

Welcome



Strange but True

I used to think those people who lived above the San Andreas Fault, in San Francisco, must have worried themselves to death every time they went to bed about the prospect of being caught up in an earthquake.

Now, having survived an earthquake myself I don't think these Californians have anything to worry about at all. Well, I say survived, I was woken up by my better half, and caught the last five seconds of the windows and wardrobes shaking before nodding off again. Only later, having tuned into the radio, did she nudge me to say that she'd been right and that it was an earthquake, did I appreciate just what an ordeal I'd been through.

The point is, we don't normally get earthquakes here, not 5.2 on the Richter Scale at any rate, and it does hammer home the fact that the regular scheme of things in the UK doesn't seem to exist any more.

Take this week as an example. We've experienced the worst weather of the winter - weather that made the main television news, with wretched reporters sent out in inhospitably conditions in newly-purchased anoraks, hoping that their fame will be boosted on TV bloopers. We've seen this type of coverage much more recently to the extent that it will soon no longer be treated as "news".

We've also just been told that last year's summer flooding was part of the natural scheme of things and nothing to do with global warming. That might be the case but surely we can't discount them as anything other than part of a bigger, more extreme, weather picture. Let's face it how often have we heard that it's the "wettest July since records began" or the "hottest November day for 40 years", or that "recorded wind was the highest since 1953"?

Met Office researchers point to the arrival of Bluetongue disease as evidence of changing climate while recent press releases note that they are also warning against the effects of climate change on plant health.

On that final point, many of you have already seen evidence of it, with diseases emerging at strange times of year or others which have not generally been seen within these shores until now. It all means not closing minds to any possibility and being prepared to scrap some of the tried and tested routines in favour of a more fluid approach to course management.

In the longer term, and it's a theme I return to on this page time and time again, golf has to embrace whatever conditions it faces. If it means warmer weather at the tail end of the year having more club competitions then and if we do continue to get more summer rain it might just be the time to do some of that work that was previously left to the bleak, cold winter months.

I know it takes time to get your head around it, but then so does an earthquake in the middle of Yorkshire.

SPARKING AN INTEREST IN IRRIGATION



The Midland Section enjoyed yet another fine day's weather during the latest of their training events at Gay Hill GC, Worcestershire. The one-day regional training workshop subsidised by BIGGA's Continue to Learn Education Programme focused on irrigation electrics.

The course programme included the general principles of the laws of electricity and how to trace and diagnose some of the common faults associated with golf course irrigation systems. The beauty of setting aside a complete day on the subject of electrics was that the delegates were given every opportunity to trace some pre-set faults on Gay Hill's system. A range of fault-finding equipment was on hand and the delegates soon got to grips with some of the techniques used.

The event was organised following the positive feedback from the irrigation workshop staged at The Belfry last year. Tony Ware, of Tonick Watering, and chairman elect of the BTLIA was joined by Mike Woolcock, from Kiem Water, to present and guide the delegates through an intensive days programme.

The event was not designed to eliminate the role of the skilled technician but to educate the owner and operator of any irrigation system to employ some sound maintenance procedures and to give them a basic understanding of fault-finding skills. In the heat of the summer when things go pear shaped these skills will allow for a quick diagnosis of the fault and reduce costly downtime.

The Midland Section are hoping to run the event again later in the year. The next event scheduled will be a Pesticides and Spraying Techniques Update which will again be a practical refresher workshop aimed at keeping the operator up to date with the latest legislation, equipment and techniques. Anyone interested in booking a place on either event should contact Paul Woodham by emailing him at paul@ghgc.org.uk