

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

WALTER WOODS TROPHY

The Walter Woods Trophy, organised by students from Elmwood College and now in its second year, was contested by teams from Elmwood College, St. Andrews University, Dundee University and Abertay University at Scotsraig Golf Club recently.

The sharp and breezy conditions did not deter the students from producing some good scores and a competitive match. The day was rounded off with Walter Woods presenting his own trophy to the eventual winners, Dundee University.

WEE WONDERS LAUNCH EVENT



Monty and the greenstaff at Dukes Meadow GC

Colin Montgomerie, six-time Ryder Cup player, recently hosted a golf day at Dukes Meadows Golf Club in West London to celebrate the launch of the 2008 HSBC Wee Wonders Championships.

Dukes Meadows Golf Club was chosen to host the event as it is a great example of a successful local community facility helping to develop the game at grassroots. Scott Margetts, General Manager of Dukes Meadows said "HSBC Wee Wonders is a fantastic event which exemplifies exactly what we are doing here at Dukes Meadows, by supporting junior golf development in this way".

Colin was able to play the course with winners of last year's HSBC Wee Wonders and hosted a skills clinic on the Golf Range and Short Game Academy. "There are not enough of this kind of facility and the owners should be proud of what they have on offer here" said Monty.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

The London Club Course Manager, Peter Todd is looking for volunteers to assist with tournament preparation during The European Open - the week of 30 June – 6 July

The tournament is the first main tour event to be hosted by the club and successful applicants can expect the following package: Accommodation for non-local volunteers, food and drink while at work, two shirts and a rain suit, and a round of golf at The London Golf Club.

Full details can be found at: www.londongolf.co.uk/recruitment.shtml

Applicants should contact Peter Todd on peter@londongolf.co.uk or Tel: 01474 875701.



IOG SOUTH WEST YOUNG STUDENT OF THE YEAR 2008

Congratulations to James Rendell, Trainee Greenkeeper at Cape Cornwall Golf Club, who finished runner up at this years IOG Student of the Year award. He was interviewed at Duchy College, Stoke Climsland, by Les Gibbs and Len Smith from the IOG in January. To enter, James also had to complete a 500 word essay.

James spent the previous week at the BTME Harrogate Show alongside fellow apprentices from Duchy College; Jack Davis (Lanhydrock Hotel and Golf Club) and Mark Downing (Launceston Golf Club). Attendance at the show was jointly sponsored by the Devon and Cornwall BIGGA Section and the Training Agency (Duchy College).

James is currently studying towards the Level 2 Apprenticeship in Amenity Horticulture (Sports Turf) and attends Duchy College on day release.

A SUCCESSFUL REUNION

The Frank Newberry European tour continues and after great success in Belgium with FEGGA and a trip to the Canary Islands with the Norwegian Greenkeepers Association Frank returned to Denmark. Invited back for the third year in a row by the Danish Greenkeepers Association the topic for the seminar this year was Negotiating Skills and proved to be a great success with the delegates who arrived on the day to the sight of a snowy landscape, something of a rarity during another mild and wet winter.

The seminar was organised by Søren Nicholson, held at Ledborg Palace Golf where Alex McCombie is Course Manager, and sponsored by Svenningsens who are main dealers in Denmark for Ransomes Jacobsen and other leading brands.

At the end of the day the 25 delegates left with some new skills and ideas to help them in their future negotiating. In summing up Søren thanked Frank for his commitment to Danish greenkeepers and his endless energy and enthusiasm. He also thanked hosts Ledborg Palace Golf and Ole Knuth from Svenningsens for their generous sponsorship. Final thanks went to the delegates for attending and wanting to develop some essential skills.



STUDENT WINS SCHOLARSHIP



Robert Farthing, third year BSc (Hons) Horticulture student at Writtle College, Chelmsford, has been awarded the Floranova Ornamental Horticulture Research Scholarship – a scholarship awarded to a student with a particular interest in the research and development of ornamental plants.

Funded by Floranova, the UK-based flower seed breeder, and awarded by the David Colegrave Foundation, the scholarship provides an award annually of £1,500 to a student with a particular interest in ornamental horticulture research and development.

Robert has a personal interest in commercial production of ornamental pot plants and cut flowers. In his application he stated: "I have always had a strong interest in horticulture. In my time at Writtle College I have been able to specialise in horticultural production and technology, with a strong leaning towards the commercial sector."

OPENS DOORS TO OATRIDGE

Barenbrug's Scottish facility recently opened its doors to a delegation of lecturers and student greenkeepers and groundsmen from Oatridge College. The specialist grass seed breeder's Scottish manager, Billy Nimmo, gave the 30 visitors an insight into the training, sales and production activities of the Falkirk-based site.

"I was delighted to open our facilities to the college," said Billy. "We at Barenbrug have a vast amount of knowledge, technical expertise and experience to share with the industry. From a primary grass breeder's perspective, our Falkirk-facility is unique to Scotland and enables us to support existing and future groundsmen and greenkeepers on a local basis."

The student delegates are now working on essays relating to the visit, with Billy set to present the writer of the best essay with a commemorative Barenbrug clock on completion of their projects.

TRAINING COURSE DATES ANNOUNCED

The Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) has confirmed the dates and venues for their training courses on the maintenance of synthetic surfaces, run in conjunction with maintenance and renovation specialists Technical Surfaces.

The IOG has developed the one day courses entitled 'The maintenance and management of synthetic sports surfaces' to ensure that those responsible for synthetic surfaces understand the care and maintenance requirements of the surface and to aid in the provision of a better and safer surface for all non-turf games.

The aim of this course is to explain how the surfaces are constructed and demonstrate the various methods of maintenance for synthetic surfaces.

The main surfaces covered during the course will be sand-based, water-based and rubber filled carpets. However, all other types of surfaces will be included.

The courses will be held at: Leicester, Loughborough University, 21st May; Bristol, Bristol University, 30th September; Yorkshire Weetwood Sportsground, Leeds, 16th October.

Attendance is £100 for IOG members and £200 for non-members which includes lunch, refreshments, comprehensive handout and certificate.

For further information contact the IOG on: 01908 312 511.

WINNERS

Ed Combest, retired professor from Lake City Community College in Lake City, Florida, is the inaugural winner of the International Golf Course Equipment Managers Association (IGCEMA) Edwin Budding Award, sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen.

The Edwin Budding Award was created to recognise those in the turf equipment sector whose actions have gone above and beyond the norm to help shape the golf industry into what it is today. Edwin Budding was one of those individuals who helped define golf, not as a player, but as an engineer. He designed the first cylinder mower, which has shaped golf as we know it today.

Ed Combest was selected by a committee of industry professionals chosen by the IGCEMA and David Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen, presented the award at Grande Pines Golf Club in Orlando, Florida. The 2008 award will be presented at Harrogate Week 2009.

EXCAVATOR SAFETY TRAINING DAY IN THE SOUTH WEST



Joe Lewis, Assessor\Trainer of RGL Plant Ltd takes a group of South West Section greenkeepers through the safe operation of mini-excavators.

These greenkeepers now possess an HSE recognised operators licence - valid for the next five years - for machines of up to 10 tonnes. BIGGA CPD points are also available for this course.

Future courses will be arranged on demand - please contact Paul Worster paulw@mgcnew.co.uk for further details.



SAFETY TOOLS

Orwell Mencap Genesis has produced a selection of wooden safety tools for Ransomes Jacobsen. Genesis Garden Furniture, part of the Orwell Mencap Genesis organisation, is already well known in the Ipswich area as a producer of hardwood garden.

Damien Ribbans, Business Development Manager for Genesis said, "Work such as this is vital for us, as it provides the varied workload that we need to develop our workforce. Our people are always more than happy to demonstrate what they can achieve, as well as learning new skills along the way."

Ian Mitchell, Sales and Product Trainer with the Cutting Edge Training team at Ransomes Jacobsen commented, "Health and safety is a major consideration right across our company, so these paddles play a vitally important role when we are turning heavy cylinders with extremely sharp blades in training situations."

GREENKEEPER RECEIVES TOP AWARD

Top learners from Scotland's land-based industries were recognised by Maureen Watt MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills, in a glittering Awards Ceremony recently.

Daniel McGarrell, of Biggar was named "Horticulture Learner of the Year" at the fifth annual Lantra Land-based Learner of the Year Awards.

This is the first time that the Horticulture industry have had their own prize category at the awards. The prize was sponsored by The Horticultural Trades Association and Lorna Davies Florist.

Some 150 guests, including employers, farmers, crofters, land managers, training providers and members of Scottish Parliament, attended the awards. Calum MacLeod, a 21-year-old agricultural engineer from Fife, scooped the top prize.

Daniel had a double win on the night taking home a total cash prize of £450.00. In addition to the 'Horticulture Learner of the Year prize, the Oatridge College student took home the 'Scottish Enterprise Regional Winner' prize, sponsored by Scottish Enterprise.



Daniel (left) receives his award from Maureen Watt MSP and previous winner Barrie Lewis



Call to discuss your requirements: 01883 344244

Email: info@eagle.uk.com Website: www.eagle.uk.com



COURSE MANAGER WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

A man, whose vision and dedication has helped to earn an international reputation for championship golf at The Grove in Hertfordshire, has been honoured and recognised for his skill and effort by the world's largest golf management company.

Phillip Chiverton, who oversaw the development of the course in 2001 with American designer Kyle Phillips and has led a 25-strong team of specialists responsible for its superb quality and condition ever since, has been named as Troon Golf's Course Manager of the Year for 2007.

Phillip is the first Course Manager to receive the award outside the Americas, a phenomenal achievement.



A key factor in the presentation of the award was Phillip's dedication and outstanding work preparing the course for the 2006 World Golf Championship.

The event not only attracted more than 100,000 visitors and global TV coverage but considerable praise from the world's elite players including World No. 1 Tiger Woods.

Phillip's illustrious career started at the age of 15 with an apprenticeship at Bridport and West Dorset Golf Club before he moved to Wentworth Golf Club working on the Championship West Course preparing it for two World Matchplay events and two Volvo PGA Championships.

BIGGA'S FIRST MECHANIC MEMBER

BIGGA has just launched a new membership category for mechanics. For just £60 per year mechanics can now also benefit from BIGGA Membership.

The first person to take advantage of this was Colin Thomas from Grove Golf Club, Bridgend, South Wales (pictured below). His membership benefits will include:

Free legal helpline – Access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for you and your family (living at the same address).

Personal accident insurance – Cover for time off work due to an accident at home, work or even on holiday as well as one-off payments dependent on the type of injury.

BIGGA website – You will find a host of information on the website and you will also be able to access the BIGGA bulletin board.



For more information and a full list of membership benefits, please contact the BIGGA Membership Department on 01347 833800 and select option 1.

A WELCOME RETURN

The English Open, a tournament steeped in rich history and tradition, will return to The European Tour International Schedule from 2009 for a minimum of five years at the St Mellion International Resort in Cornwall.

Severiano Ballesteros won the inaugural English Open in 1979 and the event quickly developed a strong sense of national identity.

Clarke won the last English Open to be played in 2002, capturing a record third win in four years. In 2009, the 21st edition will unfold after a seven year break on the spectacular Jack Nicklaus Signature Course at the St Mellion International Resort, which is currently being extensively remodelled.

St Mellion is not new to The European Tour International Schedule – the Benson and Hedges International Open (seven times) and The Players' Championship of Europe (twice) have been played at the venue – but in 2009 the players will face a revised challenge in considerably revamped surroundings.

PARTNERING TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES IN GOLF

European Golf Design, the golf design arm of the PGA European Tour and IMG, has become a Technical Supporter of Golf Environment Europe.

The partnership recognises the values that EGD and GEE share in designing, constructing and managing environmentally and socially responsible golf courses.

The practice, comprising of six full time golf course architects, and with an international track record of responsible design and construction over the past 16 years, recognises the growing importance of environmental sustainability to the future of golf.

"Golf Environment Europe is extremely excited to be partnering with European Golf Design," said Jonathon Smith of GEE. "EGD has clearly recognised the need for the golf industry to take effective action on environmental issues, and the GEE is well placed to provide the industry with valuable technical guidance, and strategic and political support."