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Welcome



Feed off the Positive Energy

It was really refreshing to be in Harrogate this year. Before we arrived all the talk was of credit crunches and job losses – it's the first recession we've had since the advent of rolling 24 hour news so there is no avoidance – but everyone in Harrogate seemed intent on bucking the trend.

Exhibitors were up-beat, visitors were up-beat, I even met some greenkeepers who had just been made redundant and, remarkably, they were less down-beat than I thought they would be. There is a feel good factor at Harrogate and it seems to rub off on people.

Perhaps it's because it marks the start of a new year. Perhaps it's because people are comfortable with the familiarity of surroundings and people they meet up with every January – a sort of huddling together in times of adversity.

Talking with colleagues during the week there was very much a feeling that in Britain we are guilty of talking ourselves into deeper trouble than we are actually in. Some of my more cosmopolitan friends said they'd been in other countries recently and there wasn't nearly as much doom and despondency on the media as there is here.

I must admit to have been a part of it, being quoted in The Times, along with some others "industry experts" on the problems the downturn were causing golf. Just before Christmas John Pemberton and I were also asked to talk on the problems of golf and greenkeeping on the radio. John spoke with Rob Bonnet on Radio 4's illustrious Today Programme, while I was on the Hawkesbee and Jacobs Show on Talksport. What caught the imagination was BIGGA's recently launched Stress Helpline.

You can't skip over the fact that golf is having problems, the current worldwide problems are compounded by back-to-back lousy summers, but in The Times I did say that the clubs that would be best placed to recover quickly would be those which didn't compromise on the quality of their course.

Of course it's easy for me to say but much less easy to do if money is not coming into the club at the same rate as before. However, it does go without saying that if a course has retained its reputation it will be more attractive than those that have cut a few corners during the hard times and become a little rough around the edges.

So, let's all take a leaf out of those who were at Harrogate and think ourselves into a more positive mood. If we all work hard, go that extra mile; solve problems; fill gaps and generally be great employees, that collective energy might just improve our own positions, that of our employers and see us through these desperate times! I've just re-read that bit and I sound like a new age hippy. But who cares, Man! If this is what it takes to pull us through.

Thanks to all who came to Harrogate. It was great to see you and I hope you got all that you'd hoped out of your day or few days that you spent with us.

Scott MacCallum

Editor