



Familiar Face, New Venture

After 17 years of managing multi-site golf courses for both American Golf and Crown Golf, Laurence Pithie has set up his own company Turf Master One Ltd.

He will now be focusing on both golf course consultancy and training within the industry, both in the UK and mainland Europe.

Laurence offers comprehensive workshops and seminars to Course Owners, Managers, Head Greenkeepers and colleges in 'effective golf course management' providing training in areas from aeration to water management. During the past year he has published a short book and a comprehensive maintenance manual on golf course management. A second book on 'Seasonal Requirements for Golf Course Management' was launched last month.

A full list of the services available can be found on his website:

www.turfmasterone.co.uk

Leaving a Mark in France

MJ Abbott Limited is moving quickly towards the completion of its first contract in France in a decade.

They began work in January at Les Aisses Golf, a part-woodland part-heathland development in the heart of the Sologne forest.

The three current 9-hole courses, which opened in 1992, have been redesigned by Architect, Martin Hawtree to create an 18-hole heathland course and separate 9-hole course.

Phase One comprises extensive tree clearance work prior to the development of the first nine holes, including the installation of primary drainage and a new irrigation system.

A new putting green will also be built in front of the clubhouse.

The project is due to be completed soon and work on the remaining nine holes is currently scheduled for Winter 2010.

Shared Standards

A new World PGA Alliance, including organisations representing 56,000 PGA Professionals and more than 22,000 PGA-member golf facilities worldwide, has been formed to establish and guide teaching, playing and educational standards for the golf profession in developing golf territories and shared best practices in player development for adults and youth.

The alliance is comprised of the Professional Golfers' Associations of

America, Australia, Canada, PGAs of Europe, Germany, Great Britain & Ireland, Japan, South Africa, and Sweden.

Born from the World PGA Conference which began in 2004 and was conducted for a third time in April, 2008, in Sydney, Australia, the alliance will be led by the chief executives of The PGA of America, The Professional Golfers' Association (of Great Britain & Ireland) and the PGA of Australia.



Royal Approval

A Syngenta formulation robot has been officially launched by HRH The Princess Royal. The Princess carried out the first experiments when she visited the company's Jealott's Hill R&D site in Berkshire.

The fully automated robot is a breakthrough in innovation and speed of delivery. It will formulate and test hundreds of potential turf, amenity and crop protection products every day, at speeds that scientists can only dream of with existing technology.

The culmination of a five year project bringing together scientists, engineers and software specialists, the robot can make almost any liquid agrochemical formation, in small amounts, and perform a basic series of tests to see if those formulations are of interest for further research.

The robot is the latest part of an additional £35 million investment in Jealott's Hill -

Europe's largest agrochemical research and development centre.

The Princess spoke enthusiastically about the role played by science in feeding the growing global population and protecting biodiversity.

"What you do here is to ensure that food is grown safely and well and understanding the biodiversity in which it grows. That needs a lot of skilled and talented people to ensure that what is done here is the best that science can provide," she said.

Jealott's Hill Site Head, Mike Bushell, added: "We were delighted that Her Royal Highness agreed to open the new facility. This is a major investment in technology which will greatly speed up our development programme to bring products to market."

Syngenta invests around \$1 billion on R&D globally each year, with £100 million in the UK.

Crown Golf Sells Two of its Properties

The Vale Golf Club, a proprietary members' club set in 304 acres near Worcester, and The Chase Golf Club, a proprietary members' club set in 160 acres near Cannock in Staffordshire, have both been sold to local entrepreneurs.

The clubs were placed on the market in February 2009, by Humberts Leisure acting on behalf of Crown Golf.

"We are continuously reviewing our estate focussing on the properties which the business wishes to retain for the long term" said Crown Golf Chief Executive, Stephen Lewis,

"Having a core business based largely around the south and the M25 has its operational benefits, and both The Chase and The Vale are geographically quite separated from the majority of our other facilities. But geography was not the critical factor in our decision to market these properties.

"Both are very profitable businesses, and we felt that they represented an attractive proposition to potential buyers. This proved to be the case.

The Vale and The Chase are both staffed by excellent and loyal teams and, with almost 2,000 members in total at the two golf clubs, we are pleased that both individual buyers are committed to taking these properties forward.

"These sales will enable Crown Golf to continue its policy of reinvesting in its estate. Recently we completed a £20m refurbishment of our flagship property, St Mellion International Resort, for example, and with 22 Crown Golf Academies in development across our golf club network, and many other large projects currently underway, we look forward to continuing our strong performance of recent years," said Stephen.

A third Crown Golf property, Eccleston Park Golf Club, which is a proprietary members' club set in 125 acres near St Helens in Merseyside, is also on the market.

A Quarter Century of Service

Dawn Gough, Personal Assistant to David Withers, Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen, has recently celebrated 25 years of employment at the company

Dawn joined Ransomes in July 1984 as a shorthand typist in the Buying Department and since then worked as Secretary in a number of departments until becoming PA to the Managing Director in 2004.

As well as her usual PA duties she is also responsible for arranging European customer visits to Ipswich and, since 2002, has regularly organised and attended the annual customer visit to the Golf Industry Show in the USA.

"I've always enjoyed working here; and have been given various opportunities to move between departments, which has given me a great insight into how the different sections of the company work together."

Dawn lives in Ipswich with her husband, Matt, RJ's Demonstration Fleet Manager

