

Golf Course Dramas

Golf courses are generally seen as quiet relaxing places where the opportunity to stop and smell the flowers often arises, but last month two golf courses had their tranquillity rudely interrupted by dramatic incidents that just couldn't be predicted. Fortunately in both cases the victims survived thanks to the actions of golfers.

At Taunton, Oake Manor Golf Club greenkeeper, Graham Hake (shown inset), ended up submerged under water and trapped by the Ransomes Batwing machine he was operating and was saved by two Royal Navy Airmen, just back from service in Afghanistan, who were playing the course, while at Caird Park, in Dundee, a pilot escaped serious injury after his two seater plane crashed into a tree on the 14th hole.

In Somerset, Joey Poole and Alan Mullins, who are based at the Naval Air Squadron Commando Helicopter Force at Yeovilton, raced to the scene when they witnessed the accident to discover Graham trapped under the machine and his head submerged.

Between them, using their training, they managed to lift and move the machine just enough to raise Graham's head above the water level until some more airmen and some of Graham's fellow greenkeepers arrived and between 10 of them they were able lift the machine clear and pull Graham out of the water.

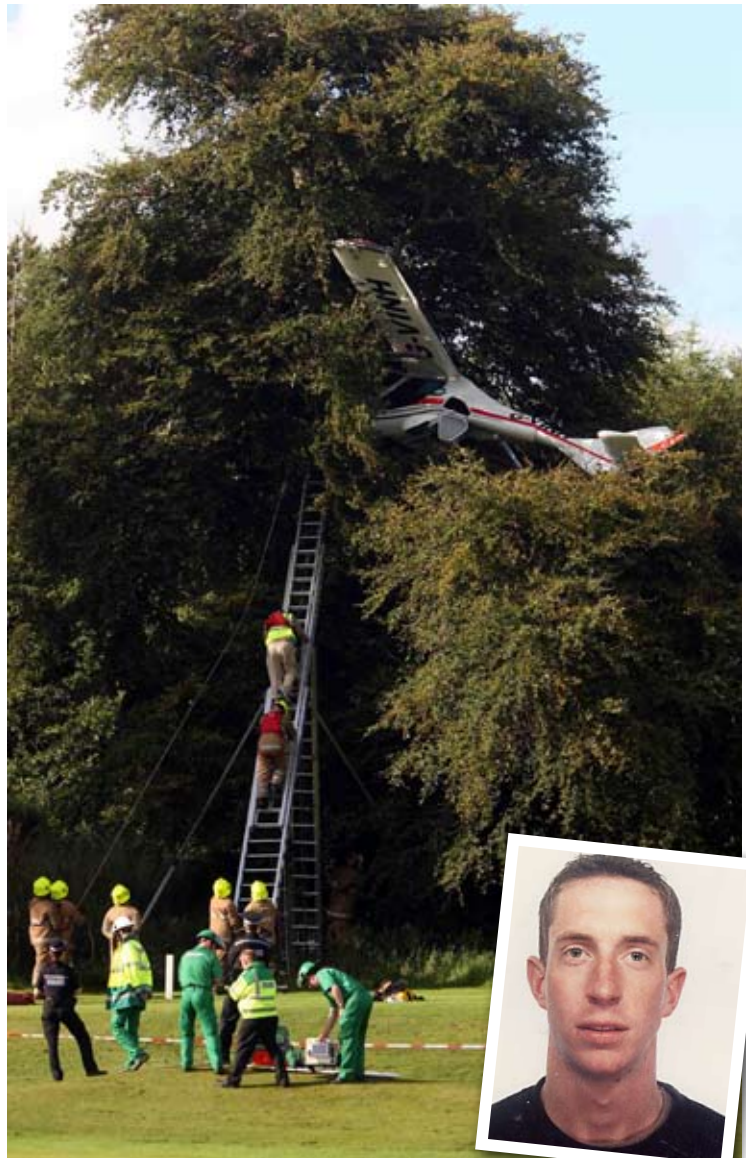
The 29 year-old was taken to hospital with minor injuries and was expected to be back at work a couple of weeks later. The Batwing was written off in the accident while the Health and Safety Executive cleared the golf club and the Ransomes' machine of blame.

In Dundee, the low flying plane which was believed to be low on fuel, and according to the local Courier newspaper, performed a U-turn over Caird Park Golf Course before stalling and careering into the tree on the 14th holes wedging between branches 40 feet in the air.

The pilot, Vince Hagedorn, from Chelmsford, Essex, told the first golfer on the scene that he was fine "but just needed a set of ladders".

Five crews from Dundee Airport fire service and a JCB attended the scene but he intrepid pilot was able to put the harness on himself, descend a ladder and walk away.

"We will comply with the wishes of the emergency services but there are not plans to shut the course at this stage. However, there may be some disruption," said a council spokesman



Photograph courtesy of the Dundee Courier & Advertiser

Annual Review of Remuneration for Greenkeepers

In light of the current economic climate and the impact that this has on golf clubs throughout the UK, the Committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS) does not feel that it is appropriate to recommend any form of review to the salary scales currently in place to be effective for 2010.

The CGCS recommends that rates of pay remain a matter for negotiation between the individual employer and employee. The CGCS further consider that employers should make an appropriate pay award to recognise any substantial change in responsibility, qualifications or

duties carried out by their employees as well as reflecting any changes to legislation governing rates of pay. Performance issues are also an important and relevant criteria in salary negotiation.

The Committee will meet early next year to review scales for 2011.



L-R Keith Lloyd, John Pemberton and Sandy Jones at The Open

Three Bodies Come Together

Three of golf's leading bodies have forged a unique partnership to help golf clubs meet the modern day challenges facing the sport.

The PGA, BIGGA and the GCMA have formed the Golf Club Management Partnership to assist UK clubs in operating more effectively and efficiently.

Representing a total of 16,000 members and with a collective experience of over 200 years in the industry, the agreement between the triumvirate, was signed at The Open at Turnberry. It is designed to encourage the fostering of closer ties between the key stakeholders at a golf club – the Professional, the Course Manager and the Club Manager – with the ultimate aim of providing a coordinated approach to the management of golf clubs. Benefits for clubs will include clarification of employment roles, job titles, skill sets and qualifications across the three organisations, helping employers find the right people.

In addition there will be exciting educational opportunities with mutual recognition of respective training programmes and the chance to open up opportunities across the industry. There is also cost-saving potential with joint conferences and exhibitions.

The first meeting of the partnership will take place in the autumn.

"This is a momentous decision which recognises the expertise of

each of the associations, the value of establishing closer ties for benefit of golf clubs across the UK and the desire of all three to work together," said PGA Chief Executive Sandy Jones.

"We are all aware golf clubs face many new challenges especially in the current economic climate and this partnership is fundamentally about combining skills and expertise to make them successful in meeting those challenges.

"The members of all three Associations play pivotal and important roles at clubs and this partnership is about assisting clubs to use them to their full potential for their ultimate benefit," added Sandy

"The development of an alliance between the three main bodies representing the management of golf clubs will be of significant benefit to the golf industry as well as the membership of the respective partners. The move is a major initiative that presents some exciting opportunities and clearly demonstrates BIGGA's commitment to the future of the game," said BIGGA Chief Executive John Pemberton.

The mission statement of the partnership is as follows: 'Members of the Partnership will work together to maximise the value and effectiveness of golf club management through shared learning, professional development and the promotion of best practice'.



Facilities Fit for a King

Kings College School has renovated some of its extensive sports facilities during a tight summer schedule, with Speedcut carrying out complete drainage and laser-levelling on three football pitches and moved and rebuilt a cricket square.

"The site is on a flood plain. Being on clay surfaces means they just became unplayable after heavy rain," said West Barnes Lane Manager, Deputy Head Groundsman, Miguel Pimenta, who has been at the school for eight years.

"Over the years we have done as much as we can with vertidrainning ourselves but the situation and the demands on the ground led us to call in Speedcut Contractors."

The King's College School job was completed by mid-July – a tough deadline, having been started on June 10 and finished on July 22.

In early August Miguel carried out the first cylinder cut of the grass (which took two weeks and three days from germination to first cut) and a high nitrogen fertiliser applied. Next month Miguel will carry out sand grooving of the pitches during half term.

Barry Pace, Speedcut Contracts Manager, said: "This was a challenging job because the timescale was very tight to get the surfaces well established by the first week of September.

"The new irrigation system and the water tank provided water to establish the seed. King's College School has excellent sporting facilities and we have been delighted to be part of the team giving pupils vastly improved surfaces to play on."

At the King's College School main site Head Groundsman Steve Wells also has two Assistant Groundsmen, James Waller and Benny Cholewa.

South East Region Seminar Reigate Hill Golf Club, November 12

This year's Seminar is arranged and hosted by the Surrey Section - The Decade Ahead!!

As we move out of the naughties what does the next decade hold for golf management and Greenkeepers?

With climate change an ever deepening recession and greater demands on Golf Course quality this years Seminar will include five excellent speakers from within the industry, covering a wide range of subjects to help us with the day to day challenges and long term improvements.

Speakers: Mark Hunt, Headland; Martin Ward, Symbio; Laurence, Pithie MG, TurfMasterOne; Tim Lobb, Thomson Perritt & Lobb, and Lee Penrose, STRI Ecologist

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Men in Pink

The Captain at Abbotsley Hotel Golf and Country Club nominated Breast Cancer research as the Club charity is breast cancer research, and the team, led by Course Manager Allan Walker, fourth from the right all entered into the spirit with new uniforms. "The lads were all in full agreement," explained Allan, who is Chairman of East of England Section

Golf Management Competitions

This year's Golf Management Competitions have recently taken place in the South West and South Wales Region.

Once again these competitions were well supported in the sections with a friendly competitive spirit between the clubs taking part.

BIGGA South West and South Wales Region would like to thank the clubs for their support in hosting these events, and Scott's for their support and continued sponsorship.

Along with individual prizes for the members of the first, second and third placed teams the winning teams in each section received an Accupro 2000 Spreader piece of machinery for their clubs from Scotts Turf Professional Ltd.

This year the South West Section event held at Filton Golf Club was won by The Defence Academy Golf Club team with 79 points, in second place was The Kendleshire Golf Club and third place was Saltford Golf Club.

The South Wales Section event was held at Llanwern Golf Club and was won by the home club team with 81 points, runners up were Morrision Golf Club and third was Llanishen Golf Club. The South Coast Section event was held at Barton-on-Sea Golf Club and was again won by the home club team with 88 points and in second place was Southwood Golf Club and third was Basingstoke Golf Club.

Jane Jones
*South West and South Wales
 Regional Administrator*



Bobcat Partners Kawasaki Bud World Supercross Team

Bobcat is the new partner of the Kawasaki Bud Racing Team Europe, which competes in the Supercross World Championship and in the Elite Motocross and Supercross Championships in France.

The Kawasaki Bud team includes two leading French motocross riders in their number: Gautier Paulin is currently European champion and David Vuillemin is the reigning Supercross World Champion.

As a Partner, Bobcat has provided a Bobcat T250 Compact Tracked Loader to Kawasaki Bud, which is used to prepare, grade and maintain the three tracks for pit bike, motocross and supercross at the Team's Tyrosse training centre in the southwest of France.

All Aboard!



The arrival of a 32hp Massey Ferguson compact tractor at Bedfordshire's Mead Open Farm has helped make "little red tractor and trailer" rides one of the most popular attractions at a thriving farm park which hosted more than 180,000 visitors in 2008.

Following a circular route of around 600 metres, the MF 1533 tractor pulls two trailers and their spellbound occupants around the perimeter of a series of paddocks, giving visitors a clear view of the farm's pigs, goats, sheep, alpacas and cattle feeding, resting and at play.

Located at Billington, near Leighton Buzzard, Mead Open Farm is celebrating its 15th year as one of the area's top destinations for local schools and for young children accompanied by parents, guardians and friends.

Supplied by local Massey Ferguson dealer, Lodgeway Tractors, the MF 1533 compact tractor ferrying visitors around the farm replaced a 135hp agricultural tractor that had been used previously for the job.



STRI scores highly in independent testing

The STRI has retained accreditation status to conduct independent testing of rootzone materials, and has demonstrated high levels of competency in testing, as specified by the USGA's Recommendations for Putting Green Construction.

This latest review included a full audit carried out by an assessor from the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA).

This involved assessing STRI's quality procedures and ASTM (American Society of Testing and Materials) compliance.

Dr Stephen Baker, Head of Soils and Sport Surface Science at STRI, said "This is a great achievement and demonstrates our goal continually to deliver world-class testing, analytical and evaluation services to golf courses and other sports turf facilities across UK and Europe."

The successful review upholds STRI's position as one of only ten USGA approved physical soil testing laboratories across the world.

Full details of all the testing services available from STRI can be found on the newly launched website at www.stri.co.uk/services <<http://www.stri.co.uk/services>> .



Lindum Support for Top Exhibit

Chris Beardshaw has used Lindum's Grassfelt for his 'Best in Show' Tatton Park show gardens for the last two consecutive years. Supplied by All Turf, Lindum's North West distributor, the consignment of 60 sq metres was used to cover the triple stepped sides of the amphitheatre forming the centre piece of 'Ness Botanische', Chris's design for Visit Chester and Cheshire.

All Turf Director, Hazel Frith, said that the Grassfelt stood up to the wear and tear of the five day RHS event brilliantly. "We had heavy downpours throughout the week and Chris's garden was packed with visitors," she said. "A lot of them climbed the walls of the amphitheatre to get a good overall view of the garden. If Chris had used conventional turf the damage would have been disastrous."



New PowerPlay Venue Impresses Creator

Two times Walker Cup captain and PowerPlay Golf creator, Peter McEvoy, visited Harrogate's Ridding Park Golf on recently to showcase the two flag 'risk and reward' game to a group of journalists and golfers.

The North Yorkshire golf resort has been chosen as an official PowerPlay Golf venue by Peter thanks to its first class golfing facilities, which included the superb new six hole Repton Short Course.

PowerPlay Golf is designed to be played over nine holes but Peter chose the six hole Repton Short Course as the location for his PowerPlay challenge.

"Risk and reward' is a key feature in PowerPlay so the Repton Short Course, with its six hole par three design and its interplay of water, woodland and parkland, provides the perfect setting for the game, as every shot counts," said Peter.

Billed as 'the new way to play golf', PowerPlay Golf has attracted global acclaim from many of the world's most famous golf-playing countries including Ireland, USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia and most recently, New Zealand.

In PowerPlay Golf, players can choose to play to the 'easy' white flag or the more difficult 'Skull 'n' Crossbones' black flag which is placed in a difficult location.



Long Service Award

Fakenham GC Head Greenkeeper, Gary Sutton, has celebrated 20 years at the club. He was appointed initially as a trainee greenkeeper under the wing of then Head Greenkeeper, Alan Gascoigne.

His joining on the July 4, 1989 marked not only the 213th Year of American Independence but coincided with the Centenary Year of Fakenham Golf Club which is now in its 120th year.

Gary attended a block release course at Easton College at the end of which he successfully completed the City and Guilds General Horticultural examinations.

He took over the position of Head Greenkeeper and over the years has transformed the golf course into one of the most highly regarded in the county.

Chairman Graham Cocker presenting a surround sound cinema system thanked Gary and commented 'that he hoped he would get as much enjoyment out of this as the members did while playing the course'.

Picture shows L-R: David Palmer Secretary, Derek Bradford, Greens Chairman, Gary Sutton, Graham Cocker, Barry Futter, General Manager