

Icelandic President Opens FEGGA Conference

The President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, opened the recently held FEGGA Conference.

It was very refreshing to hear the President talking about golf and nature working together and how it is important to Iceland. He also spoke about golf being for everyone and the fact that 10% of the population are now playing on a regular basis and up to half of them playing some five times per week. He also spoke about the recently signed agreement with the Icelandic Golf Association, where all 65 golf courses have signed up to the first stage of GEO certification.

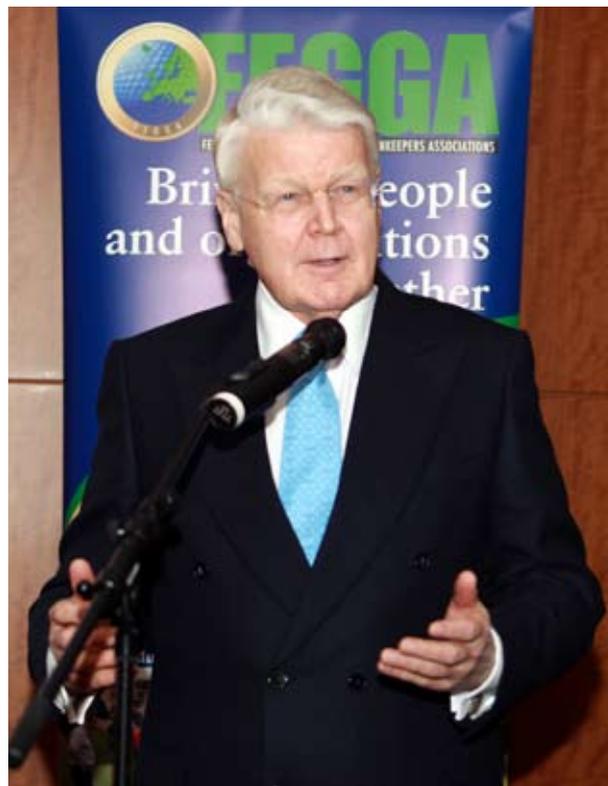
Edwin Roald, Golf Course Architect, commented: "The number of affiliated golfers in Iceland is still growing despite the economic downturn that has had a significant effect on the disposable income and purchasing power. This makes Iceland one of relatively few exceptions to the rule that participation in golf is generally decreasing."

The Conference was attended by over 20 Greenkeeper Associations and 40 organisations coming from over 20 countries globally.

This year's Conference also hosted the International Summit, an event that was established in 1990 and attended by Greenkeeper Associations annually to discuss the prominent current issues facing golf and the golf related business of managing golf courses world-wide.

The Conference and Summit concentrated on a variety of core subjects that fall high on the list of industry challenges that golf and the golf industry is facing today. The whole Conference was geared up to be very interactive, the result being to produce a range of information that will help and support Greenkeepers Associations and the 20 other organisations that were also present at this special event.

*Dean Cleaver,
FEGGA Executive Officer*



The Mat, the Anchor and the Drain Liner Solution



Bunker Solution is a three-part liner that answers many of the commonly occurring bunker problems. The three parts are the mat, anchor and drain liner. It provides "grip" for sand in the bottom bunkers and on bunker faces.

Sand slump is minimised after weather events; gravel is not required and there is no migration of stones onto playing surfaces.

The mat provides membrane between substrate and bunker sands, reduces contamination and extends life of sand.

Bunker Solution is installed throughout the excavated bunker and incorporates a ditch liner, a perimeter lip liner/anchor, and a mat that holds sand – even on 60 degree faces.

The system is designed to address problems associated with bunker maintenance using three components: a geo-textile anchor, an impermeable ditch liner, and an engineered mat. Together, these components form a complete system providing a patented solution to the problems.

The engineered mat costs around £14 per square metre, while the lip and drainage liners are sold by the linear foot.

For further information www.bunkersolution.co.uk



Souters Complete Swedish Project

More than half a million people play golf regularly in Sweden. The country may not be blessed with an ideal golfing climate, but it is one of the game's rising stars.

The prowess of Sweden's top professionals is more than matched by its technology, especially in the provision of training: witness the new Halmstad Golf Arena, with its all year round facilities. Last April work began and handover is due later this year.

What is pleasing to the British golf course industry is that one of our major sports turf contractors, Souters Sports, and its irrigation division, Souters Irrigation Services Ltd, has played a major part in its development alongside main contractor Irish-based SOL.

What makes the Arena unique is that golfers will be able to play each green from different positions and there are ten different angles for tee-off positions.

Project Architect, Christian Lundin, said that the idea was to create a links character for the state of the art training complex, and he was very much inspired by Scottish courses.

Cumbernauld and Knutsford based Souters Sports has worked successfully on many a Scottish course so its involvement in the Halmstad project was entirely appropriate.

The focal point of the 17 hectare site is a 365-metre range flanked by grass tees.

Surrounding the range is a short game area where golfers

can hit balls up to 140 metres. In the centre is a 2170 square metre green.

There is also a practice hole with four greens and nine tees.

A sports academy building includes high tech swing studios, and adjacent to this are a 1579 square metre putting green and a 1950 square metre chipping green with bunkers to suit all levels of ability.

Some of the greens have under soil heating, and teeing areas are sheltered and heated.

It was apt that Souter's 10th anniversary year was marked by its first European venture.

For further information, visit www.soutersports.co.uk or visit the Halmstad Golf Arena's website: www.halmstadgolfarena.se

LETTER FROM AMERICA

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Rae and Wilson Morrison, from Fairways GM, for a very kind invitation over to the States for the American Golf Industry Show and a look round the Ransomes Jacobson Factory in Charlotte.

"I was joined on the trip by Kenny Harper, of Meldrum House Golf Club; Robert O'Donnell, from Oldmeldrum Golf Club, and Muir Ross, from Ballindalloch Golf Club. We were looked after extremely well by Wilson and nothing was too much bother for him. Everything was organised for us and the trip ran very smoothly. We were also joined by Gerry Bruen, from Williamwood Golf Club, and Garry Ross, from Troon Golf Club, and also Gareth Rogers, also from Fairways GM, so thanks go to them for their friendship and great company.

"I am sure I speak for everyone when I say thanks very much again for a fantastic time in America."

Dale Robertson
Newmachar GC

PlantProtection goes Live with Latest Pesticide News

The UK Pesticide Guide's database has now been updated and uploaded to plantprotection.co.uk ready for the coming spray season. With so many changes taking place to pesticide legislation and product availability, a resource that helps you with your product selection, at such a busy time of year, has got to be a must.

Important changes that are now included on PlantProtection include the addition of new products: SPITFIRE from Dow; IGNITE, an

EC formulation of epoxiconazole from BASF, and INTRUDER, a new chlorpropham product from Agrichem BV.

Two products SCALA and INVADER, both from BASF, have new MAPP numbers and additional crop recommendations and a further 42 new SOLAs have also been entered.





Wild Flowers

British Seed Houses has produced a new wild flower mixture which is as attractive to the eye as it is to the multitude of wildlife for which it will provide a habitat. WF17 is set to change the misconceptions that have grown up around these mixtures.

Wild flower areas are a popular choice for all types of developments – from new roads to hotels and shopping centres.

Yet developers are frequently disappointed with their choice, seeing the

area deteriorate into a dull weedy mess.

“Architects often imagine a wild flower meadow to be like a herbaceous border,” says British Seed Houses’ Richard Brown, “yet the reality is that many native wild flower species are unspectacular to look at and that it can take a year or two to get a full display.”

British Seed Houses has sought to tackle this issue with WF17.

For further information visit: www.britishseedhouses.com

AMENITY FORUM EXPRESSES CONCERNS

The Amenity Forum has written to the DEFRA Secretary of State and other Government Ministers. It has expressed concerns about comments being made recently and emerging from discussions within Government departments.

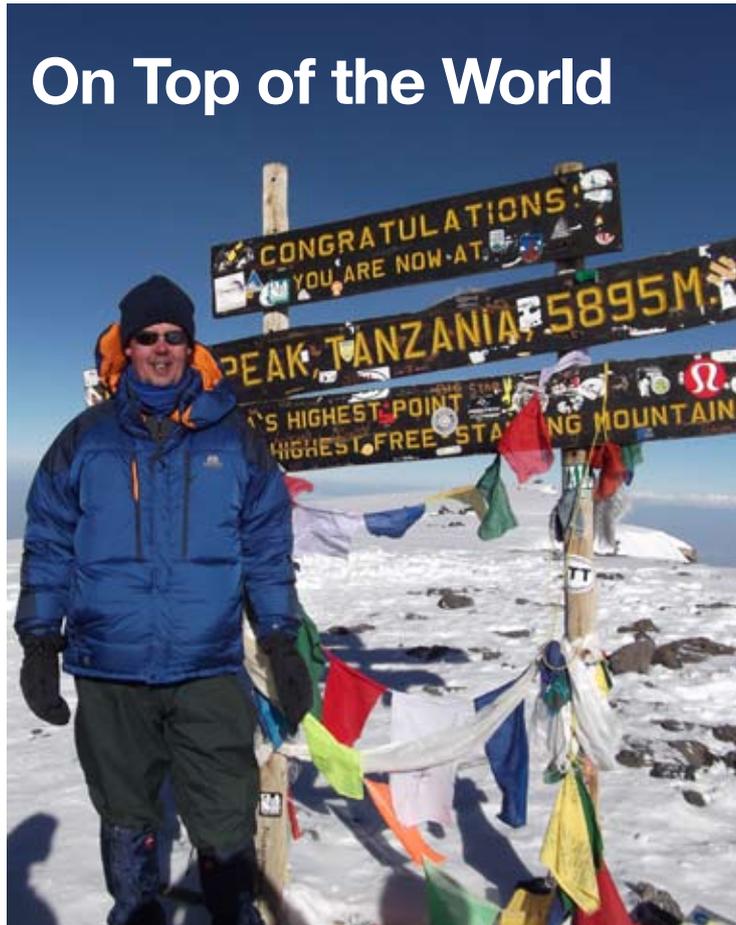
These relate to the implementation into law of the EU Sustainable Use Directive. The concern is that current controls on the use and distribution of pesticides may not be maintained but reduced.

The Forum recognises the Government’s wish not to unduly add to requirements in the Directive unless absolutely necessary but, if the current text of the Directive was just transposed into UK law, it believes that the changes would undermine the status of current professional standards on user and adviser certification.

The wording of the Directive states that Member States would be required to provide access to training, rather than stating that all sprayer operators and advisers must be trained and certificated by law.

The Chairman of the Amenity Forum, John Moverley said, “In considering the consultation on the changes last year, we had always believed that the Directive sought to reinforce controls on the use and distribution of pesticides, rather than weaken them. We urge the Government for a continuation of the UK’s current statutory requirement for certification of sprayer operators and an extension of this requirement to all advisers, as well as provisions for ongoing training and professional development.”

On Top of the World



Gareth Roberts, Course Manager at Hankley Common GC, celebrated his impending 50th birthday by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

Having agreed to make the climb over a few pints with three friends early in 2010 they reached the summit after eight days and 100km of hard walking and climbing on February 18.

It was the culmination of a year of fund raising by the four for local

charity, Help Autistic Children, which saw its coffers increased by over £50,000.

Together they have raised over £100,000 in 10 years of fund raising through a series of golf days and dinners.

“It was a great experience and I would recommend it to anyone although you do need to be fit to do it,” said Gareth.

“For my 60th I’m going to be a bit more sensible!”





Is OPM Spreading out of Control?

Over 40 of the country's senior tree officers attended an OPM Briefing at the head office of tree care firm, Gristwood & Toms, to discuss the scale of the problem.

The Oak Processionary Moth is already spreading in London and has been detected further afield in Reading and as far north as Sheffield.

Following its rapid spread across parts of Europe, it poses a serious threat to the health of the nation although it is virtually impossible to tell how prevalent it is likely to become.

The problem with the Oak Processionary Moth is that during certain stages of its development, minute toxic hairs become airborne and fall around the base of the oak trees in which it nests. These invisible urticating hairs are also spread by wind and

affect wider areas. In parts of Northern Europe, where it is prevalent, communities regularly suffer with respiratory problems, vomiting, dizziness, fever, eye and skin irritation throughout the summer months.

The Government announced last week that it is no longer seeking to eradicate the pest and will adopt a policy of containment.

They have stated that any action to manage the issue will be left to Local Authorities and tree owners.

The Forestry Commission has confirmed that it will no longer issue Statutory Notices requiring the owners of trees within the core outbreak zone to have the nests and caterpillars removed from their trees on the grounds of tree health.

Photographs courtesy of Gristwood & Toms

SOUTH EAST REGION DINNER

Members and guests enjoyed some good weather at Walton Heath, although it was slightly chilly for the early starters after an overnight frost.

Competitors once on the Course were warmed up and replenished with refreshments kindly provided by Johnny Beck and James Watson, of Sherriff Amenity, out on the 10th hole.

Everybody who played was very appreciative of the presentation and condition of the course after the long and very severe at times, winter.

It was very evident that Ian McMillan and his team had been really busy with some good work on both the Courses over the past year.

Once again the Ray Day Memorial Trophy was won by a member from Addington Palace Golf Club. It was the turn of Jason Hunt this year, playing some great golf to get round the New Course with a gross score of 69.

Following an excellent meal we were entertained by the popular guest speaker, Russ Williams, a former Comedian of the Year.

Matt Plested thanked the host Club for, as always, their fantastic hospitality and for making us so welcome on the day.

The evening was concluded with the Captain of Walton Heath Golf Club, Robert Dyson, presenting the prizes to the many different category winning competitors.

Next year's event will take place on Friday, March 9.

The South East Region of BIGGA is most grateful to the following companies for their most generous sponsorship and help with this event:-

Avoncrop Amenity Products; Blade Amenity; CMW; Ernest Doe & Sons; Grass Roots Trading Co; JSM; P Tuckwell; Rigby Taylor; Scotts; Sherriff Amenity; Sisis; Town & Country Turf; Tacit and BGA Essex Section (Hosts of this year's Regional Conference.)

Clive Osgood



10 Years Service

Rachael Duffy, of BIGGA's Learning and Development Department, recently celebrated 10 years with the Association.

Rachael started as one of BIGGA's Receptionists before moving to the L&D Department four years ago, and she also works closely with Scott MacCallum on the organisation of the BIGGA Open Championship Support Team.

To commemorate the occasion Rachael, left, was presented with a Pandora bracelet by Tracey Maddison.

Tour de France Fundraising



South Winchester Course Manager, Alex Hawkes, is taking part in a stage of the toughest sporting event in the world to raise money for two very worthwhile charities.

"The ride I am doing is the Etape Du Tour, which is a stage of the Tour de France, and the idea is that amateurs - 10,000 of them - can ride a stage of the Tour De France under 'Tour Conditions'," he explained.

Alex is riding to raise money for Parkinson's UK and The Alzheimer's Society which are particularly close to my family and I am taking part in the mountain stage, which takes place on Monday, July 11 and will be ridden by the pros as the final and most prestigious mountain, a week or so later.

The stage takes in three of the most famous alpine climbs in the Tour, Le Col du Galibier, Le Col du Telegraphe and, possibly the most famous of them all, the Alpe D'Huez.

"I think the main issues that I will face will be the heat of France in July, the cold when descending at high speed from high mountains, the lack of oxygen at such altitude and the length of the climbs - the Galibier is over 18 km of uphill road on its own," said Alex.

"I am funding the whole cost of this trip myself (or at least my wife is for my 40th) so all the money that I raise will go to the charities, rather than funding the trip itself," said Alex who is writing a blog of his experiences.

The links to Alex's fundraising pages are:

www.justgiving.com/Alex-Hawkes-Alzheimers

www.justgiving.com/Alex-Hawkes-Parkinsons-UK

SPORTS TURF INDUSTRY PROGRESSES WAY FORWARD FOR TRADE SHOWS

Leaders of the main organisations involved in the sports turf industry held further discussions recently to take forward development plans for the sector's trade shows.

The aim is to understand even better the needs of exhibitors, visitors and their representative bodies, in order to find the most cost-effective route to market for all. Senior representatives from the Agricultural Engineers Association, BIGGA, and IOG met under the impartial chairmanship of David Gwyther, of the Horticultural Trades Association. They continued to review the strengths and weaknesses of existing trade shows, including topline data from both the latest Saltex and BTME shows. They also considered in principle the respective visitor and exhibitor profiles and views, and the current show target sectors. It was agreed that some additional market

research was needed to more fully clarify the needs of stakeholders for the future, and to facilitate a development programme for trade shows.

This programme will represent a properly planned route map identifying the right solution to meet the needs of all industry stakeholder groups. The plan will be published later this year to enable solid preparation to be undertaken to implement the programme over subsequent years.

Andrew Mellon, BIGGA Chairman, commented: "As a member organisation we need to ensure that our resources are directed at delivering benefits to our members. We are undertaking a thorough strategic planning process and we will ensure we re-align our resources to that end once complete. We do need to ensure that our decision making processes are fully informed by reliable information, but have a sense of urgency and can

assure all stakeholders that it is at the top of our agenda. We took the opportunity at BTME 2011 to consult with our trade customers, and received excellent feedback. BTME 2012, which will take place in Harrogate in January, has already attracted huge support and we will continue to engage with the trade to ensure we adapt to their needs."

Geoff Webb, Chief Executive of IOG, said: "IOG has listened to others' views on the subject of trade shows and understands the need to adapt and evolve. The discussions we have held with other stakeholders have been constructive and positive. Whilst both confident in, and proud of, the track record of Saltex (despite the economic downturn) we believe the time is right to engage constructively in this review process under the direction of the independent Chairman David Gwyther. In the

meantime we are planning for this year's show - with as ever some exciting innovations - whilst continuing the dialogue with other representative bodies to look at possible future formats."

David Gwyther said: "It was another very constructive meeting on a challenging subject, but one which needs to be properly and professionally sorted in the interests of all involved in the sports turf industry. I am pleased that each organisation confirmed its desire to work together on this very important issue. Participants are all strongly committed to finding the right way to deliver the most effective show programme for their members and their customers. The Group has the professional knowledge and the right development processes to achieve a successful outcome, but will ensure it tests the water with everyone necessary on the way through."