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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Listed building status needed?

As you will see from elsewhere in this issue – and on the front cover – Wentworth is currently undergoing quite a metamorphosis.

When Chris Kennedy kindly gave up some of his valuable time to show me around I was astounded by the extent of the changes. Some of the new work, particularly on the iconic 18th, is jaw dropping and the hole will quickly become one of the most talked about in all of golf.

The standard of the work is superb and a credit to Chris and all those involved. What they have produced is high quality, to extremely tight deadlines, all at a club where failure is not an option

You must also take your hat off to Wentworth's owner, Richard Caring, whose uncompromising desire to create a true challenge for the modern day professional, not to mention pockets deep enough to make it happen, has to be admired.

But deep down I must admit to nagging doubts about whether a course, which could claim to be among the top four highest profile in golf, along with the Old Course, Augusta National and Pebble Beach, should be so radically altered.

If the West Course were a listed building, and not a 75 year-old Harry Colt-designed golf course, there is no way anyone could make the slightest tweak to it, without building regulations vetoing even the most sensible of ideas. Let's face it, getting council approval for an extension to a three bed semi isn't straightforward.

But when it comes to a golf course - which in the case of Wentworth could be justifiably claimed as a national treasure - complete transformations can be carried out with impunity.

The counter argument is, of course, that a golf course should keep up to date with the people who play the game and with developments in balls and equipment. There can't be a golf course with any history at all which hasn't been extended to some degree or another, or had bunkers moved or added, all to counter the massive distances that the likes of Alvaro Queros or JB Holmes belt the ball.

Also modern day construction is generally required to extend the life of older courses – replacing old water retaining, push up greens, which can't cope with the demands of year round play, with USGA style greens - so why not make design improvements at the same time?

But what if the work isn't done to a high standard, or a course is treated as a mere plaything of a non-golfing billionaire owner.

Now this is exaggeration to make a point so don't shout at me, but what if someone decided the Road Hole on the aforementioned Old Course could be "tarted" up, and the actual road flooded to incorporate a golf-themed log flume ride – at one stroke a water hazard to rival the Swilken Burn and a money making opportunity. Brilliant! Or the Postage Stamp, at Royal Troon, requiring a precise shot through a windmill – better still, a giant letter box! Who would be able to stop it?

Is it perhaps time that we had a Listing Building style status for our historic golf courses? It might also help to force the R&A's hand when it comes to restricting the distance that the ball flies.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

November 2009

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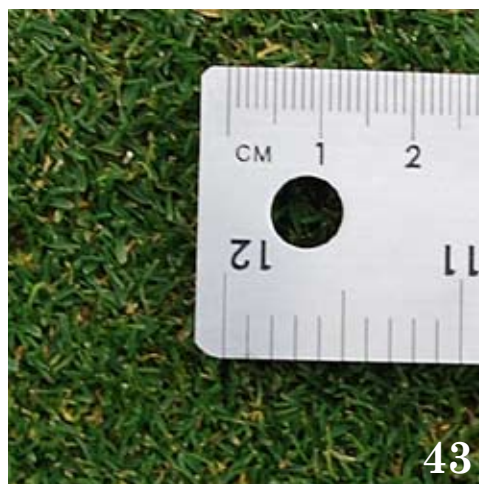
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The most talked about issue in greenkeeping at present begins the first of a two part feature ahead of the Seminar on the subject during Harrogate Week.





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TOP DEALER AWARD

Green Mowers, of Burgos in northern Spain, are the Ransomes Jacobsen Distributor of the Year for 2008. The company was also winner of the Service Parts Distributor of the Year award at a ceremony held during SALTEX.

Presenting the silver trophy to Rosendo Ferrer Delmau and Raoul Cellabos, Managing Director David Withers said, "Throughout 2008 Green Mowers have demonstrated very solid growth and all round performance excellence. They have innovative marketing strategies which have helped to combat the difficult trading and economic circumstances affecting all of Europe and have made significant investment in new premises and in staff training.

UK dealers also featured extensively at the awards with Rickerby Ltd receiving two accolades - Parts Dealer and E-Z-GO Dealer of the Year; Scottish dealer Fairways GM won the Service award; TH White Ltd won the ING Finance accolade, Bird's Vehicle Solutions of Cowbridge in the Vale of Glamorgan were presented with the E-Z-GO Speciality award and Burrows won Iseki Dealer of the Year. Completing the UK award winners, Andy Turbin, of Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd, accepted the Turf Dealer of the Year award from Rupert Price, Ransomes Jacobsen's UK and Ireland Sales Manager.

Elmwood Students to the Fore

Staff and students from Elmwood College assisted with the setting up of the Kingsbarns Golf Course for the recent Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. The tournament is played over three links courses - St Andrews, The Old Course, Carnoustie, The Championship Course and Kingsbarns.

Ten students supported by two lecturers, Stuart Mackie and Alan Clark, were involved in the preparation of Carnoustie and Kingsbarns courses.

The students prepared the fairways at Carnoustie and met with Course Manager, John Philp, and Head

Greenkeeper, Sandy Reid, who gave them and insight into how a course is prepared for a top event.

At Kingsbarns under the supervision of Head Greenkeeper, Innes Knight, the students were charged with the preparation and maintenance of the practise area, as well as cutting tees, fairways and raking bunkers.

"The Dunhill Championship was a great opportunity for me to experience golf course presentation on such a high level. I was happy to be part of this event." Said student, Lukas Boettcher.

Stuart Mackie, Greenkeeping lecturer

explained the importance of the event for the students saying,

"The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working at a major golfing event and the experience they have gained is invaluable, they demonstrated the attitude and professionalism that is required to succeed at a high level in the industry."

Caption L-R Anke Perplies, Germany; Ajay Malhotra, India; Kelvin Budd, Scotland; Calum Smith, Scotland; Mike Boyle, Scotland; Colin Mason, Scotland; Lukas Boettcher, Germany; Brett Hochstei, USA, and John Galloway, Scotland.

Climb Every Mountain



He may not be doing all of them, and he won't have Julie Andrews with him, but British Seed Houses' Simon Taylor is off to climb the highest mountain in the Americas, and the highest mountain outside Asia.

Cerro Aconcagua, made famous in the film *Touching the Void*, rises to 22,841 ft and is located in the Andes mountain range, in the Argentine province of Mendoza.

For some obscure reason he'd rather be "constantly surrounded by 21,000-foot peaks, providing formidable views of the Central Andes than standing on an exhibition stand at BTME 2010!

"It's something I've always wanted to do and the timings just clashed," explained Simon.

Simon, and two friends from his local village of Swinderby, will be climbing in traditional expedition style using multiple camps en route. The approach involves 35 miles of colourful, spectacular, high desert scenery and allows adequate time to acclimatise to the low oxygen environment, and wait out any stormy weather they may encounter.

"This climb will be very challenging because of the high altitude, cold temperatures, and strong winds. Nothing but an excellent physical condition will do, coupled with basic mountaineering skills. In preparation, we have been training in the Glencoe region of Scotland which provides some pretty challenging conditions itself," said Simon, pictured left.

"Our goal is to get to the top and back down again, all in one piece. And who knows, I may even stumble across an unknown grass species along the way!"

BOOST FOR 300 YEAR-OLD TREE



A section of the 300-year-old great yew hedge at Powis Castle in Wales has been treated for chlorosis, a condition believed to have been caused by soil compaction around the roots, depriving the affected tree of the vital air, water and nutrients needed for strong and healthy growth.

The selected treatment involved intensive decompaction of the rootzone by Terravent machine followed by injection of a blend of 18 beneficial Mycorrhizal fungi, natural fertilisers and organic liquid amendments into the soil.

Commissioned by Adrian Lovatt, Head Gardener at the National Trust-owned property, the treatment was carried out by tree and plant healthcare specialist, Eastwood Tree Services, on behalf of Telford-based Amenity Land Solutions (ALS), who recommended and supplied from its Natural Solutions range all of the organic products that were used to treat the affected tree.

"I sought advice from ALS and the firm recommended Terravent of the affected tree's root zone," explained Adrian.

"Including setting-up, the entire job could be completed by Eastwood Tree Services in around five hours enabling the work to be carried out on a day when the garden was closed."

A two-stage process, Terravent begins with the Terravent machine blasting pressurised inert nitrogen gas into the soil through a steel probe, opening up cracks and fissures to a depth of around 500mm to relieve compaction. The second stage saw the liquid blend of beneficial organic media supplied by ALS injected at a pressure of 8 bar into the holes created by the Terravent's probe, pumped from a mobile mixer tank situated some 90 metres below the treatment area.

With the intensive work completed, the final action will see Powis Castle's gardeners apply a mulch to the soil beneath the tree's canopy to help restore a natural and healthy growing environment, assisted by regular watering.



Big Week at Cowes

Cowes Golf Club's centenary recently was a particularly demanding time for Course Manager, Scott Nightingale, and his team.

"We set the course up as close as we could have done to being tournament standard and really pushed it hard. The greens were on a knife edge during that week," said Scott.

"I had been vee-mowing, sarel spiking, dressing and spoon feeding weekly for the majority of the year running up to the event. We hand mowed greens twice daily at 3mm and were producing speeds of up to 12 on the stimpmeter consistently through the week.

The celebrations, including a golf trick show by world champion David Edwards, ended with a Gala Dinner/Dance at The Cowes Yacht Haven.

"It has been an absolutely fantastic year with everyone really pulling together and singing from the same hymn sheet.

My staff were great and have worked extremely hard, putting in long hours and showing great dedication.

The Management Committee also shown great faith in my skills and knowledge which has paid dividends as the results have been seen on the course," said Scott



Andy and Paul clinch Inaugural Event

The inaugural final of the East Midlands Section Pairs Knockout competition, sponsored by Headland Amenity Products, was held at The Grove.

Andy de Wet and Paul Frith, from Birstall GC, won a tight final against Glynn Buckby, from Market Harborough GC, and Simon Banks, from Banks Amenity Products.

All the competitors met with Mark Hunt, of Headland, on the evening before the match for a meal and drinks.

The match teed off the next morning with Simon making birdie on the first hole. This lead wasn't relinquished until the 11th hole, the match then stayed pretty much nip and tuck until the 18th green. Andy reached the long par 5 in three with Simon on in four. With both players receiving shots it came down to the putting. Simon lagged his putt for a safe six with Paul holing for a guaranteed half. This left Andy with two putts for the match from 30 feet. After 'racing' the first putt past he had a 20 foot putt to win. After a perfect read the ball trundled to the edge of the hole and after having a look at the edge decided to drop in! The first time Andy and Paul had been up in the match was at the final putt to win the game!

All players had a fantastic time and all credit must go to both Mark Hunt and Headland for organising such a great venue for the final to be played and to Course Superintendent, Philip Chiverton, and The Grove for the superb condition of the golf course and hospitality given the previous night in the hotel.

South East Region Seminar Reigate Hill Golf Club, November 12

A few places are remaining at this year's Seminar - 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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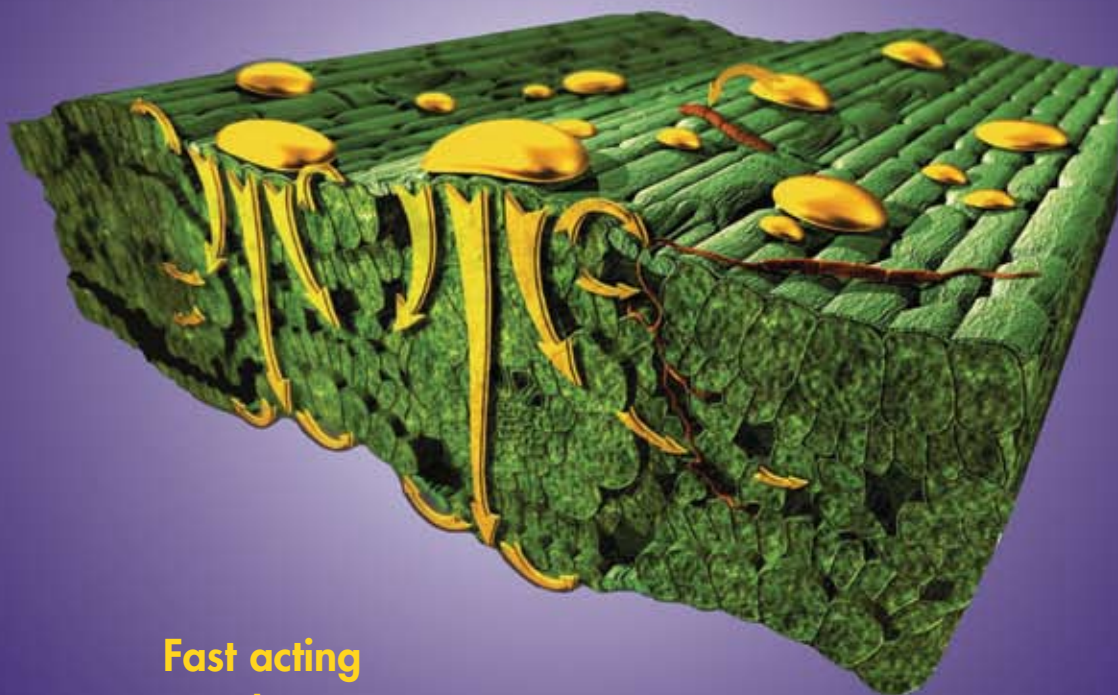
Al Fresco AGM

The South West Section enjoyed another "first" with its first-ever outdoor AGM in beautiful Autumn sunshine at Saltford Golf Club last October.

A total of 24 members attended, with Adam Matthews, Minchinhampton, and Jamie Acton, Worlebury, warmly welcomed onto the Section Committee for the first time.

Paul Worster stood down as Section Secretary to concentrate on his year as National Chairman. In his summing up, Chris Sealey spoke of his gratitude to the Section Patronage Companies for their continuing support, and underlined the importance of Section members being as active as possible within the Association.

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Training Reach Shows No Limits

During July I was lucky enough to undertake two weeks pesticide training on the island of St Helena, in the South Atlantic Ocean.

This was for a project funded by the RSPB, the UK partner of BirdLife International. The reason for this project was to teach local people how best effectively to control invasive weeds on the island. These invasives have taken over habitats and are preventing effective agriculture and horticulture from taking place.

St Helena, an Overseas Territory of the UK, is a sub-tropical island located in the South Atlantic, 1,200 miles from the south-west coast of Africa and 1,800 miles from the coast of South America.

The island covers an area of approximately 47 square miles, 10 miles long and six miles wide.

The next nearest land mass is Ascension Island at around 800 miles away.

St Helena is often described as a volcanic feature which rises dramatically from the sea, with sheer cliffs intersected with deep valleys which slope from the central ridges.

The island has rocky shores, and as one travels inland rolling hills, subtropical forest and grasslands.

St Helena is not the easiest place to get to. I travelled there by flying to Ascension courtesy of the RAF, then onto a three days cruise on the RMS St Helena which is a dedicated passenger/freight/mail ship;

one of the last Royal Mail ships in the world.

During the two weeks I had 48 people to train from various organisations: some from St Helena Government departments including the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department and the Public Works and Services Department, some from Solomons, the islands largest Public Limited Company and others as private individuals, farmers and smallholders.

While there I visited what is often called the remotest golf course in the world. Longwood golf course is situated on the eastern side of the island and is on unusually level land for the island, surrounded by natural volcanic landscapes.

The golf course has 9 holes with 18 tee-boxes. Maintenance is undertaken by the rather aptly named Arnold 'Shotty' Green the Course Manager. Unfortunately he was not there when I visited.

Hopefully I will be able to speak to him when I next visit the island on the way to doing some pesticides training on Ascension Island in February 2010 when I also hope to visit Ascension golf course and will report back! Due to the sub-tropical climate the greens are poorer quality than we are used to, but the locals regularly enjoy a good game of golf, with competitions held most weekends.

*Ian Gower
Ian Gower Associates*