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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



The world caved in on them...

There are many times when we feel that the weight of the world resting very firmly on our shoulders and, to be honest, there are days when, quite frankly, we just feel down.

We could be worried about the onset of disease on the golf course, or a member complaining about an overflowing litter bin, or in my case, an impending magazine deadline or it could be something at home, not work related.

But it's when you think about the people in Northern Japan, that it gives us a proper perspective on life. There, they were going about their business, some of them possibly even believing like us that the weight of the world was resting on their shoulders, when that world caved in on them.

The earthquake, which was the catalyst for a horrific series of events, was a massive 9 on the Richter Scale, the largest since records began. The tsunami which followed half an hour later created devastation that would cast doubt on the believability of any disaster movie plot. The television footage of the flood water sweeping away entire buildings, and gathering cars as though they were made by Corgi or Dinky and not Nissan or Toyota, was jaw dropping and it is impossible to imagine the despair of those unfortunate people who have been caught up in it.

Then, on top of it all, and as if there wasn't enough to deal with, there is the nuclear power station time bomb.

Those brave people who, as I write, are working tirelessly to avoid catastrophic meltdown are putting their own lives at risk and some will be doing so while at the same time in mourning for members of their own families.

With some many towns and villages totally wiped out, "Where to start?" must be the question for those charged with rebuilding, and attempting to bring back some degree of new normality to broken lives.

We can only wish them all well as work begins and offer up support, moral or financial, if it is requested.

What is going on in Japan doesn't take away from the troubles and issues we are dealing with back here but appreciating the suffering of the Japanese puts into context a little bit of Fusarium and a looming deadline.

With April upon us we can well and truly say that the new golfing season is here and what a season it should be. No-one is dominating the game at the moment and every tournament and Major could be won by any one of a huge number of players. In other words, for the first time in over a decade Tiger, on current form, is unlikely to be the favourite in any of the tournaments he enters and I would be very surprised if the Majors were not won by four different players.

With The Masters kicking it all off I have a sneaking suspicion for Bubba Watson so, whatever you do, avoid the eccentric left hander like the plague when you are making your selections at the bookies.

With my lamentable prediction record you'd no doubt be wiser investing your money in a Tiger Slam for 2011!

Scott MacCallum
Editor

APRIL 2011

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Compiled by Jim Cook.



Not so common

That it is called Hankley Common Golf Club is a bit of a misnomer. It is one of the finest examples of a heathland course in the country, and Scott MacCallum discovers, as a golf course, it is anything but common

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Cover photography shows Ballyunion Golf Club as taken by Eric Hepworth



The official monthly magazine of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited

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



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

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

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.

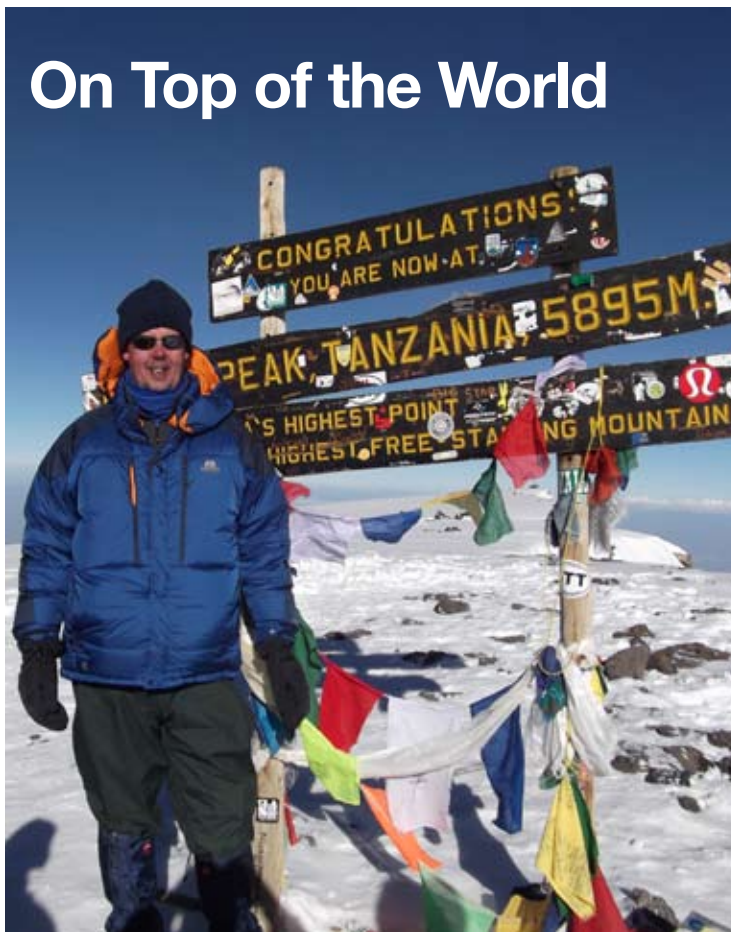
These relate to the implementation into law of the EU Sustainable Use Directive. The concern is that current controls on the use and distribution of pesticides may not be maintained but reduced.

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!”





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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.