

LANSDOWN GOLF CLUB INSTALLS AN £8,500 AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Lansdown Golf Club, Bath, like so many clubs, have experienced irrigation problems. Keeping the greens in peak condition during dry weather has caused many difficulties for the groundsmen as well as being a time-consuming occupation.

The club's "projects" committee has successfully tackled this problem and really "gone to earth". An £8,500 automatic irrigation system — the first of its kind in the West Country — has been installed. It will produce a course on which the greens should always be in perfect condition. Golfers will be able to play their approach shots on to the greens with much greater control and should be able to putt much more accurately.

The system — designed by Wright Rain Ltd. of Ringwood, Hants., and installed by John Wallis Titt & Co., Ltd. of Warminster — will enable the club to apply, automatically to each green at night, exactly the right amount of water to keep it in tip-top condition.

The system will also cut labour costs. No labour will be needed to water the greens, so groundsmen can spend more time on other essential jobs. Also, the danger of burning greens with fertilisers is eliminated as they will always be washed down into the soil.

The system consists of "pop-up" sprinklers let into the turf on the edge of each green. Each green has four or five sprinklers surrounding it. These sprinklers are only $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep and 3 inches wide. When sunk into the ground with the tops at grass level they hardly show at all.

Under water pressure the tops pop up about half-an-inch and the water sweeps across the green in a fine spray.

The whole operation is controlled by an electronic automatic sequence controller which operates a small electric pump. This is installed near the clubhouse in a special building which also contains a 6,000-gallon water tank. All the greenkeeper has to do is to programme the controller so that the greens

are watered one at a time in sequence for a certain length of time. Some greens may need more water than others and the programme can easily be arranged to allow for this. Each set of sprinklers are controlled by a solenoid valve let into the ground near the greens.

At Lansdown it has been decided that the automatic watering will take place in the early hours of the morning when the minimum of evaporation takes place. A 15-minute watering puts 500 gallons into each green, each night, and provides, over a week, the equivalent of three-quarters of an inch of rain.

On the majority of golf courses it is possible to lay all pipes and cables by mole plough and the complete installation takes two months. Due to the rock strata at Lansdown it was necessary to use an excavator and this increased the time for the installation; but even so, play was not interrupted at any time.

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