MANAGEMENT

will be using a combination of the new No. 4 (Supergrass) and No. 2 (Moss Killer and conditioner) from the company's newly established Amenity Pro-Series.

He has found that even when spraying in less than ideal conditions the results are still good. The combination of reduced Maxicrop plus 17% Nitrogen and Moss Killer and Conditioner sprayed in December has helped harden the growth while, in summer, high levels of Maxicrop doesn't scorch and, throughout the season it gives good colour,” he said. “Even more important, an application immediately after a major tournament when the greens are subjected to intensive mowing, results in very good, strong recovery.”

One problem that beset surrounding courses, yet left Royal Portrush unscathed in the Autumn, was Fusarium Patch and, for this, once more gives the credit to Maxicrop and points out the fact that the saving in terms of time and money through avoiding this disease alone makes it’s use cost-effective.

The root stimulating properties of seaweed foliar feed together with regular aeration has helped keep the soil healthy and provided a deep-rooted sward with improved shoot density and steady, hardy growth, avoiding the ‘sappy’ growth or sudden flushes that no Course Manager ever wants to see. His relief is that the natural bacterial and micro-organisms within the soil also benefit from Maxicrop natural trace elements to form an even better root environment.

Species that have particularly benefitted from this at Royal Portrush are Festuca and Agrostis.

Application has always been easy, quick and simple and, in Sid’s view, will be particularly importantly in respect of the new spraying regulations that came into force in January 1989.

“Certainly its ideal for early Spring or late Autumn dressings but, in my book, weather permitting it is possible and desirable to spray throughout the winter as well as the other three seasons. Such regular use, without interfering with play, keeps moss at bay and helps maintain a really healthy deep-rooted sward all year long” he concluded.

Sid’s other requirement was to encourage plant growth to withstand not just the wind burn from the off-shore winds (the courses are a mere 90 metres from the sea), but the wind blown frosts that occur in winter. Even so, his initial 5-week target of making both courses look the best they’d ever looked in time for the Centenary celebrations, when players from 55 Royal Golf Clubs from around the world were in attendance, was also achieved.

To mark that very special occasion, the players dressed in nineteenth century costume and tackled the ten original holes, thanks to the intimate course knowledge of the club professional, Di Stevenson’s, father, ‘Stevie’ as he is affectionately called was the Club’s professional for 50 years before being succeeded by his son and he was able to point to the spot where the original holes would be and were, indeed, found.

The very next week, the Valley Course, where the Par 3 eighteenth is named ‘Stevie’, the Causeway Coast Open Competition took place, involving 4 clubs and over 800 participants.

The following week it was the European Quadrangular Championship between Ireland, France, Germany and Sweden on the Dunluce course, in turn followed by the Irish Championships in the third week of August.

Meanwhile, the requirements of over 1200 members including a large contingent of regular member visitors from America (12 from Atlantic City alone) on both courses and on the 3 putting greens could not be overlooked.

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Enville has a long term improvement plan

John Lelean visits a Staffordshire gem where the hospitality is matched by the surroundings

One of life’s great enjoyments is to combine business with pleasure and although some of our readers might insist the labours of a golf journalist are just one long round of pleasure, unfortunately this is not always the case.

There are exceptions and a visit to Enville Golf Club in the West Midlands certainly fell into this category. My own club at Wetherby, through our past Captain John Fitton, has struck up a rewarding relationship with Enville, where we play a twelve aside team on a home and away basis. We go there in April, they come to us in September, with overnight accommodation of course. There is no way anyone is going to drive home after a surfeit of such extra-ordinary hospitality!

Enville must be one of the best kept secrets in British golf. Mention the name outside a 50 mile radius of Stourbridge and no one has heard of it. We all hope it stays that way.

For your ears only, and I trust greenkeepers will keep the news in the family, it is 36 holes of classic golfing country, carved out of pine forest and developed into a predominately heath land course.

The two courses, inter changeable when necessary for maintenance work, are the Highgate and the Lodge. The Highgate is longer, 6451 yards with a SSS of 72, the Lodge, slightly shorter at 6207 yards, SSS 70, but by general agreement much tighter, with some outstanding holes.

The Head Greenkeeper is John Palmer, who has been on the staff since 1972 and succeeded to the top job some 18 months ago.

He runs the course with eight full time staff. Two of the younger greensmen have completed the first and second year stages of the City & Guilds equivalent at Elmwood College in Scotland, but are continuing a block release for the third year module.

“We have not done a great deal of training in the past, but this is changing”, said John Palmer. “During the winter we have had workshop training on our various items of equipment. The Agriculture Training Board sent in a mechanic to train staff on tractor maintenance and a dealer from Derby instructed staff on mower maintenance and the Kohler engines”.

“Two have also been away on a chain saw safety course”.

“This year we serviced four machines ourselves at a cost of only £250 each and this saved the club a great deal of money”.

The club subscribed to the STRI and the Bingley based agronomist, David Stansfield visits regularly to check progress and offer advice.

“We view his recommendations more as a guideline than a tablet of stone”, added John. “I don’t believe it is practicable to work to a three year programme. There are too many factors to take into consideration such as the weather, the amount of play the courses receive in a year and most essential the money we have available”.

“To achieve what I have set out to do could take two years, three years or even five. If the job is done correctly the courses will come right but in their own time”.

Capital expenditure at Enville is now planned five years ahead, based on the assumption that machinery in constant use will last about five years before the cost of spares makes them uneconomic to retain.

John Palmer, conscious of running costs, plans to replace all the petrol driven machinery with diesel over the next six years and that includes his triplex mowers. He already has one diesel Toro GM with groomer units and says the improvement in the putting surface has been quite remarkable, despite the fact he is no longer cutting at the previous club policy of one eighth throughout the summer season.

“This was too low”, said John. “The bents and fescues were struggling and only the poa could survive. Now cutting at 3/16ths or higher the groomer units have increased the green speed considerably”.

Similarly, to encourage good growth he has reduced the pH from 7.0 two years ago to about 5.8 by applying nitrogen. This he believes is about the level to maintain otherwise his finer grasses could be adversely affected.

 Asked to identify his main problems, John was quite definite; drainage and thatch. He said he was now working to a much stricter slitting programme for the greens, thinning down to 6 inches, verti-cutting regularly and hollow tining to one inch centres. The verti-drain used last year broke through the pan and now root growth is down to 9 inches and he is aiming at eleven.

The day we played the course John was hollow tining and had not top dressed, but although there appeared to be more holes than green, no one complained because the puts still ran reasonably true.

When the top dressing is applied it is a 70:30 mix of sand and Fendress on the principle that a little and often is far more beneficial than a once a year heavy dosage. A top dressing of pure sand is used in the Autumn only.

He gives the greens a feed of seaweed extract and liquid iron and has cut out granular feeding completely.

During the winter, in common with most courses he had a couple of outbreaks of fusarium and treated with a Mascot Contact Fungicide. Next year he will probably vary the product, not because it was unsuccessful, but to ring the changes so the disease does
not become immune to a specific treat-
ment. Mechanical aeration is also the policy
for the fairways. John recalled that
when he joined Enville in 1972, the
fairways were so thin on grass cover
they were mown just once a month.
Now due to regular winter slitting and
verti-cutting the sward has thickened
to require cutting weekly during the
season.
Although this has created extra work,
the finer grasses have become domi-
nant, there is less need to divot and
weeds have been almost eliminated.
Fairway aeration is also helping his
other problem - drainage. There are a
number of water catchment areas on
the course that come into play and
these will need lifting and draining
into one of the numerous streams that
criss cross the fairways. Because the
course was developed out of wood-
land, rather than agricultural land
very few drains were already in exis-
tence. Trees soaked up the rain water
and the surplus ran off into the ditches.
As most greenkeepers now find, the
areas laid out for tees at Enville are
proving to be far too small for the
amount of all year play that his courses
receive. To overcome the problems
created by excessive wear, last winter
John added length or width to five tees
and has ten more planned for increase
in the future.
The fashion in the 1960's to have two
tier tees, when the back was only
used for weekend competitions has
created considerable difficulties with
both wasted ground and awkward
maintenance. John has already
started to level off his tees, but en-
countered one big snag at his fifth hole
when he discovered the elevated layer
was built on sandstone and it had to
be broken up with a JCB.
He is now aiming to have around 600
square yards of teeing ground for all
the short holes, though the course
layout causes certain restrictions on
some holes. Spreading the wear is the
only answer and this is achieved by
moving the markers daily.
Bunkers are the least of his worries.
He uses Moneystone White from
Cheshire, has no mechanical bunker
raker, just manual raking on Mon-
days and Fridays with encouragement
to the members to keep them tidy.
A neat idea seen at Enville were their
moveable bridges. Instead of a fixed
bridge across the fairway streams
concentrating wear to a focal point,
the wooden structure, wide enough to
pull a golf cart can be moved by two
men a yard to the left or right on a
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They are easy to construct from two
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at either end with a high point in the
middle. Slats are nailed across the
two beams to form an attractive
humped back design. The structure is
strengthen with stretchers and lifting
struts at either end.
As to the future? John Palmer sees his
primary objective bringing the greens
to perfection for all year round golf and
that means a continuous programme
of slitting, tining, coreing and verti-
draining.
At some time the irrigation system
installed in 1972 will need up dating,
but this is likely to involve a major
capital project.
Meanwhile my club have already made
plans to welcome the Captain and his
team from Enville in September and
we in turn are anticipating our return
to the West Midlands in 1990.
I might then be tempted to give you an
update on how John Palmer is getting
on, though this is dependent on
whether I make the team. If the im-
provement in my game matches the
promises given by our professional
when he sold me my new clubs, then
read these columns next year!
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EDUCATION

Scots aiming at better practical training

From September Elmwood hopes to start one year full-time courses for greenkeepers

Since greenkeeper training started at Elmwood College of Agriculture at Cupar, Fife in 1973, facilities have steadily improved to give young trainee greenstaff every opportunity to develop their knowledge of golf course maintenance.

At present they have 180 students on the College role drawn from not only Scottish golf courses, but from Northern Ireland, Eire and even the South of England.

Four full size greens and a putting green have been built in the extensive grounds for students to develop practical skills, which dual as a four hole course for recreational golf.

The college which has residential facilities for 80 students runs its modular SCOTVEC course on a modular programme basis, mainly on block release.

Basic practical tasks such as hole cutting, top dressing and turf lifting are taught in the first year, backed by the necessary theory, so not only do students understand how jobs are done, but why and when. This combination of outside activity on site combined with class learning continues throughout the three year course, so by the time students reach the third year stage, young greenstaff are tackling construction projects for greens and tees.

The merits of raft, carpet and sealed systems are examined and working in teams they are given the opportunity to put the theory to work.

Last year students were involved in a raft green construction with a root zone layer consisting of 80% sand with 20% loam over a synthetic filtration membrane. Bunker construction is also included with practical exercises in building and renovating bunkers suitable for parkland, heathland and links courses.

Grass identification is an essential part of the Elmwood College syllabus. Knowing the correct cultivars to use and encouraging on greens, tees and fairways and how each species reacts to various mowing regimes and soil conditions.

Further practical knowledge is obtained by visiting some of the best known golf courses in Scotland where the Head Greenkeepers at St. Andrews, Gleneagles, Carnoustie, Ladybank, Rebuilding a greenside bunker the traditional way.
Carnoustie's head greenkeeper Mr J. Philips shows students the identification of grass species.

Announcing the congress to THE GOLF COURSE'S sister magazine Turf Management, Dr Martin Farrally said that a meeting of golf researchers or a forum for an exchange of information between researchers and coaches, teachers and players. It seemed to the Department of Physical Education where there are students studying sport and exercise science at undergraduates and postgraduate level, that 1990 offered a wonderful opportunity to initiate a world congress which it was hoped would become a regular feature since the 1990 Open Championship will be played there.

The congress will take place in the week prior to the Open, at the same time as the Bell's Scottish Open at Gleneagles. The initial response to circulating the preliminary announcement to the P.G.A.'s and N.G.A.'s worldwide is most encouraging, and indicates that the sorts of people attending will be a complete cross-section of golf - equipment, manufacturers, golf turf and green researchers, university academics, international team and individual coaches and so on from around the world.

Workshop maintenance is part of Elmwood's syllabus.

For further information contact:- The Principal. Elmwood Agricultural and Technical College, Cupar, FIFE. KY15 4JB Tel. 0334/52781

Further information on the First World Scientific Congress of Golf can be obtained from Dr M.R. Farrally, Department of Physical Education, University of St Andrews, The Sports Centre, St Leonards Road, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland.
Floral centre pieces for the Ryder Cup

Nearly 30,000 blooms are being prepared for planting at The Belfry to make a colourful display

Former regular Army Physical training instructor Derek Ganning, course manager at The Belfry, is a man with flowers on his mind. Not simply birthday or anniversary bouquets, or even those which his wife Anne tastefully arranges to win prizes at exhibitions in the Midlands.
The blooms he has on his mind at the moment number nearly 30,000 and at this stage they are being nurtured in greenhouses over a hundred miles from his base.
But when they are moved from Warrington in Cheshire to The Belfry in Sutton Coldfield early next September, they will be admired by thousands of people. They will become centerpieces on the Brabazon course, scene of the Johnnie Walker Ryder Cup, the blue riband of golf, in which the European side aim for a record third successive and historic win over the American giants of professional world golf.
The begonias, marigolds and lobelias have been carefully chosen. They will provide a splash of red, white and blue in rockeries and flower beds all over the golf course and will be seen not only by the 27,000 golf fans who will visit the Ryder Cup each day - attendances are being restricted and it has become an all-ticket event - but also by millions of television viewers throughout the world and particularly in Europe and America where the event will be screened live.
"We spent a lot of time planning the types of flowers we would use and exactly where we want to display them. At the moment they are being grown in Warrington before being transported here", he said. The Belfry, one of Europe's top golf and leisure complexes, is owned by Greenall Whitley, the Warrington based brewers, and