

Enthusiasm can be measured by the queues at new golf course

Ten days after the opening of the driving range at Rudding Park, near Harrogate, North Yorkshire, golfers were queueing up to use the facilities. Managing director Mark Mackaness hopes the golf course will meet with similar enthusiasm when it opens next June.

Designed by Martin Hawtree and constructed by John Greasley Ltd, the 18-hole 6,786-yard course is set in a mature, walled parkland estate.

Rudding Estate was bought by Mark's father, John, in 1972 and the house was turned into a prestigious banqueting and conference facility. Also on the estate is a caravan and holiday cottage park.

Work began on the golf course in June 1993. By September most of the construction had been done and all the greens, tees and the six holes outside the walled estate had been seeded. The fairways and roughs inside the walls already had suitable grasses on them.

A year on, the course is shaping



up nicely. John Greasley has handed over much of the maintenance and growing in to head greenkeeper Richard Hollingworth and his three assistants. Richard, 23, is the son of Graham Hollingworth, the head greenkeeper at Horsforth Golf Club, Leeds. Richard began his greenkeeping career at Moortown, Leeds, where he stayed for five years before joining Yorkshire Mowers as a rep. Six months later

he was back in greenkeeping with a short stint at Outlane GC, Huddersfield, before getting his first head greenkeeper position.

When we met him on the course he was standing near an overgrown cemetery which he will also have to tend. Fortunately the chapel in Rudding House hasn't been used for anything other than weddings for 40 years.

Lovers of statistics will want to know that 120 acres of the 200-

acre golf course site were seeded, 9,500 trees were planted, 400 trees were transplanted using a tree spade, 7-8,000 hedge plants were planted, and 20,000m of drainage pipes were laid. They have also planted thousands of aquatic plants in the three lakes and put up 100 nest boxes.

The greens are built to USGA spec and have been sown with 80% Freda, 10% Sabovil and 10% Highland.

John Greasley Ltd moved 60-70,000 cubic metres of soil during the construction, which isn't a lot by modern standards.

The most fascinating fact, we think, is that there are only seven bunkers and four of them are on the tree-lined 14th. This is because planners don't want the estate to look like a golf course - which is why they have stipulated that the rough can't be longer than 7.5cm.

This will make it a relatively easy - and enjoyable - course for the mid to high handicappers they are likely to attract to this "quality pay and play".

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