Wentwood Hills beckons Gary

A former Head Greenkeeper at Wentworth has been appointed by The Celtic Manor Resort to ensure unbeatable conditions for this summer's Wales Open.

Gary Connell will be applying his extensive experience to the upkeep of the 7,403 yard, par 72 Wentwood Hills venue for the biggest prize money tournament ever held in Wales.

Careful cultivation of the course for the next three months will culminate in intensive daily preparation during the PGA European Tour event from June 8-11. Around 50 greenkeepers will be out at 5am each day, striping cutting the course and raking bunkers, with work resuming at close of play until 10pm.

As Assistant Course Manager for The Celtic Manor Resort's entire golf operation, 34 year old Gary's responsibilities will also extend to the resort's other two championship courses, Roman Road and Coldra Woods.

"The next few months will be something of a baptism of fire, but I'm looking forward to the challenge of helping in an inaugural major competition," he said.

Born in golfing country in Tinoon, Ayrshire, Gary began his career when he started at Barassie (Barassie) club at the age of 16 before heading south in 1987 for a decade-long spell at Wentworth, progressing to Head Greenkeeper of the club's Edinburgh course.

After a six month break travelling in New Zealand and Australia - during which he worked on the NZ Open course at Rennera in Auckland he returned to Scotland as Assistant Course Manager at the Roxburghe club on the Scottish borders.

"Wentwood Hills is the longest course and has the biggest staff I've been in charge of," said Gary.

"It's in fantastic condition and I'm very much looking forward to working on it."

Rolawn expands with more distribution depots

Rolawn (Turf Growers) Ltd has started a five year expansion programme by opening three new turf distribution depots.

This increases the number of Rolawn Turf Depots situated throughout the UK mainland from 15 to 18.

The new Northampton depot situated at the Country Gardens Garden Centre site, Harleston E Road, Harlestone Heath, Northampton opened its doors for trade at the beginning of March.

The new Newcastle South depot situated at Dobbies Garden World, Durham Road, Birtley, County Durham also opened in March.

The new Crawley depot situated on the Country Gardens Garden Centre site at Handcross, East Sussex opened last month.

Rolawn's network of depots have extensive experience to the upkeep of fresh turf and turf establishment fertiliser available daily on a no minimum order basis, enabling customers to buy as much as they require, from just one square metre to many thousands.

"We are very optimistic about the future of our business and this initial phase is an important step in our expansion programme," stated Terry Ryan, Rolawn's Sales and Marketing Director.

Mastering a new Golf Degree in Edinburgh

The School of Landscape Architecture at Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot-Watt University has launched a masters degree in Golf Course Architecture.

The School has an international reputation for landscape architecture education and this prestigious new course will contribute to its profile, affirming Scotland's place at the centre of good design for golf.

"There is already evidence of strong market demand for a postgraduate course in Golf Course Architecture. A study commissioned in 1997 identified potential world-wide demand and primary markets in Norway, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, the People's Republic of China, South-East Asia, South America and the USA," said Professor Catharine Ward Thompson, Head of School.

The MSc course in Golf Course Architecture, the first of its kind, has been developed in conjunction with the European Institute of Golf Course Architects (EIGCA) and is fully endorsed by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. The aim is to provide an education and qualification which sets the benchmark for professional recognition in the field world-wide.

The course will include modules on habitat creation, soil science and course management and will focus on examples of best, and worst, practice from around the world.

The emphasis will be on how to design attractive and challenging courses in harmony with existing landscape processes; an ecological and sustainable approach that reflects the traditional origins of golf course design.