

Golf Irrigation A La Francaise

How a British company is developing its French connections

Whereas the majority of golfers in Britain play on courses at least one hundred years old, the average Frenchman (and occasionally Frenchwomen) have come much more recently to enjoy the game; and enjoy it they now do in ever increasing numbers. To accommodate them, therefore, the growth in golf courses has increased phenomenally over the last decade, to the extent that there are at present around 150 golf courses under construction throughout France. Many of these new courses are situated in popular holiday areas such as Normandy and Brittany, which are easily accessible to the British week-end golfer.

One of the greatest problems facing golf developers in France is the relative lack of experience in all aspects of golf course design and construction. For this reason many British and American architects and golf course constructors are playing

a major role in this development. This is equally true of irrigation and the British company Watermation, one of the world's most experienced golf course irrigation companies, with its' head office at Woking, three years ago set up a French company (Watermation S.A.R.L.) located in Bry-sur-Marne on the outskirts of Paris to take advantage of the opportunities now open to British companies. Watermation had already been working in France for a number of years previous to this and had undertaken several large and important contracts. However, they felt that being "on the spot" would not only build more confidence into their French customers, but also enable them to more easily control and maintain their work to the highest standards. The office staff and the construction team are so far all British and have been chosen both for their experience in the Company and their ability to communicate well in French.

With the normally reliable summer weather in France, irrigation is not an option but an essential for all new golf courses, the majority of which opt to install automatic irrigation on their fairways as well as their tees and greens. These large systems require the latest in modern control technology such as the Watermation TW2 computer control system, already well known and proven in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe.

Examples of current Watermation projects include the new 36 hole course at Léry Poses (near Rouen). This has been planned like many new French golf courses as part of a large sports and leisure complex, often built around a lake in order to accommodate water skiing and other water sports.

At Béthemont, 30 miles west of Paris, the 18 hole championship course, designed by American

New Ransomes grass-cutting versatility



The Turftrak system. A versatile new concept in grounds maintenance. Take your choice from the Turftrak 2 (16hp 2-wheel drive) or the Turftrak 4 (16 and 21hp 4-wheel drive). And match it to a whole range of optional front-mounted attachments, for reel or

IRRIGATION



architect Jim Engh of Langer Buckley, will also benefit from a fully automatic Watermation irrigation system on greens, tees and fairways, ensuring year round playability for

the expected international clientele. Larger, more established golf courses such as prestigious Fontainebleau Golf Course to the south of Paris have also invested in a Water-

mation irrigation system.

Many French golf course developments, such as Golf de Haut Poitou, situated in western France, have been financed largely by public money, enabling opportunities for public access to golf at prices considered affordable by French standards, if a trifle more expensive than the casual, non-club British golfer would expect to pay. This magnificent 27 hole course near Poitiers, designed by Paris-based British golf architect Bill Baker, took years to build and includes a Watermation designed and installed fully automatic irrigation system on the greens, tees and fairways.

The British golf course industry is therefore well placed to compete in France with 1992 looming. France's first golf course at Pau was, after all, built by the British in the last Century!

The GOLF COURSE magazine will also be offering more business opportunities to British companies when we expand our circulation to include all European Golf Clubs from the next issue.

with all the trimmings.



rotary mowing – and a lot more besides. Diesel power and hydrostatic drive add up to easy, low-cost operation, plus positive traction and outstanding manoeuvrability. Even inclined, wet terrain is no problem with the 4-wheel drive. The attachments include Triplex Reel Mower, 48"



60" or 72" Rotary Decks, Boom Mower, Aerator, Disc Edger, Dozer Blades, Sand Trap Blade, Slip Scoop, Front-end Loader, Rotary Broom, Power Blower, Lawn Sweeper, Snow Blower and Roto-Tiller. All change in minutes without tools for maximum versatility.

RANSOMES NEW TURFTRAK SYSTEM

RANSOMES
1789-1989
200 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE