

Education in the Lothians

SINCE the late 1970s, the greenkeeping profession in east central Scotland has been served by Oatridge Agricultural College, reports Mr D.F. Webster, senior lecturer in horticulture at the Oatridge Agricultural College, West Lothian.

There are usually about 30 students over the three years of study geared to SCOTEC part one and part two certificates in greenkeeping and groundsmanship and they receive instruction in up-to-date methods of maintenance and construction and become involved in various ongoing projects at the college.

As part of the course, there are machinery demonstrations, talks from major firms involved in golf-course construction and turf irrigation, as well as sportsground layout and the use of artificial surfaces for sport, and to back these up, there are visits to suitable venues.

Students are encouraged to develop their design skills by preparing plan drawings—for instance, for a golf course layout or machinery/storage area.

They also get involved in a variety of turfgrass projects, such as a fairway area down to a modern perennial ryegrass blend and shade tolerant mixtures.

A three-hole golf course is now under construction using modern researched techniques and, in the near future, the college hopes to have a putting green for use by the students and local community.

The sportsfield is being renovated and upgraded with the involvement of different Youth Training Schemes attending Oatridge, a small pavilion is being constructed in woodwork classes and a cricket square occupies turf culture sessions.

A windbreak comprising coniferous and deciduous trees will help reduce the windspeed across the field, thus making it ideal for college sports functions.

Oatridge's location in central Scotland is convenient and accessible from all parts of the central belt for day release classes. College staff are always willing to show any interested greenkeeper or groundsman the facilities, as well as visit them at work to advise on education and training.

Contact...

**Oatridge Agricultural College,
Ecclesmachan, Broxburn, West
Lothian EH52 6NH. (0506) 854387.**



All in the course of a day's work at Oatridge Agricultural College, West Lothian. Top: students tackle drain installation. Middle: a perimeter drain is dug. Bottom: a group learns the basics of green construction.

