

Flying Divots

An appreciation of what is not always appreciated

At the root of the problem

■ **Amusing perhaps**, but there was a serious side to the tale retold regarding a contractor hollow coring greens. The Club secretary wandered out to watch, picked up a couple of the 5" cores and remarked: 'my, what wonderful root growth we have here'... the cores being 5" of solid thatch! 'I didn't have the courage to tell him the truth', said the contractor, 'he's a pompous man with long-held prejudiced opinions and doesn't take kindly to having them dented with reality!'

■ **Just a load of hot air...** that's all it takes to get airborne; and so with great trepidation, both Billy Martin and your editor gathered at Wildwood recently for his winning flight after the launching of the RFE Turf Machinery Ltd golf ball shaped hot-air balloon. Sadly the weather turned sour and the launch was postponed, so we'll have to wait to report on the exploits of 'those magnificent men in their flying machines'. In the meantime, I can report that Wildwood is shaping up magnificently (with a fabulous opening hole) and that our old friend and course consultant, Jack McMillan, is generous in his praise for its magnitude and progress, with play scheduled to begin in 1993.

■ **Following the ultra-critical** and in many ways thoroughly justified comments made on the condition of the greens at Royal Birkdale, the stage whisper going the rounds is that the Club asked a 'second opinion' from none other than Arnold Palmer (or his American agronomist) to advise on possible remedial action, the too simple answer opined being 're-build to USGA spec! Whilst appreciating that action is necessary - nay essential - one cannot help

■ **I was amused to read in 'The Independent' that China have announced they invented golf - well, the remotely similar 10th century game of chiuwan - and now go one better by claiming, on the 500th anniversary eve of Columbus's first landing, to have discovered America! Next month, they discover the wheel, followed by the lawn mower and the internal combustion engine!**

question the thinking behind appointing an American, great player though he may be, to comment on conditions that are essentially British in terms of turf species, lovely sandy ground conditions and climate. Further, such action must be seen as a snub for the STRI, who have worked closely with the Club and whose agronomists have for decades been appointed by the R&A to advise on such Championship courses. I also learn that the R&A have now issued an edict advising that any Club *not* following advice from the Championship appointed agronomist to the letter will be in danger of losing their place on the Championship roster.

■ **Night-time golf** came to Aldwark Manor, demonstrated for the first time in the north to an invited audience, who saw the chemically illuminated golf balls struck, with various plastic covered lights of a similar nature used to aid the golfers sight.

Initially the reaction was 'well, it's been a bit of fun', but greenkeepers are reported far from happy with this import from America. The reason? We have 12 or more hours of golf during summer and everyone knows the problems of overplaying and compaction. Added to this is the problem of footprinting on delicate and perhaps frosted greens and, of course, divot replacement. Overall impression? A bit gimmicky and not for the serious golfer.



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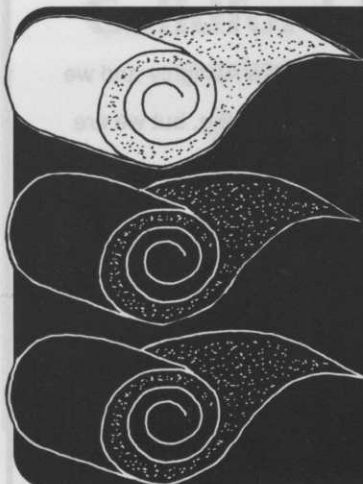
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