

Time now for a little trumpet blowing.

In an international competition, Greenkeeper International has come second in the Best Magazine category for journals published ten or more times a year.

In a written appraisal, judges said: "This is an extremely lively and popular magazine which does a good job in informing a specialist readership about their business. A plethora of ads bring interest to the pages. This is a professionally produced publication which enjoys a lively letters page – always the classic sign of a well-read magazine."

The Editing for Industry Awards, organised by the British Association of Industrial Editors, is open to all corporate and in-house publications and receives entries from the UK, Europe, the United States and the Middle and Far East. It has a reputation for quality and sets particularly high standards.

Though our design and production editor, Tim Moat, is far too modest to take full credit, this is very much his triumph and we salute him.

Milestones in the world of inventions include the lead pencil (1812), the lawn mower (1832), the rubber band (1845) and the zipper (1891). Now a new invention that is set to make its inventor a millionaire is said to be taking the world by storm – advertising on the bottom of holes on golf greens! If you believe that only one good idea is necessary to make a mint, apparently Mr Ric Dark has hit the jackpot. As golfers bend to retrieve their Titleists, adverts implore from the depths of the cup – buy me, drink me, drive me. Dark's clients already include Cadillac and Coca Cola and talks are scheduled to take place soon between Dark and a Scottish group, with plans afoot to licence the introduction of golf hole advertising in the UK.

A simple but eye-catching fund raising idea using heart-shaped golf ball markers is being launched at golf clubs throughout the UK to raise money for heart research charity STRUTH. The heart-shaped ball markers, bearing the STRUTH logo, will be available in pro shops at all clubs supporting STRUTH's 'Heart of The Green Appeal', sponsored by Legal & General. Organisers of the Appeal are encouraging golfers to show their support for heart research by purchasing one of the ball markers and 'making a mark with their heart'. The suggested donation is 50p or three for £1.

Golf clubs are also being invited to organise simple competitions to support the Appeal anytime between 1 May and 30 September. The aim is to raise more than £150,000 for vital research into heart disease, the single most common cause of death in the UK today.

Building



A new tee at Tyrells Wood

DAVID BOOCOCK offers practical guidelines whether you're starting from scratch or just extending tee areas

With most jobs on a busy golf course, advance planning is essential to determine when, where and how the work is to be carried out and this is especially true of construction work. To decide your winter work in October is folly and unless you are fortunate in having a very free-draining course or excellent access and roads to the site, such action can be the first step towards a winter of frustration and discontent.

Unfortunately, most rebuilding or extension work on a golf course has to be timed for the end of the playing season. Where construction involves grading or machine handling fill material and topsoil, operations should commence in late September, early October at the latest. If that means altering arrangements for late played Medals, visiting parties etc., so be it, provided the planning steps were taken in time that presents no hardship.

Good access to the site is vital – there is no point hashing up tracks across fairway and rough, transporting materials and machinery, and then having to spend weeks on corrective work. If you do not have good access, consider getting the basic groundwork such as fill and topsoil spreading, completed during the summer when damage reaching the site can be minimised.

SIZE

Think big, especially for tees at par three holes where, on a busy course, you may well require at least 400m². Since short holes are often tight for space, particularly at the tee end, one large tee all at the same level is preferred. You cannot afford potentially usable area lost to internal banks. At par four's allow a good 150m² for medal tees and 100m² for the general teeing area on a members course where lots of competitive golf is played. Where the emphasis is on visitors and holiday makers these sizes may need reversing to cater for the heavier use on general tees. At these holes a ladies tee of around 80m² will suffice since there are usually fewer of them and almost invariably ladies are far kinder to tee surfaces than men.

Go for width rather than length, especially on medal tees where competitive rules restrict movement of tee markers. In any case wide tees provide more opportunities for spreading wear and tear and less of the available space is lost as unusable area at the edges.

POSITION

Siting tees within woodland or new plantations is a ploy quite often used by architects and beloved of green committees in their quest to lengthen and/or add interest at a golf hole. Because cutting down trees is such an emotive issue these days, regardless of the fact that trees, like grass, require planned management, the greatest failing is to remove too few of them to start with. Alternatively in a relatively new plantation, the happy planners completely fail to allow for the simple facts of life – trees grow!

When faced with this situation be bold, removing trees and saplings within at least 10m of the edge of the tee. Within plantations ensure that in front of the tee the cut back fans out either side to avoid in future years all damage occurring down the centre of the tee or close to one edge as golfers try to secure a good line out to the fairway.

SHAPE

Golfers are conservative by nature and most moderate handicap players like a nice parallel sided shape which allows them to line up comfortably with fairway landing areas. A tee shape based on the traditional rectangle, with rounded corners to facilitate mowing with triples and easily mown slopes to embankments, serves very well.

There is no need for excessively elevated tees either, that only means large areas of bank which for the sake of appearance need to be kept tidily mown.

If the intelligent golfer is given a view of obvious hazards, sufficient to plan his second shot, it is surely unnecessary to be able to see the bottom of the pin from the nether reaches of a par five.

new tees

EXTENSIONS

If you are thinking of extending a tee by simply adding material at the front or side to match up with an existing area, the best advice is don't. Through the ravages of time and use, older tees are seldom truly level, straight away you have to compromise so that new joins old without risk of severe scalping. Sooner or later, and the emphasis is usually on sooner, the new addition will settle so the joint really starts to show and, of course, the difference in level immediately loses valuable tee space. That says nothing of the mis-match between bought in turf and the tired old sward on the existing tee, often no more than annual meadow-grass peppered with coarser tufts of perennial ryegrass. The best approach by far is to start completely from scratch, stripping topsoil and turf and incorporating any existing tee wholly into the new one.

BEWARE OF GREEKS

These bearers of gifts are usually some well-meaning member of committee or club who as soon as they learn of new construction work have contacts (usually in the building trade) for supplies of topsoil cheap, or fill for free. The golden rule here is always to examine such offerings at the site and if there is the least doubt as to quality or consistency decline the offer with thanks. A builder's idea of 'good clean fill' usually turns out to be a mixture of subsoil clay liberally sprinkled with boulders.

To provide the basis for good tees we need clean, preferably free-draining material, containing no organic debris or large stones. On links the first choice has to be the native sand. On inland sites gravel or clean reasonably structured subsoil can be suitable. Where a considerable depth of make-up is required hard-core has a place but that place is at least 600mm below finished surface levels if conventional construction is intended, 300mm if a drainage carpet and emptying drains are to be provided. Coarse rubble will need blinding with finer material before finishing layers are applied to prevent settlement or infiltration by soil.

FORMATION LEVELS

On fairways with a downhill slope it is in order to provide a slight fall of say 1 in 80 from back to front. Playing into an uphill slope, a grade on the tee surface from front to back is acceptable and helps to shed heavy rain as run-off. As long as the tee surface is smooth and uniform it matters little whether it is on an inclined plane or dead level. Naturally where ground contours permit, a level tee surface is preferred.

DRAINAGE

It will always be necessary to provide effective catchwater drains around the foot of cut banks where cut and fill grading is necessary to establish suitable levels.

Most tees will be built a modest 230mm or so

above existing ground level, which in itself helps drainage. Given reasonably structured material and adequate subsoil cultivation, both along the length and across the width of the surface, to relieve excessive soil compaction created during building operations, that should suffice.

For larger expanses of tee, particularly at par three's and where natural subsoil or the fill used in construction is unlikely to drain adequately, provision for effective pipe drainage is essential. Top quality installations will require drainage carpets, emptying drains and suitably free-draining sand/soil mixtures and, of course, provision of pop-ups for summer upkeep.

PREPARATION

Many potentially excellent tees have been spoilt by inadequate preparation or haste to finish a job off which has dragged on through much of the winter. The first essential is to get the base firm in order to minimise settlement and also to get it reasonably level. Ensure that at least 200mm firmed depth of sandy loam topsoil or equivalent is provided.

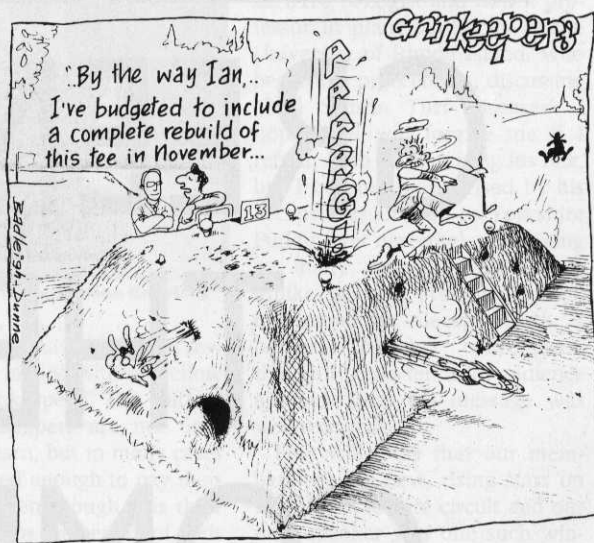
The next operations make for success or failure, and here ground conditions and the workability of the soil are crucial. In view of that and the fact that so much tee construction goes ahead in, at best, marginal conditions during autumn and winter, it is surprising that more efforts are not made to keep soil dry both in the stockpile and once it has been backspread on site.

After returning topsoil and carrying out any subsoil cultivation that is required, set up corner and intermediate pegs to represent finished surface levels. Heel and rake the soil bed at least twice in opposite directions, working to a tightly stretched line between the pegs. Reasonably dry, friable soil is essential for this process and covering it with polythene in wet weather can help enormously. Do not be tempted to put down a layer of sand on a wet surface in order to achieve a level top which you can work on. Turf will root poorly into such material, its vigour is affected and the sward will be extremely drought prone. Sand can help in this situation, but have patience and wait until it can be effectively worked into the top 25mm or so of the soil.

Correct any deficit of lime or major nutrients and it helps, particularly on sandy constructions, to work in one of the seaweed-based materials.

ESTABLISHMENT

Where the new tee is a separate entity, con-



struction during the drier summer months has much to be said for it. That gives you the option of cheap establishment by seeding, preferably during August, your own choice of grass cultivars and the stronger establishment and subsequent growth which results from seeding direct into the growing medium. The down side is that you will not be playing for 12 to 18 months unless you are blessed with a mild autumn and very favourable climate.

Most of us have to make do with turfing. Attempts to save and re-use existing tee turf are often a failure and at best you end up with distinct differences in the sward which can take years to blend. Where the old turf is predominantly ryegrass and annual meadow-grass, discard it and start afresh.

There is a wide selection of commercial seedling turf available and the stronger and more mature that product is the better it will cope with the harsh realities of its new existence on a tee. Get the new turf off to a good start with adequate amounts of fertiliser, up to two or three dressings during the first growing season. Avoid over-close cutting and ensure by early top dressing that you correct any minor irregularities in the surface.

CONCLUSIONS

The start points to any tee construction programme are usually easily identified. Getting the first and last tees in good shape must have priority. An immaculate first tee provides that all important first impression of the course and gets the golfer away in the right state of mind. Bring him home with a first class 18th hole and he will be back for more. Providing user satisfaction is what it is all about, whether it be club members or visitors.

■ The author, David Boocock, is a senior agronomist with the Sports Turf Research Institute.