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*introduces*

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## 'If you haven't done your work by

That's how I could have started this article because, when I asked greenkeepers to name an interesting course, St Enodoc was the name that kept coming up. When I got there I realised why, but none had done justice to the sandhills and hollows, plateaux and tussocks or to the view from the 14th tee out across the pretty 12th-century church where poet laureate John Betjeman is buried to Daymer Bay, or over the Camel Estuary from the 16th fairway and 18th tee.

As I said, that's how I could have started this article - but it's

been done before, a long, long time ago. In fact they are the words (more or less) that celebrated golf writer Bernard Darwin used more than 50 years ago for his article on the 104-year-old course.

In those days he played with a brassey and mashie-niblick. And the greenkeeper, F Camps, was also the steward and club repairer being paid 25s per week for his services.

Now his jobs are done by a dozen employees of the club. There are seven greenkeepers, led by 51-year-old Stuart

## Aeration/decompaction: what the scientists say

by **WA Adams of the University of Wales and RJ Gibbs of the New Zealand Turf Culture Institute**

is there an underlying problem which should be identified and rectified.

The intensity of foot traffic on tees is comparable with or greater than on greens so the compaction problems are similar. One difference is that since the turf usually has a larger root system the soil macropores are better protected. Hollow tine coring is probably the most valuable treatment.

The most frequent need on golf greens is to improve (or restore) water infiltration and air entry into the rootzone. This does not require decompaction and can be achieved by physical penetration of the surface with solid tines which may be flat or round. Frequency of operation should be determined solely on need. In the growing season spiking should be required once per month or less often. A higher frequency is likely to be needed on golf greens from autumn to spring when rainfall is in excess of evapotranspiration. The depth of penetration required may be shallow (less than 40mm) but this will depend upon the nature of the rootzone.

Hollow tine coring is the most widely used technique to improve aeration and relieve compaction in the top 100mm of rootzones. On intensively used golf courses, treatment in autumn and spring may be necessary. On less intensively used golf greens annual treatment in autumn (with one or two passes) will suffice. Too frequent use results in a soft surface. An operation to relieve compaction below 100mm should not be needed on an annual basis. Indeed if it

Compaction problems are relatively minor on fairways except on restricted thoroughfares which may require special attention. Routine aeration maintenance using a slit tine spiker is normally confined to the period between late October and April. The purpose is to penetrate a surface which has become sealed. Decompaction at a depth exceeding 100mm is rarely necessary but, when it is, a moderate amount of surface disturbance can be tolerated so that mini-mole ploughing is practicable.

● *This extract is taken from a recently published book, **Natural Turf for Sport and Amenity: Science and Practice**. The book covers general principles and how they work on golf courses, bowling greens, soccer, rugby and cricket pitches. Aimed at students taking courses in turf science and sports ground management, the 416 pages cost £24.50. Tel: 0491 832111.*