



AUGUST: Keeping busy during the golfers' summer holidays

**By Anthony Davies
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August is normally a quiet month in the way of major competitions for the club with many members taking their annual vacation. With this in mind we gear ourselves to carry out essential maintenance work on the course.

The course is still very busy with visitors and members guests so work programmes are worked around these players so as not to cause too much inconvenience.

In the first week of August all the greens will be hollow-cored using 1/2" tines with 2 x 2 spacing. As the cores are being removed they are pushed into collectible piles by eight men and then removed from the green.



When there are six greens cored, two men will then start top-dressing the greens, putting on as much as required. Around 60 tonnes will be used for all 19 greens.

This year we purchased a powered brush to help us fill up the

core holes. In the past we have used ordinary yard brushes to push dressing into the holes – not always a well-liked job and very time consuming – (just before the final brush I spread a bent only mix on the greens).

With cores removed on the greens this is an ideal opportunity to over seed, so before the final brush on the greens, I spread a complete Bent mix using a cyclone with the seed bulked up with topdressing. With the ground warm and plenty of natural sunlight, the germination rate is very high and the greens take on a peg board appearance but this soon disappears.

After a few days a small amount of dressing might be needed on the cored greens to keep the surfaces true. This is carried out as and when needed. The height of the cut will be raised after the operation with the greens being cut when the sun is up to enable us to get a dry cut.

After 10 or so days, if the weather has been kind, the greens will have made a complete recovery and the height of the cut will be lowered. By the third week of August competitions will recommence and the club will host its autumn invitation day. This is where members show off their course to their guests so it is imperative the condition of the course is back to the high standard required.

Another task I carry out on the greens after coring is to apply a wetting agent. What better way to get the wetting agent down into the soil profile with the surface open and ready to receive.

Tasks carried out before coring:

1. Obtain complete committee approval some six months in advance, in our case it is renewed every 12 months. This invites the Handicap committee to alter the fixture list accordingly.
2. I order the dressing, seed and wetting agents in plenty of time. Prestbury has soil sheds so I have the dressing in stock two weeks before the operation commences.

The first two or three days are extremely busy so you have not got the time to run around trying to get hold of seed or other requirements.

3. Place a suitable notice on the members board to inform them of the start time and the expected finishing time of the operation. Members like to know what is happening so I give them plenty of time in order that they can rearrange their activities if they wish.

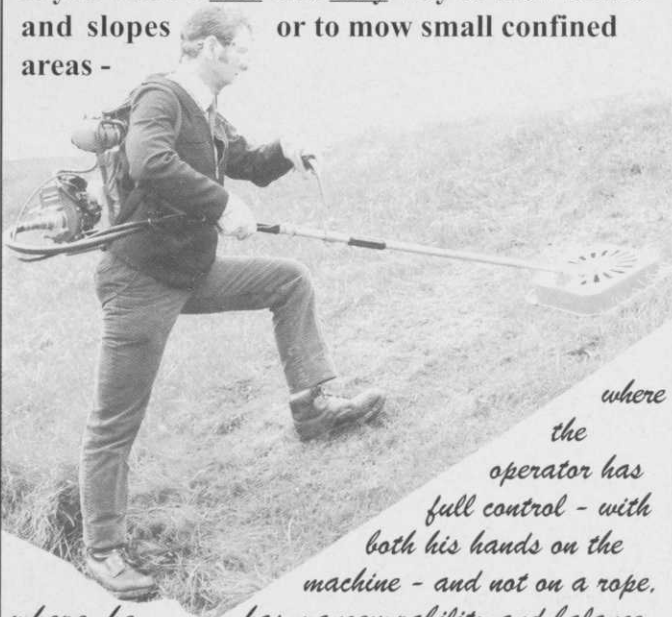
4. I spray at preventative rate a fungicide onto the greens. This is to protect them in case of wet weather during or shortly after the heavy top-dressing. With a heavy dressing and warm rain and you are unable to brush it in because it is too wet. You can imagine what could be happening under the dressing. Therefore, the fungicide application is hopefully to safeguard them against any attack of disease if the weather turns foul.

Coring in August is not a new idea as a neighbouring course have been successfully coring their greens for the past few years with great results. Mike Sheehan, Course Manager at Mere, is where I got my inspiration and it was he who advised me of what not to forget. A case of greenkeepers helping each other.

The coring of greens is the main activity for the month of August, but there are still plenty of other jobs to carry out on other parts of the course such as tidying pathways, strimming or fly mowing parts not normally touched as part of my weekly or bi-weekly routine.

We try to keep the course in as good as condition as possible with regular divoting of tees and fairways but there is still room for improvement, and coring of the greens is one of them.

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