

Architects' specifications to bring more washed turf

(mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper



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An article by Dr Jim Beard extolling the virtues of washed turf has taken Stephen Fell, Managing Director of Lindum Seeded Turf right round the world, and resulted in a major new investment for the company.

The concept of turf washed completely of any soil particles by pressurised hydraulic means prior to transplanting is not new. Ben Warren patented the system as early as 1970, but it was not until the USGA specifications advising a high sand root zone for golf greens came into force, that golf course architects began to specify turf prepared in this way.

The danger with conventional turf is that the finer soil attached to the sward is responsible for a layer developing between the turf and the root zone which retains excess water. With properly washed turf there is no conflict between soils, water flows freely into the prepared root zone and rapid root development within a free draining environment is the result.

StrathAyr, an Australian company seeing the way things were going, bought the patent on Ben Warren's system in the 1980s, and introduced it to the US in the early 1990s.

It was to Bill Casimaty head of StrathAyr, that Stephen Fell wrote after reading Dr Beard's article. He was directed first to Austria, then the US, to see the process in action, before finally arriving in Australia, where StrathAyr, had completed the re-turfing of Melbourne Cricket Ground with BAyr Root Washed Turf. After six months of investigation Stephen Fell was finally convinced that totally soil free turf was the only logical material to use on sand based construction, and the StrathAyr process was the only system with the means to achieve this 100%. "If the turf is only partially washed the benefits are completely lost," he said. "We felt the whole concept was so right that we could convince people of the long-term benefits."

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British washed turf 'ideally placed' for export overseas

Lindum has teamed up with Strathayre, and is now sole UK licensee of the BAyr Root Washing process.

One of the first people to try BAyr Root Washed Turf in the UK was Jimmy Kidd, Director of Gle-neagles Golf Developments, on their new Academy Course. He reported that two weeks after laying, the turf had produced roots of 22 inches, and after six weeks the course was open for limited play, in time for the Jackie Stewart Rolex Challenge.

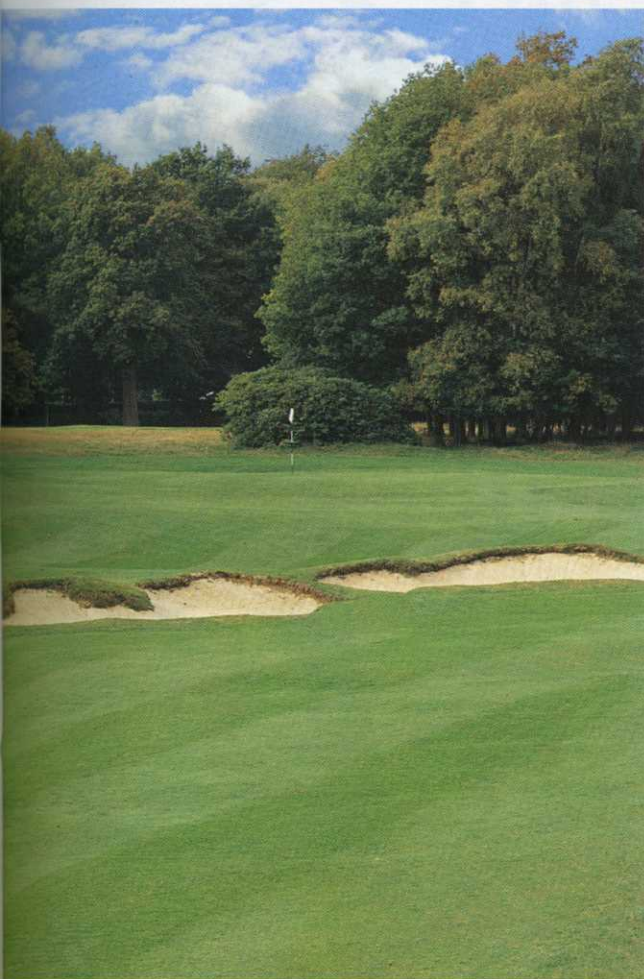
Following Stephen Fell's extensive air miles covered to reach the

right decision, there are signs that BAyr Root Washed Turf could soon be circling the globe. The company has already exported to Berlin and received enquiries from Norway and Istanbul. As washed turf is considerably lighter than conventional turf, and can survive quite happily in refrigerated lorries for several days, supplying these destinations is a viable proposition. But the "coup de gras" has to be the recent delivery of BAyr Root Washed Turf to the Kildare Golf and Country Club in Southern Ireland.



Pictured above: Stephen Fell at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Left, the StrathAyr Root Washed Turf System

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