

Facility helps students learn ins and outs of maintenance

After years of preparation and planning by Berkshire College of Agriculture, BIGGA Chairman Pat Murphy was the man invited to turn the first sod of the college's new six hole educational golf facility.

The six holes have been designed by Tom MacKenzie, of Donald Steel and Company, on 40 acres of parkland beside the main college building.

The six holes are each designed and constructed differently to give students of the college the chance to explore maintenance techniques on a range of styles.

The 1st will be a look into the future by examining a British specification; the 2nd is constructed to USGA guidelines; the 3rd will be badly constructed and badly managed to assist students with problems they might encounter later; the 4th will have a perched water table for tee and green construction; the 5th will be a traditional Old Tom Morris style hole using techniques from the last century while the final hole is a heathland style hole using a clay bowl style green and green construction taken from the 1920-30s.

The Industry Liaison Committee which drove the project consisted of Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers – including Martin Gunn of Temple, Alun Collis of Castle Royale, Ray Clark of



Harleyford and John Nudds of Garrards Cross; Club Secretaries, students, trade and PGA representatives as well as Malcolm Peake, Chairman of Green at Temple Golf Club.

The college received a £60,000 grant from the R&A for the project towards a final cost of £136,000 while additional sponsorship came from Greenscapes Ltd, Roffey Ltd, Hepworths and

Rigby Taylor.

Pat Murphy used a Kubota digger to lift the first sod and expressed his admiration for the project adding that he felt students attending the college would have a distinct advantage with such a range of holes to work on.

He then planted an oak tree to act as a permanent reminder of the occasion.

■ Pictures show the ceremonies.



Environment winners announced soon

The 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in association with Rhône Poulenc and Amazone Ground Care is nearing its completion with successful clubs being notified early this month.

The standard of entry has been exceptional and principle judge Bob Taylor, Ecologist to the STRI, has been delighted by the commitment to both the competition and environmental issues generally shown by the entries.

"The quality of environmental work being carried out at the clubs I've visited has been outstanding and it has been extremely difficult to select the clubs to visit and then those deserving of a second visit," explained Bob, who over the last few months has been to 25

courses the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

Bob has worked closely with Jonathan Smith in Scotland and Dr Keith Duff, Chief Scientist of English Nature, who has been extremely enthusiastic about the quality of entry and standard of environmental practice being undertaken by the golf clubs.

Rod Baker, Managing Director of Amazone Ground Care, who initially launched the competition several years ago, and Jonathan Hill, of Rhône Poulenc, have taken a keen interest in the progress of the competition.

"Jonathan visited two of the golf clubs with me, Gog Magog and Old Nene, and was delighted by the level of enthusiasm shown for the competi-

tion. I've also seen quite a number of Amazone machines on the courses I've visited," said Bob.

He was keen to stress that clubs which entered, irrespective of whether they won or lost, benefited.

"It is more than just a competition with winners and losers. I've been able to offer advice on all aspects of environmental matters while visiting the golf courses from tree, grass land or heather management through to care of ponds. All clubs will also receive publicity for the work."

The judging has taken the form of the European Ecology Unit's Commitment to Green project

which was launched at the Ryder Cup in Valderrama.

■ Next month *Greenkeeper International* will carry a detailed report on Bob Taylor's experiences during judging and the winners will be revealed.

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