

TALKING

Six of the country's top men give their views on Construction Work

Construction Work

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: Archie Dunn
Course: Auchterarder GC
Region: Scotland
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus four



Name: Gary Edwards
Course: Old Colwyn GC
Region: Northern
Course Type: Parkland (nine holes)
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus one, plus one part-timer



Name: Andy Smith
Course: Shirley GC, Solihull
Region: Midlands
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Course Manager, plus six, plus part-time gardener



Name: Martin Forrester
Course: Stapleford Abbots GC, near Romford, Essex
Region: South East
Course Type: Parkland (36 holes)
Staff: Course Manager, plus nine, plus mechanic



Name: Fred Deamen
Course: Alton GC
Region: South West and South Wales
Course Type: Downland
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus two, plus casuals when needed



Name: Gordon Ennis
Course: Bright Castle GC, Downpatrick
Region: Northern Ireland
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus two, plus part-timer

1

How well ahead of the work itself do you know that you will be tackling a particular job and what can affect the timing?

Six months normally and we also have a five-year rolling programme. Work can be governed by finance, weather, fixtures and the number of visiting parties.

When planning work on the course I ensure that all major jobs are carried out at the end of the season where possible and depending upon weather and course conditions.

A seven-year course improvement plan helps us to prepare well in advance for major course projects. Weather/ground conditions, season and fixtures affect the timing of operations.

Six months. The weather does, of course, affect the timing on some occasions.

We normally plan two to three months ahead and have a general five-year plan. The weather can affect the timing.

We plan six months ahead, but everything then depends on the weather which can obviously cause delays.

HEADS

2 Do you use outside contractors and why do you, or don't you, go down that route?

We use outside contractors for drainage as they have the specialist machinery which we don't have. However, we do all the other work ourselves.

I don't use outside contractors as I am capable of carrying out the work myself and this reduces the cost to the club.

We use contractors for major construction. Their expertise and specialist equipment ensures a quicker and efficient time scale for work and minimises disruption to members. It also frees the greenstaff for other course improvements and maintenance.

Yes, we use contractors for basically constructing greens because they have the expertise. We finish the job off with root zone etc.

We try to do everything in-house really because then we can do a job when we want to do it, rather than rely on contractors who have a programme and may work when damage to the course results. We had outside contractors ten years ago to do some tee building.

We used outside contractors ten years ago to build a 100ft x 50ft x 20ft deep lake from which we draw water to irrigate the course. We bought our own digger five years ago so now we do most things in-house.

3 Describe the biggest construction job that has been done at the club in your time there.

Constructing two new greens four years ago. They took sometime to get going but are doing very well now.

At my present club, the largest construction work I have carried out is the building of a putting green. The club didn't have one for the previous four years.

The construction of two winter tees with half the teeing area laid with an artificial playing surface. It only took two weeks and is a relatively small job compared with other major construction work the course has undergone in the past, or that I have been involved with elsewhere.

Building greens. We have done three complete greens and extended two others.

The par-4 4th and par-5 13th tees were reconstructed and this involved digging out a hillside with 1,500 square metres of earth moved to create a two-tier tee.

Apart from the lake, we have constructed a new 2nd hole green which is a fair way from the old one.

4 How do you go about minimising disruption to the course?

We normally mark off the areas concerned and have notice boards telling golfers what is happening on the course. Good communication is essential in this respect.

I minimise disruption to the course by starting work early in the morning before golfers arrive. Any areas which are under construction, or having work carried out, are roped off, leaving the rest of the course neat, tidy and playable.

We minimise disruption to members with good communication in the club, working round fixtures and advanced preparation of alternative playing surfaces.

We basically plan a route, keeping golfers well away from the work and also well away from the fairways and playing surfaces to limit damage to the course.

We have a large hedgeline all round the course so can divert players away from areas which are well marked. We also have notices displayed well in advance so that people know exactly what is going on

We rope off and have signs up in addition to putting notices on the main noticeboard and we find this is sufficient to have minimal disruption.

5 What construction work will you be tackling during this winter programme?

We are building a new tee at the 6th which will be 500 square metres. Also new bunkers are being built, two reconstructed and also we have drainage plans.

The winter programme has already been set and is being worked on. This includes mainly drainage and I have a constant problem with water retention on the fairways, due to the course being constructed on farmland.

We have got a big drainage programme this winter involving four greens and work on two fairways. This is being carried out in-house and not with contractors.

We are extending two tees considerably, doing some drainage work and also constructing new paths. We are also extending backwards a few of the smaller tees.

Bunker maintenance, with one on the 9th fairway needing to be enlarged. We will be digging out, laying a drain and replacing sand. There is also some drainage work on the 7th green where we will be putting in a herringbone system.

We are having a new machinery shed built, 70ft x 30ft and the site has to be cleared, doing the digger work ourselves before the specialist firm moves in to erect the building.