

SPRING CLEAN FOR GREENS

Tony Baxby, Head Greenkeeper at Harrogate Golf Club, Jay Dobson, Agronomist from PSD Agronomy Ltd, and David Snowden, from Floratine, have waged a three year war to restore the efficiency of Harrogate Golf Club's heavy greens built on a clay sub base.

"Essentially we had to improve the way the greens performed. There was a lot of thatch, they weren't stable chemically and the grass condition was a lot more variable than it should be," said Jay Dobson.

David Snowden, who has worked with Dobson on a number of courses following the agronomist's utilisation of Analync, produced a soil amendment and nutritional programme based on analysis of soil samples.

"We used CalpHex, a multi chelated calcium, and Pervade, a soil penetrant, to flush out the unwanted elements and fed during the summer months with mainly potassium nitrates and some forms of urea using soil liquids every month to six weeks and foliar feed in small quantities every two to three weeks. We also used Protesyn, which provides essential amino acids," explained David.

Working as a team around Tony's tournament timetable it appears that the three men's efforts have been rewarded. The latest soil analysis taken in January shows a 'cleaned' rootzone devoid of excess elements.

COMPOSTING IS CATCHING ON



Following the launch of their new Compost Makers at BTME, Course Care held a demonstration day at Woodsome Hall Golf Club recently. The five cubic metre Compost Maker was in action chopping, shredding, mashing and mixing its way through hollow tines cores, leaves, clippings, twigs, small branches and cardboard.

The demonstration was witnessed by interested Course Managers from the area and four representatives from the STRI. Woodsome Hall's Course Manager, Jeremy Eastwood, and his Greens Chairman, Roger Wood, witnessed the event. "We have long term plans for onsite composting and believe this is the way forward. The compost maker was hitched to our Kubota L4630 and the machine exceeded our expectations. We were very, very impressed with the compostable material produced and in such a short space of time," said Jeremy.

BUNKERS OPEN FOR BUSINESS



Colin Mitchell starting work on the new Road Hole bunker

They have thwarted the world's top golfers from Nicklaus to Nakajima, and now the Old Course bunkers are once again ready for action. With less than three months until the Open Championship returns to the Home of Golf for the 27th time, St Andrews Links Trust greenkeepers are priming the Old Course bunkers for the new season.

The work means notorious traps, such as the Road Hole Bunker, Shell and Cartgate, are being returned to a state of play following a major

rebuilding programme. In total, 94 of the 112 bunkers have been revetted to counter the effects of erosion and to prepare the course for the 134th Open Championship.

"When the bunkers come back into play, we can concentrate more on turf and course presentation. In the lead up to the Open Championship, we will want the course to be drier and faster, and additional growth will mean the greens will get smoother," commented Euan Grant, Head Greenkeeper of the Old Course.

The Old Course's bunkers often play a starring role in the Open Championship. David Duval, for instance, fell foul of the Road Hole Bunker in 2000 dropping valuable strokes and any chance of the Claret Jug as he pursued Tiger Woods. The sad sight of Tommy Nakajima attempting to escape from the same trap during the 1978 Open will also live on in many people's memories. While Nicklaus famously took four shots to escape Hell Bunker in 1995.

With the stage set for more drama in July, the Trust's greenkeepers are ensuring the bunkers are suitably prepared through sand shaping and the application of additional top dressing to ensure the new turf knits-in properly.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL VOICE

A new initiative to help the European golf sector in the field of environment and sustainable development is to be launched by the Committed to Green Foundation.

The Foundation's new flagship project will be to create and facilitate the European Forum for Sustainable Golf. This initiative will enable a community of stakeholders to participate in discussion and information exchange on environmental and sustainable development issues facing golf across Europe. It is hoped that this mechanism will enhance the dissemination of environmental best practice information to golf facilities, and also enable collective promotion of

local, regional and national environmental initiatives. The Forum will be formally launched by the European Commission in Brussels at the end of June 2005.

Jonathan Smith, the Foundation's newly appointed Chief Executive said: "I am delighted to have this opportunity to take forward the work of the Committed to Green Foundation. It is clear that golf faces many environmental challenges, golf has to adopt, and be seen to adopt, best environmental practices. If it can do so in a cohesive and credible way there is tremendous potential for golf to achieve recognition for its stewardship of the environment."

AGRONOMISTS UNITE

For the first time in the fine turf industry's history, agronomists from around the world came together for a three day conference in April, to discuss a range of issues relating to golf course management and construction. 62 participants took part in an intensive programme, held at the Craiglands Hotel, in Ilkley, which included visits to the trials ground at STRI and Alwoodley Golf Club.

The conference, organised by STRI, following discussions between Dr Gordon McKillop, STRI's Chief Executive, and Jim Snow, National Director for the USGA, was initially arranged as a joint meeting between STRI and USGA staff. As planning progressed, other interested parties from New Zealand, Canada, Italy, Sweden, Scotland, including Steve Isaac and Nick Pan - representing the R&A, were invited. A total of 22 sessions were covered over the three days.

