

claim a longer hole in one, I wonder.

In response to repeated requests for a section dinner/disco, the committee in the guise of Hugh Maclatchie and Dougal Duguid have arranged it for Friday November 24 1995 at the Westhill Hotel near Aberdeen. The cost will be £12 per head and a good deal for anyone wishing to stay over is bed and breakfast for £20 per head. Tickets go on sale at the spring outing at Newmacher next month. This may seem early but we need to know if there is a demand for this night as if we have to cancel, the earlier we do it the less it will cost the section. If you want to go, you can book your ticket in May and pay sometime over the summer, at least we will have an idea about the numbers early on.

Hopefully this will become an annual event, it is up to you. We are currently looking into the possibility of holding our AGM in the afternoon of the 24th at Westhill Golf Club, with golf before, details to follow.

Finally, have you sold your 200 Club ticket yet? Remember, the first draw is next month and all tickets have to be sold prior to that. This is the major fundraiser for the section with proceeds used to keep the costs of outings down and subsidising the dinner/disco.



IAIN MACLEOD

SURREY

Congratulations go to Chris Keen upon his appointment as course manager at Reigate Hill GC, to Douglas Brand, formerly of Braintree GC in Essex, upon his appointment as course manager at Betchworth Park GC and to James Watson who is moving from Wisley GC to take up the head greenkeeper position at Clandon Regis.

Hopefully by now you will have received a full list of events for the coming season. I hope they will be well supported. If by any chance you have not received a fixture list, please contact Derek Walder on 01737 246088.

If you wish to enter the Huxley Bowl this year, please return slips as soon as possible so that the competition can get under way, thus avoiding finishing late in the year.

Forthcoming dates: May 4 - Spring Tournament and Hayter qualifier, Blackmoor GC; June 6 - The Cresta Cup at Kingswood Golf & Country Club; June 21 - Southturf Exhibition, Motspur Park. Those of you interested in the dinner-dance at Reigate Manor Hotel will be pleased to hear that it has been booked again for November after last year's success.

DAVID GIBBS

WEST SCOTLAND

Spring is upon us with the sun shining and grass growing non-stop. Who's kidding who? Well, you never know, maybe next year.

The recent games night arranged at the Claremont Bowling Club once again proved a successful evening. The winners on the night

were D Mowatt (once again!) and S Taylor, with runners-up S Ballantyne and S McGeachy. Our thanks for this good night go to John Scott (Nairn Brown) who organised everything including those tasty pies. Thanks also go to the Claremont members for allowing us the use of their club.

The recent trip organised to St Andrews proved very successful although the golf museum closure was somewhat disappointing. A good day was had by all, with a break away from the constant rainfall on this side of the country. Our thanks go to tour guides Gordon Moir, Eddie Adams and Mark Brunton. Thirty-five people turned up for the event, it just goes to show people are interested in what's happening elsewhere.

The spring outing has been arranged for April 25 at Lanark GC. This was at short notice, so thanks indeed to Lanark and their head greenkeeper for responding so well.

On a sad note, Tommy Young of Kilmalcolm passed away in December. Tommy was head greenkeeper there for ten years, and a past chairman of the West Section. He was an honorary member of the club and a past champion in 1949 and 1959. Our thoughts are with his family.

Finally, I'd like to wish Alistair Connel of Cawder GC every success in his new position at Collingtree Park. Alistair has proved a valuable member of the section over a long time and he will be greatly missed, not for his football skills, I might add.

If anybody has any information to pass on, then please call me on 041 9425554.

STUART TAYLOR

BUCKS, BERKS & OXON

I hope, by the time this report is printed, the rain has stopped and the golf courses are dry enough to put machinery on.

Once again the section has been fairly quiet with very little news to report. This gives me the opportunity to thank several active members of the committee who recently resigned. Firstly, Simon Edwards for balancing the books over the last year as treasurer, and also Bernie Wall and Lachlan Morrison for carrying out all golf administration duties.

Over the past four years it has become very difficult to obtain golf courses for our events, because clubs are reluctant to give up a valuable business day. It's down to time and effort from Bernie and Lachlan that we've had some splendid venues.

Due to public demand, there will be a five-a-side football tournament on Sunday April 30 at Wycombe Sports Centre. Entry will be £10 per team. It is hoped this will be well represented - the more teams, the better the event. If you are struggling to make up a team of greenkeepers, then persuade some of your friends to join in. If this event proves to be successful, then a league will be formed next winter.

On the education side, we are putting

together a seminar to be held soon and details will be posted in due course.

Before signing off, congratulations to Dave Goodchild and Katie on the birth of baby 'Augusta' in December.

LINDSAY ANDERSON

SOUTH WEST

Welcome to several new members who have joined the ever growing section over recent months, amongst them Neil Taylor from Mendip Springs Golf Club, and Michael Fawcett of Marlborough Golf Club.

Whilst on the membership theme, it was pleasing to see so many new faces at Lansdown Golf Club when we held our winter competition and lecture. Support for section events is slowly increasing, so for those who haven't got involved yet an open invitation is extended to all. If you don't play and would like to participate in the day, ring me prior to the event and I could possibly arrange a course walk with a member of staff from the respective club.

It is always difficult to arrange a winter competition during February. After all, who wants dozens of greenkeepers scrutinising their course during periods of bad weather? A call from course manager Guy Woods the night before the Lansdown event highlighted the problem. He reported that it was snowing heavily but at worst there would be 18 temporaries. The day's weather though proved somewhat better with a strong breeze and virtually no snow left. Considering this and previous months' weather, the course was in excellent condition, with fairways, tees and greens all cut. Thanks to Guy and his staff for the time spent in preparation, to Lansdown for allowing us course courtesy and to the caterers for a tasty lunch. The results were: 1, M Newman 35 pts (back 9); 2, S Frankcom 35 pts (back 6); 3, S Sage 35 pts; 4, N Perkins 34 pts; 5, P Godwin 32 pts (back 9); 6, C Tozer 32 pts. Thanks to Avoncrop and BS Mowers for their generous prize donations. The day was rounded off with a talk by Andrew Venables of Fairways on wildlife management of a golf course.

Nominations are now being taken for this year's Zeneca Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award. This extremely worthwhile competition aims, in Zeneca's words, "to find the greenkeeper who gets the best from his or her course with the facilities available." First prize is a visit to the GCSAA Conference in the USA. The closing date for applications is May 31 1995. If you are interested, give me a ring on 0117 9793127 for an application form.

Finally, another reminder that Westurf takes place at Long Ashton GC on April 26. Your full support should guarantee another successful year.

KEVIN GREEN

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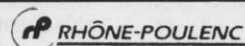


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Around the Green



weather from snow to warm sunshine during the morning's round of golf at our February meeting at Wrangaton GC. Numbers for the day were disappointing but those who were able to attend enjoyed the hospitality shown by the club with excellent food and the course made playable after all the recent rain by head greenkeeper Gerald Ayliffe and his staff. Congratulations, lads!

After an excellent lunch, John Palfrey of Avoncrop presented the golf prizes and Avoncrop Trophy for the morning's bogey competition.

Result: 1, Tony Gooch (Torrington) -1; 2, Brian Ridgeway (Fingle Glen) -2; 3, Nigel Tyler (Ruffords) -3.

The grapevine has reported that Richard Minton of Zeneca has been ousted from top spot of the order of merit for touring trade members by Nigel Tyler. We await Richard's response!

To conclude a most successful day, our afternoon educational talk on 'preparing your case for capital expenditure' was presented by Keith Janes of ING farm finance.

The section thanks Wrangaton GC and all their staff for making our day so successful, Keith Janes who made the long trip to be with us, and John Palfrey and Avoncrop.

Finally, I look forward to meeting you all at Westurf. It's the best in the West and it's free. It will be held once again at Long Ashton GC, Bristol, on Wednesday April 26. All your main local and national dealers will be there to answer your questions, you will also be able to see the latest machinery being demonstrated on the large demonstration area which includes a golf green. With all the latest turf care products on show, you can't afford to miss Westurf '95. It is RAC signposted and parking and admission are free.
RICHARD WHYMAN

CENTRAL SCOTLAND

Following last issue's sad news about the death of our only life member, John Henderson, this month's report also begins on a sombre note. David Cameron, head greenkeeper at Ladybank GC, Fife, has died at the age of 32. David was also a long-standing member of the section and a dedicated greenkeeper who could always be found on his beloved Ladybank.

I am sure I can speak for every member of the section in extending our sincerest condolences to his family.

On a happier note, it's a big welcome to the section's first female greenkeeper, Sharon Lawrie of Elie GC, Fife. We wish her every success in the future. Not to be outdone, male membership is showing a big increase and it is a pleasure to extend a welcome to Gordon McRae, David Smith, Andrew Graham, David Gorman, Scott Couttie, Simon Crawford, J Greig and D Halley (sorry, I don't have your first names). Hopefully, we will meet you at some of our section events in the coming months.

The illustrated talk by Jimmy Kidd of Gleneagles, at Burntisland, was another great success, with some 50 members and club officials in attendance. Jimmy was his usual inimitable self, giving us an insight into the development of the Gleneagles landscape over the last 400 million years. (I didn't think he had been there that long!) Who else but Jimmy could hold an audience's attention for three and a half hours, with no one leaving

the room in case they missed anything. On reflection, perhaps we should have asked Jimmy to speak at the AGM.

With regard to the formation of a section football team, we held a 'trial match' at Dalgety Bay recently and from the commitment of everyone who participated it may not be too long before some of the Premier League teams are showing an interest in the Central Section (I'm sure there are a couple of teams who could do with our assistance right now.) Details of the match against the West Section will appear in the near future.

Congratulations to former section member David Murdoch on his appointment as head greenkeeper at Liphook GC. David served his apprenticeship at Dunfermline GC before deciding to take his skills down south. Well done, David! Congratulations also go to Ian Jarvis of Alloa GC who, at the time of writing, was just about to give up the single life and settle down to 'wedded bliss', well that's what he is trying to tell himself.
JOHN CRAWFORD



SOUTH COAST

The section workshop at Sparsholt College was run by Frank Newberry, a well known figure to greenkeepers who have attended courses at Aldwark Manor. Seventeen members attended - it was necessary to keep numbers down because of the hands-on nature of these workshops. For those who were disappointed at missing out, there is to be another one during the autumn.

The feedback from those who attended was very positive with a general request for a follow-up programme. On behalf of those attending I would like to thank the industry sponsors for the day - Rows of Chichester, Romsey Garden Machinery and Rolawn.

The winter social programme for '95/'96 is being prepared and your thoughts for suitable events are requested. Please send your ideas to me at 45 Constable Close, Sholing, Southampton SO19 1EN.

We were all pleased to hear of the appointment of Jeff Drake as head greenkeeper at the Hampshire GC. Jeff worked for many years at Salisbury and South Wilts and Erlestoke golf clubs before joining the Hampshire in September 1993 as deputy head greenkeeper.

The committee has been asked by Bob Young of Sparsholt College to emphasise on all members and especially head greenkeepers/course managers the importance of supporting our trainees. It is incumbent on us all to give them our support!
ALAN MITCHELL

NORTH WEST

As I write these notes, the rain, as usual, is lashing down and I am trying to remember when we last went 24 hours without rain or snow. This winter must have been a nightmare for anybody involved with the mainte-

nance of turf. The grass has hardly stopped growing, but conditions are so wet that even normal winter maintenance cannot be carried out.

Let's hope the weather is fine for our golf match against the North Wales section at Northop GC on Tuesday May 2, tee off 1.30pm. A team of 16 is required so if you are available, please ring me on 0151 7245412.

A few movements to report this month. Stephen Worthington has moved from Prestbury GC to take over as head greenkeeper at Macclesfield GC, Peter Cross has moved to West Derby GC as assistant greenkeeper, and Andrew Mannion is moving from Warrington GC to Southern Down GC in Mid-Glamorgan as assistant head greenkeeper.
BERT CROSS



MID ANGLIA

Brocket Hall course manager John Wells, star of last month's magazine, gave 20 Mid Anglia section members a guided tour of the course. He went into the history of Brocket Hall and the difficulties faced when setting up a new golf course with predominantly sand greens. Thanks to John and the management of Brocket Hall for allowing us to see the course. It was disappointing, however, bearing in mind the location to see so few people there.

We are looking to secure Brocket Hall as the venue for our Autumn Tournament towards the end of October. As soon as this is confirmed, I will let you know.

Our Spring Tournament goes ahead on the 25th of this month at Royston. The format will be 18 holes in the morning (medal), which will be the qualifying competition for the Hayter-Beaver Challenge, followed by 18 holes stableford in the afternoon.

Several changes to the rules of the Lodge-way Fourball competition have been decided. These are: 1, The main draw to be drawn out of a hat (not regionalised); 2, 8 leagues; 3, Quarter finals to be drawn; 4, Semi finals to be drawn - to be played on a neutral course decided by mutual consent among the competitors. If they cannot agree, the committee will decide the venue; 5, The final will be played over 36 holes unless exceptional circumstances intervene; 6, All matches to be played to a win.

Ashridge GC is confirmed as the venue for this year's Texas Scramble/Christmas Tournament, to be played on Friday December 1.

Matches against the Midland Section and the London Section are currently being arranged for later in the year.

New members to welcome include: David Smith, Alan Smith, Duncan Flower, Ian Turnbull, Chris Slimm - all from John O'Gaunt GC; Peter Tiffney from Weston Turville GC; Thomas Hooper from South Beds GC; Ian Cropper from Hanbury Manor; Thomas Bowden from the Family Golf Centre; David Wright and Gareth Knight from Brocket Hall; Stephen Barrett from Knebworth GC; Brian Nolan from Kingsway GC; Anthony Perkins from Veralum GC; Mathew Towler and Michael Cutmore from Welwyn GC; and Timothy Lower from Delapre Golf Complex.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Colin Robinson on his appointment as course manager at John O'Gaunt GC and Steve Mason on his appointment as course manager at Mount Pleasant GC.

PAUL LOCKETT

SHEFFIELD

More than 60 members attended our March meeting. If it takes a woman speaker to bring members to lectures, maybe I should look into booking more females. On the serious side, thanks to those of you who did turn out on such a bad day to hear Valerie Holt of the National Rivers Authority.

Seems I just about got it right to have a lecture about water as many of our courses seem to have been closed more than open this winter. But not those in and east of the Doncaster area which seem to have missed most of the bad weather as up to March this year my course has only been closed four days.

Getting back to the lecture, my thanks to Valerie – we all learned a lot from her talk and slides about rivers, ponds, conservation, bore holes and dykes on courses. One could tell by the questions and reception she got at the end of her lecture how popular her talk was.

New members include: Giles Brackenbury (Chesterfield GC), Michael Clegg and Paul Mason (Hallamshire GC), Leigh Platton (Lees Hall GC), Stephen Currie and Steven Lacey (Hickleton GC) and Christopher Sims (Scunthorpe GC).

RON ULLATHORNE

SOUTH WALES

Firstly, members who went to Harrogate on the Westurf-sponsored trip have asked me to pass on many compliments to the organisers, Marion and Gordon Child. Once again, it was superbly organised and a thoroughly enjoyable four days. However, there were a few minor hiccups. No names mentioned, but there were four members who went to the wrong hotel to attend the AGM and by the time they realised that they had made a mistake they were snowed in! But if there was a prize for the best gaff it would go to the gent (you know who you are) who, in a hurry, made a mad dash to the toilet, to relieve himself of the previous night's curry, only to realise after a few min-

Around the Green



utes that he had dashed into the wrong toilets – yes, the ladies. It was a further few minutes – 35 in all – before he plucked up the courage to make a dash for the exit, with fingers crossed that he wouldn't come face to face with a female.

A marvellous exhibition and a superb trip – get your names down early to secure a place on the coach next year.

At Cowbridge, Mid Glamorgan, RS Bird Ltd launched the new Ransomes E-Plex and G-Plex before a crowd of well over 150 who had gathered in the firm's newly revamped premises. Courage provided the liquid refreshment and BBC commentator Alex Hay provided the entertainment. It was a marvellous evening and our sincere thanks go to all at RS Bird, especially Jeff and Roger Bird.

A few days later at Pencoed College, Amenity Land Services presented a day's 'turf conference'. Topics included overseeding of golf greens, contract spraying, fertilisers and new products, including Farmura's Inhibitor and Rhone-Poulenc's Spearhead. The attendance should have been a lot better for this enjoyable, informative day. Our thanks to Farmura, Sharpes, Atlas Interlates, Rhone-Poulenc but mostly to ALS.

The following evening at Pencoed, David Ward, course manager at Royal Porthcawl, gave a talk entitled 'Course preparation prior to the 1995 Walker Cup.' It was so good to see not only so many people but so many new faces in attendance. An enthralling presenta-

tion was given regarding the great links of South Wales, where planning started some five years ago. David covered the building of a £6million sea defence, bunker rebuilding (all 96), tee enlargements and re-positioning, as well as an ongoing intensive coring and aeration programme. A thoroughly educational and enjoyable evening, thank you David.

On the move: Andrew Jenkins, formerly of the Southerdown and Langland Bay golf clubs, has taken up his new position of first assistant at the Clyne GC where Anthony Bull has been promoted to deputy head greenkeeper.

Dates for your diary: April 19 – Spring Competition/Hayter qualifier, Creigiau GC, 1pm prompt; April 26 – Westurf, Long Ashton, Bristol.

PETER LACEY

HAYTER CHALLENGE

The 1995 Hayter Challenge Tournament gets into full swing this month with 20 of the 25 sections holding their qualifiers.

The greenkeeping golfers are playing for a place in the regional finals and, ultimately, a place in their region's team competing in the final at West Lancashire Golf Club, Blundellsands on September 13-14.

Last year, once again, the Northern team came out on top, narrowly beating the Midland team.

Dates of regional finals: Scottish: May 30, Cardross Golf Club; Northern: July 4, Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Club; Midland: July 5, Erewash Valley Golf Club; South East: June 6, Stockley Park Golf Club; South West: June 15, Carmarthen Golf Club; Northern Ireland: August 18, Clondeboy Golf Club; Eire: May 25, Glasson Golf Club.

Don't miss Westurf, the biggest little show in the west country

Here's a golden opportunity to view the very latest merchandise to be shown for the first time in the west country. 1995 has seen the launching of various new products and many of them will be at WESTURF on April 26.

Lindum, in addition to its existing range of turf, will have the new StrathAyr BAyr Rooted Washed Turf on display, so find out what the advantages are apart from a faster root development. Fleet is exhibiting its new range of line forming Xylene-free aerosols, and the new Sprayliner will be demonstrated. Terralift Fertilisers' top product for 1995 will be Year Round 4:2:8 crumble and the new product is Greens Start 11:1:1 Pencils, ideal for regular use on newly constructed greens and tees. Also new is Barkoel Crested Hairgrass, Barenbrug's biggest research project yet.

Two new products for the spring season come from Roffey Bros. Gypronit is a mini granular turf fertiliser and Eco-Dress is a topdressing derived from full composted and graded green waste. Since last year Gwilliam Kellands has been appointed main distributors for Hayter-Beaver cylinder machines, for Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Devon. Claymore will be showing the new Sabo Roberine C800, a 60in rear discharge or side discharge out front rotary.

Sisis Equipment is bringing some additions to Westurf: Supa-Rotorake, a heavy duty scarifier; Variseeder, a new tractor mounted 4ft seeder; Technicore, a pto driven vertical aerator; and Osca, an oscillating brush unit.



New products added to the Mascot range from Rigby Taylor will be on display, and Zeneca has two new mini granular products for 1995, Cleanrun (weed + feed) and Renovator (weed + feed + mosskiller). The new herbicide Touchdown LA will also be featured. British Seed Houses has recently launched Providence Creeping Bentgrass which has been bred for European conditions, and Scotts UK has two new ranges of fertiliser.

The English Golf Union will be making its debut at the

show, exhibiting alongside various colleges, the IoG and the STRI. Farmura has a major new addition to its range – Inhibitor for the natural management of fusarium. And there's lots more! So why not start your season positively and come to the show that's in the right place at the right time. Bristol's Long Ashton Golf Club, the hosts again this year, is an ideal venue for this prestigious "little" show. Ring 01803 844056 if you would like a catalogue or further information.

GROW your own

Investing in a turf nursery can be better than putting money in the bank, according to David Boocock, senior agronomist with the Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley

The availability of good quality mature turf containing the right grasses for a variety of situations and growing on appropriate soils is the acme of perfection. Whether considered good fortune, or the result of careful planning and foresight depends on your point of view, but the head greenkeeper or course manager who has developed such a resource can be forgiven for regarding it as better than money in the bank should disaster strike.

Advancing years bring some compensations but one's attitude tends increasingly towards pessimism. My beer glass is more often half empty nowadays than half full. With the sheer volume of traffic on our golf courses these days, both men and turf are under a good deal of pressure. The potential for disaster to strike is always there, from hydraulic oil pipe rupture and spillage to an overlap using a spray or a mis-cue with the weather forecast and having wetting agents or fertiliser down and then being stuck with a hot, sunny day.

There is sure to be a sod's law which states that if a disaster is going to happen, it will happen

the day before or the morning of your major club competition. Only you can minimise those risks, but a good turf nursery may well help you retrieve the situation if the worst happens, and we all have our fair share of vandalism these days.

Greens

Before assessing the desirable qualities for turf that will be used on putting surfaces, take into

account the playing requirements for that area. Is the turf likely to be used to repair an area damaged by disease or winter kill and will the green be required to be in full use at normal cutting heights as quickly as possible? The same query must be answered if a green has been reconstructed and needs to be completely returfed.

The reason for asking yourself this question is quite simply that

most commercial turf grown from seed is barely 12 to 14 months old when it is sold, and relatively immature. Such material is certainly strong enough to cope with the stresses of lifting, handling, transport and relaying, and a good product will certainly look mature. Unfortunately, it will not cope at all well with normal green mowing heights and regular heavy play within months of laying.

How often do you see patches of new commercial turf introduced into putting greens which either gradually decline and die off, or remain weak and thin for two or three years affecting the smoothness of surfaces, never really blending in properly for a long time. In my opinion, the vast majority of commercial turf requires a "grow in" period before it can be expected to support close mowing and regular use. That period can take from nine months to two years depending on when the turfing is completed, the area of country and weather conditions.

One or two growers can now supply more mature sod, at a price. If you can afford it, that's fine, otherwise grow your own turf nursery.

Many clubs utilise part of the practice putting green for repairs, but that is never a really satisfactory solution, more of an emergency stop-gap. Far better to have a properly developed and maintained nursery area. Having a source of mature turf on site certainly widens management options. No longer is there need



Prepare and re-sow stripped areas in spring

GROW your own

'For quality greens turf on most sites, it is usually best to buy in a good commercial turf to establish the area.'

for ugly bare scars from winter disease or other forms of die back, even if tucked away at the edges of the putting surface. You can actively set about removing coarser ryegrass patches, or, if needs be, introduce bent and fescue turfgrass plugs into annual meadow-grass dominated areas in a controlled management programme over the years. That has to add up to easier management, better presentation and, to some extent, peace of mind.

The qualities we are looking for in turf include the correct grass species, ie a blend of fine fescues and browntop bents with very little annual meadow-grass and no coarser grass species. For most inland sites there should be at least 50% or more strongly established bent in the sward. Fescues generally take longer to achieve a mature sod that can cope with normal summer mowing heights as well as regular wear and tear and whilst a good proportion of

them is acceptable for use on links greens, too high a proportion can lead to problems inland. The grasses should be growing in a free-draining medium that matches the soils on the existing greens. Even on older established courses the top profile will be fairly sandy as a result of regular topdressing, and there is no point "capping" that by laying on it a turf growing in heavy loam. The turf must also be free of soft, fluffy organic material at the immediate surface, and preferably used to regular mowing at the normal putting green height of cut.

Tees

The situation with regard to obtaining suitable turf for tees is far less demanding. The type of grasses forming the sward are less important, although on most courses a blend of fescues and browntop bent will still be the aim. A small amount of annual

meadow-grass will not matter and quite often the finer-leaved cultivars of smooth-stalked meadow-grass are included because these can blend well with the other fine-leaved species and established rhizomes improve recuperative powers following wear.

Perennial ryegrass is still regarded as unsatisfactory for tees on the vast majority of courses because of its open, tufted habit of growth, coarse, fibrous leaves and stems which are difficult to cut cleanly and intolerance of mowing at or below 12mm.

The soil type the grass is growing in is also less important, although obviously it is desirable to have it established in a sandy soil if the turf will be used over a special rootzone mixture even on tees.

Normal commercial turf, given a reasonable sward at all, might be expected to cope acceptably with summer play after turfing in the previous autumn or early winter. Do not expect miracles of course, such turf is still relatively immature and it will do better under a more relaxed mowing height, with regular divot repair, generous nutrition and irrigation when required.

Choice in this situation therefore boils down to a question of cost, and the quantity of turf required. Where you have the nursery space available and the time to manage it properly, a nursery for tee grade turf is well worthwhile, especially if embarking on a tee extension or enlargement programme spread over several years.

Fairways/traffic routes

Widespread weakness or damage due to drought or wear on fairways will normally be best tackled by appropriate surface treatment, seeding, mild feeding and, in dry situations, irrigation during the summer can often be the key to success. Large areas of turf for fairway repair are therefore unnecessary. It can, however, be useful to have some mature fairway quality turf available. This comes in useful for patching repairs on drought-prone mounds, local heavily trafficked areas, especially at the edges of bunkers, on green sur-

rounds and anywhere that contours funnel feet and trolleys and which come into play.

Such places can seldom be given special treatment during summer, especially watering, and on dry slopes or mounds that can be vital to survival of thin, often rather thatchy and young commercial turf. Material like that cannot cope with heavy foot or trolley traffic either, unlike the tees which get a rest between periods of wear.

Bunker turf

The traditional and still best way of retaining and holding a face on links bunkers, especially those facing full sun all day, is to build up a revetted wall of turf. As might be expected, that requires a good deal of the right sort of turf and on a regular basis. Turf walls receiving full sun all day combined with sand splash, wind and normal erosion often survive no more than three or four years, so a regular replacement programme is essential. Where there are many bunkers on a course, up to 2 or 3 acres can easily be used per year on renovations and rebuilding throughout autumn and winter.

On many links, suitable areas of turf for this purpose in the rough have been plundered over the years to the point where there is very little of the correct type of turf remaining. Commercial turf is totally unsuitable for bunker revetting and even where this is used on bunker heads, it can be a disaster unless very carefully managed and watered in its first year. For these purposes, nursery turf really comes into its own. Because natural regeneration of turf on the links can be such a slow process, a special area which can be reseeded when necessary, irrigated in summer and which is reasonably convenient for regular maintenance is now more a necessity than a luxury.

Above all else, turf for revetting must be a tough, mature sod with a well developed fibrous root system which can be cut 50mm thick, will handle easily and build up into a solid turf wall. Grass composition is of less importance but for neatness, general appearance and ease of maintenance, the finer grasses are best.

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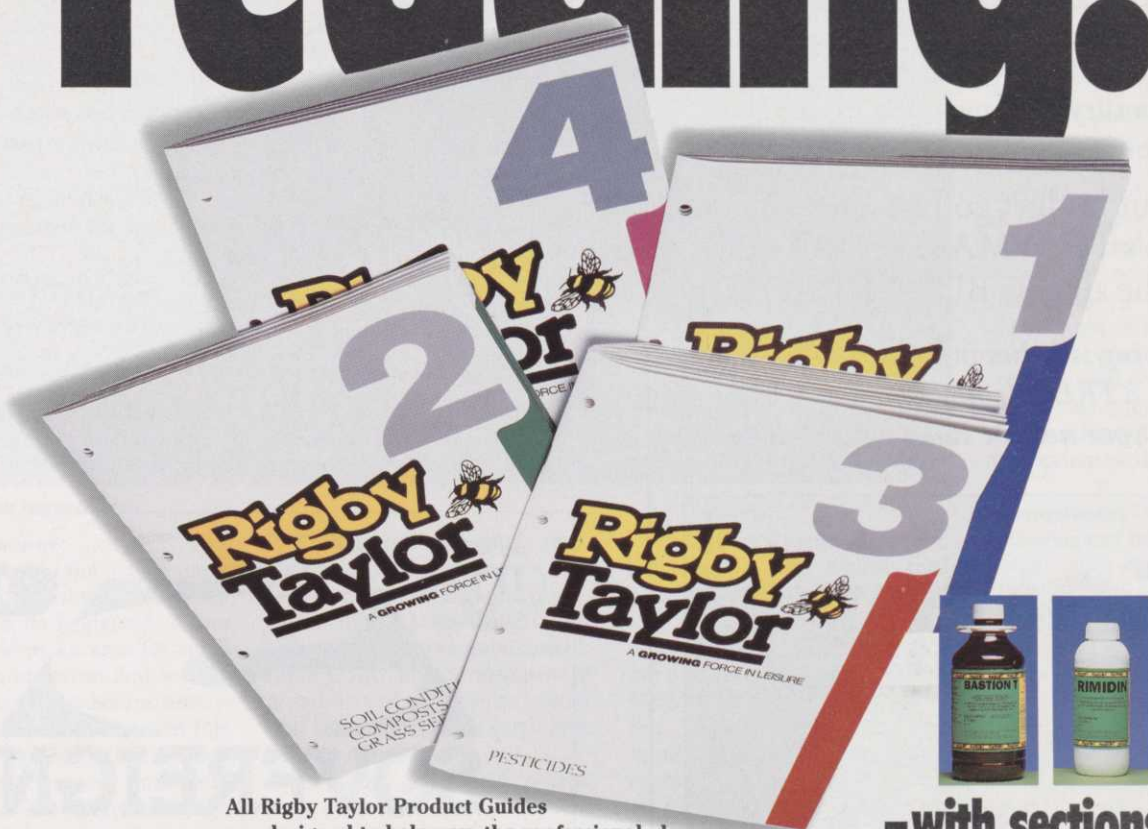
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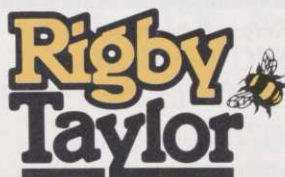


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Protect your nursery area

Establishment

An area close to the maintenance base is ideal since it is then unlikely to be neglected. It can also double as an area for small trials with materials and for setting up machinery before venturing out onto more important fine turf playing areas. The chosen place should be away from areas that come into play, although space considerations often mean part of the practice ground may have to be utilised.

There should be a good 100 to 150 mm depth of sandy topsoil, especially for putting green turf.

If not, ensure that a sandy root-zone is at least provided on that area. A means of irrigation is useful on inland sites, essential on links to allow sure establishment, rapid growth and development of a mature turf and also to ensure that you can recycle a small area on a regular basis.

For quality greens turf on most sites, it is usually best to buy in a good commercial turf to establish the area. Then, manage it carefully for 12 to 18 months until it matches the existing greens and is mature enough to take close cutting and play.

Seeding is clearly an option, but you must have a clean seed bed free of weeds and particularly weedgrasses such as annual meadow-grass, Yorkshire fog grass and perennial ryegrass. Many high hopes of developing a turf nursery have foundered through being swamped by these coarser species. Where you can start clean through adequate fallowing and cultivation, or on a naturally clean soil, produce a seed bed in late summer and sow during the period July through to early September. A small amount of an NPK fertiliser should be

GROW your own

worked into the seed bed followed by sowing a standard fine grass seed mixture containing top-class cultivars of chewing fescue, slender creeping red fescue and browntop bent chosen from the tables in the current STRI publication "Turfgrass Seed".

Sow on to a firm soil bed with uniform surface levels at no more than 34 g/m² and very carefully hand rake or lightly harrow in; on sandy soil finish off by flat rolling. To ensure even coverage, split the total amount of seed and sow each half in opposite directions. Final raking should be at right angles to the greatest slope, especially on seed beds which will not require rolling afterwards.

Any areas to be sown for tees or general purpose material that could be used on fairways, traffic routes or bunkers should be clearly defined and sown with an appropriate seed mixture.

Management

Once fine turf has reached 50mm height from sowing, top over with rotary mowers twice at a height of 30mm. Then, gradually lower the height of cut by stages over several months to 12mm and in the second summer down to 6 to 8 mm. Always box off grass clippings. Top dress if you have to, but it is far better to spend time and effort achieving a really smooth, firm soil bed before sowing, and which will allow close mowing afterwards. Feed regularly and quite heavily with nitrogen-based fertiliser at between 150 and 250 kg N/ha

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'A few courses are blessed with an ample depth of good fertile loam which can be stripped and regrown several times if the turf is cut thinly.'

during the first year to achieve rapid development of a strong, dense sward. Once the grass has established properly, reduce feeding to just basic maintenance of one or two nitrogen feeds and control thatch and any weeds as necessary.

Irrigate carefully in summer, particularly during the first year when rapid development of a dense and strong sward is vital. After that, use water at lower rates simply to maintain some growth, but at the same time aiming to develop a harder, tougher, more mature sod.

The same basic approach will be appropriate for other classes of turf from seed, although fertiliser treatment could be reduced. Maintain the sward at the height appropriate for its intended final use.

By buying in commercial turf intended for greens you can gain the establishment year. Such turf

may need topdressing to ensure a true mowing surface, keeping it topped initially at 12mm until roots are established strongly and the sward is growing away. Feeding will not be required at quite such high levels as from seed, but on sandy soils up to 150 kg N/ha may still be required to ensure vigorous enough growth and rapid development of a dense and mature turf. Commercial material often needs a bit more light raking or verticutting initially to reduce the often soft, fluffy thatch that comes with it. Afterwards, reduce these operations bearing in mind that to achieve maturity a turf must develop a strong mat of stems, roots and partly decomposed material at the surface which produces a tough mat that gives resilience and the wearing properties we are looking for.

It is, of course, possible to

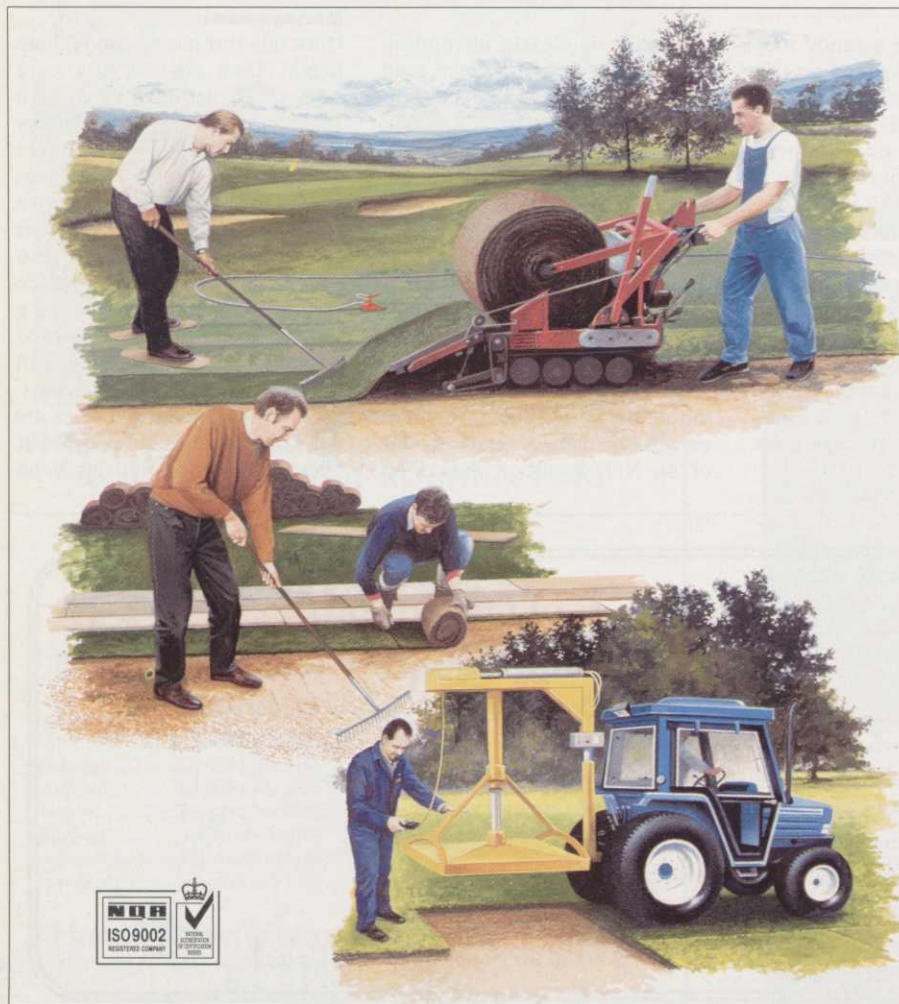
work existing swards down, after all most of our older courses started life that way, even putting greens. Tees and general purpose turf can readily be worked down from rough simply by vigorous initial harrowing, flail mowing and, where necessary, surface level improvement. One or two feeds the following summer and a gradual reduction in height of cut combined with light raking and any weed control needed will soon produce results.

Bear in mind the need for regular preparation and resowing of areas that are stripped of turf over the winter. On sandy soils there will be a need to rebuild a suitable depth of topsoil from time to time, easily accomplished by spreading a skim of topsoil and then thoroughly incorporating this into the underlying sand to produce the very sandy mixtures suitable for links.

A few courses are blessed with an ample depth of good fertile loam which can be stripped and regrown several times if the turf is cut thinly. Indeed, it is not unknown on some sites like this for the turf to be cut and lifted, leaving 25 mm wide bands of grass between the stripped out rows, and for the area to recover within a year. It goes without saying that however the used area of nursery is re-established, a little protection from traffic or play if it is a part of the practice ground will help.

Conclusion

Commercial turf is often a clean, well-grown product, but it does have some limitations. Knowing and appreciating these, you can often tailor the situation to suit your own club's circumstances and requirements, and developing a turf nursery will often give you the best of both worlds.



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