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Coast to Coast

Scott MacCallum headed to the west of Scotland to visit a new course designed by the same man who gave us Kingsbarns on the east.

There is a degree of rivalry in the MacCallum household based on the fact that I come from the east coast of Scotland while my wife is a west coaster. I have to put up with little homilies like "East is east, but West is best" and complaints about how cold she finds the east. But I counter with official Met Office statistics which confirm that it rains 365 days of the year in the west, while the east coast has sunshine records which better even the Bahamas. Usually we agree to differ.

Recently I was able to blow the east's trumpet about the wonderful new Kingsbarns Golf Club which just happens to be on the east coast, just a couple of miles from St Andrews, the Home of Golf ... which is also to be found on the east.

However the west is fighting back with a new course designed by the same man who gave us Kingsbarns.

Kyle Phillips is casting his spell over Southern Gailes which is currently

under construction in Irvine, in an area which already, even to this East Coaster, must rank as one of the richest golfing seams to be found anywhere in the country.

It borders two fine courses, Western Gailes and Glasgow Gailes with Barassie not too far away and Royal Troon and Prestwick within shouting distance. The ambition is that the new course will more than earn its place among such exalted company.

Ironically the man charged with ensuring the project comes in on schedule and on budget is from the east. Alistair Connell, was brought in as Golf Course Director and is relishing the opportunity of being involved in such a wonderful project.

"There would be no point in building a new course which was inferior to the great courses it has around it. Southern Gailes is going to be a traditional Ayrshire golf course with a traditional Ayrshire clubhouse while we also have 40 executive style villas and a hotel with leisure facilities," said Alistair, who explained that it would be a pay and play course aimed at the American market as well as local golfers.

"The land is probably one of the last traditional links sites in Scotland and

is certainly one of the last traditional links sites in the west of Scotland.

"It is not on the actual coast but is within 400-500 yards of the sea and the aim is to create a links golf course," he explained, as we drove around the course.

Southern Gailes was conceived when Irvine Development Council decided that it wanted to develop an area of wasteland and put the project out to tender.

"It could have become industrial units or anything really but our company, the only one which was proposing a golf course, was the successful bidder.

The next step was to appoint an architect and such was Kyle Phillips' reputation, having made such a magnificent job with Kingsbarns, he was asked to look at the site.

"Everyone knows he designed Kingsbarns on the east coast which is a pedigree golf course and the Directors of the company felt he was the man for this one. He looked at it and was very upbeat about what he found," he recalled.

The original routing plan was completed in June 2000 and the sod cutting ceremony performed in August of last year.

Kyle has visited the site every four or five weeks since and there have been considerable changes to his original thoughts and designs.

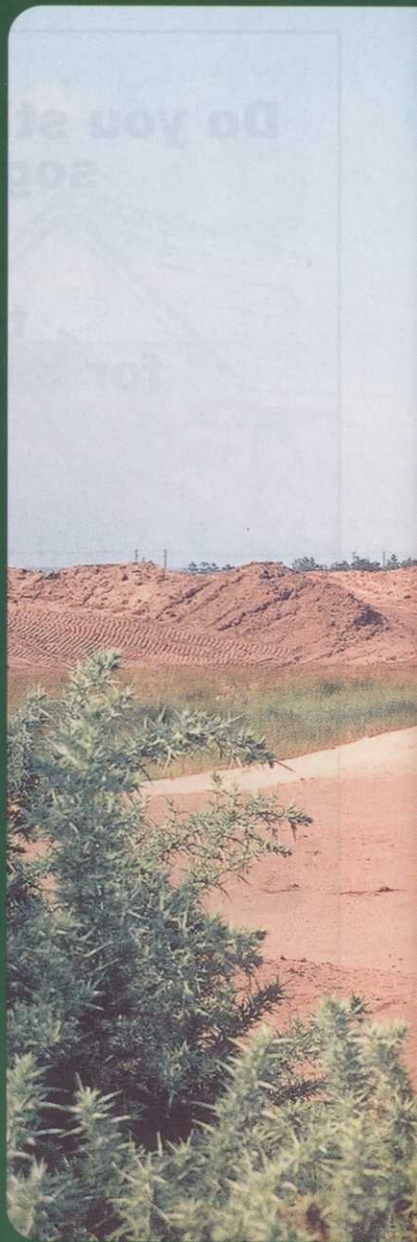
"You can easily do contour drawings but when you see the earth moving you can tweak the design then," explained Alistair.

Kyle Phillips has used the four corners of the compass on the design and has cleverly shielded the golfer from the massive paper mill building which is a few hundred yards from the site on the vast majority of the holes.

"It is a bit of an eyesore and if people are here to play golf they'd rather be looking out to sea than at a paper mill," he said.

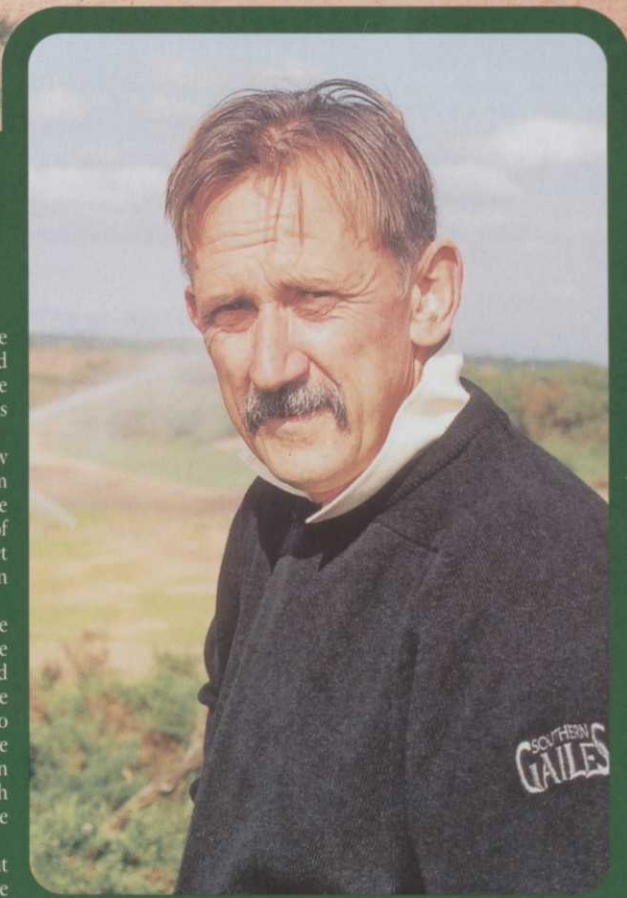
The course also boasts the distinctive Phillips' greens.

"He has his own thoughts about greens. You could say that some of





One of the distinctive Kyle Phillips greens under construction.



Alistair Connell

into," said Alistair, who currently works four days a week at Southern Gailes.

"My role now is Golf Course Director and I'm part of a team of directors and it is my role to oversee the construction of the course, act as the middle man between Kyle Phillips and the Directors and grow in the course to a playable standard."

One of the main decisions taken was to put together an in-house team to do the construction.

"To construct a golf course you can have an open cheque book but we had a budget to build a course and felt that it could be done in-house at a cost that wouldn't frighten anyone off. We've proved it can be done. We've used a subcontractor to do some of the muck shifting and hauling of materials and we're still on target to come in on budget.

"We also employed one shaper, Jeff Ppaff, an American based in Wales

who was brought in on the recommendation of Kyle Phillips and he does all the shaping to the architectural drawings and works closely with Kyle."

Alistair put together a crew comprising greenkeepers from neighbouring clubs who can do the finishing work and the growing in of the course and they have all had to get used to the problems of working on pure sand.

"Wind is the problem. The name Gailes says it all and for a large percentage of the year there is a wind blowing from one corner of the site and it sometimes proves difficult to stabilise the sand. At the early stage we had a state-of-the-art irrigation system from RainBird installed with which we've managed to minimise the blow-out.

"We have 85% take at the moment and the other 15% can be done during the work carried out over the winter."



The rolling dunes are all man-made

The team stripped a 15 acre site on the edge of the course of rootzone and used some of this to build the two and a half metre high dunes which define much of the course's perimeter. Such is the quality of natural rootzone Southern Gailes has been able to sell some of it to off-set cost.

"It's been used to construct football pitches in Glasgow including Murray Park the new state-of-the-art Glasgow Rangers training facility while we've also offered it to other local golf clubs."

Part of the site includes EEC grassland areas and the planning restrictions meant that no dune structure could be higher than two and a half metres above ground.

"We are now on those critical grassland areas which were part of the old overgrown Dundonald golf course over which Southern Gailes is laid out and the grasses have lovely fescues in them and we want to retain those indigenous grasses to retain the links feel."

Another element which had to be taken into consideration was the trees with 32 acres of fir trees on the site.

"The site is about 320 acres but about 33 acres were fir trees planted when the Government were giving tree planting grants in the 70s.

"We had no problem with the planners who said the trees were a blot on the landscape and a contractor came in and gave us a price for removing them and the money we made from the job gave the construction crew and the rest of the staff a nice Christmas party last year."

The areas around the proposed villas are Scottish Natural Heritage and SSSI sites boasting some fine flora and

fauna and Alistair is working closely with Jonathan Smith, of the Scottish Wildlife Group, to ensure everything is done to maintain these areas while there are also trying to establish wetland areas on the course as well.

"Areas of the course are rife with heather and gorse and we are taking plugs of these to transplant in other parts of the course to create an older look," he explained.

At the moment the winter work will be continuing, weather permitting with turf from their 60 area turf nursery being used to for the bunker revetment.

"Hopefully we will have some play in July of next year and if not we'll wait until the August but as we speak we are quietly confident that a given a good break with the weather in the winter and spring we will remain on course."

One of the aspects which pleases Alistair the most is the employment the new project is bringing to the area.

"We feel we are putting something back into Ayrshire by way of jobs. We've got a clubhouse, a golf course and will have a hotel and it will

bring tourists to the area and that brings jobs."

On a personal note Alistair hasn't yet made up his mind about the future.

"I would like to stay for three years and by then this course will be complimenting the other very good courses it has around it, but beyond that I don't know what will happen."

Once matured the new Southern Gailes course will, undoubtedly and some might say unfortunately, become another valuable addition to the west coast's case when it comes to the great east-west debate.



Learning

Education & Training for Professional Greenkeepers



As a member of the Greenkeepers Training Committee, BIGGA is actively involved in raising the Standard of Greenkeeper Training. The range and quality of training now available means that there is a training course for every greenkeeper which should improve the quality of greenkeeping and help to produce quality golf courses.

Golf Course Managers should ensure that their staff are trained to the highest standards, beginning by selecting a training provider that meets the criteria laid down by the GTC.

There is a clear link between education, training and economic success and if you think that training is expensive then try ignorance.

Ken Richardson
Education and Training Manager,
British and International Golf
Greenkeepers Association

Tel: 01347 833800
Email: education@bigga.co.uk
Website: www.bigga.org.uk



The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) is continually striving to raise the standards of Golf Course Maintenance and Management and they are totally committed to ensuring that the range of qualifications are relevant to the Sportsturf sector and used by Employers for recruitment and by trainees for their own personal development.

The Government endorsed awards range

from National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (N/SVQ's) to the more academic Higher National Certificate (HNC)/National Diploma (ND)/Higher National Diploma (HND) in Golf Course Management and the Degree in Sportsturf Science.

The qualifications are continually under review by the National Training Organisation (NTO) in association with

the GTC. The quality of the delivery of these awards by the network of GTC Approved Training Providers is also constantly monitored by the GTC. For up to date independent advice on qualifications, education and training courses contact the GTC on:-

Tel: 01347 838640
Email: golf@the-gtc.co.uk
Website: www.the-gtc.co.uk

www.bigga.org.uk



GREENKEEPER TRAINING

abingdon:witney college

ABINGDON AND WITNEY COLLEGE, Warren Farm Campus, Horton-cum-Studley, Oxford, OX33 1BY **Contact:** Alan Brown or John Revis **Tel:** 01865 351794 **Fax:** 01865 358931 **Email:** alan.brown@abingdon-witney.ac.uk **Website:** www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk **Information:** Warren Farm Campus is the base for Abingdon and Witney College's education and training in Greenkeeping, Sportsturf, Amenity Horticulture and allied land based courses for the whole of Oxfordshire. Courses include:- NVQ Levels 2 & 3 in Sportsturf, Decorative Horticulture and Hard Landscape. We also offer a range of short courses for the industry including Health & Safety, pesticide training and chainsaw operation. For more information contact either Alan Brown or John Revis on Tel: 01865 351794 or Fax: 01865 358931.



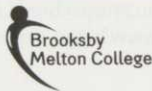
ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE, Askham Bryan, York, North Yorkshire YO23 3FR **Contact:** Central Admissions **Tel:** 01904 772211 **Fax:** 01904 772288 **Email:** sl@askham-bryan.ac.uk **Website:** www.askham-bryan.ac.uk **Information:** National Certificate in Horticulture, National Diploma in Horticulture (Turf Option), Higher National Diploma in Horticulture (Golf Management Option) all available full or part time. Block release courses: NVQ Level 2 Greenkeeping, NVQ Level 3 Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Maintenance, NVQ Level 4 Amenity Horticulture. Short courses: FEPA spraying, chainsaw and brushcutter courses.

Berkshire College of Agriculture

BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, Hall Place, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 6QR **Contact:** Tel: 01628 824444 **Fax:** 01628 824695 **Email:** enquiries@bca.ac.uk **Website:** www.bca.ac.uk **Information:** Full-time programmes - BTEC First & National Diploma. Part-time programmes - NVQ 2 & 3 Amenity Horticulture, Sports Turf (day and block release). Short courses - Greenkeeping for golfers, NPIC Chainsaw Competence Certificates, Spray Operators Training Courses.



BRINSBURY COLLEGE, Pulborough, West Sussex, Sussex RH20 1DL **Contact:** Tel: 01798 877400 **Fax:** 01798 875222 **Email:** Student-services@brinsbury.ac.uk **Website:** www.brinsbury.ac.uk **Information:** FULL-TIME: National Diploma Horticulture (Greenkeeping option), BTEC First Diploma New Entrant Horticulture (Greenkeeping option), First Diploma New Entrant Horticulture (Greenkeeping option). National Certificate Horticulture (Greenkeeping & Sportsground option), PART-TIME: NVQ3 Sports Turf Maintenance (Day release or work based), NVQ2 Amenity Horticulture (Greenkeeping & Sports Turf options), plus varied short courses including Chainsaw, Brushcutter/Strimmer, PA1/PA2A/PA6A/PA9 etc.



BROOKSBY MELTON COLLEGE, Brooksby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE14 2LJ **Contact:** Ann Hurt/Jo Lees **Tel:** 01664 850850 **Fax:** 01664 855355 **Email:** course.enquiries@brooksbymelton.ac.uk **Website:** www.brooksbymelton.ac.uk **Information:** Situated on the A607 between Leicester and Melton Mowbray. Programmes available include NVQ Level 1, II, III & IV in Greenkeeping. Work based emphasis for all of these programmes. Short courses available in Arboriculture/Chainsaw work, TDLB training and Pesticide application training.

Cannington College
SOMERSET

CANNINGTON COLLEGE, Cannington Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2LS **Contact:** Philip Sharples **Tel:** 01278 655084 **Fax:** 01278 655055 **Email:** sharplesp@cannington.ac.uk **Website:** www.cannington.ac.uk **Information:** BTEC Higher National Diploma in Sports Science (Golf Option), BTEC National Diploma in Sports Science (Golf Studies), Higher National Certificate Golf Course Management, BTEC First Diploma, BTEC National Diploma in Golf Course Management, Foundation Degree in Golf Course Management, Foundation Degree in Turfgrass Science and Technology, NVQ Level II Golf Greenkeeping, NVQ Level III Greenkeeping and Supervisory Management, FEPA Training, Chainsaw Certification, Off-road Vehicle Certification, Greenkeeper Mechanics. Certificate in Irrigation (BTLIA) 1 week course; National Certificate in Golf Greenkeeping (1yr FT). Note: Foundation Degree - part-time option (tba). HNC now 2 yr day release course.



EAST DURHAM and HOUGHALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE, Houghall, Durham, DH1 3SG **Contact:** Tony Milan **Tel:** 0191 386 1351 **Fax:** 0191 386 0419 **Email:** enquiry@edhcc.ac.uk **Website:** www.edhcc.ac.uk **Information:** Full-time courses: National Certificate in Horticulture/Greenkeeping and Groundsmanship - 1 year; National Diploma in Horticulture Turf Option - 2/3 years. Part time courses: Greenkeeping and Sportsturf maintenance NVQ Level 2 - Day Release. NVQ Level 3/4 Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Maintenance Day Release. Short courses: FEPA Modules, Chainsaw certification, Tree inspection, Horticultural Machinery, Safe Lifting and First Aid.



HADLOW COLLEGE, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 0AL **Contact:** Norman Coasdale **Tel:** 01732 850551 **Website:** www.hadlow.ac.uk **Information:** First Diploma Sports Turf Management, National Diploma in Horticulture (Sports Turf Option), NVQ Level II and Level III. Part-time Day Release or evenings. Level II in Groundsmanship evenings. NVQ III Golf Greenkeeping. Centres at Hadlow, Canterbury, Maidstone and Mottingham.



HARTPURY COLLEGE, Hartpury House, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL19 3BE **Contact:** Sara-Jane Watkins **Tel:** 01452 702132 **Fax:** 01452 700629 **Email:** enquire@hartpury.ac.uk **Website:** www.hartpury.ac.uk **Information:** Courses available: First Diploma Horticulture, National Certificate Horticulture, National Diploma Landscaping, First Diploma Greenkeeping, Certificate in Greenkeeping, National Diploma Greenkeeping, National Diploma Golf Studies, Modern Apprenticeships, Route 2 Work, NVQs available in Amenity Horticulture, Commercial Horticulture, Amenity / Turf, Amenity / Sportsturf, Decorative Horticulture, plus RHS General Examination, City & Guilds Certificate in Gardening, TDLB Assessor Awards and a full programme of amateur, leisure and day release courses.



MERRISTWOOD COLLEGE, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3PE **Contact:** David Rhodes **Tel:** 01483 884003 **Fax:** 01483 884001 **Email:** info@merristwood.ac.uk **Website:** www.merristwood.ac.uk **Information:** Full-time courses: National Certificate in Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management, National Diploma in Greenkeeping & Sports Turf Management. Part-time courses: NVQ Amenity Horticulture Level 2 and 3 in the workplace - we come to you, NVQ Amenity Horticulture Sports Turf Maintenance Level 2, NVQ Amenity Horticulture Sports Turf Maintenance Level 3 (afternoon/evening release), HNC Turf Science (afternoon/evening release), new for 2002 - HND Turf Science and NVQ Level 4, various short courses throughout the year. Please contact us for up-to-date listings and information.



MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE, Bilsborrow, Preston, Lancashire PR3 0RY **Contact:** Tel: 01995 642211/642222 **Fax:** 01995 642333 **Email:** mailbox@myerscough.ac.uk **Website:** www.myerscough.ac.uk **Information:** Full time courses: BSc (Hon's) Turfgrass Science, HND Turf Science and Golf Course Management; ND Turf Science; NC Groundsmanship and Greenkeeping; First Diploma; Turf Science; NVQ Level 2, 3 & 4 Greenkeeping Management delivered both in the work place and over the internet using the college's 'Mollnet System'. Also offer D32/D33 in the work place. Part-time courses NVQ Level 2 & 3 Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Maintenance (Day/block release or Fast track work-based training qualification), HND Turf Science and Golf Course Management; HNC Turf Science; FEPA Short courses.



NESCOT - North East Surrey College of Technology, Reigate Road, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT17 3DS **Contact:** Mr C Smith **Tel:** 020 8394 3220 **Email:** info@nescot.ac.uk **Website:** www.nescot.ac.uk **Information:** NVQ Levels I, II and III in Amenity Horticulture (Greenkeeping options). Pesticides Application - Certificate of Competence. Part time Day Release. Duration: Two years to Level II. FEPA Spraying Courses. Also available - RHS General and Advanced Certificates in Horticulture.



OAKLANDS COLLEGE, Oaklands Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL4 0JA **Contact:** Ian Merrick **Tel:** 01727 737000 **Fax:** 01727 737752 **Email:** ian.merrick@oaklands.ac.uk **Website:** www.oaklands.ac.uk **Information:** Full time courses: National Certificate in Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management. Part-time courses: leading to NVQ Level 2 & 3 Greenkeeping, Modern Apprenticeships. Evening Courses: leading to NVQ Level 4. Short Courses: Pesticide, Chainsaw.



PLUMPTON COLLEGE, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3AE **Contact:** David Blackmur **Tel:** 01273 892044 **Fax:** 01273 890071 **Email:** enquiries@plumpton.ac.uk **Website:** www.plumpton.ac.uk **Information:** National Diploma in Amenity Horticulture (options in Landscaping and Sportsturf); National Certificate in Amenity Horticulture; First Diploma in Horticulture. Part-time courses: NVQ Level 1, Level 2 Amenity Horticulture in Decorative, Nursery, Hard Landscape and Sportsturf, Level 3 Amenity in Decorative and Sportsturf, Level 4 Amenity. Also available are RHS General and Advanced and IOG National Technical and National Diploma (Int). Short courses are also available for FEPA spraying and chainsaw courses.



REASEHEATH COLLEGE, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DF **Contact:** Tel: 01270 625131 **Fax:** 01270 625665 **Email:** brianj@reaseheath.ac.uk **Website:** www.reaseheath.ac.uk **Information:** Full time First Diploma Horticulture (Sportsturf Option) - 1 year. National Diploma Horticulture (Sportsturf Option) - 2 years. BTEC Higher National Diploma Golf Course Management - 3 years. Part time: HNC Golf Course Management with Open Learning option, NVQ Levels 1-4 Greenkeeping with Fast Track options. IOG courses available. Short courses: FEPA Chemical Safety; Safe Lifting; Chainsaws, Off-Road Vehicle Driving; First Aid.

Training providers guide

Available courses guide

This guide is not exhaustive and a full list of GTC approved training providers can be obtained from the GTC. The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) are continually reviewing the approved status of training providers offering greenkeeper training courses. Anyone with a query regarding greenkeeper training should contact the Greenkeeper Training Committee at Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, Tel: 01347 838640 or visit their website at <http://www.the-gtc.co.uk>

ENGLAND



SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE, Sparsholt, Winchester, Hampshire SO21 2NF **Contact:** Ray Broughton **Tel:** 01962 776441 **Fax:** 01962 776587 **Email:** rbroughton.sparsholt@ac.uk **Website:** www.sparsholt.ac.uk **Information:** NVQ Level 2 Greenkeeping Practice, NVQ Level 3 Greenkeeping Supervision, City & Guilds Phase IV Management Studies, National Diplomas in Golf Course Management and Golf Studies, National Certificate in Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management. GTC: Greenkeeping Certificate, GTC: Certificate in Golf Course Supervision, FEPA: Short courses, Chainsaws. Phase IV and NVQ Level 2 are offered on block release and day release. Full residential facilities available. Sparsholt college provides education and training in the land-based industries.



THE COLLEGE OF WEST ANGLIA, Milton Campus, **Contact:** Bob Young **Tel:** 01223 860701 **Email:** Student Support at King's Lynn on 01553 761144 Ext 271 **Information:** The College of West Anglia offers a full range of courses for Greenkeepers including: NVQ Level 2 Sportsturf (Greenkeeping and Groundsmanship), NVQ Level 3 Sports Turf Maintenance. GTC Craft Certificate, GTC Certificate in Golf Course Supervision, TDLB Assessors awards. FEPA, Chain Saws, MO1. Other Courses: National and First Diploma in Horticulture and Garden Design.



WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE, Royal Leamington Spa & Moreton Morrell, Moreton Morrell, Warwick, Warwickshire CV35 9BL **Contact:** Brian Cook **Tel:** 01926 318268 **Email:** enquiries@warkscol.ac.uk **Information:** Greenkeeping Courses: HNC Sports Turf & Golf Course Management (Day Release 2 year Programme); NVQ Level 2 & 3 Day Release and Workbased Option (we come to you); two year ND in Horticulture with Turf Option; IOG Intermediate Diploma (evening class); Certificate in Turf Irrigation. Short Courses: Introduce your Committee to Turf Culture; Computing for the Greenkeeper; Various throughout the year - ring for details. FEPA; Chainsaw Certification; TDLB; First Aid. Also RHS General and Diploma, PA1, PA2A and PA6.



WRITTLE COLLEGE, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3RR **Contact:** David Campbell **Tel:** 01245 424200 **Fax:** 01245 420456 **Website:** www.writtle.ac.uk **Information:** SPORTSTURF PROGRAMMES NVQ Level 2 - Sportsturf; NVQ Level 3 - Sportsturf Maintenance, NVQ Levels 1, 2 & 3 - Amenity Horticulture, HNC - Sportsturf Science, HND - Sportsturf and Golf Course Management. Other Programmes: National Certificate, National Diploma (with Sportsturf Option), BSc (Hons) Sportsturf Science and Management, BSc (Hons) Horticulture, BSc (Hons) Landscape and Amenity Management, MSc Landscape and Amenity Management, NVQ 2 and 3 Service Engineering, First Diploma Agriculture (Mechanisation), C & G Agricultural Mechanics Certificate. FEPA. Chainsaw. Tractor Driving.

IRELAND



GREENMOUNT COLLEGE, Antrim, County Antrim BT41 4PU **Contact:** Declan Gallagher **Tel:** 028 94 426794 **Fax:** **Email:** declan.gallagher@dardni.gov.uk **Website:** www.greenmount.ac.uk **Information:** Day release courses to (a) NVQ Level II Greenkeeping and Sportsturf, (b) NVQ Level III Golf Course Supervision National Diploma in Horticulture with Turf options FEPA, Health & Safety and a range of short courses.



TEAGASC COLLEGE, College of Amenity Horticulture, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin DUBLIN 9 **Contact:** Pat Suttle **Tel:** 00353 16376133 **Fax:** 00353 18040212 **Email:** college@botanic.teagasc.ie **Website:** www.teagasc.ie **Information:** Block release courses in greenkeeping providing Level III Certificates by the National Council of Vocational Awards. Level III Certificate in Golf Course Management. 3 year full-time course. National Council for educational awards a National Diploma in Horticulture (Greenkeeping specialisation).

SCOTLAND



Elmwood College, Cupar, Fife KY15 4JB **Contact:** Ann Bain **Tel:** 01334 658842 **Fax:** 01334 658888 **Email:** abain@elmwood.ac.uk **Information:** Full time National Certificate Greenkeeping; Block Release SVQ Level II, SVQ Level III Sportsturf block release and Outreach available, and SVQ Level IV/HNC/D Golf Course Management available as full time, block release and distance learning. HNC Golf Facility Management, (HND Golf Facility Management subject to validation for 2002). PDA for football and cricket available both block release and Outreach. FEPA and COSHH, chainsaws, tree climbing and rescue techniques and Health and Safety short courses also available.



GOSTA TRAINING LTD, 5E Clydeaway Centre, 45 Finnieston Street, Glasgow G3 8JU **Contact:** Iain Forbes **Tel:** 0141 248 2772 **Fax:** 0141 248 2453 **Email:** learn@gostatraining.co.uk **Information:** SVQ II and III also Modern Apprenticeship in Amenity Horticulture for all options including Sportsturf and GTC Training Manual. Attendance Day/Block release from November-March. Short courses including Pesticides, Chainsaw, First Aid, Abrasive Wheels, Manual Handling, Fire Extinguisher and Assessor Training, Consultancy service for Site Risk Audits, Machinery Risk Assessments, Machinery Permit to use system, COSHH and Noise Assessment, Health & Safety, Policy development.



LANGSIDE COLLEGE, Rutherglen Campus, Buchanan Drive, Rutherglen, Glasgow G73 3PF **Contact:** Colin S Urquhart **Tel:** 0141 647 6300 **Email:** colinur@perseus.langside.ac.uk **Information:** SVQ, SGA, HNC, HND. Full time and part-time courses in Greenkeeping, Groundsmanship, Golf Course Management, Horticulture, Land and Environment and Applied Ecology. Short courses for land-based industries including Risk Assessment and Pesticides.



OATRIDGE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, Ecclesmachan, By Broxburn, West Lothian, Edinburgh EH52 6NH **Contact:** Steve Miller **Tel:** 01506 854387 **Fax:** 01506 853373 **Email:** info@oatridge.ac.uk **Website:** www.oatridge.ac.uk **Information:** HNC In Golf Course Management (Part-time); Full-time National Certificate in Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management; SVQ Level II and GTC Manual (Day and Block Release); SVQ Level III Sportsturf (Day and Block Release) SVQ Level III in Ground Care Machinery, full range of Amenity Horticulture, Landscaping and other land based subjects at HND and HNC, National Certificate and SVQ Levels; Short Course - FEPA, Chainsaw, Forklift, First Aid.

WALES



PENCOED COLLEGE, Pencoed, Bridgend, Cardiff CF35 5LG **Contact:** Paul Discombe/John Sullivan **Tel:** 01656 302672 **Fax:** 01656 302601 **Email:** pldiscombe@bridgend.ac.uk **Website:** www.bridgend.ac.uk **Information:** Courses: NVQ Sportsturf Level 2-3, HND/HNC in Turf Management. Short courses: Pesticide application, Chainsaw Operation and many others. TDLB Assessor Courses



WELSH COLLEGE OF HORTICULTURE, Northop Mold, Flintshire, CH7 6AA **Contact:** Graham Wright **Tel:** 01352 841034 **Fax:** 01352 841031 **Email:** graham.wright@wcoh.ac.uk **Website:** www.wcoh.ac.uk **Information:** Full-time - Higher National Diploma in Turf Management. Part-time - Day release Higher National Certificate in Turf Management. Block Week - NVQ Amenity Sportsturf Levels 2-3. Briefing Days - NVQ Level 4, TDLB Assessor Courses D32, 33, 34. Day Courses - FEPA, Chainsaw Certification, First Aid, C.I.E.H.

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The facilities

At the College there are extensive practical facilities and resources including a nine-hole "pay and play" parkland course. A four hole par three practice golf layout, a practical putting green and a bowling green. The College is well equipped to meet the requirements of greenkeeping and sportsturf management courses.

The courses

HNC in GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT
This advanced level course is offered on a part-time basis. It is suited to applicants who have completed their craft level training and wish to attain technical, financial and managerial skills necessary to perform effectively as modern head greenkeepers and course managers.

SVQ LEVEL 2 SPORTS TURF

The course normally lasts two years and consists of a planned programme of SQA units. The programme is designed for people entering or at an early part of their career in the industry and offers practical instruction supported by technical knowledge in a range of skills.

SVQ LEVEL 3 SPORTS TURF MAINTENANCE

The course normally lasts two years and is appropriate for people who have completed their Level 2 or have been involved in the industry for some time. The programme is based on organisational and supervisory skills with the emphasis placed on the creation and maintenance of sports turf including maintenance, repair, renovation and setting out.

CERTIFICATE in GREENKEEPING and SPORTSTURF MANAGEMENT

The course is designed for persons wishing to gain entry into the Greenkeeping and sportsturf management industry for the first time, or as a change in direction for their careers.

The content is based on a range of SQA modules devised to meet industrial needs by providing students with sound, hands-on practical experience, maintaining, renovating and developing sportsturf and amenity facilities both on and off the College site. A wide range of opportunities are available in this diverse and expanding industry with the potential to progress for those people with commitment, qualification and appropriate experience.

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Richard Windows takes up the cudgels against the dreaded thatch

IN THE GROOVE



An essential attribute of golf greens is that they are firm underfoot and free draining. Unfortunately this condition is often difficult to obtain due to the presence of thatch beneath many putting surfaces. Thatch restricts drainage and naturally holds water, producing a soft, spongy turf. Consequently, thatch control is one of the main aims of the greenkeeper. The recent availability of two deep scarification units in the UK will provide the greenkeeper with a much more efficient and less disruptive form of thatch removal, providing golfers with higher quality putting surfaces.

The fight against Thatch!

Thatch is an organic material, which can naturally accumulate in the soil profile, as grass leaves and roots go through a continuous process of senescence and death. Organic build up is possible in every kind of plant community, but in intensively managed turf areas the process is accelerated due to excess growth from possible over application of fertiliser and irrigation water. In a healthy soil/turf situation, natural microbial action will start to break down this organic 'litter' and it will subsequently become

incorporated into the organic fraction of the soil. When the rate of dead plant tissue accumulation exceeds that of natural microbial digestion, thatch in the soil profile accumulates.

Excessive thatch can restrict the free passage of water through the soil profile as the pore spaces between the soil particles can be reduced or blocked. This type of damp, often nutrient rich environment is a relatively attractive place for grass roots to colonise, especially those of annual meadow grass. Therefore thatchy' soil profiles gen-

erally support weak rooted, drought susceptible grass swards that require more applications of irrigation water and fertiliser to recover from stress, which subsequently initiates the vicious circle that contributes to more thatch build up.

As every greenkeeper knows, the key to producing good quality playing surfaces is the production of a free draining, homogenous soil profile, containing little or no thatch. Historically, the favoured and arguably the most effective method to remove thatch was by hollow coring. Not only is this operation largely unpopular amongst golfers, as the surface is disrupted and levels often compromised, it is also a relatively inefficient technique for thatch removal. A recent survey carried out by the USGA Greens Section has highlighted this inefficiency. For instance the total surface area impacted by a hollow coring operation using 12 mm tines with an intensive hole pattern of 50 x 50 mm is only 4.91% (Hartwiger & O'Brien). Obviously this means a large amount of the surface (95%) remains totally untreated and therefore little improvement to these areas is made.

The next generation of Thatch removal

The advent of the newly developed deep scarification machines will provide Greenkeepers with a more effective method of thatch removal; the Graden VS003 Verti-cutter and the Sisis Auto-Rotorake 600 are the two machines currently available. Both operate similarly and can achieve penetration to a depth of 40-50 mm on most types of soil. The former was developed for use on Australian cricket pitches. The study by the USGA Greens Section showed that a deep scarification machine fitted with 2 mm blades impacts 7.9% of the turf surface and one fitted with 3 mm blades impacts 14.1% of the surface. It is clear to see that these figures are almost double and triple the surface area impacted compared to more conventional 12 mm hollow coring. These statistics are impressive but the question often asked by turf managers is 'how much disruption does the operation cause?'. The answer to this is simple, invariably very little. Essentially the grooves look like a severe verti-cut operation and if the operation is achieved during periods of active grass growth the 'grooves' quickly recover and the surface is back to normal within a few

days. The 'grooves' have proved to be excellent preparation to work top dressing into the surface and provide an ideal seedbed for over sown grass seed.

A further benefit from such an operation is the grinding effect of the rapidly revolving blades against buried sand and thatch. This is similar to a 'chewing' action as the sand particles rub against the thatch, which hopefully exposes a greater surface area of thatch to the enzymatic action of the natural soil micro flora, i.e. bacteria and fungi. Therefore the natural rate of thatch breakdown is often increased by microbial action at the same time of physically removing the unwanted material.

Grooving for Golf

Many golf greens contain thin 2-3 mm layers of buried thatch in the top 40 mm of the soil profile, which are very difficult to remove by conventional coring as the layers re-seal themselves soon after treatment. These thin layers can inhibit the free passage of water through the soil profile and encourage lateral rooting and differential drying amongst the layers resulting in the loss of surface uniformity. This is wholly undesirable as free draining, homogenous soil profiles that can support deeply rooted, uniform grass swards are one of the fundamentals of turf management. Therefore it is vital to remove these layers and the deep scarification operation is proving to be effective and popular among greenkeepers to achieve this goal.

The 2 mm blades used during late August/ September, when grass growth is still active, is providing a very effective approach to removal of these layers. This operation should then be combined with the top dressing of a good quality sandy material so that surface level disturbance is minimal. For serious thatch problems, or management of creeping or velvet bentgrass greens, use of the 1mm blades through the main playing season will also provide the greenkeeper with an effective tool against continual thatch build up and removal.

The concept

The concept of a deep scarification is a good and exciting one. It has been popular in the U.S. and Australia for a while now and early assessments in the U.K. are very encouraging indeed. The simple fact that more thatch material is removed, allowing more air and



therefore natural thatch break down to result makes it very popular amongst Greenkeepers. These desirable attributes are further complemented by the fact that disruption is minimal and superb grooves for top dressing and over seeding are left behind. Therefore the concept of deep scarification provides the greenkeeper with a valuable tool in the constant battle against the arch enemy that is thatch.

References; Hartwiger, C. & O'Brien, P. (2001) Core aeration by the numbers. USGA Greens Section Record. 39-4. Pages 8-9. Richard Windows is an STRI Turfgrass Agronomist covering South Scotland. Richard and the rest of the STRI team can be contacted on 01274 565131, email; info@stri.co.uk or visit our website <http://www.stri.co.uk/>