

TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

WE were communing lately with a well-known golf architect. (Golf architects are always written of as well-known, reputed, or noted, but the description is more a credit to the writer for having heard of them than a tribute to their renown.) We asked him, as people unfortunately do, which golf course he considered to be his best. This knowledge would greatly interest our readers.

He removed the straw from his mouth and appeared to cogitate. After years of weighing replies to questions from Green Committees, he would not be rushed into a hasty verdict. We could understand his reluctance but another digression may be needed if you are to do so too.

Gem

When visiting almost any course to play with a member, you have known that moment on a certain tee when he says: "*Henry Cotton* (or *Dai Rees* or *James Braid* or any such distinguished golfer) *said this was the finest short hole he knew when he played here in 19 . . .*" No record remains of his opinion of the other seventeen holes. After many repetitions of these judgments at different courses, you have realised that a civil visitor was obliged to let fall some crumb, however eagerly it might be snapped up and preserved for the amazement of posterity.

A short hole will normally give a reasonable excuse for spontaneous exclamations because it is so often a device to bridge what is otherwise unplayable. A sniff of danger from lake, stream, or chasm still twitches the golfer's nostrils however used he may be to stately, roughless rounds at home. And "fine" is warily non-committal on the vital issues, leaving personal honour untarnished and audience not dissatisfied.

Grass recognition

Our golf architect regarded his straw with growing interest. This evidently showed the prominent keel of *Aira flexuosa* not the unbroken cylinder of *Festuca elatior subsp. pratensis*, as he had first suspected. Signs of imminent speech were rising and we waited sympathetically. Hardened by clients primed with all the opinions of great players since their course opened and eagerly awaited his, lost in the contemplation of a vivid past, swimming with green links, he pondered, selected, and finally affirmed.

"Ur!", he said, replaced his straw, and left us.

We do not know the courses ourselves and, on reflection, did he perhaps mean "Er . . .", leaving you to fill in the details?