

# LAST MONTH

by

The Editor

*The Editor, accompanied by Mr. Dix, B.G.G.A. Hon Secretary, visited all the Scottish Sections between 14th and 16th January*

If you put down a tee-box on the outskirts of Dumfries and walked 300 or 400 yards to the south-west, you would certainly find a place to cut the hole and you could go on placing tee-boxes and holes for the next forty miles. It is no surprise that Scotland is the home of golf. Whether it is by the sea or inland, the countryside was shaped up as one vast golf course with readymade green formations and tee positions. You only have to mow the grass. To Southern eyes, the landscape is also unbelievably free from scrappy development and even scrappier wastepaper.

We looked at Turnberry, Prestwick and Troon on our way to the first lecture at Glasgow. As an exercise in bunkering, Troon would repay months of study. The BOAC aircrews, spending time between flights at the Marine Hotel and out bright and early on the 1st tee, never lifted their eyes from their ball, even when a Boeing 707 swept over them a few hundred feet up on its way to land at Prestwick.

Glasgow on a Tuesday afternoon is not the easiest place to find a plug for the appropriate electric point in the Christian Institute where the West Section lectures are held. Everything closes down at 1 p.m. (as it did the next

day at Dundee). But we were organised by 6 o'clock when Cecil George, the Chairman of the West Section, and Ben Moir, the Secretary, came to meet us at the Central Hotel and took us out to dinner. There were rather more than 50 people attending the lecture. We were taken out afterwards as a reprisal and instructed in the mystery of halves, gills and drams. Amongst many others we met R. B. Moffatt, the General Secretary of the Association.

On Wednesday we went to Dundee via Buchanan Castle and The Trossachs. We had met William Bradford, the Vice-President of the S.G.G.A. the previous night, but when we got to his golf club he was engaged in drainage problems on the far side of the course and time was pressing. We liked the arrangement of the estate with pleasant timber houses on slopes looking down over the attractive parkland layout.

At Dundee we reconnoitred Nicoll & Smiberts Restaurant, where the lecture was to take place, by having lunch there and managed to find the right sort of plug at an electrical contractors before meeting Willie Ritchie, the Secretary of the North and Midland Section. Mr John Campbell, Links Supervisor at St. Andrews and President of the Section, introduced us very kindly, and with an attendance of 38 out of a membership of 38, we were very much impressed by the enthusiasm of this Section, especially as it is the most scattered of the three Sections which form the Scottish Association.

During the afternoon we had been up to Carnoustie but had, unfortunately, missed Robert Gordon, who is Head Greenkeeper there. The courses looked in excellent order and the weather was mild enough for greens to be mown.

On Thursday morning Mr John Campbell met us at St. Andrews and took us over the Old Course. We saw the new spectator mounds and paths through the gorse, which are being made to assist viewing at the Open later in the year. We also inspected with some misgivings the right-hand side of the green at No. 17, where grass has been removed from the edge of the road

and loose chippings left to make a shot back on to the green more interesting. Fortunately, we were not playing, otherwise we might have viewed this change with even more alarm. A brisk look round the Royal and Ancient Club House under the amiable guidance of Mr Tom Goodfellow completed the tour and we made our way to Edinburgh in time to get installed in the Free Gardeners' Institute. The shops were open, but at last we had the plug to suit the projector. We met Harry Smith, the Chairman of the East Section, and Alex Huish, Secretary. Mr D. L. Macdiarmid was also there and Mr Jim King of Luffness asked most of the questions. About 30 members attended.

**Mr. J. K. Campbell, Links Supervisor at St. Andrews, has a keen eye for the golfer's foibles. Many of his cartoons have appeared in "Golf Illustrated".**

Our readers will be enjoying in the coming months a selection which he has very kindly sent to "The Greenkeeper".

Our Friday homeward lap was 440 miles, but it was pleasantly broken at Muirfield, where a walk over the course impressed us again with the remarkable quality of this layout and where Colonel B. Evans-Lombe showed us the Raeburns and other treasures in the club house.

In these days when there is so much talk about the growing popularity of golf, it is refreshing and salutary to go round a land where it has always been popular and where it is so much part of everyday life. Meeting more than a hundred greenkeepers who look after some of its finest courses, one felt certain that the great traditions of the past are in eminently capable hands for the future.

