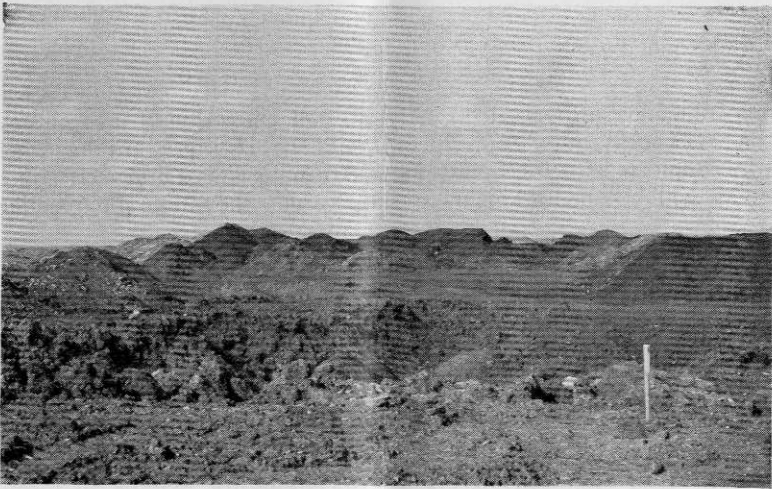


1963, when we can look back on it over a longer interval, may prove to have been a year in which several trends crystallised into the pattern of the next few decades. Leaving aside the revived discussions on the larger ball or how English pros. might win the Ryder Cup, Canada Cup, or the Open, a number of less debated but more debatable events occurred in the nether regions of golf which are certain to affect its future.

Europe's first automatic two-tier driving range at Finchley did not suffer from lack of publicity but nevertheless belongs to these background events. It will be interesting to see whether the promised developments on these lines elsewhere produce a generation of practice addicts content with the brief exhilaration of knocking a bucketful of balls to the far netting or whether they will lead more and more players into personal encounters over eighteen holes.

NEW TRENDS DEMAND NEW COURSES

by
The Editor



The half-way stage in work on Corby's new municipal course created out of the desert left by open-cast iron-stone mining. This new layout will measure over 6,300 yards and will relieve some of the problems due to too few courses in Northamptonshire

If this happens, where are they going to play? 1963 at least gave some hope that this fundamental problem would be tackled. There are signs of several new public courses, one in N W London, two in Kent, two in Essex, and another in Birmingham. The new public course at

Corby in Northants should also this year start to satisfy the needs of the many expatriate Scotsmen who support the steel output of Stewarts & Lloyds.

Many urban and rural councils have also changed the views which limited the wider development of the game



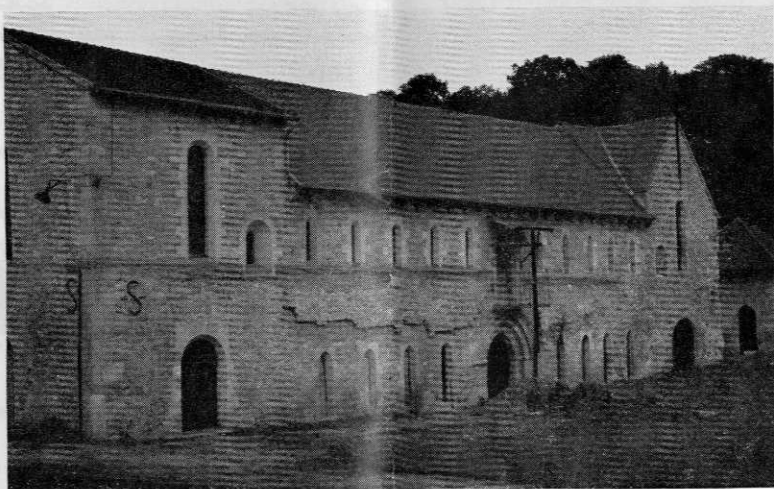
Looking back towards the future 7th Tees at the Valcros Golf Course between Hyères and Le Lavandou on the South Coast of France Vines grew here then, two years ago Now golf is bigger business than wine—even in France

hitherto. Brighter councillors can now push the idea of a golf course with some hope of support and, if land is already owned, the financial aspect can be argued with more confidence.

All this is in addition to several new private courses on more luxurious lines. But then everything has to be more luxurious to keep abreast of the times. 1963 certainly set a record in the num-

ber of plans exhibited on club notice boards for locker room extensions, mixed lounges and cocktail bars. Many clubs even improved their courses.

On the whole, demand will exceed supply for at least the next six years and this is a healthy sign. One wonders if the growth of heavily endowed events, appearance money, and sponsored amateur tournaments is equally healthy



This twelfth century Priory will form the nucleus of a new, luxury, 36-Hole Golf Club near Paris—Le Prieuré This is the club to which George Wilson went from Coventry

The Royal Birkdale Golf Course is one of the few courses in resorts well furnished with hotels that have the length, quality and area to deal with modern championships. Even so this club is in the throes of major changes to keep abreast of modern needs and to provide for the future



Douglas Pate, Royal Birkdale's Head Greenkeeper, stands on the green of his new 12th Hole being built last Autumn to replace the short 17th which created crowd control problems.

They are an inevitable corollary of the game's growing popularity but presumably Association Football must have passed through the same stage once. To see the dangers, translate the back page of a popular daily newspaper into terms of a golf tournament when it is reviewing the disturbances, carpetings, transfers, suspensions, fines, threats, and boastings, which make up space between football matches. Imagine the fun when Pro. A starts to get shirty with Pro. B for coughing when he was addressing the ball. Was it deliberate? asks A of a bystander "Just let him ask *me* that" says B. Referee takes both names, R & A says something must be done.

Another aspect of these promotions and even of the Open itself is how long club members will happily give up their course to accommodate them (often in-

volving drastic alterations or restrictions) and give up their time to be a steward or general lackey. If the frequency increases, their interest will do the opposite, especially while home-bred talent fails to excel.

Similarly, if the requirements for staging an Open Championship become very much more exacting, it will be even more difficult to find a course with both the quality and the space for this event, even if the members accept it.

The answer to all these problems, fortunately, is that the players that count will continue to enjoy their game of golf in their own way anonymously. Nobody will ever hear from them. The time to worry will be when they no longer turn up in their droves. Therefore, greenkeepers at least make things comfortable for them while they are still with us.