

# LAST

# MONTH

by

The Editor

## WIDOW'S MITE

February's first light crept through my bedroom shutters in Brittany in a house on the cliffs above Trébeurden. Mr. Jacques Ferronnière, Managing Director of one of France's two biggest banks, built it a few years back for holidays with his fifteen grandchildren. Our weekend, however, was to be devoted to a new golf course. Over the past few years he has been collecting together small parcels of land from Breton families. This is no simple matter, involving long "parlottes" in farm kitchens with people mystified by the very word "golf". Now most of these discussions have enabled him to unite enough ground to make a start. One widow is still unconvinced but as she only holds the key to the practice ground she can be allowed to reflect for another year.

The land is not dear by today's standards, but it grows only gorse, stone walls intersect the whole area, and rock is never far from the surface (above as well as below). But when it is cleared, plenty of fine, black soil (pH 4.4) comes to light and the prickly planning stage is mercifully over.

## SEA FOOD

The day before this trip, I spent an evening with Toro at Toro. The first Toro was represented by the Vice-President of Toro mowers in the U.S.A., Mr. Robert Gibson, and Mr. John Norton, the Sales Manager; the second, a Paris restaurant of the same name to which Mr. Jack Desrues, Toro's agent in France, with a nice sense of the fitness of things, escorted his party of nine representatives of five nationalities. We drove off with oysters, clams, and sea urchins (prickles again) before we got down to serious eating. The flavour of sea urchins reminded strongly of that area of beach at certain coastal towns where a long iron pipe reaches not far enough out to sea and where cautious mothers advise their children not to bathe. But then so many great eating experiences approach the limit of edibility.

Back to England on the 3rd via Domont, a site conveniently near Le Bourget, where clearing has just started on a new 18-hole layout. Being in a protected zone of forest so close to Paris, the owner had to go as high as the Minister before he could get approval. Now three fairways are under way and the teams are moving forward, one cutting, one burning, one clearing, one rooting, and soon the constructional team will be able to bring up the rear. It all sounds so easy in writing.

## LENNOX HOUSE

Next, to Lisbon, for a couple of quick nine holes—planning not playing. The best evening here was dinner with Mr. Brodie Lennox, followed by an early film from Shell's "Wonderful World of Golf" series. Lennox House is a golfer's home for golfers. The guests sleep in St. Andrews, Muirfield, or Gullane, on the first floor (Birkdale, Lytham and others are up another flight but are slightly less luxurious). The bar has one wall of trophies, golf balls festoon its ceiling and guests help themselves—all part of the Lennox way of life which is golf, golfers and golfing with a hotel of special charm and character. It is no accident that booking in advance is indispensable, but a new annexe in the garden with more rooms for more golfers is just on the point of completion.

Dinner was for three with Mr. John Escritt, who was out there advising Estoril and the Lisbon Sports Club. We were delighted when our host was handed a note sent by his wife. Mrs. Lennox, as you should by now expect, was Portuguese Ladies' Champion but a little of Scotland must have brushed off on to her. The note read: "Dinna hae the sweet. There's no' enough for you".

Sea food in Portugal was even more varied than at El Toro. Goose Barnacles and Dog Whelks, however, must be classified with Sea Urchins as just over the limit of what the ocean should reasonably be expected to offer.

Two days later the scenery changed to Buckinghamshire where I admired the nearly completed results of Phase I of Ernest Folkes' four new holes at Flackwell Heath. Ernest reckons 9,000 turves went down round one hole alone. Like many others he is blessing the weather which has helped him to do twice as much as could be expected since the autumn—three holes out of his four.

## TWO LOOPS

Next door at Burnham Beeches five sets of new tees and the foundation of one new green were already under way and two areas of new fairway cut out. These changes were all that were needed to put the 10th tee in front of the club house. With pressure on first tees growing everywhere, the second starting point is doubly important, especially at Burnham, where new firms setting up on the Slough Industrial Estate nearby are lengthening the waiting list.

## BACK TO BRUSSELS

Just before we go to print I shall be back in Brussels on a housing development site in which golf and sailing are to be provided. The lake is being made artificially and is over a mile long. The method is new to me. A barge with the necessary machinery was built on the site and top soil was removed from the golf course and lake area. Pumping started and the sand and water mixture was piped on to the golf course. The water flows back into the lake and the sand builds up the course to the required contours. Replace top soil. Prepare to sow. Easy, isn't it?

# Get on to GIBBS

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