

# LAST MONTH

By

The Editor

The popularity of golf is certainly not flagging when Rural District Councils are considering the provision of public courses. Dartford R.D.C. has already got plans for a new 18-hole course in Lullingstone Park, in Kent, and has started construction of nine holes this year. The park lies on the southerly-facing slope of the North Downs above the Darenth Valley. The area is well over 300 acres, but large sections are densely wooded and these will remain untouched for the benefit of the general public, while the more open land will provide a course of well over 6,000 yards with comfort.

From several holes, players will look down over Lullingstone Castle, in the valley, and the Roman villa nearby gives further proof of the popularity of this site down the centuries. Perhaps even the Roman game of "paganica", in which some historians see a primitive form of golf, was played over the same fields. In A.D. 350, the preparation of the golf course was less complicated, the basic idea of driving a ball to a given point in as few strokes as possible, or in less strokes than the opponent, was the same, but the open country and a landmark to serve as a goal, provided the arena. If further excavations reveal the mosaic floors of a Roman driving range, we can be certain that the wheel has come full circle.

The following week also began in Dartford, but this time in the Urban District and on the Dartford Golf Course itself, which is to be sadly carved up by the new motorway to the Kent coast. It is difficult sometimes to convince green committees that where every inch of land is already in use and some, as here, used twice by crossing two holes, the only safe and possible answer is to reduce the length of the course proportionately to the reduction of area. This is purely a question of simple arithmetic. The proper architect (the non-golfing type) can solve the problem by adding extra floors if he wishes to accommodate more people per acre. The golf architect can only plan on the ground floor and has to visualise future cries of pain and anguish if he squeezes more holes into the land than common sense dictates. This attitude is doubly important for the future when more golfers, many of them with a less formal approach to the etiquette of the game, will flood the golf courses of England throughout the week.

## Doubtful Case

The next morning began by convincing a committee of one, represented by a B.E.A. official, that it was possible to register a suitcase to Manchester via Brussels. One would have thought that this had already been achieved in an Airport as busy as Heathrow but he had never received the request before. For me, it was clearly far simpler for my suitcase to remain in transit in Brussels while I visited a site, rather than have to clear it through Customs and take it back again later in the day. After consultations, he grudgingly allowed that it was feasible and I could only hope that other officials along the line would grasp the idea more readily. Evidently somebody had doubts because when I reached the steps up to my Viscount in the evening, my suitcase was standing at the foot and each preceding passenger had been asked if it belonged to him. I finally claimed it and produced proof of ownership. Only then was it put aboard.

I do not know if all Aer Lingus Viscounts are arranged like this one. With only two seats on either side of the gang-

way and thick green upholstery everywhere, the impression was one of space and restful luxury. The seats were also low in the back, so that one could see comfortably all round. All the other planes in which I travel have tall seats with an awkward bump behind the head, which pushes the chin down on to the chest. This produces a pensive air about the regular air traveller, which is eventually an occupational disease. The theory is that after take-off the tall seat can be adjusted to a semi-reclining position. When the appropriate lever is pulled, the seat falls back into the lap of the passenger behind, who generally objects forcibly, and quite rightly. But this adjustment in no way affects the relation of the head to the spine. With a short back to the seat stopping at the shoulders, there is no discomfort and I cannot imagine that the negligible chances of survival, should anything go wrong when the aircraft is hurtling down the runway at 140 knots, are in any way reduced. Aer Lingus have also contrived to retain an entirely Irish character on board their aircraft, whereas others vie with each other to be

international. It is agreeable to be able to get a tin of Phoenix beer or a packet of Sweet Afton cigarettes between Brussels and Manchester, and the hostesses, dressed in their greenish tweed, manage to dissemble the slightly petulant expression which I have always taken, I am sure wrongly, to characterise the face of the Irish girl.

### Lancashire Coastline

This flight was the prelude to a round of courses on the Lancashire coast. The first call was at Royal Birkdale, where Douglas Pate was taking time off from his tremendous constructional programme to spread a spring fertiliser on his greens. Clad in apron and with pannier suspended in front of him from his shoulders, he strode with regular paces across his greens, casting handfuls to left and right. The technique was both impressive and accurate.

Then on to Hillside, where Ted Macavoy, in addition to his normal 18 holes, has three of his new ones to maintain. Two more are now being shaped up and before long, with internal altera-

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tions on his present course and six new ones in impressive sand-dune country, he will be pleased to receive any championship you care to name.

Then to Southport and Ainsdale, where the desire for a practice ground may require changes on the course. This is a club where golf is a serious matter and I believe they can put a team of scratch golfers in the field whenever they like. Lastly, to West Lancashire Golf Club, on the morrow, where new bunkering and minor adjustments following their recent complete re-construction are putting the finishing touches to a testing layout, under the supervision of Harry Roberts.

### French Visit

The following week took me to four new courses and one possible site in France. Most I have mentioned before, but the new 18 holes at Rochefort-en-Yvelines are now green and with a landscape of pine trees, birch and heather, should make one of the most attractive layouts round Paris. I walked round with Monsieur Jacques Léglise, President of the French Golf Federation, and a party which included Monsieur Bourret, who came to Saint Cloud as Director from the Royal Golf Club Belgique, at Ravenstein, Brussels. Mr. Chamley, the promoter of this course, has ideas rather in advance of those generally pertaining in France and has already illuminated one hole of the Pitch and Putt Course (which surrounds the clubhouse) experimentally for golf at night. Most people that I have met seem to think that French golfers will prefer other pursuits at this time of the day. But vines have already been pulled out elsewhere to



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make golf holes, so anything can happen.

The month ended with a westerly trip to see the Bath Golf Club, at Sham Castle, where A. A. Cockfield, Secretary of the South-West Section, keeps his spectacular course on the hills in such excellent condition. A site in the Mendips, where not long ago lead was smelted in long stone tunnels, still to be seen. And finally to the West Cornwall Golf Club at Lelant. This being only a few miles from Lands End, is as far as we can go for the present.

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