

# THE BACK ROOM BOYS

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**T**OURNAMENT golf today is a spectacle world wide in its aspect, the modern championship course is the arena where the leading players are attracted to exploit their skill against one another and for lucrative prizes.

Much is being done to improve the facilities for spectators, and at the main championship courses permanent amenities have been installed such as toilets and drinking water, while miles of permanent cable have been laid for use by officials, T.V. and the Press to give up-to-the-minute information. Vantage points have been built, and ground levelled around the perimeter of the course to ensure reasonable walking conditions.

The construction of "natural" vantage points to accommodate spectators by the thousand involves considerable thought, time, material, and a co-ordinated programme for transport and other mechanical devices. Essentially the work is done by the greenkeeping staff in the winter months as weather and regular course maintenance permits.

As to the siting of these vantages many are obvious, and after an event the treading of many thousands of spectators give a clear indication of others which can be improved at little cost and so spread the load. Connecting pathways around the perimeter, and this includes to and from the back tees, are of equal importance and all new work has to be consolidated and turfed over to present spectators with the best possible conditions underfoot. The whole layout must be pleasing to the eye as well as practical, and the traditional appearance of the course left undisturbed. Where necessary tubular stands can be left in the hands of the erectors, but the main object devolves on the greenkeeper whose task it is to make best use of natural amenities which in the course of time will thoroughly blend with the surroundings, so that, apart from maintenance, the first cost of which is the last.

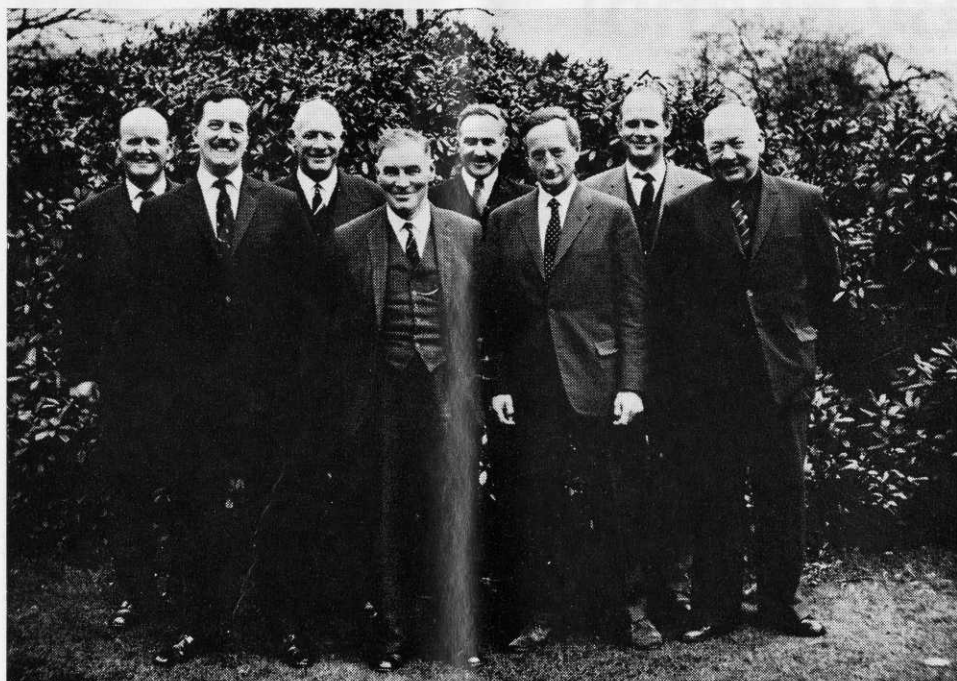
In the process of toughening up the course it often means the construction of special tees to lengthen or improve some of the holes. While as this is being done it is important that the regular routine of course maintenance should proceed unhindered, and club members enjoy their daily game with as little inconvenience as possible.

As the day of the tournament draws nearer the greenkeeper's services are much in demand, liaison with the committee is important to decide where the holes will be placed each day, the tees to be used, and to establish the sites for prefabricated stands if necessary, television towers, marquees and tents, scoreboards, mobile caravans, fences for crowd control, notice boards, collection and disposal of litter. When the lorries and vans arrive with gear of all sorts it is only the greenkeeper with his intimate knowledge of the terrain who can pilot them out to the pre-selected sites without fear of getting bogged down with heavy loads anywhere on the course.

When the players arrive they expect and must find the course groomed to perfection, so by this time preparations have been completed. Greens, tees and fairways have been given their final trim, bunkers also meticulously dealt with including the fringes. Flags freshly painted flag-pins and hole cups stand out against the background of emerald greens carefully manicured showing the familiar striped lines, which is the pleasing effect produced by the greenkeeper with his mowing machine.

During the course of a tournament the players and spectators see very little of the greenkeeper as his work must be done before play begins. This means a daybreak start every morning to cut greens, tees and fairways, move pole positions and rake bunkers. Irrespective of the weather all this work must be done on schedule though often it may mean wet skins.

By the time the spectators and players arrive the work of course grooming by



**JOINT COUNCIL FOR GOLF GREENKEEPER APPRENTICESHIP  
MEETS AT BINGLEY**

*Members of the Joint Council after their Annual Meeting at Bingley  
on Tuesday, 11th October.*

*Left to right. John Campbell, President S.G.G.A., Brian M. Wood, F.C.I.S., Hon. Secretary, W. A. W. Sivewright (Scottish Golf Union), George Herrington (B.G.G.A.), R. B. Moffatt (Hon. Secretary S.G.G.A.), F. W. Hawtree (E.G.U.), Chairman. J. R. Escritt, M.Sc., Director, S.T.R.I., John Parker, B.G.G.A., Vice-Chairman.*

**BACK ROOM BOYS—continued**

the staff will be completed—then they may be employed to help with car parking, posted at strategic parts of the course for dealing with bunkers, etc., and any other tasks of suitable maintenance.

This schedule of work continues throughout the course of the event, jobs such as cutting fairways can begin when the days play is over. In the event of drought pre-conceived plans would be brought into operation for watering greens and tees, etc., in the evening and overnight. This considerably adds to the greenkeepers many tasks as it involves moving equipment with care

being taken to ensure that all areas receive the same amount of water and the run of the ball will be uniform at every hole. When this is done all equipment must be out of the way before play begins in the morning.

After the event the work of the staff really begins with the task of cleaning up and storing away all the paraphernalia. Bottle tops, nails and studs, etc., are a menace to the mowing machines and make routine maintenance more arduous for the next few days.

When next you view a satisfying event either on the spot or on television and possibly admire the look of the course, remember those behind the scenes and particularly the Back Room Boys.