

CONTINUED

## CLUBE DE GOLF DO VALE DO LOBO

by C. J. R. PITMAN  
(Head Greenkeeper)

Weeds on the newly sown fairways were dense as expected and, having plenty of clean, local labour, most of the bad areas were hand cleared. It is an amusing sight to see twenty or so bodies crawling along the fairways engrossed in this work. Later when the grass was stronger we sprayed with 2-4D but this was tricky in one instance as we were given the wrong mixture quantities by our local adviser in the area who before had only sprayed farm crops.

The fairways, being sown on sand, contained many undulations, so on the flatter areas we gingerly employed a 10-ton steam-roller and on the steep slopes, of which there are quite a few, another gang of twenty men were quite happily punning away by hand. A very laborious job but the only way.

At the close of March we were mowing three times a week on the greens and on the fairways once a week, but on our fifth hole, a very steep, sandy fairway where we found it very difficult to obtain a flat state, the gang mowers simply cut out large areas and so it required reseeding, filling-in and then mowing with two small rotary cutters until after seed germination.

About April it gradually becomes pretty hot and the watering for the whole course was stepped up to nine hours a night on the automatic systems. Unfortunately another aggravating problem is the strong Algarvian wind from the Atlantic which in numerous cases reduces considerably the throw of the sprinklers resulting in a few escaping areas that will become parched in a matter of hours. The only way we can overcome this is with portable sprinklers on the fairways and hand-watering on the greens. We have now installed many standpipes for this purpose.

From April to October it is extremely hot most days and much of the time the temperatures are around the 80° mark. Just to help us out, this year was estimated by the local farmers to be the driest period for 30 years and indeed

we saw no rain for six months. At one time the irrigation system was functioning all round the clock and we were carrying out regular surface aeration to facilitate the penetration and percolation of the applied water. Naturally this proved rather much for some of our young grass and together with fractional knowledge of such things, as height of cut, fertilising and disease treatment in these conditions, we lost some areas of the course especially the grasses *festuca* and *agrostis*. Fortunately the tough *Cynodon* took over and now with the rains and some overseeding it is reasonably back to its former spring beauty.

Although 1967 proved drier than usual we must put the summer months down to a matter of survival. It has been a difficult summer but our knowledge gained is beyond measure.

As I say the rains are now with us but with the arrival of the first storms it turned out to be another cruel blow from Mother Nature. We had had no rain for six months and then with fantastic aggression in the space of three days we received more than has fallen here for the last two winters. The heavens opened and our poor second nine holes which had recently been seeded took a terrible beating. Deep grooves were washed down and across the fairways and some green banks just disintegrated. On the opening half of the course I was in the middle of reseeding a few areas and the down-pour just took the seed from the bare patches to the grassed area where it was held. Though we did not need convincing of the amount of water that fell, about 30 yards of an out of bounds wall alongside a fairway was simply swept down the valley. All very helpful indeed but after a year in Portugal one just learns to smile and start again.

Speaking of starting again, I am now thoroughly looking forward to starting all over again on the second nine holes. I am sure in the end all will be worth

while and we will have here at Vale do Lobo what we hope to be the best course in Europe and what we will know to be the dream of the late Sir Richard Costain.

### HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the coming year have been increased as agreed at the Annual General Meeting and will be as follows:—

Class "A" Head Greenkeepers	£1 12s 6d
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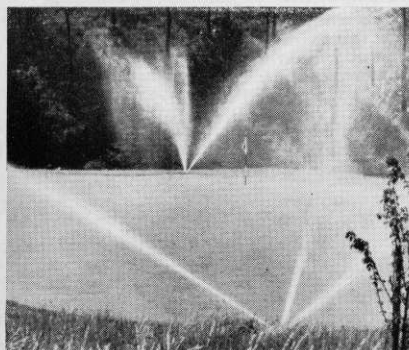
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