

A MODERN TREND

by PATRICK SMARTT

Slowly but perceptively the nature of many old established courses is changing. The architecture of new courses is following, or perhaps setting this trend.

This in its turn will produce a different form of golf; in particular amongst ordinary golfers, club members, artisans and young assistant professionals. It is from these that international players germinate.

I have in mind the near riddance of rough and as an antidote the imprisonment of the greens by additional bunkers. Closely guarded greens are nothing new; the barbering of the rough on either side of the fairway and in front of the teeing grounds has been creeping in for over a decade.

When driving off, the short-handicap golfer's mind was on the placement of the ball to give him the easiest second shot into the green. The average player's concern was to avoid the rough. Two understandable attitudes of mind. That will change, at any rate for the average player. The drive will lose its significance. Standing on the tee the dread of the rough will have faded. If the ball is going to lie in country from which a No. 4 wood or a medium iron can be used, little is lost by an inaccurate drive. The necklace of bunkers round the green will not come into the reckoning of the long-handicap player for his second stroke, the odds are he cannot reach them.

Much has been made in recent years of too much power spoiling the game. It is ironical that the new tendency should be one which will encourage all-out hitting from the tee. At present there are still plenty of tight courses, but it is held that rough in which a ball can be lost takes up too much time in these days of overcrowding. The writing is on the wall.

Trees are another matter. I cannot visualise those at Wentworth being cut back, on the other hand I know of old and new courses where they are being planted. They are impediments to the wild shot, and getting out of them can resemble a game of squash rackets. It is arguable that the element of luck is to great; the bounce into the fairway or the reverse into thicker forestry.

I am not proposing to enter into nostalgic memories of the "good old days", but I cannot let pass the Amateur Championship held at Royal St. George's in 1959. The rough had been allowed to grow nearly knee high, and I paced one fairway as being 25 yards wide. At the presentation the captain of the club thanked his members for having put up with these conditions for a week or so, and he promised the mowers would be out the next day.

That was, of course, the opposite extreme.

It also brings us to the greenkeeping and financial aspect of this no rough policy. Certain incontrovertable points stand out. Already, attenuated green staffs are fully stretched in mowing tees, fairways and greens, occasional trimmings of lush grass, heather or bracken, putting down dressings and cutting holes. They are faced with more work.

The rough has to be cut more often, therefore more "man hours". Sand bunkers have to be raked and cleared of extraneous matter, stones for example; more "man hours". On inland courses replacement of sand in the bunkers is necessary from time to time . . . expensive and more "man hours". By the way, how do you mow between trees? The constant turning must take up additional time, with the ever present chance of the tractor coming up against an "immovable

continued on page 14

SITUATIONS VACANT

SHIRLEY GOLF CLUB (7 miles centre Birmingham) require young greenkeeper or qualified assistant. Excellent prospects for promotion. Accommodation could be arranged. Apply giving full particulars to Secretary, Shirley Golf Club, Stratford Road, Shirley, Nr. Birmingham.

PENWORTHAM GOLF CLUB, Nr. Preston, Lancs., requires a fully experienced Head Greenkeeper to take complete charge of the well-maintained course. Salary by negotiation. Three-bedroomed semi available near the Club. Apply with full details in writing to A. L. Fryer, Penwortham Golf Club, Blundell Lane, Penwortham, Preston, Lancs.

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER wanted by Bramley Golf Club, near Guildford. Age 25 to 40 years. Good position and prospects for the right man. No accommodation. Apply to the Secretary, Bramley Golf Club. Tel. No. Bramley 2696.

2nd GREENKEEPER REQUIRED for parkland course. Must be experienced in all branches of greenkeeping. Good salary, free modern accommodation on course.

ALSO: A Greensman. No accommodation. Please apply in writing giving details of experience, age and present duties to: The Secretary, Ellesborough Golf Club, Butlers Cross, Nr. Aylesbury, BUCKS.

ASSISTANT HEAD GREENKEEPER required in London area. Accommodation available. Excellent prospects to take over two to three years. Full details of experience and references to the Secretary, Bush Hill Park Golf Club, Bush Hill, Winchmore Hill, N.21.

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER required. Experienced man or youngster willing to learn. Apply: Secretary, Guildford Golf Club, High Path Road, Merrow, Guildford. Tel. No. Guildford 63941.

HEAD GREENKEEPER required. Accommodation available. Application with references to the Secretary, Fleetwood Golf Club, Princes Way, Fleetwood.

Contd from p. 12.

obstruction" to the detriment of both.

Green staff are hard enough to come by in the country, in clubs near cities it is an even more serious problem. Some have resorted to placing course upkeep in the hands of contractors. I have had experience of this. It is but

natural that a firm under contract wish to get the job over as quickly as possible.

Neither farming, gardening or the care of a course can be done in a hurry. Whimsical as it may seem, a course or a links loses something when the personal touch, with its pride and intimate knowledge, is discarded.

Firemen stood by, ready to swill away poisonous and inflammable liquid, on Sunday, after a lorry carrying 19 tons of "Octel" ploughed through a wall on Mossley Road, Ashton-under-Lyme, and landed on its side on the golf course.

Play stopped on the sixth and seventh fairways of the golf course and the area was declared out of bounds for the rest of the day, because of possible dangers consequent upon the crash.

A suggestion that Lullingstone Golf Course be broken up into two nine-hole courses for the convenience of beginners appalled Mr Leslie Reeves at last week's meeting of the Estates Committee of Dartford Rural Council.

Mr Jones thought it would help beginners who found the full 18-holes too long, and also help ease congestion. By breaking the course into two nine-hole courses, more people could get round.