

SOME PECULIAR HOLES

by PATRICK SMARTT

"There are more things in heaven and earth . . .," spoke one of Shakespeare's characters. There are some golf holes on earth that the professional course architect or greenkeeper have not dreamed.

I came across them, indeed played over them, in foreign parts; in those days called colonies. While in the capitals there would be 18-hole courses, which could be called adequate. Once, that is, you had become inured to driving off from baked-mud teeing-grounds—the ball perched on a rubber tee—and approaching to sand greens, known in some places as "browns". In fact, I should place Royal Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia, Royal Nairobi and Keren (both Kenya) as good, the last being the nearest to an English course I met.

It was when visiting the isolated outstations, where the best had to be made of the ground available, government officials but lightly versed in the game gave full range to their imagination. They also, bless them, held the admirable idea that the game was meant to be fun.

Unique is a much abused word, but it may be applied with safety to the holes I shall attempt to describe. I can only hope that the professional expertise of our editor will not receive a shock detrimental to his health.

Two holes stand out in improbability. The first, a short hole, where between the tee and the green was a bungalow (the government office). A tall palm tree served as a rough guide post. The tee lay close to the building, and it is to be remembered that the shot, a No. 5 iron or rather a mashie, had to be swept cleanly off a rubber tee, no downward punch—unless you felt inclined to fracture your wrists, or the shaft.

The second was on a full course at Bulawayo in (then) Southern Rhodesia. It was one of three clubs at which the Rhodesia Championship (Northern, now

Zambia, and Southern, now the Republic of Rhodesia) was played. The tee was beside a broad stream which flowed under a railway bridge. You sighted the green by peering under the bridge. It was, again, a short hole, and there was no way to cope with it other than playing over the bridge. As in the previous instance, you dare not pitch on the green. A ball will not grip on a surface of hard mud covered with a thin layer of sand.

That disposes of the first two. The Americans favour water hazards near the green, but there is a more brutal defence in the form of a circle of pineapple beds, leaving a narrow entrance. There was no cissy local rule allowing a pick and drop without penalty. No lifting was permitted. I would give my miniscule worldly possessions to watch a world-class player devising a recovery stroke from such a place on to a brick-hard green, not to mention his lacerated ankles. My goodness me, what a time the press would have reporting the criticisms of the contestants! A pineapple plant's leaves could give a porcupine a third and beat it.

The blind hole today is regarded in the same light as a misdemeanour. For myself, I have always regarded them as exciting. I was not playing for my living, merely to beat the other man. Blindness or siting can be overdone if the conditons border on the ridiculous. Picture an ant-hill 15 feet high, sliced off at the top to form a green—sand of course—of restricted area. It was a matter of being on, rolling back, or over. I question if Pine Valley has anything more diabolical. One could expend a number of strokes, a lot of energy climbing up and down, and excessive blood pressure hitting a ball to and fro over that confounded pyramid. And yet, one looks back upon it, and the other freaks with affectionate amusement.

Reflecting on those four holes, the

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the absence of any prolonged effect is a serious disadvantage. The poisons, which provide control of longer duration, are more popular for professional use for this reason and have the added attraction of killing worms under the surface, so obviating the need for messy sweeping-up operations. The most widely used materials are detailed below.

Chlordane

This material is available as a liquid (25% emulsifiable concentrate) or in a 20% granular form. Somewhat variable results have been obtained with chlordane up and down the country, between one and five years' control being encountered.

Lead Arsenate

Lead arsenate is generally more reliable and longer lasting than any of the other materials and this offsets its high initial cost. An application at 2 oz. per sq. yd. can be relied on to produce five years' control and up to eight years' worm-free conditions are not infrequently obtained with this material. Complete failure is, however, occasionally encountered with lead arsenate and in view of this it would be wise to treat one green on a golf course to determine persistency under local conditions before undertaking a general full-scale worm-killing programme.

Carbaryl

Carbaryl (or sevin) wormkillers have recently been introduced and have the

advantages of low human toxicity, absence of any poisonous effect on beneficial soil micro-organisms and absence of any scorching effect. They do not, however, persist in their effect for longer than three months.

Lastly, a cautionary word would not be out of place. A number of the above wormkillers are harmful to humans and care should be taken during their use. Chlordane in particular should be cautiously handled, as in the concentrated form it can reach the bloodstream by contact with the skin, possibly with very unpleasant results.

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inevitable question is were they golf? Each of us had a club in his hands, the problems identical, the mutual object was to beat the other man. That dreary emphasis on luck can be challenged by the net-cord in tennis, in cricket the thin-edge that escapes the slips.

And now to greenkeeping. It was done by Africans. They kept the grass down by "swapping" with an implement made up of a sharpened piece of hoop-iron, bent like a hockey stick and attached to a wooden shaft. It was done with one hand, but the action strongly resembled a short golf swing. The greens were usually smoothed, after a match had passed through, by dragging a piece of sacking over the sand.

It is doubtful if the greenstaff on those out-stations would be accepted as members of the B.G.G.A. No suggestion of a colour bar. They were recruited from the local prison.

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