

played there before a green fee is paid. So, away we went to Temple where we had a welcome, fit for anyone, from the Secretary, Steward, and my very old friend and Greenkeeper Jim Rosier. We had drinks half way round and were met by the Captain and his wife as we came off the last green, with an invitation to come again.

Having enjoyed the Dinner at the 21st year, also the Diamond Jubilee, I may not be about at the Centenary; but I hope the powers that be at the time will take the Tournament to St. Andrews.

The Funny Side of Greenkeeping

The late Harry Fulford, a former professional golfer and humorist, wrote this piece for our magazine 25 years ago. Its philosophy will still appeal to many.

AND WHAT I KNOW about greenkeeping could be written on a postage stamp. At the same time I am going to place on record – listen to this, Freddy Hawtree – that I was once in a job where I was responsible for the upkeep of the course. Never mind where it was, but it was not a hundred miles from the Research Station at Bingley, Yorks.

At that time amongst my members was one reigning Amateur Champion, a Captain of the victorious Cambridge team of that year, and many times Open and Amateur Champion of Australia.

And the Club, fed up with the Green Committee, composed of Doctors, Chartered Accountants, Solicitors and Mill Owners, decided that the poor dam pro. was the only man who could make a silk purse out of a sow's ear! In plain English, I was the cat's whiskers so far as the course was concerned.

My first job of reconstruction was to clear the ninth green of worms. The subsoil would have delighted the heart of a potter. All day long you could see the worms forming fours on its surface. A very keen member of the Club said: 'Destroy the worms and you do away with Nature's natural ventilation and drainage.' (Incidentally from a putting standpoint I prefer a green with wormcasts, for they often deflect my ball towards the hole!)

However, let me go back to the ninth. From information received I ordered one hundredweight of steel filings from Sheffield. We covered the green with them, and a week later that green went Bolshevik. It resembled the bottom of a tanker that had been six months at sea!

We wrestled with the problem, and giving it up, I constructed a new green some forty yards farther on, and placed a 'Ground under Repair' board on the 20ft by 10ft that marked the site of what had been. As a Bug Blinder, steel filings were napoo. That taught me something.

The era of rule of thumb greenkeeping has long since passed. When I find myself to-day in the presence of the modern greenkeeper I merely listen. Not for me to butt in where angels fear to tread. I am quite conscious of my own limitations.

If Mr Hawtree tried to tell me how to make a golf club it would be seconds out of the ring. If he showed me a hefty divot and explained that it was deficient in lime, or its surface was not Poa something, I should listen and then still understand nothing.

I am not trying to throw bouquets at the greenkeepers, but I have always held the opinion that the most important servant on the golf club staff is not the steak and kidney provider, despite the fact that he generally gets the lion's portion out of the poor box at Christmas, not is it the professional whose profits go in penny stamps for A/c's rendered, but it certainly is the greenkeeper who, if he did not produce the goods, would put the caterer out of work, and the pro. a shade nearer the workhouse.

In the inauguration of Associations connected with the workers, pride of seniority is held by the professionals, who in 1901 formed themselves into the PGA. Next, I believe, came the disciples of Mrs. Beeton, the thirst-quenchers of the nineteenth hole; and then arose the greenkeepers.

I have heard rumours of a caddies' Union, but so far they lack a leader. It will come, but meanwhile there is more or less cohesion amongst those who administer to the requirements of a class of individual who claim to know more about our jobs than we do ourselves!

We are all by way of being specialists. I can imagine a member of the Greenkeepers' Association deeply immersed in a book entitled, 'The Love Story of a Leatherjacket'; and a steward, 'Ten ways of dealing with Hen fruit'. As for the pro., apart from the book he has written himself, he can only criticise the various short cuts to proficiency that seem to be a feature of our daily Press to-day.

Where does it all lead us? Unity is no doubt a fine thing. Why should not the greenkeepers have a confidential journal of their own? I see no reason why not.

By the way, I should like to get to the bottom of a mystery that has got me beat. Some few weeks ago I prepared the ground for a small lawn in my garden, on which a grandchild could play in the summer – which, by the look of things, will never arrive. I turned over the soil to the depth of a foot, prepared a level surface, and bit the ear of a friendly greenkeeper for sufficient of his four and sixpence per lb. seed. I told myself that I should get a lawn that no green could surpass. The seed struck, came up, but the winner proved to be a couple of sticks of rhubarb that now resemble a sheltering palm!

Every greenkeeper has his own problems. He of Slotpton-on-Mud is faced with a clay subsoil wherein worms make nightly whoopee. At St. Andrews an aerial torpedo would never produce signs of life in the basement.

On public courses where the non-golfing public can roam at will, the remains of ham sandwiches, paper bags, fruit and broken glass, shorten the greenkeeper's life. But has any reader even suffered from a visitation of magpies?

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