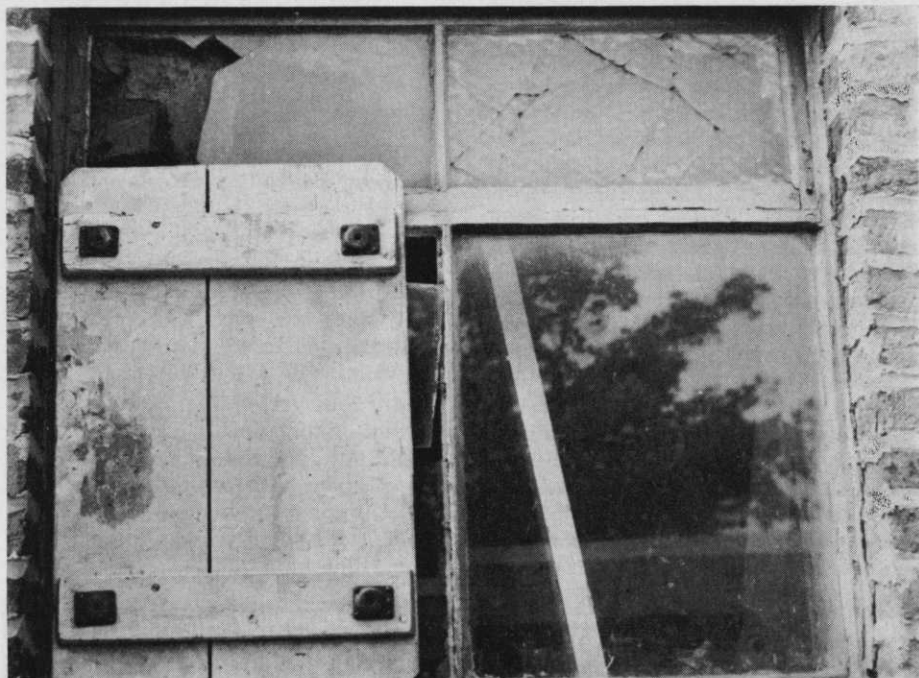


# Dispute makes history



The broken and patched-up window of the greenkeepers' barn at Grange Park golf course, with the wooden span which, say the men, holds up the roof.

## Five strikers sacked

**THE** entire greenkeeping staff were sacked from a Merseyside golf club—five days after they staged the country's first ever greenkeepers' strike. They were told that they had been dismissed on Monday, June 9, after they put in claims for better working conditions and more pay.

But the five men involved feel that they had every right to make the claims on the Grange Park Golf Club in St. Helens, and are now considering taking their sacking to an unfair dismissals tribunal.

Mr. Michael Hudson, aged 32, has been the Head Greenkeeper at the St. Helens club since September. He has been a Head Greenkeeper since the

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Story by Iain Stewart Webster

Pictures by G. Griffiths

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1960's and his last post was in Port Madoc.

He claims that the old barn which is used as the men's refuge for meals, toilet and wash-place while they are at

[Turn to Page 6]

### [Sacked, from Page 5]

work, has prompted him to contact public health officials.

"There are fungicides and paraquat only feet away from where we are expected to eat our lunch," alleged Mr. Hudson, "But that's not all. Another few feet away we are expected to exercise our bodily functions."

Mr. Hudson's assistants, 16 year old David Baines and Mike Hannon aged 17 claim that a wooden spar is wedged on the window ledge of the barn to prevent the roof from falling in.

The five men involved claim that they have been pressing for improvements and a wage rise since Christmas, but that the club haven't taken any action. After fruitless talks with an arbitrator and the club the men decided on strike action.

The men are especially bitter about the sackings because they had been complimented many times on the condition of the greens and fairways.

"The two boys take home under £16 a week and the two other men's take home wages are under £20.

"I take home £29 a week and the club pay rent and rates for my council house at 3, Beth Avenue, St. Helens. But that puts an extra £520 on my tax bill every year," claimed Michael Hudson.

The British Golf Greenkeeper's lay down a wage scale for greenkeepers and their assistants, but it is up to the golf club and the employees to reach an agreement.

"We have contacted the Department of Employment who said they would send a public health inspector down to the club," said Mr. Hudson.

Mr. Tom Purcell, the secretary of the Grange Park Golf Club, St. Helens would not comment on the sackings on the day the men were fired. He said that any comment would come from the Golf Club's council when they had discussed the matter.

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