

The Greenkeepers

DOUGLAS PATE, better known to all his friends as 'Doggie' and member of the committee of the North West Section for about 13 years, is Head Greenkeeper of Royal Birkdale Golf Club, Southport, where he has been since 1952.

After serving his time at Bishopbriggs Golf Club in Scotland, war service interrupted his career which continued after the war at Fairhaven Golf Club until joining his present club.

Royal Birkdale is an 18 hole seaside links with 700 playing members. Fairways run between sandhills and sea buckthorn and white poplar are the only surviving trees. To help him Doggie has a staff of seven and equipment including 3 Tractors—1 Trencher—1 Land Rover—Shredder—3 20" Atco Specials—2 24" and 1 30" Atco Heavy Duty Quintuple, Atco Gang Mowers—Flymos—Hayters—Sisis Autocraft.

No. 8 Douglas Pate

His choice of seed is Mommersteeg, fertilizers from Rigby Taylor and each year a different fungicide—Verdosand, Maysan, Mersil, Mildothane.

Being a seaside links presents special problems, one of them drought conditions. These have been overcome by installing a very successful watering system namely 'pop ups' on greens and fairways and tees. The system was installed by Cameron Irrigation, has proved excellent and has produced no maintenance problems.

Another disadvantage of being a seaside links is the lack of soil—every year at least 500 tons has to be purchased for maintenance work etc.

Amongst all connected with golf, the name Royal Birkdale is synonymous with championships. Since 1952, 7 amateur championships and 13 professional tournaments have been held there.



Doggie Pate at work on the Royal Birkdale course