While he was waiting for the golf to start in this month's South City, one of our more stimulating golf reporters turned to the local bird life to make up an extra paragraph or two.

He started like this: 'The Bul bulls are dead sprauncy, full of bunny and take diabolical liberties. Know what I mean?' And went on to explain that these thrush-like birds would even ravage the breakfast tray on his balcony unless he defended vigorously.

Well, frankly, I did not know what he meant. Unless he was making fun of the local patois, I was lost. I had heard of Bul bulls because they comprise one third of my knowledge of South Africa, on the wing: Turkey Buzzards and Lilac-breasted Rollers make up the other two-thirds. But 'sprauncy'? A mixed pedigree? Perhaps.: Sprightly plus Springy times Bouncy plus Raunchy? But neither and I sure what the last word means.

Then there is the other half of the puzzle. What about a Bul bull 'full of bunny'. The turkey buzzard could handle a fair-sized rabbit but not the 7" Bul bull. Or am I being too literal again?

The same writer is both intelligible and entertaining when he is writing about golf itself although like his conferees he may occasionally spice his accounts with novel terms from the leading edge of the developing golf idiom. I have learned not to wince when I read that a player 'carded' a 70' even if it causes confusion in a Yorkshire woolen mill. I also go along with the word 'little bit of'.

But what about 'sprauncy'? Can we apply it to golfers too? Too late! Golfers do not sprauncy anymore. Those with more shelf life beyond the self-by-date marked on my tin are too young to have seen Alfred Perry, professional at Leatherhead Golf Club. When Bernard Darwin described on the wireless the manner of his winning the 1935 Open, it was obvious, even without the benefit of television, that Perry spraunced down the 18th to take the title. Dai Rees also had a considerable spring in his gait. But there was so much less of Rees from the knees up than there was of Perry that he hardly qualified for true sprauncyhood. Perry even might have been described as paunchy though not, I am sure, raunchy.

Professional golfers have not only lost their sprauncy. We no longer see in the lists of their scores, those romantic parenthetic labels after their names. '(Reddish Vale)', '(Beau Desert)', '(Luffenham Heath)', (Whittington Barracks)', all names to conjure with and salutary reminders that even the man who scored in other worlds still played alongside humble club players when at home. Golf clubs lost something of their lustre when hotels, knitwear and air lines took their place for a time between the brackets. Now even the brackets have disappeared.

In case you remain unmoved by the nostalgic regrets up to this point, let me remind you of just one more feature that has faded from the annals of golf, perhaps the most grievous of all. When they redesigned and condensed the text of the annual 'Golfers Handbook', while it was still a hardback, they wiped two thousand names from the records. They retained the name of the secretary and the professional at each listed club but they dropped the name of the greenkeeper into the bin. A tradition dating back to the earliest golfing annuals, deep in the 19th century, was quietly ended without a whimper, a grumble or even, as would have been appropriate, a riot.

I have since protested to Mr. Laurence Viney who edits the smart new paperback edition of this valuable publication but what would you do, honestly, if you were asked to alter two thousand alphabetical entries already neatly parcelled to fit the space allotted. BIGGA must therefore take up the running as the first test of its new clout. If two thousand greenkeepers decide that they can do without this extremely useful annual and persuade their clubs accordingly, you may find that you too are 'full of bunny' if that's what it means metaphorically.

Your monthly ration of gourmet reading is this month being prepared in France where the appetite for change in golfing matters is less obvious. I suspect it has always been thus because the terms they employ are already novel being foreign. Consider the following:-

- The tee - Le tee
- The green - Le green
- The rough - Le rough
- The dog-leg - Le dog-leg

Only when it comes to the ball, La balle, (already a French word), does one hear the occasional frivolity such as 'Le balcon' (balloon or football). In Britain, there were once facetious terms like sphere, orb, pill and the globe. 'Miss the globe' actually got into the glossary of golf terms in the Badminton 'Golf' edited by Horace Hutchinson (whom you met here in past references to Westward Ho!, Pau and Biarritz). Nobody will regret their departure but there are other more honest, ancient terms which ought not to be lost.

1987 is sure to be a Conservation Year for (something) or Save the (something else) Year so we can now come to the educational content for which these articles are widely renowned. In order to see how far our golfing language has forgotten terms used a hundred years ago, I offer you a brief exercise in word power. Questions 1, 2 and 5 are obligatory for Scottish candidates. Pencils ready?

Here goes. Mark one box only against each word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baffy</td>
<td>Describes golfers playing in snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisque</td>
<td>Ineffective stroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluff</td>
<td>Tufted fringe of putting surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fooze</td>
<td>To remove silty material from land drains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sclafl</td>
<td>Trim cut turf to even thickness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Questions 1, 2 and 5, kindly see me in my study next month.