

WHAT

AN

EXHIBITION!

by

Gordon Young

"I'm going to Hurlingham today," I said at breakfast.

"Are you going to play?" my wife asked.

"Play what?"

"Polo."

I looked up, ready to explain. It did not need the clouds of smoke and the spurts of blue flame coming unheeded from the toaster to confirm that she was miles away. I could tell from the far-away look in her eyes that she was picturing me expensively mounted, galloping down the field, knee to knee with H.R.H. Perhaps sharing a pot of tea and a plate of cucumber sandwiches afterwards and—oh, what joy—him saying, "You must bring your wife home to meet mine."

It was cruel, but it had to be done. "They don't play polo there any more. Haven't done for a long time," I said.

"Oh!" crestfallen. "Well, why are you going there?"

"To see a Groundsmen's exhibition."

"The last time you went to one of those 'do's' you were the one that made the exhibition."

"That was a Greenkeepers' dinner." Realising immediately that I had made a tactical error by identifying the occasion so promptly, I grabbed a piece of smouldering toast, said "This is strictly business" and hurried out of the room.

Strictly business? — Not strictly true! It was a pleasure to visit the 19th Exhibition sponsored by the National Association of Groundsmen at the Hurlingham Club Grounds. Friday, 1st October, was a delightful autumn day, just as the previous one had been. As usual greenkeepers formed a large proportion of the visitors and their greetings to each other and to the "reps" were sometimes frank and uninhibited but always as warm and sunny as the day itself.

I am told that over the two days the attendance was about 17,000, including four V.I.P.s from the Dutch Sports Federation, a party of Italians and many Commonwealth and foreign visitors.

Old Friends

Many of the ninety stands were occupied by machines, proved over the years to be as near perfect as machines can be. Polished, gleaming and unscarred, some perhaps with small modifications, they may have looked different, at first glance, to those in so many greenkeepers' sheds, but they were the same old friends, tried and trusted.

Of the new machines, Messrs. Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies were showing their 86-inch Motor Triple, which is of especial interest to those who have steeply banked areas of grass to keep in order. Also on their stand was a newly designed frame for the J.5 quintuple gang unit mowers, clever in its simplicity.

As usual the stand of Messrs. T. Parker & Sons was the largest and most comprehensive in the show. They have now expanded their interests to supplying driving range equipment and are marketing the Berkshire Golf Ball Collector. This is an ingenious machine which, towed by a baby tractor or even a motor-cycle, is capable of picking up 1,000 golf balls each cylinder revolution.

Also of interest to those who have driving ranges was the "Auto-T" being demonstrated by Golf Improvements Ltd. This semi-automatic tee mat unit

is not for sale but can be rented at a reasonable annual cost. One of its advantages is that between trips to the Bahamas and signing his name on golf club heads, the overworked professional can sit while teaching—only a slight movement of one foot being required to release each ball on to the tee.

Yellow Hose

Messrs. F. W. Berk & Co. were introducing the Nobel Tricoflex plastic hose. This hose has a bright yellow opaque cover, resistant to sun and wear, and a smooth inner tube which, it is claimed, boosts water flow by 30%. Between these two tubes is the "knitted Tergal" reinforcer which gives it its strength.

I was standing in the middle of Messrs. Horwood's stand thinking how popular I would be if I returned to the Club towing a Ryan Greensaire Aerator behind my little Fiat—or perhaps towing the Fiat behind the Aerator—that is, if I had £435 in my pocket, if . . . "How much is that mower?" I heard a voice behind me. The salesman gave the

required information. "Oh, gawd!" the voice again, with such pathetic vehemence that for a moment I thought it must belong to the younger Steptoe, "They'd never buy me that! I'm the Head Greenkeeper at —. They've never bought me a machine since I've been there!" He shuffled off the stand, a small, bowed figure muttering to himself. For me this was the one disturbing incident of the show. I cannot dismiss from my mind the thought of that poor fellow kneeling on the first tee, a pair of shears in his hand and forty blistering acres of clipping stretched out ahead of him.

Open-air Classroom

What a splendid open-air classroom this exhibition could be for teaching greenkeeper apprentices! All the knowledge, know-how, and wisdom of greenkeeping and groundsmanship concentrated in a relatively small area and readily imparted by the representatives of the various firms! It would be possible for apprentices to learn their craft in two days! Of course, each lad

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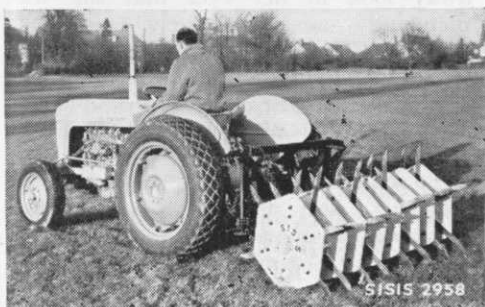
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would have to be a prodigy with an exceptional brain, a photographic memory and the stamina of an ox. Somewhere there must be young gentlemen with these qualifications . . . somewhere!?

They could learn most of what is worth knowing about turf, its cultivation and its protection on the stands of Messrs. Carters Tested Seeds Ltd., Cannock Agricultural Company Ltd. and Frank Keep (1958). Ltd. The knowledge thus assimilated being endorsed, summarised and supplemented, of course, by the mandarins of the Sports Turf Research Institute.

Tractors, mowers, piercers and a vast variety of machines could be sat on, crawled under, prodded, pulled, demonstrated and explained on the stands bearing such wellknown names as R. C. Craig, J. Gibbs, Thos. Green, W. Hargreaves, H. Pattison, Chas. H. Pugh and many others.

They could see the various methods of spraying water on the stand of British Overhead Irrigation Ltd. and of spraying weedkillers and insecticides by machines made by Pressure Jet Markers Ltd.

One new exhibit would, of course, have to be introduced—a stand showing the various types of golfers. It is essential that the young greenkeeper should know such well-known names as R. C. these by heart and how to deal with them—the Golfer Impatient Mk. 1, the Golfer Very Impatient Mk. 2, the Golfer Unreasonably Impatient Mk. 3 (the latter being the most common type), the Golfer Who Knows It All, the Golfer Without Etiquette. There are many others and new models are appearing every day.

Yes, it could be a very interesting course; the exhibition certainly was well worth the visit.

I wonder if the winner of 1 cwt. of hop manure in the grand raffle had to get home by public transport?

* * *



*One of the new machines exhibited.
The Sisis Auto-Rotorake.*

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