

LAST

MONTH

by

The Editor

Everything happens on Sunday in Barcelona. Take 28th February for instance. We were on the way to the golf club at El Prat in the morning when the road became lined with crowds and traffic was swung to the off-

side. This measure was evidently meant to keep the two near side lanes clear and might have been successful if half the drivers had not decided to return to the original side when the wrong side came to a halt. This, as appeared later, was due to another policeman trying to weave an oncoming line of traffic through the two which his friend at our end was launching at him. Two helicopters buzzed disconsolately up and down but without bombs there was nothing they could do.

Veteran Car Rally

At the same time, a Rallye Coches Epoca (Veteran Cars, in case your holiday on the Costa Brava was wasted) swept into the melee on the side which was still moving and found itself hurtled along at a pace quite unsuitable to its age and dignity. Then that side stopped while we moved; and so on, alternately, for the next two miles. Frequent stops and starts in a belt-driven phaeton are wearing on the driver's clutch-arm, if nothing else and Hispano Suizas with less visible mechanisms coughed ominously. An antique Coca Cola wagon with mustachioed attendants dressed for Edwardian tennis had thoughtfully brought a break-down wagon in support.

Still Sunday

It was still Sunday morning when we got to El Prat and the final of a knockout competition claimed our attention at once. A certain Senor Fernandes, one of the club's best players, eventually produced a pin-splitting teeshot at the short 17th and a controlled hook round a pine tree with a spoon to the 18th while his opponent faded away. By the time we had admired the course and the club house, it was after two o'clock and the Spanish element in the party was nearly ready for lunch. Indeed, we were sitting down by three o'clock which is reasonable in those parts but tends to eliminate tea. Even so, we were having a cup soon after five at the Barcelona Yacht Club where a considerable number of admirable vessels were drawn up, including a representative from the Thames.

The International Salon Nautico was elsewhere and smaller than our Boat Show — 10 Metre motor cruisers and every conceivable device for water skiing and related activities, but few sailing dinghies or yachts. Upstairs, for good measure, an art exhibition was thrown in. We naturally preferred the sculpted lady golfer, two large canvasses painted at El Prat and a curious gouache of a golfer looking for his ball in a fog.

Capacity Crowds

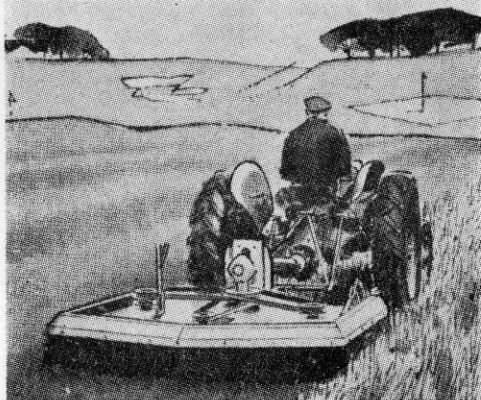
By now there was just time to get back to the Barcelona-Real Madrid game at 8 p.m. The stadium is reported to hold 120,000 and they were all there when thunder flashes and a scared black cat preceded the home team on to their pitch. The visitors in white shirts, shorts and stockings followed to slightly less thunderous applause. Seventeen free kicks later, half-way through the first half, Barcelona scored. This released a considerable tide of emotion and a rocket sailed into the air to announce the goal to the city. Alas, there were no rockets thirty-two and forty-one free kicks later respectively when Madrid scored their two. An older and more artful team, they were hard pressed for the rest of the game but held on to their lead and would have added another if the final whistle had not blown too soon.

Another Match!

As we came away, another match of less consequence was starting and there had been another before the big game, so the patrons could not complain of short measure. *Agrostis stolonifera*, by the way, on the pitch and only a tiny area of wear round the goal mouths. The floodlighting was flattering, making the whole affair look like a colour slide, but evidently this is the grass for that climate. When it is planted, it is broadcast by the handful and then rolled with a row of fairly sharp discs, two or three inches apart, which squeeze the pieces into the soil. Greens, tees and fairways get exactly the same treatment.

By now it is 12.10 a.m. on 1st March and supper just over. Roll on Monday and the relaxation of a hard day's work.

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