

TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

On a later page is printed an admirable review of the events leading up to the Minister's decision not to allow a new golf course on moorland near Keswick. The opinions expressed will coincide with those of our readers. We may be biased but it is difficult to consider that a golf course intrudes on any landscape.

The Minister thought the texture of the grass would be out of character. He is evidently not a botanist. We, ourselves, read patiently last year the comments of a county planning department on a new golf course in parkland of high landscape value. The chief recommendation in that case was that the greens under construction should be covered with soil.

The Minister might have been on safer ground if he had been concerned about bunkers. But a glimpse of those at Walton Heath or Woodbridge where heather, sand and fescue blend most agreeably would surely have softened his attitude. Or, like Berkhamstead, we could do without them altogether.

Tees could be treated appropriately and greens present no problem. Only the club-house and car-park require careful thought and treatment. This question seems not to have exercised the Minister's mind, no doubt because it is of increasing complexity at the ancient monuments under the control of the Minister of Works.

Fortunately there is an increasing number of golfers who only see a pretty hole in wild country as an improvement on Nature. A set of nine or 18 is certainly the best way to get people into the fresh air and countryside which at present too many prefer to view from inside the family saloon.

If the Minister is right, golfers will no doubt be agitating for the removal of sheep from the fells on the grounds that they are not part of the natural fauna. Human beings often spoil the view too.

It is unfortunate that the fundamental principle could not have been stated as a general one before a public inquiry engaged much trouble and expenditure. The Minister could then have saved those involved a lot of time, not least that of his own Inspector.

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