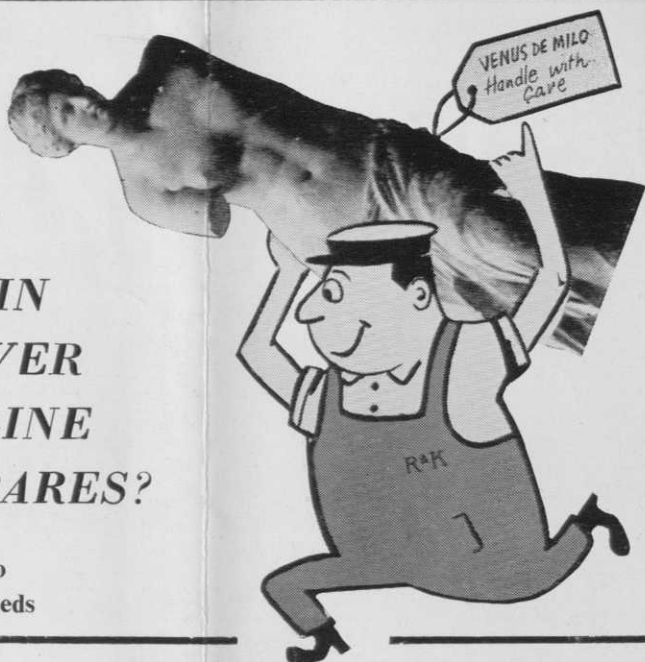


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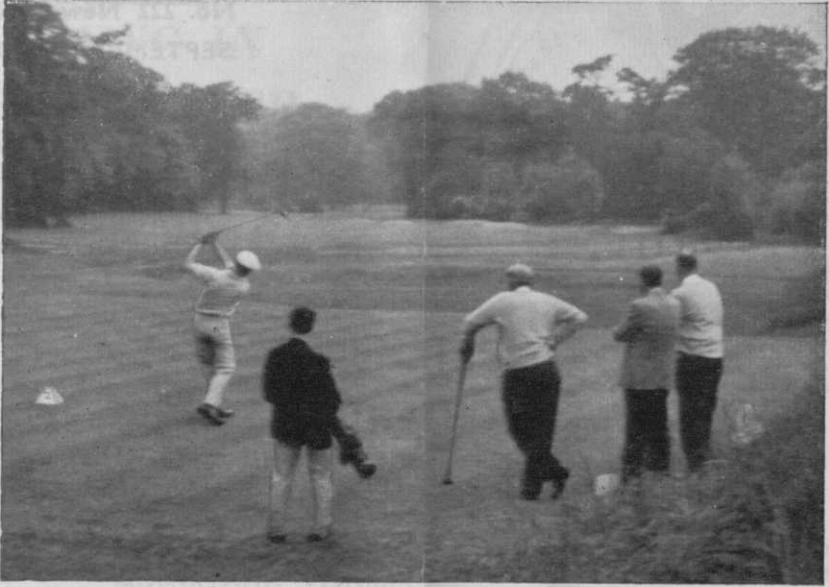
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TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

ROYAL BIRKDALE has plans for the 1965 Open well in hand. Colonel John Rees showed us plans of his tented village and of the new 12th hole, which is to replace No. 17. The short 17th has always given problems for stewards and the new 12th will not only eliminate these but will also open up a new area and leave a tough 5-4-5-5 finish to test staying power.

* * *

It is rare to find seaside undulations on an inland course. This was the second thing that struck us about the Taunton and Pickeridge Golf Club in Somerset. The first was the magnificent outlook over Taunton to the hills beyond, which must be equal in extent to those from Sham Castle at Bath, whence any number of counties are said to be visible. The undulations are due to calamine mining in the past. We are not too sure what calamine is, but if any of its miners are still in the district, they would be invaluable in making a flat course look like Deal. Charlie Bond is Head man on the course and, after 40 years on this windswept plateau, knows each hummock and hollow like his own hand.

* * *

Messrs. Bomford of Evesham are distributing a new Hammer-Knife Mower, which will cut and mulch the grass with its 2,000 r.p.m. rotor. This is a new approach to the mowing problem, which may be of interest to greenkeepers on some types of course. Heights of cut between $\frac{3}{4}$ in. and 3 ins. are possible and the 4 ft. machine costs £300. We hope to publish a picture and more details in our next issue.

* * *

A new nine-hole golf course at Metz will be open for limited play on the 1st September. This is the second new course opened in France this year. Five more are under construction.

* * *

Congratulations to Charles Large, Head Greenkeeper at Stourbridge in Worcester since 1933. The members have given him a gold watch in recognition of his work over thirty years.

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COURSES IN PLAY III

John Stobbs

WHAT some greenkeepers have to put up with!

There were only two of us there. The final of the Championship, ding-dong between two men playing between them some quite outstandingly fine golf, had passed on with its large and excited crowd down one line of holes; and was due to play back in a few minutes on to the green in front of us. The moment was peaceful: the air clear as crystal, the view magnificent, from the top of the great hill, down over the river and distant sandhills to the sea.

My companion was oblivious to it. All he was interested in was the green. Unconcernedly he strolled on to it, examining the sward, head to the ground, intently, with a professional eye for texture. Then, finding what he wanted, he settled himself contentedly and began to chew bits out of it!

Reassuring himself that this was what he was after, he munched away enthusiastically, shifting his stance from moment to moment as he spotted another succulent-looking patch. Behind his chin he left a series of nasty serrated patches, with the grass shorn off, the root disturbed and dragged up a bit, and bare soil showing between them.

It was enough to give any greenkeeper apoplexy!

Yet there was nothing whatsoever any greenkeeper could have done about it

—beyond a transitory *Shoo!*—because my companion, the sheep, had complete freedom of the greens, established by tradition, precedent, usage and commoners' rights. He, and large numbers of his fellows, wander free all over the great hill of Southerndown. There is no way of keeping them off the greens; and however closely mown they are, the sheep keep on nibbling them—attracted perhaps by some juicier flavour in the maintained turf, compared to the downland pasture all around them. Maybe the greens make a sort of permanent appetiser to the general main meal.

I was sorry that in the rush of reporting the final of the Welsh Championship through successive editions of a newspaper, I was unable to find the Head Greenkeeper and ask him how he coped with the problem. But how well he does it was amply proved that day by the fact that the winner of the 36-hole final, Iestyn Tucker, went out in 31 strokes that morning—5 under par—and was round in 67, while his opponent, John Povall, managed to do much the same thing in the afternoon—he was six under fours for ten holes and cut Tucker's lunch-time lead of 8 holes to only 2. This is certainly the only time I have ever seen a man cover ten holes in level fours, and lose six of them.

Unpaid Assistants

This is not the place to expand upon the golf. But the quality, indeed the brilliance, of the scoring did seem to me to show how basically true a man can keep his greens, even with the unwelcome efforts of several hundred sheep as unpaid assistant greenkeepers.

On the fairways, of course, the sheep may be a help. A generous scattering of dung seems to help maintain the fine springy turf; and there showed remarkably little cumulative wear and tear round the course from divot holes—one of the perpetual troubles of courses nowadays where the majority of players with modern heavy and sharp-edged irons seem to hack up their shots to the green from much the same area of fairway. Southerndown showed little sign of these sort of "maximum-digging-

density" patches: so maybe the sheep pay some sort of green fee.

Southerndown, running over the shoulder of a huge hill above the sea in South Wales, not far from Bridgend, is another of those examples of the classic, simple, downland course, making its holes out of the lie of the land as the makers of the course found it, and leaving the natural hazards of the terrain to make its challenge. There is some wonderfully disastrous gorse all over it, short and tightgrowing like a—well, I suppose there's nothing quite like a tightgrowing gorse bush! It looks as if the sheep nibble the young shoots of it; trimming each bush to a sort of solid furzy block. Certainly, Southerndown makes a magnificent setting for golf; and one of the most inspiring of courses.

Model Course

After the Welsh Championship, I went on holiday to South Devon (and if anyone going that way wants a route which avoids the now notorious "West-Country Bottlenecks" I can recommend them to write to the A.A., as we did). There we found a course which makes a splendid model for everything which family holiday golf ought to be—Thurlestone. This sort of golf needs three qualities:—

1. Everyone can get round quickly and easily, no matter what standard their golf has reached (I almost wrote "no matter how bad they are").

2. That it should make the best possible use of its land, with the minimum of climbing up and down hill, and the maximum enjoyment of any sea or other views available.

3. That it should still be a good enough test of golf to give the better player something worth while to aim at, in the way of challenge and in the testament of his score for the round.

Thurlestone meets all three of these admirably. The outward holes skirt the edge of the cliffs nearly all the way, with an almost continuous gaining of height hole by hole, but with only one hole which you could call anything of a drag, and that not a long one. You reach the crest of the coastal hill at the 11th fairway, with four of the outward

holes offering you a temporary rest from the gentle climb.

From the peak at the 11th the view is magnificent. In one direction you look back to Thurlestone, with Thurle Stone standing in the bay out at sea, and the course and cliff tops spread out before you. In most conditions you can just see the Eddystone Lighthouse, about 20 miles away to sea. On the other side you look down into the splendid estuary of the Avon, which runs down from Dartmoor, and its great sand beach below you; and then over beyond, Burgh Island, with its tractor-borne bus plying to and fro over the sandbank which connects it to the shore. Inland, it's all hill and farmland.

The holes are so laid out that the strong player can score well: in the 60s, even, if he's putting well; but only if his long irons, judgment of distance, and allowance for the effects of slope, are good. It is certainly not a course without challenge and meat for skill. At the same time, the fairways are so open, grassy and untroubled, and the hazarding so mild to the really bad shot, that the most incompetent hacker can finish the round full of cheer, and complete with the ration of balls he started with.

Fun All the Way

This sort of combination of challenge to the ambitious and benevolence to the modest is often almost indefinable in its exact character; and it is so at Thurlestone. But the fact remains: here is a course to play for fun all the way, yet upon which no man can feel he is wasting his time. For women and children, it's perhaps even more perfectly adapted; since both can stretch their ambitions to the utmost, and still never feel unduly belaboured by fortune for trying a bit more than they can manage!

It could be that, with golf growing in popularity as it is, and the main unsatisfied demand being that from beginners and public-course golfers, we could do with a lot more courses of the Thurlestone type dotted around our coasts and hills, wherever the land might allow it.



SEPTEMBER	
17th	Sheffield Section v. Northern Section at Fulford G.C., York.
17th	North West Section Annual Tournament, Ormskirk Golf Club.
17th	Northern Section v. Sheffield Section Match, Fulford Golf Club.
18th	Welsh Section Annual Tournament, Cardiff Golf Club.
19th	North East Section Annual Competition, Tyneside Golf Club, Ryton.
24th	Scottish Section Autumn Meeting, Lochgreen G.C., Troon.
25th	East Midland Section Autumn Tournament, Rothley Park Golf Club, Leicester.
26th	Midland Section Autumn Tournament, Handsworth Golf Club.
OCTOBER	
9th	Southern Section Lecture, Talbot Restaurant.
17th	Northern Section Autumn Tournament, West Bowling Golf Club, Bradford.
17th	S.G.G.A. East Section, Annual General Meeting, Torphine Golf Club.
23rd	East Midland Section, Annual General Meeting, Central Tavern, Huntingdon Street, Nottingham.



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THE ASSOCIATION VISITS ROYAL BIRKDALE

Local Greenkeepers gain Top Awards

The North West Section set out to show the others how to play Royal Birkdale when the Association gathered there on Monday, 12th August, for its three-day Tournament and Annual General Meeting. J. Gillett (St. Anne's Old Links) set the fashion with 36

points in the Monday morning Stableford competition and collected the S.T.R.I. Cup and a handsome canteen of cutlery.

Even in the afternoon at the Annual General Meeting, the North West Section resolution produced a most fruitful discussion on wages, though certain representatives from other parts



The Royal Birkdale Club-house and Eighteenth Green.

J. Gillett (St. Anne's Old Links) winner of the S.T.R.I. Cup in the Monday morning competition.



Southern Section Prizewinners with some of their admirers.

had a great deal to say about everything in general.

On Tuesday, it was E. Macavoy from next door Hillside and D. Pate, playing on his home ground, who kept up the pressure. They took the 36-hole scratch and junior division with 156 gross and 148 net respectively. However, R. H. Plain from Beaconsfield managed to get a wedge in to take the senior division medal with 152 net.

The Wednesday competition is generally a more light-hearted affair and the North West Section rested on its laurels and J. Williams from Royal Porthcawl took the "Allan Taylor" Cup and the dinner service with a net 72. The full results and scores are printed elsewhere.



The same prizewinners with another group of admirers.



J. Noakes and R. Craig were both among the prize-winners, the latter in the Vice-President's Competition on Wednesday.

Mr. Brian Park, an ex-Captain of Royal Birkdale, gave away the prizes on Wednesday afternoon. He said how proud the club was to have the Greenkeepers' Association with them, a Tournament which they prized above many others. He thought that it was about time that the greenkeeping profession found a new name for itself to keep pace with the specialist position which they now hold as key men in the life of many golf clubs.

When D. Pate received his prize, he was not allowed to depart without a speech, which he managed in eight words, "a little local knowledge goes a long way".

Thanks to the Council of Royal Birkdale Golf Club and to Colonel John Rees, their Secretary, for all the kindness and hospitality which made this a memorable Tournament.



(Above) G. T. Geddes was elected Chairman of the Association at the Annual General Meeting. Behind him is C. H. Dix (Hon. Secretary) and on the right H. G. Dixon, a past Chairman.



(Left) W. E. Moore (Second from left) who provided all these pictures, with Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Battams on his left and J. Gillett on his right.

BRITISH GOLF GREENKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 1963

Administration

We congratulate our Chairman, Mr. D. G. Lord, on a most successful year of Office. Our congratulations are also extended to Mr. G. T. Geddes of the Northern Section, who succeeds him.

Messrs. Stoy Hayward & Co. were not prepared to continue with the Audit of our accounts and the Hon. Secretary has been successful in obtaining the services of Messrs. Smallfield Rawlins & Co. These accounts will be presented at the Annual General Meeting at Royal Birkdale. We would like to record our sincere appreciation of many years of willing and helpful service rendered by Messrs. Stoy Hayward & Co.

The Annual Draw for 1962 was again very successful. The financial result showed a further improvement on last year. We congratulate all concerned with the sale of tickets and the administrative arrangements.

Annual Tournament

The 45th Annual Tournament was held at Pyle & Kenfig Golf Club, Porthcawl, last August. Only about 40 members took part. The arrangements offered by the Club were in every way most generous and kind and it

was a disappointment to the Committee that the attendance was so low. The weather, also, was very unkind, but in spite of a great deal of wind and rain, the golf and the occasion was enjoyed by all those taking part. The Committee would express their appreciation to the Welsh Section for providing the prizes for the Wednesday competition, which, with the other generous donations received, enabled the Prize list to maintain its usual high standard.

Sections

Section activities throughout the year were well in evidence, with Tournaments, Lectures, social functions and visits of interest to firms and organisations. Our thanks are again due to the latter for their continued help and interest in our affairs; also to the Officers in Sections for the hard work they do for their members.

We extend our congratulations to Mr. Leslie Jones, President of the North East Section, who has this year been elected President of the English Golf Union.

Our congratulations are also offered to Mr. G. T. Geddes, our Vice-Chairman, who has been granted an Honorary Membership of his Club and to other members who have been similarly honoured.



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