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THE BRITISH GOLF

GREENKEEPER

HON. EDITOR: F. W. HAWTREE



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DECEMBER 1967

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Are spanking new.
The ones I find are clunkers!*

—E. M. HAVENS.

DECEMBER

CONTENTS

Page	3 TEE SHOTS
6	A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GREENKEEPER AT ST ANDREWS, SCOTLAND
9	WINTER PLAY ON GOLF GREENS
10	SPECIAL OCCASIONS
11	SITUATIONS VACANT
12	NEWS FROM SECTIONS
16	MRS GREENKEEPER

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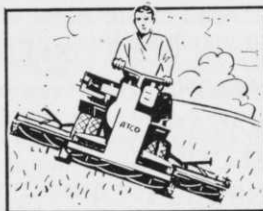
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TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

The autumn course at the Sports Turf Research Institute was so heavily booked that it was decided to run three courses of a week instead of the customary two. A total of 77 attended of which 49 were from golf clubs.

* * *

The foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Westmorland produced many voluntary extensions of precautions to limit movement around the countryside. The Ullswater, Coniston and Lunesdale fox-hounds have all given up hunting and Kirkby Lonsdale Golf Club announced that they had closed their course until further notice.

* * *

Bridge of Weir's Old Ranfurly Golf Club were putting a big increase of annual subscription to an extraordinary general meeting on 30th November. Resolutions to be discussed asked for a £5 levy until the end of the financial year in February and an increase of subscriptions from 14 gns to £20. The club captain, Mr D. M. Gibson, said he thought the days of cheap golf were over.

* * *

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The Stafford Sports Council in a survey of local golf requirements caused some worry to the Stafford Council Golf Club when they suggested that an extension from nine to eighteen holes would have to be considered in the light of any proposals for a municipal golf course. However, the Council's chairman at the annual general meeting allayed their fears and the meeting decided to reword the section to imply support for the Castle Golf Club and backing for any suggested extensions.

* * *

The fifth green at Hazlehead Golf Course, Aberdeen, was the worst hit when four greens suffered damage from galloping horses last month. Mr A. Pirie, head greenkeeper, found the damage while making his routine round of the course.

* * *

The Strood Rural District Council is planning to negotiate for the new golf course site near Hoo. The previous site which they had considered was found to be unsuitable but the Council is determined to provide golf facilities in this area of Kent which is not now very well served.

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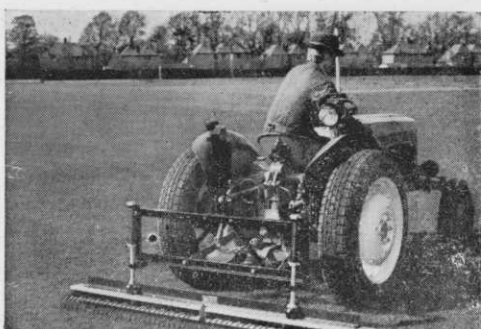
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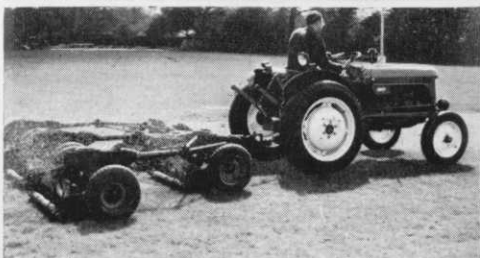
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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GREENKEEPER AT ST ANDREWS, SCOTLAND

by JOHN K. CAMPBELL,

Links Supervisor, St Andrews, Scotland

IT IS no easy matter to condense all that this heading implies in one short article for, as every greenkeeper knows—wet or fine—the successful day's work is the result of previous planning, and indeed this goes for the work from one year's end to the other. Here at St Andrews, the set up is somewhat unique not only for the publicity that comes our way, but because there are four 18-hole courses, three of which have to be maintained at championship standard. In addition, my parish further extends to a five-acre turf nursery, five acres of public putting greens, a bowling green, practice ground and a number of recreation grounds. My duty as Links Supervisor is governed by the Joint Links Committee which consists of ten members—five elected by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club and five by the Town Council—who meet once a month and to whom I submit a report dealing with such items as work done, pending, and contemplated together with matters concerning plant, machinery, compost, fertilizers, and a forecast of further work.

Staff Includes 22 Greenkeepers

The staff consists of a foreman, 22 greenkeepers and four apprentices. Of the total three are starters and, during the season, two are rangers; in effect this works out roughly at five greenkeepers and one apprentice per course, the outside work being taken in the stride. All of them are well able to tackle any job and it is particularly pleasing that the apprentices are as enthusiastically showing their mettle, members of the Greenkeepers' Association to a man, and full use is made of the periodic vacancies in the lecture courses at the Sports Turf Research Institute where so much valuable information can be picked up. The monthly meetings of the Scottish Golf Greenkeepers Association are also well

attended. Special care is taken in the work and training of the apprentices and younger members of the staff for they will be the greenkeepers of the future, and overall it is gratifying that committee members are thoroughly interested in all that we do.

Having mentioned planning, I would add that at the end of each season the next year's work is mapped out in broad outline with alternatives for the inclement weather common to all courses, and the result is that the bulk of the work is largely completed.

Work Programmed in Full

On this foundation is built the monthly and weekly programme, on all of which the staff is informed. This is appreciated because they know in advance what is expected of them, perhaps a minor point but one that concerns them individually. There is always plenty of indoor work to be done during bad weather such as the compost factory, machinery maintenance, painting tee-boxes, repairing seats, and other jobs that go into the making of a tidy course. Major repairs are done by the mechanic who has a fully equipped workshop, but those in charge of tractors, mowers, etc. are capable of tackling normal running repairs and adjustments. All machinery in use is cleaned before the end of the day, filled up and ready for the start of another day. By so doing minor faults can be detected and dealt with long before the stage of a major overhaul. The standard of workmanship is necessarily high and conditions are such that when a vacancy occurs on the staff there is no dearth of suitable applicants.

Another feature worthy of note is the interest of machinery manufacturers. The area of the Links is considerable (450 acres, including 18 acres of fine turf) and to overtake the work it is

(Continued on page 8)

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(Continued from page 6)

essential to keep abreast of the times and give these firms the opportunity to try out new ideas under conditions not so available elsewhere.

During the season the layout of the next day's work depends on the reservations over the various courses, and a study of the list is essential so that special attention can be given to whichever course is to be affected, thus giving the players a free run. Irrespective of these reservations, and there are many, men are detailed daily for the normal work on greens, tees, and bunkers keeping in advance of the players.

Following the initial morning's work the various squads are rearranged and then engaged in the cutting of fairways and greens with the least possible disturbance to players.

Generally, the Links are worked as a whole because the layout is such that, for example, when dealing with fairways—either cutting, fertilizing, or anything of a similar nature—it is more practical to make a continuous sweep. Where gangs are concerned, tractors with trailers are used to set the men to their work and the reverse process is used for the midday break—individuals are picked up on the way and the whole idea is to make the best use of the available staff during working hours. The day's work is not merely a job, it is part of a considered plan and practical suggestions from various members of the staff frequently occur, thus adding to the general efficiency.

The number of paid rounds over the four courses amounted to 120,774 during 1964, with the Old Course bearing the brunt and closely followed by the New and Eden. The Jubilee is gaining in popularity and the turf is excellent. Many visitors, particularly those from overseas, wish to play on the Old Course. The ballot is full during the season and slow play tends to restrict the full use of the daylight hours, while the task of the ranger is indeed a thankless one. Divots galore are the bugbear of the greenkeeper; only a minority of players take the trouble to replace and heel-in with the result that the cost involved in dealing with this menace is very considerable. The fact, too, that not many players take the trouble to smooth over the sand in bunkers calls for a good deal of unnecessary work. Every greenkeeper however will go to any length to keep his course immaculate. So far no machine has been invented to lift divots and lessen the manual effort.

With the season approaching tees and greens are receiving the special attention necessary following scarifying, slit tining, composting, etc., and with distinct signs of growth we may look forward to a pleasing spectacle to meet the eyes of the discerning golfers who visit St Andrews every year from many parts of the world.

(Reprinted from "The Golf Superintendent",
May 1966)

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WINTER PLAY ON GOLF GREENS

by C. R. SKOGLEY

GOLF course superintendents employed in those parts of the continent that are subject to cold winters share one major concern—winter injury to turf grass. O. J. Noer stated this fact clearly when he wrote: "When grass survives the rigours of winter, summer is no problem in the far north. In this region, winter and early spring are the critical seasons for turf grasses."

Many articles have appeared in golf journals over the years on the subject of winter injury. The concern over the problem is certainly nothing new. In recent years, however, there has been an increased awareness both of the problem and of the exact causes of it. There has been a real effort to learn how to prevent this seasonal headache. Much of this recent interest has been spurred by two extremely bad winters. The winter of 1958-59 caused more turf injury in the north-east than had been recorded for at least 35 years. The winter of 1962-63 was nearly as bad.

Winter injury is very complex. Injury to the grass takes many forms and is caused in several different ways. Soils, too, may be damaged as a result of winter weather.

In a recent article on the nature and prevention of winter injury, J. R. Watson, Jun, indicated that winter injury, occurring in northern climates, falls into two rather general categories—mechanical and physiological damage. Mechanical damage, except for frost heaving, he indicated, was caused by man and damages turf directly or indirectly.

"Direct injury," he wrote, "is produced by traffic when the grass is covered by frost or when it is dormant or semi-dormant and the soil is partially or completely frozen." Watson categorised direct injury as "(a) bruising (cellular rupture) resulting from traffic on frosted grass" (usually occurring in late autumn and early spring); and "(b) attrition from traffic on partially or completely frozen soil especially when grass is near or at dormancy".

Watson suggested that mechanical damage to soil produced by traffic on partially frozen or wet soils causes indirect turf grass injury. The *visible* evidence of this type of injury is actual soil displacement—footprints, ruts or similar surface disfigurement. Indirect injury may also be of an *invisible* kind—soil compaction. Chances for this type of injury are greatest on wet soils and during periods of grass dormancy since there is less mat or cushion present.

The physiological damage referred to by Watson is what is most frequently referred to as "winterkill". This is the injury resulting from disease, scald, suffocation, desiccation and related causes.

Mechanical injury to greens during the winter seldom gets adequate attention. Most of the efforts to avoid winter injury, and most of the current research on winter injury, relate to physiological injury. Perhaps this is proper since physiological injury is more complex and cannot be as quickly eliminated as mechanical injury. Mechanical injury (except for heaving) generally can be avoided by eliminating traffic during periods of adverse weather or when soil conditions are poor.

A report by A. M. Radko following the hard winter of 1958-1959 indicates certain damage from mechanical injury resulting from traffic. He wrote: "Traffic injury from winter play was also pronounced. The winter being an open season, more winter play was a factor. Turf around cup placements and walk-off areas is sparse at this writing." This would refer to *visible* direct mechanical injury. On many golf courses in northern areas where winter play is regular, similar or worse injury is encountered each spring. The indirect and invisible mechanical injury although not obvious may well be the most serious result of winter play.

The effect of frost action and compaction on wet soils has received

(Continued on page 11)



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