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# GREENKEEPER

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MARCH 1967

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—Raymond C. Otto

## MARCH

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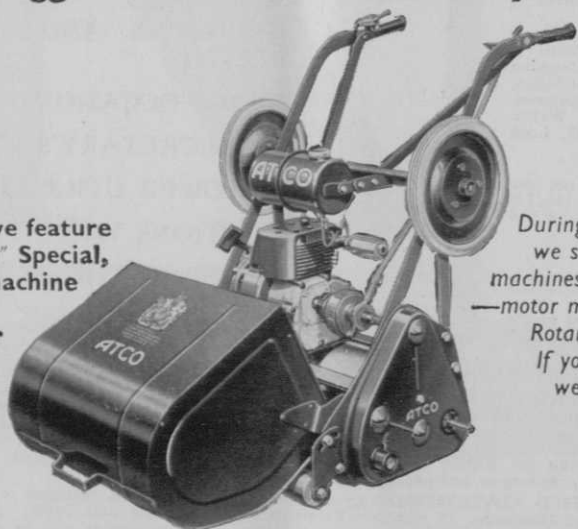
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# TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

## *Windfall*

Mr Donald Snodgrass, who died last October, has left £2,000 to the Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club for course upkeep. He had been a member for thirty-five years.

\* \* \*

## *Three Chances*

Eton Rural Council will be asked for planning consent for a 9-hole golf course on a farm at Iver Heath. The Rural Council also has its own plans for a 9-hole course at Stoke Place. For good measure, Slough itself has ideas about an 18-hole course at Langley.

\* \* \*

## *Too Late*

Hawkstone Park Hotel and Golf Club, 12 miles north of Shrewsbury, was for sale last month. The course measures 6,315 yards and was laid out in 1920 by James Brand. Now a syndicate of members has bought it. The price is not disclosed but £70,000 was being asked for the property with 158 acres.

\* \* \*

## *Thaw*

Both Workington Golf Club in Cumberland, and Llandeilo in South Wales have received the maximum £10,000 grant from the Ministry of Education. Some Llandeilo rural Councillors are now asking why the Golf Club is favoured when they cannot get funds to extend their mobile Library Service.

\* \* \*

## *Drought no worry*

Ron Whitehead, head greenkeeper at Wheatley, Doncaster, is dreaming of a dry summer. By that time he will have pop-up sprinklers on all his greens, controlled from an 18-point master clock. The cost is estimated at £4,500. The club has also negotiated a new 75-year lease with Doncaster Corporation at £500 a year for the first 25 years.

\* \* \*

## *Inundated*

The Sports Sub-Committee of Worthing's Open Spaces Committee decided to meet golfers at Hill Barn Municipal Golf Course to discuss ways of improving the course. Now they have 133 written suggestions.

# FERTILISERS AND SPRING GROWTH

by R. V. DAVIES

**P**LANT nutrients are continuously taken up from the soil by the growing plant and the maintenance of an adequate supply of plant food through the application of fertiliser is essential to maintain satisfactory growth in turf. This is particularly true of golf greens and tees where growth has constantly to renew the foliage removed during mowing. The fertiliser requirement of fairways is less than that of greens because gang mowing returns the clippings so that the nutrient material is returned to the soil and gradually decomposed and made available to the plant again. Thus many fairways have survived quite adequately without fertiliser for ten years or more though others, on sandy or thin soil, or in areas of high rainfall where the fertiliser is washed out of the soil, require more frequent fertilising.

## Main Elements

Greens require a much more continuous fertiliser programme with regular application of nitrogen (e.g. in the form of sulphate of ammonia) at controlled rates through the growing season. Nitrogen is accepted as being the most important element in providing growth for the renewal of leafage but a supply of phosphate and potash is also essential to maintain a healthy sward. Application of the spring fertiliser provides a good opportunity to apply both these elements and ensure a supply for the remainder of the growing season. It is also argued that young growth is more demanding in its phosphate requirement and therefore spring application of this element is appropriate. Phosphates are usually applied as superphosphate with possibly small proportions of fine bone meal while potash is generally in the form of sulphate of potash.

Weather conditions for steady growth are required in spring time before this complete fertiliser is applied. Suitable conditions in a normal season should

occur round about the third week in April but unfortunately few years are "normal" and occurrence of the desired conditions will vary from year to year and between one locality and another. Therefore, the main criterion for application of fertiliser in spring is that favourable weather conditions should already be providing conditions for growth. Unfortunately, however, nature does not usually oblige by providing these conditions at the beginning of the main competition season, a fact which appears to escape a large proportion of the golfing fraternity.

## False Spring

The unwary may be caught out by a false spring at this time with a sudden flush of growth during early March which quickly subsides with no further movement for three or four weeks. The resulting soft, forced growth may also be more easily damaged. Fertiliser mistakenly applied at this time will be largely wasted as, by the time growth restarts, much of the nutrient material will have become unavailable and a supplementary fertiliser may then be necessary to boost growth at the true start of the growing season. Generally a flush of growth in March should be mistrusted except perhaps in the extreme south and west and if there is a desire to apply fertiliser at this early stage it would usually be advisable to think only in terms of a light dressing of sulphate of ammonia so delaying the complete fertiliser until more settled growth is assured.

## East Winds

An additional complication, perhaps most often experienced in the east of England and Ireland, and near coasts or other exposed positions, is the sharp easterly wind which often blows as late as May and can completely arrest growth causing discoloration by scorching leaf tips. Again it is often useful to

*(Continued on page 6)*

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### *Fertiliser and Spring Growth—continued*

follow such weather with a touch of sulphate of ammonia to get growth moving again and restore colour to the sward though it may be impractical to delay the main spring dressing in anticipation of these unpredictable easterlies. This problem cannot be completely overcome but can be reduced by working into the surface an application of good friable compost at 2-4 lb./sq. yd. in March following light wire raking. This will help to protect the grass and allow growth to resume more quickly when more favourable conditions return. Damage to the sward will also be minimised by avoiding unnecessarily close mowing.

### **Early Bite**

A temptation to apply fertiliser too early often arises where, on a course surrounded by agricultural land, the farmer is seen to obtain response to his fertiliser dressings at the beginning of March or even earlier, but the grazier is able to obtain this early bite for his stock only by using the coarser grass species such as Perennial and Italian ryegrasses often specifically selected for his purpose. The coarser grasses naturally begin growth earlier than the fine fescues and bent grasses and this often explains the advanced growth of fairways in the early part of the year as compared with greens. Difference in growth between greens on courses situated within the same district may also

be attributable to this feature where greens containing a proportion of the coarser grasses and annual meadow-grass can show greater growth than those containing a high proportion of bents and fescues, although the latter will provide the superior putting surface over the year as a whole.

### **Roots**

Though adequate supply of fertiliser is essential for growth it is of little value if other requirements are not also satisfied. In addition to the points already mentioned the condition of the turf itself will have an important bearing on the effectiveness of fertiliser applications. Nutrient material supplied by the fertilisers is taken up by the roots and a deep, well spread, root system is essential to give a good, long lasting response which does not tail off quickly. A desirable root system and consequently efficient utilisation of fertiliser can only be obtained by a full maintenance programme giving adequate attention to deep aeration and fibre control.

### **pH Level**

Over-acidity of the turf may also be responsible for poor response and the level of soil acidity should be regularly checked and corrected where necessary. In some cases nitro chalk will produce a better response than sulphate of ammonia on acid turf but this fertiliser should only be used exceptionally and with discretion.

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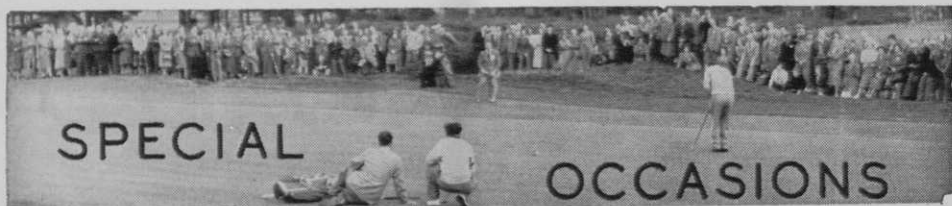
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- APRIL**            11th S.G.G.A. West, Spring Tournament, Western Gailes G.C.  
                               Welsh Spring Tournament, Llanishen G.C.
- MAY**                4th Northern Spring Tournament, West Bradford G.C.  
                               10th Southern Spring Tournament, Romford G.C.  
                               23rd North-West Spring Tournament, Davyhulme Park G.C.
- JUNE**                13th Midland Visit to Sutton & Sons Ltd.  
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## HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES

### ANNUAL TOURNAMENT — WALTON HEATH GOLF CLUB

Mr W. Mason, Secretary of the Southern Section, has kindly sent me a list of hotels in the vicinity of Walton Heath, listed below, for the benefit of members seeking accommodation for the Tournament.

#### Hotel Accommodation Within a Radius of Approximately 10 Miles

<i>Hotel</i>	<i>Telephone</i>
The Bear Hotel, High Street, Esher.	Esher 4023.
Burford Bridge Hotel, Dorking, Surrey.	Dorking 4561.
Drift Bridge Hotel, Epsom.	Burgh Heath 51663.
Hartsfield Manor, Betchworth.	Betchworth 2343.
Linden House Hotel, College Road, Epsom.	Epsom 21447.
New Bull Hotel, North Street, Leatherhead.	Leatherhead 2153.
Old Manor House, Epsom.	Epsom 4436.
Red Lion Hotel, Ockley, Dorking.	Capel 2258.
Reigate Hill Hotel, Reigate.	Reigate 43138.
White Horse Hotel, Dorking.	Dorking 2543
Whyte Hart Hotel, Bletchingley.	Bletchingley 23111.
Bridge House Motel, Reigate Hill, Reigate.	Reigate 46801.

I also understand that Mr Dulake, head greenkeeper at Walton Heath Golf Club, has kindly offered his assistance to members who would prefer local accommodation in the village, if they will get in touch with him direct.

C. H. Dix.



Presentation to John Dearlove at Hallamshire Golf Club on 21st December 1966.  
Left to right: John Dearlove, Ron Whitehead, C. Grimley, Mr A. Shardlow, President,  
H. Gillespie.