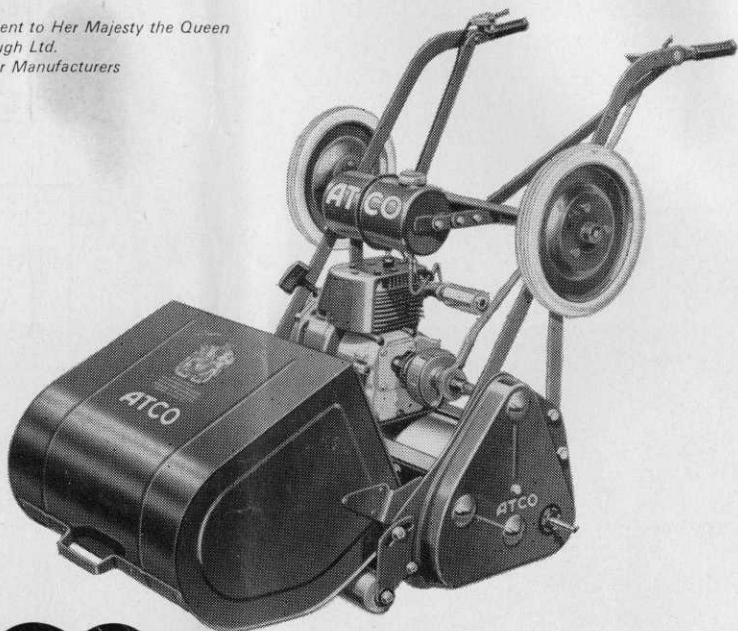




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THE BRITISH GOLF

# GREENKEEPER

HON. EDITOR: F. W. HAWTREE



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No. 277 New Series

APRIL-MAY 1968

*It's only human nature that most  
golfers consider themselves exceptions  
to the Rules.* —ROBERT BECKETT

## APRIL-MAY

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EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISEMENT OFFICES: Addington Court Golf Club, Featherbed Lane, Addington, Croydon, Surrey. Telephone: 01-657 0281. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: 15/6 for 12 issues post paid. Published during the first week of each month. LATEST COPY DATE: 8th of month prior to insertion. All rights reserved. Reproduction of original articles and photographs in whole or in part is prohibited. This Magazine shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be re-sold, lent, hired out, or otherwise disposed of. Contributions and photographs of interest are invited.

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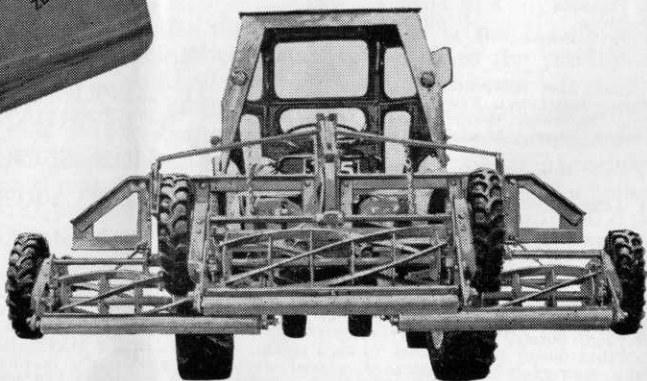
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# TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

Darlington Finance Committee have slashed estimates for the next two years including £35,000 for the provision of a layout and temporary club facilities for a golf course at Stressholme.

The acting principal of Heriot-Watt University, at Glasgow entertained Fifth and Sixth Form schoolchildren in a lecture entitled "Mathematical Mirth". He demonstrated that a full drive generates a work-load of 400 horse-power; that the club-head is only in contact with the ball for one-half of one thousandth of a second, and that the ball leaves the club-head with a velocity of about 170 m.p.h.

Walmersley Golf Club wants to extend its course to 18 holes but may not carry out the work unless accommodation can be provided on the course for its greenkeepers. The Club was appealing against refusal of planning consent for two houses for its green staff. The course is so isolated that more staff could not be attracted to the course unless housing were provided. There is one greenkeeper at present and he is living in a caravan.

The Development Corporation of the new town at Cumbernauld is to be urged by the local council to buy land now for the town's 18-hole golf course. A Corporation spokesman said that active steps towards acquiring golf course land were being taken and a year ago Corporation officers considered how tipping might be used to create the first-class golf course.

Golfers at Haltwhistle, Northumberland, had a problem—the nearest course was too far away.

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A local farmer rented them 60 acres: doctors, factory workers, clerks, farmers, bankers, everybody interested, got stuck in with mowers, tractors, picks, shovels.

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# THE GREATEST SHOW ON TURF

by F. W. HAWTREE

THE "Greatest Show on Turf" filled the Hilton Hotel in San Francisco for more than a week in February. This alone is no mean achievement when I recall that I had 105 yards to walk to the lift from room 1139 if taking the direct route or 295 yards if I went the other way. This made each side of the square about 75 yards. The first fourteen floors enclosed multi-storey garages so that one could drive up to the appropriate floor, park, and walk straight into the passage opposite one's bedroom. On the fifteenth floor the garage became a swimming pool and the next seven floors had a double circuit of bedrooms with those on the inside looking down on to the pool and those at pool level being "Cabana" rooms. All this was quite a change from the Star and Garter at Chipping Sodbury.

I felt immediately at home in the lobby when booking in. American superintendents evidently looked no different from British head-greenkeepers. They had the same tanned complexions and clear eyes haunted by the thought of what might be happening to their courses in their absence — the same obvious enjoyment of these infrequent reunions.

This was the Thirty-ninth Annual Turf Conference of the G.C.S.A.A. (Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America) and the organisation had obviously been perfected over the years.

Apart from members, there were representatives of every kind of firm concerned with turf maintenance, lecturers, guests, wives and families making up the balance of an attendance which certainly exceeded 3,000.

A special booth set up in the lobby for the registration of the attendance contained 11 young ladies in green uniforms bearing the G.C.S.A.A. emblem. They issued black brief cases containing a full programme, maps, invitations and brochures.

For recognition there was a card with name, club and state in a transparent cover.

The lower part slipped into the breast pocket and contained a summary of events. By turning over a page each day one always knew what came next. The word "England" on my card led to frequent greetings and conversations with friendly strangers. But the system as a whole led to the impression that anyone to whom you were introduced was finding out about you by shaking hands with your card and not with you. But you were inspecting his particulars at the same time and the real difficulty was to ensure that your hand met his.

There had been golf tournaments and committee meetings during the previous week but the conference proper started on Monday, 19th February. Some five hundred superintendents gathered in the Continental Ballroom at 9.00 a.m. to listen to the first educational assembly "What's new and how do we use it?" As Hon. Editor of the *British Golf Greenkeeper* I was invited to the Press and Speakers reception (Toyon Room) at 11.45 a.m. and to the Press and Speakers Convention (Walnut Room) at 12.30 p.m. (We never ran out of rooms.)

I met Walter Boysen, G.C.S.A.A. President at the first and sat next to Richard Sincerbeau, a golf course architect, at the second. Descriptions of work and of green committees reinforced my previous day's impression of being very much at home.

The second assembly at 1.30 p.m. dealt with golf course beautification. Warren Bidwell, Superintendent of the Philadelphia Country Club, spoke of the important first impressions of a golf course in his talk "The Front Door". Six other interesting papers were read, though, because his research had been into a novel area, Carl Whitcomb's discussion of "Root Competition between Trees and Turf" was outstanding. He is a Research Associate of the Department of Ornamental Horticulture at Florida University. He demonstrated how shallow rooting trees suffered if planted in existing grass, and how grass could be grown under deeper rooting

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*(Continued from page 4)*

trees. David Gourlay from the Thornhill Country Club in Ontario (there is a Canadian branch of the G.C.S.A.A.) described how his members fill in the winter time with curling when the course is under snow. Naturally the superintendent looks after the rink.

There was a Get Acquainted Party at 6.30 p.m. to round off the day though judging by the way things were going seven hours later, this was for many the start of the day — not the end of it.

The exhibition opened on the following morning. The new Jacobsen ride-on triple green mower caught the eye — all cutting and lifting mechanisms are hydraulic. When turning off the green cutting cylinders are raised and lowered with a time lag automatically provided between the lifting or dropping of the two forward machines and of the rear machine so that close cutting ends and starts at the green-edge.

Ransomes had a good display on the Warren Turf Nursery stand with Motor Triple and Autocertes bearing comparison or better with any other machines on display. They stood out all the better over there for being painted green. The Jacobsen house colour is yellow and Toro, red. Yet over here Ransomes, Atco, Lloyds, Greens, Webbs and even Qualcast all play on the basic theme of greenness as a standard finish. This certainly limits the factors likely to influence choice to those most significant. Whether it is better for trade is another matter.

Toro was naturally there in force with mowers and a good deal of space devoted to automatic watering systems. The latest irrigation layout has one controller controlling other controllers out on the course, obviating the need for long multiple runs of cable back to the central control point and giving a wider flexibility in setting a programme. The firm's representative obviously had all the facts at his fingertips.

I was not so sure about another one. I asked if one of the types of *Agrostis* he was offering was "*stolonifera*". He was not sure about that but it was

selling very well. Elsewhere I was given a bottle of hormone rooting fluid enough to make 1,000 gallons at the dilution recommended. Try this next time you sow or turf. It works in the greenhouse: so far.

This little gift made the morning and the afternoon was made by a talk by Stan Frederiksen, Mallinckrodt's Turf Products Manager, and Dr John Weiing, Professor of Plant Pathology at the University of Nebraska. Descriptions of fungal diseases and their treatment are not calculated to stimulate much excitement in those familiar with them. But the excellence of the material and of its presentation held the audience enthralled. The lecture was as much a work of art as the knowledge of the subject was profound.

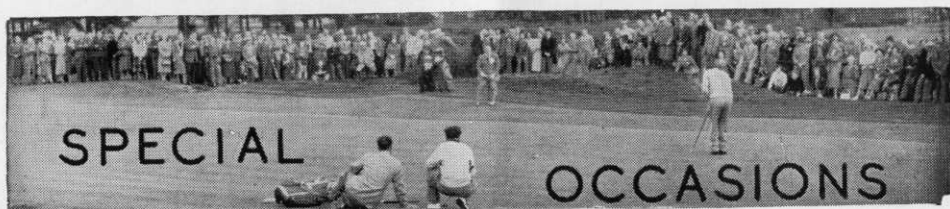
On Wednesday, there was a "Public Course Operators Clinic" in one hall and a "Small Engine Clinic" in another. On Thursday members of the U.S.G.A. Green Section dealt with putting green design, construction, planning and maintenance. Stolons are more often used than seed, both from Bent and Bermuda grasses, as the strains developed do not always breed true from seed.

Good drainage was constantly emphasised by speaker after speaker. Dr Marvin H. Ferguson is already well known over here from his articles and reputation. Another pleasing talk was by James Holmes, mid-western agronomist. A slide of a heap of derelict golf carts with the comment "That's where I would like to see all golf carts" brought a sympathetic response from the audience. He also described a telephone conversation with a man who rang up to ask what was needed to make a golf course.

Answer: "Drainage and common sense. And if you're a little short on common sense, put in more drainage."

These talks had been preceded by one from a professional, Paul Runyon. I was glad to hear that he thought the greens at Portmarnock were amongst the best in the world.

The exhibition closed that evening,  
*(Continued on page 10)*



APRIL	23rd	North-East Section Spring Tournament.
	24th	Welsh Section Spring Meeting
	25th	Sheffield Section A.G.M.
	25th	Midland Section Spring Tournament.
MAY	2nd	North-West Section Spring Tournament and A.G.M.
	7th	Northern Section Spring Tournament.
	8th	East Midland Spring Tournament.
	15th	Southern Section Spring Tournament.
JUNE	5th	Southern Section A.G.M.
	20th	Midland Section Annual Match.
JULY	2nd	Welsh Section A.G.M.
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## EIGHTEEN HOLES WITH HAWTREE

### *The First*

We are about to embark on a round of golf lasting two years or more.

Talking golf course layout and design can be a sterile occupation unless it is pinned down to actual example, but actual examples seldom unite all the relevant factors. So these 18 holes will be types—the short holes, the par-5, the dog-leg and so on—and the discussion round them will be general. The round will last a long time because each hole will take this magazine a month to play and sometimes two. But that is not so unusual nowadays.

Now we can drive off.

No. 1. Some like it tough. Think of yourself starting your round at Hoylake where drive or second can so easily be out of bounds into The Field. Now stop thinking about it. The Royal Liverpool Golf Club was founded in 1869 and although this hole was not the first at that time there are things flowering on ancient battlegrounds which do not survive transplanting to a fertile garden.

I shall return to the question of Out of Bounds later in the round. Here it is only used as an example of difficulty. The point to be made is that unless there is some natural obstacle which obliges the first hole to contain the risk of playing three from the tee, it is cynical to introduce it. There are still 17 holes to go, your golfer is probably stiff and cold. Let him dig his own pits—there is no need yet to dig them for him.

The warm humanity of the designer of golf courses is best demonstrated at the first hole. Mr Sam Snead said, "The golf architect can't play golf himself and makes darned sure nobody else can". Even if this were true in the first part it is certainly not true in the second. This is our only chance to beat Sam Snead on the first tee.

Next, the question of length. There have been people who advocated a par-5 at the first hole. There are two

mild comments to make on that recommendation. Firstly it is a waste of time; secondly it is rubbish.

It is a waste of time to make any generalisation whatsoever about the length of the first hole because the clubhouse site, the land round the clubhouse, the land beyond that and the ultimate ideal layout for the whole site, are, together, the factors which will determine how long the first hole will be. The man who starts work on a layout by saying "I must have a par-5 at No. 1", is either ignorant, feckless or both.

It is rubbish because the normal layout of, say, 6,300 yards will only tolerate two or three par-5's in either half if the total balance and variety of lengths in the sequence of holes is to be agreeable. Moreover the par-5 itself is a delicate matter. It demands, as we shall see when we play that hole, something more than sheer length to make it acceptable.

It may well be that the geography of the site requires a par-5 to open the round. In the same way a par-3 may be inevitable. But these necessities come from the site itself not from any academic decisions beforehand.

A few years ago I planned two 18-hole courses for a club near Paris called Le Prieure. The East Course ended with a par-3. The West Course began with a par-3. Only in this way was it possible to connect the clubhouse naturally to the courses. An intimate relationship of course with clubhouse is a vital consideration. Old monastic foundations like this priory were mostly sited near running water and often therefore, in a valley which in this case was narrow with steep sides, inaccessible for a longer hole except in one direction. They were also remote from the distractions of Paris. That is another matter.

But normally the par-3's and 5's are better woven into the pattern of the round at a later stage. They are too valuable to be used on the edge. And if they have to be used, the proper balance of the remainder presents additional problems.

Therefore I am inclined to affirm even at the risk of wasting your time by generalising, that a par-4 of no special difficulty is the desirable opening for nine or 18 holes if there is any choice. And if the speed of despatching players from the first tee is also of consequence then a length of 350 yards would be appropriate. In principle the shorter the walk to the green after the tee-shot, the longer the time available for putting on the green before those following reach their drives. But the proper tee and green positions will generally determine length and leave little choice.

One other small point. I believe that the flag on the first green should, if possible, be visible from the tee and the clubhouse. We shall be talking about dog-legs and blind holes after and somehow one feels that they should come later, when standing on the first tee. The visibility of the flag brings the course to the player before he drives off and as he reflects in the clubhouse afterwards. In the same way all the

bunkers on the first hole should be handsome and well in evidence even if one or two might be superfluous on a strict interpretation. On an inland site especially, the views from the first tee ought to epitomise the golfing landscape and inspire eagerness to get out into it with a bag of clubs.

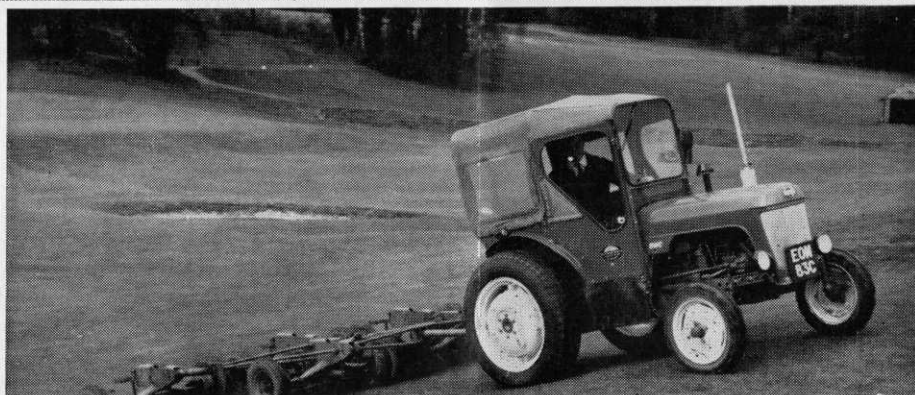
There only remains the window-dressing. The neat white rail, the broad expanse of immaculate teeing-ground, the waste-paper basket cleared of yesterday's ball wrappings, bright tee-markers, ball-washer, notices simple and to the point. The whole effect proclaims that this course is well cared for.

This first impression is probably as important as the hole itself. Provided the design looks good and the impression of the course is favourable that is as much as we need expect at the start.

For most golfers, the first hole is only a way of getting from the clubhouse to the second tee. Come to think of it, that is about all we have done here.

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(Continued from page 6)

the Annual Banquet followed. One further assembly took place on Friday followed by a tour of golf courses in the San Francisco area. But by then I was on my way home, grateful for the kindest possible hospitality and an absorbing five days. This is the way to run an association.

Has anyone any ideas about what we ought to do at Skegness?

Next month some of the practical pointers from this conference will be covered. I shall not be covering (and who would want to) the "topless" bars which offer comfort to the man about town in San Francisco from breakfast (and I mean BREAKFAST) until 2.00 a.m. or later (makes quite a long day). But then the day was so long that the Late Night Show on television, round about midnight was the *Early Late Night Show*. You could also ring up at 1.30 a.m. to borrow \$1,000 and would only pay back about \$36 a month for three years to service both the loan and its interest. If I had been able to dial the number and had no worries about the April *Greenkeeper* I might still have been there living on \$964 a month for ever. Not that it would have gone very far.

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