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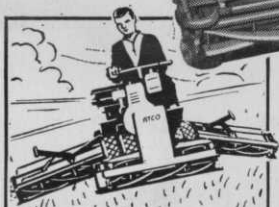
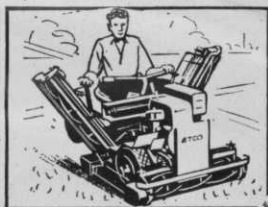
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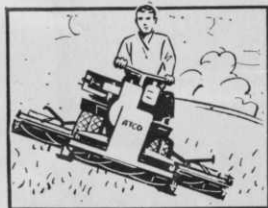
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GREENKEEPER

HON. EDITOR: F. W. HAWTREE



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No. 274 New Series

JANUARY 1968

WRONG LINE

*"I took up golf to develop self control,"
an especially poor golfer confided to his
caddie.*

*"You should have taken up caddying,
Mister," replied the exasperated youth.*

—GARY FOSTER.

JANUARY

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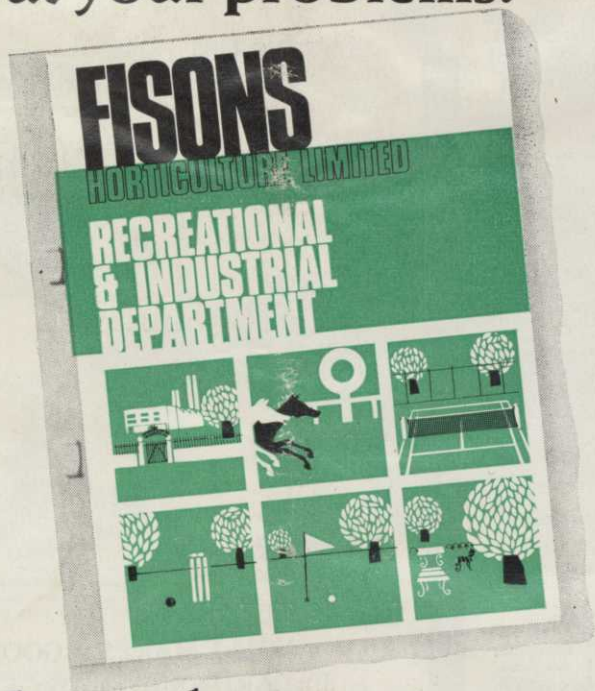
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TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

The Abergele Golf Club in North Wales is busy installing itself on its new site in Gwrych Castle grounds. They hope to have nine holes ready for next year and the second nine the year after that. Their present nine-hole course is to be crossed by the new Abergele By-pass.

* * *

John Campbell, Links Supervisor at St Andrews, showed us over his new quarters last month. He is now installed between the first and eighteenth holes of the Jubilee Course with commodious sheds, his own generating plant and repair shops. The hotel on the site of the former Black Sheds is due to open next June, and bookings are already being taken. The old stationmaster's house is to become an inn.

* * *

New municipal courses have been agreed by the councils of Rotherham and Stevenage and work on the former scheme at least will start this year. Brentwood and Dartford are also extending existing nine holes to 18. Harlow, Waltham Cross and Epping Urban councils may also join together in a project for another local golf course.

* * *

The Minister overruled his inspectors finding on the proposed development of the Kings Norton Golf Course, Birmingham, for housing. The club have plans to move farther out of town. The new clubhouse at Carnoustie will cost £57,878. This is nearly three and a half thousand pounds more than the last estimate due to rises in labour costs and materials.

* * *

WHAT MAKES A GOOD GOLF COURSE?

by **B. C. CLAYTON**

Senior Advisory Officer, The Sports Turf Research Institute

THE architect and the greenkeeper would hardly answer this question in the same way. A course may be a good one so far as the layout goes, but a poor one from the point of view of the general condition and upkeep. I suppose most golfers would prefer to play on a course which is interesting and challenging in its design though badly maintained rather than on a dull course in tip-top condition. The ideal, of course, is a combination of both — good design with good maintenance.

Taking the good design for granted, and looking at the different courses all over Britain throughout the year, we at the Institute concerned mainly with the greenkeeping side of the picture, have noted the distinguishing features of the course which stands out above its fellows in this respect.

Unspotted Greens

Greens first of all, since these are the greenkeeper's shop window. Putting surfaces will be true and smooth, not too hard and yet not too soft (although there is, of course, some controversy at present as to how soft we should make our greens, some people preferring the very soft "Target Golf" conditions that are said to prevail in America). The greens will be completely free of weeds. So many otherwise good greens are spoilt by just occasional small plants here and there of plantains and daisies which could be removed in two or three minutes with a fork. The greens will have no blemishes caused by petrol or oil, or by careless application of materials which can scorch like selective weedkillers or mercurial fungicides. The hole will be neatly cut, and the condition of the turf around it will show that the pin has not been in the same place too often. Mowing, of course, will be well nigh perfect — clean, straight mower lines, no skinning and no biting into the surrounds.

On the immediate surround and on the approach, the turf will be as smooth and uniform as on the green itself, and will be mown with a motor mower fitted with box — no running up to the edge of the green with the gang mower, spraying the green liberally with grass clippings!

No piles of grass

Another mark of the good golf course is the absence of nasty little heaps of half-rotted grass clippings dotted about like miniature pyramids. These clippings are valuable and should be collected up straight away and put all together in some central heap away from sight (and smell) so that they can rot down and later on make a useful addition to the compost heaps.

Good compost, incidentally, helps to produce good greens, and the planned production of annual supplies of mature natural compost is another indication of the "super" course.

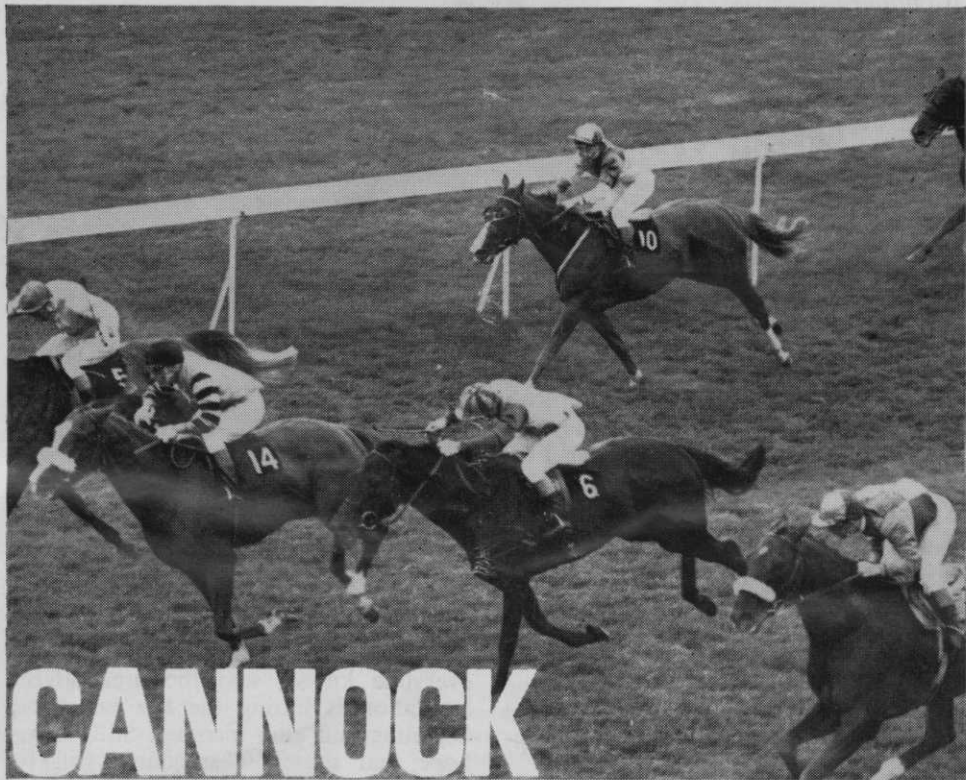
Neat bunkers

So is the condition of the bunkers — trim bunkers with a minimum of four inches clean non-binding sand. Air-cushion mowers and more appropriate grass and weedkillers are helping to take some of the sweat and toil out of bunker maintenance.

Usable temporary greens

Temporary greens to which play can be transferred when the main greens are not fit due to frost, excessive rain, or work which is being done to improve them (re-laying, forking, top dressing, etc.) are desirable on every hole where it is practicable to make them. On the good course sufficient work will have been done on these temporary greens to make their condition passable, so that it

(Continued on page 6)



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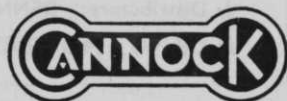
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(Continued from page 4)

is really no great hardship for the members to have to use them occasionally.

Dry, firm, clean tees

Tees are a "give-away" on some courses — uneven, soft, weedy and smothered with wormcasts. On one of the "alpha plus" courses the turf on the tees will be practically as good as on the greens, especially on the first tee which is often something of a show-piece. Clippings will be boxed during mowing, surfaces will be dry and firm, and scars and divots promptly repaired.

No bad lies on fairways

No golfer likes to play a good shot from the tee and then walk up to find his ball lying in a little hollow on the fairway where the grass is about three inches long. These small pockets where the grass escapes the knives of the gang mower will seldom be found on good fairways. Nor will those ugly bumps which get skinned by the mowers.

Well-maintained fittings

The most obvious feature of the well-managed course is the condition of the golf fittings and furniture like tee markers, benches and shelters. On a good course they will be maintained in perfect repair and those that require it will be given a fresh coat of paint during the winter. Ball washers will be kept topped up with water; litter baskets will

be frequently emptied. These are simple things but typical of a course which is in good hands.

Well-ordered equipment

Less obvious to the casual visitor, but almost invariably found on a well-managed course, are equipment sheds stocked with clean, well-maintained machinery; tools with their unpainted parts bright and shiny, each in its allotted place; the sheds themselves dry and clean with uncluttered floors.

Sufficient staff

Before the angry letters flood in to the editor, I hasten to add that on these first-class golf courses there will also be an adequate staff and sufficient funds to provide the necessary materials and equipment. Labour is difficult now, as everyone knows, and the breathalyser legislation is hitting the bar sales and depleting golf club incomes. Still, let us hope that somehow standards will be preserved and that there will always be golf courses in this country which will continue to reflect the abilities of the British Golf Greenkeeper.

MISCELLANEOUS

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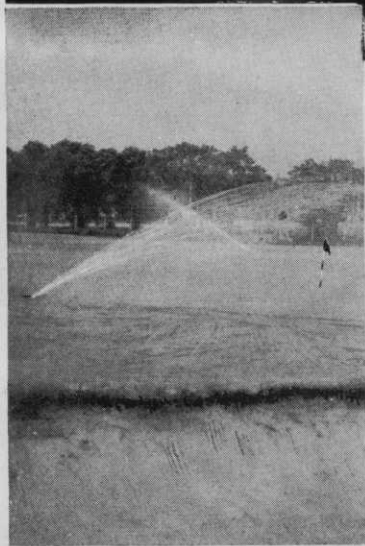
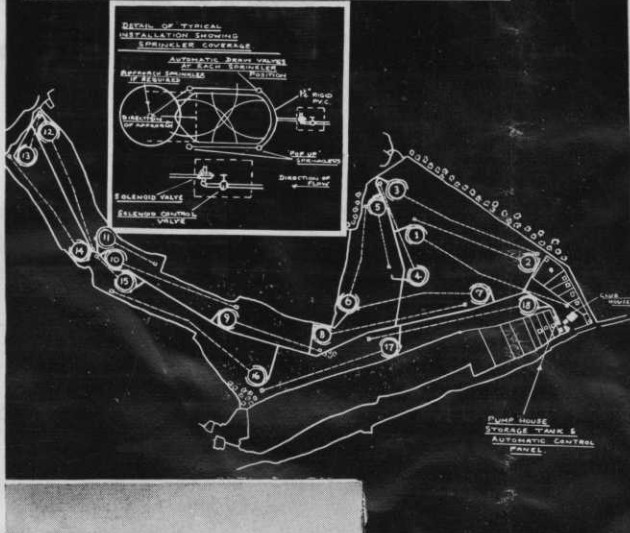
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Head Greenkeeper,
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EARLY METHODS OF GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE

by **J. K. CAMPBELL**
Links Supervisor, St Andrews

ST ANDREWS connections with the game of golf go back a long way. It has been played there since 1553, and possibly earlier. There is a record of the Marquis of Montrose playing golf at St Andrews in 1628, buying two golf balls for tenpence on the day before his wedding, and returning a few days later for further supplies.

An interesting contribution made by St Andrews to sporting history is the official acknowledgment that rabbits are useful to golf. Around 1650 the city authorities permitted the archbishop to "plant and plenish rabbits" in certain parts of the links. The idea, apparently, was that the archbishop could have the meat in return for his rabbits grazing the course. Mowing machines were not yet invented, and any burrows or holes that were made merely provided further natural hazards. History draws a discreet veil over the performances and records of those original golfing rabbits, but seventy years later there is another reference to someone else being given the privilege of "planting black and white rabbits". The city authorities were, however, learning their lesson. This time there was a proviso that "the links were not to be spoiled where golf is used". The assumption is that these later rabbits were expected to keep off the fairways and spend their time grazing in the rough.

Later this concession passed to another farmer. It seems he had no

interest in golf, for he took no steps to keep his rabbits within the area allotted to him. As the result, the links became little more than a rabbit warren. By this time the city of St Andrews was in debt and the links — which had been public property — were sold, with the proviso that the public could still play there.

House of Lords banish rabbits

It was now around the beginning of the nineteenth century, and two clubs had come into existence. Their players complained that the rabbits were spoiling the course. It needed long and expensive legal action, which went as far as the House of Lords, to end the nuisance. Even today sheep and cattle grazing is quite common on a few courses in Britain where ancient laws are still in force which give certain farmers free grazing rights. Most of these courses are laid out on common land which belongs to the local community and where golf is permitted at a very cheap rate as a form of recreation.

The difficulties of turf upkeep under these circumstances can be appreciated — and the task of course maintenance must be pretty tough. It is the writer's experience that most of these particular courses are well kept in spite of ravages of the animals. This is surely a great tribute to the greenkeeper and his staff.

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