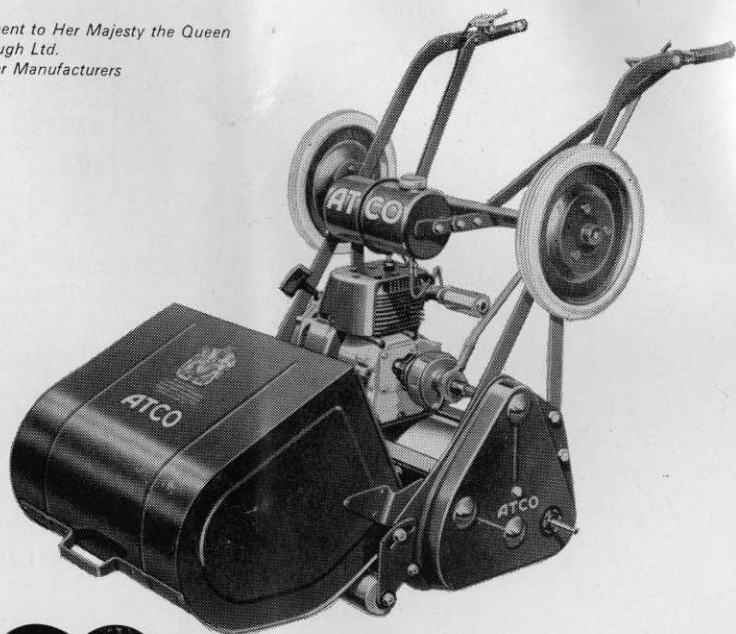




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THE BRITISH GOLF

GREENKEEPER

HON. EDITOR: F. W. HAWTREE



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No. 276 New Series

MARCH-APRIL 1968

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They must be insane,
They're playing in blustery
Gales and in rain.
Well, let them be foolish,
I'm not one to scoff;
I just wish they'd hurry,
So I can tee off.*

—ROBERT BRAULT

MARCH-APRIL

CONTENTS

Page	3	TEE SHOTS
	4	WHEN GROWTH BEGINS
	6	GREENKEEPER RETIRES
	10	CLUBE DE GOLF DO VALE DO LOBO (<i>continued</i>)
	11	HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES
	14	SITUATIONS VACANT
	15	NEWS FROM SECTIONS
	19	SPECIAL OCCASIONS
	20	MRS GREENKEEPER

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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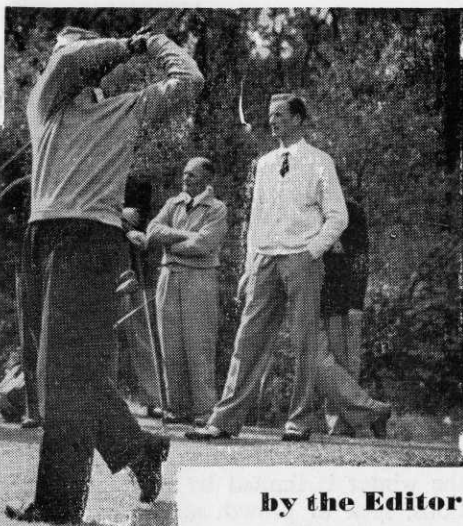
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TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

The Royal Lytham and St Annes Golf Club has been granted £1,800 over the next four years by the Lytham and St Annes Council. The money is primarily required to improve amenities for tournament crowds. Last year the Club lost £600 because it spent more than £20,000 on extensions and improvements and now has a bank overdraft. The Open Championship attracts something like 17,000 visitors to the town.

* * * *

Land to be reclaimed at Wheatley Hill in the Easington Rural District with Newcastle may include a golf course. The Surveyor is planning consultations to find out if the reclamation could provide for golf. A letter from the North Regional Planning Committee had urged the importance of looking to the provision of new golf facilities.

* * * *

The Lee Hall Golf Club at Sheffield is one of the latest to suffer from vandalism. Nearly 30 yards of turf on the ninth and tenth greens were dug up during the night by trenches cut in the rough form of the letters S and O.

* * * *

Richmond Parks Committee are, at present, considering plans for letting out Fulwell Park as a nine-hole municipal golf course. They have rejected a plan to extract gravel from the site.

* * * *

The Dunstable Downs Golf Club has raised its subscriptions by five guineas to twenty-six guineas to cover the drop in bar takings. Mr Frederick Whittingham said that the isolated position of the Club caused bar receipts to nose-dive when Breathaliser was introduced.

* * * *

The master plan for the Swindon area is due to appear this year and the officers concerned with further expansion of the town have in mind the need for one or more golf courses. The spokesman for the civic office made this assurance when questioned about the lack of facilities for golf in the Swindon area. The present Swindon Golf Club is near Marlborough but 85 per cent of the membership comes from Swindon.

WHEN GROWTH BEGINS

By R. V. Davies, B.Sc.

Golf, unlike the majority of other popular sports, is played throughout the year and in consequence there is no defined close season during which the golf course is closed to allow a period in which maintenance and remedial work can go ahead unhampered by concern for players. Nevertheless courses are generally quieter with fewer competitions during the winter months and there is more scope for controlling play while causing less inconvenience than at other times. Normal maintenance work during the winter is limited by weather conditions, lack of growth and reduced day length and it is not usually until spring that work increases in intensity with the need to produce good playing conditions in time for the busier playing period.

This is always a busy and often difficult time for the greenkeeper but, nevertheless, an interesting one when his judgment has to be at its keenest. This is the time when play increases and the early competitions are being played, very often when growth has hardly made a start. Under these conditions the care greens have received during winter will show up. Those where play has been controlled to prevent use during frosty and wet weather, which have been adequately aerated and protected against disease, will start off in a basically sound condition. They will have a full grass cover and an open freely draining surface which is generally able to take advantage of favourable conditions once they arrive. This is a great advantage in the fight for early growth which is the greenkeeper's annual battle and allows him to proceed at the earliest opportunity with other operations, such as scarifying, which can only safely be undertaken when there is growth.

Compost

There is no reason why deep solid aeration should not be carried out during this early phase to help relieve at least a proportion of the compaction which will inevitably have occurred on

greens during wet winter conditions no matter how much care has been exercised, and to help aerate and dry the top soil. It is worth noting that light application of a good, natural compost, preferably prepared in compost heaps on the course, helps to produce a little slow growth by providing plant nutrient, helps to produce a more desirable green colour in the sward and by forming a mulch helps to keep the surface warm and protect the foliage from intermittent cold spells. Dressings should be no heavier than 2 to 4 lbs per square yard and, of course, brushed into the base of the turf to overcome any danger of the grass being covered over and weakened.

During this early period of light growth the composting can be immediately preceded by careful scarification to remove some of the dead plant material which has dried back over winter and collected in the immediate surface. The compost will then help to protect the scarified surface but, even so, rotary scarifiers should be used only with considerable care as damage can easily be caused by over enthusiasm at this stage, particularly in areas open to the cold, east winds.

Early growth

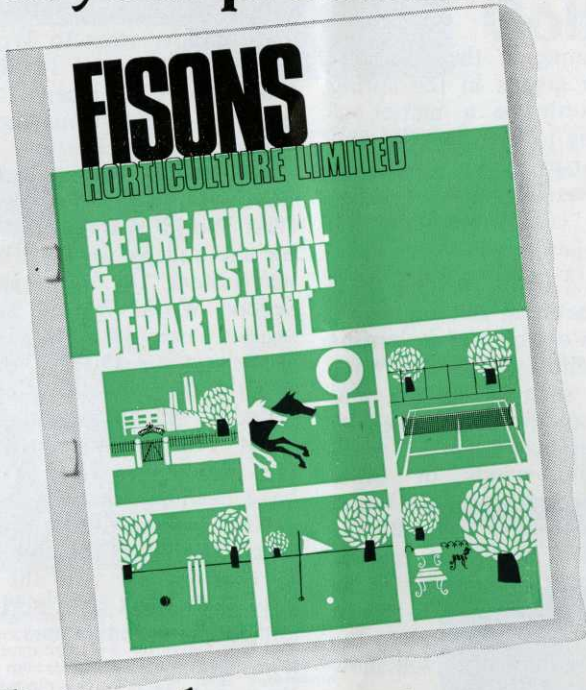
This early work might typically be possible in late March when mowing will probably still be infrequent with topping being sufficient to control patches of more forward growth in order to maintain overall uniformity. It is not until later, towards the end of April, that the cutter can gradually be reduced in height and frequency increased as more steady growth occurs.

It is only under these conditions, when growth is more reliable, that the spring fertiliser should be applied and under its ensuing effect on growth that more thorough operations such as further scarifying and weed control can be attempted and the cutter reduced to the normal seasonal height of 3/16 in. Even now care is necessary

(Continued on page 6)

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Mud? Moss? Panning? Wear
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(Continued from page 4)

because setbacks to growth can continue into May.

Moss

Moss which often collects over winter should normally disappear from healthy greens as growth improves but, where it is more persistent, control measures ought to be completed well before any scarification is undertaken. This will ensure that, if one of the slow acting mercurised moss killers is used, it will have to take full effect before the moss is removed during the course of the scarification work.

Timing

The exact planning of these various operations on the greens in the spring programme can only be a matter of judgment according to each locality and even between courses within a locality, while the variations from year to year make for further complication.

Fairways and Tees

The fairways and tees also have their call for spring treatment but owing to the coarser nature of the turf judgment need not be quite so precise and mechanical work such as spiking and harrowing, or scarification, can be undertaken more confidently while scorching by cold winds or other adverse weather is less likely. Operations on these areas have basically the same requirement of providing reasonable growth as early as possible so as to produce full strong swards in readiness for heavy play. As with greens the effect of care during the winter will show itself at this time of year.

GREENKEEPER RETIRES

OVER 50 years' service as a greenkeeper do not go unnoticed as Knaphill man, Mr Harry Hilder, found out this week. Mr Hilder retired recently after working at Worplesdon Golf Club since 1914. He has been head greenkeeper for 40 years.

Mr Hilder, 67, of 63 Highclere Road, Knaphill, was presented with a cheque and a gold watch on Sunday by the club captain, Mr Stanley Bassett. Many members were present at the ceremony. Mr Hilder also received a gift from the club on the occasion of his 50 years with it.

Mr Hilder went to Worplesdon Golf Club at the age of 14 years and, after four months, he received his first token of appreciation from the club—a one shilling per week rise.

Mr Hilder was called up in both wars. He was not called up for the First World War until 1918 because of his age and by the time he had finished his training the war was over. In the Second World War he served for four years, partly in Iran. He came back to Britain for D-Day, and returned to greenkeeping shortly after the war was ended.

Mr Hilder was born in Knaphill. His wife comes from Yorkshire. They have been married for 34 years.

Retirement will be only partial for Harry Hilder, as the club has asked him to continue to visit the club on two days each week as a sort of supervisor among the greenkeepers.

With acknowledgements to the "Woking News and Mail", 3rd February 1968.

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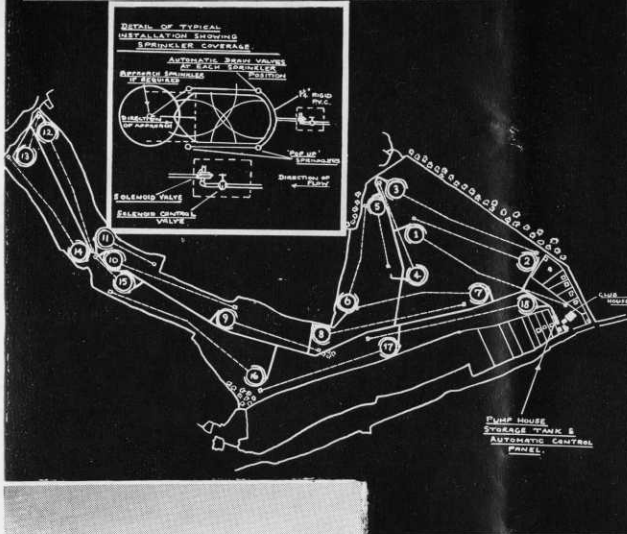
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CONTINUED

CLUBE DE GOLF DO VALE DO LOBO

by C. J. R. PITMAN
(Head Greenkeeper)

Weeds on the newly sown fairways were dense as expected and, having plenty of clean, local labour, most of the bad areas were hand cleared. It is an amusing sight to see twenty or so bodies crawling along the fairways engrossed in this work. Later when the grass was stronger we sprayed with 2-4D but this was tricky in one instance as we were given the wrong mixture quantities by our local adviser in the area who before had only sprayed farm crops.

The fairways, being sown on sand, contained many undulations, so on the flatter areas we gingerly employed a 10-ton steam-roller and on the steep slopes, of which there are quite a few, another gang of twenty men were quite happily punning away by hand. A very laborious job but the only way.

At the close of March we were mowing three times a week on the greens and on the fairways once a week, but on our fifth hole, a very steep, sandy fairway where we found it very difficult to obtain a flat state, the gang mowers simply cut out large areas and so it required reseeding, filling-in and then mowing with two small rotary cutters until after seed germination.

About April it gradually becomes pretty hot and the watering for the whole course was stepped up to nine hours a night on the automatic systems. Unfortunately another aggravating problem is the strong Algarvian wind from the Atlantic which in numerous cases reduces considerably the throw of the sprinklers resulting in a few escaping areas that will become parched in a matter of hours. The only way we can overcome this is with portable sprinklers on the fairways and hand-watering on the greens. We have now installed many standpipes for this purpose.

From April to October it is extremely hot most days and much of the time the temperatures are around the 80° mark. Just to help us out, this year was estimated by the local farmers to be the driest period for 30 years and indeed

we saw no rain for six months. At one time the irrigation system was functioning all round the clock and we were carrying out regular surface aeration to facilitate the penetration and percolation of the applied water. Naturally this proved rather much for some of our young grass and together with fractional knowledge of such things, as height of cut, fertilising and disease treatment in these conditions, we lost some areas of the course especially the grasses *festuca* and *agrostis*. Fortunately the tough *Cynodon* took over and now with the rains and some overseeding it is reasonably back to its former spring beauty.

Although 1967 proved drier than usual we must put the summer months down to a matter of survival. It has been a difficult summer but our knowledge gained is beyond measure.

As I say the rains are now with us but with the arrival of the first storms it turned out to be another cruel blow from Mother Nature. We had had no rain for six months and then with fantastic aggression in the space of three days we received more than has fallen here for the last two winters. The heavens opened and our poor second nine holes which had recently been seeded took a terrible beating. Deep grooves were washed down and across the fairways and some green banks just disintegrated. On the opening half of the course I was in the middle of reseeding a few areas and the down-pour just took the seed from the bare patches to the grassed area where it was held. Though we did not need convincing of the amount of water that fell, about 30 yards of an out of bounds wall alongside a fairway was simply swept down the valley. All very helpful indeed but after a year in Portugal one just learns to smile and start again.

Speaking of starting again, I am now thoroughly looking forward to starting all over again on the second nine holes. I am sure in the end all will be worth