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GREENKEEPER

HON. EDITOR: F. W. HAWTREE



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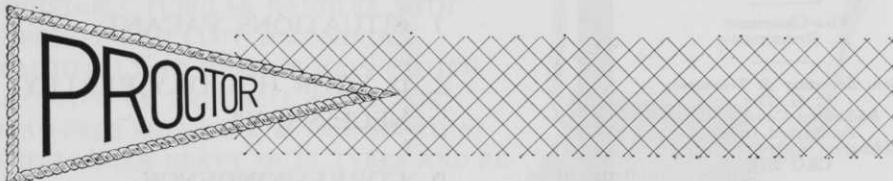
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TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

An enquiry in Renfrewshire produced a new estimation of the dangers of playing golf. Giffnock residents were objecting to a proposal for a country club and par-3 course. Their solicitor suggested that players would be round it in 25 minutes and that this would give them too much time for drinking and gambling.

★ ★ ★ ★

A £75,000 9-hole municipal golf course at Fulwell Park is still on the list of capital projects approved by Richmond on Thames Council despite public opposition. Councillor Woodward thought that the pressure group against the golf course now used the land for exercising their dogs.

★ ★ ★ ★

Keith Golf Club in Banffshire have appointed a trained greenkeeper. "But please," said the secretary in his annual report, "give him a chance and do not expect him to give you a Carnoustie within a few months."

★ ★ ★ ★

S. L. McKinlay, writing in the *Glasgow Herald*, recalls the size of the crowd which followed the Bobby Jones-Cyril Tolley semi-final in the 1930 Amateur Championship. "Even Moses might have found it more difficult to part that crowd than the waters of the Red Sea. The steward was valiant and vociferous—"Make way for the players, please," and a rich Fife accent answered him—"Tae hell wi' the players—we came tae see the gofff."

★ ★ ★ ★

Copt Heath Golf Club near Birmingham owns an 83 acre farm next to its course. This is now scheduled for development in the Solihull plan and might be worth £20,000 to £25,000 per acre. Even after paying betterment levy there should be something over £1 million left.

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The Importance of Weather

By J. PERRIS, B.Sc.

Advisory Officer at the Sports Turf Research Institute

NOW that the days are lengthening out thoughts begin to turn once more to the coming spring and summer months. Will it be another period of prolonged dry sunny spells as in 1969 or will it return to the more usual showery weather that we are accustomed to? Due to this unpredictability of our weather it is necessary for the British Greenkeeper to be amongst the most adaptable of workers in the world. He knows that it does not matter how much time and effort is put into a particular job, the weather will play an important part in the ultimate result.

However, it is perhaps well worth while to recapitulate whilst there is time the effects of weather and climate on certain operations.

Scarification

The salient point to bear in mind with scarifying or chain harrowing any area is that this work should only be carried out whilst the grass is making quite strong growth. Beware of sudden cold winds in the early spring period which will check growth, and similarly hot dry spells during the summer months.

If scarification has been carried out and hot dry weather ensues, the chance of damage to the turf could be reduced perhaps by applying liberal amounts of water. Needless to say, however, a dry surface condition would be desirable when the scarifying is performed.

Fertiliser treatment

The greens especially will need a balanced feed in the spring and correct timing will be very important. Fertiliser should not be applied too early to try to force growth, so wait until the winter is well and truly over. Probably late March/early April is about the "average" time for the first fertiliser application in the South of England, with two or three weeks' delay the further one goes North. All fertiliser applications should be made during

showery weather. On fine turf areas, unless it rains within a day or so after the fertiliser application, the materials should be artificially watered into the surface, ensuring application by means which will not wash the fertiliser into "drifts". Watering is particularly important with regard to summer fertiliser treatment of which more than one application is often required.

Aeration.

Normal spring and summer aeration can only be safely carried out whilst moist growing conditions prevail and are expected for the few following days. If spiking has taken place and a sudden dry spell occurs, some relief could again be obtained by applying liberal amounts of water to the spiked areas. However, there are occasions when shallower surface pricking is beneficial during dry conditions to aid the percolation of moisture when carrying out artificial watering.

Mowing

Do not be too hasty when lowering the height of cut during the early spring period, but, on the other hand, hasten to lift the mower blades slightly if any drought conditions occur. Also, as all practical men know, a far neater and quicker job can be achieved when mowing is carried out under dry conditions.

Fungicide and weedkiller application

These materials are best applied on a still, dry day when there is little chance of immediate precipitation. Good growing conditions must also exist when applying weedkiller to minimise the risk of scorch and obtain the maximum effect of the materials. Many turf diseases require moisture to survive and therefore the need to apply a fungicide could perhaps be reduced by switching the turf on mornings when there is a heavy dew. Should disease be noted,

Sports turf takes a lot of looking after. Up until now you could have chosen a wide range of different weedkillers to keep your turf clean.

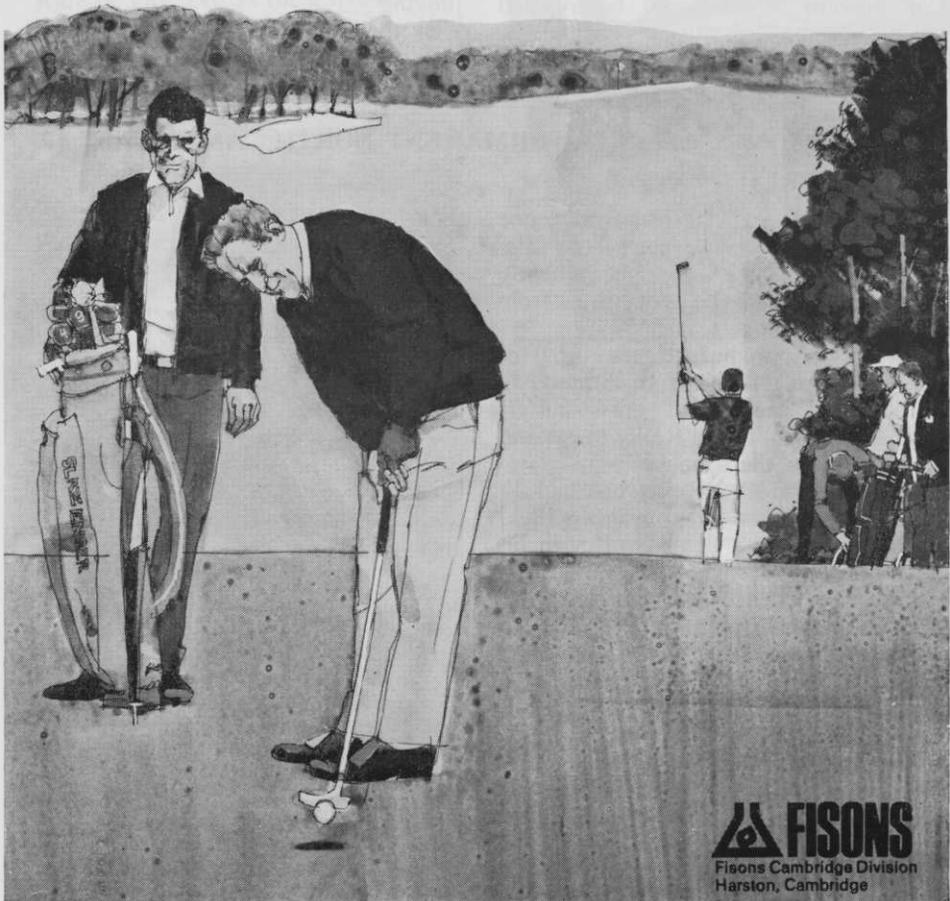
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however, immediate fungicide application should take place if it is not raining etc., irrespective of the time of year.

Drought conditions

The grass plant is about 90 per cent water and transpires many times its own weight during growth and so turf should have an adequate supply of water in which to grow and survive. In periods of drought therefore, it may be necessary to water the turf occasionally. Water should be applied before the effects of drought are obvious, ensuring that the soil is thoroughly moistened to a depth of at least 4 inches.

Construction work

Besides affecting the success of maintenance work the weather also largely determines the progress and quality of the construction of any new areas. Construction work should be avoided when ground conditions are wet, particularly if heavy equipment is being

used, as wet working results in the loss of soil structure and adversely affects the natural drainage qualities of the soil. Grass seed needs a warm and moist soil in which to germinate and grow and so the seeding of newly constructed areas is best left until about the end of August when the soil is warm and, once there is sufficient water for germination, there is little risk of drought affecting the seedling turf.

Summary

An ability to read the weather and its implications is a great asset to any Greenkeeper and one worth developing. Following the weather forecast each evening is a good idea. Even if terms such as Anti-cyclone or Depression are not fully understood, one can always turn to the Shakespearian practice of judging...

"By the complexity of the sky
The state and inclination of the day".

RANSOMES APPOINT PERMANENT NORTH AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE

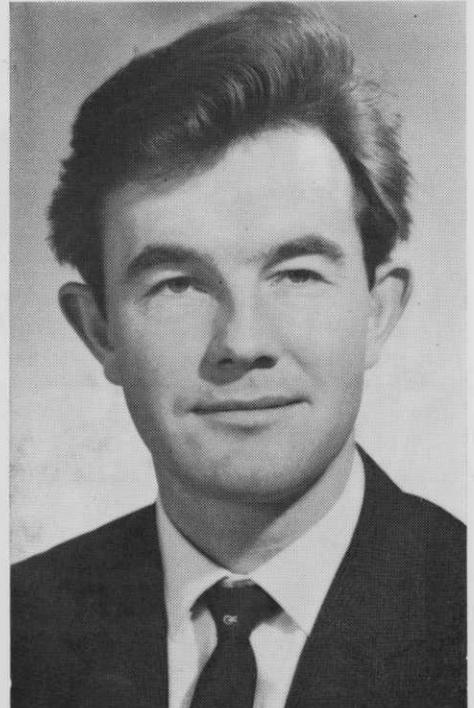
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IS YOUR HOLIDAY REALLY NECESSARY?

By F. W. HAWTREE

THE life of the golf architect is sometimes thought to be a series of country rambles interspersed with trips to the Mediterranean and an occasional game of golf. The golfer regards those who work in golf as butterflies. The golf club secretary is equally used to the pleasantries about life being one long holiday, but at least he gets a roof and a telephone. Try operating in the rain in a hundred and fifty acres of ploughed fields, barbed wire, thorns, ditches and inquisitive bullocks. In two hours you are expected to return, unruffled and free of mud, with an outline layout and opinion on which someone may be spending upwards of £100,000. Holidays last only a few weeks. As a golf architect you get this kind of relaxation throughout the year.

You are standing on a railway station in Brittany. This is about as far away in Europe as you can get from Turkey where you are due the next day, but that is how your holiday arranges itself. After eight hours on the train, you join the back of a taxi queue at the Gare Montparnasse with ninety minutes to get to Orly for your plane to Frankfurt. It is one of these periods when Paris taxi-drivers feel the homing instinct and only accept commissions in the direction of base. You reach the airport with two minutes spare but the plane is delayed an hour so you need not have worried.

A U.S. lieutenant meets you at Frankfurt at 10.00 p.m. and takes you to the General von Stauben Hotel. You are on "invitational orders" so you get a room. Somebody else has got it too. Five empty beer bottles and cigarette ash in the bath indicate that he is a congenial type but you take the vacant bed gratefully. It is Oktoberfest—brass bands, dancing and song in the ballroom—but fatigue overcomes these distractions.

At 2.00 a.m. thunder awakens you.

From the balcony you see wooden benches being removed from the ballroom and stacked in the yard below. A convenient iron fire escape leads from one to the other. When all the benches have rumbled and crashed to the bottom you go back to sleep. At 3.00 a.m. the lights go on and the congenial type says "Hi!". You counter with an old English expression and leave it at that. Fortunately he does too.

At 7.00 a.m., after this restful night, you go to the Rhein-Main Airbase where a number of U.S. airmen and civilians are hoping to move about the world in military aircraft. Some, like you, are going to Ankara but eventually decide to go via Evreux in Normandy. An old hand reckons it will be another week before they move on from there, but after a week in Frankfurt they are willing to take the chance. At midday you embark and the pilot explains about the alarm bell which he says you cannot mistake (as if you would!) and which need not worry you because he has plenty of crew to look after the passengers. (Who looks after the crew?) Also, if you feel weary, this will be due to lack of oxygen. (How long can you last?)

For political and technical reasons your route lies via Luxembourg, Lyon and St. Tropez but not quite all the way back to Brittany. So you are sitting with your lunch-box for nine hours and it is 10.30 p.m. local time when you land in Turkey at Izzmir, not at Ankara as expected. Formalities are not enlivened by near-Oriental music from a wireless set. Another old hand says that they are still playing their 78's at 45 down there.

Food is no longer being served at the Officers' Club and you retire hungry to a cold bungalow with seven American officers who are telephoning far into your sleep for news of a plane in

(continued on p. 12)

Correspondence

Toll Cottage, Whitburn Golf Club, Whitburn, Co. Durham.

Dear Sir,

HIDDEN DANGERS

I back Ken Buchanan all the way in his idea that greenkeepers should be paid danger money. Not only on municipal courses but all golf courses. There are very few greenkeepers who have their ideas getting past committee stages; this is a good idea. Assistant Tom Graham is right in saying, "It's no good waiting until someone is seriously injured."

I was cutting the 18th fairway a couple of years ago and was keeping out of the way so that a golfer could drive off. He badly hooked his ball and it struck me on the temple. I was dazed. The tractor was still running forward with gangs behind it. I was lucky not to fall off the back and get cut to pieces. I had severe headaches for two weeks afterwards; altogether I have been hit four times on the back, thigh, head and hand. Last month my assistant Dherron was hit on the nose, just about breaking it. A golf ball is a dangerous object. A few years ago a young girl was hit on the head by a ball hit by her boyfriend. This girl almost died. She was in a coma for about three months. When she came round she was just a cabbage and could not recognise anyone.

Is it Peter Keeling who is trying to make a fool of Ken and Tom? If he is, I don't agree with the comparison with traffic wardens, policemen, and football referees. On a busy golf course greenkeepers have to dodge balls most of the week. I am quite certain traffic wardens don't have to jump out of the way of cars all day and policemen don't get shot every day or football referees get kicked in the head every time they go on to a football field. Let's put this in perspective. Greenkeepers do face danger every time they go out to work on the course.

Yours faithfully,

COLIN JAMES BAXTER.

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