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GREENKEEPER

HON. EDITOR: F. W. HAWTREE



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TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

Dudley Council has earmarked 160 acres at Coopers Bank for an 18-hole municipal golf course. This was one of three sites which were considered before the Estates Committee made its decision.

* * * *

The late Miss Rachel Fairweather of Montrose left part of the residue of her estate—to be exact £99 18s. 7d.—to the Montrose Town Council for improvements to the Medal Course relating to the layout of the course or any part thereof.

* * * *

Farmers Messrs Alfred Pearson & Son find it difficult to maintain their dairy herd at present and have applied to develop their land at Tatsfield, partly in Kent and partly in Surrey, as a golf course. Tatsfield Council say they are relieved that the application is not for building development.

* * * *

Col. J. Anderson Wilson has applied for planning authority to build a golf course and hotel in his Wykehurst Park Estate at Bolney in Sussex. A previous proposal to make a country park and zoo was turned down. The mansion on the estate was the British Army Headquarters in one scene of "Oh What a Lovely War".

* * * *

The Heath Golf Club, Portlaoise, was granted an injunction in the High Court in Dublin last month to restrain 22 local people and others acting in concert with them from preventing or interfering with golf games at the club. The golf club, at its own expense, had reclaimed part of an area known as "The Heath" but local people felt that their grazing rights were being interfered with.

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WHEN THE GOING WAS ROUGH

by PATRICK SMARTT

Glancing through an old book in my collection, my eye fell with pleasure on a photograph depicting two horse-drawn machines on a golf course; in the background were old-time cross-bunkers.

The first thing that came to mind was the disappearance with the passage of time of three things. The horse as the power motive, the roller which on these fairway mowers was set immediately behind the cutting blades, and the "boots" on the hooves of the horses to avoid their imprints on the fairways.

A year or so ago I was engaged in tracing the early history of those clubs in Sussex which had been formed in the 19th century—several no longer in existence. At one I was shown a "boot" which had been preserved. On another occasion I called in at that rarity of today, a smithy, to seek assistance in finding a "lost" course. My reception was: "Lor' bless you, sir, I used to shoe the old horses there. Here's one of them 'boots' they used to wear."

History is a long time a-dying.

So too are the habits with those who have not kept up with the times. It must be a decade ago that I was passing a green at a club of which I had relinquished the secretaryship a few years earlier. A dear friend of mine, now dead, was then chairman of the green committee. With sleeves turned up, he was about to *roll* that green! He liked to do things himself, but in this instance I suspect the green staff had declined to have anything to do with it.

Some six inches below the surface lay a "pan" of clay. Our main task had been to let air into the top soil, not to mention dressings. This we did by hollow-tining twice a year. And here was this enthusiast about to pack it all down again! In answer to my

vividly expressed horror, he pointed out rather huffily that a roller was used on cricket pitches. After reminding him that the wicket was changed for every match, and that fast bowlers and some spinners caused a deal of wear and tear, it was highly unlikely that a green would be subjected to such treatment, and that pitch-marks should be lifted—not pressed down, he gave way.

I am old enough to have played on greens cut with hand-pushed mowers, light and exuding no nauseous gases. I have played on a course where ropes guarded the greens as a protection against the inroads of sheep, there for the purpose of grazing the fairways. Odd as it may seem, we enjoyed our golf.

It is important to reflect on those conditions and the consequences. The acceptable number of putts for a good player was two per green. By the time Walter Hagen came along and changed golf thinking to getting down in two from off the green, conditions had improved to an extent.

With things as they were, the triumvirate, Vardon, Taylor and Braid, and their companions in honour, Herd and Ray, did not set their sights so high. Today, with smooth, watered greens and the sand-wedge it would have been well within their compass.

There is a degree of difference between the horse and the mechanical age that is not always grasped. It is the matter of weight, and manifests itself on the older courses. The course for which I was at one time responsible was laid out in 1894, parts of it a little later. At times it became necessary to clear underground drains by rodding. Our work was considerably impeded (I write of the 1950s) by the rods being brought to a halt by twisted drains.

(contd. on p. 6)

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(contd. from p. 4)

These drainpipes had been laid in the long ago not many inches below the surface. The passage of horse and single mower had insufficient pressure to move the soil beneath them. Heavy tractors had caused sufficient earth movement to shift the pipes out of alignment.

Perhaps I am one of those who has not moved with the times. While they have to be used, shortage of manpower demands it, I still dislike to see a heavy motor-mower on a green, or a light one for that matter. It is all very well to say that the exhaust fumes are dispersed in the air. As with spraying from flying machines, they settle on the ground.

None of which is to deny that the modern green is a vast improvement on its predecessors. But look at the chemicals (unnatural) that we use, and watering. A subject on which (to borrow from Sherlock Holmes via Henry Longhurst) I hope to write a trifling monologue.

\$20,000 per hole

Golf course construction costs have more than doubled in the past decade, according to the National Golf Foundation.

Ten years ago a lot of fine golf courses were built for \$10,000 per hole, it claims, some for even less. *Today the minimum cost is usually around \$20,000 per hole and many 18-hole layouts are running \$600,000 or more.* This does not include land costs or clubhouse facilities; just the golf courses—ready for play.

* * * *

Grave Defeat

A golfing clergyman had been beaten badly on the links by a parishioner 30 years his senior, and returned to the clubhouse rather disgruntled.

“Cheer up,” his opponent said. “Remember, you win at the finish. You’ll probably be burying me some day.”

“Even then,” said the preacher, “it will be your hole.”

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GOLF COURSE GROWTH

by JOHN VAN DAM
Turf Adviser, University of California

In early years owners of golf courses recruited both labor and equipment needs from commercial agriculture. Greenskeepers, as the men hired to care for the turf were first called, were selected for whatever work experience they were able to bring to the job. The necessity of such a hiring practice is readily apparent because this was the only reservoir of employable knowledge available at that time to cope with the unique cultural demands for turf production. The man with experience in agricultural fields was employed with the hope that he could apply his knowledge to the unusual production situations found on golf courses. His own ingenuity, initiative, learning desires, and spirit of challenge were mere fringe benefits he brought to the job. These attributes, however, eventually stood him in good stead, for as the number of golf courses increased, those same attributes helped those men in charge of turf maintenance to grow with the infant turf industry. As growth in stature and job recognition took place, fledgling indicators of professionalism appeared.

To combat the increasingly more sophisticated turf problems, the greenskeepers sought new knowledge. Discussions and an exchange of experiences became commonplace. It was inevitable that the formation of an association should follow. The organization provided a common meeting ground for the advancement of knowledge and a basis for their professionalism. They were helped by research programs developed at universities and colleges throughout the country. The educators also developed turf courses to train interested students to help meet the need for qualified manpower.

Manufacturers' help

The emerging superintendent was further helped by the equipment manufacturer, product producer, and those

in position to provide needed services. Always in search of new markets, the men in the world of business turned to help the growing number of developers willing to risk money to convert urban acreages into recreational golf courses.

Gradually, advancements in turf maintenance and management wrought lasting technological, as well as personnel, changes for the golf course sector of the turf industry. The golf course superintendent of today has more demands placed upon him than dreamed imaginable fifteen years ago. His role in the turf grass industry has led all avenues of growth.

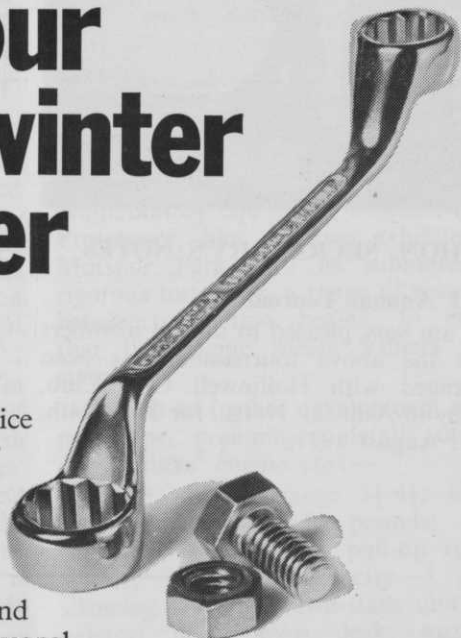
Explosion in the 60s

Beginning in 1754, with the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (Scotland), golf courses have, through the years, persistently increased in number. Gradually growing through the early years; they increased steadily through the 20s; declined slightly during the 30s and 40s; bounced back in the 50s; and *exploded* in the 60s. Today there are more than 10,000 golf courses in North America but the number of players has almost *tripled* during the 60s placing further pressures on existing facilities.

Possible problems

Current projections for the industry indicate continued growth. A University of California special report on golf courses compared 234 courses in California in actual play in 1955 to 665 in actual play in 1968. In addition, there were more than 50 courses on the drawing board to be completed by 1970. The Southern Golf Association in Los Angeles reported 157 clubs for 1970, up from 80 in 1961. (*No public links were included in the report.*) Such figures indicate to those interested in the management and maintenance
(contd. on p. 16)

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HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES

1971 Annual Tournament

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