

Blots

Patrick Smartt

Like many an escutcheon, golf score cards have blots on them. There are two columns of respectable figures, spoiled when there stands out like some painful boil an 8 or more.

It is illusory to suppose that the player with a medium or long handicap plays every hole poorly. He will to his pleasure have a good hole here and there. The improbable is part and parcel of golf, so one must assume that some 18 handicap player has scored exactly one stroke over the S.S.S. at every hole in the round. Though I must take leave to doubt it.

There is, however, displayed in the Club House of The Royal Ashdown Golf Club a card showing a total of 72, each hole accomplished in 4. The player was Bobby Locke, then an amateur. No blots, though he may have considered failure to get 3s at the short holes as such. Personal standards differ.

It is interesting to speculate on those disastrous holes that suddenly assail the golfer. In the days when it was my duty to check score cards, I made a point of ringing any outrageous figure at a hole on the card of a young and improving golfer, or an already established one. My purpose being to emphasise to the handicapping committee that it could be disregarded in assessing the player's ability, as being 'one of those things'.

The causes of these sudden reverses are manifold. It is not uncommon to hear a player stating that he hates a certain hole: 'Can't play it.' Many years ago the press (and biographers)

had a splendid time with what they called 'Bobby Jones' ghost hole'. It is a matter of confidence, and that hole can be conquered if instead of grouching about it, the victim went out and played it over and over again. He will master it, and arrive at the stage: 'Fear knocked at the door. Faith opened it . . . and there was no one there'. My goodness me, how that creed can be applied to every stroke in the game—perhaps above all to putting.

Disasters are governed to a large extent by the nature of the course or links. Despite a picture, still vivid in the mind's eye, of Lee Trevino in the scrub on the summit of a sand dune at the 71st hole at Royal Birkdale, I venture to suggest that, in general, recovery strokes offer themselves more frequently on links. They are more open, and there is room to swing the club. Tree-lined courses, provided the ball is not cupped in the roots, pose a problem. The chance of playing through them, or chipping sideways on to the fairway. The latter method will reduce the likelihood of 8s or double figures.

Lush grass rough (barbered nowadays) on park courses, detracts from any chance of a long shot. Finally we come to the heath or common course. Gorse and heather, with which I am only too familiar—not to mention bracken—are the destroyers. It is true that the club can be swung in heather, less easily through the entwining grip of bracken, but in either instance it is difficult to get the club face sharply onto the ball.

Gorse is the ultimate in destruction. Unless golf's guardian angels are with us, it means three off the tee and four for the second if that has gone astray. The only difference between the scratch and the mediocre player being that the former will be nearer the green when playing either stroke.

Although these blots can occur anywhere in the round, they may be expected early with the handicap

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golfer because he has not loosened up. Nothing will induce him to arrive five minutes early, and spend them in swinging a club. There is no drudgery in it. If he is one of those who think such action means he is taking the game too seriously, that is his business. But he must not then grumble at a poor start.

That is but one reason why these horrors creep in. There are others. It suddenly dawns upon the competitor in the monthly medal that he is doing well. The immediate reaction is he starts to play cautiously; he tightens up and that is the end. There is the direct opposite, in particular with the better players. Everything is going beautifully, the sky is blue, the larks singing, and in his state of euphoria our golfer feels he could carry the church steeple a couple of miles away. Exuberance is his undoing, he gives the ball an 'unmerciful thrash' and it sails away into the deepest rough.

Fear, as has been suggested earlier, enters into this business. Between the teeing-ground and the green, or fairway, lies a deep ravine which could be carried with a No. 4 iron. The psychological effect upon the striker is to expand the carry by many yards. It makes no matter which club he takes, that ravine is in his mind . . . and that is where the ball finishes. A stream, or expansive bunker will evoke the same tension.

These blots on those infernal, but indisputable records on pieces of card-board are a matter for commiseration. But, in brutal fact, the inflammation can be reduced. In many, many instances after a wild stroke the golfer attempts too much in his recovery measures. A little thought given to the situation, a reasoned assessment of the probabilities, and **not** the dubious possibilities, can make a deal of difference.

Contradictory as it may seem, a decision to cut one's losses will diminish them. That 8 can be turned into a 6.

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News

New marketing arrangements to handle a wider range of Toro ground maintenance and lawncare equipment being introduced to the United Kingdom have been announced by Flymo Ltd. of Watford.

Toro (U.K.) Sales and Service, a new division of Flymo Ltd., will handle national distribution of the now well-established range of Toro institutional and commercial equipment and introduce a number of domestic mowers for the 1974 season. The new domestic mowers will complement the Toro rider mowers which have already had widespread acceptance in the U.K.

Shipment of the new domestic models has already been undertaken to ensure ex-stock delivery through selected retail outlets.

Toro (London) Sales and Service, has been created within Toro (U.K.) Sales and Service, further to develop the valuable contacts the company has built up with golf clubs and local authorities in the Home Counties.

Announcing the new marketing arrangements, Mr. Alan Bradley, General Manager of Flymo Ltd., said they will enable Flymo Ltd. to concentrate on further development of this new division and Mr. Bert Jennings becomes General Manager of Toro (U.K.) Sales and Service.

Mr. Bradley reported that a number of new appointments had been made in establishing the new marketing structure and it was encouraging that a number of other experienced company personnel had transferred to the new division.



The advertisement features a black and white photograph of an ATCO rider mower on a golf course. The mower is the central focus, with the brand name 'ATCO' visible on its fuel tank and the large front roller. In the background, a person is seen walking on the grass. To the left of the mower is a royal warrant logo, which includes the text: 'By Appointment to Her Majesty the Queen Manufacturers of Motor Mowers Charles H. Pugh Ltd. Birmingham'. To the right of the mower, the slogan 'It takes one professional' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

The Horticultural Division of Can-nock Fertilisers Ltd. announce that Mr. George B. McGirr has joined them as a Technical Representative. His territory will comprise Scotland, Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear.

Peterborough's first public golf course, which is being designed by professionals Peter Alliss and Dave Thomas for Peterborough Development Corporation, will be about 6,289 yards long and have a par of 71.

The course is now taking shape at Thorpe Wood on the west side of Peterborough, as part of the development of a 2,000-acre park.

Thorpe Wood course will have a clubhouse incorporating squash courts, professional's shop, steward's flat, changing room and showers, with a large bar and restaurant overlooking the course. The first and tenth tees will both be next to the clubhouse.

The Development Corporation hope to open the course in 1975. They will operate it as a public course, open on a pay-and-play basis.

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Hortus House, 3 John's Place,
Edinburgh. Tel: 031 554 5451/6

N. Ireland - Richardsons (Ulster) Ltd.,
1 Short Strand, Belfast BT5 4BS.
Tel: Belfast 57424/5/6

Eire - ICI (Ireland) Ltd., 5/9 South
Frederick Street, Dublin 2.
Tel: Dublin 771831



NEW

Gold-N
keeps grass lush
and green



Polish Up Your Passport

The details of a trip to France next August for the Annual Tournament are set out below. This is the second offer obtained. The Executive Committee thought the first one too expensive but this one seemed reasonable. But read the small print.

Now we need to know quickly if 51 people will support the venture. Send your name and £4 deposit as soon as possible. If not enough people apply, your money will be returned. If they do, it will be credited to your trip.

The Annual General Meeting would be held in London near Victoria Station on Saturday afternoon, 10th August before departing.

Do please apply soon as there are a lot of arrangements to be made.

Unless we have enough support by the 31st December we shall have to abandon the idea and book a course in England.

The inclusive charge is £42.20 per person. Subject to a minimum of 51 fare-paying passengers travelling together throughout. The charge provides Air/Rail travel Tourist and Second Class, by Silver Arrow services

as detailed in the itinerary. A special fare has been used and is only applicable to the flights and dates shown in the itinerary. Motor coach transfers of passengers and hand baggage as shown in the itinerary. The services of a special man and drivers' gratuities are included. Two days' motor coach hire as shown in the itinerary, covering 300 kms. per day. Drivers' gratuities are included. Accommodation on a room and plain breakfast basis at a second-grade hotel in Paris commencing with room on 10th August and terminating with plain breakfast on 14th August. Accommodation is in twin-bedded rooms without facilities, gratuities and taxes included. Incidental expenses such as wines, mineral waters and other drinks, and fees to Air and Railway Company employees for carrying baggage are not included. If the party wishes to travel from Gatwick and to Gatwick reduction of

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Deposit Arrangements: £4 per person and balance due one month prior to departure.

Itinerary

Subject to prevailing conditions, rail, aircraft and hotel accommodation being available and passports with necessary visas and permits being granted.

1974

Saturday, 10th August

London (Victoria) Station Rep. 18.36

London (Victoria) Station Dep. 19.36

Gatwick Station Arr. 20.14

Flight BR 493

Gatwick Airport Dep. 20.35

Le Touquet Airport Arr. 21.10

Le Touquet Station Dep. 21.31

Paris (Nord) Station Arr. 23.35

Motor coach transfer to Hotel

Sunday, 11th August to

Tuesday, 13th August

In Paris—During stay, motor coaches will be available for visits to Le Prieuré Meulan on 12th and 13th August. (Covering 300 kms. per day.)

Wednesday, 14th August

Motorcoach transfer to Station

Paris (Nord) Station Report 18.18

Paris (Nord) Station Dep. 19.18

Le Touquet Station Arr. 21.21

Flight BR 494

Le Touquet Airport Dep. 21.40

Gatwick Airport Arr. 22.15

Gatwick Station Dep. 22.36

London (Victoria) Station Arr. 23.12

NOTE:—The Authorities impose an Airport service charge on all passengers embarking on International Flights from Le Touquet. This is paid locally and the present rate is 4 F. Francs per person.

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Other Rotorakes in the range are the heavy-duty Auto-Rotorake, priced from £283.15 ex-works (plus VAT) and the Fibamo, 12" model with optional collection box, from £65.00 ex-works (plus VAT).



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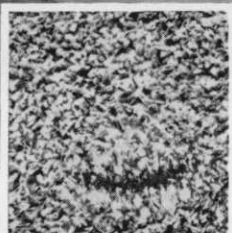
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