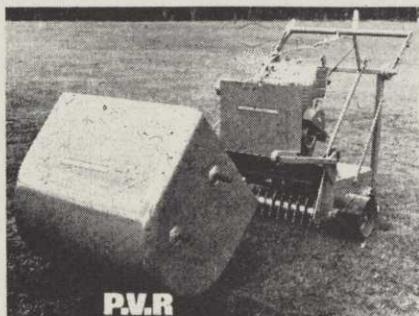


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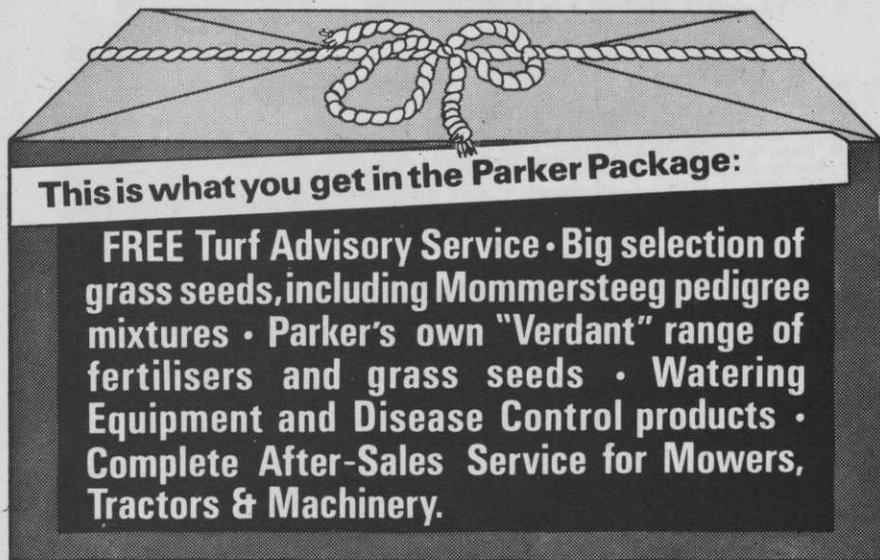
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“THE GREAT ALONE”

WE are as a race sometimes over critical, influenced by the criticisms to be read of the performance of our players when engaged in international events. Thereby increasing the pressure on them.

Criticism, my dictionary tells me is: “Judging of merit”. Any reader will know that at times, reporting and criticism are married. Inevitably, selection committees are the target for those who deem their acumen to be superior to that of experienced players, some still active, some in retirement.

It happens in golf. I write from the experience of knowing well the opinions expressed by club golfers, and a fairly good guess can be made which papers they read, or for that matter the magazine they peruse.

Tony Jacklin is an example. Because at an early age he achieved the double of the Open and the American Open, he was hailed as one of the greats. That was deserved. Ever since, reports or references about him concentrate on his failures. Failures there have been. Is it desirable to make these the target? For the time being is it not sufficient to say he was not among the leaders? The list of scores will tell us all we want to know.

It can be said that he altered his mode of living rather widely and quickly. A large house and a highly expensive car were seized upon as good copy. His

BY PATRICK SMARTT

recent departure for the island of Jersey made the headlines. I do not remember Guy Wolstenholme being the subject of reproach when he took up residence in Australia.

Henry Cotton, once established, had a fascinating car, with large, ringed snakes crawling out of the bonnet. I suspect that car still has a corner in his heart. He too, was now and again the dartboard of disapproval, not because of his play. That was beyond question. There were several others (Walter Hagen) to whom the game has meant riches. The salient point is that it called for many years of unrelenting toil before they reached the top.

Therein may lie the secret of Jacklin. The road was a short one, but it is a long lane that has no turning.

The student of the historical ‘greats’, contending against a lesser number of international players as is the case today, knows that they did not always win when they competed. Bobby Jones did not. Palmer, Nicklaus, Player and Trevino do not always supprime. But for the intervention of the war, Cotton would have numbered among them. they were not subjected to derogatory remarks on these lapses. If, indeed they were lapses.

Before the days of television, golf was



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well covered in print, but the press concentrated on successes. The reading then was in the main, leisurely accounts of the leading players (including several famous amateurs) with little comment on their mishaps. As Burton Stevenson wrote: "The only things worth remembering about a great man are his greatnesses; his littlenesses are of no importance."

That is not to suggest that defeats should be ignored, news is news. There are times when it is difficult to escape the impression of a vendetta against a player. The senior, experienced writers on the 'circuit' do not transgress in this manner.

Cameras are the main bugbear of the competing professional. Hogan held a strong dislike of them. In appearance, the epitome of the phlegmatic was Bobby Locke. Yet, I recall him taking exception to the 1949 Open at Royal St. George's. Nobody made any comment about these two. Tony Jacklin during a European championship, was the target of

opprobrium for his attitude to persistent photographers.

The tournament professional is working, playing, in strictest sense, is an euphemism. A fact too often disregarded by the spectators. At such times the golfer is the loneliest person in the world. There he is, alone with his God, who may or may not be in a testy mood, on a tightly mown sward. The centre of a circle of people, the silence electric, while he concentrates on directing the ball into a cup 4½ inches in diameter. Thousands of pounds may be involved.

It is then that a tiny noise, blowing a nose, the click of a camera, the scratch of a cigarette lighter or match, impinge on taut nerves like a sudden clap of thunder. None can fully know the pressure he is under. There is, though, a temptation to ask the more acid critics, the verbal as well the writers, in the words of Robert Service:

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WRITER'S CRAMP?

IN our April issue we published details of a scheme, sponsored by Ransomes, whereby they would offer cash prizes for the best articles, written by members of the B. G. G. A. on certain specified subjects.

To date the response has been disappointing to say the least. Having listened to Greenkeepers discoursing their knowledge on all subjects, including Greenkeeping at length at social functions it would appear that readers either did not see the item in the April issue for which reason it is repeated below, or they have mislaid their pens, in which case the Editor will send a pen to any aspiring author F. O. C., or they are too nervous in which case I recommend two large whiskies, quickly followed by a burst of writing.

As it is now those few of you who do not fall into these categories and have submitted articles will win by default and a great fund of real knowledge will be wasted, as Tennyson put it, "like fragrance wasted on the desert air"

WOULD ALL WRITERS STAND UP AND BE COUNTED?

IN an effort to improve the spread of knowledge and information amongst all engaged in greenkeeping Ransomes

have very generously offered cash prizes for editorial contributions to the British Golf Greenkeeper.

After consultation, an initial six subjects have been selected and for the best contribution on each subject a prize of £10 will be awarded with £5 for the runner-up. No limit on the number of words is stipulated and the prizes are not for journalism but for practical advice which could be of value to other greenkeepers.

The suggested subjects are:

1. Advantages or Disadvantages of the use of winter greens.
2. The need and advantages of aerifying fairways.
3. Bunker renovation.
4. Reducing the fertiliser bill by extending some roughs and carries.
5. Raising the standard of the tee areas to that of the approaches.
6. Are triples greens mowers bringing signs of extra wear on greens as forecast when they were introduced to the world golf market. Have you found any additional programme has been necessary to combat any ill effects they may have created?

The winning entries will be published in the B.G.G. Closing date for entries which should be addressed to the Editor is June 5th.

GOLF AT WALTON HEATH

MANY members will be visiting the Walton Heath Area for the Annual Tournament and AGM in August and also for the International Greenkeepers Tournament and the 2nd British Turfgrass Symposium in October. For their benefit Don Major of the Southern Section has kindly contributed the following list of hotels within 10-15 minutes driving time from Walton Heath.

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