

YEOVIL Golf Club lies on the outskirts of the town across the River Yeo, the county boundary. It was laid out in 1919 by Fowler and Alison as a nine hole course and extended to 18 holes in 1937. The natural topography of the land has been successfully used to create an interesting test of golf. A special feature is the commanding views from different parts of the course; north-west to Glastonbury, north-east to Frome and a splendid stretch of the Dorset countryside to the south. The head greenkeeper at Yeovil is Bob Moffatt, 55, a burly genial Scot. Bob was well known and highly respected among Scottish greenkeepers and golf club officials during the 14 years he



## Out on the Course at Yeovil

served as general secretary of SIGGA. He said, "I am the third generation of the family in greenkeeping - my father was head greenkeeper at Lanark Golf Club for 18 years before moving finally to Sandyhills near Glasgow where I started in the profession at the age of 16. I gained useful experience working on various courses around the city before going to Cathkin Braes Golf Club as head greenkeeper. Eventually I moved south to Calcot Park and left there in 1980 to settle at Yeovil. I have always been fond of this part of the country and the course here is particularly attractive, with some interesting features that remind me of my native heath.

"The course is laid out over 120 acres; the terrain is gently undulating and varied. Some climbing occurs early in the round but players take this in their stride and find the views rewarding.

### DIVIDED

The layout is divided by a minor road and the nature of the soil on each side is quite different, being



distinctly sandy on the one hand and a much heavier type on the other. We are told that the course was built on first class dairy farming land.

"A programme of turf care has been laid down by the STRI and we are following their recommendations closely to raise the standards. The main problem on the greens is shallow root growth, but we are overcoming this, having used a Verti-Drain for the past three years and we now have some root

**Top:**  
There are many fine views to delight the golfer at Yeovil

**Above:**  
Bob Moffatt, Yeovil's head greenkeeper

growth to a depth of nine inches. In conjunction with aeration, we regularly topdress with three parts sand to one part soil to

break down the peat which was used for many years on the greens. Phosphates and potash have been cut out of fertiliser mixtures and the main ingredients used are dried blood, sulphate of ammonia and sulphate of iron."

Bob continued, "There are no open ditches or water hazards to contend with on the course, but there are 52 bunkers where the activities of rabbits often give us a bit of extra work due to their burrowing habits in the sand. A trapper was employed at one time to deal with the menace and we did a bit of shooting ourselves to try to get rid of them. At the moment myxomatosis is rife and population numbers are gradually reducing, so they are not quite as troublesome as they used to be.

## SPECIAL INTEREST

"I have always taken a deep interest in greenkeeper training, having been involved with the greenkeeper apprenticeship scheme during my period as secretary to the Scottish Golf Greenkeepers Association. It has always been my policy to take a special interest in the instruction and training of young men, showing them how to handle and maintain golf course machinery in the workshop and on the course. The most important apprentice I trained was my son, Allen, who gained his City & Guilds Certificate in greenkeeping at Maidenhead College. After working as a greenkeeper for a few years he eventually moved on to become an area manager for Parkers, Worcester Park. "Like most courses, in the summer we are always busy coping with the amount of growth, particularly this year of high rainfall. Keeping the grass down invariably occupies most of our time, apart from other routine grooming and maintenance jobs. In autumn and winter months there are always construction and renovation tasks to be done as part of the on-going programme to upgrade the facilities, so the staff get ample



opportunities to gain valuable experience in all phases of golf course upkeep. Construction jobs are always interesting, and building tees, bunkers, etc, should be within the scope of every trained greenkeeper." Said Bob, "If any construction jobs need to be done on the course I generally discuss plans with the club secretary and he gives his views on my proposals. We present this to the green committee then it goes to the general committee for final approval.

"I am extremely fortunate to have a reliable and conscientious staff comprising two good experienced men and two 18 year old trainees who show much promise for the future. "

## CONTENTMENT

When I asked Bob Moffatt what contributed most to staff stability and contentment, he said, "The main thing is getting them interested in the job. They should be encouraged to play golf as much as possible, even if it means having a few lessons from the professional. When they have a real interest in the game they will begin to appreciate how a golfer judges the condition of the course and the amount of preparation needed to satisfy their requirements.

"Some young men come into greenkeeping and expect too

much too soon. Generally, they are looking for a job offering more money and are not prepared to knuckle down and get the necessary training and experience as a preliminary to advancement. Some youngsters find they don't like the job for it often means being outdoors in the most inclement weather to get the work done and the sheer physical effort needed is a major deterrent to their ambition.

## A GOOD FUTURE

"In spite of the number of men who drop out of greenkeeping, there are many dedicated youngsters who like the lifestyle and know the job has a good future. Golf has become an immensely popular sport and there is a demand for experienced course managers to look after new courses under construction in the UK and Europe. It is encouraging to see BIGGA spearheading the drive to provide proper educational and training facilities to meet the needs of young aspiring greenkeepers."

by  
**John  
Campbell**