



Echoes from the long, not so hot summer.

... by Fred Hawtree

Another mish-mash of delicately balanced social, technical, historical and personal gossip from the fluent pen of you know who.

South-Westerly

Spoke to Bill Pile, Devon and Cornwall Secretary, on the telephone. How was he getting on since he left the Downes Crediton Golf Club and started travelling the West Country on behalf of D O Hunt Limited of Devon? They supply everything for the golf course, except machinery!

He likes the life, he likes the job, he likes meeting his members more than ever before. In addition to golf greenkeepers, he also calls on bowling greenkeepers or, more usually, the bowling club committee. They get some useful advice as part of the deal. One club was told to cut back

trees and bushes to get some light and air to the rink. This was so effective that they slashed their order for fertiliser from 50 to 25kgs. Bill was still happy: "They'll come back again".

Don Hunt, founder of the firm and President of Bill's Section, is Chairman of the Green Committee at the Teignmouth Golf Club on Haldon Moor. If you have ever played at Mont Agel, you will remember the view of Monte Carlo harbour spread below you as you look over the back of the old 4th Tee. The club house at Haldon offers you an equally impressive panorama, even if the yachts are less opulent and the River Teign differs in certain important respects from the Mediterranean.

Jack Moor's new office and machinery sheds are also impressive. The staff dining room has fridge, cooker and all, not to mention the pink curtains.

Some bright firm should sponsor a Ground Staff Quarters of the Year competition. It might encourage any clubs still living in the corrugated iron era to see how it should be done.

They are now in deep shock and grow wild-eyed whenever they hear the word 'golf'. The members of the British Association of Golf Course Architects still try to fit the golf course to the site, not vice versa, and hope that a simple diet and devoted nursing, accompanied by gentle repetition of this message, will restore Caradon's faith in humanity and hope for the future.

Beyond the Tamar

Being in Caradon recently, (Caradon? Caradon?, you ask. It is the first bit of Cornwall beyond Plymouth). I took time out to cast a jaded eye over the new St. Mellion. After passing below the flags of all nations at the entrance and through two rows of black blobs, which turned out to be spherical pine trees, I was apprised of the green fee. (£25 to play the 'Nicklaus' but knock off a fiver if it's with a member).

So I walked past the back of the 9th Green instead but haven't slept a peaceful wink since, due to nightmares in which the earth rolls and heaves on a scale far beyond anything which Richter could devise for your average seismograph.

Volcanic ranges have popped up between fairways as the earthquakes proceeded and there are ant-like machines crawling all over them to cut the grass. The foothills are very much in play and most of the peaks as well. If this is a stadium course, there did not seem to be a lot of elbow room for spectators, but I only saw one or two holes. At least they will get good exercise on 'them thar hills', if their ankles stand up to it.

I do not know what Cornwall did to deserve this fate, but J Nicklaus has certainly put his stamp on it and nobody will ever be able to rub it out.

Unfortunately the local planners, after years of jealousy guarding their farming hinterland, have got a little bit of Ballybunion crossed with the Grand Canyon slap in the middle of it. Even their attempts to oppose further building development were frustrated owing to the employment which it would attract.

By the Plym

On the way back to Sludgecombe, filial piety demanded a diversion to look at the 9 hole Elfordleigh Golf Course at Plympton. Hawtree I designed it in 1930. (A month or so previously, filial and grand-filial piety had taken both II and III to Highwoods Golf Club at Bexhill. The greens had sunk a bit on the filled side in the sixty years since their construction, but were still puttable and not much else had changed).

Elfordleigh was an early venture in the hotel-cum-golf course development. It did not do so well as its contemporary, the Selsdon Park Hotel, but then Selsdon was only nine miles out of London and on a much grander scale. Nevertheless, Elfordleigh has survived its ups and downs for nearly 56 years under various owners. Now it is on a high.

There is a brand new pro's shop by the 1st Tee. There are more tees and bigger tees, some with stone walls holding them up to make full use of the limited space.

The site has fairly strong slopes and a stream, so you can guess the final development at the bottom of the valley. Only one guess, I'm afraid. That's right - a water hazard.

Incidentally, I looked out the ledger to see how much Elfordleigh cost in 1935. You can have as many guesses as you like for this one. The answer is £2,500. 400 times less, proportionately, I understand, than its new competitor on the other side of the Tamar, but 'fings', in case you hadn't guessed, 'ain't what they used to be'.



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Westward Ho!

John Davis, Secretary of the Royal North Devon Golf Club has given me a file containing my father's advisory reports on Westward Ho! links from 1926 until 1935, by which time, as a member of the Board of Greenkeeping Research at Bingley, he got the club to become subscribers to that developing organisation.

In view of the reaction in greenkeeping to the discovery that too much fertiliser is too much fertiliser, I skimmed through the reports to see what materials they recommended in those days. I summarise as follows:

- 1926- Dried Blood
- 1930 Malt Culms
Fish Guano
Compost
- 1931 7lbs Sulphate of Iron
3lbs Sulphate of Ammonia
to each cubic yard of
compost
(‘Neither more nor less’)
- 1932 ‘Discontinue S/A and S/I on
Greens 4,6,7,8,9 and 18.
The rest: 5lbs S/I
3lbs S/A
in 1½ cubic yards compost’
- 1933 Back to Dried Blood and
Malt Culms, in compost
- 1934 Poultry manure replaces
Malt Culms
- 1935 1 cwt Peruvian Guano in
1¼ cubic yards compost

‘What no Super?’ you ask. It appears just once, in the very last report: ‘3½lbs Super-phosphate per Green in the August dressing with Rape Meal and Sulphate of Ammonia’. Why? Perhaps I can hazard a guess.

In 1932, T W Evans PhD, AIC, the chemist at Bingley, wrote in the Journal: ‘In conclusion, it can be stated that swards cannot be maintained indefinitely by a system of top-dressing with compost and nitrogenous fertiliser...’.

In 1931, Evans had said, ‘An occasional dressing with a complete fertiliser, providing the phosphoric acid and potash in it is very low, may be applied to greens on poor soil...’. But then he continues, ‘It cannot be too strongly emphasised, that the regular use of mixed fertilisers containing high percentages of phosphoric acid and potash is to be avoided...’.

Who led us astray?

‘Open’ University

The Observer’s Peter Dobreiner sounded a few alarms on behalf of the English adverb when he suggested what players’ comments might be heard during pre-Open interviews. ‘I am hitting it good but putting horrible’ was one of them. ‘I am playing solid enough’ was another. Alerted to the dangers, one became over-sensitive to the foibles of BBC commentators. In between

‘super- shots’, Tony Jacklin described one competitor as ‘fortuitous’ which seemed to cast an unnecessary slur on his parents who may very well have intended to have a golfer in the family. But Jacklin does at least believe in the preservation of the adverb. Indeed, he manufactures them and will turn ‘over-confident’ into ‘overly confident’ at the drop of a hat. I think I overheard a ‘routinely’ too. Time for Dobreiner to go to work on these as well.

Harry Carpenter turned a neat phrase when describing a par round in the wind and rain on the Friday. It ‘staggered belief’. My memory of belief up to that time had been that you begged it. Edwardians would sometimes express amazement by ‘Well, I’m beggared. This may have been a mild form of a stronger expression to which people take less exception to-day, but it sounds a shade old-fashioned. I will ask my grand-children if that traditional game called ‘Beggard your neighbour’ is still an acceptable pastime among the young or has been toughened up so that they stagger him now?’

Belief was both staggered AND beggared by David Miller, writing in The Times when he described the 7th at Muirfield as ‘illusory’. One knew what he meant but have you ever tried cutting a hole in an illusory green? It’s easy if you have got an illusory hole-cutter.

Royal Guest

It was a pity that King Hassan II of Morocco had to cancel his golfing trip to Scotland and perhaps to the Open, due to pressure of work back home after his State visit to Britain. While he was here the Press never missed a chance to score a point over his punctuality, protocol and private entertaining. There was a good deal more about the fact that he was five minutes late for lunch than there was about who else was there. They forgot that the King is a golfer and has never yet been penalised for an infraction of Rule VII.7, although I should be surprised if it ever got into the Arabic version.

When the Queen went to see him, much was made of her lonely vigil in a tent in the middle of the desert and of her long wait for her dinner guest on the Royal Yacht a couple of days later. In my experience she was lucky that he even turned up on the right day. In humbler circles, I have responded to urgent calls for week-end consultations in Tetuan and waited until Monday before learning that the meeting had been put off for a week. Last Autumn I was bidden to a meeting at 11 a.m. for an audience with a Princess. At 1.30, we decided that she was probably

tucking into her cous-cous at some other table. You have to get into the *manana* mood if you are to earn your Queen’s Award for Export. Tap the foot, drum the fingers as she did and you’ll be out on your ear. The Royal Household also seemed to me to be asking for trouble when whoever writes the menu picked that sauce with 32 components to accompany the salmon. It is said that you can knock up a Sauce Bigarade, which has only 16 ingredients, in a matter of 25 minutes, though I should not like to try. But do not think that you will knock up this other one in 50 flat just because it has twice the number of working parts. They can not be spooned into the pot and stirred till ready. The ‘*saucier*’ has to get up early in the morning after a night of prayer and pure thoughts. Taking just two ingredients, he begins the rites. He is towelled down at intervals during the day by his aides as each critical stage is reached and another subtle element added. At 8.47 p.m., assuming the dish is to be served at 8.50 No. 32 goes in and a minute later the sauce is rushed to the table to be served at the peak of perfection.

The Spanish say that a good *paella* is always better when you get round to the second helping

because it has matured while you were scoffing the first. There are classic French dishes which must gently simmer or *mijoter* for a time if the ultimate blend of flavours is to be achieved. Not so this concoction on the Britannia. Keep it hot on the back burner for an hour and you might as well open a bottle of Heinz Tomato Ketchup.

But even if served in the new squeeze container, which deposits its contents on the floor when shaken instead of on the ceiling as the glass one used to do, I feel that some pretty sharp reprimands would have gone down to the galley if the familiar red bottle had appeared amongst the gold plate just because the guests sat down an hour too late.

P.S.

Only a month ago, I congratulated B I G G A on getting an ‘I’ into its title because it sounded like an Institute.

Now I am not so sure.

The Chairman of the Championship Committee at the Open presentation ceremony thanked the British and Irish Golf Greenkeepers Association for raking the bunkers.

Still, whether Institute, Irish, or International, the blazer badges will still be O.K.

FEATURE 1






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