

**IOG Show  
Peterborough**

# The **GREATEST SHOW ON TURF**



## The show that matters

It outgrew three sites before being established at the East of England Showground: now the IOG's 45th Sports and Leisure World Trade Exhibition, on September 3rd, 4th, 5th, promises the lot.

by **BILL MILLS** and **DAVID WHITE**

There are still a few ill-informed people who believe that the game of golf originated in the Netherlands, from whence it was exported to Scotland. A likely story!

Certainly, the game was sufficiently well established in Scotland in the 15th century to be prohibited by the authorities, on the grounds that it interfered with the practice of archery. The ban, however, was not universal because it is recorded that James IV of Scotland was at this time having his golf clubs made by a bow-maker from Perth. Perhaps he sailed across to Holland for his round?

Whatever the origins, there is no doubt that the Scots – pushing out the frontiers of civilisation – took the game with them, which is why golf is now the most widely-played game in the world. However, in the rest of the UK, golf was mostly the preserve of the rich and leisured, remaining such until the great social changes which followed World War II opened the game to a much wider and enthusiast sector of the public.

It is ironic that golf was prohibited in Scotland during the 15th century because it clashed with archery practice and the defence of the realm, for some 500 years on the → 22



# Two-hectare demonstration site will feature the latest in turf technology

**I**n the field of early Dutch golf, and that means early golf no matter how nationalistic Scots may jib, the ultimate authority was the noted Dutch historian Steven van Hengel. Like a good detective he proved conclusively - dismissing folklore and hearsay - that golf was first played in Holland as early as 1297. The old saw about Scottish shepherds shooting pebbles into rabbit scrapes is romantic but is dismissed, again with evidence, by proving that this custom began in Western Germany in 1338. Well into the 17th century there was a massive export of balls from Holland to Scotland. On behalf of golf historians everywhere, your editor rests his case.

21 talk now is of converting parts of some surplus Ministry of Defence training grounds into golf courses!

The Institute of Groundsmanship, or the National Association as it was then, held its first exhibition of sportsground machinery and materials in 1938. This was so successful that a second and bigger exhibition was planned for September 1939. In the event, the little fracas started by Adolph Hitler in September of that year meant that exhibition number two was not held until 1947. By then many greenkeepers and groundsmen had laid down their arms and picked up the tools of their trade once more, but it was a changed world for them as well.

Wartime research and development had produced engines, both petrol and diesel, which were more efficient and which had an improved power:size ratio. Research by ICI into increased agricultural crop yields had a spin-off in the discovery of weed-killers which were selective on either monocots or dicots. The story of DDT and the chlorinated hydro-carbons was another that emerged but has been told so often that it does not require further airing here. Suffice to say that they were efficient products of their time and it was to be many years before the potential dangers in their use were recognised.

The study of land drainage was becoming more of a science than an art, although there was - and still is - the touch of the artist in a well-laid system. The importance of correct sands in the construction and maintenance of greens, tees and bunkers was receiving critical attention

and, all in all, a whole new world of technology was opening up.

As more new and proven products became available so also did the IOG exhibitions expand to accommodate them. This is the reason the show has outgrown three sites and is now established at the East of England Showground, Peterborough, where there is room for expansion well into the 21st Century. The 45th Sports and Leisure World Trade Exhibition, held on September 3rd, 4th and 5th, will be a comprehensive selection of the best (and safest) machinery, fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides, soils, sands and seeds for construction and maintenance, used by professionals.

On the two-hectare demonstration site, laser-controlled trenchers and graders, a variety of earth-moving, cultivating and turf conditioning machinery, plus the latest in spraying and irrigation equipment, will be seen in continuous operation under practical working conditions.

Assembled in one area are the cream of the horticultural colleges and advisory services, where information regarding training courses and advice on turf-related problems will be readily available.

All this, and much more, on show at what has been described as - *the greatest show on turf*.

● The author, Bill Mills, is a life member of the Institute of Groundsmanship and a past editor of 'The Groundsman'.

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