

Greenkeepers' Library

by DAVID WHITE

Any book which begins with a dedication – to golf greenkeepers who, through their tireless work, maintain, enhance and conserve a large area of our countryside for the benefit of all – is bound to attract my attention. I equally believe that it will attract readers of this magazine in great numbers. The authors, John Hacker and George Shiels, have produced a fascinating little work entitled **Golf Course Presentation**, purposely to bring to the notice of all greenkeepers the high importance that should be placed on presenting a golf course to its best advantage. This is essentially a book of guidance and doesn't purport to teach its readers to suck eggs – far from it, it treats the reader as an equal and gives valuable advice on how to get the best from a golf course without ignoring its general health and well-being. Does presentation make a difference, it asks, answering with a categorical YES, it definitely does. The authors maintain that it is the surface finish which stamps the greenkeeper as being someone who cares; producing an extra effort which suggests that today is special – who would dare argue against such observations?

The book, actually a booklet of some forty pages, covers every aspect of presentation most thoroughly, including greens, tees, fairways, bunkers, rough and water features and includes a special chapter on tournament preparation. Whilst it may not give all the answers it will certainly make both greenkeepers and golfers think about the type of golf course they really want and how they can achieve it. **Golf Course Presentation**, by John Hacker and George Shiels (40pp softback) is £7.95 post incl. and is available from BIGGA HQ.

A phone call from a greenkeeper who'd been held enthralled by the words of golf course architect Donald Steel at a recent BIGGA seminar sent me chasing after a copy of **Classic Golf Links of Great Britain and Ireland**, Donald's most recent book, which he had mentioned in his lecture. I am pleased to tell readers that the search was well worth while, for the book lives up to its name and is a 'classic' for true lovers of links, those windswept courses amongst the dunes that many regard as the only real place to play golf. Donald Steel's love of seaside links shines through his writing as he takes us on a journey round Britain and Ireland, taking in 75 courses, including such venues as Prestwick, St Andrews, Muirfield, Royal St Georges, Carnoustie and Turnberry. However, the supporting cast includes a string of equally familiar names – ranging from the hallowed Royal Dornoch to Rye, Saunton, Formby and Hillside in England, Royal Porthcawl in Wales and Ballybunnion, Royal County Down and Royal Portrush in Ireland – and some unsung gems. The influence that links have had on golf course architecture runs as a continuous theme through the book. The author places each course in its historical and architectural context, describing its setting and main characteristics, and shows how the course plays, focusing on the most interesting holes. A detailed map and a card of the course accompany each entry, while Brian Morgan's stunning photographs capture the beauty and variety of seaside links. **Classic Golf Links (224pp hardback)** is published by Chapman at £25.

Having written two successful golf books John Behrand has turned his pen to fictional short stories. Culled from a lifetime of golf, which has included captaincy of the R&A and the Royal Liverpool GC, together with playing golf at county level and in national championships, the author has assembled a collection of stories – **St Andrews Night and Other Stories** – which

entrance, delight and perhaps also raise a few eyebrows. Every story has its twist and the reader is kept in suspense until the last line. 'Some of the characters and situations', the author states in his introduction, 'are drawn in part, never wholly, from my own personal memory bank. I even appear myself from time to time in various guises. There are no prizes for guessing who's who!'. **St Andrews Night and other Golfing Stories**, (130pp hardback) is published by Grant Books, Victoria Sq., Droitwich. WR9 8DE. and costs £15.50 post inclusive.

Leslie Edwards, the author of **The Game That Was Golf** is the elder of two surviving founder members of the Association of Golf Writers. He's what some might describe as an 'ancient', which qualifies him better than most to write first hand about the golfing stars (and characters) of a former era, and his book offers the reader a splendid opportunity to re-live the memories of championships of the past forty or fifty years. The book also gives insight into the world of golf correspondents, men too often decried by fools who aver 'they never left the clubhouse!'. Such contributors to the game as Darwin, Longhurst, Crawley and Ward-Thomas are all dealt with comprehensively and as a personal friend of them and of most of the men and women who have covered golf in the past sixty years, the author is able to provide clues as to their character and help explain what gave their writing such compelling appeal. Highly recommended, **The Game That Was Golf (197pp hardback)** is published by Fore Golf Publications, 129a High St. Dovercourt, Harwich CO12 3AX and costs £17.49 post inclusive.

A very grand (and very expensive) book has just arrived from Japan, from the pen of golf course architect Shunsuke Kato, entitled **What Makes a Good Golf Course Good**. In this lavishly colour illustrated volume Kato attempts to explain his views on the designing of golf courses and his design techniques, which are greatly influenced by old Scottish style and by an avowed strategic design philosophy. The volume covers the more than forty golf courses he has designed, explaining his thinking. I found it an enlightening experience to look into the oriental mind, especially the thinking revealed that his work includes his conception of the virtuous points of the Japanese character. Some of the errors in translation from Japanese into English will make the reader smile, without malice. **What Makes a Good Golf Course Good (256pp hardback)** is available in Britain from Grant Books, Victoria Sq., Droitwich WR9 8DE at £62 post inclusive.

