



Glen Head CC pres., Jay Gilman, breaks ground for \$100,000 addition to clubhouse. L to R: Robert Grieve, Peter Reiss, Charles K. Howard, Jay Gilman, Irving Spanier, Dr. Michael Berliner, Fred Grieve.

Glen Head Catches Up After Shutdown of 5 War Years

By JOHN BRENNAN

A wartime casualty, the swank Women's National Golf and Tennis Club at Glen Head, Long Island, N.Y., will be resurrected this year thanks to a greenkeeping miracle performed by Fred Grieve, veteran pro and course maintenance authority.

The gorgeous, undulating course on which the elite of Long Island's Gold Coast used to dig divots between 1924 and 1943 has been rechristened Glen Head CC since the deed was relinquished by banker Harvey D. Gibson to a syndicate of former members of the Sound View GC in Great Neck.

Grieve, who got his baptism as both pro and greenkeeper at the old Fresh Meadow CC when Willie Anderson was the pro and later spent 18 years at Leewood GC in Crestwood, Westchester, has revived a pair of Long Island courses since returning from across Long Island Sound.

After quitting the pro-greenkeeping assignment at Leewood, Fred leased the defunct Sound View GC and was faced with a thorough face-lifting job at the ancient course on which the great of the Broadway stage used to play. His methods of restoring tees, fairways and greens which had been unused for a long spell at Sound View qualified him for the job of streamlining a badly neglected course at Women's National, located about 12 miles from the Great Neck course.

Women's National, whose Social Registerites included Mrs. William Goadby Loew, Mrs. Winthrop Aldrich, Mrs. Bruce Clark, Mrs. Harold I. Pratt, Mrs. J. Barney Balding and many more prominent members of the Gotham Blue Book, was one of the first Long Island courses to succumb to the restrictions of wartime. In spite of the affluence of its members, Women's National folded because of its inaccessibility, most members going to Cedar Creek Club, Piping Rock Club, Nassau CC or Meadow Brook Club.

Fortunately, Gibson, whose Long Island estate lies within a short brassie shot in Locust Valley, saw to it that Women's National's greens were dug and reseeded last spring and the fairways were burned along with the vast rough areas. It had been virtually impossible to employ golf course laborers during the war. That shortage of labor, together with so many other shortages and inconveniences had forced the Women's National members to abandon the beautiful layout.

The Sound View syndicate, when it decided to cast about for another course last year following the decision of Paul Jeffrey, West Virginia builder and owner of the \$1,000,000 176-acre tract overlooking Little Neck Bay, to transform the golf course into a suburban real estate development of \$50,000 homes, took a fancy to Women's

National, although several other courses were under consideration.

Building \$100,000 Locker-room

More than the job of reconverting a neglected golf course faced Grieve and his associates after taking title to the Glen Head property. For one thing, the Women's National members, the majority of whom lived on nearby estates, never got around to erecting a lockerroom. There was a clubhouse, formerly a farm house of 20 massive rooms and a big pro shop formerly ruled over by Ernest Jones.

With 338 members, the new syndicate decided that the construction of a locker-room was a decided must and wasted no time starting the job of building quarters to cost \$100,000. New York Big Snow hampered the construction work, but Grieve hopes to have the sumptuous locker facilities available during the spring. He plans other improvements in the quaint clubhouse which is on top of a knoll, at the end of a serpentine driveway through the course and surrounded by hundreds of apple trees and dogwood for which Long Island is so famous.

When completed the annex to the clubhouse will provide upper and lower locker-rooms, with the men's on the ground floor being supplemented by a 35x35 grill. There will be 300 lockers in the men's quarters and 200 for the women. The new building is being constructed between the ninth green and clubhouse.

Grieve's problems of restoring the famous course were about the same as faced by greenkeepers in almost every state of the union. How well he has succeeded is attested by the news from Glen Head that the course should be ready for championship tournaments early this year. Fred got a break in that he was able to start his weed control and fertilizing programs quite early in 1947.

Restoring Course After 5 Years

"When we stepped in at Women's National, it was, frankly, a sorry mess," Grieve said in discussing the feat that has taken place in the midst of the countless Long Island estates of the picturesque North Shore. "This place was dormant for five years. The clubhouse was used as a night club by Paul Cowles, who called it the Penguin Club and the only hole of the 18 that was cut during the war years was the 10th. That was cared for because it lent beauty to the clubhouse. But the others were gone and, to make matters worse, had been attacked by the Japanese beetle.

"The owners last April ploughed the greens, reseeded them, burned the weed and grass growth to start the operation, knowing that we were intent eventually upon acquiring the place. There was a reasonable stand of grass on the greens

when we took over the place in August.

"We also found that the worms infested the course and that plantain and crabgrass were other problems facing us. We first applied sodium arsenate and after that went to work with arsenate of lead. Our soil analysis showed that far from the ideal 5.6 we had 4.0. That meant a treatment of ground limestone. We made three such treatments within a six-week span. We made replacement seeding of the grass greens and topdressed them with 1-1-1 of top soil, humus and sand. We fertilized the greens once a month and topdressed every two weeks. We were able to topdress a half dozen times before some of the members played the course last September.

"We used 2-4-D for weeds and the results were obvious in September. We did replacement seeding, using a mixture of bluegrass, fescues and red top, with a large percentage of the latter on the fairways and tees. We intend doing more seeding in the spring, but our major seeding will be done next fall when the Long Island weather is ideal for turf growth."

Grieve was fortunate in being acquainted with the work of Devereaux Emmett, the architect, who conceived both Leewood and Women's National. The cross-hazards, terraced greens and other trademarks of the famed course builder were nothing new to Grieve.

The course, when several changes are effected, will play 6,386 yards, but the par, which is deceptive, calls for 34 on the out nine and 37 coming back. The fourth and seventh are stiff par threes and there isn't a par five on the front nine. However, the stretch holes are tough, with the 14th, 15th and 17th all stiff par fives and the 18th, a 450-yarder, a tough par four. The 16th, a par three, is difficult because of a dime-sized green.

Women's National is severely trapped, with 215 hazards by actual count. A major change is being made on the 17th hole, which was formerly a par four. The new hole will be 496 yards, with the player facing a hill from the tee and facing a second shot not easily made with a brassie. There will be a new tee for the fourth hole, increasing the yardage from 192 to 210 yards.

Grieve used a force of five men and a foreman in restoring Women's National to some semblance of its pristine beauty. Fred has no watering problems at Glen Head. There is a streamlined watering system and the club has its own pump, with pressure provided by two 250 h.p. motors.

In addition to the golfing facilities, the new club intends restoring tennis, always a feature at the former Women's National layout. There were 22 tennis courts, 16 of

(Continued on page 78)

One of the great things about working on a golf course that's in terrible condition is that you can see some signs of improvement soon and they keep teasing you on. People who ventured out to the club also noticed those improvements and passed the word around. By mid-season we'd signed 25 members and had others playing on a daily fee basis.

I kept on being the only workman on the course. I was greenkeeper, supt., foreman and the whole force. A horse wouldn't have taken the beating I gave myself in getting that place so it began to look like a golf course. My son, Bob, as he grew up, began to help me a lot and proved to be one of those gifted boys who just seemed to have the knack of doing the right thing in improving turf. Eventually he was hired as my assistant. He worked with me until August, 1942 when he went into the Army. After 3½ years working for Uncle Sam he came back and again is on the job with me.

Course Improvement Pays

With Bob's help I got Willow Wood in such condition that people enjoyed playing the course and in 1939 revenue was up to the point where we could pay as we'd go. The new clubhouse was built the next year. Now the old clubhouse has been converted into a two-family house so Bob and I do not have to travel to and from work but live on the grounds which makes it in some ways better for our families and a good deal for the club too as any hour of the day or night we're apt to think about some possible emergency need of the course and rush out to inspect the situation.

We do not have a full-time pro here. The revenue isn't sufficient. Bob acts in that capacity after completing his course labors. He's doing a good job at developing golfers and golf interest, too. As a pro, Bob and I both will candidly admit Bob isn't in the same class as that other West Virginia young man, Sam Snead, but I doubt if Sam would work for what there is in this part-time pro job and have to nurse a golf course in addition. Probably Bob worries as much about our greens as Sam does about his putting—and that's plenty of worry for anybody.

Outlook Brighter

Things are looking bright now after a long struggle. We had rebuilt our greens prior to the war and had installed an excellent greens watering system. Our dues have stayed at nearly pre-war level. Our daily fee rates have gone up a little. We still stretch a nickel so thin the buffalo sweats blood. Last year we bought a new tractor and fairway units—the first new equipment we've had in 12 years.

Now we've got fine greens of Coos county Seaside bent. Up to the time we got

water for our greens we had about every kind of grass you could name—and wouldn't want—on greens as our putting surfaces, including an abundant crop of crabgrass in season. Now that we've found the right chemical control for crabgrass it's no longer a problem.

We cut our greens three times a week and give them an extra cutting on special occasions. We water three times weekly in dry weather. We topdress five times a year. We apply brownpatch control once a week in season for prevention and find that is a thrifty procedure. We fertilize our greens spring and fall with organic fertilizer and treat with arsenate of lead once a year for grub control. We use a power greens mower with a wire brush to eliminate nap.

Prior to the war we had started making our own topdressing material on an acre of ground at the club. We had plowed under the third crop of rye, soybeans and clover when we were compelled to stop this practice due to labor shortage. Then we went back to buying about a half-car of mushroom soil per season.

Again this year Willow Wood will be host to the annual West Virginia Elks' Open golf championship. A record attendance is expected. The visitors will see larger and improved facilities in the clubhouse and the course in better condition than ever—heaven willing.

There's still plenty I see that can be done but we'll have to wait until the club's finances permit hiring more help. In the meanwhile we'll hold on to what we have and continue to build optimistically. We've proved to ourselves we can't be licked and that country clubs in smaller towns can be soundly developed as valuable community assets.

GLEN HEAD CATCHES UP

(Continued from page 57)

them turf. Grieve will replace half of the turf courts and restore the clay ones. He will have two pitch-putting holes adjoining the tennis courts. He also intends constructing a putting area near the clubhouse.

Glen Head CC's newly acquired layout consists of 186 acres of rolling terrain. Jay Gilman, formerly of the Glen Oaks GC, is pres. Other officers include: Irving Spanier, vp.; Dan Gold, 2nd vp.; A. R. Farber, secy. and I. Rossman, treas. Charles K. Howard is head of the finance committee.

"When we get through with our improvement program this year, we'll have one of the outstanding layouts in the country—and I've seen most of the better ones," predicts Grieve.