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British Turf Expert Compares Maintenance Conditions

By REGINALD BEALE

(Director, James Carter & Co., London, Eng.)

IN ENGLAND we enjoy a temperate climate, with the seasons slowly merging in with each other. The spring is generally mild and wet but some years we get a long spell of cold, dry N. or E. winds with frosts at night which check growth. In the summer we seldom experience excessive heat and more seldom an "official" drought with 14 consecutive days without rain.

The autumn is mild and wet with occasional night frosts towards the end, whilst the winter as a general rule is open, mild and wet, with some frosts and occasionally a freeze-up for a week or two and perhaps once in 10 or 15 years a big freeze with the mercury going down to zero but seldom under.

As grass thrives best in a humid temperate climate it is obvious that it is easier to grow grass in England than it is in the eastern states of the U. S. A.

To show how mild it is in England, it is not unusual for the grass to grow practically all the year round and as a general rule outdoor sport of some sort can be enjoyed on 365 days of the year without serious discomfort.

Small clubs here are content with greens with an average area of 400 to 600 square yards but on the best courses they are usually 800 to 1,000 square yards, the day of the huge freak green having gone, I think, forever. A course length of about 6,000 to 6,500 yards is generally aimed at with a cut width of 50 to 70 yards, according to conditions, length of hole and the nature of the rough.

The chief turf pests are the common earth worm, leather jackets, (*Tipula paludosa*) and weeds of various sorts. There are no virulent diseases at present such as you have on your side and which seem to be associated with the acidity theory.

Wages of course laborers are about 40 to 50 shillings a week, and the number of

Mr. Beale is no stranger to the U. S., having been connected with such American clubs as Brookline and Old Elm in constructing and advisory capacities prior to the War. The lasting excellence of the American jobs with which he was associated give his remarks weight.

Beale is vigorously opposed to the acid theory and as a result of his agitation for a show-down the acid theory is being analyzed extensively in England.

His comments about the Board of Greenkeeping Research indicate that the scientists, the greenkeepers and the manufacturers have a hell of a time trying to be bosom buddies, the world over. Things over here apparently are much more tranquil than they are on the other side concerning the mutual relations of the factors interested in turf maintenance.

Individual research has demonstrated its value; so has the research of organizations, so why there should be any wrangle is one of the many mysteries that still will perplex when this generation has been led to greener pastures.

Mr. Beale's notes were set forth in answer to questions presented by GOLFDOM and appear without editing.

men on an average 18 hole course is about 9.

The usual 18 hole course maintenance cost is about £2,000 per annum.

Length of active playing season is all the year except when we experience an exceptional winter.

Standard of English course condition as compared with average metropolitan district U. S. course is better for the simple reason that the climate is more favorable to the growth of grasses and in the South of London there is a belt of light sandy soil upon which we can enjoy dry clean golf regardless of the weather in the winter. Apart from this the natural contour of the ground is more broken, interesting and suitable for golf than the sites usually occupied by golf courses in the metropolitan areas of the United States. The rough or outsides in many cases are

clothed with heather, gorse, bracken, etc. which is very pleasing to the eye.

British greenkeepers take up readily any efficient mechanical tool or implement, provided that it gives a good finish.

Water is laid on to the greens of most good golf courses but it is seldom if ever required on the fairways. Fertilizing is carried out by the use of topdressings and various types of complete grass fertilizers.

Condemns Acid Theory.

Up to 1928 the soil of the greens was kept neutral to alkaline and, in consequence, fertile and healthy.

Later a Board of Greenkeeping Research was instituted which accepted the American acidity theory as a fundamental truth.

The Board has a very influential backing and is financed by the Golf Unions, some clubs and a few private individuals. The theory was taken up enthusiastically by some, reluctantly by others and not at all by those who knew their subject.

It has now been going on for about 5 years and as the miracle of perfect greens free from worms, weeds, coarse grasses, etc. has not materialized and the turf has seriously deteriorated instead of improving, there is a suppressed revolt going on. Suppressed because the officials of a club do not like to admit that their greens are not as good as they were and because of the difficulty of questioning a "Board of Research" backed by prominent agricultural scientists.

To put it shortly the Committees who know little or nothing about the subject are worried and confused. The Secretaries fear to offend the official Gods whilst the head greenkeepers with their jobs at stake have to do the best they can.

The pot is simmering and it will not take much for it to boil over and then I think we will revert back to sanity.

The word "Research" is wonderfully inspiring but when the quest is directed by enthusiasts and cranks, as is often the case, it leads nowhere and advance is retarded.

I saw nothing in the U. S. A. to attract me to the acidity theory but not having visited the country for about 15 years I do not know if it is generally practised now or simply given lip service. I do know, however, that it has been in existence for a sufficient length of time for it to be proved beyond doubt or written down as bunk.

Soil Management for Greenkeepers Is Valuable New Book

"SOIL Management for Greenkeepers" has been published recently by its authors M. H. Cubbon, assistant professor of agronomy at Mass. State college, Amherst, Mass., and M. J. Markuson, assistant professor of agricultural engineering at the same college.

The book, beyond any question, is something that will find a prominent and helpful place in the library of the greenkeeper and green-chairman who is keeping up with his job. It is written from an intensely practical angle, but is not so deep that even the new green-chairman will be lost in a welter of technicalities.

Chapter heads are: General make-up of soils; Fundamentals of chemistry; Plant nutrients and soil acidity; Effects of organic matter on soils; Nitrogen changes in soil; General considerations in fertilizers; Fertilization of golf greens; Fertilization of fairways; Watering greens; Use of weed killers and other poisons; Causes and remedies for wet lands; Engineering methods; Profile leveling, etc.

There is considerable material in *Soil Management for Greenkeepers* that has not appeared in other manuals of practical greenkeeping.

Price of the book is \$3.00 postpaid. Copies will be sent on receipt of remittance either by GOLFDOM's Book Dept., 14 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, or direct from the authors.

British "Green Section" Issues Annual Report

OVER in England, the Board of Greenkeeping Research corresponds to the USGA's Green Section. Founded in 1929, it maintains experimental gardens at Bingley, Yorkshire, and its activities include inspection visits to clubs; analyses of soil samples, fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, etc.; advisory letters; lectures; and demonstrations.

The 1932 annual report of the B. of G. R., just at hand, contains in addition to the formal resume of the year's activities, several articles of considerable interest to American greenkeepers, including one on nitrogenous fertilizers, one on worming fairways and one on the identification of grasses.

How Greenkeepers Wrestle With Today's Maintenance Problems

By T. H. RIGGS-MILLER*

THE EVOLUTION of the modern golf course is quite recent. Few years have passed since men thought golf had to be played at the seaside. Many of the early links were formed by nature adjacent to the sea by the alluvial deposits of rivers, near where they ran into the sea.

*Address at New Jersey maintenance conference.

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There are a number of outstanding links of this type in England and Scotland, among the best known are St. Andrews, North Berwick, Sandwich and Westward Ho! The first inland golf courses were considered more or less as makeshifts, but it was soon learned that as fine a test of golf could be made on a course as on a links, which brings us to the meaning of the two words so misused. Links refer to a natural seaside course, while a golf course refers to an inland course natural or artificial. It is the preparation and subsequent care of inland courses that has brought about such an abundance of theories, conflicting viewpoints, scientific investigations and incidentally, has given greenkeepers jobs.

The first course to be designed by a golf architect where greens and tees were built up and ground prepared, fertilized and seeded in the way we do it today was Sunningdale near London. This was in the year 1900, so modern golf course construction is only 32 years old. I might add that any inland course previous to this date was built on existing pasture lands, which were mowed and fined down for the purpose.

Today there are golf courses in every country in the world. In the United States alone they number nearly 6000, and yet I don't believe it possible to find six constructors or greenkeepers who use exactly the same methods! In other words, there is no "school" of construction and greenkeeping. Generally speaking, every other trade, profession or art has a specific mode of procedure. Their system or technique of tackling a given problem differs very slightly over the length and breadth of the country. I can see no reason why the procedure of building and maintaining golf courses cannot be made more or less uniform.

The technique or method of procedure has nothing to do with topography, climate or soils, or with topdressing greens, from the making of the compost to working it in

the greens, or with mowing fairways, or with the construction of a green or tee. There must be a "best" method of performing the many and varied tasks on a golf course which would apply to any course anywhere, and it is only with the greenkeepers' exchange of ideas with one another that a unified attempt to gain greater efficiency from men and machines can be made.

Looking for the Right Way.

For instance, Mr. Roth of Plainfield, N. J. has worked out one of the best systems of cutting fairways that I know. Some other greenkeepers will have efficient methods for topdressing. Whenever a better method presents itself it would be well to try it out, and to give credit generously where it is due. Men are always ready to depreciate the line of conduct known as "cut-and-dry"; but successful management in any business is exactly that. It is cutting of one's material according to a plan, and a tentative assembling of the pieces. It means the setting aside of preconceived notions and fixed ideas, the elimination of waste of both materials and labor, the selection of machines and equipment, the arrangement of service buildings, handling the golf course, the operation of machines, and a hundred other details. The thought uppermost in the greenkeeper's mind is to find the best and cheapest way to accomplish a piece of work and provide means of doing it in this fashion. A man succeeds in the process directly in proportion to his understanding of his problems.

This leads us to the outstanding question of maintenance costs on golf courses, which is less than it has been at any time in the history of golf in America, and has been brought about by the cooperation and understanding by greenkeepers of their problems, reductions in wages of both greenkeepers and men, and the potential saving in labor made possible through the development of machinery by the manufacturers whose business it is to keep pace with the necessities created by the demands of golfers. A great number of these devices and improvements in machines were created by the greenkeepers themselves.

Cost Comparisons Impossible.

In talking of costs, one of the fundamental mistakes made by critics is the comparison between courses. Although a great deal can be done by developing uni-

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This conclusion has again been confirmed as recently as last fall. (See U. S. G. A. Bulletin, Aug., '32.)

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form performance on golf courses, there will never be a time when a fair comparison of costs between them can be made, unless all golf courses are built identical.

Physical differences of terrain and construction are important. It will be admitted that the major task on a golf course is mowing grass. The greater area it is possible to mow with a tractor mower whether it be 3, 5 or 7 gang, thus reducing hand mowing as far as possible, the lower the cost of this major item.

Any obstacles that interfere with the capacity functioning of a tractor-drawn mower such as artificial banks on tees, greens and bunkers so steep they must be mowed by hand, will have to be eliminated before real economical maintenance can be secured. A very good example of this artificial type of construction may be seen on the lower course at Essex county, where the amount of hand mowing and even scything necessary is appalling. A comparison of costs between this, and a course where the banks are well drawn out to allow a tractor to cut them completely would be unfair. The number and size of bunkers and the degree of refinements demanded also vary with every course. Thus, each greenkeeper's problem is individual and the ingenuity that he shows in mastering them denotes his worth.

Plan Ahead.

By making a careful examination of your course it is surprising how many steep banks can be eliminated even with a limited upkeep gang. It simply requires planning ahead. The results of careful planning ahead will excel those of deciding each night upon the plans for the next day. The latter arrangement means haphazard management. Begin a job properly and it is much easier to take it through to completion and to start off the second and third jobs.

Planning is, the highest test of a greenkeeper. It is not bound by precedents, it may be revolutionary, but it must consider only one thing. . . . **YOUR JOB.** These words must be written in capital letters. It stands at all times for the golf course where the ideal is to obtain the greatest efficiency from funds available. Planning of jobs cannot be done to best advantage unless those responsible have an intimate knowledge of a golf course plant—information about all kinds of machines and their adaptability, the rating

of laborers, weeding out of drones and establishing a specific goal.

A great deal can be said about small tools, such as shovels and rakes. In order to do good work good tools are necessary. Shovels should be lighter than those used on road work, with wooden D handles; handles of all other tools should be nicely finished off and well balanced.

The service building or barn is the beehive of golf course activity. Any money spent on properly housing expensive machines and providing facilities for prompt and proper repairs will pay the club handsome dividends. If it be large enough to allow screening and preparation of compost it will pay for itself still more.

Problems of Plagues.

Apart from the actual management of the golf course equipment, the greenkeeper has to fight as many plagues as existed in Egypt, which he inherited when golfers transferred their divot digging from seaside links. Whereas rabbits and sheep were the mowers and the sandy soil and salt air were the disease protectors of links, an entirely different problem was faced when turf grasses took on a fleshy prolific character in the heavy soils of their new surroundings.

I remember in England in 1911 applying 1 lb. of arsenic and 1 lb. of lime mixed with 50 gallons of water for white grubs, and a copper sulphate solution for leaf spot. So don't think that all these diseases were caused by the Green Section.

To expect a greenkeeper at a plant valued anywhere from \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 to prescribe accurately for every ailment, to work out an hydraulic formula for a water system, to design and build new golf holes, and to build roads and bridges, is foolish. The greenkeeper who tries to hide his lack of knowledge on some highly technical subject is still more foolish. A greenkeeper who has a practical working knowledge of golf course routine, fertilizers, seed, equipment and ordinary diseases and their antidotes, who handles his men and materials economically and is constantly on his job and above all knows how to obtain information on other subjects when it is needed is a clever greenkeeper.

Course's Family Doctor.

To suggest that there is an analogy between a greenkeeper and a family doctor will be ridiculed by many, but on close analysis it will be found that the likeness

does exist to a very marked degree. The function of a family doctor is to diagnose his patient's ailments and apply remedies the specialists in various diseases have found through experience best for curing particular ailments. When it comes to a major operation, the family physician does not do it himself but recommends a surgeon whom he has found to be the best for

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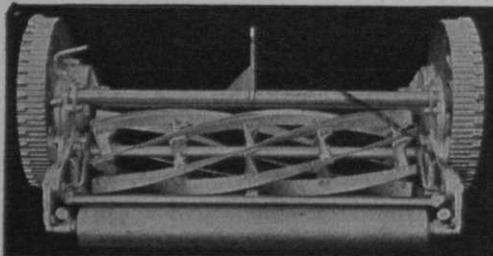


Many a fine putt—and the temper of a good member — has been spoiled by the work of a worm. Keep your

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that particular branch. When the operation is over, the family doctor nurses the patient back to health. If an analysis of blood, excreta or urine has to be made, even though the doctor has the experience and ability to make them, he generally sends them to a laboratory to have them made, so that his time will be free to attend his patients.

The family doctor who does not keep himself well informed on the latest discoveries through attending lectures and conferences and reading the various medical journals is not only stunting his own mental growth, but is depriving his patients of a service they have a right to demand.

The greenkeeper is truly the family doctor of the golf course. He analyzes its ailments and attends to its wants. If a major operation such as the installation of a fairway watering system is contemplated, he knows the engineer who has been successful and recommends him. When the lines are back filled, he nurses the wounded sod back to health.

If he wants to have specific information on some new disease, he has at his disposal all the research work that has been made not only in Washington, but at New Brunswick, and other places where he can make full use of it. If he wants to check his own analysis or is too busy to make them he can use the services at various establishments. One only has to read of the hundreds of thousands of yellow fever victims before medical research showed that the fever was caused by a mosquito, to realize what work of this kind really means. The experiments and research work at New Brunswick are just as vital to greenkeeping as the Rockefeller Institute is to medicine. Every club in Jersey should support the service which the experiment station is offering, the funds of which help to provide for its continuance. I know that I am expressing the sentiments of each and every member of our organization in congratulating the faculty in charge of this work.

Like any other business enterprise, interest and taxes are heavy burdens to golf clubs. This together with the shrinkage of memberships and income make it well nigh unbearable. Time is needed to adjust club finances. In the meantime strict budget control must be enforced. The satisfaction of adhering to intensely business-like arrangements cannot be over-estimated, more especially after a period

when the spending of money was uncontrolled, as happened these last few years.

Depreciation Neglected.

Greenkeepers who have kept any kind of cost data will have an advantage in making up their budgets. One very live factor is seldom included in budgets and that is depreciation. Depreciation occurs as a result of wear and tear due to active use, physical depreciation, neglect, inadequacy or obsolescence. (The time depreciation hits us most forcibly is when we turn in our old car).

Ordinary wear and tear of buildings and equipment is largely compensated for by current repairs. Depreciation, however, is only retarded and not stopped by repairs. A building may be made to last for centuries, but it will eventually fall into decay if continually used. A machine eventually gets to a point where it is cheaper to scrap it than repair it. Depreciation must therefore be figured on plant and equipment. The rate of depreciation depends on its durability, which is affected by the severity of its work. There are several methods of reckoning the rate of depreciation. The money laid aside for depreciation is placed in a sinking fund in order to replace discarded and worn out equipment. It is a legitimate charge and should be included in all budgets.

Can the present economic program be carried out without detriment to the golf courses? It can by the close cooperation of department heads for the common cause. By eliminating overlapping duties, and plugging leaks money can be saved. There might be some service the greenkeeper can render the clubhouse manager that would save money over the present system. In order to attract members and guests to your course, vital requirements

such as fertilizing and seeding can be included in any budget, however slim. The greenkeeper's first line of defense is good tools and equipment without which true economy is but a dream.

Beware the Phonies.

In times like these, chairman of green-committees should beware of quacks and nostrums. People who are seeking to capitalize on their schemes during clubs' financial stringency by making very flowery offers to maintain courses at ridiculous figures, which might lead the chairmen to look with suspicion on the budget submitted by his greenkeeper, a man who knows every inch of property.

Speaking for greenkeepers in general and New Jersey greenkeepers in particular, it would be hard to find a finer group of men in any industry. They are loyal and devoted servants to their clubs. When the members of New Jersey Greenkeepers' organization meet in a body, as they do each month, they represent a combined experience of over 500 greenkeeping years, which they give wholeheartedly to the cause.

ROXY, New York movie showman, has 50 sets of golf clubs. Jim Blose, Ohio left-hander, has 30 sets. A Kansas City (Mo.) golf nut bought 25 sets from one manufacturer for his personal use during 1931. When he scored poorly he gave his clubs to his caddie. Other manufacturers are wondering how they can work up customers to such a temper.

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IF I WERE A PRO— Here's What I'd Do

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A VETERAN
CLUB OFFICIAL

SINCE NONE of us are butchers, bakers, or grocers we find it necessary to GO OUT after our business instead of waiting idly for customers to COME IN, so I say if I were a golf pro, I would see the advisability of SELLING myself to the membership in such a manner that the members would never buy their golf supplies elsewhere because they would be friends of mine and I would have done sufficient favors for them that they would not think of buying from stores or at cut rates.

I would make a practice of playing nine holes every morning with a twosome or threesome or even a single simply to check up on their games and help them to correct their faults, and I would do the same stunt every afternoon until I had played with every member of the club, had given TIPS on what was wrong with their swings and showed how they could reduce their scores. This would not only be a gratis service, but I would have them understand that they were favoring me by permitting me to play with them; and you know this is really the truth when you realize they are my employers and my bread and butter.

* * *

IF I WERE a pro I would try to somehow earn the money the club is paying me by helping the manager, (providing he was my superior, insofar as the directorate decreed), and insist kindly upon doing my share to make the club more attractive, for its members. I would not charge for my services to members unless they requested instruction from me, and I would attempt to play with each and every member at least once every year to help him improve his game. Instead of attempting to high-pressure him into buying new clubs, I would suggest re-shafting some, replacing

The writer of these notes is prominent in golf as an official of several well-known clubs during his long connection with the game.

He has intimate and extensive acquaintance with professionals and their operations and has been responsible for getting many of them their jobs.

There may be some argument about several of his ideas, but all of them are worth studying by the pro who is planning to do more valuable work in 1933 than he ever did before.

others, and conscientiously try to save money for him while earning money for myself.

* * *

IF I WERE our pro, I would not only work for the good will of our present directors and try to please them, but I would work as hard as I could to please all the members. Especially would I try to please the women of the club without being fresh or familiar. I would always make it a point to go out of my way to make them think a lot of me as a professional who wanted them to play better golf and not to work so hard while playing the game.

* * *

IF I WERE the pro at our club I would try to earn the \$3,000 I get guaranteed from the club by figuring I owe each member ten dollars each year and paying it back to him in lessons, or in part by seeing that the course maintenance cost is reduced by this amount because of my co-operation with the greenkeeper.

* * *

IF I WERE a pro I know I could increase the interest of our members by just trying to be human and taking a friendly interest in each member's game instead of trying to sell him something everytime he