



*WILL IT DROP? Padgham putts on the Hilbre green. The attitude of the player from so short a distance, the stroke completed and nothing left to do but hope it may drop, indicates the keenness of the magnificent Hoylake greens.*

## HAIL TO THE CHAMPION

### Reflections from Hoylake

By BERWICK LAW

#### ARMED AT ALL POINTS

**A**LFRID PADGHAM at last has set the seal on a run of successes by achieving the dearest ambition of the professional golfer and, indeed, it would have been all wrong if he had not won at Hoylake last week.

His only rival to the title of England's best golfer is Henry Cotton. Perhaps Cotton is a shade the more accurate player from tee to green (though goodness knows the shade is of the palest) but Padgham's admirably consistent putting puts him just ahead, I think.

That is where the Americans used to have the advantage of us until we almost despaired.

All that is by and over now and, though we may not retain our championship for ever, we have now, and shall have in the future, champions to uphold us as great or greater than any we had in the past.

The Open Championship of 1936 was the most open and perhaps the most interesting there has been since the Great War.

#### A WONDERFUL RECORD

Before turning to generalisations it is of interest to examine the performances of Padgham in retrospect. Not since the great days of Harry Vardon has there been their like in England.

Confining ourselves for the moment to the Open Championship, we find that Padgham first made his mark in 1932, Sarazen's year at Prince's, when he finished equal fourth with 292, nine strokes behind the winner's phenomenal score of 283.

In 1933 he was still well in the picture, finishing seventh.

From that point he proceeded in steady progression, being third to Cotton (who equalled Sarazen's 283) at Sandwich in the following year, second to Perry at Muirfield last year, and now he is the champion.

Further, it is more than probable that this will not be the only time.

Apart from all this Padgham is the reigning professional match-play champion and has failed to win only one of the last five tournaments in which he has played.

That was at Temple Newsam just before the "Open," and I strongly suspect that he was not worrying himself overmuch about that particular affair, in view of the tremendous test that was so soon to follow it.

What a record and what a man!

Apart from a glorious body, which would have enabled him to become pre-eminent at almost any form of athletics, Padgham is dowered with a splendidly equable temperament, suspected erroneously by some to be the reflexion of a slow intellect. Actually he is as shrewd and observant as they make them and has studied the game as deeply and intelligently as anyone. He could never have done what he has done by the light of nature alone.

All hail to our new champion!

On such a tremendously testing course as is Hoylake, even without the traditional wind to make it harder still, it was inevitable that form would work out pretty truly.

Thus we had J. Adams, Cotton, Gene Sarazen, P. Alliss and R. A. Whitcombe all well up in the list, and W. J. Cox, alone of those whom we regarded as serious challengers, faltered in the last round after

leading the field. But he had a horrid draw and was last of all to go out, which must have affected him adversely.

I did not realise, to my shame, that Marcel Dallemagne, the Frenchman, good golfer that he is, was quite so good.

To be sure he was fourth at Sandwich two years ago, and his superb fourth round of 69 last week puts him unquestionably among the great ones.

Probably the fact that James Adams was for years in Ireland as professional to the Royal County Down Club at Newcastle prevented us from realising before this year what a superb golfer he is. His three defeats at match play of Padgham in succession, however, show his class.

#### IMPORTANCE OF PUTTING

It is safe, I think, to predict that Cotton's time will come again. A more superb striker of a golf ball there never was and once he can regain his confidence at putting he will have no superior and precious few equals. This time he was putting quite well, but the luck would not come his way.

In the "Open" nowadays it is not enough to putt well. You must putt excellently and have the run of the green with you as well.

This was exemplified in the last two rounds of the new champion. He himself has said that those two rounds were the worst he had played for a very considerable time.

But his amazing putting came to the rescue; notably one the length of a cricket pitch on the last morning for a three at the Royal and another of ten yards—his last stroke of the day—for another three at the home hole. That, above all things, is how championships are won.

Of the invaders from overseas, Gene Sarazen naturally, was regarded as the most formidable.

What a gallant little man he is and what a master of the game!

It seemed, however, that young as he still is, a little of the fire had departed and that his length had diminished appreciably. Perhaps the pace in his own country is a little too hot and the fires burn themselves out quickly.

Nevertheless, he finished only four strokes behind the winner and that, in all conscience, was a fine enough performance.

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*LARKS IN WIRRAL: Thank goodness as a nation we can generally keep a sense of proportion and of values. Hence this cosy establishment almost on the edge of the Alps green was left inviolate, thanks to the timely attention of one of the army of volunteer stewards.*