

We built a Club house and got the services of Mr and Mrs Fraser as Secretary, Green keeper etc. and they had free accomodation in the building. There was also machinery to buy. It was heavy going but as things have turned out it is a first class course with a very large membership and a new club-house etc. I, however, no longer play golf. They have now a licence and the old club-house is used to house the green keeper.

The first cup the club had was one donated by me as a floating trophy. I have suggested that they now let it be won outright but they will not agree as it to be retained to remind them of the early days when we had to struggle to keep the course going. Today they hold the East London Championship on this course.

We were getting rather tired of flat life and so decided to look out for a house.

One day Lorna and her mother saw a house advertised at 27 St. Andrews Rd. to be sold by auction. We went up one evening to have a look at this house which was unoccupied. It stood on a third of an acre of ground with about fifteen needle pine trees, a couple of silver oaks and two pepper trees and these had probably taken all the goodness out of the ground. There were five rooms, a large kitchen, scullery, pantry, bathroom and outside toilet, two servant's rooms and a garage. We decided that we could make a good thing of it and so I was nominated to attend the sale. I was given no idea of what price I was to go to by Lorna. She said 'Do your best'. Well, the bidding started at £750, going up by £25 bids until the man bidding against me called £1000. I then thought it best to go £50 and at £1050 Harry Perks, the Auctioneer, knocked it down to me and said 'You have got a bargain'. Burmelster, who was bidding against me, told me later that he was only prepared to go to £1000.

Well, we had the house but there was a lot to be done. Inside the house there was a lot to be done to modernise the place. Cupboards, new ceiling, doors and windows wanted attention. Lorna's mother, a real business-woman, apart from helping us financially, arranged for a Mr Greenwood, a jobbing Carpenter that she had had dealings with, to do all the necessary work to make the place comfortable and also arranged a bond for us with the Buffalo Building Society. She was a real brick. Greenwood, working on his own in his spare time, was able to do all the necessary work at a reasonable price. A contractor would have charged double the price we had to pay. It certainly took a bit longer, a month, but he made a good job of it.

We eventually moved in and settled down. The next job was to get the grounds cleaned up by getting rid of all the pine trees, silver oak and pepper trees. There was not a blade of grass, so that after getting rid of the trees there would be the laying out of the grounds and lawns. With the help of a boy and now and again a friend we chopped the trees down, all but the tall Norfolk Pine. Next job was to dig out the roots and believe me these trees put down deep roots. I was then young and full of energy and by hard work had this all done within three weeks. As the ground sloped away from Gately Street I set to work terracing it - three terraces, and then set to work planting the grass for lawns, first having set out the flower beds etc. In the back garden the ground was absolutely bare and had to be well dug up before planting the lawn. On Saturdays some of my K.R. officer friends used to spend the day helping and well do I remember how we looked forward to our beer at lunch-time. In those days I was a very poor drinker, not that I am much better now.

They were happy days and we used to love pottering about in the grounds. It makes such a difference if it is ones own home, you feel you can do something to improve the property.