

HOP STRINGERS' CHAMPIONSHIP.

Give a thought to the Hop-Stringers next time you're in the Local. Without them, your wallop wouldn't pack enough punch to knock a fly over. Rules for the stringers' championship allow each man to have a woman helper. Her part in the operation will be seen in a minute.

Then the competitors are all set.

It takes a lot of skill to handle the giant crochet-hook on the end of the 10-foot pole. Last year's winner, from the Guinness Farms, J. Hook (a most appropriate name) kept a good steady pace. A cone of four strands makes up what they call a Hill, which the growing hops will climb in the next few months. There's a lot of skill and organisation in the production of hops. The bander -in binds the strands together.

This year the brewers want 11,000 tons - enough for 7,000 million pints of beer and stout. You lucky people.

What a lark to cut daddy's string down.

When it was over they tried out last year's hops. The winner was Ted Blunt. He got a challenge cup and £4. In these parts there's no sense in a cup unless you first fill it, then empty it.

At harvest time the hop fields will be full of promise for the next thirsty year - thanks to the men who put up 300,000 miles of string.