

CHANGES IN GREENKEEPING

By J. K. CAMPBELL

Links Supervisor, St Andrews, Scotland

READING the 75th anniversary issue of *Golf Illustrated* brought back to mind many changes in the game of golf from the days of the old "guttie" to the modern ball, and from hickory to the power steel shafts of this modern era.

On reflection as a greenkeeper and in discussion with many of my profession, one is also reminded of the changes and evolution in the methods and equipment for golf course upkeep, in an effort to maintain the turf to withstand the wear and tear of the welcome and ever-increasing numbers of enthusiastic golfers who, after all, make up the vast majority.

It was my privilege to know and have many discussions with the late J. H. Taylor while he was living in retirement in North Devon, and when he recalled the experiences of his first job as a greenkeeper at Westward Ho! In those early days the greenkeeper's only equipment was a shovel and birch broom and the methods of golf course maintenance much more primitive than they are today. The greenkeeper had to be an expert with the scythe which was one of the main implements for manicuring greens and tees, cutting long grass, and trimming bunker faces.

The early types of grass mower did not give the smooth fine cut that the precision multi-bladed motor mowers make today to produce the immaculate putting surfaces that are now an essential.

The high standard of upkeep in modern golf course maintenance has placed a distinct responsibility on the greenkeeper who is expected to be a man of many parts, with more than a modest knowledge of petrol and diesel engines, soil chemistry, grass and weed identification and eradication, and so on, plus

the natural affinity to deal with his own staff, his committee and players.

The push type grass mowers once used for cutting greens and tees are gradually being replaced by powerful multi-bladed motor mowers which have made the task much easier and better results are obtained in less time.

The old horse-drawn grass mowers once used for cutting fairways has now been superseded by tractor-drawn quintuple and septuple gang-mower units, and those can contend with considerable areas in the course of a day.

There are rotary mowers for dealing with all kinds of long grass, and although the old art of scything is gradually dying out, it is still a joy to see the results achieved by the few who can still handle this useful implement.

Also there is now a wide range of mechanically propelled machines for almost every conceivable operation of golf course maintenance from turf-cutting to hollow-tining, which do the job more efficiently than was ever possible by old-time methods.

Advanced techniques and their application depend so much upon the skill and experience of the man on the job, namely the greenkeeper, in order to keep abreast of the many problems with which he may be confronted in the course of his work.

The Greenkeepers Association would like to pay tribute to those connected with the Sports Turf Research Institute whose efforts should surely have every support. With the theoretical and thorough practical experience from which should follow the wholehearted approval of every Greens Committee if the ever-increasing number of golfers are to be presented with the best possible playing conditions.