

FOR the benefit of new readers of this magazine I should explain that this series started in July 1986 and was designed, in part, as a contribution to greenkeeper training to review books that might be helpful.

However, many new books are too complicated and too specialised (and too expensive!) to be considered, and anyway, I know that many greenkeepers share my own passion for ferreting around in old bookshops.

In the first article I dealt with the pathetically inadequate books devoted specifically to the upkeep of greens and lawns and found that too many of them have little or no relevance to the problems of today as they exist on British golf courses.

Further instalments have covered a much wider spectrum - the history and philosophy of golf, golf architecture, site potential, general nature study, geography and geology, soil sciences, chemical usage, botany and plant ecology.

Now it is time to focus on the grasses and their identification. Men have been writing about grasses for almost two centuries, but for most of that time their interest lay in improving pastureland. There are some beautiful old books with hand-coloured illustrations, notably one by the first Martin Sutton, but they are not really about "our" grasses. Examples of this type of book in my collection are *Grasses* by H. M. Ward (1901) and *Manual of British Grasses* by W. J. Gordon.

From the Inter-War period I have *Grasses and Rushes* by J. H. Crabtree and the standard agriculture handbook *British Grasses* by S. F. Armstrong (1917). A very helpful book from this period, because the line drawings are so good, is *Common British Grasses and Legumes* by Thomas and Davies. In the copy I found, some unknown owner had interleaved dried specimens which made it even more useful.

In passing, it is worth noting

BOOKS FOR GREENKEEPERS AND GREEN COMMITTEES

what has actually happened in agriculture. After the depression of the 1870's there was a move to "permanent grassland", achieved by sowing chosen mixtures of seeds as opposed to using areas of grassland as it had occurred naturally.

This movement was to increase in pace and reach a climax in the Second War especially with the work of Stapledon and Davies when mixtures of clover and ryegrass were substituted for agrostis pastureland. With fertiliser these new crops could be more productive and carry more stock. The methods used in this "artificial" production of grassland were soon to rub off on the maintenance of sports turf with disastrous results.

Going back to agriculture again, further casualties have been the old meadows with a rich diversity of species and the ploughing-up of grassland to increase the arable acreage.

Most books on greenkeeping

becoming a world authority, and died as recently as 1980. His blue Pelican paperback has become known to thousands involved in turf-culture. In 1984 his son J. C. E. Hubbard, published an up to date edition of his work with some sections being the work of John Shildrick, deputy director of the STRI. The book consists in the main of detailed descriptions and drawings of the grasses and also contains a series of so called "keys" to enable systematic identification. An essential buy at £5.95.

Other modern books include *Grasses, Ferns, Mosses and Lichens of Great Britain and Ireland* by Roger Phillips (1980) which is notable for its beautiful colour photography, and *Collins Guide to the Grasses, Sedges, Rushes and Ferns* by R & A Fitter, recommended for a new single-access computer type key for identification. Most booksellers carry small books about grasses, but they do not give us enough detail.

Coming closer to home, in the *GREENKEEPER* of March 1984 there was a really practical article entitled "Know your Grasses" by none other than Jim Arthur.

Nobody can tell me that it is easy to recognise grasses in the cut state, but, for those engaged in golf course maintenance it is an absolutely essential skill.

In reality, unless the site is a freak, we are dealing with relatively few species although each may have countless strains and ecotypes. The greatest errors seem to arise on acid soils with confusion between the bents and invading *Poa Annua*.

It may then be necessary to get very close to the ground, put on the specs (!) and use some of these books to check out all the characteristics.

By Eddie Park

include descriptions of desirable grasses and very useful booklets were published by Suttons Grass Advisory Service and also by the STRI. The former was called *The Identification of Grasses by the Foliage* and the latter, by David Clouston, was *Identification of Grasses in Non-Flowering Condition* (1962).

For many years now the standard authority has been *Grasses* by C. E. Hubbard, first published in 1954. Hubbard started his career in the Royal Gardens, Sandringham, but spent most of his life in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. He specialised in grasses,