

THIS month sees the retirement of Jim Arthur the country's best known golf course agronomist. Mr Arthur first started advisory work some 40 years ago as a member of the Sports Turf Research Institute staff, he later ran various successful businesses in the commercial sector. Since he set up his own golf course advisory service, he has been associated with the PGA European Tour, the R & A Championship Committee, he usually made 350/400 advisory visits to courses throughout the UK and Europe each year and he has advised on the construction of many new courses. He also served as a member of the Greenkeeper Training Committee and was involved in bringing the three previous greenkeeping associations together, through the intervention of the R & A. Mr Arthur will remain a member of the R & A's Panel on Greenkeeping.

In advocating a product, system or design Jim Arthur has always based his advice solely with the best interest of his client in mind. Such advice has occasionally upset one or two commercial interests but everyone throughout the industry is aware that no inducement to change his advice would ever have been considered. Many companies have made design alterations or modifications to their products at his suggestion.

Jim Arthur has been a regular and valued contributor to "the Golf Course" and to "Greenkeeper". He has always been known for his forthright, if sometimes controversial views, but his advice has always been based on the consistent application of sound and eminently logical greenkeeping principles. He recently summed up his views - "greenkeeping - and course presentation has much in common with climbing a mountain peak. Each foothill climbed reveals another range, with glimpses of the high peak, which is hardly ever climbed - and even if it is, it is hard to stay up there.

# JIM ARTHUR RETIRES



The problem is that in any living ecology, change is inevitable. Each target when achieved is replaced with more ambitious ones. Areas of courses which would never have excited any comment a decade ago are now coming under scrutiny and in a decade's time will be as such part of routine maintenance as mowing fairways is now.

This means above all else that we must continually take stock of increasing man-power and machines - remembering that we are subject to a number of interacting factors. More play creates more compaction and this means more corrective aeration, yet itself reduces the time available in which to carry it out. It is no answer, for example, to stop mid seasonal aeration because slit-marks upsets members, but to find another way of achieving the results.

Equally, standards rise, e.g. in improving pitch and run-up conditions, this means more sophisticated machines which permit cuttings to be collected (the best way of improving the density, resilience and fineness of any turf) and which also keep potentially damaging tractors and trailed gangs away from narrow entrances already subjected to wear from players and their trolleys. The trolleys themselves are a major contributing factor to wear (by tending to restrict those towing them to set lines around the course, instead of spreading wear).

We cannot ban trolleys all year, though this would undoubtedly help, we certainly should try to ban all buggies - perish the thought that one day they may be as common here as on the other side of the Atlantic. Remember however, that if we do see such a heresy permitted, (and it will no longer be golf that we play but a different game described by Frank Tatum (as 'cart ball' - then will have to face another change - a concrete road round the whole course, to which trolleys are barely restricted by high kerbs!

My theme, is that change is unavoidable, that standards demanded as of right, not expected, will rise and we must try to guide these changes in the right direction, and that to achieve these standards we need more men and more machines - and indeed more money.

Above all else we must try to preserve the traditions and the conditions of a game which is under threat from a new entry of players who have no understanding of what the finer points of the game are all about. If we do not take steps to protect it, traditional or 'real' golf will become as rare as real or Royal tennis."

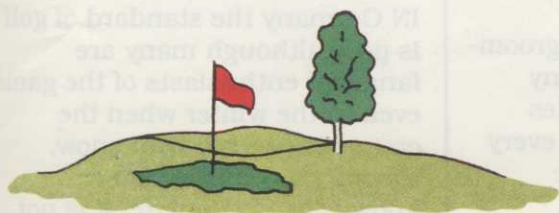
Jim Arthur has done much to enhance the greenkeeping profession; an undoubted character, he will be missed by many and the whole industry would wish him well in his retirement.

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