

## Kenneth Arnold has had more demands on him than most yet still found time to devote to the game of golf...



Kenneth Arnold is 85, a retired solicitor, a former Chairman of Green and President of Abbeydale Golf Club and has been President of the Sheffield Section since 1965. He is also a former Lord Mayor of Sheffield yet he would appear to have shared quite a bit of the time he might otherwise have spent in County Hall with greenkeepers and discussing greenkeeping matters.

"When I was told that I was to be Chairman of Green at Abbeydale by the previous holder of the position I was a keen gardener but didn't know anything about greenkeeping," confessed Kenneth.

He recalled those days back in the 60s as being completely different for golf clubs and everyone associated with them.

"In those days you might get two or three cars in the car park on weekdays," he recalled.

He is quick to appreciate how beneficial such low demand was on the greenkeepers.

"Staff could come in at 8am and start cutting greens. If someone was playing a hole they just stood

aside. If they did that nowadays they would never finish!"

Kenneth is a man of strong opinions. His first point of view delivered not long after the conversation had started was that the Americans were ruining the game.

"They are making greens faster and faster. I don't know why they don't just dig up the greens and put down linoleum."

Another view emerged when talking about the role he first undertook in the golf club - Chairman of Green.

"Chairmen of Green should be done away with. They are not required. The Head Greenkeeper should report to the Board, or the committee, on what is happening on the course and what he intends to do. It should be just like a managerial role in industry."

He is a man full of anecdotes.

"When I was Mayor I used to travel to Sheffield Wednesday matches with the team and I once asked the manager how he coped with so many people calling for his blood. He said that he had 30,000 critics each of whom knew all the answers.

But none of them knew the problems. Golf clubs are just the same."

When thrust into the Chairman of Green role that he now considers to be anachronistic he threw himself into the role attending Sheffield Section lectures on a regular basis.

It is a policy which has been continued for Abbeydale's subsequent Chairmen of Green including the current incumbent, Jack Copeland, who brought newly crowned Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award winner, John Coleman, to the club.

"We had some superb speakers, like old man Hawtree, the architect, and I would learn a lot from him," he said.

"The opportunities are there for greenkeepers to increase their knowledge and many more are doing so nowadays that when I started attending the lectures."

It is a positive, forward thinking attitude which would shame many people half his age as does his lasting ability on the golf course itself.

He still plays two or three times a week, always carries his bag and is one of those rare people who can beat his age.

There is a man in the Sheffield Section whose knowledge of the industry is second to none. His opinions are sought by greenkeepers young and old, far and wide and he has been a regular attendee at Section lectures for over 30 years. Last year in fact he was presented with a plaque from BIGGA Past Chairman and fellow Sheffield Section member, Barry Heaney.

Yet he has never worked on a golf course.

# New Year. Renew Year.

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