

Correspondence

Toll Cottage, Whitburn Golf Club, Whitburn, Co. Durham.

Dear Sir,

HIDDEN DANGERS

I back Ken Buchanan all the way in his idea that greenkeepers should be paid danger money. Not only on municipal courses but all golf courses. There are very few greenkeepers who have their ideas getting past committee stages; this is a good idea. Assistant Tom Graham is right in saying, "It's no good waiting until someone is seriously injured."

I was cutting the 18th fairway a couple of years ago and was keeping out of the way so that a golfer could drive off. He badly hooked his ball and it struck me on the temple. I was dazed. The tractor was still running forward with gangs behind it. I was lucky not to fall off the back and get cut to pieces. I had severe headaches for two weeks afterwards; altogether I have been hit four times on the back, thigh, head and hand. Last month my assistant Dherron was hit on the nose, just about breaking it. A golf ball is a dangerous object. A few years ago a young girl was hit on the head by a ball hit by her boyfriend. This girl almost died. She was in a coma for about three months. When she came round she was just a cabbage and could not recognise anyone.

Is it Peter Keeling who is trying to make a fool of Ken and Tom? If he is, I don't agree with the comparison with traffic wardens, policemen, and football referees. On a busy golf course greenkeepers have to dodge balls most of the week. I am quite certain traffic wardens don't have to jump out of the way of cars all day and policemen don't get shot every day or football referees get kicked in the head every time they go on to a football field. Let's put this in perspective. Greenkeepers do face danger every time they go out to work on the course.

Yours faithfully,

COLIN JAMES BAXTER.

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