

# A Letter to the Editor

The Bungalow  
Blackmoor Farm  
Tarn Lane  
Leeds LS17 9  
12th May 1972

Dear Mr. Editor,

I would like to apologise, through you, to Mr. C. A. Moore of Middlesex for being one of the Greenkeepers who did not reply to his appeal for information about the problems caused by 'pop-up sprinklers'.

Before making any comments I would explain that the system we have at our 27 hole course is *automatic*. This does give a slightly different bearing, but, as the basic requirements are the same, the differences are academic.

There is no point in denying that problems are caused by these watering systems but, in my opinion, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. The first point is the time saved against manual watering. For years we had the task of heaving pipes and sprinklers about the course, only to find that golfers had turned them off or pulled them into a greenside bunker which was then full of water. You can appreciate the pleasure it gives to look out over the course on a hot dry day, secure in the thought that at nightfall watering will start, with no inconvenience to my staff, nor yet, more important, to the golfers themselves.

Now that time has been saved through not having to water manually, a little of this time can be put to extra fungicide treatment. It is going to cost a little more in additional materials, but golf to-day is a question of economics, so therefore these things must be taken into account if so called 'perfect' conditions are called for. Fears that fungal attacks will be extreme can be dispelled. A little thought and a balanced watering routine can reduce attacks to a minimum. Balancing the watering routine brings into action the local knowledge of the Greenkeeper and his observance of the peculiarities of each green.

For instance, our system works in sequence and on a pre-selected time, that is, watering commences at No. 1 green, waters for a specified time then switches to No. 2, repeats the cycle, then to No. 3, and so on. As each green varies in elevation; some being exposed to wind; some low lying in natural catchment areas; others shaded, I now know that for the best results the system needs to be operated roughly as follows:- No. 1 green 10 mins. No. 2 - 20 mins., No. 3 - 20 mins., No. 4 - 10 mins., No. 5 - 5 mins., No. 6 - 25mins., and so on. Balancing the watering gets us half-way to solving the problems of too soft greens, flooding, etc., Admittedly, to have a 'pop-up' system installed on an established course may mean the addition of extra drainage to problem areas, but the long term advantages are tremendous. This should also take care of black slime which basically must be a drainage problem.

With regard to thatching, this should not be entirely blamed on watering, as one should consider the general increase in use of nitrogenous fertilizers and the general desire for 'green' greens; therefore correction of this comes in the course of general turf management.

The one major complaint of our system is that each green was fitted to the designers requirements with 360° (full circle) pop-ups. This plays havoc with some of the steep greenside bunkers, and means that staff have to spend an extra hour in throwing back the sand. Now, wherever a unit has to be replaced we are trying to fit a part circle pop-up.

Another worry, that at first seemed immense, was wind blowing the water spray off the greens. Now we find that nature seems to compensate by turning and blowing in the opposite direction in a matter of days.

This letter only briefly touches upon the subject of pop-up sprinklers, but I hope it will reassure Mr. Moore that his problems are not as large as they seem. However, as all Greenkeepers seem to have a touch of the traditionalist about them I can only extend a sincere invitation to Mr. Moore if he is ever in this area, - please call in and have a peep at our pop-ups.

Yours sincerely,  
COLIN GEDDES  
Head Greenkeeper  
Moor Allerton Golf Club  
Leeds, 17