The rise of the CLUB MECHANIC

wearing out I’ll order a new one, run the original until it is nearly ready to give in then replace it right away,” explained Steve who is also not averse to helping out the greenkeeping staff if they are pushed and he has some free time.

“I work with the operators so they will let me know if there are any problems. Machines are serviced for oil and filter change after 100 hours usage. But if we have had a really dusty season, like the last one, I’d try to do it every 50 hours. I don’t mind putting oil in them.

He is quick to stress the importance of good operators and how that can prolong the life of machines.

“Steve has come in and told operators certain way to leave the machines when they are not being used and that is helping prevent any damage in future. When starting up don’t have it on high revs for too long drop it straight back down to tick over. Basic things that generally you’d probably forget,” said Adrian (26).

“He can do the servicing on a day when the machine is not being used and you don’t really notice it,” he added.

There are other benefits to a golf club and its members to having a club mechanic.

“Hopefully in the future we shall be able to take business from another golf course if they want machines regrinding and we have the facilities to do it or even assist members who want mowers repairing – it can be done for a set fee. We’ve got 800 members and they’ve all got lawns to cut. It will help to finance the building up of the workshop. That is what is in the pipeline,” said Adrian.

The cost of fitting out that workshop is not quite as expensive as you might imagine.

“I did a rough price check for fitting out the workshop by ringing round different places for machines. We have kept it down as much as we could on prices etc and I don’t think we’ve done too badly. We shall obviously add to it as we go on.

“It has cost around £7,000 to equip the workshop to a state of usability which when you compare it to a triplex or fairway mower, which can cost around £30,000, you can see how reasonable it is,” said Steve, who has also brought much of his own equipment with him.

“I have a lot of my own hydraulic testing equipment and electric testing equipment. If a situation arose where we didn’t have the piece of kit required to do the job I think we would probably buy the kit because we wouldn’t want to be in the position of sending the machinery out and if we were to need it once chances are we would need it again some time.”

The growth of the Club Mechanic will perhaps need a change of thinking by some manufacturers as Steve has discovered.

“If you are a main dealer you can tap on to available information but the manufacturers are a bit loath to give information to a golf club mechanic. If you go on a training course as a main dealer you get the full training course right through but if you go as a golf course mechanic you just get the basics on how to change the oil and grease it. That is basically it at the end of the day. With the advent of the golf course mechanic this is bound to change though. It has got to,” commented Steve.

Another situation which will require clarification is that of manufacture warranties on equipment and whether main dealers would have to service them to maintain the warranty’s validity.

“It’s a situation we’ve not come across before. You’re not a trouble shooter whereas you just be trained to fix it when it does break down. You’re not a troubleshooter whereas Steve can find out all problems,” explained Adrian.

So what do the major companies do by way of training for use in their equipment? Greenkeeper International surveyed what’s available...

Lely (UK) Ltd - Distributor of Toro Equipment.

Manuals: A service and operator training manual with every machine purchased.

Videos: A free operator video with each purchase while there is a Health and Safety video, a Raising the Standards (of mowing) video and a Setting the Course (of mowing management) video free on request.

Training Courses: There are various training courses for end users, dealers and salesmen.

Jacobsen Textron

Manuals: An operator manual with every product.

Helpline: 01480 476971.

Videos: There is an operator training video on all products.

Training Courses: There are full training courses for operators and end user mechanics.

Helpline Number 01536 417777 (ask for service department).

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL November 1995 31
Congratulations, you've just discovered the simplicity and versatility of an Atterton grinder... just like those groundsmen featured at the locations alongside.

The individual needs of groundsmen, throughout many different applications, have been incorporated throughout the years of design and development, to arrive at what today are technically the most efficient and yet simple to use grinding machines. Equally at home grinding cylinders 'in-situ', with the cutter unit still fixed in the machine, or separate cylinder grinding with it removed, for example when the machine is stripped down for maintenance, the EXPRESS DUAL offers today's groundsmen the logical choice in grinding equipment.

Our pursuance of advancement has led to the latest design in a long line of machines – the new EXPRESS DUAL '2000'. Featuring all the attributes of the market leading EXPRESS DUAL '1000', the new '2000' includes a 'relief grinding attachment', for those who wish to grind a relief on the cutter unit and an electric drive 'lifting table' to safely lift those heavyweight units up onto the grinding bed.

Then, there's the Anglemaster range – bottom blade grinding technology at its best. Available with or without power traverse and coolant system, the simple Atterton set-up procedure allows bottom blades to be ground accurately and efficiently time after time.

Together they make a perfect pair – join the successful team, like our friends shown alongside and who knows, we could be featuring you next time!
The rise of the CLUB MECHANIC

John Deere Ltd
Training Courses: Available at the golf course or at their training facility at Langar. They include installation and safe operation, cutting units and adjustments and a two day course for golf course mechanics/greenkeepers. Helpline Number: 01949 863204 or 863244. Richard Charleton or Ivan Miller.

Hardi Ltd
Manuals: Sent out with each machine. Videos: Available on machine operation. Training Courses: In association with the dealer network or special training with BIGGA sections on request. Helpline Number: 01455 233811 or 0831 430025 R.W. Oliver (Amenity Manager).

Kubota UK Ltd
Manuals: WSM available by ordering from dealer. Videos: Can be loaned on request. Training Courses: Can by arranged on request to regional sales manager or dealer staff. Helpline Number: 0184421 4500 Ext 229.

Hayter Ltd
Manuals: Operator and workshop manuals, coloured maintenance charts, maintenance check list and maintenance schedules. Videos: Just started producing safety and operator videos. Training Courses: Four day Dealer mechanic courses, End user mechanic courses, basic maintenance courses, operator courses, safety courses. Helpline Number: 01279 723444.

Charterhouse Turf Machinery
Manuals: Complete manuals available for all products. Training Courses: Can be arranged for suitable parties. Helpline Number: 01428 661222.

Ransomes Sims and Jefferies Ltd
 Manuals: Operator, Parts and Service manuals. Videos: Product Presentation Videos. Training Courses: Service training courses held annually at the Ipswich factory for all professional equipment users. Helpline Number: 01473 276443 Mike Prentice for service training or 01473 276286 Nigel Church for sales information.

New Holland UK Ltd

Huxley’s Grass Machinery Ltd

SISIS Equipment
Manual: In duplicate with all new machines and available free of charge on request even for obsolete machines back to the 1950s. Training Courses: On application. Helpline Number: 01625 503030.

Multi Core Aerators Ltd
Manuals: Full and comprehensive manuals detailing all aspects of routine maintenance. Training Courses: Upon delivery full operator instruction is given and all routine maintenance jobs are covered with the mechanic/greenkeeper. Helpline Number: 01257 231861 – Ian Waddington Mobile 0374 488508.

Massey Ferguson
In March 1994 we reported on Head Greenkeeper Alistair Cale's route to installing a new irrigation system. How did he and Ifield GC cope with this summer's drought conditions?

This year's severe drought has tested irrigation systems at every club in the country to the full and, coupled with the general lack of water, has seen many greenkeepers faced with severe problems in preventing their courses from burning up.

With that in mind we returned to Ifield GC, where in March of last year we published an article with Head Greenkeeper Alistair Cale on the installation of a new irrigation system, to find out how they had coped with the harshest of examinations.

“Said in the article at the time that only time would tell if I'd made the right decision,” said Head Greenkeeper Alistair Cale, who had purchased a Heron (also known as HHI Electronics) controller with Hunter pop-ups installed by local Sussex company Flanderblade.

“All I can say is that I'm absolutely delighted with the irrigation system we have,” said 31-year-old Alastair.

“Over the summer I heard some horror stories from some clubs which had far more expensive systems than ours but we didn't have any problems.”

“I know that I took a gamble going with Heron because I didn't know them but I visited the factory and got references from others who had a system - mainly horticultural people - and went with them. The object was to get value for money and I feel that we achieved that while at the same time not losing out on efficiency.”

The system was installed in the winter of last year and the weather did cause a few problems.

“The cable laying took place in late February and March but the pipe laying around the greens didn't begin until early April and it was held up because it still hadn't stopped raining,” recalled Alastair.

The original article explained how Alastair had gone about preparing a report for his committee outlining what could be achieved by way of a new irrigation system on a limited budget.

“To compile the report we got a couple of the leading irrigation systems at every club in the country to the full and, coupled with the general lack of water, has seen many greenkeepers faced with severe problems in preventing their courses from burning up.

With that in mind we returned to Ifield GC, where in March of last year we published an article with Head Greenkeeper Alistair Cale on the installation of a new irrigation system, to find out how they had coped with the harshest of examinations.

“Said in the article at the time that only time would tell if I'd made the right decision,” said Head Greenkeeper Alistair Cale, who had purchased a Heron (also known as HHI Electronics) controller with Hunter pop-ups installed by local Sussex company Flanderblade.

“All I can say is that I'm absolutely delighted with the irrigation system we have,” said 31-year-old Alastair.

“Over the summer I heard some horror stories from some clubs which had far more expensive systems than ours but we didn't have any problems.”

“I know that I took a gamble going with Heron because I didn't know them but I visited the factory and got references from others who had a system - mainly horticultural people - and went with them. The object was to get value for money and I feel that we achieved that while at the same time not losing out on efficiency.”

The system was installed in the winter of last year and the weather did cause a few problems.

“The cable laying took place in late February and March but the pipe laying around the greens didn't begin until early April and it was held up because it still hadn't stopped raining,” recalled Alastair.

The original article explained how Alastair had gone about preparing a report for his committee outlining what could be achieved by way of a new irrigation system on a limited budget.

“To compile the report we got a couple of the leading irrigation

If your irrigation system is working well, that's fine. If it isn't or if you are considering a system for the first time, perhaps you should be talking to Ocmis. We have a decade of experience in designing and installing automatic sprinkler systems that might just be the answer to your dreams.

Ocmis Irrigation (UK) Ltd, Martock, Somerset, TA12 6BU. Tel: 01460 241939
Midlands Office Tel: 01789 414604 Northern Office Tel: 01924 453102
Scotland Office Tel: 01312 202102

Suppliers of irrigation systems for sportsground, recreational, amenity and landscape areas.
WHEN CHOOSING AN IRRIGATION COMPANY TO BUY FROM, SHOULDN'T YOU FIRST CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FACTS?

Fact No. 1. **Watermation** is the ONLY golf course irrigation company with systems on six British Open Championship courses.

Fact No. 2. **Watermation** has been installing systems successfully since 1970.

Fact No. 3. **Watermation** has irrigation installations on over 600 golf courses in Britain and Ireland and in 23 other countries worldwide, as well as hundreds of bowling, landscape and sports complex locations.

Fact No. 4. **Watermation** is the ONLY irrigation company who design and manufacture their own pop-up sprinklers in BRITAIN — and we make them to precision standards in brass, bronze and stainless steel. Easy maintenance and available spare parts are assured. All other sprinklers are imported, mostly made in “sealed for life” plastic, and unrepairable. We were the first company in the world to successfully design and manufacture a two wire controller – this revolutionised irrigation design. Now we export them all over the world.

Fact No. 5. **Watermation** has fully staffed offices in England, Scotland, Ireland and Malaysia, as well as a network of trained distributors and installers worldwide.

Fact No. 6. **Watermation** has the largest irrigation maintenance division in Britain and all the engineers have mobile phones. What’s more we will train your own greens staff in caring for their system.

Fact No. 7. **Watermation** has a large warehouse and stores department and friendly helpful staff, who make sure you have your equipment quickly.

Fact No. 8. **Watermation** have their own installation crews under the direction of the contracts department and don’t have to rely solely on sub contractors, as do most installers.

Fact No. 9. **Watermation** not only offer you professional design, experienced installation and high quality equipment, but the MOST ECONOMICAL SCHEME POSSIBLE.

Fact No. 10. **Watermation** always uphold and encourage the highest standards in the industry – we are founder members of the BTLIA (British Turf & Landscape Irrigation Association) and as such we helped to write the rules!

**OUR LONG EXPERIENCE IS YOUR BEST GUARANTEE**

Last, but probably the most important fact of all — Watermation are nice people to do business with for 25 years.

**Watermation Irrigation Systems**

Watermation Sprinkler & Controls Ltd., Tongham Road, Aldershot, Hants GU12 4AA

Tel: 01252 336838 Fax: 01252 336808
Reliability is our business

Two-wire and multi-wire irrigation controllers from 4 to 400 valves. Call 01903 730068 for more information and a list of our distributors.

Irrigation System's Toughest Test

companies to come and give us their opinions of our watering system and to brief the committee members about irrigation systems in general. We also went down to Ham Manor (where Alistair had been an assistant) so I could show a committee member what we'd done and he talked to the secretary. I also asked a lot of greenkeepers I knew in the area who had parkland courses what sort of pop-ups they were using impact or gear driven. I got demonstrations of different types of pop-ups and over a period of about three months we began to form the basis or a report.” – explained Alistair in the original piece.

The Heron MCI 100S controller, that was eventually agreed upon has been a roaring success.

"It has proved to be reliable, simple to use and very versatile – apart from a lightning strike in the first two months. “David Carter from Heron came to replace the controller and they have since upgraded the lightning protection for all their controllers.”

Despite being a cheaper model

Weathermatic has developed and manufactured specialist turf irrigation quality products for 50 years.

This wealth of practical experience and product, through local dealers, offers those in the sports turf industry the very best irrigation system design, installation and service.

Freephone 0500 888820 to contact your local dealer.
cut down on their water charges by high spot watering

Alastair doesn't feel he has lost out. “The only thing I would say is that the diagnostics are not quite as good as you would get on a more expensive model – but if they go wrong you still have to call out an electrician,” he commented.

“The biggest problem you can get with a system is that the decoders are not reliable but I have not had a de-coder go down in all the time I have had the system. He has also been impressed by the versatility of the de-coder.

“I can make a complete change in the order of pop-ups in a couple of minutes while I can water sections of the course in parallel and didn’t need originally to wire up a zones on the course.”

In the original piece Alastair described how they presented a 10 page report to the committee.

“It was decided we would do 12 greens this year, the remainder and a few tees next year and the following year we’d finish off the tees and do the approaches. We'd do the cabling this year; we've already put our pump in so we've got the pressure and the flow rate to cope with the extra sprinklers on the greens.”

“When we did the other six greens we changed the Hunter I41s we had originally put on the greens and put them on the tees while we put I43s on the greens – the reason being that the I43s turn a lot faster.

The fact that the club got such a good deal on its system allowed them to move further down their phased installation than they had originally hoped.

“We have already done all the greens, including the practice putting green, 12 tees, had a new controller, up-graded the pump.
The job I'm always glad to see the back of is... "Divotting"
- Gerry Byrne, Luttrellstown Castle G&CC

IRRIGATION SYSTEM'S Toughest test

ing system and re-wired the course for well under £30,000," explained Alastair.
Ifield also saved water and cut down on their water charges by high spot watering with a hose and with wetting agents.
“We used a spray to treat dry patch with non-burning wetting agent which was put on by a hand lance from our Cushman sprayer,” said Alastair.
“We also verti drained the greens with half inch tines to a depth of three inches which left no surface damage or heave from the verti drain. This helped cut down the use of wetting agent.

We did this four times in the height of the drought.”
The experiences at Ifield show that it is possible for all golf clubs, whether they be wealthy or not, can have an irrigation system which will do an excellent job and cope with the most searching of weather conditions.

NORTH STAFFS IRRIGATION
An Independent Company

At North Staffs Irrigation we can offer a range of equipment suitable for your irrigation project. A full design and installation service is provided ensuring an effective and efficient system tailored to your individual needs. We offer:

- Fully automatic Irrigation Systems (including greens, tees, approaches, etc.)
- Manual Control Irrigation Systems
- Phased Installations (allowing a basic water supply to be built upon to achieve full automatic irrigation over a period to suit your available finance)

Recent contracts include: Bangor, Sherwood Forest, Fairhaven, Beau Desert, Prestatyn, Accrington, etc, etc.

Contact us on 01785 812706, Fax: 01782 395734 or at Ivy Mill, Longton Road, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 8TB

We are founder members of the BTLIA.

MIST
IRRIGATION
SYSTEM
CONTROLS LTD

Suppliers of Irrigation Equipment to Golf Courses, Bowling Greens, Landscapes, Horticulture.
- Manufacturers of Irrigation Equipment
- Existing Systems renovated and upgraded

SPARES – REPAIRS – SERVICE

Call now for your Irrigation needs

MISC LTD

Unit 18, Hightown Industrial Estate, Ringwood, Hants BH24 1ND
Tel: (01425) 474614 Fax: (01425) 471296
Many if not all the problems we come up against in our jobs as greenkeepers can be blamed fairly and squarely on the distinct lack of communication of information.

As a teenage Apprentice Greenkeeper I remember top dressing greens which took six men three days to complete! I knew something was wrong because at a time when we were working our hardest the golfers seemed to complain the most about what we were doing!

Why? The simple answer was that in the golfer's eyes we were making putting surfaces much worse than they were before we started (in the short term anyway) so who can blame them.

They did not know why we were doing this job because it had not been communicated to them.

Now, some 25 years later, I have to say that the situation has changed very little - all the effort has gone into getting the job done as quickly and as efficiently as possible so that the golfer is inconvenienced as little as possible which is commendable but little or no effective advance has been made in explaining the very necessary work of the greenkeeper which I believe is vital in securing the future of our profession.

I use the top dressing scenario as an instance - all the tasks on the golf course require explanation from the most general question, e.g. "How often do you cut greens?" to the more detailed analogy "Why do you dig the greens up just when you've got them right?".

The days of hiding away in some distant corner of the golf course when questions are being asked are long gone. Today's Course Managers are required to be excellent communicators and must communicate effectively at all levels.

I fervently believe that it makes our job easier in the long term if we continue to try to "get the message across".

ENDEAVOURING AT ALL TIMES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

The average private members' golf club probably has around 500 - 1000 members, is controlled by an elected General/Management Committee of say 10 - 15 people, has various Sub-Committees of which one will be for the course, e.g. Course/Liaison/Green Committee of say three - seven people.

The club will have a Ladies' Section, a Seniors' Section, a Juniors' Section and in some instances an Artisans' Section.

But only one golf course! So how can you possibly communicate with all those people? With extreme difficulty is the answer but we have to if we are to be in any way effective in maintaining and improving upon present golf course conditions.

One thing I have learned over my years as a greenkeeper is that anything worthwhile is not achieved easily and that is certainly the case with effective communication. The subject must be tackled from many different directions with a common goal in mind - accurate information to the member.

Not only that but the whole system has to be monitored and reviewed periodically to assess if it is actually achieving the objectives set. If it is not we must be prepared to change and improve the system - it is no good proclaiming that "the members never read the noticeboard". That is accepting that you have failed to communicate.

I have come across five main areas of communication and these are as follows:

Official Communication

The Course Manager's presence at appropriate Committee meetings to convey all aspects of the maintenance work involved, present schedules and programmes, etc. for approval, and be able to answer questions. The development and publishing of a Golf Course Management Policy Document to ensure continuity on all golf course matters. Appropriate regular management meetings with the overall Head of Staff (usually the Secretary) to assist in his/her role as a channel of information to Committee and members.

Direct Written Communication

Monthly Course Reports by the Course Manager on detailed observations, progress, expectations on all areas of the golf course as well as general information on staff, etc. which are presented to the relevant Committee and once approved are posted for member information. Winter/Spring Renovation/Autumn Renovation Programmes once approved should also be posted. Internal magazines and newsletters as well as simple A4 large print notices of impending work on the course can be distributed on tables throughout the bar.

Direct General Communication

Presentations by the Course Manager to the members on subjects ranging from "What's wrong with the golf course and what we are going to do to put it right" to "How much it costs to maintain Augusta National in comparison..."
to our own golf course" followed by question and answer sessions. Smaller presentations by the Course Manager to sections of the Club (25 – 30 people maximum) on various subjects. This is a better way to develop two-way communication because the emphasis is placed on discussion and not lecture and much is learned by all concerned (and that includes the Course Manager).

**General Communication**

A large area must be made available in a prominent area of the Clubhouse for Course Information to post reports, programmes and schedules and any other relevant information.

It is important that this area is updated regularly - a well maintained "fresh" to keep interest. Illustrated drawings and photographs are an excellent way of attracting attention and should be used as often as possible.

Videos both professionally produced, e.g. the BIGGA career video and home-made on subjects such as course etiquette, can also keep the subjects interesting.

**Public Relations/Semi-Social Communication**

Staff golf matches against different sections of the club and even the Committee. Visits to the workshops by Committee and members to look behind the scenes. These two measures bring the rest of the greenstaff into the equation as well as the Course Manager which is important.

Having lunch in the Clubhouse periodically and playing golf with members to a small degree help us to understand and get over individual views in an amicable way.

Using all these different ways of communicating will "get the message across" better than previously and the membership will begin to understand what we are trying to achieve on the golf course. After all, we all want the same thing - a well maintained, well presented golf course of which we can all be proud.

**TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE STAFF AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

The last and vitally important responsibility of every Course Manager is basic safety. With the assistance of the Health & Safety Executive, the local Authorities and the many competent safety consultants working within the industry, this area is not so frightening as once it was.

The one piece of advice which I can pass on is to contact the relevant authority first and request assistance in setting safe systems in place and not waiting until they come knocking on your door.

In this way you are demonstrating your commitment to ensuring safe standards of work in your workplace and also ensuring a good future working relationship with the relevant authority.

During the course of this series of articles I have had some feedback regarding content. Some destructive but mostly constructive.

One point which has been made is "It's okay for these big money 36/54 hole complexes and golf clubs which can afford these highly trained Course Managers but we are just a 9/18 hole private member's club - we can't afford a Course Manager" or even "We don't need a Course Manager".

My answer to that is - you cannot afford not to employ a fully trained Course Manager. It is he/she who will analyse/assess what you have and devise efficient systems which will ensure that money is not wasted.

I would guarantee in the long term you will enjoy a better maintained and presented golf course and therefore a more contented membership for the money available - that is after all what efficient management is all about.

**Tournament magic**

A big thank you

May I take this opportunity to thank all those BIGGA members who formed the Walker Cup Support Team for their help in the preparation of the course. Your efforts were much appreciated by both Royal Porthcawl and myself.

David Ward

Course Manager

Royal Porthcawl GC

In search of age record

I am writing to you to see if you can find out how old the youngest Head Greenkeeper in Britain is.

I am 18 years-old and a Head Greenkeeper on an 18 hole private course - Sandilands GC in Sutton-on-Sea, Lincolnshire. I have just finished my National Certificate at Elmwood College and have been greenkeeping since I was 12.

If you could do this for me I would be very grateful indeed.

James North

Sandilands GC

Peter Alliss' explanation appreciated

The following was first published in Golf Weekly magazine:

May I publicly thank Peter Alliss on behalf of greenkeepers, Chairmen of green committees and Club Secretaries for his invaluable assistance while commenting on the Walker Cup. For many weeks we have been trying to explain to members why the grass is being lost on the greens only to be met with disbelief and accusations of poor greenkeeping practices.

Alliss' explanation of Take All Disease will hopefully make the many doubters realise that this problem is totally outside the control of greenstaff and is a direct result of weather conditions.

Mike Penny

Secretary

Worlebury GC, Avon

**Hollow coring**

Glenn Millar

Uleethorpe GC

**Putting in drainage ditches**

-Richard Garnble

Aldwark Manor

**YOU SAY**

Send letters to The Editor, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF or fax them on 01347 836864