

IRRIGATION CAN BE DEADLY

Last month we reported the appalling accident that befell Woodcote Park's Head Greenkeeper Eric Green, when the cover blew off the box housing the control valve alongside the seventh green.

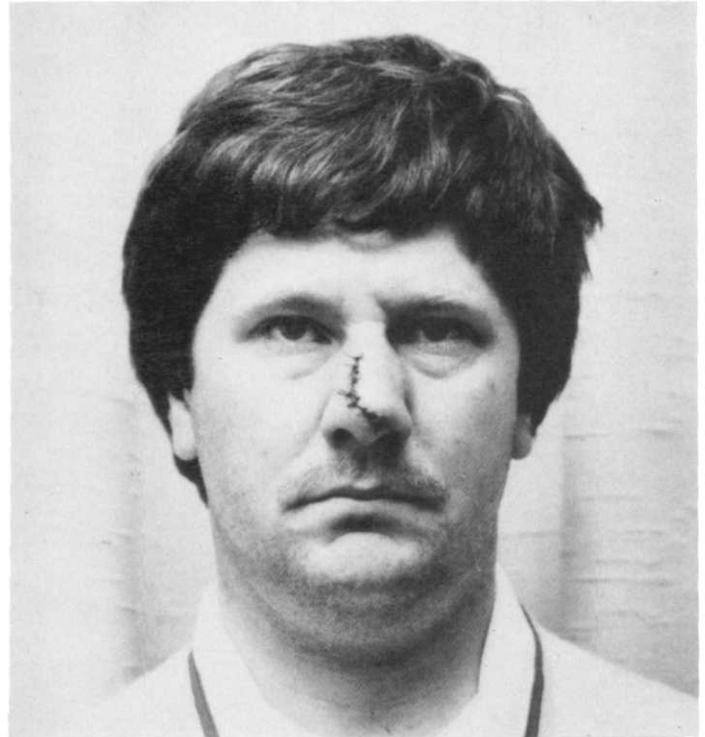
Eric is now recovering from his injuries and is well enough to take a two week holiday with his family.

Since the events of that July evening, when Mr. Green, accompanied by his wife Carol and their daughter were inspecting the updated irrigation system installed by British Overhead Irrigation Ltd., the club have employed an independent consultant to check the scheme and an investigation has commenced by the Health and Safety Executive.

Irrigation systems as was pointed out last month can be extremely dangerous if they do not meet the exacting standards laid down by the only controlling body in this country, the British Turf Irrigation Association.

One of the leading members, Bill Hawthorn of Watermation Ltd. has commented.

The horrific accident to Eric Green, Head Greenkeeper at Woodcote Park Golf Club resulting in facial injury occurred because of a failure of the plastic nipple underneath the manual hydrant. Failures of this nature are not uncommon if this method of installation is used. For this reason many years ago Watermation devised a different method of mounting valve assemblies at the greens having the hydrant supported on a metal nipple attached to a robust metal tee, in order to withstand



Eric Green (above) needed 17 stitches in his nose when a plastic coupling broke off the control valve.

the mechanical loads which inevitably are placed upon the hydrant when hoses are attached.

Toro, whose General Manager Peter Roberts is Chairman of the Association, has recently published a guide entitled 'The Thinking Man's Guide to Golf Course Watering', a publication that all golf green committees should read before asking companies to submit tenders for irrigation systems.

Naturally this booklet is biased towards the Toro product as any sales literature should be in a competitive market.

Other systems, such as that marketed by Watermation, could suit a club equally as well. The club must seek tenders for the product that best fits their need within a price bracket they can afford.

What they must not do is to take the lowest price, without ensuring the system fully meets safety standards and their staff are not put in a position of danger.

We are publishing the photograph's of Eric Green's injuries, not from a sense of tabloid press sensationalism, but simply to bring home to Greenkeepers and those involved in Golf Club Management, the need to be ultra careful when dealing with water under extreme pressure.

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