This month, Greenkeeper International’s bi-monthly series featuring Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers from every Region, looks at Bunkers.

Bunkers
Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE

1. How many bunkers do you have and have you added or subtracted from that number in the past?

We now have 98 bunkers. We had 98 ten years ago but took two fairway bunkers out.

25 plus one practice bunker. This year we are having two or three changes, but we will finish with the same number.

We have a total of 49 at Cleckheaton now. Last year two greenside bunkers were changed into one.

We used to have 28 but added another near the 13th green during 97-98 when all the bunkers were reconstructed.

A total of 32. We added one some time ago – the greenside at the 14th

We have got 74 bunkers and in last 10 years we’ve taken away four and installed one new one.
2. What type of sand do you have and what are its advantages?

We use Stewart's No 2 which is dark brown and very good after heavy rain as it doesn't compact and it is very consistent wet or dry. We used to have a silicon white sand but it caused problems by burning the face of the bunker and tended to congeal after rain.

3. Have your bunkers been designed with maintenance in mind or would you make any major alterations if given the chance?

Originally they were designed with maintenance in mind but over the years with constant edging and trimming they lost their shape and became ugly. Last year after a visit to the King's Course, at Gleneagles we copied the Braid design and are now the subject of good comments from the members.

4. How often do you do major maintenance work on your bunkers and of what does it generally consist?

We are experimenting with Wexford white sand in six bunkers at the moment as in my opinion it looks quite spectacular. However, it's a bit expensive at £25 a tonne and we may go back to filtered sand.

5. What is your policy regarding the rake left?

We edge twice a year, fly-mow weekly and the lads take edging shears out with them once a week.

We are doing a lot of work this winter on lessening the slope on the bunkers so they don't retain too much water.

The sand we use is a Tarmac Top Sports Minstead HMS2 because it is a sand that suits us. It firms up and the ball doesn't plug in and it is free draining and consistent.

Our bunkers are not maintenance friendly and are a little difficult to maintain at times due to characteristics of a Harry Colt design. There are a lot of banks and edges on them. We don't maintain them mechanically - they are all raked by hand.

Our policy is that rakes should be placed inside the bunker with about six or eight inches of the shaft of the handle coming out of the bunker and the rake should be pointed at the green. The bunkers are raked every day and the staff position the rakes as they should be then.

We always keep rakes in bunkers, overwise our staff have to keep getting on and off the cutting machines to move them. I also believe that a rake shouldn't stop the ball from going into a bunker.

We always keep rakes in bunkers inside the bunkers. This was a club council decision about five years ago, I believe, after comments on the subject by Peter Alliss on television. I always believe that if a shot is heading for a bunker it shouldn't be stopped by a rake.