

A day in the life

They say "variety is the spice of life". If that's true, greenkeepers certainly live spicy lives. Judging by a little survey we carried out recently, no-one was doing the same thing on the same day and no-one restricted themselves to just one task.

We contacted two greenkeepers from each region – a course manager/head greenkeeper and deputy course manager or first assistant – to find out what they were doing on one day, also chosen at random – March 17. Here are the replies from the magnificent seven who responded to our request.

● We're going to do this again on June 14. If you would like to take part, drop the editor a note.

**GAVIN KYLE, 28
DEPUTY COURSE MANAGER
ASHFORD MANOR GOLF CLUB,
ASHFORD,
MIDDLESEX**

An 18-hole parkland course built in 1898 on a gravel subsoil. It covers 102 acres of which approximately 85 acres are manicured and the rest is woodland. 700 members.

**Time spent in job:
FIVE YEARS**

6.45-7am

Check oil and water in machinery. Set up machinery that will be used first thing. Start and leave to warm up. Make sure they are in working order.

7-7.10am

Delegate morning jobs and then plan the rest of the day's work with the course manager.

7.10-7.20am

Attach slitter to Jacobsen workhorse.

7.20-10.30am

Slit-tine greens and surrounds. This operation is usually carried out 1-2 times a week and is carried out regularly in the lead-up to spring when we will start our spring/summer maintenance programme. The greens total approximately 8,200 m sq in size.

10.30-10.55am

Break time.

10.55am-12.45pm

Mow greens with Jacobsen Greensking to tidy up greens after the recent warm weather has produced some patchy growth. This is also done



in preparation for the weekend competitions. Mowing height is 6mm (1/4in).

12.45-1pm

Wash off machine and make ready for next period of work.

1-3.10pm

Mow fairways with Jacobsen Tri-King. After recent warm weather and with the moisture in the soil, the fairways are starting to grow and are patchy in certain areas. This is also done to tidy up the course for the coming weekend's competitions. It won't be long before we are into our summer programme if weather conditions remain the same.

3.10pm

Head for the bank – it's pay day.

Finishing time: 3.15pm

Typical day?

From a slitting point of view, this will continue while the weather and ground conditions permit before we are fully into our summer work programme. As the month goes on, so the cutting programme will continue while ground conditions permit. The mowing frequency should increase. In some ways it was a typical day and in others it wasn't. We are trying to make the most of the conditions and use them to our own benefits.

**GRAHAM EDWARDS,
21
ASSISTANT
GREENKEEPER
HARPENDEN GOLF CLUB,
HARPENDEN,
HERTS**

An 18-hole parkland course set in 136 acres. 850 members.

**Time spent in job:
FOUR YEARS, SEVEN
MONTHS**

7-8am

Tidy up bunkers, getting rid of rabbit scrapes and foot marks.

8-9.30am:

Build new path and steps to the 18th tee.



9.30-10am

Lunch.

10-11.15

Continue with path and steps.

11.15am-12.30pm

Fit new nets in practice nets.

12.30-1pm

Dinner.

1-3.30pm

Continue with practice nets.

Finishing time: 3.30pm

Typical day?

It was a normal day for this time of year.

**DOUGLAS DUGUID, 40
HEAD GREENKEEPER
WESTHILL GOLF CLUB,
ABERDEEN**

An 18-hole parkland course set in 109 acres. 700 members.

**Time spent in this job:
18 YEARS, SIX
MONTHS**

7.45-8am:

Closed course under 1 inch of snow.

8-9.30am

Mixing topdressing.

9.30-11.30am

Rebuilding work on the 10th fairway (whole new fairway and tee. The 10th hole at the moment has a severe climb up the side of a hill and we are shaving away the slope to site a tee near the bottom rather than the top. We should have started this job two months ago, but couldn't because of the weather.

11.30-11.45am

Check course and re-open it.

11.45am-12noon

meeting with greens convener about 10th fairway.

12-12.30pm

Lunch.

12.30-1.30pm

Preparing new pins and flags for start of the golf season on March 19.

1.30-2.15pm

Load trailer up with tee markers, litter baskets for putting out before the 19th.

2.15-3.45pm

Working on the 10th fairway.

3.45-4.15pm

Tidying up stones on 16th fairway – they've rolled down from the 10th fairway above.

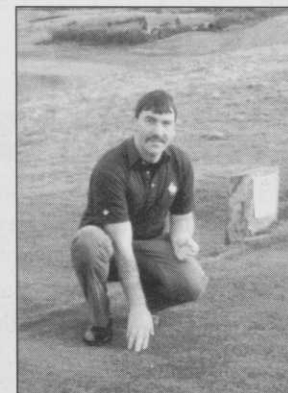
Finishing time: 4.20pm

Typical day?

Unusual as we are rebuilding a new fairway on the 10th. Normally we would be topdressing at this time of year, but due to the weather this winter we have been under snow for all but two weeks since Christmas.



Douglas Duguid



Steve Evans

HUW MORGAN, 27
COURSE MANAGER
THE WILDERNESSE CLUB,
SEVENOAKS, KENT

An 18-hole parkland, heath and woodland course set in 300 acres. 750 members

Time spent in this job:
12 MONTHS



7.30-8am

Discuss with staff what's on today and give course supervisor a list of work for today.

8-8.30am

Follow sprayer operator for two greens to check that the new sprayer is working OK.

8.30-9am

Collect petrol and diesel from local petrol station.

9-10am

Finish off writing reports for meetings later this month.

10-11am

Break.

11am-1pm

Help out with hollow-tining of greens. Check that machine is still going the correct depth.

1.30-2.30pm

Update computer with the latest budget purchases. Calculate how much has been spent this year ready for a meeting with the treasurer.

2.30-4.10pm

Meet with technical advisor from Hardi Sprayers to discuss our new sprayer.

Finishing time: 4-4.10pm

Typical day?

Fairly typical because we had numerous little problems which I had to solve whilst trying to do my own work.

CRAIG WYLLIE, 27
FIRST ASSISTANT
GLASGOW GOLF
CLUB, GLASGOW

An 18-hole parkland course set in 90 acres. 1,000 members

Time spent in job: 10 YEARS

8-8.40am

Put pins on winter greens due to 1in of snow.

8.40-10.10am

Drainage work.

10.10-10.30am

Break.

10.30am-1pm

Continued work on drainage.

1-4.20pm

Continued work on drainage. We were putting in a 100mm pipe in a blaze path to remove water that was lying on it. The pipe was to be put into a conduit that we thought was not used.

After opening the conduit we found that there was water running in it. We then decided to put dye into a conduit we already had open further out on the course. We discovered that the two conduits were linked as the dye went past the hole we had opened. We then discovered that the two conduits are joined in the area we were working. One of them was blocked past the join due to a sewage pipe that was put in 20 years ago. We have now decided that this will have to be left to next year to be fixed as we have too much work to do.

Finishing time: 4.30pm

Typical day?

Weatherwise, very typical. Workwise, this was due to the weather as we could not do course work.

DAVID NORTON, 29
HEAD GREENKEEPER
THE BELFRY, WISHAW, WEST
MIDLANDS

One 18-hole pay-and-play course, The Brabazon, plus the 20-hole Derby with 460 season ticket holders and a driving range. All in 500 acres.

Time spent in job: 20 MONTHS

6.30-6.40am

Check conditions, weather and golf booked on the courses for the day. Decide jobs for the day. Roll call and allocations of day's work.

6.40-8.25am

Inspection and course set up of front 9 holes on Brabazon Course. Markers switched, check bunkers, trim holes with one other member of staff.

8.25-8.40am

Fill in time sheets and coming week's planner.

8.40-8.55am

At hotel, go through computer for following week's bookings and sheets for any important golf details of groups, ie start times (two-tee start, shotgun etc).

8.55-9am

Get mail etc from office.

9-9.05am

Collect week's wage slips for the greenkeeping staff.

9.05-9.30am

Assist greenkeeper (front of hotel, back of 9th and 18th greens) topdressing new artificial turf path and directing golf with signs, hoops etc to 10th tees and hotel around new turf and bedding borders.

9.30-9.35am

Break, give lads wage slips, check no problems with anything and have a coffee.

9.35-9.45am

Have a short meeting with the course manager.

9.45-11.45am

Assist on the Derby Course with the hollow-tining, core collection and clearing of greens. We're in the middle of this at the moment.

STEVEN EVANS, 33
DEPUTY COURSE MANAGER
ST ENODOC GOLF CLUB, NR
WADEBRIDGE, CORNWALL

Two 18-hole links courses set in 200 acres. 1500 members.

Time spent in job: TWO YEARS, SIX MONTHS

7.30-7.40am

Liaise with course manager, organise work programme and direct greens staff.

7.40-10.10am

Fertilise greens on Church Course with NPK, granular fertiliser; 1oz per square yard.

10.10-10.30am

Morning break.

10.30am-12.35pm

Fertilise surrounds and aprons on Church Course with NPK, granular fertiliser; 1oz per square yard.

11.45am-12.20pm

Swap with member of staff and go to see how work on the new 8th Brabazon tees is coming along, liaise, assist and direct continuation of work and turfing.

12.20-12.30pm

Go to office and ring two suppliers.

12.30-1pm

Dinner.

1-2pm

Carry on work on 8th tees.

2-2.40pm:

Attend heads of departments meeting in hotel, when we go through next week's business and I also roughly plan my following week's operations.

2.40-3.40pm

See personnel manager and go through recruitment file for anyone suitable for vacancies arising shortly.

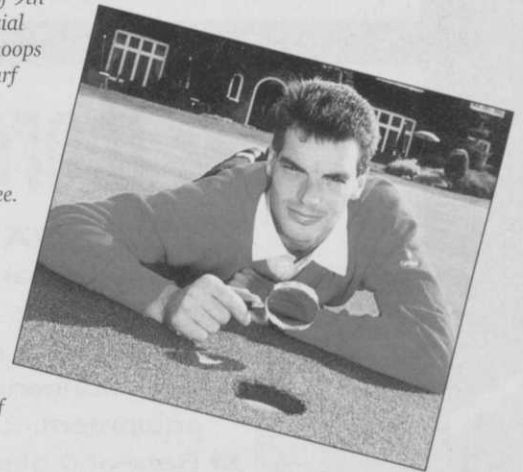
3.40-3.55pm

Agree shortlist with personnel manager and instruct her secretary to make necessary arrangements.

Finishing time: 3.55pm

Typical day?

Fairly typical for a Thursday. However I had one member of staff on holiday, one at college and four away doing their PA2 spraying courses, so I was pushed for staff. But it's always busy. Both courses were fully booked from first tee times at 7am until 'nine holes only' late afternoon.



12.35-1.05pm

Lunch break.

1.05-4.10pm

Check automatic irrigation system for faults and breakages including all sprinkler heads around greens on Church Course.

4.10-4.20pm

Put all machinery into shed and lock up.

Finishing time: 4.20pm

Typical day?

A typical day would usually consist of organising daily work programmes in advance, motivating greens staff and creating a good atmosphere to work in, which is essential. Today was typical in those respects. All greens staff are encouraged to play a full part in the running of the golf course. All greens staff have been practically trained in most areas of greenkeeping and this is an ongoing process.