

# TALKING

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



**Name:** Duncan Peddie  
**Course:** Alloa GC  
**Region:** Scotland  
**Type of Course:** Parkland  
**Number of Holes:** 18  
**Staff:** Head Greenkeeper plus five



**Name:** Vincent Magill  
**Course:** Cairndhu GC,  
Northern Ireland  
**Type of Course:** Parkland  
**Number of Holes:** 18  
**Staff:** Head Greenkeeper plus four and two students  
in the summer



**Name:** Jeremy Duffield  
**Course:** Cleckheaton and District  
**Region:** Northern  
**Type of Course:** Woodland  
**Number of Holes:** 18  
**Staff:** Head Greenkeeper plus four and a part-time  
gardener



**Name:** Jonathan Wood  
**Course:** Ross-on-Wye GC  
**Region:** Midland  
**Type of Course:** Woodland  
**Number of Holes:** 18  
**Staff:** Course Manager plus four, plus part timer  
three days a week.



**Name:** Paul Jenkins  
**Course:** Lilleybrook GC  
**Region:** South West and South Wales  
**Type of Course:** Parkland  
**Number of Holes:** 18  
**Staff:** Course Manager plus five



**Name:** George Barr  
**Course:** Ham Manor GC  
**Region:** South East  
**Type of Course:** Parkland  
**Number of Holes:** 18

# 1

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

We now have 56 bunkers. We had 58 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 48 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.



# HEADS

## 2

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.

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.

Moneystone at present. It doesn't blow about as it is quite a heavy sand and it eliminates sand splash.

We have Bank's GS 5 sand, the advantage being that I didn't want a white or too bright sand as it wouldn't fit the environment. The disadvantage is that sometimes it blows about a bit as it is very fine.

A white double washed sand which is not too fluffy. The golfers like it and it is compatible with our top dressing so any splashed out of a greenside bunker blends in very well.

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.

## 3

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.

They were never designed with maintenance in mind and we have suffered from waterlogging. We are doing a lot of work this winter on lessening the slope on the bunkers so they don't retain too much water.

Maintenance was in mind when the bunkers were designed. We are now re-shaping them as they don't face up, so there is quite a bit of work to be done.

When we reconstructed we tried to maintain the original design which has been good from a maintenance aspect. We could perhaps do to enlarge one or two.

Originally they were, but after 70 years of play they are not perfect. I would like to turf down the banks rather than have sand all the way to the top.

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.

## 4

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

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

We top up with sand twice a year and edge twice yearly. There is a continuous programme of strimming and weeding to keep them tidy.

We top up the sand usually once a year, although obviously more often if needed, on the greenside bunkers in particular. Edging, fly-mowing and weeding is done fortnightly.

We top up the sand twice a year in spring and autumn and trim the bunker edges every two weeks in the growing season.

We edge and trim fortnightly. Four years ago we drained every bunker and took all the old sand out.

We edge them maybe three or four times a year, strim some of them and flymow them. We have a five year written maintenance programme for our bunkers for sand replacement so that all the bunkers will have exactly the same sand in them. It is written down as per a policy document.

## 5

5. What is your your policy regarding where the rake is left?

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.

We always keep rakes in bunkers, otherwise 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.

I like to put the rake inside the bunker because if a shot is heading towards a bunker it should go there rather than be stopped by a rake.

Our policy is to leave the rakes in the bunkers as near to the edge as possible. It is possible we could have a 'Y' stand for bunkers in future, as it has been discussed.

It is the club policy to have the rakes in the bunkers. Rakes outside can stop a bunker-bound shot from going in.

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.