

Heritage

HEAD GREENKEEPERS

Alex Denholm was the original greenkeeper and he acted as professional in his spare time. When he was appointed the club's first full-time professional in the middle of 1926, **Mr F Parsons** from Peninsula Golf Club in Melbourne became the new greenkeeper.

Norman Ginns was head greenkeeper for almost 30 years until 1960, apart from a period when he was called up for war service in 1942. Until the late 1930s all construction work was done with two horses – Ginger and Digger – and a plough and scoops. Horses were used to cut through the rough and the cut grass was piled up with a horse-drawn hay rake and burnt.

Norman Ginns designed a turf plough with Wynnum Golf Club greenkeeper, Fred Burns. The design was refined and built by a Taringa blacksmith, Bill Jackson, in 1937 at a cost of \$20, which was the equivalent to three weeks wages for a groundsman at that time. The last extensive job that this machine was used for was at St Lucia in the 1960's when the fairways were raised on the 9th, 10th and 13th and on the 14th when the green was raised. The turf plough was later restored by Jack Surman and his son Neil. It remains on display in the grounds of the maintenance facility.



The old turf plough



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Jack Surman was head greenkeeper from 1960 until 1985. He started as a caddy with the club in 1927 and became a junior groundsman in 1935.

Jack recalled the biggest battle that IGC green staff fought in the early years was against “dollar spot” brought in by the American pros around 1931-32. A tall, powerfully built man, Jack was heavily involved in constructing both courses at Long Pocket. Life member, Peter Davies, described him as the strongest man he had ever seen and recalled him carrying heavy concrete pipes, one under each arm, while other workers struggled with one. During the 1968-69 drought Jack spent fourteen hours a day, seven days a week for seven weeks operating a mobile watering system.

The drought was followed by the 1974 Brisbane floods and in the aftermath Jack and his staff worked from daylight to dusk shifting mud from the fairways, tees and greens at both St Lucia and Long Pocket.

The familiar figure of Jack in his uniform of white singlet and dark cotton hat will be etched in the memories of members from earlier days. On the final evening at St Lucia in 1985 Jack was made a life member of the Club after 53 years at IGC.



Ross Edwards was recruited from Sydney and served as course superintendent until the middle of 1988.



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Neil Surman was the son of Jack Surman. He worked on the green staff at Indooroopilly for a number of years before serving as course superintendent from June 1988 until December 1998.



Peter Sawyer had previously been superintendent at Metropolitan Golf Club in Melbourne and served at Indooroopilly as course superintendent from May 1999 until July 2007.



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Charlie Giffard was appointed course superintendent in 2007 to 2019, having served three years as assistant to Peter Sawyer. Charlie grew up in country NSW and came to Indooroopilly via Royal Sydney (six years), Balconnen Golf Club in the ACT (superintendent), Royal Canberra (four years as superintendent), Concord in Sydney (nine months working on the Ross Watson redesign of the course) and Warwick Golf Club (six years as superintendent).



Charlie & his faithful Labrador, Zarli, on their morning inspection of the course



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Ben Grylewicz was appointed as Course Manager in 2019. Ben, who plays off a handicap of 1, grew up in Albury and started his career with an apprenticeship at Howlong Golf Club. He moved to the USA to attend the University of Ohio and worked at a number of highly acclaimed warm season golf courses in America including Harbourtown Golf Links, Muirfield Village and Pinnacle Golf Club.

After four years Ben returned to Australia to project manage the construction of the new Ballarat Golf Club course working with architects Thomson & Perrett and then assuming the role of grow-in Superintendent.

He spent the next ten years in Sydney where he led the team at The Ridge Golf Club in the Sutherland Shire as Construction Manager and Course Superintendent.

For the past three years Ben has been Course Superintendent at Royal Canberra Golf Club, finalizing the course redevelopment program.

