

# Indooroopilly Heritage

## 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.

At the end of 1926 Dr Alistair Mackenzie was engaged to report on the St Lucia Links and his recommended changes were implemented in the following months. Dr Mackenzie later designed the Augusta and Cypress Lakes layouts in the USA.

**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 1960s when the fairways were raised on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and on the 14<sup>th</sup> 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 Surman (head green keeper) and Bob Green (course architect) on the New Course at Long Pocket in 1976.*

Jack recalled the biggest battle that IGC greenstaff 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 and associates 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 greens 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.



**Charlie Giffard** was appointed course superintendent in 2007, 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).

**NOTE:** The basis of the information provided has been extracted from the booklet *A Half Century of Golf 1926-1976 at Indooroopilly Golf Club* by Jack Lunn and the later update by Ian Arnold (unpublished manuscript).

