

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HEAD GARDENER

At Kenwood the one constant in the job is people, variety – oh, and let's not forget plants. I do sometimes feel that they slide beyond my grasp as I crunch through the admin. However, Kenwood is a great site with a tremendous group of fun loving, committed people genuinely doing their best to make visitors welcome and soothe the inevitable difficulties...

Regarding my day, well, I never work Mondays but I do work every other weekend. During the morning I catch up with what's new. Dave, Deputy Head Gardener, Freddie, Ranger Supervisor or Andrew, Visitor Liaison Officer, will bring me up to speed with the latest issues. There is usually something that needs a response from me. Alternatively, Paul Griffiths my line Manager, or colleagues from Gardens & Landscape may need action on something. I'd love to say I spend the morning potting!



It's important that I get out and about to see what's happening - make contact with our landscape contractors Scion, and generally keep in touch. This is also a good time to check on the status of ongoing repairs. Fences and items of infrastructure are in constant need of attention and there is always a long list of repairs needed.

In March I was able to tap into some end of year money. A frantic couple of days then ensued setting up a decompaction programme costing £20,000 which requires high volume / high pressure air injected around the root-zone under the canopy of trees. This went on for about a week. The turf area of the Stable Field was also done in this way as it had become very seriously compacted

through the activities of people and vehicles.

Alongside this decompaction programme we also had our arboricultural consultants in to retag the estate's 5,000 trees with unique numbers.

We are a team of ten on the estate, and I couldn't ask for better staff.

The Friday of my weekend off is a busy day starting at 7.30 am. From then on I set myself a series of deadlines to ensure my desk is cleared by 3.00 pm; sometimes the unexpected happens, perhaps a lost child or an accident.....this can bring me out in a sweat as I have a train to catch which lately has been 5.30pm. Once on the train I



instantly relax. My weekend has started. Picked up by my wife I finally get home to Kirkpatrick Durham, a small village in SW Scotland at about 10.30pm. My daughter, Rosie, 15, always throws her arms around me to give me a big kiss. Who says that teenagers are awful? My son Luke, on the other hand, settles on a handshake, well, at 18 wouldn't you! Strangely perhaps, I usually sit on the floor in the kitchen next to Bramble, our lab, whilst the family tell me their news. I'm a lucky chap.

Paul Jackson