

Scott Anderson is the Head Groundsman at Kilgraston, having been with the School for 18 years. His official hours are 8am-4.30pm, but seasonal influences frequently demand more time. It's all par for the course though and having buzzards and deer as your colleagues make it all very worthwhile...

“Before joining the Kilgraston team I was in a similar role for five years, but with slightly less responsibility, at a nearby independent school. Making the School look neat and tidy throughout the year is my main focus and, with over 50 acres to look after, there's obviously a lot more grounds work from April to October.

My favourite things about this job are both the rest of my facilities team – we have a great laugh – and the wonderful wildlife. We've seen an otter with an eel in its mouth, a stout following a grey squirrel, always loads of red deer, swans, hear the buzzards circling above and oyster catchers squealing at everybody. This year, we've also got a fox family, woodpeckers and lots of ducks. Managing the environment, we capture the non-indigenous grey squirrels to encourage the reintroduction of native reds.

It's not all birdsong and lovely sunsets though; winter 2010 was extremely harsh (down to -15 at one point), with lots of gritting and scraping to keep the drive open for essential deliveries etc. With an on-site equestrian centre, there was a lot of ice to break on the horses' watering troughs too.

A few years ago there was an exceptionally severe flood in the area. The Fire Brigade came with their pumps and put sandbags at the doors. Once there was a big power cut when we had to bring generators in for 24 hours. There's never a dull moment. Presenting a positive impression to pupils and staff is all part of the job though so part of my work 'uniform' is a smile!

Most of my work-life follows a set routine though. We work from an annual maintenance schedule with a log of yearly activities.

During Easter and Summer holidays, Kilgraston holds lots of camps and tennis competitions so the courts and pitches need regular maintenance.

Summer Term – the highlight of my year - includes a lot of marking of pitches; drag-brushing the sand-based hockey pitch each week and cutting huge lawns and the playing fields.

Health and Safety is a big part of the job and the Facilities Manager and I work closely together on this throughout the year.

Another constant is maintaining the Junior Years atrium, which is really just one big greenhouse. Plants need to be irrigated and fed, although pupils do quite a bit of this as part of the curriculum.

In the autumn we cut-back a lot of the hedges and shrubs and clean-out the Deich Burn, which runs through the School's grounds. This involves removing any accumulated branches and debris that could potentially cause a flood. There are

beavers in the Bridge of Earn area but we have yet to see any evidence of them in the School's grounds.

My tool box is my constant companion. Recently, the bearings on one of the lawn mower's rollers broke. This was going to cost £600 to repair but I found two at home and fixed it for nothing. Very satisfying!

This is a multi-skilled job; I often have to reconnect wiring on the tractor. We have a very well-equipped workshop based behind Equestrian Centre. From here, I help the Science Department pupils make squirrel feeders and hedgehog sleeping quarters.

There's certainly always something to challenge you here. This summer was the first time I've had to mark out the athletics tracks from scratch, but I managed. Doing the string-lines on my own was pretty challenging but I used a series of screwdrivers to hold it all in place!

If you asked me which part of the job gives me the greatest satisfaction, I'd say, I love it all. Really I do."