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Making sport possible



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2021 PAY SCALES
GMA research
suggests 1.2% pay rise

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JANUARY 2021

WELCOME

A positive outlook

I had hoped that 2021 would begin with more optimism, but additional national lockdowns have added to 2020's challenges and tribulations. Despite this, I am filled with positivity and sincerely hope that things can only get better from here.

With three UK-approved vaccines ready and available, I feel confident that we can welcome our community later this year at SALTEX and, in the meantime, we will continue connecting people online through education, webinars and wider activity. You will read in this edition that the GMA will be generating even more recognition for turf care professionals and volunteers by launching an awareness campaign titled #GroundsWeek.

I'm really excited to bring this to the fore, almost exactly a year after lockdown was announced, especially after a physically and mentally challenging year. I very much hope this initiative will help lift spirits and provide the opportunity for even more people to recognise the turf sector's contribution through our media activity. What will you do to mark #GroundsWeek?

Finally, I personally want to thank Colin Hoskins – the *Grounds Management* editor and an outstanding journalist – who retires this month. You can read a full article on his long service and contribution to the GMA on page 8. Colin has been brilliant in his role for the past 15 years with us, and his unflappable approach has endeared everyone who has had the pleasure of working with him. I also welcome Karen Maxwell as interim editor, who joins us from February issue.

So, I'm celebrating new beginnings and the confidence in a better, more accessible world this coming year – and The GMA stands to support your work along the way.

Geoff Webb

Chief Executive

Grounds Management Association



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Making sport possible

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**GROUNDS
MANAGEMENT**
out from
February 10



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GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

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UPDATE

THE LATEST HEADLINES FROM THE GMA AND THE INDUSTRY



RECOGNISING GROUNDS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Inaugural #GroundsWeek celebration announced

THE GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

Association (GMA) has announced the launch of #GroundsWeek, taking place on March 1-7 2021 to celebrate and highlight the vital role played by professional grounds staff, volunteers and the turf sector in making sport possible. Following a difficult year for the turf sector, due to the impact of Covid-19, the GMA aims to showcase grounds staff and the amazing work they do – and have continued to do – despite sport coming to a grinding halt. It also comes after a year where parks and green spaces have been invaluable to the public's health – with increased use for 'daily exercise' and physical activity.

Grounds management continues to be challenging beyond 2020 due to limited resources and budgets, coupled with more varied and unpredictable weather conditions that make planning tasks even more difficult.

Geoff Webb, CEO of the GMA, said: "We know that the skill involved is often misunderstood. We want to inspire sports fans and the general public to celebrate alongside us and get even more people to enter the profession and lend a helping hand at pitches across the country.

"Without the vital work that grounds staff do, many sports facilities would

face cancellations and potentially closure. This is a chance to recognise all the hard work that goes into making sport possible and keeping green spaces accessible."

The GMA's campaign will encourage organisations and individuals across the industry, whether they have a career in grounds management or volunteer for an hour a week, to get involved both on the pitch and on social media.

Further details about the campaign will follow in February, alongside #GroundsWeek graphics and content for wider use. This will include top tips and a social media pack for organisations wanting to get involved. Businesses can also get involved by pledging to be a #GroundsWeek partner.

Geoff continued: "Grounds staff are vital and the work they do is essential to getting the nation active – from professional athletes to local communities. After a really tough year, we're launching this celebration week to raise awareness and give our members the opportunity to get the recognition they deserve."

For more information and further updates follow the GMA on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

OBITUARIES

Kenneth Ellison

GMA LIFE MEMBER Kenneth Ellison has died. Kenneth spent his working life in the grounds industry and, until his retirement, was an active member of the Bristol Branch and South West Region.

Arthur Harrison

FORMER SISIS SALES director Arthur Harrison passed away in November last year, aged 88.

His career at SISIS spanned over 30 years, beginning in 1960 initially as assistant sales office manager, before being appointed sales director in 1979 where he worked until his retirement in 1996.

Peter 'Bob' Hesk

Bob Hesk has died, aged 87. He was a stalwart supporter of branch activity and was secretary of Thirsk Cricket Club for 10 years. He was a groundsman for several decades and an under 17s manager, as well as the chairman of Thirsk Athletic Sports & Social Club, an umpire in the top divisions of the Nidderdale & District Amateur Cricket League and Y&DCUSA president. In his later years, Bob had a stint at Thirsk Bowls Club as a playing member, and at one point took over as secretary.

David Robinson, on behalf of GMA Yorkshire branch

TECHNOLOGY

SIS hybrid pitch in Buenos Aires

THE COMPLETION OF South America's most technically advanced stadium is set to take place this month.

Irish-owned global pitch specialist, SIS Pitches, has undertaken a full reconstruction of the stadium pitch at Club Atlético River Plate, at the Monumental stadium in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The existing pitch has been replaced by a state-of-the-art SISGrass hybrid grass system, supported with an undersoil SISAir aeration system, which has been used successfully in many stadia around the world.

OBITUARY

Farewell to Ron Harrod

TOUCHING TRIBUTES have been paid to Ron Harrod, founder of the internationally-recognised company Harrod UK Ltd, who sadly passed away on the 29 December 2020.

The "Slim Dynamic East Anglian" as he was fondly named by a London PR guru was immensely respected and loved by everyone he came in to contact with.

In his personal life, Ron was a highly-active Rotarian, and his fundraising raffles and bottle stalls at local events were legendary.

Ron also served two years of National Service as a mechanic in the RAF.

In 1954, at the age of 23, Ron along with his wife Margaret started his business, Harrod of Lowestoft, now more commonly known as Harrod Sport. The family firm has gone on to employ several hundred local people and has had acclaimed success in both the fields of sport and horticulture.

Ron will be remembered for always being impeccably dressed with a smile that would light up any room. Known to his staff as Mr Harrod, he knew everyone's name and took great interest in their families and welfare. He will also be fondly remembered for his weekly chocolate bar and ice cream treats, all delivered personally by Ron with a personal 'thank you'. Ron firmly believed that his staff were the key to his company's success.

While staff were of the utmost importance to Ron, he also firmly believed it was the "customer that was king", a statement he would repeat over and over until it was at the forefront of everything the company would do. It is now emblazoned on one of the company's conference room walls, proudly signed by Ron.

Ron was a great ambassador of both the company and the town of Lowestoft and was always so proud that his family-run business, based in the fishing town, was supplying the likes of Wembley Stadium and the



Olympic Games.

During his working life, the company won many awards for its high standards of service, and Ron's ethos and legacy is still as strong as ever today.

Ron always had a can-do attitude in both his work and personal life. No matter what the size of the challenge, the first words to leave his lips were 'we could do that'. Long before Google existed Ron would research new manufacturing processes and materials the hard way, invest in new machinery and have an unwavering confidence that it would work, an attitude that made him a true entrepreneur.

An early work passion for Ron was goal post safety and in 1989 he was instrumental as a founder member of the Comité de Européan Normalisation (CEN), holding the position of UK representative for sports posts for over 10 years and ensuring only the safest product was brought to market.

Another legacy that will live on is the Ron Harrod Foundation, a trust set up in 2018 with the sole aim of offering support to local, aspiring young athletes to succeed in their chosen sports.

Ron Harrod was a truly inspirational man that will be desperately missed but forever fondly remembered.

NEWS IN BRIEF

White Horse Contractors and GrassMaster Solutions announce new partnership

Leading natural turf pitch construction specialist White Horse Contractors has announced a new partnership with pioneering hybrid turf manufacturer GrassMaster.

The announcement builds on White Horse Contractors' successful hybrid pitch installation at Ricoh Arena for Wasps Rugby. The firm's other clients include Chelsea FC, St. George's Park and FIFA Club World Cup venues.
whitehorsecontractors.com / grassmastersolutions.com/en

Further market expansion for Kubota

Kubota (UK) has announced that Lister Wilder is to expand its operation with the addition of OEM engines supplied from its Ashford, Guildford and Reading branches.

This latest addition makes Lister Wilder the first full-line Kubota dealer in Europe, and follows the recent announcement that the dealership is to refocus entirely on the Kubota brand having already secured business within agriculture, grounds care and construction divisions.
kubota-eu.com

A new way to find the best pre-owned Toro machines

Reesink Turfcare has created an online nationwide network providing access to the best used Toro machinery available in the UK. Ree.Own, the newly launched service – reeown.co.uk – gives customers the chance to browse and compare prices on a range of machines that are guaranteed to have less than 3,000 hours use on the clock, have been used for less than seven years and have been through a multi-point check by trained technicians.
reesinkturfcare.co.uk

HUSQVARNA

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HUSQVARNA is launching a game changing robotic solution for commercial turf care management. The new Husqvarna CEORA platform is a revolutionary autonomous turf care solution for grass areas of up to 50,000m². The high performing, low noise and zero emission Husqvarna CEORA mows autonomously and systematically within virtual boundaries.

Utilising the leading-edge Husqvarna EPOS technology, a high-precision satellite navigation system that delivers an accuracy of 2-3cm, the new Husqvarna CEORA gives the user a new level of flexibility and performance. The EPOS technology allows operation without physical wires enabling quick digital redefinitions of the work area to accommodate industry leading flexible use of the lawn and aerating and scarifying without risking damage to wires.

husqvarnagroup.com

AGROVISTA

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WHIPTECBIO biodegradable tree and hedge guards help to reduce the environmental impact of planting new whips and improving landscape management.

They are made from recycled material and are 100% sustainable, biodegradable and compostable. Developed with expert arboriculturists during

the past 14 years, the guards have been successfully trialled in a range of scenarios and are now available exclusively from Agrovista Amenity.

agrovista.co.uk

CAMPEY

Air 2G2 aerator

THE NEW Air2G2 336 claims to be the most productive pedestrian aerator on the market, with 36-inch probe centres allowing operators to cover ground quicker with the same industry-leading results.

Operators have used the Air2G2 to solve a variety of problems from simple decompaction to reducing salt build-up, increasing air exchange and to introduce winter aeration programmes. With the wider 336 model, the work can be done in less time whilst always getting the same impressive results.



campeyturfcare.com

KUHN

Multi-Longer GII hedge cutter



KUHN FARM MACHINERY has strengthened its position in the long reach hedge and verge cutter market with the launch of its first telescopic arm machine.

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NEW YEAR, NEW EDITOR

Karen Maxwell
Guest editor



The Grounds Management Association bids a fond farewell to Colin Hoskins, who is retiring after 10 years at the helm of *Grounds Management* magazine



THE GMA would like to give a big 'thank you' to the *Grounds Management* magazine editor Colin Hoskins, who decided to retire at the end of 2020 to spend more time with his grandchildren and engage with his favourite pastime – fishing.

Colin, aged 66, has been a journalist all his working life, having worked in magazine publishing, at national news titles and as a news editor at Radio Luxembourg, before moving into press relations and marketing. He has had a long, supportive relationship with the GMA – from heading up the press office at SALTEX Windsor, to supporting the organisation in a PR capacity, as Learning LIVE co-ordinator at SALTEX NEC, a host scriptwriter at the organisation's annual Industry Awards and as editor of *The Groundsman*, and latterly the *Grounds Management* magazine, when he took over from former editor Mike Beardall 10 years ago.

Everyone who met and was interviewed by Colin admired his passion for the grounds care industry, his professional attitude, his kind-hearted nature, and his dry sense of humour. He was also very modest, hiding the fact that he won the US TOCA International Communications Content for the best international article with an interview with Keith Kent at Twickenham in 2014 – until it became common industry knowledge.

Chris Biddle remembers working with Colin at SALTEX Windsor when he was editor at *Service Dealer* and *Turf Pro* magazines. "Running a busy press office at any major event requires supreme qualities of patience, tact, stamina, diplomacy and the ability to answer 15 questions at a time while keeping 'hacks' watered and fed. All qualities that Colin had in spades," he says.

As magazine editor, Colin has helped to raise the profile of GMA members and the challenges they face in grounds care – having conducted nearly 200 face-to-face interviews

with professional, grassroots, volunteer and apprentice grounds personnel within his role. GMA Chief Operating Officer, Jason Booth, has experienced some of Colin's news-gathering techniques over the years. "Our industry is built on relationships and you'll go a long way to find anybody that doesn't have a good relationship with Colin Hoskins," he says. "You can tell that he does his research before every interview and he makes an effort to talk to every member of the team to get a full story."

GMA CEO Geoff Webb says he's had the privilege of working with Colin since he joined the organisation and that he's given plenty of sound advice over the years. "Colin has witnessed, and been a part of, many changes but he's always been positive and brilliant to have at your side," Geoff says. "His knowledge and understanding of our sector knows no bounds. He's been at the forefront of promoting many ground staff and turf businesses in our sector and is definitely one of our industry's unsung heroes."

"Replacing Colin, I am also delighted to announce that Karen Maxwell will be editing the magazine in the coming months. Karen has herself a great pedigree in magazine editing, having worked closely with Colin over the years on our member magazine. She has also previously gained a great reputation for producing the *Sports Management* magazine during her time at The Leisure Media Company. So, along with welcoming back Karen, we wish everyone connected with the GMA a happy, healthy 2021." ■



Karen Maxwell will be guest editor of the magazine from February 2021 until further notice.

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1.2% PAY RISE RECOMMENDED FOR 2021

Colin Hoskins
Editor



Research commissioned by the Grounds Management Association (GMA) highlights a 1.2% increase across all grounds staff pay bands for this year

FOLLOWING RESEARCH commissioned by the Grounds Management Association, conducted by Myriad Research, a recommendation of a 1.2% increase in pay for all grounds people is being made after a year when the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the UK's economic outlook is yet to be known.

The findings show that the UK is on track to record the largest decline in annual GDP for 300 years, with output falling by more than 11 per cent in 2020. Unemployment continues to rise and employers' intentions to make further redundancies remain elevated. Adding to an already complicated picture is the remaining uncertainty surrounding the terms of the UK's exit from the European Union and the economic repercussions of that agreement. Levels of inflation are not expected to align with pre-pandemic forecasts until 2024.

Unsurprisingly, this backdrop will reduce pay awards across the economy, with over half of private sector employers planning to freeze wages to September 2021 and the Government following suit for the majority of public sector jobs. The median projected pay awards for 2021 are 1% – the lowest annual figure for over a decade.

Based on extensive pay and labour market research by Myriad Research, the GMA says that while its recommended pay award of 1.2% for all grounds care bands is lower than in previous years, it is intended to balance any estimated increase in the cost of living with affordability in what is likely to be a very challenging labour market in 2021.

In addition, says the GMA, the amount paid in recognition of GMA qualifications should increase to £650 per band to ensure that training and professional development remain a priority.

The following bands reflect recommended starting basic salary payments and are based on a 37.5 hour week. Further details on roles and responsibilities can be found in the GMA's generic job descriptions, and these will be relaunched to coincide with the GMA's Pitch Grading Framework later this year.

STARTING BASIC SALARY PA

	Average*	Band
Grounds manager	£47,308	N/A
Head groundsperson	£37,552	£31,656 - £43,447
Deputy head groundsperson / sole charge	£29,476	£25,898 - £33,054
Groundsperson (Skilled)	£27,558	£24,219 - £30,896
Groundsperson	£22,079	£19,404 - £24,753
Junior groundsperson (aged 17)	£16,498	N/A
Junior groundsperson (aged 16)	£13,701	N/A

*NB: The report reflects current starting salaries, not an upper threshold or maximum for each role.

It is also recommended to consider variable factors that may increase a person's minimum starting salary, which could include:

- The number of sports being played
- The level and type of sport
- Intensity of use
- Size of facilities and organisations
- Total acreage managed
- Job holder's problem solving and decision making capability
- Staffing levels
- Budgetary responsibilities
- Qualifications required.

Bonuses, overtime and subsistence payments have not been included, nor has the benefit value of any accommodation provided. Regional pay variations have been taken into account; higher cost areas of the country would expect to make salary awards at the upper levels of the appropriate band. Regional differentials are: London Inner £3,988; London Outer £2,382; and Fringe Areas £712 - £1,430. Other UK regions are broadly similar in their pay levels. The recommended minimum pay rate for a groundsperson in London should be set at £21,000 (outer) and £22,500 (inner). ■



GMA members can access the full report via the [member portal](#)

Chorley groundsman reaches the Emirates FA Cup Final

Chorley FC's head groundsman has had his heroic efforts rewarded with an invitation to join Wembley Stadium's grounds team ahead of this season's Emirates FA Cup Final in May.

NATIONAL LEAGUE North side Chorley FC booked their place in the fourth round of the Emirates FA Cup for the first time in their history, with a 2-0 victory over EFL Championship club Derby County earlier this month.

The playing squad and management team deservedly made the headlines in the aftermath of the result, but it was head groundsman Ben Kay's role in the victory which has since caught the attention.

Chorley FC shared a photo on their Twitter feed of Ben sleeping on the pitch in the early hours of Saturday, January 9 (the day of the match), despite temperatures falling as low as -2°C. By the Thursday before the scheduled game, the freezing weather conditions meant that there were serious doubts that the match would be able to ahead. So with another inch of snow falling 24 hours before the game, Kay and his team made the call to stay overnight on Friday, sleeping on the pitch, to ensure they could be on hand to rotate the small heaters.

Wembley's grounds manager, Karl Standley was one of thousands inspired by the story and has since reached out and invited Kay to join his team to help prepare the hallowed turf of Wembley Stadium connected by EE ahead of this season's Emirates FA Cup Final. He said: "Hearing about the work Ben and his team put in to prepare for Chorley's Emirates FA Cup game was really inspiring. Their hard work and dedication were rewarded when the odds were stacked against them. It is a privilege to be able to invite Ben to join our team and help us prepare the pitch for The Emirates FA Cup Final, one of the biggest days in Wembley Stadium's calendar."

Ben said: "I'm absolutely thrilled



Groundsman Ben Kay's exceptional efforts have been rewarded

to have been invited to Wembley for the Emirates FA Cup Final. I was shocked when I received the message, but obviously genuinely touched by the offer and delighted to accept it. I can't wait to step out on to the famous turf and experience the thrill of being at Wembley. The FA Cup is such a special competition and to be involved in this way is a dream come true."

Terry Robinson, CEO, Chorley FC said: "We are very lucky at Chorley to have so many wonderful people involved right through the setup, both on and off the field. The huge amount of work and effort put in by everybody associated with the football club to get Saturday's game on was phenomenal. I've worked in football for a long time and I still find the passion and goodwill surrounding the game fantastic. Clubs simply couldn't operate without it and a result and occasion like Saturday is what everyone works so hard to achieve." ■



New football hubs are leading lights

A Football Foundation hubs project in Sunderland has resulted in three sites being developed, including 10 full size 3G pitches and four grass pitches



Ian Powell
Regional pitch
advisor, North East
and Yorkshire

A SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL investment by the Premier League, The Football Association and the Government's Football Foundation – complemented by match funding by Sunderland City Council – has seen a combined total of £18.4 million invested in a portfolio of grassroots football facilities in the county. With this amount – the largest ever invested into grassroots football in the area – the city council is aiming to provide the best quality playing pitches possible and, as part of the Local Football Facility Plan, Durham County FA's facilities lead Chris Hutchinson is also spearheading the provision of guidance and training to the grounds teams involved.

A further eight sites with 23 pitches were identified and the initial reports by the Grounds and Natural Turf Improvement Programme (GaNTIP) undertaken in 2018 provided an overview of pitch conditions with recommendations made to improve them. Working closely with Sunderland City Council's environmental services manager, Andrew Old, and his team headed by Martin Jameson, the grounds teams all subsequently undertook the GMA Level 1 Winter Pitches course to enhance their skills.

The main aspect of the reports involved a programme of deep aeration in the form of de-compaction to a minimum of 150mm, followed by overseeding of the main traffic areas, renovation to goal areas to remove the 'saddles' and an



Sunderland City Council's
King George V site back
in September 2018

application of a slow release fertiliser to help the establishment of a stronger grass sward.

A phased approach of four of the initial eight sites were subsequently prioritised for renovations. Regular site visits through GaNTIP to re-assess these sites in 2019/20 identified that while the remedial works had started to show improvements and taken the facilities to the next level, all parties agreed that this is only the start of a longer programme to continually improve the pitches.

"We understand the importance of providing high-quality facilities to encourage and sustain participation in sport and the many benefits that provides individuals and communities," says environmental services manager, Andrew Old. "We are committed to improving opportunities for all those who wish to use our facilities and, just as importantly, to the development of the members of our team who provide and maintain them."

Durham County FA's Chris Hutchinson, adds: "Sunderland City Council has been on the 'front foot' in looking to improve their grass football pitch playing stock. The collaborative approach from the County FA, GMA and the council is part of The FA's Grass Pitch Improvement Strategy that will ensure Football Foundation funding can be explored to support the great work being done within the city. This will link into the area's Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) including the refurbishment of some of the changing rooms and pavilions identified with the LFFP." ■



The King George V site
revisited in September 2019





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Example of product from ground maintenance material



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5 cubic metres lightweight compact model

002/044



FC Internazionale Milano training center NEW PITCH CONSTRUCTION & VERTIX BY FLEXGRASS

FLexGrass has built a new training pitch for FC Internazionale Milano at Suning Training Center. The first team's pitch has been restyled with top quality sods and to bring it at top level has been stitched with Vertix hybrid Grass.



For more info: info@flexgrass.ch
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All photos courtesy of Le Mans Stadium

WONDER WOMAN!

Karen Maxwell
Guest Editor



Camille Le Lay, a self-proclaimed “motivated and ambitious” young grounds woman, is on a mission to pave the way for other women to progress within the sports turf industry

IT'S FAIR TO SAY that female grounds personnel are a rarity within the sports turf grounds management sector. In fact, according to research findings in the GMA's 2019 industry-wide survey 'Groundsmanship – Sport's Vital Profession', women represent just 2% of the 26,000 employed and 37,000 volunteer combined workforce.

By all accounts, this trend is reflected at sport facilities in France, too. But Camille Le Lay – a self-proclaimed “motivated” and “ambitious” young grounds woman, who has been working for iTurf Management at Stade de France and Le Mans stadia for the past three years – hopes to increase the female workforce equality ratio, by encouraging more women into the profession through her own career progression.

“Groundsmanship is a career that is rarely chosen by French women,” Camille explains. This, she says, may be due to the perceived physical demands within a male-dominated working environment. “There is no denying that working with some of the heavy machines can be physically demanding for a woman, but it's about having a positive mentality and an open-minded approach – and I believe that any woman with that mindset, and a willingness to learn, can flourish in this job.”

Camille, who says her passion for turf maintenance was passed on to her by her father's love of gardening, plus her love of sport, gained a baccalaureate in landscape gardening before completing a BTS in landscape design at Kerplouz-LaSalle College

iTurf Management

iTurf Management provides a local management role at Stade de France, Bordeaux and Le Mans stadia, where the company employs a practical grounds team to manage the turf facilities. The consultancy arm has a wider remit, providing consultancy across the world as well as project management and tournament delivery.

The company's portfolio also extends to the design and project management of new installations and pitch upgrades.

iturf-mgt.com

in Brittany, France. She then enrolled on a bachelor's degree, specialising in sport turf management at Tecomah college which is located on the outskirts of Paris. “This training gave me an insight into the different playing surfaces and how to construct them,” Camille explains. “Understanding what is under the grass is important so you can consistently adapt maintenance techniques to deliver the best possible surface.”

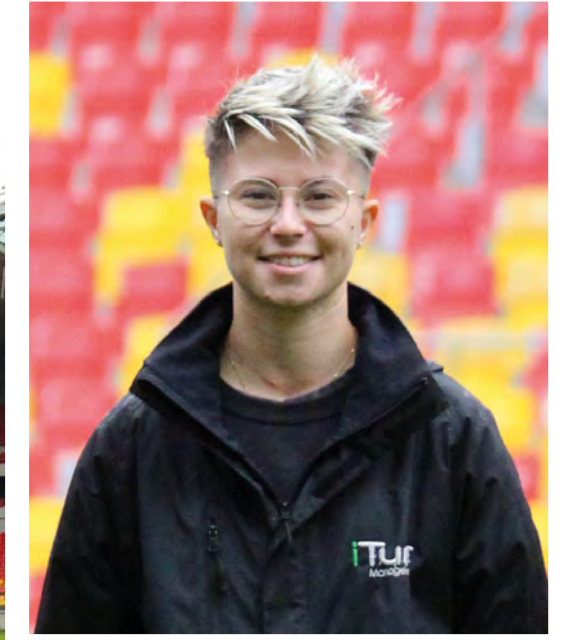
Career progression

Camille joined iTurf Management straight from Tecomah, and iTurf's chief technical officer Andy Cole says the company was excited to have her join. “Camille came to us as an apprentice student and really stood out from the other apprentices at the time. She was eager to learn all the technical aspects of the work, the science, as well as the practicalities of doing the job. The acid test is always ‘when can we let them loose on the Dennis mower?’, and she rose to the challenge very quickly,” he says.

According to Andy, Camille carries out all the tasks expected of a grounds person to deliver pitches to International and League standard. “She is always keen to learn, and also to discuss and share knowledge with her colleagues,” Andy explains.

All team members have a role in the business with Olivier Emond leading the team at Stade de France (he also supervises the teams at Le Mans and Bordeaux stadia). Dimitri Vovard leads the team at Le Mans and Camille is able to discuss turf management →

“ **WOMEN REPRESENT JUST 2% OF THE 26,000 EMPLOYED AND 37,000 VOLUNTEER COMBINED WORKFORCE** ”



Camille is hoping to encourage more women to pursue a career in grounds management

with them both, alongside her peers: Nathan Besson and Noam Chaumerliac at Stade de France; Sébastien Bégué, head groundsman at Bordeaux; and apprentices Nathan Louvigné (Le Mans) and Tom Auguste and Nouri Armetta (Stade de France).

Camille admits that when she arrived as an apprentice at Stade de France she didn't immediately know the job. "At first I had to show my enthusiasm, my tenacity and my desire to learn," she says. "But I kept listening and observing, and I wasn't afraid to ask questions of my tutors – Tony Stones and Olivier Emond. There's always been good team cohesion at both sites. All discussions are open and all ideas are welcome, so I have never felt any different being a woman, which makes us very effective on the field," Camille explains. However, she does feel that a woman is sometimes able to see things from a different viewpoint to that of male colleagues: "We often have a different vision, a sharper sense of organisation, a creative richness and a different way of thinking which can be of benefit to the team.

"I've been very lucky to be surrounded by people who have always supported and encouraged me," Camille says. Although she is also aware that her career choice is regarded by some as an unusual one for a woman, she says that this 'old fashioned' mentality has given her the strength and drive to prove them wrong. "I would encourage any woman looking to embark on a career in grounds management to not give up on their dreams, or to believe that entering a male-dominated field is too ambitious for them," she says. "A woman does have a place [in sports turf management] and I am living proof of this!"

Self-improvement

Like the rest of the team, Camille's favourite part of the job is seeing the final result of the pitch preparation, (including mowing, line marking, feeding and repairing) in the days leading up to a game. "I find it very satisfying to have a pitch that is close to perfection," she says. "It's great to get recognition and feedback from the players and staff, and this allows us to work on improving any weak areas."

Self-improvement, as well as pitch improvement, is important to Camille who has aspirations to work at some of the top international sporting venues as she progresses her career. "I want to improve myself by developing my managerial and technical skills and, being a big football fan, I would love to take part in major international sports events, such as the World Cup or the Olympic Games' tournaments. And I would love to get some experience in the UK, too," Camille admits.

With her hard-work ethic and desire to succeed, who knows what may be in store for



Camille with Le Mans Stadium's head groundsman Dimitri Vovard (right) and apprentice Nathan Louvigné

her, and other grounds women who buck the trend and pursue a rewarding career in grounds management. According to Andy, Camille is already a shining example of the progressive nature of iTurf Management. "She came in as an apprentice, has already found herself working closely as Dimitri's number two at Le Mans and I have no doubt that, with more experience, she will be more than capable of leading her own team in the future," Andy explains. "We have three head groundsman already leading their own teams, who have progressed through the ranks and our in-house training programme," he adds.

Camille is passionate about promoting the place of women in this sector, and armed with her positive mentality and determination, she is perfectly placed to pave the way for other women to progress within this industry – both at home and abroad.

"When I discovered this job I immediately knew that I wanted to make a career in this field because I could blossom while relying on rigour, patience and perfectionism – the qualities that characterise me – and I am just as hard-working and as ambitious as a man," Camille concludes. ■

Tecomah

Located in the west of Paris on a 120-hectare landscaped park, Tecomah has been an educational establishment dedicated to professional training for the management of natural environments, landscaping, sports surfaces, forestry, agriculture, machinery maintenance and water management as well as civil engineering since 1963.

The school trains 650 students a year, and 50% are taught via the French apprenticeship scheme. It issues diplomas from the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, Agri-food and Forestry, as well as professional diplomas that are registered in the [French] national directory of professional certifications.



**GROUNDS
MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION**

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The courses are suitable for both professionals and volunteers. Subject areas cover cricket, football, rugby league and rugby union.

To sign-up visit: <https://portal.thegma.org.uk/education/courses/search>



Grounds Management Association has continued to network with sports bodies and Government to provide the latest guidance for the sector. Our primary focus always remains the safety, as well as the physical and mental wellbeing of everyone working in the industry. We also understand that each working situation and environment during this challenging time is a case-by-case scenario.



WHAT'S THE DEAL FOR PESTICIDES?

We look at two key aspects of change that will be affected by Brexit; regulations for use of plant protection products and the issue of the revised UK National Action Plan related to weed, pest and disease management

John Moverley OBE
Amenity Forum chair



ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES

established independent pesticides regulatory rules on January 1 2021 and for those producing or placing pesticides on the market, they must ensure they are authorised under the new rules from that date. Some of the responsibilities are devolved and negotiations are ongoing to ensure an overall UK framework which will hopefully be achieved. Under the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol, the EU pesticides rules will continue to apply



Take part in the survey

The Government is funding a major survey of the amenity sector to increase its understanding of the total amount of plant protection products used, their modes of application and the key reasons for use. It is vitally important that the sector fully supports this work as it will form the basis for future policy and strategic decisions, and it will provide very valuable information for use across the sector.

The Amenity Forum has been consulted to help ensure the survey is as straightforward as possible and relatively easy to complete. This way it is hoped that participation will be high, and that good and sound data can result.

The survey will be sent out electronically from the week commencing January 18 and if you are selected to receive one, please complete and return it promptly. It is understood that there are many calls on time, but this survey could prove really important to all.

testing, for example, and the bulk of its requirements have been in the form of targets. It has looked to the Amenity Forum to work across the sector to voluntarily achieve them. The indications are for similar going forward, but there will be a likely increase in legal requirements and enforcement as well as greater pressures to achieve targets set. A short video clip summarising the main drivers for the new Action Plan can be found on the Amenity Forum YouTube site: [youtube.com/channel/UCv-i2KjRJ5OAloS2WCOonQw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv-i2KjRJ5OAloS2WCOonQw)

Amenity Standard

The introduction of the Amenity Standard has been welcomed by all sides and there is much support for this to become a requirement in future. The standard demonstrates to the public and all concerned that the standard of work undertaken to maintain amenity and sports surfaces is at a professional level and meets all legal and other requirements. For an organisation to show the standard, it must be a member of an approved assurance scheme. During the last months, BASIS Registration has been working, with the support of the GMA, to produce a specific sports surface assurance scheme due to be announced early in 2021. For all who operate to professional standards, meeting the requirement should be relatively straightforward. In the coming years, holding and displaying the standard will be important and so all GMA members are asked to fully engage in this development. ■

in Northern Ireland after January 1 2021.

Legislation to ensure the safe use of plant protection products will be similar to existing regulations across the UK, certainly from the start, and indeed guidance on best practice and priorities will also remain the same. Further information on current guidance is available from the Amenity Forum website (www.amenityforum.co.uk). Having said that, the UK is reviewing its National Action Plan which may lead to some significant changes. Current product authorisations will still be valid in Great Britain from January 1 2021 although responsibilities will transfer from current European bodies to UK ones. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) operating largely through its Chemical Regulations Department will continue to act as the UK's regulator.

So, the message is that there's no dramatic change. It is steady as we go, but undoubtedly change will apply and the Amenity Forum will continue to work with all involved to ensure effective communication of

these changes and to ensure amenity interests are well expressed.

The UK National Action Plan

To add to the change agenda, the UK has been undertaking a full review of its National Action Plan. It is being consulted upon with a view to its finalisation and issue in 2021. The plan sets the legislations and targets for all involved in weed, pest and disease management. The current plan has been light on legal requirements, including operator training and equipment

Stay up to date

During February and March 2021, the Amenity Forum will be running a series of free events on this topic. These will be held online with the programme starting at 10.15am and concluding by 12.30pm. There will be opportunity for questions and all the current issues will be covered. The events will be held on February 9 (England), 11 (Wales), 23 (England) and 25 (Northern Ireland), and March 4 (Scotland).

The content of all events will be broadly the same, but each will have a particular national focus. Pre-registration is required at admin@amenityforum.net



CLAP FOR CARERS

Andy Carmichael
Freelance writer



Cowgate Cricket Club in Newcastle upon Tyne is a club that clearly has roots in the local community that are as strong as those of the turf that they play on

Community spirit

Amrit Crawford, Cowgate CC's welfare officer and second team captain, as well as grounds team assistant, is another club regular who, like Dr Kumar, has dedicated himself to improving life for others. For over 30 years he has been at the forefront of developing opportunities for Newcastle's Black Asian and Minority Ethnic community. Describing him as "a true ambassador for diversity and equal opportunity", club secretary Majid Latif says that as a youth worker for the council Amrit has created sporting initiatives; organising safe spaces for young people to get together and helping them to understand why they were facing hostility elsewhere for the colour of their skin.

BACK IN JULY, England captain for the first Test against the West Indies Ben Stokes jogged out for practice at the Ageas Bowl sporting not his own well-known name on a training shirt, but that of Doctor Vikas Kumar. The gesture was part of the efforts to celebrate key workers during this year of dreadful events. Dr Kumar is a critical care specialist at Darlington Memorial Hospital. He is also a member of Cowgate Cricket Club in Newcastle upon Tyne, a club that can also count Doctors Manjunadh Muralleedharan Pillai, Nallavenkat Senthilvel and Raheel Ahmed among its players – all of whom have worked on the NHS frontline this year and all of whom deserve acknowledgement and thanks during these unprecedented times.

The club plays at McKendrick Villas, a title which conjures up images of farmers' fields and village greens. The club actually takes its name from an area a couple of miles to the north-west of Newcastle city centre. This is urban cricket, and alongside the site's other tenants, Newcastle West End Football Club, Cowgate provides a sporting hub that connects communities and offers all the health and social benefits that such pursuits afford.

Talking me through their activity is Majid Latif, one-time head groundsman and currently club secretary. He says the club was established in 1993, initially playing only friendly cricket but it quickly moved to competitive status. Like a number of teams around the city, the club used the local university grounds but when these were sold, the club was fortunate to receive the support of Newcastle City Council's Tony McKenna who helped them relocate to the current home.

Majid, who works in engineering (in the development of major power generation), became involved in managing pitches for Cowgate CC in the late 1990s when the incumbent groundsman retired. His approach to the task reflects his exacting profession: "I could see that we needed to improve the playing surfaces and started to research what needed to be done," he reflects. Part of what was needed, he thought, was to attend training courses on pitch preparation and to utilise the experience of local ECB pitch advisor and Tynemouth cricket club custodian Paul Jackson. "Paul helps us with advice and passes on any observations during his visits," says Majid. "I think he is very pleased with our work and the condition of the square."

Teams for all ages

Cowgate CC currently has three senior men's teams with an additional side competing in the shorter form North East Mid-Week Cricket League. The club previously provided for junior cricket but the volunteers who ran this section found increasing work commitments reduced their ability to manage it and unfortunately it became an unsustainable endeavour. Majid believes the organisation is close to resuming the junior game, something given a boost by their participation in the return to youth sport when the first national lockdown ended, with Northumberland Cricket Board's summer camp programme. For the six weeks of the school summer holidays, children from the under 15-, 13- and 11-year groups played cricket within small bubbles of their own age, and from their locality, to make the activities appropriate, enjoyable



Cowgate Cricket Club has strong links with the local community

and as safe as possible within Covid restrictions.

Heralding the North P&I Club-sponsored events, the cricket board was delighted at both the "positive impact on the wellbeing of coaching staff" and the opportunity for youngsters to have fun and enjoy socialising with their peers again. Hosting regular children's cricket is something Majid is factoring into plans for the square.

The square initially comprised seven pitches, this increasing to nine as the club developed. The aim is to add another three pitches, allowing for the juniors and potentially more senior teams to play without excessive demands on the surfaces. While this season has obviously been curtailed by the tough challenges beyond the world of sport, 2019 saw Cowgate CC host 63 matches excluding friendlies and practice.

The grass sward on the high clay content Kaloam square is usually kept at 10-13mm, with match pitches cut to 3.5-4.55mm depending on the time of the year. Similarly influenced by month and climate is the decision whether to water and to what volume, the club struggling with currently damaged roll-on covers. Newcastle is not noted for its tropical summers, although like a lot of the country it experienced perfect cricket playing weather during the times that the pandemic required us to do nothing of the sort. A spring/summer and autumn/winter fertiliser is used following soil testing and consultation with long-established supplier, Turfcare Specialists based in

County Durham. Repairs and in-season rejuvenation are undertaken as required.

Maintenance work

End-of-season renovations are managed by hiring the cricket board's equipment trailer and Majid details a full programme of verticutting, scarification, cleaning, seeding and topdressing. Ideally, he would like to use a Koro machine to level the square as there are some historic undulations in a few places and they have wrestled with the height of the ends this year. As with most volunteer-led clubs, however, there are many things on the wish list; replacement covers, improved sight screens and outdoor nets, for a start. Some may remain wishes as in order to secure the club's future, Majid points to being "very diligent with the expenses and working to live within our means".

Not that he is likely to find his batting or bowling benefit from the quest for continual improvement. Having played cricket from an early age he cites the march of time as a reason for not being as regular in the line up as perhaps he once was, adding: "I only play when we are short. I am 60 now!" I would argue that turf management often makes greater physical demands than taking part in the game (but that is perhaps by my own casual standard down at third man) and possibly with this in mind, Majid now takes on fewer daily tasks having trained others at Cowgate, creating succession. Jassi Singh now shoulders the majority of the grounds work, with Amrit Crawford and Amjad Ali assisting. ■

Machinery matters

Cowgate CC has an array of grounds care equipment at its disposal, including:

- Benford TVH 800L heavy roller
- Ransomes Highway 2130 4WD mower for the outfield
- Dennis FT510 mower for cutting the square/pitch/renovation – with scarifier, sorrel and brush cassettes
- Ransomes Certes 51 mower dedicated to final cut
- Dennis FT510 mower (very old) with verticutter cassette dedicated for use during pitch preparation and ahead of end-of-season renovation
- Ransomes Matador mower (very old) used as a backup for cutting the square
- 3m Jumbo Levelawn levelling tool
- 10 foot drag mat
- Earthway sprayer

Outstanding educational achievement

Michael Williams PCert(TSM) PDip(TSM), the first grounds person to achieve GMA Level 5 Professional Diploma in Turf Surface Management With Merit, describes why home education drives him on to complement his 25 years of industry experience

What is your career path to date?

I left school in 1994 and began as a 16-year-old apprentice so have learned every aspect of the job 'on the tools' from day one. I have been lucky to have always worked at sites that have proved to be ideal learning environments with knowledgeable managers and large grounds management teams who want to do things the right way by working to a high level. This experience includes 16 years at Coombe Hill Golf Club (rated number 57 of golf clubs in England) where I learned about elite greenkeeping as part of a team of 14, working my way from apprentice to become one of the senior management team running projects and the management of the automatic irrigation system, as well as running weekend operations of the course.

My hunger to learn about different sports surfaces and to broaden my mind from managing golf greens to cricket pitches – which are like chalk and cheese in the way they are managed – together with challenging myself in a completely different environment, took me to the position of senior groundsman/irrigation specialist at the prestigious Whitgift School in South Croydon. It is one of the finest sporting schools within the UK and I have been here for the past eight years learning every aspect of the management of a high-level independent school site which occupies a unique 50-acre parkland site.

What does your current role entail?

I'm involved with the daily management of everything within the school grounds, with a particular focus on being the leading grounds person for 1st and 2nd team cricket during the summer. I also oversee the management and

Colin Hoskins
Editor



maintenance of our automatic irrigation system, various woodland management operations and other major projects. Being an experienced operator of chainsaws and 360 excavators (gained during from my golf days), I've been able to transfer these skills and help achieve many in-house projects such as building a recycling wash down facility plus various irrigation installations and improvements, as well as soft landscaping projects like drainage installations and constructing railway sleeper steps around the site in addition to general overall grounds maintenance and improvements.

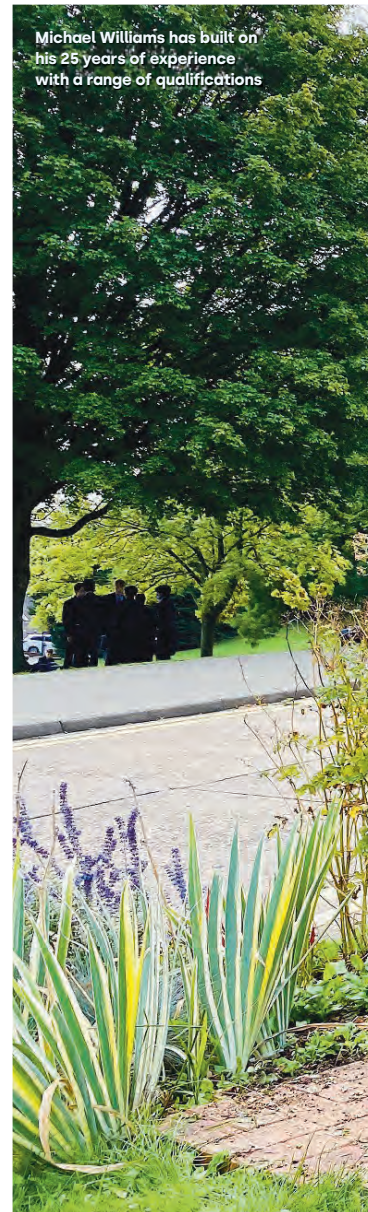
What other qualifications have you gained in addition to Level 5 Diploma in Turf Management with Merit?

I am accredited to City & Guilds Levels 1 and 2 in horticulture and sports turf (via Nescot College), Level 3 Diploma in Sports Turf Management (Writtle College) and Level 4 Professional Certification in Turf Surface Management with Distinction (nee IOG) as well as holding licences/certificates for chainsaw, spraying, tractor driving, front loader, 360 excavator, woodchipper, dumper, tree inspection, working at heights platform, strimmer, machinery maintenance plus NTCP Level irrigation and various other certificates including first aid and fire warden. I'm fortunate to have had supportive employers who see the value in educating staff by providing investment for continual professional development which is key to driving up standards.

What made you undertake such an educational journey?

After 25 years gaining vast experience, I still felt I was technically lacking in certain areas and I thought to myself "I work in a place of education, so why not work on my own education?" I wanted a deeper understanding of soil science, sustainability, ecology, green space management, contract management and people management techniques. I wanted to know more about the impact of the turf care industry on the environment and how turf can be managed in a more thoughtful, sensitive way in the future. I decided to dedicate four years to undertake Levels 3, 4 and 5 all via home learning – around 600 hours – plus managing a project for Level 3

Michael Williams has built on his 25 years of experience with a range of qualifications



“
**IT HAS GIVEN
ME THE
UNDERPINNING
KNOWLEDGE TO
CONFIDENTLY
MAKE MORE
INFORMED
DECISIONS**
”



and 10 hours of written exams. For the Level 4 and 5 online courses I was guided by my tutor, Chris Gray of the GMA, who opened my eyes to a lot of things.

It has been a tough journey navigating all this with a busy job and family life but it has opened my mind to the bigger picture of education and given me the underpinning knowledge to confidently make more informed decisions. I'm fortunate to work with a great professional multi-skilled grounds team at Whitgift School, led by Daniel Ratling who has fully supported my journey. What my journey has shown me is that behind every door I open I find endless other doors to open. I've learned I still have a lot to learn and I hope to continue my journey of building experience and technical knowledge. ■

“

**GMA IS DELIGHTED FOR MICHAEL WILLIAMS
– THE FIRST EVER GMA STUDENT TO ACHIEVE
THIS LEVEL 5 ACCREDITATION**

– Chris Gray, GMA tutor

”



Visit thegma.org.uk/learning
for details of the Grounds Management
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Quick turn-around and great results!

Great teamwork and bespoke maintenance programmes by Nottingham Forest FC's grounds team have kept the playing surfaces in top-notch condition

Unlike other clubs in the Championship, the playing surfaces at Nottingham Forest's City Ground and the training ground are not identical, so stadium head groundsman Ewan Hunter works closely with training ground head groundsman Matt Tietjen to ensure youth academy up to first-team players experience the best playing surfaces possible.

According to Ewan, the fibre-sand surfaces at both sites are in great condition, and that's due to the Rigby Taylor products they use.

"The players like the pitches at both venues as they give a slick playing surface," he says. "At the City Ground the surface doesn't bobble and the ball moves around well. My deputy, Jack Farmer, and I take a meter reading with a Clegg hammer if areas of the pitch are harder than others and occasionally struggle with water in the winter months. However, when the weather is on our side, we produce one of the best surfaces in the Championship." And a sizable collection of pitch, grounds team and groundsperson of the year awards from the Grounds Management Association and the STRI is testament to the whole team's high standards.

The equipment at the stadium includes G860 Dennis cylinder mowers, a Toro Procore, a vertidrain and sprayers. At the training ground, Matt uses ride on and tractor-mounted equipment – including sprayers, Toro Reelmaster 3100 mowers, a Toro Procore and a Rigby Taylor iGO line marker, marking pitches with the dilutable line marking paint, Dazzle.

Regarding pitch materials, Ewan says that Rigby Taylor's technical sales representative Mike Brear is an invaluable addition to the grounds team. "Matt and I speak to Mike quite a bit, he's always at the end of the phone when we need him. His product and industry knowledge is exceptional and we trust him 100%."

The club uses Rigby Taylor products that include the seed and its establishment, disease prevention, nutritional supplements and, according to Mike, his regular conversations with Ewan



The playing surfaces at Nottingham Forest FC are in great condition

and Matt cover a proactive programme of treatment.

The annual nutrient and disease prevention programme at the City Ground includes Rigby Taylor's Microlite premium range of NPK-balanced fertilisers, which is complemented by the Nutri-Link range of bio-stimulant liquid sprays. In addition, Ewan uses the Autumn Green Bio fertiliser in autumn and winter and applies fungicides with fertiliser application throughout the year to keep diseases at bay.

Matt follows a similar programme to ensure playing surface consistency at both venues.

Ewan purchases products for both venues, in close consultation with Matt, and says that since joining the club in 2005, he tried a lot of grass seed brands before Rigby Taylor's R14 100% Perennial Ryegrass blend and continued with this for five years before upgrading to the R140 Tetraploid and Diploid Perennial Ryegrass blend because of its robust and hard-wearing benefits.

Faster establishment in a shorter renovation window was a key issue for the club this season, due to Covid-19 effects on the sporting calendar. Ewan

says he was literally waiting for the last kick of last season's home game so he could start work within a short six-week renovation window before the 2020/21 season kicked off. Matt too had the same time constraints when renovating his three academy pitches in time for pre-season training.

"One of the major benefits we've both found when using R140 is that it helps to establish germination quickly and offers early protection against fungi," Ewan says. "In the early days, when the seed bed is very young, we don't want to be going on there with a tractor or a sprayer so it gives us that extra couple of weeks' protection before we apply a fungicide. "R140 has already worked really well for us during renovation this year. Although we normally leave an eight- to nine-week window to create a quality playing surface, the grass has established well in just six to seven weeks, and we're confident that our on-going maintenance programme will support its durability so we can continue to meet the players' expectations throughout the season."

For more information visit
rigbytaylor.com



GMA online 'Level 2 Winter Pitches' course

This online course, for volunteers and professionals, helps you achieve maximum results when maintaining pitches during the colder, wetter months.

The online Level 2 course can be completed in around six hours, (10 lessons) and gives participants the chance to learn more about basic turf care techniques. It is priced at **£105 for non-members**, and **GMA members pay just £75** (up to 30% off online courses).

Modules cover: the surface; influencing pitch playability; safe working practices; soils and drainage; how to identify a few of the most common turf grasses; and basic

control methods for common weeds, pests, and diseases. The course also touches on planning annual work schedules, which is essential to support grounds management and keep natural turf pitches playable.

To find out more or sign up for the course visit the Learning section of the GMA website.

<https://portal.thegma.org.uk/education/course/512858>

The learning team can be contacted by emailing Learning@thegma.org.uk or phoning 01908 552 982



PRODUCT SHOWCASE

STIHL

BGA 200 cordless blower

The new STIHL BGA 200 cordless blower cleans large areas quickly and efficiently.

With a blowing force of 21 Newton, STIHL's new BGA 200 cordless blower is the most powerful in the STIHL range and features a high air speed for coping with wet leaves.

The BGA 200 is exceptionally easy to handle, thanks to its newly developed comfort carrying system. This innovative feature allows the tool to be used in different ways depending on the application; hand-held in confined working areas or suspended in the carrying system for larger-scale cleaning work. This approach



is practical, efficient and increases operational comfort.

Thanks to its low-noise operation, the BGA 200 can also be operated without restriction in noise-sensitive areas and can be used without hearing protection. The blowing force has three different settings, which can easily be selected by the user via a selector switch. Furthermore, the user can easily adjust the length of the nozzle to meet different requirements and operating situations with the help of a quick adjustment system.

stihl.co.uk

EGO

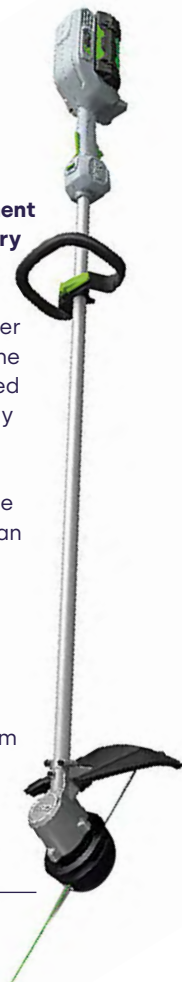
Power+ ST1510E linetrimmer

In 2019, cordless outdoor garden equipment specialist, EGO, launched its revolutionary tool and world's first linetrimmer with Powerload technology.

The outdoor power tool is the first ever linetrimmer tool with a fully automatic line re-loading system. As such, it has received worldwide recognition and has won many global awards for innovation.

The intuitive design and Powerload technology provides ground maintenance professionals with a simple, fast and clean solution for replacing lines. In less than 10 seconds, users can insert the trimmer line through the head of the tool, press activate, and the automatic re-loading system perfectly winds the line onto the spool.

Powered with EGO's 56-volt Arc lithium battery, the Power+ ST1510E linetrimmer surpasses the performance of petrol-powered outdoor power tools, without the vibration, fuss or fumes.



egopowerplus.co.uk

MAKITA

Cordless linetrimmer

During 2020, as access to work sites became more limited, those in the trade were increasingly required to complete the same amount of work in less time than before. In turn, a new collection of powerful landscaping tools started to come to the fore, with Makita's DUR369LPG2 cordless (36v) linetrimmer being one of the standout solutions.

Powered by two LXT 18V lithium-ion batteries and brushless motor system, this 1kw machine has been helping the nation's grounds care contractors to complete maintenance tasks in an efficient and safe manner, and thanks to its cordless design, users no longer have to transport fuel and so health and safety risks are reduced. Low vibration and zero emissions also greatly benefit the operator and the environment.

From tapering, scything and screeding, the company's DUR369LPG2 cordless linetrimmer is proving a big hit with those using it, emerging as the perfect antidote to the demands of the current business environment. The product, which comes complete with batteries, as well as a twin port charger, harness, metal two-tooth blade, plastic blade, nylon cutting head, blade guard, box wrench, hex wrench and accessory bag is available to buy online and in-store.



makitauk.com

ECO GREEN

Zago eco green composter

The Zago Eco Green Composter offers a simple, reliable and economic means of green waste recycling. Because these machines operate at very low noise and nuisance levels, they are favoured by many local authorities for use in urban areas. They grind, mulch and mix bio-degradable products, from grass mowings, roots and soil to 10-inch diameter tree loppings, pallets and waste paper etc.

The volume of material is significantly reduced and can be reloaded and mixed with other products before being applied to the ground.

The Zago is a heavy-duty 4-auger machine, and there is also the option of a more economical 2-auger model. The machine has a host of high-quality features, including a range from 5-30 cubic metres, outlet discharge elevators built with heavy duty stainless steel chain, heavy duty boron blades with 2-bolt fixing, an emergency stop button on all models as standard and rear loading hopper.

All Eco Green products boast a durable and robust construction, PTO/diesel/electric drives, flexible payment plans with guaranteed buy back and a large comprehensive range of spares with next day delivery. Customers also receive user safety training on all machines, and there is a nationwide in-house support team to answer any queries.

ecogreencomposting.co.uk



FLEXGRASS

Hybrid grass solutions

Armed with 10 years of experience working with some of the biggest names in sport, the mission at FLExGrass has always been to provide the perfect surface for the customer's needs.

Since the start of the business back in 2010, the aim at FLExGrass has been to pioneer hybrid grass solutions, and this passion is still at the heart of the business as the company continues to pursue new levels of performance.

FLExGrass offers two hybrid grass solutions – the stitched system Vertex, and the innovative and 100% recyclable Lay-n-Play HORIZON.

During 2020, the company delivered installations at many venues including, San Siro stadium, Juventus FC training ground, FC Torino stadium and training ground and AS Roma stadium.

FLExGrass and its owners, Fabio and Lorenzo Travaini, in collaboration with SIS Pitches, is now one of the world's leading hybrid grass suppliers and offers a range of products and services, including the surface, installation, maintenance and follow up service. The company has provided sports surfaces for top international competitions such as the last four Champions League finals, UEFA Europa League, African Cup, 2018 FIFA World Cup and the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup.

The experienced team not only constructs world-leading pitches but also offers comprehensive aftercare and maintenance services to help customers maintain high-quality pitches that last longer and play better and safer.

flexgrass.ch



PRODUCT SHOWCASE

TORO

Groundsmaster 3000

Cutting regimes were in many places reduced and even stopped during 2020, and that's where the Toro Groundsmaster 3200 and 3300 came to the fore. Their versatility to cope with the upshot of reduced mowing cycles and give year-round productivity had never been more needed or valued.

These machines brought more choice for customers. Rotary and flail cutting deck options provide flexibility and value, and a two-tier rotary deck met with customers' feature and price requirements. The 24.7hp and a 37.4hp Yanmar diesel engines make simple work of tough jobs and the legendary cutting deck is easy to adjust for simple maintenance. The bullnose bumper, rugged spindles and 7-gauge high strength steel decks are built for any terrain and the CrossTrax all-wheel drive system provides automatic traction control, shifting power to the wheels in slippery conditions.

The addition of the new Toro Groundsmaster 3000 series would have been an exciting addition any year, but in 2020 Toro's heavy investment in its new product development taking the design of an out-front rotary mower to the next level has never been more appreciated by the market.

reesinkturfcare.co.uk



JOHN DEERE

GPS PrecisionSprayer

John Deere's new advanced technology GPS PrecisionSprayer, available exclusively for use with the ProGator utility vehicle, allows sports turf professionals to work more accurately, safely and productively.

With features such as AutoTrac satellite guided automatic steering, a full-colour in-cab touchscreen display and individual nozzle control, this easy-to-use sprayer also lowers input costs through reduced overlaps and misses.

The GPS PrecisionSprayer uses satellite technology and mobile RTK (real-time kinematic) navigation down to accuracy levels of 2.5cm to allow users to create reliable spray coverage maps. It also captures all spray data and analyses the results, which streamlines documentation and provides robust analytics for recording and legislation purposes.

John Ledwidge, head of sports turf and grounds at Leicester City Football Club, has recently bought the first of these new machines to be delivered to a non-golf customer in the UK.

"There were many reasons for choosing the sprayer, the chief one being accuracy," says John. "We are creating a world-class facility at our new training ground and we aspire to be world-class in the way we operate. Adopting this new precision technology will help in our aim to be as efficient and environmentally sustainable as possible in everything we do. The GPS PrecisionSprayer means we can apply exactly what is required without overspraying or overspending."

deere.co.uk

BAYER

Valdor Flex herbicide

Resistance issues and product losses continue to put pressure on amenity contractors, but Bayer's new residual pre-emergence herbicide has helped to support customers during a challenging 2020.

"Valdor Flex (MAPP:19033) contains a new and unique formulation," says Lewis Blois, Bayer national account manager. "The pre-emergence herbicide contains two active ingredients that prevent the emergence of a broad spectrum of weeds for up to four months, on a wide range of surfaces."

John Shufflebotham, operations manager at Hortech, explains how using Valdor Flex has helped him reduce follow-up treatments: "We applied Valdor Flex with glyphosate as we already had some weed growth and wanted residual control to help prevent more emerging. We found the combination worked effectively, and we were able to reduce the amount of herbicide used on follow-up treatments, saving us time and money."

environmentalscience.bayer.co.uk



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Vision
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Grounds Maintenance Operative

Salary: £19,680 - £20,889 pro rata
 Type: 24hrs per week
 Location: Ashtons Playing Fields
 Closing Date: Thursday, 7th January 2021
 Interview Date: Thursday 21 January 2021

Vision Redbridge Culture and Leisure (Vision) is a registered charity that manages a wide range of facilities and services on behalf of the London Borough of Redbridge including: Leisure Facilities, Sport & Health, Libraries, Redbridge Museum, Parks and Open Spaces, Arts, Events and Halls Lettings.

Vision – Redbridge Culture & Leisure Ltd is looking to recruit an experienced, talented, and driven Grounds Maintenance Operative to work at one of its flagship Sports and Leisure sites.

The successful candidate will need to have a proven track record of displaying high levels grounds maintenance skills, specifically around football and athletics

Exciting opportunities like this do not come along very often. This is a unique opportunity for an experienced groundsman to be involved with a thriving site which is home

to Essex FA football and high-level athletics teams.

The successful candidate will need to demonstrate the following skills and experience:

- Able to demonstrate a high level of horticultural/sports turf maintenance knowledge and skills
- Have a real interest in providing a safe site for all users
- Understand the games of football, hockey and the workings of athletics
- High levels of skill using all industry relevant tools and machinery
- Have a good understanding of health and safety

The role requires a proactive individual with excellent communication skills, who can develop and maintain good working relationships with existing grounds teams.

For further information regarding the role please email – Robert Hobbs at Robert.Hobbs@visionrcl.org.uk
 To apply for the position please send you CV and covering letter to VisionRecruitment@visionrcl.org.uk

Eric O'Donnell
Managing director,
Sports Labs



IS COVID-19 A REAL THREAT ON ARTIFICIAL PITCHES?

There are concerns about the use of disinfectants to deal with potential pathogens on artificial pitches. Recognising how this is also an operational issue, one company investigated the situation

THERE IS NO research or Government guidance (as far as I am aware) relating explicitly to Covid-19 surviving on synthetic turf surfaces, nor any published research into treating surfaces to mitigate the risk, or any published study concerning the likelihood of an infected athlete transferring the virus to another player via the playing surface. So, it was appropriate for some research to be done on the disinfectants used to neutralise the pathogens which might be left on surfaces by users. The concern is that players might come into contact with pathogens when they interact with playing surfaces.

Sports Labs first assessed the potential existence of pathogens on typical 3G playing surfaces, then evaluated the effectiveness of disinfectants. This work was conducted in the field on 'live' 3G pitches, and were assessed as typical. Tests were conducted by taking swab samples from the surfaces using an in-house protocol. These swabs were then evaluated for the presence of bacteria and/or viruses.

Using Sports Labs' protocol, a result that needs intervention would be a measure above 500 RLU. Therefore, when we tested a surface, we measured each location against this standard. The highest readings from up to six different locations on all of the five sites were 304 RLU

(on Field 1 – contamination by moss on surface and weeds in boundary, generally in poor condition), 96 RLU (Field 2 – well-maintained surface, recently maintained by brushing), 175 RLU (Field 3 – general school use, well maintained), 6 RLU (Field 4 – an indoor pitch with a new surface; very low values at every location; site used infrequently since lockdown) and 11 RLU (Field 5 – well-maintained surface, recently brushed). The results highlighted positive results, showing a low level of contamination found and low potential for bacteria or viruses to be present on the surface.

While this is not a definitive study and more work would be required, it indicates what might be found. And while these results do not highlight a particular issue with 3G pitches as regards pathogens (bacteria and or viruses), I would still recommend a precautionary approach.

Disinfecting a surface with an appropriate proprietary product has been found to neutralise pathogens on the surface and reduce the potential for infections. There are many products on the market that are used to disinfect artificial playing surfaces. If you are considering purchasing such products, I would recommend that you obtain a technical data sheet to determine if it has any potential harmful effects on users or the environment, and check that the artificial playing surface



Testing for the existence of potential pathogens on a playing surface

manufacturer approves of using the product on the system you have. You must be confident that it has no detrimental effect on the surface or impact on the warranty. The one big takeaway is the need to clean and treat surfaces regularly to help stop the spread of infection and diseases. We recommend considering this as part of any ongoing maintenance programme.

For more information visit sportslabs.com



Around the World in 80 blades

Date: Thursday 28 January 2021

Time: 19:00 - 20:00

With the days short and the nights long, we aim to shine a bright light on the industry and lift the collective mood. This session will provide a unique insight into the international grounds management industry, highlighting techniques used in other countries, behind the scenes tours and some great stories along the way from one of the very best in the industry.

Our host Ian Mather-Brewster, key account manager GMA (ECB) with the Grounds & Natural Turf Improvement Programme, will have a one-to-one chat with industry legend Roy Rigby, grounds manager at Manchester City Football Club, about his journey from volunteer grounds person to grounds manager at an international stadium and a few other jobs in between.

This webinar will highlight:

- Ideas and inspiration learned from other sports grounds experience across the globe, as well as Roy's volunteering journey working at Crown Green Bowls clubs
- A behind the scenes glimpse of some of the biggest projects in grounds maintenance including the Etihad Stadium, Melbourne City FC and Abu Dhabi United Group
- The diversity and depth of managing an international stadium
- A snapshot into where the industry is now and where it may be heading
- The technology being used at major stadia and the evolution of products and services
- Career guidance and advice from a top UK grounds manager
- Hints and tips from the top that can be used at any level and any budget

The session will also include a Q&A.

To register please visit <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8916096332587861005>



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