

INTERNATIONAL GREENKEEPERS GAZETTE

January 2024 Issue #7

INTERNATIONAL GREENKEEPERS GAZETTE | ISSUE 07

MEET THE MEMBERS

LEWIS WELLS & IKUMI MURAI

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WELCOME KERSTEN UK

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Meet the Member: *Lewis Wells*

When International Greenkeepers For Hire was still only a seed of an idea, one of our biggest aims was to facilitate partnerships between working professionals and global workplaces in the greenkeeping and grounds industries. And now, having achieved this for so many people, we continue to be inspired and excited by the opportunities we've helped provide to our members. Here, we chatted to Lewis Wells, a greenkeeper from the UK, who travelled to Sydney, Australia, to experience the industry down under:

What inspired you to pursue a career as a greenkeeper in the first place?

I've always loved being outside as I'm very passionate about my sports, especially cricket, and being indoors has never been something I've enjoyed. So working in a job that's practical and outside was a big part of why I wanted to do greenkeeping as a job.

Could you describe your journey and experiences as a greenkeeper in the UK before making the move to Sydney?

I began my apprenticeship at an English private school, starting with estate maintenance—hedges, lawns, and planting—before shifting to my true passion: sports ground care. After 6 months on the estate side, I spent 1.5 years on the sports side to finish my apprenticeship. The experiences were invaluable, aiding not only my professional development in greenkeeping but also my personal growth. The support within the greenkeeping community was remarkable. A standout moment was being invited to Lords Cricket Ground in May to meet Karl McDermott, the head groundsman. He took time out of his busy schedule to show me around the grounds, which was an opportunity I'll always treasure.

“This opportunity has made me feel confident in doing more things that I would have thought were daunting and scary.”

How did you first hear about International Greenkeepers For Hire, and what motivated you to explore job opportunities overseas?

I first heard of International Greenkeepers through a mate who I had worked with at my job in England. He told me to join the Facebook groups as a lot of beneficial posts get published which may help me find another job in the industry one day. Working abroad never crossed my mind until the last 6 months of me actually finishing my apprenticeship. When the idea came to me that working abroad sounded like something I'd like to do, Australia was always my first choice. Working in another country was going to help me grow as a greenkeeper and develop more skills and see how jobs in the UK are done differently.

What were some of the challenges you faced when considering a job abroad, and how did International Greenkeepers For Hire assist you in overcoming these challenges?

Only being 19, leaving home was the first challenge. It took a while for me to really decide whether I wanted to make the jump and come to Australia to work, but now I'm here I'm so grateful that I did make the move to come and work here. Daryl



Lewis on site at Sydney University

Davidson and Bradley Tennant from the start have been so helpful in making sure the transition from the UK to Australia was smooth and answering any questions I had.

Can you share your initial thoughts and feelings when you discovered the job opportunity at Sydney University? What made it stand out to you?

The initial feelings were very exciting as working in a team was something I was looking forward to. I was hoping to develop my skills by learning from others. Also seeing the grounds that get maintained by the Sydney uni grounds team really appealed to me. Working on the cricket side of the job was something I was really looking forward to being a part of.

What was the application process like, and how did International Greenkeepers For Hire support you in the transition?

The application process was very smooth, which helped a lot with nerves, especially making the jump from England to Australia! I appreciated knowing that things were sorted before I got here, which again is thanks to Daryl and Bradley.

At any point if I had questions about anything, I could confidently know I could give Daryl or Bradley an email.

What do you enjoy most about your role at Sydney University as a greenkeeper, and how does it compare to your previous experiences?

I'm really enjoying helping make the cricket pitches and seeing how the process is different compared to the UK. I also love working with a team that's very experienced and always happy to help me when needed.

Were there any cultural or environmental adjustments you had to make when moving to Australia, and how did you adapt to your new surroundings?

I quickly adapted to the hot environment working here in Australia and how quickly the weather can change, which is important to keep an eye on when working on cricket squares the squares should be covered if any rain is expected. I really like the work ethic out here at Sydney Uni with regards to work always being done to the best it can be.

“SO NOW, WHEN ANY GREENKEEPERS HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH ME ABOUT WORKING ABROAD, I WILL DEFINITELY TELL THEM TO DO SO AS FOR ME IT HAS BEEN SOMETHING I’LL NEVER FORGET.”



In your opinion, how does maintaining sports turf at Sydney University contribute to the university’s athletic programs and overall reputation?

The maintenance of the sports turf at Sydney Uni provides a safe and reliable surface for athletes to get the best out of themselves. This, in return, benefits other clubs, for example in cricket. Having good cricket wickets is good for having a good reputation for the club and for other clubs playing there. A high-quality sports turf can be also a key factor in attracting talented athletes. The top-tier athletes will often seek to play for clubs with exceptional facilities that enhance their game and support their training needs.

What goals and aspirations do you have for your career as a greenkeeper in the long term, and how has this opportunity brought you closer to achieving them?

My main aspiration for the long term as a career in greenkeeping is I would love to be a head groundsman at a cricket ground. I feel like I have good attributes that would be perfect for a role like this. This opportunity in Australia has given me even more skills to strive to achieve my goal by working with the team at Sydney Uni and adjusting to the unique challenges presented in this environment.

Can you share any memorable moments or projects that stand out from your time at Sydney University so far?

Right from the start I got on well with everyone I worked with at Sydney Uni, which assured me that I made the right choice to work here in Australia. Hearing feedback from people I work with and outside of work that I’m fitting in very well was a good feeling. This made me more confident that I was doing the job well, even though it’s a different work environment from working in England.

How has this international experience impacted your personal and professional growth?

International Greenkeepers have helped me as a person grow massively, jumping in the deep end at only 19 to work in a country away from home and family.

This opportunity has made me feel confident in doing more things that I would have thought were daunting and scary, but when saying yes to these opportunities they can be life-changing. So I will always be thankful to IGFH for this.



Looking good: The product of Lewis’ hard work

What advice would you give to other greenkeepers who are considering a similar international career move?

Now I have made the move, I can 100% say that I made the right decision and haven’t regretted it once since being here. Sometimes it takes coming out of your comfort zone to realise that opportunities that at first feel uncomfortable and scary can actually be the best thing that can happen to you. So now, when any greenkeepers have a conversation with me about working abroad, I will definitely tell them to do so as for me it has been something I’ll never forget and look to come back over again next year.

Finally, what message or insight would you like to share with others about the role of organizations like International Greenkeepers for Hire in connecting professionals with opportunities abroad?

If you’re ever thinking about working abroad and need some guidance and some help with sorting a job out, International Greenkeepers is definitely the best place to go for this. They make it quick and easy and are always there to answer any questions that you may have.

Networking in Full Swing: SALTEX 2023

IGFH's Bradley Tennant explored grounds management trends and caught up with some familiar faces at SALTEX 2023. Here are our highlights from the popular event...



On November 01-02 2023, International Greenkeepers For Hire participated in SALTEX 2023, Europe's largest free grounds management show. This year, SALTEX was held at the NEC in Birmingham, UK, marking its 78th year running.

Bradley Tennant of IGFH attended the event as a visitor, taking advantage of the opportunity to spread the word about the IGFH mission, the services we offer, and our dedication to moving the sports and grounds care field forward. He was able to network with hundreds of industry professionals and key players in the industry—an experience that he deemed “invaluable”.

Bradley emphasized the significance of his interactions, stating, “SALTEX provided a unique forum for exchanging ideas, establishing partnerships, and learning from the best in the business. The connections we forged during the event are invaluable, not only in terms of business opportunities but also in driving innovation within our industry.”

The event's status as Europe's largest grounds management show was showcased by the fantastic turnout, with thousands of professionals, volunteers, and enthusiasts eager to explore the latest trends, technologies, and services in the field.

Beyond the exhibition floor, SALTEX 2023 offered a program of expert talks, seminars, and panel discussions. These learning opportunities are consistently a highlight for us, enabling us to gain insights into emerging trends, cutting-edge technologies, and evolving best practices in grounds management. We also enjoyed a firsthand look at the latest innovations in grounds management equipment, products, and services.

“The connections we forged during the event are invaluable, not only in terms of business opportunities but also in driving innovation within our industry.”

One of our highlight interactions was with Ikumi Murai, a greenkeeper from Japan who, with the help of IGFH's resources, landed a job at Arsenal F.C. in the UK. This is the first time Bradley was able to meet Ikumi in person, who had attended the event with several members of the Arsenal F.C. grounds team. Our Meet The Members interview with Ikumi can be found in this issue.

Amongst the hundreds of other professionals he networked with, Bradley also had a great experience with representatives from Nottingham Forest and



Top: Geoff Webb, CEO of GMA
Bottom: Kersten UK Stand, SALTEX 2023

Reading Football Club, and Cameron Hutcheon, Deputy Grounds Manager at Wembley Stadium.

Bradley has personally attended SALTEX on eight occasions already, and already has plans in place to attend next year's event.

Summing up his experience at the event on the whole, he said: “Participating in SALTEX was a fantastic experience for us. The knowledge gained, the connections established, and the insights into industry trends position IGFH for continued success. We're excited to leverage this momentum to contribute to the advancement of grounds management globally.”

You can learn more about SALTEX, including how to register as an exhibitor for next year's event, on the official SALTEX website: <https://www.saltex.org.uk>



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Wiltshire College & Groundsfest team

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‘Our aim was to always give back to the industry through the event and we are extremely proud to be launching The GroundsFest Education Fund.’

————— *Christopher Bassett,
Groundsfest Event Director*

Organisers of GroundsFest have announced that event profits are being reinvested back into the industry to form The GroundsFest Education Fund.

The GroundsFest Education Fund has been designed to provide support to help students at land-based colleges overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. The aim of the Fund is to not only support and enhance a student’s education experience but to encourage more people into the industry by making education more accessible.

Through profits generated from GroundsFest, students will be able to reach their full potential by obtaining funding for a wide range of items such as course literature, stationary, tools, laptops, computers and other electrical goods, driving lessons, and accredited training courses on subjects including machinery, weed management, sports turf maintenance, lawn care, arboriculture and many more.

Commenting on The GroundsFest Education Fund, Event Director Christopher Bassett said: “Unfortunately, the number of young people embarking on a career in grounds management is in decline and collectively, we should be doing all we can to change this. Education is the first step into the industry but the numbers coming through and qualifying are worryingly low.

“After several conversations, we were shocked to hear that students are being forced out of education or are being prevented from entering education due to not having the money to purchase necessary items. Our aim was to always give back to the industry through the event and therefore we are extremely proud to be launching The GroundsFest Education Fund.”

The scheme will be trialled for the first year at Wiltshire College & University Centre

before being rolled out nationwide. Victoria Fiander, Assessor in Horticulture, and Bradley Tennant, Sports Turf Lecturer, both from Wiltshire College, were instrumental in the development of The GroundsFest Education Fund.

Commenting on the new scheme, Bradley said: “The Education Fund is a fantastic initiative for students to access opportunities they may otherwise not have. Coming from a public school and a council area background, I would have loved to have had an opportunity like this, having personally paid for my own certificates such as spraying, tractor driving, and chainsaw tickets, knowing this is a key area that holds many back from pay rises or even progression within their workplace.

“Working with students, I know they often can’t find work due to travel arrangements. We are located in a very rural area, and having access to The GroundsFest Education Fund has the potential to bring more young people into our industry. Something as simple as driving lessons could pave the way for their future to become an industry leader.

“Land-based colleges are the point of entry for the vast majority of horticulture, from sports turf stadiums to the local garden centre. It’s vital we support our colleges. There are currently only 12 land-based colleges within the UK, which is a worrying number considering you can’t turn your head without seeing something that’s been involved with horticulture in some form.

“The industry is struggling from top to bottom and education is the way forward.”

For more information, please visit www.groundsfest.com.

You can also follow GroundsFest on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @GroundsFest for much more news, reviews and insightful views.

Seeding is Simple With The Dennis S500

The Dennis S500 Plus seeder is helping to get the lawns into shape at Cheltenham Ladies' College according to Ross Spry, Head of Grounds and Gardens.

@DennisMowers and like the company's Facebook page – www.facebook.com/DennisMowersUK.

You can also view the latest Dennis videos by visiting www.youtube.com/DennisMowers

After initially starting his career in greenkeeping, Ross Spry has been working for various colleges in the UK for over a decade. At Cheltenham Ladies' College he oversees a grounds team consisting of seven members of staff who tend to the sports facilities and gardens.

Somewhat of a perfectionist, Ross recognised that the College lawns needed some attention and was quick to act.

"The lawns were not in the best shape, and there was a lot of weeds and moss, and thatch build-up in them," he said. "We bought a scarifier and an aerator to try and alleviate this problem, but I wanted a machine to put seed back into the ground effectively rather than just broadcasting it.

"We looked at various brands of seeders and we found the Dennis S500 Plus to be the best for us."

Ideal for bowls, cricket, golf and other fine turf and ornamental lawn areas, the dual-purpose Dennis S500 Plus has a 510mm (20") operating width complete with interchangeable spiker and slotter reels. The spiker reel punches through the 'surface pan' allowing air, water and fertiliser to penetrate the root zone, while the slotter reel creates ideal seed germination pockets thus reducing seed wastage. Using the optional seed box attachment will ensure grass seed is dropped onto the ground at the prescribed rate and brushed into the pockets.

"We normally seed in the spring and autumn and before using the S500 Plus we apply a selective weedkiller to try and get rid of the weeds and moss," said Ross.

"It is so simple to use, and it does exactly what we want it to do. It's not heavy and it is nice and compact. Some of the lawns at the school are very small, so to have a seeder the size of the S500 Plus is ideal. It is also a lot more accurate than doing it by hand – you get more contact with the soil and better germination.

"The S500 Plus' best feature is just how user friendly it is and it makes the task of seeding enjoyable."

For further information or a no obligation demonstration, please contact Dennis 01332 824 777 or visit www.dennisuk.com

For more news, reviews and insightful views, you can follow Dennis on Twitter and Instagram

The Dennis S500 Plus seeder is helping to get the lawns into shape at Cheltenham Ladies' College according to Ross Spry, Head of Grounds



WELCOME KERSTEN UK, OUR LATEST SPONSORS

We're delighted to announce our latest sponsor, Kersten UK, who join the Howardson Group and Mountain View Seeds in promoting our great cause. 2024 will mark the 5 years of IGFH, and what a way to start the year off!

Chris, Sean, and the team are a fantastic group who share similar goals to IGFH in terms of sustainability and education. We're eager to continue to produce more free educational content and promote our industry with their support.

Kersten UK offers a comprehensive selection of innovative products for all aspects of outdoor surface maintenance. Their product range is carefully curated, including items manufactured in-house and sourced from industry-leading suppliers worldwide.

Kersten are committed to adapting their products to meet the specific demands of their territories. Through a proactive approach, the team encourages individuals to adopt effective strategies for weed prevention and ensure long-lasting surface performance.

In 2004, Kersten UK embarked on its journey as an importer of the prestigious Kersten range of sweepers and grounds maintenance equipment from Germany. The business is a family affair led by Chris Faulkner, together with his two sons, Sean and Douglas, and supported by a team of 15 professionals.

With their main office situated in Reading, Kersten strategically position themselves to deliver top-notch service to their customers. As strong advocates for customer satisfaction, they collaborate with a network of dedicated Authorized Dealers to ensure a seamless experience for all.

Sean Faulkner, Sales & Marketing Director of Kersten UK, spoke of their partnership with IGFH, saying:

'Our mission is to encourage a feeling of personal pride in our built

environment, and arm Groundcare professionals with the tools and knowledge necessary to achieve it. We feel that International Greenkeepers for Hire will be a great partner in helping us to achieve this. We are really looking forward to collaborating on educational content and working together to improve industry practices with regards to outdoor surface management.'

Kersten UK offers a variety of free online tools and educational content, and their blog is packed with useful, actionable information.

Considering creating an Integrated Weed Management Strategy? Kersten UK has a free online assessment: <https://kerstenuk.com/Kersten-Integrated-Weed-Management-Assessment>

Learn more about Kersten UK by visiting <https://kerstenuk.com/>



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NZ VS US TURF RYEGRASS

Gilba Solutions gets to the bottom of the confusion between these two commonly used turf varieties.

When it comes to the choice between NZ and US turf type perennial ryegrass cultivars, there is some confusion. Both of these perennial ryegrass varieties make contrasting claims about their respective performances.

The problem is, having looked at the research, we think we have got confused and completely misunderstood it. The trial we refer to throughout this is available as a free download at the end of this report.

We're firm believers in independent trial data, and perennial ryegrass selection is no exception.

A good example of this is in the use of Mediterranean germplasm (winter active ryegrass) in preference to continental (summer active) varieties.

The schooling is that the Mediterranean varieties will outperform Continental varieties in our part of the world due to their 'winter activity'.

It's claimed that the three big advantages of Mediterranean cultivars compared to Continental cultivars are:

1. Mediterranean turf ryegrass cultivars will germinate and establish more rapidly later in the autumn, in colder conditions;
2. Mediterranean cultivars grow more over winter and;
3. They are better for managing winter grass.

One thing that isn't different is that they all are susceptible to sulfonylurea herbicides.

Let's get to the bottom of these statements, starting with number 1: Mediterranean turf ryegrass cultivars germinate and establish more rapidly in colder conditions.

Few turf managers have the luxury of being able to oversow with perennial ryegrass later in the autumn.

However, when you look at Independent NZ Trial data where both Continental and Mediterranean germplasm were included (2005-2007), the results don't exactly support this claim.

In fact, in the case of early seedling vigour and density (Table 1), Continental germplasm did much better than the Mediterranean varieties. These trials include Mediterranean



varieties sold in the Australian marketplace.

Next up, advantage number 2: Mediterranean cultivars grow more over winter.

With this one, we thought, no issue. New Zealand is generally regarded as being colder than Australia, so these Auckland based trials should be a good test of 'winter activity'. If the above statement is true, then the NZ Mediterranean cultivars should outperform the Continental germplasm.

This is easy enough to check. In these NZ Trials, density was recorded after 61 days, with sowing being carried out in April 2005. The April mean temperature for Auckland is 16.2C. Weather conditions over the trial period fitted the norm.

Table 2 in the report is density 61 days after seeding, so by then, we are well into the winter and temperatures have fallen.

Obviously at this time, you might assume that the Mediterranean cultivars will be streets

ahead. Actually, no.

All of the Continental cultivars of turf type ryegrass were in the top LSD for density in contrast to the Mediterranean germplasm.

The third advantage is that *Poa annua* blends into the mid-green foliage of the Mediterranean cultivars. This is in contrast to the Continental turf type perennial ryegrass cultivars, where it sticks out like the proverbial.

This third is interesting in that surely using a variety that outcompetes winter grass is preferable to just "putting up with it?".

In the USNTEP trials, it includes an assessment of *Poa* competition. The end result is that the majority of the US varieties used in these trials and now available in Australia show less winter grass invasion.

Guest post supplied by Gilba Solutions. View the full article and the Ryegrass Cultivator Trial referred to at <https://gilbasolutions.com/nz-vs-us-turf-ryegrass-32/>



GROUNDSEST TO RETURN IN 2024: SAVE THE DATE

After the resounding success of the inaugural GroundsFest, the organising team is gearing up to make next year's event even more spectacular.

Scheduled to take place at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, on September 10 and 11, GroundsFest 2024 promises to be an experience like no other.

Building on the feedback received from the first edition, the organising team is working behind the scenes to implement improvements that will elevate the event to new heights. One of the significant changes is the introduction of a more free-flowing layout, enhancing the overall event experience. The addition of a new entrance is set to reduce the walk to the event, ensuring attendees can immerse themselves in the festivities more quickly.

The camping zone is set to see new facilities and the festival area is also in for a makeover, with plans underway to introduce brand new attractions.

The success of GroundsFest 2023 speaks volumes about the event's unique approach. With over a 90% rebooking rate from exhibitors, it is evident that the industry has embraced the innovative event concept with open arms. According to the post-show exhibitor survey, 93% of exhibitors generated new sales leads, showcasing the event's tangible impact on business growth.

Robbie Hayter from Net World Sports commended GroundsFest, stating, "GroundsFest is doing things differently for the industry, and I think it is refreshing. A lot of the visitors are really excited to see the outdoor demos and the festival is a great idea because you loosen up a little bit and there are more conversations and networking opportunities."

Megan Oliver from the Howardson Group echoed similar sentiments, emphasising the appeal of seeing products in an outdoor environment. "People are loving GroundsFest and the footfall has been good. We've seen people from all over the country

and we've taken a lot of enquiries. It's got a nice festival feel and it makes it an enjoyable place to be."

GroundsFest visitors were equally upbeat. Christopher Mortimer from Mortimer Contracts Limited said. "It was a fantastic show – the best in years. I bought new kit and saw lots to benefit my company for the future. I made some great contacts and I'm already looking forward to next year."

Finn Greer of Trackstars attributed GroundsFest's success to the diversity of the event. "I think GroundsFest, being indoors and outdoors, and having such a wide variety of demos are the reasons why it has drawn such a large number of people."

"The buzz is all about GroundsFest now," shared Tom Duchesne from Top Garden Services.

Marketing Director Chris Bennett highlighted the importance of industry feedback in shaping the evolution of GroundsFest. "The only way to evolve GroundsFest is by listening to the industry. This commitment to responsiveness and adaptability ensures that each edition of GroundsFest is a reflection of the evolving needs and desires of the landscaping and grounds management community."

As anticipation builds for GroundsFest 2024, the industry can expect an event that not only celebrates the latest innovations but also sets new standards for collaboration, networking, and business growth.

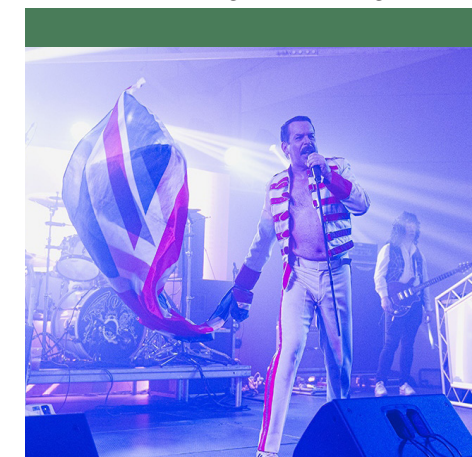
GroundsFest 2024 is poised to be an unmissable highlight on the calendar for all sectors of the grounds management industry.

For more information and how to book, visit www.groundsfest.com or follow GroundsFest on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

GroundsFest 2023
highlights in pictures:



GroundsFest 2023 was a "resounding success" according to event organisers



A highlight of the GroundsFest live music festival: Supersonic Queen



Plenty of opportunity to test new equipment and machinery outdoors

IGFH REFLECTS ON SUCCESSFUL YEAR AT BRETT CARTER EVENTS CAREERS & JOB EXPOS

As a new year begins, Daryl Davidson and Damien Curtis of IGFH have reflected on their experiences last year attending the Brett Carter Events Careers and Job Expos throughout Sydney, Australia.

The expos, which are free to attend and attract upwards of 20,000 visitors every year, have proven to be invaluable opportunities to showcase the significance of the grounds and greenkeeping industry to a diverse pool of job seekers.

Exhibiting at the IGFH stand at numerous expos this year, Daryl and Damien had the opportunity to speak with thousands of prospective candidates, many of whom had no idea that our industry even existed. The expos provided a platform for IGFH to emphasize the critical role played by skilled greenkeepers in maintaining and enhancing outdoor spaces, ranging from golf courses to sports fields and public parks.

One of the key takeaways from the expos was the opportunity to bridge the gap between job seekers and the grounds and greenkeeping industry.

As Daryl noted, "The expos allowed us to connect with a diverse range of individuals who are passionate about the outdoors and looking for rewarding career opportunities. It's not just about finding a job; it's about showcasing the value and impact of what greenkeepers contribute to the community."

The expos also served as a conduit for disseminating information about the various career paths within the industry.

Damien emphasized the importance of breaking down stereotypes associated with greenkeeping, stating, "Many people underestimate the complexity and skill required in our profession. These expos allowed us to dispel myths and showcase the diversity of roles available, from turf management to environmental sustainability."



The IGFH team leveraged the expos to highlight the global demand for skilled greenkeepers, underscoring the potential for exciting international opportunities within the industry. The events facilitated discussions with jobseekers eager to explore career paths that extend beyond local borders, reinforcing the notion that greenkeeping is not only a profession but a global community.

Looking ahead to the upcoming year, we eagerly anticipate the next round of Brett Carter Events Careers and Job Expos. The success of this year's engagements has solidified our commitment to participating in these expos, with a focus on expanding outreach and fostering connections with both seasoned professionals and emerging talents.

Daryl Davidson expressed enthusiasm for the future, stating, "We are excited to build on the momentum of the expos we were able to attend this year. The interest and engagement we've witnessed reaffirm the need for continued efforts to attract, train, and retain skilled greenkeepers. The expos provide a unique platform to actively contribute to the growth and development of the industry."

Visit <https://www.brettcarterevents.com.au/> to learn more about the 2024 schedule for Apprenticeship/Traineeship & Jobs Expos across Sydney.



Damien manning the IGFH stand



MEET THE MEMBER: IKUMI MURAI



Ikumi on the Arsenal FC pitch

We have a bonus member interview to share in this edition: our chat with Ikumi Murai, who traveled to the UK to work as a grounds person at Arsenal Football Club. Here's what he has to say on the moment he received his job offer, cultural adjustments when moving overseas, and his tips for others looking to follow in his footsteps.

What inspired you to pursue a career as a greenkeeper in the first place?

I want to play football on a great-quality pitch. There aren't too many grass pitches in Japan. Then I thought that if I could manage my own lawn, this problem would be solved

Could you describe your journey and experiences as a greenkeeper in Japan before making the move to London?

I studied agriculture in university before becoming a grounds person. I worked at the Nagoya Grampus training ground for four years. I still remember what my boss said to me when I first started working: we, the groundskeepers, were responsible for the injuries of the players on these pitches. I've been able to learn a lot in Japan. I've also experienced the role of Head Grounds person.

How did you first hear about International Greenkeepers for Hire, and what motivated you to explore job opportunities overseas?

I was looking on the internet and social media

to find out how to become a grounds person in the UK, and I found IGFH. I wanted to work outside of Japan because I wanted to know how greenkeepers managed turf in a different environment. I knew that it rains a lot in England, so I was really interested. And the Premier League is now the best league in the world, which was another factor that made me want to work in such an environment.

What were some of the challenges you faced when considering a job abroad, and how did International Greenkeepers for Hire assist you in overcoming these challenges?

Finding a job was the hardest part, so being able to get that information was very helpful for me.

Can you share your initial thoughts and feelings when you discovered the job opportunity at Arsenal?

I was thinking of going to the first place that offered me an offer. And in the end, only Arsenal made me an offer. It was midnight in Japan when I received the email with the offer, but I was so happy, I was crying.

What was the application process like to move to the UK, and did you have any support in the transition?

First, I applied for a VISA in Japan, which was granted. This VISA is valid for two years.

Support? The fact that I am now able to work for Arsenal is the best support I can feel. Everyone is nice and always willing to help me.

What do you enjoy most about your role at Arsenal as a member of the grounds team, and how does it compare to your previous experiences?

All of the things! Every day is a learning experience and I feel like I'm having fun every day, every time. Japan and the UK have different climates, so it's fun to experience that too. Winters in the UK are cold and dark, so how to keep the turf in such an environment is one of my greatest interests.

Were there any cultural or environmental adjustments you had to make when moving to UK, and how did you adapt to your new surroundings?

I had the hardest time finding a home. Because I didn't know much about land in the UK, and because of inflation, rents were higher than in Japan. When I was looking for a house, I asked a lot of people for advice, which helped me. Also, winters are cold. I was sent a very warm innerwear from Japan.

Did you know much English before moving to the UK, how have you learned?

I knew very little about it. I still feel I must keep learning. The methods are online or taught by flatmates. I also read textbooks and watch a drama called Top Boy.

What goals and aspirations do you have for your career as a greenkeeper in the long term, and how has this opportunity brought you closer to achieving them?

First, I want to increase my knowledge and experience. Then I want to help the club. As for long-term goals, I would be happy if more people knew about lawns and about grounds persons. I saw an article before which said the number of grounds persons in the UK had decreased. And it is the same in Japan, where the role of a grounds person is not popular and not well-known. I would be happy if I were interviewed and helped to make grounds persons become better known.

How has this international experience impacted your personal and professional growth?

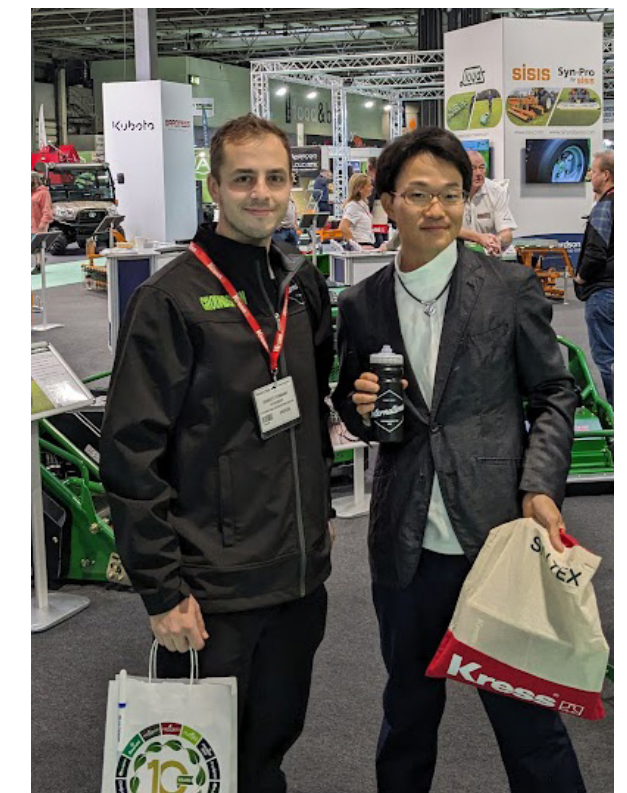
It's not common for Japanese grounds persons to work in many outside countries to my knowledge. I think it's giving me so much confidence. And, of course, I'm increasing my knowledge.

What advice would you give to other greenkeepers who are considering a similar international career move?

Leaving one's home country can be painful for some people. The important thing is that you have fun every day. I enjoy my life because I like the job itself and I like learning new things. And, fortunately, I like living in this country and everyone is so kind to me, so no problem.

Finally, what message or insight would you like to share with others about the role of organizations like International Greenkeepers for Hire in connecting professionals with opportunities abroad?

I think it is important to put yourself in an environment where you can constantly develop. If that is not in your country, then you should use the information you can get from these organisations to find a job. I wish more people knew about it. I feel like being an ambassador.



Ikumi and Bradley of IGFH at SALTEX 2023

HOW TO CREATE AN INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Kersten UK provides a formula for how councils can give themselves the best chance of success when moving away from using chemicals to manage weeds.

The first thing you need to do is to understand what's causing weeds to be present in different areas, and what factors contribute to the problem.

Initially, it's helpful to conduct a survey of the assets you look after, such as each road, park, or sports pitch, and score each one on a few different factors. Ward maps can be a good way of identifying these assets and you can build up a database that scores each asset on the following criteria:

Detritus and soil buildup

On hard surfaces, the buildup of detritus is the largest cause of a weed problem. Identify areas where soil has encroached from verges, or built up in kerbs or cracks in paving. Score this buildup, so you can prioritise the worst areas.

Detritus buildup should be continuously monitored to determine the necessary frequency and effectiveness of soil removal processes.

Sources of detritus

After identifying the detritus levels, we should then identify the worst sources of detritus, so that we can do something to mitigate them later on.

This may be overhanging hedges or trees, verges, and other vegetation. Some might be marked simply for trimming or cutting and collecting. In other cases, you might want to replace the plants with other low-litter varieties or low-maintenance plants. You could also install a barrier between the plants and the hard surface to prevent the migration of detritus.

Some sources of detritus can also be useful. The material they produce can be recycled as mulch, helping to prevent weeds in other places.



Detritus trapment areas

After identifying all the sources of detritus, we should assess where it can get trapped - for example, cracks in the surface or potholes, which might be marked for sealing, or catchment areas such as sharp corners in kerbs.

To assess how successful your weed prevention is being, score the weed burden in these areas. You should see a dramatic reduction after removing the soil and then working on a few of the other aspects, but tracking the results over time will help identify the ongoing level of treatment you need.

To score the weed burden, you can use the weediness scale in Defra's code of best practice on weed management for hard surfaces.

We can now deal with the problems we've identified. Here are some quick tips:

1. The most impactful place to start, is removing the existing soil buildup.
2. Schedule Thermal treatments.
3. Schedule sweeping to follow weed treatments.
4. Pick off the other jobs you have identified to reduce detritus buildup.

Article edited for inclusion in this issue. Read the full article here: <https://kerstenuk.com/blog>

TRANSFORMATIVE PATHWAYS

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S OUTREACH AT COBHAM YOUTH JUSTICE CENTRE INSPIRES YOUNG MEN

Throughout 2023, Daryl Davidson of IGFH visited Cobham Youth Justice Centre on behalf of Sydney University, with the aim of supporting young people in developing their career skills ready for their release. Felicity Zeiher, Communities & Youth Justice Skills Manager, shared the following piece about Daryl's support for a particular young person in the facility:



"The smile on this young man's face is not just because he was the lucky recipient of a pretty cool prize from the incredible International Greenkeepers For Hire (although I'm sure it helped!), but because of the self-esteem, career opportunity and mentorship the incredible boys Daryl Davidson & Damien Curtis have supported him with as he transitions out of custody and into a potential apprenticeship opportunity.

"It's with huge gratitude we thank Sydney Uni Sport & Fitness for not only providing the latitude for their greenkeeper & greens to facilitate this work engagement opportunity, but also to Sydney Uni Rugby for inviting this young person to train with the club as a way of integrating him back into the community through positive social and sporting engagement.

"The way this young man now lifts his head when he walks, shakes my hand, looks me in the eye, smiles broadly and calls me by my name, is not only due the enrichment that comes from this kind of opportunity, but is testament to the thousands of steps that came before from the dedicated Youth Justice team at Cobham, Putland ETU, Justice

Health and everyone that has supported his rehabilitation.

"Training Services NSW are grateful to have played a small but integral role in facilitating skills engagement opportunity. From the very first Try-A-Trade event last year that sparked the interest for landscaping right through to the Accredited Part Qualifications 'Statement of Attainment in Landscaping' under our Summer Skills program with The Management Edge - in which the young person performed exceptionally in!

"We take pride in knowing we are changing lives through skills."

A word from Daryl:

"I had a great day on Monday presenting this young person with a PlayStation 5 and Mowing Simulator game that we were giving away at the Brett Carter Events Career Expos.

We're looking forward to helping more young people out. Thanks again Felicity Zeiher and Shannon Fitzgerald for making all this possible."

TWO BALL ONE STICK CHALLENGE AT CAMMERAY GOLF

IGFH's Darly Davidson reflects on Cammeray Golf Club's fundraising event, held on November 28, 2023.

"Great day yesterday for the very first Two Ball One Stick Challenge at Cammeray Golf Club.

The rain held off just for a great fun day raising awareness for men's health and raising \$1000 that we donated to The Meadowbrook Golf Club's Turf Management Teams Movember page.

The winners of the day, Stephen Foster and James Thomas, smashed shooting a 51 for 18 holes off the stick with only one golf club each, and James sinking a hole in one.

Special mentions to Sarah Mayes and Gregory Donachie for winning the Bradman Award, and Michael Wood for winning the Blue Ball lucky door prize.

The day wouldn't have been possible without the support of Daniel Studders and his team at Ground Solutions Australia, Layton from Cammeray Golf Club, LandHQ, Tahoma31 Australia, Flemming Group, KB Adams, Turfcare Australia, CJ Murphy, Colin Campbell - Chemicals Pty Ltd, Equipment Solutions, Naturf, JESTA Transport, and Gilba Solutions Pty Ltd

A special thanks to my wife, Nicole, for helping out, stirring everyone up and taking photos of the day."



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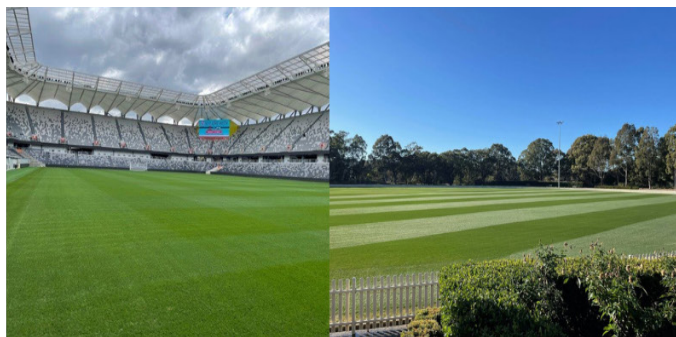
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