

## **IOG Graduateship Award Marks Career High Point For Bury Technical Officer**

Leslie Beardwood has reached the pinnacle of his career to date, attaining the coveted Graduateship in Sports Turf Management from the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG), the leading membership organisation for grounds professionals involved in the management of sports pitches, landscape and amenity facilities. And he is understandably delighted with the achievement.

“The wearing of the cap and gown with the colours and along with the presentation was the high spot of my career,” he says.

”I became aware of the IOG Graduateship award through the IOG website [[www.iog.org](http://www.iog.org)] and decided it was the ultimate award to go for.”

A technical officer at Bury Metropolitan Council’s Parks & Countryside Service in Lancashire, Leslie Beardwood is no stranger to academic honours, having been named Arboricultural Student of the Year 1990-1991 at Myerscough College.

He left school at aged 16 and started working as a trainee gardener with the borough council. This embraced a range of duties, including bowling maintenance and renovation, plant propagation, along with outside floral displays at various venues and events, and general parks duties.

“I worked as a groundsman on a mobile unit initially, seeing to the over-marking and renovation of public and school sports pitches,” he recalls.

“I attended a range of in-house training courses at Heaton Park, Manchester, from basic introductory horticulture, to pesticide use, to advanced arboriculture.”

He became a full-time member of the council’s tree team, attending Myerscough College from 1989-1996 where he attained the City & Guilds Cert Arb and NCH Cert Arb qualifications. He joined the Parks & Countryside Service’s client section in 1997, taking charge of the authority’s housing tree stock, 65 football pitches and 25 bowling greens.

An accomplishment of which he is justifiably proud was the securing of funding from the Football Foundation\* last year to implement the use of a Koro top drainer on four of the council’s soccer pitches as a regular part of end-of-season renovation.

“This proved highly successful for the users and was visited by Ko Rodenburg from Rotterdam City Council on completion of the work.”

Leslie Beardwood remains in regular contact with Ko Rodenburg, exchanging ideas on further projects and developments.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Leslie Beardwood is now studying to take the Arboriculture Association Technicians Certificate at Myerscough College. He has also completed an NVQ Level 3 in Sports Turf Management and NVQ Level 4 in Amenity Horticultural Management.

\* The Football Foundation is a unique partnership funded by The FA Premier League, The FA and the Government, and is the UK's largest sports charity, playing a key role in revitalising grass roots sport.