The dust may not yet have settled from BTME2001, but here at BIGGA, planning is well under way for next year's event. In a brand new BTME series, Neil Thomas gives a progress report on preparations for BTME2002.

**The clock's ticking...**

**BTME2002: Greenkeepers Week set to continue**

BIGGA's annual Turf Management Exhibition has been held at the Harrogate International Centre since 1989. The fourteenth such exhibition to be held in January 2002 will see a major change with the traditional Wednesday, Thursday, Friday morning show being replaced with a three day key opening from Tuesday through Thursday. This new change of opening days for the BTME follows detailed discussions within the Working Party set up by the BTME Steering Committee and subsequent consideration of its recommendations by both the Steering Committee and the BIGGA Board of Management.

There were two prime reasons for the change. First and positively, it is considered that with the success and growth of the BTME, the show can now sustain three days of trade activity and visitor traffic. Secondly, Friday morning has not been viewed as a success by the trade and Friday breakdown has remained unpopular with long journeys having to be made late in the day. So the change has been made and the Association, together with the exhibiting companies, will employ their best endeavours to ensure the success of the new format.

This brings us on to the concept of the ‘Greenkeepers Week’. Over the years, greenkeepers have come to regard the week of the BTME as the major event in BIGGAs calendar. They come to Harrogate through various packages and by various means. Some come for six days whilst others come in smaller combinations of days right down to the day visitor. BTME kickstarts the year for both trade and greenkeepers. BIGGA is very anxious to protect and strengthen the concept of the ‘Greenkeepers Week’ and as such will make only minor modifications to the week for BTME 2002 bearing in mind that the new show format will be subject to review after next year’s event. The National Education Conference will continue on the Monday and Tuesday along with the workshops programme although in both instances there will be enhanced options together with the ability to visit the exhibition at the conclusion of the educational programme on the Tuesday.

The seminar programme will operate through Wednesday and Thursday while there will be an attractive educational programme on the Friday morning before greenkeepers depart for home. Social highlights will include the Conference Dinner on the Monday evening and the BTME banquet on the Thursday evening. The BIGGA AGM will be ‘held at its normal time on the Wednesday evening. So greenkeepers’ plans for the week can continue as before but with more time available on the show floor and this will surely be appreciated with the growth of BTME.

The growth curve was significant at this year’s BTME. We need to continue to build upon it and the demand for space at BTME 2002 is indeed encouraging. BTME needs to meet the expectations and aspirations of the greenkeeping profession, golf course personnel in general and the exhibiting companies. There is a groundswell of support from all concerned to take the BTME forward and build on its success but this will only be achieved by a real ‘partnership’ of greenkeepers and trade. To this end each needs to understand and appreciate the other’s perspectives with regard to the BTME and to be mutually supportive. Many forget that BIGGA does not employ the BTME and run the BTME. It is all done in-house and it is therefore our key role to pull the whole operation together whilst creating an ambience which will allow the show to prosper and grow for all concerned.