As I write, it is now two months on from Harrogate and memories are still fresh in the mind of a truly wonderful week. My particular highlights include a wonderful TV's Tomorrow's World. Even the very best can enjoy professional advancement, if only they come to Harrogate!

Mulling over the attendance figures it is great to see a vindication for the decision to extend the show to three days, which was taken to see a vindication for the decision to extend the show to three days, which was taken well and as new The Golf Club Show, which enjoyed a very successful debut in the King's Suite. More than ever Harrogate is a not-to-be-missed Showcase for everything to do with golf... except, of course, the playing of the game.

To put it in the picture, Tuesday saw 2,445 visitors; Wednesday was a record individual day for BTME with a mammoth 4,040 visitors, while Thursday was visited by some 2,144. That produces a sum total of 8,629, 10.1% up on the 7,833 who attended BTME 2001, and reveals a relatively even split for the three days - an absolute bumper sandwiched between two very solid days.

As everyone who exhibits, or visits, a Show will know it is the final day where you expect to find the lowest number, so that the 2,144 Thursday figure is one of which we at BIGGA are particularly proud.

To put it into perspective, here’s what I wrote in a press release at my first BTME back in 1996.

A total of 2,312 visitors went through the doors on Wednesday (day 1) and 2,159 made the same journey yesterday (day 2). Last night, on your behalf a team of BIGGA mathematicians poured over calculators to come up with a figure of 42.9% - the increase on Thursday of 2,144 was on a par with the record breaking 2,144 was on a par with the record breaking between two very solid days.

Scottish Education Conference a success

The BIGGA Scottish Region Conference was again held at the Business Learning Centre, Lauderdale College, Dunfermline in March. An excellent venue with first class facilities and easy access from the motorway.

The speakers were covering a variety of subjects all relevant to the industry today.

Ged Cunliffe, Technical Sales Manager, Biotal opened the Conference with a paper on Biological Solutions for any fine turf area. This was a most important and informative subject.

Next was Philip Langdon, of Wardle Consulting Engineers Ltd, on Irrigation Systems Assessment. Philip provided an insight into irrigation systems. A topical subject and well presented by Phil. Despite the weather this winter, and the amount of rainfall we have had, his talk was of benefit to everyone who has a watering system or indeed anyone who was considering installing one.

After the break the double act of David Withers, from Textron, and Brian Goudie, of Scottish Grass Machinery, spoke on 'A Salesman's Role'. This was something different from previous years and was presented very well. The talk covered all aspects of the salesman's role, having a good salesman/customer relationship and the benefits that can be gained from this partnership.

Finally to round of the morning session, was Ruth Mann of the STRE, who presented her paper on Pest and Disease Survey. Ruth explained the reasoning behind the survey and the research being carried out. This topic was of great interest to the members and generated a great deal of discussion.

After lunch, John Caven, Director of Golf at Meldrum House, Aberdeen, spoke about his role in the 'Creation & Marketing of a 5 Star Golf Facility'. John provided a most valuable insight into marketing and presentation involved in promoting this kind of facility.

The final speaker was Paul Miller, from Elmwood College. Paul's talk was on 'Integrated Plant Management'. Paul with his experience in this field gave a very interesting and topical paper on a subject relevant to greenkeeping.

A fine set of figures

As I write, it is now two months on from Harrogate and memories are still fresh in the mind of a truly wonderful week. The bizarrely funny Brahms and Lizst at the Banquet, and an inspirational talk by Roger Black, whom, I note, has obviously used BTME as a springboard to a presenter's role on BBC TV's Tomorrow's World. Even the very best can enjoy professional advancement, if only they come to Harrogate!

Mulling over the attendance figures it is great to see a vindication for the decision to extend the show to three days, which was taken well and as new The Golf Club Show, which enjoyed a very successful debut in the King's Suite. More than ever Harrogate is a not-to-be-missed Showcase for everything to do with golf... except, of course, the playing of the game.

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BIGGA forges closer links with international associations

Right: At the GCSAA Banquet during the Orlando Show a memorable speech by Walter Woods was followed by presentations, including this portrait, to the Old Tom Morris Award winner by outgoing GCSAA President, Tommy Witt.

Below: Association chiefs get together in Quebec City. Pictured are Steven Mona, GCSAA; Ken Cousineau, CGSA; Neil Thomas, BIGGA with Maria Thorn, Senior Turf Specialist with Syngenta.

Below right: Pictured at the recent CGSA Conference and Show in Quebec City are Vince Gillis, recently retired Executive Director of the CGSA with CGSA Past President, Doug Meyer.

Gleneagles Excellence in Golf Award winner

Lee Relf, 21, from Colchester, a final year HND Sports Turf and Golf Course Management student at Writtle College, is the 2001 winner of the Gleneagles Excellence in Golf Award Scheme.

To win the award, Lee submitted two 5,000 word dissertations, which he then followed up with 20 minute presentations to a panel of judges.

The GEGAS initiative is supported by FEGGA and sponsored by Textron, and is a 12 month educational and practical training programme for young greenkeepers from around the globe, based at The Gleneagles Hotel.

It is open to students who are looking beyond a basic greenkeeping career and wish to develop their skills to become golf Course Managers of the future. The scheme can accommodate a maximum of eight students, who are selected from colleges and educational facilities in the UK and now, with FEGGA as a partner from across Europe. Textron's sponsorship includes an expenses paid visit for the winning student to visit the GCSAA Show in the USA.

The scheme was established in 1994 and has grown year on year providing students with all the necessary greenkeeping skills, together with a unique opportunity for personal development during their year-long work placement.

"Lee is the first winner of the award since FEGGA added their support for the scheme. His dissertations and subsequent presentations were of the highest order and worthy of the accolade," said Jimmy Kidd, Golf Courses and Estate Director at The Gleneagles Hotel.

"During his 12 month placement he, and the other students, have had the opportunity to experience the alternative styles of maintenance required for soil and sand based greens. They have been able to work on the championship courses at Gleneagles and develop their greenkeeping talents. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring together students from all over Europe to train and gain experience and we are extremely grateful for the sponsorship from Textron that makes it happen."

Ernie Hart

It is with great regret that I report the death of Ernie Hart. Ernie was born in 1923 and apart from the War years spent most of his working life connected with our industry.

He was the East Anglia Section President and one of the biggest supporters of BIGGA I have ever had the honour to have known. After his retirement some 14 years ago Ernie would spend some of his time visiting golf clubs around East Anglia encouraging greenkeepers to join the Association. Last year Ernie was put forward for and granted Life Membership of the Association for all the work he had done for the East Anglia Section.

Ernie was a friend to everyone and always there to help, he will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.

Ian Willett
East Anglia Section Secretary

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FOR GREENKEEPERS BY GREENKEEPERS

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Ian Willett
East Anglia Section Secretary

April 2002 Greenkeeper International 5
Toro for St Andrews Bay

Toro has supplied a complete range of turf equipment to maintain the two new cliff top championship golf courses at the £30 million St Andrews Bay Golf Resort & Spa.

The spectacular complex, which includes a 209 bedroom luxury hotel, enjoys breathtaking views over the Firth of Tay, and is the only golf club in the world with views of two Open Championship venues Carnoustie and St Andrews!

Set among 503 acres, 55 of which are designated as SSSI, the gently undulating courses - The Torrance, which opened in September, and The Devlin, opening next summer - have been kept as natural as possible with the replanting of native flowers and grass. Toro has been awarded an exclusive five-year lease agreement at St Andrews Bay.

"I was asked what I wanted on the course and said "Toro," said Course Superintendent, Neil Ballingall, who was Course Manager at Moray Golf Club before joining St Andrews Bay. The picture shows, front, Neil Ballingall, third from left, with the left Scott McNeil, of dealers Henderson Grass Machinery, Lely's George Macdonald and Henderson's Graeme Millar, with the St Andrews Bay greenkeepers.

Training numbers are on the increase

THE number of golf greenkeepers undergoing training has leapt 20% in the past 12 months, according to new figures from the GTC. There are 2,817 greenkeepers in formal training in the current year, an increase of 445 on the previous year.

The news has been welcomed by the GTC and bodes well for the quality of golf courses in years to come. The increase is attributable to more and more employees opting for work based training solutions. NSVQ Levels 2 and 3 continue to be the qualifications most in demand, but Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diplomas have also shown healthy growth.

The online Internet learning option is also proving popular, especially at Level 4. One establishment where online learning is taking off is Boston GC in Lincolnshire, where greenkeeper John Osborne has just completed NVQ Level 2 Sports turf. "Although this type of learning does not suit everyone, in John's case it has really paid off," said Secretary Stephen Shaw.

"For the club the benefits are obvious as the greenkeeper spends less time away from the course but we decide on training on a case-by-case basis. "The most important consideration is what the individual greenkeeper wants. They have to be comfortable with the kind of training they receive."

The GTC's Education Director David Golding concurred. "While the growth in training numbers is very encouraging, we at the GTC encourage all employers to invest in staff training as it is the only sure way of ensuring better golf courses."

Textron trip a success

One hundred and thirty greenkeepers representing Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Scotland, Sweden and Wales augmented by a small party from the Middle East and Ireland, Italy, Norway, Scotland, Sweden and Wales were invited to attend the Textron trip held at BTME.

For application forms and further information, please contact Bettina Schrickel or telephone (+1) 954-647-3436.