I first visited BTME in the mid 90s and have been coming ever since. Initially we operated under the wing of Kawasaki UK, and our Trillo products were used on Kawasaki Mules, which had just been launched onto the golf course market. 

My first impressions of Harrogate were that I was genuinely surprised at how busy it was. At that time I had no experience of this market sector, but it was lively with a very good atmosphere.

At that time our products didn’t automatically drop into this market and we had to amend our range to meet the requirements of the greenkeeping world. The Show gave us the opportunity to meet greenkeepers and discuss exactly what they were looking for.

Even if we produced a product which wasn’t precisely what they wanted, the Show gave us valuable information and allowed us to develop the product from there.

As our range started to develop it became clear that we needed to take a stand in our own right and since then there has never been a doubt about our attendance in Harrogate every year.

As a growing company we haven’t been able to set our stall on Harrogate and when they are not there we are marginalized and those who are not questioning themselves are mismanaging the situation. I don’t believe that the way things are at the moment that there is a road map to guide us through.

Change can happen so quickly, just look at the money market. Things can turn on their head in no time at all. I always feel the year has started when we get to Harrogate and we can look forward to the new season. We always find it a little frustrating that we can’t go out immediately and demonstrate the kit. We’ve got to wait six to eight weeks until the weather is kind enough to let us out, but it certainly sets up the on-coming season and allows you to consolidate any business that you have been negotiating.

What was very apparent last year was that it was the education that was bringing in the greenkeepers. Education is very much what it is all about.

We look forward to Harrogate each year. Let’s shake off Christmas and the New Year and get some business done.

Tim Merrell, MD, The Grass Group