

## No 2: The New Show for the Landscape Industries

**Age:** Due to be born January 16-18, 1996

**Oh no, not another trade show?** Precisely! The original idea behind this show was that it would replace shows such as BALI, SALTEX and BTME, but now it looks as if it will be an additional show for the landscape and amenity horticulture market.

**Whose idea was it?** The Agricultural Engineers Association's Outdoor Power Equipment Council (OPEC) has long been campaigning for one big international 'umbrella' show for this sector and has persuaded P&O Events, which organises exhibitions like the Royal Smithfield Show at London's Olympia, to come on board.

**P&O are in for a rough ride, then?** Following extensive consultation with members, BIGGA's Board of Management has decided to continue with its exhibition in Harrogate for the foreseeable future. Executive director Neil Thomas says: "It was a difficult decision as there are many varied views within the industry on the need for shows, the number of those shows and their location. BIGGA will continue to consult and to listen and to remain open-minded as to the future. But it will also seek to ensure that the BTME remains the pre-eminent show for our industry. The 1995 show is eagerly anticipated, the 1996 show will be even bigger and more comprehensive."

**What about the other shows?** Andy C nter, marketing director of Independent Exhibitions, which runs SALTEX for the IoG at Windsor, told us: "SALTEX is a living breathing manifestation of an 'umbrella' event for our industry. It has pulled together visitors and exhibitors from across the entire spectrum of the sports, amenities and landscaping trades. There can be no doubts about the future of a show which more than doubles its audience to over 13,500 and whose exhibitors have already snapped up 74% of its 1995 floor-space."

**So BIGGA and the IoG aren't throwing in the towel?** It wouldn't seem so. Their shows are going from strength to strength. And senior figures from both organisations were seen lurching together during SALTEX.

**Does this mean anything?** It's too early to say, although a joint statement from BIGGA and IoG is expected soon.

**What do P&O have to say about all this?** They're continuing with their plans to stage an international exhibition for the landscape and amenity horticulture sector at Olympia in January 1996. Robin Hicks, P&O Event's show director, says: "While we understand and respect their (BIGGA's) position, we will continue with our plans for a new show. This decision is based on the results of the detailed



market research which confirmed the need for a truly international event and on our ongoing discussions with senior industry figures."

**Detailed research?** Their pollsters quizzed 406 (1.19%) of their claimed 34,000 potential visitors and 292 companies.

**How many of those questioned were greenkeepers?** 103.

**P&O say the manufacturers want an international event.** A lot of people have trouble believing that anything outside London has international appeal. But Harrogate plays host to numerous major international events. This month there is the Sino-British Trade Fair with many delegates coming from as far away as China and Hong Kong. Just before BTME, there is the International Toy and Christmas Fair. In February there is the International Wine Fair and in September many international medical experts will be coming to discuss cytokines, whatever that is. This year's BTME will have a more international flavour, anyhow. There is a large party of greenkeepers from Sweden coming, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is exhibiting for the first time. The Third European Forum will take place on January 26 in the Royal Hall, with speakers including Joe Baidy, president of the GCSAA. And with the best speaker programme in Europe lined up for the National Education Conference, which precedes BTME, and the BTME seminar programme itself, more European visitors than ever are expected at BIGGA's seventh show.

**What high-calibre speakers are you referring to?** Speakers at the National Education Conference include the world renowned Dr

James Beard, David Stubbs, executive director of the European Golf Association Ecology Unit, Bob Taylor, ecologist at the STRI, and James F Moore of the United States Golf Association. The seminar programme also features Dr Beard and Mr Moore as well as Cameron Sinclair, chairman of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects, Master Greenkeepers Kerran Daly and Anthony Davies, Turnberry Hotel's course manager George Brown, health and safety consultant Douglas Shearer and Dr IG McKillop of the Central Science Laboratory who will discuss rabbit and vermin control.

**Education is a big part of the greenkeepers' show, then?** Yes, BTME is more than just an exhibition. Independent research by the Association shows that nearly a quarter of the visitors stay for the full three days and another 11% stay for five days. This means a great deal of discussion and view-exchanging continues after show hours in the bars and restaurants of Harrogate. This is one aspect of the show that greenkeepers who attend each year were frightened of losing. Plus the fact that the hotels, bars and restaurants in London are a lot more expensive.

**It sounds as though there is a great atmosphere in Harrogate during BTME?** There is. You should try it.

**I'd love to but Harrogate is too far away.** It's only 12 miles/20 minutes from Leeds/Bradford Airport which is served daily from many major European cities as well as numerous domestic airports; there are 25 trains a day from London King's Cross and 15 from Edinburgh (changing at York or Leeds), and by road it is 9 miles from the A1 and 15 miles from the M1.

**OK, so it's not that hard to get to, but it'll be expensive.** B&B ranges from £15 per night to as little as £33 per night at a good hotel (see the booking form in last month's *Greenkeeper International*). Because of all the education that's on offer many clubs pay for their greenstaff to go. Have you asked your club?

**But with all these shows on offer, why should I go to BTME when Windsor, Stoneleigh and London are much closer?** BTME is the most focused event, aimed specifically at the fine turf industry and in particular at the golf industry and greenkeepers.

**So what's going to happen in 1996, then?** Lots by the look of things. BTME is definitely happening on January 25, 26 and 27. SALTEX will also be happening – the IoG and Independent Exhibitions has signed a five-year deal with Windsor Racecourse. As far as we know, BALI will also happen (although we're still waiting for them to return our phone calls). And P&O Events says its show will happen. Only time will tell...