



The show goes on

There can be no doubt that in the past year one of the most dominant themes in discussions amongst greenkeepers and members of the trade has been the future of industry shows. The future of the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition has been at the forefront of those discussions. To recap a little, discussions started in earnest in May of 1993 when BIGGA was invited to attend a meeting convened by the Agricultural Engineers Association who through their Outdoor Power and Equipment Council represent the interests of the major manufacturing companies in our industry.

At that meeting both IOG and BALI were represented in addition to BIGGA. The meeting had been convened to convey to the three organisations the OPEC view that the time had come to establish a single indoor show for the industry incorporating shows currently organised by BIGGA, IOG and BALI. In the following months a number of meetings were held where the emphasis shifted away from IOG and BALI with a view to BIGGA being at the forefront of the new show. Developments accelerated in March this year when the AEA invited P&O Events Ltd to take the lead in establishing the new show. BIGGA continued discussions with P&O Events during which it became clear that the new show would be held at Olympia in London and whilst September 1995 had been the originally planned date, P&O Events moved this to January 1996 when it became clear that September was not a suitable date for greenkeepers to attend. BIGGA indicated to P&O Events its intention to survey its members on this extremely important issue to ascertain their views. This survey was conducted independently during August and September by the Golf Research Group and will be reported on in

detail in the November issue of *Greenkeeper International*. In the meantime P&O Events issued a press release to coincide with the SALTEX Exhibition at Windsor in September announcing the new show for January 1996 at Olympia.

There has, quite naturally therefore, been much concern within the Association and the industry as a whole. Throughout BIGGA has been mindful of two major considerations ie the views and wishes of our members and those of our exhibitors at Harrogate who provide the income not only to stage the BTME but to

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assist in the development of a strong, professional body. From the outset BIGGA entered into discussions positively and with an eye to the future. In addition to the survey we have consulted widely not only with the AEA and P&O Events but with a broad spectrum of the industry. After eighteen months and with P&O Events' announcement of the new show in January 1996, your Board of Management has been faced with an extremely important decision on the future of the BTME. Having fully considered all relevant factors, the Board has decided to continue with the BTME at Harrogate for the foreseeable future. In making this decision the Board is aware that the BTME Steering Committee

continues with its support for the event and that this support reaches much further afield within the industry as a whole. The BTME is a growing, successful show but it is not a show which can stand still. The Steering Committee has recently had the opportunity to tour the new Hall Q at the Harrogate International Centre and this offers real opportunity for the further development of the BTME. With the addition of Halls D and Q there is the facility to double the available exhibition space.

BIGGA is aware of the perception within the industry that Har-

growing European market which becomes ever more accessible with improved transport links. We believe that through a partnership of Association and industry and with the committed backing of the Harrogate International Centre, the opportunity is there for the BTME, at the centre of the country, to continue to develop as an international show backed as it is not only by an excellent educational seminar programme but now also by BIGGA's National Education Conference. Careful consideration needs to be given to the sectors of the industry in which the BTME will seek to expand and as has happened since the first show in 1989 there will be ongoing consultations with the industry. One of the strengths of the BTME is its Steering Committee and the Association remains appreciative of the commitment and support it receives from Steering Committee members. It is an opportune time to acknowledge the support of those companies represented ie Ransomes, Zeneca, Farmura, Supaturf, Lely (UK) Toro, Hardi, Hayter, Kubota, Sisis, Jacobsens, Rolawn, Rigby Taylor, John Deere, Massey Ferguson and Gem Professional.

It has been a difficult period and 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 remain open-minded as to the future. It will also seek to ensure that the BTME remains the pre-eminent show for our industry with all roads, including those from Europe, leading to Harrogate each January. The 1995 show is eagerly anticipated. We at BIGGA are greatly appreciative of the industry's continued support and we look forward to January and a show which all the indicators suggest will be bigger and better than ever.



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

rogate is not an international centre in the show sense. This is not a view prevalent in other industries who use Harrogate as the location for their shows. It is clear, therefore, that the Association, together with the Harrogate International Centre, must seek within the industry to change current perceptions and thereby enhance the status of the BTME as an international event. In the marketing of the BTME there will need to be a much greater emphasis on the excellent infrastructure at Harrogate and the improving communications particularly in respect of the Leeds/Bradford airport. Many of the companies who support us at the BTME are concerned at the need to further penetrate the