

THAT WAS THE W

BTME 97 could lay claim to be the most successful yet.

People came from far and wide to Harrogate '97. Friendships were forged and deals were struck but most of all people enjoyed themselves.

The Learning Experience in association with Ransomes brought some of the finest speakers on their subjects to the stage while the Exhibition was hailed as the best yet – by both visitors and exhibitors.

It was also the busiest ever. And that's official. A total of 5,486 delegates visited over the two and a half days. That's 27% up on last year. No wonder you could hardly move! It was also pleasing to meet so many visitors from overseas – Harrogate resembled the United Nations with 17 nationalities represented, including some from the golfing outposts of Iceland and the Czech Republic.

The week was a great success and a superb launching pad for BIGGA's 10th anniversary celebrations. Even the singing of the BIGGA Boys improved on last year's performance at the Karaoke night!

The week ended with the deafening sound of people scratching dates into the diaries – January 21-23, 1998 for BTME 98 with the Learning Experience in association with Ransomes in the shape of the Education Conference kicking off at the Majestic Hotel, Harrogate on Monday January 19.

See you all there!



Bridie Redican, Richard Andrews, Bob Buckingham and Graham Dale at the reunion

REUNION FOR TORO WINNERS

For the first time since the start of the Competition in 1989, Toro Student of the Year Competition winners, runners up, representatives from Toro, in Europe, England, and the USA, Lely and the PGA European Tour and Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education Officer met at a reunion dinner in Harrogate.

Mark Procter, who is now Golf Estate Manager at the St Pierre Golf and Country Club, was the winner in 1989. Mark, who was the Course Superintendent at Portal Golf Club, in Cheshire, back in 89, has nothing but praise for the competition and feels that all college students should be encouraged to enter. Mark has also been busy off the golf course. He married in 1993 and he has three children.

David Norton, Course Manager at Forest Pines Golf Club, North Lincolnshire, was the winner in 1990. He was an assistant greenkeeper at Beverley Golf Club in 1990 and has also worked at The Belfry, being involved in the English Open and Ryder Cup in 1993. David married in 1995.

The two runners-up in 1990 could not attend. Guy Woods, who is Course Manager at Bath Golf Club, could not attend as his wife is due to give birth at any time and Michael Wattam, Deputy Course Manager at Loch Lomond Golf Club was unavailable.

Brian Storey was the winner in 1991. Brian nominated by Elmwood College, was a greenkeeper at Silloth Golf Club and is now the Course Manager. Brian's wife is also due to give birth and he was unable to attend. John Waite, runner-up in '92, is now Head Greenkeeper at Scarthingwell Golf Club near Tadcaster. He was the first assistant at Temple Newsam Golf Club in '93. He has completed his education to Phase 4 City and Guilds and is now married with a 3 year old daughter.

Barry Neville, the winner in 1992, is yet another whose wife is due to give birth. Barry is the Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Stanmore Golf Club. Anthony Gooch, runner-up in 92, is the Head Greenkeeper at Torrington Golf Club. Tony visited Penina for the PGA Tour Conference, the Scottish Open at Gleneagles and the German Masters in Stuttgart as his runner up prize. The other runner up, Paul Brannan could not be contacted.

Nineteen Ninety Three saw the first and only lady

to win the Competition, Bridie Redican. Bridie has moved several times in four years and is now the Administrator with the Golf Course Superintendents of Ireland Association. She is married and has a four month old son. Jonathan Oldnow, is still single, is still at Coventry Hearsall Golf Club but he is now Deputy Course Manager. Richard Andrews is still at Highgate Golf Club. Richard, who is now married expects his wife to give birth in late February.

Euan Grant was the winner in 1994. Euan moved from Effingham Golf Club to Royal Jersey soon after winning the Competition. After gaining valuable experience as the Deputy Course Manager, Euan moved back to England to take charge of a new course being built at Westerham in Kent. Euan has also married since winning. Margeir Vilhjalmsson returned to his native Iceland, and became a father. He is now Course Manager at Reykjavic Golf Club. Margeir visited La Manga and Wentworth for the World Matchplay as part of his prize.

Byron Thomas was First Assistant at Morlais Golf Club in 1994. Byron, who celebrated his 21st birthday on the day of the Competition final is now at Celtic Manor.

James Braithwaite not only won the competition in 1995, he also had to beat the weather to get to the University of Massachusetts in the severe American weather of January 1996. James has moved from the Hallgarth Hotel and is now the Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Long Ashton Golf Club.

Unfortunately, the runners up for 1995 and 1996 could not make the dinner, nor could the 1996 winner, Fintan Brennan who is out in Massachusetts on the start of his eight week trip to the USA.

Bob Buckingham, European Marketing Manager for Toro welcomed everyone to the dinner and said how pleased he was to see that so many student greenkeepers had benefited from the Competition. Although some slight changes had been made to the rules of the Competition and runners up prizes for 1997, he said that he was sure that the next five years would see an increase in entries as more greenkeepers and golf clubs saw the benefits of education and training in general and of the Toro Student of the Year Competition in particular.