

TALKING HEADS

Compiled by Melissa Toombs



Name: Mark Dempsey
Position: Support Services Manager
Company: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Location: Halifax

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Are you a regular attendee of Harrogate Week? If so, why?

Yes I like to attend every year, it is a good time of year to consider buying new machinery for the new Season, we either have some budget left or in the new financial year have some new budget to spend. It is a good opportunity to network with Dealers, Manufactures and other amenity professionals, being based in Halifax the Harrogate show is our local exhibition.



Name: Gregor McGillivray
Position: Lecturer in Sportsturf
Company: Oatridge College
Location: West Lothian

No last year was the first time I'd attended.



Name: Chris Moore
Position: Secretary
Company: Royal Liverpool GC
Location: Wirral

Irregular/occasional and dependant on other commitments.



Name: William Blair
Position: Grounds Supervisor, Sodexho
Company: Sodexho Prestige Ltd
Location: Edinburgh

I am a regular attendee because I believe it is one, if not THE, best shows in the trade.



Name: Andrew Pledger
Position: Head Greenkeeper
Company: Frinton GC
Location: Essex

Yes I do regularly attend Harrogate week, I attend to so I can keep up to date with the latest techniques and technology, and see what is new in the market place. It's all very well reading about new products, but I find being able to check out all that's new, in the flesh, is better.



Name: Brin Bendon
Position: Guest Speaker
Company: Vector Training Ltd
Location: York

Yes I am, because I think I've been a guest speaker and workshop tutor since about 1995.

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Which company stands are you hoping to visit and/or do business with during the week?

I am Looking forward to Seeing Alpha Amenity, Pitchcare, Scotts and meeting up and discussing new opportunities with training and Health and safety Providers.

The ones that are relevant to the subjects I teach at college, mostly greenkeeping related subjects to collect the most up to date information on products etc. to keep my teaching notes up to date!

Irrigation companies - Architectural Firms - Equipment Manufacturers - Suppliers various.

I try to visit as many stands as possible especially the machinery and over the years I've done a great deal of business.

I would have been there this year, however my wife is expecting our second child on the 18th January and I felt that it would have been terribly selfish of me to have booked some time away. But if she decides to produce our child early I may try and pop up for the day to have a walk around.

Well, I'm not there as a purchaser as such as I'm a training provider. I ran the Career Clinic last year and was guest speaker with Andy Campbell on Managing Finance.

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Which courses have you booked on and how do you rate the Continue to Learn Programme as a whole?

The Seminars that I am intending to attend are on Tuesday "Product Compatibility and Tank Mixing for efficient turf maintenance" and "Its Hardly Rocket Science" Pesticides and Amenity Turf Developing a sustainable approach, both Seminars are areas that I am working within in the Amenity sector with a particular interest in Quality and Environmental management systems. It also allows me to obtain NROSO and Basis CPD points for my personal professional development.

None at present, as I don't know for certain what dates I am attending yet.

None at present.

I have not booked any courses but I rate the Continue to Learn programme very highly.

I have not booked anything from the Continue to learn programme, because of the reasons given above. The program as a whole is improving each year.

My delegate have told me that what I do has been well received and since we have moved to the Queen's Suite the lectures have been brilliant - the programme as a whole is marvellous but unfortunately I'm so busy I cannot attend any other courses.

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Is there anything BIGGA could do to make Harrogate Week better?

For me perhaps a little more emphasis on the amenity sector although I do appreciate it is mainly a golf course and fine turf show.

Nothing I can think of as I have only been there once, the problem with car parking has been dealt with the shuttle service on offer this year.

It is a broadly based programme that allows delegates to choose their preferred options.

I am sure there are many out there who are better qualified than I am to answer this, and I am sure they will say yes. After all, it is their show and they should be proud to be a part of it. They should also get off their bottoms and do something instead of criticise.

The amalgamation of BTME and Clubhouse has improved the stature of the show, to make Harrogate Week better; to keep improving the education side and try and entice the major exhibitors back to attending every year.

BIGGA could look at attracting people from other industries, as the world of sport is a huge place. We could widen the audience by not just focusing on golf and trying to incorporate cricket, bowling greens, tennis and the Royal Horticulture Society.

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What is your favourite memory of Harrogate Week?

Last year I was really impressed with Dr Karl Danneburger's presentation on Primo Maxx Growth Retardant, which inspired to undertake a trial using Growth retardants to establish wildflower colonisation with amenity grass areas along the Hebble Trail in Calderdale.

Meeting up with past students and present employers, seeing what they are up to now and putting faces to a names.

General optimism for the way ahead.

Having been associated with BIGGA and Harrogate for more years than I care to mention, there are far too many memories. I have met and kept in touch with so many people over the years that the memories will last a lifetime, and I will meet many of them again in January – and hopefully for years to come.

Meeting up with contacts and friends, and sharing best practices.

I love meeting up with old friends. One of the fondest memories I have was at the Banquet at the Majestic Hotel. The guest speaker one year was a Scottish gynaecologist and I was expecting his jokes to be on that subject, however he told various golf related jokes and had us all in stitches. It was a good laugh.