

TALKING HEADS Special

Compiled by Gareth Jones

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How was Harrogate Week 2006 for you?



Name: Bretton King
Position: Managing Director
Company: Ecosolve Limited
Location: Wiltshire
Exhibition Stand: M3

It's been a good week. We have had a good diverse customer base call in. We have had new people visit us and old clients. The most positive aspect is the amount of international visitors we have seen again this year. The number of quality leads builds year on year.



Name: Colin Gregory
Position: Sales Manager, UK and Ireland
Company: Massey Ferguson (AGCO)
Location: Coventry
Exhibition Stand: M11

Harrogate Week has gone very well. It's having the customers, the target audience in one concentrated place that makes it so good. It's been highly busy for us, so we are not complaining at all.



Name: Hugh Frost
Position: UK Technical Manager
Company: Novozymes Biologicals
Location: Warwickshire
Exhibition Stand: A29

The Show has been very exciting and extremely busy. There is a renewed interest in biologicals and that has been highlighted with the interest on our Stand. So we have been very busy over the three days of the Exhibition. It's been good as a varying range of people have been able to come up and give their thoughts on biologicals to us.



Name: Karl Barowsky
Position: Proprietor
Company: Classic Teak
Location: Hartlepool
Exhibition Stand: Q71

Overall, very, very good. We have had some good positive leads. Tuesday and Wednesday were very busy and very good. Thursday was slightly quieter. We provide for the entire leisure industry, golf courses being a major area, and the Show has allowed us to meet many people within this area over the week.



Name: Nick Gray
Position: Business Development Manager
Company: Bathgate Leisure
Location: Cheshire
Exhibition Stand: C31

Very good, as we have had regular enquiries throughout the week. The second day was extremely busy - with a lot of profitable enquiries, which we hope will develop into orders. Thursday has been the busiest final day we have ever had. So it's all good news as far as we are concerned.



Name: Paul Davies
Position: National Account Manager
Company: Ifor Williams Trailers
Location: Denbighshire
Exhibition Stand: B38

This is the second time we have attended this Exhibition. We have had both present and new customers on the Stand and it has been very busy. We went to the Hire Show in London in 2005 instead of here and after that we decided that Harrogate is where we actually see the end user rather than the hire companies.



Name: Robert Clive
Position: Director
Company: 360 Golf
Location: Surrey
Exhibition Stand: Q35

We are very pleased with the Exhibition. It is our first time here in the form of 360 Golf. Previously we were here under the banner Barrefield Golf and Barrefield Construction. The Show is evolving in the right way and from our point of view it has been a very worthwhile event.

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How does 2006 compare to previous years at Harrogate or other Exhibitions in general?

Every year we find that people from Europe do come to this Show. We are the sole distributor to the UK, Europe and the Middle East, so it is important we see those international customers. We are witnessing more of them coming in, with more former eastern block countries visiting. So the visitor field is spreading further. That's a good sign.

Compared to other Exhibitions this is better as it gives you the targeted audience you need and want. The interesting thing this year is that there are more non-golfing customers going through the doors. Football clubs, local authorities, that sort of thing are visiting this Show, which automatically increases our customer base.

This has been my first year here, but Novozymes' third. Compared to other Shows this one has been very focused. It has been thorough in the coverage of some of the vital aspects of the industry. It's been very open and relaxed. It's very educated orientated and that's been very good for learning about the industry, which helps our customers.

This is our first year at Harrogate Week, but we do some other shows. Here some of the leads we have generated have been very positive. So I would say I'm very happy with what I've seen of this Show at present.

It's a lot, lot busier. We've had many new enquiries this year. We don't expect to come here and get a full order book, however we get a load of enquiries that often develop into orders down the line. This is what we want and the point of the Exhibition really.

Being much busier is the main difference, it has been much more successful. We've got people here not just buying for golf clubs, but many other areas too, which is great. We've even had horsebox trailer brochures taken away, which we didn't think would happen. The customer base is clearly wider this year.

Personally this is my first time at Harrogate. It is difficult to make comparisons with other Exhibitions as we go to a number of different Shows with different target audiences. But for what this Show is we are happy with the way it's panned out for us.

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Harrogate Week provides unrivalled face-to-face contact with targeted clients, how important is this to a business?

You can only explain a certain amount in a brochure, but when clients come here they see the machines and develop a greater understanding of it. Plus if you have a client who has used the machine before, you can introduce them to a new client. This Show allows these meetings to happen, not just during the Exhibition hours, but at night too.

100%. You get different types of people walking along the Exhibition halls. All browse around, but some will just quietly pick up the brochure and go, while others will come up and talk to you. Both ways work well - as they have seen the product and have the details - you can then make sales on the back of that.

This is extremely important. One to one contact is everything. People will buy over the Internet and over the phone, but only after they have met the people they are actually dealing with. Human beings have to meet human beings and this Show does just that.

There is no substitute for actually sitting down with and talking to the people in the street. It's a people world and a people industry - people deal with people. No amount of direct mail or phone calls beats actually meeting and talking to people. Plus they can actually see and feel the quality of the product. It's crucial.

We treat the Show as a development for our business. We send out fliers, make calls, brochures, etc, but when people come to this Show they come to us rather than us going to them, so it makes a big difference. It doesn't stop when the Show does - it goes into the evening. Meeting new clients is basic to our business.

It gives us positive feedback. Seeing the end user allows us to take on board any improvements we need to make. They get to see the products, while we can ask them what needs changing on them to make the equipment even better for our clients.

Absolutely vital. Our business evolves around getting to know the client and knowing their needs. As a company we need to develop a client's trust, particularly on the consultancy side. They are relying on our integrity as well as our knowledge, so we have to have a close relationship with them. This Exhibition allows us to do that.

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Is there anything that the organisers could modify or add to make the Exhibition even more successful?

Our concerns are the same as BIGGA's - what happens if the big players disappear? Is the Show still secure? The Exhibition is the main stay of BIGGA. We need BIGGA to be strong, so the Show continues - because if it doesn't we as a company have nowhere to go. Harrogate Week is as important to us as it is to BIGGA.

As far as we are concerned we are very happy with how Harrogate Week has gone. This Show is more customer orientated than many others, so is great for us. Thursday is always the quietest day - maybe it should just be two days.

Other Exhibitions use a scanning system where you have a light pen on your Stand. Instead of giving out and receiving business cards, you scan their badge. In turn this goes to a computer and provides you with the contact details of everyone who has visited your Stand during the show. You can then follow up your leads and that would be very useful here.

Well you always want more visitors no matter how many come. But in principal I'd say no. It's a well laid out Show, with lots of people milling around and we've had useful enquiries. So in general no, I think they have it reasonably spot on.

I'm sure the organisers are aware that they have to keep changing and adding things to attract the people. Quite often there is something new that visitors haven't seen before, so the turf professionals have to keep coming in order to keep up to date and the organisers most continue that.

I don't think so. Everything has gone well, so I have no complaints. It's just good to be here promoting our products. We have a vital target audience at Harrogate Week.

As a company we offer management consultancy as well as golf course construction. We would have liked to have seen more secretaries, green chairman, managers and committee people here. So we haven't met too many people from that area, but on the construction side we have made many interesting leads.

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Do you have any particular memories that stick in the mind or funny stories from Harrogate Week 2006?

What sticks out is the quality of people and the leads we have had, plus the number of international people here. The British base is crucial to us, but you have to look to the future and building the international field is vital to us and this Show helps that.

I have no funny or embarrassing stories - honestly.

Having a range of nationalities here is great, but the odd language barrier or misunderstanding can take place. There's been a few times I've been having a conversion with an international visitor and we have been on completely different tracks due to the different use of certain words.

Nothing that I've been privy to as yet, but it always comes out the woodwork afterwards. By and large it has just been a good Show and I can't say more than that. It's been new ground for us, we haven't been here before, but will certainly look at coming back next year.

Not many I want to repeat in Greenkeeper International for fear of incriminating people. But it has just been a very good week. The Education side is important for the industry as a whole, not just greenkeepers, but for the people who exhibit too. Harrogate is a very friendly town and the time at night has been well spent helping our business develop.

The week has just gone so fast because it has been so busy. Harrogate is a nice town and a great place to hold the Show. Here you can meet and entertain clients and colleagues on the night, as everyone is based in the town.

Many, but I couldn't tell you. In general it's been a very good week. We have had a lot of fun and are looking forward to coming back.