

# HARROGATE WEEK

## A BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK



**Melissa Jones makes the most of her 'access all areas' pass and takes a look at the hard work that goes into organising this prestigious annual event.**

Visitors from around the world will be gathering in Harrogate, England, later this month for the well-established, premier event in the golf and turf industry – Harrogate Week.

Harrogate Week, Europe's largest indoor turf event that combines both elements of turf and clubhouse management, has become a truly international event with 357 visitors travelling from 30 overseas countries as far a field as Australia, South Africa, the USA and Japan.

Harrogate Week's diversity is growing and visitors from all areas of the sportsturf industry – as well as from farms & estates, local authorities and theme parks – will be attending the three day exhibition and the five day world-renowned 'Continue to Learn' education programme.

With 5500 buyers and over 150 exhibitors, attending every year. Harrogate Week's strong brand provides a platform to build relationships between exhibitors and visitors. With 5495

people visiting last year's show, 2009's event is not to be missed.

So that's how prestigious the annual show has become but what exactly has it taken to achieve this? What goes on behind the scenes?

A lot of planning, preparation and general hard work takes place at BIGGA HQ prior to the annual event. Each department plays their part in making Harrogate Week a success and ensuring the show grows in status year-on-year...

### SALES/EXHIBITION

The biggest department at BIGGA HOUSE, Sales, has the following staff: Rosie McGilvray, Sales Manager; Pauline Thompson, Exhibition Officer; Sue McDonough, Exhibition Sales; Kirstin Smith, Advertising Executive and Sharon Price, Sales Executive.

Sue McDonough works on the show all year and her job takes on a cycle: "After each January show exhibitors are given until the end of February to rebook their stand slot," explained Sue, who spends much of her time during Harrogate Week, speaking to exhibitors about what they would

like to see next year and how they might like to change their stand space.

Come March the hall space is opened up to everyone, and that's when the game of fitting stands around each other while ensuring exhibitors are happy, begins.

"Much of my job is customer service based," said Sue.

"It's important that we look after our existing exhibitors while also trying to develop the show by introducing new stands and clients."

There are many areas of Harrogate Week that also need organising such as: Where the BIGGA stand will be situated, where the eateries and café's will be positioned and how they will be promoted, and also what form the new 'Social Night' will take around the show.

Sharon's role is to help promote businesses by giving them as many options and opportunities as possible, be it website advertisements, show leaflets or information around the halls.

Kirstin works mainly on generating sales for this monthly publication, Greenkeeper International, and advertisements pushing Harrogate Week and exhibiting companies generally come in to play



Pauline Thompson, Exhibition Officer

in the December and January issues.

Probably the biggest and most complicated role is that of Exhibition Officer, taken on by Pauline Thompson.

Pauline is responsible for all the organisation, contracts and bookings for the show.

Her long annual 'to do' list includes organising security, temporary staff, first aid, the exhibitors lounge, catering points and menu's, internal and external signage, the park & ride, insurance, the Internet Café, marketing, registration, the show guide, welcome packs...the list goes on and on!

The Harrogate Week website also plays an important part in promoting the show, and Pauline is responsible for keeping this updated with the latest show news.

Another form of show promotion are advertisements within various publications. "I work with our Designer, Tom, to ensure our Harrogate Week adverts are eye-catching and the readers attention are drawn to them," explained Pauline.

Once Harrogate Week is upon us, Pauline has an early start on Saturday morning. "The first jobs for the contractors are to lay the carpets, measure out floor space, build the stand shells, and then I begin to schedule the lorries in," said Pauline.

The Sunday sees the middle of each hall filled, with the space and removal lorries being coordinated by Pauline and Mike Coleman, Floor Manager. Monday morning is generally when the smaller stands begin to arrive and by the Monday evening everything is set up and ready.

Once the show is underway, Pauline spends much of her time coordinating the main office, inspecting areas from a health & safety perspective and dealing with any queries.



Sue McDonough, Exhibition Sales



Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development

"Once Harrogate Week is over, the Thursday evening and Friday morning take the same form as build-up but in reverse," explained Pauline, who is always keen to ensure that each show is more successful than the last.

Back in the office Pauline starts the whole cycle again, and begins by collating attendance figures and passing these onto the Sales team so they can, once again, begin selling stand space.

### LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

The Learning & Development department consists of Sami Collins, Head of Learning & Development and Rachael Duffy, Learning & Development Administrator.

Sami and Rachael are responsible for Harrogate Week's 'Continue to Learn' education programme.

The department coordinate approximately 65 speakers who run various workshops and seminars. Around 24 of these people will be fringe speakers – exhibitors given the opportunity to run a free session.

Work starts 15-16 months prior to the show, "an outline for the 2009 education programme was drawn up in October 2007," said Sami. "Ideas were finalised in March 2008, they would normally be shown to the education sub-committee, before we go full steam ahead and invite the speakers."

'The Definitive Guide to Harrogate Week 2009' brochure, which details the full 'Continue to Learn' education programme and any fringe seminars booked before it is published, was written in June '08, designed August '08 and went out with the October edition of Greenkeeper International – it



Rachael Duffy, Learning & Development Administrator

is also uploaded to the Harrogate Week website – [www.harrogateweek.org.uk](http://www.harrogateweek.org.uk)

"We are also responsible for the coordination of the required audio visual during workshops and in the auditorium," explained Sami. "We also make decisions regarding the catering arrangements, take bookings via post, phone and internet and produce marketing mail outs promoting the various courses."

Learning & Development also organise the Master Greenkeepers AGM and presentations for events such as: the Environment Competition, Toro Student of the Year, and to those who have acquired new Master Greenkeepers status or achieved a CPD Diploma.

"Badging for delegates and speakers is also a necessity which we organise, as well as sending the 'Continue to Learn' programme to America to have GCSSA credits assigned to courses, and ensuring BASIS credits are also organised," said Rachael.

Sami and Rachael start work at 8am on Sunday, January 18, and control and run the entire 'Continue to Learn' programme throughout Harrogate Week.

### COMMUNICATIONS

BIGGA's Communications department, which consists of Scott MacCallum, Communications Manager/Editor; Melissa Jones, Assistant Editor and Tom Campbell, Design and Production Editor, put together articles, press releases and promotional material to do with Harrogate Week.

Tom designs 'The Definitive Guide to Harrogate Week', the 'Show Guide' and various advertisements/publicity material and signage to promote the event.

Scott and I write various articles, which feature within this publication, about the show. And as well as this, it is our job to email out press releases, help put together the Harrogate Week newsletters, and organise the set up of the Media Centre, taking bookings for press conferences, compiling media packs and ensuring the smooth running of the media centre.

After each show we have a departmental de-brief to discuss ways in which we can keep on improving the facilities.

### ACCOUNTS

BIGGA's accounts department, which consists of Stephen Coates, Accountant and Tracey Tyerman, Assistant Accountant, are responsible for organising the BIGGA stand as well as collecting and paying out money.

"Our role doesn't just involve dealing with money," said Steve. "We organise the BIGGA stand design and arrange what equipment needs to be hired, ensuring tills/PDQ machines are also ordered."

Steve attends planning meetings at BIGGA HQ, and Tracey and he arrange all the invoicing for the seminars/workshops, advertising/sponsorship and stand space. The hire of Harrogate International Centre is also paid for prior to the show.

## PA/SECRETARY

This year Sandra Raper has been responsible for organising an event which is new to Harrogate Week - **BIGGA Social Night**.

Taking place on **Tuesday, January 20, from 7pm until 10.30pm**, the Social Night replaces the banquet that used to take place on the Thursday evening after the show.

Sandra sourced the entertainment – casino tables, arcade games etc, and also picked the menu for the social night.

Sandra compiles agendas and takes minutes for Board meetings and AGM's prior to, and during, the show and helps out with various pieces of admin such as sending out invitations for the Past Chairman's reception and the Bernhard's & Co reception.

## MEMBERSHIP

The membership department, which consists of Tracey Maddison, Head of Membership Services; Justine De Taure, Membership Services Officer, and Brad Anderson, Membership Services Administrator, play a part in the annual show coming to fruition, by sitting on various panels and helping to decide how the BIGGA stand will look.

However, the membership departments work really begins once the show is underway. The staff are on hand to help with membership renewals, to generate new members, and discuss any issues or queries members may have.

## HARROGATE WEEK CHECKLIST

Just in case your mind is still crammed with Christmas memories and aching from New Year Celebrations, we thought we'd offer you a helping hand by putting together a checklist to ensure you make the most of Europe's largest indoor turf event, Harrogate Week:

- Invite Chairman of Green and Secretary
- Book Seminar and Workshop places through BIGGA HQ
- Plan which Fringe Seminars to attend
- Book Social Night tickets through BIGGA HQ
- Confirm travel arrangements
- Have blazer dry cleaned
- Log on to [www.harrogateweek.org.uk](http://www.harrogateweek.org.uk) for the latest Exhibition news
- Email friends and arrange to meet
- Check hotel reservation
- Create a wish list of the new course equipment and services
- Confirm with Treasurer how much money you have in the budget
- Decide which companies you must see during the Exhibition and plan itinerary
- Do some homework to ensure you get maximum benefit from your chosen workshops
- Buy a winter coat, scarf and gloves (it's cold in Yorkshire!)
- Check how many CPD points you need to remain on schedule
- Prepare your palate for the taste of Black Sheep and Theakston's Old Peculiar
- Ask your neighbour to look after any pets
- Put out the rubbish

