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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Harrogate delivers once again

Those who had a feeling of trepidation in the lead up to Harrogate Week 2011, concerns brought on by worldwide recession and the horrible weather we endured in December, saw their fears dissipate as soon as BIGGA Chairman, Paul Worster, cut the green ribbon to proclaim the Show open.

The traditional buzz was there, and in abundance too, albeit assisted by the real life bees Syngenta had as an attraction on its stand, and the Halls soon filled up. The fact that the final attendance was just over 6,000, 2.3% up on last year was a genuine bonus.

Harrogate has always been a partnership of commerce and education and it would be fair to say that the strong Continue to Learn Education Programme, supported by BIGGA's Gold and Silver Key supporters, gave many people a bone fide reason to come to Harrogate. The quality of what was on offer would enhance anyone's career and those who took advantage felt all the better for doing so. Indeed, with a record 2000 plus attending workshops and seminars the week was given a great start before it had even begun.

People will point to the fact that the actual Show was smaller than it has been in the past and, with slightly under three Halls of exhibitors, that is indeed true, but to expect companies in our industry sector to be immune from the economic realities is a little unfair. I was certainly disappointed on behalf of those companies who would desperately have liked to have given themselves the boost to the start of the year that Harrogate Week traditionally offers, but through budget constraints were unable to do so. They will be welcomed back with open arms when they are in a position to re-book.

Those who did exhibit were delighted that they had done so. One of them, Vermigrand, a company in the new Enviro Zone which was exhibiting in Harrogate for the first time, actually said that it was the best and most professionally run show they had ever attended.

Harrogate Week 2011 was also the end of an era as it was the last that John Pemberton will attend in an official capacity.

Having taken the decision to stand down as Chief Executive, John was the recipient of good wishes from the many, many friends and associates he had made during his 18 years with the Association.

Although he is still officially with the Association until the end of April, John will be spending his last couple of months working from home. BIGGA HOUSE will not be the same without his infectious personality and desire to do anything for anyone.

He has left no stone unturned in making BIGGA as strong an organisation as it can be, particularly during his time as Chief Executive, and there are countless members who, directly or indirectly, owe him a great deal.

He will not be disappearing entirely, and I am sure he will still be giving the benefit of his knowledge and experience to the Association whenever he is asked, but he will no doubt make the most of the free time he has to look forward to.

Scott MacCallum
Editor