

### **Grahame Jones**

Grahame Jones started his exhibition career in 1993, when he was invited to join the Operating Board for Haymarket Exhibitions, as Operations Director. During his time at Haymarket he has been instrumental in the launching of shows such as BBC Gardeners' World Live, Autosport Live Action, BBC Top Gear Live, Max Power, BBC Mega Mela, CBBC's Big Bash, Vive La France, and development of Internet Business, BBC Good Food Shows, Clotheshow Live, The Royal Show, Cereals and the Town and Country Festival.

Aside from the usual responsibilities of holding a £20m pa operations budget and managing a staff of 20 Grahame has been instrumental to the success of many innovative event projects. In 1999 it was agreed that 30,000 square metres of hard core surface and compacted concrete at the NEC should be transformed into a haven for gardens lovers for BBC Gardeners' World Live. This involved understanding the objectives and desires of the interested parties; Haymarket, BBC Worldwide, Royal Horticultural Society and the NEC and also managing their great expectations. The project took 10 months and Grahame assembled a team of architects, designers, planners, surveyors, contractors, engineers and lawyers to successfully deliver the new area, which became home to 30 show gardens, a restaurant, 300 trees and 15,000 square metres of outdoor exhibition space. In 2004 he assembled another team to do a similar project to create suitable space for another 20 gardens, picnic areas and new road links and access points for visitors.

In 1996 Grahame was set the challenge of building a racetrack inside hall 12 of the NEC with a grandstand for 2000 seats as part of Autosport International. This was to be the first time such a 'theatre' had been built in the UK and was inspired by a visit to the Bologna Motor Show. This project involved constant liaison with the NEC, Solihull and Birmingham Local Authorities and BRSCC. Issues over Health and Safety, concerns with dilapidation, environmental health worries due to fumes, burning rubber and noise were some of the challenges he had to overcome. Success was marked by the demand and after the second year the track was moved to hall 4 with a 5000 seat grandstand and increased numbers of performances for the visitors, which were hosted by Jeremy Clarkson, Tiff Needell, Samantha Janus, Davina McCall and Melanie Sykes.

The operational side of exhibitions is one of the less exciting areas of the business, and therefore, gets least press and attention. In his role as Group Operations Director Grahame has continuously striven to improve standards, maintain consistency and raise the bar. Grahame was responsible for a self-imposed traffic management system for events that have a high impact on site. In addition he has written and devised numerous documents regarding operational policy, these include; management documents for the Safety Advisory Board, service level agreements, H&S statements and Policies, DDA Policy, crowd control/visitor movement and capacity formulas - some of which have been adopted by the NEC and other venues in their staff training. Other consumer show organisers are also adopting these procedures.

Before working in exhibitions Grahame was Group Distribution Manager for Haymarket Publishing where he took over the production of all Haymarket's business titles with the aim of creating one central department. Within that role he ensured the welfare of the titles after the integration of Haymarket, BBC Magazines and EMAP into Frontline, along with change management of subscription and controlled circulation departments.

When Grahame first joined Haymarket in the mid 70s he established and managed a hand delivery operation for Campaign and Marketing magazines into central London. During the postal strikes he expanded the routes to include suburbs and every major city and town in England. He also negotiated with British Rail and road haulage companies to create best working practices and relationships and diplomatically managed SOGAT as one of the youngest managers at Haymarket.

Grahame now works on a consultancy basis offering his skills to both new and existing businesses of all sizes. He specialising in strategising, developing others, influencing, logistics and devising and implementing company policies and standards to complement those set by the industry. He is particularly interested in the sustainability issues facing the industry.