The 2011 delegation was originally selected to travel to the GIS, in New Orleans, in 2009, however due to a general ‘tightening of belts’ throughout the UK, the trip to the USA flagship greenkeeping show was postponed for two years.

The announcement to recommence the trip to the USA, starting with a visit in February 2011 to Orlando, Florida, was met with delight by the delegation originally selected.

Tuesday, January 18 – Harrogate BTMe

Beyond the interviews, the whole experience started properly at the Bernhard Reception which this year was held at the Old Bell Tavern in Harrogate. Delegates were introduced to each other and were given the opportunity to meet with past delegates, and of course selected members of the GCSAA and our hosts in Florida. It was a great occasion, in an excellent atmosphere and an opportunity to put faces to names. Information packs were distributed and introductions made, anticipation was high.

Saturday, February 5 – Marriott Cypress Harbour, Orlando, Florida

With the flight from London Gatwick behind us, we arrived at the Marriott Cypress Harbour, south of downtown Orlando. A fantastic hotel including self-catering lodges which we shared. Once settled we used the remainder of the evening to get to know each other and, of course, sample the local brews – A typical American Sports Bar – Orena, was highly recommended by one of the hotel staff and was an excellent choice, soon to become our second home for social downtime.

Sunday February 6

Sunday morning was free time; enabling the more familiar with Orlando to introduce the new visitors among us, to the sights and sounds on what was a quite cool morning. Wandering around with cameras photographing upturned buildings and American menus among other things. It really is an assault on the senses.

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house of one of our chaperoons. Gina Putnam’s parents live in a
stunning home within a golf course estate and it was clear as soon as
we were all invited in and through the patio doors, overlookng the
immaculate golf course, we were in for an excellent evening of Super
Bowl and spirited conversation. A fantastic night was had by all and a
big thank you to our hosts Mr and Mrs Putnam.

Monday February 7

With the jetlag dealt with and friendships confirmed, we set off
early to visit two golf courses. First on the agenda was the Orange
County National - Panther Lake, followed by Marriott Grande Pines.
Chris Brocious, the Equipment Manager at Orange County National - Panther Lake, was our
guide around this extensive 45 hole golf course and golf facility.
With over 1000 acres of land and what appeared to be the largest practice area we have ever
seen, Chris took us through the maintenance schedule for the
tree golf courses, which included the responsibilities he and his fellow 43 staff have to meet to
maintain this extremely busy golf facility. With over 90,000 rounds of golf throughout the year, they
are kept busy delivering a very well presented golf course 365 days of the year.

Onto Marriott Grande Pines in the afternoon and more significantly, the golf
course situated around our accommodation, where we were
introduced to Superintendent, Chris Flynn CGCS. Chris led us through his immaculate
maintenance facility and with a refreshing honesty, answered all
our many questions including nutrient programmes, irrigation
principles and his environmental aspirations. Grande Pines
dating back to the 1960s, was re-constructed in 2002 and is
currently maintained by a modest team of 18 staff - with over 42,000
rounds per year, the 7012 yard
golf course is maintained within a $1.2m budget.

While out on the golf course Chris explained the processes
of over seeding during cool temperatures and the transition between Bermuda and Perennial
Yrs and including some of the
many challenges Superintendents face every year in a changing
climate.

With the tour of Grande Pines complete we took the short journey
to the Faldo Golf Institute, which is also managed by Chris. A
staggering ‘practice facility’ with a
‘family fun’ 9 hole golf course - all
managed with 10 staff and with a
budget of $750,000.

On our return to Cypress Harbour, we relented for the
evening and joined the John Deere
GolfVIP Event. All ten delegates
joined well over 1,000 international guests at The Cuba Libre, at
Pointe Orlando, for drinks and an
excellent opportunity to meet with
friends and colleagues from across the world - a thoroughly enjoyable evening which was completed with a
few games of pool, table tennis and an opportunity to show the
locals how to play their own game of Cornhole - (You’ll have to
Google it).

Tuesday 8 February - Field Trip

Tuesday we were off on our first field trip seminar. We joined a group of over 200
Superintendents, Golf Course Managers and Greenkeepers from
across the globe.

The trip took in four golf courses among which were: Shingle Creek,
Bay Hill Golf Club & Lodge (Hosts of the Arnold Palmer Invitational),
Marriott Grande Pines and The Faldo Institute for a closer look and
the quite magnificent Ritz-Carlton
Golf Club.

It was widely agreed that the Greg Norman designed
Ritz-Carlton was by far the most impressive golf course we have
seen to date. Staggering attention to detail and perfectly presented,
the quite magnificent Ritz-Carlton
golf course, discussing the business of
golf facility. Without a BIGGA stand at
this year’s show, we used the
time wisely to talk to the many companies and vendors, collecting
information, product brochures, exchanging business cards and of
course, discussing the business of
golf course management.

All the four golf courses we visited
operated on well over $1 million
budgets, with recently constructed (2003) Ritz-Carlton an enviable $1.4
operational spend.

All the main players were
represented and of course many
we had never heard of.

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DELEGATION TRIP

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With over 1000 acres of land and what appeared to be the largest practice area we have ever seen, Chris took us through the maintenance schedule for the three golf courses, which included the responsibilities he and his fellow 43 staff have to meet to maintain this extremely busy golf facility. With over 90,000 rounds of golf throughout the year, they are kept busy delivering a very well presented golf course 365 days of the year.

On to Marriott Grande Pines in the afternoon and more significantly, the golf course situated around our accommodation, where we were introduced to Superintendent, Chris Flynn CGCS. Chris led us through his immaculate maintenance facility and with a refreshing honesty, answered all our many questions including nutrient programmes, irrigation techniques and his environmental aspirations. Grande Pines dating back to the 1960s, was re-constructed in 2002 and is currently maintained by a modest team of 18 staff – with over 42,000 rounds per year, the 7012 yard golf course is maintained within a $1.2m budget.

While out on the golf course Chris explained the processes of over seeding during cool temperatures and the transition between Bermudagrass and Perennial Ryegrass and including some of the many challenges Superintendents face every year in a changing climate.

With the tour of Grande Pines complete we took the short journey to the Faldo Golf Institute, which is also managed by Chris. A staggering ‘practice facility’ with a ‘family fun’ 9 hole golf course – all managed with 10 staff and with a budget of $750,000.

On our return to Cypress Harbour, we决议d for the evening and joined the John Deere Golf VIP Event. All ten delegates joined well over 1,000 international guests at The Cuba Libre, at Pointe Orlando, for drinks and an excellent opportunity to meet with friends and colleagues from across the world – a thoroughly enjoyable evening which was completed with a few games of pool, table tennis and an opportunity to show the locals how to play their own game of Caribolole – You’ll have to Google it.

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The trip took in four golf courses among which were: Shingle Creek, Bay Hill Golf Club & Lodge (Hosts of the Arnold Palmer Invitational), Marriott Grande Pines and The Faldo Institute for a closer look and an unrivalled level of quality. All the four golf courses we visited face every year in a changing climate.

With the tour of Grande Pines complete we took the short journey to the Faldo Golf Institute, which is also managed by Chris. A staggering ‘practice facility’ with a ‘family fun’ 9 hole golf course – all managed with 10 staff and with a budget of $750,000.

All the four golf courses we visited represented golf course Superintendents and, of course, Deputy Superintendent, Josh, were excellent ambassadors for American golf greenkeeping, speaking with confidence and with a very high knowledge of their respective golf resorts and profession.

Early evening we made our way to the Convention Centre to attend the opening ceremony of the GCSCA Show. During the proceedings, we were introduced to the many different offices which make up the management of the GCSCA including the new President, Jim Fitzroy CGCS. Jim talked about his aspirations for the GCSCA for 2011 and beyond and along with new CEO, Rhett Evans, delivered various awards to golf course Superintendents from across the US and to our delight, a very proud David Cole, of Loch Lomond Golf Club, for and along with new CEO, Rhett Evans, delivered various awards to golf course Superintendents from across the US and to our delight, a very proud David Cole, of Loch Lomond Golf Club, for and along with new CEO, Rhett Evans, delivered various awards to golf course Superintendents from across the US and to our delight, a very proud David Cole, of Loch Lomond Golf Club, for and along with new CEO, Rhett Evans, delivered various awards to golf course Superintendents from across the US and to our delight, a very proud David Cole, of Loch Lomond Golf Club, for...
There are obvious fundamental differences between both countries and how we deal with the everyday challenges on the golf courses, however, the demand for perfection on the US resort golf courses and almost at any cost, can often create problems of its own – from this has developed an industry of fixers and problem solvers. It cannot, however, be argued that the Superintendents on high end resort golf courses, deliver anything other than exceptional standards and under incredible pressure.

What came as a very pleasant surprise was the amount of people who travel from the UK to visit the show. As we wandered around the various hallways and booths, it was great to meet up with familiar faces, have a coffee and share experiences.

With 3.30pm approaching, all the delegates made their way back from the various conversations and meetings, to meet at the Bernhard & Co stand for the customary photo call and then on to meet Golf Course Superintendent of The Old Collier Golf Club, Tim Hiers. Tim led the effort to achieve the designation of the first Audubon International Gold Signature Cooperative Sanctuary and more recently became recipient of the 2009 GCSAA Excellence in Government Relations Award. Joined by Stephen Bernhard, we joined Tim in a conference room within the convention centre whereupon we listened carefully as Tim spoke.

Throughout the hour we heard about Tim’s experiences and opinions on everything from member communication, maintenance facilities and resource management. Unfortunately the opportunities for questions were limited however, the few considered questions put to Tim he took the time to answer based on his considerable experience.

At 5.30pm on Wednesday afternoon we all made our way to Tommy Bahama’s, for the Bernhard reception. This event was very well attended by many of Bernhard & Co’s past US delegates, friends and associates. Once again, this was an excellent opportunity to meet with many experienced colleagues from around the world and very well organised by our friends from Bernhard & Company. With a Who’s Who of British and American greenkeepers in attendance, the opportunity to meet, network and interact was very well managed and the philosophy of our American cousins and how they meet the needs of the golf courses they manage. Our lecturer, Mr. David L. Dobbert, of The International Sports Turf Research Centre, introduced himself as an individual who concentrated on rootzones and growing mediums, the sensation practices employed to maintain healthy turf & drainage challenges. David delivered a very comprehensive talk which identified many best practices based on his experiences and his significant career in managing the physical properties of growing mediums. Using anecdotal evidence, slides and video, he offered sound practical advice on how to deliver consistent surfaces on any golf course. All delegates were given a comprehensive pack with all the information within the seminar and with that, returned to the hotel to prepare for our last night in Orlando.

Friday evening we all attended the Jacobsen International Reception at the Universal theme park. Again in attendance were many British greenkeepers and associates of our industry. A fantastic evening was had by all and with us all meeting later for one last night at ‘our’ local bar, we enjoyed a couple of beers and chatted about the whole experience in Orlando at the Golf Industry Show. With Saturday being a free day before flying home, the discussions, laughter and drinks carried on well into the night.

The 2011 BIGGA Delegation brought the number of British greenkeepers who have travelled to The Golf Industry Show to 90 delegates, and with 20 delegates travelling from the US to BTME, Bernhard & Co need to be thanked for their unwavering support and service to greenkeeping and golf course management.

With the backing of Stephen Bernhard, the incredible hard work displayed by Kim Furnell & Gina Putnam, all delegates who have been fortunate enough to attend the trips to the industry shows, have benefited hugely. The whole process for the 2011 BIGGA Delegation has been educational, warm felt and appreciated and brought together ten like-minded individuals who are better people and golf greenkeepers for the whole experience.

On our return and since we attended The Golf Industry Show, emails have been exchanged between delegates themselves, with our US contemporaries and some of the many people we met along the way – all which proves, the BIGGA British Delegation really works and for which, some of the many people we met travelling from the US to BTME, Bernhard & Co should be suitably thanked and rewarded for their self-less efforts.
incredible pressure. Exceptional standards and under deliver anything other than argued that the Superintendents solvers. It cannot, however, be industry of fixers and problem courses, however, the demand for everyday challenges on the golf fundamentals between both the 2009 GCSAA Excellence in Cooperative Sanctuary and more International Gold Signature Collier Golf Club, Tim Hiers. Tim led the effort to achieve the designation of the first Audubon International Gold Signature Cooperative Sanctuary and more recently became recipient of the 2009 GCSAA Excellence in Government Relations Award. Joined by Stephen Bernhard, we joined Tim in a conference room within the convention centre whereupon we listened carefully as Tim spoke.

Throughout the hour we heard about Tim’s experiences and opinions on everything from member communication, maintenance practices and facilities to budgetary control. Many Superintendents were familiar with our efficient golf greenkeeping operations, there were those who weren’t — many staggered by the available resources, available manpower and results we, the British greenkeepers, achieve year in year out. With Bernhard & Co facilitating the introductions, again many friendships were made which will maintained for longer than the week spent in Orlando.

**Friday 11 February**

- **All day seminar**

Transferred by Kim and Gina, from Bernhards, we once again attended the Orange County Convention Centre, this time to attend a seminar titled: The Science of Physical Properties in the Real World – Beyond the Textbooks.

It was clear from the prior early evening, that all delegates were well prepared for this opportunity to gain a further understanding of the management and the philosophy of our American cousins and how they meet the needs of the golf courses they manage. Our lecturer, Mr. David L. Doherty, of The International Sports Turf Research Centre, introduced himself as an individual who concentrated on rootzones and growing mediums, the sensation practices employed to maintain healthy turf & drainage challenges. David delivered a very comprehensive talk which identified many best practices based on his experiences and his significant career in managing the physical properties of growing mediums. Using anecdotal evidence, slides and video, he offered sound practical advice on how to deliver consistent surfaces on any golf course. All delegates were given a comprehensive pack with all the information within the seminar and with that, returned to the hotel to prepare for our last night in Orlando.

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We all understand the importance of looking after machinery and the reasons why, but sometimes with all the pressures from all around us we sometimes forget the basics.

1. Operator Training

Probably the most important part of the workplace safety, ensuring all operators young and old, experienced or not, have regular reviews in machinery operation and safe practices.

2. Pre and post operation checks

With the constant pressure of an ever increasing workload sometimes pre start check get overlooked, not only does this risk operator safety it also reduces machine performance and increases the possibility of expensive machinery damage. Washing down machinery after use not only helps retain the value of the machine but can show up oil leaks or damaged parts before they lead to untimely breakdowns or turf damage.

3. Storage

Safe and secure storage is a must, not only for safely getting on and of machinery but with the global economic downturn expensive machinery becomes even more susceptible to thieves, simply marking machinery with some sort of identification to your club is enough to deter the opportunistic thief, while chaining together the smaller, easy picking items like chainsaws and strimmers can put them off too.

4. Scheduled maintenance

Routine maintenance through the cutting season can be neglected due to busy periods, staff shortages and cost, but cutting corners on routine maintenance can lead to serious and expensive issues with machinery, in the short term it may save money but in the long term can lead to catastrophic failures and large repair costs.

5. Equipment replacement plan

A rolling replacement plan is easy to set up, not only does it help forecast replacement costs over a five or ten year period, run side by side with machinery maintenance costs can be a useful tool in managing your golf club’s machinery purchases.

6. A good work place attitude

Everyone wants to work in a positive and happy environment. No one wants to work at a place where everyone is bickering and just putting in their time just to get paid. If you work in a company that is happy and has the necessary equipment and materials to make a job easier to do, then staff can do their job more proficiently and correctly. A company that is constantly having down time because of outdated equipment or shabby materials will see a decrease in performance and staff morale.

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* Independent trials conducted by STRI, confirming curative activity against Dry Patch, together with improving sward strength and colour

Stuart Hall, of John O’Gaunt GC and the IGCEMA, offers advice on making the most of your machinery

MAKING THE MOST OF MACHINERY
A QUICK GUIDE TO...
MAKING THE MOST OF MACHINERY

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Hedging your bets

Steve Moul makes the case for considering a traditional hedge as opposed to a fence or a wall when looking at boundaries.

Fence, wall or something else? Choosing the right solution for a boundary has long caused headaches and on occasion heartache. Sometimes people, including the ‘expert’ landscape architects, planners and designers overlook what could easily be the best solution of all – a hedge.

Hedging offers many benefits, among them:

- **Practicality and privacy**
  A wall or a fence can normally only provide cover up to six feet. Planning laws and at times, those of Physics can prevent any fence or wall from being over six feet tall in order to avoid a potential eyesore.
  The right kind of hedge can start at six feet or more and will gradually increase your cover until it reaches the desired height. It goes without saying that a well maintained hedge should last a lifetime, whereas many fences will need replacing every few years and walls will need re-pointing and repair.

- **Natural beauty**
  Hedges offer a softer, more natural boundary than walling or fencing. Where a boundary extends along the entire frontage of a large estate or golf course, perhaps several hundred metres in length, the contrast between hedging and a hard landscaped boundary can be huge. Who wants a prison wall look?

- **Security**
  Choosing a prickly hedge such as Holly, Hawthorn or Pyracantha can be an amazingly effective deterrent to anyone who wants to enter your property unlawfully.

- **Nature and wildlife**
  Hedges can be an excellent habitat for many creatures and can give shelter and food throughout the seasons. Birds especially love to pick on the berries of holly and hawthorn and the invertebrates that thrive in hedges.

- **Noise and wind shelter**
  Solid walls and fences simply deflect the wind upwards and over, hedges absorb the wind and calm it.
  The extra height and thickness of a hedge is an extremely effective way of filtering out high noise levels and providing increased shelter from cold winds.

- **Planning**
  It may be your only option as many planners are now insisting on hedges instead of walls or fences in order to soften the effect of any new development on the environment. Planners will also stipulate a minimum initial height and may even specify the type of plants to use.
  Once you have decided to install a hedge, there are many other things to consider before planting. The choice of plants is critical and making the right decision depends upon a number of factors.

  Key factors that should be considered are:

  1. **Function of the hedge**
     Is this a formal hedge, what is its primary purpose and at what height will it ultimately need to be maintained at?
  2. **Evergreen or deciduous**
     Consider the desired appearance and function of the hedge throughout the year.
  3. **Location**
     This could easily be the deciding factor to consider for many people as we all have to work to a budget. However, beware the false economy of buying cheap, poor quality plants.

     • Ask the supplier to show you evidence of the quality of plants you can expect to receive.

     • Site tests and any overhanging foliage will have the biggest effect on the plants.

     Ask for advice on how to improve the soil from your supplier.

  4. **Soil type and location**
     Most common hedging plants are very hardy and tolerant of a wide range of conditions, but some will do better than others in certain soils and aspects.

     • Light levels and any overhanging foliage will have the biggest effect on the plants.

     Ask for advice on how to improve the soil from your supplier.

  5. **Nearby trees, foundations and waterways**
     Any of these things can affect levels of moisture that make it to the roots of newly planted hedges.

     Concrete footings and tree root systems can reduce water levels, but nearby streams and ditches can raise water tables in a way that may not be visible on the soil surface.

     Good knowledge of local conditions is advised in order to ascertain whether a hedge is the correct option.

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Hedging your bets

Steve Moul makes the case for considering a traditional hedge as opposed to a fence or a wall when looking at boundaries.

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• Practicality and privacy A wall or a fence can normally only provide cover up to six feet. Planning laws and at times, those of Physics may prevent any fence or wall from being over six feet tall in order to avoid a potential eyesore.

The right kind of hedge can start at six feet or more and will gradually increase your cover until it reaches the desired height. It goes without saying that a well maintained hedge should last a lifetime, whereas many fences will need replacing every few years and walls will need re-pointing and repair.

• Natural beauty Hedges offer a softer, more natural boundary than walling or fencing. Where a boundary extends along the entire frontage of a large estate or golf course, perhaps several hundred metres in length the contrast between hedging and a hard landscaped boundary can be huge. Who wants a prison wall look?

• Security Choosing a prickly hedge such as Holly, Hawthorn or Pyracantha can be an amazingly effective deterrent to someone who wants to enter your property unlawfully.

• Nature and wildlife Hedges can be an excellent habitat for many creatures and can give shelter and food throughout the seasons. Birds especially love to pick on the berries of holly and hawthorn and the invertebrates that thrive in hedges.

• Noise and wind shelter Solid walls and fences simply deflect the wind upwards and over, hedges absorb the wind and calm it. The extra height and thickness of a hedge is an extremely effective way of filtering out high noise levels and providing increased shelter from cold winds.

• Planning It may be your only option as many planners are now insisting on hedges instead of walls or fences in order to soften the effect of any new development on the environment. Planners will also stipulate a minimum initial height and may even specify the type of plants to use.

Once you have decided to install a hedge, there are many other things to consider before planting. The choice of plants is critical and making the right decision depends upon a number of factors:

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Ask the supplier to show you evidence of the quality of plants you can expect to receive.

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The extra height and thickness of a hedge is an extremely effective way of filtering out high noise levels and providing increased shelter from cold winds.
6. Are you planting the hedge?

Planting a large hedge is labour intensive. Large root-balled trees can weigh up to and above 100kg each. Do you have the right equipment to unload the plants, dig a trench, move the plants around and lift them in? Plants can easily be damaged by mishandling. This could require at least two pieces of specialist equipment such as a Manitou forklift and a large excavator. Some hedge suppliers will offer a planting service which includes all of the appropriate machinery and knowledge involved in giving the hedge the best start possible.

Once the decisions have all been made, it will be time to start looking for the right plants. Where to start looking? Local nurseries are probably not your best option. It could take days or weeks to trawl through them to find anything remotely like what you’re looking for, assuming they can even offer the right quantity, size and quality. That could become a never-ending task.

Turning to the internet would seem like the obvious thing to do, but Google ‘Mature hedging’ and you are faced with the opposite problem. You will find dozens and dozens of websites all apparently offering the product you want, but the prices vary enormously. Also, how do you know what to expect in terms of quality and how do you go about sending back a lorry load of plants if they turn out to be the wrong size or type?

Current Distance Selling Regulations (2000) provide the buyer with a seven day cooling off period, which puts the onus on the supplier to get it right first time. It would seem that this old fashioned industry is moving forward. The product itself is changing fast, in order to respond to the growing demand for ‘instant results’. While one has always been able to buy box, yew and beech hedging etc in a range of sizes, it is now also available in a range of shapes too.

Many growers are now offering very high quality, instant hedging plants or ‘elements’ which would fool most people that the hedge has been growing in that spot for a number of years ago, but they have become much more affordable and commonplace in recent years thanks to internet competition.

The internet is not the only way that this business is moving forward. The product itself is changing fast, in order to respond to the growing demand for ‘instant results’. While one has always been and cultivating plants in rows hundreds of metres long. Ongoing maintenance is carried out in the same fashion, by tractors crawling alongside the crop trimming and undercutting the plants automatically.

The person walking behind is there only to monitor the progress of the machine as it moves along. The results are spectacular too – hedges can now be supplied that are arrow straight, two metres tall and are literally the finished article. Many growers are now offering very high quality, instant hedging plants or ‘elements’ which would fool most people that the hedge has been growing in that spot for a number of years.

The days of lining out and spiralling thousands of bare root whips may be numbered as the customer increasingly wants a solution that won’t take years to achieve.

The best compromise would be to use the internet to find a supplier that will engage with you in a professional manner to find the best solution to suit your needs and will guarantee to deliver a fantastic end product whatever your budget.

Contact
Steve Moul and Mark Jones
Hedgeworx Ltd
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(01491) 826925