



The 68th
GCSAA
International
Golf Course
Conference
and Show in Las
Vegas last month

attracted a great many visitors including a delegation from BIGGA which included Chairman Pat Murphy and Miracle Professional Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Cedric Gough (pictured above) who won the trip as part of his prize. Cedric took time on his return to write about his experiences while Stateside.

Having been fortunate enough to win the 1996 Miracle Professional Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award my prize was a trip to Las Vegas to the GCSAA Conference and Show.

Before we were due to fly out my wife, Judith and I, met up with the BIGGA team. It was nice to see some familiar faces Pat Murphy and his wife Linda, their son Ian, Neil Thomas, John Pemberton and Sami Collins who helped to guide me through my stay in Vegas.

After a long flight we arrived keen to see the sights and sounds of Las Vegas. We checked into the Las Vegas Hilton at the same time as the Lennox Lewis/Oliver McCall world title fight was on and no sooner had I arrived than I found myself bumping into ex World Champion Jim Watt and Reg Gutteridge who were over to commentate on the fight.

The accommodation was out of this world – the food and drink being so cheap and petrol just 80p a gallon. The show was mammoth and it was quite an experience just walking around it. You would have needed a week to take it all in.

The American Greenkeepers and Course Superintendents I met and spoke to were very welcoming and really interested to hear what you had to say... when you could get a word in. They had plenty of interesting ideas some of which I plan to put into practice. Because I got on so well with them I found myself inviting them back to Broadway for a round of golf. I just hope they don't all turn up on the same day!

There were plenty of new products and ideas on show and I would strongly recommend anybody who gets the opportunity to go to it.

I was lucky enough to attend a top quality banquet with Kenny Loggins providing the music and where Ben Crenshaw was presented with the "Old Tom Morris Award" by our American counter-

Viva Las Vegas!



Scenes from the GCSAA show in Las Vegas and, above, BIGGA's Neil Thomas and John Pemberton flying the flag on the Association's stand

parts for services to golf.

I stopped on in the US, as it was too good an opportunity to miss, for another eight days to take in the sights and included a helicopter flight over the Grand Canyon.

Unfortunately my trip back home was not as straightforward as my flight out as somewhere between Phoenix and Los Angeles I lost one of my bags. This has since been returned to me but my other bag also disappeared at

Heathrow. This contained my passport and has yet to be found. So if you come across somebody in your street called Cedric Gough please give me a call.

May I pass on my thanks to Miracle Professional Products through Greenkeeper International for sponsoring the Miracle Professional Greenkeeper of the Year Award – my lads would also like to say a special thanks for the £500.

Further thanks also to Miracle Professional Business Manager Roger Mossop, to Richard Minton and to the present BIGGA Chairman Pat Murphy, Neil Thomas and Scott MacCallum.

To Sami Collins and the other BIGGA girls and to my fellow finalists whom it was a pleasure to meet. I wish them all the best for the future.

May I also say to other greenkeepers like myself, who may have second thoughts about entering the new Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award, or indeed any award, go for it.

The reaction I have received from everybody I meet is pleasantly surprising – the Wolves Manager Mark McGhee has even been in touch to congratulate me on my achievement. In return I have given him a few tips and since then Wolverhampton Wanderers have gone from strength to strength.

The lads and I have also risen in stature at the club and the members of Broadway Golf Club are genuinely pleased for us.