

Neil Thomas reports on the selection of the BIGGA Delegation to visit Canada...

TEN GOOD MEN AND TRUE

The Delegation

Midland Region

Anthony Bindley
Ray Clark

Northern Region

Anthony Davies MG
Jimmy Richardson

Scottish Region

Andrew Forrest
Archie Dunn

S West & S Wales Region

Peter Lacey
Richard Whyman

South East Region

Tom Smith
Raymond Day



From top; Neil Thomas, Sam McLean and Stephen Bernhard

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" wrote John Keats of Autumn many years ago. My October odyssey around our Regions to help select our Delegation to Canada would suggest that times have changed! In a recent conversation with Chris Kennedy he informed me that Wentworth had just experienced its 37th consecutive day of rain to a greater or lesser degree. Where now the autumns of long ago!

What a rewarding experience the interviews around the Regions proved to be while Bernhard & Co are to be applauded for this initiative in enabling ten of our members to participate in a Delegation which will be not only beneficial for their personal development but will help cement relationships with an Association who seek close ties with BIGGA. Clearly there will be expectations from the perspectives of both BIGGA and Bernhard & Co and as one candidate so succinctly put it "this will be no jolly". Far from it. Already the successful ten have been advised to begin preparatory work in relation to researching the visit and it is hoped that they will renew or make contacts in Canada. There will be a full briefing for the Delegation and we will be working to ensure that it has a high profile, while on their return we will be looking for the ten to pass on their experiences to fellow members in a number of practical ways.

Each interview panel comprised, in

addition to myself, two Regional Board nominees and either Stephen Bernhard or Sam McLean as the company representative. This ensured a broad cross-section among the panels and enabled us to judge candidates from both regional and national perspectives together with a business viewpoint through Stephen and Sam. In the course of 26 interviews many valid points were made in relation to the Association and from a personal angle it was a valuable learning experience. The project is something new for BIGGA and to be widely welcomed in the opportunity it has provided for members at "grass-roots" level to benefit themselves personally as well as their Association and profession.

Of course, when selection was involved there were always going to be those who would not make the Delegation. Sixteen members were runners-up and their initial reaction will surely and very naturally have been disappointment. They will be assisted with their trip to BTME 2001 in recognition of being nominated for panel interview as worthy representatives of both Section and Region. Standards set at interview were invariably high and reflected well on the professionalism which so many of our members now demonstrate in their working lives, their Association activities and to their profession in general. I do hope that those disappointed will

consider that they have gained from the experience.

So to Canada and we look forward to strengthening our ties with the CGSA. They have had a strong presence at BTME in recent years and all the indications are that they will be well represented again at BTME 2001. This lends credence to our exhibition as truly international and demonstrates the commonality of greenkeeping worldwide with many shared aspirations and problems. BIGGA is far and away the second largest greenkeeping Association in the world and we have a key role to play in promoting the profession in a global context, particularly assisting the smaller Associations worldwide, and especially in Europe, to develop and progress. We have much in common with the CGSA and our relationship with them has growing importance in terms of influencing positive developments for the profession worldwide. These are considerations which our Delegation to the CGSA event in Vancouver will come to understand and appreciate. Bernhard's initiative may well prove to be the forerunner not only for closer international co-operation, but also in terms of the future greater impact of greenkeeping within the world of golf in its widest sense.

Neil Thomas
Executive Director, BIGGA

A message from our sponsors

Bernhard's are delighted to have the opportunity to develop their relationship with British Greenkeepers by sponsoring a group of BIGGA members to travel to the Canadian National show in February.

Meeting many candidates from the several regions during the selection process has been enlightening. Many candidates were able to discuss views and attitudes aimed at developing the professional standing of BIGGA and its members. Several had strong views on the national and local manage-

ment and communications while others were determined to improve local awareness of the many activities and career development opportunities offered by the BIGGA regions.

Education proved to be a hot topic for many and reinforced the views held by the Bernhard Company, who dedicate a great deal of time to providing a broad range of educational seminars based on the impact of mowers upon the growth of turf.

We were particularly pleased to note how many of the candidates expressed

a desire to improve not only educational standards but also to improve the expectations and examination processes in our industry.

The British industry will be well represented by this interesting and widely differing group of first class Greenkeepers who come from all over the British Isles and we are proud to be associated with them all.

Stephen Bernhard
Managing Director, Bernhard & Co