

Neil Thomas reports on the selection of the second BIGGA Delegation – this time to the GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show in Orlando ...

# Bernhard's ten to hit Orlando



Neil Thomas

## The Delegation

### Midland Region

Philip Gates - Trentham Golf Club  
David Winterton MG - Maidenhead Golf Club

### Northern Region

Tony Smith - Hurlston Hall Golf Club  
Patrick McAteer - Nefyn Golf Club

### Scottish Region

Ronnie Bunting - Kilmacollm Golf Club  
Jim Paton - West Kilbride Golf Club

### South West & South Wales

Ivor Scoones - Long Ashton Golf Club  
Jeff Mills - Taunton & Pickering Golf Club

### South East Region

Ian Willett - Thorpeness Golf, Hotel & CC  
Tony Dunstan - Mill Hill Golf Club

Was it really a year ago, I thought, when my diary showed the October week allocated to the selection of the second BIGGA Delegation in association with Bernhard & Company? A year since we selected the ten BIGGA members to visit the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association Conference and Show in Vancouver?

What a memorable event that had turned out to be, greatly benefiting our delegates who have since passed on their experiences in a number of both formal and informal ways to fellow greenkeepers. It was a pleasure, therefore, to hear from Stephen Bernhard of the success of the visit from his company's perspective and of his wish to support a second Delegation, this time to the 73rd GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show in Orlando, Florida.

The itinerary looked daunting and the geography considerable, with the five BIGGA Regions to be covered in five days but with much to be gained - not only for those selected but also for the runners-up who will be assisted with their trips to BTME 2002 in recognition of their being worthy representatives of both Section and Region. It is not only the candidates who gain but also those who undertake the interviews.

From my own viewpoint, I interviewed 23 members during the week and again this year that proved to be a valuable learning experience. I feel sure, also, that both Stephen and Sam McLean learnt much from the exercise. Two Regional Board representatives joined each Regional Panel. I was ever present while Stephen joined us for the Northern and Midland Region interviews with



Above: Flashback to last year's Bernhard's delegation to Vancouver, Canada

Sam taking over in the South East, South West and South Wales and Scottish Regions.

Members had been asked to submit a personal profile including details of education and training and career summary as well as membership history within BIGGA. They had been asked to explain why they warranted selection for and would benefit from the Orlando visit. They would need to demonstrate an ability to represent BIGGA in a public relations role at an international event. From these criteria we developed wide ranging interviews which proved both demanding and stimulating.

At the end of each day, difficult decisions had to be made, decisions on the one hand which would elicit elation while on the other disappointment would be marked. I believe the chosen delegation represents a broad cross-section of our membership and there is every reason to believe that they will be equally as successful as the Vancouver Delegates in representing both BIGGA and the greenkeeping profession.

No jolly is this - as last year's inter-

pid travellers found out. The ten selected are already embarked on researching the visit - in terms of such issues as climatic and geographic differences, budget comparisons, personnel employed on American golf courses and educational development of staff. All this will contribute to the knowledge and experiences to be gained during the trip which they will need to record with notes and photographs for presentations to fellow greenkeepers on their return.

Bernhard & Company are a leading supporter of our educational and training programmes and we at BIGGA greatly appreciate this initiative over the last two years. Members can only gain from the experience as will the Association. The impact of the Delegation in Canada was considerable and I have no doubt this will again be the case in Orlando. Coupled with the Old Tom Morris Award to Walter Woods during the Show, BIGGA's international standing and leadership role within the greenkeeping profession will most certainly be further enhanced.



Stephen Bernhard



Sam McLean

## Bernhard's Managing Director, Stephen Bernhard, explains his thoughts behind the scholarships

Earlier this year Bernhard & Company were delighted to host 10 British greenkeepers to represent our industry by attending the Canadian National Turf Show in Vancouver. The visit was a great success, new friends were made and the connection between the British and Canadian greenkeepers was strengthened.

Bernhard's are delighted to again take the initiative in further developing this relationship with international greenkeepers by sponsoring another group of ten BIGGA members to travel to the GCSAA National show in Orlando next February.

The interview process has again been enlightening. As before, many personal views have been expressed by candidates. Certainly the need for more effective local communication has

become widely felt. Education is being asked for but at a local level and with greater involvement from suppliers. Bernhard's embrace this view.

We believe that involvement of this type in the British industry and sharing knowledge and experiences of our American customers, will boost standards of working practices and knowledge of participants on both sides of the Atlantic.

As the world is moving again into a cycle of economic constraint, we will all need to become more effective. That will mean working smarter and with greater flexibility. By hosting events of this type, Bernhard's enjoy the opportunity to listen to what our colleagues in the industry are saying, learning how best to help them by supplying grinding equipment that also works smarter

and meets the real needs of the market.

During this trip to Orlando, visitors will enjoy an opportunity to see a totally different type of "destination golf experience". Hopefully the information that they gather will be disseminated to their colleagues at home, for that is the objective of this venture.

Bernhard's feel that it is essential, this year, that each BIGGA Region and every individual Section ask the locally selected representatives to spend some time with members sharing the experiences of the trip during an evening presentation.

Once again, we have a varied and interesting group of British Greenkeepers who will represent our industry in Orlando. Bernhard & Company are proud to be the sponsor and wish all those travelling an interesting and thoroughly enjoyable experience.