

BIGGA Delegation Heads for the Deep South...

Neil Thomas reports

In 2001 the first BIGGA Delegation in association with Bernhard & Company ventured forth to the west coast of Canada and the wonderful city of Vancouver to the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association Conference and Show. Such was the success of this visit that a further 10 BIGGA members formed a second Delegation in 2002 to the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando. To date 20 BIGGA members have greatly benefited from an international experience which has taken in a trade show, enabled them to attend educational seminars as well as visit golf clubs to view facilities and maintenance regimes at first hand. To a man they will tell you just how much they have benefited from the opportunity.

INTERVIEWING PANEL



Neil Thomas



Stephen Bernhard



Sam McLean



David Haskell-Craig MG

Now a third Delegation has been selected, this time to attend the forthcoming GCSAA Conference and Show in Atlanta, Georgia. These ten members emerged from a keenly contested competition which culminated with in depth interviews. It was encouraging to observe the professionalism of the interviewees whilst their dedication to their jobs and the greenkeeping profession was marked. From a personal point of view I learnt much from their views as members of BIGGA and not a few pointers for the future.

So for the successful ten, work can now commence on researching the visit, looking at issues such as climatic and geographical difference to this country, comparing budgets and personnel as well as educational provision. Much knowledge will be gained and with 'homework' completed, the experiences of the trip should be enhanced when meeting and talking with American Golf Course Superintendents.

Bernhard & Company are to be thanked once again for this ongoing initiative. The company is a major supporter of education and training programmes for greenkeepers. There is not just a financial commitment. Those who have met and spent time with Stephen and Sam will vouch for their very real hands-on approach and enthusiasm. They have a global perspective, are widely travelled and each contributes greatly on an individual basis to the success of the Delegations. The company is now a familiar name in the greenkeeping world and many of our members are the beneficiaries of their drive and support.

So the BIGGA Delegation heads off to the Deep South - it should prove to be an informative and fulfilling experience.

The 2003 BIGGA Delegation:

Kerran Daly MG - Gog Magog Golf Club - East Anglia Section
 Mark Ellis - Stocks Hotel Golf & Country Club - Mid Anglia Section
 Kevin Hodges - Weston Park Golf Club - East Anglia Section
 Jeremy Hughes - Vale of Llangollen Golf Club - North Wales Section
 Colin Mackay - Vejle Golf Club, Denmark - International Section
 Alex McCombie - Parkstone Golf Club - South Coast Section
 Gordon McKie - St Andrews Links Trust - Scotland Central Section
 Tony Mears - Dinsdale Spa Golf Club - Cleveland Section
 Duncan Smith - Cotswold Hills Golf Club - South West Section
 Anthony Woolley - Piltown Golf Club - Sussex Section

NOW IN ITS THIRD SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Stephen Bernhard comments...

A selection committee met recently to select the ten Greenkeepers who would travel to Atlanta in February 2003 to visit the GCSAA Conference and Show, as part of the Bernhard sponsored delegation.

The highly enthusiastic and interesting group included for the first time an overseas member from Denmark, who was awarded a place on the trip.



2002 BIGGA Delegation

From the increased number of applicants, it is evident that BIGGA members realise that this opportunity is open to all. It is important to the development of BIGGA that more people participate in these opportunities to learn from overseas greenkeeping practices.

I hope that the sharing of ideas and the exposure to an altogether different life style and work ethic will be immensely helpful to the group and to the superintendents who they meet as the tour progresses.

We are fortunate to have a wonderful relationship with several of the GCSAA Board and their management. These leaders of the American golf industry have been generous with their support for the arrival of the British group. They set a great precedent for us all to embrace as we seek to improve international understanding and shared education.

The enthusiasm displayed by the participants of the previous trips has been overwhelming, and this has certainly begun to rub off on us and on the new applicants, I am happy to say.

The participants of this year's BIGGA group to Atlanta have a lot to look forward to. They will have extensive homework to do before leaving for the USA in February - but it will be rewarding and fulfilling as the group develop long-term relationships with like minded colleagues from across the "pond".

I am proud to be part of the enthusiastic team at Bernhard and Company who sponsor the group to Atlanta and I hope everyone enjoys a fun filled and informative trip, returning with new experiences and stories to share with colleagues back home. We certainly hope many more greenkeepers will apply to join this successful trip in ensuing years.