



BIGGA in the USA

10 members of the BIGGA Delegation will be travelling to the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in Anaheim, thanks to Bernhard & Co. Melissa Toombs reveals the chosen ones.

Anaheim, home to the world famous Disneyland. Located just 20 miles east of Los Angeles, it seems there's more to this sunny Southern California City than just mouse ears and teacup rides. Anaheim is just minutes from the coast and some of California's best beaches, the area is home to some spectacular golf courses including: Anaheim Dad Miller Golf Course, Anaheim Hills Golf Course and Eagle Glen GC; continue a few miles further northwest and there's more family fun to be had at Knott's Theme Park and, if this wasn't enough, this vibrant city is to play host to the GIS Conference and Exhibition next month.

Once again 10 BIGGA members will be flown to the United States for the experience of a lifetime, thanks to the sponsorship of Bernhard & Co. While in Anaheim, they will visit local golf courses, attend seminars, meet with superintendents to discuss how greenkeepers do things the other side of the pond, attend functions and of course be able to enjoy the GIS (Golf Industry Show) Conference and Exhibition.

ABOUT THE GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW

The Golf Industry Show is an innovative trade show designed for the owners/operators of golf facilities, and the professional members of the golf course and club management industries. Like our very own Harrogate Week, the event combines education, networking and solutions for golf course superintendents, owners/operators, general managers, chief operating officers, architects and builders.

GIS is presented by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) and the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA), along with other supporting organisations.

The 2007 event will take place from February 22-24 and is to be held at The Anaheim Convention Center. More than 25,000 golf industry professionals are expected to attend this year's show, which will feature around 1,200 exhibitors.

THE DELEGATION



Name: Mark Henderson
Club: Thorpeness Hotel and Golf Club, Suffolk
Position: Deputy Course Manager
Age: 36

Mark has been greenkeeping for 19 and a half years. He applied for a job as a trainee greenkeeper at Hartsbourne Golf and Country Club, Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire and started work there in June 1987. The job was advertised on the notice board of Burntisland GC, Fife, Scotland where his father was a member and has just recently retired, after working as a greenkeeper there for 20 years. Hartsbourne had successfully employed two other greenkeepers in 1982, which were from Burntisland so decided to continue recruiting greenkeepers from Scotland. Mark left Hartsbourne in April 2004 when he was Deputy Course Manager to take on the same position at Thorpeness.

Mark is currently working on a distance learning HNC in golf course management with Elmwood College. He regularly attends seminars and demonstrations and is also enrolled on workshops and seminars at the forthcoming Harrogate week.

"I have been greenkeeping for almost 20 years, and am still passionate about the challenges it presents each day. The enthusiasm I have for the job will be further fuelled by being part of the delegation to the USA, experiencing and learning more about the industry at the biggest greenkeeping show in the world. By spending time with like-minded greenkeeping enthusiasts and gaining an insight and knowledge into the different working methods and disciplines in America, that would certainly give me fresh ideas to help me take my club, Thorpeness, to the next level. To also be able to see at first hand the technology, materials, machinery and equipment used and compare working practices with my American counterparts, will help me to further inspire my colleagues, perhaps change working methods and procedures currently upheld, and help improve the golf course on my return," said Mark.



Name: Ian Somerville MSc
Club: Brocton Hall GC, Staffordshire
Position: Course Manager
Age: 43

Ian has an MSc in Sports Surface Technology - his highest qualification within the industry at present, although he is considering a Phd - and has been greenkeeping for over 25 years. He started as an apprentice at Heswall GC (Wirral) but first became interested while at school. During the holidays he would help switch greens with his uncle, Bob Goodwin - he was Head Greenkeeper at a course in Lichfield.

"I'm looking forward to seeing and speaking to American Superintendents about the way they do things and how they perceive the future of greenkeeping with global warming and reduced chemical use etc. I would like to thank BIGGA and sponsors Bernhard & Co in advance for choosing me as one of the delegation. I feel it is a great privilege to represent BIGGA at such an event," said Ian.



Name: Stephen Privett
Club: Alresford GC, Hampshire
Position: Course Manager
Age: 41

Steve ran his own landscaping business for seven years - redesigning and building gardens across the South of England - before taking a job as an Assistant Greenkeeper at South Winchester Golf Course in 1994.

Steve's highest qualification to date is his NVQ Level 3, although he has completed various NVQ's and spraying courses. While studying Steve was nominated by Sparsholt College for Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year. He won the Regional Final managing to reach the last eight for the National Final, held at BIGGA HQ.

"I feel the chance to gain knowledge of the American industry would help me in the future to possibly work in the states for a while. I would hope to bring some ideas back from the states that I could use on my course in Hampshire. I will be looking for any educational opportunities for myself and my staff," said Stephen.



Name: Glenn Kirby
Club: The London GC, Kent
Position: Assistant Course Manager
Age: 30

Glenn's first greenkeeping job was in 1994 at Corhampton GC. Glenn studied turf to work on cricket pitches but after doing a placement year on a golf course he knew that was what he wanted to do.

Glenn has a National Diploma In Horticulture (Greenkeeping and Sports turf) from Sparsholt College, Hants and has also studied at Ohio State University through the Ohio State intern program.

"This trip will provide me with the opportunity to meet new people both from the UK and USA. It will also help me to keep up to date with the latest developments and give me an opportunity to learn. I'm really looking forward to visiting Anaheim," said Glenn.



Name: Rob Welford
 Club: Cleethorpes GC, Lincolnshire
 Position: Course Manager
 Age: 27

Rob has been in the greenkeeping industry for nine years and got into it by playing golf as a junior member at Cooden Beach GC in Sussex.

"After obtaining good GCSE and A level results I decided that I would never be good enough to play golf professionally, but wanted to work within the golf industry. After speaking to the Head Greenkeeper, which at the time was Stefan Antolik, I decided to embark on a three year HND in Golf Course Management at Reaseheath College. During the course I spent 12 months on placement at East Sussex National who offered me a full time position upon completion of the course. I spent 18 months there before moving to Cleethorpes as First Assistant. After 18 months at Cleethorpes I took over as Head Greenkeeper at Immingham GC for two years until I applied for the vacant Course Managers position at Cleethorpes in November 2005, which I now hold," explained Rob.

At present Rob has a HND in Golf Course Management and a PA1, 2, 6a-spraying certificates. He is currently working towards NVQ level 4 in Sportsturf Management and an A1 Assessors award.

Rob hopes that by going on this trip, he can gain an insight into the 'American Way' of greenkeeping and hopefully cement his opinion that British and traditional greenkeeping and greenkeepers, are the way forward.



Name: Paul O'Kane
 Club: Colne Valley GC, Essex
 Position: Acting Deputy Head Greenkeeper
 Age: 45

After 25 years working in the city Paul decided he wanted a career break and after taking nine months out to travel, he decided he wanted to get into an outdoor career - having had an interest in golf since he was a youngster, he decided to try and get into greenkeeping.

"I was lucky enough to find a job advert for summer greenkeeping at Five Lakes Resort and started there in May 2004," explained Paul.

After three months there he was offered a permanent post as trainee greenkeeper. He soon wanted to gain qualifications in the industry and studied up to NVQ 3 level while there. He then moved to Colne Valley GC in June this year and again has looked to further qualify himself while gaining more greenkeeping experience.

Mark completed his NVQ 3 while working at Five Lakes Resort and has also passed his PA1, PA2 and PA6.

"In September this year I started studying for a Foundation Degree in Sportsturf Science through Myerscough College and just last month I started training for my A1 and A2 assessor awards through Otley College," said Paul.

"I feel this trip will further educate myself. I will be able to view new products and will enjoy finding out about them. I will also be looking at the differences between greenkeeping operations here in the UK and those found in the USA and other parts of the world."



Name: Andrew de Wet
 Club: Staverton Park GC, Daventry
 Position: Deputy Head Greenkeeper
 Age: 25

Andrew got into the greenkeeping industry 10 years ago when he got a part time job at his local golf club during the school holidays.

"I am qualified to HND level in Golf Course Management and have an NVQ 2 as well as A1 and L12 assessor and trainer awards, and all spraying and chainsaw certificates," explained Andrew.

"I am looking forward to representing British Greenkeeping in America, building new contacts with our American counterparts and seeing how greenkeeping differs in America from Britain," said Andrew.



Name: Barry Crawford
 Club: The Carrick on Loch Lomond, Scotland
 Position: First Assistant
 Age: 26

Barry has been in the greenkeeping industry for 10 years and started his career at Prestwick GC. After five years there he moved to work for Loch Lomond GC for two years, before moving to America to work on the construction of Bayonne GC in New York and then to Augusta National GC for eight try months through the 2006 Masters.

"Going into the industry was a natural progression as I have always been interested in golf for as long as I can remember. I studied at Elmwood College and obtained an HND in Golf Course Management graduating 2000. I am currently working towards increasing my knowledge of managerial skills. I feel the trip will broaden my horizons throughout the industry - meeting greenkeepers of different Nationalities - and I will learn of the most advanced, up to date methods and technology," explained Barry.

"Since my current golf handicap is +2 I am also looking forward to hearing of golf courses throughout America."



Name: Roger Neale
 Club: Taunton & Pickeridge, Taunton
 Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
 Age: 25

Roger has been in the greenkeeping industry for 10 years. He was a keen golfer but realistic about his golfing ability and greenkeeping was the career that allowed me to work closely with the golf industry.

Roger is set to start his NVQ III this September and has already completed his CHE Golf Course Management and NVQ II Golf Greenkeeping, G3 Golf Management, A1 Assessor and various spraying certificates.

"Going to Anaheim will give me an insight into how the industry is run in the states while representing the Association. It will also enable me to share my gained knowledge and experiences with colleagues and fellow greenkeepers," said Roger.



Name: John Gubb
 Club: Bedfordshire GC
 Position: Course Manager
 Age: 31

John has been greenkeeping for 13 years. He started as a trainee at Ilfracombe GC when he left school at 18. John has also worked at East Sussex National GC in East Sussex and East Lake GC in the USA, before starting work at the Bedfordshire GC in 2000.

"I have a number of qualifications including NVQ levels 2 & 3, a National Diploma in Sports Turf Management. I also have PA1, PA2 & PA6, D32 & D33 qualifications.

"The trip will benefit me by meeting new people involved in our industry, also I hope to gain new ideas and techniques, including seeing all the new equipment at the show as well as learning something from the seminars," said John.

EDUCATION CONFERENCES

Along with the show, GCSAA, NGCOA and CMAA will be presenting their annual Education Conferences. GCSAA's conference will take place from February 19-24.

