ple and sharing their skills and experience I've learned communication skills, computer usage, dealing with budgets etc. Equally I was imparting my greenkeeping skills to them. It was a very good partnership.

One of the interesting concepts at Hankley is the Course Management Status Report which is published every two to three years.

"It talks about greenkeeping philosophy, it talks about woodland management, the turfed areas, conservation areas, staff requirements, resource requirements. All aspects of the golf course. It also pinpoints what we want to achieve and reviews some of our successes and things which haven't worked so well," explained Ian, who has produced four of these 24-25 page reports.

'We do set our goals high. We like to achieve'

"I get lots of comments from members who find them refreshing and interesting because we try to write them in such a manner that they are readable for members. "If we were to do them more frequently than we do it wouldn't give us enough time to achieve some of the goals we set," he added.

The Hankley team - Gareth Roberts, Paul Hutton, Michael Jennings, James Andrews and Gavin Baldwin - are all over the moon about the club's success and Ian is quick to give them credit.

"You are only as good as the guys around you and none of these things would have been possible without them. Ian's self confessed passion for the environment has been with him for many years and developed from his love of heathland golf courses.

"I realised that heathland was disappearing at a phenomenal rate and that developed to an appreciation of wildlife as well. That has grown through time."

Asked to comment on what answer he would give to other greenkeepers who might ask what he possesses which has helped him to two national competitions Ian gives a practical answer:

"These competitions are there to be won and the way to do it is by application and endeavour and I think we did that. If you can exhibit the history of the work you have done on your course by keeping a well documented file of slides it also helps.

"There are a tremendous number of fabulous greenkeepers out there and what I can say to them is that I've been runner-up in both competitions before and that made me focus more and made me realise that I had to work a bit harder to win... So we came back a second time and won them both."

He also has praise for both competitions and what they do for the profession.

"They highlight the professionalism that's around in the industry. BIGGA is very much to the forefront of initiating lots of that through their education training programmes," said Ian, who is married to Karen with two children Callum, 8, Hannah, 6, and Daniel, 2.

"It has been an absolute pleasure to represent my golf and the staff at both of these competitions. I'm just the ambassador and an awful lot goes on behind the scenes."

Speaking with Jack about his son he pays him a tribute to which greenkeepers would probably relate.

"He's like me," he explained, "the grass talks to him."
after their machinery. All I had to do was pick up on the greenkeeping element of the job and I took to it better than I could have expected.”

At Wortley Steven worked under Barry Heaney, BIGGA’s 1995 National Chairman, and after a year Barry placed him at Askham Bryan College.

“I did a two year Level 2 course which I passed while I also passed my spraying exams while I was there.

“I can’t get enough of greenkeeping. I watch videos. I read about it. It is more than just a job, it is part of our life,” said Steven, who is a member of the Sheffield Section which has a strong winter lecture programme.

Part of Steven’s prize for winning the Toro Student of the Year Award is to undertake a six week residential study course at the University of Massachusetts early next year and it is his attendance at this which will delay his starting Level 3.

“Winning this award is going to give me more confidence and I believe it will open up many more opportunities for me.”

The club helped Steven cope with the pressure of being in the final and the feeling that if he hadn’t won he would have disappointed a lot of people.

“The club sent me a letter on the Friday before the final to say that in their eyes I was a winner for getting to the final and that took a bit of the pressure off me because I was feeling it at bit. It’s true though because we were each one of eight who had got through to the final from hundreds who could have done.”

One element of the competition which Steven did enjoy was the linking of the Student award with that of the Excellence in Greenkeeping Competition.

“Winning this award is going to give me a lot more confidence”

America. I’m sure it will open my eyes and I’ll learn how greenkeeping is progressing around the rest of the world. It may be a different climate where different methods are used but I’ll certainly learn things which I can bring back to Wortley,” enthused Steven.

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“It was great talking with some of the older guys and they gave me support on the day Bill Sparrow and I were both waiting for our interviews and when we got talking all my nerves went and before I realised I was in and the interview had started.”

“I’ve always wanted to visit the States so I just couldn’t believe I’d won when the announcement was made.”

Steven’s success was greeted by great celebrations from his club, family and friends.

“My girlfriend, Michelle, is 100% behind me and burst into tears when I told her I’d won, while my mum and dad have organised a celebration for me when I get back. I’m also happy for Barry (Heaney) because he started me off and was one of the main driving forces behind my getting on. I know that greenkeeping is his life and that he loves BIGGA,” said Steven who also paid tribute to the encouragement given to him by Steven Hulme, a close friend who had been the Acting Head Greenkeeper at the club.

“I’d also like to thank Toro for sponsoring such a great competition, BIGGA for organising it so well and Wortley Golf Club for all their support.”

In addition to the six week study course. Steven will also visit the Toro factories in Minneapolis and California and, if time permits attend the GCSAA Conference and Show in Anaheim, California.

The two runners-up, who will also attend the Anaheim Show are Alan Owen, of Royal Birkdale Golf Club and Myerscough College and Christopher Rawlings of Rodway Hill Golf Club and Hartpury College.