As a student having to juggle both work and study requires hard work and dedication. This year’s finalists are a prime example of what time and effort can achieve.

Eight anxious greenkeepers visited BIGGA HOUSE on September 15 to be quizzed and probed within an inch of their lives and given the task of completing a report on Aldwark Manor GC (evaluating nine of the holes). On the judging panel this year were: John Pemberton, Chief Executive of BIGGA; Jeff Mills, from the BIGGA Board of Management; Peter Mansfield from Lely (UK) Ltd and Sami Collins, BIGGA’s Head of Learning & Development.

After an exhausting, nail-biting wait, finalists: James Canham, from Golf Club Gstaad, Switzerland; Paul Carella, from Bothwell Castle GC, Uddingston; George Pendrich, from Scotscaig GC, Tayport; Mathew Wormald, from Luffenham Heath GC, Lincolnshire; David Jones from Tadmarton Heath GC, Wigginton; Graeme Roberts, from Hankley Common GC, Farnham; Barrie Lewis, from Ratho Park GC, Edinburgh, and Greg Wellings, from Stockport GC, Cheshire, were put out of their misery as BIGGA Chief Executive, John Pemberton, announced this year’s winners.

Overall winner and Toro Student of the Year 2008 was Mathew Wormald (24) representing Brooksby College.

Mathew’s amazing prize involves an eight-week trip to the USA, where, for six weeks, the University of Massachusetts will be home, as he
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completes a residential turf management study course. The trip also includes visits to the Toro Headquarters in Minneapolis, the Toro Irrigation Division and to the GCSAA Golf Industry Show in New Orleans next February.

Runners up were James Canham (22) representing Myerscough College and Paul Carella (20) representing GOSTA Training.

James was a blast from the past (as far as this competition goes), 2004 saw him claim runner-up position at the age of 18, while working as an Assistant Greenkeeper at Weston Park GC.

“The award serves as inspiration to all student greenkeepers with enthusiasm and ambition. It’s a memorable and highly rewarding experience; a credit to both BIGGA and Toro,” said James.

Paul, who is currently working towards his NVQ Level 3, has worked at Bothwell Castle for four years now, taking on the role of Assistant Greenkeeper.

“I would like to thank BIGGA and Toro for organising and running the final. I had a great time and met a fantastic group of people. I would also like to thank Bothwell Castle Golf Club’s Garry Anderson, Head Greenkeeper, Alasdair McDemid, First Assistant, Stewart Carbray, Assistant and my lecturer, Iain Forbes and GOSTA Training Ltd, for supporting me through my education,” said Paul.

James and Paul both win a trip to Harrogate Week 2009, where they will be invited to attend the Continue to Learn Education Programme as well as the social events.