Toro Student of the Year 2012

The national final

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The annual Toro Student of the Year Award, now in its 24th year, offers students greenkeepers the opportunity to expand their experience by meeting and competing with the best.

One lucky winner of this annual award will soon be heading to the USA on an all-expenses-paid study trip of a lifetime, thanks to BIGGA’s Gold Key Sponsor, Toro.

Acknowledged as the highlight of the student greenkeepers’ year, the winner will receive an eight week trip to the United States, starting next January. That includes a six week study course at the University of Massachusetts and a trip to visit the GCSAA’s Golf Industry Show in San Diego and Toro’s California base.

Two runners-up will receive an expenses-paid trip to the Continue to Learn Education programme at BTME 2013 in Harrogate, next January.

The judges interviewed 29 students greenkeepers during a series of local interviews and had the tough job of selecting only six candidates to progress to the National Finals being held at BIGGA House on Sunday 16th and Monday 17th January.

The six finalists will arrive at Adwick Manor on Sunday 16th September and will then go on to the judgements and BIGGA staff for an informal dinner. Monday 17th September sees the finalists being provided with a written task to complete during the day and attending a formal interview in front of a panel of four judges who represent both Toro and BIGGA.

Following final deliberations by the judges the 2012 winner and two runners-up will be selected. The announcement of the winner and runners-up will take place at 5pm. Following a photo shoot, the day concludes with an evening of celebrations, including a meal at an Italian restaurant and a game of target bowling.

To be eligible for this award in the future, you should be a greenkeeping student studying for a qualification, up to Level Three. Entrants are nominated by their course tutor, with their entry authorised by their college or training provider.

We wish all those who entered the 2012 Award and who continue to make this Award a flagship event of the greenkeeping calendar.

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A life changing trip

Neil started greenkeeping at 16, at the Merlin Golf Club, where he completed his Level 2. He is currently working towards his Level 3 at the Duchy College.

Neil took some time out to indulge his other passion of cricket by playing club cricket in Western Australia. He returned to the UK and spent some time working as a landscaper before joining the team at Trevoose Golf & Country Club.

Neil is the club professional at Redruth Cricket Club and has represented Cornwall at Minor Counties level. He also plays golf and has a handicap of 10.

Name: Neil Ivamy
Age: 28
Club: Trevoose Golf & Country Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Duchy College

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Six of the best

Name: Stuart Imeson
Age: 20
Club: Dunstanburgh Golf Club
Position: Head Greenkeeper
College: Newcastle College

Stuart joined Dunstanburgh Golf Club at the age of 16, after undertaking his work experience. He felt this was the career he wanted to follow. After completing his Level 2, the Head Greenkeeper left and Stuart took the opportunity to improve his bowling. In the end he took a risk and Stuart has now been in the role for two years and is reducing that challenge.

Stuart is currently studying for his Level 3 and wants to continue to do the Level 4 at Newcastle College. Stuart has a handicap of 20 and enjoys football.

Name: Thomas Flavell
Age: 23
Club: Lingdale Golf Club
Position: Greenkeeper
College: Myrescough College

Thomas began greenkeeping at Lingdale Golf Club in 2007, as an apprentice, following in his father’s footsteps. He is currently undertaking his Level 2 and is wanting to progress onto the Foundation Degree.

He is also very much interested in golf course architecture. Tom is a talented golfer, with a handicap of 2. He won the scratch competition at The Leicestershire Golf Club and has represented his county.

The golf club uses Thomas’s golf knowledge to provide a golfer’s opinion on the roll of the greens, as part of the weekly course rating.

Name: Peter Thompson
Age: 25
Club: Sunningdale Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Oakslands College

Peter has been in greenkeeping for five years and is currently working towards his Level 3 Diploma. Peter started greenkeeping at Old Fold Manor in 2007. He is also aiming to further develop his skills at Sunningdale, under Course Manager, Murray Long.

Outside of work, Peter holds a season ticket for Manchester United and is a very keen cook. He’d not followed his current career path he would have trained as a chef.

Name: Christopher Watson
Age: 18
Club: Petercullt Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Elmwood College

Chris got his passion for greenkeeping after spending his work experience at the golf club. He went back after leaving school, in 2010, to work during the summer, before being taken on as a full-time apprentice later that year. Whilst at Elmwood, Chris received the BIGGA Scottish Level 2 Award.

Chris has recently taken up golf and is slowly improving. His other passions are Scouts and sailing, where in 2011 he was on the lead boat of the Tall Ships, which left Greenock.

Name: Aaron Launchbury
Age: 27
Club: North Foreland Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Hadlow College

Aaron came to greenkeeping later in life after a career in the print industry and as a painter and decorator. Aaron joined North Foreland Golf Club as an apprentice and hasn’t looked back, completing his Level 2 in twelve months.

Aaron has been working closely with his Course Manager, Dan McGrath MG, on the Operation Pollinator project. He helped Dan in research and design ideas for alternative habitats for pollinating insects.

Name: Neil Ivamy
Age: 28
Club: Trevoose Golf & Country Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Duchy College

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Neil took some time out to indulge his other passion of cricket by playing club cricket in Western Australia. He returned to the UK and spent some time working as a landscaper before joining the team at Trevoose Golf & Country Club.

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