

In the three years since the events came together, the Toro's have grown in stature to the extent that the Champions who carry the titles into the new millennium will know that they have achieved something that will make their careers.

# Toro Toro Toro



Last year's Excellence Winner, John Coleman aboard the Club's prize

BIGGA HOUSE will be the venue for two of the high spots of the greenkeeping calendar this month with the finals of both the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping and the Toro Student of the Year Award.

Winning these prestigious competitions provides the winners with a passport that will carry them through the rest of their greenkeeping careers while even appearing in the final acts as a considerable boost to a CV.

This is the third year that Toro has sponsored both events and if the judges can identify two Champions as worthy as Iain McMillan, of Hankley Common, and John Coleman, of Abbeydale, in the

Excellence Award and Steven Nixon, of Wortley, and Sally Doherty, of The Belfry, in the Student, they will have done an exceptional job.

As always the quality of the prizes at stake heightens the tension with the winner of the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping again winning an all expenses paid trip to the GCSAA Show in the States - next year in New Orleans - and a trip to Toro's outstanding facilities. In addition his golf club will win a Toro Greensmaster 3000 triple greens mower and a plaque to display in the clubhouse while each member of the greenkeeping team will receive a set of BIGGA waterproofs.

There has been a record entry for the Excellence Award which has kept the regional judges, some of the most respected figures in the industry - Jimmy Neilson, Barry Heaney, Bill Lawson, Gordon Child and Eric James - extremely busy.

Each of the finalists was also visited by Walter Woods who examined every aspect of the courses management.

Quality was also up in the Student of the Year competition which augers well for the future of the industry.

The winning student will win a six week study course in the States while the two runners-up win all expenses paid trips to BTME.



**Name:** Stuart Hogg  
**GC:** Fortrose & Rosemarkie  
**Age:** 27

Stuart has been at the north of Scotland course for seven years, four as Head Greenkeeper, and in that time has produced both a Health and Safety Policy and Management Plan for the club. With a staff of four Stuart is a hand's on greenkeeper and he overhauls and services all greenkeeping machinery himself in the winter. He is a key member of the Greens Committee and in that role recommends what machinery is in need of replacement and when. He also has full control of the working budget. All staff attend BIGGA functions and Stuart is a regular attendee at BTME. He also invests in books and videos for his staff. Should he win he feels it would be a great boost to the profession in the north of Scotland.



**Name:** Andy Campbell  
**GC:** Carden Park Resort  
**Age:** 38

This is the second successive year that Andy has won his way to the National Final of the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping. Andy manages a staff of 33 who maintain Carden Park's two courses - Cheshire and Nicklaus each of which requires different maintenance practices to retain their distinctive styles. He advises of all agronomic, management, training and recruitment matters and sits on the monthly management committee meetings. The club is registered with the EGA Committed to Green Programme and also has close links with the RSPB.



**Name:** Barrie Lee  
**GC:** Chester le Street GC  
**Age:** 33

Barrie has been at the County Durham club for 11 years and has been Course Manager for five. His role within the golf club covers everything from risk assessment, working policy, all training, machinery maintenance and replacement, planning, instruction while he prides himself on being a working greenkeeper and carries out all the regular chores. In addition he carried out the building of six complete holes on the course. Becoming Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping winner would make his club extremely proud.



## Excellence in Greenkeeping finalists



**Name:** Kim Blake  
**GC:** Fulford Heath GC  
**Age:** 40

Kim has been at the club for ten and a half years as Head Greenkeeper and he has control of all expenditure outside the clubhouse and the management of the course is left to him and the Greens Committee which meets every three months. He has been operating on a natural "back to basics" approach for the last two and a half years and last year introduced bacteria on to his greens on a five year programme. They have developed conservation areas and bought machines for the upkeep of these areas. Kim feels that winning the award would be a great way of thanking the club for all the support they have shown him over the last 10 years. He also says the award would belong as much to his Greens Committee of Graham Pillase and Ivor Cooper as himself as they have been the same for 12 years.



**Name:** Brian Turner  
**GC:** Sunningdale GC  
**Age:** 53

Brian has been at the prestigious Berkshire club as Head Greenkeeper for three years and manages the 18 staff who maintain the Old and New Courses. He lists his responsibilities as ensuring that the courses, and surrounding areas are kept in a first class condition; maintaining all records, that equipment is maintained correctly and that all staff are familiar with Health and Safety requirements. Part of the club is a SSSI and the management programme involves minimum spraying of chemicals and fertilisers. Brian, who is also an excellent golfer playing to a handicap of 3, says that winning the Award would be a feather in the cap of the club as well as his own.



**Name:** Matthew Maryon  
**GC:** Yeovil GC  
**Age:** 30

Matt has been at the 27 hole club for just over two years and in that time he has produced a Health and Safety Plan which was used as a template for the rest of the golf club and a five year development plan including irrigation renewal, tree plan, bunker renovation, tee construction, car park improvements and a machinery purchase plan. He is currently working on an Environmental policy for the club but they have already signed up to the EGA's Committed to Green Programme. Winning the Award would, says Matt, show the greenkeeping staff at Yeovil what is achievable in the industry and increase their motivation to do well.



**STUDENT  
OF THE YEAR**

**Name:** Simon O'Hara  
**Age:** 29  
**Golf Club:** Fota Island GC  
**College:** Colaiste Stiofain Naofa

Simon started work as a greenkeeper at Fota Island in May of this year having previously done work experience at Monkstown Golf Club as well as three months in the States during his college course. He is currently working towards his Greenkeeping NCV City & Guilds Level 2 but he also holds a BA in History and Geography, an MA in History and a Diploma in Legal Studies. A keen sportsman with a golf handicap of 10 his ambition is to represent Ireland in some sporting capacity.

**Name:** Kevin Scarce  
**Age:** 18  
**Golf Club:** Bedale GC  
**College:** Askham Bryan

Kevin began working at Bedale while still at school and he started full time when he left school. He has just completed his NVQ Level II in Sportsturf which he undertook in block release. Another keen sportsman he who his school basketball colours and plays golf and football and turns out for Northallerton Town, rugby union club. He is interested in perhaps working abroad in the future to add to his experience while he has his sights set on becoming a Course Manager.

**Name:** Vincent Gilroy  
**Age:** 22  
**GC:** The Warwickshire  
**College:** Askham Bryan

Vincent is Deputy Course Manager at the Warwickshire, a 45 hole Championship complex, having been Acting Course Manager for four months earlier this year. Prior to that he worked as an Assistant at the 27 hole Seedy Mill GC. He is currently just completing his NVQ Level III. He is a six handicap golfer and won the '98 BIGGA Singles Knockout Championship for the Midlands Region while he enjoys foreign travel. In fact his ambition is to be a Course Manager of a course in Portugal.

**Name:** Jim Gilchrist  
**Age:** 24  
**Golf Club:** Hamilton GC  
**College:** Woodburn House

Jim has been an assistant at Hamilton for five years having done a further two years on YTS. He has achieved SVQ Level I&II and is currently working towards level III having passed his spraying certificates. A keen sportsman listing golf and keep fit among his interests but he was also voted the Young Player of the Year for his local amateur football club. He is hoping to soon be in a position to apply for First Assistant positions.



## Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists



**Name:** Tommy Givnan  
**Age:** 34  
**Golf Club:** Bowring Golf Course (Knowsley Municipal)  
**College:** Myerscough

Tommy has been Head Greenkeeper, at Bowring - the oldest municipal course in England - for six months having previously been a charge hand on the course and before that a landscaper for 10 years. He is currently studying towards NVQ Level III Sportsturf and was last year's Student of the Year as well as BALI Award winner in '96. Tommy, who is a D32 assessor, has also been involved in the setting up of a Greenkeepers' Academy at the course with the aim of training and finding employment for 12 apprentice greenkeepers. His interests include golf, painting and sea fishing.



**Name:** Michael Bush  
**Age:** 23  
**GC:** St Mellion  
**College:** Elmwood/now Cannington

Michael is Deputy Superintendent at St Mellion having previously been an Assistant for four years. When he left school he worked for a landscaping company, but having lived in St Mellion all of his life he has seen the club grow and it was always his ambition to work on it. With no vacancies he took a position with St Mellion Leisure a golf construction company to gain experience before a job became available. He has completed SVQ I & II at Elmwood and is currently undertaking Level III at Cannington. He is keen on golf, football and motorsport.



**Name:** William Collins  
**Age:** 32  
**GC:** Falmouth GC  
**College:** Cannington College

William was promoted to Head Greenkeeper at Falmouth a mere 16 months after starting at the club as a mechanic/greenkeeper. Since then he has introduced cultural and biological practices onto the course which in turn has reduced the spraying budget. He is currently completing his NVQ Level II but has his sights set on Levels III and IV and ultimately the Master Greenkeeper Award. He is a recent convert to golf but also plays football at senior level and is keen on DIY.



**Name:** Andrew Wood  
**Age:** 29  
**GC:** Singing Hills GC  
**College:** Plumpton College

Andrew is Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Singing Hills having previously worked at East Sussex National, Mid Sussex, and Plumpton College as a groundsman/greenkeeper as well as summer holiday work at the Dyke where he is a 2.5 handicap member. He also tasted work abroad, working at Leeuwenbergh GC, in Holland. He is currently studying towards NVQ Level III - Sportsturf Management. In addition to his golf he is keen on all other sports as well as DIY.