

# Excellence in Greenkeeping

# TORO

# TIME AGAIN



The culmination of many months of searching will come to fruition on Monday October 30th when the fourth winner of the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping and the Toro Student of the Year will be discovered.

Judging at regional level has been on-going for some time for both awards and the prestigious nature of the Toros has ensured a quality lineup for the finals.

The winner of the Excellence in Greenkeeping Award will follow in the illustrious footsteps of Iain McMillan, of Hankley Common; John Coleman, of Abbeydale GC, and last year's winner, Brian Turner, of Sunningdale.

This year the competition follows a different format with a Home International flavour to it. Instead of each Region sending a representative plus one wild card each country within the home nations will have a representative. Walter Woods and Bruce Jamieson, of Toro, have visited each of the finalists to assess the quality of the golf course and maintenance regime and the visit to BIGGA HOUSE for the final stage will involve an interview by an expert panel comprising representatives from both BIGGA and Toro.

The eventual winner's golf club will receive a Toro Workman 2100 utility vehicle and a trophy, while the man himself will win a two week trip to the United States to visit the GCSAA Conference and Show in Dallas, Texas as well as a trip to the headquarters of the Toro Company in



Above: Last year's triumphant winners. Left, Tommy Givnan with the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year trophy, and right, Brian Turner with his Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping

Minneapolis and its factory in California. The winner's team will also receive £250.

As England has more golf courses than the other three home countries four semi-finalists have been selected from whom the English finalist will be drawn and each semi-finalist will win a Reelmaster 1000 pedestrian mower for his club and a plaque.

The person who succeeds Tommy Givnan, of Bowring Golf Course, in Knowsley, near Liverpool, will win

the Toro Scholarship - and eight week trip including a six week residential turf management study course at the University of Massachusetts, USA and a trip to the Toro sites and the GCSAA Show in Dallas. The winner's Senior Greenkeeping Tutor will earn a place on the BIGGA trip to the GCSAA Conference and Show while two runners-up will be invited to attend the Learning Experience, in association with Textron, in Harrogate next January.



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## Finalists: Ireland

This edition of Greenkeeper International went to press before the Irish finalist was announced. Full details of all finalists will appear on the BIGGA website as soon as they are released. Point your browser to [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) for the latest news and events from the Toro Awards and the greenkeeping industry in general. *SMc*



## Scotland

**Ronnie Bunting, Kilmacolm GC**

Ronnie is 46 and has been Course Manager at Kilmacolm GC, near Glasgow, for the last 14 years having been a greenkeeper for 32 years and a Head Greenkeeper for 24. A staunch BIGGA supporter he regularly attends BIGGA Regional training courses while he has been Chairman and Secretary of three BIGGA and before that SIGGA Sections. A keen advocate of good environmental practice under Ronnie's management Kilmacolm has received awards from the Scottish Wildlife Charter, the BIGGA Environmental Competition, in association with Amazone and Grass Roots and the National Green Apple Award scheme. He is qualified to D32-D33-D34 and acts as an internal verifier for the GTC while he gives talks to local SVQ level 2 students.



## Wales

**Gary Johnstone - Southerndown GC**

Gary is 29 years-old and arrived in Wales eight years ago from his native Scotland. Born in Aberdeen he began his career at Aberdeen Kings Links before spending three and a half years at Carnoustie. He moved to Southerndown as Deputy Head Greenkeeper in '92 and was promoted to Head Greenkeeper just over a year later. His greenkeeping education began at Elmwood College where he achieved his Scotvec levels 1,2 and 3 in sports turf maintenance while he is currently completing his HNC in Golf Course Management at Pencoed College. He still finds time to play golf to a handicap of 4.

## English Semi Finalists:

Due to the large number of entrants and size of the country, four semi-finalists were selected. The English finalist was not possible to announce before this edition of Greenkeeper International went to press. *SMc*



**Graham Waller - Henley G&CC**

Graham is 30 year's old and a Yorkshireman. He moved into greenkeeping after initially training as a nurse. The change of direction occurred when he took a short term job at Maxstoke Park GC in 1989 and his potential was spotted by Trafford Stonebridge who encouraged him to go to college. He moved to Henley in '94 to gain experience in the growing-in and maintaining of a new 27 hole development.



**Richard Barker - Kirby Muxloe GC**

Richard is 36 and has been Head Greenkeeper at Kirby Muxloe, near Leicester, for a number of years. A staunch BIGGA supporter he is a current National Board Member and a regular attendee at many BIGGA functions on a Sectional, Regional and National basis. He plays to a handicap of 2 and is the current Leicestershire County Second Team Captain.



**Terry Farkins - Dartmouth G&CC**

Terry is 35 and has been Course Manager at Dartmouth for the past nine years, taking over at the growing-in stage. He states that his ambition is to win the Toro award and then to achieve Master Greenkeeper status. He is keen golfer and cricketer having played Minor County Cricket for Devon.



**Gerald Bruce - Berkhamsted GC**

Gerald is 38 and has been at Berkhamsted for 14 years having previously been a trainee at Hunstanton GC. He plays golf to a handicap of 2 and is married with two children Hannah (8) and Freddy (5).



**Name:** Laurence McCrory  
**Age:** 27  
**Golf Club:** Mentmore G&CC  
**College:** Oakland College

For Laurence, greenkeeping eventually won over a degree in Orthoptics at university for his future having initially found an aptitude for the former in a summer job at Chiltern Forest GC. Although he did finally go to university and did well in his course he took the decision to return to greenkeeping and a job at Mentmore via a work placement at Brocket Hall G&CC. He is currently undertaking a National Certificate in Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management. Someone who sets daily, monthly and yearly goals for himself he is particularly proud of a solo charity Land's End to John O'Groats bike ride which he completed in 12 days having cycled just under 1000 miles. He also lists rugby, tennis, golf and reading among his interests

**Name:** Jonathan Cleland  
**Age:** 24  
**Golf Club:** Helensburgh GC  
**College:** GOSTA Training

Jonathan is Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Helensburgh having started his career at the club. He returned in '98 having spent four years as Greenkeeper/Groundsman at Cameron House Hotel's nine hole course. He is currently working towards his N/SVQ Level 3. He is a keen golfer and is also interested in boating and other watersports. He has ambitions to become a Course Manager and to take on the challenge of being fully responsible for his own course while his tutor at GOSTA Training expects great things from him. "He has wide practical experience and a thirst for knowledge," said Chris Bothwell.

**Name:** Michael Sawicki  
**Age:** 27  
**Golf Club:** The Richmond Golf Club  
**College:** NESCOL

Michael joined the Richmond staff earlier this year after two stints at Coombe Hill GC, an apprenticeship at Rhuddlan GC in Wales and being in charge of the growing-in of Woodcraze Manor GC. At Richmond he is responsible for the recently installed irrigation system and is working towards NVQ Level 3. A fine footballer he is captain of Kingston Academicals FC and a previous footballer of the year for the club. He is also a holder of a Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award while he is currently considering learning Spanish or Portuguese to improve future career prospects.

**Name:** Vince Harrison  
**Age:** 30  
**Golf Club:** Enderby Golf Course  
**College:** Brooksby College

Vince worked in a bank for 10 years before he decided to move into greenkeeping. Initially he reduced his banking hours and enrolled at college, spending his holiday entitlement working on the college grounds to improve his knowledge before he resigned from the bank last summer and started on the nine-hole council course at Enderby where he is First Assistant. He is currently undertaking NVQ Level 2 and is delighted to say he is working in a job which he thoroughly enjoys. His interests include golf, football, reading and gardening.



## Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists



**Name:** Mark Farragher  
**Age:** 22  
**Golf Club:** Portmarnock Hotel & Golf Links  
**College:** Elmwood College

Mark has been a greenkeeper for five years and in that time has worked at some fine golf clubs including Gleneagles, Lahinch and the K Club and he has worked at a number of prestigious events including the WPGA Championship at Gleneagles, and the Smurfit European Open. He is currently undertaking an HND in Golf Course Management. He is a keen footballer and also enjoys golf and snooker. Attached to Portmarnock H&GL, he will be hoping to emulate Fintan Brennan, also from the club, who won the Toro Student of the Year award in '96.

**Name:** Tony Vokes  
**Age:** 35  
**Golf Club:** St Austell GC  
**College:** Cannington College

Tony has spent two years at his present club where he also finds time to assist and advise on the maintenance of three rugby pitches at St Austell RFC. Prior to that he spent three years at Mid Dorset GC through its construction and playing in. Before that he worked for Merlin Landscapes. He has just completed his NVQ Level 2 on Cannington's "Fast Track" system. He represented St Austell at rugby, tennis and managed the St Austell third team for season 99-00. His other interests include golf, tennis, cycling, motor cycling and cottage/house restoration.

**Name:** Christopher Williams  
**Age:** 25  
**Golf Club:** Astbury GC  
**College:** Reaseheath College

Christopher returned to the golf industry after a break of five years during which time he worked in the motor industry. Initially he spent nearly three years as assistant to the golf professional at Astbury Golf Club. He returned to the club as an Assistant Greenkeeper and is currently taking his NVQ level 2 at Reaseheath. He plays golf to a handicap of 8 and is also interested in motorcycling, keep fit and travel. His aim is to add to his experience and move up the ladder in the greenkeeping profession.

**Name:** William Fulton  
**Age:** 32  
**Golf Club:** Turnberry GC  
**College:** Langside College

William has been an Assistant at Turnberry for 10 years having moved into the profession following a spell working in a garage. During the past decade he has worked on the Open Championship and the British Seniors Championship. He is currently working towards his HNC in Golf Course Management. His main interest outside work is wildlife while he is also keen on football, walking and swimming.