

BIGGA Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, explains how the TORO student finalists are selected and profiles of the successful eight.



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The TORO Student of the Year Competition 2002

The Highlight of the Year for many student greenkeepers, the TORO Student of the Year Competition, moved into its second stage, the Regional Finals, during the last week of June. The Competition starts at BTME each year when Training Providers are asked to nominate their choice of Student Greenkeeper. This year saw 38 entries, from 21 Training Providers, all hoping to become the TORO Student of the Year 2002.

This year's interviews began at Luton Airport, on 20 June, when Peter Mansfield, from TORO, BIGGA Board Member, David Walden, and I interviewed three candidates.



The Regional Interviews continued in Edinburgh where Jeff Anguige, from TORO, BIGGA Board Member, Iain McLeod, and Ken Richardson, spent a full day interviewing the 9 entries from Scotland.

Manchester Airport was the next venue with Trevor Chard, from TORO, BIGGA Master Greenkeeper, Andy Campbell, and I interviewing a Total of nine candidates from the North of England and from Ireland.

Back in the car for the next trip to St Albans where I was joined by BIGGA Board Member, Ian Semple, and again by Trevor Chard to interview the candidates from the South East.

Another car journey to Cheltenham followed the Interviews in St Albans where I was joined by Peter Mansfield and BIGGA Master Greenkeeper, Gordon Irvine, to interview candidates from the South West and Wales.

Yet another car journey took Peter and I to Peterborough where we were joined once again by David Walden to interview the candidates from the Midlands.

Looking at the statistics shows that a total of 38 candidates were interviewed by nine judges at six venues with me travelling 1600 miles.

I started off by saying that the Competition was the Highlight of the Year for Student Greenkeepers. It is also a great boost for the judges to see that the standards of training, both on and off the course, continue to improve. Moreover, candidates are now better prepared for interview, making the judges job of selecting eight National Finalists ever more difficult.

This Year's Competition was difficult to judge as all candidates met a very high standard and they should be very proud to have represented their club and training provider in the Competition. The judges can, however, select only eight National Finalists and they are:

Representing Scotland



Graham Winter, who works at Kingsbarns Golf Links and attends Elmwood College. Graham has seen Kingsbarns develop from a field for grazing cows in summer and a ski run in winter to a high class links golf course, as he has all of his life in the town. Graham is just starting his career in greenkeeping and hopes, one day, to manage a prestigious golf club.

Representing the North of England



Peter Cross, who works at Woolton Park Golf Club in Liverpool. Peter has been a greenkeeper for 11 years, attending a range of courses to improve his knowledge and skills. His most recent course has been an HNC in Golf Course Management at Reaseheath College.

Representing Ireland



Two candidates have been selected to represent Ireland in the National Final. They are Gary Finnerty and Mairaid Coleman.

Gary now works at Fota Island recent venue for the Murphy's Irish Open. A student at Elmwood College, Gary has recently completed his HND in Golf Course Management. Although only 22, Gary has worked on five golf courses two of which are in the US.



Mairaid Coleman is the third female greenkeeper to reach the National Finals. Now the Head Greenkeeper at Killerig Golf Club in Co Carlow, Mairaid has been involved in greenkeeping for three years. She was raised on a farm and trained as a horticulturist before turning to greenkeeping. Mairaid has recently gained her Certificate in Greenkeeping from An Grianan College of Horticulture.

Representing the South East of England



Another Region with two National Finalists, the South East will be represented by Murray Long and by John Gubb.

Murray Long entered greenkeeping in 1986, studying for City and Guilds Phases 2 and 3. He then spent some time establishing his career, becoming Head Greenkeeper, at Coombe Hill Golf Club in 1997. Murray returned to education to study NVQ Level 3 at Merrist Wood College, which he has recently completed.



John Gubb has been involved in greenkeeping since he left school 1993. A native of Devon, John is now the Deputy Course Manager at the Bedfordshire Golf Club. He has, recently, gained his NVQ Level 3 at Merrist Wood College to add to a National Diploma in Turf Science and a D32/33 assessor qualification.



Representing the South West and Wales

Duncan Brown is a relative newcomer to greenkeeping having joined High Post Golf Club, Salisbury, in 2000. Duncan has recently completed a National Diploma in Horticulture and Greenkeeping, at Sparsholt College. Duncan aspires to travel continuing to gain experience towards becoming a Course Manager.



Representing the Midlands

The Midlands Region will be represented by John Osborne, who is an assistant greenkeeper at Boston Golf Club in Lincolnshire. John has worked at Boston Golf Club since 1997 but mainly on a part time basis while he studied to become a probation officer. John decided that he preferred the outdoor life and joined Boston, full time, last year. John has, recently, completed his NVQ Level 2 in Sportsturf through the Myerscough 'Mollnet' distance learning.

The next step to becoming the TORO Student of the Year is the National Final, which will be held at BIGGA House on Monday 23 September, when a panel of judges will select the winner of the TORO Scholarship. This includes six weeks of study at the University of Massachusetts, a trip to the TORO factories in Minneapolis and in California and a trip to the GCSAA Exhibition in Atlanta in February 2003. Two runners-up will receive an all expenses paid trip to Continue to Learn and BTME at Harrogate in January 2003.

REGION AND SECTION TRAINING COURSES AUTUMN 2002 AND SPRING 2003

Thanks to contributors to the BIGGA Education and Development Fund, we can, once again, this Autumn and Spring, offer high class training courses for a very low price. The full brochure will be inserted into the September Edition of Greenkeeper International and will be available at Saltex. However, as some courses are due to run in October, I thought that I would give you some advance notice so that you can be prepared.

OCTOBER COURSES	DATE	AREA
PA1, PA2a and PA6 Spraying Course	14 -18 October	Midlands
PA1, PA2a and PA6 Spraying Course	21 -25 October	Mid Anglia
Basic Computer Skills	16 & 17 October	South West
Tractor Driving	30 & 31 October	South Wales
Health and Safety at Work	30 & 31 October	Northern England

NOVEMBER COURSES	DATE	AREA
Basic Computer Skills	5 & 6 November	Mid Anglia
Essential Management Skills	18 & 19 November	Luton Airport
Reel Sharpening	28 November	Carden Park

DECEMBER COURSE	DATE	AREA
Essential Management Skills	12 & 13 December	Manchester Airport

Remember, this is only a partial list of courses that will be run this Autumn and next Spring. These courses are guaranteed to be popular and places will be limited. Reserve your place by contacting Sami or Ken, at BIGGA House.

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