



▲ Winner Alex with runners up James and Robert.

The Runners Up

After selecting Alex Shore as the winner of the competition the panel had to make two further decisions – the two runners-up. The two 2004 Student Greenkeepers of the Year runners-up receive an all expenses paid trip to Continue to Learn and BTME and Clubhouse 2005 in January. After much deliberation Robert Finnegan and James Canham were declared the 2004 runners-up.

Robert Finnegan

Spend two minutes with Robert and his passion for greenkeeping will no doubt rub off on you, it really is infectious. He began his career as an Assistant at Navan Golf Club, before moving to Scotland to gain the training he was desperate for. Studying a HND at Elmwood College, Robert has landed himself a job at none other than the home of golf, St. Andrews, on the Old Course.

An ambitious individual Robert, 20, is determined to make the most of the opportunities that come along, and he plans to work as a greenkeeper around the world while still in his 20's. He plans in particular to spend time working in both the US and Scandinavia.

With Euan Grant, the Head Greekeeper of St. Andrews' Old Course, nurturing Robert's enthusiasm and ability, the youngster should progress to be a fine greenkeeper.

James Canham

James is just 18 years of age but has knowledge beyond his years. Educated at the College of West Anglia, James is working towards his NVQ Level 2 and has clearly

absorbed everything he has been taught so far.

James is an Assistant at Weston Park Golf Club and has aided in the many changes within the course. He is keen to gain more knowledge in the machinery, business and budgeting side of greenkeeping, as he believes these are becoming increasingly important factors within the industry.

Another individual who has a great passion for his job, James enjoys the challenge of putting the theory learnt in the classroom into practice on the golf course.

James plans in the future to gain as much knowledge as possible in as many areas as he can. This attitude should see him rise though the ranks of greenkeeping and he plans to be at the top within 10 years.

Despite not being crowned the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year for 2004 the remaining five Finalists certainly did not leave empty handed.

BIGGA Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, and Toro's Andy Brown emphasised at the awards ceremony that all eight entrants really were winners. A cliché maybe but one that is certainly very true in this case.

The interview panel of John Pemberton, BIGGA Chief Executive, David Walden, BIGGA Board member, Peter Mansfield and Andy Brown, both of Toro, were extremely impressed with the standard of all eight interviewees and the course reports that they produced.

It resulted in some tough and very close decisions having to be made by the panel, which highlighted just how the standard of education in greenkeeping is increasing year on year.

Christopher Kerr, studying at GOSTA, Peter Kennedy, at Reaseheath College, Stuart Glover, Greenmount College, Alastair Higgs, of Sparsholt College, and Katherine Walls, from Myerscough College, all left BIGGA HOUSE with the great experience of being in the competition final, and all that it entails, and the knowledge that they are among the top young greenkeepers in the UK and Ireland. All can look forward to very bright futures.

After the success of the 2004 Student of the Year competition and the high benchmark set by the entrants BIGGA and Toro are already eagerly awaiting the start of the 2005 competition.



▲ The eight finalists, from left, back row, Stuart Glover, Christopher Kerr, Katherine Walls, Alastair Higgs and Peter Kennedy and, front, James Canham, Alex Shore and Robert Finnegan.