

TORO[®]

Toro Student of the Year 2012

The national final

The finalists for the annual Toro Student of the Year competition, held at BIGGA House, have now been chosen. Those lucky enough to make the cut are revealed by our new L&D resident, Stuart Green...

The annual Toro Student of the Year Award, now in its 24th year, offers student 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 trips to visit the GCSAA's Golf Industry Show, in San Diego and Toro's Californian 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 September.

One of the final six (pictured), have the incredible opportunity to follow in Matthew Perks' footsteps to become the 24th Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year.

The six finalists will arrive at Aldwark Manor on Sunday 16th September and will join the judges 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 tenpin 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 sanctioned by their college or training provider.

Our thanks go to all those who entered the 2012 Award and who continue to make this Award a flagship event of the greenkeeping calendar.



Continue to Learn seminar at BTME 2012 (left) and Vegas trip (above)



GI Further reading

GI June 2012 (pages 24-26) featured 2011 winner, Matt Perks, and his three page account of his trip to the States

THE TORO COMPANY
Toro Student of the Year, Matt Perks, reveals all about his trip to the States, the prize for scooping the top position in the annual BIGGA competition.

A life changing trip

The day I first met with the Toro Student of the Year judges was a bit of a blur. I was sitting in a room with four other students, all of whom were vying for the title of Toro Student of the Year. The judges were looking at our portfolios and talking to us about our work. It was a bit of a pressure, but I managed to hold my own. I was lucky to be one of the six finalists. The trip to the States was a real eye opener. I got to see some of the best golf courses in the world and meet some of the best people in the industry. It was a life changing experience. I got to see the Toro headquarters in California and meet the staff. I also got to see the GCSAA's Golf Industry Show in San Diego. It was a great experience and I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in the golf industry.

"The campus was like a small town with its own basketball and ice hockey arenas, bars and restaurants. It even had its own Power Station"

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TOUR TRIP

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Six of the best



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



Stuart joined Dunstanburgh Golf Club when he left school, 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 inquire about the vacant position. The owner took a risk and Stuart has now been in the role for two years and is relishing the challenge.

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

Name: Thomas Flavelle
Age: 23
Golf Club: Lingdale Golf Club
Position: Greenkeeper
College: Myerscough 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 3 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: Christopher Watson
Age: 18
Golf Club: Peterculter 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 awarded 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: Peter Thompson
Age: 25
Golf Club: Sunningdale Golf Club
Position: Assistant Greenkeeper
College: Oaklands College



Peter has been in greenkeeping for five years and is currently working towards his Level 3 Diploma, at Oaklands College.

Peter started greenkeeping at Old Fold Manor in 2007, but chose 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.

Had he not followed his current career path he would have trained as a chef.

Name: Aaron Launchbury
Age: 27
Golf 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 assisted Dan in researching design ideas for alternative habitats for pollinating insects.

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



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 Trevoze 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.