Wood Boring Beetle Flies into the UK

UK plant health authorities are battling to eradicate the most dangerous alien insect pest of trees and shrubs in the United Kingdom, which has over the past two years. The boring activity of the larval saw. Length of ALB life cycle varies depending on temperature. Entomologists expect ALB life cycle under south of England conditions to be around 2 years. The boring activity of the larval saw leaves tree trunks which collapse and die. To serious is this quarantine pest that tree felling and incineration is required. All normally sacrosanct priorities including Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and nesting birds. Thankfully none of the three golf courses in this area of Kent are affected. Spread of ALB onto golf courses would completely change their topography and lay-out due to a massive loss of trees of all stages of growth and development.

In addition, it would undoubtedly mean significant collateral damage to sports turf from the heavy machinery and equipment needed to fell, transport and incinerate hundreds of full grown trees. Adult beetles will fly at least 400 metres in search of a food supply and anyone handling infested trees or subsequently transporting defoliated leaf or re-cycling cuttings will inadvertently spread the pest. Experience from the US shows that a very small number of beetles can spread. After arriving in New York in 1996 and Chicago in 1998, ALB subsequently spread into the New England States, Ohio and Canada. Estimates for damage and cost of control run into hundreds of billions of dollars.

The sun beamed down on Chris Kennedy, Golf Courses Manager at Wentworth, for the BMW PGA Championship, his 52nd and final European Tour event as world number one. Luke Donald produced a dominant display to successfully defend his BMW PGA Championship title. Chris described the conditions running up to the tournament which brought drought then heavy rain with low temperatures throughout, as ‘the most difficult build-up I have ever had to deal with’. A strong statement after 22 years at Wentworth and 50 all told in the industry!

Nevertheless the yet again rejuvenated West Course is immaculate and the most recent course changes notably at holes 12, 15 and 17 as well as the raised landing areas on 18 were seamless in appearance. The great weather for the week brought out a record crowd of over 155,000 for the four tournament days to witness Europe’s finest players competing for the Tour’s flagship title. Donald’s closing 68 for a 13 under par total of 275 saw him cruise to a four shot victory over Paul Lawrie and Justin Rose. It was an eventful week for Chris beginning with a tribute from the Association of Golf Writers and closing with the presentation of a silver salver on the 18th green during the main prizegiving from the European Tour’s Chief Executive George O’Grady (right).

Congratulations to Chris for his well-earned retirement and we wish him well as he relocates to his native Scotland. Good luck also to Kenny Mackay as he takes over the reins from Chris for the next chapter in the Wentworth story. As usual a Support Team of BBOGA volunteers co-ordinated by Clive Osgood assisted with the event, providing back up on the first two days and then each individual match was accompanied over the weekend, by a member. A full complement of forty-five BBOGA Members, from all over the country, took part and had to take on plenty of water in some of the course of their duties, because of the high temperatures with hardly a cloud to be seen in the sky over the last two days. So all accounts everybody was kept on their toes with frequent visits bring made into many of the well-places and formidable West Course bunkers throughout.

Grand Finale

Wentworth’s Chris Kennedy is the leading lights of the game and he is a huge fan of the course, which he rates as one of the best in the world. He has been a massive part of the Wentworth community for over 20 years and was instrumental in helping to create some of the most iconic holes on the course. He has a deep affection for the course and has helped to shape it into the world-class venue that it is today.

The Association of Golf Writers paid tribute to Chris Kennedy, the retiring Golf Courses Manager at Wentworth, during their annual lunch at Wentworth Club on the eve of the BMW PGA Championship. The BMW PGA Championship was the 52nd European Tour event where Kennedy had managed the course preparation at Wentworth and his contribution was recognised by the AGW with Chairman Bill Elliott and John Jacobs, the founding father of the European Tour and Honorary Life Vice President of the AGW, presenting a silver Quaich. Elliott said: “We as golf writers talk so much about how much equipment has moved on in our lifetimes and so much over the last 20 years and actually I think the greatest advance in that time is the conditioning of golf courses. That’s down to fantastic skill, commitment, enthusiasm and passion, no one has that more than Chris Kennedy here at Wentworth. You have been a terrific asset to this club and an example to greenkeepers across the country and we thank you for what you have done here.” Jacobs was also joined by Judy Williams, the wife of the late Michael Williams, golf correspondent of the Daily Telegraph for some 20 years, to present Colin Harding with the AGW’s Spring medal played over Wentworth Club’s Edginton Course.