

GI NEWSDESK

The latest news from around the globe



VOLUNTEER AT THE BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BIGGA is again offering a superb opportunity to increase your experience by volunteering at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth in May, assisting Kenny Mackay and the home greenkeeping team between May 20-25.

You can volunteer for one day or for the full period. The schedule will involve bunker raking duties on the last two days, possibly all four days, and early morning duties on the official Practice and Pro-Am Days on May 20 and May 21.

This is a great chance to see at

close hand the preparation for the European Tour flagship event on the West Course at Wentworth.

For more information please contact, Clive Osgood, South East Regional Administrator cliveosgood@yahoo.co.uk, also on 07841 948410 or 01737 819343.



SOUTH EAST GOLF DAY

The South East Region's Annual Golf and Dinner Day will be held on Friday 7 March at Walton Heath Golf Club on the Old Course. This is one of the industry's longest running events and is always well supported.

For more details please contact Clive Osgood, all details for Clive can be found in the BMW PGA story on this page.

MAC ON THE MOVE



David MacIndoe, who featured in GI last September working as a grow-in consultant on Belarus's first ever golf course, has made a move to warmer climes in Portugal.

David, left, a former Course Manager who is now a Lawn & Sportsground Consultant, has been appointed Grow-in Manager on the new David McLay Kidd course at Comporto Dunes near Lisbon. He starts imminently on an eight-month contract.

SCOTTISH CONFERENCE

The Scottish Conference will be held on 4 March at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline.

Gordon Moir and Paul Miller will be providing a talk on the "Story of Kingarock", a course in Fife.

Alistair Eccles will then pose a question for delegates to ponder "to oversee or not to oversee".

We are delighted that Cameron McMillan will be coming up for the day to dispel the mystique surrounding Queenwood Golf Club in Surrey.

During lunch, Stuart Green from BIGGA's L&D Team will be available to discuss CPD and to provide a presentation to members extolling the virtue of full participation in the scheme.

After lunch our chairman Andy

O'Hara will provide his address that this year will include Chris Sealey, National Chairman, providing his thoughts.

Mark Hunt will then take us through a number of factors that are affecting course maintenance with a distinctive look at changes to our climate, something that may affect your course!

Finally, we have Steve Chappell from Gleneagles providing us with a background on the preparation of The Ryder Cup 2014.

Six CPD credits are available to anyone attending the conference - further details are available from the BIGGA website, including the booking form.

Alternatively email John Young: johnyoung@bigga.co.uk

A TOP DRESSING DOWN FOR CHALARA

Urea is a component of turf top dressings but could also become part of the solution to chalara ash dieback.

Urea could hasten the decomposition of ash leaf litter along with ascospore-containing apothecia the overwintering sexual stage of *Chalara fraxinea* thus breaking its infection cycle.

Application of urea has proved highly successful in helping to manage apple scab, a widespread and damaging disease of apples caused by the fungus *Venturia inaequalis*). Apple scab and chalara ash dieback have one salient feature in common. That is the ability to overwinter on fallen leaf debris which subsequently acts as a template for the production of sexual spores (ascospores) in tiny mushroom-like fruiting bodies called apothecia. Ascospores are liberated from apothecia early in the following season to infect the new flush of leaves (and young fruit in the case of apple scab).

North American apple growers spray urea on their trees just before autumn leaf-fall or to the orchard floor in the following spring. Treatment with urea accelerates leaf tissue breakdown by soil-borne microbes and hastens soil

incorporation of the leaf matter by earthworms, thus depriving the apple scab fungus of a template for spore production. Urea is applied to break the infection cycle.

Research at the University of New Hampshire showed a 97 per cent reduction in spring production of apple scab ascospores when trees are sprayed with 5 per cent urea just before leaf-fall in autumn; a 50 per cent reduction from urea applied to the leaf litter when approximately 95 per cent of the leaves have fallen in late autumn/early winter; and a 70 per cent reduction when urea is sprayed on to the leaf litter in spring. The same researchers claim shredding of leaf litter in late autumn (November) or early spring (April) will reduce the risk of apple scab by 80-90 per cent. Similar overall findings are reported in the Quebec province of Canada.

However, a word of caution is required. There are essential differences between these pathogens and diseases which mean the same level of success may not be achievable against chalara ash dieback.

After autumn leaf fall ash leaflets disintegrate quickly and by the following spring only the



leaf stalk remains substantially intact.

Fungal fruiting bodies (apothecia) are produced on these highly resilient ash leaf stalks (rachis and petiole) and it remains to be seen whether urea can speed up the decomposition of such hard foliar debris.

Apple scab is a superficially disfiguring infection of the leaves and fruit. Considerable economic damage is caused through a reduction in the photosynthetic capacity of leaves (and therefore stem

growth and fruit yield) and fruit quality and finish, but apple scab 'never' killed an apple tree.

Chalara ash dieback on the other hand is an internal vascular wilt disease, infecting via the foliage but subsequently spreading throughout the internal woody tissue of the tree.

Infections start on the leaflets and progress rapidly along the rachis and petiole (leaf stalk) before transferring into the woody stem at the point of leaf attachment.

Dr Terry Mabbett

TRIBUTE TO DOUGIE JOHNSTONE

Tributes are continuing to be paid to Dougie Johnstone, Course Manager at Hinckley Golf Club, who was tragically killed in an accident on his course just after Christmas.

It is believed he was working on his course alone on Friday 27 December clearing storm damage when he was hit by a falling branch.

Chris Kennedy, who retired as Director and Golf Courses Manager at Wentworth in 2012, hired Dougie in 2008 as assistant greenkeeper and was planning to meet up with him at BTME 2014 along with many other past and present Wentworth team members.

Chris said: "Dougie came to us because he wanted the whole package on his CV ahead of his first Course Manager role. He was looking for tournament and

construction experience and we were able to offer him both.

"He was heavily involved in the West Course redesign and in all manner of tournaments during his three-year tenure with us. He was a very hard working man, totally committed and keen to learn. He was enthusiastic, asked questions and was also very good with the members. If they stopped him while he was working to discuss the course he was only too happy to explain what was going on.

"He was also a very good golfer and practised regularly. He was a good people person, a great lad and important team member. We were sorry to lose his services in 2011 but very happy for him that his career was progressing and he had secured his first Course Manager position at Hinckley.

"On behalf of everyone who knew him at Wentworth, we'd like to say that it was an absolute pleasure working with him. He will be sadly missed and we were all thinking about him and his family a lot during our traditional meeting at BTME."

Chris added that Dougie's wife Sue was a key figure in the Variety Club's Golf Society, and Dougie had played in several tournaments with well-known celebrities.

An inquest has opened into Dougie's death. Initial investigations revealed he had suffered a large head wound, and was discovered early on the morning of Saturday 28 December close to where he had been working. A health and safety probe has been launched and a full inquest will be held at a later date.

