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An American theme

With the 2012 majors out of the way the focus now turns to the Ryder Cup matches in Chicago later this month.

The American players had appeared to be in the ascendancy in recent times but Rory McIlroy's stunning eight-shot victory at Kiawah Island in the USPGA Championship coupled with seven of the top ten places being filled by Europeans was a strong riposte from the Cup holders and sets the event up brilliantly. Home advantage may play a part but I'm sure the matches will be close.

The Ryder Cup is an event that attracts interest way beyond the normal golfing audience, we've been thoroughly spoilt by the amazing London Olympic Games and this is golf's chance to make as thrilling a statement.

In this edition we feature an insight from Curtis Tyrrell, the superintendent at the host venue, Medinah Country Club and one of the most recent recipients of BIGGA's Master Greenkeeper award, into his preparations for the most watched golf tournament in the world.

Another American destination under discussion this month is San Diego, host city for the Golf Industry Show in February 2013.

We are delighted that Bernhard and Company are continuing their support of the BIGGA Delegation to the GIS which will see ten members get a fantastic opportunity to visit the show, experience the GCSAA's excellent education programme, visit some renowned golf facilities and make lasting friendships with their fellow delegates. Witnessing this year's group bond together in Las Vegas was a privilege and having spoken with many of them since I know that the experience is genuinely in the 'once in a lifetime' category.

The flyer on the front cover gives details of how to apply to be considered for the Delegation and I would urge all members who believe their

careers could benefit from the experience to try their luck and complete the online application form. We are hugely grateful to Stephen Bernhard and his colleagues at Bernhard and Company for their generous sponsorship of this activity.

On September 1st we opened registration for BTME in January, exhibition space is filling up fast and the education programme is bigger and better than ever.

Pre-registration ensures smooth access to the halls of the Harrogate International Centre, go online at www.harrogateweek.org.uk and click the **Register Now** icon.

Then, simply enter your details to receive your access badge.

During BTME the aforementioned Curtis Tyrrell will be joining Jim McKenzie of Celtic Manor and Steve Chappell of Gleneagles for a unique presentation on the greenkeeping demands of the Ryder Cup past, present and future.

Details of the full Continue to Learn education programme will be contained in the October edition of Greenkeeper International.



Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO

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Ryder on Curtis!

"It's once in a lifetime experience for me and the team - it's the pinnacle of all our careers and we're working our butts off"

The eyes of the world will be on one particular course this month when the 39th Ryder Cup rolls into Illinois. GI talked to Curtis Tyrrell, Director of Course Operations at the Medinah Country Club...

Curtis Tyrrell has been eagerly anticipating Friday September 28 2012 since his first day in his current role four years ago. On that morning, the 54th year old will sign the official that has his 'voice in a lifetime' opportunity to host one of the world's greatest sporting events.

However, while Curtis and his team have made many alterations to the course over the last four years with the Ryder Cup in mind, he believes it stems that the 6000 members will also enjoy the benefits after the curtain has been drawn.

Knowledgeable BIGGA members in the UK have benefited one of the worst summers in memory. Curtis and his colleagues have been fighting exactly the opposite problem as experienced members' feverish pitch.

He said "It's a shame in a lifetime experience for me, and all my team it's the pinnacle of all our careers and we're working our butts off."

"I've been on the edge of my seat with excitement for probably a year now. The preparation's been pretty intense. We've had the hottest July ever recorded, it's been over 100F during the day and 80F through the night.

"The grass has come through already, although some fairways with high the areas have suffered. A lot of people don't realize we have three courses here and it's number three that's hosting the Ryder Cup. To help everything else the summer's unprecedented heat, we're doing this course a month before the tournament for deep aeration and overseeding, and some areas are being treated."

"The greens are running at 11 on the thermometer and grass speed is great. We've had the hottest July ever recorded, it's been over 100F during the day and 80F through the night.

Curtis was not slow to make alterations soon after his arrival at the club, which opened in 1925. The all-important third course has previously hosted the PGA Championship and US Open.

"Medinah is a family club, and when I arrived I got to see the world's best players. Our course we know we had the Ryder Cup on the horizon so that obviously played a huge part in our planning."

Tyrrell also noted the membership of the course and proud to be a member of the course and proud to be a member of the world's greatest games are here.

"Course three will be open to members for our new fee business model."

"We rebuilt all the greens in late 2009. Some were already USGA measured greens so we brought all the others up to the same standard."

"We then re-grassed all the fairways, which all the bunkers and entirely rebuilt the 15th hole. These changes were mainly for the members' benefit. They love this course and want it to be the best that it can be."

"We carried out extensive work last winter. We did some fairway installation to begin with the movement and temperature management around critical greens."

"Then, after we started being on the infrastructure for the tournament, grasshopper, we re-aerated, topdressed, repaired, topdressed and putts. This will all give it a year so it's quite an undertaking."

During the tournament Curtis will be assisted by 100 volunteers including BIGGA members Lee Stratton, Course Manager at the new O West Golf Club, and Steve Chappell, Head Greenkeeper from the Glasgow which hosts the next Ryder Cup.

While some may expect Curtis to have several weeks off to recuperate after the Cup, nothing could be further from the truth. The very day after the championship is over, work will begin on a huge \$6.4m redrains and renovation of course one.

Curtis first caught the greenkeeping bug while working at the Country Club in Woodstock, Maryland, and after graduation he moved to Southern California to work as an assistant at PGA West in Palm Springs.

The club took on his responsibilities before moving on to the role of Golf Course Superintendent, and finally secured his current role in 2008.

Curtis is a proud member of BIGGA and added that his membership is crucial for keeping up to speed with developments in the UK.

"I'm a BIGGA member because I wanted to expand my knowledge and learn as much about greenkeeping on the other side of the pond as I could. I wanted to cover all bases, and learn exactly how it's run over there."

"The standard so much from the BIGGA members I've met, it's been awesome."

"The magazine every month has been invaluable. The fact to know what challenges are facing people here in the UK and how they're facing them and tackling them."

"I didn't think my career would progress to the point where I was preparing the Ryder Cup course. There are so many talented guys over here in your average country club, you never think you will get to this level so much is a real awesome true for me."

"I want everyone here to be proud of their contribution towards the Ryder Cup."

"We're lucky to have a fantastic team and I'm really excited everyone's really enthusiastic and engaged."

"After that, my only remaining wish is to be an American vet!"

* The greens are USGA type with 100% Cynopoda from 07 and 081119 and the iron and steel based construction with a USGA monitor, also 100% Cynopoda from.

* Greens preparation will involve light topdressing once a week up to ten days before the event with mowing six days a week and rolling five days a week.

* Curtis hosts his fortnightly a well-trodden philosophy of soil testing and mixing his fertilizers from local purchased liquid nutrients, adjusting according to environmental conditions. He also uses an organic fertilizer based on chicken manure for his granular programme.

* Medinah has a significant fleet of equipment including a couple of TruTurf rollers and ferries from Tenn.

RYDER CUP PREVIEW

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GI GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL
Celebrating 25 years of BIGGA £5.20 SEPTEMBER 2012

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 Tony Smith is paid a visit by a fresh face at GI, Steve Castle

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ASH TREE ALERT
 Breaking news on a threat to your course

Ryder on Curtis
 Ryder Cup preview

The Ryder Cup rolls into Chicago. GI talks to Curtis Tyrrell, Director of Golf Course Operations at the Medinah Country Club

ALSO INSIDE... ANTHRACNOSE : BRUSHCUTTERS : DRAINAGE



The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association Limited.



Callum beats Long Odds to Triumph

A promising teenage greenkeeper helped his club scoop a coveted trophy – after being called away from repairing a bunker to play a crucial round.

Trainee Callum Long, 17, had to race to the first tee to compete in the St Ives Junior Cup final after a player dropped out at the last minute. Despite still wearing his work clothes, he held his nerve together with teammate Michael Cato to win the cup in a dramatic sudden death play-off.

Callum, who plays off 12, is currently studying for a diploma in greenkeeping while working at St Ives Golf Club, Cambridgeshire, as part of his work-based training.

He said: “I was repairing a bunker when the junior organizer came over to tell me someone had dropped out, and asked if I could

play in the Junior Cup Final.

“It was a bit of a surprise to say the least, but luckily I had my golf shoes at the club. Before I knew it I was in a golf cart heading to the first tee. I still had my work clothes on. It was tiring because I had got up that morning at 5.30am to start work, and because it went to a play-off I didn’t finish until about 6.30pm, but I knew I had to keep my concentration because it was an important competition.

“It just goes to show that maybe you don’t need to do too much preparation, my partner and I played some good golf on the day and I was very pleased to help us win the cup.”

Callum was delighted by his success as was everyone at the club, particularly Course Manager Phil Gates.



SOUTH COAST DEFEAT SECRETARIES IN CARE CUP

South Coast Greenkeepers achieved a notable victory in the 16th Annual Course Care Cup.

Held at Rushmoor Golf Club, the Wessex Secretaries were keen to reverse last year’s close defeat in fine weather. The match was again hard-fought and extremely close, with the result coming down to the final two holes of the day – and the greenkeepers prevailed winning by three matches to two.

An excellent meal followed and thanks from all were extended to Highspeed Group for sponsoring the event.

PICTURE: Highspeed Group’s Area Manager, Paul Dyter is shown presenting the trophy to Tony Gadd, Chairman of BIGGA South Coast Section.

HOME COMFORTS FOR VERULAM

Verulam Golf Club took full advantage of hosting the BIGGA Golf Management Trophy by winning the competition on home turf. The event, sponsored by Tacit, provided an excellent prize table.

The Verulam team of Robin Farrer, Chris Carpenter, Don Longarvie and Neville Custance triumphed with 85 points. Second place went to Buckingham Golf Club with 81 points, the team included Brian Piggott, Peter Frost, David Barnes and Chris Wilkes. Third place went to John O’Gaunt Golf Club with 77 points on count back.

The format was a stableford, four ball better ball with the best two scores on each hole to count.

Nearest The Pin was won by Paul Toyer from St Neots Golf Club and the Longest Drive winner was Simon Woolley from Brickenden Grange Golf Club. Thanks to all who attended.

Attention BIGGA Members

Have you got anything that you think might be of interest to other BIGGA members reading these pages? We are always on the lookout for news, stories and goings-on within our membership.

Also, if you are doing something outside of your day-to-day greenkeeping role, let us know about it. Maybe a fun activity or a sponsored run? Please feel free to get in touch with our new Communications Executive, Steve Castle on 01347 833800 ext 510 or email steve.castle@bigga.co.uk with your news (and photographs!)

North and South Wales Come Together in Battle



An idea which began over a chat at the last BTME resulted in the first BIGGA golf battle between North and South Wales BIGGA members.

The tournament was the brainchild of Gareth Knight from Trefloyne Golf Course and Rhys Butler of Aberdovey Golf Course – and Rhys agreed to host the inaugural event.

Gareth, South Wales Secretary, takes up the story: “Rhys kindly booked the dormy rooms for the south team and we decided on two teams of eight players.

“We were very lucky to gain sponsorship for both teams, John Mooney of Rigby Taylor organising the North Wales team sponsorship and Peter Holmstrom from Countrywide sponsoring the South Wales team.

“We teed off at 2pm. It was a light breeze at Aberdovey for the North Wales Links Boys, however blowing a gale as far as we were concerned! Strong winds and a tight Links course made it tough conditions for some of the inland parkland green keepers.

“The course was excellent, a beautiful coastal setting, the true untamed elements of the natural rolling links creating an exhilarating rustic and natural course.

“Colt, Braid and Fowler have all had a hand in shaping the course over the years, with tight lies, rolling fairways, natural bunkers, undulating approaches, dry firm surfaces and true, fast greens, a joy for any standard of golfer.

“The match was very close with three of the games heading to the 18th hole, the result being 3-1 to the North Wales team.

“We all sat down to a beautiful meal after and were joined by Richard Dixon of the Golfing Union of Wales who said a few words, speeches were made and the rest of the evening was enjoyed by both teams embracing the delights that Aberdovey had to offer.

“Thank you to Rigby Taylor, Countrywide and Farmura for their continued support and assisting this event, Trade involvement is so important to all section events.

Thank you to all the BIGGA members that travelled far and wide to support the day, and to Richard Dixon of the GUV for his support and Aberdovey for hosting the event.

“The Organisation for next year’s event is already underway and we hope it to be as successful as the last. This proves once again how important networking can be at the BTME show.”



KINGS OF THE CASTLE

Bothwell Castle Golf Club have appointed a new Head Greenkeeper and an Assistant Head Greenkeeper.

Alasdair McDermid, who has been Acting Head Greenkeeper for the past year at the parkland course near Glasgow, has accepted the permanent role of Head Greenkeeper. He’s been with the club for 20 years.

Stewart Carbray, who has been employed by Bothwell since 2000, is now Assistant Head Greenkeeper. Stewart has been Acting Assistant since last year.

Everyone at BIGGA congratulates Alasdair and Stewart, and wishes them every success in their permanent roles.

Picture: Stewart (left) and Alasdair

Ash Tree Alert

Dr Terry Mabbett reports on an unprecedented potential threat to your course

Native Common Ash Trees Face Surprise Disease Threat

Native common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) now faces an unprecedented threat from the latest alien plant pathogen to arrive in the United Kingdom (UK). Chalara ash die-back caused by the fungus *Chalara fraxinea* sailed into the country in style on a consignment of 2000 ash trees exported by a Dutch nursery to nursery in southern England.

The south of England nursery based in Buckinghamshire subsequently sold the consignment by mail order to 90 customers throughout the UK. Forestry Commission (FC) and Fera (Food and Environment Research Agency), which subsequently intercepted *Chalara fraxinea* on the trees, identified the 90 customers and gave out instructions for them to dig up, chop up and double-bag the trees before taking them to a landfill for deep burial.

This is somewhat surprising since standard biosecurity practice in such potentially catastrophic pest and disease situations is for the destruction of trees on site by burning followed by a thorough clean up including tools, soil and compost by professionals drafted in specifically to do the job. Transporting tree material infected with a new alien pathogen into the wider environment flies in the face of standard biosecurity practice and common sense.

Be that as it may, FC and Fera have since found the disease in the wider environment on some 500 ash trees planted in a Leicestershire car park and sourced from a nursery in Lincolnshire. Fera is also investigating outbreaks of the disease at nurseries in Surrey and Yorkshire.

Chalara fraxinea was able to 'walk into' the UK because although it is rampant across continental Europe, including France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, it is not an EU regulated pathogen. That means common ash trees can be imported into the UK from any other EU country with absolutely no restriction, inspection or documentation (an EU Plant Passport) that would otherwise declare a clean bill of health.



The disease is particularly prevalent in Denmark where up to 90 per cent of trees in many locations are infected and all are expected to die. *Chalara ash dieback* has the capacity to inflict on common ash what Dutch elm disease did to English elm in the 1970's. That is to essentially wipe out the species as forest, woodland, amenity and landscape tree in the UK.

So what's the damage? *Chalara fraxinea* infects ash trees of all ages but is more likely to be terminal in ash saplings. Symptoms are seen on the leaves, shoots and branches. Trees with advanced infections have defoliated crowns and profuse epicormic growth on trunk and branches.

Leaves display dark coloured lesions at the base and along the mid-rib, accompanied by obvious signs of wilting. Dieback of shoots and twigs is common.

Small lens shaped lesions form on the bark of stems and branches, subsequently enlarging to form perennial cankers which cause shoot and branch wilt and dieback especially in the upper crown.

The wood underneath bark lesions is brown/grey in colour which often extends longitudinally beyond the necrotic area of bark.

Advanced infections of whole trees is characterised by withered tops and shoots in the crown, marked dieback of shoots, twigs and branches and prolific epicormic growth lower down.

The causal pathogen, which can be isolated from leaves, shoots, stems, branches and even roots of symptomatic trees, is spread by rain splashes and disseminated by insects.

Long distance spread is most likely through trade in living trees and the movement of saw logs from infected trees.

Ash dieback caused by *Chalara fraxinea* may be confused with similar symptoms caused by completely different fungal pathogens, insect pests and even physiological problems caused by environmental factors.

Cankers caused by the fungus *Nectria galligena* and even bark necrosis caused by ash bark beetle (*Leperisinus varius*) could be mistaken for ash dieback.

Other factors which may be confused with ash dieback are larvae of *Prays fraxinella* (bud moth) that mine into shoot bases causing them to wilt and die. Even frost and drought damage could conceivably be confused with ash dieback.



TOP: Shoot dieback with wilting leaves on common ash and caused by *Chalara fraxinea* (Picture Forestry Commission)

ABOVE: Bark canker on common ash caused by *Chalara fraxinea* (Picture courtesy Thomas Kirisits)



(Continued from pages 8-9)

Impact on golf courses

Trees are an important and integral part of virtually all golf courses in the UK and their continued health is vital to the structure and appearance of the course as well as the health and safety of members, players and staff.

Common ash is spread throughout the UK. The ash tree population was recently estimated at 80 million but this is almost certainly a gross underestimate.

Common ash is a pioneer tree which freely germinates from naturally dispersed seed to establish in groves where opportunities arise in woodland, copses and rough open land.

Many if not most golf courses will have ash trees that have naturally established in this manner.

Common ash is also widely planted on golf courses, prized for its fast growth, an open and light shade casting canopy which does not kill the turf-grass beneath. And a light leaf load which rots away quickly in autumn and is relatively easy to clear away.

FC and Fera are now recommending that landowners who have planted ash trees in the last five years should inspect them for symptoms of Chalara ash dieback disease.

Greenkeepers should follow this advice even if the trees were purchased from a UK nursery. The nature of trade between EU nations means they could have just as easily come from any one of 26 other EU countries the vast majority of which have endemic chalara dieback disease.



ABOVE: Greyish brownish wood of ash branches infected with *Chalara fraxinea* (Picture courtesy Thomas Kirisits).

LEFT: Severe shoot dieback on common ash caused by *Chalara fraxinea* (Picture Forestry Commission)



ABOVE: Bark canker on common ash caused by *Chalara fraxinea* (Picture courtesy Thomas Kirisits)

BELOW: Leaf necrosis on common ash caused by *Chalara fraxinea* (Picture courtesy Thomas Kirisits)



Help is at hand...

Greenkeepers who suspect they may have Chalara ash dieback disease on their courses should contact:

Forest Research Tree Health Diagnostic and Advisory Service.
Tel: 01420 23000.
E-mail: ddas.ah@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Forestry Commission Plant Health Service.
Tel: 0131 314 6414.
E-mail: planthealth@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Fera Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate.
Tel: 01904 465625.
E-mail: info@fera.gsi.gov.uk