

OE GOLF SOCIETY

Report by Chris Walker

More than 80 people are currently members of the Old Eastbournian Golf Society (OEGS) but we would most definitely welcome even more. Membership is open to all members of the Eastbournian Society - not only OEs but also parents of former and current College pupils and members of staff at the College.

Some of our fixtures are only open to actual OEs, namely the Halford Hewitt, Grafton Morrish, Cyril Gray (for the over 50s), Sussex Schools and the Public Schools Putting Competition. However we also organise a whole host of friendly matches against other schools, a Spring Meeting and an Autumn Meeting, all of which are open to any member of the OEGS. And these are open to golfers of all abilities.

Membership of the OEGS only costs £25 (or £5 if you are under 25 years old). You then only pay for the fixtures that you attend. And again, for anyone under 25, we almost always generously subsidise their golf from OEGS funds.

Our contacts are either President Chris Walker (president@oegolf.uk), Secretary, David Burt (secretary@oegolf.uk) or Treasurer (and Captain in 2018), Jo

Grey (treasurer@oegolf.uk). We have just launched a new website, www.oegolf.uk, and we have a Facebook page, www.facebook.com/groups/762739557127533/.

We play on many magnificent golf courses, at times paying well below the usual green fee rate. New for 2018 was a match against Brighton College at Chart Hills GC. In 2019 we are returning to Piltdown GC for our AGM plus golf on Sunday 12 May.

Matches against other schools

We played matches against: Cranleigh (at Royal St George's), Hurstpierpoint (at Walton Heath), King's Canterbury (at Rye), Brighton (at Chart Hills), Tonbridge (at West Sussex), Lancing (at West Hill), Uppingham (at North Hants) and Allhallows and Dover College (at West Surrey). Details of the majority of these matches appear below but, for the record, we drew with Lancing, lost to Brighton and also lost to King's Canterbury (by 7 matches to 5, but this was not bad seeing that we were 6-0 down at lunch). Also for the record, Andrew Langlands successfully defended the Merritt Scratch Cup at our AGM Meeting at Royal Ashdown Forest GC on 6 May 2018.

Scratch Match v Old Cranleighans

Sunday 11 March 2018, Royal St George's GC

A total of ten Old Eastbournians turned out to take on the Old Cranleighans over the challenging Royal St George's golf course. This was a scratch match but, on handicap, the Cranleigh players are on average stronger than the Eastbourne ones. Out of the five morning foursome matches only one pair won, namely Adrian Sharpin and Grant Leonard by 2 & 1. Chris Walker and Will Hylton came reasonably close, only losing by 2 & 1. The afternoon matches, now in brilliant sunshine and with a light breeze, followed a similar pattern. Our only afternoon victory came from Chris Walker and David Barwell who won by 3 & 2. But despite going down by 8 matches to 2 the day was most enjoyable and excellent preparation for the Halford Hewitt in April.

Halford Hewitt

Thursday 5 to Sunday 8 April 2018, Royal St George's GC

Another campaign that was judged to be a success despite us only winning our first round match in the main Halford Hewitt tournament. Some of us practised at Royal St George's on



The 2018 Halford Hewitt at Royal St George's: left to right: Ben Dawson, Chris Walker, Ian Sands

the Tuesday and Wednesday. We then played a friendly match against Loretto at Prince's on the Thursday which we lost by 4.5 matches to 0.5. In the first round of the Hewitt we managed to triumph over Framlingham by 3.5 matches to 1.5. Our top pair of Adrian Sharpin and Geoff Campbell had to play well to win by 1 up over John Wybar and Lottie Whyman – yes, with Lottie playing off the same tees as the men! Our second round against the holders, Epsom, was always going to be a good deal more challenging and this indeed did prove to be the case. We went down by 4.5 to 0.5, the half coming from Mark Stewart and Tim Mote, albeit two of our other losses were only by 2 & 1.



Halford Hewitt, left to right: Geoff Campbell, Adrian Sharpin and their opponents from Framlingham, John Wybar and Lottie Whyman

The team comprised: Mark Stewart, Ben Dawson, Grant Leonard, Adrian Sharpin, Geoff Campbell, David Barwell, Chris Hampton, Will Hylton, Tim Mote, Ian Sands and Chris Walker. And we were extremely grateful for support from Brian Meaby and David Stewart.

Roll on the next Halford Hewitt which takes place between 11 and 14 April 2019.

Match v Hurstpierpoint

Wednesday 25 April 2018, Walton Heath GC

Our annual match against Hurstpierpoint was overshadowed by the death of Ken Ohlson on 22 April. At 92, Ken was perhaps the oldest member at Walton. He was always keen to have supper as well as play which he did until very recently, famously thrashing Jeremy Waud when he knocked it around from the white tees



Halford Hewitt: Mark Stewart and Tim Mote

in 79, beating his age by six strokes.

Playing on the New Course, first off for Eastbourne was Charles Oakley who won a very close match against Alex Fleet. Ben Burrows and Adam Walker took on Hurst Captain Jeremy Waud and his new wunderkind Glen Bridges, who played well below his handicap to cruise to a 4 & 3 victory. Our next pairing of Peter Robinson and Brian Meaby (combined age 166) lasted until the 15th until the cold, the wind and the opponents finished them off. Hugh Price and Mark Winstanley won and so the overall result was a halved match, our best result for years.

OEGS Spring Meeting

Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 April 2018, Royal West Norfolk GC

A report by David Dunn

A few weeks after Easter at the end of April, which is well before anything recognisable as spring weather has hit the Wash, the hardest band of OEs met for the Spring Meeting at Royal West Norfolk Golf Club (Brancaster). The weather was challenging, as usual, and this was the first occasion in a very long time that we were not joined by Peter Robinson, our erstwhile secretary and the donor of the plate for which we play. His retirement from competitive golf is a sad day since he has been almost the only OE golfer whom I could occasionally beat.

We stay at various venues around north Norfolk and, after golf, meet for dinner at some delightful mid-range restaurants. Playing foursomes is always a challenge but on the Sunday when we competed for the plate, Jo Grey (off 16 handicap) and Mark Simpson (6) came in with the winning score of 28 points, and the plate was presented to them by local host George Eve.

Match v Eastbourne College

Thursday 17 May 2018, Royal Eastbourne GC

A team of six OE golfers travelled to the Royal Eastbourne Golf Club to take on a team from the College.

Playing fourball, better ball matchplay, Will Hylton and Chris Walker (the latter using ancient hickory shafted clubs) took on Toby Lock and George Pepper (handicaps 6 and 5 respectively) and managed to sneak home one hole up. The gross better ball in this game was one under par and it was always very closely fought. Chris Morris and Peter Henley played against Peter Dickinson, the captain of the

College side, and Sam Tsang. The match was all square after the first nine holes but the OEs ended up something like four holes to the good. Brian Jay and Tony Dunn managed an excellent half against Will Oates and Jani Flind despite being four down with five or six holes to play.

So the overall result was a 2.5 / 0.5 victory for the OEs but some very good golf was played by the College pupils which augers well for the future. And we thank the Master in Charge of Golf, Alex Roberts, and Brian Jay from the OE side for arranging the fixture.

Grafton Morrish Qualifying

Saturday 12 May 2018, Knole Park GC

Adrian Sharpin captained the OE team that attempted to qualify for the 2018 Grafton Morrish Finals up in Norfolk in the autumn. He and Mark Justice put up an excellent performance with 31 Stableford Points (playing scratch foursomes). Mark Stewart and Tim Mote scored 25 and Will Ripley and Peter Morgan 20 for a team total of 76 points. Unfortunately this fell short of the 80 or so that would have been required to come in the top 8 out of 17 teams competing that day.

Cyril Gray Tournament

Thursday 21 to Saturday 23 June 2018, Worplesdon GC

A much more successful Cyril Gray Tournament this year. The starting team of Paul Wickman, Mark Stewart, Chris Walker, Mark Simpson, Ben Burrows and Anthony Eden did lose narrowly by 2 matches to 1 to Berkhamsted in the first round but the same team then beat Gresham's in the first round of the plate. There Chris Walker and Mark Simpson won on the 19th and Ben Burrows and Anthony Eden came back from 1 down on the 17th tee to win 1 up. We did then lose 2-1 to St Bees (with the deciding match involving Jo Grey and Anthony Eden losing on the 20th) but we went through to the Saturday morning semi-final of the plate because St Bees would then have been unable to raise a full team of six. In the semi-final (now with David Barwell in place of Mark Simpson) we lost 3-0 to Glenalmond. Watson's won the Cyril Gray and Glenalmond the plate.

Match v Old Tonbridgians

Sunday 22 July 2018, West Sussex GC

Our annual match against the Old Tonbridgians was unlike earlier such matches, being decided over two rounds of foursomes, rather than just a single round. Our thanks go to Ben Burrows, the organiser of the OE team and our contact with West Sussex, and to James Howie for the OTs.

A great time was had by all over what is a magnificent course, even given the very hot and dry conditions. Playing for quarter points on the byes, Eastbourne trailed by 3.25 to 2.5 points at lunch and by 6.75 to 5 points by the end of the day. Hence we had to pay for the lunchtime wine! Thanks to all 12 OEs who played and especially to Captain Jo Grey and David Dunn who were the only ones on our side to win both in the morning and afternoon.

Match v Uppingham

Wednesday 1 August 2018, North Hants GC

This was our third annual fixture against Uppingham. A lovely, calm and sunny day in

only (!) 23 degrees of heat saw nine OEGS members lunching in the delightful Justin Rose Room before venturing out on course for four four-ball matchplay pairings and one singles matchplay. The four-ball games were halved: Colin Farrant / John Maclean (won 3 & 2); Grant Leonard and Tony Dunn (won 2 & 1); Jo Grey (Captain) and Richard Gourlay (lost 4 & 3); David Burt and Mike Morris (lost 5 & 4). Which left Brian Jay in the deciding singles losing by a valiant 2 & 1. This means both OEGS and Uppingham have won one match each with one drawn in the series to date. Many thanks to all the OEGS players including a big welcome to Richard Gourlay in his first OEGS outing.

Autumn Meeting

Saturday 15 September 2018, Cooden Beach GC

A select (but highly skilled) group of seven OE golfers gathered for our 2018 Autumn Meeting at Cooden Beach GC under the command of match manager Andrew Langlands to whom many thanks are due. The majority of the course had weathered the dry summer better

than many in the UK. Maybe those reed-filled ditches do have some beneficial effects.

After a more than adequate 'full-English' we set off for a single round of Stableford in a fresh breeze but also glorious sunshine. Tony Dunn off a 9 handicap put up a stout defence



The 2018 Autumn Meeting at Cooden Beach: winner David Wells (left) and match manager Andrew Langlands

of his title with 36 points (nines of 12 and, yes, 24 points). Chris Morris (11 handicap) came second with 37 points but the clear winner was David Wells who off 17 returned 41 points.

Triangular match v Dovorians and Honitonians

Thursday 18 October 2018, West Surrey GC

The second year of the Triangular match was once again held at West Surrey GC on a very pleasant sunny October day, with teams from the Dovorians (Dover College), the Honitonians (All Hallows) and the OEGS, competing for the 'Foresail Trophy'. The nine three-ball matches (consisting of players from each school) were all hotly contested, with the OEGS team coming out on top, based on the eight best scores counting from each team. The final result was OEGS with 256 points, the Dovorians second with 248 points and the Honitonians third with 239 points.

The winning OEGS team consisted of David Burt (captain), Colin Farrant, Jo Grey, Ian and Peter Henley, Will Hylton, Brian Jay, John Maclean and Paul Wickman.