

OE GOLF SOCIETY

Chris Walker writes:

2020 has been a very different year for the Old Eastbournian Golf Society (OEGS) with the vast majority of our events being cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The main scratch team tournaments in which we play did not take place - namely the Halford Hewitt, Grafton Morrish and Cyril Gray (for the over 50s). We did however manage a Halford Hewitt practice day just prior to the first national lockdown and then a most successful West Country tour in September and our usual Autumn Meeting at Cooden Beach GC. Further national

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lockdowns and restrictions permitting, we hope to return to our normal programme of events in 2021 when we will be playing some of the top golf courses in the South of England, in addition to our annual weekend during the Spring in Norfolk.

Membership of the OEGS is open to all members of the Eastbournian Society – ie OEs and also former and current parents of College pupils and members of staff of the College. Some of our fixtures are only open to actual OEs. 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 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. Those members who paid their annual subscription this year should note that no further will be required in 2021 since so many of our 2020 fixtures had to be cancelled.

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We play on many magnificent golf courses, at times paying well below the usual green fee rate.

Halford Hewitt Practice – Sunday 15 March 2020, Royal Cinque Ports GC

Eleven OE golfers assembled at Deal – Adrian Sharpin, Chris Walker, Grant Leonard, Tony Dunn, David Barwell, Ian Sands, Ben Dawson, Mark Justice, Tim Mote, Charlie Oakley and Piers Manktelow. We played foursomes both morning and afternoon, all aimed at getting us in top form for facing Lancing in the first round of the Halford Hewitt in early April. We were well aware of the Covid-19 restrictions that were being discussed and indeed, only eight days later, the first lockdown came into effect and the 2020 Hewitt was cancelled.

OEGS West Country Golf Tour – September 2020

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic – but taking due care of all the Covid restrictions – a group of both men and ladies OEGS members, guests and partners, enjoyed a highly sociable three-day golf tour in September in the West Country, playing the highly rated North Devon courses of Saunton (the East Course) and Royal North Devon (the oldest course in England at its original location) and the number one ranked Somerset course, Burnham and Berrow (the Championship Course). OEGS Secretary, David Burt, who organised the tour said: 'Despite the huge difficulties we face in the country at the moment, the group were determined that the tour went ahead, especially as this year we have had to cancel nearly all our golf fixtures and events. The three courses we played in the West Country are all very special and really only accessible at a reasonable cost for golf societies like the OEGS. The tour was a great success, helped by some warm weather; plenty of laughter and the added bonus of everyone going home with at least one prize !'

Autumn Meeting - Saturday, 19 September 2020, Cooden Beach GC

We played an 18-hole Stableford competition for the Crosse Challenge Trophy from the yellow tees with full handicap allowance. Yet again for this event, the day was fine and sunny but with a 10 miles per hour breeze from the east. The easterly wind made the course more testing than in a prevailing westerly. Chris Walker won the trophy with a superb 41 points, a gross 74 off a handicap of 7. The second best scores were 33 points from both Andrew Langlands and David Dunn. It was great



Left to right: Patricia Seath, David Wells, David Dunn, Tony Dunn, Iryna Photiou at Cooden Beach GC.

to see two lady members competing, namely Iryna Photiou and Patricia Seath. They acquitted themselves very creditably with individual scores of 32 and 31 points respectively. The greens were noticeably quicker than usual, probably owing to the club championship being staged the same weekend. The course was mostly in good condition except for a few fairways having bare patches as a result of the exceptionally wet winter and the course's inherent challenges with drainage during those months. Positive comments on the day were received by the match manager from all OEGS participants.

OEs triumphant in UK hickory championships

Autumn 2020 has been an exceptionally successful time for OEs playing in hickory championships organised by the British Golf Collectors Society (BGCS). These are events played with wooden shafted golf clubs, all of which must date from before 1935. Firstly, Ben Burrows won the Scottish Hickory Championship with a fine net 63 off a hickory handicap of 15 on a windy day at Kilspindie GC on 3 September. Secondly, and in even more challenging weather conditions, Chris Walker won the English Hickory Championship at Rye GC on 2 October with 35 points off a hickory handicap of 13. Ben also played well in this event with 33 points for joint second place.



BGCS captain Carolyn Kirk with Ben Burrows at Kilspindie GC.



Ben Burrows and Chris Walker at Rye GC with their respective prizes