



The Bunnet

Official newsletter of the
James Braid Golfing Society

President : Peter Thomson

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From Under the Captain's Bunnet

"I go, I come back," said Ted Kavanagh. And so, taking his cue, I return to the tee box after a one round absence, bringing with me thanks from Jane and I to all of you who kindly sent their good wishes for our wedding, the reason for my absence from this column in the last issue.

Good wishes come with my personal and sincere thanks to our overworked and unpaid Secretary, Steve Toon, and Vice-President Robert Powell, who produced the last issue of The Bunnet without any help from me whatsoever. My non-involvement in the publishing process simply confirmed what they both suspected in the first place - without a journalist's interference they got the job done in exactly half the time.

What a wonderful year 2000 was. There was so much hype about the upcoming new millennium and then, suddenly, it had gone like flotsam on the receding tide.

Much more lingering were the memories of a great year for our Society, including our first official venture overseas. New York was the destination and I think I can speak for all those who travelled when I say that it was an outstandingly successful pilgrimage to the New World. Taking light into a darkened world is never easy but the JBGS disciples were more than up to the task. New friends were made and old ones further cemented. We were royally entertained in that rather special part of the United States where the game essentially began for the Americans.

Golf had been played in the States near Charleston more than a hundred years before the St Andrew's G.C. at Yonkers in New York, the oldest club in America, was formed in 1888 by John Rattray and his friend Robert Lockhart, two expatriate Scottish school friends from Dunfermline in Fife. When they and their friends formed the St Andrew's Club - the apostrophe was introduced to distinguish it from another well known club with the same name - they became known as the Apple Tree Gang after the tree under which they sat and used as their first clubhouse.

Our band of warriors enjoyed memorable hospitality at that wonderful and historic club where the famous portrait of John Reid in his red jacket still hangs on the clubhouse wall. A full report on our US exploits - heavily censored - appears elsewhere in this issue.

It was also a great year on the home front; at Brora for the Spring Meeting and then at Lundin Links, Scotsraig

and Elie for the Autumn Meeting and in our matches at Walton Heath and West Surrey. Our President, Peter Thomson, had to give second best in the end in the Presidents Cup but he led his men with distinction and gave the Americans more than a bit of a scare in the early stages. He is now enjoying a well-earned rest from "official" duties and we look forward to welcoming him back to Scotland in the New Year.

Malcolm L. Campbell, Captain



Michael Beckerich, President of The Saint Andrew's G.C. (pictured right) receiving a putter from the Captain as a memento of the JBGS match versus The St. Andrew's G.C. The Society owes a debt of gratitude to Michael Beckerich that is impossible to sufficiently express. Without his goodwill and influence the Society Tour would not have happened. The Society thanks him for his support: truly a guid friend an' a canny golfer.



Left: Michael Beckerich with JBGS Secretary Stephen Toon, Captain Malcolm Campbell and Peter Landau following the match with The Saint Andrew's Club of New York.

From The Secretary's Quill

Marcel Proust had his madeleine; Wordsworth his daffodils; Sherlock Holmes his opium: all to stimulate the recollection of times past. I just need a bagel and a host of memories of New York - The Hudson Valley and the Society's first overseas tour - come crowding into mind.

It was a tour that many times we thought would never happen, but thanks to Mike Beckerich, President of The Saint Andrew's G.C. of N.Y., it did happen.

Once arrived on the wrong side of the Atlantic, most of the team went walkabout. Toon, Maciocia and Powell met up in Newark, N.J., hired an automobile and then took in the South Bronx by night. Curiously, we survived and found our way to Hastings-on-Hudson.

Campbell also arrived in Newark, N.J. and hired an automobile, but preferred to make the 45 minute trip via a four hour tour of Philadelphia.

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Dr. Still and Herr Kersken selected JFK as their port of entry. A five hour transatlantic crossing was followed by a five hour minicab tour of Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan, picking up and dropping off additional passengers at will. Assault with a sand iron and the threat of hi-jack finally brought the driver to his senses.

Terry Bergdall, travelling from Lusaka, Zambia, reported an uneventful journey.

Locals, Ralph Livingstone III, Charles Wagner, James Dean and James Dean Jnr eventually oriented their overseas team-mates and the Braid Society zingari finally played some golf.

If Scotland is The Home of Golf, then the Hudson Valley must be its Country Seat, its Palladian Mansion and its Savoy Bar



Above: Mike Gentile, Captain of The Saint Andrew's G.C. of N.Y. (left) welcomes Mario Maciocia (right) of the James Braid Golfing Society, with Dr. Ronnie Still (right centre) and George Goodall (left centre). Mario was no stranger to a glass on this trip, particularly after his hole in one at Sleepy Hollow.



Left: Great fellowship was enjoyed at each club during the tour, as can be seen here with J.B.G.S. Vice-President, Robert Powell, (second right) and member from Lusaka, Terry Bergdall (left) with Sleepy Hollow opponents, Messrs. Casey and Kittsley.

and Grill all rolled into one. The magnificence of the clubhouses and the quality of the courses are only matched by the welcome offered to itinerant hackers.

Gentlemen all, we thank you for your hospitality.

Random memories return . . . The thought that James Braid, born in the tiny parish of Elie and Earlsferry, had some hand in the creation of the dramatic course at Yonkers, N.Y., currently remodelled by Jack Nicklaus . . . The dinner at Sleepy Hollow C.C., which honours a member each year with the "Headless Horseman" award; this information immediately followed by Capt. Campbell's announcement of Dr. Ronnie Still's nomination for the J.B.G.S. "Legless Scotsman" award . . . thirty eight choices of donut at Dunkin Donuts . . . Mario's permasmile following his Hole-in-One . . . learning that the tuxedo was invented in Tuxedo . . . Ralph Livingstone III (a.k.a. Hickory Daquiri Doc) sizing up an approach shot with laser vision goggles and announcing: Exactly 167 yards to the pin. It must be a mashie niblick! . . . black bears are a local hazard at The Tuxedo Club . . . courteous caddies . . . bagels with cheese for breakfast.

The most overwhelming impression is the fellowship of golf. We travelled from three continents to play golf with perfect strangers who unreservedly welcomed us as friends. This was an experience to be treasured.

Braid was, above all, a club professional. His design work was his after hours, week-end work. Braid believed his priority was to support and encourage the members of his club.

In closing, I salute those club professionals and assistants we met, who organised our matches, tried to make sense of our score cards and kept smiling despite it all:

Charlie Hicks: The Saint Andrew's G.C.

Jeff LaCoille: Sleepy Hollow C.C.

Dave Carazo: The Tuxedo Club.

Thank you gentlemen, from us all.

Stephen Toon, *Secretary*



Bagger Vance at The Tuxedo Club?

Ralph Livingstone III plays exclusively with hickory shafted clubs. Seen here with his Tuxedo Club opponent, Ralph is demonstrating his 100-year-old persimmon headed putter. The shock of opponents seeing Ralph clip a 250 yard drive with a club fashioned when Braid was a youth was worth a couple of holes to the J.B.G.S. side in each match.

The Legend of Bagger Vance, a recently released Robert Redford film, features the actual clubs Ralph used on this tour. Those interested in hickory clubs may learn more from Ralph's website:

www.hickorygolf.com



The Poetry of Golf

Members at the President's Putter Dinner were privileged to hear Professor Lindsay Symon present a poem by former Poet Laureate, John Betjeman, followed by Robin Butler's parody of the same.

Prof. Lindsay Symon

Seaside Golf by John Betjeman

How straight it flew, how long it flew,
It cleared the rutty track
And, soaring, disappeared from view
Beyond the bunker's back -
A glorious, sailing bounding drive
That made me glad I was alive.

And down the fairway, far along,
It glowed a lonely white
I played an iron, sure and strong,
And clipped it out of sight.
And spite of grassy banks between,
I knew I'd find it on the green.

And so I did. It lay content
Two paces from the pin;
A steady putt and then it went
Oh, most securely in.
The very turf rejoiced to see
That quite unprecedented three.

Ah! seaweed smells from sandy coves
And thyme and mist in whiffs,
In-coming tide, Atlantic waves
Slapping the sunny cliffs,
Lark song and sea sounds in the air
And splendour, splendour, everywhere.

Golf Poetry 1990 by Robin Butler.

How low it flew, how left it flew,
It hit the dry stone wall
And plunging, disappeared from view,
A shining, brand new ball -
I'd hit the damned thing on the head,
It made me wish that I were dead.

And up the fairway, steep and long,
I mourned my gloomy plight
I played an iron sure and strong,
A fraction to the right.
I knew that when I reached my ball
I'd find it underneath the wall.

And so I did. I chipped it low
And thinned it past the pin
And to and fro and to and fro
I tried to get it in;
Until, intoning oaths obscene,
I holed it out in seventeen.

Ah! seaweed smells from sandy caves
They really get me down;
In-coming tides, Atlantic waves,
I wish that I could drown,
And Sloane Street voices in the air,
And black retrievers everywhere.



JBCS Dates for 2001

Spring Meeting:

Walton Heath
Thursday May 24th
and
Friday May 25th

Founders' Meeting:

Brora
Friday 29th June
to Sunday 1st July

Autumn Meeting:

Fife
Friday 7th September
to Sunday 9th September

Please complete and return
the enclosed form if you wish
to take part.



Pictured beside the statue of Braid at Dalmahoy are Braid's two surviving grand daughters: Mrs. Mackie from Cardross and Mrs. Hope from Dundonald in Ayrshire. Seated is Fiona Mackie, one of Braid's great grand daughters.

(Photo supplied by Brian Anderson)

The Perfect Cocktail

by Peter Landau.

The surrealist, Bunuel, wrote in eloquent praise of the Dry Martini. His favourite drink was red wine, but he claimed that it did nothing for his imagination; to provoke or sustain a reverie, only a Dry Martini would do.

Bunuel had obviously never tasted a Manhattan, as prepared and served by Peter Landau: author, raconteur, International traveller, Historian of the Saint Andrew's Golf Club of New York and mixer of very fine cocktails.

Those who have experienced the texture, potency and subtle after effect of Peter's Manhattans will assure you that they live up to their infamous reputation. Peter has kindly agreed to share his recipe with us.

Three parts blended American rye whiskey (a prosaic brand such as Four Roses should be used, although others, like Seagram's 7, a Kentucky bourbon or even Jack Daniels, may be substituted if necessary)

One part Cinzano sweet vermouth

One part Cinzano dry vermouth

One quarter teaspoon of Maraschino cherry juice

A dash of Angostura bitters

Stir with five or six ice cubes for fifteen or twenty seconds and then serve in a cocktail glass with a Maraschino cherry. The cherry is for appearance; it need not be eaten.

Peter writes: I'm sad to say that unlike kummel — which is supposed to improve one's putting by making the hole look larger — no magical claims are made for this drink. But even so, as I think you'll agree, it's a nice change of pace.



Charity Challenge

Brian Anderson, J.B.G.S. member and Director of Golf at Dalmahoy, near Edinburgh, led his team of professionals in a challenge to play 10 tenth holes of ten James Braid courses in ten hours on the 10th day of the 10th month in the Millennium year. The challenge was completed in just 7 hours and the Braid courses played were:

Gleneagles (Kings and Queens); Glenbervie; Royal Musselburgh; Monkton Hall; Broomieknowe; Craigmillar Park; Lothianburn; Ratho Park; Dalmahoy (East Course).

The team played in period costume and used clubs from the Braid era. Over £2,500 was raised for children's charities.

Well done lads! Ed.

Left to right:
Scott Dixon, Stuart Callan,
Brian Anderson, Graham Head



Out in 35 - back on the 15.26 to Dunfermline

Autumn Meeting 1st to 3rd September 2000

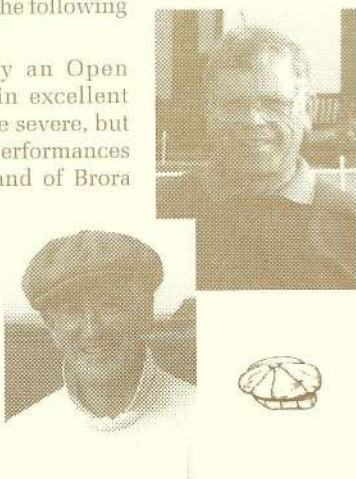
The Kingdom of Fife, birthplace of Braid, was once again the venue for our Autumn Meeting.

First up was an individual stableford at Lundin Links, won by the Captain of Lundin G.C., Alan Stuart with 39 points. One point behind was Michael Clark and in third place was Mario Maciocia with 36 points.

A very sociable dinner followed in the clubhouse at Lundin G.C. that handicapped participants somewhat for the President's Putter stroke play competition the following day at Scotsraig G.C.

Scotsraig is deservedly an Open Qualifying course and was in excellent shape. Playing conditions were severe, but a couple of really excellent performances were carded. George Sutherland of Brora shot 80, net 74, to take the putter north to the favourite Scottish links of our President, Peter Thomson.

Jim Bannerman also put in a net level par over 17 holes. However, the tendency of links golf to leap up and bite one when least expected was demonstrated on Railway, the par 5, 16th hole. Jim was out in 35 and back in the 15.26 to Dunfermline.



George Sutherland (top)
Jim Bannerman (bottom)

Presentations were made at The Old Manor Hotel in Lundin Links, where proprietor and J.B.G.S. member, Alistair Clark, hosted a superb dinner. Highlight of the after dinner festivities was Professor Lindsay Symon's recital of poetry, published on page 3.

A very warm welcome met the J.B.G.S. members the following day at the Golf House Club, in Elie, which is the birthplace of Braid. A foursomes match against local members is now a regular fixture that brings the season to a close.

The Braid Room

Many members have made the pilgrimage to Brora to play the links and visit the Braid Room in the Royal Marine Hotel. Robert Powell, our Vice-President and Managing Director of the Links and Royal Marine Hotels, is always delighted to offer a personal welcome to visiting members.

The Braid Room is occasionally used for private functions and we recommend that you contact Robert in advance so that he may advise when it is available for viewing.

A Society library is planned for the Braid Room at The Royal Marine Hotel in Brora.

The next development for the Braid Room, as an addition to the memorabilia and trophies, will be a library of books and videos and a listing of web-sites. We would be grateful if members could bring to our attention or even donate books or videos in the following categories and advise us of web-sites of interest:

- 1) Braid, his life and work.
- 2) Works by or about Society members. We are privileged to have a significant number of authors in the Society, including Peter Thomson, Malcolm Campbell, James Finegan, Peter Alliss, Lorne Rubenstein, John Moreton, Peter Landau, to name a few.
- 3) Works on Braid clubs or courses or clubs the Society has played matches against.

Lists will be published on the web-site.

www.thebraidsociety.com

In 1986 Alistair Risk (JBGS member) and three colleagues on the 17th green at Brora, Sutherland, watched a cow giving birth to twin calves between the markers on the 18th tee, causing them to play their next tee shots from in front of the tee. Their application for a ruling from the R&A brought a Rules Committee reply that while technically a rule had been broken, their action was considered within the spirit of the game and there should be no penalty. The Secretary added that the Rules Committee hoped that mother and twins were doing well. - From The Goliers Handbook