

North East Tour

September 12th/14th 2022

September 12th 2022 – Berwick Upon Tweed Golf Club (Goswick Links)

A healthy turnout of 19 JBGS members arrived at Goswick Links on Monday morning and were greeted with fine albeit breezy weather.

Following coffee, soup and sandwiches on arrival, members took the opportunity to catch up with each other and prepare for the challenge ahead.

As was the case for the previous meetings during the year, members had travelled from right across the UK to attend the series of competitions with notable mentions to the Stanbrooks from the S.E. of England and the collective group of “daffodils” from South Wales.

Goswick Links, was redesigned by James Braid following a visit on the 17th August 1930. Braid altered 13 holes all of which still exist, albeit some have been lengthened.

Format for the day was a Society Stapleford with 18 of 19 attendees participating and the Member's Secretary keeping a close eye on proceedings.

The course itself was in fine condition for the time of year, with the club's ranking within the top 50 courses in England and it being an Open Championship regional qualifying course soon becoming evident!

Scoring was found to be difficult, but this did not detract from the enjoyment of a fine test of golf and this was echoed unanimously by the society membership.

Winner on the day, was Paul Jones with a battling 32 points, who edged out the captain, who had the same score but was beaten on the back nine.

September 13th 2022 – Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Club

For the 2nd day of the North East Tour, we made our way across to Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Club, where we were welcomed with warm sunshine and just a slight breeze.

Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Club, was visited by James Braid in 1920 to initially put the existing nine holes in order and then produced plans to extend it to twelve holes in 1929, fifteen holes in 1931 and finally eighteen holes in 1936.

Due to a relatively early morning start, the society found the course quiet as it set out on a 4 ball better ball stableford.

Once again, we had 18 participants with Past Captain Peter Stanbrook resting up for the grand finale the following day.

The course was an absolute joy to play, due to the fine weather, a fun format and the stunning ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle as a backdrop!

As to the competition itself, due to the weather and the format, scoring was much improved. Paul Jones once again triumphed (handicap review required) but this time partnered by the impressive KJ Redmond who dovetailed together to an impressive 43 points. Runners up were David Grounds and Angela Grant, who were narrowly edged out with a fine 42 points.

Following the golf, the society members swapped stories of their respective rounds over soup and sandwiches while enjoying the unusual atmosphere of a clubhouse that was shared by golfers, walkers and sightseers alike.

That evening, society members and wives gathered at the Victoria Hotel in Bamburgh where fine food and great company were enjoyed. The captain announced the winners and runners up for the day including a special award to Paul Melding for holing his bunker shot on the 15th hole.

A major incident was avoided at the dinner when Mr. Melding tried to take Len Bunton's wine. But Mr. Bunton handled the situation diplomatically by stating "I like to be generous, but I'm not that generous!"

The captain thanked everyone for attending the evening and the tour in general and remarked that he felt that while the Founding Meeting will always (and quite rightly) be the centrepiece of the society's year, the strength and health of the society could be more accurately measured by the attendance at the regional meetings. The captain was happy to report that based on the past 12 months that things were looking good.

September 14th 2022 – Bamburgh Castle Golf Club

For the final day of the North East Tour, we met at Bamburgh Golf Club for a morning competition.

Bamburgh Castle is not a James Braid course but due to its location, it was recommended by members of the society that it was a course we should not miss.

The course was designed by George Rochester, the professional at nearby Alnmouth, in a very natural style. Bernard Darwin, doyen of golf writers, described it as "mountain golf" in A Round of Golf on the London and North East Railway. He also commented: "There may be prettier golf courses, but I really don't think I have ever seen them, and I have seen a good many by this time". The course is also the home club of Garrick Porteous, 2013 Amateur Champion.

All 19 society members took part in the final days competition which took a team format of the best 2 scores from 4 on all holes, other than the par 3's where all scores counted.

The captain's team only had 3 players so had a ghost player to make up the numbers. Said ghost player seemed to go missing on a number of holes!

The weather for the day was once again fine, albeit breezy. The course was quirky but enjoyable (6 x par 3's and numerous blind holes) but the views were stunning as we looked out towards Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands.

The consensus of opinion regarding the course, was confirmation of its quirkiness but a resounding "I'm glad I've played it!"

Soup and sandwiches followed with the announcement of the winners being the team of Richard Perry, KJ Redmond, Len Bunton and Steve Jones with a score of 100 points. Runners up were the team of David Grounds, Mark Horner, Roy Pickervance and Alison Stanbrook with 96 points.

The captain once again reiterated his words from the previous evening and thanked everyone for their support of a very successful week in the North East, wished everyone a safe trip home and looked forward to seeing everyone in 2023.

Summary:

A very successful trip and a heartfelt thank you goes to all the JBGS members who attended.

Feedback from the membership indicated that everyone enjoyed the choice of location, the courses played, and the format played each day.

As mentioned at the dinner on Tuesday evening, a special thanks goes out to Tommy Brown, Bill Stephens and Len Bunton who worked together to come up with the suggestions on the courses we should play.

Then as always, I must give a special thank you to our Members' Secretary Alison Stanbrook, whose coordination of these events is impeccable and ensures the members enjoyment when we meet up. Her time and effort are second to none.

That now concludes the fixtures for the year, but as mentioned at Bamburgh Castle Golf Club, we are already planning next year's events. If anyone has any suggestions, please forward them as soon as possible, as the committee will be meeting to discuss this in the next week or so.

Once again, thanks to each and every member who attended JBGS events this year, and I look forward to seeing you all again in 2023.

Regards,

Barrie.