

South Wales Tour

May 10th/12th 2022

May 10th 2022 – Neath Golf Club

A healthy turnout of 16 JBGS members arrived at Neath Golf Club on Tuesday morning and were greeted with fine albeit breezy weather.

Following coffee and a light bite on arrival, members took the opportunity to catch up with each other as well as welcoming new members Alan Kinsella and Chris Lambert to the society.

As was the case for the South East Tour last autumn, members had travelled from right across the UK to attend the series of matches, but a special mention needs to be made to Tony Gill and Angela Grant who made the trip from Brora and even squeezed in time to stretch their legs with a stroll across the Malvern Hills the night before the match!

Neath Golf Club, is an original James Braid design, which has barely changed, since he visited and designed the course in May 1934.

The JBGS fielded a strong side against Neath Golf Club, and with the captain's cunning plan of including a number of Neath members in the society team, confidence was quite high for a positive result.

The course itself was in fine condition for the time of year, with the club holding a county order of merit event (The Neath Bell) the previous weekend.

The society enjoyed the benefits of this recent event, and while the team gallantly battled against determined opponents, we were edged out 4.5 – 3.5 in the match, leaving the captain's one and only plan for the tour in tatters!

Following the match, participants enjoyed the company of their respective playing partners while enjoying a traditional Welsh lamb dinner.

Speeches followed, and both Captains were in agreement that the day had been a success and hopefully it could be done again in the future. Gifts of shot glasses were provided for the members of the Neath team and the Neath Captain was also presented with the proceeds of the traditional "Bunnet Collection" for the club's junior section, along with a copy of the "James Braid and his Four Hundred Courses" book.

May 11th 2022 – Langland Bay Golf Club

For the 2nd day of the S. Wales Tour, we made our way across to Langland Bay Golf Club, where despite a weather forecast for heavy rain, the golfing gods shone on us and we were once again welcomed with sunshine and a strong breeze.

Bolstered by a hearty lunch prior to play, we undertook a society stableford on a course visited by James Braid in 1936, where he made minor alterations to the course, but introduced very severe bunkering.

Unfortunately, prior to the start of play, Alan Kinsella had to pull out of playing at Langland Bay due to hurting his back at Neath. To his credit, he stayed with the party for the remainder of the trip and even undertook a reconnaissance trip over to Pennard Golf Club to see what lay in store for us the following day.

As to the competition itself, the course was found to be in fine condition along with stunning views of Langland Bay and Caswell Bay as we played the course.

Scoring was far from spectacular in the challenging breeze, and the competition was won by Steve Jones of Neath with a very respectable 35 points.

The society members enjoyed a well-deserved drink on the club's patio following their rounds, exchanging tales of their trials and tribulations during their round, whilst we also bid a safe trip home to Malcolm Harris and Roy Pickavance who were unable to stay for the final day, but whose attendance and support was greatly appreciated.

May 12th 2022 – Pennard Bay Golf Club

For the final day of the S. Wales tour, we travelled along the Gower Peninsula to Pennard Golf Club known as the "Links in the Sky".

Pennard is another James Braid original course which he designed in 1908 and made a number of visits making alterations up until 1931. Pennard will host the Welsh Amateur Championship this year.

Pennard had agreed to a match of 6 pairs per side, which originally was a concern as we started as a party of 16. Fortunately, through members not being able to stay the full 3 days, injuries and squad rotation, the numbers worked out just right!

Once again fine weather prevailed and we were slowly acclimatising to the steady breeze.

Pennard, is often referred to by golfers from neighbouring clubs as a "Marmite" course (you either love it or hate it). Fortunately, from a JBGS perspective, the feedback was that they loved it and you could see the delight in Tony Gill and Angela Grant's faces when they saw livestock fences around the greens, just like Brora!

The match itself was a tough one with Pennard fielding a very strong side with extensive local knowledge. The result was 4 -2 in Pennard's favour, but this paled into insignificance in comparison to the great company we enjoyed and the spectacular views over Three Cliffs Bay and Oxwich Bay.

Once again, a fine meal and superb company was enjoyed following the match, with the Pennard members being very appreciative of the commemorative shot glasses, the "Bunnett Collection" for the junior section and the "James Braid and his Four Hundred Courses" book.

Both Captain's speeches were reflective of how successful the day had been, and once again, the hope it could be repeated sometime in the future.

At the conclusion of the formalities, the society members, took some time to say farewell and wish a safe trip home to each other at the end of a very enjoyable few days.

Summary:

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

Good relationships have, I believe been maintained at Neath Golf Club and established at Pennard Golf Club and this gives us the foundation for future visits should the society wish to visit the area in future years.

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.

We now move onto the Highland Tour at the end of June. I'm looking forward to see as many of you as possible during this trip and particularly looking forward to welcoming back our overseas members who have been unable to attend due to Covid-19 restrictions. In the meantime, please stay safe and well.

Regards,

Barrie.