

The Founding Meeting

June 21st/23rd 2023

With the Covid-19 pandemic hopefully now behind us, JBGS members from far and wide arrived in the Highlands of Scotland full of hope, expectation and not to mention a tinge of trepidation of what the forthcoming days would bring.

June 21st 2023 – Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club

Following the previous year's match held at Brora to celebrate James Braid's 150th birthday (which fell during the pandemic) it was a treat to return to Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC to pick up on what has become, our kick off match of the Highland Tour.

It was the first time we had been back to Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC since 2019 and everyone was looking forward to playing this fine layout on a sunny albeit breezy day.

A solid turnout of 22 JBGS members participated in this match (we were loaned two players from Fortrose & Rosemarkie) which required a two-tee start.

As is the norm, the Captain of the JBGS had wondered, prior to the start of the match, whether he would need to hastily rewrite his well-thumbed losing speech. But he had no reason to worry, as the team were well and truly thumped (10-1) with the society only managing two halves from the encounter.

Following the match, participants enjoyed the company of their respective playing partners while having an enjoyable meal of their choice.

Speeches followed, and both Captains were in agreement that the day had been a success and that the JBGS were looking forward to visiting Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club next year.

Gifts of shot glasses were provided for the members of the Fortrose & Rosemarkie team and the proceeds of the traditional "Bunnett Collection" was presented for the club's junior section.

Special mention to Duncan Robertson for filling in for the team when not 100% fit and to Alison Stanbrook, David Thomas and David Walsh who earned halves in their respective games when a whitewash was a realistic possibility. I understand that despite our inept performance, we will be invited back next year!

June 22nd 2023 – Royal Dornoch Golf Club

Due to Royal Dornoch Golf Club hosting a visit of passengers from a cruise ship, the JBGS were requested to move the match from its traditional late morning slot, to a starting time of 08:20am which we were happy to accommodate.

On arrival at Royal Dornoch Golf Club, we were greeted with warm sunshine and barely a breath of wind. The course was found to be in pristine condition with the playing of the Vagliano and Junior Vagliano Trophies scheduled for the end of the following week.

The JBGS match team comprised 20 of our male members while our remaining 4 ladies played a friendly fourball behind the match. While conditions were benign, this did not detract from the challenge of Royal Dornoch as a true championship golf course. This also reflected in the overall result, whereby despite the society performing gamely, we were overcome by good golf and local knowledge and the Friendship Trophy remained firmly in the hands of Royal Dornoch Golf Club (8 – 2).

Once again, a fine meal and superb company was enjoyed following the match, with the Royal Dornoch members being very appreciative of the commemorative shot glasses and the “Bunnett Collection” for the junior section.

Both Captain’s speeches were reflective of how successful the day had been, and how they both looked forward to repeating the fixture next year.

June 23rd 2023 – The Founding Meeting - Brora Golf Club

And so, to the finale of our week, the Founding Meeting competition at Brora.

Prior to play, a forum was held in the “Peter Thomson Room” at Brora Golf Club. Updates were given to members regarding the structure and activities of the society, and the opportunity was given to members to voice any concerns and ideas they may have regarding future meetings and merchandise. Discussion was also held regarding Braid memorabilia that had become available following the recent renovations at the Royal Marine Hotel. Constructive discussion was held, with several suggestions made, that would be followed up on in due course.

And so, to the competition. 18 holes of stableford golf over the magnificent Brora links. 34 entrants competed for the various prizes on offer, but all hoping to take the principal prize of the “Peter Thomson Memorial Trophy”.

As had been the case all week, despite a forecast of rain, we teed off in fine weather with a light breeze.

The course was found, as usual, to be in superb condition with good golf being rewarded and poor golf penalised. This was reflected in the broad range of scoring, but didn’t detract from the enjoyment of both the course or the company.

That evening, society members met up at Brora Golf Club, where following drinks and an excellent meal the Captain announced the day’s winners. These were as follows:

The Peter Thomson Memorial Trophy:

Winner: Tony Gill

Runner up: Ben Harrison

The Captain’s Pink Balls:

Winner: Bozena Torkington (on back 9)

Runner Up: Angela Grant

The Curate’s Egg:

Winner: John Rankin

The Groovy Uwe Award (Triumph of Style over Substance):

Winner: Bill Maitland (James Braid Jacket)

Marco Polo Award (Greatest determination to get to the meeting):

Winner: Robert Harrison (From the U.S. with two sons in tow)

The captain also presented welcome gifts to new members making their first appearance at a meeting: Harold Torkington, Bozena Torkington, Robert Harrison, Benjamin Harrison, William Harrison and Gordon Bowden.

An additional award was announced as the “Hero of the Week” to Duncan Robertson who while he was not able to attend the dinner had battled through the week despite not feeling well.

Following the awards, our Vice President and Founding Captain, Malcolm Campbell said a few words explaining both the founding and the ethos of the society. He also presented the Captain with a signed copy of Bob Charles' biography to which the Captain extended his gratitude and thanks.

The Captain went on to thank the Society Members for making the week the success it had been and for also enabling him to maintain his 100% record of defeats since taking on the Captaincy.

Whilst the Captain was pleased to see such healthy support for the week's events, he was mindful that the society had lost some much-loved members and friends earlier in the year, in John Moreton, Ken Horne, Paul Jones and Ian Farquhar. This along with other members who were unable to attend for various reasons, prompted the Captain to propose a toast - "To absent friends". Malt whisky for this purpose was very kindly provided by three of our US members who were unable to attend the meeting. Thank you, Rick, John and Bob!

As a way of thank you from the society, a gift was presented to Alison Stanbrook, for her tireless work in organising not only the Founding Meeting, but all the JBGS events.

The Captain then handed over to the master of fines (Sheriff) Len Bunton, who proceeded to hand out ruthless penalties for misdemeanours reported to him over the course of the week. These misdemeanours spanned a wide range of topics from dress code violations to downright stupidity. An amnesty was offered to all members, to avoid heavy fines, and the level of guilt amongst the society members must have been high, as a good sum was raised for Brora Golf Club Junior Section.

With no other outstanding business, the captain closed the evening with a toast to the man we gathered to honour – "James Braid."

June 24th 2023 – The James Braid Open - Brora Golf Club

Following a tough few days of golf, there were only three hardy souls who entered the 36-hole James Braid Open at Brora.

David Thomas, Chris Taylor, and 36-hole stalwart Bill Stephens were up for the challenge and battled away admirably throughout the day.

By early evening David Thomas emerged as the best JBGS member in the field with a very respectable nett score of $72 + 74 = 146$ and deservedly took the James Braid trophy.

Well done to all three members who demonstrated a level of commitment, determination, and stamina we all could have done with!

Summary:

Once again, a fantastic week, where it was great to see both old friends and make new! A heartfelt thank you, goes to all the JBGS members who attended.

As always, I would like to give a special thank you to our Members' Secretary Alison Stanbrook, whose co-ordination of this event was impeccable and ensures the members' enjoyment when we meet up. Her time and effort are second to none.

We now move onto the Fife tour in September. I'm looking forward to seeing another healthy turnout, and to those who can't make it, stay safe and we'll see you all again soon!

Regards,

Barrie.