

The Founding Meeting

June 24th - 28th 2025

Once again, JBGS members from far and wide arrived in the Highlands of Scotland full of hope and expectation and in high spirits of what the forthcoming days would bring.

June 24th 2025 – Muir of Ord Golf Club

An addition to this year's itinerary, was a match v Muir of Ord Golf Club who were celebrating their 150th anniversary.

Muir of Ord was an old nine-hole course with a local and small membership, when Braid arrived in January 1925 to extend the course to eighteen holes.

On arrival, Braid announced he was "pleased with the ground for extension" which was called the Castle Hill Plateau. He was asked to look at the original nine as well.

The original nine lay between the railway line and the main road, or more exactly seven did. Not unexpectedly Braid removed the remaining two, on the far side of the road. His new tract of ground lay beyond the railway on rising ground, where his holes 5 to 13 were to lie.

The work progressed slowly, perhaps finance related. Even in October "work was still being done" and especially "the new greens were still not ready." In April 1926 the local paper reveals that Braid had bunkered the original nine and that they would be completely ready by 22nd April. Braid's nine were still not ready, and it seems that in the autumn of 1927, the new clubhouse and the new nine were simultaneously opened.

It was a tight and tough assignment, and Braid's course only measured 4853 yards, though par was 68. Not unnaturally, in time, the club wanted more land and an extended 9th and a new 10th & 11th were created, removing two of the holes between the railway and the road. The split is now 11:7 instead of 9:9 and the course is 5,542 from the back tees. This happened in 1996. The course has not changed much over the years.

As to the match, the society received a warm welcome from its President Mr. Hamish Milne and its team members, as it went out and enjoyed a challenging and strategic course.

The weather was fine, as was the company, but the Muir of Ord team was too strong for the JBGS as they ran out 5-1 victors.

Following the match, everyone enjoyed good company and a hearty meal.

The JBGS Captain congratulated the President and the membership on their 150th Anniversary and presented the club with a decanter to commemorate the anniversary and the visit.

Gifts of shot glasses were provided for the members of the Muir of Ord GC team and the proceeds of the traditional "Bunnet Collection" was presented for the club's junior section. James Braid whisky glasses were also presented to the Club President Hamish Milne.

The President of Muir of Ord Golf thanked the society for visiting and being part of their anniversary celebrations. He hoped that the society would visit again sometime in the future so that a return match could be held.

The JBGS Captain gave special thanks to JBGS member Scott Kelly who was key in arranging this special day.

June 25th 2025 – Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club

Following the "warm up" match against Muir of Ord GC, the society moved the short distance across the Black Isle, to play its regular fixture versus Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC.

Team numbers increased, as additional society members joined the group, and everyone looked forward to renewing acquaintances that had been made over the 11 years that this fixture has been in place.

Fortunately for us, conditions for the match were perfect, with the course in excellent condition and the weather sunny and only a slight breeze.

The matches followed the traditional 2 x tee start, to ensure everyone got round the course in the most efficient manner.

Following a hugely enjoyable day on the course, the Captain of the JBGS quickly realised he would need to hastily rewrite his well-thumbed losing speech, as a number of society members returned to the clubhouse stating they had won their respective match.

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

Scott Kelly gave a speech on behalf of Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC and the JBGS Captain responded with his own modified speech where he announced a match result of 5.5 – 3.5 in the societies favour. The society Captain apologised for the result, and assured the Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC membership, that it would not happen again.

Gifts of shot glasses were provided for the members of the Fortrose & Rosemarkie team and the proceeds of the traditional “Bunnet Collection” was presented for the club’s junior section. James Braid wine glasses were also presented for the Club President Douglas Simpson.

Special mention must go to Malcolm Harris who was match manager and coordinated everything alongside Angela Grant and Alison Stanbrook.

Once again, a great day at Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC with the traditional warm welcome ensuring that the fixture is one which we will look forward to next year.

June 26th 2025 – Royal Dornoch Golf Club

Following the previous year’s match on the Royal Dornoch Golf Club’s Struie course, playing for the Friendship Trophy returned this year to the Championship course,

On arrival at Royal Dornoch Golf Club, we were greeted with warm sunshine and a brisk breeze. The Championship course, whilst familiar to most of the JBGS team, was a new experience to some of our newer members. The course itself was found to be in pristine condition and both teams teed off in anticipation of a good match.

The JBGS match team comprised of 19 of our male members along with KJ Redman to add some glamour and skill to the occasion!

Conditions on the day were testing and this along with the challenge of the Championship course itself led to a very good battle which everyone reported on as being great fun.

As the society sat down, to enjoy a fine meal in the Royal Dornoch GC clubhouse, it soon became apparent to the JBGS Captain that the society members had perhaps enjoyed themselves too much?

This was reflected in the overall result, where the captain once again had to hastily rewrite his well-prepared losing speech, to announce that the society had achieved a very rare win over Royal Dornoch GC by a margin of 7 – 4.

The society captain, explained to the Royal Dornoch GC Captain that the previous day’s win could be put down to a mistake but that the win today was just careless and that it would not happen again!

The JBGS captain congratulated Royal Dornoch GC on its forward thinking with the near completion of the new clubhouse and the announcement of the planned construction of a new course.

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 “Bunnet Collection” for the junior section. The Captain Mr. Gary Bethune was presented with a pair of JBGS whisky tumblers.

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 29th 2025 – 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 Thompson Room” at the Sutherland Inn, Brora. Updates were given to members regarding the continuing relationship with Brora GC, 2026 fixture suggestions, merchandise, website upgrades and memorabilia. 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. 27 entrants, competed for the various prizes on offer, but all hoping to take the principal prize of the “Peter Thomson Memorial Trophy”.

As with the week in general, we remained lucky with the weather with only a heavy shower and a brisk breeze having to be contended with. The course was found as usual in superb condition. As ever, a stiff but fair test was faced by the membership, this didn’t detract from the enjoyment of both the course and the company.

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

The Peter Thompson Memorial Trophy:

Winner: Tony Gill

Runner up: Mark Horner

The Captain’s Pink Balls:

Winner: Angela Grant

The Curates Egg:

Winner: Alex Taylor (Best score on the middle 6 holes)

Marco Polo Award:

Winner: Ross Kelly (travelling from Australia, but also playing at Brora after breaking his nose, puncturing a lung, and damaging his knee in Budapest).

Hero of the Week:

Winner: Diana Thomas (Stepping in at short notice at Muir of Ord and Fortrose & Rosemarkie – helping the Captain to win a match).

The captain also presented welcome gifts to new members making their 1st appearance at a meeting: Simon Barrington, Mick Mannion, Alex Taylor, Diana Thomas, and Colin Brunton (absent).

The captain went on to thank the Society Members for making the week the success it had been and without who, the society would cease to exist.

Whilst the Captain was pleased to see good support for the week's events, he was mindful, that the society were missing other members who were unable to attend for various reasons and prompted the captain to propose a toast - "To absent friends."

As a way of thanking you from the society, a gift was presented to Angela Grant, for her tireless work in organising not only the Founding Meeting, but all the JBGS events, alongside Alison Stanbrook who could not attend this year.

The captain then handed over to Mr. Len Bunton, to ruthlessly hand out 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 £400 was raised for Brora Golf Club Junior Section and was presented to the Club Captain Mr. Graeme Greenhill on the night.

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

June 30th 2025 – The James Braid Open - Brora Golf Club

As if they had not enough golf over the course of the week, a few hardy souls entered the James Braid Open at Brora Golf Club on the Saturday following the dinner the previous evening.

The wind had picked up from the previous day to a very challenging 40 mph. With such conditions, it was clear to see that low scoring was going to be a rarity.

A total of eight members took part in the open day and while all the JBGS members battled gamely, Steve Darlington emerged as the best JBGS member in the field with an excellent nett score of 73 and deservedly took the James Braid trophy for the second year running.

Well done to all the members who took part. Hopefully, even more JBGS members will take part next year.

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 Secretaries Angela Grant and Alison Stanbrook, whose coordination of this event was impeccable and ensures the members enjoyment when we meet up. Their time and effort are second to none.

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

Regards,

Barrie.