

The Kent Tour

April 28th – 30th 2026

April 28th 2026 – Walmer & Kingsdown GC

Following, what seemed to be a never-ending winter, the JBGS membership congregated in Kent for its Spring Meeting.

A nice turnout of 11 JBGS members arrived at Walmer & Kingsdown Golf Club on Tuesday lunchtime for a society individual stableford to kick off the Kent tour.

The course was opened on 10th April 1909 with a match between Braid & Vardon (Braid won 3&2).

During WW1 it reverted to 9 holes, but officially reopening in 1919. The War Office requisitioned the land in WW2 and the course ceased to exist as such.

The 2000 club booklet says that during 1944 and 1945, the greens were preserved and as such the course was reinstated.

In 1974 there were changes to holes 7 to 9 and 14 to 15 (mainly lengthening with 800 yards added to the course). The course is mainly as Braid designed it.

On the day of play, the society was welcomed with sunshine but accompanied by strong wind off the English Channel.

The course was found to be challenging but enjoyable, with numerous Braid “trademarks” noticed by the society members.

From a competition perspective, Len Bunton rolled back the years with a fine 36 points from Peter Stanbrook with 35 points.

Following the golf, the society enjoyed the hospitality of Mike and Helen Harris, who put on a superb barbeque at their nearby home and good food and good company were enjoyed by the JBGS members, in preparation for the following day’s golf.

April 29th 2026 – Littlestone GC (Championship Course)

Following a good night’s sleep and hearty breakfast, the JBGS members were refreshed and ready for their 2nd day of golf at Littlestone GC on the Championship Course.

Once again, the members were greeted with sunshine. However, the wind had increased to a brutal 40mph, which caused some trepidation amongst a number of the JBGS members.

Braid visited early February 1905. The course was originally designed by Laidlaw Purvis (Royal St. Georges).in 1888, and more work with David Herd was carried out in 1899.

Braid was called in 1905 to improve the bunkering. A lot of his work can be seen in the fairway bunkers of the 1st four holes, cross bunkers on 5th and 18th holes.

Many blind holes were done away with.

Prior to play, the JBGS members enjoyed a hearty lunch, possibly to provide ballast for the impending battle against the course and the elements.

Whilst both the course and the weather made for a very challenging day, this did not detract from the enjoyment of a top-quality golf course, albeit a frequent comment from the membership, being that “it would be great to play the course again on a more benign day”.

That said, Tony Gill scored an excellent 33 points in those conditions followed by Mike Harris with a credible 30 points on a very difficult day.

Following the completion of the round, the JBGS members reconvened in the Littlestone GC clubhouse to enjoy a light meal and for the captain to present the prizes from the previous two days.

With the formalities of the day concluded, the JBGS members moved inland and relocated in or around Sevenoaks, in preparation for the final day of the tour at the Wildernesse GC the following day.

April 30th 2026 – Wildernesse Golf Club

For the final day of the Kent Tour, we arrived at the Wildernesse Golf Club for an afternoon tee time.

Our numbers for the final day were reduced to 10 with Peter and Alison Stanbrook having to leave us, but we did have a partial replenishment with our new member Howard Thomas.

Prior to play, the membership enjoyed a light lunch along with more sunshine and a mere warm breeze on the clubhouse patio.

Compared to the previous two days, conditions were near to perfect and the membership teed off with a mixture of excitement and anticipation of the challenge ahead.

Braid visited in 1927. Only three holes were retained from the original layout, though three more were similar. Seven holes were new, two were amalgamations, one a reversal and two reangled.

In 1954 the clubhouse moved for a second time and necessitated the removal of four Braid holes (1, 2, 17 and 18). The club decided to carve three and a half holes out of Chance Wood, which the course moves in a clockwise direction, though with more holes on the west side. Apart from these changes, the Braid design remains intact including the highly rated par 3 5th.

An attractive woodland course, demanding accuracy and positioning and well bunkered.

The course itself was in good condition, and all the members were complimentary in their opinion of a tough but fair challenge.

From a competition perspective, local knowledge prevailed with Malcom Harris winning the stableford with 37 points from the captain who scored 35 points.

The day concluded with the presentation of the winner's prize to Malcom Harris along with welcome gifts to our two new members Freddie Harris and Howard Thomas.

An enjoyable meal was enjoyed by the society members prior to saying our goodbyes to everyone. The JBGS set off in their respective directions to make their way home with another regional tour successfully completed!

Summary:

While we were lucky that we did not encounter any rain over the three days, the wind over the first two days did make things extremely challenging to say the least.

Fortunately, the wind did not detract from another successful trip. Once again, a heartfelt thank you goes to all the JBGS members who attended.

Special mention must go to Angela Grant, Tony Gill and Len Bunton who made the long journey from across Scotland. Also, a big thanks to Peter and Alison Stanbrook, who travelled from Farnham, Roy Pickervance who travelled from Nottinghamshire and Leighton Smith who travelled from South Wales.

A big thank you must go to Malcolm Harris, who came up with the idea and along with brother Mike, did a lot of the coordination for this event. This took a sizeable weight load off the JBGS committee – thank you Malcolm.

Thank you everyone, without your support the society would cease to exist!

We now move to the Highlands for the Founding Meeting in June, where a very attractive itinerary awaits us.

I look forward to seeing everyone soon.

Regards,

Barrie.