



WHITGIFT GOLF

THE OLD WHITGIFTIAN GOLF SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NO 4 JUNE 2024



A Message from the Captain...

Just to keep you up to date on Old Whitgiftian competitive golf...



WE are pleased to report that our Grafton Morrish qualifying team of: Harry Sellers, Carl Hills, Joe Firth, Max Stanley, Nick Baxter-Brand and Nic Gates, watched by injured Captain Toby Kemp, qualified at Royal Wimbledon on Sunday for the Grafton Morrish finals. This London

Group is one of the toughest, so well done all. The finals will be held at Royal West Norfolk (Brancaster) and Hunstanton GC between 26th and 29th September if anyone fancies a short break to spectate in this delightful part of the world. Full qualifying details (makes interesting reading) can be found on www.graftonmorrish.org.uk/

As regular readers of our website will know, we disappointingly lost in the first round of the centenary Halford Hewitt this year. We'd like to thank all of the players and the many supporters. We have a strengthening side, so this was a knock back, but the management team led by Matt Webster are already analysing and planning for next year.

Next up is the Cyril Gray (the over 50's Halford Hewitt spin off). Having reached the semi-finals last year, we have a potentially strong team with some new recruits reaching 50. This is played at Worplesdon and runs from Weds 26th to Friday 28th June this year. Another good location for sitting in the sun on the terrace watching the golf unfold around you...

Alan Scovell

Captain's Day at Purley Downs



Alan Scovell's Captain's Day was held at Purley Downs - Purley 'Ups and Downs' to the less fit amongst us - in early May. A reasonable turnout, no doubt inspired by the prospect of more Fortnum & Mason biscuits amongst the prizes, took to the course on a warm and sunny day – quite a change from the year's weather to date – and were rewarded by greens in top condition, running true and (very) fast.

Views right across London failed to distract the more diligent players, and Don Anderson (*above*) came out top, for the first time in, er, days. His score of 38 points was two ahead of David Absalom in second and three ahead of Alasdair Grievson, the latter making his first appearance in a society meeting and, by his own admission, more accustomed to being beaten by Ian Chicken in our knockout competition! The biscuits were shared liberally with prizes also handed out for those nearest the pins on the par 3s, and just about anybody else that had turned up.

Who Can Join?

All Old Whitgiftians, pupils and staff of Whitgift School, and parents of pupils, qualify to join, male or female. Others who have a close connection with the School are also welcome and golfers of all handicaps are encouraged to apply.

As a member you will have the chance to meet up with peers, colleagues or teachers. The annual subscription is currently just £35.

Please contact the Hon Secretary Peter Gale at: honsec@oldwhitgift.com



Annual Dinner at Tandridge

TANDRIDGE GC hosted our AGM and very enjoyable annual dinner, with some team golf beforehand. The evening activity was joined by some 30 people, about half of whom ventured on to the golf course. The AGM itself saw Mark Chatham appointed vice captain, and Laurie Evans and Martin Hayes both elected to the committee.

Mark also won the annual knockout tournament, and so was awarded the Challenge Cup, whilst schoolboy Paul Ellinghorst (pictured with President, Pip Burley & Simon Beck) won the Walker Cup for his contribution to School golf. Paul demonstrated his potential on the golf course too, hitting his 223 yard tee shot on the par-3 13th to within six inches of the hole.

The meeting also saw the launch of society captain Alan Scovell's appeal for funds to support younger players in the Halford Hewitt and other major competitions. Participation in these events can cost significant sums and the society's goal is to ensure that players who are good enough for the teams can afford to play, no matter their financial status. The appeal looks set to be well supported by the society.



The Halford Hewitt Celebrates its Centenary in Style

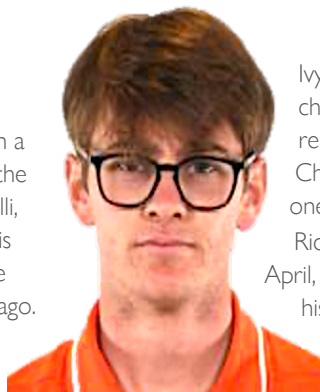
TWELVE OWs joined nearly 800 others at a black-tie dinner at the Grosvenor House Hotel in Park Lane to celebrate 100 years since the Halford Hewitt was first played. All 64 'Hewitt schools' were represented, plus several guests, some of them representing the various courses on which the Hewitt has been played over the years.

The dinner was preceded by the draw for the 2024 competition, was played on 11th-14th April. Whitgift were drawn to play Shrewsbury, in the first round.

l to r: Dudley Thompson, Oscar Bailey, Carl Robertson-Hills; Tom Blossome and Martin Hayes

Winning in the States

FROM time to time, we hear of great things from Whitgiftian golfers playing in competitive golf outside the UK. Members may be aware that there have been a number of golfers who have left school and gone to the US on golf scholarships. One such is Riccardo Fantinelli, who has some astonishing accomplishments against his name; readers may recall his finishing runner-up in the British Boys Championship at Deal a couple of years ago. Riccardo is now at Princeton, where he led the university's golf team to victory in 2023



Ivy League team event, and won the individual championship, with a score of 5 under par. He has also represented Italy in the 2023 World Amateur Team Championship at Abu Dhabi GC; the team finished fifth, one of their best three ever finishes in the event.

Riccardo continued his winning form in the US; in early April, he won the Princeton Invitational, which is presumably his home tournament on the US inter-collegiate circuit.

He scored at 6 under par for the three-round competition.



An OW Albatross!

THE Combined match (the OWs playing alongside the Masters) against the School took place on a very bright Wednesday in May. The school team was a mix of ages (with boys from the Lower 1st through to the VIth form) and handicaps from 1 to 16, very similar as it turned out to those on on the OW and Masters' side. So a good match was in prospect. And so it turned out – with a narrow 3-2 win for the OWs/Masters.

There were some astonishing reports from the course. Tony Harris reports that his schoolboy opponent hit the back of the 204-yard 16th with a 7-iron; his schoolmaster partner hit the 350-yard 9th with a mishit drive; and most impressive of all, OW Harrison Sellers (far left in the group photo) scored an albatross on the par-5 10th hole (468 yards), holing his 60-yard second shot – yes, 60 yards.

Do the maths. Harry explained his 400-yard drive by the fact that it caught the downslope – others pointed out that the downslope only starts after about 330 yards. Some feat and (probably!) the first albatross in OWGS history.



The Whitgift Flag Flies at Deal

The centenary of the renowned Halford Hewitt competition saw sixty-four school flags displayed outside the clubhouse

OUR first round at Deal was on Thursday v Shrewsbury at 11.30. The previous day was the Peter Kenyon Bowl and the Society's internal foursomes competition, the Thompson Tankards, at Prince's. And 55 years after he last won it (yes, 55), Robert Hollidge won the Tankards, playing with Jeremy Stanyard (*right*). Well done, both.

It was not to be in the HH, sadly. Shrewsbury played some great golf and edged the first round against Whitgift 3-2, with the fifth match going to the last hole. The scorecard didn't quite reflect the tension of the match, with the last Shrewsbury pair, 3-up with four to play, being pegged back by Richard Gibson (*below right*) and Nick Baxter-Brand to go 1-up with two to play. Whitgift had chances on both of the last two holes but could only manage halves on each. To next year, then...

The major surprise of the second day was to see Loretto (winners in 2021, 2022, and 2023) beaten by Uppingham. Repton (who lost to Whitgift in the first-round last year) were going well and were already through to the quarter finals. Shrewsbury lost to Tonbridge.

In the Plate, Whitgift beat Liverpool in their first-round match. Whitgift beat Clifton 2-1 on Saturday morning to reach the Plate quarter finals, where they went on to play Bradfield. Bradfield prevailed 2-1 and went on to play Forest in Sunday's semi-final. The other semi-final featured local rivals Epsom and Berkhamsted, which Epsom won.



In the main competition the semi-finalists were Bedford, who played Cranleigh, and the more familiar names of Eton and Tonbridge. But special mention must go to Brighton, who won three matches against Canford, Lancing and Fettes, before falling to Cranleigh in their quarterfinal. Brighton's previous record in the competition over the sixty-three years since 1960 was Won 4, Lost 62 (Covid meant no competition in 2020). Some improvement!

Following on from the comment about Brighton's improved performance, we cannot conclude this Hewitt report without tipping our hat to two less-fancied teams who made their respective finals - and one of them won. In the main competition, Bedford made their first ever final, beating Repton and Cranleigh on their way. However, it was their luck to face Eton, who had won every single one of their twelve finals in the Halford Hewitt and were not about to let superstition get in the way of their 13th. And so the centenary edition of the Hewitt ended as had the first in 1924; a win for Eton.

Perhaps more surprising was Forest's win against Epsom in the Prince's Plate final. Overall, there is the impression not only that the standard of the competitions is rising year on year, but that the improvement is across the whole field of 64 schools.

In football's Premier League, it is often said that there are no easy games (with just a nod to Palace's 1-0 win at Liverpool). Maybe the same is becoming true in the Hewitt

The Grafton Morrish Qualifier - a Nervy Finish at Royal Wimbledon

ABOUT 115 schools enter the Grafton Morrish; broadly any of the schools affiliated to the Headmasters' Conference. To narrow this down to the 48 that can contest the finals at the end of September, regional qualifiers are held. Whitgift falls in the London region for this purpose and qualifying happens each year at Royal Wimbledon GC. This year's event was on Sunday, May 19th and fourteen schools turned up in the hope of winning one of the six berths available for the finals at Hunstanton and Brancaster.

The qualifier is an 18-hole scratch stableford, for three foursomes pairs. Whitgift's team (captained by Toby Kemp who was unfortunately injured) was Harry Sellers/Carl Hills; Joe Carmody-Firth/Max Stanley; and Nic Gates/Nick Baxter-Brand. The received wisdom before the event was that 80 points would be enough to qualify, based on previous years' experience, but the greens were still

a little soft after all the rain we have had.

Still, Whitgift's eventual score of 88 points (with the pairs scoring 31, 31 and 26 respectively) looked enough. However, it was a close-run finish. Eton (winners of the Hewitt in April) scored 97 points, with two of their pairs scoring 38 and 36 (gross 69 and 71 respectively), KCS 90, Epsom and St George's both 89, Whitgift 88, followed by three schools on 87 (Harrow, Rugby and St John's) only the first of which qualified automatically for the finals (on count back).

Phew! Great scoring but a nervy end to the day for many; Charterhouse, Rugby, Westminster, St Paul's and Highgate being Hewitt schools who missed out. No wonder some maintain that the Morrish is more difficult to win than the Hewitt - and that was just qualifying!

WHITGIFT GOLF, SCHEDULE OF FIXTURES, 2024

Matches are open to all members with a limited number of places on each team. Please express your interest online. The Match Manager will select a team and will communicate the selected team and any reserves to all concerned. The Match Manager will inform you of the payment required.

Meetings are open to all members of the society, except for the Scratch Cup, where restrictions on spaces may apply. Please book online. In most cases, you will have the option of paying online or paying separately to the society account.

School team competitions In general, these are scratch competitions and only the lowest handicap players are likely to be chosen to play. For the Halford Hewitt and Grafton Morrish, handicaps at 3 or below tend to be the standard; for the Cyril Gray maybe 10 or below. They are only open to OWs, not to parent or teacher members of the society. Members with low handicaps wishing to be considered should make themselves known to the relevant team captain or to the Secretary.

An exception to the above is the Peter Kenyon Bowl, which is a foursomes competition open to any pair of society members (but with a maximum combined handicap of 18).

Matches

Date & Time	Match	Venue	Match Manager
Thu, 06 Jun 2024	Match v Old Alleynians	Tandridge Golf Club	Jeremy Stanyard
Thu, 22 Aug 2024	Match v Croham Hurst GC	Croham Hurst Golf Club	Tony Harris

Meetings

Date & Time	Match	Venue	Organiser
Wed, 24 Jul 2024	President's meeting	Hever Castle Golf Club	John Gould
Thu, 15 Aug 2024	Hornsey-Walker Cup and Veterans' Cup Meeting	Sweetwoods GC	Alan Blok
Tue, 10 Sep 2024	Autumn Cup meeting	Cuddington Golf Club	Tony Harris
Sun, 20 Oct 2024	The Scratch Cup	Walton Heath GC	Ljevans10

School Team Competitions

Date & Time	Match	Venue	Organiser
Mon, 03 Jun 2024	Gordon Thorburn Schools Putting Competition (qualifying)	Royal Wimbledon Golf Club	Matthew Webster
Wed, 26 Jun 2024 - Fri, 28 Jun 2024	Cyril Gray	Worplesdon Golf Club	martin.j.hayes
Fri, 28 Jun 2024	Cyril Gray Seniors	Worplesdon Golf Club	Tony Mason
Fri, 27 Sep 2024 - Sun, 29 Sep 2024	Grafton Morrish - Finals	Hunstanton Golf Club	Toby Kemp

Tour

Date & Time	Match	Venue	Organiser
Tue, 01 Oct 2024 - Thu, 03 Oct 2024	Autumn Tour	Bungay and Waveney Valley GC	John Gould

If you would like to play in any of the above as a guest or wish to join the OW Golf Society, please contact: honsec@oldwhitgolf.com. Or check out the OWGS website at: www.oldwhitgolf.com