



OU Golfing Society 2023 Season Highlights

2023 has been another busy year for OUGS golf, with a notable first for our ladies, a good year for our scratch teams, though not quite up to the sensational 2022, further growth in our Eagles membership (for under-30s) and the opening of the School's new indoor golf training studio, generously supported by OUGS members. As always, around the country, there was plenty of competitive fun in our area meetings, matches against other schools' alumni and Eagles events.

Behind the scenes, planning is well under way for celebrations to mark the OUGS centenary in 2025. Lots of good ideas across the season are being fleshed out, but at the core will be a two-day event over Friday 11th and Saturday 12th July, involving golf at Luffenham Heath and a big centenary dinner at Uppingham. Mark your diaries accordingly!

Captain's Meeting & AGM 2023

Jeremy Cooke's (WB 67) Captain's Meeting, and the 2023 AGM of the society, were held at Trevoze Golf & Country Club in Cornwall over the weekend of 6th to 8th October. Developed over many years into a top golf and holiday venue by OU owner, the late **Peter Gammon (WD 49)**, Trevoze has hosted seven previous OUGS Captain's meetings, starting in 1997. Sadly, Peter died since our last visit, but Trevoze is now run by a very professional team, led by his son, who ensured that we were looked after every bit as well as in previous years. Captain Cooke had even organised for fine sunny weather over the weekend, adding an extra element of pleasure to the golf and social activities enjoyed by the 29 OUGS members and their 19 partners who attended the meeting.

On the Saturday, the Acorn Trophy for the best stableford score was won by **Brian Cooke (Hf 53)** with an astonishing 42 points on his 84th birthday! The Lee Tankard for the best gross score was won by **Chris Gotla (H 68)** on countback from **Jeremy Cooke (WB 67)**. Both shot 77. Other prize-winners were **Alistair Fisher (WD 65)**, **David Downes (L 59)**, **Robert Pope (WD 60)**, **Jeremy Cooke (WB 67)** and **Richard Venables (H 60)**. The Rutland Tankard for outstanding service to the society over the year was awarded to **Tom Hayes (SH 74)**. On Sunday, the Christopherson Rosebowls were won by **Brian Cooke (Hf 53)** and **Mike Ingham (M 66)**.

At the AGM, **Richard Bernhard (B 64)** was confirmed as Captain for 2024, and **Tim Dickson (SH 67)** was elected Vice-Captain. **Alan Thomas (H 62)**, **Mike Ingham (M 66)** and **Stuart Lloyd (WD 74)** were confirmed as President, Treasurer and Tournament Secretary respectively and **Tom Hayes (SH 74)** was elected interim Secretary until a replacement for our very recently deceased long-serving Secretary, Martin Walker (see below) is appointed.

Richard's Captain's Meeting will be held at St Pierre Country Club at Chepstow over the weekend of 13th to 15th September 2024. St Pierre has two fine 18 hole golf courses as well as a spa/leisure centre and other facilities expected of a 4* Marriott group hotel. Just over the border in South Wales, it is easily accessible to members travelling from all over the UK, being only a few miles from the M4/M5 junction near Bristol. And for non-golfing partners, there are attractions such as Chepstow Castle, Tintern Abbey and the Wye Valley, within easy range, and many others a little further away.



Brian Cooke (Hf 53) and Mike Ingham (M 66) being presented with Christopherson Rosebowls by Jeremy Cooke (WB 67).

Public School Alumni Tournaments

Halford Hewitt

Our scratch team, comprising **Eddie Allingham (H 81)**, **Peter Crocombe (B 03)**, **Sam Debenham (C 90)**, **James Gunton (SH 97)**, **Damian Pitts (Hf 91)**, **Tom Stevens (C 00)**, **Henry Short (Hf 07)**, **Archie Warman (M 06)**, **Ewen Wilson (M 85)** and **Ollie Worrall (Hf 12)**, with **Stuart Lloyd (WD 74)** as non-playing Captain, beat Brighton 3¹/₂:1¹/₂ in the first round and Watson's 3:2 in the second, but lost to Tonbridge 2:3 in the third round, with the final match going to the 20th hole. The 2023 winners were Loretto.

Bernard Darwin

Back to earth after our spectacular 2022 successes! Our over-55 scratch team, comprising **Nick Freeman (L 70)**, **Eddie Allingham**, **Dennis Watson (M 76)**, **Simon Moffatt (H 74)**, **Jeremy Cooke** and **David Stewart (Hf 68)** beat Marlborough 3:0 in round 1 and Westminster 2:1 in the second. In the following day's semi-final, the same team, but with **Stuart Lloyd** substituting for **David Stewart**, lost to Wellington 1:2. Charterhouse won the event. Our over-65 Senior Darwin team, comprising **Nick Freeman**, **David Stewart**, **Jeremy Cooke**, **Richard Patrick (F 66)**, **David Patrick (F 65)** and **Robert Pope (WD 60)** beat Eton 2¹/₂:1¹/₂ in the first round but lost 1:2 to Harrow in the second. Tonbridge beat Charterhouse in the final. Highgate won the Veterans (over-75s) scratch competition, beating our pair of **David Downes (L 59)** and **Anthony Walker (L 61)**.

Grafton Morrish

Our team for the East Midlands Area qualifying round at Gog Magog GC comprised; **Damian Pitts** (Captain) and **Ed Shooter (Fgh 91)**, **Ewen Wilson** and **Ollie Worrall**, **David Patrick** and **Rowan Northcott (B 05)**. Regrettably, this year the team finished in the middle of the pack with 75 points, compared with the East Midlands leaders, Framlingham and Loughborough on 91, and so did not qualify for the Finals at Hunstanton in October. The ultimate winners for 2023 were Birkenhead School.

Queen Elizabeth Coronation Trophy

After a great day's golf in sunshine at Muirfield as guests of QE tournament director, Sandy Gray, the weather turned Scottish for the tournament itself. The OU team of **Sam Debenham** (Captain) and **Tom Kennedy (B 06)**, **Eddie Allingham** and **Ewen Wilson**, **Peter Crocombe** and **Henry Short** beat Gordonians 2:1 in the first round but then lost to Heriots. Winners were Glasgow Academy.

Northern Public Schools Meeting

Held at Woodhall Spa, Uppingham once again won the Birkdale Bucket (team prize). We were middle of the pack at the Luffenham Heath Public Schools meeting but did not sparkle at the Midland Public Schools meeting at Little Aston.

Silver Tassie

For the first time, Uppingham fielded a team of two pairs in this Ladies competition at The Berkshire GC. **Rebecca Haywood (Fd 81)** and **Alice Dickson (L 06)** had a better ball score of 41 stableford points on the Blue course, while **Clare Warman (LH 75)** and **Debbie Lewin (Fd 83)** scored 36 points on the Red course. Their team aggregate score was just 1 stableford point behind the first three teams, all finishing on 78 points. That secured them 4th place out of 26 schools participating – a fantastic result. The winners on countback were Wycombe Abbey.



Uppingham Silver Tassie Team at The Berkshire GC. L to R: Debbie Lewin, Clare Warman, Alice Dickson and Rebecca Haywood

Area Meetings & Matches

The OUGS Merseyside Meeting was held in April at Ormskirk this year and was won by **Rick Taylor (M 59)** with 33 points from **David Arthur (SH 63)** and **Andrew Renison (F 54)**, both with 32 points.

The West Midlands & Spring meeting in May at Little Aston saw **David Hopkins (WD 60)** win with 36 points from **Rick Taylor (M 59)** with 33 points.

The London Area Meeting in September at Piltdown was won by **Alan Thomas (H 62)** with 36 points from **Andrew Morgan (Fgh 74)**, second on countback, and **Andrew Weiss (H 64)**, both with 33 points.

At their many matches around the country, OUGS teams registered wins over the alumni of Repton, Oundle, Sedburgh Nottingham, Eastbourne and Loretto and also won the matches against The School and the Piltdown GC team. There were draws with the alumni of St Pauls and Giggleswick and losses in matches against Westminster, Uppingham Rovers, Sedburgh, Oundle, Rugby, The Leys, Ampleforth, Cheltenham and Malvern. The match against Old Alleynians was cancelled because they could not raise a team and the match against Borth & Ynyslas GC was postponed out of mutual respect for the untimely death a few days earlier of our Secretary, Martin Walker (see below), who played in many past Borth matches and was intending to play in this one too.

OUGS Eagles

The OUGS Eagles have now attracted over 60 male and female golfers under the age of 30. The Princes weekend in February was played under sunny blue skies, with **Tom Stevens (C 00)** team beating that of **Peter Crocombe**. The 3-cornered meeting at New Zealand GC was won by St Peters and the Royal Wimbledon meeting was won by **Jethro Symington (M 11)** with 33 points, who therefore holds the Eagle Trophy until next year.



Eagles at Princes GC

Uppingham Indoor Golf Studio

There is a close relationship between the School and OUGS, with the society supporting school golf in many ways and the Uppingham Association supporting OUGS in helping younger OU golfers onwards and upwards. It was therefore no surprise that OUGS members happily volunteered most of the funding for the School's new indoor Golf Studio and were invited to the official opening on 3rd February. We were treated to a display of excellent golf by Lulu Leetham and Thomas Jackson, two of Uppingham's top players, and enjoyed some not so brilliant attempts ourselves to use this amazing new facility. It will certainly be a great golf coaching aid for pupils in the future, especially during winter months, and hopefully provide much enjoyment as well to both pupils and external users through the school's community sports programme.



Opening of the Uppingham Golf Studio

OUGS members were deeply saddened to hear that **Martin Walker (L 67)**, our Hon Secretary for 21 years and an absolute core member of the Society, died suddenly at home on 11th September. Just the previous week, he had played four rounds of golf on consecutive days with OUGS friends, culminating in the London Area Meeting at Piltdown, and had ostensibly been in excellent health.

We will all miss him.



OUGS Membership

OU golfers of any age, gender and golfing ability are welcome to join the OU Golfing Society. Please see the main OUGS webpage for further details and please get in touch if you would like any further information.