



MARCH 2021 NEWSLETTER

# Press Golfing Society

www.pressgs.co.uk

INSPIRING: Captain Dylan's beloved Luffenham Heath



Picture: TOM SHARPE

## Dawn of a new season

I'M absolutely delighted to be writing this newsletter with the knee-shaking anticipation of a return to golf just around the dog leg. And I write with actual news! After losing our first two fixtures to Covid, I'm thrilled to announce our season will get under way with a bang at the wonderful Swinley Forest. Not only will we be playing at one of the top courses in the country, but so many of us will be sporting the vaccine and a new confidence that life is getting back to normal. It will be a real shot in the arm.

I wrote a first draft of this newsletter in January when the situation for golf was depressingly unclear. What a difference a few weeks have made. Once play finally gets under way, I've been determined the PGS offers you a great season of golf, something to look forward to when we need it most. As a result, we'll be doing things a bit differently.

From the ashes of the fixtures at West Hill and Fulwell rises the new one at Swinley Forest. Numbers are limited to 30 players and because we anticipate it being an extremely popular fixture, we've booked not one, but two days to allow as many members as possible to play. They are May 4th and 13th playing for the Lord Riddell Trophy.

We have the same arrangement for our second fixture at Effingham, but with play on consecutive days - May 20 and 21. We hope the rest of the year will run as normal. It's a slightly compressed start to the season but this way we can offer a large proportion of the membership some top quality golf at a time when we are all hungry for it. Starving in fact.

It's become a lockdown cliché to appreciate life more than we used to and there's no

## A message from 2021 captain Dylan Dronfield

doubt that is the biggest take away for me. I live life at 24 hour news channel speed and it's forced me to slow down. So when we meet again, I will be better equipped to savour it.

From the moment I arrive to Tim's reassuring smile as he takes my cash, hear the familiar crack of Titleist on titanium, wince at Jamie Weir's latest sartorial purchase, chuckle while Rob Hewer rushes to the first tee because of "problems" on the M25 (aka a late night with Tony Smith) and see Messrs Price and Jones inhaling a bottle of red in the clubhouse, I will drink it all in. The PGS will be back. On reflection, I used to take all this for granted, it was just normal. But these will be - in fact they always have been - special times. The PGS is a special place.

I want to take a moment to tell you about one fixture in the calendar, Captain's Day, which will be a particular thrill for me. I'm hosting it at my home club, Luffenham Heath in Rutland. It's where I learned to play golf aged nine with

my Dad and where I've been a member since I was 14. Dad is still a member and last year my children joined, aged nine and seven. On August 23, there will be three generations of my family at the halfway hut to cheer you on and keep you refreshed. I hope you will make the journey up here. Yes, it's further than you might usually drive to a PGS fixture, but a glorious top 100 heathland course awaits and I'm sure you'll walk off the 18th very glad you came.

Beyond Captain's Day, the other highlight of the year is undoubtedly the 30th edition of the Wryter Cup. After last year's cancellation of the away fixture, this October we're playing at Royal Liverpool thanks to the tremendous efforts of Nic Brook. We hope that life has returned to normal by then to allow it to go ahead - and that the EU have got enough vaccines for the French team! After two defeats in a row, I hope to take a strong team to the Wirral where we will be determined to win it back.

There is a lot to look forward to this year. My thanks to outgoing captain Colin Hancock for asking me to be his VC and negotiating with Swinley Forest. Also to Tim for his relentless work to keep us going.

I am smiling as I sign off, we are so nearly there. Golf! Until then, take care of yourselves and those around you. When it finally starts, it's going to be a special PGS year. I look forward to seeing each and every one of you very soon. - Dylan





**MAY DAZE: PGS**  
year to start at  
Swinley Forest



## 2021 FIXTURES

THE PGS 2021 season will kick off with an incredible, top-class double double.

As captain Dronfield has revealed, our opening fixture will now be at the incomparable **Swinley Forest** in May. Clubs are having to restrict society numbers to around 30, so we've booked both Tuesday 4th and Thursday 13th to give everyone a chance to play in what's bound to be a hugely popular one-round opener.

Qualification for the Sir Emsley Carr knockout will be by the top 16 placings between the two days, proportionate to the field. (ie. If equal numbers were to play on each day, the top eight from both would qualify.)

Then it's on to the original late-May meeting at Harry Colt's **Effingham**.

### Society days

**SWINLEY FOREST**  
Medal & Sir Emsley Carr  
qualifier  
May 4/13

**EFFINGHAM**  
May 20/21

**WALTON HEATH**  
President's & Guest Day  
Tuesday, June 15

**ASHRIDGE**  
Tuesday, July 20

**LUFFENHAM HEATH**  
Captain's Day  
Monday, August 23

**THE BERKSHIRE**  
Tuesday, September 21

**THE GROVE**  
Tuesday, October 26

**THE BERKSHIRE**  
Scramble & Auction  
Tuesday, November 9

**REIGATE HEATH**  
Captains, Ctte & Seniors  
TBC

The club proved to be great hosts when we last played two seasons ago and again we have two dates - Thursday 20th and Friday 21st.

National restrictions ruled out **West Hill** this month (although we'll be back at the Surrey beauty next year, variants permitting) and sadly **Fulwell** cancelled our April fixture as clubs moved to protect their membership after so many months without golf.

But with **Swinley** and **Effingham**, followed by the wonderful **Walton Heath**, then **Ashridge**, **Luffenham Heath** and **The Berkshire**, the PGS schedule will be one of the strongest ever as we head towards **Hoylelake**, **The Grove** and the traditional **Berkshire** scramble. All dates (and some data) on [www.pressgs.co.uk](http://www.pressgs.co.uk)

### Matches

**ROYAL MID-SURREY**  
v Stock Exchange GC  
Tuesday, May 11

**RICHMOND**  
v Stage GS  
Monday, July 5

**ROYAL BLACKHEATH**  
Triangular Hickory match  
Thursday, July 29

**ROYAL ST GEORGE'S**  
v London Solicitors GS  
Monday, September 13

**ROYAL LIVERPOOL**  
XXX Wryter Cup,  
v Association de la Presse  
et du Golf  
October 3 - 5

**MUSWELL HILL**  
SJA Phil Sheldon Trophy  
TBC

Match v Northcliffe GS  
TBC

Check the website for any  
news and updates  
[www.pressgs.co.uk](http://www.pressgs.co.uk)

## Picking Wryte road to Hoylelake

**TWELVE-TIME** Open venue Royal Liverpool, historic Hoylelake, will host the resumption of the Wryter Cup this October. Captain Dronfield needs our strongest team to win back the cup, but the normal qualification process is being thrown a little by \*checks notes\* a global pandemic.

So the PGS committee has agreed it's only fair that Dylan should have one or two additional captain's picks to compensate for a slightly truncated schedule. Should we lose one or two meetings, there'd be one extra pick, to be chosen by a selection committee of Dronfield, secretary Tim Allan and Hoylelake's very own Nic Brook: three or four lost and they'd choose a further player, ie four in total.

Now we just have to hope the French get their vaccination act together sometime before the autumn.

## Have your say on our future

WHICH is your favourite PGS course (and the one at the bottom of your list)? Where else would you most like us to play golf? How much is too much for a day at The Berkshire?

Help to shape the Society's future by taking part in a short survey coming soon.

The PGS has evolved and thrived since its foundation in 1904 by responding to huge shifts in our industry ...and society beyond. These have changed our journalistic universe beyond anything Sir

Emsley Carr could have imagined, and yet the PGS has always listened to its members and adapted.

The midst of a global pandemic seems as good a moment as any to take stock and set a course for the next few years.

Playing golf at top clubs is getting ever more expensive and the events of the past year have not helped. Members want to restrict societies,

clubs need to recoup losses and, in the short to medium term, Spring 2022 dates at good venues are almost entirely full as this year's cancelled bookings are rolled over.

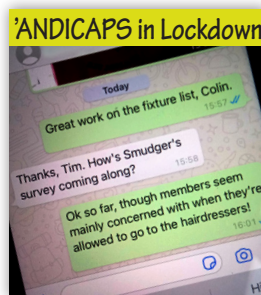
For next year, the Committee has acted quickly to secure the outline of

an outstanding schedule, but that process has thrown up some challenging questions.

For those of us who love playing top courses with the PGS there's always a tension between the quality of the venue

and its affordability, particularly given that these days it appears not every member is a national newspaper editor with a limitless expense account.

So the PGS committee has taken up a suggestion from Reach's (indeed) Tony Smith to survey the membership. Details soon from secretary Tim.



## Get close with an **ADNAMS** SOUTHWOLD

**CAPTAIN** Dronfield has teamed up with the brewer and wine merchant, **Adnams**, to run a nearest the pin competition at each of our fixtures this season.

Entry will be £5 with all proceeds going to **Cancer Research**, a charity close to Dylan's heart after his brother in law died of cancer aged just 40.

A magnum of **Adnams Prosecco** is up for grabs at each fixture with all the winners playing off for a King/Queen Pin prize at The Berkshire in September. The ball sweep is taking a break until we can all sit together again. Thank you to **Adnams** for supporting **Cancer Research** and the PGS.

## Give your ok to our website

AS many of you will have discovered, thanks to secy Tim Allan, we have a better website. And he'd like you to be part of it.

So unless you're on some sort of witness protection programme or have other strong reasons for hiding your identity, Tim would be most grateful if you could either log in or just email him to let him know you're happy for your contact details to be seen by other members. Thanks.

■ YOUR committee has decided that it's about time PGS subs had some correlation with events in the outside world and should be nudged up a fiver to £30.

The extra income will help keep the cost of meetings down a little.

Subject to AGM approval this change will be made from 2022.

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