



Press Golfing Society

APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

www.pressgs.co.uk

DOUBLE BUBBLE FOR NURSEY

Second meeting: Northwood, Monday, April 15
Full details overleaf

Worplesdon win follows Northcliffe triumph

JAMES NURSEY made March a month to remember as he completed a duo of PGS triumphs.

Fresh from captaining the society in Suffolk to retain the cup in the match against the Northcliffe, Nursey beat a strong field in the medal round at Worplesdon to win the Lord Riddell Memorial Trophy.

The former Mirror staffer's net 71, playing off four, was enough to secure the best gross score of the day of 75.

Ian Woods, who topped Division 2, finished a stroke behind Nursey on net 72, as did Nev Appleton, who came second in Division 1. Ross Slater took third in Division 1 with a net 73, while Philip Johnston and Cornelius Bohane tied on net 74 to take the places in Division 2.

'I was lucky enough to play with Keith Ging and Nick Cherrie, who are both very good players,' said Nursey.

'Big-hitting Nick blazed the ball past Keith and me on most holes but I just focused on getting in a nice rhythm.'

'When it became clear I had a decent card going, both my playing partners were very encouraging, which I appreciated a lot. But frankly it was such an enjoyable stroll in the sunshine after some bleak, wet, winter months, I wasn't thinking about the card much and just enjoyed the game, the company and of course the lunch.'

Despite the odd temporary lake on the fairways, Worplesdon was in excellent condition after a winter of saturating rainfall.

Also in tip-top form was PGS vice-president Patrick Eagar, who carded his very own 80 as the society marked his milestone birthday after a generous collection

from members. 'I'm working on shooting my age,' said Patrick, who received gifts including wine and a framed print by Michael Clark. 'I've had a fantastic – I think – 38 years in the PGS,' said Patrick in an impromptu speech. 'I've loved every minute of it.'

Later, in a gracious thank-you note to the PGS, Patrick added: 'What a wonderful and generous surprise! I am still in a bit of shock, I knew something was up

– maybe a bottle of champagne or something, but the present was quite something.'

'I really feel that the membership and the memories over the years have more than compensated for anything I might have contributed to the PGS.'

'They are a wonderful and, at times crazy, bunch of individuals. I wouldn't have missed them for anything.'

Nursey was also full of praise for

Slater, his taxi driver for the day from their homes in the Midlands.

'Ross did well to stay awake at the wheel when quizzing me about the round,' added James.

'However when he started describing his, I think I nodded off. I blamed the treacle tart and gave Ross a bottle from the winnings to apologise.'

'It was a memorable day and the classy tribute to Patrick highlighted the very best of the society.'



WINE O'CLOCK: James Nursey, left, with PGS captain Tony Smith and Division 2 winner Ian Woods

Pictures: PAOLO MINOLI/JOHN QUINN/FELIX DUCKWORTH



FAIRWAY TO HEAVEN: Larry Lawson on the 17th; birthday boy Patrick Eagar with Capt Smith; Tim Allan and Nic Brook; and Worplesdon in the sun

Second meeting: Northwood Monday, April 15

NORTHWOOD in Middlesex is a new course for the PGS and comes highly recommended by the Northcliffe GS. It's our cheapest meeting of the year, by some distance. Sign up now at the PGS website...

SINGLES STABLEFORD
News of the World Trophy
Holder: Andrew Porter

GREENSOMES STABLEFORD
Sir Leicester Harmsworth
Memorial Trophy
Holders: Jonny Bramley & Ben Todd

■ Singles will go out in three-balls from 8am and greensome pairs will tee off after lunch.

COST
£110 per golfer, including bacon roll, coffee & tea, and three-course lunch of avocado and prawn cocktail, steak and ale pie, and bread and butter



Northwood's
15th hole

pudding. Ball sweep is an extra fiver. Please pay in advance to **Press Golfing Society; account number 40749648; sort code 20-41-41.**

ENTRIES
Follow the sign-up link at www.pressgs.co.uk

PRIZES
First three in singles Division 1 and first three in Division 2. Best three pairs in greensomes.

TELEPHONE
You can leave a message at the club on 01923 821384.

HOW TO GET THERE
By car: From the M25, the course is six miles from junction 17 (head south-east on A412, Riverside Drive and A404) and junction 18 (head south via the A404). From the M40/A40, it's 11 miles north via B467, Breakspear Road, A4180 and A404.
By Tube: Northwood Tube station – on the Metropolitan Line – is a short taxi ride away or a 10-minute walk via Green Lane and Maxwell Road. The journey from King's Cross to Northwood takes about 40 minutes.

POSTCODE for satnavs
HA6 2QW

FAREWELL GENEROUS JOE

PGS colossus and master court reporter dies at 94

TITANS of the old Fleet Street days lined up to pay tribute to the much-loved and respected Joe Wood, who died, aged 94 on March 15.

The warmth, affection and respect for the former boss of the Joe Wood News Agency at the Old Bailey and the High Court shone through messages from reporters who worked with him, editors who depended on him and golfing pals who laughed their ways around the fairways with him.

And family members told of his final days surrounded by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren at the home he shared in Dulwich with his beloved wife Nita, who passed away in January.

Joe suffered from poor health in his last two years, battling prostate cancer and became increasingly frail after Nita died.

They had been married for 70 years and had two children, son Tim, 69, who took over the agency when his father retired, and daughter Tracy Simmonds, 67, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

'Dad was frail but still pushing back and we moved his bed downstairs to the heart of the house where he was surrounded by the family,' said Tracy. 'It was an incredibly sad time but such a privilege to spend those last few months with him sharing some wonderful moments.'

A former captain of Enfield Golf Club and the Press Golfing Society, Joe was an excellent golfer whose lowest handicap was two.

A natural sportsman, who was RAF javelin champion during his National Service, he also played rugby for a Saracens team. His name is emblazoned on at least eight PGS trophies including the prestigious Sir John Gordon Golden Putter.

He had a difficult childhood, according to son Tim. His father was killed in a freak accident involving a bus when Joe was 11 and his mother wasn't able to take care of him, so he spent time with different relatives in Barnstaple and Colchester.

After a grammar-school education, his uncle, Gordon Wood, also a reporter, taught him the basics of court reporting and he worked at the Bankruptcy Court before taking over the Old Bailey agency.

He met Nita at a Pitmans shorthand class in Enfield. 'I think he asked her if he could borrow a pencil,' said Tim.

Notoriously absent-minded, he once almost sparked an inquiry at Scotland Yard after two valuable PGS trophies went missing following

by Philippa Kennedy

FORMER PGS PRESIDENT
AND CAPTAIN

Chester Stern's captain's dinner there. Sometime later, Nita found them at the back of the bedroom wardrobe where Joe had hidden them for safekeeping when they got home from the event.

On another occasion, he reported his car stolen from his drive, only for it to turn up at Enfield Golf Club, where he had sensibly left it after a boozy club lunch a week earlier.

Perhaps the most spectacular example was when a delayed holiday flight meant him missing his own captain's dinner at London's Savoy Hotel. He eventually arrived, full of apologies, after dinner was over.

There will be a private cremation, but the family is planning a party at the family home in Dulwich to celebrate their parents' lives on a date as yet to be decided.



NATURAL SPORTSMAN: Joe on the course at Ballyliffin in Donegal and (inset) with Hugh Whittow and Tom Clarke at last year's Captains' Reunion at Royal Blackheath

Friends and Fleet St colleagues pay tribute

MONTY COURT, former editor of The Sporting Life and lifelong golfing pal, writes: 'Tragically, I'd been expecting this for some weeks. It was quite clear from the conversations and messages from Joe's daughter that Joe was utterly heartbroken by Nita's death and wanted only to join her.'

'I'd like a quid for all the courses I've played with Joe. Very often Nita would be in attendance – and although she must have accompanied Joe and their great friend James Mangan to functions at many courses, she never picked up the rights or wrongs of golf club etiquette.'

'During a PGS trip to Portugal, she persuaded my wife to join her on a buggy. Unfortunately, a mother and father of a thunderstorm hit us, and with Nita at the wheel, their buggy flashed round the course in the general direction of the clubhouse. It didn't matter if greens or bunkers got in the way, as a petrified Nita searched for shelter like an inspired and terrified F1 driver. Onlookers could not believe the sight of this bright yellow vehicle sending up spray as it flashed across the immaculate greens and through flooded bunkers.'

'When Joe was captain of Enfield, the guest of honour at his dinner was the pro at Woburn, Alex Hay, who was a fixture on every BBC golf programme. As Joe rose to his feet, it was clear he was having a memory lapse.'

'You can't remember my name, can you?' said an amused Hay. 'Joe shrugged his shoulders and said: "No. I'm sorry but I can't." And, utterly unembarrassed, he carried on with his speech amid howls of laughter all-round.'

EDDIE LAXTON, former Daily Express and Mirror reporter, remembers Joe as a talented front-row forward at Saracens: 'Joe played many parts in his 90-plus years – a super-sportsman, fine singer and terrific chum. Professionally, in the press box at the Old Bailey or the High Court, he was exceptional. Not a mere "court reporter", day-after-day the lifelong-freelancer penned stories tailored specifically for his Fleet Street clients. In no more than 15 or 20 pars, his copy was always a great read. Million-pound bankruptcies and murders were given individual treatment. He was no less entertaining on the golf course or in the bar. He leaves us with so many wonderful memories... go in peace my old friend.'

TOM CLARKE, former sports editor of the Daily Mail and Times and PGS captain, writes: 'Nita and Joe were always charming company. That's the best word for Joe – charming. Joe covered every minute of "my" High Court case – the libel action brought by Kieren Fallon and Lynda and Jack Ramsden

against The Sporting Life. We lost but the detail that emerged in the case encouraged racing authorities to keep a much closer watch on what was going on in races.'

NIC BROOK, Mirror art editor, remembers Joe's golfing prowess as a three-handicapper. 'Joe was a lovely fellow, the kindest of men and a fabulous golfer. You always felt you'd do OK if you had Joe as your playing partner.'

JEREMY CHAPMAN, former PGS secretary, writes: 'Lovely man, lovely golfer – the best we had in the PGS for a while. I was lucky enough to play with him twice, once back in the day when he was in his prime and with his magnificent iron play shepherded us to a wide-margin win in a team event. He was an awesome partner, as well as a hugely encouraging one. The second time many years later was in an Emsley Carr quarter-final on the Edinburgh course at Wentworth. It was damp and he wasn't the force he was. Suddenly after ten holes he said, "You have the match, let's go and have a good lunch!"'

PHILIPPA KENNEDY remembers being sent up to the Old Bailey as a 'young and very green reporter' by formidable Sun news editor Ken Donlan, with the instruction: 'Find Joe Wood. He'll look after you.'

'Naively I thought I was supposed to take down every single word and I was panicking. Joe just handed me some copy with the prosecution opening statement, the names of the defendant and the barristers

and the plea. I think he probably gave me an intro, too. He was an incredible presence, tall and handsome and a natty dresser. He invited me to join a golf trip once to the west coast of Ireland and I was designated "house mother", my main job being to check Joe's room on leaving in case he had forgotten something. Once it was a pair of highly polished shoes and another time it was his blazer with his passport in a pocket.'

STEPHEN MANGAN, actor son of Joe's close buddy James, says: 'He was my Dad's closest friend for decades and Joe would come around to our house to play snooker and drink whiskey. The Woods were like family and we would go on holiday with them. He and my Dad met at Enfield Golf Club in the 70s and Dad even got him into the PGS, even though he had never written a story in his life. Joe was such great company and made everyone feel included. 'He was a wonderful raconteur and joke teller, laughing all the time. Some people just make you feel like you are at a party. That was Joe. He made you feel like you were in the right room.'



DEVOTED: Joe with his wife Nita

The Sir Emsley Carr matchplay knockout

Nic Brook v Kevin Price

Tim Allan v Jono Baker

Peter Dazeley v Nev Appleton

Evan Samuel v Hugo Chambre

Nick Cherrie v Steve Lewis

Ian Woods v Philip Johnston

Neale Adams v Mike Waker

Ross Slater v Kevin Mitchell

THE society's medal round at Worplesdon decided the 16 competitors for this year's Sir Emsley Carr matchplay competition.

Among some eye-catching ties, Hugo Chambre will take on Aussie knee specialist Evan Samuel in a Hampton Court showdown, while another new(ish) PGS member, Kevin Mitchell, faces in-form Ross Slater.

Worplesdon runners-up Nev Appleton and Ian Woods will play President Peter Dazeley and Phil Johnston respectively, and Nic Brook takes on Kevin Price in a clash from yesteryear. Knees will be on show with shorts-loving



former captains Tim Allan and Jono Baker drawn against each other. Steve Lewis will hope to repeat his 2018 Emsley triumph, but faces a

tough task against big-hitting Nick Cherrie. Neale Adams and Mike Waker complete the draw.

First round ties must be played by Sunday, May 5; the quarter-finals by Sunday, June 23; the semi-finals by Sunday, August 18; and the final by Monday, September 30. The two finalists qualify for the Wryter Cup. If you pull out, as well as incurring Tim's wrath, you'll be ineligible for this year's Wryter and next year's Emsley Carr.

THE dates for the 12-team European Journalists' Nations Cup in Portugal have changed slightly, so it will run from Saturday, November 9 to Thursday, November 14. The five-night package includes practice and

competition rounds at Royal Obidos and the nearby Praia D'el Rey. The cost is from €756pp for a shared room and, as well as the golf, includes a gala dinner, four other dinners – all including drinks! – plus a half-way-hut snack on

each round. The cost for non-playing guests is €530. Jonny Bramley will captain the PGS team – email him at jonathanbramley63@gmail.com to register your interest in playing. Full details are on the PGS website.

Thorpe -yes! PGS lift the cup after tie in Suffolk showdown

Delight for team Captain Nursey in 8-8 draw with Northcliffe

THE PGS enjoyed an extraordinarily close contest with Northcliffe this year, which saw the hosts and defending champions retain the trophy following an 8-8 tie.

The annual match was played over Aldeburgh and Thorpeness on the Suffolk coast in successive days in early March with the teams staying at the latter venue.

The sides went into the second day with the scores locked at 4-4 after the opening foursomes at a sunny Aldeburgh. That capped an eventful opening session with one Northcliffe pair playing off the ladies' slope rating by mistake to take three extra shots before subsequently agreeing to halve their match with Nev Appleton and Jonny Bramley.

A late illness also meant PGS captain and host James Nursey had to rope in a last-minute replacement and Chris Lamb, a former Norfolk amateur champion, kindly answered the SOS.

Elsewhere there was plenty of good play from the team, especially the duo of Duncan Farmer and Simon Taylor, who won both their games.

They even managed to fit in a mini pub crawl after winning their opening foursomes in good time in the first match.

Then, the following day, Farmer and Taylor's second point in the penultimate match of the fourball betterball ensured the PGS retained the trophy for a fourth successive year.

A home win looked in doubt at one stage but the PGS's strong tail featuring experienced pairs – including Evan Samuel and Colin Hancock, Kevin Price and Tony Smith and the aforementioned Farmer and Taylor – all registered wins.

As did Ian McIlgorm and Paolo Minoli to ensure four points on day two with the lively McIlgorm blazing a trail on and off the course.

There was also a polished PGS debut from Kevin Mitchell, who came suited and booted.

Lee Smith and Mike Allen triumphed in the foursomes, while Nick Jones, Appleton and Bramley all helped ensure an enjoyable, fun contest.

The memorable match even included a hole in one on Thorpeness's 208-yard par 3 16th for Northcliffe's Keith Cottington, but it still wasn't enough to stop Samuel and Hancock winning against the visitors, who were ably captained by Craig Fawcett.

PGS skipper and Norwich fan Nursey, back on East Anglian soil, said: 'Craig put out a strong team with some younger talent this year and it was an extremely close, well-spirited contest. The great



Pictures: IAN MCGILGORM / EVAN SAMUEL / MIKE ALLEN



CAPTAIN MARVEL: James Nursey receives the cup from his NGS counterpart Craig Fawcett, while Duncan Farmer and Simon Taylor finish their match in quicktime ahead of their impromptu pub crawl

Time for a Cheesy birthday party...

AS THIS year is the 120th anniversary of the Press Golfing Society, we're marking the occasion with a birthday lunch on Monday, October 21. The venue is the very atmospheric and ancient Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese Tavern at Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, just yards away from the site of the old Press Club, where we were instituted on the same day in 1904.

The aim is to enjoy a traditional Fleet Street lunch, with plenty of reminiscences about the 'Street of Shame' along with a celebration of our birthday and proud PGS heritage. We hope you can get along!

To reserve your seat (we need an idea of numbers asap) please email Nic Brook at nic.brook@hotmail.com for more details.



PITCH PERFECT: Neil Darbyshire – on Team Northcliffe – plays towards the 'House in the Clouds' in Thorpeness. Inset: The NGS's Keith Cottington's hole in one and Aldeburgh's handsome clubhouse

courses, good food, largely fine weather and decent company ensured the guys from both sides thankfully all enjoyed it.

'But it was extra special to emerge with the trophy at the end and I think the PGS can expect another close game at Kington next year. I wasn't sure of our prospects when I left much

of the team including Messrs McIlgorm, Price, Smith(s), Allen and Samuel in the bar in the small hours before the final tee times.

'But I never should have doubted their ability to shake off a hangover and rise to the occasion in true PGS style.'

Report by James Nursey

'ANDICAPS ON TOUR... it's Alas Smith and Jones!



PGS full results and fixtures 2024



THE ADDINGTON



WALTON HEATH
OLD COURSE

SOCIETY DAYS

THURSDAY, MARCH 14 WORPLESDON

Winner of Lord Riddell Trophy:
James Nursey (net 71, gross 75).
Div 1: Nev Appleton (net 72),
Ross Slater (73). Div 2: Ian Woods
(72); Cornelius Bohane, Philip
Johnston (both 74).

MONDAY, APRIL 15 NORTHWOOD

northwoodgolf.co.uk
News of the World Trophy (Singles
Stableford): holder Andrew Porter
Sir Leicester Harmsworth
Memorial Trophy (Greensomes
Stableford): holders Jonny
Bramley & Ben Todd

TUESDAY, APRIL 30 THE ADDINGTON

addingtongolf.com
Captains' reunion, committee
and seniors
Dazeley Past Captains' Trophy:
holder Paolo Minoli (Singles
Stableford, past captains only)
The Calamity Jane Putter holder
Hugh Whittow (Singles Stableford,
all players)

TUESDAY, MAY 14 WOKING

wokinggolfclub.co.uk
Mirror Trophy (Singles Stableford):
holder Nick Cherrie
Wilkinson Sword (Greensomes
Stableford): holders Tim Allan &
Colin Hancock

TUESDAY, JUNE 11 President's Day & Guest Day WALTON HEATH

waltonheath.com
President's prizes for singles,
foursomes and guests
Reg Hinder Memorial Trophy
(Singles Stableford): holder
Neil Darbyshire
Foursomes holders: Jim Murray &
guest Hugo Tudor

TUESDAY, JULY 16 ASHRIDGE

ashridgegolfclub.ltd.uk
PGS Memorial Salver (Singles
Stableford): holder Nick Jones
Sir Harry Brittain Trophy
(Greensomes Stableford): holders
Jonathan Baker & Colin Hancock

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20 Captain's Day MANNINGS HEATH

manningsheath.com
Billennium Bowl (Singles
Stableford): holder Mike Allen,
Harold Lewis Weight for Age
Trophy: holder Rick Evans

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 THE BERKSHIRE

theberkshire.co.uk
The Sun Challenge Trophy
(Singles Stableford):
holder Jonny Bramley
Sir George Sutton Salver
(Greensomes Stableford): holders
Nev Appleton & Jonny Bramley

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29 WEST HILL

westhillgc.co.uk
Peggy White Vase (Singles
Stableford): holder Mike Waker

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18 WORPLESDON

worplesdongc.co.uk
Christmas Scramble and
charity auction

MATCHES

MARCH 4&5
Thorpeness and Aldeburgh
v Northcliffe GS
Result: 8-8 tie,
PGS retain cup

TUESDAY, MAY 21
v Stock Exchange GS
Royal Mid Surrey
rmsgc.co.uk
Match captain
Patrick Eagar



MONDAY, JULY 1
v The Stage GS
Richmond
therichmondgolfclub.com
Match captain Nick Cherrie

MONDAY, JULY 29
v British Golf Collectors
Hickory match
Royal Blackheath
royalblackheath.com
Match captain Nic Brook

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
v London Solicitors GS
Royal St George's
royalstgeorges.com
Match captain Tom Crone

SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1
Granville, Normandy
XXXIII Wryter Cup
golfdgranville.com
PGS captain Tony Smith

NOVEMBER 9-14
R. Obidos & Praia d'El Rey
European Nations Cup
royalobidos.com and
praia-del-rey.com
Match captain Jonny Bramley