

The 20th Bad Etiquette Classic

June 2013

When Mark, Julian, Pete and David met in a Bournemouth pub one Sunday evening in 1994 ahead of two days of golf, little did they realise that nineteen years later they'd be gathering in Inverness for the 20th Bad Etiquette Classic.

1994. Ah yes. A vintage year if ever there was one. John Major embroiled in sleaze, Nelson Mandela inaugurated, arrival of the DVD, 49p for a litre of petrol, £3 for a net birdie, Nick Price Open Champion, and Julian Malton first winner of the Bad Etiquette Classic. Those were the days. The days when participants prioritised family holidays ahead of the BEC (imagine !) and when you could be given Worst Etiquette Award or a handicap cut based only on a show of hands following a pint costing £1.38. Ah yes.

Have things really changed that much? Sure, participation, event duration, handicaps and the Founder Member have all

grown a bit, and a pint now costs £17.20, but heh, a net birdie is still £3 and Julian can still deliver a fine rendition of the Cheese Sketch when required.

This year we looked to be in good shape for the Tour with courses booked and 8 participants confirmed well in advance. But when it comes to the BEC you should never count on anything (other than the fingers of both hands when playing a par 5). One cancelled flight, a lack of communication, an ill-considered e-mail and two irreconcilable differences of opinion later, and our number was reduced to seven. Alas.

And so to Gatwick where six of this year's BEC hopefuls met for an excess baggage avoidance master-class (Pete deftly balancing his clubs on a single toe at check-in) and to board their fairly Easyjet flight to Inverness. There, we were emotionally reunited with fellow BEC sufferer and 7th man David L before shuttling

to a nearby industrial estate for an audience with Thrifty's Customer Expectations Manager. 'I'm sorry sir we don't have any Volvo Estates in at the moment.' ... 'Sure, no surprises there. After all, why would the hire of 2 Volvo Estates in any way involve the presence of Volvo Estates?' ... 'So we'll be giving you.' ... 'Oh, wait, don't tell me, a 2 door Fiat Punto and a 0.1 litre Nissan Micra Coupé?' ... 'No sir, actually a 4 door Toyota Tundra Rock Warrior and a 3 litre Land Rover Freelander.' ... 'Blimey! You sure? We're just going to play some golf, not trying to recapture Aleppo.' ... 'And both cars come with functioning wing-mirrors and road tax as standard.' Wowza. Holiday Autos were clearly on their game.

Paperwork completed, we set off in our TSV's (Tactical Support Vehicles) armed with DFGP's (Dornoch Firth Golf Passes) up the 'Alpha Nine' in the direction of TGC (Tango Golf Club). And as dark skies threatened overhead and

severe weather warnings (and unexploded IED's) passed intermittently at the roadside, we began to realise why we were going to be needing such rugged vehicles for this, our 20th campaign.

And what a campaign it would be, taking on the Sutherland links of Tain, Royal Dornoch, Brora and Nairn Dunbar. After 20 years of blood, sweat, tears, lost balls, shortest drives, wrong turns, nearest pins, fine putts, fond memories, magnificent courses, varied weather, a couple of jars, a few laughs and a great deal of golf, Mark, Julian and Peter would be playing their 100th BEC round and collectively we might be playing our five millionth competitive yard. The sheer wonder of it!

So, to Tain, where the order of play was decided by the usual draw from the Tea Pot, Mark failed to deploy a cup before dispensing his coffee from the machine, the skies brightened and the 20th Bad Etiquette Classic commenced.



Toyota Tundra Rock Warrior - bomb proof trim, gun turret, variable wipers, rapid golf bag deployment capability



Despite a good drive, Pete finds the water hazard on the 7th at Nairn Dunbar

1 BEC
20 years
75 courses
802 rounds
14,433 holes
75,968 shots
4,995,128 yards

Day 1 - Tain



AM - Richard buys an outrageously expensive rain jacket in the pro-shop but despite the severe weather warning it doesn't rain on our 9 holes around Struie

PM - Dave G, Martin & Richard

- Dave drives the 15th (300yds par 4) and 4 putts
- Martin's 5 net birdies lead to 2 comfortable match wins

PM - Mark & Julian vs David L & Pete

- Mark, Julian and Pete celebrate their 100th round of BEC golf around the Royal Dornoch championship links
- Level after nine, Julian wins the 10th, 11th and 14th and Mark secures them a 4&3 victory with a birdie 3 at 15
- Miraculously it remains dry all day!

3-Ball - Mark, Pete & Richard

- Mark hits a magnificent drive down the middle at the 1st to get the 20th BEC off to a fine start
- Unexpected sunshine for the opening 4 holes is replaced by steady, and at times heavy, rain to the 12th
- Playing bogey golf Mark wins both of his singles games; Richard's late rally (incl. birdie 2 NE at 16) secures him a 3&2 victory over Pete

4-Ball - David L & Julian vs Dave G & Martin

- 13 net birdies, a net eagle and 3 nearest pins suggest this group was finding its form quicker than the 3-ball
- David L wins LD with the shortest drive at the 4th but he and Julian lose their early lead and succumb 2&1

Day 2 - Dornoch



AM - Julian, Mark & Martin

- Mark's bogey golf (89 net 73) is sufficient to secure 2 match wins against modest opposition

AM - Dave G & David L vs Pete & Richard

- Pete finds the 18th (190yds par 3) from the tee and holes the putt to halve the match from dormy 3 down

PM - Julian, Mark & Richard

- Richard makes a brilliant birdie 3 at the 12th, shoots 93 net 69 and comfortably wins both matches

PM - David L, Martin & Pete

- Dave G retires with conjunctivitis; as a result we finish 4,872 yards short of 5 million yards over 20 BEC years!
- Pete loses both matches but wins an impressive 50p

Day 3 - Brora



3-Ball - Mark, Martin & Richard

- The leading group risks disqualification as they mistakenly play the 7th following the 4th and in so doing cause the mother of all snarl-ups on the course
- Mark has a wayward round and thinks he's blown his chances, but Martin fades dramatically over the closing holes and it's anybody's guess who's won the Tea Pot

4-Ball - David L & Julian vs Dave G & Pete

- Pete makes birdie net eagle at the 2nd and 3 more NB's on the front 9 to put he and Dave 6 up at the turn
- Julian lays claim to all four par 5's with an LD and 3 SD's
- 5 NB's from David & Julian are good enough to salvage the back 9 but not the match; they lose 6&5

Day 4 - Nairn Dunbar





After Many Years of Golfing (to the tune of 'Four and Twenty Virgins')

After many years of golfing, the BEC Tour's 20th year,
On our way to Sutherland bearing rain-proof gear.

Singing tee-shots down the middle, approach shots on the green,
Such shots from BEC participants are very rarely seen.

Jovial Julian he was there mixing it in the fray,
Unimpressed with last place so he threw his clubs away.

Singing, Vale of Glamorgan, Nefyn and Porthcawl,
Ballycastle, Canterbury, we've survived them all.

Dapper David he was there, winning 50p at Tain,
But lost fifteen quid at Dornoch, and at Brora lost again.

Singing tee-shots down the middle, approach shots on the green,
Such shots from BEC participants are very rarely seen.

Perfect Peter he was there; striding on the links,
Avoiding Dornoch's night spots, preferring forty winks.

Singing, Vale of Glamorgan, Nefyn and Porthcawl,
Ballycastle, Canterbury, we've survived them all.

Ruthless Richard he was there, his talent knows no bounds,
Finished up in third place with earnings of three pounds.

Singing tee-shots down the middle, approach shots on the green,
Such shots from BEC participants are very rarely seen.

Dangerous Dave he was there asking himself why,
Retired PM at Brora with an infection of the eye.

Singing, Vale of Glamorgan, Nefyn and Porthcawl,
Ballycastle, Canterbury, we've survived them all.

Marvellous Martin he was there, he very nearly won,
Until the 17th at Nairn Dunbar, where he came undone.

Singing tee-shots down the middle, approach shots on the green,
Such shots from BEC participants are very rarely seen.

... And finally ...

Maudlin Mark he was there, unsure if he could hack it,
Goes and wins the tournament, the Tea Pot and pink jacket!

Singing, Vale of Glamorgan, Nefyn and Porthcawl,
Ballycastle, Canterbury, we've survived them all.

Match-play head-to-head

The vital statistics of our top (and bottom) pairings have been known for years; Andy & David L, played 9, won 6, halved 3; Andy & Pete J, played 10, won 8; Dave G & Julian, played 13, lost 12. But what about head-to-head results?

Well, new analysis of the results of the 'Hard Core Seven' (Mark, Julian, Pete, David L, Dave G, Richard and Andy) reveal some truly startling new statistics! *Truly startling you say?* Yes, for example:

- Only 54 of a possible 105 match permutations involving these players have occurred over 20 years; the two David's have never played against Mark & Richard, and Julian & Mark have never played against Dave G & Pete or, for that matter, Dave G & Richard. *Will this take long?*
- Only 2 match permutations have occurred 4 times: Julian & Mark versus Pete & Richard (played 4, won 4) and Julian & Pete versus David L & Mark (played 4, won 3, lost 1). *When do we get to the startling bit?*
- The Founder Members have met in a 4-ball combo 9 times. They met 8 times in the first two years of the BEC and then, incredibly (and I mean, incredibly), they never played another 4-ball until featuring together in the 100th round at the 20th BEC! *You need to get out more.*
- And of those 9 combo's, Mark has won just 3, David and Pete both 4, and Julian 7. *A lot more.*



From the BEC archives

Julian in Gaelic garb readies himself for an attempt at Longest Drive.

Dunbar GC
1856

Player Profiles

Mark

Mark entered this year's event with minimal expectations and a written proposal for its conversion from golf to crown green bowls to ensure its lasting appeal. But following 4 rounds without loss, Mark found himself in the yellow cashmere and unexpectedly enjoying himself. £16 ahead of Martin going into the final round, Mark looked odds-on for the Tea Pot, but an erratic final round was very nearly his undoing. Two sandy par NB's at the 2nd and 17th, however, edged him the BEC title (his fourth) with a margin of just £5. Congratulations!



Julian

After a poor start at Tain, Julian steadied the ship on day two moving up into 3rd place. But 2 disastrous rounds about the Brora links cost him a whopping £43 and plunged him into last place from where he was unable to recover. 10.5 negative extras didn't assist his cause, and by the time Alison joined him for a few days in the Highlands, Julian had abandoned any intention of suffering further losses on the links and had ditched his clubs and shoes in the nearest wheelie-bin.



Pete

Without a match win during the first 3 days of competition and having trailed for much of the time in last place, Pete desperately needed a strong finish at Nairn Dunbar. And that's what he

got with 4 NB's, an NE, a 6&5 match win and takings of £16 hauling him up into 4th place. Not only that, but Pete's final round net 69 secured him his first Scarisbrick title.

David L

David's 20th BEC campaign failed to materialise in earnest. Despite a reasonable tally of net birdies and wins in both of his singles matches, David allowed midfield and ultimately trailed home in fifth place with losses of £18. Following five consecutive years in the red, David was overheard to question the ethics of the BEC scoring system, but those of us that know him well, know that beneath the pained exterior is a man hugely looking forward to the next decade of the BEC.



Richard

Voted most improved player on the Tour and one who came within a whisker of victory in 2011, Richard might have been considered a contender for the Tea Pot had not a winter shoulder injury set back his elaborate preparations. A solid start around Tain suggested that all was well, but this was followed by the purchase of an exorbitantly priced jacket (pictured) in the Dornoch pro shop which did little for either his golf or wallet. Over four days of competition Richard battled his way to five singles wins and 3rd place on £3, a cheque that would have been somewhat healthier had he not collected an eye-watering 8 FP's!



Dave G

What to say? On the positive side, Dave was unbeaten in the pairs. On the less positive side he lost both singles 6&4 and money in every round eventually

Après Golf

Accommodation - The Eagle Hotel, Dornoch. Not the first Eagle Hotel we've stayed at on Tour but quite possibly the first to provide a breakfast newsletter (entitled 'The Blether') for its guests.

Saturday - searched Dornoch in vain for somewhere to eat (sufficiently desperate at one point to reconnoiter a shut-down curry house on an industrial estate), ending up at the very pleasant Sutherland House for Cullen skink.

Monday - ate at the splendid 15th century Castle Hotel (in the less than splendid corrugated plastic roofed conservatory) and treated ourselves to a selection of fine malt whiskies in the hotel bar.



coming 6th, saved only from last place by Julian's selfless collapse on day 4. Dave withdrew from the afternoon round at Brora citing acute conjunctivitis (a complaint which, with hindsight, Julian wishes he too had contracted) and in so doing inadvertently sabotaged the achievement of the BEC's 5 million yard milestone.

Martin

Unbeaten over the first 2 days and leading comfortably on £37.50, Martin looked to be on track for his second Tour victory from 3 starts. But around Brora, Martin lost the lead and found himself £16 adrift heading south to Nairn Dunbar. There, Martin almost staged the most dramatic of comebacks, but just when the Tea Pot appeared to be within his reach, he inexplicably self-destructed, failing to finish either the 17th or 18th holes and in so doing gifting the Tea Pot to Mark.



The BEC's Top 20 Moments

After 20 years and 802 rounds of golf on the links of Britain, the BEC's seven most prolific participants have selected their Top 20 Best BEC Moments of All Time.

During Phase I. of the elaborate voting process (*there are phases?*) participants were asked to shrug off the onset of dementia and recall their favourite BEC moments. Then, in Phase II. (*seriously?*)

THE SUNDAY TIMES

20 BEST BEC
MOMENTS
OF ALL TIME

1994 - 2013

they were asked to select from the list of 54 nominations resulting from Phase I. and rank their Top 20 moments (*have you ever considered counselling?*).

With a modest barrage of cajoling, seven sets of rankings were eventually received. These were then averaged with statistical outlier data points excluded (*euthanasia may be?*) to produce an overall ranking of the Top 20 Best BEC Moments of All Time as presented below.

- 1 Forgery, impersonation & deception on an unprecedented scale, Royal Birkdale BEC 7
- 2 The Great Channel Tunnel Debacle ... "We're on the train, where the @:~\$ are you?" BEC 5
- 3 Julian & Angie's duets ... and her fixation with his cords, Anglia Court Hotel, Norfolk BEC 4
- 4 Blown away by a six club wind, Ballycastle BEC 11
- 5 Pete's third-party altercation in the pub at Deal ... it was always going to be Pete, but the first death threat on Tour still came as a surprise BEC 19
- 6 Andy's hole-in-one, 13th hole (167yds), Rolls of Monmouth BEC 8
- 7 Dave G's debacle at the 7th, Royal Portrush; 3-wood into fairway bunker, immaculate wedge backwards down wind, 3-wood back into bunker BEC 11
- 8 Daube beef and the Waitress with the Aqua-Panthers Tattoo, Harvey's, Troon BEC 13
- 9 Launch of the Bad Etiquette Classic website - a masterpiece taking the BEC to a limitless global audience ... namely Alison's Dad 2012
- 10 Dave G's putt into the lake at the 5th hole (145yds), Dartmouth Golf & Country Club BEC 3
- 11 A wild time had by all at Nefyn & District BEC 17
- 12 Not permitted to wear trainers, Richard returns to the wooden-floored nightclub wearing spiked golf shoes, Scarisbrick Hotel, Scarborough BEC 9
- 13 Andy's 'Chip & Chunder' spectacular on the 5th & 6th holes, Le Touquet BEC 5
- 14 Tighter than you'll like it ... all 8 participants in with a shout at Celtic Manor and 4 putts on the final green determining the winner BEC 12
- 15 Who switched the Tea Pot? Mark Player fesses up to having smashed & replaced the historic trophy BEC 18
- 16 Jackets, ties and evening snooker at Royal Lytham & St Annes BEC 14
- 17 Richard's tee-shot to within an inch, 14th hole (154yds), Nicklaus Course, St Mellion - had it gone in he would have won his first BEC title BEC 18
- 18 The shocked look on the face of a Mundesley member when first Richard, then Mark then Pete entered the clubhouse, Norfolk BEC 4
- 19 Dave G's Hamlet moment in a crater-like bunker at the 17th, Royal Portrush - 5 shots to get out, empties 8kg of sand from his turn-ups and toes the next back in BEC 11
- 20 The starter's encouraging words following our opening drives at Royal Birkdale ... "Well, good luck gentlemen, it's going to be a difficult round" BEC 7

See you at the 21st Bad Etiquette Classic !