

Introduction

The 1996 Bad Etiquette Classic (BEC) witnessed many departures from BEC tradition including the expansion of the field from 4 to 8 players, and the introduction of Sunday golf (the inevitable and natural follow-on to Sunday trading). Arguably this year's venue, in the vicinity of Dartmouth was the best ever with two exceptional golf courses, Dartmouth Golf & Country Club and Thurlstone Golf Club, and ideal accommodation in a renovated cottage in the grounds of the former.

In a commendable demonstration of car sharing, this year's 8 intrepid participants motored in only 4 vehicles towards the West country and a rendezvous at the residence of Stephen Buck, a BEC hopeful, who had pulled out of this year's event some months earlier. Rather rashly Steve had

Cockfosters) prior to the event, eliminating the need for excessive coin tossing on the first tee.

Match Profiles

Round	Venue
1	Dartmouth Golf & Country Club (Club Course)
2 & 3	Thurlstone Golf Club
4 & 5	Dartmouth Golf & Country Club (Champ'nship Course)

The two closest matches took place at Thurlstone on Monday, the first a morning game pitting David L & Pete against Julian & Jez. All square after 16 holes, Julian then won the short 17th with a fearless "nearest the pin" and 3 putts while everyone else made 5. Halving the 18th in par 5 secured a 1 up victory for Julian & Jez. In the afternoon Julian & David G were all square after 17 with Jez & Richard. Jez's longest drive at the 18th set up his par 5, and nett birdie good enough to win the match 1 up.

At the other end of the spectrum there were 2 notable annihilations. Mark & David L going down 7&6 to Pete and John (more about him later) at Thurlstone, and Peter & Dave G losing 6&4 to John & Julian at Dartmouth.

See the statistical summary for match results.

Player Profiles

Mark Powderham (handicap 11/13)

Having shown signs of returning form on the practice ground prior to the event, after a golfing famine of almost 14 months, Mark approached this year's Bad Etiquette Classic in positive mood. His performance, although

markedly better than last year, was varied and generally well over handicap. This was eventually acknowledged by the BEC handicap sub-committee who generously increased him from 11 to 13. Some long drives, nearest the pins and a couple of match wins enabled Mark to keep his head more or less above water eventually losing only GBP 8 putting his BEC career losses to GBP 39. Although Mark recorded the most gross bogies (38), the most nett pars (38) and the least "blow-outs" (28), he was 35 over handicap for the tournament, and the greater public grows increasingly impatient for a return to his true form.

David Law (handicap 16)

David excused himself from the coffee and cake break on the M4, reportedly to visit a long lost sister elsewhere on route, but a cursory inspection of driving range receipts at Dartmouth Golf & Country Club revealed his true loyalties. That David lost money for the first time this year is indicative of the bumpy ride that he was given over the three days. Astonishingly David lost all 4 of his matches and the trend of his gross scores, 85, 86, 89, 97 (pointing to



Victor "Little John" with fellow participants during the 1996 BEC

extended an open invitation to all BEC participants to partake of coffee and cake *en route* to Dartmouth, forgetting that the average BEC golfer would never refuse a free anything. 7 out of 8 of us pitched-up, and it was here that many old BEC acquaintances were re-established and new ones made. Steve's hospitality certainly guarantees his receiving an invitation to BEC 1997.

An early attempt by BEC founder and co-organiser Mark Powderham to eliminate two members of the opposition (who had reported good form over coffee) failed when they reacted quickly to his unannounced swerve into the fast lane of the M4. Fortunately for Mark this was later deemed to be a "worst confrontation with a 2nd party" (another player) and not "worst confrontation with a 3rd party" (a member of the public, golf club establishment, clergy etc.).

Little time was lost between our arrival *en masse* at the Dartmouth Golf & Country Club and our teeing-off in the first round of the 3rd BEC. It should be noted that this year all pairings and matches had been laboriously established (on the Piccadilly Line between Terminal 4 and

a 113 gross fifth round) must have been the real reason behind his departure after lunch on the third day. It is the first time in BEC history that a player has pulled-out during the event, and the BEC committee, in the belief that conduct of this nature cannot be taken lightly, fined Mr Law GBP 10. With his usual display of great accuracy on the short holes earning him 8 nearest the pins, and his uncanny avoidance of "negative extras" David somehow managed to contain his losses to GBP 15 reducing his career earnings on the BEC tour to the same figure.

Julian Malton (handicap 20)

Julian's performance in this year's BEC is remarkable not least because it went largely unnoticed by the BEC handicap sub-committee. Julian is the only player to have made money every year since the BEC tour began and must be the only 20 handicapper in golfing history capable of hitting a driver and a 3-iron to 15ft on a 537yds par 5 as he did on the 16th on the Dartmouth championship course.

occasion when he was overheard to shout (and I quote) "oh, f***, f***, f***, f***ing, f***ing, f***er", as he passed unawares on the far side of a bush beside the 14th tee as Mssrs Powderham, Malton, Grimbley and Reeves prepared to hit their tee-shots on the final round. One can only assume that he had temporarily mislaid his ball, his comb or perhaps a contact lens. Peter's golf also showed marked improvement, and this was quickly recognised by the BEC handicap sub-committee which cut him from 22 to 20 after the first round. He notched up no less than 6 nearest the pins (including a near hole-in-one on the 15th on the first round), innumerable nett eagles and birdies and is the first golfer in BEC history to play to level handicap during the event. That his total gross score for the 5 rounds was less than Julian's is justification enough for the fact that a proposal to cut him from 20 to 18 is second on the agenda for the opening BEC handicap sub-committee meeting next year. Once again, many, many thanks to Peter for his outstanding, selfless and voluntary

arrangement of courses, tee-off times and accommodation, all of which were terrific.

Jonathan Casale (handicap 24/17)

Never has one player caused quite so much turmoil on the BEC tour. Given a 24 handicap on account of unknown form and only vague mumbblings about his golfing past, John annihilated the opposition almost from start to finish winning his first four matches, knocking-up 5 gross birdies (a number of which might well have been eagles), 24 pars and the second best 90 hole gross score by one stroke (ha, ha, ha ed). His first round alone netted him GBP 39, an amount unprecedented in BEC history and largely at the expense of Jez. Although the BEC handicap sub-committee cut him twice their actions did little to mitigate the onslaught. With 5 nett eagles and 27 nett birdies, it quickly became evident to us all that the best way to avoid losing money

was to stay out of his 4 ball; it not even being safe to be his partner. Meanwhile, at times his etiquette was not on the same level as his golf. He was penalised twice for "worst etiquette" and one particularly appalling incident springs to mind when at Thurlstone he was spotted urinating in a green-side bunker. Despite such incidents John went on to break all known records by banking a cool GBP 70, and this might even have been more had the BEC committee not rigged the final game pitting him partnerless against Peter and Jez who were at that time lying 2nd and 3rd respectively. Whilst not easily appreciated at the time, it has to be said that John played some marvelous shots, and many congratulations must go to him for becoming the 1996 BEC champion.

David Grimbley (handicap 24/26)

David was one of four players to arrive at this year's BEC brandishing a new set of clubs (the others being John, Julian and Richard), and a very respectable opening round of 92 with three par 3 nett birdies contributing to a 3&2



A Thurlstone GC official inspects damage to the club house following Richard Reeves' 17 off the tee debacle during the 2nd round of the 1996 BEC

During the final round, he won both longest drives with tee-shots in excess of 320yds, one 2yds beyond Mark's and the other at least 40yds! Julian won 4 out of his 5 matches, shot steadily in the low 90's and walked away with a neat GBP 22 taking his career earnings on the BEC tour to GBP 37 and earning him 2nd place in the BEC order of merit. A proposal to cut him from 20 to 18 is top of the agenda for the opening BEC handicap sub-committee meeting next year. Off the course this year his Monty Python recitals were unfortunately overshadowed by his rather extravagant use of the early morning hot water.

Peter Jacobs (handicap 22/20)

It has to be said that Peter was a reformed character this year. Never for a moment did he ever threaten to pick-up "worst etiquette" or "worst confrontation with a third party" penalties, when in the past this had been his forte. He seemed able to lose a ball without instigating a national search and avoided playing out of turn or holding up play. He was polite about the course, with the exception of one

victory over the opposition may have given David cause to celebrate a sound initial return on his sound investment. Alas, it was not to be, as his form gradually deteriorated causing him to lose money in all 5 rounds, leading eventually to his being bailed out by the BEC maximum liability insurance scheme. But he certainly provided one of the highlights of the week in the final round at Dartmouth when at the par 3 145yds 5th hole, following a classic iron shot to the front of the green avoiding water to the left and rear, David putted firmly passed the pin and into the pond. Quite possibly the worst putt of the event, if not of all time.

Jez Ellison (handicap 22)

Jez had a very mixed BEC which saw him fluctuate between substantial financial losses and gains. He was unfortunate to be drawn in the same 4-ball as John in the opening game which directly led to his losing GBP 31, but he bounced back well in the 2nd and 3rd rounds with two hard-fought 1 up victories and a very healthy spattering of nett birdies. There was much debate about a possible handicap cut at this juncture, one of the strongest proponents being Mr Jacobs, and had it not been for Jez's zero earnings at that time (and the draw pairing him with the chairman of the handicap sub-committee in the next round), it is likely that he would have been on the receiving end of the handicap hatchet. At Dartmouth on the Tuesday morning as some early rain temporarily dampened spirits, Jez hired a golf buggy to afford him extra strength going into the final two rounds. And indeed this strategy seemed to work as he went on to win both of his final matches although it deed lead to a rather ugly drunken-three-in-a-buggy incident at the start of the final round. Jez might justifiably have expected to end up in the black, but that fateful final 3-ball with John and Pete (the other two drunks) dashed any hope of that, as they knocked up 8 nett birdies and a nett eagle against him and sent him crashing to an overall loss of GBP 15.

Richard Reeves (handicap 24/30)

Richard's golfing prowess is the subject of many an anecdote and we were honoured to have him amongst us for the 3rd BEC. He is to be congratulated for his improved dress sense on the course and on his acquisition of a pair of golf shoes prior to the round at Thurlstone. As for his golf "Richard could do better", treating us to a veritable feast of furthest from the pins (7), shortest drives (3) and the highest number of "blow-outs" (73). He will no doubt tell you that his favourite hole of the week was the 179yds 3rd on the Dartmouth championship course where he made two immaculate regulation par 3's. Richard is clearly intent on taking-over where Peter has left off in terms of bad etiquette and shows all the signs of a true BEC golfer, never giving up on any hole no matter what the circumstances. No where was this better illustrated than on the 90th and final hole of the event, a 214yds par 3 across a valley and over water. As three of us putted out in virtual darkness, with the match long since decided, Richard doggedly retrieved his ball from the stream for a second time, thinned it across the water with a wedge, and strode after it with a look of great satisfaction. Richard too was saved by his BEC maximum liability insurance, and the sight of him forking out the maximum GBP 40 was a tonic for many of us.

Richard was very lucky to avoid having the "worst confrontation with a third party" honour bestowed upon him when shortly after the glitzy prize presentation ceremony he was extremely abusive to a waitress who brought him what I thought were a couple of very well turned-out pieces of lettuce. These apparently did not constitute Richard's idea of a club sandwich.

The Long Way Home

There being a surfeit of two-seater sports cars around and Mark's intention to return only so far as Swindon resulted in some serious speeding on Tuesday evening as Mark drove John and Richard at high speed across the country in pursuit of an Inter-city 125 that was due to call at Bristol at 22h00 and Swindon at 22h20. Unfortunately we were unable to head it off at either station and Richard and John found themselves unceremoniously dumped at Swindon station at 23h00 with no trains time-tabled till the following morning. When I left them, they were in serious discussion with a taxi driver regarding a one-way trip to London. What's a 90 quid taxi fare when you've just won GBP 30 between you?

Handicap Certificates

Many thanks to all of you that managed to provide a handicap certificate this year. Between the eight of us we were the proud holders of 3 authentic certificates and 3 forged/loan certificates. Special thanks to Mark who provided 3 such certificates (yet another BEC record). The certificates were badly needed at Thurlstone; Peter's face was a picture when the pro told him that the two players without certificates couldn't play before adding that he was only joking. Obviously some form of alternative West Country humour. And Dave G's long hesitation when, within earshot of the pro, he was asked what club he was a member of, was also a highlight, surpassed only by the incredibly obscure Leicestershire golf club that he suddenly recalled shortly afterwards!

Please all make sure of your forgeries and loan certificates for next year, or perhaps even consider joining a real golf club.

BEC 1997

Absolutely no thinking what-so-ever has taken place regarding the timing of next year's BEC. Keep your diaries free between early May and end July.

Please address all suggestions regarding next year's venue, proposals for rule changes, complaints, grievances and other communications to either Mark or Peter.

Rule Changes

None at this time.

*See you at the 4th Bad
Etiquette Classic !!!*