

# 6th Bad Etiquette Classic

## Introduction

The 6<sup>th</sup> Bad Etiquette Classic, like every Classic before it, was unique. It included many high points such as golfing for the first time in Ireland and the marvelous courses at Waterville, Ballybunion and Tralee, and some serious low points in the shape of Killorglin, a hired Volvo estate and the absence of David Law. Indeed, this was the first BEC ever to be played without one of its Founder Members.

But on a happier note, David L's absence did create a vacancy ..... and this was ably filled by Steve Buck whose entire contribution to the BEC previously had been limited to the provision of tea and cake on route to Dartmouth in 1996.

## Ireland

This year's event was booked through Irish Golf Tours, a company whose name instills total and immediate confidence in its every prospective client. Our intrepid eight met at Heathrow Terminal 1's Aer Lingus check-in desk. Only Richard was less than punctual and this might have been challenged more vociferously had he not offered one of BEC's all time great excuses ..... "Sorry I'm late but I was giving Vivien a foot massage and ..... well ..... one thing lead to another as it does". The seven of us nodded carelessly and busied ourselves with the important task of affixing our luggage labels as if to suggest that casual sex was frequently a routine cause of irritation and delay for each of us.

Following a quick beer and an uneventful flight to Cork we picked up two estate cars, a Volvo and a BMW, for our 2½ hour journey to Waterville. The Volvo came scratched and dented with non-functioning wing-mirrors and a permanently glowing warning light (wing-mirror mechanism requiring replacement? It also came untaxed we discovered on Tuesday morning when we found a £50 ticket tucked under the wiper. The more luxurious BMW was claimed by Pete J who somehow got away with an unconvincing argument about choice of hire car being a well known but undocumented perk of the BEC organiser.

According to the information provided by Irish Golf Tours our journey to Waterville was one of 102.8 miles, and whilst the Irish roads have a reputation for not being the widest or fastest, we were none-the-less sorely impressed (quite literally) by the unexpected sharpness of bends and the breadth and depth of the pot-holes we encountered. And

thankful were we also for the many EU-funded short bursts of dual carriageway on our way West through Ballincollig, Ovens, Lissardagh, Macroom ("Mac'room, Mac'room, don't you realise this is a dual carriageway?"), Ballymakeery ("I say, this makes a Ballymakeery of the whole darn constitution what"), Ballyvourney, Morley's Bridge, Kilgarvan ("Garvan is innocent"), Kenmare, Parknasilla, Sneem and Caherdaniel ("Didn't I park the Caherdaniel?").

## Accommodation

Our first night was spent at the Smuggler's Inn set on the shore (strangely enough) alongside Waterville links. A multitude of eclectic evening shadows cast their magical images across the .... After a quick beer outside we were treated to a very decent dinner in the dining room and adjourned to the bar. Here we found not only a nice upright with a decent set of ivories and good tone (an American girl whose name we never did establish), but a trusty piano too. So, in time honoured tradition, as the rest of us tunelessly mumbled half-for-gotten lyrics, Julian provided a veritable

feast of fine finger work as the upright oohed, aahed and ignored her husband.

Had it not been for a second strange party of golfers who interspersed persistent rowdiness inside with occasional rowdiness outside (as they fired-off tee-shots into the darkness!), we might all have had a decent night's sleep

## Waterville

Bright and early next morning our first round was

immediately put in jeopardy by an aged Irish waitress who clearly didn't appreciate the considerable importance of the BEC event and our need to tee-off timeously. Julian, for one, was left with no option but to down his cereal, full cooked breakfast, toast and coffee in a single mouthful, an appalling spectacle tolerable only by those with a hardy BEC constitution.

Participants and onlookers alike were left in no uncertain terms that this year's BEC had begun when Steve blasted his drive 300yds down the middle ..... perhaps the most awesome BEC opening shot of all time. Minutes later, as he putted out for a par 4 nett birdie, many of us were rapidly reaching the conclusion that some sort of terrible mistake had been made with the invitations. In fact cries of "bring back David Law" were heard from the gallery. But otherwise, the only noteworthy incident in this well contested game between Mark & Steve and Jez & Richard came on the 9<sup>th</sup> tee when Richard was struck in the goolies



The 6<sup>th</sup> Bad Etiquette Classic, 1999 (Tralee)

(two balls one bounce so to speak) by a frighteningly wayward Pete J approach shot to the 8<sup>th</sup>. Apparently Pete's shouts of "four" were unheard over the sound of the prevailing breeze, loud gulls etc. Steve and Mark went on to win 2&1.

Meanwhile, in match 1B Andy & Peter reached 5 up at the turn against David & Julian and whilst David tried to stem the tide with nett birdies at 11, 14 and 15 it was a case of too little too late and the match was lost 4&3.

Tragically we were not able to get a second round at Waterville despite the advanced assurances of Irish Golf Tours who had promised that, whilst not reservable, this would present no problem. As a consequence a new venue had to be found for the afternoon and we departed in such haste that the bar and lunch tab went conveniently forgotten. For the next 48 hours messages preceded us wherever we played and wherever we stayed as we were relentlessly pursued by Waterville Golf Club and the Garda for the £48.15 we owed.

**Killorglin Municipal (Dump)**

We found ourselves at Killorglin in County Kerry for the afternoon round. Certainly the least interesting course of all those we passed on the way from Waterville and the most disappointing we have encountered in the 6 years of the tour. An unfortunate contrast with the beautiful Waterville only hours earlier. That said, all of the holes were memorable; some for their muddy fairways, others for their bumpy greens, and the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> as substantially superior holes worthy of a mediocre pitch and putt.

A quality course is however not a prerequisite for a quality match as was ably illustrated by the encounter between Mark & Dave and Steve & Julian which was all square for much of the front nine with the advantage changing hands regularly through 16. 1 down with 2 to play Mark & David looked set to square the match once again at the 127yds par 3 17<sup>th</sup> with Mark on the fringe and the opposition both short on a steep bank short of the green. But Steve sank a 12' putt for a 3 and Mark was unable to keep the match alive missing from 4' for the half.

In match 2A Pete & Jez went 1up at the first against Andy & Richard and never relinquished the lead holding on for a 3&2 victory and (with his 5 positive extras) putting Pete J in the overnight lead with £32.

**Day 2 - Ballybunion**

For once, there seemed to be a little time in hand as we breakfasted at the Grand hotel in Tralee but that was before David began trading on the Small Caps Market from his bedroom. "Sell 3,000 extra smalls .... yeah the black ones



with the velcro adjustment..... sell, sell, sell ..... and buy 10,000 of the Pocohontas pink ones with the motif". By the time Dave had redistributed global stocks of children's head-wear we were in a hurry!

Monday, whilst intermittently sunny, was cool. But even if the weather wasn't perfect, Ballybunion was, a truly spectacular course in superb condition with some wonderfully unusual and memorable holes.

Dave & Richard were dealt a cruel blow by the draw paired together against an in-form Andy & Mark as well as an exceptionally demanding golf course. Eight up at the turn, Andy and Mark went on to win 9&8, a record BEC margin of victory eclipsing John Casale & Pete J's 7&6 drubbing of Mark & David L at Thurlstone in 1996. But full credit must be given to Dave & Richard for the way they persevered and battled for a courageous half on the back 9.

Meanwhile, match 3B could not have been more starkly contrasting with Steve, Peter, Jez and Julian contesting the closest of matches. Six times, after one or other pairing had got their nose ahead, the match was brought back to all square and eventual honours were shared with Steve & Peter winning the front 9 and Jez & Julian the back.

The first of the afternoon matches was close too with Richard & Julian finding themselves all square against Jez & Dave after 12. But the tide turned against them, losing both the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> before they were able to force a valuable half in 8 at the 476yds par 5 15<sup>th</sup>. So tough was this hole that table-tennis style scoring was adopted ("six-eight" ..... "seven-eight" ..... "eight-all") and in 16 attempts we made only one par (a miraculous nett eagle by Mr Reeves), 2 bogies and 2 double-bogies.

Ultimately, Richard & Julian succumbed to a 3&2 loss in which Julian contributed only at the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup>. As he said himself afterwards "had it been boxing the referee would have stopped it at the 8<sup>th</sup>" (a fearsome par 5 of 585yds at which our track-record was worse still: 3 bogies, 2 double-bogies).

Match 4B pitted the wits of the 4 players at the top of the leader board. Pete struggled for the first 6 holes but fortunately for him and unfortunately for the opposition Mark was firing on all cylinders with 4 pars in the first 5 holes. Andy & Steve were not however inclined to give up without a struggle and, from 5 down after 7, staged a ferocious come-back winning the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> reducing the deficit to just one hole. But Mark & Peter turned the screw once more over the closing holes to come home 3&2.

Had the BEC's "Best Putt" tradition not been frivolously abandoned some years ago, Steve's putt at the 17<sup>th</sup>, with the back 9 still to play for, would have won it without

question. Deftly setting the ball on its way downhill along a hairline ridge from 50' and across a glass-like green, Steve miraculously managed to keep the ball on the lower tier of the green within about 8' of the hole. From there he coolly holed-out, but Mark too had been putting like a demon and rolled in a 6 footer for a nett birdie and the hole. With Andy three-off-the-tee at the 18th Mark & Peter clearly had the back nine in the bag until that is Andy hit a miraculous approach shot with his second ball to 18" and tapped in for a winning bogie 5.

### Day 3 - Tralee

In a crucial committee meeting over dinner on Monday evening, it was decided that only one round was feasible on the final day and that the 6<sup>th</sup> BEC would therefore be decided over 5 rounds. Consequently, as we teed-off in sunshine and shirtsleeves at beautiful Tralee on Tuesday morning, Andy and Peter were the clear contenders for the Tea Pot on £50 and £46 respectively with Mark only in with an outside chance on £32.

Out first in match 5A Andy looked to be in winning mood on his way with Julian to a comfortable "dog's license" (7&6) victory over Steve & Richard.

Not far behind in the 6<sup>th</sup> BEC's final four-ball, Pete J was looking for a strong performance to put the elusive Tea Pot within his reach. And initially that strong performance was provided by Dave who, with 5 straight nett birdies from the 2<sup>nd</sup> had the opposition reeling (5 down) and his own partner (Pete) wondering what the likely impact of this remarkable performance was on his own balance sheet. But Mark & Jez (who were playing well by normal standards ..... but not by David's) clawed their way back to 1 down after 12. Nerves tautened and muscles too apparently as illustrated by Pete who, on missing a short putt for nett birdie at the 15<sup>th</sup>, inadvertently smacked his ball 50yds back down the fairway to the feet of a following and much bemused four-ball.

At the 18<sup>th</sup> Mark's 6' putt for par to halve the match lipped out giving Pete & David victory 1 up. Had Pete done enough to keep the Tea Pot cosy until next year?

### BEC's Golfing Greats

#### Mark Powderham

The BEC Tea Pot Holder never looked to have quite the same form this year as that which carried him to victory in the 1998 Bad Etiquette Classic. A good start at Waterville (partnering rookie Steve Buck) was quickly reversed at Killorglin where Mark hit his opening tea-shot OB and struggled to regain composure.

At Ballybunion Mark excelled with winnings of £32 propelling himself through the field into 3<sup>rd</sup> place, but leaving him with too much ground to make up on the leaders at Tralee.

Amongst Mark's achievements this year were pars at the first seven par 3's of the event, most gross pars (27), most nett pars (36) and no negative extras.

For the first time Mark did not shoot the lowest gross score (soundly eclipsed by Andy) but he can be well pleased with his overall performance and 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

#### David Law

The early signs of David's rebellious tendencies should have been spotted in 1996 when he departed Dartmouth Golf & Country Club after only 4 rounds. Whatever his reasons for not participating in this year's BEC (and he has proffered many), the Committee takes a dim view of what is clearly a deliberate breach of paragraph 3.1 of the Constitution. David is therefore and hereby mandated to buy the first 2 rounds (of drinks) at next year's event, and for that reason, as well as the fact that we sorely missed his graceful practice swings and lyrical prowess, we eagerly await his return at the 7<sup>th</sup> Bad Etiquette Classic.

### Records set during the 6th BEC

- First BEC without all four Founder Members
- Most consecutive nett birdies (Dave G with 5)
- First use of air-transport and untaxed road transport
- Most expensive BEC
- Crappiest golf course (Killorglin)
- Greatest ever margin of victory (9&8)
- Longest ever BEC hole (585 yds, Ballybunion)
- Highest ever nett score (Steve with +50)

#### Steve Buck

At the end of day one, with two comfortable match wins under his belt, 7 nett birdies and in second place with earnings of £30 Steve may well have been asking himself why he hadn't accepted invitations to the BEC in previous years.

But at Ballybunion Steve fared less well scraping only one half and demonstrating a more varied shot-making ability with delicate shanks into the Atlantic interspersed with awesome

slices into deep heather.

Whether, in the light of this dramatic collapse of form (including 9 blobs on his final card), he has the will to return and battle it out again another year remains to be seen. Perhaps 12 nett birdies, 5 longest drives and memories of Waterville will be enough to tempt him back. Alternatively his 5 furthest from the pins, +50 nett score (another BEC record) and losses of £5 may encourage him to resume his former road-side catering role.

#### Julian Malton

Once again this was a mixed BEC for Julian. Neither 2 match wins, 11 nett birdies nor his "Fat Boy Wide Shaft" image putter could reverse first round losses of £26. And to think of the high hopes he had had of that putter when he declared it at the start of the event: a Christmas present from Alison; a copper insert to keep it stiff; his trusty Ray Cook optimistically abandoned.

A solid performance at Killorglin and a final round of 92 at Tralee containing new fewer than 5 of his total 11 nett birdies, a nearest-the-pin and a rare "furthest-from-the-pin-combo" may provide some consolation for the man who has progressively slipped in the order of merit from 2<sup>nd</sup> only 3 years ago to 8<sup>th</sup> today. We look forward to a fighting return to the form that won him the event back in 1994.

### **Peter Jacobs**

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> successive year Pete made a flying start. After 3 rounds, while some of us were still re-acquainting ourselves with the fine art, Pete was well into his stride with 2 match wins, 11 nett birdies, 5 nearest-the-pins, 4 longest drives and £51 to the better. Andy was ahead by £3 but Pete seemed relaxed. After 3 successive runner-up positions was this going to be Pete's year?

Had it been down to match play alone it might well have been; Pete winning both of his closing matches whilst Andy lost 3&2 in the afternoon at Ballybunion. But unfortunately for Pete two other factors contributed to his undoing: firstly, Pete's positive extras all but dried up over the last 36 holes and, secondly, Pete's partners proved a mixed blessing, not just contributing strongly to the essential match wins, but playing so well that they walked off with £30 between them, seriously damaging Pet's own takings.

Ultimately, Pete was pipped at the post for 2<sup>nd</sup> place and came in 3<sup>rd</sup>. But once again he can take considerable consolation from being the only player unbeaten in the match play and from retaining his number one position on the BEC tour with adjusted earnings of £141.

Thanks yet again to Pete for his impeccable organisation.

### **Richard Reeves**

Following some good form at Le Touquet last year where 4 match wins ensured that he had no recourse to his Maximum Liability Insurance, Richard's form this year was a disappointment with all 5 matches lost and this year's MLI limit of £70 exceeded by some considerable margin.

On a more positive note, Richard made 2 nett eagles, 7 nett birdies and 3 longest drives, statistics which compare respectably with previous appearances. He might therefore consider the match play to have been his undoing and a close inspection of the draw lends some support to the view that he got the thin end of the wedge in terms of both partners and opposition.

We can only hope that Richard's rough ride during the 6<sup>th</sup> BEC does not deter him from returning next year.

### **David Grimbley**

Had it not been for a fighting finish over the final 36 holes Dave G might also have been looking for MLI relief and something more enjoyable to do next year. But a hard fought victory with Jez in the afternoon at Ballybunion clearly gave him a taste for victory and on Tuesday David conjured up 7 nett birdies, shot 98 gross and made himself a neat little £12 reducing his overall losses to £32 and bringing him home in 6<sup>th</sup> position, the first time ever that David has not brought up the rear of the field.

Disappointingly, Dave's etiquette has not been called into question too often over the years, but he is to be commended this year for a fine performance at Ballybunion's 10<sup>th</sup> whereupon skirting the green his trolley and clubs executed a text book first-stage separation with the latter contriving to come to rest at the bottom of a deep green-side bunker.

### **Andy Slamin**

From the word "go" Andy was in winning form; £22 up after Waterville, and moving up into pole position after a strong morning round at Ballybunion containing 5 nett birdies, 3

nearest-the-pins and a longest drive. But in the afternoon he & Steve suffered defeat at the hands of Mark & Pete (as well as the indignity of a wrong ball debacle at the 10<sup>th</sup> where briefly it appeared that they had confused their balls on the tee) which prevented Andy from extending his lead on the field.

But at Tralee, when the chips were down, Andy's chips followed suit (holing from off the green at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>) and with a telling 4 nett birdies and a nett eagle he became the first player ever to win the Bad Etiquette Classic for a second time. Congratulations Andy.

No sooner had Andy accepted the historic Tea Pot, donned the cherished Pink Jacket and swept his winnings into his oversize pockets, did he proffer his apologies, gather his effects and race for the nearest exit leaving us to feel that we had been the unfortunate victims of a "smash 'n' grab". In fact his only crime was to have departed without paying the £20 deposit for the trophy.

### **Jez Ellison**

Jez had a considerably better BEC in 1999 than in 1998. Neutral overall in the match play, Jez might consider that 2 nett eagles, 11 nett birdies, 3 nearest-the-pins and 5 longest drives (more than any other player) ought to have been worth more than the £3 he eventually took home. However, he can be well pleased that £3 earned him a very respectable 4<sup>th</sup> place considerably higher than any of his previous finishes.

## **Handicaps**

The 6<sup>th</sup> BEC saw the introduction of the much publicized and loudly heralded new handicapping system whereby handicaps were to be adjusted after each and every round dependent upon each player's nett result. Unfortunately every player's handicap increased after every round, and the system was declared a resounding flop.

The Committee has therefore undertaken to once again conduct a review with the objective of developing a handicapping system prior to next year's BEC which takes into account the fact that we play (a) tough and unfamiliar courses, (b) irregularly and (c) crap golf.

## **The 7<sup>th</sup> Bad Etiquette Classic**

It having taken the Founder Member 7 months or more to produce this year's write-up, provides the unprecedented opportunity of being able to publish the dates of the first Bad Etiquette Classic of the new Millennium. The preferred dates for the 7<sup>th</sup> Bad Etiquette Classic are **Saturday 15th July to Tuesday 18th July 2000**. Members and possible Invitees should also be aware that the week prior (Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July to Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2000 ) remains a possible alternative.

**See you at the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Bad Etiquette Classic!**

