The 13th Bad Etiquette Classic

The superstitious amongst us might have briefly considered the possibility of the 13th year of the Bad Etiquette Classic being an unlucky one. Would we be frustrated by terrible weather, plagued by illness, foiled by a cocked-up booking, found lacking in respect of handicap certificates or struck down collectively with the "yips"? In a word, "no"; indeed the 13th BEC upheld the event's unrivalled track-record as a celebration of golfing mediocrity performed on the grandest of stages.

This year's event took place in and around Troon in Ayrshire with unattractive but adequate accommodation provided by the Ramada Jarvis, excellent nosh dished-up nightly at Harveys, great hospitality extended at The Four Cats and Club de Mar and stern tests of golf awaiting us at Royal Troon and Glasgow Gailes.

And as much as 2004 was a story of survival against the rain, cold and gale force winds, so was 2006 a matter of survival against sunburn, dehydration and deliria. 36 holes and 10 hours out on the Troon links in 90°F with not a tee's worth of shade, was not for the faint-hearted.

And somewhat unexpectedly this year 3 new players got a taste of the Tour: Charlie Rice who retired with a wrist injury after just 15 holes thereby setting a new BEC record for the cost of golf at £41/hole or, if you prefer, £7.50 per shot; Craig Mason who kindly stepped-in at short notice to play the Old Course; and Andy Carolan who gave Pete & Mark some uncalled for tuition around Glasgow Gailes at a cost of £13 each … good value I suppose for a 4 hour lesson!

Once more the BEC nimbly took adversity and fluctuating numbers in its stride, reintroducing the much feared 3-way singles match-play format in rounds 2, 3 and 4 and graciously extending the terms of the event's Maximum Liability Insurance to relieve Charlie of his losses and a proportion of his costs.

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BEC 3

Dartmouth - Club

Thurlstone [36]

Dartmouth - Champ [36]

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Sheringham [36]

Royal Norwich [36]

BEC 5

Hardelot - Les Dunes [36]

Le Touquet - La Foret [36]

Le Touquet - La Mer [36]

BEC 6

Waterville

Killorglin

Ballybunion [36]

Tralee

BEC 7

Hesketh [36]

Royal Birkdale [36]

Formby

Aprés Golf

While Charlie stayed back in the hotel calling the missus with the unhappy news that he was injured, booked on the next flight home and, worst of all, down 31 quid, the rest of us found our way to Harveys - almost certainly the best restaurant we've stumbled upon in 13 years of BEC fine wining & dining. With an amenable waitress bearing an "AquaPanthers" tattoo and serving the meanest Daube Beef in town, the restaurant was so good we returned three nights in a row … and, more often than not, ordered the same food! Mark - 3x Cajun Chicken Salad and 3x Slow Roast of Daube Beef; Richard - 3x Poached Pear & Toffee Bananas; Julian … 6 bottles of the Italian Pinot Grigio and 12 bottles of the Chilean Merlot.

On Saturday & Sunday evenings, the meal at Harveys was followed by a pint at the lively Four Cats (where, as custom required, we stood about looking & feeling …. well …. old) and on Sunday Mark & Pete went on to the even livelier Club de Mar to attend the Bad Etiquette Classic's first ever foam party. Wow! Wilder than Ballycastle and wetter than Vale of Glamorgan I can assure you!

Extract from the Minutes of a Special Meeting of the South Ayrshire Licensing Board (31st August 2006)

"The Board considered and approved Club de Mar's application to include foam parties within the description of entertainment".

Day 1

Belleisle

Being the finely tuned, well-stretched, raring-to-go athlete that he is, Pete J opened up in Match 1A with a sandy birdie net eagle down the first. Less well stretched but none-the-less unperturbed, Andy & Mark got going rather more slowly reaching 2up by the turn and eventually taking the match 5&3.

Charlie, who had barely been in the game and who was clearly in some discomfort (that's journalistic speak for "complete agony") was forced to retire at the 15th leaving Pete no choice but to defend the back 9 alone. Generously permitted to play with 2 balls simultaneously (something he evidently practices) Pete, bizarrely played much better as "Charlie" than as "Pete" with a fine "Charlie" tee-shot to the short 17th and a "Charlie" LD, par 5, NB of the highest standard at the 18th for … well… nothing.

Meanwhile in Match 1B to an accompaniment of bagpipes the match fluctuated intriguingly with David L & Julian ahead after 3, 13 & 15 and Dave G & Richard ahead after 6, 11 & 17 and David L's birdie 4 NE at the 18th ensuring an equitable all square conclusion.

Slamin signals intent at Belleisle

From our correspondent at the Slaphouse (Belleisle's 15th hole)

On a course memorable only for its bizarre distance markers and unfathomable stroke indexes, Andy Slamin returned an impressive 71 today with 4 net birdies, 3 nearest-the-pins and a 5&3 match win placing him firmly at the top of the leader board following the first round of the 13th Bad Etiquette Classic and signalling his clear intent to regain the trophy he last won in 1999.

Search for a Supersub

It was clear that Charlie would not be able to continue into day 2, so along with our beers and tales from the opening round was the pressing need to find a replacement. Who did we know who was free of work commitments, quite good at golf (but not too good) and able to travel up to Glasgow at the drop of a midcap? "Think Law Think" as it said in a shop window we'd seen on the way to Belleisle. The search for a supersub was on.

Actually, it only took for Andy to leave a couple of messages with his innumerable, Edinburgh-based, semi-retired, golfing friends, and by morning "Craig" was up for the Old Course, "Andy C" down for Glasgow Gailes and Charlie on his way home.

More Courses

BEC 8

St Pierre - Old Course [36]

Rolls of Monmouth [36]

St Pierre - Mathern

BEC 9

Ganton [36]

Scarborough Nth Cliff [36]

Rotherham

BEC 10

Dunbar

Gullane 3

Haddington

Gullane 2

Gullane 1

North Berwick

BEC 11

Galgorm Castle

Castlerock

Portstewart

Royal Portrush - Dunluce

Royal Portrush - Champ

Ballycastle

BEC 12

Vale of Glamorgan [9]

Royal Porthcawl

Southerndown [36]

Celtic Manor

BEC 13

Belleisle

Troon Lochgreen

Troon Darley

Royal Troon - Portland

Royal Troon - Old Course

Glasgow Gailes

Day 2

Troon Lochgreen and Troon Darley

Day 2 unfolded on the rather featureless links of Troon Lochgreen and Troon Darley. Up, down, up, down. In fact, the first memorable hole of this year's event came at Darley's 5th (our 41st hole) featuring a modest dog-leg.

But whilst the courses were mundane the golf was not. The first match out alone recorded no less than 26 positive extras; Andy holing outrageous putts for back-to-back birdies at the 5th & 6th and Richard holing an extraordinary 50ft putt from off the green at the 9th to snatch the nine just when Andy thought he had it in the bag. But from 4 down after 11 Andy & Dave G recovered to just 1 down before Mark & Richard clinched the match 2&1 at the 17th causing Andy lost £2 despite 4 NB's, 2NE's and 2 other positive extras; it was that sort of morning.

The notes from Match 2B simply state "Pete on fire" and that's as good a summary as any for his 3-ball trouncing of Julian 8&7 and David L 4&3, 10 NB's, net 67 and record 18 hole earnings of £44.50. Ouch!

After just 45 minutes for lunch we were back out again with Dave G lucky to avoid a fine for playing 18 holes in his moccasins and Andy matching Pete J's morning pyrotechnics with an identical record-equalling haul of £44.50. Meanwhile, the heat & length of the day were taking their toll on the 4-ball behind with all four struggling until Julian emerged from the doldrums to hole from 8ft at 13 & 14 and then 3ft at the last for a par 5 and a 1up win.

Slamin guashes Jacobs resurgence

From our correspondent Reg Shirker working from Home (Troon Darley's 18th)

Caught amongst a blitz of birdies and eagles at Troon Lochgreen this morning, Andy Slamin allowed himself to slip back into 2nd place during the second round of the Bad Etiquette Classic behind a resurgent Pete Jacobs who took the lead with a masterful 67 containing no less than 10 birdies. But in the afternoon at Troon Darley Slamin showed his true class responding to the challenge with a fearless 70 outplaying the opposition and emphatically restoring his lead of the event on £67.50.

Stat File

Participation

Participants	18
Courses	48
Rounds	521.5
Holes	9,384

Medal

Total par	37,033
Total gross	49,272
Total net	39,335
Result	+ 2,302

Gross

Eagles	2
Birdies	126
Pars	1,525

Net

Albatross	1
Eagles	165
Birdies	1,531

Matches

4-balls	115
2-balls	53

Extras

Nearest Pins	286
Longest Drives	305
Furthest Pins	251
Shortest Drives	103

Day 3

Royal Troon - the Old Course

Let's not worry overly about the morning round at Troon's Portland Course other than to say that it was hot, the car park was full of Americans, shorts were not permitted and Pete J pocketed a handsome £36. Let's instead focus on the afternoon round on the magnificent links of Royal Troon's Old Course where our number was restored to 8 by Craig (playing off 8). All that we need say is that Andy knocked his tee-shot at the famous Postage Stamp 8th to 20 inches (quiet please while he putts out - right) and Craig birdied the 18th, the appropriately named Craigend, for a fighting half with Julian against Andy & Richard who had lead on and off for much of the round.

Out behind, Dave G was also enjoying the hallowed links recording 2 NE's, 2 LD's and 2 NP's on the front 9 to put he and Mark 2up against David L & Pete at the turn. But from 14 as the shadows lengthened (the sun finally having relented at 7pm!) Dave & Mark began to crumble with Mark topping his tee-shots at 16 & 17 and Dave just managing to scramble a half in a fortunately un-televised six at the par 3 17th to take he & Mark down the last dormy 1up where they ultimately prevailed.

Jacobs' Second Charge no Match for Slamin's First Class Postage

From our correspondent Penny Black at the Postage Stamp, Royal Troon

With 7 birdies and an eagle contributing to a sublime 66 at the Portland Course this morning, Pete Jacobs again showed that he is prepared to go all the way at this year's Bad Etiquette Classic. But in a remarkable afternoon on the Old Course, Andy Slamin the overnight leader once again rebuffed the Jacobs challenge and stamped his authority on the event with 5 birdies and an eagle during an uncompromising round of 72. Slamin now takes a £38 lead over Jacobs into the final round at Glasgow Gailes.

Readers' Wives Supplement!

"Post & BECs" special!

Tina Jacobs

"It's OK for the other WAGs … for them the BEC's just 3 or 4 days but what with all the practice Pete puts in it affects the whole family for months. Last summer Pete played every course in bloody Berkshire (not to mention Surrey); corporate golf days, business golf days, celebrity golf days … and of course, since the introduction of the Easter BEC event in 2001 we don't see Peter for much of April either! And as for those wretched write-ups … I put them straight in the Panasonic shredder … just think of all that personal data (gross pars, net birdies), its tantamount to asking for identity theft.

PS. You can write what you like, but my Pete would never go to a Foam Party!".

Alison Malton

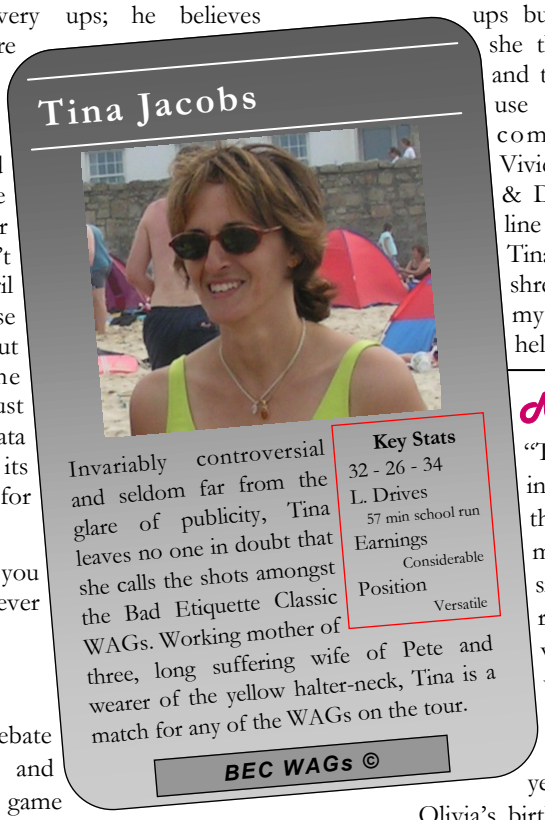
"I know there's a lot of debate about new technology and whether it's spoiling the game but from a personal perspective there's absolutely no doubt that Julian's wide shaft and copper inserts have significantly improved his performance".

Jacqui Slamin

"It's been a nightmare since the BEC last year. First Andy comes home with that bloody trophy again and then the next day he orders a glass cabinet from Harrods. The lounge would have been bad enough but to have it in the hall with that daft bloody Tea Pot, all those leather-bound copies of the write-up and Andy's other BEC memorabilia on show … it's so embarrassing. And why he's started wearing that Pink Jacket in preference to his Armani and Gucci suits I don't know!".

Jess Powderham

"If only the BEC weren't followed by 250 days of numerical and verbal reasoning! Mark spends forever on those ruddy write-ups; he believes people read them! When is someone going to explain to him that he's wasting his life? He even thinks Alison enjoys the write-ups but Alison told me she thinks they're crap and that she and Julian use them for home-composting. And Vivien told me that she & David use them to line the cat litter tray. Tina apparently just shreds them! Please, my husband needs help and fast!



Name withheld

"Thanks for getting in touch and sorry that Steve hasn't made the BEC since 1999. Oh, I remember it all too well; while Steve was away golfing Patrick got hiccups! The next year of course was Olivia's birthday and the year after that Patrick had a cold and then in 2002 Steve had to read a bedtime story. In 2003 Steve had to fix the gutters and the year after that the drains were blocked. Hopefully he'll make it to the 14th BEC although the cars need washing & my mum is coming round for tea that weekend".

Svetlana Legova

"Hi Mark, I not long in the UK. Personally I'm sinking the BEC is a pain as it means Richard is away for 3 nites while I'm getting a cold and lonely in the bedroom. It's a pity Richard doesn't putting the heating on while he away but says he has to saving for his BEC losings and that I can keep warm using the pole fixed in the bedroom corner. I'm not liking this BEC no fun and soon back to Kharkov!"

Wendy Hedges

"Mark, found your letter amongst piles of Dave's dividend vouchers and offshore statements. Dave enjoys the golf but frankly I think it's totally irresponsible for him to go; do you realise European technology growth stocks fell 17½ points while Dave was in Glasgow! He lost £21 playing golf and £9,379,021 whilst putting out at Troon Darley! These days his idea of high tech stocks is a box of hex-dimple Ultras. I called him on his mobile this year and at first he seemed relaxed saying "don't worry about it" and then all of a sudden he got really agitated and when I asked why he said he'd just missed a four-footer for sandy-par, net eagle and the win at a double shot hole … blimey, and I thought hedge-fund terminology was complicated. David's in doubt for 2007; the collective view in the City is that the world economy would not survive another of his 4 day golfing breaks".

Sheila Fit

"Gooday Mark! Hope a txt ok. Richard out back working on 6pack in gym. Needs to build biceps & quads if going to come with me (mountain biking that is). Ref yr eml I couldn't give a XXXX about the BEC; golf's for pooftas and R isn't playing nxt yr u soft pommy bastard! Luv Sheila

Records set at the 13th BEC

- Greatest winnings in a year - £90 (Andy)
- Most expensive golf - £41/hole (Charlie)
- Greatest winnings in 18 holes - £44.50 (both Pete J at Troon Lochgreen & Andy at Troon Darley)
- Most NB's in 18 holes - 10 (Pete J, Troon Lochgreen)
- Most NP's in a year - 8 (Andy)
- First foam party - Mark & Pete J at Club de Mar
- Least attractive accommodation - Ramada Jarvis, Ayr

Next month's TV

BECs in the City

Golfers' Wives

Celebrity Big Bertha

US Masters Chef

Day 4

Glasgow Gailes

For the 6th and final round at Glasgow Gailes our numbers were made up by Andy Carolan ("Andy C"), yet another of Andy S' golfing chums from north of the border. Why him? Well ... a golfer (handicap 13), local (Edinburgh) and available (self-employed) ... but most importantly - having had two Davids, two Peters, two Marks, two Richards and two Johns on the Tour - it was clearly important to have a second Andy. It goes without saying that it would have been better had Charlie been called Julian and Craig Jeremy but you can't have everything.

So, with the sun already on ferocious form by 10am and sun cream the order of the day, match 6A got underway with the mighty Andies up against the Twin Peaks of Mark & Pete with the former pair reaching 3up after 6 thanks largely to some magnificent driving by Andy C (are long straight tee-shots even constitutional?). And with neither Mark, Pete nor the course warden (who popped-up at intervals to bemoan the speed of play) able to make any impression, the rarefied Andies cruised to an all too comfortable 3&2 win.

Match 6B was similar (with Julian & Dave G 3up after 5 against David L & Richard, and the course warden on the lookout for misdemeanours) but not familiar as Julian & Dave avoided the much fancied crumble and hung-on for an historic 4&2 victory - their first in 9 outings!

Slamin puts record straight

From our foreign language correspondent in Glasgow

Despite a faltering 76 during the final round, Andy Slamin secured the necessary match win today against key contenders Pete Jacobs and Mark Powderham to win the 14th Bad Etiquette Classic. Ably assisted by rookie Andy Carolan, Slamin answered his critics with a 3&2 win to complete a fine tournament and bring to an end 6 years of famine since his last victory in 1999. "I can't believe I've got to take that stupid tea pot home again" said a jubilant Slamin as he received the trophy and a cheque for £90.

Andy Slamin

13th BEC	
N. Eagles	5
N. Birdies	24
L. Drives	5
N. Pins	8
Earnings	£90
Position	1st

Three times winner of the Bad Etiquette Classic Tea Pot, the only player to have holed in one and proud contributor of the 1998 Chip & Chunder Spectacular, Andy Slamin is a BEC force to be reckoned with. This year's emphatic victory with record earnings of £90 reinstates Andy at the top of the all time Leader Board with total earnings of £291.

TOP CHUMPS ©

David Grimbley

13th BEC	
N. Eagles	5
N. Birdies	18
L. Drives	4
N. Pins	1.5
Earnings	-£21
Position	7th

No one on the Tour has transformed their game like Dave G. Having exchanged 5-iron for 600cc Big Bertha and invested heavily in coaches, psychotherapists & physicians, Dave has won 3 Scarisbrick titles and reduced annual losses to just £14 pa in the new millenium. His first BEC title remains elusive and may depend on the launch of the 1800cc Big B.

TOP CHUMPS ©

Other Runners & Riders

Mark Powderham

In 2nd or 3rd place throughout the event and despite, in his own opinion, the greatest bunker shot ever on the Tour - played with the ball 4ft below his feet and 12ft below his shoulders to within 7ft at Glasgow Gailes' sixth, Mark lacked consistency and was never realistically in with a shout.

David Law

Wearer of the Yellow Cashmere after 13 of 17 rounds prior to this year's event, David's run of strong form came to an abrupt end at the 13th BEC with losses in 5 of 6 rounds causing him to call upon Maximum Liability Insurance for the first time in his career.

Julian Malton

Unbeaten in five 4-ball matches but thumped in both singles and short of net birdies, Julian continued his volatile trend of winning in the odd years (2001/3/5) and losing in the evens (2000/2/4/6) succumbing to losses of £26 .... but …. BUT!, winning the Scarisbrick trophy for the second time.

Peter Jacobs

Described regularly by opponents as "on fire", Pete amassed an impressive 28 NB's & 6 LD's and destroyed his opponents in the singles. But losses in 4 out of 5 four-balls were ultimately his undoing forcing him to settle once more for 2nd place.

Richard Reeves

With the exception of an explosive front 9 at Lochgreen, Richard was unable to reproduce the form and first finish "in the black" (£4) of 2005, finishing in the red once more and increasing his all time sponsorship of the event to £362.

SEE YOU AT THE 14TH BAD ETIQUETTE CLASSIC