The 28th Bad Etiquette Classic

August 2021

Venue

The Wirral Peninsula

Courses

- Wallesey
- Caldy
- Heswall
- Delamere Forest

Stats

6 participants

94 holes

3,043 shots

32,753 yards

Caldy Golf Club

The 100th golf course played on Tour.

Over the years, there have been a number of emphatic victories at the Bad Etiquette Classic. Who can forget John Casale taking us to the cleaners in 1996, Andy taking us back there in 2006 and Richard putting us to the sword on the Northumberland coast in 2016? We thought it would be quite some time before Richard's record earnings of £96 and record margin of £79 would be surpassed. Not so. As it turned out, we had only to wait 5 years before Geoff crushed all in his path at the 28th BEC, amassed £111 (£92 ahead of his nearest rival) and became the 11th holder of the Tea Pot.

One prospective participant to avoid the crush was Steve Buck. From the moment his planned participation was announced, players and onlookers alike had savoured the prospect of his return to the Tour after an absence of 22 years. But alas, on the eve of the event, Steve pulled out when his son tested positive for Covid. *'Pulled out' you say?* Err. Well. Suffice to say, it wasn't that simple. But, given Geoff's anni-hilation of the field Steve might well consider himself fortunate to have missed out, with a return to the Tour in 2022 a much better prospect. We look forward to Steve rejoining us then!

So with a merry band of just 6 of us (and no one feeling in the least put out about the many hours spent figuring out formats for 7 golfers) we headed north to The Wirral Peninsula to play Wallesey, Caldy (our 100th course on Tour), disappointing Heswall and splendid Delamere Forest.

Accommodation this year was ably provided by Leasowe Castle near Moreton. Built in 1593 by Ferdinand (the 5th Earl of Derby no less) it originally consisted of an octagonal tower with a door 'six feet above ground level'. *Why?* For protection from high tides' ... modified later presumably when it was realised that no one could get in. Other important questions you'll be wanting to ask are: *What's the origin of the lounge ceiling?* It's actually the original ceiling from the Star Chamber of the Palace of Westminster brought to the castle in 1836. *Why?* Because without a ceiling guests would fall into the lounge from the bedrooms above. *Is the hotel dog friendly?* More so today than during the Famine of 1623 when dog featured regularly on the specials board. *Is the castle structurally sound?* Not in the opinion of David L (MRICS, BECV '95, '04) who drew our attention to subsidence of the ramparts, cracking of the machicolations and excessive heat loss through the lancets … conditions that aging BEC participants have themselves suffered from in recent years.

Out on the course there were also questions to be answered. Would Mark's new Garmin Approach watch help him navigate the Caldy links? Would Pete gel with his new Callaways? Would David L's driving be deemed to be of an acceptable standard? And would Dave G be taking the knee on the tee? All would be revealed at the 28th Bad Etiquette Classic.

Some o' de lads

Mark

Having shown signs of form ahead of this year's event, Mark approached the 28th BEC with some optimism. Four hours of back-to-back sea shanties on the drive up with Pete was not perhaps Mark's mental preparation of choice, but he made a sound start at Wallasey, and as he and Dave G began their round at Caldy on day 2, life was good. The sun was shining, there was no one ahead and no one behind … 'Dave, lah we'll be around in nah time'. But then things went awry. Having played the 401yds 3rd (each in a creditable 5 strokes) they discovered it to have in fact been the 16th ... the first on course navigational foul-up since Mark, Richard & Martin's on course navigational foul-up at Nairn Dunbar in 2013. Should they perhaps have taken notice of the course signage instructing golfers to cross the road to the 3rd hole, or questioned why the number '16' was displayed on the 3rd tee? Perhaps so. Having hurriedly retraced their steps up the 16th and across the road, they squeezed in apologetically (and tighter than they might have liked) between two 3-balls. So much for a swift and relaxed round.

From then on, Mark found the going tough, losing 3 of his next 4 singles matches, struggling miserably around Heswall and finding every possible bunker during the final round at Delamere Forest where for good measure his normally trusty putting stroke deserted him.

Given the above, it's surprising that Mark managed to scrape home in 3rd place with losses of just £16.

Julian

Knowing that he would be attending a wedding at Combermere Abbey days before BEC28, Julian asked David L whether he would be willing to pick him up from Whitchurch on the Saturday and chauffer him about during the event. Being the happy, obliging chap that he is, David agreed. Initially the arrangement appeared to work satisfactorily, but ahead of the final round Julian informed us that David had been driving erratically, often not as far as required and sometimes in completely the wrong direction. He therefore planned to leave his driver in the car.

At Wallesey Julian got off to a solid start with earnings of £7. Around Caldy he maintained liquidity (while others handed all their cash to Geoff) and at Heswall he filled his pockets thanks to a fine round featuring an impressive holed 9-iron from 127yds at the 8th for a gross eagle, net albatross 2.

Spot the Difference. Above - Julian at Leasowe Castle (2021) and below - Julian at St Pierre (2001)

In years past Julian might have savoured his position in the leaders' 2-ball for the final round at Delamere Forest. but up against Geoff 'The Hinge' Eaton, the prospect was somewhat less savoury.

Ultimately Julian finished runner-up with £19 and looked well pleased as he departed with new driver, Alison.

Pete

Ahead of the 28th BEC, Pete invested an undisclosed sum in a new set of Callaway irons & woods. Early concerns raised during practice that the new clubs were not delivering the promised improvement were confirmed on day 2 at Caldy when Pete was heard to say 'These clubs have totally ruined my game! I'm going to kill that f***ing Callaway salesman.'

Indeed, trailing in an uncustomary last place after rounds 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, it was not clear that the new clubs (nor the relentless singing of sea shanties) were benefitting Pete's golf. Ever the competitor however, Pete had no intention of finishing sixth. On the final day at Delamere Forest he dug deep, made the necessary arrangements for the Callaway rep to be terminated, holed a couple of long par putts and carded 4 NB's, a net eagle and a 3&2 match win to bring him home in 4th place; his 24th top 4 finish in 28 outings.

And whilst his new clubs may not have carried him to a 4th BEC victory, his final round at Delamere Forest earned him a second Scarisbrick title on countback from Geoff.

A Night Out in Moreton

Dave G: Lids. Wa'ay we do'n this even'n? Warra bout a bevvy?

Pete: Eeyar, 'n some scran la.

Julian: Warra bout a curry at Akbor's?

Mark: Belter. G'wed, bewk it.

Geoff: We c'n stop at an offie for bevvies. Yous drive la, I'll keep dixie.

David L: We look like skag heads. Am go'n ter change me clobber.

Dave G: Garwarn. I'm changing me webs and kecks.

Mark: I'll drive as long as yous dun s'n sea shanties.

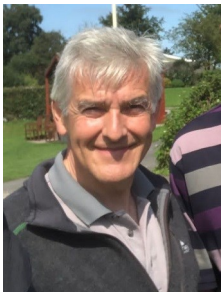
Pete: Yer jam jar is jarg lid and me sea shanties ay custy.

David L: Arr Ay. Heavy salad. Yer gorra cob on? You beun pure buzzin' off each uvver all avy.

Geoff: It's juss banti. Ye no wara a meen.

Julian: Thuz Akbor's and an offie. Abor eeyar. Lets give it the bifters.

David L



David might have hoped that a trademark par 4 down the 349yds first at Wallesey signalled a return to form after 12 consecutive years of BEC losses. Alas not. At the end of day one David found himself in 5th place and he remained firmly in that position until dumped into 6th place at Delamere Forest on the final day just hours after being dismissed as Julian's driver. How cruel life can sometimes be.

Dave G

Having attended a couple of days of residential golf school and got a few games under his belt, Dave approached the 28th BEC with form and confidence. For the first 2 days this confidence appeared justified as Dave mixed minor losses with minor gains to occupy a comfortable 3rd position after 4 rounds. But at Heswall he was thrown under the Geoff Eaton bus and never recovered, finishing 5th with losses of £37. Amongst Dave's highlights were his contribution to the wrong hole fiasco at Caldy, 'taking the knee' when teeing up to preserve his dodgy back, an impressive opening salvo at Delamere Forest with 3 NB's and an LD within the first 6 holes and a personal best of 6 longest drives.

Geoff

Whilst others pinned their hopes on a last minute dash to the driving range, Geoff's preparation for the 28th BEC was more comprehensive. 'Install Explanar Golf Swing Trainer in 'os golf studio, practice every dee, play regularly and supplement with periodic tuition'. The results of such impressive commitment to the game were visible for all to see … and the signs were ominous. During practice Geoff was swinging and scoring more like a ten handicap than the 27 (or such like) that the bonkers World Handicap System was purportedly bestowing on him.

Following a brave (but ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to frighten Geoff off completely the day before departure with an elaborate Covid scare story, our only hope was that he might suffer a dramatic decline of some sort … a sticking hinge perhaps … on the Wirral Peninsula. But there was to be no such salvation. At Wallesey Geoff parred 3 of the first 4 holes, won 3 longest drives (each by more than 50yds) and eased himself into the Yellow Cashmere with earnings of £21. Around Caldy and Heswall there was absolutely no let up, and by the time he walked off the 18th at Delamere Forest on the final day, the stats spoke for themselves: 24 net birdies, 8 out of 9 matches won, 9 longest drives, 3 nearest pins and Bad Etiquette Classic Champion with record earnings of an incredible £111.

Congratulations Geoff!

Records set at the 28th Bad Etiquette Classic

- First August BEC
- Highest earnings in a year - £111 (Geoff)
- Greatest margin of victory - £92 (Geoff)
- Fastest BEC write-up - 55 days (Mark)
- Most expensive BEC Tour - £800pp (excl. losses)

Proper clobber on show at the 28th Bad Etiquette Classic

Geoff's sons have nowt but respect when they hear of their father's accomplishments at the 28th Bad Etiquette Classic

Participants lewk'n sound as a pound in de sunshine at Heswall GC

See yous timorrer lah for the 29th Bad Etiquette Classic