

CAPTAINS REPORT

The Senior Golfers' Society of Australia 2013 tour of the United Kingdom was an outstanding success from every point of view. Meticulous pre-planning by our UK hosts and concurrent preparation in Australia ensured a virtually trouble-free tour. The touring team played on some of the finest courses in Scotland and England, if not the world, and enjoyed hospitality that was warm and generous in the extreme. Even the weather generally held good for the whole trip.

Of particular note was the way in which our ladies were included. Whether playing, being entertained or on the very well conducted tours of historic sites, they were made to feel most welcome and the esprit within the touring party was very much enhanced accordingly.

Whilst we won just one more competition than the total of our losses and draws, which was a pleasing result, the overriding feeling within the team was one of a sense of privilege in being members of such a happy and well organized group, playing on magnificent courses, hosted by generous and convivial UK club members, whilst absorbing the beauty of the English countryside and the sense of history spanning many centuries.

That this all came together so well did not occur by accident. The initial tour planning by the UK Senior Golfers Society was quite superb in all aspects of course/club selection and access, excellent accommodation, very good bus coaches and drivers and interesting tours arranged for our non-golfing ladies.

Early liaison with the Senior Golfers Society of Australia through John Marcard to firstly establish a team (with partners) proved sensible. As Team Captain it was pleasing to see how all members approached accepted individual tour responsibilities.

Don McNee as Treasurer supported by Peter Motteram (also Flagmaster) was a key appointment. Barry Barr as Match Master balanced the handicaps superbly and with John Webb recorded the daily match results.

The Baggage Masters in Peter Davies (also Vice Captain) and Roger Wilson did a magnificent job in codifying our luggage and ensuring that nothing was misplaced or lost throughout the tour. A daunting task and well done to both.

Chris Whitford provided the essential tour photographer's record; a big job and well done.

The Ladies Captain Prue Webb fulfilled her role magnificently with charm and enthusiasm that was greatly appreciated by the lady golfers.

Jenny Slade, in co-operation with UK SGS, did a great deal in the lead-up to the tour to plan a very interesting and comprehensive program for the non-golfing ladies and did a brilliant job co-coordinating the visits.

A good Scribe to put the Report together is essential and Peter Robbie has done us all proud in that respect. With 15 courses played in just 22 days, it was important to compile notes of the tour on a daily basis.

Another innovation was to appoint a daily Match Captain to brief the team on the evening before of the following day's game, to liaise with the host club's match captain and to do a 'thank you' speech after lunch or dinner. This took a big load off me as Tour Captain.

Finally, Marlina in putting together a brochure including all details of matches, job responsibilities, general information, accommodation arrangements and the CV's of couples which was issued before we departed Australia, did a fantastic and essential job. A copy of the brochure is attached to this Report for the information of future teams.

In respect to suggestions for improvement, there were very few. One member thought that there was not quite enough rest time between games but others were happy with the scheduling. Another member would have liked to have one day for husbands and wives/ partners to play together, perhaps on a scheduled rest day.

In summary, this was a wonderfully planned and executed tour, greatly enjoyed by us all. Words can't express the gratitude that we feel to our wonderful hosts for all they did to make our tour so memorable in every respect.

Of particular note was the effort put in by David Baxter and his wife Debra. David spent months of carefully considered planning and liaison with team members in Australia leading up to the tour with nothing left to chance. He and Debra 'chaperoned' us magnificently for much of the tour as the UK Seniors Golfers' Society's representatives.

It would be remiss not to mention the exceptional hospitality extended to the team by His Excellency, the Australian High Commissioner, Mr Mike Rann and his staff. The High Commissioner treated us to a full tour of Australia House, from the rooftop to the basement, and followed a delicious and generous morning tea with a detailed briefing of his High Commissioner's role.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team members, their spouses and partners for their friendship, cooperation and willingness to share the duties.



It was a privilege for Marlina and I to be involved with such a fine group on people on such a wonderfully planned and enjoyable tour of the United Kingdom.

Michael Jeffrey
Tour Captain



Forby Golf Course, Hole 8

TOUR PLANNING

An invitation from the United Kingdom Seniors Golf Society was received in November 2011, for 16 couples to tour in 2013.

The invitation was formally accepted at the Annual Meeting of the Society in April 2012 and this meeting laid down the formula for selecting the participants from our constituent societies roughly in proportion to their respective memberships.

The final team comprised four players from New South Wales, three each from Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia, two from South Australia and the ACT's Michael Jeffery who accepted the office of Tour Captain.

The onerous task of communicating with participants, of receiving and remitting deposit and other funds, arranging team shirts, balls and sundry enquiries from our tourists was assigned to John Marcard. From among the tourists, volunteers were called to and assigned to perform various roles;

Captain	Mike Jeffrey
Treasurer	Don McNee
Co-Treasurer/Flagmaster	Peter Motterman
Baggage Master/Tour Guide	Peter Davis
Drovers Dog	Roger Wilson
Match Master	Barry Barr
Ladies Captain	Prue Webb
Scorer	John Webb
Scribe	Peter Robbie
Photographer	Chris Whitford
Non-Golfers Activities	Jenni Slade

Golf tours between the United Kingdom and Australia are organised on a four year cycle and several of our hosts had been involved in the 2009 UK Tour of Australia and were keen to maintain the high standards of reciprocal hospitality established over the years since the Australian Seniors Society was formed and first travelled to the UK in 1967.

The SGS has a large annual fixture list, some 130 matches and enjoys good relationships built up over the years with many golf clubs throughout the UK. The SGS committee devised the itinerary for the tour and committee members were asked to take responsibility for negotiating the dates and format of golf at the selected clubs in each geographical area.

There was a desire to include as many of the best venues as possible in the itinerary, which resulted in a preponderance of links courses. In Scotland, since the Open was to be at Muirfield in 2013, it was decided to arrange fixtures in the West;

- Prestwick has the largest number of SGS members in the area and was the obvious choice for the opening match.
- Southernness hosts an annual two day match with SGS.
- In the North West the course selection was the same as for the annual tour enjoyed by SGS members in September each year.
- In the South West the three courses selected are again very SGS friendly with many of the SW Seniors being members of these clubs.
- The same applies in the South East, with the choice of Woking as the final venue being an obvious one, since this is the SGS 'home Club'.



David and Deborah Baxter first became involved in the tour arrangements after the itinerary had been agreed with David Baxter and John Marcard liaising to resolve the detailed planning.

Over the months preceding the tour the email traffic increased to the point of overload as the volunteer team contributed details and sought consensus on the huge variety of planning issues. Gradually the itinerary was fleshed out with tee times, playing partners, dining, entertainment and excursion arrangements. David Baxter's attention to detail was extraordinary and later in the tour as the full benefit of the effort applied to planning became evident, David earned the moniker "Rolex" with several tourists forming a view the efficiency of the planning and precision of execution could have only been achieved with the experience of a Swiss watch logistics expert.



Everyone in the touring party travelled independently and choose to holiday in different parts of the world on route to Glasgow to be there on the 10th of June. With seemingly effortless precision everyone arrived in good health and in great expectation.

TROON

Because the touring party was drawn from the different states of Australia only a few of the couples were known to each other. The stylish "Old Marine Hotel" at Troon was the scene for introductions but the lead up to the tour meant our hosts could easily be forgiven for thinking we were all a group of old friends by the time a lone piper called us to cocktails and a formal welcome and the commencement of the tour.

It was appreciated that so many of the SGS office bearers had travelled from throughout England and Scotland to make us welcome and to play in our opening Prestwick match. It was also wonderful that local members had invited us to split into smaller groups and arrange private dinner parties at their homes for the following evening so the Troon welcome was an opportunity to get to know the locals and experience splendid Scottish hospitality.





The Marine Hotel, Troon

PRESTWICK

The very traditional Prestwick was indeed an appropriate Golf Club for the first match of our Seniors Tour. As the original home of the Open Championship in 1860, the magnificent clubhouse features its golfing history and the course retains much of its original layout with a number of very unique and somewhat quirky holes.

Travelling from the Marine Hotel at Troon it was not surprising our bus driver needed assistance to find Prestwick, located among the twelve virtually adjoining links courses along the Firth of Clyde.



WEATHER:



Wind & Rain cleared Mid Afternoon

CAPTAINS REPORT

Mike Jeffery

We were pleased to receive a warm welcome by Match Manager Dr Douglas Mack followed by a five course luncheon in the dining room, with all players seated at their magnificent banquet table. Captain John Ker provided an interesting introduction to the proud history and traditions of Prestwick, but after an excellent meal and beautiful wines the match strategy of our hosts became apparent with an introduction to their traditional pre match heart starter Kumils.

Teeing off in wind and rain the fortification was appreciated as was the essential local course knowledge, generously shared by our hosts. While not a long course, many of the holes were very deceptive and a great introduction to links golf among the dunes.

As the weather cleared and the Kumils wore off we managed a 5/3 match victory which our hosts subsequently declared an honourable draw – apparently a worthy UK Seniors tradition, recognising we were really there to enjoy the company and the course, the score being of no consequence.

With so many outstanding link's courses along this coastline, Troon has earned it's reputation as one of the leading golf destinations in the world.

As the team enjoyed post match drinks a very distinguished retired Admiral commented rather dryly that our first time Flagmaster, Peter Motteram would need more training, but we all thought Peter had done well venturing out in to the wind and rain to hoist our pennant and remembering to recover the flag after a wonderful days golf and hospitality at Prestwick.

LADIES REPORT

A warm greeting by members of the ladies Golf Club, Troon. The course was played in wet weather with some of the group playing only 9 holes. The four ball match was won by the Australian. Lunch was in the ladies dining room which boasts magnificent views which were unfortunately obscured on account of the poor viability. A great start to the trip!



HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY

The 17th hole at Prestwick is a very long par 4 requiring a long drive and a courageous completely blind second shot over hill, heather and a bunker called the monster. Lindsay Stade played the shot of the day to find the green, set up for a birdie for a match winning result.

Australians	v	Prestwick Seniors
Barry Barr & Don McNee		John Ker & Matthew Lewis
Gill Coles & Peter Robbie		Mike Dickson & Jim Unick
Peter Davies & Lindsay Stade		Douglas Mack & Alan Mickel
Allan English & David Stuart		Iain Tullock & David Baxter
Michael Jeffrey & Walford Thyer		David Stewart & Jimmy Forrest
Wal MacDonald & John Webb		Mike Brown & Donald White
Result	5/3	



WESTERN GAILES

CAPTAINS REPORT

David Stuart

Having been somewhat stung by the 5/3 defeat at Prestwick the team chosen by WGGC were particularly strong. The weather in the main was sunny, at times cloudy with periods of steady winds.

On this magnificent classic links course all teams again played well, the result being 4 matches each. Special thanks for the day must be extended to vice captain Allan Thompson, James Handie & Manger Secretary Jerry Russell.

Prior to golf the team again enjoyed an excellent lunch. The day was a memorable golfing experience with very friendly and welcoming Scottish seniors.

Western Gailes Golf Club dates back to 1897 and offers an excellent test of true links golf. Any change in the strength or direction of the wind, that usually varies between south-westerly and north-westerly off the adjacent Firth of Clyde, provides new challenges that are compounded by the undulating terrain and finely contoured greens cleverly located and set in the folds of the surrounding sand dunes.

Together with the line of dunes running down the coastal stretch from the 5th to the 13th holes, the out of bounds wall from the 14th onwards, the plentiful supply of pot bunkers plus the meandering burns, all combine to present variety and a memorable challenge.

INCIDENT OF THE DAY

In the Clubhouse lounge of Western Gailes in pride of place sits a solid silver kangaroo donated to the club in 1928 by the Gailes Golf Club of Brisbane.

Thinking this would make a great photo to send home, Sandy Ferguson of Western Gailes invited an unsuspecting tourist to pose with the trophy.

A small sign saying DO NOT TOUCH - ALARMED too late became apparent, the kangaroo hastily replaced. and security incident narrowly averted.



WEATHER:

Mostly sunny with a breeze





Australians	v	Western Gales Seniors
Wal MacDonald & Chris Whitford		Alan Thomson & Sandy Ferguson
Gill Coles & Peter Lindsay Stade		Iain Carslan & Paul Stevens
Barry Barr & Peter Robbie		Peter Jamieson & Bill Judge
Michael Jeffrey & John Webb		Douglas Mack & Spencer Patrick
Peter Davies & David Stuart		Jerry Kessell & James Hardie
Jim MacPherson & Roger Wilson		Donald White & Jim Thorpe
Peter Motteram & Don McNee		Alan Mickel & Harry Murray
Allan English & Walford Thyer		James Laird & Jimmy Forest
Result		Draw



SOUTHERNESS

CAPTAINS REPORT

Lindsay Stade

On day five of our tour, we left the quaintness of the Troon Marine Hotel and travelled to the southern reaches of western Scotland where we were greeted with the warm hospitality at the Southerness Golf Club. Whilst not enjoying the fame of some of its more illustrious peers, Southerness is highly regarded by the Scottish golfing community. It has hosted many high level events including the Scottish Amateur Championship and the British Ladies Championship. The course is ranked in the top 30 in Scotland.

Southerness is set amongst gently rolling farmland, remote from the large population centres, engendering a kind of serenity. As we arrived at the modest clubhouse, the heavens decided to open up. Our sumptuous luncheon was accompanied by the sound of heavy rain beating against the windows! Thoughts of a quiet afternoon playing cards were entertained, however the rain abated as the first match got under way.

The course was fairly level and an easy walk. However it provided a stern challenge, particularly with the stiff breeze blowing off the

Solway Firth. The 12th hole was especially memorable – a 380m dogleg right, turning towards a spectacular green protected by bunkers on the right, a pond on the left and the beach a mere 10m behind the green.

Southerness proved to be a challenging but fair test of golf, with no blind shots or dunes to negotiate. Good shots were rewarded, but the strategically placed heather kept everyone honest. As we bid our farewells to our hosts for their generous hospitality, we thanked the golfing gods for keeping the rain away and making our visit to Southerness a truly memorable experience.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY

The match went down to the wire and with all but one group in the Clubhouse the tourists were one match down. On the eighteenth tee the last group were all square. Peter Robbie wind assisted, hit the green on the long par 5, for two, badly missed the eagle putt but holed a pressure putt to win the match and secure an honourable team draw for the day.



WEATHER:
Scattered Showers, Clearing





LADIES REPORT

Sue and Jane and Sarah were our very hospitable hosts. This very exposed remote course was played in extremely windy challenging conditions with yet another win by the Aussies. Our teams were named after native local flowers from the area. Harebell, Bluebell and Thistle, but it was not a day for smelling the roses.

v		Southernness Seniors
Lindsay Stade & Barry Barr		Robert Kennedy & Malcolm
Gil Coles & David Stuart		Henry Rowe & Jeremy Cullen
Peter Davies & Walford Thyer		Donald Robertson & Hamish
Allan English & John Webb		Alec Waugh & Colin Marriott
Michael Jeffrey & Chris Whitford		Donald Shamash & Alistair R
Wal McDonald & Roger Wilson		Stephen Howie & John Thorpe
Jim McPherson & Don McNee		Bob Blair & Geoff Laing
Peter Motteram & Peter Robbie		Angus McKenzie & John Handley
Result	Draw	



DUMFRIES, WINDERMERE & SOUTHPORT

Our overnight stay at the Aston Hotel in Dumfries was comfortable with the old manor house refurbished and extended, and set in magnificent gardens. Our stay in Dumfries, the home of Robbie Burns, was all too brief but a number of us managed early morning walks before the coaches arrived and we headed south to Windermere.

Peter Davies by this time had gained the confidence of our coach driver and assumed the role of navigator. Peter was able to share his local knowledge as we travelled south and succeeded in redirecting the coach off the beaten track and over mountain passes with a narrow single lane strip of bitumen flanked by wonderful old stone walls, but to be shared by cyclists in a race, mini drivers on a rally, and other miscellaneous sightseers. The views were magnificent and the countryside wonderful but we would expect our young driver may still be requiring therapy sessions to restore his confidence.

Arriving at Millar Howe and the start of a three day golf break was well timed. Several couples took the opportunity to meet up with friends and family and tour separately for the period, but for those who stayed and enjoyed the walks, lake ferries, and scattered villages it was an opportunity to explore and enjoy a beautiful part of England. Dinner at Millar Howe overlooking Lake Windermere as the sun set was particularly spectacular and with everyone sharing stories from the day including more Coach dramas in tight country lanes there was much merriment.





On Monday we departed for Southport via Lancaster where several in the group visited the magnificent gardens of Gresgarth Hall while others walked the central shopping area of town for a less than inspiring experience among the locals, many of whom looked like they had fallen on hard times.

The journey from Lancaster To Southport was a long afternoon but afforded Allan English the opportunity to recruit new WiFi donglers. The concept of a bus with a dongle providing on line WiFi was initially treated with some scepticism but one by one the iPads went live with email traffic ,Sat Nav and posts to our tour blog occurring en route. After preserving with our Captain and his errant iPad an Order of Merit of some Regal description was proposed for Allan, but the ceremony is still pending.

After checking in at the Vincent Hotel in Southport we were collected and transported to the home of Peter and Sandra Unsworth of Royal Birkdale. This was a very pleasant introduction to many of the local Seniors and with balmy BBQ weather we enjoyed a wonderful evening and meal in their backyard.



FORMBY

Formby's links are set amongst coastal sand dunes and towering pines. The undulating fairways are planted with traditional rye grasses and flat lies are rare. The Links at Formby Golf Club were founded in 1884 and have been sensitively modernised over the years to ensure it remains a challenging but enjoyable test of golf. Particularly to address sand dunes on the ocean frontage that required several new holes.

While a true link's course some controversy has arisen in relation to pine tree plantations that form a sheltering backdrop to the course. Many would have them removed however we enjoyed the shelter and from several elevated tees the golf vistas were spectacular.

Inside the layout of the Formby links an eighteen hole ladies course complete with separate clubhouse allows the ladies to run their own fixture.

CAPTAINS REPORT

Allan English

On June 18th we had the pleasure of playing at Formby golf Course situated on the beautiful North West Coast of England. Facing the Irish sea this was a course I was looking forward to playing.

We were met by the match Captain David Appleton and enjoyed a fine welcome and very enjoyable lunch at the 100 year old club house.

The links course was challenging, particularly for a high handicapper like me. Lots of heather it was a course where you needed to be pretty straight off the tee.

I managed to get into most of the strategically placed pot bunkers that seemed to be a magnet to a golf ball in windy conditions.

The greens and course were in fantastic condition and the glorious pine trees were certainly a great memory of a great day of golf.



WEATHER:
Sunny, top of 12°C





Australians	v	Western Gales Seniors
Wal MacDonald & Chris Whitford		Alan Thomson & Sandy Ferguson
Gill Coles & Peter Lindsay Stade		Iain Carslan & Paul Stevens
Barry Barr & Peter Robbie		Peter Jamieson & Bill Judge
Michael Jeffrey & John Webb		Douglas Mack & Spencer Patrick
Peter Davies & David Stuart		Jerry Kessell & James Hardie
Jim MacPherson & Roger Wilson		Donald White & Jim Thorpe
Peter Motteram & Don McNee		Alan Mickel & Harry Murray
Allan English & Walford Thyer		James Laird & Jimmy Forest
Result		Draw



