

press release

27th October 2014



News article

Golf Trust welcome back disabled golfers

Monday 27th October 2014 - GOLF TRUST OPEN

47 disabled and impaired golfers entered The Golf Trust UK Disabled Open at The Shire on Monday 27th October 2014. They weren't alone some 37 staff from British Airways took part as caddies volunteering their time to help out for the day. After all the planning between The Golf Trust and the Disabled Golf Association even the weather turned out in style on glorious autumnal day.

Overseeing the arrangements on the day and presenting the prizes was Matthew Andrews who volunteers with the Golf Trust, ably assisted by David Rose of Hickory Golf. Brian White was winner of category 0-18; Djemal Muhuddin won 19-25; and Brian Botwood won higher handicappers. Nearest the Pin on the 7th was Rob Grant; Nearest the Pin on the 14th was Jason Heathfield. But the real winner was disabled and impaired golfer.

Junior winner was rocket-powered young sensation Lewis Eccles, just 13 from Doncaster, Lewis was defending the title he won at The Shire in 2013. Lewis has autism, as well as playing with the Disabled Golf Association (DGA) he is a member of the Special Olympics. Lewis has had an impressive year and brought his handicap down to 9 also representing his country in the squad selected by OOM for the Auld Enemies Cup in September.

Ladies winner was Sue Robertson, 49, from Wokingham, Berkshire. Sue was a complete beginner 3 years ago so was delighted with her win which she said was "a true test of perseverance". Considering herself an 'impaired' golfer having arthritis in her spine, fractured sacroiliac joint falling down the stairs, and 2 carpal tunnels repaired – all of which has left her with reduced mobility and sleep apnoea from gaining weight due to being unable to get about. Sue's experience of golf as a low impact sport, is that it's a great way to rehabilitate. Sue, who volunteers tirelessly for the DGA helping her husband Graeme, who has MS, with running events also holds down a full time job with three children.

Peter King, 52, from Walderslade, Chatham in Kent was left with a paralysed arm, broken leg and knee cap, and fractured skull on Tuesday 13th November 1979, after a serious motor cycle accident aged just 17. Surgeons tried to repair the nerve damage to his spinal cord without success. Although he had played a little pitch and putt as a youth, football was more his thing. So as part of his rehabilitation, Peter started playing golf with friends to see if he could maybe play one-handed and to get his life back on track, "I can't even remember the last time I got a birdie, but on the par3 into the wind, I chose a club lower

than usual and my ball landed two inches from the flag but I still had to putt it. I'm on cloud 9 right now, absolutely delighted". The winner's trophy, the Craig Waugh Memorial Trophy was presented by Cheryl Stevens, Craig's mum. Craig had been a promising junior who died tragically in a car accident. Cheryl always felt that had Craig survived his accident with major injury he had been the type of person who would have persevered and played as a disabled golfer such was his passion.

DGA is a pan-disability, not-for-profit organization, membership is free. This special day was to be the last event of what has proved to be an incredible season for DGA members which will start up again next March. More information is at disabledgolf.org.uk

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About the Disabled Golf Association

Our main aims are to promote the game of golf as a pathway to a healthier lifestyle and greater social inclusion for those who are disabled, irrespective of age, gender or disability. This includes providing the means to make it easier for the disabled player to access the facilities both on and off the course. We aim to provide information about equipment to permit that increased accessibility, this can be done by means of single-seater buggies specifically designed for the disabled player, bespoke club and prosthetic adaptation as well as supplying professional coaching at events from those who have been trained to teach the sport. We aim to attract not only those who have played in the past prior to an illness or injury, but also those who have never played the sport but are seeking the unique benefits of a sport which can be played by anyone either alone against the course, or in teams against each other.

We look to provide a playing environment where the clubs are disabled friendly and accessible and the courses are pre-vetted to ensure that they are capable of being played by those with limited mobility. We are helping to assist in the launching of coaching academies and training sessions throughout the UK. Also from our base in Gloucestershire we aim to provide information on courses, equipment and holiday resorts for the disabled golfer. We hope to offer all of these benefits for our members and others but also employment for those in the area who are disabled and can join us.

All our members are kept aware of the activities of the association by a comprehensive web site and active facebook site, which attract new members on a daily basis. We also actively seek and need the feedback from our members on such diverse subjects as new events, holiday resorts, new equipment, as well as opportunities to volunteer and assist in future direction.

In our first year in 2010 we achieved over 200 members with associates throughout Europe and have links with other disabled golfing organisations throughout the world. In 2010 we arranged or were involved with 12 events which is unique in the world of disabled golf, we have attracted a true cross section of disabilities and our members realise they can enjoy a friendly and enjoyable experience.

In 2011 we increased our membership to 500 and introduced a series of events for newcomers as well as those requesting competition plus a unique series of par-3 events for those with limited mobility. In July 2011 we were featured in a 4-page centre spread in Motability Lifestyle magazine which led to 100 new members in just one week! We held 24 events in 2011. In August 2011 DGS received notification of official registration as a shared-enterprise Community Interest Company.

By the close of the 2012 season (where we had 40 events) we had over 600 members, making us the largest pan-disabled not-for-profit golf organisation in the UK – and possibly the world! We took the opportunity to rebrand and change our name from Society to Association to reflect our national role in the UK.

In 2013 we held over 50 events throughout – England, Wales and Northern Ireland – and a whole series of taster sessions for those new to golf, supported by Sport England. We closed with over 800 members and with BGL, Glenbrae and Titleist as supporters. We made the decision to cease trading 31st December 2013 as

DGS and England/Wales split to form two separate organisations as much to aide with funding streams, still very much working together – DGA in England and WDGA in Wales.

In 2014 we have events scheduled every week of the season in England – with 6 courses selected for the BGL Race to Burhill, 11 courses including a large number of Crown courses participating in the Order of Merit (OOM) and plenty more excellent courses providing DGA Local Events where we take golf to the places where people live; we also have a good number of charity events planned throughout the season having been chosen as Captain and Lady Captain charities in 2014. In Wales there are a further 8 OOM events planned. **Recognised officially by the Charities Aid Foundation as a charitable Community Interest Company (CIC) we have launched our new website disabledgolf.org.uk along with [justgiving](#) link.**

We are continuing with support from BGL, Titleist, Glenbrae and from MASS and added Crown Golf as supporters for DGA. New for 2014 is a partnership with IGEM South West, LIMBCARE, and with PACE Rehabilitation. DGA have an ongoing partnership with the Motor Accident Solicitors Society (MASS) who have chosen DGA as their charity of choice on an ongoing basis bringing much needed funding to support the infrastructure of the organisation.

About Crown Golf

The award-winning Crown Golf group supports the Disabled Golf Association. Crown Golf, the UK's largest owner / operator of golf clubs, has 25 UK golf facilities and 38 golf courses in its portfolio. With pride in customer service and innovation, Crown Golf (established in 1994) aims to provide an outstanding golf experience for its members and visitors, tailor-made to suit the lifestyles and needs of a wide range of golfers. The company's flagship is European Tour venue St Mellion International Resort, home to The Nicklaus Signature Course – the first in the UK to be designed by 18-time Major-winner Jack Nicklaus.

About the Motor Accident Solicitors Society (MASS)

MASS is a non-profit making national association of solicitors who specialise in road traffic accidents, representing the accident victim. Formed in 1991, MASS promotes the highest standards of legal services through education and representation in the pursuit of justice for the victims of road traffic accidents. MASS comprises 190 solicitor firms that employ over 2,000 legal staff, throughout the UK. Collectively member firms conduct in excess of 600,000 road traffic accident personal injury claims each year. The victim, and what is in their best interests, must remain at the centre of the debate. Our goal in this debate is to both protect the rights and interests of consumers who are victims of genuine road traffic accidents as our constitutional objective.

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