

## The Bernard Darwin Trophy 2022 Review



What a joy it was to welcome the first sixteen Halford Hewitt schools back to Woking GC, the home of The Bernard Darwin Trophy. We saw the usual combination of camaraderie and rivalry, with the competitions played in the best possible spirit on a golf course in wonderful condition. After a nervy return from the pandemic conditions in 2021, it finally felt like we were getting back to some sort of normal. There is nothing like a full dining room at Woking on the first day of competition to remind us all why we love coming back.

### **Malvern claims fourth Bernard Darwin Trophy win**

In the 63rd playing of the Trophy, Malvern won for the fourth time, and the second time in just four years. On the first day, the winners from last year, Harrow, eased past Clifton and Highgate to book their place in Day 2. Marlborough squeezed past The Leys in the morning, with a win by the second pair on the 19th but lost to Uppingham in another tight match in the afternoon. It all came down to the last pair where Stuart Lloyd and OUGS captain Tom Hayes came back from three down with five to play to record an unlikely victory.

There were heavyweight fixtures in the top half of the draw. Malvern showed early form against local favourites Charterhouse and breezed past Repton in the afternoon. Having beaten Eton in a tight match in the morning, Tonbridge were firm favourites to beat Rugby in the afternoon. But there was genuine disbelief on the face of Rugby captain, Nigel Cadbury, when his team were victorious. 'Super-sub' Melville Guest paired up with Nigel at third pair to deliver the deciding point.

The veranda at Woking is a great spot to watch the drama unfold and, with the 14th playing downwind, we saw a few players overshoot the green. None more so than Charterhouse, for whom Anthony Wreford found himself playing their fourth shot to the 14th green from the greenside bunker of the 18th. Several balls found their way into the flower beds surrounding the clubhouse. But, as ever at the Darwin, there was no shortage of R&A rules experts on hand to offer an opinion.

The veranda at Woking GC is also a great place to unwind after a warm day of competitive golf. And, with much to discuss, it was good to see the veranda busy well into the evening. Stocks of white burgundy would be running dangerously low.

On Day 2, Rugby were unable to continue the giant-killing when they came up against an impressive display by Malvern, who won all three matches with holes to spare. In the other semi-final, the match hinged on the middle pair. In a high-quality contest, Gotla and Stewart of Uppingham beat Brewer and Posford on the 18th.

So, a final between Malvern and Uppingham, with the latter hoping to record 'the double' (see below). The tide shifted in Malvern's favour around the turn and by the 14th it looked all the way like a Malvern win. Adrian Coleman's side concluded the competition in dominant style and went through all four rounds of the tournament without losing a match.

The first-round losers contested the Bernard Darwin Goblet on the afternoon of Day 1. This year, Charterhouse prevailed. In a scratch foursomes stableford competition over 14 holes, the Carthusians won the Goblet with a combined total for two pairs of 49 points. The Charterhouse pair of Royds and Allen recorded 26 points over 14 holes, which was a most impressive knock.





### **Uppingham win first Senior Darwin**

Two weeks earlier we had gathered for the Senior Darwin competition. We had near perfect conditions and some fantastic matches. Several schools needed to find late replacements, for COVID and other reasons. Indeed, Marlborough opened the tournament by fielding just two pairs against Radley. Even so, Carrick and Martin-Jenkins of Marlborough took the match against Radley down the 20th hole before losing in a very tight game. Radley would face Uppingham in the afternoon and found the opponents' second and third pairs (Dickson & Gotla, and Ingham & Cooke) in imperious form.

Elsewhere, The Leys surprised themselves by beating Winchester in the morning and would face the victors of a battle between two recent winners of the Senior Darwin, Charterhouse and Tonbridge. It was a good tussle with a win for Tonbridge coming from the formidable pairing of Monteuis and Hubbard. The afternoon match against The Leys was a tight affair, with the Tonbridge first pair closing out the match on the 18th. In the bottom half of the draw, Harrow beat Wellington, thanks to another last-hole victory, and made light work of Highgate in the afternoon. Brewer and Bearman, at 3rd pair for Harrow, were looking ominously strong. Meanwhile, 2018 winners Repton beat 2016 winners Rugby with some comfort, setting up a titanic battle with Malvern in the afternoon. Malvern had been comfortable winners against Westminster in the morning, but lost to Repton in a very tight game, with the crucial second pair match going to Wright and Porter of Repton on the 18th.

Semi-final morning saw Tony Monteuis (Tonbridge) get an unintentional cold shower when the sprinkler system mysteriously came on just after nine o'clock. Uppingham had to make changes on the second day, with Pope coming in for Ingham. Dickson and Gotla moved up to first pair and won comfortably against Cooper and Sims. The middle match proved decisive, with the Uppingham pair of Patrick (R) and Cooke beating Monteuis and Hubbard on the 19th.

In the bottom half of the draw, Repton got the better of Harrow at first pair. The surprise of the match was at third pair, with Elliott and Greatrex of Repton winning 3&2 against Brewer and Stewart. Repton would face Uppingham in the final. Dickson and Gotla stayed at first pair for Uppingham and made light work of Andrews and Fletcher of Repton. And at third pair, it looked to be going Uppingham's way early in the round. Pope and Patrick (D) would win 4&3 as the Repton team ran out of steam. So, it was a first Uppingham win in the Senior Darwin and special mention should go to captain Chris Gotla and his partner Tim Dickson who won all four of their matches before they got to the 17th hole.

Somewhat confusingly, the Senior Darwin trophy is a 'plate', and the Plate competition is played for a salver. On this occasion the 14-hole Plate competition was won by Rugby with a combined scratch stableford score for two foursomes' pairs of 38 points.

### **A third Veterans win for Marlborough**

It was a pleasure to welcome the Veterans on Day 2 of the Senior Darwin. A few schools dipped into the ranks of the Veterans for Senior Darwin players, so we had a slightly smaller field than usual for the Veterans' competition. Participants play a stableford

foursome off a bogey card and it was a very close contest, which went to a countback. The Marlborough pair of Hopper and Mercer birdied their last hole (the 14th) to pip the Malvern pair of Thompson and Bevan Jones. It was a particularly notable win for James Hopper, the President of the OMGS, who has now won the trilogy of Darwin events (Bernard Darwin, Senior Darwin and Veterans competitions).



### **To conclude**

Congratulations to all our winners in what has been a year of very good competitions. It was fitting that two of our winning sides, Malvern and Marlborough, were victors in their society's centenary year. We received a lot of nice feedback from participants about the Darwin events, which in no small part is due to the friendly welcome we receive from Woking GC. Our thanks go to Dubravka ('Dee') Griffiths, the new General Manager, and all her staff. We were also delighted to see the new Woking GC President, David Stewart, who was there to congratulate the victors. David is pictured above with Uppingham, the winners of the Senior Darwin.

The dates for the 2023 competitions are on the home page of the Bernard Darwin website ([www.bernarddarwin.org.uk](http://www.bernarddarwin.org.uk)). We will be meeting at Woking GC on Monday, 31st October for a brief AGM and the draws for 2023. If you would like to represent your school at that meeting, please get in touch with a member of the Committee (see below).

Until next year...

Robert Miller (Repton)

John Gill (Charterhouse)

Robin Swann (Marlborough)

Nigel Washbourn (The Leys)