

## Subject: The British Open Trip Summary

### Members

I have recently returned from a fantastic holiday tour of Ireland and Scotland with a terrific group of Nudgee members, friends from Royal Queensland, and golfing acquaintances who now live in New York. We had three doctors on this trip in case of emergencies!! How good was that!

Our tour group departed on July 17th for Dublin, where we were greeted by our genial hosts from Scotland Tours. After leaving Dublin we travelled through Northern Ireland to Londonderry. Among other things over the next four days, we attended both the second round and Sunday's final round of the Open at the Dunluce links of Portrush Golf Club, in County Antrim.



More than 60,000 excited fans packed the gallery stands on the final day. Ireland's Shane Lowry was the Clubhouse leader after 54 holes with the awesome score of 16 under. Irish hopes were raised. He must have felt the weight of the entire country on his shoulders when he teed off in the final round. Right from the start he had to battle in extreme weather for most of the afternoon. As the round unfolded it

became clear that Shane Lowry had both the temperament and the skills necessary to win the most important Championship in the world. His was a combination of rock solid shot making, grit and total focus for a resounding 6 shot victory.



All Irish hearts were happy and so were we. When their countryman held the Open's Claret Jug aloft, the entire crowd went wild. Tiger's win at the Masters this year was outstanding. Shane Lowry's performance to win the Open was equally impressive. Founded in 1889, Royal Portrush GC was the first Club outside the UK mainland to stage the Open in over 70 years. To be on the spot to see Lowry win so



convincingly was very special. It was an historic occasion that we and many others will always remember.





Following the thrill of seeing the world's best perform at the Open, we moved on to Donegal to test our skills at the superb links course of Portsalon GC on the Fanad Peninsula. Next we travelled to Belfast to catch the Stena Line Ferry for the two hour trip across the Irish Sea to Cairnryan on the coast of Scotland. The plan for the next 7 days was to play some of Scotland's great courses. Our home base for 3 days, was a beautiful hotel overlooking the Berwick golf course in North Berwick. On day one we enjoyed a morning round at historic Muirfield GC followed by lunch at the Club. Lunch in Muirfield's magnificent Clubhouse involves men wearing a coat and tie in strict observance of the Club's rules. We did and all looked the part. At Portsalon visitor Mel Howe from Gladstone beat Jimmy Sparks, while at Muirfield Pat Donnelly teamed up with friend Simon Geldart to win the Fourball.





Muirfield has a special place in Australian golf history. It was in 1954 that Doug Bachli a member of the Victoria Golf Club in Melbourne won the British Amateur Championship here. 1954 was also the year that another member of Victoria Golf Club, Peter Thomson, then a professional won the first of his 5 British Opens. These achievements in that one year are recognised in Victoria GC's Clubhouse.

More games were at Gullane , a gem of a course where Ricky Fowler won the Irish open in 2016 and last year South African Brendan Stone shot 60 the final round to win. Scotsraig GC. Established in 1817. was another fine course we also played. Captain Troy Scott and Ken McLean won the aggregate at Gullane while Paddy Wilkins was a big winner at Scotsraig.

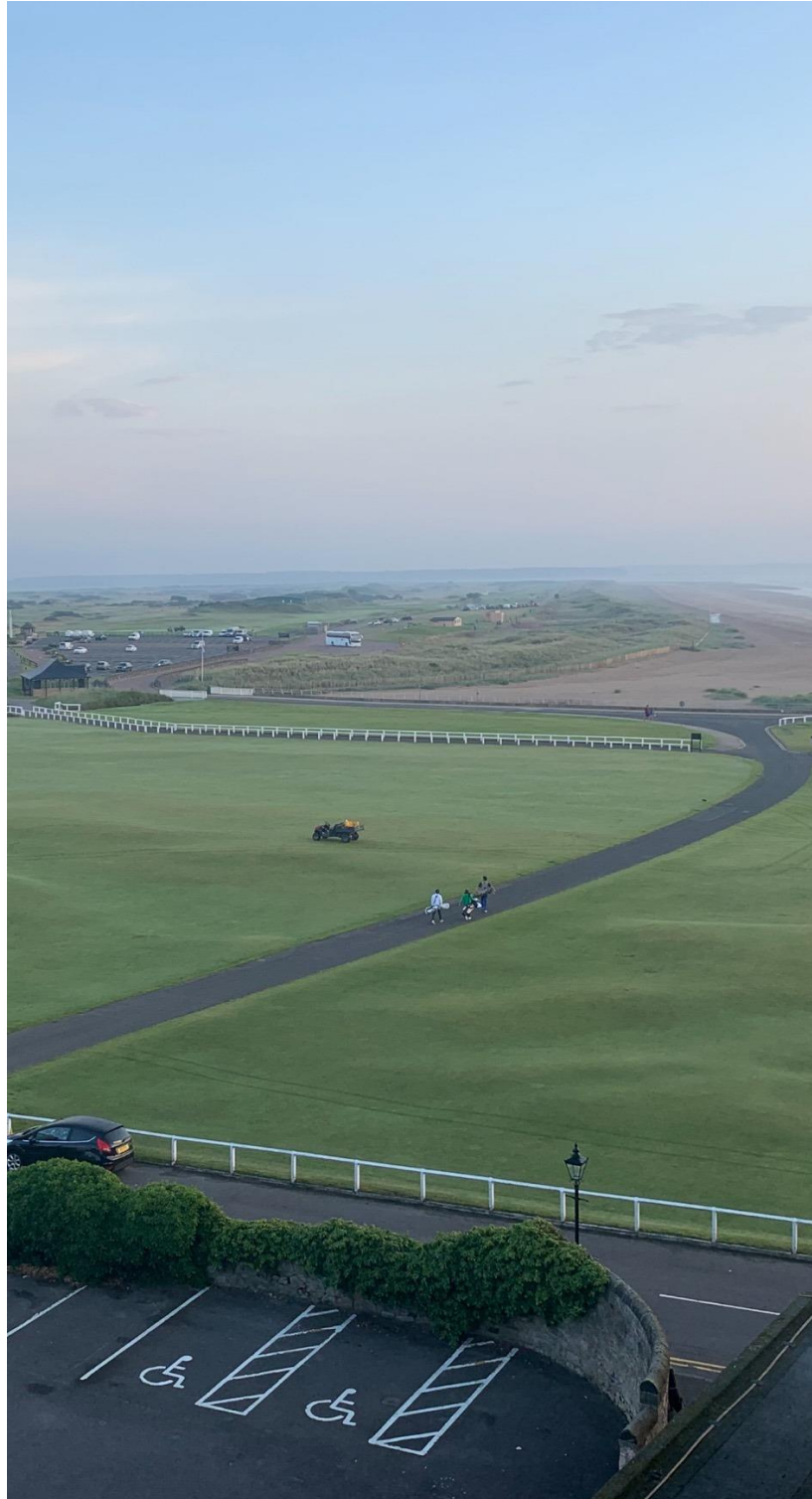


Our next stop was at the home of golf, in the town of St Andrews on the east coast of Scotland. On arrival we checked in to the Rusacks Hotel. This is a beautiful building which overlooks the 18<sup>th</sup> fairway of St Andrews famous Old Course. If you stroll from the breakfast room to the front of the Hotel front you are 20 metres from the course boundary. Amazing.





We played the Jubilee course on the first day while awaiting the outcome of the Old course ballot to see who in our group would be fortunate enough to play the Old course. The good news was my friends from RQ and Nudgee's captain Troy Scott were successful. The rest missed out, but Jimmy Sparks and Paddy Wilkins did manage a round at Carnoustie. At the Jubilee Di Wilkins shared the honours with Peter Daley.





From here to Western Gailes another wonderful layout and then on to Royal Troon Golf to play this iconic course – the venue of 9 previous Opens. The 2016 Open featured the exciting contest between Sweden's Henrik Stenson and USA's Phil Mickelson. A final round 8 under par 63 by Stenson, saw him win by three shots finishing an amazing 20 under par. The course was in pristine condition and the opportunity to play its hallowed links was another memorable experience. John Fardon and Tony James (RQ) big winners at Western Gailes while Tony James beating Phil Green at Royal Troon.





For more golfing attractions we then returned to Ireland and the beautiful seaside town of Portrush to our accommodation at the Royal Court Hotel. The hotel was positioned high on a hill and overlooked Royal Portrush GC with stunning views of the North Atlantic Ocean. It appears this hotel was booked out for the week of the Open by an overseas company at a cost of \$1 million for its exclusive use. We could never match that!



# Royal Portrush Golf Club

31 July 8:34 pm

[Edit](#)



Portrush is a town anyone would enjoy. The golfing choices are multiple with a dozen or more top row courses within a 30 minute drive. The town has a fantastic surf beach, cosy Irish pubs, restaurants and stacks of unique shops selling plenty of Irish goodies. We played Dunluce the Royal Portrush Open course the week after the Open. You can imagine how good the condition of the course was and it lived up to our expectations. For us a smidge of the Opens atmosphere seemed to linger as the multi-tiered grandstands were still in place. On each and every hole we had a good feel of the challenges the Open field had to deal with minus the crowds and applause.







We also played Portstewart Golf Club's outstanding Strand course, where in his first European Tour victory Spanish professional Jon Rahm shot 24 under to win the 2017 Irish Open. Our final three days were spent near Dublin with accommodation at the Portmarnock Links Hotel. Visitor Simon Geldart played very well at Portrush to win with Kenny McLean next while I managed to beat them all at Portstewart !







We played two more games before putting our clubs away, one was at the famous Portmarnock Golf Club. Founded in 1894, It has been an Irish Open course and the venue chosen to stage the 1960 World Cup. That event was won by the American team of Arnold Palmer and Sam Snead. Australia's team of Peter Thomson and Kel Nagle finished in third place.

Our last game on tour was played at the relatively new Portmarnock Links Golf Club. A wonderful and challenging links course, Portmarnock was designed in 1995 by Germany's Bernard Langer, a three time winner of the Irish Open Championship. Jimmy Sparks and Gerry Dowdall won the day at Portmarnock while our last event our four man Teams event won by Paddy and Di Wilkins along with Gladstone's Mel and Mary Howe.



The final evening we all dined together at a popular seafood restaurant in Portmarnock on the river. The next day some set sail for home while others took time out to explore more of this wonderful country. All in all it was a magical golfing experience and a wonderful time for all who could make it.



P.S. It was a great Open and next year the event will be at Royal St. Georges in Sandwich England, east of London on the coast close to Dover and Margate. The Open has been played here on 15 occasions with Darren Clarke last winning here in 2011 while our own Greg Norman won here in 1986. If you haven't been to an Open you would love the experience so I am making enquiries about a trip next year. Info should be available soon.

Cheers and good Golfing

JD