



SILVER TASSIE VICTORY SPECIAL



Loretto's winning team. From the left;

Captain Rosie Bailey, Rosie Everett, Emily Feibusch and Emma Howie



OK, we didn't manage to win the Halford Hewitt for a record fourth successive time, but you can't keep Loretto golf out of the news as our Ladies team, at the first time of trying, has won **The Silver Tassie**, the premier Ladies golf competition for alumnae of independent schools. The competition, held at The Berkshire, dates back to 1961 and initially featured major girls' schools but more recently has included many top co-educational schools such as Marlborough, Millfield, Uppingham, Oakham and Cranleigh.

A little bit of background; the Headmaster and I were collared at the Halford Hewitt in April 2023 by Jo Giddins, the organiser of The Silver Tassie. 'If Loretto is so good at golf why don't you participate in The Silver Tassie?' she asked. We didn't have an answer but resolved to enter a team for the 2024 tournament. Rosie Bailey (née Niven) had joined the OLGS Committee a couple of years ago to look to encourage more lady members but having had two children since matters were at an early stage.

Rosie spent the early months of 2024 with the help of the school finding suitable candidates to represent Loretto and managed to finalise a team just a few weeks ago. The tournament is held at The Berkshire where Rosie happens to be a member though as a new mother she hadn't played 18 holes for over two years! Remarkably the team met each other for the first time on the morning of the tournament so while Rosie was able to claim a few friendly members' bounces, the team did not have the advantage of established pairings.



It was a chilly windy June morning at The Berkshire



The competition is a pairs better ball handicap stableford with one pair playing The Berkshire Red and the other The Berkshire Blue course. The better ball scores for each course are added together. There is also a Cup for the best Scratch better ball score across the two courses. Previously the Silver Tassie (handicap) winners could not also win the Scratch Trophy but this year for the first time the rule was changed so one school could win both. And that is exactly what first time participants Loretto did!

The two Rosies played the Red course and Emily and Emma played the Blue. The Berkshire is one of the famous heathland courses to the south west of London, founded in 1928 and laid out by the famous designer Herbert Fowler. The two courses are of a similar style though The Berkshire Red is famous for its structure of holes: 6 Par 5s, 6 Par 4s and 6 Par 3s. One of the biggest challenges is the heather, something which Rosie Bailey as a member and Emily who is a member at nearby Hankley Common were familiar with. There is a fairly simple tip about how to deal with the heather at The Berkshire – don't go in it.

Both Loretto pairs had better ball gross scores of 77 – extremely good scores on these tough courses. With handicaps, that translated to 38 points for the two Rosies (a couple of monster putts for 4 points by Rosie E helping!) and 43 for Emma and Emily; 81 points in total. Loretto were out early so these set the early clubhouse lead but there were many schools still to come in. At that stage I had a quick look at last year's winning score: 78. I suddenly realised that something special might be happening. Two other schools in particular looked to be a danger; last year's winners, Wycombe Abbey and Millfield who are always competitive. Wycombe Abbey scored an impressive 39 points on the Blue but their Red pair could only get 32. Then Millfield, came in with 39s on each course, good scores but three behind Loretto's combined score. No other school got closer than that – The Silver Tassie was Loretto's.



The team being presented with both trophies



It was a clean sweep of almost everything: 81 points for The Silver Tassie three ahead of Millfield in second and a combined gross of 154, three better than Millfield on 157. Loretto's 77s were the best gross on each course and Emily and Emma's 43 was the best stableford score across both courses. What a performance for a team who had only met that morning.



Enjoying refreshments in the clubhouse afterwards

This win gives us a tremendous opportunity to develop Women's golf within the OLGS – watch this space for further events. A lunch to recognise the team's achievement is planned for the autumn and it is hoped that many more ladies will participate in OLGS events.

While I have your attention a few points to note and events for your diary:

Our Scratch Team has again qualified for the Finals of the Grafton Morrish Tournament which is held at **Hunstanton and Brancaster from 27th – 29th September**. They start on the Friday at Royal West Norfolk, Brancaster, and find themselves in a tough section of the draw with Sherborne, Solihull, Sedbergh, Tonbridge and Malvern. We wish them luck.

The Loretto School Foursomes will be held at **West Sussex on Wednesday 24th July**. So far we have about 14 schools participating but there is still room for others to sign up – pairs don't have to be from the same school so it is a good opportunity to invite a friend along. The day is excellent value at just £100 for golf and the excellent West Sussex three course lunch. Email me at andrewjrbrown1@gmail.com



Disappointingly there has been very little interest in our match against Uppingham on **Thursday 15th August at Reigate Heath**. I had hoped that the chance to wreak revenge on Uppingham for the Halford Hewitt defeat would help generate interest. If we don't get more players this fixture is likely to be discontinued; Alec Watt, who did so much to promote the OLGS in the south, was a member at Reigate Heath and hosted the match for many years so it would be a great shame if we lost this date. The day is even better value at usually around £70 for lunch and golf. Again email me at andrewjrbrown1@gmail.com

In Scotland we have matches against Merchiston, Glenalmond, Edinburgh Academy and the school coming up in the coming months. Please see the website for details.

www.ol-golf.com

We have a team entered in The Anniesland Trophy on Tuesday 25th June while The Mellin Trophy starts at West Hill the following day. We have again struggled to get enough players to participate in The Mellin.

OLGS Medal 8/9th November at The Renaissance. Robert will be in touch with details nearer the time.



The lovely Reigate Heath, often voted the best 9 hole course in the UK

Lunch in the delightful 'Windmill' Clubhouse and golf for around £75