



Fine Art Golfing Society

Centenary event

3-4 September 2026

Centenary dinner

Following our match at Worplesdon we gathered at Gorse Hill Hotel for the centenary dinner. Eric's Presidential speech about the founding fathers of the society is reproduced at the bottom of this newsletter.

We managed to gather all of our trophies together for the first time, wow!



Bruce Marshall brought a fine selection of early clubs and a copy of the first ever golf book to show us (value £50K)

John Dixon is taking a keen interest.

Our special guest was revealed as none other than Nick Dougherty, anchorman for Sky's golf coverage as well as 3-time PGA Tour winner. Sam's Q&A session lasted almost an hour and had us spellbound as Nick told some wonderful

stories about playing with Tiger Woods at the US Open, as well as Nick Faldo and Seve Ballesteros. We have invited Nick to join us as an honorary member of the society. What a gent.



Bandido: Sam awarded our newest accolade The Bandit Award to David who took the joke in the spirit it was intended.

However, Sam made the serious point that it's time the ribbing stopped as David's handicap is back in single figures and he is still scoring well as the YTD scores show below.

David will have the honour of choosing next year's holder before Hankley Common in December.



Guests: Georgina Gough's contribution as the only lady Captain in living memory was recognised at dinner. She made a delightful 3-ball at Woking with Mary Spanner and Kim Dove who will join the society in 2027.

Other guests included John Dixon and Guy Peploe from Scottish Art Dealers who travelled down from Edinburgh for the whole event. We are eternally grateful for the way they have made our tours to Scotland unforgettable.

I was also delighted to play at Worplesdon with James Fielden who introduced me to FAGS back in 2004. James doesn't have a lot of time for golf

but I'm sure we'll see him again soon.

Auction. David auctioned six lots for Sam's chosen charity Cardinals in the community of which he is Chairman. There were 4-balls at Princes, The Berkshire, Woking and North Hants as well as tickets for a PGA lunch and a bespoke artwork created by Richard Lewis raising £3,900 in the process. We thank everyone for their contributions.

And the winner is... Robert won at Worplesdon with 38 points ahead of Sam with 37. The following day 37 points was enough for Sam to win at Woking on countback from Mike Roberts.

Other Business: Deposits for Princes & Swinley Forest

I have published the schedule for 2027 below and now need deposits for both Princes in May (£100) and Swinley Forest in July (£50). Instead of the old £200 deposit Swinley's new General Manager is asking for £50 pp – £2000 for 40 players.

Please book online at the link <https://fineartgolf.org/store/ols/categories/events>

2027 schedule

- Ashridge Mon 5 April (18)
- Princes Thur 6 - Fri 7 May (2 x 18)
- Betchworth Park Mon 7 June (18 or 36)
- Swinley Forest Thur 15 July (36)
- West Surrey Tue 3 August (18)
- Worplesdon Thur 9 September (18)
- Scotland tour Mon 4 – Fri 8 October
- The Berkshire Thur 14 Oct (18)
- Woking Tues 7 December (18)

Subscriptions will be £100 for 2027 discounted to £80 for renewals before the end of November. Renew online <https://fineartgolf.org/store/ols/products/sub>

Year to date scores with one event to go

Partridge trophy		Rabbits		Seniors		Birdies	
David Hughes	112	Robert Frew	99	Robert Frew	99	David Hughes	9
Sam Loxton	112	Mike Dove	94	Andrew Jobson	97	Henry Loxton	9
Kerry Hill	103	Tony Thomas	94	Tony Thomas	94	Sam Loxton	9
Mike Roberts	103	Joe Cattermole	91	Cliff Williams	92	Kerry Hill	6
				Bruce Marshall	91	Mike Roberts	5
				Joe Cattermole	91		

Thank you!

I would like to thank you all for the fabulous personalised golf bag that I was given, I will treasure and hack round golf courses with it for many years to come. It's fair to say that I am looking forward to playing with my old clubs soon, though.

I am also very grateful to Bruce Marshall who presented me with a wonderful Hickory Challenge trophy.

We must also thank Eric and Robert for buying the champagne for the reception on Thursday and Sam and Eric for their efforts in making the evening a fabulous success.

See you all at Hankley Common for the Christmas Meeting on Tuesday 15th December.

Here's to the next 100 years!

Simon

Eric Bryan's speech on some of the early FAGS members

Ladies and gentlemen, if you cast your minds back to 1926, the year the Fine Art Golfing Society took its very first swing, it was quite extraordinary just how much history was crammed into those twelve months. In January, John Logie Baird gave the world's first public demonstration of television, followed in March by the first transatlantic telephone call. It was also a remarkable vintage for human talent, bringing into the world Queen Elizabeth II, Sir David Attenborough, Marilyn Monroe, and Fidel Castro, a group that would certainly have made for a rather lively seating plan and an even more interesting 4-ball. On home turf, the nation briefly ground to a halt during the UK General Strike, while down at Brooklands, history was made at high speed with the inaugural British Grand Prix.

And if 1926 was a dramatic year for the wider world, it was equally momentous on the fairways. Across the Atlantic and over at Royal Lytham, Bobby Jones made history by becoming the first player ever to pull off the "Open Double" winning both the Open Championship and the US Open in the same season. At Wentworth in June, a prosperous seed merchant named Samuel Ryder watched an informal match between British and American pros and decided "we must do this again"- laying the groundwork for the Ryder Cup.

Meanwhile, the USGA finally gave its official seal of approval to steel shafts, rapidly consigning classic hickory clubs to the pages of history and, fittingly, to antique shop display windows. I wish I had known this before trying to play with hickories earlier this year.

Yet amidst all these seismic developments, 1926 saw another, far more gentlemanly revolution take place right here: the founding of FAGS. When you look through the early history of our Society, one thing becomes immediately clear: we were never short of characters. And, rather reassuringly, many of them were art and antique dealers. Which means that FAGS has always brought together two professions requiring extraordinary talent: buying valuable objects and hitting and then finding a small white ball. Both involve knowing when to take a risk, when to keep your mouth shut, and most importantly, when to blame somebody else.

So let's start with the man who started the whole thing: Frank Partridge. Frank was one of the great London antique dealers of his generation,

with clients including Lord Leverhulme, Sir William Burrell and even Queen Mary, who gave him a Royal Warrant. He opened a gallery in New York, founded the British Antique Dealers' Association and, rather extraordinarily, survived the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915. He had been travelling with eight fellow antique dealers and was the only survivor of the group. Frank was also a very good golfer, winning the FAGS Championship in 1935. Today, the Partridge Trophy is awarded to our Golfer of the Year. His son Claude carried on the tradition, winning in 1929 and 1930, while Gordon Partridge took the title three times—in 1936, 1949 and 1953. Between them, the Partridges combined antique dealing and competitive golf rather impressively.

Basil Dighton was our first-ever Champion in 1926. Basil was an antique dealer specialising in works of art and sporting prints. But in 1923 he found himself involved in the notorious Shrager v Dighton court case concerning the authenticity of antique furniture. He won the case, but the damages awarded were practically peppercorns, while the legal fees were enough to break him. So Basil discovered one of the oldest principles of both the trade and golf: You can win and you can still lose.

Another fascinating character was Vyse Millard, who presented the Rabbits Cup. During the First World War he served with the Essex Regiment and Royal Flying Corps, flying reconnaissance, being wounded at Ypres and receiving the Croix de Guerre. After the war he opened a shop in Amersham and acquired the nickname "King of the Ring." Whether that referred to his dealing, his personality or his golf, he clearly knew how to survive.

Then there was Martin Norton, head of S. J. Phillips of New Bond Street. Martin was a scholar of the trade, co-authoring a book on gold snuff boxes. He was also a serious golfer off a low handicap who belonged to Wentworth for more than fifty years giving him a deep knowledge of both gold snuff boxes and difficult greens.

We should also mention Malcolm Stoner, champion in 1931 and 1933; Philip Blairman of H. Blairman & Sons, champion in 1957; and A. H. Baldwin, founder of the famous coin and medal dealers, who was Golfer of the Year in 1947 and lives on in the Baldwin Salver. Together with Leslie MacConnal-Mason, commemorated by his Memorial Trophy, FAGS became a remarkable gathering of dealers capable of spotting a fake at twenty paces many of whom donated some of the amazing trophies that the society owns today and that are here this evening.

More recently Angus Lloyd was a distinguished fine-art dealer and exceptionally successful FAGS golfer, winning the Championship several times in the late 1970s and 80s. An R&A member he belonged to The Berkshire, Royal St George's, Walton Heath, Swinley Forest and the Lucifers. Quite frankly, how he found the time to be a successful art dealer with all that golf is beyond me.

Our most famous past President, Bill Tillman, was a master furniture maker, restorer, and dealer. A craftsman of such repute that he was commissioned to build the very presentation table the R&A still uses to display and present the Claret Jug at all the Open venues. A devoted member from 1955 to 2016, Bill was Captain of Surrey, founder of the famous Tillman Trophy for amateur golf, and a regular participant in Bing Crosby's "Clambake" in California. He was an R&A member and was involved in the introduction of the American sized larger ball into the UK. Bill built a nine-hole golf course in his own garden—because when you are an antique dealer who enjoys golf, why not!

And that is perhaps the perfect way to sum up the early FAGS spirit. These were extraordinary men: dealers, collectors, scholars, adventurers, soldiers, pilots, entrepreneurs and, above all, golfers. They built businesses, survived wars, fought court cases and occasionally found time to hit a little white ball around England's finest courses. They gave FAGS character.

Which brings us neatly to the present day because none of us would be standing here enjoying this tradition without the immense debt of gratitude we owe to all of our past secretaries and, in particular to Simon Berti. Simon has done a fantastic job strengthening the Society, keeping us impeccably organized and ensuring that the FAGS spirit remains as vibrant today as it was back in 1926.

So here's to Frank, Basil, Vyse, Martin, Claude, Gordon, Malcolm, Philip, Baldwin, Leslie, Angus, Bill and, of course, to Simon for keeping the show so brilliantly on the road along with all the dealer golfers who made FAGS what it is today. May their art and antiques remain genuine and profitable, their handicaps remain low and their golf balls be found exactly where they think they are.

Cheers!