

2014 Championship and Silver Meeting - Penwortham Golf Club - 7th - 9th May 2014



The qualifying round began in fine but breezy conditions. Unfortunately, that proved to be the best of the day, as the rain, accompanied by a strong wind, developed by lunchtime. Scoring proved very difficult. Carmel Hall from Penwortham produced an 80 and won the President's Prize for the best gross score. The best nett was won by Bev Scholes of Rochdale, 2nd, 3rd and 4th netts by Kate Ainsworth of Pleasington, Marie Miller of Bolton Old Links and Jeanette Smith of Ashton & Lea.

The first day's matches were played in blustery and wet conditions which got worse as the day went on. The longest match was between Carmel Hall, who had led the qualifiers and Carol Helme, from Bolton Old Links. Carmel was two up with two to play, but Carol won the last two holes in gritty fashion and held on to win at the 20th.

The next morning the semi finals were between Carol and Jeanette Smith from Ashton and Lea, which Carol won 3&2, and Ann Lowe and Janet Melville, both from Royal Birkdale. It was a good match, but the difference was on the greens, and Janet holed crucial putts to beat Ann 4&3.

In the final Carol struck first, parring the 1st, and chipping in for a birdie from the back of the 2nd green, to go 2 up. Janet countered with a par on the 3rd to go back to 1 down, but three putted the 5th to lose it, and went out of bounds on the 6th, to be 3 down. Both girls had chances on the next few holes, but could not hole the putts, so Janet was still 3 down after 11 holes.

The 12th is a tricky par 3, playing into the wind, and Carol played a superb tee shot within 6 feet of the hole. Janet countered with a very good tee shot to about 12 feet, and as neither could hole their putts, it was still 3 up to Carol. The short 13th was halved in par, as neither girl could convert their birdie chances, and then it was on to the long 469 par five 14th hole. This was right into the teeth of the wind and Janet played a great long iron for her fourth, just 5 feet above the hole. The putt could have gone as far past with the wind whipping down the green, but Janet putted dead, to go back to 2 down. Janet's tee shot on the par 3 15th ended up in the bunker, Carol's tee shot was short, but in no trouble, and Carol won the hole to go dormie.

The 16th is a great matchplay hole, and with the wind behind, Janet was going to have to go for the green in two, over a ditch just short of the green. Carol had the luxury of playing the hole as a conventional par 5. Janet hit her second shot from a tricky lie towards the tree on the right of the ditch, but her ball went over, and she had a difficult downhill chip to the pin. Carol had played her second to a good position in front of the brook, but she didn't quite hit her third shot hard enough, and it went into the ditch, hit the concrete side of the ditch and ricocheted out into thick rough, but parallel to the hole. Carol played a superb shot out of the rough, over the ditch, giving her an uphill

putt for an outside chance of a five. Janet played her chip to a similar distance, but above the hole. Janet putted first and was given her next putt, so Carol had her putt for the match. Her putt narrowly missed, and it was onto the 17th. Both girls hit very good drives, but Carol was within range of the green and Janet wasn't. Janet leaked her second short and right, and Carol played a superb wood onto the heart of the green, and that was eventually good enough for the match and the Championship.

Congratulations go to both girls for playing such good golf in the weather, which was very testing and very tiring. Congratulations to Carol, who played controlled golf throughout the Championship and got to grips with very difficult greens. Carol is a worthy Champion, and we wish her and the rest of the Richardson Trophy team all the best for their matches.