

T2G BRIEFS

New August date set for Mullingar Scratch Trophy

THE 56th staging of the prestigious Mullingar Scratch Trophy has been confirmed for August 11-12 — the weekend following the conclusion of the AIG Irish Amateur Close Championship at The European Club.

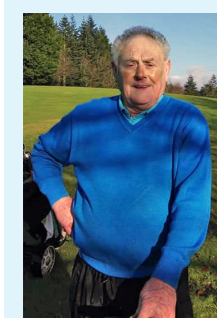


Robin Dawson (Tramore) will tee it up in the Sherry Fitzgerald Davitt & Davitt sponsored Mullingar Scratch Trophy from August 11-12. Picture: Pat Cashman Photography

Set to be sponsored again by Sherry Fitzgerald Davitt & Davitt, the event has had to relinquish its August Bank Holiday date because of the new date for the "Close", which has been brought forward by two weeks to August 4-8. With the action on the links at Brittas Bay set to finish on Wednesday, a good field is expected to travel to Mullingar the following weekend with Tramore's Robin Dawson, runner-up to Tullamore's Stuart Grehan last year, one of the first to commit.

Mullingar's Albert Lee said: "We are really looking forward to welcoming all the players to the 56th consecutive staging of the Scratch Trophy and very grateful to Sherry Fitzgerald Davitt & Davitt for coming on board as sponsors again this year."

First played in 1963, when Joe Carr triumphed, the list of past winners is a who's who of Irish golf with the likes of Tom Craddock, Des Smyth, Philip Walton, Paul McGinley, Darren Clarke, Pádraig Harrington, Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry all getting their names on the famous silver cup.



Donegal man wins his first prize at 78

Jim Joe Gavin wins his first of many

GOOD things come to those who wait so it was little wonder that Jim Joe Gavin thoroughly enjoyed the first win of his golfing career at Ballybofey and Stranorlar Golf Club — just days before his 78th birthday.

The Castlefin man had 37 points off 28 to win the Tuesday outing on January 30 with five points to spare, and he's now so full of confidence, he insisted when receiving his prize from President Joe Blee that it is the first of many.



David Wallace with the winning Munster team at the Golf Voyager Algarve Golf Challenge

Wally leads Munster to victory in Algarve

FORMER Ireland star David Wallace led Munster to a victory over Malcoorm O'Kelly's Leinster in the Algarve Golf Challenge at the five-star Pestana Vila Sol Golf & Spa Resort last week.

Hosted annually by Limerick-based company GolfVoyager.com, 32 Munster golfers took on 32 from Leinster and the result was a successful title defence for Wallace's team by a resounding 23-9 scoreline.

The fourball event, which runs in conjunction with the main event, was a much closer affair and came down to

a sudden-death playoff for the second year in a row. Last year's winners Adrian Kearney and Paul Coothe from Woodstock Golf Club in Ennis, came from nine points behind on day one to set the clubhouse target with 78 points. This was matched by Mark Ponsonby and Chris Nee who followed their fantastic 46 points on day one with 32 points on day two. With light fading quickly both pairs headed to the 100m marker on the 18th fairway for a sudden death playoff. With a large gallery looking on, the experienced Kearney and Coothe won with a par to claim the title for the second year running. The 2019 Algarve Golf Challenge will be played at Pestana Vila Sol in Vilamoura from January 25-29. Golfers interested in teeing it up should visit www.golfvoyager.com or call 0611-514600 for details.

IRELAND boasts myriad wonderful golf facilities but you would be hard-pressed to find one that has such a positive impact on people's lives as the patients' putting green at St. Luke's Hospital in Dublin.

The primary national centre for radiotherapy treatment, the hospital which opened in 1952, was founded by the Cancer Association of Ireland and remains a hugely important facility to this day.

Families all over Ireland who have been touched by the disease will be more than familiar with the great work carried out at St Luke's, which is hidden away in the leafy suburbs of Rathgar and Dartry.

Its financing remains one of the great challenges of the Irish health system but thanks to the efforts of the volunteers in the Friends of St Luke's, more than €1 million a year is raised to provide patients with all the services they need.

Since 2003, those services have included a patients' putting green, and it has proved to be an invaluable amenity for those undergoing long-term treatment.

Many stay on site at the Lodge and thanks to the efforts of a former patient, Pádraig Harrington's late father Paddy; they can get out in the fresh air with friends, family or other patients for a few hours of relaxation and golfing distraction.

Walk through the reception of the Lodge and you will find an array of putters and some chipping clubs in the doorway and just 25 yards beyond lies the magnificent, 800 sq. m putting green that Harrington senior was determined to see built.

It is situated on what was once the old tennis court and croquet green and opened by the Ryder Cup player some 15 years ago with the help of generous benefactors and the design skills of Jeff Howes.

"Paddy was a patient there and there was an old bowling green so he thought the hospital could do something for the patients," recalled Paddy's widow, Breda.

"I have often wondered how the green was doing and I am just thrilled to hear it is so well looked after and so popular with the patients. It's great to see that even if someone is sick, they can get out and have a putt. I know Paddy would be very pleased indeed."

The Friends of St Luke's pays for the upkeep of the green, and it is ironic that the man charged with giving the putting surface the



Fraser McMullen, braves a snowy morning at St Luke's Hospital in Rathgar to have a few putts on the green and (below) the plaque which pays tribute to Paddy Harrington



The Friends of St. Lukes Hospital wish to acknowledge the contribution of Paddy Harrington to the patient putting green which was officially opened by his son Pádraig Harrington Irelands Ryder Cup Player September 2006

year-round, tender loving care is married to senior women's international Gertie McMullen, the daughter of their co-founder.

"Gertie's late father, Prof. Michael O'Halloran, helped established the Friends of St Luke's in 1981," said Dubliner Fraser McMullen, whose Sportsground and Field Services company looked after Croke Park and Donnybrook and serviced many golf clubs before it closed in the wake of the most recent economic downturn.

"He was the former medical

director of St Luke's Hospital and a really great man.

"The green is a great facility for patients to have. Otherwise they would be just waiting in their room all day, so it's great to see. Nobody likes being in hospital, so it is nice they have this in their lives."

Fraser is himself recovering from serious illness, having suffered a brain haemorrhage last April.

But he is now back into his daily routine at St Luke's, where he has seen dozens of patients take to the game with gusto.

"I see people out there putting who had never picked up a golf club in their lives before," he explained.

"I tell guys, 'Go in and grab a putter and have a go.' And I come back a week later, and they'll say, 'Thanks very much for that — we

When putting is a game for patients

Putting green at St Luke's is proving an invaluable amenity for those in treatment. By **Brian Keogh**

were out there for hours!' It keeps the mind active, which is important.

"This is my sixth year looking after the green I could be out at 5 am on a summer's morning watering and find two or three patients out there when I arrive.

"They stay in the Lodge from Monday to Friday, get the bug, and there they are — putting away."

"It is a huge help to many patients, especially when families come with children to visit."

Team matches are frequent with the beginners among the ladies challenging the men to take them on last year, provided they wore oven gloves to even the odds.

"It is used a lot," said Fiona Campbell, a spokesperson for the Friends of St Luke's.

"A patient might only have treatment for half an hour and then have the rest of the day free. So if they are feeling well enough, they can head out to the putting green, walk in the grounds or visit the arts centre.

"When families come, children are out on the green, and it's wonderful to see. It's an extra facility for the hospital."

The Friends of St Luke's tries to raise as much as €1 million every year, using the funds to improve the lives of the patients.

New wheelchairs and rooms for relatives are key items, and they are now in the process of refurbishing the pharmacy having just put in two new lifts, and reconditioned the original lift from the 1950s. "Last year we opened a children's

play area and a chill-out room for adolescents," Fiona added. "Before that, there was no child-friendly indoor space for children as they waited for their treatment or while being monitored post-treatment."

"Our target is to raise €1 million a year among the families of the patients and friends so our next big goal is to put in an MRI, which might take a few years."

Golfers looking to do their bit for St Luke's Hospital can tee it up in the Friends of St Luke's Annual Golf Classic, which will be played at Castle Golf Club on May 18 (shotgun start at 2 pm).

Teams of four cost €750 so to enter, contact Dee Turley — dee@friendsofstlukes.ie or call 01 406 5314 to make a booking (or a donation by credit card).

T2G BRIEFS



Forrest Little Men's and Ladies' Captains Ray Grogan and Laura Dooley and Chairman Peter Reilly with Corrstown Men's and Ladies' Captains Peter Lehane and Suzanne Reynolds and Chairman Oliver Boyce.

Corrstown and Forrest Little create Dublin's first 45-hole membership

FORREST Little Golf Club and Corrstown Golf Club have forged a relationship they believe is the first of its kind between two member-owned clubs in the Dublin region.

A new arrangement will allow members to play and enjoy the benefits of membership at the other club free of charge, including select competition play.

Corrstown chairman, Oliver Boyce said: "We have been thinking of this concept for a while as part of our strategy to both reward and retain loyal Members by giving them greater value for money."

"It had to be a top golf course that we linked with, it was fantastic to find a like-minded management team at Forrest Little who embraced the idea."

Peter Reilly, Chairman of Forrest Little near Dublin Airport, believes his

club shares the same core values as Corrstown, which is just a 10-minute drive away at Kilsallaghan.

"We see it as a win-win for both clubs, but most importantly a reward for our loyal members," he said.

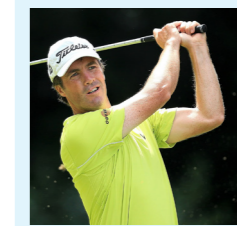
The arrangement is for a trial period of one year initially and is free to existing members.

The first 20 new members joining either club from today can avail of a special introductory rate quoting: #45.

For further details contact: Sean Dunne, Secretary-Manager at Forrest Little, on 01-8401763, sean@forrestlittle.ie or margaret@forrestlittle.ie or visit www.forrestlittle.ie/membership.

For Corrstown GC, contact Daragh Browne, Sales & Marketing Executive, on 01-8640533, sales@corrstowngolfclub.com or visit www.corrstowngolfclub.com/membership

Rice wins at Druids Heath



Limerick's Tim Rice

IRISH PGA Championship holder Tim Rice took the top prize in week 12 of the Titleist sponsored Druids Glen Winter Alliance at Druids Heath.

The Limerick talent scored 36 points in win from four from Druids Heath's David Gilseenan with Paul Mahoney a point further back in third.

PGA professional Greg Leech won the gross on a countback from Marc Nolan and Manuel Alvarez with 30 points while Druids Glen professional Patrick Geraghty leads the Order of Merit by four points from Nolan.

Super Sixes are hailed a success

NEW formats are now the rage in professional golf with the European Tour staging the ISPS HANDA World Super 6 Perth in Australia this week.

Irish amateur golf has used tried and trusted formats for more than a century but if the success of last week's Irish Student Sixes Tournament at The Heath Golf Club in Laois is any indication, golfers are happy to embrace change.

The first tournament of its kind for amateur golfers in Ireland, Maynooth University's David Brady and Cian Feeney took first prize with a top score of 15 gross stableford points over the final six holes.



Cian Feeney (MU) and David Brady (MU) winners of the Irish Student Sixes Tournament. Picture: Golffile

Following the introduction of a nine-hole sprint event to the interspersed schedule last year, the Sixes tournament called for an even more aggressive approach. Thirty pairings were divided into five groups of six, each pair was slated to play five matches, three of them on the opening day.

The tournament concluded with a six-hole shootout, providing each team with 36 holes over two days.

Electrifying savings boost for GUI clubs

FLOGAS and the Golfing Union of Ireland have confirmed very special business-to-business electricity rates for golf clubs located in the Republic of Ireland.

GUI Members with their own business or those responsible for energy overheads in their place of employment, and sub-contracted services, like catering and maintenance within golf clubs, can all benefit from up to 15% cheaper electricity with Flogas.

At present, Mullingar, Headfort and Charleville are just some of the GUI Affiliated golf clubs around Ireland that are enjoying between 10%- 15% reductions on their energy bills following their switch to Flogas for B2B Electricity.

Alan Kelly, Communications Manager with the Golfing Union of Ireland said: "The GUI is delighted to bring this offer from Flogas, which is for the benefit of its



John Foley MD Flogas Ireland and Pat Finn CEO GUI. Picture: Gotfile.ie

member golf clubs across Ireland.

"While the electricity offer is only available in the Republic of Ireland at present, Flogas also provides LPG and Natural Gas to clubs in Northern Ireland and I would encourage all golf clubs to get in touch with Flogas to see what they can offer."

Many Clubs in the Republic and Northern Ireland are already customers of Flogas for LPG and Natural Gas and enjoying savings on that front as well.

Flogas is the title sponsor of the Irish Amateur Open Championship for 2018, its third year in a row to be associated with this very exciting championship.

John Rooney, Managing Director, Flogas Ireland also commented, "We're delighted to be able to support the activities of the GUI and its members as a sponsor, and we are looking forward to a very productive and fruitful collaboration for many years to come."

To find out how Flogas business to business electricity can save money for your club or your business, contact Karen Canavan, Commercial Sales Co-Ordinator with Flogas, on kecanavan@flogas.ie or 041.9815817.