

The Bernard Darwin Trophy Review - 2025

Wellington hit the first drive of the 2025 Darwin events when the **Senior Darwin** got off to its usual frenetic start. Roadworks led to a few very last-minute disclosures of teams. And one player did what we have all done at some point – he left his clubs at home.

The 'Round 1' morning session had its fair share of excitement. The Wellington second pair, Northcott and Hardingham, played their fourth shot on the 14th from the clubhouse verandah. And the local rule relating to flowerbeds around the clubhouse was required at least twice on Day 1. The pick of the ties in the morning was probably Charterhouse against Harrow. Nigel Sellars stepped in to play with Michael Robinson at third pair for the Carthusians. Nigel, who is so often a Darwin spectator, admitted to being very nervous. But they won their game to help Charterhouse win the tie.

Harrow would go on to win the Senior Darwin Plate competition in the afternoon with a combined stableford score for the two pairs over 14 holes of 37 points. Congratulations to Jamie Warman and team.

The afternoon's quarter finals saw a heavyweight match at the top of the draw. Both Tonbridge and Charterhouse were weakened by injury and our best wishes go to Jonathan Hubbard, Richard Partridge and Anthony Wreford for full recoveries. On this occasion Charterhouse had the stronger 'bench' and won all three games. Elsewhere, Malvern continued with their excellent form, dispatching Repton.

In the bottom half of the draw, the much-fancied Uppingham had a scare against Marlborough. Carrick and Mockridge played at the top for Marlborough and made light work of Freeman and Pattrick. But Chris Gotla and David 'Angus' Stewart continued their strong form to win at second pair for Uppingham. The deciding game was a cracker and went into extra holes. The '19th' for this match was in fact the 15th hole. Marlborough drove the ball onto the Woking GC tree-lined practice ground, which is in bounds... and challenging. They were not able to make par from there, so Uppingham came out on top.

All of which left Highgate to play Eton. Highgate are on a roll and were assisted by a sickness in the Eton camp, which left them with just two pairs in the afternoon. So, Highgate required just one win from the two afternoon matches. But, standing by the clubhouse, Highgate captain Gerald Wingrove was in a state of high anxiety as the two games went through the 14th. Both games were level at that point. Fortunately for Gerald, his first pair made a great par on the 18th to win the game...and the match.

The semi-finals of the Senior Darwin saw a mouth-watering tie at the top of the draw.

Last year's winners took on the local favourites Charterhouse. The Malvern team was precisely the same as that which won the Senior Darwin in 2024 – same pairs, same order. And they did not disappoint, winning the first two pairs to seal the tie. In the bottom half, Highgate's great run was to come to an end. In three tight games, Uppingham would seal their place in the final.

It is fair to say that Uppingham ran out of puff in the afternoon's final. For whatever reason, they just could not get going. Part of the reason, no doubt, was that the Malvern team continued their outstanding form. The consistency of the Malvern pairs through 2024 and 2025 was admirable, and they went on to win the final with room to spare. Our congratulations to the Malvern team on doing "the double". There is great team spirit there, with the players cajoled by the fine leadership of non-playing captain Bruce Streather. Malvern have laid down the challenge for 2026. Who can stop them doing the treble?



As ever, the **Veteran Darwin** players (75 and over) joined us on the second day of the Senior Darwin. We had a mixed turnout, with five schools failing to field even one pair. However, the other eleven schools produced 19 pairs, which included some of the great names of Halford Hewitt golf, such as Malvern's Jeremy Lowe and Richard 'Gorilla' Thompson.

The Veterans' field included 15 octogenarians, with every single one exuding the same competitive spirit of their heyday. In the end though, the winners were a pair of septuagenarians, Andrew Aylwin and Stephen Posford of Harrow. Playing scratch stableford off a bogey card (par 80), the Harrow pair came in with a terrific score of 34 points, some five points clear of the field.

For the Veterans, we also run an age-adjusted competition. This year's event was close with the Uppingham pair of Downes and Cooke winning on a countback. Congratulations to our winners, and to all who participated on a special day.



The schools gathered on Thursday, 26th June, for the start of the **Bernard Darwin Trophy** event with Charterhouse looking to do the 'threepeat'. The holders were pushed quite hard by Clifton in the first round but sealed the win on the 18th green at third pair. Highgate continued their winning streak with a 2-1 win over Rugby. Tonbridge won a very tight encounter with Marlborough, winning two games on the last green. And Malvern squeezed past The Leys, winning the deciding game on the 20th hole.

There was no doubt that the shock result of the morning came from Winchester who beat Harrow. The Winchester 'top' pair, Hewetson (shirt tucked in for once) and Fell, who observers considered might well be sacrificial lambs, produced an incredible display of sunk putts, chips and bunker shots to defeat Warman and Tindall. Elsewhere, Uppingham, Radley and Eton made relatively light work of Repton, Wellington and Westminster respectively.

As with the Senior Darwin, all teams took lunch in the dining room this year and enjoyed an excellent summer buffet with varying quantities of wine. In the afternoon's second round, Eton, Radley and Charterhouse were reasonably comfortable victors. Uppingham beat Winchester but Hewetson and Fell, now at third pair for Winchester, nearly repeated their form of the morning, eventually losing on the 17th to Lewin and Lloyd of Uppingham.

Nerves were on show in the semi-final round on Friday morning. At the first hole, the second pairs of Uppingham and Eton must have broken a record for the distance between tee shots. Two of the games in that tie went to the last hole, with Allingham and Dickson of Uppingham clinching victory on the 18th. In the top half, Charterhouse and Radley won one game each by 4&3, leaving all eyes on the first pairs. In a top-quality game, Charterhouse prevailed on the 17th hole.

And so to the final - and the stakes were high, with Charterhouse going for the 'threepeat' and Uppingham looking for a memorable victory in the OUGS centenary year. The Charterhouse top pair of Asprey and Allen always looked likely winners against Freeman and Moffatt, eventually winning 4&3. At second pair, Allingham and Dickson of Uppingham eventually came through 2&1 against Hill and Gray, leaving the scene set for a third pair showdown.

The Uppingham third pair of Andrew Lewin and Stuart Lloyd found themselves three down with five to play against Royds and Foley-Brickley of Charterhouse. Uppingham won the 14th thanks to an excellent long-range putt across the green from Lloyd. The 15th was halved with a pair of terrific birdies and Uppingham won the 16th after Charterhouse found a very unfortunate lie off the tee. On the 17th hole both teams were greenside in two, facing tricky approach shots. And it was Uppingham who managed to get up and down for a four to take the match to all square. Two nervy drives on the 18th saw both teams in the heather, on either side of the fairway. Both second shots left the balls short of the green. Charterhouse chipped on to 12 feet but were outdone by Lloyd of Uppingham who chipped to four feet. The Charterhouse putt was missed and Andrew Lewin, better known for his cricket than his golf and playing in his first Darwin, coolly sank the winning putt for Uppingham.



So, a tough result for a Charterhouse side who had played so well over the two days. But a super win for Uppingham in their centenary year, recording just their second success in the Bernard Darwin Trophy. In the plate competition, played for the Bernard Darwin Goblet, Harrow pipped second place Marlborough by just one point, offering some consolation to Warman and Tindall. The Old Harrovians won both 'plate' competitions and the Veteran Darwin this year – an interesting treble.



Our thanks go to Woking Golf Club for being terrific hosts once again.
And our specific thanks go to Mark Gravette (Club Captain) and
Simon Chantrey (President) for joining us for prize giving.

We look forward to seeing everyone back at Woking GC next year.

2026 competition dates
Senior Darwin – 9th and 10th June
Veteran Darwin 10th June
Bernard Darwin Trophy 2nd and 3rd July