

NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2023



JAMIE'S BLOG

I'm sure by now you will all know what a great year 2022 was for Variety Golf.

Not only did we hold a record number of events with record attendances, we also raised enough to put forty Sunshine Coaches on the road, equivalent to more than £2m!

All of this is down to you, our members, and the generosity of our corporate partners and sponsors – many of whom are individual members as well. Variety Golf is in very good shape.

The biggest challenge we face this year is undoubtedly the increased cost of our Sunshine Coaches. As you will realise, the whole of the motor industry has been hit hard by current market conditions, not least the seemingly never-ending shortage of electronic components upon which modern vehicles depend. Added

to this is inflation, which appears to be a problem across the world, increased energy costs and the war in Ukraine. These factors combined mean that the cost of a Sunshine Coach is up by over 25%, meaning that we are now looking to raise between £30-£35,000 per coach.

So, having faced (and successfully overcome) the Covid crisis, we are now faced with yet another challenge, namely to match let alone exceed our performance last year. To achieve this target we have to set our sights on raising a further £250k. With your help that shouldn't be beyond us.

One way is to encourage more people and companies to hold their own golf days in aid of Variety Golf. We refer to these as "Proceeds to" events. Last year we benefitted from six of these, some organised by Variety Golf members at their own clubs, but mostly from non-members who chose us as their charity of choice.

If you can encourage anyone you know to help in this way, I would be very grateful. I am fully aware that we cannot keep on going back to you, our members, asking for more and more, plus there is a limit to how many events we can organise ourselves. "Proceeds to" events neatly solve both problems.

Meanwhile, the current season has got off to a flying start with our new Captain, John Conteh, MBE, in fine form and three successful golfing events already behind us.

I wish you all a most enjoyable Spring and Summer and look forward to seeing many of you on the fairways again soon.



At the Ivy - Our First Captains' Lunch



Variety Golf held its first Captain's Lunch in a private room at the Ivy in Covent Garden on Friday, February 17th.

The lunch kicked off with a champagne reception followed by a classic 'Ivy' lunch of smoked salmon, shepherd's pie and apple crumble.

More than sixty members attended determined to make sure John enjoyed his very first event of the season. In his opening remarks, Variety Golf Chair, Pip Burley, referred to the fact that whilst we have always been lucky enough to have a celebrity as our Captain, it was rare for us to have an international sporting star. You can see in the picture that we began a new tradition and presented our

incoming Captain with a jacket and, just like the winner of the US Masters, John got a green one!

We were entertained superbly throughout the lunch, firstly by Bob 'the Cat' Bevan who hosted our Heads and Tails game and then by 'Magic Man' David Redfearn who was totally mystifying as always. Topping the Bill was John's fellow 'scouser' Stan Boardman who was hilarious and presented John with a big red 'This is Your Life Book' summarising John's amazing career!

It really was a special Lunch and thanks to all of you who attended.



Our Captain John Conteh, MBE

Knock Us Out Captain!



John was Born in Toxteth, Liverpool in 1951 to an Irish mother and Sierra Leonean father, one of a family of ten. Obviously why he gets on with us lot. He was encouraged by his father to take up boxing when he was 11 and showed a natural talent. Nine years later he won the Amateur Boxing Association belt – and went on to represent England winning a gold in the middleweight division at the 1970 British Commonwealth Games.

Turning professional at the age of twenty, during the years 1974-1978 he would go on to become the holder of the WBC European, British and Commonwealth titles as well as become the WBC light heavyweight

champion. He was one of only seven British Light Heavyweights to win a World Championship since 1903 - positioning him as one of Britain's great boxing champions.

He was the subject of 'This Is Your Life' in 1974 and, the same year, won the BBC television sports challenge show *Superstars*. He appeared in films such as *Man at the Top*, and *The Stud*, and made a starring appearance as a washed-up boxer in the television series *Boon* in 1989. He appeared on a boxing special of *The Weakest Link* and also featured on the cover of Paul McCartney's Wings album *Band on the Run* (with Kenny Lynch) and is

the subject of four portraits in the National Portrait Gallery.

John was appointed MBE in the 2017 Birthday Honours for services to boxing (the same year Donald Trump made it into the White House and Mrs May was Prime Minister) – one of only six boxers in history to do so. One of those, of course, was our old friend and Chairman, Sir Henry Cooper, who was the only one to get a knighthood.

This is the second time John has been Captain of Variety Golf having previously filled the role in 2002.

John, you are really welcome as Captain and we are all so pleased you have accepted the job.

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Please note that all our events fill up very quickly. So, to avoid disappointment, please book up early. First check our website (varietygolf.org.uk) for details, format and cost, then call Jamie on 07801 098101

- 28th April: Ladies European Tour Pro-Am – Sundridge Park GC
- 9th-10th May: Variety Loch Lomond Pro-Invitational – Loch Lomond GC
- 16th May: Ray Clemence Invitational – Hanbury Manor
- 15th June: Presidents Day – Coombe Hill
- 22nd June: Sunshine Classic – Woburn GC
- 5th July: Variety Team Championship – Bearwood Lakes
- 17th July: Variety Pro-Am – Brocket Hall GC
- 27th July: Sir Bruce Forsyth Trophy – Wentworth Club

A Little Bit of History

Variety Golf Will be Celebrating its 60th Anniversary in 2025

The Variety Club of Great Britain Golf Society (now Variety Golf) was formed in 1965 with its sole objective to raise money for the purchase of Sunshine Coaches to be donated to schools and care centres for disabled and disadvantaged children.

The first President of the Society was Leslie A Macdonnell CBE KSG (right) who was, during his year as Chief Barker of the Variety Club of Great Britain (now Variety the Children's Charity), Managing Director of the London Palladium. Leslie was a founder member of the Golf Society, but on his demise, the position of President was taken over



by Sir William E Butlin MBE who was one of the greatest benefactors of children's charities ever known. At the time most of the Society's members were connected with show business or sport.

After Sir Billy Butlin, the role was taken on by Lord Victor Matthews, then Lady Sheila Butlin, and now currently resides with legendary entertainer Jimmy Tarbuck OBE, OStJ who has been a member for more than fifty years.

The Society, rebranded as Variety Golf in 2019, still has a significant celebrity membership, but consists mainly of business people who share a passion for raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves.

In 1965, the First Captain of the Variety Club Golf Society...

...was actor, Jeremy Hawk. He was born on May 20, 1918 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Suave and debonaire, his many films included parts in Lucky Jim, The Thirty-Nine Steps (the re-make with Kenneth Moore), Return of the Pink Panther (in which he assisted the bungling Inspector Clouseau played by Peter Sellers) and, most recently in 1998, Elizabeth, starring Cate Blanchett. His face was familiar on Television through his many appearances on the Benny Hill Show.

He was a keen golfer and, at his peak, played off a handicap of 3. He was married three times to Lisa Hawk, Tuli Hawk and Joan Heal. He died in January 2002 at the age of eighty-three at his home in Reading, Berkshire.



Hitting the Headlines...

Once again, we are partnering with leading UK Golf Magazine, Golf Monthly, to provide us with coverage both within the magazine itself, and also digitally using their wide network of social media opportunities.

So far, a double spread editorial will be appearing in their next issue which will be followed up by a series of whole page colour advertisements. Various other features will appear on golf and corporate social media, promoting our aims and objectives and

encouraging new corporate partners to sign up to run their own events in aid of our charitable fundraising. Keep your eye on the UK's favourite golf magazine for more news of our activities.

varietygolf
improving young lives every day

Transforming disadvantaged children's lives through golf

Last year Variety Golf raised £2m and presented 40 Sunshine Coaches. We talk to Captain, John Conteh MBE, about how your company can help

U John Conteh MBE is the new captain of the Variety Golf Society. Variety Golf was founded in 1965 to purchase Sunshine Coaches for disabled and disadvantaged children. It has also partnered with The Golf Trust, which organises golf lessons for disabled children.

All Conteh explains: "For schools and organisations catering for children with special needs, the lack of suitable facilities for children with disabilities makes life a real headache for teachers and carers. But a Sunshine Coach makes it possible to take children in comfort and safety to experience new places, whether this is for sport and leisure pursuits, to visit interesting or historical places or just to access the core curriculum at other schools. It lets these children explore places they would otherwise never get to. This makes it possible for them to integrate more into the local community. The increased self-esteem and confidence that comes from doing something as simple as having a drink or snack in a cafe is hard to imagine, but teachers will tell you they see the difference. When children have new experiences, there's more to share and talk about so their social and communication skills improve."

A Sunshine Coach costs in the region of between £35-£40,000 depending on its specification, but there are many ways that a company or golf club can help Variety Golf.

John Conteh MBE is captain of Variety Golf for the second time

What they say

One of the companies that has done this is **Edi Residential**. Managing director James Ahern explains: "Variety Golf has run our Edi Residential Company Golf Day on The Greens for the past four years from start to finish and every detail was handled perfectly. We were delighted to raise enough funds for two Golf Days to present our own Variety Sunshine Coach to an amazing special needs school which is just round the corner from our office. The satisfaction from seeing that Sunshine Coach on our way to work makes it so very special."

Road Thomas, CEO of **Greener**, says his firm has been thrilled to present five Sunshine Coaches in the last five years. "To see the

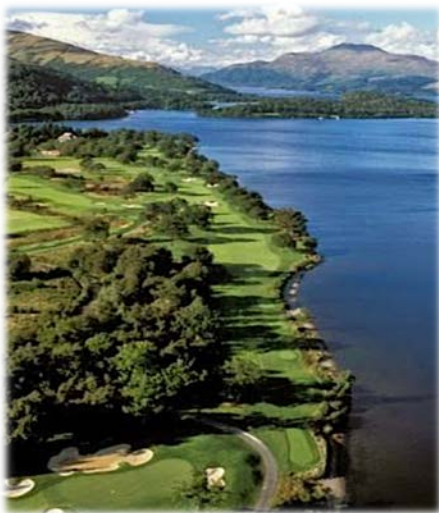
smiles on the children's faces when they receive their own Sunshine Coach makes it all worthwhile," he says.

Disability Children programme, or by holding fundraising golf days, often with working entertainment provided by Variety Golf.

"Our generous members come from all walks of life," says Conteh. "But with the same goal in mind to enjoy golf in great company of great venues, whilst raising money for the children. Variety Golf will be there to help with all the preparations of what you can be sure of will be a very special day where you will enjoy the company of our celebrity members on the course - not to mention some great evening entertainment!"

How you can help

If you believe you would be able to help in Variety Golf's charitable objectives, please get in touch with director of golf, James Ahern, on 01628 626611 or e-mail him at james@varietygolf.org.uk



Looking Ahead to Loch Lomond

This year Variety Golf has two events at this fabulous golfing venue

Such has been the popularity of our "Rugby Legends" event at Loch Lomond, that we have been fortunate enough to obtain a second slot on May 8th and 9th when we will be holding a Variety Pro-Am Invitational.

Meanwhile, the 10th Rugby Legends event will go ahead in September as usual on Sept 3rd and 4th.

If you haven't experienced the magic of playing this wonderful golf course, rated amongst the best in the world, you should. Sadly, if not surprisingly, both these events are fully booked. However, cancellations do happen, so if you would like to be put down as a reserve, please get in touch with Jamie as soon as possible.

Jamie's 11th Charity Pro-Am at The Grove

On Friday March 31st we were at The Grove for Jamie's 11th Charity Pro-Am. Despite the rain coming and going for most of the round, a great time was had by all. Jamie's good friend and Ryder Cup star, Jamie Donaldson, headlined the impressive list of European Tour Pros and with a huge field of 29 teams playing it was a busy day!

The condition of The Grove was incredible considering how much rainfall there had been in the previous few weeks and the scoring was decent.

After the golf, we were delighted to present a Sunshine Coach in honour of the great Jerry Stevens who ran the Variety Club Golf Society for over 25 years. Jerry's son Marcus and his family were there to present the keys.

It was a very special Coach presentation which was sponsored by funds raised at our Variety Christmas Lunch last year.

After Dinner, David Redfearn was exceptional as always and did some tricks on some of the Tour Pros (left).

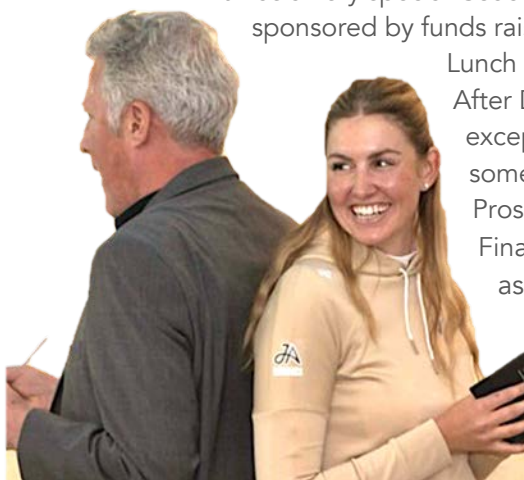
Finally, our Captain, John Conteh, conducted the Live Auction in style - as he always does.

A great day despite the weather that raised just over £20,000, plus a 2nd Variety Sunshine Coach of the year on the road!

Winning Team: Robert Dinwiddie (Pro), Louis Leveson, John Frederick, & Simon Freer, with 89 points. Winning Professional: Robert Dinwiddie with a 69, 3-under par



Jamie and Jamie



March Prize Draw Winners...

The March Prize Draw which was drawn out by our Captain, John Conteh, on Captain's Day at Sandy Lodge. The winners were:

- Ray Nash - £500 Worth of Entries or Clothing
- Eddy Garty - £250 Worth of Entries or Clothing
- Mark Ramprakash - A Variety Golf Peter Millar Sweater & Golf Shirt
- Barry Root - A Variety Golf Sweater

If you would like to join the 100 Club and go in for the Monthly Prize Draws, please let us know, its £20 per month for your name to go into the draw.





2023 Variety Golf Grand Xmas Lunch

The Hilton, Friday, December 8th

Once again it's time to make a diary note – Christmas is not as far away as you think!

This year we have been fortunate to line up two brilliant TV stars, the fabulously entertaining ventriloquist and British Comedy Award Winner, Nina Conti, and the well-known comedian, actor and raconteur, Rob Brydon. Both are sure to entertain us royally as we again expect a full house at the Hilton, Park Lane.

This year tickets will be priced at £185 per person, including a Champagne Reception and a splendid Three-Course Xmas Lunch with Wine.

As always, the Variety Golf Christmas Lunch is open to members, wives and partners, friends and associates. Don't miss it!

We look forward to seeing you.

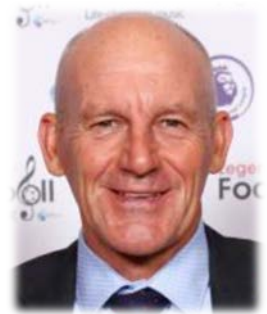
New Committee Members



We are delighted to welcome two new members to the Variety Golf committee - last year's Captain, Steve Coppell and longtime supporter and sponsor Richard Keel.

We are grateful for their further commitment to Variety Golf and look forward to benefitting from their skills and experience as we move forward with plans for the future of our remarkable society.

The committee members currently are: Pip Burley (Chair), Jamie Little (Director of golf), Keith Andrews (Treasurer), Bill Sangster, Tony Negal, Michael Budgen, Steve Coppell and Richard Keel.



Don't forget to look at our website for more information about all our fixtures for 2023. All our events are booking up fast so do please get in touch with Jamie (tel: 07801 098101 or e-mail: Jamie@varietygolf.org.uk) as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.



VARIETY GOLF, MEDBURN LANE, WATLING STREET, HERTS, WD6 3AA TEL: 07801 098101.
E-MAIL: JAMIE@VARIETYGOLF.ORG.UK WEBSITE: WWW.VARIETYGOLF.ORG.UK
