

A Brief History of the Narwhals Golfing Society

1935-2025



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1935-2025

1935 and the origins of the Society's name.

The Narwhals Golfing Society is one of the oldest and most distinguished Golfing Societies in Wales. The Narwhals was established in 1935, eleven years after the foundation of the Erratics Golfing Society in South Wales, as part of the newly formed North Wales Amateur Golf Association. An article in the Denbighshire Free Press noted that *'It was decided to limit the membership of the association to amateur members of a club in the North Wales area, and who have a single-figure handicap.'* In addition, it states that *'The Association team will be known as 'The Narwhals.'* A Narwhal, incidentally, is a species of whale which devours everything it meets!

Whilst there is no clear explanation as to why the Society was called 'The Narwhals,' it is clear that the membership consisted mostly of 'North Walian' golfers: it is reasonable to suggest that the Narwhals was a play on words and so the North Walians became the Narwhals. There is no other apparent link with the sea creature Narwhal, but one of the interesting features of the matches against our partner Golfing Societies is the carrying into match dinners of a replica of a Narwhal tusk, by the golfers who performed badly on the day!

The Narwhals in the 1930s

The Rules of the Society were published in 1936 with the two key objectives being to (a) foster the game of golf in the counties of North Wales and (b) to play matches with Golfing Societies and other representative teams. The Narwhals of the 1930s were an exceptionally powerful society, capable of fielding a side entirely composed of Welsh internationals, and prior to 1939 the founding officials of the Narwhals successfully organised a number of fixtures with other prestigious Societies and representative teams. Two club matches were played in 1935 but the first Society match (as reported in the Daily Post, October 19th, 1935) of what is perhaps the longest Narwhal association, with the Hittites of Cheshire and Lancashire, was played at Prestatyn in October, 1935. A return match was played against the Hittites at Hoylake on 29th March 1936. A total of ten matches were played in 1936 against various teams. The early links with Cheshire clubs successfully promoted future fixtures, in particular, at Delamere Forest and Wilmslow.

In addition to celebrated North Walian golfers like Charles Hobleby Eaves, Sam Roberts and Jimmy Black, the Narwhals



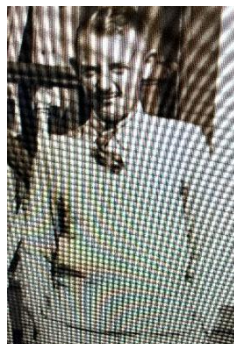
Jimmy Black, Welsh
Champion in 1933.

ranks were boosted pre-war by the election as Honorary Narwhals of a number of distinguished international golfers from South Wales including Henry Howell, Roger Chapman and R M de Lloyd, all of whom won the Welsh Amateur

Championship at least once, as did Black (in 1933) and Roberts (who won the first of his three Welsh titles in 1934).



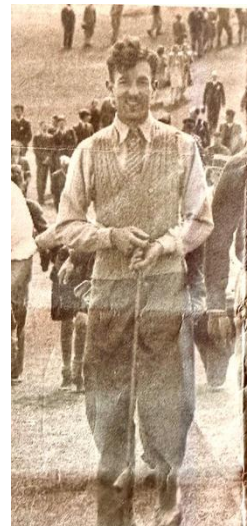
Sam Roberts, Welsh Champion in 1934.



Henry Howell, Welsh Champion 8 times.



R Chapman, Welsh Champion in 1935.



RM de Lloyd, Welsh Champion in 1936.

The Narwhals in the 1940's

The Second World War had a very significant impact on golfing activities in North Wales, with both the Conwy links and parts of Harlech taken over for military purposes. Nonetheless the Narwhals emerged in strength after 1945, and in 1947 two Narwhals, Sam Roberts and Jim Breen Turner, contested the final of the Welsh Amateur at Harlech, with Roberts winning the championship for the second time. Narwhals Myles Clark (in 1947) and Breen Turner (in 1949) joined Hoblely Eaves and Sam Roberts in representing Wales in the Home Internationals.



Sam Roberts, 1947 Welsh Champion.

The Narwhals in the 1950s

The Society was particularly active and thriving during this period. Narwhal relationships with many other Golfing Societies and golf clubs flourished and matches were played against the following: The Welsh Northern Counties Ladies, Three Counties Golf Union, the Hittites, Delamere Forest Golf Club, Portmarnock Golf Club (whose team invariably included the great Irish amateur Joe Carr), the Wigorns Golf Society, the Blasters Golf Society, Royal County Down Golf Club and the Old Lerpoolians. The fixture against the Welsh Northern Counties Ladies was an

innovative initiative as matches involving Golfing Societies tended at that time to be between gentlemen only.

Sir Geoffrey Summers, a successful businessman and director of John Summers, steel manufacturers in Shotton, was elected as the Society President in 1954 and was a strong supporter of the Narwhals in this role until 1972. It is believed that he presented four solid steel trophies of miniature Narwhals, of which three still exist at Royal Liverpool, Royal St David's and Prestatyn: the fourth trophy remains unaccounted for.

Emergent international golfers of the 1950s from the Narwhal ranks included Ted Davies, Ian Hughes and Edgar Mills, and both Edgar (in 1957) and Sam Roberts (in 1953) won the Welsh Amateur title, the latter thus achieving the unique feat of



victories in three consecutive decades.

Edgar Mills, Welsh Champion in 1957 & Welsh Senior Champion in 1980 & 1986.

Sam Roberts, 1953 Champion.



The Narwhals in the 1960s

A busy calendar of fixtures took place during this decade with Narwhal matches played against the Welsh Northern Counties Ladies, Three Counties Golf Union, Delamere Forest Golf Club, the Hittites, the Wigorns Golf Society, the Blasters, Old Lerpooians, the Acers, Royal Blackheath Golf Club, the Erratics Golf Society, Wilmslow Golf Club, The Oxford & Cambridge Golf Society and the Windcheaters Golf Society.



A further wave of Narwhal international caps saw representative honours gained for the first time by Jimmy Buckley in 1967, Dave McLean in 1968 and by A V (Tony) Moss in 1965: Tony is one of very few Welsh internationals subsequently to be appointed an England selector!

Jimmy Buckley,
1968 Welsh
Champion.

The Narwhals in the 1970s

Although fewer Narwhal matches were played during the 1970s, our relationship with particular Societies and clubs strengthened. Narwhal fixtures included matches with the Three Counties Golfing Union, Wilmslow Golf Club, the Hittites, Delamere Forest Golf Club, D P Jones' Cheshire Team, the Acers and the Old Lerpoolians. Matches were also played against a team from the University of Wales in 1972 and 1973 and against the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society in the mid-1970s.

Once again during this period there was a very strong representation from our members in the Home Internationals. Those Narwhals who made their international debuts in the 1970s included Barry Owen (in 1971) Clive Brown (also in 1971), John Roger (JR) Jones (in 1972), John Parry (in 1975) and Terry Melia (in 1976).

Dave McLean, Welsh
Champion in 1973 &
1978.



Clive Brown, Welsh
Champion in 1971.



Ted Davies, Welsh Champion
1970 & 1972.



Terry Melia, the 1979 Welsh
Champion.

The Narwhals in the 1980s

Unfortunately, the Society's records for this decade are very scanty, and no information is available to indicate Narwhals activities between 1986 and 1989 although we do know that after 21 years of loyal service, Norman Jones retired as the Treasurer of the Society. Jim Corson also retired as Secretary in 1984 after 29 years in post. These significant retirements inevitably impacted the administration of the Society.

However, from 1980 to 1985, a number of Narwhals matches were played against the following teams: North Wales Juniors, Delamere Forest Golf Club, Wilmslow Golf

Club, the Old Lerpoolians, Dyfed Golf Union (formerly the Three Counties Golf Union) and the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society.



JR, Welsh Champion in 1983 & Welsh Senior Champion, 2000.

During the 1980s Narwhal members enjoyed conspicuous success in both the Welsh Amateur and Welsh Stroke-Play Championships, and several Narwhals proudly represented Wales on multiple occasions in the Home Internationals, with Michael Calvert (in 1983) and E O Jones (in 1985) newly capped by Wales during this period. Holyhead's Dave McLean remains the most capped Narwhal of all.

One important development during this period was the significant expansion of competitive senior amateur golf, and Narwhal Edgar Mills from Maesdu, added the Welsh Seniors Championships of 1980 and 1986 to his earlier Welsh Amateur title.



EO Jones, Welsh Champion, 1985.

The Narwhals in the 1990s

This was a challenging decade for the Society's own activities, although two individual Narwhals made major contributions to the wider game of golf in the British Isles. The input of Jim Bolger and Norman Jones successfully secured the services of John Roger Jones as the Secretary and Clive Brown as the Treasurer in 1996, in order to revitalise the Society and further promote Narwhal meetings and matches. Spring and Autumn meetings were held annually from 1996 to 1999 at courses which included North Wales and Porthmadog.

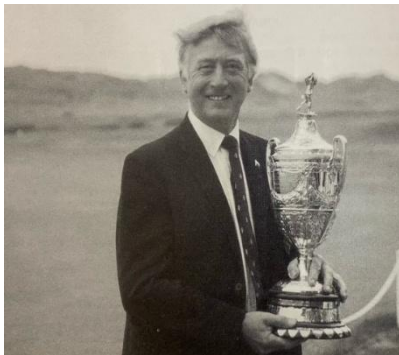
Colonel W Vivian Jones, a former Captain and President of the Narwhals bequeathed the significant and important sum of £1,000 to the Society in January, 1990. In later years, members were also extremely grateful to Rod Gizzi, a long-standing member for his generous donation to the Society.

Narwhal members attended the 50th Anniversary of the Blasters Society in 1999, prompting discussions of a revival of that fixture, and a match was also played against the Royal St David's Golf Club in 1999. The possibility of reviving the historic fixture with the Hittites was also raised.

In 1995, Clive Brown had achieved great success as Captain of our victorious Walker Cup team at the Royal Porthcawl Golf Club, the first Welshman ever to captain a

winning GB & I side. Future major champions who played in this match included Tiger Woods and Padraig Harrington and when Clive Brown captained the Walker Cup team again in 1997 at Quaker Ridge, New York, Justin Rose made his debut appearance.

This decade was also a particularly busy period for John Roger Jones (known affectionately to everyone in the golfing community as 'JR'). In addition to his numerous achievements on the course, JR became more actively involved in administrative matters. These included his appointment as Captain of the Welsh Team in 1990, being elected a member of the R&A in 1994, a member of the latter's Rules Committee in 1996, President of the Welsh Golfing Union in 1998 and appointed to the Championship Committee of the R&A in 1999.



Ian Hughes, Welsh Senior Champion, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, & 1997.



David Reidford, Welsh Senior Champion in 1998.

Narwhals continued to sparkle at national senior level, with Ian Hughes winning five Welsh Senior titles at Aberdovey during the decade and David Reidford one.

The Narwhals in the 2000s

Very few matches were played against our partner Golfing Societies during this period apart from the successful revival of the match with the Hittites in 2007. The focus appeared to be on local fixtures against the Vale of Llangollen Golf Club and the North Wales Boys. However, the Narwhals did once again take on the Oxford & Cambridge Golf Society in August 2007 at Royal St David's.



Phil Jones, Welsh Senior Champion in 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2010

Members continued to meet regularly for the Spring and Autumn meetings throughout the decade, playing on the links courses of Porthmadog, Conwy and North Wales. Success in the Welsh Senior championship at Aberdovey continued, with both JR Jones and Phil Jones winning the title, the latter for three years in succession.

There had been a real risk that for the first time ever in the long history of the Narwhals, the decade would see no Narwhal capped anew by Wales. However, by

representing Wales at the Senior level, Phil Jones continued a remarkable run of international recognition for the Society's members.

Sadly, Jim Breen Turner, Narwhals President and long-standing foursomes partner of Sam Roberts in the Home Internationals, passed away in January 2007.

The Narwhals in the 2010

The Society was established in 1935 and a very interesting and informative 75th anniversary booklet was compiled and written by one of our members, Eric Howells in 2011. Narwhal matches in this decade included fixtures against the Leatherjackets in 2015 and 2018 and the Kummelians in 2018.



Narwhal and dual Welsh Amateur champion Jason Shufflebottom became a regular international golfer early in this decade, making his first appearance for Wales in 2011, to be followed by Lee Jones in 2014 and 2016. Phil Jones claimed the Welsh Seniors title for the fourth time in 2010 and John 'Popman' Williams became a Welsh Senior International in 2018.

Jason Shufflebottom, Welsh Champion in 2011 & 2012

Away from North Wales, both JR Jones and Clive Brown continued

to be active and important members of the R&A, in particular serving on the R&A Rules and Championship Committees.

The Narwhals in the 2020s

In March 2020, lockdown restrictions were introduced in the UK due to COVID, which had a very significant impact on people's lives and on their sporting activities. In September, 2021, an inaugural match was played against the Icelandic Vikings at Prestatyn and an invitation for a return match in Iceland has been received. It was not until the Autumn Meeting of 2022 at Prestatyn that the Narwhals were able collectively to meet again.

The strong Narwhal fixture list for the following year positively promoted links with other well-established societies. During 2023, very successful matches took place against the Erratics at Royal St David's, the Hittites at Conwy, the Moles at Royal St David's and the Kummelians at Nairn.

At the Spring meeting, members proudly congratulated Clive Brown on his election as Captain of the R&A in 2022. This was particularly significant as he became only the second Welshman ever to receive this honour.

During this period Elly Evans (Secretary) ran the Narwhals Golfing Society, arranging fixtures and selecting teams. These were difficult times when golf clubs were struggling with incomes and venues at traditional rates were hard to secure. Nevertheless, Elly Evans negotiated The Society's path through these troubled times in an inventive and enthusiastic manner. Much thanks go to him for his contribution.

A new initiative of a mid-Summer 9-hole meeting at St Melyd Golf Club, organised by Jamie Hughes, the Narwhal Captain, proved to be a very popular event in 2024.

Another successful relationship was reinforced in 2024 when the Narwhals played against the Leatherjackets at Burnham & Berrow. In 2024, a new partnership was established with the Flat Caps Golfing Society from Ireland. The inaugural match was played over three courses, namely Portmarnock, Dollymount (Royal Dublin) and Baltray (County Louth). In 2025 a return match against The Flat Caps was played over two days at Conwy and Royal St David's and the camaraderie between the two Societies was evident and augurs very well for the future.

A midsummer meeting was arranged for 2025 by Clive Brown at Penmaenmawr Golf Club, but unfortunately this had to be cancelled at the last minute due to the closure of the Conwy tunnel a couple of hours before tee off!

A very enjoyable new initiative (the Narwhals Winter Warmer) devised and organised by Martin Jones, (Secretary) was held at Rhyl Golf Club on 30th December, 2025. The Narwhals has a very long association with the club and its former members who included L Peckover Burrill, the first Narwhals Secretary. Rhyl was a regular Welsh championship venue prior to the Second World War and it was the venue for a match in the third year of Narwhals fixtures against Ivor S Thomas's Team on 11th April, 1937. As a consequence of a new sea defence scheme in 1951, the course was re-designed and became a nine-hole course.

An inaugural match against the Welsh Ladies Golfing Union was held at the Chester Golf Club's Sealand links in 1936, a course which no longer exists and was founded in 1891. It later became Curzon Park Golf Club at which Colonel Vivian Jones (past Narwhals Captain and President) was a member. The next Narwhal fixture against a team of Ladies (the North Wales Ladies) also took place at Rhyl, on 20th June, 1937. It was appropriate, therefore, for the Narwhals to revisit this historic golf club, founded in 1890 and reputed to be the fourth oldest golf club in Wales.

2025 Officers of the Narwhals Golfing Society: President - J R Jones, Captain – Jamie Hughes, Treasurer – Ray Ledsham, Secretary – Martin Jones. Executive Committee- Arthur Jones & Guto Lewis. The Committee meets regularly to arrange fixtures and to promote the Society's aims and links with partner societies.

2026 Officers: (TBC) President – J R Jones, Captain - TBC Treasurer – Ray Ledsham, Secretary – Martin Jones. Executive Committee – TBC

Narwhal Society members who have played Men's international golf (for Wales unless otherwise stated)

H Howell (Honorary Member) (1922, 1923, 1925, 1931-1938 inclusive, 1947)

R Chapman (Honorary Member) (1929, 1932, 1934-1936 inclusive)

R(Dick) de Lloyd (Honorary Member) (1931-1938 inclusive, 1947-1948)

JL Black (1932-1936 inclusive)

Douglas Hall, St Deiniol, Bangor (1932 & 1937)

Jimmy Roberts, St Deiniol, (1937)

C Hobley Eaves (1935, 1936, 1938, 1947-1949 inclusive)

SB Roberts (1932-1938 inclusive, 1947-1954 inclusive)

G Wallis (1934, 1936, 1938)

MD Clark (1947)

G Breen Turner (1949-1952 inclusive, 1955-1956)

H Palferman (1950 & 1953)

ID Hughes (1954-1956 inclusive)

ES Mills (1957)

EN Davies (1959-1974 inclusive)

AV Moss (1965-1967 inclusive)

L Roobottom (1967)

JA Buckley (1967-1969 inclusive, 1976-1978 inclusive)

Jimmy Buckley also represented Great Britain & Ireland in the 1979 Walker Cup match

D McLean (1968-1978 inclusive, 1980-1983 inclusive, 1985-1986, 1990)

CT Brown (1970-1975 inclusive, 1977-1978, 1980)

Clive Brown also captained Great Britain & Ireland in the 1995 and 1997 Walker Cup matches

JR Jones (1970, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1980-1985 inclusive)

JB Owen (1971)

JR Parry (1975-1977 inclusive)

TJ Melia (1976-1978 inclusive, 1980-1982 inclusive)

MW Calvert (1983- 1984, 1986-1987, 1989, 1991)

EO Jones (1983, 1985-1986)

Jason Shufflebottom (2017-2013 inclusive)

Lee Jones (2014 & 2016)

Narwhal Society members who have won the Welsh Amateur Championship

H Howell (Honorary Member) (1920,1922,1923,1924,1929,1930,193 & 1932)

JL Black, 1933 (at Porthcawl)

Jimmy Black later became the professional at Royal St David's Golf Club and in 1957 won the Welsh Professional Championship, the first man ever to win both titles

SB Roberts, 1934 (at Prestatyn) 1947 (Royal St David's) & 1953 (Prestatyn)

R Chapman (Honorary Member) 1935 (at Tenby)

RM de Lloyd (Honorary Member) 1936 (at Aberdovey)

ES Mills, 1957 (Royal St David's)

JA Buckley, 1968 (Conwy)

EN Davies, 1970 (at Royal St David's) 1972 (Prestatyn)

CT Brown, 1971 (Southerndown)

D McLean, 1973 (at Ashburnham) 1978 (Conwy)

TJ Melia, 1979 (Ashburnham)

JR Jones, 1983 (at Southerndown) 1984 (Prestatyn)

EO Jones, 1985 (Ashburnham)

Jason Shufflebottom, 2011 ((at Aberdovey) 2012 (Royal St David's)

Narwhal Society members who have won the Welsh Amateur Stroke-Play Championship

EN Davies (1967 (at Royal St David's) 1971 (Royal St David's)

JA Buckley, 1977 (Prestatyn)

JR Jones, 1972 (at Pyle & Kenfig) 1973 (Maesdu) 1982 (Cradoc)

D McLean, 1975 (at Holyhead) 1979 (Holyhead) TJ Melia, 1980 (Tenby)

M Calvert, 1986 (at Pyle & Kenfig)

Narwhal Society members who have won the Welsh Senior Championship

Venue: Aberdovey

Edgar Mills, 1980 & 1986

Ian Hughes, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995 & 1997

David Reidford, 1998

JR Jones, 2000

Phil Jones, 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2010

Our Partner Societies, Clubs and Representative Teams since 1935

The Hittite Golfing Society – founded in 1926 and arranges its home fixtures at Royal Liverpool Golf Club. The Hittites was the first Golfing Society that the Narwhals played against since our inception in 1935.

Chester Golf Club – founded in 1901 and had links with the Welsh Golfing Union. Being close to the Welsh border and having J H Welsby as a member of Chester Golf Club and the Narwhals in 1936, promoted good relationships. This resulted in matches being played regularly at venues including Delamere Forest and Wilmslow Golf Club.

North Wales Counties (Welsh Ladies Golfing Union) – founded in 1904 to promote women's amateur golf across Wales and our fixtures against them date back to 1936.

Liverpool Colts – established in 1933, with the rules stating that all members had to be under the age of 26.

The Three Counties Golf Union, which later became the Dyfed Golfing Union in 1954.

Delamere Forest Golf Club -founded in 1910.

Portmarnock Golf Club – founded in 1895. The club has a rich history including hosting the Canada Cup in 1960 (won by Arnold Palmer & Sam Snead) and the Walker Cup in 1991.

The Wigorns Golf Society – founded in 1950 as a foursome society for golfers over the age of 30 who were members of a Worcestershire Golf Club.

The Blasters Golf Society – formed in 1949. Members of the Narwhals proudly attended the 50th Anniversary of the Blasters at Stockport Golf Club in May, 1999.

The Old Lerpoolians Golf Society – established in 1921 and open to former students of Liverpool College (education for 4 -19 year-olds.)

Royal County Down Golf Club – founded in 1889 and ranked as one of the best courses in the world. The Narwhals first played a match there on May 3rd, 1958.

The Acers Golf Society – a number of matches were played against this society, e.g. at Hoylake on 26th August, 1962 and at Royal St David's on 25th August, 1963. The last fixture was at Prestatyn on 6th September, 1970.

The Erratics – The Society was formed at an official inaugural meeting on 9th January, 1924 and is the oldest golfing society in Wales. Although Sam Roberts had been in contact with Henry Howell (an honorary Narwhal) as early as 1935, the first match eventually took place on 21st/22nd September, 1963 at Royal St David's. The Erratics play their home matches at Royal Porthcawl Golf club.

Oxford & Cambridge Golfing Society – founded in 1898. The Narwhals hosted a match at Royal St David's on 2nd August, 1965 and also in 1971 and 2007.

The Moles Golfing Society – founded in 1911 and in the early days, played their home matches at the West hill Golf Club in Surrey. Since 1996, Royal St Georges Golf Club has been their home venue. The inaugural match with the Narwhals was played in 2021.

The Kummelians – celebrated their 25th Anniversary in June, 2023 at Nairn Golf Club. A Narwhals team was pleased to be invited to participate. Nairn is one of just nine venues to have staged the Walker Cup, Curtis Cup, The Amateur and the Women's Amateur.

Wilmslow Golf Club – founded in 1889. Regular matches were played against a team from the club during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

The Windcheaters – A Society based in Northern Ireland and founded in 1961. They play their home matches at Royal County Down Golf Club. Our first fixture was at Prestatyn on 18th September, 1966.

The Leatherjackets Golfing Society – founded in 1928 and the Society play their home matches at Burnham and Berrow, a world-class links set amongst towering sand dunes.

North Wales Juniors – A team of talented young golfers from clubs in North Wales. Regular matches were played against them from the 1980s.

Vale of Llangollen Golf Club – established in 1908 and a popular fixture with the Narwhals.

Denbigh Golf Club – originally founded in 1908, but closed in 1918 and was revived in 1922. Fixtures against the Denbighshire Golf Union Scratch Team and a Senior Scratch Team are arranged by Narwhals members, Arthur Jones & Eric Howells.

The Plovers Golfing Society based in Portmarnock (Match at Royal St David's on 14th September, 2012)