

Gentlemen,

Thank you all for being here today and the tremendous support you have given to this and previous events during my year (two years actually!) as captain. We've had two great meetings, Sandy Lodge in May and now here for Autumn Meeting, as ever, at West Herts. The support has been fantastic, with over 40 playing at both events, so thank you again.

Just briefly, we have had three matches this summer and remarkably, great weather for all three! Our first, a three-cornered match with Haberdashers and Aldenham ended in a close victory in the last match. Great way to start the season. We then moved on to play Old Columbians at Centurion in St. Albans. As many of you will know, this is a tough Championship course and I have to say I was delighted to keep my score under 72. For the first 9 holes!! We were beaten 3 - 1 on this occasion by a strong Old Columbian team, but had a great late afternoon and evening in the sun on the terrace afterwards. Finally, we played against the school at West Herts on a beautiful afternoon and evening and came out victorious 2 1/2 - 1 1/2, regaining the Pete Ausden Trophy.

Today I feel is the highlight of our season. Always good to be here at West Herts and an evening when we can present prizes, eat and drink together for the first time in two years.

I'd like to thank all of the team captains for stepping up once again and putting their teams together. Predominantly O.F.s of course, but very importantly our guest, and I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you all, and our diners Mike England and George Deane.

I am very pleased to be playing today with my two sons Brad and Josh, and also Percy McCloskey, former master at the school and my rugby coach in the 1st XV and team-mate at Fullerians RFC. Also delighted that for the first time in quite a while, my brother Steve has joined us at an O.F.A. meeting. As many of you will know, he is a member here at West Herts and is playing today in Team Highfield. Really glad you could be here Steve.

I would like to mention three people who we have lost in the past two years since we played here at West Herts. Two past Presidents of the Society, Dick Hughes, the Society's founder and Dave Price, of course, Chris and Tony's dad, who were such a huge part of the Society's success and endurance. And though not a playing member, John Cook, six times O.F.A. Chairman, ever present for the after-match dinner, who sadly passed away in February. Remembered with affection, a toast to them and all absent friends.

Before I conclude, a few thank-yous. To West Herts Golf Club for hosting the event today. Course in great condition, greens like lightning. Today was the first time I've ever used my rescue putter! Many thanks to the caterers, I thought the food was excellent, and the bar staff for serving us drinks this evening.

To Chris, as ever, our MC, a job his lovely dad used to handle for the Society. Thank you to Ian Martin who has kindly done the scoring for us today, not an easy task. Ian is a very loyal guest at our meeting and we are very grateful for his efforts.

To our Chairman Michael Groves, a source of great support at all times. We partnered in the school match in July, and came home with a good point. Thank you, Michael.

In particular, I'd like to thank Russ for all he has done to make every event this season run so smoothly. He really has been a rock, a great organiser and has made my job so much easier. My patient partner around Centurion in June and always available for advice on the golfing front, particularly on that emotive subject of taking less shots!! So, Russ, many thanks.

So, winding up, it's great for so many of us to get together in family teams and in groups of contemporaries from school and of course, with friends and guests. Some have travelled quite a way, Spencer Deane from the US, David Oates from the Isle of Wight and the Englands from Rickmansworth.

The time has come for me to hand over the Captaincy of the Society for the 2022 season. I didn't have to think for too long who I was going to ask. He has been my closest friend since we joined WBGs in September 1969. He was, in our year group, with a certain Mark Highfield, the most established all round sportsman amongst his peers. You name it, he could play it. Not shy in speaking his mind, loves a bit of controversy and in his company, there's never a dull moment. Former first-class rugby player at Saracens and County cricketers for Hertfordshire. So, it gives me great pleasure to invite my great friend Mark Pattinson to succeed me as captain of the Old Fullerians Golfing Society for the 2022 season.