

Immediate Release: 16 September 2020

Ian Woosnam senior classic hailed a hit Driving forward Yorkshire tourism

Welcome to Yorkshire has confirmed plans to put Yorkshire on the map as a top golfing destination after working with SGH Sporting Events to help host the first professional tournament in the county for more than 20 years.

Liam Bond won the inaugural Welcome to Yorkshire Ian Woosnam Senior Classic tournament in association with Aberdeen Standard Capital with a round of 65 at Ilkley Golf Club on Wednesday 16 September.

The two day, COVID-19 safe and socially distanced event saw dozens of teams tee off at the stunning course overlooked by the iconic Cow and Calf rocks and has been hailed a huge success.

Tuesday saw the sun beaming down on the Yorkshire green for a pro-am event with footballing stars like Ryan Giggs, Robbie Fowler, and former Leeds player Tony Dorigo alongside cricketer Ryan Sidebottom, former Hull KR and Rhinos player Danny Maguire and BBC TV presenter Dan Walker.

The event also saw a socially distanced Q and A where 1991 Masters champion Ian was joined by event player's Catriona Matthew, OBE who captained Team Europe to victory at the 2019 Solheim Cup in Gleneagles, Scotland, and will again serve as the European captain for the 2021 Solheim Cup and local hero, former Ryder Cup captain and US Senior Major winner Mark James.

Commenting on the event team, **Welcome to Yorkshire's Chief Executive James Mason said:** *"Wow, what a great two days with the backdrop of some stunning Yorkshire scenery. The success of the event has given us just a taster of the kind of things we might see here in Yorkshire in the future and a hint of the boost this could be for tourism. There are so many amazing golf courses in the county with spectacular countryside and coastal backdrops and we want to make sure everyone knows about them."*

James continued: *"We know how Golf tourism has benefitted Scotland by almost £290 million a year and while they have 500 plus courses, we have more than 180 here in Yorkshire, many of which are world class so there is huge potential."*

“Golfers tend to also spend as they visit places for a few days so restaurants, hotels etc all benefit. As we all adapt to life with COVID-19 this event has proved there’s still plenty of fun to be had in the beautiful outdoors of Yorkshire while staying safe.”

Andrew Jennings of the event organisers SGH Sporting Events said: *“We had been in discussions with Welcome to Yorkshire for a couple of years about bringing a professional event back to Yorkshire, and when Ian Woosnam agreed to put his name to a senior event that allowed us to attract a great field and a high profile sponsor in Aberdeen Standard Capital and a venue like Ilkley Golf Club which perfectly showcases golf in Yorkshire.”*

Winning player Bond, who only turned 50 three weeks ago, won by a shot from five-time European Senior Tour winner Phil Golding, and by two from Gary Wolstenholme.

Home favourite Mark James, an honorary life member of the Ilkley club finished in a tie for 6th on level par with while tournament host and fellow ex Ryder Cup captain Ian Woosnam carded a three over par round of 72.

Woosnam said: *“This is the first time I have been to Ilkley and it is truly a great course. Yorkshire is a fantastic place to play golf and I look forward to returning next year.”*

Bond said he liked his chances after shooting three under par in the pro-am the day before the event, which was also his first sighting of the course: *“This course really suits my eye as you have to drive the ball well and that is one of my strengths. I didn’t miss a green until the last hole and that was due to me putting the ball in the right place from the tee. I’m delighted to have won this event and to receive the trophy from Woosie was special.”*

Bond, who built a driving range just outside of Chepstow in Monmouthshire three years ago, has set his sights on playing full-time senior golf and building on the experience he gained when he played on the European Tour in 2011.

Welcome to Yorkshire continues to be committed to promoting the diversity of the tourism offer in the entire county through world class events which are COVID-19 safe and fully within government guidelines.

- ENDS -

Image: Winners presentation

L-R Nigel Jenkinson Ilkley Golf Club President, Ian Woosnam, Winner Liam Bond, WtY Chief Executive James Mason

Further Images can be found here:

<https://yorkshire.box.com/s/5qledybess4pyg6dwaf3g4k6yk17nmny>

Editors' Notes:

- **Welcome to Yorkshire** is the official destination marketing organisation for Yorkshire, working to grow the county's visitor economy.
- **Welcome to Yorkshire** is a not-for-profit membership organisation, funded in part by grants, sponsorship and Welcome to Yorkshire members. All money raised is reinvested directly back into promoting Yorkshire.
- Key facts include:
 - Tourism in Yorkshire is worth £9 billion annually
 - The county's tourism and hospitality industry employs almost 225 thousand people
- Tag **Welcome to Yorkshire** in any coverage on Twitter and Facebook using our handles: @welcome2yorks and <https://www.facebook.com/welcometoyorkshire>

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