

Holt Shield

2025 Annual Report

Once again, the Holt Shield competition ran smoothly, with matches being played on time and without any issues. The same format as in the previous two years was used, and due to its success, it's likely to be used indefinitely.

No clubs resigned in 2025, so Portadown and Galgorm remain on the reserve list.

George Stuart Memorial.

Played at Ballymena Golf Club on Friday, 1st August.

Ballymena, with a strong association with the Holt Shield, was a great host. There was a good turnout, and the golf was played in splendid weather. The presentation meal was excellent and enjoyed by everyone. Colin Valley's team manager, Stephen Garland, won the George Stuart Memorial Shield and silver medal with a commendable score of 38 points. Balmoral is due to host the 2026 event, which will be a poignant venue as it was the home club of one of the founders of the Holt Shield, Mr George Stuart. With Balmoral set to move its course to a new location over the next few years, it presents a great opportunity to play this historic course one last time.

The Final

First Leg, at Cairndhu, Saturday, 11th October.

Second Leg, at Belvoir Park, Sunday, 12th October.

Congratulations to Cairndhu for winning the 2025 Holt Shield.

The final was originally organised for the previous weekend, but due to inclement weather, it was postponed.

Both teams survived extremely tight semi-finals and progressed to the final with great pedigrees. Belvoir Park were defending champions, and Cairndhu won the Holt Shield twice in the last four years. It promised to be a tight match, and so it proved. Taking a 3.5 to 1.5 lead from the first leg at Cairndhu to Belvoir, the Cairndhu team got over the winning line with a win in the second match and went dormie up in both the third and fourth matches.

Both teams played the final in a competitive but friendly manner, true to the spirit of the Holt Shield.

As winners, Cairndhu hosted the presentation dinner on Friday, 28th November. They are well accustomed to organizing this event, having hosted three over the past six years. The evening was a great success, with both teams officially receiving their medals, shields, and pennants.

Bobby Conroy Award

Presented to the player deemed by the two team managers to have made a significant contribution in the final and throughout the competition.

Creating momentum for Cairndhu by winning his match early in the first leg at home and for his brilliant play and record throughout the competition, Christopher McCourt, representing Cairndhu, won the Bobby Conroy Award and silver medal.

A special mention must go to Alan McMillen for his sportsmanship in calling a penalty on himself when accidentally moving his ball on the 17th hole during a crucial stage in the final at Belvoir.

Holt Shield Committee

Johnny Greer, Greenisland, resigned from the committee. Stephen McComiskey, Holywood, and Jonny McDowell, City of Belfast, both joined the committee. Unfortunately, due to family commitments, Jonny had to withdraw, but he intends to get reinvolved when the time is right for him. The committee wish both Johnny and Jonny well for the future and thanks them for their contribution.

Mervyn Perry, Knock, is the outgoing Chairman. He has carried out his duties over the past two years with diligence and pride for the Holt Shield. He has been a great ambassador for the competition, and under his leadership, the Holt Shield has continued to flourish. Receiving a cheque for £330, the Chairman's chosen charity for 2025 is Marie Curie. The committee wishes his successor, Stephen McComiskey, a successful term in office.

Finally, may I wish all the participating clubs and players a successful 2026 campaign and thank them for their continued support of the Holt Shield.

Tony Campbell

Hon. Secretary.