

RICHMOND PARK GOLF CLUB



ANNUAL REPORT - 2019

In many respects, 2019 was a routine year with little to shout home about, but there were a couple of features that stand out.

It is easily forgotten but in amongst the early morning foggy heads on New Year's Day we woke up to the realisation that we could now putt with the flag in the hole. On 1st Jan we found that we were under the jurisdiction of the new Rules of Golf which presented new procedures and new terminology. Our ditches at the Park were no longer water hazards and we had red and yellow penalty areas, where all of a sudden we were allowed to ground our clubs. This change was a welcome move in the cause of fairness. In precisely the same way that anyone on a plane who can't fasten a seat belt shouldn't be there, the golfing fraternity provided explicit examples, video guidance, and instruction as to how to drop a ball from knee height, and anyone who couldn't have figured this one out quite simply shouldn't be on a golf course. We were however presented with a completely new and demanding challenge, namely by using some of Einstein's theory of relativity the question arose as to how long a three minute search time can really stretch. For some of us who give the appearance of playing with a variety of trick shots there was jubilation to hear that a double hit now counts as just one stroke. Also, for those of us who occasionally manage something close to the impossible there was welcome news that there is no longer an extra penalty if your drive off the tee is embedded in the side of your golf bag. Along with the emphasis for "Ready Golf" the new Rules are encouraging everyone to get off the golf course as quickly as possible whereas there are some who still enjoy a good £ per hour ratio.

Talking about the weather every year is not the most exciting topic but for the last few years we have experienced many extremes. 2019 can be characterised by having many stretches of very dry periods interspersed with days where we have experienced torrential rain. By the end of March the courses had received four inches of rain, and then the dry spell started. There was virtually no rain in April. May through to the third week of September was exceedingly dry apart from a few isolated instances when the rain fell in biblical proportions. Midway through September the Park was looking very brown, the fairways were behaving like concrete, and the greens had plenty of 'bounce'; and then the heavens opened. Close to three inches of rain fell in the last 10 days of September and another ten inches of rain fell in the remaining 13 weeks to the end of the year. It was no surprise that both courses transformed from rock hard to quagmire very quickly and everyone had to adjust their

playing styles to cope with the ever worsening course conditions. Whilst we were doing battle with the course conditions it is worth sparing a thought and having some sympathy for the greenkeeping staff. At the end of the 2018/19 winter period the irrigation system packed in just when the rain stopped and the greens needed plenty of water for the spring growth. Hose watering was the order of the day. It was a while before a replacement pump could be fitted and when this was done the electricity supply failed. A generator had to be installed as it became apparent that a completely new electricity supply to the greenkeeping complex was necessary. Hooking up the generator highlighted a few leaks in the irrigation system but then the main tank developed a leak and a huge temporary pillow tank had to be installed. It wasn't until the end of October that all the major problems had been resolved and normal operations could resume but, of course, by this time mother nature had completely saturated both the courses.

When reviewing our membership data below, you will see the good news for 2019 where it is reported that the Club has had another year of membership growth with an increase of 12%. In addition to the Club's membership numbers there is one very important feature that we are keen to see develop and it is the level of playing activity. Leaving aside the impact of the weather there are a number of weekends where there is some degree of external influence on the playing numbers, such as we find with the bank holiday weekends and when we have Saturday events. A review of a period of thirty weeks covering the main summer months shows that for 2019 the average number of Wednesday players was 41.6 and for our Sunday events the number was 49.4. It has to be said that there has been a general expectation that both these numbers would be higher and the challenge for the Club's committee now is to encourage an increased playing activity in 2020. There was a time in a different era when the average summer Sunday attendance was between 70 and 80 players so there is considerable ground to be made up.

On the same theme, here are a few more stats to whet the appetite. In 2019 we had 134 stroke play club events recorded on HandicapMaster. For these events our friendly competition secretaries had to process a total 4,450 scorecards which is an average of 86 scorecards per week. In 2018 we processed 4,200 scorecards so 2019 is showing a 6% increase of player activity for 2019. The 6% increase is a positive step in the right direction, however as mentioned, our first target is to increase our number to at least 100 scorecards per week.

At the start of 2019 we had two new pairs of hands on the Club's tiller with Nigel Gaymond and Deborah Potter stepping up to be our Captains for the year. It is traditional for our Captains to complete a two year tour of duty and Deborah will remain in office for 2020. In Nigel's case it was necessary for him to have a heart bypass operation in the early part of October 2019 and in view of an uncertainty concerning his tenure in London for 2020 Nigel has decided to step down from the Captain's role but he will be remaining as an active member of the Club's committee whilst he is in the UK. During 2019 Nigel successfully manoeuvred various committee members and others to see that all the operational aspects of the Club were successfully covered and he managed to revive the Club's internal International Challenge which has now been added as a permanent annual Saturday fixture. We are grateful to both Nigel and Deborah for their successful stewardship in 2019 and in 2020 Deborah will be joined by Kim Chaffart who picks up the Captain's mantle.

Annual Prizegiving

To celebrate with the 2019 competition winners and award the year's prizes we are returning to Malden Golf Club for the Club's annual dinner on Saturday 8th February.

Our prize list below shows that we have 60 major events to reward. In addition, we have the monthly medal Sunday events for the men and the ladies, and together with the midweek monthly medals we distribute 32 winning glasses through the course of the year. Sometimes it might seem that just a few players are hogging all the prizes but the list below dispels this myth because we have 77 names listed, representing 28% of the Club's membership.

The 36-hole scratch Club Championship is the Club's premier event on the fixture list and after wins in 2016, 2017 and 2018 we were waiting to see if it would be a case of four in a row for Jay Barker. In the first round on the Prince's course Jay (playing off 6) finished with a birdie free four over par gross 72. However, with a clear aim to avoid a repeat of his 2018 runner-up position Aidan Hurley (playing off 5) played probably his best round at the Park with four birdies to finish with a one under par gross of 67 and a lead of 5 shots. In the second round Aidan accumulated two birdies for his finishing score of 77 for a combined gross of 144. Jay mounted a challenge with birdies on the first two holes but he was unable to catch Aidan and Jay was the runner-up with his second round gross 75 and a combined score of 147. Congratulations go to Aidan as the 2019 Champion, the position that he last held in 2013. As an aside, Aidan's gross of 144 is the lowest score that we have on record since 2002.

The men's Club Championship junior division for those with handicaps of 17 and above is an equally hard fought challenge and in the first round Jim Deissler played eight under his handicap to take the lead with a gross 80. Hanging on to Jim's coattails was Ned Shanklyn with a gross 82. For his second round Jim succumbed to the curse of the Duke's course with a gross 107 and it was Ned's gross 89 that give him the Champion title with a total score of 171. Mark Rosamond had the best Duke's second round score and this elevated him to the runner-up position with a total score of 177.

The men's Handicap Trophy is awarded to the player who achieves the best overall performance for the 36 holes and this was Peter Osgood with a combined net of 130 (an average of 65). On this leaderboard Aidan Hurley was the next highest score with a net of 133.

The ladies' 36 hole scratch Club Championship is the year's premier event for the ladies and taking the lead at the half-way stage was Angela Flynn with a Prince's course score of 81. Three ladies were chasing Angela with gross scores of 88. In the second round Angela didn't have the lowest score but her 93 on the Duke's was sufficient to take the 2019 Champion's title with a total score of 174. Lia Donath was seven shots adrift of Angela after the first round and she was able to cut this back to four shots to finish as the runner-up with a total of 178. Tenesi Karakaneva lost out to Lia on the countback as she also finished on 178.

For the Club Championship net scores the ladies have the Handicap Cup for the lower handicaps and the Pembroke Cup for those playing off 20 and above. In the lower division Veronica Mitchell emerged as the player with the best performance with a combined net of 145. Three ladies finished on 146 but it was Lia Donath who captured second place on the countback. For the Pembroke Cup it was Caroline Stillwell who had the best two rounds for a net 141 and the runner-up slot was captured by Doreen Dolby with a net 145.

...and then, to ensure that all members are catered for we have the midweek Club Championships which are run on a similar format. The 2019 men's Champion was Henry Lindsay-Bethune with 80 for his first round plus an excellent one over par 72 on the Duke's course that gave Henry the winning gross total of 152. Angus Robertson marks his first appearance on the Club's annual result table with his runner-up score of 155. The men's junior trophy was captured by Dylan Merchant with a total of 174 and Pralab Barua finished

as the runner-up with a score of 177. In the ladies' Club Championship Veronica Mitchell took the Champion's place with an overall score of 172 and Sheena Harrington held on to the runner-up place with a total gross of 179. In the joint Handicap Trophy challenge for the best net score it was Veronica's net of 134 which takes first place from Henry's net of 136.

Here follows the full prize list for 2019: -

RPGC 2019 PRIZE LIST

WEEKEND EVENTS

Senior Men's Club Championship

Ladies' Club Championship

Junior Men's Club Championship

Men's Club Championship Handicap Trophy

Ladies' Handicap Cup - handicaps 0-24

Ladies' Pembroke Cup - handicaps 25-36

J H Taylor – match play 0-16

Two Courses Cup – match play 17+

Ladies' Challenge Cup

Men's Fourball – match play

Ladies Double C Cup

Mixed Foursomes – match play

Ladies' Committee Cup

Grand Medal Trophy

Silver Jubilee Trophy

Golden Jubilee Trophy

Diamond Jubilee Trophy

Platinum Jubilee Trophy

Anniversary Cup

President's Putter

Captain's Prize

Lady Captain's Prize

J Q Robertson Trophy

Coronation Cup

Shaw Cup

Summer Cup

Spring Mixed American Greensomes

WINNER

Aidan Hurley

Angela Flynn

Ned Shanklyn

Peter Osgood

Veronica Mitchell

Caroline Stilwell

Habib Amir

Sunny Lall

Veronica Mitchell

Kim Chaffart &
Henry Lindesay-Bethune

Lia Donath &
Elaine Elborn

Lia Donath &
Richard Inglis

Sheena Harrington

Toby Hunt &
Sean Thomas
(A tied result)

Rhys Jarvis

George Taylor

Peter Needham

Evgeny van der Geest

Henry Lindesay-Bethune

Deborah Potter

Ollie Griffin

Cathy Staveley

Ned Shanklyn

Chris Lordan

Anis Driaa

Kris Lynch

Jane Maxwell &
Keith Cassidy

RUNNER-UP

Jay Barker

Lia Donath

Mark Rosamond

[Aidan Hurley]

Lia Donath

Doreen Dolby

Jeremy Ryan

Paul Green

Sheena Harrington

Habib Amir &
Martin Heinrich

Maureen Slade &
Cheryl Woodhouse

Lesley Mason &
Nigel Gaymond

Lia Donath

Jay Barker

Tenesi Karakaneva

Henry Lindesay-Bethune

Robin Thomas

[Barry Page]

Alison Chadwick

Chris Lordan

Maureen Slade

Peter Needham

Evgeny van der Geest

Alexander Krasnenkov

Seong Lim

Ann Gardner &
Richard Inglis

Autumn Mixed - Handicap	Jessamie Dunton-Rose & Igor Peliugaev	Veronica Mitchell & Keith Cassidy
Autumn Mixed - Scratch	Veronica Mitchell & Keith Cassidy	[Alison Chadwick & Nigel Gaymond]
Burgess Cup - Greensomes	Habib Amir & Martin Heinrich	Tony Bergqvist & Peter Needham
Top Dog Trophy	Chris Lordan & George Taylor (A tied result)	
Ladies' Dowling Cup	Tenesi Karakaneva	
Lissaman Cup	George Taylor	Robin Thomas
Barton Bowl	Alison Chadwick	
Charity Cup	Kerry Sargeant	Richard Inglis
Spring Stableford Trophy	Luke Baker	Mike Shabani
Winter Competition	Martin Heinrich	Ollie Griffin

MIDWEEK EVENTS

Senior Men's Club Championship	Henry Lindesay-Bethune	Angus Robertson
Ladies' Club Championship	Veronica Mitchell	Sheena Harrington
Junior Men's Club Championship	Dylan Merchant	Pralab Barua
Club Championship Handicap Trophy	Veronica Mitchell	[Henry Lindesay-Bethune]
Inaugural Trophy	Alastair Whyte	Bruno Clerckx
Grand Medal Trophy	Brian Ransom	[Mark Rosamond]
Anniversary Accumulator	Kim Chaffart	[Dylan Merchant]
Founder's Cup – E. Bailey	Paul Green	Charlie Forrest
Founder's Cup – Mrs Millidge	Susan Hemsell	Richard Norden
Founder's Cup – J. Hume	Alvaro Garcia-Hoz	Paul Grand
Founders' Cup	Richard Owen	[Paul Grand]
President's Prize	Tore Burman	Kim Chaffart
Captain's Day	Tore Burman	Toby Hunt
Priory Cup	Tom Cook	Kim Chaffart
Masters Bowl	Loui Suarez	Arthur Clark
Claret Jug	Russell Stewart	Jack Evans
Midsummer Trophy	Jeremy Ryan	John Curry
Fred Hawtree Trophy	Ann Gardner	Mitch Cohen
The Edward Cup	Mark Rosamond	Alison Chadwick
Autumn Pairs	Brian Ransom & Seymour Laird	Toby Hunt & Chris Jones
Harrington Trophy	Oliver Khan	Rick Kimber
Charity Trophy	Sheena Harrington	Mark Rosamond
Winter Competition	Richard Hodgkinson	Mike Jones

All the names mentioned will be receiving prize awards apart from the names shown in brackets [xx].

Membership

Here's our 11 year table and we can see where we stand at 31 December 2019.

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
Men:											
Regular	217	192	171	149	123	86	93	102	104	101	96
Junior	0	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0
Hon (playing)	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	4	4	5	1
Total Men	<u>218</u>	<u>195</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>97</u>
Ladies:											
Regular	53	46	44	41	41	36	37	37	40	46	43
Hon (playing)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Ladies	<u>54</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>44</u>
Total	<u>272</u>	<u>242</u>	<u>220</u>	<u>192</u>	<u>167</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>133</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>154</u>	<u>141</u>
	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+
	12%	10%	15%	15%	33%	5%	8%	10%	3%	9%	8%
Joiners:											
New men	61	50	42	53	49	14	22	25	23	24	26
New ladies	11	7	7	3	9	2	2	2	1	9	5
Junior	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Rejoiners – men	4	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Rejoiners – ladies	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	<u>76</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>31</u>
Leavers:	<u>46</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>20</u>
	19%	17%	14%	19%	16%	18%	26%	22%	18%	15%	15%

We can chalk up 2019 up as another successful year for the Club in terms of numbers with an overall increase of 12% to reach 272 members.

From the table's analysis it would be wrong to presume that the intake of new members is a steady easily controllable flow. We are all aware that for the prospective new members who approach us without handicaps it is necessary to record three scores before we are able to award starting handicaps and this of course creates something of a lead time before we see the candidates join our ranks. At the end of September our new intake was only just ahead of the number of recorded leavers. This highlights the unevenness of the membership interest and we were fortunate to have 20 new members join us during an 8 week period to the middle of November. At this point it is worth mentioning that the three card handicap qualification process places quite burden on the Club for card marking and there is inevitably some coordination required with the weekly bookings sheets. During 2019 there were a remarkable 242 cards marked which equates to an average of over five cards per week for the busy ten month period from February to end November.

Those who are new to the Club will no doubt be surprised by the membership trend which shows a dip that commenced in 2012 and the significant resurgence in 2015. It was back in May 2012 that the new building development work commenced with various course changes and restrictions, and it was not until June 2014 that the two courses were finally back to their 18 hole configurations. It was not surprising that with the mayhem at the Park we lost

members during this development period. The other main significant feature to affect membership was our agreement with Glendale in 2015 to commence the Club's midweek golf activity and since this enhancement there has been a very healthy number of new members who confine themselves to the Club's midweek events. Overall, it is very good to see that since the lows of 2013 and 2014 the Club has more than doubled the membership during the last five years.

One feature that I have referred to before and is worth reiterating again is the shift that has occurred in the proportion of men to ladies. Ten years ago the ratio was 30% of total membership and this has fallen to 20%. On the plus side, in 2019 the figures show that we attracted a good number of new lady members which has preserved the ratio and not allowed it to fall.

It is common for most golf clubs to lose members in the range of 15% to 20% each year and RPGC is no exception to this general theme. There are however a couple of factors that have a particular influence on the Club's retirement rate and the first of these is the over-optimistic expectations of some who subscribe for the annual Glendale Loyaltee cards and then find they do not have the time available for regular golf or competition golf. The second group of higher than average leavers is a product of the Club's own success in providing a perfect venue for members of the international community whose time in London is limited before the next relocation occurs. With these two features in play we should not be alarmed by the high number of annual leavers but this does emphasize the work that is needed each year just to hold the numbers steady.

Midweek Wednesday Golf

There is little to report on the Wednesday golf other than to say that the arrangements have been running smoothly and with the emphasis on 3-ball games the pace of play on the course is normally quicker than Sundays. As seen from one comment above, the Wednesday activity level now represents 46% of the average weekly player attendance which marks Wednesdays as a very significant component of the Club's total activity. During the latter part of 2019 the Club attracted a number of new members who will be playing midweek golf and there may need to be some adjustment to the Wednesday hours but this will be considered.

In the winter period there are two blocks of Wednesday morning tee times and in the summer period there is an additional afternoon block. The success of the Wednesday programme is largely down to the work that Kim Chaffart puts in to prepare the bookings sheets and refine the playing order to for all the participants prior to his publication of the start sheets. Those who are fortunate to be near the top of a Wednesday leaderboard will be aware that Kim also looks after the Wednesday competition entries and the sweep awards. It follows that we are all grateful for Kim's input.

Whilst on the subject of help I must mention that Paul Grand processes the Wednesday results. In the summer this necessitates a special revisit to the Park on Thursdays to collect the cards from the late Wednesday players

Also providing an oversight role is John Ahad who stepped into Kim's shoes in March 2019 as the new Midweek Captain.

Inter-Club Friendly Matches

Here's what happened in 2019:

Men vs. Rickmansworth:

We'll have to wait another year before we see the match trophy on the Club's prize table. In the first leg played at the Park our home team took a lead of 4:2. Experience tells us that we need a very commanding lead before venturing to Rickmansworth and 2019 was no exception. On home soil Ricky won their leg with a 5:1 result and they retain the trophy with an overall win of 7:5. I am sure that one of these years I will be able to report a different result.

Ladies vs. Mitcham:

In a change of routine the first leg of the friendly was played at the Park and the home team started the match with a 3:1 win. For the second leg at Mitcham, the RPGC ladies secured another 3:1 win and with the overall 6:2 result the trophy is retained for another year.

Mixed match vs. Amida:

The fixture alternates between the clubs each year and we were on home territory in 2019. The format is mixed pairs match play, and on a day when it was our turn to present a course with the consistency of concrete our home team won by 4½ to 1½.

External Competitions

It is common knowledge that with a combination of the configuration of the holes and the general set up of the courses at the Park for the general public we find that the handicaps of our Club members do not typically travel well to other courses. This means that with external competitions the Club's members can have a starting disadvantage compared to opponents from other clubs. Despite this predicament there is still the desire to participate in external competitions where the conditions allow and we can see here how the Club fared in 2019.

Surrey Golf – The Surrey 5's – Men's Individual Matchplay

For 2019 the Club entered two teams.

Team 1 was Captained by Richard Owen and in the first round the team was unsuccessful at Cuddington.

Team 2 was Captained by Pete Harrison and lost on home soil that to a team that had travelled all the way from Roehampton.

Men's UKPCC – [Stableford]

In July 2019 we had six men that progressed to play in the regional qualifier that was held at Hoebridge, and Toby Hunt elected to play his qualifier at Thorney Park. From Hoebridge Chris Lordan was invited to St Andrews and Toby qualified by virtue of leading the division 2 players. In the UKPCC national final played on the Eden Course at St Andrews Chris

Lordan finished some way down the division 1 results and Toby was unfortunately unable to attend.

NAPGC Men's Championship – Medal

Richmond Park had four entrants for the regional qualifier held at The Oaks and Aidan Hurley made it through to the national final held at Woodhall Spa. Aidan didn't return with a prize but he did finish in the top half of the division 1 results.

NAPGC Clapham Common Shield – Men's Greensomes Aggregate Stableford

In the first round the Club's team was successful against Thorney Park. Unfortunately, in the second round the team came up against Hoebridge and lost by two points.

NAPGC Bourne-Vanneck – Men's Aggregate Medal

The 2019 regional qualifier saw a return to Bird Hills. Our 2019 team of three comprised Pete Harrison, Jay Barker, and Chris Lordan. Our team finish 6th in the gross ranking with a score of 244 and missed out on a place in the final by just 3 shots.

NAPGC Senior Men's Championship - Stableford

The seniors' event is for those aged 55 and over. There was a small number of RPGC entrants but none featured in the honours.

NAPGC Men's Siemens Bowl – Four-ball Better Ball

This event is geared towards the higher handicappers and the team comprises four pairs. In the first round the Club's team lost to Bird Hills by 156 to 143.

NAPGC Men's Better Ball Team Match Play Trophy

This event comprises three pairs in a match play knockout. In the first round the Club's team lost to Birchwood Park.

NAPGC Men's Weekday Toprock Salver Better Ball Match Play Knockout

This is a straightforward pairs better ball knockout. Each pair is a 'team'. The Club entered two teams in 2019. In the first round the A team received a walkover but then lost in the second round to Bird Hills. The B team had a successful first round win against Addington Court but lost to Portsmouth in the second round.

NAPGC Gordon Forster Bowl – Team Stableford Knockout

This is a private entry winter team competition and two teams entered. The Overseas team won against The Oaks but progress was ended at the next round with a loss to Birchwood

Park. The Barkic & Gang team won their first round match against Moore Place but lost in the second round to a team from Wimbledon Common.

Ladies' UKPCC – [Stableford]

For the ladies UKPCC event Veronica Mitchell proceeded to the regional qualifier at Bird Hills but was unable to progress to the national final.

NAPGC Ladies Championship – Medal

From Richmond Park Veronica Mitchell and Jane Fraser progressed from the Club qualifier to play in the national final that was held at Sandford Springs. Neither Veronica nor Jane returned with a trophy but both were in the top sections of their respective divisional results.

NAPGC White Webbs – Ladies' Team Match Play

In the first round the team was drawn to play away at Hoebridge and lost to the home team.

NAPGC Senior Ladies' Championship - Stableford

The ladies' seniors' event is for those aged 50 and over. Four ladies from the Club participated. With 36 points Sheena Harrington won The Barbara Rainey Bowl for the best net score. Lia Donath was the runner-up with 35 points. With a combined Stableford score of 71 points Sheena and Lia won the Reg Pugh Shield for the best team of two players. The runner-up position in the pairs challenge was taken by the Club's other entrants, Angela Flynn and Elaine Elborn.

It needs to be mentioned that Lia stepped in at the very last minute to replace Val Riziotis as Sheena's pairs partner. In 2018 the Reg Pugh Shield was won by Sheena and Val.

NAPGC Ladies JHB Shield – Stroke play medal with teams of three players.

This was not entered in 2019.

NAPGC Ladies Match Play Trophy – Pairs Better Match Play

This was not entered in 2019.

NAPGC Ladies Toproc Bowl - Greensomes Pairs Match Play

This was not entered in 2019.

NAPGC Mary Forster Bowl – Team Stableford

In tandem with the men, this is a private entry winter team competition. In the winter of 2018/19 there was one team in play. In the initial qualifying group stage the team was drawn to play against Moore Place and Mitcham, and it was Moore Place that progressed to the national final

NAPGC Hawtree Trophy – Mixed Greensomes Aggregate Stableford

RPGC entered two teams. For the first match the Club's A team scored an away win at Mitcham by 3 points. The second round was played at the Park against Southsea and the team scored another win with the margin of 15 points. The next round was the area final and the opponents were Easthampstead. On this occasion Easthampstead won by the narrowest of margins, just one point.

The Club's B team commenced with an excellent 6 point away win at Hoebridge. For the second round the Club was at home against Huntswood and with a win by just one point this was again the narrowest of margins. In the area final the team was up against the formidable Rose Hill club and lost by 14 points.

Rose Hill was the winner of the Hawtree Trophy (again) and the Easthampstead team finished in second place.

Internal Matches and Competitions

The Bontor – Match Play

After losing in 2018, the ladies came back in 2019 with a strong desire to recapture the Bontor trophy. Sixteen players on either side stepped up to the challenge and it was the ladies who came out on top with a win of 9½ to 6½.

Ladies' Invitation – American Greensomes

The Invitation was played in the dry June conditions. The American Greensomes format requires not just good play but also good partner selection and Val Riziotis excelled on both counts by winning with 38 points with Peter Needham. Veronica Mitchell and Jay Barker lost out on the countback to finish second with their 38 points.

Men's Invitation – American Greensomes

The Men's Invitation was played on a rather hot day in July. The winners were the partnership of Nick Rogers and Veronica Mitchell who amassed a staggering 47 points. In second place were the partnership of Peter Jagger and Ann Gardner who would have been forgiven for thinking that a win was in the bag with their score of 46 points.

The International Challenge

At the beginning of 2019 our Captain Nigel Gaymond raised the prospect of an international challenge in recognition of the diverse nature of the Club's membership. Little did he know that in a previous era the Club had an internal international competition and the trophy had been in mothballs for many years. It was agreed to promote the new International Challenge as a Saturday team match play event and this will now continue as a regular component for the Club's fixture list for the future. For the first running of the International Challenge the Brits were the winners against the Internationals with the score 10½ to 7½.

The Ladies' Spring Weekend Away: main event - The Lockie Trophy

For the spring weekend the group enjoyed a pleasant return to Donnington Valley for a dry weekend (weather wise). The course is very pleasant but with the rolling hills we were confronted with challenges that we do not experience at the Park. The main event for the ladies is the 36 hole challenge for the Lockie Trophy and Christine Stewart was the winner with a combined total of 59 points. Runner-up to Christine was our Lady Captain Deborah Potter with 56 points. The men's 36 hole challenge was won by Jon Cooper with a commanding 66 points and yours truly was the runner-up with 59 points.

The Ladies' Autumn Weekend Away: main event - The Gill Hibbs Trophy

For the September excursion the weekenders ventured to the De Vere Estate hotel at Wokefield Park near Reading. Summer conditions prevailed but there was a hint of autumn chill. The main event is the 36 hole ladies challenge and the winner of the Gill Hibbs Trophy was Cheryl Woodhouse with 65 points. Lesley Mason was the runner up with 62 points. Top man for the weekend was the Club's guest Greg van Heerden with 72 points and Nick Rogers finished as the men's runner-up. For most participants the trip to Wokefield Park was a new experience and a very pleasant change of scenery.

Extra-Curricular Activities: Away days.

No away days were arranged for 2019. A combination of the Club's busy fixture list and match commitments has lessened the desire for organised away days and for 2019 it could not be established that sufficient demand existed for a midweek away day. However, for 2020 it is planned that something rather special will be on the agenda.

Individual Achievements

- On 19th August RPGC assisted Glendale with the second running of the new 'Richmond Park Open' on the Duke's course. The aim to achieve 120 players was soon overtaken and the morning's start sheet contained 34 games and 136 names. For the early players there was a huge deluge with more than an hour of unwelcome heavy rain. Once this cleared the day was very good but the ground conditions were very wet. The rain clearly affected the scores and these were untypically poor with the men's CSS moving up one shot to 72. In the main handicap section just three players were below CSS and all three are RPGC members. Loui Suarez finished streets ahead of everyone else as the Open winner with an eight under net 64. Mark Laverty finished as the Open runner-up with a net 70, and Doug Donaghey finished in third place with his net 70. The ladies' Open prize was won for the second year running by Angela Flynn with a net 75.
- Birdies and eagles galore in 2019 – for some players. Top of the men's Sunday birdie listing is Kerry Sargeant with 50. Following Kerry were Chris Lordan with 40, Mike Shabani with 38, and Henry Lindesay-Bethune with 37. Top of the Wednesday listing is Henry Lindesay-Bethune with 39. Following Henry were Brett Colley with 35, Jeremy Ryan with 29, and Hassan Mouilah with 28. Eagles are a very rare breed but for the Sunday events there were 13 eagles with

Evgeny van der Geest heading the list with two eagles. The Wednesday events yielded even more eagles with a total of 15. Both Brett Colley and Hassan Mouilah head the Wednesday listing with two eagles.

- The ladies' Sunday birdie listing saw the top position shared between Sheena Harrington and Tenesi Karakaneva with 13 birdies each. Val Riziotis followed with 11 birdies and in fourth position on the list is Angela Flynn with 10 birdies. On the Wednesday birdie listing Sheena tops the ladies with 16 birdies and Veronica Mitchell follows with 6 birdies.
- We have just the one recorded 'hole in one' for 2019. The proud achiever is Richard Owen who was playing in the Surrey Fives match at Cuddington and his ace was sunk on the 8th hole.
- It is very difficult to pick out the best round of the year at the Park but the round that stands out was played by Jeremy Ryan on 26th June on the Duke's course. Jeremy scored a one under par gross 70. He was playing off 11 and this gave him a remarkable twelve under score for a net 59 which then converted to 48 points for him to win the midweek summer trophy.

www.RichmondParkGolfClub.Org.Uk - The RPGC Website

It is now 18 years since our President Tim Meyer started the website with the primary aim of providing a source of news and information for the Club's members plus the further aim of publicising the existence of the Club to the outside world. Shortly after the introduction of the website it was in heavy demand because it housed the Club's bookings sheets in the days before CDH and before the modern-day handicapping systems were introduced. We know that more recently there has been less of a need to refer to the website but it does continue to provide an excellent central collective reference point for what has occurred both currently and over the years. At one stage the website was receiving a variety of hits (including web robots) at a rate exceeding 1 million per annum and although the activity level is lower the current hit rate is still around one every 57 seconds, or 550,000 per annum. Fortunately, the membership enquiry rate is much lower than this.

In his role as 'editor', for the last 18 years Tim has devoted hours and hours of his 'free' time every year to ensure that the website is up-to-date with the news of forthcoming happenings together with the current information concerning the results data along with the report commentaries. Having struggled with many websites to find a route to the correct information we all recognise the importance of the correct internal website linkages and we are very fortunate that with the Club's website Tim has devoted a huge amount effort to ensure that the 3,000 plus pages can be easily navigated.

It was in the latter part of 2017 that the Club embarked on the creation of a new website to replace the current one. The aim is to retain all the historical data presently held on the current website. Unfortunately, this project has not progressed at anything like the rate of progress that was hoped but there is now a clear desire to move this forward during 2020. Tim was hoping that the new website would be operational before we moved into 2020, however this was not to be and he has rolled the current website forward so that our 2020 data can be loaded as before.

Understandably, we are all exceedingly grateful to Tim for his continued contribution for editing and maintaining the integrity of the website which is not an easy task for him to slot in with his demanding business activities.

Absent Friends

In February 2019 we said farewell to David Leather. David joined us in April 2018. Before this he was a frequent player at the Park and he was encouraged to join in our club activities by Richard Hodgkinson. It was clear that David enjoyed the challenge that we all experience with golf and he appreciated the mix with the Club's members. In early 2019 David had been receiving treatment at Kingston Hospital and he had a reasonably fair prognosis for a positive recovery, and his sudden death at the end of February was entirely unexpected.

The Committee and helpers

In 2019 we had 15 members serving on the main committee and although many members have accepted roles with key duties it is correct to say that everyone contributes to the smooth running of the Club in some shape or form. The advantage of a relatively large committee is the ability to share the workload and we have cover in the event of absences etc.

From an operational perspective we do have committee members with specific responsibilities who deserve a special mention because they are involved in week by week activities and for some there is rarely a day that goes by without some Club business requiring attention.

- Richard Owen has the unenviable task of Liaison Officer which entails him being the conduit between Glendale and RPGC, and to a lesser extent between Glendale and Putney Park. Twice each week Richard is required to determine the block booking requirements for our Sunday and Wednesday games and the timings have to be coordinated with the Glendale staff. In addition, Richard's role includes the bookings for all the club's matches and the friendly fixtures, and let's not forget the bookings for our Saturday events. On top of this booking function Richard has to coordinate all the associated catering requests. It is no surprise that the level of email traffic on these bookings routines is excessive. Also, as the Liaison Officer Richard is the first point of contact for the golfers who indicate to Glendale that they are interested in competitions or club membership, and we often see the names come across in batches of three or more. From the details passed across by Glendale it will normally be the case that Richard needs to make contact with the referrals and from this step it often follows that arrangements need to be made for the potential new members to be booked in for the handicap qualification process. There is only a small amount of this activity that is semi-automatic because we tend to find that our potential new members raise comments that require a high degree of personal attention. We have not yet reached the end of the liaison activities because a very crucial component of the role involves the control and submission of the Club's monthly invoices to recover the refunds for those who have signed up for Glendale's annual Loyaltee cards. We have roughly 130 members with the annual cards and keeping tabs on the new and expiring cardholders is no easy task. Needless to say, we continue to be grateful to Richard for his time and input to ensure that his tasks are managed successfully.
- My next mention is for the three Handicap/Competition Secretaries; Paul Grand, Kim Chaffart and Sheena Harrington. As we have seen from above, the Sunday and Wednesday competitions have required in excess of 4,400 scorecards to be processed and we all know that all the competitions need to be processed in very timely manner to ensure that all the handicaps are current. In addition, we all appreciate the competition

reports that accompany the official publication of our competition results. There is of course much more to the task than processing scorecards because our potential new members require special treatment until they come on board as full members, and there is a seemingly constant running maintenance conversation with CDH concerning the new members and those that have left the Club. As may be suspected, our three secretaries are involved with the technical aspects of the handicapping system and the need to apply new features from time to time such as the new 10 hole Duke's course arrangement that Glendale introduced at the close of 2019. We are grateful for the work and the dedication applied by Paul, Kim and Sheena. Of course, for 2020 there will be a change of operation with WHS arriving in November 2020 but for the time being it will be business as usual.

- Peter Jagger has been in charge of the purse strings for a couple of years and with an average of two transactions per day there is an obvious need to be on top of the various items of activity. On a regular basis Peter keeps the committee updated with the Club's financial position and we all appreciate his dedication to the task and the time involved to ensure that our numbers are in good order.
- Next, I must give a mention to our bookings officers, and during the year those involved have been Pete Harrison, Kim Chaffart, Sheena Harrington and Paul Brown. It is plain for all to see that there are weeks when the bookings sheets resemble a dog's breakfast and a major tidy operation is needed before the start sheets are published. However, our bookings officers have a knack of tidying the sheets before issue and with the officers coordinating between themselves all the 2019 start sheets were issued correctly and on time. We are all grateful for this action which ensures that our order of play does not go haywire. Whilst referring to the order of play I must highlight one notable feature in the 'system' that has emerged through 2019 and give a special mention to the ever-present Kim Chaffart who keeps us all well informed by arriving early at the Park to write up the white board, not just on Sundays but also on Wednesdays.
- If you have not met Toby Hunt on a Sunday it means that you are the poorer for not being sufficiently high on the leaderboard for a sweep distribution, and if Kim Chaffart has not approached you on a Wednesday with a dodgy brown envelope your sweep contributions have gone to a worthy cause. It is with thanks to Toby and Kim that we have another aspect of the Club's operations that are run efficiently.
- In 2019 Cheryl Woodhouse volunteered to take charge of organising the spring and autumn ladies' weekends away. As mentioned, Cheryl took us for a very welcome return to Donnington Valley in the spring and to Wokefield Park in the autumn which was new territory for most of those participating. It was good to see that both weekends were fully subscribed and Cheryl's finely tuned organisation meant that both weekends proceeded like clockwork. The Lady Captain and others are involved with the coordination of the results and the prizes and this is appreciated by all but a special thanks go to Cheryl for the main organisation and the hotel arrangements.

...and the final word

I hope that you all have a most enjoyable 2020 golfing year and, possibly, a mention on the 2020 prize list.

Peter Harrington
Secretary
25th January 2020