

RICHMOND PARK GOLF CLUB



ANNUAL REPORT - 2005

We are approaching the end of January 2006 and 2005 already seems like aeons ago. It is very easy to dismiss the past when we are all concentrating on those New Year resolutions and the tasks ahead for the forthcoming year.

For the Club, 2006 promises to be a year of change and in some respects we can expect one of the biggest changes since the Club's inauguration in 1924. It is for this reason that we have to tread very carefully in 2006 and make sure both that we know what we are doing and that we do it correctly. However, before looking at what is down the road let's have a scan at 2005.

Can you remember as far back as 2004? The year got off to a roaring start when the Pavilion went up in smoke on 2nd January 2004. We camped in the pro-shop for a while and through the endeavours of Geoff Foreman we eventually obtained portacabin number 1 which we shared with the other clubs. This was not a happy arrangement but it was the best that we could manage under the circumstances and it ensured that as we moved into 2005 we did at least have an operational base and a noticeboard. 2004 was a year of turmoil and hard work, and by comparison 2005 has been a doddle. The year started with a mild winter, the summer was pretty good by UK standards and the autumn period leading into winter has been very kind to us Sunday golfers. It is not so many years ago that the use of the temporary greens in winter was a pretty permanent feature, but for the last few years the occasional days when we have encountered 18 temporary greens are thankfully few a far between. So, back to 2005, although the year was less problematic than 2004 we had a few moments of note, and a few of our members had their individual moments of glory.

Dinner Dance and Annual Prize-giving

It would be easy to write a glowing report of the dinner dance, but there would bound to be a 'clever Richard' who would spot that we've not had it yet. The format for this Saturday's dinner dance remains the same, and we will be joined again by our regular band, the 60's Allstars.

Attendance at last year's dinner dance was 90, and our present indication is that we will be slightly closer to 100 this year - a good round number. Our venue is the Winning Post again, and with a capacity limit of just over 250 we have some way to go before we need worry about a capacity limit. For the benefit of our new members I will mention that 20 years ago the attendances at our dinner dances were approaching 200!

Just below you will find a list of our prize-winners for 2005. Congratulations go to all those whose names are mentioned. Missing from the list are the names of the most improved players for 2005. The intention is that these should be kept secret until dinner dance. This year we again have two worthy winners. I can disclose that both winners will be attending the dinner dance (but I have to admit that this isn't much of a clue). 2005 was unique in one

sense - it is the first time in our membership days that the Club could boast a scratch player! Bruce Cuff retired from the pro-shop in October 2004 and started to play with us on a guest basis at the beginning of 2005. He hadn't been playing much whilst working in the shop and as a concession we granted him membership in March 2005. Although we started him off scratch his initial playing performance was close to a handicap of 4 or 5, but he soon found his form. Through the year until he emigrated in November his Club 'handicap' increased from scratch to 1 (actual .05), but then dropped to scratch, a truly remarkable achievement given the quiriness of some of the playing conditions and the variable quality of the courses at the Park. Bruce was chased hard in the first round of the Club Championship by Ian Smith, but in the end he ran in a comfortable winner which was hardly a major surprise. However, for the second year running Ian Smith collects the runner-up prize for the Club Championship which demonstrates a standard of golf way above the expectations of many of us. Congratulations also go to our Junior winner Peter Cunningham who also managed to return a good score in the second round. Our third Club Champion winner for 2005 was our President Julie Smith who retains the trophy that she first one in 2004.

RPGC 2005 PRIZE LIST

EVENT

Senior Men's Club Championship
 Ladies' Club Championship
 Junior Men's Club Championship
 Men's Club Championship Handicap Trophy
 Handicap Cup - handicaps 0-24
 Pembroke Cup - handicaps 25-36
 J H Taylor – matchplay 0-16
 Two Courses Cup – matchplay 17+
 Ladies' Challenge Cup
 Men's Fourball – matchplay
 Mixed Foursomes – matchplay
 Ladies' Committee Cup
 Grand Medal Trophy
 Silver Jubilee Trophy
 Golden Jubilee Trophy
 Diamond Jubilee Trophy
 Platinum Jubilee Trophy
 Anniversary Cup
 President's Putter
 President's Putter - ladies
 Captain's Prize
 Lady Captain's Prize
 Richmond Park Golf Club Open
 Trevor Allen Open
 J Q Robertson Trophy
 Coronation Cup
 Shaw Cup
 Spring Mixed Foursomes
 Autumn Mixed Foursomes - Handicap

WINNER

Bruce Cuff
 Julie Smith
 Peter Cunningham
 Peter Harrington
 Sheena Harrington
 Jini Beacham
 Dave Williams
 John Ahad
 Siobhan Clarke
 Bruce Cuff &
 Kerry Sargeant
 Cheryl Woodhouse &
 Paul Grand
 Sheena Harrington
 Bruce Cuff
 Michael Rossiter
 Michael Rossiter
 John Ahad
 David Marsh
 Michael Rossiter
 Osman Chaudry
 Julie Smith
 Peter Harrington
 Julie Smith
 I Parkinson
 John Bennett
 Jon Cooper
 George Martin
 Bill McSorley
 Kate Friswell &
 George Martin
 Sheena Harrington &
 Peter Harrington

RUNNER-UP

Ian Smith
 Tracy Wright
 Geoff Foreman
 Cheryl Woodhouse
 Pia Langeland
 Jon Cooper
 Geoff Foreman
 Kate Friswell
 Dave Lawrance &
 Rob Urquhart
 Tracy Wright &
 Martin Wright
 Julie Smith
 Sheena Harrington
 Veronica Mitchell
 Dave Winter
 John Sowter
 Vic Wadley
 Sheena Rennie
 Michael Rossiter
 Veronica Mitchell
 J Schroeder
 Michael Rossiter
 Di Jackett
 Bruce Cuff
 Doreen Dolby &
 Jon Cooper
 Tracy Wright &
 Martin Wright

Autumn Mixed Foursomes - Scratch	Tracy Wright & Martin Wright	
Burgess Cup - Greensomes	Lee Eden & Stan Potts	Jim Fogarty & Stuart Nash
Summer Cup	Adrian Wilder	Peter Cunningham
Top Dog Trophy	Michael Rossiter	
Dowling Cup	Julie Smith	
Lissaman Cup - 3 clubs + putter	Ian Smith	John Bennett
Barton Bowl - Play-off – top 8 against captain	Veronica Mitchell	
Charity Cup	Graeme Syme	Tracy Wright
Winter Competition	David Marsh	Steve Peacock

Membership

It is no secret that the lack of facilities and the overall cost of golf at the Park continue to have a detrimental impact on the ability to gain and hold new members. Every year we lose an average of 20% of our membership because of relocation, family commitments, or an opportunity arises to play golf elsewhere, and 2005 was no exception. The important point is to maintain a good core membership through which we can sustain a keen interest in the Club's fixtures; and I am pleased to report that we gained 17 new members in 2005, some of whom have become regular Sunday morning participants.

The analysis below shows the profile of our membership over the last four years. Despite the future anticipated amalgamation of the clubs in 2006 (described below), the Committee will continue to pursue measures to encourage new members to the Club. This is in the short term interests of the Club and in the longer term interests of the new club.

	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2004/05</u>	<u>2003/04</u>	<u>2002/03</u>
Men:				
Regular	69	73	78	67
Senior	6	7	7	6
Junior	0	0	1	1
Honorary (playing)	3	1	1	1
Total Men	<u>78</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>75</u>
Ladies:				
Regular	33	32	29	30
Senior	2	4	3	3
Junior	0	0	0	0
Honorary (playing)	1	0	0	0
Total Ladies	<u>36</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>33</u>
Total Membership	<u>114</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>108</u>
Joiners:				
New men	13	19	22	13
New ladies	4	4	1	7
Rejoiners – men	2	0	1	5
Rejoiners – ladies	0	1	0	1
Total	<u>19</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>26</u>

Some would question, what is the optimum size of the Club? The answer to this is that the official tee allocation available to the Club on Sunday mornings is 21 games and with our present playing ratio we could increase to 150 members without causing any major bookings hic-cups.

Inter-Club Matches

The Club's friendlies are an important part of the fixture programme and they give us a chance to re-acquaint with some old golfing friends. It is envisaged that our friendly matches will be continued by the new club, and some new matches will be established so as to broaden the experience of members. For 2005 the Club had another year of mixed results as follows:

Men vs Airlinks:

This match was not played in 2005.

Men vs Rickmansworth:

There was a time when our Club has a succession of wins against Ricky but this is no longer the case. In the first leg played at the Park the Ricky team took a commanding lead of 4 - 2. When we played away at Ricky, if my recollection is correct, the score was 1 - 5 indicating a fairly convincing points win. Despite this overall result, the individual matches were not quite so one-sided where all our losing pairings remained undecided until the 18th hole. [The winning pair was the combination of Kerry and Sheena.]

Ladies vs Mitcham:

In the annual Rich-Mitch fixture our home team launched into a first round lead of 3 - 1 for the second year running. The competition was much sterner for the second round at Mitcham and we suffered an away loss of 1½ - 2½; however for the second year in succession we scored a win with an overall score of 4½ - 3½.

Richmond Ladies vs White Lodge Ladies

This competition between the Clubs is for the Bette Hill Rosebowl. Bette was member of both clubs and she promoted the inter-club Stableford match. Unfortunately, the Clubs ran into fixture difficulties and were unable to play the match in 2005.

Keys Trophy (Strokeplay):

The Club did not field a team for the 2004 but returned in 2005 to take the Trophy. If all clubs participate, the Trophy is played for by five teams from the five member clubs of the Association.

Association Salver (Stableford):

In the second of the Association annual matches the Club was beaten into second place by White Lodge.

N.A.P.G.C. Competitions

Clapham Common Shield (men)

In 2004 we ran into Basildon and we were completely annihilated in something less than 5 hours. In 2005 we were drawn against the 'c' team so we reckoned on a chance of making some progress in the competition. Sadly, we discovered that the 'c' team members were our previous opponents who had gone on to win both the Clapham Common Shield and the Bourne-Vanneck Trophy. The result was something of a foregone conclusion, however the match was played in a good spirit and despite the inevitability of the final result I did hear that

all those who played enjoyed the day. The final tally was a win for Basildon of 30 points, however there was some satisfaction in knowing that this was 5 points better than 2004!

Hawtree Trophy (mixed)

The Club's A team recorded a 3 – 2 win in the first round played at home against Ruislip. Sadly this was not repeated when the team lost away 2 – 3 to Little Hay. The Club's B team came unstuck at the first hurdle when it played away at Huntswood. The score was 1 – 4, but all the individual matches finished close to or around the 18th hole, therefore the result on the day was closer than the final score indicates.

White Webbs (ladies)

The Club again entered two teams in 2005. Our 'A' team found themselves away to Portsmouth, a difficult course to play for the first time. We did not succeed at Portsmouth but with a score of 3 - 2 the indication is that we were not too far off achieving a positive result. Our 'B' team fared slightly better by winning the first round 3½ - 1½ at home against Bird Hills. Unfortunately, what was thought to be an evenly matched game at the next venue at Sandown Park turned out to be more of a challenge than envisaged and we lost 1 - 4.

Internal Matches and Competitions

Bontor

The Men did it yet again!!!

Ladies' Invitation

Pia chose well!! She grabbed Bruce and they were the winners, with Cheryl and Paul the runner-ups.

Men's Invitation

Tim also chose well. He partnered Cathryn to victory, with Jon and Di as the runner-ups.

The Lockie Trophy

That infamous trophy for the ladies! The Spring weekend away at Sandwich seems so long ago. It was a close result after 36 holes with Lorna White scoring a win by one shot.

Individual Achievements

- In the Open competitions played at the Park this year we again had some notable successes. We succeeded in four out of a possible six wins in these events:
 - In the Ruskie Hall Open, Paul Grand won and Geoff Foreman was the runner-up.
 - In the Putney Park Open, Andy Furniss won and Jon Cooper was the runner-up.
 - In the Centurion Open, Ged Scott was the winner.
 - In the Richmond Park Open, I Parkinson from Ruskie Hall was the winner and J Schroeder from Putney Park was the runner-up. Our highest-placed competitor was Kate Marsh.
 - In the Association Trophy, we did not take a place and Norma Lynch was our highest-placed competitor.
 - In the Trevor Allen Open, John Bennett won and Jason Strong was the runner-up.
- Congratulations to the following 'three' hole in one achievers:
 - Ian Smith on the 16th on the Dukes during his J H Taylor match against Buce Cuff on 17th April 2005. Ian won the hole! – and the match at the 21st hole.
 - Stan Potts on the 14th on the Dukes in the Burgess Cup on 16th October 2005.
 - Tim Meyer on the 10th on the Princes in the second round of the Winter Competition on 25th November 2005.

- In the Bournemouth Open week Toby Hunt finished in 9th place in the men's 72-hole medal event for low handicappers.
- An eagle – not a particularly rare event – except on the 7th on the Princes achieved by David Marsh on 16th January 2005 in the Winter Competition. [For the old boys – the previous recorded 7th eagle was by Ray Bland in the RPGC Open in 1998.]
- Pam and Tim Fox won the Husband and Wives 36 hole mixed foursomes open at West Byfleet, a very challenging golf course.

Major Changes for 2006

(a) New Management Contract.

It was just 20 years ago in 1986 that the proposal was first made to build a clubhouse close to the Chohole Gate entrance to the Park. The activity taken in 2005 means that we continue to move slowly but surely towards seeing this original proposal become a reality. The Department of Culture Media and Sport has issued tender invitations to a shortlist of potential candidates to bid for a long-term management contract that requires the new manager to build a clubhouse. All the necessary outline planning consents have been received, providing the Department with an effective green light to proceed with the project. The new contract will commence in October 2006 and there will be an obligation on the new manager to build the new clubhouse as quickly as possible. We are aware that a sizeable number of course managers expressed an initial interest in the new contract, and we have been informed that Glendale is one of the companies that will be bidding for the contract.

(b) Amalgamation.

The new management contract will provide a continuity of playing rights currently enjoyed by the various clubs that play at the Park. The major significant change is that the new contract envisages a 'one club' scenario therefore the old chestnut of the amalgamation of the clubs is now a very much a live subject for 2006. The five clubs that comprise the 'Association' have the opportunity to establish and manage the amalgamated club and keep the club independent from the new courses manager. If this opportunity is not taken the inevitable consequence is that the new manager will run a management-owned club that will have a limited fixture schedule and higher fees. It follows that if we as club members do not progress the amalgamation issue we will not be able to maintain our present club environment which has over 80 years of historical achievement. Our Club is the strongest and most progressive of the Association clubs therefore it is important that we are able to provide the leadership and resources where appropriate in order to ensure the success and independence of the new club.

It is envisaged that amalgamation will be required by the end of September 2006 and we have modified the Club's traditional timetable to fit all our important events into the shortened season. A number of members have requested information concerning the mechanics of the amalgamation process and I will summarise the main features:

- An entirely new golf club is to be formed. At the last Association meeting there was a general consensus that the name of the new club shall be 'Richmond Park Golf Club'. Between now and commencement date the new club will establish committees to determine such matters as the operating budget including subscriptions and joining fees, playing schedules and fixture lists, procedures for the control of handicapping, external matches and friendly fixtures, bookings procedures, and general administration.

- The five Association clubs and the Glendale club will cease to operate from the date of the amalgamation. Members of the Association clubs and the Glendale club will be invited to join the new club. The new club will have the ability to hold the existing tee slots available to the clubs and it is hoped that in time the new club will be able to increase the tee allowance for play on Fridays in addition to Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- A member of the new club will be able to play on any day that the club holds a relevant fixture or tee slot.
- The existing clubs will be able to donate cups and trophies to the new club. The new club will have full discretion over the new fixture list and will not be bound to continue any of the fixtures played by the existing clubs.

The natural consequence of the amalgamation process is that our Club as we presently know it will come to a close around the end of September. The transition for us to the new club will not be as dramatic as for the other clubs because our club's name will be carried forward. It is important to recognise that there is no merit in planning for enhancements, changes or developments beyond 2006 because the Club as we know it quite simply will not exist. It is also most important that we do not descend into a state akin to 'end of term fever' and it is important for us all to maintain the momentum in terms of our regular Sunday play, our match commitments and the development of the membership. .

(c) Course Changes.

The new management contract will place an obligation on for the new operator to build a new driving range, a six hole par 3 academy course, and carry out alterations to the existing courses. It is not envisaged that any major works on the new course layouts etc will be undertaken in 2006. Those that have played recently will have noticed a new bunker installed in front of the green on the 10th hole on the Dukes course, and some work is being carried out on the bunker on the 8th on the Dukes though it is difficult to see what the intention is. We have been advised that it is intended to complete the installation of a series of three bunkers on the left of the fairway on the 5th hole on the Dukes course. Since embarking on the changes it has become clear that Glendale was not aware of the effect that the changes will have on the allocation of stroke indices and this is something that the Committee will need to consider.

For the remainder of Glendale's tenure under the short-term contract the firm has been asked to consult with the Association before any further changes are undertaken, therefore we will be in a position to ensure that any future proposals have merit.

Extra Curricular Activities

2005 was not a vastly busy year but we did enjoy some notable extras.

When he is not driving his redmobile Dave Williams occupies his spare time looking after the Club's accounts and organising the 'away days'. The task fell into his lap by default a few years ago and since then he has practically single-handedly looked after all the arrangements for our outings. In 2005 he successfully promoted trips to Rusper in May where the winner on the day was Peter Cunningham; and to North Downs in October which turned out to be a good test of golf and a good test of the waterproofs where the winner was Mark Katz (a guest).

It is a tradition stretching back many years that the ladies organise their own away weekends in the spring and the autumn. An invitation is typically extended to the men to fill the vacant

playing slots. In the spring it has already been mentioned that the weekend was held at Sandwich in Kent, playing on the 27 holes of the Princes course. Lorna as we have heard won the ladies prize and for the men Jack was our champion. In the autumn the ladies section travelled to the Five Lakes complex close to the Essex coast. We encountered a spot or two of torrential rain, but this did not deter Cheryl who was the overall winner and Ian who collected the runner-up prize.

In 2005 the Ruffians Ryder Cup rightly returned to Richmond in a convincing manner. The Ludlow Ruffians descended on Richmond for the annual challenge comprising a Friday pairs match and a Saturday singles match, playing for a total of 15 points. On the Friday the Ludlow chaps were obviously struggling from travel-lag and Richmond built up a lead of 4 - 1. Despite much bravado from Ludlow, an over-enthusiastic session on the Friday evening by the Ludlow team took its toll and on the Saturday Richmond advanced with a score of 9 - 2. Our home Club win of 12 - 3 !! will no doubt trigger the Ludlow team captain to introduce intensive on-course and in-bar training sessions so we can expect stiff opposition when the Richmond team travels to Ludlow in 2006.

www.RichmondParkGolfClub.Org.Uk - The RPGC Website

The Club's website does not survive and enhance by pure magic. It is the endeavours of Tim Meyer who keeps the website up to speed. He diligently controls and edits material for the website, he loads the website with standing data and news items, he looks after the maintenance of the website in terms of the formats of the layout, he manages the internal linkages and the new annual sections, and I am sure that there is an array of activity that we will never know about. As a Club we are exceptionally lucky to have someone with the skills, time and IT resources to be able to continue with the website and to keep it up to date.

Tim is always on the hunt for new material for the website, therefore if anyone has snippets for the inclusion on the site please pass these through to him.

A few of us receive a monthly report of website activity. Through the year we have maintained our average hit rate of roughly 1,000 hits each day. Even in the quiet days of December 2005 the average was 855 hits per day. It is fair to say that a large number of the hits are spurious and from different parts of the world; there were 21 countries listed for the month of December. However, notwithstanding the international interest, the website does provide a valuable service in providing information for prospective members and a strong encouragement for recruitment for the Club.

Last year I mentioned that we have a project in hand to introduce an archive section to the website. It is still the aim to establish the archive, however more pressing commitments have restricted the opportunity for us devote time to this project.

Portacabin Nbr 2

Behind the scenes and without any fuss or indeed particular recognition we are all fortunate to have volunteers who devote time and energy to help improve the conditions for the Club and the members. The establishment of the second portacabin is no exception. In the first instance we must give a huge vote of thanks to Geoff Foreman who purloined the cabin for us from deepest Chelmsford. Amongst other things, Geoff needed to trek over to Chelmsford to discuss the arrangements for delivery etc. Once installed, Martin Wright spent considerable time sorting out the electrics, Vic made up the steps, and Paul Grand started the process of levelling the cabin. Kerry Sargeant spent a day working on the delivery of the cabin and the external paint, a further day carrying our various repairs, noticeably to the roof where the squirrels had been having a feast, and another full day opening up the interior. There have been other incidental contributions from various members and we should

express a huge vote of thanks to all concerned. The new cabin has been a vast improvement for the Club and with drinks now available we have rekindled our old social atmosphere.

The arrival of the cabin was not a foregone conclusion. The first delivery attempt failed as a result of a broken clutch on the lorry (yet another day at the Park for some!). When the delivery lorry arrived at Roehampton Gate it was discovered that the gate was just 2cm wider than the cabin. Needless to say, it took roughly 20 minutes to negotiate a way through the gate, causing something of a traffic hold up in the meanwhile. The next obstacle was the entrance to the course, and with the slant on the roadway the cabin made it reached the 18th hole with just a few inches to spare. The third and final problem was the tricky task of reaching home base, and here we had roughly a one inch clearance from grounding the lorry's diesel tank. That was three exceedingly lucky escapes all within yards of the final resting point, and any one of these near misses going wrong would have scuppered the whole exercise.

The Committee and helpers

Compared to 2004, it is fair to say that 2005 was something of a breeze, but this is largely due to the efforts of a few who help keep the wheels of the Club oiled and in good working order. I won't dwell on all the Committee and helpers but I will mention a few who have kept the Club on an even keel:

- Both the 2005 Captains, David Marsh and Sheena Harrington dealt with the organisation of the internal and external matches. Cajoling members to play in matches and enticing members to play in foursomes events is never an easy task; it often results in chewed finger nails and expensive telephone bills. Of course, the tasks and responsibilities of the Captains are far more than just organising games etc and the fact that we did not have any major hic-cups during the year is a direct result of the input. Both Captains are stepping down and the Club welcomes on board both Jon Cooper and Cheryl Woodhouse who will be leading us through to the amalgamation.
- A number of the Committee members and a few others have stepped in from time to time to assist with the bookings process. This is a thankless task, although the new white board in the cabin does make life easier on Sunday mornings where players can see their game partners. Our chief bookings officer has been Vic Wadley and special thanks go to him for his time and patience during the year. On many occasions Vic has turned up at the Park early on Sunday mornings even when he has not been playing and there are not many willing to sacrifice the comfort of home to a chilly morning in the portacabin.
- It is not often that Dave Williams gets a mention for his efforts so it is about time that something is said. Dave looks after the Club's accounts and produces monthly reports for the Committee's review. He looks after the away-days and he plays a major part in the organisation of the dinner/dance by collecting the 'ticket' monies and arranging some of the raffle prizes. Also, and most importantly, Dave is always available at the end of the email line and in amongst the hundreds of messages that circulate round the Committee through the year he is able to draw on his depth of knowledge and experience to help clear some of the tricky problems. Dave is clearly a worthy recipient of a vote of thanks from us all.
- It is without doubt that the person working the hardest behind the scenes is Paul Grand. Paul wears the booking officer hat when he controls the bookings data on the website, he wears the competition secretary hat when he prepares and publishes the

match results and reports, and of course he still wears his traditional Handicap Secretary hat for the men. In addition to all the golfing duties Paul has fairly recently found the time to fit in a full time job, therefore we owe a big vote of thanks for keeping the weekly admin firmly under control.

The Final Word

I hope you all have a most enjoyable golfing year in 2006 with a few successes on the way.

Peter Harrington
Secretary
25th January 2006