

RICHMOND PARK GOLF CLUB



ANNUAL REPORT - 2009

January 2009 – it probably seems like a bit of a blur by now. The weather was cold and frosty and occasionally stormy, so it is not too surprising if we have difficulty recognising any memorable difference between January 2009 and January 2010. When the spring weather suddenly arrived in March we encountered a major contrast and unlike 2008 we were able to enjoy some really good playing conditions for golf. Of course, this period may not have seemed so cheerful because the country was in the grip of a very major recession and all the newspapers were full of worldwide doom and gloom. However, down at the Park we were insulated from external influences and we enjoyed many months of very healthy golf in the summer period. Then, of course, everything changed overnight during one weekend in November. From that moment on the weather was horrid – wet, cold and very blowy and sometimes all three on the same day.

Normally this introduction section is reserved for items of a general or casual nature but in 2009 we encountered something so rare that it deserves front page news in the Annual Report. We were subject to some good fortune and with just a bit of excellent golf skill the Club surprised just a few at the NAPGC HQ. Our adventure started when the Hawtree 'A' team 'won' a bye for the first round of the pairs knockout event. In the second round we were drawn at home against Wycombe Heights which was most fortunate because on their course pitons come in handy. Anyway the opponents couldn't handle playing on a flat course and our team recorded a 5:0 win. In the third round we were drawn at home against Deangate Ridge. Again, it was most fortunate that this was a home match because Deangate Ridge is a journey of well over 2 hours way in a remote part of Kent on the Thames Estuary where the wind always blows. For some strange reason the Deangate Ridge team agreed to play at the Park early on a Sunday morning, leaving them with a journey start time of certainly no later than 6:00am. With a few days to go before the event Deangate Ridge announced that they were giving us a walkover, the reason given that they were struggling to muster sufficient ladies to make the early journey to Richmond Park. So, we had successfully negotiated the first three rounds of the event!

The next round of the Hawtree would be the 'regional final' and the match had to be played on neutral ground. We agreed with our opponents Birchwood Park to play at The Oaks over by Croydon. We were successful on the day with a 3:2 win and this meant that we had qualified for the semi-final which was being held at the Shropshire Golf Club. Travelling to Shropshire was indeed a different kettle of fish because the semi-final and final events were being held over two days and this required accommodation for the team. In the semi-final we came up against a very strong team from Tamworth and we were clobbered 4:1. On day two Tamworth were themselves clobbered by the winners Portsmouth. Also on day two our team played the other semi-finalists Whitewebbs for the third vs. fourth positions. This match was closely fought and we clinched third position with the very final putt on the 18th green! Congratulations go to our full team and particularly to those who travelled to Stafford: Anne Koychev, Harriet Carr, Caroline Ward, Veronica Mitchell, Doreen Dolby, Kerry Sargeant, Paul Doran, Graeme Syme, Richard Owen, Toby Hunt, Ian Smith and Julie Smith.

Richmond Park is a relatively small by traditional club numbers and our courses at the Park do not give the degree of challenge that is often found at other venues. These factors should be considered in relation to our competitive strength when pitched against teams from courses with frightening characteristics, therefore it is all the more significant that our team did so well in 2009. It is a while since Richmond Park progressed so far and our previous moments of glory were: 1981 – runner up; 1982 – winner!; 1989 – runner up.

One decision taken at the end on 2008 was to dispense with the knockout qualifiers and to run the 2009 knockouts on an 'open entry' basis. This step proved hugely successful and we increased participation by about 60%, and it was good to see that there were some hotly contested matches in progress in evidence right the way through the summer playing season. We will obviously continue with this plan going forward. Once consequence of dropping the spring qualifiers was the release of a couple of spring weekends on the men's fixture schedule. Given the time of the year and the typical playing conditions it was decided to hold a 36 hole Spring Stableford over two consecutive Sundays. Also, lurking at home and gathering dust Gurpal had previously donated a figurine golfer to the Club and we have adopted this as the permanent trophy for the new Spring Stableford event. As you will see from below, the first winner was Julian Ratnage.

So – what else happened in 2009 – let's take a look:

Dinner-Dance and Annual Prize-giving

Once again, for our annual gathering we are paying a return visit to The Winning Post on the Chertsey Road at Twickenham. I am sure that everyone will have received reminder messages ad nauseam however for the sake of completeness I will mention that the 2010 Dinner-Dance is this Saturday 30th January commencing at 6:00pm.

For the 2009 dinner dance we had 83 in attendance. Unfortunately, this year we are struggling with numbers. It would be good to see our attendances up to the 100 mark and even better if we could get back to the days when we had 150 for the evening!

Below is a list of our 2009 prizewinners. We have some familiar names on the list and it is always pleasing to see some of the newer members' names appearing. Each week the Park presents us with new challenges and it is often the case that the difference between win or lose is dependent on a fraction of a roll of a golf ball or the ability to have the tidier back 9 back 6 or back 3 holes. We have many 'major' events on the fixture list but the one event that stands ahead of the others for tension is the 36 hole Club Championship scratch competition. The first round is always played on the Prince's course and in 2009 this was played on one of the hottest days of the year, and the scores showed this. This is what happened over both legs:-

- In the first round of the men's senior division the leader was the Club's 2008 winner, Dave Winter. Dave had the best round of his life at the Park, he was two under at the turn and completed his round with a level par 69 – a staggering 9 shots below his handicap and 5 shots clear of the next group of players. It is worth mentioning that lying in second spot on 74 were Tim Meyer, Hiro Ushido, and Paul Patching. Further back were James Inglis on 76, and on 78 were Graeme Syme and Jason Loubser. The second round on the Duke's course was far more punishing both weather wise and golf wise compared to the first round. Dave's first round lead of 5 shots very soon evaporated and in a major contrast to his first leg he finished 11 over his handicap for his second round. Those starting the day in joint second position also did not fair so well either. Tim Meyer scored 4 over his handicap for his second round, and Paul Patching 7 over his handicap for his second round. However, further back down the field some good golf was in evidence. The best of the second round charges came from Jason Loubser

who played 6 under his handicap on the Duke's Course with a 75. Jason takes the Club Championship with a fine score of 153, closely followed by James Inglis who carded a 78 for the second round to give to final score one shot adrift on 154.

- In the first round of the ladies championship the leader by 3 shots was Harriet Carr with an 83. Following Harriet were Sheena Harrington on 86, Lia Donath on 90, and on 91 there was a cluster of three ladies comprising Di Jackett, Jayne Maxwell and Janet Fox. Despite the more difficult conditions for the second round Harriet notched up her game and carded a 79 and was the clear winner on a total of 162. The main battle was for the runner-up place. In the second round on the Duke's course Lia and Di both toiled but Jayne had a strong round of 89, however Sheena managed to card a 91 which was good enough to hold the second spot with a total of 177 and three shots ahead of Jayne.
- The men's junior club championship is for those with handicaps of 17 and above and the battle for honours was also a tight contest. The first round lead was taken by Julian James with a score of 81. He was hotly pursued by John Morris and Osman Chaudry, both on 83, and further back but in with a shout were Arthur Dolby on 87 and Julian Ratnage on 89. In the second round Julian couldn't maintain his winning form and he was overtaken by John Morris who scored his second 83 to take the cup with a total of 166. Julian held on to the runner up spot with an 88 to give a total of 169 for the two rounds.
- In conjunction with the club championship scratch competitions both the men and the ladies run handicap events and the results were as follows:-
 - ❖ Jason Loubser took the men's Handicap Trophy with a very impressive net 66 followed by a net 63 on the Duke's course giving a net total of 129. Jason was closely followed by Graeme Syme who scored a brace of 65's to finish with a net total of 130.
 - ❖ The ladies' Handicap Cup is for those with handicaps up to and including 24. In 2008 Jayne Maxwell was the clear winner with an impressive net 137. In the first round in 2009 Jayne was tied in second place with Lia Donath on 71, but in the following week Jayne had the better round with a net 69 giving an overall net 140, and Lia's net 73 secured her a second place with an overall net 144.
 - ❖ The ladies' Pembroke Cup is for those with handicaps of 25 and above. In 2009 Julie Smythe played two very tidy rounds to score a net 67 followed by a net 69 for an aggregate net of 136. This was compensation for failing to capitalise on a first round lead in the 2008 event. Following Julie was Jini Beacham with a net 70 and a net 68 to give an aggregate net of 138. Jini was also the runner up in 2008, but on this occasion she was a mere 14 shots higher with a net 152!

RPGC 2009 PRIZE LIST

EVENT

WINNER

RUNNER-UP

Senior Men's Club Championship	Jason Loubser	James Inglis
Ladies' Club Championship	Harriet Carr	Sheena Harrington
Junior Men's Club Championship	John Morris	Julian James
Men's Club Championship Handicap Trophy	Jason Loubser	
Handicap Cup - handicaps 0-24	Jayne Maxwell	Lia Donath
Pembroke Cup - handicaps 25-36	Julie Smyth	Jini Beacham
J H Taylor – matchplay 0-16	Michael Rossiter	Jason Loubser
Two Courses Cup – matchplay 17+	Nigel Ward	David Keen
Ladies' Challenge Cup	Julie Smith	Lia Donath

Men's Fourball – matchplay	Jason Loubser & Michael Rossiter	George Martin & Ian Smith
Ladies Double C Cup	Cheryl Woodhouse & Maureen Slade	Sheena Harrington & Julie Smith
Mixed Foursomes – matchplay	Carrie Ward & Kerry Sargeant	Ros Lake & Paul Grand
Ladies' Committee Cup	Julie Smyth	Susan Smith
Grand Medal Trophy	Nigel Ward	
Silver Jubilee Trophy	Veronica Mitchell	Peter Harrington
Golden Jubilee Trophy	Kerry Sargeant	Tim Meyer
Diamond Jubilee Trophy	Gary Flounders	Phil Midgely-Carver
Platinum Jubilee Trophy	Jon Pieters	Arthur Dolby
Anniversary Cup	Kerry Sargeant	
President's Putter – overall	Graham Harris	Gina Jillet
President's Putter - ladies	[Gina Jillet]	Norma Lynch
President's Putter - men	[Graham Harris]	Lee Eden
Captain's Prize	Tim Meyer	Graeme Syme
Lady Captain's Prize	Jini Beacham	Norma Lynch
Richmond Park Golf Club Open	Jason Loubser	Jon Pieters
Trevor Allen Open		Debra Dempster
J Q Robertson Trophy	Doreen Dolby	Nick Rogers
Coronation Cup	Tim Meyer	John Ahad
Shaw Cup	Davide Oddono	Stuart Nash
Spring Mixed Foursomes	Jayne Maxwell & John Morris	Alison Chadwick & Nigel Marsh
Autumn Mixed Foursomes - Handicap	Alison Chadwick & Greg Albertyn	Fiona Coombe & Nick Rogers
Autumn Mixed Foursomes - Scratch	Fiona Coombe & Nick Rogers	
Burgess Cup - Greensomes	Jim Fogarty & Stuart Nash	Richard Kenwood & Ron Linden
Summer Cup	Arthur Dolby	Tim Meyer
Top Dog Trophy	Tim Meyer	
Ladies' Dowling Cup	Alison Chadwick	
Lissaman Cup - 3 clubs + putter	Nigel Ward	Susan Smith
Barton Bowl - Play-off – top 8 against captain	Julie Smith	
Charity Cup	Donovan Friel	John Morris
Spring Stableford Trophy	Julian Ratnage	Graeme Syme
Winter Competition	Matt Roadnight	John Morris

Membership

With the recent bout of snow it is strange to think that 2009 was a pretty good year weather-wise. Unlike 2007 and 2008 we did in fact need the odd splash of suntan lotion and the playing conditions for golf were the best that we have seen for a long while. The summer was not a scorcher but we were presented with some good weeks and the courses dried to a brown sunburnt solid base that gave us all the impression that we could hit the ball for miles. Amongst other things, the weather does obviously have an impact on the propensity of golfers to join golf clubs and for us in 2009 I would say that it was an 'average' year as shown by the table below.

Attracting and retaining new members is clearly not an easy task given the lack of facilities at the Park, and the quality of the existing facilities is not exactly impressive. These

weaknesses are within the remit of Glendale's management contract to remedy and it is disappointing that there has been a lack of action to introduce improvements during 2009. Fortunately we are independent of Glendale and being left to our own devices it means that we have what I believe to be a pretty tidy and reasonably efficient weekly playing arrangement that satisfies most of everyone's requirements. One of the main objectives of the Club is to provide a facility for members to have relatively comfortable rounds of golf with familiar faces and in this regard I consider that we have some degree of success. It is, after all, certainly not the facilities on offer but rather the Club's members that take the club forward year by year.

So how did we fare in 2009?

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>
Men:								
Regular	89	78	62	69	69	73	78	67
Senior	7	7	7	8	6	7	7	6
Junior	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Honorary (playing)	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
Total Men	<u>97</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>75</u>
Ladies:								
Regular	36	38	36	34	33	32	29	30
Senior	7	5	5	5	2	4	3	3
Junior	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Honorary (playing)	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Total Ladies	<u>44</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>33</u>
Total Membership	<u>141</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>112</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>108</u>
Joiners:								
New men	26	27	7	15	13	19	22	13
New ladies	5	6	4	5	4	4	1	7
Rejoiners – men	0	1	1	4	2	0	1	5
Rejoiners – ladies	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>26</u>

From the table we can see that in 2009 we gained 31 new members, not quite as many as the 34 gained in the previous year but 2008 was clearly something of an exception. With a net gain of 11 members the result does of course mean that there were 20 of the 2008 members that did not rejoin. This rate of retirement is exactly in line with our expectations since we are well aware that members move on as a consequence of changed personal circumstances.

Strange as it may seem we have been receiving membership enquiries during this recent snowy period so despite the weather and the financial climate it is good to know that there is still some interest out there. The enquiries may of course not lead to anything but for the moment the signs for 2010 are encouraging.

There is one trend that has become apparent over the years and it is worth a mention here. If we take ourselves back to the mid-1980's the Club's membership was generally in the region of 130 to 150. It follows that our current total membership is back up to the 1980's figure, although at this period the ratio of men to ladies was in the order of 3 to 1 instead of our current ratio of 2 to 1. One of the main differences with our current membership is that 15 to 20 years ago the Club was fielding roughly 20 games on a typical summer Sunday

whereas in 2009 the number of games fielded in has been in the range of 15 to 17. This means that despite the Club raising the number of members, the increase has not translated into a corresponding increase of our average playing numbers in our Sunday morning slot. This trend is also very noticeable with regard to the members of the public who seem to be far more sporadic and transient than we have previously seen at the Park. My guess is that the absence of a sensible clubhouse or meeting area does have an impact on the social pre and post-game activity with the result that there is not the level of general interaction that existed before we lost the Pavilion in January 2004. It would be good to see us get back to a regular contingent of 20 games every Sunday, and at our present playing propensity rate we need another 35 members!

Inter-Club Matches

For clubs with reasonable facilities inter-club matches are a huge feature of normal club life and it is unfortunate that the Park is not conducive to a larger involvement of what are commonly referred to as friendly events. We are fortunate to have retained the matches that we have on the agenda and here are the results for 2009:

Men vs Rickmansworth:

Sadly, a loss. For the second year running the Club started well at the Park with a first leg lead of 4-2, and for the second year running the Club's team was not able to capitalise this advantage and we went down by 4 ½ - 1 ½ at tricky Ricky. Overall, therefore, the score for Rickmansworth was 6 ½ - 5 ½.

Ladies vs Mitcham:

The Richmond ladies had retained the trophy for five years and it was to be expected that Mitcham would pull out a few stops to reverse this trend. In the first leg Richmond went to Mitcham and ran up a somewhat surprising lead of 2 ½ to 1 ½. In the second leg at Richmond the Mitcham ladies fought back and the score was the reverse of the first leg with Mitcham winning 2 ½ to 1 ½. For the second year running the result was a draw and the Richmond Park ladies retain the trophy.

Ladies vs. Amida (Twickenham):

A win at Richmond Park! The new format for 2009 comprised three pairs of ladies and three pairs of men playing a 4-ball better ball format. Many of the matches were very close and survived until the 18th or very close to the 18th hole. In the final tally, the ladies won all three matches and the men won two of the three matches. In 2010 the event will be played at Amida's course.

Association Keys Trophy (Aggregate Singles Strokeplay):

A win! With a best net score of 279 RPGC were the winners over Centurion in second place on 284. Our team comprised Richard Owen, Graeme Syme, Paul Doran and John Morris.

Association Salver (Aggregate Pairs Stableford):

A win! RPGC 'cruised' to a 1 point win over the other clubs with a total of 73 points to the next best of 72 points by White Lodge. Our pairings were Richard Owen with Graeme Syme and Nick Rogers with John Morris.

N.A.P.G.C. Competitions

Clapham Common Shield (men) [Greensomes Stableford]

In 2009, the draw was against Wexham Park and although we have beaten Wexham in previous years we were not successful. The aggregate of the home and away legs was Wexham 220 and Richmond Park 211.

Hawtree Trophy (mixed foursomes matchplay)

The travels of the 'A' team are noted above. Our 'B' team took an early exit by losing 0-5 to Brent Valley Details in the first round.

White Webbs (ladies singles matchplay)

The Club entered two teams in 2009.

The 'B' team was drawn against Brent Valley, fortunately not too far because the team lost all 5 of the individual matches.

The 'A' team fared better in the first round and gained a very credible win over Tilgate Forest with the score 3:2. In the second round the team had to travel to Easthampstead and were not successful in losing by 3 ½ to 1 ½.

Internal Matches and Competitions

The Bontor

In 2009 the scoring was very close but the men squeezed another win with the final score of 7 to 6.

Ladies' Invitation

Perhaps Alison Chadwick took a peek at the 2008 results before inviting Kerry Sargeant to be her partner but whatever ploy was used it worked because they won the invitation and for Kerry it was his second win in two years. The runner up spot was taken by the pairing of Cheryl Woodhouse and Paul Grand.

Men's Invitation

It was the turn of the men to invite the ladies and no doubt recalling a runner-up position in 2008 Paul Doran invited Cheryl Woodhouse to the Saturday event and they scooped the first prize. In the runner up position were Nick Rogers and Veronica Mitchell.

The Lockie Trophy

For a rare change the Ladies' Spring Weekend Away was a dry weekend (weather wise). The weekend saw a return to Meon Valley near Southampton. The course is a good length and quite demanding in terms of accuracy with some water features to collect errant shots. The winner of the Lockie Trophy for the second year running was Anne Koychev (she doesn't need to buy a new doorstep yet!) and the runner up was Jayne Maxwell.

The Gill Hibbs Trophy

In 2009 the Ladies' Autumn Weekend Away returned to England and it is fair to say that revisiting the Springs Hotel not too far from Oxford took us back to some traditional English

countryside. Moreover, during one afternoon spell we encountered a Lancaster bomber, a Hurricane and a Spitfire. Although the course was not overly long it made up for this with some rather testing slopy greens that took some time to master. Although this difficulty affected the bulk of us Jayne Maxwell mastered the conditions very well and won the Gill Hibbs Trophy, and the runner up for the weekend was Julie Smith.

Individual Achievements

- In the Open competitions played at the Park in 2009 we had a few successes:
 - Ruskie Hall Open – no placings.
 - Putney Park Open – Stan Potts was the winner with a net 62 and Paul Appleton was the runner on with a net 63.
 - Centurion Open – Alison Chadwick was the runner up with a net 63, just one shot off the winner.
 - The Richmond Park Golf Club Open – Jason Loubser was the winner with a net 63 and Jon Pieters was the runner up with a net 64.
 - Association Trophy – no placings.
 - Trevor Allen Open – Debra Dempster was the runner up with a net 64, just one shot off the winner.
- There was one hole in one in 2009 – Richard Kenwood at the 1st hole on the Prince's course when playing the August Monthly Medal on 9th August. By all accounts the shot was a well-executed duff.
- In 2009 no honours were taken in the Bournemouth Open week.
- The majority of members struggle to get par, and birdies are a complete rarity. There are, however some members who seem to do well collecting birdies, and for 2009 the top results are:
 - Kerry Sargeant 42, Paul Doran 32, Graeme Syme 21, John Morris 21.
 - Harriet Carr 15, Lia Donath 7, Sheena Harrington 6.

2009 – a relatively quiet year at the Park? I think that the overall answer has to be yes.

(a) Development Plan

I'm not sure that I can comment on 'progress in 2009'. We were led to believe that Glendale would be submitting revised development plans to the various authorities for fresh planning consents, however there has been no indication that any positive steps have been taken. My guess is that the UK's recession placed a big question mark against the financial viability of the full project and that for the time being the grand development scheme is on hold. We are aware that Glendale has a contractual obligation to do 'something' but this is as far as our knowledge takes us.

In 2009 we did witness a few happenings on the courses with roped off areas and an indication that some work would commence but that was all quite clearly a false alarm.

In the first quarter of 2010 the Association is scheduled to be holding a meeting with Glendale and this will present us with an opportunity to see what if anything is planned for

the short term. One reason for our need for clarity is confirmation that our 2010 fixture list can proceed as we intent and that it will not be disrupted by course closures.

(b) RPAGC.

For those unfamiliar with the Association I will mention that it is a small body whose membership comprises the six independent golf clubs at Richmond Park. Included amongst the tasks of the Association is the mandate to liaise with Glendale and the Royal Parks Agency as appropriate. It is fair to say that the Association did not have a lot of activity on it's hands in 2009, largely because of the lack of progress with regard to the main development project.

One area of important responsibility undertaken by the Association is the overarching authority for the men's handicapping at the Park. This situation exists as a result of a historical need for a convenient means of communication between the clubs and the Surrey County Golf Union. As a result of new handicapping provisions mentioned below the Club has taken one step to change the handicapping relationship that exists with the Association. The action taken will not have an impact on the workings of the Association, and we will continue to be involved in Association's liaison activities going forward.

(c) Handicapping.

During 2009 the details were finally released for the arrangements for the new 'active' and 'inactive' handicapping classifications that became effective on 1st January 2010. In short, members who fail to submit three cards for qualifying rounds in a calendar year automatically default to 'inactive'. This new ruling affects few at Richmond Park, but in some clubs the number of members dropping into the 'inactive' category is close to 50%. For us at Richmond Park the Committee has decided that for the time being we will not be placing any restrictions on our 'inactive' members.

During 2009 the EGU pressed on with the 'central database of handicaps' [CDH]. The launch date was set at 1st January 2010 but this has been put back provisionally to 1st May 2010 and inauguration may indeed be delayed again. During the latter part of 2009 it was announced jointly by the EGU and EWGA that in addition to the men the ladies will also be joining CDH. As the name implies, the database will hold the names and handicap data for all English golf club members and clubs will be able to check on the details of members whose handicaps are held away together with the handicaps of players from other clubs who enter open competitions. The present relationship referred to above between the Association and the SCGU means that for the moment our Club's men have to be registered under the Association name in CDH. However, in order to correct this anomaly the Club made an application to SCGU in November 2009 for an individual membership of the SCGU which in turn will ultimately allow the Club to hold it's own registration in CDH.

Although not a handicapping issue, the discussion that ensued between the EGU and EWGA seem to have blossomed into something rather more romantically stronger because the EGU and EWGA and now 'engaged' and plan to join together in the not too distant future. The stumbling block seems to be the choice of residence with the EGU preferring a joint home in the present sleepy hollow in Lincolnshire and EWGA insisting that they live together in Edgbaston which is nearer to the shops.

Extra Curricular Activities

In 2009 we again fortunate to have some interesting extras:

On 3rd April Julie had organised the ladies' spring weekend away for Meon Valley in the vicinity of Southampton. The results of weekend are reported above. The arrangements for

us at the hotel were very good and thanks to Julie's endeavours the tour party had an excellent weekend.

A month later, on 1st May, having taken over from Dave Williams it was John Morris's first venture into the 'deep end' to arrange the Club's away day to Epsom Golf Course. The day included a warm up of 12 holes in the morning followed by 18 holes in the afternoon. Uncharacteristically, and for the first time in years, John decided to hold the away day one day when it wasn't teeming with rain, and in fact it was a very fine day with a bit of a breeze. Epsom was selected for a couple of reasons, one of which being that the course is short and comfortable. What we didn't know was that the greens were treacherous and not even velcro would have kept the balls on the putting surface. The overall winner on the day was Ian Smith on 41 points and the runner up was Paul Doran with 40 points, and a number of individual awards were presented. John passed his initiation test with flying colours and we look forward to some further away days in 2010.

On Saturday 4th July Captain Richard hosted a summer BBQ for the Club at his home in Kew. The weather was again kind to us and a contingent of 30 to 40 members enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon and evening doing what we do best – eating and drinking. It was a marvellous gesture and we are grateful to Richard for arranging such a splendid occasion.

On 18th September Julie took us off to the Springs Hotel in Oxfordshire. The setting is very pleasant with a large garden lake of natural spring water. The course was challenging without being overly demanding and the weekend arrangements all ran like clockwork. Once again we are grateful to Julie for making sure that everyone had an enjoyable and comfortable weekend.

www.RichmondParkGolfClub.Org.Uk - The RPGC Website

Once again Tim Meyer deserves a huge vote of thanks for editing and administering the Club's website which, incidentally, runs off his own IT facility. Not only is the website a source of the Club's day by day historical data since 2002 but the website does provide good helpful information to our members and a fair number of the members of the public who have no end of assorted queries.

Tim applied a few technical enhancements to the website in 2009 and he added a few extra 'pots' for information from the Committee or the Captain. As we draw to the close of each year it becomes necessary to create a new year in the system. It is a major time-consuming task to connect all the linkages on the website therefore at the beginning of each year it does take a little while before everything is in place.

The website statistics show people connecting from all over the world. Even in December 2009 we had connections from Colombia and Latvia! Overall there was a slight fall in our hit rate for 2009 but given that we are quite a small club we still managed a hugely impressive number of 'hits'. So, the actual number for 2009 was 1,007,726 – for the entire year this was a hit rate of one every 31 seconds (2008 – 29 seconds). I am pleased to say the not every person who joins the website asks to become a member!!

The Committee and helpers

2009 was another successful year for the Club in terms of fixture arrangements and general admin and although there is the appearance that a lot happens by default rather than design the Committee does keep tabs on matters to ensure that we run as smoothly as possible given our limited manpower resources.

In 2009 Richard Owen completed his second of the two year term of office as Captain and Richard was twinned with Jayne Maxwell who stood as Lady Captain for just the one year.

Under their stewardship the Club had an excellent year in with regard to our Sunday fixtures, external matches and of course the run in the Hawtree. We enjoyed some fine afternoons at the Park with healthy refreshments to keep everyone suitably merry. In addition to the Captains' hard work there are a couple of further noticeable contributions from our Committee members that are worthy of mention:

- During the commencement period of 2009 Gurpal Sekhon took over the task of looking after the update of the order of play booking sheet data that appears on the Club's website. This might sound like a fairly simple and straightforward task but it does involve a regular update process throughout each week and more often than not there are major changes in order to accommodate the potential new member activity. It is evident that without Gurpal's attention to our bookings process our Sunday mornings would be rather chaotic.
- In March 2009 Dave Williams vacated the Treasurer's hot seat after 15 years of running the purse strings and we were most fortunate to have Nick Rogers join the Committee to pick up the reins. It may not appear that we have much to account for but we do have transactions occurring during every week of the year.
- Year on year I report that the person who has worked the hardest to keep the 'show on the road' is Paul Grand. Paul's primary task is to keep the men's handicap records in ship-shape order and this involves processing all our scorecards on a week by week basis. For some weeks the task involves the processing the ladies' cards and for some weeks there is the added task of processing the cards of the other clubs who play on Sunday mornings. In addition to the weekly processing routine Paul was requested to be a part of one of the first group to sign on to CDH and there was extensive email traffic to resolve the many teething problems. When not working on the men's handicaps Paul prepares the competition results for our men's and joint competition and he keeps a firm control of the sweep monies. Finally, you will usually find Paul at the Park on Saturdays depositing the booking sheets in order that we can commence our Sundays without a major drama on our hands.

A Change for 2010

For 2010 the Committee has taken one decision which is worth a mention. It has been decided to increase the weekly competition entry fee to £2. The weekly sweep entry remains at £2. We are exceedingly frugal with the purchase of the annual keepsake trophies but over the last few years the cost of engraved trophies has rocketed and the Club's annual charge is in the order of £2,500. The receipts from our competition entries vary from year to year but barely cover half the total trophy spend so it is time for an increase. With a quick scan of the records it has not been possible to determine the date of the last competition entry increase but it looks as though it was about 15 years ago.

The Final Word

I hope you all have a most enjoyable golfing year in 2010 and a few successes that we can record in next year's report.

Peter Harrington
Secretary
22nd January 2010