

RICHMOND PARK GOLF CLUB



ANNUAL REPORT - 2020

Twelve months ago I said that 2019 was a routine year with little to shout home about. When we had the Club's annual dinner at Malden Golf Club last February we were all optimistic that 2020 would be another onwards and upwards year with no hiccups and a comfortable blend of competition golf at the Park. We were all in blissful ignorance that within the space of just six weeks the world would be turned upside down and we were all instructed to 'stay at home' meaning that golf was off the agenda. The first national shutdown started with immediate effect from the announcement on Monday 23rd March. Everyone has their own memories of the strange situation we experienced back in March, but one overriding recollection is the relentless unprecedented overuse of the word 'unprecedented' by the press and the tv in almost every comment when the word 'new' would have sufficed. Also in March we were introduced to the word 'furlough' and from the US prison system we stole the word 'lockdown'.

2020 started with the legacy of the 2019 autumn deluge, an average of one inch of rain per week for the last thirteen weeks of 2019, and yet more torrential rain fell in January. At this time vast sections of the Duke's course were flooded, notably the 11th hole, and Glendale had ten holes open for play. All eighteen holes of the Prince's course were open but large sections were suffering from casual water and saturation, and temporary greens became more permanent than hoped. For both courses the conditions prohibited the Club from counting the events as handicap qualifying but we persevered with competitions all the same. On the Duke's course we started the year by playing two loops of nine holes but we ran into a tee congestion problem starting the second loop and after this poor experience we were obliged to resort to ten hole events. At the beginning of March the Duke's course was reconfigured for the Club to be able to play two loops of nine holes and on this occasion the loops finished on the eighteenth hole. During all this time water was pouring onto the top section of the Prince's course which had become almost impassable and we became accustomed to a well-worn series of temporary greens. Then, on 22nd March on the Prince's course there was cause for celebration as we were able to host the Coronation Cup as the Club's first handicap qualifying event since December. However, on this day were wondering what might be round the corner and at 8:30pm on Monday 23rd March we heard that we would all be confined to quarters for a lengthy period.

On Friday 15th May golf resumed, but it was not the same. All games were limited to 2-balls; we were prohibited from 'touching' anything that someone else might have touched; it was not permitted to remove the flagstick for putting; the putting cups were upside down; no bunker rakes; the ball washers and benches could not be used; no scorecards; and the requirement was to arrive and then leave as quickly as possible. On the plus side the weather had been remarkably good during the 50-odd days of the lockdown. Glendale had just two greenkeeping staff on duty covering the entire site and when we finally got to see the courses they were picture perfect. Instead of being a saturated soggy mess the fairways were now playing like concrete and we got a new fixture programme under way immediately. One noticeable feature

with the resumption of golf was the huge surge of interest by the general public and there was no shortage of enthusiasm to dust off the clubs by our members.

At the end of May the welcome message from Westminster relaxed the nightmare of the 2-ball game requirement but with congregations of people still restricted it was necessary for Glendale to impose a 3-ball game limit. Understandably, the Club's weekly tee blocks were overwhelmed with excess demand and it was a major struggle to get those out who wanted to play.

Whilst we were enjoying ourselves comfortably in our cosy environment at the Park the rest of the country was starting to struggle in a big way and the golfing shutters dropped again on Thursday 5th November for a further four weeks of lockdown. We resumed Club activities on Friday 4th December but then the last proverbial spanner for 2020 hit the works on Saturday 19th December when we heard that with immediate effect we were all promoted to Tier 4 and golf was returning to 2-balls, but more significantly we heard that Christmas was by and large cancelled for many families.

When we consider that 20% of 2020 was subject to lockdown and further restrictions affected other periods a quick look at the prize list below indicates that we did quite well to squeeze in the bulk of the competition schedule.

Operationally it was necessary to introduce some unintended but significant changes in 2020:

- At the beginning of May there was a hint that the lockdown would be coming to an end. There was every indication that when golf could restart the demand would be excessive. In order to prevent a mass arrival of the public for the limited 2-ball tee slots the team at Glendale introduced a policy whereby the green fee golfers would need to pre-book and pre-pay for a tee slot. This move presented something of a problem for the Club because prior to this period the Club's green fee players had paid for their golf on the day of play. To get round the difficulty it was necessary to start a new routine immediately and this routine is still running. On the day prior to each Wednesday or Sunday competition Richard Owen drops the start sheet details onto an excel file which is then marked up to identify all the known green fee payers. Richard's file is submitted to Glendale for checking. One of Glendale's managers then calls Sheena Harrington to agree the green fee names and the prepayment of the green fees is made. It is then necessary for Sheena to contact the relevant Club members to obtain a reimbursement. As can be seen, under normal circumstances this routine occurs twice each week. Records have to be maintained to identify those that have paid the reimbursement and those where payment remains due. It is also necessary to keep track of the situations where members have paid a green fee but will be looking for a refund because they did not play. Also, situations occur where members do not pay because they cancel their bookings late but in the meanwhile a green fee payment to Glendale had already been made. At the beginning of this routine in the May period there were up to 20 members for whom green fees had to be prepaid to Glendale but fortunately the weekly number of prepayments has reduced to a small number for each event. It is not surprising that there has been an encouragement for the more regular players to acquire one of Glendale's cards for unlimited golf. Anyway, since 17th May, via the routine outlined the total number of individual player bookings that have been checked amounts to 3,588.
- For members the most obvious 2020 change was the introduction of the Purse. As the country moved towards the first lockdown it was becoming increasingly apparent that the cash collection of the competition and sweep entries would have to cease, along with those moments of excitement with Toby and Kim approaching on the fairways to hand over the brown envelopes with the sweep winnings. As we now appreciate, the Purse is an efficient means of collecting the competition entry fees which are paid over to the Club's main account. This removes the issue of those who previously liked to pay

in Euros and odd pennies. The sweep entry collections are paid out when the competition results are announced and for those that are interested in numbers the total sweep payout between 27th May and 31st December amounted to £5,346.

- On 7th July it was announced that the committee had agreed to introduce the new policy to allow the men with handicaps of 25 and above the option to play competitions from the yellow tees. The policy was introduced in recognition that some of the higher handicapped members are short hitters and the setup of the courses meant that in some instances the fairways were out of reach from the white tees. Also, it was recognised that by allowing play from the yellow tees the rounds had the potential to be more efficient with reduced periods of ball searching in the rough. At the commencement of the policy there was a major concern that the yellow tee players could have a significant competitive advantage over the white tee players but this concern is not born out by competition result information.
- WHS arrived with a fanfare on 2nd November and perhaps fortuitously, the country entered another lockdown on 5th November. In the lead up to WHS there was a constant stream of information and detail provided by England Golf including hours of educational video. Rather than have everyone overloaded with the EG material Sheena Harrington produced a summarised video presentation to give a flavour of what was in store. In the run up to WHS the EG comments referred to an expectation that date of birth details would be loaded by clubs on the WHS platform. However, in the days leading up to the first WHS data capture it became apparent that the date of birth details are mandatory, and there was a scramble to obtain and load the information as quickly as possible. The Club's first WHS event was on Wednesday 4th November and WHS failed. In fact, the failure provided an interesting insight into the relationship between Handicapmaster and WHS and the November issue was rectified before play resumed in December. However, in December a new communication flaw between Handicapmaster and WHS was identified and a number of manual processing corrections were made. After this last incident in early December the Club has not had a major issue with WHS although we have seen numerous software updates to Handicapmaster and there has been some tweaking on the WHS platform.
- On 23rd November it was announced that the committee had agreed to a quite revolutionary policy change for the Club by allowing for a trial period the ability to play the Sunday competitions on the preceding Saturday. In summary, the Sunday events are being trialled as weekend events. The introduction of this policy was driven largely by the lack of available Sunday tee slots to accommodate all those interested in joining the competitions and the Saturday option allowed some flexibility to be added to the competition process. At the announcement of the policy the trial period was set to end on 31st March 2021 but for obvious reasons the period will need to be extended and the facility may become a popular feature if 2-ball restrictions extend for a lengthy period into 2021.
- On Thursday 3rd December the Ladies' Section held their AGM via zoom. One proposal agreed at the meeting is a change of name to the Women's Section. In order that the change can be recognised officially by the Club a proposal has been tabled at the 2021 AGM for the Club's Constitution to adopt the new name – Women's Section.

In the review of membership discussed below we see that the year on year total shows a reduction of 8%. A healthy membership number is of course critical but we also want to see the members out on the golf course. 2019 was another year with weather-related issues and in the summer period of thirty weeks the average competition attendance was 49 for Sundays and 42 for Wednesdays. A direct 2020 comparison is not feasible as a result of the first lockdown period but it is very encouraging to see the rates of activity increase and for the 48 events played between the beginning of June until mid-December the average attendances were 69 on

Sundays and 57 on Wednesdays; a quite remarkable overall increase of 38%. Another snippet of info is that in broad terms, in 2019 there were 4,450 scores processed and despite the various restrictions in force during 2020 there were 4,400 competition scores processed.

At the start of the year our two Captains, Deborah Potter and Kim Chaffart, were very quietly plotting how to approach 2020 as regards the team entries for the external competition plus the arrangements for the friendly fixtures and the Club's Saturday events. It didn't take too long for the plans to be put aside as the prospect of an entirely different year emerged. Traditionally, the two Captains are in the driving seat with the joint task of manoeuvring the Club through the year but as we know, there were periods of unforeseen disruption. However, despite the difficulties the Club performed well during the year and we are grateful to Deborah and Kim for their part in the Club's stewardship during 2020. Deborah has completed her two-year period as Lady Captain and Val Riziotis has taken up the mantle of Lady Captain for 2021. Kim continues as the Club Captain for his second year and he will be looking forward to something more like 'normal' in 2021.

Annual Prizegiving

Sadly, the traditional annual dinner and presentation evening is off the 2021 agenda. At the time of writing we have no indication of when we will be able to play golf and meet up so the best that we can expect in due course is the opportunity to hand over the Club's perpetual trophies to the winners on an individual basis. As regards the prize vouchers etc. for the winners, separate arrangements are being made.

If we head back in time there used to be five Clubs playing at the Park and the fixture programme contained a number of inter-club fixtures. These became irrelevant some years ago and for the relatively quiet days such as the bank holiday weekends we became accustomed to hosting 'sweep only' events. For 2020 this routine was changed so that we would hold full competitions on all Sundays and Wednesdays, and on the former free days we are now awarding the winners with an engraved plate known as a drake's dish.

When we look at the competition reports and periodic missives it is easy to gain the impression that we have a select group of members who capture all the Club's trophies and it is true that some members do indeed have winning streaks. However, a review of the names below shows that we have 58 members who have made it to the 2020 prize list, more than 20% of the Club's members.

The Club Championship is the Club's premier event with the scratch format played over 36 holes. In 2020 the CC had to be rescheduled from the normal summer slot to the autumn and in making this change it was acknowledged that the course conditions could be quite different. In the men's senior division for handicaps up to 16 the first round scores on the Prince's course (SSS 67) were rather surprisingly on the high side given that the weather was fine. We saw Ant Thomas leading with a 72 followed by Lee Marshall on 73. Four players were tied for third place with gross 74s. For the second round Ant was already booked in for an external weekend's golf but as he was about to head off a little lady north of the border [Nicola Sturgeon] stopped him in his tracks. Ant was able to capture a tee slot for the chilly and breezy second round on the Duke's course (SSS 71) and he finished the winner of this round with a gross 79. Ant's total gross of 151 crowns him the Club's Champion of 2020. Overtaking a number of contenders Armi Ingratta finished as the runner up with rounds of 75 and 80 for a total gross of 155. In the men's junior division for handicaps of 17 and above Barry Page takes the Championship honours with rounds of 87 and 97 for a total gross of 181. Finishing just one shot behind with a gross of 182 the runner up place was taken by Peter Goodall. In tandem with the CC the Handicap Trophy is awarded to the player with the best performance over the

36 holes and the 2020 winner was Captain Kim Chaffart with two sub-handicap rounds to finish with a net 133.

Unlike the men, the ladies' scratch CC is not divided into divisions. After the first round three ladies tied on 86 but it was just Sheena Harrington who played in the second round and it was another gross 86 for a total of 172 that was sufficient to take the Championship title for 2020. Veronica Mitchell finished as the runner up with two rounds of 88 for a total gross of 176. For the best net results the ladies have two cups; the Handicap Cup for handicaps of 19 and below where the winner was Veronica Mitchell with a net 142, and the Pembroke Cup for handicaps of 20 and above and the winner was Cheryl Woodhouse.

Not to be content with one CC the Club also hosts similar Midweek CC challenges for the men and the ladies. Our 2020 Midweek men's Champion is Pete Harrison with scores of 77 and 74 for a total gross of 151. Pete was hotly pursued by second placed Oliver Maskell whose two rounds of 76 game him a total of 152. Our 2020 Midweek Ladies Champion is Gina Jillett who scored rounds of 83 and 90 to win with a total of 173. Runner up to Gina was Sheena Harrington who finished with a total of 179. The Midweek Handicap Trophy is a joint challenge involving the men and the ladies and for 2020 our winner is Alan King with two sub handicap rounds for a 36 hole combined net score of 133. Also, Alan's two good rounds were sufficient for him to take the Midweek Junior Club Champion title with a gross of 169, and tied for the runner up place are Colm Ivors and Scott Sparks (now in New Zealand) both with totals of 175.

Here follows the full prize list for 2020: -

RPGC 2020 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 0-19

Ladies' Pembroke Cup - handicaps 20+

J H Taylor – match play 0-16

Two Courses Cup – match play 17+

Ladies' Challenge Cup – match play

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

WINNER

Ant Thomas

Sheena Harrington

Barry Page

Kim Chaffart

Veronica Mitchell

Cheryl Woodhouse

Richard Inglis vs Joe Robinson

Adrian Wells

Sheena Harrington

Tenesi Karakaneva

Jay Barker

Paul Green

Susan Smith

Roger Rojas

Rhys Jarvis

Paul Green

Louis Dickey

RUNNER-UP

Armi Ingratta

Veronica Mitchell

Peter Goodall

[Ant Thomas]

Jane Fraser

Doreen Dolby

John Ahad

Katharina Katte

Not played in 2020

Not played in 2020

Not played in 2020

Veronica Mitchell

[Aidan Hurley]

Doreen Dolby

Luke Baker

Scott Sparks

Duncan Taylor

[Roger Rojas]

Barry Houston

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Captain's Prize | Joe Robinson | Tamas Ladacs |
| Lady Captain's Prize | Cheryl Woodhouse | Deborah Potter |
| J Q Robertson Trophy | Jay Barker | Tenesi Karakaneva |
| Coronation Cup | Rick Kimber | Gunnar Sundberg |
| Shaw Cup | Jay Barker | Lee Marshall |
| Summer Cup | Jay Barker | Peter Needham |
| Spring Mixed American Greensomes | | Not played in 2020 |
| Autumn Mixed - Handicap | | Not played in 2020 |
| Autumn Mixed - Scratch | | Not played in 2020 |
| Burgess Cup - Greensomes | Mark Finnett & Bennie van Heerden | Gregory Jean-Baptiste & Adrian Wells |
| Top Dog Trophy | Jay Barker | [Adrian Wells] |
| Ladies' Dowling Cup | Sheena Harrington | - |
| Lissaman Cup | Peter Goodall | Adrian Wells |
| Barton Bowl | Veronica Mitchell | - |
| Charity Cup | Kim Chaffart | Uli Katte |
| Spring Stableford Trophy | Damber Thapa | Pete Harrison |
| Winter Competition [2019 / 2020] | Jay Barker | Peter Needham |

MIDWEEK EVENTS

Senior Men's Club Championship
Ladies' Club Championship
Junior Men's Club Championship
Club Championship Handicap Trophy
Inaugural Trophy
Grand Medal Trophy
Anniversary Accumulator
Founder's Cup – E. Bailey
Founder's Cup – Mrs Millidge
Founder's Cup – J. Hume
Founders' Cup
President's Prize
Captain's Day
Priory Cup
Masters Bowl
Claret Jug
Midsummer Trophy
Fred Hawtree Trophy
The Edward Cup
Autumn Pairs
Harrington Trophy

WINNER

Pete Harrison
Gina Jillett
Alan King
Alan King
Richard Norden
Charlie Forrest
Ray Esin
Joe Goncalves
Julie Ryan
Lee Marshall
Lee Marshall
Darren Vallance
Jay Barker
Ray Esin
Joe Goncalves
Rick Kimber
Gina Jillett
Peter Goodall
Luke Baker
Peter Goodall &
Mark Rice
Diego Pirastru

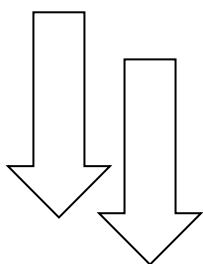
RUNNER-UP

Oliver Maskell
Sheena Harrington
Colm Ivors &
Scott Sparks
[Diego Pirastru]
Jon Wilson
[Richard Hanna]
[George Taylor]
Lee Marshall
Damber Thapa
Damber Thapa
[Damber Thapa]
Richard Hanna
Avi Murphy
Luke Baker
Richard Owen
Tenesi Karakaneva
Joe Goncalves
Roger Rojas
Cosmo Liefing-Moore
Richard Norden &
Teddy Holt
Brett Colley

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

Those who have previously attended the annual dinner will be aware that there are two undisclosed awards presented on the evening. Clearly, with no annual dinner possible it is appropriate to refer to these in this report. When I say undisclosed, the names are commonly known to only three committee members before the presentations are made and I am referring to the two MIPs; the Most Improved Player awards. To determine the MIP for a period there is a recognised formula promoted by the USGA which takes account of the relative differences of handicap movements of the high and low handicappers and we have been following this method of calculation for many years. With the advent of WHS it is necessary to take extra care because the method of calculation of a player's handicap index changes as the score record builds up to the full record of twenty scores and a distortion of true performance is possible. Anyway, here are the two recipients :-

- Whilst there are many men with exceptional handicap improvements we have one very outstanding and worthy winner of the MIP for 2020 – Louis Dickey. At the commencement of 2020 Louis had a handicap of 29.5. After returning to London from Uni, Louis resumed his Club golf activity in July after a very long break. We know that he was working on his golf and shortly after resuming he scored 52 points in a non-qualifying event and he then followed this with 51 points on the Duke's course to win the President's Putter. Accordingly, Louis' handicap was slashed on observation. On WHS Louis has a full handicap record and without any ESR adjustments his present index is 17.4 – a handicap drop of 12.1 for the year.
- For the women we also have an outstanding worthy 2020 winner. I am sure that she will read this and have an immediate double take – Elisabeth Piner. In January 2020 Elisabeth started the year with a handicap of 44.1. In the tough muddy 2020 winter conditions Elisabeth struggled to make any progress with her handicap. However, in the dry summer conditions the scores were steadily improving and in August Elisabeth recorded an outstanding net 57. WHS shows that Elisabeth has a full summer handicap record and she finished the year with a handicap drop of 7.6, down to 36.5.



Membership

Here we have our 11 year table and we can see where we stand at 31st December 2020.

| | <u>2020</u> | <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> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Men: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regular | 203 | 217 | 192 | 171 | 149 | 123 | 86 | 93 | 102 | 104 | 101 |
| Junior | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Hon (playing) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Total Men | <u>204</u> | <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> |
| Women: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regular | 45 | 53 | 46 | 44 | 41 | 41 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 40 | 46 |
| Hon (playing) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total Women | <u>46</u> | <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> |
| Total | <u>250</u> | <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> |
| | - | + | + | + | + | + | - | - | - | - | + |
| | 8% | 12% | 10% | 15% | 15% | 33% | 5% | 8% | 10% | 3% | 9% |
| Joiners: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| New men | 42 | 61 | 50 | 42 | 53 | 49 | 14 | 22 | 25 | 23 | 24 |
| New women | 3 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Junior | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Rejoiners – men | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Rejoiners – women | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | <u>50</u> | <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> |
| Leavers: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <u>72</u> | <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> |
| | 26% | 19% | 17% | 14% | 19% | 16% | 18% | 26% | 22% | 18% | 15% |

We can see that year on year the Club's total membership reduced from 272 down to 250. The reduction is not a drama and nothing for anyone to be concerned with.

In previous reports I have remarked that the Club's membership drops whenever there is a major external episode that impedes the natural flow of competitions and events. An example of this was a flood that closed the Duke's course for nearly eight months from October 2000 through to May 2001, and more recently we had the course development work from 2012 that restricted operations until the return to 36 holes of golf in June 2014. At the commencement of 2020 the Club was in a good position to break through the 300 strong membership number but it soon became apparent that with the advent of the first lockdown period there would be an impact on membership numbers. When we returned to golf in May we were restricted to 2-ball golf and we did not have sufficient tee slots for our current membership let alone the slots required to entertain new membership requests. At this time we were forced to introduce a waiting list with the objective of phasing in new members so as not to overwhelm the bookings sheets. This was achieved with some success but the high demand for tee slots made it difficult for some members to play at their chosen tee times.

Looking at the stats for a moment, we can see how the major episodes of early 2020, firstly the course flooding followed by the lockdown and then the 2-ball limitations, had a detrimental impact on the opportunities for joiners to come on board. We all know that those without a live handicap are required to complete three rounds for a starting handicap. In 2019 the Club registered 242 handicap qualifying rounds (almost 5 rounds per week) and for 2020 this number

reduces to 137 rounds, a difference of 105 rounds. In the period from Jan to end May 2020 there were 80 less handicap qualifying rounds completed compared to 2019. Also in the Jan to end May periods the Club had admitted 41 new members in 2019 and for the corresponding period in 2020 the number was just 11 new members. However, those who have followed the details this far will have detected that the membership intake for the period from June to December 2020 was marginally ahead of the same period in 2019.

Moving on to the position at 31st December we have 14 potential new members who are in the process of completing their three handicap qualification cards and we aim to bring these new members on board just as soon as the conditions allow. In addition to this group we have a list of general public golfers who in 2020 have all expressed at some stage an interest in pursuing membership with RPGC. All have been contacted, and this list contains 50 names.

One of the more attractive features of the Club is the wide range of disciplines that keeps the membership busy when not playing golf, and we have members from a large number of countries, both near and very far. Of the 72 former members who left us in 2020 there were 23 who moved overseas, and we are aware of another cluster of members who moved away from London. Most clubs lose in the order of 15%-20% of members each year and RPGC is no exception to this general pattern but the profile of the Club's membership does lend itself to a relatively high rate of membership rotation, and the particular circumstances of 2020 have indeed contributed to the higher proportion of leavers.

Midweek Wednesday Golf

Since the commencement of Wednesday golf in 2015 we have seen a gradual increase in the popularity of midweek golf and 2020 was another year when we saw more members competing. However, we have to recognise one untypical influence on the 2020 playing numbers as we saw some members on the course who were furloughed and some who were allegedly working from home.

Overall we now see that the Wednesday attendances represent 45% of the Club's competition entries and we all know that many midweek players are also weekend players. As Wednesdays have progressed since 2015 various events have been added to the fixture list and we now have full Club competitions occurring on every Wednesday during the year.

Before 2020 it was traditional to run Wednesdays with 3-ball games to help with the pace of play so the general adoption of 3-ball play at the Park was not an issue but tee availability did become a problem as the Club's attendance numbers increased. We were looking constantly at the need to book supplementary Wednesday tee slots and this will continue during 2021. As regards the Club's admin we must give a special vote of thanks to Kim Chaffart who prepares the bookings sheets and massages the playing order before the start sheets are published to those playing. There are others who are involved in the Wednesday admin and further comments appear later.

A general oversight role for Wednesday golf is performed by the Midweek Captain and John Ahad has been performing this duty since March 2019. We are grateful for John's involvement and in a short while the reigns will be handed over the Henry Lindesay-Bethune who will be the new Midweek Captain for 2021 and 2022.

Midweek Friday Golf

For some years a few members of the Club's committee and others were booking private Friday games and promoting these on the Club's booking system to allow members to play a friendly

sweep in addition to the Wednesday competitions. It became increasingly obvious during the summer of 2020 that there was increased interest in Friday golf and Richard Owen commenced a series of non-qualifying mini sweep competitions using the Club's Purse facility, and the results were posted on Masterscoreboard. The tee arrangements were becoming increasingly difficult to coordinate and in October Richard managed to secure a small but important regular four game tee block booking with Glendale. In the seven weeks of Friday golf that could be from played from October to end December the average attendance was 15 members and it will be interesting to see how Fridays develop in 2021.

As the coordinator for Fridays from the preparation of the bookings sheets all the way through to the publication of the results and the processing of the sweep entries we are grateful for Richard's full involvement in keeping Fridays under control.

Inter-Club Friendly Matches

Here's what happened (and didn't happen) in 2020:

Men vs. Rickmansworth:

Originally planned to be played in June and September this match had to be cancelled.

Ladies vs. Mitcham:

The November lockdown prevented the full match from being completed. In the first leg played at Mitcham the Club's team took a 2:1 lead.

Mixed match vs. Amida:

In 2020 it was the Club's opportunity to visit the David Lloyd Hampton golf course with the aim repeating our Club's home win in 2019. The format is mixed pairs match play and when playing at Hampton we find that Amida normally fields a strong team. This situation was repeated in 2020 and although the precise details are unclear it is known that the Club's team was well and truly thumped.

External Competitions

It is traditional for the Club to enter competitions promoted by Surrey Golf and the NAPGC. Many of the events scheduled for 2020 had to be cancelled and the activity levels were much reduced for all golf clubs compared to normal. Here is a synopsis of our limited activity in 2020:

Surrey Golf – The Surrey 5's – Men's Individual Match Play

Not entered in 2020.

Surrey Golf – Kelso Hamilton – Men's Four Ball Better-ball Match Play

Not entered in 2020.

Surrey Golf – The Thornhill KO - Mixed Foursomes Match Play

In a first venture for the Club two pairs were entered. Kim Chaffart and Veronica Mitchell found themselves away at Royal Wimbledon and lost this match. The other pair were Pete Harrison and Sheena Harrington. They achieved success in the first round against Farnham, and again in the second round away against Camberley Heath. They then came unstuck at home against Wimbledon Common, losing on the 19th hole.

Men's UKPCC – [Stableford]

Event cancelled for 2020.

NAPGC Men's Championship – Medal

Event cancelled for 2020.

NAPGC Clapham Common Shield – Men's Greensomes Aggregate Stableford

Each Clapham Common team comprises six pairs. For 2020 the competition was cut to area finals and the Club's team played at Huntswood where the home team went through to the final.

NAPGC Bourne-Vanneck – Men's Aggregate Medal

For 2020 the regional qualifiers were cancelled and there was a grand final challenge involving 32 teams at Bird Hills. The Club entered two teams, one comprising Sunday players and the other comprising midweek players. The A team with Lee Marshall, Jay Barker, and Pete Harrison finished in 9th place (gross), and the B team comprising Jeremy Ryan, Sean Thomas and Hassan Mouilah finished in 19th place (gross). The conditions must have been tough because only six of the ninety-six players scored under CSS.

NAPGC Senior Men's Championship - Stableford

Event cancelled for 2020.

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

In this event four pairs travelled to Hoebridge for the regional final and it was the Hoebridge home team that progressed to the final.

NAPGC Men's Ballantyne Trophy - Better Ball Team Match Play Trophy

This event comprises three pairs in a match play knockout. The team captained by Paul Brown has success in four rounds to reach the semi-final, but then lost to Chingford who went on to be successful in the final.

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

The Club entered two pairs for this event. One pair had a win against Addington Court but then lost to High Elms. Coincidentally, the second pair also lost to another pair from High Elms.

NAPGC Gordon Forster Bowl – Team Stableford Knockout

The GF is a winter Stableford knockout challenge and the teams are private entries. The Club pays for the competition entries but thereafter the teams are responsible for their own costs. Two teams competed in the early 2020 winter period. 'The 4 Stoogies' came unstuck at the first hurdle against '4 men and a boy' from Tilgate Forest. 'The Overseas' team came unstuck against their first opponents from Wycombe Heights.

Ladies' UKPCC – [Stableford]

Event cancelled for 2020.

NAPGC Ladies' Championship – Medal

Event cancelled for 2020.

NAPGC White Webbs – Ladies' Four-ball Better Ball Stableford

The Club entered two teams. Playing at the Park the B team was successful and progressed to the national final where four clubs were represented. The Club's B team comprised Sheena Harrington paired with Cheryl Woodhouse and Lia Donath paired with Veronica Mitchell. In the final played at Staverton Park last July the team finished in the runner up position, losing out to Hainault Forest.

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

Not entered in 2020.

NAPGC Senior Ladies' Championship - Stableford

Event cancelled for 2020.

NAPGC Ladies' Match Play Trophy – Pairs Better Match Play

The Club's entry lost away to Easthampstead in the first round.

NAPGC Ladies' Toproc Bowl - Greensomes Pairs Match Play

This competition is confined to midweek players. The Club's pair were successful in the first round against the Basildon B team but then lost in the next round to the Basildon A team.

NAPGC Mary Forster Bowl – Ladies' Team Stableford

In a similar manner to the men, the Mary Forster is a private entry winter team competition. The competition format involved four clubs playing four rounds at each club's course. The team of Jayne Maxwell, Susan Smith and Lia Donath progressed to the national final that was played at Staverton and the ladies finished in fifth place.

NAPGC Hawtree Trophy – Mixed Greensomes Aggregate Stableford

RPGC entered two teams that were involved in a challenge at the Park comprising five teams. The Club's B team succeeded in progressing to the national final that was played at Staverton Park in September. The team comprised Jay Barker with Veronica Mitchell, Pete Harrison with Doreen Dolby, Damber Thapa with Sheena Harrington, and Nigel Gaymond with Gina Jillett. At the final the team finished in third place with Rose Hill chalking up yet another routine victory.

Internal Matches and Competitions

The Bontor – Match Play

In 2019 the ladies had a very convincing win of 9½ to 6½ which meant that they had their hands on the trophy for 11 of the last 20 years. Captain Kim decided to reverse the trend in 2020 and he made ample use of the September weather. Kim's appeal to the rain gods meant that there was not the usual summer run on the ball, and it just so happened that the Bontor was played on a day when it was desperately cold and very breezy. With 16 individual matches out on the

course the ladies needed 8 wins to retain the trophy, but this was not to be and the score finished 12 – 4 to the victorious men.

Ladies' Invitation – American Greensomes

The Invitation was played on a sunny Saturday in July. There were 18 pairs playing on the Prince's course. The scoring was very high and Sheena Harrington with her invite Damber Thapa finished in first place with 45 points. Second place was shared with two pairs finishing on 43 points; Elisabeth Piner with her partner Angus Robertson, and Avi Murphy who opted for discretion in selecting Patrick to join her.

Men's Invitation – American Greensomes

The Men's Invitation was played on a good golfing day at the beginning of August. 16 pairs played and the scoring was high bearing in mind that everyone was on the Duke's course. The winners with 47 points were Nick Rogers who was under instruction from Veronica Mitchell. In second place, also on 47 points but missing out on the countback we had Carmelo Di Salvo with excellent surgical assistance on the course from Katharina Katte.

The International Challenge

The International was held on 24th October. Team Brexit (as it was nicknamed) competed against Team Europe and Team Rest of the World. Playing in 3-balls it was decided to play 'skins' where only an outright win of a hole counts. The format was remarkably popular with the opportunity to pick up a good number of skins with a one outrageous win. The final result was a European win with 102 skins, the UK team finished in second place with a score of 71 skins, just ahead of the RoW with 69 skins.

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

Unfortunately, the spring weekend away booked for the Cotswolds Hotel in April 2020 had to be cancelled.

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

No arrangements were made for the autumn weekend away.

Extra-Curricular Activities

During one committee meeting that he missed Paul Brown found that he had been given the task of looking after the Club's social activities. Over the years it has usually been possible to squeeze in one or two competition away days but this was not feasible in 2020. However, for those free for the excursion Paul did have something very special up his sleeve for 2020. Paul booked 'the Club' in for a six night break at the end of August at the Ashbury Hotel in Devon. It was just the tonic after the early lockdown period and a summer with very minimal external activity. With all the early summer turmoil occurring it was difficult to predict the interest for the Devon trip but in the final analysis there were 38 in attendance including 3 children and four non-golfing adults. To say that the 3 star hotel is bizarre is an understatement and with all the facilities included in the accommodation cost, the bargain experience was a delight. Tee times were arranged for golf from the Monday through to Thursday and with some careful planning Paul arranged for prizes for the day's winners. It was good to see the day prizes being distributed to a large spread of those in attendance, and on the Thursday evening extra prizes for the week were awarded with the announcement that the week's champion golfer over the four rounds was Colm Ivors.

Individual Achievements

- Birdies and eagles galore in 2019 – for some players.
 - Top of the men's Sunday birdie listing by a wide margin is Jay Barker with a total of 63, an average of 2 birdies for each of his rounds. Following Jay we have the 2019 leader Kerry Sargeant with 47 birdies, Aidan Hurley on 45, and Pete Harrison on 42.
 - The Wednesday birdie listing is headed by Jeremy Ryan with a total of 40. Following Jeremy we have Henry Lindesay-Bethune with 34 birdies and Brett Colley with 31 birdies.
 - For the men there were 10 Sunday eagles recorded. Also there were further 11 Wednesday eagles with Colm Ivors capturing two eagles on the Duke's 17th hole in July. However, the most impressive eagle of the year has to be Jay Barker's hole in one on the Duke's 10th hole in July's Diamond Jubilee round.
 - The ladies' Sunday birdie listing is headed by Jane Fraser with a total of 13. In 2020 Jane was an infrequent player and her birdie ratio was slightly above 1.5 per round. Following Jane were Veronica Mitchell with 8 birdies and Val Riziotis with 7 birdies.
 - Heading the ladies' Wednesday birdie listing is Cheryl Woodhouse with 9 and she was followed by Sheena Harrington whose tally was 6 birdies.
 - Eagles for the ladies are very few and far between but there was one during 2020, an eagle 3 on the Duke's 17th hole by Jane Fraser.
- It is always difficult to identify the best round of the year and there were some outstanding scores posted in 2020 but overall we have to say that the best individual score is that previously mentioned for Elisabeth Piner whose net 57 was a full 17 shots under her handicap.

www.RichmondParkGolfClub.Org.Uk - The RPGC Website

The website has clocked up another successful year in 2020 with thanks to Tim Meyer for his diligence in constantly updating the sections and the numerous links to maintain the integrity of the website. 2020 is the 19th year that Tim has edited the website and we are very grateful for the large number of hours spent each year to keep the website continually updated with future happenings, results data, and the competition reports. We are aware that Tim has to juggle the website with his extensive work commitments.

Prior to the Club adopting Handicapmaster the Club's website contained the game booking details and it was common for the Club's members to dive in and out of the website on a very frequent basis. More recently the website has become a source of information and a good comprehensive archive record of the Club's activities and results. Although there is less of a need for the membership to refer to the website there is still a good 'hit' rate indicating that the Club is being accessed. In 2020 the website received 422,361 'hits' and this equates to one hit every 75 seconds. We know that many hits are robots but the website has traffic from all over the world. Back in the days when the website was used for operational activities the annual hits exceeded 1 million, a rate just above two hits per minute.

At the beginning of 2020 there was a degree of optimism that the Club's new website would go live during the year. Unfortunately, the mayhem of 2020 hindered the development of the website and there is still some work to be done. Nobody is more disappointed about the delay than Tim who could have relinquished his long-standing editorial duties. The new website has been in the making since 2017 and many are keeping their fingers crossed that we have a positive changeover in 2021.

Absent Friends

Concerning the names mentioned here there are many fond memories and many members have their own stories to tell, however in fairness to everyone it is appropriate to be relatively brief.

Early in 2020 the news was received that Tony Archdale had died in the summer of 2019. It is thought that Tony would have been in his early 80s when he died. Through the 1980s to 2008 Tony was a regular Sunday player at the Park. In his later golfing years Tony would use a buggy and every Sunday the buggy would travel extra miles as Tony scouted all the rough areas for free golf balls. Occasionally, Tony would beach his buggy on a lump and need rescuing. Tony was a very quiet person who had little conversation but he was a 'character' and he was very well known in the cricketing world where he posted the numbers on the large scoreboard at Lords. Tony lived with his mother in a flat in Wandsworth and he continued in the same flat after she died. It was very clear to all who knew him that for Tony his Sunday golf was one of his main highlights of the week.

In March 2020 we received the news that Michael Hinks-Edwards had died in January. It is estimated that Michael was in his mid 70s when he died. Following the announcement of Michael's death the first message to me inside seven minutes said it all "wonderful memories of a true gentleman". It was difficult to pin down Michael's precise occupation but I am aware that he wrote speeches for public figures including an ex-chairman of Volvo. When he joined the Club, Michael lived with his family in East Sheen and he became a weekly regular. Michael was a tidy player with a high teens handicap but he hit a short ball. One day he surprised everyone by announcing with his traditional smile that he had won the longest drive at a very large event at Wentworth, but this was purely because out of the 100+ participants he was the only player to finish on the fairway. Michael moved to Ludlow in 2002 and then proceeded to set up an annual inter-club match between RPGC and Ludlow GC. The golf seemed to be secondary to everyone having a good time. Despite leaving London Michael kept in touch with a number of members and there used to be an annual congregation at a 'pad' somewhere for a full week's golf at the Bournemouth Open week. Again, the emphasis seemed to be more on having fun than worrying about the golf scores. Michael was always very cheerful and he had the ability to raise everyone's spirits.

In April we received the news that John Sowter had died at the age of 91. John was another regular weekly Sunday player at the Park who joined the Club in early 1980s. Before retiring from work John had a senior audit function with NatWest and his scorecards could always be relied upon to be easy to read and blemish free. We couldn't persuade John to join the Club's committee but he was always very helpful with card marking and for some members he would act as a rescue service to get them home. John had a few winning moments during his time with the Club which were just as much a surprise to him as everyone else.

In November we heard that Mike Egan had died in August and he would have been 95 in December. It is a guess that Mike joined the Club in the 1970s. Mike had quite a soft Irish accent and it is assumed that Ireland is where his golf started because wet weather was never a problem for him. Mike's main occupation was a plumber on major London building sites and this kept him strong and healthy. For a huge number of years Mike's wife Rose used to organise the ladies' spring and autumn weekends away and Mike was always there in attendance. Mike had a low teens handicap and he could always be relied upon to return a good score. Mike and Rose emigrated to Australia around 1999 and although the contact was limited, occasional snippets of info would emerge from down under. Rose died a few years ago, however we heard that Mike continued with his golf and up until recently he had a local friend that would take him off to the golf course, and coincidentally this friend once worked at Richmond Park as a golf professional.

Recently we received the news that Lee Eden had died on 18th December at the age of 80. Lee joined the Club in the summer of 2004 and he became a regular Sunday participant. Lee mentioned that he had first played at the Park back in the 1960s or early 1970s. Over the years it was clear that Lee's fitness level had deteriorated and it was necessary for him to use a buggy. This restricted his golf to the non-winter periods when buggies were permitted. Although Lee was a quiet person a number of members will recall that Lee's rounds often had memorable 'episodes' not least his desire to play irrespective of whether it was his ball or not.

As one member commented to me, in 2020 we have seen the end of a chapter.

The Committee and helpers

One good attribute of the Club is the existence of the large main committee that enables healthy discussions to occur on the key topics with the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas. In 2020 the committee had 17 members for the full year and Henry Lindesay-Bethune was co-opted to join the committee in early November. Whilst everyone on the committee plays a part in seeing that the Club's operations perform efficiently we do have some committee members with specific duties and responsibilities who are involved in weekly activities and it is fitting that they receive a mention:

- Richard Owen bears the brunt of the weekly admin duties. You will have noted above some of the tasks performed by Richard and these are only a small part of the role that he plays. Richard is the Club's Liaison Officer and this entails him being the conduit for communications between the Club and Glendale and vice-versa. In this role Richard has to also deal with some communications that are relevant to Putney Park and coordinate arrangements with this club. In the note above it is mentioned that Richard is required to provide a copy of the Club's start sheet names to Glendale. Five days prior to this action Richard has to confirm to Glendale the number of games required just in case some of the Club's tee block needs to be released for public bookings. This process requires almost daily monitoring because a sudden exodus of names from a booking sheet does require the Club to give notice to Glendale when game times are not required.

In his liaison role Richard is required to book the Club's Saturday fixtures and all the tee times required for the friendly fixtures and matches against other clubs. On top of this Richard has to book all the catering requests. One complication is that it is not uncommon for the details being passed to Richard to contain elements of uncertainty. Coming across from Glendale, Richard receives the details of the golfers who have expressed an interest in competition golf or club golf. Normally the names would come across one at a time or in very small batches but in 2020 the public interest in golf mushroomed and in the period from July to December there were in the order of 65 men to contact with a view to them joining us for a round.

Another chore that goes with the liaison role is to perform an accounting role by keeping track of the members with annual cards and submit the monthly refund invoices to Glendale. This task is easier said than done because the information at hand is often unreliable and the lockdown periods have caused a bewildering rescheduling of all the annual cards. There are roughly 130 names involved in this monthly exercise through the course of the year.

As I have said on many previous occasions Richard performs the lion's share of the work to keep the Club ticking over on a weekly basis and we are grateful for his time and dedication to the tasks that he performs.

- We must acknowledge the time commitment and conscientious attention to the roles performed by our two Handicap Secretaries: Paul Grand and Sheena Harrington. Paul

looks after the men's handicaps and he provides the Sunday competition results. Sheena looks after the women's handicaps, the Wednesday competition results, and the Sunday competition results for the women where they have their own events. In some respects, life after the first 2020 lockdown period made life a touch easier because scorecards are no longer collected and checked for completeness and accuracy. However, in the early stages of individual score entry via Masterscoreboard there were some interesting 'fat-finger' errors with some most unlikely eagle entries that had to be corrected.

On Handicapmaster there is an on-going maintenance activity for processing the potential new members with their scores and also the task exiting the leavers from the system. Before November these activities had to be performed in conjunction with the appropriate update of the CDH records.

The introduction of WHS was not quite so seamless as predicted by England Golf and a significant amount of manual intervention on WHS was required to correct some erroneous handicap index numbers. The main problem centred on the absence of handicap qualification cards on WHS and it soon emerged that the details of roughly 130 members needed some degree of correction. In some respects the November lockdown was fortuitous because the break from golf enabled the handicap indices to be corrected before the Club's competitions were under way again.

We are of course grateful to Paul and Sheena for their time and their attention to the detail of their topics in 2020.

- Peter Jagger manages the Club's accounts records and he provides up-to-date figures for review at the regular committee meetings. There are not many days when some element of accounts activity does not occur and we are grateful to Peter for maintaining his daily control of the Club's numbers.
- Everyone who has played in 2020 will have benefitted from the bookings sheet admin performed by Paul Brown (Sundays) and Kim Chaffart (Wednesdays). 2020 was an exceptionally tricky year as the weeks bounced from 4-balls to 2-balls and then hovered between 3-balls and 2-balls. There was also the issue of game intervals that were either 8 minutes, 7 minutes, or 6 minutes. All these different combinations have required separate templates to be prepared for use, and on top of this we have seen extra private games added to the bookings sheets to provide extra tee slots. For many weeks in 2020 the demand for tee slots was much greater than the regular tee block allowances and we have all witnessed the weekly juggling acts being performed to try and make sure that everyone who wants to play manages to get a game. With all this background activity in play it is clear that the issue of the twice weekly start sheets involves a good deal of thought and application and we are grateful to both Paul and Kim for their management of the bookings sheets throughout the year.

...and the final word

I hope that when it gets going you all have a most enjoyable 2021 golfing year and, possibly, a mention on the 2021 prize list.

Peter Harrington
Secretary
27th January 2021