



Ups & Downs

Pyecombe G C

Newsletter

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No 129

Editor Alf Bickham

FROM THE CAPTAIN

Into the New Year.....

One thing I was warned about on becoming Captain was how fast time goes by. I can't believe we are now 2 months into the New Year and 3 months of my year have already gone by.

January and February aren't the busiest of times at the club and were of course interrupted by snow which closed the course for 9 days at the end of January. That meant we had to rearrange the MSWL match against Ifield which has been rescheduled for 3rd March. We go into that match with a chance to lift the trophy but it will need a resounding win if we are to do so. We currently sit in 2nd spot 3 points behind Copthorne after losing 4 – 6 to Haywards Heath (a typically poor result inherited from the previous Captain) beating Worthing 6.5 – 3.5 and halving with Copthorne 5-5.

On the subject of course closures aren't we incredibly lucky to have played so much golf already this year. When we played Copthorne they were moaning about their lack of golf over the past few months and many of the other local courses have also suffered umpteen

closures. I always make a point of talking Pyecombe up as we play pretty much 12 months of the year. I'd also like to compliment Simon and the boys for getting the course in great condition despite the inclement weather.

Speaking of tight matches we had the first 'Sunday Men' v 'Sunday Ladies' match last Sunday (24Feb13) which is a quite a good day to play a match between the Sunday Men & Sunday Ladies.....! The first 5 matches all went to the wire and quite amazingly all were halved before the last two men's pairs who clearly hadn't listened to my earlier briefing about 'equality' went and won their matches. I have to say I have never been so happy to come off the course with a half. After being 4 up with 5 to play I had to hole a fifteen footer to avoid defeat after a great comeback from Angie & Dawn. Well played indeed Ladies...!

On the social scene after a quiet start to the year apart from an excellent impromptu Sunday lunch organised by George Eves (thank goodness my wife was driving us home..!) we now have a number of events coming up. Another lunch, the 'Captains Carve up' on 10th March (Mothers' day) kicks things off followed by a Quiz night with Quiz master Roy Aitken on the 30th.

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MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEWSLETTER

Leave in the Office with the Secretary or in an envelope in the foyer marked for the attention of Alf Bickham / Newsletter or send Alf an Email message to his Email address of: alf@abickham.freeserve.co.uk or to make contact by telephone, call him at home, **Tel. No. 01444.242101**

FROM THE CAPTAIN (Continuation)

The 4th April is an evening with Peter James the well known crime thriller writer who sets his novels largely in Brighton. Tickets are going fast so book early. By the way can someone lend me one of his books please..! We are also having, following last year's great success, another comedy evening later in April (that should see the swear box swelling). Date is to be confirmed as soon as VC Colin Kemp returns from his annual Algarve trip. And finally on 31st May Elvis comes to PGC in the guise of Craig Jefferson, the award winning Elvis Presley tribute artist. So no need to be 'lonesome that night'.

On the golfing front things start to pick up now and one date to get in your diary is the 6th May, the early spring bank holiday. That's the date for this year's Fun(d) day when we'll be looking to raise some monies to spend on further improving our lovely golf course.

That's all from me. As usual I'm off to see Jason for yet another lesson in a vain attempt to try and win something this year.....

Cheers,

Nick Lee

LADIES SECTION

I can't believe that I am already a quarter of the way through my year as Lady Captain. The Ladies Section have had a fairly quiet few weeks since Christmas but, with the golf season just about to take off, my diary is starting to look very full. I have a feeling that when I look back on the year, I will reflect that, despite the steep learning curve that I've been on, these first few months will turn out to have been the easy bit!

Firstly - very well done to the Ladies 'Mail on Sunday' Team, who won their first round home match against Hill Barn 4.5 / 0.5 - a great start to the competition! Their win takes them through to the next round against Sweetwoods. The Morrice Four's team will be playing their first round at Hassocks on the 19th March, and the Daily Mail Foursome's are also scheduled to get going in March. The Division matches will be starting soon and we send our best wishes and good luck to all the Ladies who will be playing and representing Pyecombe this year.

Our thoughts this week have been with Joyce Holland at this very sad time for her and the family. The Holland family are some of the longest standing members of the golf club and Peter will be remembered and missed by many of us. The Ladies still play for the Eve Holland Trophy every year in memory of Peter's mother.

On a cold day in January, when thick fog closed the course, the Ladies huddled around a roaring log fire in the clubhouse, (enjoying coffee, cakes and then lunch!) and at the same time held a Bring & Buy sale to recycle unwanted bits and pieces. It was a very successful event and we managed to raise over £100 towards The Captains' charities. As they say - one person's rubbish is another person's treasure! We hope to repeat the event later in the year - perhaps without the cold and fog next time.

This year the Ladies section have volunteered to try our hands at some garden maintenance around the clubhouse area. The two beds on either side of the steps look like they will be our biggest challenge. They need to be properly dug over and all of the weeds removed, and then we'll face an on-going war as the weeds try to rear their ugly heads again. A few ladies took the opportunity of a beautiful sunny afternoon last week and made a start on the work, hopefully some of you will notice the difference as you walk by! I would like to thank those who did help and encourage more of.....

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LADIES SECTION (Continuation)

.....you to join in the fun next time. Once the weather improves we will be organising some work parties to do the first clearing. Any offers of help from men and/or ladies would be really appreciated. We will let you know of the dates we'll be working - so PLEASE come along and help us to make our clubhouse look as attractive as possible. You know what they say about first impressions!

And finally - I have been looking through previous editions of Ups and Downs for inspiration, and realise that there is no way I can compete with Bron Morley's lovely contribution in January 2009! Her eagle (and expert) eyes spotted wild life around the course and her description is amazing and well worth a read. I know we have a beautiful course to play golf on and I often say "no matter how bad the golf has been I've had a lovely walk on The Downs and a bit of exercise and fresh air". Now I realise how much wild life is out there I think that I shall forget that little white ball for a while and concentrate instead on the deer, pheasants, rabbits, hares, partridges, larks, buzzards, kestrels, weasels (or are they stoats?) - I could go on forever Spring is in the air, let us hope it is followed by a good summer!

Irene Silander
Lady Captain

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Our Club is now four months through the financial year. There is some good and bad news. Generally it's better to get the bad news out of the way first, so let's start with that.

Our membership numbers are down significantly compared to last year. A mixture of ill health and economic consideration has led to a significant number not renewing their membership. Some are on temporary suspension due to health issues that are not allowing them to play. At some point it is anticipated that they will return, but it does mean that from a financial point of view it is money we will not recover this year. The management Committee have no issue with members in this category and as a members' club it is the right thing to do. From our target of subscription income we could be down around £25k to £30k.

Over the last 6 or so years the Club has enjoyed a rebate on its council rates from Mid Sussex District Council. M.S.D.C requested a review of our rulebook. Whilst we qualify as a non-profit organisation the clause relating to the distribution of funds/assets back to members should the Club dissolve, has not met with their approval. They have therefore withdrawn the rebate. Our liability this financial year will be around £14k and in a full year around £28k (around £70 per member). I have set up a sub group in operation to consider options and they will report back in due course.

Key to keeping our subscription rates at a reasonable level is to increase our membership level. We are in the process of reviewing our Marketing Strategy to achieve this and whilst it may not have a big return this year, the long-term effect is encouraging. The principle is to target and nurture, so that non-member golfers eventually decide we are the Club they wish to join. The Club has had a Twitter account for some time, but it has not been overly active. This has now changed with at least a daily posting and over the coming months we will encourage members and non-members to follow PGC on Twitter. Face Book is also being reviewed. Although these social media options may not appeal to the older generation the younger generation seem unable to live without them!

During March we will also advertise in the local press and your recent help in advising management of the main reasons for being a member of PGC will be key points in some of the advertisements.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (Continuation)

In today's economic uncertainty it is a fine balance as to how we price our quality asset (the course) and encourage people to use it. We all know we should not undersell, but please be patient in this tough market.

With membership income suppressed it is encouraging to report that green fee income is up on last year, helped in some part by rain affected courses in the low lying areas. We are in the process of encouraging green-fees to play after noon, which is a time when members least use the course. If we are able to generate income in this area it will assist our overall financial situation. Additional use of the course during the afternoon will hopefully result in additional monies going through the Club House.

Even though our financial situation could be better we are still managing to make some small improvement around the clubhouse and on the course, which you can read about in other sections.

We have a great Golf Club and it is you the members who make it so. Many members give up their spare time to do tasks around the Club, and on behalf of you all I thank them.

Len North

SENIORS WINTER LEAGUE

A few words on the Seniors matches.

Brighton and Eastbourne Seniors League

Pyecombe have halved their last two completed matches leaving the club unbeaten this winter with a match against Willingdon in March and two matches in early April, at home to Lewes and away to Seaford Head the teams for these games are now on the Seniors board. Good results against these clubs could see Pyecombe finishing top of the league.

Neil Beard-Neilson
(Seniors organiser)

JASON BOWEN

PGA PROFESSIONAL



GET READY FOR THE NEW SEASON

With spring hopefully on the way, it's time to start thinking about getting ready for the golf season. Here are a few helpful tips to make this year a successful one:

1) **Check your grips.** Grips should be changed at least once every two years but depending on how much you play, they may need to be changed as often as every six months. Worn and slippery grips may cause problems in your swing. Slippery grips will cause you to subconsciously grip the club too tight. Tension of any kind affects the swing but none as much as excess grip pressure.

Squeezing the club too tight may cause one or more of the following problems: loss of power, slices and overall poor contact. Cost of new grips - £5 to £10 per club. (10% reduction on full sets)

2) **Check your spikes.** Aside from the obvious safety reasons while walking up and down Pyecombe hills, spikes that are worn down may cause slipping during the swing. Loss of balance and excess foot movement may cause mishit shots leading to unnecessary bogies and worse. We can replace your spikes for just £9 while you wait or leave them with us while you have a drink after your game.

3) **Book a lesson.** This is the perfect time to brush up on your basics. Starting the season with good fundamentals should lead to a more enjoyable year of golf. I am running a special promotion for Members through March of a **1 hour lesson for £25.** (Save £10) This will provide a great opportunity to have a check up on the long game and short game. All lessons come with an optional emailed video of your swing.

NEW STOCK AT PYECOMBE'S PRO SHOP

We have some very exciting plans for the coming season. We'll be stocking some of the biggest golf club brands on the market and be offering a new custom fitting experience using a state of the art launch monitor. Our aim is to offer the very best service possible in terms of the choice of product, the use of technology and our own experience to match you to your perfect golf club, the price of the equipment and the after sales service. We will be providing more information on these exciting developments in the next few days. A free custom fit will be available to all members at Pyecombe Golf Club at least until the end of April. Further products on the horizon are the new Bushnells Range Finder Tour V3 with jolt technology and Bridgestone golf balls to add to the Srixon and Titleist ranges. Don't forget that we are running a Bridgestone demo day on Saturday the 9th of March. This is free to all members.

Special offers:

One hour lesson in March - £25 - Save £10

Free coaching in March for beginners

Please let your friends know

Jason