



Ups & Downs

Pyecombe G C

Newsletter

September/ October 2015

No 144

Editor Alf Bickham

FROM THE CAPTAIN

This is my last report and firstly I would like to thank all members who have made my year so pleasurable for me. Then of course I must mention the team of the club under Alan Davey who just made my job so easy. Please Alan would you pass my sincere thanks on to all the team.

In the last couple of months I have represented Pyecombe at the MSL balls and have kept sober in most, and did not let the club down. I give a big thank you to my partner and hope not too many toes were trod on. I am to attend the Vets section annual lunch and presentations on Friday 13th November which is a great honour for me and I was also invited and of course attended the Broken Spur dinner; again what a honour.

Well now it is my swan song and where has the year gone? Andy make sure you enjoy every minute because as they say there is nothing like a past Captain and please can I use your car space?

Finally I began the year as a shy person who had little confidence and had been elected to represent such a brilliant golf club and now it is the end I believe that I am certainly a more confident person who grew into what I would like to believe, a Captain who did not let the club down. Only time will tell I guess, and I cannot sign off without Thanking Mary the best lady Captain in Sussex this year, who is such a great friend.

Thank you all for making my year so special.



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**

LADIES SECTION

A short final newsletter from me as my year will probably be over by the time that you read this.

I've had a really wonderful year, and I would like to thank everyone for all their help and support during the past year. Particular thanks must go to my really excellent committee – their support and hard work have made my time in office so much more enjoyable. And of course, my year wouldn't have been the same without Captain Mike alongside me. We get on so well and both share a great love of Pyecombe Golf Club, it's staff team and all the members. Mike has been a tower of strength during the year – always there when I've needed him, and between us we have tried to do our best for the Club. Thank you, Mike, for everything.

Our Ladies' season ended with the first ever Ladies Annual Dinner and Prizegiving on 28th October. It was a wonderful evening giving us all an opportunity to celebrate our golfing successes, and to spend time together having enormous fun.

A magnificent meal was provided by the catering team which many thought was the best they had ever produced. We had a slide show, a quiz, a raffle, an auction and a highly amusing 'synchronised swimming' demonstration! A total of thirty trophies were presented including the Ladies Championship trophy presented to Aileen for the 34th time!



Above: Mary presenting Aileen (on right) with her trophies

What a great way to end the year for me!

It has been a great honour and privilege to be Lady Captain of such a special club, and I am now delighted to retire, stand back, and hand over the reins to Alison.

I wish her and Andy good luck and a happy and successful 2016.

Mary Barnard

Lady Captain

The President reflects

As I write this piece there is less than 3 weeks to go before our AGM – as usual time seems to fly by.

Full reports on the Club's current position and progress over the last twelve months will come from the Officers of the Club, but this is my opportunity, on behalf of the members, to thank them and all the staff, for all that they have done during the year. Much time and effort is spent on ensuring that when members, and visitors, come to the Club they have an enjoyable experience. This means that, not only is the golf course presented in as perfect a condition as possible, but also, when play has finished, people are attracted into a welcoming Clubhouse where speedy and efficient service

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The President reflects (Continuation)

.....ensuring you get that thirst quenching drink, have a tasty bite and enjoy the camaraderie of friends in comfortable surroundings.

Strive as we may, we don't live in a perfect world but, given the various constraints under which the Club Management and staff sometimes work, I believe that thanks to all their commendable efforts the above expectations are essentially met. Overall, I believe the Club provides excellent value for money and competes very favourably with other local clubs, quite a few of which envy the all year round playability of our excellent course.....having just played a course on Wealden clay, not too far from Pyecombe, it was difficult to play in the wet muddy conditions (and it's only early November!) and I spent far too much time afterwards cleaning my trolley, muddy boots and trousers – you don't get that at Pyecombe!

So, we shall shortly be saying 'farewell' to our Captains Mike 'Wilmy' Willmott and Mary Barnard. They have both had a very successful year, totally 'throwing' themselves into their roles and have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Mike was taken quite ill early in his Captaincy which knocked him back a bit, but he fought back, fortunately recovering before the busy summer playing season started. It is also good to hear that Mary is gradually recovering from a back problem which thankfully came after the main playing season was over. The AGM beckons.....

Reg Auchterlonie

SENIORS UPDATE – October 2015

The Downland Seniors Winter League (DSWL) is now underway and Pyecombe have had a satisfactory start (referring to my old school reports I think this means it is ok but could do better!).

We have played 4 matches (home and away to both Brighton & Hove and Eastbourne Downs) and have 22 points for but 24.5 against. First impressions would suggest we are not doing very well but to appreciate previous comments you have to understand the new scoring system as extra points are awarded for away wins and draws. A home win earns 2 points whereas an away win earns 3 points. A home draw earns 1 point whereas an away draw earns 1.5 points. A good illustration of how this affects the score is our recent home match against Brighton & Hove. We won 3 and 2 at home but each team earned 6 points.

The same Pyecombe team plays in the home and away match which allows the losers an opportunity for revenge in the next match. Two good examples have been Messrs Len North and Dave Schwartz who exacted revenge for a narrow loss at home to Brighton & Hove with a bigger margin win in the away match. The other was Messrs Colin Giles and Keith Burnett who having lost heavily away replied with a sound drubbing for their opponents at home. Well done to both pairs.

At Pyecombe the Seniors Organiser is very fortunate in having a larger pool of competitive Seniors than most other clubs in the DSWL. Whilst this brings its own problems it does bring an

SENIORS UPDATE (Continuation)

edge to our games. There was even a suggestion from within that the Organiser do a Haka with the Pyecombe players before a recent match. Whilst we did not perform, the suggestion is being carried forward and the Organiser is working on a gaelic equivalent with backing music provided by bagpipes, so watch this space!

To reinforce the above comments regarding team selection, out of a possible 20 players for the 4 matches Pyecombe fielded 18 different players. Well done and thank you to everybody in the respective teams.

We have 5 more matches to play over the winter including The Dyke, West Hove, East Brighton, Willingdon and Lewes. All good courses and from the results in so far they are all fielding some very strong sides. We look forward to some exciting days ahead.

Finally, a couple of big thank you's to 2 Pyecombe players who do a lot of work behind the scenes but don't often get a mention. The first is to David Jaggar who has the unenviable task of being the impartial organiser for the DSWL as well as the arbitrator to ensure fair play and order with some of the more vocal Seniors Team organisers and Captains. The second is Barry Wood who on receipt of all the results in the DSWL updates the results and league table which can be found on our very own Pyecombe website. Thank you both.

Duncan Campbell

Seniors Organiser

VETS SECTION

After a bit of a gap at the end of August our season of matches continued with a home match against The Nevill on 11th September. This set a good tone with a win by 4 to 2 and was followed by another home win against Copthorne by 5 to 3. The next scheduled away match against Ifield had to be postponed due to flooding of the course so we had coffees and came home. Highwoods at home on 25th September was another home win, although the margins were narrowing at 4 to 3. Lewes away on 29th September proved too tough even though all our team actually found their way there and we lost by 3 to 5. Unfortunately the streak continued into the next home match against Ifield on 2nd October which we lost by 4 to 2. The home match against Royal Eastbourne on 5th October was to have been the rerun of the first match of the season which was called off due to rain, unfortunately it was a rerun in the full sense as this was also rained off due to Pyecombe rain (i.e. horizontal). A home win against Mannings Heath on 9th October restored feelings somewhat but that euphoric mood came to grief with our last match of the season. The postponed away match against Ifield on 15th October saw us tumble to a 7 to 1 defeat. Thanks to Chris Muschamp and Alex Burford for avoiding a whitewash – hope it bodes well for Chris next year.

All of the match results for the vets are shown in the Table (see page 6) where you can see that we won 12 and lost 20 matches overall – not a bad result as on some occasions we had trouble fielding a full team.

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VETS SECTION (Continuation)

The summer pair's cup on 7th September resulted in a win for Graham Tate and Tom Nutley, with Peter Moore and Peter Johnstone as runners-up. The final of the summer knockout Milne Salver saw Martin Avis beat Tom Nutley. Tom was clearly on a roll as at the very pleasant exchange day at Tyrrells Wood on 14th September his team, including James Spicer and Chris Openshaw notched up 85 points – a full 10 points clear of the runners-up Captain's team with Maurice Woolgar and David Taylor. This was Maurice's next to last appearance before he went down with septicaemia and was rushed into hospital. Fortunately he is recovering as can be seen from his note on the Captain's Board and we wish one of the Vet's stalwarts a full recovery.

The Negus Trophy took place on 12th October and was won by Aubrey Watson. This was rapidly followed on 13th October by the Vets/Ladies challenge which was won by Chris Muschamp and Pat Webb. That is the nearest the Captain has come to winning anything but a win by the Vice-captain and the Captain's wife enables me to bask in a little reflected glory. The postponed over 70's cup took place on 19th October and was won by Aubrey Watson (I should have a short cut to avoid typing that too often), Alex Durie, who came second overall also took the over 80's.

The new style Captain's Challenge with the Vice-Captain and Past Captain was to have taken place on Monday 26th October but was cancelled due to lack of support. It was to have been in teams of 3 with the prizes going to the team scoring closest to the Captain's team. Clearly this complex format was too much for most Vets to come to grips with! Think again for next year, Chris.

The Ron Clark Fun Day on the 9th November was perhaps a little less fun than it could have been due to the very strong wind (even by our standards). This cross-country competition, going from 1st tee to 2nd green, 3rd tee to 4th green etc. appeared to completely bemuse the pair trying to play a proper round of golf ahead of us. The winners were Dave Schwartz and Alex Burford with a creditable 23 points ahead of Martin Avis and Ted Longley on 20.

Finally we had what seems to have been a very successful Vet's Annual Dinner on the 6th November. Over 60 attended with a good number of ladies and the provision of excellent food, some modest entertainment and an assortment of prizes drawn for by the Ladies made for a pleasant and relaxed evening.

By the time you read this we will have had the Vet's AGM and I will have handed over to my successor, Chris Muschamp. If he enjoys his year as Vets Captain as much as I have done then he will have a great time.

Geoff Webb

Veterans Section Match Results 2015

Club	Date	Home/Away	Result	Score
Highwoods	30 March	A	LOST	6 ½ - 1 ½
Worthing	10 April	A	LOST	6 - 2
Dyke	13 April	A	LOST	6 - 2
Copthorne	22 April	A	LOST	7 ½ - ½
Crowborough Beacon	1 May	H	WON	4 ½ - 3 ½
Mannings Heath	19 May	A	LOST	7 - 1
East Brighton	22 May	A	WON!	3 ½ - 2 ½
Willingdon	27 May	A	LOST	7 - 0
Eastbourne Downs	29 May	H	LOST	5 - 3
Nevill	5 June	A	LOST	5 - 1
Ham Manor	8 June	H	WON	5 - 1
Dyke	15 June	H	LOST	5 - 3
Willingdon	29 June	H	WON	6 - 1
Ham Manor	1 July	A	LOST	3 ½ - 2 ½
Cowdray Park	6 July	H	LOST	6 - 2
Haywards Heath	10 July	H	WON	4 ½ - 3 ½
East Brighton	13 July	H	LOST	4 - 2
Crowborough Beacon	21 July	A	WON!	5 ½ - 2 ½
Cowdray Park	23 July	A	LOST	6 ½ - 1 ½
Worthing	27 July	H	LOST	4 ½ - 3 ½
Royal Eastbourne	30 July	A	DRAW	3 - 3
Lewes	7 August	H	WON	6 - 2
Eastbourne Downs	14 August	A	LOST	6 ½ - 1 ½
Haywards Heath	17 August	A	LOST	6 - 2
Nevill	11 September	H	WON	4 - 2
Copthorne	18 September	H	WON	5 - 3
Highwoods	25 September	H	WON	4 - 3
Lewes	29 September	A	LOST	5 - 3
Ifield	2 October	H	LOST	4 - 2
Royal Eastbourne	5 October	H	DRAW*	3 - 3
Mannings Heath	9 October	H	WON	4 ½ - 2 ½
Ifield	15 October	A	LOST	7 - 1

* Rained off twice so draw agreed.

ON THE COURSE

It has been a tough year for the Head Green keeper to produce what we expect out on the course this year. Cold weather and subsequent poor growing conditions from Spring extending right into June coupled with continual mechanical breakdown of the pedestrian mowers have tested Simon's mettle for sure, the knock on effects extending way into the summer. I believe he and the team have done a great job this year and under the circumstances mentioned, particularly on the greens, where since July up to aeration works in August and again after recovery from that work, they have been in very good shape. That view would be endorsed by the many favourable comments received from influential visitors from other Sussex clubs in recent weeks.

In a day and age where everybody expects everything to be on demand and of a marvellous standard or you take it back, it doesn't quite work like that in maintaining a golf course. We are working with nature and the vagaries of the weather and its effect, sometimes it's kind, sometimes not, it is not like producing something in manufacturing, or the service industry for instance.

New pedestrian mowers are being trialled at present and will be purchased shortly, they will be used regularly over the winter, particularly when it is too wet to get the triple mowers on the greens and the over seeding programme continues to improve the percentage of fine grasses in the greens. I know I keep banging on about over seeding, but we are increasing the percentage of fine grasses in the greens, it is not an overnight process, but something which will improve year on year to get the desired results and we need to remain patient, which I know is not a popular trait in twenty first century living!

The rough has recently been sprayed with the rescue treatment on an eight metre boom width adjacent to the semi, all around the course. If you care to look, you can in some areas see the coarse grasses dying off and turning yellow already, this bodes well for next year.

The past year has seen the 9th tee refurbishments, this has also attracted much favourable comment on the improvement to the hole by members and visitors alike. We will use all of the tees throughout the winter. Some of the rough will be cut back as semi and the fairway extended back toward the tee a few metres for next season, to help those struggling with distance from the new tee.

Works will start shortly on the 16th green, remodelling to the Hawtree drawings, another worthy project being backed by The Friends of Pyecombe. I hope the end result will fuel our appetite to continue on the 17th and 18th in the near future.

After monitoring tee shots in Ladies and Vet's competitions earlier in the year and assessing the results, this year's winter works will see some tree clearance on the 7th hole to encourage a fairer tee shot to the fairway, it will enable cutting of the fairway slightly higher up the slope and a wider band of semi to grow below, this will help to hold balls before they run off the bank on the right hand of the fairway. This work will not affect play as we will be using the winter tee by that time.

Loose and leaning fairway marker poles will also be re-bedded over the winter as they are looking rather unsightly. With a lot of green staff involvement on the 16th green project, tree work on the 7th and numerous other jobs aside normal course maintenance, I feel the team are in for a busy winter.

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ON THE COURSE (Continuation)

The year since last November, when I took over as Chair of Green again has flown by. It has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience yet again and heartening to see the investment in course projects that I have been able to be a part of. As my year was the last of a three year term, I wish the new incumbent all the best. A thank you to Simon Wells and his team for making the job so much easier for me, showing dedication, professionalism and pride in maintaining and presenting our course to a high standard.

Gary Hann
Chair of Green

