



The Court Circular

Journal of The Coulsdon Court Veterans Golf Club

Number 59

December 2020

Note from the Editor

Wow. What a year. Let me start by thanking everyone who has persevered to provide and play their golf at Coulsdon Court this year. The ground staff, cut in numbers kept the course in as good a shape as possible in April and May and again in the Autumn furlough, Matt and Mark in the pro shop have done their best to provide a service despite austerity from the hotel and have made allowances for course closures in our membership renewals and last but not least our members who have kept going through thick and thin. Amazing.

A big thank you too to our Captain Chris Watts who has kept driving forward to keep the show on the road in adversity. A great performance, Chris. And not to forget the Committee which has 'zoomed' throughout the year to deliver changes to handicapping, frequently revised fixture lists and timely accurate updates to Master Scoreboard. And in such a challenging environment we have on board several new members which gives me great pleasure in welcoming:

Bruce Blackhall

Roger Clark

Tony Ozieri

Chris Reeves

Tim Walsh

They are great guys who are already contributing to the Club on and off the course. We look forward to playing more together and integrating them further into our number as Covid conditions are relaxed.

This growth has been offset by the sad loss of John Stacey who always added character to the Club. We pass our deepest condolences to the family as we were able to do in limited number at the funeral due to Covid-19 restrictions.

George Paulson-Ed

Outgoing Captain's Report

Well it's certainly been an unusual year, but I've been pleasantly surprised to realise how much we've managed to fit in. It all started so well; we had a full fixture list and we were all looking forward to our year of golf. Then there were some news reports of a new virus coming from a food market in Wuhan, China. It seemed to be a small local problem in a far away place. But unfortunately... well, you know the rest.

The year started with the monthly medals and 18 hole competitions. We managed to fit in the President's Challenge on the 9th March. However on the 24th March, the golf course closed and didn't reopen until the 26th May. The Captains' Drive competition was conducted using a random number generator to select the length of the captain's drive.

During lock down, a small piece of history was returned to Coulsdon. Mr Phil Gibbs had kindly donated a mashie golf club to us. It belonged to Leslie Cotton, the first golf pro who started here in 1925/6 soon after the course was laid out. The club was given to his father Jim Gibbs who lived in Stoats Nest Village. The mashie will be displayed in the hotel when things get back to normal.

Whilst there was no golf, Eddie McGrath produced 2 well researched articles. The first one on the difficult subject of pitching and chipping, and the second on the art of putting. Many thanks Eddie. The course reopened on May 26th. We revised our fixture list and thanks to Mike Jordan managed to run 2 Matches and a number of internal competitions. However social distancing meant the after match get together was very restricted. There was a second lock down and the course was closed from November 5th to December 2nd.

The Eagles Club was a very slow starter when introduced by me in 2016, after 2 years it still didn't have any members. This exclusive club is only open to the more accomplished players who managed a two under par. Congratulations to Ian Booker, Brian Bourne, Ron Wellbrook and John Gill who all joined this year, bringing the total membership up to six.

In 2019, sponsored by the four golf clubs, the Coulsdon Manor Rotary Club and the hotel, a defibrillator was mounted on the wall next to the reception desk at the hotel. This was my reason for choosing the Voluntary Responder Group who are a group of volunteer lifesavers working in the capital through a registered charity – London Ambulance Service Voluntary Responder Group.

Community first responders – defibrillator-trained St John Ambulance volunteers attending on call from their homes and responding to 999 calls in their own car without blue lights alongside ambulances Launched by patron Dame Helen Mirren in March 2012, the charity offers financial support to volunteer groups responding to patients alongside a traditional 999 ambulance response. Although 999 response reach a majority of patients quickly, for those whose heart has stopped beating, receiving lifesaving care immediately gives them the best chance of survival.

All volunteer responders are trained to use a defibrillator, a device that can restart a patient's heart by delivering an electric shock. Getting a defibrillator to someone in cardiac arrest gives them the best chance of survival. The defibrillator has been used four times on the course this year and on two occasions played a critical role.

With all the opportunities for social gathering closed off to us this year, opportunities for fundraising for this charity has become severely limited. The use of the internet meant some money raising events did take place. So my thanks go to all the members who donated using bank transfer.

The green keeping staff have kept the course looking good in a year that posed many challenges to their working practices. Some golf courses have been lengthening their fairways as the likes of Bryson DeChambeau and the other big hitters, are reaching the par 4 green from the tee! We are not expecting that problem at Coulsdon!

This difficult year draws to a close. The membership has been great, they have taken on board the new World Handicap System, and acted in a truly responsible nature through the pandemic. We have all kept in contact using social media whilst there has been no golf and I sincerely hope that 2021 will bring better things and better golf. My sleeve is rolled up ready for the call to be vaccinated.

I know you will continue to give your support to Ron Wellbrook who takes over as Captain in 2021. Let's hope that rain and snow don't manage to keep us from our game. Have a happy and healthy golfing New Year. All the best.

Chris Watts

Our Incoming Captain 2021

Firstly, I'd like to give thanks to Chris for working through such a difficult year, not easy trying to hit a continually moving target. Hopefully 2021 will be a fuller golfing year than the last. We have a full fixture list, including matches against other clubs. Having said that, given the situation at present, nothing

is certain and some matches may well need to be cancelled. As your Captain I will of course be doing my best to keep all fixtures in place as far as we are able.

My charity this year will be the Huntingtons Disease Association. For those unfamiliar with this disease and the charity, Huntingtons is a physically debilitating condition that over time slowly erodes quality of life. The main work of the charity is to provide support for those with the condition and their families. My main reason for supporting this charity is that I have a long standing mate who has this and is now in a care home. My charity invitation day will be Friday, 10th August. Please make a note of the date and support my charity.

Last year, for most of the time, we missed our after match friendly chat and banter. I feel that this is an important part of club life that can promote discussion of club interests. Comments good or bad can lead to improvements and hopefully members' satisfaction. As soon as we are able and personal safety improves, I would like to promote returning to this.

As ever, we will of course be encouraging new members to join our friendly club.

Lastly, as your new Captain, may I wish you all a safe, happy and healthy year and look forward to 2021 giving us all more golfing opportunities.

Ron Wellbrook

Remembering Johnny

John Stacey



There could be few who wore a smile so wide and for so long as our dear friend Johnny. Always ready to share a joke, have a laugh and go out to enjoy his round ready for sharing his company at the 19th. John served the club for many years bringing good, positive ideas for improvement whether it be on the course or off it. For many years when the opportunity arose he would play with Mark Elliott, keeping him in good spirits and staying close to him and the family latterly. But this was John to a tee, always thinking of others and giving of himself for their happiness and contentment. It was in Beckenham just a few weeks ago at a most dignified Covid-19 regulated service that a few of us only on behalf of the Club were able to express our fond farewell to a true friend. We shall miss him.

George Paulson

Hall of Fame 2020

Hall of Fame

We've had a difficult year but persevered in the face of adversity. The accolades go to :

Monthly Medal

		Winner	Runner Up
January	(Div 1) (Div 2)	Les Ropke Bob Lyndon	Ken Boyden Tony Brown
February	(Div 1) (Div 2)	John Moulton Tony Brown	Les Ropke Ron Morgan
March	(Div 1) (Div 2)	Les Ropke Ron Wellbrook	Gordon Wilkinson Tony Brown
June	(Div 1) (Div 2)	Les Ropke Eddie McGrath	John Tidy Alan Johnson
July	(Div 1) (Div 2)	Ed Collins Mac McRae	Alex Leonard Mike Jordan
August	(Div 1) (Div 2)	John Moulton Paul Nicholson	Alex Leonard Eddie McGrath
September	(Div 1) (Div 2)	Alex Leonard Bob Lyndon	Reg Parsons Alan Johnson
October	(Div 1) (Div 2)	Ed Collins Chris Watts	Tony Quelch Brown Tony Brown
December	(Div 1) (Div 2)	Les Ropke George Paulson	Tony Brown Bruce Blackhall

Trophies

Kelly Shield: Ken Boyden

George Boulter Trophy: Brian Bourne

President's Challenge Trophy: Les Ropke

Tony Boniface Trophy: Tony Quelch Brown

Other

Club Championship, Townsend Decanter: Les Ropke

Captain's Cup: Mac McRae

Christmas Competition: Les Ropke

4-club competition, Semple Trophy: *cancelled*

Age Competition, Peter Mills Cup: *cancelled*

9-hole league: *cancelled*

Order of Merit: *cancelled*

Knock-outs

Spring singles, Joe Kent Cup: *cancelled*

Autumn singles: *cancelled*

Pairs Competition: *cancelled*

All we can say in the difficult circumstances is a very big thanks to all and congratulations to the winners. Special recognition goes to Les Ropke for the standard and consistency of his game throughout the year. Well done Les, much deserved, and always a pleasure to play with you. Tony Brown specialized in runner up whether it be Div 1 or 2. Great play Tony; the money's on you for 2021!

It is great too to see such a wide spread of members in our 'hall of fame' including new member Bruce Blackhall. It's a well done to everyone and a thank you for entering the competitions and playing with such a good spirit. And thanks to Mike as match secretary for juggling the fixture list to get the most out of the year – great job.

From the Committee

Throughout a difficult 2020 the Committee has continued working on your behalf, holding 4 meetings over Zoom in addition to the AGM which was attended by a total of 32 members.

Particular attention, as always, is paid to the Club's finances which are in good shape primarily as a result of the knock on effects of the COVID pandemic. After discounting various other alternatives the Committee has agreed that 2021 membership fees be reduced thus passing back a significant portion of the surplus to members and compensating for lost course availability.

The World Handicap System which was introduced in November, was subject to a great deal of work behind the scenes to ensure a smooth roll out to the members.

As a general comment it would be appreciated if more members could volunteer to take up positions on the Committee and help share out the workload.

Finally, lockdown has not been easy for any of us. As one of my friends commented the other day – the human body has approximately 6 trillion nerves and she's managed to get on every bloody one of mine!

Keep well & stay safe.

Paul Nicholson

Handicap Committee

We have now taken on board the 2019 rule changes with positive feedback from members that the game is quicker and better for them.

Now that we have started using the World Handicap System (WHS) there seems to be some confusion as to what your playing handicap is. I will try to explain

Handicap Index (HI). The HI you have is worked out from the best eight scores of the last twenty scores you have entered. There is a very useful aid, which is the 'MyEG' app – it is very easy to download onto your mobile phone. You will see your list of twenty scores, eight of which are highlighted with a green disc. These are the best eight scores after taking account of the course condition adjustment which affects the course rating on the day. Each time you enter a new score it goes to the top of the list and the last one drops off. The best eight scores are again taken as the basis of your handicap index (HI).

Course Handicap (CH). To get your CH, wherever you play, you look up your HI on the board provided, making sure you choose the correct tee, and you will find your course handicap (CH). This in effect is taking into account the difficulty of the course. You play to your CH when you are playing a supplementary ie non competition round.

Playing Handicap (PH). If however you are playing in a competition, you use your playing handicap (PH). This is worked out by multiplying your CH by 0.95 to give you your PH for that competition round. Your gross score is however used by England Golf to determine any adjustment to your HI. (Note: the adjustment factor is different for fourball (0.85) and individual matchplay formats (1.0)).

I hope you understand my explanation, if you are still unsure about it speak to me or contact me. I promise it will be absolutely clear to you!

One other point I would like to bring to your attention is I would like you to continue sending me your scorecards and entering your score on mastersscoreboard as you do now.

Roger Harding
Chairman, Handicap Committee

A special mention is needed in support of the Committee due to their hard work to keep the handicapping, competition rules and course and card marking etiquette to the highest standards. The many of us who have been and/or still are members of other clubs will acknowledge the necessity and quality of the Committee's efforts with appreciation. And a big thank you to everyone who have marked, copied, sent and entered scores on Mastersscoreboard after our competitions.

Ed.

Greens Committee

With the restrictions put upon us all this year and the limitation our grounds staff have had to work to, our course has stayed in a remarkable condition, the last few days excluded of course! The greens in particular have been very well maintained, but unfortunately there are still issues to address with our bunkers.

The fallen tree on the 4th has been moved off of the fairway and is no longer an issue. The fallen tree on the 15th is still alive and is not going to be moved so it remains GUR. All in all though I think we should be pleased with the hard work Joe and his team have put into making our few months of golf special.

Mike Jordan
Greens Committee Representative

Matches and Awaydays

We planned a full and busy 2020 with the opportunity of playing new courses and meeting new friends as well as playing with teams on courses we have been playing for some years now. Unfortunately COVID-19 hit and most of that went out of the window! We did manage to play a small number of matches towards the end of the year but generally the card was empty.

So going forward we have arrange yet another very busy calendar for 2021, playing our friends from all the old clubs we usually play each year and playing on new courses with new friends.

This year we will not be printing cards but the calendar is available to all on our Coulsdon Court Vet Site <http://www.coulsdonvetsgolfclub.co.uk/>. Master scoreboard and then into “Forthcoming Fixtures”.

I hope that you will all support your new Captain and put your names down for as many matches as possible and let’s make 2021 the year we beat COVID -19, home and away!

A Happy New Year to you all.

Mike

Membership

Although this year has been a difficult one for the club we have still managed to welcome five new members to Coulsdon Court Vets they are:- Roger Clark, Bruce Blackhall, Chris Reeves, Tony Ozieri and Tim Walsh. Apologies if you still haven’t had your club tie!

Due to the Covid pandemic we have been unable to partake in our normal range of social events. Therefore it has been difficult to welcome new members into the club in our normal way. So I hope that they are settling in well and looking forward as we all are to a better golfing year to come!

At the last count we had 65 members but we are always open to new members so if you have any friends or relatives who would like to join please ask them to contact me. Or if you have any ideas of how we could attract new members please let me know.

Lastly I would like thank our outgoing Captain Chris Watts in managing a very difficult year and to wish our new Captain Ron Wellbrook a very happy and successful year to come.
All the best

Nigel Messett

Hotel Liaison

It was with some surprise that the hotel abruptly lost it’s new General Manager, James Hughes. This combined with the Coronavirus has resulted in no formal consultation and liaison with the hotel management during the year. We have kept an informal link with the staff in the hotel, as far as we have been able and worked closely with the pro shop and ground staff as Mike has reported. We discussed with the pro shop the allowance for both lock downs in our membership subscriptions with a positive outcome that full allowance has been made for the first and due allowance will be made in the 2021 renewals for the second lockdown.

The ground staff negotiated firmly at the first lockdown to secure maintenance funding from the hotel which was a saviour for the course. We gave the ground staff our full support at that time as we have since through Mike.

We all know how the hospitality sector has suffered and the hotel is no exception. The golf continues to be a lifeline; how 2021 will work out is still an open question for the hotel. Watch this space.

George Paulson
Hotel Liaison

And Finally

A very big thank you to all our members for bringing such a good spirit to the Club even at this difficult time. We have an excellent, focused Committee which addresses members' concerns, organizes the club's business and thinks ahead to bring change for the better. We have benefited significantly from Ed Collins, Paul Nicholson and Ron Wellbrook joining the Committee this year with thanks to Nick Getting, John Moulton and Brian Roberts for their past contributions.

And I would finally thank Ken Bowden, Andreas Holgado, Paul Nicholson, Chris Watts and Ron Wellbrook who volunteered as rangers to walk the course daily during the first lockdown to prevent abuse and damage to the playing areas. A big thank you guys from all the members at Coulsdon Golf.

Stay in touch using the website www.coulsdonvetsgolfclub.co.uk for more information.

Everyone on the Committee wishes all the membership a Happy and Safe New Year with the hope that we can get back to normality as soon as possible. Hope to see you on zoom at the AGM on 6 January.

George Paulson
Ed.