

RICHMOND PARK GOLF CLUB



ANNUAL REPORT - 2004

Firstly, I wish to say that as a result of some pretty horrid time commitments this Report is not so full as originally intended; so, for those with meritorious achievements that I have omitted to mention I apologise now

2004 - it was the year of the Olympics. It is quite amazing how all these major events slip to the back of the mind once they are off the tv screen. For a time it was looking as though the Olympics might be held without the benefit of all the new buildings and stadia. There was a distinct possibility that the event might have had to have been transferred to borrowed premises; and there was talk of the entire panoply of organisational control and logistics being run from a portacabin or two. It was this final prospect of the portacabins that spurred the Greeks to complete the works on time! We can understand why – to operate without the benefit of a home base is a nightmare, and whilst we should be grateful for small mercies a shared portacabin is less than ideal: in a nutshell, for 2004 there is just one comment - that was hard work!!

Dinner Dance and Annual Prize-giving

The dinner dance to celebrate 2003 fell after the last AGM, and by quirk of the timetable the dinner dance to celebrate 2004 was held on the Saturday just gone. Every year we try and enforce a three-line whip for the dinner/dance, and every year our success is less than it should be. However, the good news is that for the January 2005 dinner dance we had an effective increase of 18 attendees (net 10 for reasons which I will not bore you with) and hopefully we will see the majority of last Saturday's attendees plus a few more at next year's dinner dance on 28th January 2006!! Last Saturday's attendance was just over 90, still a long way off the 190 that we used to see in the 1980's!

By all counts, last Saturday evening was another fine success. Our regular band – the 60's Allstars was on good form - and must have turned the volume up a bit because most of us still couldn't hear anything at the Park on Sunday morning. The ladies raffle produced a contribution towards the cost of the evening of something in excess of £800, another splendid result helped by some generous purchases. A special mention must go to Julie Smith for the preparation of the menus and the prize table labels; and secondly to David Marsh plus Kate who prepared the 'bespoke' raffle tickets which were infinitely better than the old cloakroom tickets.

The presentation of the prizes is an integral part of the dinner dance. The results for the Club's competitions are posted weekly in the portacabin and also on the Club's website so we are all very familiar with the names of the competition winners. When we get to the prize-giving it becomes immediately apparent which members have had a successful year by the number of trophies stacked on the various dining tables. I won't go into details, but last Saturday there was, for a change, a preponderance of trophies on the tables occupied by Committee members. This is an interesting correlation, and if anyone is aspiring for a major trophy haul in 2005 perhaps a spot of committee duty might do the trick.

A regular feature of the prize-giving is the award for the most improved players of the year. The most improved player is determined according to a consideration of both handicap

improvement and home competition success. For the ladies I am aware that a sub-committee deliberated long and hard to consider a group of candidates who were in contention, with the final decision to award the accolade to the Lady Captain Sheena Harrington. With regard to the men it was a simple two-horse race between Jack Koychev and Jason Johnstone. In any normal year either of these two would have won hands down but we had a remarkably close run to the wire, with both these chaps producing incredible performances. In Jack's case he returned to us from Cyprus in February 2004 where he had experienced some success and started the year playing off 27, and finished the year playing off 18! On the prize list Jack was the winner of a monthly medal and runner up in the Charity Cup. In Jason's case he didn't play to a handicap 28 when we admitted him in April 2004, but we recognised that he had the potential to do exceptionally well assuming that he could settle into something of a regular routine. During the year Jason won the April bogey, the Centurion Open, the Club Championship Handicap Prize, and he was runner up in the Junior Club Championship and the Burgess Cup. Through the year Jason's handicap reduced by 10 shots to 18! Jason is the recipient of the MIP award, though there is a huge groundswell of opinion that Jack was really unlucky to have come across such a formidable performance by Jason. We wish the all three mentioned here the best of golf in 2005, and in Jack's case we hear that he has already made an immediate challenge to claim the 2005 MIP award!

Membership

Every year we expect to lose members – some relocate, some have new family commitments, some move on to private golf clubs, and strange as it may seem some find other activities to do on Sunday mornings. The Committee is all too familiar with this pattern of events which is why we are constantly on the look out for new joiners.

I have mentioned before that the Club's official Sunday morning allocation is 21 games, but it has not been since the early 1990's that we have fielded this number on a regular basis and in the summer of 2004 we were typically seeing in the order of 16 to 18 games. The Committee is doing what it can to boost numbers and there will be no let-up in 2005. The signals coming across from the new courses operator are quite encouraging so we are hopeful that we will receive some shop support for our 2005 membership drive.

It is no secret that the loss of the Pavilion has had a significant impact on the number of general public players at the Park, and it is inevitable that the Club has also failed to attract members as consequence of the lack of facilities that now present us. With this in mind it is comforting to know that we have been able to recruit quite successfully through 2004 and we already have some membership enquiries for 2005.

As a digression, I will mention that the vast majority of potential new members are seeking their first handicap and the Club is ideally placed to provide this facility. The means that for these potential joiners they need to progress through the handicap qualification stage and whilst we try and arrange for the main Committee Members to perform the card marking duty this is not always possible so we would ask members to help out as necessary.

The analysis below shows our membership profile over the last few years. Our target is 150 members so we have quite a way to go:

	<u>2004/05</u>	<u>2003/04</u>	<u>2002/03</u>	<u>2001/02</u>
Men:				
Regular	73	78	67	67
Senior	7	7	6	7
Junior	0	1	1	1
Honorary (playing)	1	1	1	1
Total Men	<u>81</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>76</u>
Ladies:				
Regular	32	29	30	27
Senior	4	3	3	3
Junior	0	0	0	0
Honorary (playing)	0	0	0	0
Total Ladies	<u>36</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>30</u>
Total Membership	<u>117</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>106</u>
Joiners:				
New men	19	22	13	3
New ladies	4	1	7	2
Rejoiners – men	0	1	5	1
Rejoiners – ladies	1	0	1	0
Total	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>6</u>

Inter-Club Matches

The Club's friendly fixtures are an important part of the fixture programme and it gives us a chance to socialise with some old friends. The Club had another year of mixed results in 2004 as follows:

Men vs Airlinks:

Regrettably the Airlinks match was not played. Airlinks are the current holders of the salver trophy and we aim to get our hands on it in 2005.

Men vs Rickmansworth:

The Ricky captain obviously had serious intent to win back the trophy from Richmond Park. In the first leg the Ricky team were the winners by 4 – 1. However, it is worth mentioning that the stars on the day were Ian Smith and Geoff Foreman who achieved 51 points on a better-ball Stableford equivalent. In the home leg our team did beat the Ricky chaps 3-2, however this was insufficient for us to retain the trophy with a final overall 6 – 4 win Ricky team.

Ladies vs Mitcham:

In the annual Rich-Mitch fixture there was a change of fortune for the Mitcham ladies. In the first leg the Richmond Park team ran out the winners by 3 – 1. The sole Mitcham win on the day was by a member new to golf whose handicap had dropped from a start of 23 to 16 within the space of a few months. On the away leg the Richmond Park ladies were also successful with a 2 ½ - 1 ½ win; thereby giving an overall 5 ½ - 2 ½ win to our side. This contrasts significantly with the (lucky) 6 – 2 win to Mitcham in 2003.

Richmond Ladies vs White Lodge Ladies

This competition between the Clubs is for the Bette Hill Rosebowl. Bette was member of both clubs and promoted the inter-club Stableford match. In 2003 the Richmond Park ladies proved to be superior on the day. In 2004 the Richmond Park ladies were again the victors by a sizeable margin.

Keys Trophy:

The Club did not field a team for the 2004 Keys Trophy, however the Club will be back in action challenging for the Keys in 2005.

Association Salver:

The Club's team comprised Ian Smith and Geoff Foreman, plus Dave Williams and Peter Harrington. Ian and Geoff, playing off three-quarters handicap scored an unassailable 43 points to help the Richmond Park team to a clear victory. The runners-up were White Lodge, just ahead of Putney park. The success in this event means that Richmond Park will be entered for the SCGU Kelso-Hamilton competition in 2005.

N.A.P.G.C. Competitions

Clapham Common Shield (men)

In the first round the Club had a good win against Addington 203 –192. In the second round the Club was drawn against Oaks Park who first thought that they had won but when the sums were checked we all found that Richmond Park were the winners 199 – 197. And then came Basildon. The weekend before the match the Basildon team had won the NAPGC Bourne-Vanneck trophy, and it was clear to see why. We were somewhat overwhelmed by Basildon at their home course and they were also the winners on our home course. The only good feature of this match was that we didn't waste our effort just to lose by a point or two; we were beaten by 5 points at home and a further 30 points away!

Hawtree Trophy (mixed)

The Club again entered two teams in 2004. Unfortunately, as a result of holidays and goodness knows what else we were unable to field a team for one of the first round matches so we granted our opponents a walkover. The team that did play ran up against stiff opposition in the first round in the form of Thorney Park and lost 3 – 2 on our home patch.

White Webbs (ladies)

The ladies entered two teams. Both teams had successes in their first matches, but both teams came unstuck in their second matches, one against Queens Park which was always going to be difficult playing away and the other against Hounslow Heath whose NAPGC team is now one of the strongest in the country

Internal Matches and Competitions

Bontor

The Men did it again!!!

Ladies' Invitation

Out from winter hibernation it was Caryl and Martin Goldsworthy who were the winners on the day.

Men's Invitation

It was the Handicap Secretary's day. Lia Donath and Paul Grand were supreme.

The Lockie Trophy

That unique trophy for the ladies! The winner at Meon Valley was Maureen Slade.

Individual Achievements

- In the Open competitions played at the Park this year we again had some notable successes. We had five out of a possible six wins in the these events:
 - In the Ruskie Hall Open, Anthony Williams was victorious.
 - In the Centurion Open, Jason Johnstone was victorious.
 - In the Association Trophy, Jon Cooper was victorious and Ros Lake the runner up.
 - In the Richmond Park Open, Loe Leon-Martin was victorious.
 - In the Trevor Allen Open, Paul Palombo was victorious and Paul Appleton was the runner up.
- Congratulations to John Bennett for his hole in one on the thirteenth hole on the Princes course.

2004 Club Prizes

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>WINNER</u>	<u>RUNNER-UP</u>
Senior Men's Club Championship	D Winter	I Smith
Ladies' Club Championship	J Smith	L Donath
Junior Men's Club Championship	O Leon Martin	J Johnstone
Men's Club Championship Handicap Trophy	J Johnstone	S Peacock
J H Taylor – matchplay 0-16	P Harrington	D Winter
Two Courses Cup – matchplay 17+	D Marsh	A Dolby
Ladies' Challenge Cup	V Mitchell	P Fox
Men's Fourball – matchplay	P Appleton D Winter	P King M Wright
Mixed Foursomes – matchplay	S Harrington P Harrington	K Friswell D Marsh
Ladies' Committee Cup	S Harrington	M Hood
Grand Medal Trophy	I Smith	
Silver Jubilee Trophy	A Williams	G Foreman
Golden Jubilee Trophy	S Kendall	P Flanagan
Diamond Jubilee Trophy	P Appleton	A Williams
Platinum Jubilee Trophy	I Smith	S Clarke
Anniversary Cup	A Williams	P Flanagan
President's Putter	P Patching	P Harrington
President's Putter - ladies	S Harrington	D Jackett
Captain's Prize	S Kendall	M Lennard
Lady Captain's Prize	D Jackett	T Wright
Richmond Park Golf Club Open	O Leon_Martin	K Asada [PPK]
Trevor Allen Open	P Palombo	P Appleton
J Q Robertson Trophy	P Fox	D Jackett
Coronation Cup	P Patching	S Nash
Shaw Cup	R Hill	P Flanagan

Spring Mixed Foursomes	J Oliver D Williams	V Mitchell J Cooper
Autumn Mixed Foursomes - Handicap	T Wright M Wright	R Sumner S Potts
Autumn Mixed Foursomes - Scratch	T Wright M Wright	
Burgess Cup - Greensomes	A Williams & D Williams	J Johnstone & T Scarr
Summer Cup	I Smith	D Marsh
Dowling Cup	S Harrington	J Smith
Handicap Cup - handicaps 0-24	C Woodhouse	R Lake
Pembroke Cup - handicaps 25-36	L Kenny	J Beacham
Lissaman Cup - 3 clubs + putter	R Urquhart	M Lennard
Top Dog Trophy	P Patching	S Kendall
Barton Bowl - Play-off – top 8 against captain	P Fox	K Friswell
Winter Competition	J Ratnage	G Foreman
Charity Cup	M Bean	J Koychev

Happenings at the Park

In the same way that people remember days and anniversaries of national or international tragedy we recognise 2nd January 2004 as possibly the worst start to a season that we could contemplate. The Pavilion suffered an electrical fault and the building used for the official opening of the first inner golf course in 1923 came to an untimely end in a raging inferno. At the beginning of 2004 we operated from the shop in a haphazard manner and after a while we took up squatters rights at the back of the office area. In the summer we did have some success and a very very big thank you goes to Geoff Foreman. Geoff convinced his firm that we were a worthy cause for a redundant portacabin and this has been our joint 'clubhouse' through the second half of 2004 and into 2005. I say joint clubhouse because the portacabin is shared with the other clubs who contributed to the cost on installation.

At the beginning of 2004 we knew that GCM's management contract was set to expire on 30th September 2004. The intention of the Royal Parks Agency at the start of 2004 was for a long-term development contract to commence on 1st October 2004. However, the over-riding requirement for the commitment to the long-term contract would be the approval to use Chohole Gate as the main entry and exit point for the golf courses. The approval was not forthcoming and there was a change of tack to issue a short-term two year management contract with the aim of commencing the long-term contract in October 2006. An expression of interest to manage the courses was submitted on behalf of the Association clubs but, regrettably, the contract assessors rejected this. It is common knowledge that the contract was awarded to Glendale, and it is fair to say that the firm has started to introduce improvements to the courses which is a good sign.

With regard to the amalgamation of the Association clubs, this topic is currently residing on the back burner. The clubs have been informed that amalgamation will not be required until just before the commencement of the long-term management contract. As mentioned above, if all the planning approvals are received it is the intention to commence the long-term contract on 1st October 2006, and with a six month amalgamation timetable it follows that the process of club amalgamation will not be kick-started until the beginning of 2006 at the earliest. In the meanwhile, the clubs remain independent.

Extra Curricular Activities

With the mayhem at the Park the Committee was presented with something of a major challenge in terms of general organisational arrangements, particularly for the

communication of our awaydays and other events. This reminds me of the period when I was receiving items from all over the place with a request that they should go on our noticeboard; my stock response was that we did not have the luxury of a noticeboard! Notwithstanding the difficulties, it was with thanks in the main to Dave Williams that we had successful awaydays at Littlehampton and Hoebridge twice.

The Committee contemplated a summer event but with a mixture of poor venue options and unreasonably high costs it was decided to skip an event in 2004. The Committee has already taken the view to hold a summer event in 2005 so if anyone has any bright ideas please shout since we are looking for inspiration.

The summer event leads me on to a relatively new activity for the Club, namely the Ruffians Ryder Cup. This is an annual 2-day event against Ludlow Golf Club, jointly promoted by the two team captains of Michael Hinks-Edwards and Paul Grand. At the first fixture on home soil in 2003 it was Richmond Park who were the deserved victors. In 2004 Richmond Park fell behind on the first day. The deficit was largely attributable to the greens playing like sloping glass windows, something we are not used to. We fought back bravely on the second day and despite a close finish the final result was a win to Ludlow. In 2005 it is our turn to host the match on our fairways and we intend to restore the trophy back to its rightful home. As with 2003, the Committee is considering the possibility of combining the 2005 summer event with the visit of the Ludlow team.

The RPGC Website

With thanks to Tim Meyer who devotes a huge amount of time and effort to maintain the Club's website we can all see that it continues to go from strength to strength. In round terms we are averaging 1,000 hits per day and every month we have a day or two that break the 1440 barrier: i.e. a hit rate of under 60 seconds. This is a huge achievement for such a small golf club and one that we can be proud of. From all quarters we receive compliments on the website and this is very encouraging.

In 2003, Paul Grand stepped into the frame by preparing the booking sheet data on his own website which is linked to the Club's website, and this enabled members to see at a glance whether they had booked for games and their projected tee times. By all accounts this has been a major improvement to our old routine and we should recognise once again the time and effort of Paul to keep this service running.

At the end of 2003 I mentioned that work had commenced to amass data for a historical archive of Club and associated information. This project is still in hand and we hope to see the new section on the website during 2005. If any members should have information for this section, all contributions will be gratefully received.

The Committee and helpers

As mentioned, 2004 was a tough year all round. I won't dwell on all the Committee members but I will mention a few instances of service above and beyond the call of duty:

- Julie Smith rejoined the main Committee to be appointed our first Lady President. We were delighted to have Julie back on the Committee where she brings a wealth of experience having previously served on the Committee for well in excess of 10 years.
- Martin Wright steps down after an extended three years as Captain, during which time he has kept the ship on a steady course. Martin's extra year as Captain was deemed appropriate as a result of the intended amalgamation of the clubs but with this topic off the front burner we decided to offer Martin a rest. We are pleased that

Martin stays with us on the main Committee where we will continue to benefit from his input.

- David Marsh is a newcomer to the Committee and we are both fortunate and delighted that he steps directly into the Captain's role after a short period as Vice Captain.
- Without doubt, the person working the hardest behind the scenes is Paul Grand. More by default than by design, Paul has taken over the coordination of the booking sheets, the match results and reports, and of course he still retains his duty as Handicap Secretary for the men. Paul deserves the biggest thanks for keeping the cracks well and truly papered over.

Departed Friends

In 2004 we sadly lost two of our friends.

Jim Rutledge died suddenly in September. Jim was one of our regular Sunday participants and a good club supporter through the years. His unique heft-handed swing was far from textbook material but it worked for Jim and through the years he had some notable successes. Jim could be a bit of a rascal but many of us recognised that he was really just pulling our legs.

The second death was that of Harry Seed who passed away in October. Harry was an honorary member of the Club. The award was granted for his services to the Club spanning in something in excess of 20 years where he held office in all the senior positions. It would be true to say that in the days before computers and email it was largely through Harry's endeavours that the Club functioned in the 1970's and 1980's, and he ensured that the Club was in fine fettle when he retired from the Committee.

The Final Word

I hope you all have a most enjoyable golfing year in 2005 with a few successes on the way.

Peter Harrington
Secretary
27th January 2005