RICHMOND PARK GOLF CLUB



ANNUAL REPORT - 2011

Looking back at the beginning of 2011 the score reports refer to the cold and windy conditions at the Park, and the occasional Sunday where it was also wet and muddy. For those of us playing it was indeed a grim winter with snow on the ground through to early January. The weather was pretty messy all the way through to March and then, as if by magic, it appeared that we had leapt straight from winter to summer without a hint of spring. Although the temperature rose at the end of March the conditions were very dry and we didn't encounter the usual April showers. The dry conditions helped our golf because the grass was very slow to grow, or, to put it another way, our scores would otherwise have been much worse.

Overall, 2011 was a reasonable year for golf and also for the Club. Our Sunday attendance was pretty solid and it is good to see that some of our more recent joiners have become regular weekly players. It is also good to see some new names on the list of winners for 2011. When compared to 2010 we had on average 6 more members playing with the Club each week in 2011, and this has to be recognised as a step in the right direction.

In the 1980's golf literally 'took off'. With Lyle, Woosnam, and Faldo constantly in the news we found that the demand for golf overtook supply by a wide margin. In addition, we had Seve as an honorary Brit and with programmes such as 'pro-celebrity golf' just about everyone became hooked. We haven't returned to the 1980's yet, but we do have Luke Donald sitting as the world's number 1 player, and we then have Lee Westwood sitting as the world's number 2 player and finally we have Rory McIlroy sitting as the world's number 3 player. Events such as The Open in 2011 demonstrated that golf can be a real battle against the elements and the popular win by Darren Clarke showed that winning is not just a function of age. If the UK golf industry is unable to capitalise on the UK's success stories and the unique combination of world ranking standings it would be a sorry result. With the success of the professionals it is possible that the popularity of the 1980's golf could be repeated over the next couple of years, in which case we need to be prepared for a healthy influx of new members.

Dinner-Dance and Annual Prize-giving

We have reverted to our former timetable and the prizes for 2011 will be awarded at the Dinner-Dance which is being held at Coombe Wood Golf Club on Saturday 4th February.

We have to say a big thank you to our Lady Captain, Susan Smith, for sourcing Coombe Wood as a venue and for taking charge of organising the evening. A few years ago we visited Coombe Wood for an 'awayday' and it absolutely threw it down with rain for most of the day so I am hoping for a brighter evening on the 4th.

Our list of prizewinners for 2011 is presented below. The Club's main event for the year is our scratch event, the Club Championship, and in 2011 we saw some excellent play as follows:

In the first round of the men's senior division Mike Rowe pulled out the stops to take the lead with a gross 73 on the Prince's course. An eagle on the 18th hole helped Mike to a one shot lead over Shaun Feldon who finished with a 74, and in third spot and within shouting distance of the leader was Greg Saunders on 76. In Mike's case he was playing off 12 and he turned in a commanding net 61. In Shaun's case he was playing off 3 therefore his net was 10 shots higher on 71.

The second round is always played on the Duke's course and as we all know, this course presents more of a challenge. On this day it was Shaun's turn to take the ascendancy and he finished with another 74 and a combined championship winning score of 148. Mike had a very creditable 79 to finish with an aggregate 152 just 4 shots wide of the mark. Greg's second round challenge did not live up to expectations and he finished the day with a score of 88.

The men's junior division is for players with handicaps of 17 and above. At the end of the first round there was a good deal of congestion at the top of the leaderboard. Holding first place was Osman Chaudry with a round of 86. Following Osman we had Nigel Gaymond and John Pieters with scores of 87. On 88 we had Anthony Tama and Chris Webster, and finally at three shots adrift on 89 we had Craig Froude and James Cowling.

For the second round there was a distinct change of fortune. Craig did not play. Both Osman and John managed to contrive 'no returns'. Nigel and Anthony had scores in the 90's which left Chris and James in the frame. Both Chris and James scored net 66's for round 2 but it was James who had the better gross with a score of 83 against 85 for Chris. With his superior second round James clinched the junior championship with a total of 172 and Chris finished the runner-up with a total of 173.

- o In the Men's Club Championship Handicap event Mike Rowe was the runaway winner. In his first round Mike opened his scoring with a net 61, a mere 6 shots under CSS. In round two Mike scored a net 68, yet another shot under CSS. For his two rounds Mike had an aggregate net 129 and this was 6 shots clear from the group sitting with scores of 135.
- The first round of the Ladies' Championship saw Sheena Harrington take a two shot lead on 86 over he nearest challenger Suzanne Clifton who finished on 88. Just one shot behind in third position on 89 was Kate Emanuel.
- In the second round Sheena succeeded in holding on to her advantage and with a score of 85 and she was the only lady to score in the 80's for the second round. The first three positions for the first round were maintained for the championship result with Sheena finishing with an aggregate 171, Suzanne finishing on 179 and Kate with a score of 183.
- The Ladies' Handicap Trophy is for players with handicaps up to 21 and the handicap competition is run in conjunction with the Club Championship. The leader after round 1 was Sheena with a net 70, closely followed by Kate on 71

and Suzanne with a net 75. For the second round Sheena had a commanding net 69 to win with a combined total of 139. Sheena was followed by Kate with her net 76 who finished with a combined score of 147. Suzanne slipped backwards in the second round with a net 78 and she finished with a total of 153 for the two rounds.

The ladies' Pembroke Cup is also run in conjunction with the Club Championship and it is applicable to those ladies with handicaps of 22 and above. In the first round Jini Beacham took the lead with a net 69 from Gina Jillett in second place with a net 72, and Julie Smyth was in third place with a net 75. In the second round Jini held on to her lead with a net 77 to give a total winning score of 146. Gina faltered and finished with a net 82 and a combined score of 154. Julie enjoyed a good second round and moved up to second place with a net 75 and a combined score of 151.

RPGC 2011 PRIZE LIST

EVENT	<u>WINNER</u>	RUNNER-UP
Senior Men's Club Championship	Shaun Feldon	Mike Rowe
Ladies' Club Championship	Sheena Harrington	Suzanne Clifton
Junior Men's Club Championship	James Cowling	Chris Webster
Men's Club Championship Handicap Trophy	Mike Rowe	
Handicap Cup - handicaps 0-24	Sheena Harrington	Kate Emanuel
Pembroke Cup - handicaps 25-36	Jini Beacham	Julie Smyth
J H Taylor – matchplay 0-16	Paul Doran	Paul Appleton
Two Courses Cup – matchplay 17+	Andy Furniss	Danny Deprez
Ladies' Challenge Cup	Doreen Dolby	Susan Smith
Men's Fourball – matchplay	Paul Appleton & Aidan Hurley	Paul Doran & Paul Patching
Ladies Double C Cup	Sheena Harrington & Julie Smith Gina Jillet &	Alison Chadwick & Suzanne Clifton Doreen &
Mixed Foursomes – matchplay	Graeme Syme	Arthur Dolby
Ladies' Committee Cup	Lia Donath	Sheena Harrington
Grand Medal Trophy	Graeme Syme	
Silver Jubilee Trophy	Tony Kopczak	Danny Deprez
Golden Jubilee Trophy	Mike Rowe	Paul Patching
Diamond Jubilee Trophy	Tom Chase	Graeme Syme
Platinum Jubilee Trophy	Jim Fogarty	Paul McConnell
Anniversary Cup	Paul Mc Connell	
President's Putter	Jon Cooper	Itsawat Mahdumrongkul
Captain's Prize	Nathan Bower	Paul Patching
Lady Captain's Prize	Christina Muller	Jini Beacham
Richmond Park Golf Club Open	Jon Cooksley (PP)	Paul McConnell
Trevor Allen Open	Not played	
J Q Robertson Trophy	Jon Cooper	Russ Cavell
Coronation Cup	Val Riziotis	Hans Koppelman
Shaw Cup	Itsawat Mahdumrongkul	Mike Rowe
Spring Mixed Better-Ball	Susan Smith & Kerry Sargeant	Gina Jillet & John Morris

Kate Emanuel & Alison Chadwick & Autumn Mixed Foursomes - Handicap Shaun Feldon Jon Cooper Kate Emanuel & Autumn Mixed Foursomes - Scratch Shaun Feldon Danny Deprez & Nigel Gaymond & Burgess Cup - Greensomes Rick Smith Anthony Tama Arthur Dolby Summer Cup Andy Furniss Top Dog Trophy Jon Cooper Ladies' Dowling Cup Sheena Harrington Lissaman Cup - 3 clubs + putter **Toby Hunt** Darrin Siiankoski Barton Bowl - Play-off - top 8 against captain Jayne Maxwell Tony Kopczak Charity Cup Tom Chase Spring Stableford Trophy Simon Mandelbaum Kerry Sargeant Winter Competition Matt Mandelbaum

Membership

After a run of four years of membership growth the stats for 2011 show that we failed to hold our number to our 2010 total. This is disappointing, but it is not tragic, and there is some favourable news ahead.

At the commencement of each new membership year we are able to assess the likely membership retirements and we guessed that for 2011 the leavers would be higher than normal. As it happens the number was the highest for 10 years so we were right to recognise that 2011 would present a challenge.

The beginning of 2011 was the second year in a row when the weather in the early months was rubbish. Casual golfers who had any possible inclination to progress to club membership could have easily looked at the weather and decided that Sunday morning TV was far more appealing. We did see two hardy souls join us in the first quarter of 2011 but it was not until the summer that we enjoyed the arrival of a number of potential new members who were keen to enter cards for their handicaps.

So – here's where we stand at 31 December 2011.

	<u>2011</u>	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Men:										
Regular	100	97	89	78	62	69	69	73	78	67
Senior	4	4	7	7	7	8	6	7	7	6
Junior	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hon (playing)	4	5	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1
Total Men	109	107	97	86	70	78	78	81	87	75
Ladies:										
Regular	31	40	36	38	36	34	33	32	29	30
Senior	9	6	7	5	5	5	2	4	3	3
Hon (playing)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Total Ladies	41	47	44	44	42	40	36	36	32	33
Total	150	154	141	130	112	118	114	117	119	108
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Joiners: New men	00	0.4	00	07	-	45	40	40	00	40
New Inell	23 1	24	26	27	7	15 -	13	19	22	13
Junior	0	9	5	6	4 0	5 0	4 0	4	1 0	7
Rejoiners – men	0	1 0	0 0	0 1	1	4	2	0 0	1	0 5
Rejoiners – ladies	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	5 1
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Total	24	34	31	34	12	25	19	24	24	26
Leavers:	28	21	20	16	18	21	22	26	13	

Year on year we see that the Club is 4 members short of the 2010 total. Rather surprisingly the men have advanced by 2 and the ladies have fallen by 6. This movement reveals an interesting trend. In 2002 the ladies' section represented 31% of total membership. The proportion increased to 38% in 2007, but since this year the ladies' ratio has moved down to a figure of 27% at the end of December 2011. Another mildly interesting statistic is that in round terms roughly 25% of our ladies are members of more than one golf club, whereas the men's figure is somewhere between 5% and 8%. One inference from these numbers is that the ladies' enjoy more 'variety' than the men, or perhaps the ladies' simply enjoy a wider variety of men.

Over the last few years our leavers have been averaging 15% and the result for 2011 shows an increase to 18%. The average for the full 10 year period is 17% therefore we should not consider that we have any significant cause for concern. For those that did leave us in 2011 my assessment is that 36% left to play at another club, a further 18% moved away, and from what I can judge the remainder quite simply gave up playing golf.

In previous reports I have referred to a 'target' and I consider that we should continue to aim to get to where we were back in the 1980's when golf was enjoying its most popular period. At this time the Club would field 20 Sunday games on regular basis. Through 2011 our average Sunday attendance was in the order of 15 or 16 games therefore the arithmetic tells us that our membership should be in the order of 200. To get the membership number up to this level is not something that is going to happen overnight but the new development should promote a resurgence of golf at the Park and the Club should benefit accordingly.

The good news for the start of 2012 is that we have 8 potential members in the wings to join us. All 8 have been assessed for handicapping therefore they are ready to join immediately.

Inter-Club Matches

Here's what happened in 2011:

Men vs Rickmansworth:

Well, after such a poor result in 2010 the Club decided that it was time to get a grip and have a concerted effort to win back the trophy that we hadn't seen for a few years. In the first round at home the Club started the campaign with a slender lead of $3\frac{1}{2} - 2\frac{1}{2}$. As it happened this was no better than 2010. In the second leg at tricky Ricky we mounted a major challenge by fielding our strongest team for years. Unfortunately, we lost, and for the second year running we lost 6-0!! The overall result was $8\frac{1}{2} - 3\frac{1}{2}$ - to Ricky.

Ladies vs Mitcham:

Our Richmond ladies came away from Mitcham on one of the hottest days of the year with the scores even on 2-2. For the second leg at the Park our ladies were much stronger and they won all four home matches. The overall win was therefore 6-2 to Richmond. It was noted that 2011 was the 50^{th} anniversary of this friendly fixture.

Ladies vs. Amida:

In 2011 the Amida friendly returned to the Park. The format comprises three pairs of ladies and three pairs of men playing a 4-ball better ball format. On home soil we had the advantage over our opponents and our ladies reversed the 2010 score with a 3-0 win, and with some new players our men were also successful with a win of $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$.

Ladies vs. Wimbledon Common:

The Club was approached by our neighbours on the other side of the A3 to hold a friendly fixture to alternate across the courses on a year by year basis. For the first year the ladies were invited over to Wimbledon Common and 'red' was the theme. The Wimbledon ladies had the upper hand and the overall score was 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ however I gather that local knowledge played a significant factor.

N.A.P.G.C. Competitions

Clapham Common Shield (men) [Greensomes Stableford]

In the first round Club had a good victory over High Elms with a 12 point win. The second round against the Lullingstone team was always going to be difficult and we lost this one.

Hawtree Trophy (mixed foursomes matchplay)

In the first round we had a very successful bye! For the second round we came up against Farnham Park at home and we were victorious. In the third round we were drawn against Bird Hills and we were unsuccessful on their course with a loss of 4 - 1.

White Webbs (ladies singles matchplay)

The Club's team had a convenient bye in the first round. In the second round the Club was pitched against Hoebridge B and we lost on our home course by 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Internal Matches and Competitions

The Bontor

In 2011 it was two in a row for the ladies. The ladies retained the Bontor trophy with a winning score of 8 to 6.

Ladies' Invitation

Sheena made a wise decision to pick new recruit Michael Hansler playing off 8 to partner her. With a score of 2 points or more on every hole they amassed a huge winning score of 45 points. In second place were Lia Donath and Rick Smith.

Men's Invitation

As a result of a Hawtree clash it became necessary to reschedule the invitation to October. On a day when Rick couldn't play Nick Rogers stepped in to invite Lia and they won with 40 points. Just a whisker behind, the pairing of Kate Emanuel and Paul Doran took the second spot with 39 points.

The Lockie Trophy

In 2011 the Spring Weekend Away visited the Manor of Groves at Sawbridgeworth. With a good number of trees the course provided an interesting challenge.

The winner of the Lockie Trophy on her first Spring escapade was Val Riziotis. In second place was Susan Smith.

The Gill Hibbs Trophy

For the Autumn Ladies Weekend Away we made the journey to the Suffolk Golf and Country Club near Bury St Edmunds. The pickle factory next to the course was an experience that nobody will forget. Veronica Mitchell overcame the air pollution problem to win the Gill Hibbs Trophy (the 5th anniversary of the event) and Jayne Maxwell was the runner-up.

Individual Achievements

- In the Open competitions played at the Park in 2011 we had a few successes:
 - Ruskie Hall Open this event has been discontinued.
 - Putney Park Open the runner-up on a countback was Michael Hansler.
 - Centurion Open this event has been discontinued.
 - The Richmond Park Golf Club Open the runner-up for our own Open was Paul McConnell.
 - Association Trophy this event was not run in 2011
 - Trevor Allen Open this event was not run in 2011.
- There were two 'hole in one' scores in 2011:
 Paul Brown achieved his on the 16th hole on the Duke's course whilst playing in the first round of the Spring Stableford on 13th March.
 Danny Deprez was successful on the 9th hole on the Duke's course whilst playing in the
 - Silver Jubilee on 23rd October, and he went on to be the runner-up for the day's event.
- In the 2011 Bournemouth Open week, from a field of 80 players Paul Doran took 1st place on day 2 of the men's 72 hole competition. Paul finished the event in 6th position.

- In the Kelso Hamilton (SCGU event) our pairing of John Morris and Richard Owen were unsuccessful in the first round playing against Roehampton – losing on the second extra hole.
- For the third year of reporting Kerry has excelled at the top of the men's birdie listing. Here are the results for 2011:
 - Kerry Sargeant 59, Graeme Syme 32, Toby Hunt 31, Richard Owen 20.
 - Lia Donath 12, and 7 each for Kate Emanuel, Val Riziotis and Sheena Harrington

<u>2011 – a relatively quiet year at the Park? Well, for once the answer has to be yes.</u>

(a) Development Plan

Glendale lodged the planning application with the Richmond Upon Thames Council on 24th December 2010.

After reviewing the proposals the Committee concluded that the Club could not provide full support for the plans. There were a number of concerns with regard to the proposed course alterations, we were not happy with the traffic arrangements around Chohole Gate and there appeared to be operational weaknesses including inadequate car parking facilities. A letter outlining the Club's concerns was submitted to the Planning Department. This was registered as an objection on the case file which could be viewed over the internet. The reaction from the RPA was less than complimentary. The reaction from Glendale was a letter outlining how it was the intention to alleviate some of the concerns raised by the Club.

By the summer of 2011 the planning decision date had passed and a new forward decision date had been given. The correspondence and actions of the Planning Department as noted on the case file gave an indication that the planners were in favour of the application however a number of supplementary items of information needed to be checked before the decision could be taken.

The communications from the RPA and Glendale had called upon the Club to side either for or against the new development project. After some extensive Committee discussion the final conclusion was that despite the obvious failings, the interests of the Club would be better served with the build of the new clubhouse rather than no new clubhouse. A second letter was submitted to the Planning Department advising that with explanations and clarification received from Glendale the Club is in a position to support the new development.

In December 2011 the development plan received approval subject to a number of pre-build conditions. Accordingly, the new development will commence in 2012.

(b) Clubs at Richmond Park

In 2010 it was reported that the old Association had drawn to a conclusion and that the Club had entered into a 'Liaison Group' relationship with White Lodge and Putney Park. The new Group had little activity during 2011 and there is nothing of substance to report.

The Club received news that both the Ruskie Hall and Centurion clubs were not of a sufficient size to maintain an affiliation with the EGU and we have encouraged Glendale to restrict the Sunday morning block booking to RPGC and Putney Park only.

(c) Handicapping (CDH), the SCGU and the EGU.

The introduction of CDH was the catalyst for the Club to enter into a new individual club membership with the SCGU and in turn it became apparent that a new affiliation with the EGU would be necessary. At the close of 2010 the necessary actions were in progress and full affiliation with the EGU was achieved in the first quarter of 2011.

Extra Curricular Activities

In 2011 we were again fortunate to have some additional Club activities away from the Park:

In March, the traditional Ladies' Spring Weekend Away saw us head off to the Manor of Groves Golf Hotel and Country Club near Sawbridgeworth in Herts. The course required a far greater degree of precision than we are called upon at the Park and this caught out the unwary. The hotel was comfortable and a good time was had by all.

In September the Ladies Autumn Weekend saw us head off to the Suffolk Golf and Country Club near Bury St Edmunds. On arrival there was a hint of pickled onions in the air. At the back of the course there was the most unbearable stench of rotting vegetation and vinegar wafting from a pickling factory that was adjacent to the course. As it happens, the course was very enjoyable to play but the pervading stench from about a mile from the source was enough to make the most hardened golfer take up chess.

We are very grateful to Julie Smith for continuing to persevere with organising the weekends away. There is always a long string of admin involved in getting the troops to the venue and then follows the on site admin. The participants just need to turn up and play but as the organiser Julie is effectively on duty all the way through to Sunday's prize-giving.

In May 2011 Jon Cooper took the Club off to Hersham Village for an away day at the course near Esher. Back in the 1980's Sean Smith was coach to about 10% of the RPGC membership and it was good to see him at Hersham Village looking after games. The winner on the day was – appropriately - Captain Gurpal Sekhon with 41points – just 8 clear of his challenger. Sheena Harrington picked up the ladies prize with 36 points. As we had dinner the heavens opened in dramatic fashion, a case of perfect timing.

www.RichmondParkGolfClub.Org.Uk - The RPGC Website

Yet another year goes by and the website grows with another year of information and data.

We owe Tim Meyer another huge vote of thanks for providing the Club with the website service. Tim maintains that he is just the editor when it comes to the website but he is also the organiser and the designer.

In addition to the retention of archive data the website provides us with an up to date noticeboard where we can all find our tee times and handicaps. Many of us use the website as a communication medium for email transmissions and the ability to have an incoming message directed to various recipients is a huge asset. For those of us that use the website extensively it is difficult to imagine how the Club could operate efficiently without it.

I haven't totalled the hit rate this year but we are still close to 1 million hits per annum – roughly one every 31 seconds. Fortunately, not all these hits translate into membership enquiries.

The Committee and helpers

2011 started with Gurpal launching himself into his second year at Captain and Susan stepped into the Lady Captain shoes that were vacated by Veronica Mitchell. Something must have been happening behind the scenes because the Club's admin appeared to run smoothly and our year was mainly trouble free.

In addition we have some further noticeable actions that are worthy of mention:

- During the bulk of 2011 Gurpal looked after the Club's bookings sheets and he was
 deputised during the year with Sheena stepping in. Looking after the bookings sheets
 has to be one of the most awkward and demanding jobs in the Club. It requires a daily
 attention to the comings and goings and just when everything is organised the Secretary
 dives in and changes everything around. The booking sheet routine is something that we
 have come to rely on in a very big way and we all need to be mindful of this.
- We are fortunate to have our accountant Nick Rogers looking after the Club's accounts.
 Without the benefit of a clubhouse it is difficult to keep tabs on everything which does make accounting control a difficult task.
- Yet again I have to report that the person who is key to the success of the Club is Paul Grand. Paul is the men's Handicap Secretary which is a formidable task in its own right. Modifications to the handicapping rules were introduced on 1st Jan 2012 and through 2011 Paul needed to work through the paucity of reliable information. Paul looks after the preparation of the weekly results sheets and the payment of the sweep monies. In addition, Paul just happens to be the committee member who lives closest to the courses and on Saturdays he makes a weekly trip to the courses to have the sheets available for the starters on Sunday mornings.

Absent Friends

I am very pleased to say that 2011 was a quiet year!

In October 2010 I attended the funeral of Janet Fox in Knightsbridge. At the conclusion of Janet's celebratory reception I was informed that she had mentioned the Club in her will and bequeathed a sum of money. This was a very pleasant surprise and totally unexpected. During 2011 we received a notification from Janet's solicitors that she had left £2,500 to the Club and the money was received during the latter part of the year. We knew that Janet was involved in many church activities and there was no indication that Janet would be so generous towards the Club. It is fair to assume that Janet's generosity is a reflection of the measure of pleasure that she had as member and her desire that we should share in her enjoyment of her time with us.

The Final Word

I hope that you all have a most enjoyable golfing year in 2012 and some success!!

Peter Harrington Secretary 29th January 2012