



Club Newsletter

Issue 09

www.goringgolf.co.uk

September 2011

Captain's Log

My thanks to all of you who have turned out in either the Mixed or Captain's matches. Results recently have been largely favourable with comfortable wins against RAOC and Minchinhampton. My thanks to Dave Athey for organising the Minchinhampton match in my absence. I'm glad the weather relented in the afternoon to enable all concerned to thoroughly enjoy our super course. The Mixed, away at The Springs resulted in a disappointing 5 - 1 defeat. I hope to reverse this next week when we entertain them for the return. There are still a number of matches coming up so it's not too late to sign up your availability should you fancy a game.

Well done to my team in the recent Teams Challenge. It goes without saying that the Foursomes League cream rose to the top yet again, but thanks to Adam's efforts and Gary's hole in one and general team consistency the Captain's team managed a creditable second place. As in previous years the event was typically "Goring & Streatley" keenly contested on the course, discussed at length over lunch, with much good humour and a prize or two to keep the winners happy!

I would like to use this newsletter to promote our Golf Club Bridge Club. We have for very many years played bridge at the club during the winter months, and I am anxious that this tradition should continue, albeit in a different format. I would like those interested to be aware that there will be a slightly increased charge for these evenings, to cover the cost of a barperson for the 3 hours that we occupy the premises, and that there will of necessity be a reduced number of prizes on offer for our winners. Otherwise Duplicate Bridge as usual, the more the merrier. Sign up on the Clubhouse notice board, and let battle commence! I hope to see lots of you when we hold our first session on October 12th at 7 15 pm.

Well done to all the Gala winners and also to all of you who supported these traditionally fun competitions. Some splendid scores (as usual) matched by two excellent buffets. A fantastic value weekend. Thank you "Office" and "Catering" for delivering the best yet again.

The rains have arrived and "greened-up" the fairways. The course is looking lovely, but I hope this isn't the end of summer (what summer!) as there's still much golf to be played. I'm enjoying mine, hope you enjoy yours and keep up your support of all our activities. Happy golfing!!

Jack Rainsden

Over 80's membership

For a number of years we have offered subscriptions discounted by 100% to our members who have reached 80 years of age and who have been members for more than 25 years. When we had only 2 or 3 active members in this category it was a delightful benefit to offer to people who no longer played so much golf. However, we have now reached the stage where we have 37 golfers playing free golf with increasing numbers set to join these ranks in the next couple of years. This is an unsustainable position especially in a club where we cannot currently afford any major investment and where we have 55 vacancies.

After much deliberation and with great reluctance the GMC has decided that zero subscriptions for Over 80s will cease from 31 March 2012. From next April, for members with 25 years' membership and reaching the age of 80 before 1 April 2012, the club will discount membership by 50%; for those with 30 years' membership and on reaching the age of 85 before the subscription renewal date, the discount will be 75%.

In equity it will be impossible to continue giving free membership to those already in receipt of this benefit and, therefore, from April 2012 all members currently in the Over 80s category will be charged a membership discounted by 75%.

It remains possible that all of this will be taken out of our hands. The age provisions of the Equality Act are due to be implemented in April 2012 although the legislation has yet to be ratified by the Secretary of State; if this does happen it is very likely we will be unable to offer even these discounted memberships.

Margaret Berriman

Shorts

The web site now has an **Arrange a Game** feature

Your help wanted on **Divoting Party** on Monday 19th September, bottom car park at 5pm, and Tuesday 20th September, top car park at 5pm. Drink & chips afterwards.

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Help Please

As you can see, the newsletter is developing and we are beginning to get a number of advertisers. Most of the advertisers are from the local community.

This is great for the club and for members. The advertisements bring in revenue helping with our budget deficit. The links with local businesses hopefully will lead to further links, and members also benefit from the services and offers being advertised. It is great to see the Beetle & Wedge offering a £15 voucher in this month's edition - see Page 6.

However, we could do with more advertisers and that requires a bit of help. I need someone to help me get advertisers, keep track of what adverts are booked and to make sure the office is invoicing the right people for the right amount. The effort required is not great - send out a few e-mails, make a few calls, keep track on a spreadsheet, keep me and the office updated once a month. I would think we are talking about three or four hours a month, less once it is running.

If you would like to help, please drop me a line or give me a call. E-mail is editor@goringgolf.co.uk or call me on 01491 873342.

Geoff Ward, Editor

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Handicap Sub-Committee

This committee has been set up within the Club Committee in accordance with the requirements of the CONGU handicapping system. As you all know (!) our golf handicaps are calculated and adjusted according to a unified handicapping system which is used throughout the UK. Generally we are given a handicap when we start playing and it is then adjusted according to how we play in the various qualifying competitions that we enter. Naturally, the more competitions we enter, the closer our handicap relates to how well we play.

As many people find it difficult to play in a large number of competitions there is also an Annual Handicap Review, when the handicaps of all the members are looked at and can be adjusted (up as well as down). This is the main task of the Handicapping sub-committee. We are aided in this by some computer software which compares your playing record to that of the 'standard' golfer in your handicap category! This software flags players who it thinks are better or worse than they should be. However, as with most statistical procedures, this works better if you have played more rounds and in fact it doesn't even look at players with fewer than 5 competition cards. The committee however will look at ALL players and use their knowledge of your golf to come to a decision. The membership of the committee is Mike Evans, Jason Hadland, Roger Colebrook, Betty Johnston and me, Ann Williams, as Chairman. I have been asked to chair this committee because of my experience of being the Berkshire County Ladies Golf Association's Handicap Adviser for 7 years.

The Annual Review of Handicaps will take place in early January. If you think that your handicap is not appropriate to your standard of play and would like it adjusted, please send me an email to that effect. I will say however, that the more competition cards you have put in the more likely we are to be able to judge your case properly. Therefore I urge you to play in as many competitions as possible between now and the end of the year.

Ann Williams

Advertise Here

The Club Newsletter is an ideal vehicle for advertisements. It goes to all members and is available on the club web site for at least a year. We have copies in the clubhouse so it is seen by guests, visitors, societies as well as business and social users. All visitors to our web site can read the newsletter. So the Newsletter is an ideal place to advertise for local businesses and services, and local events and activities. Please tell your friends and the businesses you use.

For more details or to reserve your space, please contact me at editor@goringgolf.co.uk or phone 01491 873342. More details at http://www.goringgolf.co.uk/latest_news

Geoff Ward



2011



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A/B Team update

The A/B squad, resplendent in their fetching baby-blue hoops, have had a busy, and successful summer. Excellent wins over Calcot, Newbury & Crookham and Henley have raised the team's morale.

To date our record now reads : Played 11 : Won 6 : Drawn 3 : Lost 2 . With only 4 matches to play, this could be a record-breaking season! 25 players, of diverse ages, have represented the A/B team this year, and best wishes must go to Dave Street and Andy Sherman, both have sustained spinal injuries in recent weeks, and we all wish them speedy recoveries.

Players who have played in five or more matches are eligible for the season's Order of Merit. By the end of October there should be 15 or 16 guys in contention. NB. Away win=4pts , Home win=3pts , Away draw= 2pts and a Home draw=1pt. (Pts means points, not Pints!). Last year's Champion was Mick Tombs, sadly his work commitments have limited his appearances this season, but a late surge could bring much gold!

A date for the diary is Sunday, 23rd October. The end-of-season Alphabet Cup match against the C Team. The C Team guys were cock-a-hoop with their placing in the recent Teams Challenge competition, but a timely reminder that the A/B Team name is the only one engraved on the prestigious Alpha Bet trophy: enough said ! We'll need all squad members to make themselves available for the 23rd. It should cap the season off in fine style.

Alan Stephens ("Teach")

Jason Hadland 'Your Club Professional'

Goring & Streatley Golf Club
01491 873715

Please, not an afterthought

We have become used to seeing the Tour Professionals strike stronger Hybrids off the Tee (who uses a 1-Iron anymore?) but I was struck by the fact that several were using loftier Hybrids instead of #5 Irons at the US Open. Watch the Champions Tour and the number using Hybrids instead of mid-Irons is even greater.

There are two reasons for this. Firstly it allows those golfers to gain a little more consistency (for most amateurs that's a lot more). Now there is less pressure to get the ball quite as long off the tee. That allows the golfer to sacrifice some distance off the Tee in exchange for more accuracy and possibly a golf ball with greater feel.

The benefits of consistency to your score and your enjoyment are obvious. But most golfers are not aware that a #5 Hybrid will fly a little higher than a #5 Iron and land a lot softer. That means a golfer can get the same stopping power on approach with their #5 Hybrid as their #6 or even a #7 iron!!

By the way, those of you that still carry #3 and #4 Irons that only come out of the bag for civil war reenactments, please come and see me. And those of you thinking of upgrading to a modern weapon(s) please come and spend some time with us. We'll make sure your Hybrids aren't an after-thought. They should be integrated into your set – blending with both your Fairway Woods on one end and your irons or the other.



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Improving your Consistency

If you have NOT made the move to replace your long Irons with Hybrids then I suppose I should give up banging the drum. Before I do though, I would urge you to speak to anyone that has made the switch, watch any Professional on the Champions Tour or even an ever increasing number on the main tours. They will tell you that for any golfer, there are ball flight advantages, there is the flexibility of shots you can hit, but the greatest advantage is the consistency of shot you will produce with these clubs. Speak to us and let us improve your game.

Callaway has new clubs to improve your consistency. If you would like to find out more, or schedule to have a look in store, please contact me.

Internet Sales? Think Twice!!

Recently I have a couple of customers in with problems that have occurred with clubs that have been purchased over the internet. One was a counterfeit 2 ball putter that was about 20% cheaper than the real thing. It was only when the head fell off after 3 rounds that he came to see me and I broke the bad news. In my experience if the price seems too good to be true then there is probably a reason for it....ITS PROBABLY A FAKE!!! The member bought a replacement from me and immediately said how much better it felt and he walked away with confidence in the product. Unfortunately on this occasion the £90 spent on the fake putter will never be seen again and the club is in the rubbish bin!! BEWARE!!

Jason Hadland



3 IRON VS. HYBRID

Golf is NOT a punishment you are allowed to make it more fun. After all we do want you to go out and shoot lower scores. If you are still playing #3 & 4 Irons, you never or can't use, make a definite plan to change them.



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INTEGRATE IRONS & HYBRIDS

Where should your Hybrids end (and your Irons start) to bring you the best results from improved consistency and higher approach shots?

INTEGRATE HYBRIDS & WOODS

Where best for your game, should your Fairway Woods end and your Hybrids start without leaving gaps?

Ladies' Section News

Farwell to August – “Oh! It’s raining, it must be Thursday” was the cry that was heard all too often this month!

We can now forward to the season of ‘autumn mists & mellow fruitfulness’ and to the final competitions of 2011 - Autumn Meeting (15 Sep), Autumn Bowl (24 & 29 Sep), and Catherine Leslie Cup (8 Oct). Some additional tee times have been made available for the Ladies Open (13 Oct). Please see the website for entry.

August competition results:

BCLGA (Berkshire County) - Millennium Cup: Deidra Cuthbert was in the winning team and Margaret Berriman in the third team.

G&S: August Medal and Foundation Brooch (6 Aug) - Margaret Berriman

Stableford (18 & 20 Aug) +Angela Uzielli Qualifier; Silver (H/c 0-20), Fiona McClure; Bronze (H/c 21-36) Margaret Street

Marjorie Arnold Salver (25 Aug) - Ann Johnston
9 hole Stablefords (25 Aug & 1 Sep) - Mary Griffiths

September Medal (1 Sep): Vicki Hooper
Saturday Medal (3 Sep) : Margaret Berriman
Ladies Invitation (8 Sep) was won by Lorna Laford & her guest, Brenda Rodway, with 49 points.

Late News: EWGA:& PING Womens Fourball Betterball Golf Tournament 2011 England: Plate Final; Ann Williams & Charlotte Cornwallis were 2nd with 42 points (BB9)



Charlotte Cornwallis, Joanne Morley, Alison Nicholas, Ann Williams

Match report:

The Ladies Friendly matches with the Maidenhead, Frilford Heath and Sonning ladies left the opposition in the winning position. We have the autumn Eggs & Legs match on Wednesday 5 October and have a 3 hole deficit to overhaul. Your Legs need you!

The Ladies Tuesday rollups will be on 13th September (12noon), 27th September & 4th October (9.00). All lady members are welcome so ‘Academy’ and new lady members please come along.

September date for diary:

Information meeting (Thursday 22 Sep, 7.30pm) for ALL members on the proposed merger of EWGA and EGU.

Betty Johnston, Ladies' Captain 2011



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Lane Beats Spain

In August David captained a 6 man team of United Kingdom Members in Bratislava, Slovakia, United Kingdom won out of 22 countries and beat their nearest opponent Spain by 16 shots.

Gael Lane

Vets Matches

Have the VETS turned the corner? Although the overall results still show relatively few wins from the 27 matches, the most recent 3 matches have produced 2 wins. The VETS have more matches than other sections within the club so if you think you could join in one of the teams and help us to keep up the good work then please get in touch with the EGGs Capt David Browne or the Vice Capt Rob Downs.

Summary results

Vets League	Played	Won	Halved	Lost
Home	5	3	1	1
Away	6	0	1	5
Vets Friendly	Played	Won	Halved	Lost
Home	8	3	0	5
Away	8	1	0	7

Roger Colebrook



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Bunker Advice

This is advice on how to help us to maintain our bunkers to a consistently high standard.

1. Find the best entry and exit point

Locate the lowest spot around the edge of the bunker that is convenient to your ball. Try not to walk down a steep face, possibly damaging the turf edge.

2. Enter the bunker with the rake

Carry the rake into the bunker. Contrary to what some golfers believe, it is within the rules and can speed up play. Be sure you do not allow the rake to touch or test the sand. Just drop the rake at a convenient spot.

3. Play your shot

The rake should be dropped behind the area where you take your stance and not used to align the shot.

4. Smooth over the sand as you back out

Begin raking over the signs of play. Pull the tines of the rake towards you, but be careful not to pull too much sand backwards. If you are pulling too much sand towards you push the tines away from you a few times. It is most important not to build up too much sand on the sides of the bunker which would leave the base bare.

5. Exit the bunker and complete raking

Step out of the bunker and make a final few passes with the rake. Replace the rake parallel to the line of play with just the handle on the surrounding grass.

6. Admire your work

When finished the sand surface should be even with no signs of divots or footprints and no excess sand having been pulled towards the bunker edge. There might be small furrows left by the tines of the rake.

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Members' consultation

Firstly, can we extend a big 'thank you' to all those members who took the trouble to turn up to the consultation evening on 23 August – and another 'thank you' to those who wrote and emailed their ideas? It's great to be part of a club where the members are prepared to be involved!

Secondly, you probably want to know the upshot. Well, it's still early days but here are some of the findings we took away with us.

A majority seem to want the club to stay much as it is. We take it that you want a great downland course (no-one can change the geography of the course, so we are stuck with 'the hill') with good greens. And we like those greens cut regularly, the bunkers raked and the divots on the tees repaired. We have the expectation of a well-maintained test of golf.

A number of questions and queries were raised some of which can be answered here.

Saving costs

There was a suggestion that the club does not have a budget. This is definitely not the case! A great deal of care is taken in drawing up the annual budget taking into account the number of members we believe we will have during the year. Recently, we have not had full membership and we have cut costs by delaying the replacement of machinery. We have looked closely at staffing and in the last year we have let two people go. All our utilities and insurances have been renegotiated. We attempt to see beyond one year and plan up to three years ahead.

Increasing income

It is not always about cutting costs but increasing turnover. There is a new bar menu. (If you haven't tried it, do; there are regular new 'specials' to tempt your taste buds!) While we are talking about food, these days nearly all our food is prepared by our chefs on the premises and we avoid 'buying in' to preserve our margins. We have applied for a different licence which will enable us to run more outside functions such as weddings. And, along with this, all our external function menus and costings have been revisited to ensure a proper return for the club.

It has been suggested that we should look at franchising the restaurant. Things have moved on from the days when the club last had a franchisee and a number Berkshire clubs have *paid* their franchisees. We are now reaching a position where the catering is producing income for the club, where the club has control and, right now, running the catering in-house offers the best deal for members.

We have stopped offering discounted green fees which will reduce some of the wear on the course without jeopardising income. Our society packages have also been revamped to give a better service and increase profit. We are also trialling our first corporate membership (with a Mercedes dealership) and may enter into another one with a company based in

Wallingford. We expect these to produce additional income but without too many visitors on the course.

We have a relationship with The Swan in Streatley – and it benefits you, too, because you can get a discount on membership of their spa and gym!

New ideas

We have had a number of suggestions that we will actively investigate: such as installing solar/wind power and encouraging walkers to use the half-way hut. Then there is the idea of a draw for a free year's membership....

We are in the process of introducing a new social calendar with a programme of events aimed at attracting a variety of members.

We know that members would like to tender for major works being undertaken on the clubhouse. This is not a problem! The last major works (rebuilding the kitchen) were carried out by a member who tendered for the job. And back in the mists of time the extension to the men's changing room and the drainage were all carried out by members.

Be informed

By the way, the audited accounts are on the website and the noticeboard so you can look at the level of salaries and the contribution from food and beverage. The recent work undertaken on the septic tank is coming in at £500 – not the £200,000 we have heard bandied about. We believe the problem is identified (at last!) and is in the process of being remedied.

Next steps

The GMC continues to discuss the findings and to ensure that the club charges the right level of subscription to maintain the course you want to play and the clubhouse you want to relax in. We believe we will need to raise subscriptions above the 5% level next year – but, of course, will need authority from the membership to do this – but do not see this rise being greater than 10%.

Margaret Berriman

Next Issue

All contributions are welcome. Please e-mail to editor@goringgolf.co.uk, post in the Marketing pigeon hole outside the club office, or telephone Geoff on 01491 873342

Please always include a telephone number, and an e-mail address if possible. Photos are welcome and encouraged. Please get your articles in as early as possible but **deadline for the October issue is Monday 10th October.**

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