

Kirkcudbright Golf Club

# Newsletter

The COVID-19 Issue

March-July 2020



## Captain's Corner

I just looked on the home page of our website and I realised that we've not had a Newsletter since February. The new season was due when we went into lockdown in March and we've been rather overtaken by events since then.

As the lockdown has now been slightly relaxed and the course is re-opened, we feel that we should have something that brings all the recent changes together, and looks forward to further loosening.



I must say that the first six months of my captaincy has not been quite what I expected with a significant budget shortfall and almost no golf. I hope to improve in the future.

We should start by thanking our greens staff, both for the work they've done in the winter that prepares the course for the season, to Jamie and Dylan for taking on the furlough arrangements with such good grace, and of course to John for staying on top of the essential work during the shutdown, and presenting us with a course so playable and attractive from Day 1.

Continued...

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## Captain's Corner (continued)

In spite of John getting much praise from all the members, there is some evidence it wasn't an entirely solo effort, and that we should also be thanking Willow as well for her efforts.

I should also thank Jack McCreadie for planting up and looking after the pots at the front of the clubhouse during the driest Spring on record. This stuff doesn't happen on its own folks, I know Jack doesn't want any thanks, but it's important that we notice.

Malcolm has done a great job on re-jigging the men's fixture list, and the Ladies and EGGs committees have been working hard too for their sections.

This is intended to be a brief newsletter as there's still not much to report beyond the weekly updates, but there's also short contributions here from the Ladies section and the EGGs. We hope to have more news on arrangements for the Club Championships, visitors and Opens by the time of the next Newsletter, but this is not going to be a normal season. I'd also like to thank the "sponsors" of the competitions that we've had to dispense with this season, and that when they return next year, that members will make a special effort to support them.

I got press-ganged into writing a profile this time (I nominated Cameron for the last one). Donald has penned a nice article on the upgrading of the course from 9 to 18 holes, which should be of great interest especially to those (like me) who never played the old layout.



It is our intention to have a "Re-opening Day" when we are allowed to access the clubhouse. We won't move "trophy" competitions to accommodate it, but we should have some sort of celebration.

Finally, I'd like to extend very warm and heartfelt thanks to Steve Richardson who has worked tirelessly during the break on furlough arrangements, understanding the financial help on offer from both local sources and the Government, liaising with Scottish Golf and the R&A, talking regularly to deferred visiting parties, cajoling non-paying members and ex members to re-join, buying the ball lifters, setting up the tee booking, the cashless entry and the online remote score entry system. I'm sure there's more, but it gives a picture of the sheer breadth of what Steve does. I know he gets a lot of support and thanks from members, but it really is warranted.

Please enjoy your golf,

Rod,  
**Club Captain.**

# Ladies' News

## Enthusiastic

Our Ladies have made an enthusiastic return to golf after Lockdown with up to 30 playing on a Tuesday. Its great to see everyone again, albeit from a distance.

Thanks must go to the Green Staff for presenting the course in such good condition after Lockdown, something many of the Ladies have commented on.

We are very pleased to welcome 4 new members and some who are returning after a break from golf. I hope that we can meet socially in the clubhouse soon but meanwhile enjoy your golf Ladies.

After three weeks of social golf, some the Ladies are ready to return to competition. We intend to do so at the end of the month. Details of this coming soon.

Hilary Austin,  
**Ladies' Captain**



## Quote...Unquote



Fluff : A shot in which the clubhead strikes the ground behind the ball before hitting the ball itself, causing it to dribble forward one or two yards.

A more widely used term for this type of shot is a "Practice Swing"

HENRY BEARD & ROY McKIE  
From "Golfing - a Duffer's Dictionary"



## Did You Know...?

Golf Balls Were Originally Made of Wood or Feathers.

Some of the first golf balls were made entirely of hardwood, such as beech and box trees. These balls appeared during the 14th century and remained in use until the 17th century. Of course, a typical wooden golf ball would only last for a few games before it needed to be replaced.

An alternative type of golf ball, known as a feathery, also appeared around the era of the wooden ball. A feathery was basically a leather pouch filled with chicken or goose feathers (hence the name). Due to the extensive labour and materials required, a single feathery ball would often cost the modern-day equivalent of £10-£20.

## EGGS news

### Social and Competitive golf

As you would expect, there is nothing generally to report for the EGGs section but we should advise that the EGGs Fixture List will be reviewed by the EGGs committee to possibly start some of the competitions in July and that all inter-club matches with the veteran sections of the other clubs have been cancelled this season.

Further news regarding the competitions will be advised by email near the end of June.



Well, a few weeks ago (12th June) we had our Dummy run 2BBB comp for the Eggs section. This went very well and gave us a good chance to see how the draw, game format and reporting the score cards via photo images to our match secretary Alastair worked out. I am pleased to say everything worked very well and the course was in great condition. Thank you John and your team. We started our fixture list proper for this shortened season on 19th. See the EGGs Fixture list that is now on the club

website. We believe we will be able to play all the EGGs trophies and medal matches during this season including the 36-hole stroke play EGGs Shield.

The draw for the Eggs Spoon Knockout match play is now done. This is also now available on the club website under the results section.

So, we are off and running and all looking forward to some great social and competitive golf in this shortened season. Thanks as always goes to all those people working hard behind the scenes in the Club management team and our committee. Thanks to you all.

Enjoy your golf and keep well.

Steve Groome,  
**EGGS Captain.**

The first thing I'm going to do when golf resumes is go straight to my nearest course, walk onto the first tee, peg up my ball and take a brief moment to appreciate being back in my happy place before I hit my shot.

The second thing I'm going to do is hit a provisional.

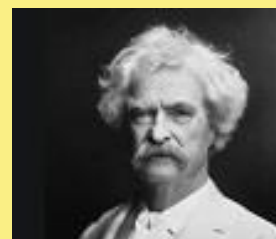
Thanks to Hilary Austin for the above contribution

### Volunteers, please

We are always on the lookout for volunteers to help in the Office, particularly as we enter the main season and go to longer hours and (preferably) a 7-days a week service. If you are happy to offer some time and are ok with computers (for the email, tee booking and membership systems we operate), answering the phone and dealing with visitors then please get in touch. Even the odd day to cover other absences would be helpful.

"Never argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience."

~ Mark Twain



### Come and Join Us

The EGGs meet every Friday for the draw at 9:45 and anyone 55 or over who wants good sociable golf and excellent company is welcome to join us for the princely sum of £2 for a year's membership.

And currently only £2 per Friday sweep, too.

## Player Profile

Every now and again, we'll ask a member to answer a few golfing questions and to reveal a little more about themselves on and off the golf course. This edition shines the spotlight on our current club Captain...

### Player Profile

#### Rod McAllister

What's your handicap right now? 10.7

And what's the lowest it has been?

I got to 7 briefly when I was at school, then I hardly played for 12 years and started back at 18. Since then I've not been lower than 9 (or higher than 12) for well over 20 years.

What's the best course you have played?

Tough one this, I learned at Pleasington which is used as an Open qualifier, but I've not played it since I was 17. My memories of it are very positive (especially the 16th - [https://www.pleasington-golf.co.uk/hole\\_16](https://www.pleasington-golf.co.uk/hole_16) ). In my day there was no gap in the trees, best hole I've played anywhere.

Most enjoyable, probably Lundin Links – but there are so many in Fife, and I'd happily play the Old Course every day.

What course would you most like to play that you haven't?

Augusta National – but there's so many. In Scotland, Muirfield, and I've always wanted to play The Rolls of Monmouth, (no, nor me). Jack Nicklaus described it as the best parkland course in the UK.

If you could only play links or parkland for the rest of your life what would you choose?

Definitely Links, Pleasington is a parkland type of course built on old sand quarries (two of which are "bunkers"), so it plays like a links course, and Lundin Links has a run of about 5 parkland holes at the top of the hill in the middle of the round. A bit strange but enchanting.

Who would you pick to hole a 6-foot putt to win you £100?

Brandt Snedeker. Within the club, it's hard to separate Tom Hinchliff and Raymond Wong.

Best player you've played with or against?

I had a one hour bunker lesson with Christy O'Connor Snr at a corporate day when no-one else signed up. I also played a few times with Colin Gillies who was Scottish PGA champion more than once. Nice guy.

What has been your best moment in golf?

Winning the Eric Brown Memorial at Dalmahoy, but I've twice played 9 holes in 33 strokes, once the front nine at Royal Dornoch and also the back nine on the Ailsa course Turnberry (with a 3 putt).

Who would be your dream 4-ball?

If you want to know who I am, look at this list – Laura Davies, Rick Wakeman, Samuel L Jackson. If I can just caddy, I'd add Miguel-Angel Jimenez. Four hours in that company would be heaven.

Cont.../



## Player Profile (continued...)

What is your favourite club in the bag?

6 iron, and I don't know why. I could probably score just as well with just that and a putter.

If you could change one thing about golf, what would it be?

I'd stop the ball going so far, it's making great courses redundant.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

You have to actually believe you have the ability to execute what you are trying to do. If you can't convince yourself, it's not happening. (Unfortunately, I'm really easy to convince).

What's your bogey hole at Kirkcudbright? The 10th (see previous response).

Do you have any golfing superstitions?

No, I'm bad enough without that burden too.

Away from golf, what are your other interests?

I like F1 (I used to have a BRDC license) and tennis. I was University snooker champion (prize was 3 frames against John Spencer). I like trivia quizzes and I collect (and deal) in postage stamps.



Thanks to Hilary Austin for the above contribution

## Coming soon – “Course Rating” and “Course Slope”

Our current stock of scorecards is about to run out and you may notice some differences on the new cards. One change is the inclusion of something called Course Rating and Course Slope for each of our measured courses (the Red, White and Yellow tees). What is this?

When the World Handicap System is introduced in November this year, there will be a new way of calculating how many strokes you get on any particular golf course. Every course in the world will have both a Course Rating and Course Slope. These, with your handicap, will dictate how many strokes you get.

**Course Rating.** These will be close to the Par/Standard Scratch Score (SSS) for each set of tees. Ours are:

	Par	SSS	Course Rating
Red Tees (Ladies)	72	72	72.3
White Tees (Gents)	69	70	69.7
Yellow Tees (Gents)	69	68	68.0

The Course Rating represents the average score that a scratch golfer (Club player, not Pro) would expect to get, playing from each of the tees. Not surprisingly, the SSS is based on the Course Rating rounded to the nearest whole number. So far, so pretty much the same.

**Course Slope.** Simplistically, this is a calculation of how hard a course is for a bogey golfer, which is defined as around 18 handicap. If it is of average difficulty, then the Course Slope is set at 113 (don't ask me why that number). Anything higher and it means the course is more challenging than normal to higher handicappers. Things like how accurate you need to be or how close severe trouble is to greens or fairways influence the calculation. For our tees, the Course Slope values are:

	Course Slope
Red Tees (Ladies)	125
White Tees (Gents)	118
Yellow Tees (Gents)	117

So, our course has been assessed as more difficult than average for higher handicappers from all 3 tees. Most people would say this is fair; we've always said you need to play good positional golf here and staying straight (easier said than done) makes a big difference. While a scratch golfer can mostly stay out of trouble or recover well, a higher handicapper can struggle once off line.

Basically, this means the number of strokes you get to play this course will go up slightly faster than handicap, particularly for the Red tees. Lower handicappers will not see a difference, mid handicappers will get an extra stroke or perhaps 2 and high handicappers might get 3 or 4 extra strokes. All of this will be worked out in detail and every Club will have a chart on display outside their Clubhouse so that members and visitors can see exactly how many strokes they will get to play the course. Look out for a chart for our course later this year.

## The Kirkcudbright GC wildlife files

We're all used to seeing cows on the course now and again, and the occasional heron, deer or cuckoo, but did you see these young stoats on the 9th tee a few weeks ago? There were at least seven of them jumping around and playing as players were teeing off, occasionally jumping out to have a quick look and then diving back into the undergrowth. Thanks to Maurice Halliday for these photos.



PS In case you're wondering, they are stoats, not weasels. The way I remember it is...

SToaTs will have a black Tip To Their Tail, Wheras Weasels Won't. Easy, eh?



## Extension of the Club to 18 holes, Stage 1

In the early 1970s, there was a proposal to make a new 18 hole golf course on what was then land on the Boreland Farm owned by the Kirkcudbright Common Good Fund, stretching from what is now the 10th hole northwards with High Boreland farmhouse as the clubhouse, and vacating what was then the 9 hole course for housing.

The proposal was actively supported by District Councillor Father Michael Lynch, but not all the District Councillors were in agreement. Nevertheless, the plan had good chances of success, but had to be abandoned when there was a collapse in the property market and the developer pulled out.

In 1976, a member (Roddy McGregor) approached the Club with a suggestion that if the Club were to rent the field opposite his house (which was beside what is now the 14th tee), it would enable it to expand to 18 holes, as that would link into the Boreland Farm.

Club Captain at the time, Donald Shamash, with the permission of the Club, approached the owner of Lochfergus Farm, Mr Robert Deely, to enquire if this was possible. Donald was told that while the owner was not prepared to rent the land, he was prepared to sell it at an agricultural valuation on the condition it was never used for housing. Negotiations took place on the price, and thanks to the generosity of Mr Deely, a satisfactory deal was concluded.

### David Picken and Donald Shamash

More to follow in the next issue...

## Lost & Found Corner

Have you recently lost something on the golf course? Or have you found something? Or both?

Well, now you have a chance to advertise your lost and found items here in this newsletter.

The item we're starting with is described and pictured below. If you have lost this item, please contact the club office immediately.

### The Editor.

PS It has been sanitised and stored safely for more than 72 hours.



Found on the 8th tee (yellow) a few days ago, this single brown lace (2 feet or 60cms in length) must have been removed from a golf shoe and dropped but how did the owners' golf shoe then stay on their foot?

## Ask Armando...

### Kirkcudbright's Golf Agony Uncle is here to help you!

Here are some of the latest letters that Armando has received and his replies...

*Dear Armando* - I've been playing golf for 40 years now and I still can't seem to putt properly. There must be some special trick to it. I've watched lots of pro golf and YouTube videos but I still can't get down in 2 with any consistency. What should I do? *Desperate of Kirkcudbright*

Dear Desperate - don't worry, you're a normal golfer, the myth of getting down in 2 is perpetuated by golf pros and Maurice McKenna, for everyone else it's a complete lottery.

*Dear Armando* - my friends and I have been arguing about whether it is better to have a fade or a draw. On the one hand, a draw gives extra distance and looks better. On the other, a fade seems to land more softly and with better distance control. What do you advise? - *Shot Shape of Kirkcudbright*

Dear Shot Shape - my advice is get a life. If you can choose which shot shape to have you should be playing at Gleneagles, not Kirkcudbright.

*Dear Armando* - my husband and I both play golf. We often wonder why more married couples don't play golf. Do you have any ideas? *Smug of Kirkcudbright*

Dear Smug - there used to be more married couples who both played golf, but they're divorced now. Or not speaking to each other. Your turn will come.

*Dear Armando* - whenever I play golf my playing partners always tell me what I'm doing wrong, whether it's lifting my head, swaying, leaning back, not turning fully, swinging too fast, jumping, letting my arm flap, having the wrong grip etc. Some of them have a higher handicap than me; surely they should keep their views to themselves? They can't all be right. *Disgruntled of Kirkcudbright*

Dear Disgruntled - no, I've seen you play, they're all correct, you're rubbish.

*Dear Armando* - my friend buys new clubs nearly every year, he must've spent thousands in the last 5 years alone. But he still has the same handicap. I feel I ought to advise him not to waste his money but I don't want to upset him. What do you think? *Worried of Kirkcudbright*

Dear Worried - it's his money and his life, if it makes him happy then I'm all for it. But suggest to him that he looks at the "Armando Airblades" as a recommended brand, I guarantee they will take at least 2 off\*

\*The phrase "2 off" is not meant to suggest any improvement in golf, enjoyment, satisfaction or peace of mind but can refer to the number of zeros in a bank balance.

**Do you have a question for Armando?** If you do, please write it on a letter, burn it in the fire and let the ashes escape up the chimney - this is also guaranteed to work. P.S. Don't do this if you have a gas fire.

Regards,

*Armando*

## The Last Word (from the Editor)

### Back at last!

Well there's 3 months we all never want to see again. Luckily, most of us have survived and there have been very few cases of COVID-19 within Dumfries & Galloway, compared with many other areas of the UK.

The EGGs are back playing social golf and preparing for a return to competitive golf by sending in a photo of their scorecard to the EGGs Match Secretary. This has worked well so far and the Ladies may be taking up this procedure when they return to play their competitions soon.

Indeed, we have also played several men's competitions by entering online and by recording scores on the club computer or from home, again via the website. Huge thanks should go out to Steve Richardson for all the work he has done to get us to this point and for his excellent correspondence and guidance for those who need a helping hand when it comes to technology.

Thanks have already been expressed to the greenkeepers from all sections of the club but it's worth saying again. Well done, John, and thank you for keeping the course maintained to the best it could have been during the lockdown. And Jamie and Dylan have worked hard since they came off furlough, catching up with the stuff we weren't allowed to do.

I think we can now say that summer has definitely arrived (despite some heavy showers here and there) so brush the dust off your gear and get yourself playing again.

Fore!

**The Editor.**



### Keep In Touch

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