

Kirkcudbright Golf Club Newsletter

Christmas 2020



Captain's Christmas Log

STAR DATE: 25TH DECEMBER, 2020

I think 2020 may go down as one of the toughest years in the Club's recent history, but certainly the strangest. In my first year as captain, we've had to deal with a 10 week lockdown with the course closed, two greens staff on furlough, a burst pipe above the office which caused significant damage to our electrical estate and the fabric of the building, severe restrictions that had a major impact on visitor numbers, particularly when the weather was at its finest, reduced use of the lounge, and to top it all, when we came out of lockdown, my handicap was 10.3, and now I'm playing off 15 under WHS.



I'd like to thank the 33 members who logged into our virtual AGM, only 3 less than last year, and report that everything went well with approving the subscription increases, which means we have a chance to deliver on the planned budget. Having proposed a cap of £15 increase for 2021 when we agreed the £20 increase last year, I'm pleased that we were able to carry that through.

I do appreciate that some may say that as the course was closed during lockdown, that there was a case to limit the increase even more, but we felt that we could not cut expenditure on the course, and our analysis suggests that in fact members played more often in the weeks when the course was open than the year before. I have already played 6 more rounds in 2020 than I did in 2019.

Cont/...



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Captain's Christmas Log (continued)...

It is always a balancing act, and we are well aware that if we charge too much, we lose members and actually get less income. I don't think anyone would have predicted the largest net increase in membership for several years. Our challenge now is to retain them, and get back a few more who didn't renew by providing a continually improving product, namely the course.

It's really important that I give thanks to the whole membership. I can report that remarkably, not a single member asked for a refund of their fees during lockdown, and every single person who pays monthly kept their payments going without a break. This is simply not the case at a number of clubs, and many have had to go cap in hand to their members for help, so I salute all of you for your support.

In spite of the greens staff being furloughed in the initial lockdown, the course was presented to us on our return looking magnificent and has been the subject of much praise from members and visitors alike, so thank you again to John and his team. Ultimately, it is you who deliver our product. I should also say that one constant theme from our visitors this year has been their praise for the warmth of the welcome they received, so thanks to everyone, in particular our office staff, and also to everyone who has had a hand in sanitising buggies.

So we now look forward to 2021 with a vaccine on the horizon, a rebuilt club office, a course that continues to improve from the targeted investments that we are making, the return of Open competitions and the possibility of more new members and visitors.



I'd also like to give a heads-up that we will be hoping to make a start this year at fundraising to support the costs of refurbishing the lounge and bringing it into the 21st Century. Ideally we'd like to start work next winter. Financially that might not be possible, but we're going to start by forming a group to start looking at the requirements and the design, so anyone with the skills to contribute, please step forwards. What we do will probably need to last 20+ years. I think we all know that the lounge has the feel of a 1960s working men's club and rather lets down the course, but equally, none of our visitors has ever come off the course and said they won't come back because of the state of the lounge. We must keep it in perspective, and not put ourselves into debt, so I expect the burden will mostly fall on the successors of myself and Hilary, but hopefully we can make a start this year.

Thanks everyone for your support and for the frequent kind words, and I trust that everyone has a lovely Christmas break, hopefully with your families where possible, and a peaceful New Year. It will be nice to see everyone out in January with their new toys and looking forward to getting to grips with whatever WHS throws at us.

Rod McAllister,
Club Captain.

Ladies' Captain

2020 - A Summary

2020 has not turned out not be the year we were all anticipating way back in March. Very quickly we could see that Covid 19 was going to have a huge impact on our lives for some time to come, bringing with it what seemed like more negatives than positives. As a consequence of that we had to alter many familiar systems in order to become Covid compliant, some easier than others to get our heads round. However, we were able to play golf! A mixture of social and competitive golf saw a large number of ladies play throughout the summer. We ran a much reduced programme which included a Lockdown League, Monthly Medals and the Club Championship.

Probably the highlight of the summer was when the whole Club came together to support the Eggs/Ladies Charity Texas Scramble. Due to everyone's generosity we raised £800 for Marie Curie in memory of Annette Beaton.



Nov 2nd saw the introduction of the new WHS. A different handicap for us all! The winter golf series is giving us the opportunity to use our Course Handicaps and see the effect of the Playing Handicap when the results are calculated. Another change to embrace. Looking forward to next year, it is the Ladies Committee's intention and hope that we will follow our normal Tuesday programme of competitions. We will review just how that will work nearer the time, perhaps by February /March. We will produce a new fixture list, similar to the one we had hoped to use this year and keep our fingers crossed.

One further change for the ladies next year is for us all to have a Competition Purse on the Club system, HandicapMaster. It will be used to take entry money from and deposit winnings into. More details to follow in the New Year.

On behalf of the Ladies I would like to thank John Houston and his team for the way they have presented the course this year. It has been a joy to play. Thanks also goes to the office staff for all their help, especially Steve Richardson who never once looked frustrated when I came in with yet another question. Finally, I want to thank the Ladies Committee for all the help and support they have given me as we faced up to the year's challenges. I especially mention Liz Mackie our Secretary and Jane Richardson our Handicap Secretary on whom the bulk of the work has fallen. Thank you all.



No doubt, this has been a challenging year, but we are still playing the sport we enjoy on a beautiful course. For that we must feel grateful.

Hilary Austin,
Ladies' Captain.

Match News

A Review of 2020...

It's fair to say that 2020 wasn't exactly the season we were hoping or planning for, but from a playing point of view it turned out well in the end. Apart from the Springbank & AC Brown Matchplay events, we managed to squeeze all trophy competitions into a shortened season.

When we restarted around mid-June, we all had to get used to some additional measures put in place for our safety. Putting with the pin in was frustrating for some, but for the most part everyone was just really happy to be out playing again. Marking our own scorecards is a bit different and personally I miss shaking hands at the end of a game but all the small things we do now can make a difference in the longer term.

The online prize-purse system has been a great help to me, and I think that the tee booking system has been a real success too. Both required a lot of work from Steve to get these up and running as quickly and seamlessly as he did. There has been a lot of positive feedback on the booking system even if it was born out of necessity, and it's something that I'd fully support continuing with even when we do return to 'normal' eventually.

Competition numbers have been up this season with an average of around 40 taking part each week. We peaked at 70 for the TCB Cup in July which was won by Mark Durham. A full list of winners can be obtained at the clubhouse but some of the more notable wins were:



Club Champion –
William Squires who topped off an exceptional scoring season for him. Well done William.



Silver Tassie –
Christopher Wilson won in dramatic fashion with a stunning score of 62 in the final group.



Iain McBeth Trophy (Player of the Year) –
Craig Rudd after a very consistent season, fighting off some tough competition along the way.

The Winter League is now under way and we have continued with the "old" CONGU Handicapping System. The simple reason for this is that it allows us to make temporary handicap adjustments while we move on and off a shortened course through the winter.



I'm sure we will all get used to the new World Handicap System in time for the 2021 season. Given time, I think it will prove to be a big improvement to the game. I guess we will find out!

Look out for some new competitions next season – The Champions Trophy will be an end of season competition for all trophy winners throughout the season, and we will play for the Eric Guthrie Putter, in Eric's memory, open to Ladies & Gents.

Finally, the smooth running of the club, depends on a team of volunteers giving up their own time. I'd like to thank everyone who has helped in any way, big or small. It's always appreciated.

Malcolm Kirkwood,
Match Secretary

Greens News

Objectives

This year our main objective was just to get through the year as unscathed as possible and hope and pray that next year brings something better.

Staff

Our staff have responded well to very difficult circumstances and produced our course to a very high standard. Dylan is progressing well in his apprenticeship. John and Jamie continue to work well together.

Weather

We continue to receive more than average rainfall which does make life more difficult for John. Partly because of this John has started on a drainage project on selected greens to remove excess water and hopefully this will result in greens being available for play longer in the winter and less reliance on winter greens. Early indications are looking good.

Thanks to all who have put forward suggestions to improve our course.

Willie Watson,
Greens Convenor.

“

No matter what happens, never give up a hole. In tossing in your cards after a bad beginning you also undermine your whole game, because to quit between tee and green is more habit-forming than drinking a highball before breakfast.

”

SAM SNEAD



Treasurer's Report



Golfalotto

The £60 Monthly prizes for September, October, November and December were won by Ian McCartney, David Brown, Tommy Learmonth and Sandy & Carolyn Grieg, respectively. Well done, all of you.



The winners of the Golfalotto Christmas Special Draw of £940, drawn a few days after the AGM, were Margaret and Bill Allan (pictured below).



You can still join Golfalotto, or buy more tickets!

If you sign up before 20th January, the cost will be £124, or £52 now plus payments of £36 in Dec 2020 and Dec 2021, or a monthly Standing Order of £3.65. As well as the regular £60 monthly prizes, this would make you eligible for a prize of approximately £950 in 2020 and 2021, as well as approximately £3,800 in 2022.

The payment can be made Annually, or by Monthly Standing Order.

Details from the Office, by email from Donald Shamash (dqshamash@gmail.com) or telephone 01557 330065.

Donald Shamash,
Treasurer.

Considering everything that has happened this year we were able to complete a full fixture list even with the reduced timescale. This meant that we did not have a lot of time for fun bounce games but we did have a good competitive season. All our matches with other clubs in the area were obviously cancelled, home and away, but we are hopeful of playing some next season. A provisional Fixture list for the 2021 season will be produced in January/February.

I have listed the Winners of our major trophies for the 2020 season on the next page and Phil Downs was our golfer of the year by one point from Ian McConchie with 3rd place going to Alastair Millar. My own EGGs Captain's Prize was won by Colin Kennedy. This competition doubled up with the June medal.

Below is a photo of Phil, our Golfer of the Year. I am hoping to have a few more images of our winners in the next Newsletter in the New Year. Congratulations to the winners and we all look forward to a full season's fixtures and matches next year, COVID allowing.



Phil Downs, EGGs Golfer of the Year 2020 with his EGGs Spoon Knockout Trophy

Continued overleaf...

EGGS news (continued)

As far as my own game is concerned, I was pleased to have two good rounds in the EGGS 36 hole stroke play comp coming in 2nd to Ian McConchie. That's about all that can be said and my New World Handicap reflects that (gone up a shot). This new system for the handicaps seems to have moved forward ok. We are now using it during the winter, but the EGGS Winter bounce game handicaps are being adjusted independently by Alastair. The system will not really kick in properly until the beginning of next season when temporary greens and "lift and place" in the first cut [of rough] will be discontinued.

Thank you...

A really strong thank you goes out to all EGGS members for the way they have used the club systems for booking games etc. Everybody has been patient and accepted the way we have had to work booking their place in the Friday draw and sending score card images to Alastair. (Thanks Alastair for your help and patience.) It is just great that we have people that are so willing to help in these difficult times and a big thanks goes out to the Admin volunteer staff at the club and especially Steve Richardson during the real stressful time of COVID, New World Handicap and club house floods. (What a year but thanks to all, we seem to be getting through to the other side.)

Thanks also goes to our Committee for their great support and I hope that I don't have to send them so many emails in 2021 and we are able to get together more often for meetings in the clubhouse. We all in the EGGS have missed the clubhouse get-togethers and I hope we start to see some movement back to our old ways and this will help our communication to you all and save you reading my regular updates.

Talking of updates you may have seen my email announcing that EGGS Golf will be restarted on Friday 8th January as both Christmas & New Year fall on a Friday this year. Should the course be open during this festive season, there will be nothing to stop us booking a tee time and playing a bounce game. Some may wish to do this on New Year's Day or between Christmas and New Year.

I finish this Christmas review by wishing all members of our club a healthy and happy festive season. Keep safe and hopefully see you on the course when this wind and rain stops.

Steve Groome,

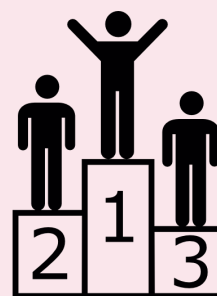
EGGS Captain.

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.

EGGS Trophy Winners 2020

TROPHY	WINNER
Captain's Prize	Colin Kennedy
EGGS Spoon (Knockout)	Phil Downs
EGGS Shield	Ian McConcjie
Bill Telfer Trophy	Gibby McCoskrey
Rab's Claret Jug	Phillip Loy
Closing Day (Secretary's Prize)	Ian Senior
Eclectic Cup	Alastair Millar
EGGS July Medal	Colin Marriot
EGGS August Medal	Phillip Loy
EGGS September Medal	Colin Marriot
Sam Ironmonger Trophy	Alastair Millar
Golfer of the Year	Phil Downs



Holes-In-One

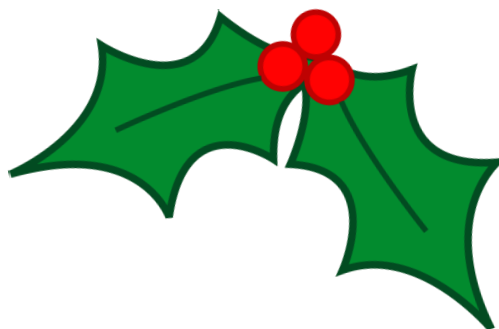
During the Sam Ironmonger Memorial EGGs competition on 20th October, Dave Harris was the latest Kirkcudbright golfer to achieve a Hole-In-One. This was at the 16th hole playing with (and kindly photographed by) Colin Kennedy and Jim Judge. As the flag was at the front of the green, none of the group saw the ball go in but Dave thought he'd hit it well and would get close and so did Jim. Walking down the hill, they noticed that there were two balls on the green, one much closer than the other. Then they noticed something very close to hole but couldn't tell if it was a ball or a leaf or just the sunlight reflecting off the white sides of the hole. Discussing whether or not it was a ball as they descended, they were obviously watching where they were walking and literally (literally) took their eye off the ball. When Colin looked at the hole again, the white thing had disappeared. They all agreed that it must have been a ball and that it was balanced at the back of the cup between the flag and the edge of the hole, and that it must have fallen in when the wind blew the flag and the flagstick moved. Colin thought his ball was the furthest away but Dave and Jim didn't know whose ball it was that had dropped (gripping stuff, eh? [Ed]). As you already know, it turned out to Dave's ball in the hole, luckily for him and sadly for Jim. Dave says he's had a Hole-In-One once before at the 8th hole at one of his old stomping grounds in Liverpool, at [Allerton](#), but that was about 30 years ago, just after he started playing golf. Congratulations, anyway, Dave.



PS A few weeks later, Jim Judge did get his turn at the 6th. I'm assured that there is a photo but Jim hasn't managed to get it sent to me. Perhaps we can include it in the next newsletter if he sends the evidence shortly. So it's congratulations to Jim, too.

I make that 5 holes-in-one this year at Kirkcudbright. Am I wrong? Has anybody been keeping count? Is this a record? Should I ring Norris McWhirter/Ross McWhirter/Roy Castle/Kris Akabusi?

View From The Office



1. Office Refurbishment

We are part way through refurbishment thanks to Tommy Learmonth, Allan Breckenridge, Robin Murray and Brian McQuarrie, who have been working hard fitting it in round their normal lives. Hopefully we will be back in it from the start of next year. Many thanks to those who made donations towards this, which has supplemented the insurance claim.

2. Buggies

We are purchasing a third single buggy thanks to a grant from the R&A. This one will be fitted with lithium batteries and is the start of transitioning the whole buggy fleet to the lithium option. Though more expensive the warranty and expected life of these batteries is much longer and the weight reduction is significant, especially for double buggies. This means the buggies will do less damage to the course and be useable in more marginal conditions, which is an important part of keeping our members playing.

3. Membership

We benefitted from the increased interest in golf after the lockdown and have had just over 50 new members during 2020. Although this was only a net increase of about 15 it is the first increase in membership for several years. We hope to be able to run a membership campaign next April, presuming the course and Clubhouse are reasonably freely available.

4. Golf Club software

We are still using HandicapMaster for now, including their tee booking system (having ended our relationship with BRS/Golf Now/TeeTimes.com). Both members and visitors have found tee booking relatively straightforward and not too much of a pain. The transition to the World Handicap System has gone ok, with some teething problems. If you notice an issue with any rounds you have played and how they appear on the Scottish Golf App or website or HandicapMaster please let us know and we should be able to resolve it .

5. Volunteers

I'm indebted to the many people helping in the Office and around the Clubhouse. It is the difference between surviving and thriving and I get a very positive sense of how well we are supporting both our members and visitors. Thank you all.

Steve Richardson, Office Manager.

An update on the COVID-19 situation...

Members might wonder why, as we've gone into Tier 4, that the booking system has reverted to 2 balls. The guidance from Scottish Golf is as follows:

For those golf clubs who **have** a COVID Officer and applicable risk assessments: Groups of up to 4 golfers with no restrictions on number of households.

For those golf clubs who **do not have** a COVID Officer and applicable risk assessments: Groups of up to 4 golfers with up to two households represented.

Anyone wishing to step up and take on this task, please contact the office. The same restrictions apply in Tier 3.



Real golfers go to work to relax.

GEORGE DILLON



The Last Word (from the Editor)

Merry Christmas, Shalom, Greetings for the festive season...

Well, there's not much I can say about 2020 that hasn't already been said. And 2021 may not be much different unless we all pull together and keep up the practices that have kept the number of local cases very low. I know the vaccine is being distributed as quickly as possible but we're not out of the woods just yet...



Looking back at my New Year's resolutions last year about getting a different driver and a few lessons, that didn't happen but I did go back to an old driver and that stood me in good stead most of the season. I won't make any for this year but I wish you luck in keeping yours.

The virtual AGM was a little strange but the Committee all seem to think it went as well as could be expected. As despite the pandemic, as a club we were able to say that we're in a relatively good position and with just a small increase in subscriptions for 2021, we should still be financially sound for a good few number of years. Speaking of the

Committee, let's take this opportunity to thank them all for all the hard work they do (voluntarily) to keep the club running as smoothly as they do. Thank you, all.

That's all for now, see you in 2021...

The Editor.



Keep In Touch



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