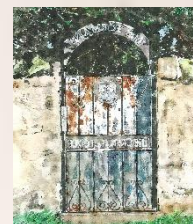


Musselburgh Old Course Golf Club



THE CRADLE OF GOLF



Newsletter - Issue 1 Summer 2023

We are delighted to publish our very first e-newsletter ‘ **The Cradle of Golf** ’, which will be produced on a quarterly basis and will contain several regular topics, including an article on the history of golf at Musselburgh, kindly written by one of our club members, which you will find on Page 6.

Captain’s Welcome

It is a privilege for me to hold the position as Captain of Musselburgh Old Course Golf Club. I have been associated with the club since it was re-constituted in 1982 and in that relatively short period of time the club has come on leaps and bounds.

From humble beginnings running out of two prefabricated buildings in the racecourse, we now reside in what was the former clubhouse of The Burgess Golfing Society (Now The Royal Burgess Golfing Society) and in recent years we have completely refurbished the building.

I would like to thank David Blackshaw, David Reid, and our secretary Alan Tweedie on compiling this exciting new newsletter. As Captain of this fantastic golf club, I look forward to reading many fascinating and interesting stories of the history of golf on the Musselburgh Links which has left an indelible mark on the game that is now enjoyed by millions of golfers throughout the world.

It will be an honour for me to add to future editions and I hope all of you enjoy reading the first “The Cradle of Golf” Newsletter and I would be delighted to hear your feedback and any ideas or suggestions you may have for future issues.

Jackie Brown (Captain)

2022 – A Year of Anniversaries



This is a quick summary of what happened last year, which was a huge year for our golf club and the town of Musselburgh. Firstly, it was our club's 40th Anniversary, to commemorate the occasion we played a one-off 9 Hole Strokeplay competition, which was won by Ross Lerner.

Formed in 1982, we are a relatively young club, however, our club's founding members had played on these Links for decades and some of their ancestors had probably golfed here since the 1800's, if not before. Following WWII, Musselburgh Links had been neglected, the golf course was

slowly dying and badly needed brought back to life. Greens were rarely being cut and small branches from nearby trees were being used at flag sticks. By forming the first club attached to course since the 1800's, our founding members thought the club could encourage and influence the council to breathe new life into the golf course, a course that had hosted six Open Championships between 1874 & 1889. The foresight of our founding members will never be forgotten as the course is now vastly improved.

2022 also marked the 350th anniversary of golf first being documented as having been played on Musselburgh Links and we hosted several events to celebrate this occasion. Initially, on 2nd March 2022, the anniversary date, we hosted a 'Media Day' in the clubhouse, we made an appearance on Sky Sports Golf and appeared in many versions of the written press. The celebrations culminated in 350th Anniversary Invitational 9 Hole Event, in which we welcomed teams representing Musselburgh Links Ladies GC, The Royal & Ancient GC of St. Andrews, Royal Troon GC, Honourable company of Edinburgh Golfers, Prestwick GC, Royal St. Georges, Bruntsfield Links GS, Leith Rules GS, Royal Musselburgh GC, The Musselburgh GC, The Stephen Gallagher Foundation, Team Jane Connachan (Multiple Ladies European winner and Curtis Cup player) East Lothian Juniors and many others, including Musselburgh's Loretto School, Musselburgh Racing and East Lothian District Council. The competition was won by Gordon Thomson, David Reid, Euan Bonthron and Alan Tweedie.

It was the 150th Anniversary of the Open Championship, which was played at St. Andrews, where Australia's Cameron Smith became the Champion Golfer of the Year and lifted the Claret Jug.

So far, 2023 has been less hectic on the golfing front, but we have been very busy working on two major projects. The first, was to replace our old and inefficient clubhouse windows and the other was to replace our external trolley storage shed.

We will cover both projects in more detail in Issue 2 of this newsletter.

MOCGC Major Trophies

Captain's Cup - April

Congratulations to Callum Livingstone, who scored an impressive scratch round of 66 to win our Captain's Cup by one shot from runner-up Douglas Campbell.

Overall Position	Player	Score	Placing	Countback
1	Livingstone, Callum	<u>66 - 01 = 65</u>	Overall Winner & Lowest Gross Score	
2	Campbell, Douglas	83 - 17 = 66	Overall Runner-Up	
3	Fairgrieve, Steven	71 - 04 = 67	Overall 3rd	
4	Bauld, Euan	78 - 10 = 68		Last Nine Holes
5	Colville, Grant	84 - 16 = 68		Last Nine Holes
6	Smith, Liam John	88 - 20 = 68		Last Nine Holes
7	McGovern, Mike	84 - 16 = 68		

Lewisville Rose Bowl Open

Congratulations to Colin Whoriskey on winning our Open Competition on Sunday 25th June 2023.

Overall Position	Player	Score	Placing	Countback
1	Whoriskey, Colin <i>Musselburgh Old Course</i>	69 - 03 = 66	Overall Winner & Lowest Gross Score	
2	Taylor, Gavin <i>Lochend</i>	75 - 08 = 67	Overall Runner-Up	Last Nine Holes
3	Free, Nathan <i>Musselburgh Old Course</i>	71 - 04 = 67	Overall 3rd	
4	Milliken, Gus <i>Broomieknowe</i>	84 - 15 = 69	Overall 4th	Last Nine Holes
5	Hill, Steve <i>Musselburgh Old Course</i>	80 - 11 = 69	Overall 5th	Last Nine Holes

Pro-Am Claret Jug

Congratulations to Stuart Higgins, who narrowly beat his brother Alan to win our Pro-Am Claret Jug competition on Sunday 16th July 2023.

Overall Position	Player	Score	Placing	Countback
1	Higgins, Stuart	81 - 18 = 63	Overall Winner	
2	Higgins, Alan	75 - 11 = 64	Overall Runner-Up	
3	Larner, Ross	77 - 12 = 65	Overall 3rd	Last Nine Holes
4	Campbell, Josh	84 - 19 = 65	Overall 4th	Last Nine Holes
5	Harris, Keith	78 - 13 = 65	Overall 5th	

Musselburgh Old Course GC v Loretto Golf Academy

The Eagle Trophy

Many years ago, our club Juniors played an annual challenge match against our neighbours at Loretto School. Adam McKinlay, Loretto's Golf Academy Director, who rediscovered the trophy, asked if we could restart this match and the club thought this would be a great idea.

As we still do not have many Juniors members, we decided that this year's match would be played between some of the best club players and some of the best students from Loretto's Golf Academy, playing 6 fourball matches.

After a very pleasant mornings golf, Loretto came out on top, winning the match 5-1 to take the Eagle Trophy back across the road to their golf academy.



Junior Golf

Over the last year, we have been able to focus on reactivating our club's Junior Section. Many of our juniors regularly attended Friday afternoon coaching sessions with Jane Connachan at Fisherrow Links and this summer we entered a team into the Junior Golf Sixes League, which is a funded initiative organised by The Golf Foundation and Scottish Golf.

Our Juniors were placed in a league with Royal Musselburgh GC, Haddington GC, Musselburgh GC, and Longniddry GC. Over the summer months, each of these clubs hosted an event.

Each team consists of 6 players (3 pairs), who play 6 shortened holes against another club in a 2 ball Texas scramble format.

Our squad is made up from our club's junior members and from our neighbours at Loretto School's golf academy.

East Lothian Winter League

Last season's Winter League Team performed well in Division 2 and at one stage looked like they could have gained promotion to Division 1, but it was not to be. Team Captain Matthew Craigie has stepped down to concentrate on his golf, so the team will now be 'captained' by a small group of senior club members.

International Membership

We currently have a dozen International Members, all from the USA who reside in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas.

International Membership costs £150 and all proceeds from this season's IM fees being put towards our club's new shed. The storms of 2022 severely damaged our old shed, which eventually had to be demolished.

If anyone is interested in becoming an International Member of our club just drop an email to mocgc@outlook.com

Club Merchandise

We have a range of club merchandise on sale in our online shop, including a 350th Anniversary tops and accessories, if you would like a look around the shop, this is the URL.

<https://musselburgholdcoursegolfclub.imagescotland.com/shop>

Special Guests

During this year's Scottish Open at The Renaissance Club, we had the pleasure of welcoming several well-known sports writers, broadcasters, and TV Presenters from the USA into our clubhouse. Bob Harig and Alex Miceli from Sports Illustrated and Rex Hoggard from the Golf TV visited us after playing 9 holes on the Links. A couple of days later Smylie Kaufman, Terry Gannon and Glenn Sarvaski from NBC played 9 holes with our club secretary, using our hickory clubs.



Special thanks to Bob Harig for later publishing the following article in Sports Illustrated.

<https://www.si.com/golf/news/musselburgh-old-course-british-open-history>

Musselburgh History by David Blackshaw

In the first of a series of articles on the history of the club but probably more importantly that piece of land we see from our clubhouse, I want to start with our most recent celebration in 2022 of that diary entry that happened 350 years ago that makes us proud to play the course. It is remarkable that historians found the diary entry and a record of the family accounts of Sir John Foulis about his bet playing 'golfe' as he records it. We have a number of members in our club who like a bet and are very vocal telling anyone who will listen how much they have won. However, you very rarely hear about any losses, and even more rarely would they be stupid enough to record it so their wife could see. However, Sir John did record a loss at 'golfe' to Gosford, Lyon, and others at *Musselboorgh*, a sum of £3 5s 0d (which is £3.25) and on the same day, 2nd March 1672, he bought 3 golfe balls for 15s (75p).

spent in m ^r tounes w ^t Comiss ^r monro, ratno, androw oswald, etc.	0 12 0
spent at newhaven and leith, and at the play, w ^t young and old ratho, s ^r James hay, Marg. spense, Lady ratho, my wife, etc.	6 8 0
2 March for 3 golfe balls,	0 15 0
Lost at golfe at Musselburgh w ^t Gosfoord, Lyon, etc.	3 05 0
for a horse hyre thither	0 18 0
4 for 2 doz ⁿ ½ cloak buttons	2 0 5
5 spent at leith seing the horse race	0 13 0
6 for a bust ¹ (?) of anders. pills	1 13 4
7 to my man Johne Old 3 dol. in p ^t payment of his fee, he hes got formerlie 22 Rex dollers all he hes got is 25 R. dollers	8 14 0
7 March to david young to pay the poors contri- bution from 13 Ja ^r last to the 1 st of Ja ^r 1673	3 12 0

It is difficult to comprehend what happened in 1672 to allow a man from Foulis House in Ravelston which is in the west of the city centre in Edinburgh to play golf at Leith Links and more importantly our wee course. At this time, he was 34 years old and married to his first wife and they had 3 children, but he also had 14 brother and sister in laws so maybe he needed to get out of the house. He was a wealthy lawyer and was born into a wealthy family, but this would have taken a lot of time and effort to

travel that distance in those days. In his accounts on the same day, he paid 18 shillings (90p) to hire a horse presumably to get to the course. We have members that drive less than a mile to the club.

To put it all into context 1672 was just 6 years after the Great Fire of London and was when Sir Christopher Wren started work on rebuilding St Pauls Cathedral. It was the year that Sir Isaac Newton was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, and he published his Theory of Colour in which he split white light using a prism into the colours of the spectrum. Some of our older members will recall the cover of Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon album showing this. In 1672 the Scottish Parliament was dissolved by the English monarch Charles II making James (who would become James VII) Governor of Scotland. All these things that we think of as ancient history, is our history not just something that happened several years ago. If you think about paintings of these people and the way they dressed and looked in normal life what clothing and footwear would they have used for golf.

I mentioned that he must have been a wealthy man but to lose £3.25 in one game of golf, well how much is that worth today. It is difficult to get information on things like inflation over that sort of period but here are a few things to put it into context. A general Labourer could earn 10d (which is approx. 4 pence) a day so that is 80 days hard labour to pay off the bet. You could buy 6 sheep or a cow for £3. The golf balls cost 5 shillings each (25p) so 6 days hard labour and we think Pro V1s are expensive. How many of our members would own up to losing that much money in today's terms especially writing it down, so well-done Sir John. In his accounts he lost at golf, at the horse racing at Leith and at cards again with Gosforth and Lyons. So, without that 'stupid' record we might never have been able to celebrate 350 years of 'golfe at Musselboorgh'.

The next Newsletter will be out for Christmas 2023.