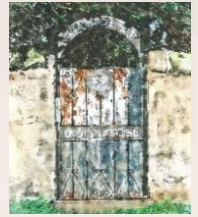


Musselburgh Old Course Golf Club



THE CRADLE OF GOLF



Newsletter - Issue 2 Autumn 2023

Thank you to everyone who contacted us regarding Issue 1 of our e-Newsletter, your feedback and positive suggestions are much appreciated, as is your interest in our golf club and Musselburgh's golfing history.

Winter has arrived in Musselburgh, the temperature has dropped with cold and frosty mornings now being the norm. We had our club Christmas Dinner on Saturday 9th December, and it was another great night in the clubhouse so many thanks to our chef John McFeely and his elves for serving up an excellent meal. On Friday 15th December we held our Children's Christmas Party, which was an exciting evening for members young children and grandchildren in the run up to the big day on the 25th.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Our Club and the Community

On the course :

We hold at least two charity events every year, our main Charity Day takes place in August, this is an invitational competition for members and their guests. This year's Charity Day raised just over £2,500, which was donated to Dadswork, a community project in East Lothian that works with fathers and male care givers. It provides support groups, positive parenting classes, workshops on the role of fathers, home visits, trips and outings for fathers and their children.

Our other event is the Ronnie Macwhinnie Trophy, a memorial event for a member's late father, this is a match-play competition between Musselburgh Old Course Golf Club and Musselburgh's Ship Inn. This is a great event, which is well supported by members, players, and sponsors alike. We pride ourselves in supporting mainly local charities and over last few years we have donated over £10,000 to The Hollies, First Step, Funny Lumps, Cycling Without Age (Musselburgh), MS Society, Alzheimer Scotland, and Prostate Cancer UK.

Off the course :

We are working closely with Dementia Friendly East Lothian (DFEL) and host DFEL's 'Musselburgh's Friendship Group' in our clubhouse every Thursday. Visitors include people affected by dementia and loneliness, who meet up to spend a few hours in a warm, safe, and welcoming environment. For more information about DFEL follow this link: <https://dfel.org.uk/> We also host several lunches for community groups and will soon be hosting a Christmas Dinner for a local disabled sports group.

New Clubhouse Windows

Near the end of 2022, we received confirmation from East Lothian Council's Planning Department that our application to replace our old clubhouse windows, had been approved. Our windows were no longer insulating our clubhouse and they were also presenting us with significant security issues.

We applied for planning permission on the basis that installing new windows would upgrade our property in a way that contributed to achieving a more sustainable building, with lower running and maintenance costs whilst contributing to East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy.

We are grateful to East Lothian Council for understanding what our club is trying to achieve in reducing our emissions and for approving our plans which allowed us to move forward with the procurement and installation of our new windows.

We requested several quotations to install the new windows and asked Inveresk Glazing, a local company, to undertake this work.

We then contacted and subsequently applied for potential funding to Valencia Communities Fund, an independent, not-for-profit organisation which provides funding for community, heritage, and biodiversity projects around in England and Scotland through the Landfill Communities Fund and Scottish Landfill Communities Fund.

After passing several rounds of assessment we were delighted to be informed that our application had cleared the final hurdle, and we would be receiving a grant towards the costs of our new windows.

We are extremely grateful to Valencia Communities Fund for their assistance with our windows project, which enabled us to complete the work well in advance of the cold winter weather arriving.



Sponsorship & Donations

We would like to thank our sponsors for their generosity and ongoing support of our club competitions.

Safe Building Services Ltd, Musselburgh Racing, The Brunton, Contract Heating, Alex McGregor, Les Griffiths, Jack Brown, Rab Little, The Four Amigos & Club Kleeks.

Competition sponsorship and the donation of prizes to our competitions make a massive difference to our club. Every committee member works voluntarily so everything that comes into the club from sponsorship or donations is used entirely for the benefit of the club.

Club Championships 2023-2024

This season's Club Championship Qualifying rounds were held on Sunday 30th July and Sunday 6th August. The knock-out stages commenced the following Tuesday with the finals being played on Sunday 13th August.

This season's Club Champion was Ross Noon who held off a strong fightback from Keiran Blyth.

The best two aggregate gross scores were returned by Ross Noon, who carded rounds of 69 + 66 for a total of 135.

Roll of Honour

Club Champion : Ross Noon

Runner Up : Keiran Blyth

B Champion : Stephen Peters

Runner Up : Mark Macwhinnie

C Champion : Liam Smith

Runner Up : Michael McGovern

Senior Champion : David Moffat

Runner Up : Steven Hill

Musselburgh 'Hickory' Challenge

Since 1999, we have invited each of the golf clubs with historic connections to Musselburgh Old Course back home to play in our annual hickory challenge competition. Teams from The Royal & Ancient GC of St. Andrews, Prestwick GC, The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, Bruntsfield Links GS, Royal Musselburgh GC, Royal Burgess GS, Leith Rules GS, Thorntree GC, Port Seton GC and others compete in a 9 Hole competition.

Each team consists of four players, playing in pairs they play a foursomes medal round using hickory clubs. The team with the lowest combined score is declared the winner and this year's victors were the British Golf Collectors Society, who narrowly beat The Musselburgh Golf Club on countback. We run this invitational event to celebrate the origins of golf at Musselburgh and to remind ourselves how our predecessors, over several hundred years, played this great game.

We have a stock of hickory clubs that can be used on the course but there are many breakages, which need to be replaced. If anyone has hickory golf clubs that are no longer required, maybe you would like to consider donating them to our club ?

Musselburgh Amateur Championship

This year's Musselburgh Amateur was played at The Musselburgh Golf Club at Monktonhall, the Championship consists of several categories, Scratch, Ladies Handicap, Men's Handicap and Juniors. Two of our club members played exceptionally well, in the Scratch event Jamie Binning just lost out on countback to Benn McLeod (The Musselburgh Golf Club) after both players scored 68's. However, in the Men's handicap Keith Harris went one better, winning this event with a nett 69. Congratulations to Keith and Jamie for playing so well and doing our club proud.

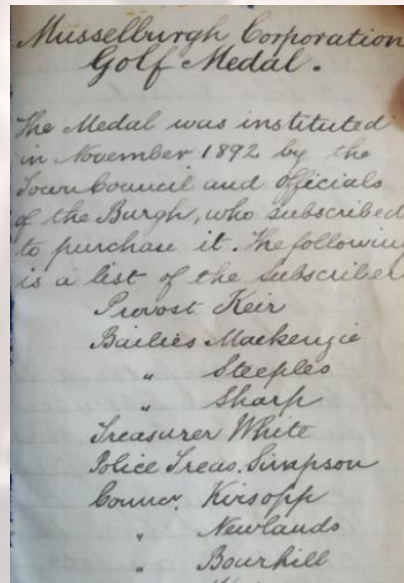
Junior Golf

Over the summer, our club juniors enjoyed their first venture into the Junior Golf Sixes League, with several of them being relatively new to golf they produced some excellent scores and showed great commitment to this event. Many thanks to their parents for bringing them along to the various golf courses in East Lothian and for spending time out on the course alongside them. This is a great initiative from The Golf Foundation and Scottish Golf.

Many of our juniors continued their coaching sessions with Jane Connachan at Fisherrow Links. As a non-course owning golf club, we do not benefit from having a professional golfer, however, this season we have established an excellent relationship with Loretto School's Golf Academy, and we are looking forward to building on this next season and beyond.

Musselburgh Corporation Golf Medal

This is an East Lothian Council (ELC) competition which in recent years has been played at The Musselburgh Golf Club. It was first played for in November 1892 and although the medal can only be won by someone representing ELC, office bearers from all three of Musselburgh golf clubs are invited to participate in the event as guests. This year's Corporation Medal was won by Kate Green, ELC's Golf Development Officer, who became the first lady to win this event. This large medal is made of silver and has the names of every winner engraved on several internal silver plates. The book that accompanies the medal also contains the names of the winners and the playing conditions on the day.



International Membership

We currently have around a dozen International Members, all from the USA who reside in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas. International Membership for 2024 costs £250 and the proceeds from International Membership is used to maintain and upgrade our historic clubhouse and towards our replacement "caddie shack" which had been severely damaged by recent storms. If anyone is interested in supporting the club by becoming an International Member or by buying one as a gift for someone else, please send an email to mocgc@outlook.com and we will send you further details.

New Friends at Dalmeny Estate Golf Club

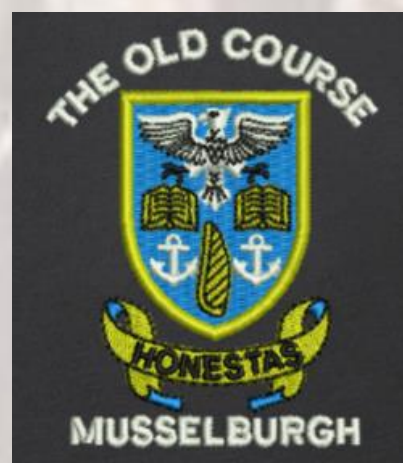
This summer we were invited through to Lord Rosebery's Dalmeny Estate, near South Queensferry to play a friendly match against Dalmeny Estate Golf Club. Their 9 Hole golf course was designed by Musselburgh's Willie Park Junior, in 1905 and is laid out in the shadow of Dalmeny House (currently being renovated), home to the Earls of Rosebery since 1662. The fairways are on the lawns of the estate with two of them running along the shores of the Firth of Forth, giving fine views over the Forth estuary to the various islands and over to Fife. After the golf we were all treated to what must be one of the finest pies in West Lothian. Many thanks to Secretary Willie Ruffle and the members of Dalmeny Estate Golf Club for their hospitality.



MOCGC Online Merchandise

We have a range of club crested merchandise on sale in our online shop, including Polo Tops, Sweatshirts, outer-ware, hats, caps, and towels.

An example of one of our polo tops is shown below.



You can access our club shop via this link :

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

Be Proud, be very proud by David Blackshaw

Although we might be proud of the heritage of the course, its Opens, its Open winners from Musselburgh etc., we should also be very proud of our club. Over 40 years ago some brave souls and a few are still members today, decided that Musselburgh Old Course should once again have a club based at and associated with the course. We all appreciate the hard work and financial hardships that were required to get to where we are today, and we are proud of what these members did. However, as our wee club is only 40 years old, how can we think that we have anything to do with the course and its history ?

Well, let us go back to the days of the course being an Open Championship venue. At that time many golf clubs and societies used the course, and four major clubhouses were built in the road where we are based, these clubhouses belonged to four of the six oldest golfing societies in the world, now known as The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society, Royal Burgess Golfing Society and Royal Musselburgh Golf Club. However, during the second half of the 1800s, when Musselburgh Old Course was very busy, these four clubs, who all funded the maintenance of the course, moved away from Musselburgh to their own purpose-built golf courses. It was at this time that Musselburgh Old Course started to fall into disrepair and in 1892 the town council took over control of the course and its maintenance. At this point, the course suffered from a severe lack of care and attention. Grass was allowed to grow, bunkers went untended, and football and cricket were played on the course. In 1948, byelaws were passed to include the provision that no other game but golf be played on the course, and this still stands today. However, it was not until the formation of our club in 1982 and due to the pressure put on the council by our founding members, that the town council began to take golf seriously and realise they had an historic course that was worthy of reinvesting in. Numerous press articles stated that without the formation of our club the council may have allowed the course to even close. It was said that at some council meetings the phrase 'there is no future for golf at Musselburgh.' These days it is Enjoy Leisure, who are responsible for running and the upkeep of Musselburgh Old Course. Enjoy Leisure are East Lothian Council's Charitable Trust for sports, leisure, and active lifestyles.

We are indebted to the sacrifices our members have made over the past forty years, for having the foresight to reincarnate a golf club at Musselburgh Old Course, for returning a 150-year-old clubhouse to its former purpose and for restoring the inside of the building, which is now full of historic memorabilia.

So be proud, without our wee club, Musselburgh Old Course may no longer exist. Imagine there being no golf course, no tangible heritage would be here today and there would have been no 350th Anniversary celebrations in 2022. The Times newspaper, on August 10th, 2017, wrote "When MOCGC started in 1982 the course was in a very bad condition. Now we have a great course, looked after by a great ground staff." Be proud, be very proud.

In our next newsletter, we will walk you up Balcarres Road and write more about the history of the four clubhouses that dominated the street.

The next Newsletter will be out in Spring 2024