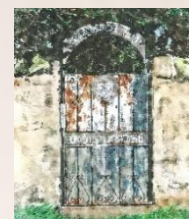


Musselburgh Old Course Golf Club



THE CRADLE OF GOLF



Newsletter - Issue 5 Summer 2024



The weather during the summer may have been a bit hit or miss, but the action in and around the Club has been red hot. The summer is the time of year that our Club Championship takes place. Two weeks of scratch stroke play qualifying with both rounds counting in the category chosen by the member. The four categories that we have then had playoffs

in a match play format. The Club Championship quarter finals played on the Tuesday after qualification saw Nathan Free fall on the last hole to David Service. Kieran Blyth defeat Gary Grigg, Callum Livingstone the victor over Stephen Fairgrieve and Matty Craigie fell to David Read. Following the semi-finals which took place on Saturday we saw Callum Livingstone play David Service on the Sunday in a 36-hole final. With David being the overall victor and our new Club Champion. Seen above, third from the left, with the other category winners. On David's left is our B Section Champion Stevie Peters, who retained the title he won last year and was the victor over Mark MacWhinnie in the final this year. The Senior contest was between our Club Secretary Alan Tweedie and our Club Treasurer Terry Gillan. Alan is seen here on the extreme right with the trophy. The C Section was contested by Graham Malcolm and Wilbur MacKenzie, in what ended up the tightest of all the finals, with Graham winning on the last green. A great day with a huge turnout of spectators following each match. Then finishing with our traditional sing song, however the golf was more in tune than some of our singers.

23rd Musselburgh Challenge

Also, in the Summer on 6th July saw the club hosting the Musselburgh Challenge, the 23rd edition of a hickory competition played over our famous course as it would have happened in the early years of The Open. In that tradition invites were sent out to those clubs that also have hosted



The Open. Teams of 4 came from Prestwick and The R&A Golf Club of St Andrews who together with our course hosted The Open in the late 1800s. Not forgetting other clubs that had their clubhouses in our street Bruntsfield Links and Royal Musselburgh. As in past years a team from Leith Rules a society that keeps the history of the oldest course, which was Leith Links, and the British Golf Collectors Society who always play with hickories. The winners seen above from The Thorntree, a society within Royal Musselburgh who played on our course up until 1925.



Our members here seen above with some of the team from Prestwick, Kilspindie and the British Golf Collectors.



The runners up were the team from Leith Rules who were only one shot off from taking the trophy. Leith Rules Golfing Society were featured in the last issue of our newsletter. The competition was four ball better ball with scores from both pairs counting.

Following a lovely meal served to all the players, a number of speeches were made, and a good time was had by all.

Charity Day 2024

Sunday 25th August 2024 was our club Charity Day and our nominated charity this year was Changes, a Musselburgh based mental health support charity. For the last few years, we have chosen a local based group to support and once again our members turned out in force, not only to play in the competition but also by donating raffle prizes and buying lots of tickets. The charity were the big winners as the club raised over £2,000, once again a small club with a big heart.



The winner of the competition was Ali Scoots, seen here with our Club Captain Billy Alexander and Jill Jeans from the charity.

Ali won the handicap prize with Justin Maver taking the Scratch prize with a score of 74.



Versus



A yearly match is played by our senior members and the equivalents from Gifford Golf Club as they have a section called EGGS (Elderly Gifford Golfing Society). In spring we hosted them and were easy victors. In the summer, we visited Gifford for the return match and found that their course management was far superior to ours, which is a very poor way of saying that we were heavily defeated. However, as many of us travelled by minibus, we could have a drink in their clubhouse and after much effort by our Seniors, we did win the drinking game. A sad point was that their team Captain had a nasty fall early in his round and had to be taken to hospital, he suffered ligament damage and a break. We all wish him a speedy recovery and look forward to hosting them next spring.

Au revoir Jan

At the beginning of August, after three years of loyal service, Jan our Bar Steward moved on to pastures new. We were sorry to see her go and wish her all the best for the future. Fortunately, we found a replacement relatively quickly with Peter taking on the Bar Steward's responsibilities and he has been settling in over the past few weeks. Welcome to the club Peter.

Our New Shed

The Club have been in the process of obtaining a new shed to house our sit on buggy and the member's trolleys. Work started months ago with members helping to lay the concrete base, using wheelbarrows to ferry the wet concrete from the lorry at the kerbside. A big hiccup when the shed that was delivered was not the one, we ordered. This was returned and sourcing another took a while but eventually a metal shed was chosen and delivered. Then after looking at the hundreds of pieces, an instruction booklet which was over 40 pages long which stated 'Easy to assemble' panic set in. A small number of members got together and over the last few weeks have managed to erect the new shed from a very complicated set of instructions. From the advertised drawing to the actual finished article. Very little swearing was heard throughout the process, honest. The Committee would like to thank all the volunteers, who have saved the club a lot of money by doing all the work ourselves. Especially as most of those volunteers do not even use the trolley shed.



Junior Section

Our club juniors finished runners-up in their Golf Sixes League this season, this was a great achievement as we only restarted a junior section in 2023, so this is only their



second season together as a group. Golf Sixes is a relatively new initiative for juniors who don't yet have a handicap or have a handicap of 37 and above. Six players from each club play in pairs against pairs from another club, over six shortened holes.

West Links Juniors from North Berwick won the league with Musselburgh Old Course GG finishing ahead of Craigielaw GC, Gifford GC and Longindry GC.

POS	Club Name	Fixture Pts	League Pts
1	West Links Junior GC	595	20
2	Musselburgh Old GC	561	14
3	Craigielaw GC	463	13
4	Gifford GC	556	13
5	Longindry GC	521	10

International Membership

International Membership for 2024 costs £250 and the proceeds from International Memberships enable us to maintain and upgrade our historic clubhouse. If anyone is interested in supporting the club by becoming an International Member or by buying one as a gift for someone else, please follow the following link ...

<https://musselburgholdcourse.com/international-members-form>

Ancient Golf Balls



The original ball used to play golf up until 1848 was a leather sewn ball stuffed with feathers, boiled and hammered into a ball. Sir John Foulis would have used one all those years ago and they were very expensive. His accounts show that a “feathery” cost 5 shillings each in 1672 a fortune in today's terms. So golf was a sport for the rich, or the rich to bet on.

A Scot, the Rev Dr Robert Patterson while studying at St Andrews University wanting to play golf but not able to afford a “feathery”. He experimented with some resin from the Gutta Percha tree. He saw his father heat some to repair some footwear. The resin had been used to pack a statue sent from Malaya to his father. His first attempts failed but eventually perfected the technique and after painting it white used it to play. Musselburgh became a town known for its golf equipment, clubs and the new guttie ball. This invention changed golf from a rich person's sport to be available to the masses.



One of our International Members, Denny Lane, ably assisted by his wife Cathy and based in the USA makes replica feathery golf balls. This is the link to his website :

<https://www.hickorylane featherie.com/>

All Our Yesterdays by Gordon Thompson

It has been well documented that the golf course was in a state of decline prior to the Club starting up in 1982. There was no green keeper and the greens were attended to by the person who looked after the council bowling green at Fisherrow. Throughout the summer the greens probably averaged out at one cut per week. In the winter months they were “visited” once a fortnight, but only cut if it was deemed essential. This meant that new hole positions were only cut once in a blue moon!

Fortunately, the club managed to persuade East Lothian Council to employ a green keeper and the rejuvenation of the course began. The council only employed the greenkeeper on the understanding he also collected green fees from those playing and dispensed with the services of one of the elderly gents who had been employed previously to collect the green fees. The full-time greenkeeper was a major step forward for both the club and, more importantly, the course. On the negative side this led to the introduction of “sand bunkers”! Prior to the greenkeeper’s arrival the only bunkers we encountered were the natural grass hollows. The fairways at this time were mainly just bare earth with little or no grass, with the only shades of green provided by moss. Thankfully it was not long before a combination of seeding and feeding produced the green shoots of recovery, and thankfully the course has never looked back.

One of the main hazards facing the golfer at that time was the racecourse running rails. The old rails had concrete posts for uprights, which were about six feet apart and the running rails were made of wood. The grass between these posts was just left to grow, therefore if your ball went into this thick grass your immediate problem was finding it! If your ball collided with the concrete posts your fate was in the lap of the gods. Whilst we play across the racecourse with tee shots on three holes at present, back then we never had to play across the racecourse.

I am not sure when the term “Health and Safety” entered our language, but it certainly was not a consideration in the 1980s when you consider the layout of some of the holes on our course:

Formans: In the 1980s the tee was on the right-hand side of the racetrack. The area that is OB was once the fairway, which also meant you were teeing off with the main road directly on your right! How this never led to a catastrophic road traffic accident is more surprising than the tee position! Not many had the expertise or courage to try and hit the fairway from the tee as it was only about 20 yards wide, so it was turned into an impromptu dogleg with nearly all golfers opting to aim the ball across the racecourse and hit the area of land that is now the fairway.

Sea Hole: as you leave Formans green at present you head to your right to the Sea Hole tee. In the 1980s the teeing ground was to the left of the green and once again it was directly beside the main road. Thankfully, you were hitting in the opposite direction from the road itself, however this put you in direct line of fire for players playing their approach shots into Forman’s green.

High Hole: like the Sea Hole in as much as you head to your left to go to the Gasworks tee, but in the 1980s the teeing area was to the right of the High Hole green. The teeing area was located in what is now the rough on the left-hand side of the second hole. This meant that whilst standing on the 9th tee you were in range of tee shots from both the 8th hole and errant drives from the 2nd hole as well.