

Open Forum from the Annual General Meeting of Donnington Grove Golf Club
held at Donnington Grove Country Club on Wednesday 31st March 2010.

At Geoff Kell's request **Richard Lomax** chaired the open forum as incoming Club Captain and gave the following report.

I was pleased to be asked to become Donnington Grove Club Vice Captain, eventually leading to my role as Club Captain, for the following reasons:-

1. To improve communications through the introduction of a Members' Website.
2. To become involved and try and improve club matters for the better enjoyment of all members

I therefore committed to doing everything I could to achieve these aims. The launch of the member's website during my Vice Captaincy has already made a huge difference for members, keeping them informed of all club events and news. I have therefore already achieved one of my objectives! However, I aim to build on this during my year with some more improvements to the website.

Before looking forward to my year, I would like to give my thanks to outgoing captains Geoff Kells, Lynn Turner and John Rance for their excellent service to the club during their year. Geoff, in particular, has put in a huge amount of his time into club matters and has been, in my opinion, an excellent captain. Lynn worked tirelessly on behalf of her ladies, whilst John, who almost single handedly created our Senior section over the last two years, leaves it in rude health.

I would now like to introduce my 2010/11 committee to you:-

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| • Vice Captain | Tim Brunsdon |
| • Treasurer | Brenda Agutter |
| • Competition & Handicaps | John Tonner |
| • Member's Representative | Ray Ross |
| • Senior's Captain | Mike Williams |
| • Ladies' Captain | Ann MacDonald |
| • Ladies Vice Captain | Sylva Davis |

My charity for my year is **Help for Heroes**. I am sure that you will all be aware of this great charity and the work it does for all those service personnel injured or maimed since 9/11. I hope that the members will support me in raising lots of money for this charity during my year.

My plans for the year are as follows:-

- To maintain as full a golfing calendar as possible, within reason, as we are not a large club and sometimes find it difficult to raise a full team!
Notwithstanding the above, we have already agreed to put extra matches into the calendar with a new Tri Tournament involving Castle Combe (Manor House) and Avon GS.
- Concorde League and Hillman Trophy competitions remain as the most important inter club matches and I want to help the respective captains of these teams as much as possible, to give them the best chance of perhaps winning one or both of them!
- The Champagne Roll-ups were a great success last year and we will be continuing with these this year.

The difficulties we experienced last year (course congestion and conflict with members) have been addressed by Sandtrend following representations by your committee and a number of measures have been, or will be, introduced from tomorrow. Letters from Chris Strong and me to members have already detailed these.

The tee booking system survey had 40 in favour of change and 31 in favour of no change. The conclusion the committee reached was that no change would be made but we would carry out some more research into what systems other clubs were operating.

Course improvements – this week Tim and I carried out a course inspection with Gareth and Dave Knight and we drew up a number of possible improvements to the course which will be carried out during the year. The main focus was on the first tee and also on better course definition of the fairways, first and second cuts.

Social – last year we had a very full and successful numbers of events, including – Donnington Diners, Christmas Party, Quiz nights, Race night and Ferret Racing! I am not too sure what we will be doing this year as we do not have a Social Secretary on the committee and Tim is a hard act to follow. However, it's your club and all ideas will be gratefully received and if you want an event we will try and put it on for you!

Finally, I invite you to let me know of any issues or concerns which you may have. Feedback, good or bad, is how any organization learns how things are going. We have no monopoly on good ideas. You may email committee or speak with any committee members should you wish to raise anything.

Richard also thanked the various team captains who give up a lot of their time to run the teams. The Team captains for this year are:

James Dawes	– Hillman Team,
Paul Bailes	– Sunday Mail Team,
Geoff Kells	– Concorde Team,
Tim Brunsdon	– Men's Interclub Team,
Sylvia Davis	– Ladies and Mixed Teams.

Richard then invited Ann MacDonald to say a few words as incoming Lady Captain.

Ann MacDonald

I want to thank Lynn for choosing me as her lady vice and I hope to do her proud in the coming year as lady captain. Sylvia Davis will be my vice captain and we look forward to working together in doing as much as we can for the ladies section.

My charity this year is the Duchess of Kent Hospice (Charity) in Reading. I have been to see them and was amazed at the amount of work they do not only for the cancer patient's but also for the families.

The ladies will be holding a golf and coffee morning on the 12th May which will be in aid of my charity. The ladies open will be held in June and has been very successful over the past few years. There is a full diary of interclub and mixed matches for the coming year and various other opens and competitions that the ladies have entered. I wish them all the luck in their games.

I am also in the process of arranging the ladies away day in the coming months. I also intend to carry on with the ladies social evening which is held once a month and which has become a very special event as it enables all our ladies (5 and 7 day members) to meet and catch up with gossip and enjoy a lovely meal together. I am also looking forward to meeting our new lady members.

I fully intend to support Richard throughout the year as Club Captain and to work with him and the Committee in keeping Donnington Grove as successful as it has become

Richard then opened up the meeting to any questions.

Steve Clark

Why is the home Interclub matches being held on Saturdays this year and during members' tee times?

Richard Lomax : We struggled to run teams last year on Sundays. The consensus within the players was that they would prefer to play on Saturdays even if that meant missing a medal.

The tee times have been changed from within the member's times for all but 1 match to take account of recent concerns.

Tim Brunsten: We have agreed with Chris Strong that for the 2011/12 year the Interclub matches will use the last 3 members tee times and the first 3 golf breaks tee times. This will meet the member's and management wishes half way. As 12 members play in these matches they will in effect be using the 3 members time slots.

Darren Boyce

The recent renewal letter stated that the current membership fee had not increased. However last year there were 12 complimentary green fees and no EGU membership fee contained in the final amount.

Chris Strong : The annual subscription has not increased for the past 2 years.

Donnington Grove has in the past paid the EGU fee, whereas most other courses do not. He agreed that the overall cost had slightly increased but the main point was that the subscriptions had remained the same.

Dave Allen : The subscriptions this year include third party golf insurance for members on all golf courses worldwide. This is a new incentive this year. The reason for the EGU fee being paid separately was due to the equality laws as men paid more than the ladies and this had led to an inequality in the annual membership payments. It was felt best to get individual members to pay for the fee which includes their BB&O fees.

Steve Clark

In a recent notice it was stated that you were deemed to be 'off the course' in the half-way hut. Does this mean that you are out of the competition?

Richard Lomax : The wording may have been wrong in this instance. The idea was to encourage those players who spend time in the half-way hut to let following groups play through if so requested. There was no intention of disqualifying players.

Chris Strong : We are pushing to get a turn round of 10 minutes from the half-way hut and have introduced a sign on the 9th tee to encourage players to phone through any requests.

Steve Clark

Members in the last few tee times have had problems with guests going through to the 10th without asking to play through.

Gareth Williams : The new Marshalls should help this problem.

Tony Coleman : Better signage is required on the 9th and on the path by the half-way hut.

Tim Brunsdon : The Starters need to be better briefed at the start of the day. They can inform each group of the location of the half-way hut, how to order food etc from the 9th tee and the requirement to check there is no one already in there before proceeding through to the 10th

John Rance

Can the Sat Nav on the buggies be programmed to inform players to go to the half-way hut?

Gareth Williams : I will look into the possibility of this.

Darren Boyce

Can instructions be placed on the website and notice board instructing players of the correct method of raking a bunker?

Tim Brunsdon : This was included in the Green keepers report from August 2008 which was still on the website. However it would seem to be a good idea to re-publish this as a separate item from time to time throughout the year.

Graham Gourlay

Can notices be published reminding all players, including members to repair their pitch marks?

Richard : Yes this was another matter that probably needed to be done several times a year.

Tony Coleman

You spoke of toughening up the course. What about the lesser players who are already playing a tough course?

Richard : I am aware that the 'better' players make up a minority at the club and that the course cannot be set up just for them. I would like to see the course revert to more like the original design, allowing the rough to grow slightly and better definitions of the first and second cuts.

Steve Clark

The pin positions for the Champagne Roll-Up on Fridays are the same as the Saturday in the competitions. This seems to give an advantage to those members who played on the Friday.

Richard : This is due to time constraints on the Saturday morning. The green staff has to prepare the course and changing 9 holes is probably a step too far.

There being no further questions the meeting was closed at 8.32pm