



# Vale Royal Abbey

THE DRIVER MEMBERS NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2011

## CAPTAIN'S REMARKS

Writing my article for the Driver and reflecting on the period between

September and November, I now understand the wise words of the past Captains who told me how quickly my year would pass.

To put the three months into perspective, Franky and I have been overwhelmed by the members support for our charity, Leighton Hospital Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit, where all our

national targets for donations have been smashed!!

Franky, Leighton Hospital Management and I cannot express how grateful we all are for the donations received from the Igoe family through the organisation of their Golf Day and Evening function in remembrance of Michael Igoe. As the Driver goes to print we know that the net sum raised will be in excess of £27,000!!!! The organisation

of the day and evening by Helen, Shaunagh, Anne Marie and the baking skills on show by Shannon at the halfway house was exceptional, and thanks must also go to Ian Embury and his staff who catered for more than 200 in the evening.

The generosity of VRA members who support the Captains' Charity and Four Nations is unrivalled by any golf club in Cheshire, and as we all know it is not the winning (honest!) but all about having a bloody good time and raising money. The Four Nations is a special VRA event and this year it was as good as it always is and Ireland DIDN'T win again! I think everyone is aware that VRAGC has raised more than £110,000 for charities since it's formation and others question how can such a young golf club that has been in existence for a dozen years and whose playing membership has been fairly static around 350 for that period, raise so much money for charity.....obvious really, they don't have members like us or a special auction master of the calibre of Keith Hadaway who has contributed so much to our charity events this year and every year.



The Hall on Four Nations Day

The Gentlemen's Presentation Evening was a highlight for me with Ian St. John as a guest speaker and an attendance of 60 for the dinner. I think it is worth mentioning that former Captains and I still cannot fathom the lack of attendance of winners at the Presentation Evening and



most disappointing of all, those that do not have the courtesy to communicate that they will not be attending. I guess not everyone understands the efforts that go into preparing for the Presentation Evening – the labelling, the organisation and engraving so ably managed by Terry Hargrove - and then finding we have a no show.

Notwithstanding that bit of a moan, I hope everyone enjoyed the evening and congratulations to all winners including the double trophy winners Liam Davies and Mark Jackson and of course to John Redmond who secured three trophies including the Club Championship in his first year at Vale Royal.

Finally I look forward to your continuing support and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and hope to see those that can come on Boxing Day for the Hip Flask Challenge.

**Cliff Wood**  
Captain



Captain Cliff Wood with Ian St. John



Captain Cliff Wood with President Steve Graham



Club Champion John Redmond



LADY CAPTAIN'S REMARKS

Bonjour,

Another term, another season but golf is still high on the agenda.

Franky MacIver Lady Captain

We started the winter season with our yearly Four Nations event, which this year not only was well supported, but brought new faces to our teams. We united France and Wales and created the "Frales team", who unfortunately were unable to prevent a Scottish victory!. Many thanks to Ian and his catering team for bringing the "je ne sais quoi" of France.

As always the Ladies Section was busy and this time French was the word or should I say "be French" was the instruction for the dress code of the charity day. If you were lucky enough to play golf on the 18th October, you could have met two can-can girls, three sailors (one of them being Rene/Betty Suter, whose moustache kept dropping into her cup of tea!!), lost between 'Allo,'Allo and the secret French Army, a few stripey tops, it was just.... olala!!! Winners were rewarded with French delicatessen: you cannot beat Brie, red wine, champagne and baguettes!!

Our presentation evening felt like a novelty as the main prizes were won by two newcomers, Sharon Healey and Sonya Bradbury. Well done to all our participants and if you did not win this time, there is always next year!

It just remains for me to wish all of you a very "Joyeux Noel et Bonne Annee".

Franky MacIver Lady Captain



Madame la Capitaine. 4 Nations Day



"Rene" and friend!!



Fun at the Moulin Rouge!! "Rene" gets everywhere!!



The Winners



## A VIEW FROM A FORMER MEMBER

Paul and I were delighted to be invited by the host Mike Igoe to play in his team at the golf day that was held on the 4th November at Vale Royal where all the proceeds were to be donated to the Captains' Charity.

The day was tinged with sadness remembering the tragic death of our friend's son who was only 17 when his life was cut short. The 4th November was the date he would have been 21 and the family decided to hold a charity day in his memory.

On behalf of all the visitors I would like to say thank you for a tremendous day. All the family were involved but



Photo courtesy of Sue Goddard

particularly Shaunagh who did all the organising and Shannon who baked lots of cakes and biscuits to feed us at the Halfway House. I don't know what she put in the banana cake but one of our team had a piece and from that moment on played great golf!!

There should have been 22 teams but one team had to pull out, so that left 21 teams which seemed rather appropriate.

As previous members we were looking forward to playing the course again and meeting old friends. We were not disappointed. The course was in fantastic condition and with the sun shining on the beautiful trees in their full autumn colours, the day could not have been better. From the bacon bap which started the day to the hotpot that followed the golf, we were totally spoilt.

I am sure the evening went well also, but unfortunately we had to get back to our home in North Wales.

We look forward to playing again at Vale Royal and hope to see anyone who wishes to come and join us for a game at Nefyn Golf Club.

**Chris Harris**

Lady Captain 2005

## PRO'S TIP

Six Golf Swing Tips from the Address to the Follow Through

There are many people that say your stance should be the same width apart as your shoulders. While this can work, you actually want to have your feet a bit wider than your shoulders. This will ensure you have a good solid base.

Believe it or not, there are people who think that the chin placement is not all that important. While it is not going to be the most important tip you receive, it is one you want to be sure you are making note of. Basically, you do not want your chin resting on your chest. You can use your fist as a guide by placing it against your upper chest and allowing your chin to lightly touch it.

Grip pressure is extremely important. Whilst having a weak grip could send your club flying down the fairway, it is paramount not to grip too tightly!! Too tight a grip tenses your muscles in the forearms and will stop you making a free flowing shoulder turn.



Now, you are not going to bend your knees as though you are going to sit on them but you do not want them straight and tight either. Do not lock your knees. You simply want your knees to soften ever so slightly.

Out of all the golf swing tips, the takeaway is the part that you really want to pay the most attention to. This is where a lot of golfers mess up and it costs them dearly in their game. When you first start on your backswing, you are going to make sure that your arms, hands, right shoulder, the clubhead and the shaft are all moving as one single unit. It is also very important to realize that your hips need to stay in place and build up resistance. Think of your body as a spring. The top half is turning and twisting right before the release.

It is important to make sure that you are following through with your golf swing. Do not stop at the ball or shortly thereafter. You want to make sure that you are following it through all of the way in order to make sure you are hitting the ball with sufficient power and also sending it in the correct direction. It is not just what happens before you hit it but what happens after as well.

**Dave Ingman**  
Club Professional

## A WORD FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

As we approach the year end I would like to thank all members for their support throughout the year. It has been an improving year so far, and whilst we cannot afford to rest on our laurels, the business in both areas (golf and events) of the Abbey are recovering which is excellent in the current economic climate. So on behalf of all the staff I would like to thank you all for your support and understanding.

There are a couple of issues that I would like to ask you to take into consideration for the future.

Firstly:- We have had a number of complaints from residents adjacent to the 18th, about golf balls landing in their gardens. I would like to take this



Vale Royal Abbey Golf Club, December 2010

opportunity of reminding all members, visitors and guests that they are responsible for their own actions and have a duty of care towards the safety of fellow golfers, visitors and the club's neighbours. We would strongly recommend that you have adequate insurance cover to protect you against any claims which may be caused by your actions.

Secondly:- It seems that there are a number of members not booking tee times through the pro. shop – I must point out that it is one of the rules of the Club that all members and guests book a teetime with the pro. before going on to the course. There are a number of reasons why this is important such as:-

- To prevent abuse by others who should not be on the course
- To enable us to use the booking system as a tool for managing the course usage effectively.
- Disappointing members who just turn up and find that there are no teetimes available.

I must reiterate that it is a Club rule that no-one should go on to the course without prior booking.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation in these matters.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

**Ian Embury**  
General Manager.



ON A LIGHTER NOTE!

A man was getting ready to tee off on the first hole when a second golfer approached and asked if he could join him. The first said that he usually played alone, but agreed to the twosome.

They were even after the first few holes.

The second man said "We're about evenly matched, how about playing for £5 a hole?" The first man said he wasn't much for betting but agreed to the terms. The second man won the remaining 16 holes with ease. As they were walking off number eighteen, the second man was busy counting his £80.

He confessed that he was the Pro. at a neighbouring course and liked to pick on suckers. The first man revealed that he was the Parish priest. The Pro. was flustered and apologetic, offering to return the money. The priest said "You won fair and square and I was foolish to bet with you. You keep your winnings"

The Pro. said "Is there anything I can do to make it up to you?"

The priest said "Well you could come to Mass on Sunday and make a donation, and if you want to bring your mother and father along, I'll marry them!!"

Boxing Day is traditionally a fish day as far as food is concerned – and for those interested a 'must do' is to watch the start of the Sydney to Hobart Sailing Race. It is quite a spectacular sight following the boats as they leave Sydney Harbour and make their way out to sea through the Heads.

Then follows three days of relative calm, to build up energy reserves before the New Year celebrations – of which I probably need say no more, other than it is a spectacular sight and well worth coming to see if you can manage it.

So, Happy Christmas from Australia and Best Wishes for 2012 from...

Dave and Jan Gooding

*(Note from MF. This was a much longer and very amusing article and I must apologise for curtailing it, there was just not enough room. If anyone would like to read it in it's entirety please let me know and I will let you have a copy)*



Vale Roayl Abbey Golf Club, December 2010

CHRISTMAS IN WARMER CLIMES

.....Christmas Day follows a similar pattern (food-wise) to the UK, albeit in warmer temperatures – although I have to say that last year was the first of the three we have enjoyed here when the weather was stunningly hot and sunny! 2008 was disappointingly cloudy – warm but cloudy, so we visited Taronga Zoo; 2009, it rained for the whole of Christmas week but luckily we were in Perth and Adelaide where the sun shone; and thankfully 2010 was fantastic! Definitely a beach day with the Christmas meal held over until late afternoon/early evening! Fingers crossed 2011 will be similar.



## CHRISTMAS EN FRANCE

On Christmas Eve, French children put their shoes in front of the fireplace in the hopes that Pere Noel will fill them with gifts. Sweets, fruit, nuts and small toys will also be hung on the tree overnight. When the children go to bed, the grownups will “reveillon” and it is the culinary high point of the season.

Each region in France has it’s own traditional Christmas menu, with dishes like goose, chicken, capon, turkey stuffed with chestnuts, oysters and boudin blanc (similar to Christmas pudding) . After the meal, cadeaux/presents will then be exchanged.



Another important aspect of French Christmas celebrations is the crèche filled with “santons” (tiny holy models) which is displayed in churches and many homes.

Franky

## HANDICAPS AND COMPETITIONS COMMITTEE

These are some of the important changes to the Unified Handicapping System (UHS) for 2012:-

Competition Standard Scratch is an indicator of the course difficulty on any given competition day and has been calculated as Standard Scratch Score + 2 (SSS+2) since its introduction in 1989. In future it will be calculated as SSS+ Handicap Buffer Zone.

For example – SSS 71

- Cat 1 Nett 72 & better
- Cat 2 Nett 73 & better
- Cat 3 Nett 74 & better

Analysis indicates there will be minimal change on the CSS outcome for typical men’s competitions.

A facility has been created within the handicapping software to identify improving players (or instances of exceptional scoring) and to recommend an appropriate Exceptional Score Reduction (ESR) to their handicap. Adjustment is based upon two nett scores better than -4 within a specified number of qualifying rounds. A single -4 is not considered exceptional.

General Play now only applies under very exceptional circumstances such as prolonged ill health or a handicap wrongly allocated – effectively General Play Reductions are no more. Please remember that social scores are not applicable in the adjustment of a CONGU handicap.

The main opportunity for required handicap adjustment is the annual Review of Handicaps that must be completed prior to 1st March. This review is carried out by the Committee to ensure that all playing members have handicaps that are reflective of their competitive playing ability.

Rules of Amateur Status have also been updated – the principal changes are to:-

- Rule 2-2 Contracts and Agreements
- Rule 4-3 Subsistence Expenses
- Rule 3-2 Hole-in-One Prizes and Prize Vouchers

*(the only one that might affect VRAGC Members – more information will follow in the near future)*

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New (Golfing) Year.

**Terry Hargrove**

Chairman Handicaps and Competitions Committee



## SENIORS SECTION

Arrangements for our Annual Christmas 9 Holes Bottle Run are underway as I write

The Committee has debated whether or not in these stringent times we should provide a mince pie for everyone with our festive meal. We have said "Why not?. Hang the cost!!" It's that time of year and goodwill towards men and all that. Besides the chaps need feeding up a bit after a strenuous season.

At our Annual General Meeting in October, we congratulated our 2011 Tuckley Trophy winner – Trevor Stephenson (he who practices a lot!) and also Brian Lightfoot (our own Monty Don) who won the Diamond Plate. The elegant and debonair Mark Harris won the LMS Trophy – and a few monthly medals too!. The Old Factotum Trophy was won by that Old Factotum, Doug Gallimore.

As our two "deserving causes" this year we gave a bottle to our Course Daffodil Planter – John Hart – and one also to our intrepid auditor Hugh Roberts.

2011 saw our efforts rewarded in our interclub matches in that again we managed to win more than we lost.

Those who attended our "Evening of Nostalgia" both dined well and were also entertained right royally by a trombone playing retired physician accompanied by our resident musical director Monica – great fun!

Our winter programme is now well underway so all that remains to be done is to quote Bob Cratchit from Charles Dickens "A Christmas Carol" and say " A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears, God bless us!"

**Peter Roberts**

Chairman of the Seniors Section

## NOSTALGIA EVENING

For those able to remember, this dinner was arranged as a follow up to the annual Rider Cup dinner in July, when the guest speaker Dr. Edward Williams was unfortunately taken ill. This time, he was fully fit and after a meal of Autumn Pumpkin Soup (very good) Boeuf Bourignonne and Lemon Posset (to die for!), Edward was introduced by Monica Foster who had known him since childhood. We were assured that all their early happy days were above board!! He gave an entertaining talk of the highlights of his medical career, interspersed with trombone playing,

with our own accomplished piano player Monica, keeping him in time! He sang a song by Tom Lehrer ( a truly original and humorous singer-songwriter) an all round trip down memory lane. Curiously, it turned out that two of us on Edward's table knew two close associates of his, truly a small world.

I was not able to obtain any supplies of Watney's Red Barrel, nor persuade the waitresses to wear miniskirts, and Manager Ian was certainly not going to entertain accepting payment with a stack of old Green Shield Stamps that I was saving for a rainy day!

A thoroughly enjoyable evening.

**Kevin Dawson**



PEOPLE

We have recently received good news of Anne Williams after she was taken seriously ill so suddenly some weeks ago. It is good to hear that she is now progressing well and we would like to send her good wishes from all at the Abbey, we hope that her progress will be swift and complete, and we look forward to welcoming her back in the not too distant future.

Welcome back to Paul Beales who used to work at the Abbey. He is once again in charge of the kitchen, and we hope he is here to stay!

Congratulations to Jonathan and Claire Betts the proud parents of Ava Linda who arrived at 0-45am on Thursday Dec. 8th. We all send our love from the Abbey and hope that they have a very happy Christmas with their best present ever!!

...AND FINALLY

As always, I appreciate your input into the Driver, please keep the articles and photos coming. The next edition will coincide with the new Captaincies – until then enjoy your golf, and in particular have a very HAPPY CHRISTMAS and hopefully a PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!!

Monica F.  
Tel:- 01606782899  
Email:- kwfoster@kmfoster.co.uk  
Letter rack in the Hall

