



CLUB *Selection*

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Spring 2017

Mark drives 'to infinity and beyond'!

There was a definite buzz at the Club on the first day of April as new Club Captain, Mark Tibbenham was welcomed onto the first tee in celebration of his first official Club duty, his drive-in.

Buzz Lightyear (who Mark bears an uncanny resemblance to) was ably assisted by his Vice Captain, Barry 'Woody' Knights, both joined the cast of Toy Story characters that included Jessie, Bullseye, Stinky Pete, Wheezy, Ken & Barbie, The Pizza Planet Aliens, Toy Soldiers and of course Rex who were eagerly awaiting their arrival.

Having removed his 'Space Ranger' helmet, Buzz/Mark drove "to infinity and beyond" - well 202 yards at least, a distance that was predicted by Edwina Hughes who collected a Bottle of Champagne.

Mark was supported by over 100 friends and family as well as Club and Saturday Club members to celebrate his achievement. The event was a great success and an excellent start to what we hope will be an extremely enjoyable and memorable year for him.



Buzz and Jessie (aka Mark and Clare) are supporting East Anglian Air Ambulance this year.



Mark drives into office in almost full Buzz Lightyear costume - apparently the head restricted his vision somewhat!



Captain "Buzz" is driven to the first tee by "Woody" Knights.



Bullseye, Green Army men, Barbie and Kenny, Jessie, Stinky Mark, the Aliens, Wheezy and Rex the Dinosaur welcomed Mark to the first tee.

Exotic reflections for Clare's Drive-In



Phew I needed that! Vice-Captain Anne Fenning gives Clare a few tips on her grip perhaps?



Clare is the centre of attention as her grass skirted supporters get into full swing.



Swaying (possibly slightly inebriated) palm trees welcome Clare to the tee.

Our new Ladies Captain Clare Peck, is very fond of holidays and travel. Hence the theme of her Drive-In on 22nd April reflected this passion with swaying palm trees, sun lounger, cocktails and gorgeous girls in grass skirts!

Following a rousing rendition of a bespoke version of Tony Christie's "Is this the way to Amarillo?", Clare calmly stepped up and with a very smooth swing drove into office with a super drive straight down the fairway.



Clare about to strike the Drive-In ball.

Captain's Blog

Mark Tibbenham – Club Captain



Welcome to my first update as Captain. At the time of writing I've been Captain just 14 days. So far it has been a whirlwind of activity. Thank you all for the support you have shown me, and in particular the support from our outgoing Captain Ian Harvey.

Ian had an incredible year (winning the Jack Walker Trophy) and together with Sue Knights raised over £12,600 on behalf of the club for their chosen charity, Cardiac Risk in the Young in support of the Lily Webster Foundation - what an amazing achievement! There were many events organised that included a Casino Night, Quizzes, Texas Scrambles and the Charity Golf Day. The proceeds were further boosted by the installation of a 'swear bucket' in the casual bar.

January brought Burn's Night, where Ian toasted the Lassies in the time honoured manner, with an equally amusing response from Sue. Ian's year ended with a final fling in mid-March where he hosted the popular Texas Scramble. 27 teams took to the course on the day, with the eventual winners being Edwina Hughes, Ken McCredie, Clive George and Mark Turnbull.

The day after our AGM, I attended the Suffolk Golf Union Presidents Day & AGM at Bury St. Edmunds Golf Club. Here I saw our own (past President) Bill Darling elected as President Elect, a prestigious and very well deserved honour.

1st April, and my drive-in! I was thrilled at how many members turned up to wish me well (or was it to see if I was an April Fool)! Just before the drive-in our Vice Captain Barry Knights ushered me to the changing rooms to get into a fancy dress costume. The costume looked tight, and it was. After a bit of tugging I eventually got it on over my head. I was Buzz Lightyear from Toy Story, and it was very hot in the costume. For some reason the Saturday Club seem to think I look like him... I was greeted on the first tee by more club members dressed as Toy Story characters. The drive did not go "to Infinity and Beyond." It was 202 yards and guessed correctly by Edwina Hughes who picked up a bottle of champagne. My next challenge, however, was to get out of the costume. After further tugging, panting, and squeezing I eventually removed the costume only to discover the zip I had not used!

Looking forward, I'm hoping it's going to be a great golfing year. The golfing diary is packed out and it would be great to see more of you sign up to the friendly matches against other clubs. They really are friendly, and the cost is only to buy brunch or dinner. Similarly, if you want to play some friendly mixed golf then please do sign up to the events run by Ivor and Di Evans. If there are any ladies looking for a partner, then I would be delighted to play a match with you. All you need to do is sign up on the mixed board outside the changing rooms.

Congratulations to the 10 pairs who qualified in the Captain/Pro Challenge. Jon Markham and I are looking forward to taking you all on.

Hambro/Tolly tee off on the 14th May where we have home draws against Southwold and Aldeburgh respectively. In the Stenson we have a bye in the first round so the first match is not until the 22nd July. Beaumont is mid-May at home to Purdis, with the Parks also at home against Rushmere at the end of June. In the Curry Cup our first match is away against Colchester in late May. In the Suffolk Amateur Foursomes Championship, held at SGC on 23rd April, Chris Bartrum and James Biggs of Diss GC won, becoming the first pair to win three successive years. Best net result was Andy Cunningham (SGC) and Sam Debenham (Hintlesham).

Clare Peck our Ladies Captain and myself have joined forces to support East Anglian Air Ambulance as our chosen Captains' Charity. They have 2 helicopters operating out of Cambridge and Norwich. Since their launch in 2000 they have attended over 19,000 lifesaving missions. They offer critical care on scene and a quick transfer time to hospital. In fact the aircraft can reach patients anywhere in the region within 25 minutes. Hopefully you will never need them, but it's great to know they are there.

On the social side, we have a Quiz on 25th May, with teams of 6. Please do join us for this very enjoyable evening. As details of further social events follow, please keep a look out around the club.

Finally, many thanks for your support and I wish you all a great golfing season.

Busy golfing calendar underway for the Ladies

The golfing year for the Ladies has had a wonderful start with a home win against Haverhill in the Suffolk Senior Jubilee Shield. This is a knockout, 4 Ball Better Ball County Competition with Hambro scoring & our girls won 32/16. The next round is away at Gorleston in May.

We have also had three friendlies against Diss, Haverhill & Woodbridge— a loss, a draw & a win respectively. The Weston (league off scratch) starts with a home match against Bury St Edmunds on the 30th April – spectators are very welcome to come and see some of our best golfers in action.

The Cranworth (Foursomes & Singles Knockout 21-30 h/c) and Stearn (Foursomes Knockout 12-20 h/c) lists are up on the boards – both these County Competitions are such a good golfing experience, as well as really fun to play in and we would encourage Ladies to sign up. Matches start in June for both competitions.

Our social events have also started with our New Seasons Dinner on 11th April. Forty nine ladies enjoyed a delicious 3 course meal with a quiz, pass the parcel & lots of chatter & laughter.

We are all raring to start playing the myriad of competitions that fill the Ladies' diary.

Clare Peck – Ladies Captain



Senior Jubilee Shield team L to R: Di Glasswell, Jenny Buckle, Margaret Morrison, Annie Tyler, Carolyn Heywood, Lesley Barnes, Carolyn Tanner, Elaine Anderson and Jane Foster.

Chairman's Chat

Russell Morley - Chairman

We held our AGM at the end of March and I'm pleased to say the members supported all the proposals which the Board had put forward. At the same time, we saw a number of members leave the Board and a new team was elected to take us forward. So, what can we look forward to in 2017?

Greens

Ivor Evans has agreed to take over the Chair of Greens from Jeff Gilham who retired at the end of his three-year tenure, and James O'Doherty who is new to the Board, will be joining Ivor on this committee. Ivor, of course, held this position prior to Jeff, so is returning to a familiar role.

It is intended to continue with the programme of course improvements in the autumn which will see the 14th tee rebuilt and the path up to the ladies tee replaced with the rubberised version. Also, the 9th and 11th greens should be drained and the bunkers affected by the drainage will be refurbished.

We will continue with clearing the area between the practice ground and the 18th as time allows. Meanwhile we expect to take delivery of the new rough mower shortly, as the priority remains to invest in our course so it can be maintained in the best possible condition through the playing season. This will involve occasions when there will be course maintenance which will cause some minor disruption to play but we hope this year to keep you fully informed of this and any other activity, which may affect your enjoyment of the course.

At the moment, I am hearing stories that a number of local courses are still struggling to get their courses up to standard as we emerge from the winter ... I am pleased that Matt and his team have done a wonderful job and Stowmarket is in great condition ... I hope this remains so. We hosted the Suffolk Amateur Foursomes Championship on the 23rd April and this was a great opportunity to showcase Stowmarket Golf Club.

House

David Fletcher has taken over from Ken Cooper as our Chair of House, having worked on Ken's committee for the last couple of years. Once we have a clear understanding of our membership numbers, following the renewal process this spring, we will be in a position to review our budgets. If we achieve the numbers we budgeted for, then we will be able to release the funds which will enable David and his team to progress their plan for refurbishing the lounge/restaurant areas of the clubhouse.

Before moving on I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ken for all he has done for the club, not just the refurbishment programme which has seen the clubhouse transformed in the last couple of years, but also for his huge contribution over an eleven year term on the board, serving as Club Captain and President as well as chairing committees which saw the main car park asphalted, parts of the course drained, the changing rooms refurbished, construction of buggy sheds, on course toilets, running numerous social events ... it's a long list and for all he has done as well as his larger than life presence we are very grateful.

Membership & Revenue

Annie Tyler is taking over from Ivor and I have already had a meeting with Annie who has a long list of ideas which she would like to explore. At the moment, Annie is forming her committee who will be selected to bring the skills and experience to help achieve her plans. Among the tasks will be relaunching the website which Ivor has already commissioned, but will need constant maintenance to

keep up to date, so finding a webmaster is important. Similarly, we need to improve our media relations and again Annie will be looking for somebody to undertake that role. New board member Gareth Knowles will be joining Annie on the committee and I know he has some fresh ideas, so I hope we can look forward to putting in place a range of incentives which will see us arrest the decline in membership from which we have suffered recently and don't forget, if you introduce a new full member, we will credit your account with £100 when that member renews next year.

In House Services

Mo O'Shaughnessy is continuing in this role, which is proving quite challenging as well as rewarding. Unfortunately, we were without the services of Chris, who is now managing the bar and catering, for a long period up to mid-April, following his knee operation. This of course coincided with the period when we have been without a club manager so the management of these operations has fallen to Nicola and Mo who have done a great job. It was not the start we planned as we hoped to be building our team, experience and skill levels ready for the busy period. However, we are where we are and I think most will agree the quality of the food now offered is much improved, although there remain some areas we still need to work on. We are grateful for the support and encouragement we have received. We are currently looking to increase our staffing levels as we move towards the busier time of year so if you know of anyone who may be interested in waiting, bar work or even as a temporary cook/chef, please let Chris or Mo know.

Finance

Richard Harris is our new Finance Director, taking over from Bill Von Isenberg. Richard has a wealth of experience so I am sure he will bring a fresh view on how we manage the club's finances ... for the present, he is quietly watching how we operate and waiting for the renewals to flow in so we can see how our budgets are likely to work this year and whether we are able to release all capital budgets to house and greens.

Golf

As we move towards the summer, playing golf is why we all join the club. Our Captains have "experienced" their respective drive-in's and are looking forward to the seasons golf ... social or competitive ... talking to Mark, Clare and David they are really excited about the year ahead and with programmes of golf and social activities planned ... I'll say no more about this as I'm sure they will be telling you more in due course.

Club Manager

Following Geoff's departure, we are well into the recruitment process with applicants from our membership and existing golf club managers from across the country ... we are seeing some excellent CVs so are confident that when we are able to make an appointment we will be placing ourselves in safe hands. The closing date for applications is 21st April which will be followed by a selection process involving at least two interviews for the final candidates. The successful applicant will no doubt need to give notice from their existing position, so it may be the end of June or even July by the time someone is finally in place.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a great summer of golf and enjoy our course which is already in superb condition, our clubhouse services, which is trying to offer the best it can to our members and visitors. Please do enjoy our club ... we are the friendliest around.

"I don't believe it"

To use those immortal words of Victor Meldrew, from the BBC sit-com One Foot in the Grave.

We are experiencing some vandalism in the clubhouse, in the form of damage to some of the new Honours Boards. Someone (or some people) seem to think it is amusing to peel or

rearrange some of the letters from the boards, thereby changing the appearance of a winner's name, which then costs the Club money to repair.

This is unacceptable, mindless behaviour and when the culprit(s) is/are identified they will be severely sanctioned by the Board. If any member witnesses this stupidity, please report it to the office.



Seniors – Keeping calm and playing golf - Lots!

The 2016 Summer competitions, Singles Matchplay, Summer League, Reuben Wiffen & Eclectic, concluding end of September were won by Ken McCredie, Ken Stuart, Andrew Coxhead and Gerald Prior respectively.

Lots of people entered both the October and November stablefords, won by Kalvin Finch and Colin Parish respectively and although the weather had taken an Autumnal turn playing conditions were generally good. Not rain or snow but fog delayed the start of the 4-club Gren Hibbert Shield/Turkey Trot stableford on 6th December won by Ivor Evans who, incidentally, plays lots of golf.



Two weeks later 18 teams of four with a shotgun start contested the annual Progressive stableford. Five points separated the first 3 teams with winning team 'Zeal' comprising Paul Freeman, Tony Boyce, David Rooney and Roger Brownlee, scoring a creditable 120 points. A very pleasant days golf was followed by an excellent Christmas lunch courtesy of the ever hard working catering and bar staff.



The 2017 January and February stablefords were won by Ken Cooper and Paul Freeman respectively. Three players had a hole-in-one in February, albeit with a couple of Winter greens, surely a record. Captain Mike and his wife hosted the annual Seniors' dinner attended by 110 members and guests on 3rd & 4th February.



The Winter League starting last October concluded on 2nd March with Mike Heywood and David Wilding taking the honours.

Mike's Final Fling was at the Gog Magog GC on 6th March and the Terry Bayley trophy was won by Clive George, who played the back 9 to par and had 9 single putts - he too plays LOTS of golf.



Mike handed over to David Hughes at the Seniors' AGM on 7th March, after a stableford won by, you've guessed it, Clive George!



Mike said he had thoroughly enjoyed his year as Captain and hoped that his memos had kept everyone up to date with information on the 42 matches played. His Seniors' Captain's charity initiative had been very successful and had raised £2000 for Alzheimers Research and the Stowmarket Stroke Support Group.

As the result of a survey of members last year the committee decided to: reduce the number of matches played by 3 in 2018, play 2 medal competitions in lieu of stablefords in June & August and relax the dress code for home matches insisting that players change but sanctioning smart casual clothing at lunch, although jacket and tie is optional.

Due to the sterling efforts of the Green Keepers the course has held up well throughout the Winter and provided us with lots of golf. David started his captaincy with a convincing home win over Bury St Edmunds in the first match of the season. Fortunes since have been mixed but it's early days yet. Paul Williams won the medal competition followed by lunch on Tuesday 4th April for the Charles Grayston Salver with a creditable net 64 and we are looking forward to a Summer of lots of golf!

On 10th April a team of 12 led by Pat Shepherd competed for the Golf 55 Trophy, hosted by Rushmere GC alongside Fynn Valley and WAGS (ex Waldringfield members). We were narrowly beaten into third place this year, the hosts taking the honours with 347 points, WAGS were second with 343 and we scored 341. Our in form senior of the moment, Clive George, had the highest individual score of the day with 43 points!

News from the Pro Shop

Jon Markham and his team have a very well stocked shop and are looking forward to a busy and successful summer of sales and helping members to improve their game. In this respect there are a number of initiatives already planned:

On Thursday 1st June there will be a Cobra demonstration event, from 2pm – 6pm, for members to try out the latest Cobra equipment.

Supporting the clubs drive to encourage more youngsters to take up golf, Jon and Alex are booked to deliver a Tri-Golf taster session at Trinity Primary School, Coombs and Cedars Park Primary School. At these sessions children are given a fun and games based introduction to golf, using specially designed over-sized plastic equipment, which will hopefully lead to some "getting hooked" and visiting the club with their parents to find out more about golf at Stowmarket Golf Club.

Jon and his team are also running a 4 week "Get into Golf" course, giving beginners group coaching sessions on Friday evenings, 6pm – 7pm. Members will also have noticed Matt Voysey working in the Pro Shop recently. Matt is studying for his A-Levels and will be assisting in the shop throughout the summer months.

Finally, did you know that Jon is a member of the Foremost buying group, which enables Golf Professionals to buy stock at prices that are competitive with online retailers. If you are not able to find the goods or equipment you require in Jon's shop, then visit www.foremostgolf.com to view their full range of products, select what you are looking for and then "click and collect" from our Pro shop. Foremost Golf operate a "price match guarantee", so hopefully very few of your golfing equipment requirements cannot be supplied at the most competitive rates through our Pro shop.