

ANNUAL REPORT

The past year has been very busy and, I hope, enjoyable. We have experienced highs and lows, victories and defeats, personal achievements and celebrations and we have offered commiserations and support during less happy times. Such is the rich pattern of membership of our relatively small, yet lively Golf Club.

To have taken on the role of Lady Captain has been a great honour. I have felt quite humbled to be following a long line of treasured and respected former captains (many of whom are still here in such a supportive role). Not least, it has been a privilege to follow in the immediate footsteps of Sheila Emsden, whose wise and compassionate leadership was an example to us all.

As supply has, in recent years, outstripped demand, many golf clubs (including North Warwickshire) are now having more difficulty in recruiting new members. A club is only as good as its members and so we are particularly delighted to have welcomed such first rate new lady members this year. I would like to take this opportunity of formally welcoming **Ann Blake, Anne Brown, Carole Hawkins, Pat Horton, Valerie Pinfold and Sue Rayner** into the fold. They have all settled in so quickly and already, they are becoming involved in the life of the section as valued members. I trust that they will continue to enjoy their golf and the friendship at North Warwickshire for many years to come.

Many of our longer-standing members will perhaps be wistful of the earlier days, when a relatively small group of Ladies would arrive at the club in the middle of the morning and arrange groups to play in an ad hoc way. Following their golf they would have lunch (known as tea!) before repairing to the lounge for a few hands of bridge! How the section has changed, and whilst we mourn the passing of more leisurely times, we have had to keep pace with change and recognize the importance of "playing the game" in a more competitive manner according to the dictates of the LGU, ELGA and CONGU. But it has to be for the better. In general, Ladies are now taken much more seriously in the golfing world and they have much more voice in the running of their clubs. Our competitions at NW have never been better supported. Our start sheets are consistently full and impressive scores are returned, resulting in handicaps being reduced. This year we have seen 27 members reducing their handicaps and 10 of those ladies, more than once.

We were delighted to hear that, following an assessment of our course by the County Standard Scratch Advisors, from February 1st 2006, the SSS from the Red Tees has been altered from 70 to 71. An unexpected but welcome decision.

The Match season ran smoothly with friendly matches and league fixtures being supported with enthusiasm. Whilst we did not achieve so many victories last year, I am sure the participants enjoyed playing different courses and making new friends along the way. As an interesting aside, it is worth noting that many of the individual matches went to the 18th hole and beyond, only to be lost. Maybe we need to be a little less ambivalent and apply a touch of golf psychology to finish the job off!

In April, we entered the “National Nines” competition for the first time. It was greatly enjoyed and it is pleasing to see the increased level of support for this event in the coming season.

May I take this opportunity to thank all those members who represented the club in all the matches and in the County Team Championships. I would also like to thank those Ladies who flew the flag for North Warwickshire Golf Club by participating in the various County events.

Our two matches with The Exclusives were keenly contested in the spring and the autumn.

In April, we were extremely touched to accept a beautiful salver, generously donated by Marion Carolan in memory of her husband, Mick. Mick particularly enjoyed the fellowship of the Exclusives and always relished their matches against the Ladies Section. The Salver is a fitting memorial to such a genial gentleman and we shall continue to remember him with affection, as we play for the trophy in our biannual matches.

The Ladies, by tradition, are responsible for arranging the Mixed Matches with other clubs and I was delighted to be able to add an additional fixture to our match list. In May, we were entertained to a match at Churchill and Blakedown GC - another nine-hole course. It was greatly enjoyed and we look forward to hosting a return match this year as well as participating in our usual fixtures with Leamington and County and Copt Heath.

I am most grateful to Pat Singer who has cheerfully continued to organise the monthly Mixed Greensome matches throughout the summer. Pat expends an enormous amount of time, energy and enthusiasm in arranging the pairings and ensuring that all the participants have an enjoyable game. Her dedication is appreciated so very much.

The thought and planning that went in to organising our “Special Events” ensured they were all enjoyable occasions. Ladies Invitation Day, Ladies Day, The Day out to Walmley, Lady Captain v Secretary Match and the Seasonal Fun competitions were all supported with enthusiasm, and it is always particularly special for us on these occasions to have the opportunity of sitting down after our golf and enjoying a meal together.

Arguably, the most important of our Special Events is our Open Competition in the autumn, when we open our doors to visitors. This year’s event succeeded in maintaining our high standards of welcome and hospitality due to the seamless planning and hard work of all those involved in the day.

And then there were the social events, off the course. We held two Bridge Drives so ably and generously organised by Don and Bessie Francis. We are most grateful to them both, particularly as the proceeds from these events benefit the Ladies Fund and the Captain’s Charity. The Coffee Morning proved enjoyable as well as profitable and was an opportunity to publicise the work of my chosen charity – Riding for the Disabled. Through your generosity during the year, we were able to send a cheque to the Fen End group for £900. Thank you all so very much.

Throughout the year, we have had the privilege of offering our congratulations to those members celebrating Milestone Wedding Anniversaries and Significant Birthdays.

Also, I do hope we have been able to offer some useful support to those who have suffered illness or injury, to sustain them through their darker moments, and help them on the road to recovery.

I have a very long list of people to thank for their unstinting support throughout my year. The Green staff has been most accommodating and have ensured the course has been presented in perfect condition for all our competitions. Andrew Bownes, our Professional has been exceedingly supportive in checking us in for competitions, offering advice on Rules and identifying (and invariably fixing) the faults in our game by providing lessons at the drop of a hat.

I am most grateful to Nicki, Paul and Barbara, our caterers, who have been so supportive and helpful, particularly in the planning and execution of meals for special events. I am delighted that at last, plans are in hand to provide them with the long-overdue improved kitchen facilities that they deserve.

The Vice Presidents and the gentlemen on the main committee have been most supportive. I have valued their interest in the Ladies Section and their willingness to offer practical help wherever and whenever it has been needed.

Quite naturally, most importantly, my thanks go to all the members of the Ladies Committee. Each member has fulfilled her role with consummate initiative, efficiency and verve. Not once have I needed to question that a task promised would not be fulfilled and it has been a privilege to work with such a great team. May I offer our special thanks to Sheila Emsden and Daphne Woodard who stand down from office this year? Sheila has served on the Committee for five years, including her year as an inspirational Captain. We have Sheila to thank for being such an effective Membership Secretary – particularly in recruiting and welcoming such a clutch of super new members this year. Daphne, a former Captain, came back onto Committee three years ago to take on the role of Treasurer. We are indebted to her for the meticulous way she has handled our finances and her wisdom and wealth of experience have been much valued. Thank you both. You will be greatly missed.

I make no apology for expressing a slightly self-indulgent but very special debt of gratitude – to Allan, my husband. He has supported me in every way during my captaincy and has cheerfully accepted that the Golf Club, quite rightly, has had to take precedence over other engagements and commitments. Most importantly he has been a treasured sounding board, he has made me laugh in the darker moments and has always been there with a bottle un-corked – particularly on Thursday evenings.

As I consider the busy year outlined in this report, I ponder....How did we fit it all in? Well, we did, but not without the undying support of my loyal committee, who worked tirelessly for you, the equally loyal and supportive members. Your good humour and generosity of spirit, has made my year so satisfying and memorable. Thank you all.