



St Stephen's Golf Society

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Secretaries Annual Review, December 2015

Dear St Stephen's Golf Society member

When I was asked to take over the secretaries duties last year I did actually know what I was letting myself in for. A few of you may already know that I've been a club secretary for two cricket clubs before and lectured/directed business networking groups. Their success was based on good 'communication', that's why my first job was to set up the new society website which is the information hub for the society.

It was also very important to remember the roots of this society; luckily I already knew the founding members and their expectations – 'keep it friendly, informal and in good spirit'.

The second issue that needed my attention was booking the 12 society days. I personally was not happy with the existing booking arrangement and I know a few other members had concerns. We felt the responsibility for booking society days was asking too much for an individual member using their own money, so we needed to find cash, about £750, and quickly!

Luckily a few of us had some good business contacts and with a bit of arm twisting the bank account started to fill up with sponsorship money which we used to pay all the golf course deposits for 2015. In fact it worked so well by October this year the 2016 deposits were also paid. A special mention here to someone you may not have heard of – **Sandra Bundock**. This is the lady who makes all our payments, banks all the funds and keeps an eye on **Ady Gough** (treasurer) which as you can imagine is like herding cats! Seriously though, please remember that Ady and Sandra do a lot of work behind the scenes that ensures our society days run smoothly.

Talking of which, who can remember January 2015 at Chelsfield Lakes? My first event! My heart was pounding as members old and new arrived. I was so disappointed when I watched a golfer through the club house window putting on the practice green, the ball got bigger and bigger as it rolled through the falling snow. Quick thinking by **Chris Adams** saved the day as a few of us managed to get onto an icy Cobb Tree Manor GC. The day wasn't totally lost although I did get some stick from Ady for the first ever cancelled society day.

I'm also really pleased with three other main changes brother/skipper **Andy Stevenson** and I brought to the society...

...the club sponsored polo shirts had a very good take up after a few members raised the idea and **Mark 'Buck' Burns** decided to solve the Royal Blue colour issue with his enthusiastic design input...

...and the KO Cup, played with exemplary good spirits, 24 members battled it out over the summer. There were some very close matches but congratulations to **Karl Robson** for winning the cash prize, **Mark Delo**, a very worthy runner up, plus **Steve Hughes** and **Graham 'Spike' Morgan** who took third place...

...not forgetting the handicaps. Andy and I were worried that some of the members were turning up with absolutely no chance of achieving 30pts let alone winning a trophy. Andy, '**Scotts' John McNeil** (ex Canterbury GC H/C sec) and myself met up one evening and decided to wait for 4 competitions to be completed then re-assess. We also decided that the target for all members should be 30 points and handicaps would then be adjusted accordingly. The next society day in June at Broome Park GC vindicated the changes with 17 of the 27 competing members scoring 30pts or more at a total average on the day of 30.50pts.



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I can also reveal that the average society handicap is now 21.22pts (16.81pts in Jan 15), the total points scored by all members in 2015 was 7341pts at an average of 29.18pts – well done us!

The two most improved players this year are **Karl Robson** and **Will Scull** whose handicaps have both gone down 5 strokes.

The toughest golf course (averaging all attendees) was Lydd GC (21.12pts), no surprise there but the highest scoring course is a bit of an eye opener – Chelsfield Lakes GC (31.64pts) last month.

I'm not going to divulge the final placings for the 'best of 7' results yet but well done to the winner (who I know has worked really hard to maintain his average), and well done also to everyone who completed the qualifying 7 matches and to the 7 members who played all ten society days this year. That's a fantastic achievement and endorsement for the hard work Andy, vice skippers **Mark Delo**, **Alex McBeth** and the rest of the organisers put in.

However I will mention **Will Scull** who played every event amassing a top scoring 305 points, well done Will although I don't think you'll wreck yourself again on the eve of the last match – that was close!

I'm sure you all have some great memories of this year's events but for me?... **Darren Holman's** daughter Ruby at Sene Valley's 'Trilby Challenge', will I know be remembered by her for a long time. **Antony 'Spanner' Back** losing his score card 5 times at the same event kept everyone entertained. **Steve Winder's** hyperthermia moment playing in a nylon shirt at Lydd GC in March. **Tom O'Brien** winning his first golf trophy in his first season.

But the champagne moment for me this year was **Dave Gregory's** 10pt 'sulk off' at a very wet Weald of Kent GC back in February, you had the touch of a rapist that day mate but fair play, you averaged nearly 30 in your best of 7, not bad for an old buggy!

2016 holds many challenges but I think the society is now more robust and can grow if not in number but in quality as we weed out some of the elements that we may not want to take into 2016. And why not! We have the finances, infrastructure, spirit and determination to move forward with confidence but remember the key to any successful club - 'communication'.

So, if you have an idea, concern or just want a moan-up call me anytime, so I can tell you politely to f*ck off. I am of course only joking; your feedback is not only needed but very much appreciated.

Thanks for all your support during 2015 and best wishes to you and your families for the festive season. I look forward to seeing you all on the 29th at the presentation.

Nigel Stevenson
Club Secretary

My top tip for you: "You've just got one problem. You stand too close to the ball after you've hit it." Sam Snead