

**From The Captain  
Brian Woodward**



It seems no time at all since the October newsletter and our report on the last of the 2009 season's matches. And here we are, already looking for teams to represent Mid-Herts in 2010. Simon Best has been working on fixtures, trying to ensure that the matches start at a time that means they don't eat into the whole day. I hope his efforts will mean that more gentlemen will put their names down for both home and away matches.

The Scratch teams matches start later in late April. They are currently discussing the Captaincy of the team, Chris Tingey having left to take on the responsibilities of House Manager at John O'Gaunt. We should recognise that Chris was a key player at Mid-Herts. Not only did he win the club

championship a record number of times, but was often our 'banker' in club matches. Thanks go to him for his golfing contributions to the club, and our wishes for a long and successful career.

Maybe it's an age thing, but I have to admit that my knowledge of the junior section was, to say the least, limited. I was therefore impressed at their AGM to see the enthusiasm and commitment for Mid-Herts. The golfing exhibition I witnessed after the meeting was good to be able to share and a credit to the golfers. We are indebted to Alan Green and his team for giving up so much time, sometimes cajoling, but mainly encouraging our younger members.

As I hope you are all aware, my chosen charity for the year is Grove House Hospice. The major fundraising event is our charity quiz, which will take place on Friday 5 March. I already have a number of raffle and auction items to help boost the fund, but if any member would like to contribute a raffle prize or item for auction, they would be most gratefully received. David Higgins tells me that whilst in Florida, he completed the compilation of most of the rounds, so we look to be in for another fun filled evening!

On Wednesday 7 April, the first of 22 eclectic evenings takes place. There is an amount of fierce competition over the weeks, but it is in very good spirit. Alan Greaves and his team supply a varied selection of low cost food after the games, and a convivial evening ensues, even when Eric Sim decides to 'DQ' someone for reasons best know to Eric. The 12 holes played vary each week, but last year a popular qualifying nine holes were introduced as an option, once every three weeks. The eclectic epitomises what Mid-Herts is about - competitive golf, but camaraderie after the game. If you can make it between 4.30 and 6pm, join up with fellow members.

There's been lots of chat about the dress code recently. I had to smile, therefore, at an item in my morning paper saying that Tesco had barred a customer - for wearing pyjamas! Nearer to home, I hope soon we will have your views declared, and can move on.

May I wish you all a good season in 2010, not too many rounds over three and a half hours, and a continued good spirit in the clubhouse.

## From the Lady Captain Cynthia Hayhurst



How times change – I can remember my interview by Madge Dancey and Libby Calder. I was keen to be part of this friendly supportive club. Then it was explained to me that there was a five year waiting list. In fact, managing the list and continually contacting ladies 'in waiting' was a major job at that time. In today's changed business climate we are actively looking for new members.

Little did I know that many years later I would be proud to be invited to be Lady Captain; it was an even greater surprise to find Mike will join me as Club Captain from next April. We both feel very honoured and will do our best to make 2010 a very successful year. When spring arrives, watch out for some of the 100 bluebell bulbs we have planted in the woods either side of the second hole

The membership is still friendly and supportive in all respects. We all have a part to play showing courtesy, tolerance and respect to fellow members, staff and visitors; offer a smile and a few words to a face new to you, even though you risk finding out the person has been a member for years.

My charity this year is CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) founded in 1995 by Alison Cox MBE after her son Steven aged 18 who was in America on a tennis scholarship was given a mandatory ECG and diagnosed with a heart abnormality. Steven retired from tennis immediately unable to emulate his brother Mark Cox.

It is estimated that at least 12 young people, aged 35 and under, die every week in the UK from undiagnosed heart conditions. The majority of sudden heart-related deaths are due to inherited forms of heart muscle disorder and irregular heart beat. Often the person is very fit and striving to be a better athlete in a chosen sport. CRY is committed to raising money to fund mobile cardiac screening units, counselling families, family screening and genetic analysis.

In April 2010 CRY will be running regular cardiac testing clinics that will be available free of charge to any person in the South East who was born in 1995

## From the Chairman John Sefton



During these rather cold days when golf, for some of us, loses a little of its appeal it is a good time to look back briefly but more importantly prepare for the new season.

As the Treasurer will report in greater detail at the AGM the club finances are in much better shape at the end of 2009 than was the case 12 months earlier. Reserves have been built up which are sufficient to meet most unexpected problems, but more importantly we can resume controlled capital expenditure. Little was done last year but your Board is debating a number of projects which will be detailed in the 3 Year Plan that members will receive in a few weeks.

A start has been made in the clubhouse with redecoration of the lounge area and it is intended to continue the refurbishment progressively over the next few years. This will not be at the expense of the course - which is our main asset - and we want to ensure that your golf remains enjoyable and yet challenging. Last year Jody and his team prepared the course beautifully and they will be striving to further improve the presentation of Mid-Herts.

Members have co-operated to ensure the interim subscription was paid efficiently and we can now assess the levels of renewals and resignations. At the start of 2009 we lost 85 members compared to 45-50 in the previous few years. After considerable success in recruiting new members we ended the year close to the levels 12 months earlier, and the resignations this year are significantly lower at 54. We are confident that we can restore the overall membership levels to the level that will generate the required income to maintain our progress to a sound financial position.

The Captain has referred to the question of dress code: the survey of members has been well received with 55% of members responding. There are still a couple of weeks before closure and any member who has not replied is urged to answer the question in the survey. The result will be announced at the beginning of next month.

Finally may I thank the staff on behalf of all members. We were very well served throughout 2009 whether we were on the course or in the clubhouse and I am sure they will continue to provide an excellent service this year and ensure we all enjoy our membership of Mid-Herts.

### **Welcome to new members**

We would like to warmly welcome the following new members who have joined the club over the last few months:

Graeme Mercer  
Mark Cowell  
Deborah Eustace  
Rob Hillstead  
Liam Jeffries

John McHale  
Richard Taaffe  
Jake Graham - Junior  
Ray McHale – Returning Member

### **From the Woodmen David Houghton**



It was at the end of the Second World War (1946, I think) that I followed my father around the course, stopping at the Cross Keys for refreshment. If I remember correctly (while sitting outside) there was a green quite close to the entrance of the pub. I was, however, not interested in the golf, but more in the fact that there was a donkey tethered in the middle of the course. Little did I think that, 64 years later, I would have the honour of being chosen to be Woodmen Captain at Mid-Herts Golf Club.

For three years, my predecessor, Peter Rook, did a marvellous job, keeping us all in order, using his organisational skills and humour to make sure that the senior section of the Club ran smoothly and efficiently.

Thank you Peter, your hard work was greatly appreciated by all the Woodmen.

In taking over, I intend to maintain all the important ideals of the Woodmen section - that is to encourage senior members of the club to get together with their contemporaries to enjoy relaxed, friendly golf, make new friends and always uphold the high standards of dress and etiquette that are a feature of being a Woodman.

Things never stand still, so changes are inevitable. In order to promote and give a fresh new look to the Woodmen profile, I have produced a new logo which has been incorporated in all the notices and communiqués.

It has also been agreed that the title of 'Convenor' should be changed to 'Captain of the Woodmen'.

To encourage more Woodmen to take part in golfing events, I shall be introducing a series of new fun competitions, which will be held over 14 holes. The first is called 'The Houghton Hips, Hearts & Hernias'. A morning not to be missed! There will be lots of prizes, all donated by the committee, and the entrance fees will be donated to a local charity.

It is important that all new and present members are aware of the activities and benefits you get from being part of this very important section of Mid Herts Golf Club. We meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday Mornings for relaxed 3 and 4 balls. Just turn up, you will always get a game and a chance to see what a very nice bunch we are. There are regular matches with the ladies and the juniors, plus knockout competitions. Seventeen matches are played home and away against top county clubs. These matches have helped over the years to foster our reputation of being a very friendly and well organized golf club.

The Woodmen, being the senior section of the club, is open to all members aged 55 and over and are substantially retired. There are no fees and no other requirements. If you are interested in joining, please contact me, David Houghton (01438 871234)

With the help of Glenn Morton, our new secretary, and my team of hard working Match Captains, I am looking forward to building on the continued success and popularity of the Woodmen.

## **On the Course** **From Paul Dugdale**

Due to our wonderful weather not a lot has happened during December and January! We have as you will no doubt have noticed put in some new 100 yard markers, which I am sure will be appreciated by our visitors. We have continued with our tree work and removed a couple of trees from the side of the 11th which will help the green and the remaining trees.

The 5th green has been re-laid and we hope to be starting to use it in May. A new area between 9th green and 10th hole has been prepared so that we can store materials more correctly and less wastefully. We will also start work on improving our pathways and trolley park areas. Work will start at the end of February on the redevelopment of the 7th hole. An artist's impression of this will soon be on display in the clubhouse so that everyone is aware of what is happening.



Our new deputy course manager, David Gass, seems to be settling in well and will add further strength to the team.

We have given the ladies a new tee to try on 12 and to be considered for permanency during 2010.

During this spring the greens committee will go through the course policy document to bring this up to date.

All is looking positive for the year, weather permitting, your course will be better than ever this year with lots of small changes improving the overall appeal of the course.

### **Carrying**

The Greens Committee have asked that members be encouraged to use a 'carry bag' at this time of the year. As you know we operate a 'day to day' policy with regard to trolley restrictions and so far this year we have not had many. In order that we can continue to avoid a blanket ban, any help in this area is appreciated.

Also, please do not walk across the front of the 4<sup>th</sup> Green from the 3<sup>rd</sup> or across the 6<sup>th</sup> Fairway after playing the 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Men's Competition Report** **Dennis Merchant**

The Edinburgh Stableford was won by Alan and Chris Cowans on count back from Colin and Nik Everall, both with 44 points. Keith Allingham and John McIntyre were 3<sup>rd</sup> with 40 points.

### **Men's Interclub Matches** **Simon Best**

#### **Men's Inter Club Matches - Format refreshed for 2010**

Mid-Herts plays ten friendly matches, home or away on Saturday mornings, against other clubs in our region. As well, there is an attractive annual match against Ross-on-Wye GC (away in September 2010) and a home fixture each year against the Herts Police on a Tuesday evening in July.

All adult male members of the club are eligible to represent Mid-Herts. If you haven't played in a club match before, why not put your name down and enjoy a sociable, but competitive game? You are welcome regardless of your handicap.

The inter-club matches give members the opportunity to play other courses – or to host other clubs at Mid-Herts – for just the cost of their meals (£10 a match in 2010) and drinks, without any green fee.

The arrangements for the home Saturday morning matches in 2010 have been revised in the light of feedback from members and the practice at some of the other clubs we visit, mainly to produce an earlier finish. The morning starts with Alan's excellent full English breakfast at 8am, which sets us up well for four-ball better ball match play, starting at two tees from 8.45am so as not to interfere with the Saturday morning swindles. We finish the morning with sandwiches and chips, wearing smart casual dress and with no need to change after playing.

The speeches will be early in the proceedings. There will be differences in some of these details when we play away, but the broad structure is common to all the matches.

Sign-up sheets are posted on the notice board about six weeks before each match and the selected team list will appear no later than a week before the match. We give preference to those who sign up earliest and in the case of away matches, to members who have played in home matches in the same or previous years, but we also have an eye to including players who are new to club matches.

The season opens with two away matches at Harpenden Common on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March and at East Herts on 20<sup>th</sup> March. The first home match is the visit of Harpenden (Hammond's End) on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. Simon Best (01438 833306) can provide any further information you might need.

## **Ladies' Competition Report** **From Sandra Lindsay**

The ladies AGM in November went very smoothly thanks to Brenda Reintjes being very well organized. Cynthia Hayhurst is now our Lady Captain, with Brenda as her Vice Captain. We have two new lady committee members - Joan MacBean and Hilary Armstrong. Welcome ladies and good luck to you all in 2010.

Major trophy winners for 2009 were:-

- Davis Cup: Rachel Keens won the scratch K.O. and Ladies Club Champion for 2009, runner up Sue Ludlow.
- Temple Cup - Gill Burn, runner up Jane Bennett.
- Silver Trophy - Deborah Conner, runner up Sue Ludlow.
- A. P. Ford Cup for the best gross aggregate at the spring and autumn meetings was won by Pippa Legg. Pat Marshall won the Helena Spencer Cup for the best net aggregate at the spring and autumn meetings.
- Maldwyn Jones for medal winners was won by Liz Carter, runner up Nicky Singer.
- Golfer of the Year - Silver division was awarded to Mary Hoare based on scores in seven medals April to October and the Howell and Jubilee competitions. The equivalent for the Bronze division was shared by Sue Hailey and Gill Gadsden.
- Congratulations to Mary Hoare for winning the EWGA medal for the four best net medal scores in 2009.

As we all know the snow delayed a golfing start to 2010. Fortunately we did play our first big competition, the January Crystal Stableford; teams of 3, best 2 scores count. The winning score of 88 points by Gill Sheppard, Pat Carnell and Jill Wood was an amazing result. They now take a 10 point lead forward to next round.

During January and February we have used our temporary card with changed stroke indices, playing the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole as a par 4 and evaluating the forward tee on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Thinking about where we now get shots on the holes helps ignore the cold weather.

The Mail on Sunday team won their first round at home against Welwyn Garden City – a very close encounter saved by Rachel Keens winning on the 19<sup>th</sup> hole – well done.

Well done to the Pearson team who won their first match, away, at Chesfield Downs last Friday.

Lucy Williams played in the British University Strokeplay Midlands event at Woodhall Spa (Hotchkin Course) in November shot 4 under for a 69 followed by 2 under for a 71 to win the girls' event by 11 shots and beat all of the boys by 2. This has cut her handicap to +1.3.

We all congratulate Linda Hyam who is Ladies' Vice Captain Nominee from November 2010.

### From the past Lady Captain Su Hawke

#### Herts Air Ambulance benefits from our charity raising



On an extremely bitter day we finally managed to present the cheque to the Herts Air Ambulance. We were lucky enough to actually see the helicopter as five minutes after we arrived they were called out and it was all stations go. The helicopter takes a maximum of four minutes to be up and off. At the site there is always a pilot, doctor and paramedic on hand for instant action. As we were told, Herts is one of the few that actually have this facility and means that 'A & E' can go straight to the site saving valuable time for the accident victim.

We were told that the costs had risen from £80,000 a month to £120,000. This is because the helicopter is used much more often than they had expected. They hadn't realised how much it would be needed! We also have several major roads going through Herts and, sadly, that brings with it an increased number of accidents. Apparently road, rugby and golf are the major areas of need. So let's hope it's around if any of us need them.

Thank you all so much for your extremely generous support which means that through every ones efforts for my charity we have raised over £18,000. Incredible.

#### Tom Shadbolt represents England in Quadrangular Golf Tournament

After finishing runners-up for the past three years, England sent a powerful team to Spain in a bid to recapture the annual Costa Ballena Quadrangular Tournament title it last won in 2006.

England beat the home nation, Spain, but were up against an even tougher German Men's team who won all three of their matches. England finished runners-up .

## Mid-Herts tackles the Arsenal pitch

Jody, our course manager, has a brother who is deputy head groundsman at the Emirates Stadium. He put a call through to him to ask if they could use our Verti-Drain machine to help with some compaction issues they had. We were happy to help and our guys went along to ensure all was in order.



## Dates for your diary John Tanner and the Captain's Committee

**Friday 5 March:** Captain's Charity Quiz – book now to avoid disappointment

**Friday 19 March:** Draw Night

## Advertising Members' Services

We are pleased to offer this opportunity for members to advertise their services in the Mid-Herts Golfer.

If you would like to advertise in a future issue for a small fee, please contact Martin Bennet.

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