

Welcome to the new Captain Mike Hayhurst



Mike Hayhurst was inaugurated as Captain at the AGM at the end of April, taking over from Brian Woodward. Mike has been a member for 25 years and is well known to all sections of the Club having played, at one time or another, in all the men's and mixed competitions, swindles, roll-ups and matches (except the scratch matches!). The Club has, however gained some 300+ new members in the last 10 years, so there will undoubtedly be many members who do not know him.

From 1996 he served two terms on Captain's committee followed immediately by four years on the Board and has had an input to most of the things which have happened in the past 15 years.

Mike was born in Blackburn, but has not lived there since University. He has lived with his wife Cynthia in Sunderland, Exeter, Hatfield, California and Canada, before settling in Harpenden in 1980, where their children spent the latter part of their schooldays. He has played golf for 35 years, having learned to play in California and remembers that, in two years there, he did play golf in the rain, once. Mike played most of his golf casually with friends and with societies until joining Mid-Herts at the behest of two of his colleagues at British Aerospace, Islwyn Jones and Stan Fitzgerald.

Mike says of his Captaincy "It was never my expectation to be the Captain. I joined the committees to be able to give something back to the Club I so enjoyed. I am greatly honoured to be Captain of this wonderful Club and look forward to serving the membership in this way. I want to work with the Board and the other committees to enhance our reputation for being a friendly club that welcomes all golfers and their guests to play our lovely course and enjoy our facilities. This is in addition to the aims of having sound finances and a course which everyone, members and visitors alike, look forward to playing and having played, want to play again.

Mike's chosen charity for the year is the Jumbulance Trust, based in Lamer Lane. They fund and operate a small fleet of coaches that are highly modified to take disabled people, adults and children, on day trips and more extended holidays. The modifications involve providing wheelchair access and fittings to hold them on the journey. There are similar facilities for stretchers, disabled toilets and also emergency medical equipment. The Jumbulances are all registered as ambulances - and have the requisite flashing blue light. Most of those travelling would be unable to go on these trips at all without the facilities provided. One of their fleet was replaced last year after having done 1.5 million miles over 20 years -75,000 miles a year!

The Captain's Committee is:

Peter McIntyre: Vice Captain
John Tanner: Social
Dave Smith: Social
Geoff Proudlock: Competitions

Simon Best: Matches
Mike Gadsden: Greens
Chris Newsum: Handicaps

Captain's Day – 15 May

Mike's first main event will be to welcome all members along to Captain's Day. The competition will be for teams of 3, best 2 to count on each hole. Teams may be men or ladies or both and each team may include one junior. There is no need to book to play, just turn up with your team or turn up and fix up. This will be a competitive but fun event. As well as main prizes for those who take part in the competition, there will be a putting competition in the afternoon. 5-day members may take part from 1 pm without paying the green fee. Also, from 12 - 3pm and 5 - 7pm there will be a barbeque and for those who don't want to miss the Cup Final, Mike has arranged viewing facilities in the clubhouse. Cards must be in by 6.30pm.

There will be an evening prize presentation at 7pm, following the Captain's Drive-In.

Captains together

Cynthia Hayhurst is the Lady Captain. This is the first time in the Club's history that a husband and wife have been Captains at the same time. Many husbands and wives have both been Captains but not at the same time. In recent years, we have had Laurie and Ann Toes, Brian and Chris Gregory, Mike and Ann Nash and Alistair and Pam Clark. Cynthia is by now well-experienced, having been Captain since the Ladies' AGM in November last year.



Cynthia, who is a West Country girl, met Mike on a student holiday in the south of France. She trained as a teacher and rose to be deputy head before retiring. During that period, they had 2 boys and now have 5 grandchildren in California and Cambridge

After playing golf a little in California and Canada, Cynthia started to play regularly in 1987 and joined Harpenden Common because at that time there was a five year waiting list here. She joined Mid-Herts as well in 1993, but found working and being a business lady at two clubs was too time-consuming, so left the Common in 1996. Cynthia retired from teaching in 1999 and almost immediately joined the Ladies' Committee, becoming Handicap Secretary and then Ladies' Secretary. There was a short gap in which Cynthia was chairman of HEDFAS, followed by her being elected Lady Vice Captain in 2008.

Cynthia's charity is CRY, Cardiac Risk in the Young. It is devoted to publicising and setting up diagnostic facilities to begin the prevention of the 15 deaths a week in this country of young people (14 -35) who are otherwise fit and well, but die suddenly from heart-related causes. Many of them excel at their chosen sports and die during participation in or training for them.

Cynthia and Mike are looking forward to this unique experience but recognise that it will be a very busy summer.

Annual General Meeting

For those of you who were unable to attend the AGM which was held on Sunday 25 April, the following is a summary of the reports.

From the Treasurer Phil Bunbury

Phil began by saying that he would like to reflect on where we were some 16 months ago at the start of the financial year 2009. In reality", he said, "that year started with the Club financially looking over the edge of an abyss. We had just lost 10% of our membership by



number, we were devoid of cash and our current liabilities exceeded the current assets. And all the time we were in the grips of deep recession. So I hope you will be pleased and reassured with the financial progress that has been made throughout the year which is a significant first stride on the road to recovery.”

The income secured was achieved by maximising the Club’s three income streams, membership, societies and green fees. Golf club membership is nationally in decline but by the end of the year the club had clawed back close to what was lost at the start. Societies and green fees increased by a whopping 64%. Throughout the period expenditure had been kept tightly in check.

Fortunately, the clubhouse was free from any major unforeseen expenditure. Also, the irrecoverable VAT cost was very low, reflecting negligible capital expenditure. All in all a result of income exceeding expenditure of £35k was as welcome as it was necessary. He reported that not only does the Club have sufficient base reserves, it also generated cash, so is now able to restart the capital expenditure programme that the membership indicated be pursued in last year’s survey. And very importantly the current assets exceed current liabilities. Phil then outlined how the current year has started. Following the change to the subscription year, membership interim uptake due 1 January was bang on budget. Results for the first quarter were in line with expectations. The Board has therefore actioned the following expenditure.

- Replacement of course machinery that was aged between 5 and 12 years. There is no plan for further expenditure this year.
- Materials compound has been moved on a pay back of 5 years and freed up car park space.
- The overdue redecoration of clubhouse has taken place.
- First phase bunker work commenced in accordance with its own 6 year plan.

Finally, the three year plan identifies the need to strive to maintain a level of income so as to allow a responsible capital expenditure outlay without damage to liquidity.

From the outgoing Chairman John Sefton

At the AGM Phil Bunbury laid out very clearly the financial performance of Mid–Herts in 2009, and indicated the current sound position of our club. The principal point I made could be summarised as - Good progress has been made, but there is still a great deal to do and there is no room for complacency.

Last September you will recollect that we held a survey of members. In contrast to the recent election there was an overwhelming view expressed that members both enjoyed Mid-Herts, the course and the way golf was organised at the club. The Board were also encouraged by the support members gave to the priorities that were being pursued: focus on the golf course to ensure a challenging but enjoyable experience for all, and the pursuit of a sound financial position.

We have encouraged visitors to provide income that complements that generated by members but have been very mindful that we must recognise the interests of members. That will remain a continuing priority.

We keep stating that we must have cash reserves of at least £75,000- indeed £100,000 is the objective to ensure we can deal with any unexpected problem that may arise.

That has been a fundamental strategy of the Board in the last 2 years and I believe that the new Board will continue to encourage financial rectitude.

At the AGM the 3 Year Plan which was presented to members contained a range of projects to improve the course and the club infra structure. The new Board will be considering the priorities and timing over the next few months and we will await their decisions with both interest and confidence.

On a personnel level I have enjoyed my period on the Board and know that the new team will serve members well and continue to safeguard the long term future of Mid-Herts Golf Club.

At last year's AGM, we were asked whether the Board would be reconsidering CASC. We discussed the issue at several Board meetings. It was agreed unanimously that the club would benefit from the additional income of around £35,000 per year and that in our opinion the risks were very limited. However, we recognised the mood prevailing within the membership and decided this was not an appropriate time to re-present the issue at an AGM. We do however believe that it should be regularly reviewed in the light of the Club's finances, the view taken by other clubs and the attitude of government to CASC.

We were also asked at last year's AGM if the Rules of the club would be published on our web site. We have agreed that we require a secure members' area on the site to publish such documents. A secure area will be included if we upgrade our web site. However, this is not one of the priority areas for capital expenditure.

John concluded: "In conclusion, may I thank all the staff for their dedication and commitment to Mid-Herts which makes it such a special place for so many of us."

Board Members

John Sefton is now stepping down from the Board of Management, having been Chairman for two years. President, Robert Daley, thanked John for his hard work and excellent leadership.

John Ireland was elected to the Board of Management and the Board agreed unanimously that John be the new Chairman. Other Board members are: Phil Bunbury, Paul Dugdale, Janet Biscoe, Lewis Hawke, Mike Hayhurst, and Cynthia Hayhurst.

Questions raised at the AGM

A number of questions and or comments were raised by Members at the AGM and we would like to share these with you, together with the answers given by the Board.

Q: Given that over 30% of club members are seniors, how do we ensure that they are adequately represented and that their voice is heard?

A: All officers of the Club are elected by members. Our current officers include a more than fair representation of seniors.

Q: What efforts are made to find out why members leave the Club?

A: The General Manager makes personal contact with every member who resigns. Of those who have left this year, most have left because they are moving away, no longer playing as much golf as they wish to, have changed jobs or have lost their jobs and cannot afford to continue membership. Sadly some members have died. One couple cited 'playing arrangements' as a reason for leaving – they did not like the restriction of not being able to play together on a Sunday morning because the course is not open to Ladies.



Q: Given our marketing efforts to attract new members, visitors and societies, it is important that the Club's website is upgraded to create the right first impressions. This is as important as the car parking area.

A: Thank you for this comment. The Board will consider this in its plans.

Q: The subscriptions this year showed the fees for the Golf affiliation fees as separate costs - £10.50 for Men and £17.50 for Ladies. This should have carried an explanation.

A: Yes we apologise. We should have explained the rationale for this. The affiliation fees have always been an element of the subscription but not shown separately. We have now shown these fees separately and this avoids paying unnecessary VAT. However, the calculations for the subscriptions factor this in and Members are not paying for this additionally.

Welcome to new members

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

Brian Murray	Robert Jordan
Thomas Greenhalgh	Matthew Ford
Gill Nuttall	Andrew MacKinnon
Michael Jelley	Robert Carragher
Philip Davies	Russ Powles
Angela Cowie	Matthew Talbot
Katie Frost	Andrew Lloyd
Chris Ward	Ian Sperry
Lyn Evans	Steven Sear
Stephen Gartland	Robert Howes
David Harding	Dave Boynton
Harry Ward	Pamela Roberts
David Hartnup	Stephen Wright

On the course

From Paul Dugdale

All is beginning to come together, but we now need a little help from above i.e. a little rain to start the grass growing. In early May, we will refill the bunkers so that they will all be in play again. The first of May should see the end of preferred lies but if we do not get some growth we may ask for a delay in this for a couple of weeks.

The seventh: We are delighted with the appearance of this and look forward to bringing the rest of the course up to this standard. We hope you like the James Braid type mound beside the green.

The fifth: The turf has taken well and Jody and his team are cutting it daily. They will continue to dress it and slowly cut it shorter. Hopefully by early June we will be using it again.

Heather: As you can see the chemicals used on the heather patches have killed the grass around it and you will note we have considerable new growth on the 15th. Unfortunately, elsewhere, it is struggling, but we will not give up and will persist in our efforts.

I wish you all good luck with your play. Let's all have a great season.

Open Day

Our Open Day last weekend was a great success and 14 new members will be joining the Club as a result. This brings the total number of new members so far this year to 31.

Mid-Herts hosts prestigious events

On Monday, 26 April we hosted the Hertfordshire Ladies' Spring Meeting. A full field of 84 ladies from Hertfordshire Clubs, including our own, played from early morning start. The event was organised by Pat Carnell (who is on the Ladies' County committee) and Martin. Eight of our ladies and four men helped on the day, starters, ball spotting, selling raffle tickets and running the half way house refreshments. All the staff made every effort to make it a success. The County President said the lunch was the best she had had at any Club – praise indeed. Alan and his staff did an amazing buffet, fit for a Michelin star restaurant. The winning team was Gill Sheppard, Pat Marshall and Liz Carter. A great advert for our club and the course.

On Friday, 30 April we hosted the Hertfordshire Past Captains 'Captain's Day' where our very own John Saunders, as Captain of the Herts Captains, was host. 81 Past Captains took part in the afternoon 3 balls, 45 of whom also played in the 9-hole morning event. The weather played its capricious part in the afternoon, with hail among other conditions. The course and the catering were much complimented and John's organisation ensured that all had a very good outing.

Matches

Spaces are still available for the men's club matches at home against Harpenden (Sat 22 May) and Mill Green (Sat 29 May). Please sign up on the notice board if you are interested.

Captain's Prize

Captain's Prize day (24 April) was blessed with the most perfect conditions – warm weather, blue skies and a gentle breeze. The conditions brought in some excellent scores but the winning score was unprecedented – Colin Hicks managed to turn in a net 61. Playing off a handicap of 18, he played an amazing 8 under. Needless to say he has been cut 2 shots! The CSS was 68.

2009/2010 Club Trophies

Captain's Prize	Colin Hicks
Junior Golfer of the Year	William Aldred
Edinburgh Trophies	Alan and Chris Gowans
Coxon Sale	2009 Phil Bunbury 2010 Mark Tant
President's Plates	Ted Marriott and Alan Westcott
Silver Bowl	Chris Newsum
Sladen Slaver	Mike Hayhurst
Hampden Bowl	William Lake
Anderson Trophy	John Gatehouse
Jubilee Cup	Eddie Lintott
Marriott Cup for Grandads	Richard Downes
Winter Tankards	Not Played
Tom Brown Trophy	Peter Brattle
Berry Bowls	Steve Murray and Lindsay Murray-Gray
Halsey K/O Medal Cup	Paul Mayles
Mid Week Mixed Foursomes	Mike and Cynthia Hayhurst
Moxham	Jeremy Day and Nik Smith
Paulian Jugs	Paul Dugdale and John Gatehouse



Horace Rawlins Cup	Julien Negus
Nunn Scratch Trophy	Chris Tingey
Winter Scratch	Paul Mayles
Associate/5 Day Knock Out	Robin Orchard and Nik Goode
Turner Tassie	Tom Bunbury
Mixed Tankards	Paul Truckle and Mary Hoare
Silver Goblets	Dick Howland and Dave Smith
Bowen Trophies	John Watt and Paul Mayles
Centenary Cup	Chris May
Challenge Cup	Chris May
Scriven Jefferies	John O'Hara
Royds Club Champion	Chris Tingey

Yoga for Golfers

Our yoga evenings are proving to be very popular and some claim that increased suppleness is leading to a better swing on the golf course! Spaces are still available for anyone who would like to join in. Beginners are welcome and it is open to both men and women.

The classes are currently held on Tuesday evenings at 7.45pm in the upstairs area. At £5 session, it is very good value. The next class will take place on Tuesday 25 May. If you would like more information, please call Neil Mawdsley.

Dates for your diary

John Tanner and the Captain's Committee

On the 31st May, Bank Holiday Monday, there is the traditional mixed greensomes, a man and lady as partners. There is a list up to sign for the game and the dinner.

On the 4th June there is mixed evening golf, where any men/women combinations can take part. It is followed that evening by the last Draw Night until the autumn and all participants in the golf can book their meal before playing.

For the duration of the World Cup, the big television from the upstairs room will be installed in the bar and we plan to have food and drink available for those who would like to watch the matches in a convivial environment. More details nearer the time.

The 18th July is the last day of The Open. The Sladen Salver is being played that day. Again we shall be organising food and beverages for those who want to cheer on the British stars competing at St Andrews.

The biggest event of the early summer will be the Captain's Midsummer Music on the 24th July. It will have a combination of the best of Alan's excellent cuisine with superb musical entertainment and dancing. Tickets will be on sale soon, so keep an eye out for the announcement.

Advertising Members' Services

Martin Bennet -

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.