

STOVER GOLF CLUB

NEWSLETTER (SEPTEMBER 2011)

Captain's Corner

The summer season is coming to a close, but there is still a lot to play for.

The South Devon league is coming to a climax and it looks like it will be a two horse race between Stover and Teignmouth. We wish the best of luck to Neil and his team.

At the Torbay cup we came 2nd behind the hosts Dainton, it was a great weekend played in the right spirit. On the first day we held a 3 point lead but we were overtaken the following day in the singles by a strong Dainton side, who had also won through to the final of the scratch knockout beating Stover 2 matches to 1. The final was played at Churston and it went to the eighteenth green of the last match. Dainton have now qualified for the finals at Bovey Castle in October.

I would like to thank everyone who supported my away day at Oake Manor, the sun shone and a good day was had by all. Well played Jack Potter, Nigel Roberts and Phil German who came in with a winning team score of 82.

Stover is now beginning to recover from the early, dry summer and the greens are now at the best they have been all year. The club are very grateful to all the members that have volunteered as a Hampton's Hero or a hole sponsor, it is very noticeable on some of the holes how much effort people are putting in to repair divots and improve the bunkers. A big vote of thanks must go to our pond warden Barry Ravenscroft for all his hard work.

Finally on Saturday 8th October we are holding an End of Season Bash and everyone is invited. It is intended to be a casual evening with a buffet and disco so please purchase tickets from over the bar - price £7.50.

I look forward to seeing you on the fairways

Dave Marks

Hele Park Golf Club

As members are probably already aware Hele Park is closing its membership categories with effect from March 2012 and will become a pay and play course only until such time as it is re-developed as building land.

The Hele Park owners have agreed to circulate its members with membership offers from other clubs (none of the local clubs currently have waiting lists) and we are aware of several clubs who are in the process of doing this.

We believe Stover is the natural home for many Hele Park members to move to and with the continuing fall off in membership in golf clubs generally your Committee believe that it is in the interests of all our members that we do what we can to attract Hele Park players.

The Committee have therefore agreed a package that is being offered to Hele Park members which will enable them to have dual club membership over this winter, continue with their existing Hele Park membership categories (but at Stover) between April and August before being absorbed into the Stover membership categories next September.

Membership Categories

We were visited recently by a representative from the English Golf Union (EGU) who made a presentation regarding the effects of the recession and the drop off in golf club membership everywhere.

She emphasised the need for golf clubs to consider moving towards more flexible forms of membership that encourage people to take up the sport without necessarily the immediate commitment to the expense of full club membership.

Whilst we would all like to retain the status quo, we must move with the times and recognise what is happening around us - the membership format of most if not all clubs around us is changing and the message from the EGU was clearly that clubs must adapt to survive.

With this in mind a sub-committee is currently reviewing our membership categories to see what can be done to attract new players, particularly those at the entry level to the sport, and possibly to retain those at the twilight of their playing career.

This initiative was already well underway prior to the Hele Park announcement but in the circumstances is extremely timeous.

The proposals that arise from this process will either be put to the membership at the AGM or, to allow for a fuller debate, possibly at an EGM.

Financial Results for 2010/11

Despite the Treasurer being advised during a recent visit to Churston that Stover had gone into administration (!!!!), it is pleasing to advise members that we have had a reasonably successful year - the catering account has been brought within budget, capital expenditure has been restricted to essential items and although the auditors have yet to crawl across the books we expect our cash flow to be at least on budget for the year.

From the Green Committee

Volunteer help - things are moving!

As many of you will know, we have instituted a member's volunteer help programme to support Jason Hampton and his team in the upkeep of the course.

Firstly members have come forward to act as 'custodians' of individual holes. Whenever they play their chosen hole, they will undertake the sort of 'housekeeping' that can be done without unduly delaying play:- divot repair on tees; clearance of rubbish; and raking and weeding of bunkers, where necessary. They might also repair pitch marks on their green; (sadly, this still doesn't seem to be common practice amongst many members!). These custodians might also suggest ways of improving their patch. We still need more supporters to cover later holes on the back nine, so please get in touch with Graham Green or Will Hendry if you would care to help.....

We have enlisted the support and expertise of Barry Ravenscroft in the supervision and care of our ponds. In parallel to the role of Tree Warden on the course, Barry has agreed to be our first Pond Warden. From day one, Barry has thrown himself into this role, quite literally, jumping into the ponds in the cause of weed clearance. He has been up to his waist in muck and golf balls; most recently on the 4th pond, he was ably assisted by Rob Hudson, a Category 1 pusher of loaded wheelbarrows! The work is arduous and we are very grateful to Barry for his time and energy.

We have also begun course work through a group of volunteers called Hampton's Heroes; we met first to undertake staining of the wooden bridges and support rails on the course. So far about a dozen members have come forward, but the more we have, the lighter the work, as Confucius nearly said. We will finish the bridges, weather permitting, on Monday next, the 19th September, from 4.00pm onwards and then will meet from time to time through the year to do simple but time-consuming jobs on the course. Look out for the notices in the future and come and help.

We have also managed to fund some extra part-time greenkeepers until early Autumn and they have done useful work in many areas of the course - the regular upkeep of the river banks has been really noticeable and welcome.

The volunteer help is one attempt to maintain our best asset in these difficult financial times; However, the enthusiasm shown by those members who contribute and their evident pleasure in doing so is impressive- a communal stake in an enterprise, Stover Golf Club, that is important to us in so many different ways.

Our club belongs to its members and the more people who take a pride in it, and invest a little of themselves as well as their subscription, the better it will be.

Graham Green,
Chairman, Greens Committee

House News

WANTED - Keen gardeners!

Further to our chairman's initiative in creating a flower border by the 10th tee we are planning to expand on these horticultural enhancements by positioning a number of planters around the clubhouse. If you are a keen gardener and would be willing to assist in sprucing up our clubhouse area by planting these out and maintaining them in a voluntary capacity then please contact Pam Giles, Chairman of House. Costs will be covered and a watering system installed.

Did You Know?!

Stover 'Aces' set new record.

Four players scored a hole-in-one over a period of five days bringing Stover's golfing year to a stunning climax. During a Saturday medal round, Jason Hampton, a scratch player for many years, holed a superb 7 iron on the 13th for his own first 'ace'.

The mathematical chance of scoring a hole-in-one is approximately 1 in 45,000 attempts. Ryan Wheeler was unaware of this and three days later, during the weekly Junior Stableford, scored his own first 'ace', also on the 13th. Ryan, one of Stover's improving young players, calmly described hitting "*a smooth 6 iron that pitched a few feet short of the pin, and it ran straight in*".

On the following day Dave Mugford scored a hole-in-one during the Wednesday Stableford. He modestly described his 9 iron shot to the 7th green "*It was good. It was over the flag all the way.*" It was a little better than that! The ball pitched fifteen feet past the hole and spun back towards the hole. Unsighted by the bank of a bunker, Dave thought the ball close to the hole. Dave's playing partner Malcolm Ball knew better; "*It's gone in! I saw the flag move! It's gone in!*" and lo and behold they found the ball in the bottom of the cup.

Hampton, Wheeler and Mugford had set a new club record for the most holes-in-one in less than a week. In the final act of the drama and within an hour Tony Parr had added to the tally, again on the 7th hole! "*I just hit a nine-iron and it went in*". Tony explained nonchalantly.

Stover's new club record for the most holes-in-one in five days is now held by Messrs Hampton, Wheeler, Mugford and Parr.

Despite extensive research no reference has yet been found to that being exceeded by any other club.

It may well be that the Stover quartet have set a national record.

Does anyone know differently?



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