



The Golf Club – Secretary's Report

Words by Robert Forman (89-94)

The start of the year saw the potential Halford Hewitt squad gather at Gullane Golf Club in January for their annual trial and the following months saw plenty of Merchistonian golf being played, some good, some bad and some really bad.

The year was Bill Hannay's (54-58) second as Captain of the Club before handing the captaincy on to Alastair Milligan (58-63) at the Autumn meeting in August.

In terms of fixtures and competitions I report as follows:

Autumn Meeting

The Autumn Meeting was moved to the last weekend in August due to a fixture clash at the Bruntsfield Links, but that did not have any detrimental effect on the numbers of golfers or attendees at the dinner afterwards. We had 40 golfers meeting for lunch, prior to heading out for a shotgun start and to compete for the various prizes on offer. All attendees enjoyed the relaxed barbeque lunch that was laid on for us.

The course itself is undergoing some huge changes and the green staff should be complimented for ensuring that the course was in as good a condition that it was – we are all very much looking forward to playing the redesigned course in 2018.

Dinner was held in the dining room at Bruntsfield Links after the golf, there were over 50 people in attendance, including a number of wives, partners and other guests. Special thanks must go to the School Chaplain, Nick Blair, for coming along to the dinner with his wife Fiona. Nick gave a great update on the health of the School.

Bill then gave a brief summary of the golfing year, before handing over the Captaincy to Alastair Milligan.

After the speeches there was the usual presentation of prizes - the list of the prize winners is below.

Merchistonian Golf Club – Autumn Meeting 2017 – Results

Competition	Age Group	Type	Winner	Score/ Points	Runner-up	Score
Gold Medal	All	Scratch	Mike Rolland (98-03)	72	Pete Legget (03-11)	75
Silver Medal	All	Handicap	Sam Paulo (94-02)	67 (bih)	Phil Robson (94-01)	67
Merchistonian Quaich	Under 30	Scratch	Pete Legget	75 (bih)	Freddie Ward (07-11)	75
Abram Jug	Under 30	Stableford	Pete Legget (03-11)	36	Freddie Ward	34
Centenary Trophy	Under 40	Stableford	Sam Paulo (94-02)	42	Phil Robson	39
Biggart Donaldson Trophy	Over 40/Under 60	Stableford	David Morrison (83-89)	37 (bih)	Douglas Macrae (84- 90)	37
Allan Salver	Over 50	Scratch	Morison Zuill (50-55)	87	Gavin Thain (79-85)	91
Ness Tankard	Over 50	Handicap	Morison Zuill	76	Graeme Scott (53-58)	78
Hewat Driver	Over 60	Stableford	Morison Zuill	30	Graeme Scott	29
Biggart Memorial Trophy	Over 60	Scratch	Morison Zuill	87	Graeme Scott	92
Tujoh Puloh Tappit Hen	Over 69	Stableford	Morison Zuill	30	Graeme Scott	29
Mickel Cup	Past Captains	Stableford	Morison Zuill	30	Bill Peterkin (55-60)	28
Ladies	Ladies	Stableford	Niamh Waldron	29	Margaret Milligan	19

Special mention to Mike Rolland who won the Gold Medal for the fourth year running with a gross score of 72, Sam Paulo who won the Silver Medal for the second year running with a net 67 and Niamh Waldron, Head of Merchiston Juniors who won the Ladies prize with 29 stableford points.

Social Matches

There was a fairly full schedule of social matches this year including: Lorettonians, OG/Fettesians, Sedbergh and the match against the School boys. I would like to thank the Match Managers - Ian Wilson (72-77), Malcolm Gourlay (56-61), Gavin Thain and George Walker (69-74) - for the time and effort that they put into arranging these matches. It is much appreciated by the Committee and also the participants.

The results were as follows:

Lorettonians – There was a slight confusion with the OL match this year, in that we had a date in June for the fixture and Malcolm Gourlay had organised a team. Unfortunately, the date was incorrect and was scheduled to be in October at Prestwick – the Secretary was very apologetic for this confusion! Second time round, the team consisted of Robert Forman, Martin Stein (84-89), Graham Fisher (76-82), Michael Bremner (87-90), Connor Bolton (07-09), Grant Milligan (89-94), John Glen (83-90) and Graeme Dickie (75-80), who took on the Lorettonians in blustery conditions. At lunch we had a commanding lead with the pairings of Stein/Bolton, Forman/Glen and Dickie/Milligan all providing wins. In the afternoon Fisher and Bremner made amends to their loss in the morning by winning their matches with their respective partners. In total the match was won 5 ½ - 2 ½.

OG/Fettesians – Ian Wilson again took charge of the team at Panmure and the format this year was a three-ball sixsome Pinehurst. A great day was had by all in attendance although Ian's report did note that they had a "minor disaster" on the course – Merchiston halved one match and lost two. Fettes and Glenalmond tied for first place.

Old Sedberghians – The team consisting of George Walker (69-74), Freddie Ward, Sandy Corstorphine (59-64), Graham Hardie (66-71), Ian Ballantine (61-65), Charles Abram (65-69), Colin Barbour (78-83) and James Henderson (01-09) took on the OS team at Prestwick. As luck would have it, it was also the same day that the Club were taking on the Lorettonians at Prestwick and in extremely gusty conditions (precursor to Hurricane Ophelia) the team just came up short on the day. The morning matches were lost 2 ½ - 1 ½ and despite being bolstered by an excellent lunch in the company of the other MCS team ended up sharing the points in the afternoon to lose narrowly by 1 point overall.

School – On Sunday 18 June, the Merchiston Golf Academy played its annual match against the Merchistonians at Muirfield. Blessed with glorious sunshine, with little wind, and a pre-match lunch, that would equal any royal banquet, the match was set to be a cracker. In match one, the boys were up against it right from the start; four down through four holes, playing against two of the Halford stalwarts (Chris Cowan (79-85) and Harry Thomson (72-78)), the boys fought back hard, eventually losing on the 18th hole. Match two proved to be a tight affair also, and, had it not been for one or two, and too many stray shots from the boys, the loss on the last hole could have been quite different! In the final match, and playing Muirfield for the first time, the two "young guns" proved unfazed by the course's reputation, as one of the toughest links courses in the world. With impressive know how and quality precision shots, the youngsters went round in three over par, which, especially in foursomes golf, is mighty impressive! Noting that match manager, Gavin Thain, was in this last match and that he stated "thankfully we did not lose on the 10th but it was not long after that", I will leave you to your imagination what you think that result finished up as..! All in all, this was a wonderful day out, with the Merchistonians victorious in the final result, winning 2-1.

As with previous years I would recommend participating in these social matches. They provide a fabulous opportunity to play some of the finest courses in Scotland at a knock down rate and in good company.

Representative Matches

As usual the Club entered teams in the Stenhouse Quaich, the Halford Hewitt, the Cyril Gray, the Senior Wayfarers and the Queen Elizabeth. As with the social matches, I would like to thank the match managers: Stuart Briggs (60-65), Chris Cowan, Martin Stein and David Hutchison (73-76) for organising the teams at these events.

Scottish Wayfarers/Stenhouse Quaich – Once again, Merchiston were the winners of the Stenhouse Quaich played as always at the Golf House Club, Elie in March. The competition involves eight person teams from six schools (Merchiston, Edinburgh Academy, Fettes, Loretto, Glenalmond and Strathallan) playing each other once over the weekend. Merchiston won the quaich for the fourth time in a row and the eighth time in the last nine years, beating Loretto into second place. Thanks to all the players who played over the weekend – C Cowan, D Cowan (84-91), M Stein, C Smith (96-02), M Rolland, R Crummey (06-09), S Biggart (96-03), H Thomson, D Thomson (74-80), J McIntosh (02-09), D Morrison, S Briggs, Q Dunlop (57-60) & D Hutchison (73-76).

The Queen Elizabeth Coronation Schools Trophy - The last weekend in September saw the Merchistonian team of Martin Stein, David Morrison, Stephen Biggart, Mike Rolland, Pete Legget (03-11), and Freddie Ward compete in the QE at the Royal Burgess. Lenzie Academy were the first round

opponents. Ward and Leggett won the top match but then disaster struck. Stein and Morrison had been 1up on 17th tee, but lost 1 down on 18th. That left Rolland and Biggart who were heroically hanging on with a 9 foot putt on the last being holed to take the game into extra holes. Up the 19th Biggart hit a very good drive and Rolland hit a lovely shot into 2 feet. Sadly Lenzie knocked their shot in to 2 feet and closed out the match.

Halford Hewitt - The Merchistonian golf team of Martin Stein, Jamie McIntosh, Chris Cowan, Dougie Cowan, Charlie Simpson (94-98), Ross Crummey, Chris Smith, Robbie Bremner (85-91), Harry Thomson and Mike Rolland to Kent for the Halford Hewitt competition. We met Harrow in the first round and after losing in that round last year and then having to play in the plate we were happy to avoid that fate this year with a good first round victory. We progressed to the quarter finals by beating Radley 4-1. We then had a very tight match with Haileybury only winning at the first extra hole thanks to a brilliant birdie from Chris Smith and Robbie Bremner. Robbie's epic 6iron to 12" at the 19th being the shot that took us through. In the semi-final we met Ampleforth who were the better team on the day and deserved the win. In summary; a good campaign with the team acquitting themselves well both on and off the course at Royal Cinque Ports GC. Special mention goes to Douglas Cowan who reached his 51st game at the HH during the campaign.

Cyril Gray - The Cyril Gray Tournament took place at Worplesdon Golf Club on 22, 23 and 24 June. The Merchistonian Team was David Hutchison, Graeme Dickie, Donald Thomson, John McKean (75-81), Alistair Duncan (69-73) and Harry Thomson. There was a disappointing start to the tournament as the Merchistonian Team lost 2-1 to Wellingborough. However on the Friday the Merchistonian Team comprehensively defeated Eastbourne 3-0 in the morning and Stonyhurst 3-0 in the afternoon. On the morning of 24 June we lost narrowly to Rossal.

Senior Wayfarers – Senior Wayfarers took place at the end of April at Western Gales Golf Club. The Merchistonian Team was David Hutchison, Thomson, Roger Baird (73-78), Alistair Duncan, Martin Judd (76-69) and Gavin Spencer (73-78). The Merchistonian Team were lead qualifiers on the Saturday afternoon, defeated Strathallan comprehensively in the semi-final on Sunday morning and lost narrowly to Glenalmond in the final on Sunday afternoon.

Joining the Club

The fixture list for 2018 will be published in January and I hope that as many of you as possible will take the opportunity to sign up for representing the school and the club when this is issued. If you are interested then please do get in touch as we are always keen to attract new members of all abilities for social and competitive golf alike. In the meantime I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible throughout the 2018 golfing season.

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