



The Centenary Newsletter 2021

Well, after the doom and gloom of 2020 the society has arrived at its Centenary! Just 3 years after the RAF formed on 1st April 1918, our predecessors formed the RAF Officers Golf Association and held their first Meeting at Sandy Lodge on 26th April 1921. St George's Hill was the next venue and a super photograph on our web-site captures 26 immaculately attired golfers on the clubhouse steps. The society's secretary and our most distinguished golfer of that era, Cecil Hayward, was an England international – the first of many RAF players. Cecil ran the society for almost 30 years and is rightly known as the Father of RAF golf. Sadly the society's records were lost when his house was bombed in World War 2, but our record of the minutes of all AGMs and committee meetings since 1945 is complete. It tells an interesting story. On 17th April 1945, Cecil chaired a committee of 4 Air Commodores including Douglas Macfadyen, father of current member Sir Ian Macfadyen. They decided to reform the society as soon as hostilities were over, to open it to all ranks and to make the annual subscription £1. Their foresight created the society it is today.

In the 1950s and for many years thereafter our membership was over 1000. On production of an ID card, for a much reduced green fee our members were privileged to play at the top courses in UK, such as Sunningdale, Wentworth, Royal Lytham & St Annes and Troon. By then, the RAF had produced many outstanding golfers including amateurs such as Laddie Lucas, and professionals including Henry Cotton and Dick Burton, both Open Champions. RAF ladies had also made their mark; Enid Wilson, Pam Barton, Jean Donald and Molly Wallis were all National Ladies Champions as were RAFGS Affiliated members Jill Thornhill and Vanessa Marvin. No less than 9 Ryder Cup, 14 Walker Cup and 4 Curtis Cup players have worn RAF uniform. RAF players have won 172 international events and 320 County Championships.

Cecil Beamish, an Irish international, won the greatest number of RAFGS competitions and was our President from 1985-1999. He was succeeded by Sir Patrick Hine. 'Paddy' as he is known to all, was the most exciting young prospect to emerge on the golfing scene in the early 50s; aged just 17 he achieved the unique feat of winning both the England Boys trophy and the Brabazon Trophy – the England Men's Strokeplay Championship. He and David Harrison, another highly successful amateur golfer, were appointed Captains of the R&A. Our members continue to win competitive events; we congratulate Mark Cooke on winning the Lincolnshire Seniors Championship in 2020.

But for many reasons 2020 was not a year to remember fondly. Peter Alliss, who was our longest-serving member, an outstanding professional golfer and for decades the BBC's voice of golf sadly died. Peter was one of our strongest supporters; every year he thanked me for posting the Newsletter and wished us well. One of our Vice-Presidents, Charles Donovan also passed away. The instigator of the Scottish Tour and a past Chairman, Charles was a charming man with a lovely

way with words. A distinguished after-dinner speaker, his rendition of 'The Lion and Alfred Ramsbottom' was legendary. Among those to die from Covid-19 was our previous secretary, the much-loved Harry Griffiths. To say that Harry was a character is a serious understatement. He moved the society into the 21st century and more than anyone he led the renaissance of the Scottish Tour at a time when its popularity was waning. He was a familiar figure at many RAFGS events, with an idiosyncratic golf swing influenced by various rugby injuries. His many friends will remember his sense of humour, his enthusiasm and his charm.

Last year all our events up to the end of August were cancelled and at one stage it seemed that the whole year would be a complete write-off. However, in September and October we miraculously fitted in 3 Meetings and 4 matches. The matches against 3 of our doughtiest opponents – Moor Park, Sonning and Henley – resulted in defeats, albeit a very narrow one at Moor Park. But we did manage to halve our Foursomes match against the Seniors at Woking, aided by a narrow victory for new member Justin Muir and your secretary, who managed to get a hole-in-one!

Our Meetings started with 33 players at Fulford. We played just one round, but the club catered for us well and the scores were excellent. Martin Old, the defending champion, was going well with an amazing 24 points on the front 9 before he had the misfortune to damage his elbow. Scratch golfer Mark Cooke logged 5 birdies in the middle 9 holes in his gross 71. But the clear winner was new member Tom Dobbins who scored a tremendous 44 points. Cefin Parry was 2nd with Mark Cooke 3rd. Jenny Smale pipped Tony Doveston on countback for the Veteran's Salver.

Our first venture to Wellingborough Golf Club was a great success despite inclement weather. We welcomed 37 players – an excellent turnout – including 5 new members - Dan Ashwell, Ian King, Kath Malvern, Huw and Liz Rees. The course played well despite recent work on the greens and the catering was good too. With 37 points Q Dixon was the winner of the Swinton Cup - his first RAFGS success but not, I suspect, the last. His name is now engraved on the trophy along with that of Henry Cotton. Ollie Whyatt, Nigel Ashworth and Liz Rees were just one point behind.

34 golfers took part in the Winter Meeting at Sandy Lodge. The weather was dismal for the first 2 hours, but Sandy Lodge lies on a glacial moraine and drains well so the course was eminently playable with excellent greens. Tim Evans won the Roses Bowl with a super round of 38 points, with Gordon Varley 2nd with 37 and John Evans 3rd with 35. The club ensured that we were all catered for in style and safety, so apart from the weather the day went well.

On the administration front, your committee broke new ground in 2020 with 3 meetings on Zoom! In anticipation of the usual AGM at Newark being cancelled, they discussed detailed arrangements for our Centenary celebrations. These included the design of a revamped logo which is more representative of our RAF heritage and which now appears on this Newsletter, on our new ensign and on a range of accessories purchased as prizes for all our Meetings in 2021. These include: holdalls, umbrellas, shoe bags, scorecard holders, tote bags, caps, towels, water bottles, pitch repairers, ball markers and golf balls. These are all high quality products. Those of you who doubt that you will win a prize may purchase any of the items by completing the enclosed order form.

The committee also commissioned Glenmuir to embroider our new logo on a range of their knitwear products. These include polo shirts, for which our preferred colour is light blue, various sweaters and gilets. The items are displayed on the Glenmuir web-site and are attractively priced. They can be ordered by using the enclosed form. Note that I will need payment with the order. Prototype versions of Glenmuir garments on display late last year received favourable comments.

After lengthy debate, the committee could not decide whether we should enter our next century with a new tie! So in advance of holding a virtual AGM on Zoom, members were asked to indicate their preference. Of the 83 responses, 9 abstained, 12 preferred the green tie, and 62 preferred the idea of a dark blue tie. This clear mandate authorised the committee to proceed with commissioning a new tie on a dark blue background. An example will soon appear on our web-

site. It will cost the princely sum of £10 excluding P&P. The green tie will continue to be perfectly acceptable at all RAFGS events. The virtual AGM was most successful, reaching a wider number of members than could our traditional AGM. 54 members participated and regrets were received from another 65. The on-line Meeting provided an opportunity for some members to see and chat to friends whom they had not seen for years.

Turning to the 2021 Centenary Meetings, entry forms for Moor Park and Coxmoor are at the back of the Handbook although I can accept emailed entries. The response date is 31st March. It may be that we are oversubscribed. In this case the committee will take into account the extent to which members have supported the society over the years and their contributions to the Centenary Fund over the last 4 years. The format at both events will be teams of 4 with the best 2 Stableford scores to count. Members may apply to play in a specific team. At Moor Park we shall entertain representatives of those clubs with whom the society has enjoyed a long-standing relationship. Up to 23 teams of golfers will make a Shotgun Start at 0930. At 1530, we shall have a fine meal, for which there will be space for an extra 20 non-golfers. It would be wonderful if some of our old and bold could join us for the meal. The golf at Coxmoor will start at midday from 2 tees followed by a meal at 7pm. The cost of each event will include a dark blue tie for the men!

At the end of 2020, the Society had 386 Full Members and 27 Affiliated/Lady Members. We welcomed 26 new members in 2020, the highest number in many years. Please do your best to recruit more members. We need them to sustain our Fixture List.

For those who have not yet seen our web-site, superbly developed by Steve Baxendale, I encourage you to view the first 100 years - [100 Years \(rafgs.org\)](http://100Years(rafgs.org)) . Please post any comments which will come direct to Steve and me.

With sadness the deaths of the following members are recorded:

P. Alliss, Gp Capt CP Donovan, Gp Capt HA Griffiths, BN Keeley, Sqn Ldr JSW Scott D Phys Ed, EJ Summers, Wg Cdr HB Trant MBE.

Players in RAFGS events are expected to have appropriate insurance provision. For an annual subscription of just £10, membership of the RAF Golf Association provides £5,000,000 world-wide insurance cover as a player or spectator. The insurance also awards £100 to those fortunate enough to register a Hole-in-One in a recognised club or society event, as I can testify! It is simple to register with the RAFGA. <https://www.rafsportsfederation.uk/sports/raf-golf-association/>

I am grateful to the increasing number of members playing in Meetings or matches who are transferring funds electronically. Just e-mail me with your intentions and your handicap index. I guarantee to refund if there is a late drama.

The Society's AGM will be held on Zoom on Thursday 7th October at 7.30 pm. I shall circulate relevant documents 3 weeks beforehand and ask for responses to those items which require a vote.

Our Chairman, Malcolm Middlemist, and I hope to see many of you in our Centenary year. We wish you a safe and healthy 2021 and hope that we are able to continue to play golf as we knew it.

Roger Carr

January 2021

MATCH REPORTS

Moor Park Golf Club

Sunday 13th September and the fact that this was the Society's first club match of the year only emphasises what a strange season it has been. But despite staggered arrivals, social distancing, Covid golf rules on the course, and no dinner afterwards there was no shortage of Society members wanting to play, and Moor Park went to some trouble to make this long standing fixture as

enjoyable as possible in the circumstances. The weather was perfect, the golf competitive, and the result in doubt until the last putt on the last green of the last match. Moor Park holed a curly four footer to take the glory, but the most satisfying outcome was that a very enjoyable afternoon's golf had taken place at all.

Team:	Tim Bishop	Archie Gormley	Bob Pearson	Terry Smith
	Q Dixon	Peter Hickman	Rod Powell	Phil Sperring
	Mick Ford	Rick Lipscomb	Ian Robinson	Ian Wood

Sonning Golf Club

The Sonning Captain had recruited a team of strong golfers including his Vice-Captain and no less than 7 past Captains, so this was always going to be a convivial match featuring many mutual acquaintances. Malcolm Middlemist welcomed Paul Carroll to his first RAFGS event and Paul Mardon & Phil Sperring who were Sonning novices. Despite a drop in temperature and a fresh wind we avoided rain and enjoyed a course in excellent condition. Sonning had their noses in front after the first day's play, leading by 3½ to 2½, and despite Tim Evans & Jimmy Wilson each being in 2 winning pairs, the score was repeated on Day 2, enabling Sonning and a relieved Ken Patterson to retain the Clyne Cup by 7-5.

Team:	David Backhouse	Roger Carr	Rick Lipscomb	Terry Smith
	Peter Bedford	Paul Carroll	Roy Logan	Phil Sperring
	Robby Boyce	Tim Evans	Paul Mardon	Jimmy Wilson

Henley Golf Club

Henley paid us the great compliment of rearranging our match for the Danesfield Cup, usually played in April. This was their only club match in 2020. Their Captain had selected 4 pairs mainly with an aviation background, including some low-handicappers. We were under new management this year as Basil Evans had handed over the reins to Jethro Tull. But some things don't change. Although the match was all square after 7 holes, course knowledge prevailed on the homeward stretch and Henley deservedly retained the Danesfield Cup by a 3-1 margin. Well done Nigel Dowdall & Rick Lipscomb for saving our blushes; they played well to beat 2 very good golfers. The course was in excellent condition and the meal was much enjoyed. Henley is one of our longest-standing fixtures but victories come rarely; the tally is now Won 9, Lost 32 and Drawn 5. As I say each year, maybe this year will reverse our fortunes!

Team:	Jethro Tull (C)	Nigel Dowdall	Rick Lipscomb	Phil Sperring
	Paul Carroll	Reg Horne	Rod Powell	Dennis Virgo

Seniors Golf Society at Woking

The team enjoyed another fabulous day at the delightful Woking club. With beautiful weather, good company, and a course in lovely condition despite the sanded greens, we put in a very good performance to halve the match. As ever, it was played in a very sporting manner, and we enjoyed an excellent lunch. We welcomed Justin Muir to his first RAFGS event and he had a most auspicious start. Just to round things off, Roger Carr made a hole-in-one on the 10th and plied us with Kummel to celebrate!

Team:	Peter Bedford (C)	Tim Evans	Justin Muir	Phil Sperring
	Roger Carr	Nigel Dowdall	Rod Powell	Dennis Virgo
	Andrew Curtis	Mick Ford		