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Nearly Diamond Music Act

See Social
for further
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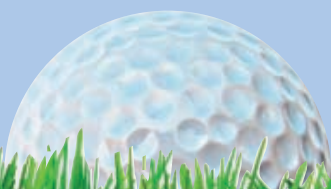
I had the pleasure of visiting the Club the weekend before last and enjoyed a round on the Saturday morning. Both Friday afternoon and Saturday it was nice to see and chat with a lot of members who remembered myself and my wife from the days we were members. Also I thought the course was in excellent condition. If you have an anecdote you would like to share, an item of interest, photograph or a suggestion for inclusion in the eBulletin please submit by email at mpgmagwin21@sky.com.

Mike Gould
Editor

MEXICAN NIGHT **Friday 11th April**



**See Social Noticeboard for menu
and bookings
From 7.00pm**



from the Club Captain



Finally it seems to have stopped raining and the sun has appeared. We should all be very thankful that we have not suffered any closures due to the wet, many clubs in the area have not been so lucky. I have spoken to some other clubs lately who have had little golf since before Christmas, this may show why we have had many enquiries about membership and I seem to be interviewing at least once a week at the moment.

On the social side we have had the annual Club Quiz, which has been running for over 35 years and our resident quiz master Kit Nielson did us proud with some taxing questions. There was a general consensus that the quiz was a little easier with an interesting mix of categories this year, and because my team came second it must have been. Congratulations to Roger Gadsby's team that were worthy winners.

I did actually manage to play for the first time this year in our annual season opener against Alton. This home match was a close affair with Alresford coming out top 3½ to 1½. The men's club matches are very competitive and the list remains up in the changing room so get your name down, you might even get the job of carrying me as Brian Overton did in the first match.

All the new members from last year and this year were invited to our Meet 'n' Greet. This is an event that brings the staff and our various Committees together for drinks. The nibbles were supplied by Merryl and Dean and as seems to be the theme with our caterers it was almost a full blown buffet. I did make the mistake of eating beforehand but as Captain I did need to eat my share, solidarity and all that. Thanks to all the staff and members who gave up their own time, everyone really enjoyed the opportunity to mix with each other.

I have had a few round timings come into me but not enough yet. They can be anonymous if you wish, just put the data in my drawer in the office or on the board in the men's or ladies changing room. I am doing this to find out the average rounds at Alresford with a view to putting some information boards around the course on how long each round should take. It's not as some people think to find out the slow play culprits. Just email me on les@noturningback.co.uk or phone me on 01962 732223.



Les Thorne
Club Captain

We are going to try the experiment of 2- and 3-balls only before 11.30 am on the 12th April. This is the national Pro-am Qualifier and the ladies Age Concern stableford. This may speed up play on the course or it may not. Please do give this a chance, the general consensus on this is it may take longer to get off the first tee but the round should take less time and be less frustrating, but we will see, and the Captain's Committee look forward to hearing your constructive feedback on the matter.

The ladies start their Stoneham Cup campaign soon so good luck to all those that are taking part this year. The County Seven's team are to play Basingstoke at home in the next month after getting a bye in the first round. Hopefully we can bring some county trophies home this year after some really close misses in the last few years.

Easter sees one of our flagship 2-day competitions, the Linnets. Played over the Friday and Saturday, this normally sees a very large field of men and women playing. Last year we saw over 25% of the eligible Alresford members take part so good luck in this one.

I want to flag up some future events, the Invitations both the Men's and the Mixed are great events and there have been accusations that we do not always advertise early enough so get August 3rd (Men's) and August 31st (Mixed) in your diary. I will be playing in both, of course, if I can find a woman who will play with me. The other date is the Captains' Charity Day on June 8th myself, Charlotte, Andrew and Josh invite you to make up a team of four and come along and raise some money for the Information Support Service (Hampshire) for Parkinson's disease. It does promise to be a good day with hopefully some interesting additions to the course.

I look forward to seeing you all over the coming month at the club.





Charlotte Bass
Ladies' Captain

On 6th March we played the first Stoneham Captain v Lady Captain's team singles match play competition. It is an event to start off the Stoneham season (following the triangular match in February) and get some more match play experience early in the year, as well as team building.

Everyone from the Stoneham squad who were available to play on the day took part. We had eight singles matches led off by Mandy Overton, Captain of the navy and white team, and my team "in the pink". Mandy had to give me eight shots – most generous I thought. Apart from our pairing, the team went off in handicap order, as in the Stoneham Cup. The pinks won 5–3 with every match going to the last or last couple of holes, with all the matches keenly contested. We then had a fabulous afternoon tea. It was a great event and everyone seemed to enjoy it.



The navy blues and the pinks ready for their tea

The qualifiers from the 2013 Daily Mail Foursomes played their first round in the finals 9th March. Our team of Lesley Martin and Liz Thorne beat our opponents South Winchester away, 3&1, and so go through to the next round. Well done to them and we wish them good luck in the next round.

Our first friendly match of the season was on 14th March against Hockley away. The day was beautiful - still and sunny, if cool at times. We had a great day, and enjoyed the match, but were well beaten, 4-0.

We held our Spring Coffee Morning on 18th March. More than 60 ladies from many clubs took part on a reasonably fine day. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. £218 was raised for the Captains' Charity. On 24th March we hosted Bramshaw for a friendly match at home. The Bramshaw ladies are always delightful company. We know some of them will be playing in the Stoneham Cup against us. They won the day 2½ to 1½. We had a fabulous meal afterwards of Meryll's home-made chicken pies, which were very well received all round.

The 28th March saw our annual Meet 'n' Greet evening, where the Captains and members host an evening welcoming new members who've joined during the year. It again proved to be very popular and successful, introducing new members to others, both new and "old" so they will find people to play with and also see a few friendly faces in the club when they come to play.

The first round of the Knight Cup was played at Alresford on 31st March. The Captain's pick of Fiona Corkhill and Diana Hampton battled hard against Liphook, sadly losing on 18th. You fought well ladies, thank you for taking up the challenge.

Ping 4BBB

This competition used to be played only on Saturday. I introduced the idea of playing more competitions over both Saturday and Tuesday in 2014, to maximise the opportunity for all ladies to enter. This is the first one we've changed, and it was played on Tuesday 25th and Saturday 29th March. We had an entry of 33 pairs, a significant increase over past years. It was won by Sally Reid and me with 39 points.

Ladies' Invitation

Just a quick mention of the Ladies' Invitation. This is on a Tuesday this year, July 22nd. It's a lovely event where we can play in a friendly competition on our own course, entertaining our guests and meeting other golfing ladies. There are fun prizes too, for nearest the pin guest and member. We then enjoy a meal together afterwards. Do phone a friend and get it in the diary.

Coming up in April:

We are now getting into the season of Club board competitions, many of which are open to all. This month we start with the Mackershaw a favourite of mine. It's a Stableford. When I play in the Mackershaw I always feel that along with the main golfing season, spring has really started – ever the optimist! Do please consider taking part in the Mackershaw. You choose your own partner(s) and sign up in the Pro shop. Easy. We want more ladies' names up on those trophy boards!

Later in the month is the Linnets, a 36-hole medal competition over two days. If you can only play on one day you can still take part - it's a qualifier.

The Courage and Barclay is a 4BBB open to ladies and men, with each pair in any man/woman/junior combination. You just need to find a partner and another pair to play with and sign up in the Pro shop and go out and play.

We have our first Stoneham fixture at home on Sunday 13th at 12am against Osborne, IOW. Please come and cheer on the team (in pink if you have it). Mandy and the team very much appreciate support from the gallery, so let's give them as much encouragement as we can. If you haven't done this before, it's a great way to watch singles matchplay. We walk around the course and see how the matches are going, exchanging signals to keep up with the scores (think of Seve at the Ryder Cup without the buggy). Do come and join us.

- Friendly match against Royal Winchester at home, Friday 4th.
- Mackeshaw - Stableford for ladies and men, Sunday 6th.

- Friendly match against Romsey away, Monday 7th.
- Age Concern Stableford on Tuesday 8th and Saturday 12th.
NB Saturday 12th - as an experiment to see whether it helps speed up play, only two and three balls will go out before 11.30.
- First Stoneham match of the season vs Osborne at home, Sunday 13th.
- Vets and Ladies breeze up on Thursday 17th.
- Linnets, 36 hole medal competition for ladies and men, Good Friday 18th and Saturday 19th.
- Bank Holiday mixed fun competition – greensomes flag, Monday 21st.
- Friendly match against Blackmoor away Friday 25th.
- Courage and Barclay, 4BBB open to ladies and men, any combination, Saturday 26th.
- Mixed match vs Tylney Park away Sunday 27th
- Ladies' Spring Meeting Tuesday 29th.

Ladies' section competition results

EWGA Medal – Lifeboat Charity 1st & 4th March:

Div 1:	Claire Gould	net 70
Div 2:	Charlotte Bass	net 73
Div 3:	Sue Masser	net 65

March Stableford 8th and 11th March:

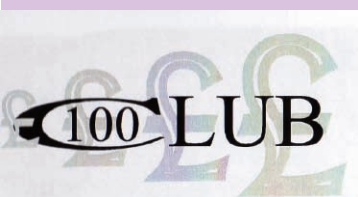
Div 1:	Rox Dhand	35pts
Div 2:	Lyn Jones	35pts
Div 3:	Gill Male	37pts

PING 4BBBB competition 25th and 29th March:

Winners: Charlotte Bass & Sally Reid 39 pts

Jane Hendry

Ladies' Handicap Secretary



The winners of the 100 Club prize draw for April are:

£100 - John Allen	£50 - Pat Young
£32 - Ian Mackintosh	£32 - Carole Young
£32 - John McIlree	£32 - David Sault

Congratulations to all the winners The next draw will take place in the week beginning 5th May ... look for the list of winners on the Secretary's notice board.

Not a member of the 100 Club?

If you're not a member of the 100 Club, you can become one for as little as £1 per month. Shares in the 100 Club are purchased for £1 per month and there is no limit on the number of shares which can be held. In general, most members have between 1 and 5 shares and pay by monthly direct debit, though it's also possible to pay quarterly or annually. Each share is allocated a number which is entered in the monthly draw. The top prize is £100, with a second prize of £50 and four other prizes of £32. For more information contact George Clelland on 01962735008 or george.clelland@btinternet.com or call in to the Secretary's office.



Andrew Frearson
Vets' Captain

The weather continues to be unkind to us and to the course and the first Over 60's Stableford on 10th March took its toll on many a handicap – mine included. Some sunshine and warmer temperatures over the next few weeks will make life a lot easier for all of us (we hope!).

The Captain v Vice-Captain match took place on 12th March. There were 64 participants and the Captain's team prevailed with a win by 9-7. The after match meal was of the usual (as we have come to consider it) high standard and our thanks go to Merryl and Dean. Those who missed the event this year are strongly encouraged to make the effort next year.

The Meet 'n' Greet evening for new members on 28th March was very successful and I took great pleasure in being able to welcome new members, particularly new Vet members, to our club. The Wednesday roll-ups are a great format for new members to integrate with the others and if anyone has any difficulty in doing this, please don't hesitate to contact me.

The draws for the knock-outs and the Fred White Foursomes have now been made and should now be on the notice board. Please ensure that play-by-dates are adhered to – it makes life easier for everyone.

Slow Play

I have always refuted the general claim that the Vets hold up play on the course. In general, when we play we get on with it and don't linger. I was surprised and somewhat disappointed therefore, in last week's roll-up, to take over four hours to get round when we all went out in three balls. There did not seem to be any particular pinch point – it was just slow. It is the responsibility of all of us to do something about this – the Club gives us a lot of course time and we should use it to greatest effect.

Our last two tips have been:

- positioning of trolleys around the green
- getting to your ball as soon as possible

This month's advice is to mark cards when you get to the next tee – the person whose "honour" it is marking his card after he has taken his tee shot. In friendly games, play "ready golf" and concentrate less on strict order of play.

Match results

We are now into the "match" season and those who wish to play are reminded they must have an active handicap to do so. Don't miss the qualifiers as they come along – you need to play in three to ensure your handicap remains active.

At the time of writing, we have played Corhampton at home and Petersfield away, both matches resulting in a win for Alresford. We have a further five matches this month and a highly social event – the Breeze-up – with the Ladies section on 17th April. The draw for this latter event was on 3rd April so this should now be available on the notice boards. Enjoy the Spring golf.

Member's Photographs



These pictures show the 16th green after a sudden hail storm at the conclusion of the morning round in the Texas Scramble held on Sunday, 23rd March

Pictures supplied by my daughter, Claire!



match committee report



After what has seemed to be a slow start to the season, our stroke play competitions are now getting under way. However, the Winter Eclectic has finished and Richard Bass has asked me to include the following in my report.

Winter Eclectic:

This is now run by Richard Bass after many years of hard graft by Jack Moody. There was a good entry of 54 for this. Terry Foreman set a really good score to start off with his first few cards and then nobody could catch him, though things were looking a bit closer towards the end when everyone was playing their final rounds.

We deduct ½ handicap from each persons best scores over 10 rounds.

1st	Terry Foreman	54.0
2nd	Ashley Wright	56.5
3rd	Geoff Jenkins	57.0
4th	Stephen Barnes	57.5
5th	Andrew Jones	58.0

Call-Up Holes

It appears that there is some confusion about the correct procedure on the call-up holes (2nd and 16th) and this was raised at the Captain's Committee, the correct procedure is as follows:

When all players in the group have reached the green, if the group behind are on the tee then the group on the tee should be called up.

However, if the group on the green have started putting before the group behind reach the tee then they should continue putting out and then leave the green.

Supplementary Cards

There is a lot of confusion about cards for handicap, extra day cards, supplementary cards and this is resulting in cards going to the "wrong place". Extra day cards do not exist they were only for the ladies and they stopped some years ago. If a new member does not have a handicap then they have to put in three cards to get their handicap, these should be labeled "**Card for Handicap** (1), (2) or (3)" and you should **not** sign the sheet in the Pro Shop. Supplementary cards are for members who already have a handicap and should be marked "**Supplementary Card**". To make these valid you have to sign the sheet in the Pro Shop before playing. So **only** mark "card for handicap" if you are a new member and do not have a handicap. Failure to label your cards correctly could result in them being discounted or subject to delay in entering them on your playing record.

Peter Spreadbury
Match Secretary

March competition results

8th March Stableford

Div 1:

1st Richard Tallon	36pts o.c.b.
2nd Mick Grant	36pts o.c.b.
3rd Harry Dhand	36pts o.c.b.

Div 2:

1st Graham Maycock	34pts
2nd John Goddard	33pts o.c.b.
3rd Malcolm Hoar	33pts o.c.b.

10th March >60's Stableford

1st Geoff Jenkins	39pts
2nd Brian Bellamy	36pts
3rd Duncan Webb	35pts

16th March Famous Grouse Memorial:

1st John McIlree & John Irving
2nd Steven Barnes & Simon Wills
3rd Norman Parker & Peter Harwood

The results of the Maurice Jack and Mackershaw competitions played on the weekend of 5th/6th April will not be available before the deadline for this month's copy but will be included next time.





As I write, the sun is shining, the ground is warming up and the golf course is bursting into life! Even the first wildflowers are emerging in the rough and observant members will already have seen violets and cowslips making tentative appearances. The local rule for preferred lies has been lifted.

The winter programme has just about ended and by the time you read this, the greens on the 5th and the 16th will be in play. The Greenkeepers have had an unprecedented amount of work to do this winter to cope with both the flooding and the strong winds. In the case of the latter, there have been a number of trees down and a large number of broken branches, which have had to be pruned to avoid further damage and in some cases for safety reasons. Whilst we have had to hire additional equipment and contractors to cope with the additional work, we have taken the opportunity to rationalise some of the areas of the course, which have become overgrown over time. An example is the area between the 11th green and around the 12th tee, which currently look bare, but will recover strongly.

A number of comments have been made on the subject of the beech tree, which was cut down at the back of the 15th tee. Notwithstanding wind damage, this tree was removed due to the effect it was having on the condition of the back of the tee, through shade and root damage.

The photograph shows the amount by which this tree has grown in the last ten years – the point of the tee peg, marking the circumference in 2004. This demonstrates the need for a regular programme of removal, replacement and pruning. Left unchecked, the course would become imperceptibly overgrown and less playable.



On another note, members have asked about the recent tinning on the greens, which has resulted in them being somewhat inconsistent. The general answer is that reasons for such aeration include organic matter reduction, improved air/water infiltration, and compaction reduction. At Alresford we aerify the putting greens throughout the winter months with 13mm tines down to 100mm at least once a month. During the summer months we try and aerify every 10 days with 8mm tines down to 100mm. Summer tinning is almost unnoticeable after cutting.

The reason for the recent exercise was as a result of the unforeseeable consequence of the wet winter weather coupled with the heavy moss treatment last autumn. This created a situation where iron compounds sinking through the substrate met sulphur compounds from fertilisers in the soil profile. Our regular core sampling showed that this had started to create a black impervious layer of ferrous sulphides about 120-150mm under the surface. By tinning the greens with 16mm tines down to a depth of 200mm (i.e. large tines, unusually deep) we were able to break up the layer and allow air to percolate with the result that oxidation created soluble sulphates, which will leach away. We therefore have encouraged an environment where healthy root systems can develop – a situation which is vital to enable the putting greens to survive the stresses the summer can bring. The long-term benefits of this action will pay off throughout the summer months. As a footnote, we would normally have top-dressed the greens after tining, but we were let down by our sand supplier at the same time as our equipment failed. Both issues have now been rectified.

Please bear in mind that these actions do not replace the annual greens maintenance week at the end of April when there will be further, aeration, top dressing, fertilisation and over-seeding. However, this should have less impact than normal, given the recent work and the current warm spell.

As always, send any comments/suggestions to greens@alresfordgolf.co.uk. Also, a reminder that the next forum will be at 12.30 on the 25th April, in the clubhouse bar, if you wish to discuss any specific issue in person. It would be helpful if queries could be emailed beforehand in case any background research is required.

Did you know ...

I was also asked recently about how often the holes are moved on the greens. The answer is, that except in exceptional climatic circumstances, new holes are cut every Tuesday and Friday throughout the year and sometimes more when the course is busy with competitions and heavy play. Moving the holes regularly, spreads wear evenly over the greens.

Harry Dhand
Chairman of Greens



New Members

Welcome to the following new members who have all joined the club starting in March and April so far: Alan Farrell, Francis Moore, Peter Sly, Kenneth Turnbull, Frank Blackmore, Graham Otway (7-day); Will Peck (Intermediate) and Jack Linley (Academy). We hope that your time at the club will be a long and enjoyable one.

May I remind all members that we are welcoming new membership enquiries for all categories? If you know any friends or acquaintances who are thinking of joining a club or changing clubs, please do your best to sell them the benefits of Alresford.

Membership packs are available from the office which details the benefits and prices (including new payment options). We would be delighted to show any prospective members around the club and arrange a round of golf for them.

Members' Guest Green Fees Special Offer

Due to the continued success of this scheme, we will offer the GUEST GREEN FEE DISCOUNT OFFER again in 2014. Over the course of the season bring either 6 guests for £108 or 10 guests for £180. These will be available ONLY from the Secretary in advance (not the pro shop). Please be aware that all "visits" must be used by 31st December 2014. No refund or extension will be given on unused "visits". Normal restrictions apply.

Club Roll Ups

Fancy a game in the week? All members are welcome to come along to the "club roll-up" on Wednesday mornings. The usual start time is 11am during the summer and 10.30am during the winter months all timings subject to any advanced tee reservations.

APRIL

Wednesday 2nd – 11.00am
 Wednesday 9th – 11.00am
 Wednesday 16th – 10.45am (due to Society)
 Wednesday 23rd – 11.00am
 Wednesday 30th – 11.00am

MAY

Wednesday 7th – 11.30am (tbc—due to society)
 Wednesday 14th – 11.00am (Mid-Week Medal)

Team Golf

Team Golf starts on 24th April this year. Details and Team entry forms are posted on the Social noticeboard and there are still spaces for teams. Anyone interested in finding out about Team Golf is advised to read the notice and/or to contact Roger Corkhill on 01962 883701, in person or at roger.corkhill@btinternet

Are you getting the most out of your membership

COURTESIES & RECIPROCAL

"COURTESIES" are where a local club offers us a tee time when we have a course closure due to a county or open competition here at Alresford. These are posted on the Main Noticeboard and are booked on a "first come first served" basis via the Secretary's Office. Members should request these slots directly with the Secretary (at Alresford). Members are reminded that individuals are limited to three rounds only. The 2014 schedule will be posted on Monday 14th April.

"RECIPROCAL" are agreements between clubs whereby members can play at another club, usually FOC or with a nominal green fee charge, Monday to Friday (subject to availability).

We have several clubs that we have reciprocal arrangements with namely:

BRAMLEY, near Guildford, Surrey
 LEE-ON-THE-SOLENT, Hants
 WATERLOOVILLE, Hants
 TIDWORTH GARRISON, Wiltshire
 YEOVIL, Somerset
 SALISBURY & SOUTH WILTS, Wiltshire
 RUSHMORE, Wiltshire

Requests for tee times must be made through the Secretary's Office (Alresford) and can be made a maximum of two weeks in advance. We are restricted to 1 x 4 ball from Alresford per week at each club. This provides an excellent opportunity for members to play other courses during the year and have a "day out".

"OPENS"

The club receives numerous "open competition" posters and entry forms from clubs in Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire, Dorset and beyond, advertising Ladies, Men's, Mixed and Juniors competitions. These are filed in the Ladies Changing Rooms (Ladies and Mixed) and under the TV in the bar (Men's, Seniors', Mixed and Juniors). Once again these provide an excellent opportunity for members to play competitive or social golf at other member clubs, which will have been prepared in tip-top condition for the day, at a vastly reduced price. Many will include food.

Here is a selection of recently sent "open" invitations:

Puttenham Mixed Open – Thursday 22nd May
 West Byfleet Seniors' Open – Friday 6th June
 Test Valley Senior Men's Open – Tuesday 10th June
 Barton on Sea Mixed Open – Sunday 13th June
 Cowdray Park Seniors Open – Wednesday 25th June
 Lee-on-the-Solent Men's Open – Saturday 5th July
 Badgemore Park Seniors' Open – Monday 14th July
 The Drift Mixed Open – Sunday 20th July
 High Post Mixed Open – Tuesday 22nd July
 Bramley Men's Open – Sunday 27th July
 Freshwater Bay Seniors' Open – Friday 1st August
 Farnham Married Couples Open – Sunday 17th Aug.
 Effingham Seniors' Open – Monday 1st September
 New Forest Mixed Open – Friday 26th September



FACEBOOK – check out our new Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/alresfordgolfclub>

Make sure you “like” our Facebook page and you will link to it and get the regular pictures and updates on what’s happening!

PACE OF PLAY

The Captain’s Committee has decided to undertake a trial in its quest to improve the pace of play.

On **SATURDAY 12th APRIL**

ALL PLAY

(competition and social golf)

MUST be in 2 or 3 balls only before 11.30am

Pace of play on the day will then be reviewed.

Catering

Members can now enjoy 10% discount off of food purchased with their members card. The discount applies to anything from the daily menu, specials board or Sunday lunches. It does not apply to match meals, function and events food.

BOOK NOW FOR THE NEXT SUNDAY LUNCH CARVERY

Easter Sunday - 20th April

Come along either as a large or small table and with members or guests.

Book directly with Merryl



David Maskery
Club Secretary

social scene

Neil Diamond Tribute Act (Nearly Diamond) is back by popular demand on Friday 16th May. Tickets are £15 per person and will be available from the office shortly. This will include a superb finger buffet. Doors will open from approx. 7:30 with the act due to start at approx. 8:15. Numbers will be limited and not available on the door, so please get your tickets in advance.

Roger Corkhill is organising Team Golf for the 2014 season. I believe there are a few spaces for teams still available so please sign up ASAP to avoid disappointment.

Please watch the Social Notice Board for up and coming Social Golf Events, which shall be organised by various members of the Social Committee.

We are always looking for suggestions for different types of events to run at the club, so please feel free to make any suggestions. One recent idea was to organise a scrabble evening, we are looking into this...

Over the coming months I will be handing the Chair of the Social Committee to Chris Chapman. Thank you to all members that have supported the Social Events in recent times and I hope you have enjoyed them as much as I have.

James Stewart
Chair, Social Committee

a look at rules supplied by **Celia Batten** email: celia@celiabatten.vispa.com

LOCAL RULE - SHEEP ENCLOSURES

Entry into and play from any area of the course which is being used as a sheep enclosure is prohibited. The ball may not be retrieved. The player should substitute the ball under no penalty and drop within two club lengths of the point where the ball crossed the boundary of the enclosure, not nearer the hole.

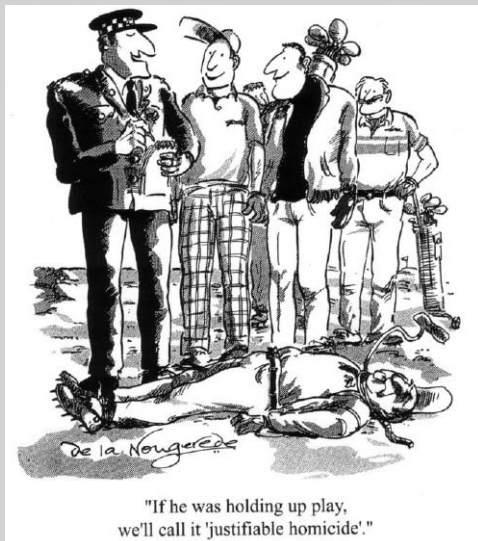
Procedure for taking Relief:

1. Identify the point where the ball crossed the boundary of the enclosure.
2. Measure with your Driver (without its head cover), two club lengths from that point. It is advisable to mark the two club lengths distance with a tee.
3. Stand erect, hold the ball at shoulder height and arm’s length and drop the ball.
4. If the ball rolls and comes to rest more than two club-lengths from where it first struck a part of the course, the ball will have to be re-dropped.
5. If the ball rolls and comes to rest nearer the hole than the point where the original ball last crossed the boundary of the enclosure, the ball will have to be re-dropped.

“Thought for the Month”

SLOW PLAY? Its not me, it's everyone else!

Slow golfers do not believe they are slow. They just tuck their head under their shell and continue to display poor pace of play etiquette on the golf course . Slow play is just bad manners.



"If he was holding up play, we'll call it 'justifiable homicide!'"

SPEED ON THE GREENS

(love 'em then leave 'em)

1. Never mark your scorecard on the green. Not only is this dangerous as a golfer playing a blind approach could hit you but it is also a total waste of time. Do the paperwork on the next tee.
2. By all means take time to line up your putts but do it whilst the other players are putting out. You only need to stand still, out of eyeline during the actual putting stroke. This tip alone can cut tens of minutes off a 4-ball golf round.
3. Park trolleys and buggys efficiently. The best place is usually to the rear of the green on the same side as the next tee. It's not Rocket Science!!! Look for directional signs or where the group in front has gone.
4. As a matter of routine mark your ball on the green with a ball marker. Always carry another to mark a playing partner's ball to save them walking across the green if it will speed things up.
5. We have all seen when your partner hits a bunker shot through the green and it is still their honour. To save time offer to rake your playing partner's bunker debris and repair any pitch mark , this will save time and allow them to get to their ball quicker.

Speed of Play - A members point of view

"Don't hurry, don't worry and take time to smell the flowers along the way" - Walter Hagen

Amidst the continuing debate about speed of play on the golf course, I thought I would offer a personal view, possibly at variance with some of the more regular stuff trotted out. Firstly let me say I am no fan of slow play, but I am saddened that while I often hear comments about speed of play, I rarely hear people being encouraged to enjoy the game.

It seems to me that the 'solutions' often put forward to cure the 'problem' are little more than cosmetic and do not address the real issues. Let me give one example. I've seen in many places reference to filling in score cards, and ensuring priority is given to teeing off, and using the time when playing partners tee off to fill cards. Well, let's exaggerate, and say it takes 10 seconds to write down a score, and that is done 17 times before leaving the course and completing the task after the 18th green. Worst case, that is less than 3 minutes per round, and much of it is time which should be used to watch where playing partners' balls have gone, to avoid the much more lengthy search and rescue process of looking for lost balls. It is one example among many which have no material impact on speed of play.

In golf people are encouraged to do things quickly, not carefully, and we can all cite many aspects of our lives where that can be a recipe for disaster. Driving, for example - that's cars not golf balls! We are encouraged not to make a practice swing, "Just get up and hit it!" Well, I don't agree. In your routine you may or may not make a practice swing – but surely it's worth taking the time to think about what you are doing, rather than 'just hitting it'?. The result will often be better and it might actually save time.

We all know the sensible advice about where to leave trolleys and bags, to call groups through when searching for a ball is causing a delay etc., and the vast majority of golfers do those things. Moreover I have met very few golfers who simply delight in playing slowly, but I do also recognise that whatever the sport we all act, think, move at different speeds. There is no one-size-fits all method of operating, and golf is the one sport I've played which attempts to act as if there is, or should be. It's always everyone else who causes delays! Check out the videos on the R&A website for some good information.

It seems to me that many things happening on golf courses cause frustration, and the shorthand or default response to those frustrations comes back inexorably to blaming it as slow play. The fact of the matter is that many of us want to play continuously, so if I get to my ball and am ready to hit, anything that stops me equals slow play by the group in front. Then, when they get to the next tee I notice they are filling in scorecards and taking practice swings, and that increases my frustration and further confirms they are slow

and deliberately trying to wind me up! What? - I should look forward to see what is happening with groups in front of them? Don't be ridiculous - there's a gap, which rationally I know is as a result of a forward group having driven off, but irrationally I just blame it on these muppets in front of my group, taking 2 or 3 putts each, and in some cases actually spending time lining them up! So that confirms it – "They are slow."

You may sense that I attempted to put a bit of theatre into that last paragraph to add some drama. It's rubbish though, isn't it? There are things which can ease the flow of golfers around any course, and some are not surprisingly covered in the rules of golf. Our task is to keep up with the group in front, not to rush up behind them harrising and hassling, because they play at a slightly different pace than would ideally suit us. We are all trying to get a game, and at busy periods, it may be a bit slower than other times, so maybe we just have to have more realistic expectations.

So what are the things I have observed which have a material impact on the level of enjoyment golfers get from their rounds, and reduce the frustrations so often felt, and parcelled up as slow play?

Group Sizes

Particularly at busy times ensuring that groups are of the same size, 2 balls, 3 balls etc. Mixing group sizes on the course is an immediate cause of possible conflict and hold-ups. Even when well managed, as groups are called through, that in itself can cause delays and frustration, as well as the obvious loss of rhythm, and enjoyment.

Focus

As far as possible ensuring that all those playing at particular times have the same focus, eg competitions. Where that doesn't happen and medal players are competing for space with golfers out for a friendly four ball there is a real chance of conflict and frustration. "Get used to it, it's what we do"? Or maybe we can try to manage the situation by segregating some competition times, for men and lady golfers? This is done at many, probably most, golf clubs.

Attitude

If your mindset is to get on with it, that's what you will do. If you don't care what is happening to the groups in front and behind, you won't act in a manner which is considerate of other golfers. If you always do the same things, maybe amble along with your chums having a chat, you will not be inclined to respond to events around you on the golf course.

Saving Time

Walking at a reasonable pace.

Being ready to play, including getting to your ball as quickly as possible, if that can be done safely, and without distracting playing partners.

Keeping an eye on playing partners' balls to cut down the time taken looking for lost balls.

Playing a provisional ball when you suspect trouble.

Being flexible so that you speed up when required.

Keep up with the group in front, not just ahead of the group behind.

In reality attitude, pace of walking and being ready to play are the things which will get you around the golf course in reasonable time. Other aspects of organisation, and simply understanding what the situation is on the golf course at any particular time really do help. One of the best pieces of information I've seen on a golf course was a board by the first tee of a course in the West Midlands - "Today the pace of the course is four balls. If you are playing in a two ball you may be called through but should anticipate some delays. We hope you will enjoy your golf". Expectations set, and not a murmur from anyone in the bar after the round!

Oh and one final thought. Do you think replacing divots, and repairing pitch marks is helped by playing as quickly as possible? I made a note last week and on one day fixed 108 pitch marks on greens. An average of 6 per hole and my playing partners weren't idle, sorting their fair share as well. Playing on such a wonderful golf course it is that vandalism which concerns me! Certainly far more than maybe spending 10 or so minutes longer on the course than I might ideally have wished.

It's such a great game, and we are so lucky to play in beautiful surroundings on an excellent golf course. Don't hesitate to let me know if you think I have this massively wrong.

Do enjoy your golf

Kevin Peel



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The Editorial Team takes no responsibility for incorrect information received from Contributors.

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