

The History of Seniors golf – Lymm Golf club

The Decade -1970 / 1980

A decade of activity at Lymm. The new Clubhouse was constructed and completed during 1974/75. Ray Ellis one of the founder members of the OSL's (Over Sixties League). Ray was a real workhorse. He used his skills to manufacture the clubs Honours Boards. The first recorded senior working for the good of the club!

Around the same time, the early 1970's (the actual year is not on record), Gordon Wood, Ray Ellis and a few others formed a group together and formalised a weekly competition amongst like-minded Senior members (Men over sixty as it was then). The embryo over Sixties League was formed.

And the OSL grew in popularity.

Through the 1970's the regular format of Autumn / Winter/ Summer "Best-5-from-10" annual competitions gelled and became firmly entrenched in the makeup of the group.

1978, the first Senior's recognition as an active group. A club Seniors Trophy appeared – The Gordon Wood Trophy (18 hole one-day Stableford competition).

During this first decade the group, led by Gordon and Ray, had applied for permission from Council, to join along with other Golf Clubs in the area to hold annual inter- club Seniors Matches – Home and Away. The limit was set at 8 visiting Clubs and 16 players per team. The long tradition of these matches was started.

The Decade – 1980/ 1990

In 1982 founder Gordon Wood died. The following year his widow donated a handsome new replacement trophy to the OSL's – still in use today. Graham Calder, then OSL leader arranged with the club for a slot to be allocated each year – the trophy match was on the club official Calendar!

Graham Calder was joined by Ray Ellis and they continued to lead the OSL's well into the latter part of the 1990's, when ill health forced both to hand the batten on to younger members.

During these early years of the group the members did more than just play golf together.

Bonfire nights and Christmas parties were social highlights along with the Annual Dinner Dance. Work parties were organised during May and September to help the ground staff with divot filling and reseeding. OSL members volunteered to give their assistance on Ladies open days as car parking marshals, starters and other duties. Being in the OSL meant you were guaranteed a busy time!

The Decade – 2000 / 2010's

By the turn of the century, Andy Ward had become the leading light, driving the group forward as well as managing the inter club matches. More trophies were added to the list and the membership flourished. In memory of his invaluable input the Andy Ward Trophy goes to the winner of Winter League.

The drive behind the OSL had, and continued, to pass through many, capable hands. No records survive but anecdotes and memories from long standing members who were around in those years remember names like Roy Smyth, Dennis Jarrett, JOE PRIESTNER, Gordon Hough, Mike Hemsley, Mike Smith, Alan Bolton, ALAN THOMAS and Norman Gleave.

Of course, for every one of these drivers there was an army of volunteers (often press-ganged admittedly) to help with the ever-changing work load. Far too many to list (even if we had the details) although a few names stand out;

Alan Thomas – devised and introduced the first computer spreadsheet – a momentous leap forward for the group. It is still in use today. Peter Glover – ran the knock-out competitions for many years and was instrumental in so many members signing up. Peter Hankey, Joe Priestner, George Clark-they muddled through the admin on Friday games. Colin Chisnall – well he was Colin.

Somewhere along the way, in this second decade, Subs had been introduced – to pay for the small prizes and trophies and general expenses in running a group.

Subs need a special appointee – a treasurer. Some of the names on our sketchy records (the actual tenure is unknown) are:

Joe Priestner, George Bradshaw, Harold Newsholme, Malcolm Naylor, Ron Thornton, - they all carried the Treasurers Mace at some stage.

The first of the seniors annual Xmas Lunches happened sometime in this decade. Initially a small band meeting to celebrate, but developing over many years and different venues. Chinese Christmas lunch was a favourite for many years. By the end of this decade it was a firm fixture in the calendar at the club.

The decade – 2010/2020's

In the early part of this decade the membership had reached a plateau. Friday was still the game of the week but the group was beginning to flag. Membership had dwindled to a low ebb – it was lacking direction and purpose.

Unconnected with this, during 2015 the name of the group had to be changed to reflect new golf regulations. Players over 55 years of age had now become seniors, so the LGC “Over Sixties League” became the “LGC Seniors Section”.

2015. The season was well underway. Norman Gleave had held sway for a number of years. Phil Blake was drafted in as secretary during the Autumn session and, in a short few weeks he inherited “the job” when Norman abruptly stood down and left the club.

Phil called on others to gather round. It was obvious the section needed a better management structure and a clearer definition of rules and guidelines.

In a few months – by the start of 2016 – an 8-man committee was in place. Arthur Nuttall stepped up and took on the job as the first Chairman.

First task? Arthur drew up the “basic rules and guidelines” – the stake in the ground to work from. Bob Ellison stepped up as Treasurer (after a long career in the bank . . .who else was better qualified?). Phil took the secretary’s role. Other Committee members, Mac Macdonald, Les Fecitt, Ken Pearce, Nick Reynolds were quickly allocated various jobs and they all set about their individual responsibilities and collectively driving the section forward.

April 2016 – Rob Taylor was co-opted onto the committee to expand the number to 9. The work load was increasing. Nine members are still the template today.

October 2016. The first AGM.

Committee members stood down; others volunteered and were democratically voted in by the members. The juggernaut thundered on.

November 2016 – A sub committee was formed to manage handicaps, chaired by Mac, assisted by Nicholas and Les.

Early in 2017, “Communication” was identified as the major obstacle to growth. The membership needed to be connected. A weekly newsletter would be the solution agreed to in Committee.

Phil Blake moved across to Communications and became the first editor/compiler of the embryo newsletter. Rob took over his duties as Secretary.

The first newsletter went out by e-mail, delivered to the in boxes of every member on a Wednesday evening – March 2016. And? It is still published today and has done so for every Wednesday to this day. The e-mail delivery has been superseded by the use of the Seniors bespoke web site.

2018 saw the (agreed) 40th anniversary of the of the formation of the OSL’s. Although seniors met in groups for many seasons before, it was agreed that the year of the first playing of the Gordon Wood would be a firm and fitting milestone for the official birthdate of the group. A “40th Anniversary” badge on a shirt was issued – which has now become a collector’s item.

2018: Collecting for charity had also become a focus. The Peter Herrity Trophy, named for a popular member who sadly and suddenly passed the year before, was played in the summer for the first time in 2018. (18-hole Stableford one day competition). Entry fee charged, the proceeds to our charity.

2018 sees the Gents Seniors Section establish a memorial bench, which is located near to the 14th white tee. All members who have passed are remembered by a brass plaque.

2018 again. At the suggestion of Les Fecitt the Committee sets out to join the prestigious inter-club Tatton League. Entry was successfully negotiated and LGC entered the fray for the first year. (Note – Lymm finally won this in 2024)

2018 – still more. April. A rumour surfaced of an annual match that had been played between Senior men and the Ladies section some years before. Rumour turned to fact. The Mitre Trophy was uncovered (Mitre? Mr & Mrs Bishop had donated the original trophy – a Bishops hat is called a . . .?) The annual match with all its quirks was re-invigorated and played in August. It remains a popular fixture in the Seniors and the Ladies section calendars and has been played for every year since.

2019. Les Fecitt and Ken Pearce floated the idea of a regular Monday competition. We had no team games for seniors. We only met one day a week. A regular team game, with the added spice of “a pound in the pot” was launched. Very quickly this was fielding 30 plus players rolling up for a game each week (hoping to win beer money?)

2019. The difficulty in presenting prizes and holding any kind of all-inclusive meetings was recognised. The concept of a single day – a Presentation Day (with the AGM bundled in) was developed. October 2020 was to be the first and this continues to this day. Game in the morning followed by a club lunch.

2019 – April. Phil Blake resigned on health grounds – he needs to concentrate on beating a Prostate cancer diagnosis.

The Decade – 2020's onwards

2020. January. Suddenly – COVID was on the horizon.

By March the club was shut down. We were all locked down. The country was shut down. The Spring of 2020 was sunny but long and hard.

Restrictions lifted very slowly – the section had to adapt to the new world of social distancing. No organised golf was permitted. The members muddled through the rest of 2020 and into 2021 as best they could. Remember? No shaking hands – bumping elbows instead.

By March 2021(some 15 months later) things were properly lifting. The Committee, determined not to lose the benefit of mixing playing partners every week, devised a weekly booking schedule – for Friday games. Small seeds.

Restrictions rolled on into the following year. The Committee (meeting on-line) sanctioned a Whats app group – a way to keep members in touch and an antidote to Cabin Fever. The initial grouping started in June 2020 but was replaced by an all-inclusive platform on 7th April 2021. The “Sultans of Swing” went live (named by Andrew Ransom) It is still very active and posts regularly today.

Arthur Nuttall still held the reins. Chris Turner, Duncan Clarke, Andrew Ransom had rotated onto the Committee. All Committee took up specific roles and automatically went onto the rota of guest editors for the newsletter, joining Phil, Rob and Ken Pearce for many of the coming years.

October 2021 AGM The numbers recorded at the 2021 AGM held in October were 84 paid up members with 57 on average regularly turning out for Friday League games.

Covid was not quite behind us but some sense of the new normality were showing green shoots

Changes made at the 2021 AGM were: after 2 terms, Arthur bowed out. Mike Bennett stepped into the Chairman's shoes. Dave Craggs and Bob Mycock rotated onto the Committee

This Committee output continued at pace. A team shirt was needed. Lymm Golf Club Seniors needed to look like the team we were. The shirt was selected and made mandatory for all home/away matches for the 2022 season. And handsome they look. And this still stands to date.

January 2022 – the 7th. Joe Priestner is 90. Social distancing unbelievably is still hovering in the background. How do we celebrate? Easy. A rolling party at the half way house. Cakes/ drinks/ a healthy tot all enjoyed by the members as they trooped past in their 4 ball bubbles. And Joe? He celebrates by winning the round on the day!

May 2022. The Monday team games had fallen away during the Covid era. It was time to restart. They were relaunched as the “Happy Mondays”, complete with a new selection of games (mostly with misunderstood rules) and a weekly booking schedule. Roll ups were a thing of the past. Organised and run by Secretary Rob for the next 12 months.

July 2022. The US open was on the telly – Green Jackets and all. Why not a Champion of Champions for the Seniors? The funds couldn't stretch to a Green Jacket but why not a Green Jersey. The Seniors Championship was devised – a one-day Stableford over 15 holes for all the winners of any Senior's game throughout the preceding year. This is played in September of each year.

2022 (sometime?) Senior's comps have never been recognised as club competitions. No seniors board competitions. So – a Seniors honours board was designed and installed and is still very much in use. It can be seen over the Seniors notice board in the locker room.

October 2022 AGM rolled around. Membership was up to 92 with over 60 booking on for a Friday. Five long standing committee members had done their time – and more. Duncan Clarke, Bob Ellison Ken Pearce, Andrew Ransom and Chris Turner all stood down.

New blood arrived in the form of Steve Gosling, Grahame Brickell, Peter Willson, John Armstrong and Mark Pickles. Steve picked up the all-important Treasurers mace. The others tumbled into the many, many roles that needed to be filled. Dave Craggs takes over from Andrew Ransom the duty of maintaining the memorial bench and surrounding area with Grahame Brickell maintaining the rockery area.

2023 – January. The all-new Web portal was launched – the brain child and creation of Mark Pickles- the new Communications man. Results, handicaps, instructions – even the rules and regulations, were now available to everyone – and available easily. The newsletter morphed into a brilliant format – every service in one place. Great stuff is new blood.

2023- Introduction of 2 divisions for Seniors with a cut-off of handicap of 18 and below Div 1 and 19 and above Div 2.

2023 – the summer. The inter club matches changed and expanded under the management of John Armstrong. A mammoth task, but the section was now up to 10 matches away (reciprocated at home) per season.

2023 – also the summer. Many matches – lots of teams busy on Fridays. What of those not in the team? The “Bottle of Wine” Friday comp was introduced and is now a fine fixture in the senior’s calendar whenever a home match is being played.

October 2023 AGM. Membership had stabilised around the 95 mark – the Covid loss/ gain had been weathered out of the system. Bob Mycock (Tatton League manager and team captain) stepped down along with Rob Taylor (after 8 years as a Committee member). In the shuffle that followed, Dave Craggs takes the Secretary’s role and Peter Willson picks up the “Happy Mondays” mantle. Paul Foster joins and gets the all-important handicap Secretary’s seat.

2024 – January. Andy Timms is co-opted onto the committee to pick up an empty seat. He takes the roll of Seniors liaison to the Gents committee. Andy later becomes Club Captain for the 2025 season but retains his links to the Seniors committee.

October 2024 AGM. 96 paid up members on the roll. Mike Bennett steps down and is replaced as Chairman by John Armstrong. Mike Kendal & Stephen Bird join the Committee.

TROPHIES

Probably a good point to recap. All the trophies added over the years were now logged and represented on the honours board. Viz.

A) **Friday Senior's League 12-15 hole Stableford Competition**
(best 5 scores from 10)

Autumn Session-Div1 *Fred Johnson Rose Bowl* first presented in 1983 - 2023 **Div. 2** Trophy awarded.

Winter Session – Div.1 *Andy Ward Cup* (formerly the Leigh Arden Clock) first presented in 1982. 2023 **Div.2** Trophy awarded.

Summer Session – Div.1 *Peter Broady Cup* 2015 (formerly the Hilda Nickson Plate) first presented in 1978. 2023 **Div.2** Trophy awarded.

B) **The Gordon Wood Trophy** 18-hole Stableford competition played for since 1984 (open to all LGC club senior members)

C) **The Mike Smith Trophy**, a summer singles knockout competition. Played since 2006

D) **The Andy Ward Trophy**-Played in the winter. A pairs competition. Played since 2012.

E) **The Peter Herrity Trophy**- Played in the summer. First played in 2018

F) **Memorial Trophy**- Played in September.

G) **Championship game** – Played in September. First played in 2022. Winner of winners awarded jumper.

1st Update September 2025 by Dave Craggs & Rob Taylor