

Hilton Park Herald

Billy McCondichie - An Appreciation

By Rab Gardiner

Born in 1940, in 1955 Billy became Hilton Park's assistant pro - to his greatly loved Dad - Jimmy. That same year he shot 71 over the 'New' in the Open at St. Andrews. He went on to play 20 consecutive times in that competition, and became well known on the PGA tour.

At his prime, recognised amongst the very best strikers of a ball, he should have been successful at the highest level, but for his achilles heel - putting !. As it was, he lifted the 'Scottish Assistants' in 1959 at Pollok, followed by the Glasgow Pros at Cathcart Castle two years later. In match play Billy had success at Cowal & represented West of Scotland professionals many times.

Apart from competing on the South African circuit in 1965/66, and a stint as Golf Director at a Bahamian complex in 1973, he has been a constant at HP for over 50 years.

Unashamedly 'old school' - and sometimes suffering because of that, his craftsmanship was clearly evident in his back shop, especially in the days when clubs needed repairing !

Continued overleaf



As you probably all know, Gordon Simpson will be taking over control of the pro shop from 1st Nov. Here he takes the opportunity to explain the plans that he has in mind -

The first phase will be to give the shop a face-lift and this will hopefully all be finished by the end of November at the latest. I hope you all bear with me while the re-furbishment takes place. Once we have completed the fit-out, it is my intention to staff the shop with one PGA Professional and one PGA Trainee. This will allow the shop to cater for all the needs of our members and visitors alike and to offer a facility which will rival any in the area. Although it will not be possible to have the shop fully stocked before Christmas, it is my intention to provide a full range of all the major brands such as Callaway, Titleist, Ashworth, Ralph Lauren and many, many more so please feel free to come in and wander around. In the meantime if there is anything else I can do for any of you, please feel free to contact me.

Gordon Simpson - General Manager

Captain's Comments

What a successful season it has been for Hilton Park, with wins in the McIntyre and Patrick leagues and promotion in the Greenlees as well as success in the Thomson McCrone and the Juniors. I would like to thank all who have played in teams and who turned out [sometimes in poor weather] to fight for those vital points. Personally I enjoyed being part of a team in the Patrick. I would also like to thank all the team organizers - I know it takes a lot of work for the matches to run smoothly. As Murray reports on this page, Stuart Neil and his team have improved the courses and under the management of Gordon, all staff and committee have worked extremely hard to try to provide the service the members expect of a club like Hilton Park. I would like to thank those who have written in expressing their appreciation of recent improvements.

I feel the club is gradually coming together and there is real optimism for the future. The time for separate sections, operating independently is over. If we are to survive we must act together as one club. As one new member said to me at the new members day, it is much better fun playing as a mixed group rather than being separated.!! She was still saying this having played with two of our male committee members !!

Now is the time for setting plans and priorities for next year - hopefully you will continue to enjoy your membership at Hilton Park as we go forward.

Louise Cooper - Captain

Greens Report

After a good summer it is back to the winter work programme now on both courses. Let's hope for some decent winter weather so that the improvements achieved by Stuart Neil and Gordon Harvey and the greens staff in 2006 can continue during the "closed" season.

We have ambitious plans to drain some of the more stubborn greens and to lay new drains on the remaining problem areas of both courses. Money, time and weather all permitting it should make a big difference. We shall also continue with selective tree felling to improve drainage and soil conditions. Given a decent run of weather we should then be close to where we could say the worst is over for both courses by the start of the next playing season.

*Murray Ritchie
Greens Convener*

Lockers

Just a reminder re. the survey on the new lockers. If you have received an email - please complete the on-line survey - otherwise grab a paper copy from the bar and fill it in !



Billy McCondichie
(from overleaf)

Thoughtful, yet straightforward in his approach to teaching and hugely knowledgeable about the game, WMC has enjoyed friendship with generations of members - albeit many of Hilton's older `characters` are no longer around.

Our best wishes for his retirement go with him and Jean

Social News

Don't forget the combined **Prizegiving** on Friday 24th Nov. which will also be a **social evening** featuring a Jazz band. Invitations are being issued to all Prizewinners - and tickets will be available very soon at £5 each - covering a Buffet and the evening's entertainment.

An **Italian** night is being held on **Saturday 4th November**. Tickets priced £10 each can be ordered from Frank. - QUICKLY !

Volunteers are **STILL** required to help with the Children's **Xmas Party** on 17th Dec. - if you can spare a few hours - please contact Corla van Griethuysen.

Donations of flowering **shrubs** to be planted on the courses would be very welcome - contact Corla.

Please let us know how we can improve the Newsletter. Comments to

Lewis Niven
(lewisniven@aol.com) or any Committee Member.

Team Results

On Fire in the McIntyre !

Congratulations to all the senior Gents who have contributed throughout the season to winning the McIntyre league. This is a prestigious and keenly contested competition involving 16 Dunbartonshire clubs. Participants have to be 60 or over and are required to be retired. There is no handicap limit.

Of the 15 matches played, Hilton Park lost only three - all of which were away ties - to Kirkintilloch, Dumbarton and Dullatur. The pool of players is quite large - over 40 gents, so mentioning everyone is a little impractical, but many of the players are pictured below. Well done again.

Below - many of those who contributed to the McIntyre success.



Thomson McCrone

The Hilton Park team did well this year in winning Section 1 of the Thomson McCrone. Unfortunately, Dumbarton proved too strong over the neutral venue at Kilsyth and we lost in the quarter finals 3 and 2. This is a sociable league - playing four-balls on a Sunday - home and away. It is open to any gentleman, although maximum handicap allowance is 20. If you are interested in playing please watch the board or contact Jamie Rodden.

DGU Knock-Out Trophy - HP reached the semi-finals - but we were defeated by Esporta.

The Ladies are the "bee`s knees" in the Greenlees !

Adding to the success in the Patrick Trophy, the Ladies have won promotion to Division 1 of the Greenlees League with a total of 36 points. Hilton Park was second equal on points with West Kilbride, but we had more away wins and therefore won promotion to Division 1 along with league-leaders Kilmacolm. An in-depth pool of talent included the following ladies -

Fiona McLean / Lana Macdonald / Maida Grant / Isobel Anderson / Helen Lamont / Isobel Whitefield / Helen McGregor / Dorothy Woodger / Sheila Cranstoun / Helen Stewart / Sheila McCrossan / Cherry Jamieson / Ann Sinclair / Helen Burnet / Sheila Steele / Pat Syme / Margaret Gibb / Eileen Fenwick / Rosie Bruce / Kay McColl / Margaret Stewart.

Congratulations to you all.

Financial Footnote

Since this will be the last issue of the Herald until early next year - please don't forget our **Introduce a Friend** membership offer (£100 off your sub !) and also remember the **Fairway Credit** scheme, which can help to help ease your financial planning for subscriptions due next March ! More details on both are available from the office.

Finally - a date for your diary - the club AGM will take place in Bearsden Burgh Hall on Friday 23rd February 2007. Best wishes to all for the `close` season - the Herald will be back in the New Year.