

Social Convenor's Report - Golf Society AGM 25th May 2022

After a rather difficult, to say the least, initial 12 months last year as your Social Convenor, thanks to the various Covid-19 restrictions, I had expressed my hope that those would “continue to relax further over the coming year, enabling all of us to do the same”. Although that didn't quite turn out to be the case, nevertheless we still managed to hold several, extremely enjoyable and successful social events during the last year, starting off with our second 'Rules Night', this time hosted by the HKGA's very own specialist, Brian Choa, on Thursday 24th June, following that day's earlier outing to KSC East. His presentation proved a bright and imaginative insight into a few of the more peculiar aspects of the game that we all play and love, whilst also trying to cope with the many 'slings and arrows' it throws into our fairways, not only via the conditions but also the regulations that we must abide by as we try to navigate them. Lashings of post-presentation, canapes, wine and (non-ginger) beer 'helped' our brains process them further into the evening.

This was followed up by staging our first ever match with the HKFC Lawn Bowls Society, held on Wednesday 1st September, so that twenty-four members from each society could compete together across the six rinks, in mixed fourballs, comprised of two members from each society and allowing for the more experienced lawn bowlers to assist our own members as well as contributing to the social side of the evening. To celebrate this, each GS member was awarded one of our prestigious, white, HKFC dragon match shirts normally reserved for golf, but perhaps more suited to an indoor arena, thanks to their tendency to become somewhat transparent at any hint of perspiration! As several of our GS members were stepping foot on the hallowed, blue 'turf' for their first ever experience of lawn bowling, guidance by their more knowledgeable counterparts proved essential to help calm any nerves and/or sweat. However, once we'd got to grips with the in-built break of the bowls themselves, our experience of thousands of yards of wayward putting over the years proved extremely helpful, with several of the matches rather surprisingly going down to the final few ends. The overall result,

however, was one of victory for both sides as the connection between our societies proved the most significant winner of the night, besides the HKFC's F&B profits once again!

Whilst we're certainly keen to have a repeat contest over the coming year, if any of our own members can think how we might best reciprocate with an introduction to golf for our Bowls Society colleagues, please do feel free to suggest them. Some current considerations include using the HKFC Sim room, although the golf grip is somewhat harder to master than the one required to roll a large, oblong ball for complete newcomers, let alone the swing itself! Certainly, a putting contest would seem to fit the bill, although I doubt that we'd be allowed to dig holes into their outdoor turf. Perhaps such an event held once again on the blue arena, with the fake cups that several of our members may well have used whilst held in quarantine, could be suitable? In any event, all suggestions are very welcome. A brief description along with a wide-angle photo of all the participants can be found on p.15 of the November 2021 Club Magazine - <https://www.hkfc.com/news-and-events/monthly-magazine/?year=2021>

Rolling on from this, we held our second Drink & Drive event on Friday 5th November, this time steered by PING. Unfortunately, I had to miss it, despite my best efforts to recover from surgery two days beforehand. However, skipper Woody stepped into the breach to make sure the ship sailed smoothly long into the night, with similar results to the first TM sponsored evening held nine months earlier.

2021 was then bid adieu in true style just three weeks later, on Friday 26th November, as we sought to get our members into the festive spirit early with certainly the most enjoyable HKFC golf event that I have been fortuitous enough to attend over this last decade as an HKFC GS member, with similar expressions made by several of our longest-standing members of many decades more - the HKFC's first ever outing to the exclusive, Shek O Country Club. Normally this course is strictly reserved for members only, or corporates funded with deep pockets. But, thanks

to our success in attracting sponsors, the Committee decided that we could subsidise the event to make it a very reasonably priced opportunity to play this beautiful course. Nevertheless, we remained unsure how many of our members could afford the package, but, within hours of sending out the invitation, we were flooded with multiple requests to play, which could only be decided by a lottery that led to the lucky 72 teeing off as fourballs on each of the 18 holes via a shotgun start an hour after the noonday gun would have made its mark; with the fireworks that later came, both on and off the course certainly making this special event not only a true 'Christmas Cracker', but an extremely enjoyable one, especially as it allowed so many of our members to be present at a single event; a very unusual phenomenon during these times of intense, social restrictions.

Fortunately, we were also blessed by a gloriously sunny and windless day, which allowed for every golfer to test their skills around this visually spectacular but tight course. The Yellow Ball competition demonstrated this with only two of our eighteen fourball teams managing to get their ball all the way round the course. Thankfully, despite the loss of many other balls, no injuries were inflicted on our fellow members!

This was then followed by a sumptuous barbecue buffet on the back lawn of Shek O overlooking the South China sea, which made for a truly memorable evening. The wonderful food, which included a spit-roast lamb, was not only delicious but plentiful, as were the various prizes, which encompassed a wide variety of golfing awards as well as ones for the best dressed player and team, alongside multiple fines (in the shape of Tequila shots) that were handed out late into the evening. Hopefully our society will be allowed back for repeat performances over the coming years, and this won't have been a one-off, although the memories of our inaugural visit will forever remain truly unique.

For fuller details, as well as photos, please refer to the report on p.38-40 of the January 2022 Club magazine - <https://www.hkfc.com/news-and-events/monthly-magazine/?year=2022>.

After we'd taken time to recover, we looked forward to 2022 with eager hearts and renewed livers, only for those plans to be almost immediately thwarted by a further fifteen weeks of tight lockdown restrictions, which sliced our social plans well and truly out of bounds for the first quarter, but, on the bright side, saved more of our funds to help celebrate our society's 30th anniversary during the second half of this year.

Once restrictions were lifted we seized the chance to stage our third Drink & Drive event, on Saturday 14th May 2022, this time with the primary aim of meeting our new golf professionals, Vaughan, Billy & Anthony. As several of our members had grabbed the chance to flee the coop that most of us have been nesting in for rather too long now, this allowed every attendee to spend a full half hour with each of our trio of experts, followed by further analysis in the Family Lounge, aided by liquid refreshments as ever.

Looking forward to the coming year, I am tempted to repeat my closing wish from twelve months ago, but will instead suggest that our members continue to get their bodies back into shape as we look forward to hosting further celebrations to mark our Society's 30th anniversary – with details soon to be sent out regarding a social event staged to coincide with the weekend of the 150th Open, on Saturday 16th July, no doubt aided by several wine vintages, alongside a betting competition around the winner of the claret jug itself. Later in the year we will be holding a fuller celebration to mark three decades of our Society's existence, when more of our members should be back in what we all hope will be far less of a coop and more of the springboard that it once was to many more enjoyable social and golfing outings.

Onwards, upwards and, as ever, down the hatch & hole too! 🍷🍺

Jonny