

The 21st Century

2000 – Captains: Rob Swift (Club), Pat Webster (Ladies)

Over the past decade membership had fallen from around 800 to about 700, largely as a result of the opening of a number of new proprietary courses in the area (Wheathill, Farrington, Orchardleigh, Frome, Wedmore and Long Sutton), plus some who lacked confidence in the club's ability to carry through the clubhouse project, a factor which further impacted on 2001 membership as the project moved to fruition.

An independent project manager, Dennis Targett, was appointed to oversee the planning, and later the construction, as required by the benefactor. During the year some modifications to our proposals were made according to requests by Mendip Planning Department. Plans were displayed in the clubhouse and issued to builders for tender. Through this, and in the committee's preparation for a EGM to decide on whether to go ahead, the final deal with the benefactor was agreed - £270,000 interest-free loan repayable over 15 years, a donation of £35,000 conditional on the members putting up a similar amount over and above normal subscriptions.

At a well-attended EGM held at the Blue School the project received the go-ahead by 275 votes for to 201 against. Dennis Targett was contracted to produce detailed plans for planning application, taking into account feedback from Mendip.

On the golfing side in this year, the club team lost in the semi-final of the Somerset Bowl, but the 1st team won promotion to Division 2 in the BDGL, taking Division 3 trophy in the process. The Weetabix Age Group Championships were held at Wells. Lindsey Elkins won the Girls under-17 group, with Philip White and Ryan French coming 3rd and 4th in their group. Lindsey competed in the English Girls Championship in Norfolk and the British Girls at Blairgowrie in Scotland, while Ian Parham won the prestigious SGU Presidents Salver at Burnham and Berrow. The Men's 1st team won promotion to Division 2 of the Bristol & District League, and Phil White and Chris Sheard were selected to play for the County Juniors. Ian Parham won the SGU Presidents Salver. Wells Juniors won the Mid-Somerset Golf League Teams Day.

& Maurice Pearce, who had been Head Greenkeeper since 1992, left the club, and the greens team continued to work well together as a group without a designated lead.

Club champions for the year were: Mark Wickham and Catherine Nicholson

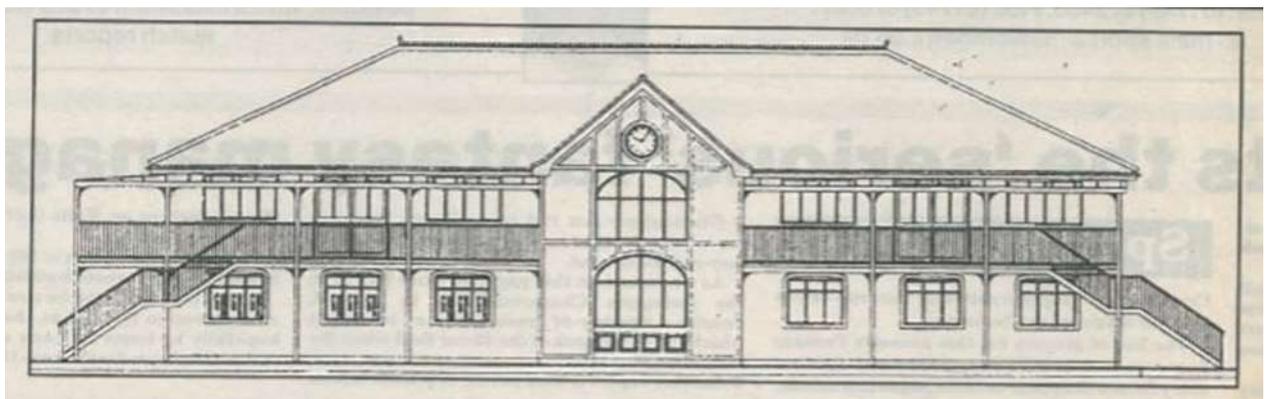
2001 – Captains: George Ellis (Club), Hazel Willmott (Ladies)

Again, much of the focus in this year was on clubhouse development. The management of the club was restructured with a more streamlined board replacing the old committee structure, with consequent rewriting of the club constitution and rules.

Old Clubhouse on what is now the Car Park



Valuable assistance in negotiating plans through the Mendip planning procedure was given by local councillor Bill Mackay. After one rejection by the planners, a submission was put before the council planning board with the planning department still recommending rejection over certain details which the club considered to be unnecessarily petty. However, the board of councillors passed the plans on a significant majority vote.



With the green light given, Thorners were appointed as the builder of choice, with Dennis Targett overseeing manager on the club's behalf. The final estimate for the work was in the region of £450,000, with the club taking a bank mortgage on top of the benefactor and membership commitment already agreed. The benefactor contract had been agreed, and preparatory site work commenced.

During the year James Elliott was appointed as Head Greenkeeper from within the team who had been doing such good work since Maurice's departure. At the AGM Alan Shore was voted Honorary Life Membership for his services to the club over many years in various roles which had included Captain (2 years), Team Manager, Social Chairman, and the leader of fund-raising and planning for Centenary Year in 1993.

The club championship produced one of the tensest finales in memory, with Chris Sheard and Ian Parham tied after 36 holes. In a 5-hole play-off they were all square after 4 holes. Ian birdied the final hole (12th), only to see Chris triumph with an eagle!

Club champions for the year were: Chris Sheard and Kim Lord

2002 – Captains: Shaun Palmer (Club), Penny Booth (Ladies)

This year was dominated by the construction of the new clubhouse. The benefactor's loan and donation were fully paid to the club, and the members had contributed their £60 per head as per the agreement with the benefactor. The old clubhouse base was retained as what is now the top car park, and planning permission was sought to develop the lower car park area. On the course reconstruction work to both 2nd and 16th green was carried out, and James Elliott was appointed Head Greenkeeper.

The year saw some increase in club membership above 660 after years of gradual decline. The new clubhouse was officially opened in November.

Philip White became Captain of Somerset Juniors team, and he and his mother starred in their respective club championships. Phil had shown his golfing prowess in winning the Dickinson, Burnside and Scratch Cups in addition to the club championship.

Club champions for the year were: Philip White and Sue White

2003 – Captains Ray Smith (Club), Kathy Kingman (Ladies)

Retiring Captain Shaun took up the captaincy of Somerset County 2nd team this year. Wells again hosted a county match, this time against Glamorgan, as well as now becoming a regular venue for other representative events.

The first repayment to the benefactor was made in April, the start of an annual process that would finish in April 2017, the payments being on a rising scale of value. A new club flagpole was acquired courtesy of donations from club roll-up groups, the Shankers and the Bar Flies. Member Bernard Wilson presented the club with an ornamental wheelbarrow which he had made, having walked with it from Walton to the club, sponsored to raise funds for cancer research. George Ellis

presented the club with a clock for the exterior of the new clubhouse, and through the inspiration of Scottish captain-elect the club held a Burns Night supper, an event repeated a number of times over the years.



The club was again victorious in the **county Rose Bowl competition**, and our presence in SGU matters was further enhanced with the appointment of club professional Adrian Bishop as county team coach, and the news that Shaun Palmer would become County Captain in 2005.

Club champions for the year were: Ryan French and Kim Lord

2004 – Captains: Jerry Suenson-Taylor (Club), Angie Seal (Ladies)

This year saw the computer system for competitions and tee booking up and running. After much discussion a site was selected and prepared for the installation of a Portaloo adjacent to the 3rd green, for the convenience of the ladies.

A major issue for the club occurred when an EGM was called by a group of mostly younger members over the clubhouse dress rule that shirts should always be tucked in to trousers. They claimed that fashion/styling for tailored shirts made it an acceptable dress standard for such shirts to be worn outside trousers, i.e. “untucked”.

The “progressives” carried the day with a clear majority vote to change the rule, an event that made press and TV coverage.



Dress ruling for on-course standard was unaltered – tuck at all times!

Phil White continued his golfing progress, becoming Somerset Colts Champion .

Club champions for the year were: Ian Parham and Glenys Slater

2005 – Captains: Steve Clarke (Club), Anne Dyson (Ladies)

Shaun Palmer took on the County Captaincy, a post he was to hold for 2 years. Under his lead, and backed by the coaching of Adrian Bishop, Somerset won the Channel League title, while team member Phil White won the Presidents Salver and was SGU 1st team Player of the Year.

With Ray and Pauline French leaving, Adrian Lawrence took on the catering franchise with Mark Wintersgill as chef..

Club champions for the year were: Phil White and Catherine Nicholson

2006 – Captains: Malcolm Terry (Club), Phyllis Lewison (Ladies)

There was a change in the office this year with long-serving secretary Christine Searle leaving. Her replacement was Beverley New, a low handicap golfer and member at Lansdown GC; Bev was subsequently appointed Club Secretary in 2007 with enhanced day-to-day duties in the running of the club administration.

There was a change again in the catering department with Shaun Palmer and his wife Tess taking on the franchise as S&T Hospitality. They later added Burnham and Weston to their portfolio, though Wells retained their personal attention. The driving range also moved to a franchise operation under the management of the club professional.

Once again Somerset won the Channel League under Adrian and Shaun's guidance, with Phil White becoming a West of England Foursomes winner and Glenmuir Champion of Champions.

Club champions for the year were: Phil White and Polly Clark

2007 – Captains: Adrian Lawrence (Club), Barbara Hunt (Ladies)

Two innovations in this year were the first availability of buggies for hire from the pro shop, and the introduction of the Wednesday evening "Two meals for £10" initiative by S&T. This was to prove a successful and enduring event in the club week Power tees were tried in the driving range, and a starters hut was purchased by donation, to be erected by the 1st tee (in memory of Anne Dyson). For the first time, too, tee times were introduced at Wells. After some initial misgivings by members the system seemed to settle well, with non-bookable periods early morning to accommodate the well-established roll-up groups.

Early work began on investigating the potential for the club to join the Community Amateur Sports Club scheme (CASC) which subject to the club meeting certain conditions of accessibility to membership could yield significant financial grant. The need for this was underlined by a deteriorating financial position brought about through some uncontrolled expenditure on the course and under-budgeting due to incorrect membership numbers being used, the members database having been allowed to "drift" over several years.

Golfing success in the year included a team winning the BDGL Hi-Lo Foursomes Championship, Jerry Suenson-Taylor winning the SGU Presidents Salver, a club team becoming SGU Centenary Six Champions, and also winning the SGU Windwhistle Trophy.

Club champions for the year were: Phil White and Polly Clark

2008 – Captains: Richard Booth (Club), Jill Bocquet (Ladies)

The early part of this year was dominated by a rather tempestuous AGM due to the club's reported loss of about £55,000 for the 1967 financial year. This led to a number of changes in key board roles with stricter financial oversight imposed on all operational areas. Further work on the pros and cons of CASC took place leading to a proposal being put to the membership later in the year.

After discussion with Mendip DC, brown signs were erected at the lower end of St Thomas St, and at the turn off to the club from Bath Road, thus making it easier for first-time visitors to find their way to the club. On the social side, an excellent St George's Day dinner was held in the clubhouse – music, flags and all!

Eira Powell was appointed as club secretary in the autumn of this year.

Club champions for the year were: Matthew Parham and Polly Clark

2009 – Captains: Phil Slater (Club), Glenys Slater (Ladies)

A group of volunteers started by Eric Loxton around 2007/8 were becoming increasingly involved in maintenance and improvements to the infrastructure of the course (paths, bridges, etc.). The club continues to be indebted to "Eric's Tuesday Gang". Work began towards setting up a club website, something which would evolve over the coming years to be an excellent club facility.

Early investigations were made into the potential benefits of signing up to the Community Amateur Sports Clubs scheme (CASC), whereby the club might obtain rate relief of the order of £20,000 for facilitating ease of access to membership. Finances in the year were showing a significant improvement under the guidance of the new board.

On the golfing front, Phil White won the South West Counties Championship, and set a new course record of 64. The club started planning for the Cyder Cup, a two-day competition to be held at Farrington and Wells in 2010 to mark the Ryder Cup being held at Celtic Manor.

Club champions for the year were: Phil White and Polly Clark

2010 – Captains: Alan Pickstone (Club), Sandra Heath (Ladies)

The good work on the running of the club continued, keeping the finances in the blue. The club website was up and running. The inaugural Cyder Cup with a round at Wells, followed by a round at Farrington the following day, proved a big success, and has gone on to become an annual open fixture for the two clubs.

Club champions for the year were: Phil White and Polly Clark

2011 – Captains: Steve Rowse (Club), Jenny Ead (Ladies)

During the year Jack Heginbotham joined the Pro Shop as an assistant. Phil White was appointed County Captain, and Adrian Bishop Team Manager for the Somerset team. George Ellis retired as President. The club decided to join the “1893” club (marking the foundation year), whereby club members could have a courtesy round at the other clubs in the group.

For the first time in living memory the club championship was postponed due to bad weather, taking place in August rather than June or July. With the London Olympics due to be held in 2012, it was perhaps fitting that the Captain Elect for that year was chosen to be Andy Williams. Andy had been a reserve member of the British 400-metre squad for the Munich Olympics.

Wells Seniors team were successful in winning the Somerset Seniors Rose Bowl. Phil White had a good season away from the club, coming third in the English Stroke Play Championship and fourth in the French Amateur Championship. At home he improved on his own course record with a 63, and captained Somerset to another Channel League win.

Club champions for the year were: Phil White and Julie Kinsey

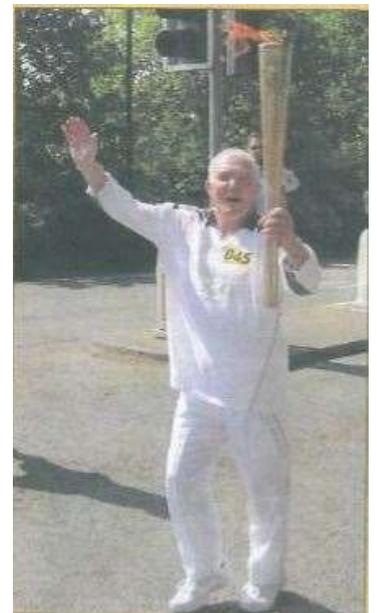
2012 – Captains: Andy Williams (Club), Janet Elliott (Ladies)

This year saw the introduction of discounted membership fee categories in younger age groups, a big reversal of the situation in a generation from when discounts had been applied at the higher age groups. This was becoming a challenge for all golf clubs faced with demographic shifts in membership, and increasing cost and time challenges for younger working people.

Sadly George Ellis passed away after distinguished service to the club, initially as our first full-time secretary/manager, and subsequently as Captain the President. In his will George made a bequest to the club for the erection of entrance pillars to the car parks, work on which was completed in 2013.

A storage area for members' buggies was created by conversion of 2 bays of the driving range, with provision for recharging. To mark the Queen's diamond jubilee 60 of these swans had been produced and displayed around the city, and were later auctioned to raise funds for local charities. The Thursday roll-up group purchased “Betty” the swan which was then sited on a plinth on the bank above the 12th/15th greens.

Club member Dave Humphries had secured selection to carry the Olympic torch for a leg of its journey through Wells, and raised over £4000 for the Parkinsons Society charity in doing so. In recognition of his efforts the senior members donated the necessary funds to purchase the torch which was presented to Dave.



The club were presented with the Golfmark award in recognition of its work with young golfers.

For the first time the club championship was held over two days in conjunction with the ladies championship.

Club champions for the year were: Simon Lord and Julie Kinsey

2013 – Captains: Jim Saint (Club), Margaret Sellar (Ladies)

Jenny Davis took on the role of Captain of Somerset Senior Ladies, and Phil White was in his third year as County Captain.

Club champions for the year were: Jack Palmer and Julie Kinsey

2014 – Captains: Mike Stringer (Club), Janice White (Ladies)

This was, by decree of Captain Mike Stringer, to be a “colourful and fun” year, which saw some very bright attire on the course over the summer months. Foremost in this, setting the trend, was the captain himself.

During the year work was carried out to get an improved club website together with the Club 2000 system allowing members better facility for booking tee times for competition and general play, and for recording competition scores.

Adrian Bishop resigned as Club Professional, and Jack Heginbotham was appointed as his successor. Sean and Tess Palmer (S&T Hospitality) gave notice of their intention to resign the catering franchise from early 2015, having given excellent service to the club over nine years.

The Avalon League team won promotion with record points. Josh Higgs, a Wells junior, was named in the England U-16 development squad. After 30 years in the role, Alan Shore stood down from his role as secretary of the Wells Past Captains Society. An honorary life member of Wells, Alan had served as captain, chairman, team manager over the years in his tremendous contribution to the club, and had led the organisation of the club’s Centenary Year in 1993. He continued to give time to the sport as President of Bristol & District Golf League.

Club champions for the year were: Jack Palmer and Jill Coglán

2015 – Captains: Steve Bocquet (Club), Janice White (Ladies)

With the Palmers leaving, the club decided to take management of bar and catering back into direct control, and Alan Precious was appointed as chef/catering manager.

At the AGM Wells set a precedent by voting a lady (Erica Klim) to the position of Captain Elect, a first for a club in Somerset. This led to BBC Somerset carrying the story with an interview with Erica and club president Raymond Smith. It was subsequently decided that the captaincy would have a “handover” in November, in line with the Seniors and Ladies sectional captaincies.



Pictured centre Club Captain Erica Klim with Gill Magrath and David Hayward

The new website was up and running in the year. The generosity of a two members allowed plans for the surfacing of a path from the 9th green to the 11th tee, and from the 11th green to the 12th fairway adjacent to the greenkeepers shed, though inclement weather prevented the work from being carried out until the following year.

A highlight for one of our members was when Mickey Currell won a Mini for a hole-in-one at Mendip GC charity day. Meanwhile, the Ladies Alliance team won promotion in the Bristol & District League.

Club champions for the year were: Will Thomson and Julie Kinsey

2016 – Captains: Erica Klim (Club), Gill Magrath (Ladies)

This year saw the erection of a “halfway house” above the 12th/15th green, which with the provision of power became an excellent refuelling stop to be used on special days – opens, charity days, captains and championships.

With subscriptions from members a defibrillator was purchased, and resuscitation courses given to a number of members. Due to changes in the rules of the CASC scheme, the club decide to withdraw from membership in 2017. Following a break-in to the men's locker room which resulted in the theft of some equipment, the club installed a CCTV system to monitor movements around the exterior of the clubhouse.

Jack Heginbotham decided to introduce a simulator facility and this was to be housed in the driving range area. Following the necessary alterations to the building, this was commissioned in December and a winter "indoor league" was started.

Phil White won the SGU County Championship, and was 3rd in the Champion of Champions event.

Club champions for the year were: Alan Todd and Glenys Slater

2017 – Captains: Stuart Mann (Club), Tina Davies (Ladies)

This year saw the final payment to the benefactor. Over the past 15 years the repayments had been on an escalating scale, starting at £2000 in 2003, and finishing with £32000. Despite the challenges of declining membership over the period, years in which the weather seemed intent on limiting golfing participation, and the odd blip in club profitability, the goal of a new clubhouse of a more permanent construction than it's predecessor had been achieved with the club showing a reasonably healthy balance sheet. This was vindication for the decision to proceed back at the start of the millennium when many harboured doubts about the viability of the proposal.

Former junior Polly Clark, granddaughter of past Ladies Captain Daphne Pring and daughter of Steve and Jackie Clark, had been club Ladies champion for 5 years from 2006 to 2010. She has played many representative roles in both junior and Ladies golf teams for both club and county, and, after graduating from Bath University in Sports Science was appointed Tournament Secretary to the Ladies European Tour. This then led to her appointment in this year to the position of European Solheim Cup Director to oversee the 2018 staging of the biggest worldwide match event in the Ladies golfing calendar.

Club champions for the year were: Alan Todd and Glenys Slater