

## **A Life in the Day of Royal Malta Golf Club Captains**

Early start today to attend the funeral of a relative of an ex Lady Captain! I attended in my official capacity as Lady Captain of the RMGC to represent all the lady members. One of the roles of a golf club captain is a welfare one – this means organising flowers or visits to golfers who find themselves ill or in hospital. After the funeral, I gave a lift home to Millie who is our oldest active golfer: she is 89 and still plays a full 18 holes almost every week. She refuses to take a buggy and walks the distance. Fortunately the RMGC course is relatively short and flat. The main difficulties are caused by either the heat or strong winds, which often blow across the flat, small, desert island that is Malta. Millie and I had a cappuccino in the small fishing village of Marsaxlokk near her home. Marsa means harbour and xlokk means south in Maltese! ('x' is pronounced like 'sh')

Whilst I was thus occupied, Nigel who is the Club Captain was meeting one of our main sponsors, the Marketing Manager for BMW motors. They are sponsoring a 4-day tournament in September. There are lots of details to thrash out, the rules of the competitions, the catering, and the corporate entertainment. After the meeting Nigel had lunch with the Club Chairman and they discussed the new catering contract for the golf club. The Club Chairman chairs the Board of Management, which takes responsibility for all the commercial aspects of the club whereas the Captains are responsible for all 'matters golf'. Inevitably there are some conflicts of interest occasionally.

There are competitions every week of the year, Men's, Ladies' and Mixed. This adds up to some 130 or more competitions to be organised. These need sponsors, prizes purchased, trophies engraved and presentation evenings or lunches. Fortunately we are supported by two committees who undertake all these organisational matters. We have both spent 3 years ourselves working either as competition or handicap secretaries and feel it is important that any future club captains do the same – otherwise they find it very difficult to manage all the many and varied personalities and rules disagreements that seem to be part and parcel of every golf club.

We are 'in the job' for a year and then our Vice Captains take over. The season ends in June each year with the AGM of the Club as well as the Club Championships. Our golf course is a green oasis with over a million litres of slightly saline water being pumped onto the course each night for most of the months of the year. We are the only course in Malta and attract quite a large number of golf tourists but are primarily a members' club. Recent improvements to the course as well as ongoing investment in our facilities mean that the product has got better and better and now our membership is virtually closed at around 550 full members and 150 or so overseas members who tend to spend their holidays in Malta.

To end our day, we both played in a mixed summer evening tournament, quite a small turnout as it is midsummer but, as the Ladies organise these, we have to check the results are correct, I announce the winners and give out the ball sweep – anyone who gets a 2 on a hole wins some golf balls. One of our best youngish golfers had also set a new amateur course record of 62, which had to be celebrated. His name will be engraved on a course record board for posterity. The RMGC was founded in 1888 and many of the honour boards in the clubhouse date back to this period. It is quite fascinating reading many of the old names, which reflect Malta's colonial and military history. For more information, log onto [www.royalmaltagolfclub.com](http://www.royalmaltagolfclub.com).