

Challenge Match v Musselburgh Old Golf Club, Saturday 21 May 2021

The challenge match against Musselburgh Old Golf Club had last been played in 2019 with the 2020 and 2021 matches having been cancelled due to Covid. Both teams assembled on Musselburgh Old Course for an 8.30am tee off and were greeted with blue skies and a brisk south west wind.

Musselburgh Old Golf Club team captain Billy Finnigan announced the players onto the first tee. The opening tee shot of LRGS' President John Dixon never left the pin and was followed by equally good shots by the others in the first group. An impressive standard had been set.

This year the match was played off the yellow tees as a race meeting was taking place early afternoon. Golf off some of the white tees can pose a risk to race course staff. Having said that, one of the Musselburgh tee shots at the 2nd hit the large William Hill advertising screen adjacent to the racecourse, the player saying "he was opposed to gambling" i.e. trying to claim he was aiming for it!

The players' handicaps were adjusted to reflect the slope rating for the yellow tees. It can now be disclosed that the LRGS team this year included a number of guest players as a number of regulars were not available. Our thanks are due to David Bell, Graeme Hislop and Ian Smith for participating.

The outcome of the match was a win for LRGS who won two matches to MOGC's one with two matches halved giving a 3-2 result overall. Our 4th win in the series and the second in succession! The individual match results were:

John Dixon and David Bell beat Llew Jenkins and Ryan Henderson by one hole
Alastair Chalmers and Graeme Hislop halved with Anton Larner and Mark MacWhinnie
David Clark and Alison MacDonald halved with Grant Campbell and Billy Finnigan
Robin Miller and Ian Smith beat John Nisbit and Clark Johnson by 2 and 1
Duncan Walker and Chester Kruk lost to Kieran Blyth and Greg McVean 4 and 2

In the last match, Musselburgh player Kieran Blyth, a 2 handicapper, drove the 4th green, a drive of 300 yards +. Hard to live with for the LRGS pairing.

At the post match hospitality MOGC team captain Billy Finnigan welcomed the LRGS visitors and commented that this was the 15th year for the match and a fixture which they were pleased to host. Billy presented the Knowles Challenge Trophy to LRGS Secretary Robin Miller who commented on the good spirit in which the match was played, the good condition of the course and the enjoyable post-match hospitality. LRGS looked forward to the return match on Leith Links in July.

The year 2022 marks 350 years of golf at Musselburgh and is also MOGC's 40th year as a club. To mark the occasion, on behalf of LRGS John Dixon presented Musselburgh Old Golf Club with a suitably inscribed framed certificate of the John Rattray statue opening.

