

Mr Chairman, Mr Past Captain, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much Norm for presenting me with my blazer, my badge of office, I am, and will always be, proud to wear it.

Thank you, also for your kind words of introduction, I will do my utmost to live up to the expectation; I can promise no more, no less than that.

During my year as Vice-Captain I have been learning from the now outgoing captain, Norm. This way I have been involved in issues as they have arisen and hopefully learnt from these experiences. Also, I count myself lucky to be surrounded by so many past captains of our club who, I'm sure, would always be willing to give their advice and support, should it be needed, so I start my year full of confidence. Lets hope any knocks along the way are small ones.

It now falls to me to perform my first task as Captain. Norm, as a mark of respect and gratitude for all your work over the last year, I'd like you to accept this gift from all of us at the Club.

PRESENT GFT TO NORM

You know, I joined oak Park some ten years ago, mainly to play social golf and perhaps a few competitions. The few competitions became the many and in 2005 I noticed that the results of the Midweek competitions took a time to be posted. I highlighted this fact on the discuss page and got "the treatment" from Trevor Bracken by way of reply. I ended up volunteering for CompsCom and the rest, as they say, is history. When Norm asked me to be his Vice-Captain, I was somewhat taken aback so I told him that I'd think it over and let him know. In truth it didn't take too much thought, I decided that I had no option but to accept the invitation, once I'd got the go-ahead from my wife of course,

because it is a great privilege and an honour that I couldn't refuse.

Needless to say, acceptance was the easy part. The reality of the situation then starts to kick in. Ignoring the year as Captain, that was a long way off after all, I convinced myself that being Vice-captain would be easier than continuing as Head of Comps but in reality I just became more involved than before. But time marches on and here we are, my year as Captain, so let's get on with it.

My year starts here so I'd like to lay out the plans as they stand. The diary of events at our club has always been and will continue to be very busy. The internal competitions will continue unabated in all sections of the club, Men's, Ladies', Mixed, Seniors and Juniors, including both Summer and Winter Knock-outs as well as Eclectics and Orders of Merit. Furthermore, there are moves afoot for competitions to be held on the Village course. The trials for these competitions have been hampered by the adverse weather so we'll have to see how things develop there.

As well as the internal competitions there is a packed programme of inter-club friendly matches, covering the Men, Ladies, Seniors and Mixed. The Men's section will have additional fixtures this year as we have joined The Crown Golf League. Seven Clubs will play in this League this year, with a Finals Day in October. It will be good to have some additional competitive golf, rather than all friendly matches. The Seniors will continue to play in the Two Counties Winter League, which Oak Park have managed to win since its inception some **five** years ago (my thanks go to Brian Davis who has been instrumental in this success), and the National Seniors Team competition. Once again the Men have entered teams in the Daily Mail Foursomes, the Mail on Sunday 5's and the Hampshire Sevens, while the Ladies have entered the Stoneham Cup, a competition in which they

have enjoyed much success in the past, the Knight Cup and the Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday competitions. You will no doubt have seen on the website that the Juniors are also performing well in their competitions, good luck to all involved.

We can be truly proud of our Social Calendar here at Oak Park and it is no wonder that many other clubs are envious of it. The intention is to continue in the same vane. The first formal event will be Saturday's Drive-In Dinner Dance and during the year there will be further formal events, ten club nights –the first of which will be on April 9th rather than April 2nd as this is Good Friday - plus another race night which has proved very popular in the past. My thanks to Tracey Hart for agreeing to undertake the organisation of this event.

Our busy schedule of competitions and social functions is only possible because of all the hard work put in by a fairly small band of members who give of their time so freely and so ably. So with no further ado I'd like to introduce this year's Club Officers; they have been appointed unopposed and will form the Main Committee.

Please stand when your name is called to help recognition for the newer members.

Firstly, I'm sure that you are all aware that this year's Ladies' Captain is Margaret Church. I have worked closely with Margaret over the last year and am certain that she will continue to watch over this successful section of the club. She was a very popular choice and will be a great asset to the Club as a whole, but I'm sure you already know that. I look forward to her working in tandem with me.

The Competitions sub-committee is one the busiest in the club. This year it will be run by Paul Fenwick. Paul is a relatively new member to the club, let alone CompsCom but I feel sure that he and his committee members will prove more than capable of meeting the challenges ahead.

The fastest growing section of the club is definitely the Juniors. The Academy, under the management of Gavin Grenville-Wood, has been very successful, meaning that we have seen many new junior members coming through and getting CONGU handicaps. We now have something in the region of 90 junior members, with approximately 20 of them having official CONGU handicaps. I am pleased to say that Linda Warren has agreed to continue in post as Head of Juniors during these exciting times. It will not be easy balancing the growing needs of the Juniors against those of the main membership but I feel sure that Linda will keep all best interests uppermost throughout the year.

Neil Dockar has served the club well over the last 3 years as Head of Handicaps so steps down. I'm sure you will all join me in saying thanks to Neil for all his work over the years. This year we will see a change in the running of the Club's handicaps. The English Golf Union (EGU) and the English Women's Golf Association (EWGA) recommend that Clubs operate a single handicapping Committee, looking after both the men's and ladies' sections of the club. I am pleased to inform you that Keith McDowell has agreed to head up this new look Committee. He will be working with a member from both the ladies' and the men's sections, together with me as arbiter, should the need arise.

With the continued churn of members it is important to maintain the role of New Member Integration. This task is a difficult one as many new members merely want to play social golf but it is a vital service for those who want to become involved in competitions and social events. Gill Hawker will continue in this post, continuing to call all new members in an attempt to discover their expectations and then to help them in any way possible to achieve them.

The last few years has seen a steady growth in the Seniors' section; I think we will now see a period of consolidation. However there are several changes in this year's sub-section committee. To ensure continuity, Gosta Bergkvist has agreed to serve a further year as Head of Seniors for which I am grateful. This will give the new committee time to find its feet. I feel that I must mention Doug Johnson here. After many years of excellent work, amongst other things, organising the summer inter-club fixtures, Doug has decided to leave Oak Park, to join his many friends at Sand Martins. I know I will miss him greatly and I'm sure you will all join me in thanking Doug for all that he has done for us and to wish him well for the future.

Tracey Hart had another excellent year as Head of Social and I'd like to thank him for all his efforts over the last couple of years. He has made it difficult for his successor but we should't be looking for comparisons but viewing this as an opportunity to put a new slant on our social calendar. I feel sure that Helen Mills and her committee will perform most ably. I look forward to the year's events with great anticipation.

Roger White, who presented last year's accounts to you a little earlier, has agreed to

continue in post for a further year. Roger has carried out this role over the last year, showing commitment to the task, precision and tenacity. What more can we ask for.

Finally, I'd like to introduce my Vice-Captain, Cliff Simmons. This time last year Cliff took over from me as Head of Competitions and proved his worth in this post. He has been involved in so much more than just Comps, working hard to get us our new office upstairs and the acquisition of a new whiteboard, amongst other things. I feel sure that the Club will benefit from his dedication and his proactivity.

The last piece in the jigsaw of how the club runs is, of course, Crown Golf. The relationship between the Club and Crown is, overall, a good one. There are bound to be differences along the way, as we have experienced in the recent past, where our priorities appear to clash with those of Crown. We must remember that Crown are operating in a very difficult marketplace but I am content that, overall, our best interests will be served by continuing to work closely with Richard and his team. To this end we will continue monthly meetings with Richard and also continue the regular course walks. This way I feel sure that we can look forward to a healthy future.

Now I come to this year's charity. Margaret and I had many discussions before agreeing on Treloars. Treloars have a school for disabled children aged from 7 to 16, a college for students aged 16 and over, as well as a programme for people with disabilities aged from 18 to 65 to achieve a short term goal. The Treloars mission is to provide opportunities for physically disabled young people to learn, develop

independence and to realise their potential. Although most of their income is obtained from fees, there is still a need to raise at least £2 million a year. Margaret and I will shortly be forming a Charity Committee and will be looking for volunteers, so please let Margaret or myself know if you would like to help us raise much-needed funds for this most worthwhile cause.

I feel sure there will be a few opportunities to help support Treloars. Mike Wilkinson and Colin Church will be running in the Fleet half marathon on Sunday so if you would like to sponsor them please go to the website and follow the link. Colin is also running the London Marathon and all monies that he raises will go to Treloars as well. Watch this space for further charity announcements.

John Colville of Treloars will make a short presentation at the April Club Night, don't forget, not April 2nd but April 9th. The school is having an open day tomorrow, pretty short notice I know and a further open day on 13th May but Jon Colville has also suggested that a further visit can be arranged at a later date, should anybody wish to see the work being done there.

I have visited the school and was really impressed with the atmosphere, the dedication of the staff and the happiness of the pupils. Whilst Treloars is our main charity, Margaret and I would like to make one other small addition. Cliff Simmons and his fellow directors of Synergy Security, will once again sponsor the 2s competitions, for which we are very grateful, but this year 50% of the proceeds from this will go to Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. This is in deference to Brian Edwards and all he has done for the members over the years.

Well, I'm sure you all feel that I've gone on for long enough so I'll wrap this up by

saying that I, the Committee members and Crown will do our utmost to ensure that all events run as smoothly as possible but these events can only be a true success if you, the membership, support them. I look forward to your support, starting with the outgoing Captains, Norm and Lucy putting-out and my Drive-In this Saturday, followed by the Texas Scramble competition, and the Dinner Dance in the evening. I hope to see you there.

Thanks for your patience and I look forward to a good year ahead of us. I fully intend to enjoy my year as Captain and I invite you all to enjoy it with me.

Good night and thank you.

