



## CENTENARY CLUB PREPARATIONS

Ray Burniston writes, the following notes are to help you prepare for your club's Centenary Year and are not exhaustive as each club will try different ideas.

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### Plan Ahead

The following notes are to help you prepare for your Club Centenary Year and are not exhaustive as each club will try different ideas. The first rule is to start making plans several years in advance. At a rough estimate it is probably a good idea to start at least four years before the event.

### Check Date

Although it may seem superfluous to suggest this, several Clubs in the past have suddenly found out that their actual Centenary Year is different from the one they thought it was. The R&A at St Andrews may be able to supply information if your club records are not that good or non-existent. The local History Society or the Local Press are other avenues to pursue in obtaining the critical information of when the Club was formed. It is also a good idea to find out other clubs especially in the area who may also be celebrating as this can lead to inter club events which are popular with the members. In some cases you may be able to fix up with a club some distance away for such an event.

### Form a Sub-Committee

This committee should be set up right at the start and should consist of members who are prepared to put the time and effort into the project. Try to involve all sections of the club and use expertise within the membership that could be helpful. This committee does not necessarily have to consist just of existing members of the committee but could include past members and be prepared to co-opt onto the committee members who may carry out a specific task.

### Centenary Club Captain

It is a good idea to start the process well in advance to decide who will Captain the Club in this important year. It needs to be someone with the time and enthusiasm to carry out what will be a very busy year. The person will naturally be on the committee right from the start so that they can be fully acquainted with what is going to be required of them during the year. They will have much work to do in arranging perhaps guest speakers and other items.

## Club History

Most Clubs produce some sort of book on the Club's history from its conception right through to present day. If you are fortunate enough to have a Club Historian then they will usually accept the job of doing this. If you do not have one then you will need to find the right sort of person within the Club to carry out this task. They may need to spend many hours researching the Club at local libraries and other places. Reading through old minute books of the club can not only be a time consuming job but also quite a strain especially if the minutes are written in poor hand writing. Take into account the following points when deciding to produce a book.

- ✎ Be wary of expecting vast sales, some members who have recently joined and even some of long standing may not be prepared to purchase it. Most of the clubs who have produced them in recent years still have copies left on their hands years later.
- ✎ Keep the numbers printed to a sensible level and remember it will probably need to be subsidised within the club. A good idea is to include the cost in each member's subscription notice leaving it to them if they want to strike this item out.
- ✎ You can offset some of the cost by including advertising but this is not always popular.
- ✎ Some clubs bring the book out the year following their centenary and include a chapter with photos of the actual year. This invariably helps sales as most members will want a copy of the events in which they have taken part.

## Programme of Events

You will need to spend a lot of time in the years before, deciding the actual programme and finalising all the details. You should take into account some of the following points:

- ✎ If you are going to have a major golf event such as the County Championship or even a National Championship you will need to make the application several years in advance as these events usually have a 5/6 year cycle.
- ✎ You must decide if you are going to have 1 or 2 weeks of events or spread it out over the whole year. If you do the latter it can be difficult to keep the members enthusiasm going as it usually starts well and tapers off after a time. It is probably best to have a few events during the year but concentrate the main thrust during the summer months over a 1 or 2 week period. Picking the date for this is important because you do not want to clash with other clubs or even their well established open weeks.
- ✎ If you are going to have a centenary ball or dinner then you need to decide the venue well in advance and send out invitations to VIP's at least a year in advance. If you are going to house it at the club in a tent/marquee then you need to plan well in advance and decide the best site. If it is in winter then remember you will need it lined with heating and have a suitably covered way to the main clubhouse for use of toilets etc.
- ✎ Some clubs will introduce a Centenary Trophy to commemorate the year and this will then be played for on annual basis. You will need to obtain a suitable trophy with the necessary engraving before the event.

- ✎ It is usual to encourage all sections of the club such as; seniors, ladies and juniors to have some events to celebrate the year. This way all the club members are involved and not just a few.
- ✎ You should draw up a list of persons to be invited as guests at different events in the year, these could consist of some of following; National/County Officials, Local Dignitaries, Club Captains of Clubs in the district, Club Officials of any clubs that you have special ties with, past members of some standing ie past Captain, Presidents etc, ex-employees of the club of long standing i.e. secretaries, professionals, head greenkeepers, stewards etc. You will have to sort the list out within your budget but be careful you do not leave anybody out who has made a substantial contribution to the club in the past.

## Souvenirs

Be wary about being talked into producing a lot of different items. Once the year is over the members will be reluctant to purchase other than at a massive discount. Some of the things you might consider are;

- ✎ Special centenary tie
- ✎ Sweaters, shirts, caps, golf balls, ball markers, pitchforks and other items of interest to the golfer.
- ✎ Flags, tee markers, scorecards and other items for the course. These can be used after the centenary year has finished.
- ✎ Commemorative china mugs and plates can be obtained but they are often left unsold in large quantities.
- ✎ A tree planting scheme to celebrate the event, with members paying for a suitable tree which is planted along with a plate stating they presented it to the club. Make sure that you get a tree expert to decide the type of trees to be purchased and make sure they are suitably placed around the course.
- ✎ Course furniture such as seats or ball washers could be included with again the members paying for them.
- ✎ Try and include at least one project that will not only provide a memento of the occasion but will also mean a long term benefit to the club.

## Finance

Finally you will have to decide how you are going to finance the year especially if you are going to have events in which a large number of guests will be invited. If you prepare several years in advance then you can include a small levy on each member for eg four years which at £10 per adult member can produce £20/30K or even more. Remember the Club Captain will need some help during the year especially if you have events in which a large number of VIP's and guests are invited. You may need to spend money on areas of the clubhouse before the event or perhaps on the golf course. These items should be in the annual budget but they may need to be brought forward for this occasion which may mean above inflation increases in subscriptions a year or two before.

## Sundries

There will be many things that will need attention during the year and the following are just a few:

- ⌘ Photographer - you will need the services of an experienced person for the year so book them up well in advance.
- ⌘ Special Centenary Notice Board - this should be placed in the main area of the club and must include all notices covering the events.
- ⌘ The Professional should be invited to sell certainly the commemorative memorabilia such as golfing attire and even other items.
- ⌘ You need to keep a diary(s) within your office of not only all the dates but the dates when certain tasks should be started or completed. You will need this to start probably 2 years before the start of the year.
- ⌘ Thank you letters will need to be sent to acknowledge any gifts or messages of goodwill to the club.
- ⌘ In view of the time you will spend running or helping on events it is probably a good idea to appoint a Centenary Secretary who could undertake to handle many of the tasks so as to relieve you as the secretary from them.

Remember that to be a success the year must be carefully planned in advance and you as the Club Secretary will be expected to keep an experienced eye on everything.

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