



THE DELGANY DISPATCH



Issue 23.2

January 27th, 2023



Captains' message



We are delighted to note a significant improvement in the weather this week which has been great for all players, but particularly buggy users who can finally get out and play. We are also delighted at the very positive response by players to the measures introduced by the Course team to protect the fairways and encourage repair of divots. With everyone's continued co-operation we can look forward to excellent playing conditions when the season gets into full swing.

Such has been the response on divot repair that we are now short of divot bags despite acquiring a very large number to distribute to members during COVID. As there is a cost to replacing them could we ask you all to search your cars and golf equipment for lurking orphan bags and leave any that you find on the holders near the clubhouse.

Preparations for the opening night of the Play are well under way and the cast are busy rehearsing on set which is taking shape before our eyes in the bar. Tickets are still available for most nights and it promises to be a great show. Bring your friends and dine beforehand as Jamie will have a special pre-theatre menu and you will be sure of a well located seat by coming early.

Poker nights were a popular social event in the pre-COVID period and hopefully nobody has forgotten how to play as we are planning to resurrect them. Further details are given later in this Dispatch.

Apart from the dismal weather January has been a sad month for many with a number of bereavements, including the passing of two members, Michael Burke and Seamus Corcoran. Michael was the father in law of Men's Competitions Secretary, John Gallagher, and brother in law of Eamonn Heffernan. Our condolences to all.

Course News

The impact of frost on our golf course:

Given the recent weather, we thought it would be worth sharing with you some of the key factors in how we deal with frost.

1. Crunchy grass is vulnerable to damage

Golf course turf is normally resilient to traffic, but when ice crystals form inside the plants (effectively this is frozen dew), they become brittle and vulnerable to damage. Walking or driving over frost-covered grass may rupture plant leaves, stems & cells leading to dead turf. The plants may also be weakened without immediately showing the effects. It can take grass more than a month to recover from this damage.

2. When it comes to frost delays, location is everything

Many of us have looked out our windows at home and see no signs of frost, only to find a frost delay when we reach the golf course. This is because frost can linger in colder microclimates long after other areas have thawed. North-facing slopes, low-lying areas and areas sheltered from the wind are especially likely to remain covered with frost.

Ground frost, effectively beneath the surface, can take a considerably longer time to defrost than above ground conditions. For example, ground temperature can be minus 2 whereas the air temperature can be as different as plus 4 or 5. So a full examination needs to be carried out before any decision is made to open the course.

3. Closely mown turf is at high risk

Frost damage can occur on any part of the golf course, but it poses the greatest risk to closely mown turf. Putting greens are particularly vulnerable because they experience the most concentrated traffic. A four ball, typically, takes 300 steps or more on each putting green; if there is frost present, all those steps could cause serious damage. It is worth noting that even when there is surface thaw (and the 'white' and crunchy feeling is largely gone) this does not mean the greens (or tees) are ready to play. The grass root system extends 4+ inches below the surface and ideally no play should be allowed until all of the grass root system has thawed. If play is allowed when frost is still prevalent the roots can be severed (broken) and the grass leaf blade will die. This is why we must be and remain cautious.



Course News

4. A little frost can cause big delays

No signs of frost on the first tee or on the putting green? That doesn't mean you will get the "all clear" sign. If frost remains in areas that are unavoidable early in the round, the course must remain closed. When large trees shade primary playing surfaces, especially on early holes, the course must remain closed even if the frost has melted elsewhere. It is also important to remember that once the frost is totally clear, the course staff may need time to catch up on course preparations before play can begin.



Finally, there is a perception among some members that the greens staff are overly cautious about opening the course after frost. I hope the summary, provided above, illustrates the complexity of the decision making process and shows that a visual observation alone is not a basis for opening the course.

The life of a Divot Bag

What a great life a divot bag lives. Hanging outside in the fresh air, taken for a walk (some days), carrying some divot mix, assisting our golfers to repair our fairways before being hung up for a rest. Then more of the same the next day and for the year ahead. Who could ask for more.....

However, too often the divot bags are not returned to their natural home where they hang comfortably, drying in the wind and resting for the challenges of the next day. Instead, they are taken home, hidden in cold rooms, garages or many are left, unused and unloved, in the golfer's car boot. These places are dark and inhospitable, and these poor bags live a miserable and deprived existence hoping that they might be returned to their important duties on the course.

How can that be? Impossible, I hear you cry..... So, let's examine the evidence: 1,500 bags purchased in the last 5 years at a cost of €3,700, that's 300 bags per year and our current stock now in circulation is approximately 200. **So where have the 1,300 gone... Assuming our visitors have taken half, then we have the rest!**

So I say free these imprisoned bags now. You will feel better for doing this good deed. Please search your cars, outhouses, garages and sheds. Return the divot bags to their rightful place. The alternative is to introduce the **Divot Bag Police (DBP)** who will set up search and seizure check points on the drive way to liberate any purloined bags and anyone caught red-handed will have to do community service (weeding) and will be named in the Dispatch. I don't even want to contemplate what would happen if a member or guest had two strikes..... it doesn't bear thinking about.



Please return the 650 divot bags before it's too late !

Course Committee

Ladies News

Just a little reminder about our singing group, 'Learn to Sing'

- This will start with a taster session on
 - Tuesday next 31st January.
- Please contact Mary Corcoran on 085 8617755 if you are interested in taking part.



As all you Ladies know the Shotgun Start 4 ball due to take place on 17th January was postponed due to the bad weather.

It will now take place on Tuesday 31st January starting at 10.30am.

Most of you have re-entered, but for those of you who haven't there's still a few spots available.

It will finish with soup and sandwiches at a cost of €15. This promises to be a fantastic day.

A green promotional poster for a golf event. It features a white golf club head and a white golf ball at the bottom. In the top left, there's a brown box with 'Q&A' and a question mark icon. In the top right, there's the Delgany Golf Club logo, which includes a stag and the text 'DELGANY GOLF CLUB Established 1908'. A yellow-bordered box in the center contains the new date: 'New date: Tuesday January 31st'. At the bottom, there's text about the event details: 'SHOTGUN START 10:30 4 BALL FOLLOWED BY LUNCH AND GOLF TEAM TABLE QUIZ' and 'COST €15 REGISTER ON BRS TIMESHEET ON SUNDAY 8TH JANUARY AT 7:50PM'. The background has a pattern of white dots.

Q&A

DELGANY GOLF CLUB
Established 1908

New date:
Tuesday
January 31st

SHOTGUN START 10:30 4 BALL
FOLLOWED BY LUNCH AND
GOLF TEAM TABLE QUIZ

COST €15 REGISTER ON BRS
TIMESHEET ON SUNDAY 8TH
JANUARY AT 7:50PM

Ladies News

Book Club

The Delgany Book Club was set up by Annette Dunne in 2008 and has been going ever since. Originally we had five or six enthusiastic members, now we have 19 members on the list, all avid readers! Our aim is to hold a meeting in the Golf Club every fourth Tuesday, this can vary from time to time depending on other activities in the Club, so we're flexible.



The meetings last about an hour where we discuss the nominated 'book of the month', then we rate it from 1 to 10 and keep a record of the ratings.

Finally we invite members to nominate a book of their choice for the next meeting and through a show of hands the book will be selected. Usually the person who nominated the winning book will chair the next meeting. In the winter months we sit around a table in the dining room and have a meal while we discuss the book. In the summer it's almost impossible to organise the meetings so at the end of May we have a meeting to share our suggestions for summer reading. The monthly meetings start again in September. Currently we're not taking in any new members but if you'd like to join the Book Club, please tell us and we'll put you on the waiting list.

Men's Competition News

Rescheduled Winter League Round 4

Please note that Winter League Round 4 has been rescheduled to Sunday, February 12th.

Please note that this round will operate in groups of 4 and with 10-minute intervals between each group.

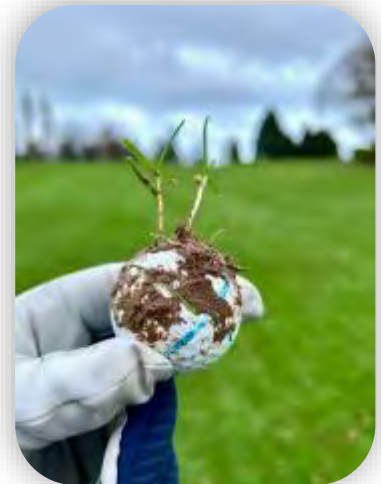
Booking will open next Sunday, January 29th at 8pm.



WINTER LEAGUE

2023 Leaderboard

1st TEAM D	IAN BARRETT 688
2nd TEAM H	FRAN O'HARA 652
3rd TEAM C	DONAL MEEHAN 650
4th TEAM J	MICHAEL BEHAN 533
5th TEAM G	BRIAN MCGEE 521
6th TEAM A	TOM BERGIN 513
7th TEAM F	JOHN GALLAGHER 503
8th TEAM I	SHANE O'LOUGHLIN 466
9th TEAM B	PAUL HAUTZ 454
10th TEAM E	JOHN SWEENEY 418



The joys of winter golf as captured by Daragh Bass. We all love to play, but this photo shows why we need to protect our course at this time of the year. Always use your sand mix for divots and repair pitch marks.

Social News



Cupid wore skirts

Have you got your ticket for the play yet?

Still some availability for every night except the last Saturday (25th February).

Dates are Wednesday 15th, Thursday 16th, Friday 17th, Saturday 18th and Wednesday 22nd, Thursday 23rd (limited availability) and Friday 24th (going fast).

Get the **Red Carpet** experience on Premier Night, Wednesday 15th Feb (limited availability).

Please call Cheryl on 087 2520835 to reserve a place. Tickets €20 each and curtain rises 8.00pm.

Pre-Theatre dinner will be available on all nights - please phone the bar on 01 2874536 ext 3 to make your booking.

Congratulations to Paul Mescal on his Oscar nomination.

Paul's Grandad is our esteemed member Colm Molloy.

Not being shy, we are taking the British approach and claiming Paul as one of our own !!

Best of luck Paul.



Social News



Poker Night

We are planning to resurrect the poker nights
with the first session taking place on

Friday 10 February starting at 7.30 pm.

Entry will be €25 per person with large cash prizes

The more who come the greater the prize fund.

so please come along and bring your friends for some excitement and craic.



Michael Burke was my father-in-law, so I think it is appropriate that I pen a few lines in his memory. Michael joined Delgany in 1974, having moved his family to Applewood Heights in Greystones, the previous year. He took up golf in his early 30's and had been a member in Newlands in Clondalkin.

He got to single figures in a few years, so he was in demand in Delgany for the Inter-Club Panels. He was a member of the **Barton Cup Winning Team in 1981** (see photo) and he was very proud of this achievement.



In March 1982, when playing in the Monthly Medal off a handicap of 7, he stood on the 18th tee having played 60 gross shots. Sadly he had a 6 at the last hole to narrowly miss out on the course record at that time. He won that Medal of course and his handicap went to 5, which was no mean feat.

Michael built up a large circle of golfing buddies, who were still his friends right up to his final days. Stories of his exploits on the golf course are there for the record, but there were a few off-course ones too!! Leo Harmon told me that they were away on a golf trip to Ballybunion with Dave Fox and (the late) Michael O'Neill. The craic was "mighty" so a late night was had. Michael and Dave had to "double-up" and when they retired for the evening, they got a nasty surprise when they got to bed as some joker put a bunch of thistles in the bed resulting in some choice language!! Leo also told me that when Michael and his wife Frances returned from a long trip to New Zealand (where their son Kevin lives) they were somewhat taken aback to find a large "For Sale" sign standing outside their house. The fact that Leo was party to both of these incidents is suspicious to say the least...

Richard Sherriff recalls his great personal and leadership qualities, underpinned with a shrewd mind and confidence in his abilities and decision-making. Michael managed two Metropolitan Cup Teams getting to two finals in consecutive years (1986/7) - a unique achievement in itself - narrowly missing out winning both.

Michael Burke RIP

Paul Hautz partnered Michael in many Barton Cup matches in the 1980's and was amazed at how far Michael could hit a wedge, which he did regularly from the 11th tee. Unfortunately, Michael wasn't always the straightest hitter and once managed in a match to pull his drive from the 15th all the way over to the edge of the ditch on the 10th!! Paul miraculously managed to hit the 15th green from there and they won their match on that hole...

A special thank you to Tommy Synnott who was very generous to Michael with the use of his golf cart, even giving him a spare key so that Michael could use it when Tommy wasn't.

Michael was a very kind and caring person who adored his family, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. When Deirdre and I were married in 1987, the wedding reception was naturally held in Delgany Golf Club. During his 'Father of the Bride' speech, Michael referred to the club as his "second home"...well, never a truer word was spoken. He loved Delgany and Delgany loved him.

Michael, I will miss you on the golf course along with so many of your friends. Most of all, I'll miss the joy of your friendship and your company in life, may you rest in peace.

John Michael Gallagher



The Delgany Golf Club 1981 winning Barton Cup team.

Ian's Cryptic Quiz

As many of us like Crosswords and Quizzes, Ian McMahon has come up with a few fun cryptic clues to help you find the Delgany GC related answers to his questions.

We are offering a sleeve of Taylor Made golf balls as a prize.

- 1) No one jinks with our Pres (4&9)
- 2) Our man with the Rule Book (4&5)
- 3) Delgany's Finance Minister (4&7)
- 4) A twisted Toga (4)
- 5) This lion does no harm (3&6)
- 6) This Michael is a saint (7&7)
- 7) A tittle for the Lady Captain (5&6)
- 8) Our man recently took on two tribes (4&7)
- 9) She shoots arrows on the course (3&6)
- 10) I leave the strokes on the course (7&6)

All answers marked 'quiz' to delganydispatch@delganygolfclub.ie

As usual in the event of a tie.... all winning entries will be entered into a draw.

The winner will be revealed in our next issue.



Our favourite photographer Derek O'Brien has been clicking again and sends us this great shot with the title :

“Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive”

Thanks Derek.



DELGANY GC CENTENARY BOOK

It is the bird population at Delgany that generally grabs the greatest attention.

Colourful ones are plentiful, including yellowhammers (though now on the endangered list), bullfinches, goldfinches, chaffinches, greenfinches, goldcrests, robins, and various types of tits, including the spectacular long tailed ones. The reservoir opposite the clubhouse beside the car park supports mallard duck, and this year a family of three were hatched and reared here.



Pheasants can be heard, and sometimes seen, in the north woodlands and open countryside to the east. While these are the descendants of survivors of the guns of the La Touches and the traps of local poachers, there is a bird cruising the skies of Delgany today that was not here in 1908. The red kite, a member of the hawk family, disappeared from most of Britain and Ireland in the mid 19th century due mainly to predation and poisoning. Red kite bones were found during the excavation of medieval Wood

Quay. A few pairs held on in south/central Wales and progressive protection and support measures have enabled these to expand to a now healthy 600 pairs.

On 21st July 2008 the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and the Welsh Kite Trust and the Golden Eagle Trust in the Republic, released 26 adolescent birds in Wicklow (following on 30 introduced throughout the country in 2007), in the hope that they will thrive and breed within the next few years.

These latest immigrants from the EU are regular visitors to Delgany and its woods. Their diet is mainly small dead animals and worms. They can be recognised in flight by their long deeply forked tails.

Another recent addition to the bird population of Delgany is the buzzard

but this has happened naturally without need for human mediation. They had also suffered from the predation and poisoning that affected the kites in Ireland but a number survived in the glens of Ulster and Donegal. Over the past twenty years they have spread gradually southwards and two pairs have nested in woods north of the golf course for the past three years. They are soaring birds and can be recognised by their circling wheeling flight (often over the woods at the 12th fairway and

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green) and by their cat like cries. As Pat Glennane says if we could train them to prey on grey squirrels Michael Carey would be delighted.

Other birds commonly seen and/or heard during a round of golf include blackbirds, mistle and song thrushes, dunnocks, meadow pipits, pied wagtails, wrens, kestrels, sparrowhawks, sparrows, tree creepers, rooks, swallows, swifts and woodpigeon. Jays are a fairly scarce woodland bird resident in the Delgany woods and related to the crow family. They are about the size of jackdaws and each stores thousands of acorns every Autumn. Their cry of *krar krar* is very recognisable. Overall they are pink in colour and are recognisable in flight by their black tail and white rump. When putting on the 3rd green golfers will often hear, and sometimes see, a small colony of jackdaws

which nest in suitable holes in the oak to the left of the green. Swallows sweep and swoop over the 1st, 2nd and 6th fairways, and a pair of house martins has recently built their mud nest under the eave of the south roof of the new clubhouse, and successfully reared a brood. They often use the same annual nesting site: with a bit of luck they may return from South Africa with Ken Burgess and the South Africa "wild geese" next year.

Sadly, the grey partridge, which previously was located in the wooded area between the 9th and 10th fairways, is now an endangered breed in the country. In contrast, the magpie population appears to be increasing, probably because of the urbanisation of the greater Delgany area. Striking looking as it is, the magpie is generally regarded as a



menace because of its instinct to raid other birds' nests and prey on their eggs and chicks. One of these birds swooping over the car as you drive up the avenue is not a good sign and can cause sockets later on in the day!

Some years ago, five families of the native red squirrel were seen in the Glen of the Downs woods and it was also common to see red squirrels at play in the oak and beech trees around

DELGANY GC CENTENARY BOOK

the golf course. Like the grey partridge however, the red squirrel has now all but disappeared, thanks largely to the expanding population of grey squirrels, which, unlike the red, apparently are able to feed on relatively immature acorns, resulting in the red squirrel being literally starved out of existence.



Aside from this, the grey squirrel causes serious damage to broadleaf trees by stripping the bark in order to access the softer, more edible, inner tissue – bark stripping renders the trees more susceptible to various types of pathogenic infection, and sometimes death. The trees at Delgany vary in their vulnerability to the grey squirrel, with sycamore and beech most at risk, horse chestnut, lime and conifers least, and oak lying somewhere in between.

The fox and the badger are long established residents of Delgany golf course and there have been frequent sightings of these, especially in the vicinity of the entrance avenue. Indeed, a notable feature of the southern woodland is the presence of an active badger sett between the entrance avenue and the 10th medal tee. When left alone, the badger is a harmless animal which, fortunately,

manages to support itself on food from the surrounding woodlands rather than digging on the golf course. Foxes are not evident on the course in such numbers now as they once were, which probably accounts for the relative increase in numbers of rabbits and hares around the golf course. Many people attribute the decrease in fox numbers to the easier availability of food and food-refuse in the new housing estates around Delgany village.

There have been numbers of sightings of deer on the golf course, especially in early mornings. Such sightings should not be considered unusual since the deer population of County Wicklow has recently been estimated to be in excess of 30,000. Most of the deer in the Delgany and Glen of the Downs area, including those sighted on the course, are Sitka and Red deer hybrids. These magnificent animals are capable of inflicting serious hoof damage on greens, but fortunately they do not seem overly interested in the dietary or amenity attractions that are available to them on the open golf course.

The foregoing review refers to wild animals and birds in Delgany. But domesticated animals have been associated with the Club as well. Jackie Mahony's dog was a regular visitor with him to the club: horses helped form and maintain the course: sheep kept the sward shorn: cats roamed the woods around the carpark and mice sometimes roamed in the ladies changing room as well!

DELGANY GC CENTENARY BOOK

2. BIRTH

2.1 ORIGINS OF DELGANY GOLF CLUB

On 22nd February 1908, Dr. Arthur M. Archer, W.D. Carr, A.L. Figgis, W.F. Robertson, Dr. Smyth and H.N. Walker, who at the time were members of Greystones Golf Club, met in the nearby Grand Hotel (later to become the La Touche Hotel) and formally founded Delgany Golf Club. They all wished to play golf on Sundays, and because Greystones did not allow this, they took the initiative and moved inland. At another meeting in the following week the founders decided that each original life member would be permitted to nominate two Gentlemen members and two Lady Associates at an annual subscription of one guinea (€1.33) each, with no entrance fee. A short time later, in May 1908, it was decided that 'boys and girls over 15 years of age be eligible for membership.'

Delgany village of 1908 was a backward place. There was no electricity, the



nearby main road from Dublin to Wex-

ford was barely wide enough for two carts, almost nobody had a motor car, and the nearest public transport was the railway at Greystones.



To establish a golf club, and construct a course in such environs, required courage and determination above the ordinary. Without even tractors, much less bulldozers and mechanical diggers, the course had to be cleared with billhooks and scythes. Astonishingly, on Good Friday 1908, less than two months after the meeting in the Grand Hotel, the first competition was held over nine holes, and by the end of the year competitions were being held over 18 holes. Incidentally, the winner of the first Captain's Prize (1908) was Clem Robertson, one of five brothers who had joined the new Club.

The founders were not people to be trifled with, and the record shows that they wasted no time in banning card playing in the clubhouse on Sundays, dispensing with the services of the greenkeeper, and putting the caterer and his wife on a week's notice.

DELGANY GC CENTENARY BOOK

If the founders showed immense courage in getting the new Club off the ground, we can only marvel at what they did on 18th September 1909, little more than a year after the course opened. On that Saturday they brought to the Club the then most famous golfer in the world. Harry Vardon, whose record of six Open Championship victories is still unsurpassed and who had invented the Vardon Grip, was invited to play an exhibition match over 36 holes with Michael Moran, the Irish Champion.



Harry Vardon

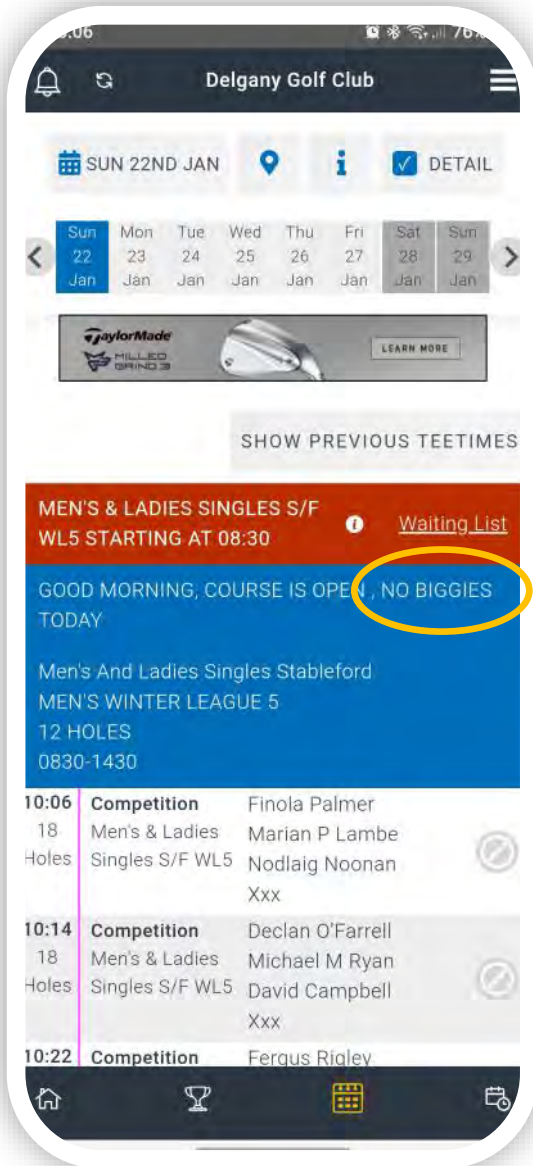
Vardon was also to advise the Committee as to what course improvements were needed (the minutes show that he was paid 10 guineas for this professional advice). A large crowd came from Dublin to watch the match. Most of them travelled by train and were taken

from Greystones Station to the course by various sorts of horse transport arranged by the Club. Teas for non-members were served in a marquee at a cost of 8d (€0.04) per head, while luncheon was served in the Clubhouse for members at a cost of 1.6d (€0.10). The Committee had also decided that 'no excisable liquor shall be supplied to any person except to a member, or a visitor introduced by a member, who must be present and pay for such liquor.'

Despite the careful planning, an embarrassing incident occurred. In those days, though it was not the practice to admit professional golfers into clubhouses, the Committee had decided to do things differently – it provided luncheon in the clubhouse for both players after the first 18 holes! But while Vardon duly arrived, no one had told Moran, who had made his own arrangements; after much searching, he was eventually located enjoying lunch in a nearby hostelry in the village.

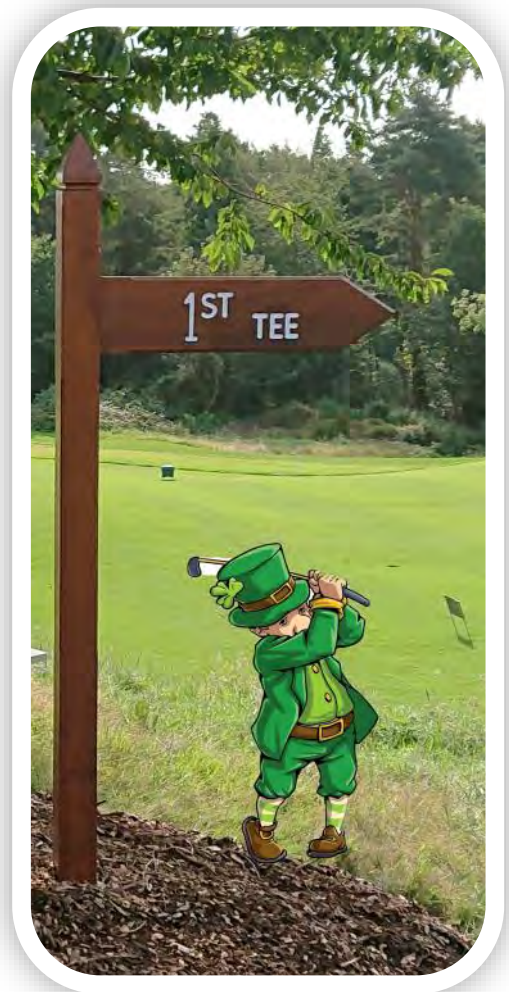
There is little doubt that Vardon's visit contributed hugely to Delgany's growing reputation and led to a big increase in society outings and green fees. Although only a short while in existence, Delgany had established itself as a Club with fine facilities, an attractive course and a warm welcome.

Some of the Committee's strict views on how a golf club should be run, and how its members and staff should deport themselves, were outlined in its Rules



We know it can be tough getting on the time sheet sometimes, but it came as a shock to find out that on Sunday, January 22nd only the little people were allowed to play !

It appears that Darby O'Gill and his mates have hacked into our BRS system !



The Delgany Dispatch is produced by the Clubs

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