

## CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2007

The Golf Union of Wales (GUW) is a limited company incorporated on 1 January 2007 following the merger of the Welsh Ladies Golf Union (WLGU) and the Welsh Golfing Union (WGU). The decision to merge the two unions was passed at Extraordinary General Meetings of the two Unions in July 2006 but a commitment to merge to form one governing body as the way forward to promote and develop the game in Wales as an inclusive and accessible sport had been taken in 2001 as part of the bid to bring the Ryder Cup to Wales. The WLGU and WGU were members of the 'Team Wales' partnership which, in 2001, developed the bid document that was successful in bringing the Ryder Cup to Wales.

I would like to pay a special tribute to the Merger Working Party which worked assiduously to ensure that, on 1 January 2007, the GUW was able to get off to the best possible start. The thorough and conscientious way in which the Working Party dealt with the merger issues has laid the foundations for a successful organisation.



In becoming one governing body for the amateur game in Wales, the GUW is placed at the forefront in the UK in terms of integrating women's and men's golf. We are entering a new era for the sport in which the Union will play a prominent role in building on the achievements of its predecessor Unions to further develop the game for all golfers in Wales. The Union is emerging as a modern, forward thinking governing body and the Sports Council for Wales, as part of its Modernising Sport programme, has provided the Union with financial and officer support to help implement the necessary changes.

The first year has been a period of change, transition and learning during which the GUW has implemented a new staff structure and has revised systems and procedures to ensure that the Union performs effectively. At the same time the staff of the Union, together with the Management Committee, the Council, and the many volunteers that support golf in Wales, have made sure that golf and services to golf have continued to be delivered successfully.

Wales is currently in the middle of an exciting but challenging period for golf. In a little over three years Wales will be centre stage for one of the largest and well known sporting events in the world: the Ryder Cup. Maximising the potential that the Ryder Cup will bring to Wales, in the context of developing the game and increasing participation is a significant challenge for the GUW. An even greater challenge to the Union is maintaining the momentum of interest in golf beyond 2010, to make sure that participation and excellence in the sport can be sustained.

In recognising these challenges we have developed an ambitious 10 year vision. Our first business plan begins to identify how we will work towards achieving that vision: there is a long way to go and much to achieve along the way which we can only do by working together with our stakeholders, partners and sponsors. We have already begun the journey and the Union is looking forward to taking along all those who love golf and wish to see Welsh golf achieve the very best.

## **Council**

In the transitional period of 2007 the Council for the GUW comprised the Council members of the WGU and the WLGU Executive Committee Members. The first Council of the GUW was elected under the new electoral arrangements of six districts comprising 19 members in February 2008.

I thank all those who retired from the Council for their many years of service to the WGU and the WLGU and to congratulate those who were elected to the new Council.

## **Management Committee**

This year sees the retirement of the Treasurer to the Union, Tony Disley. Tony has served the WGU and the GUW for 20 years and we are indebted to Tony for the significant contribution he has made to golf in Wales during that time. As well as being a key member of the Merger Working Party Tony was a former Chairman of both the WGU's Championship and Golf Course Committees; he was also Captain of the Welsh Team from 1996-1999 during which time the Youth's team won the 1998 European Youths Team Championship.



**Tony Disley**

## **2007 Financial Results**

The statutory accounts cover the year to 31 December 2007, the first year of operation of Golf Union of Wales Ltd. The assets and liabilities of the Welsh Golfing Union and the Welsh Ladies' Golf Union were transferred to the new body on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007.

The Management Committee is aware that there is intense competition for all external funding and we need to ensure that we are not too reliant on these to maintain the core activities within our strategy. That said, we would acknowledge in particular the support of all our sponsors, as well as various organisations for their generous grants. We were especially pleased to welcome several new sponsors in the year. All such funding makes a significant difference to our ability to achieve our aims.

The budget for 2007 projected a deficit of £45,000 for the year so I am delighted to report a surplus of £11,519. Whilst the first year of operation incurred some inevitable costs it is gratifying that we are already experiencing synergy benefits.

Our balance sheet is strong, reflecting the prudent cash management and rigorous budgetary control of both the individual unions. However, the 2008 Income and Expenditure account will be under strain as subscriptions will be affected by the payment of Ladies' Golf Union subscriptions (not paid in 2007 as were accounted for in December 2006 in the WLGU accounts). Expenditure will rise as we will be sending both a Mens' and Ladies' team to the World Amateur Team Championships in Australia in the Autumn. However reserves are sufficient to contemplate a modest deficit in the short term.

### **Golf Development Wales – Developing the Game in Wales**

It has been an extremely busy year for all involved with the launch of a junior club accreditation scheme (Junior GolfCert); a new development strategy (d<sup>3</sup>); the start of a joint project with the PGA in respect of Coach Education and the dynamic progress of the Ryder Cup Wales Legacy Fund process.



The initial development strategy, "Making a Move", concentrated primarily on beginner introductory

schemes and the major highlights again this year have been:-

- the continuing success of Dragon Sport Tri-Golf. The latest figures from the Sports Council for Wales show that 2,500 children took part in nearly 700 Dragon Sport Tri-Golf sessions during the 2007 academic year;
- the increase in 5x60 golf schemes. 5x60 is the Welsh Assembly Government's secondary school scheme for extra-curricular sport and about a quarter of those schools with 5x60 officers are showing an interest in running golf sessions. 5x60 is an area that GDW believes will develop significantly in 2008;
- the development of specific local authority partnerships e.g. Pembrokeshire, Cardiff, Newport, Gwynedd and Anglesey;
- the compilation of golf material for the PE national curriculum (Key Stage 3).

In terms of general junior participation, the figures for 7 – 11 yr olds are up by 4% points for the last 2 years. This represents a further 8,000 children participating in the sport and brings the total to 35,000. For 11- 16 yr olds figures have risen by 4,000 to a total of 25,000.

Having worked successfully, via “Making a Move” to build a broader participation base, 2007 has seen some reflection and review and the new strategy, “d<sup>3</sup>” will build on these successes and produce a slight shift in direction giving an increased focus to supporting golf clubs and beginner playing facilities. The d<sup>3</sup> strategy takes account of the inherent personal life-skills within golf and reflects that in developing someone as a golfer, you are also helping to develop them as a person as well as developing the sport in general.



Some of this work has already begun with the Women & Girls Start Golfing Scheme which started in 2006 which has resulting in over 50% increase in girl members in the last 5 years; the launch in early 2008 of the Clubs Junior Guide cd-rom and the new Junior Club Accreditation scheme, “Junior GolfCert”.

“Junior GolfCert” is a charter mark that all clubs aspiring to

provide a quality experience and environment for its junior members should seek to attain. It is a standard that clubs will be proud to acclaim that they have achieved.

Child and adult welfare continues to be an important aspect of any junior golf activity and GDW has been a partner of the NSPCC in the Children in Golf Steering Group and continues to offer advice and guidance to clubs in this key area.

The development of golf in Wales is also fortunate to have the benefit of the Ryder Cup Wales Legacy Fund, a £2 million fund which was part of the successful 2010 Ryder Cup bid and which is being used to develop various types of beginner playing facilities across Wales. GDW is playing a key role in evaluating all the applications and assisting subsequent successful applicants in developing their requisite strategic plans. Over 25 golf clubs are currently involved in a variety of Legacy Fund schemes.

The final aspect of GDW’s work has been the establishment of Regional Centres of Excellence and it is very pleasing to note that two of the five centres have been completed (The Vale of Glamorgan and Clays Golf Centre); two are currently being constructed (Llangefni and Celtic Manor) and one is at final planning stage (Machynys). Counties and national squad players have a

specified amount of free access to these centres to help develop them as elite golfers for Wales.

### **Elite Performance and Coaching**

As part of the writing of the Union's High Performance Plan 2008-2012 a comprehensive coaching review was undertaken culminating in the appointment of Neil Matthews and Jeremy Bennett as National Coaches and Paul Williams and John Peters as Regional Coaches. Our thanks go to former coaches David Llewellyn, Christine Langford and Ian Runcie for their tireless work and considerable expertise over a number of years.

On the whole it was a disappointing year for team results however there were some highlights including the Boy's Under 16 team winning the inaugural quadrangular event in Scotland. Both the Men's and the Ladies' teams made the top flight in the European Team Championship but will have been disappointed not to have contended for a medal.

For the first time Wales had 3 players selected for the GB & I Walker Cup team which narrowly lost to the USA – Rhys Davies, Nigel Edwards and Llewellyn Matthews. Rhys and Llewellyn along with former Welsh Champion Ryan Thomas all joined the professional ranks at the end of year and we wish them every success in their future careers.

Breanne Loucks and Sahra Hassan were both selected to represent GB & I against the Continent of Europe in the Vagliano Trophy and the end of season saw international Lydia Hall turn professional and finish an excellent second in the European Ladies Tour qualifying school.

### **Championships and Events**

We congratulate all the Champions for the season and especially Llewellyn Matthews for successfully defending the Welsh Men's Amateur championship and the Pinnacle Order of Merit and also for being named the Towergate Amateur Golfer of the Year.

The following table summarises the winners of our national championships and Welsh performances in international team events.



Welsh Champion Breanne Loucks (R) with runner up Tara Davies

<b>INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS</b>	<b>WINNER/POSITION</b>
Ladies' Open Stroke Play Championship	Heather McRae (Dunblane)
Ladies' Close Championship	Breanne Loucks (Wrexham)
Senior Ladies' Match Play Championship	Ann Lewis (Royal St David's)
Welsh Open Stroke Play Championship	John Parry (Harrogate)
Welsh Open Youths' Championship	Sam Matton (Bowood)
Welsh Seniors' Championship	Keith Stimson (Wenvoe Castle)
Welsh Open Seniors' Championship	John Baldwin (Sunningdale)
Welsh Boys' Championship	Joe Vickery (Newport )
Welsh Girls' Championship	Beth Davies (Mold)
Welsh Amateur Championship	Llewellyn Matthews (Southerndown)
Welsh Boys' U15 Championship	Mark Parry
Welsh Boys' U13 Championship	Zack Galliford (Borth & Ynyslas)
Welsh Ladies' Seniors' Championship	Vicki Thomas (Carmarthen)
Welsh Individual Handicap Championship	Cat 'A': Andrew Watkins (Welshpool)
	Cat 'B': Glyn Davies (Welshpool)
<b>TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS</b>	
Welsh Inter Counties	Caernarvonshire
Welsh Boys' Inter Counties	Glamorgan
Welsh Ladies' Team	Vale of Glamorgan
Welsh Team	Wenvoe Castle
Welsh Handicap Team	Pontypridd
Welsh Junior Inter Club	Carmarthen
Ping Welsh Mixed Team Challenge	Whitchurch (Cardiff)
Victory Shield	Vale of Glamorgan
European Boys' Team Championship	11 <sup>th</sup>
European Girls' Team Championship	19 <sup>th</sup>
European Mens' Team Championship	8 <sup>th</sup>
European Ladies' Team Championship	7 <sup>th</sup>
Boys' Home Internationals	4 <sup>th</sup>
Girls' Home Internationals	4 <sup>th</sup>
Mens' Home Internationals	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ladies' Home Internationals	4 <sup>th</sup>
Senior Mens' Home Internationals	4 <sup>th</sup>
Senior Ladies' Home Internationals	3 <sup>rd</sup>

The GUW is committed to providing a range of events to cater for golfers of all abilities and 2007 saw the introduction of the inaugural PING Welsh Mixed Foursomes Team Challenge. The Championship Committee have also identified a number of other new events which will be introduced over the next few years.

## **Handicapping and Course Rating**

Work on the quadrennial revision of the CONGU Unified Handicapping System has been completed and the new UHS Manual has been sent out to all clubs. To complement the introduction of the new manual a successful series of seven handicap workshops have been held around Wales.

The G UW continues with an annual Course Rating Programme with 25 courses being re-rated Standard Scratch Score during 2007.

## **Golf Course Management**

The Golf Course Management Committee, in conjunction with sponsors ECL Telecom, hosted 3 workshops for member clubs in November with an array of top class presenters introducing topics such as Health & Safety, Ecological and Environmental Considerations, Greenkeeper Training and the importance of a Golf Course Policy Document. Copies of the presentations and of the G UW's Draft Golf Course Policy Document can be found on the Union's website [www.golfunionwales.org](http://www.golfunionwales.org)

## **Sponsorship**

We recruited a number of high profile sponsors during 2007 including Magners, Ping, Pinnacle and ECL Telecom whilst extending existing arrangements with Towergate, Footjoy and Titleist. This has resulted in record levels of sponsorship income and we have also been successful in achieving pound for pound Sportsmatch funding for all the cash sponsorships meaning that additional funding has been available to Golf Development Wales.

We are extremely grateful to all our sponsors, both new and long-standing, for their invaluable support for the game. In an ever competitive environment for external funding we will continue our endeavours to attract new sponsors, to build on the services we currently provide to sustain the game and support our member clubs.

In addition we would also like to express our gratitude to the R&A and Sports Council for Wales – their generous support is vital to our ongoing development and the achievement of our goals.

## **Communications**

We are conscious of the need to regularly and clearly communicate the activities of the G UW to all our stakeholders. Equally important is ensuring that our stakeholders are able to communicate effectively with the Union and receive appropriate and timely information or advice.

We are able to use the services of a media officer within the Sports Council for Wales, and using a number of agencies to distribute information and press releases about our events and activities. The Welsh Club Golfer offers us the opportunity to feature articles about the Union which is helping to raise our profile. Monthly bulletins containing information about events and championships are distributed to Council members. The Union's web site has been redesigned and is a primary source of information about the Union's activities.

### **Towergate Welsh Golf Awards**

Conwy Golf Club won the 2007 Towergate Welsh Golf Club of the Year Award which was presented at the Ryder Cup Wales Annual Gala & Awards Dinner at the Vale of Glamorgan in October.

Conwy saw off tough competition from a number of clubs including, Cradoc, Machynys Peninsula and Nefyn. The panel of Golf Union Wales judges were impressed with the club's new management structure, the quality of the course changes and the number of top quality events it has recently staged and will stage in over the next few years. Other awards handed out during the glittering ceremony were:-

- The Towergate Tour Pro of the Year which went to Becky Brewerton who had a successful season in 2007 winning the Ladies English Open at Chart Hills and also becoming the first Welsh player to play in the Solheim Cup.
- The Towergate Golf Development Wales PGA Professional of the Year (identified by Golf Development Wales as having contributed most to grass-roots development in 2007) which went to Neil Matthews who is a tutor for the PGA on its Level 1 courses, a Golf Foundation Junior Leader and a coach for Gwent county juniors. Neil also won the Golf Foundation's Annual Sinclair Award earlier in the year.
- The Towergate Welsh Amateur of the Year which went to Llewellyn Matthews who during 2007 retained the Welsh Amateur Championship crown and the Pinnacle Order of Merit title as well as winning the prestigious St Andrews Links Trophy, qualifying for the Open Championship at Carnoustie and being one of the record number of three Welshmen to play in the Walker Cup.



Amateur Golfer of the Year Llewellyn Matthews and GUV Chairman Louise Fleet.

## **European Golf Association General Assembly**

This report would not be complete without recognising Andrew Morgan's 2 year tenure as President of the European Golf Association. Traditionally the country of the outgoing President plays host to the EGA's General Assembly and it was the G UW's pleasant duty therefore to stage the event in October. The Assembly Dinner was held at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff in the presence of Wales' First Minister Rhodri Morgan.



L-R Andrew Morgan, Rhodri Morgan and Phil Dixon

Well over twenty European Golf Federations were represented throughout the three days and our thanks go to Visit Wales for its generous patronage of the event.

## **Conclusion**

2007 has been a successful first year for the Golf Union of Wales and this is due to many people who are too numerous to mention individually. But the collective hard work and good will of the Union's professional and enthusiastic staff who have worked extremely hard during this period of change, and the many volunteers at all levels who give their time so willingly to further the Union's activities and the game in Wales have all contributed to the achievements of 2007.

I thank everyone for their hard work and the contribution they have made to Welsh golf.

**Louise Fleet**  
**Chairman**  
**April 2008**