

HERE ARE A FEW GOLFING MEMORIES OF MINE WHICH I THOUGHT WERE QUITE AMUSING.

1. WITHIN TOUCHING DISTANCE OF THE GOLFING HOLY GRAIL.

As I am nearly sitting in the chair reserved for the oldest member, I want to write down a couple of "golfing occasions" that seem to stick in my memory. I hope the main characters can take a few of my exaggerations on the chin and roll with the punches!

One such occasion was a friendly fourball played many years ago with the two main characters being Nigel May, who was my partner, and John Keenan, who partnered Mike Hayes.

Nigel needs no introduction. As befits a member of Newcastle County Down he is RMS's gentleman's gentleman. Amongst the Saturday and Sunday 'roll up' gang, Nigel is about the only one we trust to make an honest draw to decide who will play with who....because it is well known that many others, including myself, have been known to "fix" the draw so that we play with our preferred golfing partners. Sadly we have all reached that stage of grumpiness!

The other memorable thing about Nigel is the ever present score card he carries in his back pocket. I have secretly wondered whether he, a top accountant, has had difficulty in adding up simple figures or whether it is because of his quest for perfection in keeping everyone's score for the entirety of the game. For he is frequently seen whipping out his score card to tell player "A" that he is three down to player "B", but not to worry as he has two strokes coming, and telling player "C" that he is five up on player "D" (himself) but that he'd better watch out because the second nine is coming which we know Nigel always prefers. For Nigel is always the optimist.

And so on to the game itself, where Nigel and myself, despite playing out of our skins, found ourselves one down after nine holes, largely as a result of the extraordinary play of John Keenan. The situation was even worse standing on the 15th tee as we were now two down with John about to receive a stroke. Keenan, as we were used to seeing on that particular day, hit a perfect drive 230 yards down the middle, and it was at this particular point that I noticed a certain hardening come over the normally gentle features of my partner. For as with all the great achievers in life, when a certain crisis point is reached, a certain switch is turned on and they spring into action. And clearly, the thought of losing the 5£ tea stakes was right now getting under the skin of the Managing Partner of one of the UK's largest accountancy practices, my partner Nigel.

Leaving the 15th tee heading for our drives I watched my partner, with his immaculate 'plus twos' and long legged elegant strides, slowly but surely catch up with the pigeon toed shoe shuffle of our opponent Keenan. I then had a premonition as to what would happen next and sure enough, out of his back pocket came the ever present score card which he then began waving

under John's nose.

"John my dear man, what a splendid fellow you are", I heard my partner begin with, followed by..."and what fantastic golf you are playing. Do you know that if you par these last four holes you will be round in a gross 75".

Well, before I tell you what happened next, let me first remind you of a few facts about John Keenan's character. In a word, this man is tough. He's parachuted out of aeroplanes breaking legs, he has been chopped up by surgeons and been back drinking his pints within days as if nothing had happened. He has spent a lot of his commercial life living on the knife edge of survival and taken everything in his stride. In short, John Keenan is without doubt one of the club's hard men.

John is also a very serious golfer, and was playing off 16 at the time we played this game. He had once confided with me that on many occasions he had laid awake at night, staring at the ceiling, totally ignoring his young beautiful wife, thinking of ways he could break 80 around the Outer Course at Royal Mid Surrey...something that at the time he had never managed to achieve.

Whether my partner knew this I do not know, but it was to this very fragile underbelly that any golfer has, just when he is within touching distance of his golfing Nirvana, that my partner's few words were directed...."four pars for a gross 75".

And in this instance poor John proved that he was no different to the rest of us golfing mortals.

The first thing I saw was a gradual glazing over of the eyes. Then a large moonlike and totally meaningless grin slowly spread over his face. He was entering a 'trance like' state over which he had no control as he reached for his 3 wood and took a huge four letter swing which thundered into the ground fully 8 inches behind the ball.

The next two minutes proved too painful for any decent fellow golfer to watch and my memory must have blanked out. My next recollection of John was seeing him perched on the mound at the back of the 15th green muttering to his partner, out of the corner of his lopsided mouth (as he is known to do), that he would try and chip in for seven to make it easier for his partner, poor Mike Hayes, to hole his putt for a six....for John's mind was also blown to shreds by this stage.

Well, as we can all guess, poor John Keenan never did break 80 that day and Nigel and myself, after being one down with four to play, romped home to win the game. Although our prize was only £3, as ever, my partner was quick to point out, after doing yet more calculations on his score card, that wining £3 instead of losing £5 represented a swing of £8, certainly not to be sneezed at Philip.

The game was reassuring as well in the fact that even those who live their lives with the highest moral codes can occasionally fall to mere mortal levels and enjoy a bit of lighthearted low level skulduggery in order to win a game of golf and make our opponents pay for tea.

But rest assured, Nigel still, to this day, remains about the only man we trust to make an honest draw.

2. A VIEW OF MICHAEL SULLIVAN.

We will next move on to another notable member of the club, the bold and mercurial Michael Sullivan, who, on the day he captained the Club against the Artisans, was found by Dr. Marco Chiesa and myself lying in a comatose state head down half off the Ladies first tee. We did the decent thing and put a couple of towels under his head and left him for dead, only to find an hour later, when we came out to check on him, that the body had risen and found it's way back to the bar in the artisan's club house. Apparently it was on that night that we heard that the Captain of the Artisan's, when walking home, nearly drowned himself in the river Thames.

It was about that time that Sullivan and myself had got into the habit of discarding our friends in the Saturday 'roll up' mob as we wanted to play a little earlier in order to finish in a respectable time for tea. We both enjoyed very strong tea and burnt toast, and paying for this formed the wager we played for, which I usually won. (Both Sullivan and myself always had our eyes open wide for the 'opportunity to profit', and Sullivan, being the optimist he was, always thought he was going to get a free tea out of me.) It was on one of these occasions, standing on the first tee of the "Outer Course" that we noticed two forlorn figures moping their way towards us, heads bowed. We soon recognised them as our friends Willie Wise and Philip Joy and asked them what was amiss. Apparently their two opponents had failed to turn up, and before I had time to commiserate, my partner Sullivan, more quickly than he should have done, asked if they would care to have a game with us. Knowing Sullivan as I do, I immediately had my suspicions that he was on to something, and sure enough, when they had accepted our invitation to play, my partner gently asked if they were up for a little wager. (I had a feeling that because I had recently been playing better than normal, Sullivan was banking on me to earn himself a large free meal.!)

For those newer members who have never met Sullivan, the simplest way of describing him is that I believed him to be RMS's answer to the great Tony O'Reilly of Ireland, blessed with more than his share of good looks, sporting prowess and financial wizardry. He could also tell a good tale. The only problem was that for some intangible reason our own version of the great man never quite made it across the line. The jobs that this man has held down, the situations that he has been in, and the varied company that he is known to have kept, from criminals to celebrities, would make all the rest of us, including the mighty (and occasional 'moaning') Mike McMahon, look like little grey men in little grey suits. Despite all these varied experiences in life, the big apple always seemed to allude him to a degree that in some periods of his career he never knew where his next bean was coming from. Usually however, regardless of how bad things were, Michael was always seen at the

club bar, standing ramrod straight, immaculately dressed in a dark blazer with a club tie with a big welcoming grin on his face and the offer of a drink. This man was a larger than life character that could not be easily hidden away, which was sometimes to the disappointment of a few members in the ladies section of the club.

Maybe because it was at one of these low periods in his life that made him look at our prospective opponents as if they were going to provide his next bean, for the look on his face was of undisclosed greed. He was looking at Willie Wise and Philip Joy in the way any Irish farmer looks at his Mullingar heffers when they are taken to market. They are looked upon with a view to certain 'in the bag' profit. (When I enquired from an old Irish friend of mine, the late but larger than life Dermot Affleck-Graves, why this was the case, he replied..." Philip, don't you know that

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Mullingar heffers have meat that grows all the way down into the ankles, and the farmers get paid for all that extra meat"and he added with a twinkle in his eye that if I wanted to see what they looked like then possibly a couple of examples could be seen if I popped into the ladies bar.

Back to the first tee, where my partner was working himself up into a betting frenzy. His intentions were very visible to the observant onlooker, because the extra saliva, caused by the thought of a free meal, had formed a veritable rainbow over the first tee as all the spittle was hurled into the air as each and every bet was shouted out with uncontrolled excitement. "One one and three" was the first shout, followed by "birdies, eagles, presses, sandys, ouzlers and reversible ouzlers". And with each bet made, our opponents moaned their agreement and bowed their heads as if they were being taken to the slaughter.

When the action eventually started, I decided to take the honour, and thinned a 4wood straight along the ground to see it finish nestling right behind the pin. This pleased my partner who was next to play. He stood thoughtfully and confidently on the tee, eyes firmly fixed on the pin, his left hand gently caressing the iron clubs in his bag. He had the air of a man who knew exactly what he was going to do and how he was going to achieve it, as you would expect from a man who was used to rubbing shoulders with golfing Royalty. For it is widely known that our Michael was and is a very good friend of the great Argentinian golfer Roberto de Vicenzo, with whom Michael has played many a game of golf, and possibly because he had Roberto in mind at that particular moment, our Michael whipped out a 6 iron from his bag and smote the ball mightily right out of the middle of the club. We all watched in awe and admiration as the ball sailed up into the clear blue sky and eventually plumped down, fully 40 yards short of the green. Not for the last time on that day we heard Sullivan mumbling to himself that he was a stupid old Irish whore! Next on the tee was Philip Joy, who fixed me with a beady eye and demanded to know what club I had played. Before I had time to lie I replied that it was a 4 wood, and so he followed suit, hitting a low slice out of the heel that finished on the right hand side of the green.

Finally came Willie Wise, never known to play faster than any other member

of the club, probably due to his numerous club 'waggles' and the final flourish of pushing his myopic spectacles up his nose, a sure sign that he was eventually about to hit the ball as he now could actually see it. He first asked me to point out where the green was and I directed him to the bunker on the right hand side of the green, where he promptly hit it. For Willie was a good 'single figure' man despite his short sightedness.

Leaving the first tee my partner and I had a spring in our step, in expectation of a profitable start to the game. Leaving the first green however, things were a little different. For my ball had run on 25 feet past the hole, from where I three putted, thus giving a point to the opposition. Philip Joy took over the 'ouzler' and then proceeded to hole the putt for a 'birdie' for a total of three more points. And finally Willie Wise, because he was now close enough to actually see the pin, managed to get up and down from the bunker in two and thus earned a point for the 'sandy'.

One down in the match and five units down was not the start my partner had in mind and walking down the long second hole I watched, as head bowed, he no doubt was thinking how he would face the press and tell them of the "positives" he could take out of the situation!

Things unfortunately only went down hill from there on, for playing the tenth hole I looked back and noted in terror that our Furher Commander Codd, leading the first group of the normal roll-up four balls, was catching us up, and I knew he would take no prisoners if we dared to hold him up. So in immediate panic I informed our group that in order to speed up the game, we now had to play according to 'Ballybunnion' rules, and that means no looking for anyone's golf balls and you hit as soon as you are ready. Why they are known as Ballybunnion rules I can only guess, maybe it is because the weather is so ferocious down in SW Ireland that they have to play their games as fast as possible. Anyway, these rules were employed to keep us ahead of the the formidable Brian Codd and we scurried along successfully until we reached the 12th tee, when I suddenly realised I had lost my shooting stick. "Boys, boys," my plea went out, "my shooting stick has vanished. Has anyone seen it". Before I could say any more, Philip Joy fixed me with another ferocious stare and shouted right into my face "you can stuff that shooting stick of yours where it hurts Arundell. You've just told us we have to play by Ballybunnion rules, and if we're not allowed to look for golf balls then we're certainly not going to waste time looking for your wretched stick". Well, there was no answer to that. Sometimes you just have to swallow and take it on the chin and poor old Sullivan and myself certainly had it all thrown at us that day, morally, physically and financially and had to sit through a very long tea as we watched our opponents laugh their heads off and eat our meal.

What Sullivan did not know when these two forlorn looking figures approached us on the first tee, heads bowed, was that they had won the Winter Foursomes on at least two occasions and were therefore certainly anything but the Mullingar heffers that he had in mind when he began cranking up the bets. In fact, it has occurred to me over the years, that the reverse may have been the case. They might well have spied Sullivan and myself standing on the first tee and realised that the free tea that had been lost when their opponents had failed to turn up, could easily be salvaged by making a game with a couple of (it pains me to say this) pigeons! No, that is

not a good thought to finish on, and I certainly won't repeat it to my friend Michael. It was just a bad golfing day.

My Godfather always told me that success came late in life, which I will continue to believe in, and I think I will now pass that message along to my mate Sullivan, because one of these days, make no mistake, that big apple will land firmly and possibly unexpectedly in his lap.

3. **The HEAD PROFESSIONAL.**

Harvey Barraclough was the head professional of a golf club I once belonged to. He was a tough no nonsense Yorkshireman with huge hands as big as spades. And he was a very good golfer. For despite being content making his living as a club professional, he had many times forayed out onto the professional tour with a significant degree of success.

He was not very talkative, in fact some members found him a bit on the cold side. And as sometimes happens with men of few words, he was extremely observant, so much so that you had the feeling that, where ever you were, he was able to see straight through your innermost golfing soul case. In fact, were you out on the course playing and Mr. Barraclough was within 500 yards of you, one tended to 'tighten up' with the inner belief that the professionals gaze was fixed firmly on your backswing despite you yourself being shielded by the thickest hedge. And if you entered his shop, which he ran the way you would expect any sensible Yorkshire man to run a shop, very few escaped without making a purchase once those exray eyes had fixed you to the spot. Few were brave or foolish enough to engage in lengthy small talk and walk out with no purchase made.

Underneath all that, he was kind, absolutely fair and his manners, both social and golfing were impeccable. And that says a great deal because a lot of his time was spent on the practice ground trying his best to teach quite a large number of golfing imbeciles how to swing their golf clubs half way decently. And that, as we know takes a degree of patience that only saints can cope with.

He was held in very high esteem by most members, certainly all those who were aware of his qualities, and we, as members, welcomed any opportunity to play a round of golf with him, despite the fact that you knew that every particle of your golf swing...and we all know how many particles make up a golf swing...would be under the sharpest of microscopes. It was always a healthy challenge to face, and sometimes, after he had pocketed the usual winning stakes, he was kind enough to take the most helpless member of the playing group aside to give him one or two useful tips that would give the poor man some hope for the future and keep him away from the larder where he kept the shot gun.

All golfers know that feeling.

One day I was myself in a fourball in which Mr Barraclough found himself partnering (by way of the 'high/low system) the highest handicapper within the group, one of the most well known of the Club's "characters", a certain Jeremiah Lightfoot, who played off a handicap of 27. Jeremiah was a man well into his seventies, but by some freak of nature his giant body retained all the subtleness of a 35 year old, and when he caught hold of his drive, as he did frequently off the first tee, it flew for miles, even without needing a practice swing.

And that really annoyed his other three playing partners, all with much lower

handicaps, who couldn't hit the golf ball half the distance. And it annoyed them even more because usually they had had to wait some considerable time before Jeremiah actually appeared on the first tee, because the head of Jeremiah was permanently in the clouds. Not just because he was close to 7 feet tall, but due to his completely laid back late nineteenth century attitude to life. He could single handedly have invented the words affable, amiable and charming. Unfortunately, nature sometimes balances things out, and although he found himself over imbued with these delightful qualities, Jeremiah always found it difficult to concentrate on the job in hand, for time and tide had absolutely no meaning for him. Hence the usual wait on the first tee and the constant chaperoning of Jeremiah around the golf course, reminding him which hole he was playing, whether his team were up or down in the match or whether his three foot put would win the hole. Which it did on many occasions, much to the chagrin of his opponents.

One of the other traits we playing partners always had to be on the lookout for was his habit of wandering off into the woods, if the woods bordered the fairway we were playing on, in search of the odd ball. Whether it was because of a certain tightness of fist or the thought of getting something for free I do know not, but we all know golfing friends with this peculiar habit, more normally found in squirrels.

And it was this particular habit that caused me to remember the incident that occurred on the par 5 fourteenth hole during our game with The Head Professional.

It had rained heavily during the week, causing the small gully, which ran just in front of the green on this long par 5, to fill with water and form quite a pretty mini Lake, which many thought added to the hole and should be made a permanent feature. Mr Barraclough, who knew how to hit the ball, despite soggy fairways and a wind against, had hit two of his best shots to finish several feet short of this mini lake, in an ideal position for a simple 30 yard chip to the pin for a probable birdie which would put his team one up with four to play.

Unfortunately his partner Jeremiah was no where to be seen. For he had been happily zigzagging up the long fairway in a world of his own. Although he had eventually 'picked up' it still took him some time to reach his partner, the Head Professional, whose impeccable golfing manners had required him to wait and not play his shot until his partner showed up.

And it was on reaching the Lake that something occurred that caused me and my partner, the even more impeccably mannered Japanese member Higeti Sugimoto, who was a very close friend of Mr Barraclough both on and off the course, to realise that there could be trouble afoot. For Jeremiah had suddenly seen a few golf balls lying at the bottom of the lake which had recently been discarded by earlier players as the balls were just out of reach. And some of the balls looked brand new, certainly to the eyes of Jeremiah. It presented the long dreamed of 'pot of gold' which he was totally unable to ignore. He immediately became oblivious of his friends, his partner and any and all golfing etiquette. Using his full height and the longest club in his bag, he leaned across his playing partner and managed to successfully scoop one or possibly two quality golf balls from the bottom of the lake. And being very polite he thanked his partner profusely for the patience he had shown although he still remained completely ignorant as to the possible detrimental effects that this delay could have on his partner, who let us not forget, was waiting to play a delicate shot across a water hazard.

And it was the detrimental effects that Higeti and myself were beginning to be aware of. And sure enough, after this rather long wait our Mr Barraclough, a tour hardened player, was seen to approach his chip shot with a little more speed than usual. And the

result was the cleanest of all shanks. The ball did manage to carry the water, finishing two feet to the right of the surface of the green. He had missed the green which was right in front of him. He then long putted from off the green, following the ball with rather long and hurried strides. So fast were his strides that he managed to catch his golf ball up, eventually tapping it in for a par, except, according to the professional, the ball was still moving when he hit it.

So he called a penalty stroke on himself and apologised to his playing partner for losing the hole.

We walked to the fifteenth tee, with Jeremiah still his amiable self, the professional rather silent and Higeti and myself, head down, firmly looking at our toes. For we could feel certain volcanic pressures building up around us and were aware that the knuckles on the back of those giant hands of Mr Barraclough were turning white. Sure enough, when he stood up to hit his shot, we witnessed one of the most violent and thunderous quick hooks known to man, which left the lovely weeping willow tree situated 75 yards to our left shaking with pain.

Jeremiah was quick to sympathise,...."oh Mr Barraclough, I've never seen you do anything like that before. Whatever could have caused it"and was told by the kind and well mannered Professional that it was just a little lack of concentration, but have no worries, he was now going to concentrate properly in order to make sure that Higeti and myself bought them tea.

And so it transpired. Jeremiah holed a tramliner and Mr Barraclough managed a birdie to win on the eighteenth green. Jeremiah was taken aside and given, we think, a few helpful tips by Mr Barraclough before the both of them joined us for tea. As Jeremiah always ate to satisfy his 7 foot frame the tea bill was high. And then we had to listen to a lengthy description as to just how good the new golf balls were that Jeremiah had retrieved from the bottom of the lake. The Head Professional remained silent with a gentle smile of understanding on his face, and Higeti and I both remembered that the toasted tea cakes certainly did not taste as good as usual.

3 (a). **JEREMIAH LIGHTFOOT**

I first came across young Jeremiah at what he refers to as "The" Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club, where he was already well known for his very laid back late 1900's demeanour.

This man came straight out of one of P.G. Woodhouse's golfing tales. Affable and amiable were his second names, and eccentricity was his password. And for these qualities he would be forgiven over and over again when he rolled up on the first tee fully 15 minutes late for his arranged starting time. For such trivial matters as punctuality were way down on the ladder of importance, especially if he was engaged in a lengthy dialogue with the club's oldest member over the cost of hot buttered toast. So, as far as I could tell at the time, nature had endowed this man with soft edges around each aspect of his character. No sharp edges, discipline or tempers were to be seen.

At least that was what I thought until the time I was invited out to Portugal to visit his family estate, situated up in the leafy hills of Sintra, half an hour from Lisbon. It was here that I learnt that Jeremiah was an 'only child', and as was usual with any only child, he very much wanted his own way. Which was perfectly normal. And since I was his guest, and only half his size to boot, this was quite easy for him to

achieve. What I found amusing was his way of achieving this. Whereas the House of Parliament uses a three line whip to make sure that its members jump to attention when asked to, Jeremiah uses a "double please", which he hopes will have the same effect on his guests as the triple whip has on MP's.

So within my first few hours in Sintra I was told..." Philip, when you have a pee in my house, please wash your hands afterwards.....PLEASE.." Or the following morning, after cooking him his first Olympic sized hot breakfast, I heard....."Philip, please do not distribute the left over breakfast crumbs to the birds, as it will only attract the vermin....PLEASE". And as it was his house that I was staying in, I usually agreed to do what was asked of me.

The other thing I was beginning to have second thoughts about was Jeremiah's laid back attitude towards time and punctuality. What I had considered at the golf club to be a quaint old fashioned trait, was proving, in a 'one on one' situation, on his own stamping ground in Portugal, to be quite trying. Especially for someone who was top of the class in the 'grumpy old men' category. On many occasions on the way to the golf club we would stop off at some little Portuguese corner shop and young Jeremiah would ask me to wait in the car for a couple of minutes while he picked up his newspaper. And normally, after 25 minutes he would emerge. This happened quite frequently, rousing my curiosity as to why he took so long. So I began to spy on him. I found the main reason was Jeremiah's usual trait of amiability, befriending those he met and smothering them with his 'bonhomie', while at the same time (when in Portugal) practicing his Portuguese on the poor proprietor. Who, after 10 minutes or so, was beginning to wish this amiable Englishman would leave the shop or put his hand in his pocket to buy something. Especially if Edward had given him a "Times" token and run off with his expensive foreign newspaper.

Then we come to golf. By this time, I was beginning to realise that the only reason I had been invited out to Portugal was because I was a better golfer than he was, and at a stroke I would be able to fill the roll of ball boy, golfing partner and teacher in one obedient package.

And I was also learning that there was nothing 'laid back' about Jeremiah's approach to golf. He was, on his own territory, a frightening golf fanatic. So much so that in late May or June when we were normally playing, he would get quite irate if anyone else happened to be on the golf course at the same time that we were playing. I can remember having to stop him rushing across three fairways to issue a "double please" (get off my course) to an innocent young couple three holes ahead of us. And as far as our own games of golf went, they could be described as competitive. Although Jeremiah pretended not to know what was going on, at each moment during the 18 holes he knew exactly who was up and by how much, or whether anyone was cheating. For beating me would present him with ultimate joy while at the same time leaving me with ultimate shame, frothing at the mouth. A lot was at stake.

And it may have been after one of those shameful moments, (every low handicapper hates being beaten by a high handicapper), when I was letting off steam with a cold beer in my hand, at a delightful little fish restaurant in Sintra, that I received yet another "double please" from young Jeremiah.

" Philip, would you please moderate your language. Other people in this restaurant (Edward usually referred to these lovely little family run restaurants as his "greasy

spoons") might understand English.....PLEASE.." ! Which of course I was happy to do, since, even I, in my hot flush of losing to the lesser player, had noticed one or two delicately uttered "Lee Ho Fook" (a well known Chinese restaurant in London) words emanating from my direction.

I did not think there was the slightest chance of upsetting anyone, since there was a nice buzz of conversation in the room and our closest fellow diners were two elderly Portuguese grandmothers, conservatively dressed in dark shoals stretching from floor to ceiling, who were sitting right behind me, facing the opposite direction.

So the meal progressed happily for the next half hour, with no punches being thrown between my host and myself, when I was aware of the scraping of chairs behind me as the two old ladies paid their bill and prepared to leave.

The next thing I was aware of was the two of them standing directly over me, looking down with gentle maternal smiles on their faces. The smaller of the two then uttered, with the clearest diction I have ever heard, words that I will never ever forget..." Young man, I do believe that in Yorkshire they speak very good English"..... then, still with a smile on their faces, they slowly turned and made their way out of the restaurant.

Poleaxed....dumbstruck.....total and complete denouement.

I eventually thought of a riposte I could have made, but I didn't want to look like a complete fool and be seen chasing down the road shouting that Geoffrey Boycott himself must occasionally have used a naughty word. No. Nothing I could do. Not one small 'positive' could I take out of it, unlike all other professional sportsmen who always manage to find some kind of a positive, however small, after a bad day at the office.!

I eventually surfaced back into reality only to find my friend Jeremiah falling backwards off his chair with uncontrolled guffaws of donkey like merriment. It eventually dawned on me that he was enjoying my total and complete put down. Which in fairness was understandable. For it had been a wonderful knockout bow, cleanly delivered. But his laughter did thankfully bring me back to the present, stir my competitive instincts and helped me to look forward to the future and forget the put down that I had just received. I began to focus on how I could get back at him, that is to say, my host. That train of thought immediately made me feel a lot better and brought me back to normality. Especially when I remembered I was in charge of the kitchen and Jeremiah enjoyed his hot breakfasts like nothing else on earth. I decided to punish him the next morning. He would only get one fried egg with his breakfast instead of the normal three.

No matter how many times he said "please".!

P.S....the storyteller is always allowed to get the last laugh.!

4. **Dinner with BRIAN.**

A GOLFING STORY. The names mentioned in the story below are entirely fictitious and no character mentioned and described below resembles any known person belonging to the golf club I belong to. If there is any suggestion of similarity I hope my friends in question can bend a little and take any small glancing blows and exaggerations with a grin rather than a lawyer's letter.

Many years ago I was invited to spend a long weekend with one of my golfing chums, Denis Albutt, who lived near Richmond, which was close to the golf club we both played at. This was great for me because I lived deep across the other side of town and it saved me a considerable amount of travel time.

I did however keep it in mind that I would have to tread very carefully when staying at his home because I knew from experience that when we were both together, in whatever circumstance, a highly charged wobbly was waiting just under the surface. For Denis was one of the world's perfectionists. He was also highly observant and highly intelligent. He was a top level chess and bridge player on the intellectual side and a top level golfer on the sporting front, playing to a near scratch handicap for many years. His ability with the long irons was legendary as was his deft touch around the greens.

His name is up on the boards of several south England golf clubs as Champion Golfer and he has won "The Antlers" which was a nationally respected golfing 'foursomes' event held at the club we both belonged to.

The only trouble was that this huge storage tank of ability and intelligence was all bottled up, because for some reason or other he was a bit shy and this made it difficult for him to verbalise his thoughts easily and calmly at any given moment. Hence things tended to build up inside him until eventually some "camel's straw" would come along which would cause all his frustrations to explode out of his system with the force of one of his 300 yard drives. And experience has shown, that on more than my fair share of times, I happened to be the camel's straw.!

That is why I knew I had to tread carefully. Especially because, at the time of this occasion, Denis was a little past his golfing prime and the odd 'three putt' had started creeping into his game which would cause any golfer to get a bit short tempered, especially one that was constantly expecting perfection.

Regardless of all this, we were chums, so when I knocked on his door on Friday evening all I was thinking about was a few beers, a chess game and a good meal, because as you would expect from such a talented person, he was also a brilliant, if temperamental, cook.

This proved optimistic.

I was soon rocking back on my heels from a quick and unexpected verbal left hand jab...for as he opened the door and caught sight of me, with an aggressive 'half yell' he asked me "what the hell I was doing here" and " didn't I know he hated people staying with him in his own apartment".

I managed to ride this turbulence and, after a lot of sighing and cursing, he eventually let me get my foot inside the door, and gradually, as I had imagined, the evening progressed pleasantly enough ending up with him winning the chess game.

I told Dennis I was cooking breakfast for him the next morning. Not because I lost the chess game. As a sportsman, I was also a bit competitive, and fancied my ability as a cook. I did not want to leave him with the moral high ground right across the board.

So the morning came.

Mornings are always a bit tense when staying in someone else's house. For one thing, the pleasant and relaxing effect of the alcohol the night before was gone. In fact, the opposite is true, for sometimes the nasty after effect of alcohol raises it's ugly head...the dreaded hangover..which can make people, even seasoned drinkers, veritably bad tempered. And underlying all this of course, is 'the animal factor'. For

although we human beings believe ourselves to be civilised, intelligent and courteous to all around us...(for that is the labelling on the bottle)...in reality, the contents within the bottle are 99% animal. And being animal, your territory becomes vitally important. Which is why every one of us, all around the world, however well mannered we are, find ourselves tip toeing around on broken glass when ever we stay over at someone else's home, because we know, and the hosts know, that the 'sacred rights of territory' are being interfered with.

So, were I half way philosophical, given the reasons above, I should have known that breakfast with Dennis would always be tense. For we were competing males, in animal terms, and I was occupying his territory. And I also knew that there was only one loo (that most private part of anybody's territory) in the apartment, and that sooner or later we would both be competing as to who got there first.

Understandably, I was a bit tense and nervous as I set about cooking breakfast. Not quite as nervous and tense as the unlucky golfer who has to hit the first shot in a 3 day Ryder Cup match, but somewhere near. And my first shot hit the bunker, because I had unknowingly taken hold of Dennis's absolutely sacrosanct non stick omelette pan in which to sauté the tomatoes...to say I received a verbal slap on the wrist would be an understatement.

Eventually the breakfast was cooked. And a work of art it was. The rind had been separated from the bacon to make it extra crispy and melt in your mouth. The toast was extra thick and very well toasted so that the melted butter laid on the surface ready to receive the perfectly cooked poached eggs, devoid of any water which would make the toast soggy. The tomatoes, amongst others, were well sautéed to take away the sharpness. And all was presented on piping hot plates in the dining room so the host and his cook could properly begin the day.

We sat in silence We ate in silence.

Denis spent the time either head down looking at the plate, no doubt hoping to find the smallest culinary mistake, or looking up and glaring at me, maybe fearful that I should beat him to the toilet. I sat in respectful silence, hoping for some grunt of approval but above all hoping that no rejects would be left on his plate.

That would rate as a success.

Eventually we both finished eating. Not a scrap was left on either plate. Denis stood up and carried his plate back to the kitchen. I breathed a big sigh of relief. Denis must have enjoyed his breakfast, which I was genuinely happy about. I was beginning to gain some of the moral high ground.

And then the earth stood still.

From out of the kitchen came the most ear piercing scream anyone could imagine. "Arundell you absolute idiot, you have put too much Fairy Liquid in the washing up bowl and you are staining my plates". Or words to that effect.

I always knew I could never win.

Later in the day we reached the golf club to meet up with our usual gang of friends to sort out who was going to play with who. And one of the first we bumped into was Brian Codd, a good friend to both of us. His voice was usually the first and most dominant to be heard whenever and wherever our golfing gang met up, and sure enough he was now announcing to the assembled company that his wife was away and that he had a pink ticket for the evening.

His ability to dominate the conversation at any dinner table was accentuated by the sheer strength of his personality. For Brian was a properly tough ex military man who

had been in some hairy situations when doing service in Oman and Indonesia. Everything was either black or white and once he had pronounced there was usually no argument.

And he was never afraid to state what he believed even if it would land him in hot water. But on the odd occasion that he was proved wrong, he was strong and big enough to give everyone the most humble and graceful apology. And so with his character. Although he appeared ramrod straight and unforgiving on the outside, he had a very soft and kind inside, which very occasionally would pop up to the surface. Thus Brian was one of the better known members of our particular golfing gang and if you were honest, there was always an element of fear if you were drawn to play with him, because he was certainly not afraid to tell you what he thought, as many newcomers to our golfing circle soon found out if they happened to talk to quickly or play to slowly. Even on the snooker table he was held in awe for his ability to ram home the long distant pots, which gained him the nick name of 'Rifleman Codd'. When my friend Denis heard that Brian might be free that evening, he quickly went up and asked him if he would like to join the both of us for dinner, no doubt not wanting to be left with me alone for yet one more night. Brian stared long and hard at Denis and then he turned his head and stared at me, and during all this staring he blinked several times, which indicated to me that he was actually thinking. And what he must have been thinking was "golly, poor old Denis doesn't say much (blink) and Arundell talks a lot of nonsense (blink). It is not going to be too much fun for me..(clank)..?" And then out popped the answer. "NO". It was a clear cut No, with no softening words, although he was kind enough to throw in the excuse that his wife Perry had left him something in the fridge, hoping maybe that this would save our feelings.

Denis and I were still reeling from the after effects of this very public put down when another member of the gang who had been standing close by, approached us, mentioning that he had just left home with a flea in his ear and might possibly welcome a seat at our dinner table.

Denis was very happy and quick to give a positive response. It not only helped us recover from the moral blow to the solar plexus that Brian had just given us, it also gave us a bit more credibility, for the man who wanted to join our table was Mike MacMahon, very well known through out the club and certainly of an equal, if different, standing to Brian.

For Mike was known to have gone through life using all the highways and byways that the good God had made available to man.

To begin with he was a top sportsman. He had given up the chance of being a county cricketer because he was offered the glamorous if dangerous job of being a head croupier in the gaming halls of the Caribbean, with tentacles leading to the American mafia. It was said that each new year Mike would line up all the young and beautiful ladies who purported to be the 'croupier's assistants' and take his time throughout the remainder of the year knocking them over one by one. Usually in between his rugby and cricket games.

And after a few years of this he found himself roaming the golfing fairways of America working as a professional golfing 'caddy', for not just any golfing pro, but England's best at that time, Open Champion Tony Jacklin.

In the fullness of time Mike found himself back in the UK supplying high quality fruit and vegetables to the best Hotels and 'Gentleman's Clubs' of London, and in doing this he invariably found himself eating at the top tables with the Directors, Managers and Chefs that he consorted with.

In short, this man has had a life littered with milk and honey.

The only trouble with Mike was his capacity to moan.

Probably because he had flown so high in life he was now a man that was very hard to please. When he was on the golf course he moaned because he thought his swing resembled one of the slashing cover drives of his cricketing youth. Even when the swing was genuinely a good golfing swing he moaned because the flight and sound was not quite in the league of his previous employer, Tony Jacklin.

And when dining out no table would ever compare to dining with the Head Chef and Managing Director of The Goring Hotel.

Despite this capacity for near primeval moaning, Mike would generally be considered a good catch for our or anybody's dinner table because of his many and varied experiences in life, the stories of which usually surfaced after several bottles of wine. Knowing that Mike was safely signed up for our dinner table, Denis, being the kind and fair man that he was, re approached Brian to see if he wanted to change his mind now that Mike MacMahon was going to join us for dinner. The answer again was a definite "No", which was a shame but it did soften the sting of his original rebuttal of our invitation. At least it was not only just us that the great Brian was turning down. And so, after the usual squabbles as to who was playing with who, the assembled company meandered out onto the golf course to spend four pleasant hours or so competing as to who were the unfortunate ones who would have to cough up and pay for the tea and toast of the lucky winners. I am pleased to report here that we have all been civilised enough not to have had to resort to full scale punch ups or on course wrestling matches to decide this important issue. Don't forget that a few million years ago, the winners usually ate the losers. That is why, however polite we are on the surface, we all love winning and hate losing. So the winning of tea carries much more weight than the simple £5 needed to pay for it.

And it was while having our tea that the next little episode of the story took place, for who should walk through the door but Colin Campbell, a very good friend of Denis Albutt, my host. In fact, he was more than a good friend because he was also a seriously good golfer who in his youth had won The Scottish Boys Championship. Without, we are told, ever having a golfing lesson in his life. So there was a special unspoken bond of respect between these two golfing friends because both of them in their golfing careers had been to places that the majority of us normal amateurs could only dream about. And like many who had achieved the heights in a truly competitive field, Colin was modest. He was also a true Scot, for although not dour, he was a man of few words. Even after a few whiskeys.

So it took a while before we learnt that he also was free for the evening because his wife Dianna was on other errands. It was therefore no surprise that shortly thereafter we heard the happy Scottish grunt that signified that yes, he would accept the invitation to have dinner with his chum Denis.

Now also within earshot of this happy Scottish grunt was our friend Brian. And the more observant of the assembled company knew that Brian looked up to Colin in the same way that the little Ronnie looked up to the taller Ronnie because, in golfing terms, our Colin was in a higher class to our Brian. And that was fact. When Brian organised his golfing tours to his beloved France, Colin was the first on the list to be invited, and Colin, because Brian was also his good friend, was usually the first to accept.

So, hearing that Colin was going to dine with us, most of us half way sensitive and observant souls realised that Brian was now in a tricky and embarrassing predicament. Because most of us knew he would happily give his right arm to join the dinner table

but we also knew that he had already turned down the invitation, not only once but twice.

Not for one second was Brian embarrassed. Not for one second did he hesitate. Not for one second did he contemplate the underlying, possibly embarrassing, circumstances. In a completely open and honest 'volte face' or in military terms, "about turn", he went straight up to Denis and with the sweetest and gentlest voice of an innocent seven year old asked.."Oh Denis, if Colin is coming can I come too.." And so dear reader, yes, we did all, in the end, have dinner with Brian, for we all knew and liked him, hard side or soft side showing.

EPILOGUE. Of course we all had fun over dinner. Plenty of noise and good food. There was however one more little twist in the tail of this story that the three later arrivals to the dinner table still don't know about. And that was a little incident that took place in the kitchen.

For Denis had originally planned a meal for just the two of us, and had prepared two pieces of fresh Lemon Soles. He now had to think quickly as to how to satisfy three extra hungry men, and so resorted to his well stocked double door, floor to ceiling fridge/freezer and extracted three of the best sirloin steaks he could find...remembering that Mike MacMahon was present. And as a perfectionist himself, Denis took out his heavy cast iron griddle, which he would slowly heat up to a ferocious temperature to properly sear the steaks, and a lighter weight state of the art non stick frying pan to make sure the excellent pieces of fish were properly "pan fried" as described in the best restaurants.

Now maybe you have already guessed, but at the absolute critical moment of the whole evening, until this moment unbeknown to the guests, the poor lemon soles were thrown onto the red hot griddle and the steaks had to make do with the gentle heat of the non stick pan.

Unfortunately for my friend Denis I just happened to be passing the kitchen door at this precise moment, and as a half decent cook myself, I noticed this error, and Denis, having caught sight of me, knew that I knew what had just happened. So with a big grin I gave him a wink and asked " if he needed any help in the kitchen"?. And, as you can expect, the temperature and volume suddenly increased to breakpoint as he yelled at me" no, I certainly do not want any help from you and stay out of my wretched kitchen"...or words to that effect.

And even to this day, many years after this memorable dinner, if things are a bit quiet and slow in the evening when I reach for my first drink and I need cheering up, I give Denis (who now lives in Scotland) a call and ask him if he needs any help in the kitchen. And sure as eggs are eggs, within seconds, I can feel 500 miles of telephone cables shaking violently as he tells me where the blazes I can go.

Still, I guess that's what friends are for.

5. A GOLFING DAY AT WOODCOTE.

Most fathers are attentive to their son's wishes, and are also known to quietly boast about some of their achievements, more so if they themselves have nothing to shout about. Golfing fathers are no exception to this rule, especially if the golfing son hits the ball over 300 yards. So it was no surprise to me when I received a nod and a nudge from Mike Marland indicating that his son Sam would really appreciate a golfing round at the RAC course at Woodcote Park, where I happened to be a

member. Mike also knew that I would almost certainly say yes to his request as I was someone who was never invited to play at outside golfing events with the "established" members of my own golf club. And Marland was close to the centre of that elite crowd. To complete his enjoyment and to alleviate the boredom of having to spend the entire day with me alone, he had invited our mutual friend Ian Ray to join us. Just as he knew the reason I would most certainly say yes to his wishes, he also knew that by offering Ray a free hot breakfast it would take wild horses to keep him away.

Although we were set to play on Monday, I noticed on Friday's weather report that rain was expected on that day and this was restated in the weather report on Saturday evening. I now found myself in a quandary, because the last time the three of us had gathered to play we were rained off and I did not want that to happen again. I realised it would be up to me to make an executive decision as to what to do because Ray was away at a weekend wedding party and Marland was in his usual state of uncontactability.

This put me in a bit of a cold sweat. For my highest position of responsibility in life had been to captain the Dwarf Snooker Team one winter's night at RMS and I had never before had to make a decision that would affect the happiness of three other people. However, as I was lying awake in bed I suddenly remembered that the RAC had only recently installed the latest and most up to date "Golf Course Simulator" at their Woodcote golf club. Bingo!. The perfect answer. It would be a new toy for us child minded old golfers to play. We could talk the talk for three hours even if we couldn't walk the walk, and we could watch the prodigious Sam hit the ball through the screen into the next county.

A fantastic idea and I went to sleep with the thought of a pat on the back from my golfing chums....something that seldom happens.

On Sunday morning I wrote an email stating that I had cancelled the tee time and instead booked the 3 hours on the simulator and received Marland's thanks and agreement plus his confirmation that he would pick me up from the Sutton Rail Way Station that Sunday afternoon and take me to RAC Woodcote. It was at the point of being picked up that it began to occur to the recesses of my mind that the next couple of days could turn out to be close to a French farce. I had emerged from Sutton Railway Station and soon noticed Marland's big black Land Rover on other the side of the High Street, with his hands flapping furiously which, despite knowing he suffered from Parkinson's, I took as a sign to "get over here pronto". So I put my head down and concentrated hard in order to miss the dangerous High Street traffic and get to his car, only to find that when I had reached the other side of the road Mike had done a death defying U-turn and was now waiting for me with his giant car at the exact point I had earlier been standing. Normal Marland behaviour I reminded myself, as we set off for the Club, where Mike duly dropped me, and after hitting 300 practice balls he headed home with both of us looking forward to a hot breakfast the following morning and giving Ian Ray 'a bit of stick'.

For myself that Sunday afternoon, it was the usual practice of a long swim, followed by tea, in order to line my tummy so that I could drink myself half to death when the clock struck 7.15pm and I could begin "my (alcoholic) rations". For I always look forward to a prize at the end of each day.

At 7.05pm I had just entered the main lounge and was in sight of the bar when I had a friendly tap on the shoulder, only to find one of my old RAC chess playing 'compadres' eyeballing me from about six inches, and without even opening his mouth I could tell he was undergoing huge withdrawal symptoms and there was no way I would proceed an inch further towards the bar without our getting the chess board out and playing a game.

I eventually tore my mind off the drink and warmed to dear old Tony, as I had heard he had not been too well and knew a game would give him a lot of pleasure. Also we played at roughly the same level (or 'handicap' as we golfers would say) which is always preferable, but Tony had a reputation of never giving up even when he was in an obvious "resign-able" position.

The game began and within 15 minutes and the first 20 moves I found myself in a massive and dominating attacking position, with his king's defence practically wiped out. Whether it was because my mind was fresh or whether Tony may be suffering from the beginnings of the much talked about disease for older people I know not. I was just on the point of making yet one more brilliant move which I was sure would force a resignation from even the most dogged opponent and good enough for The Times chess correspondent to write up with a double exclamation mark..B2-K5!!....when I noticed Tony's mouth was open and he was staring wide eyed over my left shoulder, as if he had sighted an apparition.

And sure enough, when I turned around, there was Marland dressed like a scarecrow, white hair unkempt and with a wild look in his eyes which were firmly fixed on me.

"He wo wo won't have it", he finally stammered out.

"Who won't have what?" I replied, as I excused myself from Tony and quickly ushered Mike out of the room aware that ten pairs of hostile eyes were burning into my back from ten well dressed RAC members and their wives.

"Ray says he is definitely not coming if we have to spend three hours inside with the simulator."

This was a blow to the solar plexus as my brilliant idea was about to be cast straight into to dust bin by an important member of the RMS golf club, with my reputation following.

"Did you remind him of his free hot breakfast?"

"Yes" Mike replied "and the definitely not was changed to probably not, but he still wasn't sounding that happy".

We calmed ourselves down a bit and I promised I would call Ray in an hour or so and win him over and that we would all meet in a happier frame of mind for breakfast the next morning. Mike looked happier, because it was his day after all, and went back home whilst I went back to Tony and my chess game.

I don't want to bore golfers with chess games, but suffice to say that fully 40 minutes later I managed to drag the last remaining pawn across the line to be converted to a queen, and it was only at this point that my mate Tony threw in the towel. The golfing equivalent would be my being 7 up with 6 to play and eventually scraping a half on the eighteenth hole with a double bogey. I certainly wasn't feeling that good about my ability with the chess board that night. The only good news was that Tony was very quick on the draw when it came to producing the booze so that it only took

half an hour before I had regained sufficient strength and courage to call my apparently disgruntled golfing chum Ian Ray.

The good thing was that I knew he was probably the kindest and most soft hearted member of our golf club and that once I had reminded him that it was Mike and his son Sam's day he would come to his senses and join the gang. Which he duly did, especially when a couple of subtle reminders of the best hot breakfasts in the county of Surrey had been thrown in.!

Monday morning's breakfast was indeed as good as promised and four happy bunnies left the breakfast hall and set off for the practice ground, because we had nearly two hours to fill in before our allotted time with the simulator.

What caused the problem was the changeable weather, for when the clouds gathered and the skies darkened we were all happy with the decision of playing inside with 'the simulator'. But just like April Showers, all of a sudden the brilliant sun would burst forth and we all wanted to play outdoors on the real course.

And I, as the organiser, found myself running in and out of the professional shop trying my best to placate the host professional as we constantly changed our minds. Luckily they were most accommodating and my final (as I thought) decision was to play the simulator as a particularly long spell of rain was in progress near to our start time.

The final twist of course was still to happen. Ian Ray was now (ironically) all in favour of the simulator and was leading the charge to the door that housed it when all of a sudden the sun peeped through the dark clouds and Big Sam muttered 'sotto voce' that he really preferred to play on the proper course outdoors. And so, as it was his day, without further ado three of us veered off in the direction of the proper first tee dragging a most reluctant Ian Ray with us.

Which, in the end, proved the correct decision. Although another squall or two hit us, by and large we had the sun on our backs. We all hit the odd good shot and even big Sam kept it out of the trees on the right every now and then. And finally, as the only birdie of the day was made by Ian on the eighteenth hole, we all, with one accord, immediately decreed that he deserved to finish the day just as he had started the day, with a free tea. After all, we did want him back to play with us again.

6. THE COMPOSITE COURSE AND THE "BOUNCING" OF TOSHI BY THE CLUB'S NICEST MEMBER.

This particular Saturday we knew we were set for the first proper sunny and windless day of Spring, for high pressure had set in. We also knew that England were playing Wales at Twickenham which would mean our club would be buzzing with people, golfers and rugby followers alike. We golfers also knew that because of the high Spring tides part of our course would be under water which meant that we only had one course to play on instead of the usual two. This course is known as "The Composite" because it is made up of bits of our two main courses, known as "The Inner" and "The Outer".

It was therefore quite obvious to any half way intelligent golfer who wanted a game that there would be pressure on getting a starting time, which in turn meant that the sooner one arrived at the Club the better chance he had of a game.

So the wise old owl Arundell set off early and sure enough found all starting times fully booked until after 2pm, except for two tee times reserved by his normal golfing gang. One for David Allen and one for Nigel May. Each of these players was allowed to be joined by two other golfers thus forming two "three balls" as four balls were not permitted when The Composite was in play.

Not known for holding back when survival is at hand Arundell quickly placed his name next to David Allen's start time and found his way into the changing room where he bumped into Toshi, the Club's best mannered and most self effacing member, who after a lot of 'ah'ing and 'so'ing eventually made it known to me that the previous day he had already agreed that he would play with David Allen on his allotted tee time of 12.42. Great, I thought to myself, a 'no pressure' game as Toshi was always relaxing to play with and Allen, despite the intimidating distances he hit the ball, was so badly off his game he was quite likely to be in need of some very unusual sympathy from me.

Then next to enter the changing room was Charlie Searle, the kindest and most honest member known to the club, and a 'single figure' man to boot. He had just walked in carrying his motor bike helmet in one hand and a bicycle chain in the other, for despite all the good things said about him this man could turn into a ferocious chain wielding thug if any car driver dared cut him up on the road. He told me he was off to Wales the very next day which would be the first day of his retirement. God help all the foxes and pheasants that lived in Pembrokeshire. For Charlie was also a hunter. I mentioned the starting time situation to him and he quickly agreed to join Nigel May who had the tee time following Mr.Allen.

Next to be seen was Pat Hatt, the classiest golfer belonging to our 'afternoon golfing gang' and known to be absolutely reliable as to his unreliability of showing up on the first tee if there was the smallest sniff in the air of his attractive collection of womenfolk. When told the situation he agreed to complete the six golfers who would take up the two allotted tee times, and when I caught sight of Nigel May, I cornered him and put a foghorn to his good ear and slowly and loudly told him that his two playing partners would be Charlie Searle and Pat Hatt. To which he blinked, mumbled something totally incomprehensible and walked away.

Having hopefully arranged the two three balls based on the order of arrival, I set out to calm my nerves and practice with my plastic golf ball. However, with my first sniff of fresh air I realised that there would be trouble afoot, for who did I see pacing up and down the practice green with a mobile phone clamped to his ear but the very affable and easygoing Harry English, only I noticed that on this occasion he had a grim look of determination written all over his face. He definitely looked in the mood for competitive golf.

And sure enough, when I returned to the bar which was our usual assembly point, there was Harry sitting as if glued to David Allen, saying nothing. I quickly realised that the affable Harry English, after working 25 years underground on CrossRail, had acquired a lot of steel in his belly and that there would only be one out come.

Especially when David Allen blurted out (hopefully in jest?) that he would never have allowed my name to be put next to his on the starting sheet.!(David, I am afraid, disappointed, as the natural born leadership qualities expected of a 6'4""second row forward were singularly lacking. He did however have the decency to look entirely sheepish when admitting that he would do nothing and say nothing to resolve the

tricky problem facing us which could result in a very unseemly bar brawl on the first tee (where's my harp !) between some of the oldest and most respected members of the club to decide who was playing and who was not. That was until I mentioned it might be him that would be bounced if we agreed to a democratic picking of six balls out of a hat.!)

So, in an effort to diffuse the situation and to gain brownie points I immediately offered to resign my position and offer it to Harry, knowing full well that he was going to take it anyway, even if over my dead body. As usual there was no reaction whatsoever to this most generous offer, probably because most who know me realise I seldom do anything that is not in my own best interest, and sure enough I had noticed the possibility of slow play which would mean not only missing the rugby match but also missing my practically sacred tea time as well. Therefore playing "the loop" did have its attractions.

At this point the first three balls were to be Harry, David and Toshi, when who should walk into the bar but the Club's nicest member, Reg Walsh, so easy going that he hardly knows which day of the week it is and certainly at this moment had not the slightest awareness of any trouble with tee times, as any problems relating to the Composite course would never have entered his mind. For in Reg's world there is never any problem in securing a game. And sure enough who should immediately see the problem and sacrifice his position to allow Reg to play but the good souled Yammamoto, who said he was willing to join me playing 'the loop'. (Maybe Toshi was thinking he could get a free tea out of me...he ain't stupid.)

All very well except that now we are getting very close to tee off time but the ever easy going Walsh has ordered a pot of tea for himself and coffee for the even later arriving Edwardes. And this is when a little confusion sets in. Not wishing to rush his tea Reg tells Toshi that he (Toshi) should now take his (Reg's) tee time in the first group. Therefore Toshi, in order to accommodate Reg and also because all along he had been dying to play the full 18 holes, rushes out to the first tee only to find that Nigel May, understandably impatient with all the confusion, has elevated himself into the first tee off time with David Allen and the immovable Harry English.

Result. Toshi unwittingly bounced by his good friend Reg who is still happily drinking his tea.

By this time Arundell has got to the first tee and is taking a bit of pleasure in watching this mini cameo unfold. He sees the first three hit their shots and notices that now only Charlie Searle remains, who himself is looking a little uncertain as to whether he will get a game at all! Because at this point the good mannered Toshi, who for some reason is blaming himself for the confusion, disappears towards the first hole of the loop and Pat Hatt has lived up to his reputation and disappeared off the face of the earth just when he was supposed to be teeing off.

No need to worry, for at this point our two knights in shining armour appear. Our anointed ones to whom everything is given. The bouncy and irrepressible Edwardes, who ever since his professional golfing guru "little Matthew" put him on viagra now hits the ball further than anyone else in the club. I swear that this man bounces along on his toes rather than walks on his heels for he seems to always be suspended in space several feet off the ground wearing a perpetual grin...especially if his football club is winning. Followed by the easy going Reg, who now, without rushing, has finished his cup of tea. They proceed calmly and effortlessly to the first

tee which is clear. Their golfing partner Charlie is waiting, the sun is shining, they make pleasant banter with the group following and hit their shots completely unaware of the carnage, bloodshed and confusion that has gone before. Meanwhile Toshi and Arundell, despite not being attractive females, unexpectedly find Pat Hatt waiting for them on the other first tee and begin a happy, uninterrupted and stress free two hours of golf. We are in for tea at the correct hour and able to watch the start of the rugby. No lawyers or punch ups at this late stage please.

7. GREENHORN ATTENDS IRISH EVENING.

Having been away from Trinity College Dublin for more years than I care to remember, I was bowled over to receive an invitation from The Society of The Knights of the Campanile to attend a reunion in the West End of London at the prestigious Saville Club.

This particular society of Knights is made up of those who achieved some form of recognition in the sporting world during their university years and it was my good fortune to "somehow" be elected captain of golf in 1963/4 with my most famous achievement being "somehow" to be one up with one to play against the great golfer David Sheahan in our annual 'colours' match against UCD (University College Dublin.) For this particular David was already an Irish Hero, being a current Walker Cup golfer and winner (as an amateur) of a major Irish professional golfing tournament with a full international field.

I was therefore looking forward to this unexpected invitation that would revisit my past, with some degree of excitement and quite a large degree of trepidation. And guessing that it could be a 'heavy' evening I had prepared my body with a long healthy swim at the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall, better known by all those who belonged to superior London clubs as "The Chauffeur's Arms".!

I set off walking from Pall Mall in what I thought was good time, forgetting the fact that it was uphill all the way to reach my destination, and this error was further compounded by my turning left instead of right at Grosvenor Square. I therefore eventually found myself at the main entrance of the great Saville Club late, sweating and dishevelled.

So I was somewhat heartened to bump into another late arrival, also sweating, also dishevelled, who was frantically digging around in his canvas travellers bag searching for a jacket that would get him through the door. I knew he was a 'knight' because he wore the tie that I recognised.

The next thing I knew was so 'deja vue' or surreal that I could have been knocked over with a feather. For who should rise up from the floor and look down at me with a crumpled jacket in hand but the the great McCambridge, that is Gregg McCambridge, a couple of years senior to me and one of 'the' swashbuckling characters of my era at TCD. And what nearly put me on my back was the fact that he was looking younger than the last time I had seen him 50 years before, even if minus a few teeth!

> This was a man I was put in touch with very early on at Trinity because he was a member of The Portmanock Golf Club, and joining that great club was my overriding ambition. And so it transpired that during my first year in Dublin I spent many more hours stalking Mr. McCambridge to get him to propose me into that Golf Club than I ever devoted to my studies. I picture myself now as the rather small and dishevelled detective Colombo following any clue that I could get hold of as to the whereabouts of the great McCambridge. And the search never took me anywhere near places of study. Normally the trail took me to the top society coffee houses by day and the most fashionable drinking houses by night. For I was told that Mr. McCambridge from that early stage in his life was 'a man of leisure'. Like the great Kubla Khan his life would be filled forever with milk and honey, not to mention the odd vat of Guinness.

Which I usually found to be correct. For whichever fashionable establishment I found him in, he seemed to be the centre of attraction, and whenever his name was hailed in welcome across a usually crowded room, you would see heads rise up and point to the ceiling, those great jaws (no doubt directly inherited from the male line of Tyrannosaurus Rex) would open wide and a deep throated animal roar would fill the air. For there was no reason for him to waste his time with small talk. His close friends were able to translate that two second roar into a two paragraph description as to how the great man was feeling at that particular moment. (I now realise that 'the McCambridge roar' was the natural precursor to all this "digital encryption" that we hear so much of today, that keeps the boys at GCHQ on their toes.) Back to the front door of the Savills Club. All this was going through my mind as I picked myself off the floor and regained my senses. After saying our hellos Gregg and I both managed to get through the door and as I knew would happen Gregg was quickly engulfed with a gang of the old "in crowd", those players who played for all the first teams at university and were always invited to the best parties every Saturday night. Like Roger Brownlee, the Biellenburgs and Peter Whiteside who were present. For myself, who usually spent Saturday nights at university eating chips out of a newspaper on the Dublin Quays with friends from the second or third tier of College society, I reverted to form and headed directly in search of the wine trough to gain Dutch courage and to catch up with those who had arrived ahead of me.

And bit by bit, as the mind gently clouded over with the help of the grapes, the past of 50 years ago began to overtake the present as various names cropped up. Was not my very first girl friend (even if in the mind only) named Rokie Ganley, who, I was told, quite fancied the bespectacled rugby team's hooker, (why are most rugby hookers half blind?) who himself may have fancied Rokie's sister Lil, who in turn again may have fancied a far better looking and more intelligent rugby three quarter.....for 'backs' always have it over 'forwards' in this matter.....and then again what ever happened to those other names that occasionally pop up in my mind..the tall, ever so easy going old Etonian Tom Avenal, the small and sharp minded Mickey Brown so successful with all the girls.

And from my golf team where is "Mr. Big" aka Hugh McKeown, Stephen Black, he with a broad accent, while Richard Fleury I know became an Irish International. Luckily the names of Jeremy Pilch, the star player on the team, and Martin Rees are more up to date in my mind as I have seen them since university.

And so the first hour and a half passed by in the most pleasant, hazy and dreamlike way until my animal instinct of greed began to raise its ugly head as I became aware that after all the white wine, I was suddenly ravenous for food. So I turned to my charming neighbour, of even greater vintage than myself, who no doubt had attended many of these gatherings, and enquired when we would be called in for dinner. "Food" he replied, looking at me in the most sympathetic and paternal way, "there is no food. Don't you know this is an Irish evening!"of course I should have known all along. It always was like this in the old days in Dublin and just as before, I realised that I could never keep up with the hard men in terms of 'the drink'. At this point panic set in and my survival instincts began to assert themselves as I began to think of ways of escaping for food...at least then I would have the chance of waking up alive the next morning.!

But first I thought of the great McCambridge (although my friends always tell me I never think of others) who mentioned that he was catching an early flight the next morning to Portugal and did not have a bed for the night. So I rang up my club "The Chauffeur's Arms" who told me they, very unusually, did have a spare single room available. Happy in the thought that I had at last done something helpful for someone other than myself, I searched the room for Gregg McCambridge. And his reply was the same as it would have been 50 years before, for he thanked me profusely for the trouble I had taken...."but sure Philip, I think I prefer to drink through the night and I'll find a bench to catch some sleep on at the Airport"which is of course why he looked so young and healthy, for had he spent his life going to bed early with a glass of hot milk he probably would never have made it to the party in the first place.

Leopards never do change their spots, and once someone began the speech making, that old coward Arundell was out of the doors like a flash, looking for the first available noodle bar. Which was just like the old days when I was eating chips out of a newspaper on the Dublin quays while everybody else was going to some fancy party that lasted all through the night. But then I guess that always was the true 'me'.

Epilogue....I hope this word does not mean that I have kicked the bucket. It is just meant to round off this little story, in the form of "The Short Happy Life of Philip Arundell".

The eighteenth hole of Royal Dublin is a par five dog leg to the right with the second shot played over an 'out of bounds' area. Arundell was one up with one to play on the great David Sheahan having birdied the previous hole and so had 'the honour'. The breeze was behind coming over the left shoulder as he hit his best drive all day and for the first time in the match managed to out drive his opponent. He then watched David hit his next shot onto the middle of the green, to be putting for an 'eagle'. Arundell then played one of the first pressure shots that he can remember and "somehow" hit a 5 iron inside his opponent. At this moment the Captain of the TCD golf team, known for his positivity and confidence, began to think that there was at least a chance of a "win".

David Sheahan just missed with his eagle attempt and so all that was needed for a win was two putts from 18 feet. At this point Arundell looked up and noted the great crowd that had assembled to watch this most unexpected moment and realised that

the 'great crowd' consisted only of two people, who were at least on his side. For his friend Paul Dempsey plus girl friend Susan Legge had faithfully been following the match. Arundell has had 50 years to think of what happened next and why it happened. In an effort to impress his 'gallery' and go out in a blaze of glory he went for his eagle putt and raced the ball 8 feet past the hole. He then looked up again and saw quite clearly, perched on his left shoulder, a very familiar old friend which a lot of us carry around usually known as a 'negative devil', and the only positive thing to come out of this sighting was that Arundell knew exactly what was going to happen to the next putt.

We shook hands warmly. It was a great "halved" match, my friend on the left shoulder could sleep easy and anyway I knew the golfing gods would not have allowed it to finish any other way. And over all these years it has been a much more interesting story to tell.

Jeremy Pilch made the captain's speech that night.

8. THE YOUNGER BROTHER.

Well now..I am about half way through my travels to America and I have reached the house of my elder brother Chris and his wife Ginni. And I am immediately reminded of the wise old men of my golf club, The Royal Mid Surrey. Because many years ago, when Chris came to London on his insurance business, I would take him out to the golf club. And before I could say Jack Robinson these wise old men had renamed him as my 'younger' brother.?! This of course hurt. And this got worse when Chris, who only plays golf 6 times a year compared to my 600 times, would always beat me comprehensively. So I refused to play with him any more and forced him onto other amiable souls such as the club's best known surgeon, Arthur Makey, who liked to dissect a golf swing in the same way he would dissect anyone's heart. My brother likes talking as well.! So they could talk for hours over the intricate complexities of the golf swing, mental and physical. I also forced Chris into playing with young Edward Raw and also with possibly the latest member of the club (in those past years), Denis Albutt, as well as the club's most polite member, a Japanese friend of mine named Toshi Yamamoto. Anyone but me. Which, in the end, helped me forget all my defeats as well as the stigmatism of being referred to as his elder brother.

So after 20 years or so I had managed to forget all about this unhappy comparison...until the other day. After a rather long journey from Orlando I arrived a little tired at night, so I retired to bed reasonably early, only to find that the next morning Chris was no where to be seen. Until Ginni his wife said.." Oh, don't worry about him. He is off on his morning jog..he will be back in about 3 hours for his breakfast.!!!" Now jogging surely to goodness grace is only for 20 and 30 year olds..and here was my older brother out for 3 full hours!...I hated jogging at prep school...yet here he was yet one more time making me feel that I should be living in this retirement community built specially for the very old, and not him. And worse is

to come tomorrow..a game of golf is planned and Chris has not played since last July..and I already have a feeling as to how the game will go. Surely I am now old enough to take these things in my stride.?

The other thing that is beginning to dawn on me, half way through this trip, is the effect that I have on other people, more especially my hosts. They all want to disappear. Raffy and his wife Melissa hid under their bedclothes until well after 10am each morning and I now find that Chris and his wife disappear promptly after watching the 7 o'clock news every evening. What it is about me I know not, but long may it continue because it allowed me free range of the kitchen for breakfast in Orlando, and at night, free range of the wine cellar here in Arizona, and as the houses here are all bungalows there is not too much of a problem discovering where the wine is kept. (my brother, a bit of a health freak, follows doctors orders and has one glass of red each night. I certainly am upping that ratio. Chris will get a shock when it's time for the weekly stock taking. He will count the numbers of bottles consumed. I 'just' fit into that category, whereas my friend Denis counts the numbers in crates per week.!) The other thing I am aware of here is a sort of 'under the counter' trench warfare involving the cost/benefit or should I say stress/benefit theory on the health front. Because the home team like to eat their dinner at 5.30 each evening with no alcohol, which is obviously healthy and therefore has the moral high ground, where as I am in the habit of eating at 8.30 at night after relaxing for an hour or so with my usual "rations". Which, according to my great chess playing friend Herbert, is also healthy, because it changes and relaxes the wave lengths of the mind. And so I am very much on Herbert's side.

So far, after about 6 days, the battle is about even, 3-3, because when we are eating in, Ginni very kindly cooks my meal and allows me to eat later on after using up some of my brother's alcoholic rations. But when we are eating out I am a captive audience. I have to eat early and have no alcohol, because who but Philip "Bundles of"Joy (a golfing friend) would ever want to drink that early.

Unfortunately, I have just found out that my number is up. Because Ginni has just announced (I think I noticed a sleight touch of triumphalism in her voice!) that " tomorrow we are out for a Mexican meal, on Friday we are visiting Max (a good friend of home team) at 3.30 pm to be followed by dinner at five at The Cow Palace, and on Saturday (as I already knew) we are going to a "Buddy Holly" concert from 7-9pm"...which obviously means dinner has to be finished by 6.30pm sharp.

So I have thrown in the towel....and all I can do is to report at a later date as to whether there has been any sudden improvement in my health, and whether the cost or stress has been worth the benefit.....

Let's take a break from the meanderings of my over imaginative mind..what else has been going on..

Chris and I took a trip about 30 miles south, to the town of Nogales, which is right on the Mexican border. A huge change in culture in such a short distance, because everyone there were Mexicans speaking Spanish, and the buildings were much older. (I saw 'the wall'!) Very different to the newly laid out village/town of Green Valley full of retired middle Americans. On the way back we touched into a tiny village called Tubac, which is an 'arty' place selling ethnic (Mexican) pots, paintings, copper

products,(this is a mining area), and possibly tapestries and woven products. It is mainly for tourists, and the high season for them is now, during winter months from October to March.

On return, had a long chat with nephew Rennie who lives in a different part of Arizona. He seems happy and was interested to find out about Michelle..I said I didn't know that much because she was always in and out of aeroplanes flying this way and that..we will wait for the next instalment in due course.

The weather is delightful, crisp and chilly mornings and nights, mid seventies during the day. Usually blanket sunshine. The country side is naturally desert scrub and here we are about 3200feet above sea level. Within about 8 miles you climb up to 4000+ feet into the foothills where you get a mile or so width of proper evergreen trees before the mountains start to rise more steeply...not too much over 5000 feet.

It is up on these roads that Chris sometimes does his work outs..I think he has his eyes on those Ethiopian Olympic champions who train where there is a limited supply of oxygen.! I have to say, were I ever a Jogger, these would be perfect conditions.

The golf course practice range is 4 minutes walk from our back gate and the swimming pool only one minutes walk, just across the parking lot to our main local recreational centre where the pool is located. When it's a 'late meal' night I love the last hour of daylight (5-6pm) hitting golf balls with the yellow golden sunshine hitting the mountains and then 6-7 pm fooling around in the pool gazing at the deep blue/black sky and the clear and bright full moon. And that is a nice thought to finish on.....so cheers for now.

Felipe.

P.S. That golf game.....I was dead right..I am a keen golfer and can talk the talk, even if I cannot walk the walk too well.

I know what to look for. So I kept a very sharp eye on all proceedings, right from the very start to see if Chris, who is 'a natural' at this game, could repeat that easy swing after a 6 month lay off. Chris is very laid back..in fact he and my friend Edward are similar in this respect..they are so laid back that sometimes I think they are not immediately aware of what is going on around them, which is one reason they take ages to do anything and are generally late for each and every appointment.

And in Chris's case, one of the benefits of this, I am sure, is that he is not aware of all the difficulties and down side risks of hitting a golf shot. Maybe because, from the outset, he always had a natural swing and so never had too many bad shots to clog his memory.

And sure enough, his first drive after a six month layoff was wafted easily, with no hurry in his swing, straight down the fairway. His second shot landed close to the green leaving him a delicate little chip from a tight lie over a bunker and onto the green. Now this was a difficult shot. Edward would rather rudely describe such a shot as 'a brown trouser job'. It requires nerves of steel and a soft and delicate swing with loose hands. I had my eyes fixed on every movement made, half hoping that he would prove to be human and make a mistake. No such luck. With a calm and slow swing, he gently 'lifted' the ball over the bunker to land softly on the putting surface.

Now contrast that easy going approach to that of an over sensitive

neurotic perfectionist, someone like Denis or my self..(Raffy Esteva may well fall into this category, but certainly not Melissa. She still knows no fear of golf.) We are all 'over aware' of everything going on around us, even butterflies banging their wings too loudly. And we are aware of any and every negative consequence resulting from a mis hit shot. And if there aren't any, we can make them up with our imagination going into overdrive. So hitting that delicate chip shot over bunker would not only take a year off our lives, it would give the odd bystander a little amusement, because he would probably see the golfer in question jerk himself two feet in the air at the point of impact, as if he was hit by an electric shock, which would send the golf ball screaming across the green at knee height causing all fellow players to dive for cover.....i had better not go on....I think my mind is going again...I better search for a psychiatrist..there are meant to be many of them over here, or better still, take up jogging.....but that description above is basically why it is an easy game for Chris and a difficult game for me...all in the mind..

See you in Seattle.