

WELCOME



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WELCOME to the first NCG Society Guide. We've listened to what you, the club golfer, wants to find in your favourite magazine and we trust that the following pages provide the information you need to plan some great away days this summer.

We understand that the highlights of the season often come when playing new courses, whether on a captain's trip or with your best mates in a friendly fourball.

All the clubs featured inside are very much open for business and ready to welcome you and your group.

Over the page, you can read the advice of Andy Roper, who formed the Bunkers Golf Society three years ago

in the north west. Now they run events every three weeks and have a waiting list to join.

"Our objectives were to play the best courses and venues that we could afford, and obtain the best deals we could get for those venues," says Andy, who has left no stone unturned.

Showing an enterpreneurial spirit, he has even struck a deal with a local retailer, recognising that with 35 mustard-keen golfers on his books the society has some buying power.

"We've formed a strong partnership with Clarke's Golf Shops — which has gone from strength to strength," he said.

"They assisted by providing

sponsorship, which aided us in organising events, and in return we utilised the shops as our 'go to' place when shopping for golfing equipment."

Clever. But amid all the administration and business tasks, Andy never forgets what the society is all about.

"The golf for us is as much about the banter and enjoyment as anything else and we like to have a good laugh along the way."

Amen to that.

Enjoy the Society Guide and we trust you enjoy many memorable away-days in the season ahead.

The NCG team

HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL SOCIETY

Andy Roper has already organised over 40 society trips since forming the Bunkers Golf Society three years ago. He told Craig Middleton his keys to success

✓ Before the season, make a list of preferred dates you want to play on. For Bunkers, we like to have an event every 14 to 21 days

✓ Use the internet to find courses. We use **teeuplo.co.uk** to read reviews then make a list of clubs I realistically think we can afford to play

✓ Create a spreadsheet to update following each phone call/email to show the date the club agreed, the deposit costs, the cost in full per person, what's included and due dates for payments. This prevents duplication and helps you organise what needs doing

✓ Call club secretaries to introduce your society and ask for some quotes on the dates you are looking to fill

✓ Be committed to it. Running a large society is like having a

second job! With the organising and website work that I put in, it's around 12 hours a week on average. In the close season it can be three or four hours a day as you get things organised

✓ Get a committee set up to bounce ideas around and share the workload

✓ Have clear aims and objectives. What do you want to play, where, when, and how much will you pay?

✓ Get organised. A bank account is vital. Keep tables and spreadsheets so you can always easily refer to them

✓ Get social. A website is ideal — but is tricky if you have no experience (I taught myself and learned). Failing that, use social media like Facebook and Twitter. The more information that is out there, the closer members feel to the society.



ABOUT BUNKERS

Andy is chairman of Bunkers Golf Society. He has only been playing for four years but decided he wanted more frequent days out with his friends. He plays off 13 at Lee Park in Liverpool.

What made you start the society?

We were bored of the existing groups, playing below-standard courses and paying over the odds. Plus, we wanted to feel like we belonged to something — like you would with a club — rather than just rolling up once a month. Within a few weeks a committee was formed.

Tell us about Bunkers

We currently have 35 full members and this is our ceiling limit, which was set by the society when it was formed to ensure that we are able to provide the best possible golfing experience. We currently have a waiting list of nine members and this will soon be capped too as places do not free up all too often.

Although based in Liverpool, we actually cover much wider afield with members from Skelmersdale, Wigan, the Wirral and Manchester.

The majority of members are made up of a group of my friends and this then branched out to their friends and colleagues.

Starting a society can't be easy. What was your main goal when you started?

It certainly isn't! Our objectives were to play the best courses and venues that we could afford, and obtain the best deals we could get for those venues. The golf for us is as much about the banter and enjoyment as anything else. Our key intention was to form partnerships and links with clubs and golfing companies.

Therefore, I contacted a couple of companies in that early stage of Bunkers and put forward some business ideas and proposals that would benefit both sides. From this, we formed a strong and lasting partnership with Clarke's Golf Shops — which has gone from strength to strength and I am sure is one of the main reasons why we have been as successful as we have in growing and developing.