



## DMVGA Captain 2025

Malcolm Tester Teignmouth Golf Club

I was born in 1946 in a small village in Kent, Hildenborough which is near to Tonbridge. When I was two years old we moved to a suburb of Gillingham called Wigmore. We moved into a wooden, what I would call a, two bedroom chalet. No electricity, no running water and well away from other properties in what I thought was a giant wood although no doubt as an adult it was not that large.

Part of a family of 7, I had 3 brothers and one sister and as children we had a great childhood being able to play in the woods without disturbing neighbours.

We went to a primary school in Bredhurst and in those days we either walked to school or caught the bus. No drop off or collection by parents. I took the 11 plus exam and was sent to Gillingham Technical School in the middle of the town. 6 miles from home and so bus or later on a bike ride to school until the age of 14 when a developer bought our home in the woods and we moved into a town house in the middle of Gillingham.

Educationally I managed to get 7 O levels and 2 A levels exams. As a school we played football in the winter and cricket in the summer. Somehow I was good enough to play for the teams and my claim to fame happened when for the first time we got a fixture to play Maidstone Technical school. I was playing at right half and had the job of marking David Saddler who went on to play for Manchester United and England. I didn't get near him at all in the match and he finished with 8 goals in an 18- 2 defeat for us.

Their right back Tony Weston went on to play for Gillingham so you could say they had a good team. Their stars left that year and the following year we went back and won 3-1. Small consolation.

Leaving school I went to work for Rochester City Council in the Housing Department as a trainee. That was enjoyable and after 3 years I applied for and got a job as Housing Assistant with Westminster City Council. It is probably from this where I got my ability to enjoy the early rising to catch the train to London Victoria. Almost certainly that involved standing in a crowded carriage for an hour while the train rocked and rolled into London.

Later on I moved to Family Housing Association as Area Manager for a team managing social rented housing in Kensington and Chelsea. A great time but in 1978 I managed to get a similar job in Devon with Devon and Cornwall Housing Association. My wife (a Devon girl) and I had visions of retiring to the country and being self sufficient. That didn't happen which is probably just as well. In various roles I stayed with them until retirement 12 years ago and was part of their growth from a small local association to a very large housing group with over 40,000 homes in the South West.

It was in London where three of us started playing golf at Richmond Park public golf course amongst the deer and on the flight path into Heathrow. We played in all weather, sunshine, rain, snow, frozen ground and everything in between.

In Devon, we lived in Exeter and I took the opportunity to go and play most of the courses near to hand. One of my team had a father who was Chairman of the Club at what was the Manor House Hotel Moretonhampstead, (now Bovey Castle) owned by British Railways and I joined as a member playing off 18.

Moving houses around the south of the county, Shaldon, Plymouth, Shaldon again and then Teignmouth on the birth of our daughter in 1992. The same year I left Moretonhampstead and joined Teignmouth playing off 8. Over the years I managed to get down to 4.5 and played off 5/6 for several years but age is catching up quickly now.

I took over as rep for the DMVGA in 2014 and stood for the committee that same year. In 2018 I took on the organising of our competitions and took over as Secretary when Les Hartly resigned in 2022. I have several hobby horses the biggest of which is slow play, I cannot understand how so many people can play the game without taking notice of what is going on around them and doing as much as they can not to ruin the experience for other players. It makes me note the efforts England Golf are undertaking with their Yellow card system and whether we might consider such an initiative ourselves.

The days of cheap golf have gone and the costs of our events has risen considerably since the Covid epidemic. I still believe though that our events continue to give very good value for money and enjoyable golfing experiences to our members. We are always looking to make improvements with the objective being to offer golf at the best courses in the county at as good a value as possible.

It is a great honour to be elected Captain and I am looking forward to my year in office so I would like to thank you for affording me the honour and I will give as good a service as possible to you all.