



The Bear of Rodborough Croquet Club

January 2011
Newsletter

**A Happy New Year to all Bears.
Annual subs now due – please send to Brian by 31st January.**

South West Federation

Did you know we enjoy what is probably the largest and most energetic regional federation? Last season, there were 261 matches in the south-west involving 296 players. This makes our playing record even more impressive and we look forward to continued progress this year.

Rosemary is currently finalising the season's fixtures and will send out the dates shortly.



The successful 2010 Federation Team



The club trophies we will be playing for this year.

Bears in Belgium



Don and Robert, supported by Faith, travelled to Brussels for the Belgian Indoor Open Croquet Tournament in January. Two half-courts were laid out in the largest ballroom I have ever seen and in a most luxurious setting. It was a good, if expensive, way of getting some practice during the winter months.



Faith's diary of this trip is appended to the end of this newsletter.

Annual Dinner

Rosemary will be sending details of the Annual Dinner as soon as details are finalised. You will recall that at the AGM we moved away from the idea of a Christmas meal in favour of a start of season dinner because there would be less likelihood of disruption due to weather.

Hotel News.

We were delighted to hear that the Bear has been taken off the market and that the owners are not only keeping control but are going to invest in a refurbishment programme. We value the very special relationship we enjoy with the current owners and manager and to hear that they are to continue is the best new year's announcement we could have received.

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Who is for Wolkersdorf?

For the first time in the club's history, we are returning for a second visit for our summer jolly. Wolkersdorf, near Vienna, is a super two-lawn club in a small town and within easy reach of Vienna. Since we were there in 2008, they have completely stripped and re-laid their lawns to make them perfectly flat and fast. Heinz, our host, suggests we arrive on Friday 19th August in time for an evening meal at a Heurigan, play croquet on Saturday and Sunday 20th/21st and for those who wish it, guided tours of Vienna on Monday and Tuesday 22nd/23rd. Don, Faith and Robert are staying on to play in the Austrian Open on 27th and 28th August, returning home on 29th. There is just one hotel in Wolkesdorf which is pleasant, good and not very expensive and is within easy walking distance of the croquet club.

If you have not already done so, please let Don know if you are able to join us. In order to get sufficient rooms in the

hotel, we will need to book early (last time Heinz negotiated a special price for us).

For more information, you may like to look up photos of our last visit on our website -

<http://www.faydon.com/Bear/Bear.html>

Also: the hotel

www.hirners.com/hotel/hotelklaus/

and Wolkesdorf Croquet Club

www.croquet.at/clubs/wolkersdorf.html

Scroll down and you will find lots of photos and eventually find a report of our last visit which is written in German but if your computer has an auto-translate facility, it will make enjoyable reading.

In his last email, Heinz asked me to send his best wishes "to all the nice Bears".

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Courses.

There are many good croquet courses for players of all abilities and clicking on this link will give you the list for 2011.

<http://www.thecroquetacademy.com/file/2011Programme%20coaching%20flyer.pdf>

The Croquet Academy website is-

www.thecroquetacademy.com

Faith's diary follows below

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For more information:

Our Club Website- <http://www.faydon.com/Bear/Bear.html>

Croquet Association (of which the club is a member) -www.croquet.org.uk

South West Federation of Croquet Clubs (to which we are affiliated) - <http://www.swfcroquet.org.uk>

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The Bear of Rodborough Croquet Club.

Chairman and Hotel Liaison:	Robert Moss	01453 872386
Secretary:	Rosemary Danby	01453 872456
Treasurer:	Brian Pittaway	01453 860610
Handicapper and club competitions manager:	Don Gaunt	01453 822507
Lawn Manager:	Nick Hurst	01453 882960
Equipment Manager:	Richard Danby	01453 872456
Webmaster:	Don Gaunt	01453 822507

Faith's diary.

A WEEKEND VISIT TO BELGIUM FOR THE BELGIAN INDOOR CROQUET -
JANUARY 2011

Thursday 6th January 2011 We left home just before 1300. The conditions were terrible with rain and sleet and a lot of spray. We arrived at the White Rabbit Innkeepers Lodge, Maidstone shortly after 1600. We went out to eat at a Thai restaurant, so we went back to the hotel and had a good meal.

Friday 7th January 2011 After breakfast we took our stuff down to the car - it was raining. A notice of clamping had been attached to our car - according to this we were not displaying a permit to park - the car park is pay and display. We had signed a list last night when we checked in giving details of our car registration. There was, however, no sign of a clamp on the car. Don took the notice into the hotel - a member of staff came out - she said not to worry about it. We left at 0840 - it was grey and damp with a temperature of 4°C. We made our way back to the M 20 and headed for Dover. The traffic was moderately heavy - it was quite foggy in places. We arrived at Dover just before 0925. There were new security checks being made in what used to be the old customs hall. The ship docked on time at 1230 and, as the captain had said, the sea had been calm and we had an enjoyable crossing. We took the A 16 - passing Dunkerque and on into Belgium. We now followed signs for Brussels. Again conditions were not good - there was fast moving traffic and a lot of spray. The A 16 becomes the E 40 and we followed this until we turned off onto the Brussels ring road. This road passes the airport. The traffic was very heavy and fast moving on this road. We arrived at the Chateau de Lac in Genval at 1510. Once we had taken our things to the room we made our way up to the ballroom. Various people were there including John Swabey. Don was given an order of play booklet and a red scarf. We then went to the tower bar for a beer. After our beers we returned to the ballroom - Don went to collect the croquet mallets. Each player received a red scarf which had Belgian Croquet Association on it. Various games of golf croquet took place. Rob arrived and took his mallet. In the evening we had a very nice meal at the nearby Shangri La Chinese restaurant. When we paid the bill hot towels were bought and we were given a Chinese scroll calendar. The owner remembered us from one of our previous visits two years ago and he had a chat with us. The cost of our meal was £51 + tip. We went back to the hotel and joined Rob in the bar for a drink and sat and chatted.

Saturday 8th January 2011 We slept well. After breakfast Don went back to our room - it was now around 0930 and he wasn't due to play until 1000 at the earliest. I went straight up to the ballroom. Four games were in progress. I found a softish seat and made myself comfortable. Don arrived at 1000 - he commenced playing at 1020 - playing James Death. Don lost this game. His next game was against Paula Le Moignan - Don won this. Lunch was on a 'do it yourself' arrangement with rolls, egg, cheese, pate, salami, crisps, and tangerines. As is usual at Belgian Croquet events the beer was free - just help yourself to what you wanted. Don had a break after his match against Paula. The block games were all completed by 1400 - your position in the blocks determined the arrangement for the second round. Don's next game will be

against Samir Patel - Samir won both his games in his block. Don will then play Rob who won no games in his block. Don went back to our room to have a rest whilst Rob was playing Samir. Rob, as expected lost to Samir as did Don when he played Samir. Don's last game of the day was against Rob and Rob won. I went back to our room around 1820 to get washed and changed for tonight's dinner. Don came back around 10 minutes later. We made our way up to the room where the dinner was being held soon after 1930 - this was in the high tower room. We were each given a glass of champagne on our arrival - there were dishes of nuts, crisps etc. Just before 2000 we all took our seats. We had chosen our menu some weeks ago. Don had smoked goose breast, Pekin duck and a strawberry dish. I had a prawn dish starter - it resembled a large spring roll but was filled with large prawns, I too had the Pekin duck - six or seven slices of duck breast, a couple of potatoes plus a small portion of some other vegetable. Neither Don nor I were able to finish our main course. My sweet was a hot chocolate cake filled with molten chocolate - this came with a vanilla like ice cream, a small dish of cream and some red currants. At the start of the meal we were served with white wine - this changed to red wine when the main courses arrived. Our glasses were refilled as soon as they were half empty. We consumed a great deal of alcohol. The 'game' this year was a short talk on 'what you would have given for Christmas in the year 1 AD'. We then had John Swabey's awful songs - Rob thought these were great. We left around 2245 and went back to our room. Read for a short while.

Sunday 9th January 2011 Around 0920 we made our way to the ballroom. Don will be playing alternate stroke doubles today - he and Rob are to be partners. Their first game was against David Openshaw and John Swabey. Around 1100 a television cameraman arrived - John Davis - from Luxembourg was interviewed. Don and Rob lost by 1 on time. In the second and final round of the event they played Kevin Garrad and James Hopgood - again Don and Rob lost. It was chilli con carne for lunch, cooked by Bob Appels. All games - including a best of three final in the main event had been completed by just after 1400. Prize giving and photographs then followed. Don went for a walk around the lake. While he was gone I sorted out my packing - he was gone around 45 minutes. We ate again in the Chinese restaurant. We had almost finished our meal when James Death with James Hopgood and his girlfriend Susie arrived. We went up to the bar for a Martin's beer - we were joined by the others when they came back from the restaurant. We all sat and chatted. It was nearly 2300 when we went back to our room. We read for a short while.

Monday 10th January 2011

There was a hard frost over night and everything was covered by a thick frost. We sprayed the car with de-icer and I sat with the car engine running whilst Don went back to our room to collect the croquet mallets and his suit. The car thermometer showed -3°C. We left just on 0900 - clear skies and very cold. We made our way out of Genval towards the Brussels ring road. This was very busy - queuing traffic from beyond Waterloo. Much of this was due to road works - one lane had been coned off for several miles where a road gang were repairing pot holes. This delayed us for almost an hour with the slow moving traffic. We eventually joined the motorway towards Mons and conditions improved. As we got up towards Lille it got quite foggy for around

30 miles. The Lille by-pass was busy but the traffic was moving well. We arrived at Auchan at Grand Synthe - near Dunkerque just on midday. We got a selection of French bread flours, some tins of petit pois, some chocolate and a 4 litre container of detergent (€9.40) - at home a litre of Persil costs around £6.50 so the French detergent is a bargain. We arrived at Calais port just before 1300. Passports are checked as you enter the port. Only one lane was open so we had to wait in a long queue. We were first car on - we are parked outside by an enormous lorry - the car will be covered in salt spray when we get back to Dover. The sea was calm but it became increasingly rough as we neared Dover. We were second car off - our car was covered in salt spray - as we knew it would be. We headed up the M 20, M 26/M 25. The traffic was heavy but moving well. It began to rain as we left the service area at Reading and this got heavier as we headed west. We reached home, unloaded the car, unpacked and went down to the town for an Indian meal.