

Bear of Rodborough Croquet Club



Newsletter – March 2014

30th Annual Dinner **Friday 28th March**

It is that exciting time of year for you to study the attached menu, make your choices and order what you would like. Please send in your requests as early as possible but before **the deadline of Friday 21st March**. Please take care to follow the ordering advice attached to the menu and wine list on pages 5 + 6.

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Charity One-Ball

Sunday 4th May is the confirmed date for our heat starting at 10.00 a.m. For those who have not tried this before, it is a good, fun day with several short games and a lot of action and friendly banter. Tuition can be given and you can take it as seriously as you like but the prime objective is to have as many people as possible entering at £5 per head, to raise money for Prostate Cancer UK. The game is played to Association Croquet rules but with each player having just one ball so the game is fast with both players on the lawn at all times. It encourages good distance and positioning shots, courage at trying to roquet your oppo's ball from distances beyond your normal comfort range and hoop running from "exciting" distances when the previous shot has not worked!

For the one person who takes it most seriously, the heat winner will have the opportunity of playing in the national final at Winchester the following weekend.

We are hoping for at least ten entries and if you are free on that day, **please let Don know asap.**

On-line Lawn Booking

Everyone has now received the access code and instructions for using this new system. If you have trouble using it or if, during the year, you can identify ways of improving it, please contact Richard W who will be happy to help. You may not need to book a lawn but it may be useful for you to check regularly what is going on because all club events are listed on this calendar.

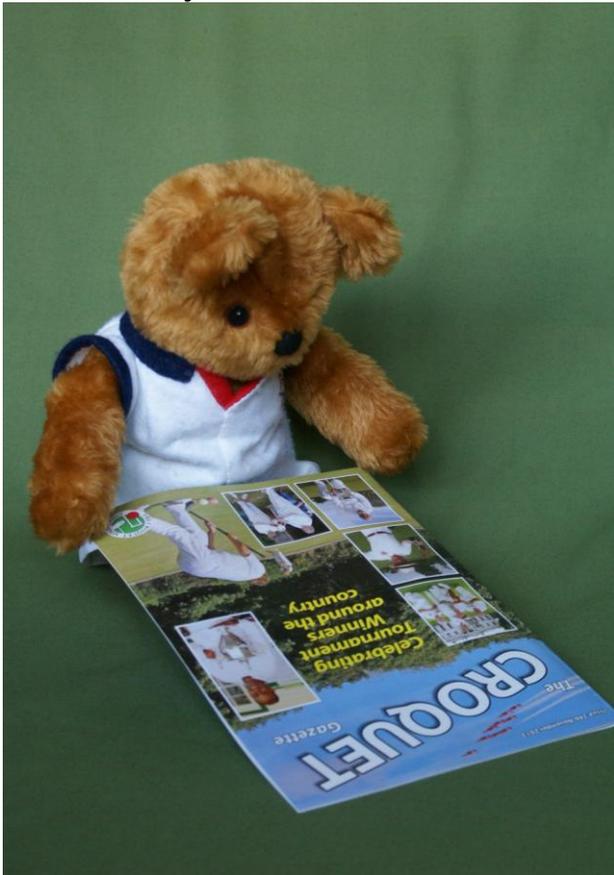
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Photo Competition

Your photographs have been packed up and sent to the independent judge. This year we are delighted that they will be judged by Chris Roberts who is not only the editor of the Croquet Gazette but is also a professional sports photographer. The result will come back in a sealed envelope and the photographs will be on display at the dinner when the winner will be announced. Thanks to everyone who has contributed.

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Roddy's Progress - 3
"I decided to join the CA"



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Hotel News.

The new manager at The Bear is Kate Carter who some of you will recognise because prior to this appointment, she was Front of House Manager at the hotel. We wish her well in her new post and look forward to working with her.

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2 places left

There are two remaining places for the team entering the SWF Short Croquet Tournament at Nailsea on **Saturday 12th April.** Please contact Robert if you would like to play.

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2014 Jolly

The Bears on Holiday

We have been invited to Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club on the weekend of **6th / 7th September (provisional).**

The outline plan is to have friendly games with like-minded people in a convivial environment. Over the two days, "free time" can be built in to the schedule if you would like it.

The Budleigh club is organising a dinner for us on the Saturday night in their club house. At £10 per head for 3 courses, this is a very special price for us (Vegetarians catered for). Lunches have yet to be arranged.

As always, we are responsible for booking our own accommodation and, considering the dates, it would be sensible to do so as soon as the dates are confirmed. B+B in Budleigh is limited but there is plenty of choice in Exmouth and Sidmouth.

Non-playing spouses are welcome to come too and to do their own thing for as much or as little as they choose. If you do not know Budleigh Salterton or the croquet club there, you can see more at:

www.budleighcroquet.org and
www.visitbudleigh.com

Most of us will be wanting to play Association Croquet but if anyone would like to include some Golf Croquet, there are plenty of GC players at Budleigh who would be keen to play.

If you would like to join us, please let Don know and state whether you are a "definite" or a "hopeful."

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SWAN is about to be hatched.

The **South West Area Newsletter** is published and will be distributed in early April but I thought you may enjoy one sentence which will appear on page 2. It reads "*Cheltenham were relegated and their place will be taken by **The Bear of Rodborough.***" – no smugness please!

An update about the proposed changes to CA fees and funding.

At our AGM, the consensus of opinion within our club was that the status quo should be maintained. Your views were put forward to both the CA and the SWF but the chairman of the CA, Jeff Dawson, has explained why this is not an option. His arguments are compelling and I urge everyone to consider his views carefully. Those of you who are CA members will have seen in the current Croquet Gazette, Jeff's article on the subject but it is important that everyone should read it, both CA members and non-CA members, because it has implications for everyone who plays croquet. Something you need to know before reading further is that there are two main sources of income for the CA. Member

clubs pay a per capita amount (currently £7.95 per person per year). Then, Individual Tournament Members pay an extra annual subscription, plus a tournament entry levy – a percentage of each tournament entry fee. When our club joined the CA, we did not increase our club annual subscription but decided to absorb the £7.95 per head. This remains the case and no increases in our subs have been needed so far. However, should the CA proposals be adopted and the per capita fee increase, we would need to rethink our annual subscription. The final point I must make before you read on is that we all benefit hugely from the CA and that to have a strong, effective and properly funded governing body is in everyone's best interest.

Jeff has kindly allowed me to reproduce his Gazette article below.

CA Fees - The Case for Change – Jeff Dawson

I believe the time has come when we need to reconsider how we fund croquet in England. In my article in the October Gazette, I showed how the CA raises its money, and also how it spends it. Just to recap; about 57% of income comes from tournament players in one form or another – that's including tournament levies, and individual CA membership (which most people only take out when they need it to play in tournaments). I think the perception is often that the CA is for elite players, or at least tournament players, but the reality is that most of the money raised goes towards the development of the game in one form or another. In fact taking all the CA spend on tournaments, including organising them, administration, producing the fixtures book, office time, etc., and adding in what we spend on international events both home and away, the total expenditure comes to just 18% of the overall budget. Development loans and grants, and work done in sorting out handicaps, coaching, refereeing, etc., is a much more significant element of our expenditure. Does this imbalance matter?

Well, there is of course the question of what is fair to consider, but putting that aside for a moment then one might argue that it doesn't if that is the end of the story. Tournament players are, of course, the most enthusiastic among us, and for the most part they do not begrudge the relatively small amount they pay for their CA membership. They tend to spend a lot more travelling and staying overnight in order to compete anyway. However, it does become more clearly an issue if we believe tournament play is likely to decline. If this were to happen, then the CA's income is reduced, and consequently the money we put into development comes under threat.

Is a decline in tournament play likely?

In its current form, I believe it is and that's for two reasons.

1. The survey of croquet players carried out in 2012 showed a worrying trend that many clubs are seeing an increase in the number of 'social' players, who are not really interested in competitive play. That tends to mean that the number of competitive players is falling.
2. When we analysed what has been happening in the federations, we saw a significant shift in how many people play their croquet. The success of the federations in organising leagues, especially in the SW and SE federations has led to as many competitive man-days being played through federation-led or advertised events, as there are in the whole of the CA fixtures book. This is a significant shift from say ten years ago,

and we think the trend is likely to continue. That's great, of course, but it does mean that for many, they get all the competitive play they want without having to join the CA or play in fixture-book events. I have increasingly found when asking players if they would join the CA that I am getting that reaction, and it's a message I'm getting from other people trying to recruit CA members too.

At the moment, the CA's finances are sound, and we have been able to continue our grants programme unabated. We have not yet seen any significant fall-off of tournament members, however, we have seen a decline in tournament levies (about a 10% decline over the last 5 years, after correcting for inflation and the reduced percentage the CA introduced a few years ago). I believe that if we continue the way we are, then a fall in CA membership is almost inevitable. We are fortunate that we have a large number of loyal members, who tend to stay members once they've been hooked, even if they no longer play in tournaments. However, if we can't get new members to replace them then eventually numbers will decline.

The advantage of taking action now, rather than waiting for a crisis, is that we can introduce change gradually. I believe we need to shift towards charging clubs more for their membership (thus effectively charging ALL croquet players, rather than just tournament players). Done slowly over a period of time, this should not be too painful for club members – after all if we scrapped tournament membership completely and put the whole burden on club players, then it would mean charging them only an extra £10 per head or so. I'm not actually suggesting we need necessarily go that far, but even if we did then croquet remains a cheap game to play, and for most clubs this increase would be small compared to overall membership costs.

Changes to the fee structure is just one aspect of the report put forward by the Federation Working Party, albeit probably the most controversial. The report also proposes changes in the relationship between Federations and the CA, changes to the boundaries between federations, widening the CA's membership base to include all club players, and other factors affecting the overall administration of croquet. If you would like to learn more then please read their report on the CA website www.croquet.org.uk. The CA is keen to hear your views – why not write a letter to the Gazette or email me directly and let me know what you think.

Jeff Dawson
Chairman of the Croquet Association

30th Annual Dinner – Friday 28th March 2014.

The Tower Room at the Bear of Rodborough Hotel.

Please send your **order form to Robert** and send your **payment to Brian** either by cheque or electronic transfer to be received no later than 21st March (remember to email him, too, if you are sending it electronically).

Bank transfer details: Sort Code 09 06 66. A/C number 41503328. A/C name "Bear of Rodborough CC"

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Order Form to Robert (Copy and paste if you wish to reply by email or print and post if preferred).

Name 1.....Starter.....Main.....Pudding..... £ 25.50

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Pre-ordered wine Bottle/s of at £.....

TOTAL sent to Brian £.....

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Menu

£25.50 per head.

Tomato & Basil Soup with herb croutons

Smoked Salmon, crème fraiche, lemon, confit beetroot

Smooth Chicken Livers & Brandy Parfait, Homemade chutney, toasted brioche

Tomato & Mozzarella Salad, olives, rocket, pesto

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Pan Fried Breast of chicken wrapped in parma ham, fondant potatoes, madeira sauce

Lamb shank, Dauphinois potatoes, minted cabbage, rosemary jus

Pan Fried Fillet of Salmon, crushed new potatoes, chive beurre blanc

Warm Tart of Creamed Leeks & Goats Cheese, apple compote, dressed leaves

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Glazed Lemon Tart, raspberry compote, orange infused crème fraiche

Warm Sticky Toffee Pudding, butterscotch sauce, vanilla ice cream

Dark Chocolate & Roasted Hazelnut Tart, Winston's honey & ginger ice cream

(Wine list on next page)

Bottles of wine ordered and paid for in advance.

ALL other drinks to be paid for at time of purchase.

Pre-ordered wine.

Sparkling

Sant' Orsola Prosecco, Italy **£28.00**

Light and lively, with ripe pears and lemons rounded off with a hint of sweetness.

Champagne

Louis Dornier et Fils Brut **£42.00**

A light, fresh, vigorously youthful Champagne with a fine, elegant, slightly lemony nose, lively mousse and long, crisp palate.

Mercier Brut **£45.00**

A youthful elegance with a small amount of reserve wines for balance. A round, ripe generous yet light character

Rosé wine

Belvino Pinot Grigio Rosato , delle Venezie, Italy **£19.00**

Slightly drier in style, full of fresh summer berry fruit aromas.

White Wines

Cullinan View Chenin Blanc **£18.00**

Robertson, South Africa

Deliciously fresh and creamy with peachy fruit character. A classic South African style.

Whispering Hills Chardonnay, Central Valley **£18.00**

California, USA

Crisp and lemony with tropical fruit flavours

Corte Vigna Pinot Grigio, Pavia, Italy **£19.00**

Floral, racy and dry with green, crisp fruit, an innovative wine by a collaboration of private land owners.

Luis Felipe Edwards Sauvignon Blanc **£19.00**

Rapel Valley, Chile

Hand harvested, gently pressed to retain the natural fruit aromas and flavour of citrus fruit, melon, pineapple and pear.

Red Wines

The Gourmet Shiraz, South Australia **£18.00**

Restrained blackberry fruit backed by a crisp finish.

Luis Felipe Edwards Merlot, Colchagua Valley, Chile **£19.00**

A soft, smooth, approachable Merlot with rounded cherries and spiced plums.

Luis Felipe Edwards Lot 2 Malbec **£22.00**

Rapel Valley, Chile

Intense red-purple with rich, red-berry fruit aromas with juicy plums, dark chocolate and mulberries.

Durbanville Hills Pinotage, Durbanville, South Africa **£24.00**

A rich fruity character fills the mouth, backed by silky tannins and raspberry and red cherry flavours.

For more information:

Our Club Website- www.faydon.com/Bear/Bear

Archived newsletters and coaching hints - <http://www.faydon.com/Bear/News>

Croquet Association - www.croquet.org.uk

South West Federation of Croquet Clubs – www.swfcroquet.org.uk

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The Bear of Rodborough Croquet Club.

Chairman / Hotel Liaison: Robert Moss 01453 872386

Secretary: Richard Way 01453 833762

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