



Our visitors

This year to date we have hosted seven groups of WI ladies, some from as far away as Rayleigh and Clacton and others from more local groups.

The ladies enjoyed a game or two (with tuition as we go round!) and afternoon tea under our gazebo. We also hosted a group of 41 club members and you can see from the photo that they had a great time.

- Jan Hall

Jean and Derek Go International

Derek and I joined Reigate Croquet Club in 2023. The club has one small court and about thirty members. They have made us very welcome and encouraged us to enter all their many internal competitions. Last year Derek won the Centenary Plate. In March we had a note from our secretary asking if anyone would be interested to playing in the European Golf League, our heat would take place in Hamburg Germany. Level Play and they needed at least four maximum six for a team. I volunteered and Derek was asked to come along and make up a team of five.

Our heat was the last in a series of seven heats around Europe including Latvia, Spain, Ireland, England, Switzerland, Czech Republic, and Germany.

We flew out of Gatwick in the evening of Thursday 4th with Doug, one of our team members. Phil and Michael had gone out the day before to sort the car and accommodation and were waiting for us at the airport. We arrived at the Hamburg Croquet Club, Dorfstasse 51, Quickborn at 10pm just in time for a nightcap and bed.

Our Captains report of the weekend is below.

EUROPEAN GOLF CLUB LEAGUE

6/7th July 2024

Venue HAMBURG CROQUET CLUB

Reigate Priory CC Team: Michael Bye, Philip Davies, Doug Dykes, Jean Healey, and Derek Ryan

This is the second year the event has taken place at venues throughout Europe. The winners of each heat [semi-final] qualify for the final in Madrid.

Our opponents Germans [HAMBURG], Spanish [SHEERY] and British [DULWICH last year's winners!] were all on paper at least one and sometimes up to five rankings better than us; we knew it would be a serious challenge. Format comprised level play and first to seven, with all play all over two days, two doubles and eight singles from a team of four for each of the three matches.

To prepare for the challenge, the Reigate team arrived 1/2 days early to sample the local beer, and of course practice before Saturday. To say the lawns were like the Himalayas would be unfair, but there were some slight undulations. Definitely home advantage before we had even started. After practise on Friday morning, we lunched at a local golf club.

The clubhouse and accommodation were five*, privately funded and maintained by Margrete and Jurgen [brother and sister, both in their 80's]. The accommodation comprised four double bedrooms, some overlooking the two lawns, gardens and pond [where Jean encountered an early morning swimmer!] with countryside in the distance, and the rooms set over a huge dining/kitchen area.



A huge first floor conference hall with timber beams etc became the venue for Friday evenings food [fresh mackerel and salad] and entertainment, Germany v Spain. You can probably imagine the banter and conversation particularly around the disallowed penalty [which the Germans seemed to take quite well] with a few beers inside them. We British could of course enjoy the game. Jean and Derek stayed at the club whilst the rest of us stayed in the nearby town of Quickborn about a 12 / 15-minute drive in the hired car. A semi basement Air B and B. It served its purpose.

First up on Saturday morning for Reigate was the Hamburgers. Being advised on the previous Friday night after the football that it was a 10.00 start the three of us duly set off at 9.00 from our accommodation in Quickborn, only to receive a call from Jorn [Hamburg Capt. and tournament organiser] that we were supposed to be there at 9.00! Yes.... after a few choice words, increased pressure on the accelerator and possibly a speeding fine, we got to the club for 9.20. Was this cunning German tactics to disrupt us before we got going or a payback for losing at football? we will never know. There were throughout the day however a lot of references to 10am being 9am and visa versa.

We kicked off against Hamburg with the two doubles Bye/Dykes v J. Vinnen/Pfizner and Davies/Healey v P. Vinnen / Jenquel. Both games to the golden hoop and sharing the spoils. The singles followed and were a mixed bag of performances ... We won three and lost five making the score 6 to 4 to the home team. We just needed a bit of luck, and it could have gone our way.

Lunch was followed by the Spanish, Sherry, they brought an improvement in the weather with them as it became very hot. Again, starting with the doubles Bye/Dykes and Davies/Ryan. As with the Germans, the spoils were shared. The singles followed and were again a mixed bag of results... with regular cheers of 'Olay' and 'Pedro', when Alfonso hit a jump shot from 5/6meters out with us finally losing 6 to 4 to the Spanish. Derek's victory v Pato was commendable including a hoop in one and a long jump shot. But overall lady luck eluded us. Again. Within minutes of the end of the day's play the heavens opened so, a retreat to the clubhouse bar was essential.

Jorn had organised a team dinner at the 'GUT KADEN' Golf club about 20minutes away; a lovely evening in a grand clubhouse/dining area /setting, it gave us some time to mingle over a few beers and wine and we did not have to bite our nails through extra time or a penalty shootout.

Sunday arrived very quickly, and we knew we had a serious day ahead of us v Dulwich. It was enjoyable despite the result to be able to play against experienced hard hitters. In the doubles Bye/Dykes and Davies/Healey resulted in two nil victory to Dulwich. It looked ominously like a whitewash; but Jean prevailed with an excellent win v Peter Haydon. so, yes, errh! 9 to1 to Dulwich. In hindsight our preparation was not good. We should have bought Dulwich a few more beers the night before but, I am not sure it would have made much difference in the result.

Something I have failed to mention before and was a key obstacle throughout the day was the presence of chickens. They would regularly appear out of nowhere and proceed to move across the lawn and then be chased away by mallets. There was also a black cat that would decide that it was time to cuddle a croquet ball, with no preference for colour!

The final result was Reigate Priory CC 4th, Dulwich prevailed by two games to beat Sherry.

Phil Davies
Reigate Captain



Non playing guest!!

