

The Ancient Britons



Hockey Tour to Holland

7th – 14th October 2017

Saturday 7th October 2017

The Tour began for most of the Tourers at about 05.00 hours on Saturday morning. The Midland party (Julia, Paul & Jackie, Robin & Ruth, Paul & Karen, Lee & Teri, Trevor & Angela, Anne & Charles), were due to take off from Birmingham Airport at 09.35 so assembled at Departures around 7.30am and joined the long, snaking KLM baggage check-in queue for the only operational desk.

The Southern contingent (John Beale, John Peirce, Richard & Diane and refugee Clive), and the Western branch (Tom & Christine) had similarly timed departures with the aim that, after a short flight time of an hour or so, all (except John B) would rendezvous at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport to be 'coached' together to the Novotel Den Haag City Centre.

As a result of the co-ordinating efforts of our "Travel Obersturmbannführer", this all came to pass. However John Beale, travelling alone, had originally planned to get a train from Schiphol to Den Haag, but decided that a taxi would make a more appropriate statement of his arrival. Having followed that decision, he was now left with the unenviable task of explaining to Marilyn an expenditure of 130.00 Euros.

That left Mike & Lynne and Brian & Hazel to arrive by motor car and finally Marilyn to catch up with JB in the late evening.

After landing at Schiphol at the predicted 11.25am (local time) we joined the inevitable long queue for Passport control – but unbeknown to us 'Big Brother' was observing certain ABs. A young lady had spotted Trevor's lower locomotor difficulties and intervened to whisk him off to the front of the queue.

At baggage collection, the Midland group was duly joined by the Heathrow Heathens (John Peirce & Clive, Richard & Diane) as well as Tom & Christine – the party now totaled 19.

Whilst awaiting baggage, Teri (Rotary Printers!) Baron handed the Tour Brochure to Julia who distributed copies. The coach driver was identified so Julia rounded up her flock and we headed out to board the coach for Den Haag – some thirty minutes away or so we thought!!

It had always been Julia's aim to have a 'home from home' feeling in this short Tour and she didn't disappoint. We headed out into pouring rain, lowering skies, mist and miserable faces – and Yes, Dutch windmills; ah! but only of the modern turbine variety appearing now and then as shadowy outlines in the mist. Clive had his first Dutch ciggy whilst the coach was loaded; then off for the thirty minute drive – I wish!! Down the N44 towards Den Haag – with the world and his wife. Miles of queues as the road to Rotterdam had been closed so all that traffic decanted onto our road; this situation was further compounded by first a three-car accident requiring police / medical attention and later a two-car incident leaving one of the two at right-

angles to the traffic flow. Untold joy. Come back M5, all is forgiven! We reach the Hotel at 2.20pm – room allocation and rest.

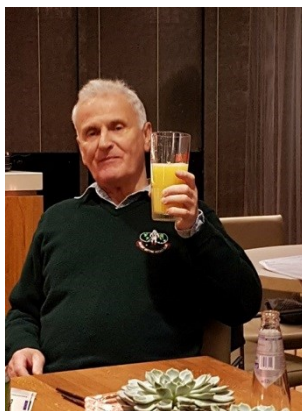
The car travellers arrived to be faced with a tight entrance to the underground car park and a challengingly accurate line-up for the lift which will take them below. The Novotel is designed for short-stay business people or weekenders; Teri has packed for England so it will be interesting to learn how she gets on with the allocated four coat hangers!! We agree to meet up again at 7.00pm in the Hotel bar to plan the evening.

Eventually some of the ABs duly checked out the facilities, namely the Bar. In hotel bar during our first drinking practice just after arrival; Tom Ettling insisted that he must have a straw to drink his gin and tonic.

ABs gradually assembled around 7.00pm. Robin Conway and Paul Sharratt were already locked in battle on the football table. The table football was in the hotel reception. Robin seemed to be the one with the strongest wrists for some reason, and had the technique that Richard and everyone used to use when Richard was at college – he was definitely king of the table (although Richard was leading against him when we had to leave to get on the coach home!). Charles & Anne Cooper appear from outside drenched to the skin – having chosen to eat early. Gradually different eating options are mooted and groups break off to follow their predilections. This leaves Trevor, Angela & Julia to go hunting and they eventually settle on the Suzeran Chinese Restaurant for rib-eye slices and what proved to be not-so-crispy Duck! Still raining as we finally wend our way back to the Novotel – unable to take advantage of the covered shopping arcades which are now closed!

Earlier tonight Clive was causing a rift in Greek Anglo relations - Not happy with our bill. Zorba the owner of Greek Taverna Athena suggested that he drinks less ouzo next time.

So later, back at the hotel Bar - did I say bar? G & T they have no T; Rum & coke; they have no rum. Beer? They have no draught. So now we go to the bar asking.... what have you got. JP not liking the fizzy tinned Lager. OJ and 7up. Last few remaining, everyone else in bed.



Sunday 8th October 2017

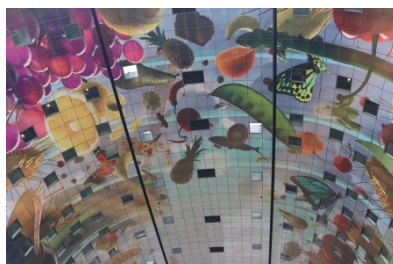
ABs gathered downstairs for breakfast at 8.45 in preparation for the required 10.30am meet to board the coach for the tour of Rotterdam. But what of 'Rotterdam'?? Much of this area lies below sea level. Its history goes back to 900AD when the area was called Rotta after a smelly,

muddy tributary of the Meuse and then later, in 1270AD, a dam or dyke was built there and a settlement grew around it for safety – and the name changed – to Stinkydam. We are due to meet our guide at the Rotterdam Central Station - re-construction of which - was started in 2004 and finally completed in 2014 and is a pragmatic example of the many cutting-edge architectural designs in the city. Our guide, Sandor Rossi, (originally from Scotland), explained that the centre of Rotterdam had been blitzed and decimated during WWII and bad though this was, the re-development had allowed avant-garde designs to be mingled with historic buildings. One example of this is the historic Timmerhuis (town hall), being extended using modular, working space 'pixels', which slope backwards from the street to terminate in irregular peaks. We follow the line of the original dam, which is now the main street, down to the Oude Haven (old port); this name had a familiar ring to JP – but it was nearly his undoing later!!

This eclectic architectural area contains the world famous range of Cube houses designed by Piet Blom and built on pillars above a main road. The aim is to maximise internal space over three floors by tipping the 'cube' of a conventional house through 45 degrees. The outside view is very odd as there doesn't appear to be a horizontal line anywhere!! Close by is a modern hexagonal tower block – the shape of a sharpened pencil - contrasting with an older skyscraper (modest by present standards), which at one time was the tallest building in the world!



A short walk then to the new elongated horseshoe-shaped Market Hall (Markthal) complex – opened in 2014 at a cost of 175 million Euros. Covering the rounded ceiling of the Hall is the unique 'electronic painting', Cornucopia, a representation of fruits & vegetables. This is a 36,000sq.ft. mural created by using 3D digital techniques with the initial computer image broken down into 4,000 segments and then each segment printed onto an aluminium panel. The precise assembly of the mural was again computer-controlled. A mesmeric spectacle which features 'son et lumiere'!! Photo opportunities abound everywhere around here.



Phew. Time for a visit to the café Dudok for a little refreshment. Out comes the coffee and the Dutch apple cake. We were just tackling the cake when: Lieve hemel!!! Panic!! JP can't find his trusty anorak! Forensic questioning and use of 'the little grey cells' concluded that it had been most likely left at the 'oude haven', whilst pursuing photo opportunities! Probably now gone, but JP was urged to go in an optimistic search even if this meant abandoning his cake.

Chivalrous Richard, having already scoffed his portion, volunteered to accompany JP on the ten minute walk. They returned in triumph - JP having spotted the article from fifty yards draped over the harbour wall.

JB never fails to impress. Karen has a sandwich in her hand bag and JB puts his hand in her bag and we hear the cry John, get your hand off my box.

Trauma over, we finish our grub and board the coach for the journey to Rotterdam HC. The driver is requested to stop at an appropriate place to 'take on water', for the game; ever vigilant, the opportunistic Clive seizes the chance for a long-awaited "fag-break". Well ... the Dudley moment goes to Clive. The bus stops for water. Clive is first in queue. Water is 3.5 Euros, so Clive digs deep into pockets picks out all of the change and pays perfectly.... then he sees cigarettes can I have some and she explains we have red Blue / White light arc. Clive picks one and says can I have a pack of 100 we don't have that she says. She gets 20, he looking perplexed then says can I have 2 more packs please. Then Clive has to search 27 pockets to find his wallet; time goes on and on. Needless to say Clive has just enough days for his pre match warm up.

An impressive array of facilities greet us; large Club House surrounded by six Astro pitches – the main one of which was terraced in front of the Club. 2,200 members, 150 teams including junior teams. 1st XI ladies and mens team plus coaches are all salaried and matches televised every week. Most of the money comes from sponsorship and the state.



Hockey at a whole different level. We understood that ex-Olympians would feature in the host team. ABs look around hopefully for the promised 'hired mercenaries'. No extra players but we borrowed 2 from Rotterdam (Alex & Eric). Teri has had a message to say we will have 3 for tomorrow's game.

Pre match wardrobe malfunction: JP no button on his shorts, solution -- cable tie off Richard Boucher.

The 1st match v HC Rotterdam 1 - 5

The Ancient Britons arrived at the fantastic facility of the Rotterdam Hockey Club on Sunday, 8th October for the first match of the 2017 tour of the Netherlands. To put things into perspective, the HC Rotterdam is the fourth largest club in the Netherlands and has nearly 2,500 members, seven astro pitches including a 3,200-seater stadium, and four Veteran sides. Their top Mens and Ladies teams play at the highest level in the Netherlands and are all salaried.

Into this centre of hockey excellence rode the bare eleven players representing the Ancient Britons club, with a couple of those eleven already sporting earlier injuries.



Fortunately, two Rotterdam players (**Alex and Eric**) volunteered to help us out, slightly reducing our average age to the low sixties compared to our opposition's average of about fifty. We knew we were likely to be under pressure for most of the game, and so it proved more-or-less from the opening whistle.

First Quarter

The back line of **Lee Baron, Clive Kendall, Robin Conway, and Mike Christie** initially coped well, with all four making crucial tackles at key moments during the first ten minutes or so, although **Richard Boucher** in goal was relieved to see two fearsome shots fly over the crossbar when the Rotterdam centre forward bamboozled the defenders with his stick work to open up a shooting opportunity. A telling pass out at one point found **Jon Beale** out wide and his subsequent cross was almost converted by **Brian Hopkins**. A further foray by **Mike Christie** was defended by the Dutch, but most of the quarter was spent in the ABs half. 15 minutes: AB 0-0 HCR.

Second Quarter

The ABs regrouped during the break, and the midfield managed to gain a foothold in the game and relieve some of the pressure on our defence. A great interchange of passes between our Dutch guests, **Alex and Eric**, led to **Eric's** final shot going agonisingly close but wide of the post. The Rotterdam keeper got called into action a couple of times, including deflecting a short corner shot from **Paul Sharratt** onto the post and wide, and a couple of other interventions to prevent us from reducing the deficit. Finally, the pressure paid off for Rotterdam and they opened up our defence leading to a pass to an attacker, around **Richard** in goal, with the simple task of tapping the ball into an open net on the reverse stick. 24

minutes: AB 0-1 HCR. ABs responded almost immediately with an attack via **Robin Conway** and **Brian** to **Paul Sharratt** who won a short corner. **Robin** injected to **Paul** whose shot was stopped by the keeper's pads, only for **Brian** to score from barely a yard out. 27 minutes: AB 1-1 HCR.

A strong wave of HCR attacks and shots were defended or rebuffed by **Richard Boucher** but eventually a short corner was awarded to HCR just on the stroke of half-time. **Richard** saved the first shot but with the whole HCR team in the ABs 'D', the rebound was inevitably dispatched. 30 minutes: AB 1-2 HCR.

Third Quarter

The early part of the second half saw us in a more dominant mood, with some great work in the midfield from **Jon Beale**, **Paul Woodward**, **Alex** and **Eric**, supported by **Brian** and some great runs down the right wing from **Tom Ettling** creating some space for us to attack. Several chances were created for forwards **Paul Sharratt** and **John Peirce**, but unfortunately they were unable to hit the target with their keeper again making some good saves from both of them, and from a rare sortie into the opposition 'D', **Robin** just went wide of the post. We were not the only ones squandering chances as their left wing contrived to miss three open goal chances from a couple of metres or less out from the far post when they had opened up our defence and passed round a stranded **Richard**. Maybe he just felt sorry for us! **Richard** also pulled off some good saves throughout the game to keep the score down slightly from what it could have been. Despite **Richard's** efforts and some great last-ditched defending as we tired during the second half, Rotterdam managed to score at regular intervals. Their centre forward – who turned out to be an ex full Netherlands international player – found the target following some individual skills, placing an extremely well struck shot beyond **Richard** into the far corner of the net. 42 minutes: AB 1-3 HCR

Fourth Quarter

Following initial AB pressure, a promising run and cross from **Tom Ettling** on the right wing saw his shot going just wide, an HCR breakaway led to a save on the line with a foot by **Mike** and the subsequent penalty stroke was well converted. 53 minutes: AB 1-4 HCR.



Over to you Richard



Ready



Nearly Got It

HCR's final goal of the game came from a well-intercepted kick out from **Richard**, picked up on the reverse by their skilful and quick midfield dynamo who passed a couple of defenders and shot from the left of the circle past **Richard**. 57 minutes: AB 1-5 HCR

Full time: AB 1-5 HCR

Note Taker – Richard Boutcher

The score of 5-1 to Rotterdam probably reflected their general dominance of the game, but the ABs' efforts and perseverance definitely made a game of it and I'm sure that everyone enjoyed a match played in a great spirit and with some fine skills and clinical finishing on show. After the game, we were very well looked after at their clubhouse with an excellent array of foods to choose from, and copious beer to quench our thirsts and drown our sorrows. Their players were very sociable and spoke far better English than our Dutch, mingling with the ABs and our supporters to make a very entertaining after-match event.

Paul Woodward, Skipper for the tour, thanked our hosts and supporters, thanked **Mike Christie** for his efforts playing out of position at right back but awarded **Richard** the **Man-of-the-Match** award based on the votes made by the supporters.



Woody doing formalities



Woody in motion



Boutcher in action



Damn, missed him



It's OK Lee, I got him



Stand up Brian



Short corner Ump



Switch, Plan B



Nearly worked!



Woody to Paul – SHOOT!



GOOOOAAAALLL



Lee in control



Brian in motion



Sharratt under control

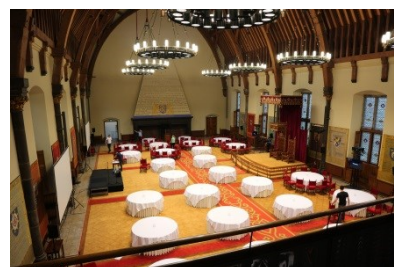


Paul, still being marked

Monday 9th October 2017

10.00am we are awaiting our Guide for the walking tour of Den Haag. Time for another “footaball” game, which resulted in an admonishment for rowdiness. Richard Boutcher did at some point drop his glasses playing table football (from his shirt not off his face!) and spent the rest of the day without them as he didn’t discover it until they had started the tour – casualties of the earlier rowdy encounter. Confusion over where the meet is but our Guide finally appears and informs us that we will need Passports for our visit to the Binnenhof. Once more we negotiate the myriad of all-powerful bicycles and the menacing trams to end up in the reception area of the Binnenhof.

The Binnenhof is a complex of buildings bordering the Hofvijver Lake in the centre of Den Haag – a spectacular setting. Originally, the older parts formed the residence of successive noble Dutch families. At the centre of the complex is the 13th century Ridderzaal (Hall of Knights); the Dutch Senate has a chamber in the western corner whilst the lower House of Representatives meets in the large modern eastern section. The office of the Prime Minister is also here. We join our Guides, Lindy Janssen and Chanine Drijver, and are allocated lockers and given security lanyards. Ready to go!! But no! Panic! JP has forgotten his locker number! Crisis resolution comes to the fore and we are soon on our way up the spiral staircase to the balcony in the Hall of Knights.



This 131ft x 66ft Hall is now used for both private and official state functions – including the state opening of Parliament. The 85ft high building has a vaulted roof – with 59ft timber beams – which has the appearance of an upturned boat. This is not so surprising once you know that shipyard craftsmen were employed in its construction. Next off; up the escalators to the contrasting modern chamber used by the House of Representatives and an explanation of how Dutch democracy works. Time now to nip round to the BIT Grill & Café for coffee and Dutch apple cake.

12.20pm and onto the coach for a visit to Den Haag's seaside playground – Scheveningen – and lunch by the harbour. We pass the Peace Palace which was constructed between 1907/13 following discussions between Russia and America and now houses the International Court of Justice. We duly arrive at Scheveningen and, after an initial stop in a car park, the driver somewhat tetchily, agrees to drop us nearer the harbour. The coach is just about to depart – but where is Clive?? Somehow he has got shut on the departing coach but we manage to recover him. A ten minute walk to De Dagvisser harbour-side restaurant during which Lynne managed to get bitten on the hand and forehead (we never caught the 'flying Dutchman'), and Julia applied the soothing balm.

A very pleasant salmon lunch and then back down to the beach-side promenade - the object being to stroll to the distant Pier and Ferris Wheel where we are due a drop of 'bubbly'. The dull weather isn't particularly encouraging and there are periodic signs of a sea fret. However Julia, Clive & JP, Trevor & Angela set off with Clive indicating which of the beach-side 'dens of iniquity' had benefitted from his missionary zeal on a previous visit with England Vets. Along the way we came across a wonderful children's playground, comprising lots of small 'gnome-like' figures in all sorts of mischievous predicaments! Photo opportunity! as it seemed very much like an AB warm-up routine! At this point, Trevor felt it appropriate to stick his head through one of those humorous seaside 'cut-out' models.

Approaching the Pier, we are joined by Jon & Marilyn and we look for a cup of tea. Marilyn explained that they had come across a display of 'nudes-in-woollies', sculptures in an underground gallery. She had thought that this was a new form of artistic display until it had been explained that the exhibition was in the process of being broken down and transported away – and the 'woollies', were used to protect the items during transit. By now, Angela is viewing the Bungie Jump at the end of the Pier with suspicion – having been the subject of a subterfuge on a previous occasion!

However, 5.00pm arrives, ABs are assembled and the champagne is brought out as we enter the Wheel. A few spins later we have had a pleasant experience to finish the day – a nice idea Julia. Ten minutes back to the coach and we are on the way back to the Novotel.



Tuesday 10th October 2017

Breakfast warning once again – 9.30am deadline!! Paul S is 'eggsasperated' as to why Karen has waited fifteen minutes for poached eggs only then to be told that the Hotel has run out! Individuals doing their own thing. Lee & Teri, Paul & Karen, Charles & Anne off for Retail therapy; Brian & Hazel to the MC Escher exhibition at Museum Escher in het Paleis – the permanent exhibition in the former Winter Palace of the Dutch Queen Mother.

Around 10.00am, Julia, Trevor & Angela, Clive & JP set out to attend to the first 'port of call', or should it be the first 'call of port'!! Then afterwards to the Panorama Mesdag. We set off on another battle with the 'two-wheeled terrors', and quite accidentally – but fortuitously – we came across a "Port-Seller" and after negotiation, agreed to return for some goodies. Off then to the nearby Panorama housed in a purpose-built circular building.

The Panorama Mesdag gives you a 360 degree vista of the sea, dunes and fishing village of Scheveningen (where we were yesterday), as it was in 1881. It was originally privately commissioned and was painted by Hendrik Mesdag – a noted marine painter - & friends. This cylindrical painting is 14 metres high and 120 metres in circumference and is the world's oldest Panorama still on its original site. It was completed over a two-year period 1880/81. We access the painting via a central spiral staircase and all around in front of the painting is a fake terrain of sand etc. to give it perspective. ***An amazing experience so we feel that we have earned refreshment.***

Down to the on-site café for a light lunch and then a return to our first 'port of call'!! Half an hour good humoured repartee with the female assistant (a hockey player) and we secure Port and tot glasses for the remaining two games and the JP / Clive "Port Reserves" are replenished. A leisurely stroll back to the Novotel and we get ready for the coach pick-up at 5.15pm for the evening match.

The 2nd match v HGC 3 - 6

The ABs took to the field at about 8.30pm, having been fed copious amounts of beer and an Indonesian curry. Not the best preparation for a match and so it proved to be with the ABs 3-0 down after 10 minutes. HGC play in the Over 35s League and it showed as they overran the ABs at will. **Richard Boucher** had very little chance with all the goals which were expertly struck.

The 2nd quarter saw HGC extend their lead to 5 nil with a powerful undercut to **Richard's** left and a deft high level backhand flick into the top corner. By now the ABs were slowly finding their form with **Paul Sharratt** just striking wide and **Clive Kendall** breaking down a 2 on 1 with a well-timed tackle.

The 3rd quarter saw good attacking play from the ABs. A silky pass from **Brian Hopkins** to **Stefan Berkhout** (Dutch guest) saw **Stefan** roof it; 1-5.



Robin Conway then came close with a reverse stick strike from the edge of the circle that hit the post. HGC then increased their lead against the run of play: 6-1.

A series of great attacks by the ABs showed the capabilities of the HGC keeper, who was nicknamed “Thor and King Kong”, being 6’9” and must have weighed 130 kg.

John Peirce soon realised this when he struggled up close, or was it snuggled up close. A great pass from **Robin Conway** to **Paul Woodward**, who crossed across goal and **JP** tucked it between the keeper’s legs.



The 4th quarter started with ABs the stronger and they were soon awarded a penalty corner. **Paul Sharratt** thumped it into the bottom left corner to make it 3-6. **Clive Kendall** made a great save on the line and took a nasty blow on the hand. This brought **Lee Baron** back on the pitch, after he had earlier received a cut on his eyebrow from a clash of heads. Rumour has it that **Lee** was winning on points at the time!! And so the game ended with a 6-3 loss, which was a very respectable result against a much fitter and younger side; and ABs won the 2nd half 3-1.

Note Taker – Jon Beale



Boutcher at full stretch



Will Robbert beat him?



Yes he does!



Jump on him Roy



JP concentrating



The Dutch in control



Paul calls a new routine



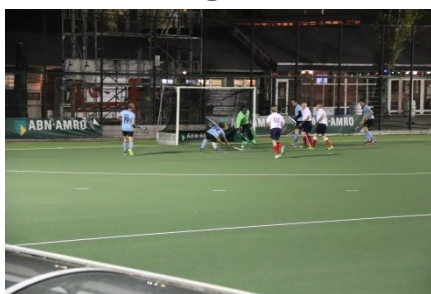
Who to give it to?



Damn, missed it!



Don't let him pass it!



Who's marking him?



Good effort Richard



Stefan on the break



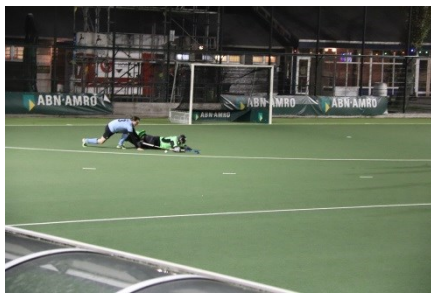
Come and get it



Sorry, can't have it



Robbert in motion



Richard foils another



Sharratt shot goal bound

Wednesday 11th October 2017

A Breakfast 'before the bell', as usual. Met at 10.00am for short walk to the Mauritshuis Museum – negotiating on the way rampant cyclists (who rule the streets and get extremely tetchy with pedestrians), as well as the trundling trams. The Museum is a 17th Century building and was originally built for a Dutch Count. It is now State-owned and houses the Royal Cabinet of Paintings – a collection numbering 841 items mainly from the Dutch 'Golden Age', of Rembrandt, Vermeer, Potter, Hals & Holbein. We met our knowledgeable Guide in Reception, up a few stairs and proceeded on a tour which highlighted particular works of art – ranging from Paulus Potter's gargantuan canvas 'The Bull', to Rembrandt's 'The Anatomy Lesson of Doctor Nicolaes Tulp' and culminating in Vermeer's globally acclaimed painting 'Girl with a Pearl Earring'.



Cup of culture drained -
break time!



Off to the Museum Brasserie
for a 'top-up'. coffee and a
Hazelino confectionery.

Back on the streets; a bit more walking and 'velocipede-dodging', to arrive at the Catholic Monastery of the Brothers of St. John – within which is the Kloosterbrouwerij (Micro-brewery), producing Haagsche Broeder real ale. We were met by American exile Brother Benedict Joseph – dressed in the familiar Monk's garb - and a somewhat dashing younger brewer Kees Verbogt ('Kees' as in Case), dressed in T-shirt, jeans and wellies!! Kees's proper job is as a Policy Coordinator with the Dutch Ministry for Economic Affairs. The combination of youth and wellies obviously moved Marilyn as she was heard to comment "is Kees also a monk? - if so, what a waste". Sadly, those boots were made for malting!! Only eight Brothers inhabited the vast building and they try to make ends meet by renting rooms, holding retreats and conferences, doing pastoral work and selling ale to the local bars. We visit their church first, are then shown the 'hidden' church in the present refectory (used when Catholicism was outlawed) and move on to the Micro-brewery which produces 100 litres / week. Time for the tasting hosted by brewer Kees!! T-shirt legend referred to 'wild yeasts'; Tom commented that they would cure 'thrush'. Marilyn reckoned 'wild oats' would have more attraction. Three Beers tried: Medium taste – 6.0% ABV; Dry / Crisp taste – 6.5% ABV; Porter – 8.5% ABV. Anne Cooper, not a



habitual beer drinker, wasn't sure whether the description she heard was 'hospice beer', or 'horse p--- beer!! (She had her own idea). Sold in 75cl bottles, the label tag lines were 'Drink it with Broeders', and the slightly scholarly 'Primus inter Pares'. A quick vote of thanks to the hosts and then we totter just along the way to a light lunch at the Restaurant Pastis. Soup, cheese & a selection of meats with wine and, of course, a pastis if you wished.

Now 3.00pm-ish and having taken on a suitable amount of ballast, we go off to visit the Van Kleeff jenever and liqueur distillery in the heart of historic Den Haag. Greeted by the vivacious, enthusiastic, extrovert owner of the Van Kleeff Museum & Distillery – Fleur Kruijt – we were sat at tables in the atmospheric building and treated to an entertaining explanation of the origins of jenever and the history of Van Kleeff's whilst munching on more warm bread, snacks and olives but this time accompanied by jenever and a variety of other propriety liqueurs – one of which was referred to as 'Kruide Baggah' (Shitty Herbs!!!). Jenever is a distillation of malt wine to 50% ABV and then herbs (principally juniper for its supposed medicinal qualities) are added to this unpalatable liquid to smooth and mellow the taste. This potion eventually found its way to England as Gin.



Around 5.00pm, now suitably anaesthetised, we reluctantly start out to return to the Novotel - not caring a 'monkeys' about the gesturing cyclists weaving their way between us. But where is JP?? Back we go to find him in deep conversation with Fleur explaining that there might be a connection with a distant arm of the 'Van Peirces'. The evening will be up to individuals to sort out.

Thursday 12th October 2017

Groups & Individuals to sort their own activities out today.

Angela & Anne Cooper off to the KLM office near the Hotel to book assistance at Schiphol on the return journey for their aged partners. Decision after that was Trevor, Angela, Anne & Julia would get a taxi to the 'traditional' Dutch town of Leiden. Charlie would stay at base – too much excitement! Arrived there and immediately booked a boat tour on the canals to get the best feel for the place. Some of the bridges had very low headroom which necessitated us 'ducking down', and the lowering of the canopy under which we sat; this was no problem until the lowering mechanism failed; fortunately, after a few frantic phone calls by the skipper, the problem was resolved.



Shortly after this incident, we were instructed to prepare to repel boarders from a fast approaching craft full of unsavoury-looking characters. As the craft got nearer, we were able to reassure the skipper that we played hockey with these people as Paul & Karen, Lee & Teri, Diane & Richard, JP & Clive hove into view. An international incident averted. A very informative tour, well presented by the multi-lingual skipper who emphasised that Leiden was very much a University town. Disembarked and headed for a light lunch at a canal-side café – followed by the unsavoury characters. After lunch, wandered around the shops, took in a proper Dutch windmill, dived into a junk shop where Anne re-appeared triumphantly holding Charlie's Xmas present, a walking stick with a good bit of tread on the end and then off to meet the taxi which we had pre-ordered.

Back at base, Anne went off to check on Charlie and Trevor & Angela decided to go for a spot of 'chocolate indulgence', at adjacent chocolatiers Hop & Stork.

Met at 6.45pm for the coach to HC Klein Zwitserland; duly arrived at the narrow entrance lane where the driver hesitated with his forty seater. The hesitation was countered by Brian with the time-honoured shout 'I've been here before! You can go down and turn around.' (That was unlikely to have been in a fifty foot 'chara' Brian!!). The driver edged the coach down the lane to the HC entrance – but couldn't swing through the entrance. A high speed team evacuation followed with mutterings of 'sorry but better get on and change', leaving one or two of us with the driver. The lane swung to the left - but to where?? We carried on to another entrance

which the coach could just get through into a yard. A fifty-six point turn later, the coach was facing the way it had come but the angle of the narrow entrance was proving to be more awkward from this side than the entry side. Slowly - and not so surely – with rear wheels spinning perilously over an adjacent deep ditch, the coach edged back into the lane and was liberated!! What happened in the match?? After that trauma, ask Brian!!

The 3rd match v HC Klein Zwitterland 1 - 1

The ABs started well in this game, which began at 7.30pm, with plenty of possession. It was also good to be playing a team of an appropriate age. Sadly **Jon Beale** was injured and couldn't take part. Unfortunately HC Klein took the lead with a flick from the edge of the D after 10 minutes. During the 1st quarter it was end to end hockey but ABs conceded a penalty corner but they defended it well.

HC Klein began the 2nd quarter and attacked again but this time **Richard Boucher** made an excellent save and then immediately saved the rebound. ABs managed to cross the halfway line and twice in succession made it in the opposing circle. On the first occasion a nice pass from **Tom Ettling** found **Brian Hopkins** whose shot was saved. **Brian** praised the pass and **Tom** agreed saying "Thanks Love".

The second occasion saw **Robin Conway** find **Brian Hopkins** in space and from the top of the circle, **Brian** smashed it into the top left corner; 1-1. What a well-executed goal.



HC Klein then won a further penalty corner but again ABs defended well. Another attack from ABs saw a cross from **Paul Sharratt** reach **John Peirce** but he narrowly missed the target.

Half-time arrived and ABs deserved the break, and from the restart **Clive Kendall** went off on a good run but sadly his effort was in vain. ABs were becoming inventive and a great aerial pass from **Brian Hopkins** to the top of the circle sadly failed to gain the reward it deserved. Yet again ABs were involved in end to end hockey but great marking from both sides prevented penetration. Further attacks from ABs kept up the pressure and eventually they gained the just reward with a penalty corner. Sadly the end did not justify the means as a **Paul Sharratt** shot was well saved by the opposing keeper. ABs kept up the pressure and won another penalty corner but again ABs were foiled as **Robin Conway's** attempt was foiled at the near post. ABs couldn't keep up the pressure and HC Klein broke and won a penalty corner for themselves. Their attempt on goal was comfortably saved by **Richard Boucher**. Soon after HC Klein broke again but **Clive** took one for the team when he was hit on the thigh.

The 4th quarter was very exciting as both sides were pushing for the winner but HC Klein won the first penalty corner. The call from the bench was "hold on Guys" as **Trevor Davies** said "this is the

time for the dyke to open”. Perhaps he meant Polders, being in Holland!! Fortunately ABs held out and broke free with a great pass from **Clive Kendall** to **Paul Woodward** attacking as a unit, but HC Klein thwarted their attempt. As HC Klein broke **Brian Hopkins** saved the day with a great tackle. HC Klein wouldn't give up as the clock ran down and won a further penalty corner, but their shot went wide. The final whistle went and a great game between 2 well matched teams finished 1-1.

Note Taker – Teri Baron



Teams before game



Pennant from HC Klein



Time to get ready



Tom neatly balanced



Brian creating space



Clive is on his way



Steven controlling



Steven on the move



Still my ball



Mike drives ABs forward



Lee taking control



Sharratt working back !!



Talking a good game



Time for a Drink



The 3 Musketeers??

Friday 13th October 2017

Trevor & Angela went 'solo'. Trevor was keen to visit the Louwman Transport Museum which we had passed on a previous coach sortie. So off by taxi once again!! This Museum features the largest private collection of vehicles and automobilia in the world – all housed in an iconic, purpose-built modern building on three floors. The collection was started in 1934 by Dutch vehicle importer Pieter Louwman and now comprises some two hundred and fifty vehicles with a significant proportion being pre 1910. The well-directed internal route means that you will have walked one mile by the time you leave the display.

On again by taxi to visit Delft – another archetypal Dutch town. Wandered around the quaint streets on the hunt for an appropriate Delft-blue memento. Eventually found a trio of small houses which represented the shop premises in which we had purchased the items. A glass of wine in a local Best Western and time for the taxi back to base!

Out again at 7.00pm, a short bicycle-infested walk to the End of Tour Dinner venue 't Goude Hooft - Den Haag's oldest hostelry dating from 1423. Three tables on the Ground Floor in an atmospheric setting. Not so much 'taking wine' this time, as we were among other diners – but plenty of supping wine. Tour Captain Paul Woodward did the formal 'Thank-Yous' and presented the Player of the Tour to Brian Hopkins; Paul himself was presented with a Delft tile memento and Vice-Captain Richard with a Delft Salt & Pepper.





Julia was then thanked for her organisation of the Tour and given an expression of the Tour Party's appreciation. An enjoyable and convivial end to the short Tour.

Saturday 14th October 2017

Due to leave the Novotel by coach for Amsterdam Schiphol at 1.00pm. Trevor & Angela think they have time to visit Madurodam in Den Haag. Madurodam is a model village and park containing Dutch landmarks and reflecting aspects of Dutch life using mostly a 1/25 scale. It was built to honour the memory of Dutch resistance fighter George Maduro who died in Dachau in 1945. The initial project was funded by George's parents and opened in 1952; subsequently,

there have been many additions over the years. In 2012, for its 60th birthday, the attraction was given an 8 million Euro facelift!!

The airport coach is on time and a trouble-free run to Schiphol. Anne & Angela go in search of the pre-arranged assistance with KLM for their ageing Lotharios – only to find that this amounts to a push-it-yourself wheelchair!!

Pizza lunch and then the flight home at 4.35pm for the Midland contingent. Cheerios at Birmingham and away home.

On behalf of AB Tourers “Thank You Julia”, for a good week; sorry that your own enjoyment was marred by your own health problems.

A few final “cheesey” comments on aspects of the Tour:

(We GOUDA done better!! EDAM well knew we could!!)

(If only he had the Bols!! Maasdam - well try harder next time!!)

(jenever can tell can you???)

Our thanks to our Report Author: Rt Hon Trevor Davies, with snippets & photos from Richard and Diane Boutcher, Paul Sharratt, Teri Baron, Tom Ettling & Lynne Christie.

DATE	Man of the Match	OPPONENTS	VENUE	F	A	SCORERS
08/10/17	Richard Boutcher	HC Rotterdam	Rotterdam	1	5	Brian Hopkins
10/10/17	Brian Hopkins	HGC	Wassenaar	3	6	Stefan Berkhout John Peirce Paul Sharratt
12/10/17	Clive Kendall	HC Klein Switzerland	Scheveningen	1	1	Brian Hopkins

Brian Hopkins was named Player of The Tour.

Thanks to the Note Takers – Richard Boutcher for Game 1; Jon Beale for game 2; and Teri Baron for game 3.

Paul Woodward (Captain); Richard Boutcher (Vice-Captain); Clive Kendall, Robin Conway; Lee Baron; Mike Christie; Brian Hopkins; Jon Beale; Tom Ettling; John Peirce; Paul Sharratt + Roy van Dorssen, Stefan Berkhout & Robbert Geluk.

**Jackie Woodward; Diane Boutcher; Chris Ettling; Teri Baron; Marilyn Beale;
Hazel Hopkins; Karen Daly; Ruth Conway; Lynne Christie; Julia Greenhough;
Charles & Anne Cooper; Trevor & Angela Davies.**

