

# HAM Tour 2018

## Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March

Whilst the ABs were winging their way to HAM, **El Presidente** was returning from a not too successful Stag Weekend with future son-in-law and friends. Whereas most were out enjoying themselves he was in bed at 6pm 'til 9am one night and 8pm 'til 9am on the last night; after picking up a "virus" of some sorts on the plane. Once home it was time for last minute packing prior to travel.

Some of the ABs were already "in the mood" as en route to London **Teri** noticed that a car had been stopped by PC Plod, or as **Teri** would say "Look **Lee** it's a plain clothes Police Car!!"

## Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March

In the morning, **Sandie & Phil** took Marley to "Park Your Pawz" then finalised the cases before setting off to the Premier Inn at Heathrow Terminal 4. Getting off the National Express bus which arrived on time, it was a quick 10 minute walk on a covered concourse. Prompt check-in followed by superb service in the Bar and restaurant before retiring to bed.



Whilst all this was going on, the ABs were up for breakfast prior to their full day Tour of Valletta, which included a visit to St John's Cathedral followed by a tour of Casa Rocca Piccola, a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Palace of a Maltese Noble Family, with time to enjoy a champagne tour. This unique experience is usually given by Marquis de Piro himself and followed by a glass or two of champagne. Then it was off to Upper Barakka, for the HAM Experience, and Grand Masters Palace State rooms.



## Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March

Today was a free day for ABs prior to a 6.30pm leave by coach for hockey at Kordin National Stadium. **El Presidente** meanwhile was getting up to leave the Premier Inn at 8.25am. Thirty minutes later **Sandie and Phil** were sitting down having breakfast after the quickest ever check-in, boarding pass scanning and immigration check!! Unbelievable. A smooth flight which arrived on time, but sadly

**Phil** spilt some of his red wine. Normally no problem but **Sandie's** lilac hoody was on the floor, so you can guess the result!! Once off the plane it was a quick and efficient airport transfer shuttle system and by mid-afternoon **Sandie and Phil** were having a small beer with **Lee & Teri** in the Hotel Phoenicia Lounge Bar. **Teri** did feel like she needed sustenance so a slab of chocolate cake was the answer. Slowly but surely the ABs gathered with **Peter Reid** in the lift with his large hockey bag, when an occupant said to him "You can't play golf in the dark" to which **Peter** replied "It's alright I have luminous balls!" and then it was on the coach and off we went for a 20 minute journey. Once there, like on many occasions we were the first team to arrive.

#### **HAM Malta 4 Ancient Britons 1**

With an almost full stadium ABs started as always; on the defensive, as HAM pressed forward but the ABs' defence held firm, but conceded a penalty corner soon after. A hard hit to the top of the circle was returned to the injector, **Henry Cachia**, who unmarked calmly scored. "Where was the marking" was the cry from the bench. HAM continued to flood forward but their attack fizzled out as a wayward pass went over the sideline. HAM were passing the ball too well and the ABs were struggling but still tackling well. Once ABs got possession a good passage of play with **Clive Kendall**, **Robin Conway** and **Brian Hopkins** saw them get a bit of control. This led to animated support from the bench and from the **WAGS** in the Spectators Stand.

After 10 minutes, a great move from the midfield saw **Robin** pass to **Tony Taig** who passed into the right corner for **Paul Sharratt**, whose cross for **Tom Ettling** just missed the target.

After 14 minutes HAM were back on the attack but **Richard Boucher** repelled them with a smart save.

Surprisingly after 16 minutes ABs won a penalty corner but the HAM defence refused to buckle as they not only cleared the danger, but started an immediate counter-attack and just kept the ball in play only for **Clive Kendall** to time his tackle to perfection.

After 20 minutes ABs also counter attacked at pace but the final pass was wayward and sadly slipped out of play. Each side now repelled attack after attack and the play swung from end to end as the half-time whistle sounded.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half started with 37 Maltese passes (no crosses) and just the 1 touch from the ABs. It all ended with a 1 on 1 with **Richard Boucher**, who thankfully won again. ABs did then get a period of play but sadly passing to the wrong coloured shirts became a bit of a problem despite the entreaties of skipper **Lee**. Good work down the right side from **Richard Turner** won a penalty corner which HAM cleared easily. HAM attacked again down the right and another **Boucher** save saved the day. This only seemed to spur HAM even more and after a weaving run down the sideline a cross found the unmarked **Rudolph Camilleri**, who slammed the ball just inside the near post giving **Richard Boucher** no chance. HAM were now attacking in numbers creating more pressure on the already overworked AB defence and after 23 minutes they added to their lead, thanks to **Rudolph Camilleri**. Three minutes later HAM increased their lead again after attacking round the back of the ABs' defence through **Andy Monaghan**.

After 28 minutes the ABs attacked down their right hand side and the cross into the circle created a problem for HAM and a penalty stroke was awarded. Before **Lee** or anybody had a chance to

decide, **Tony Taig** had flicked it home. Just before the end the ABs won a further penalty corner, but sadly HAM held out as the final whistle was blown.

**Richard Boucher** duly gave the “Vote of Thanks” speech, thanking Xavier their Captain, the Umpires, Desmond for the food and especially the WAGS. **Richard** also thanked **Julia** for organising the Tour and also our Hosts, David T Agius, Henry Cachia and Luke Mallia.

HAM Goalscorers: Henry Cachia, Rudolph Camilleri (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>) and Andy Monaghan.

ABs Goalscorer: **Tony Taig (PS)**.

**Man of the Match: Jon Beale**

Umpires: Paul Brincat and Manwell Imbroll.

Reuter Correspondents: **Richard Turner & Tom Ettling**.

Thanks also to Rudolph Camilleri for the details of scorers and Umpires.

After the game it was time for sandwiches, cobs and a choice of patizzis, filled with either ricotta or peas. Beer flowed in the form of Cisk or Cisk low Carb with wine for the **Ladies** and a small tot of port to send us on our return journey. Drink was definitely working as after **Phil** said that **Mike Wingent** was coming out on Thursday, **Sandie** said “next Thursday!!” Once back at the Hotel a few descended on the Club bar for a few more glasses of port, i.e. **Lee & Teri**, **Karen & Paul**, **JP**, **Clive**, **Phil & Sandie**, **Charles & Anne** (not twin), **Brian & Hazel**.

### Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March

Today breakfast was back to normal, ages waiting for the coffee and no salt or pepper on the tables, but at least the food was good so that was a plus. Afterwards it was time to get on the coach for a

trip to Mdina and first a trip on a few boats to see the Blue Grotto. There was just 6 ABs on our boat and on our return there was a major altercation between the Skipper of the boat and all the Organisers, perhaps there weren’t enough passengers so he gets less money, but none of us could speak Maltese. We then had a little time to spare before getting back on the coach, so what better than a quick beer, before



visiting the Maritime Museum. Afterwards it was a bit of a walk via small alleyways before arriving at our lunch destination, Tal-Petut in Vittoriosa. The Chef came out and described what we would be eating. There were tapas-like dishes with courgettes, peppers, tomatoes, followed by fava beans, bigilla, cheeselets with tomatoes, sausages with figs and local ravioli for starters. The whole meal was a delight and a completely different experience. We were also “entertained” with a football pump story from **Peter Reid**, apologies for not being able to relate as it was a visual joke. It was then time for a stroll in the sunshine. Unfortunately this was when the speed of the ABs varied, but **El Presidente** managed to acquire a Tour Guide’s “weapon”. There was also time for a few pictures of ABs.





Later in the day it was time for afternoon tea and cakes, of which there were several to choose from and delicious they were too. Once replenished it was time to visit the Church where a bomb had crashed through the roof and was then rebuilt around it.

We then all got back on the bus before getting back to the Hotel at about 6.10pm and then a small group went to the Band Wilhena Club for a few drinks.

A small group slowly increased in size, but the real surprise was, that in this small establishment they had a variety of gins including Chase GB, Hendricks and Sapphire to name just 3, which they served with small berries and ice. The **Ladies** had 4 each along with **Paul Sharratt** and the other men had beers, but when it became time to pay, the total cost was just under 60 Euros, so exit quickly. Back at the Hotel it was time for the "Port Nightcap Brigade" to finish off the day.



### Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March

Breakfast was more relaxed today as it was a free day so 9.15am was the choice, as others had gone off Quad Biking for the day. Today the poached eggs were fine but the toast was brown granary, not white as requested!! Fifty percent correct I suppose, so progress was being made.

Afterwards **Sandie and Phil** went off for a walk into Valletta centre and whilst walking we heard the sound of an oboe. It was therefore time to sit, have a beer and listen to the delightful sounds of Toms Abelis. Later it was time to stop again and have a spot of lunch – a pizza and another beer. We still hadn't found "The Pub", a famous hostelry where Oliver Reed had his final drink. So **Phil** asked the waitress where Oliver





Reed had his last drink and she said "Orson Wells?" **Phil** said "No Oliver Reed" and she replied "Correct, Orson Wells wrote War of the Worlds" and **Phil** said "No, that was HG Wells". She then admitted to getting them mixed up!! Eventually we were pointed in the right direction. Anyway we duly found the establishment. It wasn't very big but there was a friendly landlord and the weather was good enough to sit outside. Soon after, we were joined by **Tom & Chris Ettling**, who also knew of its existence. Whilst minding our business who should be walking up the street but **Mike & Lou Handley** carrying a M&S bag. It didn't seem much at the time but they had been shopping as their luggage had gone missing. **Phil** offered to loan **Mike** some trousers later and strangely they fitted. As can be seen from the picture, they

had T shirts bearing Oliver Reed's last drinking session!! Back at the Hotel the Management had invited the ABs to a Champagne Reception at 6.30pm. Certain ABs decided to buy a few more bottles just to be sociable. A "cacophony" of ABs then decided to venture out for dinner and crossed the road to a nearby Pizzeria and surprisingly the food was quite good, especially the tortellini which had an exceptional sauce. It was then decided that a nightcap in the Club Bar might be a good idea and here we joined up with our final arrival – **Mike Wingent**.

### Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March

Breakfast at 8am and this time we sat on the right hand side of the restaurant. Today we had a choice of fruit juice for the very first time – orange juice or apple & melon juice, so tried the latter which was a very pleasant concoction. Poached eggs were perfect today and this time on the correct toast. Not everybody was served as quick and **Teri** broke the record for the longest wait for poached eggs – 23 minutes. The afternoon was already pre-planned so off into town for a walk around in the morning. **Sandie** had a need for an Aperol Spritz so **Phil** relented and agreed, reluctantly having a beer at the same time at our orange and black tablecloth restaurant.

We got back for the 2.00pm meet and off we trolled to the Upper Barakka, then down the lift to the harbour and onto the gondolas for a trip around the harbour, noting Philip Green's yacht but unfortunately not getting close enough to pull the plug!! We were not only in the last gondola out with just **Julia**, **Sandie** and **Phil**, but we were nearly the first gondola back. I think we got the short tour as there is no money to be made with just 3 people and not 6. After being on the water, a thirst had built up, so time for a beer and where better than "The Pub" again. This time we had the company of **Paul & Karen**. **Paul** had suggested for the evening meal, a visit to Kings Own Band Club Bar and Restaurant; so on the way back we called in and booked a table for 6.00pm, to be vacated at 8.00pm. The **girls** decided to "go back and change" whilst **Paul** suggested a nice bottle of red – who was I to argue, so we nipped in to Charles Grech. The Girls returned at 5.45pm and ordered a bottle of white wine, then realised that they only had 15 minutes to drink it, which they managed!! We arrived at the restaurant at 6.05pm!! Upstairs on the first floor where the washrooms were situated was a pianist, what a strange place for live music. Our waiter duly came over and gave us several snippets of information regarding wines and the Menu. Not long after ordering the **Beales** turned up, but fortunately we only had space for 4!! At 8.00pm the next customers arrived so the Management moved us into the Bar area where we joined the locals. **Sandie** was not feeling too great so decided

to return to the Hotel, whilst we adjourned for a Port or two. Whilst talking to the locals **Phil** managed to drop his glass of tawny port (to this day still not sure how as didn't hit anything) but the Locals said "don't worry" and the management brought him a replacement port – note the safety glass!!

On the way back **Paul Sharratt** suggested a nightcap so we called into the last hostelry only to find the **Barons** and **Mike Wingent** ensconced at the Bar. Time for a quick Hennessy before adjourning for the evening, but the **Hopkins**, **Boutchers** and the **Handleys** turn up, so time for 1 more before we leave.



### Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March

Breakfast was a similar time today at 8.00am, no eggs just fruit juice, as the coach was due at 9.00am. The first game was due to start at 10.00am and **El Presidente** gave a quick speech explaining that it was 266 days since his last game so it was up to everyone in front of him to keep the ball as far away from him as possible. Lee then indicated that all would get pitch time and so ABs took the pitch for the 1<sup>st</sup> game for the Malta 50<sup>th</sup> Celebration.

### **HAM Malta 1 Ancient Britons 0**

The ABs fresh from a full English breakfast took to the field resplendent in their lucky white shirts. Unfortunately the new chimney Clive is having installed on the top of his head is not complete and he is unable to smoke during the match.

A slow start by all players but the ABs forced a penalty corner but this was uneventful. Sadly HAM Malta broke away and their danger man **Andy Monaghan** dribbled into the circle and even though he was forced wide by **Phil**, his mishit shot found its way into the far corner. ABs were not dismayed and managed to force 3 penalty corners in quick succession but were unable to convert any. The first attempt, **Phil** tried to find **Tony Taig** but the keeper just managed to deflect wide. The second saw a slip to **Paul Sharratt** who tried to deceive the defence by passing back across to **Robin Conway** but sadly was too far in front. The final attempt saw **Phil** shoot but it went high and wide as the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter drew to a close.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter began with ABs in the ascendency and a great attacking move beginning with **JP** passing to **Tony Taig**, whose through ball to **Mike Wingent** saw his fierce shot well saved by their keeper. The game swung from end to end and HAM duly won a penalty corner but **Peter Reid** was out so fast that he smothered their attempt. ABs broke again and a great long ball from **Paul Sharratt** found **Tony Taig** hiding in the corner. A run along the goal line saw Tony win a penalty corner. **Tony Taig** delivered to **Phil Hall** who drove the ball towards **Mike Wingent** on the penalty spot whose deflection went just wide, as the whistle ended the first half.

HAM started the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter well with several passes bisecting the AB defence but a good tackle by **JP** led the way as ABs intercepted at will. HAM still kept up the pressure and after winning a penalty corner, a weak shot went well wide. ABs took a quick 16 yard which led to an attack with numbers but the final ball failed to find the target. HAM counter attacked yet again but all

3 attempts on goal led to 3 great saves by **Richard Boucher**. As ABs tried to clear the danger **Mike Handley** accidentally caused an injury to the hand of the HAM forward. After their free hit, a penalty corner was awarded but the shot was deflected wide for a long corner which ABs easily defended. ABs then broke and **Lee Baron** passed to **Mike Handley** down the right wing and his pressure created another penalty corner. A direct shot from **Phil** was deflected wide off the line as the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter came to a close.

ABs began the final quarter strongly but HAM soon regained control in their midfield and quickly attacked and moved forward but **Phil** calmly cleared the centre as it entered the circle. ABs attacked and thanks to **Teri** shouting "Pass to **Robin**; he is as free as a bird!" the ball duly found **Robin** who then smashed the ball into the circle. **Mike Wingent** reacted instantly deflecting the ball upwards but sadly just past the left post. HAM regained the ball and broke quickly winning a further penalty corner but this time they messed it up and ABs managed to clear the danger. ABs then broke quickly and a good push forward by **Mike Wingent** nearly found **Tony Taig** but unfortunately his control wasn't quite quick enough as the HAM defender cleared for a long corner, which sadly came to nothing. For the next few minutes ABs were pinned deep in their half but the defence held firm. As the game came to a close **Robin** tried to muster one last attack and his through ball just evaded **Mike Wingent**. A 1-0 defeat but ABs could be well satisfied against a younger and faster team.

**HAM Goalscorer: Andy Monaghan.**

**Men of the Match: Mike Wingent & Richard Boucher.**

**Umpires: Paul Brincat and Nathan Galea.**

**Reuter Correspondents: Jon Beale, Richard Turner and John Peirce.**

ABs now had a break and lunch as HAM Malta played Rabat. Sitting around in the sun was quite relaxing, whilst some went for a stroll and others kidnapped wildlife.



**Rabat 2 Ancient Britons 1**

The ABs wearily made their way to the pitch with the speed of **Mike Handley's** luggage arrival.

Rabat made their way to the pitch having finished their rusks and Ribena.

The ABs started brightly with good interpassing resulting in a penalty corner, but to no avail. ABs then showed some really great play with darting runs from **Mike Wingent** and excellent play down both wings by **Brian** and **Paul**. A short corner to ABs right on the whistle allowed everyone up. A great injection from **Tom** but the shot went just wide.

Rabat started much better in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter but ABs defended well. ABs counter attacked a couple of times but Rabat were strong and low in the tackle, much better tackle than **Jon Beale's**. **Mike Handley** was intercepting cross field passes and then blocked a dangerous cross into the circle. Rabat just kept on coming and after 4 square passes into the circle shot just wide, as ABs

luckily kept a clean sheet. Rabat's youngest then took on 4 AB defenders but the experienced **Allan Sutton** blocked his route and calmly dispossessed him. A rare AB attack again fell short as the desired shot went calmly wide. It was during this period that the AB defence stood firm with **Clive** and **Mike** dominant and the midfield worked tirelessly moving up and down the pitch. A scary minute that seemed to last forever saw Rabat shoot about 10 times with all ABs putting in a shift in defence with great tackles and interceptions which ended up with **Richard Boucher** kicking the ball onto an opponent's foot to bring the half to a close.

Changes at half-time saw **Paul Sharratt** replace **Phil** at sweeper and **Richard Turner** making his return after injury. Another switch by **Lee** saw **Peter Reid** move into midfield and this led to better possession. Rabat managed to enter the circle, with the illegal use of the foot, but **Richard Boucher** with a sliding save kept ABs in it. Rabat kept relying on their youth with fast breaks and from a short corner the ball was switched right then left for **Jonathan Seychell** to net into an unguarded goal. ABs wouldn't give up and **Paul Sharratt** came up with a couple of match saving tackles. **Mike Wingent** then went on a brilliant 40 yard run but **John Peirce** was unable to get the required touch to net, as the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter came to a close.

At the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, ABs went straight on the attack, with **Tony Taig** making excellent runs to open up passing opportunities. For a few minutes ABs camped in the Rabat "23" with **Brian** firing into the circle but Rabat managed to clear. ABs were still finding lots of spaces to attack but an inaccurate pass gave Rabat the chance to break and win a short corner. Fortunately their shot on goal went wide.

ABs managed to keep the ball away from the younger opponents but sadly didn't create any worthwhile attacks as Rabat calmly organised their defence. ABs did eventually get behind the Rabat defence once, when **Tom** put the ball through for **Mike Wingent** near the back line but the pass was too quick; even for our whippet.

Rabat then won a further short corner but yet again their shot was fortunately mishit and wide. Even though ABs cleared the danger Rabat soon regained the ball and a dangerous cross from the right evaded forwards and defenders. A rare AB attack saw great passing with the final deflection rolling just past the post.

Rabat were not giving up and they won another penalty corner which resulted in a scuffle yards from goal with **Phil** diving forward to stop the ball on the line and then clear the danger. The next short corner a similar thing happened but on this occasion **Phil** failed as **Jason Vella** netted.

With not long left ABs tried to up the tempo and a driving run from **Brian** saw his dangerous centre stopped and cleared. And then it happened!! **Robin** passed to **Paul**, **Paul** passed it back to **Robin** who waltzed into the "D" and calmly smashed the ball into the back of the net. Sadly this was too late, but what a finish for the ABs.

**Rabat Goalscorers: Jonathan Seychell and Jason Vella.**

**Goalscorer: Robin Conway. Men of the Match: Mike Wingent & Mike Handley.**

**Umpires: James Mizzi and Nathan Galea.**

**Reuter Correspondents: Jon Beale, John Peirce and Tom Ettling.**

As we were booked to join both teams later for the Official Tournament Dinner, we decided to take the coach back to our Hotel 45 minutes earlier giving more time to change before getting back on the coach to the Hilton in St Julians. Sadly team names had been put on the table so inter socialising didn't take place. Or as **Marilyn Beale** said "it's a shame we are not mixing with the Italians!" "That is because they are Maltese, **Marilyn**."

### **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> March**

Breakfast today was the traditional 8.00am prior to the 9.00am coach to the hockey. Yet again ABs had 2 games with the same break for lunch. One of the ABs didn't seem to have as much time as after an Umpiring dispute in the 2st game, **Paul Sharratt** decided to show them how to do it, so umpired HAM v Rabat.

### **Rabat 2 Ancient Britons 1**

The pre-match ritual began with the ABs trying to touch their toes. **Jon Beale** bent down but failing to reach his toes said, "Since I have got older, my legs have got longer! – Who else!!

The ABs began full of confidence as Rabat line up with only 10 men; we obviously beat them in the bar last night, BUT GOAL. A poor pass by the ABs is intercepted and Rabat drive into the circle, passing the ball around giving **Richard Boucher** no chance as **Jamie Sciberras** fires home. Not the wanted start but ABs immediately drove straight down to the other end and a sharp shot from **Mike Wingent** hit the post. The rest of the quarter sailed by with neither side in control nor neither side creating a chance.

Rabat began the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter with yet another early attack winning a penalty corner, after forcing a rare stick tackle from skipper **Lee Baron**. An infringement by ABs in the circle resulted in a second attempt but fortunately their final shot slipped wide.

A counter attack by the ABs with several passes between **Jon Beale**, **Brian** and **Peter** gave **Tony** a half chance but the keeper saved. Rabat took a quick "16" and were soon in the ABs half winning another penalty corner, but this time ABs cleared and broke quickly. A **Mike Handley** pass down the right wing found **Tony Taig** in space but his cross avoided all attackers, as the game became end to end. This was soon followed by another great cross from **Mike Handley** which provided an opportunity to get a stick in at the near post; but the Rabat keeper cleared the danger. Another Rabat attack looked to be creating a massive problem but **Allan Sutton** timed his tackle to perfection and snuffed out the problem. ABs tried to control the midfield and following passes between **Robin** and **Paul**, Rabat managed to clear for a long corner. ABs patiently worked the ball into the circle winning a penalty corner. This time **Phil** switched the ball right and as the ball was worked around the circle, the final pass to **John Peirce** saw him touch the ball home. Another attack by the ABs resulted in several appeals for penalty corners but none were given. Rabat were slowly looking more composed and made yet another counter-attacking break while the ABs were still appealing at the other end, but thankfully the whistle went for half time.

ABs began the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with **Richard Turner** and **Mike Handley** combining well up the right hand side, but sadly it didn't come to fruition. ABs kept up the pressure with forwards and the midfield trapping Rabat into their "23" for a full 30 seconds! Excitement reigned on the bench

as **Jon Beale** “streaked” into the Rabat circle onto a pass from **Robin Conway** but the weight of his clothes slowed him down and the Rabat defender won the race to the ball. “Don’t dive” was the cry from **Clive** but **Jon** did; with the predictable outcome. Some fine attacking play by ABs using both wings sadly broke down as the crashed cross field passes went out of play.

“Ouch” another short corner for Rabat which they flicked on to a foot for a second attempt, but this time a great save from **Richard Boucher** saw the ball cleared. Immediately ABs went back on the attack and **Mike Wingent** drove powerfully at the Rabat defence but his shot from a narrow angle was easily saved by the keeper and then cleared. Back came Rabat for another short corner with the same result – a **Richard Boucher** save. Thinking the whistle was for the end of the quarter, Rabat relaxed but ABs didn’t and went charging upfield. Some of the Rabat defence were awake and after repelling the danger, set up a counter attack but **Mike Handley** was alert and a great tackle saved the day as the whistle finally ended the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.

The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter began with a brilliant break by **Mike Wingent** who passed to **Paul Sharratt** who sadly miscontrolled and the chance was gone. Rabat came back on the attack but they were thwarted by another brilliant save by **Richard Boucher**. A superb break by **Tom Ettling** and **Mike Handley** led to another chance for **Paul Sharratt** but he shot just wide. Then tragedy happened as a melee in the circle saw Rabat awarded with a penalty stroke taken by **Matthew Buhagiar** which just eluded **Richard’s** dive. Staunch defending by the ABs sadly couldn’t stop Rabat adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> goal after the ball had hit the post leaving defenders stranded. An impressive display from the ABs against a younger and fitter side saw a 3-1 defeat, even though Rabat has informed me that they thought it was just 2-1.



**Rabat Goalscorers: Jamie Sciberras and Matthew Buhagiar.**

**Goalscorer: John Peirce.**

**Man of the Match: Allan Sutton.**

**Umpires: Paul Brincat and Nathan Galea.**

**Reuter Correspondents: Jon Beale, Richard Turner, Tony Taig and Tom Ettling.**

**HAM Malta 2 Ancient Britons 1**

The ABs took to the field for the last game with the experience of Einstein, the ability of Red Rum and the legs of Nora Batty.

From the outset the ABs were put under the cosh by the younger and fitter opponents and they successfully defended all 4 penalty corners until the last one, when the unsighted Umpire gave a goal but after a discussion between the 2 Umpires, was disallowed for being too high. Sadly for the ABs the joy didn’t last too long as soon afterwards, HAM won another short corner and this time after a scramble **Henry Cachia** scored. Not to be deterred, ABs bounced back very quickly as **Mike Wingent** attacked the HAM defence and calmly waltzed around the back onto

the goal line and then pulled the ball back to **Tony Taig** who slotted home. The game was now finely balanced and the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter was very even.

Changes for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter saw **John Peirce**, **Jon Beale** and **Tom Ettling** on for **Mike Wingent**, **Paul Sharratt** and **Brian Hopkins**. **Phil** made several neat tackles to set the ABs back on the attack. ABs still had to defend and following a misdirected pass HAM almost scored but **Richard Boucher** managed to force the forward into making an error. After a series of passes **Tony Taig** had an opportunity on the right but unfortunately struck his shot just wide. Soon after, a cunning through ball from **Robin** reached **Tony** who subsequently won a penalty corner, but **Phil** decided to shoot himself and the ball went high and wide. **Robin** then tweaked another pass dissecting the HAM defence but it was also too good for the AB attackers as the whistle blew to end the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

Skipper **Lee** made several changes for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with **Hall**, **Conway**, **Reid** and **Ettling** off. The first problem was that the ABs went to the wrong end – elementary mistake, Dr Watson; but once off and running it was up to **Brian** covering well in midfield breaking up the HAM attacks. He was well supported by **Richard Turner** who also put in a dangerous cross forcing HAM to concede a penalty corner, which was easily defended by HAM. They broke quickly and soon forced their own short corner but their flick at goal was well saved by **Richard**. Soon after **Richard** was called on again and managed to deflect the ball wide. ABs tried hard to force HAM backwards and succeeded thanks to the “whippet” **Mike Wingent** who, after a snaking run, won a penalty corner. **Paul Sharratt** was called up to receive and his forceful shot was well saved. HAM came back again but a great saving tackle from Skipper **Lee** gave further inspiration to the team. Just before the whistle went for the end of the quarter HAM had the chance to take the lead but somehow managed to miss an open goal.

The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter began with a couple more changes and a quick through ball to **Mike Wingent** looked promising but sadly no end product this time. Another break from **Mike Wingent** saw him faced by 2 defenders but this time he lost out. Another ABs attack began with **Mike Handley** passing to **Peter Reid**, who in turn passed to **Brian Hopkins**. **Brian** and **Mike Wingent** exchanged passes and succeeded in winning a penalty corner, which was well saved by the HAM keeper. The game was now finely balanced and swung from end to end and HAM won a penalty corner after a very bad AB tackle, (no names this time). **Richard Boucher** calmly watched the ball go wide of his right hand post.

Several AB attacks provided lots of pressure on the HAM defence but none were converted. This duly became worse as HAM “won” a penalty corner after a very clean tackle by **Phil** saw the ball cleared out of the circle. From the resultant corner **Lee** was tripped as HAM scored through **Chris Attard** – not a happy AB team. Soon after the whistle went for the end of the game with ABs sadly having played 5 and lost 5.



**HAM Goalscorer: Henry Cachia and Chris Attard.**

**ABs Goalscorer: Tony Taig.**

**Umpires: Nathan Galea and James Mizzi.**

**Man of the Match: Phil Hall.**

**Reuter Correspondents: Jon Beale, Brian Hopkins, Tom Ettling and Richard Turner.**

As this was the conclusion of the Tournament, it was time for the Award Ceremony, whilst consuming a few beers. It was also time to talk to **Andy Monaghan**, a player for HAM, but from Peterborough.



Once all pleasantries were over, the ABs returned to the coach and went back to the Hotel arriving at approximately 6.15pm. After disembarking two of the ABs came together as **Tom Ettling** tripped but reaching out he was saved by **Karen Daly**, yes I agree it does sound strange but it was where **Tom** put his hand that showed he was up to date and abreast of the times and **Karen** did say he was a handful.

**John Peirce** had suggested a certain bar and after a bath and change, a group duly followed our Chairman. Several decided to try the usual G&T but they had run out of lemon, ice seemed to be at a premium as we had to order extra; and the tonic was flat. Apart from that it was fine, but the group only stayed for the one and then moved on. Looking for better Gin was the decision and after passing a restaurant, where the same pianist from Kings Own Band Club Bar and Restaurant was playing; we walked on and found the "Yard 32 Gin & Tapas Bar" which only had over 180 different Gins and 32 different tonics!!



### **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

After breakfast it was time for a full day at the island of Gozo, so off on the coach for a short trip to the ferry. Queueing was novel, well it wasn't really queueing more like "herding" and once the door was opened to get on the ferry, it was a chase for a seat as it seemed like there were only enough for half of the passengers!

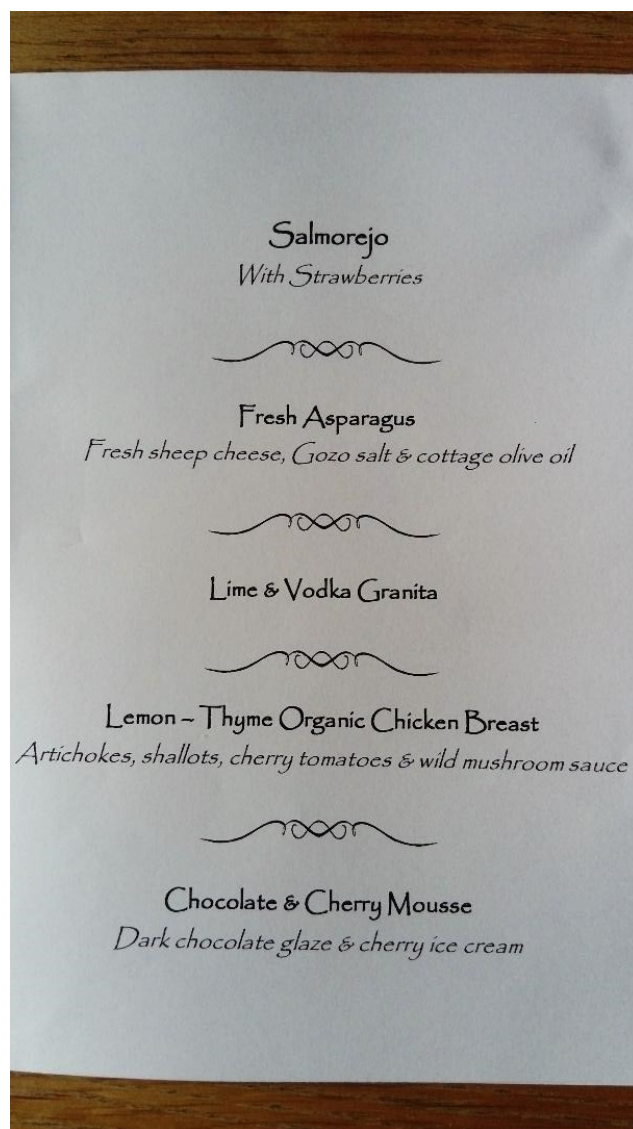
Some of the ABs managed to find an area where they could ensconce; whilst **Clive and JP** were spotted having a little snooze on the boat, creating the line from the Wham hit "Wake me up before you Gozo".



Whilst walking up the steps of a church **Phil** noticed a man sitting at the top with a golden Labrador. **Phil** asked "is it friendly", to which the man replied "Yes, are you?"

We then went to lunch at the Kempinski Hotel at San Lawrenz, a very plush establishment. It was just a pity that the service didn't quite match the 5 star rating. Firstly we had to wait ages before we could get a Wine List but when it arrived **Phil** ordered 1 white and 1 red for about 7 people. Ten minutes later the waiter arrived with 1 glass of red and 1 of white!! Taking them away it then took him 10 minutes to bring the 2 bottles.

Salmorejo is basically a tomato puree but this was with a difference (with strawberries), which didn't actually suit everybody. The rest of the Menu was good and the following picture below shows the dessert.



**Clive Corpus Kendall** was nearly arrested for littering after he lost his hat due to high winds at the Citadel on Island of Gozo.



### CAN ANYBODY SEE **CLIVE'S HAT**

Later in the day after getting off the coach **Paul Sharratt** loses his credit card. After several ABs then got off the coach to search, it was found on the back seat!! **Paul Sharratt** said as **Richard Turner** arrived back at the bar "Oh its **Richard Boucher**", but he left for England 2 days earlier!

Once back at the Hotel some of the ABs then decided to revisit the Wilhena Bar for a few drinks then back to the Pizzeria for a meal – what a mistake. This time it seemed that there was a different Chef as several dishes were wrong. Afterward we adjourned to the Club Bar where the “Port Club” decided to reconvene, and where we were subsequently joined by **Peter & Glynis Reid** for a final nightcap or two.

### Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March

This was a free day so another later breakfast at 9.00am and today **Teri** only had to wait 9 minutes for her poached eggs. Later in the day **Teri** was found to be not quite as awake or alert as she tried to undo her jacket. Sadly she thought she was wearing the jacket with the Velcro fastener, but unfortunately this was incorrect, it was a zip fastener, so the jacket now needs a complete rebuild.

Whilst out and about, **Sandie** apparently went to a Gender Neutral Loo in the Café Teatro, but **Paul Sharratt** took photographic evidence to prove otherwise.

**Richard Turner** had a problem trying to get into the safe but this turned out to be **Mike Wingent's** fault as he had put so many of the free beers inside!

Tonight was the Tour Dinner and when the first course was brought out someone on the next table said “Is this Bruschetta?” **Teri** then said “Who’s having Prosecco?”

**Teri** also stated that her latest favourite song was Lucille after hearing it was about the sole of her shoes –or was it “loose heel”.

**Lee** was listening when **Marilyn** asked the waiter “Do you have decaffeinated Coffee”, **Lee** asked “Does **Jon** know you will be up all night?”

During the meal there was the usual “taking of wine” and this time the **Ladies** were to the fore. Later in the evening **Jenny Taig** treated us all to a “Table Sing-Song” with the Flying Pig Campfire Song, each having to learn a line, difficult for some I know, but eventually Conductress **Jenny** succeeded – SHE DID, she didn’t and didn’t die of a broken rib!

Speeches – First was **Jon Beale** who gave a humorous tribute, in his own inimitable style, to our dear friend and Treasurer **Trevor Davies**. **Phil Hall** then decided that the **Mr Sharratt** deserved recognition, not for his Umpiring, but rather his Mr Angry in the previous game and he was presented with a “Pin”. **Lee Baron** then had to choose his Player of the Tour and this deservedly went to **Peter Reid**.



### Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March

Sadly we missed **Richard Turner** who was catching the local bus to the airport, due to having an earlier flight, even though we were down for an 8.45am breakfast, so had to make a quick phone call to him to say goodbye. Afterwards we had time to spare before departure so went for a walk back into town and up to the Upper Barakka just to admire the view and for **Sandie** to have a last Aperol

Spritz, which sadly wasn't very good as a tad weak. We then went for a last walk around when I heard my Oboist in the distance. Once found it seemed a good idea to sit and have a little snack and a beer.

When back at the Hotel, suitcases packed, it was time to sit around before getting on the bus to the airport, having said our goodbyes to **Tony & Jenny Taig** and **Peter & Glynis Reid** as they were flying back the following day. Our plane was apparently on time, so it was a simple and straightforward flight home. Once landed it was time for final goodbyes as ABs made their final journey home.

**Sandie and Phil** had decided to spend the night at the Premier Inn at Terminal 4 so it was a 10 minute walk along the concourse, our waiter Sujee remembered them and welcomed them back enthusiastically, so then it was time for a meal and beers before shuteye.

**Our thanks to Julia for her patience and understanding in organising a most enjoyable Tour.**

**My "Thanks" to Lee Baron and Richard Boucher for their Captaincy.**

**I sincerely hope that you all enjoyed your time in Malta.**

MAN OF THE MATCH RECORDS					SCORE	
DATE	PLAYER	OPPONENTS	VENUE	TOWN	F	A
13/03/18	Jon Beale	HAM Malta	Kordin	Paola	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
17/03/18	Mike Wingent Richard Boucher	HAM Malta	Kordin	Paola	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
17/03/18	Mike Wingent Mike Handley	Rabat	Kordin	Paola	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
18/03/18	Allan Sutton	Rabat	Kordin	Paola	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
18/03/18	Phil Hall	HAM Malta	Kordin	Paola	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Player of the Tour - Peter Reid :: Hotshot of the Tour - Tony Taig</b>						

Attendees were Trevor & Angela Davies, Richard & Diane Boucher, John Peirce, Jon & Marilyn Beale, Lee & Teri Baron, Tom & Chris Ettling, Julia Greenhough, Robin & Ruth Conway, Charles & Anne Cooper, Paul Sharratt & Karen Daly, Peter & Glynis Reid, Allan & Pam Sutton, Mike Wingent, Mike & Lou Handley, Tony & Jenny Taig, Phil & Sandie Hall, Brian & Hazel Hopkins, Clive Kendall and Richard Turner.

**Pictures courtesy of Brian Hopkins, Richard Turner, Tom Ettling, Phil Hall and Richard & Diane Boucher.**

# Practice Game v HAM

## Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### 1 - 4



**ABs and HAM**



**Lee giving Team Talk**



**Skipper in action**



**Where is everybody?**



**Got this**



**He pushed me**



**Mine, no Mine !!**



**Yours Brian !!**



**Oh dear, another goal**



**And another**



**And another**



**Tony gets one back**



**Always friends after game**



**I am truly knackered**

# GAME 1 v HAM

## Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### 0 - 1



**ABs and HAM**



**C'mon, catch me**



**Skipper in action**



**We are ready**



**Don't worry, I've got it**



**Mike concentrating**



**Have a rest Clive**



**El Presidente in control?**



**Textbook Mr Conway**



**One More Beer please**



# GAME 3 v RABAT

## Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### 1 - 2



**ABs and RABAT**



**I'm over the halfway line**



**So am I, Mike**



**An AB shot at goal**



**Great save from Richard**



**Where are you all !**



**John Peirce vision**



**American Football block**



**Richard assessing options**



**Robin on the break**



**Robin bursting through**



**GOAL !!!**



**Wrong deodorant JP**



**Time for a beer or two**



**Skipper & Top Goalscorer**

# GAME 3 v RABAT

## Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### 1 - 2



**ABs and RABAT**



**Skipper Richard**



**Which way are we going**



**Oh No, they score**



**Get off, it's mine**



**Great save Pres**



**Short corner to Phil**



**Slip left to Robin**



**Pass to JP, who scores**



**Richard showing his pace**



**Didn't touch him, Umpire**



**Who remembers the bully**



**Get up you two**



**ABs and the WAGS**



# GAME 4 v HAM

## Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### 1 - 2



**ABs prepare for battle**



**Damn, missed it - Goal**



**Yet another bully off**



**Mike to Tony**



**Tony steadies himself**



**Tony scores - GOOALLL**



**Double pronged defence**



**Just watch and learn**



**He tripped me Umpire**



**This is how you do it**



**Reverse stick, bye bye**



**Sticks!!!!**



