

Ancient Britons Tour of South America- PART 1.

On a cool November day, Saturday 9th of November 2013 to be precise, 32 Ancient Britons, old and older assembled at Terminal 5 Heathrow ready for 'the tour'. Some of us had followed the Captains instructions and were wearing the official uniform of blazer, grey trousers and tie. Others had turned up in comfortable clothing just right for a 14 hour flight. Come on! It's just not British to be comfortable on a plane.

Our first major problem was when we came to check in, where Julia had negotiated an extra bag allowance with none other than Richard TAMS Marketing & Sales director from British Airways. Somewhat surprisingly, Kimberley, the New Zealand girl on the check-out desk had never heard of him and wasn't impressed with the email being waved in her face. But she did check with her colleague, Silke, from Germany and her supervisor Abdul, who was on attachment from Easy Jet. They also had never heard of this man purporting to be a director. So we had a Mexican standoff until Robin and Mervyn decided they were going to upgrade, so were able to take the extra couple of bags.

So onto the flight and 6 films later we landed in Buenos Aires international airport to be met by Dario, our Guide and 30 degree heat with some warm rain.

10 November 2013

That evening we had our first game of hockey, so some of us decided that we should take a couple of hours nap if possible. Others had followed our guide's careful instructions about changing money. Basically, on the streets there were dozens of men shouting "Cambio Cambio". If you went with these men they would give you a much higher exchange rate than the 'official' exchange rate, which was about 5.5 pesos to a dollar. Frank Colwill decided to avail himself of this service and immediately went and bought a bottle of water. Sadly the shopkeeper refused to accept the Mexican pesos that Frank had swapped his dollars for, (instead of the Argentinian ones).

The match against San Martin turned out to be our most successful in terms of result. A 4-0 victory played in high humidity. The après match was extremely successful also, with us comfortably outscoring our generous hosts in the amount of barbecued beef we ate and the astonishing amount of fluid replenishment we managed. The huge steaks were cooked on massive barbeques and we then moved onto

some tango dancing from the professional couple Alan and Pamela Sutton.



Left to right:-

The steaks. Tony telling some jokes. Tim's reaction to the jokes.



Photo 1. Tony walks off just prior to the start of the first match, wondering how he is going to defeat their 18 men. Fortunately, he hasn't noticed Dudley engaging several of them in conversation. This went on for many minutes and meant we were able to score twice before the 6 opposition members who were politely listening to Dudley realised what was happening.

Photo 2. One for the hockey purists - Frank demonstrating the correct way to hold a hockey stick.

Photo 3. After his MOTM (Man of the Match) performance Frank goes off to gain his well-deserved reward from wife Jackie. For reasons of good taste it was not considered advisable to show the next few photographs.

There was no recipient of 'the waistcoat' although there were several strong contenders at this early stage.

11 November 2013

The AB's descended at various times in the morning for the breakfast feeding frenzy. There were a few stiff bodies, but no real injuries at this stage. Most people went out for a walk into Buenos Aires, a beautiful vibrant, atmospheric city. Later that afternoon we all met up to go to the San Fernando club. This was a really tough game against young skilful opposition. After going 4 - 1 down with only a few minutes left, some real power play from the ABs saw us salvage an honourable 4 - 4 draw.

The après match hospitality was again very good and the team departed the club, ready for their beds.

There were a couple of notable incidents that are worth mentioning. The first, when Tony announced the squad, asking a couple of players to stand down, as we had 18 players instead of the accepted 16. Bob JAMESON was one of the 2. Imagine everybody's surprise when halfway through the first half, there was Bob on the pitch. Sandra calls it "selective deafness".

The second unusual event was when we were getting changed. We all got changed and then left our kit in the changing room. After the match, the whole team went and picked our kit up and then walked about 400 metres to another changing room. When we got to the new changing room Clive Kendall could be heard asking "who's got my kit?" (Tony was later heard explaining to Clive that even vice-captains have to carry their own kit occasionally).

The final incident was as we were leaving the club, when Dudley was the victim of a horrendous tackle that sent him crashing to the floor. As we all looked for the offender, Dudley sheepishly admitted he had tripped over one of the oppositions stick bags!

The first recipient of the waistcoat was John Peirce for various transgressions outlined by Tony, both on and off the field. Although John maintained the allegations were unfounded, I witnessed him falling over on at least 2 occasions, as well as missing an open goal, so perhaps it was deserved.



Photo 1. The Ombu tree. A massive native of South America that can be seen in the parks that abound in Buenos Aires.

Photo 2. Mervyn, a massive native of Bath who could be seen at various countries in South America during November 2013.

Photo 3. Trevor during his MOTM performance. The camera was unable to focus on Robin, because he was moving so fast.

12 November 2013

After coping with the early bun fight at breakfast, we departed the hotel with Dario to see the sights of Buenos Aires. The sheer scale of the City was astounding and we saw some interesting sights. At one point we stopped at a cemetery in the middle of Buenos Aires and saw the tomb of Eva Peron. We will definitely going to the musical now we know a bit more about her.

We also went to an area called Caminito, which is the touristy part of a place called Boca. As in Boca Juniors, who Maradona played for. It was a real atmospheric place with argentine tango dancers and live music at every outdoor restaurant and a few of us vowed to go back there when we had more time a couple of weeks later.

The hockey was an unusual event in that we played a side with some senior players and only 10 men to start with. Sure, by the end of the game they had 16 players of very good ability who almost overturned our 5 goals but not quite, we held out for a 5 - 4 victory.

The game was notable for the amazing amount of substitutions Tony managed to apply, plus the unusual positions he asked people to play. By the end of the match everybody was shouting at each other and Russ managed 2 things of distinction. The first was throwing his stick a considerable distance, possibly a world record and the second more positive one was being awarded MOTM.

Once again the hospitality was superb at the club, which was reminiscent of an English pub / club (well we were playing the Hurling Club) and the recipient of the waistcoat was an easy choice for John. Mervyn did make a strong bid for the waistcoat by letting an Argentinian called Paddy score from about an inch from the by-line, but it had to go to the skipper. No, it wasn't for the ridiculous amount of unusual substitutions Tony did, it was for a much more fundamental reason, (which Tony tried to keep quiet). Tony forgot his astro turf trainers.

So after a gigantic meal of empanadas and chicken, washed down with Stella and Malbec, a tired group of Ancient Britons went back to their temporary home of Hotel Dolmen.



Photo 1. Clive demonstrates how many cigarettes he intends to smoke between that point and the bus. (50 metres away)

Photo 2. Paul S takes some much needed relief in one of the City Centre parks.

Photo 3. German, Raghwir, Jasminder and Balbir, look on in admiration at Paul's performance

13 November 2013

This was a visit to Los Patricios, a farm where people still practice the skills of the Gaucho. It was an interesting ride out to the farm, because the AB'S were treated to a lecture by Farmer Frank on the crops being grown in the fields, either side of the road. The sheer scale of the fields were incredible though. They stretched on and on, and the countryside was so flat, you could literally see for miles.

On our arrival at Los Patricios, we were treated to Clive exiting the bus at speed and almost doing himself a serious injury. Julia could be heard suggesting to him that he should use the steps, the same as everybody else.

We then had a fantastic display of horsemanship by the gauchos, plus we saw how they trained the young horses. Some brave people then rode the same horses the gauchos had been galloping on, whilst the more refined amongst us, took a carriage ride around the grounds.

We then went to the swimming pool for a game of mixed water polo (with a little ball). Oh dear reader, if I could only convey to you the filthy foul, sometimes almost disgusting tackles that went on. Mainly, it must be said, by Jackie Woodward, Pam Sutton and Jackie Colwill. A decent umpire would have sent them off, but all Tony did was try and equalise the scores. It ended up 18 - 5 to the men. The highlight of the game was when Balbir got told off for dribbling with the ball, (true, he was).

After all that exercise, in the words of true cowboys, we went "back to the ranch" for a sumptuous barbeque plus some folk dancing.

We returned from the ranch preparing to pack and move on for our first internal flight. So a quiet night by most, although a late night drinking club appeared to be building some strong foundations, with John, Clive, Tim, Paul S and Karen occasionally weighing in with the odd bottle here and there.



Photo 1. Julia and Karen go for the sedate option of touring the ranch.

Photo 2. Sue gets grabbed by a gaucho. What is Balbir doing with his left hand as he walks past Sue's derriere?

Photo 3. Several ABs jump in the pool together. The resultant splash, not only removed the water out of the pool, but also flooded several hundred acres of fertile grassland.

14 November 2013

A bit of a travelling day where we flew from a local airport up to Iguazu, (pronounced Igwassu) where we ensconced ourselves at the Iguazu Grand Hotel and Casino. There we were treated to an extraordinary display of slow waiting skills by the staff. They are all obviously trained at the same Argentinian school of extremely slow waiters. The timed record was 45 minutes for a round of 4 drinks, which included 4 visits back to the bar, to remind the waiter where we were sitting.

15 November 2013

Iguazu Falls.

On the hottest day of the tour so far, Robin was awarded the waistcoat for accidentally exposing his bottom to a group of admiring ladies as he rose majestically out of the swimming pool at Los Patricios, leaving his trunks behind, (sadly there are no photos available of this performance, just the memories).

The Falls themselves are absolutely spectacular and it is only when you actually see them, you appreciate the splendour. Photographs cannot do them justice. It was also quite strange walking to them along paths, where exotic birds were flying, or monkeys climbing in the trees above. We had 2 casualties during the day. The first was Anne falling over, as she chased a coatimundi (a member of the racoon family). Although Ann reacted with the speed of a striking cobra, when the pesky creature stole her sandwiches, she unfortunately stumbled, cutting her leg. Dudley told me she was very brave at the Doctors and she is ok now.

The second was when Ruth was looking up at the vultures overhead and a gust of wind took her beloved Tilley hat into the wide waters of the Iguassu river a tragic loss.

Overall, this was an incredible experience and a fantastic day.



Photo 1. Tim finds a tree that is named after him (*Enterolobium contortisiliquum*, or 'Timbo' for short).

Photo 2. Ruth proudly wearing her Tilley hat (fortunately insured).

Photo 3. The Tilley hat proudly floating down the river minus Ruth underneath it, living up to the manufacturers boast that it floats.

16 November 2013

Argentina into Brazil.

Overnight it appeared that Dudley had accidentally left his bag in the hotel restaurant area which contained his valuables. Fortunately the staff had picked up the bag and placed it in reception waiting for the rightful owner to come and claim it.

Sadly for the majority, Dudley got to reception before anyone else and an ever growing number of Ancient Britons were treated to the spectacle of Dudley explaining to all 3 Reception staff how he could prove that the bag and contents were his. All the poor staff wanted to do was to give the man his property back, but no. Dudley started by bringing out photos of him over the years to compare with his passport photo. He then moved onto handwriting samples and types of cash he had on his person, which could be compared to the types of cash he had in the bag. By this stage, quite a queue had formed, so just before Dudley provided a voluntary DNA sample together with a set of fingerprints and a retina scan, we were able to distract a couple of the staff and pay our bills.

During the long wait on the coach, waiting for Customs, there were several contenders for the waistcoat. Frank and Mervyn, who seemed to be having a competition to see who could be the first to eat a ton of steak; German for telling a series of terrible jokes, (including the 5 rupee one) and Balbir, for laughing hysterically at every one of German's jokes,

even though he must have heard them hundreds of times. But the clear winner was Dudley for his incredible performance at Reception.

The rest of the day would have been horrendous if there had just been a couple of you travelling on a 'normal' holiday. As it was, the 2 hour wait at Customs led to us cutting short our visit to the Brazilian side of Iguassu. We rushed to the airport to find there were no flights for us to go to Rio. You can imagine how the poor telephone and keyboard must have suffered as Julia moved into full gear. How we laughed!

Anyway, with a delay of only a few hours we got onto the plane and landed in Rio a couple of hours later. We arrived at the hotel Rio Pestana Atlantico on Copacabana beach, where the thoughtful staff had some Pisco sours waiting for us. Due to our late arrival, we were unable to see the scheduled "Rio by night", so we wandered into Copacabana on the night and had a few well deserved refreshments before hitting the sack.



Photo 1. Dudley and Ann, none the worse for wear, the morning after the night before. (Hospital visit, losing property, etcera, etcera).

Photo 2. Iguassu Falls. Brazilian side. Unbelievable.

Photo 3. Karen, Clive and Woody test the beer at Iguassu Airport.

17 November 2013

On a warm but overcast day we started with a brief tour of Rio and then onto Christ the Redeemer statue. On the way we stopped at the Maracana, or to give it its correct name Estado Mario Filho, the home of Brazilian football. Robin was presented with a birthday card and a baseball hat with Boca Juniors on it, (which he quickly placed in a bag considering where he was).

After a long funicular ride up to the top of Corcovado hill which rises 2,300 feet, we arrived to find thick dense fog. Every so often though, a gust of wind would reveal the 100 foot high statue, almost as a ghostly apparition. It was still pretty special and we marvelled that it was built in the 1920's and completed in 1931.

The afternoon should have seen us taking on a Brazilian hockey team, but they were unable to raise a team, so the ABs did their own thing.

Robin and Ruth met up with Ruth's sister and husband and Robin went to see a football match at the Maracana. He said the fans were vocal, passionate and a mixture of male, female, young and old. It was a fantastic experience and lacked the aggression and thuggery seen at English games.

The evening was spent enjoying a Brazilian barbeque and again the ABs were left wondering whether there was actually a South American school of slow waiters, as opposed to an Argentinian one as we initially thought. The food was good though and we had a few spicy variations which satisfied even the palate of German.



Photo 1. Frank loitering, as a “handsome” man dressed as a sailor minces past.

Photo 2. Three Amigos discussing England's chance of playing at the stadium, (not good).

Photo 3. “It's behind you” Patrick and Julia search for the 635 ton, 100 foot statue.

18 November 2013

Today was when we visited Sugar Loaf Mountain, and what a spectacular day it was. A much clearer day sent the temperatures rocketing upwards as we went up the mountain in the cable car.

Bob had quite rightly been awarded the waistcoat by Dudley for having the temerity to stand up in the coach and attempt to justify why he found it necessary to go into the ladies toilets at the Brazilian restaurant the previous evening. Bob explained that he was approached by a poor young female, (he knew she was poor, because she could hardly afford any clothes). This said female engaged Bob in conversation and she wanted to show him the ladies toilet (perhaps there was a leak or something). Bob, being the perfect gentleman obliged and strangely enough was joined by several other Ancient Britons to witness what went on. Anyway, cutting a long story short, she apparently still has

Bob's wallet! So instead of doing a long handover speech, all Dudley had to do was help Bob on with the waistcoat, he being the author of his own misfortune.

The views from Sugar Loaf Mountain were spectacular and we then went via the Cathedral to an eating establishment, where we feasted royally.

In the afternoon, the majority of the ABs adjourned to Copacabana beach where we had an impromptu game of sand hockey. Once again the ladies proved themselves as dirty at this game as they were in the swimming pool with Karen and Pam being particularly sneaky. Following a short game of Frisbee, a couple of phone calls were made to Greenpeace to obtain permission for some of the Ancient Britons to go into the water which they duly did, getting bowled over by massive waves.

Later on, some of the party went and watched some 5 a side floodlit beach football. No wonder the Brazilians have such fantastic skill and stamina, they hone and refine it on the beach from when they are old enough to walk.



Photo 1. Note the serious faces in the cable car. We had just been advised that there was a weight limit.

Photo 2. The view from the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain.

Photo 3. The Brazilians are also good at building sandcastles on Copacabana beach.

Ancient Britons Tour of South America- PART 2.

19 November 2013

This was another travel day with a 5 hour flight from Rio to Santiago in Chile. However during the coach journey to the airport, Bob was able to liven up the proceedings by passing the waistcoat on. In the brief time he had the jacket, he was able to identify 3 strong contenders. He started off by reprimanding Frank for conduct unbecoming of an Ancient Briton. Frank allegedly 'accidentally' pushed Brenda off the settee at a late night party in Room 915. Fortunately, Brenda avoided serious injury

by landing squarely in Clive's lap who happened to be in the right place at the right time, (apparently it put a smile on both their faces anyway).

John was again nominated, just for the sheer amount of showers he had, all before 11.30 am. Apparently, he got up, had a shower, gone for a walk. He came back and had another shower, then went for some photos on Copacabana beach, came back sweaty (apparently) and had his final shower of the morning. It was suggested that was probably a cold one.

But the winner and deserved recipient of the waistcoat was Paul Sharratt, for ungentlemanly conduct in the previously mentioned sand hockey match on Copacabana beach. At one point he managed to foul Jackie W, Brenda and Pam simultaneously which ended up in them forming a writhing mass of sweaty bodies!!

Anyway following the normal Airport / Immigration / Customs, arriving about 6.00 pm, we were met by our tour guide Jose (no way) who introduced us to the driver (Hose B) and travelled to the Grand Hyatt hotel, easily the best Hotel of the lot. Although the weather was hot, it was a dry heat which lacked the humidity of Rio. The traffic was pretty bad around the City Centre, which should have been a bit of a warning to us about leaving for matches on time, but that is yet to come.

After checking in at the hotel most of the ABs descended to a nearby restaurant for sustenance and liquid refreshment. We then started to appreciate the beautiful Sauvignon Blanc that Chile is rightly famed for.



Photo 1. John making the most of his photo opportunities on Copacabana beach, perhaps explaining why he needed so many showers that morning.

Photo 2. Paul proudly wearing the waistcoat near a beautiful Jacaranda tree in Santiago.

Photo 3. The Ceibo tree. Now this was really confusing for us Ancient Britons. Our guide in Argentina, Dario told us the Jacaranda tree was the national tree of Argentina. Our guide in Chile, Jose, told us the

Jacaranda tree was the national tree of Chile and that the Ceibo was the national tree of Argentina. He also stated it was called the Devil tree. What we did manage to work out, was that Chileans and Argentinians have possibly not got the best of relations. For those of you who are still remotely interested in this story, the Ceibo is the national tree of Argentina and the Monkey Puzzle tree is the national tree of Chile. The more educated of us will know it as *Araucaria araucana*. The Jacaranda is not the national tree of either Country. Now you know.

20 November 2013

The following morning was started by a civilised breakfast, with waiters who brought us coffee and tea and fruit juice when requested, most reassuring. We then went on a short tour of Santiago and learnt that there were many good miners in Chile.

We then went to a local Lapis Lazuli factory which had a very tight driveway. As the ABs began the song of "For he's a jolly good driver", CRUNCH. Hose B, (the driver) had managed to steer us into a small, but deceptively solid tree branch, which smashed one of the passenger windows. So we then had a mass evacuation with 2 things of note. The first was the alacrity that Balbir managed in disembarking the bus and the second was Tim who had been put in charge of emptying the bus, but somehow forgot Paul Sharratt's sunglasses, the ones he had made especially for Copacabana beach, with a wraparound black reflective glass. The ones where you couldn't see his eyes.

Later that day, we had the first of our hockey matches, with the coach supposedly picking us up at 18.30 hours. Right in the middle of rush hour. Anyway, the coach arrived at 19.15 hours and we eventually got to the pitch to play the Manquéhue club (pronounced Mankayway Tony) We were given a right run-around by a very high quality side and lost 5-1. Robin confidently thought he had scored the consolation goal, only for Richard to explain that he had felt it necessary to run and hit the ball the last 3 inches into the goal.

The après match hospitality was again wonderful with a further chance to sample some stunning Chilean Sauvignon Blanc.

Mervyn was MOTM for a fantastic series of saves that kept the score down to single figures.

Paul stood up for his amusing 'handover the waistcoat speech' and suggested that several members deserved the waistcoat with spurious examples of their misdeeds. But there was one misdeed that everybody

witnessed which fully deserved the waistcoat. That was the unseemly haste that Balbir exited the coach when the window went in. As Paul said, "What happened to the long held tradition of women and children first?" Anyway, Balbir was so happy to receive the waistcoat, he got Jasminder up on stage and they gave us a quick Bhangra dance to the delight of our hosts.



Photo 1. Who put that tree there?

Photo 2. Paul ponders life without his sunglasses.

Photo 3. German tells the 5 rupee joke one more time, just in case somebody somewhere has never heard it. Note Farmer and Jackie are pretending to be asleep so as not to encourage him.

21 November 2013

This was a day trip to the City of Valparaiso and everyone was there bright and on time for the 9.30 am start. Everybody that is except for John, Tim and Clive. As they approached the coach, they saw Balbir with a big grin on his face already stripping the waistcoat off ready to hand it on. After a lot of bumping and jostling, Clive was the last one on, but only because he had to stop and put his cigarette out. So the waistcoat passed on to Clive, who probably deserved it under the totting up procedure anyway.

So off we went in a smaller and less luxurious coach through the Casablanca valley where they make all that beautiful wine. We thought we had got lost when we saw the signs for Casablanca, but not even Hose B could have got us onto the wrong continent. Could he?

Jackie Woodward celebrated her birthday today, which gave Tony the opportunity to give her a little present, a medium sized speech and a big kiss.

We arrived at Valparaiso to find it a multi coloured city of a million people who have built their corrugated iron houses into the hillside. An amazing sight on a huge scale. We also found out that the area is subject to

earthquakes and tsunamis and the town actually has a 'practice' Tsunami alert twice a year.

After a pleasant walk and tour we made our way to a fish restaurant (above the Tsunami line). There we were treated to a sumptuous feast, with fantastic Sauvignon Blanc, which just kept coming. Eventually we got to the sweets, but few of us had any room left. Except Mervyn.

We then made our sleepy way back to Santiago via Vina Del Mar where we saw seals and some old statues. Real statues, not Ancient Britons resting. The rest of the late afternoon and evening was spent catching up on sleep or drinking, depending on how everybody felt.



Photo 1. "Of all the fish joints, in all the towns, in all the world, she walks into mine"

Photo 2. Tiny Tim and Little John.

Photo 3. Words alone cannot describe the scene here. You will just have to make it up sorry.

22 November 2013

Breakfast was quite an unusual event this morning as Dudley chose the moment to spill his cereal in the restaurant. The waitress came out to clear up the mess but was stopped by a determined Dudley who wrestled the cloth off her and cleared it up himself. It was certainly quite an interesting spectacle watching Dudley and the waitress wrestling for ownership of the cloth.

This was a rest / free day where people did their own thing. Tony, Mervyn, Patrick, Woody, Trevor, Robin and Paul (the last 2 accompanied by their partners) went and played golf. Paul and Robin came out on top having brutally thrashed Trevor and Woody 6 and 4.

The 3 ball was much more gentlemanly. They declined to say who had won and didn't even declare their scores maintaining they had accidentally lost them.

The day was finished with various people drinking and eating in and around the hotel and preparing for the next hockey match.



Photo 1. “Ooy Robin, there’s a piece of s**t on the end of your club”
“No, Not that end”.

Photo 2. The only birdie Trevor and Woody saw that day.

Photo 3. After all that golf, the boys sat down to a light snack.

23 November 2013

This was a relaxing day spent enjoying the swimming pool or the retail therapy that abounded in Santiago.

However, the evening match was against Sport Frances and wow, were they good! They were also very young and ran and passed the legs off us. We lost 8-1 and Woody got the MOTM for his energetic performance.

Clive gave an amusing handover speech, passing the waistcoat onto Mervyn for not only managing to eat several sweets at the fish restaurant, but at the same time, accidentally eating the Captain’s sweet in his feeding frenzy.



Photo 1. Another one for the hockey purists. Note Bob’s left elbow. His hard bony, excruciatingly painful elbow in the liver / kidney region of the opposition’s oldest player.

Photo 2. Bob can’t bear to watch.

Photo 3. Mervyn demonstrates the Tardis-like quality of the waistcoat. Sue applauds the manufacturer.

24 November 2013

This was a mid-morning match in Chile in the middle of November in 30 degree heat and the 6th and final match of our wonderful tour. We were determined to do better against the Prince of Wales club, a really nice up market club. We were really pleased that at least some of the opposition looked to be a similar age to us. A hard fought game led to a 3-2 defeat and the following immortal commentary. “Bob Jameson, to Alan Sutton, Alan to Dudley, Dudley to John Peirce ...GOOOOOOOOAAAAAALLLLL”. The ABs second goal was similar but went like this. “Paul SHARRATT, to Paul SHARRATT, to Paul SHARRATT, John Peirce GOOOOAAAALLLLL”. Anyway an excellent game to close our account in South America.

We then retired for another feast of food and drink and Robin got MOTM. Mervyn made his presentation of the waistcoat to German, for an appalling series of jokes that stretched the length of the holiday.



Photo 1. John Peirce...GOOOOOOOOAAAAAALLLLL.

Photo 2. German tries to explain that his jokes really are very funny and he didn't deserve the waistcoat.

Photo 3. Richard did take an awful lot of photos, but this looks like he is trying to eat Ann's camera in this picture.

25 November 2013

This was another travelling day going from mid Chile to lower down Chile. On the bus to the airport, German gave his handover speech in Punjabi. Fortunately Robin was there to explain it all. There were 3 main candidates and Trevor was nominated for firstly receiving no punishment at all for oversleeping and secondly for being a co-defendant in the relocation of omelettes at breakfast time. Farmer Frank was also nominated for holding the stick the wrong way round and chatting up women in every single country we had visited. But the winner of the waistcoat in German's opinion was Russ. This obviously shocked a few people because Russ's behaviour had been exemplary

(according to Angela). German went on to explain that he was a supporter of fiscal profligacy as far as the kitty was concerned. So for being far too fiscally prudent with the kitty, the waistcoat went to Russ.

Anyway, onto the new destination, Puerto Montt about 700 miles down the coast and from there a short bus ride to Puerto Varas. Brrr!! The first thing we noticed was the difference in temperature, having dropped from mid-80's to mid-60's. But when we got to the hotel, the temperature was forgotten with the spectacular view from the front. We had beautiful clear sky, a lake and in the distance a snow topped volcano. Tony took a photograph that did it justice reproduced below.

That evening people did their own thing, some eating in the hotel, but that wily couple Paul and Karen had somehow 'discovered' a restaurant attached to a butchers and about 10 of the party went there to eat their fill of fresh steak, just for a change, plus a few beers and Sauvignon Blanc of course.

Back to the hotel for a few more beers and sun downers and then to bed.





Photo 1. We say goodbye to the 40' Christmas tree in Santiago.

Photo 2. The streets of Puerto Varas.

Photo 3. The view from the front of the hotel (Great photo from Tony).

26 November 2013

This was a day where most of the group went up a volcano, or penguin viewing in Russ and Angela's case, or fishing in Mervyn and Frank's case. The trip to the volcano was pretty impressive, with the group travelling by coach to the first level where the cable cars began and 2 cable car rides to just above the snow line. There we had incredible views of the Andes, but a stern warning from our guide not to go wandering off from the path. As he said, "32 people who had started the climb to the top over the years have never come down again and their bodies have never been found". It didn't stop some ABs from throwing snowballs though.

After a thoroughly good day, the group returned to the Hotel where people did their own thing. Some of the group managed to find a Cuban restaurant, where the grateful owner dished out Havana cigars at the end of the evening.

There was a mass get together at the end of the night, where the late night club had set up shop, preparing themselves for the end of tour spectacular the following evening.



Photo 1. “Hey Dudley, I can see your house from here”.

Photo 2. Woody and Jackie, show they were prepared for the cold.

Photo 3. The Carpenters song. “I’m on the top of the world looking down on creation”.

27 November 2013

This was a semi free day, but there were some important dress rehearsals for the ladies prior to the surprise “spectacular spectacular”. So, the ABs wandered around Puerto Varas, shopping or relaxing mentally and physically preparing themselves for the end of tour dinner.

There was one important rematch that took place, when Trevor and Woody took on Paul and Robin for the grudge golf rematch. It was a totally different game this time and everything seemed to favour Trevor and Woody. So this time they only lost 4 + 2 (instead of 6 + 4).

So onto the end of tour dinner and we soon realised that either Russ had loosened the purse strings, or German had actually cut them as the end of tour dinner commenced, judging from the copious amounts of alcoholic beverages sunk by the thirsty ABs.

After the feeding frenzy, we all retired to the basement for the West End production, plus a few speeches and presentations.

Tony made his outgoing Captain speech stating he had played on most of the continents in the world. (Just Atlantis and the Moon left now

Tony). The Sharpshooter Award went to Paul Sharratt. (Frank reckons it should have been the Goal Hanging award). Player of the Tour went to Woody for his fantastic all round contribution. We had an impromptu heartfelt speech from German, one from Julia, which prompted a hearty round of applause for her energy and commitment to the AB cause and finally, an amusing 'handing over the waistcoat speech' from Russ who felt that Frank was the worthy winner.

The ladies gave us a rendition of Ancient music for Ancient Britons with a modern twist and interesting lyrics, which made several of the men immediately phone their credit card companies, to find out just how much their wives had actually spent over the course of the holiday.

Following the hilarious sing song, the ladies were then somewhat surprised to see 4 judges step up to mark their performance. Bruno Sharratt, Darcy Denison, Bob Goodman and German Revel-Horwood. There was almost "a disaster darling" when German scored the ladies a 2, but swiftly realised his mistake and gave them the first 10 of the evening.

So the evening passed in a blur, but being as we had to leave the hotel at 08.30 hours the following morning, everybody was tucked up in bed by midnight. And yes! There is such a thing as the tooth fairy AND Father Christmas.



Photo 1. Birdies abound yet again for those golfers.

Photo 2. “Pisco sours” soothe those first night nerves for Brenda, Jackie W, Pam and Jackie C.

Photo 3. Sandra Gershwin Hammerstein-Webber Jameson directs “the Chilean play”.

Photo 4. Darcy Denison performs his own version of allongé although it was meant to be gargouillade.

28 November 2013

This was a travel day and when we say day, it really was all day and into the early hours of the next day. But we wouldn't have missed it for anything. It was a spectacular journey by coach and boat and eventually plane that took us from Puerto Varas over the Andes and the border back into Argentina and eventually back up to Buenos Aires. One of the highlights was getting into a 4 wheel drive bus for the journey over the Andes from Chile into Argentina. According to our guide, the route stays open 365 days of the year. You can only imagine what it would be like in the snow.



Photo 1. Raghwir has a little rest waiting for the bus.

Photo 2. Richard has a bigger little rest.

Photo 3. The border crossing from Chile into Argentina.

29 November 2013

We duly arrived back at Hotel Dolmen, Buenos Aires at about 3.30 am (after almost 24 hours of travel). This was unfortunate for the people who went to the market at 7.00 am. They did state though that it was an amazing sight and it dwarfed the markets in England.

The rest of the party got up towards the end of breakfast and had a leisurely morning.

For the rest of the day, people wandered around Buenos Aires. Some people went to pick their hand made leather suits / hats / jackets up and

a few intrepid souls went to a tango lesson at a club and reckoned they could now do the basic 8 steps.

Now we understood a bit more about the 2 exchange rates you got in Argentina, people had a competition to see if you could get anywhere near 11 pesos to the dollar. Frank could be heard trying to get rid of some Mexican pesos.



Photo 1. A garlic seller on the streets of Buenos Aires.

Photo 2. A street party in the evening.

Photo 3. Everybody joins in with these parties, Russ and Angela trip the light fantastic.

30 November 2013

So what do you do on your last day in this beautiful city? Well, some people stayed in to prepare themselves for the tango show at La Ventana night club and some people decided to go back to the atmospheric Caminito area of La Boca we had visited 10 days earlier.

Caminito was jam packed full of people and several of the ABs took the chance to buy some souvenirs. They then went and had an extremely leisurely lunch whilst watching live tango dancing. Some very incriminating pictures were taken which hopefully are subject to the 30 year rule but are unlikely to be of any interest except to midwives, divorce lawyers or gynaecologists.

Prior to going to La Ventana, the ABs met up in the bar, where various glasses of wine were consumed. It was Patrick's birthday today and Patrick was presented with an extremely large map of South America, which we now hope is hanging in pride of place on his bedroom wall? Not even Hose B could get lost with this map.

We then made our way to the club which was a real highlight of our tour. It was world class entertainment with pleasant food and great company. We were fortunate in that Julia had got us front table seats, which meant we were right in the action.

We had various photos taken and at the end of the night Balbir once again decided to show off his Bhangra dancing skills. It hasn't been decided yet on whether they are going to incorporate that particular style into the show.

So the night finished and the ABs returned to the hotel for their last night in South America.



Photo 1. Pam entertains the crowds.

Photo 2. Robin entertains himself.

Photo 3. Paul is too busy watching the action in his reflective sunglasses to pose for the picture.



Photo 1. Patrick gets the massive map.

Photo 2. Tony wins on the 'who has got the most badges competition'.



Photo 1. Balbir has an appreciative audience for his Bhangra fusion Tango routine.

Photo 2. “Ruk Ja O Dil Deewane”. Stop oh mad heart.

Sunday 01 December 2013

We flew back to England arriving on Monday morning.

What a tour! What memories!

Everybody did their bit for making the tour enjoyable, but a special and massive thank you for the organisation and sheer hard work put in by Julia Greenhough for making sure the holiday lived up to everyone's expectations.

It is hoped that everybody enjoys this little reminder of just a few of the memories from this wonderful tour of these beautiful South American countries.

See you in Jersey.

A special “Thank You” to Robin Conway and all those Members who have made contributions in one way or other.