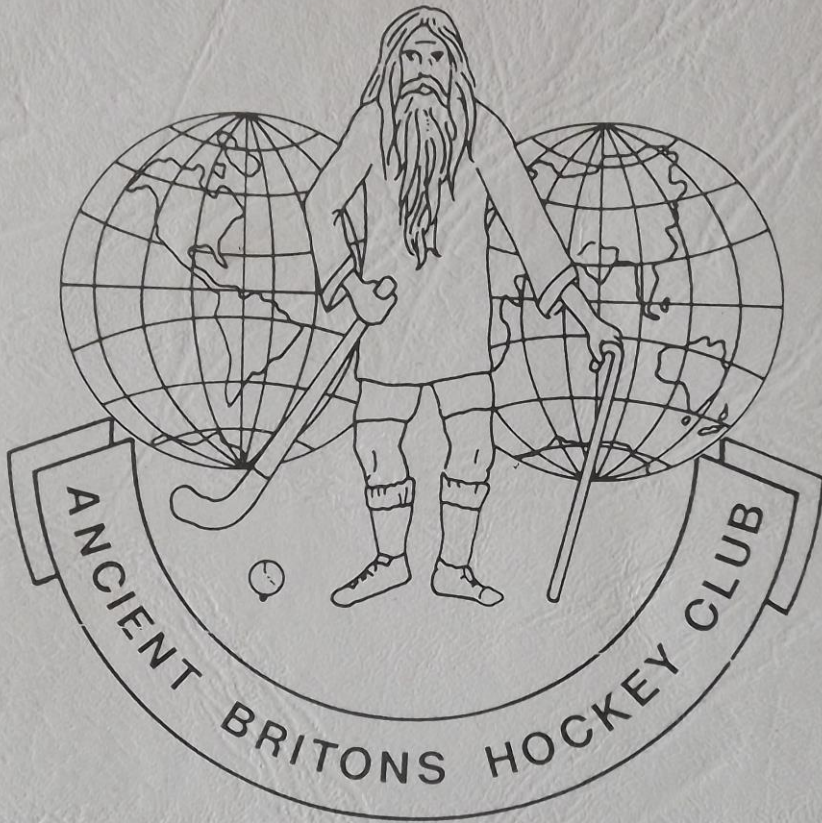


6/1/91

ANCIENT BRITONS



HOCKEY TOUR

TO

CANADA 1991

MAGNIFICENT HOSPITALITY

Our Canadian Tour proved more fabulous than any of us could have dreamed when we were making our preparations. Breathtaking scenery, unsurpassable hospitality, friendliness and companionship - AND we even managed in short breaks from the socialising and sightseeing to win some of our matches!

The achievement of this state of pleasure is due in no small part to our hosts and billets. You have put up with us, fed, watered?, transported, spent time and provided convivial and congenial companionship all across the Nation. We hope that we have been equally good guests and were not too much trouble though as all of us are cleanliving, early to bed teetotallers this seems (to us) unlikely.

To the local co-ordinators of the activities, (including the hockey and cricket!), a special word of appreciation. Without you none of this would have been possible. We are well aware of how much time and effort you gave for us, and to you and your long suffering wives, our sincere thanks.

Our thanks also to Bob Rees and Peter Horn of our travel companies and to Bob Moorhouse for ensuring that the trip went like clockwork. And more especially to Arthur Barber, who shepherded a very unruly bunch day by day with a calmness that successfully hid any problems caused by such a disorderly band.

This narrative records for each day some personal highlights or reminiscences to remind us all of the many varied and enjoyable times we had as we journeyed across Canada, both social and sporting. We hope it does justice to you all and to the localities.

Remember, you know our addresses and telephone numbers. Now come and see **US, please.**

MAY 24

At last the day has arrived for which we have all been waiting and planning since 1989 and our return from our highly successful tour to the Far East and Australia. Muster at Heathrow 11.30am for flight to Toronto. Waiting to see us off were Bob, Eddy, Freda and John Polley. Great to see them but sad also that they, and several other original AB's, not able to make the trip this time. After a dispute as to how sticks were to travel and chatting up by Elaine of a fellow traveller who happened to wander into our group, we boarded the AIR CANADA flight at 1pm. The 6½ hour flight passes pleasantly enough, drinking, eating, and chatting. The film put the majority of AB's to sleep and proved just as boring as the book!

Arrived Toronto at 3.30pm (Canadian Time) and the usual drag through Customs and Immigration, we finally emerged into a warm steamy atmosphere reminiscent of the Far East. Here we were joined by Mary and Alan, Bryan and Phil, and two Aussies Tony Hall and Jim Harvey. Arthur's cousin formed the welcoming party - our first Ookpic.

A 30 minute coach drive and we had at last arrived at our first hotel. We were immediately made to feel at home by porters dressed as Chelsea Pensioners. Tony Hull greeted us here with details of the match and celebrations planned. The foyer of the Delta Chelsea resembled Waterloo Station, but everyone finally dispersed to find rooms on the 20th floor.

6.15pm

A short break and then a meeting of ABs in roof top bar for talk by our leader (Arthur) and Captain (Chris). First kitty declared, first collection by Betty, first cold fizzy beer consumed. Party then split up to find eating houses.

MAY 24 (CONT)

Half favoured steak house, half chinese. The Chinese party followed Alan Filby (owner of the only map) and, on the recommendation of a fellow Air Canada passenger sitting next to Val and Peter, trecked off to find Champion House.

This establishment proved to be excellent, food and hospitality in true Toronto/Chinese style. Fortune cookies were handed out; Mary and Rita won a gift from the Manager (wall scrolls) and Paul won everyone a cup of plum tea.

The steak party learnt about Caesar Salads, found across Canada, and also that the size of meal meant that finishing three courses required a huge appetite.

By this time everyone was feeling the strain so we all staggered back to the hotel about 11pm. This was of course 4am GMT.

The Bransgroves had arrived from Cairns via Honolulu and Los Angeles. 26 hours flying they were somewhere in the hotel reportedly sleeping.

Two or three more wide awake souls disappeared into the bar - Strapper to the fore, but most of the party retired to bed.

(Knackered)

MAY 25

Free day. Recover from flight. Everyone to their own devices. Discover Canadian delicacy - cold hash browns for breakfast. ABs trickle down to breakfast. Colin and Colleen appear. Now only Johns Carrick and Haggett and Sue Harling to join the party.

5pm

Muster in foyer for Taxi to Lamport Stadium. Some delay while correct door is located, then whilst Taxi driver decides if he knows the way, also on arriving at the ground just where the entrance was and whether they would let us all in. Met by fit, young looking veterans side. Further delay to start of game whilst West Indian (Toronto Division) cup Final takes place. Lady referee better looking than either of ours. Joined excited spectators (amidst empty tinnies and popcorn). Teams eventually assembled on pitch for photographs and exchange of banners etc. ABs presented with a fur owl (ookpic). Meet Peter Waddell, (ex Bournemouth) so he plays for the ABs. Chance of goal for ABs came after ten minutes when a short corner ball was stopped! and hit hard by Colin, missing the post by inches. Action then passed to the Ookpics with two short corners and shots on goal stopped by Rod.

ABs again took up the attack, with several missed opportunities through lack of support to Clive who was in his usual head down, going for goal charge. John Peirce missed a penalty flick by hitting the post which came from a defender taking out an AB attacker in the "D". Half Time score 0-0.

After drinks the game was fairly even for the first ten minutes, when a goal scored by the Ookpics was disallowed as the ball was struck from outside the "D". Attacks on the AB goal continued with another short corner, again cleared by Rod, then an attack on the AB goal, followed by defence errors gave the Ookpics a gift of a goal.

MAY 25 (CONT)



ABs then hit back with a short corner, the ball hitting the side netting. Five minutes before time, a footstop by Ookpics in front of goal, penalty stroke, again taken by John P, which this time found the other post!. A good game played in a friendly spirit ended in the 1-0 win for Ookpics. Colin Bransgrove Man of the Match.

Team and supporters transported by car to the home of Tony and Ann Hull where we were given terrific hospitality by the Ookpics and their wives. A great start to the tour.

Beer and wine flowed freely and a marvellous buffet was provided. Thanks everyone. ABs started falling asleep on their feet.

Returned to hotel by friendly Ookpics and so to bed.

Knackered.

MAY 26

A wet morning, the only rain we saw until BC, for long awaited trip to Niagara Falls. The rain appeared to clear just as we arrived at Niagara. Time for the cable car ride over the rapids and the whirlpool before reaching Niagara proper.

Weather closed in again, more rain, unlikely to be able to achieve helicopter ride. Short walk along cliff listening to the thunder of the falls to find what was on offer. More rain.

Partook of an amazing "Sunday Brunch", whilst the weather cleared (apparently). Many of us would not require food before tomorrow.

Most of the party headed for the "Maid of the Mist". Waterproof suits were found to fit most of the party, and it was a blue shrouded group which headed out into the river. Not an AB tracksuit in sight! The Maid takes passengers right into the noise and spray of the arc of the Horseshoe falls. A wet, but thrilling experience.

The more intrepid amongst the party had the fantastic experience of going right over the falls in a helicopter.

Several hundred photographs were taken before the combination of spray from the falls and even more rain proved that our team tracksuits were not fully waterproof.

No one minded that, Red and Blue flashes being spotted all along the cliff edge. No time to go down under the falls due to queues - pity, the plastic mac would have been useful. How could we all have come to this wet country without raingear

Coach tour through the town. How could it be so tacky compared with the majesty of the falls?

Awesome, breathtaking, magnificent (and wet).

MAY 27

Free day. Weather fine. Cold hash browns for breakfast. From the advertised 50 attractions select three. Other ABs do likewise and go in all directions. Small party go my direction.

Must use subway. Find entrance, hand over money for tickets, handed back coins to drop in box at same window. Negotiate discount for group. Railman sighs. Bloody tourists.

Go on ferry to islands. Walk. Find bar - well Strapper was in the party! Catch bus round to different Ferry terminal. Wait in sunshine Why couldn't yesterday have been like this?

Return to mainland. Eat healthy lunch (except Colin who goes for sticky buns). Walk to Skydome. Bump into other ABs now on parallel track. Get onto tour. Start with film which frightened me though no reports of accidents. Perhaps it was the small theatre, but decided I was no good at heights. Shown round stadium filled full of facts about size, biggest hit, special earth etc. Could all this expense just be for a game of Rounders? Not allowed to view Bluejays changing facility. Carpet no good for hockey.

To the CN Tower. Now know that I don't like heights. More facts. See more red and blue flashes. Are all ABs here? Need a drink to recover. Told unbelievably that ABs had failed to drink their quota at the Hulls the night before. I did my bit. Have another drink to recover.

Back to hotel. Meet in bar. Kitty time Scatter for eats. Party to the wharf. Lose and find Rod. Apparently under-tipped staff. Back to hotel, some to bed, others to bar. Picked up by birthday girl (39!) Bluejays supporter. More facts about rounders. Buy drink. Girl collapses. Surprise? Go to bed.

MAY 28

The day started early for your reporters (John and Angela Peirce) with a 5.30 call to allow us to be driven in to the Delta Chelsea Hotel from Oakville

Nearly didn't make it - a very long truck carrying girders got stuck on a very tight exit ramp from the Queen Elizabeth Way. Vehicle became stuck against the edge, bursting a tyre and making a wheel threepenny bit shaped. Driver got out, scratched his head, then decided to drag it round by brute force, regardless of damage.

Arrived at Delta Chelsea at 7.30 and settled in for breakfast (cold hash browns); first other AB spotted was A.B at 7.50.

After a pleasant ride to the airport, came the problem of selecting the correct gate to use. Joan went on an unguided tour of all the gates at Pierson International, and finally decided that Gate 77 would do. The rest of the Team arrived more directly. Group check used. The Skip found it difficult to count the total baggage as it kept on being moved. Sticks were counted separately.

The Edmonton flight was standard, land water and videos to see, etc. Towards the end a stewardess approached JP and said "You must be one of the fit ones who has got to play this evening as you are not drinking". "Who is?" I asked. "The big guy (Chris) and the Aussie (Jim)" she replied. To correct the image I promptly ordered three beers!

Luggage quickly off loaded. Coach waiting as usual. Coach loaded. People seem to have found regular sitting positions on coaches already.

Drive to hotel. The coach driver (a pilot) did two circuits of the hotel before making a successful landing.

John Carrick arrived.

MAY 28 (CONT)



Match against Edmonton. If they were vets then we came from beyond the grave! They fielded 3 vets, the remainder in the age 20 to 35. Their legs were faster than ours, but grim Dunkirk spirit kept us afloat - Clive was seen to tackle (and clear) from our "D" - good one Clive.

Considerable pressure was absorbed by the defence and it was also becoming clear that an inspired comeback performance by Alan Filby in goal was likely to cost him some beer. The score was 1-0 to Edmonton at half time, a welcome respite enjoyed by the ABs including our lady guest Anne Ogden. Highlight of first half were shouts from Anne and Doreen, "You may be a lot older but you're a lot better". Wish it were true. Edmonton advance to 3-0. The ABs drawing on unknown reserves of stamina began a last $\frac{1}{4}$ surge, and were rewarded by a goal by Mike Barber set up by Rod Harling from the right wing. Alan Filby Man of the Match.

Beer was consumed first at the University Bar with our opponents who refused any AB kitty. Later at the Hotel with some of the opposition with pizzas supplied and eagerly devoured.

MAY 29

Instructions on what to do on visiting Edmonton are simple - "Go to West Edmonton Mall". Most team members obeyed, arriving in 2s, 3s and 4s by bus and taxi. This place has to be seen to be believed. Not only is it an enormous shopping mall, it also includes a full size indoor fun fair including the "Drop of Doom" (more later), an indoor beach of some 150 metres length with a wave machine, not to mention an underwater attraction featuring four people carrying submarines!, - of course a waterpark was included.

Through the day ABs bumped into each other here and there, though it is doubtful whether between us we saw all of the place. Some shopping took place though most, with full and heavy suitcases, waited for later in the Tour.

The Drop Of Doom. Colleen was very keen to have a go, and Elaine was persuaded to earn her "intrepid adventuress" badge by riding this device. Preparation was rigorous- a visit to the restroom, "just in case". ABs appeared, by telepathy? to watch. Strapped firmly into the machine, a going-white faced Elaine and an excited Colleen were fired up to the top of the ride (said to be 150ft), then straight down, VERY straight down and fast, then with a sharp turn horizontal on your back to be slowed down. It certainly scared the onlookers and Elaine emerged slightly pale, knees knocking; Colleen excited and bright eyed, looking ready to spend the rest of the day going up - and DOWN. There were no takers from the spectators, even Colin, who did most of the crazy things elsewhere, ducking out of this.

Various meals were consumed, and the dolphin show watched from a safe distance. A jet lagged John Carrick met a waiter who arranged some golf for him, as well as Tony Hall and Clive.

A quiet evening. What else was there to do?

MAY 30

Billed as the day of the journey from Edmonton to Jasper (220 miles).

On a gloriously sunny morning, the coach left the hotel on time (well it was a lady driver), travelling the Yellowhead Trail, heading for the mountains. The flat countryside soon started to change and after a "coffee" stop at Edson, the coach was buzzing with anticipation. As soon as someone said "mountains" all sat up and started taking notice, the coach emptied and the first real sight of snowcapped mountains had cameras clicking.

Further down the road, the coach stopped for everyone to enjoy the Maligne Canyon. Some of our more intrepid, and fitter, explorers trekked down to the waterfall at the bottom of the canyon, others were more sedate, but all agreed that our first experience of the Rockies was great.

We left the canyon at 3pm for the last part of the journey to Jasper, the scenery improving at every turn of the road. Eventually the coach pulled in at the Lobstick Lodge, after the coach driver had taken us on a tour of Jasper.

No bar, but "Strapper" passed the message "drinks at Nicks" and there was a mad scramble to get rooms and cases sorted out. Most of the group settled for a relaxing drink, others could not wait to sample the air and walks round the town.

The drinkers set off for the mountain via a cablecar. Up to the top through the snow for some!. Grizzly bear spotted on way back.

Meal at Nicks or Japanese. More drinks, then splitting up, to the laundry room, to finish the "kitty" or just to bed.

MAY 31

The day really started the night before in an anonymous little bar just off the strip at Jasper. The beer was cold, the waitresses warm, genial and neighbourly and several of the rakish AB forwards were feeling avuncular towards anyone who revealed a little personality, a little cleavage and a little leg. I seem to recall the approach "I may be too old for you but you are not too young for me". The air conditioning laboured in vain to dispel the strong scent of seduction. Expectations were high throughout the team that goals that had so far eluded the forwards might be achieved. Would they be voted Man of the Match without ever lifting their sticks?

I must confess that these two forwards were grossly unfairly misjudged on that night as their whispered proposals to these waitresses turned out not to be directed to their own personal pleasures and fantasies but to the overall wellbeing of the Ancient Britons by planning a picnic for the following day. We shall all have to form our own conclusions as to whether this was the intended design or did we subsequently benefit from another breakdown in our forward's communications?

I also suffered a loss of memory through dissipation at the same bar. Arrangements, I was subsequently reminded, had been made for me to act as chauffeur to top team management on the following day, but somehow it slipped my mind and I retired to bed oblivious of any future plans.

May 31st opened for me with a phone call in my room from our man from Connecticut. "Bring yourself and your driving licence to reception in 15 minutes". I always follow orders that early in the morning, and joining others similarly summoned, was duly dispatched to Budget Rentacar in Jasper to hire a car, with John Sharpe as No.2 driver and Elaine as passenger.

MAY 31 (CONT)

The car was arranged and I returned to the Hotel. There sitting on the bench was the Team Manager, his son and Joan and Alan Francis expectantly awaiting my arrival. I found I had 6 passengers and only four seats. I also acquired Ian Marsh who insisted on getting in the boot. I could see myself being sent home in disgrace.

Hasty apologies were made and back down to Budget where, after some discussion, a fancy compact befitting to management was found and so my face and my future tour was saved.

One of the young ladies appeared, the other was still in bed. There was no food. Those on the picnic stood and waited. Somehow the second young lady and the food eventually turned up and the party in three vehicles got on its way led by that experienced Australian military pathfinder (Hall).

Down Highway 93 to the Athabasca Falls, 32km south of Jasper where the Athabasca river is funnelled into a narrow gorge. Waterfalls bloody waterfalls! Then back to Jasper and a further hour's drive to Maligne Lake the second largest glacial lake in Canada. Animals were seen on route, which I think were Elk. They certainly weren't Grizzlies. Most of the lake was still frozen and the patchy snow created a chilly atmosphere, but the two young ladies fulfilled their promises by providing a splendid picnic which was enjoyed by all, including the Chickadees.

Arrangements had been made to ride the white water (Strapper with a different set of young ladies) and so back to the hotel for a 3pm pickup.

MAY 31 (CONT)

If my memory serves me right, 14 Ancient Britons gathered for the great adventure outside the hotel. A battered car arrived with a jovial lady guide. Wet suits and wet boots were distributed which had been purchased as a job lot from the used stocks of the Canadian navy remaining over from the last war. Nothing fitted and clearly the stretchability of both the suits and the Ancient Britons was severely tested. When eventually kitted up we presented ourselves as very poor models for the wearing of rubber protection.

After a further wait the remaining guide turned up in another battered vehicle, plus a taxi driven by Strapper's arrangement lady, and so back down Highway 93 to the Athabasca Falls. We then realised that we would have to carry the large rubber rafts down to the river, but as there was no alternative we struggled for several hundred yards to the starting point.

After donning our personal flotation devices, we were given instructions on safety and what to do to do if anybody fell overboard. We were also taught the rudiments of paddling, though I don't think Strapper ever realised that the command "Paddle right" meant that those on the left of the boat paddled in the opposite direction.

One raft contained only Ancient Britons whilst the other included 3 Dutchmen from Amsterdam who volunteered to lead. They said that they had canoeing experience and one had served in the Dutch navy. There were some of us sitting behind who grew to doubt that experience.

The international scale of grading rivers ranges from an easy 1 to a very difficult 6. This stretch of river is rated 2 overall with short periods of 3. I don't think any of us will forget the journey over 8 to 10 miles lasting some 2½ hours. The white water was exhilarating and the scenery

MAY 31 (CONT)

(what we had time to view) majestic. Nobody fell overboard although one or two came close. Paddling skills improved dramatically over the course and answering the screamed commands instantly with a shout of "one....two....one" became almost second nature.

There was sporting rivalry between the rafts culminating in several water fights. The sparring for the downstream position became a cat and mouse affair. Everybody received a good soaking especially the Skipper who was the figurehead in the prow of the Ancient Briton's raft. Gallantly he took the brunt of the spray to protect the brave AB's women who had also committed themselves to that raft. Those in the Dutchmen's raft will remember the advantage gained by the other raft in its unfair and ungentlemanly use of a yellow bucket.

True to form when we arrived at our destination, the battered shooting brake and Taxi were missing but they eventually turned up. The final point turned out to be alongside Highway 93 and the rafts required carrying and stacking on top of the trailer. Wetsuits were taken off (in the open) and the odd compromising picture was taken of the struggles viewed with hilarity from passing cars. Strapper then sorted out the payment with a motly collection of very wet notes, and we were taken back to our hotel intoxicated by the wonderful trip and vowing to go again at the first opportunity.

After a shower went back to the anonymous little bar just off the strip at Jasper, where the beer was still cold, the waitresses still warm, genial and neighbourly and where after recounting the day endlessly, my memory deserted me yet again.

JUNE 1

The start of the second week of the Tour, saw the party continue its journey through the Canadian Rockies and National Park from Jasper to Banff.

A coach was available, so we did not need to join in the annual Jasper to Banff road relay race, won by a nippy Japanese team. Crowded breakfast among the competitors - cold hash browns.

Our route was Highway 93, or the Icefield Parkway which took us alongside the whitewater Athabasca and Sunwapta rivers. We passed the Athabasca falls, then the Tangle Falls which in winter freeze and are used for ice climbing.

Certain aspects of the landscape are five million and ten years old (5,000,010). Well this is what Carrick tells us as they were five million years old when he was last here.

"Would Group E now board shuttle bus 639 (and fasten seat belts) for take off" - to the Columbia Icefields. A ten minute ride took us to the Snomobiles for the journey onto the Athabasca Glacier - a high point of the Tour. The lateral moraine was crossed with a gradient of 32 degrees or a 1 in 2 drop. The original snowmobile was a converted Greyhound bus. The icefield itself has an area of 120 square miles and is 1000 feet thick. Apparently it requires 100 feet of snowfall to produce one foot of glacier ice. The compaction of the dust particles around which each snowflake joins produces a mass so dense that most light is absorbed, and only light of the shorter visible wavelengths is reflected thus producing the blue tinge of the glacier ice.

The maximum velocity of the ice is 25 metres per year and so once on its way could take 150 to 200 years before meeting the now turquoise or green rivers.

JUNE 1 (CONT)

Mountains and lakes are one thing, but we are now into glaciers and icefields.

Shortly after the icefields we reached the Sunwapta pass, the point of the great divide. Melting ice from the area forms rivers that flow into three oceans, the Pacific, the Athabasca north into the Arctic and the North Saskatchewan river systems into the Atlantic.

Lunch was taken at the Saskatchewan River Crossing where by using a number system for cooked requests, the most efficient food stop made by the party on the Tour resulted.

During the afternoon two unscheduled stops were made on sightings of black bears but there was no stop for the third sighting, either because they were now common sights or perhaps because we were now on a main highway. We were not allowed out of the coach to take photographs in case Elaine tried to smuggle the little (big) darling on board.

A detour was made to view Lake Louise, named after a daughter of Queen Victoria. This magnificent lake is overlooked by the majestic Mount Victoria and is not known to have been seen by a white man until 1882. An AB? One of the other sights at Lake Louise was far more modern - four girls in bikinis and it will be interesting to see how many of the pictures taken were of the lake.

At journey's end at Banff, after check in and parade, meals were taken in various taverns including a fondue at the Grizzly House. The day finished with choir practice at the King Henry VIII pub in the grounds of the Banff Springs Hotel. It didn't help.

JUNE 2

The Canadian Pacific Railway had established a frontier outpost which in 1883 became known as the town of Banff. William Cornelius Van Horne, the Railway Chairman, dreamed up a magnificent hotel based on a Scottish castle, and in 1888 the Banff Springs Hotel opened for business. We could probably say it is now more of a tourist attraction than a hotel. Chateau Lake Louise has similarly been built by the same company

The hotel rambles seemingly for miles, at least it seems like that from the annex in which we stayed. Though it boasted a Scottish piper and innumerable staff, it was probably the hotel with the smallest bedrooms and the least helpful staff.

This free day followed the pattern of others, with groups doing their own thing. Some shopped at the quite expensive local shops. Four played golf on a course with probably the best scenery in the world. Some went up the cablecar to the mountain top for breakfast and fresh air. One of our party, an Australian of course, even managed to throw a snowball onto a lady from Leatherhead who for some reason expressed displeasure against this innocent sport!

Another journey, another coach, this time with a taciturn driver. Nearing Calgary we passed the ski jumps used by Eddie the Eagle in the 1988 Olympics and then came something completely different - a meeting at Bottlescrew Bills would introduce us to our first billets. We also had our first serious introduction to the Canadian alcohol laws - no standing at the bar on Sundays!

And so we dispersed with our billets to eat, drink or just to chat. Or to go to the theatre for a performance of 'Irma Vep', which the programme described as "inspired lunacy", with all parts played by just two actors.

JUNE 3

Another fine sunny day. Billet Mike Conbey up and away to work as usual early. Employed as fitter with Western Natural Gas.

Took LRT (Light Rail Transport) to McMahon Stadium where the rest of the party also gathered from their scattered billets. Meet was 9.30 and all arrived on time.

A variety of transport had been lent by our hosts including a minibus, and the whole party left, travelling west out of Calgary on TransCanada I for about an hour and twenty minutes and arrived at Kananaskis Indian Reservation at approximately 11am. This place was also the site of the Olympic skiing.

Here the full enormity of our hosts offer of a short walk hit us. None of the hockey team came with us though two guides, Ed Bell and Gerald Kendall, gallantly volunteered? to ensure we did not get lost. But the walk was going to be far from easy.

After some confusion and a drinks break we set off along the Terrace trail in a westerly direction following the mountainside round the Kananaski valley. Superb day for walking, few mosquitoes and slight breeze. The party was strung out over a considerable distance, some of the more active racing ahead to cover about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles to a bridge. The more sedentary members covered about three miles before turning back and having a picnic on a slope overlooking the valley. Very peaceful.

Eventually the lead party returned and after a short pause all made their way back to the cars for the drive back to Calgary.

An interesting preparation for the match which was against a combined Saracens/Warriors side.

JUNE 3 (CONT)



The match was played on a very long grass and uneven surface, shared with a million mosquitoes, all of which presented the teams with difficulties. ABs however exerted early pressure but in spite of winning many short corners were unable to put the ball in the net. Eventually Colin Bransgrove scored and this was followed quickly by goals from Clive Richardson and John Peirce before halftime. Our opponents rallied in the second half but could not penetrate the ABs defence. Eventually Mike Barber completed the ABs scoring with a fine solo effort and was selected as 'Man of the Match'. A 4-0 victory could not hide the fact that two more penalty flicks were missed.

The Team and our hosts retired to the Rocking Horse Saloon for some well earned refreshment and country dancing. However the days exertions had taken their toll and with one or two notable exceptions, drinking was concluded at a reasonable hour and another successful day of the Tour came to an end.

JUNE 4

We woke up to sunshine again in our billet's very comfortable house. Asked if we could use the washing machine in the basement, and Debbie Barron, our hostess, agreed. Wonderful three sets of dirty hockey kit all washed, such a relief. (There were four of us at this billet, three of whom were players!). All round Calgary similar questions were being asked and answered in the affirmative. Clean kit abounds.

ABs arrived at McMahon stadium from all points to catch a bus for today's trip. It was a school bus which was just as well as it was a museum outing with our cheery leader Roger Thirnbeck a geography lecturer in the area.

A comprehensive running commentary on the historical, geological and political aspects of the area well prepared us for our first sight of the Badlands. We stopped at Horseshoe canyon which is difficult to describe. Just enormous earthy mounds in a valley.

Apart from this valley, the countryside had seemed very flat. John Sharpe called it "typical cowboy film country". This valley was everything but flat. A fossil hunt was brought onto the agenda. ABs started clambering down the steep sides, the earlier and more adventurous ones sliding, not very gracefully down the earth slides on their bottoms. Others found a path which was not so steep. Having started we found that the main barrier to success was hordes of mosquitoes which got everywhere. AB tracksuits passed a further test with the hoods proving an effective barrier to bites. It should be recorded that no fossils were found.

On to Drumheller, through steep sided canyons

JUNE 4 (CONT)

for a visit to the Tyrell Museum of Palaeontology. Here we were able to experience 4.5 billion years of the Earth's history to the emergence of Dinosaurs, mammals and Ancient Britons. Three educational hours. Why aren't our museums like that? Onto a suspension bridge, (guess who made it sway?) and then the strange Hoodoo hills. Here we searched for bones - to no avail - just more mosquito bites!

Wonderful place to photograph ABs pottering around and the Colonel took a super snap of Colleen Bransgrove trying to squeeze around a rock with such a look of concentration on her face.

We return to Calgary and deliver home our super hostess for the day, Nelica, before moving onward to the Southern Alberta Pioneers Lodge and a party with our hosts.

Definitely one of the best B.B.Qs of the tour, with a very red faced Colin Bransgrove assisting with the cooking of the steaks. Barrels of beer had been bought and the ABs pitched in to consume these, though some was left over for the following night. The Colonel sniffed out a game of golf, and a hire car appeared like magic. Walks in the grounds in the warm evening sunlight with no attendant mosquitoes - apparently the Badlands had just received their first moisture for years and that was the reason for all our bites. Who was going to drive home after all this jolly?

Roger Fry made a very funny speech. John Carrick recited his own personal poem, which I didn't listen to because it was rude. Singing. Chris tells his eagle joke, others tell the ones they can remember. Evening passes by in a blur.

Surprise, surprise, the men volunteer me to drive home. Mike Barber says I made a good job of it! John Sharpe is covered in Savlon where he had sat and scratched his bites all day. And so to bed.

JUNE 5

A morning free allowed us to establish more about our surroundings. Like learning from our Billet that the house sparrows were busying themselves in preparations for a second family in a box provided, emphasising an all too short a summer. And the ferret like creature seen on the lawn was a Richardson! ground squirrel

After days of clear blue sky the weather was not so kind, with a few drops of rain and the sky generally overcast. There was in fact a high of 16c (60f) and a low of 6c (42f). ABs all did their own thing as usual, working!, golfing, shopping or just generally acting as a tourist visiting the sights of Calgary.

Amazingly no efforts were made by our hosts to tire the team out before the match. Perhaps they had seen the effects on our play in the previous match. This second match, against a combined Warriors/Saracens team this time, was to take place at the McMahon Stadium, used for Canadian football and the Olympics of 1988.

The match started with the Ancient Britons having most of the early play which resulted in the opening score when Clive Richardson beat the goalkeeper with a reverse stick shot. Our opponents responded in classic manner by drawing level within a minute or so. In control of the midfield the ABs were able to put in successive attacks which were rewarded when Clive Richardson was put clear to shoot from the left in front of the goalkeeper as he advanced. So it was 2-1 at half time.

The second half started as the first with Colin Bransgrove continuing his ground tackles and Mike Barber using his speed to snuff out attacks in midfield. The Colonel was sent on one of his searing runs down the right to

JUNE 5 (CONT)



terrorise the opposition, and produced a cross that resulted in a melee in the circle, and when the ball broke free Clive Richardson achieved his hatrick.

Our opponents responded with a good cross and first time shot to make the score 3-2. The game was now end to end stuff with both sides striving for the killer blow, though the ABs always seemed just to have the better chances.

As a consequence of a sustained attack a penalty flick was awarded to the ABs. After a minor debate Mike Barber was selected to take the stroke, the third man in the team so chosen. He greatly improved our poor showing at this set piece when the keeper just failed to save it with his glove, and the ball went in the net. The ABs had scored a penalty at last, much to delight of cheerleaders who screamed their delight.

The ABs now 4-2 in the lead, maintained their cool

JUNE 5 (CONT)

and their pressure, and when another short corner was awarded, Chris Webb stepped up to take it. He shot with absolute precision between the left leg of the left back and the left hand post, the ball squeezing between the shin pad and the upright. Absolute silence from the cheerleaders who obviously had not expected this or they had not been watching. As he walked back the message was passed to supporters and screams of delight eventually were heard. (umpire had not blown was their claim). 5-2, and with the match now well within their grasp, the Ancient Britons concluded their scoring when Clive Richardson powered home a loose ball. A 6-2 victory which was going to be the base of much celebration.

Getting to the showers in this vast stadium meant picking the correct corridor out of a number of unmarked entrances, and walking past a well equipped sports injury room, both with equipment and with young physiotherapists. We nearly lost half the team! Arthur, who had managerial responsibilities (arranging for the Ladies to go straight to Village Park Hotel) never did find the showers (his story) or perhaps he stopped off on the way?

The players repaired to John Penfold's house in an effort to finish off the beer from the previous night whilst drinking to his birthday. Also to try to convince Clive that four goals equated to three hattricks which when added to his Man of the Match award meant four jugs! We didn't succeed.

Then all off to the Village Park for more beer and food and to say our farewells to our wonderful hosts in Calgary. And to say Hello to Sue Harling just arrived from England.

JUNE 6

Thursday dawned a bright clear sunny day for our departure from Calgary. This departure was unfortunately delayed due to traffic jams caused by the spectators still trying to leave the McMahon Stadium from our previous night's game. Or was it simply that no one could find John and Elaine again? Chinese for breakfast! What a true blue English excuse.

Buzz, our driver, gave a non stop commentary as we passed the Olympic Ski Jump and headed toward Lake Louise for the second time. The romantic atmosphere had several couples planning their return one day.

The first stop today was in the Go Ho National Park at Rocking Horse Pass, where one of the engineering wonders of the day, the Sperial Tunnel complex was overshadowed by the magnificent Cathedral Mountain.

Lunch was at a grizzly bear infested area - Rogers Pass. Ignoring the advice not to venture too far into the mountains several ABS wandered off and foundSNOW! A snowball civil war resulted which was clearly won by the Colonials over the Woking Warriors. Clear evidence of the correctness of the Victorian policy of deportation!

The Grizzlies, which apparently had been playing round the swimming pool the day before, knew better than to tangle with a veteran hockey team and did not appear. Pity, as we had all read the advice of playing dead, a pose which the defence practised regularly, and everyone wished to see if practice made perfect!

The afternoon journey was to be a very peaceful drive through the Revelstoke National Park. Voices mainly from the back of the coach spoilt the calm, with shouts of "Pub" or "Beer". However with one short drinks stop we arrived quietly in Kamloops.

JUNE 7

Departing Kamloops on time (9.30am) a photo stop was made overlooking Kamloops Lake, where Chris Webb, our resident train spotter counted 5 such mechanical transport devices during our stop of $7\frac{3}{4}$ minutes. During the morning run, our relief guide, a farmer of great repute, gave a most informative history lesson on the mad English Earl who installed the wooden aquaduct that was still visible, to irrigate his apple orchard and supply water to a town of some 5,000 people. After a short coffee stop at Wallache a very long forced stop was necessary due to road works.

This caused great excitement; Chris counted his trains, the learned engineers held great discussions on the Canadian railway guage and others just sat on posts. The results of all this was - too many rail wagons, 5ft $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins or 4ft $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins guage after much measurement, and a quick change of trousers by the measurer to reveal a brightly coloured (blue and white) underwear.

The much awaited lunch stop was at Hells Gate which was reached by a cable car ride and where we were greeted by a gentleman who advised that what was under his kilt was frozen - a lunchtime joke. Salmon seemed to be a popular choice for lunch.

As usual our departure time was set, but as was common, we were late due to guess who? Elaine and John missed the cable car or were they hunting Roos?

Evening accommodation was the Barclay Hotel after dropping John Carrick on a rain swept freeway. Didn't he look forlorn and lonely? Some were furnished with a whole suite of rooms, others had to rearrange the furniture to shut the door!

JUNE 8

Our first day in Vancouver, a free day now that the match had been re-arranged and we were not to be picked up until eight o'clock in the evening. As before this meant that ABs split into small groups all doing their own thing.

After spending the night at the Barclay Hotel, in palatial suites, it was disappointing not to find a swimming pool, and the hotel breakfast was probably the poorest yet. Many ABs disappeared onto Robson Street to find a better fare.

We were to meet Emma, whom we have known by correspondence for a few years, but have never met before. She arrived, with a wolfhound for identification in front of the hotel, and we went off in her truck leaving several ABs at Coffee.

Emma lives at Lions Bay, N of Vancouver and on route to her house we walked for two hours in Lighthouse Park, one of several untouched northern rain forests in the area. It is a real delight how the British Columbians have their wild places so close to cities - if only it was possible back home. In this park there was a tree stump which had been sawn and left to show its age - it had begun life 100 years before John Cabot discovered Newfoundland, a humbling thought.

Lunch at Emmas was a real experience, the view from her deck was Howe Sound to the Islands and is truly breathtaking, and you don't mind an almost vertical hill the house is on at all. Elaine's first encounter with an oyster was also her last (she hopes!).

We then left for another walk, this time on the shore at Porteau Cove before returning to the hotel to await for our billets at 8pm.

Other members of the team also went walkabout and

JUNE 8 (CONT)

there were many sightings of AB tracksuits in Stanley Park. None actually walked all around the perimeter path (this feat was to await John Haggett's epic run later on when we returned to Vancouver from the island), but goodly distances were achieved by some.

From Stanley Park to the Canada centre can now be walked along specially marked paths, and, avoiding the bicycles, the Skipper came across a quay offering hire of yachts etc. Some you could even drive yourself, though the thought of some of the ABs being let loose in the harbour quickly stifled that idea. But remembering the Bum boat trip on the last day of the previous trip in Singapore details were noted and administrative plans for our last day began to take shape. Others took the seaplane flights offered or strolled quietly through the many malls.

As more ABs arrived back at the hotel, small groups formed for meals. Some took the easy option visiting the Tower Pizza house across the street, and were impressed enough to make this become the venue of our last meal. Others visited a superb French restaurant Chez Thierry, an experience which all of us failed to repeat though we were all advised to do so.

Billets appeared as if by magic at the appointed time and quickly met their AB. With no parking outside the hotel, and at times double banking of cars, the ABs proved again how quickly it is possible to load a vehicle and depart. Many visits were paid on the way 'home' including the Queen Elizabeth Park, a lovely garden with wonderful views of the city in the evening sunshine.

And so to bed.

Here for many there was an excellent "spontaneous" party at the McKee's with super food & good company, a lovely chance to get to know all our hosts.

JUNE 9

A quiet day with our hosts from the Vancouver Hawks preparing gently for the match at 2pm. There seemed to be some doubts as to whether a full team could be put out against us, at least there was in some billets, but too many teams had tried to phase us before for too much notice to be taken of this chat. Just as well as it turned out as the organisers were quietly getting rather more than eleven players to the ground.

The morning was occupied in a variety of ways as our hosts took us to many of the fine sights close to Vancouver. By the end of the day all ABs were able to converse knowledgeably about Stanley Park, Queen Elizabeth Gardens, The University, the Capilano Suspension Bridge, the Lions Gate Bridge etc. etc. Somehow our hosts seem to have a kind of divine knowledge of what to show visitors!

The afternoon saw the ABs and their hosts and the supporters assemble at the Eric Hamber Sports Ground for match number 5. The weather was warm and sunny and ideal for the AB photocall which preceeded the match. The astroturf was actually marked out for hockey (field of course), our opponents had found 18 players and the ABs were for the first time to play in their change strip of red shirts and white socks. This seemed to worry the Colonel who was heard to comment that the only things he usually saw on the pitch were red socks.

After some discussion on the best background for the photographs, (North Vancouver was chosen), and after the usual preliminaries, the match began before a mixed bunch of enthusiastic fans. The ABs now had their full squad, as John Haggett had arrived and Roger Fry still had a few more days, With the exception of Alan Francis, who was still suffering from his niggling injury, the AB squad was at full strength. It was Alan Filby's turn to play out of goal. The opposition chose, by a

JUNE 9 (CONT)



process probably akin to osmosis their eleven and the game started.

Cut and thrust was the order of the day, with both sides mounting attacks thick and fast. Our opponents with all the international talent at their disposal probably shaded the play for skill, but the ABs with four games behind them to weld the teamwork fought hard in the heat.

The key moment came in the opening five minutes when the ABs were given a penalty flick. However the post intervened yet again and after that the ABs were happy to gain a draw, conceding a goal but equalising with a great goal from John Peirce. Arthur Barber who showed just how the game should be played was 'Man of the Match'

Home to shower and use the washer then to a Barbeque at the Kitsilano Yacht Club. Salmon! Great food and company - and so to bed.

JUNE 10

An early start and yet another paragraph in our wonderful journey across Canada. We are approaching the end of our East/West tour and are looking forward to exploring Vancouver Island and its capital city Victoria.

Our hosts set their alarm clocks in anticipation of an early departure and duly assembled our motley group in the car park adjacent to the Arbutus Shopping Centre. Coach awaits as always.

Bags, cases and hockey sticks carefully and speedily stowed into the bowels of said coach, and off we set in the direction of the ferry.

First stop at Tsawwassen terminal where we joined a long queue of travellers to the island. Immediately we sent out a search party for one, John Carrick, who was travelling under his own arrangements from the District of Surrey. Success!! - just in time for boarding. A picturesque trip between a mass of islands, accompanied on the early part by a pod of killer whales.

90 minutes later we docked at Swartz Bay and continued our journey with the same coach and driver. 90 minutes later we arrived in Victoria on time for our appointment with David Auld and David Bellingham (DB) at the Beacon Hill Cricket Pavilion. Swift unloading of cases, a drink and back on the coach for a ride to the City centre.

Most go into the "Sticky Wicket", and as the clouds begin to close in, some stay there a long time! A huge selection of beers, including some from GB though even these are served very cold. Kitty time is called. It begins to rain.

The braver elements move to explore the immediate surrounds, and the rain stops. All get to Beacon Hill at 5pm for drinks and meeting with our Billets and then back with them for the evening.

JUNE 11

After another night with our billets in Victoria, we arose to a bright but windy day with nothing scheduled until our match against the Oak Bay Fossils at 5.30pm.

Billeting is a marvellous way to see and understand the locality and to make new and, in my case lasting friendships. But many of us are peculiar shapes and sizes and it is often possible to wake up with a stiff back. In my experience this does not affect sleep, the hospitality ensures that we get to sleep easily.

Dress standards at Victoria Golf Club proved slightly trying. The Colonel (Victoria's) had written a letter to the papers recently and felt constrained to equip us in long trousers rather than shorts. My borrowed pair were suited to a larger waist (significantly larger) and that is my excuse for a high score, the half gale being incidental.

The course is spectacular and all of the players fed balls to the sea with gay abandon. The Colonels (Victoria as well as AB) had the better of the others at the finish. I hasten to add that it was not a junta.

Other ABs also began to learn about Victoria, one of the more "english" places visited. With the slightly inclement weather of the day before behind them, foraging parties were seen all over the City as the day before had mainly been spent close to the "Sticky Wicket" pub.

The famous tracksuits were seen especially in the Royal British Columbia museum, another museum presented splendidly.

Our opponents in the evening turned out to be the Evergreen Masters. This did not put us off

JUNE 11 (CONT)



The ground at Glen Lyon High School had a jungle at one end and a drooping left winger's corner at the other. A wet patch at the same end on the right had umpire Ian Marsh sliding with the zest of a skater. On the whole a reasonable grass with slightly undersize circles, which had defenders beaming and forwards frowning. The goals were set inside football goals to increase the concerns of the thrusting inside forwards.

In the first ten minutes the ABs pressed on the attack, Tony Hall missing twice. The second miss lead Ian Marsh to indicate an Australian Rules football "behind" as it passed between the hockey and football posts. Canadians were bemused. Then John Carrick missed an open goal from three yards before Clive Richardson scored a tigerish goal off the pads of their 66 year old Irish keeper.

The ABs continued to dominate in the second half

JUNE 11 (CONT)

until Mike Barber's shot from the edge of the circle was deflected upwards and over the defence into the top left corner of the goal.

Towards the end of the game, Alan Filby took an injudicious step and injured himself nastily in the leg. Strapper Jim Harvey beamed with the prospect of many days employment. The resulting penalty stroke (I hasten to add that this was not given away by Alan) was nearly saved by Skipper Chris Webb defending the goal with only a glove as additional armour. The glove proved his undoing, as the ball went in off it. Bad luck, Skipper!

Rod Harling donned all his equipment in record time and with his assistance the defence stood firm for the last few minutes as the Evergreens threw everything at the ABs. But the final result was a win by 2-1.

This was a fine all round performance by the team, which was reflected in the voting for Man of the Match. Ten of the team received a vote and three members received three. By common consent the Man of the Match was deemed to be Roger Fry, who was to leave us tomorrow to fly home to England. No jug was charged for this decision.

Dinner with our hosts was at the Old Bailey so John Haggett and Roger Fry felt quite at home. Well over 60 sat down to the meal washed down with jugs of wine. Later we were regaled (again) with the Skipper's eagle joke and his tale of Larwood, Voce and exploits with a humble Somerset bowler's bare chest. DB responded in similar vein so that we were all reassured that despite some rumours to the contrary the British Empire is alive and well in Victoria.

JUNE 12

A quiet morning, repacking yet again, saying our farewells to our billets and checking into the Carlton Plaza Hotel. Gentle recovery from the dinner the night before, calm contemplation of the prospect of this cricket match in the afternoon. Groups of ABs doing their own thing, wherever you went the track suit was in evidence. And so to Beacon Hill Park, the matting wicket and a warm if slightly overcast day. Just the right amount of cloud to help the swing bowlers. There was also a gentle cross breeze.

The team chosen after considerable practice and debate (two balls bowled in Calgary to see who could bowl, and the Skip asking for volunteers on one of the coach outings), had lost its wicket-keeper with Alan Filby's injury. From the huge number of volunteers! young Strapper was chosen. The ABs were to play in their numbered shirts and tracksuit trousers.

Shortly before 1.30pm Chris managed to lose the toss and the ABs, as agreed, took to the field. Colin Bransgrove and John Peirce opened the bowling. In the 3rd over Colin managed a straight ball and the first wicket fell with only 17 on the scoreboard. Fours came thick and fast. John, over worried about the no-ball law, bowled well behind the wicket. The second wicket fell when Clive Richardson moved and caught the ball. (37 for 2) Colin's awesome bowling caused havoc and the next man kicked the ball onto his wicket. John Sharpe replaced John Peirce at the town end, and the Skip with aggressive spin took over at the sea end. The scoring rate slowed.

One man retired and a quick wicket followed. Clive the next bowler at the sea end loosened up with a wide but ended the over with a wicket. John Haggett at the Town end was unfortunate when Rod Harling tried to kick the ball instead of catching it. A further retirement and seven wickets now down for

JUNE 12 (CONT)



104. Ian Marsh now took over at the Town End and was the first bowler to measure his run up, and Colin returned with his Queensland pace, and soon got a wicket.

The boundary line was marked at this point to aid the umpires. The groundsman was ably assisted by Betty Bloomfield. Chris took over for the last over, spread the field and was hit first ball for 6! Just 10 off the last over. Total 145 for 8 - the ABs need just 5 an over.

Stiff limbs were dragged into the pavilion. Colin looked worst, though he insisted he was OK and would bowl some more if asked. The tactics used were mulled over, Why had Ian been held back for so long? Strapper was beaming after his comeback at wicketkeeper after so long. Confidence had risen, the abyss of total and embarrassing slaughter no longer upon us. The batting order was published.

After cucumber sandwiches and tea, John Sharpe and Rod Harling strode out to open the innings

JUNE 12 (CONT)

Second ball John returned to the pavilion caught behind (Wicked ball- "Good enough to get a touch") for more tea and sandwiches. Ian Marsh, batting at number 3 opened the scoring with an aggressive snick. Rod was bowled when the score stood at 10. Ian hit two fours and Colin Bransgrove broke his duck with a single.

A few more runs and Colin sent up an easy catch which was accepted. Next man to the crease was the Skipper. Ian gave another easy catch after scoring 21 invaluable runs. John Haggett comes to the wicket. The score is 50 for 4 in 21 overs. Behind the run rate but not disastrous.

Chris attacks the bowling aggressively. John is bowled middle stump. Paul Bloomfield in. Chris mishits a ball straight to their Colonel and is out for 56. Our Colonel, Tony Hall, quickly scored a single! Paul was clean bowled and John Peirce bustles to the wicket.

The batsmen meet in the middle of the wicket and talk tactics. We were behind the clock. Quick running took place to loud cheers from the AB supporters on the boundary.

The batsmen meet in the middle of the wicket and re-talk tactics. We were still behind the clock. The run rate became two runs a ball for the last two overs. Too many and the innings finished after our 30 overs at 135 for 7.

Tactics were discussed in the pavillion. Why hadn't the skipper run faster when he was batting? Why hadn't the Colonel batted higher up the order? Strapper and Clive Richardson explained to all and sundry that if they had batted the ABs would have won! Colin Bransgrove disappeared into town to find a chiropractor. B.B.Q, cheese and potato pie the speciality. Lots of beer. To the hotel, baths and bed. We hadn't been thrashed!

JUNE 13

The Captain's day began in the bath, sleeping peacefully. He was rudely awakened at about 12.30am and, escorted by a few of our hosts, joined a select little group drinking in the Swan pub, near to the hotel. A few Pandoras later the group moved onto to a neighbouring venue before returning to the hotel, past some very young looking women, to fall into bed at 2.30 am.

The morning and afternoon followed the now established pattern for a free day. Groups heading off in many direction to places such as the Butchart Gardens and the Museum. This time "hobbled off" might the most accurate description of the cricket team, still living off their close encounter the day before.

The Colonel set off for another croquet assignment and the serious stretcher cases, Messrs Filby and Bransgrove did not go anywhere fast.

Siestas were not uncommon, a few of the more obvious hostelries were visited and the whole party met back at the hotel, to be picked up by a schoolbus at 4.30pm for the ride to the match against the Oak Bay Fossils.

Strapper was kept very busy for the half hour before the match, ensuring that the eleven walking wounded ("the team") were able to take the pitch. The two others capable of pulling on their kit ("the substitutes") joined the stretcher cases and the cheerpeople on the touchline.

A video provides a permanent record of the events that took place ("the match") not least Ian Marsh's first game out of goal for 25 years.

JUNE 13 (CONT)



The opposition started with their strongest line-up but ironically were 2-0 down - somewhat against the run of play - by the time that half a dozen pairs of new legs took the field at the end of the first quarter. The first goal resulted from a counter attack with a typical John Carrick finish except that the ball flew into the roof of the net rather than 10 feet wide. The second came from a worked short corner move : Peirce, Barber (M), Hall, Barber (M), oops, back of the net. From planning to execution about 10 seconds, which was probably wise given the limited retention span of average AB memory.

The third goal came just on half time, with John Carrick picking up a short corner rebound and bundling the ball over the line. J.C's Canadian duck was well and truly broken, and he came close to smiling at half time.

Such successful mastery of the difficult school pitch and the numerous, and therefore rather

JUNE 13 (CONT)

frisky opponents, could not be sustained as the midfield tired in the second half. The persistence of the opposition paid off with a goal after about 10 minutes.

The persistence of Paul Bloomfield paid off with a jug card shortly afterwards - awarded for questioning one of John Oakley's perfectly correct decisions. Paul's recompense came later when he became comfortable 'Man of the Match' winner, with a juggable seven votes so doubling his later contribution to the kitty. No further injuries occurred and by careful juggling of the substitutes the ABs emerged relatively unscathed. A number were looking considerably stiff and slow moving, though as this appears a normal state, few people realised the difficulties being faced.

After the match, and an hour of drinking, speeches and watching the match video at the Oak Bay Sports Club the school bus took a singing party back to the hotel. J.C's two goals had certainly livened up the choirmaster and David Auld was seen to lower himself in the driving seat to escape detection as the off key racket spread across the streets of Victoria.

At the hotel the party split up, some taking hosts to a lobster dinner, others to a chinese restaurant and a further party went to Spinnakers, a local hostelry with its own brewery.

The Captain's day ended as it had begun in the Swan pub, near to the hotel. A few Pandoras later the group moved onto to a neighbouring venue before returning to the hotel, past some very young looking women, to fall into bed at 2.30 am. Ian Marsh remained until 5am. What will D.B do when we go?

JUNE 14

Friday dawns as Friday will
Just one more suitcase left to fill
Which is something of a pity really
'Cos there's enough to go in 3 - well nearly

Breakfast in diner across the way
Will the hash browns be anything like hot today?
Bus ready waiting, true to form
Number 964 with driver Norm
So with a last goodbye from old DB
We take our leave of Victoria BC.

Through Columbia advertising 'bedding pants'
(Canadian pyjamas for maiden aunts?)
Past Goldstream Park where salmon thrive
We continue along Malahat Drive

Stop at a view quite spectacular
Scenic cement works and Saanich Peninsular
There's a heritage town: Whippletree Junction
With a drive-in movie, the last to function

We pass through Duncan with its totem poles
Big hockey stick (but like Carrick no goals!)
Halt at Chemainus with murals and woodmill
And a mountie the girls all chase with a good will
"Its mount a mountie week", (Carrick of course)
Which is bad news for the mountie and worse
for the horse

Its a relief to Ladysmith, the Colonel's trumping
About not being willing to try bungy-jumping;
It was a shame 'cos the AB's had organised a
ballot
And agreed to let him take along his mallet

JUNE 14 (CONT)

So we reach Nanaimo and on our way
In a ferry like a Flymo to Horseshoe Bay
Into a cablecar, lots of slant eyes there
Joan feels the chill 'cos there's a nip in
the air'

Grouse Mountain, shrouded in mist, can't see
far
Though we manage to spot Strapper already in
the bar
Half the party's not yet back (to Norm's
consternation)
They're watching a film (Room at the Top?)
with Arthur's dispensation

WE made it back in time for Norm (all this
to-ing and fro-ing)
Then circuited round Stanley Park to the
club (rowing)
Skipper declares "it's kitty time" so we
give the beer a try
Surprise, surprise its cold and wet even
though its Molson's Dry

Howard the host shows up a little late to
take us to our billet
He's bought along his minivan but we still
manage to fill it
We join the North Vancouver set at the
Boathouse, get well fed
Then home for a final night cap - and so
to bed.

THE WHITE RIVER RAFTERS



THE LADIES



THE CRICKET XI



THE PLAYERS



JUNE 15

Elaine, John Sharpe and John Haggett are billeted in a spacious old house with Rick McMichael (a bookbinder) and his wife Barb (who helps elderly people cope with serious problems such as Alzheimers disease). She also plays a mean game of hockey, as we found out to our cost later.

The plumbing in this billet has a mind of its own. John Haggett's last cold shower was compulsory and part of the curriculum.

Hair cuts for men cost 17 dollars. After one of these, dinner in a posh restaurant was necessary! This was full of American ladies from Seattle knocking back the white wine at a brisk pace.

This was a free day before the joust, and for once our opponents had no plans to tire the team out. Of course they did not know we only had 11 fit players or a walk round Stanley Island would have been quickly arranged. The team was therefore able to relax in their various ways.

John Haggett went to visit a contact at Southlands Riding Academy. They were in the middle of a 4 day international grand prix on their 100 acre grounds. His friends were intending to retire back to England (to enjoy a good breakfast - so it seems).

Other members of the team explored Stanley Park with its 1000 acres of cedars and other trees, gardens, totem poles, views of the mountains and the City, and its aquarium. This contained a great variety of fish, killer whales and balugas getting up to naughties in public.

Others explored the City, ate lunch up the tower, flew in seaplanes and walked round Canada Place and the various shopping malls. The educated among us visited museums and other centres of learning!

JUNE 15 (CONT)



Our evening match with Vancouver Jokers International was played on an indecently green grass pitch at Hugo Ray Park - over the Lions Gate Bridge - built by the Guinness family to deliver their products to the natives. When sufficiently inebriated they were moved on (even prior to Ernest Saunders).

The cricket score book for the match played alongside us showed the weather at 2pm as "mixed". By 7pm it was anything but mixed, it was monsoon!

However we managed to win against a side playing in Dutch colours. In order to accommodate our hosts (who had heard of us and had too many players) we played 3 periods in the match. We won the match 3-2 (goals from Peirce, Bransgrove and M. Barber) but managed to lose two of the periods. More of this later.

We then had a celebration in the bar for a 50 year old cricketer. The speeches went on far too long - but they often do at cricket club dinners in other places.

I sneeze as I write.

JUNE 16

Free day until the barbeque.

The weather improved slightly today, dull but with no rain until the early evening.

Unlike England the church service that Paul and Betty went to included a celebration of Father's day which is big in Canada.

During the morning several of the ABs found their way to the Granville Island Market with its wonderful array of fresh fish, meat, bakeries vegetables and other stalls - including take-out food from many countries which was eaten over a pint, or two, in the Arts Theatre club.

There was a continual change round in the street entertainment provided - the ABs were represented by Colin Bransgrove and Mike Barber who assisted Wick Lewis with his juggling and uni-cycle act. Mike Barber unwittingly lent his watch to Wick so was required to be present at the conclusion of the act!

The ABs were also represented by Elaine and John Haggett in the fun run collecting funds for the Children's Hospital. Elaine completed five kilometres and John 10, and John's time was a very creditable 50 minutes. Elaine and Wendy Webb, occasionally accompanied by John or by hosts, ran "across" Canada (in every town). Just like the ABs to get their women to do the training.

The Barbeque at the rowing club was timed for four o'clock, or at least drinks were with eats later. Quote for the day :- "We can't start drinking at 4pm" said the skipper as he downed his second pint at lunch time. ABs arrived in Stanley Park from all directions, including some on foot from Granville. The barbeque was hosted by the Jokers who after plying the ABs with alcohol, always a difficult job!, managed to convince the Skipper to play a return match. Great evening.

JUNE 17

As our coach was picking us up for a half day outing at 9am, and as our hosts had to go to work, an early start to the day was essential. Cars appeared from all round Vancouver and the familiar red and blue flashes were seen all along Robson street from about 8am. The white tour bags etc were stacked in the Barclay Hotel whose staff seemed bemused by all this early activity. Many hurried breakfasts were eaten before the coach arrived on time.

After a desperate count by Arthur to make sure we had all appeared and a renegotiation on the places we wished to visit, we headed for the salmon hatcheries at Capilano. Here hordes of miserable looking salmon floated in tanks before leaping a further barrier for sex and death. Just like a veterans hockey tour! This was followed by a steep walk (or limp for our 3 wounded) up to the Cleveland Dam. The black clouds were again very low, though it wasn't actually raining, with mist between the top of the trees, but the water shoot to the bottom of the dam was very clear and frenetic.

Next to the Lynn Suspension Bridge and another look down to the depths of the gorge - not for the faint hearted. And so to be dropped from coach at Lonsdale Quay, N. Vancouver with a visit to the very up-market boutiques before returning by Seabus to Canada Place.

Although highly recommended by our very talkative driver, the Old Spaghetti House proved itself unable to cope with 25 thirsty and hungry ABs all at once, though when the food eventually arrived it was enjoyed by all.

A quiet afternoon followed with final shopping in Gastown before the walk (and limp) back to the Hotel to prepare ourselves for the match.

JUNE 17 (CONT)



With some dispute raging? as to who took the honours on the previous encounter with the Jokers International, a rematch was arranged at the Eric Hamber Astroturf Pitch. Howard Fernandes realised that the ABs were low on playing resources and in a short period gathered together a very strong side. What had seemed like a great idea after a few bevvies on Saturday now looked like becoming a difficult and exhausting run around for a bunch tired limbs.

The match was fast and furious with end to end attacks. Both sides had their chances before midway through the first half, Barbie, one of the Joker's two lady players, scored from close range after a neat through ball.

Although often under pressure the ABs battled hard and in the second half, with Mike Barber (Man of the Match) running endlessly, created sufficient chances to level the match. But it wasn't to be and what was probably the most skilful and demanding match of the Tour was lost 0-1, but no disgrace to an AB's side which strove doggedly to the final whistle.

Afterwards refreshments at the Robson Grill and ..

JUNE 18

..the day started with late night revelries in the Barclay with 12 ABs (including two of the fairer sex and two of the Aussies) giving renditions of popular tuneful favourites such as The Woad Song, G'Day, There'll always be an England, Cwm Rhondda, Jerusalem and Waltzing Matilda. All this was beautifully accompanied on the baby grand piano by Patrick, and Howard sang. Only two Jokers could stand the pace!

Dawn broke; Were all ABs still abed? By 9.15 no movement at the Heidelberg Breakfast cafe, but Ian Marsh was seen claiming to have eaten his already. Late night revellers appeared for breakfast at 10 but they were not the last!

A beautiful sunny day developed (it doesn't rain every day in Vancouver apparently!). Ideal for the rest day before our final encounter on the hockey field. Groups disappeared in all directions, many spent the day leisurely touring the City on the Skytrain with occasional short walks for a quiet non alcoholic drink.

Others sunbathed. Rod and Sue hired a plane and overflowed the City and its waters. Visits to Chinatown, Gastown and Granville Market, ferrys were employed in numerous directions. Clive Richardson worked again, and Coleen and Colin took a helicopter flight & actually got to the top of Grouse Mountain in sun. Some photographs were now available and much time was spent reminiscing about the times spent earlier in the Tour. Orders for repeats were quickly forthcoming and Tony disappeared immediately to arrange these.

A good day to lift ourselves just once more for our match against West Vancouver in the evening at Hugo Ray Park on grass. Our tenth match of the Tour.

JUNE 18 (CONT)



At 7pm the Skipper won the toss and chose the pavilion end with the sun at our backs. The ABs looked good in the first half scoring three goals, one each for John Peirce, Mike Barber and Clive Richardson against a semi blinded West Van side. After the change round there was no energy left in the visitors and with an even lower sun, vision upfield was impossible and it was tough going. The home side pulled one goal back but the ABs were never going to concede the last match of the tour Tony Hall was the Man of the Match again; his legs held out longest with many good dashes down the wing. He was promoted to Brigadier by the team.

A few drinks with our opposition followed, with memories of past matches and absent friends discussed at length. Then off to the Robson Grill for food and an early night (12 o'clock). The whole party was quite exhausted and delighted that our third match in four days had resulted in another win.

JUNE 19

Wednesday was fixed for the main team outing of the Tour - a steam hauled train journey to Squamish followed by a boat trip down Howe Sound back to Vancouver.

It is a matter of honour among ABs (as well as avoiding possible financial disadvantage) to assemble at or before the appointed time, and once clocks have been synchronized, an otherwise deserted spot can be occupied by the full party within a minute or so. This talent is obviously not shared by our host nation and the coach we were instructed to join at 8.30 did not appear till 8.40. It then took us some hundred yards to deposit us to await a further coach (9.15) for transport to North Vancouver in time for the departure of the Royal Hudson promptly at 10. Luckily it wasn't raining and surprisingly The ABs did not stand where they were told, "in line, behind that rope, for 30 minutes"!

Time taken in waiting for the first bus was employed in saying our farewells to "Strapper" Jim who was to return home to Australia. His beaming countenance may have been at the thought of leaving but, more probably, at the many embraces he received from his "darlings".

The train wound its way from the BC rail terminal along the east shore of the Sound, through many tunnels, and presented the photographers with many opportunities to snap conifers, railway lines, sea and waterfalls.

Arriving at Squamish at noon we just had time to find something to eat (and drink) before boarding the MV Britannia for the 1.30 trip back. No one took up the offered tour of Shannon Falls or the Glacier Air Tour, but we noted with appreciation the notice "Welcome to Ancient Britain" and a restaurant named Wokin.

JUNE 19 (CONT)

The Sound is a major centre for the timber industry and it was particularly interesting to watch powerful one man boats sorting logs and then herding them into pens or onto saw mills whilst we were waiting for our boat to depart.

In lovely weather! we cruised through Howe Sound back to Vancouver. The ABs spent the time either sunbathing, snapping pictures of the scenery or sleeping and it is rumoured that one or two may have had a drink.

A marvellous trip was completed by a short coach ride back to the hotel, though some more energetic ABs walked so that they could pinpoint the outlets for provisions for tomorrow's yacht outing. "Time spent on reconnaissance is seldom wasted" (Colonel Hall 1991).

At the hotel we found a still beaming "Strapper" Jim ready for further embraces as he was still waiting for his airport bus. He got them!

A short pause for recovery and the whole party appeared in tour uniform to eat at the "White Tower" pizza Restaurant opposite the hotel, where the ABs were delighted to be joined by Eva and Stuart Wilson of Jokers International who had entertained us on three occasions, and it was nice to be able to tell Stuart that all his personal efforts had been so appreciated. Slight problem chaps, restaurant does not have 20 pint mugs!

After the meal we were joined by Peter Horn of Hagens (our travel agent) in a room set aside in the hotel where John Carrick's 50th birthday was celebrated; the cake nearly caught fire; reports, thanks and awards were given, and Chris with considerable support from members, was able resist recounting the "Eagle" joke.

JUNE 20

The party is beginning to break up. Colin and Colleen are the first to depart today at approximately 6am. Next Alan and Mary Filby and Angela left to catch the 10am to Toronto and Alan and Mary to transfer to New York, and Angela to "craft" her way around Toronto with her pal Karen.

Most of the others (including John Peirce just!) occupied the middle of the day with a cruise, in a hired boat, up Indian Creek. Having accompanied Angela to the airport, John was pushed to arrive in time for the 10am departure. Having debated the pros and cons at the airport terminal John decided that with a projected quayside arrival time of 10.05 it was worth a shot. Pounding along the dockside footpath, as fast as an AB can go at the end of a tour, John saw a patch of red which had come to indicate the presence of an AB.

Heartened by the cheer floating across the water from the yacht John got on board James Bond style with a leap across a widening gap as the boat departed (well it seemed like a gap). The remaining members of the party had a far more leisurely sequence to arrive on board Breakfast, (hot hash browns), and a visit to the market for provisions. Some members were even seen visiting a liquor store!

We idled out of the dock behind a seaplane as it took off to the cry (from John Carrick of course) of "Follow that sea plane - driver!" The weather was not kind for this trip (dull turning to rain), so the girls put away their bikinis and lounging on deck with a beer was substituted by lounging in the cabin with a beer. One highlight was the repeated toasting of "Strapper" Jim using up quite quickly a bottle of Glenfiddich a present from Jim to John Carrick for his big fiveoh.

JUNE 20 (CONT)

The atmosphere was relaxed, the scenery enjoyable with one or two frenetic last minute report writings to meet the Skipper's deadline for example the (newly promoted) Brigadier was seen "dictating" his report, flat on his back, mouth wide open, on a bunk. (Photograph available)

The congenial atmosphere, and possibly the bad weather, which kept us under cover, led to the composition of a new song to the tune of "She'll be coming round the mountain". 10 by lines were quickly forthcoming including :-

"John Oakley will be flashing a green card"

"Strapper will be rubbing deep heat in"

"The Colonel will be streaking down the wing"

This activity caused much merriment and maybe at last provided the Tour song, a keenly sought verse all over Canada.

After the trip, back to the hotel in the rain to await our final coach trip. Luggage expertly loaded for the last time. Airport, still raining. Peter Horn had checked us in, boarding passes ready. Just the luggage now. More arguments about sticks and how to load them. Watched Rod's goalkeepers bag disappear down the conveyor. Will that bag, twice the size of any stick come to an early grave.

Saved by the ISIS boat race crew. They had oars! A special check in desk was discovered. Remember that you Fiji bound Jokers. Our sticks were lost to sight in little green boxes.

Take off 7.30pm - still raining. The second AB's overseas Tour is near to completion.

How can four weeks pass so quickly?

JUNE 21

The Flight Home.

The final day dawned, if that is the correct word for a midsummer day over the Greenland Icecap, at an indeterminate hour which seemed to depend on which time an individual had set their watch. The sun, which eventually came into sight above solid clouds, never varied in intensity for the whole flight and was always on the left side of the plane.

The 21 remaining AB's, drowsy by now, were provided with their first poor airline meal of the Tour - I think it was dinner and that it was Ravioli. Then lights were dimmed at 8am in a vain effort to convince us it was nighttime. The clouds suddenly broke and we knew we had left British Columbia! In fact it was Greenland in all its splendour lying bare beneath us. It looked awesome, bleak and cold.

Negotiations continued to organise champagne for THE birthday party. The computer had, of course, failed us. The aircrew had, apparently never heard of Bucks Fizz (well they were French) and were not prepared to mix anything with their sparkling wine. Eventually a pretty disgusting white liquid was placed before us but no sweat - big bad John was 50 and toasted.

After that things pass in a flash. What on earth was that we were given for Breakfast? Solid cloud again - it must be Test match time. Circle Watford, into cloud, appear low over Heathrow, land 30 minutes late. Customs. The last farewells. Where is our chauffeuse? The Oakleys also waiting. Ah here they come, son (Oakley) and daughter (Webb) carrying full beer mugs. "We thought we would wait in the pub and forgot the time!" Likely story

All over. Here's to New Zealand 1994.

RESULTS

TORONTO	v	OOKPICS	LOST	0-1
EDMONTON	v	SELECT XI	LOST	1-3
CALGARY	v	SARACENS/WARRIORS	WON	4-0
CALGARY	v	WARRIORS/SARACENS	WON	6-2
VANCOUVER	v	HAWKS	DREW	1-1
VICTORIA	v	EVERGREEN MASTERS	WON	2-1
VICTORIA	v	OAK BAY FOSSILS	WON	3-1
VANCOUVER	v	JOKERS INTERNATIONAL	WON	3-2
VANCOUVER	v	JOKERS INTERNATIONAL	LOST	0-1
VANCOUVER	v	WEST VANCOUVER	WON	3-1

PLAYED 10 WON 6 DRAWN 1 LOST 3

GOALS FOR 23 GOALS AGAINST 13

SCORERS :-	C. WEBB	1	C. BRANSGROVE	2
	J. CARRICK	2	J. PEIRCE	4
	M. BARBER	7	C. RICHARDSON	7

PLAYERS OF THE TOUR :- M. BARBER (33) and
A. HALL (18)

In VICTORIA

CRICKET :- LOST 135 for 7 against 145 for 8

ANCIENT BRITONS Cumulative Playing Record

PLAYED 47 WON 15 DRAWN 5 LOST 27

GOALS FOR 99 GOALS AGAINST 113



THE PARTY