



# ANCIENT BRITONS

## MINI TOUR

### HOLLAND 2015



## Thursday 09/04/15

'Up with the larks', who am I kidding! I arose sometime after; after what I don't know as I was asleep, but time to do the shopping for bits on our return, as travelling tomorrow. It was then time to take Marley for a walk prior to kennels. It was decided to take the car to the car wash, then back home to wash the wheel trims and give the inside a quick vac, followed by sandwiches for lunch, a quick bet on the Gee Gees and football at the weekend.

Later on Hannah and James (Sandie's daughter and boyfriend) came round as whilst we were preparing for Holland, they were also off on a short holiday to Benidorm but Sandie was booked to give them a lift to the airport - 3 o'clock tomorrow morning!! No cooking tonight so it was decided to order a Chinese Takeaway followed by a quick few rounds of the Logo game. If you don't know what chocolate or chocolate bars look like then you have no chance. Needless to say I don't win (Sandie did). We did consume a few Beers / Cider / White Wine / Freixenet throughout the evening (I call it practising for the weekend away).

Suitcase was packed, hockey bag down from the loft (after removing the cobwebs). Sandie has now found out that one hockey kitbag is heavier than one suitcase. As there was to be an early start for 3 of the 4 occupants, Zebedee decided that 11 pm was late enough.

## Friday 10/04/15

At 2:20 am Sandie was up ready to take Hannah and James to Birmingham Airport. One secret she kept for a whole fortnight was that the return journey took her 1 hour as she went the wrong way and ended up in the direction of Birmingham and not Coventry. Back to bed for an hour or so but Sandie wasn't too successful in getting to sleep (today would be a long day). Up at 6 am to wash hair, (Sandie not me) with the aim of leaving Coventry at 8.15. After returning home for a necklace we eventually "set sail" and arrived at the Eurotunnel on time. Time for a quick coffee, then we were ready to board, Sandie with her G & T for the tunnel. Once through the Tunnel we entered Belgium - it was time to stop at Adinkerke for my warm-up ciggies, and then back on the road. Bypassing Bruges all seemed hunky dory and then the wheels started to "come-off". Virtually stationary round Ghent, very slow round Antwerp as it seemed like 15 lanes converging into 3. By the time we got to the outskirts of Rotterdam I was well and truly p...ed off. Directions were perfect until about 4 miles short of Noordwijk when we were instructed to turn off towards Beeklaan, but no signs (subsequently found out it is a road name)! When we were about 6 miles north of Noordwijk an Zee we saw a sign sending us back, so we doubled back along the coast route into the city centre and there was the Hotel impressive on the horizon.

Eventually arrived at Hotel at 7:55, almost 12 hours travelling - approximately 425 miles!!! We walked into Reception and our room wasn't ready - IT IS 8 PM FOR GOODNESS SAKE. Give me 20 seconds said the receptionist I am talking to the Housekeeper - "keep talking I'm off to the Bar". After Julia had a quick chat, we now had Room 366. Up in the lift to Floor 3; according to the signs the highest number is 330. Back to Reception, "sorry Sir but you need to use a different lift". Now that would have been a good thing to say when giving us the key! Mr Sharratt did tell us later that you can walk all the way through but there are no signs to tell you this.

At least the room has a sea view. Because of the problem we are offered 2 complimentary drinks. Large beer and a glass of Pinot Grigio, please. "Sorry Sir, but it only entitles you to 2 small beers. I think the look I gave him, did it. "But in this case Sir, no problem". It seemed like all other ABs had arrived and were in the Bar and therefore introductions to new Members duly took place with Lee and Teri Baron, along with Mike and Lou Handley, and David Read.

Once it was time to move en masse we were led towards the city centre of Noordwijk, following Colin and Tara (Taz). A pincer movement took place as some headed towards an Italian restaurant on the seafront, others started down the pedestrian section of the city centre. This didn't look feasible so Phil Hall went back to Pinocchio (another Italian

restaurant) "can you do a table for 13". After moving a couple who were halfway through their meal, we were all accommodated. On thanking the couple we found out that they were Americans, she was 2 weeks from giving birth and obviously not drinking but I managed to persuade the husband to have a drink as our apology. Once it was agreed to share the food bill but keep the drinks separate, we all settled down to an enjoyable meal, especially since **Phil Hall** had persuaded the owner that he preferred the beer without a 4 inch head!

During the meal, **David Read** offered his spare bed with Ladies being allowed to choose which they preferred. This led to **David Read** becoming known as **David "2 beds" Read**.

Once the bill arrived the traditional balance was wrong but once **Richard Turner**, **David Read** and **Clive Kendall** realised it was their 2<sup>nd</sup> bottle of Chianti, it soon became sorted. It was then all onto Shanks' pony back to the Hotel. Was it time for bed? Not according to **Paul Sharratt**. (It was 10:10 or is that the famous horror theme tune – ten, ten, ten, ten, ten, ten, ten). **Paul Sharratt** kindly offered to buy a round, so a few decided to join him. **Teri Baron** then mentioned that being a new Member, she had checked in on arrival and then gone down to the bar. She introduced herself to 3 people but then found out that they weren't ABs!!

### **Saturday 11/04/15**

Breakfast for some was at 9.15, well it was for me. Perhaps some were up earlier and now training on the beach. A good choice of food, hot and cold along with a selection of breads. The coffee tasted like coffee and we were joined by **Paul** and **Karen**. **Karen** duly ordered tea which came in individual pots. Sitting in the middle of the table was a choice of teabags. **Karen** duly took the lid off the pot and stirred. The hot water was well and truly stirred now!! Pity there were no teabags inside. **Paul** decided he wanted something from the buffet and met **Clive Kendall** up by the coffee machine. **Clive** had decided to have coffee the posh way in a cup and saucer, so placed them under the machine and pressed the button. The coffee was duly dispensed to fill the cup, especially if normal size. But **Clive** had used an Espresso size cup so the coffee overflowed not only the cup but the saucer as well. **Sandie** then explained to **Paul** and **Karen** that "Phil doesn't do mornings, he's grumpy". **Paul** then said that I reminded him of the grumpy men from The Muppets but initially forgot their names, then remembered "isn't one called Waldorf and the other one ----- Salad??"

All came down to breakfast at different times and some, **Mike and Lou Handley** decided to dine in the Beach restaurant along with the Wedding Party!!

After breakfast and even though it was raining we went for a walk as the game wasn't until 3 pm. A nice bracing walk along the front soon brought us back to reality and time for a coffee. Once back in the Hotel, perhaps time to get ready but not for **Phil & Sandie**. Back to a flooded bathroom, perhaps **Sandie** and **Phil** had more to drink than they thought and missed! On closer inspection it looked like the water was leaking from under the tap, flowing down it on to the sink top and then trickling on to the floor. Maintenance was called and it was explained to him, and he then called a plumber. (Might as well adjourn to the bar for a small beer). Once it was repaired the Concierge came and explained that every 6 months or so they check the taps and the washers and the washer had not been put back in so "it must have been the Students" he said. Blame someone else as usual. Eventually it was all fixed so could now return to the room and change into hockey kit, suits you **Sandie**; and then on to the bus for the strenuous journey up and down hill, through dale and valleys until eventually arriving at today's venue – after a 5 minute journey! No opposition as yet as we are almost 50 minutes prior to push back. Time for a warm-up ciggie or two and then watch the opposition practising as they arrive in dribs and drabs. First impression was that this lot look like they can play a bit.

**MATCH REPORT FOLLOWS:**



On a cool blustery Saturday, 12 Ancient Briton hockey players assembled at the Grand Hotel, Huis Ter Duin in Noordwijk an Zee, Holland, ready for the coach journey to the local hockey club. After about 5 minutes we were dropped off to face the challenge of dodging the bicycles coming at us from all directions as we walked the short distance to the club. Noordwijk hockey club, (pronounced noord vike) boasts 1,700 hockey members, but only 2 Veterans' sides. And Veterans means over 35, which was about the only thing we had in common as the Dutch side were at least 15 years younger on average than the ABs.

The first game against Veterans 'A' began with the Dutch forwards and midfield passing the ball around with great confidence and starting to pressurise the defence of debutante David READ, Alan SUTTON, Clive KENDALL and Phil HALL. Fortunately the whole team all battled to keep the Dutch at bay and the team's confidence was boosted by Richard BOUTCHER a goalkeeper in top form who was saving shots and clearing danger from the start. On the rare occasions the midfield managed to get the ball forward ABs looked like they might cause some problems with Lee BARON going close on one occasion after the ball was worked out down the right hand side through Richard TURNER, Colin NEWMAN and Mike HANDLEY before Paul SHARRATT crossed the ball. It was Noordwijk though, who took the lead with their top quality player giving Richard no chance with a well struck shot. The same player then doubled the lead with an even better shot just inside the post. The ABs started battling back and after good work by Frank COLWILL, he passed the ball to Paul SHARRATT who ran along the baseline looking to pass the ball back for a grateful AB to hammer in the goal. Well, that is what the opposition keeper thought; what Paul actually did was to pass the ball into the goal through the 4" gap that the keeper had left on his near post.



**“Where are the rest of my goals?”  
“Sorry Paul, Camera shutter speed too fast”**



**“Come on guys, help me out, I'm diving everywhere”**

After a rousing team talk by Clive, we all got ready for a second half battle. And a battle it was! The Noordwijk best player completed his hat trick with another fine goal and our backs were against the wall. Some incredible play by both Alan SUTTON and Phil HALL, prevented certain goals, but Richard in goal was also inspired and kept the score down to 3-1. With about 10 minutes to go another good move left Paul SHARRATT advancing towards the D with the opposition goalkeeper rushing out to meet him. Paul did a massive right to left dummy over the ball which left the keeper lying on the ground, whilst Paul calmly passed the ball into the net. This left the score looking respectable, but to everyone's astonishment Frank not only passed the ball for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in the game, but also found Paul SHARRATT again running towards the top of the D. This time the keeper did not make the same mistake. He narrowed the angle giving Paul the smallest of targets to aim at. Paul duly obliged with one of his

thunderbolts which the poor goalie only saw as it rebounded off the side and the backboard as it went past him on the way out back to the halfway line. With only a few minutes left the ABs were able to hang on for an unlikely draw against top quality opposition. Richard BOUTCHER and Paul SHARRATT were voted for as joint winners of the "Men of the Match" award. This was an incredible result as the balance of the game was probably 70/30 in favour of the Dutch side. They also proved to be sporting opponents and entertained us royally after the match. They did however warn us about the B team which were considerably younger than the A team. So off we went all looking forward to the game at 11.00 am the next day.

Noordwijk A 3 Ancient Britons 3

Goalscorer: Paul Sharratt 3

**Squad and Supporters to be found at the end of the Sunday report.**

**EDITOR: Robin Conway.**

After the game the weather slowly improved so that some people even ventured to stand outside, but the majority were not so daft and stayed indoors. A crate of Heineken duly appeared but no bottle opener. Fortunately they had a system of clicking one top against another and one fell off. It was co-ordination so the ABs were no good at that, but some had to try. Others like me just passed the bottle to the Noordwijk expert, Mathijs Dobson!! Someone suggested that they "got their long tackle out" but nobody really knew what Robin meant exactly!! At the same time Noordwijk provided a continuous buffet, starting off with nibbles being brought round, like chicken on a skewer, followed by a table in the corner with an array of dishes including tasty morsels like eel and herring. Once a case was finished, it was immediately replaced with a further case of Heineken (just keeping the sponsors happy). Even though the game finished about 4.30 the coach didn't return until approximately 7.00pm. Some players were still in possession of a bottle so duly took it with them, back to the coach as they prepared for their long journey to the Hotel. All made it without asking the driver to make a "comfort" stop.

Back at the Hotel and players were up and back downstairs faster than they had been on the pitch. Several ABs gathered in the Bar, does one call them "a clutch", "a swoop", "a pride" or even "a vintage" and after a quick decision we duly meandered out of the Hotel. As we left the Hotel one member of the ABs was still only partway through his beer, but rather than waste it, the glass decided to come with him (which gives you a 50% chance of identifying the person). On this occasion we turned right, as according to "Goalscorer" Sharratt he knew of a Bar he had found at the top of the shopping centre. This involved walking past the Radisson Hotel with the "mermaid with the big boobies" (Allo Allo), which was probably the only reason for taking this route.

Once there Messrs Sharratt and Conway duly ensconced themselves at the bar, collected 'kitty' and ordered the beverages. A convivial evening of chat took place until it was decided to wend our weary way home. En route there is usually something of note and on this occasion, it was no different. The "glass" was still present with its holder and as they walked through the pedestrian centre another AB noticed the Police ahead. In his desperation to warn the holder of the problem ahead, he didn't quite notice the 'moving' lamppost which duly smacked him one in the face. Of course there had to be a final "stopping" point closer to the Hotel, which involved the sponsors of the team that we were due to play tomorrow - 'Café Rosser'. This place was a tad louder and younger and some ABs didn't stay very long, but the remainder decided to use the dance floor. It wasn't quite Bill and Bobbie Irvine (13 World Titles between 1960 and 1968) and definitely not the Peggy Spencer Formation Team (her team appeared for 40 years on Come Dancing), but perhaps we could have found ABs' entrant for "Britain's Got Talent" – Colin and Taz.

Eventually all "known" ABs had trolled back to the Hotel, some were a tad concerned that we hadn't gone for a meal (justifiably) and there were others who had tried to join the party, but their attempts had fallen on deaf ears. Apparently Lee and Teri had been ringing

a certain person's mobile, but it was in his right hand pocket, the wrong side to hear it (obviously not available 24/7 then). They had done a complete recce of the area but to no avail, but who would expect ABs to walk up a pedestrian shopping area to find a bar!

A few people then stayed in the Bar for a few beers to prepare for the following day with the last being declared 'back in room' between 1:30 and 2 am (subject to ratification).

### **Sunday 12/04/15**

Morning game today so up a tad earlier, changed and down for breakfast by 8.30. Similar buffet selection and nothing dramatic happened this morning (to my knowledge). Afterwards it was back to the room, get sticks and prepare for the bus departure @ 10am. Some 5 minutes later we are at our destination, again prior to hosts, who slowly arrive and appear even younger than the players from yesterday. Today the weather was much better and a change of pitch meant a slightly slower game and the ball bouncing less. A few warmup ciggies whilst watching the opposition showed the side to be probably quicker but a tad less skilful; but still a massive challenge for the ABs.

The next day saw a couple of injuries manifesting themselves with David READ pulling a fetlock, although some bright wit suggesting he may have fallen out of one of his 2 beds. Readie bravely stood on the line waiting to come on for one of the inevitable substitutions that was going to happen. Readie could also be heard asking for shirt number 256 when it became available. Frank had hurt feelings because of the amount of times Clive had to tell him to shut up during his team talk and at half-time Frank went over the opposition to talk to them (but was told to shut up and go away by the opposition's captain).



” Yes we are under attack again!”



” Get up Richard, stop resting!”

So with a bare eleven the ABs faced up to a fit and fast Noordwijk B team who were clearly out to improve on the A team effort. And within 4 minutes they had done just that by scoring past the ABs defence who hadn't seen much of the ball up to that point. The game then settled down, with ABs showing good basic skills and Noordwijk some good closing down work. A superb passing move from the back to the front involving 5 players saw a short corner for the ABs and Paul SHARRATT blasting the resultant shot past the keeper and defender to make it 1-1. Frank COLWILL was causing the opposition all types of problems with his skills and at one point had 5 players around him trying to get the ball off him. A few minutes later when the whole of the ABs were calling upon him to pass, he strode into the D and calmly thumped the ball home. This was the first time the ABs had been in the lead and it seemed to settle the side into playing passing hockey.

The second half was more of the same with ABs getting some more short corners. From one of these corners a defender clearly and blatantly stopped the ball with both feet on the line. Despite all 22 players plus supporters seeing this, the umpire did not, until the other umpire ran up from 80 yards away to tell him it was a penalty stroke to the ABs. Paul SHARRATT



waited until the keeper had committed himself before pushing the ball into the goal. There was still time for drama and an onslaught by the opposition saw a flicked shot just elude Richard BOUTCHER and make the score 3-2. A resolute final 3 minutes saw chances at both ends, with Alan SUTTON again clearing off the line and Phil HALL calmly letting a shot hit the far post at the final penalty corner, before clearing wide and out of danger. ABs came away worthy winners in what was a tough but enjoyable game against much younger opposition. The whole team were voted "Men of the Match" for an outstanding effort.

Noordwijk Veterans B 2 Ancient Britons 3

Goalscorers: Paul Sharratt 2 (1 PC, 1 PF); Frank Colwill 1

**The Squad:- Richard BOUTCHER (GK), Alan SUTTON, Clive KENDALL (Captain), Phil HALL (President), David READ (room 256), Richard TURNER, Colin NEWMAN, Lee BARON, Robin CONWAY, Mike HANDLEY, Paul SHARRATT, Frank COLWILL (shut up Frank).**



**The Supporters:- Diane BOUTCHER, Pam SUTTON, Sandie HALL, Julia GREENHOUGH (Tour Organiser), Tara SIMMS, Teri BARON, Ruth CONWAY, Lou HANDLEY, Karen DALY, Jackie COLWILL, Jean WRIGHT, John CARRICK.**

**EDITOR: Robin Conway.**

I have to say that the game was more enjoyable than the previous day though the opposition were younger, probably because the ABs stayed dry for a start and secondly were always in the game. After the game the "Heineken" case duly arrived and bottle expert, Mathijs Dobson was called into action. The BBQ food began with pitta balls and mustard and cheesy nibbles with dips, then more beers, then more food, then more beers until at 3pm the coach was spotted in the distance. We said our goodbyes after Clive Kendall had given the post-match "thank you" speech.

This time the bus driver took us on a scenic route back to the Hotel taking approximately 20 minutes. Karen duly got off the bus first and played the part of the concierge behind the lectern at the entrance, welcoming the guests as they arrived. It seemed like a good idea to have a coffee and a beer in the Lounge. Eventually it was time to change for the "End of Tour Dinner" in the Brasserie La Terrasse. It was not going to be a private room as other guests would be present, so this could make speeches difficult. We were also honoured to be joined by two of our Opposition from the game earlier, Joost and Roy.



Sorry did somebody say something!!



Thank goodness this was taken early.

We did have a formal toast prior to the meal when all ABs stood to acknowledge "Absent Friends". The following is the Menu for the Evening:-



**Tartare of raw salmon**

Capers, pickles, samphire, salmon caviar, lime crème fraîche  
*Grüner Veltliner Stadt Krems Kremstal Austria*

**Or**

**Pickled sirloin**

Spring vegetables, quail egg, lettuce, dill mayonaise  
*Blauer Spätburgunder Knipser Pfalz Germany*

*OR*

**Skin fried sea bream fillet**

Potato mousseline, young carrots, spinach, tomato vinaigrette  
*Rioja Blanca Ostatu Rioja Alavesa Spain*

**Or**

**Roasted free-range chicken**

Candied sauerkraut – appel/onion compote – gravy of poultry  
*Merlot Verum Patagonië Argentina*

*OR*

**BLT Carrot cake**

Elderflower sorbet, basil crème fraîche  
*Tokaj Classic "3 puttonyos" Winery Macik Slovakia*

**or**

**Selection of European cheeses**

Toasted nut bread, apple syrup  
*10 years Old Tawny Taylor's Douro Portugal*



During the evening a few people decided to toast absent friends again, whilst others decided to 'take wine' with present company. **Paul Sharratt** 'took wine' with all those who had scored a hat-trick this weekend, i.e. - himself. Pamela Sutton duly 'took wine' with all the supporters and **Phil Hall** 'took wine' with all new Members (or virgin tourists). **John Carrick** then entertained the entourage in his own inimitable style with an impromptu speech regaling us with tales of yesteryear and also some a tad more recent – my lips are sealed. When we arrived at the coffee stage, **Sandie** decided to open the complimentary chocolate; unfortunately it was the sugar which spilled over the tablecloth. **Paul** then said "I'm going to the loo, but do not want to miss anything". **Diane** said "leave the door open".

As the wine flowed so did the memories and **Karen** for some reason told us that she made **Paul** wait 3 months, to which **Paul** said "I put my hand on her knee and moved it up and down", to which **Phil** replied "I didn't know her knee moved that much". **Paul** said "he even had blisters waiting, but he did know where it was". **Phil** said "he was glad that at least his memory was still working". **Paul** said "it was, as I was arriving rather than coming!"

ABs adjourned to the bar where a few more beers and wine were consumed and it was in this environment that people started to remember some of the things that had happened during the weekend. For some reason earlier in the day **Frank** organised a car to bring him back from the beach. **Julia** took some photos of the view from the Hotel, so you can see how far away the beach is!

**Colin** said that "**Taz** was having a great time entertaining the locals and being very hospitable to the opposition". **Taz** said "at least I didn't spill my drink down my front."





So Frank "does it look like it is a long way back from the beach?"



Mike said to Richard Boucher "would you like a drink", Richard said "No, I'm alright thanks, I've had my limit and if I have any more I will be f....d later" (language Timothy, for those that can remember the Ronnie Corbett comedy "Sorry"). Phil then asked if Diane knew that and Richard said "best not tell Diane".

Karen was thinking about going for a wee and promptly fell down the steps from the bar. To be honest they were quite big steps.

Richard Turner said "you know when to go down Teri". Unfortunately Readie came in on the wrong end of that conversation and said to Taz, Ruth and Teri that he was not desperate, he was just encouraging.

Lee became the ultimate philosopher when he said "if only I had scored those 2 goals we would have won 5-3, but we could have won by more!"



Like everything it all seemed so much funnier at the time. Slowly but surely ABs drifted off to bed and all that remained were the traditional diehards, at a guess the same people. A few went out for the proverbial cigarette and on returning via the revolving door, Joost managed to trap Phil in the door (not content with on the pitch, but also off it!).

It is believed that the final curtain came down sometime around 3:30.

### Monday 13/04/15

As we had a long journey ahead of us, Sandie and I went down for a quick breakfast and were joined by Mike and Lou Handley. The chat continued and after an enjoyable conversation re the weekend, we said our goodbyes. The return journey to the Eurotunnel



was a lot easier and we arrived in time for a coffee before boarding. Arriving home to a 'Marley less' house we decided to nip up the road to the Penny Farthing pub for a meal. So it was the end of a thoroughly enjoyable short AB tour. **All our thanks go to Julia Greenhough for her superb organisation.**

