

Jersey Tour 2014

10 April As usual the holiday started for me the day before departure. Coffee in bed as usual prior to a last walk with Marley, then he was off to kennels on his holidays. So keen to go that he whined in the car and as soon as we arrived he tried to pull my arm out of the socket. At least he is happy to be there, so we do not have to worry. It would have been easier if I had bought his food prior but a slight detour didn't seem to waste much time. It was then time for a visit to the Car Wash followed by a quick visit to Sainsburys for lunch, cheese and piccalilli sandwiches.

Back home and it was time to plan the route and set the Sat Nav. For some reason the Jersey postcodes do not seem to match the street name but after a bit of persistence I did manage to find the route to the pitch for the relevant games. I then rang the Hotel in Bournemouth to arrange mine and Sandie's late arrival on our return, as leaving Jersey on the afternoon ferry on Monday.

It was then time to get the kitbag out of the loft and sort out the relevant shirts and socks. We couldn't be bothered to cook so nipped out to the Penny Farthing for some Lamb Chops, glass of Pinot Grigio and a pint of Pedigree. Then once back home, we settled down to watch a recorded video of a Jane Doe movie. Bed at 10:45, all cases packed and ready for tomorrow.

11 April Up at 7:10, Sandie up at 5:30 to have bath and wash hair. We eventually got on the road at 8 o'clock and had an easy start to our journey, but then got caught in traffic at junction 9 on the M40. A bit of quick thinking, changed lane, jumped the queue and cleverly joined the slip road a mile up the road. Arrived in Weymouth at about 11:50, met John Peirce in the car park. Apparently he had to register to park the car, so used my mobile but to no avail. John went into the Condor Office and all got sorted and he moved his car in to their car park. On to the Ferry and as we had allocated seats we found ourselves in the middle of a family. Once the Ferry left Weymouth there were several spare seats so we moved and joined up with John and Sheila Butler. We then had a bite to eat along with a Gin and Tonic and a London Pride, before Sheila and Sandie went off to duty free to get their Gin for Jersey. Once we docked it was then a simple journey in convoy along the coast to St Brelade's Bay Hotel, but parked in the wrong place – the Fitness Centre, told to move, before moving to the other car park the other side of the Hotel. Checked in, room was large and just what I ordered.



It was then time for a few beers and Gin and Tonics before sorting out the cases and getting ready for the evening meal. After taking advice from Mervyn it was decided to try the Sugar Reef and he led the way with a few others following shortly afterwards. On arrival, after several had walked past we found Paul Sharratt, Karen Daly, Robin Conway, Richard and Diane Boucher were already ensconced. But no Mervyn and Sue !! A quick pushing together of 2 tables and we were ready, 2 bottles of Merlot for all with a Pinotage for John and Sheila. There was a limited Menu but 6 Thai Curries and 2 Fish and Chips were duly ordered. During the meal John Butler duly asked “When are you getting your hair cut Phil?” and he was promptly told “I got it cut in February”. He then apparently said to Sandie, out of Phil’s range, that if you can get him in a ponytail I will buy you some Champagne. Apparently the Thai Curry was really good and came with extra sauce. Afterwards it was back to the Hotel and an invite to Room 94 for a Port or two. Bed duly came sometime around midnight.

12 April Up at the crack of dawn, well a tad later for some and prior to going down to breakfast at 9 o'clock, a quick look at the view from the balcony. To the left the bay, to the right Nigel Mansell’s house.



Paul Sharratt then found out the next Tour was likely to be Portugal October 15, Karen Daly then said October 15, no October 2015. An excellent breakfast with food that looked appetising along with several cold choices. This was followed by a walk along the beach; Sandie rolled the trousers up for a paddle in the sea and then time for a quick coffee. Back to the Hotel to get ready for the convoy trip to the Le Quennevais Sports Centre for a 2:30 start. But would Phil be in a ponytail ???



A few people noticed but most thought it was done on purpose not knowing about the bet the previous evening; Phil duly kept it in for the whole game !! The following is courtesy of skipper Tony Perryman.

What a great weekend we have all had, the hockey was always going to be hard going as we only arrived with 10 men who could turn out on the field with Clive being unable to play due to his broken finger - we wish him a speedy return to the field.

Most people travelled by ship, crossing a very calm English Channel on a very warm Spring evening and this sunshine stayed with us all weekend making it very pleasant for our very supportive ladies to sit and watch and some even got a touch of sunburn. We all booked into the St Brelade's Bay Hotel and what a great place again "Julia thanks", very close to the beach and newly re-furbished.

Our first game on Saturday afternoon was against a Jersey side who, as we now take for granted, were going to be a bit younger than us. Our line-up was of great interest, Merv in goal, Phil sweeper, Richard Boutcher right defender (never played out before), skipper in the middle, John Butler left defender (first game with us for 2 years) with Robin Conway and Paul Woodward mid field. Up front we had John Peirce (first game since his knee op), Paul Sharratt & Mike Heywood. As hoped we were able to borrow a player and "Foxy" played in mid field for us. One of our 2 stars of the weekend Jackie Woodward (not played for 8 years) was persuaded to change and act as 12th "man" (someone for Clive to use as and when) because we were sure someone would need a rest.

Within 3 minutes of the start we shook our hosts to the core, a ball to the skipper from Paul Woodward in our half of the pitch was taken into the Jersey half and struck cleanly onto Paul Sharratt's stick in the D and with great power gave our host for the weekend Tim Pollard in goal no chance at all. The realism of what we were up against followed very quickly and we were soon defending from all quarters, this is where in my opinion the other star showed and this was Richard who made so many interceptions and stops in the D off the line and deflections. Of course everybody else were as equally busy marshalled with great skill by Phil, deft tackles by John and tremendous running in mid field by Paul, Robin & Foxy and our visit into the Jersey 25 was fairly rare. Shorts against us came and went and were well defended with Merv doing his part in the whole rear-guard effort going on, and it was well into the half before we conceded from a very well worked short corner. Our front players were having very little chance to put Tim under pressure and the odd chance we had came to nothing as John is still without his best mobility. Paul S and Mike tried to link the rather large gap between defence and the Jersey goal. The largest roar from our ardent lady supporters was for Jackie when she took the field to give John a break and was soon into the game down the left.

The umpires were kept fairly busy as, unusual for our games, a member of the Opposition was treating the game as an Over 50's cup game and I am sure a little bit of French blood upped the ante. Just before the end of the half Jersey were awarded a flick for a foot stop on the line, but fortunately for us the shot went 2 metres over the bar. By now it was getting very warm and half time could not come too soon. Clive took over the half time talk, not that he had players to change around but it was decided to play with only 2 forwards and bolster the very hard worked mid field. John came back on for Jackie.

The second half was more of the same despite having an extra mid field player as most of us were defending with success short corners and all, at one stage it sounded a bit like Morris dancing as Paul S's stick and our now named friend Pete were exchanging contact and unfortunate some of the verbal that followed led to Chris fulfilling one of his less enjoyable tasks.

Towards the end of the game we had a couple of very close efforts when John got onto the end of some long balls, one in particular looked to be heading for the top corner but Tim managed to palm it over the bar. A very tiring game came to a close as a 1-1 draw. An amazing result and then we moved on quickly to the local for a much needed drink as there were no changing rooms. As is normal with these games, the very supportive ladies elected Richard as the Man of the Match for his outfield star performance.

Bottom right picture is Paul Sharratt just before scoring. Pictures courtesy of Diane Boutcher.



The after game drinks were held at La Marquanderie, where a few Liberation beers were downed. It was then time to return to the Hotel to bathe and change before getting on the coach to the Moorings Restaurant on Gorey Pier. Our information was that we were having a meal costing £25 and then John Peirce and Phil had accounted for the wine as an extra. What a surprise we had when it came to the bill - the wine was inclusive !! We eventually left the restaurant at about 11 pm and back at the Hotel there was still time for a few ports for Clive Kendall John Peirce and Phil. A couple of hours were then spent dissecting hockey before retiring at approximately 2 pm.

13 April With a game at 10:30 it was necessary to get up a tad earlier and have breakfast at approximately 8:30. “Don’t say you feel jaded” I was told. For certain athletes, breakfast was a concern with eating too close to the game, but for others it was time to indulge. After breakfast it was time to get ready to leave but the lift created a problem for Sandie as the key didn’t fit ! Most people just pressed the buttons. Once at the Le Quennevais most took the same route to the pitch apart from John Butler. When asked where he was going, John replied “I know where I’m going”; Sheila quietly remarked “that’s debatable”.

Once by the side of the pitch several Ancient Britons did their warm-ups but Phil did his by the side of the pitch. This time it wasn’t a cigarette but a Deep Heat spray on the back followed by a lean-back, then a lean-forward. Sandie then started laughing which turned into tears of laughter which then set Karen off and she started laughing. Those in the crowd who saw the Warm-Up Routine said that it had to be seen to be believed. As the opposition started to arrive Paul Sharratt duly noticed that one of the opposition was of the opposite gender and pointing to her saying “Lady”, to which Karen added “WOMAN”.

The following report is courtesy of skipper Tony Perryman. Pictures courtesy of Diane Boutcher.

20 hours later we were back on the pitch. This after a great evening meal at The Moorings Hotel at Gorey arranged by Tim Pollard for us, it had been agreed that we would go by coach so as everyone could relax as they wished and what a great meal we had with very nice wine.

10:30 am came around very quickly but fortunately no one had picked up any life threatening injury on Saturday as normal injury did not come into the equation for this game against Old Victorians even younger than Saturday, but they only had 10 so something was even !! No early joy for us, this time very much the reverse, they were young and quick their first goal from a sharp reverse stick strike as the 48 year old central attacker got away from the skipper giving Merv no chance. It soon became evident that John was not going to see much of the ball at his end of the field as Mike was holding back in the mid field hoping someone might get the ball to him. Phil was doing a sterling job keeping us alert to rapid movement of the Old (or was it Young) Victorians, with our mid field of the 2 Paul's and Robin working very hard in trying to find John but with very little success.

It was not long before we were 3-0 down with firm shots from open play which Merv would agree on his better day would not have gone in or if they were not so young they would not have got the shots away. A late arrival for the Old Vics called Nigel joined us to strengthen our midfield and allow Mike to go further forward. This did give us more control across the middle but did not prevent another goal before half time.

Clive had less option to talk about at half time in this match; Jackie had again agreed to play and would come on for Mike up front. At the restart it was evident that the Old Vics had rearranged their side and I for one had a 54 year old to mark, a bit better chance to keep up with him !!! The mid field led by Robin were able to make some progress and we did earn a couple of shorts but were unable to make them count but in between, their attacks were pretty relentless with Richard and John doing some very good work in keeping the ball out of the D. A further goal was conceded when the defenders were outnumbered by a quick breakaway, the heat very hard work, 2 games in 24 hours and most likely the previous night starting to tell but no one gave up. Cheered on by our loyal ladies a 3 ball movement found the ball in the goal, a free hit from Phil down the middle found Robin who ran it on and timed a perfect pass to John who struck it with the face of his stick, yes face of the stick and into the goal. This lifted the whole team and soon after this we were unlucky not to get a second when a deflected shot hit the upright, Jackie helped build some good attacks down the left but it was all absorbed by their defence. Still the attacks came at the defence and Phil was heard to say "here they come again only 4 of them this time", we did let in a further goal before the end, 6-1 final score. By the end it was really hot and every one had earned a drink at the pub for such a tremendous effort, but no opposition, so we enjoyed a drink on our own.

In the evening we were hosted by Tim and June Pollard (AB members) to a very fine meal and drinks and Robin was awarded Man of the Match by our ladies. We left Tim and June at 10 pm by coach almost the end of a great weekend spent in the true AB's manner, thanks to you all.



A squad primed for action.



A team on the defensive.



Chairman John Peirce scoring our goal.



Commiserations to the Ancient Britons

After the game we again adjourned to La Marquanderie, but this time no opposition. Because of the sun several ABs sat outside enjoying the Jersey air whilst imbibing in the Liberation Ale. Some got hungry so Mr Sharratt ordered some garlic bread. Ten minutes later 4 large plates appeared with garlic bread, some with cheese and tomato, enough to feed more than one !! Generous to a fault he invited several who were then duly fed and watered. Eventually people drove or walked back to the Hotel a little jaded but merry. Paul Sharratt was later seen on the balcony in a state of undress, rumour has it that it was a full moon or was it somewhere to park your bike. Returning to his room he was then seen on the balcony in just a towel. Still Karen wasn't convinced. He then went back into the room, only to return dressed in a Hotel dressing gown. This seemed to work. At the same time apparently our Chairman John Peirce went up to his room only to return to Reception to ask for a key !! For some it was time for a short siesta followed by a relaxing bath before we all got back on the coach to go to Tim & June Pollard's house. The ABs were shown into the garden where we had an aperitif, whilst certain ABs played with the Boxer dog. As the sun began to set and the temperature we adjourned to the front room which had tables and chairs aplenty along with a buffet table fit for a King or even a Queen. June was also serving lasagne or chicken curry or quiche with salad. To follow there was a selection of cheeses including Brie and I must admit my particular favourite, the majestic St Agur. In the background was music for the not so young and John Butler. An evening of musical Classics most of whom were Buddy Holly apparently, but Robin Conway managed to Name That Tune in three notes. John Peirce did ask Robin "if he thought he was coming to Jersey for a rest"; Robin replied "No, I was coming with the wife". More musical classics were known to several but Lonnie Donegan confused one person and "Move It" is now apparently by Elvis and not Cliff. A thoroughly enjoyable evening of food and entertainment – THANK YOU TIM AND JUNE.



It was soon time for the ABs to mount up and get back on the coach for a snifter or two in the Bar. John Butler duly honoured his bet and Sandie got her Champagne and then this was followed by an invite to John Peirce and Clive Kendall's room for a port or two. Unfortunately Clive seemed to take his time in arriving, perhaps it was the weight of his new tracksuit slowing him down, but by the time he arrived Karen Daly was already in his jimjams. Not long after all adjourned to their respective rooms.

14 April No hockey today and a percentage of Ancient Britons were due to leave whilst some were staying on the island to enjoy the weather and hospitality. Breakfast was a tad later today for some and also a little disappointing. I ordered poached eggs which appeared ok initially but were quite watery and tasteless. Also notice that Paul Sharratt and Karen Daly had ordered similar and they concurred. It was then time to pack, pay the bill and having time on one's side, a little tour of the island. First off it was west towards Corbiere, the famous racehorse, sorry the famous lighthouse. It was off limits to get up close but it did appear to have had a recent lick of paint. We then drove off around the headland and



found Beauport Bay, a secluded spot which is one of Jersey's famous beaches and an authentic suntrap. We then decided to drive into St Helier for lunch but this is easier said than done. The car parking is all done by way of a card which you buy in Newsagents. I did ask a taxi driver if there was an alternative and that was a car park in South Street but he said that would be too difficult to find. So we drove out of St Helier back towards St Brelade's Bay and found a lovely little sun trapped café for a locally caught crab sandwich and a beer. It was then back to St Helier and the ferry. We arrived early but the queue soon moved and we were on the ferry and this time two seats without a family. We arrived early in Poole as it was another smooth crossing and duly arrived at our Inn well in time. Down to the bar for a few pints of Wadsworth 6X and Wadsworth Henry and for Sandie 2 large glasses of wine before bed.

15 April Not too early for breakfast and obviously not as much choice as St Brelade's Bay Hotel, but the Chef did know how to cook poached eggs, they were delicious. A slow uneventful journey home where we arrived at an empty house; no Marley until tomorrow.

A thoroughly enjoyable few days spent with delightful company; "Thank You Julia" for your organisation, Tim and June for their hospitality, but as Leonard Sachs used to say on the TV programme "The Good Old Days" - but chiefly yourselves.