

CSG Bowls Club Bournemouth Trip

1st to 6th December 2018

On Sunday 1st December a group of intrepid members of the Bowls Club with a few friends embarked on the annual pilgrimage to Bournemouth, kindly organised by Rose and Rob Kirby.

Our destination as usual was the Durley Grange Hotel, where we received our usual warm welcome. We had to wait a while for our rooms to be ready, due to staff shortages, but this was no problem as most people went off for lunch and then we re-united in the lounge and caught up with everyone's news over a cup of coffee whilst we waited.

During the week everyone took off to different destinations mostly using the excellent Bournemouth bus service. Only a stone's throw away from the hotel is a bus stop with buses to Poole Bus Station going every few minutes. From there you can go to a huge variety of destinations. Alternatively a short walk down the hill into Bournemouth will give you access to more buses. A small group of us did our usual foray to Swanage by bus from Poole. It is about an hour's ride from Poole but through the pretty villages of Wareham and Corfe Castle with lovely scenery and waterfalls along the way. We usually come back on the chain ferry but this was closed this year due to maintenance work. Another day we had a walk round the shopping centre at Poole and also along the Quay to a very interesting maritime museum.

Other people went to Durdle Dor, Lulworth Cove, Wimbourne and Winchester (but the parking there is a bit of a nightmare). Strangely Salisbury did not hold its usual appeal! Tim and I went to Romsey and had a look round a lovely Abbey with a very interesting history, and then as it was such a terrible day we opted for a bus ride to Shaftesbury to see Gold Hill where the Hovis advert with the cobblestone hill was filmed.

Wednesday afternoon we were leaving to play Indoor Bowls at 12.15 and as the weather was not very agreeable a large group of us played UNO in the lounge, although some people were brave enough to venture out. The Indoor Bowls match was very enjoyable, although it was a very different experience to what we are used to outside and in short mat. The top rink was Ian McLeod, Chris Moir and Colin Kemp with Graham Buchanan, Rob Kirby and Mary (from Croxley Green) just 1 end behind. That evening was our Turkey and Tinsel Christmas Dinner and as usual the Durley Grange did us proud. We really could not fault the lovely dinner and afterwards in the lounge Father (or was it Mother?) Christmas paid us a visit and we all got a Christmas present. A delicious Christmas cake and mince pies were also laid out there for us.

As usual the week was not without its dramas – On the Tuesday Roy Pound fell on the concrete steps of the Pavilion and tumbled down quite a few. Fortunately he was wearing a thick coat which minimised the damage a bit but a subsequent x-ray revealed a broken arm and obviously he was very sore, bruised and shaken up. Chris and Roy soldiered on for the Wednesday as they did not want to miss the Christmas meal but went home early on the Thursday to visit the doctor and fracture clinic. Apparently Roy is still awaiting an operation to repair the fracture. Denise Williams was hammering on our bedroom door early one morning as her tap had come off in her hand and water was spouting out all over the place. The only person she had managed to find to assist her in reception was the little waitress, Sue. It seems you do have to be a jack of all trades at this hotel! Anyhow she managed to stop the water as a temporary measure and the plumbers came out the same day and fixed the problem.

The hotel is rather 'quirky' – Hubert's wardrobe doors came off when he went to open them, and the lift is like travelling in a telephone box – but any deficiencies are more than made up for by the lovely helpful staff, mainly Emma, Sue (the waitress) and Julian, the diminutive little barman (who is hardly higher than the bar and doubles as a waiter), the wonderful food and the ambiance. Every meal was delicious and everyone ordered a different combination of cooked breakfast without a raised eyebrow. Added to this, the atmosphere was so lovely – entertainment every evening in the lounge. Nearly everyone got up and had a dance at some point and we specially loved 'Hey Baby' when we could let vent to our 'oohs' and 'ahs' with feeling.

The value for money is fantastic and we all thank Rose and Rob so much for organising the trip and allowing us to share their find of this brilliant little hotel, which even boasts a swimming pool.