

CHILTERN TOURERS

BOWLS TOUR 19TH – 26TH April 2018 by Margaret Timberlake

HOTEL JUPITER, PRAIA DE ROCHA, PORTUGAL

Thursday, 19th April

The Hazlemere contingent presented themselves at Margaret and Tim Timberlake's house in Widmer End in the early hours of Thursday 19th April for a 3 a.m. departure. Everyone was on time despite the early hour and the coach departed on time. Next stop was Aylesbury, where we arrived about 3.20 a.m. However we were one member missing so we waited patiently for a while. Then Alex phoned the culprit who was fast asleep, having thought the trip was leaving on the Friday. As his house was on the way to the airport (with a little deviation) the coach driver agreed to pick him up from his house and to give him his due the culprit was ready to leave by the time we got to his house (amazingly!).

All went smoothly at Luton Airport (apart from the coach driver entering the wrong way, practically demolishing a shelter and going towards oncoming traffic to go up and over a central kerbstone to get back on the right track!) The plane left more or less on time and we arrived at Hotel Jupiter at about 11 a.m. It is a lovely clean hotel with very friendly and helpful staff and is situated right opposite a beautiful sandy beach. It was lovely and sunny on our arrival so most people unpacked and then went out for a stroll in the sunshine to get their bearings. Some people were a bit unlucky in that their rooms weren't ready until after 3 p.m. but it wasn't a big problem. Dinner was at 7 p.m. and the hotel had seated us altogether in one area in such a way that we could all be sociable, helped by the provision of the red and white wine on each table.

Friday, 20th April



The coach left at 9.45 to go to **Alvor Bowls Club**, a very friendly crowd. I was in Allan Rumble's team and for a while we kept the other team at bay quite well and for a time were even in the lead by 5, but the opponents gradually clawed their way ahead and beat us by 5. Sadly there were no winning rinks and the overall score was 64-131 to Alvor. We had a nice convivial meal afterwards of chicken, sausages, new potatoes & salad followed by carrot cake or fruit cake.

Although the weather had remained fine although a little chilly throughout the match, as we drove back to the hotel the skies darkened and shortly after our return at 2.30 p.m. it poured with rain and was very windy. However it did brighten up again later.

Saturday, 21st April

We awoke to thunder and lightning. However, optimistically, we left at 9.45 a.m. hoping to play **Pedras Bowls Club**, which was about an hour's drive away. We had coffee on arrival whilst awaiting the decision as to whether to play or not, which was to be given at 11.30 a.m. By this time the rain had stopped but it was still very windy and presumably the pitch would have been rather soggy. **The decision was made to abandon the match**, which left some people hugely disappointed and others greatly relieved, which just goes to show you can't please all the people all the time! However we understood it came down to a matter of health and safety so it was in our best interests. The tour guides then had the dilemma of what to do with a coach load of people on a wet and windy day. The decision was made to go to the Ikea Complex, which was a modern shopping mall with some very nice shops and restaurants. Naturally some of the men looked a bit alarmed at this prospect (thinking of their credit cards) but it was a good way to keep us all dry and wile away a couple of hours. By the time we left the sun was making its appearance again so we stopped off at Vilamoura, which proved to be a lovely destination.



Some of us wandered round its beautiful marina, looking at the boats we could never afford and licking ice-creams, which were more within our price range and the atmosphere was quite festive. Our leader Allan and a couple of other intrepid people decided to save their legs and go on the little chug-chug train around the town. I don't know where they ended up but it must have been through the swamps as some people returned with mosquito bites! We got back to the hotel at about 4.30 p.m. which seemed to please the football fans in the group as there was some interesting football match on the hotel T.V. (aren't they all?).

Sunday, 22nd April

A bowls-free day today and most of us opted to go to Lagos by various modes of transport, some by bus, some by train and some by taxi.



However everyone seemed to make it there as we seemed to spot someone we knew in every little café (which is very comforting in a foreign town).

Everyone had a good wander through the cobbled streets of Lagos and again the weather was kind to us. We all got back to the hotel about 5 p.m. – just right for a little relaxation time before dinner.

Monday, 23rd April



We set off at 9 a.m. to go to **Valverde Bowls Club**, which as the name seems to suggest is in a lovely setting with lots of greenery and flowers around it and mountains in the distance.



One team (Val, Eleanor, Billy and Candi) had a really good win (25-10). **There was much jubilation as this helped our team to a win overall for the first time in about 8 years**, so everyone was on a real high, especially Allan Rumble who also managed to win ten euros on the 'swindle', (which is so named as Allan is the only one who knows how it works, although he assures us it is all quite logical). Tim won the other ten euros so I am not complaining! A nice meal was provided in the lovely dining room with a background of squawks by the resident parrots.

It poured with rain on the way back to the hotel but by the time we got back at about 3 p.m it was lovely and sunny again so some of us ventured out again for a wander. Overall Score: 104-98 to Chiltern Bowlers

Tuesday, 24th April

After breakfast we left on the coach at 9 a.m. to go to **Tavira Bowls Club**, a longish drive of over an hour. It has a small clubhouse with a small swimming pool right in front of it, which fortunately no-one fell into although there was a near miss! **The team we were playing, St Saviours, were from Jersey** and were very friendly and the hosts of Tavira were very welcoming and hospitable and provided us with a lovely tea of sandwiches and cakes. Unfortunately we couldn't repeat our win of yesterday but Candi, Geoff, Eleanor and Roy Pound had a good win of 15-8. Overall Score: 76-99 to St Saviours. We got back to the hotel about 3.40 p.m. so plenty of time to glam' ourselves up for the meal out that night at a Portuguese Restaurant near Lagos. The evening at the restaurant was really enjoyable, tables all set round the dance floor, lovely food and plenty of it, lady singer with a lovely voice and all the music was of the era most of us know and love, viz. 60's! By the end nearly everyone was on the floor, dancing that is, and not prone as a result of the free wine and beer! We were very grateful to Bowling Abroad for providing this entertainment and drink.

Wednesday, 25th April

We woke to the sound of a 5 gun salute in honour of the Portuguese Revolution which heralded democracy in Portugal and in honour of which it was a public holiday. Our destination today was Floresta Luz B.C. which was an artificial green. The weather was boiling hot but there was a lovely breeze which helped although we all had to slap on lots of suntan cream. It was so hard initially to find the correct green and weight and we thought we would be slaughtered but in fact we managed to hold our own and the club only lost 78-116. The top winning rink was Bobbie, Geraldine, Tony Batkins and Tony the Tour Rep.

Team Photo from Floresta to be added when received ...

We left the club at about 1 p.m and the coach took us to Lagos for a couple of hours to enable us all to have some lunch. Being a bank holiday it was very busy and there was a lovely festive atmosphere. Personally we had a delicious lunch and Denise and I managed to down a jug of Sangria, by which time it was almost time to stagger back to the coach. Back at the hotel it was time to get packing (literally) before attending the Presentation Evening. The top woman player was Eleanor and the top man was Allan Rumble, despite Tony, the Tour Manager's, best attempts to disprove this. These awards were well deserved. All the members of highest winning rinks were duly presented with lovely mementos from Bowling Abroad. Denise Williams won an award as the 'unluckiest player' which basically meant she was always in the wrong place at the wrong time! After this Geoff from Cheddington got up and told some jokes which made us all chuckle and Cyril told some poems and demonstrated his impressive memory, called to a halt by Allan who reminded him that we were getting hungry by this stage. After this it was dinner and an early night for all of us.

Thursday, 26th April

Breakfast at 6 a.m. and off to the airport at 6.45 to catch a plane for Luton at 10 a.m. All went smoothly and we all got home safe and sound. I am sure we would all like to say a huge thank you to Allan for organising this trip, which was so enjoyable, and to Denise for typing all the paperwork. We know a lot of hard work goes into the organisation in every way.

Thanks are also due to Bowling Abroad for their input, management of the airline problem and helpfulness of the Tour Manager, Tony and his wife, Gill.

I have to add that Allan was a little disappointed that we all behaved so well that he wasn't able to raise as much money in fines as usual. He is already thinking about next year's tour and I hope he will get lots of takers as it is really something not to be missed.

Margaret Timberlake