

Report of the Algarve Bowls tour, October 10th – October 24th 2007

Day 1, Wednesday, October 10th

The suitcases are packed. It was quite a puzzle, because we wanted to take our own bowls. That is 6 kilos per person extra in a suitcase which already weighs 5 or 6 kilos. It means that we have about 8 or 9 kilos left for all the other things we want to take, not forgetting our bowls shoes and our club t-shirts.

At 4.20 am the front doorbell rings. Because our neighbour is on holiday, Paul, the club-secretary of the ABC ☺, our bowls club volunteered to bring us to Schiphol. It is very quiet on the road so we arrive at Schiphol very quickly. After saying goodbye to Paul, who wanted to get home fast to go back to bed, we went to check in for our flight. Nowadays it is possible to check in yourself, so we were able to choose row 14 (near the exit). After almost two and a half hours flying time, we start descending to the airport of Faro in the Algarve. Since there is a one hour time difference we have to set our clocks 1 hour earlier. We land at 9.20 am Portuguese time. Nice and early, so we still have the whole day ahead of us. It is a cloudless blue sky and the temperature is already 23 degrees Celsius, which is promising for the next few days. After collecting the suitcases we go to Guerain, the car rental firm our tour operator Vaya.nl deals with. We booked the cheapest a-type car. Usually this means the smallest car without air co available. We thought we would be getting a cheap Audi, but after dealing with the administration, we went out with the keys of a nice blue Peugeot 1007. A car with air co and a lot of electronic gadgets, among which electrical opening sliding doors. Also it appeared to have a diesel engine. That saves on petrol. What a luxury, quite different from my daily "Goddess", a Citroen DS. Recently we celebrated its 40th birthday (September 26 2007)..



rental Peugeot 1007

We start our tour in the Peugeot with 36418 km on the clock. We brought our own TomTom and placed it in the car. What modern times. You take a little gadget from home and you can find your way around Portugal easily. It is really an example of practical technology. At home I programmed all the bowls greens we wanted to visit as much as possible. The problem in Portugal is, that in a lot of cases the Urbaniz  o is used as an address. You get to the area, but not exactly where you want to be. As far as possible I looked for the GPS-address on the internet, to be able to programme the places exactly.

Our apartment is in Lagos, a little past the middle of the Algarve. It is about 88 km from Faro airport. Because we are early and it is more or less en route to Lagos, we decide to visit the bowls green of Praia da Oura in Albufeira to see when a Roll-up or open competition takes place. We can then plan our time in the Algarve accordingly. The fun part is that this bowls-club is also called the ABC (Albufeira Bowls Club). Thanks to our pall TomTom we find Praia da Oura in no time. In Albufeira is an open air green with a carpet like in Haarlem (Netherlands). We will find out later whether it is a nice green to play on.

After acquiring the necessary information, we carry on in the direction of Lagos. According to our information we should pass another bowls-club at Alvor. Approximately 18 km before Lagos, we see the exit for Alvor. We follow the signs and yes, this an example of only getting to the urbaniz  o, without knowing the exact address. So we looked around and found it. Quickly programming the GPS address in the TomTom, to enable us to find it the next time, regardless of the direction we come from. We meet Connie Borell, the manager, and her husband, John, of the green in Alvor. Friendly People who give us the information we look for. We also enquired for the days and times of the open competitions. The clubs name is San Antonio Lawn Bowling Club, but the green is called Alvor Bowling Centre. The local papers write about the "Alvor Lawn Bowling Club". It is a grass rink, so we are curious to see how we will perform on this rink later. They tell us not to forget to give Joke and Co their best regards. They remember Joke and Co from their visit a couple of years ago.

It is almost midday and we are now on our way to our apartment. We wonder what it will look like and what the surrounding area is like. It is located at Meia Praia beach. A long beach which runs from Lagos to Alvor, a total of 5 km. A good opportunity for a beach walk. The only thing between the apartment and the beach is a narrow road. It's a largely renovated complex and we luckily got a renovated apartment on the 4th floor. Spacious, looking out over the sea and a large balcony. We enjoy our holiday already. Immediately some shopping for the next few days. The supermarket is close by, especially with the car.



View from the balcony

After lunch we start planning the week. We want to combine exploring the area with playing as much bowls as we can. We intend to visit every bowls green in the Algarve and share our experience with others..

There are two carpet greens, the rest are grass. The remaining greens we intend to visit are Parque da Floresta and Vilamoura. We were going to skip Tavira. This green is past Faro in the direction of the Spanish border. After making preliminary plans we look forward to our first nights rest in a large bedroom.

Day 2, Thursday October 11 2007

After a very nice breakfast on the balcony, again in bright sun light and a blue sky, we went to the beach opposite the apartment complex. As said before an open long beach with very few buildings. One restaurant, and that's it. It will be 25° C today and the predictions are for a slightly lower temperature of 22° C for the next few days. This is a comfortable temperature, if there is no wind, especially with the sun shining brightly. While Saskia was taking a nap in the sun I decided to have a swim in the sea. This was immediately a warning against the under currents. These were quite strong and I had to fight fairly hard to get back to the beach. Once there it took a couple of minutes to catch my breath. Saskia never noticed a thing, except seeing me gasping for air for a few minutes. I was exhorsted by the strength it took me to get back to the beach against the under currents. The waves were not very big, but this apparently is not a sign for no or few undercurrents. Still it wasn't that bad for the rest of the holiday. From the beach we had a nice view of the land behind our hotel.



Appartemencomplex Meia Praia Beach Club

After lunch we made a tour in the direction of the "End of Europe", named S. Vicente. En route we got to the bowls green Parque da Floresta. At home I entered the correct address of this green in our TomTom and it lead us far into the park to the green. This green is located in the middle of a very luxurious golf course. A beautifully kept course, where you couldn't find a single bit of grass between the tiles on the patio's. It is close to Vale do Bispo and Budens. Here we meet Janice, the manager of



In the far distance the bowls green

Parque da Floresta Bowling Club. We receive a lot of information about the club and bowls in general in the Algarve. Bowls is becoming more and more popular. According to our information about 200.000 Brits live here, both Scots, Irish,



The Golf link with the luxurious villas in the background

English and Welsh. All spending their well earned retirement in the mostly luxurious houses. Because of the demand for houses by these British people, the prices of properties have gone up considerably in the last few years. There are also a lot of golf players who like to play bowls as well. Isn't Portugal nice? A lot more people would like to spend their retirement in this way. We agree to come and play bowls on Friday an say goodbye to Janice for now.



Rocky coast between Vila do Bispo en Sagres

We drive towards Sagres en S. Vicente. On our route we enjoy stunning views and we stop several times to admire the beautiful rocky coast line.

You can walk here for hours and enjoy the rocky coastline as seen in this picture. You have to take care though, because you can easily slip on the smooth and sandy rocks.



Rocky coast between Vila do Bispo en Sagres



We continue the tour further in the direction of the “End of Europe” named S. Vicente. It is a barren and dry area where the south coast and the West coast meet. The sea on the west coast is a lot wilder than on the south coast. More wind brings higher waves.

According to a memorial stone a 28 year old German boy fell down and died. Apart from this and the views there is not much to see. But if you go to the Algarve and want to visit the south coast, this is a place you should have seen. Via a nice route we go back to Meia Praia and have a nice dinner. In the evening the two of us enjoy a game of American joker, then to bed for a good nights rest to be fit to play tomorrow at Parque da Floresta. We look forward to this.

Day 3, Friday October 3 2007

Early in the morning the sun is already shining on our balcony. A tasty breakfast in the morning sun and our day is already a success, especially since we are going to play bowls in Portugal for the first time. We were going to go to Parque da Floresta, where Janice is in charge. The reception is very



hospitable and they are pleased that we join them to have a game of bowls. A lot of English (Oops British) of course and between 10.30 and 11.00 o'clock the "dressed in white" men and women arrive in the clubhouse. To the British this is a social event. Twice a week they play an open competition. Besides of this there are competitions between the different clubs, except with Vilamoura. According to the clubs Vilamoura is a separate club, which is totally commercialised. Vilamoura is not at all joining any of the Algarve bowls competitions. Anyway, we subscribe for the day, regardless of the position we play. They want to know though how we play in Holland. Saskia says she usually plays lead, second or third and I say usually third or skip

when playing fours. After everybody subscribed the teams are made. There are a lot of people playing, so it is going to be fours. Saskia starts on rink 4 and I on rink 8.

We play a good game and are as good, or bad, as the members of the club. The responses were very complementary. "Oh what a wonderful control weight Jan". That is a nice thing to hear, isn't it?

After the first 9 sets, we have lunch. We ordered a tuna salad and it tasted wonderful. After lunch we continued to play the remaining 9 ends. The first set is won by Saskia and sadly I loose. The second set it is the other way round. I win and Saskia looses. We really liked the rink and decided to come back and play again.

After the games we sat down talking to the members. They are very curious about bowls in Holland. Of course we mentioned our



Lunch between the sets

site on the internet and they are very curious about our Algarve Story. The English thought that Saskia had a nice style and a good swing. She was doing very well in comparison to the members that always play here. It gives a special feeling to play here surrounded by the magnificent natural surroundings. "Bowls in heaven" one could say. There was another green without carpet or grass. This



second green would be used again. We were told it was probably going to be another grass rink, but it hadn't been decided yet. Apparently it was a plan that has been on the shelf for years. Our experience on this green was very positive. Of course we didn't play on all the rinks, but we saw that they looked very decent and reasonably level. Also they were rather fast.

We found that a lot of bowls is organized. Competitions within the clubs, between the clubs of the Algarve and other tournaments. If you want to play bowls, there are plenty of possibilities in the Algarve.

After this first experience, we go to the beach to reflect on a nice day. We've earned that we think. A swim in the sea is comforting, because the temperature of the water is 23°, unusually high for the time of year. This is due to the southern wind which drives warm water towards the Algarve. In the evening back to the apartment to have a nice dinner. Tomorrow we plan a trip to the Monchique mountains. Goodnight for now.

Day 4, Saturday October 13 2007

We leave nice and early in the direction of the Monchique mountains. First we visit Silves, because I think there is a palace with a garden containing beautifully tiled pieces of art. Unfortunately this is not the case. There is a nice historical town centre with narrow streets you can just about get through in a small car. From Silves we carry on in the direction of Monchique, a nice little town on the top of the



View looking towards the sea. The lakes can be seen in the centre.

Monchique mountains. There are a lot of good view points on the way to the top where you get a good panorama of the whole area in the direction of the sea. It was a little bit hazy when we took this picture so you can't really see the sea very clearly. The photo is taken on the road to Foja. Apparently this is the best place for a panorama of the Algarve. We drive through Monchique and up the mountain to Fóia. A magnificent route and along the way the most beautiful panoramas. The clouds have disappeared by now and we have very nice views as can be seen on the next photo.



Panorama near the top at Foia

The top of the mountain range is high enough for a chance to a walk in the clouds. Not while we were there, as there was a cloudless sky. Because of a mild wind it was fairly cold though. As you can see in the picture above one has a good view of a large part of the Algarve. We continue our route in the direction of Aljezur, a small town on the west coast of Portugal. As said before a coast with a rougher sea, more wind and higher waves. It is a very nice route via small roads and through a magnificent natural area.

After arriving at the coast we follow the coast line to Arrifana, a small town with a fishing-harbour and a small beach.

A short walk on the pier gives us a good view of the harbour, with the rock formations, in the back



ground. On the left a picture of the harbour with the small fishing boats. The middle picture shows the road we came from. And the photo on the right shows clearly how steep the road leading to the harbour was. We have our packed lunch on the beach, enjoying the beach, the sea and the view.

After lunch and a good rest we go towards Lagos. We drive via the N-268, which runs along the coast first towards Vila do Bispo. We have been there before when we drove to S. Vicente.

Because it is still early, we decide to go to the centre of Lagos. We have not been there yet. Lagos has a nice boulevard with the old town centre on the other side of the road. Lagos is also a tourist



Boulevard of Lagos. On the left the canal leading to the Atlantic ocean and left the old centre of the town

centre, with an old town centre with small streets and alley ways. Very nice to walk through. Lots of little restaurants and terraces, where you can enjoy a good meal or have a drink. Even though we are already in the middle of October, it is still good weather at this time of night. It starts to be dark and the town centre is still a good place to be. Slowly we start our journey back to our apartment to reflect on a nice day again in the Algarve. Tomorrow we will play bowls in Alvor.

O Algarve é o feriado ensolarado para você

Day 5, Sunday, October 14 2007

The weather forecast is a little less promising today, they even expect a bit of thundery weather. At 11.00 o'clock we play bowls at Alvor. TomTom gave us a nice short route from Meia Praia to the bowls green. We did put the exact GPS-location in our TomTom, so it guided us via a nice route through



Bowlinggreen in Alvor. De name of the de club is San Antonio Lawn Bowling

nature and along a golf course to the correct spot. We are welcomed by Connie and John, the managers of the bowls green in Alvor. The name of the club is Santo Antonio Lawn Bowling Club. At that moment an English Bowling club is playing a match. We have a game of pairs with an English couple, who are also holidaying. What a pity, we left our camera in our apartment on the charger. We totally forgot about the thing. So we decide to make photos later. It is a heavy grass green, which we are totally not used to.

You can see that the English are used to playing on grass in the summer. Our opponents are not Lawn bowls but Crown bowls players. It looks a lot like bowls, but they play criss-cross on a green. And apparently the jack has a bias too. It seems it

is played a lot in the North of England. It's different, but nice to learn about. In spite of normally playing Crown-bowls, they win the first game. We find it difficult to get the right weight for the correct distance. Also you have to play fairly straight to get the right line for your bowls. This also means that it is tougher to place a bowl near the jack, when there are several bowls in front of the jack. It requires a different technique to accomplish this.

During the game there is a dark cloud hanging exactly above the bowls green. Of course it rains a little, for about 5 minutes. It is rather refreshing, but straight after the rain it is warm again.

After a drink, we play a second game. In spite of improving quickly on our play, we lose this second game as well. Although we have to underline the calls from our opponents "oh lucky me"! It is quite an experience to play on a grass green.

Because the female opponent has a bit of a pain in her back, we decide to go on playing singles for another 4 ends.

There are eight rinks on this grass green. Later we noticed that they play left to right as well as up and down. They change this every so often. It has probably to do with maintaining the grass green in tip top shape. A grass green obviously requires a lot more maintenance. The quality of the green is reasonable. We only played the one rink, but looking at the games on the other rinks, we got a good impression. We are not sure whether to play here again. It depends of our plans and the other greens we want to play on.

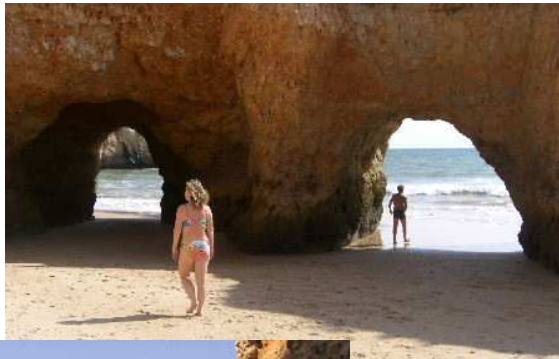
After saying goodbye to Connie and John, we have a rest on the beach of Alvor.

There is a bit more wind now. Is not very pleasant on the wide open beach of Alvor.

We knew that there were nice smaller beaches in little bays between the rocks, with alleyways underneath. At the end of the beach in the direction of Portimão we do see rocks sticking out of the sea. We decide to walk there because we think there is more shelter against the wind.



When we follow the road along the coast we indeed get to a very lovely beach. According to the map the place is called Tres Irmãos. There are in fact three separate beaches linked by dry pathways at low tide, but wading through water by high tide. It is great here. A very nice bay between the rocks. The rocks in the sea shelter the beaches from the sea and the wind. It is lovely to be here. Sylvia, our co member of the Tuesday night bowls evening in Holland, told us about a place with three beaches with stairs on she talk about because Lagos and is easily made. This one can little restaurant, the sea. On a own private on earth



the second beach leading up. Did this place? We are not sure, according to her it was between Praia da Luz. But a small mistake Two of the three beaches have a one of which is built into the rocks. only be reached from the beach or quiet day you almost have your beach. Very nice, almost heaven



Oh que bonito!



At low tide you walk with dry feet from one beach to the other, at high tide you'll get wet feet.



After a lovely time, we return to our apartment at about 18.00 pm. The fifth day turned out to be a very pleasurable day again.

Day 6, Monday October 15 2007

After breakfast we prepare ourselves for a trip to Albufeira. A 67 km drive from Lagos. The open competition for couples would start at 13.00 pm. We leave around 10 o'clock and first go past Albufeira in the direction of Vilamoura to have a look at the local bowls green. We want some information to see if we can join one day for a roll-up or open competition. A beautiful location with two greens, where at the moment an English club is playing. Jeanet gives us the information and looks forward to us joining for a game. Proudly she shows us a photo she displayed in her office of Theo Bellaart and Ineke Nagtegaal. Two other Dutch players she played with last year. In answer to her question we said we do know them. The grass greens look very good, especially when the sun is shining. After agreeing to phone when we want to play, we leave for Albufeira.

In a new neighbourhood in Albufeira, Praia da Oura, an apartment complex is situated of the same name. On the complex there is a bowls green on a carpet. You have a good view of the ocean from where you start to play. A very nice location so close to the beach. Straight after arrival we subscribe for the games. We play Pairs and there are 8 teams joining the game. We will play 5 games of 6 ends



each. We can have a short practice on rink 5. At first it was hard, but soon we got the hang of the rink. Then we started the first game. We do play fairly well and manage to win our first game on rink 4. After a quick lead of 9-1, we finish the game 9-6. Immediately after, we start the second game on rink 5. In



spite of a hard to play rink we get the hang of it and manage to win this game as well, final score 6-4.

The third game on rink 1 is a disaster for us. Bowls that should curve inwards go out, whether we play to the left or to the right. Apparently this rink is



almost the worst rink of this green. In the last end we lose the game 7-8, after leading 7-5. A pity, but that's how it goes. The fourth game we play on rink 2. This is truly the worst rink. It is impossible to play a good game. We have so much difficulty to adjust that we lose this game as well, 9-5. The last game we have to play on rink 3. According to our previous opponents the worst rink. It appears that we like this rink and play very well. We win the last game 7-4. Result three wins and two losses. Not a

bad result we think. All in all a pleasant introduction to Praia da Oura, an enjoyable afternoon, but concerning the rink we decide not to go again. Again we are told that Saskia has a "beautiful throw" No prize, but a pleasant afternoon on the bowls green of the ABC.

By now it is 5.30 pm and we leave for the town centre of Albufeira. There is always some sort of entertainment in the old town. Also lots of little restaurants and terraces. We start looking for a nice restaurant for dinner. Eventually we find a little place with a mixed grill on the menu. Only later we realized it was an Israeli running the place, who used to live and work in Holland. He aimed for the Dutch and had some Dutch food on the menu. If we had known that beforehand....During dinner it started to rain so we decided to sit inside. Well, if we had only known. They liked to play Dutch tear-jerkers, and not as back ground music..... We had a different setting in mind for our dinner, but on the other hand it was pleasant too. To conclude our dinner we were offered a delicious local liqueur with something in it.... We thought one shouldn't eat it, so we left it in the glass. Later a Dutch tour guide told us that this was the best bit of the drink: A cherry. So we regretted leaving it. When we finished our dinner it was still raining so we quickly walked to the car to drive back to our apartment. It was about 45 minutes driving. This time we chose to go via the motorway A22. Along the way we had thunderstorms with flashes of lightning on the horizon. A magnificent view, but rather not on our holiday we are back home again at around 9.30.pm. Tired but very fulfilled we go to bed to get some rest.

Day 7, Tuesday October 16 2007.

We have a bit of a lay-in and take a tasty breakfast. The sun is not shining and there are still clouds about. Last nights thunderstorm has vanished and the weather is supposed to clear up a bit. We decide to have an easy day today. Around midday it is starting to become warm again and the sun is showing itself again. So we go to the beach Tres Irmãos at Alvor again, comfortably relaxing on the beach and making small walks along the rocky beaches.

When we have had enough of the beach we decide to have a look around in Praia da Rocha, a very



Apartments Praia da Rocha

touristy place with lots of hotels and apartment complexes. We decide that Meia Prada, where our apartment is, is a lot better.

It is very nice with a very wide beach, which is just as well, thinking of all the



Beach Praia da Rocha

tourists staying there.

Returning to our apartment we booked a boat trip for Thursday. Six hours on a boat, sailing along the rocky coast and caves of the Algarve. It is already the last day of our first week in the Algarve. Because we do a lot of things time is flying by. But still it is an exciting week of which we enjoyed every minute.

Goodnight for now.!



*Portugal, onde você pode encontrar
o sol, o mar, a natureza e povos amigáveis!*

Day 8, Wednesday October 17 2007



Magnificent sky with the sun half hidden behind the clouds.

Some of the guests already leave for Holland after one week. We are glad to have another week, because we want to do so many more things. The boat trip, but also visiting Taviar, an old historic town near the Spanish border. There is also a bowls green we want to visit. We want to visit all the bowls greens in the Algarve you see and if possible try them all out to be able to compare them. Further more we want to make plans for the second week. So it will be a combined activity and beach holiday. It seems we are lucky with the weather. Usually starting about mid October, the sun starts to shine less and also the temperature drops. The same period last year was a lot cooler and it rained a lot more. Lets just say that everyone gets what he or she deserves.

There is no wind and a glorious sun shining in the sky. So we decide to go and find a new beach. The idea is that every beach has something different. We go to Burgau, a picturesque fishing village of which the old town is still a working fishing harbour. A new part is built next to the old town centre, for the young folks. The surrounding is very traditional and varied. We drive on to another beach where



Beach on the other side of Burgau where clearly the millions of years past can be seen in the rocky cliffs.

we spend the afternoon. A beach with rocky cliffs, which shows the past millions of years in the different coloured layers. Every layer you can see represents a certain era from in the past. Come evening we go along Lagos to an internet café to put a small message on the website. Also we can get some money from a money machine. That's about all we do today. Tomorrow the boat trip.

Day 9 , Thursday October 18 2007

Just before 10 o'clock we board the boat for the trip to Sagres. On the way we stop and board small boats to sail through all the caves. A magnificent trip under and through the caves. Skilfully the guide leads us through the caves, telling us about their history.



After returning from the caves we sail to Sagres. En route we are served a lunch of chicken salad, wine and mineral water. A lovely boat trip along a varied coast with villages, beaches



and a lot of rocks. We enjoy it, especially because it is a bright and radiant day again.

We land in Sagres and visit a land is not very interesting. It is the III. In the harbour of Sagres surface of the water. Probably tourists. After an hour we board journey. Unfortunately we didn't lucky for that. We did get a nice Lagos the boat anchors to give us a chance for a refreshing dive in the sea.. We did bring our flippers and goggles, but the water was not clear enough to see anything under the surface. Nicely refreshed after the dive, we dock at Lagos. The boat trip is finished, it was a nice day again.



small terrace. The part where we only interesting because of Henry one can see a lot of fish at the they get a lot of food from the the boat again to start the return spot any dolphins. One has to be tan though. Before we get to

Day 10, Friday, October 19 2007

Today we intend to play bowls again. This time in Parque da Floresta. We found the names of Joke and Co In the guestbook, who were here in 1999. They enjoy having us again. It is busy this time, 52 members plus us two makes 54 players. So we will play fours again. Today we play a bit worse than last time. Especially rink 4 seems to be worse. Both of us loose our first set of ends, but the atmosphere is very enjoyable. After lunch we continue with the second set of ends. We play a fair bit better now. We are more used of the rinks now. After the game we have a nice chat with some of the members and exchange information. They are very curious about bowls in Holland. Unfortunately we have to inform them that bowls is a relatively small sport in Holland, that is only played by a diminishing group of players..

They invite us to come and play again next Monday. We don't know yet. We do have other plans and if it fits into these plans we will. But the chance is great that we want to chill on the beach for a couple of days before going home..



We make a note in the guestbook mentioning our website. Several of those present want to visit our site and see the pictures. That's the reason this article is in English as well as in Dutch. Also they inform us of another bowls green we hadn't planned for. We didn't know about this one. It is Vale de Lobo, between Vilamoura and Faro. Also in the near future two more greens will be opened, one near the golf course Boavista, right past Lagos at the N125 and one in Espiche. When go back to the apartment, we come across the by now well known beach at Burgau and we enjoy reflecting on a day of bowls in Parque da Floresta.

Day 11, Saturday October 20 2007

We planned to have a look at the green Vale de Lobo on Sunday but not to play there. Because we were told that there was a very good grass green in Tavira, we decided to go there today and take a bit more time for this. Also we intended to visit the historic town.

We leave around 9.40 for the Spanish border and arrive at the bowls green at about 10.30. It lies a bit hidden, but thanks to the GPS address we programmed in the TomTom it was easy to find. And by a scenic route TomTom brought us in no time to the right place: Cerro de Leiria. On arrival we were told that a competition was held between the "Tigers" and the "Titans", two rival groups within the club. They were very fanatical to win their games.



Welcome sign at the green in Tavira

There was no open tournament, but we could play together on one of the unused rinks. We eagerly took the opportunity to get to know the rinks. We played a single of 21 ends against each other. It is a good grass rink, which is faster than the green in Alvor. There is a cosy clubhouse with a swimming pool. By the way Saskia won both ends. The first one only just, but the second with a big difference (due to the beer between the



ends). The owners Bill and Joan have their own house on the grounds. They have transferred the managing and renting out to the members of the Tavira County Lawn Bowling Club. Because of their age it became too hard for them to do it themselves. That is also the

reason why the place is for sale. (See the last page for more information).



Jan on the green in Tavira

During our game we are greeted by Bill and invited to come and have a cup of tea at his place after the game. Luckily they like tea the Dutch way, because we don't like the English style tea very much. We talk a lot about bowls in Holland and also about bowls in Great Britain. Bill and Joan are originally from Scotland and so

we get to the subject of the champion of champions. This championship will be in Aberdeen next year. Bill offered to keep in contact, because he can perhaps arrange something or get information in case we want to go a bit earlier. He has a lot of connections you see.



Bill en Joan, owners of the place.

We receive flyers and other information. We even get a book about bowls and addresses in Scotland. We have a look at the websites of Tavira and ABC and they are impressed. When saying goodbye we quickly took their picture.

We were asked to come and play one more time before we go back to Holland. We keep that in mind, but because of the distance and because we don't want to plan anything for the last few days, we probably won't come around to do that. We'll see, but it's worth it.

We leave for the town of Tavira, a historic town with a pleasant old city centre. A lot of well dressed Portuguese are wandering around the church when we eat our packed lunch there. They are waiting for something, but what? Or for who? It soon became clear. We walked in the direction of the old city wall, when we see a beautiful bride. She is having her photograph taken in the garden near the city wall.

We take a pleasant walk through Tavira. Again small, narrow streets. We see a sign for a camera obscura. It is in the old water tower of the city. Entrance fee of € 3,50 per person. We go up via an



elevator and a Portuguese lady explains about the history of Tavira in poor English. It wasn't easy to understand, a pity. But it was very good. There is a camera on top of the tower. This shows the whole of Tavira. The camera can be directed with the help of a remote control. Every part of Tavira



has 21 churches. That is a lot. It includes a lot of small neighbourhood churches as well though, but even so.... We walk along the small streets to the river that cuts through the town. One sees a lot of



houses here with the characteristic Portuguese tiles on the outside walls. The pictures vary a lot, just as the colours of the tiles. Some streets are littered with these houses with tiles. We walk via an old bridge to the other part of Tavira. Here there



are also a lot of churches and cosy pleasant squares. The Tavira council did everything possible to make as many nice seats and play areas as possible. Often they've become meeting places for the local people. They always seem to have to tell each other something. This is what makes Tavira a real Portuguese historic town.

We continue our walk back to the car. It's early in the evening now and we decide to eat out in Estói. This little town is on the way to the apartment. Why Estói? This place has a palace with a garden littered with all kinds of pieces of art, steps and small buildings, which are beautifully tiled with several pictures. At first Jan thought it was in Silves, but when we enquired, it appeared to be Estói. When we arrived in Estói we walked towards the palace, which was signposted. We were disappointed, because the gate was closed. Apparently work was taking place on the palace. We weren't there for the palace, which was closed anyway, but for the garden around it. We hope they are restoring it, because it looks very sad now. It's a pity it is neglected. Nothing left to do but to continue on our way to the apartment. .

We freshen up, because we will go out for dinner in the city centre of Lagos. Plenty of nice little restaurants to choose from. We want fish for dinner. After walking around a little bit we find a nice little restaurant. They have mixed fish on the menu. That seems to be to our taste. A fish soup for a starter. Unfortunately the tuna was a bit dry, but the rest was very tasty. We had a nice bottle of wine with our meal and a cup of coffee to finish it off.

It was a nice day, we don't want to go back to Holland for a long time yet, but oef..... We only have three more days to go. Doesn't time fly when you're having fun....



bowls

JOIN YOUR LOCAL BOWLING CLUB
for fun, friendship and good sport
(First game free with tuition available for beginners)

Albufeira Bowling Club - David Berbridge 93 450 8216
Alvor Lawn Bowling Club - Connie Borrell 96 444 4452
Parque da Floresta Bowling Club - Janice Clarke 91 787 3885
Tavira County Lawn Bowling Club - Nick Purkis 289 793 206
Vale do Lobo Lawn Bowling Club - Richard Hepburn 91 414 7623

**ALGARVE
COOL OASIS
FOR ALL
DRINKING
WATER
SOLUTIONS**

Day 12, Sunday October 12 2007

This afternoon, we will play in Vilamoura, but we leave early for Vale do Lobo, a bowls rink on a big luxurious golf course. Via a luxurious villa park on the golf grounds we eventually get to the Vale do Lobo Lawn Bowling Club. We are welcomed by the bowling director Richard Hepburn. The bowling green is nicely situated on the grounds between green areas. We really don't have the time to play, but to make a comparison with other grass rinks, one should have rolled a few bowls. On special



request we are allowed to roll a few ends on rink 1. It is a reasonable green, with quite a lot of restoration spots. The green is a bit faster than the one in Alvor. On the left, the rink runs fairly straight, whereas on the right the bowls tend to make a larger curve. Once you've discovered that, the rink is good to play on. After a drink we thank Richard for the hospitality and leave for Vilamoura, where we agreed to meet at 13.30 pm. to play a game at 14.00 pm. We are very curious, because Vilamoura is a well known place to bowls players from all over the world. They call it themselves Europe's Leading Bowling Holiday Centre.

Arriving in the luxurious area and golf grounds of Vilamoura we are welcomed by Amadeo, the manager of Vilamoura. As said before Vilamoura has two greens of 8 rinks each. A lot of tournaments are organised here. For a big fee everybody can enter these. Vilamoura doesn't join in with the other bowls greens in the Algarve and is actually an organiser itself. They exploit the rink on a more commercial basis. There is nothing wrong with this of course. They mainly aim for the English people in the Algarve. Their flyers are based on English visitors and the prizes are in pounds and not in euros. Vilamoura does not just take care of the bowls green, but offers complete holidays including hotels, apartments etc. So a fully organised holiday, including bowls and golf. Nothing but compliments for the green. It is a nice grass green with little or no problems. A green with a good foundation and few weak spots. Of course we didn't play on all the rinks, but we could see all the rinks were ok by watching the games being played on the other rinks. It remains a grass green, so you have to put a fair bit of weight on every bowl. But we are used to that after Alvor and Vale de Lobo.

We were assigned to teams of Fours. Why fours? There were enough rinks for pairs or triples. Nobody knows. Afterwards we realised we were playing a strong and experienced team in Jill and Dave. They are not beginners. With 26 and 16 years experience in England, where Jill played a number of times in Lemington and also in the triples finals. To start we have to get used to the rink. After getting behind, we get back to 9-9. in the ninth end. After the break we hope to get past them. In the break we have a pleasant drink after which we continue to play the 2nd set.



A nice drink during the interval

Saskia is playing second, Jan plays skip. After getting ahead, we eventually lost the game. Especially after a "lucky wood" by Dave, result 5 down, we couldn't keep up anymore. But we didn't play badly considering it was the first time on this rink. The grass is cut short and thus runs faster than the one in Alvor and Tavira. Dave was proud to have played in New Zealand and Australia once. There is a club with 2000 members and a lot of rinks. Thousands of spectators come to watch the games at big tournaments. We can't imagine what that would be like. Dave also remarks the nice "style" of play of Saskia. It becomes a bit boring.

We have another chat and a drink and exchange more information. We did get a bit more experience and make nice acquaintances. Especially contact with other bowls fans and talk about bowls is always nice. We say goodbye to everyone and receive a small present from Janet, an employee of Amadeo.

Day 13, Monday October 22 2007

Two more days. We decide not to go to Tavira or Vilamoura again. But use the final days to enjoy the beach.

The beach at Tres Irmãos is most appealing, so we go there again. The temperature is a bit low, but because there is no wind and the sun is brightly shining, it still feels a bit warmer than before.

We don't do anything anymore and after a good meal, we play some cards and enjoy a good nights rest.



What's in all these rocks?

Day 14, Tuesday October 14 2007

Saskia is getting up early for a morning walk along the beach. Beautiful shells are washed ashore at certain times in the morning at a specific part of the beach in the direction of Alvor. We already did this walk once. Armed with a bag to take her findings home she leaves in the direction of the beach. When



returned she showed her findings. Although very nice shells, she didn't come across anything out of the ordinary, apart from a fossilized shell in a piece of rock.

Today is the last day here, so we stay on the beach in front of our apartment. It is going to be another day of reflecting on all the things we have done during this holiday.

In the afternoon we go for another walk along the beach in the direction of Lagos. Nicely relaxing and with a little breeze. Very enjoyable, especially when you think of the cold and wet weather in Holland. To think we have to go back there tomorrow.

Late in the afternoon we return to our apartment to pack our things. Tomorrow we have to get up at 4.30 am.



Cork tree in the Algarve



Cork



Stacks of drying cork

Day 15, Wednesday October 24 2007

The alarm on the mobile rings, phew!!! 4.30 am. Get up, have a shower, a small breakfast and then the direction of Faro. During the night it started raining cats and dogs and it still is. It's cool so early in the morning. We don't mind, because we are dressed for the cold Dutch weather. In little under an hour we drive to Faro, where we have to hand in the car. The route description to the rental firm is correct, so we drive straight there. Without a check on the car everything is dealt with.

No check will have to do with the fact that we bought off our own risk for € 960.=. It's more restful to have done that. No risk except for tyres, windows and underside of the car, but that is normal. The mileage reads 34848. We drove a total off 1430 km. We are early, but the advantage is that when the check-in opens, we are ahead of the queue. That means we have ample choice of seats.



We leave Portugal and return to the cold and normal live again.

Jan expects to be on the same type of airplane as the outward journey, so asks for row 14, where the exit is. Because of his legs. The Portuguese lady informs us that the exits are in row 12 and 13. So it's a different plane. Because the outward plane had two exits, we believe her and go for row 13. So we get into the plane and guess what? There is only an exit in row 12. A pity, but luckily the journey is relatively short. Arriving at Schiphol we indeed appear to need our coats. Brrr, isn't it cold in Holland.



It is approximately 150 km from the east coast to the west coast of the Algarve

Epilogue

We have enjoyed our two weeks in the Algarve in the period of October 10th to October 24th 2007. The people are very friendly. Not only the Portuguese, but also the British who stay there for the winter or are on holiday.

We are told that nearly 200.000 Brits live in the Algarve. That's why there are a lot of golf links, 24 in total, and 6 bowls greens. A lot of the Brits are living on these golf grounds or in a villa close by. Bowls is so popular there, that there are probably going to be more greens. One can really have a proper bowls holiday there. There are two greens with carpets and four with grass. Our findings are described in this report.

We have made pleasant trips and especially enjoyed the sun, sea and beaches.

The conversations with the Brits during our bowls matches were very pleasant and we could easily make lasting contacts.

We did make a favourites list of all the greens, the carpets as well as the grass greens. We based the list on a variety of facts. We took into account the quality of the green, the location, the pleasantness, reception etc. This is our personal list:

1. Vilamoura (grass)
2. Parque da Floresta (carpet)
3. Tavira (grass)
4. Vale de Lobo (grass)
5. Alvor (grass)
6. ABC-Albufeira, Praia da Oura (carpet)

We hope that a lot of bowls fans read our Algarve Bowls Tour and might be tempted to experience this as well. If you want information that we can give, do not hesitate to ask and contact us via our e-mail address. Because of the many Brits we have met, who wanted to read our story, we include an English translation of this story on our website.

We want to thank everybody for their kind reception and hospitality during our stay in the Algarve.

Kind regards from Saskia and Jan

Algarve@almerebowlsclub.nl



Picture: Saskia and Jan, Dutch champions mixed pairs outdoor 2006

For the enthusiasts an overview of the details of the clubs:

Bowls green	Bowling green Praia da Oura
Club	Albufeira Bowling Club (ABC)
Address	Rua Oliveira Martins
Contact	David & Rene Berbridge
Telephone	(00351) 289 514 764 – mobile: (00351) 93 450 8216
Website	-
Email	Rene38@hotmail.co.uk
Flyer	http://www.almerebowlsclub.nl/Algarve/flyer-ABC-Albufeira.pdf

Bowls green	Alvor Lawn Bowling Centre
Club	San Antonio Lawn Bowling Club
Address	Montes de Alvor (urbaniz��o)
Contact	Connie Borrell & John Palinski
Telephone	(00351) 282 415 597 – mobile: (00351) 96 444 4452
Website	-
Email	hetges@sapo.pt
Flyer	http://www.almerebowlsclub.nl/Algarve/flyer-Alvor.pdf

Bowls green	Bowling green Parque da Floresta
Club	Parque da Floresta Bowling Club
Address	8650 Vila do Bispo
Contact	Janice Clarke
Telephone	(00351) 282 695 924 - mobile: (00351) 91 787 3885
Website	http://www.vigiagroup.com/parque_da_floresta/about/home_page.html
Email	jigglejan@sapo.pt
Flyer	http://www.almerebowlsclub.nl/Algarve/flyer-parque-da-Floresta.pdf

Bowls green	Bowling green Santa Catarina
Club	Tavira County Lawn Bowling Club
Address	1204 Z Cerro do Leiria 8800 – 158 Sta Cat Fonte Bispo, Tavira, Portugal
Contact	John Hewitson (Eigenaren:Joan en Bill Cameron)
Telephone	(00351) 289 792 603 – mobile: (00351) 91 463 6282
Website	http://www.tavirabowls.com
Email	bowltavira@gmail.com
Flyer	http://www.almerebowlsclub.nl/Algarve/flyer-Tavira.pdf
Buying Info:	http://www.almerebowlsclub.nl/Algarve/verkooptavira.pdf

Bowls green	Bowling green Vale do Lobo Resort
Club	Vale do Lobo Lawn Bowling Club
Address	Golfpark Vale do lobo, Almancil
Contact	Richard Hepburn
Telephone	(00351) 289 353 456 – mobile: (00351) 91 414 7623
Website	-
Email	bowlsinportugal@yahoo.co.uk
Flyer	-

Bowls green	Bowling green Vilamoura
Club	Vilamoura Lawn Bowling Club
Address	Av. Eng. Joao Meireles 8125 Vilamoura Algarve Portugal
Contact	Amadeo en Janet
Telephone	(00351) 289 321 260
Website	http://www.lawnbowlsolidays.com
Email	info@lawnbowlsolidays.com
Flyer	http://www.almerebowlsclub.nl/Algarve/flyer-Vilmoura.pdf

A special flyer was made with the information of all the clubs except Vilamoura:

<http://www.almerebowlsclub.nl/Algarve/flyer-Algarve-Bowls.pdf>

In The Portugal News, English edition of October 20 2007 we read this message:

Bowls Algarve Inter Club League Matches Played Saturday 13th October

The new season started today in glorious weather, all teams no doubt dreaming of lifting the coveted title. This season sees a nine team league so one team will rest each week. The first round of games saw Algarve Harlequins visit Tavira Titans and come away with a very convincing away win by 80 shots to 27 and sweeping all 8 points available. Over at Alvor, the Greens entertained the PDF Sinners and won a close match by 72 to 48 and by 5 points to 2. Meanwhile VDL Wolves made the long trip to PDF to play the Crusaders and the home team romped home by 78 shots to 26, taking all 7 points. In the final game this week, ABC Cats played host to the Alvor Gladiators and edged home by 60 - 45 and by 5 points to 2.

So the Harlequins top the table at this early stage, closely followed by the Crusaders and then the Greens and Cats. Gladiators and Sinners come next, with the Wolves and Titans currently bringing up the rear. Tavira Tigers rested and will start their campaign next weekend.

The Inter Club competitions have been drawn and will start shortly. Entries are well up on last season and there is a separate ladies singles this year. Mens singles have 41 entries and the ladies 23 (35 last season when it was a mixed competition). Pairs are up from 35 to 40, triples from 18 to 24 and fours up from 11 to 18.

All in all a very busy and entertaining season in prospect.

Alan Clarke
League Director

The Portugal News in English. 20-10-07

ROUTE TO VALE DE LOBO

Take the motorway A22 towards Faro leave at the Loule, Quarteira turning down to the N125 Quadro Estrados traffic lights turn left heading to Faro
Turn right to Almancil approx 100 metres turn right and follow signs to Vale de Lobo

