

Yes, it's time for...

**Giffy's
Belgium
Invasion
2003**

Belgium Tour 2003

Welcome to our:-
Regulars
Returning Players
First Timers
Old Timers
Drink Carriers
Overweight Has-Beens
Impressionable Youngsters
And Hangers On

Tour History

17 years visiting the same tournament. In year one we took seventeen people who made up one men's team – EB, Steve Simes and Paul Hammerton guested for Kettering and Hazel Perry played for team of American female students – this was a cunning ploy of Steve Simes' to allow the rest of the lads to go over and watch these 18 year olds play under the pretence that we were supporting Hazel and not really a bunch of lecherous lads on the pull! Saints had thirteen players: Giffy (the only person to play every year), Wurzel who has only missed one year plus Eddie Ireland, Brian Cooke, Chris Almond, Roger Halse, Simon Fowler (from Market Drayton HC), Stuart Perry, The BJs, Jerry Stevens, Anil Gomes and Martin Hennell (better known in the hockey world as Zippy). The first tour involved leaving St Neots at 6pm on the Friday evening, having a six hour ferry crossing from Dover to Zeebrugge and then the two hour coach journey to arrive at Ternat at 9am on the Saturday morning and our first match was at 9.30. We struggled in this first game and only beat the German favourites to win the tournament 3-0!

The numbers increased in year two when we took our first ladies team and two men's teams although we still travelled on the Kettering coach but this time travelled over on the Thursday night and visited Brussels on the Friday.

Year three saw us travel with Kettering, the Haverhill ladies joined us for the first time, and a scratch ladies team won the tournament for the first time – the start of a proud record.

It is usually the case in Belgium that the Saints men perform better on the Sunday than Saturday, and indeed managed to win the tournament in 1994, Phil Gillett scoring the winning goal with one of his trademark thunderbolts from three feet that didn't quite reach the backboard! Marauders men are usually unbeaten apart from when dubious decisions and sheer bad luck prove costly. The ladies win the trophy most years.

The Belgium Roll of honour:

17 Years	Giffy
16 Years	Wurzel
15 Years	Tony, Eddie
10 or more	Mad Mel, Samba Sequins, Stevie Moore, Batman, Crossey, Mutley, Billy

Giffy's Tour Diary 2003!

Thursday 14th August 2003

- 17.00 Arrived in St Neots with clean washing, sleeping bag, passport, tent, mobile phone and address book. After much thought following last year's financial shortfall and the unreliability of certain people the decision to go ahead this year was made – a blind faith that enough people will support the trip and the fact that a cancelled trip would mean the end of the Belgium tour permanently swayed the balance.
- 17.30 After parking the car, I returned to the Ernulf.
- 17.31 First beer
- 17.37 Second beer
- 18.00 Half way through my fifth beer, I decide I had better buy some for the journey. I ensure that the driver knows the difference between Ternat and Tournai.
- 18.30 We arrive at Tony's house to collect the rest of the party. This is the only way we can guarantee that Tony will be in the right place to be picked up.
- 18.45 Leave Cambridge bound for Dover, picking up Sharon on route as well as two wee stops and a pub stop (not the same pub as last year – although it was really good, we were all too drunk by that point to ever have a chance of finding it again).
- 23.30 Boarded the correct ferry for a change and then the party split up – some searching for food, some searching for alcohol and some for both. I went to the bar for a sharp Guinness in a proper glass, and to collect my thoughts as I had left them lying around somewhere – so far so good.

Friday 15th August

- 01.00 Arrived in Calais and passed through customs without needing to pass a previously inspected passport from one of the coach to the other, so someone who had forgotten their passport could get into France! Within ten minutes of leaving Calais most were asleep. Downstairs Nick, Grommit, Angus and Mark were playing cards. Tony, Barry and Little John are still awake, but starting to wane.
- 03.30 We arrive at Green Devils Hockey Club and we pitch our tents in the dark before retiring for some proper sleep.
- 08.00 Got up, answered the call of nature and went back to bed.
- 11.30 (Belgium time) Weather very hot and sweaty so went for a shower to cool off before breakfast. Entered the changing rooms and Nick Mann was combing his chest and Crossey was admiring himself in the mirror. On the way back to the tent I almost tripped over Billy who was asleep in the car park by the coach. After confirming with the driver that we would leave for Bruges at 13.30, I returned to the tent, and saw some newcomers moving their tent off pitch two!
- 13.50 We leave for Bruges twenty minutes late because Stevie Moore and Judy were waiting for their desserts in the restaurant and Wayne Tuna was feeling hung over. On the way to Bruges, the Marauders Men had their team meeting. Mutley was given the job of goalkeeping kit monitor, Samba the job of stick monitor and Lisa was presented in time-honoured fashion with the tray freshly painted in the new colours.

- 18.40 Leave Bruges. Had a great time visited a few bars and had an omelette with mushrooms and bacon. Billy was asleep on the way back as well as in two of the bars during the afternoon, and Nicola was suffering from the heat. Fiona asked how long until we get back, and I gave my stock answer of forty minutes, knowing that with wee stops and diversions we might be longer – still no sign of Wurzel.
- 20.00 Returned to base. After some effort we woke Billy, and he stomped off in the general direction of the tents for more sleep. I explained to some first timers that tonight was Lasagne Night, so a quick meal and a few glasses of Trappist in the restaurant was a good idea. Boynie had been in good spirits all day and had crashed out early, whilst the younger members of the party practised their football skills. Saints men held their team meeting where Nick Moore was appointed Chief Sneak and Daniel Rowland was appointed Totty Spotter.

Saturday 16th August

- 00.01 Found out the times of the Saturday games. The girls avoided Haverhill, but will play East Kilbride. Marauders and Saints men also avoid each other. Little John produced a bottle of port and Samba a bottle of Archers. Wurzel finally turned up after falling asleep on the train from Cologne to Bruges and getting a taxi back from Paris.
- 09.00 I got up early to watch Saints men play – surprise, surprise, the opposition were late hung over and short of players. Saints were happy though as Tuna and Bazza both avoided yellow cards, whilst Steve Ridley hit the post and Grommit only let in four goals. After the game I went for a shower and had a cup of black coffee for breakfast followed by three beers.
- 11.30 Marauders played OK in their first game. Samba managed to hit the corner flag, Nick Mann only scored two goals and despite a mix up between Angus and Wurzel, the opposition only scored one goal from a shot deflected in by the umpire. At the same time our girls played East Kilbride, goals from Mad Mel and Sam making up for a comical error where Angie Storey scored past Liana.
- 17.00 Saints were in good spirits, believing that three losses and two draws would be enough to win their group. Billy was already asleep after downing a bottle of port. Tony was complaining about Adam not passing the ball, but Adam was happy because three wins and two draws was not bad, and Nick had scored his five goals with aplomb. The girls were victorious with one goal conceded and eight scored with Boynie scoring three in her only game – the one where the opposition's goalie wore flip-flops and no shin pads and complained that our ladies were hitting the ball!
- 21.30 Billy got up and joined everyone at the disco.
- 21.32 Billy fell asleep by pitch one.
- 21.45 We found out the football scores from home and Arsenal had won 4-0, Manchester United had lost at home to Bolton and a poor display from the Chelsea golden boys meant that Roman Abramovich had been sacked and employed by QPR as caretaker Chairman taking his billions with him.
- 21.50 Bazza moans to everyone about being fouled during one of the day's games (the one where he was umpire).

- 22.30 Will Mason and Sebastian have a water fight, Will ends up soaked and has to go and get changed.
- 22.45 Liana, Nicola, Cat and David return to their tents with Nicola feeling slightly the worse for the alcohol consumed. David later returns to play football with Sebastian.
- 23.15 Fiona asked if they called last orders yet. Billy woke up gave Fiona a beer and slapped her on the back.
- 23.30 Playing times are given out for the Sunday. Saints have a later start than the Saturday, but as they have all gone to bed nobody could tell them. Marauders are on before saints but all without exception are still up partying and will be for at least another four hours despite an 11am start.

Sunday 17th August

- 05.00 Returned from the disco. Mutley, Mad Mel, Sam, Tony, Angus, Nick and Fiona all lasted the pace. I wanted to carry on drinking but I could tell that the others needed some rest. Mutley was unscathed after falling over his own feet, and Billy was found asleep on pitch two, and was put into his tent.
- 09.30 I got up early to watch Saints play. They are all refreshed after their early night. Grommit saved a penalty flick given away by Tuna and Daniel Rowland had a goal disallowed for offside (a rule still played in Belgium).
- 11.00 Marauders play the best game of the weekend – OK they lost by three goals, but Wurzel did make one really good pass, Billy received a pass from Adam, and Tony was up in time for the start of the match. Our girls played Haverhill, and despite a string of fine saves by Liana and Boynie almost scoring, Haverhill were victorious with a goal in the last minute of the game.
- 17.30 Presentation time. Saints men had played in the trophy and came fifth overall despite only scoring twice all weekend (both Martin Storey) and Marauders men came seventh overall in the cup – a bad second day were tiredness and heat exhaustion finally took hold. The ladies won the tournament after East Kilbride forfeited their place in the final as they had to leave early to catch a ferry. Goals from Boynie (a tap in) and Mad Mel (deflected short corner) helped them beat Haverhill after they qualified in third place overall.
- 21.00 Left Green Devils club after a meal at the restaurant. Within minutes everyone bar Billy was asleep. Billy said he couldn't sleep on a coach and had hardly slept all weekend either!
- 11.55 Caught the ferry and read the newspapers where reality took a grip – Arsenal had lost, Manchester United had won, England had lost the test match in three days, Cambridge was flooded after freak thunder storms, David had misplaced his passport and Sharon had lost her car keys. Everyone was very tired, so I left them in peace and went for a quiet pint of Guinness in a proper glass.

Monday 18th August

- 03.30 Arrived at Ernulf. Passport and keys were found, everyone was safe and tired, looking forward to next year's tour, vowing as they left the coach to pay a bit earlier in 2004.

Dramatis Personae

Marauders Men

1. Adam (Captain). Touring die-hard who has successfully avoided captaincy for some years but the job has finally caught up with him.
2. Mutley (Vice). The return of the long-standing tour animal, after avoiding last year's tournament to attend a poodle convention in Folkestone, the Bury St Edmunds stalwart is back.
3. Angus. Sacked from Vice Captain, as he expected to be Captain this year. Angus has been returned to the ranks.
4. Crossey. The little man from Copenhagen, who is our only tax exile, will be travelling on the coach with us for the first time in years.
5. Giffy. A major injury doubt but with some Pils (this is not a spelling mistake) inside him and with due stubbornness will be as useless as ever.
6. Samba Sequins. Our erstwhile treasurer whose accuracy in front of goal would shame a scud missile.
7. Black Tony. Here with his own entourage, picked up from his own doorstep and idolised by the Belgian people.
8. Tray A. Otherwise known as Lisa who for the last two years has had to put up with the notoriety of being Wurzel's bitch.
9. Geoff. Transferred from the Saints team for a record-breaking fee of two pints of Guinness and half a kebab.
10. Billy. Our unofficial backer who is to be found asleep in the most unexpected of places. Lives on a cider based diet.
11. Wurzel. Jetting in from Cologne at some point over the weekend where he has been attending the 37th Annual European Blow Up Doll Convention
12. Tray C. Tray C makes her return to the ranks of the Marauders men after missing last years tour though injury – a very nasty chip to the nail varnish of the index finger of her left hand.
13. Nick The Hatchet. The captain last year, and he did so well that we let him return again this year.

Saints Men

1. Bazza (Captain). Sorry youngsters, but after many years sitting on the sidelines awaiting his chance with great enthusiasm, Bazza is finally being handed the Captain's armband.
2. Mark Allen (Vice). Mark is a great rarity – he is a friend of Grommit's who is going on tour with him for a second time – all the others have never come back for more.
3. Tray B. Known to many as Judy. Speak loudly to her as she manages to sleep in the same room as Stevie Moore and so must be deaf, as I have heard him snore.
4. Stevie Moore. After a year of being ~~ravished by Judy~~ ravaged by injury, Stevie is another of the tour party who will have to take things easy this weekend – possibly by sitting watching with a beer in his hand.
5. Grommit. The goalkeeper who claims to play for Hereford, primarily by default, as he is their only available choice.
6. Tuna. Last year's stand in captain returns once more and has his girlfriend Louisa with him, so we expect him to keep a low profile, but how low will he go?
7. Chris Moore. Eldest son of Stevie who at time of printing had rather long hair – the Ballad of Beardsley comes to mind!!!!!!
8. David Griffiths. The younger brother of Nicola and Liana who keeps goal for St Neots 5th team and like many other goalkeepers claims to be able to play on pitch.
9. Martin Storey. A former St Neots player who has been over-exposed to St Ives hockey club and is here with his wife Angie.
10. O Danny Boy. By the tender age of only fifteen Danny had played for, and lost with, every men's team at St Neots Hockey Club.
11. Nick Moore. Stevie's youngest son who has sensibly already got short hair. Nick is the youngest player in the Saints team at 8 years old.
12. Nick Jowitt. A St Neots 5th team player who is a dentist by trade. This is Nick's first Belgium tour and his last for a while as he is moving to Australia for a few years in September.
13. Steve Ridley. Another player bringing his girlfriend with him. Will they ever learn? This is his first tour, and will prove a valuable learning curve in drunken debauchery, as he is off to college in the autumn.
14. Will Grace. One of the successes of the recent Surrey tour and current holder of the young clubman of the year award.

Marauders Ladies

1. Cat (Captain). Returning to the St Neots area until November, and so joining us for her third Belgium pilgrimage.
2. Angie Storey (Vice). On her second visit to Ternat and this time she has brought her husband with her but has left the kids at home.
3. Boynie. Another player struggling with fitness. If she plays she is guaranteed to score at some stage and she has brought her puppies with her!
4. Nicola. A recent recruit to St Neots HC who has joined as part of the Griffiths “buy one, get two free” package. Nicola has recently passed her driving test.
5. Manda. Travelling over with Mad Mel, she will be there when we arrive and wave goodbye when we leave.
6. Roseanna. The second generation of the Dias clan, who played for the first time last year, whilst on her ninth Belgium tour. Her first tour was at the tender age of four months old.
7. Sam Bradbury. A regular Saints tourist who is on her first Belgium tour. Sam has played twice and scored twice for Cambridgeshire.
8. Mad Mel. She’s mad and she’s called Mel. The longest serving lady tourist in Belgium, who will meet us in Ternat.
9. Liana. St Neots goalkeeper who joined us on a Bosman ruling from Stevenage last year. This is her second visit to Green devils and she is likely to suffer from the heat under all the kit she will be wearing – no I don’t mean lipstick.
10. Fiona Humphrey. After going on the Isle Of Mann tour in 1989, Fiona has decided to give touring another go.
11. Shazza. The successful captain of the Porn Stars team in Surrey in 2002 and was in the Marauders ladies team that won the same tournament this year.

Hangers On

1. Big John. No he will not be in goal this year – he has outgrown his kit and it is too hot.
2. Tall Tim. Tent erector in chief. Selected to help put up the tallest of tents and to display white skin on tour.
3. Rob. Bowling buddy of Big John and the twins. He knows a “standard empty glass” when he sees one, and is here to keep Big John company and get drunk if time allows.
4. Chris Cross. Ladies team water carrier and drinks dispenser. Neighbour of Mad Mel and matches Crossey for body hair.
5. Marty “Back-Passage”. Ladies team drinks monitor and kitty collector. Here for the third time and likely to pull Boynie.
6. Veronica and Ruth. Friends of Roseanna and both on their first tour.
7. Sebastian. Hardened tourist who together with Roseanna will keep Tony in order.
8. Louise & Nicola. Here to support Tuna and Steve Ridley. Hopefully they will enjoy themselves and meet some decent blokes.

Costs

Coach and Ferry	£72
Kit	£30
Tournament Entry	£30
Beer and Drinks	£5
Total	£137
Money collected	£120
Shortfall	£17 (x45 people=£765)

Please support our fund-raising efforts!!

Fantasy Hockey Rules (Belgium 2003)

1. All rules can be changed, but Giffy will oversee fair play.
2. Off the pitch points, both positive and negative will be decided by an appointed group of judges.
3. Points earned in the "Name Game" count towards Fantasy Hockey score.
4. On the pitch points:
 - a. Captain Win=20pts; Draw=5pts; Loss=-10pts
 - b. Defender/GK Clean Sheet=20pts; Goals=-10points per goal
 - c. Midfielders. Short corners: earnt=10pts; conceded=-10pts.
 - d. Forwards Goals=20pts; Hat Trick=-10pts (greed)
 - e. Assists=5pts; penalty saves=30pts; goal-line clearances=10pts
 - f. Yellow/Red card=elimination of player from game.
5. Off the pitch points:
 - a. Spillage: minor=5pts; major=10pts
 - b. Lateness=-5pts; Missing a game=-20pts
 - c. Classic comic moments=5pts to 20pts (depending on funniness)
 - d. Passing wind: in your own tent=0pts; elsewhere=-5pts
 - e. Buying Giffy an alcoholic drink=20pts
 - f. Sleeping on tour: early (before 11pm)=-10pts; late (past 1am)=10pts
 - g. Throwing up=elimination of player from fantasy hockey
 - h. Actions considered worthy of mention to be judged.

50% of money collected to go to pay for shortfall in tour costs. 40% goes to the winner. 10% goes to second place.

You can pick yourself, but not deliberately lose points.