

Royal Caledonian Curling Club
Men's Tour to Switzerland
17th to 31st January 2020



Map of the Tour provided by our Swiss Hosts



Friday 17th

Arrival at Basel Mulhouse Airport

Free Evening with Dinner in the hotel

2 nights at hotel in Basel

Saturday 18th

Free Morning for informal Sightseeing

Lunch and Game 1 Arlesheim CC

Welcome Banquet in Das Schöne Haus

Sunday 19th

Lunch and Game 2 Aarau CC

Dinner and Game 3 Lucerne CC

Monday 20th

Morning Sightseeing Tour of Lucerne

Lunch and Game 3 Küssnacht CC

Sightseeing at Rheinfall

	Dinner at Schaffhausen CC
Tuesday 21st	Game 5 and lunch at Schaffhausen CC Game 6 and Dinner at St Gallen CC
Wednesday 22nd	Flims via Appenzellar Distillery Game 7 at Flims CC and dinner in hotel
Thursday 23rd	Transfer to Celerina for lunch Game 8 – Open Air in Celerina Dinner in Grand Palace Hotel
Friday 24th	Glacier Express Trip to Brig Welcome reception in Tourist Office Dinner in local Distillery
Saturday 25th	Visit to Stockalperpalast Game 9 and lunch at Brig Ice Arena Game 10 at Lausanne CC Dinner in local restaurant
Sunday 26th	Game 11 and lunch at Geneva CC Transfer to Langnau for 3 nights Dinner at Emmental CC
Monday 27th	Game 12 Emmental CC Visit to Cheese Dairy Dinner in Signau
Tuesday 28th	Game 14 and lunch at Thun CC City sightseeing tour of Berne Dinner at Hotel Hirschen, Langnau
Wednesday 29th	Transfer to Lauterbrunnen

James Bond Gondola Ride to Schilthorn Summit

**Game 15 at Murren Open air Rink
(ultimately cancelled due to weather)**

Aperitifs at Rink

Dinner in Hotel Eiger

Thursday 30th

Game 16 and lunch at Interlaken CC

**Game 17 against all our hosts at
Interlaken CC**

Farewell Party at Hotel in Interlaken

Friday 31st

Transfer to Airport Basel Mulhouse

Farewells and flight back to Edinburgh



Feddy Meister

Tour Manager

Member of 2014 Tour

Swiss Curling

Association

Board Member



Alfred Hofsetter

Tour Guide



Frank – bus driver

2020 TOURISTS

Norman Ainslie



Born 1956

From Dunblane, a small town in Perthshire, and have lived in the area all my life. My grandfather was a keen curler and lived in Port of Menteith, a short walk from the Lake, and a great place for curling.

Married to Frances for 40 years. Since retiring from the family engineering supplies business in 2013, my days are filled with curling, cycling, playing golf, and gardening. I enjoy travel (all over the world but I have never visited Switzerland), food and wine.

My home club is Sauchie & Bannockburn based at The Peak in Stirling. I also curl for Dunblane and the Old Fellows curling clubs. As a level 2 coach, I enjoy coaching Stirling Young Curlers, the Stirling Virtual Club, and school groups.

I am really looking forward to meeting fellow curlers and making new friends.

Basil Baird



Born 1961

I have lived around Edinburgh all my life, for the past 34 years with my favourite wife Anne. We have 3 grown up children: Scott, Mhairi and David - all curlers.

My diverse career includes pig farming, mushroom production, snail and worm growing. Currently grow cereals and run a haulage and storage business with Anne and Scott.

Have curled at various levels over the years without notable success other than taking part in the 1985 Glasgow Silver Broom Men's World Championships (swept the first stone at the opening ceremony along with seven others). I was Midcalder CC President from 1999-2001 and I am currently the Midlothian Province President.

Other hobbies include game/clay pigeon shooting and golf. Quite partial to quality cheese and chocolate so looking forward to the tour.

Harry Brodie



Born 1955

Retired last year after over 40 years in the petrochemical industry and I wonder how I had time to actually work!

Played cricket at school before taking up Football Refereeing which I did for over 20 years. Officiated at a Norway v Brazil match which was the highlight of my career. Love hillwalking and biggest thrill to date was going to Nepal, seeing Mount Everest close up and getting to over 19,000ft on a nearby mountain.

Took up Curling in 2007; mother club is Abercorn CC and also curl regularly with Linlithgow CC and Buchlyvie CC. I am a Level 2 Umpire and also Competitions Convenor for the Scottish Wheelchair Curling Association.

Married to Michele who also curls and umpires! Love to read detective novels, going to the movies, walking and my garden. This will be my first ever visit to Switzerland!

Robin Copland (Tour Captian)



Born 1953

First played in Haymarket ice rink in Edinburgh in 1969 and immediately fell in love with the game. Curled competitively for many years and was lucky enough to represent Scotland in the 1989 World Championships in Milwaukee. Toured Canada in the centenary tour in 2003. Though I played against many Swiss teams, notably the Attinger and Tanner rinks, I have never curled in Switzerland.

I am a member of Currie and Balerno CC and look after the club's website. Founder member of the Reform CC in Glasgow and a past-president of the Glasgow Young Curlers Club and the Edinburgh Curling Club. Now serving on the Area Standing Committee of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club.

I am married to Lois, a fellow curler whom I met in Stranraer Curling Club; we have three grown-up children. I golf – but not very well!

David Cunningham (Tour Secretary)



Born 1968

Started curling at university and was awarded a "colour"; played for only five seasons before moving to Guernsey as a Chartered Accountant with a Big 4 firm - no curling there! Took the sport up again in 2013 after returning to Edinburgh. Currently Secretary of both SIAE CC and Midlothian Province of RCCC; also play with Merchiston CC - all based at Murrayfield Curling Rink.

Although qualified as a CA, I spent most of my career in HR, recruitment and office management roles.

Since retiring in 2012, have volunteered at Paralympics, Commonwealth Games, Ryder Cup, European Curling Champs and European Diving Champs. Used to love running (completed nine marathons) but bad knees ended that fun. Still enjoy watching many sports, going to music gigs, quizzing and viewing art.

In a relationship with the lovely Debbie and I help my dad to maintain his independence.

Mike Dick



Born 1957

I have curled for more than 45 years, winning the Scottish Championship in 1981 and 1982 with Colin Hamilton. Also been runner-up in the Scottish, Scottish Junior and Scottish Mixed and have had a few successes more recently on the Seniors tour.

Married to Alison and we have two grown up sons, Jamie and Colin. All three are also past national curling champions.

Away from the ice rink, I play golf and sing with an Edinburgh amateur choir. I'm a consulting actuary advising pension schemes and have served on various councils and committees for the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

Trevor Dodds



Born 1957

Former President of three clubs as well as Midlothian Province. Past member of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club board, now on the Area Standing Committee. I have been President of Edinburgh Curling Club and am heavily involved in the refurbishment of Murrayfield Curling Rink.

Toured Canada in 2003. Represented Scotland at World Championships at Oberstdorf. Won many national events including Senior Mixed with the tour captain.

Looking forward to the tour.

David Hardie



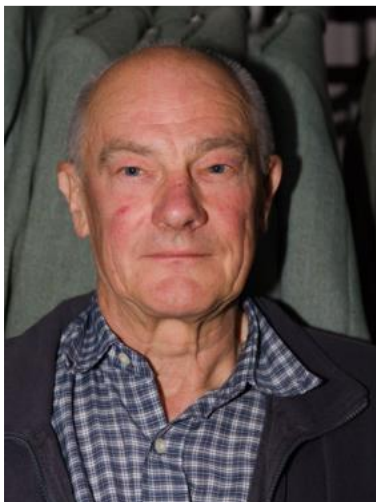
Born 1960

Married to Fiona and have three children: David (a designer based in London), Aline (a florist with her own business based in Edinburgh) and Grant (a full time curler based in Glasgow). David and Aline both got married in 2019 and I am looking forward to what the future will bring along.

I have curled for over 40 years and enjoyed some success but now see my participation as mainly social, although I still play in the Scottish Seniors. Recently enjoyed spectating and have travelled to numerous overseas events including the Olympics in Sochi and several World Championships.

I am a Civil Engineer and run my own construction company which I started in 1996. Also enjoy golf (12 handicap), car rallying (where I compete in the British Tarmac Championship) and the usual eating and drinking.

Iain Jamieson



Born 1955

Curl with Dumfries Curling Club, based at the Ice Bowl in Dumfries.

Married, with a daughter and a son. Started working career as an electronics engineer, then software engineering and finally information technology, now retired.

Hobbies include a lot of curling (playing, coaching and umpiring) and mountain bikes in the summer.

Jim Lawson



Born 1956

St Boswells Curling Club. Married to Carol, who is involved in teaching, with a son Angus, who lives and works in Glasgow.

For the first years of my life, I lived in Angus thereafter in the Scottish Borders. I have been very lucky as farming is both my work and my hobby, and I have been doing it all my life. The two "T's" have been very kind to me – "Tatties and Teaching".

Encouraged by my parents, I started curling at the age of 16 at Borders Ice Rink, Kelso; have won and lost a few games there and all over Scotland. I am looking forward to representing Scotland and playing overseas with new team members. The biggest disappointment in my curling career was being dropped from the Borders team to play in the Corstorphine

Friendly!!

Brian McCartney (Tour Vice Captain)



Born 1951

Married to Jane with two married sons and three grandchildren. I am a retired technology and pupil care and support teacher. Before becoming a teacher, I was a qualified engineer.

Presently, I am the President of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club (Scottish Curling) and am the Vice-Captain of the 2020 Tour to Switzerland. Member of Letham Grange Curling Club since 1999, playing at Forfar Ice Rink. I have been my Club and Province President twice. Organised the 2014 incoming Swiss tour when it came to Forfar. Qualified coach and have developed schools and wheelchair curling in my area.

I also enjoy playing golf in good conditions at Carnoustie Golf links as well as gardening during the summer.

Rod Mickel



Born 1951

Married to Pauline, with 2 sons and 2 grandchildren. Live in Crieff, a small town on the edge of the Highlands in Scotland. Formerly a lawyer, and thereafter worked in a wine shop.

My curling club is Crieff & Ochertyre. I have been Secretary, Treasurer, and President in the past, and am now Vice-President for 2nd time. A member of the Area Standing Committee of Scottish Curling, I am a level 1 qualified coach, employed at Dewars Ice Rink in Perth, and also a qualified umpire.

Hobbies include playing bridge, hill walking and riding motorcycles.

Robert Robertson



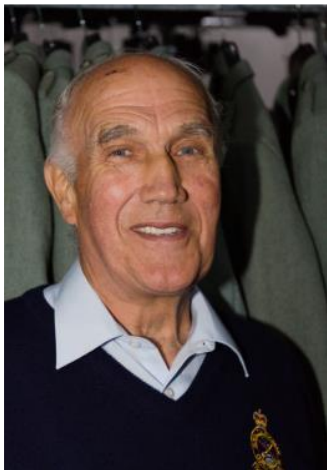
Born 1954

Curled for over 37 years and an active member of Eddleston Curling Club in Peeblesshire Province. Immediate Past President of the Province and have been Club President on 4 occasions. A highlight of my Presidency was carrying the Scottish flag when the Canadian tourists visited Edinburgh for the Strathcona Cup in 2019. As a keen curler I also find time to develop the sport and am a qualified Level 1 coach with Edinburgh Curling School.

Have recently retired from my own business improvement consultancy and now have time to enjoy my first granddaughter, a future curler in the making!

Wide range of interests include walking, reading, travelling and watching a number of sports – football, rugby and, of course, curling.

Stewart Robertson



Born 1949

New Abbey Curling Club. Married to Liz, with three children and four grandchildren. I am a retired lorry driver/mechanic.

I have curled for over 50 years at club and national level and now umpire up to international level. Was a member of the Scottish touring team for the Strathcona Cup tour to Canada in 2013 and I am very much looking forward to being part of the 2020 tour to Switzerland.

Other interests include rally motorsport.

David Roy



Born 1968

I live in the beautiful and surprisingly diverse county of Fife, shuffling through life on the back of managing the bucolic and surprisingly mixed Crail Golfing Society, the world's seventh oldest golf club. Interests include larking about on stage in community theatre, playing about on a golf course and curling. Currently the President of the Club Managers Association of Europe and also currently married to Jenny, who is an award-winning Master Saddler and keen horse rider. She is also a curler and we won our club 'Pairs' competition this year.

Ian Sankey



Born 1951

Originally from Perth. I am a retired Physical Education teacher and live in Glenrothes in Fife. My wife Meg and I have three children: Alistair, Marianne and Michael. Sadly, Alistair died aged 21.

I was introduced to Curling by my doctor who diagnosed that I was too old to play Rugby at 30. "Be at Kirkcaldy Ice Rink by 17:30 on Monday" and a curler was born. I retired from Rugby aged 58!

Member of both Markinch and Raith & Abbotshall curling clubs, playing at Kirkcaldy and Kinross ice rinks. President of Markinch Curling Club and also highly involved in the 'Curling's Cool' programme, visiting schools to give talks and coaching. On tour,

what I'll enjoy most will be the friendly games, played in a competitive spirit, good fun and making new friends both with fellow-tourists and our Swiss hosts.

Enjoy Rugby and travel. I am a long-suffering supporter of St. Johnstone Football Club in Perth.

Mike Silvera

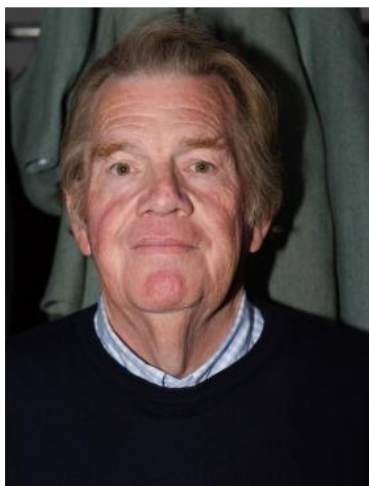


Born 1949

I have been curling for over forty years, with my local club Bishopshire all that time, and have been a very successful club curler. I have also had the privilege to visit Canada and Japan to watch my daughter Michelle play in the World Junior Curling Championships, which she won in Japan.

Worked in the grain trade for twenty years, before coming home to run the family farm, where I work alongside my son Martin. We grow a variety of vegetables and cereals on the farm, as well as operating a very successful farm shop and coffee shop. Enjoy spending time with my grandchildren, who are 3, 4 and 6 years old, so keep me on my toes!

Alan Stuart



Born 1950

Born in Edinburgh, briefly a law student, then banker. From age of 25, worked in the family baker and butcher business (founded 1857). I am currently chairman and there are 220 employees. Past President of Scottish Bakers and Centenary Chairman of the British Confectioners' Association. Founded World Scotch Pie Championships in 1999.

Married Jan (RCCC Swedish Tourist) in 1979, have two married sons who work in the family business. Two great daughters-in-law and four wonderful grandchildren.

Have golfed since childhood with lowest handicap of 4 and scored five holes-in-one. Past Captain of Lundin Golf Club.

Have curled for 50 years at club level for Leven CC and Hercules CC, serving as President for both. In fourth year on RCCC Area Standing Committee. Have skipped two 8-enders.

Finally, have lost over 40 kilos to come on tour - hope not to put any back on! Still a bit of a gourmand and wine lover.

Gordon Thomson



Born 1968

My home is in Kirkcaldy, also known as the "Lang Toun", in the Kingdom of Fife. I'm married to Avril and have a daughter, Caitlin. Work as a Project Manager for a multinational company which delivers bespoke, highly skilled engineering support for the marine sector.

My mother club is Thornton which plays in Scotland's oldest ice rink, Fife Ice Arena. I've served as the club's Vice President and President - currently on a second term as Vice President.

On tour, I'm looking forward to make new friendships with the tour team and also our Swiss hosts, making the tour a trip of a lifetime and something to remember.

Derek Young (Tour Treasurer)



Born 1956

After Qualifying as Chartered Accountant in 1980, moved into industry as Finance Director for a medium sized family business in the car and caravan trade. In last 5 years, moved to part time work in Highland Wear business run by the next generation of the same family.

Mother Club is Borestone and Stirling, one of 4 oldest clubs in the world, but play most of my curling with Kilsyth CC (oldest club in the world) and Drymen CC. All play out of The Peak in Stirling. I am a level 2 qualified coach and coach Stirling Young Curlers and Stirling Virtual Club. Curled for over 40 years.

Live in Stirling with my wife Janice. One daughter, married to member of RAF and lives near Cambridge.

My other interests are golf, cycling, walking, and reading.

TOUR TEAMS 2020

Team 1 - Basil Baird, Gordon Thomson, Harry Brodie and Brian McArtney

Team 2 - Mike Dick, Stewart Robertson, Ian Sankey and Alan Stuart

Team 3 - Trevor Dodds, Robin Copland, Jim Lawson and Robert Robertson

Team 4 - David Hardie, Rod Mickel, Iain Jamieson and Mike Silvera

Team – 5 David Roy, Derek Young, David Cunningham and Norman Ainslie



Our Tour Mission Statement :
Our tour to Switzerland will rank amongst the twelve most memorable days in all of our curling lives...

Friday 17th January 2020 – meet up

Assembled on time at the Hotel and (on pain of penalty correct uniform, we were place by Robin, our doughty photos. The earnest hope number of digital images that be one where we are looking eyes open.



Captain Copey

Edinburgh Hilton Airport fines) all wearing the collectively wafted into leader for the team was that given the vast were captured, there may the same way and with our



Team 1



Team 2



Team 3



Team 4



Team 5

After a soup and sandwich lunch and choosing to change out of our gold braided blazers for the journey, we made the relatively short trudge to check in and the joyless EasyJet self-service experience. We were as pleased as we were surprised to discover the several dozen tins of haggis that had been randomly rammed into luggage had not tipped the scales into the red.

As instructed, we lined up to purchase six gallons of industrial gin at duty free, raising the eyebrows of the normally unperturbable check-out staff. Duly provisioned, we refreshed ourselves at the bar, boarded and we were off.



The Basel airport baggage carousel thankfully spat out the requisite amount of luggage and we assembled at the 'outsized baggage' area waiting for everyone to catch up. The unexpected hiatus was caused by Jim Lawson, who had remained at the carousel, anxiously watching the empty belt continuing to revolve. "What's up Jim?" enquired Robin; "My small case hasn't arrived" came the reply.

At this, Robin pointed to the distinctive grey case with the striking and unmissable Swiss Tour logo, complete with the name 'Jim Lawson' and asked his bemused team member "You mean that case sitting there?". Jim silently picked up his bag and made for the exit.

After a short minibus transfer the unremarkable and modern Swiss Congress Hotel provided us with our first taste of Swiss hospitality, albeit from Michaela, the Irish maître de, who instantly determined the unsophisticated nature of our requirements as we sat for dinner. "I think you would enjoy the burger." She declared. "It is one of the more modestly priced menu items, the portions are substantial, and it goes perfectly with the overpriced thin fizzy beer we serve".

Day One – Saturday 18th

Assembling at the appointed hour of 9:00 for our first taste of ‘Morning Class’, we were delighted to discover that Michaela’s sister, Niamh was on hand to help Trevor prepare the 21 glasses of potent pick-me-up. Worryingly, we all agreed that drinking before breakfast was an unexpectedly pleasant way to start the day and we hoped that after two weeks of such behaviour we could return to more sober habits.

The morning was left free to do some informal sightseeing in Basel City Centre.



Once a baker, always a baker. Alan doing some market research – or that was his story.

We assembled in the hotel reception for our travel to our first game.



We then got our first view of the tour bus, our constant companion for the next 13 days.



Arriving at the Arlseheim curling centre, we were instantly entranced by the charming wood-lined Swiss cottage style restaurant and were soon seated for lunch.



Musical accompaniment was appropriately provided by Paul Muller, who sang, yodelled and played his Schwyzerorgeli, which we were pleased to discover was a Swiss Folk Accordion.

Our host, Bruno Schallberger, led us on to the most glorious ice sheet, complete with angled mirrors and electronic scoreboards and we were encouraged to bellow out Flower of Scotland, which we managed with an unexpected vigour. In stark contrast, it appeared that our



Swiss opponents were less keen on their own national song, which is perhaps one of the less uplifting of anthems.

Possibly buoyed by the singing, the immaculate rink, or maybe just the beer at lunch, we triumphed over our hosts 5-0, with special mention going to Basil for his 13-3 win. Shot of the day, however, was awarded to Mike Dick, who was lying six against, but expertly guided his last stone to the button for shot.

Scores Game 1:

Team 1: 13 - 3 Team 2: 9 – 5 Team 3: 11 – 5 Team 4: 10 -4 Team 5: 7- 4

	Shots	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland Total	50	25	5	0	0
Switzerland Total	21	15			

Our transport to dinner was the predictably efficient Swiss tram system, which glided us serenely to the heart of the old town.



A short amble then took us the most enchanting 'Das Schone Haus', which was the basement of a local government building and used by a club dedicated to parading at the famous Basel Fasnacht Carnival. We quickly learned that the Basel Carnival is the biggest and most important in Switzerland, dating back several centuries and saturated with tradition.



A 72-hour semi-religious affair, the 1,800 Fastnachtlers parade through the town in the dark with lanterns on their head and carrying illuminated parade banners and accompanied by bands of musicians called

'Cliques', playing piccolos and drums. It turns out that we were to be entertained by such a clique, who played their piccolos with considerable verve. It was commented that such behaviour in Scotland would normally be associated with orange sashes and the reference was not altogether out of place. The Basel Festival is unorthodox in



Switzerland because it is deliberately timed to mess with lent and snub the catholic tradition.



The urbane and witty Conrad Engler was the perfect host, calling us to the buffet table in strict order and doing so with a humour that was impossible not to find endearing. Not only did the wine flow freely but our considerate and kindly hosts ended the evenings feast with generous measures of Oban 12.



Following such hospitality, it felt almost unkind to impose our choral endeavours on the Swiss but such is the tradition, we were duly obliged. It was possibly the wonderful acoustics of the vaulted ceiling, or the fact that the Swiss had fulsomely imbibed, but our two songs were handsomely applauded.

We were gratified to learn that the Clique commented to Conrad that the combination of our team uniforms, lusty singing and general bonhomie helped create the best evening they had experienced in the club for over ten years. We'll take that.

One of our Swiss hosts wore the kilt specially for us.

Our return trip should have been unremarkable, such was the mundanity of Swiss tram travel but that was not to factor in the



impact that Mike Silvera had on one particularly camp passenger who was keen to find out what we were up to. Mike patiently explained that we were curlers, and such was Henne's excitement, he was ceremoniously presented with a tour badge, which he will no doubt treasure for days.



Day Two – Sunday 19th

Day 2 commenced with the impressively bewigged Rod Meikle dispensing the days fines, with the scales of justice finely balanced to fairly judge the various misdemeanours of the previous day.

The journey along the Rhine valley was unexceptional and shrouded in fog but as we crested a pass in the Jura mountains, the sun lit the Swiss landscape and the chat in the bus suddenly started to reference the Von Trapp family.



Our arrival at the delightful Aarau Curling Club was heralded by three Alpine horn players, whose fanfare was as much enjoyed by the club staff as it was by their guests. Entering the well-appointed restaurant, the club members plied us with wine, despite the early hour and an official welcome was provided by Thomas Habegger, the club Vice-President.

He explained that the club was rightly proud to be the home of Silvana Tirizoni, who skipped her team to win the 2019 Women's World Championships and aimed to continue to produce champion curlers through their youth programme.



Whilst our previous opponents were a gather-up of Basel curlers from various clubs, who had never played together, Aarau was a completely different test. Despite various heroics from teams Dodds and Hardie, including the shot of the day from Trevor, who found the narrowest of gaps to score a 6 and go into the lead at the 6th end, we encountered our first whitewash.



Team 5 had this game off and took the opportunity to do some sightseeing in this lovely town of Aarau.



Another lovely lunch was served, alongside the customary liberal issue of wine, and our gratitude was again expressed in song. Belted out with all the subtlety of a football terrace chant, “Bring Me Curling” seemed to hit the mark, so we quit when we were ahead and made our way to the bus, to travel to Lucerne for our next game that evening.



Scores Game 2:

Team 1: 4 – 7 Team 2: 6 – 7 Team 3: 3 – 5
Team 4: 3 – 4

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland Total	26	14	0	0	4
Switzerland					
Total	32	17			



Lucerne’s fame as one of the world’s top tourist locations is rightly justified. The old city walls made for a picturesque backdrop as we entered the impressive city. The staff at the Continental Park provided a 5-star welcome and we quickly

checked in and made our way to the next match.



The city’s ice sports complex was a relatively modern sprawling concrete affair with the curling rink being placed well behind the hockey and ice-skating sheets. However, the curlers had paid for the curling hall to be lined with wood, which provided a warm and distinctive

atmosphere for our match.

Team 5 had to shuffle the line-up. David unfortunately caught his foot at the side of the rink and damaged his toe, and couldn't slide properly, and choose to play lead stones, before going into the head. The rest of the team moved up, and Derek played skip stones.



Thankfully, similarly to Basel, the Lucerne curlers had been somewhat clashed together and this made for a more competitive affair than Aarau. Mike's team had an impressive win (14 – 3), David Hardie held on to win 5 – 4, David Roy's team ended up all square, despite taking an impressive 6 at the 4th end, but Basil lost 8 -4. leaving the Scot's to come out on top 2½ to 1½.



The dinner was again a festival of local fare, Chügelipastete followed by a chocolate and pear mouse, and as usual, the wine flowed freely and the crack was first class.

Scores Game 3 :

Team 1 : 4 – 8, Team 2: 14 – 3, Team 4 : 5 – 4, Team 5 : 8 - 8

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	31	15	2	1	1
Switzerland	23	17			

Day Three – Monday 20th

The day did not start well with the news that Brian was unwell to the extent that the doctor had to be called. Trevor and David Hardie stayed with him, whilst the rest of us continued with the itinerary, and were treated to a short walking tour of Lucerne.



The tour guide was both professional and rightly proud of Lucerne. Giving the impression that she could have spent days showing us around her hometown, in

a sense it was a shame that we had such little time in the city. And yet, because we were shown around a couple of buildings that otherwise we would



not have known existed, it was as if we had been given a behind the scenes insight that made our stay even more special.

The route to our next game took us along the lakeside of Zurich, past the banker's mansions to the curling club of Kusknacht, where we were graciously welcomed by Hans Peter Keller, the Honorary President. Following another fine lunch and glass of wine, the curling match was a stern test of our resilience as a team. It was portentous that the oldest member of the club, a 92-year-old veteran, threw a ceremonial first stone straight to the button.





After taking to the ice for the traditional anthems, the games were a stern test, with only Team 5 winning their game, and that only after Derek's shot of the day. With three players still in Lucerne, our teams were rejigged with subs from Mike Dick's rink. David Roy's was the

only unaffected team, but the skip then discovered that his injured toe was worse than he thought and he again played lead stones.

Derek threw fourth stones and was rewarded with the shot of the day. 6-6 and lying one down behind a guddle of guards, the final delivery of the match did an angle promote of one the guards onto another guard, onto our only stone in the house, tapping it onto the shot stone, leaving us lying one, and a 7 – 6 win, and the Swiss astounded (and if truth be told, Derek was equally astounded).



Scores Game 4 :

Team 1 : 5 – 5, Team 3 : 3 – 5, Team 4 : 3 – 5, Team 5 : 7 -6

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	19	12	1	1	2
Switzerland	25	19			



The game was followed by a delightfully smooth transfer to Schaffhausen, briefly interrupted by a stop to see the famous Rheinefallen, floodlit and majestic, before checking in to the charmingly old-fashioned family run hotel.

The ice arena provided the standard of facilities that we had come to realise is the norm, rather than the exception in Switzerland.



Glass of wine in hand, we were comprehensively introduced to the curling club by the President, Marco Gabrieli, who used a projector to illustrate the history of curling in Schaffhausen and promote its hosting of the 2021 Women's World Championships.

The meal appeared to be designed to make Alan Stuart happy, being the local



speciality of a massive ham, baked in bread. It appears that the bread retains the moisture and the ham was succulent and flavoursome. They served a specially decorated curling cake and asked us



all to sign the poster that they had designed to promote our visit - more examples of the fantastic welcome we received everywhere we went.

Following a brisk walk back to the hotel, we were greeted by Trevor and David Hardie who had made their way to Schaffhausen by train after ensuring that Brian was safely in the hands of Lucerne's medical experts.

Day Four – Tuesday 21st

The early morning matches back at Schaffhausen were shared 2 games all, but our cumulative shots up were reduced to +21, the closest margin during the fortnight.



Scores :

Team 2 : 9 – 6, Team 3 : 3 – 5, Team 4 : 4 – 8, Team 5 : 2 – 7

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	22	13	2	0	2
Switzerland	26	19			



We were treated to lunch before moving on again to our next game at St Gallen. Prior to leaving, the customary vote of thanks was this time given by Derek

Saint Gallen proved to be a slightly less memorable stop, which is not to detract from the high standard of hospitality provided by our hosts, but rather because the modern hotel and ice arena were both situated on the outskirts of the town.

The impressively waistcoated greeted us from the bus and change in the ladies changing the seemingly commodious gents' facilities. The ladies who change their shoes were unperturbed to enter the room footwear amidst the group of Scots.



Gallus Keppler directed us to room, despite nature of the had still to seemingly and retrieve their half-dressed

We lined up behind our national flags on the ice as usual and chanted Flower of Scotland to the continued bemusement of the locals, who in turn were mystified why their anthem was being picked out on a Hackbrett by Gallus, who appeared not to know the tune.

All five rinks were playing, so Basil's team needed a sub for Brian.



Because he was drawn against a wheelchair team, his new lead was also a Swiss wheelchair player (a friend of Harry's from an umpiring trip).



Blooming good he was too!

David Hardie's rink took the greatest plaudits though, winning 17-6 and enhancing our shots up, Mike Dick also contributing with a healthy 11 – 3 win. We took the night 3 games to 2.

Continuing the theme of local speciality foods, we were served St Gallen Bratwurst, an unappealing almost white sausage, served with pasta. We were told that you could eat the skin of the sausage, but generally this was not done and given that it is Zebu intestine, it was good advice.

By now, our singing had been honed to the point that we had started to look at our hosts when singing and even provide some actions, rather than simply staring nervously at the words. Consequently, our three minutes of entertainment was well received, and we returned to our tables chuffed with our efforts.



Not to be outdone, Gallus unsheathed his Hackbrett, and feathered the strings with the delicate brass hammers in an effort to coach a tune from his Swiss folk instrument. It was at this juncture our guide and mentor, Freddie, explained that Gallus had only recently taken up the Hackbrett and was still learning. His enthusiasm to entertain in such circumstances was indeed Gallus, as we

would say.

Scores :

Team 1 ; 9 – 5, Team 2 : 11 – 3, Team 3 : 5 – 7, Team 4 : 17 – 6, Team 5 : 3 – 5

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	45	20	3	0	2
Switzerland	26	18			

Day Five – Wednesday 22nd



Our stop at the Brewery in Appenzeller was as much as a surprise to us as it was to the staff of the brewery, given that it was closed. Alfred worked his magic, explaining that he had 20 heavy drinking Scots in a bus, and they quickly unlocked the door. A three-minute introduction to beer production in the Appenzeller region was provided by the young woman at the till and a variety of souvenirs were rashly purchased.

We quickly moved on to the Appenzeller Wine Distillery, who were far more



prepared for our visit, with Fransisco wating to meet us and the doors already unlocked. With 42 herbs being used in the distillation, it is hoped that Appenzeller wine is good for you in some



way. This can in no way be clinically proven but they appear to hang on to the concept nonetheless. We were all suitably enchanted

by the aromatics of the herbs that a significant number of souvenirs were purchased and may even be drunk at home, if only as a cough medicine.

From Appenzeller we continued on the



longish journey to Flims through some pretty countryside, and passed Davos, where the current G5 summit was being held. This was definitely Heidi land - we stopped at a service station which had a “Heidi Land” shop and animal farm and

was definitely more upmarket than its British counterparts.

Every curler we met, explained that Flims was the best rink in Switzerland and given that we had visited some crackers, it had much to live up to. And yet it did.



The A-framed ceiling and wood-lined hall was immaculate and backed by the most beguiling bar. The ice was perfect and the opposition generous. We were properly inspired to sing Flower of Scotland with genuine fervour and by now unsurprised that the Flims curlers did not utter a note of their national song.

As at Arlesheim, the excellent ice conditions suited us and we racked four wins and one close defeat. Mike’s team won 19-4, the biggest score of the whole tour. Basil won 10 -5, Trevor won 11 -3 and David Hardie 9 -2. The only defeat was David Roy’s team losing by 6 – 7, narrowly failing to take a 3 in the last end after lying in a wining position before the Flim’s skips last stone, and having come back from a 0 – 5 deficit, after 3 ends.

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	55	25	4	0	1
Switzerland	22	15			

The Des Alpes hotel, where we stayed, was a short enough walk from the rink, that it was chosen as the venue for the evening meal, which was another local speciality of a style of gnocchi, followed by a sticky tart. Eddi Cramer, President of Flims CC, aided by British born Adrian Manning, were gracious hosts and a joy to curl with.

It was at this juncture that we learned that Brian had been passed fit to travel and would join us in Celerina, which made a great day even better.



Day Six – Thursday 23rd



The transfer from Flims to Celerina was most special, winding slowly through the Alps, climbing to 2,284 metres over the Julier pass. The journey was both scenic and at times thrilling, as we passed over steep gorges and snaked alongside vertiginous valleys.

Passing through Saint Moritz, we universally acknowledged that we were pleased not to be staying at the internationally famous resort. By stark contrast, Celerina was charming. Set against a backdrop of seemingly endless mountains and dotted with crystalline ski slopes, the town was pleasingly serene.





We were royally attended to at Bo's Co Café, where we were treated to a bowl of Pizzocheri, which is an Italian mountain food, and was followed by an entirely unnecessary but warmly welcomed cake.

Crossing the road to the outdoor rink, we were all entranced by the

setting and equally delighted by the warm mountain sunshine. Admittedly, the seven-sheet rink offered the variable ice and the oddities of outside stones but that was simply part of the challenge. As the sign above the Cresta Run, high above the town explained, tradition is not the worship of ashes but the preservation of fire.

The match was played out to the music serenading the surrounding skating rinks, where skaters of all ages glided peacefully in the still, cool air.



Joyously, we peeled the contest, with one win, one loss and three peeled



matches, and retired to the rinkside bar where we were fed Italian pizza breads, cheese balls and local air cured hams. David Roy, with toe better, took his rightful place back skipping team 5, and held on for a 6 – 6 draw after a spirited fight back by the Swiss. Basil also got a 7 – 7 draw, taking two 2's in each of the last 2 ends, and David Hardie also came back from 4 down to earn an 8 -8 draw. Trevor scored our



only victory of the day in a tight game, but came out winners by 8 -6. Mike had a rare loss by 8 shots to 2

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	31	18	1	3	1
Switzerland	35	20			

Brian, and his wife Jane arrived during our game, and then joined us in the rink side bar for our aperitifs. We were all please to see Brian back, and looking extremely healthy.



Despite such gluttony after our game, within a couple of hours we were seated at the plush Cresta Palace Hotel, being served a sumptuous meal of jugged Roe deer.

Our genial hosts were impressed enough by our singing that the club President, Arthur Rudisuhl and his wife Silva demanded an encore, and so Auld Lang Syne ended one of the great days of the trip.

Day Seven – Friday 24th

Having been advised by our hosts the previous night, that the world famous Cresta run was worth seeing, Team Roy rose at 6.00am to visit it, before breakfast and morning class, as we were



due to depart straight after breakfast.

Having walked up to the run just outside Celerina, we were not

disappointed in our decision. While viewing the steep run from a gallery point close to the finish, a tour driver approached us and said he had a group of visitors in his mini bus here to try the run, and did we know where they had to go. We looked at each other and thought – if they are sensible, they will go home. The run looked frightening.



The views over Celerina from the top were worth the climb.



Our transport to the next destination was the fabled Glacier Express train that runs from St Moritz to



Zermatt, and would drop us off at Brig. It was good to see Brian, with his wife Jane (far left), back with us on

tour, and looking fit. The train drew into the station with punctilious predictability and we shambled aboard cluttering the carriage with our presence.

The only discernible problem with the journey was that the panoramas were endless and it was hard to know which particular Alpine scene merited a photo because every part of the journey was spectacular.

We sat in our teams and luckily for Harry, he was directly opposite a Brazilian couple who he insisted on befriending, along with the coquettish young train attendant who shared responsibility for serving us food and drink.



Inevitably, the cost of some light refreshments from the bar prohibited excess and just as predictably, Alan had provisioned his table with his favourite picnic consisting of three bottles of wine, a case of lager and a huge box of cakes.



Lunch, when it arrived was a strangely chaotic affair, with a seemingly haphazard approach to dishing out the menu. Mike Dick's team, having enjoyed their mid-morning aperitif, were the only table to be treated to a bowl



of soup, albeit without the convenience of spoons. Eventually, everyone was tucking into some goulash and rice, satisfyingly washed down with a couple of bottles of Zermatt beer.

Such was the absorbing nature of the scenery, the six-

hour journey passed quickly and ere long we were being welcomed at Brig by the amiable local curlers, who ushered us to the local Tourist Office where beer, wine and cheese awaited. The official duties were dispensed efficiently by club President Romauld Rothenfluh, who had recruited Patricia and Martina to assist with translations, and everything was dispensed with the usual good humour and bonhomie. Suitably victualled, we made our way to our evening abode, which was the delightfully old-fashioned Schlosshotel.



Our hosts had somewhat nervously arranged a tour of the Sempione distillery, anxious because they consider Scotland to be the home of whisky and their local fare wouldn't compare. They needn't have worried.

The owner and distiller, Fredy Lengen had recruited his friend, Reto Steiner as tour guide and he ensured that we understood why whisky production was so unusual in Switzerland. We learned that the Swiss tax the production of alcohol in advance and Fredy therefore had to fund the creation of the distillery at the same time as paying an annual tax bill of 65,000chf each year in advance of any whisky being sold.

Following the short tour, we were poured liberal measures of Fredy's wine before being seated for the dinner that was prepared and served by his family. The menu of tossed salad starter and main course of local sausage was becoming familiar to us but it was delicious and warmly welcomed.



The rendition of our songs in gratitude of an immense amount of work by the Lengen family seemed pedestrian but was in retrospect inspired because we were each bestowed a measure of the finest Lengen brandy, and then gifted a bottle of the same to do with as we wished.

Day Eight – Saturday 25th

With the hotel being handily placed adjacent to Brig's most famous landmark, we trudged over in the chill Alpine air to meet



Romaine, our guide to the Stockalperpalast, who calmly narrated the story of this iconic Valais building.



Within sight of the renaissance palace was the ice arena, where we took on the Brig curlers, with varying degrees of success in yet another immaculate facility, managed by the splendidly named Richard Hug.



The previous session of curling went over time so we were restricted to six ends, sharing the four games, all with close score lines.

Basil, with a 2 at the last scrapped home 5-4, Mike suffered a second rare defeat and lost 1-3, Trevor

traded ends and scrapped home 8-7 winners, while David Roy lost 2-4.

The Brig Curlers had made a trophy for our game and insisted in coming up with a formula for scoring that meant we got the Trophy, collected by Brian.

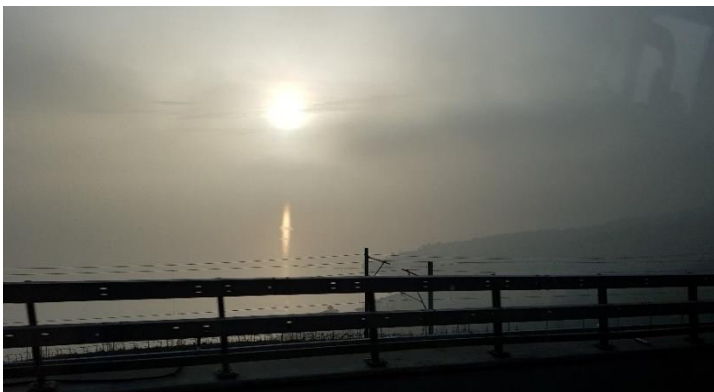


Our canapes, beer and wine were all local specialties and we boarded the bus to Lausanne replete with food, drink, and friendship.



Scores :

	Ends	W	D	L	
Scotland	17	9	2	0	2
Switzerland	19	13			



The journey to Lausanne was picturesque and Lausanne was somewhat of a surprise, not so much in the fact that we had the pleasure of driving past the Olympic Museum twice, but more so that the Lausanne curlers were rather more relaxed about hosting a Scottish tour.



The curling rink, being situated on Lake Geneva, offered the most spectacular views and the most variable ice, with the rink nearest to the windows, affected by the light.



However, we appeared to adapt well and bested the opposition, which included the reigning Swiss Junior Champion, Marina Loertscher, and daughter of Switzerland's first curling gold medallist, Patrick Loertscher, (who also won the Worlds in 1981)



For the second time on tour, we won all five games. Basil came from behind to win a tight game 7 -6, stealing in the last against the hammer to win. Mike returned to his normal winning ways with a comfortable 10- 5 win. Trevor's rink after a good start ran out winners by 9 – 6. David Hardie came from behind twice to win 7 – 5. On the window sheet, David Roy's rink, after a good start, defeated the Swiss Juniors by 8 – 6, and had the Swiss champion not made her last draw against 4, victory would have been more comprehensive.

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	41	23	5	0	0
Switzerland	28	15			





Rather than dine at the somewhat limited club facilities, we crossed the road to an Italian restaurant, and were served up the now customary tossed salad, followed by a local

speciality sausage, washed down with suitable amounts of Swiss wine. A good night was had by all and after the customary thanks and prestation of gifts, we said our farewells and made our way to the hotel via the local Metro.

The city centre offered less than the likes of Basel, Lucerne and Bern, but the facilities on offer at the hotel were of the highest standard and enjoyed by all.



Day Nine – Sunday 26th

Day nine started with an early rise for breakfast, as the bus was scheduled to leave at 8.15 for the transfer to Geneva. The journey was buoyant, as the front half of the bus sang all manner of Scottish songs on the bus, which were at times recognised and occasionally in tune, while the back half caught up with some much-needed sleep. The plains of Switzerland were pastoral and well-tended, but in comparison to our recently experienced alpine excursion it provided a chance to ignore the scenery and carouse instead.



Geneva was another lovely city, though we only saw it briefly from the bus. We saw the famous fountain used in the TV program "The Champions", which brought a chorus of the expected song.



The rink at Geneva was a modern affair and was only a few hundred yards from the French border.

Tight games were had against the Geneva rinks, (one of whom were playing in the upcoming Swiss Mixed Championships), with the exception of Basil's rink, (which included Freddy for a couple of ends) who did us proud by winning 16 - 3 amongst three other close wins and one close defeat. Mike traded ends and won 7 - 5, Trevor also traded ends and won a tight game 6 - 5. David Hardie despite losing a 3 at the 3rd end to fall 2 behind, came back strongly to win 7 - 6, winning 4 of the last 5 ends. David Roy went 6 - 0 down after 5 ends, but also came back strongly in the last 3 ends, to only lose by 6 - 5, and was lying game before the Swiss skip played his last stone, which cut David back to just one shot, and a tight defeat.

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	41	22	4	0	1
Switzerland	25	17			



In contrast to our previous hosts, the Geneva curlers were inspired enough by our singing to respond with their own anti-French anthem, which was richly received.

David Cunningham took his turn to give the customary vote of thanks for a very enjoyable, and socialable, early afternoon.



Such was the hospitality received at Geneva, our transfer to Langnau was a sedate affair and we decanted to the Hotel Hirschen, somewhat travel weary and ready for our impending three-night stay, our first stay in a hotel of more than one night, since our arrival in Basel, and now with time to catch up on clothes washing.



After time to unpack we made the short road to Zollbrück which took us to Freddy's home rink, and our first night of hospitality here, and to a standard of Swiss hospitality that was unsurpassed. We had a temporary change of driver, as Frank, our regular driver, had to take his statutory break. His place was taken by his father who ably, well almost ably, drove us for the next 3 days.

Our time in Langnau was to be some of the most relaxing and socialable on the tour, as with 3 nights here, we did not have to pack every morning, and we spent each night with our hosts from the Emmental Curling Club, and had a chance to get to know them better. By the 3rd night, we had become good friends with them.



The Emmental Curling Club were keen to enjoy a Burns night, supplemented with fondue, and although this menu is not often seen on Burns weekend, we were jubilant. The "Address to a Haggis" was recited in German and Scots, by Alan Stuart and David Roy respectively.



The Swiss seemed to enjoy our Haggis, brought over in cans in the broom bags, and cooked by the staff here to baker Alan's instructions. Washed down by a bottle of malt per table, added authenticity to the event.

We were treated to three local sisters singing traditional Swiss songs in the most angelic form, and with the clever use of audience participation they engaged in such a fashion as we rarely witnessed. Their signing may also have been enhanced



by the partaking of the whisky, which they were not slow to devour appreciatively.



An enjoyable night was had by all, and we departed back to the hotel just before midnight – tired and well-watered, from a great night.

Day Ten – Monday 27th Jan

On Monday morning we returned to Zollbruck for our game against the Emmental Curling Club and we were again warmly welcomed, by raised brooms at the entrance to the Club.





As the rink was only 3 sheets, the party split into two, and Mike and David Hardies rinks were piped onto the ice by a piper resplendent in full highland outfit.

After the official ceremony, the rest of us toured an Emmental Cheese centre. There was a relative absence of enthusiasm

amongst us for the excursion, which had been billed as a visit to a dairy, but we quickly discovered otherwise. Not only was the valley of the river Emmen captivating, but the facilities on show were part dairy, part museum and part Willie Wonka.



Aika was not only a knowledgeable and enthusiastic tour guide, but her forbearance for tolerating our schoolboy humour was admirable. She efficiently conducted us around the genuine 18th



century alpine dairy cottage, demonstrating the original production methods, before initiating the mostly self-guided experience in the brand-new visitor centre.



The mix of digital projections, recorded narration and moving scenery could have been straight from a Roald Dahl book and we were



blithely ushered from Disneyesque animated singer, to a wool-lined representation of a cow's stomach without demur.

The two sessions of curling commenced with the usual parade, behind the flags and our rendition of Flower of Scotland. However, in stark contrast to every other rink, the Emmentallers enthusiastically intoned the Swiss anthem, which was a joy to behold.

Mike's team were in steamroller mode and David Roy's rink enjoyed reaching double figures, as our cumulative shots up exceeded +100 and we took an unassailable 16 games lead.

Trevor without doubt drew the strongest rink put out against us, and, despite trading ends he only scored singles, while the opposition picked up two 3's, and he was the only team to lose here.



Basil won 8 – 3, Mike won 15 – 1, Trevor lost 4 – 9, David Hardie won 8 – 7, and David Roy won 10 – 4.

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	45	25	4	0	1
Switzerland	24	14			



Freddy had used the occasion of our Tour to entertain an important local sponsor, who kindly offered a guided tour of his company's facilities, which were conveniently located near to where we would be dining for the evening. The fact that he was offering free beer made the impending trip to a concrete factory modestly more appealing.

Greeted at the entrance by the boyish and beaming Christoph, he expertly tutored us in the art of manufacturing pre-cast concrete components that he insisted on referring to as 'manhole bottoms', which engendered stifled giggles from the overgrown schoolboys amongst us. David Hardie, with working in that industry, managed to ask some sensible questions.

We ended the tour in the spotless office facility, offered our gratitude to Christoph through song and left for dinner infinitely more informed about 'manhole bottoms' than we ever considered possible.



We were delighted that our Emmentaler opponents joined us for dinner, which was to be accompanied by a musical trio playing traditional Swiss

music on accordions and a keyboard.

However, the slightly surreal nature of the day was sustained as the restaurant owner expertly rendered Amazing Grace on a saw, before displaying a dazzling talent with cowbells, including the cleverly crafted participation of Brian, given his own wee bell to ring at the end of the tune.



Suitably lubricated, we ended the day with a rousing rendition of Auld Lang Syne and we made our way back on the bus, satisfied that we had helped to play our part in what was a wonderful occasion.

Day 11 – Tuesday 28th Jan

With a few of the party nursing ailments, and the low clouds dampening the appeal of the countryside, the transfer to Thun was a sedate affair, only occasionally disturbed by slight skids on snowy roads, with our relief driver Adolf (Franks father) taking over for Frank's statutory rest days.

Thun CC had kindly arranged for an alpine horn player to welcome us and such was our familiarity with the stertorous tunes, we almost felt able to hum along.



David Hardie's aching knee finally gave up early in his match and sadly he could no longer play for the rest of the tour. However, the munificent curlers of Thun had bought three bottles of Macallan 12-year-old, which helped assuage David's pain a little and was a welcome pick-me-up for the rest of us. We needed it after suffering a 3-1 reversal in games and a knockback of 7 shots.

Lello, the brusque Italian and sole provider of food and drinks, dashed purposefully between tables and managed to serve all 70 of us quickly and without fuss. He is pictured enjoying a dram of Macallan from our gift of a Quaich to the Club. Our melancholic departure from Thun CC was not only because we had enjoyed the company of our opponents but because there was at least a half-bottle of Macallan left.



Our next stop was to be a walking tour of Bern but such was David Hardie's injury, he was forced to lay up in a pub. However, he was pleased that Basil, Trevor, Alan and Jim selflessly sacrificed their walk around the Swiss capital and stayed in the pub to keep him company.



The rest of the party were sedately shepherded around the magnificent ancient city by the composed and jovial Barbara, who explained that the Bernese are famous for their slow pace of life. Amongst the many



splendours of the town was the remarkable Zytglogge, which is a 15th century clock, famous for the fantastic number of moving figures adorning the clock tower.

Prising Trevor, Basil and co

out of the pub, we boarded the bus back to Langnau, and having spent in couple of hours in the pub on strong Swiss beer, we were treated to an impromptu singsong on the journey back to the hotel by the revellers, and on arrival at the hotel, perhaps somewhat inappropriately, headed for the wine cellar.



The Hotel Hirschen had the most beguiling 17th century wine cellar, which was suitably appointed and lit perfectly for our aperitif with our new Emmental friends whose company we

were delighted again to have for dinner.

It was understood that there had been no entertainment laid on for our meal, and so in order to fill the void, we declaimed our tour themed limericks, much to the bemusement of the Swiss and Scots alike. The winning



limerick was penned by Robert Robertson, and ably delivered on the night.

*The skip, a retired merchant banker,
Led a team from the guid toun o' Sanquhar
After another "no score" the team had to roar
That the banker, from Sanquhar, was ...
Not a very good skip.*



The silence that followed was broken by the soft singing of women's voices drifting in from the bar next door. Without hesitation, Freddy dashed through and beseeched them to sing for us, which they kindly did.

It transpired that they were a local choral group who met once a month to sing Swiss folk

songs and were a delight to listen to, as they performed their favourite harmonies. The closing of the evening with Auld Lang Syne never seemed more appropriate.

Day 12 – Wednesday 29th Jan

With snow forecast, Freddy decreed an especially early departure for the trip to Murren, and given the fragile nature of some in the party, it said much about the harmony of the group that everyone boarded on time. Morning class was distributed on the bus, but today saw a few dissenters who were feeling a bit under the weather. Frank was still on mandatory time off, so chauffeuring duties were still carried on by his strikingly bearded father Adolf, who ploughed through the fresh snow with a carefree abandon that we attributed to a lifetime of driving on untreated roads.

Arriving at the cable car station unscathed, (but not the bus, as Adolf hit the overhead canopy on arrival) we debussed and stared agog at the dizzying height of the mountain, we were to be lofted to. Sadly, the low, dank clouds obscured the spectacular view of the valley and by the time we reached the summit at Piz Gloria, visibility had been reduced to zero. A couple of the party



didn't have a head for heights and were wary of the ascent. Trevor overcame his reluctance to heights, and didn't opt out at village level, and went all the way to the top, and was glad he did.

Trevor felt he was on top of the world.

Thankfully, the viewpoint is renowned as the principle location for the Bond movie, 'One Her Majesty's Secret Service' and we whiled away the hour sauntering around the 'Bond' display in the visitor centre.

A 2 cable car descents took us to the snowbound and idyllic village of Murren, and the magnificent Eiger Hotel, where we checked in before traipsing up the hill to the sports centre.



Our hosts provided yet another warm reception, replete with alpine horn player, and explained that the continuing snow precluded any outdoor curling and that we would instead have the afternoon to ourselves. We were all disappointed not to further experience outdoor curling in the idyllic surroundings.

Murren is a small, picture postcard village, largely car free, and an utter delight



to wander around. In addition, the supremely well provisioned hotel provided the perfect environment for us all to recharge our batteries somewhat.

Some of the party utilised the hotels facilities, and had a swim in the hotel's small pool (4 strokes and you had to turn) and relaxed in the sauna,

which was a traditional European sauna where no swim costumes are worn, but avoided the outdoor hot tub. Others

preferred to have a more relaxed afternoon.



At the evening reception, courtesy of the hotel, we learnt from Murren CC President, George Fritz, that the hotel manager, Adrian Stahl, was not only a curler, but that his family owned the hotel. This helped explain the supreme confidence of the staff in their duties, as they were mostly long-term employees, who were well looked after and handsomely rewarded.



Our meal that night was one of the best on Tour, with a high standard of cuisine, enjoyed by all.



We sat with the teams we would have played in the afternoon had the weather not forced its cancellation.



Our table place names that night were a novel idea, being made from gingerbread. With evening entertainment being hard to find in Murren, the hotel bar doubled as a makeshift disco, which was riotously enjoyed by several tour members, as they mingled with fellow hotel guests until the small hours.

(picture courtesy of Ian Sankey on WhatsApp – just in case you wanted to know Mike)

Day 13 – Thursday 30th



The morning greeted us with a perfect blue sky, and despite a few bleary eyes,





we were easily shepherded to the cable car station for our final descent, before our onward transfer to Interlaken (meaning between 2 lakes)

The Interlaken rink was right next door to William Tell Museum and outdoor theatre.

With the health of a good many of the party being somewhat delicate, Freddy suggested that the two games scheduled for the day could be cut to six ends and unsurprisingly, this was enthusiastically adopted. The Interlaken facilities were as well-tended as we had come to expect, and the by now customary alpine horn player was on hand to herald our arrival and play the Swiss anthem.



The last competitive matches of the tour went our way 3-1 in terms of games, but 23-20 in shots to our hosts.

Basil won 6 – 3, Trevor took



a tight game 7 -6, as did David Hardie but 6 -5. Team Roy, skipped by Derek for the final game had a bad lose 9 – 1.

	Total	Ends	W	D	L
Scotland	20	11	3	0	1
Switzerland	23	12			

The final tour totals were 462-355 shots (+107 shots); 37 wins, 5 draws and 21 losses (+16 games). We also won 14 more ends (243-229).



One final judgement by Sheriff Rod, was on the wearing of the C U Jimmy hat.



Our excellent lunch and restorative beers were served by the perjink Otto, and we had a pleasant interlude before the final game of the tour, which was to be a friendly with each team consisting of two Scots and two Swiss. We were delighted that curlers had travelled from every rink who had hosted us and it was fitting that the ensuing game was both great fun and played to a high standard.



The Carlton Europa hotel was the most idiosyncratic that we had encountered, with the reception staff being dressed in a form of Swiss national costume and the public areas

festooned with what could generously be called brocante, but to many would simply be junk.

Prior to our farewell reception the team meet for a final get together on our own. Vice-Captain Brian, on behalf of the whole team, thanked Robin for his sterling job as Tour Captain, and presented him with an engraved quach as a memento of his Captaincy. Robin and Brian then presented the team with a tour pennant each.





Before dinner our aperitif was served in the rooftop bar, complete with roaring log fire and panoramic views of the town.

The fact that we had spent a decent amount of time with our Swiss hosts who had joined us for the closing dinner meant that the conversations flowed as easily as the wine and our friendships strengthened. Our final rendition of our songs was a tad weary but were lifted by the added singing of our hosts, who enthusiastically joined in.





The “thank you” presentations were heart-felt, and although we were all ready to return to Scotland, we were keen to stretch the evening out and continue to enjoy the camaraderie that had been so carefully nurtured.



Day 14 - Friday 31st



Another relatively early start for our final journey back to Basel airport.

Message from Captain Copey – remember to pack your gift of a Swiss Army knife in your case, and not in your hand luggage.

It was another picturesque journey at the start, before we hit the more commercial area around Basel.



After a double trip round the car parks, Frank dropped us off, and we said our farewells to him. Freddy and Alfred conducted the transfer to the departure area with their customary polish, and an understandable tearful farewell was bid to them, and we returned to Scotland richer for our experiences, and with a host of new friends.

Just over 2 hours later we arrived back in Edinburgh, collected our luggage, said our farewells, and made our way out to find our respective lifts home, all looking forward to our first re-union, to reminisce our time in Switzerland.

Final Results of our games against the Swiss

	Shots	Ends	W	D	L
Basil Baird	94	51	8	2	2
Switzerland	60	39			
Mike Dick	109	54	9	0	3
Switzerland	54	37			
Trevor Dodds	93	45	8	0	5
Switzerland	81	52			
David Hardie	98	53	8	1	4
Switzerland	80	47			
David Roy	68	40	4	2	7
Switzerland	80	54			
Scotland Total	462	243	37	5	21
Switzerland Total	355	229			

A selection of Team photos









Some Action Photos





Tour Songs

Step We Gaily

Step we gaily in oor trews
With our brooms and slidey shoes
Captain Copey's got the booze
All for Swiss tour curling.

Brig and Murren, Flims and Thun
We are touring all aroon'
Micht go up, we micht go doon,
While in Switzerland curling.

Step we gaily in oor trews
With our brooms and slidey shoes
Captain Copey's got the booze
All for Swiss Tour curling.

Lakes and mountains, snow and ice,
Cheese and chocolate, gin and slice,
We'll partake of every vice,
While in Switzerland curling.

Step we gaily in oor trews
With our brooms and slidey shoes
Captain Copey's got the booze
All for Swiss Tour curling.

Let's Go Curling

Let's go curling, show your style
Let's go curling, make 'em smile,
In this world where we liver there should be more happiness
So much joy we can give when we curl with one another
Shots against us,
Matter not
Char will follow
And a tot
We will laugh, we will smile
We will stay and drink a while
Bring me Curling, Bring me sunshine, Bring me Love
Let's go curling, show your style
Let's go curling, make 'em smile,
In this world where we liver there should be more happiness
So much joy we can give when we curl with one another
Shots against us,
Matter not
Char will follow
And a tot
We will laugh, we will smile
We will stay and drink a while
Bring me Curling, Bring me sunshine, Bring me Love

Some Curlers Graces we used on Tour

O'Lord wha's love surrounds us a'
And brings us a' the gether
Wha' writes your laws upon oor hearts
And bids us help each ither
We bless Thee for Thy bounties great
For meat and hame and gear
We thank Thee, Lord, for snaw and ice
But still we ask for mair
Gi'e us a hert to dae whit's richt
Like curlers true and keen
To be guid friends along life's road
And soop oor slide aye clean
O Power abune whose bounty free
Oor needs and wants suffices
We render thanks for Barley Bree
And meat that appetises
Be Thou our Skip throughout life's game
An' syne we're sure to win
Tho' slow the shot and wide the aim
We'll soop each ither in

An adjusted version of the above, in a format our Swiss hosts might understand

**Oh God, whose love surrounds us all
And brings us all together
Who writes your laws upon our hearts
And bids us help each other
We bless you for your bounty great
For meat, and home and gear
And thank you, Lord, for snow and ice
Although we ask for more
Give us a heart to do what's right
As curlers true and keen
To be good friends along life's road
And sweep our sheet e'er clean.**

**Lord make this food given for our use
Help the stones to reach the hoose
May we never have to rush
And see that we always play the brush
Provide us with the keenest ice
And if ye can, a decent vice
If by chance we're asked to try
Lord assist us to chap and lie
Those bounteous mercies which thou dost provide
May it help us Lord to improve our slide
All this we ask in Jesus name
To improve the roaring game**

Some Reflections on the Tour Overall :

We started in Basel in the west of Switzerland, on the French border, moved across to the north east to Schaffhausen, and then east to St Gallen, on the border with Germany and Austria, moved south to the Brig on the border with Italy, and back to the west. Interspersed with trips to the centre of Switzerland. We had a comprehensive tour of the whole country, albeit a whistle-stop in most locations.

We played in cities like Basel, Lucerne, Lausanne, Berne and Geneva, in the suburbs of Zurich at Kusnacht, in the pretty ski resorts of Flims, Murren and Celerina, in some provincial towns like Aarau and Langnau (home to our Tour Manager Freddy) and Thun, in the countryside in West Central Switzerland.

We played in large multi sports complexes like Brig and Schaffhausen, in small homely local rinks like the 3 sheeted rink in Langnau, the picturesque rink in Lausanne overlooking the marina, and the lovely ski setting of Flims, and 2 outdoor settings in Celerina and Murren (although the game here was cancelled due to the weather).

All ice rinks were well appointed, with good ice, good changing facilities, and nice bars and restaurants. Some were owned by curlers, and some by local authorities.

Overall, we had a comprehensive tour of Switzerland, with excellent hospitality everywhere we went.

It was a slightly different tour from the normal. It was billed as a Men's Tour, but as previously agreed with our hosts, we played a mixture of all male teams, mixed teams, predominately female teams, a mixed wheelchair team, and against some juniors, including a member of the current Swiss Junior Ladies Champions.

Our team was a mixture of very experienced curlers, who have won Scottish Championships and played on the world stage, like Captain Copey, Trevor and Mike, and the rest of us having varying levels of playing and coaching experience over the years, with Norman only having taken the game up a few years ago, and a few with experience of tours in America and Canada. A mix of ages and abilities, but with a common goal to enjoy the sport we love.

At one of our pre tour get togethers, Robin asked those who had represented Scotland, to raise their hands. One tourist, who will remain nameless, who raised his hand, was looked on with surprise, as nobody recognised him having played in a Scottish team. Asked afterwards when he represented Scotland, he said he expected us all to put up our hands, as weren't we all representing Scotland on the Tour. Well said.

It was a more relaxed and less competitive Tour than the ones against the Canadians and the Americans. Winning is important, but not everything. In curling, sportsmanship, etiquette and friendship are equally important (and some might say more important), and on our tour we experienced them all in abundance.

With Brian taking ill in the early part of the Tour, his wife Jane flew out to be with him in hospital, and when thankfully Brian made a quick and full recovery, Jane decided to stay on, and we were pleased to welcome our 21st Tour member onto the Tour, and she is probably the first female to be part of a Scottish Men's Tour (although the 2014 Swiss Team to Scotland brought a lady with them to lead their entertainment). In this age of equality, ours was truly an inclusive tour.

Making use of modern technology, our Facebook page kept family and friends back home up to date with our progress

Our Thanks

Firstly, our thanks have to go to the **Swiss Curling Association** for inviting us to tour their beautiful country in 2020, and for their gifts of a Swiss Curling Association Back Pack, and a legendary Swiss Army knife.

Our major thanks have to go to **Freddy** and **Alfred**, for the way they ran the tour, and to use a Swiss cliché – it ran like clockwork. Without them, it would not have been the same. They looked after us regally the whole time, providing us with daily hits of the lovely Swiss chocolate (and drinks) on the bus.

Thanks to our driver **Frank** (nicknamed by us - Swiss Frank) who expertly drove us about during the Tour.

We also have to thank all our **hosts** at all the rinks we played in for their hospitality and organisation. Equally, without them the tour would not have been so successful. And thanks to our **opposition** at all the games, who made it competitive, but friendly.

As Vice-Captain Brian said on the final night, **Robin (Copey) Copeland**, was the obvious choice as Captain. Robin did not disappoint, and was a captain extraordinaire, and we owe him a big thanks for pulling everything together, and helping us all exceed our Tour Mission Statement – thanks Robin.

Finally, we also owe a big thanks to our **partners** at home, who allowed us to indulge ourselves for 2 weeks.

In summary:

We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We met up initially largely as strangers, and by the end, left as friends.

On tour we had a WhatsApp Group to communicate meeting times, uniform, etc. When we returned home, some comments posted on it summed up the feelings of all on Tour.

Thank you one and all for a great two weeks - see you all at the reunion
Trevor

I would echo what Trevor said.

Baz hope you are feeling better today after a relaxing night at home.

A special thanks to our specific team - we may not have won as many games as others but it was thoroughly enjoyable and we gelled as a team - a bit more luck here or there and it could have been different, but that's curling, and I wouldn't change it.

Roll on the re-union.

Derek

I just want to thank everyone for a terrific two weeks. It was great to be part of such a successful team. There was a great atmosphere in the camp which helped us bond.

The leadership was understated and worked very well.

I must say a large thank you to Mike and the rest of my rink for a wonderful two weeks of curling.

Roll on the re-union.

Gordon

Curlers from Scotland there were twenty

Gin, curling and laughter a plenty

Ones or Twos

Dressed smart in trews

Swiss bank now totally empty

Thanks for the blast y'all

Baz

Can I say a big thank you to all you guys for the help you gave me when I was not at my best. Also for taking Jane into the fold when she was forced to join us. She thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience as did I with a great bunch of lads. Thanks guys.

Brian and Jane.

SWISS TOUR 2020 – A GREAT TOUR

Given what has happened with Covid 19 since, we were lucky to complete our tour, and in the difficult times that have followed, we had happy memories to look back on, and keep us sane through lockdown. Our WhatsApp group continues to be used to keep us in contact with each other.

Roll on our First Re-Union, whenever we may be fortunate enough to hold it.

Freddy and Alfred, resplendent in their Trews that we arranged to have made for them, and sent over after our return.



Think this sums up the Tour

