

To give this report it's "official" title we were at the
GRAND MASTERS WORLD CUP HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
held at the Real Club de Polo de Barcelona & Castelldefels Hockey Club from
20th – 30th June 2018

77 teams, men and women in the age groups of 60+, 65+, 70+ and 75+ were taking part in the competition. Fifty-one national teams and 26 touring teams alongside umpires, technical officers and many spectators underline the fact that Hockey is a great sport that can be played and enjoyed to the full at any age.

Thank goodness say I – to be able to represent England in one of the LX touring sides alongside Mary Schweir, Sherry Shawcross and the awesome Bill Greenwood is without doubt a dream come true and the past few years have been a real adventure. It has been an opportunity to learn from the many different nationalities and cultures we have come into contact with and we have enjoyed great camaraderie during competitions as we rekindle old friendships and make many new ones.

6 games in 8 days was taxing to say the least and not made easier by temperatures in the 30's+ We also played full 70-minute games as well, unlike the youngsters who, I believe, only play 60 minutes!! However, we got through it all and survived to fight another day mainly through beer wine and sangria!

Barcelona is a great city and time off was spent sightseeing in the very modern, cosmopolitan and dynamic city which has the Mediterranean as its centrepiece. Time on the beach, only a short walk from the Castelldefels pitch followed by a swim in the med was fabulous. There were visits to the Nou camp home of Barcelona FC., the Olympic stadium and the monastery at Montserrat. Aerial trips up mountains and around the harbour and a stroll around La Rambla with its narrow winding streets were a must. There were so many more fantastic sites visited during the 10 days but probably the best time of all was had when we met up with our team mates in the evening to chill out, sample fabulous Spanish cuisine and catch up on the latest news and gossip.

All in all, an incredible experience and I would say to you all keep playing and when chances come your way grab them with both hands and give it a go – you will never know where it will lead you.

Oh, and by the way the LX 60's won **Gold** (Sherry) and us even older fogies LX 65's won **Silver**. Bill has written a fabulous report giving a great example of the day to day life at the tournament