

Review of Overseas Congress in Corfu

May 2015

The seventh overseas congress of the Scottish Bridge Union took place from 18th to 24th May on the beautiful island of Corfu. Seventy-two devotees from north and south of the border descended on the Dassia Chandris hotel in Dassia to participate in the week long bridge programme which was competently and professionally run by our very popular directors Ian Ross and Duncan Cursiter.

I thought that the hotel was great, the food good, the bridge organisation terrific (of course I would say that) and the view from the restaurant second to none. As usual, a friendly atmosphere was prevalent and all participants should be proud of that. The fact that the weather was good was an added bonus as sunshine lifts the spirits of those of us who see very little of it.

As Jack and I only play when required and so have quite a few free evenings, I decided to offer Mini Bridge to any long suffering non-bridge players who were accompanying their fanatical spouses. Although the idea was a good one and I will do this again, I would have done better to advertise this extra attraction beforehand. Sadly the Mini Bridge sessions did not leave base, better luck next time.

Talking about next time, I heard a rumour that there may well be a Scotland versus England match inserted into next year's programme!!! I will say no more – you'll be queueing up to participate in that no doubt.

Jack and I joined in only one of the organised trips, the one to Albania. We had both been excited about that visit since last year as we had chosen it when we did our reconnaissance visit. We couldn't imagine a better opportunity of visiting a country that was so unknown to us and seemed so dark and forbidding. What a wonderful visit that proved to be, exceeding our expectations in spades, to use an appropriate term! First impressions of the port of Sarander were that it was a more modern town that we had expected. There were plenty of shops, bars and hotels and the locals were friendly. We had a lovely lunch there before setting off for Butrint, the world heritage site about fourteen kilometres from Sarander. Once upon a time this was a city inhabited first by the ancient Greeks and then later by the Romans. The ruins were uncovered when Benito Mussolini ordered archaeological excavations in 1928. Although his motives were purely political, hoping to extend his fascist governments' control, the person he placed in charge of it all was a very good archaeologist and he and his team unearthed the start of what is now an amazing historical find. The guide told us that it is thought that only twenty per cent of the site has been revealed and so there is much more to come.

The second trip was a bus tour of the island, taking in Paleokastritsa which is famed as being the most beautiful resort on the island. As I didn't take part in this excursion I can say not a lot more, apart from the fact that those who did go on the outing thoroughly enjoyed it.

All in all I am confident that this congress has been one of the best so far. On Thursday Jack and I are going on our inspection trip to Croatia in preparation for next year's congress. I will send out my report on that next month, after the July Congress at Peebles.

Joan Lees

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