

WORLD HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN KILKENNY

RFA Handbook 2003-04

In October last year, three valiant Brits travelled to Ireland to join 1000+ entrants for the 2003 World Handball Championships. This triennial event rotates around three venues including the USA and Canada and so will not reappear in Europe until 2012.

The preparation that Matthew Wiseman, Hamish Buchanan and Dave Hebden managed was sadly limited due to the lack of Handball courts in the UK, and we were certainly found out in the championship by ceiling shots – these being rather frowned upon at your average squash club – and other devilish angles that were quite new to those of the small hard ball persuasion. The standard was very high, and our progress in the various events was quickly arrested by our better-practised opposition. But we had a lot of fun, were very well entertained, and it was good to see the Union Jack represented amongst a surprisingly long list of countries at the opening ceremony.

The facilities and organisation of the game in Ireland are impressive. There is an excellent structure for youth participation, superb spectator facilities at most venues and a very professional approach to managing matches; for example, plentiful markers and time-outs are a standard part of the game.

We learnt that Handball is quite a different ball game to Fives, but I think we all left feeling that, given a bit more practice and time, we could adapt to the demands of the game, and we look forward to having another go – and of course another

chance to sample the Guinness! Handball courts do not have bars, but we managed to compensate for this by finding some very good ones outside the courts.

Dave Hebden



Dave Hebden and Burt Repine (USA) at Muckerlee for the World Handball Championships.

Picture supplied by Dave Hebden