

Netherlands O80 0 England O80 1

The first ever international match at Over 80 was played between Netherlands and England at Breda in the Netherlands in 2019 and ended as a 0-0 draw. The Covid pandemic meant that a second return fixture could not be organised until 2022 when England won 2-0 at Bisham Abbey. The De Knoest -The Knot -Trophy, a hockey-stick shaped trophy carved from Dutch oak, was contested this year for the third time at Tilburg on Thursday 26th April, 2023.

On a fine sunny afternoon the Dutch started well and the England defence was soon under pressure with little opportunity for the forwards to make many forays into the Dutch half. However after the England experienced backline of Brian Tubb, Colin Pearce, Allan Sutton, George Hazell and Bill Greenwood had withstood the initial threat from the Dutch, England slowly found their confidence and, in the second half, started to apply pressure of their own. With Ken Wilcock commanding the centre of midfield with good support from Andy Holden, Austyn Leaverland, Chris Parker and Peter Danson the forwards began to stretch the Dutch defence. Peter Ross, Tony Jones and Adrian Stephenson were able to link effectively and eventually a raid down the right and cross

from Peter Ross was lifted off a defender's stick and skilfully deflected into the goal at shoulder height by Tony Jones. The Dutch tried hard to get back into the game and legs were tiring. However a fine save by Chris Long in the England goal made sure that England kept a clean sheet and the score at the final whistle remained 1-0 to the visitors.

The traditional after-match hospitality was provided by the Dutch in the form of an excellent meal at the neighbouring Auberge du Bonheur where the trophy was presented to England captain Ken Wilcock and both he and England team manager Andy Holden thanked their hosts and looked forward to the fourth match in the series scheduled to be played at Canterbury in 2024.

England squad: Ken Wilcock (Captain, Bowdon), Chris Long (LX Club), Brian Tubb (Trojans), Colin Pearce (Sheffield Hallam), Allan Sutton (Belper) George Hazell (Bury St Edmunds), Bill Greenwood (Yeovil & Sherborne), Andy Holden (Vice-captain, South Lakes), Austyn Leaverland (LX Club), Chris Parker (St Albans), Peter Danson (Belper), Peter Ross (Chichester), Tony Jones (Canterbury), Adrian Stephenson (St Albans) Physio: Sue Danson Manager: Christine Wilcock.

Umpires: Graham Reynolds (England) and Karel van Nunen (Netherlands)