

GERMANY 2019

Sunday 22 September

HTHC 1 Ancient Britons 6

The game commenced with the usual line-up and presentations. It was agreed that the push back would be preceded by a respectful silence in remembrance of an HTHC Member who sadly lost his life in a glider accident the previous Thursday. ABs had already designated **Tony Taig** as reluctant kicking back/goalkeeper, but guest keeper **Henning** arrived just before the start; leaving **Tony** with a clean sheet.

The initial play ebbed and flowed as ABs settled into the European climate. Six minutes gone and a cross from the left led to a skirmish in the circle. Newcomer **George Howard** pounced and slotted the ball home. For the rest of the 1st quarter the ABs started their passing routines building their confidence at the same time.

The 2nd quarter began with a period of even play and then; after 18 minutes, a mishit clearance by HTHC was collected by **David Knott** who marched into the circle. Drawing defenders towards him, he calmly slipped the ball to **Skipper Sharratt** who nudged the ball goalwards at such speed that even the snails missed it. Two nil to the ABs; was this to be the perfect start? HTHC were still in the game and after winning a penalty corner narrowly failed to reduce the deficit as ABs defended stoutly. ABs went back on the attack and following another penetrating **David Knott** run into the HTHC circle, he yet again set up **Paul Sharratt** who netted. HTHC then took up the mantle and on their next foray thought they had scored but a fine save by **guest keeper Henning** kept them at bay. ABs were not to be stopped and a swift attack down the right by **Paul Bateson** saw him enter the circle and slip the ball to **Tony Taig** who calmly netted. As half time approached HTHC came back again and won a penalty corner in the dying seconds. Even though ABs defended stoutly it had to be retaken but they did so again as the whistle brought the half to a close, ABs 4 goals to the good.

Would the 3rd quarter be like before?? The answer was NO as the ABs were caught napping after the 37th minute. A sharp HTHC attack left defenders in their wake as they quickly reduced the deficit. Would or could ABs respond and the answer this time was a resounding YES. Pride was dented and retaliation was immediate, well 3 minutes later, and yet again it was **Batman and Robin**, sorry **Paul Bateson** setting up **Tony Taig** for his 2nd goal. HTHC would not give up and back again they came but **Henning** was equal to the task. As the quarter came to a close, good attacking play by **Richard Turner** and **Paul Bateson** produced a short corner. A snap shot by **George Howard** was almost deflected home by **Poacher Peirce**.

The 4th quarter began where the ABs left off and HTHC were now well and truly on the back foot. The **Robin Conway/David Knott** combo nearly scored twice from penalty corners; whilst a solitary HTHC foray was well cleared by **Allan Sutton**. ABs thought they had increased their lead as **David Knott** and **Brian Hopkins** cleverly produced a goal, but it was sadly disallowed. However **Skipper Sharratt** had the last laugh, grimace or was it wind as he slotted home goal number 6, his personal hat trick, after another **David Knott** pass. The crowd cheered “**JUG SHARRATT, JUG**”. After the final whistle it was time for the **Robin Conway** analysis – did

not make the ball do the work in the first half, but much better in the second. Overall it was a lovely game to watch. ABs showed great skill in their passing and movement and it would be invidious to single out anyone in a dominant performance where the team was the winner.



Tuesday 24 September

HSV 2 Ancient Britons 2

Once again ABs had to borrow a keeper and this time it was 28 year old **Roman** – a League keeper from one of the higher Club sides. The start of the projected 7.30pm was delayed half an hour after the usual line-ups and presentations. **Ulrich** – **Julia's** hockey contact; who had also been at the previous game, responded on behalf of HSV. On closer observation HSV appeared to be 15-20 years younger and **Ulrich** quietly commented that “HSV will be a better side than HTHC” and so it proved.

Feeling each other out for the first 5 minutes, play was end to end before HSV collected a missed clearance but **Roman** saved well. Another attack from HSV, but **Allan Sutton** stood out as he stoutly repelled the HSV advance. Pressure was building and after 7 minutes an HSV attack down the right produced a shot which **Roman** saved well, but sadly the rebound fell unkindly and the HSV forward fired home. HSV kept up the pressure and this was compounded by AB giving the ball away = too many errors. This was keeping **Allan Sutton** and **Roman** very busy as ABs were being pushed into a deep defence. Fortunately ABs had **Robin Conway** on the touchline urging ABs “Come on Lads – we don’t want to be too many goals down in the first quarter”. Slowly but surely ABs improved their passing but by the end of the quarter were still unable to threaten the HSV circle, never mind the goal.

HSV changed their personnel at the beginning of the 2nd quarter and ABs began to gain a foothold as the level of intensity increased. An excellent **David Knott** sortie was repelled but HSV immediately counter attacked but fortunately missed their chance. Play was now to and fro as another **Knott & Sharratt** attack was scrambled clear. As HSV broke yet again **Clive Kendall** came to the rescue and the rebound was cleared by **Roman**. After 24 minutes a long through ball put ABs back on the attack and they won a penalty corner. HSV defended it so well and immediately went on the attack. Clever inter-passing gave them an open goal which they duly refused to take. As the quarter came to a close, ABs won a long corner. A slick pass to **David Knott** and as he determinedly ran into the circle, a quick sleight of hand gave him a shooting

chance and he duly dispatched the ball into the corner of the net. The first half therefore came to an end as ABs were thankful to be on level terms.

ABs began the 3rd quarter in a positive frame of mind and their first charge into the circle saw the ball fly over the bar – sadly a 2 point conversion if playing Rugby Union. A long ball down the left and a cross in to the circle resulted in a short corner. Both the initial shot and the **Skipper Sharratt** rebound attempt were saved. Knotty was now attracting a lot of attention which then left space for **Paul Woodward, Brian Hopkins and Robin Conway** to exploit. Good AB interplay was countered by a very determined HSV defence. A strong AB attack via **Brian, Robin and Paul Sharratt** led to a short corner. A fierce **David Knott** shot was stick-stopped on the line. HSV came back strongly but ABs scrambled the ball clear on each occasion. The 3rd quarter finished with a flurry of activity at both ends but no goals.

ABs began the last quarter strongly with good inter-play and after 5 minutes they won a penalty corner. This time the injection was fast and after the ball was squared to **Skipper Sharratt** he fired the ball home. With pride at stake HSV upped the tempo which produced several dangerous attacks but **Tom Ettling** defended stoically. One foray saw the ball fired over the crossbar and into the next field (lost ball and surely 6 and out!!). Not to be outdone **David Knott** tried the same but this time the ball was found. After 55 minutes HSV attacked down the left. Even though the ABs initially repelled the danger the ball was not cleared and as the ball ran free the HSV forward put the ball into the net from close range. Was there going to be a final twist to the game? The final five minutes was end to end stuff, but ABs did have a last chance. A cross from the right found an AB player (still unnamed and unmarked) and incapable of scoring with the goal beckoning. Not the fairy-tale ending. The **Brian Hopkins/ Robin Conway** analysis was that ABs started with errors and misplaced passes, but slowly settled to give a good account against much younger opposition. As a whole, a drawn game was probably a fair result with interesting umpiring decisions re enthusiastic tackling.

Man of the Match – **Roman**, who kept ABs in the game during the early part of the match.

Excellent après match hospitality. Pizzas, beer and wine with a few Tony Taig led musical interludes and Anne Cooper starring as Allouette in a Paul Sharratt led rendition of the old favourite. A cock-up by the coach firm so the ABs didn't get home until 11pm after taking several paid-for taxis; so it was up to the Heritage bar for late night Ports.



Saturday 28 September

Berlin HC 9 Ancient Britons 3

This match against Berlin HC – founded in 1905 – was a step up from the Hamburg opposition. With a sprinkling of German veteran Olympians and an average a decade or so younger, it was always going to be a test of the AB fortitude. A game of 4 x 15 minute quarters was agreed with both sides drafting in young keepers; for the ABs it was **Nicholas**, a 20 year old who had spent time in research at Imperial College London.

The early minutes saw both sides like boxers, feeling each other out and a promising move involving **George Howard, Peter Reid and Woody** ended just wide. Berlin slowly began to control both the pace of the game and the movement of the ball, with quick slick passing, accurate and always with options == oh dear that was an ominous sign! This came to fruition after 6 minutes when a long through ball down the middle was missed by all AB defenders, then switched right before the cross into the circle produced a sharp goal bound shot and Berlin were in the lead. Undaunted the ABs attacked from the restart and a sharp shot from **Richard Turner** was just wide. Yet again Berlin came back with a similar long ball, this time down the right, another cross and this time a slick deflection into the net. From the restart Berlin won possession and an aerial into the D led to the ball running along the goal line and fortunately to safety. Further attacks were repelled by **Nicholas** and the defence and a determined foray by **Allan Sutton**, a pass to **George Howard** was sadly intercepted as the quarter came to a close.

This was a passing and moving lesson from Berlin HC; AB players and supporters were uncharacteristically subdued during this short break.

Skipper Sharratt called a few changes giving players pitch time and early shots from **David Knott** and **Paul Bateson** led to corners but were repelled by the Berlin defence. This only stung Berlin into retaliation, not a good move, but **Nicholas** was on hand to keep out 2 very fierce attempts on goal. ABs couldn't stop the flow but a counter attack led to a scramble in the circle and two shots were both saved. Berlin then counter attacked and this time tried the left side and a cross to the back of the circle produced a fierce shot and goal number 3.

Back came Berlin again but they were foiled by a determined **Tony Taig**. **Paul Bateson, Knotty and Paul Sharratt** responded but their promising move was finally stopped at the edge of the circle. It was now end to end stuff with **Knotty** taking on the Berlin defence with determined dribbles and shots which led to a couple of corners and a last ditch goal line clearance. Berlin came back on the offensive but stout defending by **Stewart Flisher** backed by **Nicholas** held firm. Sadly a minute before the end of the quarter another Berlin attack led to an unmarked forward who duly dispatched the ball into the net.

Four nil down, but a motivational speech from **Skipper Sharratt** set ABs back out in positive mood. And so it proved as an initial Berlin attack broke down, the ball was swiftly moved to **David Knott** who skipped into the D and smashed the ball home. A retaliatory Berlin attack was broken up and **Robin Conway's** presence was improving the AB ball distribution. A pass to **David Knott** saw him carved up by several Berlin tackles == but sadly no whistle – perhaps he needs lessons from the hurdler = Colin Jackson!! Berlin HC then counter attacked but was well cleared by **Nicholas** but their next attack produced a penalty corner; injection followed by inter-passing then bang giving **Nicholas** no chance. From the restart **Knotty** set off again on a

dribbling run, this time hurdling much better, finishing with a fierce chest high shot being saved by the Berlin keeper. A series of Berlin attacks saw **Nicholas, Stewart Flisher and Robin Conway** in rapid succession defend the cause. A foray into the opposition circle by **Peter Reid** created a chance for **Poacher Pierce** but his shot flew just wide. I say flew, more like crawled. Berlin kept up the pressure as the quarter came to a close but change to the 5-1 scoreline.

After the short break an immediate Berlin attack was repelled and a quick counter attack by the ABs resulted in a penalty corner. A fast injection gave **David Knott** time to pick his spot. It was great to reduce the deficit but this only produced a reaction from Berlin. Winning a long corner they managed a sharp save by **Nicholas** but the second attack was passed back into the circle and after a scramble, they netted. ABs came back yet again and a long ball to **David Knott** was slipped quickly to **Skipper Sharratt** but his shot was deflected wide. Berlin came back, like the proverbial oil-slick and switching the ball from left to right then crossed quickly into the circle for a simple tap-in. *TIRED LEGS A-PLENTY NOW*. But ABs still showed spirit and another **Sharratt/Knotty** combination nearly came to fruition but **Paul's** final shot was well saved. Back again came Berlin and more clever passing led to a virtual walk-in goal. *FINISHED!! NOT BY ANY MEANS*. Another determined **David Knott** dribble involved typical German defending which ultimately led to a penalty corner. After injection **Robin Conway** sprinted to the near post, like a young gazelle, and after several attempts by others, he pounced like a Peregrine Falcon, too fast for the Berlin defence and slipped the ball home. As expected back came the Berlin avalanche but long corners and short corners were stoutly defended by the ABs, but in the closing minutes the dam was breached again giving Berlin HC a 9-3 victory.

After the game it was the turn of **Robin Conway Senior, Brian** who said that it was a combination of AB anno domini and Berlin skill; with their cohesion, competence and familiarity far too hot to handle. Berlin HC are a class side which obviously play together regularly and is well rehearsed in all patterns of play.

Man of the Match: **Paul Bateson, Allan Sutton & Robin Conway** (3 way tie).

Tuesday 01 October

Blau Weiss HC 2 Ancient Britons 3

A walk through a suburban wooded area brought the ABs to Club Blau Weiss. Unfortunately there were NO Umpires and no keeper for the ABs – so ABs started with 11 on-field players. Pushback was set for 12 midday; just when the elders would prefer to sit down for lunch!! Yet again a sprinkling of Deutschland tracksuits were in evidence – but fortunately much closer to the AB age profile, as 4 x 15 quarters had been agreed.

The game started with a BW push back followed by some midfield sparring, a bit like Audley Harrison though. **Peter Reid** broke up an early BW attack and the ball was put out to **Richard Turner**, who crossed to **John Peirce** but the BW defence crowded him out. Another AB attack was led by **Mike Christie** as he charged down the left like the proverbial greyhound. Fortunately there was no hare to chase so he stayed on the pitch but the BW made him shoot wide. BW counter attacked but **Peter Reid** again intercepted and thwarted the danger. ABs were then off again and a slick move between **Paul Bateson** and **George Howard** gave **Poacher Peirce** a chance but the final ball flew over the bar from close range. Then information was received via the Hockey network, the transfer embargo was lifted and **Dieter Schmidt** arrived to take on the AB

pads. BW decided to put him under pressure straight away but **Clive's** clearance set up another AB attack which they BW managed to defend well. A further attack down the left saw an astute cross from **Brian Hopkins** but the final shot was deflected just wide. The long corner that followed saw **Paul Bateson** dribble into the circle which BW appeared to scramble clear only for **Paul** to regain possession and force home. Good interplay involved **Paul Bateson, Stewart Flisher, John Peirce, Brian Hopkins, Peter Reid and George Howard** which kept BW under pressure as the quarter came to a close, ABs 1 nil up.

The 2nd quarter began with **Clive Kendall** breaking up a BW attack; the ball ending up with **Knotty** who dribbled into the circle and winning a penalty corner. BW broke too early, so 1 defender down. The next injection saw **David Knott** feed **John Peirce** but BW semi-cleared only for **Robin Conway** to regain possession but his shot was saved. Another AB attack saw **Brian Hopkins** set off upfield, a quick slip to **Stewart Flisher**, who passed to **Robin**, who crossed towards **John Peirce** who was carefully "eased off" the ball by the rugged German defence. A sporadic attack from BW was swiftly repelled as a counter attack developed with **Clive, Allan Sutton, George Howard and Knotty** charging up the pitch but BW managed to break it all down, only for **Stewart Flisher** to win it back, force his way into the circle, but his shot was saved on the line. It was called a shot or was it a mishit or under-hit; as **Paul Sharratt** almost overtook it en route!! BW were beginning to get back into the game but **Clive** managed to break up the move, only for the ball to end up back in the circle and a penalty corner was conceded. Sadly a deflection allowed BW to draw level. ABs took up the mantle and began to press hard through **Brian, Robin and Stewart** but the final attempt from **Skipper Sharratt** was rebuffed. A long ball down the BW right saw **Stewart Flisher** brilliantly take one-handed and set up a chance for **Tom Ettling** but BW managed to deflect his effort wide as the half-time blew.

Right from the start of the 3rd quarter, BW attacked down the left resulting in an unmarked forward having the chance to net but he fired wide. A number of AB attacks then swiftly followed involving **Mike Christie, Paul Bateson, Paul Sharratt and Robin Conway** but sadly all proved abortive. Two aerials from **David Knott** (yes, not **Robin Conway**) in quick succession caused confusion in the BW defence but their keeper vacated the circle to snuff out the danger. ABs kept up the pressure and both **Robin Conway and Brian Hopkins** had shots saved, but BW counter attacked and they tried twice but their close range shots were also cleared by keeper **Dieter Schmidt**. It was now end to end hockey and sadly ABs failed to convert their chances whilst BW attacked down the left, then a dribble into the circle saw them take the lead with a crisp shot. The 3rd quarter thus ended with ABs having to chase the game.

Paul Sharratt began the last quarter of hockey on the Tour with a low flying aerial which did cross the halfway line, but only just. **David Knott** then produced a proper aerial to **Paul Sharratt** who was promptly "mangled" by the BW defence. Shortly afterwards **Knotty** set off on one of his mazy dribbles into the circle and a push goalwards. Goal-hanging **John Peirce** distracted the keeper as the ball crossed the line, claiming a touch but VAR deemed otherwise. Now the game was there to be won by either side and **Paul Bateson** set off down the left, feeding **David Knott**, then **Paul Sharratt** and finally **John Peirce** but their keeper cleared upfield. BW kept possession and also peppered the AB goal twice but **Dieter** saved well. Back came the ABs with **David Knott** pulling the strings, first a chance for **Paul Sharratt** which went wide, then creating a chance for himself but this was saved. Then a cross from **Tom Ettling** but **Knotty's** shot

screamed over the bar – *FRUSTRATING!!* Finally success, and yes it was **David Knott** again; breaking into the circle, this time drawing the whole BW defence before slipping the ball to an unmarked **John Peirce** 2 yards from goal. Could the ABs hold on, as BW immediately responded but **Clive** came to the rescue with a clever intervention, passing to **Paul Bateson** who set up another attack which sadly went out, like the proverbial flame? Back came BW and they won a short corner, but were penalised for encroaching into the circle. The game came to a close as the ABs won a penalty corner. **Robin Conway** injected but **David Knott's** shot was too high.

Brian Conway summed up the game = a somewhat fragmented game between 2 sides of matching ages and skills!! A determined performance by ABs and a game played in good spirit. A good game to watch.

Man of the Match: **Paul Bateson**.



Our thanks to Julia for her patience and understanding in organising a most enjoyable Tour.

Trevor & Angela Davies, Mike & Lynne Christie, Brian & Hazel Hopkins, Tom & Chris Ettling, Charles & Anne Cooper, Paul Sharratt & Karen Daly, Paul & Jackie Woodward, Peter & Glynis Reid, Paul Bateson, John Peirce, Stewart Flisher, Robin & Ruth Conway, Brian Conway, Julia Greenhough, Richard Turner, Clive Kendall, David & Pauline Knott, Tony & Jenny Taig, George & Lisa Howard.