

The Ancient Britons



AGM Weekend 2018 Lilleshall

20th – 22nd July 2018



Friday 20th July 2018

Ann & Dudley, JP & Clive, arrived from the North and South, joined by the Westerners Tom & Chris Ettling having started Thursday; stopping off en route. A quick snack in the café, followed by a couple of beers, perhaps a few ports before journeying up the steps to prepare for the weekend.

Saturday 21st July 2018

The morning started in bright sunshine and El Presidente took a slight diversion to pick up new AB member Chris Szpak from Stafford Train Station. Trevor Davies had as usual organised the refreshments for during and after the games today, ably helped by Tom Ettling, Russell Gates and Mike Christie - **"THANK YOU"**.

The 1st Game v BRIDGNORTH A 1 ~ 1

Brexit is nothing compared to the organisation behind this match. The referendum result was for the ABs to win but seeing the team amble on to the pitch it was more like Brussel sprouts than Brussels out. The PM couldn't have picked a better side but in fairness she had little to work with. The European Court of Human Rights

has ruled that our older players are fit to take to the field and rejected the opposition's claim that they should all be put down. And so the game began...

Once all ABs had arrived it was over to Skipper **Bruce Baron** to get his troops together. He organised the 11 on the pitch leaving **Tom Ettling, Allan Sutton, Richard Turner and Dudley Walker** on the bench; with an average age of 69. They looked nervously at the opposition bench which had been strengthened by 2 children of pre-shaving age, but **Mike Christie's** World Cup Gold Medal struck fear into the hearts of anyone who really cared about the game.

The first 3 minutes were entirely all ABs' possession. Five minutes in and ABs won their first penalty corner. Injection to **Paul Sharratt**, slip left to **Paul Woodward** and a "thunderous" shot smashed against the backboards, allegedly!!



I've stopped it Woody

Shoot Woody

GOOOOAAALLL

ABs were in control but **Mike Christie** was struggling with the weight of Gold around his neck and he broke forward down the right and called for the ball – "WIDE LEFT". A good tackle from **Phil Hall** led to a quick attack; **Paul Sharratt** to **Mike Christie** but the Bridgnorth defence quelled the danger. Bridgnorth then broke clear but on entering the circle were easily denied by keeper **Reg Sharratt**.



Under control



And me



And me

Bridgnorth kept up the pressure but 2 pieces of lovely skill, the first from **Chris Szpak**, lifting the ball over the opposition stick, and the second a timely interception by **Russell Gates**, cleared the danger. **Bruce** was leading from the

front and was steady in midfield, tackling and distributing excellently. At the end of the first quarter ABs were leading 1-0.

Clive was struggling a little and **Allan Sutton** took over for the second quarter. Bridgnorth started strongly but good defending from **Chris Szpak** relieved the danger as he passed the ball off the pitch. A mazy run from **Mike Christie**, the World Cup Winner (did I mention that before), as he went from the right side all the way to the left before passing to a colleague. Bridgnorth kept up the pressure but a soft shot was easily cleared by **Reg Sharratt** to our Gold Medallist who



I'm off – left or right??



“My Ball Guys”



Sharratt in motion

moved the ball out of the danger area. Sadly the ball came back again but **Allan Sutton** broke up their attack with skilful use of his foot which then went off **Phil Hall's** foot for a penalty corner. ABs tried to defend with an extra player but the Umpire noticed. As the ball bounced around the circle ABs tried to clear but a cruel deflection found Bridgnorth forward **Tony Willmot** who duly equalised. 1-1. Soon after a monster stick tackle by a Bridgnorth midfielder – “timber!” was met with a very long whistle. **Bruce Baron** took a quick free hit with a pass to **Paul Sharratt**, who crossed the ball into the circle from the right but was too hard for any colleague. The game was beginning to become too open, swinging from end to end and from a Bridgnorth attack they won a penalty corner, nobody knew why, but fortunately it came to nothing. The quarter came to a close with a great move between **Bruce, Woody, Paul and Mike** being thwarted.

Time to take on fluids along with a motivating speech from **Skipper Bruce**.

Changes to the line-up increased the pressure and **Bruce Baron** again broke up a Bridgnorth attack ending up prostrate at the top of the AB circle, whilst the ball was transferred forward swiftly to **Tom Ettling** in front of goal but he sadly was unable to convert. ABs were quickly put on the back foot as Bridgnorth stormed

forward and a sharp cross into the circle nearly found an opponent free in front of goal, but fortunately the ball was out of reach.

ABs soon fought back and a long ball found **Paul Sharratt** in space. His quick pass into the circle found **Brian Hopkins** but his deflected shot just ran past the post and



Brian shoots ...



But just wide



Skipper in control

along the goal line. Another cleverly weighted pass from **Paul** tempted **Woody** to chase but sadly was a bit too far. Bridgnorth came back on the attack but **Allan Sutton** calmly cleared the danger and worked the ball forward. **Brian Hopkins** played a long ball to **Tom** but his shot just flew wide. Bridgnorth tried to increase the pressure but a good block by **Richard Turner** averted the danger, a lucky escape. Another AB attack saw **Paul Sharratt** cross to **Brian** at halfway. A long cross field pass found **Tom** whose shot just shaved the post as the third quarter ended.

The 4th quarter began with honours even for the first eight minutes but Bridgnorth then won a penalty corner for “feet”. Bridgnorth nearly scored but **Reg Sharratt** deflected the shot wide. ABs kept up the skill level to the end but neither side could break the deadlock. Heat and tiredness nearly won the day but ABs held on for a deserved draw.

The Ladies felt that it was difficult to nominate one individual as **Chris** and **Russ** both got two votes for the first game with mentions for **Woody, Reg, Brian, Bruce and Phil**.

It was just a short break before Game 2 and **Skipper Bruce Baron** made sure that fluids were taken on board before issuing playing instructions. Changes were made and **Paul Sharratt** was rested for the first quarter as it was felt that we needed a new note-taker.

The 2nd Game v BRIDGNORTH B 0 – 1

Unfortunately the same team could not take to the pitch for the second game because:

- * There were two arrests for up-skirting **Angela** and one of those was **Trevor** (his excuse was he just wanted a reminder).
- * One AB got lost between the pitch and the changing room (no guesses needed, but it was felt that he was weighted down with Gold).
- * Three were found sitting in the hotel waiting for the AGM to start.

ABs started well and attacked from the first whistle but nothing came from it as the final pass failed to find anyone. Bridgnorth tried to breach the AB defence but **Clive** and **Phil** were reading the game beautifully. AB attacked again but the final pass still didn't find the intended target, but the ABs did win a long corner but sadly with the same result.

Woody did manage to evade the Bridgnorth defence and had his 3rd battle with the goal line – the goal line won. Bridgnorth then won a penalty corner and their direct shot took out **El Presidente** at thigh height and was rightly disallowed; but unlike footballers he got up and soldiered on. Not only that; but soon after **Phil** made a great diving reverse stick tackle on the back line.



“Missed me” said Bruce



“You OK, Phil?” said Bruce



“No, it got me” said Phil

ABs kept up the pressure and a break down the left saw **Woody** and **Chris Szpak** combining well but the attack frittered out. **Clive Kendall** then took a leaf out of the Football World Cup and goes down like Neymar, after a stick tackle takes him out. Soon after **Clive** was up and as Bridgnorth thought they had taken the lead with a rocket of a shot, **Clive** calmly deflected it wide, as ABs held firm to the end of the quarter.

“Someone has sat on my cigarettes” was **Clive’s** word of advice at the short break. **Bruce** had different ideas as he asked for more of the same from his troops.

Sadly Bridgnorth began on the offensive but the ABs were well marshalled by **Phil** and they were kept at bay. ABs began to attack with short sharp passes but all came to no avail, as Bridgnorth also pressed but their final pass into the circle was deflected past the post, as ABs were lucky to survive. Some excellent defending by **Russell Gates** saw another Bridgnorth attack come to nothing, whilst **Reg Sharratt** was totally in control as he was commanding the circle as he made 2 crucial saves from penalty corners. **Paul Woodward** then started an excellent move passing to **Tom Ettling**. **Tom** passed to **Bruce**, then to **Brian** whose final ball fell to **John Peirce** whose shot was deflected for a long corner. A series of attacks ended with **Woody** winning a penalty corner which saw **Paul Sharratt** pulling a great save from the Bridgnorth keeper. A further penalty corner sadly came to nothing as the quarter ended.

Bruce corralled his troops together with a few words of comfort (“beers in 30 minutes Guys!!”).

This quarter began poorly for both sides as the passing kept going awry, but ABs did create a couple of attacking moves but both ended scrappily in the Bridgnorth circle. Whilst this was going on a Spitfire flew past in the distance, perhaps the ABs could follow the example with **Tom Ettling** flying down the wing. As the game was beginning to slow, **Chris Szpak** increased the pace and sped into the circle only to be deliberately blocked – short corner. **Paul Sharratt** realised there was no time so played the ball onto feet to win another penalty corner. This time **Paul** changed the play and slipped the ball to **Chris Szpak**. As the Bridgnorth keeper closed down the space **Chris** lobbed him; and the crossbar; 2 points for a



2 Points for Conversion



Why 2 hands, 1 will do.



“To you Woody – I’m off”

conversion!! Soon after ABs won a long corner but this also came to nothing. Bridgnorth came back into the game and created pressure in the ABs circle but **Reg** calmly cleared the ball wide to **Russell** who immediately started a new attack by switching the play to the right. A quick ball into the circle from **Brian** found **Paul Sharratt** in space but his shot hit a defender – penalty corner. A poor stop gave **Woody** little time but he did manage to win another penalty corner. This also failed to be converted but a long corner was at least a slight reward. A swift pass to **Tom** saw him pushed to ground (another Neymar dive??), but he did manage to win a penalty corner just before the whistle. Yet again a missed chance as **Paul Sharratt** drilled the ball just past the post; as sadly other ABs were on a different planet at the time – knackered and needing a break.

Bruce Baron gathered the troops together and after a quick dousing of liquid refreshment asked for a final effort.

ABs began the last quarter of the day with good possession but then lost the ball on the halfway line. Bridgnorth broke quickly but fortunately the final shot hit the side netting. Bridgnorth now took over and won a short corner which was initially well defended by the ABs but the attempted clearance was deflected and fell to Bridgnorth forward **Richard Thomas** who duly netted. 0-1.

What could the ABs do? They raised their game and immediately attacked down the left as **Russell** found **John Peirce** who with silky skill moved into the circle but was unable to get his shot as he was closed down. A great “16” from **Phil** found **Chris** on the left wing. Following 3 quick passes the ball was transferred to the right side where **Tom** played the ball into the circle, but it was cut out by the Bridgnorth defence. ABs tried to keep up the pressure but Bridgnorth counter attacked three or four times but ABs held firm. As the game drew to a close ABs mounted their final attack. Quick passing found **Tom** in the circle but his shot went just wide as the whistle blew for full time.

The Ladies again went with **Chris Szpak** but also **Mike Christie** for the second game, both receiving an equal number of votes.

After the game it was time for post-match drinks and sandwiches. The ABs and the opposition mingled outside in the early evening and all agreed that both games had been competitive.

Some players from the 1st game had showered and changed whereas some from the 2nd were waiting for the comfort of a bath, preferring a beer first.

ABs began to congregate for drinks prior to the AGM (sadly the draught beer was too hot and cloudy) before moving to the requisite room. After the AGM, ABs moved next door to Chapters for their Annual Dinner. The waiters and waitresses clarified with each table the relevant orders and all seemed to run quite smoothly. As there were joint winners for Man of the Match, **EI Presidente** gave **Chris Szpak** the Man-of-the-Day award at dinner.

Trevor also began the usual "take wine with", the **President** duly accepted the challenge and continued. **Trevor Davies** had managed to rehire the 2016 entertainer. As the evening progressed, **Phil Hall** managed to slip in a few bottles of port and distributed accordingly. Ladies and Gentlemen alike were all included and as the port began to run out, ABs slipped away to bed in dribs and drabs, with the drabs being last, deep into the morning.

Sunday 22nd July 2018

The morning duly arrived and ABs met for breakfast. It looked like being another hot day.

The 3rd Game v OLD WULFS 1 – 0

Some say picking a winning team is as easy as picking a winning horse. And so, once more in the saddle, the ABs began their third game.

On the side line there were representatives from the local glue factory, Princess Anne's stable lad, Lester Piggott's cousin and a reporter from Horse and Hounds.

The ABs were full of oats and trotted onto the pitch, thoroughbreds one and all. The excited crowd were not disappointed despite 3 players having to be put down at half time.

A deadly trio of Tom Ettl, Richard Turner and our World Cup Gold medallist were warming the bench as Skipper Bruce Baron decided on his opening line-up. ABs were pleased to welcome Robin Conway and Nirmal Singh as replacements for Brian Hopkins who could only play yesterday. Robin was deemed necessary to counter balance the utterings of Reg. Apparently it had been far too quiet so far, so 2 minutes before push back we had a short rendition of "Take me home country roads". Umpires for this game were due to be Chris Kitto and Richard (with the dangling bicep) Boucher, but Richard sat out the 1st quarter. As the whistle blew for the start of the game "Super Sub" Dudley Walker arrived. The opposition

were much more “mature” than yesterday and from the outset looked very handy. Fifty seconds into the game and still no score. Then ABs began to move forward as **Nirmal Singh** found **Robin Conway** in space, a further through ball to **Woody** who won a long corner. Whilst all this was going **Trevor Davies** “lost” **Angela** but found a table which suddenly became loaded with tots of Port.

A good period of possession for ABs led to a penetrating run from **Chris Szpak** but Bridgnorth were back in depth to snuff out the danger. Whilst all this was going on **Mike Christie** was pacing nervously on the touchline trying to remember whether he was on the right or the left. Bridgnorth then began to fight back but **Clive Kendall** was in control and broke up three attacks as all came to nought. As the quarter came to a close it was good to see that **Dudley Walker** was ready for action, if and when called. 0-0.

Bruce Baron informed the squad that there were just the 3 quarters to go, so encouraged all to take on liquid, but preferably not the Port.

A positive start was made by both sides with ABs passing and defending well. Then a loose pass from **Nirmal Singh** gave the opposition a slight chance but Skipper **Bruce Baron** lay down his stick flat on the floor to save the day. Not long after, a superb pass from **Robin** found the Note Taker **Tom Ettling** sitting on the bench!!! Not content with his first effort **Robin** again deceived the opposition as he managed to do it again 2 minutes later. Soon after, Bridgnorth broke and **Phil Hall** backed off and the opponent cleverly played it onto his foot for a penalty corner, but luckily the shot was high again.

The quarter continued with both sides giving and taking and the game was in the balance and could go either way. For a few minutes the game became boring to watch as nothing exciting happened as Bridgnorth had 65% possession but fortunately couldn't convert any chances as the ABs held on. With 1 minute to half-time Bridgnorth won another short corner. ABs defended it well and quickly broke forward and in seconds were in the opposition circle but **Nirmal's** shot was well saved by **Quinnie**, as the half came to an end.

Bruce encouraged all to take on liquid refreshment and neither **Clive** nor **Phil** had a cigarette.

Bridgnorth began with the traditional lofted pass to start the last half of the weekend and this was collected at the back by **Allan Sutton** who began a 20 pass sequence for the ABs. Sadly it all came to nothing and Bridgnorth broke into the ABs circle but after a scramble the ball was cleared. It looked like tiredness had set in for both sides as passes went astray. Sadly it was becoming noticeable that Bridgnorth were getting stronger and faster as the ABs began to wilt, perhaps too much fun last night. Could they weather the storm? You bet they could; as a drilled cross into the circle found **Poacher Peirce** in front of goal, he duly deflected it into the net. 1-0 to the ABs. Bridgnorth were not going to quit and they pushed



Poacher Peirce nets



Perfect body position



Text book pass

forward but as the cross came into the circle – “LEAVE IT” was the call and the danger passed. ABs then started moving the ball really well (“poetry almost” said someone one), but surely this couldn’t last as they moved upfield and yes, the move broke down. Bridgnorth were trying to equalise and they managed to find a way into the circle but **Reg Sharratt** was up to the task and calmly booted the ball wide and away from danger.

Bridgnorth created loads of pressure for the rest of the quarter and finished off with a penalty corner. An accurate shot was going in the corner but **El**

Presidente calmly flicked the ball off

his legs and the ball raced to the fine leg boundary for four.

Now Skipper **Bruce Baron** came to the fore as he tried to galvanise his troops for a final push in the last but one game of the weekend, calling for all hands to the pump.



Flicked down to Fine Leg

The last quarter began with ABs first on the attack with **Chris Szpak** and **Nirmal Singh** interchanging passes before the ball was delivered into the circle, but no AB was able to control it. **Chris** was becoming more involved in the game but a call



Nirmal on the run



Get ready - AERIAL



Can I shoot from here?

for the ball saw a Bridgnorth interception. Bridgnorth started to create more danger in the AB circle and **Phil Hall** failed to stop the ball completely but then cleared across the D and **JUST** got away with it. ABs were now ensconced in their own “22” but **Phil** managed to clear the ball out of danger and over the halfway line. **Chris Szpak** managed to control the ball, slipped it to **Tom** on the edge of the circle but the final pass just failed to find **Paul Sharratt**. ABs kept up the pressure and **Chris** fiddled his way into the circle, winning a short corner. **Robin Conway** injected but too quickly for **Paul Sharratt** who didn’t stop cleanly but **Bruce Baron** managed to regain possession, slipping the ball to **Woody** who won another penalty corner. This didn’t work at all as Bridgnorth easily cleared upfield and won a penalty corner, given by **Chris Kitto**, even though the “other” Umpire, as it was too obvious. Fortunately for the ABs **Reg Sharratt** was in control, clearing all



Reg saves easily



Woody wins short corner



Shot sadly went wide

danger. It was now up to the ABs to hold on, but they were not content with that as they still pushed forward winning a further penalty corner. The first attempt failed but a defender’s foot allowed a second chance, just as the sun came out. This time it was the switch move to **Paul Woodward** who narrowly shot wide of the goal and yes as usual he was beaten by the goal line. A 1-0 win for the ABs.

The Ladies Vote for the first game were 3 people, being **Phil, Allan and Robin** tied for Man of the Match with 2 votes each.

The 4th Game v OLD WULFS 1 – 4

Was game 4 a match too far for the leg weary ABs? Only time would tell. Who had what main course at the AGM was readily apparent from the start.

The beef men were trying to graze on the astro and kept frothing at the mouth, the salmon brigade were trapped in the nets, the chicken men kept soiling the pitch and as for the filo tarts!!!! A rejuvenated **Phil Hall** was spotted, looking very embarrassed, returning from behind the changing rooms with a youngster and a pair of jump leads.

For the last game of the weekend Note-Takers were tasked with incorporating “FISH” into their report, sadly not all achieved but congratulations for your attempts. APOLOGIES FOR THE OBVIOUS MIS-SPELLINGS === I AM JUST THE TYPIST.

Phil Hall was fishing for sympathy prior to the game as he said his knee was hakeing in a different plaice. **John Peirce** cupped his hand to his ear as his herring was not too good and in the morning he was always a bit crabby.

Robin Conway was back on form with his distribution – it was as if he was living the bream! **Chris Szpak** attempted an aerial but thank cod he didn't hit anyone.

Woody fluffed a pass (rare indeed), making a right sprat of himself. Bridgnorth then broke quickly, but a clever “dummy leave” from **Phil Hall** averted the danger.



Great reverse stop



Dudley is free == pass



Time for a beer guys

Not to be outdone **Reg** then played a similar move as the Bridgnorth forward gave up the chase. ABs slowly began to get back into the game and a great move up the left began and ended with **Nirmal Singh** being one on one with **Quinnie** and this time **Quinnie** won. He would have been in a world of turbot if he hadn't. (I don't

get it either – turmoil??). A great run from **Paul Sharratt** was followed by the weakest shot ever seen on a hockey pitch, which sadly only just reached the keeper. Bridgnorth tried to break out of defence but **Robin** got a well placed stick in the way to avert the danger. It was fairly obvious who was taking notes – **Tom EttLING!!** ABs were still putting the pressure on Bridgnorth, closing them down and hussling, but Bridgnorth broke ranks and managed to nick a goal. Bridgnorth made a quick counter attack after a slick AB move had broken down and this left **Reg Sharratt** with no cover and therefore ABs went 1 nil down. I say nick a goal when we really mean **Nirmal** decided to do something different. 0-1. The end of the quarter saw a few tired legs and **Robin Conway** limping off with a pulled muscle!!

The 2nd quarter began very evenly; both sides still had 11 players on the pitch. The ABs were not going to give up or carp on about the goal they had given away and **Chris** broke clear giving the ball to **Nirmal**. He got on his pike and raced into the circle to fire the ball home with a well-directed flick. 1-1. The rest of the quarter was end to end but the ABs were beginning to flounder.

Skipper **Bruce** now had to galvanise his squad for the last 30 minutes.

The 3rd quarter began late in the day under a mackerel sky with Bridgnorth gaining the 1st penalty corner. **Nirmal** decided to clear the ball wide across our circle, but via their centre forward who fortunately shot wide; whilst **Tony Perryman** was helping to clear up the Port – not drink it **Tony!** Soon after **Clive Kendall** cleverly turned the Bridgnorth attacker only to find that he had split his hand and was off to **Doc Tom** for repairs, **Allan Sutton** on as sub. Bridgnorth were still on top but **Reg Sharratt** was outstanding in goal and kept them at bay. Yet another short corner against the ABs but again good defending kept the scores level as the quarter came to close.

Skipper **Bruce**, the sole of discretion, now called for one last effort, whilst several ABs sat perched on the bench. ABs began well and a slick move between **Bruce** and **Robin** saw them enter the circle but the Bridgnorth defence outnumbered them and cleared the danger. Bridgnorth then broke clear and unfortunately a deflection left their forward clear and free to tap into the empty net. 1-2. **Bruce** was now

leading by example urging players forward and a sharp through ball from **Paul Sharratt** found **Dudley Walker** in space but his deflection just went wide. Two quick changes saw **Paul Woodward** and **Richard Turner** come on for the last few minutes to give the side fresh legs, but even they couldn't stop Bridgnorth increasing their lead. A shot at goal was going so wide that there appeared to be no danger but **Martin Hall** stopped it going out and fired into the empty net. 1-3. ABs still tried to press forward and a charge into the circle by **Paul Sharratt** saw a slick pass to **Richard Turner** but sadly his deflection also went wide. In the last minute Bridgnorth attacked again and another shot was going wide until **El Presidente** decided to get involved and deflected it past **Reg**; giving him no chance. For the second game the ladies seem to have voted for **Nirmal** despite effectively scoring at both ends. Nobody else came close - vote wise.

"THANK YOU" TO ALL SIX HELPERS ON THE DRINKS TEAMS – Paul Woodward, Russell Gates, Tom Ettling, Mike Christie, Clive Kendall and Richard Turner.

I need at this point to "THANK" all the note takers over the weekend from both sides of the pitch, so I am not taking the blame: Tom Ettling, Russell Gates, Clive Kendall, Paul Sharratt, Chris Szpak, John Peirce, Richard Turner, Allan Sutton and Paul Woodward. A special mention also to Jon Beale who kindly created the opening paragraphs for each game. Sincere thanks to Diane Boutcher for the photographs. **A massive "Thank You" to Tony Swales & Mike Savage for the Bridgnorth & Old Wulfs Teams, especially for your selection of players, so that all games were superbly competitive and so enjoyable.**

After both games it was time for the ABs to shower and leave Lilleshall for a short journey to the Pheasant Inn at Newport where Quinnie was the Host. Thank you to all attendees and I hope you enjoyed the weekend.

A special "Thank You" to Umpires Chris Kitto and Richard Boutcher.

Our thanks also to Trevor Davies for his organisation of the weekend.

Richard & Diane Boutcher; Trevor & Angela Davies; Phil & Sandie Hall; John Peirce; Chris & Jane Kitto; Russell Gates & Angela Castleton; Robin Conway; Clive Kendall; Dudley Walker & Ann Lewis; Tony & Margaret Perryman; Paul & Jackie Woodward; Mike & Lynne Christie; Tom & Chris Ettling; Allan & Pam Sutton; Julia Greenhough; Bob and Sandra Jameson; Bruce Baron; Brian Hopkins; Richard Turner; Paul Sharratt; Reg Sharratt; Peter & Sue Danson; Nirmal Singh and Chris Szpak.