

READ&BLACK NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017



President's Chatter

Another mainly successful season has been completed for the Red & Blacks, and the full playing records for the senior sides are shown later in the Newsletter. Taking the Ladies first, it has been an excellent one. The 1's and 3's finished third in their respective Leagues, their highest positions for many a season. The 2's went one better and finished second and should gain promotion back up to Division 1. We managed to field a 4th team on 10 occasions and we hope to enter them into the League next season. Unfortunately things did not go so well for the Men's section, with poor results in the first half of the season resulting in 1's coach Ravi Viridi, leaving and being replaced by experienced coach Sam Naismith. Results improved, but not sufficiently to avoid relegation. The 2's and 3's finished in 7th and 9th positions respectively. The 4's were the most successful men's side with 10 wins in their 'friendly league', their best season for a long time. Hopefully, the individual Team Captain's reports will be circulated to members some time soon.

The juniors have also had a good season with increased numbers, better age group successes and more AHC players playing for Middlesex sides, so the future is looking bright. Credit is due to all the coaches for coping with increased numbers and the ever improving players. In addition, the visit of Gold medallist Helen Richardson-Walsh to a Sunday morning Junior's training session in January helped fire everyone's enthusiasm for all things hockey. Helen had agreed to come for a 90 minute visit and a short question and answer session, instead she arrived early and stayed for over 3 hours and made time for everyone and shared her gold medal with all. She also kindly donated a signed top to the Club and some of her and wife Kate's GB and England kit to the junior section and to help boost Club funds - another GB Ladies hockey team inspirational performance. Thanks are due to Helen, but also of course to all the Captains, Vice Captains, team managers and others who have held Committee and other Club posts and duties; especially Ladies Fixture Secretary Kate Thompson, who also handled most of the men's fixtures as well. However, the biggest THANK YOU is due to Tracey (Luvvy) Holland, who after countless seasons of looking after the Umpires is taking a season off from off field duties. Likewise long serving Victoria (Freddie) Newman is also standing down as Ladies Club Captain and Gordon Smith as Club Welfare Officer. Thank you also to all the coaches junior and senior, including Jamie O'Connell who is standing down after a good first season as Ladies, assistant coach. Thanks are also due to Steve McCarthy who has continued to take action and team pictures whenever he could fit in a visit to AHC and he also did a splendid job taking pictures for all during Helen R-W's visit.

President's Chatter

The Club's Annual General Meeting was again held on the last day of the season, and we had a high attendance and several actions and proposals are being followed up by the new committee. Unfortunately, numerous vital AHC posts have still to be filled and a full list is shown on page 5, with one of the most urgent vacancies being that of Men's Club Captain. More members are required to help in all areas of the Club and please can you all think seriously about taking one of the vacant positions on, as once again, it is being left to too few to keep things going. Once again, recruitment of players of all ages and abilities remains a top priority and especially for the men's lower teams. As a start, we are running 4 sessions linked to the England Hockey (EH) "Back2Hockey" scheme for males and females in April and May. On a separate note EH are using AHC as one of their pilot Clubs for their new "Club Mark" scheme which is replacing the previous "Clubs First" accreditation scheme. As before, Sue Westlake is doing a sterling job in coordinating the paperwork.

As always there has been a lot going on at Ashford (Short Lane) Sports (A(SL)S), and we are getting more regular functions, but finances are still tight as more and more maintenance jobs are required to help maintain the ageing facilities. More thanks are due to those that have covered the voluntary bar shifts and Freddie, Shane Smith and Keith Nash for helping me with the opening and locking up duties. Unfortunately not every bar shift was covered and this left Keith Nash covering the whole shift. Keith has therefore decided to take a break from covering the bar from 6 pm until the AHC volunteer arrives every Monday and Tuesday, in the winter season. This means we need either for volunteers to turn up at 6 pm sharp or members to take turns at covering from 6 pm until the designated volunteer(s) arrives. There have been various essential plumbing, electrical repair and maintenance problems, which Chris Evans, Keith Nash, Roy Smith, Mark Doggett, Iain Bothwell and Jo and David Lawton amongst others, have worked hard to solve. More help is still needed though as we try to maintain the standard of all the facilities and equipment. David Hanks has performed miracles in the kitchen and makes AHC a popular place to visit for opposing and home teams! AHC has paid for another two floodlight stanchions to be refurbished, so all four on the Clubhouse side have been completed. The other four on the far side of the pitch need to be replaced before next winter and Peter Cottrell is chasing up on grants for this urgent work. Gary Denne in the Club office and Colin Dyos behind the bar have both done sterling work to bring in more functions and to ensure they run smoothly. Colin and Keith Nash also managed to ensure we maintained our "Cask Marque" accreditation for the popular real ales on sale. Another bonus is that David (the silver fox) Brant has been elected to the A(SL)S Management Committee and his financial expertise is already being put to good use. Welcome on board David.

My Middlesex President and Hockey Museum roles have kept me busy away from AHC and have opened doors to working with EH in some areas and enabled me to help to raise the profile of AHC, as hockey develops its role and aims for all. There is an exciting summer of International hockey ahead, with not only the AHC summer leagues, but also the one off Ladies GB v Holland and Argentina games in June and the Men's World League semi-finals at Lee Valley. Why not get along if you can and of course preparations are well underway for the Women's World Cup next year. Have a good summer on and off the pitch, please help fill the vacant posts if you can and of course "COME ON U RED & BLACKS".

Lynne

Back2Hockey Sessions

We are trying to recruit new members to the senior sides by once again running our “Back2Hockey” sessions. Please try and encourage people you know to give hockey a try or to start playing the game again and bring them along to one of our sessions. Please pass the details on:

“Back2Hockey” is a national scheme designed for women (and MEN) with a focus on fun, fitness and friendship. It is for beginners who have never picked up a hockey stick before, or those who have been away from the game for a while and want to polish up their rusty hockey skills. You’ll have the opportunity to get a bit fitter, learn new skills and play team hockey in a fun and sociable environment.

The 4-week programme will run on the following dates:

Wednesday 19th April 7.30-8.30 pm

Wednesday 26th April 7.30-8.30 pm

Wednesday 2nd May 7.30-8.30 pm

Wednesday 9th May 7.30-8.30 pm

Your sessions don’t have to be consecutive – just come when you can and see how you get on! The sessions are free and sticks and coaching will be provided. Just wear clothes suitable for sport (t-shirt, sweatshirt, shorts or tracksuit bottoms), and trainers or astroturf shoes if you have them. Bring a bottle of water to keep hydrated during the session.

Once you’ve completed ‘Back2Hockey’ you can come along and watch or join in our summer leagues which run from May through to the end of July. Our Clubhouse is adjacent to our astro pitch, complete with changing rooms and bar and you can check our facilities on our Club website www.ashfordhockeyclub.co.uk for more details. All ages and abilities welcome as are male players as well.

If you have any questions or would like to register your interest in taking part in the next course, please contact president@ashfordhockeyclub.co.uk or just turn up on the night.

Fundraising Made Easy

AHC has a partnership with Easyfundraising that enables you to raise money for the Club while you shop online. It doesn’t cost anything and takes only a moment or two to set up. At present we have only 9 members involved (ACC have a lot more and have raised over £800), and it is very simple once registered to put the Easyfundraising icon on your Tool Bar to remind you to use it. You can collect free donations for AHC every time you shop online thanks to <http://easyfundraising.org.uk>. There are nearly 3,000 shops on board, ready to make a free donation to AHC - it doesn’t cost you a penny extra. It’s really simple, all you have to do is:

1. Join - Head to <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ashfordhockey/?t=Easyfundraising-li&v=a&u=3Z0359&=> and sign up for free.
2. Shop - Every time you shop online, go to Easyfundraising first, pick the retailer you want and start shopping.
3. Raise - After you’ve checked out, that retailer will make a donation to Ashford HC for no extra cost whatsoever!

AHC Website | Twitter | Facebook

Are you aware we have a club website www.ashfordhockey.club.co.uk where you will find some match reports and all the latest news about our super hockey club. We also have an AHC Facebook Group and Facebook Page so if you can pop onto Facebook and press the 'like' button on the page then you will get the updates feeding through to your news feed.

We are also on Twitter @ashfordhockey so tweet us your news.

Astro Fund Draw

Winners for the second part of the season

January	£50	Tracey Holland (Luvvy)
	£50	Andy Barnes (Digger)
	£100	David Brant (The Silver Fox)
February	£50	Darren Cole
	£50	Robert Evans
	£100	Val Hardman
March	£50	Martin Smith
	£50	Robert Evans
	£100	Team Jeffries
April	£100	TO BE DRAWN AT THE ANNUAL DINNER
	£250	" " " "
	£500	" " " "

To be in with a chance of winning money from our Draw, which is held every month during the season, you need to purchase tickets from our Club Treasurer Wendy Baker. All proceeds go into the Astro Fund and help AHC and A(SL)S with the upkeep and future development of the pitch. Forms are available on the notice board and AHC website, so why not sign up and help AHC out.

Annual Dinner

This year's dinner will take place on Saturday 6th May at the Castle Hotel, Windsor. We have approximately 103 attendees. There will be an auction of some items of England and GB kit, so put in your bids now.

Sainsburys 'Active Kids' Vouchers

We are still collecting Sainsbury's vouchers to exchange for hockey equipment. The scheme runs until early June, so please pop them in the box in the Members Bar – thanks. We are sharing the collection with ACC this time, so there is only one collecting box located in the members bar.

AA's Chatter

* The Annual Challenge cup game between the AA's and Sunbury Stars of the Past (SSOP) was played at AHC just before Christmas, and it was also made into a memorial match for SSOP Angela Petch, who died from cancer in 2016 at the age of 47. It turned out to be a ding dong of a game with the SSOP's scoring first and then going 2 – 0 up, despite some good saves from debutant Jo Lawton in the AAs goal. The AAs got one back via Sue Westlake before the break, only for the SSOP's to make the score 3-1. The AAs rallied in the second half, when Gillian Clegg cleverly deflected in a hard cross to make it 3-2. As the game wore on, chances were created at both ends of the pitch with the SSOP's hitting the post. However, the AAs managed to get an equaliser when a hard strike from a corner was helped on its way by yours truly to make the final score 3-3. Santa called in after and a good time was had by all who had played and/or watched the game, Ange would have enjoyed the day.

* AA and long time goal scorer for the Ladies 4's Janet Mock is hitting a smaller white ball these days, and is currently Ladies Golf Captain at Sunbury Golf Club, well done Mocky.

* AHC Vice President, Ram Vig and wife Sue graced Griffin Park with their presence in February at a midweek Championship League game between Brentford and Aston Villa. Unfortunately for Ram, his team were well beaten by the Super Bees and he and Sue decided to leave early.

* Former AHC player, coach and Club sponsor Deep Bassi (Hockey Heaven) also put in appearance at Griffin Park, this time on Good Friday when the Bees beat Deep's team Derby County. Deep hopes to visit AHC next season to catch up with everyone. His visit was marked by four AAs being invited onto the pitch before the game for a photograph with the Team captains and match officials. Bod, Brownie and myself lined up with the Bees Skipper, whilst Sheila Kinnear joined the Derby contingent, good fun it was too.

* AHC legend and Life Member Martin Smith has been seen on the Colts circuit as one of his granddaughters is now playing for Old Cranleighans HC. Pleased to report that the Smith hockey dynasty is being maintained, sadly not at AHC at present though!

* Several AA's attended the South Masters trials at the start of April. Annie Neyton was unfortunately injured and couldn't attend whilst 1's Goalkeeper Ali Black (Wilkins) was preselected for the O50's. Sue (Bod) Lane had 28+ in her age group, competing with 9 current England Masters, so unfortunately was not selected, which was tough luck. There were 26 in O60's with 3 (I think) current England Masters and I made 1st reserve for squad of 13 - well chuffed as I was easily the oldest, and I am on standby for the O60's Nationals to be held over the weekend of the AHC dinner. Hopefully we can get more AA's along and selected next year.

* Unfortunately the lovely Russell McQuillan former AHC star colt, 1's and Middlesex player (and latterly England Masters Over 40's star), had to have a hip replacement in January, as did another AHC former star and coach Seamus O'Connell in 2016. I am pleased to say that they are both fully recovered, partly due to them being so young compared to many of us AAs.

* Val Urwin aka Dyna Rod /Value added, decided to hang up her stick in March, after fifty (yes 50!) years of playing, mainly due to a persistent knee injury rather than age. Val played most of her hockey for AHC, but also spent numerous seasons turning out for Windsor HC. The occasion was marked with a short Royal presentation at a recent AAs coffee morning.

* The Sniffers had a great tour to Weston Super Mare over Easter and had some star outfits for their Gold Medal theme and played some festival hockey. In addition, a few of the vintage AAs are off to Budapest in early May, but will be sightseeing rather than playing hockey!

* Former Ladies 1st team and Club coach and hockey coach at St James school Jeremy Clarke, played for Henley 2's v AHC 2's at Short Lane before Christmas and managed to injure himself. Jeremy passed on his best wishes to everyone and regularly asks for updates on the Ladies teams' progress.

* I received a lovely update from Bruce Cotton over Xmas and although as yet him and Poleen haven't been able to persuade any of the girls to play hockey. Poleen had an excellent season with Pine Hills – making the Grand Final with the veteran's team and being minor premiers with the first-selected Saturday grass team. Bruce, even, started doing a little bit of coaching for Poleen's grass team and thoroughly enjoyed it.

* Former AHC members Rosemary (Posey) and Bill Jenssen are living locally still, but neither is playing any hockey. Posey and her daughter are accomplished horsewomen and are good friends with Tracy (Sybil) Cottrell, who is back in the saddle after her recent injuries.

Lynne

Socials

QUIZ NIGHT - The Family friendly quiz night was a great success with a full house... We even had to dust off some old tables and squeeze them in the room to fit everyone in!!

It was an interactive quiz including the history of the club and it's members. After two close rounds it went to a tie break between three teams. Sarah 'Hoppy' Hopkins won the quiz with the closest answer to how long the River Thames is.....very sport orientated!

The winners Lucy, Hynes, Bash, Hoppy and Co very kindly put there winnings back into the club.

An all round brilliant family friendly night.

Tours / Festivals

The Drambuie Sniffers went back on tour after a period of rest, visitng Weston-super-Mare over Easter weekend!!

Weston-super-Mare was a first for the Sniffers but definitely won't be the last!!

13 Sniffers made the trip to WSM and had a brilliant time being very adult like and responsible..... said no Sniffer ever!!

It was a brilliant tour full of laughs, SBAB, gold body paint and a little bit of hockey!

Next year is a special tour as it will be the Sniffers 25th Anniversary.



A small party of the vintage AAs are off to Budapest at the start of May to see the sights, have some fun and not play any hockey.

AHC Committee Members

2017/2018 Season

President
Chairperson
Hon Secretary
Treasurer
Men's Club Captain
Ladies Club Captain
Colts Manager
Men's Fixtures Sec
Ladies Fixtures Sec
Press Officer/Webmaster
Entertainments
Recruitment Officer
Membership secretaries

Lynne Morgan
Ian Jenkins
Vanessa Law
Wendy Baker
POSITION VACANT
Claire Brant/Emma Hynes
Peter Cottrell
POSITION VACANT
Kate Thompson
POSITION VACANT
POSITION VACANT
Ryan Croxon
POSITION VACANT

AHC Coordinators

2017/2018 Season

ASC Representative
Men's Disciplinary Officer
Ladies' Disciplinary Officer
Coaching Coordinator
Umpiring Coordinator
Grounds Coordinator
Equipment Coordinator
Webmaster

Annie Neyton
POSITION VACANT
Claire Brant
POSITION VACANT
Chris Howkins
Lynne Morgan
Lynne Morgan
John Vocking/Ryan Croxon

AHC Team Captains

2016/2017 Season

Mens 1st XI Manager
Mens 1st XI Captain
Mens 1st XI Vice Captain
Mens 2nd XI Captain
Mens 2nd XI Vice Captain
Mens 3rd XI Captain
Mens 3rd XI Vice Captain
Mens 4th XI Captain
Mens 4th XI Vice Captain
Ladies 1st XI Captain
Ladies 1st XI Vice Captain
Ladies 2nd XI Captain
Ladies 2nd XI Vice Captain
Ladies 3rd XI Captain
Ladies 3rd XI Vice Captain
Ladies 4th XI Captain
Ladies 4th XI Vice Captain

Peter Cottrell
Luke Cottrell
Charlie Cottrell
Ryan Croxon
David Eastbury
POSITION VACANT
POSITION VACANT
Gordon Smith
Jonathon Long
Sarah Hopkins
Alison Black
Jackie Parsons
Kim Downs
Alison Donelan
Abby Cowell
POSITION VACANT
POSITION VACANT

AHC Junior Coaching Staff 2016/2017 Season

Child Welfare Office
Volunteer Junior Coordinator
Junior First Aid Officers

Vanessa Law
Peter Cottrell
POSITION VACANT

Club Kit

AHC training kit, including Ladies shirts, junior hoodies, senior hoodies, zoodies, rain jackets, fleeces, tracksuit trousers, beanie hats, skorts and shorts in senior and junior sizes can now be purchased on-line from the Pro shop, website on www.proshop-sport.com e.mail; sales@proshop-sport.com or phone 0208 568 9929.

New larger and stretchier Club socks are now available in junior size small £8 per pair, and adult medium and large, as well as some old extra large) at £9 per pair.

Peter Cottrell has a supply of junior shirts and some Men's league shirts.

Happy shopping and hopefully you will wear your AHC kit with pride.

Hockey Camp - May Half Term

DQ Coaching are running Hockey Camp at Ashford Hockey Club on 30, 31 May and 01, 02 June 2017. This is a new venture for the club and if it is a success it will be run during all the holidays. To make it viable we need at least 20 participants hopefully we can get up to 50. You can attend as many days as you like however there is a discount for attending all 4 sessions. Discount is also given for siblings.

The cost is £40 per day or £120 for a full 4 days. For busy parents there is the option for an early drop and late pick up at an additional cost of £15 per day. Application forms can be found on <http://www.dqhockey.com/courses/4585451406> . (Please note the Summer 1 dates on that page are inaccurate; the course is 24-27 July 2017).

DQ Coaching is run by Sam Naismith; Sam is our 1st team men's coach and has coached junior hockey at an international level. In the past we have run one day camps with our usual volunteer club coaches. A 4 day course is more than our existing resources can stretch to so we have brought in Sam with his team of paid coaches. The course is for U16 to U6; sufficient coaches will be provided to coach different ages and abilities.

For this first venture I will be on site all the time to ensure that everything runs smoothly. This is not just aimed at club members and experienced players, it is also aimed at non-members and complete beginners. Please spread the word.

The information has been loaded onto the clubs Facebook page. The club has a page which is open to all <https://www.facebook.com/Ashford.HC/> and a closed group which I will upload photos of the junior teams <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AshfordHC/>. If you want to join the closed group, give me a shout. We are offering free coaching for 06-13 year olds on Sunday mornings from 09:30-11.00 throughout the summer. Bring someone down to Short Lane. The more, the merrier!

Peter
Youth Coordinator

And so the season ended like this...

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts	League Position
Mens 1s	22	6	3	13	46	62	21	10th
Mens 2s	22	7	4	11	39	58	25	7th
Mens 3s	22	7	3	12	40	49	24	9th
Mens 4s	20	10	2	8	49	43		
Ladies 1s	22	12	6	4	75	38	42	3rd
Ladies 2s	22	18	0	4	92	36	54	2nd
Ladies 3s	24	12	1	9	39	23	37	3rd
Ladies 4s	10	4	1	5	9	14	37	Friendlies

And the Club's Top Goal scorer this year is Lucy Downs with 30 goals.

Again the ladies have 7 names in the top 10 goal scorers in the Middlesex Women's League!

Lucy Downs (30) secures top spot again, Jackie Parsons (20) and Maria Cavilla (20) share 2nd place, , Gillian Clegg (15 and 4th Place), Jenny Tippell (14 and 5th Place), and Caitlin Davis (13 and 6th Place)

In the Mens leagues Shujah ur Rehman secured 2nd spot with 28 goals in Premier – Division 2 league.

Thanks to all the umpires that have done games this year - Mick, Lesley, Sherpa, Neil, Michelle, Shar, Bobby, Mark, Chris, Surinder, Ryan C, Gordon, Luvvy, Digger and Jamie.

Regarding Umpire Development – Ryan Croxon has just been accepted by onto the England Hockey NYUPL Program and has his first NPUA (National Programme Umpiring Association) appointment on Tuesday 25th April at Lee Valley!

See link for details http://www.npua.co.uk/public/young_umpires_menu.php

Summer Hockey

The Ladies summer league organised by Kate Thompson and Kirsty Hull is starting next Tuesday 9th May and continuing until the start of July. Please contact Claire Brant, Emma Hynes or Jackie Parsons if you are interested in playing.

The Men's summer league is being organised by Ryan Croxon so please email him if you are interested in playing.

AHC Ladies 1s End of Season Report

With a new coach the Ashford Ladies Ones were optimistic about the season but unfortunately, with a lack of preseason they did not get off the strongest of starts. Although they battled hard it wasn't meant to be in their first game of the season losing to their long term rivals Staines, 3-1. The connection between the players continued to grow drawing their second game and then proceeding to go on to a three week winning streak. However, their sixth game proved to cause trouble with a 4-2 loss, the ladies never failed to work on their mistakes and come back stronger than before. They demonstrated their hard work at training by progressing forward in the season with a three week winning run, including large goal differences of 8-0, 6-2 and a 2-1 win over previously unbeaten top of the league. The Harrow ladies' ones caused an injustice with the Ashford ladies, taking away their winning streak with a final score of 3-2. This caused a wave of determination and fire within the Ashford ladies, with a non-loss run of seven weeks, drawing three and winning four. The ladies faced a double headed weekend, winning their Saturday game against Southgate ladies three's 7-2, a Sunday game proved controversial for the Ashford ladies losing 2-1. The ladies battled a lengthy and solid game against Chiswick but fatigue and exhaustion from their Saturday game took its toll. They didn't let this bring their morale down and the game the following week ended with a 1-0 win. The next two weeks brought only draws for the women, they continue to improve on the chemistry amongst the team, their technical faults are decreasing and the strength of the team is sound and can only remain to grow. The ladies biggest wins were two lots of 8-0 and a 6-2 win, all extremely well deserved as were all their results. The defensive line were the backbone of the team, continuously working as one unit keeping the losses to a minimum.

The league the women battle through is tremendously tight and with the high level of skill brought to the team on a weekly basis they are likely to end the season third.

The ladies would like to thank all the umpires that have helped them out through the season and making the games possible. Also, a big thank you to Adam Wilkins for taking on the team and bringing them great fortune. Jamie O'Connell has been a big help as well warming the ladies up for a weekly challenging training session.

Anna Protheroe

AHC Ladies 2s End of Season Report

League Stats

P 22, W 18, D 0, L 4, GF 92, GA 36, Pts 54 = 2nd Place and Promotion hopefully ☺

Consistency has been the key to our winning streak this year. Even though there have been 26 players that have featured in the 2s team this year, the fact that we had a squad of the same 16 has helped us to improve and gel as a team.

A huge thank you to all those that have played 2s this season. Each and every one of you has contributed to the above results. To prove how well everyone has played this season, Man of The Match has been won by 14 different people.

Our defence this year featured Jo (GK), Luvvy, Kate, Abi, Elize and Kim Fry.

Jo Lawton has played all 22 games this season and what a Wall she has proved to be only letting in 36 goals compared to last year's GA of 58. She has won MOM 4 times and had her best game (I feel) against Indian Gymkhana in the first leg when we lost 2-4, as the score would no doubt have been double figures without her day! The consistent back four of Luvvy, Kate, Abi and Elize have continually covered each other's back and been a much more attacking defence this year. Kate and Elize have made crucial tackles and Abi has done a grand job of man marking role and saved a goal on the line too. Kim Fry returned from injury and slotted in nicely into the 2s defence.

Our midfield featured Bod, Freddie, Barbie, Vidal, Ellie, Becky and Lynne. Ellie played 10 games at left midfield before she was pulled up to the 1s. Ashford welcomed back Barbie to the club this season and she also won proved her worth also winning MOM 4 times. Bod covered all midfield positions and got MOM 3 times. All the midfield have been brilliant this season subbing in at left, middle and right, and have been a core part of the new dice press formation which worked brilliantly

in the last 4 weeks. We also brought up Millie Hack for the last 3 games to cover in midfield and she won MOM the first week she came up.

Our forward line this year consisted of Gillian, Jackie, Jenny, Maria and Kim Downs – Well what can I say apart from last year we scored 76 goals but this year we smashed 92 goals in the back of the net narrowly missing our target of 100 (An average of 4.18 goals a game). The first half of the season saw 39 goals with 53 in the second half (probably prompted by a little goal scoring competition set in the last 6 weeks generating a spurt of 31 goals!). All the forwards worked well together and continually set each other up for goals. 9 hat-tricks between Yip, Maria, Jenny, Gillian and Kim – what happened to all those promised jugs! Yip's goal tally is 20 from 20 games, best goal for me was the reverse stick air shot again IG. Maria not to be outdone also scored 20 goals but from 14 games and also got MOM 3 times. Jenny scored 14 goals, got MOM 4 times and dropped back to play Right Midfield when we needed her to, surely you got to like it a little bit at the end ;-)

Gillian scored 11 goals followed by Kim D on 8 who only managed to play 11 games due to work commitments.

There were some great goals scored this year, a couple of smack downs on the goal line, reverse stick shots and straight corner strikes. Other goal scorers were Bod (with a brilliant individual goal against WH&E in the last game of the season), Freddie, Becky, Vidal, Lynne, Ellie, and Barbie.

Special thanks to Becky for covering numerous positions on the pitch, along with Barbie and Jackie covering at the back. Other players making appearances in the 2s were Wendy Baker, Kirsty Hull, Stacey Arkwell, Annie Neyton, Felicity Lawton, Vanessa Law and Catriona Barron ☺

The season started off great and we were pretty much in the top 6 from the outset. Just after Christmas we slowly started creating the gap between third place and with 3 weeks to go no one could catch us. The 4 games lost were both home and away against top of the table Indian Gymkhana and Southgate. Our best result was against Imperial Medics with a 11-1 win!

The second half of the season was much improved with us improving on nearly all of the results from the first leg.

Firstly, a huge thank you to Lesley for being the 2s team umpire again this year, attending home and away games, it's much appreciated by the team and we hope you have enjoyed yourself this season, especially the fines ;-)

I'd also like to thank all the other umpires that have umpired this year for the club – Mick, Sherpa, Neil, Chris, Michelle, Paul, Bobby, Mark, Surinder, Ryan C, Gordon, Digger and Jamie, I couldn't have managed as Umpire Coordinator without your constant support ☺

Secondly, thanks to our wonderful new coaches Adam and Jamie. Apart from your brilliant coaching sessions, you created a renewed sense of enthusiasm within the ladies section which definitely contributed to all the ladies doing well this year.

Thirdly, thanks to David Hanks for all the yummy teas he has dished up this year, yours is the best Curry!

Lastly, many thanks to Freddie for being an awesome Club Captain this season, your constant support has been invaluable to me.

I would also like to say a personal thank you to Kate for being my chauffeur week in week out. Bod/Lynne for bringing along the water bottle carrier each week. Barbie and Bod for helping me wash the white shirts. Also thanks to Bod, Kate, Abi/Millie and whoever else has helped me write the match reports in the back of the car on the way home from games. The job of match reports was made a lot easier thanks to Annalise Lawton taking notes on the side of the pitch as she plus dad were our No.1 supporters. Thanks to Catherine Brant and Nadia Parsons for their very decorative match report of the NPL game.

It has been a pleasure to be Captain of the 2s year and hopefully you have all enjoyed it too ☺

Luvvy

AHC Ladies 3s End of Season Report

Well what a mixed season it has been for the 3s. We started off with Megs Hurley as captain but she had to step down so I stepped in to run the team for the rest of the season. We all wish her well with her new addition to the family.

We started off the first half of the season on a bit of a losing streak, narrowly losing to Teddington, Chiswick and BA. We then found our feet as a new team had a great run end Oct/Nov with 4 wins on the trot which helped us jump up to 4th place.

Our team has then been quite consistent with a solid defence of previous 2s players, Catherine in goal and Kirsty as CB, joined by Catriona on right and Irish newcomer Bryony on the left and myself who rejoined the club playing sweeper. Gemma and Sarah have also made appearances in the 3s defence line up. We also welcomed young Megan and Jade into the team and being versatile as they are they have played on the half way line and on the forward line. Millie and Hannah have strongly held the middle with Emily demonstrating her silky dribbling skills on the left. Chloe and Jess started off as our driving force on the right flank. Lynne joined the team as right mid end of November bringing years of experience to the team which enabled Chloe to move up to the forward line. Our regular stalwart forwards Abby, Vanessa, Nicky and Chloe have notched up 35 goals between them with Chloe being top goal scorer with 11. A big thank you to Sue, Val, Gill and Becky for making guest appearances on the forward line too.

We started the second half on a high beating teams we lost to in the first half with a memorable win against Chiswick. Bad weather in January then cancelled 3 games which had to be rearranged, one of which was the Ealing game with the lovely Jeff, which had already been abandoned due to lack of floodlights back in December. We finally played the game in March resulting in a 1-1 draw played in sun, rain and hailstones and were looking forward to the rematch last weekend but unluckily for us they conceded, damn!

Our best win was 5-0 against West Hampstead last Sunday with Jade and Megan scoring their first goals for the 3s, followed by a 4-0 win against Teddington in the snow in February. We also had fantastic games against Harrow and OMT 2s only losing 0-1 to both teams who are currently sitting top of the table.

A special mention goes to Emily for her first green card and the only card of the season for the 3s! So with a couple of unlucky narrow losses against OMT 3s in Dec (which clashed with the annual Vets game) and Hendon&Mill Hill in Feb we are currently sitting in 3rd but Teddington are right behind us with a game in hand this weekend so potentially may be pushed to 4th, but hopefully they will lose and we will remain in 3rd.

Thank you to Mick, Lesley, Michelle, Chris, Bubbles and especially Shah who came away to Ealing with us on that very wet Sunday.

A big thank you to Jamie our coach and congratulations on passing your level 1 umpire.

Well done to everyone who has played and made my life as captain easy, especially my vice captain Abby for her constant support and advice 😊 Roll on next season!!

Alison Donelan

AHC Ladies 4s End of Season Report

Due to the great number of players at pre-season training it quickly came apparent that a 4th eleven was needed. This was to help give as many people as possible a game & introduce our junior players to ladies hockey away from the formal league. Over the season the team have played 11 games, two of which were against our own ladies 3s where the score was a 0-2 loss both times. The 4s are the most travelled ladies team stretching beyond the Middlesex boundaries from the first game against South Bucks to two games in Surrey.

The team always played well and in good spirits making sure the friendly games were friendly. The stats show 4 wins, 1 draw and 6 lost however the losses were the maximum of 3 goals.

A big thank you to everyone who has supported the team; Kate for organising the fixtures, Jackie managing the team on the day, all the goal keepers (junior & adult), Barbie & Freddie who doubled-up when needed and those who umpired the home games. The team are looking forward to entering the Middlesex league next season and having regular fixtures!

AHC Mens 1st End of Season Report

After promotion straight back into South Prem 2 there was an air of optimism round this campaign. With the experience of 2 years previous and captain Luke Cottrell fresh on the hunt for new talent to bolster the squad the season was opened with a home fixture against Blackheath.

With 55min gone and Ashford 3-1 up it looked like the perfect start was on the card. But by the time the final whistle had gone Ashford found themselves losing 4-3. A strong first performance but lacking help from Lady Luck or the umpires, as it turned out this set the trend for the first half of the season. Close results, but never able to build momentum week on week.

Highlights we're a dramatic late 3-2 win against local rivals Staines and a gutsy performance away at unbeaten league leaders Tulse Hill 3-2 (2-0 up with 10 to go). The Tulse Hill game left the team realising something needed to change.

So onto January with a new coach, increased training sessions and several new players the stage was set for the great escape. This was aided with the first fixture being cancelled due to poor weather giving the team another week of training to gel.

The result was a comfortable home win against Bournemouth the following weekend. Was the escape on?

The following weeks saw performances slowly but surely improve and the daylight being closed between the safe zone above and those dangling below relegation red line. But performance don't always mean points, the luck and the decisions and required results kept eluding the team.

Come the final game of the season, Ashford mathematically could still stay up but was dependant on other results and 3 points. A hard fought 2 all draw was all the team could manage, back to the MBBO we go.

AHC Mens 2s End of Season Report

Ashford Mens 2s didn't have the best of starts to the season and lost their first 3 games. Putting in the performance but narrowly missing out on the points. Poor availability, mainly from injuries, crippled the season but the new guys that came into the side held their own. Standout performances from the first half of the season came from Pavi, Sutch and the latest edition to the club Charlie May between the sticks. Pavi later went on to fracture his arm just after Christmas with Sutch called into action with the first 11. Solid performances all round from the always available Smith and Betts combo including the veteran regulars Crab Hands, Shar, Digger, Baker and eventually Cole towards the end of the season.

Things didn't really pick up until a couple of games before Christmas which saw us on a six game unbeaten run heading into the new year – including a draw with the now league champions and a win against second in the league! A range of players were used from all across the club with little Joe Chapman becoming a regular fixture in the side at the young age of 13/14! Steve Law also stepped up and become a strong attacking force down the flank playing at right half – regularly sharing the Man of the Match votes with Charlie.

Ashford 2s finished the season comfortably mid table which hasn't really been a true reflection on the team's performance. Only on a few occasions were we truly outplayed and for the majority of games we have dominated the opposition. Putting into practice some of the 1st XI tactics and utilising the youth at the club has put us in a very strong position for next season. Now it is time to kick on as a squad and strive for promotion into MBBO Regional 2 within the next two seasons.

Ryan Croxon

AHC Mens 3s End of Season Report

The 2016/17 season was again a challenging but ultimately rewarding season for the 3s. The aims of the 3s is to maintain league position and to be a development XI with youngsters coming up from the 4s and colts, gaining a solid experience of league hockey before progressing up to the 2nd XI and 1st XI.

This was helped with MBBO div 6 was particularly competitive this year with only OMT3 breaking away at the top and Bicester being cast adrift which ultimately left 5 teams fighting to avoid the 2nd relegation spot coming into the final 3 weeks of the season. From an Ashford perspective, we won 7

games and drew 3 games ensuring survival in a winner takes all last home game of the year against Oxford Hawks. But that doesn't tell the full picture as we had a further 4 games where we lost by a single goal including 2 in the last minute; only in 3 games were we wholly uncompetitive which says a lot for what was a predominantly young and inexperienced side.

On the positive side, early season availability issues meant that I was able to bring up Olly Combe and Reece Sharma from the 4s who made immediate impact claiming the respective centre back and left back positions as their own along with Lewis Baber showing that his captain had played him out of position for last season. This gave us a solid base for the remainder of the first half of the season where we were able to get 4 wins and 2 draws, narrowly missing out on a couple more occasions. The style of hockey was good with shifting points of attack and a solid defence led by Combe and John Hunt.

Highlights of the first half of the season included a tough away game at Wycombe where we had been humiliated last season. Therefore, we made a point of putting maximum effort into the fixture and were rewarded with an early 2 goal lead first half. This immediately grew to 3 goals at the start of the 2nd when Berressem intercepted a Wycombe pass to play Lunn in who rounded the keeper with less than a minute on the clock. This shocked Wycombe into playing and they soon got 2 back and with their tails up it took a valiant effort from the defence to hold on to the win with the experience of Darren Cole proving crucial.

The 2nd half of the season also started well with a 2-2 draw away to Amersham in the game of 4 seasons thanks to the changing conditions from Frost to Sun to Rain to Sun to Blizzard which left the aged Amersham pitch resembling a lake with sandbars come the end of the game. This was followed by a strong defensive performance against OMT3 at home resulting in only a 2-0 defeat against some players easily of 2s / 1s standard.

Unfortunately, this early promise did not continue and rather than building on the first half of the season the 3s suffered from the availability crisis that hit the Mens section with more than a quarter of players being injured or away or a month period in February. This resulted in some challenging selections (vs Bicester where the captain was trying to string 11 players together from a Luxembourg Hotel Room) and some heavy defeats (away to Wallingford) as it was often a case of any 11 players to get a team out with many playing out of position. The effort of everyone who played during this period was exemplary but it goes to show the importance of having good availability and making yourself available for other teams if the start time does not allow you to play for your normal side. These challenging games did have some positives in the way that the remaining players pulled together and also in the rapid development of Joe Chapman who secured himself a 2s spot with some very impressive performances and also Harvey Bray who put in a number of impressive performances on the 3s wing.

Stung by a string of defeats and the need to learn from past mistakes the 3s put in some significantly better performances in the last 3 games; starting with a narrow defeat to 3rd placed Milton Keynes where Dan Lee and Andy Holdaway put in solid midfield / wing performances with the stabilising presence of digger at the back to allow us to really exert some pressure on the Milton Keynes team. The final two games became must win games with a number of players getting opportunities in the 2s as a result of a 10:00 start time causing some player swaps. This led to a very competitive game with Maidenhead who scored in the first half and led to a determined fightback from the 3s who dominated 2nd half position with Lunn managing to equalise from a Croxon short corner. But the last 2 minutes proved to be defining with Ashford paying the price for squandering two game winning chances before conceding from the final play of the game.

The final game therefore became a winner takes all game against hawks with the 3s strengthened by returning players to the Mens section managed to dominate possession and play a very attacking style with lots of intricate short passing. This resulted in a 7-1 win to ensure safety with the only blot being the conceding of a Pen Flick following Andy Ritchie following his captain's orders to clean everything out if someone was coming through in goal (Lunn takes the blame for this).

Ultimately, we can say that this was a successful season with the core objectives met (maintaining league position) and exceeded (developing youngsters for the good of the club). Next season should prove to be very competitive for positions within the 2s and 3s with the plethora of young talent staking their claim and the continuing development of some of the newer members of the club. But the captain would like to finish with a call to action for the Mens section with everyone to consider playing as many games as possible next season and also if we can try to recruit one player each from

either your friends, work colleagues or class mates so that we can ensure that we have enough players next season to support the 3 league teams and hopefully look to follow the ladies lead and actually put out additional friendly sides.

Lunny

AHC Mens 4s End of Season Report

No one expects the Spanish Inquisition, Equally no one expected the #mightyAHC4s to win 10 games – we only won 3 last season!! Forget the results though, like last season, we really enjoyed our hockey and, for the majority of games, I could not have been happier with the level of performance displayed by the team

I think one of the main factors of our success was we actually played as a team and looked out for and encouraged each other and, like the best teams, had a real backbone and never gave up
New players! 7 of them and all amazing – 4 (Tim & Harvester, Paul Northam and Adam Huse (son of ex-player Margaret)) had basically not played before July or pitched up at the Club Day and the other 3 (Branty, Nav and PJ Harvey) hadn't played for 9, 14 and 25 years respectively. Harvester played so well he went up to the 3s before half the season was up, his old boy Tim is an Eveready Bunny and should have his own TV show, Nav is a slower and less hyper version but scored goals and they were a great mini-team down the left and we missed their energy the last few games, Paul N was the Iceman in front of goal with 5/6 goals and has natural hockey sense, Adam was Mr Versatile and must have played 10 plus positions for 3s and 4s while PJ just loved being whacked by stick, man or ball and was man down in pretty much every game (also I enjoyed hearing the constructive feedback he received from 'Thunder' Dom, his boy). Dangerous Dave Brant sometimes lived up to his nickname when he could stop the ball and he top scored with 9 goals and what about Jess, who strolled around at the back like a hockey reincarnation of Bobby Moore (he kicks the ball a lot)
Old players! Great Orex was steadiness personified until his something went ping, Bobby as a hockey player is a terrific County Councillor but he did score the goal of the season with a top of the D, matrix-style undercut past a bemused keeper, Jon 'Hopper' Long managed to play without a zimmer frame all season and scored 8 goals and many assists, Braminator really came on as the season progressed and scored 6 goals and is giving Lewis a run for his money with his languid skills, Bubbles stayed on the pitch which was a miracle, Cam was our trusty GK and never let us down (but I think we did him a few times) - he had a lot to do but did it very well and then we have Surinder who will have his own chapter in the story of Hockey, his trademark twirl and violent whack/top was a thrill to behold and he scored 4/5 goals

Great results! Beating Marlow 3-1 and Camberley 2-1 (always wiped the floor with us up to this point). Second game (and win) against BA was bizarre, practically Walk Hockey in the first half and then a feisty, league game in the second half as they changed their team around and grew increasingly frustrated by us not letting them win! My personal favourite was the 1-all draw against Old Wimbledonians when we had most of our 'superstars' out (I was a very proud umpire)

The last 5 games, we lost players upwards and to injury and we collectively got tired so our performances did suffer even though we still won 3 of those games. We are hoping to have one last game (and BBQ) against the under 16s – at least 4 and maybe 5 families will have a player on each side so look out for the date

As I alluded to earlier, results are not the primary reflection of a good season but they do help! We played some lovely hockey at times and in the right manner and I hope the hardy few that saw us enjoyed our displays. Lastly, thank you to those who cameo'd so we could get teams out and especially all of our umpires but, in particular, Stevie and Ram. Enjoy the break and see you all next season!

Cap'n Gordo