

AFC Wimbledon US Dons Newsletter

Issue 6 – December 2005

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US Dons – News

Well, we are coming to the close of another year. What a stunning year for the US Dons. Our membership is growing, we are up to 42 members and 12 honorary members. We have come a long way since SoCal and I talked about it last year. Dave has done a great job keeping up the website. I hope you have all had a chance to visit the website. We posted a copy of the WDSA (Wombles DownUnder Supporters Association) 150th newsletter. It is an interesting read, take a few minutes to look at it.

The Don's season has not begun as we are accustomed to. Defeat to Walton & Hersham in the FA Cup is hard to take after the tussles we had with them last year. But, it doesn't mean our season is through. We still have the league and the FA Trophy to set our sights on. Our early success in the past 3 seasons has brought with it high expectations. But with each rung up the ladder we have to expect tougher opposition. With the injuries to start the season, it has not been easy for the management, but recent results, though only draws, seem to indicate we belong in this division and our hopes for a playoff spot are not unreasonable. We stuck with them through the recent bad years Let's stick with them now and cheer them to even greater heights.

Let's hope it's not an omen of things to come, but our "kit sponsorship" was attached to the away strip of Amadou Kouman. After a bright start, Amo unfortunately suffered an injury. We wish him all the best and a speedy recovery. A special "Thanks" to all of you who contributed to the kit fund, we are now mentioned in each and every home game program, and the club is certainly appreciative of our support. I have attached a copy of the kit sponsorship from the programme within this newsletter.

This month we are celebrating a couple of our newer members:

We have a BIO from Nic (Carolina Don), and a couple of pictures of possibly the youngest member yet, my Grandson Dylan, who recently attended his first two AFCW games. The away game at Windsor & Eton and the home game against Maldon Town. I need to take him more often. He brought the team some good luck with a 3 – 0 victory at Windsor and a 4 – 0 victory over Maldon. At 5 years old, he is running around shouting "Come on You Don's" and singing "We are the Champions"! He likes to

spend Friday nights at “PaPa’s” house so he can listen to the WDON commentary on Saturday mornings.

Keep the BIO’s coming, I am still waiting some from ‘SOCAL’ and ‘Canadian Don’. Maybe this will shame them into to sending theirs in.

We have a contacts page attached, and anyone who doesn’t mind sharing their info, let Dave Hambly (SoCal) or myself know. Also if you have e-mail address updates let us know. I try and send the newsletter to your e-mail as well as have SoCal post it on the website. There are a couple of e-mail addresses that are coming back as invalid.

Finally, I would like to wish all fellow Don’s A Very Merry Christmas and A Happy and Prosperous New Year. This sentiment is for all Dons fans, management and players, as many in the homeland and Australia read our website.

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David Garlinge
(Limeydg).

US Dons Bio – Carolina Don

I was first introduced to Wimbledon FC by my GrandDad and Uncle, Freddie and Jamie Mead. My great GrandDad had actually played for the Dons at Plough Lane, probably in the late thirties I'm guessing, and my GrandDad used to mess about on what would become the away-end next to the river Wandle while he played. Though Freddie stopped going regularly to games in the early nineties, Jamie is still heavily involved at AFC.

My first game was definitely against Shrewsbury Town - I remember this as we had moved from Shrewsbury to Leatherhead in 1980, and then on to Chessington in about '83 - and I think that first game would have been 1985. If I remember correctly, we won 2-1, and although I would always remain fond of the Shrews, I was forever a Womble after that day! That Christmas, I spent most of the holidays walking around in my new Wimbledon kit, and pretty much lived for Saturday afternoons down at Plough Lane. For several years, until work, relationships, and the move to Selhurst interrupted my near-continual existence at Plough Lane, I would religiously arrive at mid-day to claim our regular spot on the West Bank with my best mate DJ. We never had much cash in those days (nothing's really changed there, then), so we would often be confined to one program between two, sharing a box of Bassett's Allsorts (humourously sold by the rather shady looking vendor inside the west Bank turnstiles), and a bottle of tasteless

I have to say, those afternoons were pure magic! Wimbledon were fairly invincible for the next few seasons, and yes, DJ and I were there in '88. But other great memories were going so crazy when the Dons equalised against Norwich on their way up to the old Div.1 that we missed the fact that we scored AGAIN within about 45 seconds! We actually got all the way home before realising we'd won and not drawn! Beating Everton 3-1 in our first live televised game in the FA cup, and nearly getting killed by a Vinnie Jones free kick up at Mansfield on the way to cup glory. The crazy thing is, I think it was an indirect free kick inside the area - we were so tightly packed in to that little terrace we couldn't get out the way when Vinnie somehow missed the goal from eight yards out. We ducked, but some poor guy behind us never got up again...!

But life moved on, DJ moved to Perth, Australia, and my interest waned in the Selhurst years. I can distinctly remember thinking on one of the increasingly rare visits to Thornton Heath station that I would rather watch Wimbledon in the non-leagues at Plough Lane than continue this pointless pilgrimage. In fact, had my mother not become the secretary to the head of Football in the Community at WFC, I probably would have stopped going all together. As it turned out, for a couple of years in the late nineties, my involvement with the club was mainly as coach on the kids summer soccer courses, and some time working in the club porta-cabin offices at Selhurst while at university in Strawberry Hill. But when WFC went North, I have to admit, my enthusiasm went South, and I really couldn't be bothered to even try and stay involved.

I had never been involved in WISA, or any of the protests and campaigns at Selhurst to turn the club and FA's decision around, except for writing one or two letters to local newspapers. To be honest, my enthusiasm had dipped too much at that stage, so I can't claim any personal involvement in the formation of AFC, or the Dons Trust. But as soon as I heard what was going on, I joined the Trust, and found my way to the Sutton United game for the first ever AFC kick-off. As I stood on the terrace of Gander Green Lane with my younger brother Los, I just knew that the Dons that got me through my teenage years, the Dons that changed me from a Shropshire

wanderer to a true Londoner, the Dons that won me over and made Saturdays magical, were back! And so was I...!

Well, long story short - after two years of renewed Womble-magic at the Meadow of Kings, I met my now wonderful wife Amy. The only problem was she rather inconveniently lived in Charlotte, North Carolina! But when you're hooked your hooked, and although I miss the Dons terribly, Amy was well worth the 4000 mile trip and the ongoing battle with the US immigration service! (Anyone else been there...???) I think the Dons would understand, and by the wonder of technology, I get to listen to the games on radio WDon. Between my wife, the warmer weather, the Charlotte Bobcats and the Carolina Panthers, I just about get through without being at KM, but one day soon I'd love to get back for a game.

Away from football, I work as a payroll technician in Downtown Charlotte, am a regular chess-player on the wonderful chessworld.net website (playing under the nick-name of AFCDon!), and enjoy trying to find real English ale in the supermarkets of North Carolina :-)

Come on you Dons!

Nic (aka Carolina Don)

Editors Note: Nic, If you still keep in touch with DJ, and he is still in Australia maybe he would like to hook up with the WDSA. There is a entry for Robert Smith (founder of WDSA in the contacts section.

AFCW News

The season continues to be an up and down affair. Some good victories and some not so good results. The last few weeks seem to have been blighted by a number of Don's players being sent off. The strength of the team has shone through these mishaps, however this is something DA and the coaching staff need to focus on. 10 men will generally have a tough time winning games in this new division!

The good news is the team is still only 9 points off the lead and still battling in the top half of the table and for a playoff position. If they can string a few results together, our dreams of a third straight promotion are still in play. One of the points in our favour, is that we still have to play a lot of the clubs in playoff contention. And the results show, we have been playing those clubs better than the lower placed teams.

We have had some good results in the FA Trophy and now face St. Albans at home for a berth in the first round proper. This will be a tough game, with St. Albans currently top of Conference South division, the division we hope progress to in the very near future. This month will be a busy month for the team with several cup games interspersed with league games, for the next three weeks they have 2 games a week.

Some sad news recently announced by the club was the decision by Matt Everard to retire following injury and the need for a further operation. Matt was one of my favourite players and I was looking forward to his return to stabilise the defense and add those extra goals, he was famous for, from set pieces. We wish him well for the future and offer our thanks for his service to the club. At the Leyton game this past Saturday, he received a great outpouring from the fans, it was well deserved!

Don't forget, you can listen to the Home games on the Internet at 'www.wdon.com', and while enjoying the game you can hook up to the new chat-room at: '<http://www.afcwgb.co.uk/gb.php>' and chat with some of your fellow Dons. Several of the US Dons are on there as are some of the other distant supporters and the home based supporters who can't make the game in person. Hope to see some of you out there in the coming weeks

Guest Column:

Another guest column. This time from long-time supporter Ray Armfield. This article was part of an AFCW program, and was forwarded to us by Robert Smith of the Wombles DownUnder Supporters Association. Thanks Robert and Ray.

LONG TIME DONS' FAN RAY
ARMFIELD SAYS BULGARIAN HRISTO WELIKOV IS THE MOST DEDICATED
SUPPORTER HE HAS SEEN IN 35 YEARS.. HERE IS HIS AMAZING TALE OF HRISTO'S
FIRST VISIT TO SEE HIS
FAVOURITE TEAM AFC WIMBLEDON

I Bade an emotional farewell to Hristo after the King's Lynn game -- the poor guy was in tears about having to leave, having enjoyed himself at AFCW so much. He gave me an envelope with a couple of photos in and when I looked closer there was £200 in cash! "Give it to the club" he said.... I've managed to make him Barry Moore's (3rd) kit sponsor for the rest of the season in the programme and at the end of it he'll get a signed white away shirt. He's the most dedicated football supporter I've seen in nearly 35 years of watching the Dons. Hristo's English was better than I first thought and he seemed reasonably 'streetwise' (but keep reading....), so communication was OK. I wrote the programme article which he seemed to like - as he bought TEN copies, plus half the club shop). I paired him with 'Brazilian Don' for the game and they seemed to get on well. Hristo took a few photos so hopefully we'll see those in due course. We also managed to get him a mention in Bulgarian on the tannoy at half-time and got him a complimentary terrace ticket for the Wealdstone game as well. He then went to the Ladies game at Kingsmeadow. The Ladies' team imaginatively christened him 'Uncle Bulgaria' and insisted on dragging the poor guy into the changing rooms for a team picture with him! And he went home with some of Roger Joseph's (kindly donated) training kit which pleased him no end. I chaperoned Hristo to Gravesend & Northfleet's ground where he met his all-time WFC hero Alan Kimble (currently Fleet's first team coach). 'The Wand' was a great host, posing for pictures, signing stuff - including a Gravesend programme - and even making us a cup of tea before we watched training. Hristo was wearing his AFCW tracksuit and we joked that he was a Bulgarian international centre-half there for a trial, which the players found amusing (except the Gravesend centre half - who's face was a picture until he was let in on the joke!). I'm not sure if AK (Kimble) could work out why he was Hristo's favourite player, but I think he was quite flattered. Shame that Justin Skinner wasn't around (due to an injury) as Hristo knew all about him as well. In fact, his knowledge of English football - both professional and non-league - is very impressive. Unfortunately, he was 'questioned' by Police when he tried taking some pictures of Plough Lane, which I think spooked him a bit. As I understand it (and bear in mind this was Hristo's second day in England) he went to Plough Lane to take some photos, using a vantage point already in place to get some shots of the building site. A female security guard spotted him and told him to come down. He tried to explain why he was there and showed her my article in the AFCW programme. She explained she had to phone her boss to ask what to do next. Hristo said 'fine' and waited while she did this. The boss said 'Phone the police' - so she did and they took 20 minutes to arrive, during which time Hristo said he could have run off, hit her or worse. The Police arrived and when they discovered he was from Eastern Europe their attitude changed (unfortunately Eastern Europeans don't have a good press over here). Hristo was eventually taken to Wimbledon Police Station in handcuffs (offering no resistance) was fingerprinted and photographed. He has shown Liam Nolan a copy of the Police Report which mentioned he was detained under new 'Prevention of Terrorism' laws. He was there for seven hours, although he said one officer was really nice and said his brother had played against our reserves for Molesey FC ! The Bulgarian authorities were contacted and while he said they accepted his story he thought they did not believe him and will veto any future visa application to re-visit the UK. On a happier note, I've just had an e-mail from the new sponsor of Barry Moore's 3rd kit.... "Hallo again. I am now in Bulgaria, but every day I think of my 2 weeks in England. Four AFC Wimbledon, 3 AFC Wimbledon Ladies games, I met with players, staff and Alan Kimble and speak with other AFC fans, I had

a picture with all AFC Wimbledon Ladies. Three weeks ago it was only a dream. You all are so friendly with me. Would like to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU Ray Armfield, Liam Nolan, Wagner(Brazilian Don), Ron Trayhorn and Clare Camlin. These people made my stay in England magnificent. I love you all. Come on you Dons, Hristo.”

Hristo made an impact on AFC fan EC3Don: “It was one of those moments when you realise what this club has achieved and how much it means to fans from far and wide.....Petty moans about individual players or management decisions pale into insignificance in the grand scheme.....Hristo shows us all up with his dedication. Must say Hristo is a brilliant guy. Never met him in person but saw him on the platform at Hampton and he was gutted at the result. Someone asked him who he supported ‘back home’ and he said ‘No one, only AFC Wimbledon’ quality

Fundraising Activities

Attached is a copy of the kit sponsorship from a recent Wimbledon programme. As you can see we are listed as the away kit sponsor for Amadou Kouman. This list is displayed in every home program for the year, so we are getting a lot of press at home.

Currently not much else is going on over here. No more diets, we should probably wait until the holiday season has passed and we all need to lose a few pounds again.

We need some:

New Ideas

Send us your ideas for other fundraising activities we could embark upon. One thought is to have some US Dons team shirts made up, which we could proudly wear on our trips back to the homeland. Any takers on this?

AFCW and Cancer Research:

OK ... I'm still plugging the cancer research – It does not impact you while you are on the computer and it does not cause you or your computer harm. Give it a try! If it doesn't work for you, then remove the driver.

AFC Wimbledon has always had an affiliation with supporting Cancer research (it has been one of the recipients of the Walk(s) for Wimbledon sponsorships). There is a program that has been in operation for some time, whereby, you can link your home computers to a Grid supporting cures for cancer. The program runs in the background of your PC and will not inhibit your use of the computer, but will run programs when your computer is idle and utilise any free CPU time. A couple of us have set up an AFC Wimbledon team on the grid and are donating our free CPU time to the cause. If you would like to join, I have attached a link to the team below. Click to this site, download the driver and join the team. Each participant and team gain points. It is a good way to advertise and promote the club. Later on we may be able to gain some sponsorships, based on points earned, that could be shared amongst the club and cancer research.

'<http://www.grid.org/services/teams/team.htm?id=C89CDDA3-BE3D-4D7B-8601-87BB77C8329A>'

There are at least 16 football clubs with 'teams' associated with this research, the largest being Liverpool. We are working on a table that will rank the football club teams, by points, by members, etc. Obviously the more team members you have the more points you can accumulate. We can make this a fun thing that can derive great benefits for everyone. So come on all of you, go out to the above link and join the fight against cancer.

If any of you have had trouble getting on to this site, they have had a few problems during a system upgrade. Things are back to normal now, so please take a look and feel free to join up for this worthy cause.

Contacts

Here we will list contact information for those of you who want to share. Who knows, in our travels we may be in a fellow supporters area and get together for a beer and chat. Sign up is optional.

David Garlinge (Limeydg)
206 Winding Road
Friendswood, Texas 77546
e-mail: davgarlinge@aol.com
phone: (281) 482-6034

Dave Hambly (SoCalDon)

Burbank, CA.
e-mail: dave@usdons.com

Robert Smith (WDSA)
Australia
e-mail: wdsa@optusnet.com.au

Websites of interest

Official Website - contains schedule, results and game reports:

www.afcwimbldeon.co.uk

WISA: www.wisa.org.uk

Tony Kempster's site: www.tonykempster.btinternet.co.uk

Paul Raymond - ItmustbeDons: www.itmustbedons.com

Ryman League: www.isthmian.co.uk

DonsOnline: www.donsonline.co.uk

Radio WDON: www.wdon.com

NEW chat-room: <http://www.afcwgb.co.uk/gb.php>

Kit sponsors

Matt Fowler

home kit - Marc & Tom, Paul, Amy & Chas
away kit - Darren and Samuel Leach
home socks - Peter Jones

Joe Paris

home kit - Tim Hillyer
away kit - lddpics@mac.com

Paul Smith

gloves - The Malteser Dons

Matt Everard

home kit - Debbie and Cho
away kit - W.I.S.A
home socks - Martin, Rachel & Tabby - Wayward Wombles
away socks - PISA

Ryan Gray

home kit - In Memory of Bernard Whaley
home socks - The Highland Hobbits
away socks - Vicki Lowndes

Stefan Wojciechowski

home kit - Diana Harris
home socks - Paul Merritt
away socks - www.afcdons.net
3rd socks - Jertzee, Nicky, Isa and Anya

Shane Smeltz

home kit - Norman and Tricia
away kit - Weird and Wonderful World Collective
3rd kit - Mike Richardson
home socks - TinTin and Charlotte
away socks - Kiwi Don

Leon McDowall

home kit - Adrian Stacey
away kit - Steve, Cathy, Emma, Chrissie, Paul,
Anne & Lizzie
home socks - HP - Number 9
away socks - PISA

Richard Butler

home kit - Gibbo and the Welsh Womble
away kit - Jon, Harry and Devon West
3rd kit - Mike Richardson
home socks - www.wup.me
away socks - John Dryland and Faye Blaylock
3rd socks - Mrs.Moe

Amadou Kouman

home kit - Steve and Pam
away kit - USDons Supporters Club - usdons.com
home socks - Lib Dem Don

Antony Howard

home kit - Derek and Susan Goodhew
away kit - The Harris Family - Kent
3rd kit - Tina Massey
home socks - Traci and Jake Warren
away socks - Bert

Wayne Finnie

home kit - Helen Beckett and Sandy Lawrence
away kit - The Willoughby Arms, Kingston-Upon-Thames
home socks - Moe The Barman
away socks - Dundonald Old Boys

Sean Hillier

home kit - The Trafalgar Freehouse, South Wimbledon
away kit - Mike Richardson

Barry Moore

home kit - Darren and Samuel Leach
away kit - The Roger Connell Experience
home socks - Daniel and Elliott Jennison
away socks - Hannah and Joseph Bugg