

The annual Club Force took place over the weekend of April 28th, 29th and 30th and, as usual, an enormous amount of work was undertaken under the auspices of Paul Jenkins, whose ability to tackle the most difficult of problems was again in evidence and he was never found wanting

In contrast yours truly was always found wanting but I at least showed willing and helped in a variety of ways, the first being to undertake some tree felling. As well as the ubiquitous 'Jenks' I was helped in this endeavour by Brian Pomeroy, Paul Maxwell and Stephen Millward, although I have to confess that my part in the operation consisted almost entirely of putting the unwanted branches on to the trolley and wheeling it over to the bonfire whilst my more illustrious colleagues undertook the skilled work

We did not find any stray footballs lodged in the trees, which must be good news – the football club have obviously learnt how to shoot straight – but the trimming was certainly worthwhile and means that anyone fielding on the boundary during the cricket season will not be encumbered by twigs spoiling their view of the play and there are no excuses for mis-fielding the ball.

This exercise was followed by the construction and painting of some additional advertising boards, and they now run virtually along the entire length of the ground opposite the pavilion – all we need now is some additional advertising

We must not forget our current advertisers, of course, and it was time for their boards to be thoroughly cleaned with some warm water, wet sponge and the correct amount of cleaning fluid although, having completed the task, I realised that the boards were displaying that annoying streak you often encounter when cleaning windows

However a quick call to Rosie Webster, who explained how to overcome this problem did, indeed, resolve it and our advertisers' products now gleamed in the sunlight for all to see – take advantage of their services; they are all excellent

As the football season gives way to the cricket season on the main part of the ground, it is time to prepare for the latter and tidy up after the former, which includes unveiling both the main score-box and the repeater board

The Netball Club had been painting the top of the pavilion walls and as I approached them one of them muttered something about the adjacent 'Mike Pike score-box' and wondered who he might be

"No idea", I replied "and I've told you before about your excessive use of four letter words!"

It is amazing what you find in a score-box between the seasons; discarded goal-keepers, a left boot, the remnants of some pot plants, some old cricket balls and some score-books..... Although perhaps the latter does make some sense

A thorough 'Spring clean' was in order and whilst the experts removed the protective covering, from both the main and repeater boards, yours truly set about making it spick and span and checking that the scoring console was in order

'Jenks' asked for the aerial required for the repeater board but, and, of course, I could not find it. However a quick call to Graham Watts, who was due out of hospital later in the day, suggested that I look in the console case and, of course, it was there

I'm sure everyone will join me in wishing Graham a speedy recovery. He still needs a recuperation period, so please look after him and remind him he must put himself first at the moment rather than the club

With six football teams not playing on the Saturday I expected to see something in the region of 70 + footballers helping out their club when I arrived and..... well, actually, I didn't, but we all live in hope, albeit a false one, and I have written before about the lack of commitment that some members show which I am sure..... no-one has read; other than those who do show this commitment, that is!

Ian Forbes has a fall breakdown of those in attendance – and the clubs they represent – which will be published in due course, so you can see the details for yourself and although

it does not make good reading, numerically that is, there is a lot in the old adage that dedicated volunteers are more helpful than those press ganged, and they certainly work a lot harder; quality not quantity, as they say – and it's a long-time since I've used that particular chat-up line.

My main job for the day was painting all of the fences with anti burglar paint. It is a big job, and I was helped in this regard by Mike Crombie and Ceejay Watson, two of the good guys from the football club who did make the effort, and Roddy Trompiz, who was actually playing in the afternoon but put in a stint before the big match “I won't eat before the game” explained Roddy when offered some pizza, “as the food lays heavy on my stomach as I run around.”

Now if you want some fences painting then Ceejay is your man, as his height not only gives him an enormous advantage but also enables him to paint the fences *from both sides*. Mike is more of an average height but he was also born to the job – he went to an art gallery after completing his task. It was really good to get to know both of them and, indeed, meeting other club members is partly what Club Force is all about

As for Roddy, what can I say? He 'phones me every Sunday to let me know that he has sent the 9th XI match report, win, lose or draw, although only one of those results is apposite for our magnificent nines! He is an example to everyone and it was no surprise at all that he supported Club Force; he's that sort of guy

Must confess that I left shortly after 4-00 p.m. to go and watch the Palace v Burnley game, and if the result was intended as a punishment for deserting my post, I certainly got what I deserved.

There were even fewer people in attendance on Sunday but I did get the opportunity of meeting Ricky Martin. It is always good to put a face to a name, although he might have a contrary view, and he was busy making some running repairs to the Clubhouse sliding doors before painting the same

The main work of the day was putting the finishing touches to the cricket nets and transporting the slats from the container to their rightful place in the sight-screens. 'Jenks' had made some new ones and, as we put them into place, there was a notable difference between ours and those of Ex-Blues which stood, somewhat forlornly and in a bad state of repair, just a few yards away

“Someone is here to help” said the ever present Stephen Millward, and as I welcomed him I could not but help think he looked remarkably like Nick Mole, and having made a complete and utter fool of myself, by asking him what his part in the Club was, I discovered that he was, indeed, Nick Mole, the current football ‘Clubman of the year’ and erstwhile treasurer of the OWA – apologies Nick; it was the beard that threw me

“I'm not very practical; my wife calls me Frank Spencer”, confided Nick, but his skills were more than adequate - I'd have a word with Betty if I were you, Nick!

Having sorted out the slats it was time to address the sprinklers, of which there are four, “but one of them doesn't work”, explained Stephen

Well it does now, better than the other three, in fact, thanks to the magic skills of Paul Jenkins

A slight change to the catering arrangements this year which, although still in the capable hands of Ian Forbes, saw them out-sourced - fish and chips on Friday and pizzas on Saturday; no, not courtesy of the tennis club!

A sincere ‘thank you’ to everyone who supported Club Force this year, particularly Paul Jenkins, who yet again showed his considerable skills and knowledge and worked tirelessly throughout. Paul also has the endearing quality of accepting everyone for what he or she is, has extreme patience with those whose skills are nowhere near those of his own, and remains cool and calm when confronting any problem - which he always overcomes

Thanks Paul; your contribution to the Old Wilsonians has been immense, and I'm not just talking about Club Force but also in everything you do for us. You are the epitome of a good Club man and we all love you dearly