

Ian Pilgrim – Old Wilsonian eulogy by Clive Peckover, 11 July 2025

1. I am honoured to be asked to say a few words today – on behalf of Old Wilsonians – about our friend, IP.
2. As Pikey said in his wonderful tribute, Ian embodied the spirit and values of the club which, for him, always came first.
3. He was loyal and selfless. He was quick to embrace new opportunities and tackle new challenges. Much of what we have and enjoy at Hayes today is Ian's legacy.
4. Above all, to know Ian was to be his friend. That meant sharing many great times and enjoying his wonderfully dry and playful sense of humour. Ian was just a great guy to be around, and you knew that he was always there for you.
5. There was also no better man to have in your corner when you needed a mortgage. Ian brought the same integrity to his work as he did to the club, always going the extra mile to secure people the deal that was right for them. He helped half the club in this way and many of their families.
6. The many wonderful tributes to Ian over the past few weeks – from across the club and the wider community – are testament to his special quality. As was the attendance of 100 people at Hayes on 24th May, before the next home cricket matches, to mark his passing with a minute's applause around the square.
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7. Ian was a great sportsman, in all senses of the word. He had been captain of the 1st XI at football and cricket whilst at Wilson's. And he had an illustrious career for the OWs, making 584 appearances and scoring 57 goals for the football club and making 354 appearances, scoring 3,610 runs and taking 101 wickets and 144 catches for the cricket club.

8. A footballing highlight was winning two cup finals for the 3rd XI in the early 80s, playing at centre-half, winning 3-2 against Catford Wanderers and 2-1 against Old Monovians, in a replay played at his beloved Hayes.
9. But Ian was never one to dwell on his own achievements. His first thought was always what was best for the club. An example was how, in his late 30s and with the football club struggling for goalkeepers, Ian volunteered to don the gloves – and most successfully – when he would far rather have played out on field.
10. The only boast Ian ever made about football was how he was “unbeaten in Europe”, as a leader of many memorable football tours, including Amsterdam, Hamburg and Guernsey. Ian loved the social side of sport, including Sunday football with old friends like Ashley Easden in the Weebles – “they wobble but they don’t fall down”. And he had a natural affinity with Caribbean cricket, organising three wonderful tours of Barbados with his friend Graham Watts, and being virtually carried off the pitch at Hayes by their supporters after four straight sixes into the tennis courts almost brought a final over win in a Sunday game against Caribbean Mixed.

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11. Ian was a formidable fundraiser for the club from a young age. The great Mike Harris records in his history of the football club how “Ian Pilgrim first came onto the ways & means committee in 1980. He has been working for OWs ever since. Fundraising would be cut by half without him”. This was later reflected in Ian’s years of service in the Bar Team, particularly in recruiting and managing the staff to run an operation which, under his friend Jasper Gundry-White, continues to generate tens of thousands of pounds of vital revenue for the club.
12. Ian was far-sighted and very go-ahead. He saw how proper procedures and accreditation for welfare and safeguarding were not just important in themselves, but were vital in meeting the expectations of parents and the requirements of funding bodies. It was then Ian’s hard work which saw the cricket club become one of the first in the area to secure Club Mark and Focus Club status and bring in new funding as a result.

13. It is literally true to say that the cricket club would not exist as it does today without Ian's contribution. In particular, in founding the Colts section in 1997, together with Denise and with Ian and Alex Forbes, which IP then led and developed over many years, and which has become the lifeblood of the club. I don't think there was a prouder day for Ian than 2 September 2023 when the 1st XI which took the field against Kings Hill was comprised entirely of ex-Colts.

14. Ian helped many other clubs in Kent get and retain Club Mark status. He was a leading member of the first Bromley Sports Partnership. And it is very appropriate that donations in Ian's memory should be made to the Chance2Shine cricket charity: IP introduced that initiative to five local schools, including Hawesdown and Glebe, where it was the catalyst for our shared use of facilities which continues to this day. Ian's out-standing contribution to grassroots cricket was recognised in the Alan Albury Award from Kent and at Lords by Nat West.

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15. Proud as he was of Wilson's, it didn't matter to Ian where people had gone to school. Indeed, he often said that non-old boys frequently put more into the club as they didn't take it for granted. And it mattered greatly to Ian that their contribution to the club was equally valued and properly recognised.

16. It always gave Ian great pleasure to welcome new people to the club and to make them feel at home. He went out of his way to make time for people and to understand and support them as individuals. So many at Hayes today are there because of Ian, often gently reeled in by him to help out in some way.

17. Ian was a regular attendee at OWLS – the Old Wilsonians' Luncheon Society – particularly if sausages were on the menu, and at Friday meetings of the Entrepreneurs Club, with Paul Jenkins, Adrian Beckett and others. And for years Ian and Denise organised the football club kids' Christmas party, an institution which continues to this day.

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18. Ian is the only person to have been Life President of the cricket club. He was also President of the club and, in 2005-2007, of the Old Wilsonians' Association.

19. That's one measure of his contribution to and stature in the club.

20. Another is the many wonderful memories and stories about Ian which people across the club have shared in recent weeks.

21. Ian had a gift for friendship which will be long remembered and which made – and will always make – the Old Wilsonians a special place to be.

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