NEWS OF OLD WILSONIANS

MAY 2021



OLD WILSONIANS' ASSOCIATION
(FOUNDED 1904)

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MAY 2021

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CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Bar & Clubhouse re-opening guidelines

Old Wilsonians Sports Club
Updated Bar and Clubhouse Measures.
Covid19 New measures as of May 17th
Welcome back in the Clubhouse.
We thank you in advance for your cooperation, patience and understanding through these challenging times.

Opening times
Monday to Thursday 6pm -10,30pm
Friday 4 -10.30pm **Kitchen 5pm -8pm**
Saturday 12-10.30pm. **Kitchen 1pm-8pm**
Sunday 12-10.30pm. **Kitchen 1pm -6pm**

Bookings should be made via the email address below.

owabar@icloud.com

Time limits on amount of time for each booking. [2 Hours only if we are over booked to allow all members use of the clubhouse]

A full menu is available in the clubhouse.

Please Wear a face covering
We are asking people to follow government guidance in relation to wearing a face covering. This currently means guests and members must wear a face covering in the clubhouse. Please plan ahead and bring a suitable face covering with you. If you are not wearing one, you will be politely asked to do so – we do appreciate that there are reasons for exemption.

BAR AND CLUBHOUSE
•1) Face Covering should be worn when entering the bar.
•2) No Standing in the bar area, unless you have a table and wish to use toilets.
•3) Indoor hospitality guests must observe the rule of six when inside the venue, which allows half a dozen people from different households to meet – or more if they come from two different households.
•4) We will take your food and drink order

OUTDOOR AREA.

•1) Outside, people will be able to meet in larger groups in beer gardens or when dining al fresco – with up to 30 people
•2) No entry to bar area order from the main entrance we deliver you drinks
•3) Maximum per table 6 people on the main balcony, table service only
•4) Mask should be worn in all inside areas.

Once again, we have had to adjust our way of working and this will no doubt cause some disappointment, but we ask that you assist the bar team in their duties with adhering to the rules as it is not up to them to decide who is a household member or not. We are all in this together.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation, patience and understanding through these difficult times.

A reminder of the clubhouse requests.

•Please wear a face covering when standing in the clubhouse

•Please stay seated – no standing at the bar

•Please supply your contact details for Test and Trace

Pikey's Progress: The Club re-opens, the cricket season starts & remembering Kirk

The Prime Minister was pretty clear – Step 2 in the process in the roadmap out of lockdown allowed outdoor hospitality to reopen, along with indoor leisure and gyms, hairdressers and beauticians, and non essential retail shops, whilst domestic overnight stays for one household were allowed as from April 12th. The great day arrived so Mr Johnson went and had a haircut, although nobody noticed and, as far as overnight stays are concerned, no-one ever knows where 'Bojo' will be sleeping, least of all his ex wives and current fiancé.

As far as Old Wilsonians were concerned the reopening of outdoor hospitality was the news they had all been waiting to hear, and seats were booked as people eagerly sought to enjoy some of the hospitality that only the OWs can provide. The question, 'Should I leave the car at home in order to enjoy a social drink for the first time in months' was virtually rhetorical, a no brainer as participants were eager to partake of the amber liquid and obey the law at the same time as members gathered to celebrate their new found freedom.

The talk was of …….. well, irrelevant, really, the very fact that this was possible was all that mattered and, as the evening progressed, most people were talking gibberish anyway and everyone went home happy after seeing old friends and making a few new ones. The following morning the gardening club met again for the first time in a couple of months and head gardener Bill Hartley, who had also been there the night before, informed us that he had recruited a new gardener during the evening's festivities, namely Derek Seston, an announcement that has been subsequently confirmed to prove that it was not just the drink talking – welcome, Derek. By the end of the week £1,700 had been taken over the Bar and it looked as if things were returning to some sort of normality.

Saturday saw the first day of the OW cricket season - organised sports had been allowed as from March 29th with the OWFC back in action on that day – and a visit to Catford Wanderers saw the OWCC playing for the first time this year. On arrival the ground appeared to be a fortress as I could not find a gate that was open. Eventually I approached a man who appeared to be one of authority and he asked me where I was from "Old Wilsonians, " I confessed "I'm sorry, but we are not allowing any supporters today because of the restrictions; crowds are not allowed", he explained. "But I'm the OWs new opening bowler and have been known to bowl at over 100 mph".

He looked at me in a way that implied he did not believe my claim, so I had to confess that

I had come to score, and on hearing this news he not only let me in but ushered me to a table and said “The lady there is also scoring, ” and she turned out to be Jane Abbett
“I’m scoring for Catford Wanderers “ Jane confided.

Shortly after the game started several tennis players had finished their games and were somewhat intrigued by the cricket taking place in front of them.
“I understand that games can go on for five days” inquired one
“Only Test matches”, corrected another, who seemed more au fait with the game
“Is this a Test match,” asked the inquirer
“No; they are international games; Catford Wanderers v Old Wilsonians is not classified as an International”

To read a full report of the game you will have to see the cricket newsletter - go on; you know you want to - but save to say we lost an entertaining game by just one wicket in a contest which enabled everyone to get a good work out, and we did have some supporters, although they had to claim they were either coaches or umpire assessors in order to gain access.

Sunday saw the second instalment of ‘The Kirk Benjamin Memorial Trophy’ as Old Wilsonians Super Vets took on Arts Network, not just to remember the much missed Kirk, but also to raise funds for the charity which helps those with severe and enduring mental health needs and, of course, to remind everyone of the work needed to combat this cruel illness and the need to support those who suffer in this way. Kirk used to play in these games and after his tragic death it only seemed right and proper that the game should be played in his memory, so a trophy was purchased and was first played for last October, resulting in a 4-2 victory for the Super Vets, who were determined to retain this Cup; well, they are not likely to win any other!

It was a perfect Spring morning and the game attracted a large crowd - think that is legal and they did abide by the rules and regulations – and we were so pleased to see Kirk’s Mum, Pauline, wife Sophie and one of their daughters in attendance. For the first 20 minutes or so the Arts Network game plan worked perfectly to such an extent that they took a well-deserved two goal lead, but as the half wore on the OWs started to get back into the game and **NICK BILLING** reduced the arrears with a well placed header whilst guest **‘NICK’** equalised just before half-time and our eldest team then went on to score three more in the second half, a sublime chip from **DAN HARRIS,** a tap-in from **MARK MACE -** the OW President always scores in this game - and a header from **DOUG SMART** that will not be a ‘goal of the season’ contender.

After the game Sophie and Pauline presented the trophy to Mark Pope, the OW skipper, and Sophie said a few moving words of how much the family appreciated the way in which the Club continues to preserve Kirk’s memory.

It so happened that the weekend marked the 25th anniversary of a 6th XI game Kirk played in against Old Meadonians, the report of which contained the following: “We fought on and an excellent run down the right and cross from John Mole was met by **KIRK BENJAMIN** rising like a salmon at the far post”. There you go, Doug; that’s how it’s done; you’re not supposed to stand in the six yard box and just hope the ball hits you on the head, you’re supposed to make some sort of an effort.

This was an excellent game, played in an excellent spirit in the true ethos of Super Vets and Old Wilsonian football and raised £300 for Arts Network - every player, on both sides,

donated his match fee, whilst there were also additional contributions - with another £300 promised via Doug Forbes's sponsored runs – if you have not already done so then please sponsor Doug - which is also helping, 'Mind', 'The Samaritans' and a local Council project and, most important of all, making people aware of mental health issues in the process.

The OW's have always been concerned about the mental health of its members – and mental health per se – and this game illustrated the fact perfectly. Thanks to everyone who played and turned up to support, to Mick Pilgrim for refereeing and to Jasper for doing the catering as the two teams mingled after a hard fought and enjoyable fixture to conclude the truncated 20/21 senior football season at Hayes. Arts Network only play two games a year and it is always against our Super Vets, and we look forward to seeing them again in October for their first encounter of the 21/22 season.

Mike Pike

Sportsclub Update from Alex Forbes

Sad news , Mike Harris past away earlier this week . Mike was Life President of the Senior Football club for over a decade and was also a Past President of the OW Association. The Youth section have a team named after him . He had high standards believed the game should be played hard, but fairly. It was important to socialise with both referees and opposition after the game . H hated you warming up in the goal mouth & if you even tried to sneak a bag into the club house he was upon you like a velociraptor . He is the reason the football club has survived and flourished. Our condolences go out to Lillian & the Harris family.

Harris was a lovely kind man, although wouldn't like to show it. He was loved by the football club . Usually it took you at least a decade to win him round , but once you did he was amiable and let you off the odd demeanour! The little Mexican (due to his gringo moustache) was awarded a medal by the FA for 50 years of service. He wanted the club to win the hospitality cup & when they did you saw no prouder man. The 1st XI will tell you how happy he was when they won the AFA Cup 6 years ago (picture on the home page of the website) he had been after that cup for years and was mighty proud to win it at last.

On a personal note Mike always guided me when needed and took an interest in what I was up to. We tried to update the records together 3 years ago, technically challenged would be an understatement for both of us, but we succeeded, mind you it took 3 weekends ! Mike was also the only man to send me off and took great delight in doing so . He will be missed massively , Rest in Peace. The flag is at half mast in honour of our former President & there will be a minutes silence before our senior games over the weekend as we think about the little Mexican who prowled our pavilion.

Back to the club he loved . We raised over £600 for mental health with a combination of Doug 5km hobble & the Kirk Benjamin Trophy on Sunday where we had a 23 man squad.It was lovely to see Sophie (Kirks wife) and their 2 daughters , also Kirks Mum & cousin . A lovely day was had by all . Read more & last Saturdays match reports.

The Tennis club crowd fund raising is going well but only a few days left if you wish to contribute to laying a new path from the bungalow to the tennis huts if you fancy donating . Lots of club days happening so keep updated on the website , or social media .

The club bar is open for outside table service only , ideally book up your table in advance. All sports have now restarted . Some with restrictions , so please read up on the latest sporting body guidelines. There are restrictions on the number of supporters allowed to spectate , these differ by sport organisation .

Cricket club – Have started nets Tuesday nights 6-8pm & 4th XI (more senior group) Thursday nights at the same time . The cricket club are also launching a supporters club where all proceeds will go towards player development (both colts & seniors). The Kent 20/20 cup final has been rearranged for the 30th May down at Tunbridge Wells . Please let Dave Welch know if you are attending (as we need to manage the numbers)

Football clubs – Juniors are having pay & play football & should be playing until the end of June . Seniors are in a mini league competition until the end of May . There is a game this Sunday for the Vets.
Netball club – Has been given the go ahead and a summer camp for juniors is taking place.
Squash club –someone from the same household can now play

Other things happening – There is a Men on the Hill , the brain child of Glen Wheeler, Jasper Gundry White and Doug Forbes meets every Sunday and chats through mental health issues. The changing rooms are closed as they go through a refurbishment , which should be completed in 6 weeks time .

Lastly happy birthday to my brother Stu Forbes who reached 50 last week

Alex Forbes

TENNIS CLUB FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN - A FANTASTIC SUCCESS

What a generous bunch of members you all are! Our original target for the campaign was to raise £1500 which Sport England agreed to match – making a total of £3000. That was rapidly exceeded so we stretched our target and in the end have raised an amazing sum – almost £4,400 in total. The tennis club is currently talking to the Old Wilsonians' Association about the work we need to do to create the access we all need and want - for ourselves as members and to open up access to the widest possible additional audience.

Thanks to everyone who either donated a reward or pledged cash. And to you all for spreading the word. This was a new adventure for the club and involved lots of work behind the scenes. But it has been well worth it.
NIGEL JORDAN, CHAIRMAN

Old Wilsonians' Lawn Tennis Club Regional Award Winners

Stop Press 26th May 2021

Old Wilsonians' Lawn Tennis Club won the Competition of the Year 2020 award at the LTA South East Regional awards which were announced yesterday. We are now through to the National Finals which will be held on 24th June 2021



Mike Harris Rest In Peace

I am sad to report that our Life President, Mike Harris, died peacefully at home Tuesday 20th April 2021. This is huge loss and our thoughts go out to his family of whom he was extremely proud.

It is difficult to put into words what "The Mexican" meant to Old Wilsonians. The fact he was our Life President really says it all. He simply bled old gold and black and he was never happier than when he was at Hayes. He was immensely proud of the club and the fact that is provided a platform for Old Wilsonians of all abilities to share fun times on the pitch and in the bar.

During his lengthy association with the club, he has done everything! He has been a player, a referee and held every committee position going, some for a large number of years. Without him, we wouldn't still exist. Mike is also the sole reason that you all know how many games you have played for the club and how many goals you have scored. He was one of a kind and not someone that will ever be replaced. Over the years he has spent of fortune feeding and watering our referees and other visitors and ensuring that all players and opposition treated our facilities with respect.

I have lots of fond memories of Mike. He has been hugely supportive of me and others during my time on the committee and always had a piece of advice or a way to help. I remember him walking onto the first team pitch and demanding the referee disallowing a goal that Jon Howe had scored with his hand, annoying at time, but testament to his Corinthian spirit. Programme editors for cup finals will not miss his 15-page submissions detailing the clubs progress on a day-to-day basis, AGM's will be significantly shorter and you haven't played at Old Wilsonians without having been shouted at for playing in the goal mouth or taking your bag in the bar!

Over recent years he got huge joy of what the 1st XI achieved. I have never seen him happier than he was when holding the AFA Senior Cup in 2014 and 2015. He was also over the moon when we were asked to host the final in 2016. However, what made him Mr Old Wilsonians was he was equally content when we managed to put out a 10th XI or have a side with a large number of school boys in it.

A true legend of amateur football and one that will leave a huge hole at Hayes. We have lost a number of legends in recent years and let's hope that they will be still having a drink in the bar every Saturday shouting their "constructive" critisicm.

Rest easy mate, Ariba
Jamie Parkinson and all at Old Wilsonians

Bob Bevan paid this Tribute to Mike Harris

I joined the Old Wilsonians Football Club 60 years ago this autumn. There were only four teams and Mike was skipper of the 3rd XI. He was a bustling, not necessarily skilful striker but a frequent goal scorer. As in life his playing style was courageous and he had a big heart. Anyone who played against him knew they had been in a game by the end.

Off the field he was enormously enthusiastic about the club and didn’t keep quiet about it. Back in 1961 we had an equally enthusiastic 4th XI Captain, Brian McAlister, brother of the legendary Richard “Mac”. He held his own team meetings and did an occasional newsletter which meant that his side was doing well even though Brian himself was not as good a player as his brother. People were very keen to get into this bonded side.

Consequently the new old boys were struggling to get a game and it was decided to form the first ever 5th XI in the history of the club and I was elected captain at the age of 17. So I probably first met Mike properly at the Monday selection meetings in the office of our then Hon Secretary George Croucher – another legend of AFA football. He worked for Mays Funeral Directors in Peckham High Street. As you can imagine this led to a deal of black humour especially enjoyed by Mike and the then 2nd XI Captain Ian Forbes.

Young old boys will find it hard to believe that we used to post the selection notices on the Tuesday mornings so with deliveries much more reliable you would know by Wednesday where and for which team you were playing.

I suggested that as we were spending that money we should turn the selection notice into a short weekly newsletter, giving last week's results, tables and other news. Mike announced that he had a Gestetner duplicator which he would donate to the club if I would do the newsletter/selection notice. I can see him now bringing this heavy cumbersome machine up the stairs into our flat in East Dulwich which was not hugely welcomed by my parents.

Once again for the younger old boys this was a state-of-the-art printing machine 60 years ago. You had to type each page on a wax stencil so mistakes were a nightmare, although small ones could be fixed with correction fluid. Then you had to paste black ink onto a roller and the letters would appear through the typed wax onto the paper. It was a messy, time-consuming business with frequent malfunctions which, for a few years occupied my winter Sunday evenings. No wonder I got married so late.

Of course Mike Pike took it over for decades and I'm sure he is as delighted as I to see it still going, as was Mike Harris. As George Croucher started to wind down from his 40-year stint as Secretary and five before as Assistant Secretary, Mike slowly took over and for many, many years he was the club's driving force.

Sometimes not always a diplomat but he got things done and I can pay him no higher compliment than to say he has been as important to our club as was George Croucher. I know that he would be flattered by that because he had the most enormous respect for George. I now regret not saying that to him myself. Just like his predecessor Mike became involved across the whole of AFA football where again he was held in the highest regard and affection, including organising the Old Boys Cup. Many people have already listed the many offices and honours he held or received so I won't repeat them here.

At the last OW Association Past Presidents lunch held before the pandemic I sat with Mike which I am now so pleased about. We rolled back the years including the time when we had played together in a 5th XI where I scored my only competitive hat-trick and he got one too. In his case probably one of several dozen.

We talked about George and the duplicating machine and all the ups and downs and even the odd disagreements we might have had now all in the past. I also know that he was delighted, when I started speaking professionally, that the OWFC were featured on dinner menus such as the PFA, Footballer of the Year and many others. I think he even asked for the odd copy.

That picture of him with our first-ever AFA Cup should be enlarged and hung in the club. It was one of his happiest ever days and I was glad I was there too to witness his unashamed joy. Just like other legends who have left us it will be hard to go into the clubhouse without expecting to see and certainly hear him. I shall not be alone in missing him. RIP mate. You were a good man.

Bob Bevan

Mike was a stalwart of AFA Football and will be sadly missed. Men like Mike do not come around too often. Please can you pass our condolences to all at Old Wilsonians and to his family.

Although I am not nearly as old as Bob, I started playing football for the OW's whilst still at school in the late 1960's along with Lou Barry and Len Brown. Mike Harris was still playing in those days and he would persuade us to turn out for the lower elevens on a Saturday afternoon after playing for the school in the morning. So Mike has been part of my life for well over 50 years. My most difficult time as President of the OWA was to chair a mediation session between Mike and George Wing over the respective roles of the Sports Club Secretary (Mike) and the Ground and Bar manager (George). As personality clashes go this was in the extreme category and there was no love lost between them. You could cut the atmosphere with a knife but somehow the issues were briefly resolved without it escalating into anything more serious. I never had an argument with Mike in all that time but he always spoke his mind and asked the difficult questions nobody else wanted to raise at AGMs and OW Council Meetings. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Ed

Mike Harris - A man for all seasons, but particularly that relating to football

All Clubs have to deal with the loss of their most loyal and dedicated members but the Grim Reaper has not been kind to the Old Wilsonians over the past few years.

Over 20 years ago, it was certainly in the 20th century, Ian Forbes inaugurated the 'Past Presidents lunch' where all former Presidents of the Association met for a meal and a drink……particularly the latter. The occasion also raised a lot of money for the Club – that was always Ian's main motivation – and one of the ways he extracted 'a tenner' from us all – it was always 'a tenner' – was by running a book on as to whom of us would die first.

(Tontine - Cannot remember exactly how it worked – the money would have been of little use to 'the winner' so have to conclude that ***ALL*** of the proceeds went to the OWA).

This went on for a few years after which Ian became frustrated that none of us had died, and concerned that none of us would cough up our £10, he changed the rules and we had to predict which famous person would no longer be with us 12 months later at the time of the next lunch.

Sadly, six Presidents have died since that first lunch – including Ian Forbes – the latest being Mike Harris, who died on April 20th. Both Jamie Parkinson and Alex Forbes have subsequently written wise and heartfelt words on the Football Club's third Life President and if you have not already done so then I advise you to read what they had to say but, and briefly, the gist is as follows.

Jamie writes about how proud Mike was of the Club, particularly when the 1st XI won, and then retained, the AFA Cup and equally when we were able to put out a 10th XI, and his Corinthian spirit, whilst Alex highlights Mike's kindness, the importance he put on socialising with both the opposition and the referee after games, and reminds us that the Junior Football Club have a team named after him.

Both, and independently, also highlight his aversion to players warming up in the goal-mouth and sneaking kit bags into the Clubhouse. Bob Bevan has also written about 'The Mexican', as he was known, although the epithet of 'Rolf' is probably one that he should no longer be associated with.

According to Mike's own records he played 119 games for the Club, scoring 40 goals – dodgy knees cut short his playing career - but everyone knows that it is what he did off the field that makes him such a great Old Wilsonian and a man to whom we will be eternally grateful. He was secretary for longer than anyone can remember, succeeding George Croucher to whom he was assistant and someone Mike admired greatly, and was so proud when we won the League's Hospitality Cup, an ambition also close to George's heart.

As secretary Mike claimed that he had/needed to play at home every week, and took a lot of stick for that. "But think of all the washing-up I have to do" was his rejoinder. However, he was not averse to making other sides travel when they were without a fixture and invariably informed the skipper involved: "I've got you a friendly -an away fixture at Mill Hill" (I'm convinced he had an arrangement with their fixtures secretary).

Mike worked in a fruit and vegetable market which necessitated him getting up early in the morning, so insisted that no-one called him after 9-00 p.m'

“I’ll do a deal with you,” he explained, “I won’t call you at 4-00 a.m. if you do not call me after 9-00 p.m”

He drove an open top truck for many years – it contained a lot of room for fruit and vegetables – and was a life-long Charlton supporter, but it was always the OWs who came first and, as a consequence, watched them only occasionally, and invariably at mid-week evening games. As a Palace supporter I recall such a fixture and, having parked my car about a mile from Selhurst Park, became aware of said truck hurtling past me along Croydon Rd .

In 1988 he convinced me to help him compile a history of the Football Club to celebrate its centenary – it’s probably about time this was updated. He also helped those in other clubs to compile similar histories as this email to Malcolm Whitehead, who compiles a weekly newsletter for members of GOALS, (‘Golden Oldies Alcoholic Lunches’ and of which Mike was a member) illustrates:

'I feel extremely saddened to learn the news of Mike's sudden death'. For me he was not simply a friend. He was additionally a wonderful authority when it came to demonstrating ways in which to research archive material, especially with regard to Alexandra Park Football Club. May he rest in peace’

When I became editor of the Football newsletter he attempted to sell the position to me by saying “It is the sort of job that someone only does for a couple of years” but I never got round to telling him years later - many years later - that this was somewhat of an under-estimation.

He used to ‘phone me every Sunday afternoon and dictate his weekly column which always had something to say, whether it be detailing the fortunes of the various sides, reminding players to pay their subs, promoting fund-raising activities or emphasising the importance of removing the corner flags after games. But there is one thing you could always guarantee – every word was intended to promote the OWFC and ensure it progressed.

Although the Football Club was his passion he also played cricket for the OWs with enthusiasm rather than skill and was a committed fielder, saving many a run, and was the sort of guy who would help you out at the last moment if you were short, the sort of man he admired in the Football Club and, in his later days, could invariably be seen at the Club supporting our cricket teams in the summer – he just could not stay away from Hayes on Saturday afternoons.

Mike was initially reluctant to become President of the Association but was eventually persuaded to do so. One of his reservations was that the position involved speaking at the Annual Dinner, something he was reluctant to do, which is interesting as Geoff Robinson claims that it was Mike’s inspiring speech at the Leavers’ Supper - an event held at the Club to persuade the current crop of leavers to join the Association - that convinced Geoff to do so.

On becoming OWA President he said he wanted all sections of the Club to come together and inter-act far more than that had done in the past, and it is a blessing that he lived to see this happen, with so many members now playing a multitude of sports and the football, cricket and tennis clubs all having junior sections to secure the long term future of

the Club he loved and served with such distinction.

Our immediate thoughts are with Lillian and the rest of the Harris family and I am confident that they all know how much Mike meant to the Club and vice versa and hope that this will be of some comfort to them at this difficult time.

So the unique Mike Harris has gone but he will not be forgotten, and this does not mean that you can now warm-up in the goal-mouth or take your kit bag into the Clubhouse, for to do so would be an insult to his memory.

Mike Pike

Rob McGibbon, a childhood friend of Mike Harris, contacted Neil Kendrick after hearing of Mike's passing and penned this tribute.

Mike Harris – A Personal Memory by Robin McGibbon

Mike was my most trusted, loyal, teenage friend, and were so close we were Best Man at each other's wedding.

We met at a youth club, in Brockley, South East London, when Mike was 16, and clicked immediately. We played in the youth club soccer team and, according to a team-mate, Nigel Clarke - later to become a celebrated sports reporter for the Daily Mirror - Mike was a "fearsome" right-back.

I don't remember much about his football ability, but Mike was certainly fearsome off the pitch - never slow to speak his mind. Which was probably why he was made captain. He always claimed it was because he was the oldest, but, looking back, I'm sure it was because he was the bossiest, with an air of authority way beyond his years.

We were fanatical Charlton supporters and, when we didn't have youth club matches, we'd go to the *Valley* and occasional away fixtures.

This might surprise many who knew him only from Old Wilsonians, but, as a teenager, Mike was very shy and never *ever* sought the limelight. I witnessed this many times, but one episode that sticks in the memory occurred at Wolverhampton railway station, in February 1955.

Mike and I, and another friend, John Gray, had travelled to *Molineux* to see Charlton play Wolves, in the FA Cup fifth-round, and when we got off the train, festooned with Charlton colours, we were confronted by a photographer from the *Express and Star* newspaper, wanting a picture for the paper's early afternoon edition.

John and I, who were far from camera shy, agreed immediately, but Mike wanted nothing to do with it and retreated into the background. That the picture made the paper's front page meant not a lot to him; he was - in those days anyway - one of those guys not comfortable being in the spotlight.

Mike was such a loyal friend to me. When I played for Maidstone United, then Redhill and Bromley, in the sixties, he came to watch home and away games and, you won't be surprised to hear, was never slow to tell me what he thought of my performance!

He was a very generous man, particularly with his time. When I asked for help with research for heavyweight boxer Billy Walker's autobiography - which I ghosted - Mike agreed immediately and spent hours at the British Library photocopying dozens of newspaper reports of Billy's fights.

Our friendship endured many decades and he left me something permanent to remember him by - a scar on my chin.

A couple of months before that Wolves match, we'd travelled to *White Hart Lane*, with two other friends, to see Spurs play Aston Villa. Mike had taken to wearing a yellow Cheesecutter cap and, on the way home, one of our friends snatched it and ran off, along Bethnal Green Road, giggling.

Many Old Wilsonians will find this hard to credit, but, in those days, Mike was very nifty and he gave chase at some lick, bellowing at the culprit. For some reason, I found the whole episode - particularly Mike's over-the-top outrage - hilarious, and laughed so much I blacked out.

The next I knew, Mike was bending over me, in the gutter, trying to stem the flow of blood from my chin with a hankie. Then he barked at the friend who'd nicked his cap to knock on the nearest door and ask someone to phone for an ambulance. When the friend dithered, Mike yelled at him - in the style that will be familiar to Old Wilsonians - to get a bloody move on.

The pay-off to the story is that I was taken to the nearby London Hospital and had six stitches put in the wound. Mike waited, then made sure I got home safely. Having endured a tedious 1-1 draw at *The Lane,* we both agreed that my accident was the most exciting event of the afternoon!

Mike was a dear friend and I'm so thrilled for him that he found his niche in life - doing what gave him pleasure, and being respected by so many.
How many of us have achieved that?

Robin McGibbon

The Harris family prepared this Eulogy to Mike for his funeral

EULOGY - MICHAEL LEONARD HARRIS

In the little time we have here today, there is nowhere near enough time to do justice to Mike's life, however, we shall share just some of the wonderful things about him that made him who he was, and we start with his Eulogy….

Michael Leonard was born on Monday 14th March 1938, in the borough of Greenwich, south London. He was the second son to Mildred and Len.

However, at the tender age of just 1, the second world war had broken out and young Michael was evacuated with his mother and brother Brian to Great Tew – a small country village in the Cotswolds Hills, in Oxfordshire. It was to be Michael's home for a few years, until it was safe for him and his family to return to London.

Whilst they were living in Great Tew, sadly Brian died. He was only 9 years old but born with a hole in his heart and suffering multiple fits (sometimes several times a day) the condition was very difficult to correct in those days. Mike never forgot his big brother and often reminisced about his time in Oxford.

Back in London, and by now attending the local primary school, Mike did well, and was a studious young lad who was also very sporty too – especially football, which he loved.

After taking the 11plus exam, Mike gained entry into the grammar school, Wilson's in Camberwell – a school that was steeped in history, and of course, which Mike and his family were notably proud that he got in to.

He continued to work hard and formed some of his long-term friendships that he would see through to his last days. His friends would often joke about how many GCE O'level exams they gained between them!

Mike's father, Len, had his own mobile business selling fruit and vegetables in the local community and this no doubt prompted Mike's decision to follow in his father's footsteps.

On leaving school, Mike was offered an apprenticeship with an insurance company, but working in an office was not for him! He soon secured an apprenticeship as a bookkeeper/cashier in the Borough Market in London.

Working in the Borough Market, Mike often worked unusual hours, starting his working day sometimes as early as 2am, and often finishing at 12 midday, sleeping for a couple of hours before taking up his second employment as a Youth Leader for the London County Council. He organised after school activities for groups of youngsters in football, rounders, tennis and other games in the local parks. He continued this work long after he was married.

Like most young men in those days he was required to do National Service, so at the age of 18 he started his two years service in the Army at Aldershot. He did not enjoy those years in the Army and was glad when they came to an end.

It was during this time, that Mike met Lilian when they were introduced by a mutual friend. The rest they say, is history.

Mike and Lilian were married on 11th September, 1965, on a very cold, wet and windy day. Paul accompanied them as page boy at the tender age of six years old. Paul was presented with a baby sister Jacqueline in 1966 followed by a brother Richard in 1969.

But there were three loves in Mike's life; family, Charlton Football Club, and of course, Old Wilsonian Football Club, but as his family will attest to – not necessarily in that order!

Mike spent every Saturday at the Old Wilsonians football club grounds in Hayes either playing football during the winter months or cricket in the summer. He qualified as a referee and had a good few years when he was able to referee games, both at home and away until his dodgy knees ended his career.

Retirement for Mike meant that he could devote most waking hours to The Beautiful Game. Not only had he played it and watched it, he was now able to research it. So, he spent much of his retirement years at the British Library where he would explore copies of old newspaper articles, gathering information on the football history and performances of amateur football clubs throughout London and the home counties.

Information gained during this research contributed to a history of the club, a publication entitled Old Wilsonians Football Club – A Hundred Years.

Mike was very proud of his family, often boring people to tears when talking about their achievements and he was thrilled to bits when his children grew up and met partners of their own and of course, making him a grandfather – having Sarah, Antonia, Luke, Alfie and Ellie, and later on, a great grandfather, with the birth of Logan.

He worked hard, making sure his home and family were comfortable, secure and always full of love. But of course, there was always football in there somewhere! He would often be found to combine the two by bringing his wife & children to the club for social events, watch football games or just hang out in the club house. It was his second home!

I will now hand over to Alex Forbes who is representing his fellow club members, and who will take up the remainder of Mike's story, as Club man and President.

Alex Forbes gave this Eulogy at Mike's Funeral on 27th May

Mike Harris

I am honoured to be asked to say a few words today about our friend, Mike Harris, and give a brief account of what he achieved for Old Wilsonians.

Mike was an active member of the Old Wilsonians for over 60 years. He played both football and cricket for the club, He held numerous positions within the Club and the wider OWA. Mike was always a ‘giver’ rather than a ‘taker’ where the Club was concerned.

Mike was what you would call an enthusiastic cricketer and if we were ever short, he would turn out. But his real passion was football. He supported Charlton Athletic; he loved the Old Wilsonians.

According to Mike’s own records he played 119 games for the Club, scoring 40 goals, and he captained the 3rd XI. Unfortunately, dodgy knees cut short his playing career.

One of my first memories of Mike was when he was a referee. I walked into the changing rooms and was blinded by a cloud of white horse oils and ralgex. This would ease the pain in Mike’s knees, and he would then put a pink bandage around his knees, which would unroll during the game!

He was a no nonsense ref and expected the game to be played fairly and with respect to your opposition. Where this did not happen, you would get a Harris rant!

What people didn’t see was the ridiculous amount of work Mike did behind the scenes.

As well as all his work for OWs, Mike was heavily involved in the Old Boys Cup where he was their secretary for 12 years and their President for the last decade. He was well regarded throughout Old Boys football. He much enjoyed the camaraderie and the stories – telling them, and being on the receiving end, with good humour.

Mike compiled a 100 year history of the club with Mike Pike back in 1988. Mike also looked after the football statistics for over 20 years, an incredible contribution which also did much

to stoke friendly rivalry and banter throughout the Club.

There was a lot of excitement when the statistics were published each year – though Mike's IT skills would occasionally come to the fore and a season would go missing or a number of games missed off or added. It all added to the enjoyment!

Over 50 years Mike held various positions for the OW football club.

He was football secretary for longer than anyone can remember, succeeding George Croucher to whom he was assistant and who was someone Mike admired greatly. Mike then went on to be President of the Football Club

He became President of the Old Wilsonians' Association in 2000- 001. Mike was initially reluctant to become President but was eventually persuaded to do so. One of his reservations was that the position involved speaking at the Annual Dinner, something he was reluctant to do, although very good at it once coerced. In his tenure as OW President, Mike brought all the sections closer together, a togetherness which continues to this day, much to his satisfaction.

Mike then became the Football Club's third Life President, our heart and soul. The "Mexican" as we fondly called him was our inspiration. He was also our front of house. He would greet and look after the referees, direct the opposition to their changing rooms, make certain no one warmed up in the goal mouths and could spot a bag being smuggled into the clubhouse from a 100 yards. "NO BAGS IN THE CLUBHOUSE" was a much used phrase on a Saturday afternoon. And playing away matches, you always noticed whether the club you were visiting "had a Harris" or not, and it always a better afternoon if they did.

Mike always took a keen interest in how you as a team had done, from the 1s to the 9s. It didn't matter if you didn't get back to the Club from an away match until late, Mike always wanted to know how things had gone and, for the stats, who was in the team and who the goal scorers were.

As you went to the changing rooms his eyes were upon you; he missed nothing. If you were lucky you would get a grunt. This usually meant you had played for over 5 years. If you did over 15 years you would get a shake of the head and "are you still playing?" But this meant you had made it as a club member; the little bandito had acknowledged you!

Mike took immense pride in how we as a club socialised with both opposition and officials, and he regarded it as one of the club's greatest achievements when we won the league's hospitality cup.

But the undoubted highlight for Mike was when our 1st XI won the AFA Cup for the first time. Mike was sooooo proud, and the photo of him with the trophy was the memento of

the day. It was a cup we as a Club had always aspired to and his boys had won it; no one was happier! And we could not have been happier for him.

He had a gruff exterior, but a heart of old gold. His always kind words and a nudge in the right direction were what pushed you on. He leaves a big hole and will be sorely missed. Mike would not have relished public tributes like this.

But tribute must be paid to a man who meant so much to so many people. Mike gave 100 per cent to everything he did. He carried people's respect and affection, because he had respect and affection for them, if sometimes in a grumpy way.

And his commitment to and love of the Club were such that you just didn't want to let him down.

Rest in Peace Mexicano!

CRICKET CLUB

Looking forward to a full season of Cricket

Deadlines are always a challenge for contributors and as I write the cricket report for the May edition of NOW – namely in the second week of that month - it is not clear how much cricket we can play but we are hoping to have a full season, albeit adhering to government guidelines and restrictions in order to do so.

The initial signs are encouraging, with both the 1st and 2nd XIs winning their first league games, but there is a long way to go and complacency is not part of the OWCC's lexicon.

Regular readers will recall that our T20 side reached the final of the league's T20 Cup competition, knocking out two Premium division sides in the process – never tire of mentioning that – and we will be playing Tunbridge Wells, and on their ground, on ***Sunday May 30th*** to decide who picks up the trophy, the final having been delayed from last season because of coronavirus.

The game will be dedicated to Graham Watts, whom we are still missing, and although it is true that no player should have to be motivated for a Cup Final, that little bit of extra impetus might make all the difference, and the players, and the majority of the spectators, will be wearing shirts designed in his honour. Graham scored many a T20 game and there was no-one prouder than he when we beat Bexley in the semi-final, the last OW game he saw.

We will be running four Saturday league teams, the 1s and 2s playing at Hayes and the 3s and 4s at the adjacent Hawes Down, so please come along and support our sides. Justin Pryor is inaugurating a specific 'Supporters Club' scheme which, for a small fee, entitles you to many bonuses as well as the opportunity to see lots of cricket, so why not join.

Michael Mitchell continues to lead the 1st XI whilst Nick Morley is replacing Doug Forbes as the skipper of the 2s, Doug announcing his intention to play in the 3rd XI "as a batsman".

This is a challenge for Kevin Carruthers, our new 3rd XI skipper, who will have to resist the

temptation of saying to the aforementioned Doug: “Can you do No.10 for me, please”.

Neil Treacher again leads the 4th XI, a man who has been playing for us for over 40 years and whose dedication to the OWCC is an example to us all, whilst his leadership qualities are ones to admire.

Our Sunday Development team is another with a new skipper – namely Syd Sherlock – a side, and by implication, designed to ‘develop’ the youngsters in the Club and many colts will learn a lot form their involvement with this side as, indeed, did Syd himself when he first became part of that team.

And talking of colts they, too, are looking forward to a full season of cricket, anxious to make up for time lost last year.

Sunday social cricket has been a problem over the last few years so we are hoping for a mixture of social games, promoting mental health through our successful ‘Men at the Hill’ initiative, and arranging fixtures that include the local community and family members.

Fund-raising is always a vital part of any Club’s itinerary but more so than ever this year because of the limitations of last season, and although 2020 produced some innovative initiatives, which softened the blow to a certain degree, we still have a shortfall to make up and are particularly concentrating on President’s Day and the ensuing cricket week in this regard, both of which were lost to coronavirus last year, to make sure that the books balance.

The reputation of Old Wilsonians’ Cricket Club continues to grow in the County of Kent and, indeed, beyond, with players of all ages keen to join our ranks to the extent that we hope to be able to field a 5th XI from time to time and, ultimately, enter them to play league cricket again, so why not join us and add to our playing strength(?).

It’s always difficult to write a cricket report when virtually no cricket has been played, but my next contribution will give such details starting, hopefully, with news of a T20 Cup final triumph.

You can, of course, keep up to date with the season as it progresses by visiting old.wilsonians.com and going to the cricket section, but don’t forget to also educate yourselves on the activities of the other subsidiary clubs and the Association per se when doing so.

Mike Pike - Secretary, OWCC

Match Reports - I can win clearly now the rain has gone.....
Posted 17th May 2021

OLD WILSONIANS IN A HURRY: Upchurch fail to post a competitive score Upchurch 1st XI 102, Old Wilsonians 1st XI 103 for 1 - OWs win by 9 wickets!

Some tight and penetrative bowling by Old Wilsonians - Guy Hannah, 4 for 19, Michael Mitchell, 2 for 22 and James Sellar, 2 for 17 - enabled them to dismiss Upchurch for 102, with only Lloyd James (21), Gery Ryan (14) and Alistair Owen-Browne (14) showing them any degree of resistance However, when it came to the OW's turn to bat everything changed and it seemed they had a train to catch - or more likely the threat of rain to avoid -

as they raced to their winning total in just 15 overs, Matt Abbett finishing on 80 not out with Jon Rodda (14 n.o) looking on admiringly from the other end.

OLD WILSONIANS IN CONTROL: Pilgrim has Upchurch in a spin
Old Wilsonians 227 for 6, Upchurch 82 - OWs win by 145 runs!

A determined and stoic innings of 36 not out by the Upchurch opening bat, Alan Pattenden, failed to save his young and inexperienced side from a 145 run defeat against Old Wilsonians in a rain affected game, reduced to 40 overs a side, with David Pilgrim's leg spin causing them all sorts of problems as he finished with 5 for 25, including a hat-trick, as they were dismissed in 28.2 overs. Earlier the OW innings had been dominated by Cameron Jones (95), who found all of the bowlers to his liking, whilst Azman Shahan (23) and Nick Morley - with a quick-fire 40 not out - saw the total well in excess of 200, with Alfie Masters, 2 for 42, being the most successful of the visiting bowlers.

NEIGHBOURS SHARE AN ENTERTAINING GAME: Old Wilsonians take the spoils
Old Wilsonians 3rd XI 210 for 6, Natwest Blues 1st XI 182 - OWs win by 28 runs!
In an entertaining game Old Wilsonians got the better of neighbours Natwest Blues by 38 runs, although they had to rely on three players, Seth Clifford (80), Andy Hazzard (60 n.o) and new recruit John Fornear (26) for the majority of their runs, with the home side's opening bowler, Lewis Barham, recording impressive figures of 8-4-9-3. The Natwest Blues reply was more consistent, with Gary Jones (31), Ashley Harriss (34), Michael Pett (28), Rob Dolby (28) and Matthew Dean (20 n.o) all making useful contributions, but it was not enough as Roger Nicholas, 3 for 41, Kevin Carruthers, 2 for 38 and the ubiquitous Fornear, 4 for 45, bowled their side to victory.

WICKETS TUMBLE IN DAY FOR BOWLERS: Old Wilsonians get the better of Natwest Blues.
Old Wilsonians 4th XI 101, Natwest Blues 2nd XI 79 OWs win by 22 runs!
Twenty wickets fell in this game for just 180 runs but, initially, this seemed far from likely as Neil Treacher (26) and Laurence Allen (16) got the home side off to a positive start with an opening stand of 46. However, after that the visiting bowlers took control with Kal Nye, 3 for 9, Doug Danks, 3 for 23, Andy Brown, 2 for 17 and Dave de Soya, 2 for 27 bowling their side back into contention. But it proved to be a day for the bowlers, with Nick Herbert, 3 for 20, Sam Caschetto, 3 for 16 and Paul Jenkins, 2 for 4, easing their side to a 22 run victory with only the impressive Nye (27) holding them up to any degree.

OW GARDENING CLUB

The Magnificent Tree - and Three; ‘Mac’ joins Ian and Mike behind the goal

On the first Monday of every month an intrepid group of Old Wilsonian gardeners can be seen at Hayes working hard to ensure that you can enjoy the efforts of their toil and comment positively on their work – what do you mean, you’ve never noticed?

Forget Alan Titchmarsh, Charlie Dimmock and Percy Thrower, these people are the real deal whilst they also do other work and basic maintenance around the Club, e.g. mending fences, many of which have been damaged by careless drivers, unblocking drains, replacing locks and removing enormous numbers of cigarette ends – you will be amazed where people put their cigarette butts rather than in the receptacles provided.

There are invariably a number of people playing tennis at the time whom, upon looking at

the contingent, probably conclude that these are hardened criminals doing their community service, although the presence of Clive Prince will convince them that all are not tarred with this particularly brush.

“Very re-assuring,” observed one, “ that these reprobates have someone virtuous to keep them under control”

The group recently planted some Winter pansies – last year it was geraniums – to brighten up the outside of the pavilion, whilst an enormous amount of weeding, dead-heading, cutting back, collecting rubbish and tending to the memorial garden are essential parts of the work.

Sadly the current lockdown means that members cannot enjoy these delights but hopefully things will change and you will soon be able to do so. (Incidentally there is a ‘gardening jar’ on the bar for your loose change, or something bigger perhaps, the contents of which are all translated into gardening produce or equipment).

The November session was a bit special and significant as we planted a tree in honour of ‘Mac’ McAlister alongside his former friends, team-mates and great OWs, Ian Forbes and Mike Kendrick and we were delighted to be joined by the Beverley Sisters, aka Pat, Annie and Claire McAlister, for the final part of the planting.

“Do they have to have been President to get a tree?, asked Claire
Well, No, but that is just how it has panned out so far and we can only wonder at the inter-change of words between them as they watch the football behind the goal on the 2nd XI pitch.
“The standard of OW football has certainly declined since our day”, observed Mike
“And look at the balls they play with; you only have to blow on them and they will travel 60 yards. Not like the ones of substance we had to kick and head” added ‘Mac’
“I’ve watched two full seasons and only seen one own goal during that time; it’s so disappointing” regretted Ian
“Do you remember the game when we lost by the odd goal in five when you, ‘Mac’, ignored the call of “Out” thereby playing an opponent onside and allowing him to score the winning goal”
“I was watching my winger”, retorted ‘Mac’, “and, anyway, I’ve played alongside Bobby Moore and Jack Charlton and they never complained about my ability to respond to their calls.”
“Good players, I grant you, but they would never have got into an OW side. It’s a bit risky playing three at the back and we really need a couple of speedy wing backs who also understand the essence of defending and then no opponent would ever get past us”, opined Mike.
“You always said that the ball might get past you but an opponent, never”, concluded Ian

So our three heroes are now re-united and as current players prepare for their games please pay your respects to their respective trees, remember the many hours they devoted to the OWs and you cannot help but be inspired as you, too, represent the Club that they all loved and served with such distinction.

You will be delighted to learn that all three trees now have a watering hose to help with the necessary sustenance, although no-one would be surprised if Ian’s was visited by the occasional scotch and dry.

So who are the heroes and heroines of our gardening club?
Bill Hartley is our head gardener because he knows what he is doing and, sadly, the group was formed following the sudden death of wife ***Steph,*** whose idea the garden was in the first place, and a memorial to her is one of the first things you see upon entering the club.

Clive Prince and Anton Snowsill also know what they are doing whilst ***Jill Forbes*** is a new recruit and we welcome her gleefully, as well as the delicious honey she makes.

Mick Pilgrim and Stephen Millward, despite the long distances they have to travel, are tireless workers, with a degree of skill, and can be relied upon to perform 'emergency' gardening functions – e,g, watering the aforesaid tress – whilst ***Lynn Pilgrim*** acts as our professional consultant.

Les Wilks also used to be a regular member of the team but since his move to Bexhill-on-Sea this is no longer practical, although we do rely on his daughter Sally as we acquire many of our plants from her nursery.
After the planting ceremony I spent a happy hour or so having a drink with Pat, Annie and Claire reminiscing over old times, Annie and Claire remembering the days when they spent their Saturday afternoons preparing pie and beans for the football club.

In those days Annie also spent a lot of her time baby-sitting Alex, Doug and Stuart Forbes and Neil and Maria Kendrick, but don't blame her too much for the way in which they have all turned out!

It is a tradition of the Football Club to hold Vice Presidents and Friends days for both 'Mac' and Ian Forbes and once the coronavirus vaccine does its job then such an event to honour Mike will surely be added to that list and, who knows, in 30 years time, we will probably need such an event every other week and there will be a veritable forest behind the goal.

In the meantime I am in no hurry to become one of those wing backs. "You were never good enough, anyway" confirmed the ghostly voice of Mike Kendrick.

Mike Pike

UPDATE FROM OW PRESIDENT MARK MACE

Further to my last update, it seems there really might be light at the end of the COVID tunnel.

I've been lucky enough to enjoy a couple of games of football since the easing of COVID restrictions started in April. Most notably the Kirk Benjamin Memorial game against Mike Pike's South East Arts Network. This annual event aims to raise awareness of mental health issues. This year's game was attended by a number of Kirk's family as well as a veritable rogues gallery of OW legends spectating. It also coincided with the reopening of the bar, which may or may not have had something to do with the large turn out! It was a thoroughly enjoyable game which the OWs won 5-2. The issue of mental health has sadly affected a number of lives within the OW community. Doug Forbes and Glen Wheeler have set up the 'Men of the Hill' who group who meet regularly to provide support for anyone who might need it. Further details can be found on the website.

On a much more sombre note, I was deeply saddened by the recent passing of Mike Harris. His family were kind enough to invite a number of OWs to attend his funeral, where Alex Forbes led the club's tributes. Mike did so much for the club as a whole and in particular the football club - justifiably deserving his Life Presidency. He was very much part of the fabric of a Saturday afternoon at Hayes and will be sorely missed. The full eulogy is available on the website for anyone who missed it.

Things have been slowly getting back to some semblance of normality at the club. Jasper and the bar team have been doing a fantastic job running the bar in line with the ever-changing guidelines.

Tennis has resumed with somewhat of a boom in membership and the Cricket season has just started. The improvements to the changing facilities continue apace. It's taken a little longer than expected due to some unexpected issues that came to light as the work progressed. But I'm pleased to report that all have now been resolved and the work should be completed imminently. I had a look around with some of my fellow Council members a couple of weeks ago and we were struck by how significant the improvements are. I'm sure that members using the changing rooms once finished will really appreciate the changes.

So, fingers crossed that restrictions continue to ease according to the government's planned timetable. Once restrictions have eased completely, we will look to resume our larger celebratory events and get back to enjoying the OW camaraderie that we've been missing for too long.

Mark Mace
President
Old Wilsonians Association
president@oldwilsonians.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Our Senior Past President, Les Wilks, mentioned in the Gardening Club news, reached the grand age of 90 years old on 21st January this year. Les contacted me by phone and sent me the following letter from his new abode in Bexhill-on-Sea.

“I'm sorry I have been a bit slow in thnking everyone for my birthday cards and kind words on my 90th bithday. I'm not sure how involved you were but I know Mike Pike and Nigel Jordan contacted OW's and Tennis Club members of the news of my birthday resulting in me receiving 65 cards and some quite emotional letters thanking me for helping them enjoy their times at the Club not only playing but also some of the social events I was involved in organising.

Also going back a years mention was made of DIY work parties and helping on sideshows at the Donkey Derbies. I will not be able to thank everyone personally and wonder if you would be able to include a big 'thank you' from me in the next issue of NOW. It would please me if you can.

I have promised to write an article on my early involvement at the OW Club in the early days at Hayes and I thought the younger members might find it of interest to what Donkey Derbies were all about and how it started at the club and so on!

I will start on it tomorrow and might have something ready for the next NOW!
Hope all is well eith you and yours,

regards Les, from the seaside!”

Many will fondly remember Les as an excellent strutural engineer and the go-to person whenever any alterations or improvements to the Clubhouse were proposed. Les designed the new roof and upstairs accommodation to the Clubhouse during my year as President and I was priviledged to work with him on that project dealing with the local Planning Department and Building Control visits during the construction phase. This greatly improved and expanded the facilities at Hayes which are being further improved this year. Ed