NEWS OF OLD WILSONIANS

NOVEMBER 2023



OLD WILSONIANS' ASSOCIATION
(FOUNDED 1904)

NEWS OF OLD WILSONIANS
NOVEMBER 2023

PRESIDENT	MARK MACE markamace@gmail.com
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	MIKE PIKE Phone 020 8659 6443 owmikepike@yahoo.co.uk
HON SECRETARY	ROGER MATTHEWS Rogermatthews16@live.co.uk
HON TREASURER	NICK MOLE nick@dmassociates.co.uk
SPORTS CLUB SECRETARY	ANTON SNOWSHILL antonsnowshill@hotmail.com
GROUND MANAGER	STEVE MILLWARD Stephen_millward1@sky.com
BUILDINGS MANAGER	PAUL JENKINS Phone 07973 807070
BAR MANAGEMENT TEAM	JOHN DRABWELL, JASPER GUNDRY-WHITE, STEVE LAWRENCE Hayes Hill, Bromley, Kent Phone 020 8462 2600
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE	PAUL JENKINS, MARK MACE, MIKE PIKE
DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE	GERRY ADAMS, CLIVE PECKOVER, MICK PILGRIM
APPEALS COMMITTEE	PRESIDENT AND TWO MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDRAISING	Vacant
SUPERDRAW & PRIZE DRAW CLUBS	TOM SULLIVAN sully100@hotmail.co,uk CHESNEY JENNINGS chezbjennings@gmail.com
SCHOOL ADDRESS	Headmaster's Office Wilson's School, Mollison Drive, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 9JW
OLD WILSONIAN'S LODGE	Secretary, GREG KIRBY Phone 07860 802935 www.oldwilsonianslodge.com
HON. EDITOR	MALCOLM TAYLOR Phone 07917 782974 taylormalcolmhj@gmail.com
OLD WILSONIAN'S WEBSITE	www.oldwilsonians.com

Old Wilsonias Association AGM 12/12/23 7.30pm

Get ready to mark your calendars and join us for the annual Old Wilsonians Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) on December 12th, 2023, at 7:30 PM. We're thrilled to invite all members to gather at the prestigious clubhouse located in Hayes.

Event Details:

•**Date:** December 12th, 2023

•**Time:** 7:30 PM

•**Location:** Old Wilsonians Clubhouse

•**Address:** 81 Hayes Hill, Bromley, BR2 7HN

•

Our AGM is a momentous occasion where we come together as a community to reflect on the past year's achievements, discuss future plans, and make crucial decisions that shape the association's direction. Your participation and input are invaluable to us!

Accessing 2022 Minutes

If you'd like to review the minutes from the 2022 AGM before this year's meeting, you can access them from the OW Website. Take the opportunity to refresh your memory and come prepared with any questions or discussions you might have regarding last year's proceedings.

Your Participation Matters

The AGM is a prime opportunity to have your say in the association's decisions. We encourage all members to attend and actively engage in discussions. Your perspectives and contributions play a crucial role in shaping the future of Old Wilsonians.

Save the date, set your reminders, and join us on December 12th at the clubhouse in Hayes. Let's make this year's AGM a memorable and productive event for the Old Wilsonians Association.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

The Agenda for the AGM will be published on the OW Website www.oldwilsonians.com

CRICKET CLUB

The 2023 season was one of consolidation for the cricket Club. All of the senior sides performed well but none were in the hunt for promotion nor in fear of relegation.

The 3rd XI were probably the most successful side with Andy Ifill and Howard Abbett winning the League's highest run scorer and wicket taker awards respectively.

The Sunday Development side also finished in mid table whilst we had a handful of Sunday social games and hope to increase this number next year.

The most successful Colts side were the under 15a, who missed out on winning their league by just one point.

As ever a number of youngsters made their debuts in senior cricket whilst for their final game of the season, the 1st XI side had all graduated from the colts section, the first time this has happened in the history of the Club.

We have made significant strides in our aim to provide Women and Girls cricket, laying important foundation stones which we will build upon next year.

Sadly the year saw the death of Colin Smith, an important member of our sides in the 1960s who, of course, was also a leading member of the Association's Lodge.

Dave Welch, our Chairman, was in hospital for a long period of time but pleased to report that he is making steady progress in his recovery and it has been great to see him back at the Club, although we have all told him that he must not rush things.

In his absence Clive Pecover and Doug Forbes stood up to the plate, and I thank them both sincerely and Doug, quite rightly, was our 'Club Person of the year' as a consequence.

Margo Lawrence, our President, is standing down to be replaced by the equally admirable Denise Pilgrim.

Mike Pike

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS – 40 YEARS AGO F.A. CUP FINAL

BRIGHTON '83 MEMORIES - BOB 'THE CAT' BEVAN LOOKS BACK ON HIS CAREER

In 1983 I had started to enjoy a lot of success on the football after-dinner circuit. I still had a proper job as Group PR Director of European Ferries Plc, which included the ill-fated, but then highly-successful Townsend Thoresen Car Ferries and the Port of Felixstowe as its best-known companies.

In that role in 1979 I had appeared at an Ipswich Town Dinner in aid of their inside-forward Trevor Whymark and, having given a ferry prize, was asked to say a few words. Also there were John Motson and Jimmy Hill. One of the other speakers was former Express and Mail journalist Steve Curry.

On the evening, clearly to their surprise, I launched into my tales of my goalkeeping for the

Old Wilsonians 6th XI, something I had been doing as an amateur for 12 years. This led the three aforementioned to suggest me to the Football Writers' Association for their prestigious 1980 Footballer of the Year Dinner. This would change my life. Immediately I sat down the late Nat Lofthouse booked me for a dinner at Bolton Wanderers, where he was Commercial Manager. Within a year I was working with such names as Billy Connolly and Jimmy Tarbuck.

I also started to appear in the press, largely the Daily Express where I would ridicule some goalkeeping errors and contribute a cartoon series on "The Cat." Sadly it would be short-lived when a new editor, Larry Lamb, appeared. I was also being used on TVS sports and news magazine programmes and obviously Brighton were being strongly featured. This despite being a Crystal Palace supporter although the current rivalry hadn't really kicked in then.

Despite working for EF I was active on the speakers' circuit with the full agreement of the Chairman, Keith Wickenden, who happened to be Deputy Chairman of Brighton. Club Chairman at the time was Mike Bamber who had persuaded Wickenden to buy the La Manga complex out of administration. Something he did not necessarily do with the agreement of the rest of the EF Board but that's another story.

At the time Brighton were struggling in the top division and were destined to be relegated. Previous manager, Mike Bailey, former Charlton and Wolves legendary tough midfielder, had been replaced, because of his over-defensive style, by the extrovert but relatively inexperienced Liverpool midfielder, Jimmy Melia. In his cream coloured suits and white shoes, Melia encouraged the team to play with more freedom and when they won at Anfield in the 5th Round, the winner coming from ex-Liverpool favourite Jimmy Case, people started to take notice. Brighton players would later say that if Bailey had stayed they wouldn't have been relegated but he would not have allowed them to play as they did to win at Liverpool.

After surprisingly getting past Sheffield Wednesday in the semi-final they found themselves in the final. At the time my cousin Roger Bevan, a lifelong Brighton fan, was working in South Africa and flew home and back in 24 hours fully expecting them to lose and had to fly back again a few weeks later with the whole family for the Final. Now living back in the UK he and his twin sons, Mark and Phillip remain season ticket holders, travelling home and often away, and until last autumn was Chairman of the Seagulls Over London Club.

Once Brighton were in the Final the town went mad with anticipation and during the build-up Melia, who was loving all the attention, said to the players that he was thinking of bringing a comic in to relax and amuse them. Captain Steve Foster, famous for his headband, told me Melia had suggested his Scouse mate Jimmy Tarbuck but they had opted for me after seeing me at the 1981 PFA Dinner, where I had had national coverage on ITV, and the other appearances on TVS.

In those days Selsdon Park Hotel, near Croydon, was a favourite choice for one of the Cup Final sides and at the time I lived a few miles down the road.

On the Friday I had been at work in Fleet Street as usual but left soon after lunch and Joined the team, directors and other staff for dinner. A BBC crew were there and filmed me saying a few words and Chairman Mike giving us all a small carriage clock which seems bizarre now. It wasn't even engraved although I did engrave mine later.

After dinner the players and I decided on snooker and ironically I was drawn against goalkeeper Graham Moseley ("Mose"). We were useless and could hardly pot a ball leading someone to suggest this was because neither of us could stand seeing a ball hit the net.

Steve Foster was suspended for the game and he stayed up with me for a few beers while the others went to bed.

In the morning there was some light training and I was given a Cup Final tracksuit. I still have the top in a frame. I was having a great time but appeared to have no formal duties apart from having a laugh with the players, especially at my expense during training. I remember how relaxed all the players were throughout this whole period, something they would later carry into the game.

After an early light lunch we headed to a local school field and became the first and only Cup Final side to fly to Wembley in a helicopter. Chairman Bamber had done a deal with the old Gatwick-based British Caledonian to use their twin-rotor Chinook which used to ferry BCal passengers to and from Heathrow from the Sussex airport. En route Melia said he'd like me to do 10 minutes on the mike on the coach as we travelled from the field at Wembley to the stadium. I didn't think that was quite right but, in the circumstances, was prepared to do what I was asked.

In those days one of the big moments for a team was the coach going up the old Wembley Way through all the fans. So as we headed off I did a couple of gags but one look at the players' faces made me say "anyway I expect you now want to enjoy the atmosphere so good luck lads" and sat down.

In Foster's absence Tony Grealish was skipper and he would say to me later how much they all appreciated me not following Melia's wishes. He said "we didn't want to be rude to you so I was relieved when you did that." I think it also highlighted that although they liked Melia they didn't have much respect for his man management skills.

We arrived and I was in the dressing room. By now I was very much part of it and some of the players wanted me to be on the bench but that was a step too far and not allowed.

However, I joined them on the pre-match walk on the pitch. My first impression was a surprise to find it was a normal size pitch albeit with 100,000 packed round. I suddenly realised every pitch has a minimum and a maximum size. Years later I would play two charity games on it.

The other memory was of how wet it was and how the water came over my brogues. There had been some controversy about the pitch having recently been used for a horse show and it hadn't really recovered.

By now I knew many of the Manchester United players from dinners and chatted to Steve Coppell and Bryan Robson. They had the air of people who were used to such occasions while the Brighton lads had come out like tourists with their cameras and "Mose" took a picture of me in a goal.

I had a designated seat plus my "access all areas" pass, something I sadly didn't keep.

When they came out Captain Grealish was wearing the famous Foster headband as two

fingers to the banning of their key player.

History shows that they played out of their skin and would have won in the last minute had Gordon Smith's shot beaten Gary Bailey in the United goal. Was it a bad miss? Was it a good save? I think the latter. I also think the deteriorating state of the pitch didn't help Smith.

Extra time failed to produce a result and I was back in the dressing room and a great atmosphere as they were to get another chance in the replay the following Thursday when Foster would be available.

Smith was very relaxed about the "miss" afterwards. However, as the years went by it got worse for him. The Brighton fanzine is still called "And Smith Must Score" and he told me he was once on the beach in Italy, many years later when a kid recognised him. He said "didn't you miss that goal at Wembley?" Smith said he had to tell the bloody kid hadn't even been born in 1983.



Boarding the helicopter at a school field near Wembley after the first game

We headed back to the helicopter to fly down to Brighton where we were mobbed before heading into town where I was due to be the cabaret at the dinner. As I arrived at the dinner the crowd outside the venue started chanting "Bob "the Cat", Bob "the Cat" for the only time in my life! At the dinner I opened by suggesting that Bamber was the only Chairman to ever hold a dinner to celebrate a draw.

I had a bit of a setback before I went on when my neighbour called to tell me my house had been burgled during the Final. I was single at the time and had had a lot of publicity including a page in the Mail talking about how humour can be used as a motivation. Somewhat ironic now.

On the Sunday the players and I were due at another dinner but I had to go home to sort the house out and then returned wearing my white tuxedo. On arrival centre-forward, the late Mike Robinson, looked at it and said "was that the only thing they left? Obviously burglars of taste."



Walking to the helicopter after the first match with the late Mike Robinson

On the following Wednesday I was back at the hotel, having a laugh with a longer training session including a five-a-side. Then it was helicopter, no gags on the coach, dressing room, walk on the pitch and then in the stands for the game. What was not the same was the atmosphere among the team. The relaxation had gone and they lost 4-0.

Man United had played better while Brighton, even with Foster, had a poor night. Obviously the dressing room was quiet but Foster was a good leader and tried to lift the players reminding them of the great experience. He also said “what were the United fans singing? “Stevie Foster – what a difference you have made”. They were f***ing right.”

On the coach back to the helicopter he even got them singing and I led “Old Wilsonians, we’ll support you ever more.” Maybe the first time that has or will ever be sung at Wembley.

“Mose“ and I sat together as we flew over a still-floodlit Wembley. He was down and reminding himself it was the biggest defeat since the war or even earlier. Then he recovered and looked down at the Stadium. “Still, what an experience. Just look at that.”

And so it was.

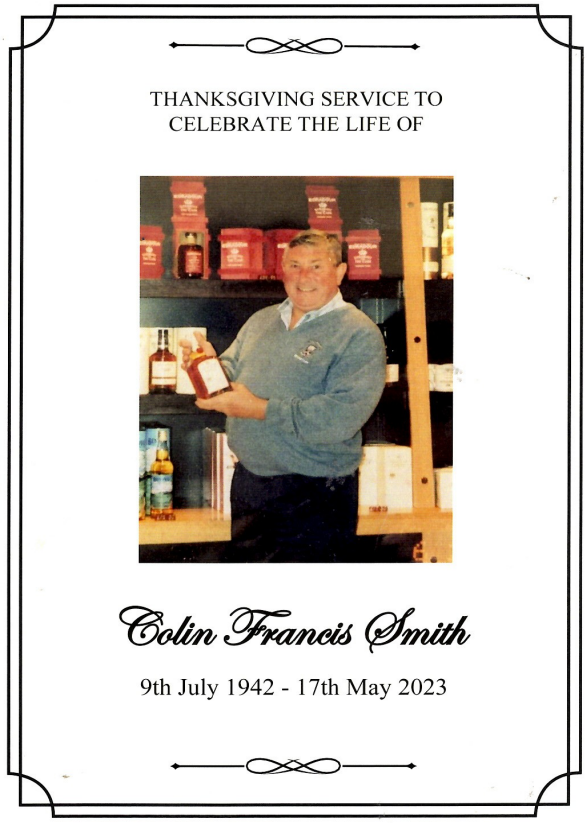
Over the years I have often crossed paths with many of the players and the bond of the shared experience continues even though I was only on the edge.

One of those much in evidence at social functions before and especially after was Foster’s stepfather, Peter Saunders. He was general manager at Allders of Croydon, a major department store. He and I were bespectacled, six feet tall and on a couple of occasions had dressed very similarly. This led to the team thinking it funny to start calling me Pete and him Cat. Peter said one day we would go into his store and get identical clothes for the next party. Sadly we never did but he was a great help replacing a great deal of what had been lost in the burglary. Every cloud……..

Copyright Bob “the Cat” Bevan MBE 2023

OBITUARY

COLIN FRANCIS SMITH



Colin Smith was an Old Wilsonian who played football and cricket for the Old Boys in the 1960s and was a regular attendee at the OWLS lunches. His daughter Suzanne gave this Eulogy at the service of thanksgiving at Our Lady of the Rosary, West Common Road on 15th June.

Good morning and thank you for joining us at this Service of Thanksgiving for my dad, Colin.

As I'm sure you all know, dad was a great character and I have been very touched by the large number of kind messages I have received. Almost without exception, they have expressed what a larger-than-life character he was but also how he was well known for "ruffling a few feathers" – so I think I'd better start with an apology on his behalf and would like to think that despite his occasional stubbornness, his heart was in the right place!

Colin was born in Bexley and grew up with his brother, David, and cousins Terry and Pat and older brother, Roy. He was proud to have attended Wilson's Grammar school. He had a passion for all sports – football, cricket, golf, cycling, tennis, table tennis to name but a few and when he wasn't playing himself, he would be watching it on TV. Some of my earliest childhood memories are of watching him play tennis at his beloved Old Boys Club, Old Wilsonians – where hopefully you will all be able to join us later to raise a glass in his name.

He was also a very keen dancer and was proud to be part of Peggy Spencer's Latin American Formation Team. It was here that he met my mum Denise and they both tried to pass on their love of dancing to my sister and I, with varying degrees of success. My sister and both her children became very accomplished dancers, but I was more of a tom boy and wanted to play football – so I am the only member of the family who hasn't danced for the queen!

Whatever Colin did in life, it was always with 100% commitment. As passionate as he was about his sport, he also put the same level of effort into his work. He spent many years working at Courage's – so long ago that when he started, they were still using Shire Horses to pull the drays. In later years he was also a regular attendee of the Courage Lunch club – food and wine, another passion of his!

After leaving Courage's, Colin went on to work at Berni Inns and Brady's and then later in his career, took on the role of golf club secretary. As you can see, there is a common theme emerging of sport, good food and fine wine!

But his life's journey wasn't without its share of heartbreak. Colin faced the devastating loss of his brother David in 1987 and then his beloved wife Denise in October 2000. I don't think he ever really came to terms with these losses and they left an indelible mark on his heart.

However, his roles at various golf clubs gave him the opportunity to move around the country and he was very fortunate to have the support and companionship from Iris at this time. The four grandchildren loved spending time with them both. When they later moved to Fair Acres, he became very active on various committees - not quite the expected "quiet retirement".

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Colin was an active member of the Masons and joined several lodges. Whilst I am not familiar with all the details, I know this was something that was very important to him but did cause the occasional sense of humour failure. He really couldn't see the funny side, when a red sock got in the same wash as his white gloves, leaving them a delicate shade of pink! I am very thankful for the support that so many of his Masonic friends showed him, especially in the last few months when he moved into James Terry Nursing Home. Through the Masons, he found a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and purpose.

Colin had a zest for life that was truly infectious. He possessed a love for celebrations, and whenever there was music and laughter, you could find him on the dance floor, usually accompanied by a poor unsuspecting partner, who had been dragged onto the floor to join him. So time for a second apology – to all my school friends and any wives and female friends who were subjected to his Fred Astaire meets Elvis impersonations, I apologise!

In recent times, Colin's health began to falter, and he faced the difficult reality of adapting to new circumstances. It was a challenging journey, marked by personal struggles and a longing for the life he once knew. However, despite these difficulties, Colin found solace in

the Masonic nursing home, where he received the care and support he needed.

Today, as we bid farewell to Colin, we acknowledge that his passing brings both sadness and relief. While his physical presence may no longer grace our lives, we find comfort in knowing that he is now free from the limitations and hardships he endured. It is a time to remember the joy he brought, the memories he shared, and the impact he had on the lives of others.

Colin Francis Smith, may you rest in peace, knowing that your spirit lives on in the memories we hold dear. You will be missed, but your legacy of love and laughter will forever guide and inspire us. Farewell, pops, until we meet again."

Suzanne Woolaway

OBITUARY

LES WILKS 21/1/1931 to 8/10/2023
PRESIDENT OF THE OLD WILSONIANS 1986-1988

EULOGY GIVEN AT HIS FUNERAL ON 7/11/23 AT HASTINGS CREMATORIUM BY HIS DAUGHTER KAREN

When somebody has lived such a full, social, and active life as Les did, it can be hard to know where to begin, so I suppose starting at the very beginning makes the most sense.

Les was born on the 21st of January 1931 to Alf and Sarah, and eight years later his sister Shirley was born, who sadly passed away last year.

Les grew up in Walworth, south London, and enjoyed a very happy childhood. His mother Sarah was the youngest of seven, so Les was often surrounded by his large, close-knit family who were always supportive, shared in Les' sense of fun, and were a very positive presence in his upbringing.

Les' father Alf was a skilled Gold Blocker, however, after an accident at work that saw him lose his lower arm, he had little choice but to leave this position, and so with Sarah, they took on *Alf's Oil and Domestic Store* in Elsted Street, Southwark.

After the breakout of World War II in 1939, aged just eight and a half, Les was evacuated to Martock in Somerset with a school friend. The pair were instructed by their mothers to pretend they were brothers to ensure they could stay together, and sure enough they were eventually chosen by a couple who managed a small farm.

Les stayed in Somerset for a year before briefly returning home in August 1940. However, as the war worsened, he had to be evacuated again, this time to stay with his aunt in Chessington, Surrey.

Not long after this, Les' future would take a positive step forward when he passed the 11+ exam, earning himself a place at Wilson's Grammar School.

At Wilson's he quickly formed a strong bond with a few other boys who would become some of his closest friends for the next eight decades. It was also here that Les discovered his love for sport - again something that would remain with him for the rest of his life, and he quickly became a regular in several of the school's sports teams.

Although Les loved few things more than playing sports, he was never just there to make up the numbers and later in life once remarked with his mischievous smile: “It’s not about the taking part, it’s the winning that counts!”

During the war, many of the schools in London had created Camp Schools outside of the city, and so Les went to board in Horsham, Sussex where Wilson’s had built their site.

Whilst Les was away at boarding school, he was called home due to his dad becoming unwell. Very sadly Alf passed away on the 26th of August 1944, aged just 39. Les was only 13. Alf’s brother, Uncle Charlie, lived locally and became an important figure for Les in his young adult life.

Once the war had finished, Wilson’s School then moved back to Camberwell in London, and Les returned home to live above the shop with his mum and sister, enabling him to cycle to school each day.

Les continued studying at Wilson’s School until he was 16. He had hoped to stay on for sixth form, but he was unable to as without his father Alf, Les needed to bring in extra money to support his mum, and so he got a job in a clerical position in the Architects department at the London County Council.

Magazines would get delivered every week to the Architect’s department, and, because Les was in charge of filing, he would look through certain publications and soon developed a keen interest in design and engineering and decided that engineering was the career for him.

Over the course of the next two years, Les spent one day and two evenings a week studying for his structural engineer paper. He earned his graduateship in 1953 and three years later he became a member of the Institute of Structural Engineers.

During his time with the London County Council, Les’ love for playing sports continued to grow, joining the departmental football and tug-of-war teams, but more importantly, it was at this time that the start of his love for tennis began, and he became a member of the newly formed ‘Southern and Lawn Tennis Club’ based at Belair Park in West Dulwich.

Les was a founding member of the committee where he made several life-long friends as well as meeting a young Pat Murnane. Les and Pat started out playing as a mixed doubles pair, but soon this partnership developed into something much more!

In early 1955, after coming back from a night out at the theatre, Pat and Les dashed

into a telephone box to escape the rain, and Les – ever the romantic - produced an engagement ring. Pat of course said “yes”, and they married in the September of that year.

The newlyweds moved into a flat at the top of Brixton Hill, although Pat was always sure to refer to it as being in the more upmarket Streatham!

With the support of Pat, Les started working for a new company which saw the couple move to North Cheam, and it was here that their two daughters were born, first Sally in 1958 and then Karen in 1960.

Between the births of his two daughters Les became involved in the acquisition of the Old Wilsonian Sports Club ground, somewhere that would become a second home for Les and his family.

In 1963 the family moved to West Wickham to be nearer to the Old Wilsonian Sports Club that Les already played football for, and it wasn’t before long that both Les and Pat had joined their tennis club too.

Les was a lover of DIY, rarely however following his own “measure twice, cut once” rule, and in West Wickham he relished the opportunity to modernise the family home.

They often had friends over for dinner parties filled with laughter and games, and with this in mind Les was the first in the road to knock through the living room to the dining room to create the perfect space for hosting their get-togethers. Conveniently this modification also created room under the stairs where Les cleverly fitted a bar that served the favourite drinks of the time.

Les was a stalwart of the Old Wilsonians Football Club, starting out in the first team as a winger and forward, and then as he got older, slowly working his way down the pitch into defence and also down through the teams until he reached the vets, before eventually retiring from football in his 50s.

He was also an active member of the Tennis Club, serving on the committee for many years and as life president until his death. If they weren’t playing tennis, Les and Pat would be helping out at the club tournaments, running their popular ‘Ace Pimms Bar’. Towards the end of his playing days - and displaying his familiar and infectious sense of humour - he was once heard telling a doubles partner, ‘I’m alright as long as I don’t have to move!’ At the age of 83 Les did stop playing, but continued to support the club in so many ways.

Les is probably most fondly remembered for what is affectionally known as the Donkey Derbys. These he loved organising with a team of volunteers for many years, starting with the first Gala Day in 1959, which then became the Donkey Derby and Gala Day in 1968. The Derbys continued until 1979 and attracted visitors from miles around, with a local paper reporting more than 10,000 visitors one year.

The Donkey Derbys were enjoyed by all who attended, but they were also vital for the survival of the club that Les loved so dearly, with the Derbys raising enough money to keep the club afloat during a difficult time. When asked at the end of one Donkey Derby, "what happens now Les?", he swiftly replied with a grin, "Well, I start working on next year's event tomorrow!"

To the tennis club members, he is probably best remembered for the hilarious annual Beaujolais evenings in which he would dress up as various French characters and perform a host of silly sketches which had the tennis crowd in stitches, and are still fondly spoken about to this day.

Les was proud president of the Old Wilsonians between 1986 and 1988, and since his recent passing, one friend referred to him as Mr Old Wilsonian with another kindly saying that they knew of no one who wasn't proud to be his friend. Les was tireless in his role as President - supportive, open and friendly, approachable and non-judgemental, always eager to receive a humorous anecdote and enjoy a friendly, relaxed exchange in any company.

In 1971 he set up his own business, Leslie Wilks Associates, Consulting Engineers, initially working from home before moving to offices in Penge, and later to Sevenoaks. Using his expertise, Les helped with improvements to the Old Wilsonian clubhouse and in 1973 he helped build the squash courts which are this year celebrating their 50th anniversary.

Les was a fantastic dad to Sally and Karen. No task was ever too great, he was incredibly supportive and hands on. He was also a very progressive father and encouraged Sally to do technical drawing at school, making her the first girl at her school to do so. Above all Les was a fun dad and was a big kid until the end. The photographs on the Order of Service clearly show a man with a love of life and a permanent smile with flashes of perennial school boy mischief.

Les was always checking when the next game was to be played, and if there wasn't a game to hand then he would take great pleasure in devising something on the spot for them to try. Sally and Karen feel incredibly lucky to have spent so many fun-filled days and to have enjoyed quality time with Les while growing up and are also appreciative of his quiet support and encouragement throughout their adult lives.

Les and Pat's last move together was to Keston in 1981, and once again Les saw another opportunity to improve the house, putting in a spiral staircase and adding an extension across the back of the house looking out over their spacious garden which they loved spending time in.

Even though they hadn't been there long, Les and Pat were quickly back to hosting, and organising garden parties with old and new friends, in which Pat did the catering and Les got out his sideshows again. They happily lived in Keston for nearly 40 years, and conveniently were still only a 10-minute drive from the club where they continued to play tennis every weekend.

One neighbour described Les and Pat as the life and soul of every Oakfield Lane get-together, with Les' generosity shining through, organising the activities with great enthusiasm, and involving all ages. Once Sally and Karen had moved into their own homes, Les and Pat began to enjoy walking weekends away with friends and family, exploring beautiful destinations all over the country – often in large groups made up of people they'd known since their twenties but also adding new friendships along the way.

In 1983 Les' first grandson William was born, who has taken after his grandfather in his love of making and playing games and like Les, often has a building project on the go too. Will took great pride in sharing the results of his design and carpentry skills and would often seek the professional knowledge and advice from his structural engineering grandfather.

In 1999 his second grandson Ollie was born, who has inherited Les' love for football and tennis, and plays both regularly. Ollie fondly remembers watching Match of the Day with Les growing up and more recently always looked forward to going over to chat with Les about all of the latest matches.

In 2013, after 58 happy and fun years of marriage, Pat very sadly passed away. It had been a demanding few years towards the end as Les cared for Pat at home and then visited her daily in a nearby care home.

In February 2019, when Les was 88, and with the encouragement of Sally and Karen, he made the brave decision to move from Keston to Bexhill on Sea. These last, special years enabled all of the family to see more of Les, involve him in their lives, and spend more quality time with him, both at home and out and about in the area.

Les often said what a good move it had been, and it enabled him to enjoy the company of his close family almost every day. Les also made some good friends and

had lovely neighbours; he joined a local weekly lunch club, and as always, the sport continued to be an interest as he joined the nearby bowls club and played every Saturday morning.

The family have been taken aback and deeply touched by the many cards, tributes, and messages of love and condolences they've received since Les' passing which are a testament to his popularity, and love of life. It has been both comforting and heart-warming to hear how much Les meant to so many people and over so many years.

He was always good company with never a bad word to say about anyone. He was endlessly kind, quick witted, and a mischievous school boy to the end, always with a glint in his eye and a smile on his face. That unique expression will remain with his family and friends for ever and will be forever in their hearts.

Karen

Tribute from Stan Quantrill (or how Les Wilks came to join the Old Wilsonians)

Both Les and I worked for the LCC, Les in the Architect's Division and I was in the Education Division. On leaving school I joined the Old Boys and played football whereas Les played for the LCC.

Both teams were in the same League / Division and when we played against the LCC, Cyril Lucking said to me that chap Les Wilks is a Wilsonian. At full time I spoke to Les and said 'Why don't you join the Ows' which he did and in addition to playing football and tennis he worked hard on the alterations to the clubhouse and the Donkey Derbies.

A change in jobs took me into Essex and Hertfordshire and eventually another change to St Mary Cray. As our boys were at an excellent school we decided to ask my mother-in-law if I could lodge with her Monday to Friday and as her house was on the corner of Pickhurst Lane I was able to re-join the club and play Squash.

One evening Les left the GP Meeting and asked me whether I would help out on a temporary basis and be the Bar Manager around 1980 a poistion which I held until 1992 when another job meant moving back to Bishop's Stortford.

After I retired Les and I were in contact for 40 or more years in one way or another followed by occasional phone calls and at Christmas cards.

So goodbye Les and thanks for the friendship since the 1950's, 70 years in total.
Stan Quantrill

Mike Pike (another OW Past President) paid this tribute to Les Wilks

Put simply Les was one of my heroes and, as far as Old Wilsonians are concerned, there are numerous people who will agree with me – if they do not then they seriously understimate his contribution to our great Club.

He was our Chair for many years and laid the foundations for what we have now.

He joined the school in 1942, as did his great friends Richard 'Mac' McAlister and Pat Fitzsimmons and when Lou Barry, Pete Davis and Malcolm Taylor, who started at the school 20 years later, claimed that they were the first to provide the Association with three Presidents from the same year he very quitely, but firmly, reminded them that he, Mac and Pat had done so before.

He will probably be best remembered for the Donkey Derbys, which attracted crowds from miles around and I urge you all to look at the press cuttings which still adorn the pillar over there - points in the appropriate.

I know that Bob Bevan wants to talk specifically about these events so I will not rain on his parade save to say that, as soon as one had finished, Les started working on the next one.

He also played tennis well into his 80s and Nigel Jordan will be saying something about that so I will tell you a football and cricket story.

Les was in his late 40s, or possibly early 50s when he realised that he needed a new pair of football boots as the season approached "What size boots does your son take," inquired the shop assistance, in total ignorance of Les's pedigree.

As for cricket many of you may not be aware of the fact that he played the game and, indeed, he never joined the Cricket Club. However, Les being who he was and the epitome of CCF (Club Comes First) and on learning that the 2nd XI were short of players volunteered to play for them - away at Shootershillians.

Upon his return I asked him how he had got on "I bowled", he proudly responded "and took 5 for 56" although, and having congratulated him on this impressive performance and after asking for more details, he confessed that he had bowled 5 overs for 56 runs.

Les used to organise the monthly discos, his prime responsibility being to ensure that the equipment was functioning properly and he and Pat were always enthusiastic dancers.

Sally and Karen were also regular visitors to Hayes and came to regard it as their second home. Then they all had to deal with the fact that Pat fell victim to the most cruel illness of all and, ultimately, her death after which he was torn between staying in Keston or moving to Bexhill-on-Sea to be with his family.

Before he made that decision he became involved in the Old Wilsonians' gardening club - when the OWA were looking for volunteers Les was always one of the first to put his hand up and he was given special responsibilities for looking after the memorial garden. I used to 'phone Les on a regular basis, both before and after his move, and in answer to the question as to how he was he invaraiably said "Not so bad" and told me what he had been doing.

After his move to Bexhill-on-Sea he joined the local bowls club and went to weekly lunches after which there were games and quizzes. Did he get involved – well, that is a rhetorical question.

Les spoke enthusiastically and with love and pride about his two daughters and two grandsons and said he missed the Club, but nowhere near as much as we missed him.

He attended OWLS whenever he could, when everyone was delighted to see him and hung on his every word, whilst his last visit to Hayes was in February, and if you need any more proof of his dedication to the Club you need no further proof than the registration of his last ever car, which contained the letters OW "I just had to buy it" he enthused.

Les Wilks was one of a kind and I will never forget him and always feel a deep debt of gratitude for anything and everything he did for us. He had an engaging and beguiling smile and a twinkle in his eyes and after consulting with his family the Association will ensure that there is a lving memorial to him at the Club, whilst his family will ***always*** be welcome here.

Many of us here today will remember Leslie Welch, the memory man. Leslie Wilks was a man we will never forget.

Mike Pike

Another Past President Bob Bevan also paid tribute to Les Wilks

Les came into my life when I was around 16 or 17 and first came up here. He was often joined at the hip with another legend Mac McAlister and one of my earliest memories was helping them to lay the foundations for a new shed which Les wanted to build to house all his Donkey Derby material.

When it came to building and DIY I was at the opposite end of the skill set from Les but I do recall being on the end of a lump of wood to assist in tampering the wet concrete to get it level before it set.

At that time I was keen to get involved in the Club and was volunteering to do many things including a shift on the bar. Les told me I was too young – those were the days. My memory doesn't allow me to be exact on the chronology of it all but Les became Chairman of the Club and I too got very active for several years running this ground, getting big money for renting the football pitches on Sunday mornings and much more besides.

I did cause some controversy which amused Les when, being commercially-minded, I installed a condom machine in the gents. That was a fairly new idea back then and created some issues with the then Tennis Secretary, Roy Kay. How was I to know he was a devout Catholic? Turned out the McAlisters were too!

Another great memory was the Donkey Derby which Les turned into an epic annual event drawing crowds of many thousands. In those days it was not legal to sell tickets on the day so entry was by pre-sold programmes and we used to send the kids round the doors for weeks ahead, especially in the rain to get sympathy from the buyers. Imagine doing that now?

This event saved the club because our millionaire President, who had bought the ground

and helped bankroll it, had died and left us out of his will. I wrote the letter headed “Save the Old Wilsonians” which Les thought might be a bit strong at the time. However a few hundred turned up and several stalwarts threw themselves into the Club not just immediately but in many cases for the rest of their lives.

Most of them, like Les, have sadly gone now as you will see from the trees planted in their memory outside and Les was at the very head of that gang.

Les’s efforts on the Donkey Derby are probably what kept the club going until improved management started to put it on an even keel which I am delighted to see continues to this day. One story which is topical at the moment concerns my suggesting to Les that we introduce a Beat the Goalie stand at the Donkey Derby in 1966. I wrote round to all the then London First Division goalkeepers. Hard to believe several wrote back. I still have the handwritten replies from Bob Wilson, Pat Jennings and Ron and Peter Springett. However they all declined so I dropped down a division and got a letter back from Millwall’s Alex Stepney who said he would come if his fee of five guineas was acceptable. I still have that letter too.

A couple of months later he was transferred to Chelsea for £50,000, then a world record for a goalie. I was worried he now wouldn’t come but he assured me he would so I sent him some programmes in the hope he might bring some of his famous new team-mates. I was very naïve then.

On the day he turned up and I showed him to the dressing room and handed him his five guineas. “I won’t need that,” he said. “I sold those programmes you sent me!” Then he asked if he could leave early at say 4 30. I said that would be fine and asked why he had to go early. He said “my wife had a baby yesterday and I’d like to go and visit her.”

Alex, of course, only played one game for Chelsea and then signed for Man Utd to win the European Cup and much more. Once I joined the after dinner circuit he and I renewed our friendship, now lasting 40 years. You may have seen him laying the wreaths at Old Trafford in memory of Bobby Charlton recently. I was speaking to him only last week and it was only a couple of years ago that I get round to asking what the fee was when he went to Man U. He told me it was £55,000 so he broke the world record twice in a season.

He is a smashing bloke, as you will have gathered from that story, and Les was comfortably in the same bracket not just for this place but throughout his life. He was a hero to many of us so I was very pleased just a couple of years back when Karen and Sally asked me to fix for him to meet one of his heroes, Geoff Hurst, at a show they were taking him to in Hastings. I told Geoff that as I had met his captain, Bobby Moore, he ought to meet mine. I know from the subsequent phone call from Les that he was knocked out by Geoff getting him into the dressing room and having a long chat.

You will gather that apart from all the work up here, some of which we shared, he was also my football Captain when he dropped down the sides and I was still playing on the field. In fact my only competitive hat-trick was under his leadership. It stays in my memory not just for the hat-trick but because when I had scored two followed by another club legend, Mike Harris, getting three we got a penalty and everyone told Les to let me take it. He refused and gave it to yet another legend, Charlie Holder, who was the designated taker. Charlie missed. Then we got another. Despite my pleas Les still gave it to Charlie Holder. He missed again. Fortunately near the end I got my third.

Just as well because for about 45 minutes Les had seriously pissed me off. I did forgive him because, thinking about it, just 45 minutes out of over 60 years is not bad.

In those 60 years of course there are so many more memories. We bumped into him and Pat at least once watching tennis at Wimbledon and he always seemed so pleased to see you.

At one point we had offices just round the corner from each other in Penge and only at the funeral this week I discovered that Mike who worked with him and took over the business when Les retired is the brother of my late cousin's wife who lives in Australia. I can't believe we've only just found that out.

I know Les had a tough time when Pat was in a home and I remember a sad phone call with him once when he pointed out all his mates had passed away one by one.

So it was good that he moved to Bexhill where I remember calling him on his 89th birthday when he said he never thought he'd get that old but that now he had he'd quite like to make 90.

In that call I told him that we had just come back from a round the world cruise where I celebrated my 74th birthday. Over dinner I said to Laura "I don't think I'll make 80" and she said "I think you will but I'm not looking forward to it." Les loved that.

Apart from denying me those two penalties for the rest of the time I thought the world of him. Loyal, honourable, supportive, a friendly yet inspiring leader with the greatest sense of humour and always ready for a laugh. Without him this building and this club might not be here.

So for me this is exactly the right place not just for me, but probably many of you as well, to finally say goodbye to a quite remarkable and very talented man who was also quite simply a lovely bloke.

I should have had one of the penalties though.

Bob 'The Cat' Bevan

TRIBUTE FROM NIGEL JORDAN FROM THE TENNIS CLUB

AT THE WAKE AT HAYES 9/11/23

Firstly that Les was one of the reasons I joined OWs back in 1993 – Les & Drabbers and Anne Kendrick. They made me so welcome on an Open Evening , and Les continued to look after me right up till the time he moved to Hastings.. He was never one to make the distinction between Old Boys and everyone else – and I loved him for that. He invited me to play in a regular four even thought I hadn't played for about 16 years when I turned up – with a Wilson 2000 racket which was almost as bad a having a wood one.

When I became Chairman in 2010 Les was always supportive of the major changes I brought about. He loved seeing the club full of children, lots of noise and activity.

Thirdly, I recounted how we initiated President's Night after Pat died – largely to honour Les & give him a significant role as President and enjoy his many tales. He would talk to everyone about the history of the club, and the way things have changed over time. On

one famous evening he had everyone in stitches when he recounted tales of the Donkey Derby – the scale of which is almost unimaginable – with Wickham Park and Ex Blues becoming car parks, with 8000 – 10,000 people attending, with Army tanks, big 8-foot diameter footballs trying to get up Hayes Hill, and best of all the tale of ladies reclining in deckchairs with their legs in the air – being the target for the hoop-la. I thought it was hysterical – but the serious side is that these events (before the Gambling regulators put a stop to them because it became too predictable which donkey would win!) were what paid the mortgage on the club and allowed the Association to hold on to the ground when Bert Bourner died unexpectedly.

Pikey's Progress: A weekend of great sugnificance for Old Wilsonians

There were 13 of us……. it was Friday the 13th .
Terry Adams called and left a message; it was Monday morning.
"You can probably tell from my croaky voice that I am not too well. Jan and I have just tested positive for Covid so I will not be able to make Friday's get together."
I returned the call and, hopefully, said the right things.
There were 12 of us.

Stan Honnor sent me an email saying that he was catching the 11-15 from London Bridge to Hayes and I replied that I would endeavour to get on the same train at Lower Sydenham and it worked perfectly, with the train arriving at Hayes at 11-54, almost perfect timing as we were due to assemble at 'The New Inn' at 12 noon – even Stan and I, despite our advancing years, are capable of getting across the road in six minutes.

Alan Wilson was already there, dressed as a commissionaire/lift attendant/bell boy – take your pick, and within half-an-hour there were 12 of us, an achievement in itself. A tab had been set up behind the bar and the talk, and beer, flowed in equal measures.

Pete Wilkinson, the oldest of our number, proudly announced that he is now a great grand-father, "Me too, " exclaimed Stan and Rod (Warboys).

The lunch was due to be served at 1-00 and as 1-30 was fast approaching someone mentioned that fact. I was just about to make inquiries when a member of staff gave me the nod that said lunch was just about to be served and we all took our places.

Everyone had put in their orders a week or so before the event but I took a list of their requirements just in case – just as well really as some had forgotten. Did you really order porridge followed by kippers and custard Tony?

As you can imagine from the Class of '56, the year we all joined the school, much of the talk was about our school days, the masters who taught us, the punishments inflicted, failure to get homework finished on time and the consequences that followed.

We remembered 'absent friends', Vic Bennett in particular, and in whose memory this lunch is now dedicated. We will meet again – certainly this time next year and, hopefully, before.

Move the clock forward less than 24 hours and the venue was the school, albeit not the one the Class of '56 attended for it moved to Wallington in 1974.

The occasion was the opening of the (Kirk) 'Benjamin room' which is part of the school's

‘Well-being Centre’, itself part of the Paul Britton Centre, which also includes a gymnasium and a music room, and a number of immaculately turned out school prefects gave us a guided tour.

We counted three pianos, and that was even before we entered the music room, whilst the building also contains a gymnasium to die for.

Matt Holmes was my guide – he is the 1st XI football captain – and OWA President Mark Mace and I impressed upon him the value of joining the Old Wilsonians’ Football Club once his education studies have been completed.

The tour completed, we adjourned to ‘The Benjamin room’ itself for the main event, the unveiling of a beautiful mosaic of the school badge made by Arts Network and a citation relating to what they do and their relationship with the OWs, and a splendid photograph of an immaculately dressed Kirk.

Tim Lissinore, the deputy head, Mark Mace and Sophie Benjamin all then made very moving speeches in which they all highlighted the traumas of mental health, and how we should help and support those who are victims of this cruel condition.

Sophie’s contribution was particularly moving – Kirk was remembered every day, he would have been 50 next year and she reminded us that the main cause of death for men under 50 is suicide.

Beverley, Kirk’s aunt, then added a few apposite words before we were told that we had to leave the building by 4-00 p.m; no detention on this occasion, then

Being Old Wilsonians someone suggested we adjourn to a pub and ‘The Greyhound’ was the agreed venue where Jim Lloyd confessed that he once set fire to Andy Udale and had to explain his behaviour to Fred ‘Eric’ Massey.

This caused your correspondent to recall an incident involving Alan Wilson, one of the Class of ’56, earlier compared to a lift attendant - do keep up - who used to travel to the school by bus with a friend who went to Archbishop Tennyson’s, which overlooks the Oval Cricket Ground, Alan, of course, getting off at Wilson Rd, a few stops before his friend.

One morning his mate exclaimed that he did not fancy going to school that day and suggested that he and Alan get off at the next stop and return to his home where “My mum can supply as with coffee, cake and fags all day.”

Initially Alan was reluctant but was eventually persuaded to agree to his friend’s idea and they left the bus.

The following day both of the miscreants had recovered from their ‘illness’ and returned to their respective schools and, upon arrival, Alan was approached by the deputy headmaster who exclaimed: “Come and see me in the morning break, Wilson.”

Somewhat perplexed Alan dutifully did what he was told and Eric asked: “Did you enjoy your coffee, cake and fags yesterday?”

An astonished Alan responded “Yes, but how did you know?”
“I was sitting behind you on the bus, came the stern reply.

Move the clock forward less than 24 hours and a vast array of talent was assembled to take part in 'The Kirk Benjamin Memorial Trophy', a game of football played between the Old Wilsonians Super Vets and Arts Network, a game in which Kirk used to play on a regular basis and now a twice a season event.

The OWs scored after three minutes and were 4-0 up at half- time, and although the visitors pulled one back soon after the re-start the hosts ran out comfortable 9-1 victors, a score that was not representative of the game – it seemed that the home side converted every chance they had whilst the visitors created equally positive chances but the ball just would not go in.

But the result is/was irrelevant, the significance, and for both sides, is all that matters. Thanks, as ever, to Phil Gilmore for refereeing and, as ever, for donating his fee towards the £5,000 we need to raise towards 'The Benjamin Room.'

So many others, too numerous to mention, have also been equally generous to tne extent that we are now more than half way towards our total and, with the use of 'Gift Aid', we will get even closer.

So ended three important days in the life of Old Wilsonians, but what had we learnt? The Class of '56 are still alive and kicking, although we are all aware that kicking a football is no longer possible.

The school is thriving, with outstanding facilities and is looking after and supporting those with mental health issues.

The Super Vets again got the better of Arts Network on the football field but the event is far more important than the result.

Looking forward we are determined to promote the OWA to the school – some solid bricks have already been built and although there is still much work to be done the future looks good as far as this is concerned - there is already talk of resurrecting th Old Boys Dinner and for it to be held at the school …….. and Terry and Janet have recovered from their bout of Covid.

Mike Pike

SUPER DRAW AND 200 CLUB RESULTS

The OW Super Draw and 200 Club have been running successfully for many years and provide an excellent source of Fundraising for the Association.

Since Graham Watts, who ran the Draws for around 20 years, passed away it fell to Tom Sullivan and Jasper Gundry-White to manage the Draws and keep it up to date.

The results for 2023 for both draws appear at the end of this Newsletter which will be the last in their current format. If you are a Winner and have not received a cheque in the post please contact Tom Sullivan by email sully100@hotmail.co.uk as soon as possible to confirm your address and personal details.

An announcement will be made soon to re-launch the Draws, details of which will be posted on the OW Website.

SCHOOL NEWS

Wilson's School produces a term magazine called Wolf Salient from the logo on the school crest. For those not able to access the website or internet easily the following are recent news snippets from their articles.

JACK ELLIOTT, OLD WILSONIAN, NETS BRACE IN MLS CUP FINAL

Jack Elliott continues to represent Wilson's footballing excellence stateside, scoring twice in the MLS Cup Final for Philadelphia Union on 5 November 2022. Despite playing centre back, Jack found himself helping out at the other end of the pitch. With the game poised at 2-1, Jack scored his first goal in the 85th minute, his equaliser from a set piece forcing extra time.

In the 124th minute, it looked as though Jack had won Philadelphia the MLS Cup for the first time in their history when he scored his second goal of the game from close range. Leading in stoppage time at the end of extra time, the opposition, LAFC, had also been reduced to 10 men after a red card for goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau. It was to be late, late heartbreak for Jack and Philadelphia however, with Gareth Bale scoring for LAFC in the 128th minute – the latest goal ever scored in MLS history – to make the score 3-3, and send the game to penalties which Philadelphia unfortunately lost. Despite ending up on the losing side, Jack was the Union's standout player and continues to represent Wilson's football brilliantly on the international scene.

WILSON'S OFFICIALLY REGISTERED AS A SCHOOL ON LINKEDIN

We are delighted to say that Wilson's School is now officially registered as a school page on LinkedIn. This means you can now list Wilson's as a place you studied in the Education section on your profile.

If you studied at Wilson's, please revisit your Education section to complete the previous step. This will help us to develop the Wilson's Alumni Network, enabling Old Wilsonians to connect and network with each other. Additionally, adding Wilson's in your Education section allows us to improve our alumni records, and also ensure we can invite you to alumni events in the near future! To follow the Wilson's School Page, click the LinkedIn icon, or follow the link here.

LEGACIES FOR WILSON'S

THE EDWARD WILSON SOCIETY LAUNCHED

We are delighted to be launching 'The Edward Wilson Society' as part of our 'Legacies for Wilson's' campaign. We are planning to host our first legators event – for members of The Edward Wilson Society – at the school in 2023/4, or even earlier if there is a strong response to the campaign. If you are interested in making a legacy to Wilson's - or if you have already made a legacy to Wilson's but have not yet told us - please read and follow the instructions in the legacy brochure by either clicking on the image of the front page on the left, or by following the link here. In particular, we invite you to complete and return the Legacy Pledge Form on Page 11. Additionally, if you have any questions, please contact the Director of Development, Tim Edge, via email at TE@wilsonsschool.sutton.sch.uk

OLD WILSONIANS AND ARTS NETWORK COMBINE TO REMEMBER KIRK BENJAMIN

The Old Wilsonians SuperVets football team, so called to pay homage to their old age rather than their skills, have been playing two games a season against Arts Network, a charity that supports those with severe and enduring mental health issues, to raise much-needed funds for the charity and draw attention to the issue of mental health.

One of the OW participants in the early days was Kirk Benjamin, a man known to one and all as a vibrant individual, full of life and with considerable footballing skills. However, beneath Kirk's outward persona was a man in pain, and after he took his own life, it was agreed that these regular fixtures should be in his memory, and a Cup was purchased – 'The Kirk Benjamin Memorial Trophy' – to be awarded to the winning team after each game.

'Men at the Hill', the OWs forum for discussing and encouraging members to talk about their mental health issues, has been functioning for some years and with great success in that it has helped many members cope with this cruel disorder, and our SuperVets side has 'Men at the Hill' emblazoned across their shirts, whilst Arts Network, founded in 1996, continues to help vulnerable people. "The camaraderie and socialising helped me realise that I am not alone", proclaims one of its members.

As a way of saying 'thank you' to the OWs for the money they have raised for them, Arts Network have produced a beautiful mosaic of the Club's badge which will form an integral part of the Clubhouse following the proposed refurbishment at Hayes. Whilst thanking this wonderful charity, I have no doubt that they will agree with me that the most important aspect of all of this is to draw attention to those with mental health issues and to help them in any way they can, and I am confident that the readers of 'Wolf Salient' will endorse these admirable sentiments.

BRITTON CENTRE NEARS COMPLETION

A massive thank you must be extended to all the supporters of Wilson's Giving Day 2022, who have directly contributed to the purchase of a range of equipment needed to equip the new building. Relatedly, we are excited to invite our donors to visit the Britton Centre, and tour the building, in January 2023.

We are delighted to report that our new building - the Britton Centre - is finally nearing completion. Featuring a state-of-theart fitness suite, nine music practice rooms, three classrooms, and several changing rooms, the new facilities will massively improve how music and fitness are taught at Wilson's, and will no doubt be enjoyed by staff and students alike!

ALUMNI NEWS

Now we have emerged from the pandemic, the Development Office is planning a series of face-to-face events aimed at increasing the engagement of our alumni with the school and with each other. Building on the success of the previous event in 2018 we are planning an alumni drinks party at the old Wilson's Grammar School building in Camberwell in 2023. This promises to be a highly nostalgic evenFootball Newsing as the building, currently occupied by Camberwell College of Arts, is very much as it was when the school moved to Wallington forty seven years ago.