

Fan in the Stand becomes... New chairman in the stand!

Peter Marsden

Peter Marsden took over the WFC reigns as chairman in the summer, but he's only just found time to answer the usual probing *Fan in the Stand* questions and give us some idea about his background and plans for the club. But it's worth waiting for...

Whereabouts you live?

I live on the borders of Cricklewood and Willesden Green with my wife Do-reen and Max a miniature Yorkshire Terrier with plenty of 'attitude' (maybe Wealdstone should sign him up !!). Our two daughters Carol (who is already a familiar face at Grosvenor Vale) and Sinead have long since flown the nest. We have lived in the same house for 20 years. We are looking to move further out of London -we both like Hatch End.

What's your line of business?

I arrange property-related 'business finance'. Most of my clients are high net worth property developers/property investors. My speciality is sourcing unusual lenders. I also have property interests of my own.

First Stones game you saw?

I think it was the last home game of the 1973-4 season, at home to Trowbridge. According



Nick DuGard (left) has the pleasure of presenting incoming chairman Peter Marsden with a £24,000 cheque on behalf of the Supporters Club. A nice welcome!

"I'm enjoying helping Gordon Bartlett put together a squad that's capable of mounting a challenge for promotion"

to Professor Worby's excellent book the game ended 3-3 in front of a bumper 2,548 attendance at Lower Mead. Stones won Southern League Division One by 11 points.

What or who persuaded you to become involved in the Stones originally?

I was a 16 years old living in Sudbury (Wembley) at the time and the two local papers, the Wembley and Har-

row Observers gave great coverage to Wealdstone and were always extolling the goalscoring exploits of a certain George Duck.

Do you follow any other team?

Yes for my sins I was/am a Watford supporter for countless years (hundreds of programmes) but got a little disillusioned with 'big time' football about 10 years ago

STONES FAN IN STAND

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29.10.2016

- and by the hand of fortune Watford were at home to Accrington Stanley in September 2006 in the Carling Cup (Stanley's first season back in the Football League). I happened to mention to the Stanley directors that my father was also from East Lancs and they invited me to join the Board. In my 10 years at Stanley I was associate director, director, vice-chairman, chairman for the last four years, and I am now the club's Hon President.

Do you prefer lower-League football?

You bet. My preferred football 'range' is League 2 / Conference League. I had the misfortune to go to the Olympic Stadium the other day (West Ham v Accy Stanley in the League Cup) and I have never been so bored.

Any disadvantages?

No

How do you fit watching football, and Wealdstone, into your family/working life?

With great difficulty. I am always totally overwhelmed with work (I get about 80 work telephone calls and 40 work e-mails a day) and up until recently my wife and I spent 4 months looking after our much loved and very noble 17 years old dog Mr Taz who was in a very bad way but sadly he has just passed away. To be brutally honest I sense that Wealdstone need a 24/7 chairman but while I am happy to be the club's



Not a bad match to start with... Peter's first game was the championship-winning game against Trowbridge at Lower Mead in 1974. Above: John Henderson (far left) rifles the opening goal of a 3-3 draw in front of a 2,000-plus crowd and (left) the famous gold programme that marked the occasion

main benefactor I am acutely aware that I do not have enough hours in the day... albeit as an Irish friend keeps telling me

"if you want a job done well ask a busy man".

How big a part of your life is the game?

Yes it is a major part. At Wealdstone I enjoy helping Gordon Bartlett to put together a squad of players capable of mounting a promotion challenge. I love meeting the Wealdstone fans (who are perhaps the most passionate in the country) and who I think share my vision of getting the Stones back in their rightful position of Conference National. I think having a football club playing at a decent level but at the same time 100% connected with the fans (no big time charlies) and also in tune with the needs of the local community is my vision of the game and hopefully our supporters buy in to this too.

Most memorable game/s you've EVER seen?

I think it would have to be when Watford beat Southampton 7-1 at home in the League Cup having lost the 1st leg 4-0 at The Dell. Sept 1980

Have you ever played the game yourself and most memorable moments?

I was only an average player. Played for my school old boys The Old Lyonians at Pinner View, North Harrow. I was a right footed winger who played on the left wing and liked cutting inside (sounds like Omar !!)

Any suggestions to improve your Stones -watching experience at the Vale?

That's a big question !! Anything that would get us 3 points at home would do for me. I would like us to be more dominant at home (it seems we play better away).

Who's your favourite all-time Wealdstone player?

Eddie Oshodi (just pipping George Duck)

Best away trips to watch

football? When I was at Accy I liked going to York (nice people and proper old fashioned football ground) and Pompey (full of Stanley old boys and again a proper old fashioned football ground). With Wealdstone I say the trip to Whitehawk was very surreal. I enjoyed going to Dartford too.

What was your highlight of last season?

Accy away at Wycombe last but 1 game of the season. We took about 500 fans to Wycombe many of them in fancy dress. We won 1-0 which meant that provided we beat Stevenage at home last game of the season we were promoted. The postscript was however that we could only draw 0-0 last game of the season (Stanley hit the bar 3 times) and even at 0-0 we still thought we would go up but Bristol R scored 2 mins in to added time at home to already relegated Dagenham to 'steal' the last promotion place from Accrington.

Best - and worst - non-League grounds you've visited?

Best - Wrexham or Torquay.
Worst - Borehamwood (zero

atmosphere)

Best stadium you've EVER visited?

I used to like Highbury in the 1970's. I would stand in the North Bank with my big brother who was an Arsenal fan and the crowd were packed like sardines. I used to like the Metropolitan Police band at half time, the half-time scores from other games being put up by hand on little pegs on the side of the pitch and the adverts for Percy Dalton nuts.

Where do you like to stand (or sit) at the Vale?

I normally go with my daughter Carol and grandson Joshua - he likes to stand either close to the goal at the Bulla stand (he likes the singing and occasional bad language) or on the touchlines right next to Gordon's dugout.

What are your expectations for the Stones for this season?

Prior to Saturday's 1-2 defeat against Truro I thought we had a 50/50 chance of promotion but the manner of that defeat makes me think there

is still work to be done. We can still go up if we roll up our sleeves, the forwards convert more chances and the defence keep their concentration.

How does the current programme compare with others you see?

It's an excellent programme

Any articles or features that you'd like to see?

I always like 'where are they now?' features about players from yesteryear

What's your Wealdstone claim to fame, or interesting fact?

In 2012 when I was chairman of Accrington I had quite a close relationship with Watford's (Italian) director of football. He offered me Britt Assombalonga on loan for nothing; Britt having just come back to Watford from a very successful loan spell at Wealdstone. Watford wanted him 'toughened up' in the lower echelons of the Football League. I tried to get our manager John Coleman (whom I have the deepest respect) to take a chance

on him but John said 'no'. Probably because he wasn't a scouser !!

And finally... Where do you think the club will be in five years?

Mid table Conference National playing at Grosvenor Vale in an improved but still slightly 'homemade' (in a nice way !!) stadium in front of regular gates of 1000-1500.



Nottingham Forest's Britt Assombalonga, who had a great loan spell with the Stones in 2011-2012, missed out on a loan spell at Peter's Accrington Stanley the following season....