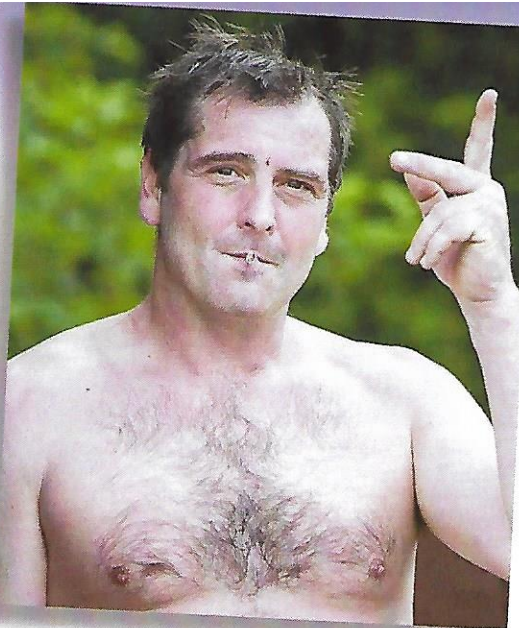


'I always told new Stones players that if the fans were getting on their back, make sure you make a big tackle in the next five minutes! Our fans seem to love a big tackle nearly as much as a goal'



LEE WALKER answers a few pertinent questions

LEE WALKER, a real supporters' favourite from the 90s and literally larger than life, first joined Wealdstone in November 1995 - and he scored on his debut away to Camberley in a 2-1 victory.

Suffering a number of injuries in his time with the club, he made 111 starts (64 off the bench) and scored a total of 56 goals including one hat-trick in a 3-0 win away to East Thurrock United.

He joined the club as a centre-forward but was also pressed into duty as an emergency centre half. He also started two games in the Middlesex Senior Cup in goal (1 win, 1 defeat) in the 99/00 season and was also pressed into duty between the sticks during a couple of league games due to injuries and dismissals.

In his own words, Lee has 'a lovely fiancé' and is getting married in March, and two beautiful children, Daisy-Jane (10) and Henry (3). He owns Superwalker

BY ROGER SLATER



Dog Walking Services and has been walking dogs for six years. Loving the outdoors as Lee does, it's the perfect job....

You joined Wealdstone in 1995 - What was the career beforehand?

I won the English Schools Trophy playing for West London then I signed for Millwall on schoolboy forms when I was 14. I earned a two-year apprenticeship. At the end of my second year we won the FA Youth Cup the year before the famous class of 92....

Actually, I scored in the final and luckily for me there was a scout watching from a (now defunct) professional team in Hong Kong called Sing Tao SC and off I went. While I was there we won the Hong Kong League Cup but my time was cut short after an argument with the manager that led to

me being escorted from the 31st floor of a building by five Security Guards.

I came back to the UK and played for Sittingbourne to see out the season, then I joined Slough Town and played lots of games and scored lots of goals for their reserves - though I did make a few starts for the first team and a few appearances off the bench in the Conference. My only abiding memory is getting booed by the home fans every time I came on as sub!! Gordon (then at Yeading) came to my rescue and I joined them on loan until the end of the season. We managed to stay up with a very convenient draw on the last day of the season... after that I played for Bashley and we got to the 2nd round of the FA Cup, before I moved onto Chesham and then Molesey.....all pre-Wealdstone!

Did you know anyone when

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you joined?

Gordon and Leo obviously, and also Paul Sheldrick from our time at Southwark college as budding apprentices.

Stones fans are known for "sharing their opinions" – how do you handle that as a new player?

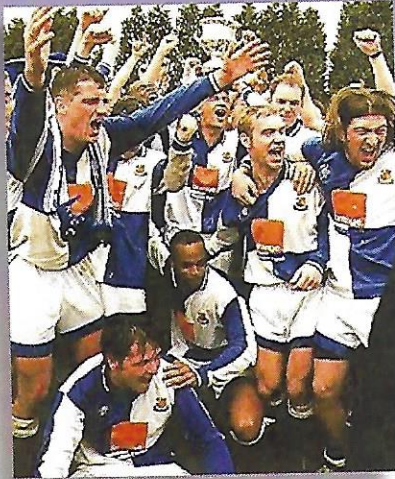
When Gordon phoned me offering me the chance to play for the 'Stones his opening line was "You are playing in front of 10 men with carrier bags at Molesey. Come and see the fans we have here - they are the best in non-league... if they like you".

Luckily I managed to score on my debut and also put myself about which the fans seemed to like! During my time with the club I always told new players that if the fans were getting on their back, make sure you make a big tackle in the next five minutes! Nowadays everyone loves free flowing football but then, 'Stones fans seemed to love a big tackle nearly as much as a goal.

The Championship season (1996-7) must have been a highlight – any particular memories?

The season before we'd just missed out on promotion finishing fourth and in the summer I had the first of my four knee operations. As I was bored I decided to set up a fines committee for the players. Lateness, no tie, odd socks etc. – pretty much anything I could think of. The money collected in fines was all to go towards a weekend in Blackpool at the end of the season.

Once every month we had a 'Special Fines Day' where players had to bring in specific items. From memory we had Cock-a-Leekie Soup day, Funny Trousers day, Moustache day.... they were all good earners but the one that made the most money was Gay Porno Magazine day. Unsurprisingly it brought in the most money - £200 - as not one player



had the guts to ask their local newsagent for a copy!

On the pitch, we seemed to have the Championship in the bag at one stage, then we lost a couple and it got very tight. For the last six or seven games every point mattered so much. I think I scored a couple of winners in the run-in (Clapton penalty, Epsom?). It all came down to the last day at Northwood when we were one nil down and went on to win. (See picture above, with Lee front left)

One of the great memories of my life is sitting on the pitch about an hour after the game finished and looking around thinking this could not be better. We had not only won the League but we had won it with a team full of mates.

Who bent the trophy?

I do not know who bent the trophy but I know someone who drank a Champagne and Wee cocktail out of it....

Anything else stand out as a personal memory of your time with the 'Stones?

I have many great memories of my time at the 'Stones. Perhaps one that sticks out is an away game at Windsor in my first season. We won 2-0 and all the players and fans stayed in the Windsor clubhouse for a long

time after the game singing songs and taking the pee out of a few of their players – the few that hung around anyway!

Injuries were a big problem, leading to you leaving in 2002 – did you play on?

Injuries were always a problem for me. I always tried to come back too quickly and played on when I should have come off. When I was a youngster at Millwall, a triallist got injured and asked to come off. After the game we all sat in the changing room and John Docherty (the manager) went apoplectic and said if he ever saw a player ask to come off injured that they would never play for Millwall again!

That stuck with me, much to my resentment.

In my last few years I was taking two pain killers when I woke up, two more at half ten then a couple of muscle relaxers at lunchtime followed by a couple more painkillers before kick-off and again at half time.....

Both my knees and groin have been operated on since I was twenty and in the end, my body had had enough. I left Wealdstone to join Southall - on my first training session they only had 3 flat balls to play with and it took no time to realise that I no longer had the desire. I stuck it for a few weeks, but after a month or so I retired. I think I was 28.

You're in the bath with..... Rubber ducks, Boats, Submarines, your Partner or....

I share my bath with the 'Two Mikes' podcast (Blimey, that's pretty much self-abuse - Ed) **Centre half or centre forward, you played pretty much the same game...what was the 'Lee Walker' way?** The Lee Walker way was to always shake the ref's hand and wish him good luck and a good game, then try to get away with as much as possible.

The first challenge of the game was always very important to me.

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THE TEAM OF 99 Lee Walker is in the centre of the back row, towering over goalkeeper Noel Imber. It should have been the squad that won promotion to the Ryman Prem, but for some dodgy ground grading...

Winning it as a centre half or centre forward was important but letting your opponent know you were there set the tone for the whole game. I never spoke to my direct opponent but always had a great laugh on the pitch, (never more so than when Ferg scored an own goal in the Legends v Watford match).

Winning meant everything to me until we got into the bar, then the game was over – even after a defeat I was not one to stew on it.

What don't we know about Gordon Bartlett?

When Gordon was trying to tell us off his mouth would go into a little round shape that you could perfectly fit an HB pencil into!

What happens 'on tour'.....makes its way into the Programme. What shouldn't you tell us and about who?

(Blackpool?)

I have a story about "a utility player" (protecting the guilty) who, after a heavy session didn't make the loo in the middle of the night, then he got his mum and dad to pick him up from Blackpool. And we all mooned them as they drove away.

There is also a crazy story about a night in Northampton too with some Columbian trialists (I'm sure some locals could enlighten you on that

one) and many more that I do not think my team mates would like me to repeat.

I do remember one night when the whole team was out in the West End in a club, and I ended up being chased around the dance floor by a waiter wielding a broom!

Now you are hosting a Dinner Party for five guests (anyone, dead, alive, real or fictional) – who do you invite and why?

For dinner I would have Mike Parry, Mike Graham, Piers Morgan, Michael Vaughan and David

Bumble Lloyd. A great evening's entertainment talking football and cricket.

Walker, Jones, Moore, Lamb... ..a party looking for somewhere to happen?

All of us liked a laugh! We were all up for a beer every Saturday. That's part of what made the team spirit so good. Fergie would end up so drunk he would just say mm mm, Lamby would be chatting up a bird or three and Jonesy would be laughing at all of my jokes!

What got into your blood with Wealdstone?

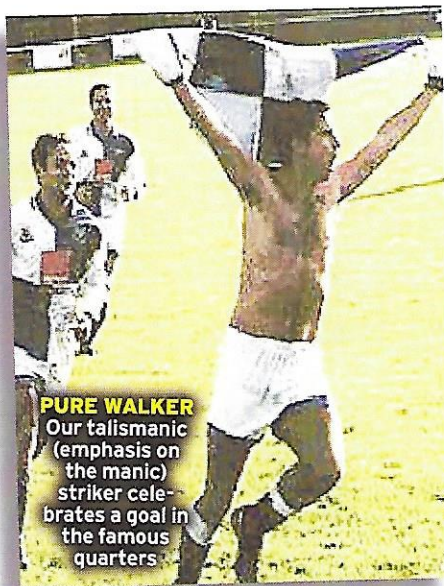
The fans, the players and management were all as one - and it is not often that happens in football.

Anything else you want to tell us?

I would like to mention two players that never seem to get much credit when people talk about the 'Stones. Lee Smart was the best crosser of a ball in all my time at the 'Stones and Paul Sheldrick was the best finisher.

Otherwise, I could never understand why Gordon kept bombing out Fergus - it made him cry.

P.S Thanks for the invite to the Marathon Bet Charity Match, El Presidente .



PURE WALKER
Our talismanic (emphasis on the manic) striker celebrates a goal in the famous quarters