



BY ROGER SLATER



ROBIN TUCKER joined a much-changed Wealdstone side for the start of the 2000-01 season, having impressed against the Stones in a friendly while playing for either Arlesey or Thame United.... he can't remember!

Ever popular - even as an Everton fan - Tucks has been married to Nicole for 12 years (and they've been together 20). They have two children, Emily who was 10 on Christmas Day and Liverpool fan Jack, who will be 8 in March.

He still lives in Bletchley, Milton Keynes as he did during his time with the Stones, and he is a Business Manager for a contractor working in civils, renewables and landfill aftercare. Prior to that he had 18 years in the Waste industry managing landfill sites and recycling centres.

Tucks made 186 starts for Wealdstone including friendlies, appeared 15 times off the bench and scored 12 goals, at least two of which were very significant and are well remembered.....

You joined Wealdstone at the start of the 2000-01 season - What was the career before that?

My career started at Newport Pagnell in the United Counties League before I followed the manager from Newport to Buckingham Town for a brief spell in the Southern

WHITE LION WONDER Tucks only played for the Stones while we were at Edgware ..and he spent most games like this, close marking while desperate to get on the end of a cross or two!

'I didn't get many goals but I did score the last two of the season in 2004-5.. and it kept us in the Ryman Prem'

ROBIN TUCKER has some warm Stones memories

League before we were relegated back to the UCL. I was studying at the time and lived in Bognor Regis, so away games were easy, but I had a long trip back up for home games!

I'm pretty sure we played Wealdstone in a cup game at Buckingham whilst I was there - I remember our centre forward Darren Harmon got some customary stick from the Stones fans! While I was at Buckingham

Town Paul Lamb played in the same team for a while as well.

We had a good young boss called Darren Wood and he moved on to manage Fords Sport Daventry, also in the UCL Prem. He took a few players from Buckingham (me included) and merged them with the Ford Sport squad and we went on to win the UCL Prem. Unfortunately the club didn't get promoted due to

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the ground grading and so the players went their separate ways.

I was keen to play at a higher standard and trained pre-season with Thame and Ariesey. That was when we played against Wealdstone, where I bumped in to Lamby again and he suggested trying out with the Stones (as they had no players and were desperate!). The rest as they say.....

First impressions?

My first league game was against Whyteleafe and we lost 2-1 but it was a good experience for me, playing at better grounds and with better support. It was also a step up in terms of the coaching, training, management and organisation etc...

Gordon then brought Tony Joyce to the club and I used to travel to games with him. Joyce is a character so the journeys were always a good laugh.

You played through about five seasons of transition at Wealdstone, and though not a top goalscorer, there were a couple of stand-outs...How often do you watch the youtube video of Dover away, and what do you remember about scoring 'the one' in a 3-1 defeat at Salisbury?

Whenever I get the chance I will bring it up. Funnily enough I had just shown that Dover video to a Leeds fan at work. We were talking about Jermaine Beckford who also scores a decent goal in that game. Not sure why Gordon brought me on in centre midfield for that game, but it was 1-1 when I came on and obviously I changed the game as we went on to win 4-2. I scored that goal and set one up as well! The best part of the video though is our fans throwing a dustbin at the Dover keeper as he's walking off at the end and Gordon trying to settle them down.

My goal at Salisbury, in the last few minutes of the last game of the 2004-5 season - when we were in real danger of going down - was a skimmed header over the advancing keeper in to the empty net. The fans were getting



'Good in the air for someone of average height'.. Tucks gets up for this one, watched admiringly by J Beckford

updates on the Cheshunt game frantically working out if we were staying up or going down on goal difference....didn't Jolly miss a penalty that game as well?

Even though we lost the game it was like a win because we'd stayed in the higher tier with the restructure, and personally I was well happy to get the goal that counted. We had our end of season night that night and drove down to Bournemouth after the game. Celebrating finishing fifth from bottom!!

If you look back I actually scored our last two goals that season, the Salisbury goal and the only one in an away defeat at Hampton (maybe off my knee from another set piece?). We had the same goal difference as Cheshunt but were ahead of them on goals scored by two (my two). Where would the club be now without my goal scoring prowess?

I'm not sure how it all worked out in the end. It seems better the way I remember it anyway.

Looking back on those seasons, imagine you are back in the dressing room.....who are the players that stand out and why?

Lee Walker and Paul Lamb were always loud in the dressing room and you'd usually find them pee-

ing against your leg in the shower! Joyce always had good banter. Jonah and Fergy always had something to say - on or off the pitch.

Then Jason Shaw was a good experienced player to have around. That Andy Carter was always noisy.

You're in the bath with.....Rubber ducks, Boats, Submarines, your Partner or.... Lee Walker and Paul Lamb - to keep the water warm!

What are the best and worse memories of Wealdstone FC?

I recall my first goal away at Barking and celebrating with the fans behind the goal, Mickey Sways and Danny Tilbs come running in and crush me against the wall. I've watched that one on YouTube as well.

Our FA Trophy run in 2003/04 was a good experience. Beating Thurrock on the Friday night 3-2 at Edgware was a great atmosphere. We had a tough game against their two centre forwards Cliff Akurang and Tresor Kandol but got the better of them and I think one of them got wound up and was sent off. I'm sure it was one of the first times our result had been shown on the score banner for Sky Sports aswell. Thurrock were playing well and had been on a good FA Cup run themselves that season so it was a great result.

The next round against Maidenhead was called off on the Saturday due to snow, it got re-arranged to the Tuesday night and we got stuffed. Had it been played on the Saturday you got the feeling we'd have made a better account of ourselves. I think we would have played Halifax in the next round so to lose at that stage and not really play well was disappointing.

Although I was out injured for the latter half of the 2003-04 season I came to most games in the run in. The 8-0 result against Enfield changed things for us in terms of goal difference and must have

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been a choker for Arlesey whom we beat in that run in. The play-off final at Dulwich capped it all. It was great to be involved but gutting not to be playing.

Anything else stand out from your time with The Stones?

I remember a game at Bedford Town where Joycey had played for a few seasons. He knew they had a few songs about the player wearing the number four shirt. Before the game Leo called out the numbers and I was number two and Joycey was number four. Not realising, I had said to Leo that I was usually number four, so Joycey quite happily changed numbers. The rest of the game I got abuse from the Bedford fans and was told to f**k off back to Wealdstone – when I only lived 20 minutes away in Milton Keynes! They had this song “Number Four is Michael Barrymore, Number Four is Michael Barrymore etc...”

Tell us something about Gordon Bartlett we don't know?

I'm sure the Wealdstone faithful know him far better than I do by now but he did once launch a hot cup of tea over me during a half time rant at Edgware. I was sitting by the table near the changing room door where all the half time drinks were put. Gordon smashed something in to the table for effect, to get his point across and all this hot tea spilled over me. All the players were sat there trying not to laugh as it would have ruined the moment.

And Leo Morris? Great character, always says it how it is. I seem to remember one game Nigel Reed (I think) was subbed after coming on as a sub. He was complaining on the bench about being dragged - “why was I subbed?”, Leo explained “because you were sh*t”.

If you had to write a football CV at your peak, how would you describe Robin Tucker? I think I was a 100% committed player who lead by example and liked to defend. A good header of the ball,

We were certainly brought back down to earth by Cheshunt on Saturday, losing four nil to a very strong side. Talking with fans and players, after the game we hadn't played as badly as the score line suggests, the difference was they kept their shape well and were more clinical than we were.

It was hard work in the game especially keeping an eye on their lively number seven Leon Archer who ran us ragged all afternoon. I ended up on my arse having been nutmegged and later had to tackle him to stop him. Luckily the referee missed that one!

The standard Cheshunt played to is what we must achieve if we are to progress up the table. Tonight will be another interesting test against a side up there and winning games.

We enter the game with spirits still reasonably high and keen to get back to winning ways.

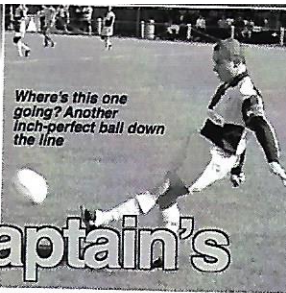
On the player front Billy took a fair bit of stick again due to his Shrek comparison and we now have Austin Healey Carter at the back for us. Perhaps he should have picked the ball up and run with it. We may have had more chance that way. I shouldn't talk about Rugby too much though as (after Sunday morning) Andy Carter will get upset...

There are a few injured players working their way back to fitness. Both James Fisher's and James Shipperley's ankle injuries are coming along which will add a bit more strength and depth to the squad, whilst Shawry managed to struggle through the game carrying a heavy knock from the following week. Not bad for a thirty-six year old!

Danny Tilbury is still a way off but perhaps his old man could step in if we're desperate?

Last week's yellow jersey award went to Danny Julienne following his attempt to catch the ball through the roof of the dugout after Andy Carter had shanked yet another one out of play. Tonight's award has not been decided yet.

Overall Danny and Shawry are top-



Where's this one going? Another inch-perfect ball down the line

Captain's Log

robin tucker
(or silky Tuch as he likes to be known)

ping the table for awards this season, with Shawry looking to retain the title from last year.

Following this Dunstable game we again have a string of away fixtures before the next home tie. A chance for me to hang my pen up for a while and take note of a few more stories for the column. Next week we are planning a night out involving bad shirts. Fred has offered to supply the whole team although I'm sure Jermaine could help him out. When we next go out the theme will be Mike Reed look-a-likes so no prize for guessing the winner.

The Wealdstone look-a-likes are certainly raising a few smiles in the changing rooms incidentally, but the best one yet is not one of the players, it has to go to Attic Man's Freddie Mercury impression last week. Classic.

Oh, and watch out Ben Alexander. Your lookalike is being compiled for the next programme...

My next notes will be for the Trophy match against Hitchin as they progressed through their replay with Wivenhoe. Again another tough tie, this time against higher opposition than we are. As Gordon suggests these are the games that will provide an indication of how good we are. Get behind us again tonight.

Cheers, Tucks

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celebrity corner

where we like to look at famous stones fans of the past & present
No.6&7: MARK BROWN, OMAR WILLIAMS

Not exactly fans, these two were actually players in the early 90s

Yes, but who are they? I've never heard of them

They only played a few games each, in the Yeading years. But they're now familiar faces on TV, not that you'd be looking at their faces

How do you mean?

How can I put this... when they played for the Stones we liked to see them with their kit on. Now it's usually off. You don't mean... Yes. Apparently they are now starring on Television X, the Fantasy Channel. Omar has his own show.

How do you know this?

Pete Worby was channel hopping the other night and caught a bit of the TVX Preview by accident.

What, like a couple of minutes?

Two and a half hours actually. He was just checking it was really Omar and Mark

Did Pauline believe him?

What do you think?

Robin also penned some excellent 'Captain's Blogs' for the Stones programme back in 2003-4. They fitted in perfectly well in that humorous publication...

for someone of my average height I won my fair share against centre forwards. Could read the game quite well and had enough pace to get me out of trouble.

And now, are you still involved in the game? Coaching, Management – any aspirations in that direction? I'm now 40 and play in the vets Sunday league for MK Irish. We have a good team and it's a good laugh playing with my mates. I still pick up the odd muscle injury now and again though, but I aim to continue for

as long as my knees hold up. It takes a good week to recover after a match now.

I have no real aspirations to coach or manage at the minute – seems like too much effort to me - although my son has started playing under 8's football this season so things may change as his career progresses! I'll keep my head down for as long as I can get away with it...

Thanks Tucks, polish the boots and we'll get the Vets together again soon....