



# walking in a wealdstone wonderland

BY TIM PARKS



There's an assist on his debut for Junior Tiensia (5) on his debut at Northwood....

...but we can't that he did look

say who scored it. Except strangely familiar :)



**Welcome back to The Vale for the first time since that sensational ending to the 2024-25 NL season.**

Three first-half goals against AFC Halifax Town in front of a boisterous 2,800 crowd back in May saved our bacon - and the survival celebrations are something we'll

remember for many, many years.

But now we must concentrate on aiming for an amazing seventh season in non-League's top flight, which would be something our special club has never before achieved. Four decades ago, despite winning the first-ever non-League double, our stay in the Gola (National) League ended after six years and the battle to better that record starts at home to newly-promoted Truro City in just three weeks' time. See fixture list (right).

It's a mouth-watering start to the season with a very real possibility that our next game (away at Halifax on August 16) will be switched to The Vale as the Yorkshire club are having problems re-laying their pitch due to a local hosepipe ban.

We still don't know if the switch is definite - or even a change to another venue in Yorkshire - which is intensely annoying at this late date. Many of our fans have already booked accommodation and train tickets to Halifax (one of our favourite weekend away destinations) which are largely unrefundable. We share their frustration.

That aside, it's an opening month that could offer a much better return than last season's abysmal start under Matty Taylor. We go to Woking on Tuesday 19th and then face fallen giants Carlisle United on

Saturday August 23 in front of what should be another big Vale crowd. It seems only yesterday that Carlisle were topping the old First Division with a win at Chelsea on opening day. (Well actually it's 52 years ago but that's recent history for me!)

**Before that we face League Two MK Dons, and then Championship side Charlton Athletic in these warm-up games following the run-out at Northwood last Saturday.**

One major change since the last programme notes was of course the exit of gaffer Neil Gibson and his No.2 Lee Jones. Our former midfielder (and interim manager the previous year) Sam Cox was quickly appointed and after a couple of months of intense player-hunting and negotiating, he must have been pleased with the stylish performance at Chestnut Avenue last Saturday - despite the three-level gap between the teams.

New signings Dylan Kadji, Sak Hassan and Junior Tiensia all looked the part and the several hundred Stones fans enjoyed their afternoon in the sun. There will be more arrivals to come (I hope!) but most of that activity will happen in the next two or three weeks... including the assembly of a management team. One or two (including new physio Georgie Turner) were at Northwood but cannot be announced just yet. However, Saj Vigneswaran (pictured above left) has been named as as the inaugural Wealdstone FC Womens manager. Welcome to the Stones, Saj, and I'm sure your wealth of experience will enable the women's team to quickly establish itself.



**A big thank you to MK Dons boss Paul Warne for bringing his League Two side to Grosvenor Vale for the first of our home friendlies, and also to Nathan Jones for bringing over the might of Charlton's Championship side for what will be**



A familiar 'trialist' hits our second goal at Northwood

**another tough test four days later (kick off 6.30pm if you're reading this before the game!)**

With our transfer business beginning ever later, Stones' gaffer Sam didn't want a congested early pre-season to interrupt training and bonding sessions with our reshaped squad - while MK Dons, for example, will have already played warm-up games against St Mirren, Hitchin (won 6-0) and National League newcomers Brackley Town. The Dons had a disappointing League Two campaign in 2024-25, finishing 19th, but new manager Warne has four League One promotions on his CV (with Rotherham, three times, and Derby County) and will be aiming for elevation to that division this season.

Charlton, meanwhile, find themselves back in the Championship on that back of that glorious play-off final win over Leyton Orient at Wembley on May 25. A single first half goal from Macauley Gillesphey - in front of a 76,000 crowd - put the Addicks back where they belong.

**And now a message from Peter Worby... what do the following have in common?**

Barry O'Sullivan, Mike & Val Weston, WFCSC, Matty Snell, Tony Paultley, Andy Richards, Raj, Darrell Parsons, Ron Platt, David Pollock, Terry Hissey, Toby Jackson, Joe Mannion, Graham Clark, Mike Pullin, Ossie Kelly, Peter & Steve Drew, Mark Snell, David Ryder, Keith Davies, Tom Johansen, Steve Charlton, Ron Moore, Jon Taffel, Ginge, Tom Marshall, Gary Smith, Dave & Carolyn Edwards, Forum Charlie, the Ingram family, Robert Barrett, Tim Parks, Stonescast, Adam Rowlands, Ian & Lynn Austin, LTB Coaching, Mick Fishman, Sarah Gowdy, APA Security, the Rawal family, Jim Sorrell, Martin & Syl Allen, James & Victor Klarfeld. Well, they are all people that John Young and I wish to thank for agreeing to either be a

# 2025/26 FIXTURES

## August

- 9 TRURO CITY (H)
- 16 FC HALIFAX TOWN (A)
- 19 WOKING (A)
- 23 CARLISLE UNITED (H)
- 25 BOSTON UNITED (A)
- 30 ROCHDALE (H)

## September

- 2 SOUTHEND UNITED (H)
- 6 SCUNTHORPE UNITED (A)
- 13 GATESHEAD (H)
- 20 MORECOMBE (A)
- 24 TAMWORTH (A)
- 27 EASTLEIGH (H)

## October

- 1 BRACKLEY TOWN (A)
- 4 ALTRINCHAM (H)
- 18 YORK CITY (A)
- 25 SUTTON UNITED (H)

## November

- 4 YEovil TOWN (A)
- 8 BRAintree TOWN (H)
- 15 HARTLEPOOL UNITED (A)
- 22 FOREST GREEN ROVERS (H)
- 29 SOLIHULL MOORS (A)

## December

- 6 TRURO CITY (A)
- 20 FC HALIFAX TOWN (H)
- 26 BOREHAM WOOD (H)
- 30 ALDERSHOT TOWN (A)

## January

- 3 CARLISLE UNITED (A)
- 17 WOKING (H)
- 21 TAMWORTH (H)
- 24 GATESHEAD (A)
- 31 MORECAMBE (H)

## February

- 7 EASTLEIGH (A)
- 10 ALTRINCHAM (A)
- 14 YORK CITY (H)
- 21 SUTTON UNITED (A)
- 24 BRACKLEY TOWN (H)
- 28 HARTLEPOOL UNITED (H)

## March

- 7 BRAintree TOWN (A)
- 14 SOLIHULL MOORS (H)
- 21 FOREST GREEN ROVERS (A)
- 25 YEovil TOWN (H)
- 28 BOSTON UNITED (H)

## April

- 3 BOREHAM WOOD (A)
- 6 ALDERSHOT TOWN (H)
- 11 ROCHDALE (A)
- 18 SCUNTHORPE UNITED (H)
- 25 SOUTHEND UNITED (A)



Match Ball Donor or a Players Kit Donor last season. And it's that time of the year again! We need Match Ball Donors and Kit Donors. Please help out and speak to either myself (Peter Worby) or John Young for further details. Our numbers are (Pete Worby) 07967698370 or (John Young) 07874846785. Come join the merry band!

Our Ball Donor for the MK Dons game (and also the upcoming pre-season games against QPR and Slough) is the Wealdstone FC Foundation, while Toby Jackson, of lapel badges fame, is match ball donor for the visit of Charlton Athletic.

**We've talked about Carlisle Utd already but the other relegated team from the EFL this summer, Morecambe, are in a plight that even namesake Eric wouldn't find funny.**

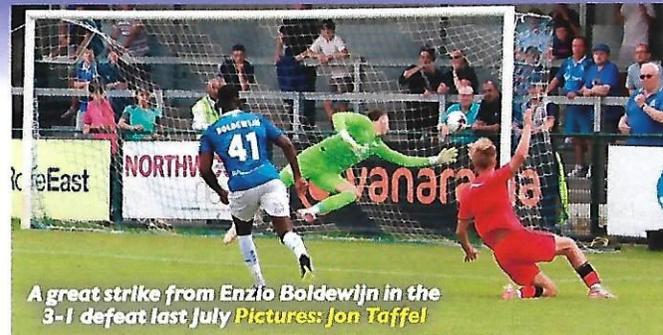
Owner Jason Whittingham was supposed to be selling the Lancashire club to Panjab Warriors, who have already paid millions to cover the club's debts, but now says he has found a new buyer which leaves the Indian consortium considering legal action...while the fans see the prospect of administration or a points deduction looming.

WFC may not be flush but at least we're well-run and solvent!

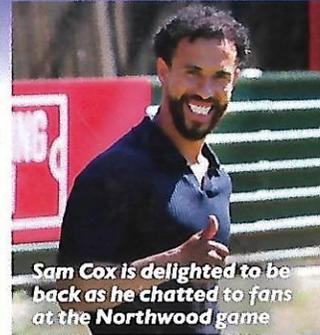
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**A WARM WELCOME**  
**TO THE DONS**  
**FROM MILTON**  
**KEYNES**



Alex Dyer sweeps in the first goal two years ago **Picture: Doug Kermit**



A great strike from Enzio Boldewijn in the 3-1 defeat last July **Picture: Jon Taffel**



Sam Cox is delighted to be back as he chatted to fans at the Northwood game

**LAST July, manager Matt Taylor was honing his line-up for the start of the National League season - just two weeks later - when MK Dons brought their League Two side to a sunny Grosvenor Vale.**

And he must have been disappointed at the eventual 3-1 defeat after shipping two soft goals in the opening 16 minutes. Stephen Wearne (who had always caused us problems for Gateshead in previous years, and will be visiting the Vale with his new club Carlisle this season) and Joe Tomlinson had the visitors cruising. Even a response from our new winger Enzio Boldewijn in the 68th minute, bringing the score back to 2-1, only provoked a fine effort from Matt Dennis hammering his shot into the top corner from 25 yards to settle the game.

**Wealdstone:** Matthews, Barrett, Cook (Woodman 72), Mariappa, Boldewijn, Georgiou (Cesay 72), Eastmond (Hutchinson 58), Simmons (Dyer 45), Miller (Dreher 72), Obiero (Trialist A 45), Adarkwa (Ashford 45).

**A YEAR before that, in July 2023 we welcomed the Dons as our first home opposition of pre-season... and that sent our minds whirring here at Program Towers.**

Had we ever played them before? MK Dons are, of course, the franchised version of the old Wimbledon FC which caused such a furore when the South London club located to Bedfordshire in 2001. That had all started in 1997 when a consortium led by music pro-

ducer Pete Winkelman (supported by Asda and IKEA) proposed a large retail development in Milton Keynes including a Football League-standard stadium.

The consortium approached Luton, Wimbledon, Crystal Palace, Barnet and Queens Park Rangers! In 2001 Wimbledon FC owners Røkke and Gjelsten appointed a new chairman, Charles Koppel, who was in favour of this idea, saying it was necessary to stop the club going out of business - and to the fury of most Wimbledon fans Koppel announced on 2 August 2001 that the club intended to relocate to Milton Keynes.

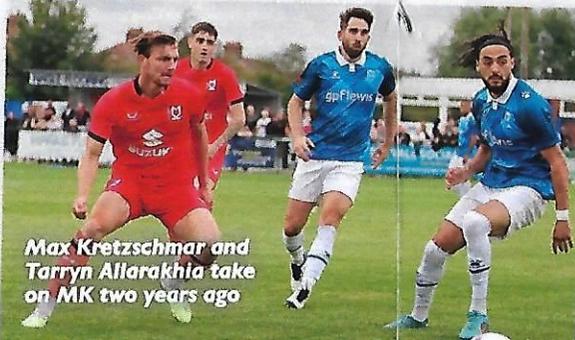
**We've only met MK Dons twice before...and club's history is so fascinating**

Championship side WFC remained at Selhurst Park while the search of a new stadium continued and in June 2003 went into administration: Winkelman decided to buy the club and arranged the temporary use of the National Hockey

Stadium in Milton Keynes, playing its first match there in September 2003. Nine months later Winkelman's Inter MK Group bought the club out of administration and announced changes to its name, badge and colours - the team was renamed Milton Keynes Dons Football Club. By this time MK Dons were in League One, and though they won promotion to the Championship in 2014 it has been a slow decline for the club since then... ending in relegation to League Two in May 2023.

There is of course rich irony and smug looks

**Left: MK Dons (in white) face Blackpool during their first season in residence at the former hockey stadium, 2004-5**



Max Kretzschmar and Tarryn Allarakhia take on MK two years ago

among the supporters of the original Wimbledon FC. In the wake of the club's controversial relocation, AFC Wimbledon was born and the phoenix club has risen from Surrey County football right through the Isthmian and National Leagues. Now of course (following play-off final victory over Walsall at Wembley in May) they are above MK Dons in the pyramid, in League One, with a brand new home of their own in Merton, just down the road from the old Plough Lane ground.

**Older Stones fans (like myself) have charted the extraordinary stories of Wimbledon and indeed Milton Keynes City over the past 50 years.**

Current MK Dons fans may not care to reflect that the area once had a fairly successful Southern League team in Bletchley Town, which went out of business in 1974 and was renamed Milton Keynes City. In the early 80s the Wimbledon FC chairman Ron Noades bought a controlling interest in the club (I wonder why?) but the lack of interest in football in the town made him bail out in 1985, when MK City went bankrupt.

The club re-emerged in the mid-90s, playing at Wolverton Town's quirky old ground in the South Midlands League - and it was there, I believe, that the Stones only other meeting with a 'Milton Keynes branded team' ever took

place. On the evening on Wednesday August 13, 1997 (three days before the Isthmian League Division Two season kicked off) Gordon Bartlett took a squad XI to Wolverton for a warm-up friendly. Precious few details are to be gleaned but, thanks to the *Elmslie Ender* fanzine and Roger Slater's Wealdstone 'bible' we know that it finished Milton Keynes City 1, Wealdstone 2 in front of a heaving crowd of 87. Maybe Ron Noades was right about the apathy of the local population!

So what happened when we finally met up with 'a Milton-Keynes-branded side' again in July 2023? Well, the first half, in particular, saw 'Stonesball' in all its glory while their fans, who turned up in good numbers expecting a comfortable win in our homely sur-

roundings, were simply mystified. How could a part-time National League side outplay them? What did it all mean to a club banking on a quick bounce-back to Level Three?

An early goal from Alex Dyer, a terrific volleyed leveller from Max Dean with 8 minutes to go and an equally smart volley from Giovanni McGregor moments later decided the game.

**Wealdstone:** Trialist A (Trialist B 66), Barker (Phillips 66), Cook (c) (Trialist E 45), Mundle-Smith (Hearn 66), Clayden (McGregor 45), Dyer (Ferguson 45), Charles (Trialist D 45), Kretzschmar (Trialist F 45), Allarakhia (Trialist G 45), Obiero (Olomola 45), Campbell (Andrews 45)

**By Tim Parks**

**OUR RECORD v MK DONS P2 W1 D0 L1 F3 A4**

**STONES KICK OFF STRONGLY AT NORTHWOOD**

**Northwood 1 Wealdstone 4:** Stones won their opening pre-season fixture in broiling 30-degree temperatures last Saturday after an impressive first half with largely last season's retained players and announced signings on show. New capture from Barrow, Junior Tiensia, crossed to allowed a familiar Trialist to make it 1-0, and another face from last season curled in the second goal after 15 minutes. Former Stone Dylan Kearney pulled one back from the spot for The Wood, 35 minutes in, before our impressive new midfielder Dylan Kadji sent a dipping shot over the home keeper a minute before the break. Another trialist scored the only goal of the second-half, a calm finish into the bottom corner in the 74th minute. We also hit the frame of the goal three times in that first half as the pressure mounted.  
**WEALDSTONE FIRST-HALF XI:** Baptiste, Cook, Woodman, Trialist A, Boldewijn, Kretzschmar, Kadji, Tiensia, Obiero, Trialist B, Adarkwa.  
**WEALDSTONE SECOND-HALF XI:** Trialist C, Trialist D, Trialist E, Trialist F, Hutchinson, Trialist G, Trialist H, Georgiou, Trialist I, Hassan, Sekyere.



**PAGE 6**  
**...AND A BIG HELLO**  
**TO THE ADDICKS**  
**FROM THE**  
**VALLEY**



**ON the face of it, you wouldn't imagine the Stones and Charlton Athletic had often crossed paths in our comparatively rich histories.**

But in fact we have faced Charlton seven times in pre-season games with the Addicks tagged as a "Charlton Athletic XI" until our most recent clash two years ago. On a surprisingly wet afternoon for late July, Stuart Maynard's Stones suffered their first defeat of an impressive pre-season by a whopping 5-0 margin against the full-strength League One visitors. Yes, we had a few triallists on show but Charlie Barker and Charles Clayden (both released by Charlton that summer and signed by the Stones) must have felt a bit rueful as the goals crashed in!

The hundreds of travelling fans celebrated in the Bulla Stand as Lloyd Jones, Panutche Camara and Scott Fraser sealed a 3-0 lead by the interval. Alfie May and Karoy Anderson later confirmed a comprehensive victory for Dean Holden's men.

A year earlier, another unbeaten Stones pre-season run was deflated by a 1-0 Charlton XI win at the Vale, our loan star from the Addicks Aaron Henry returning to

set up the only goal by Euan Williams, who gave Sam Howes no chance late on. Jordy Mongoy looked to have given Stones the lead in the first half but a very, very tight offside decision went against the rangy striker

Previous to that, Charlton came to our iconic old Lower Mead ground for pre-season warm ups in August 1987 (a preface to our relegation that year from the Conference National) which ended 2-0 in their favour, and then back on August 10 1985 when Stones were revelling in the title of the first-ever non League double winners. See Harrow Observer match report (right)

Keeper Paul Jones (a capture from Wimbledon as back up to Bob Iles) was the only unexpected face and Stones pulled off a 1-0 win over a very strong Addicks side thanks to Mark Graves' goal.

And it was another Stones' victory the first time these clubs had met in a friendly a few years' previously: August 5 1982, as Southern League Champions Wealdstone gave early warning of an impressive 82-83 campaign by beating the South Londoners 2-1, again at Lower Mead, with Roy Davies and Dennis Byatt getting the goals. **But wait - remarkably, the two clubs had clashed in league matches over 100 years ago!**

When Charlton became a senior club in 1913 they fielded a reserve side in the London League Div One and played the Stones (who had just been promoted by dint of winning London League Division Three). Charlton won both games by a 1-0 scoreline, and then after a long interruption caused by the First World War, the Addicks

turned professional and joined first the Kent League, the Southern League and then the Football League in successive seasons. The embodiment of

# 'Stones finally get their man



**GOAL: Mark Graves is on target for Stones, beating the despairing dive of Charlton 'keeper Tony Laing.**

Wealdstone 1 Charlton 0

**WEALDSTONE** have completed the signing of midfielder Derek Doyle, after a drawn out wrangle with neighbours Harrow Borough.

The two clubs had clashed over the transfer fee, with Wealdstone refusing to meet Boro's £2,000 valuation of the player. Although Doyle had been training at Lower Mead, Boro had refused to allow him to play in Wealdstone's friendlies.

But the problems have now been sorted out and Doyle signed for Stones before Saturday's friendly with Charlton for "an undisclosed fee". "We think that he will be able to perform at this level," said Wealdstone manager Brian Hall.

"But he knows that he has got to prove himself worthy of a place in the side.

"We have Greenaway and Donnellan playing well and it is up to him to seize his opportunity, show what he can do and put himself in contention. He is a good acquisition to the squad."

Doyle played his first match for Wealdstone against Charlton and slotted in well on the left-hand side of the midfield.

He covered well and most of Wealdstone's openings were forged by him until he was forced to limp off 12 minutes into the second half.

The only goal of the game was scored two minutes earlier, with Doyle setting up the chance for Mark Graves.

The previous Thursday, Wealdstone beat Orient 5-1 in their first WF Capital League match.

The match was particularly notable for a goal by Wealdstone 'keeper Bob Iles. His long punt upfield in the 16th minute deceived Orient's Mark Seckerell, bounced over his head and settled in the net.

Wealdstone (v Orient): Iles, Tapley (Perkins, 66), McCargo, Byatt, Bowgett, Greenaway, Holmes (Jones, 60), N Cordice, A Cordice, Graves, Donnellan.

Wealdstone (v Charlton): Jones, Tapley (Perkins, 65), McCargo, Byatt, Bowgett, Wainwright (N Cordice, 63), Greenaway, Holmes (Jones, 63), A Cordice (Smart, 53), Graves, Doyle (Codnor, 67).

**1985: STONES 1 ADDICKS 0**

**Charlton on the attack in the friendly at the Vale two years ago**



ambition!

Their reserve side re-appeared in the London League, and on November 10 1919 Wealdstone and Charlton drew 2-2 at the Valley - and in the return at Lower Mead on Saturday February 7 the Stones were 3-0 winners with 'Badger' Kirby, Hobbs and Durham getting the goals.

But these were strange times for Charlton Athletic. The club's

Valley stadium, with its 75,000 capacity was seen as too big and in an effort to increase crowds they decided in 1923 to attempt a merger with the exotically-named Catford Southend of the Kent League. This South London club (nothing to do with the Essex Shrimpers, by the way) had its own smaller 'The Mount' ground, the polar opposite to the sunken Valley as it was perched on the side of a

hill. That 1923-24 season was a spectacular disaster - the Football League banned the merger (despite Charlton taking the first step of abandoning their traditional red and white in favour of Catford's light and dark blue stripes) and then biblical rainfall caused the new terraces and stands to slide down the muddy slope towards Laleham Road. The ground was unusable for several weeks and at-

tendances were disappointing... a bit of an understatement as Charlton's 3rd team (still playing at The Valley) were pulling in bigger crowds than the first team!

The adventure lasted just the one season before Charlton moved back home.

**OUR RECORD v CHARLTON**  
**P10 W4 D1 L5 F9 A13**