

R.I.P. Derrick Draffan

Popular member of Sid Cann's squad passes away.



Wycombe Wanderers Ex-Players Association are sad to report the death of one of their founding members. Derrick Draffan died at his home in Little Kimble last week - surrounded by his family – only days after being diagnosed with leukaemia and just four months after celebrating his 86th birthday.

Derrick was a popular member of Sid Cann's hugely successful squads, spending six years at Loakes Park from 1955. A speedy, combative winger, he was unlucky to be competing for a regular first team place alongside such stars as Len Worley, Frank Smith, Mickey Rockell, Jack Tomlin, Vince Free and Dennis Way.

He made just 11 senior appearances but was a regular in the club's all-conquering reserve side which many reckoned was the equal of most other Isthmian League first teams. He also played for his local village team; had one season alongside big mate Dennis Atkins at Berkhamsted and another with Dennis Syrett at Oxford City.

A good all-round sportsman, he played cricket for his local team Prestwood. He was also very good golfer, a highly-thought of member of Ellesborough which he once captained before becoming President. They lowered the clubhouse flag to half-mast this weekend as their sign of respect to a popular long-standing member.

He displayed his golfing talents at every WWEPA Golf Day, winning several prizes alongside such good friends as Jack Tomlin and Jim Truett. Derrick also took over from Dick Tunmer in organising a separate golf day for ex-players.

This took place at Ellesborough. As everyone got older, this evolved into a lunch, held regularly at The Bull at Bisham where players from the 1950s and 60s got together annually to remember the good old days. This event always included players from the 1957 FA Amateur Cup Final squad. The last was in October and attracted Wembley heroes Dennis Syrett, Mike Wicks, Jim Truett and Len Worley as well as many other former teammates.

He was extremely well known around the Prestwood area where he took over running Draffan's Store from his Mum & Dad - Mary and Dick - who had opened the shop when moving down from Consett in County Durham where Derrick was born on January 18th, 1934.

Derrick leaves a daughter Nicola, son Richard and four grandchildren – Genevieve, Richard, Sally & Mark – along with stepdaughter Pippa and her children Jax & Billy. Wife Jackie passed away 12 years ago, and first wife Shirley died in July 2018.

The thoughts of everyone at WWEPA are with them all. Because of the Corona Virus lockdown, only close family will be able to attend the funeral when a date is decided. We will keep everyone posted on behalf of the family.

John D Taylor WWEPA

Main Picture: Derrick Draffan with his teammates who won the Isthmian League Reserve title in 1955-56. Front (l-r): Ray Howson, Frank Smith, Dennis Atkins, Derrick Draffan, Dennis Way. Back: Jack Hathaway (Trainer), Ron Stagg, Ken Crook, Roly Kipping, Arthur Burgess, Dave Worley, Dave Twitchen, Bill Nobbs.

Below: four of that same side turned up for last October's Wycombe Wanderers' reunion lunch at The Bull at Bisham along with other old colleagues. Front (l-r): Arthur Burgess, Dick Tunmer, Derrick Draffan, Jim Truett, Ray Howson, John McCullum. Back: Vince Free, Len Worley, Mike Wicks, Alan Hutchinson, Dennis Atkins, Mike Brown, Martin Priestley, Dennis Syrett.

