



A terribly sad end to 2021 for WWEPA with the loss of two more valued members, adding to the massive list of departures since the horrid Covid lockdown began back in March 2020. That staggering total was taken to 20 with the deaths this week of Gary Lester and Dave Robertson, both long-term members of the Ex-Players Association. We remember them at this sad time along those we lost earlier. We hope their families will eventually be able to look back at the good times they had in our company and at the Football Club which dominated so much of their lives.

The distinguished list includes Mickey Holifield, Jack Timberlake, Derrick Draffan. Jim Truett, Peter Roystone, John Reardon, Arthur Burgess, Mike Wicks, Ian Barkus, Dave Springell, Dave Worley, Ron Rafferty, Sandi Derben, Cliff Trott, Debbie Anning, Billy Gallacher, Bernard Warden, Tony Thompson, Dave Robertson and Gary Lester.

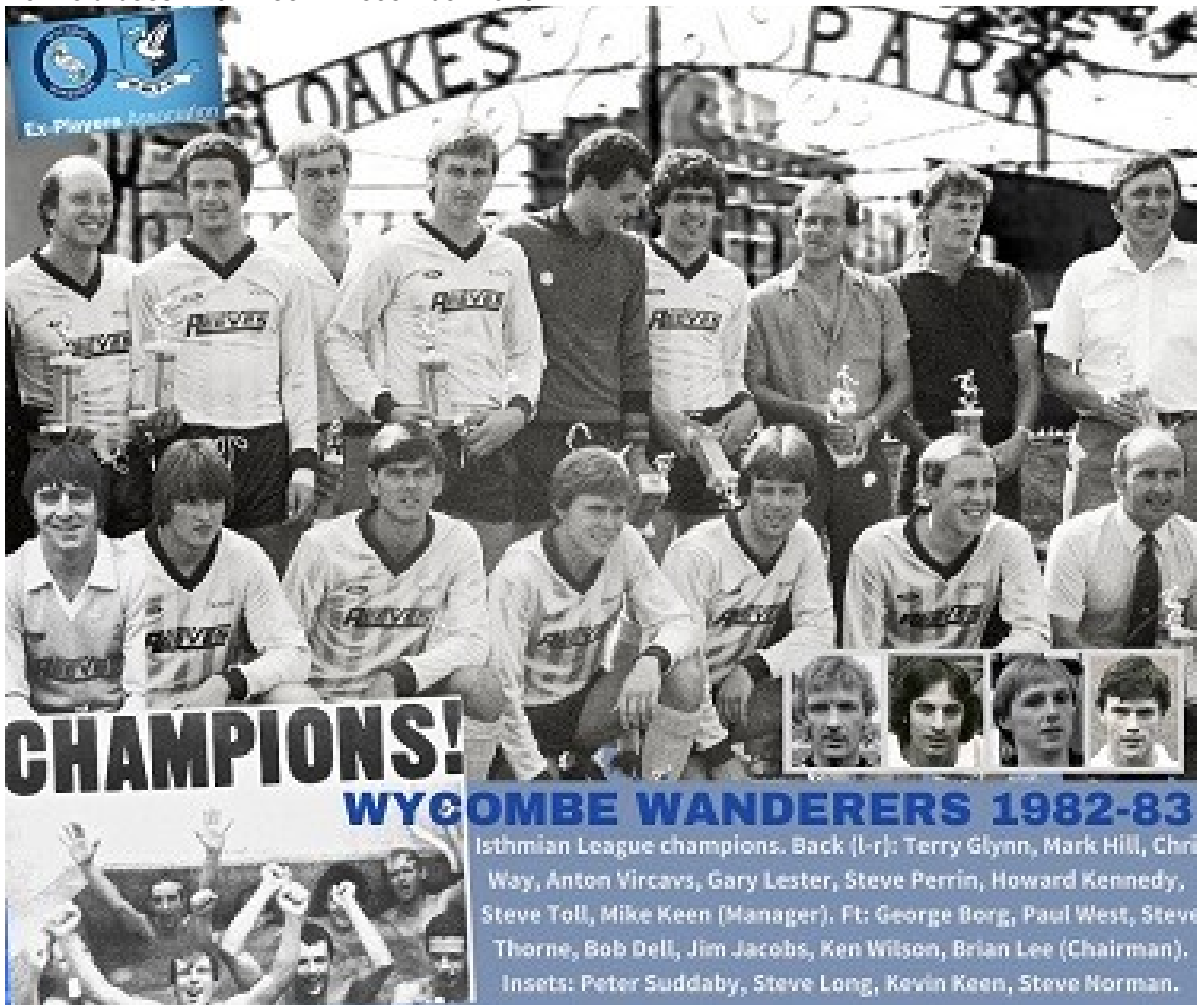
When it's safe to do so, Wycombe Wanderers have offered facilities to celebrate the lives of those who played a part – large or small – in forming the fabric of the club we love so much. Tributes to our most recent departures are below. But we will remember them all.

John D Taylor (WWEPA)

Lester death stuns Blues



Gary Lester feted by former players on his return to Wycombe to pick up his WWEPA Life Membership from old boss Brian Lee in December 2019



The glory days as a title-winning player in the 1980s.

A regular in both title-winning sides of the 1980s, Gary Lester is second behind only John Maskell in the Blues' appearances chart as goalkeeper. His 521 games at Loakes Park puts him in twelfth spot in the all-time list. Over 11 years, he earned the plaudits from a legion of fans and a well-deserved testimonial against Spurs in 1989.

Those stats led to him picking up a WWEPA Lifetime membership which was originally announced in November 2019. Gary was still working as a volunteer for a charity in Romania and couldn't attend our annual dinner when his achievements were honoured that night alongside those of Bob Dell and Mark West, two other 80s heroes.

When he moved back to the UK to live in Largs in Western Scotland, Gary was delighted to travel down to Adams Park to receive his award and to find Bob was amongst the ex-players to welcome him 'home.' He received his award from Brian Lee, former manager and chairman during his stint at Loakes Park. Brian described Gary as an ideal club man, a loyal servant and a hugely consistent goalkeeper who played a major role in the club's achievements for over a decade.

Bob Dell was amongst old teammates shocked at the unexpected news of his passing. "We joined Wycombe at the same time, him coming from Chalfont and me from Prestwood – two local lads trying to make our name in the game. It was a great era in the club's history with two Isthmian League titles, a League Cup win, a run to the FA Trophy semi-final and a couple of Berks & Bucks Cup victories. Gary was instrumental in all of this." Other former colleagues were quick to add their tributes.

John Maskell: I always knew when he first joined the Blues Gary would go on to be an excellent goalkeeper. He was a manager's dream, safe pair of hands, brave, but above all he was so consistent. Liked and respected by all his teammates.

Jim Jacobs: RIP Gary top keeper, Great memories of you mate.

Jim Melvin (WW Coach): I worked with Gary on joining Wycombe and as well as being an excellent keeper, he was just a lovely guy with a very keen sense of humour. I am so saddened and sorry to hear this dreadful news. RIP Gary and God bless.

Steve Guppy: Shocked to hear about Gary. A top guy with a great sense of humour. Such sad news.

Matt Crossley: Top man, was Gary. He had a lot of time for me when I first signed. Sad news.

Rod Lavers: I am completely stunned at the awful news. During my time as groundsman at the club Gary was a good friend and always ready with some jovial comment about the pitch. He was an outstanding goalkeeper and certainly instrumental in helping the club to many honours during the 1980's, playing behind a resolute defence under a number of different managers.

David Jones (Ex-WW Physio): This is such a dreadful shock. When I arrived at the club, Gary stood out as a very cheerful character, an excellent goal 'keeper and always had a twinkle in his eye for fun.

WWEPA mourn Dave Robertson



WWEPA were shocked to learn of the death of long-time supporter and enthusiastic member Dave Robertson only a short time after being diagnosed with cancer. David was a director of Wycombe Wanderers Trust, previously served on the boards of the Football Club and the Sports & Education Trust and oversaw the running of the women's football section of the club.

He was a regular in our ex-players box at Adams Park and attended all of our functions including the golf and bowls tournaments, our quiz and annual dinners. He was immensely popular with players old and new. Shocked by his passing at the age of 73, Wanderers' legends were quick to pay their respects.

Keith Ryan and Keith Scott rode with Dave on the 'Football To Amsterdam' cycle challenge to the Dutch capital back in 2016. Rhino said: "I am deeply saddened to hear the news. I spent a wonderful weekend with him as we cycled to raise money for Prostate Cancer. He was a warm, kind and engaging companion. He showed great courage to complete the 140-mile ride, as I know he did in his fight against cancer. His passion for the football club that we both love was always so evident. He will be sadly missed. All my love to his family and friends."

John Maskell (WWEPA President): During my association with the football club Dave was one of the nicest people I ever met. Lovely man who was a great supporter of WWEPA, he will be sorely missed.

Anthony Stewart: He used to say I reminded him of Ledley King which is a massive compliment. David was a great man with a warm heart.

Steve Brown: So sad to hear the news. David was a man full of enthusiasm and always made time for people, along with all things Wycombe Wanderers."

Sam Wood: Such a lovely man, my thoughts go out to his family.

Paul Hayes: A wonderful man to have around the place. I'll always remember he went out of his way to make sure I signed in 2014. I'll always be grateful he did.

Lee Harrison (Wycombe Coach): One of the kindest and warmest people, who made my first time at the club so enjoyable. He'll be missed by so many.

Max Kretzschmar: Such a great guy. Sat with my dad and the manager on my first long term deal with the club. The club was not as strong then as it is today. A bit of a mess really. Wycombe Wanderers first and foremost. He will be sorely missed."

Don Woodward (WWFC Chairman 2012-14): David was one of a kind, the nicest of men. Not many

people will know how hard he battled to take the club through to fan ownership and beyond. He was responsible for helping Gareth with many key signings at a time the club had very little funding to play with. Above all a true gentleman and one of the kindest I have ever known.

Vince Faulkner (WWEPA): A pleasure to be in his company, a true gentleman in all aspects and will be sorely missed.

Paul Lewis (Chairboys on the Net): David's passion for Wycombe Wanderers was 100% but it was always with a smile on his face and the care of the supporters at heart.

Phil Catchpole (BBC Three Counties Radio): David was Wycombe Wanderers through and through and an absolute gentleman. He'll be greatly missed.

John Bignell (WWEPA): A privilege to have known David and served with him on the Trust Board. He will be sorely missed at WWEPA events and matches. A really special person.

David & Josephine Cook (WWFC): Another dedicated Wycombe supporter, and strong director within the Trust. Life is so cruel, especially after losing his wife to the same disease.



THREE WISE MEN

A slightly lighter note to end our final Newsletter of 2021. Congratulations to former teammates Keith Ryan and Danny Senda for recent coaching appointments. Rhino takes over at his local club, Flackwell Heath, while Danny has joined Charlton Under-23s. And a special word for Matt Bloomfield who is celebrating his 18th year with Wycombe, having been signed by Tony Adams back in December 2003. Merry Christmas to you & all our members and friends. Hope 2022 is a lot better for us all.