



instantly recognisable club sides in the world. Its kit, its stadium, its famous players. Everything that football on that continent represents. Now, the kit wasn't solely intended to bring this comparison, and its creator will tell you that there are many teams dressed in yellow and blue. However, with our history and our far-reaching international fanbase, it wasn't long before our Argentinian friends also noticed us.

Known for our friendly welcome, today we host a group of Boca fans, who not only have had their interest in our club piqued, and now we hope they fully adopt us as their second club. Dare we say that many follow our progress given how our world was turned upside down at the turn of the century.

The Boca UK fans are enjoying their visit today that has included a friendly set of



five-a-side matches on our all-weather pitch, a full stadium tour, an exchange of replica shirts and pennants, as well as being part of filming to document their visit and an appearance on Dons TV before the game.

We are also confident they will enjoy the food stalls before kick-off which has its selection of Argentinian fare! The fans will be grouped together in the stadium for today's game and I'm sure they'll be making a lot of noise.

Sebastian Dieguez heads up the Boca UK group and has this message:

"We're thrilled to be connecting with the Dons! We both have this shared passion for the game and, more importantly, these colours that bring us together across borders. We can't wait to see our relationship grow."

For us at WISH, today marks the start of what we hope will be a new phase of growth for us and the Club. We know we have many fans around the world, and some of those have their unique supporter groups. We want to try and bring all of these together

and recognise our worldwide appeal. With this in mind please keep an eye out for future communications on how we can make AFC Wimbledon a worldwide force!

As usual, if you can donate to us, to help with future WISH projects, then please do so using the QR code here:



HANDS ACROSS THE WORLD: A TASTE OF LATIN AMERICA

When the playing strip was released for this season during the summer, it was an instant hit – just ask

our club store team – and also bore a resemblance to a certain team in South America! Thoughts immediately turned to imagine if we could match their swagger and style.

Of course, that team is Boca Juniors, one of the most



FAREWELL TO A LEGEND

Earlier this month Wimbledon Football Club lost one of its most illustrious supporters, Mick Pugh.



Mick will have been known to many of you, as a friendly face with a character that shone through the crowd. He was not just a fan of the club; he was often regarded as part of its foundations. He would champion the club and its many causes whenever he could and was never short of a tale to tell.

Often seen around the ground helping out in many ways, as you will see from the images on these pages, Mick was a beacon of what we all stand for. His welcoming



smile was not just reserved for past players, but also for those who visited the club for the first time. He was very much one of us as fans, but also what helped us all tick. Matchdays and beyond, there

was nothing that he would not do to help.

The praise you will read here is just a snapshot from those who knew and worked closely with Mick, but we are sure that if you encountered him you will have your recollection of his infectious spirit.



We start with some words from Club President, Dickie Guy...

"Mick Pugh, if ever there was a true Don, it was Mick. A great servant of the club, a long-standing volunteer, a co-founder of WISH, and the man for contacting ex-players in running the Wimbledon Old Players Association.

"My wife and I were fortunate enough to visit Mick a week before he passed away. Although he was in considerable discomfort and could barely speak only in a whisper, he was still jovial and hadn't lost his sense of humour. A very brave and strong man, he will be sorely missed. The world will be a sadder place without Mick Pugh. RIP Mick."



Mick's reach was far and wide and often left his mark on people from all over the world. We had a message sent to us from America:

"Learned the incredibly sad news that our family friend, legendary AFC Wimbledon supporter and volunteer Mick Pugh passed away. A chance meeting on a flight to Iceland landed Mick in our lives and he easily spun us into lifelong supporters of the football club and custodians of the greatest story in the world of sports.



"Mick exemplified all the joy and human value that can come from a community-focused sports club, especially in this age of hyper-inflated teams and leagues. Mick was well known for his volunteer work, even as he battled serious illness for over a decade. I want to honour

Mick for the kindness he showed my family and for the joy he brought to our lives. His spirit will be showing folks the way home to Plough Lane for ages to come."

Michael Padmanathan worked closely with Mick on various projects around the club:

"When any club grows organically, the infrastructure is never prioritised to look after volunteers. It's the 'senior players' who keep things ticking along. Not because they have a fancy position but by leading by example. So for me, 12 January 2024 will make the end of an era and one where decades of service have been central to our identity and where we are today.

"We worked on three things over the last 12 years. He was the lead in the Common Ground Film. I do not remember him needing more than one take. We also reunited the seven remaining members of the 1963 team in Cannizaro House. We sat around a table and talked about the old days for two hours. Mick was in his element. Unsurprisingly, I have seen Mick act as the Club Ambassador on many occasions including Roy Law's funeral.



"There was the pitch team of course. I remember there was a group of us trying to get the pitch ready for the

Oxford game on Boxing Day. Four days of draining Kingsmeadow manually. Somehow it went ahead. We were dreadful. Lost 0-3. Mick mockingly wept loudly on my shoulder at full-time on the pitch.

"Then there was WiSH. He never missed a meeting, most times had a prop and an ice-breaker joke and with Chris Hutchinson, we had two box to box midfielders who could do pretty much everything.

"On a personal note, on many cold evenings, he would call Ann and say 'I am just going with Michael for a curry. He is cold' or 'I will be late just taking Michael back with his bike in the car as he is cold'. Mick would normally be wearing shorts and a T-shirt (normally navy blue). He was a storyteller. Every game there would be a new story. What amazed me is his passion and knowledge on such a range of subjects – from Wales to Mitcham, from fossils to growing tomatoes. About eight years ago, I wanted to go to an amateur film showing of the Miner's Strike near Highbury on a cold Tuesday evening. No one would go! I knew Mick would as I dialled his landline. We had a great time. Not surprisingly, he wanted people to have a good time. Henceforth, my parting picture speaks volumes."



The aforementioned Chris Hutchinson also gave his memories and thoughts.

“What a pleasure and honour it has been to know Mick. For me, he really does personify what it is to be a Volunteer, and more so a Volunteer connected with our football club. Despite chronic health conditions which worsened over time, he remained positive, cheerful and an inspiration.

“He was as equally full of appreciation and pride in his family as he was full of fun and knowledge. Mick had that rare quality of being direct and friendly, which is why he is so widely respected. He has achieved so much and has left so many legacies.



“With WiSH, I worked on many projects with Mick, including our cherished WTID gates. We needed to remove the paint that was covering the graffiti. Mick brought a bottle that contained a secret ‘potion’ that might help do this. Fortunately, water did the job, and despite considering drinking the contents of the bottle, it returned safely home with Mick.

“As his health deteriorated, more recently I would visit him, Ann, and sometimes Tom at home. At times we’d put the world to rights (more often AFC Wimbledon and WiSH-wise). But more than anything they included

stories and laughter, with a few friendly insults thrown in! This remained true for my last visit, which turned out to be his last day with us. Mick became a good friend; my kind of person and I will remember Mick often and with a smile.”



John Lynch rounds off our homage to Mick and summarises what he meant personally.

“Mick has volunteered for the club for nearly 60 years, thousands of hours given across many different roles all for the love of Wimbledon Football.



“A father, husband, teacher, and a great and special friend to many of us. Someone I'd become very close to having stayed with him and the family many times, more than a friend, someone I valued, admired and respected for all that he'd done and all that he was as a human being – reliable, resolute, ethical and dedicated to whatever was needed as a co-founder and member of WiSH, Wimbledon Football and WOPA the old players association which he doggedly kept alive during all the Club's changes over the years.

“Wherever your spirit is Mick part of it will remain in our hearts with your legacy preserved.”

Mick was a proud family man, and his children and grandchildren were a constant in his life. Sons Tom, and Sean with his partner Mel, and Alex with partner Elaine who have their daughter Josephine. Daughter Elizabeth with her husband Pete and their two daughters, Arabella and Olivia.

Ann Pugh, his wife, led the first tributes to Mick with some words that were first published on our Official Website, they are printed here now to wrap up our warm sentiments to a man whose legacy will live on at the club.

“All at AFC Wimbledon will be saddened to learn that Mick passed away having suffered serious illness for several years with courage, positivism and his unique brand of humour coupled with bloody-mindedness.

“A Wimbledon fan for most of his life, Mick was active in many aspects of the club, from sponsoring junior teams to being Chairman of Wimbledon Old Players Association (WOPA), co-founder of WiSH volunteering for over 50 years across so many areas of the club.

“He wrote many heartfelt tributes to former players, volunteers and fans for the programme. But for now, let's remember his indomitable spirit, humour and influence on the club he was so proud of.

“A true Womble.”

