

WiSH



Batsford Reunion To Mark 50 Years Since Historic Match

The Club is hosting an extra special event on Friday 31 January with true Wimbledon greets to be reunited for a celebration of THAT match versus Leeds United in 1975.

For Wimbledon fans back then and Dons who wish to find out more about a unique time in our history, it'll be an unforgettable night.

The Batsford Reunion – named after the Wimbledon manager who created a heroic team that defied the odds by holding their league champions Leeds in their own backyard – will bring together almost the entire starting 11 from that memorable day.

There's sure to be one or two stories that supporters may not have heard before – a Q&A taking place with all of the squad from 1975.

Back then, Wimbledon were in the Southern League, so it created national headlines when the Dons held Leeds, and for the first time since the following players will be all together:

Dickie Guy, Ian Cooke, Jeff Bryant, Bob Stockley, Billy Edwards, Roger Connell, Kieran Sommers, Micky Mahon, Dave Bassett, Selwyn Rice.



Maureen Batsford (on behalf of Allen) and Gloria Donaldson (on behalf of Dave) will also be joining us, plus goalkeeper Mike Kelly from the 1963 FA Amateur Cup winning team.

John Lynch, Managing Director at Wimbledon in Sporting History (WiSH), said: "It was a revolution that Allen Batsford started in the summer of 1974, having just won the FA Amateur Cup with Walton & Hershham.

"The early 70s were very difficult for Wimbledon and at one point the Club was subject to interest from a consortium led by George Best. Before Allen took over the reins we had only seven contracted players, but he changed everything. Bringing in players including Dave Bassett, the whole spirit of the Club was transformed on the way to reaching the Football League for the first time.

"We've got virtually the whole of the starting 11 joining us and they've never been all in the same room for half a century, so this will be a one-off event.

"It'll be an unmissable night for people from that era, or younger Dons who want to find out more about a club icon who was the catalyst for Wimbledon to transition from non-league into the league."

There'll also be one or two revealing insights from the squad back then, plus a few funny stories from an era when football was rather different!

John added: "We'll also hear about the two Wombles turning up unexpectedly on the pitch at Elland Road – to say Allen Batsford was unhappy would be a massive understatement. We'll also hear more about the presentation of a Haggis to Billy Bremner after the game!"

Funds from a raffle and an auction will be donated to WiSH for stadium and community projects, with proceeds from ticket sales to the Club.

Raffle prizes will include new posters of the Batsford Arms – the pub inside the old Plough Lane stadium – replica shirts from that historic season and special merchandise.

Scan the QR code to buy your tickets now!



Worldwide Wombles Weekend

Calling all international Dons!

We've arranged an extra special celebration to mark your fantastic support – and we're giving you plenty of notice to join us at our wonderful Plough Lane home, The Cherry Red Records Stadium.

'Worldwide Wombles Weekend' is scheduled to coincide with the home match versus Salford on 15 February 2024, but there are plenty of other reasons to entice you to SW17.

Starting on Friday with a 'meet and greet' with Dons heroes from the past, the schedule of events will continue with a stadium tour on the Saturday morning (accompanied by a club legend), before an opportunity to enjoy our fantastic food park – complete with delicacies from all over the globe!

Then you'll settle down to watch the big game from an area in the stadium dedicated to international supporters, offering the opportunity to proudly show off your flag.

So far, we've got Dons supporters coming along from the following countries: Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, France, Bulgaria, Poland, Argentina, Germany, Italy, Spain.

Wimbledon in Sporting History have worked with the Club to bring

together Dons supporters from all around the world for the first time – and to promote Wimbledon as 'global ambassadors'.

WiSH Managing Director John Lynch said: "Our research shows that Wimbledon fans have started their own supporter groups in 34 different countries – you may have seen pictures on social media of the 'SweDons' and 'Wombles Down Under'.

"We're aiming to build upon this by doing something no other club has done before by bringing together supporters from all around the world – creating a unique atmosphere at our fantastic home. We want to give them something special back, so that they feel a big part of the Wimbledon story.

"Following the visit by Boca Juniors fans, which gained worldwide attention last year, we want to create an annual International Weekend. As well as showing off the support we have from so many different countries, we want them to go back home and spread the word about our unique club – acting as global ambassadors for the Dons!"

As part of this, a limited edition international badge will be gifted to supporters when they visit, along with a matchday programme special and our museum will feature international displays – offering memorable photo opportunities.

The event is aimed at supporter groups from around the world and places can be reserved for £45 each from our online ticket shop using the code 'GLOBALDONS'.

Securer your spot now by scanning the QR code!

For queries, email info@wimbledoninsportinghistory.co.uk

