



Terry Burton

Still passing on his extensive football knowledge as a consultant working for the Premier League in an advisory capacity on Youth Development issues and a member of the PGMOL evaluation panel, Terry Burton is also a League Managers

Association mentor. His lifetime in the game began as a teenage defender at Arsenal, where he captained the Gunners' FA Youth Cup winning side in 1971, before being surprisingly released and his modest playing career thereafter was spent at non-league level with the likes of Folkestone Town and Hayes.

But it was coaching where Terry's passion lay and he returned to Highbury in 1979 as youth team coach, bringing through many youngsters including Tony Adams. Don Howe promoted him to first-team coach in 1986 and then George Graham placed him in charge of the reserves a year later. After managing Wealdstone for three months, Burton got the reserve team coach post at Wimbledon beginning a long association with the Dons and a reunion with Howe plus another former Arsenal man Bobby Gould. As Terry adds: "My first 'live' Wimbledon game at the Club was the 1988 FA Cup Final, so it was an interesting summer after that!" Terry revamped the productive academy, keeping a steady flow of home-grown players into the first team squad and moved up to become assistant manager under Joe Kinnear.

"Joe was a very charismatic character, who could handle the players well and I handled the coaching. It was a good balance. And we found our way of making it work." Three top ten finishes in the Premier League and two domestic cup semi-finals were testament to the job they did and his abilities were further recognised when he became Technical Director, but when Kinnear's replacement Egil Olsen was dismissed with two games of the 1999/2000 campaign remaining, Burton was given the unenviable task of preserving Wimbledon's Premier League status. Despite the relegation that followed, Burton was handed the manager's job permanently and achieved respectable finishes – playing a short passing game – in both of his seasons in charge, despite the off-the-field backdrop of the Milton Keynes move. Burton was fervently against it and the stress manifested itself in



a burst appendix causing him to be hospitalised.

Matters came to a head at the end of the 2001/02 campaign when Charles Koppel instructed him not to play defender Peter Hawkins because his 25th appearance would trigger a bonus payment the Club didn't want to pay. Terry relates what happened next. "I told him there was no way I'd do that. The dressing room would know. He said there would be trouble if I played him. I replied there will be trouble if I don't. As it turned out, I played Hawkins and got the sack the following week. Then I went down to show my face at the AFC Wimbledon open trials on Wimbledon Common that summer and told the press 'This is fantastic and a chance for Wimbledon supporters to have their own club again'. From then on, Koppel and 'WFC' stopped paying me the remainder of my contract and didn't pay me another penny. This was the kind of spite that these people had towards anyone that spoke out to say it was a bad idea to move

to Milton Keynes and take a club away from its supporters."

Terry's coaching career took him on to various roles at Watford, Cardiff City, West Bromwich Albion, Sheffield Wednesday and back to Arsenal once again. But he never forgot AFC Wimbledon, keeping in touch, looking out for our results and making occasional visits to Kingsmeadow. "I was so pleased to see Neal Ardley – someone I coached as a 14-year-old – return as Dons manager and it's great that the dream they all had on the Common has come true." And we are very pleased to see you today Terry, welcome back to Plough Lane!

