



WOPA

MIKEY HASWELL

When AFC Wimbledon manager Dave Anderson signed Chelmsford City's Player of the Year Mikey

Haswell in the summer of 2006, he'd already seen what the talented young left-back could do first hand as the Clarets did the double over the Dons in some keenly contested Ryman Premier Division meetings.

After putting pen to paper, the defender said: "It's like picking up where I'd left off five years earlier." What Haswell meant by that was that he'd had two spells in the Wimbledon FC youth system and even been a ball boy at Selhurst Park for the Dons home games.

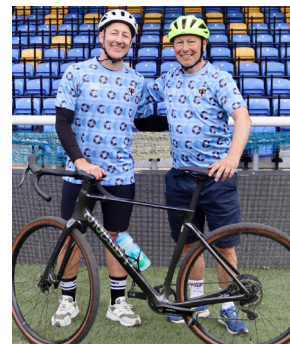
But after moving on to the Southend United academy, it was at Grays Athletic, then a 15-game loan spell with Romford in 2001/02 where the Walthamstow-born number three got his senior debut, before joining Wingate & Finchley and then making the step up to Chelmsford.

It was a well-timed move to AFC Wimbledon though. He made 39 appearances in 2006/07 as they escaped the Ryman League at the third attempt after beating Staines in the Play-off Final and then a further 16 in Blue Square South, before being displaced by the emerging Chris Hussey. "Week after week we'd had to play really fired-up teams all determined to put one over us. I was exhausted at the end of the season. But we had some excellent players and I was particularly pleased for Mark De Bolla, who was a friend of mine, that he scored the decisive goal against Staines.

"I have a picture of me with my arms loft, trying to summon up the energy to run over and join in the celebrations. Those games are the reason many of us wanted to play for the Club. Big crowds, passionate support and the chance to progress."



Competing pressures of the Dons quickly going full time in the National League and his burgeoning day job in the women's fashion industry (and now as a Senior Procurement



Manager for ASOS) were also a factor when he was invited for a trial at Brighton & Hove Albion in the summer, but Mikey eventually remained part-time and rejoined Grays and then Billericay where a badly-broken ankle in a pre-season friendly saw him sit out long spells.

Getting into fundraising, he recently completed a 50-mile cycle Velo and Blue challenge for the AFC Wimbledon Foundation, riding from Plough Lane to Priestfield



at Gillingham and he is a welcome guest this afternoon, here with his wife Tori, daughter Florence and young son Orlando – attending his first-ever football match. "I regard myself as a fan these days and get along to games whenever I can – proudly wearing my WOPA badge. It's great to see so many of

the same faces still here, like Erik, Ivor and Trev and I'm still friends with some of the fans too," he told us.

So welcome back to Plough Lane Mikey – oh and Happy 42nd Birthday – you didn't think we'd forget that, did you?!

