

# AFC WIMBLEDON

*On This Day*



*History, Facts & Figures  
from Every Day of the Year*

**GARY JORDAN AND STEPHEN CRABTREE**

*Foreword by Ian Cooke*

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# Introduction

Everyone will look back to certain points in life and particular dates that stand out as landmark moments. The day they overachieved at sports day, the day they broke an arm or leg, their first real date, kiss, and perhaps eventual marriage. Going on their first holiday abroad, buying their first car and moving out into their first home. All life-changing moments that will live long in the memory. This is not really different when it comes to sporting events, whether witnessed on television, or live in person at a stadium or arena. That feeling of euphoria at the last-minute winner, or the despair when you concede that penalty against your rivals. It sticks in your mind until the next time, the next big moment. Sometimes they don't just happen on the pitch. They may happen off it when a favoured player or manager leaves the club, or even worse, a boardroom split that sees the unimaginable occur.

These events may not be life-changing to everyone, some people will react differently in certain circumstances, but nevertheless they are still moments in time that need to be preserved and cherished. Over the years, Wimbledon Football Club has seen its fair share of highs. The club has always thrived on being the underdog, especially when it came of age during the 1970s with famous FA Cup runs where players became household names, and illustrious foes were knocked off their mighty perches. The flipside of this is that over time the fans have also had to fight for the very survival of the club, and stave off mergers and relocations, until of course

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one famous move was allowed to happen. Never to be beaten though, the underdogs prevailing again, the Wombles were not going to give up and from that terrible summer in 2002 the club was born again to tell new stories and create further historical moments.

We hope that in the coming pages you will be taken on a journey that raises your eyebrows and saddens your heart. You might remember the day you were there and recall that special date; others will be thrilled by the history being told. The outcome is the same – this is your club's history, and you should all be pleased to be part of it. Enjoy!

**AFC  
WIMBLEDON**

*On This Day*

**JANUARY**

### **1st January 1988**

There was talk of European football in SW19 after a 2-1 victory over Derby County – the win was their fourth in a row over the holiday period – moved the Dons into the First Division's top five. With the score at 1-1 in the 61st minute, John Fashanu beat England goalkeeper Peter Shilton with surely the most powerful header ever seen at Plough Lane.

### **1st January 2005**

Dave Anderson brought a breathalyser into training and tested nine of the players after a Ryman League Division One Hogmanay horror show against Whyteleafe the previous day. 'I thought they were drunk the way they played as we lost,' the manager said. 'I was quite impressed with them actually as all of them managed to outsmart the machine.'

### **2nd January 1978**

A disastrous day trip to Swansea led to the resignation of Allen Batsford. Defender Dave Galvin was left behind when the team coach pulled out of an M4 service station after lunch and the reshuffled Dons put up limited resistance in losing 3-0 to the high-flying Swans. In the aftermath, the manager resigned, stating interference from his chairman Ron Noades had made his job impossible.

### **2nd January 2016**

The Dons showed their determination to make 2016 a promotion year by winning 4-1 at Cambridge United thanks to goals from Paul Robinson, Jon Meades, Lyle Taylor and Ade Azeez. 'It doesn't get much better than that,' manager Neal Ardley said. 'In the second half there was only one team that was going to win. We were breathtaking.'

### **3rd January 2000**

TV replays showed that Ben Thatcher had clearly elbowed Sunderland's Nicky Summerbee in the face during the build-up to the only goal as the Dons' 11th game without defeat at Selhurst Park ensured they began the new millennium seven points clear of the Premier League's relegation places. 'If my elbow caught him, I apologise. It was certainly unintentional,' the left-back commented.

### **3rd January 2004**

Looking to reach Wembley, the Combined Counties League Dons put three goals past BAT Sports at Kingsmeadow. ‘They are an impressively run club but there is no way in a million years they are going to win the FA Vase this year,’ Sports boss Andy Leader claimed. ‘There are far bigger and better teams around in the northern section and they will shortly have to face one of them.’

### **4th January 1975**

The part-time Dons stunned the football world by becoming the first non-league team since the Second World War to win an FA Cup tie on a top-flight ground. Mick Mahon’s 49th-minute strike and a series of fine saves by Dickie Guy helped the Southern Leaguers to win at First Division Burnley with home manager Jimmy Adamson saying, ‘They are a most professional side.’

### **4th January 2014**

Debutant Charlie Wyke lifted the mood among the travelling supporters by scoring one and making another as the Dons cruised to a 3-0 victory at Wycombe Wanderers. After seeing his side record their first League Two win in eight games, jubilant manager Neal Ardley said, ‘Now we have to put together a run of performances like that, so we start to move up the table.’

### **5th January 2015**

Two Steven Gerrard goals sent Liverpool through to the FA Cup fourth round after a 2-1 win over a spirited Dons side. ‘They should be proud of their performance, but this was a chance for us,’ Neal Ardley said as he reflected on Adebayo Akinfenwa’s 36th-minute equaliser. ‘If we had a bit more quality and nous, we could have got something out of the game.’

### **5th January 2019**

Kwesi Appiah’s 90th-minute winner secured the Dons a dramatic 3-2 FA Cup third-round victory at Fleetwood Town. ‘It’s fabulous for everyone concerned,’ manager Wally Downes said afterwards. ‘All that the club has ever done is make history all of the time from the moment the club was started again until today. Now we need to take this form into the league games, so we get out of trouble.’

### **6th January 1968**

Nearly 10,000 fans inside Plough Lane saw the Southern League Dons lose 4-0 to Third Division Bristol Rovers in the FA Cup second round. Writing in the *Sunday Express*, Alan Hoby asked the question, 'Why did Wimbledon lose when they had 75 per cent of the possession and the best player on the pitch in Stuart Davies?' His answer, 'Defensive mistakes and mediocre finishing.'

### **6th January 2001**

After a draw with lower-league Notts County in the FA Cup, more than 400 supporters staged a sit-down protest against the club's proposed move to Milton Keynes. 'It is becoming a mental thing,' substitute Gareth Ainsworth said as he tried to explain the team's poor home form. 'Selhurst [Park] is not our proper home. Plough Lane used to be a fortress for the club but this place lacks atmosphere.'

### **7th January 1961**

Peter Kenchington was the toast of Plough Lane after his hat-trick had helped knock holders Tooting & Mitcham out of the Surrey Senior Cup. Watched by over 7,000 fans, the Dons produced their best football of the season to totally outclass their local rivals as they won 5-0. Had Eddie Reynolds had his shooting boots on, the hosts could have scored double figures.

### **7th January 1978**

Dario Gradi's first game as manager saw the relegation-threatened Dons do well to hold promotion-chasing Brentford to a draw at Plough Lane. 'I'm going to put this club on a more professional basis,' the new boss told reporters afterwards. 'I'm looking to sign young players. I want to establish this as a club where young players can develop and grow.'

### **8th January 1994**

Dean Holdsworth's hat-trick in a 3-0 FA Cup third-round demolition of Scunthorpe United took his tally to 13 as he responded to owner Sam Hammam's promise to kiss his backside if he totalled 20 by the end of the season. With his team still in both the cups and the top half of the Premier League, the former Brentford striker was coming closer to meeting the owner's cheeky challenge.



### **8th January 1997**

Clinical finishes from Efan Ekoku and Øyvind Leonhardsen were enough to secure the Dons a 2-0 win at Bolton and a place in the League Cup semi-finals. 'I have always said that my primary ambition for this club is to get into Europe,' manager Joe Kinnear said. 'I would love to get to Wembley for a cup final. I went there three times as a player and won the lot. I would love to make it four as a manager.'

### **9th January 1954**

Those calling for Harry Stannard to be dropped were made to look foolish as the veteran striker scored twice in the Dons' 4-1 Surrey Senior Cup victory at Woking. After 19 seasons and well over 200 goals for the club, the 37-year-old, known by his team-mates as 'the gaffer', belied his years by leading the line superbly at Kingfield.

### **9th January 1991**

A diving header from Alan Cork deep in injury time proved to be the last FA Cup goal ever scored at the old Plough Lane. 'It was one of those special nights,' the striker later recalled of the evening the Dons beat Aston Villa. 'Miserable weather, floodlights that barely lit the pitch, but the place was alive. I never liked Selhurst Park. Plough Lane and nights like that – that's what Wimbledon was about.'

### **10th January 1987**

Dave Bassett blasted his top-flight team despite seeing Lawrie Sanchez and Glyn Hodges score late goals to deny Second Division Sunderland an FA Cup victory at Plough Lane. 'We were rubbish,' the manager fumed. 'There isn't a real professional at the club. We deserved nothing. Half of them looked like they were on drugs – sleeping drugs!'

### **10th January 2004**

Returning to the scene of their first ever game, AFC Wimbledon's run of 32 consecutive Combined Counties League victories came to a halt with a 2-2 draw at Sandhurst Town's Bottom Meadow. 'Giving away a two-goal lead is something you shouldn't do,' admitted striker Joe Sheerin. 'That was very frustrating, but we will pick ourselves up and try to go on another run.'