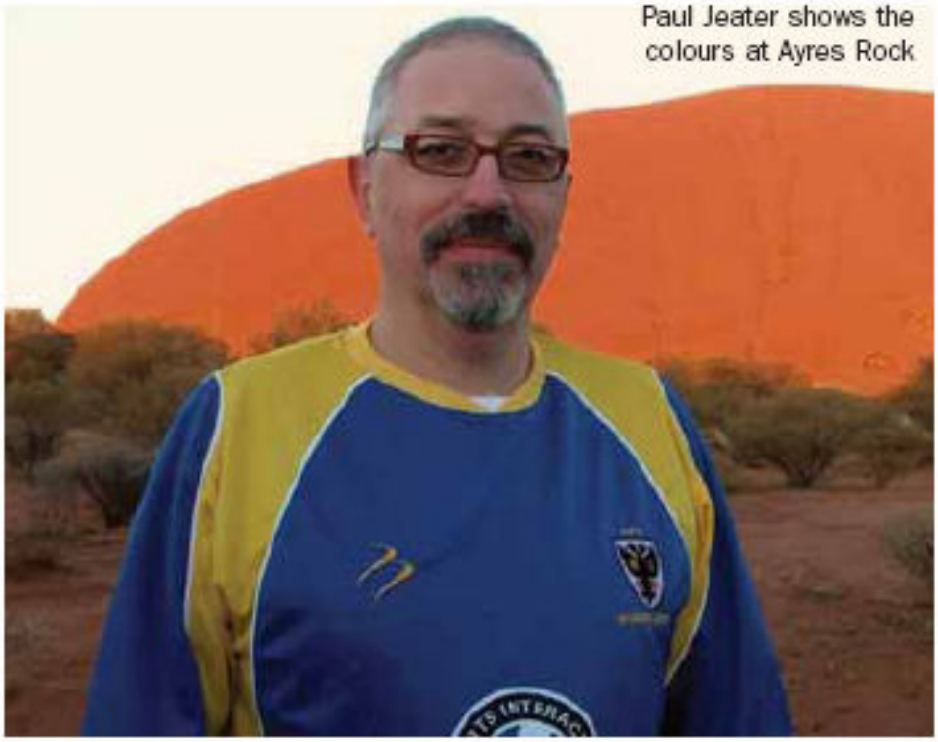
TIME TO DO YOUR BIT?

Nominations open today for the Dons Trust board elections, which take place next month. We asked Paul Jeater, who has just completed a two-year "tour of duty", about his time on the board.

What have the past two years been like?

Never a dull moment. Two years ago, Matt Breach, Iain McNay and myself were newly elected to the board just days after the team got hammered at Billericay – I can't remember a worse performance. Yet within a few weeks came wins at Aldershot and Gravesend & Northfleet . . . and then Darlogate broke. Along with other board members, I found myself sitting in QC Jim Sturman's offices in London discussing the consequences of challenging the points deduction imposed by the Ryman League.



Paul Jeater shows the colours at Ayres Rock

What encouraged you to stand for election two years ago?

I thought then, as now, that it's vital to get Dons Trust members actively involved in the club. At the time, the fans' ownership seemed under threat, and that's something I feel is non-negotiable, so standing seemed the right thing to do.

So what has been achieved in the past two years?

When I look back, the most far-reaching decision seems to me to have been the implementation of a "lockdown". What this means is that it is now much harder for any elected board to dispose of either the club or the ground, because for that to happen a very large number of members would have to attend a meeting and vote in favour of such proposals. For Wimbledon supporters, that's crucial.

You were one of the board members who interviewed Erik Samuelson for the post of Chief Executive, weren't you?

Yes, Iain McNay and I carried out "the interview". It was slightly strange because Erik had already been doing the job in a temporary capacity, and had seen us through the Jermaine Darlington affair. We knew that he was the man we wanted, and fortunately we didn't have to haggle too much about the salary. I think we got the club a very good deal!

For anyone who is considering standing, can you give us an idea what board meetings are like?

Informal yet businesslike, if that isn't contradictory. The board secretary, David Wilkinson, distributes the papers well in advance, and the paperwork is clear and easy to understand. Everyone is very welcoming and friendly. We're all fans, and it's natural that we want to talk about the last match, but you soon find out about the many different strands that go to make up the club.

Aren't there any disagreements?

Of course there are: when you put

twelve people together they won't always agree, and there have been times when I found myself in a minority – in opposing last season's Café Royal event, and also in opposing the increase in concessionary prices this season. But what you always have to bear in mind is that in spite of any differences, all board members care passionately about the club and believe that they are acting in its best interests.

What's the time commitment like for a board member?

There are the regular monthly meetings, scheduled for the first Monday evening of each month, but many other matters are dealt with by email or phone. If emergencies crop up we've occasionally met on Saturday mornings. For me, travelling from Essex has been an issue – I've not been able to attend as many other club functions as I would like. However, it's important that the board represents a broad spectrum of opinions and supporters, and I guess I've been able to speak for "wayward Wombles".

What's your own position – will you be standing again?

Before Christmas I informed the board that I would not be seeking re-election. My personal situation and work responsibilities have altered somewhat, and this has made me reassess my position. I hope sincerely that other Dons Trust members come forward, because we need contested, vibrant elections. A field of candidates has to be good for democracy and the future of the club and the trust. If any member is thinking of standing and wants to chat to me about it, they can email me at pauljeater@thedonstrust.org

So what now?

I have every intention of remaining a matchday volunteer, and I hope to renew my efforts on behalf of the Fundraising Committee. I've really enjoyed my "tour of duty", and would recommend it to any interested member.

Hire a room at Kingsmeadow

At the Cherry Red Records Fans' Stadium there are three function rooms that suitable for a variety of occasions, from wedding receptions and corporate events to 18th birthday celebrations and smaller private parties.

With its range of function rooms and the ample free parking, Kingsmeadow the ideal venue for a party or event.

The Ethelred Suite (the "back bar" on matchdays) can accommodate 200 guests, or 150 seated formally. It is ideal for wedding receptions and anniversary parties.

The spacious middle bar has a more relaxed atmosphere more suited to 18th and 21st birthday parties. It holds up to 200 guests.

The Ruthwell Suite (the President's Lounge on matchdays) has room for 80 guests and has been used for christenings and other small gatherings. It is also ideal for corporate meetings and training days.



To check the availability of the rooms, and for hire charges, email functions@afcwimbledon.co.uk or call 020 8547 3396 during office hours, between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm on weekdays. If you're an AFC Wimbledon shareholder or season ticket holder, you are eligible for a 15% discount.