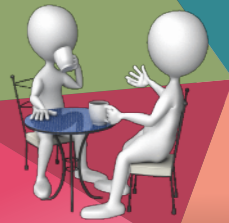




SWDFEF Newsletter February 2016



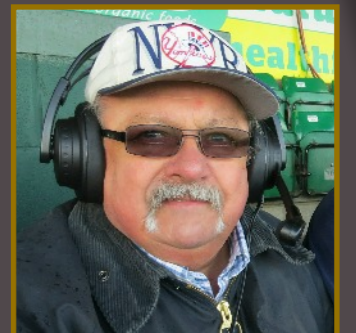
South West Disabled Fans' Experience Forum



NEWS



Ian James



David Munn

Co-Founders: Nick Saunders (Exeter City DSA) & David Munn (Yeovil Town DSA)

SWDFEF, 37 Chestnut Avenue, Exeter, Devon, EX2 6DL
Tel: 01392 661602 Email: swdfef@gmail.com

Editor: David Munn (Yeovil Town DSA) Email: d.g.munn@btinternet.com



Nick Saunders



YTFC Players & DSA Members at 2015 Christmas Meal

There are stadium segments of all our eleven South West clubs, embedded in the new design. Can you find your particular stadium?

Bristol City; Bristol Rovers; Cardiff City; Cheltenham Town; Exeter City; Newport County; Plymouth Argyle; Swansea City; Swindon Town; Torquay United & Yeovil Town

We're Ready, are you?

I hope that you enjoy the expanded version of our Newsletter which has come about owing to the many activities reported by everyone.

One concern raised, when I road tested the new format with a few people was that, "Will all the different colours affect those with sight issues?" I am fairly sure that none of the recipients in our group email list have sight issues, however, any constructive comments about this new format will be welcomed.

Give us your questions

Plymouth Argyle DSA have suggested that, as an enhancement to our annual Forums, anyone who has a subject that they would welcome input and comments from other clubs, in between Forums, please email them to me at d.g.munn@btinternet.com and I will circulate them. Once ALL replies are received (no more than two weeks after I have raised the question), I will send all input and comments to every club. Thanks.

About Level Playing Field

Level Playing Field (LPF), a registered charity, is the trading name for the National Association of Disabled Supporters. LPF is recognised as the representative and coordinating body of disabled sports fans across England and Wales.

A dedicated team of staff provide day-to-day support and guidance to a range of relevant stakeholders including clubs, managers of sports venues, architects, local planners and access officers, policy makers, politicians, media, other fans groups, equality and disability organisations and last but certainly not least, disabled sports fans and their associations (DSAs) and advocates. If you want more information, please do contact LPF at Email: info@levelplayingfield.org.uk or Tel: 020 8621 2403

"It was like the ref had a brand new yellow card and wanted to see if it worked." - RICHARD RUFUS



Home Park



Swansea DSA Mulled Wine evening

SWANSEA CITY FC DSA

December and January have proven a busy time for Swansea City FC's Disabled Supporters Association. In December we held a Mulled Wine evening in Swansea Market. The evening was well supported by Swansea City Football Club. It was a good opportunity for DSA members to gather socially. Members of the DSA were joined by Huw Cooze (Supporters Director), Ian James (SCFC Disability Officer), Kev Johns (Club Chaplain, Stadium Announcer, and known as "Mr Swansea"), and Lee Trundle (Club Ambassador). While mentioning Lee Trundle, we are delighted to announce that Lee has accepted our offer to be the Ambassador of the Disabled Supporters Association. Lee is a legend locally and his enthusiasm and support of the DSA has been excellent from the day we started. Finally, for those of you who read the last SWDEFF Newsletter, you will have read about our "Evening with Alan Curtis". Little did we realise at the time, that by the next Newsletter, he would be the Club's Manager (albeit till the end of the season, at the moment). The DSA wishes Alan all the very best for his time in charge of the first team.



DSA Fund Raiser



Lee Trundle accepting the offer to be DSA Ambassador from Mark Phillips, the Swansea DSA Chairman

"He dribbles a lot and the opposition don't like it , you can see it all over their faces." -- Ron Atkinson

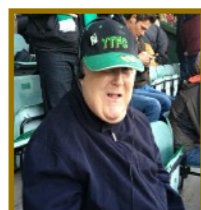
Yeovil Town DSA

We at YTFC DSA pride ourselves on our service we provide for both home and away fans on a match day. We arrange parking in advance so that when disabled fans arrive at Huish Park, their match day experience starts stress free. The committee are always around with badges on, letting fans know who we are and offering assistance in any way they may need it.

Our Christmas meal was another excellent event, which was attended by 67 members and guests plus 6 players and 3 of the team management who joined us for the meal after they finished an evening training session. The evening started with the whole YTFC playing staff and team management staff amongst us in the Legends Lounge. Why? Because we were all interested in watching the F A Cup 3rd round draw live. Our nearest rivals, Exeter, were drawn at home to Liverpool while Yeovil were drawn away at Carlisle United. With all respects to Carlisle, there were a few disappointed groans after the draw was made. Our own sponsored player Artur Krysiak is a great supporter of our DSA, donating shirts and signed goalie gloves, to help us raise funds. Also Darren Way, YTFC first team manager, is our President and we hope this will continue even though he now has extra responsibilities. Once again the raffle contained a large number of prizes, thanks to the 2 Janets, and raised £306 for our funds. We also enjoyed the superb food from Head Chef Kevin Napper which was served up by Clive Robinson and his very efficient staff.

We have 6 wheelchairs available; lucky for us these are serviced 3 times per season by committee members free of charge. As well as being available on match days we offer these wheelchairs out now to our members who may need one for a day or a few days away.

Our future plans for facilities inside the ground are on hold, as there are planning applications being submitted by the club to build a new stand, which would include new purpose built areas for disabled fans, with wheelchair accessible viewing areas.



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Liberty Stadium

Plymouth Argyle DSA (PADSA)

PADSA members enjoyed a Christmas party held in the tribute lounge.

PADSA has been awarded a Vital Sparks grant from Plymouth City Council and the Arts Council. We have had enquiries from organisations on behalf of clients who would like to come to the match, but unsure what to expect. The grant is to produce a social story on a person coming to the football at PAFC for the first time. Social stories are used to help prepare individuals when they are going to somewhere new, trying a new skill or situation. The story will explain in pictures so the person can have an understanding before they try and go somewhere new. This helps with anxiety and stress. The book could also be used for those who may have communication difficulties, learning difficulties and those with dementia or if English is not their first language. We are working with a photographer and will produce the book ourselves and it will be available online. We hope this will encourage disabled fans to come along to a game and gain a good match day experience. Members are being part of the project , which starts in the New Year.

PADSA has recently bought small item 2 handled cups, swivel seat and transfer disc that can be useful when required. These will be stored at PAFC. We are open to suggestions for equipment needed.

We have been guests on the "Campaign for Disability Awareness Group's" monthly radio show. The access-all-aerials radio station is at Hannah's at Seale Hayne. Great fun was had by Sue and Barry Francis. Those who listened said we promoted PADSA well.

If fans are going away to a game, a good source on information for disabled facilities at grounds are provided by LPF, on www.levelplayingfield.org.uk or www.disabledgo.com. We are aware of some issues from attending York City.

We would also like to thank Mr Brent for his assistance when he came to the aid of a disabled fan at the Dagenham and Redbridge game. Many clubs do offer carers tickets to accompany disabled fans. If in ticketing information it does not mention a carer's ticket, do please ask, as some clubs will provide on hearing individual cases. In the recent newsletter from the travel club, an article "How well do you know your mate?". This was referring to, "do you know if they suffer from any issues such as illness?" Some people do wear medical bangles or carry medical "Alert cards". Other ways that may alert people or emergency services to a medical issue is the person may have in their pocket or bag an ICE pack or message in a bottle. These carry vital information and are available free of charge from pharmacies, GP surgeries, Age Concern and other organisations.

A big Thank you to Philip Lee who is the volunteer commentator for PAFC Soccer Sight as he did a 500 mile round trip on Boxing Day to commentate on the Argyle v Yeovil game. Unfortunately, the Plymouth-based Soccer Sight team members were not able to broadcast on that day and he didn't want to let our listeners down, so the only option was to drive down from Staffordshire. The upside was that his son (he works for the BBC) was able to help out with the driving and the commentary, so the match-day experience was very special for him.

"Sorry, boss, I should have kept my legs together", said Ray Clemence
"Wrong, it's your mother who should have!", replied Bill Shankly

What we do, explained

Level Playing Field Working Together Project

The Level Playing Field (LPF) Working Together project continued to grow in 2015 and with further funding recently granted to extend the project until October 2017.

The aim of this project is to improve the relationship, awareness and cooperation among disabled fans, their clubs and non-disabled fans. This has been done by supporting clubs and disabled fans by helping them to form and create pan-disability user-led Disabled Supporters Associations (DSAs). The project also aims to establish or further enhance the cooperation among existing DSAs, clubs and their disabled fans. In so doing, LPF hopes to raise awareness of the importance of ensuring accessibility and inclusion for all fans within both football and other sports.

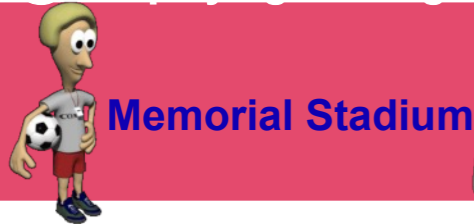
In 2015, three DSAs were established at Newport County, Bradford City and Crystal Palace with ten new DSAs established since the start of the Working Together project in 2012. Plans are now underway to help establish even more DSAs as part of the on-going Working Together project.

Motivated by the success of the SWDFEF, LPF is also working with clubs and DSAs to establish new regional forums across England and Wales.

Portsmouth F.C. hosted the first ever South Coast regional forum in September 2015 with Nick Saunders attending on behalf of SWDFEF. The forum proved to be a resounding success and LPF is now looking to work with clubs and DSAs to establish forums in other regions.

LPF Project Coordinator, Kieran Reynolds was pleased to be invited to speak at the South West regional forum (SWDFEF) in October 2015 with the event hosted by Cardiff City F.C.

If you are interested in forming a DSA at your club or require further information about the LPF Working Together project, please contact the Project Coordinator, Kieran Reynolds on Tel: 020 8621 2487 or at Email: kieran@levelplayingfield.org.uk .



Memorial Stadium



Huish Park



Ashton Gate



ECFCDSA cheque handover to Exeter City Ability Counts F.C. ★

The DSA had a bucket collection and a grand total of £392.15 was raised through the generosity of supporters. Representatives from the DSA handed over £200 to team coach, Will Allan and a player from the ECFC Ability Counts Football Team run by the clubs Football in the Community. The DSA has this season handed the Ability Counts team £400 by way of sponsorship, thus ensuring those with disabilities can enjoy playing football like everyone else. ECDSA saddened by the passing of committee member. ☆

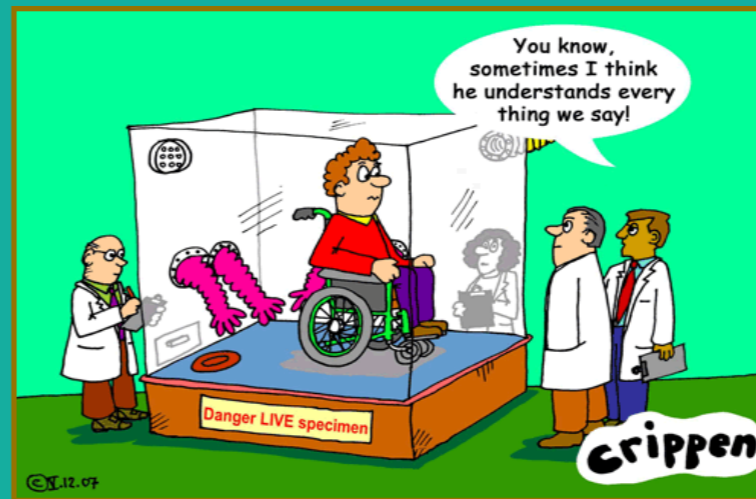
The DSA was saddened to learn that long-time committed ECFC supporter David Turner recently passed away at the age of 60 on 11th Dec 2015. David was a bright personality familiar to most regular visitors to St James Park, and has been a DSA committee member since 2011. DSA Chairman & ECFC DLO Nick Saunders said: "This is very sad news. I've known David for many years, and he was a pleasure to be around. The banter you could have with him was great, and I worked closely with him during his time on the ECDSA committee." "He will be missed greatly by us all, myself and everyone at ECDSA and the Exeter City family send our condolences to David's wife and ECDSA committee member Juanita and his family, at this sad time."

Latest Update on Roger Battrick (ex YTFC DSA Chairman)

Roger aimed for Christmas and celebrated it along with New Year celebrations. He enjoyed it all, except it took it's toll on him and he had to spend a few days in bed to recover. The 2 to 9 months prediction by the doctor, regarding his lung cancer, is up in March and Roger is determined to not only reach it but pass it.

Article Contributions

All eleven clubs were invited to contribute to this newsletter by submitting an article, however, if your club does not have an article it is because none were submitted. It would have been an excellent result if ALL clubs had contributed, thus enabling all of us to gain more experiences by your successes, failures and problems.



Launa Windows Stadium

"If you're in the penalty area and don't know what to do with the ball, put it in the net and we'll discuss the options later." – Bob Paisley advising his players.

Newport County AFC DSA

Over Christmas our club was asked to donate televisions for the children's ward at the local hospital as part of an annual commitment; the DSA, along with some other supporter's groups, donated £100; this money will be covered by raising funds through our pin badges and Limited Edition photograph sets including a signed set by our Ambassador Michael Flynn. Any additional money raised this way will help towards the improvements we have identified as being needed at Rodney Parade, including a new away disabled stand and radar locks on disabled toilets. We will be meeting with Rodney Parade management to pitch to them the ever popular "Buy a Brick" fundraising scheme, once purchased we hope the bricks will be displayed at Rodney Parade for all to view. In addition, our DSA will be planning other social events including an Easter egg hunt, voting for our inaugural Player of the Season award and end of season party.

Whilst our fundraising attempts are to provide physical facilities for disabled supporters there are other plans for the rest of this season. We are currently working with our local council to lead a project we hope will increase the number of spectators affected by disability coming through the gates to watch games at the Parade. In addition, we hope to arrange a Mental Health Awareness Day, similar to that held by Exeter City recently and also a Carer's day whereby we offer informal carers discount tickets for a specific game, to encourage them to attend for some respite and potentially feel the same stress release and break from issues, as we do from attending games.

The government has responded to the 5 questions put to parliament by Lord Richard Faulkner before the Christmas recess: Read via the link below: -
<http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/news/government-responds-lord-faulkners-questions-parliament-access-sports-grounds>

"The person that said winning isn't everything, never won anything." - Mia Hamm

My motivations for setting up the SWDFEF Forum

I was approached to become the Media Representative, when the Yeovil Town Disabled Supporters Association was re-formed in June 2009. My current association at that time was that I was and still am, a "Soccer Sight Commentator" at all YTFC home games, which is a service for blind and visually impaired supporters.

As this was a new experience for me, I canvassed a number of people to ascertain what was the best way of disseminating information to not only YTFC disabled supporters, but away disabled supporters, about services provided by YTFC and the DSA. One suggestion was to produce a "YTFC Disabled Information and Facilities Brief" that could be publicized within our own club and also be sent to all visiting clubs. This has turned out to be a very productive and welcome service.

In late 2010, Nick Saunders of Exeter City DSA contacted me and outlined that at their club all departments regularly met to discuss plans, procedures & spending for the benefit of the club, as their club is owned by the club's supporters, through the Exeter City Supporters' Trust. Nick wondered whether this philosophy could be applied between DSA's at other clubs, so that we could all benefit by each other's procedures and activities. Being a pro-active person, I thought that this was a great idea.

Nick & I had a "brainstorming session" to establish What, How and Why we could introduce this idea, so that other clubs would welcome the idea and be prepared to be involved. An initial email was sent out to league clubs, who were no more than two hours' drive away from Exeter City, to test the interest. The response was positive, so we set about organizing a name, a logo, a set of guidelines and a programme that would maximize the impact to all clubs. This meant that ALL departments or individuals who were directly or indirectly responsible for procedures and practices for the benefit of disabled supporters at a club would be included and involved in making presentations at Forums. We decided that an annual Forum would keep the impact pertinent and live and that, having each Forum at a different club, would also expand the learning for all delegates.

We also decided that there would need to be a central contact, rather than both of us, so Nick became the central contact as well as Exeter City being the club to host the initial Forum. The second one being at Yeovil Town (which selfishly ensured that there would be at least two Forums)!!

The idea took off and we have now had 5 Forums over the last 5 years with Swansea City, Plymouth Argyle & Cardiff City being the other three hosts for the Forum. Everyone without exception has fully involved themselves in achieving a great experience for all delegates and the contact between us all has benefitted everyone.

There is regular contact between the 11 clubs in our South West Region and we have recently enhanced our philosophy by producing a quarterly Newsletter to which all 11 clubs can contribute, which continues the cross fertilization of ideas and actions for all. We are both proud of our idea and the 11 clubs that are now part of our family. David G Munn (YTFC DSA Media Rep).