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**ALLAN MABERT – VISUALLY IMPAIRED REPRESENTATIVE**

Disability: Visually impaired since birth

Current status: Blind

I regard the biggest achievement in my life, certainly the one that has brought me most fulfilment and happiness, was when I convinced Trish to share the rest of her life with me, we have been married for 37 years. We live in the Epping Forest area with our 4 rescue cats, one of whom is named Charlie George.

I have always been passionate about sport and was fortunate enough to represent GB in Athletics at both Paralympic and European levels. The pinnacle of my success was breaking the 400 metre world record in the 1977 European Games in Poznan, Poland.

My hobbies and interests include listening to audio books, I am an active member of 4 book groups, quizzing, supporting animal charities, tai chi and most recently tandem cycling, on the back of course.

Prior to retirement at the age of 60, I worked over 39 years in local government, adult education and the charity sector. I am currently a Director of Essex Blind Charity. In 1998 I became the first blind person to be appointed as a Magistrate in London. I served on the Bench for 13 years before standing down in 2011, I remain on the supplementary list. I am the author of numerous published articles and papers on the benefits of blind people participating in sporting activities.

I have supported Arsenal since the 1970/71 season. The Charlie George Cup Final in 1971 against Liverpool really got me hooked. Winning the League titles at Anfield, Old Trafford and at that small club up the road have been highlights but the Invincible's unbeaten season does not get the credit it deserves. My biggest disappointment was losing the Champions League Final in Paris but that team gave us some great memories on route to the final. It was a reminder that in football you don't always get what you deserve.

My favourite Arsenal player is Dennis Bergkamp, not just because of his genius on the pitch. At a pre-season open training session at Highbury we witnessed Dennis helping the ball boys collect the footballs used during the session, whilst most of the other players made their way down the tunnel, now that’s class for you.

Finally, market forces may prevent us always having the best team but I am in no doubt that we are the club with the best values, traditions and class in the country.