

THE ADAMS FAMILY

THE PREMIER FANZINE
OF WYCOMBE WANDERERS

ISSUE 30 * JANUARY 1998
80 PENCE



**The battle to appear in the next
merchandise catalogue begins in earnest**

**AFTER
BASINGSTOKE**

**Why the Auto Windscreen Trophy
is better than the FA Cup**

THE ADAMS FAMILY

Issue 30

PO BOX 394,
High Wycombe, Bucks. HP13 6HT
EMAIL ad088@mdx.ac.uk

Happy New Year (unless you're reading this on Boxing Day, either before, during or after we get a pasting from Watford), and welcome to issue 30 of TAF.

Although we apologised in advance for some equipment failures that affected production of the last TAF, we were still expecting to have articles that read from left to right and over the page, but sadly it was not to be. An extensive inquest has taken place, and after serious fight between the printers and the paste-up department, it's been called a draw. However, both sides are ready to give 110% from henceforth, so we'll let it be. Sorry if it spoiled your enjoyment - and if you didn't notice, sorry about the lack of colouring pictures and tellytubby badges with this issue.

Dear oh dear, we're crap aren't we? Yep, just as you thought it was safe to get slightly optimistic, the lads are going down faster than flagoons of ale at a Highwayman's disco. We at TAF don't really mind the Wanderers being a bit useless (at least we're not in Doncaster's position - (c) The powers that be at WWFC) as long as they try hard. Trouble is, a few of them don't and that's what upsets.

You might even think that it is those few that are letting down manager Gregory and the club, but no it may be you! Have you bought a quartered shirt yet?

None of us at TAF have, because we don't like the material - gives you terrible joggers nip! Still the team look nice in it - and maybe that's the point!

Contributors

Andrew Dickinson, Douglas Peters, David Chapman, Jonathan Dickinson, Neil Peters

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Thanks to the Bucks Free Press for Photos

Veranda Tete-a-Tete....

For quite some time now we've been trying to up the class of this, the first main article you read in this fanzine (providing you don't use the Koran technique) without much success. However after a fierce editorial meeting, it was decided that the rather tawdry, fake cockney, "cor rahnd 'ere yuh left yer back door open and popped next door fuh coffee, Spam and dripping", monicker of Terrace Tattle should be dropped for something a little classier.

And so using the trusty thesaurus, we've converted it to the name you see if you gaze right. For me it conjures up visions of Roger Moore in a tuxedo, sipping fine wine, conversing wittily with a fawning crowd of both male and female persuasion - the former begging to be so cool, the latter gagging to be whisked off to his 5 star hotel in Switzerland. To you perhaps it represents something else, but rest assured - the content's still the same usual shite.

During the rather poor spell we've been suffering, I've taken to musing if the Wanderers have become Equal Opportunity employers? Anyone who examines the job pages these days will be aware that nearly everyone displays this badge of PC on their adverts, and looking at the skills of some of our lads, one has to speculate that Wycombe have signed up to the scheme. Because to be honest, I'm certain that even a blind person could play better than half the team did against Basingstoke.

Ah, Basingstoke. Thankfully for myself, this dismal farce is covered in depth elsewhere in this issue, but it is strange how such tragedy starts to take on an almost amusing angle as you watch the game. Contrary to some reports, I thought the travelling support down at Basingstoke retained a certain humour - even if of the gallows variety - throughout the entire demise. Indeed, where I was stood, when Scotty missed his penalty it seemed as if no-one really cared that much. I myself groaned and laughed. For how much longer can you scream and rave at a team that cannot be improved owing to the finances? A team built to stave off relegation, not to win things? Personally, the most unfortunate aspect of the current period is that I'm finding it impossible to get very upset about it all - the field is full of other clubs' rejects, who are just good enough to keep us out of serious trouble, but not much else. And when they start believing they're a bit good, as they did in the FA cup, they look absolutely dire.

But there is no point in having a pot at the manager, who certainly has mostly the right ideas. It's time to look at the

players who are treading water and effectively giving you a two-fingered salute. It's time to forget all this bollocks about how they give 100% 'for you' every week - because it's clear that not all of them do. Without mentioning names, I was disappointed to notice two players on their coach back from Basingstoke having a good old laugh and a game of cards. Now maybe Mr Gregory isn't of the 'sit in silence' school which is fair enough, but I'd have thought that anyone involved in that game ought to have been a bit subdued - or at least have the intelligence to draw the curtains.

For me it was the worst cup shame since Wycombe were eliminated from the Auto Windscreen of the 80's - namely the AC Delco Cup. The Wanderers lost by the odd goal to Bognor Regis on a chilly night after extra time - and the match accommodated my first ever sighting of a footballer who just simply gave up and lost us the tie. Quite simply, a nothing ball from Regis' right winger was trundling across the Wycombe box with five minutes left. But we didn't care, 'cos Kevin Day was there to hoof the ball clear and lead the line up the field. But Kev didn't. Kev looked at the ball and I witnessed his face sigh, 'Why bother'. And so 'the Regis' scored and won (I've been a cynic ever since, the moment still haunts my dreams).

Moving on, the shock of this week has been Wycombe's away win at Southend in the 'cup that counts' - a victory that could have been emphatic had certain spoon boots not been in operation. I presume that while our boys are clocking up one of the worst away records of all time, they are still residing overnight in plush hotels in order to attain team spirit (ho) and enable them to be fresh for the game (ho). May I suggest that this lame pampering only adds to the problems and maybe a rude awakening is in order. Perhaps an initial downgrade could be that the team only stay in 'Travel Tavern's' - similar to the home of Alan Partridge. If they continue losing, a trip to Milletts would be in order to purchase canvas tents and sleeping bags - which could be pitched at the nearest service station to their destination. Failing that, just travel down on the day, and ditch that luxury coach - a Wycombe Bus Company double decker would suffice, and would indicate some bond with the town these players turn out for.

I was glad to see proof in the BFP that others have noticed that there must be a bevy of incontinent Badgers nesting in the Servispak stand. The damn thing is always sopping wet, seats and all. All further proof that rather than trying to ban the hunting of vermin (foxes), we ought to legalise other sports such as Badger Baiting. Indeed it could be a half time entertainment, that would be fun for spectators, dogs, participants - and it would keep your seat and floor space free from filthy Badger urine.

Talking of death and wetness, it is pertinent mention both Mickey Bell and David 'the Faz' Farrell. Anyone who saw us get stuffed at Bristol will no doubt be heartened by discovering that Belly is a complete bottle merchant. More disturbing though is how 'the Faz' keeps scoring and generally gilding round opponents for Peterborough. The man was the biggest wet weekend ever whilst here, and I wish a Christmas flu-bout on both him and the Bell.

DAVE'S RAVE

Wycombe Wanderers and their fans owe a lot to David 'Jesus' Carroll. It's a shame for that reason, on the night of Carroll's testimonial the crowd figures didn't match our appreciation. Davie has had many wonderful years with the blues, etching his name on many occasions into the club's history. The ticket prices were reasonable and the opposition impressive in the shape of Martin O'Neills Leicester City. The evening may have been a little cold for the over 60's but it's that generation who seem to appreciate the style of Carroll more than most. So the explanation in the lack of enthusiasm on the terraces that night must fall down to the blue's recent form. This is at least something Carroll has been directly involved with.

Enough said on the disappointments, the actual evening was one to remember. The football wasn't of the highest quality from either team but the commitment and humour shown by friends and club was one to be proud of. Simon Garner made a heavenly appearance as well as Paul Hyde, Thommo, Kimberley Casey, Andy Kerr, Terry's Howard and Evans and Bonny Langford. Boss Gregory also put in a little performance (a bit ropy really) and all in all with the help of grandad Casey's two goals they all did the blue quartered shirts proud.

Martin O'Neills first official return to Adams Park saw a 'welcome home' applause for Steve Guppy.



Guppy pulled on both shirts for the game and for his part looked suburb apart from a couple of misses that Paul Read would have hung for. The first half was a bit crap but it all livened up during the second. Although Wycombe started fielding bar-men and youth trainers the real comedy began when Alan (110%) Parry entered the scene. Diabolical! Lets just say you may talk a good game but that's it Alan. Don't give up your day job. Carroll himself didn't manage the full 90 but I would hazard a guess this was a little bit of 'play it safe' tactics from Gregory. Both teams did change more than a girlfriend before going out but you just can't risk playing people like Tim Langford for a full 90 minutes. It's something to do with the insurance fee.

Yes David we at TAF were all there and would go ten times over. You have been unbelievably good for Wycombe and have given us hours of enjoyment. The only thing we could knock you for is the duff tip you gave us at the dogs. Runnymede Chief was a lame duck and we lost a fortune. When you hear people say "Wycombe have never lost a Wembley" they are not talking about Carroll. And while were are still on the betting subject - How much testimonial money have you got left now then David?

TAF's Alternative Stats Page

As predicted in the last issue, Steve McGavin has hit a rich vein of form, unfortunately at the same time as the rest of them have hit the pits of despair. Mind you with two wins on the trot we're beginning to show improvements. Steve Brown's consistency sees him at the top, whilst Dave Carroll has proved that he still has plenty to give in midfield.

Luton (h) D 2-2: **Steve McGavin** - For an assist and a supreme strike

Plymouth (a) L 2-4: **Keith Scott** - Well c'mon who else was worth it?

York (a) L 0-2: **Dave Carroll** - On an abysmal showing, Dave was able to leave the field in the knowledge that he made an effort.

Basingstoke (h) D 2-2: **John Cornforth** - He scored two goals which helped us retain some dignity.

Wrexham (h) D 0-0: **Steve Brown** - His return gave the midfield some bite.

Bristol C (a) L 1-3: **Martin Taylor** - Kept the score decent with some top saves.

Basingstoke (a) D 2-2 (but lost on pens): **Steve McGavin** - One of a handful who could just about excuse themselves.

Bournemouth (h) D 1-1: **Steve McGavin** - As the team reaches a trough, the boy pasty managed to shine again.

Grimsby (a) D 0-0: **Paul McCarthy** - With backs against the wall, any of the three centre-halves could have got the honours. The "dog" was the pick though.

Southend (a) W 1-0: **Steve Brown** - A great battling performance that got us back to winning ways.

Oldham (h) W 2-1: **Dave Carroll** - He returned to top form with a display full of flair and creativity.



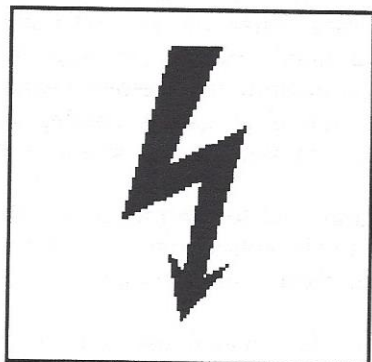
TAF M.O.M AWARDS

Hall of Fame

Steve Brown	5 MOM
Mark Stallard	4 MOM
Steve McGavin	4 MOM
Paul McCarthy	2 MOM
Keith Scott	2 MOM
John Cornforth	2 MOM
Dave Carroll	2 MOM
Mo Harkin	1 MOM
Alan Beeton	1 MOM
Jason Cousins	1 MOM
Keith Ryan	1 MOM
Nicky Mohan	1 MOM
Martin Taylor	1 MOM

The shameful Blues have proved to be one of the dirtiest teams in the country, but that's hardly surprising with Nicky Mohan's ill-timed tackles which have seen him clock up another stack of suspensions.

THE LIVEWIRES



<u>Name</u>	<u>Yellow</u>	<u>Red</u>
Nicky Mohan	6	0
Steve Brown	6	0
Jason Cousins	4	0
Paul McCarthy	4	1
John Cornforth	3	1
Michael Forsyth	4	0
Keith Ryan	3	0
Mark Stallard	3	0
Micky Simpson	2	0
Keith Scott	2	0
Jason Kavanagh	2	0
Steve McGavin	2	0
Martin Taylor	1	1
Alan Beeton	1	0
Dave Carroll	1	0

The Dave Carroll fair play awards



Once again welcome to my monthly column. Firstly I must apologise for the booking I recently picked up whilst moaning about the distance of a wall. This hurt me and I can promise you that I won't receive another booking this season. As for this month's award, well it goes to Mr. Steve Brown who has managed to curb that raw temperament of his and pick up only one booking. Long may this continue....

The NETBUSTERS..

Mark Stallard	13 Strikes
Keith Scott	7 Strikes
John Cornforth	7 Strikes
Steve McGavin	4 Strikes
Paul Read	4 Strikes
Jason Kavanagh	1 Strike
Mo Harkin	1 Strike
Keith Ryan	1 Strike



Spice Up Your League....

Provided you could find it, buried beneath the mounds of Man United ass-kiss and general Premier League worship in our national newspapers, you may have read about the recent meeting of the 72 Nationwide league clubs. Once again 'a proposed shake up' was on the agenda - business speak for a selection of lame gimmicks that suggest the only way the Football League can survive is by turning it into a freak show. As in Victorian times, when the general public enjoyed many an entertaining family outing pointing and staring at the inmates of mental institutions, Premier League punters will soon be able to marvel at games bearing no resemblance to world football, and stare at the simple folk who watch it.

One of the radical proposals admitted to the media was the abolition of midweek fixtures, to be replaced with a game on Friday followed by the return fixture on Sunday. What a load of arse!

Grudges carried over from the first match between teams and fans; trips to Carlisle on Friday night followed by sharing motorway space with the inbred border folk on the way back down; public transport either packed with commuters (Friday) or non-existent (Sunday); as well as being a terrible strain on even our fittest stars (like Corny)! But this was far from the only piece of lunacy raised at the meeting, with talk of penalties after drawn matches, and bonus points for leading at half time etc. Not surprisingly these proposals received a rapturous welcome in the Daily Mail, who years ago published their own ludicrous 'Super League' in which, among other things, teams had points deducted for bookings. The whole thing was as daft as those people who think that winning at Fantasy Football proves that they are likely to make great football managers in real life. But it seems we haven't seen the end of such tomfoolery yet.

It is almost impossible to imagine what other reams of dung were let rip at the meeting, but if people are willing to consider such things we at TAF are always willing to jump on the bandwagon.

And so here follow our own ideas on how to make the world in we watch football a better place

Rule One

The Zonal Goal System

We propose, in the interests of entertainment, that the

standard regulation goal should be increased to twice its current height. The top section of the goal would remain as it is now - a sop to the Luddites - but the bottom would be transformed into an attractive patchwork of tubes. By scoring into the top half, one goal would be registered, but hitting the tubes (protected by the goalkeeper) would score a greater value, highest towards the centre of the goal. The tubes would be see through and would change colour when hit, but as an extra fan-pulling extravaganza, the highest value tube, (in the centre of the lower area), if hit would link to a delightful firework display. The lower area would be measured in relation to the keeper's height and reach, and would therefore encourage dwarves and vertically challenged individuals to apply for positions in an area of sport where they are currently under represented.

Rule Two

Points for Glamour

It has been noted that the Premier League have attracted many young ladies (and a few lads as well, no doubt) through the turnstiles by marketing glamorous young men such as David Beckham, Jamie Redknapp, Stan Collymore and Gianfranco Zola. Therefore, every team will be required to put forward the player who in their opinion is the nattiest guy in the team - to take part in a 'Mr Nationwide' competition. Negotiations are under way for this event to be broadcast on television's prestigious 'This Morning with Richard & Judy', where a panel consisting of Vanessa Feltz, Lesley Joseph, Zoe Ball and Russell Grant, will place the lads in order of 'fitness' for their respective divisions. The final will consist of the top 4 from the three divisions fighting for the coveted crown of 'Mr Nationwide'. As an added incentive, the club of the outright winner will automatically be promoted to the first division, at the expense of the division one club with the lowest rated 'Mr Nationwide'. Should the winner come from a first division club, that team will gain immunity from relegation for five years.

So that all the young heterosexual fellas (and strange ladies!) don't feel left out, every club will be required to have some 'sexy cheerleaders'. Videos of their performances will be mailed to classy nightclub owner, Peter Stringfellow, who will award bonus points to, '...the club with the best mix of perfect pins, bouncing bristols, and ravishing rears!'

Rule Three

Promotion / Relegation Shake-up

Although the play-off system has had its successes, there are still far too many meaningless mid-table fixtures after Easter. Therefore it is proposed that the three 24 club divisions have 12 promotion places & 12 relegation places each. If this proposal is accepted, the Football League could be called many things, but certainly not the home of stagnation. More supporters would experience the

agony of relegation, but likewise more would experience the pride of promotion - and all the extra merchandise it sells.

As regards promotion to the Premier, it seems unlikely that such a conservative bastion would be willing to adopt these radical proposals. In which case the top 12 of division one would qualify for promotion, but only three would be accepted. These three would be selected by counting up the amount of times they are referred to by media pundits as 'Sleeping Giants'.

Rule Four

The Handicapping System

At the start of each season, club chairmen will be required to submit sealed bids to the Football League as part of the 'Compulsory Registration for Added Points' scheme.

The lowest bid would start the season on zero points, the next lowest on four, the next on eight and so onwards. This will bring the structure of the Nationwide League closer to that of the Premier League, and ensure that a handful of clubs win every year. This will enable these specific clubs to set up glossy fan-mags and Digital TV stations, with a reduced fear of catastrophic failure.

So there you have just a few suggestions, and we're not expecting any consultancy fees either. If you've got any radical ideas why not send them to one of our governing bodies - you'll probably stand a good chance of becoming the next president of FIFA.

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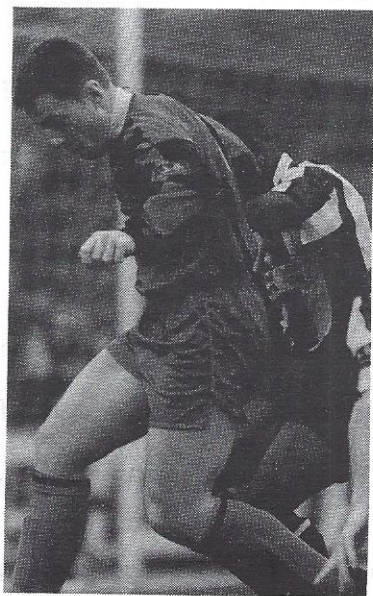


MICKEY BELL

ROT IN HELL

PAUL READ

A QUARTER OF WEED



MICKEY NUTTALL

A COAL SCUTTLE

train of thought

The scene - a train just about to leave London Marylebone. A Wycombe fan, proudly wearing his quartered shirt, is sitting alone. Just as the train pulls away a dodgy looking cockney jumps on and sits opposite the Wycombe fan. After about ten minutes of staring at the Wanderers shirt he says....

Cockney - Wot shirt's that then?

Wycombe Fan - Wycombe Wanderers.

Cockney - Who? Wot division they in then. The first.

WF - No, we're in the second division and have been for a few years.

C - Never seen you on Match of the Day. Why do you wanna support a team like that? They never win nuffink.

WF - They're my local side and actually they've won plenty in recent years.

C - Like wot?

WF - Two FA Trophies, the Conference and Third Division play-off final.

C - Wots the Conference, I've never heard of it.

WF - It's the league below the third division. If you win it you go into the football league. Why, who do you support then?

C - Manchester United. I supported Liverpool a few years ago but they're no good anymore.

WF - You're not related to Zoe Ball are you?

C - Eh?

WF - Never mind. So how often do you go to see them.

C - Well I've never actually been but I see them on the telly a lot. I'm their biggest fan.

WF - Why don't you go and see them.

C - It's too far away. I live in the East End.

WF - You could go and see them against London clubs. There's always plenty of room when they play Wimbledon.

C - But I watch them on the telly. They play in Europe as well you know. I bet your lot don't. It must be well boring in the second division.

WF - I enjoy it. I go to every home game and quite a few away games too.

C - How many replica shirt's you got then? I've got five.

WF - I last bought one about three years ago.

C - I thought you said you were a fan. You've got to support your team.

WF - I go to nearly every match. That's supporting your team, not buying the odd shirt.

C - Yeah, but Manchester United are the best. Everyone in the world's heard of them.

WF - Why do all United fans say that. I bet at least two thirds of the World's population have never heard of them.

C - No, EVERYONE has heard of them.

WF - Hardly a reason to support them is it. It's a bit easy just picking a winning

team to support. What will you do if they start losing will you support another team like you did with Liverpool?

C - No, I stopped supporting Liverpool because I didn't like Gary Souness.

WF - Graeme.

C - No mate, George Graham managed Tottenham.

WF - No, George Graham was at Arsenal. The Liverpool manager was GRAEME Souness.

C - Well he can sod off back to Celtic for all I care.

WF - He was at Rangers actually.

C - No, Graeme Souness never played for Queens Park Rangers. Who's Wycombe's manager then?

WF - John Gregory.

C - Never heard of 'I'm.

WF - That's alright, I'm sure he's never heard of you.

C - How are your lot doing this season?

WF - Not too well. We've had a bad run and are in the bottom half of the table.

C - Why do you still go then?

WF - Because they're my team. I'm loyal to them. I don't just support them when they're winning. If you stick with them through the rough times the good times are so much sweeter.

C - I can't understand you mate. You spend all your money on a bunch of sad losers.

WF - At least I support my local team. If everyone supported glory teams lower division sides would disappear. Why do you support Manchester United, you're not from Manchester, you've never been to a game and you used to support their deadliest rivals. Who's your local team?

C - West Ham.

WF - Why not support them. At least you could go to the odd match.

C - You just don't get it do you mate. West Ham are crap. Man Utd are the champions. "Champioli Champioli oh way oh ay oh way".

WF - Please don't sing. So who do you want to win the World Cup, Brazil, Germany?

C - No way mate, I'm English. You've got to support the country you come from.

WF - That's exactly what I've been trying to explain to you.

The train pulls into Wembley.

C - Oh well this is my stop. I don't imagine you've ever been here with Wycombe have you.

WF - Well, we've won here three times in the last few years.

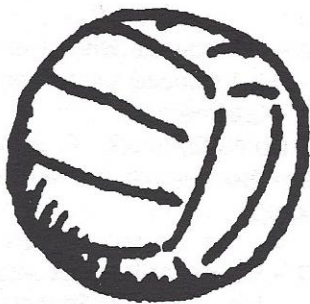
C - What at, dog racing, ha ha ha. Well I'm getting off, I'm going to see Luther Vandross. I hope High Wycombe Wanderers do well, ha ha ha.

As the Cockney gets off the Wycombe fan scratches his head and sighs. At the next stop two lads get on and sit opposite him. After about quarter of an hour one of the lads says...

Lad - What shirt's that then?

WF - It's WYCOMBE WANDERERS and excuse me but I'm getting off here.....

THE DIARY.....



Brownie for France '98???

Unfortunately our friends from over the sea, Eire, failed to qualify for next years World Cup finals, so sorry Macca, we had to scrap our plans to hype you into the squad. However Wycombe's very own "Reggae Boy" Steve Brown seems more than capable of joining the Jamaican squad. I heard a rumour that Exeter's Mark Blake, 36 years old, was destined for a place, and if so then why not Brownie. In the next few issues we will be campaigning on behalf of the man and letting the Jamaican boss know, so any letters of support will be printed in the next issue. (yes that means you lot - get writing).

News from Dorchester

Diary readers will be pleased to know that our friends and fellow Yeovil-haters from Dorset, namely Dorchester Town, have been on good form lately. You may recall that TAF contributors bonded with Dorchester on a holiday last year, and have indulged in a bit of mutual back-slapping ever since. Town fans were gutted when star striker Pickard defected to Yeovil, where he's been bagging goals for fun, but are also cheering at the return to form of their own Dave Carroll figure, Steve Richardson. This frail, balding midfield maestro, has been sending defences giddy in recent weeks, so we say to Gregory...snap him up on a free, and we'll have Basingstoke goal machine Paul Coombs as well.

Wanderers IN Town

Now some of you may remember that Wycombe players were often being spotted at various places about town. However with most of them living in Hertfordshire and the likes, sightings have been limited in the past few months. However with Christmas coming, the roaming eye has gone into overtime. Young Mark Stallard was spotted dribbling through the window at Feathers on Desborough Road, while his fellow acquaintance John Cornforth was busy chatting up the ladies at suave fish and chip 'restaurant' "Tuck-In". Corny was obviously in good spirits and quipped, "I know I shouldn't be eating pasties and pies, but its Tuckin' good stuff boys", and ran off without offering us a chip. Cheeky bugger.

Town centre was even busier. Dave Carroll went into a consumer rage when he found out that Argos had sold out of "Tellytubbies". "Do you know who I am?" he screamed at a terrified assistant, "yeah that's right pal, if it wasn't for me this town

would be a joke. I helped put it on the map". After demanding to see the manager Dave soon cheered up when he was offered a complimentary barbecue and patio garden set, complete with garden gnomes. "That will look a treat in Ruislip" he beamed. While all this was going on Alan Beeton was seen spending his wages on a Sony Playstation. So why this rash purchase Alan? "Well have you seen that bird Lara Croft in Tomb Raider two- look at the size of those jugs mate" he drooled. Well Alan I hate to tell you mate, but she's not real. Still he's only a young lad.

Festive humour at the Wanderers?

With the cash-strapped Wanderers looking for a few extra nuggets this Christmas, you'd have thought that maybe they'd have gone for a flash-looking catalogue advertising all their fine wares. Well, cast your eye over the latest release and guffaw at some of the worst design you have ever seen (OK issues 1-3 of The Adams Family excluded). Young Mo Harkin was the subject of most amusement, as the lad is dotted around the imaginary Adams Park pitch in a variety of guises. In one shot he is a pasty faced midget with all the pulling-power of a Robin Reliant, whilst in another he is a strapping Bond-esque figure equipped with cheesy sun-tan.....stand up the real Mo Harkin please. Elsewhere there are players who have seemingly had their legs amputated in some sinister marketing game, and heeeellllllllpppppp Penelope, some of our lads are sinking in quicksand around the centre-spot - sort out the drainage Mr "Hooded Claw" Jim Gardener!

Does 'Bob-a-Job' Still Exist?

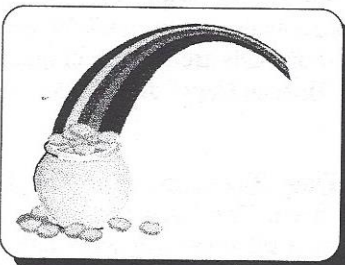
'Brian Day' was certainly a success at York City, even though the BFP took it all a bit seriously with talk of attacks on Brian. However we have more Brian news to report - namely the fact that his sponsored motor was looking a trifle grubby in the car-park against Oldham. Of course, in the days before Scouts earned their money by grubbing a quid fifty to let you park in a car park that isn't theirs, before bugging off home and offering no security for your outlay - they would do such things as wash your car for a 'bob' (which Reg Timberlake assures me was 12 and a half pence). So come on Scouts - help to clean up your blackened profile by washing Brian's car.

The Joy of Working for Wycombe

There's been 'trouble at mill' with power failures in the Servispak recently. Rumour has it that these cuts have been facilitated by much loved director Graham Peart refusing to hand over 50p's for the 'leccy meter until at least 300 replica shirts have been sold at each game. But such freak events have been taking their toll on tea-bar staff morale. On being politely asked by an assistant to hurry up with serving chips, a morose, spotty youth replied, with a full array of 'Quid-a-Kidders' in attendance, 'Stop F@*king moaning you old cow'. Hurrah for the legendary British good breeding and elegance!

FIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE WWFC ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET

For the benefit of those in charge of the dwindling coffers at the club, we decided to get our heads together and come up with some creative means of saving or even generating the club some money. Any further suggestions from you lot will be treated with the usual respect they deserve (by a fanzine desperate to fill up space in a future issue).

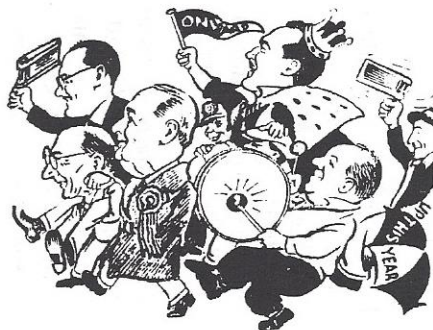
1. This might sound ridiculous, but go part-time, or at least partially part-time! There are hundreds of players out there playing a high standard of non-league football with a decent day job who would be perfectly capable of joining the Wycombe squad. Sure - we're a professional club and proud of it, but look at the business world today. The days of the 'job for life' are long gone, and companies now have a much wider mix of full-time, part-time and contractor staff employed. Why can't football clubs be the same? Come back Terry Howard, Kim Casey, the entire Basingstoke team - all is forgiven....
2. Scouting for talent. Why is it that Wycombe has never in my recollection found a player for next to nothing, who has then gone on to bigger and better things and made us nice and rich in the process? Ian Wright was playing park football before Crystal Palace signed him, Guy Whittingham for the Army and Yeovil Town before he went to Portsmouth. Why can't we find players like this? Maybe there's a network of 20 odd talent spotters that we don't know about scouring the local leagues on our behalf for budding talent (why has no-one spotted me yet?), but I doubt it somehow. If scouts are paid their expenses, plus a bonus for every one taken on, it would cost the Club next to nowt.
3. Performance Related Pay. There's no denying that football is big business

in this day and age, in which case we ought to start adopting PRP principles and a team-working approach to management. For example, if Nicky Mohan's had a bit of a 'mare, a £50 dock in pay might be off-set by a good all round performance by the defence as a whole. And even if Paul Read has scored a jammy brace, he can't expect a bonus for two tap-ins alone. It could even be measured by averaging out the marks in the tabloids next day.



(MARK AUSTIN CONTEMPLATES
ANOTHER MIDWEEK HOME GATE)

4. Kids in for free. The Quid-a-Kid days are a fine idea - why not go the whole hog and gamble on letting them in for free more often, say for a month at a time? If a kid comes to one of the current freebies and sees a crap 0-0, it might put him/her off for good, but the chance of seeing three or four consecutive games for no charge might just get them hooked. As we all know, these are the budding fans of tomorrow, and typically the ones that spend the most money (via the parents' wallets), so get the blighters in and fill Adams Park!
5. Better use of Adams Park. The hospitality suites aside, the actual stands and pitch at the Club are used for only a fraction of their potential, especially during June and July. Why not raise a few coffers by staging 'Bucksstock' - the county's biggest ever music festival? Or put on outdoor theatre productions, 5-a-side tournaments, flower shows, Billy Graham rallies, basket-weaving fairs, the Wycombe ruddy Show - whatever the local punters desire, basically! Perhaps some of these suggestions are a little facetious, but the possibilities certainly exist to use up some of our spare capacity at the ground.



Page 'Centre' Fella

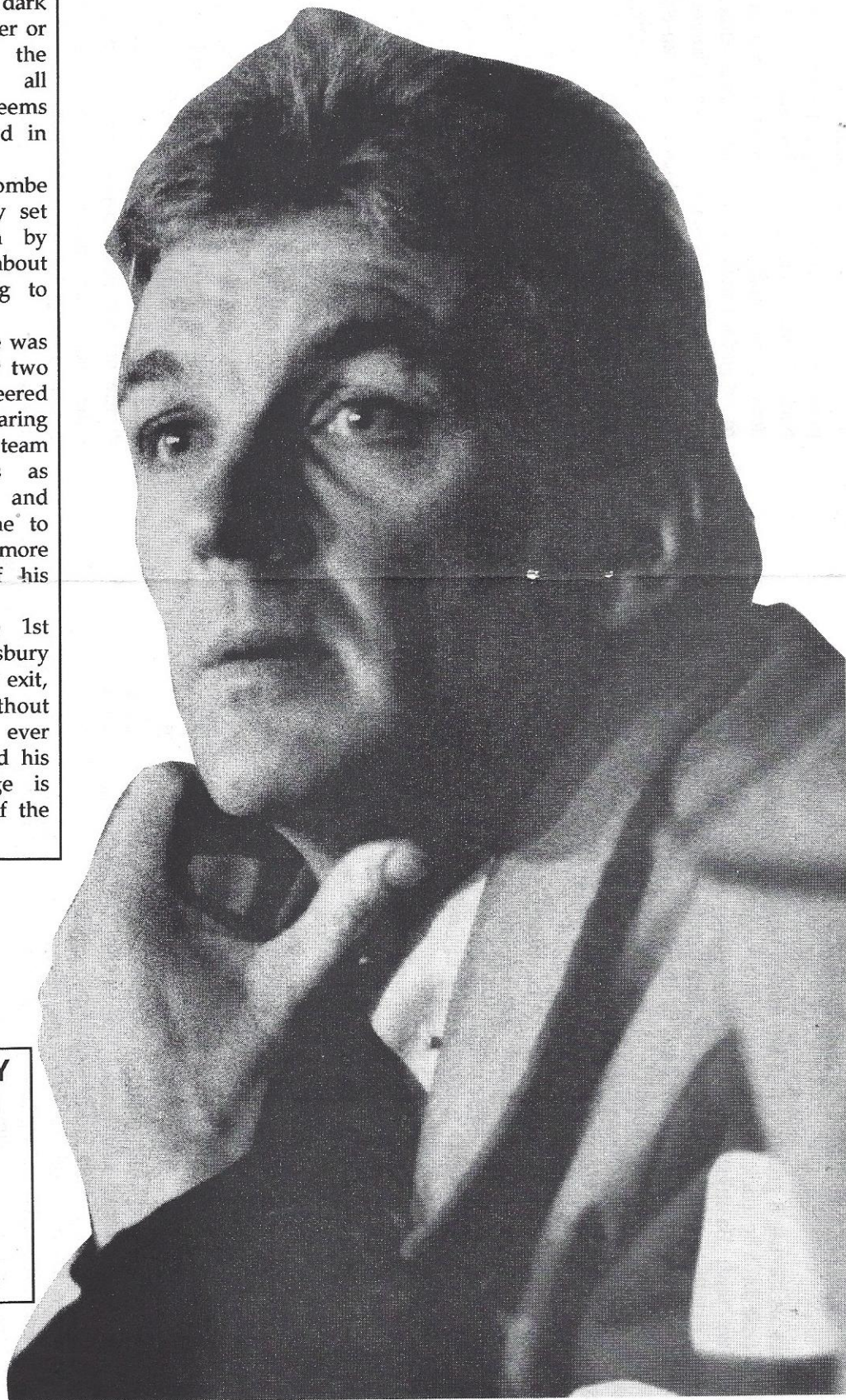
When supporters talk of the dark days of Alan Smith, or whether or not John Gregory cuts the mustard, there is one all encompassing standard that seems unlikely to ever be surpassed in terms of crapness.

Peter Suddaby became Wycombe manager in 1987, and swiftly set the standard for his reign by saying, 'I don't know much about management but I'm hoping to learn.'

Sadly Peter only learnt that he was quite dreadful at it, and after two shock early victories - engineered by 'God' Ashford before clearing off to Maidstone - a team containing such luminaries as Rowan Dodds, Alan Mayes and Nigel Gray lost 7-0 at home to Barnet, and won just once more before Pete was relieved of his nightmare in the New Year.

Coupled with an FA Cup 1st Qualifying round exit to Aylesbury (0-2) and a first round Trophy exit, Peter Suddaby is quite without doubt the worst manager to ever darken the club's name - and his haunted, but hunky, visage is printed here as a reminder of the darkest days.

NAME - PETER SUDDABY
GAMES IN CHARGE - 28
VICTORIES - 5
DRAWS - 6
DEFEATS - 17
GOALS FOR - 27
AGAINST - 59



HALF-TIME ACTIVITY PAGE

Perhaps us having a grammatical dig at any publication, official or not, is a clear case of "the cack calling the turd brown". However, so impressed were we with Basingstoke Town's 'alternative' synopsis of our playing squad's details in their (quote) "Special Edition Programme" recently (which makes you wonder about the state of their ordinary offerings!), that we thought we'd have to reproduce it and turn it into an exciting bit of boredom relief for all you eagle-eyed boffins who, like us, aren't thrilled any more by the prospect of ten more cubs scoring penalties from six yards out.

One can only assume that our mini player profiles reached BTFC Programme Editor, Michael Edwards (for it is he), as follows:

Alan Hutchinson attempts to fax details to Basingstoke, only to discover that due to a freak storm, all telecoms lines to the club are down. Undeterred, Alan calls upon the services of a reputable local courier, who turns up on a swift looking 2-wheeler. However, his cambelt snaps along Hillbottom Road, so he calls up his mate who keeps homing pigeons, who promptly turns up with feathery friend, message pouch attached to its underside. Off sets the pigeon to the Camrose, but gets caught up in the aforementioned storm. He plummets to earth, finishing up ass-over-tip in a puddle. Attempting to decipher the sodden information himself, our airborne hero decides to call in at a local hostelry to sink a couple before completing the voyage.

So, we have Wycombe pen pictures dictated from a pissed and soaking wet pigeon, trying to recall details read from a lump of papier maché - this can be the only rational explanation for the comedy that ensues. We spotted no less than **26** cock-ups on the following page - consisting of a combination of omissions, factual, spelling and grammatical errors of all types. See how many you can find, kids, then take it in to your teacher when you go back to school and look like a right slimy swot.



STEVE MCGAVIN (Forward) Born 24.1.69 North Walsham. A club record signing for £140,000 from Birmingham City in March last season. Started as a trainee with Ipswich Town before moving to non-league Sudbury Town. Then spent 18 months with Colchester United where he won Conference and FA Trophy honours in 1992, joining Birmingham in January 1994 for £150,000. Steve has made 7 League appearances to date.

PAUL MCCARTHY (Central Defender) Born 4.8.71 Cork, Southern Ireland. Joined from Brighton Hove Albion for £10(),00. He has 10 under 21's Caps for the Republic of Ireland.

PAUL READ (Striker) Born Harlow 25.9.73. Signed from Arsenal January 1997 for initial fee of £5,000. Trainee with Arsenal F.C. from 1991 to 1997. Scored two goals on his home debut for Wycombe vs York City on 25th of January 1997.

JASON KAVANAGH (Defender) Born Birmingham 23.11.71. Signed from Derby County on 29.11.96, following a months loan period, for a fee of £20,000. Played for Birmingham City AS a Schoolboy and joined Derby County during season 198-89. His debut game for Wycombe vs Crewe Alexandra on 2.11.96.

MICHAEL FORSYTH (Left Back/Central Defender) Born Liverpool 20.3.66. A very experienced defender who moved from Derby County to Notts County during 1994/95 season for £275,000. Transferred to Wycombe on 5.12.96 for a fee of £25,000. Debut game for Wycombe vs Rushden & Diamonds on the 18.12.96.

JOHN CORNFORTH (Centre Midfield) Born Whitley Bay 7.10.67. Signed from Birmingham City on 5.12.96, for a fee of £50,000. Birmingham paid £350,000 for him from Swansea F.C. in March 1996. Previously also played for Sunderland and has 2 full Welsh Caps. Made his debut game for Wycombe vs Rushden & Diamonds on 18.12.96.

MICHAEL SIMPSON (Midfield) Born Nottingham 28.2.74. Signed by tribunal from Notts County in January 1997. Trainee with Notts County 1992 to 1997. Made his debut for Wycombe vs Chesterfield on December 14th, 1996.

MAURICE HARKIN (Midfield/Winger) Born Derry - Northern Ireland 16.8.79. Had trials with Watford, Brentford and Nottingham Forest before joining the YTS scheme at W.W.F.C. Has also made 9 appearances for Northern Ireland Youth. He made his debut for the Wanderers 1st Team vs Barnet (F.A.Cup 2nd Round) on the 7th of December, 1996.

MARTIN TAYLOR (Goalkeeper) Born Tamworth - 9.12.66. Started his career with Mile Oak Rovers and after two seasons joined Derby County, where he made a total of 140 league And cup appearances. He made his debut for Wycombe, whilst on loan from Derby County, at a home match vs Shrewsbury on the 29th of March, 1997. Martin has signed a 5 year contract with The Blues.

MARK STALLARD (Forward) Born Derry - 24.10.74. Joined Wycombe in March 1997 from 13bradford City for a fee of £110,000. Scored 4 goals in 12 appearances in the Football League.

KEITH SCOTT (Forward) Born Westminster - 9 6.97 Returned to the Club during Season 1997/98 after leaving in November 1997 to join Swindon for a Club record transfer fee of £57,000. he made his return debut match for Wycombe on the 29th of March vs Shrewsbury whilst on loan from Norwich City Scottie has scored 15 League goals for Wycombe.

ALAN BEETON Born Watford - 4.10.97. Signed from the YTS in the 1996/97 Season. Alan has already made several 1st Team appearances.

GARY WRAIGHT Born Epping - 5.3.79. Signed from the YTS in the 1996/97 Season. Gary has already been on the bench this season.

AARON PATTON Born London - 27.2.79. Signed from the YTS in the 1996/97 Season.

Reg Timberlake's

Player Profile



Name: Reginald Alfred Timberlake

D.O.B: 17th May 1910

Married: To Freda, for 46 years this Christmas

Children: 3 strapping sons, who I might add, have all fathered children of their own.

Car: No.....cars are for the rich and the lazy. I walk everywhere.

Fathers Job: He's been dead for twenty years you fool. What's more he was crippled in the war and unemployed, so have some respect!

Who did you room with on away days?

Let me tell you - we never "roomed" with anyone in my day. Parading around stark naked in a bedroom with another man was a hanging matter.....and rightly so. I once made it to a friendly in Gretna Green with a combination of hitching and jogging. You might think I was knackered, but no I scored a hat-trick. So there's a lesson for you young footballers who get it all on a plate.

What's your favourite musical instrument?

I've always been a great lover of the harpsichord, but of course you had to go to University to get a sniff of playing one. Therefore it was mostly played by queer rich folk, so I went off it.

Who was the biggest influence in your career?

God gave me my talents and I used them, so me and him I suppose.

Which other sportsmen do you admire?

None in this day and age, fame just goes to their heads. I used to like Bobby Charlton until I saw that he was married to some dolly bird who reads the weather. And as for his brother Jackie I think he should have had his medals taken away from him when he went to manage Ireland. That was an insult to Englishmen everywhere.

Your toughest opponent and why?

They were all tough in my day, but none tougher than Corinthian Casuals Ronnie Jackett, who broke my leg six times. We always had a beer afterwards though, because we were sportsmen, not puppets like today's players.

Your favourite ground and why?

Yeovil's Huish ground because with the slope it was like home from home. Why Wycombe and Yeovil moved to flash new grounds I'll never fathom out, 'cos you just can't buy character, can you?

What do you like about the modern game?

Very little. It's run by cowards, cheats and scoundrels. It costs me almost a weeks pension to buy a ticket, when students and kids who have never done a days graft in their life, get in practically free. And then when I've got over that injustice, the team play like a load of turnips and I spend more money drowning my sorrows in the bar.

Does it compare with football in the 30's?

No. The players then were fitter, quicker, stronger and more passionate than they are now. If some of today's players would have come training with us, with their earrings, mobile phones and fancy deodorants, we'd have kicked seven bells of shit out of 'em.

What do you dislike about the modern game?

All of the above, plus the fact that women are getting into the board room. If they think they can run a club by flashing their pins at the chairman, then they're wrong...it's sick!

What is your ambition in life now?

To dine with the queen mother, a proud woman who could set an example to some of the young ladies today. My niece wants a Spice Girls video for Christmas, but I won't buy it....its nigh on pornographic.

What was the most embarrassing moment in your career?

Having a fight with a linesman who touched my backside whilst taking a throw-in. Afterwards I found out that it wasn't the linesman, but my cheeky wife-to-be - the hussy!

Favourite Food: A nice bowl of soup.

Favourite Drink: Water from the tap, or a fresh stream.

Favourite Actor/Actress: Rogers and Astaire.

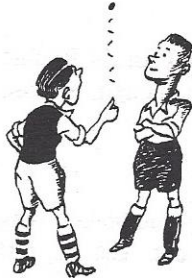
Favourite Singer/Band: Not my kind of thing.

Favourite Film: Any Monroe - A beautiful lady, but not smutty.

Favourite Holiday Resort: Minehead, Butlins.

Favourite Soap: Coronation Street

Favourite Soap Character: The lovely Pat Pheonix/Elsie Tanner.



O'Neill's Signings - "A - Z"

(Part Two)

As you will recall from last issue we looked at Martin O'Neill's signings from A-C, where the likes of Aylott, Brown and Cousins battled for the prize title of best/worst signing. In this issue we move on to signings C-H. Just to remind you about the ratings, the first is for **Skills** - Was he a player blessed with flair and talent, or an absolute oaf? Secondly, **Style** - Did the man cut it off the pitch as well as on it? An important feature in these days of "Peart World". Thirdly, **Fan Popularity** - Was he a fans favourite, or a complete loser. Fourthly, did he **Aid The Cause (ATC)** - Did he do his bit for the club or was he a complete waste of time and money. The player can score a maximum of 5 in each category, thus ending up with a grand total out of 20. So let TAF cast its judgement on the following players. Come in Gavin Covington....

GAVIN COVINGTON: (1991-93) An averagely skilled left-back who popped out of the reserves for the odd game every few months. A Left-sided player, his lack of opportunities saw him return to Hitchin Town, a broken man.

Skills 2 - He ran up and down the left flank.

Style 2 - Hugh Grant floppy mop-top for the ladies.

Fan.P 1 - Only the die-hards will wax lyrical about him.

ATC 1 - Managed to look cheesy in the team photographs.

TOTAL 6 POINTS

Where is he now? Working in a florists in Newport Pagnell.

TONY CUNNINGHAM: (1994) Huge Jamaican striker, who in his late thirties came on loan to Wycombe and managed to scare the living daylight out of a couple of defences.

Skills 2 - He could obviously head the ball and hold it up well. That was it though.

Style 3 - Viv Anderson on steroids.

Fan.P 2 - Looked lethal in a couple of games.

ATC 2 - Didn't do any harm in the games he played in.

TOTAL 9 POINTS

Where is he now? Forming a lethal partnership with Trevor Aylott for some outfit in the Unibond Premier.....possibly.

JOHN DEAKIN: (1991-92) Another fringe player who struggled to make the grade alongside legends such as Stapleton and Thommo in the glory years. However the wee man showed enough skill to earn a transfer to Kidderminster, where I believe he still plies his trade.

Skills 4 - Sublime skills were undermined by his lightweight physique.

Style 2 - Your average midfield midget.

Fan.P 2 - Some old men gagged for his skills, but most of us remained neutral.

ATC 2 - He played alongside some non-league legends, and didn't look too ropey.

TOTAL 10 POINTS

Where is he now? John is still playing at the "home of Meccano" that is Aggborough Stadium.

MIGUEL DESOUZA: (1995-97)

People were very excited when we bought Mig from Birmingham. He scored six goals in his first six games and people were touting him as the next big thing. Unfortunately injury struck after this spell and Mig was out for the rest of the season. I wonder what would have happened if he'd remained fit?? His next season was also good, but then it all went a bit pear-shaped during the Smith era.

Skills 4 - An undoubted talent, if he could be arsed.

Style 3 - Marketable man, even if he did look uncomfortable in Wanderers' fashions.

Fan.P 4 - Dipped at the end, but he was at one time the crowd favourite.

ATC 3 - Never reached his full potential, but scored some cracking goals.

TOTAL 13 POINTS

Where is he now? On the transfer list at Posh. And no doubt grizzling like a young lass.

ROB DEWHURST: (1992-93)

The arrival of Rob Dewhurst on loan from Blackburn set the stage for mass pandemonium from the Bucks Free Press. Rob came down on the train for his debut, and poor old John Reardon had to pick him up when his train was late - crikey that's the wacky world of non-league football, mate..... This hysteria continued when Rob netted a firm header on his debut, but soon died when he buggered off again a few games later.

Skills 3 - Solid, dependable big man.

Style 2 - Northern pie and chips man.

Fan.P 3 - Was heralded as a saviour and many fans bought the hype.

ATC 2 - We remained unbeaten with Rob at the helm.

TOTAL 10 POINTS

Where is he now? Hanging around with Hateley at Hull, poor sod.

TERRY EVANS: (1993-97)

Big Tel was an absolute guru during his first two seasons at Wycombe. True to the cliché, he was a giant of a man, and despite being totally unfit for most of his career, he played a huge part in getting Wycombe onto a respectable footing in the Nationwide League.

Skills 3 - Ground skills were poor, but heading and tackling first class.

Style 2 - A bit 70's Dennis Waterman-ish for my liking.

Fan.P 5 - Garner aside, I can't think of a more instantly popular player.

ATC 4 - As mentioned, big Tel gave us plenty of cheer in his spell here.

TOTAL 14 POINTS

Where is he now? Plying his trade with Crossley, Patto et al. at Kingstonian.

PETER GARLAND: (1995)

Having followed Charlton's progress for some time, I was thrilled when we signed Peter Garland on loan. This midfielder, who at Spurs and Newcastle was dubbed the 'next Gascoigne (well he was a bit portly), was always a silky ball-player. However he was cursed by injuries and when O'Neill left and Shite and Kamp came in Wycombe never took him on.

- Skills 4 - Gave the Wycombe fans plenty to gag about in his five games.
Style 3 - Portly Geordie chap, possibly daft as a brush???
Fan.P 3 - Most Wycombe fans were keen to sign a midfield playmaker.
ATC 2 - Didn't hang around long enough to further our cause.

TOTAL 12 POINTS

Where is he now? I believe he is playing for Crawley Town, having been released by Leyton Orient. A criminal waste of talent.

SIMON GARNER: (1994-1996)

An absolute cult hero of recent years, Garner gave us a feast of football in his two years at the club. Having played at the top level, he was committed to winning, and was always a joy to watch. Whether taking the piss out of defenders, spluttering and wheezing after a fifty yard run, or sticking his fingers up at opposing fans - Garner was everything you wanted your favourite player to be like.

- Skills 5 - The man was blessed with them.
Style 4 - Booze, fags, Jail.....but he did look a bit knackered.
Fan.P 5 - Probably the most popular Blues' player so far in the 90's.
ATC 4 - Helped us get into the 2nd division, with an awesome display at Wembley

TOTAL 18 POINTS

Where is he now? In a pub no doubt.

TY GOODEN: (1991-93)

A very talented youngster who joined Wycombe at the start of the 1991/92 campaign and won over Wycombe fans with some stunning pre-season displays. However with Guppy an absolute wizard on the left flank, Ty never really got a decent run going and Martin O'Neill told TAF that releasing him in 1993 was one of the things that he possibly regretted doing.

- Skills 4 - He certainly had plenty, but was always a tad lightweight.
Style 3 - Cheeky schoolkid in the "Five Star" mould....oooooh Steadman.
Fan.P 2 - Had a fair few admirers, but these dwindled when he scored against us.
ATC 2 - Didn't get enough chances to shine.

TOTAL 11 POINTS

Where is he now? Ty is a regular in the Swindon team.

So there we have it until next time, where among the greats being rated will be saucy stand-up Dennis "Chubby" Greene and "Wacky Baccy" Aky Hayrettin.

QUACK, QUACK, OOPS!

Those of you with any intelligence about you will have spotted the 'deliberate' mistake incurred in our last issue, which made us look at best like incompetent assemblers, at worst like disorganised amateurs trying to get the darned thing out at the last minute, neither of which are true - well, OK then, the second one perhaps on occasion. It was in fact the first time in nearly six years of TAF that a continuity error had appeared, however I'm glad to say that this was a genuine error on our Printer's part and nothing to do with us! Our crack legal team have negotiated a favourable financial compensation package which has redressed the balance.

Basically, pages 5 & 6 in TAF 29 should be where pages 31 & 32 are, and vice versa. The problem can actually be rectified fairly easily by your good selves, especially if you have access to a long-armed stapler, although not essential. Simply carry out the following steps:

- 1). Remove the two staples from your existing copy of TAF 29 and open it right out.
- 2). Keeping the pages carefully in order and with the front/back cover facing up, turn to the third sheet (A4 sized) of paper.
- 3). Turn this sheet over and fold it the other way, such that the Paul Lewis article on the Bristol Rovers game becomes pages 5 & 6.
- 4). Re-staple (or use your own form of adhesion) your precious copy back together and hey presto - Adams Family perfection once more.

If this is too much hassle or you're a bit of a thick Jack/Jill Clot, the David Jason article starts on page 30 and finishes on page 5 - got it?

By measure of compensation for the mental anguish and physical turmoil that you yourselves may have suffered, we have got a special offer on back issues going. Basically, we're 'giving them away' (until our next issue comes out) for just 30p each, which includes post, packaging, shipping, labour, VAT and stamp duty. So just flick back through your old issues and work out which ones you're lacking. A full set can nowadays at auction fetch upwards of *tens of pounds*, so I'm told, and the new 'wipe-clean' glossy covers mean that they can double up as handy coasters. So why not solve those, "What the Charlie Dickens do I get for Grandad this Christmas??" conundrums, by buying him a set of six? He'll be beating them away with a stick come coffee mornings. As if all that weren't enough, every fourth one you buy costs just 10p, so that's four

for £1 by our reckoning - can we honestly say fairer than that?

To take advantage of this idiotically magnanimous offer, just get in contact with us stating whatever numbers you're after. Write to us at the address on the front inside cover (note our new post code) - you can even save yourself a stamp if you deliver it in person to the Wycombe sorting office on Queen Alexandra Street - or e-mail us on "ad088@mdx.ac.uk" with your requirements. Either way, you should get a delivery within a couple of weeks. Available issues are listed on the inside front cover, and we accept cash, cheques and postal orders payable to "D.Chapman". In the words of some old Prime Minister git, "You've never had it so good...."

Quiz Page.....

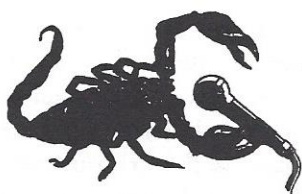
Yes, it's back. The super dooper Adams Family quiz page.

We have yet another exiting competition for you. This issue's prize is a fantastic Wycombe Wanderers Number Plate (Nice!).

Firstly, congratulations must go to Mr. I Kirkaldy of Holmer Green who correctly came up with Len Worley as the answer of last issues competition. It's worth noting that there were only three entries, so any correct answers stand a ripper chance of winning top prizes. Last season's video will be dropping through your door any moment now.

So, on to the big one. The first correct answer pulled out of the tombola by our celebrity guest (we're trying to secure Keith Chegwin) will win the Wanderers Number Plate. Just answer the following questions and sent them to the usual Adams Family addresses, postal or email:

- 1 - Name five footballers who have played for England with less than four letters in their surname.
- 2 - Which to British football grounds are closest together?
- 3 - Name six footballers who have played in a London, a Manchester and a Liverpool derby.
- 4 - Which player scored a hat-trick and saved a penalty in a cup final?
- 5 - Name seven players with birds in their surnames.
- 6 - Who, in the last twelve months, has scored at Wembley for Newcastle United and kept goal for Manchester United?



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CUP OF GOOD CHEER?

Knowing where exactly to begin the vitriol is the problem I have with Wycombe's display at Basingstoke - most of you will by now have read match reports of the doom-laden FA Cup replay, but few of you - apart from those 800 hapless souls who thought that a trip to North Hampshire would see us cruise to a professional and easy victory passage to Round 2 - will realise just how spineless, hopeless, listless, apathetic, worthless (hey, you guys can read a thesaurus as well as I can, ref. "shit" (*adj.*) in case you're stuck for where to start) a performance this really was.

We're well known for our exaggeration of the true facts in the fanzine as you're no doubt well aware, but this was utterly and without doubt THE WORST performance from a Wycombe team that I've ever seen in my 13 years as an active fan, no question. Worse than anything under Smith, worse than losing to the Met. Police at home, worse than getting stuffed 7-0 by Barnet. This is of course an entirely subjective opinion, but we'd be delighted to hear from anyone who thinks they have seen a Wycombe team play worse. From start to finish, we never looked *capable* of winning, and from Basingstoke's second equaliser onwards, with our creatively comatose midfield/attack (McGavin and Brown excepted) devoid of any cunning or goal-scoring guile, we were, I kid you not, *playing for penalties*. Embarrassing yet true, readers.

Quite simply, the Isis part-timers were better than us in both games and in virtually all departments - sharper, quicker to the ball, fitter, more skilful, and whilst both of their goals in the replay were a little fortunate, they took the piss out of the famous old cliché, "the Cup is a great leveller..." by swinging the balance way beyond the equilibrium. It was Wycombe who were looking for divine intervention most of the time, although we were not aided by the biggest 'homer' of a referee that I can recall in recent years - Mr Graham Barber, whom Martin O'Neill has not got on his Christmas card list either, did his best to assist the non-leaguers' passage to Round 2 by blowing up for fouls as soon as any Basingstoke player fell over, whether a Wycombe player was near him or not. Didn't work the other way round mind, as of course being plucky part-timers and all having been up since 4 a.m. doing milk rounds, catching rats and re-tiling roofs etc., they were allowed to use any means necessary to stop us from scoring - elbows, face-offs, shoulder barges, you name it.

For instance, Steve McGavin, who worked tirelessly all match, showed remarkable restraint when, with Wycombe 2-1 up, he shimmied his way gracefully past three

defenders and was bearing down on goal, only for Barber to peep once again because apparently McPasty had 'pushed' someone - ahh, bless the poor love, must have made his shirt all dirty. Steve was yellow-carded for stating to Barber the ruddy obvious and what we had been screaming at the pillock all evening, "Flipping heck, Mr Official, you blithering myopic dunderhead!", or similar words of a more earthy nature.

Having turned up at Basingstoke's Camrose ground in surprisingly good time (for us), we were relieved to see Paul McCarthy warming up to start a game, and at last, a return to midfield for Keith Ryan, where he has been *desperately* missed (Management - take note, we beg you) this season. With Brucie fit again - or thereabouts - it was looking good at the back, with Gregory giving Plug Beeton another stab at left wing-back despite a poor game at Bristol City the Saturday before. Things looked bad though from the fifth minute when our flat-footed defence was caught out for the first of many times by a simple through ball down the ay-diddle, which Taylor was pleased to see flash wide.

In all honesty, we never looked like getting 'beaten' as such by Basingstoke, we just were powerless to win (or even wanting to win) the bloody game ourselves. McGavin's first goal provided some relief, although it was one of only two WWFC efforts all half, and whilst Taylor made to my mind the right decision in coming out for their first equaliser, his execution of the clearance left something to be desired. Equally at fault was TAF fave Paul Macca, I'm afraid, who for reasons unknown decided that 20 yards would be far enough to boot a free-kick from just outside our area to present the opportunity.

That aberration was Paul's last effective contribution to the match, but whether Kavanagh's introduction in the second half was tactical or enforced, the decision to play him in midfield was, as it has been in previous matches, completely wrong. With Corny looking as interested in proceedings as David Blunkett at a mime artists' convention, it was down to Brownie to 'carry' the entire midfield, I'm afraid. Perhaps I'm missing something here, but I'm sure I've seen Cousins play pretty OK at centre-half before, and unless I'm a bit thick then Jason Kavanagh is a tried and tested full-back by trade, so why drag our best chance of winning the game back into defence - namely Mr Ryan? For him to give away a penalty as well (although hardly his fault)??? Tactics aside, John Gregory cannot and should not take the blame for this performance - it must rest with the players. To paraphrase Geoff Boycott on the England cricket team, our squad is as good as any other in this League (quality-wise, if not quantity-wise) - we're just not playing to anything like our full potential. There was a distinct lack of passion about the team on the pitch (although it has improved of late), I hope that the return to fitness of Carroll and Stallard boosts morale and provides much needed competition for places.

I don't think anyone who went to Basingstoke (the players included) could argue with the following 'grades' for each man's performance.

TAYLOR - 5/10 After such a blinder against Bristol City, Martin didn't really command this match as we'd hoped he would. Partly to blame for the first goal and flapped at too many crosses again. Even teased us by getting his hand to one of the penalties - but still it went in.

COUSINS - 3/10 His worst performance EVER?? I can't remember a game where he tackled so infrequently, crossed so poorly and shot/passed so inaccurately.

BEETON - 2/10 I'm afraid Alan's still a boy in a grown-up's game when the pressure's on, and certainly not cut out for left-(wing)back. Permanently five yards away from the man he was supposed to be marking and unable to deliver a decent attacking pass all evening.

RYAN - 6/10 With his return to centre-half for the second 45 went our last effective chance of getting a grip on the tie. A solid display amongst mainly witless colleagues and was unlucky with the penalty decision.

MOHAN - 4/10 Is this man the new Terry Evans? Nope, he's not that good yet. For a big chap he doesn't exactly command the back line as well as he could, and in this match couldn't pass water, let alone the ball to a team-mate. Unlucky to receive a yellow card for an innocuous challenge.

FORSYTH - 5/10 Very average display by Brucie's standards, but his recent injury probably affected his overall game and fitness. Forgiven on this occasion.

McCARTHY - 4/10 Never really looked up for it and made some uncharacteristic errors at the back. Odd decision to take him off, I thought.

SCOTT - 1/10 Keith hardly needs us to tell him he played like a Sunday league footballer the morning after his stag-night. But you lot do - trust me, I don't think I've ever slagged off Scotty before, but this performance reeked of a prima-donna who simply could not be arsed. Oh, hang on a minute - he's got anaemia hasn't he? And there was me thinking that Guinness was full of iron. I don't even blame him for the penalty miss - well struck and well saved.

CORNFORTH - 1/10 As usual, Corny flatters to deceive for the first 30 minutes, then just appears to get knackered and loaf about in what we now refer

to as the 'Corn Circle', literally waiting for the ball to drop at his feet. I doubt if he touched the ball more than six times during the entire second half plus extra-time - and one of those was a penalty kick!! Must be close to that Welsh call-up by now, John.....

McGAVIN - 8/10 A star amongst a galaxy of black holes (with the emphasis on the 'holes'). Not only looked the only one capable of scoring, but played with real pride and guts.



BROWN - 7/10 Considering he was the only one that bothered to tackle in our entire team, he carried the rest of Wycombe's limp central section damned well. Set up both goals and deserved a better midfield to play with.

KAVANAGH - 3/10 Out of position in midfield, and rarely contributed anything positive. Could have made a name for himself if only Scotty hadn't tried to grab the glory. With us 2-1 up and totally unmarked, The Kav was poised to steer home the clincher until Scotty popped up from nowhere to head McGavin's cross tragically over. If we were New Men, we would have wept openly, but being Neanderthal Wycombe lads, just abused the pair of them.

All of a sudden, the prospect of a 'glamour' home tie with Fulham in the Auto Windscreens Shield would look strangely appealing.....

THE SELECTOR

Still looking for an excuse to pop down the bookies? The other half for ever moaning about you frittering away the family finances? Well, look no further than The Adams Family for sanctuary, for The Selector is almost guaranteed NOT to pick the right result for you. Armed with your latest copy of TAF, just flash this in front of the 'bread knife', highlighting our (un)success rate this season, and the possibilities for instant wealth are, quite frankly, limitless.

From an initial miserly tally of 17.5% in TAF 29, we managed a laughable although slightly better 22.2% from the Luton to Oldham games (9), so by simply *ignoring* whatever we predict will happen, you have reduced by one third your pools options. Or, if you just go in for those spur of the moment, guess the right score flutters on match days, we can pretty much rule out one of the permutations for you straight off. Here's our latest set of wet-finger-in-the-airings for matches from 26/12/97 to 24/2/98. Don't laugh - some people (like us) *do* lose money on them!



WATFORD (H) 26/12/97

Optimistic though we often are, I really can't see us upsetting the Hornet's nest on this occasion. Although we look difficult to break down at home, Watford's superior strength in depth and our over-generous dispensation of half of Adams Park to their fans will make it seem much like a home fixture.

Final Score: 1-2

SOUTHEND UTD (A) 28/12/97

Am I tempting fate in suggesting that Southend might be one of those 'lucky' teams (for us) whom we always get points off? (*Yes, shut up! - Ed*). Having played averagely and beaten them 4-1 at home, followed by a well deserved victory in the AutoJoke Shield, I sense more points a-coming. Our first double of the season? A late Shrimpers equaliser will sadly put paid to that fantasy....

Final Score: 2-2

NORTHAMPTON TOWN (A) 3/1/98

The Blues' first match of '98 sees both sides still in the 'giving' spirit of Christmas, with goals galore at Nene Park. How do we know this? A hot-line to Him Upstairs, that's how. The only problem is knowing when the hallucinogenics have worn off and the divine intervention has kicked in.

Final Score: 3-4

WIGAN ATHLETIC (H) 10/1/98

Our dodgy run of victory-less games comes to a welcome end at AP, when Wigan, looking better candidates for relegation currently than automatic promotion (as many had predicted for them in August), realise that you can't expect to stuff the Wanderers 5-2 without feeling the wrath of such fearsome individuals as Carroll (gasp!), Cornforth (nooooo!!!) or even Jason 'Nice but Tough' Kavanagh (grrrr!). Suffice it to say that revenge will be sweet.

Final Score: 2-0

FULHAM (A) 17/1/98

I don't think there's anything we like more in the world of footy than seeing a 'big' team doing shit. Surely the only thing keeping half of the Maine Road regulars from leaping headlong off the Kippax is the prospect that Man Utd might not win every single competition they enter. We too have all smirked at dosh-frittering Wolves' inability to cast aside the might of Bury and Port Vale, and so it is with Fulham, who have got rid of Mr Al-Fayed's money quicker than hot tatties to little avail so far. What I'm trying to say is that we'll get a point. Got the point?

Final Score: 1-1

BLACKPOOL (H) 24/1/98

After our unfathomably smug 4-2 win at their place, the Satsumas will be looking for serious retribution. Well, they'll just have to wait another cotton-pickin' year, won't they? Our tea-leaves reveal a brace for Scotty, so our advice: "Put a monkey on it - Monsthter, Monsthter!!"

Final Score: 3-1

CARLISLE UTD (A) 31/1/98

Like QPR, Carlisle are one of those teams that can't decide which division they should be in. They need a Division 2.5 where they could just play Peterborough every week. I'd like to say that we'll push CUFC further into relegation mire and romp to a professional victory in Cumbria, to send our hardy long-distance travellers home happy. That's what I'd *like* to say.

Final Score: 0-0

BRENTFORD (H) 7/2/98

Further opportunity to capitalise on a team (currently) down the bottom. I have a feeling, though we have been known to err, that this will be our 'Burnley at home' for this season - y'know where we play brilliant and every shot goes in. (*Nurse - come quickly - this man's gone utterly insane..... - Ed*)

Final Score: 4-0

BURNLEY (H) 14/2/98

Talking of Burnley at home..... our third consecutive (subject to cup runs - not us of course, and postponements, clubs folding etc.) match with a relegation prospect, or it would seem that way as things stand currently. I don't think we can expect a repeat of last season's drubbing, however a narrow victory isn't too much to ask, is it? Well yes, it would appear that way. Off the pitch, expect a Premiership Club to move in for Mark Stallard with a £1.5m bid, and Corny to join a fitness clinic, after a young fan calls him "Tinky-Winky" (cos he turns purple after he runs for a couple of minutes).

Final Score: 2-2

PRESTON NORTH END (A) 21/2/98

A third consecutive victory would be too much to ask, I fear. We've had our fair share of glory against PNE in the past - a 3-2 win on the plastic followed by the Wembley humiliation, but since then the Lancs boys have certainly had the upper hand. A minor lapse in defence (which we're well used to this season) will give Preston the points. Knackers.

Final Score: 0-1

BRISTOL ROVERS (A) 24/2/98

As I live and breathe, dear friends, our computer predicts a handsome (yet close) victory for the Wanderers at Bristol. Following last season's capers where Cheesy forget what end he was playing at and where Big Tel got the winner off what looked like his wedding tackle, there'll be more of the same this season - only without the Three Stooges slapstick elements. One well worth making the drive for - a rare away victory and our first double of the season? Oh, yes.

Final Score: 1-0



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