The BLUES NEWS

The official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club



We're still on the ball for promotion

Issue No. 3

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Two divisions which are leagues apart

Mark Austin
Sales & Marketing Manager

IF you have ever visited such renowned stadia as Wexham Park, Slough or Park View, Welling, you would imagine that such memorable grounds could not be found in the Endsleigh Insurance League. However if anybody has visited the County Ground, Northampton; Belle Vue, Doncaster or Layer Road, Colchester, they will know that Slough Town's corrugated cowshed will be sorely missed.

However, commercially there is a considerable difference between the GM Vauxhall Conference and Division III.The major difference financially is the shared out monies received from the league sponsors, via the GMVC or the Football League. All Division III clubs get nearly 30 times what conference clubs get, although Wycombe Wanderers only received half an allocation this season, as it is our first year in the Football League. The other half goes, would you believe, to the demoted club.

In last season's case it was Halifax Town. One assumes that the idea is to enable any demoted club to get back in the first year of asking. It does not have seemed to have worked this year, and I am delighted that Kidderminster Harriers look likely to win the Conference this year. I have always felt sorry for them since they lost 2–1 to Wycombe Wanderers in the FA Trophy Final at Wembley in 1991. Their Aggborough stadium is one of the best in the conference and they have an excellent commercial set up run by my good friend and colleague Phil Wright.

The pressure to succeed financially through sponsorship and advertising is greater in Division III as the outgoings are far greater. More Police and stewards are required, more demands are quite rightly put on safety and comfort for supporters, wage bills are higher and there is more travelling. All these increases have to be met, either through increased gates or through commercial activities.

Very few clubs in Division III can afford the luxury of having any space around the pitch perimeter, whereas quite often in the conference, there is more space than advertising boards. The other main difference is the various grants and schemes available in the Endsleigh Insurance League.

Jewson are substantial sponsors of an awards scheme, based on improving facilities for families at football clubs. Wycombe Wanderers were recently awarded £12,500 by Jewsons following an application to create a creche/children's room on a matchday and a classroom for non–matchdays, for the learning through football scheme.



More police and stewards are needed for matches in Division III



Mark Austin

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Call up the 'Sportsline'

I CAN'T quite claim to have an audience as big as David Mellor's but then I've never worn a Chelsea strip in compromising circumstances – and I've certainly never met Antonia De Sancha. Otherwise, for 999 read elevenSEVENTY and you end up with much the same thing ... an hour of debate, controversy and good old–fashioned football chat.

Let me explain! For those of you who haven't yet realised that High Wycombe now has it's very own local radio station, elevenSEVENTY is the name and eleven o'clock every Friday morning is the time to tune in. "Sportsline" is a phone–in show with a special Wycombe Wanderers flavour, hosted by yours truly.

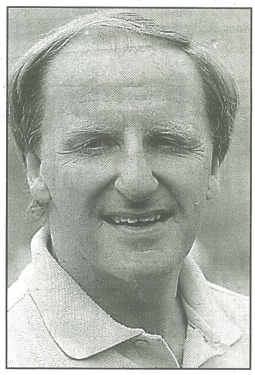
The show is a platform for YOU to air your views on a sporting topic of the moment, and if it happens to be about life at Adams Park, then so much the better. Call me on (0494) 452100 and the stage is all yours to rant and rave about anything to do with the Wanderers. If you are nervous about stating your case "live" on air – and there's really no need to be – you can always write to me c/o ElevenSEVENTY, PO Box 1170, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 6YT.

Sportsline has been on air since January and we've already notched up a few exclusives. The programme was first to break the news of new signings like Simon Garner, Steve Brown and Nicky Reid. We had Martin O'Neill as my studio guest in the week when he wasn't talking to the press. And even the chairman had to admit that the first he knew of the postponement of our game against Darlington was when he heard me give the news on Sportsline.

We've had interviews with most of the players, injury bulletins from physio David Jones and a state–of–the–pitch report from the groundsman, Jim Gardner. We heard from Nottingham Forest Manager, Frank Clarke about the chip butty habits of a certain young Irish midfielder he used to play alongside.

My ITV colleague John Helm did his party piece – burbling the names of all 92 Football League Clubs in the space of 25 seconds, and Kathy from the front office revealed how she sweet talks those irate fans who can't get a ticket for a big game.

Sportsline stirred up a lively debate when I had the temerity to criticise that previous pair, Bore–vill and Bean. Ice–dancing a sport? You've got to be joking! For the next ten minutes, the phone lines were buzzing with the irate ladies of Buckinghamshire castigating me for my "rude" comments.



By ALAN PARRY

One week we discovered the chap who is surely Wycombe's oldest fan, an 84-year-old gentleman who remembered soldiers doing their drills on Loakes Park before the First World War!

Another week I asked for suggestions for a suitable piece of music to play over the Adams Park loudspeakers when the team runs out. A local disc–jockey rang into suggest Free's hit All Right Now! – and he received complimentary tickets for his first ever football match as a prize.

Wanderers fans have been on the line to voice their complaints about many topics: car parking, ticket arrangements, beer prices, team selection and style of play. But, in the main, you seem to be pretty satisfied with things at Adams Park – most of the calls have been in praise of the manager, the club and the players.

Every week, I plead for calls from listeners who follow another club or another sport altogether, but the vast majority of elevenSEVENTY's audience are obviously fans of the Blues – and I'm not talking about music. Incidentally, on that subject, the show allows me to indulge in my love affair with the records of the Sixties and I make no apologies for trotting out all my old favourites from The Beatles to Roy Orbison.

There was also a big response from fans who said that they would love to hear the show, but found 11 o'clock on a Friday morning a difficult time to listen. No problem. ElevenSEVENTY's Programme Director, Andrew Phillips – who just happens to be a newly converted Wanderers fan – agreed to repeat the show every Friday night between 7 and 8pm.

You've probably got the idea by now that I'm very enthusiastic about Sportsline, but I also recognise the need to keep improving the show. I'd love to hear your ideas – and the best way to get them over to me is ringing (0494) 452100 any Friday morning. Don't be shy.

Your own local station, elevenSEVENTY provides a nice, easy style of listening with a variety of music and regular news up–dates. Despite limited resources – the cost of launching a new station is a massive financial drain – they are doing their best to expand and improve. They deserve your support.

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Spotlight on Wycombe Wanderers Wilkinson Sword Under-12s

THE spotlight this month is on the Wilkinson Sword Under-12s squad managed by Tony Sequeira and coached by Barry James and Nick Nicholls.

The squad train at Cressex Astroturf on Thursday evenings and have a representative side that play in the Local Star League.

The side uses Shelburne School for their home games with games kicking off at 10.30am on Sunday mornings.

They have only lost two of their competitive matches so far this season and hope to gain promotion in their league.

They have an end of season tour planned for their members and will be going to Pontins at Wall Park over Whitsun to take part in a football Tournament as well as enjoy a well deserved break.

To help toward the cost of their tour, the side has arranged discos and other events to help raise the money.

Like all the Lions sides they have also been ball boys down at Adams Park and all would one day like to play at the ground.

Tony Sequeira believes they are successful as a squad because: "we have a terrific bunch of parents who support us. They help us with fund raising, organising match days and the hundred other jobs that running a team involves. We have been very lucky in receiving a new kit this season from our sponsors Wilkinson Sword and hope they will continue to support us".



The Under-12s line up with their trophies

We are now very actively seeking sponsors for each of our sides for next season. The funds raised we hope will go a long way towards the cost of replacement kits and equipment to help reduce the costs we have to ask parents to pay.

We will acknowledge every donation and wherever possible get the sponsor's name promoted either on the kit or through our publicity activity.

If you know a company prepared to be associated with our objectives, get us a name and we'll speak to them.

Don't ask me – I'm only a woman



By DIANE MEDCRAFT

MY first regular encounter with live football was of the boys variety in a local Under-9s set-up involving my oldest son. The league was called something along the lines of Thames Valley Friendly League – there's a fib for a start because at times there's not a lot "friendly" about kids football.

The Dads are fairly blatant with their tactics. Wearing very ill fitting managers' coats they gather, mafia like, at strategic positions on the touch line and blow their cigarette smoke into the eyes of the opposition.

Mums, however are a lot more subtle in their support. Ever heard the phrase 'hell hath no fury like a mother scorned'? Roughly translated it means something like this: If your best friend in the whole world, whose children you are godmother to and who was bridesmaid at your wedding, has a son who plays in opposition to your own little Gazza and he takes your boy down in the middle of a top of the table clash, you will hit him, stamp on her foot and never speak to that violent family again!

Once I got the job at Wycombe Wanderers, my days as an uninformed, impartial female who just happened to enjoy watching football were numbered. Not necessarily due to any change in my attitude but simply because a woman who works in a football club is deemed to be an honorary bloke.

Men who would not have given me the time of day in my pre–Wycombe days were suddenly slapping me on the back and offering to buy me a pint! Bemused and slightly flattered I would struggle with the lager and find that there was a hefty price to pay in exchange for the price of a drink. Namely my 'inside information' about team strategies, financial dealings, how many tickets for cup games I could lay my hands on and the colour of Martin O'Neill's socks. As a side line I had presumably taken an advanced referees' course and spent most matchdays with a wine glass pressed to my ear outside the dressing room door memorising the team talk.

I tried in vain to explain that I had no opinion worth offering on that offside decision five games ago (the fact that I was still in the office when this scandalous judgement was made cut no ice) and that I am only capable of watching one player at a time, but to no avail. The words I came to dread most were 'talk me through it' because what these people really meant was 'let me bore the pants off you with my version of the game and you can look interested'.

When I dared to grumble slightly in the presence of an elderly gentleman I was soon put in my place. What I had not realised was the real significance of becoming a member of staff. Namely, to wear one of life's most treasured possessions, a drip dry, polyester mix blazer emblazoned with the club crest of WWFC. Any real supporter worth his salt would appreciate what an honour it was to wear. By real supporter, he of course meant those who were born within six miles of the gasworks as the crow flies and have never missed a home game in 35 years. (To date I have met at least 4,000 of these and the number rises in proportion to the 'all ticket' games we have, but that's another story!)

On further investigation I discovered that there is many a tale to tell about the history of The Blazer. Firstly, there is only one blazer worth talking about. It came in a rather fetching shade of French Blue that nearly matched with the co–ordinating swan print tie. Because there was an element of crimplene in the fabric no one had to bother much about size, as it was capable of stretching over the most demanding stomach. Sadly we have now catered for the more fashion conscious directors and players, who took offence at visiting away grounds and being told where to park the team bus. The French Blue blazer is now a garment destined in time to take its place in the Victoria and Albert museum and our officials blend into obscurity in standard M&S dark navy with gold buttons.

Rumour has it that a wife was nearly divorced because she inadvertently put her husband's blazer in with her smalls on the boil cycle. Several officials were known to sleep with them on and one requested to be buried in his. Once word got around that there was an abandoned blazer spotted at Booker tip, locals had to endure a five-mile snarl up while the auction took place. Quite simply, forget all you've heard about Freemasons and the dodgy handshake, or elitist club ties. If you haven't got The Blazer – you haven't made it in life!

Fortunately for all the female staff employed at Wycombe Wanderers the pressure to "talk football" stops when we enter the office. What a joy it is to watch the games, listen to the post mortem conducted over cups of tea and not to be asked for an opinion. Indeed the only reason that we are all still allowed to work here is because we know nothing about football. However, if we're talking about the going rate for a third-hand blazer vcg original badge intact, I'm your woman!

Hard work – but fun

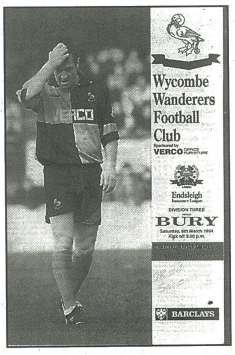
HAVING written about some of this season's away travels in the previous two issues, I thought I'd use this month's page to acquaint BFP readers with what is involved in producing a matchday programme for a first team fixture at Adams Park.

Back in May, 1991, I was fortunate enough to be offered the position of Programme Editor by Brian Lee, General Manager at the time. To be honest, I'd had little experience of either writing in, let alone producing, football programmes, and on arriving home I started to think of all the possible problems that could occur! I don't work at Adams Park, having my own full–time job in Local Government. I've also two daughters aged under four to look after - and I live some 20 plus miles away!

I'm most fortunate to have an excellent team of assistants – Steve Peart, Dave Finch (Mr "Stats") and Bob Cairney. There's also my regular contributors from within the Club – Alan Parry, Alan Hutchinson and, until recently, John Goldsworthy (delicate matter that one!). All these persons make my job that much easier – I usually only need to write a couple of pages, giving myself more time to concentrate on the duties of an editor.

The most important part of my role is planning. For a Saturday game my printers deadline is at

PROGRAMMED IN by Adrian Wood



07.30 hours (nice early morning start in mid–winter!) on the previous Wednesday, but it's usually two weeks before matchday that I start planning a programme in detail. The first issue is the colour photographs – for scanning purposes the printers need these eight days before a matchday. Visiting clubs are supposed to forward in good time, team photographs, pen pictures etc, but some are a lot better at this than others! I often need to contact them by phone or fax. I have a photographer at all home afternoon games and try to use photos from one home game in the next programme and so on. Due to the above deadlines however, this is not always possible. Just to show I've no "favourite" players, all the Adams Park first team squad have – or will be – featured both on the front cover, and inside, before the season's end.

I am then left with some 20 pages to be filled. Our programme does contain a considerable quantity of advertisements – I have no control over this, but these are an important source of revenue to the Club which keeps the programme self–financing. I attempt to maintain a sensible balance between articles and statistics, whilst giving ample information about the day's opponents. Every attempt is made to be as up to date as possible but obviously details of a game played the previous Wednesday can't be included.

My evenings leading up to a deadline are spent either writing my own pieces of copy or communicating with my contributors – I've developed quite a good relationship with Alan Parry's answering machine over the last couple of years! Attending all the Club's away fixtures, I concentrate on the "On the Road" page.

I include road directions to away venues which are as accurate as possible but these are in the main provided by the host clubs – regrettably I don't personally know the exact route to every Football League ground! The day before a deadline I always ensure I go over to Adams Park to pick up any items for inclusion from the full–time members of staff. My next task is to ensure that I've sufficient copy for all the available pages – normally this is no problem, and often I've had the difficult job of deciding what to omit through lack of space. Thankfully my nightmare of being left with a blank page at the printers deadline has not yet turned into reality!

The importance of advance planning was never so obvious than when we played Bath City in 1992 in the FA Trophy one Sunday afternoon in early 1992. I knew that if the game ended all–square the replay would take place just two days later and that the printers would need the copy first thing the Monday morning! We were level 1–1 and once Kim Casey hit the bar in the 88th minute I knew it wouldn't be going far that evening! In reality though my team and I had already planned for this eventuality – pictures were "on standby" at the printers, information on the visitors etc, had already been acquired. I still managed to get the normal programme produced in time – and even got a few hours sleep as well!

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Blues fans write in

THE Club would like to thank all the supporters who wrote into the Blues News with their views. Please continue to send your opinions on any matter concerning Wycombe Wanderers or Adams Park to the Blues News Editor, Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, Adams Park, Hillbottom Road, Sands, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 4HJ.

The Club would very much like to publish supporters' letters in every issue of the Blues News from now on. In fact, if we get enough letters, the Club would be willing to devote a whole page to supporters' letters and opinions in every Blues News.



Jacky Hobson, Barry Hobson, John Meadows and Carole Meadows

Dear Blues News

AFTER all the problems after the Wigan match I know this was in very bad taste by the minority of so-called supporters, the majority of us appreciate every thing has been achieved by every person concerned with Wycombe Wanderers and you should all be congratulated on all the success, excitement and joy you have brought to the people of Wycombe and long may this continue, as we look forward to every game. If we all get behind the team on bad days as well as good days more success will follow. I believe the supporters showed their true support against Bury on Saturday and hope this took away some of the bad feeling, and cheered up Martin. It would now be nice to cheer up John Goldsworthy so we may have his excellent contribution back in our programme. So John please don't let these few people make the rest of us suffer so please put pen to paper and give us back your article.

I would also like to point out a few points that I hope may be of interest to you and as I believe these would help to improve your excellent facilities.

1) To put some smelly blocks in all the WCs on match days to freshen them up at a very low cost.

2) Please could you have an arrangement for late comers to games, ie, a recognised entrance, a ticket system or turnstile so all figures and monies go on record for the club, also at/from half–time a reduced admission fee be charged as full price as at present is far too much to ask.

3) Directions for coming away matches to be printed in the Bucks Free Press/Midweek for persons who do not obtain previous programmes for various reasons, ie, miss a match, short of cash etc,

I hope these points are helpful to you and may be considered for change or improvement.

Once again, all the best for the rest of the season.

KR Young

Supporters' letters

Dear Blues News

I WOULD like to thank Wycombe Wanderers Football Club for the hospitality shown to me and my relations at the Bury game. My second cousin Deborah Warwick was mascot for the game and a number of us attended the game, we were met by a gentleman called Mr Anning and given a guided tour of the Club.

At half–time tea and biscuits were the order of the day, and my day was made complete by the fact that Wycombe won the game, and Simon Garner scoring the first goal thus ensuring that I won £20 on the "Golden Goal" as I had purchased a ticket showing the first minute.

I sincerely hope that the Club goes from strength to strength and if your public relations is anything to go by they should.

Phil Crook

Extracts from an open letter

Dear Blues News

I AM writing this letter as most certainly one of the minority of WWFC supporters who believe that not all of the changes happening at the Club are for the better, or as a spoon as TAF would say.

I have been following WWFC all of my life but not only me but my father, and my father's father.

And my father's father's father.

And my father's father's father's father.

And what have they given me in return.

I'm sorry I momentarily lapsed into Monty Python.

I vaguely remember some games from my childhood. Not so much the football because when you are young one game is very much like another.

I can remember incidents like our car catching fire on the M4 on the way to Ninian Park, and still making the kick–off.

I can remember a wall collapsing behind the goal at Waterlooville and a WWFC fan breaking his leg.

I cannot remember the trek to Middlesborough for the cup replay because I was too young to bunk off school, (If the Cressex Headmaster is reading this I can tell you that my brother wasn't sick that day. At least no until the final whistle).

Anyway I sold my home leg ticket for a tenner so I had no right to go to the replay. Sorry but I was a kid and ten pounds was a fortune to a 12-year-old in those days, and I got to see the match on the Sunday afternoon.

My support has now become an obsession and this began seven or eight years ago when the average gate was about 1,200 people at, of course, Loakes Park. The site of the current training pitch. Yer right.

When my godson was two, I started taking him to Loakes Park and I admit his attention span never lasted the full 90 minutes in the early days and for most of the second halves, he would be rolling around the grass at the hospital end or collecting stones.

The point is I got to watch the match, my godson enjoyed himself, and I fulfilled my Christian duty. Loakes Park our Temple. The referee the vicar. The choir in the Gas Works End (not very good in those days either) and a win was the answer to our prayers.

My godson has now been fully converted and insists on making is parents a regular part of the Adams Park Congregation. Over the years I would not like to imagine how much has been placed into the collection plate by this family in exchange for match entrance, programmes, golden goal, leagueline subscription, raffle tickets, replica kits, scarves, hats, cokes, sweets, etc.

I have not been to many away games this year, but I would like to mention:–

a)Twerton Park for the Cup game where there were so many away fans I could only see about three-quarters of the pitch. And I am 6ft2in.

b)Preston. I was not there but I have been told to mention Preston because WWFC fans were crammed into an overcrowded area on the ground.

c)Northampton. Crap ground but at least the children were allowed to sit on the pitch.

So is there a point to my rambling?

I want the Club to succeed and attract large crowds and in the long term I would love an all seater stadium to watch Premiership football.

In the short term however, why cannot the Club install crush barriers in the away section of the ground to increase capacity so all WWFC fans know exactly how the ground is permanently segregated.

Secondly, I would like to know why my son is not allowed to sit on the surrounding barrier with his legs dangling pitch side but he can sit on the fence facing the terrace. Is the sight of one of Jason's tackles rated 18 and the Steward has to impose the Club censorship rules?

Gary Styles

THE BLUES NEWS 7



Blues fans have always been vociferous in their support - this is your chance to speak out

Dear Blues News

YOU requested in the Northampton programme the fans' views, I'd like to mention a few of the things that I don't so much hate as find irritating, I would prefer though not to have my name added to these views, these are actually gripes I've been meaning to write about for ages.

Firstly, the splash guards in the gents toilets can only have been designed to splash the floor next to the urinal and often your shoes as well, the toilets also smell badly even at 2pm when you would expect them to smell freshly cleaned.

Secondly, whoever put the extra blue bits in to the barriers behind the goals hasn't stood there during a match! Anyone who wants to get off the terrace now has to disturb a lot more people to get to a clear set of steps, this is most annoying when the early leavers are "sneaking out" and we're trying to watch the boys hang–on to a nerve racking one goal lead! I realise it was done to increase capacity so will the blue bits be removed when–if–ever the barriers are installed in the Woodlands Terrace?

Third and finally, the matchday announcer is an embarrassment to everyone I know so surely must be to the Club? It's not a job I would do myself so I can't be too hard on him, but on Saturday he obviously didn't know who scored the goal, I did and I was partly unsighted 120 yards away! Hopefully he'll never repeat his pre–season gaff of announcing the wrong teams as they came out.

It will be interesting to see how much response you get as I myself am reluctant to complain when we have been spoilt with such an excellent set–up, but if it's views you want these are mine, if they are acted upon they will make my visits to Adams Park even better than they already are, of my 25 years following the Blues, these last three have definitely been the best.

A true supporter

Dear Blues News

AFTER reading the new Blues News (which I thought was brilliant), I thought I would offer my services to the Club.

It was suggested that there might be possibilities of a match day creche. I myself am a nanny, and have been for eight years now, after passing my exams at Aylesbury College in a "City & Guilds in Home Economics for family and Community Fare".

If you do go ahead with the Creche and are looking for help, please contact me, as I'd like to help in anyway for Wycombe Wanderers Football Club.

Karen Newton

Dear Blues News

THE story of an obsessive Blues fan following the Wanderers from abroad for one year – his trials, tears, tribulations and hangovers.

This is the story of me, Matt Brown and how from Chile, some twelve thousand kilometres from Adams Park, I followed the Blues first season in the league, my only contacts with the club I felt part of; a knackered shortwave radio, infrequent Bucks Free Press reports sent from home and extremely infrequent snippets of news in copies of The Times which I scrounged from rich ex–pats.

It all started on Saturday August 14, 1993 (obviously after the pre–season friendlies which cost me a combined total of £18 –I mean EIGHTEEN QUID to glean the knowledge that Southend were good, Paul Walsh looked stupid but was still pretty classy, Westy was going to struggle and that Swindon looked rather short of firepower up front) when I joined the Blue Army – five coaches! – on the road to Carlisle. My departure date to Chile had been put back several times and you can imagine my delight at discovering I would be able to see that first match.

Anyone who was anyone was there so I needn't waffle, suffice to say that my disappointment at Westie not playing and – on the most important day in their history, my team being kitted out in some appalling green and white pastelly number; was cancelled out by the joy of the occasion. However on Saturday 21 August we positively ran across town to be back in time for the World Service Sports Report, 7.45pm our time, and the news that Wycombe had beaten Chester 1–0 and hence were off and running. I say we, meaning myself and my fellow Project Trust volunteers who live together and all teach English in separate inner–city state schools in Santiago – Jon Cassidy (ardent Brighton fan, his team have been boosted from their lowly light by the arrival of an Irish manager) and Roger Davy (Sunderland glory supporter).

August 31 saw me return home from work just in time to hear the results – Hereford United 3 (cue exclamations of despair) – Wycombe Wanderers 4. I instantly became unbearable for a whole week with endless chants of 4–3, 4–3, 4–3. The inspectors at INBA, the boarding school where I live, are all football mad but expect all English people to support Manchester United – there are only two divisions in Chile so The Fourth division is a bit of a joke to them, especially as there is a Chilean team called The Wanderers who are renowned for always losing. From this date on the cry of Wanderers' is almost a substitute for my name and they always enquire about the English Wanderers' weekend performance.

I built myself up to Saturday, September 18, all week, it was our chance to get revenge on Col U for THAT DAY two years ago, unfortunately the match clashed with Chilean Independence Day celebrations which we inevitably got caught up in hence missing the day's results. This meant that I spent the next ten days biting my nails before I could get hold of an appropriate English paper – hence I had already suffered the disappointment of the 3–0 defeat to Coventry. I think for ever I will remember my feeling when I read the score, that number 5 and the list of Colchester scorers seeming to stretch down the page for an eternity, and that name, McDonough, laughing at me from the paper.

It's so much harder to take over here. A win, no matter how scrappy or beautifully earned, is like finding money in the street, a loss like a kick in the teeth, and a loss to Col U, a 5 –2 loss like a sledgehammer in the testicles and half a pound of brussel sprouts forced down your throat.

I started to recover from this setback with a few successive Blues victories, and the World Service reports of the valiant effort against Coventry persuaded me that Division Two was easily in reach.

November proved to be a good month for both me and the Blues; I was now well and truly settled into my teaching and was finding it very fulfilling work, and a string of good results including the first round cup win (coinciding with Brighton's early exit) topped off by the magnificent news of victories over both Crewe and Preston, more than anything I'd hoped for.

Now though, whilst I'm waiting for the World Service to reach the Third Division results each week, I get to exclaim a big sigh as Swindon are beaten once again followed by the cry that "Scotty got their consolation goal".

In Mid–December I left the congestion, the smog, and the four million football mad' people of Santiago (they play a very different pace of game which involves never having shots and presumably waiting for the other team to fall asleep from boredom so that you can walk the ball into their net) to spend six weeks travelling in the south of Chile during the Summer/Christmas holidays.

As I write now, at the end of January, the season is half way through, our chances of promotion don't look too bad and I'm eagerly awaiting the torture of missing our third and fourth visits to Wembley in four years in the Autoglass Trophy and the playoff final, secure in the knowledge that we're bound to win both!

Matt Brown
Santiago De Chile

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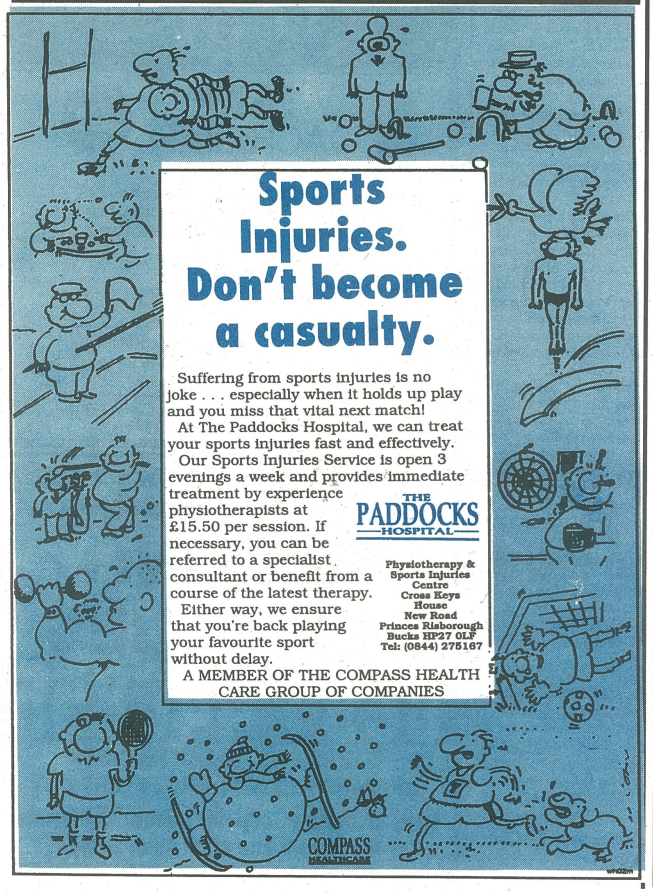
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8 THE BLUES NEWS



He wears it well: Steve Guppy in the Verco strip

Chair we go, chair we go



By Roger Vere
Managing Director
VERCO

A PHONE call from Ivor Beeks started it all. As an old established local furniture company, whose directors and staff have supported the club through thick and thin over the years, it had been suggested that we might like to become sponsors to the club. It did not need much thought or discussion; our directors were unanimous – we would definitely like to take up the offer.

This was six years ago when the club was still at Loakes Park, but it was clear to see the direction in which the club was heading and certainly we wanted to be part of the action. The club was very ambitious but in a controlled, realistic way.

We felt that we could help the club and that in a two–way partnership, association with the club would assist our company. This would be achieved by raising our company profile locally, thereby helping recruitment and by association of the two names, customers and potential customers nationwide think of Verco whenever Wycombe Wanderers is mentioned, whether it is via the football results or the high level of media attention which the club has attracted – particularly with Martin O'Neill.

Needless to say, the newspaper and television pictures of Wycombe Wanderers players with Verco boldly displayed on their shirts, is very welcome, as is the large number of Wycombe supporters who sport the Wycombe replica shirt.

Fortunately, Verco is a short word which appears very prominently on the shirts – too prominently for one local furniture manufacturer who has banned his staff from wearing Wycombe Wanderers (Verco) shirts while at work!

As a promotional exercise, we frequently bring customers to matches, often from other parts of the country. Not surprisingly, they are always most impressed with the club and the very professional way it conducts its affairs. These positive memories always help in a subconscious way whenever office furniture is being selected in the future. Club appearances at Wembley have provided other opportunities for company promotion and publicity – long may they continue.

ISAAC LORD

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Sweet revenge



'Animals' are tamed by Police at the match in Colchester

SUPPORTER'S VIEW by Stephen Lee

BY the time you read this we'll know if Wembley is a reality again or not. For now all I have to write about is the small matter of victory over Colchester! Not to mention crucial wins against Gillingham and Bury.

Something is not quite right though. As I wrote in the last edition of the Blues News, the abuse at home to Wigan was totally unjustifiable. Despite it being the culmination of a series of bad performances, are we really so fickle as to barrack our own players when they don't perform. That may motivate them to improve, but it would be despite the fans, not because of them. I believe one of the reasons for our success has been the rapport between crowd, players and management. It's all of us against the rest. Recent events have eroded that bond, we don't seem united anymore.

It must have been a massive disappointment for Martin O'Neill that the crowd reacted in exactly the way he predicted when we hit that old dodgy spell. The same people that had an influence on him turning down Nottingham Forest to stay here, were now criticising his decisions. Yet I know the majority of our fans want him to be our manager for the duration of his natural life! He deserves great respect for leaving us in no doubt about his feelings, by not responding to our chants at Gillingham.

Quite clearly, we can all bring a great influence on our long term future. If we continue to simply expect our side to rewrite the record books, then we will fail. This all seems highly dramatic, but just think about it. If we can bring a positive influence on keeping our manager, then it follows that the reverse could be true. I've got a terrible feeling that the next time he is tempted by a bigger club, he will go.

We should never forget his gesture at staying with us. Loyalty in football is a rare thing. Martin O'Neill displayed tremendous loyalty to us, at a vital time in the club's history. He, and the whole club, now deserve our unswerving support.

I was hoping the crowd would get right behind the team against Gillingham. Unfortunately, the facilities at Priestfield were poor. We were positioned in the corner of the ground, without cover, as if we were an afterthought. Probably quite appropriate considering the manager's mood toward us. So our vocal support wasn't up to much.

In a perverted sort of way I was half hoping we would just get a goalless draw, so we could applaud a much improved performance. Of course, their defence, and Tim Langford, conspired to give us a celebration.

Unfortunately, I couldn't get to Swansea. I'm reliably informed by my Welsh correspondent, Danny, that the facilities were okay, with covering. So the 500 or so fans who made the long journey were able to generate a decent atmosphere. Apparently the result was justified as well.

Victory over Bury at home was vital. Our latest West Brom recruit, Nicky Reid, looked superb. Although I felt that Captain Creaser's return was the highlight of the day. Especially when he cleared the ball off the goalline with an incredible overhead kick.

So onto the visit we had all been waiting for since September 18, 1993. Colchester AARGH at Layer Road. Until March 12, I had always suspected that it was us who hated them. How wrong I was. Their thugs made it quite clear how much they hated us. Revenge was sweeter for it though.

The day began well, as I arrived before 1pm, to find the queue at the visitors entrance had already started. By 1.45pm most of our fans were there, seemingly concerned that their away end only held 1,100. As it transpired, we completely filled the area, without it ever being uncomfortable.

On the field our team was a class above theirs and I am totally unbiased! Off it, their fans were making us feel welcome as usual. Even when we made the breakthrough in the second half, their fans were rather sporting in approaching our end and trying to add their congratulations to our manic celebrations! In reality, of course, they were animals. Worse followed when David Titterton scored the all important second goal. This time they made a concerted effort to get over to us.

The Police and stewards did very well to restrict the invasion. Unfortunately, the animals trampled one of their stewards, breaking his arm. Praise is due to the referee for having the sense to stop the match with a few seconds remaining. Thanks to the thugs though, what should have been loud and prolonged celebration of our victory over McDonut and Co, became a quick clap. Outside, the Police did well to cordon off the thugs. As far as I know, no–one else was hurt.

With no–one to fight it seems they turned their frustration on their management by returning to the ground and demonstrating on the pitch. It's amazing how far they've progressed since winning the tin pot league in 1992, not! One thing that I couldn't understand, at the final whistle, their goalkeeper, Cheesewright, applauded the thugs who were trying to invade the pitch. Is that what they call loyal support in Colchester?

Let us hope it was our last visit to Layer Road.

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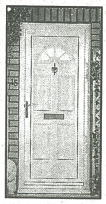
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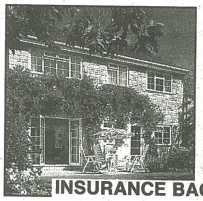
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Mixing business with pleasure

By TONY LEESE

MY catering career started in High Wycombe in May 1974. I arrived at the train station at 12.30 for an interview at 3pm with a Mr AA Thibault of Concord Hotels, what does one do in a situation like this but look for the nearest pub which wasn't far away. The Flint Cottage was a different pub in those days. I remember having half a roast chicken with trimmings and fresh veg for about 40p.

After lunch I made my way the 100 yards up the hill and three flights of stairs (I've since discovered if you made it up the stairs and could still talk you got the job).

My next visit to Wycombe came in February 1976 when as part of my training I was posted to the Falcon Hotel, which at that time was a very busy small hotel you really got to do a bit of everything there.

When my time was up I moved around a little before moving to Germany (to learn the language). I worked in a two star Micheln restaurant seating 280 where I stayed eleven years, got married and became a dad. At this time I decided I wanted my daughter to grow up with English as a first language.

A friend of mine told me the Hotel company he was working for were opening a four star Hotel in Slough. I applied and was accepted for the job of Restaurants Manager in charge of the two restaurants and room service.

A year after my return I was informed a Mr AA Thibault was trying to contact me. He had become a director of WWFC and was looking for someone to run the catering side of the Club. My initial reaction was I don't want to run a burger bar. I came for a look around, the outside caterers moved out and I moved in. That was two-and-a-half years ago.

My job here is to make money. There are no paid directors, so all profits go back into the Club to improve the game or the facilities, not into someone's pocket.

We often do a juggling act, meetings go on until 5.30pm and the rooms are required at 6pm. The worst time is after a Saturday football match, cleaned and layed up for the guests arriving at 7.15pm is no easy task. We could avoid this by not taking functions, but at the end of the day this would mean less money at the Clubs disposal, plus me spending a lot more time at home!

There are 1,100 Blues Club members of which approximately 40 are regular customers on non–match days. The rest only use our facilities on match days, I assume this is because we are the nearest place to the match to get a pint. After a match if we lose, the Centre–Spot is empty by 8.30pm, if we win it could be 9.30pm. We do, however, have a regular Sunday lunch group who will always give you a post–mortem of the last match.

One of the problems in trying to get new customers is if they don't know us they tend to have pre–conceived ideas on hearing the name Football Club. nce they come here that changes. So please if you have any conferences, seminars, birthdays, weddings, or dinner dances, give us a try.



Some growing concerns

by JIM GARDNER

ACCORDING to TAF (the Adams Family) this is my third and final column. When I was asked to contribute I did say three would be plenty, but now I will attempt at least one more just for spite.

In fact, most of what was written was not too far from the truth. Indeed I had to be badgered to begin with but as I quite enjoy a good badgering I relented.

I felt, like them, that nobody would want to read what I did all week, much less care, but to my surprise quite a few people said they had enjoyed it. OK, so it was only four, frankly, I could not care less, and if you believe that you must be able to knit fog.

It does hurt, lads, after all we are all only trying to make Wycombe bigger and better.

A great deal was made about the piece on the germination of grass seed. I had a thought midweek, what a shame it was that around 20 years ago certain gentlemen in the Wycombe area also knew about germination.

Enough of the free ads for TAF which, incidentally, I have always bought and will continue to do so, probably, maybe, let's wait and see – any chance of a free copy lads?

Did you catch the London match Millwall v Leicester? If so, you would have seen the condition of the pitch on the main stand side.

The height of the stands roof means the sun never gets to this part of the pitch during the winter months resulting in weak, thin growth. If we ever decide to raise the Woodlands Terrace we could well have a similar problem. It is amazing that when a new stadium is built often costing many millions no thought is given to what the groundstaff need to maintain the pitch - you get marvellous banqueting rooms, gyms, medical rooms etc, but most of the groundsman's materials stand outside in some dark corner.

When speaking to fellow groundsmen, even at the top clubs, most have horror stories to tell like having mower's trapped inside the stadium. No problem until you need repairs and have to knock a wall down, no top for grass clippings which then have to be bagged in bin liners and put out for the dustmen, no money for new machinery because the office needs a new carpet or whatever. Also could any of the designers of these new stadiums tell me why they always put the groundsman's room in some dark cold corner. I believe its the mushroom theory, keep them in the dark and feed them on bull****.

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Lucky Letters Draw

One of the promotions that we run at Adams Park is a 'Lucky Letters' weekly draw competition.

The draw is based on the letters of the alphabet, members select their choice of letters, using any combination from the following:

Any combination of 3 letters	**10p per week**
Any combination of 3 from 4 letters	**40p per week**
Any combination of 3 from 5 letters	**£1.00 per week**
Any combination of 3 from 6 letters	**£2.00 per week**
Any combination of 3 from 7 letters	**£3.50 per week**
Any combination of 3 from 8 letters	**£5.60 per week**
Any combination of 3 from 9 letters	**£8.40 per week**
Any combination of 3 from 10 letters	**£12.00 per week**

This weekly draw takes place on Monday evening, when three letter are drawn out. Any member who has those winning letter wins, or shares in, that weeks prize pool. The current prize pool is just over £400 per week. This will increase with new members being recruited.

I am enlisting new agents for this competition, and would welcome the opportunity of calling in person to explain to your staff, or one member of your workforce in particular, the full details of this weekly draw.

Agents receive 10% commission on sales. This figure could be paid to an individual or directly to your company, to be used for whatever purpose you decide upon, for example towards your Christmas Staff party?

With Wycombe Wanderers currently employing unprecedented success, I am sure that many of your staff will appreciate the opportunity of participating in, and hopefully winning, this weekly Lucky Letters Competition.

For further details call Mike Phillips, Promotions Manager, on

(0494) 472100

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We are looking for fit, flexible and sociable people to form a team of canvassers to develop our existing rounds and to create new ones as the need arises.

Experience has taught us that the best canvassers and agents are those who have the football club's interest at heart, as well as their own!

For every ticket that you sell you will earn 50 pence. It's as simple as that. On average thirty tickets are sold in a two hour period. Work for two hours per evening, four nights a week and you would earn £60 per week.

COULD YOU USE AN EXTRA £60 PER WEEK?

Join the Wanderers canvassing team today!

For full details, call Mike Phillips on (0494) 472100

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Simply complete your name and address below and hand it to the Commercial Office or send by post (no stamp needed) to

Wycombe Wanderers Football Club,
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The sum of £8.67 (eight pounds sixty seven pence) monthly ☐

The sum of £26.00 (twenty six pounds) quarterly ☐

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Me and my orange jacket



By Carol Day

"CAROL" they said, "write us a piece for the Blues News." I thought they were joking but no. "Tell us honestly what it is like being a female steward," they continued. I like my job as a steward (orange jacket, not the crowd control yellow jackets, who have to watch the fans. That's not a joke either!) so I can only be as honest as The Management will allow!

I have been a steward for just over a year and during that time many changes have been made to matchday operations. Following our promotion to the Football League, matchday safety procedures have been greatly improved and we now have briefings before and after the games and attend training sessions throughout the season.

You will probably have noticed the new jackets that we have been issued with. Unfortunately for me, they only come in one size extra, extra large! These lovely aluminous jackets keep us cold when it's cold and hot when it's hot but despite all this, you can always see where we are. The jackets also provide a great topic for some male supporters to use as chat up lines.

The most common printable line that I get is:

"You could fit two people in that coat, how about sharing it with me."

So far I have resisted all temptations but maybe one day I will be persuaded to try it (especially if asked by certain Wycombe Wanderers players. Well I can dream).

My stewarding position is on the Vice Presidents (VP) tunnel which is situated in the main stand, and is the VP's, sponsors and guests' access to the stands. They emerge from the bars just before kick off, go back down for a cup of tea or soup at half time and then come back up again for the second half. Each time they go through the tunnel they have to show their pass or ticket for the game, which I have to check before they can go down. It is amazing the things that have been flashed at me by people trying to get to the bar area at half time.

I am told by my fellow stewards that I have an easy life standing on the VP tunnel. When I have two hundred or so people trying to get through a tunnel only five foot wide, in two seconds flat, it is not that easy. The problem is that people have only ten minutes to get down the tunnel, have a cup of tea and get back to their seats in time for the second half.

Therefore, as forty five minutes approaches, they get in their starting blocks and as the whistle blows for half time they sprint for the tunnel faster than Linford Christie going for Olympic Gold.

As they sprint through the tunnel I have to check their passes so I guess it is lucky that I am a fast reader and as they start going down I am usually left squashed against the tunnel wall feebly shouting "tickets and passes please". And they say that I have an easy life!

It is quite a relief when the game starts and I take my position on the yellow gate near the tunnel. My task is to keep the yellow gate and the surrounding yellow areas free of supporters whilst keeping one eye on the crowd and one eye on the match (and the players).

The Blues News may be the opportunity to communicate to everyone why certain rules and regulations are necessary. Yellow gates are there for emergency access, as are the areas painted with yellow stripes in the terraces and stands. They must be kept free as in the event of an emergency it is essential that there is a clear path through the stands and onto the pitch.

Unfortunately some supporters consider that a perfect view of the game is more important than their own safety.

When I ask supporters if they could move away from the yellow areas, I often get ignored or accused of spoiling their enjoyment of the game. If I was the size of Terry Evans then everyone would do exactly as I ask but being a 5ft4in female steward, they don't.

Freefall for all at Adams Park



SEE the RAFSPA Hawks freefall parachute display team on Saturday, April 2, Wycombe Wanderers are putting on a pre–match Easter spectacular at Adams Park for the key promotion clash with Torquay United.

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