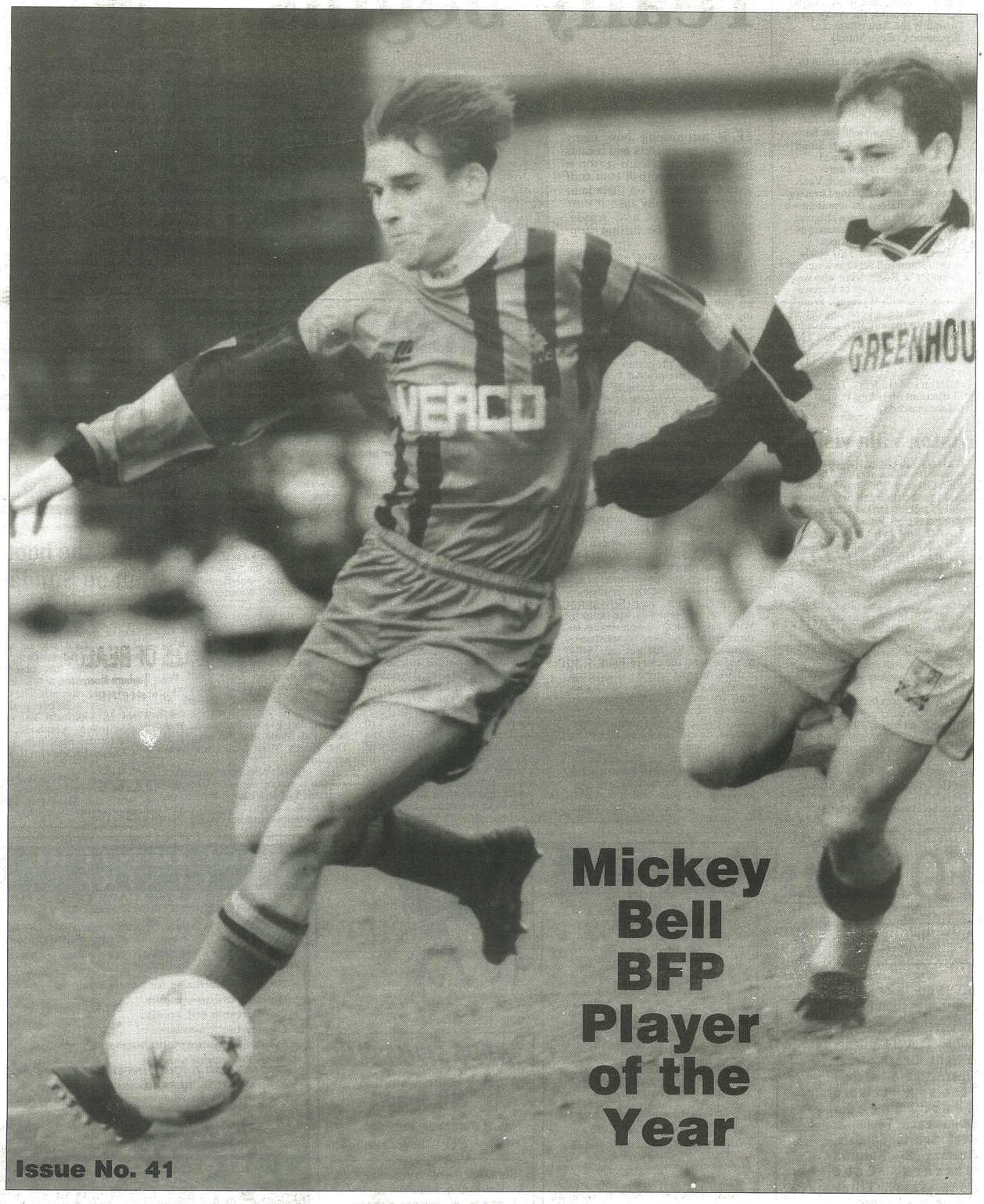
The BLUES NEWS

The official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club



Mickey Bell BFP Player of the Year

Issue No. 41

IN SHORT

Verco sponsor the Blues away stand

VERCO Office Furniture Ltd has agreed to sponsor the Away Stand (formerly the Amersham & Wycombe College Stand).

The board at Verco have decided to dedicate the stand to the company's former Chairman and Joint Managing Director Roger Vere who died in August, following a brave fight against cancer.

The Away Stand will now be known as The Roger Vere Stand and will be officially opened before Wanderers' friendly against Aston Villa. Derek Vere, Chairman and Managing Director of Verco will open the stand on behalf of Verco who are entering their tenth consecutive season as the club's official sponsors.

Derek Vere said: "This newly named stand will serve as a timely reminder of Roger Vere who was involved at the outset of Verco's association with Wycombe Wanderers, and was a keen supporter right up to the untimely end of his life, at the youthful age of 54. He will be remembered."

Away fans will be charged £12 on the day, £10 OAPs or £8 for children and students. There is a £1 discount on tickets bought before matchday.

Aston Villa visit

ASTON Villa head the list of pre-season friendlies arranged by John Gregory. Villa have promised to send their full first team and £7 million striker Stan Collymore make his Villa debut.

After Villa's visit on Friday, July 18 (ko 7.45pm) the Blues entertain QPR on Friday, July 25 and Berkshire rivals Reading on Friday, August 1 (ko 7.45pm).

Prices for these games are Amersham & Wycombe College Stand: Adults £8; concessions £4.

ServisPak Stand, Bucks Free Press Family Enclosure, The Roger Vere Stand, AXA Equity & Law Stand all cost: Adults £8; O.A.P.'s £4; children and students £2

Children must be under 16, and students, in full time education, under 22 on July 1, 1997. To book ring the creditcard hotline on (01494) 441118 on or after June 23.

Season ticket holders for 1997/98 can purchase their tickets from Monday, June 2. Tickets go on general sale from June 23.

Now the work really begins

COMMERCIAL BREAK
By Mark Austin

IT is astonishing how many sponsors, supporters and friends assume that the closed season is the time that football club staff get off lightly, go on their holidays and generally take it easy until the start of next season. Nothing could be further from the truth.

During the shorter and shorter closed season almost everything has to be pre-sold for the following season. First priority is the season tickets (details of which should be arriving any time now), the Vere Suite and Woodlands Executive Club memberships.

Next priority is the advertising in the matchday programme, as this needs to be pre-printed before the first pre-season friendly match, which this season is scheduled for as early as Friday, July 18. Next is all the ground advertising boards. Many people ask why we don't sell them on two or three year contracts. We occasionally do if the price is right but the biggest unknown is which division we will be in the following season. Promotion to Division One would mean that all boards would be worth more and the pitch perimeter boards costs soar for the guaranteed Sky Sports live matches.

All the match sponsorships, ball sponsorships and programme sponsorships have to be sold in advance for each fixture, even before the dates of the matches are known. With the closed season being so short there is no time to sell everything once the fixtures are published around the end of June.

This means most sponsored matches are chosen by club rather than by date. The only dates we know in advance are the Coca-Cola Cup, FA Cup and Auto Windscreens Shield, assuming of course we are drawn at home. Some sponsors do wait for the fixtures to be published as they can have specific dates in mind. All in all it is not easy to please everyone and still sell all the match sponsorships, but thanks to our tremendous local corporate support we manage it somehow.



Mark Austin: A busy summer ahead

Other jobs in the summer include the renewal of annual contracts, such as stand sponsorships and car sponsorships. The official club sponsorship has another two seasons to run as Verco Office Furniture Ltd enters its tenth consecutive season.

The youth team sponsorship by the Walters Group of Companies has another three years to run. The PK Graphics Mascot sponsorship has just been extended by five years and the away stand sponsorship by Amersham & Wycombe College is being transferred to the Main Stand which will be known for at least the next three seasons as the Amersham & Wycombe College Stand.

The Bucks Free Press has renewed its sponsorship of the Family Enclosure and ServisPak Ltd continue as sponsors of both the ServisPak Stand and the Centres of Excellence run by youth team manager Neil Smillie, alongside the extremely enthusiastic Adrian Cole our youth development officer.

Motts Travel remain as our suppliers of our official team coach and official supporters coaches until at least the end of the 1999/2000 season.

PSV Glass continue as sponsors of both the Baby Blues and Junior Blues Supporters Clubs.

The AXA Equity & Law Stand sponsorship is now entering its third season, as is the contract with MBNA International Bank Ltd for the Wycombe Wanderers Visa Card.

Finally, do visit our official website on the Internet, sponsored by Brandon Communications Ltd. There are links on the site to the well run Chairboys on the Net website run by Paul Lewis and the Bekonscot Model Village website.

The model of Adams Park at Bekonscot is being updated over the summer to incorporate the new ServisPak Stand and the seating of The Roger Vere Stand for away supporters.

The official WycombeWanderers website is run by Brandon Communications Ltd and can be located on w e b s i t e : h t t p : www.wycombewanderers.co.uk

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Pictures for this edition of The Blues News were supplied by the Bucks Free Press.

The Blues News is the official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers. It is produced in association with the Bucks Free Press.

Any correspondence should be sent to the Editor, The Blues News, Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, Hillbottom Road, Sands, High Wycombe. Telephone (0494) 472100. Fax (0494) 527633.

Put the boot in on Sunday

WANDERERS are looking for a person or company to run a regular Sunday Market, car boot sale or summer fair at Adams Park.

The club has planning permission for a sale in its 320 space car park. The club also has adjacent parking for an additional 400 vehicles, toilets, telephone, and the Centre Spot pub, open 12 noon to 3pm on a Sunday.

Anyone interested should contact Mark Austin, the Sales and Marketing Manager on (01494) 472100

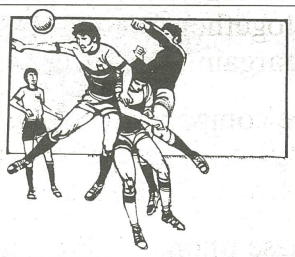
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We'd be down with Smith

By Alan Parry

THE sheer relief of avoiding relegation is something I'd never experienced before in more than 30 years of watching football.

The feelings hardly compare with the elation of victory, but it was still a very satisfying achievement. As a lifelong Liverpool fan, relegation was something that happened to other clubs. I'd heard people talk of the misery of going down but that was as close as it got.

Now, after spending an entire season emotionally attached to a club which was almost relegated, I understand what they mean. A look at the final table suggests that Wanderers finished comfortably above the drop. We all know nothing could be further from the truth!

The reality was an anxious battle over nine months with relief coming only on the penultimate Saturday. I know it is pointless to look back in anger, but I must place on record my disappointment at the performance of Alan Smith during his time as Wycombe's manager. I am sure that we would have been relegated if he had remained in the job. In my opinion, Mr Smith set this club back a long way. He was too hasty in dispensing with valuable and experienced players and their replacements were expensive and inadequate. His style of play drove supporters away and cost the club a lot of money in lost gate receipts and commercial sales. John Gregory inherited a mess and it's to his eternal credit that he turned things round so quickly. To get the team playing attractive football in the midst of a relegation battle was a remarkable achievement. He has brought a smile back to Adams Park.

John has set himself a high standard. Supporters will expect improvement next season and in some quarters expectations may be unrealistically high. I have already heard fans talking about automatic promotion. We should remind ourselves of the quality of clubs we'll be competing against next season. For a start, the three relegated from Division One Southend, Oldham and Grimsby have experience of a higher level and that's an advantage.

The trio automatically promoted from Division Three – Wigan, Fulham and Carlisle – all have potential. Wigan have a chairman who has poured money in while Fulham and Carlisle will be well supported. Then you look at the likes of Watford with Elton John signing the cheques again. There's Luton, Millwall and Bristol City who've all experienced life at the highest level and don't forget famous old clubs like Preston and Burnley. There is still so much to do to get our club on an even keel before we start thinking of dramatic progress through the divisions.

Remember it took Wimbledon nine years to get from non-league to Premier League and they twice suffered relegation along the way. We have only been members of the Football League for four seasons.

However, I'm as ambitious as the next man and I'm also looking forward to next season with cautious optimism. But we must be realistic. A team which almost went down doesn't become promotion favourites even before a ball has been kicked. I know that Gregory and Richard Hill will be working to strengthen the squad.

If they're successful I'd expect our results to improve and our dreadful away form must be the priority. But every club begins a new season with optimism. So many factors need to be right to produce a winning formula – good players, good management, spending power, a high level of support and – most of all – luck. You can get everything right and be ruined when your three stars get injured.

We have an improving squad which is younger and more professional than at any stage in our League development. Our youth system is producing results. Confidence has returned among those fans who deserted us during the Smith regime.

On the down side, we have suffered financially because of all the comings and goings over the last few months. You must spend to improve and so we are in debt. It might take some time before we are back in credit. Please be patient. There are bound to be setbacks ahead. We have an excellent stadium and a good team. Success may take a little longer, but I'm confident we'll get there.

Kit for sale: Ideal for curtains or tea towels

SPECULATION has been rife that Wanderers will return to quarters next season, since John Gregory and Richard Hill wore the old shirts against Bristol City.

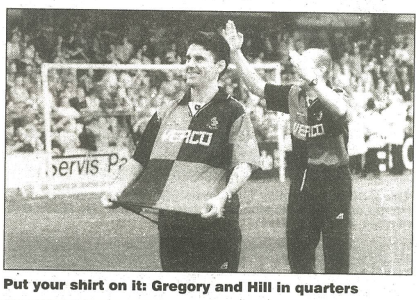
Gregory wants quarters and a fans' survey showed 98 per cent were in favour of bringing them back.

Many fans think the existing home shirt, designed under the eye of Alan Smith, should be hung, re-drawn & quartered. However Wanderers have sold all 1,500 Mizuno home shirts.

Chairman Ivor Beeks was quoted in the Bucks Free Press concerning the large amount of left over "stripey"fabric. The club faces the dilemma of whether to make it into replica shirts and run for another season or scrap it writing off the cost.

One solution would be for people or local football clubs to buy the fabric, thereby removing what seems to be the last obstacle to a return to quartered shirts.

The new Mizuno navy and yellow away shirts sold 135 on launch day. The V neck was designed by Gregory for player comfort.

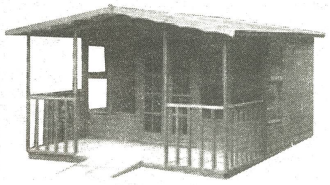


Put your shirt on it: Gregory and Hill in quarters

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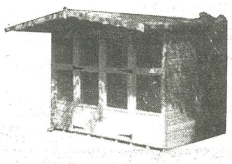
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If this advert interests you please phone or visit our display area and talk to Paul How on any aspects of sheds. All advice is FREE and we hope with our expertise and your help we can make the ideal Shed, Wendy House, Chalet or Summer House to grace any garden large or small.





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They were framed for Wanderers camera action



You Belter: Mickey Bell receives his Bucks Free Press supporters player of the year trophy from BFP reader Becky Gillett



Eight of the best: Eight of Wanderers 1957 Amateur Cup Final team which played against Bishop Auckland in front of 93,000 fans at Wembley were guests of the Blues when they played Bournemouth in April



Getting shirty: Press officer Alan Hutchinson models the new Wanderers away strip



Runner up: Steve McGavin, second in the BFP readers player of the year vote receives his bubbly from BFP reader Becky Gillett



Sheffield steel: March's youth team player James Sheffield receiving his award from Chris Walters



Third one lucky: Dave Carroll took third spot in the BFP poll



Jack in the box: Fifty years after Frank Adams gave Loakes Park to Wanderers his son Jack was guest of honour at their new Adams Park ground



Rising star: Alan Beeton, who has been offered a professional contract, receives his Youth Team Player of the Year award sponsored by the Walters Group of Companies. Also pictured are (from left) chairman Ivor Beeks, youth team manager Neil Smillie and Chris Walters



Best again: Mickey Bell is presented with a bottle of bubbly by Verco's Allan Davies after being voted April's Supporters Player of the Month

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The Great Escape

The story of the Blues

THE Great Escape, the story of the 1996/97 season is available on video from Monday, June 2.

The Great Escape is a compilation video of Wycombe Wanderers' fourth season in the Nationwide League, and their third consecutive season in Division Two.

Compiled by media professionals, it contains all the highlights of the 1996/97 season and looks behind the scenes at Adams Park.

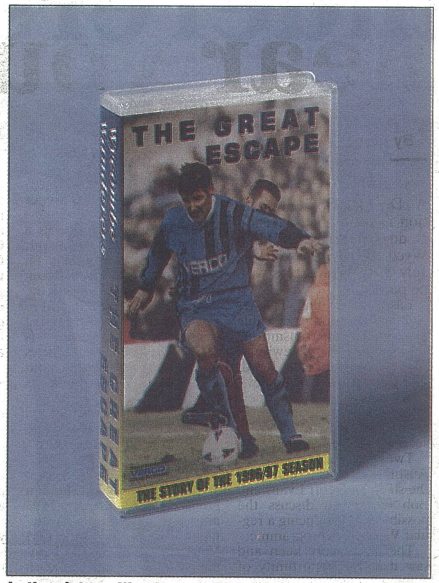
There are highlights and goals from all home and away league matches as well as goal highlights from the Coca-Cola Cup, FA Cup and Auto Windscreens Shield.

This outstanding video includes interviews with manager John Gregory, assistant manager Richard Hill and youth team manager Neil Smillie, who was also caretaker manager for five league matches. This complete record includes the record breaking 5-0 thrashing of Burnley at Adams Park. Other highlights include action from the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup semi-final against Aylesbury, footage from an Official Blues Supporters Club Forum with John Gregory and action from the youth team's Southern Junior Floodlit Cup semi-final against Crystal Palace.

The Great Escape tells the amazing story of how Wanderers recovered from a poor start under Alan Smith, obtaining only four points out of 27, to end the season unbeaten in the League at Adams Park since Boxing Day.

The video is produced and directed by Simon Parry, son of Alan, with all the production and match coverage by Profile Video Ltd of Cowley, Oxford. Our sincere thanks go to Philip Barker and Dick Croxon for commentary, and to our enthusiastic press officer Alan Hutchinson who did the narration and the voice-overs.

The club has held the price for the fourth successive season. The video goes on sale on Monday from Wanderers in Town priced £14.99.



In the picture: Wanderers' escape is captured on film

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Great green fingers

WANDERERS head groundsman, Jim Gardner has been presented with a Highly Commended Certificate in the Nationwide Groundsman of the Year Awards.

The superb Adams Park pitch was selected by analysis of referees marks all season, away club's nominations and finally by personal inspections by Dr Steve Baker of the Sports Turf Research Institute.

Last year Gardner won the Second Division award and this year his pitch was rated in the top three in the division. The achievement is particularly impressive because the pitch took a battering from the hot air ballon in January.

Blues at Beaconsfield

ADAMS Park is being redeveloped this Summer at Bekonscot Model Village in Beaconsfield.

The Enchanted Village has had an Adams Park since 1992 but now the model is being up-dated to include the new ServisPak stand and seated away end.

Other new additions for the 1997 season include Enid Blyton's house in Beaconsfield and a Tudor show house.

Admission is £3.20 for adults and £1.60 for children (Under 3's free) but this voucher entitles one free adult or child entry when accompanied by a full paying adult.

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Not only will you be showing your support, you really will be giving it too. For every accepted cardholder, MBNA International, the bank that issues the card on our behalf, will pay us a royalty. Then every time you make purchases with your card, a small percentage of the total transaction value goes to our funds. You'll be an official Wycombe Wanderers F.C. sponsor - at no extra cost to you!

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Coming to a set near you soon

By Alan Hutchinson

A DIFFERENT innovation in terms of television is due to arrive in High Wycombe by the end of July and Wanderers will be part of it.

Based in Reading, Thames Valley Television is a cable company already transmitting to Basingstoke, Newbury, Henley, Maidenhead, Reading and Marlow. Local television is new here but in America and Canada it is established with huge success.

Two months ago Mark Austin and myself met with the station's Geoff Evans and Bob Geortz to discuss the possibility of producing a regular Wanderers programme.

They were very keen and saw it as an opportunity of launching cable into Wycombe with a ready made audience. Once Wycombe is added to their existing territory a total of 240,000 homes will be on cable.

For the past eight weeks a programme has been put together for transmission on a Thursday evening between 8 and 10pm throughout the summer. Plans are in hand to run right through the coming season. The programme is made up of interviews, news and match highlights and already the feedback is encouraging.

Thames Valley TV intend to present a launch package at the High Wycombe Carnival at the end of June.

During the close season TVTV are transmitting ten great matches between 1993 and 1997, starting with the night Wycombe won the GM Vauxhall Conference Championship, thumping Runcorn 5-1. Included in the series are: the first ever Football League fixture at Carlisle; the play-off final at Wembley against Preston; the first match in Division Two against Cambridge; and the Coca-Cola cup clash with Coventry at Adams Park to name a few.

Each programme is introduced with some brief background before handing over to a player to talk about the action, followed by the game.

As far as Wycombe Wanderers are concerned this presents a great opportunity to bring the fans closer to the club. For the first time we can show exactly what goes on behind the scenes, the people who work at the club and the role they play.

With ten months of the year available, including preseason and possibly play-offs it will be possible to run features on the club twice a month and player profiles twice a month in alternate fashion. Maybe a Where Are They Now section could be included as well as coverage of promotional activities by players and the manager.

The over riding aim is to attract more people to watch Wycombe and make them aware of the facilities available at Adams Park. As Wycombe Wanderers become more prominent so the demand for information grows. While we shall always be protective of our own information service, Ringing the Blues, always a good source of income to the club, we are aware of getting the right kind of publicity access to as many people as possible.

You will only be able to receive this programme on cable. Watch out, it maybe coming your way soon!

More chances to get shirty with Wanderers

WANDERERS popular Mark Your Man package returns for its third season offering fans double the opportunity to back the Blues.

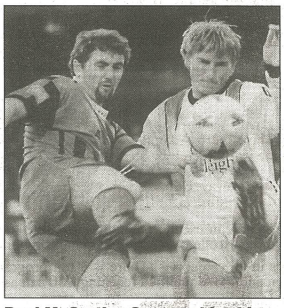
The shirt sponsorship scheme combines the fun of sponsoring your favourite Wanderer along with gaining valued publicity.

For the first time you can now sponsor either the home or away kit or both.

The package costs only £250 plus VAT to sponsor your favourite player's home shirt or £200 plus VAT for their away.

For your money you receive a full colour head shot of your sponsored player which will appear in every programme along with your name; tannoy announcements and recognition within Blues News throughout the season; tannoy announcement if your player is chosen as the Laurent Perrier Man Of The Match; involvement in the Verco Player Of The Month presentation if your player is chosen and the photograph of the presentation appearing in the next matchday programme. Two £14 Amersham & Wycombe College Stand seats for the last home League fixture of the season along with two passes to the Vere Banqueting Suite; presentation of the sponsored players football shirt which will be signed by your player and framed, and a framed photograph of the presentation are also included.

To 'Mark Your Man' contact: Tim Arnold, Assistant Sales and Marketing Manager, on (01494) 472100. Existing sposnors will be offered first choice.



Paul McCarthy: Sponsor his shirt

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Captain Marvel signs off

CAPTAIN'S LOG
By Terry Evans

THIS is my last Captain's Log following my departure on a free transfer.

To say I've enjoyed my time at Adams Park is a gross understatement. To leave knowing Wycombe will be in the second division next season means a great deal to me. It was a difficult season but I believe we didn't get the results many of our performances deserved.

Supporters are often unaware how hard people work behind the scenes. There are many committed staff who put in more hours than they're paid each week. They ensure Wycombe is one of the best run clubs anywhere. I've made many friends and will miss them all. I'm taking this opportunity to thank some of them and apologise to any I've missed.

Dave Jones is an excellent physio who I'd like to thank for getting me playing again following a number of bad injuries. Mr Channon the orthopaedic surgeon who has patched me up on numerous occasions, is a real gentleman who loves football.

I've known Neil Smillie since our years at Brentford, he's doing a fine job with the youth team and I expect him to get his chance of management in the future and I'm confident he'll be successful.

Alan Parry is one of the most passionate directors I know and great company. If you've never been to a Sportsman's Dinner you're missing out, he's an excellent compere. He is a supporter first and director second.

Andy Pembroke is a great lad who is responsible for one of the most important aspects of the club, the bars. He's always looked after us and nothing is too much trouble for him.

Jim Gardner turns out an excellent playing surface every year but is never satisfied which is why he works all hours not only on the pitch but supervising the away kit, the boots and all the other items we need. He's a great character and always smiling.

Mark Austin works tirelessly and is a good mate, though when things aren't going well he tends to feel the burden on his shoulders. Mistakes happen to us all. The time when the parachutists were still in the air when we came out for the second half always brings a smile to my face. Mark was not happy especially when Martin told him to get them back in the plane. We creased up. Priceless.

Alan Hutchinson is a great character who I always have a laugh with. He loves the club and always has a story to tell. I can't imagine going to work and not seeing him. Johnny Reardon is another good laugh. He's always too busy to talk though we always prise 20 minutes out of him.

The Spice Girls who keep the club clean have always been great value and we've enjoyed plenty of fun together. The office girls do an excellent job and probably get more stick than anyone being on the front line.

Chairman are usually anonymous with players, especially when things aren't going well, but I've always found Ivor fair, honest and approachable. He is a good man to have at the helm keeping everybody pulling in the right direction.

I could not end without mentioning some of the people who've left the club. I was pleased to be invited to the FA Trophy at Wembley. I met up with Thomo and Terry Howard who helped Woking lift the cup and also saw Crease who now plays for Dagenham & Redbridge though I hardly recognised him as he had his head shaved for charity.

I recently read in the BFP that I was one of the highest paid players at Wycombe. It would be wrong for me to leave without correcting this especially as it was not even close to the mark. When I was initially on loan to Wycombe, Denis Smith at Oxford wanted to sign me and offered much more money. After speaking with Martin it was clear he could not come up with anywhere near this figure but I decided to be loyal to Martin as he'd rescued me from Brentford.

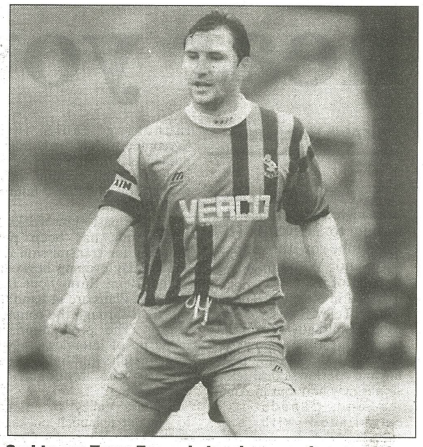
Martin was in charge when I signed for my last term and it was widely known he worked on a tight budget. The wage Oxford offered was much more than I'm earning now and that was four years ago!

There is not enough room in Blues News, let alone my column, to relive some of the great stories regarding Martin O'Neill. I've never worked for a better motivator, though my commitment has always been the same no matter who I played for. We hit it off straight away and still keep in touch. It's no surprise he's had great success in the Premiership.

Paul Franklin, Steve Walford, John Robertson and Jim Melvin were also good friends I enjoyed working with and who are now also doing their stuff for Leicester.

My final thanks goes to you supporters. This season has seen you show your real colours. I felt that you contributed a great deal to our survival. I thank each one of you for the continued support and hope that next season Wycombe will produce the performances and results you so richly deserve.

Unlike Cantona, I'm not retiring. I've received a number of offers so I could even be playing against the Blues one day. Wycombe's been a great place to work and already I miss it, thanks everyone. Be lucky.



Sad to go: Terry Evans is leaving on a free transfer

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