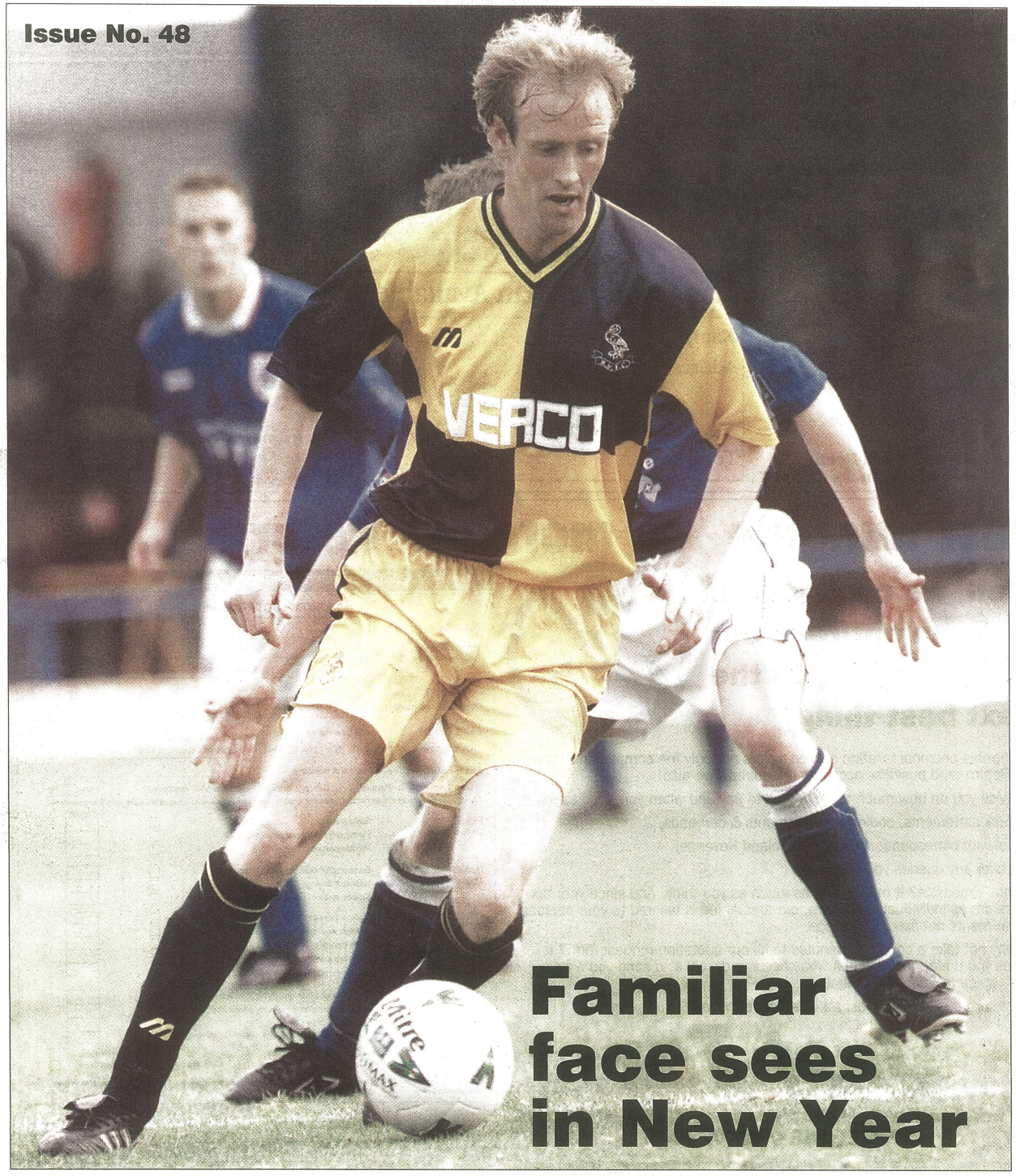
The BLUES NEWS

The official newspaper of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club

Issue No. 48



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536134

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535484

Blues boss asks the fans to get behind Wanderers

Stop moaning, start cheering

GREG'S GRAPEVINE
By John Gregory

AS 1997 draws to a close we certainly find ourselves in better shape than at this time last year, but while both Watford and Bristol City can feel the first days of Spring upon them, we still have to face the prospect of a long hard Winter.

After a disastrous opening fixture to this season's campaign, by September 2 we had clawed our way up to the heady heights of third place. Unfortunately, this proved to be a false dawn, as by November 22 we had slipped to 16th in the league.

Regardless of what happens in the future, November was a month that I will always remember for all the wrong reasons. That month certainly showed me who was on our side and who wasn't.

It was a month when all the whingers came out of the closet and if there is one kind of person I cannot abide it is a whinger.

Even our local newspaper the Bucks Free Press started to print letters from whingers. At a time when the team were looking for our true supporters to get behind them and help get out of a barren run the BFP gave space in its sports pages to print whingers' letters.

This, in turn, gave individuals personal glorification by printing their names and addresses.

Needless to say our true supporters have since responded by giving the players their full support at a time when we needed them most.

Real supporters have disassociated themselves from such tripe, and the letters I have personally received since (albeit some have been anonymous) have been full of positive comments.

One whinger bemoaned the fact that we have spent £450,000 in 12 months, they forgot to mention that we had to also sell players to the value of £230,000.

My maths would suggest that we have spent £225,000 on 10 players, £22,500 per player. Ray Wilkins' overcoat costs more than my whole team put together.

So I enter 1998 brimming full of optimism and confidence that we have made, and will make, enormous strides forward throughout the whole football club, in all departments.

We are still only five-years-old and will continue to make progress. My squad is very thin in numbers but they are a great bunch of lads and a pleasure to work with. All are very keen to improve all aspects of their game as, quite frankly, maybe we are under achieving at the moment.

Our performances have improved enormously during the month of December and we are certainly aiming to climb up the league table and get back to a more satisfying position.

So stop whinging, support your team – we all need to be positive entering the New Year. We will be giving 100 per cent commitment to the cause – make sure you are.

I would like to wish you all a very prosperous New Year – get off your backsides, don't be an armchair critic, get yourselves down to Adams Park and support your local team.



True Blue: John Gregory playing on Dave Carroll's testimonial night

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

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.

Mac's at the park

RONALD McDonald, the famous McDonalds clown, will be dropping into Adams Park when Wanderers take on Wigan.

Ronald will be giving away McDonalds food vouchers for the High Wycombe restaurant before the match on Saturday, January 10.

He will also be taking part in a half-time penalty shoot out with Bluey the Swan at the Quid-a-Kid match.

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IN SHORT

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New catalogue

WYCOMBE Wanderers 1998/99 Clubshop Colour Catalogue is available free of charge from Wanderers in Town in the Octagon Centre, the Cornerflag Clubshop or the Commercial Offices at Adams Park.

The catalogue includes a Super Kit Deal for adults and children, who will save £12 on the offer.

The club is committing itself again to holding the kids replica kit deal price until May 1999.

Off to the cottage

THE Blues have drawn Division Two rivals Fulham at Craven Cottage in the second round of the AutoWindscreens Shield.

The tie is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, January 13, subject to Spurs and Fulham not drawing their third round FA Cup match on Monday, January 5.

The competition is now a knock-out on the night game, with golden goal extra time and penalties if needed.

Nice ground, but we need to fill it



Overall view: The impressive Adams Park

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Supporter voices his fears for future of the game

By Keith Blagborough Secretary, Wycombe Wanderers Official Supporters Club

AN article in the Nationwide Review about the marketing of football recently made me sit up and take note.

How while no-one would disagree with the marketing jargon about 'satisfying customer need', I find that the word customer strikes an uncomfortable note.

Customer infers that we supporters come along, pay our money and just buy a product and, to some extent, I suppose that's what we do. But I wonder if this approach will attract customers and lose supporters.

Take Peter, who comes on our coaches, for an example. He is a supporter who is certainly not a young man, but who never misses a Wycombe match home or away. He, like myself, was brought up in a culture of going to football on Saturdays, and because of this background it became part of his life.

We are not unique in this, we are members of the committed and, if I may say, are the bread and butter support of football clubs, the ones who are always there even when things are going badly.

On the other side of this, I was on holiday last year and met a West Ham supporter with a similar background who could only afford to take his two sons three or four times a year to Upton Park.

These boys should become the bread and butter support for the Hammers and be future regulars, but will they or their children? I doubt it.

As this is reflected across the spectrum there will be fewer supporters and more customers.

Arguably, the best marketed club is Manchester United, but can you get to Old Trafford to see them?

My son wanted to take his wife to watch them and the only way he could organise this was a package deal, booked last July for this season and take what was offered.

You cannot get tickets so where will the next generation of supporters come from – the committed supporters when times are not so easy.

It's inconceivable that they need them at Manchester United? But look at Everton and Manchester City, if the customers leave, what will become of their future.

That is why I am not comfortable with this approach, I worry about the long term future of the game and the marketing philosophy that can so damage it.

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Alternatively you can also book by calling (01296) 429307.

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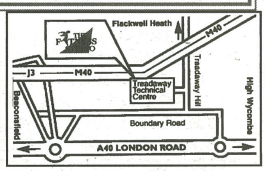
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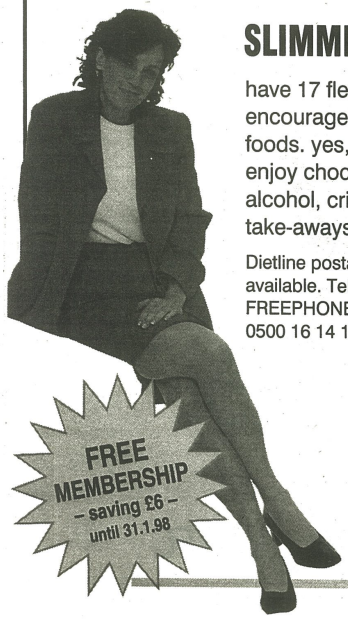


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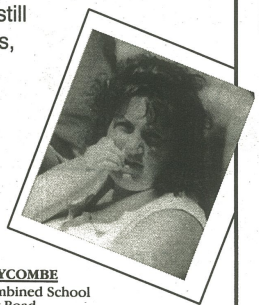
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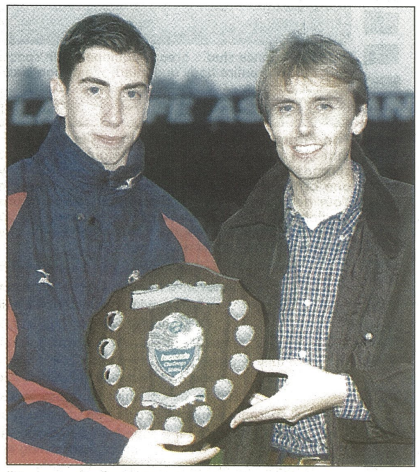
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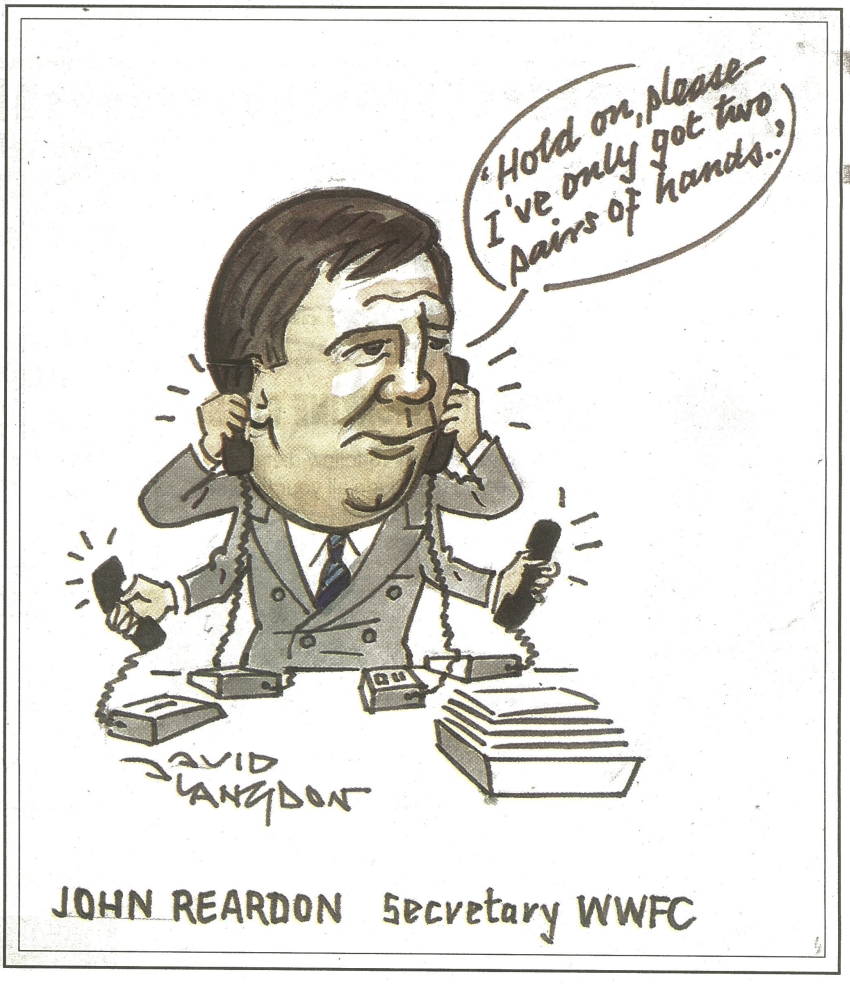
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Fans' favourites





WANDERERS WINNERS: Keith Ryan (left picture) receives November's Supporters' Player of the Month award from Allan Davies, marketing and commercial director of Verco, to add to the award he won last month. Meanwhile, in the right hand picture, Nick Leach receives November's Lucozade Youth Team Player of the Month award from Chris Walters of the Walters Group of Companies, sponsors of the youth team.





Proud moment: Blues' press officer Alan Hutchinson gets to pose with Martin O'Neill and the Coca-Cola Cup, which the Leicester boss brought to Adams Park for Dave Carroll's testimonial

New Year, new chances for us

By Alan Hutchinson

THE New Year for the Blues will hopefully begin on a good note, and at least we start it at home.

Because of Northampton Town's involvement in the FA Cup third round the first game of the New Year will be played at Adams Park.

Wigan Athletic, the team we opened the season against, start 1998 for Wycombe Wanderers.

After beating the Blues 5-2 on the opening day and having spent £1.4 million on new players, Wigan have kept us company for most of the season.

Strangely enough our display at Springfield Park was one of the better footballing memories. Even the Wigan chairman could not believe his team had won by such a margin on the day.

This will be a great opportunity to start 1998 with a win and build again on protecting the home record at Adams Park.

From the team just below us we move onto our next opponents, just above us. On Saturday, January 17 it's Fulham. By the time this one comes around this could be our seventh meeting of the season. Coca-Cola Cup, Capital League and Auto Windscreen Shield make up the other six.

Since the take over by Mr Al Fayed, SW6 has never been the same. The Harrods boss has invested his year's takings from the electrical department to bring in Kevin Keegan, Arthur Cox, Ray Wilkins, Frank Sibley and Alan Smith (don't we know him?).

Their collective salaries are £1.7million, they have already spent £6million on the team and within the five years of Keegan's contract, hope to be in the Premiership. My wish for the New Year is that Wycombe do not lose this game.

If it becomes easy to just throw money in every direction to achieve success then we can all pack up and go home. There is a lot more to team building than buying a collection of players.

Often the less talented are the work horses of a side that talent cannot do without. It is my belief that Fulham will be trying to get into Division One next season.

Saturday, January 24 sees Blackpool come to Adams Park. This will be our opportunity of a double. The performance at Bloomfield Road was excellent, especially the second half goals from Mark Stallard and John Cornforth.

When these notes were written Blackpool were just about half-way and three points in front of us. This should be another win for the Blues to keep the New Year rolling.

The final league game for January will take place at far flung Carlisle on Saturday, January 31.

To say we owe them one is a bit of an understatement. Up to the Watford game they have been the only team to win at Adams Park in 1997.

There was nothing fortunate about their victory, it was comprehensive. Although bottom of the table with only five wins they do have a habit of providing the unexpected. A 2-0 home win over moneybags Fulham was another example.

Other matches see the youth team visiting Peterborough United in the FAYouth Cup third round on Friday. January 9 (ko 7pm).

Also coming up will be the Auto Windscreen Shield second round tie at Fulham, plus the Berks and Bucks Cup, first round game at Bracknell Town. Dates for those two are still to be arranged.

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Methodist Church Hall, Spittal Street, Marlow
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Trading places

IF any seat season ticket holders wishes to bring a guest or a larger party they can trade any of their vouchers for seats elsewhere in the stadium prior to a matchday.

For example if you have two season tickets in the Amersham & Wycombe College Stand or Blocks N,P and Q of the Servis-Pak Stand but want to be sit with two guests this is not a problem.

Assuming you don't have two spare seats next to your seats, all you have to do is trade in the appropriate voucher for the match you want at the Commercial Offices or at Wanderers in Town.

Your existing seats will be put on sale for that particular game and the club will give you two seats of your choice next to two spare seats.

There is no cost for this transfer, but your guest seats will need to be paid for. In the unlikely event you should wish to downgrade your seats there is no refund.

Free fivers

YOU can claim a free £5 clubshop voucher by filling in a Wycombe Wanderers Visa Card application form from the commercial offices at Adams Park.

The offer is not open to existing card holders.

Full details on the benefits of holding a WWFC Visa Card (including no annual fee) are available from the commercial offices or Wanderers in Town in the Octagon Centre, or by ringing MBNA International Bank Ltd on freephone (0800) 062062, quoting reference GT79.

How Boxing Day derby hit profits

COMMERCIAL BREAK
By Mark Austin

HAVING the Watford match on Boxing Day was very unfortunate from a commercial point of view. Had the match been scheduled for any other time of year, we would have seen a new league attendance record at Adams Park.

Unfortunately, the corporate side suffered as a result of companies not being able to attract guests, as they were either at relatives, friends or away on holiday over the festive period.

Although all the executive boxes were sold out, we still had spare capacity on hospitality, which is unheard of for big matches here.

Also, bringing forward the kick-off to 1.30pm, at the police's request, affected people's decision to have hospitality, as those who did eat had to sit down at 12 noon for their meal.

As it has turned out, we would have been better being paired with a Division Two side that was not such a big box office draw on paper, located far enough away to have no ticketing restrictions, but near enough to bring a decent crowd. This way we would have had a traditional large Boxing Day crowd and increased both our income and league average.



Money maker: Sales and marketing manager Mark Austin

And of course we would still have had a big derby match against Watford to look forward to later in the year.

Hopefully our home league form in 1998 will match that in 1997 when we stayed unbeaten at Adams Park gaining 26 points out of a possible 30 points (eight wins and two draws).

There are still plenty of big games to come against the division's top placed teams. We play last season's Third Division Champions Wigan Athletic tomorrow, York City (who are the surprise package of this season) on Tuesday, March 3, Bristol City on Saturday, March 28 (I'm sure Micky Bell's homecoming will attract a large crowd), Grimsby Town on Good Friday and Millwall on Saturday, April 18.

Both tomorrow's match and the Grimsby Town match are Quid-a-Kid matches, so if you have never been to Adams Park you have got plenty of opportunity to sample the very friendly family atmosphere at the home of Wycombe Wanderers.

Commercially there is no hiding the importance to the Blues of doing well in the Auto Windscreen Shield this season. With the early exit from the FA Cup, the club really needs the extra income to try and catch up on it's budget.

Obviously a trip to Wembley for the final would solve any cash shortage we might have this season.

However, first we must overcome flush Fulham, Kevin Keegan and all, at Craven Cottage, which is no easy task.

Having never had a home tie in the Auto Windscreens Shield to date (although we did when it was the Autoglass Trophy) if we did win it this season, I think we will have both earned it and deserved it.

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- youth	£5.99	£2.99
Red & yellow jigsaw G.K Shirt (kids & adults)	All half price	
Goalkeeper jigsaw kids kit deal (shirt, shorts & socks)	£39.99	£19.99
Goalkeeper jigsaw adult kit deal (Shirt, shorts & socks)	£54.99	£27.50

There will be other items heavily reduced during the 'Half price replica kit sale' including leisurewear and souvenirs.
All offers are only available while stocks last.

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MARK Your Man Sponsorship, where supporters sponsor a player's kit includes two tickets to the last home match of the season, your player's shirt signed and framed, a framed photograph of the presentation after the Chesterfield match, a mention in every matchday programme, PA announcements, and an appearance in any supporters player of the month.

To mark your man call Tim Arnold at Wycombe Wanderers on (01494) 472100.

Players and sponsors are: John Gregory: James, Harry &Victoria; Richard Hill: Francis Glenister, Solomon Brothers In Ltd (0171) 721 3891; Neil Smillie: The Blues Supporters Club (01494) 563697; Dave Jones: available home and away; Martin Taylor: George & Matthew MacKenzie (H), Coach No.1, The Blues Supporters Club (A); Brian Parkin: available home and away; Nicky Mohan: Phil Turner (H), Richard Vere (A); Paul McCarthy: Denzil, Margaret and Andrew Ashcroft; Michael Forsyth: Bucks Auto Components (H); Jason Kavanagh: Bill & Sheila at The Disraeli Arms (01494) 526760 (H), Frances Carvell (A); Jason Cousins: Dave Woodbridge, Christine Bye (H); Steve Brown: Paul and Alan Gillott (H), Ann Cohen & Co Solicitors (01494) 677420 (A); Dave Carroll: H Elaine Blake, A Alan & Kathy Hutchinson; Keith Ryan: Link Precision Services (01844) 347062; John Cornforth: Quality Heating Services Ltd (01494) 538488; Michael Simpson: available home and away; Steve McGavin: Sharon Healey (H), Selina Perrin (A); Mark Stallard: Vince's Table (H); Paul Read: Graphic Arts Supplies Ltd; Aaron Patton: available home and away; Alan Beeton Gary and Sharon Trimby (H); Mo Harkin: WWISC (H); Ben Hodson: available home and away; Gary Wraight: available home and away; Keith Scott: Catherine Worboys (H), Alan, Michael & Richard (A).

A Posh date for young Blues

BLUES' youth team, sponsored by the Walters Group Of Companies, have been drawn away at Peterborough in the FA Youth Cup third round on Friday January 9 (ko 7pm).

If Wanderers progress it will be the first time they have reached the fourth round.

● Wanderers have been drawn away to Bracknell in the first round of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup. The date has not been fixed.

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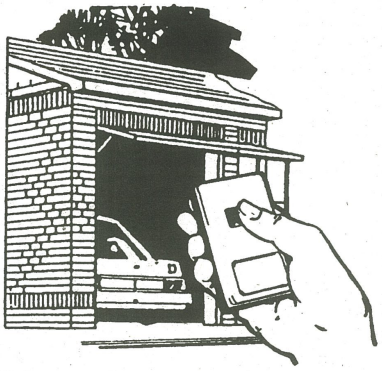
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New schools programme set to kick off next month

Community work is so rewarding



Community football: Goalkeeper Martin Taylor joins the youngsters and coaches at one of the successful schemes run by the Blues

WE would like to start by wishing you all a happy New Year.

We would also like to thank everyone connected with Wycombe Wanderers for their support and encouragement in the short time we have been at the club. A special thanks to all the office staff, Kathy, Sue, Sharon, Niki and Maureen for all their help.

The New Year could not come quickly enough for us as we have a lot of schools waiting for our services. We are looking to have a schools programme in place by the time we start in February.

COMMUNITY CAPERS
By Nas and Dave

The two projects that we are currently undertaking are the Panini Schools Six-a-Side Tournament and the Smoby Monneret Table Soccer Competition. We would like to thank Smoby Monneret and Panini for their support in these activities.

A last big thank you must go to our sponsors Midland Bank, for letting us deliver a schools programme, and Sportsmatch for backing the business sponsorship.

Last but not least Wagon Wheels for their support of all the community schemes. Without this support we would not be able to be out there representing Wycombe Wanderers in the community.

Good luck to John Gregory and the players and let's hope the New Year will bring us more success and perhaps even a play-off place at the end of the season.

We're doing OK folks

By Alan Parry

WITH the New Year upon us there's a great temptation to look back over the last year and wonder what might have been, if only.

However, much as I enjoy reminiscing, I prefer to look forward.

Last year will not be remembered as a vintage year in our history and there's no point dwelling on the things that went wrong.

John Gregory achieved the first priority he was given when he became manager, namely to keep the club up.

He improved the style of play, strengthened the squad in almost every department and transformed the atmosphere in the dressing room.

Whilst things didn't quite go according to plan in the second half of the year the fact remains that we're still in pretty good shape. As I have remarked several times in the matchday programme, I really cannot understand why there's so much gloom and doom around Adams Park.

When we beat Oldham recently we stood just six points off the play-off zone. At that stage only the top three teams in the division – Watford, Bristol City and Oldham themselves had scored more goals than us. It doesn't sound too bad to me.

Publication deadlines meant this article had to be written before the Christmas fixtures, but I'm confident enough to predict things will continue to improve. Confidence has returned and the team has started to play good football again.

A more positive attitude among you – our supporters – would help the players do even better. Let's get back to the days when we all got behind the team from the off.

I have unshakeable belief in the ability of John Gregory and the players to continue our improvement. I've studied our remaining fixtures and I really believe we will steadily climb the table.

My message for 1998 is simply this: Let's cheer up, appreciate what we've got and have the faith to believe that things will get better. I'm the eternal optimist trying hard to convince all the pessimists that supporting Wycombe is one of life's joys.

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