

MIDWEEK MAIL

REGARDING your invitation to comment on John Milburn's Assessment of Wycombe Wanderers involvement with the town, I don't intend to enter into his controversial statements over present management. Enough has been said in his article and in recent letters to both the Bucks Free Press and Midweek.

Our decline, I believe, in public support goes back many years, not so long after our tremendous F.A. Cup games with Middlesbrough (then 2nd from top of 1st Division). This was probably the greatest achievement in our 99 years' history, when we were not only "The talk of the town", but the "Talk of the country".

Instead of capitalising and making this exhilarating period the spring board for future entry into the Football League we slowly but surely commenced to dig a hole down which thousands of our once loyal supporters disappeared. The ratio in numbers was most probably more than any other top non-League club in the country.

What started the rot? I believe that when Brian Lee relinquished his position as manager we should have gone for a top name in the Allan Batsford mould. Don't say the problem was finance because we had just completed five seasons with money spinning FA Cup runs, one FA Amateur Cup semi-final, and top attendances in the league. Instead we appointed two managers with lesser managerial experience.

These were vital years, in which the process of the long trek from Loakes Park began.

What saddens me is we didn't use the income from these momentous years, plus the income which was begin-

The ball's in your court, Wycombe!

ning to roll in from our most successful lottery to build the big clubhouse-cum-night club which supporters and thousands of lottery addicts were promised.

This project was shelved at the 1980 AGM by the then club chairman, Mr Reg Williams. His exact words were and I quote: "We run a football team and not a social club. The clubhouse is secondary to the team. That is what we are here for, to produce a football team for the town."

In the past four years, however, we have spent only £3,000 on buying players and have never replaced top quality players like Terry Reardon and Keith Searle whose control of midfield and heading ability respectively have been sorely missed.

Was it money again when Mick Doherty, a top-class midfield player, decided to go to Yeovil instead of Loakes Park?

I've included all these statistics because I believe supporters have left us because we didn't live up to our expectations both on and off The Park.

Last season was our best for six or seven years, but still the deserters have not come back. WHY!

The officials of the club must accept criticism and be man enough to leave the sanctuary of the stand and walk down to 'The Shed' to answer some questions.

Only last evening a supporter said to me: "Why are Southampton FC year in and year out in conjunction with The Bucks Free Press running a soccer school while our own club is a by-stander."

What we require from today is a big public relations exercise; appoint a Public Relations Officer to supplement the tremendous job Paul Birdseye, our Commercial Manager, is doing for the club's lottery, and which some pro clubs must envy. Have an open day for families later in the season. Yes, with a little American soccer razzmatazz. Invite the US Base families.

Come on Wycombe the ball's in your park. Don't balloon it over the stand. — **John Simmonds, Chiltern Avenue, High Wycombe.**