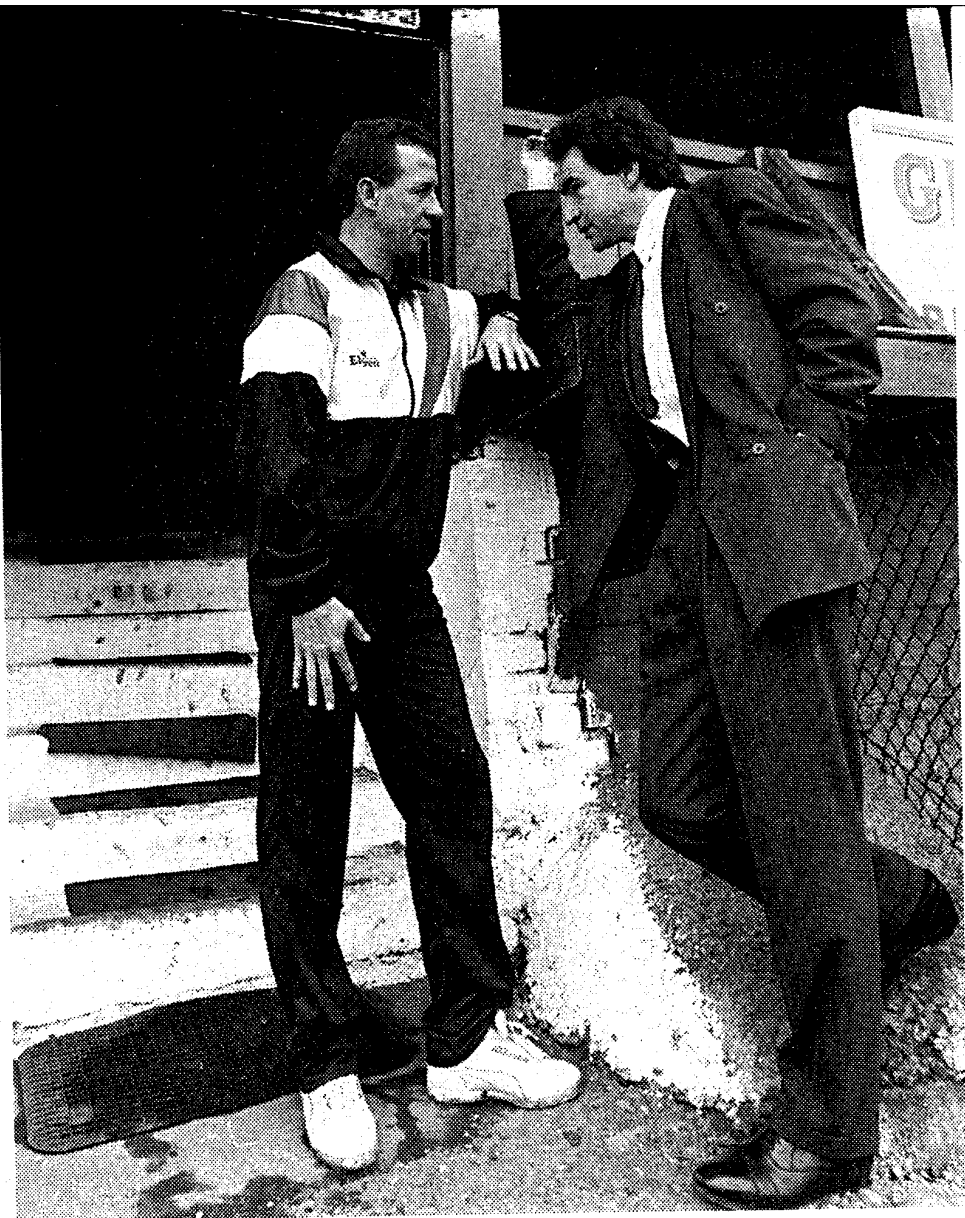




New setting for old friends John McGovern and, right, Martin O'Neill at Wycombe

NON-LEAGUE

Wycombe leave memories of friendship on the touch-line

THE smiles and handshakes were warm and sincere when former Nottingham Forest warriors Martin O'Neill and John McGovern confronted each other for the first time in their new managerial roles on Saturday.

For 10 years have elapsed since the two former midfield players were important cogs in Brian Clough's team which beat Hamburg 1-0 to win the European Cup for the second successive season.

But this time, the setting was less formidable than Madrid in 1980 and Munich a year earlier when Malmo were also felled by Forest by a single goal. Instead, the two friends met on the sloping pitch of Loakes Park — home of Wycombe Wanderers for only another seven weeks.

However, this end-of-season

By Peter Ernest

GM Vauxhall Conference fixture meant just as much to both men in terms of commitment. For Mr O'Neill, now 37, and Mr McGovern, 40, are the latest managerial recruits at this level at Wycombe and Chorley respectively.

So Wycombe's 4-0 win in front of a 1,706 crowd enabled them to consolidate their position in the top half of the table with goals by Carroll, West and Lambert (2).

But Chorley, in only their second season of Conference football, were left in third-from-bottom position, with Mr McGovern having only nine games remaining to steer his new charges away from the threat of returning to the HFS Loans League.

On Saturday Mr McGovern

saw his hopes of salvaging at least a point vanish when his goalkeeper, Joe Neenan, was injured just before half-time and was replaced for the rest of the match by Brian Ross, an outfield player.

Elsewhere in the Conference, **Barnet** regained top position when goals by Bull (2) and Clarke gave them a 3-1 victory at **Telford**. **Darlington** were held at home to a goalless draw by **Merthyr** and are one point behind Barnet with a game in hand.

● **Bridlington**, after a 3-0 first-leg away victory over **Guisley** on Saturday, will make the return leg all-ticket when they attempt to reach next month's final of the FA Vase. In the other semi-final, **Hythe** saw a 2-0 lead vanish before an 82nd-minute goal by Wheeler gave them a 3-2 win over **Yeading**.