

-Mann on Friday—

EVERYONE has their own stories about the Wembley final, but for me the moment that the Wanderers stopped on their victory circuit to shake a frail Jack Francis' hand will live on in my memory.

Each player in turn touched his hand through the wire mesh fence, and someone passed the trophy over the top to let him touch it.

Tears streamed down Jack's face, and many fans who witnessed the scene became misty-eyed.

That the team should halt their celebrations to share their delight with one of their oldest fans was a marvellous gesture.

It endeared me even more to the Blues' heroes who battled so hard and so successfully this season.

The atmosphere within Wembley epitomised the best traditions of a community spirit

so often lacking and which many thought had vanished.

But Wycombe Wanderers managed to capture the hearts and minds of more than 25,000 people who gave up their Saturday to brave the rigours of the A40 or the railways.

It was a shame that more could not have been at the post-match dinner at Adams Park where the team, officials, sponsors, guests and dignitaries let their hair down.

Manager Martin O'Neill emerged as an excellent raconteur who managed to mock just about everyone around him without offending a soul.

And speaking of souls, the new High Wy-

combe Vicar Frank Hillebrand won many friends with his sense of humour, joining in all the gentle ribaldry from the stage, where Blues' captain Glyn Creaser attempted, without success, to string a sentence together without a swear word.

The club's major sponsors, Verco, led much of the celebrations during dinner and started a wave, similar to the one seen hours earlier at Wembley.

Then the bleary-eyed revellers re-emerged the next day to go to a civic reception at the town hall, where some 3,000 supporters gathered to pay homage.

I gather that the then council chairman Frank Sweatman paid for the champagne

himself – and was at great pains to point this out to the Press, presumably to show that the council was not wasting public money.

What he didn't seem to appreciate is that the public doesn't mind when the money is being spent in a good cause.

Still, it was good when the fans started up the chant: "We want our training pitch". There was nervous laughter from a few councillors as they thought over their decision for Wednesday's planning meeting.

It is a great shame that those councillors could not add to Blues' glory, but have forced them to go to a replay after a site visit.