

MARTIN: WHY I STAYED

**by Emma
Wilkinson**

THE thousands of Wycombe Wanderers supporters are to be thanked for in-demand Martin O'Neill staying at the club.

Against all the odds the Blues' maestro opted to stay in Bucks. He was offered the Nottingham Forest manager's job on Tuesday - the day after he was met by a sea of fans outside Wycombe Council's offices for the civic reception to celebrate the club's FA Trophy win and promotion to the Third Division.

Chants of "Don't go Martin" rang out across the town and "We hate Forest".

At a specially organised press conference in Adams Park on Wednesday, Martin said: "Monday night's affair had a lot to do with the decision.

"I have accepted the offer of a two-year contract to stay at Wycombe Wanderers. I have started a job at Wycombe which I would love to finish.

"There is an enormous



Martin O'Neill

potential here and I am excited to take this club as far as it can go. I can't leave Wycombe at such an important and exciting time as this.

"But I hope Forest get back to the top and I have this silly little dream that we will join them," he added.

The man who led Wycombe into the Football League for the first time in their 109-year history, travelled to the Midlands with an open mind about the job, but has since talked to his wife and

Wycombe's chairman Ivor Beeks and said: "We have something going here at the moment," adding most of the players wanted him to stay on.

When asked about Martin's contract, Ivor said: "If we couldn't afford him he would not be here. We sat down and talked terms.

"Notts Forest have missed out, it will take somebody extra special to take his place."

Martin told the press conference that the Forest job did not appear as daunting as it could have because they have just been relegated.

Blues goalie Paul Hyde said: "He has obviously achieved something for Wycombe no other manager has done and I can understand why top clubs are interested in him."

The players' contracts have yet to be settled, but Martin and Ivor stated a number will go full-time to give the club a chance in the Third Division.

● Frank Clark, managing director of Leyton Orient, is now to take over at Notts Forest.