

By Martin O'Neill

BY the time you get to read these notes, I am hoping that Terry Evans will have put pen to paper and signed a new contract which will keep him at Wycombe Wanderers FC at least until June 1997.

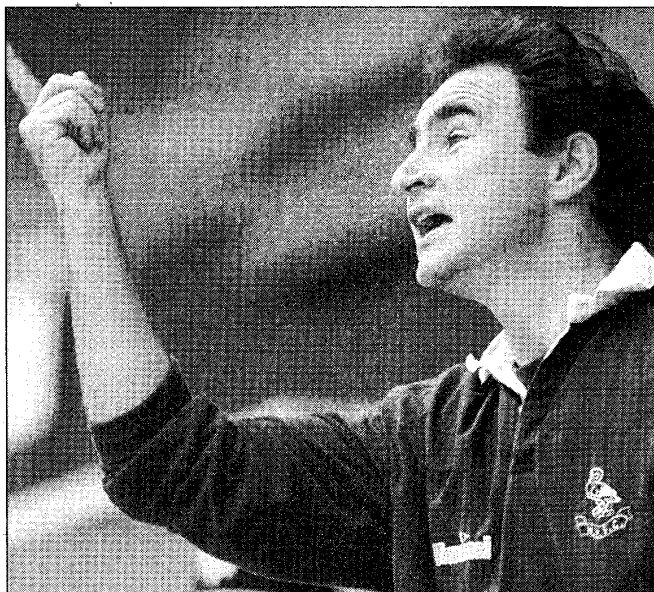
Terry has been a colossus for us since he joined from Brentford about 18 months ago and his own commitment to our cause has been influentially unwavering.

Jason Cousins signed for another two-and-a-half years at the beginning of the month and I was equally delighted to be able to work out a deal which keeps him reasonably happy for another period.

Now all he has to do is start performing as consistently well as last season to keep ME reasonably happy. Re-signing players who have done magnificently for Wycombe during the last few seasons, and who, in my judgment, still have a big part to play in the future of this club, gives me more satisfaction than signing someone who is new to the club.

Which leads me rather appropriately to the apparent mayhem caused by Alan Parry when his own views, expressed at the Independent Supporters Club meeting, were aired in the Bucks Free Press Midweek this week.

Alan was speaking candidly when asked what the manager had been doing to attract new players to the club. It seemed from the tone of the article that almost every time I tried to sign a new player, I had been thwarted by the old fickle Finger of Fate. Actually, for the most part, this is not true. Generally, I have pulled out of



'I'm a bit better than okay': Wycombe boss Martin knows his onions where talented players are concerned

deals because players' demands exceed, by a lengthy way, the pay structure at the club.

The instances quoted in the paper are Louie Donowa, of Birmingham, and Robbie Dennison, of Wolves. I had agreed fees with both clubs for the individuals concerned, but was unable to agree personal terms with the players themselves. No fantastic big deal!!

The fact that both have gone on to win back first team places at their respective clubs, only goes to prove what I have known for a long time anyway – that I am an excellent judge of a footballer.

With the Peter Thorne transfer, I confess to being more than a little disappointed. Having seen the

lad play for Blackburn's reserves in late November, I followed up my interest with a firm bid when on-one else in the country had even heard of the lad.

My first, second, and third offers were refused, but my fourth offer was finally accepted by Blackburn who asked me to wait over the weekend in case they had a string of injuries.

Unfortunately my interest triggered off a bit of a rush, and Kenny Dalglish eventually sold him to his old friend Steve McMahon at Swindon Town, which he was perfectly entitled to do.

I felt the lad could be something special, if given the chance. Obviously other people eventually

thought so as well. I was disappointed because of the circumstances just stated and that such efforts had come to nothing in the end. Such is life.

Miguel Desouza, a different type of player to Thorne – but with enormous potential, has only stepped in to score four goals in three League games and pay off some of his transfer fee.

Honestly, he could be anything, he could playing for Maidenhead or Real Madrid in three year's time. It's entirely up to him.

I think he will get decent tuition at this club to give him a head start.

So to the signing of Gary Patterson. The lad was unaware that he had a problem with his back which came to the fore when extensive medicals were done. He had been able to train and play League matches, but had discomfort when not properly warmed up.

This had been a problem for some while at his previous club Shrewsbury, but the full extent was only realised later. He will need to have proper attention focused on his back in the summer, but can play, thanks to physio David Jones, with much less discomfort than before, or so Gary tells me, so desperate is he to play in our first team.

The lad can definitely do a bit, to coin an old footballing phrase, and since my judgment on players over a five-year period at this club has been a bit better than okay so far, time will tell on everything and everyone.

The Guppy transfer, I have no intention of trying to explain again. At £35,000, Michael Bell, who cost one fifth of what Guppy was sold for, has been brilliant for us. The case rests.