

Lookalike Bill fails Smith test

(For knowing his geography)

MEDIAEVAL monarchs scared of being bumped off employed lookalikes to thwart would-be assassins.

And I reckon new Wycombe Wanderers' manager Alan Smith (surely the most important man in High Wycombe, nay the northern hemisphere) needs the same.

After all, what is to stop a rival club spiking his half-time orange and preventing The Blues inevitable march to promotion next season?

Wanderers' fans at The Hourglass pub, Sands, came



Which....

up with the solution.

They told Backchat: "We have the best lookalike you will find. His name is Bill



....is which?

Sutherland and the likeness is uncanny."

Builder Bill, of Wycombe Road, Bradenham, laughed

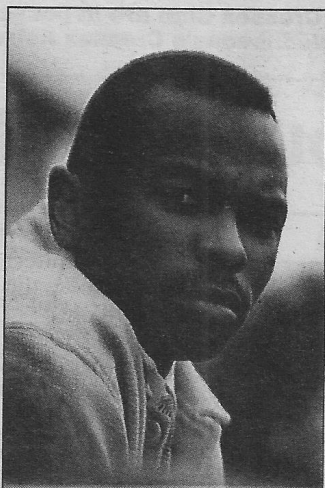
away any similarity. But he reckons Smithy will lead the Blues to great things.

Still, a test was needed to see if Bill could pass muster. So I asked him what county High Wycombe is in.

As Blues fans know, Smithy told Wanderers' telephone update line that the club had to ensure every boy born in Berkshire becomes a Wycombe player.

Alas, Bill replied Buckinghamshire. Drat and double-drat.

Hemmings gets another chance



Hemmings: Reprieved after being transfer-listed

ALAN Smith has illustrated how magnanimous and practical he is by giving transfer-listed Tony Hemmings and Steve Thompson a reprieve.

Hemmings was put up for sale by Smith's predecessor Martin O'Neill for drink-driving two months ago - a charge he admitted and was later fined for.

Thompson was also disciplined for events surrounding the incident.

But, in line with comments that he is going to give everyone a chance to prove their worth, Smith wants to see how determined the pair are to stay.

"I'm not particularly bothered about what's happened in the past. I'm not going to listen to gossip. What happened before does not concern me. It's what happens in the future that I care about."

Smith believes he will know the extent of what each of his players are capable of after they have played three friendlies.

Wycombe's next match, Smith's first home game in charge, is tonight against Ipswich Town, who dropped like a stone from the Premiership last season.

Ipswich from: Pears, Wright, Tarrico, Wark, Linighan, Sedgely, Yallop, Williams, Thompson, Mason, Scowcroft, Chapman, Swales, Thompson, Milton, Tanner, Slater.