

Bucks Free Press

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Give our club pride of place

WHAT is going on at Wycombe Wanderers?

That is the question on everyone's lips after the bizarre events of this week.

First, respected director and soccer commentator Alan Parry made a remarkable veiled attack on manager Alan Smith in the club's match programme on Saturday.

"The standard of some of our recent games has been unacceptable and I sympathise with the complaints of the paying customer," he said.

Many of those selfsame paying customers have aired their views against Mr Smith's managerial style in this paper over the last couple of weeks.

Secondly, Mr Smith was verbally assaulted during a packed meeting of the independent supporters club - by the mother of goalkeeper Paul Hyde.

Hyde left Wanderers this season, much to the chagrin of supporters, after publicly falling out with the manager.

On Monday night, his mother, Audrey, voiced her anger in front of hundreds of fans by telling Mr Smith: "You tried to destroy Paul."

Thirdly, Mr Smith was also criticised yesterday by Martin O'Neill, the manager who made Wanderers great. Mr O'Neill is apparently furious at his successor's criticisms of the standard of the team he left behind.

This kind of situation is new to Wanderers, a club which has enjoyed unprecedented success in recent years after a meteoric rise from non-league soccer. Gates have plummeted in recent times as the team have suffered an inconsistent spell of form.

We therefore urge the club to get its act together quickly before a great and progressive club is reduced to the level of also-rans.

We also urge the fans to have some patience with their relatively new manager. Alan Smith had a fairly good track record before coming to Wycombe, and we admire his openness and honesty.

The very fact that he braved a meeting of hundreds of potentially hostile fans is a tribute to this.

It is also worth noting that many clubs and their supporters would give their eye-teeth to have the facilities and the players that Wycombe have, and to be 12th in the Second Division of the greatest league in the world.

Arthur Church



CHURCH
VIEW

What's gone wrong with the world?

DEEP at the back of my mind, though not entirely buried, I have long had the feeling that the day might come when I would be sitting at my now technically outdated portable typewriter staring at a blank sheet of paper and searching for something about which to write.

There's Wycombe Wanderers, playing their last game of the present season at Bristol tomorrow comfortable (is that quite the right word?) in the knowledge that, although some of their performances have not been all that we would have wished for, they are in mid-table position and in no danger of dreaded return to the lower division.

Trouble is, I suppose, that in the past few years we have had a surfeit of cream and we should not be too surprised if it has turned a mite sour. There are a lot of clubs who would dearly love to be in the Blues' position, and a lot of other supporters who would sleep better at nights if they were.

There are more heights to be scaled, more cream to be savoured. But that's all grist to the mill of BFP sports editor Claire Nash, whose job it is, and to all those letter writers who, having paid their money, have a right to have their say. If only some of them didn't harbour the illusion that they could do a better job than those whose task it is.

It is time to put the bickering and in-fighting behind us so that Wanderers can again aim for glory.

Alan Parry, in his programme notes, told how Sunderland supporters had backed their manager with the song: "Cheer up Peter Reid."

Perhaps it's time to get in tune with Wycombe's manager. How about paraphrasing the Beatles with a version of: "All We Are Saying is Give Smith a Chance."