

How history repeats itself

VIEW FROM THE STAND

By Ron Barnett

WEDNESDAY evening's battling performance at Middlesbrough brought back memories of our epic FA Cup encounter back in the early seventies. Once again, they hit us with an extra late goal that could prove to be decisive.

Hopefully, this narrow defeat will encourage more people along on Tuesday evening, and the club can earn a few bob from the two matches. I believe Andy Pembroke could have a key part to play in the return leg – if he refuses to open the players' bar this could well unsettle Robbo, Gazza and the rest of the Middlesbrough team.

I just can't seem to get away from Middlesbrough lately. Back in August I went on a walking holiday in the North Yorkshire Moors and Cleveland Hills. For days on end we could see Middlesbrough looming on the horizon – not a pretty sight.

We got back just in time for the home win over Swindon – think hard and you may remember how sweet it felt to celebrate a victory. Then up pop Middlesbrough as our opponents in the next round.

Shortly afterwards we went off to Italy, before the start of their season unfortunately, and teamed up with a couple of Middlesbrough fans. Whilst we were bemoaning Wycombe's poor start to the season, they were telling us all about local rumours of drinking and gambling cliques at the Riverside.

Their main concern was that the fans' top man, Paul Merson, would not be able to accept this type of team bonding. Sure enough, a few days later Merson was on his way to Villa to join ex-Blues boss John Gregory at his Temple of Temperance. Our two Middlesbrough fans were gutted – almost as much as I was when I saw the paper with Wycombe firmly anchored at the foot of the table.

You know it's going to be a long, hard and cold winter when your manager says in mid-September: "If we keep playing like that we will stay up." Not exactly a great confidence boost for the fans, but at least you know Neil isn't going to settle for mid-table mediocrity.

Brown doubt

WYCOMBE WANDERERS v BOURNEMOUTH

**A guide to tomorrow's
Division Two match at
Adams Park**

AFTER two confidence boosting performances at Middlesbrough and Burnley, Blues hunt their first league win against a Bournemouth side who have never lost at Adams Park.

Steve Brown, who didn't travel to Boro, could again miss out while Paul Read, who failed a fitness test at Middlesbrough, will hope the extra rest will have helped his ankle.

Neil Smillie must choose between keepers Mark Westhead and Martin Taylor. Taylor's back wasn't 100 per cent in midweek so Westhead faced Gazza and co and his performance will make it hard for Smillie to overlook him.