

Let's make it a happy hunt this time

PARK LIFE

By Alan Hutchinson

WE GO to Bristol City tonight and I can't ever remember their Ashton Gate stadium ever being a happy hunting ground for us.

I remember our goalkeeper Brian Parkin getting sent off there a few years ago and Steve Brown had to take over in goal.

Brownie did ever so well and I remember the Bristol City fans chanting for Parky to be allowed back on the pitch because Brownie was doing so well in his place.

That was also the night when John Gregory went down incognito to watch us just before he was appointed the Wanderers manager.

In fact, Bristol is a lucky place for Gregory because it was in the hotel just before our game at Bristol Rovers that he received the call from Aston Villa offering him the job there. I was with him that evening.

Don't be surprised if he tries to switch Villa's matches to Bristol now, because it is obviously a lucky place for him.

Talking about former Wycombe people, the Bristol game gives us another opportunity to link up with former player Mickey Bell, who left us to join City.

I'm not one of those people who has a downer on Mickey Bell. I thought the reception our fans gave him when he came back a couple of seasons ago was disgraceful.

These people don't understand what goes on behind the scenes. We offered him a contract but he had an agent who was busily trying to get him a better deal elsewhere. Unfortunately agents are part of the game now. I wish that the FA had banned them.

They are taking money out of the game and I think Mickey Bell might still be a Wycombe player if it wasn't for agents and he had been left alone to conduct his own business.

His agent was encouraging him into trying to find something better.

Agents want players to move. They make their money when players get transferred so they are always touting their players around. They are taking money out of the game when it always used to stay between the clubs and the players.

Lawrie Sanchez is always getting calls from them all the time. Even Conference players have agents now and its pushing transfer fees and wages up.

Now I've got that off my chest I can return to tonight's match. It certainly makes a change to play on a Friday night and I'm quite happy to be playing tonight.

History shows that attendances on the last Saturday before Christmas are always awful.

Doing it this way round means that the men can still get their football and the wives can drag them around Tesco tomorrow afternoon.

I know it's a bit inconvenient for our away fans but at least Bristol's not far.

● Wanderers press officer Alan Hutchinson is writing in place of regular BFP columnist Steve Brown.

Steve was unable to bring readers his column because his baby boy Maxwell is still in hospital.