

The **ADAMS FAMILY**

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GLORY, GLORY, HALLELUIAH



Can
'The King'
keep
Wycombe
marching
on?

WYCOMBE WANDERERS FANZINE

The ADAMS FAMILY

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'Glory Glory, hallelujah - yes you've guessed it, We at TAF have gone 'King Crazy' with the sudden realisation that Elvis Presley could well be the key to division two survival. And we reckon you will too, when you read our feature detailing the uncanny powers that are derived from playing the royal highness of rock n roll's emotional rendition of 'An American Trilogy'. Whether you see Elvis as the King or just a bloated greaseball in an outsize and filled to capacity nappy, raid your record collection, search the charity shops for copies, and play the 'Trilogy' on the way to every game. And if anyone from WWFC is reading this, contact us and we'll slip your tannoy man a copy too!

So what else is there in this TAF other than Elvis - plenty, that's what punters. For starters, our legendary end of season poll is within, and we beg you to make the effort to send in some answers, it's more important than the general election, and you get prizes too - bet Ray Whitney hasn't thought of that yet?

Also we discuss contracts, review this tense season, weigh up the prospects of survival, salute Scotty, present more exciting ideas to Ivor, learn of more strange footballing tales from Seymour Crumbleberry and get excited about the 1997 prospects of The London Monarchs in the World League! Plus loads more if your good. Get reading, get praying and most of all, get lucky.....

Contributors: Dave Chapman, Andy Dickinson, Neil Peters, Jon Dickinson, Doug Peters, Floyd Foreman, Stuart Hargreaves

Life Presidents: Paul Van Walwyk & Ginger 'American Trilogy' Bird

Rest in Publishing hell: Rhubarb Rhubarb

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<http://www.bogo.co.uk/oscar/bodg1.htm>

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terrace tattle...

Blimey, we're not in the bottom four for the first time since the sixth of September - and doesn't it seem strange? Being above that ominous line that appears in all the papers after thirty odd games is scary - it's like John Noakes without Shep, it's like Hinge without Bracket, it's like finding something worth viewing on Channel 5. In other words, it's just not right.

Now that we're sat above the danger line, I feel exposed. It's comfortable in there, you just sit back, moan a lot, and fret about the lack of London teams in division three. Once you're above it, the expectations rise. I'm already checking myself from writing about how we're safe, and how heroic it all is. Still when you've been chased by the reaper all season, I suppose it's only fair enough to stop for a celebratory half when you've put some distance between yourselves.

Of course it comes as no surprise that the breakthrough came on the day we won only our second away league game at Notts County. For months now, Adams Park has become a fortress to rival Old Trafford, sadly for our sanity the away trips have seen quite the opposite. But the trend has been bucked for once, and with all the others collapsing nicely on the day, we're up in the Gods at last.

Sadly I didn't get to see Steve Brown's screamer, or for that matter, the equaliser, due to some mechanical problems with the trusty chariot on the way (damn, sounding like Goldsworthyl!). After spreading a tasty oil slick on most of the northbound M40 / M42, dropping off my passengers outside the ground, and struggling to park, I was cheered by the news that Wanderers were 2-0 up after 10 minutes. Sadly this was not true, and it goes to show that coach drivers are as big liars as taxi drivers. You know the conversation, it's Saturday night and your coming home from a curry and ale night, you ask the taxi driver the score of any Premier League game, and he'll say 3-0 to whatever team you express a preference for, just to get a handsome tip mind - 'cos there's no truth in it whatsoever. Well now the coach drivers do it too. And while I'm being totally irrational here, isn't it strange that coach drivers never go to see what they have taken you to? Football, theatres, gigs, theme parks - they all sit in their coaches, read the Sun, listen to Melody FM, get bored and invent lies to pad out their dull lives..... bastards!

Still we won in the end so fair play and all that!

Of course the result was never in doubt thanks to 'The King'TM and his trilogy, which once again came up trumps for the blues. 'All my trials will soon be over' croons 'The King'TM and hopefully ours will be too. More of that later in TAF, but before move on I have to pose this teaser. What sort of a King would be found with soiled pants draped around his ankles, immortalised in the sordid last act of trying to liberate a 'Big Mac' from round the U-bend of his own lavatory? And he cheated at Scrabble too!

This great event was preceded by the fantastic draw achieved at Luton, where the novel idea of charging £12.50 for inflicting crippled back and knee joints courtesy of, shall we say, limited leg room came into being. I've never been to Kennilworth Road before, and I hope that the privilege is not mine ever again. That said, the result more than made up for any discomfort, and could well prove to be the catalyst for our great escape.

Once again the trip to Gillingham was rewarded with a stinker of a game, and a crap result to boot. For this game, a section of your TAF team journeyed to the match with a supporter of the Gills, who was rather excited at the ludicrous play off hype being indulged in by their chairman before the game. We were very kindly treated to a cuppa in the house of the aforementioned gentleman's sister, but ungraciously refused an after match beverage, preferring a sulky milkshake at a nearby petrol station. It's all very well chatting about footy with the opposition before the match, but even the most cordial of chat after a defeat is torture on a par with fingernails on a blackboard.

Sadly the Wanderers legendary away form meant a humiliating defeat at the hands of David Kemp down at Millwall. The sorriest thing about the whole affair was the utter crapness of the Lions still proving to much for our boys. I travelled down on the train from London Bridge believing the hype of the terrible South London hoodlums, but the reality was as intimidating as being threatened by a lone Morris Dancer. Even on the packed train home it was plain sailing, not that I'm complaining mind, but I was expecting at the very least to put into practice my very best South London accent. Apart from the result, I suffered one further embarrassment. As I was travelling directly back to Wycombe from my London pad via The New Den, necessity had it that a few 'essentials' needed to travel in a bag with me. Of course, the stewards would insist on searching my holdall (sour looks at the deodorant can, did they think it was a weapon, or don't they have such luxuries in SE14), shamefully revealing two pairs of pants to the queuing throng behind me. If you saw them I can only offer my profoundest apologies.

Finally I am pleased to report that there has been no further sightings of that pesky band at Adams Park since our last issue, and hasn't the atmosphere been miles better for it? However with some important games coming up soon, the freeloaders will no doubt be dragging their wind instruments to the ground and inflicting more orchestral misery on the long suffering patrons of block's 'S' and 'T'. Our only hope is that the family stand remains relatively full for the remainder of the season, thus keeping the band out of earshot. Now if they could learn 'The Trilogy' that would be another thing altogether!!

THE SECOND COMING

"I am the resurrection and I am alive", the immortal words poured from his lips as he crowned his debut game by netting a goal after his spell in the wilderness. He has returned, he needs no introduction; Keith Scott is here in our hour of need. On Saturday the 29th of March at Adams Park against Shrewsbury, those present witnessed not only a fine victory but The Second Coming. Please excuse the Stone Roses analogies, let's hope Scotty doesn't suffer the same fate and lose some vital members!

I remember writing a tribute to the Guinness guzzling guru many moons ago in T.A.F. and since that time plenty of players have tried to fill his boots, only to pale into insignificance by comparison. Only Super Simon Garner did true justice to Scottys' No.10 shirt. But we mustn't get too excited just yet for he is only on loan to us at present. But hopefully Norwich will put him up for sale and surely John Gregory will snap him up quicker than ginger Spice Girl gets her bristol's out.

The last few years haven't been the smoothest for Scotty. After a storming start for Swindon scoring against Man. United in the Premier League on his debut, he played o.k. for them all season, but the team weren't strong enough to survive at the top level. His next move to Stoke was a tad disastrous, an alleged fall out with the gaffer may well be the reason. A brief reunion with his old boss Sir Martin of O'Neill at Norwich put our man back on track, but despite putting in several good performances for the Canaries they have a habit of loaning him out to other clubs, not that I'm complaining at the moment.

On the 22nd of February this year Scotty graced Adams Park in the guise of a Watford player. Although a real professional he obviously couldn't bring himself to score against us, that would have been bordering on treason in his true-blue eyes. It was in fact the first game that I attended in over 17 months, Alan Sm***s' sabotage of our beloved team drove me to such a deleterious mental state that I was forced to seek asylum over the other side of the world in order to recoup. I think it was Terry "Chief" Evans who blooded Scotts' nose that afternoon. Big Tel was apparently a bit gutted by Scottys' facetiousness at the Guns & Roses "anthem" our boys trot out to. I agree that the dismal track is worth a hearty laugh, and upholding such musical standards is admirable of Scotty, but he was wearing a Watford shirt, which is reason enough for a slap.

Now however, Scotty has redeemed himself by having pulled on the (hideous) blue Wycombe shirt, and has once more begun weaving magic into our attack. I wouldn't dream of taking the "Jesus" tag from Dave Carroll, but it appears we now have two saviours. Scotty like Carroll, plays with a certain passion when in a Wanderers team. The match against Blackpool the other Saturday was proof enough that, at this crucial stage of the season, it's exactly what's needed. When Brown and Carroll were injected into a somewhat lifeless team, it kick-started everyone into a positive move, and the winning goal was formulated by our two messiahs.

So he's back to the rescue, back to uphold our dreams, back to lift us from the mirey clay, and to quote another famous Manchester band, he's hopefully back for good.

P.S. How about giving the man the No.10 shirt Mr. Gregory?

Contract or not???

Well it's that time of the season folks, where "bum-sweats" are the order of the day. Where "But gaffer, I'm better than Cornforth" shouts can be heard cascading around the managers office. Where "But I've got to think of the wife and kiddies" offering is used to play on the fans heart-strings.....OK, basically it's make or break for several of our favourite and not so favourite players.

With the likes of Lawrence, McGorry and Rowbotham plying their dubious trades elsewhere, the number of players salivating around the boss and doing "extra training" has dwindled recently, but there are still a few of them sweating it out. Here at TAF HQ we have been drawing up our own contract talks, so as a guideline for Messrs. Gregory&Hill we unveil the TAF contract blueprint for the season to come.

Steve McGavin: The lad McPastie has really shone this season, and were it not for his recent chick-inspired groin injury, I'm convinced Steve would be pushing Micky Bell for the title of Player of the Year. Who knows he may yet. Whatever, he must be offered a new contract. He was made to look a laughing stock under the short reign of Smith and the Smithmeister even managed to dupe us here at TAF to think that Steve was an overweight piece of rubbish. But full marks to him. He can now in Beardsley-esque fashion say, "well I've truly justified my transfer fee", and he has. THE VERDICT: A Three year contract with a Ginsters discount bonus signing on fee.

Micky Bell: It's a well known fact that our old guru O'Neill has been sniffing round Michael of late, but we say hands off squire. You've got Guppy, Ullathorne as well as Mike Whitlow on the left-side, so please leave us with our major asset. Micky has had an outstanding season and must be our most skilful player. As O'Neill himself would say, "Young Michael is first-class and his work-rate is phenomenal". THE VERDICT: A five year deal, Thameside apartment, and a Harrods hamper.

Terry Evans: A lot of people have differing opinions on Big Tel. "Crap footballer", "great leader", "a winner", "a whinger".....but whatever you say, you simply can not knock his commitment to the club. I know for certain that clubs would be gagging to sign Evans on a free as his presence can be awe inspiring. I don't think he's been as good this season as some of the quicker forwards have exposed his lack of pace. Whats more the emergence of Paul McCarthy as one of the most composed centre-backs the club has seen has dented Terry-mania. However his aerial presence has been as impressive as ever and I know for a fact that us supporters would be filling our brecks if Evans was up against one of our flapping custodians next season. THE VERDICT: A two year deal, Guns 'N Roses box set and a "gammy knee" release clause.

John Cheesewright: Cheesy has had a very mixed season here at Adams Park. There is no doubt that he is a firm favourite with some of the fans, but I wonder if that's because of his funky name as opposed to his keeping skills. Sadly for John he suffers from the age old cliché - he's a great shot-stopper, but his handling is at times appalling.

He flaps about more than a constipated ostrich or a normal Brian for that matter. And that punch is simply not convincing. Still he's a young lad, and seeing as the sublime Taylor has gone back to Derby I guess Johnny may still have a part to play in the proceedings, especially after seeing Brian at Notts County. THE VERDICT: case still open, but looking dodgy.

Matty Crossley: Poor old Matt hasn't had the best of seasons this term. A demoralising loan spell to Rushden to team up with his old mate "Stapes" meant that this long-serving "guru of the back-pass" is looking at an uncertain future. Who knows, a few decent games in the capital league or a shock return to the first team could help him out, but it looks unlikely. Crossley is more than capable of playing at this level, but whether Gregory thinks so is another matter altogether. THE VERDICT: There's no room for sentiment in soccer - but Matt deserves a one-year contract and testimonial for his solid service.

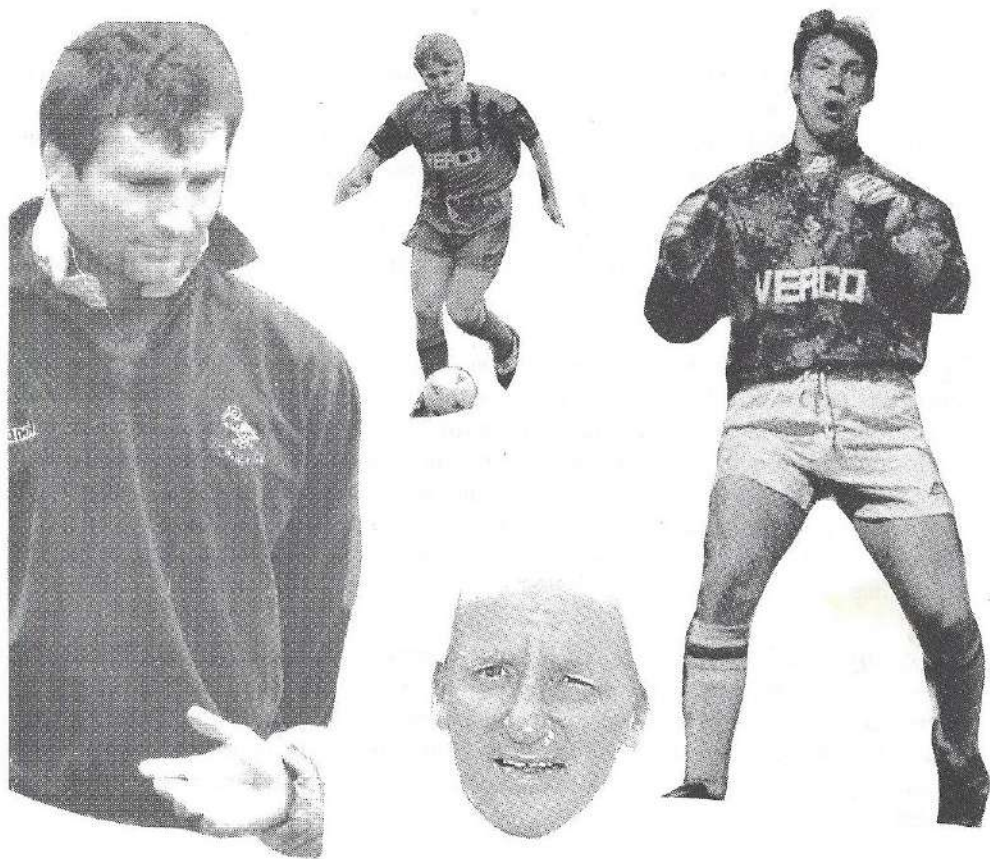
Tony Clarke: The diminutive/midget striker has had little chance to impress since that impressive debut two seasons ago at Leyton Orient. He seems to lack confidence and that aggressive streak that strikers thrive on. Nevertheless anyone seeing him at a recent Capital League match would have seen one of the finest goals ever to grace Adams Park - a 25 yard lob from the narrowest of angles. Whats more with our chronic lack of strikers - many people thought that Clarke had merited a place on the bench on more than one occasion this season. THE VERDICT: A young man still awaiting his chance - another year perhaps?

Terry Skiverton: The ginger "hard man" has been the corner stone of the capital league this season, which although depressing for him, has probably not gone unnoticed. He is strong in the tackle and maintains a healthy work-rate throughout 90 minutes, just like his follicled-brother Paul Scholes. Although he is not a fan of TAF, his surly refusal of a copy every month ensures him a lack of fans amongst our contributors, he has shown a fair bit of promise. THE VERDICT: Another year - and a years supply of Clairol "Loving Care". Washes out every 6-8 rinses, should Tel want to return to his natural hue.

Jason Cousins: Tough tackling Jase has had a fine season once again, and although he's not as comfortable as Bell coming forward in the wing-back role, he's shone defensively. Blues fans always feel comfortable knowing that players like Cousins are in the team, as you never get any less than 100%. I hope we see more of him in the seasons to come. THE VERDICT: A further two years regardless of the odd rash knee-crunching tackles.

Dave Farrell: The enigmatic Faz has had another one of those bizarre seasons. There are odd games when he looks the part, but on the whole he flatters to deceive. His "I want to go home to the Midlands" grizzling didn't really endear him to the public, so despite his obvious talent it looks like we are going to be seeing the last of the man. THE VERDICT: A free transfer to "cheapskates" Hereford, to join McGorry and Williams.

So having assessed the merits of the lads above, my sincere apologies to any other players who have been left out. This is due my poor researching and inability to find back copies of the BFP. I know that I've tended to sit on the fence when making my verdict, so I don't envy John Gregory's task of the inevitable releasing of some of these lads. Still the club has to continue with or without them, and we can't leave this article without a mention to Messrs Beeton, Harkin, Wraight and Patton, the YTS boys who I hope have accepted pro-contracts with WWFC. Beeton is TAF's top-tip for accolades, with one local journalist and TAF-contributor putting money on him captaining England in the 2002 World Cup. Odds are a healthy 50,000-1 apparently. Harkin is unlikely to make it to the World Cup with Northern Ireland, but he could become an exceptional Wycombe player. As for the other lads, Patton looked good against Slug Town recently - scoring a fine winner, as did Wraight. So all the best lads, as long as you show a bit of passion and pride for the fans, you won't go far wrong.



Clockwise from left - Big Tel, Stevie Mac, Johnnie Cheese, Alan Beeton

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OUT NOW - OUT NOW - OUT NOW - OUT NOW

Dear Ivor...



Dear Ivor is your direct line to the top. Got a gripe or a moan? Then don't just sit in the stand whinging about it, write to Dear Ivor and the big man will sort it. Don't forget, Ivor doesn't want to just hear your complaints, it's up to you to come up with a solution.

Dear Ivor,

It has come to my attention that your team seems to have spent the majority of the season in the relegation zone. Since the new year the home form has been excellent, however, one away win all season is quite frankly crap. Why don't you tell the team to win a few away games then the Blues won't be playing the likes of Scarborough and Hereford next season. It's so simple I can't believe no-one thought of it sooner.

Mr. Ron Barnett.

Dear Ivor,

Wycombe don't seem to have scored many goals this season. Why not sell that waster Desouza and get Keith Scott back at the club.....Doh!

Homer Simpson.

Dear Ivor,

Quid-a-Kid may be all well and good for those kids who don't get much pocket money but what about us loyal supporters. I work full time but I'm always skint. How about letting anyone under the age of say thirty in for a quid for every home game next season. This would boost the attendances, and let's face it, if Adams Park was sold out every week the atmosphere would be terrific and it wouldn't just be annoying bastard kids shrieking 'Come on Wycombe' for ninety bloody minutes. How about it? You'll sell loads more beer to us than those kids can manage. Some might call it false economics but I reckon it's just good old fashioned sense.

Tony Broke.

Dear Ivor,

I have noticed the Bucks County Council 'Parking Shop' on Castle Street and they seem to be doing a great trade. Why not open up a 'Parkin Shop' in the Octagon selling Brian Parkin merchandise. That Formula One shop will probably go bust soon, so you can take over their premises. You could sell 'keepers gloves with Teflon Palms or even Brian Wigs. I'm

sure plenty of women would buy wigs for the young men in their lives. I'm also sure that plenty of nubile young teenage girls would love to have a 'Brian Parkin Mirror' in their bedroom.

Miss Dani Behr.

Dear Ivor,

I have noticed that every week the new stand seems to be full of fireman pretending to inspect your impressive new erection to ensure it's safe. These cheapskates are obviously only there for a free view of the match and are costing the club revenue. I have two suggestions, firstly charge anyone wearing a fireman's uniform the normal admission price (otherwise everyone will be turning up wearing plastic yellow hats for a free seat). Secondly, why not start a factory fire at 3:00 every Saturday afternoon, that will keep the buggers busy. I have a petrol tank and box of matches at the ready so just give me the nod. If you like I could even target the premises of your competitors in the building trade and burn down their yards. if you are interested meet me in the Castle Pub, Castlefield on any night of the week.

Mr. D Brennan.

Dear Ivor,

You don't seem to be selling so many 50/50 draw tickets these days. I blame the acne ridden goons who try to sell these to the public. Mumbling "50/50 draw tickets" at passers-by is hardly going for the hard sell. Why not get that bird Melinda Messenger to sell them, she used to flog double glazing so she'll be a natural. She could even offer a free kiss with every ticket sold. You'd make a fortune from me alone. Look into it man, I beg you.

Adrian Would.

Dear Ivor,

I can't help noticing that you will have to buy a 'keeper before the start of next season. You can't afford to pay for three and I have come up with a great way for getting rid of Brian Parkin without buying out his contract. I've heard Neil Morrissey is pretty useful with the old hog-skin so why not invite him down to Adams Park and give him a contract. Then offer the BBC Brian Parkin as a replacement for Tony in "Men Behaving Badly" as the similarity between these two is uncanny. I'm sure Lesley Ash would be thrilled as she goes for footballers anyway. Also, the sitcom's script writers could dream up hundreds of hilarious gags about Brian dropping all manner of amusing items.

Mr. J Cheeseleft.

the camera never lies

FIFA are forever dreaming up new rules to 'improve' the game of football. These range from the sensible new back-pass rule, to ridiculous ideas like kick-ins instead of throw-ins and the ill-fated no offside from free kicks experiments. However, one idea they won't even discuss are video replays.

Televised football is big business now and as a result the likes of SKY TV have about a dozen cameras at each game. They can cover any incident from any angle, watch it back in slow-motion and determine whether the referee made the right decision or not.

With the amount of money up for grabs in the Premier League that a good cup run or qualification for Europe generates, referees could potentially cost clubs millions of pounds.

Leicester City fans will always remember Chelsea's 'penalty' in this season's FA Cup. The replay proved the referee made an appalling mistake which cost Leicester the game. However, from where the referee was standing it did look like a penalty and he had to make a decision on what he saw. As we all know, most linesmen are too spineless to make a big decision themselves, so it is always left to the ref.

Romania should have qualified for the second stages of Euro '96 had the ref seen their 'Geoff Hurst' goal cross the line, he didn't and they were knocked out. While I do have sympathy with Leicester and Romania, I must agree with FIFA that video replays will not be introduced.

Cricket now has a third Umpire with video replays. Many Cricket purists will disagree with this idea, but unlike football, Cricket is a game that can be interrupted. Football is a fast flowing game and I don't believe anyone would want that to change.

Players and supporters contest every decision that goes against them, so what would be the criteria for stopping the game and looking at a replay? Penalty decisions? Proving the ball crossed the line? Or just to determine whether Roy Keane should be booked for taking out an opponent in the centre circle? Even if the ref does have to call in technology who is to say that it will be conclusive. SKY have cameras cover every inch of the field including the goal line, but they can't always prove something one way or the other. What would happen then, a drop ball from where play was stopped, toss a coin, or just go with the refs original decision. Surely it is better to let the ref make a decision on what he saw. They may often make decisions that give the impression they are blind but that's part of the game. Chesterfield will feel they scored a third goal in the FA Cup semi-final just before Middlesbrough scored their second. But by the same token, replays suggest 'Boro should have had a penalty in the first half when Hignett was chopped in the box. From the replays shown in that game, I don't personally think either of the penalties that were given should

have been. I know it's a footballing cliché but 'These things have a habit of evening themselves out over the course of a season'.

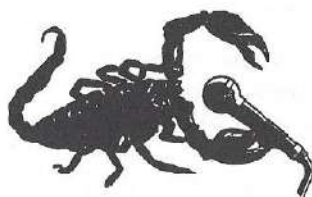
If someone was replaced by technology every time they made a mistake, Liverpool would have a robot in goal and Wycombe would have started the season with a Sinclair ZX81 managing the team.

Another point is who would pay for this? Man. Utd. can afford to have cameras everywhere, including in the ball, but how would a club like Wycombe pay for it? One guest on Channel 4's 'Under The Moon' suggested it should only apply to the Premier League because 'Nobody cares about the Nationwide League and there is nothing at stake there anyway'. A stupid comment if ever I heard one. Football is not solely about money. The game has lasted over a hundred years without the TV millions. All money has done is increase the gap between the haves and have nots. I am not at all opposed to changing the game for the better, I just can't see the benefit in change for change's sake, or just because we have the technology to do it.

One of the joys of football is whinging. We moan at our players, our manager, the opposition, but especially at the ref. Imagine not being able to blame the ref for your team getting stuffed at home, or their inability to win an important game. I believe it is our right as football supporters to give the ref grief everytime he makes a mistake, and quite often when he's obviously right but we're losing. Imagine having that taken away from you. It is one of life's simple pleasures.

Hopefully FIFA will stick to their decision (like any good referee) and we will never have the game held up while the fourth official studies ten replays from different angles. Personally I believe more effort should be spent on improving the standard and fitness of referees, especially in the lower divisions. Why not have professional Refs and Linesmen who work as a three man team officiating the same games together week in week out. The ref will learn to trust his assistants and the linesmen may even be confident enough to make their own decisions. After all, singing 'The Cameraman's A W**ker' just doesn't sound right.

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BLUE AWAY DAYS

Last Saturdays victory at Notts County was a miracle. After miles of travelling around the shires searching for that elusive second away win, the joy etched on peoples faces as we left the ground was akin to winning the FA Trophy in 1991 and 1993. After months of misery entrenched in the bottom four, supporting the Blues away was all of a sudden a pleasure. The players had breathed new hope into the fans, and survival was a distinct possibility. Scotty, Carroll and Brown - those old-timers and fans favourites, epitomised the O'Neill spirit which went AWOL under Smith and is now returning under Gregory and Hill.

But wiping the dew from my eyes for one moment, I must return to the clubs shocking away performances this season. At home Gregory and the lads have turned Adams Park into a veritable fortress, and at times we have been treated to some great footy to match. However away from home we have been fairly ropey and at times dire. The midfield has been overrun and the strikers have barely managed a shot in some games. Only the dogged resilience of the defence has kept many of the scorelines respectable. Now this article is not going to attempt to analyse this, as there is no sure-fire reason. At times - Watford, Gillingham - we have been negative and paid the price, but mostly we've simply been outplayed. However I'm going to look back at a few seasons and see if this current away malaise has any history - or if, hopefully, it's simply a one-off experience.

The O'Neill and Smith years

1995-6...won 6	drew....7	lost...10	12th in Division Two
1994-5...won 8	drew....8	lost...7	6th in Division Two
1993-4...won 8	drew....7	lost...6	4th in Division Three - promoted
1992-3...won 11	drew....6	lost...4	Conference Champions
1991-2...won 12	drew....3	lost...6	2nd in the Conference
1990-1...won 6	drew....8	lost...7	5th in the Conference

So we start by looking at Martin O'Neill's first full season in charge. Six victories and seven defeats meant that it was a pretty average season. Highlights were a tasty 4-2 victory at Merthyr and a debut strike by fashion deity Mick Nuttall in a 2-1 win at Kidderminster.

The following season of 1991-92 saw the Blues thrill their travelling army, and it was at this time that Wycombe fans often outnumbered the home following. The highlights of this season included a 4-goal salvo by Dirty Dennis Greene up at Alty and the non-league performance of the century away to Redbridge where Scotty and Jesus Carroll ran riot in a 5-0 seeing to. However much of the season was blighted by Col.U and the 3-0 defeat up at their shit-pit ranks as one of the poorest defeats in recent years.

All was not lost though as the following season Wycombe mirrored their away form, losing only four all season. The GMVC Championship was therefore won and league status achieved. Steve Guppy tormented Woking up at their gaff in a 3-0 win, as did that man Scotty at Merthyr in a 4-1 win. As always there was a

depressing game and we lost 3-0 to country bumpkins Yeovil, with Simon Stapleton getting sent off for a headbutt which would have floored Tyson.

O'Neill's impressive away record continued the following season in Division Three. Any sceptics of the skills of little Timmy Langford would have been eating their words at Lincoln and Preston as he bagged a couple of braces in impressive victories. Keith Scott annihilated Chesterfield and got a cup of tea thrown at him in mid-celebration while Haky Hayrettin and Steve Brown hit 50-yarders at Preston and Doncaster respectively. We climbed onwards and upwards.

Season 1994-5 and another successful away-day itinerary completed. A couple of shameful 4-1 drubbings at Wrexham and Stockport were balanced out by an impressive 1-0 win at Birmingham with the goalscorer Cyrille Regis also signing off his Wycombe career with a strike in the 1-0 at Leyton Orient. However O'Neill was ready to depart and in came the dietary genius, the footballing Lord, the mighty Alan Smith.

Fresh from relegation with Palace, Smith's first season in charge in 95-6 wasn't without it's share of horrors. Thrashings at Carlisle, and Hull were traits that continued into the current season with the Peterboro' debacle, but there were high points, notably the away drubbings of Oxford and Bradford in the days when Miguel could hit the net with aplomb. However the expectant Wycombe fans could suffer no more Smith-ball and Gregory took over in an attempt to stop the rot.

So judging by recent seasons it seems as though we've been more than a little unlucky this term, however there are a few other notable away campaigns in the Wanderers history. 1987/8 saw three away wins and a mere 18 away goals in a season very similar to this years. The team ended well and went on to enjoy a better next season - perhaps some inspiration for the players there.

In 1986-7 the Vauxhall-Opel Premier was stormed by a Blues side who clocked up a stonking 16 away wins. A rampaging Noel Ashford was the main reason behind this.

In 1974-75 John Maskell, Steve Perrin and the lads lost only three times away from home while in 1969-70 with Bodger in his prime Wycombe went from the 2nd September to the 9th May without an away loss. This was some feat as two seasons prior they suffered a shocking end to the season where consecutive away beltings of 6-0, 5-0 and 5-0 were dished out by the mighty Hendon, Dulwich and Leytonstone.

Season 1950-51 only saw 3 away wins, but the lads managed to do the double over the footballing wizards Tufnell Park Edmonton which was some consolation.

However through painstaking research I managed to find the definitive depressing time to be supporting Wycombe. Rivalling this season for shoddy away form we have to go back to 1933-4 and 1934-5 where in two seasons the lads managed only one away win, a 2-1 at Kingstonian. Indeed from the 4th Feb 1933 through until 22nd August 1934 the Blues failed to win an away league game. Imagine the piss up the fans must have had after that one!

Well that's as far as I'm going back, my retinas are frying with the mass of stats in front of me courtesy of the marvellous Official History book which has been a godsend for any Wycombe fan. So if you haven't got it - buy it. Oh, and happy travelling next season.

the adams family five...

Once again, mostly to prove that we've has no bottle whatsoever, and that our burning desire is to be all things to everybody, the TAF top five rears its head at the end of a ruddy exciting season. Picking a player of the year would have seemed a stupid pursuit before Christmas, when we were considering changing the title of this article to 'The Adams Family's five least shite'. But the fine progress under John Gregory has saved the day, and so, in alphabetical order only, here are our top five. The names are printed in bold to enable Brian Parkin and John Cheesewright to swiftly notice they aren't in the frame!

Mickey Bell

Without doubt, the hot favourite for the BFP award, and not simply due to his ever present status this season. Sir Mick has come through the trauma of being one of Alan Smith's favourite players to majestically prowl the left flank, cheering man and beast alike! How many can remember writing off this supersonic wing-back after the 'bargain' purchase of Davey Farrell from Aston Villa? Thankfully John Gregory was not been fooled by those gaudy boots, and the Faz has seen limited action in the face of bionic Bell. Those of us who thought the end was nigh salute Mickey, and may his reside with Wycombe for as long as Issac Lord has sold quality hardware goods down in Desborough Road to the general public!

Steve Brown

Some may be surprised at the oft suspended midfield warrior's inclusion in the TAF top five, but his six league goals to date (13/04/97), sturdy form in a tough season, and the fact that he might pick a fight with us gives Steve the nod. Brownie started the season with our first goal of the campaign at Shrewsbury, and has gone 'goal crazy' (compared to his previous record of two in ninety-six) ever since. Despite being out of the side through injury as well as clocking up an estimated 50+ disciplinary points, his return in place of John Cornforth has been a decisive factor in the Wanderers' drive for safety. Always a fearsome tackler, Steve's distribution is also perfectly reasonable, and one can never doubt his determination to the Wycombe cause.



Dave Carroll

Shock of shocks, horror of horrors - deadly Dave was actually distinctly shite at the beginning of the campaign, but his performances in the midfield melting pot have improved throughout the season, to such a level that they make that Comet look positively run of the mill in the grand scheme of God's kingdom. Almost ever present this season (except when carrot topped Skiverton was drafted in to justify his wage), Dave overcame the depression that is playing in a midfield with Matt Lawrence, to earn fully his TAF nomination. Dave's season entered a new dimension last Saturday, when he turned wing-back against Notts County, and despite being taken out on numerous occasions, failed to trouble the swearing box, despite looking mildly disgruntled towards the end. 'A great example to the up and coming youngsters', is what David Pleat would have said if we could have been arsed to contact him.

Paul McCarthy

Guaranteed to cause a rumble in certain areas of our readership, but is it just the TAF team who can't fathom out why the Cork crusader isn't the first centre back on the teamsheet? Despite the handicap of being photographed with the cream suit clad Smithster at the event of his £100,000 signing, and being the replacement for the much loved Terry Howard, Paul has looked accomplished after a few dodgy openers for the blues. Often the first to be dropped when Wycombe let in a goal or two, there has been no public 'Ravinelli-ing' from Macca, who has stuck to impressing the crowd with his cultured but gutsy performances. Add to these accomplishments the fact that he nearly won a TAF scribe over 200 nicker courtesy of his goal against Forest in the Coca-Cola, and you'll realise why Paul McCarthy hits our top five.

Steve McGavin

Think back to Wednesday September 17th 1996, when Wycombe fans openly wept with derision at McPasty's inclusion on the bench, by a desperate Smith who had marginalised the player previously. McGavin was the one omission that barely any Wycombe fan could blame on Smith - on the transfer list thanks to his ability to constantly fall over, look overweight, and score once in a blue moon, most of us thought little of the man. But following his distinctly inconceivable double strike against Rotherham that helped to create Wycombe's first league win of the season, Stevie Mac has enlivened the season up with his essential skills, that were been sorely missed during his spell out through injury. This time last year, a worthless has-been wasting his career away, now a hero and a major reason behind the Wycombe revival - it is almost frightening that he could have left for nothing

Who's the Greatest?

Don't worry folks, we're not about to invite Nick Owen to present a half-baked quiz show with Denis Law babbling drunkenly about how all those foreigners aren't a patch on 'Besty and Marshy'. Alternatively let **us** gurgle on intoxicatedly about how the 'Daily Telegraph Fantasy Football League' scoring system can be used to prove **once and for all** which Wanderer is the most consummate advocate of, what Chuck D calls, the "Shut 'em Down" method.

The inspiration behind this feature was the excitement that shone in to one sad TAFster's life, when he noticed that his fantasy team contained £1.9 million rated Jason Kavanagh. 'If only his points for Wycombe could count for my score,' he mused wistfully, 'I could feel better about my defensive pairing of Richard Ord and Liam Daish!' But as this far from fantasy season draws to a close, have our boys done any good?

First the rules. It's 3 points for a clean sheet, 3 points for a goal, 1 point for playing, and 1 point for every goal conceded. Sadly, as we only thought of this idea at our hectic editorial meeting seven days, coupled with the fact that mega-brained cabbie Fred Housego still refuses to become our very own statistician, assists do not count - sorry Mickey! For clearer and fairer analysis, the contestants are placed into four categories - may the best man win.

The Battle of the Keepers

Martin Taylor - Eight (8)

Frankly, there is little need for numeric scrutiny in proving that Taylor is superior to Brian and Cheesey, the sheer fact that he can catch crosses and make saves are enough to convince the majority of sane persons. In just four appearances Martin has clocked up a healthy eight points, and left us heartbroken as he returns to sit on the bench at Derby.

John Cheesewright - Nine (9)

OK, I'll admit it now, I almost rushed myself to hospital when I saw this score. After numerous checks we discovered that it really wasn't minus 9, and that the sub-Moussadik keeping skills of Cheesey looked likely to take the keepers award. The Cheese's lowest depths were reached at minus three, but since his early games, a steady recovery has seen him climb to a score that would be deemed highly respectable for any keeper.

Brian Parkin - Zero (0)

And so it was that even in this competition, poor old Brian's luck deserted him. Not really, you may say, it could have been a minus score. But think on. Have you ever heard someone called, 'A Minus'? No! Have you ever heard someone called, 'A Zero'? Yes! and in the goalkeeping stakes it's a cruel but spookily apt description. Although his score is affected by being an active veteran in the battle of Peterborough, this total is yet more conclusive proof that a free transfer to Viking Rovers awaits the Neil Morrissey of WWFC.

The Peterborough Veterans

Although participating in an atrocious result at face value, these players' actions have never been honoured highly enough after they forsook professional pride for the long term good of dumping Smithy on the dole. Well they may not have medals, but they have their own category, as TAF decorates the Heroes of London Road (1996).

Terry Evans - Nineteen (19)

Removed from the field of battle as the last defiant gesture of the wonky eyed commander, Terrence has recovered from a score of minus nine after the Wrexham match, to the proud total displayed above. Despite missing out on the odd clean sheet, his two league goals have bough extra dividends, clocking up, a score that any fantasy player would be darn well proud of!

Jason Cousins - Sixteen (16)

Plucky cockney lad Jason has also recovered to a fine score since the Wrexham encounter, and stands a respectable three points behind his 'old mucker' Tel. However, if a clean sheet can be attained against Burnley (after our deadline) then Jase will be neck and neck with the suspended Terry, possibly forcing the big man to utilise his shady London gangland contacts against a player who, in the words of Terry himself, 'Is getting too keen'.

Paul McCarthy - Five (5)

Thus the statistics make a total mockery of Paul's inclusion in 'TAFs Top Five', but Macca has seen the hard times, and rather unluckily missed out on the chance to bag a few clean sheets. Still after a long minus spell, Paul has breached the Zero, and stands a good chance of increasing his tally for the season.

Mickey Bell - Twenty three (23)

The top scoring Veteran, therefore the winner of this category, and in the statistics' humble opinion, clearly the overall victor. Why? Because not only has Mick attained a fantastic fantasy score, worthy of a top five side, but he stood shoulder to shoulder with the previous three in the Peterborough 'victory'. Mickey escaped from the clutches of the

minus' following his clean sheet and stunning strike against Millwall in December, and has never looked back. Many Fantasy players would have ditched Mickey like a puppy after Christmas, but those who bestowed love and affection on the flying Geordie would have been richly rewarded.

The Gregory Gentlemen

Jason Kavanagh - Eighteen (18)

The inspiration behind this article has naturally clocked up more points in a Wycombe shirt than his almighty Zero for Derby. At £1.9 million in the original game, you'd be laughing all the way to a free sweatshirt if Jason was in your team, but thankfully that valuation is also a fantasy - eighteen points may be good, but for £1.9 million we'd expect at least Forest's Steve Chettle! Still, it'd still be better value than fifty grand for Rowbotham.

Michael Forsyth - Twenty Five (25)

Sweet Aunt Ada, whilst never being the suavest of performers, Mick Forsyth has hands down whipped the asses of all his competitors with this whopping score. With a fantasy result like this, you'd be forgiven for thinking that 'Brucie' was turning out for Arsenal or Manchester United (there you go kiddies), instead of Wycombe.

The Odd-bods

Matt Crossley (Sir) - Three (3)

A miserable score for Sir Matt, reflecting his unhappy season, sadly the former hero can't even point to a loss of points at Peterborough, only appearing briefly from the bench. Most Wanderers fans would've had Matty in their starting line up this season, but his decent price would have been ill rewarded by this poor points tally. Sadly it seems unlikely that Matt will improve his total for this season, unless plague and disease sweep Adams Park, a sad fact for us all to digest.

Matthew Lawrence - One (1)

To be brutally honest, we only included Matt to laugh at his minus score, but he surprised our statisticians by ending his Wanderers career in profit - even after several heated recounts! The utility man plumbed the depths of minus four after the Peterborough campaign, (although is not honoured by us because he was fannying around in midfield that day), but recovered sufficiently before bidding us farewell to be nearer to his mentor Alan Smith in London. If Wycombe survive the drop, we can be sure to witness his 'skills' upon encountering Fulham next year, provided they don't rumble him and send him packing to Tooting.

The Third Annual TAF Awards

And of course a rather excellent competition rolled into one! Oh yes, it's that time of year again when we attempt to gauge the opinions of you, the paying punters, with regards to all things light and dark blue (or white with poncey stripes, or red with white trim, or yellow with green quarters, or what the hell ever). To enter, simply write 1 - 17 down the side of a piece of paper, then apply grey matter to the following posers, and put your considered response next to the corresponding number on the sheet, before sending the whole thing courtesy of Royal Mail to our PO Box address (see inside front cover).

Alternatively, if a journey to the post-box seems too daunting to contemplate, then an e-mail to "ad088@mdx.ac.uk" with your votes will also get you 'in the draw'. The draw for what though? Well, brace yourselves, cos we've really pushed the boat out this time - the winning entry (first out of the Mike Phillips tombola) gets:

- ◆ A whole year's free subscription to WWFC's premier fanzine, The Adams Family (that's this one, the one you're reading now, Bud!)
- ◆ The latest copy of the "Football Fan's Guide" book, a witty, yet essential tome featuring details of every ground in the Premiership and Football League, with instructions on how to get there, where to park, is the food safe, can you have a dump without fear of catching a medieval disease etc. etc.
- ◆ Gary Patterson's shirt, as worn by the man himself (occasionally)

This last item, of course, is now something of a collector's item, for not only has this semi-stripey monstrosity hardly sold in droves this season (adding a certain cult rarity value in future seasons), but as you are probably also aware, 'Wor Gazza' has been cruelly given the cold shoulder treatment by our otherwise faultless new boss, thus placing his shirt firmly into the 'nearly new' category. I mean, John Cornforth vs. Gary Patterson - hmm, tough choice for any manager, that.

So with carrot now firmly attached to string and stick, what further incentive do you lot need to enter?? Get those fully (or even partly) completed questionnaires to us by the end of June (which is when we start thinking about TAF 28), to make sure your opinions count. It's been said before, I know, but we really don't get a vast number of entries for this little exercise, so do yourselves a favour and get them in for a spiffing chance of winning some whippet prizes. Bonne chance, mes amis!

(All questions relate to games, players, clubs, grounds for THIS season only)

1. Best player
2. Most improved player since last season
3. Best buy
4. Strangest inclusion or acquisition
5. Strangest omission or sale
6. Best game
7. Worst game
8. Best ground
9. Worst ground
10. Best goal
11. Worst miss or attempted save
12. Best match programme or fanzine
13. Worst match programme or fanzine
14. Has the overall standard of refereeing improved, declined or stayed about the same compared to last season?
15. Rate John Gregory's efforts (out of ten) since his arrival
16. Advice for Mr. Beeks during the close season?
17. How could we improve "The Adams Family" for next season?

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CRUMBLEBERRY

TAF's resident footy bore serves up more 'treats'

I have received so much fan mail (especially from young females readers) since the last issue that The Adams Family have offered me an extended contract until the end of the season. I haven't decide if I will accept it or not yet as the Leicester City Fanzine have approached me with an even better offer. However, while I'm still here I thought I'd do my duty and brighten up your dull little lives with some Super Facts about the game we know as Association Football (OR Soccer if you are one of our American cousins).

In 1962 Atletico Madrid player Juan Arcona was struck by lightening during a match with Real Sociead five minutes before half time. He was wearing rubber soled boots at the time and amazingly was not badly hurt. After spending the interval on the treatment table suffering from shock he re-appeared for the second half. Sadly though, he gave away a penalty and was sent off!

The record for "Keepy-up" is held by nineteen year old Nigerian Sonny Massapa. He managed to keep the ball up for an amazing 33 hours. However, as there was no Guinness Book of records representative present this record will never be officially recognised. According to Sonny he will never be able to repeat this feat as he put such severe strain on his back breaking the record that he can no longer stand straight let alone keep a football up in the air.

The old North Bank terrace at Highbury used to hide a grisly secret prior to be knocked down to make way for the new stand. When the terrace was being built local people were invited to dump rubbish to build up the banking for the terracing. One contractor got too close to the edge when backing his horse and cart full of rubbish. The cart fell into the hole and pulled the horse with it. The stricken horse had to be destroyed were it lay and was buried in the terrace.

Before becoming 'A bit of a bounder' Terry Thomas, the popular British comic actor, was on the books at Chelsea. He captained their youth team and played for the reserves. Sadly he never made it into the full squad. In his autobiography he blames his disappointment of being released by the club for becoming a

comedian. He had been at the club since he was sixteen and other than playing football and making people laugh he didn't know how to do anything else.

Alex Ferguson may think Manchester United have a fixture backlog but maybe the grizzling jock should think of the poor professional footballers of Baffin Land in the Artic Circle. Because they only have one month of sunlight a year they have to fit a whole season into four weeks. There are ten teams in the professional league and they have to play each other twice during the 'season'. That works out at as a game every 1.7 days. Cantona, Beckham and Giggs, they don't know when they're born.

In Saudi Arabia it is illegal to play football on their Holy Day. Anyone caught breaking this law has their feet cut off as a warning to others. Could play havoc with Sunday league football if ever such a law was introduced to the British Isles.

So fanatical about there football are the Accouri tribe in Bolivia that in 1977 the entire tribe clubbed a man to death for bursting their one and only football. Apparently they had to wait seven months before they could get a replacement from the nearest sports shop, 280 miles away.

And now dear readers, I must ask for your assistance about a non footballing fact matter. I am a man who likes to separate fact from fiction. I don't like pub arguments that remain unresolved and there has been an argument running at TAF HQ for a number of years now. The great Bourbon Biscuit debate. Are they 'lovely biscuits, ideal for dunking in a cup of tea' or are they in fact 'baked by the Devil using Rhino dung'. Please help us to settle this debate by sending us your thoughts. Answers on the back of a Bourbon biscuit to the usual address.

The Blues Are Going Up

Sadly it is our duty to warn you of a possible price rise for next season. The cost of paper, printing and all that lark, has meant that for the second time in five and a half years a price rise could see TAF retailing at 70p. However to avoid this most shocking display of daylight robbery since Chomp Bars flew in value from 10 to 12p, we are letting you subscribe for next season at the fixed price of £5.00 including P&P. So how about subscribing and including your questionnaire responses? Make cheques payable to local hoodlum D.Chapman, send in to the usual address and await a flurry of desk-top activity which will see next seasons mag looking better than ever.

Making Matchday's Merry

The title echoes hearty sentiments we'd all agree with, I think. But 'how', is the immortal question?? Stuart Harvey of the day-glo (but still most amusing) Electric Chairboys (<http://www.bogo.co.uk/oscar/bodgl.htm>) has a couple of good suggestions:

MASCOTS/KIT

It's great to see that John Gregory is improving things on the field after the dank and dismal days of Sm***, and now survival in Division 2 looks a real possibility. However, we at the Electric Chairboys reckon there are a few aspects of the matchday atmosphere at Adams Park that could do with a little attention, if we're to generate the kind of atmosphere that lifts teams to greater things.

First and worst is the disgusting kit - not only does it look crap, it also reminds us of the Douglas Hurd who was in charge when it was foisted upon us. Happily, John Gregory seems determined to send it where it belongs, so that one seems to be in hand.

Secondly, we have Bluey the ruddy Swan. OK, so clubs apparently need silly mascots for marketing purposes and to keep the little kiddies amused, but a stupid fat duck waddling around, accompanied by spotty herberts (aka the Youth Team) lobbing Snickers bars into the crowd, and two poor sods dressed as bits of film?? Really.....

You can sort of see the point, I guess - the swan is the emblem of Wycombe etc., but unfortunately poor old Bluey is far from elegant, and more like the Ugly Duckling of fairy tale fame - a sad fat duck, and nearly as laughable as that stupid hornet thing at Watford, and the Barry Fry-lookalike Blue Nose at Birmingham. The best place for Bluey, I'm afraid, is back in the river, preferably in a sack with a few bricks.

What we really need is a mascot that reflects Wycombe's history and the club's origins amongst the town's furniture workers, and preferably one that looks a bit like what it's meant to be. After all, we're called the Chairboys, not the Swans - they're a bunch of sheep-felching nutters from Wales. So what about: *Charlie the Chair*?? Charlie would fit in with the Club's tradition - and, if we were very clever, we could put him on wheels, so the poor sod

inside doesn't get knackered traipsing around the edge of the pitch. Or what about remote control? The possibilities are almost endless!

Anyway, if you agree, please write to the club and plead with them to banish Bluey and choose Charlie. He'd certainly make a difference, would bring a smile to many faces, and might even merit a special mention by Gabriel Clarke on Nationwide League Extra.

THEME TUNES

I can't help thinking that the atmosphere at the ground would be improved if we had some decent music for the boys to run out to. Many teams already have a theme tune, like Wolves' "The Liquidator" (mighty fine, and was used for several seasons by the Loakes Park PA man some years back). However, most are your usual Tina Turner/Queen type dross, although we could change "We Will Rock You" to, "We hate, we hate Col U", which would more than make up for the song's shortcomings. The recently tried out Guns and Roses effort might be OK for Heavy Metal Terry in his incredible spandex shorts, but surely we can do better than that?

So, we got to thinking of a few ideas for theme tunes. Number one choice has got to be the old Dambusters Theme - it's a tried and trusted old fave, rousing for fan and player alike, and we can all join in lustily for the, "We all flippin' hate Slough!" bit. Gets my vote.

Or what about the theme from the Archers? It's nice and jaunty, and might cheer people up a bit, although my mate Wilf reckons it could make us sound like a bunch of tractor drivers. Then there's the Thunderbirds theme - a great tune, but might invite some comments about players who move like string puppets. Going back a few years again, the World Cup Theme by Colourbox (for the '86 World Cup) still sounds as fresh as a daisy, and would rekindle memories of the Loakes Park slope once more, as the old PA man used to play this one as well - top notch stuff!

And of course you could do an awful lot worse than Elvis himself (q.v. Fortean Footy) - most people know the songs, and after all, he is the King. How about for starters, "It's Now or Never", "King Creole" or the splendid "Wonder of You" (a big favourite with TAF)? Or, if we wanted something a little more raucous, the Ramones would be a good bet - 5000 Blues fans chanting, "Hey ho, let's go!", or, "Gabba, gabba, hey!" would be a sound for sore ears.

And finally what about a special song for when we play old friends like Colchester or Oxford? There's a nice one by Nick Cave called simply, "Scum". Anyhow, hope that's got you thinking - if you've got any decent suggestions, please send them in.

96/97 - the season review

Mr Parry's certainly not wrong when he claims that "life is never dull at Wycombe Wanderers", despite it becoming something of a well worn cliché within the boundaries of Adams Park. However, it goes without saying that I'm sure we'd all much rather be contemplating 'automatic promotion or play-offs?', as opposed to 'Division 2 or Division 3?'. Whatever happens at the end of this season, one thing's for certain - we now have the RIGHT man for the job at Wycombe. Whereas the board clearly didn't do their homework properly in appointing Alan Smith as Martin O'Neill's replacement, they certainly selected shrewdly with John Gregory.

Smith wasn't a 100% bad manager - he was well respected and generally liked at Crystal Palace - his face just didn't fit in at Wycombe, wrong style of play, poor rapport with the fans, dubious man management techniques. John G is totally the right man for Wycombe. He is 110% passionate about Wycombe, has developed respect from the players, and plays football which is by and large pleasing to watch. So stay up or go down (gulp!), we can still look forward to next season with some relish, and I don't think there will be many of us blaming JG if come 3rd May we're in 21st position (or worse). Not since 5th October had we been out of the dropping zone until last Saturday, so to end up safe on the last day of the season will seem like a last minute reprieve for a man stuck on Death Row for seven months.

**Smith - in 'not 100%
bad' shock...**



If you had to name one thing which has caused our downfall this season, then a lack of goals must surely be it. When you consider that Keith Scott (who could play a maximum of nine games for us) might end up top league goalscorer, you will realise that Dixie Dean will be resting easy in his grave at the prospect of any Wycombe players overhauling his season's scoring record. Yes, the goals have always been shared at Wycombe, but a top scorer of six (and that a midfielder who's missed his fair share of games), is really a little poor.

Defensively, we look OK for a team near the bottom - Adams Park is harder to break down than Fort Knox at the moment, and away from home, we're far from appalling in terms of goals against. It's when you consider that of the twenty games we've lost this season, twelve have been by a one goal margin, that you start to realise how close we could be, to being comfortable safe. A solitary extra goal in half of those twelve lost games would have seen us six points and about five places higher up the table than we are now.

Forget all this baloney about 'creating your own luck' (OK, so let's buy a luck-creating-machine for next season and send Scotty back to Norwich), or 'luck evening itself out over the course of a season' (the same as saying that you won't win the lottery again if you've already won it once), we have been about as fortunate as a prospective tenant who thought that 25 Cromwell Street would be a nice place to live. With Desouza out of form for most of this season, and the inconsistent Johnnie Williams out of favour (no matter how crap Meguel decided to play), we never did strike that happy 'deadly partnership' until 29th March (Shrewsbury at home), when Scotty and Stallard seemed to get on better than Salman Rushdie and his travel agent. And with the pacy Paul Read as back up, we once again have started to look dangerous - OK, we're talking comparatively here, I know, but these three marksmen look to be the best goalgetters we've had since Big Cyrille and the Godfather Garner.

Garner - released but never forgotten...



On the subject of strikers though, how could we forget the unfathomably unspawnny poacher that was of course Neil Davis? Neil didn't play badly at all during his spell at the Park, however he was bereft of any hint of Aldridge-esque fluke in front of the old onion sack. He clobbered woodwork like a psychopathic carpenter, and was, I feel, the antithesis of a lucky mascot, more like a cursed gremlin from the Bad Luck department in Hades.

The goalie situation has not helped matters - having two keepers at the club, neither of whom have performed with any great domination or conviction this season, hasn't really generated the competitive edge between the two of them that it should have. It's more like each coming under the spotlight whenever they play. They're similar keepers in that they both are generally good shot-stoppers, but appear to be closet vampires - hate crosses. Brian usually tries to catch everything with about a 50% success rate, whereas Cheesy

favours the punch/slap a little too often for my liking. I think we all recall that grimace-worthy o.g. that Cheesy managed away at Bristol Rovers.

What remains to be seen though, is how fickle the punters will be if we do drop into the basement, God forbid I even mention the 'r' word. It will obviously be seen as a tremendous relief and a measure of success if we do stay up this year, however well over 90% of the current hardcore won't recall our first and last flirt with relegation, which, like this season would seem at the time of writing, went to the final game.

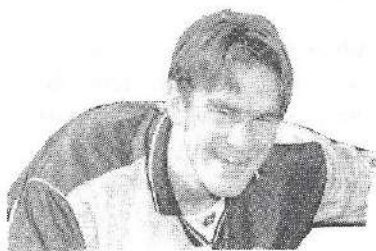
It was our first season (1985/86) in the Conference (then known as the Gola League) and we had been doing pretty well up until we lost to Kettering in the Quarter Finals of FA Trophy. A 2-1 defeat was the signal for the remainder of our season to swallow-dive towards impending doom. So it came to the last game of the season, we knew that we needed a win to be sure of staying up. The visitors? Kettering again, whose fans turned up in fancy dress for the great occasion - however the fun stopped there as a dour game finished a season of mixed fortune - I seem to recall Anton Vircavs heading against the bar, but 0-0 it finished. Our fairly naff goal difference coupled with an experimental points system being tried out on us guinea pigs in the Gola League that season (two points for a home win, three for an away win), meant that we finished bottom of a number of clubs on the same points, all of whom had managed to do just enough on the last day of the season to stay above us.

We were dependent on Runcorn beating Dagenham the next day to stay up, however with McKenna & co.'s minds on an FA Trophy Final appearance the following week, Dagenham did the business, and Wycombe went down (albeit briefly) for the first time in the club's history. Finding out your team has dropped a league via telephone on a Sunday afternoon is a strangely numbing experience - not the thousands of others there present to share in your grief, nor the players around to applaud your support one last sad time. Depending on last Tuesday's result against Burnley, the Blues may well be close to safety already, however this season has seen us languish in the bottom third of the table permanently and in an almost continuous relegation berth since losing to Luton on September 7th.

Aside from the Parkin vs. Cheesewright debate, the remainder of the back four have also been juggled around with, save of course the mercurial Mr. Bell, whose conversion to a left wing-back has really put a downer on Dave Farrell's career, whilst giving us a slightly uneven balance of attacking options. That said, Jason Cousins has had another solid season as right back / wing back, and was clearly a safer bet for the job than the eager but not-a-great-deal-of-cop

Matt Lawrence, who was about as defensive a player as Michael Schumacher is a driver. Which is clearly good enough for Fulham, but who are we to argue with £30k for the floppy-haired chump?

**Lawrence - *may be
back again next year..***



Uncannily similar to our mid-eighties demotion season has been our aptitude to cast aside our league worries and perform rather above-averagely in the cups. Reading were swept away with some ease over two legs in the Coca-Cola, and we ought to have done to Forest at Adams Park what Chesterfield did to them in the FA Cup, but Jason Lee had other ideas. Likewise in the FA Cup, we overcame tricky away ties to breeze into Round 3 (again!), before losing to two Bradford goals that never should have been given, on a pitch which never should have been played on.

It has of course been the Wanderers' diabolical away form which has done most damage (after the aforementioned general lack of net-busting), both from a points-attaining and morale-heightening point of view. When you consider that we drew our first three away games, it makes our overall away points tally of 12 (to date), seem all the more shocking. We suffered eight away defeats on the trot (scoring in just three of these games), until our luck changed at Bristol Rovers, but then came further despair in 1997, interspersed with the odd 0-0 draw. What has been even more galling is that we have genuinely played really well in so many of these games and still got the square root of Fanny Adams to show for it - remember Bournemouth, York, Watford, Millwall, Chesterfield, to name but a handful?

On the flip side, we've played like an U-10s cub team on occasions and deservedly lost - who thought Bristol City, Rotherham and Peterborough were good days out?? However, the general points-to-performance ratio has NOT been justified this season, which contrasts sharply with recent seasons when we would score in virtually every away game, and be considered a genuinely difficult team to break down. We are fortunate that the Adams Park roar (OK - whimper, sometimes I know) has put off teams from even scoring, let alone picking up points in 1997 - even Watford were damned lucky to scrape a draw. So, in summary, all credit must go to John and the lads for scrapping their way to a position where safety is now looking more likely than relegation. I never thought I'd say this, but I'm looking forward to that trip to Gillingham next season!!

Fortean Footy

All of you planning on taking in the crunch game at Stockport next Saturday, would do well to get hold of a copy of the magnificent "American Trilogy" song (preferably the live version), recorded by Elvis Presley at the height of his cheeseburger phase, for the journey up. Now you'd be forgiven for thinking that the following claim is a pile of bovine turd, based on the 'economical with the truth' nature of much of our prose in TAF, however, on every occasion that "The Trilogy" (consisting of those timeless classics, "Look away, Dixieland", "Hush, Little Baby" and "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah") has been played en route to a league game this season - home or away - the Wanderers have NEVER lost. Fact.

The evidence is quite conclusive - here's the Hall of Fame to date so far - Blackpool, Walsall, Brentford, Luton and Notts Co. (all away), plus every home game since Christmas. We've left it behind on occasions this season and always come away empty-handed, so if we do go down this year, the TAF Tour Bus will be more than willing to shoulder a large portion of the blame. We started realising its mysterious powers when against all the odds we beat Crewe and a few weeks later gained a crucial point at Brentford - before that, it had just been played on the way to games as a bit of a piss-take out of the bloated white jump-suited one, but once its truly supernatural qualities began to make themselves known to us, we started taking the whole thing a bit more seriously. So knock it if we go down, but we expect some sizeable cash donations to the TAF address should we stay up.

Can anyone else lay claim to a lucky tune? Or perhaps a lucky brand of fags (we found Lucky Strike were particularly effective during our first season in the Football League), or a lucky pair of pants, perhaps? Write in with your tales of jiggery-pokery, talismen and bizarre rituals - we hope to get the chubby Father Lionel Fanthorpe in next issue to investigate your claims.

Cheers...

Thanks to all our loyal readers for supporting TAF throughout this difficult season, yes, even those of you who still shout, 'Bloody hell, it's gone up again', despite the fact that it hasn't!
See you all next season

"Bob Officer -
You are the evil
at this club"



We all thought of Smith as the savoury
media friendly manager, but behind
closed doors, TAF can exclusively reveal,
Alan Smith is...**THE TWO HEADED BEAST**



"Mr McGorry - you
are the future of WWFC"

"Look at Steve McGavin
He's an unfit disgrace"



"Simon Garner - Oh dear
what a shoddy pro"



"Hemmings was nothing
short of a common thug"



**THE
Gospel
according
to Saint
Alan**

"Kempy - Guard
both our Brians:
McGorry & Parkin.
They will serve us well"

