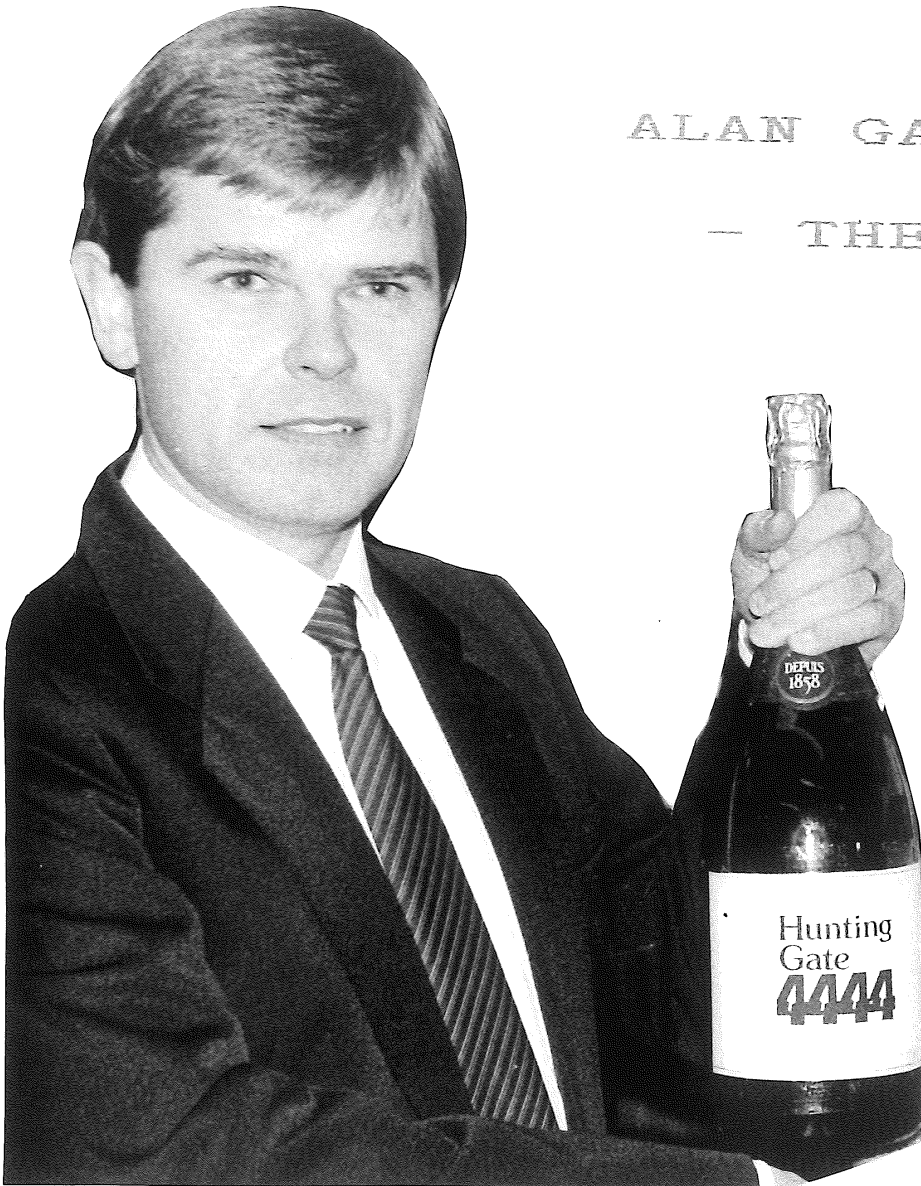


Chairboys Gas

*A Magazine by Supporters
of
Wycombe Wanderers F C*

INSIDE

G.M.V.C.
VAUXHALL OPEL
BEAZER-HOME
& N.F.L.
NEWS



ALAN GANE

— THE INTERVIEW

30p

1987-88 No 1

Chairboys Gas

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to mark the 25th anniversary of
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1987-88 No 1

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of Wycombe Wanderers F C, The Blues Club, or the Editor.

EDITORIAL

Well another season is underway but what a summer it has been. Spirits were sky high last May when the team walked off with three trophies but events off the field over the last few weeks have left supporters dumbfounded, confused and annoyed.

I suppose the easy way out would be to just sit-back and let the incidents blow-over. However, I think the time has come to lift the veil of secrecy and inform the Clubs' supporters just what is going on.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find most of the regular features coupled with a special interview with Alan Gane and an article on behalf of the supporters investigating the events of the summer. 'Chairboys Gas' would be pleased to hear your views on the subject - let's not be silent anymore, let us and the Club know your feelings.

Back on the field, every fixture looks tough, with visits to Maidstone and Kidderminster following our opening GMVC fixture against Stafford at Loakes Park. Own goal specialists, Bognor visit us on Bank Holiday Monday in the Vauxhall Charity Shield before we travel to Northwich Victoria and host Fisher Athletic in the League. On Saturday 12 September we visit Aylesbury United in the First Qualifying Round of the F A Cup.

Please enjoy the reading.

Paul Lewis

Contributions and assistance for this issue from Phil Ball, Simon Burrage, Steve Maguire and Andy Reston.

ALAN GANE — THE INTERVIEW

by Tannoy Man

I interviewed Alan after his departure from the Club. We talked about his career, the tremendous success of last season and his general impressions of Wycombe Wanderers F C.

Alan started his playing career at Chelsea, who he joined as a 14 year old schoolboy. Tommy Docherty was the boss in those days but Alan's 4 year stay at the Bridge ended when the Doc got the boot. He joined Sutton United in 1969 - the year Sutton were beaten finalists in the Amateur Cup Final at Wembley. A year later he joined Slough but only played a handful of games before going to college for 3 years teacher-training. During his time at college, he played as an amateur for Brentford. College was followed by his one season at Wycombe (1972-73) - one of the few seasons Wycombe didn't win anything! Gane then turned pro and spent two "magic" years at Hereford United under Colin Addison but when the Manager was replaced by happy smiling John Sillett (*"don't believe a word of it"*), Terry Paine, the Saints veteran, replaced Alan in the side. Another enjoyable season followed, this time at Chelmsford City, but his longest stay at one club started the following year, when he began a 5 year stay at Slough Town - described by Alan *"as one of the best teams I've ever played with"*. There were further moves to Staines, Wokingham (an unhappy time for Alan despite having Paul Bence as an excellent coach) and finally 2 years at Walton & Hersham before Paul Bence asked Alan if he would be his assistant at Wycombe - the rest is history.

Alan admitted that he had been to quite a few clubs but added with a smile *"But I've been loyal to every one of them"*. Alan was a PE teacher until the move from Slough to Staines, when he received an *"offer I couldn't refuse"* by Wang Computers and is now their Personnel Manager. Just how difficult is it to combine a full-time job with managing a major non-League team? *"It's been no problem and the firm have been totally co-operative. Wang have a strong interest in sport and as you probably know, sponsor Oxford United so they have been very encouraging. As a matter of fact, I've been regularly featured in the company magazine because of my job with Wycombe."* I then asked what his job as assistant to Paul Bence involved. *"Taking training sessions mainly but also a fair amount of scouting"*.

Last season was obviously a dream but what was his general impression? *"We had a talented team, an absolutely smashing bunch of lads, the spirit in the dressing room was brilliant, and I thought we played some of the best football played at this level for years. I never wanted a team of mine playing football like Wimbledon or Wealdstone. I wanted a team capable of playing not only great football but WINNING football. Because we had 4 or 5 players who were capable of scoring plenty of goals, I think we achieved this"* He went on to emphasise the importance of Ashford and Barrett and said both of them had loved their stay here (until recent events at least). Evidentially Noel secretly loves the adulation so perhaps I'll be calling him 'God' over the tannoy again after all.

Come the start of last season, did the manager have any idea that we would start so well? *"I thought we'd start well because our form in the pre-season games with Sutton, Enfield and Wealdstone showed we could compete with the best. But I certainly couldn't have predicted nine straight league wins. In those early games, I'd like to mention Byron*

continued over...

continuation....

Walton who gave 100% in every match and scored some cracking goals." I mentioned that people were upset with the sale of Byron and asked why we had to get rid of him? "I hated to see him go but it was the circumstances that came together. He lost his form at the same time that Declan came back from America. Unfortunately we couldn't afford both of them". I also asked his views on Barry Silkman, who also left after a short spell. "Silky, for me, was one of the highlights of the season. He did us a favour - both parties knew it wasn't a long term arrangement. Come the Winter with the pitches starting to get heavy, the games wouldn't have suited him but he was tremendous at Slough and against Tooting".

Regarding our early exits from the big cup competitions, I questioned why Alan didn't seem to be bothered about them. "I wasn't too worried about the defeats against Rugby and Yeovil in the F A, GMAC and Hitachi Cups. I said to the players before the season, and time and time again, the only priority this season was to win the league - nothing else really mattered. I was a little upset about the Leatherhead defeat though, especially because it was just before Christmas. I do realise the importance of long cup runs, especially to the fans and would love to get to Wembley but promotion had to be the Number One priority".

When did the manager honestly think we would win the league? "The crunch game was against Worthing, we were all over them but couldn't score. Declan missed a penalty but we gritted our teeth and still won 3-0. I knew we'd do it then". Did losing 4 times to those glove-making tractor drivers, Yeovil worry Alan? "No. The team who wins the league would be the team who goes to places like Barking and Hendon in the middle of winter and picks up 3 points - not the team who beats Yeovil. Yeovil are a good side - they'll win it this year I think, but watch out for Farnborough and Hayes (eh?) this season".

I then questioned Alan about a couple of reservations I'd had about the Club - the lack of a reserve team and the proposed move to Green Belt land in Sands. I was surprised by his forthright views. "The lack of reserve team is a bit of a disaster. The Club doesn't seem to realise how much money it could save, in the long run, by having a properly run reserve team. As for the move to Sands, I have mixed feelings. If the move is solely for the aim of getting into the Football League, then it's got to be a good thing. But, we would bound to lose a lot of traditional support; if we do well immediately after the move it could be OK, but if we do badly, it could be a nightmare. You've only got to look at Slough who moved from the centre of Slough to a ground with no atmosphere. Crowds could halve".

I asked Alan of what he thought of the Wycombe supporters. "I can't speak highly enough of them. Phenomenal. They're so loyal". Aww! Shucks Alan, we love you too!!

Were there any final messages for those wonderful fans, Alan? "Thank you for your support. It's been a great experience - an experience that should have gone on longer"

I thanked Alan for his time and on behalf of all Wycombe supporters, wished him the best of luck for the future.

The interview left me wondering why should a manager, who loved Wycombe so much, who'd never worked with such a great bunch of lads, someone who loved the supporters and who had just had such a successful season and was keen to do better this season: WHY SHOULD HE HAVE TO LEAVE. Perhaps the fans should be asking questions?

DO THEY MEAN US?
investigated by Steve Maguire

We kick-off the new season by taking a look at a fairly new magazine, Football Today, which during the summer months has been running a feature on the new sides in the GMVC this season.

Wycombe (33-1 outsiders for the title according to William Hill) were covered in the same edition as championship favourites Lincoln City, and it was encouraging to read that the Club were strengthening the squad for the new season *"in which they aim to do rather more than just hold on to their place"*. In view of recent events, however, I think there will be a number of people happy to settle for 19th place come next May.

The new ground also got a mention as a *"10,000 capacity stadium, with a 1,500 seater stand, covered on all four sides"* which should be ready for the start of the 1988/89 season, subject to planning permission. The more cynical amongst you might possibly dismiss claims that this will be *"the best stadium in non-League football"* as rather extravagant, imagining that Hillbottom Road will be more like Aylesbury's new ground. There has already been suggestions that our F A Cup tie there will be made all-ticket, because of the expected a crowd of over 2,000.

The Thame Gazette predicted, when the draw was made, that this game could set a new ground record at Aylesbury's new home. The present best was the crowd of 2,040 for the 'top of the table' clash with Fisher at the tail end of last season. The F A Cup draw saw the Wycombe Observer quickest off the mark with the draw details, two days after the draw was announced, but neither they nor the Free Press picked up the fact that this is our first venture in to the first qualifying round for 13 years.

In recent weeks, however, it has not just been the local and sporting press we have had to monitor for references to the Chairboys but national institutions like The Times and the B B C. Impressive eh?

Well don't get too carried away, The Times were really reporting on Bucks win over Somerset in the Nat West Trophy, but the visit to High Wycombe made journalist Marcus Williams think of football saying *"Wycombe has witnessed some stirring cup-ties deeds from it's football team, the Wanderers"*. I wonder which game he was thinking about? Last season's epic tie against V S Rugby perhaps?

Finally, having seen the advert for the Commercial Manager's job in the Daily Mail a few weeks ago, on Saturday August 15 in the same paper the position of Team Manager was advertised. This brought the following comments at the end of Bob Wilson's Football Focus on Grandstand that Saturday lunch time (Bob Wilson was just handing back to Desmond Lynam after a feature on Scarborough).

DL *"Makes you wonder about the planning ahead by some of these clubs when you see an advert in today's paper by Wycombe Wanderers, advertising for a Team Manager. They've left it a bit late haven't they? Mind you their season doesn't start 'till next week."*

BW *"It's appropriate for that club for their famous slippery slope"*

DL *"We've had a few people on the phone here to see what the money's like, but they can't get through at the moment."*

BW + DL *"HA HA HA"*



LINCOLN CITY have already been installed as favourites for 'automatic' promotion this season. The Club have decided to remain an almost full-time set-up and reinforced their serious intentions to make a quick return to the Football League when they payed out more than £100,000 (including a record £34,000 deal) during the close season on assembling a squad which contains only four survivors from last season. Lincoln, whose annual budget is £300,000, open their first ever non-League campaign with an away game at last season's GMVC runners-up, BARNET.

Lincoln's second game of the season takes place at WEYMOUTH who have appointed former Torquay United boss Stuart Morgan as their new manager. Morgan takes over from Brian Godfrey who was dismissed at the end of last season. The match with Lincoln is a special occasion for 'The Terras' as it is the first league match to take place at Weymouth's new ground. The new ground is on the site of the old Wessex Speedway Stadium and was developed at a cost £3 million.

MUNEATON BOROUGH were relegated instead of WELLING UNITED at the end of last season for failing to keep the League informed about the future of their Manor Park ground. The local fire authority closed the main stand towards the end of the season and Muneaton were left with too much work to complete before the new season began. Muneaton will now play in the Beazer Homes League (formerly the Southern League).

Promoted FISHER ATHLETIC's Surrey Docks Stadium only just met the requirements of the GMVC ground grading committee and over £90,000 worth of work was started during the summer. Fisher enter their first season in the GMVC with a wealth of players with Football League experience. Former Football League players currently at Fisher include 'keeper David Fry who appeared for Crystal Palace and Gillingham, Gary Cooper (QPR), Andy Massey (Millwall, Aldershot and Port Vale), Micky Nutton (Chelsea, Reading and Millwall), Trevor Dark (Birmingham City), Leroy Ambrose (Charlton Athletic), John Leslie (Wimbledon, Gillingham and Millwall) and Tommy Cunningham (QPR, Wimbledon and Orient). Also in the Fisher squad is Chris Lewington, brother of Fulham manager, Ray and who joined Fisher from Carshalton in 1984 prior to a long spell at Dulwich Hamlet. The Club, who less than 14 years ago were playing park football, will be hoping to attract the public of London's Docklands to the ground now they are in the national league - the average gate at the Surrey Docks Stadium last season was less than 300. Wycombe play Fisher at Loakes Park on September 8 with the return at the Surrey Docks Stadium taking place on January 30.

Despite talks of a ground sharing scheme with Crewe, NORTHWICH VICTORIA will continue to play at their Drill Field stadium for at least another season. 'The Vics' are now without their former England and Manchester United star, Gordon Hill, who moved to STAFFORD RANGERS during the close season.

The GMVC are to be 'guinea-pigs' for the 1987/88 season as an experimental rule will operate whereby the offside rule will be scrapped at free-kicks. If successful, the F A may ask FIFA to adopt the rule world-wide.

SEASON BY SEASON

SUMMARY by Steve Maguire.

1977/78 was not really what the typical Wycombe supporter would call a successful season, for despite finishing third in the league, Enfield were a class above the rest and virtually had the title sewn up by Christmas.

Our main problem was scoring - our two leading scorers from the previous season had departed, Ian Pearson to Millwall and Howard Kettleborough to Bedford, so the main scoring burden rested on Dylan Evans and veteran Tony Horseman (in his last season with the Club). As, however, the pair had only scored 15 goals between them the previous season there were many people who were puzzled why some of the £10,000 transfer fee for Pearson was not spent on strengthening the forward line.

After a few weeks of the season a modest fee bought Derek Harris back from Southall but after a promising start he also struggled, and it was a surprise when ex-Bicester striker Steve Pratt was allowed to leave after a few appearances as substitute. Other players who impressed but did not stay long were Farouk Quraishi (who's name proved a handfull for programme editors and announcers throughout the league) and Steve Vass, both of whom went to play overseas.

Thanks to our good record over the previous few seasons we were given exemption until the First Round Proper of the F A Cup, but without Mick Holifield, injured in a meaningless Shaw and Kilburn game, we crashed out at the first hurdle in the park pitch surroundings of Minehead, despite a great deal of travelling support. There were further good turn-outs from Wycombe when the F A Trophy came around, with special trains being run to both Bridgend, where we won with a last minute goal, and up to Humberside, where we bowed out to Goole Town on a pitch more suitable to planting rice than playing football.

There was an amazing start to the Hitachi Cup tie with Staines, when the visitors presented us with an own goal just 12 SECONDS after the kick-off and proceeded to get a player sent-off just 3 minutes later! After a narrow win against near neighbours Maidenhead United we were eventually put out of the competition away to Trophy Finalists Leatherhead.

En route to the Berks & Bucks Final we had a very satisfying win at Slough, but the Final at Aylesbury against Chalfont was a dissapointing one on a 'ploughed field' type of surface. Gary Lester was Chalfont's regular keeper in those days but he missed the Final after breaking his jaw earlier in the competition.

Tony Horseman made his final appearances for the Club on tour in Malta, where he scored in both matches but the season ended on a controversial note with the departure of manager John Reardon after nine seasons with the Club. The Club committee decided not to renew Reardon's one year contract, but when he was told of this decision, the manager was given the option of resigning due to "pressure of work" - which he declined to do.



COMPETITION	PL	W	D	L	FOR	AGA
Isthmian League	42	22	9	11	66	41
F A Challenge Cup	1	0	0	1	0	2
F A Amateur Cup	2	1	0	1	2	2
Hitachi League Cup	3	2	0	1	4	2
Berks & Bucks Senior Cup	5	5	0	0	15	4
Shaw & Kilburn F L	12	8	1	3	26	12
Friendly/Tours	2	2	0	0	10	1
TOTAL	75	42	14	19	133	72

RESULTS FOR SEASON 1977-1978

GAME	DATE	OPPOSITION	COMP.	V	RESULT	H-T	ATT
1	06/08/77	Bedford Town	Fr	H	D	2-2 (1-1)	
2	09/08/77	Witney Town	Fr	A	L	0-1 (0-1)	
3	13/08/77	Queens Park Rangers	Fr	H	L	0-1 (0-0)	2250
4	17/08/77	Oxford United	Fr	H	D	0-0 (0-0)	
5	20/08/77	Croydon	IL	A	W	2-1 (0-1)	
6	23/08/77	Hayes	IL	A	L	0-1 (0-0)	
7	27/08/77	Leatherhead	IL	H	D	1-1 (0-0)	1100
8	30/08/77	Hendon	IL	H	W	2-1 (0-1)	1000
9	03/09/77	Sutton United	IL	A	L	0-1 (0-1)	
10	06/09/77	Southall & Ealing Borough	IL	H	W	3-2 (0-1)	700
11	10/09/77	Tooting & Mitcham United	IL	H	L	0-2 (0-0)	1150
12	13/09/77	Staines Town	IL	A	W	3-1 (2-0)	
13	17/09/77	Hendon	IL	A	W	2-1 (1-0)	543
14	20/09/77	Kingstonian	IL	H	W	3-0 (1-0)	1000
15	24/09/77	Boreham Wood	IL	H	W	3-0 (2-0)	1250
16	27/09/77	Kingstonian	IL	A	D	1-1 (0-0)	
17	01/10/77	Hitchin Town	IL	A	W	3-1 (0-1)	600
18	04/10/77	Hayes	IL	H	L	0-2 (0-1)	1100
19	08/10/77	Bishops Stortford	IL	H	W	3-0 (2-0)	950
20	11/10/77	Oxford City	SKFL	H	W	2-1 (2-0)	
21	15/10/77	Enfield	IL	A	L	0-3 (0-1)	
22	17/10/77	Southall & Ealing Borough	IL	A	W	3-0 (1-0)	
23	22/10/77	Barking	IL	H	W	1-0 (0-0)	1200
24	25/10/77	Staines Town	IL	H	W	4-0 (2-0)	1050
25	29/10/77	Tilbury	IL	A	W	3-2 (2-1)	
26	05/11/77	Leytonstone	IL	H	W	1-0 (1-0)	1100
27	08/11/77	Aylesbury United	SKFL	A	W	3-0 (1-0)	1454
28	12/11/77	Dagenham	IL	A	W	2-1 (0-0)	
29	15/11/77	Milton Keynes City	SKFL	H	W	2-0 (1-0)	250
30	19/11/77	Maidenhead United	B&B 1	A	W	2-0 (1-0)	
31	26/11/77	Minehead	FAC 1	A	L	0-2 (0-1)	1400
32	29/11/77	Loughborough College	Fr	H	W	3-0 (1-0)	
33	03/12/77	Slough Town	IL	H	L	1-3 (0-2)	1200
34	10/12/77	Hungerford Town	B&B 2	H	W	4-2 (4-1)	850
35	17/12/77	Leatherhead	IL	A	L	0-1 (0-0)	
36	20/12/77	Witney Town	SKFL	A	W	6-0 (2-0)	
37	31/12/77	Slough Town	IL	A	W	3-0 (1-0)	
38	02/01/78	Oxford City	SKFL	A	W	2-1 (0-1)	
39	07/01/78	Tooting & Mitcham United	IL	A	W	2-1 (0-0)	
40	14/01/78	Bridgend Town	FAT 1	A	W	1-0 (0-0)	1000
41	24/01/78	Staines Town	HLC 1	H	W	3-1 (3-0)	
42	04/02/78	Goole Town	FAT 2	A	L	1-2 (0-1)	1156
43	14/02/78	Slough Town	B&B 3	A	W	4-1 (2-1)	600

44	21/02/78	Woking	IL	A	D	1-1	(1-0)	
45	25/02/78	Tilbury	IL	H	L	0-2	(0-0)	
46	28/02/78	Maidenhead United	HLC 2	H	W	1-0	(0-0)	1150
47	29/02/78	Detroit Express	Fr	H	W	3-2	(1-1)	
48	04/03/78	Chesham United	B&B 5/F	A	W	3-1	(0-0)	
49	09/03/78	Chesham United	SKFL	H	L	2-3	(0-0)	
50	11/03/78	Bishops Stortford	IL	A	W	1-0	(0-0)	
51	18/03/78	Carshalton Athletic	IL	A	D	1-1	(0-0)	
52	21/03/78	Milton Keynes City	SKFL	A	W	1-0	(0-0)	
53	22/03/78	Djurgardens (Sweden)	Fr	H	D	2-2		
54	25/03/78	Woking	IL	H	D	0-0	(0-0)	
55	27/03/78	Chalfont Saint Peter	B&B Fin	N	W	2-0	(1-0)	1700
56	29/03/78	Chesham United	SKFL	A	W	2-1	(1-0)	
57	01/04/78	Boreham Wood	IL	A	W	5-0	(4-0)	
58	04/04/78	Leytonstone	IL	A	L	0-2	(0-0)	
59	06/04/78	Carshalton Athletic	IL	H	W	3-2	(1-2)	
60	08/04/78	Walthamstow Avenue	IL	A	L	0-1	(0-1)	
61	11/04/78	Dagenham	IL	H	W	3-0	(0-0)	
62	15/04/78	Enfield	IL	H	L	0-1	(0-0)	
63	17/04/78	Hitchin Town	IL	H	D	1-1	(0-1)	
64	20/04/78	Leatherhead	HLC 3	A	L	0-1	(0-0)	
65	22/04/78	Croydon	IL	H	D	1-1	(0-0)	
66	25/04/78	Walthamstow Avenue	IL	H	D	0-0	(0-0)	
67	27/04/78	Banbury United	SKFL	H	W	3-1	(0-0)	
68	28/04/78	Scarborough	Fr	H	D	0-0	(0-0)	
69	02/05/78	Banbury United	SKFL	A	D	1-1	(1-0)	
70	05/05/78	Sutton United	IL	H	D	1-1	(1-1)	
71	08/05/78	Witney Town	SKFL	H	L	1-2	(0-2)	
72	11/05/78	Aylesbury United	SKFL	H	L	1-2	(0-2)	
73	13/05/78	Barking	IL	A	W	3-2	(0-2)	
74	27/05/78	Excelsior	Tour	A	W	7-1	(3-1)	
75	01/06/78	Bortex	Tour	A	W	3-0	(2-0)	

1977-78

GOALSCORERS SUMMARY FOR SEASON 1977-1978

	IL	FAC	FAT	HLC	B&B	SKFL	Fr	Tour	TOTAL
Paul Birdseye	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Dave Bullis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Bob Davies	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Roger Day	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3
Bary Dickens	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3
Dylan Evans	14	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	17
Steve Hardwick	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Derek Harris	8	-	-	-	2	4	-	-	14
Garry Harthill	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Mick Holifield	8	-	1	-	-	3	-	-	12
Tony Horseman	11	-	-	-	2	4	5	1	23
Howard Kennedy	6	-	-	1	4	6	4	-	21
Braham Mackenzie	7	-	-	-	3	3	-	-	13
Keith Mead	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Alan Phillips	2	-	-	1	1	3	-	-	7
Steve Pratt	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
John Priestley	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	4
Steve Vass	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Own Goals	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	5
Totals	66	0	2	4	15	26	10	10	133

Premier Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	42	35	5	2	96	27	110
Dagenham	42	24	7	12	78	55	79
Wycombe Wanderers	42	22	9	11	66	41	75
Tooting & Mitcham United	42	22	8	12	64	49	74
Hitchin Town	42	20	9	13	69	53	69
Sutton United	42	18	12	12	66	57	66
Leatherhead	42	18	11	13	62	48	65
Croydon	42	18	10	14	61	52	64
Walthamstow Avenue	42	17	12	13	64	61	63
Barking	42	17	7	18	76	66	58
Carshalton Athletic	42	15	11	16	61	63	56
Hayes	42	15	11	16	46	53	56
Hendon	42	16	7	19	57	55	55
Woking	42	14	11	17	62	62	53
Boreham Wood	42	15	8	19	48	65	53
Slough Town	42	14	8	20	52	69	50
Staines Town	42	12	13	17	46	60	49
Tilbury	42	11	12	19	57	68	45
Kingstonian	42	8	13	21	43	65	37
Leytonstone	42	7	15	20	44	71	36
Southall & Ealing Borough	42	6	15	21	43	74	33
Bishop's Stortford	42	7	8	27	36	83	29

The VAUXHALL-OPEL



League News

YEOVIL TOWN begin the season as firm favourites for promotion to the Conference at the third time of asking. After spending a fortune to ensure second place for two years running, Manager Brian Hall is confident that the championship is on the way Huish.

After capturing several of his ex-Wealdstone playing staff since taking over as manager at Yeovil in January, Hall looks to have developed a squad capable of rewarding the loyal Huish fans with some long awaited success. Yeovil open their third VOL campaign with a visit to BARKING. Barking have only two first team players left from last season and continued their rebuilding programme by signing Steve Mosley from BILLERICAY TOWN and centre-forward Micky Engwell from CHELMSFORD CITY.

After Welling United were given a 'last minute' reprieve by the GMVC, the vacant place left by Wycombe in the VOL Premier Division went to BASINGSTOKE TOWN. Basingstoke, who came 16th in the Premier Division of the Southern League last season, expressed an interest in joining the VOL set-up and were duly excepted when the place became available. Manager of the Hampshire side is Alan Humphries who since moving from the assistant spot at SLOUGH TOWN at the start of the year has completely transformed the squad and saved the Club from relegation. Humphries' latest signings are midfielder Chris Hodge, formerly at Southampton and defender Tony Carter from FARNBOROUGH TOWN.

John Mitchell and John Lacey, both members of Fulham's 1975 Cup Final side, have teamed up on the management front at ST.ALBANS CITY. Mitchell, Manager at Clarence Park for the past four years, is to hand over control to Lacey due to business commitments but he will stay with the Club as football director. Lacey becomes the Club's first full-time appointment when he takes over the dual role of Manager and Commercial Manager.

Newcomers to the Premier Division, LEYTONSTONE/ILFORD will cause some problems this season now that 'The Stones' Manager John Still has been given a free reign to secure some quality players. Still, a former player with Ilford, was manager at Leytonstone & Ilford during their 1981/82 'grand slam' season when the Club collected the Isthmian Championship, The Hitachi Cup, The London Senior Cup and The Essex Senior Cup. Still moved to manage Dartford in 1983 and subsequently won the Southern League Premier Championship in his first season. A year later he narrowly missed out taking Dartford to the Gola League Championship but twelve months later Dartford were relegated back to the Southern League and Still was on his way back to Leytonstone for the 1986/87 season. The Division One Championship was won by a thirteen point margin from LEYTON-WINGATE and with their home now being Walthamstow's Green Pond Road, have a ground that is just a few improvements short of GMVC standard.

All Premier Division clubs now have an 'A' grading following inspection at the end of last season. In addition 14 clubs from the lower divisions also gained 'A' grades - those clubs are BASILDON UNITED, BILLERICAY TOWN, BRACKNELL TOWN, FELTHAM, GRAYS ATHLETIC, HERTFORD TOWN, LEATHERHEAD, METROPOLITAN POLICE, OXFORD CITY, SOUTHALL, UXBRIDGE, WALTHAMSTOW AVENUE, WOKING and WORTHING. 26 clubs gained 'B' grades, 24 'C' grades with FLACKWELL HEATH remaining ungraded and MAIDENHEAD UNITED suspended.



The Southern League, now known as THE BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE will begin the 1987/88 season with its biggest ever membership of clubs. 66 clubs will compete in the three divisions with the sponsorship from Beazer Homes worth over £120,000 over the next three seasons. Over £40,000 will be made available this season with the winners of the Premier Division Championship receiving £3,500

The newly elected clubs are PAGET RANGERS from the Midland Combination and ATHERSTONE UNITED from the West Midlands League who will play in the Midland Division and BALDOCK TOWN (United Counties), BURY TOWN (Eastern Counties) and HOUNSLOW (Hellenic) who will all play in the Southern Division. To accomodate the new clubs, TROWBRIDGE TOWN will transfer from the Southern to the Midland Division while WOODFORD have withdrawn from the Southern Division to join the Essex Senior League and LEAMINGTON (a founder member of the Alliance Premier League) have pulled out of the Midland section to join the Midland Combination.

The Premier Division has also a few changes with NUNEATON BOROUGH, BURTON ALBION, V S RUGBY, LEICESTER UNITED, DORCHESTER TOWN and ASHFORD TOWN all newcomers this season. Nuneaton Borough joined as the relegated club from the GMVC, while Burton Albion chose to move from the Northern Premier League to help accommodate the other two clubs relegated from the GMVC, Frickley Athletic and Gateshead, into the NPL. The other four clubs earned the right to play in the Premier Division of the Beazer League by finishing first or second in the respective lower division.



NPL

The Northern Premier Football League

The Northern Premier League are still seeking a successor to league title sponsors of last two seasons, Multipart. However, when the NPL commences it's twentieth season this year, it will for the first time in it's history operate with two Divisions.

After lengthy negotiations with the Northern Counties East League and the North West Counties, the new First Division of the NPL will consist of the following 19 clubs:

ALFRETON TOWN, EASTWOOD TOWN, FARSLEY CELTIC, HARROGATE TOWN and SUTTON TOWN - all from the Northern Counties East - plus ACCRINGTON STANLEY, CONGELTON TOWN, CURZON ASHTON, DROYLSDEN, EASTWOOD HANLEY, FLEETWOOD TOWN, IRLAM TOWN, LANCASTER CITY, LEEK TOWN, NETHERFIELD, PENRITH, RADCLIFFE BOROUGH, STALYBRIDGE CELTIC and WINSFORD UNITED - all from the North West Counties.

The introduction of the new division will, subject to grading, result in automatic promotion and relegation between the top two clubs in the First Division and the bottom two in the Premier Division, as well as the top club in each of the Northern Counties East and North West Counties Leagues and the bottom two in the NPL First Division.

Last season's F A Cup heroes from the Northern Premier League, CAERNARFON TOWN, have appointed former Liverpool defender and hardman, Tommy Smith as their new manager. It is Smith's first major managerial position and he takes over from John King who left for Tranmere Rovers at the end of last season's campaign.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS - THE DISGRACE?

How can optimism turn so quickly to despair, anger and pessimism for the coming season? What really has been happening behind the scenes at Loakes Park over the summer? Why have we lost a popular and successful manager, not made any major signings (apart from Nigel Gray) and have players, until recently happy at the Club, threatening to leave? 'DISGRACEFUL' was Rolf Niven's headline in the Bucks Free Press but just how much truth was there in his report? Enquiries have been made for 'Chairboys Gas' and the findings should incense all true Wycombe supporters.

It's been a poor summer for administrations. The 'Irangate' hearings have revealed that the man ultimately responsible for his department's policies knew nothing at all of the activities of staff under his control. We also have had the sorry sight of our own government rushing around the world trying to stop publication of a book that gives a pretty damning indictment of MI5's affairs in the Seventies.

So what of Wycombe's administration - its Directors and most importantly the Chairman. Have they really been holding the Club back and could we really have signed Doherty, Agana and others?

Firstly, we have the case of Mick Doherty, already netting the goals at Maidstone. Doherty was desperate to sign for Wycombe, he was even prepared to take a wage cut to join the Club. Weymouth wanted £10,000, Wycombe offered £7,000 and refused to budge - for two long months. Brian Lee's attitude seems that if we held out, we'd get him for less. Wrong, Maidstone steamed in with a £10,000 bid, we refused to offer the VAT on top of that £10,000 and Doherty reluctantly joined Maidstone. Some people will say "He didn't have to go to Maidstone" but put yourself in the same position as Doherty. He'd been ready and willing to sign for two months, pre-season training was just about to begin and he didn't belong to any club. Obviously, at that stage, you can't afford to wait any longer and he accepted the first firm offer that came along. Then we have the case of Tony Agana who has already made an impressive First Division debut for Watford. Surely we could never compete with a First Division club? We shouldn't have needed to. Agana had agreed to play for Wycombe before any interest from Bassett and Co. But what happens, the board dither and we lose out on another fine player. Next was the Gary Roberts of Barnet saga. Stan Flashman, the Barnet Chairman, wanted Roberts to go to us, not Maidstone - he even offered him for less money. Again the board hesitated and another signing bites the dust.

There were other players, of course, including Andy Pape the Enfield and non-League international goalkeeper but the story of penny-pinching and intervention by the board seems to have repeated itself throughout the summer. There is not an endless supply of quality players at this level and it is obvious for a serious challenge for a place in the Football League we need at least 2 or 3 more class players. Gane did his part by lining up the talent, only to be thwarted by an apathetic board.

We don't agree that a manager should be given an open cheque book, and high transfer fees and wages should be avoided if possible - but we must compete with the other clubs if our intention to join the Football League is to have any credibility. Where would the money come from? Well we have seen what success can do to gates at Loakes Park - success in the Conference would bring the public flocking back even more.

*****FACT***** WWFC made a profit of £46,000 last season and currently have over £180,000 in the bank.

So why haven't we signed anyone? One conclusion is that Brian Lee is holding the Club back. Now why should any Chairman not want his own side to do well? To understand this, one has to look at the history of Mr Lee. He was probably the best manager (until recently) we have ever had; he did things in his own individual way, old fashioned perhaps in his attitudes to the game and players (ie not mixing with players after the game but going straight to the board room) but his ideas certainly worked and he built a fine team. But how did he get those fine players? Did players, living miles away from the area come to play for the love of the Chiltern Hills, the splendid furniture industry and wonderful people? Of course not, they played for Wycombe because they were being paid handsomely, even in those good old (sh)amateur days and there was always the added incentive of possible Amateur International Caps.

So, is Lee being a total hypocrite by not backing Gane's efforts in building a side good enough for the Conference and ultimately entering the Football League? He had the backing of the board when he was manager, was it too much to ask for him to do the same to Alan Gane? When asked about last season's success, Lee's response was "Well, we bought ourselves up".

What is more shocking to report, however, are the events leading to Alan Gane's departure. Alan Gane - Resigned. Wrong - Alan Gane - Sacked. Why, for heaven's sake? Evidently, the Club were unhappy with what had been appearing in the local press. But Rolf Niven didn't get anything out of Gane apart from the basic facts that we hadn't signed the players we intended. Rolf is a professional journalist - he's paid to investigate matters himself. He doesn't rely on a few unrevealing comments - he talked to the players and clubs concerned, leaving no stone unturned.

What possible other reasons could there have been to get rid of a man who, within one season has transformed the team from a tired dejected shower to a vigorous, professional squad who picked up 3 trophies along the way? One suggestion to why Gane was forced to resign was that we hadn't registered enough players for the season, but all the squad from last year were training with the Club and with no desire to go elsewhere would have all put pen to paper in the next couple of weeks. Or on the otherhand could it have been that we were going over budget for the season? However, our most experienced players have only been offered small wage rises and we've made no expensive signings at all.

*****FACT***** Yeovil's wage bill is 3 times ours.

continued over...

So in conclusion, what have we got? A Chairman going it alone on major decisions and still meddling in team selection and the Directors leaving everything to him because "he knows about football". Can't anyone stand up to the man?

So what is happening now at Wycombe? Suddenly, Brian Lee has created a press officer position so that all enquiries have to go through Alan Parry. Alan, though obviously a keen supporter and friend of the Club, has, we all know, other commitments and can't be expected to be around all the time. The creation of this post is obviously a tactic to suppress any truth coming out. It's been difficult enough getting anything out of the Club in the past but now it will be well nigh impossible. The players have already been told not to speak to the press.

Brian Lee is now desperately trying to resolve things before the season starts by trying to recruit a manager (via the national press) and has already offered Noel Ashford an astronomical amount to keep him at the Club. Paul Bence, the man that Brian Lee wanted back, changed his mind about rejoining within a day. He didn't get on with the Chairman before, why should things change 2 years on?

So what of the players and Alan Gane in all this. Alan Gane has been dignified throughout the affair - he even agreed to resign for the Club. Although he kindly gave an interview 'Chairboys Gas' about his career and last season's events, he has refused to make any comments on the events of the summer. He has decided to let the Supporters make their own enquiries about what really happened. There is no doubt, however, that the affable Mr Gane is deeply hurt, angry and dissatisfied at the way he has been treated.

As for the players, they are in an awkward position and deserve the utmost respect. The squad that achieved so much last year, want to stick together and get on with the job - they are not in a position to rock the boat, despite the fact that they may be privately annoyed about the events. Supporters must get behind the team as much as possible - it's not their fault that they have been left in the lurch like this.

Quite frankly, we can see no valid reason for Gane's dismissal. We ask the Club to do the honourable thing and give a statement to the supporters answering the allegations against them and putting to an end the rumours and confused press statements of recent weeks. Supporters are the lifeblood of the game and are continually being dragged through the dirt. Wycombe's Membership scheme, 'LeagueLine' - started less than a year ago to help the Club supposedly gain a place in the Football League - is now in danger of falling apart as more and more people withdraw their weekly investment due to disillusionment with Club policies. It is the Club's duty to respond, if we don't hear from them, we must assume two things. 1. They don't care about their supporters and 2. They haven't a case to answer.

F A CUP 1st Qual (GMVC Clubs)
Saturday 12 September 1987
 Burscough v NORTHWICH VIC
 or Warrington
 Holbeach v STAFFORD RANG
 or Walsall B
 Stalybridge v MACCLESFIELD
 or Congleton
 Wisbech v KETTERING TOWN
 or Brackley Town
 Witney Town v BARNET
 Corinthian v WELLING UNITED
 or Camberley
 Erith & B v SUTTON UNITED
 or Wivenhoe Town
 Aylesbury U v WYCOMBE WAND
 Heybridge v FISHER ATH
 or Dorking
 Frome Town v WEYMOUTH
 or Poole Town
 CHELTENHAM T v Dorchester T

F A CUP 2nd Qual
Saturday 26 September 1987
 F A CUP 3rd Qual
Saturday 10 October 1987
 F A CUP 4th Qual
Saturday 24 October 1987



Qualifying Competition
w/c 7 September 1987
 First Round Proper
w/c 5 October 1987
 Second Round Proper
w/c 2 November 1987
 Third Round Proper
w/c 30 November 1987
 Fourth Round Proper
w/c 2 February 1987
 Semi-Finals
w/c 22 February 1987
 Final Tie
w/c 21 March 1987



**VAUXHALL
CONFERENCE
Fixtures**

Saturday 22 August 1987

Barnet	Lincoln
Bath	Telford
Boston	Kiddermster
Cheltenham	Wealdstone
Dagenham	Altrincham
Kettering	Enfield
Macclesfield	Maidstone
Northwich	Fisher
Sutton	Runcorn
Welling	Weymouth
Wycombe	Stafford

Tuesday 25 August 1987

Altrincham	Northwich
Bath	Cheltenham
Enfield	Boston
Fisher	Barnet
Runcorn	Macclesfield
Stafford	Kettering
Telford	Kiddermster
Wealdstone	Sutton

Wednesday 26 August 1987

Maidstone	Wycombe
Welling	Dagenham
Weymouth	Lincoln

Saturday 29 August 1987

Altrincham	Wealdstone
Boston	Fisher
Enfield	Northwich
Kiddermster	Wycombe
Lincoln	Dagenham
Macclesfield	Barnet
Maidstone	Bath
Runcorn	Cheltenham
Stafford	Welling
Telford	Sutton
Weymouth	Kettering

Monday 31 August 1987

Barnet	Welling
Bath	Enfield
Cheltenham	Altrincham
Dagenham	Maidstone
Kettering	Telford
Lincoln	Runcorn
Macclesfield	Kiddermster
Northwich	Stafford
Sutton	Weymouth

Saturday 5 September 1987

Barnet	Telford
Dagenham	Macclesfield
Fisher	Bath
Kettering	Maidstone
Kiddermster	Enfield
Northwich	Wycombe
Stafford	Lincoln
Sutton	Boston
Wealdstone	Runcorn
Welling	Cheltenham
Weymouth	Altrincham

Tuesday 8 September 1987

Altrincham	Lincoln
Bath	Barnet
Enfield	Dagenham
Macclesfield	Northwich
Runcorn	Stafford
Telford	Cheltenham
Wycombe	Fisher

Wednesday 9 September 1987

Boston	Kettering
Maidstone	Weymouth
Welling	Wealdstone

Saturday 12 September 1987

Bath	Boston
Enfield	Altrincham
Maidstone	Kiddermster
Runcorn	Dagenham
Telford	Wealdstone

Monday 14 September 1987

Dagenham	Welling
Kiddermster	Bath

Tuesday 15 September 1987

Fisher	Maidstone
Kettering	Boston
Stafford	Runcorn
Wealdstone	Enfield
Wycombe	Barnet

Wednesday 16 September 1987

Cheltenham	Telford
Lincoln	Macclesfield
Northwich	Altrincham
Weymouth	Sutton

Saturday 19 September 1987

Altrincham	Maidstone
Barnet	Northwich
Boston	Weymouth
Fisher	Runcorn
Kettering	Dagenham
Kiddermster	Stafford
Lincoln	Enfield
Sutton	Cheltenham
Wealdstone	Macclesfield
Welling	Bath
Wycombe	Telford