

MARK Hodkinson's book "THE WEDDING PRESENT: THANK YER, VERY GLAD" (Omnibus Press, £7.95) caused controversy well before its publication last week. The band had at first collaborated enthusiastically with Hodkinson, giving candid interviews and handing over potentially embarrassing personal memorabilia for reproduction in the book - hence the endearing childhood picture of David Gedge that adorn the first chapter.

However, relations became strained when the author first interviewed a couple of Gedge's ex-girlfriends, and then looked into the most unpleasant episode in the group's history - the sacking of drummer Shaun Charman at the end of 1987. It's not surprising

## THE WEDDING PRESENT

Thank Yer, Very Glad



MARK HODKINSON

that this chapter caused some anxiety on the band's part. Sara Catt, Charman's girlfriend and - until his dismissal - The Wedding Present's roadie, tells how Gedge flirted with her on a European tour shortly before the sacking, and her assessment of his character is understandably damning.

But Hodkinson has clearly gone way beyond the call of duty in his efforts to present the whole Wedding Present story. He talks to everyone from band members' parents to the A&R man who signed the band to RCA; and most of many witnesses he calls, even those with no further vested interest in the band speak for their defence.

Indeed, the story related here is generally one of integrity and success through persistence. It's told with sensitivity and intelligence. Detailed but rarely pedantic, this book is about as good as rock biographies get.

**DAVE JENNINGS**