

Blues' veteran official keeps you in touch

**Report by
PETE LANSLEY**

THE number of fans calling Alan Hutchinson's clubcall line for Wycombe Wanderers is now hitting four figures most weeks.

'Ring the Blues' has been run by former Wanderers secretary Hutchinson for 14 months and his chatty service of news and interviews is providing one of the best services in non-league football.

Gary Cleverdon, of Telecom Information, said: "His enthusiasm comes across over the phone. It's a good line, nicely and regularly updated and gives value for money."

Cleverdon, who is involved in customer support with many non-league clubcall lines, was unable to reveal figures of calls received but Hutchinson said his weekly average of around 1,000 calls is double that of Colchester United's, the next best supported service.

Hutchinson, who has been involved with Wanderers for around 40 years, has increased his service from three days a week to a daily service. "The club's run in the Trophy helped it take off," said Hutchinson.

"The club spent £300 in the close-season on brand new equipment, and the quality of the interviews has improved.

"I'm absolutely delighted people enjoy it. I'll carry on doing it until the club say they've got someone better."

Hutchinson, who said he started Wycombe's youth and ladies' teams and was also a programme seller at the end of the Fifties, has plans to improve the line still further.

He doesn't start work, at his shop Crock's and Crystals in Bourne End, until 10am each day, which gives him the chance to update the line.

Cleverdon added: "Wycombe doing very well within the football world is perhaps one reason they're getting so many calls. Plus they are reaping the benefits of regular updates."

Hutchinson pointed out: "I can give people the basics of a story as soon as it happens, like when John Deakin signed. Then they can get more detail in your paper."

His long involvement with Blues has taught him which sensitive stories to tactfully leave to one side.

"There are certain areas the club just don't go down. I leave that to you guys," said Hutchinson.

Financially, Blues benefit by reaping 50 per cent of the income from the calls, which last year amounted to £12,144.

● You can 'ring the Blues' on 0898 446855.

In off the post

Dear Sport,

HAVING just returned to England after working in Canada since 1976, I am now retired, so hopefully will again be able to follow Wycombe Wanderers.

I have already travelled away to Boston and Kidderminster with an old friend.

I have seen the Wanderers since those heady days of the early Seventies, when the team were almost invincible under the managership of Brian Lee (to me — having watched the team since 1951 — the club's greatest manager of all time).

Now several old friends have asked me: "How do you compare the present team with the great seventies side?"

All I can say after two games is — no comparison. None of the defenders come up to Gary Head, John Delaney or Keith Mead. The midfield — especially Carroll — wouldn't have been allowed to clean Terry Readon or Larry Pritchard's boots, and Tony Horseman and Keith Searle are in a different class to West and Scott.

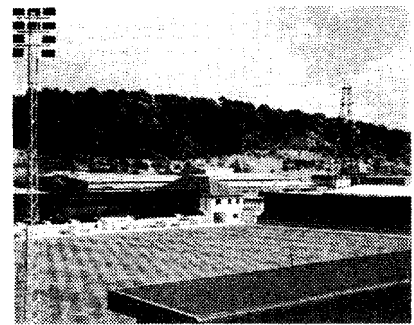
The only player in the present team who might make the grade was the goalkeeper who saved the Wanderers in both games. Half the side would not have been in Brian Lee's squad and I must have seen more Wanderers players' cautioned then in nearly the full six seasons Mr Lee was in charge.

I shall continue watching the team, hopefully for many years, and all I can hope for at the moment is that they prove me wrong!

Name and address supplied

● BLUES fans are invited to respond to this verdict by writing to the Sports Desk, Bucks Free Press, Gomm Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7DW (or faxing them through on 0494 534015).

All sporting letters are welcome, to arrive, with name and address supplied, no later than Tuesday morning to be considered for inclusion in the Friday edition. They are accepted on the basis that they may be edited for legal or space reasons.



Adams Park round-up

BLUES' youth team equalled the club's best run in the FA Youth Cup by reaching Monday night's first round proper.

After winning through the preliminaries, they lost 2-0 at Epsom and Ewell.

But this equalled last year's feat when they also reached this stage.

Their manager, Jim Melvin, also in charge of Wycombe's reserve side, was grateful to be able to witness that and last Saturday's first team game.

The jocular Scotsman was only discharged from Wexham Park Hospital in Slough hours before Wycombe's 1-0 win over Redbridge.

Melvin, a vital cog in Martin O'Neill's coaching team, spent a week in the hospital starting his recovery from a burst appendix.

Melvin has lost a stone in weight, and watched the game quietly, away from his place in the dugout.

● WANDERERS are looking into a park and ride scheme. Parking is already available at Sands Middle School in Mill End Road, but if there is sufficient support, the club will provide a free bus service from there to the ground.

There will again be slips enclosed in the programme for tomorrow's home game with Merthyr, and the club need to know your views as they try to improve the car-parking situation.

Poppies will be on sale at the ground tomorrow.