

Cheers, Scotty!

WYCOMBE have recouped their expenditure on Keith Scott ten times over, but his contribution on and off the pitch became incalculable in money terms.

The 26-year-old former Lincoln City striker was a driving force during three seasons with Wanderers which saw their transition from non-League stalwarts to a seemingly ever-upward surge up the professional ranks.

He was brought into the Wycombe fold at a time when Martin O'Neill sought a new level of commitment both in front and behind the scenes to guarantee Blues' progress into the Football League.

Scott caught the manager's eye as a big, stubborn forward when

Claire Nash reviews Keith Scott's Wanderers career

on-loan, from Lincoln City, to Conference side Boston at the beginning of 1991. He had netted against Blues just months earlier while on loan at Gateshead.

O'Neill broke the club's spending record to buy him for £30,000, with the striker posting an early return on the investment by scoring in every round of that year's FA Trophy-winning run, including the first goal in the 2-1 victory at Wembley.

Crisis

But the next season saw Scott endure a crisis of confidence when

the goals dried up following an operation to remove his appendix.

The striker did not start motor-ing until the latter months of the 1991/92 term when Blues battled to within spitting distance of promotion, only to miss out on goal difference to Colchester.

He recalls: "I scored something like five goals in 28 games. It was a bleak time. Strikers get into routines and thrive on confidence.

"I got to the stage where I was trying too hard, but my confidence gradually came back with each goal."

There were no such tortures for the perfectionist marksman last season, although there was frustration that he did not finish with a nice round 30-strong tally with a strike at this year's FA Trophy Final.

His 15 goals so far this term certainly need no window dressing.

But he is the first to give credit for his success to Wycombe's potent providers. "You are only as good as the service you get. Everyone has a job. Mine is scoring goals. If the midfield create them, I have to put them in."

Scott's role as a key character in the dressing room has also been a vital component of Blues' success.

His presence alone has sometimes been enough to inspire at crucial moments.

Scott was rushed back to fitness, after straining his ankle in last season's vital Conference derby

against Slough where he scored the only goal, to make his comeback in Wycombe's Trophy semi final against Sutton in April.

He didn't hit the mark, but Wanderers recorded a 4-0 victory which overturned a 3-2 deficit. However his boss said: "Keith Scott coming back was psychologically a major boost in the dressing room. If he was able to put his boots on in his fitness test, he would have played."

Puzzled

The striker has admitted he was puzzled that no big clubs were interested in acquiring his talents during the close-season.

But he channelled his ambition into honing his body to a peak of physical fitness which markedly enhanced his pace to make him a difficult targetman to stop.

His height and hard work also made him invaluable to Blues' defence, making tackles and saves as crucial as his goals.

He is affectionately renowned for never being one to shy away from singing his own praises, and has in the past been reticent when things don't go as well.

But Scott's on-pitch endeavours and readiness to share a pint and a chat with Blues supporters after matches make him a figure who will be fondly remembered, and now keenly followed with his new masters in Wiltshire.