

Pair are on course for full-time contracts

GLYN Creaser and Steve Thompson are set to be offered full-time contracts in the New Year.

Wycombe's only part-timers, apart from Mark West who is injured, are figuring ever-more largely in Martin O'Neill's plans after sturdy performances during the first half of the season.

He is keeping faith with the pair who have both overcome major injury battles.

Both were substitutes for Saturday's FA Cup second-round match against Cambridge United, one year after scoring both goals in Wycombe's 2-2 draw with West Brom at the same stage.

O'Neill revealed on Saturday that even amputation had been a consider-

ation after warehouse manager Creaser's heel was run over by a forklift truck ten months ago.

Thompson, an RAF physical training instructor, has had a torrid time with groin strains since the start of this season, but has always made it back to fitness for the big occasions. Both players have been training alone since evening sessions stopped.

Wycombe take glory in their stride

THE aftermath of Wycombe's victory over Cambridge United underlined just how far Blues have moved on since their heroic battle to claw back from the brink of defeat against West Brom in last year's FA Cup.

Their 2-2 draw against Ossie Ardiles' aristocrats at Adams Park at the same stage of the competition caught the imagination like never before and signalled their march towards bigger and better things.

It was a giant of a performance, quite deservedly plastered over national newspaper back pages.

But this year Wycombe's second-round success raised barely a whimper in comparison.

It seemed, in a nutshell, to be merely a steady day at the office for Blues — albeit a hard grind at times.

The players' and fans' reactions also reflected the realistic, rather than blase, fact that they don't have as much to prove any more.

Cambridge, after all, were the fifth Second Division side Wycombe have beaten this season.

The fans mobbed the players after the final whistle, but the post-match hubbub in the bars was markedly no different from the now-usual victory hum.

The players were satisfied with a job done well within their capabilities.

"We deserved it," said Steve Guppy. "Once we got the goal, they had no choice but to push forward," was his matter-of-fact summation.

The hysteria was to come later.

Cup draw weaves its mystique

THERE can be no drama so mindbendingly tense and surreal as an FA Cup draw live on telly.

Ping-pong balls, numbers, a velvet pouch, and solemn pronouncements make for a Twin Peaks version of Paul Daniels' magic bingo show.

No relief can be found in the flicker-less faces of the Football Association's three grey men Graham Kelly, Gordon McKeag and Sir Bert Millichip. All you can do is keep gnawing on the fireplace rug.

There was no crowding round a tiny transistor, as of old, to hear whether they had drawn a plum or a bum. Wanderers' stars went their separate ways on Saturday night, all deservedly out on the town one way or another.

But all would have been tuned in to BBC1's Match of the Day, come 11.20pm.

Former Blues boss Alan Gane had a bit-part to play at the FA's Lancaster Gate headquarters following Sutton's upset against Torquay. His mammoth grin commendably only dropped slightly when his club were drawn away to Notts County.

Wycombe's 64 ball was plucked a couple of minutes into the draw. They're at home. A sharp intake of breath. Twenty-four. Silence. Err.....A, B, C, D....sounds promising. The head swims, the alphabet far too complex.

Ah, Norwich City — the Premiership club which gave English football a timely shot-in-the arm by being the first in this nation's history to beat Bayern Munich on the Germans' home patch.

That'll do.