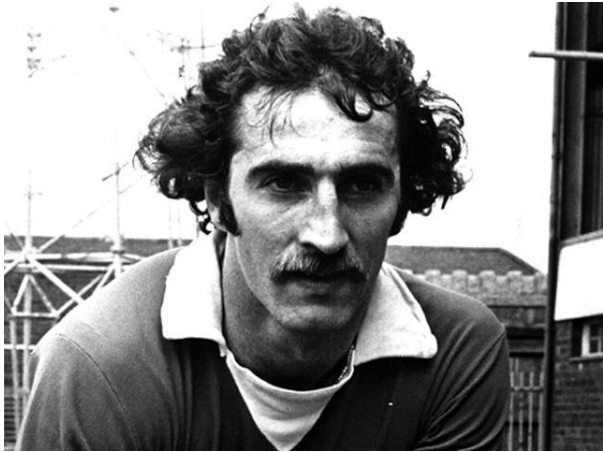




John Ridley came late to the professional game, having gained a degree at Sheffield University and qualified as a teacher. The tall, Consett-born centre half joined Port Vale - local to his teacher training college - in July 1973 and amassed 149 full league appearances for the Valiants in this spell, before Leicester City were persuaded to offer £55,000 for him in 1978. The Foxes changed manager not

long after he joined, and the new one didn't rate him so highly as the one who bought him in, so his Filbert Street days were numbered. Although he played 17 games for the Foxes, he was on his way to Chesterfield for £35,000 within a year.

John was a powerful and dominating type, but he became this through having a calming influence on those around him, thanks to the elegance of his play. John could handle the rough and tumble if the other lot insisted on it, but he much preferred to play football. His and Bill Green's differing strengths formed an awesome central defensive partnership, but John was equally adept in a midfield role. A member of the club's Anglo-Scottish Cup winning side, he left in the summer of 1982 as Chesterfield's financial crisis deepened, returning to Port Vale, who he helped to promotion from Division Four.

As his football career moved into its final phase he filled a number of playing and coaching posts at such clubs as Stafford Rangers, Matlock Town and Newcastle Town. After hanging up his boots, John became a maths teacher in Stoke and sadly passed in May 2020, aged 68.

For Chesterfield: 121 + 3 Football League appearances, 8 goals.

Career: 392 + 26 Football League appearances, 16 goals.