

My legendary life has been exaggerated, says Garner

By Claire Nash

SIMON Garner will not give up beer and cigarettes, despite new Wycombe Wanderers boss Alan Smith suggesting he curb his consumption.

The 35-year-old former Blackburn Rovers and West Brom striker has signed a new one-year deal to extend his stay with Blues to a third season.

But Garner, a 40-cigarettes-a-day man, said this week that his much-discussed, some would say much-admired, lifestyle has been overstated.

"I like to have a couple of cigarettes after a game and I also like to have a beer. I think if I smoked and drank as much as people say I do, then I would be dead by now,"



Legendary:
Simon Garner

said the popular veteran who has scored more than 200 goals during a distinguished career.

He confirmed that Smith had broached the subject of his health.

"He's had a quiet word. But my lifestyle has not been excessive," said Garner.

Before offering the stalwart forward a new contract, Smith said: "He smokes 40 cigarettes a day. It's not really what I'm about."

Garner, released by Martin O'Neill to give him a chance to shop around for a better deal at the end of last season, is pleased to stay.

"I want to stop at the club. I know I will have to battle away for a place, but I'm enjoying my football as much as ever," he said.

Smith's first signing Paul Hardyman, meanwhile, happily joined the Wycombe fold in a free transfer from Bristol Rovers this week.



New signing:
Paul Hardyman

The left back plugs a position which has been unsettled at Wycombe during the last five years.

The former Portsmouth and Sunderland defender was offered a one-year deal after impressing Smith in pre-season friendlies.

"Everything's gone well. I was pleased to sign after seeing how well the club is set up," said Hardyman, who shows an attacking style on the left wing.

"I like to get up there and join the attack as much as possible," said the 29-year-old. He was frustrated at Bristol Rovers, who reached last term's Division Two play-offs, after missing the first four months through injury.

"The manager there doesn't like to make too many changes when the club is doing well. It was disappointing not to play more games," Hardyman explained.

Smith has also signed former Slough Town central defender Mark Foran on a month's loan from Sheffield United, but has released Blues favourites, central defender Glyn Creaser and winger Simon Hutchinson.