

Crowds pack town for heroes

**MATTHEW HARRIS and
DAVE PETERS**

STAFF REPORTERS

HUNDREDS of people packed into High Wycombe yesterday evening as Wycombe Wanderers' players toured the town centre in an open-top bus.

The crowd waved flags, sounded air-horns and blew whistles to greet their heroes.

The event was held to celebrate the club's success in reaching the semi-final of the FA Cup. More than 19,000 fans were at Villa Park on Sunday to see the Blues' brave fight against Liverpool.

And yesterday fans turned out in force to thank the team in person.

Ann Marks, who was brought up in Wycombe and goes to nearly all the matches, said: "The cup run has been great. I think they could have made it, they nearly did."

"We are very proud of them and we will give them a big wave today and hope they do not get relegated. I have come down here to show them that it was not just one day and we want to support them in their hour of need."

Neil Timberlake, of Wycombe Marsh, who was at Villa Park on Sunday, said: "I wanted to cheer on the boys. I think the team have been a magnificent credit to themselves and to High Wycombe and I wanted to come and cheer them on."

Manager Lawrie Sanchez said: "It's nice that the council has done this for us but the bus would look a whole lot better with a trophy on it. Hopefully we will be sitting on the top of a few more buses next year when we have won something."

The last time he was on a bus was 13 years ago when he scored the winning goal for Wimbledon against Liverpool.

The last person to be thrown a civic reception by Wycombe District Council was Sir Steve Redgrave after he clinched his fifth Olympic gold medal.

Lawrie said: "It's good to be following in the footsteps of Sir Steve Redgrave after all he has achieved. We are in very good company."

Wycombe Wanderers' chairman



Manager Lawrie Sanchez and players on the bus

Ivor Beeks said: "What these players have achieved is greater than anything achieved before. The support we got was unbelievable really and the players would like to say thank you to all the people who made it up there."

The bus went slowly from the far end of the High Street toward the Guildhall for speeches and presentations.

The event was organised by Wycombe District Council. Its chairman David Cox had a decorative Waterford crystal rose bowl for the team engraved with the words: "Presented to Wycombe Wanderers Football Club by the Chairman of Wycombe District Council in recognition of the team's FA cup success in the 2000/01 season."

No wonder Gerrard's cross...

WYCOMBE Wanderers fans are demanding that Gerrards Cross is renamed Ryan's Chip following last Sunday's FA Cup semi-final.

They are calling for the name change because it was Steven Gerrard's cross which led to Emile Heskey's opening goal for Liverpool in Sunday's FA Cup semi-final.

They want the village to be renamed Ryan's Chip instead, in honour of Keith Ryan's 88th minute goal for Wycombe in their 2-1 defeat.

Fan Stephen Walmsley claims the village's name is "as emotive as if it had been Heskey's Header

or Fowler's Shot", and has called for a petition to change it to Ryan's Chip.

Ted Wheller, chairman of the Wycombe Wanderers Independent Supporters Association, has taken up the issue and is launching a campaign on his organisation's website today to have the village renamed.

He said: "The town has got to change its name. We can't live with that any more."

"I will avoid that place until they change its name and I will Tippex it out on my maps."

And Ryan is backing the campaign.

He said: "I like the sound of Ryan's Chip. I hadn't realised the significance of the name Gerrards Cross until now, but now I have I'm fully behind the campaign."

"It's a great idea but I can't imagine there is much chance of it happening."

Jennifer Woolveridge, chairman of Gerrards Cross Parish Council, has put the mockers on the campaign.

She said: "History is a bit longer in time than one moment in a football match."

"Gerrards Cross has been here for centuries. Changing the name of the village is a bit extreme."