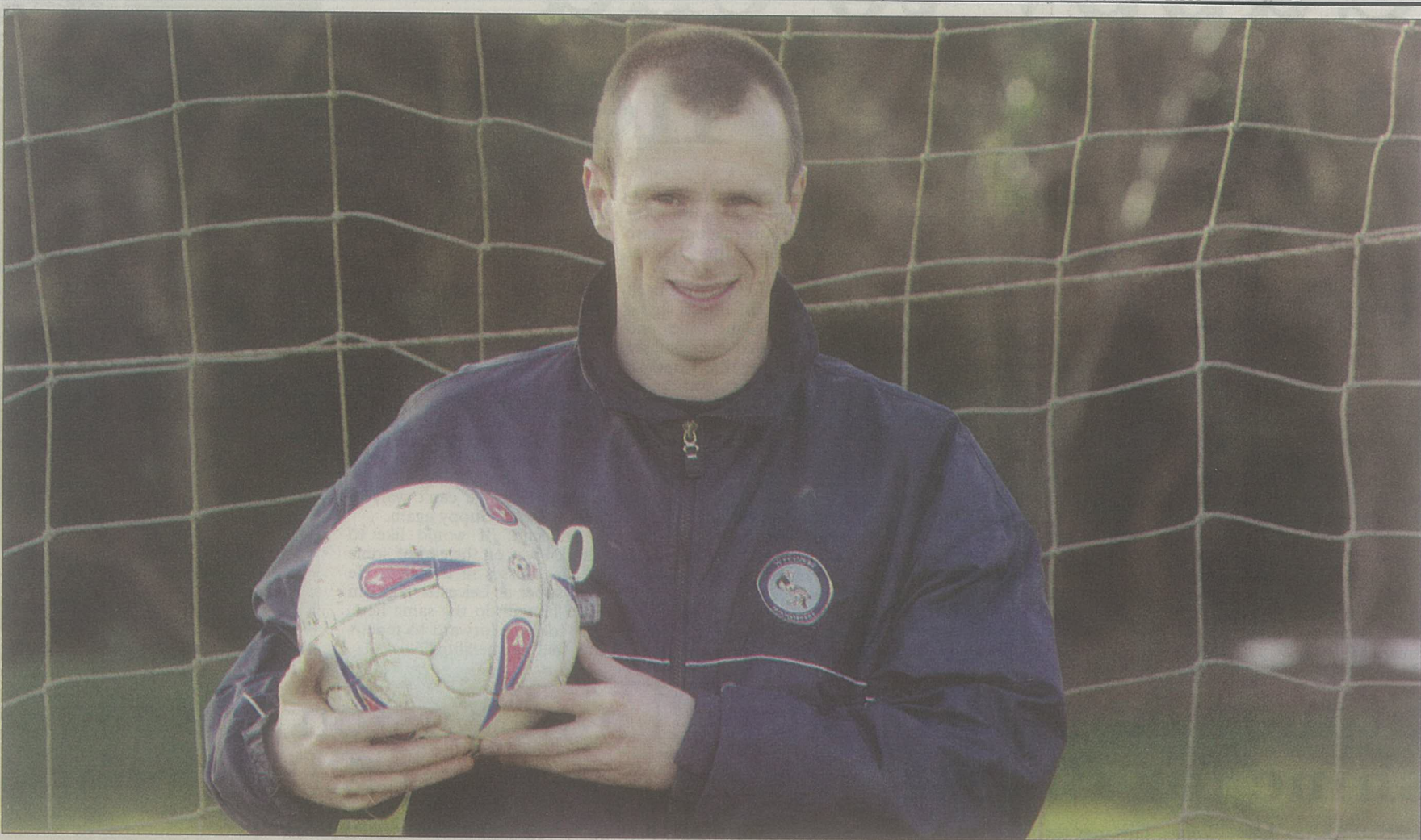




Back of the net: Steve Claridge is looking to get among the goals for Wanderers after arriving from Brentford on a month's loan

14/01/05

Claridge is a goal machine

Gorman brings in Mr Goals to boost Blues' play-off bid

DAVE PETERS

WANDERERS

Gorman gambled on Claridge's experience in a bid to boost Blues' meagre goals total. They have scored only 11 times in front of their own fans.

And Gorman insists Claridge's age will be an advantage and not a problem.

"Anyone who says he's too old doesn't know what they're talking about," he said.

"He is two years off 40 but he can still do it. Stevie has seen it and done it. He gets into the box and he does what he does so well on instinct.

"He is just what we need. He

scores goals off the little scraps in the box which we have not been doing and his experience will bring the best out of our other forwards."

Gorman had to persuade chairman Ivor Beeks to stump up the cash for the club's penultimate loan signing of the season and he is excited about re-uniting one of the game's most colourful strikers with one of the best crossers of the ball.

Steve Guppy's service from the left wing was a major factor as Claridge plundered 21 goals in two spectacularly successful seasons at Leicester and Gorman can't wait to see them start doing the same in the Wycombe blue.

He said: "He's a proven goalscorer and if he can't get us goals I don't know who can.

"I'm looking forward to seeing him and Guppy together again."

Claridge will make his debut against the third-placed Swans tomorrow in a match that Gorman reckons will be as tough as they come.

He saw the Welshmen draw at Championship side Reading in the FA Cup last Saturday and knows that his team will have to be at their best to prevent Kenny Jackett's promotion-chasers from doing the double over his men.

He said: "Swansea are a good

organised side who are going to be very hard to beat but we've got Joe Burnell and Clint Easton fit again and, now we've got Steve Claridge as well, it's like having three new signings."

And Claridge is determined to win a longer deal at Wanderers by banging in the goals.

He said: "I would like to think this will be my last club. I have had too many.

"I'm really pleased to come here and I'll be doing my best to make it a longer thing."

And he added: "I can't wait to get going. I think the last time I played in this division was with Cambridge and we won promotion - hopefully that's an omen."

WANDERERS have signed veteran goal machine Steve Claridge on a month's loan from Brentford with a view to a longer deal.

Blues boss John Gorman reckons the 38-year-old - who has scored 215 goals in a 14-club career including four this season - could be the final piece in his jigsaw as he plots a New Year's drive for the play-offs.

He said: "Steve Claridge is the Teddy Sheringham of our league. As a goalscorer he is as good as they come.

"We are just a few goals short of being a really good team and hopefully he can help give us those goals."