WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"Luton are a compact side. When their talented inside men develop real honest-to-goodness thrust down the middle they will test the best."—"Sunday Pictorial."

*

"As the game progressed . . . Luton livened up and, with a bit of luck, might have brought off a big surprise."—"The People."

*

"In attack Luton played much the neater football, but generally they lacked punch."—"News of the World."

*

"Luton displayed more midfield craft than Arsenal, but it was ruined time after time by lack of thrust."—"Reynolds News."

*

"Luton must take a new motto—get on with it. Faster football will pay them—and they can do it."—"Empire News and Sunday Chronicle."

*

"There were times indeed when it looked as though Luton might force a draw, for their approach work was ingenious and attractive to watch."—"Sunday Express."

*

"It took Luton most of the first half to recover their wind."—"Sunday Graphic."

FINISHING POWER THE CRYING NEED

Arsenal Defence In Depth Plan Foiled The Town

By CHILTERN

ARSENAL 2, LUTON TOWN 0

TO say that football is an unpredictable game is scarcely original, but, certainly, the happenings to the Town last week prompt this thought.

After the sparkling display at Blackpool, hopes and confidence were high that the Town would be able to hold the Gunners, but their forward line, so lively and hard punching at Bloomfield-road, had a somewhat lethargic look on Saturday and misfired badly in front of goal.

One of the reasons for this was that the Town forwards could not combat the old Arsenal plan of depth in defence, with their defenders backing continually, so that their penalty area was always well tenanted when the Town were on the attack.

Result was that seldom could the Town players find an open space anywhere near goal. Nor were their tactics, pretty enough in midfield, calculated to provide the answer to this problem and far too many square passes were used.

Ground was made but slowly, with the ball being worked across field and insufficient use was made of the down-the-middle route where Arsenal were known to be vulnerable.

With Groves continually roving out of the middle and no one else driving through as he tried to pull Fotheringham out of position, the centre-half was not harassed very often and goal-mouth punch was sadly lacking.

The Town began very much on the wrong foot when they became a goal down after only four minutes when fiddling near the halfway line in which Adam, Jones and Pearce were involved was the fore-runner of the trouble.

CLAPTON CAUSED DANGER

Pearce made the final error which allowed Clapton to gain control and race through with Pearce grimly trying to overtake him. His centre came across and VIC GROVES forced the ball through with some part of his anatomy, as Dunne and Owen desperately tried to challenge.

For some time, the Town goal was in danger, mainly through the operations of Clapton, but, gradually, they settled down and had the better of matters in the last 20 minutes before the interval.

John Groves was unlucky with a header that struck the bar and sent the ball over, something that also happened to Adam early in the second half.

In this period, there was little in it, with the Town playing the more clever brand of football, but Arsenal always that little more direct.

However, there always seemed a good chance that the Town would rescue a point, until the 70th minute when another surprise goal arrived.

SLACK COVERING FOR FREE KICK

This time, it was from a free kick, at least 25 yards out awarded for a mild offence against Clapton. Just previously, HOLTON had taken a free kick and, confronted by a defensive wall, was content to "chip" the ball.

For some reason, the Town defenders were slow to form up, with the result that Holton saw a gap and hit a tremendous low shot that sent the ball speeding into the corner of the net, with Baynham well beaten.

That settled it and yet the Town might have got back into the game late on had not Kelsey made a great save from a raking drive by Pearce by pushing the ball on to the post.

While, on the run of the play, the Town would not have been flattered had they forced a draw, the disappointment was that there was not more finish in the front line.

Turner was too closely watched to be a danger and it was not until the second part of the second half that Brown really came into it as a marksman.

STRENGTH IN THE MIDDLE LINE

Although John Groves did a lot of work and played some neat football, this match served to emphasise that he is not forceful enough for the leadership.

Cullen had his best spell in the first half, but both he and Adam, who had a lot of the ball after the interval, tended to make their centres too close to the vigilant Kelsey.

Once again, there was great strength in the middle line, where Pearce again stood out, as did Owen in his battle with Vic Groves and Morton, for the way in which he cut out Bloomfield.

Dunne, too, was successful against Haverty, who was not so dangerous as was expected and the main trouble came from the other wing where Jones was given a "chasing" by Clapton whom he could not nearly match for speed.

Highlight of Baynham's confident display was a tremendous save from a shot which Vic Groves made on the volley and which looked a winner all the way.

ARSENAL: Kelsey; Charlton, Wills; Holton, Fotheringham, Bowen; Clapton, Herd, Groves (V), Bloomfield, Haverty.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; Dunne, Jones; Morton, Owen, Pearce; Cullen, Turner, Groves (J), Brown, Adam.

Referee: P G Brandwood, Kidderminster.

Attendance: 50,111.