

New boy Sheffield shows his steel



ACTION MAN: New signing Laurie Sheffield goes bravely against Oldham in August 1968. Another new boy, Brian Lewis, is on the right. Graham French is in the background.

After walking away with the championship of Division Four in 1968, the Hatters were in no mood to merely sit back and consolidate and, helped by the wealth of directors Tony Hunt and Reggie Burr, decided to push on for further promotion.

The summer signings of Mike Harrison from Plymouth for £7,000, Brian Lewis from Coventry for £18,000 and Laurie Sheffield from Oldham for £10,000 showed that the Town meant business. However, when the cost of ground improve-

ments was added to the transfer figures it was estimated that £90,000 had been spent that close season, a massive amount at the time, especially for Luton Town.

The supporters responded to this show of commitment by the board and bought season tickets in numbers never seen before while eagerly awaiting the start of the new campaign.

The opening day visitors to Kenilworth Road were Oldham Athletic and on a hot, sunny day a crowd of 14,747 turned up on a wave of euphoria to see if the Town could

steamroller their way straight through to Division Two. The three new signings were all on show which meant no places for previous season heroes Ian Buxton, Ray Whittaker and John Moore, although Buxton was still away playing county cricket for Derbyshire.

The Town started the game in blistering fashion and, but for heroic saves by Oldham goalkeeper David Best, would have been three goals up in the opening 10 minutes. Even Best could not continue to stem the tide and the breakthrough finally came in the 17th minute when

Oldham defender Walter Joyce tripped Lewis in the area, leaving Harrison to slot the ball home from the penalty spot.

The Hatters continued to attack and hit the woodwork three times in the first-half before Keith Allen was first to react to a shot from Sheffield that had cannoned off the bar just before the interval.

Winger Graham French, who had been having a field day, was tackled heavily early in the second period and limped off, but the Town were soon on the rampage again and full-back Fred Jardine smacked in a 25

yard shot on the hour, his first goal for more than a year.

The biggest cheer of the afternoon, however, was reserved for Lewis, who smashed home the fourth goal from close range in the first seconds, a just reward for an all-out action display in an unfamiliar forward position.

Afterwards Luton manager Allan Brown, his face wreathed in smiles could not disguise his delight while the Hatters newest supporter, Eric Morecombe, had already booked his ticket for the next game, a mid-week clash against Watford!