



ACTION MAN: The Hatters' Viv Busby attempts to force his way through the Sunderland rear-guard at a packed Roker Park. Sadly, the Hatters were off colour that day and went out of the competition

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Roger Wash is always looking for Luton Town FC memorabilia. If you have any pre-1970 programmes, press cuttings, press photos or match tickets to sale ring him on 01638 602551. Good prices paid.

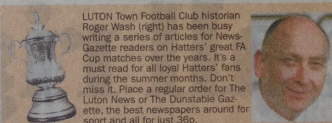
Cup run ends in tears at Roker

WHEN the draw for the third round of the FA Cup was made for the 1972/73 season, a home pairing with Crewe of Division Four was seen by Second Division Hatters as a certain passport to the next stage for the first time in 12 long years.

A crowd of 9,411 assembled at Kenilworth Road on a bitterly cold afternoon to see the Luton players in a hard work of what should have been a simple exercise, but Jim Ryan and Barry Butlin saw off a fighting side who were ably prompted by town player Gerry Jones. The reward for this less than glorious victory was a trip to First Division Newcastle United and from the moment the draw was made the local and national press were in their element. The sports pages were filled with stories of the damage about to be caused by Malcolm Macdonald, who would be playing against his old side for the first time since his transfer to Ryeside 16 months previously.

Macdonald, who was by now the hero of the Newcastle terraces, was never backward in coming forward when talking to the media and he turned the match into a personal crusade to put one over his old teammates (in the nicest possible way).

Despite the fact that the Town stood little chance of winning, several train loads of Luton supporters made the long trip north and were confronted by an intimidating atmosphere created by a partisan, capacity crowd of 42,710 in a three-sided St James Park.



The Town, having failed to register their proposed new orange and black second strip with the Football League had no such problem with the FA and so turned out in their new shirts and shorts, purchased by director Eric Morecambe, for the first time.

The new-look Hatters had to endure the predicted fierce initial onslaught in the opening minutes with Macdonald, made captain for the day, missing an early sitter. Gradually the Luton players increased in confidence and, out of the blue, took the lead in the 28th minute when the wily John Aston advanced on Magpies' goalkeeper Ian McFaul and calmly hit a left foot shot into the net.

Again Newcastle pressed, but it was the Town who increased their lead just before half-time when Alan Slough broke down the right before cutting the ball back to Aston, who hit it into the top corner for a picture goal.

Not surprisingly it was 'backs to the wall' stuff in the second half with John Moore putting in one of his finest-ever defensive performances, even though the ball was sometimes blocked with unorthodox

parts of his anatomy! The only slight disappointment on a brilliant day was that the trains arrived back too late for the travelling supporters to watch the game again on Match of the Day in those pre-video days.

If the Town were to reach Wembley they would have to do it the hard way as the fifth round draw saw the team travelling again, this time to Bolton, who were chasing promotion from Division Three and were unbeaten at home for almost a year.

Another partisan crowd greeted the train loads of Luton supporters, but the Bolton following among the attendance of 39,556 could never really get worked up as the Hatters took control of the game from the start. It came as no real surprise when Alan Garner headed the only goal in the second-half to set up a quarter-final tie for only the fourth time in the club's history.

Cup fever had, by now, hit the streets of the town and the slight dampener of being drawn away again, this time to Sunderland, was tempered by the fact that the Hatters' away record that season was better than their form at Kenilworth Road. The Town had already won at Sunderland during the league campaign and the week before the FA Cup clash, the return at Luton saw

the Hatters win 1-0. Confidence was therefore sky-high, but as in 1969, when Nottingham Forest were thrashed 5-1 just before the Cup Final, perhaps it was bordering on over-confidence.

Sunderland cleverly rested several first choice players for the league game, which probably gave the Town a false sense of security. The week leading up to the big game was disruptive to say the least and did not help the team's preparation. Firstly a rail strike meant that the Town players, directors and supporters would not be able to take advantage of the special charter trains that were the norm for away matches at the time. This meant that every available coach in the area had to be mobilised to carry the thousands of fans on the long trek to the north-east.

If this was not enough it was then learnt that 550,000 buy from Derby. Butlin, would be out for the season having picked up a bad knee injury. It was then announced that keeper

Keith Barber, who had broken a leg only a month before, would play at Roker Park. Clearly, manager Harry Haslam did not rate reserve goalkeeper Willie Carrick but to put a less than match fit Barber back in the firing line could well turn out to be a big mistake. A massive 53,151 packed the Roker Park terraces, a figure that was never beaten and almost 40,000 more than for the league meeting earlier in the season.

The Sunderland fans were in full voice from the off, as the men in red and white stripes tore into a surprisingly limp Luton rearguard. Quite frankly the Town did not perform on the day with Viv Busby, in for the injured Butlin, ploughing a lone furrow up front and barely troubling the Sunderland defence. It was such a disappointment after all the hard work that had gone in before and the home side were fully deserving of their all-too-easy 2-0 win which left them up for going all the way and lifting the trophy, beating Leeds in the final.

Moore: Yes, it was a header

POSTBAG: Following up the controversy surrounding the Bernard Moore goal against Arsenal in the FA Cup in March, 1952, I recently visited Bernard at his home in Bedford and he assured me that his goal was a diving header from a Bert Mitchell centre.

Bernard showed me a photo with the ball on his head and said that George Stobart had almost put him off by attempting to handle the ball into the net.

Bernard also played for Bedford against Arsenal a few years later in the same competition and missed scoring a winner at Highbury by no more than inches in the final minutes of the game. And, like The Luton game before, Ser-

nard said that Arsenal were extremely lucky to win the replay at Bedford's Eyre.

After he finished playing, Bernard became a teacher in Bedford and successfully managed a local schools representative team.

I hope this may be of interest to your readers and serve any old arguments.

FOA Bart, Alexandra Place, Bedford
(If you would like to share some of your Hatters' memories, drop us a line at: The News-Gazette, Media House, 39 Upper George Street, Luton, LU12RD. Alternatively, you could email your views to john.moore@bedfordnews.com or andy.mackenzie@bedfordnews.com