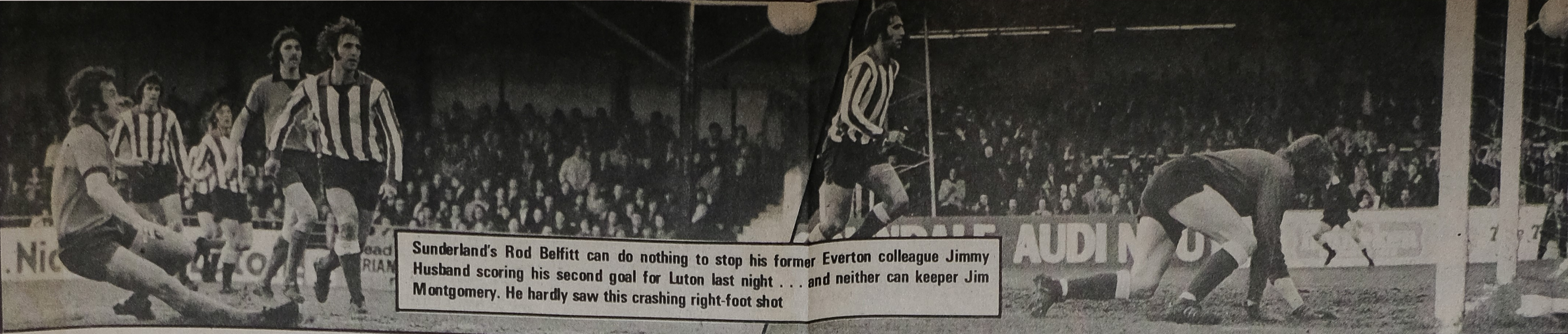




Sunderland's Rod Belfitt can do nothing to stop his former Everton colleague Jimmy Husband scoring his second goal for Luton last night . . . and neither can keeper Jim Montgomery. He hardly saw this crashing right-foot shot

CHAMPAGNE FOR LUTON

Halom's winner can't ruin Division Two farewell

THEY lost by four goals to three. They threw Eric Morecambe in the bath. They sang and they drank champagne.

It was a night Luton Town's footballers said goodbye to the Second Division and took the accolades of the crowd for their promotion to the First.

It was a heady night. A memorable night. At the end of it manager Harry Haslam took a microphone and summoned the biggest Luton league crowd of the season on to the pitch to thank them for their support.

The kids and the dads spilled across the turf like a noisy fruit salad, orange and tangerine favours waving hello to the First Division.

They were driven by the euphoria of promotion boosted by the marvellous match they had witnessed. Everyone seemed to forget that Luton had lost. Somehow it didn't matter.

They had seen attacking

ROGER DUCKWORTH



reports Town's last match

THE TABLE

Luton 3 Sunderland 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Middlesbro	42	27	11	4	77	30	65
LUTON	42	19	12	11	64	51	50
Carlisle	42	20	9	13	61	48	49
Blackpool	42	17	13	12	57	40	47
Sunderland	42	19	9	14	58	44	47
Orient	41	15	17	9	54	41	47
Nottm For	42	15	15	12	57	43	45
West Brom	42	14	16	12	48	45	44
Hull	42	13	17	12	46	47	43
Notts Co	42	15	13	14	55	60	43
Bolton	42	15	12	15	44	40	42
Millwall	42	14	14	14	51	42	42
Fulham	42	16	10	16	39	43	42
Aston Villa	41	13	14	14	47	44	40
Portsmouth	42	14	12	16	45	62	40
Bristol City	42	14	10	18	47	54	38
Cardiff	42	10	16	16	49	62	36
Oxford	42	10	16	16	35	46	36
Sheff Wed	42	12	11	19	51	63	35
Crystal Pal	42	11	12	19	43	56	34
Preston	42	9	14	19	40	62	31
Swindon	42	7	11	24	36	72	25

football at its very best. Luton were already promoted. Sunderland had no chance. Both sides showed what can be done when 22 skilful players relax and enjoy their calling.

It was an incredible 3-3 at half-time and the Kenilworth Road rafters rattled with the cheers of appreciation. All six goals were award winners. There wasn't a duffer among them.

To say that Luton goalkeeper Graham Horn had a cracker of a game might seem daft when he let in four goals. But it's true. It goes to show the calibre of the goals.

Sunderland sportingly clapped Luton on to the pitch. Then they set about them. Four times the Northerners were ahead, the last time being the decider. And it was fitting that

the winner should be scored by Sunderland's Vic Halom.

The former Luton man even allowed himself a shifty little V sign when he netted his 21st goal of the season and gave Sunderland the points. But there was no venom in it. In fact Tricky Vicky, as he was affectionately known at Luton, thoroughly enjoyed being the butt of the crowd—even when they sang "Halom is a Womble".

Sadly for the Luton it was the softest goal of the lot. Halom beat a hopeless offside trap, found the ball at his feet and laughingly rolled it into the net.

That was a pity, because Luton had played some marvellous football. Sunderland goalkeeper Jim Montgomery, who repeats his Cup Final magic for us every Sunday afternoon on telly, pulled off three world-class saves that had Luton's unlucky centre-forward Barry Butlin clapping in wonder.

Similar

With Horn doing similar things at the other end, the entertainment was top class. If only we could see football like this every week the game would be in a vastly different state than it is.

The match should have been played in February but it was rained off. Putting it back to the end of the season was like cutting the icing off the cake and saving it until the end.

With the Luton crowd still singing Congratulations and Everything is Beautiful, Billy Hughes rattled in a second-minute goal to start the fun.

Luton's man of the match Jimmy Husband headed in a fine centre from John Ryan a quarter of an hour later and Montgomery had made two of his great saves to Butlin before Towers cracked in Sunderland's second from a Kerr corner.

Anderson and Faulkner won the ball for West to go left and lay on Husband's second which he thrashed first time past Montgomery. And the former Everton player began to look for his second hat-trick in six weeks. He was unlucky to meet Montgomery in such form.

Halom laid on number three for Ashurst to thump in another picturesque shot. You wouldn't have thought Sunderland had no more to play for than their good name.

Tremendous

Four minutes before half-time Butlin headed in his 17th goal of the season, for which he had to thank a fine cross from West, who had a tremendous game.

The second half belonged to Montgomery. Early on he made separate saves to breakaways by Hindson and Husband before making two wonderful stops at the expense of Butlin's goal account.

Halom's winner came in the 78th minute and Luton's further goal attempts met rugged resistance from Montgomery.

At the end the breathless fans summoned the lung-power to turn Kenilworth Road into a throbbing cauldron of sound. Harry Haslam and his band of merry men gathered in the stand to take a bow and skipper Bobby Thomson thanked the fans for the support which has pushed the Town into the First Division.

Mr Haslam told them: "You are the best supporters in Britain. Sorry about tonight's result."

Quite honestly, I don't think anyone gave a damn. All that mattered was that Luton are in Division One.

LUTON TOWN: Horn; John Ryan, Thomson; Anderson, Faulkner, Garner; Jim Ryan, Husband, Butlin, West, Hindson. Sub: O'Connor.

SUNDERLAND: Montgomery; Malone, Guthrie; Longhorn, Watson, Belfitt; Kerr, Hughes, Halom, Ashurst, Towers. Sub: Bolton.

Attendance: 20,255.

Goals: Hughes (Sunderland, 2 mins); Husband (Luton, 17 mins); Towers (Sunderland, 25 mins); Husband (Luton, 30 mins); Ashurst (Sunderland, 35 mins); Butlin (Luton, 41 mins); Halom (Sunderland, 78 mins).

Right: Skipper Bobby Thomson salutes promotion with a bottle of champagne, watched by John Ryan, Graham Horn and reserve coach Ken Whitfield.

In the background is a delighted club chairman Robert Keens and director Reggie Burr.

Below, a certain Town director whose partner boasts short, fat, hairy legs, has Harry Haslam and the team in stitches.

Pictures: TERRY RICHARDS

