

BRISTOL ROVERS

Match No 13 1976-77

LUTON TOWN

Division Two

Saturday, January 1

3 pm Price 15p

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Assistant Secretary:
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Team Manager:
Don Megson

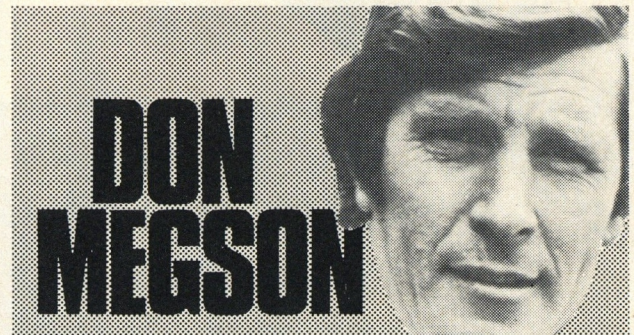
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Trainer/Coach:
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Dr. W. T. Cussen



ON the first day of 1977, I look back on the year just ended with tremendous disappointment. When I took over as Rovers' manager, I wanted to bring fire, ambition and drive to the job.

We started by winning the Watney Cup and then went on to gain promotion from the Third Division to the Second. Everything seemed to be going right because the club was moving forward.

When we won promotion and I sat down with our secretary, Peter Terry, to talk about plans for the future, did either of us ever visualise we would be playing before gates of 5,000 within just over two years?

I still have the same ambitions and drive. But the fact remains that, when you step up a division, it is a testing time and it takes a period to readjust. That was proved by the problems City had in establishing themselves in the Second Division.

But, that being so and with gates at their present level, all energy is being devoted to stopping the club from slipping back. Instead of progress, the financial situation has forced us to think more in terms of survival.

Yet progress is being made — though at a slower rate than I had hoped.

GRADUALLY

We are coming to terms with Second Division football after two seasons and gradually working towards achieving everyone's dream of bringing First Division football to Eastville.

The order of the day has become the introduction of young players into the team. That is how City built up their promotion side and we are working towards the same goal with the likes of David Williams, Phil Bater and Jimmy Hamilton, who are blending in with our experienced players and making us a more competitive force in the Second Division.

I am hoping they will help stimulate an upsurge of interest in the Rovers and bring in minimum gates of 10,000 so that we can stop worrying about survival and concentrate all our efforts on going forward.

My attitude is always one of optimism and I face 1977 confident that Bristol Rovers will progress. The support we get during the year will decide the speed of that progress.

**ACTION
ACTION**

GOAL NUMBER ONE: Gordon Fearnley hammers home our first goal in the victory over Carlisle United at Eastville.



Gordon and David on target

Pictures by ALAN MARSHALL

GOAL NUMBER TWO: David Maniforth fires in the winner against Carlisle.



FOCUS



Peter Aitken, capped by Wales at youth and under-23 levels, comes from Penarth and is a product of Rovers' Cardiff-based nursery. He came to Eastville as an apprentice and became a full professional at 18.

Now 22, the athletic defender first appeared in the senior squad as an unused substitute at Bolton on February 19, 1972, but had to wait until the following season for his first taste of League football.

That was in the home game with Chesterfield the following August 29.

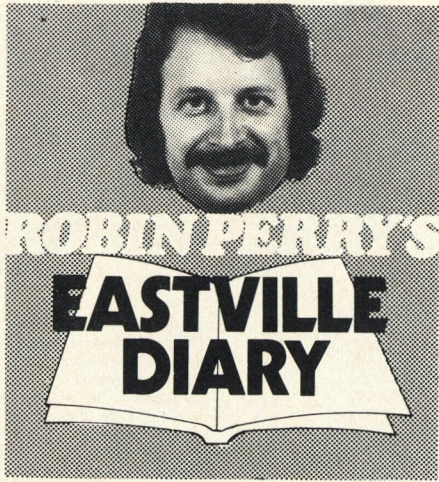
He went on to make 26 appearances that season. The following year, however, Mike Green kept him out of the sweeper role during the promotion programme.

But Peter came in for the final few games and it was after that Rovers accepted Plymouth Argyle's offer for skipper Green.

After being an ever-present in the first season up in Division II, Peter was hit by injuries last season, when he had 18 games.

This season, Peter, who is engaged, sent up his century of first team appearances and to date has made 111.

PETER AITKEN



The new year belongs to Stuart Taylor!



BRUCE BANNISTER... 91 goals in 231 games.

If you count Gloucestershire Cup and Watney Cup matches, STUART TAYLOR'S 500th appearance for Bristol Rovers slipped by unnoticed when Carlisle visited Eastville just before Christmas.

But, counting the games that qualify for most record books — League, F.A. Cup and League Cup — big Stu still has 11 matches to play after today to qualify for Rovers' exclusive 500 Club.

But today is still important for the loyal local lad, who, it is hard to believe, is still under 30.

For January 1 marks the start of his well-earned testimonial year. And it kicks off with a dance tonight at the Dragonara Hotel, Bristol.

Unlike most players, centre-half Stuart has opted for a testimonial year rather than season, with events taking place during the second half of this season and the first half of next.

With Lindsay Parsons' testimonial game to fit in before the summer, Stuart's match is likely to be in the autumn but his organising committee have quite a few occasions planned before then, starting with tonight's dance.

Considering he came into professional football late, Stuart has a remarkable record of appearances and consistency. He has not missed many games since establishing himself in the number five spot nine seasons ago.

He started his career with Bristol City as an amateur but it was from local club Hanham that Rovers signed him, first as an amateur, then a part-timer and finally as a full professional.

Stuart has served two spells as skipper and there can hardly be a player more deserving of a successful testimonial.

* * *

While one notable Rovers career continues, another has just ended. I refer, of course, to BRUCE BANNISTER, now

a Plymouth Argyle player after spending just over five years at Eastville.

The 28-year-old Yorkshireman joins another ex-Rovers, MIKE GREEN, at Home Park. Both were among the heroes of the promotion triumph of three seasons ago.

And, I suppose, Bruce, as the Grab half of Smash and Grab, was part of the most famous Rovers striker partnership since GEOFF BRADFORD and VIC LAMB DEN.

He and ALAN WARBOYS will long be remembered as one of the most-feared duo's outside the First Division.

Bruce played 231 games for Rovers and scored 91 goals. I am sure all Rovers fans will join with me in wishing him success with Plymouth and happiness in their new home for the whole family.

* * *

JIMMY HAMILTON, who has come to Rovers in exchange for Bruce, actually started his League career with West Bromwich Albion, spending six months at The Hawthorns as an apprentice professional.

"I got terribly homesick", he said, "and the club agreed to cancel my contract.

"But I couldn't get a club in Scotland and realised that if I wanted to make a career in football I would have to return to England. That was when I signed for Sunderland", added the 21-year-old attacker.

He was still only 16 when he made his League debut for Sunderland but, following a change of manager, his first team chances became limited and he joined Plymouth for £10,000 just under a year ago.

Recently married to a Durham girl, Jimmy admitted he was not keen to move again so soon when he heard about the proposed exchange deal.

But, after visiting Eastville and talking to Don Megson, he realised there was a lot of scope for him with Rovers. And when he was told that the club had been interested in signing him before, while he was still with Sunderland, he was even happier about agreeing to the move.

"It's nice to be somewhere you know you are really wanted," he said.

STUART TAYLOR... a great Rovers club man who is having a testimonial in 1977.



TODAYS MATCH BALL

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ALAN KING introduces

LUTON TOWN



LUTON TOWN have proved attractive opposition this season without ever really putting together the kind of winning sequence which could make them promotion contenders.

Their successes this season include a 4-2 victory over Rovers at Kenilworth Road in November.

Manager HARRY HASLAM's biggest headache of late was to find an experienced goalkeeper. First-choice KEITH BARBER was put out of action with three broken ribs.

Seventeen-year-old TONY KNIGHT — a professional for only seven months — took over but manager Haslam then managed to borrow MILIJIA (pronounce it Melia) ALEKSIC from Plymouth Argyle.

Aleksic joined Plymouth from Stafford Rangers in February 1973 for £6,000. Earlier this season he had loan spells with both Oxford United and Ipswich Town.

Full back PAUL PRICE comes from St Albans. He made his League debut at Oxford in April 1973 and has only become a regular first-teamer this season.

STEVE BUCKLEY cost £5,000 when he joined the club from non-league Burton Albion in April 1974.

Defender JOHN FAULKNER also made his name in non-league soccer. He was in the Sutton side which reached the fourth round of the F.A. Cup in 1970. Sutton eventually lost 6-0 to Leeds United but Don Revie was so impressed with Faulkner he took him on the Elland Road staff. But he had a series of injuries and played only two League games before joining Luton in 1972.

The Futchers brothers, centre half PAUL and striker RON, have been with Luton since June 1974 when they were signed from Chester. Paul — one of the few players to impress in England's recent Under-21 international

against Wales — was rated at £100,000. Ron's fee was estimated at £40,000. Ron has a habit of scoring a lot of goals in the holiday games.

BRIAN CHAMBERS played for Sunderland and Arsenal before joining Luton for £30,000 in July 1974. In September he turned down a move to Burnley after a £20,000 fee had been agreed.

Former Luton apprentice PASQUALE FUCCILLO (known as Lil) has been a professional since July 1974 and won a regular first team place towards the end of last season.

Skipper ALAN WEST is a product of the Burnley school of soccer. Although he played only 45 League games for Burnley he won an England Under-23 cap and was valued at £80,000 when he joined Luton in October 1973.

Striker JOHN 'DIXIE' DEANS had a remarkable scoring record of 83 goals in 110 games for the great Scottish League side Celtic. He moved to Luton in the summer for a £20,000 fee.

JOHN ASTON's story of achievement goes back to his days with Manchester United, the highlight of which was a European Cup winner's medal in 1968. He joined Luton in July 1972 for £50,000.

Like Aston, JIMMY HUSBAND also had his share of success in the highest section, winning a Division One championship medal with Everton in 1969-70. He moved to his present club in November 1973 for a £70,000 fee.

RICKY HILL, an England youth player, made his League debut against Rovers at Kenilworth Road last season when he came on as substitute and scored.

LUTON Town: (left to right).

Back row — Brian Gregory, Steve Buckley, Tim Smith, Kim Wassel, Dixie Deans, Ricky Hill, Sandor Simon.

Middle row — Graham Jones, Paul Futchers, John Faulkner, Tony Knight, Keith Barber, John Ryan (now with Norwich City), Paul Price, James McNichol, Reg Game (physiotherapist).

Front row — Pasquale Fuccillo, Brian Chambers, David Carr, Roy McCrohan (coach), Harry Haslam (manager), Jimmy Husband, John Aston, Peter Mead.



REFEREE

DEREK LLOYD (Fernhill Heath, Worcs.). Started refereeing in 1956 and graduated through the West Midland Regional League to the Football League. He played soccer as an amateur for Stoke City and a professional for Worcester City.

A married man he works for a high-pressure die casting company. He is a qualified cricket coach.

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PRIVATE PARTIES

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Stadium Scene

Happy New Year! I hope you all made your resolutions and that one of them is to come greyhound racing here next Monday, January 3rd. The first race is off at 11 am.

To start the year off right, we at the Stadium invite you to join us next Monday morning and if you produce this programme at the North Stand Enclosure, you will receive entry and a form card **ABSOLUTELY FREE**. And that's worth £1.

I hope you can join us.
CLARKE OSBORNE



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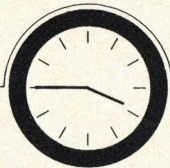
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B BLACKPOOL HULL CITY	G NOTTS CO. SHEFF UTD.	L COVENTRY BRISTOL CITY	T NEWCASTLE MAN. CITY
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D CARDIFF FULHAM	I ORIENT SOUTHAMPTON	P LEEDS EVERTON	X TOTTENHAM WEST HAM
E CHELSEA HEREFORD	J PLYMOUTH CHARLTON	R LIVERPOOL SUNDERLAND	Y W.B.A. IPSWICH

Ted Osborne Calling



We are very grateful today for sponsorship by HARVEY LEE, who, although little known in the Bristol area, is one of the country's leading suppliers of leather and suede coats.

He appears in Bristol each Friday and Sunday and can be found amongst probably the largest stocks of coats in any market.

You will see him just outside the True Blue Club. Take this programme with you as an introduction and I am sure he will give you a special extra discount.

I hope you all had a Happy Christmas and a good New Year's Eve. Here's wishing you all a prosperous 1977.

SEASON TICKETS

AT

REDUCED PRICES

We are now at the halfway stage of the season and the Football Club are pleased to announce that season tickets can now be purchased from the club offices at the following reduced prices:

PREFERENTIALS:

Adults (previously £26) **£13**
Juvéniles and senior citizens (previously £14) **£7**

ORDINARY:

Adults (previously £21) **£11**
Juvéniles and senior citizens (previously £12) **£6**

NORTH AND SOUTH ENCLOSURES:

Adults (previously £16) **£8**
Juvéniles and senior citizens — North Enclosure only (previously £8.50) **£4**

TRUE BLUE CLUB

Tonight: Dancing to **MAC'S STARS**

Tomorrow: The popular return of one of Bristol's top groups — **McARTHUR PARK.**

QUICK QUIZ

compiled by Clive Godfrey

1. What is Luton's club nickname?
2. How much did Newcastle United pay Luton for the services of Malcolm Macdonald in May 1971?
3. What was the score in the corresponding league fixture last season?
4. Only one Luton player was ever-present last season. Can you name him?
5. Who was their leading League goalscorer last season and how many goals did he score?
6. Have Luton ever won the F.A. Cup?
7. Who scored the Rover's goals in the recent 2-1 home victory over Carlisle?
8. What is the highest position that Luton have ever attained in the Football League?

YOUTH SCENE

by COLIN DOBSON



At youth level the school holiday periods are always busy, and this Christmas has been no exception.

With two separate coaching courses, numerous matches and trials at different age-groups, organisation is a key factor in its smooth running.

As youth coach I am very lucky to be working with a good staff off the field, which leaves me lots of free time for coaching.

Decisions will shortly have to be made on most of our youth team regarding apprentice contracts for next season.

Most of them have been attending our coaching sessions for a long time, and many people will take great joy seeing some of the lads stepping up into the paid ranks.

My biggest concern is the "late-developers". Making decisions at 16, when body

growth has not ended, can be misleading.

Most boys not signing apprentice in the past have tried elsewhere, gone around other clubs, then settled with local amateur teams.

But if it is at all possible, I shall be trying to hang onto the skillful "late-developers" as long as possible and hope to create opportunities for them to make the grade with us later on.



GORDON BENNETT LOOKS AT tomorrow's man

STEVE WHITE

Goalscoring being the declining art it is these days, Steve White's record in our 'A' and youth teams is noteworthy.

In his final sixth-form year at Gaunts School, Chipping Sodbury, Steve is being given a number of opportunities in the Reserves before manager Don Megson decides his future with the club at the end of the season.

But at the moment this 17-year-old from Rangeworthy who joined us from Mangotsfield United fifteen months ago is more concerned about his important date in London on Monday — an English Schools' under-18 international trial.

Good luck, Steve!

QUICK QUIZ ANSWERS

1. "The Hatters"
2. £180,000
3. 1-0 defeat for Rovers
4. Keith Barber
5. Jimmy Husband 14 goals.
6. No. Runners-up 1959.
7. Gordon Fearnley; David Staniforth.
8. 8th Division One 1957-58

GROUND REGULATIONS

Rights of admission are reserved and subject at all times to the ground regulations of Bristol Rovers Football Club.

SUPPORTERS' VIEWPOINT

Because of the urgent need for funds the Supporters' Club have brought forward the date for the annual sponsored walk. The date pencilled in at the moment is Sunday, February 27. Further details will be given when the date has been confirmed.

In the meantime we are looking for advertisers for the sponsored walk leaflet which will be widely distributed. The cost is £10 per panel and anyone interested is invited to contact us at our Headquarters, 468, Stapleton Road, Bristol, BS5 6PA, Tel No. 556967.

Incidentally, now that 414 Stapleton Road, has been closed, our headquarters is open during the daytime as well as evenings which should facilitate services for members who wish to make coach bookings or anyone who wishes to join the Supporters' Club. The new commercial manager, Mr. Graham Drew, will be pleased to see anyone at this address.

Probably because of the expense of Christmas festivities, donations towards the purchase of the Football Club's Training Centre at Hambrook, have

been very slow in coming in, of late. Latest subscribers are:— £2 donation — Mr. D. Snowdon; £1 donations — Mr. G. Curley, Mr. M. Laskey, Mr. & Mrs. K. Nicks, and "Mike and Audrey". Donations at the rate of £1 per square foot can be sent to me c/o the Supporters' Club when I shall be pleased to send you the appropriate acknowledgment Scroll. If it is more convenient, donations can be handed to any committee member or to either of our huts at the stadium, on match days.

We are still looking for old programmes and if anyone can oblige they can be handed in at our headquarters or at the stadium huts.

Have you got your copy of our Year Book yet? Copies, at 20p, are still available from our headquarters or at the Stadium.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a happy and prosperous New Year and thank them for their help during the past 12 months.

ERIC GODFREY

NEXT MATCHES

BATH CITY

South West and Wales
Youth Cup

Wednesday, January 5 (7.30)

CARDIFF CITY

Division Two
Saturday
January 15 (3 pm)

D4U & 4ME2

TEAMS

ROVERS

Blue/White

- 1 Jim EADIE
- 2 Phil BATER
- 3 Lindsay PARSONS
- 4 Frankie PRINCE
- 5 Stuart TAYLOR
- 6 David WILLIAMS
- 7 Kenny STEPHENS
- 8 Gordon FEARNLEY
- 9 Alan WARBOYS
- 10 Jimmy HAMILTON
- 11 David STANIFORTH
- 12 Andrew EVANS

LUTON

Orange

- 1 Milijia ALEKSIC
- 2 Paul PRICE
- 3 Steve BUCKLEY
- 4 John FAULKNER
- 5 Paul FUTCHER
- 6 Brian CHAMBERS
- 7 Pasquale FUCCILLO
- 8 Alan WEST
- 9 Dixie DEANS
- 10 Ron FUTCHER
- 11 John ASTON
- 12 Jimmy HUSBAND

Referee: MR. D. W. LLOYD
(Fernhill Heath)

Linesmen: MR. P. J. ACKRILL
(Swindon) red flag
MR. L. B. BEGAM
(Exeter) yellow flag

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