

BUCKLEY BREAKS THE ICE

77/78

FORCED BY shortage of recognised first team players to include inexperienced youngsters in the side, Town boss Harry Haslam was reasonably happy with his team's first outing of the new season.

"You can't draw too many conclusions from the first match," he said. "It's something you have to get behind you before you can start to assess how things might develop. We had to rely on young lads, and I was pleased with the way they played."

**By BRIAN
SWAIN**

He was also satisfied with the display of new signing Phil Boersma, who limped out of the game after 62 minutes with a hamstring strain.

The former Liverpool and Middlesbrough player was given a big hand as he left the field, and had shown flashes of the approach work skills that first attracted the Town's attention.

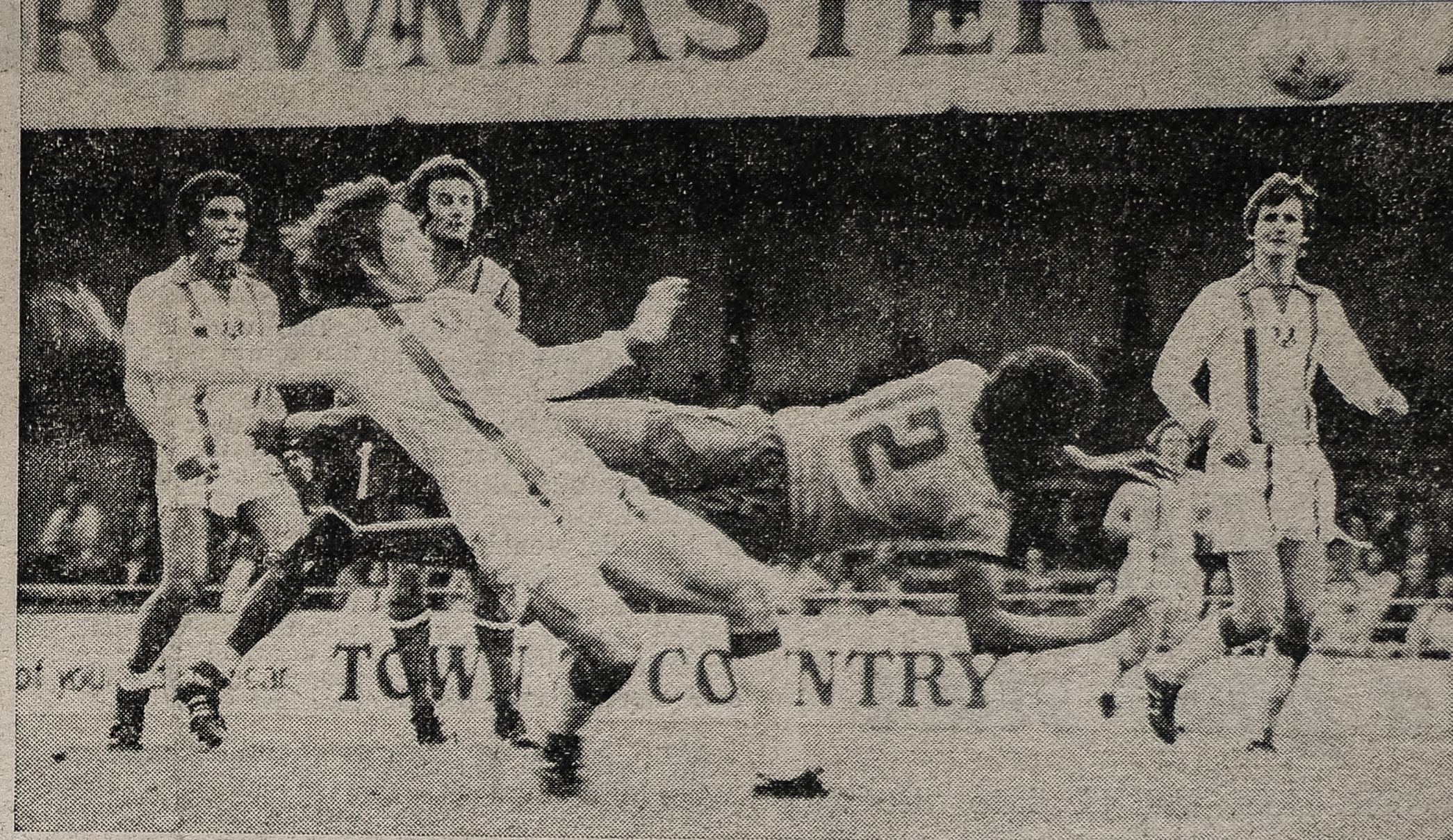
Unfortunately Boersma had missed a reasonable chance in the first half and in the end the Town needed a goal from a defender to break the deadlock.

Orient went home feeling that they were unlucky to lose. "We could have been at least two goals clear before Luton scored," said manager George Petchey. "But Luton got the breaks and we didn't."

His comment did less than justice to Milija Aleksic, because he was the major reason Orient failed to score when they should have done.

The Town were more impressive in the early stages, with Lil Fuccillo, Tim Smith and David Carr over-running Orient's midfielders. John Jackson had to make a good save from Carr, and another to stop Carr reaching a dipping cross by Smith.

But for a time the Town went off the boil, with inaccurate passing allowing Orient back into the game. Kitchen might have scored when he beat John Faulkner, but tried to beat Paul



● **Ricky Hill** flies through the air to get in a diving header which flew narrowly wide of the post.

Futcher as well and was dispossessed.

Aleksic's legs saved the Town when Kitchen got through again, while at the other end Buckley and Jim Husband prised open the Orient defence but Boersma rolled his shot inches wide.

Early in the second half Aleksic made the save of the day when he twisted in mid-air to clutch a close-range header from Kitchen.

If that effort had produced a goal the Town would have had no cause to complain, but Aleksic's save gave them new heart, while Orient must have felt that this was going to be one of those days when they would never score.

The point was rammed home in the 52nd minute when Carr sent Boersma away down the right wing. Fuccillo was first to Boersma's high cross, passed short to Buckley, and the full-back's roaring drive from just outside the box flew into the net. Jackson's attempt to save was beaten when the ball took a deflection off Roffey.

Orient caved in after the goal, their attacks smothered by a more confident Town defence in which Faulkner was outstanding.

Ricky Hill went on as replacement for Boersma, and within minutes went close to scoring with a brave diving header from a cross by John Aston.

Fuccillo forced Jackson

to make a smart save to divert a 25-yarder round the post, and Orient's frustrations boiled over when Peter Allen was booked for a foul on Smith, three minutes from time.

Then Jones was daft enough to earn the Town's first caution of the season, reacting to some goading by Orient and kicking the ball at Kitchen.

But the young full-back had done enough to prove that he is competent to hold down a place in the league side.

The other under-studies have also done well, but this week's return of Ron Futcher, Alan West and Paul Price gives the Town more combinations to play with.

If the manager can come up with an attacking formation with more punch his hopes of competing for a promotion place will become much more realistic.

Match Details

LUTON TOWN 1, ORIENT 0
Half-time: 0-0

TOWN: Aleksic; Jones, Buckley, Faulkner, Futcher; Carr, Smith, Fuccillo; Husband, Boersma (Hill, 62 mins), Aston.

ORIENT: Jackson; Fisher, Roffey, Hoadley, Roeder; Allen, Glover, Payne (Grealish, 71 mins); Chiedozie, Mayo, Kitchen.

THE GOAL: Steve Buckley, 52 minutes, with low drive deflected in by Orient's Bill Roffey.

ATTENDANCE: 8,061, second lowest in the Second Division, 2,000 down on last season's opening fixture, and 3,000 below last season's average.

REFEREE: Ray Toseland, Kettering; not up to his usual standard.

BOOKINGS: Peter Allen of Orient for a foul on Tim Smith; Graham Jones for kicking the ball at Kitchen.

ENTERTAINMENT: Patchy, but with the Town showing signs that they can put their game together at times, but looking under-powered in attack.

**PICTURES
BY STEVE
TEMPLEMAN**

the net which he beat four defender Kevin McIntegart, who as well pleased as the goal for the first time, Celtic's ne with Division II Kent Premier North Hom old player Phil Horan each chances as Roger M tion, Celtic demonstrate SUPPORTERS CLUB