

PAST ENCOUNTER

2nd JANUARY, 1984

LUTON TOWN 2, FOREST 3

After a narrow victory over the Hatters, at the City Ground, back in September, the Reds claimed their first league double of the season in this game to take their holiday points tally to nine from four fixtures.

Luton, under manager David Pleat, were in sixth place in the table, enjoying their most successful spell in Division One since attaining top flight status for the first time in 1955.

Forest were in fifth spot, one point ahead of their hosts — both teams, from their lofty perch, eyed UEFA Cup qualification.

On a mudheap of a surface Forest quickly returned to winning ways, following defeat at the hands of champions Liverpool, although not before playing second fiddle to the Hatters for the first half-hour, as Luton dominated to take the lead through Paul Walsh, who was soon to be on his way to Anfield.

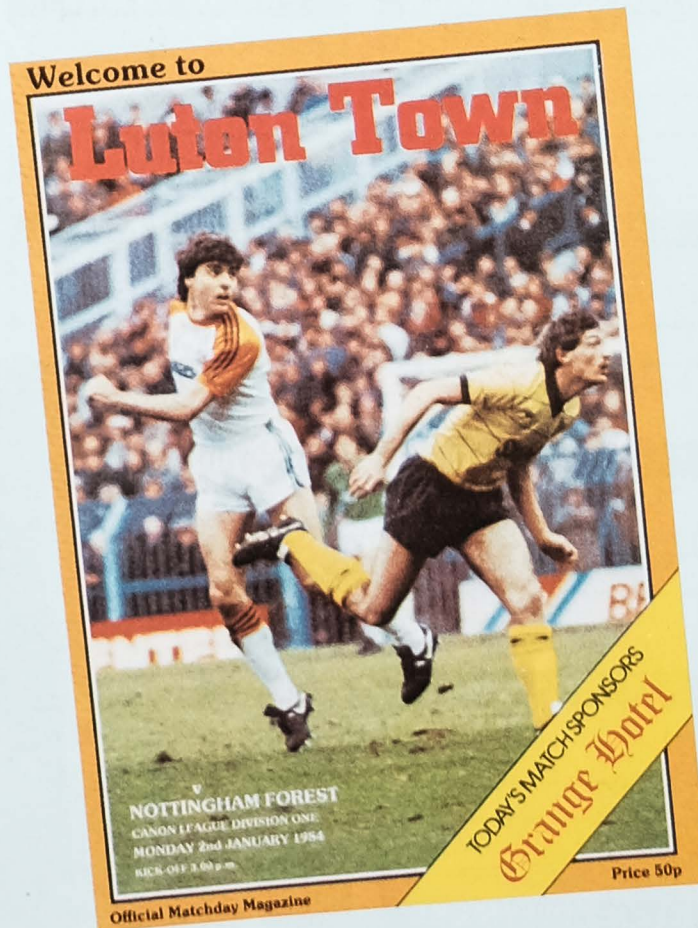
Without a direct strike on the Town goal, Forest's attack erupted into life with a three goal salvo, in seven minutes, shortly before half-time.

The Reds first on 37 minutes had luck written all over it, as a Garry Birtles free-kick deflected wickedly off the Luton defensive wall to leave Les Sealey stranded — more good fortune followed.

Luton, denied a free-kick on the half-way line, were penalised themselves a few seconds later when a free-kick was awarded to Forest. With Luton protesting at the decision, Steve Hodge took advantage to fire home from the edge of the area.

Town, in total disarray, conceded a third, two minutes from the break, as Peter Davenport diverted a Steve Wigley drive beyond Les Sealey, the Hatters had moved from dominance to despair in seven short minutes.

Pleat rallied Luton at half-time — Hans Van Breukelen twice came to the Reds rescue with fine saves, to deny Brian Stein and Paul Elliott, before Luton added their second in the 63rd minute, as ex-Dulwich Hamlet striker, Nigerian born Chukwuemeka Nwajobi, making his league debut, raised Hatters hopes of a revival.



The revival was not to be as Forest applied themselves with a resolute defensive display to earn victory — the three goals took the Reds tally to 41 in 22 outings — leading goalscorers in the division.

Luton might well have been aggrieved at their loss. In a thrilling encounter fortune had, more than once, played it's agonising part!

Attendance : 12,126.

HATTERS : Sealey, Stephens, Thomas, Horton, Elliott, Donaghy, Hill, B. Stein, Walsh, Bunn (Antic), Nwajobi.

FOREST : Van Breukelen, Anderson, Swain, Fairclough, Hart, Bowyer, Wigley, Davenport (Wallace), Birtles, Hodge, Walsh.