

PLEAT SLAMS TV — AND FANS

DAVID PLEAT launched an attack on live TV and apathetic supporters after Sunday's glamour match enticed a mere 11,265 spectators to Kenilworth Road.

"I think that should set the alarm bells ringing all over England," said the manager.

The gate was 5,744 down on the corresponding league fixture last season:

"In many ways it was a disappointing crowd," said the manager, after watching his side mauled by Manchester in front of millions of arm-chair viewers.

"Maybe that is the reason why we should relocate to Milton Keynes, because people here are not interested enough to come."

Luton will not suffer financially from the lower-than-expected gate because the Football League have a special fund to cover such contingencies. But that, as Pleat emphasised, was not the point.

"I'm thinking of future generations of players. Where will they come from? Football live on TV is not the real thing. There is no substitute for being at the game. Let snooker and darts have TV. Football is a fascinating team game that people should come and watch."

Pleat offered no excuses for the outcome of the game, which United won convincingly with a pair each for Robson and Whiteside and a fifth from Stapleton.

Moses hit a post and Whiteside spurned his

LUTON 0
MAN UTD 5
Robson 2, Whiteside 2,
Stapleton.

83/84

hat-trick by whacking an easy chance against the crossbar.

It's difficult to salvage crumbs of comfort from such a comprehensive annihilation but there were turning points when fate could have dealt Luton a kinder hand.

The first was when United scored their second. Whiteside's headed goal stemmed from a throw-in, a move that would not have been permitted had referee Alan Robinson taken notice of his linesman who was flagging for an offside moments earlier.

The second blow for Luton was the amazing save from Bailey that kept out Frank Bunn's brilliant volley. Had the ball found the net the score would have been 2-1 and the match within reach for Luton.

But even if the breaks had gone Luton's way Hatters would still have struggled on a day when United found the perfect blend of skill, pace and strength while Luton had too many players not performing to their best ability.

England manager Bobby Robson was in the crowd, with one eye on his next fixture, the match in France on

February 29.

But of Luton's contenders only Paul Walsh would have left any lasting impression although Ricky Hill did magnificently well considering he is still carrying an injury that kept him out the side for four games.

Supporters intent on keeping Hatters in Luton used the presence of the TV cameras to extend their campaign. But their aircraft trailing a banner proclaiming: "Home is Luton not MK" had to compete with a fun shoot-in before the game featuring Jimmy Greaves, Ian St John and Gordon Banks.

The Oak Roaders, who later disgraced themselves by hanging on to the ball, tried to give their side the best possible start by taunting the opposition about their shameful cup defeats at the hands of Oxford and Bournemouth.

Walsh put Luton in with a chance after two minutes when a fierce long-range volley was saved by Bailey.

Brian Stein went close with a flicked header before Bryan Robson put United ahead with a



● Aylott is stopped in a rare Luton attack.

shot deflected off Mal Donaghy.

Whiteside's controversial goal after the offside incident gave Manchester a commanding half-time lead.

Paul Elliott allowed the ball to reach Moran and the United defender missed a golden chance before robbing Elliott at the death at the other end.

The third goal came when Sealey set off on a kamikaze charge beyond his area and Robson lifted the ball over his head.

Stapleton scored an easy goal from a patient build-up and Whiteside tapped home United's final goal to complete a sweet four-man move.

As the final whistle blew Luton could not have been relishing the prospect of meeting Liverpool next Saturday. Injured skipper

CANON LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Liverpool.....	27	9	3	2	28	8	7	4	2	17	12	55
Nottm F.....	27	9	3	2	31	13	7	1	5	22	18	52
Man Utd.....	27	9	2	3	29	14	5	7	1	22	15	51
West Ham.....	27	9	2	2	30	11	6	3	5	14	15	50
Q.P.R.....	27	9	3	3	25	9	5	1	6	20	15	46
Soton.....	27	8	3	2	18	10	4	4	5	12	13	43
Tottenham.....	27	6	3	4	22	19	5	4	5	24	25	40
Norwich.....	28	7	4	3	23	14	3	5	5	10	18	39
LUTON.....	26	5	2	6	24	24	7	1	5	17	17	39
Coventry.....	26	5	3	4	17	13	5	5	4	18	20	38
Watford.....	27	6	3	4	26	22	5	1	8	22	26	37
Aston Villa.....	26	9	3	2	22	15	1	4	7	16	26	37
Everton.....	26	5	5	3	11	8	4	3	6	10	19	35
Arsenal.....	27	5	3	6	21	19	5	1	7	21	20	34
Ipswich.....	26	7	2	4	24	14	2	3	8	12	21	32
Sunderland.....	26	5	5	3	17	11	3	3	7	9	25	32
West Brom.....	27	6	2	5	17	18	3	2	9	13	27	31
Birmingham.....	27	5	2	6	13	12	3	4	7	14	21	30
Leicester.....	27	5	4	4	21	21	2	4	8	21	28	29
Stoke.....	27	5	3	5	16	18	0	5	9	7	29	23
Notts C.....	26	3	3	6	22	28	2	2	10	14	29	20
Wolves.....	26	2	5	7	12	23	2	1	9	9	30	18

(● After Tuesday's games)

Graeme Souness was at the match on behalf of TV and as he left the ground he told me: "I'll be back here next week — playing."

LUTON: Sealey, Stephens, Donaghy, Elliott, Thomas;

Hill, Horton, Bunn, Stein, Walsh, Aylott, Sub: Antic.

MAN UTD: Bailey, Duxbury, Moran, Hogg, Albiston, Robson, Wilkins, Robson, Muhren, Whiteside, Stapleton, Moses. Sub: Graham.