

Wayne's a Luton tonic

84/85 (FAC)

MATCHWINNER Wayne Turner cracked open a couple of bottles of Lucozade last night to start his celebrations. Local lad Turner will remember this, his 24th birthday, with relish after hammering home the solitary goal that sends Luton into an FA Cup quarter-final battle with Millwall on Wednesday evening.

After five hours of furious and frenetic action Luton had edged out their neighbours at the third time of asking.

But why the pick-me-up drink and not something a bit stronger? Happy Hatter Turner explained: "I've had the flu all week. In fact, after Wednesday's match at Watford I spent Thursday in bed.

"That was my first goal for nearly two years. Not a bad present, is it?"

"But I've never felt so shattered, you know what it's like with flu. I'm chesty and I've got a rotten headache but

Luton 1 Watford 0: by PAUL PARISH

that goal is the best tonic of all."

Turner was only back in the side for the games with Watford because Peter Nicholas is Cup-tied.

Then, in the 58th minute, he burst into Watford's penalty area to flash home the winner from Gary Parker's incisive and perceptive pass.

It was a rare gem in a game of pace and tension, where passion replaced panache and speed took over from subtlety.

But it underlined Luton's renewed hopes and gave manager David Pleat, celebrating his appointment to the

club's board of director's even more to smile about.

Pleat said: "The position of this club is healthier than it was at Christmas. We're no longer a soft touch. We're more resilient and that's down to some of the players who have joined us.

"Most important, however, is staying in the First Division but it's nice to win a game like this and have a little bit of glory."



One of those newcomers, Steve Foster, was ultimately the man who broke Watford's heart. That familiar white headband shone like a beacon at the heart of Luton's defence.

Watford had looked the better of two average outfits in a first half remembered more for the physical combat than the performance of either side. Ten free-kicks in the first 12 minutes, tells its own story but referee Jeff Bray didn't caution one player, suggesting that it was enthusiasm rather than malice that inspired a series of clattering tackles.

The wizardry of John Barnes, surprisingly called up after a quick recovery from a hamstring injury, suggested Watford had the player with the skill needed to separate the sides. Les Sealey denied him in the two noteworthy moments of a scrambled first half.

Luton got their act together after half-time, Turner got his glittering goal and Watford's ambitions dissolved as they pumped high ball after high ball into Luton's penalty area.

Manager Graham Taylor, remembering those giddy moments last May when Watford reached the Cup Final, said: "Perhaps neither side really deserved to go through but somebody had got to lose and this time it was us."