

AND THRILLING SIX GOAL BLAST TO KICK OFF 1989 ...

STUNNING START!

JEKYLL AND HYDE Hatters stormed back from their worst defeat of the season in stunning style.

The same team that had trudged silently away from Plough Lane on New Year's Eve returned to action 48 hours later and annihilated Southampton for their best win of the term.

The Luton defence that was given such a torrid time by the Dons was never really tested.

And Hatters got just the New Year tonic they needed when mighty Mick Harford struck only his third goal of the season in the second minute — stoking up confidence again.

The million-pound striker told the Herald: "We did not do ourselves justice at Wimbledon.

"By our own admission we were terrible, so we needed a win, and the goals to boost our goal difference.

"That was my best game for quite a while — I needed a few goals too.

"I'm a centre-forward and you need to score — that's what we are judged by."

Harford's contribution was enormous on a day when Hatters could — and perhaps should — have hit double figures.

Southampton — the team Hatters must face in the Littlewoods Cup quarter finals later this month — spent 45 minutes warming up before the kick-off.

But they were left stone cold by Harford's

LUTON 6 SOUTHAMPTON 1 By MICHAEL WEINSTEIN

early strike.

Kingsley Black, in for axed David Oldfield, swung the ball in and John Burrridge was left rooted to his line as



• Scorer — Kingsley Black.

Harford powered into the top corner.

Hatters' second attack of the day made it 2-0 — and the foundations for a slaughter were laid.

Black seized on an appalling Graham Baker back pass to turn and shoot in an instant

past Burrridge from 15 yards.

Rarely can Hatters' finishing have been so clinical, but they did let the visitors off the hook as another six chances went begging before the break.

Roy Wegerle screwed one wide and saw another fine chance fly off Burrridge and onto the bar, while the keeper somehow stopped a Marvin Johnson deflection from point-blank range.

Avalanche

But if the crowd were worried that Southampton might get back into the game — a second-half goal avalanche soon settled their nerves.

• Goal number three came in the 54th minute as Wegerle finally found his scoring touch. The striker controlled David Preece's long ball with his right foot and fired over Burrridge with his left in one movement.

• Saints pulled one back



• Unstoppable — Burrridge is stranded as Harford nets his second and Hatters' sixth.

straight from the restart, but Wegerle was not to be out done, and in the 56th minute he fired an unstoppable shot home for his eighth goal in nine games.

• Ricky Hill made it five on 69 minutes, when Danny Wilson teed him up for a 20 yarder, after Kevin Moore's suicidal pass across the face of goal.

• And Mick Harford

completed the scoring with 17 minutes still on the clock when he chested home from a pin-point Wilson cross.

Harford — who had blasted just over from 25 yards in the first-half and missed with a 57th minute header — had his best chance for a hat-trick on 78 minutes but failed to connect properly from eight yards.

88/89

THE LINE-UP

LUTON: Sealey, R Johnson, Harvey, Preece, Foster, M Johnson, Wilson, Wegerle, Harford, Hill, Black. Subs: Breacker and Dowie.

SOUTHAMPTON: Burrridge, Forrest, Statham, Case, Moore, Osman, R Wallace, Maddison, Le Tissier, Baker, D Wallace.

• Attendance: 8,637.