



PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Hatters in the air . . . Mick Harford's header gives Luton the early lead they proved unable to hold at Wembley
Luton Town 1, Nottingham Forest 3

88/89

Son shines for Clough and Forest

David Lacey at Wembley

THE opening instalment of the Clough trilogy was completed at Wembley yesterday with just the hint of a family crisis. By the end of the afternoon, however, father and son were doing fine — and if the preliminaries had been dominated by Brian, the day belonged to Nigel.

Yet Nottingham Forest won the Littlewoods Cup — Brian Clough's first trophy for nine years — only after Luton Town, the holders, had seized a match which was becoming a matter of just passing interest and turned it into a full-blooded contest of skill and mounting excitement.

Mick Harford's goal gave Luton the half-time lead, a situation Forest had faced against Southampton in the 1979 final when they had gone on to win 3-2. This time Forest made less of a meal of their recovery.

A penalty needlessly conceded by Sealey, the Luton goal-

keeper, early in the second half enabled Nigel Clough to bring the scores level. Neil Webb then gave Forest the lead after Clough had initiated the move, and Clough scored his second goal to complete what was in the end a convincing victory.

Brian Clough, back on the bench after being banned from the touchline on League grounds for punches thrown at invading fans, took it all phlegmatically. He did not even punch the air when his off-spring scored.

Contrary to some predictions the Nottingham Forest manager did not lead out his team in tracksuit and trainers. But no sooner had he taken his place below the Royal Box than the blazer and flannels gave way to his more familiar attire.

Luton began by showing how they had reached Wembley for another year and ended by demonstrating how they had slipped into the First Division's bottom three after seven successive League defeats. In attack they were rich in ideas,

with Harford a frequent threat in the air, but in defence they grew increasingly ragged.

If Nigel Clough became the game's ultimate master, Luton's Danny Wilson was its leading strategist before half-time. With the tireless Preece and worldly-wise Hill giving him consistent support, the former Forest player found the space and the angles to expose one of the League's best-organised defences.

The shot from Grimes that Sutton turned over the bar just before the quarter-hour remained the game's most meaningful moment until the opening goal ten minutes before half-time. Preece's corner from the left was cleared out to Wilson on the right and a superb cross found Harford only half-leaping to head past Sutton, the ball glancing into the net off the goalkeeper's arm.

While Nottingham Forest had put together some delightful passing movements before the interval their football badly missed Carr's speed on the

right and required a touch more urgency all round.

As soon as the second half began there were signs that this had been the theme of Brian Clough's half-time talk. The ball was played earlier into space and out to the wings.

Not that the equaliser owed a great deal to deep thinking. At the beginning of February, when the teams had met in the League at Kenilworth Road, Sealey had conceded a penalty by bringing down Hodge in needless circumstances.

Now he repeated the process as Hodge drifted into the area and went wide after collecting a pass from Webb. A year ago at Wembley Andy Dibble, Sealey's deputy, had saved a penalty against Arsenal. Now Clough sent Sealey the wrong way.

Once Luton had been breached, with the midfield tiring, the walls fell in on them. Clough, Webb and Hodge ruled. In the 69th minute Clough appeared to lose the ball to Black deep in his own half but recovered quickly and found Gaynor

in space on the right. Webb, trotting mildly through the middle and staying onside, met Gaynor's cross and beat Sealey without breaking stride.

Fourteen minutes from the end three Forest players — Pearce, Gaynor and Clough — advanced on five defenders and passed the ball through them as if they were statues. Clough scored sweetly from another cross by Gaynor and Forest had won the tournament for the third time.

Now their priority will be Saturday's FA Cup semi-final against Liverpool, with the Simod Cup final against Everton at Wembley on April 30 promising them another pleasant afternoon out. So far as the family Clough is concerned, that could be the afternoon father paints the parlour — with Brian you never know.

Luton Town: Sealey; Breacker, Grimes (McDonough, 76min), Preece, Foster, Beaumont, D Wilson, Wegerle, Harford, Hill, Black.

Nottingham Forest: Sutton; Laws, Pearce, Walker, T Wilson, Hodge, Gaynor, Webb, Clough, Chapman, Parker.

Referee: R Milford (Bristol)