Telephone Advertising: (0462) 423423; Editorial (0582) 31288; Dunstable Editorial: (0582) 608811

Sports News

TOWN MATCH VERDICT

Southend Utd...2
Luton Town.....1
(Half time 1-0)

★ ★

Brian Swain reports — **Action pictures: John Sherwood**

Great goal, but not much more to cheer about

● MY BALL: Southend goalkeeper Paul Sansome gets to the ball ahead of Town striker Geoff Aunger.

FOR ten minutes or so at Roots Hall on Saturday Luton Town looked as though they might grab an unlikely point.

Fortunate to be only one down after a poor first half, they were lifted by a wonderful goal from **Kerry Dixon,** who seems to enjoy hitting the Southend net.

Briefly the home side looked rocky, but with the Town unable to press home the attack with any conviction Southend recovered their poise.

It took them 12 minutes to regain the lead, and after that there was little hope the Town would hit back again.

They looked less than perfectly balanced.

RETURN

In defence, **Marvin Johnson** was missing for the first time this season, because of a hamstring injury received on the training pitch.

Manager **David Pleat** completed his Premiership loan allocation for the season by bringing back **Mitchell Thomas,** the first lad he signed under the YTS scheme at Kenilworth Road 12 years ago.

Having groomed him carefully, Mr Pleat later took the young fullback with him to Spurs.

But they, and West Ham who bought him from Terry Venables, left him out of their league sides, and at Southend the 28-year-old defender had the bad luck to be up against a side which used the flanks very much better than the Town did.

Thomas hardly had time to acclimatise before Southend right back Gary Poole got round the back on an overlap run, and crossed for Ricky Otto to head in a near-post goal with the game barely two minutes old.

Otto, tricky and quick, proved to be a real thorn in the Town's side, much more than the recalled **Scott Houghton** was able to be on the Town's left.

In the first half the Town looked disjointed, with Dixon and **Geoff Aunger** almost isolated, and starved of service because the Town's main worry was about defending.

Southend, who were up to fourth in the table with Saturday's win, were a good passing side, nimble and incisive, particularly down the wings.

Houghton made an early effort with a run and shot which went wide of the far post, and later **Paul Telfer** got into a promising position for a drive which was deflected by a defender for a corner.

But the more consistent attacking was done by Southend, and **Juergen Sommer** turned in another man of the match show to keep their interval lead to a single goal.

He was let off the hook when Jon Hunt put a header straight at him from Otto's deep cross, but he then had to make three very good saves as Southend threatened to run riot.

Gary Jones tricked **John Dreyer** on the edge of the box and placed a shot perfectly towards the corner, but Sommer took off to dive to his left and push the ball away.

Then he finger-tipped Graham Bressington's header over the top, after the Town failed to deal with a corner, and finally he made another acrobatic dive to deal with a shot by fullback Chris Powell, who had been played in by good passing by Derek Payne and Andy Jones.

The half-time whistle was a merciful release for Town fans, but our spirits were given a massive lift as soon as the second half started.

Southend were pushing forward when Aunger scrambled for possession. The ball fell to **Des Linton,** just inside the Town half, and he quickly knocked it forward.

Dixon looked offside, but he raced clear, to hit the sort of goal he would have been proud of at the pinnacle of his England career.

He found a few yards of real pace, held off an attempted challenge by Andy Edwards, and hit a tremendous shot, in full flight with his right foot from just outside the box.

Paul Sansome was still making his dive as the net bulged, and there was a second of stunned silence in the ground before the Town fans behind the goal erupted in delight.

IMPROVED

It gave the team a boost as well, but although their passing improved nothing came of it, and having won the first half by a wide margin the home side shaded the second, aided by a controversial winner in the 58th minute.

Referee Graham Poll made several strange decisions, with both sides suffering and then benefitting.

The question when Hunt shot the winner, after a very good Southend move across both sides of the pitch, was if men in front of him were interfering with play.

Gary Jones made the final pass for Hunt to shoot home from the edge of the box, with a deflection off **Trevor Peake** leaving Sommer stranded.

Left back Thomas was particularly outraged: he had been dragged out wide to cover Brett Angell, who was in an offside position.

But Mr Poll ruled that he was not interfering with play, and the goal stood.

And we would be kidding ourselves if we thought the Town lost because of a ref's hairline decision.

The Town rarely threatened a second equaliser, despite the introduction of both subs. **Paul Dickov** replaced below-par **Ceri Hughes,** and **Jamie Campbell** took over midfield duties of **Alan Harper,** to try to give that department more of an attacking thrust.

Dickov managed to fire off one shot, but without enough power to worry Sansome, and four mintues from time Southend were denied a third goal with the off-side decision favouring the Town this time: Jones lobbed into the net after Hunt attacked the Town's left flank, but this time the flag waving against Angell was accepted.

The Town certainly did not deserve a worse defeat in view of their improvement in the second half.

But the record points up the problem: in nine away games in the league only once have they managed to score two goals, and that on the night Crystal Palace hit three at the other end.

Dixon's goal at Roots Hall was something special, but I would love to see a few scrappy ones as well!

The match details

TOWN: Sommer; Linton, Peake, Dreyer, Thomas; Telfer, Hughes (Dickov 69 mins), Harper (Campbell 83 mins), Houghton; Dixon, Aunger. Goalkeeper sub: Petterson.

SOUTHEND: Sansome; Poole, Bressington, Edwards, Powell; Hunt, Jones, Payne, Otto; Jones, Angell. Subs not used: Gridelet, Lee and goalkeeper Royce.

THE GOALS: 1-0 two minutes: Ricky Otto, near post header after right back Gary Poole made the overlap to deliver a quality cross; 1-1, 25 seconds into the second half: Kerry Dixon, stunning 20-yard drive powered into the top corner after beating the offside trap — or at least the linesman thought so — and holding off an attempted challenge by Andy Edwards; 2-1, 58 minutes: Jon Hunt, shot from 20 yards deflected by Trevor Peake, with offside not given against two men behind the defence on the grounds that they were not interfering with play.

OTHER STRIKES: Town two saved, five wide; Southend six saved, three wide and one by Andy Jones disallowed for offside against Angell. Corners: 7-1 to Southend.

BOOKED: Ricky Otto and Graham Bressington of Southend and Trevor Peake and Mitchell Thomas, all for fouls.

REFEREE: Graham Poll, Berkhamstead. Very inconsistent, and upset both sides, with Southend robbed of the chance to continue a promising attack when he pulled back play to book Trevor Peake after Otto had got clear. It gave the advantage to the Town.

ATTENDANCE: 5,567 thanks to a good following from Luton. Only three matches have attracted bigger crowds at Roots Hall so far this season.

ENTERTAINMENT: mediocre, with Juergen Sommer keeping the Town in it with three superb first-half saves when Southend looked like running up a big score. The Town were better in the second half.

The Town's facts and figures so far

● CHART SHOWS Town score first, goalscorers, gates and league position.

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE DIV I

1993

AUGUST			
14 Watford (h) 2-1 (Telfer, Dixon)	9,149	—	
21 Portsmouth (a) 0-1	12,248	—	
28 Nottm Forest (h) 1-2 (Hartson)	9,788	22	
SEPTEMBER			
11 Bolton Wdrs (h) 0-2	7,199	24	
14 Tranmere Rov (a) 1-2 (Benjamin)	5,871	24	
18 Middlesbrough (a) 0-0	12,487	23	
25 Birmingham (a) 1-1 (Telfer)	11,081	23	
OCTOBER			
2 Barnsley (h) 5-0 (Oakes 2, Hartson, James, Houghton)	6,201	21	
5 Bristol City (h) 0-2	5,956	21	
9 Derby County (a) 1-2 (Williams)	15,885	23	
16 Notts Co (h) 1-0 (Dickov)	6,366	21	
20 Sunderland (a) 0-2	13,760	23	
23 Oxford Utd (a) 1-0 (Hughes)	5,161	19	
30 Leicester (h) 0-2	8813	21	
NOVEMBER			
2 C. Palace (a) 2-3 (Aunger, Hughes)	10,925	23	
7 Charlton (h) 1-0 (Telfer)	6,327	18	
14 Southend (a) 1-2 (Dixon)	5,567	18	

APPEARANCES (as sub in brackets): Ever-presents with 17 each: Sommer, Peake, Dreyer and Telfer. Johnson 16, Hughes 16, Oakes 13(2), Harper 12, Hartson 9(1), Dixon 8(1), Linton 8(1), James 7(1), Preece 6, Dickov 5(3), Rees 5(1), Williams 4(8), Houghton 4(5), Aunger 3, Thomas 1, Campbell (6) Petterson (1). Before transfer: Benjamin (2)1.

Number of players used: 22 (23 last season).

GOALS: Telfer 3. Dixon, Oakes, Hartson and Hughes 2. One each by Houghton, Williams, James, Dickov, Aunger and Benjamin.

ASSISTS: Oakes 4, Hughes 3, Dixon and Johnson 2, and one each by Williams, Hartson and Harper.

THE COCA-COLA CUP

Round 1 (1): Aug 17 Cambridge (a)	0-1	4,065
Round 1 (2): Aug 24 Cambridge (h)	0-1	3,861

APPEARANCES: Two each by Sommer, James, Johnson, Peake, Dreyer, Benjamin, Preece and Hughes. Oakes 1(1), Houghton 1(1), Rees 1, Telfer 1, Campbell 1, Williams 1, Hartson (1).

THE ANGLO-ITALIAN CUP

Aug 31 Watford (a) 1-2 (Preece)		2,854
Sep 7 Southend (h) 1-1 (Dixon)		1,823

APPEARANCES: Two each by Sommer, Hughes, Preece, Peake, Dreyer, Johnson, Houghton, Dixon and Hartson. Williams 1(1), James 1, Telfer 1, Linton 1. One each as sub by Oakes, Greene and Woolgar.

● EQUALISER: Kerry Dixon gets clear of Southend defender Andy Edwards to rifle in the Town's goal. Below: Geoff Augner is the first to start the celebrations.

THE WEEKEND'S FULL LOCAL SOCCER RESULTS

S. Midlands League

O'BRIEN PREMIER CUP: Arseley 3 Harpenden 1.

O'BRIEN CHALLENGE TROPHY: Letchworth 0 Brache 2.

FLOODLIT CUP: Hoddesdon 0 Sawbridgeworth 2; Welwyn 1 P. Bar Crus 1.

PREMIER DIVISION: Bedford Tn 7 Shillington 1; Biggleswade 4 P. Bar Tn 2; Buckingham 6 Arlesey 2; Hoddesdon 1 Hatfield 3; Langford 5 Harpenden 1.

SENIOR DIVISION: Ampthill Tn 1 Winslow Utd 2; Bedford Utd 1 Shenley 5; New Bradwell 1 Totteraho 2; Pitstone 0 Leverstock Gn 4; Risborough Rgrs 3 Tring 2; Toddington Rov 3 London Colney 2.

DIV ONE: Emberton 1 Eaton Bray 1; Sandy 2 Scot 3.

RESERVE SECTION

TROPHY: Shefford 6 Ashcroft 2. **DIV 1A:** London Colney 9 61FC 0; Tottermhoe 1 Langley 2. **DIV 1B:** Arlesey 2 Biggleswade 2; Hatfield 3 Leighton 1. **DIV 2:** M. Benz 1 Ampthill 1; P. Bar Crus 4 Sandy 2; Walden 4 Risboro 1; Winslow 1 De Havilland 3.

Luton District League

PREMIER DIVISION: AC Cadoza 7 Singh Sabha 0; Crawley Green 1 Old Dunstablians 3; Luton OB Res 6 Studham 1; Stockwood Ath 4 Flitwick Tn 2; Ebony 3 Dagnall 5.

DIV ONE: Brickmakers Arms 0 Lea Sp Stopsley 7; Kent Res 2 Luton OB A 1; Markyate 1 Lewsey Pk Res 1; L. Eagles 7 Flitwick Tn Res 1.

DIV TWO: First & Last 7 Markyate Res 1.

Beds FA cups

SATURDAY COMPETITIONS

SENIOR CUP: 61FC 1 Shefford Tn 2

INTERMEDIATE CUP: Caddington 1 Barton Rov 3; Leighton Ath 2 Kent 5; Lewsey Pk 2 Shillington Res 1.

JUNIOR CUP: Henlow Italians 1 Thresher 1; Studham Res 1 Heath 5; De-La-Rue 0 St. Cuthberts 2; Houghton Tn Res 3 Brickhill Tigers 3; Delco Res 1 Caldecote 2.

JUNIOR CHARITY CUP: Harveys 1 Sportsman Dunstable 1; Bromham Res 5 Eaton Bray Res 0; Corinthians 4 61FC A 3; Flitwick A 0 Golden Lion 4; Compasses 10 Moggerhanger Res 2; Old Dunstablians Res 2 Thistle Res 0; Thresher Res 4 Cople Sports 0.

SUNDAY COMPETITIONS

CENTENARY CUP: Boro Arms 3 AFC Stopsley 1; Crescent 1 Swan Rgrs 2; Houghton Tn Res 1 W. Horse 3; Dynamo 3 Streatley Chequers 3; Fox & Hound 3 Casa Bianca 6; Lewsey Soc 1 Wells Star 0; FC Toddington 2 AFC Chequers 0; Sportsman 0 Blunham Sports 4; Southcott Res 2 Park Tn 3 aet.

JUNIOR CUP: Peacock 3 Lea Sports 2; St. Joseph's 3 Lewsey 2 aet; Boater 1 Leighton WMC 4; Favourite 3 Axe & Compass 2; TRW 0 Brewery 2; AFC Napoli 7 NT Sugar Loaf 3.

LOWER JUNIOR CUP: Boro Arms 3 Lewsey Res 0; Dog & Duck 7 Ampthill Alb 0; Southcott 3 Wigmore 5; Silsoe 7 Axe & Compass 1.

The NHC Sunday League

PREMIER DIV: Sacred Heart 1 Celtic 0; Hexton 0 Heron 1; Green Man 3 St. Joseph's 1; Crawley 2 Coral 5; Limbury Black Swan 2 GIS 2.

DIVISION ONE: Lilley 9 Crawley Res 1.

DIV TWO: FC Houghton 2 Houghton Town 1; Stopsley Harriers 9 Valley 0 abandoned.

DIV THREE: Black Swan 2 Old Moat House 1; Coulter 3 Coral Res 4; GIS Res 1 Red Star 1; Vaux High Town 1 Caddington Res 4.

DIV FOUR: Flint 3 NT Sugar Loaf 2.

DIV FIVE: Royal Mail 1 Barbarians 0.

DIV SIX: Luton YS 1 Woodstock 0; Barn Owl 2 White Hart 4; Black Swan Res 3 Wellington 3.

DIV SEVEN: Markyate 0 Hansom Cab 5; Red Star 1 Limbury Utd 3; Thameslink 1 Lynmore 4.

Luton Sunday League

DIV ONE: High Tn 14 Oakley Res 2.

S. Beds Sunday League

PREMIER DIV: Farley Eagles 2 G. Man Clophill 4; Coach & Horses 3 Moor Pk 2.

DIV ONE: Rose & Crown 2 Ramridge Sp 0; Moor Pk Res 4 Lea U 3; Britannia 1 Inter City 1.

DIV TWO: Sundon Pk Res 3 Sportsman 1; Tophill 1 Cosmopolitan 3; Albion 0 Crown & Keg 6; Windsor Castle 1 Emerald 1.

DIV THREE: Eddie's Bar 3 Painters Res 3.

Chiltern Youth League

UNDER 17 DIV ONE: Dunstable Tn 0 Downside 3; N Pagnell 3 Water Eaton 0. **DIV TWO:** Gyosei 2 AFC Houghton 9; Ampthill 1 Mandeville 1; Tring 0 Downside B 1; Manor 5 Ramridge B 2.

UNDER 15 DIV ONE: Astra 7 Dunstable Tn 3; Limbury BC 0 Lewsey Centre 2. **DIV 2:** Delco Dynamo 3 Ramridge B 4; Downside 1 H. Hatters 4.

UNDER 14 DIV ONE: Leighton Cor 3 Dunstable Tn 3. **DIV 3:** Copenhagen Colts 3 WL Saints 2; Downside 0 Icknield Ath 14.

UNDER 13 DIV ONE: Sundon Pk 4 Lewsey Centre 0; St. Joseph's 3 Ramridge A 1. **DIV 2:** Kempston Rurals 5 Ampthill 4; Selby 14 Toddington 1.

UNDER 12 DIV 1: AFC Houghton 0 Limbury A 15; Celtic 4 Ramridge Rgrs 5; Lewsey 5 Leighton Cor 2; St. Joseph's 5 Ampthill A 1. **DIV 2:** Gliders 3 Redbourne 14; Jets 4 Barton Stars 1; Sundon Pk Rgrs 5 H Hatters 1.

UNDER 11 DIV 1: Lewsey A 4 Sundon Pk 2. **DIV 2:** Limbury 2 Celtic 4; Redbourne 1 Leighton Cor B 6.

UNDER 10 DIV 1: Aylesbury 2 Dunstable Colts 1. **DIV 2:** Sundon Pk 1 Limbury 1; Dunstable Tn 2 Ampthill 0; Sacred Heart 0 Flitwick Eagles 3.

BEDS UNDER-18 CUP: Sundon Pk 3 Wootton 1; Park Tn 4 Warden Hill 1; Ramridge 4 Icknield 1; Limbury 3 Leighton Tn 1.

BEDS UNDER-16 CUP: St. Joseph's 6 St. Mary's 1; Dunstable 6 Cranfield 2; Warden Hill 2 Bedford BC 0.

BEDS UNDER-14 CUP: Warden Hill 4 Kempston 5; Sacred Heart 10 Luton BC 2; Potton 4 Lea Sports 2; St. Joseph's 1 Lewsey 0; Woodside 1 Arlesey 5.

The First Division

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	P
Charlton	17	6	2	1	16	5	3	3	2	7	9	32
Tranmere	17	7	1	1	21	9	2	3	3	6	9	31
Leicester City	15	5	1	0	14	4	4	1	4	9	8	29
Southend	16	5	2	1	17	6	3	1	4	12	15	27
C. Palace	14	6	2	0	17	5	2	1	3	11	11	27
Stoke City	16	5	0	3	11	9	3	3	2	14	14	27
Derby Co	16	6	0	1	18	9	2	2	5	8	17	26
Bristol City	17	5	2	2	14	8	2	2	4	8	12	25
Portsmouth	16	5	2	1	14	8	1	5	2	11	15	25
Millwall	17	4	3	1	14	9	2	3	4	7	15	24
Wolves	17	3	5	1	15	9	2	3	3	12	10	23
Middlesbrough	16	3	3	2	13	6	3	2	3	12	12	23
Birmingham	16	4	3	2	13	12	1	2	4	6	11	20
Nottm Forest	16	3	3	2	13	12	2	2	4	10	11	20
Grimsby	16	2	5	1	9	4	2	3	3	12	14	20
Watford	15	4	2	2	14	12	1	1	5	8	17	18
Notts County	16	5	1	1	14	7	0	1	8	6	22	17
Luton Town	17	4	0	4	10	9	1	2	6	7	15	17
Sunderland	16	5	1	2	13	6	0	1	7	3	19	17
West Brom	15	4	3	1	19	13	0	1	6	5	14	16
Bolton Wdrs	15	3	2	2	12	9	1	2	5	9	15	16
Oxford Utd	16	4	2	2	15	11	0	2	6	5	18	16
Barnsley	17	1	1	6	7	15	3	2	4	14	18	15
Peterborough	15	3	4	1	12	7	0	2	5	3	14	15

Southend relieved to pick up the points

RIVAL managers and long-time friends — they were once team mates in an England Schoolboys side - **Barry Fry** and **David Pleat** both thought the result was about right at Roots Hall.

Said Fry: "We had a great start with the early goal, but then their goalkeeper kept Luton in the match. We would have had two or three more goals but for him.

"I said to our lads at half-time that one goal would not be enough, and Luton proved it."

The managers thought both teams did well to play passing football on a very windy day, and on a greasy pitch.

"I am just relieved to get the three points, because Luton are a good footballing side," said the Southend manager.

Mr Pleat said: "In the second half we moved up a gear and it became a very good game.

"The winner was an own goal by Trevor Peake, when players were off-side.

"To be fair I thought Southend shaded the game. But it deserved a better winning goal.

"We are disappointed that we still have not got back-to-back wins, but we didn't use the width of the pitch enough."

● **THREE OF Kerry Dixon's last four goals have been scored against Southend. Saturday's stunning effort was his second league goal of the season, following one on the opening day, against Watford.**

That came after his goal against Southend at Roots Hall on the final day of last season, and he was on target against them again in the 1-1 Anglo Italian Cup game at Kenilworth Road in September.