DAVE FLETT REPORTS: HATTERS' AWAYDAY AGONY LEAVES BELEAGUERED LAWRENCE WITH PLENTY TO PONDER

● SHOPPE THWARTED: Tony Thorpe's path is blocked by Mark McGregor's lunge

TAKING CAREY: David Oldfield gets round Wrexham skipper Brian

CHING ON WITH THE CHASE: Wrexham's Brian Carey (left) and Tony Thorpe

Wales of discontent as fans rubbish Lennie's rabble

A DESPONDENT Lennie Lawrence watched his team slump to their fourth successive league defeat and admitted afterwards that he was "very, very concerned" by the Hatters' fans reactions.

"Lawrence Out" chants resonated around Wrexham's Racecourse Ground after the first goal, second goal and at the final whistle, but what upset the beleaguered manager most was the travelling supporters' criticism of his players.

For those who made the long trip to Wales, their dark moods no doubt exacerbated by the long tailbacks on the M6, this was one lifeless performance too far.

"There's a lot of thinking to be done by me," Lawrence admitted somewhat ominously after this latest setback. "I have to take the fans' reaction on board. That's symptomatic of large numbers of Luton fans we've got serious problems. A mood seems to be spreading at the club and today was a very thought-provoking and interesting day."

Lawrence's main problem remains the failure of his players to produce any level of consistency.

Defensive howlers continue to be the club's undoing at Kenilworth Road but on this travels, at least in the last two games, it is their inability to create chances that is losing them games.

On Saturday, Steve Davis and Marvin Johnson were outstanding in the heart of the Hatters defence but further upfield the visitors' attacking impetus was non-existant.

David Oldfield had one of his frustrating afternoons and Tony Thorpe was anonymous for long periods but neither was helped by the service afforded to them by an unimaginative midfield.

Wrexham were not much better during a flat first half which must have represented one of the quietest 45 minutes of professional football ever played.

The loudest cheer of the half was reserved for the news of England's Five Nations defeat in France and only after that information did the home crowd seem interested in turning off their transistor radios and tuning in to the less attractive fixture in front of them.

In an uneventful first 45 minutes, a noticeable near-poor header from Steve Davis after a Graham Alexander corner was the nearest the Hatters came to breaking the first-half stalemate while, for Wrexham, Craig Skinner blazed over from close range on 16 minutes.

On the other occasions Wrexham threatened the visitors goal, a corkilled Kelvin Davis was alert to the danger, racing off his line to clear several times.

In the second half, the home team upped the tempo while Lennie Lawrence's men stayed in the same gear.

Neil Roberts should have put the Wrexhmen ahead in the 51st minute but shot over with the goal at his mercy after a Dean Spink cross and shortly afterwards home manager Brian Flynn took the first real game desperately in need of a change, introducing on-loan striker Southampton Steve Basham and young winger Neil Mummery.

Wainwright immediately set about tormenting Hatters right-back Darren Patterson and, on 63 minutes, it was his cross pulled back by Roberts that set up David Brammer for the opening goal.

The Wrexham midfielder made no mistake from just inside the visitors' penalty area, firing low and hard into the bottom corner as Kelvin Davis no chance.

At the other end, the Hatters were restricted to long-range efforts from Richard Levey and Alexander both seeing speculative efforts on target before Thorpe squandered the best chance, putting a sure shot into home keeper Andy Marriott's hands after hooking through from Steve Davis.

Predictably, Wrexham got a second when Oldfield's dreadful mistake Basham break down the right and cross for Roberts to hit a powerful rest of the net and seal his side's first home league victory for three months.

Scant consolation for the Hatters came when emergency striker Steve Davis took one minute to do what the best team performance to do in the previous 179 - scoring from the net. Davis had Mel McGrath the ball to lob in after Paul McLaren's cross.

The goal was greeted with more jeers than cheers from the Hatters travelling army as their team's slide into relegation troubles continues.

"We certainly didn't deserve to win but I thought it was a bit harsh to lose," Lawrence pondered afterwards. "It wasn't a good performance but it wasn't that bad. We've never been consistent enough like Wrexham were today and soon. If we'd have played like they did at home we'd have got a point out of the match. It's life I suppose."

When asked what he could now do to turn things round, Lawrence responded: "What I've preached but I wonder if that's the answer. I would like to be sitting down on Thursday at Fulham with some players to choose from and a few decisions to make."

"That has been my ambition at Luton for six months and more but it doesn't over look like materialising. Other clubs don't do nothing, we won't. I'm getting money to buy players in it's time."

"We're in a mess. We've lost four league games on Saturday when I thought we'd turned the corner. The bit has gone from over our head in November."

With an absolute vengeance.

The troubled manager refused to be drawn into talk of being away from the club but did add: "If you're a manager in this game especially at a club like Luton, you're swept away by emotion. Is the club you've got to think of."

WREXHAM: Andy Marriott, Mark McGregor, Phil Barrett, Brammer, Dave Ridler, Brian Carey, Craig Skinner, Neil Roberts (62), Gareth Davies, Dean Spink (sub Steve Basham, 58), Neil Mummery. Ward, Sub not used: Deryn Brace.

LUTON: Kelvin Davis, Darren Patterson, Richard Johnson, Marvin Waddock (Dwight Marshall, 73), Steve Davis, Mel McGrath, Paul Allen, Paul McLaren, David Oldfield, Tony Thorpe, Graham Alexander. Subs not used: Simon Davies, Sean Evers.

WREXHAM 2
Brammer 67, Roberts 89

HATTERS 1
Davis (5) 90

Attendance: 3,387

● WATCHING BRIEF: Hatters coach Trevor Peake, Mitchell Thomas and substitutes Dwight Marshall, Simon Davies and Sean Evers watch Chris Allen look for a way past Wrexham centre-half Dave Ridler.

● CHANG ON: David Oldfield shields the ball from a defender

LENNIE'S VERDICT

"The away fans have been pretty good but they rubished the team at the end which I think was a bit unjust. It's a burden they could do without and I'll have to think about that."

● FLYING AN NIGHTY: Wrexham centre-half Brian Carey jumps the highest at a Hatters' corner

Pictures: Fred Williams

LUTON TOWN FC 1997-98 THE STORY SO FAR ...

August	Opponents	Score	Scorers	Att	Pos
Sat. 9	Fulham	2-1		5,401	-
Sat. 12	Colchester (DC1)	1-5	Thorpe 87	2,840	-
Tues. 15	Southampton	0-2	Davis (2)	5,142	-
Sat. 19	Watford	1-1	Thorpe 12	6,192	-
Sat. 26	COLCHESTER (DC1)	1-5	Thorpe 34	2,818	-
Wed. 30	BLACKPOOL	1-1	Thorpe 82	5,404	12
September					
Sat. 2	MILLWALL	0-2		9,761	18
Sat. 9	Northampton	3-1		7,246	11
Sat. 16	Bournemouth	1-1	Marshall 43	4,661	13
Tues. 19	BURY (DC2)	2-1	Thorpe 45, Davis 90	3,433	-
Sat. 23	WREXHAM	3-5	Davis (3) 41, Gray 66	5,387	13
Tues. 26	BURY (DC2)	3-2	Davis (2) 18, Thorpe 73	2,257	-
Sat. 30	Oldham	2-1		4,924	11
October					
Sat. 7	WATFORD	3-2		9,051	10
Sat. 11	PLYMOUTH ARG	2-1	Thorpe 34, 54, Drury 81	4,811	10
Sat. 18	Bristol Rovers	1-0	Oldfield 68	4,496	10
Sat. 25	Wycombe	1-1	Thorpe 90	5,372	10
Sat. 29	BRENTFORD	2-0	Alexander 20, Thorpe 45	5,972	8
November					
Sat. 1	Wycombe	2-2	Alexander 7, Thorpe 74	5,215	9
Tues. 4	BURNLEY	2-3	Alexander 32, 90	5,315	10
Sat. 8	Bristol City	1-1	Thorpe 90	6,010	10
Sat. 15	TORQUAY (FACT)	2-1	Thorpe 90, Davis 90	4,705	10
Sat. 22	Stoke City	1-1	Thorpe 90	12,026	10
Sat. 29	York City	3-1	Alexander (3), Thorpe 79	4,725	10
December					
Tues. 2	GILLINGHAM	3-2	Davis (3) 20, Thorpe 77	4,804	11
Sat. 13	Millwall	1-1	Thorpe 90	9,206	10
Sat. 20	BRISTOL ROVERS	2-3	Allen 8, Oldfield 90	4,406	10
Sat. 26	SOUTHAMPTON	2-3	Davis (2) 45, Thorpe 90	9,255	10
Sun. 28	Mansfield	2-3	Davis (2) 90, Thorpe 90	7,991	10
January					
Sat. 3	Watford	0-1		6,000	10
Sat. 10	BLACKPOOL	3-1	Thorpe 59, 74, 76	5,181	10
Sat. 17	BRIDGTON (AWS)	3-1	Davis (2), Thorpe		
Sat. 17	BURNLEY	1-2	Alexander 79	6,007	10
Sat. 24	Fulham	1-2	Alexander 90	6,000	10
Tues. 27	BRIDGTON (AWS)	2-1	Alexander (2), Thorpe (pen)	2,000	-
Sat. 31	BOURNEMOUTH	1-3	Thorpe 90	5,663	10
February					
Sat. 7	Wrexham	1-2	Davis (5) 90	3,387	10
Sat. 14	Northampton	0-0			
Sat. 21	Bournemouth (AWS)	0-1			
Sat. 21	BRISTOL CITY	1-1			
Sat. 28	WIGAN	2-1			
Lg.Cup	Plymouth Arg.	A 3-1			
March					
Sat. 7	Wigan	1-1			
Sat. 14	WYCOMBE	1-1			
Sat. 21	Burnley	0-1			
Sat. 21	GRIMSBY	1-1			
Sat. 28	Walsall	1-1			
April					
Sat. 4	YORK CITY	0-1			
Sat. 11	Torquay	1-1			
Sat. 18	Gillingham	0-1			
Sat. 21	CHESTERFIELD	2-1			
Sat. 25	Bristol Rovers	1-1			
Sat. 28	Brentford	2-1			
May					
Sat. 2	CARLISLE	1-1			

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Fulham	40	25	7	8	74	37	82	+37
Bristol City	41	24	9	8	74	42	81	+32
Millwall	40	23	9	8	67	35	78	+32
Bristol Rovers	40	23	8	9	62	40	77	+22
Oldham	40	22	9	9	67	41	75	+26
Wrexham	40	22	9	9	64	41	75	+23
Chesterfield	40	21	9	10	67	41	72	+26
Bournemouth	40	21	9	10	59	38	72	+21
Gillingham	40	21	9	10	59	38	72	+21
Wycombe	40	19	12	9	56	41	69	+15
Wigan	40	19	12	9	56	41	69	+15
Chesterfield	40	19	9	12	56	41	66	+15
Blackpool	40	19	9	12	56	41	66	+15
Watford	39	17	9	13	56	39	60	+17
Walsall	40	17	9	14	53	45	60	+8
Wigan Athletic	39	16	8	15	43	45	56	+2
Brentford	40	15	9	16	45	46	54	-1
Preston	40	14	12	14	50	51	54	-1
Bury	40	14	9	17	44	51	51	-7
Luton Town	40	13	10	17	49	51	49	-2
Plymouth Arg.	40	13	10	17	48	57	49	-9
Stoke City	40	12	13	15	42	51	49	-9
Carlisle	40	12	10	18	49	61	46	-12
Southend United	40	11	12	17	38	51	45	-13

BAD BOYS

Player	Yellow Cards	Red Cards
Paul McLaren	7	0
Steve Davis	5	0
Dwight Marshall	5	0
Mikael Thomas	5	0
Gary Waddock	5	0
Paul Gray	4	0
David Oldfield	3	0
Graham Alexander	3	0
Tony Thorpe	3	0
Kevin Davis	2	0
Mel McGrath	2	0
Mark Pembroke	2	0
Marvin Johnson	2	0
Richard Johnson	2	0
Matthew Spring	2	0
Paul Allen	1	0
Steve Davis	1	0
Paul McLaren	1	0
Tony Thorpe	1	0
Kevin Davis	1	0
Graham Alexander	1	0
David Oldfield	1	0
Gary Waddock	1	0

APPEARANCES & GOALS

Player	Appearances	Goals
Graham Alexander	46	10
Paul Allen	45	1
Tony Thorpe	44	16
Kevin Davis	43	14
Steve Davis	43	1
Mel McGrath	42	1
Paul McLaren	41	1
Mark Pembroke	40	1
Paul Gray	39	4
Mikael Thomas	39	1
Dwight Marshall	38	1
Gary Waddock	38	1
Richard Johnson	37	1
Marvin Johnson	36	1
David Oldfield	35	3
Matthew Spring	34	1
Kevin Dillon	32	1
Mikael Dorsett	30	1
Mark Beeney	29	0
Mark Pembroke	27	0
Mark Stein	26	0
Kevin Davis	25	0
Matthew Spring	25	0
Mark Stein	25	0
Kevin Dillon	24	0
Mark Beeney	23	0
Mark Pembroke	23	0
Mark Stein	23	0
Kevin Davis	22	0
Matthew Spring	22	0
Mark Stein	22	0
Kevin Dillon	21	0
Mark Beeney	20	0
Mark Pembroke	20	0
Mark Stein	20	0
Kevin Davis	19	0
Matthew Spring	19	0
Mark Stein	19	0
Kevin Dillon	18	0
Mark Beeney	17	0
Mark Pembroke	17	0
Mark Stein	17	0
Kevin Davis	16	0
Matthew Spring	16	0
Mark Stein	16	0
Kevin Dillon	15	0
Mark Beeney	14	0
Mark Pembroke	14	0
Mark Stein	14	0
Kevin Davis	13	0
Matthew Spring	13	0
Mark Stein	13	0
Kevin Dillon	12	0
Mark Beeney	11	0
Mark Pembroke	11	0
Mark Stein	11	0
Kevin Davis	10	0
Matthew Spring	10	0
Mark Stein	10	0
Kevin Dillon	9	0
Mark Beeney	8	0
Mark Pembroke	8	0
Mark Stein	8	0
Kevin Davis	7	0
Matthew Spring	7	0
Mark Stein	7	0
Kevin Dillon	6	0
Mark Beeney	5	0
Mark Pembroke	5	0
Mark Stein	5	0
Kevin Davis	4	0
Matthew Spring	4	0
Mark Stein	4	0
Kevin Dillon	3	0
Mark Beeney	2	0
Mark Pembroke	2	0
Mark Stein	2	0
Kevin Davis	1	0
Matthew Spring	1	0
Mark Stein	1	0

MAN OF THE MATCH STANDINGS

Player	Matches
Mel McGrath	7
Steve Davis	5
Paul McLaren	5
Tony Thorpe	4
Kevin Davis	4
Graham Alexander	3
David Oldfield	3
Gary Waddock	3
Chris Allen	2
Richard Harvey	2
Gavin McGowan	1
Kelvin Davis	1
Stuart Douglas	1
Julian James	1
Ryan Smail	1
Mitchell Thomas	1

STAR TURNS

STEVE DAVIS - was the Hatters star man against Wrexham with a commanding display in the Hatters back four deservedly capped by a well-taken goal in the game's final minute.