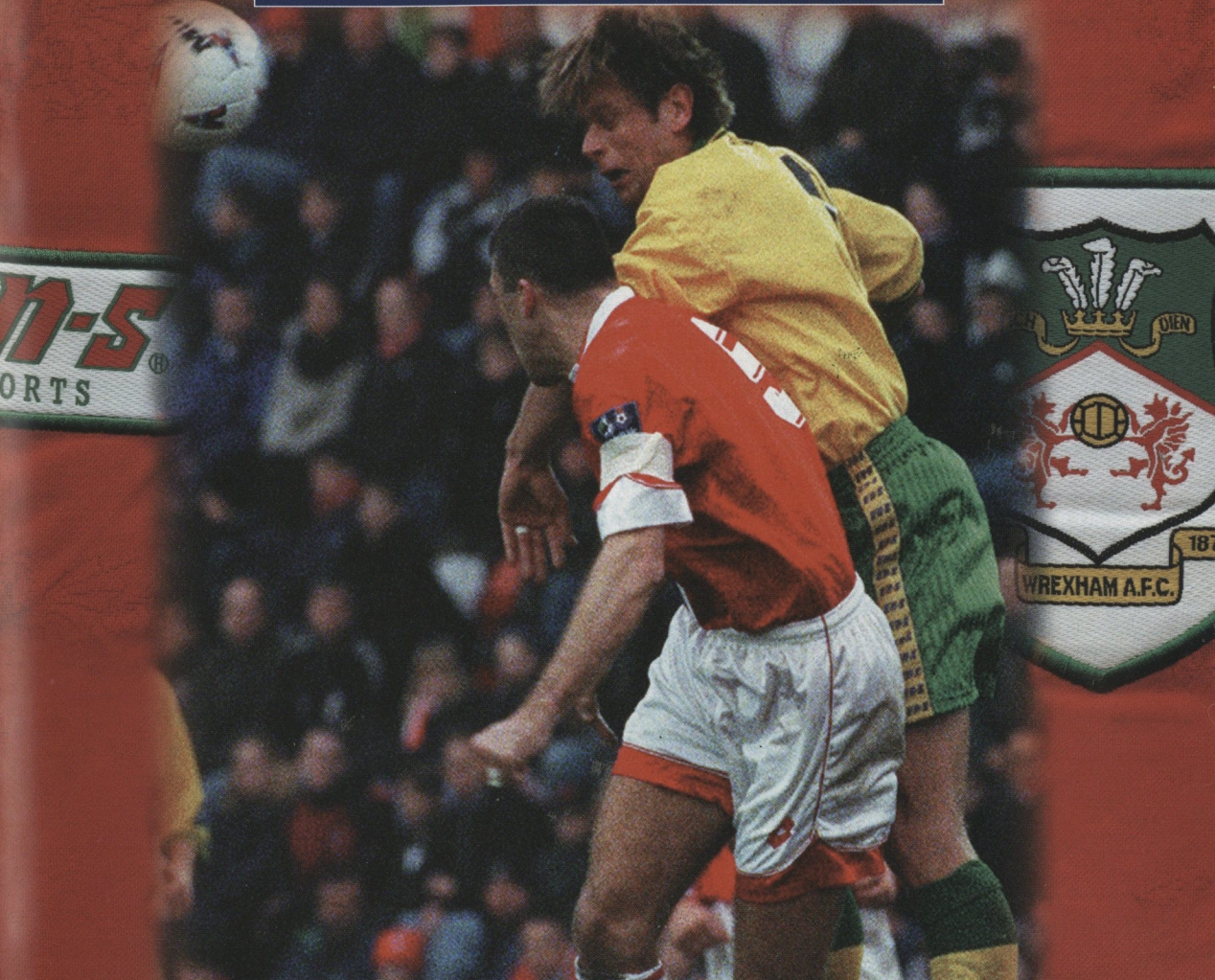
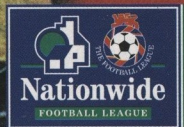


WREXHAM

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2



v. **Luton Town**

Nationwide Division 2
Saturday, 7th February 1998
kick-off 3.00pm



Wrexham F.C.

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TELEPHONES:

CLUB: 01978 262129

PROMOTIONS: 01978 352536

FAX: 01978 357821

COMMUNITY SCHEME:

01978 358545

CLUBCALL: 0891 121642

ROBINS REVIEW

CO-EDITORS:

David Roberts, Geraint Parry
and Phil Jones.

CONTRIBUTORS: Paul Atherton,

Steve Trinick, Martin Astley,

Brian Davies, Eddie Davies,

Gareth Davies, Paul Davies,

John Humphreys, Peter Jones,

Paul Sleeman, Mark Griffiths,

Nigel Wynn.

Photos:

Wrexham Evening Leader.

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*Karl Connolly (inset) gets the Reds off to a
flyer against Wimbledon and (main)
celebrates the moment.*



good to be back home again

Good afternoon everybody and welcome back to the Racecourse after a gap of almost four weeks. During this absence we have still been very busy with three away league games and the trip to Merthyr in the Invitation Cup.

As you will know, I have been looking at several options to strengthen the squad and with Karl Connolly getting injured at Bristol, I felt that we needed to add another option. So I'm pleased that we have gained the services of Southampton striker Steve Basham, initially on a month's loan.

I have taken the opportunity to watch Steve and have liked what I have seen. He arrives at the Racecourse looking to impress during his stay here and to add to the experience he has already gained with the Saints.

The Franz Carr situation seemed to be heading nowhere, as he had other options open to him and they looked like being his preferred choices.

While talking of players coming in, we also said goodbye to one of our loyal servants in January. Barry Jones, who had enjoyed a successful month on loan with York, has accepted their offer of a permanent transfer.

We are genuinely sorry to see him go, but I fully understand the player's desire for first team football. Since his arrival from Liverpool in 1992, Barry has been a model professional, giving his best effort in whichever position he was selected for. With well over 200 appearances in five and a half seasons, he was an important member of our squad, but things do change and it's good to see him fixed up a decent club.

Barry will always be made most welcome at the Racecourse anytime he cares to call in and he will also be missed by his many friends at the club.

You will have read in the local press that we have reached agreement with five players concerning their new contracts and I am delighted that Tony Humes, Kevin Russell, Dave Brammer, Gareth Owen and Phil Hardy have all put pen to paper.

This was a major decision for both club and player, so it is encouraging that we have sorted out these deals well ahead of the close season. It also says a lot about their commitment to the football club and belief that they can achieve success here.

Under the Bosman ruling, they would all have become free agents in the summer and could have moved on.

Phil Hardy was in the news again, this time over his selection for next week's 'B' international in Dublin, when the Republic take on Northern Ireland. If all goes well, I hope to get over to see the game on Wednesday night for myself.

Mick McCarthy call me about Phil and asked for

my assessment on his progress this season. Happily what I was able to tell him, only confirmed the scouting reports he had received and Phil was duly included in their squad.

He has certainly returned to the sort of form we all knew he was capable of, which has benefitted the team and now pushed him back onto the international stage.

Unfortunately, the news was not so good for Karl Connolly. Following his early departure from the game on Saturday, he appears to have damaged the same ankle he hurt at Preston and if it takes a similar time to recover from, Karl will be missing for between two and four weeks.

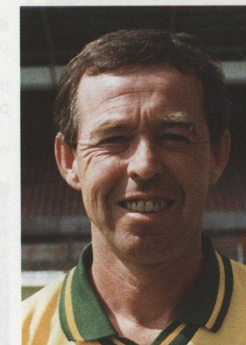
Otherwise, the day out to Bristol City was a good one for us, as we collected a point and bounced back from the poor performance at Oldham the previous Tuesday. In fact, after surviving the set back of conceding an early goal to Shaun Goater, I felt we probably had the better of the play, with a winner certainly not being out of the question. Which was very encouraging when you look at City's record this season, especially at Ashton Gate.

We tried a different combination in attack, with Karl switching to the left wing, leaving Dean Spink and Neil Roberts as partners up front. This was no reflection Neil Wainwright's displays, which have shown exactly what we knew before, in that he has the ability to become a regular in the side. But he is still young and leaving him out for a few games here and there, will not do him any harm at all. There is little point in running him into the ground at this stage of his career and I know he will come back even more eager when he next gets the chance.

We have also set in motion arrangements to bring goalkeeper Clayton Ince back over from Trinidad at the end of this month. He is currently playing for his country in the Los Angeles based Gold Cup, but we hope to see him training with us again in the near future.

Today we welcome Lennie Lawrence and his Luton Town team to the Racecourse. He is an old friend of ours, who has been doing a good job at Kenilworth Road, drawing on his vast experience to help his side through a crushing series of injury problems. I honestly don't know how we would have coped here, had we been in a similar position to Lennie this season.

We enjoyed a good victory at their ground earlier this season and know just how difficult they can make life for you. Remember, we were two goals up in the first-half, but Luton levelled matters before we were able to pull away again. More recently they have started to gain some encouraging results and they will be looking to end the year on a high and push themselves as far up the table as possible.



"Before hand we would probably have settled for a win, draw and defeat of three away games, but after winning at Millwall it was a shame we couldn't have added more points to our total."



THE LIFE OF WALLY

After making his mark in the home victory of Merthyr Tydfil, winger Neil Wainwright, known to one and all as Wally, has certainly made an impression on the Racecourse supporters with his dazzling runs down the left hand touchline.



A couple of match winning goals have hardly done his cause any harm and he is certainly enjoying his time in the spotlight: "It's been a good month for me, coming on a Blackpool and grabbing a late goal to finally lay the Bloomfield bogey, while at Millwall it was a much more convincing win than the score might suggest.

"I've learnt quite a bit in these games and at the Den, I was up against Paul Allen, who gave me a hard time in the opening stages of the game. He kept tight to me and hit me hard, but as the match went on, I gradually managed to get the better of him.

"Oldham was completely different for us, they have a very good home record, but it was still the type of game we could have won had we been on form.

"I reverted to the substitutes bench for the trip to Bristol City last Saturday, but having tasted life in the first team, I'm determined to keep working at my game and look forward to my next run in the side."

FIVE ALIVE

With the Bosman ruling now affecting clubs throughout the League, manager Brian Flynn has moved quickly to secure five players on long term contracts.

Those who have committed to the club include skipper Tony Humes, Phil Hardy, Gareth Owen, Kevin Russell and Dave Brammer. All five would have been free agents in the summer and the manager was very pleased to have secured the signatures of so many players.

"It was a major decision for both parties and I'm delighted that they have pledged their futures to Wrexham."

WHEN IRISH EYES ARE SMILING

There was cause for a double celebration for full-back Phil Hardy, who put his name to a new contract and then heard he had been selected for the Republic of Ireland's 'B' squad.

"After playing with the Under-21's for so long, I have missed being involved at international level. Now that my club future has been sorted out and I feel I'm playing to the sort of standards I have set myself, it's great to know that I have still been remembered by my country.

"The game is a 'B' international against Northern Ireland in Dublin and gives me the chance to play in front of manager Mick McCarthy and his assistants, if selected on the night.

"There is a big step up between Under-21 and Full international, so

hopefully being with the B squad will help me try and bridge that gap. I'm really looking forward to the challenge and with the game being against the North, there is bound to be a good atmosphere."

A FOND FAREWELL

It was a shame that we parted company with Barry Jones in recent weeks, but hopefully it will prove a good move for the former Liverpool defender.

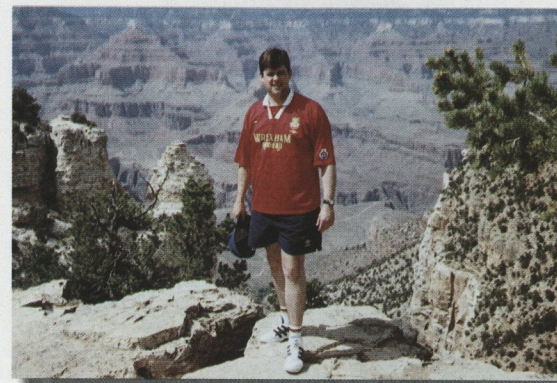
Keen to play regular first team football, Barry enjoyed a successful loan spell with York City and after talks with their manager Alan Little, he agreed a permanent contract with the Minstermen.

Barry enjoyed five seasons at the Racecourse since signing from Anfield in the summer of 1992 and made over 240 appearances, as the club gained promotion from the Third Division and won the Welsh Cup.

We all wish Barry the best of luck in his future career and look forward to welcoming him back with his new team mates in April.

REDS WORLD TOUR (Part 265)

This week we feature Coedpoeth's very own Kevin Williams, who is snapped while on holiday at the Grand Canyon, Nevada, USA last summer. Ahh those were the days, sun and shorts!



We are always on the look out for more such pictures, so don't forget to take your camera (and jersey) next time you venture away from home. No matter the destination.

SUPPORTERS' NIGHT OUT

An evening with former Manchester United, Chelsea, Scotland, etc, manager Tommy Docherty, has been arranged at the Wrexham Lager Social Club by the Shropshire Reds.

The supporters club from over the border has a reputation for organising a series of successful events for their members and now switch their attention to Wrexham itself.

Ex-FIFA referee John Lloyd will comper the night's entertainment and proceedings get under way at 8.30pm on Monday, 16th February.

Tickets are priced at £10.00 and are available from the Club Shop under the Yale Stand, or by phoning Peter on (01743) 271438. Demand is sure to be high, so please don't be disappointed by leaving it until the last minute. Remember, the Quiz Night they ran at the Lager Club before Christmas was a sell out, so be warned!

FRIENDLY DATES

It has been confirmed that Bobby Gould will bring the full Wales squad to the Racecourse on Saturday, 30th May, as they prepare to travel to games in Malta and Tunisia the following week.

Ticket arrangements will be announced in due course.

Alex Ferguson has promised to bring his title winning side for another

glamour match and we hope to host Manchester United on Tuesday, 4th August, although this has still to be confirmed. Again any ticket details will be announced nearer the date.

We can confirm our annual trip to the Isle of Man, for the International Football Tournament, when we return to defend our crown in late July. The week runs from Sunday, 19th July until Saturday, 25th July, and is a week earlier than usual, due to the new league season having been brought forward.

MILLWALL AND GRIMSBY REARRANGED

Our two outstanding home fixtures have now been confirmed as: Millwall, Tuesday 17th March and Grimsby Town, Tuesday 31st March. Both games will have the normal 7.30pm kick-offs.

PONTIN'S LEAGUE UPDATE

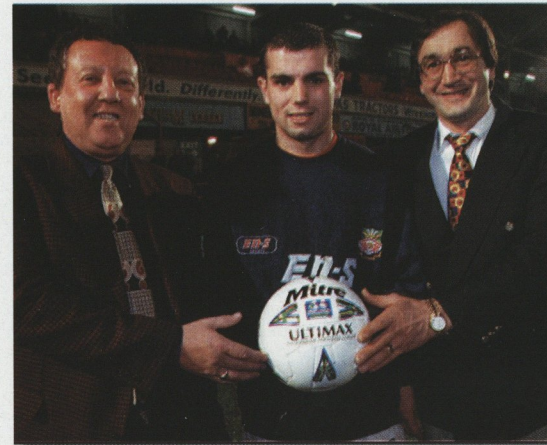
Due to recent postponements, supporters who take an interest in the Reserves are advised to take note of the new fixture list published later in this programme.

With the backlog, we are playing another two games this coming week. On Monday we visit Burnley for a League Cup tie (ko:7.15pm) and then play host to Barnsley on Wednesday night (ko:7.00pm).

Later in March, the home clash with Sheffield United has been brought forward to the Monday night, as on the following Friday the Racecourse plays host to a Wales Schoolboy International.

WIMBLEDON MATCHBALL SPONSORS

Pictured tonight, presenting the matchball to full-back Mark McGregor are Ken Edwards from ADG Windows and Pat Derosa from P.Derosa, Plas Acton Garage.



We hope both gentlemen and their guests had a great night with us, and that also goes for match sponsors Scotts Nightclub and Marcher Gold Radio. It was a pleasure to play host to these local businesses and we hope to see them again in the near future.

CROESO TREF LUTON

Dyn ni'n croesawu tim Lennie Lawrence i'r Cae Ras p'hawn 'ma gan obeithio am gystal llwyddiant yn eu herbyn ac a gawsom yn y gem ar Ffordd Kenilworth yn ol ym Mis Medi. Bryd hynny, daeth hatrig gan Karl Connolly a gol yr un gan Dave Brammer a Craig Skinner a buddugoliaeth wfyaf a tymor (hyd yma!) i'r Cochion. Ers hynny, wrth gwrw, dydy'r Cochion ddim wedi ei chael hi mor hawdd i dro cefn y rhwyd, ond, o ddweud hynny, dydyn ni heb ildio llawer chwaith.

Bydd yr 'Hatters' yn falch o weld cefn tymor 1997/98:- maent wedi bod yn ymladd ers y cychwyn bron yn erbyn mynd lawr i'r Drydedd Adran, ac mae ganddynt record echyddus ar Ffordd Kenilworth, gan gynnwys cweir yn eu gem 'Derby' yn erbyn Watford o 4-0.

Fodd bynnag, oddi cartref mae ganddynt record lawer gwell: gan ennill pedair a chael pum gem gyfartal o'r tair gem ar ddeg maent wedi'u chwaere hyd yma.

Ar bapur felly, gem y dylai'r Cochion ei hennill yn hawdd; ond... dydd'r Cochion heb brofi buddugoliaeth yn y Gynghrair ar y Cae Ras ers yr 8fed o Dachwedd. Does ond gobeithio am fuddugoliaeth p'nawn 'ma felly os ond i roi pen ar y rhediad llwm yma.

Mwynhewch y gem!

OBITUARY OF HUGH McMAHON (1906 - 1997)

Once again we bring you the sad news of the death of another former Wrexham Football Club player. Hugh McMahon was with us in the 1930's, having signed for the club from Stoke City in October 1932. He played in what was regarded as Wrexham's best side of the inter-war years, when the club finished in it's highest ever position in the old Third Division North, runners-up to Hull City.

Playing at centre-half, Hugh operated alongside many of Wrexham's well known players from that period - full-back Alf Jones, fellow defenders, Matt Lawrence and James Bulling, while the forward line was led by none other than Tommy Bamford, who was ably assisted by the likes of Jack Hughes, Tommy Lewis and Harry Waller.

Hugh was born on 7th July 1906 in Saltcoats, Ayrshire and spent his early years there. On leaving school he took up work as a joiner, but he also played football for his local side, Saltcoats Vics. It was while he was playing for this Scottish Junior League side, that he was spotted and signed by Scottish Second Division side Cowdenbeath, whom he joined in 1927.

He went on to play in 53 Scottish League games for the 'Blue Brazilians', turning in some impressive performances which Blackpool manager Harry Evans, was quick to take notice of. He signed Hugh in May 1930, at the end of a season in which Blackpool had just won the Second Division Championship.

Hugh made his Football League debut for the 'Seasiders' in their first ever match in the First Division, at home to Arsenal in August 1930, before nearly 29,000 fans. However, it wasn't to be a dream start for either player or his new club, as Arsenal won 4-1. He soon established himself in the first team, but in February 1931, lost his place in the side and did not make another appearance Bloomfield Road, as he joined Stoke City in the close season for a £500 fee.

Hugh made an immediate impact in the Potteries, when he scored on his debut in a 2-1 home win over Chesterfield. However, it was not to be all glory, as he was unable to command a regular first team place in the City side. The following season again saw him out of favour, and in October 1932, he was transferred to Third Division North side Wrexham.

He went straight into the side, in place of Harry Beck, for his debut in a 2-0 home victory over Stockport County. Hugh soon established himself as the club's regular centre-half, although he did switch to playing at right-half when required, but which ever position he played in, he was described as a "prodigious worker, who never knew when he was beaten". During his four seasons in North Wales, he missed just fifteen matches after making his debut.

Hugh was involved in many memorable matches for Wrexham during that time, especially in the successful 1932/33 season. The following season, he played in the 11-1 win over New Brighton in the Northern Section Cup, our record victory against league opposition. The 1934/35 season saw the popular Scot made the club captain, a position he held for two seasons before his move to Doncaster Rovers in August 1936.

During his time with Wrexham, Hugh had made a total of 165 League and Cup appearances, and scored seven goals.

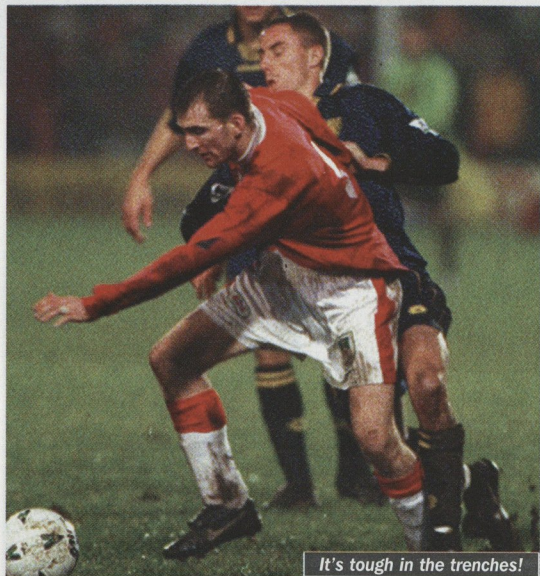
While with Doncaster, he had the experience of playing in their first ever overseas match, when travelling to take on the Dutch National XI in Rotterdam. The locals were preparing for an international against Austria and had invited Doncaster over to play in preparation for that match. Hugh's stay with Doncaster was a short one, as he returned to Scotland the following December to join Albion Rovers, who played with for a short time before retiring from the game.

He later settled in his home town of Saltcoats, where he returned to working as a joiner. Sadly, Hugh died three days before Christmas, on 22nd December 1997. He was 91 years-old. His son Hugh Jr, is a member of the European Parliament for Strathclyde West.

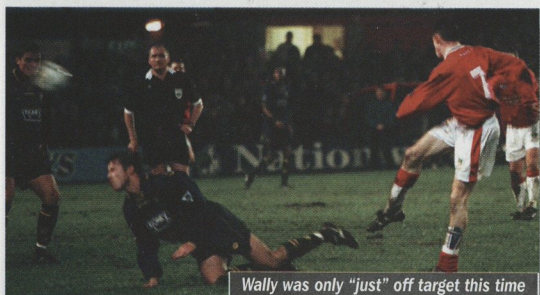


"The sad sight of Karl Connolly being carried from the pitch at Bristol City."

Wimbledon



It's tough in the trenches!



Wally was only "just" off target this time



Neil Ardley gets no change from Gareth Owen

match report

If fate decrees that you have to go out of the F.A.Cup then this, surely, is the way to do it. Though there is to be no march to the quarter-finals this season, Wrexham added "Glorious Defeat" to their already impressive portfolio in football's favourite competition, as they pounded their Premiership opponents for much of this pulsating replay. They were ultimately undone by three crucial errors in a 20 minute first-half spell, the visitors capitalising on the kind of defensive sloppiness that would go unpunished in the Second Division, to transform a single goal deficit into a two goal cushion.

Wrexham were denied the credit that they were due for a gritty display at Selhurst Park by the drama that followed the final whistle. As if in response to that they began the replay in a very determined mood, and might have been comfortably ahead by as early as the third minute through Neil Wainwright (twice) and Gareth Owen, who both came mightily close to embarrassing Neil Sullivan. Three minutes later they deservedly went in front, as Karl Connolly applied the finishing touch to a move that owed much to a surging run from Owen. Neil Roberts and Owen then had their chances to extend the lead before Wimbledon drew level with a magnificent strike from Michael Hughes. The Irishman seized upon a weak clearance to hammer the ball past Marriott and into his goal via the inside of the left hand post.

Carl Cort sent a few flutters through the home fans with a looping header before Hughes struck again in the 25th minute. Marcus Gayle's gallop through the middle was halted by a brilliantly timed Brian Carey tackle, but the ball ran free to Hughes who conjured up another superb finish to leave Marriott helpless. They were the first goals conceded by Wrexham in this season's competition, and either would be worthy of the Final itself.

Wainwright, who enjoyed a lively first-half, very nearly grabbed an equaliser with a fine jinking run and a shot that clipped the angle of post and bar, before Wimbledon pulled further ahead nine minutes before the interval. Neil Ardley's corner was headed home at the near post by Gayle, who had time to pick his spot, and though a raised flag lead to lengthy discussions between the officials the goal was allowed to stand. It was a cruel blow and, on the overall balance of play, one that Wrexham certainly did not deserve. It was almost cancelled out just before the interval, when Wainwright pulled his shot fractionally wide of the target.

Connolly succeeded where the youngster had failed within a minute of the restart. He was first to a ball into the Dons' area from Roberts, and it was in the back of Sullivan's net before the 'keeper had moved. It was just the start to the second period that Wrexham needed and, urged on by the large crowd, they went flat out in search of the equaliser. Wayne Phillips, who showed signs of returning to his best form, almost claimed it with a header that drew a marvellous save from Sullivan, and the visitors then survived a couple of confident penalty appeals as their hosts turned up the heat to make a complete mockery of the gap between the two sides.

The quality of the football was astonishing given the stamina sapping state of the pitch, already heavy from a downpour before the game and worsening by the minute as the action and the elements took their toll upon it.

Connolly was a whisker away from his hat-trick with a curling shot as the game entered its final phase and, as if to emphasise the one-sided nature of the half, Kenny Cunningham became the fourth Dons player to be yellow carded as he was cautioned for time-wasting over a throw-in. A final frantic few minutes almost brought the goal Wrexham richly deserved, but neither Phillips, Connolly, Roberts, nor Mark McGregor could quite find the accuracy or power to force the extra 30 minutes.

The final whistle brought a standing ovation for both sides, who had served up a magnificent match, and the Wrexham players left the field with their heads held high and their pride intact.

Wimbledon's travelling support amounted to small change in a season's best turn-out of 9,539. The home fans, particularly in the second-half, were absolutely superb. The atmosphere they generated again underlined the value to the Wrexham cause of a strong passionate following. If only the less-regular attenders can be persuaded to return to the Racecourse for the bread an butter league fayre, then their backing would do so much to help realise everyone's ambitions for the Club.



Wrexham

2

HOME TEAM

1. Andy Marriott
2. Mark McGregor
3. Phil Hardy
4. Wayne Phillips
5. Dave Ridler
6. Brian Carey
7. Neil Wainwright
8. Gareth Owen
9. Karl Connolly
10. Neil Roberts
11. Peter Ward

ON THE BENCH

12. Dave Brammer
13. Dean Spink
14. Martyn Chalk

Wimbledon

3

AWAY TEAM

1. Neil Sullivan
2. Kenny Cunningham
3. Alan Kimble
4. Vinnie Jones
5. Dean Blackwell
8. Robbie Earle
11. Marcus Gayle
12. Chris Perry
16. Michael Hughes
18. Neil Ardley
26. Carl Cort

ON THE BENCH

7. Ceri Hughes
9. Efan Ekoku
10. Staale Solbakken

MATCH STATS

	Wrexham	Wimbledon
Shots on Target	8	5
Shots off Target	7	2
Fouls Conceded	8	11
Caught Offside	2	5
Corner Kicks	7	4

Match Time:	1st Half: 46.01
	2nd Half: 46.18

Conditions:	Wet
Referee:	Steve Dunn (Bristol)

Attendance: 9,539

Bookings Substituted Goal

plenty of pride in cup exit

Monday, January 12th

Following Saturday's disappointing 3-0 home defeat by Fulham manager Brian Flynn, in an interview in the Daily Post, expects pride and professionalism to lift the Reds before tomorrow night's replay with Wimbledon at the Racecourse. "We have an honest bunch of players at this club who work hard in training and in games," he declared. "When a defeat happens they take it personally as individuals and collectively as a team. I won't have to lift them for the Cup-tie. Their professionalism will do that. It will look after itself. I'm sure they will respond in the right way." The game itself looks like being a sell-out.

Tuesday, January 13th

Wrexham's F.A.Cup dreams are ended for another season despite a superb performance in going down 3-2 to Wimbledon. The Reds get off to the ideal start with Karl Connolly giving them a 7th minute lead after good work by Gareth Owen. The Dons hit back before half time with two Michael Hughes goals and a third from Marcus Gayle. The early reply needed in the second-half arrives in the 46th minute with Connolly heading his second goal, but despite constant pressure from then on, and several good shouts for a penalty, the deserved equaliser never arrives and the Dons claim their place in the Fourth Round.

Wednesday, January 14th

In an interview in the Evening Leader, Brian Flynn, although disappointed with last night's result, was full of praise for the performance of his team: "I thought we deserved to take it into extra-time, at the very least. If we play like that we'll win more than we lose. I don't want the referee's decisions to deflect from what the team did, but it looked a penalty. Unfortunately, the referee didn't give it. I would rather talk about how our team did, how we played with so much passion and commitment. There is disappointment in defeat, but we can't ask for more than what the lads gave us."

The club has extended the contracts of striker Neil Roberts and his younger brother Stephen. Neil's contract has been extended until 1999, and Stephen has been signed on professional forms six months before his youth training scheme is due to finish.

The Pontin's League Cup-tie at home to Oldham Athletic is postponed, as the Racecourse pitch is unfit following last night's match.

Thursday, January 15th

Bary Jones talks in the Evening Leader about the possibility of his move to York City becoming permanent: "We've only just started to talk and there's a lot to sort out. It's going to be a big step for me, so I'm not going to rush into it. My contract is up at the end of the season, so I need to consider every aspect of the move."

Friday, January 16th

Brian Flynn's preparations for tomorrow's game at Millwall centre on Kevin Russell's knee injury, one which forced him to miss Tuesday's game. "We'll have another look at him this morning to see whether he can travel this afternoon, but I would say he is doubtful," explained Flynn. "He has seen a specialist and has also had a scan, but as yet we haven't had the results."

Wayne Phillips is therefore likely to continue in the Reds' midfield.

Saturday, January 17th

The 300 or so supporters that make the trip to South London, for the second time in a fortnight, are rewarded as the Reds' impressive record at Millwall, only two defeats in nine visits, is extended thanks to Neil Wainwright's 75th minute winner. A low-key first-half is followed by a second-half totally dominated by Wrexham. Neil Roberts forces two good saves out of Tim Carter in the Millwall goal, Roberts and Peter Ward both see efforts strike the woodwork, and strong claims for a penalty go



unheeded. But the Reds are not to be denied their well-deserved victory as Wally's goal clinches a second successive away League win.

A young Wrexham side draw 2-2 at Corwen in the North East Wales Cup.

Monday, January 19th

After another good away win, Brian Flynn hopes that the result and performance in South London will be the springboard to reaching a play-off position at the end of the season. "We have got a clear path and we know exactly what is expected of us," he said in the Daily Post. "It looks as if Watford and Bristol City aren't going to slip up and there will be a lot of clubs, like ourselves, saying they have got a realistic chance of getting into the play-offs." On Saturday's game, Flynn accepted that Wrexham had made a slow start: "We had a very nery start, but we got ourselves back into the game and it was good second half performance. We kept creating chances and you sometimes wonder if the ball is ever going into the net but the goal when it came was quality."

The reserves suffer yet another postponement, as their game at Bradford City is a late victim of the weather.

Tuesday, January 20th

Deryn Brace makes a welcome return to first-team action, as the Reds gain a comfortable 2-0 victory at Merthyr Tydfil in the FAW Invitation Cup, with goals from Dave Brammer and Martyn Chalk. The win takes us to the top of Group B. Barry Jones completes his £35,000 transfer to York City.

Wednesday, January 21st

The 'A' team are beaten 4-1 in a rearranged game at Manchester United, Danny Williams scoring the Reds' goal.

The Wrexham AFC Supporters Association is relaunched at a meeting at the Centenary Club.

Friday, January 23rd

Midfielder Kevin Russell is told by a consultant to rest his troublesome knee for between three and four weeks, because of bruising on the bone. Meanwhile, recent injury victims Tony Humes and Craig Skinner hope to play in tomorrow's NEWFA Cup replay with Corwen at Colliers Park.

A Paul Roberts goal gives the 'A' team a 1-1 draw at Morecambe.

EVENING LEADER

David Lovett..
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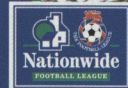


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LAGER

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Luton **town**

Often in recent years it has happened. A team which looked certain for promotion misses out at the last hurdle, contest the play-off lottery and then fall by the wayside. The following season is then often difficult, with the disappointment still fresh in everyone's mind and the added burden of expectancy, often too much to bear. We only have to recall the late 1980's to remember our own problems!

This partly tells Luton's tale - a play-off semi-final defeat by Crewe, enough to keep them in Division for a season longer than they would have wished. Partly, because that set back only tells half the story - as the mention of injuries is bound to bring a frown to manager Lennie Lawrence's face.

The queues outside the treatment room at Kenilworth Road just seem to be getting longer and they are a major reason for seeing Luton in the wrong half of the table this year. A catalogue of injuries to, at one stage, 20 of the first team squad, have made it one of Lawrence's most difficult seasons ever.

"When we last played Wrexham we had a roll call, we simply had to have a head count, players who were fit played and even Trevor Peake had to come on at the age of 40.

"The problems have been accentuated, due to the fact that they have been longer term injuries, rather than knocks that players can come back from quite quickly."

Injuries to the likes of striker Stuart Douglas and goalkeeper Ian Feuer, both key players, have made the priority this season one of consolidation. Though as Lawrence admits, apart from the top two the play-off places are there for the taking.

"We were looking at the table this week and apart from Watford and Bristol City, Fulham look on course for the highest number of points for a third place club. After that it is so tight, that we must have as good a chance as any - if we can put a string of results together. After what we've been through this season, I find that amazing, absolutely amazing."

Town's recent 2-1 success at Fulham in the Southern Quarter-Finals of the Auto Windscreens Shield did not go unnoticed, a result which certainly delighted the manager: "Yes, it was a good performance and though granted it was against Fulham's real Division Two side, as opposed to the one bought to get promotion. It was a boost for the likes of Tony Thorpe, who looked sharp when he came on and, of course, got the winner. It was a bonus that we got the winner in injury time and didn't have to go into extra-time, but on reflection our first-half performance in particular deserved a victory.

"The early rounds of this competition are not exciting, but when you get to the regional semi's and final, and then Wembley beckons - with it a financial rewards, then any club in the lower divisions welcomes that.

"What we need to do now is to build on that and we have one hell of a week next week, which gives us the chance to determine the fate of this season in Division Two."

Last Saturday Bourmemouth were the visitors to Kenilworth Road, in a dress rehearsal for the forthcoming Shield semi-final. Lawrence made a number of changes for the second division clash, in came

Kelvin Davies in goal, after Ian Feuer had been dropped for conceding six goals in his previous two league games. Marvin Johnson also returned after a two month lay off through injury.

Despite emphasising the importance of the fixture, the Hatters went down to their ninth home defeat of the season. A Jason Brissett effort on 10 minutes gave the Cherries an early lead and Steve Fletcher added a second on 58 minutes, when a poor defensive header allowed him to run through and score a fairly simple goal. Johnson sparked a furious fight back in the last 20 minutes, but all too no avail. With Bourmemouth 'keeper Jimmy Glaas in fine form, twice having efforts off the line and forcing nine corners in the final quarter of an hour, it was not to be.

Manager Lawrence was in reflective mood after the final whistle: "We were unfortunate not to get a point at the end, having thrown everything at them in the closing stages, but we got punished again for mistakes and again gave goals away. You can't do that and expect the points."

Next week Luton travel to Watford, followed by a home game against Bristol City. No wonder then that

Lennie stressed how important it was to get points going into this difficult period. They failed last Saturday, so Wrexham had better beware!

Luton's Five year record

SEASON	DIVISION	LEAGUE POS.	LEAGUE CUP (RD. REACHED)	F.A. CUP (RD. REACHED)	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE
96/97	2	3rd	4	3	6,332
95/96	1	20th	1	3	6,498
94/95	1	16th	1	4	7,350
93/94	1	20th	1	3-4	7,217
92/93	1	20th	2	4	8,213

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LENNIE LAWRENCE

Luton town

GRAHAM ALEXANDER (Midfield)



An honest hard working ball winner who featured in all but one of Luton's league games last season. A bargain £100,000 fee bought Graham from Scunthorpe United in July 1995 and the final game of last season against Stockport County

was his 100th for the Hatters. He made 199 appearances whilst at Glandford Park, although he is not recognised for his goalscoring feats with just two his credit last year, but when he does connect the result is usually spectacular. Played for Scunthorpe in the 1992 Wembley Play-Off Final and unfortunately miss a penalty in the shoot-out with Blackpool. His move to Luton came after being watched for sometime by the Hatters coaching staff and he was the first signing by then manager Terry Westley

CHRIS ALLEN (Forward)

Joined the Hatters on loan from Nottingham Forest, this left sided winger was an apprentice with his local club Oxford United and went onto play well over 150 games for the Manor Ground side. He went on loan to Forest in February 1996 and made the move permanent the following summer for a tribunal fee of £300,000. Failed to settle in their first team last season,

although
made
17



PAUL McLaren



starts at the City Ground. Has two England Under-21 caps to his credit.

SIMON DAVIES (Midfield)

A capture during the summer from Manchester United for £150,000, Simon is just 23 years-old and hails from Winsford. Limited to just 20 games during his Old Trafford career, he was loaned to Exeter City in 1993 and Huddersfield Town last season, as his first team chances became scarce. Scored in United's 4-0 Champions League victory over Galatasaray in 1994 and also appeared in the game against Goteborg. Scored his first goals for Luton against ourselves in September. Holds an F.A. Youth Cup winners medal for the Reds Devils' 1992 success and has gained one Welsh international cap when used as a substitute in the 1996 2-0 defeat by Switzerland.

KELVIN DAVIES (Goalkeeper)

Twenty one year-old 'keeper who has proven an able understudy to Ian Feuer - he grabbed his chance earlier this season only to fall victim of the goalkeeping crisis which has hit Kenilworth Road. The Hatters had also used Nathan Abbey and Andy Dibble by mid-September. Restricted to just one Auto Windscreens appearance last season, Kelvin has represented England at Under-21 level and is also a Youth international. Went on loan to Hartlepool in August, but was recalled soon after due to Feuer's injury. Made his Luton debut in the 2-2 draw with Stoke City in 1994, and now looking for an extended run in the first team.

STEVE DAVIS (Defender)

Played in many a fixture here at the Racecourse whilst with his former club Burnley, who he left in July 1995 for £750,000. Not a bad profit on a player who cost just £60,000 four seasons earlier when transferred from Southampton. A commanding central defender who has over 35 goals to his name, he led Burnley as captain, up into the First Division. Has over 300 senior appearances to his credit and was selected for the PFA Second Division team last season.



GARY DOHERTY (Forward)

Still on a trainee's contract at Kenilworth Road, Gary made his bow in the first team against Millwall in September. Donegal born, he was schooled locally and went onto represent Luton and Bedfordshire at youth level, plus Eire as an Under-18 cap. Played his earlier football at centre-half, but has switched lately and with good effect, to a forward role. He stands well over six feet tall.

STUART DOUGLAS (Forward)

Fast and tricky youngster who earned a

professional contract in the summer of 1996 after scoring prolifically in the reserve and youth teams. Used on just nine occasions last season, seven of which were from the bench, so will be looking for more regularly football this time. Scored Town's first league goal of this season in the 1-0 victory over Southend and played against ourselves back in September.

SEAN EVERS (Midfield)

Given just two chances in the first team during 1996/97, Sean is another product of the Hatters youth scheme - he has featured more this season, mainly as a substitute. Only 20 years-old, he made his debut in an Anglo-Italian Cup tie against Perugia in September 1996, but had to wait until last February for his league bow.

IAN FEUER (Goalkeeper)

A giant at 6'7" tall, the American arrived at Kenilworth Road initially on loan from West Ham United, he spent three months with the Hatters before a £580,000 fee made the move permanent in September 1995. Dominant in the air, as his height would suggest, Ian as an ever present last season helping the club to the Play-Off semi-finals. Suffered a serious shoulder injury in August which kept him out for four months, but he has now recovered to resume his duties.

ANDREW FOTIADIS (Forward)

Progressed successfully through the youth ranks, Andrew took his opportunities well to break into the first team last season, scoring two goals in the final two games of 1996/97. He joined the club full-time in 1996, after continuing his education until he was 18, but combining this with games for the youth and reserve sides. Andrew was also capped by England at Under 15 and 18 levels. Injuries last season and this, have forced him to miss out on a number of games.

PHIL GRAY (Forward)

Belfast born striker who first signed for Luton in 1991, but missed most of the following season due to injury, as the Hatters departed the top flight. Went onto net 26 goals in 1992/93, before joining Sunderland for £800,000 in 1993 and spending a further three years at Roker Park. Under the Bosman ruling he moved to Nancy in France and then onto Dutch side Fortuna Sittard, from whom Luton acquired his services again, this time for a fee of £400,000. Capped 25 times by his native Northern Ireland.

JULIAN JAMES (Defender)

Suffered the ignominy of being sent-off against Crewe in the semi-finals of the Play-Offs, after an exemplary season at right-back. Julian missed just two games during the campaign, bring to 250 his tally of league games for Luton. Now 27, he won two England caps at Under-21 in his earlier days at Kenilworth Road, he has successfully converted from left-



back. A previous winner of a Player of the Season award, he was granted a benefit last season.

MARVIN JOHNSON (Defender)

Solid central defender who missed only two matches in 1996/97, he has been with the club for 13 years - signing professional forms in 1986. He made his debut against Wimbledon in 1988, forming a good defensive partnership with first Trevor Peake and then more recently Steve Davis. Has lost his place lately due to injury, adding to manager Lennie Lawrence's desperate crisis this season.

PAUL McLAREN (Midfield)

Tall composed right sided midfielder who broke into the first team in 1995/96, but held down a more regular spot last season. Joined Luton from school and has gained representative honours with England at Youth level. A regular in the side so far this season, a bright future is predicted for Paul, who hails from High Wycombe.

DWIGHT MARSHALL (Forward)

Cost the Hatters £150,000 when he signed from Peter Shilton's Plymouth Argyle in July 1994, he suffered a badly broken leg in February 1996 after a successful start to his Luton career, he was top scorer during 1995/96. Returned to action in November 1996, he made the majority of his appearances last term as a substitute. A pacey forward who will always score goals, he has also been used as a substitute in recent game. Started his career at Grays Athletic before a £35,000 move to Plymouth Argyle in August 1991, he also had a brief spell on loan at Middlesbrough in March 1993.

DAVID OLDFIELD (Forward)

Australian born attacker who rejoined Luton in 1995 from Leicester City - six years after leaving the club to sign for Manchester City. Originally an apprentice at Kenilworth Road, City forked out £600,000 for David after just 39 first team games, but his stay at Maine Road produced 30 outings before Leicester paid £150,000 for him in



1990. His career was more of a success at Filbert Street, where he went onto make over 200 appearances for the Foxes. Scorer of a hat-trick last season against Preston, David was more the provider for Tony Thorpe, he is a classy performer who can also operate in midfield.

DARREN PATTERSON (Defender)

Another Belfast born player on Luton's books and a Northern Ireland international as well. Limited to just ten appearances last term, he is now an established member of the first team, an ankle injury now thankfully repaired. Performs equally well at centre-back or right-back, he was signed for £100,000 from Crystal Palace in 1995. Began as a trainee at West Bromwich Albion, but failed to break into the first and joined Wigan in August 1989. After three years and over 100 outings for the Latics moved for £225,000 to Selhurst Park in 1992. Called up to this week's Northern Ireland 'B' squad for the away game with Eire.

PAUL SHOWLER (Forward)

Another long term injury victim this season, Paul started his career at Goole Town before moving to Altrincham and then into the pro ranks with Barnet in 1991. Signed by Luton 18 months ago, he established himself last season, only to be thwarted by a knee injury during the run-in, resulting in a cartilage operation. Joined Luton for £50,000 from Bradford City.

MATTHEW SPRING (Midfield)

Product of the Luton youth policy who has broken into the first team this season. Still only 17, he has featured in recent Hatters matches, as Lennie Lawrence has been seen to give youth a chance. Was unfortunate to be sent-off on his full debut in the 3-0 defeat of Plymouth earlier this term.

MITCHELL THOMAS (Defender)

Experienced 33 year-old, who now has over 500 senior appearances under his belt, a regular at left-back, he enjoyed a splendidly consistent campaign in 1996/97. Yet another injury victim this season, a hernia operation keeping him out until Christmas. The former England Under-21 international played for three seasons in his first spell with Luton Town in 1986, before Spurs paid £230,000 to take him to White Hart Lane. Made almost 200 appearances for the London club and then

switched to West Ham in July 1991. About 14 months later he was back at Luton on a free transfer. Now over his injury problems and back to first team duties, much to the relief of the local fans.

TONY THORPE (Forward)

Prolific scorer last season, Tony's goals, 31 in all, took Luton to within a whisker of a return to Division One and the first Hatters' player to top the 30 mark since Malcolm MacDonald in 1971. His transformation from attacking midfielder to forward was completed last year and he was expected to continue his feats this season. Unfortunately the unsettled side and a loss of form have not helped his cause, although he is in double figures again. Joined Luton as a youngster after leaving Leicester City in 1992, released after completing his apprenticeship. Winner of the Luton Player of the Year award in 1997, he also featured in the PFA team selected by his fellow professionals.



GARY WADDOCK (Midfield)

Moved to Kenilworth Road on a free transfer in March 1994 from Bristol Rovers, after a three month spell on loan. At 35, he is the veteran of the side after beginning his career as a junior with QPR, going onto spend eight seasons at Loftus Road. A brief move to Charleroi in Belgium followed, before Millwall brought him back in 1989 for £130,000. He also had spells at QPR (again) and Swindon Town, before moving to Rovers in 1992. A tenacious ball winning midfielder, he was installed as Luton's captain last season, fitting reward for his inspirational leadership.

ALAN WHITE (Defender)

21 year-old defender who moved to the club in September, for £40,000 from Middlesbrough. Played under Lennie Lawrence at 'Boro in both reserve and youth teams, while getting a substitutes role for the first team on several occasions. Previously a schoolboy with Derby County, Lawrence introduce him into the Luton team against West Bromwich in the Coca Cola Cup and he has been a regular since.

Back Row (L-R): Robert Keen, Sean Evers, Stuart Douglas, Steve Augustine, Andrew Barr, Paul McLaren, Simon Davies, Gary Doherty, Matthew Spring, Ian James, Andrew Fotiadis, Richard Harvey, Dwight Marshall. Standing (L-R): Bob Bird (Financial Controller), Cherry Newbery (Club Secretary), Clive Goodyear (Physio), Paul Lowe (Youth Development Officer), Wayne Turner (First-Team coach), Paul Showler, David Oldfield, Mitchell Thomas, Nathan Abbey, Ian Feuer, Kelvin Davis, Marvin Johnson, Chris Willmot, Graham Alexander, John Moore (Youth Team Coach), Trevor Peake (Reserve Team Coach), Kathy Leather (Commercial Manager), Les Shannon (Scouting Co-ordinator). Seated: Liam George, Tony Thorpe, Steve Davis, Nigel Terry (Director), David Kohler (Chairman), Lennie Lawrence (Manager), Cliff Bassett (Director), Chris Green (Director), Gary Waddock, Julian James, Terry Sweeney. Front Row (L-R): Jimmy Cox, Russell Laves, Stuart Fraser, Darren Howe, James Ayres, Daniel Tate, Nick Webb, Emerson Boyce, Moses Jerry, Michael McIndoe, Andre Scarlett, Delroy McKey.



down the slippery slope

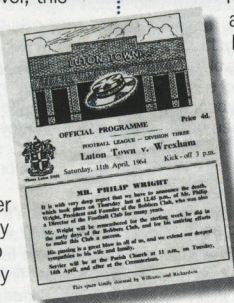
Wrexham and Luton first met at the Racecourse during November 1963, at a time when both clubs were slipping towards football oblivion. Luton had suffered relegation from the old Division Two the previous May, having finished rock bottom of the table and the current campaign had also become a struggle. Our visitors occupied 21st place in the league, with 14 points at the time of their visit to North Wales. The Reds themselves were faring even worse and had not registered a league victory since the end of September - two months and 12 games previously. Not surprisingly we were bottom of the table, having gained just eight points from 21 games. However, this was the game that ended that horrendous run, as Arfon Griffiths and Mickey Metcalf hit a goal a piece in a gritty encounter which Wrexham won 2-0.

When the sides clashed again the following April at Kenilworth Road, the Reds needed to win their final four games in order to stand any chance of avoiding relegation. Our hosts still needed points themselves to avoid the drop and their 3-1 victory certainly eased their worries, while hammering another nail into Wrexham's coffin. Luton's reprieve lasted only one season though, as they too suffered relegation to the Fourth Division by finishing in 21st spot come May 1965.

This led to us meeting again the following August when Luton travelled north, where another 2-0 defeat awaited them. This time it was a youthful Reds outfit that they faced - due to the financial situation at the Racecourse. However, it was left to "old hand" Sammy McMillan to hit both our goals in this win. Barely a month later the Reds returned to Bedfordshire, but once again it was the home side that collected the points with a 1-0 result. 1965/66 was to be the worst in Wrexham's history as they ended the year bottom of the Football League, while the Hatters finished in sixth place, only missing out on promotion by goal average.

Both clubs spent 1966/67 "rebuilding" a decent team. Wrexham won the Racecourse fixture in October, 2-0 again, with second-half goals from Tony McLoughlin and Sammy McMillan. Luton won their home game in February, 3-1 - Arfon Griffiths notching our consolation following a scoreless first period. The Reds finished the season in seventh place with 52 points, compared to Luton's 17th spot on 41 points.

Still things were improving for both clubs and 1967/68 brought the Fourth Division championship to the Hatters, while Wrexham finished in eighth position. Luton came to the Racecourse on the opening day of the new season and following a scoreless opening half, Ray Smith's header from an Arfon Griffiths free-kick put the Reds one up. Shortly after this Wrexham skipper Terry Bradbury was sent-off along with Town's Graham French and this seemed to upset the Reds more than the visitors. Indeed, it proved all too apparent as Luton stole a point by grabbing a very late equaliser. Wrexham's own promotion followed in 1969/70, but as Luton had stepped up again to the Second Division that season, the clubs were not destined to face each other again until 1978.



ON THE UP

By the time of the next encounter, during October 1978 at Kenilworth Road, both clubs were enjoying a certain amount of success. Luton were a well established Second Division outfit and the Reds were enjoying their first season at this higher level. Our hosts began with a "bang" as Brian Stein headed home on nine minutes. Things looked ominous when Lil Fuccillo knocked home Ricky Hill's 12th minute cross to make it 2-0, before Bob Hatton hit the bar with a header. However, the Reds "pulled up their socks" and battled back with a tremendous performance. Bobby Shinton shot just wide and Arfon Griffiths missed an open goal, before Mickey Thomas beat his marker and scored with an

glorious chip shot into the far corner, just three minutes before the break. With both teams committed to attack, the only surprise was that no further goals were forthcoming. As Reds' boss Griffiths commented: "Luton are a very good side and, like us, they like to go forward. The outcome, although disappointing for us, was a great game for the fans."

The return fixture came the following May and was not without controversy. Wrexham took the lead after 30 minutes when Steve Fox and Mel Sutton combined to set up Steve Buxton, who shot a great goal from 20 yards. The visitors battled back only to be denied by Wrexham custodian Dai Davies. However, on 73 minutes Joey Jones dived to clear a flick-on by Ricky Hill, but only succeeded in handling the ball. Luckily for the Reds, the man in black missed this and even sent-off Mark Aizlewood for protesting too strongly! Six minutes later Peter Williams rubbed salt into Luton's wounds by heading home as Wrexham won 2-0.

Season 1979/80 saw both clubs chasing promotion early on and Wrexham lay in ninth place when second placed Luton arrived at the Racecourse in December. The Reds were leading 1-0 thanks to Dixie McNeil's first-half goal, when live-wire Steve Fox struck a dream goal on 61 minutes to knock the heart out of the visitors. Fox found himself in possession on the edge of the box, with 'keeper Jake Findlay stranded. However, there were four defenders on the goal-line, but the cunning Fox chipped a glorious goal. Two-nil became 3-0 on 75 minutes when new signing Frank Carradous ran 45 yards and laid on a goal for Ian Edwards. Bob Hatton did pull one back, but this proved to be too little, too late to matter. It was the end of season when Wrexham made the return trip south and David Moss chipped a brilliant goal of his own, to give our hosts a 65th minute advantage. Brian Stein's last minute strike completed Luton's victory, but the Hatters could only finish sixth with Wrexham way down in 16th position.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Same again was the story of 1980/81, as the Reds once more ended the season in 16th place with Luton just missing out on promotion once again - this time by only two points and finishing in fifth spot. However, Wrexham's visit to Kenilworth Road in September finally brought some reward for the travelling fans. Ian Edwards slotted home a Frank Carradous centre to open the scoring on the hour, only for Luton's young Frankie Bunn to force home an equaliser in the final minute and deny us our first away victory in a year. The Racecourse encounter came during the following March and the teams played out a dismal scoreless draw.

It was mission accomplished for Luton in 1981/82 as they stormed to the Second Division championship and thus promotion to the top flight. Unfortunately, Wrexham were destined to head in the opposite direction as we ended up next-to-bottom. The early season fixture in North Wales was played in a rainstorm, but league leaders Luton kept their heads above water and sent the Reds sinking to their fifth home defeat in six games. Mal Donaghy opened the scoring on 28 minutes with a 20 yarder and seconds before the interval Steve White smashed home their second from even further out to complete the scoring. Reds' boss Mel Sutton reflected: "Luton's commitment was better than ours today." The return fixture saw Wrexham give a battling performance to earn a point from a scoreless draw.

The season wasn't quite all doom and gloom, as we managed to dump Luton out of the League Cup in round two. A 2-0 Reds victory at Kenilworth Road was well earned, with Mick Vinter's second minute goal setting the scene. Simon Huht slotted home our second on 22 minutes, following a Joey Jones free-kick and this was to prove decisive as Luton could only manage a 1-0 win at the Racecourse, thanks to Steve White - mind you Eddie Niedzwiecki's 47th minute penalty save helped!

topically speaking



"MAKE LOVE NOT WAR"

Savo Milosevic and his representatives have battled on and off for a couple of years to get him out of Villa Park, only to find that all it took was a mouthful of spit. I wonder if his agent demanded a percentage!

While his actions have been understandably greeted with revulsion, it seems to be the inevitable conclusion of the current fashion for treating fans with contempt, the only difference being that his target was his own team's followers. I suppose it's not a new thing - I wrote a "Topically Speaking" years ago on the same subject, riled by the antics of that promising Forest striker Stan Collymore.

However, the baiting of supporters seems to have escalated in recent times, while referees have correspondingly become more reluctant to do anything about it. Officials seem to fear enthusiastic goal celebrations before player's own supporters, even though these seem to be a most natural part of the game. Often referees are to be seen wading into a throng of gleeful players, exercising their right to play the killjoy. The most extreme example of this came three seasons ago, when Liam Daish was given a second yellow card for celebrating a goal for Birmingham at Chester, by picking up and playing a trumpet thrown onto the pitch by his own fans. There was no hint of his actions being directed at the Chester fans, but off he went anyway.

However, referees seem blind to players' actions in front of the opposing supporters, despite the obvious inherent dangers. Take the recent West Brom - Aston Villa cup tie: Dwight Yorke appeared to direct a gesture at the WBA fans after his first goal, but his actions paled into insignificance when my friend Stan capped his goal by standing a good five seconds in front of the home fans in jeering celebration. In case the F.A. haven't noticed, West Bromwich isn't a million miles from Birmingham and football fans seem to take these local rivalries rather seriously. The police insisted on a noon kick-off, so I wonder how they would have felt if a riot had been sparked by these actions?

No doubt a spokesman would have blamed the WBA fans for not having the common decency to support a posh Premier club, and therefore understanding that boorish arrogance is compulsory from the players on £25,000 a week.

Having a go at opposing fans seems to be obligatory among Premier League players, and turned a blind eye equally de rigueur for refs. Loveable David Beckham raises little enthusiasm when celebrating before Manchester United fans, but is openly provocative if he scores in front of the enemy.

The current state of affairs wasn't always tolerated. I can recall Tony Cottee rightly being punished by an F.A. disciplinary committee for a stray finger in front of the Kop.

Sadly, incitement can now be pre-meditated and sustained without fear of recrimination. The SFA have shown a willingness to act in such matters, although their hand has been forced by the specially sensitive nature of the Celtic-Rangers rivalry. However, the swift punishment of Paul Gascoigne's behaviour in the most recent Auld Firm match at least proved that they do not fear reputations - can the F.A. confidently rebut such allegations?

One day a player will be baiting the opposing fans when one of them gets it into his head to gain revenge by throwing a can at his head. Then the tabloids will enthusiastically rush out their "Hooliganism Rears Its Ugly Head" headlines again. But how do people respond to provocation in everyday life? Surely such a scenario can only be avoided by the education of players - if they got a yellow card every time they wound up their adversaries, perhaps they'd think twice next time.

MARK GRIFFITHS

It's there - Wrexham's first goal of the 1967/68 season. Ray Smith (dark shirt, left) heads home a free kick by Arfon Griffiths (in the background) and the ball hurtles into the net between two Luton Town men on the goal-line. The Wrexham player with a close up view is Sammy McMillan. But Luton shocked Wrexham by snatching a draw with a late equaliser.



WREXHAM'S RECORD v. LUTON TOWN

Previous meetings between the two clubs since our first ever clash in 1963.

HOME

P	W	D	L	F	A
10	6	2	2	14	6

Biggest home win: 3-1, 15th December, 1979
 Biggest away win: 5-2, 20th September, 1997
 Heaviest home defeat: 0-2, 24th October, 1981
 Heaviest away defeat: 1-3, 11th April, 1964 & 11th Feb., 1967

AWAY

P	W	D	L	F	A
10	1	3	6	12	16

Highest home attendance: 9,321, 19th August, 1967
 Lowest home attendance: 3,342, 12th March, 1997
 Highest away attendance: 10,890, 12th March, 1982
 Lowest away attendance: 4,660, 16th September, 1965

a is for ARSENAL

On 24th April 1988, a Wembley crowd of 95,732 witnessed an exciting Football League Cup Final between Luton Town and Arsenal. A first half goal from Brian Stein saw Luton hold a 1-0 interval lead. In the second half a goal from the 'Hatters' Danny Wilson, and one each from Arsenal's Martin Hayes and Alan Smith, saw the game heading for extra time, until Brian Stein popped up with a late winner for the 'Hatters'.

b is for BROTHERS

In the late 1980's, Luton were in the unusual position of having brothers Brian and Mark Stein, in their attack. Brian had joined Luton in October 1977 and within weeks appeared at Old Trafford in a Football League Cup tie, he also made a solitary appearance for England against France in Paris in 1984. While his brother Mark, scored 19 goals in 54 games for Luton, before going on to play for Q.P.R., Aldershot (loan), Oxford United, Stoke City, Chelsea, and this season he has turned out for Ipswich, on loan.

c is for CUP Goals

In the 1960's, Luton played Manchester City in an F.A.Cup fourth round game. After Luton had taken a 2-0 lead, City's Denis Law scored six goals in 50 minutes. However, this record was to be scrubbed from the record books as the game was abandoned after 69 minutes, with City leading 6-2! The replayed match also saw Luton take a 2-0 lead, and though Law again scored, Luton ran out 3-1 winners.

d is for DANNY Wilson

The current Barnsley boss, was manager Ray Harford's first signing for the 'Hatters'. Born in Wigan on New Years Day 1960, Danny made his Football League debut for Bury. He then moved to Chesterfield, where his inspirational performances impressed Brian Clough, who signed him for Nottingham Forest in January, 1983. However, ten months later he moved to Brighton, before he joined Luton in July 1987. He scored 24 League goals in 110 appearances for the 'Hatters', leaving to sign for Sheffield Wednesday in August 1990.

e is for ENGLAND

Centre-half Steve Foster, who made three appearances for England in 1982, joined Luton Town from Aston Villa in November 1984. He was signed for a bargain £70,000 by manager David Pleat, who rated his new signing as the best deal he had ever done. Steve, who will always be remembered for the trademark head band he wore, later captained Brighton in the 1983 F.A.Cup final against Manchester United.

f is for FOUNDATION

At a meeting at Luton Town Hall in April 1885, Luton Town Football Club was formed by the amalgamation of two leading local sides, Wanderers and Excelsior. The Wanderers had three months earlier changed their name to Luton Town Wanderers, and did not take kindly to the formation of another club, but were talked around at the meeting.



g is for GOALKEEPER

With over 21 seasons in the Football League, Les Sealey still finds himself being picked as West Ham's substitute goalkeeper. Les started his career at Coventry City, for whom he made 158 League appearances before joining the 'Hatters' for £100,000 in August 1983. He went on to play in 207 games for Luton, before moving to Manchester United in June 1990.

h is for Small HEATH

On 12th November 1898, in a Football League Division Two match, Luton suffered their heaviest ever defeat against Small Heath, who later changed their name to become Birmingham City. The Brummies beat the 'Hatters' 9-0, after only being elected to the Second Division the previous year.

i is for INTERNATIONAL

Luton's most capped international player is Mal Donaghy, who gained 58 of his 91 caps for Northern Ireland whilst with the 'Hatters'. He had joined Luton from Irish League club Larne, for a bargain £20,000 in June 1978, later playing for both Manchester United and Chelsea.

j is for JUST a name

Luton's first ever Football League game at Kenilworth Road, on 4th September 1905, was dominated by the 'Greens'. Their opponents Plymouth Argyle wore their traditional 'green', the referee was a Mr 'Green', the game was kicked off by a member of the 'Greene' King brewing family and the Luton Town secretary at the time was a certain.....Mr Green!

k is for KENILWORTH Road

The first ground Town played at was Dallow Lane, then Dunstable Road, before moving to their present home on Kenilworth Road in 1905. The current capacity is just 9,975, while the record attendance for the ground stands at 30,069 for an F.A.Cup match with Blackpool in March 1959. Luton were one of the first clubs to dig up their natural grass playing surface and replace it with a synthetic pitch. An initiative greatly appreciated by local sports clubs, in fact, in season 1986/87 more than 200 matches were played at the ground.

l is for LEICESTER

On 4th September 1897, Luton Town visited Leicester Fosse for their first ever Football League game. The match ended in a 1-1 draw with a Mr.Ekins recording the 'Hatters' first ever League goal. In 1900, they failed in their bid for re-election and it was not until 1920 that they regained their place in the Football League.

m is for Eric MORECAMBE

Without doubt the most famous Luton Town supporter must be the former comedian, Eric Morecambe. In his weekly television show 'Morecambe and Wise', there were many sketches in which his love for the club inspired humour. Before his death Eric had become a director of the club.

n is for NOTTINGHAM Forest

In August 1981, current Grimsby Town winger Kingsley Black, became Luton's record transfer fee received, when he signed for Nottingham Forest for £1,500,000. He had joined the 'Hatters' straight from school and gone on to score 26 league goals in 127 games. He has also represented Northern Ireland on more than 30 occasions, making his debut against France in 1988.

o is for ODENSE

In August 1989, Luton Town manager Ray Harford, approached the Danish club OB Odense, to sign Danish international forward Lars Elstrup. The 'Hatters' ended up paying a club record fee of £850,000 for his services. Elstrup went on to score 19 goals in 60 league appearances, before leaving Kenilworth Road in the close season of 1992.

p is for Joe PAYNE

In 1936/37, Joe Payne scored a phenomenal 55 league goals, in just 39 games. This still stands as a record for the number of goals scored by an individual in a single season, for the Third Division South. On 13th April 1936, Joe again went into the record books when he created a Football League best of scoring a remarkable 10 (Yes, TEN) goals in one game, against Bristol Rovers, with six shots and four headed goals. A feat which will take some beating.

q is for the QUEUES

On 4th March 1959, Luton Town recorded their highest ever attendance at Kenilworth Road, when 30,069 fans turned up for a F.A.Cup sixth round replay against Blackpool. The home team won 1-0 and eventually reached the F.A.Cup final, where they lost 2-1 to Nottingham Forest. The best gate receipts for a match at Luton Town, came on 23rd March 1994, when fans paid £115,541 for the F.A.Cup tie against West Ham United. Luton won what was a quarter-final replay 3-2, before going out to Chelsea in the semi-finals.

r is for RECORD Cup win

The opposition for Luton's highest ever cup win were Clapton, who on 30th November 1927, were beaten 9-0 in an F.A.Cup first round tie after the original game had been abandoned. The goals were scored by Yardley (4), Reid (2), Dennis (2) and Woods.

s is for SIMOD Cup

On 27th March 1988, Luton were the clear cut favourites for the Simod Cup final against Reading. However, in front of 61,740 fans at Wembley it was not to be and despite a first-half goal from Mick Harford, Reading went on to win 4-1. To reach the final, Luton had beaten Everton 2-1, Stoke City 4-1 and Swindon Town 2-1, after extra time.



t is for Record TRANSFER fee received

Born in Swansea, centre-forward John Hartson was to make 54 Football League appearances, scoring 11 goals for the 'Hatters', before Arsenal stepped in with a massive transfer bid of £2,500,000. After failing to get a regular place in the Arsenal first team, John moved to West Ham United, where he has been a resounding success. He has also now established himself in the Welsh team and the country high hopes of him at this level.

u is for UPSET

On 7th December 1965, Southern League side Corby Town, travelled to Kenilworth Road, following a 2-2 draw and enjoyed a surprising 1-0 win. In front of 13,000 fans, a 33rd minute goal from Maurice Goodall was enough to see Corby into the third round of the F.A.Cup for the first time in their history.

v is for VICTORY

On 13th April 1936, Luton recorded their highest ever Football League win, when in a Third Division South game, they beat Bristol Rovers 12-0. This was the game in which Joe Payne scored his record 10 goals, with the other goals coming from Martin and Roberts.

w is for WALES

When the 'Hatters' took to the Wembley field for the 1959 F.A.Cup Final against Nottingham Forest, they were clear favourites. Only six days earlier in a re-arranged First Division game, at Kenilworth Road, they had thumped six goals past Forest and were full of confidence when they ran out under the twin towers. However, it was not to be their day, as Forest stole the honours, winning 2-1.

x is for eXceptional Service

In the late 1940's, two players joined the 'Hatters' and they both went on to give the club sterling service. The first to sign was Bob Morton, who between 1948 and 1964 made a club record 494 League appearances. The following year Gordon Turner joined the club, and between 1949 and 1964, he scored a club record 243 League goals.

y is for YOUTH

In his early playing days at Cardiff, goalkeeper Andy Dibble won youth and under-21 caps for Wales. It was this exposure that brought him into the limelight and Luton paid £125,000 for his services in July 1984. Following loan spells with Sunderland and Huddersfield, he left Luton after just 30 appearances to join Manchester City for £240,000 in July 1988. Earlier this season he was back on loan with Luton and played in Wrexham's 5-2 win at Kenilworth Road.



Millwall

match report

After seeing the flames of our F.A.Cup dreams finally extinguished by Wimbledon the previous Tuesday, Wrexham returned to league duties as we looked to climb back up the table and into play-off contention. The New Den was our destination to take on the Lions of Millwall led by the ex-West Ham manager Billy Bonds.

Manager Brian Flynn retained the starting eleven that had performed so well against the Dons. For Millwall Tim Carter replaced the flu hit Nigel Spink, whilst Andy Cook was making his home debut after signing from Portsmouth.

Considering the fact that Millwall had not won in their previous four outings, they came at Wrexham from the start. Within a minute Danny Hockton was sent clear down the left wing by Paul Shaw. The winger, however, failed to capitalise on the ex-Arsenal man's good work. Hockton was soon in the thick of the action moments later, heading wide from an Andy Cook free-kick.

Yet more Millwall pressure was exerted, Carl Veart made a strong run from midfield, but his shot failed to trouble Andy Marriott. He was given another chance moments later but also wasted that after good work by Shaw.

Wrexham's only replay in this opening period was a Neil Wainwright shot straight at Carter, after he cut in from the left wing.

Millwall were forced to make a change on 14 minutes when Kim Grant was replaced by Paul Wilkinson, although this was not a popular action for many of the watching fans, who roundly booed as the much travelled forward entered the fray!

Hockton was seeing a lot of the early possession, forcing Brian Carey to clear hurriedly. The Lions should have taken the lead on 19 minutes when a Cook free-kick was well won in the air by Wilkinson. It felt to Shaw six yards out, but the midfielder blazed high over the bar.

After a period of play that saw both teams struggle to retain any real possession, Wrexham finally woke up. Peter Ward played in Phil Hardy, whose near post cross was flicked straight at a relieved Tim Carter by Neil Roberts.

Andy Marriott earned his wages just after the half hour, turning away a Hockton shot for a corner. The Welsh international was called on again moments later, to dash from his area to once more thwart Hockton's progress. The half petered out with neither side creating any chances, thanks to a Mark McGregor last gasp tackle denying Hockton.

It appeared that the half-time drinks must have been supplied by the Chinese swimming team. As it was a rejuvenated Wrexham side who took the game to Millwall in the second-half, with Wainwright and Ward sending shots wide soon after the restart.

Karl Connolly, who was largely non-existent in the opening period, came to life when linking well with Hardy, but saw his shot blocked. More good work down the right between McGregor and Wayne Phillips resulted in a corner, from which ward planted a firm header against the crossbar.

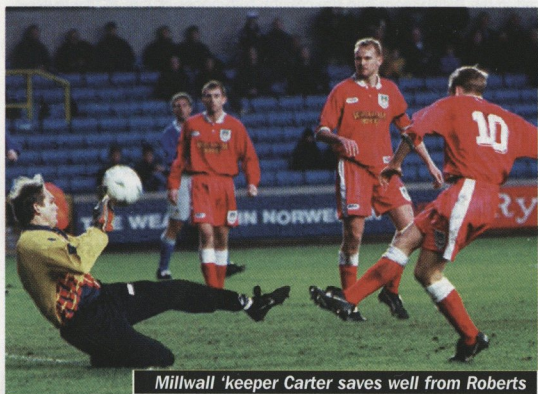
Carter in the home goal, then produced a double save after he failed to hold a Wainwright shot, but reacted well to block Roberts' follow up effort.

A minute later Wrexham had an appeal for a penalty turned down, after a well delivered Ward corner was headed goal ward by Roberts. Exactly how the referee and his assistant missed Paul Allen stick out a hand and knock the ball off the line, is a mystery to everyone but the officials concerned.

The game took a strange twist for the home side, when Cook limped off injured, minutes after they had used the last of their three substitutes. That came when Wilkinson left the action to cheers and was replaced by Maurice Doyle, a bit ironic for those same fans, as they team was now down to 10 men!

The pressure continued to mount and finally told 15 minutes from the end as the Reds eventually made the all important break through. A ball out of defence was knocked forward by Roberts and collected by Connolly, in turn thread a pass through for the darting Wainwright to take in his stride. Wally crossed diagonally over to the right, rounding the 'keeper and coolly slipping the ball into an empty net.

The closing minutes saw the Reds make good use of the ball as the clocked ticked down. The final whistle brought our fourth away victory of the season.



Millwall 'keeper Carter saves well from Roberts



The incident when Paul Allen cleared off the line



Wally rounds Tim Carter to score



Millwall

HOME TEAM

1. Tim Carter
2. Bobby Brown
3. Andy Cook
4. Bobby Bowry
5. Brian Law
6. Scott Fitzgerald 46
7. Paul Allen
8. Carl Veart
9. Kim Grant 14
10. Paul Shaw
11. Danny Hockton

ON THE BENCH

12. Maurice Doyle No.13
13. Paul Wilkinson No.9
14. Keith Stevens No.6

Wrexham

HOME TEAM

1. Andy Marriott
2. Mark McGregor
3. Phil Hardy
4. Wayne Phillips
5. Dave Ridler
6. Brian Carey
7. Neil Wainwright
8. Gareth Owen
9. Karl Connolly
10. Neil Roberts
11. Peter Ward

ON THE BENCH

12. Martyn Chalk
13. Dave Brammer
14. Dean Spink

MATCH STATS

	Millwall	Wrexham
Shots on Target	3	8
Shots off Target	5	5
Fouls Conceded	21	16
Caught Offside	5	3
Corner Kicks	3	8

Match Time: 1st Half: 45.56
2nd Half: 46.17

Conditions: Dry
Referee: David Orr (Iver, Bucks.)

Attendance: 5,550

■ Bookings ■ Substituted ● Goal

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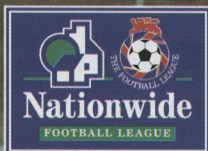
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community news



Good afternoon and welcome to the Community section. To help encourage our younger supporters to become part of the Junior Reds during February, we will be offering inclusion in a free draw for a signed team photograph, all children who sign up before the end of the month. Application forms are available from the Club Shop, Community Office or by post, if you ring 01978 358545. The final of the Smoby Monnerett Table Football competition was held this morning in the Community Office, the winner will be going forward to the North West area finals and then hopefully to the final in London. There the lucky contestant will have the chance to win a trip to Paris and the World Cup Finals. Our lucky winner will be revealed in next week's programme. The winners of the Panini Schools Six-A-Side Competition, which was held last Tuesday, were the team representing Borrás Park Junior School, after a very tense penalty shoot-out with Ysgol Penrhyn from Pentre Broughton. Borrás Park will now represent Wrexham AFC at the area finals in Manchester, where they will play likes of Manchester United, Manchester City, Everton and Chester City(!). Good luck to them all.

See you at the Bristol Rovers game next Saturday.
STEVE HUGHES

Supporter's Club News

SHROPSHIRE REDS

The club has two important evenings coming up. Their next meeting on Thursday, 12th February at the Oswestry Town FC Supporters' Club in Gobowen Road, Oswestry, will be addressed by BBC Wales commentator Ian Gwyn Hughes. The evening will commence at 8.00pm and will be restricted to members only, though new subscriptions will be accepted on the night. And, remember half-season fees now apply (£3.00 Adult; £1.50 Junior/OAP; £6.50 Family).

They follow this four days later with their biggest event to date, when they will be presenting "An Evening with Tommy Docherty" at the Wrexham Lager Club on Monday, 16th February. Ex-FIFA referee John Lloyd will compete what is sure to be a fantastic night's entertainment, one which gets under way at 8.30pm. Tickets are



priced at just £10.00 each and are available from Wrexham AFC's Club and Programme Shops, or from Peter on (01743) 271438. Demand is sure to be high - tickets are already selling well - so, if you would like to be part of the audience, don't delay.

VALE OF CLWYD REDS

Membership continues to grow, with numbers up to over the 60 mark and, like the Shropshires, they have reduced their fees for the remainder of the season. In a joint venture with their Shropshire cousins they have undertaken sponsorship of the remaining Player Kit packages for the second-half of the season - a gesture which was greatly appreciated by Wrexham AFC's Commercial Manager Allan Thomas. Their next meeting will be towards the end of the month and will be announced in the programme before hand. If you think that this group has something to offer you, why not pop along and have a chat with them? Or, if you can't wait that long, then speak or either Roy (01745) 591746, or Kevin (01745) 591241. They'll be pleased to hear from you.

Finally a quick reminder of Wrexham's other "satellite" supporters' groups: **London Reds: Barry - 0181 402 2001; Ynys Mon Reds: Gary - 01407 810491; Manchester Reds: Steff - 0161 256 3904; East Anglian Reds:** for the moment, please write via TSG, 21 Dolafon, Penybont Fawr, Oswestry, Salop. SY10 OPA.



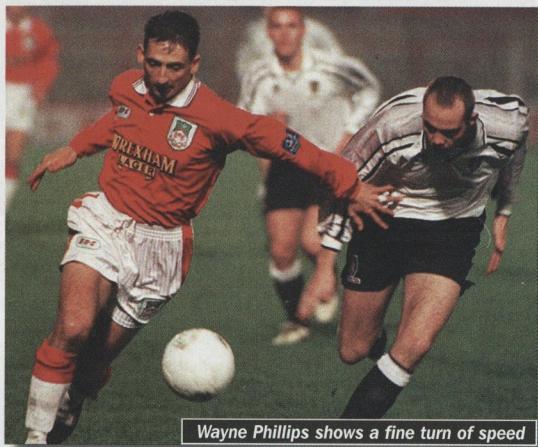
MASCOT

This afternoon we are pleased to welcome nine year-old Gareth John Lloyd of Gyfelia, Wrexham as our match mascot. He attends Maes-y-LLan, School in Ruabon and names Gareth Owen as his favourite player. We hope Gareth and his family enjoy their day out at the Racecourse.

Game	Match Sponsor	Matchball Sponsor
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Blackpool	Evening Leader	Artic Windows 01745 816962
Bristol City	Delmar Worldchoice	Nigel Roberts
Chesterfield	Edmundson Electrical	Acarfair Bed Company
Millwall	Nat West Bank	J.R.Boyle (Wxm) Ltd
Burnley	Minerva Roof Truses	Drum Reed Ltd, Civil Engineers 01978 752836.
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FAW Invitation Cup / Qualifying Round / Penydarren Park / 20th January 1998

Merthyr Tydfil



Wayne Phillips shows a fine turn of speed



Karl Connolly slides in on goal



The Merthyr defender plays follow my leader with Wayne Phillips

match report

After the excellent victory achieved at the New Den, Wrexham made the trek down to south Wales for this FAW Invitation Cup match against Merthyr Tydfil.

With the group system being used purely to decide home advantage in the knockout stages, many questioned the need for all these games and this reflected in the crowd. However, manager Brian Flynn has used the opportunity to give experience to the likes of Neil Roberts, Neil Wainwright and Steve Thomas, while also bringing other squad members back into the first team frame.

This game proved to be no exception, Mark McGregor and Peter Ward being rested with Deryn Brace and Dave Brammer their replacements. McGregor found himself on the bench with Dean Spink and Martyn Chalk.

Following a 5-1 victory at the Racecourse in the first meeting, hopes were high for more of the same, however, it was to be the Marthys who got in the first shot on goal, with Andy Marriott saving Ian Mitchell's effort at the second attempt.

Wrexham's turn was soon to follow, Gareth Owen shooting straight at Gary Wager after a Wainwright lay-off, but the Merthyr 'keeper was not troubled by another Owen effort a minute later, which actually hit his brother on the terraces!

The Reds continued to dominate and a mistake by Anthony Jenkins let in Karl Connolly, his cross to Roberts saw the young striker shoot wide of the mark. On 15 minutes, more neat build up play concluded with a well worked dummy by Roberts, Connolly was set free, but Wager reacted superbly to deny the Wrexham man.

Chris Summers did his best to ensure that it was not all one way traffic though, though his chip failed to trouble Marriott. But the Wrexham goalkeeper was a relieved man to see the same player's header go wide of the intended target.

Normal service was soon resumed when Connolly did well to win his header on an Owen cross and Brammer was not too far away with a firmly struck free-kick. Wager was then at full stretch to tip away another Connolly header and he was also equal to an Owen shot as the Reds strived for the opening goal.

As the half drew to a close Brammer volleyed wide and Wainwright produced his customary cut in from the wing to fire a shot straight at Wager, as more Wrexham pressure was exerted.

A half-time reshuffle saw Merthyr made a double substitution, sending on Roy Jordon and Terry Green. It was Jordon who had Marriott back peddling frantically to tip his long range lob over the bar. Unlike the first-half, the second was slow in getting going, with neither side creating much in the way of goalscoring chances.

Just after the hour Wrexham made a double substitution with Martyn Chalk and Dean Spink replacing Phillips and Roberts. The two new men quickly combined to force Gareth Abrahams into clearing the danger.

Wrexham struck the bar soon after, when an Owen free-kick found Connolly unmarked and crashed his chance against the woodwork. The ball came back to the Wrexham forward, who sent his second attempt well wide.

The opening goal finally came with 20 minutes remaining as Brammer showed great tenacity to force his way past two opponents, before giving Wager no chance with his left footed drive into the bottom corner.

The second goal was not long in coming either, Wainwright skipping down the left wing to send in a deep cross which was converted by Martyn Chalk from close range. This gave Wrexham some breathing space and knocked the stuffing out of brave Marthyr.

The last 15 minutes saw the visitors boss their opponents and Wager was kept busy until the end. He saw a Brammer header fall into his hands and rushed off his line to deny Connolly. The Merthyr 'keeper was powerless to stop a Spink header finding Connolly, but he was saved by a defender on the line.

Soon after the game ended with a comfortable win for the Reds and sent them to the top of the table, with Cardiff having one game left - at home to Merthyr.



Merthyr Tydfil

0

HOME TEAM

1. Gary Wager
2. Anthony Jenkins
3. Russell Wigley
4. Gareth Abraham
5. Anthony Rivett
6. Roger Gibbons
7. Darren Porretta
8. Cohen Griffiths
9. Ian Mitchell
10. Chris Summers
11. Dean Clarke

ON THE BENCH

12. Roy Jordon
13. Terry Green
14. Mark Williams

Wrexham

2

HOME TEAM

1. Andy Marriott
2. Deryn Brace
3. Phil Hardy
4. Wayne Phillips
5. Dave Ridler
6. Brian Carey
7. Neil Wainwright
8. Gareth Owen
9. Karl Connolly
10. Neil Roberts
11. Dave Brammer

ON THE BENCH

12. Martyn Chalk
13. Mark McGregor
14. Dean Spink

MATCH STATS

	Merthyr	Wrexham
Shots on Target	2	11
Shots off Target	4	7
Fouls Conceded	19	18
Caught Offside	5	6
Corner Kicks	0	9

Match Time:	1st Half: 45.36
	2nd Half: 45.52
Conditions:	Brass Monkeys
Referee:	Ray Ellingham (Cardiff)
Attendance:	473

■ Bookings ■ Substituted ● Goal

John Mortimer

Signed by Wrexham after the Second World War had ended, in readiness for the recommencement of the Football League for the 1946/47 season. John was recruited by the Wrexham manager of that time, Mr Tom Williams, who had signed him after a local scout had spotted him playing in the local leagues around Birkenhead, turning out for both Prenton Villa and Park Villa, with whom he had won many honours.

John had played football for his school teams, Temple Road and Claughton High Grade in his native Birkenhead. However, he was still only 15 years-old when the Second World War began and any notion of taking up a career in football was simply forgotten. Instead, after leaving school, John went to the offices of the Birkenhead to Liverpool Ferry Company before taking up work as an apprentice Joiner at Cammell Lairds Ship Builders in Birkenhead, with whom he was employed for seventeen years.

Football was still an important part of his life and progressed from Prenton Villa to Park Villa, who played in a higher standard league on the Wirral. "I was offered the chance to join Chester, by their manager Frank Brown, along with two other players from Park Villa, a lad named Skinner and goalkeeper Terry McNee, who I later teamed up with at Wrexham. The other two both agreed to join Chester, whilst I turned them down."

Despite declining the chance to move to Sealand Road, it wasn't long after that John was given the opportunity to join Wrexham: "A local scout for the Birkenhead League recommended me to Mr Tom Williams, who was manager of Wrexham at the time, and I agreed to sign on amateur terms." It was following the end of the conflict that John made his first team debut for Wrexham, when he played three games in the 1945/46 F.A.Cup competition, which was played over two legs for the one and only time.

His debut came in the first round, second leg match with Crewe Alexandra on the Racecourse in November 1945, which Wrexham won 3-0, (4-2 on aggregate). John had stepped into the side at left-half, the same position that he played in for the next two matches, both against Shrewsbury Town in the second round of the F.A.Cup and which saw Wrexham go through 2-1 on aggregate. The next round saw Wrexham drawn against First Division side Blackpool, John said: "That was the most disappointing moment of my football career, as I would have been up against Stanley Matthews, but I was left out of the team, to make way for an experienced player."

The following season saw the recommencement of normal peace time football and John had to wait patiently for his Football League debut, which finally came in December 1946. Playing at wing-half, in place of Billy Tudor, he made his debut against Southport on the Racecourse in a 1-1 draw, which saw Jesse McLarty score the Wrexham goal in front of a crowd of 5,721. Of his debut, John said: "It seems so long ago, I really don't remember too much about it now, except that I

wanted to do well for my place as full-back with the team."

It was at left-back though, that John was to make most of his appearances for Wrexham, although he was to find stiff competition from Ron Jackson, the club's regular full-back. However, John made six more League appearances that season for Wrexham and during the close season, in June, he was signed on part-time professional terms, at the same time continuing to work at Cammell Laird: "I also did most of my training with Tranmere Rovers in the evenings with their part-time pro's".

The following season again saw Jackson playing at left-back, but John was to make 19 League and Cup appearances during the 1947/48 campaign and it was during that same year that he played in the club's F.A.Cup inglorious exit to non-league Colchester United. Wrexham lost 1-0, but it was only after a sensational penalty farce saw them go out: "We were trailing 1-0 when Billy Tunnicliffe was chopped down in the penalty area. He recovered in time to take the penalty, placed the ball on the spot, walked back to take his run, spun round, collapsed from concussion and had to be carried off.

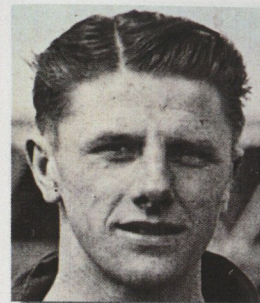
"Jack Boothway then stepped up to take the kick, but he completely miss-hit his effort and watched as the ball trickled into the Colchester goalkeeper's hands. We later found out that their 'keeper had dug a hole on the penalty spot and placed the ball in, it while we were all concerned about Billy Tunnicliffe!"

The end of the season saw Wrexham go on their first ever overseas tour to Germany, with John included in the party of fourteen players. This was to be one of his most memorable moments with the club: "We were over there for ten days, playing against the Combined Services XI, The Rhine Army XI and B.A.O.R. (British Army On the Rhine) in Celle, Hannover and Rothesan. The devastation in Germany at this time was terrible, but I'll never forget when we boarded the ship for the Hook of Holland. Our trainer, Charlie Leyfield, warned all the players to have an early night and get their heads down, due to the rough crossing ahead which would cause sea-sickness. In the morning all the players were fine, but Charlie himself was as sick as a dog!"

The 1948/49 season saw John playing mainly for the Wrexham reserve side in the Cheshire League, as he was to disappointingly make just one first team appearance that year in a Football League game at York City in October 1948, which ended in a 5-1 defeat. However, John was to win honours that as he was selected to play for the Cheshire County Football League against their counterparts the Southern League, at the Racecourse on 23rd October, 1948. Another Wrexham player Les Speed, was also selected.

"I remember the star man for the Southern team was Frank Soo, who had previously played for Stoke City and Luton Town," recalls John.

Despite this honour, at the end of the season, he was



to be released by Wrexham, but was soon fixed up with another club when he signed for New Brighton on trial. However, he had an unfortunate start with the Rakers, as he broke a leg in a reserve match at Fleetwood whilst still on trial and this saw him out of action for three months. Given the precarious financial position New Brighton were in at the time, it was a sporting gesture by the club's directors to give

John a contract until the end of the season. Once fit though, he found his first team chances limited and he made just four League appearances for the Wirral team during the 1949/50 season, and then the following year he was to make just one more first team appearance before being released on the 5th May 1951, a month before the New Brighton club failed to gain re-election to the Football League.

John then signed for Cheshire League side, Ellesmere Port Town for the 1951/52 season and spent three years with them, before signing for Northwich Victoria for the 1954/55 campaign. He remained at the Drill Field for just over a season, when he returned to North Wales to join up with Rhyl in September 1956. After just over 12 months with the seaside club, he signed for Welsh League side Caernarvon Town, around Christmas 1957, and played for them against Wrexham, in Caernarvon's 4-2 Welsh Cup semi-final defeat in March 1958. His last match for the 'Canaries' was against Borough United in May 1958, when Caernarvon won 15-4! He then signed for Pwllheli & District in August 1958.

After John had finished his playing career with Pwllheli, he continued to work with Cammell Laird, with whom he had been employed throughout football career, before switching to a job with the Unilever Soap Company at Port Sunlight. He followed that with by a "long stretch" at Shell in Ellesmere

Port and finally working as a quality control inspector for Vauxhall's, before retiring in 1988.

Of the players who John played alongside for Wrexham, he said: "They were great guys, Eddie Tunney, Bill Tudor, Norman Sharp, Darkie Baines, Jess McLarty, Jack Jones and Les Speed. The main one though, was Gibby Bellis. He was a brilliant footballer and a great example. He always had six strappings of bandage on either leg, between ankle and thigh, while Billy Cook would always have a roll cotton wool in his boots before taking the field!"

Of the game today, John said: "Football is all about possession. I would rather the game was played more direct, it makes the game more exciting, although you do have to move with the times."

As for Wrexham, John, who is now 74 years-old, said: "I do keep an eye on Wrexham's results and league position." And as for himself, he said: "I manage to play golf twice a week which I really enjoy, while my two Grandsons play football for their school teams. Richard is 17 and Adam is 11 years-old. They also both play for a youth team called Castrol Juniors."

fact box

Name: John McCormick Mortimer
Date of Birth: 5th December, 1923
Place of Birth: Birkenhead
Position: Left-Back

Wrexham Record-
Debut: v. Southport (h) 21st December, 1946
Last Match: v. York City (a) 9th October, 1948
League: 23 apps, 0 goals
F.A. Cup: 2 apps, 0 goals
Welsh Cup: 2 apps, 0 goals

Other Clubs-
New Brighton - Oct 1949, 5 apps 0 goals; Ellesmere Port Town - 1951/52; Northwich Victoria - 1954/55; Rhyl - Sept 1956; Caernarvon Town - Dec 1957; Pwllheli & District - Aug 1958

Honours-
Cheshire County League representative cap 1948.



Wrexham 1946/47.

John is third from the right on the back row.

get the maps out lads!

While we always hope for a friendly draw in any of the World Cup and European Championship tournaments, deep down it has now become customary that Wales will always be up against it, whoever our opponents turn out to be - with the exception of maybe super San Marino!

This is mainly due to the fact that we have not qualified for any finals since the 1976 European Championships (remember Austria at the Racecourse in November 1975 and Arfon Griffiths' goal?).

Wales reached the final stages of the 1958 World Cup Finals, but only due to the fact that we had a second chance via the back door, and won a drawing of lots to endure a play-off with Israel, which was successfully negotiated 4-0 on aggregate.

In hindsight it seem that Wales used up any luck they would have had in their history in that particular incident! We certainly have not had our fair share since, by any stretch of the imagination.

As fourth seeds, we now expect to be grouped with two of the big guns and the recent draw in Ghent was no exception. The only consolation being from a financial point of view and a new country for the Welsh fans to get to grips with. No doubt the various maps and atlas' were being scanned in abundance.

The former Soviet Republic of Belarus take their players from either Russian clubs or local champions Dynamo Minsk, who finished their recent season with a 27 game unbeaten run. They are expected to be the "chopping blocks" of the group, but don't bet on it, what with so many new countries now emerging in World football with far superior technique and skills to our own.

Italy and Denmark will no doubt make the running with Switzerland, hopefully, capable of springing a few surprises to break the group up, to at least give us a chance of keeping in touch.

Group One "The Group of Death" as it has already been dubbed (when was it anything else!) will give the coffers of the Welsh F.A. in Westgate Street a financial lifeline. With the National Stadium under redevelopment and our stadia not up to the criteria required for "big" matches, Old Trafford will no doubt be utilised for the Denmark encounter due to the player links, while Goodison, Old Trafford or Anfield may be on the list of venues for the Italy match, which could be early on.

Many of us hope it will not be the latter as the Scotland match in 1977 still leaves one feeling bitter about that occasion, both on and off the pitch.

It is sad we have to cross the border at all, but in this case it seems the obvious choice.

One should be optimistic at the start of any new tournament, especially with a number of emerging youngsters that are beginning to crop up in the higher echelons of the League. The midfield area has long been a problem, but Robbie Savage, Carl Robinson, John Oster, Craig Bellamy and the highly rated Matthew Jones at Leeds United, should all be around for some time to come to supplement the present incumbents Gary Speed, Mark Pembridge and Ceri Hughes etc. (one feels our own Gareth Owen could and should be among these with his new found consistency). "If only we had a defence", is now the familiar cry!

Welsh soccer fans in need of an end of season holiday can now enjoy just that in the first week of June. Wales will be the guest of Wrexham F.C. at the Racecourse on May 30th, which is the first of two games to celebrate the club's 125th Anniversary - the other being against Manchester United in August.

The fans can then fly out to Malta for a friendly on June 3rd and finish up in Tunis on June 6th with another friendly against World Cup finalists Tunisia.

Ninian Park has been confirmed as the ground for the interesting meeting with another World Cup qualifier in Jamaica on March 25th. Hopefully the pitch will be to everyone's liking!

Returning to the forthcoming European Championship theme, there is still no sign of the "Tactical" assistant to manager Bobby Gould and one feels he should be on board by now, to help with the preparations for the group games.

"Pigs might fly" must be the answer on most pundit's lips on asked about Wales' chances. But then again, we have recently seen two of the creatures take flight and they were wearing a shade of red!!



TWELVE TO TACKLE

1. When Luton were relegated to Division Two at the end of the 1995/96 season, which other two teams dropped through the relegation trap-door with them?
2. When the Hatters won the League Cup in 1988, which team did they defeat 3-2 in the final?
3. Luton set a Division Three (South) goalscoring record in April 1936, when they routed which team 12-0?
4. Apart from Luton, which other Nationwide League side are nicknamed the Hatters?
5. When Manchester United were formed in 1878, what was their full name?
6. Which Nationwide League team once played their home matches at the Old Show Ground?
7. Which team holds the record for the largest ever crowd to attend a GM Vauxhall Conference match?
8. In what year did Denmark surprisingly win the European Championships?
9. Which four teams competed in the Second Division play-offs last season?
10. Who are the only two sides to gain admission to the Football League without having previously played a senior fixture?
11. Name the six teams that Cyrille Regis represented?
12. Which 13 Football League teams have Yeovil defeated in the F.A.Cup, since their first giantkilling act in 1924/25?

1. Watford and Millwall, 2. Arsenal, 3. Bristol Rovers, 4. Stockport County, 5. Newton Heath Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, 6. Scunthorpe United, 7. Lincoln City (9,432 v Weymouth May 1988), 8. 1992, 9. Brentford, 10. Bristol City, Crewe Alex and Luton, 11. West Brom, Chelsea and Bradford City, 12. West Brom, Coventry, Aston Villa, Wolves, Walsley, Walsley, Chester, 12. Bournemouth (twice), Brentford, Brighton, Bury, Cambridge, Crystal Palace (twice), Exeter, Fulham, Hereford, Southampton (twice), Sunderland, Torquay, Walsall (twice).

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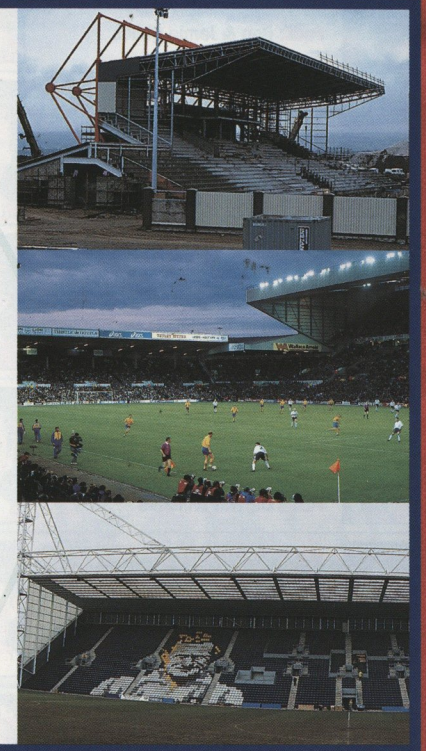
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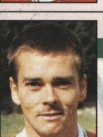


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 Jonathan Cross Kit: Pads: Ben & Jamie Childs	 Tony Humes Kit: Erfyl Roberts Pads: Erfyl Roberts	 Brian Carey Kit: London Reds Pads: Joe Liardet
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 Karl Connolly Kit: Shropshire Reds Pads: Martin & Annabelle	 Neil Wainwright Kit: Pads: Phil & Allan	 Dean Spink Kit: Vale of Clwyd Reds Pads: Dewi Thomas
 Craig Skinner Kit: The Sheeping Giant Fanzine Pads: Jane Connah	 Neil Roberts Kit: Acton Park Hotel Pads: Scoot	 Paul Roberts Kit: Gareth Lynn Pads: Emma & Leah Dollimore



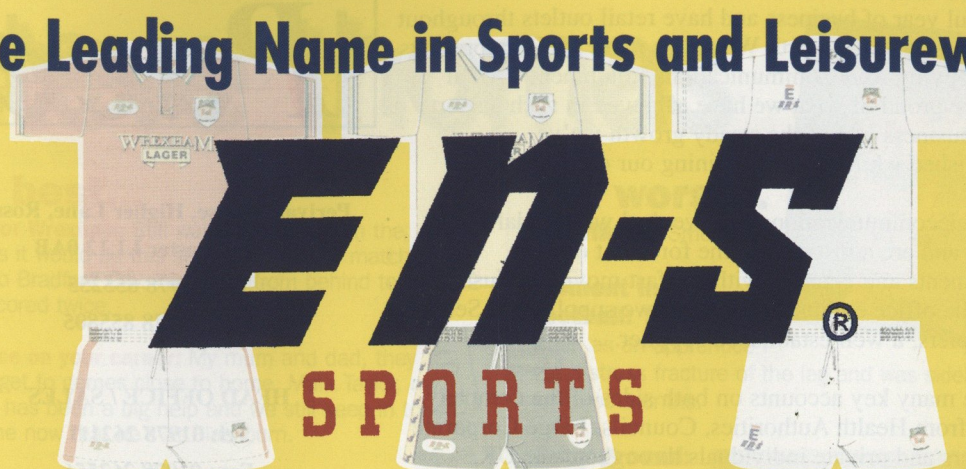
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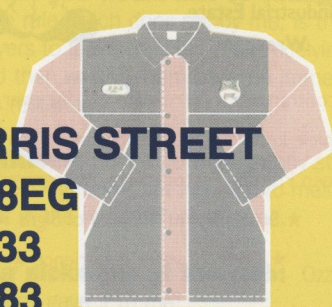
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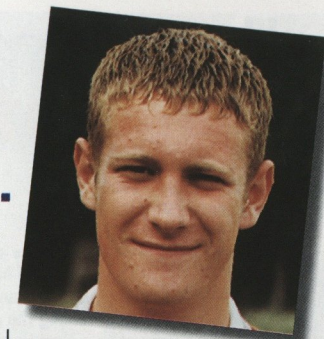


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the best...

Game for Wrexham: Still waiting, although in the reserves it would be this season's Pontin's match at home to Bradford City. We came from behind to win 5-2 and I scored twice.

Influence on your career: My mum and dad, they always get to games close to home. Mark Taylor, my cousin, has been a big help and we still keep in touch by phone now that he's at Blackburn.

Away ground:

Victoria Ground, Hartlepool - it might not be the best around, but I always enjoy watching or playing there.



Game ever

seen: That has to be the England v. Holland clash in Euro'96. It was just a shame that the Dutch scored to stop Scotland qualifying.

Moment in football so far: There are two, turning pro at Wrexham and being selected to play for Wales U-18's, I now have 10 caps to my credit.

Current player in my position: Roy Keane - his work rate is unbelievable.

Other sport: Snooker, I'm a member in Wrexham and enjoy playing the game, although I'm not a great watcher.

Pastimes: Going out with my mates back home, which happens once in a blue moon!

TV programme: Match of the Day - Harry Enfield & Chums.

Film ever seen: Silence of the Lambs or Seven.

Type of music: Beautiful South

Holiday experience: Ibiza '97, with the Monkeys.

Food: My mum's Steak and chips.

School subject: P.E. I was not a great student at school!

Schooboy hero: Paul Gascoigne during his days with Spurs.

the worst...

Pet Hates: Smoking.

Moment in

football: That was when as an apprentice I got a stress fracture of the leg and was sidelined for three months.

Away ground:

Feethams, Darlington. As you would expect from any self respecting Pool supporter.



Other sport:

Cricket - it has to be the worst game in the world.

TV programme: Star Trek. When Geoff switches it on in the digs, the rest of us get up and leave.

Film ever seen: Dusk Till Dawn - it starts well but then goes weird!

Musical artist or band: Pulp.

Food: Beetroot - disgusting!

School subject: All of them - it would be hard to pick one I hated the most.

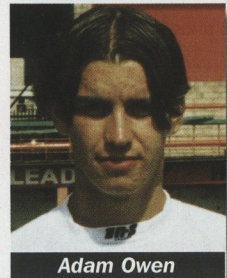
One thing that you would like to change in football: One rule which does annoy me, is the forcing of injured players to leave the field after receiving treatment and then waving them back on immediately the game has restarted.

Any superstitions: I don't go through any strange rituals in the dressing room, but I do like to make sure that I feel right in the mind before a game.

What is your nickname at the club: Ozzy and guess what? Joey gave it to me!

all teams back in action after christmas

Saturday 17th January, 1998
Lancashire League Division Two
MARINE YOUTH 1 WREXHAM 'B' 3



Adam Owen

Despite going a goal behind early on, the Reds battled back in the second-half and an inspired double substitution swung the game back in our favour.

Dave Hennessey was the star of the display, scoring twice and missing out on a hat-trick when failing to convert his second spot kick of the afternoon.

After levelling from a penalty, it was Adam Owen who set up Hennessey for his second when the ball came down the left and was knocked into the area, before being slotted home under the goalkeeper.

Owen was back for his first game after missing a month due to suspension and he made up for wasted time by finishing the game off. The ball was played in low from the left wing and Owen stepped up to get in front of his marker and angle his effort passed the dispirited home 'keeper.

Team: Kristian Rogers, Steve Cooper, Kevin Hannon, John Whitley, George Horan, Mark Entwistle, Gareth Hughes, Dave Hennessey, Dave Sweet (Adam Owen 50), Paul Mazzarella, Ian Coks (Darren Roberts 50). Sub: Andy Jones.

Tuesday, 20th January, 1998
Lancashire League Division One
MANCHESTER UNITED 'A' 4 WREXHAM 'A' 1

Unfortunately there was never much danger of the us repeating our victory over United from earlier in the season.

Team: Leigh Edwards, Steve Cooper, Rob Morris, Steve Hopkins, Lee Reilly, Andy Griffiths, Robin Gibson, Steve Thomas, Danny Williams, Craig Tate, Phil Jones. Subs: Tom Baker, Dave Hennessey.

Friday, 23rd January, 1998
Lancashire League Division One
MORCAMBE RES.1 WREXHAM 'A' 1



Paul Roberts

Having already lost at home to the Shrimpers this season, another tough game was expected at Christie Park against the reserve side of the Vauxhall Conference title challengers.

The early action saw Gareth Hughes beat two men on the right wing but his low cross was cut out by the goalkeeper.

A slip by trialist centre-half Lee Reilly, allowed a Morecambe forward to run through one-on-one with Leigh Edwards and despite getting a hard shot, the big 'keeper was able to touch the ball over the bar for a corner.

Wrexham were enjoying the better of the exchanges and on 13 minutes good play on the right side saw a cross into the box, where Paul Roberts reacted quickest to get in a low effort that was saved at the second attempt.

The Shrimpers broke out of defence to cause their visitors a few moments of worry, as first a free header from the penalty spot was directed wide and then the cross back in saw another long range looping header land on the top of the crossbar, despite being covered by Edwards.

Reilly was winning his fair share of battles in the middle and on one occasion was able to find Roberts on the wing. The Reds won a throw-in, the ball was cleared from the home penalty box, but Steve Thomas collected it and won a corner through his persistence.

About five minutes before the break, a short corner was put over by Jonathan

Cross and Reilly got a firm header on target, which the 'keeper did really well to touch away for another corner.

After the turn around, it was Wrexham who continued to force the issue and Roberts was extremely unlucky not to open the scoring in the 50th minute. He created a chance for himself by lobbing the goalkeeper from 20 yards, the startled player had no chance of stopping the effort and as he spun round to see where the ball had gone, saw it strike the woodwork bounce back hit him on the legs and ricochet out for a corner.

Roberts though, was not to be denied for long and on 56 minutes a great through ball from midfield saw the striker dart up the centre. Taking the pass in his stride he advanced into the box and crashed a low shot off the 'keeper into the net.

Wrexham were now rampant and on the verge of scoring several more goals. A Dave Hooson pass to Danny Williams was cut out by a defender, but the loose ball was thumped the wrong side of an upright. Roberts was tackled inside the penalty area, the ball ran wide to left wing, Phil Jones' curling shot was tipped away by the 'keeper.

On the hour mark, Roberts was again involved, this time in midfield, turning two opponents and pushing a 20 yard pass in Williams' path. The young striker took three stride and fired in another good effort, but could not beat Morecambe's last line of defence.

Wrexham introduced all three of the substitutes, two were from the Army and the third, Rene Pinard, from local Wrexham youth football. Each of them showed plenty of enthusiasm and lent a hand in continuing the Reds seige of the home goal. Indeed, Craig Brodie finished another Wrexham attack by hitting a post.

Then with three minutes remaining, emergency left-back Andy Griffiths directed a back pass to Edwards, but the ball fell short and the goalkeeper was given no chance when caught stranded off his line.

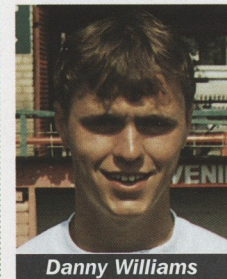
Even after this setback, Roberts burst through and forced the home 'keeper to rush out and make a marvellous block. Phil Jones was the only player booked, when committing a late challenge.

As Morecambe play their Division One games at their main ground, the facilities on offer to the spectators are first class and well above anything else throughout this league. The bar under the main stand was open before kick-off and again at half-time, while the food kiosk was fully stocked with hot goodies. All this for a crowd of less than 100!

Morecambe continue to bring the overhaul standard of their ground up, a new stand is under construction behind one goal, while terracing at the other has been completely relaid and covered. This leaves just the opposite paddock, which is quite narrow and open to the elements.

Team: Leigh Edwards, Dave Hooson, Jonathan Cross, Gareth Shone (Craig Brodie 51), Lee Reilly, Andy Griffiths, Gareth Hughes (Rene Pinard 73), Steve Thomas, Danny Williams (Steve Cromby 67), Paul Roberts, Phil Jones.

Saturday, 24th January, 1998
North East Wales Cup - Replay
WREXHAM 5 CORWEN 2



Danny Williams

After only drawing at Corwen, the Reds were forced to a second match at Colliers Park. The pitch had to be roped off to conform with the rules and a small band of travelling supporters helped create a decent atmosphere.

We slipped behind to an early goal, but Danny Williams made sure that we left at half-time on level terms.

Corwen had caused us a few problems, in particular their star player Alex Drake was having a fine game, but after the break the tide was firmly in Wrexham's favour.

Williams went on to complete his hat-trick, with Steve Thomas and the returning Craig Skinner finishing the rout. A late Corwen strike provide some consolation for the visitors.

We now have a home tie in the next round, facing Castell Alun Colts on 21st February.

Team: Mark Cartwright, Craig Jones, Rob Morris, Steve Hopkins Dave Hooson, Andy Griffiths (Adam Owen 47), Steve Thomas, Craig Skinner, Steve Rishworth, Danny Williams, Phil Jones (Andy Jones 65).

Saturday, 24th January, 1998
Lancashire League Division Two
MANCHESTER CITY 'B' 2 WREXHAM 'B' 2

With three schoolboy players in the starting eleven and no substitutes available to travel to City's Platt Lane complex, the youngsters looked to be against it.

But credit where it's due, the Wrexham players gave a good account of themselves, against a side that displayed some awesome pace when on the ball.

Yet it was the visitors who struck the first blow through Carl Andrews, a Robin Gibson cross giving the Wrexham striker the opportunity to get his header on target.

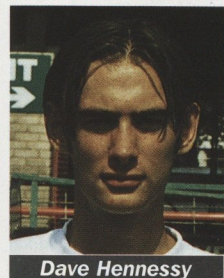
Paul Mazzarella was "on fire" for the Reds and we certainly needed all the help we could get against the Premiership club. They came back to equalise before the interval and then took the lead in the second-half.

All was not lost though, as we still had one card up our sleeve. With about 10 minutes remaining Andrews beat two defenders and crashed home his effort and earned Wrexham a thoroughly deserved draw.

Some might argue that we should have even gone on to collect the three points, but it was a good even game and 2-2 was a fair result.

Team: Kristian Rogers, Dave Johnson, Kevin Hannon, George Horan, John Whitley, Paul Mazzarella, Robin Gibson, Mark Entwistle, Carl Andrews, Ian Cox, David Sweet.

Saturday, 31st January, 1998
Lancashire League Division One
WREXHAM 'A' 2 LIVERPOOL 'A' 3



Dave Hennessey

Having suffered a heavy defeat in the away fixture with Liverpool last November, the young Reds started the game in determined mood and shaded the first-half.

On 20 minutes ex-Shrewsbury apprentice Craig Tate notched our opening goal. A corner from the left was placed over by Steve Thomas and in a scramble Tate headed home.

Within 15 minutes Liverpool were level, when a cross from the left wing ran through to the back post and with no one picking up the spare striker, he had a simple task to

score.

A rare mistake by Rob Morris allowed the ball to bounce over him and let his marker to run through and put the Merseyside club in front. There was another lapse for the third, when Adam Owen's pass to Gareth Shone fell short and from 25 yards out, the ball was lashed home.

As the minutes counted down, Wrexham were able to give themselves some hope when Gibson's run took out two men and his cross to the near post was finished off by Danny Williams.

Team: Leigh Edwards, Craig Jones (Adam Owen 20), Rob Morris, Lee Reilly, Gareth Shone, Steve Thomas (Tom Baker), Dave Hennessey, Steve Rishworth, Robin Gibson, Danny Williams, Craig Tate. Sub: Andy Jones.

Saturday, 31st January, 1998
Lancashire League Division One
OLDHAM ATHLETIC 'B' 3 WREXHAM 'B' 2

Played on a poor pitch next to Boundary Park, the young Reds tried their best against but slipped to a disappointing defeat.

Team: Kristian Rogers, Steve Cooper, Kevin Hannon, John Whitley, Steve Hopkins, Dave Hooson, Paul Mazzarella, Gareth Hughes, Carl Andrews, Ian Coks, Phil Jones. Subs: Mark Entwistle, George Horan.

Last Monday night, the Pontin's League team had their first game in over two months, going down to a heavy defeat at Bradford City. A full report of that game, our midweek cup tie with Oldham and next Monday's visit to Burnley, will appear in the Bristol Rovers programme.

PONTIN'S LEAGUE pontin's central league division two fixtures 1997/98

Date	v	Opponents	Res	Scorers
Aug 13	A	York City	1-3	Watkin
Aug 20	H	Blackpool	0-1	
Aug 28	A	Barnsley	1-3	P Roberts
Sep 10	H	Bradford City	5-2	Thomas(2), Watkin, Wainwright, Griffiths
Sep 24	A	Burnley	2-1	N. Roberts, Cross
Oct 1	H	Lincoln City	3-0	P Roberts (2), N. Roberts
Oct 8	H	Stockport County	1-1	P Roberts
Oct 15	A	Rochdale	1-2	S. Morris
Oct 22	H	Bradford City (LC)	3-0	N. Roberts (2), Wainwright
Oct 29	H	Shrewsbury Town	2-3	Skinner, Morris
Nov 11	A	Rotherham United	0-3	
Nov 19	H	Carlisle United	5-2	D. Williams, Chalk, Griffiths, Wainwright, P Roberts
Nov 25	A	Sheffield United	0-1	
Feb 2	A	Bradford City	1-4	N. Ward
Feb 4	H	Oldham Athletic (LC)		
Feb 9	A	Burnley (LC)		
Feb 11	H	Barnsley		
Feb 16	A	Lincoln City		
Feb 25	A	Blackpool		
Mar 4	H	Burnley		
Mar 9	H	Sheffield United		
Mar 18	H	York City		
Mar 25	A	Carlisle United		
Apr 1	A	Shrewsbury Town		
Apr 8	H	Rotherham United		
Apr 22	A	Stockport County		
Apr 29	H	Rochdale		

Home games to be played at the Racecourse ground, kick-off 7.00 p.m.

lancashire league division one

Date	v	Opponents	Res
Aug 16	H	Blackburn Rovers 'A'	3-1
Aug 23	H	Burnley 'A'	3-0
Aug 30	H	Morecambe Res	3-4
Sep 5	A	Preston N.E. 'A'	1-4
Sep 13	H	Tranmere Rovers 'A'	4-5
Sep 20	A	Everton 'A'	1-3
Sep 27	H	Bury 'A'	1-1
Oct 11	H	Marine Res.	4-0
Oct 18	A	Crewe Alex Res.	6-5
Oct 25	H	Manchester United 'A'	2-0
Nov 1	A	Bolton Wanderers 'A'	1-1
Nov 8	H	Preston N.E. 'A'	2-0
Nov 15	A	Liverpool 'A'	2-5
Nov 22	H	Manchester City 'A'	1-1
Nov 28	A	Oldham Athletic 'A'	3-5
Dec 6	H	Everton 'A'	2-3
Dec 13	A	Tranmere Rovers 'A'	4-1
Dec 20	A	Burnley 'A'	2-3
Jan 10	H	Bolton 'A'	1-0
Jan 12	A	Manchester United 'A'	1-4
Jan 23	A	Morecambe Res.	1-1
Jan 31	H	Liverpool 'A'	2-3
Feb 7	A	Marine Res.	
Feb 14	H	Stoke City 'A'	
Feb 18	A	Manchester City 'A'	
Mar 7	H	Oldham Athletic 'A'	
Mar 21	A	Blackburn Rovers 'A'	
Mar 28	H	Crewe Alex Res.	
Apr 18	A	Bury 'A'	
Apr 25	H	Bolton Wanderers 'A'	
May 2	A	Stoke City 'A'	
TBA	A	Manchester United 'A'	

lancashire league division two

Date	v	Opponents	Res
Aug 16	A	Blackburn Rovers 'B'	0-5
Aug 23	H	Carlisle United 'A'	2-2
Aug 26	H	Everton 'B'	1-2
Aug 30	A	Blackpool 'A'	0-3
Sep 5	H	Burnley 'B'	1-0
Sep 9	A	Liverpool 'B'	3-1
Sep 13	A	Tranmere Rovers 'B'	0-4
Sep 20	H	Wigan Athletic 'A'	3-2
Sep 22	H	Chester City 'A'	4-0
Sep 27	A	Wigan Athletic 'A'	0-1
Oct 4	H	Manchester City 'B'	2-1
Oct 18	H	Morecambe Res.	7-1
Oct 25	A	Rochdale 'A'	2-0
Nov 15	H	Marine Youth	1-0
Nov 22	A	Morecambe 'A'	0-0
Dec 6	A	Chester City 'A'	0-2
Dec 13	H	Manchester United 'B'	1-0
Dec 20	A	Crewe Alexandra 'A'	1-2
Jan 10	H	Liverpool 'B'	0-3
Jan 17	H	Marine Youth	3-1
Jan 24	A	Manchester City 'B'	2-2
Jan 31	A	Oldham Athletic 'B'	2-3
Feb 7	H	Oldham Athletic 'B'	
Feb 11	H	Rochdale 'B'	
Feb 14	A	Carlisle United 'A'	
Feb 18	H	Blackpool 'A'	
Feb 21	H	Stockport County 'A'	
Feb 28	H	Tranmere Rovers 'B'	
Mar 14	H	Crewe Alex 'A'	
Mar 21	A	Bury 'B'	
Mar 28	A	Stockport County 'A'	
Apr 4	A	Everton 'B'	
Apr 18	H	Blackburn Rovers 'B'	
Apr 25	A	Burnley 'B'	
May 2	H	Bury 'B'	
TBA	A	Manchester United 'B'	

new boss at deepdale

Preston North End have parted company with manager Gary Peters after accepting his offer to step down following a disastrous run of results, culminating in a 3-1 defeat against Gillingham at Deepdale. Indeed, during and after that Nationwide League encounter, North End supporters were calling for his dismissal. He had already tendered his resignation over the Christmas period, after seeing his side pick up one point from a possible nine, but was persuaded by the board of directors to remain in the hot-seat a little longer.

The 43 year-old has been offered the opportunity to remain at Deepdale in a new role developing a Centre of Excellence, but has been away taking a break to consider his options. His former assistant David Moyes has taken over, at least until the end of the current campaign after impressing chairman Peter Gray.

The chairman expressed his disappointment at Peters' departure, but also looked forward to a new era for the club: "I am sorry that Gary Peters is stepping down as manager, after making such a significant contribution to the club over a number of years. I am, however, pleased that he is considering my offer to continue at Preston North End, in what is a very important job as we aim for Premier League standards. We have had a succession plan in place for some time and in David Moyes, we have a well qualified and committed manager, with the potential to take Preston forward."

The Lillywhites have also appointed Paul Johnson as their new development officer to work on initiatives as part of the "Kick Racism Out of Football" campaign.

MASSIVE SPONSORSHIP DEAL FOR COTTAGERS

Fulham have announced a massive £1.5 million three-year shirt sponsorship deal with Demon Internet, who claim to be the biggest internet suppliers in Europe. From the start of next season the club's shirt will bear an advertisement for the company in what is widely believed to be the biggest sponsorship deal in the Nationwide League.

The Londoners have again been splashing out with Wayne Collins and Rufus Brevett the latest recruits to Keegan and Wilkins' army. Collins, a 28-year-old cultured midfielder, is yet another player that has decided to forsake the bright lights of the Premiership for this Thames footballing backwater, and he cost the club an initial fee of £400,000 from Sheffield Wednesday. However, that could yet rise to £550,000 depending on his success at Craven Cottage. The Owls originally snapped him up from Dario Gradi's production line at Crewe for £600,000 at the start of the 1996/97 season, but he failed to make a significant impression at Hillsborough, indeed he only played 12 games last term, scoring once in a 2-2 draw at Derby.

Brevett, an attack-minded left-back, moved across London from Queens Park Rangers for a fee of £375,000, after passing a medical.

He originally came to prominence as a member of Doncaster Rovers' surprise Youth Cup Final side of 1988 and soon found himself attracting scouts to Belle Vue after turning professional in the same year. After more than 100 appearances for Rovers, he left Yorkshire for Loftus Road in a £250,000 deal.

Also arriving at the Cottage in a much less publicised, but perhaps no less important deal, is former Chelsea and England favourite Peter Bonetti who has been named as the club's new goalkeeping coach.

GROBBELAAR TO REMAIN AT BOUNDARY PARK

Eccentric former Liverpool goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar has signed a new deal to keep him at Oldham until the end of the season. Now aged 40, he joined the Latics as goalkeeping cover for the ever consistent Gary Kelly, following long term injuries to regular reserve stoppers Ian Ironside and youngster David Miskelly, but has yet to get a chance in the Boundary Park first eleven. He has, however, played a vital role off the field as manager Neil Warnock was quick to acknowledge: "Bruce is a great influence and with David Miskelly injured, we still need cover in the goalkeeping department."

Warnock has also managed to secure veteran forward Ronnie Jepson for an appearance-based transfer fee of up to £30,000. Oldham are reported to have been chasing him for several months from Lancashire rivals Bury and finally got their man despite the Shakers boss Stan Ternent being reluctant to release him: "Ronnie did a brilliant job for us and goes to Oldham with our best wishes. It was the right time for him to move on."

In a busy month for the Latics boss, he also found time to place forwards Sean McCarthy and Stuart Barlow on the transfer list, along with versatile winger/striker Matthew Rush.

£3 MILLION JANSEN

Carlisle's young prodigy Matt Jansen has returned from a spell on trial at Manchester United, amid rumours that the Premiership champions have made a £1 million pound offer plus further 'pay as you play' payments to take him permanently. The Cumbrians forthright chairman/manager Michael Knighton is reported to be holding out for £3 million for the talented youngster, after claiming: "Matt is the best 20 year-old that I've ever seen. I know what he's worth and the message to all interested parties is, "let's see the colour of your money"." Therefore the odds on a quick sale appear remote. The locally-born attacking midfielder came through the ranks at his hometown club and had only played 19 league games for Carlisle before this season. A number of Man-of-the-Match displays, aided by 12 goals already this term, have brought the talent scouts flocking to Brunton Park.

However, Man United boss Alex Ferguson has denied that an offer is imminent: "He's gone back to Carlisle, but we'll be keeping an eye on the situation. I think it might be just a little premature to say that we have actually made a bid for the player."

Jansen is also reported to have been on trial at Derby, Crystal Palace, Manchester City

and West Ham have also reportedly been taking a keen interest in his development.

ROUND-UP

It seems a long time since we were last here at the Racecourse for a Nationwide League game and since then there has been a number of transfer deals involving clubs in the division. It seems strange that, so far into the season, so many sides could probably yet make the play-offs with a good run. Indeed, today's visitors Luton find themselves just outside the dreaded drop-zone, yet are only twelve points off that much sort-after sixth place.

BLACKPOOL: The Tangerines made an ambitious bid to land Tottenham Hotspurs' full-back Clive Wilson, but the deal fell through after Andy Hinchcliffe's proposed move from Everton to White Hart Lane was stopped after the England international failed a medical.

They have managed to land former Bloomfield Road favourite John Hills, who has returned on loan from the Goodison Park outfit and Bolton have agreed to allow Greg Strong to remain for a third and final month, despite insisting that he is not for sale. An attempt by Nigel Worthington to complete the permanent transfer of another borrowed star, in the shape of Martin Foster, was rejected by his club Leeds and he since returned to Yorkshire following just a month on the Fylde Coast.

BRENTFORD: The Bees have become the latest stop on Notts County goalkeeper Mike Pollitt's one man tour of the Nationwide League Second Division. Following loan spells with Oldham and Gillingham already this season, the former Lincoln and Darlington stopper has now moved to Griffin Park. Also arriving from County is former Manchester United defender Graeme Hogg, who has signed a contract that will keep him at Brentford for the rest of the current campaign. He made a quick impression with a debut goal against Plymouth Argyle in a 3-1 win last Saturday.

Meanwhile, club sponsors Ericsson, who also back QPR, have announced that they will not be looking to extend the sponsorship deal which has seen their logo appear on the Bees shirts, when it expires in the summer.

BRISTOL CITY: The Ashton Gate club have announced that they will not be allowing visiting Bristol Rovers fans into their family enclosure for the forthcoming derby game in March. City had hoped to allow the move as a gesture of friendship, but have now scrapped the idea after discussions with the visitors and the local police force.

BRISTOL ROVERS: Next Saturday's visitors to the Racecourse have allowed 6' 4" striker Julian Alsop to drop a division to join Swansea City on a months loan, and he immediately found the net for his new club with goals in their victory over Darlington and draw with Macclesfield, both at the Vetch Field.

The Pirates, ironically, were then forced to turn to the Swans to borrow a goalkeeper, after regular number one Andy Collett sustained an injury during training on the Friday morning before last weekend's trip to Gillingham. With just 40 minutes until the noon deadline to register players for the following days games, Rovers contacted Swansea and secured the services of their second choice custodian Lee Jones, who had impressed in a reserve game between the two clubs the previous week.

BURNLEY: Andy Payton has returned to his hometown club, in a swap deal which has seen Paul Barnes move over the Pennines to Huddersfield. Payton was rejected by the Clarets 16 years ago when, as a 14 year-old he came to Turf Moor on trial before being released. His homecoming was certainly something special for the local lad, as he grabbed the only goal of the game, in what could turn out to be a vital 1-0 success over fellow strugglers Southend.

"It's great to get a goal on my home debut for the team I supported as a boy. To hit the winner was a dream come true, my parents were watching and I was pleased for them and all the other fans who gave me a great welcome," explained a delighted Payton afterwards.

He was back on the scoresheet again last weekend as York were routed 7-2 at Turf Moor.

GRIMSBY TOWN: Grimsby have splashed out some of their recent cup windfall on midfielder David Smith from West Bromwich Albion for a reported fee of £200,000. Signed by the Baggies from local rivals Birmingham for £90,000, he readily agreed to drop a division to once again serve under Alan Buckley, who was formerly in charge at the Hawthorns. Also arriving at Blundell Park is fellow midfielder Wayne Burnett, who has been loaned from Huddersfield, while departing is Neil Woods who has been borrowed by Scunthorpe United for a month, after returning from a similar period with Wigan.

NORTHAMPTON TOWN: Jason Dozell has agreed to remain at Sixfields for the rest of the season, after it appeared that he would be signing for French club Nice. The former Tottenham and Ipswich midfielder was on a short term deal with the Cobblers, but has now signed a longer contract through to the summer. "Jason is enjoying football more than at any time in the last two years", surmised manager Ian Atkins.

SOUTHEND UNITED: Welsh international goalkeeper Neville Southall has extended his loan period with the Roots Hall club for a second month and boss Alan Martin is in no doubt of the giant keeper's influence: "Neville has made a terrific impact here and has made a good contribution."

WALSALL: The F.A. Cup Fourth Round trip to Manchester United certainly provided a financial windfall for the Saddlers after a crowd of almost 55,000 turned-up, including around 8,500 Walsall supporters. The Second Division side came out of the tie with a lot of credit despite the 5-1 scoreline and ace striker Roger Boli was one who enjoyed the experience, especially scoring much to the delight of friend and former United hero Eric Cantona: "I would have liked to have played against him myself here at Old Trafford, but that's life. I am still a happy man. He told me that he hoped that I would score and then he could see me on TV. I am now very happy because Eric will see me scoring at his ground."

WATFORD: The Hornets have signed Israeli international Alon Hazan following a recommendation from Ronnie Rosenthal. Costing £200,000 from Ironi Ashdod, the deal was held up while a work permit was obtained, but the formalities have been completed to enable the 63 times capped midfielder to complete his move to Hertfordshire.



Red Shirts, White Shorts, White Socks

White Shirts, Blue Shorts, Blue Socks

Andy Marriott	1	Kelvin Davis	1
Mark McGregor	2	Darren Patterson	2
Phil Hardy	3	Richard Harvey	3
Kevin Russell	4	Gary Waddock	4
Dave Ridler	5	Steve Davis	5
Brian Carey	6	Marvin Johnson	6
Craig Skinner	7	Chris Allen	7
Gareth Owen	8	Paul McLaren	8
Neil Roberts	9	David Oldfield	9
Dean Spink	10	Tony Thorpe	10
Dave Brammer	11	Graham Alexander	11
	12		
	13		
	14		

officials

Today's Referee:

Trevor Jones

(Barrow)

Trevor came into refereeing by taking up the whistle in his local Barrow junior leagues in 1977 as a 16 year-old. After four years at local level he progressed up to the West Lancashire League, spending a further 10 years learning his trade before promotion to the Northern Premier League in 1990. In 1993 he combined his NPL duties with games in the Vauxhall Conference and Central League. This solid grounding earned him a place on the National List of Referees in 1996. A police officer with the Cumbria Constabulary, Trevor is a married man with two young daughters, who also enjoys squash, cycling and horse riding. This is his first visit to the Racecourse as the main official.

Assistant Referees:

C. D. Edwards

N. Hancox

Fourth Official:

R. M. Cooper

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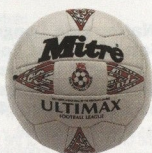
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ground regulations

In the interest of Spectator Safety the following conditions apply at the Racecourse Ground and will be enforced by the Club's stewards, with the full support of North Wales Police: **REMEMBER**

- (1) The club has the right to refuse entry or eject any person who refuses to be searched by a steward or police officer.
- (2) Any person who fails to comply with instructions from a steward may be ejected from the ground.
- (3) Any person whose behaviour could reasonably be construed as consisting a source of danger, nuisance or annoyance to other spectators may be ejected. ALSO it is a criminal offence, for which you may be arrested, to:-
 - (1) Throw anything on to the pitch or at players, officials and other supporters.
 - (2) Take part in any indecent or racist chanting.
 - (3) Go on to the playing surface at any time.
 - (4) To try to enter the ground with intoxicating liquor.
 - (5) To try to enter the ground whilst drunk.
 - (6) To possess any article, such as knives, bottles, fireworks, smoke canisters, cans and flares which might be used as offensive weapons.
 - (7) Use behaviour which is threatening, abusive or insulting towards another. Persons convicted of criminal offences will become subject of Exclusion Orders banning them from all Football League grounds.



next at home

Pontin's League Wednesday 11th February 1998 Racecourse Ground 7.00p.m.
Wrexham Reserves v Barnsley Reserves
 Nationwide League Saturday 14th February 1998 Racecourse Ground 3.00p.m.
Wrexham v Bristol Rovers