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[Monday 16th April 2001 Kick-off 3.00pm]

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Opening Shot

Craig Faulconbridge puts the Notts County defence under the cosh.

Photography
Les Evans / Wrexham Evening Leader



Wrexham AFC

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Cover Shot



Rooster shows good control on the ball.

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Worthington Cup

One Leg Format Introduced

Next season's Worthington Cup will be played over one leg in the first two rounds and not two as it was this season, it has been announced.

Football League Chief Executive David Burns revealed that Lincoln City and Leicester City proposed the change, which was then agreed by the other League clubs at their March divisional meetings.

"It is a positive development that will mean more entertaining football for fans and even more surprise results than ever before," said Burns. "I am certain we can look forward to an exciting and financially rewarding Worthington Cup next season."

The competition will also carry a UEFA Cup place for the winners next season - the Cup's 42nd year and the fourth of the five-year sponsorship with Worthington, made by Bass Brewers.

The Football League also revealed that 1.5 million fans watched the games in this season's Worthington Cup - up nine per cent on the season before - and that 11 million people saw the final on television when Liverpool beat Birmingham City in a penalty shoot-out at Cardiff.

Next season, the final will be shown free on terrestrial television by ITV.

Gold Bond

New Agents Required

We are always on the look out for new Gold Bond Agents, but we do have a specific requirement for someone to look after the area in and around Chirk.

Should any supporter be interested, then they are asked to contact Phill Sadler in the Commercial Department on 01978 352536.

Hatter Alert

Is There Anyone Out There?

Calling all Luton Town fans living in Merseyside and North Wales.

Don't be afraid you're not alone, as Keith Brooksbank is looking to make contact with you.

Based in Liverpool, Keith travels to Luton games, home and away, on a regular basis and is hoping he can team up with fellow liked minded souls help pass the hours en route to a Hatters match.

If you're interested, then you can contact him by writing to: 25 Heathcote Close, St.Dunstons Village, Liverpool. L7 6QA.

Gareth Owen

It Never Rains When It Pours

On the road back to full fitness is long serving midfielder Gareth Owen, after the Deeside based player had been forced to sit on the sidelines since getting injured towards the end of February at Rotherham.

"I haven't been injured for 18 months and then I go and pick up two on the bounce. It almost felt like that joke about buses all coming along at once. First I pulled a muscle at the top of my right thigh and thought I was only going to out for a couple of days, in fact I was looking at getting back in time for the Walsall game the following Saturday.

"Unfortunately it just didn't get better and took a long time to heal. Once it was sorted out I felt fine and played in a full practice match at Stansty. After about an hour, during which time I'd had no problem, I came off and was fine, really looking forward to stepping up my training. I had the day off on the Thursday, then I came in on the Friday and go and tweak my groin. "At first I thought, ok, out for another week, but I was back in on the Monday and felt fine. A few days rest seemed to have cured it and since then I seem to have got stronger, building up to playing a few reserve games at Walsall and then York last Monday. Hopefully, I will also have been involved against Stoke, as we're close to winning promotion and I'd like to play my part, as well as trying to force the gaffer's hand.

"At some clubs playing for the reserves can be a problem, it shouldn't be, as we're all professionals and you should have the same attitude when playing for whichever team you're picked in. At Wrexham we also have Joey Jones, so there is certainly no problem motivating yourself.

"With the team at the top of the table recently, it's been really important going out there and getting the three points to keep our lead. I say 'our' as I feel part of the reserve team and in turn, it's part of the club. If we keep winning, then there's every chance of not only promotion, but the title as well.

"Competition for places throughout the club is high at the moment, so it's not going to be easy getting back into the first team, but I've got to keep doing my best and hopefully make the gaffer pick me.

"With my contract up at the end of the season, you want to be impressing as much as possible, to make sure you're here again next year."



Gareth - on the road to full fitness

New Sponsorship Deal

Nationwide Agree Extension

The Football League on Tuesday announced a £12m three-year deal to extend their current tie-up with sponsors Nationwide.

The new deal sees sponsorship revenue rise by 33% from £3m to £4m each season. Nationwide, who are also linked to the England national team in a separate deal, have been involved with the Football League for the past five seasons.

But while the Premier League are looking for new sponsors as they approach the end of a deal with Carling, the lower divisions have continued their own link with Nationwide.

They believe their new television deal from the start of next season, which includes live games being shown on a terrestrial channel again, has helped to improve their marketability.

David Burns, chief executive of the Football League, said: "This new agreement is confirmation that the Football League and its 72 clubs remain at the heart of the nation's favourite game.

"We are delighted to continue with what has been one of the most successful sponsorships in modern sport.

"Nationwide has been good for football and the Football League has been good for Nationwide.

"The sponsorship has been so successful because of the values we share. We both have strong involvement in the community and have a philosophy based on sharing and mutual support."

Burns added: "With almost 14 million people attending league games each year and strong ties with communities the length and breadth of the country, the Football League remains a powerful and attractive vehicle for sponsors.

"The return of our games to free-to-air television further strengthened the package we were able to offer to meet the strategic objectives of Nationwide.

"We are looking forward to three very successful years together and hopefully many more after that."

Last summer the Football League concluded a £315m three-year arrangement with ONdigital and ITV, which includes 15 live Sundays of games being shown on ITV as well as the Division One play-off final.

The TV deal proceeds, as well as the sponsorship revenue, will go towards helping the sometimes precarious financial position of Nationwide League clubs.

Stuart Bernau, Nationwide's marketing and commercial director, said: "It's a great deal for both parties.

"Nationwide Building Society is delighted to continue its association as the sponsor of the world's original league football competition.

"The relationship that Nationwide and the Football League have enjoyed over the past five seasons has been one of the best in football. We believe that it will be replicated and built on over the coming three seasons."

Under the deal, which runs from next season to the end of the 2003-2004 campaign, Nationwide will still sponsor the manager and save of the month awards, the man of the match awards for live games and the fair play league.

They are also continuing their 'season of promise' scheme which provides £10,000 to each Football League club to help disadvantaged and minority groups attend matches.

Avon Insurance

Crunch Time

While there was the chance that we could have clinched promotion to the Premier Division of the Avon Insurance League last Wednesday afternoon - apart from winning we also needed Walsall and Lincoln to drop points at home - this coming Wednesday night's home clash with Darlington (7.00) would seem a more likely date sort the details out.

If you are free to come along, then the club would be delighted if you could get down to the Racecourse and lend your support to Joey Jones' side, as they go in search of the points that will see a higher standard of reserve team football next season.

Last Monday, the reserves kicked off their double header with a 3-1 victory at York City before moving onto the home game with Stoke City 48 hours later.

Our last fixture sees us travel to Grimsby Town on April 23.

Admission is free for season ticket holders and only £2.00/£1.00 for everyone else.

"WE CAN TAKE A LOT OF POSITIVES OUT OF THE VALE GAME AND SHAUN WILL HAVE ENJOYED HIS DEBUT"

Brian Flynn



DAY BY DAY

Monday 2nd April

Wrexham will have to make changes from the side beaten at Brentford on Saturday for tomorrow's trip to Port Vale. Defender Dave Ridler, who failed last week to overturn his sending-off against Bury a fortnight ago, begins a five match ban. Mark McGregor is therefore likely to switch inside with Phil Hardy, an unused substitute at Griffin Park, returning after a lengthy injury.

Christian Smith begins his role as the club's new commercial manager.

Tuesday 3rd April

The Reds take a well-deserved point from a 1-1 draw with on-form Port Vale at Vale Park. Brian Flynn springs a surprise with second-year scholar Shaun Pejic given a senior debut in place of Brian Carey who'd been unwell. He also elects to bring in Michael Blackwood for his first League start since the opening day of the season. Robin Gibson fires the Reds into a deserved 29th minute lead but the home side piles on the pressure after the break and Tony Naylor nets a 66th minute equaliser.

The Reds still don't know their opponents in the semi-final of the FAW Premier Cup after the Barry-TNS tie is abandoned after 115 minutes with TNS leading 3-2 in extra time.

Wednesday 4th April

The reserves take another giant step towards promotion to the Premier Division of the Avon Insurance League with a last-gasp 1-0 win over promotion rivals Walsall at Bromsgrove Rovers' Victoria Ground. Andy Morrell nets the decisive goal. The rearranged Academy game at Stoke City is postponed due to a waterlogged pitch.

Thursday 5th April

The club announces that it will be heading to the Isle of Man for their annual pre-season tournament between July 22nd and 28th. They will be joined by Oldham Athletic, Burnley and the I-o-M representative side for the round-robin event, in which the top two sides will qualify for the final.

The club also announces that they have been successful in retaining their Academy status for next season, subject to satisfying certain criteria before a July 20th deadline. This follows a meeting at the FA's headquarters last week in which Academy director Tony Humes and club director Geoff Farrell gave a presentation on the club's commitment to the scheme.

[New Outlet]

Town Centre Shopping

In association with Gold 'N' Gifts Jewellers, 23 Charles Street, the club now has a town centre official stockist for our merchandise.

If a trip to the Racecourse is a little out of your way, then please call in and see the selection on offer at Gold 'N' Gifts Jewellers.

They are fast becoming Wrexham's most popular jewellers for watch repairs, batteries and straps, with an every changing range of gold and silver jewellery, both new and second hand.

[Football Festival]

Isle of Man Tournament

We have been invited to participate once again in the Isle of Man Pre-Season Football Festival to be held 22nd - 28th July.

The club is delighted and privileged to be invited, particularly since last year it had been forced through other commitments to miss out for the first time in years.

Manager Brian Flynn remarked: "This tournament is superbly organised and has proven year on year to be excellent preparation for the season ahead.

"It is always very competitive and we really look forward to returning. We'll give it our best shot to win it again.

"It is good to get the lads away and is particularly beneficial to bedding in any new signings and enhancing team spirit."

This year's tournament is a four-team affair with the other teams invited being holders Oldham, first division Burnley and the Isle of Man national team.

Played on a round robin basis, the two finalists will therefore play four games in the week and we would like as many fans as possible to make the trip across the Irish Sea, since it is a great week away and well worth the effort.

If you have not been to the Island before, then why not give it a try this summer.

[Medal Collector]

Championship Contender

When the scores come through on Saturday afternoon, there is one player who takes more than a passing interest in the Conference results. It's Kristian Rogers, who spent a month on loan at Rushden & Diamonds, but just why is he so keen to see the Nene Park club win their race for the title.

"Well, first of all I really enjoyed my brief time there, but if they do top the Conference, I'll be in line for championship medal. In fact, I'm hoping to make it a double this season with some silverware in the Avon Insurance League!"

TRUNDLE WATCH

This is now getting a bit like a column in Private Eye, as we have received a steady stream of newspaper/programme cuttings devoted to the great man!

This latest offering was spotted in the recent North West Counties League Division Two Oldham Town v Warrington Town programme:

"One time Burscough discovery Lee Trundle, who also has spells with Chorley, Stalybridge, Southport and Bamber Bridge, has continued his good start to life in the Football League. Moving from Rhyl in the League of Wales, Lee scored seven goals in his first five games for Second Division Wrexham, who signed the Liverpool born player for £50,000."

Any similar sightings will be gratefully received.



[National Award]

Stewards' Training Presentation

As we announced in the Notts County programme, the club has just received official notification that it has had its application for accreditation under the new Footballing Stewarding Qualification approved by the National Verification Manager.

This award was launched last season in a joint venture between The Football League, The Football Association and the FA Premier League.

Wrexham Association Football Club is latest club to achieve this accolade and the award will be presented before today's game versus Luton Town.

The FSQ is designed to measure how effectively stewards' training has been carried out at clubs. The initiative has been developed in consultation with the Football Licensing Authority and the Football Safety Officers' Association, with financial support provided by the Football Foundation.

The Football Stewarding Qualification Scheme was launched in September 1999, when clubs were presented with details of the criteria they would need to satisfy in order to qualify for the award. Applying clubs are visited by a National Verification Manager appointed by the football authorities and the award is given to those clubs whose arrangements for the training and assessment of their stewards best meet the criteria laid down.

Jack Crawford, The League's Security Adviser, who will present the award to Wrexham, said: "This is an important step forward in our efforts to improve the standards of stewarding in throughout football. The football authorities are promoting the highest professional standards in stewards' training, contributing to an even safer environment for spectators at all our football grounds. Everyone involved at Wrexham can be proud of the standards they have set at the Racecourse Ground."

[Notes From Beneath The Away End]

Community News

Happy Easter and welcome back to the Racecourse for this afternoon's game against Notts County.

Last week saw the latest of our school holiday soccer course, when over 100 children attended the NEWI Sport Centre. This week we move onto the Airbus UK Sports Centre at Broughton for a four-day course.

We still have vacancies on this course and any child wishing to attend only needs to turn up on the day to register.

Once again our good friends from Colour Supplies, Wrexham will be sponsoring a mountain bike as the first prize in our grand draw. One lucky child, who takes part in the any of the Soccer Schools, will be taking this super prize home with them.

Rotary Penalty Winner

Last week during the game against Notts County, 10 year-old Sean Davies from Ruabon was invited along to take part in a half time penalty shoot-out against none other than Rockin Robin.

Sean was the local winner of the District Rotary Penalty Competition, which has since had to be suspended due to the foot and mouth precautions.

As a reward for winning the area final, he was invited to the game and also presented with his prize and certificate by the president of the Wrexham Erddig Rotary Mr.Graham Watson.

Important Message From Railtrack

As part if the national agreement with RAILTRACK, all Football In The Community Projects around the country are keen to support and promote the awareness and dangers which surround railways.

Vince Lucas, Railtrack Commercial manager, also sends this message to all children, parents and everyone who looks after youngsters: "With the light nights now upon us and school holidays fast approaching, children look to play outside. This brings an increased danger of them playing near railway lines. At Railtrack, through our involvement with the national Football In The Community Scheme we want to encourage children to play football and keep away from the dangers of the railway.

"Our theme for this year is "Stay Safe, Play Safe - Please help keep children away from the tracks".

We here at the Wrexham scheme are please to be associated with the sentiments expressed by Railtrack and we hope that we are able to play a great part in ensuring that this important piece of safety advice is heeded by all.

St. David's Girls U12

The Girls U12 football team from St.David's School, Wrexham recently took part in the regional finals at Oldham.

The girls were really unlucky not to qualify for the next stage, having not lost a game they missed out by just one goal on the dreaded goal average rule.

We would like to thank the girls for the manner in which they represented the club and hope that they enjoyed the experience anyway.

Our Mini-football Club is now in full swing with over 70 children taking part each Saturday morning. The Club meets at the NEWI playing fields every weekend, commencing at 10.00am and finishing at 11.30am.

The Club is designed as a first insight into football for all children aged between 5-7 years and is open to all children regardless of ability.

The Club has an initial joining fee of £2.00 and sessions cost just £2.00 per week. To join our other min-footballers, just come along to NEWI any Saturday morning.



"I HAD NO DOUBT IT WAS A GOAL, AS IT CLEARLY CROSSED THE LINE!"
Craig Faulconbridge



DAY BY DAY

Friday 6th April

Skipper Brian Carey and Darren Ferguson are both likely to return to the side for tomorrow's home game with Peterborough United after missing the midweek trip to Port Vale through illness and suspension respectively. There's shock news behind the scenes as it is reported in the local press that managing director David Rhodes has tendered his resignation because he feels that his position at the club is being weakened.

Saturday 7th April

Lee Trundle's superb 82nd minute strike gives the Reds a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Peterborough at the Racecourse after Andy Edwards 74th minute header had cancelled out Brian Carey's 9th minute opener for the Reds. The win lifts the Reds up to 10th. Adam Arkell scores as the under-19s go down 3-1 to Sunderland at Colliers Park.

Sunday 8th April

The Wales on Sunday reports that chairman Pryce Griffiths has accepted the resignation of managing director David Rhodes. Mr Griffiths is quoted: "I'm sorry to see David go because I'm proud of the work we have done together here. We are trying to keep him, just saying to him that we want things done in certain ways. But he has offered his resignation and I've accepted it."

Monday 9th April

There is concern over the ankle injury sustained by Michael Blackwood during his substitute appearance against Peterborough United. It looks as if he might be sidelined for tomorrow's visit of Notts County. The Reserves take another giant step towards promotion from the Avon Insurance League Division One with a stunning 3-1 victory at York City. The Reds field a strong line-up, including three full internationalists, and it was Craig Faulconbridge that bagged a hat-trick to secure the three points.

Tuesday 10th April

Notts County arrive in town and leave with a point, although the talking point concerned whether Craig Faulconbridge's second half header had crossed the line or not. While nearly everyone in the ground thought it had, the referee and his assistant were of a different opinion. Geoff Thomas had taken a simple header after 26 minutes, but three minutes later Danny Williams levelled the scored with a low shot from 16 yards.



VOTE NOW FOR THE WREXHAM PLAYER OF THE SEASON 2001

LEADER

Wrexham FC Supporters Association and the Leader invite you to vote for the 2001 Wrexham FC Player of the Season and Young Player of the Season (Aged under 20 at start of the 2000/2001 season).

You may vote for any player currently on the staff at Wrexham and the awards will be presented on the pitch prior to the Wrexham v Millwall match on Saturday 28th April 2001.



WREXHAM FC 'PLAYER OF THE SEASON' AND 'YOUNG PLAYER OF THE SEASON' OFFICIAL VOTING FORM 2001.

My choice for the Wrexham 'Player of the Season' is:

My choice for the 'Under-20 Wrexham FC Player of the Season' is:

Signed

Address Postcode Tel No:

Form to be counter signed by parent or guardian if voter is under 16 years of age.

Signed

Send to: Player of the Season 2001, c/o Carol Clark, 4 Lyndale Grove, Wrexham, LL12 8 DQ or hand it in at the Wrexham FC Club Shop by no later than midday on Wednesday 25th April 2001.

Voting Rules

1. No person may vote more than once. 2. All votes must be on an official voting form. 3. Closing date for receipt of votes is midday on Wednesday 25th April, 2001. 4. The adjudicator's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 5. Voting forms received unsigned, illegible, altered or after the closing date will be disqualified. 6. North Wales Newspapers Ltd. take no responsibility for votes which arrive late, damaged or are mislaid.

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We've been working hard at our game and it's starting to show

Brian Flynn

Welcome back to the Racecourse for this Easter Monday meeting with Luton Town and I hope the holidays are going well for you.

Due to deadlines for printing today's issue, I'm obviously not able to pass comment on Saturday's visit to Adams Park, but it will be interesting to know how we got on against the FA Cup semi-finalist, especially after their midweek defeat at Swansea.

What I can talk about is our Tuesday night draw with Notts Count at the Racecourse and the evident disappointment of not being able to collect the three points, despite a good fighting display.

While we were denied a goal from Craig Faulconbridge's header, I thought we had genuine chances to win the game in the first half and several more in the second. Overall though, I thought it was a very good performance, which I think we deserved to win on chances alone.

Apart from the two people who mattered most, I think everyone in the ground thought it was a goal. I went in to have a word with the referee afterwards and told him it was a goal, but he obviously disagreed with my interpretation of the events.

Their keeper has made the save from Craig, the ball has then shot up and hit the stanchion holding the net behind the post and crossbar before coming back out into play.

Away from that incident, I thought our passing and movement was good, although in the second half we lost one or two balls with some sloppy passing, but overall it was generally good.

The loss of Lee Trundle, after just a few minutes was a blow, as the lad seems to have strained an achilles tendon. All though a scan will have revealed the true extent of the injury.

Credit to Craig though, as he play 85 minutes at York the night before and then about the same against Notts, and he still gave everything for the cause. That also applies to Steve Thomas, who played a part for two nights running, coming on as a sub for his first league appearance of the season.

It would have been hard to pick out one player from our side to praise, as I thought they all did well for us.

They have got players who can catch you on the counter attack, but fortunately for us our defenders defended well, most certainly from set pieces. They have got five players well over six foot and we dealt well with that threat.

Credit to the midfield, because they are the ones who create the chances and you would like to think that you can take a good number of them. Unfortunately we didn't tonight. Andy has been scoring regularly in the reserves, he's come in to make the transition to the first team, now all he needs is to add goals to his general standard of play.

As a club, we are where we are in the league because of our inconsistency over the season, but there are signs that we are putting it right and that's pleasing. Perhaps it's a little bit late for this season, but we traditionally seem to finish the year strongly and now we need to maintain that standard to make sure we keep winning games.

Our opponents today are battling for their lives in the relegation dogfight, so we know that anything we gain out of this afternoon's meeting will be well earned.

Joe Kinnear has recently joined them and he seems to have had an immediate impact with a sequence of results that has given the Kenilworth support some reasons to be hopeful.

After their home draw with Oxford a week ago, they probably need to win five or six of their last seven games, a tall task, but you can bet that Joe will have his team fired up.

Attendances at our games might not be all that we would have hoped for of late, but as regulars I can only thank you for your continued support. It is much appreciated by both the players and management.

After today we set off for two away games, first visiting Stoke City on Saturday and then going into the Welsh derby with Swansea City three days later. So while the season might be winding down, our games don't get any easier and we wouldn't want it any other way. Enjoy today's game.

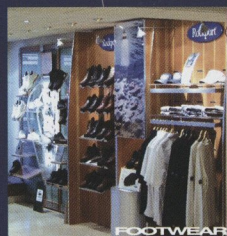
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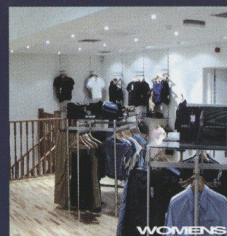


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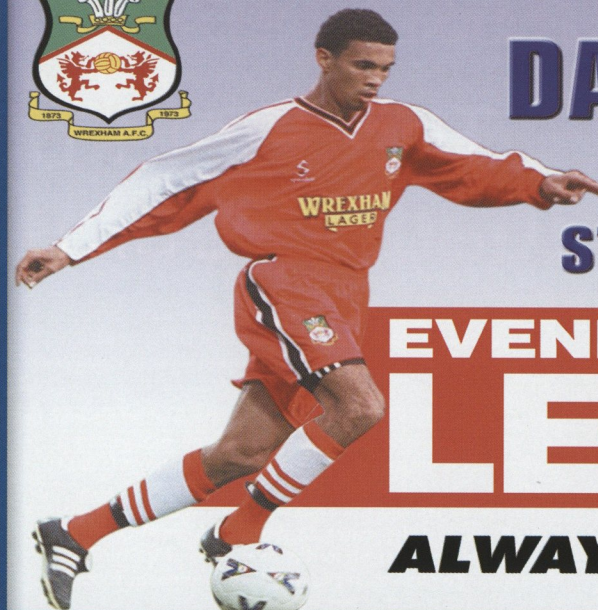
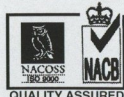
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European Nights

The Field of (bad) Dreams

After defeating the Danes from Lyngby, Wrexham were designated a 'seeded' team by UEFA. We thus found ourselves drawn to play the 'unseeded' Manchester United in round two!

ASKING TOO MUCH

It was asking a bit too much for Wrexham, struggling near the foot of Division Four and 85 places below Manchester United in the Football League, to upset the "Red Devils" at their Old Trafford home. Especially as we were also hampered by the 'three foreigner' ruling, which meant we forced to leave out a number of regular first teamers and draft in YTS lads to fill their places.

But, Wrexham were by no means disgraced and can look forward eagerly, if not with too much expectation, to the return leg.

United, who, barring miracles, should progress to the quarter-finals, were kept at bay until the 41st minute before finally breaking down the resistance of Wrexham's stubborn defence.

The Welsh outfit deserved to have gone in at half-time still on level terms. And, had they held out, the anxiety which was starting to creep into the United ranks may have accelerated into desperation. Indeed, United's fans in the 29,405 crowd were not altogether liking the progress (or, lack of it) made by their side. And, whistles of derision were beginning to come from parts of this fine stadium.

GOOD START

For 41 minutes Wrexham were very much in there with a shout. In fact, before the double hammer blow just before half-time, the sort of result we wanted for the second leg looked a possibility.

Brian Flynn's red and white army were very much on the march early on. Only three minutes had gone when Flynn himself had Wrexham fans roaring as he got Chris Armstrong away down the right wing. Armstrong's acceleration took him

past Clayton Blackmore and his cross left United 'keeper, Les Sealey, stranded at the near post. With the goal gaping, Graham Cooper raced in at the far post but just failed to connect.

This scare rocked the home side into life and Lee Sharpe, United's man of the match, broke away from Wayne Phillips to see his cross blasted over by Brian McClair. The Wrexham defence then allowed Paul Ince room to run at them and his low shot was just wide.

With Brian Flynn and Sean Reck outstanding in midfield, United were finding it hard to set up clear cut chances and looked anything but assertive. They were pensive and edgy with Neil Webb, their midfield maestro, being kept quiet by Reck. He went everywhere with Webb and that unquestionably kept Wrexham in the game.

It was a crunching Reck tackle on Ince that launched Wrexham's next attack. He set Armstrong free but, as Wrexham fans turned up the volume, Flynn couldn't make the most of the ball when it arrived.

The United faithful were far from happy, although Ince went close with another shot and only a great tackle by Nigel Beaumont denied Mark Hughes.

Back came Wrexham and Flynn received the ball just inside the United half. He evaded Webb's challenge and, from 20 yards, unleashed a fierce shot which Sealey just managed to palm over the bar. This brought the first corner of the game but, unfortunately, it came to nothing.

Reck was then yellow carded for a foul on Lee Sharpe but Wrexham had grown in confidence. Beaumont was having a good game against Mark Hughes and Alan Kennedy's domination of Danny Wallace was such that the United winger was later substituted for Mark Robins.



MINUTES OF MISERY

Another Armstrong cross was again agonisingly close to getting Cooper in, but then United almost scored. Webb's corner was met by Gary Pallister and his header hit the bar.

Hughes then made an opening but volleyed just over as Wrexham refused to lie down. Wrexham held their breath when Phillips clattered into Sharpe as he raced into the area, but Spanish referee, Martin Navarrete, who had a good game, only gave a goal kick.

Wrexham 'keeper Mark Morris then saved a Hughes header under his crossbar before tipping over a header from Pallister.

Then came two minutes which changed the course of the game. Webb's corner was flicked on by Steve Bruce and Brian McClair headed home. To concede a goal at that time was a big blow.

Worse was to follow though. Sharpe seemed to foul Phillips, but the ball fell to Mike Williams so the referee waved play on. However, 'Sparky' whisked the ball away in a flash and went for goal. He wrong footed Beaumont, whose challenge brought Hughes to earth. Bruce took the penalty and though Morris got a hand to the ball, he couldn't keep it out. It was a relieved United side that went in at the break just a minute later!

SECOND HALF

Despite these set-backs, Wrexham began the second period brightly and nearly grabbed a vital away goal. Kennedy advanced down the left and sent over a deep cross. Armstrong climbed well and his powerful, downward header just scraped the wrong side of the post, with Sealey nowhere.

After that, Wrexham were forced to fight a rearguard action as United went looking for a third goal. It came on 59 minutes when we failed to mark properly at a corner.

Webb's kick was initially headed away by Jon Bowden, but it fell to Pallister who blasted home a 25 yarder for 3-0.

Accurate passing and good off the ball running began to drag Wrexham out of shape, but Morris made great saves from Ince, Sharpe and one in particular from a Hughes

downward header.

Wrexham boss, Brian Flynn said his team had worn their shirts with pride and, ever the optimist, commented: "If we get an early goal at home, anything can happen." The dream lives on!

AT THE 'COURSE

Manchester United's arrival must have brought back memories of their last visit in the 1957 FA Cup, when the 'Busby Babes' won 5-0. This time around, the "new" United needed two games to match that scoreline.

Facing the almost impossible task of clawing back a three goal deficit, Wrexham set about their job in a manner which delighted the home fans in the 13,327 crowd. From the start, Wrexham took the game to United and created a few half chances and Les Sealey had to be quickly off his line to deny Graham Cooper.

However, on 30 minutes, Paul Ince repaid some of his £5,000 per match transfer fee. He went on a diagonal run across the edge of the Wrexham penalty area before finding Mark Robins, who accepted the chance.

Shortly after this, Denis Irwin's deep corner kick was met by Gary Pallister's downward header. Mark Morris parried the ball away, but Steve Bruce prodded the ball in from close range for 2-0.

If the travelling hordes thought this was the start of a goal avalanche, then they were mistaken. For, it was Wrexham who went closest to adding further goals through Andy Thackeray and Lee Jones.

Jones spotted Sealey off his line and his attempted lob was a bit too hard and just cleared the bar. Thackeray was even more unfortunate as his shot came back off a post and was scrambled clear.

Late on, young Kevin Jones, on in place of Chris Armstrong, chipped a shot, only for Sealey to palm the effort away in acrobatic style.

While we did lose both legs, it was to the eventual competition winners and in no way was this young Wrexham side disgraced. Indeed, it was another fine chapter in our European history.



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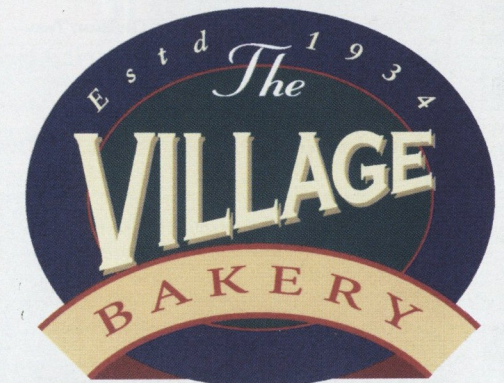
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All the details for the forthcoming home and away matches



Nationwide League Division Two STOKE CITY v. WREXHAM

Britannia Stadium
Saturday, 21st April, 2001
Kick-off 3.00 p.m.

Getting there: Leave Wrexham on A534 towards Nantwich and then pick up signs for the A500 and M6. Join the M6 Southbound for one junction and then leave to follow signs for A34 (s/p Trentham Gardens). Opposite the gates for the gardens, turn left onto the A5035 (s/p Longton). Soon the old Trentham Mines come into sight on the left and access to the away car parks is sign-posted. Remember, you must have a prepaid car park pass to use the Stadium Car Park.

Away Travel Club: Coaches will depart the Yale Car Park. Please contact the Club Shop for further details.

Car Parking: Places are set aside for visiting supporters at the Stadium. However, tickets have to be purchased in advance direct from the ticket office here at the Racecourse. The cost is £3.00. Stoke City recommend that all visiting supporters travelling by car make use of this facility, as otherwise supporters are faced with a very long walk!

Visiting Supporters Accommodation: Visiting supporters are allocated the Signal Radio South Stand, which is covered and has a capacity of 5,000. The cost of entry to this part of the ground is £15.00 for Adults and £9.00 for Concessions.

Programme: £2.00

The Last Time: Stoke keeper Gavin Ward produced an inspired display to help his side to a 2-0 win at The Britannia Stadium back in October 1999. The former Cardiff City custodian produced a brilliant save to deny Gareth Owen and then saved well from Karl Connolly from the resultant corner. Stoke made sure of the points inside the first 15 minutes of the second-half when poor defensive marking allowed both Paul O'Connor and Graham Kavanagh to score.

Ward then produced a breathtaking save to keep out substitute Craig Faulconbridge's header as the Reds failed to find the net for the first time that season.

Nationwide League Division Two SWANSEA CITY v. WREXHAM

Vetch Field
Tuesday, 24th April, 2001
Kick-off 7.30 p.m.

Getting there: Leave Wrexham on A483 (s/p Oswestry).

Continue to Shrewsbury to join A49 (s/p Leominster). Follow A49 to join A40 (s/p Monmouth) then A449 (s/p Newport). Join M4 at junction 24 and follow signs for Cardiff. Leave M4 at junction 42 (first s/p exit for Swansea) and follow the road s/p Swansea City Centre/Mumbles. After arriving at the centre, follow the signs for Mumbles (Oystermouth Road). The Vetch Field is at the rear of Swansea Prison which you will see on your right.

Away Travel Club: Coaches will depart the Yale Car Park. Please contact the Club Shop for further details.

Car Parking: Parking spaces for away fans are available at the County Hall, situated to the left of the traffic lights just after passing the prison.

Visiting Supporters Accommodation: Visiting supporters are allocated the West Terrace, which is covered and has a capacity of 2,000. The cost of entry to this part of the ground is £10.00 for Adults and £5.00 for Concessions. When a large away support is anticipated, seated accommodation is provided in the Jewson Stand, cost £13.00 for Adults and £7.00 for Concessions.

Programme: £2.00

The Last Time: Wrexham last made the long journey to South Wales on League duty back in April 1996. With the Reds pushing hard for a play-off place and the Swans struggling at near the foot of the table, Wrexham's 3-1 win was expected with Gareth Owen and Lee Jones (2) canceling out an effort from Steve Torpey.

Nationwide League Division Two WREXHAM v. MILLWALL


The Racecourse Ground
Saturday, 28th April, 2001
Kick-off 3.00 p.m.

Ticket Details: Standard League prices apply. Please note that demand for Family Tickets is expected to be high and we would advise early application.

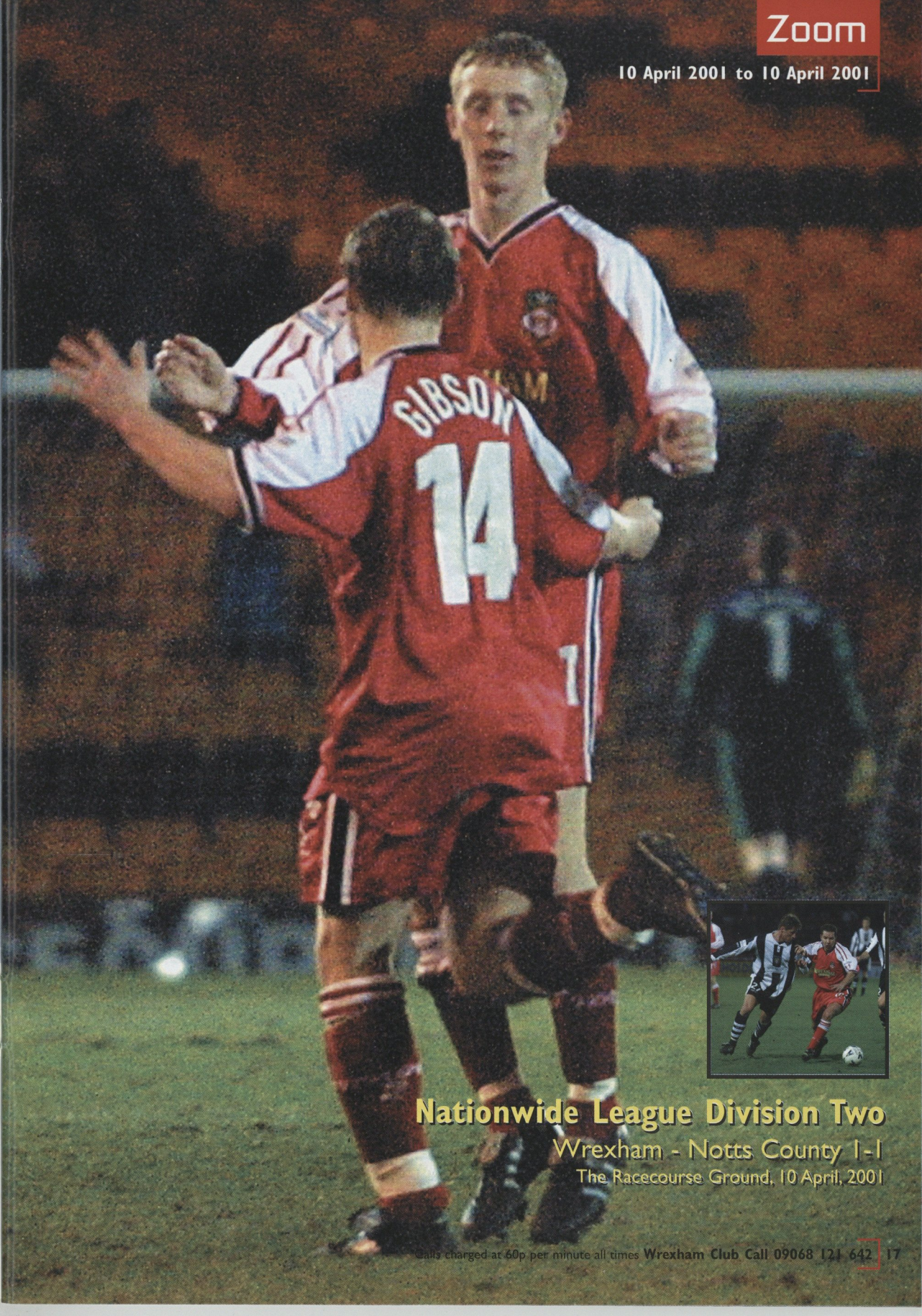
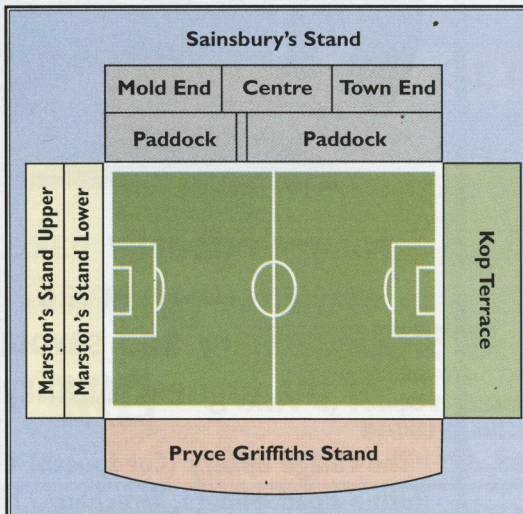
The Last Time: Wrexham and Millwall shared the points in the last encounter between the sides at the Racecourse back in March 2000. Gareth Owen gave the Reds a 20th minute lead before Michael Gilkes equalised with virtually the last kick of the match; Wrexham having withstood a second-half bombardment from the visitors.

HOME LEAGUE PRICES 2000-01

For match ticket availability please telephone 01978 262129 during normal office hours.



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Pryce Griffiths Stand - Executive Area	£17	-
Pryce Griffiths Stand	£14	£9
Sainsbury's Lower Stand	£12	£7
Sainsbury's Upper Stand	£13	£8
1 Adult & 1 Child	£15	-
1 Adult & 2 Children	£19	-
Marston's Stand	£13	£8
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Kop Terrace	£11	£5



Nationwide League Division Two
Wrexham - Notts County 1-1
The Racecourse Ground, 10 April, 2001



A Goal or not a Goal?



Wrexham 1

Notts County 1



Tuesday 10th April 2001 / Nationwide League Division Two

Goals / Williams 29 / Thomas 26

Match Report

There was late drama at the Racecourse Ground when Wrexham striker Craig Faulconbridge thought he had won the match for his side with a late header, but referee David Law ruled it out.

County started defensively, relying on the occasional breakaway but Wrexham missed many chances. They also had an early setback when home striker Lee Trundle limped off with an achilles injury after only seven minutes.

Andy Morrell had a shot saved by County keeper Darren Ward and when Robin Gibson was set up with the goal at his mercy he missed from six yards, shooting wide.

A long shot from Danny Williams cleared County's bar before they broke up field for Danny Allsopp to carve out a clear opening. He ran through for a one on one with Kevin Dearden, but fired a shot straight at him when he might have chipped and left the keeper stranded.

Geoff Thomas headed the Magpies

into the lead from Sean Farrell's right-wing cross against the run of play.

Williams then levelled for Wrexham three minutes later with a shot from 15 yards, when set up after good work by Faulconbridge.

Thomas should have added a second goal for County when he was in space only 10 yards out, but fired his shot high into the stand.

Wrexham were going flat out for goals and Morrell seemed certain to score but his shot was deflected off Ian Richardson for a corner. Morrell headed over from his next opening and Faulconbridge missed twice from long range.

With half an hour left Faulconbridge went up to meet a left-wing corner from Darren Ferguson and watched the ball hit a stanchion inside the top of the net and rebound back over the line into play.

As the Wrexham players protested, County turned the ball out for another corner. After checking with his linesman, the referee stuck to his original decision and gave the flag kick.

Wrexham had other chances to win the match and Morrell was guilty of a glaring miss when Faulconbridge set him up only 10 yards in front of goal. With time running out Ferguson hit a post with a powerful curling free-kick from 25 yards.

Match Quotes

"While we were denied a goal from Craig Faulconbridge's header, I thought we had genuine chances to win the game in the first half and several more in the second. Overall though, I thought it was a very good performance, which I think we deserved to win on chances alone.

"Apart from the two people who matter, I think everyone else in the ground thought it was a goal. I went in and had a word with the referee afterwards and told him it was a goal, but he obviously disagreed.

"The loss of Lee Trundle after just a few minutes was a blow and the lad seems to have strained an achilles tendon. We'll know more about the extent of the damage after he's had scan

in the morning.

"Credit to Craig though, as he play 85 minutes at York last night and about the same tonight, and still gave everything for the cause. That also applies to Steve Thomas, who was sub tonight for his first league appearance of the season.

"Credit also to the midfield, because they are the ones who create the chances and you would like to think that you can take a good number of them. Unfortunately we didn't tonight. Andy has been scoring regularly in the reserves, he's come in to make the transition to the first team, now all he needs is to add goals to his general standard of play.

Magpies manager, Jocky Scott said: "They had played well at times but had also given the ball away needlessly.

"We had one or two chances in the first half. It was the type of game where either side had opportunities to win.

"Normally a draw away from home would be a decent result but it doesn't help us now at this stage of the season when we need to win."

Picture 1: Andy Morrell sends in a shot at the Notts County goal.

Picture 2: Darren Ferguson shows his despair at the Ref's decision of no goal.

Picture 3: Craig Faulconbridge clashes with County's Henrik Jorgensen.

Picture 4: Lee Trundle shows the power that has made him a wanted man.

DAILY POST

Wrexham were convinced that a refereeing error robbed them of three points, just as they felt they were denied a draw at Meadow Lane last December.

WESTERN MAIL

There were chants of 'cheat' after referee David Laws disallowed a header by Faulconbridge that appeared to come back out off a stanchion inside the net.

Wrexham: Dearden, Roche, Hardy, Carey, McGregor, Ferguson, Williams, Russell (Thomas 76), R.Gibson, Morrell, Trundle (Faulconbridge 8). Subs: Walsh, Pejic, Chalk.

Notts County: Ward, Jorgensen, Brough (Hughes 68), Calderwood, Ireland, Nicholson (Liburd 68), Owers, Richardson, Thomas, Allsopp, Farrell. Subs: P.Gibson, Moreau, McDermott.

Referee: Mr.D.Laws
Attendance: 2,741
Away Support: 164
Conditions: Variable

David Roberts looks back at his recent trip to Armenia

Raining Goals in the Land of Noah

When the draw for the 2002 World Cup Qualifying competition was made, I doubt few if any Welsh fans had ever contemplated travelling the 2,500 miles to Armenia.

An Orthodox Christian country, Armenia is dominated by Mount Ararat where Noah's Ark is said to have settled after the great flood. Clearly visible from the capital Yerevan even though it now lies technically in Turkey, Mount Ararat is said to be some 3.5 million years old and at its peak is 5,165 meters above sea level. Indeed according to one of Armenia's many legends, when God created the world he sieved the soil and threw the softest part to one side and the stones to the other, exactly where Armenia now stands.



Throughout its history, the country has long been the subject of conflict and, whilst always retaining its own identity, Armenians have had to endure various rulers. By 1828 Armenia had become incorporated into Russia but border conflicts with Turkey persisted. Then, in 1915, the Turks massacred over 60,000 Armenians, an act which culminated in Armenia becoming part of the USSR in 1920.

Armenian leaders since then have been preoccupied by the conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian-occupied exclave, assigned to Azerbaijan in the 1920's by Moscow. The struggle escalated after both countries gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and the economies of both sides have been hurt

by their inability to make substantial progress towards a peaceful solution.

The former Soviet republic has endured a troubled existence in more recent times, with over 50,000 people killed in two separate earthquakes, followed by the assassination of its head of state some two years ago, shot dead during a parliamentary debate.

The advice on health care for such a trip also made for interesting reading: "A reciprocal agreement for urgent medical treatment exists with the UK, although proof of UK residence is required. Power shortages and disrupted medical supplies have undermined normal health services to such a degree that travellers would be well advised to consider a health insurance policy guaranteeing emergency evacuation in case of serious accident or illness, as medical insurance is not often valid within the country.

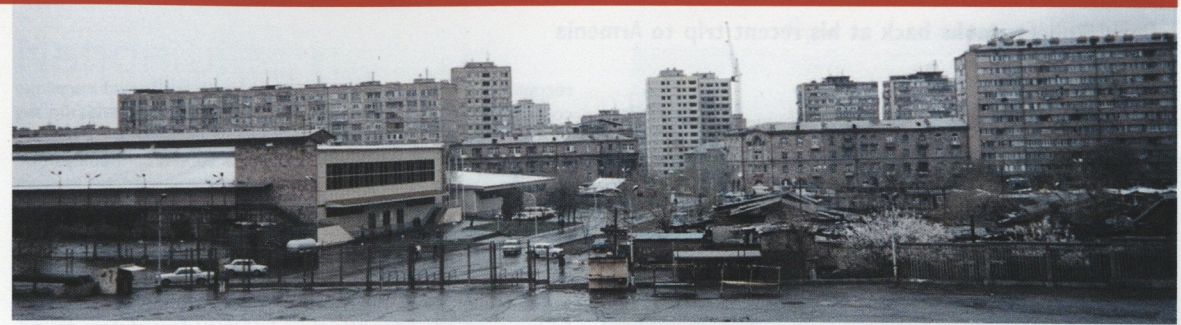
"Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services. Travellers are also advised to take a supply of those medicines that they are likely to require (but check first that they may be legally imported) as there is a severe shortage of even the most basic medical supplies, such as disposable needles, anaesthetics and antibiotics." So, all in all, your typically holiday destination!

Having thus questioned my own sanity and arrived at a worrying conclusion, I decided that I was on my way to Yerevan.

Direct flights to the country's main Zvartnots airport are somewhat scarce and so it was no surprise that the Welsh team decided to charter a plane for the arduous journey with the flight scheduled to leave Cardiff at 10.00 a.m. on the Wednesday morning.

With the Reds in action against Bury the night before, it was a case of having to leave for South Wales at 4.30 a.m. The forecast snow was already falling and the blizzard conditions between Wrexham and Shrewsbury made driving particularly interesting. The thought even crossed my mind that it seemed more difficult to reach South Wales than the borders of Asia!

Thankfully, the weather relented and once past Monmouth the roads became clear and I eventually arrived at Cardiff airport at 8.30 a.m. to meet up with the rest of the Press Party. That said, the radio confirmed the effects the inclement



weather was having on the whole of the UK, with Luton Airport closed and delays across the southern counties.

Having checked in, it soon became apparent that the flight would be delayed. The plane was still at Stanstead Airport and the arctic conditions meant that all the planes there had to be de-iced before they could take-off.

After a near three-hour delay, the plane finally arrived in Cardiff and we were on our way buoyed by the news that the strong prevailing winds meant that we would not require a refuelling stop in Bucharest. This meant that the flying time would be just over four-and-a-half hours with a scheduled landing time of circa 9.30 p.m. given the four-hour time difference.

The flight passed reasonably quickly and we were soon being bussed to the airport terminal building in Yerevan. The only slight problem at this was that the automatic doors on the airport buses refused to close, but this didn't seem to worry the driver who then sped off much to the consternation of those close to the doors!

Compared to various Eastern European countries, passport control was relatively efficient and we were soon ushered through to the baggage collection point. In an ideal world, this later process would have taken some 30-40 minutes. However, the Armenian authorities managed to keep us waiting for over 90 minutes before the luggage duly arrived; bearing in mind we were the only plane to land at the airport that evening I dread to think how they would cope with the Easter Bank Holiday rush.

After a 20-minute coach ride, we arrived at the Hotel Ani Plaza, dropped the bags into the room and headed off to explore down town Yerevan.

The first thing that became apparent was the lack of street lighting. This meant that the search for nightlife was concentrated on the main thoroughfare, Abovian Street. Despite the place being seemingly deserted, we noticed a sign for a Bar and so decided to investigate. The entrance then led to a lift in which no more than three people could fit at any time. Whilst it seemed to be a definite fire hazard, we pressed the button marked 'Bar' and found ourselves in what was most

definitely a local's bar. That said, the hospitality afforded to us was excellent and we enjoyed a couple of hours sampling the local beer, which I have to say was most palatable.

Thursday began brightly, with the weather surprisingly mild. Walking around the main streets in daylight gave one the chance to get one's bearings, with the majority of shops and hotels being based along Abovian Street. This led directly to the Republican Square, a most imposing open plan area around which were situated various Government Buildings, including the National Museum of History.

Turning left off the Republican Square took you down towards the stadium, before which was a large open-air market. The market was dominated by woodcarvings, many of which depicted the Armenian alphabet or the 700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia. Other store-holders had paintings of Mount Ararat available, or traditional Russian dolls.

On the fringes of the market were people selling all manner of items in a seemingly desperate bid to alleviate the poverty in which they found themselves; such things as television and radio parts, many of which seemed to belong in a museum.

The poverty was quite distressing, particularly as it was so evident in many of the 'properties' in and around the main streets. In part, this was the result of the recent earthquake but the general living conditions in which some people had to exist were quite sobering.

After returning to the Team Hotel for lunch, I along with several other members of the press party decided to watch the senior side train in the afternoon. During the course of the morning, Welsh manager Mark Hughes had visited some seven possible training locations before deciding on what can only be described as a mud-heap of a pitch on the outskirts of the city.

Given that the Armenians had trained there in the morning, it was clear that there was not a great deal of choice available. In all honesty, the pitch was more akin to Sunday League football with the groundsman memorably requesting that the players "only train on the green bits!"

The players struggled to keep their feet during the session but at no stage did they complain about the sparse facilities,

continued over ▶



David Roberts looks back at his recent trip to Armenia



recognising that this was the best that such a poor country could offer.

After the journalists had filed their copy, it was off to a Russian owned restaurant that had been recommended by some Americans staying at the Hotel. Whilst seemingly struggling to cope with such a large party, the food was fine, as was the local Armenian red wine. Next stop was the Hollywood Bar, a more western-style club that became the base for many of the Welsh fans over the course of the trip.

The coach trip to the Under-21 game in Abovian on the Friday gave further food for thought. The extent of the poverty endemic in Armenia became apparent on the roads leading out of Yerevan, with 'shanty' towns built on little more than rock faces. Mainly built of tin sheeting, running water and electricity would be mere pipe dreams for the inhabitants. The lack of infrastructure was also evident in the roads, with potholes every few yards, which made for a very bumpy ride on the coach.

Abovian itself was a typically dour Eastern European city, with the ground surrounded on one side by blocks of flats on the other by a stunning view of Mount Ararat. The contrast was sublime as the temperature dropped quickly to make for a brisk afternoon watching football.

The game itself was a disappointment with Wales controlling possession for long periods but without ever threatening the Armenia goal. A draw seemed to be the likely result before the home side scored with a rare attack inside the last few minutes. Their success prompted wild celebrations at the final whistle and few Welsh fans would begrudge the joy their success meant to the local fans.

Prior to the match, Rob Phillips of BBC Radio Wales had asked whether I would like to be interviewed about the trip and my thoughts on Armenia in general. The prospect of fame and fortune immediately raced through my mind. Then I realised that this was the BBC and so those goals would have to wait until I win the National Lottery!

Along with a fellow Welsh supporter, Huw from Aberdare, we spoke for about ten minutes back to the studio in Cardiff. Huw had only arrived late the previous night but was staying until the following Tuesday. In essence, we both agreed that the beauty of visiting such a country as Armenia was the hospitality you received. The people have so little but are prepared to give so much in return.

Back in Yerevan, I met up with Marcus, a Bristol-based Welsh fan trying to travel around all the various European countries. With him on this trip were two English fans and the three of them were going onto Moscow after the match, before returning to Heathrow to fly back out to Albania for the England match the following Wednesday.

With a Lonely Planet guide book in hand, we decided to

explore a few of the more remote bars around the city, only to get ourselves totally lost in the Asian sector. In Armenia, the custom is for virtually all entertaining to take place in private homes and that was certainly the case where we went, with most of the bars seemingly deserted.

I woke on Saturday morning to find that the weather had taken a decided turn for the worst, with the rain lashing down outside the Hotel window. Therefore, Mark Currie and myself headed for the National History Museum that bore testimony to the various conflicts Armenia has endured, particularly the Turkish massacre of 1915. The astonishing fact was the realisation that many of the buildings which had been built several centuries before were superior to those inhabited in current times.

With the rain now stopped, I ventured down to the Republican Stadium to take some photographs of the new ground, which has been built courtesy of financial assistance from FIFA.

Once again, the contrast of the newly built stadium to the tin shacks on the hills overlooking it was thought provoking. Inside, the ground was a standard bowl shape with a running track around it. The cantilever roof was most impressive save for one thing. The only part that was actually covered was on the main stand side. Therefore, virtually everybody was going to get very wet!

By now the heavens had well and truly opened and I was thankfully able to stop a taxi and get back to the hotel before resembling too much of a drowned water rat!

With having to check out of the rooms by 3.00 p.m. and the senior match not kicking-off at 9.00 p.m. local time, the intervening period was spent chatting in the Hotel Bar, wondering whether Wales could avoid the disasters which had befallen the side in previous trips to Moldova, Georgia and Belarus.

With the luggage packed onto the coach given that we were heading for the airport straight after the match, we left for the ground some two hours before kick-off. The rain was constant and the thought did cross my mind, of being greeted by Noah's Ark parked at the ground!

The game itself proved to be a thoroughly entertaining affair, with John Hartson's brace of goals securing a point in a 2-2 draw. It was a game Wales could and should have won but the final score-line did, in the land of Noah, have a certain symmetry to it - being two by two!

The flight home took nearly nine hours, including a refuelling stop in Bucharest, and we touched down in Cardiff at 6.30 a.m. Having had barely one hours sleep in 30, I felt surprisingly fresh and so decided to drive home to Wrexham. I finally got back in the house at 10.00 a.m. and went straight to bed for a long and well deserved rest.

Oh, the joys of watching Wales.



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F.A. Cup Ten Year Record

1990-91	Round 4R	Lost to West Ham United (A) 0-5
1991-92	Round 3	Lost to Sheffield United (A) 0-4
1992-93	Round 4	Lost to Derby County (H) 1-5
1993-94	Round SF	Lost to Chelsea (N) 0-2
1994-95	Round 4R	Lost to Southampton (A) 0-6
1995-96	Round 3	Lost to Grimsby Town (A) 1-7
1996-97	Round 3R	Lost to Bolton Wanderers (A) 2-6
1997-98	Round 1	Lost to Torquay United (H) 0-1
1998-99	Round 2	Lost to Hull City (H) 1-2
1999-00	Round 3R	Lost to Fulham (H) 0-3



Past Masters

John Aston	Brian Horton
Mal Donaghy	Joe Payne
John Hartson	Trevor Peake
Bob Hatton	Les Sealey
Ricky Hill	Paul Walsh



Luton Town Recent Form Guide

Saturday, 31 March, 2001
 Nationwide League Division Two
 Colchester United 3
 (Stockwell 17, 37, Skelton 43 pen)
 Luton Town 1 (Howard 84 pen)
 Team: Abbey, Boyce, Helin, Dryden,
 Taylor, Spring, Howard, Rowland (Douglas
 45), George, McLaren, Mansell.
 Attendance: 4,271

KENILWORTH ROAD STADIUM

Current capacity
 9,975
 Record Attendance
 30,069 v. Blackpool
 F.A. Cup Sixth Round Replay, 4th March
 1959

HONOURS

F.A. Cup
 Runners-up: 1958-59
 Football League Cup
 Winners: 1987-88
 Runners-up: 1988-89
 Football League Division One
 Seventh: 1986-87
 Football League Division Two
 Champions: 1981-82
 Runners-up: 1954-55; 1973-74
 Football League Division Three
 Runners-up: 1969-70
 Football League Division Three (South)
 Champions: 1936-37
 Runners-up: 1935-36
 Football League Division Four
 Champions: 1967-68

LEAGUE STATUS

Elected to Southern League	1894
Southern League	1894-1896
United League	1896-1897
Elected to Football League	1897
Division Two	1897-1900
Elected to Southern League	1900
Southern League	1900-1920
Division Three	1920-
1921 Division Three (South)	1921-1937
Division Two	1937-1955
Division One	1955-1960
Division Two	1960-1963
Division Three	1963-1965
Division Four	1965-1968
Division Three	1968-1970
Division Two	1970-1974
Division One	1974-1975
Division Two	1975-1982
Division One	1982-1996
Division Two	1996-

Average League Attendances

1990-91	10,274	1995-96	7,223
1991-92	9,715	1996-97	6,781
1992-93	8,212	1997-98	6,501
1993-94	7,878	1998-99	5,527
1994-95	7,350	1999-00	5,658



Photography
 Luton Town

Ask any Luton fan what they want from their football club these days, and they will probably reply in one word, "stability". Over a long period of time now Luton have struggled both on and off the field, as the modern game has squeezed the life out of the smaller clubs, and into that category Luton have fallen.

We at Wrexham know the limits of ambition these days more than most, but for a follower of Luton, reality these days is a far cry from the time only nine years ago when they were a top flight club. It probably pains them still to think that they were relegated from the top division, at the point of inception of the Premier League, and given all the riches that it brings these days, if Luton could have survived a season longer, maybe their situation would now be very different.

Things almost came to a head at the start of last season, when the club, then in receivership, had doubts about actually participating that year. Just fifteen hours before the season's start matters off the field were finally resolved and maybe that was a turning point for the club.

Having finished in a creditable mid-table position last term, further changes this time have seen the side struggle once more. Another new owner came forward, in the shape of Mike Watson-Challis, rejoining the club he once served as a director back in the old First Division. Ricky Hill, a former favourite on the pitch, was charged with taking the side towards Division One once again, but events this season have not gone quite according to plan.

Having struggled in the bottom four since the end of September, the team had seen its confidence sapped over the first months of the campaign, and by then the writing was on the wall. Their sensational defeat at home to ourselves, after being three goals to the good, was just one of a series of poor results which finally ended in the departure of Hill just two days before an FA Cup tie against Rushden and Diamonds. Sky TV, of course, smelled a shock, but Luton, guided by Lil Fuccillo, sent the upstarts on their way with a 1-0 defeat.

Fuccillo was still in a state of shock: "I only joined the club two weeks ago and now here I am as manager, it's unbelievable!

"I was saddened to see Ricky leaving, both in terms of football and as a friend. But we are a professional football club, and we have to go about the game in the right way. We need to get moving in the right direction, and I have told the board that there have been too many staff changes recently, and that's why we've had no stability."

Back on the field results did improve initially, but with the club still second from bottom of the table in early February, the board looked again at the manager's position. Fuccillo was called and told that former Wimbledon boss, Joe Kinnear, had been installed as Director of Football with charge over team affairs. Effectively the manager, Kinnear was at pains on his arrival to see that Fuccillo stayed on.

"I'm the manager, full stop. I'm in charge of anything to do with football. Lil has not left the club, his role at the moment is helping me out, as everyone else is at the club. I know that the job is not going to be easy, but I never run away from a fight. I haven't got a magic wand, but I've still got plenty to offer."

Kinnear has been at doomed Oxford earlier this season, but had left citing 'family' reasons for his departure. That saw the Oxford fans less than happy, but at least the Hatters faithful had

Tough time and a new challenge ahead for Joe

Joe Kinnear

something to pin their faith on.

Chairman Watson-Ellis was happy to have got his man: "I am delighted that Joe has decided to join us, and I'm confident that his vast experience and energy will assist the club to regain some of its past glories."

Judging by how events have gone since, that may take a little while longer, but Kinnear has at least brought some structure back to the club. Fuccillo still remains, assisted by John Moore on the coaching side.

Kinnear set about achieving some realistic goals upon his arrival, and avoiding defeat, especially at home, was a first step. Victories over Swansea and Cambridge, plus draws against Bristol Rovers and high flying Reading showed a new resolve. He pointed out that under his tenure, the side had picked up as many points in the last ten games as it had in the first 26, which showed vast improvement, but was still going to be tough to stay up.

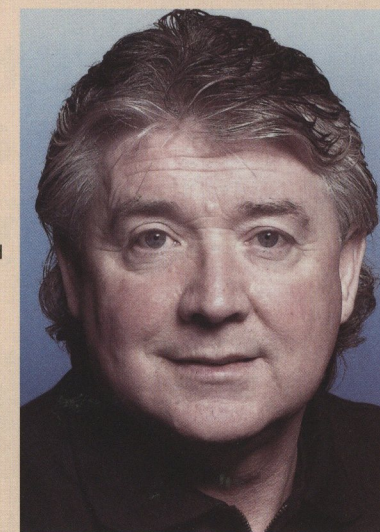
That unbeaten home run was ended by Stoke, just over a week ago, and Kinnear now had to re-assess the situation: "We still need to win six games to stay up. I think that we did enough to have won that game today, never mind get a draw out of it. The referee made an astronomical mistake, when he did not award us a penalty for the foul on Stuart Douglas, and it has cost us. They even admitted it afterwards."

"I feel sorry for the lads, but in our situation we cannot feel sorry for ourselves. We know its getting tougher and tougher for us, but while there is still a chance, you have got to be hopeful. We're running out of games now, so we must be positive."

"When you look at a team in this division like Stoke, they have a half-decent side out there, and an expensive one. Our side cost £50,000 at most to assemble, so the gulf is huge. We must get into the same sort of bracket next season, irrespective of what league we are in. We have to be able to compete."

That may be a reminder to the Hatters board to look at the exploits of the likes at Cardiff and their spending, as they have surely achieved promotion, albeit at a cost.

Should Luton get relegated, to the bottom division for the first time since 1968, Kinnear obviously feels funds need to be made available to him to strengthen the squad. With a new stadium near the M1 motorway finally on the horizon, Luton may well have to start a new period of stability in Division Three. Getting The Hatters back to their former glories, could present Kinnear with his biggest challenge yet.



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CALLS MAY BE RECORDED

Squad numbers are shown to the left of the player's name

Luton Town



Photography
Luton Town



1 Mark Ovendale
Born 22.11.73 Leicester
Age 27. Goalkeeper
Signed from Bournemouth

A £425,000 signing from Bournemouth in the summer, the fee the most substantial paid by Luton for many a year. Mark was the initial number one choice this term, but lost his place most recently in March to Nathan Abbey. He had been signed by Bournemouth from Barry Town, where he was a key figure in their League of Wales triumphs. His first chance of League football, came at Northampton back in 1994, having been signed from Wisbech, but he played just eight times prior to joining Barry. Player of the Season at Dean Court last term.

4 Matthew Spring
Born 17.11.79 Harlow
Age 21. Midfielder
Former Trainee

Missed just two games this term, Matthew has matured beyond his years in this current Luton side. A driving force, in Luton's successful Youth Cup semi-final side of 1997, he made his league debut at the age of 17 and has not looked back since. A tenacious midfielder, he missed three games last term and has now appeared in over 150 games for the Hatters. Scored just three games so far this term, his most recent strike in the 3-1 defeat at the Bescot Stadium against Walsall, back in February.

5 Julian Watts
Born 17.3.71 Sheffield
Age 30. Defender
Signed from Bristol City

Julian has appeared in over 30 games this term, he has recently lost his place in the side, having to be content with a seat on the bench. He joined Luton at the start of last season after a frustrating spell at Bristol City, where he played just 17 times in a season there. Initially on the books at Rotherham, having played in local non-league football, he then joined Sheffield Wednesday and Leicester in 1996. Loan spells have also seen him appear for Shrewsbury, Crewe, Huddersfield, Lincoln and Blackpool.



8 Paul McLaren
Born 17.11.76 High Wycombe
Age 24. Midfielder
Former Trainee

Paul was virtually ever present in the side until just after Christmas, but he regained his place in March. A former trainee, Paul has made over 190 appearances for the Hatters, since he turned professional back in January 1994. A robust midfielder, who has had more than his share of injuries during the past few seasons, he even struggled with a dislocated toe last term. His only goal of the campaign so far this season was in the FA Cup victory over Darlington back in December. He has only netted four other goals during his career.

9 Stuart Douglas
Born 9.4.78 Enfield
Age 23. Forward
Former Trainee

Always capable of unlocking defences with his pace, Stuart has now been at Kenilworth Road for seven years, turning professional back in 1996. He made his debut as a 17 year-old against Oldham in 1995, whilst still a trainee and he has since only had sporadic spells in the first team due to injuries. Stuart has scored five goals this term, having been out of the side for the early months due to more injuries, but has since regained his place. Played in over 150 games during his Luton career, he is also a supreme creator in the Hatters front line.

10 Mark Stein
Born 29.1.66 Capetown SA
Age 35. Forward
Signed from Bournemouth

Returned to the club in the summer nearly 20 years after joining the club as a schoolboy. Made his name as a dangerous striker in Luton colours, he has since had a nomadic career, leaving Kenilworth Road in 1988 to join QPR for £300,000. A year later it was onto Oxford and then Stoke, which opened up a £1.4m switch to Chelsea in 1993, where he stayed for five seasons. He had loan spells back at Stoke and Ipswich, before going to Bournemouth in 1998. Out of contract last summer, Mark has appeared in over 30 games this term.



Photography
Luton Town



Photography
Luton Town

Squad numbers are shown to the left of the player's name

Luton Town

11 Liam George
Born 2.2.79 Luton
Age 22. Forward
Former Trainee

A lively striker, Liam has progressed through the ranks at Kenilworth Road. He has played in over 40 games for the Hatters this term and has been a regular in the side up front, although he has had to be content with a number of bench appearances amongst those. He made his debut back in 1997, but suffered a broken leg soon afterwards. A Republic of Ireland Under-21 international, he returned to fitness and continued finding the net. Scored seven times so far this term, he was the leading scorer last term with 15 goals.

12 Adam Locke
Born 20.8.70 Croydon
Age 30. Midfielder
Signed from Bristol City

Signed to add vital experience to the squad back in the summer of 1999, Adam began to establish himself in the side last term. He has recently been troubled by a hamstring strain, but has had a couple of reserve games to get himself back into first team contention. On Crystal Palace's books as a trainee, he joined Southend prior to making his League debut and stayed at Roots Hall for three seasons, joining Colchester in 1994. He then switched to Bristol City three seasons later. Has appeared in 28 games for the Hatters this term.

15 Matthew Taylor
Born 27.11.81 Oxford
Age 19. Defender
Former Trainee

Matthew is having a superb season, and has missed just two starts so far. A young and talented defender, who got his chance last year. He came into the side, due to Luton's financial problems at the start of last season, and stayed there, making his debut on the opening day. A graduate from the youth and reserve teams, Matthew scored his first league goal, a stunner against Wrexham. Halfway through his three year contract with the Hatters, he has made over 90 first team appearances for the club already.

16 Nathan Abbey
Born 11.7.78 Islington
Age 22. Goalkeeper
Former Trainee

Has regained the keeper's shirt again in a season of change between the posts. He and Mark Ovendale have shared the duties so far this term, but Nathan has had a new lease of life since the arrival of Joe Kinnear. He has battled continually to keep his Luton career on track, having signed professional forms back in 1996. Since then he has played under differing managers, and has accumulated over 50 first team appearances along the way. Given a new contract last summer, he has excelled recently in Luton's quest to avoid relegation.

17 Emerson Boyce
Born 24.9.79 Aylesbury
Age 21. Defender
Former Trainee

Another to have graduated from the youth teams through to first team action. Missed just six games this term, Emerson is a dependable defender, who is equally capable at centre back or on the right side of defence. Made his league debut back in January 1999, in an Auto Windscreens tie, he showed enough to be offered terms at the end of that season. It was during the second half of last year that he became a regular in the first team. He has scored three goals this term, the latest against Swindon in February.



32 Lee Mansell
Born 23.9.82 Gloucester
Age 18. Midfielder
Former Trainee

An injury crisis thrust Lee to the fore in dramatic style giving his debut in the FA Cup replay tie against QPR in January. What followed was "Boys' Own" stuff, as just a minute into his debut he scored. Needless to say he has since kept his place in the side, and has added a further four goals to his tally. Has been associated with the club since the age of eleven, he went on through the ranks to earn a professional contract in the summer. Looks set for a bright and successful future at Kenilworth Road.

33 Richard Dryden
Born 14.6.69 Stroud
Age 31. Defender
Signed from Southampton

Richard has had a frustrating season and his latest port of call is Luton on a free transfer. He arrived in February from Southampton, having previously this term been on loan at Swindon and Northampton. He was also loaned twice to Stoke last season, as his first team opportunities were few and far between at the Dell. Re-united with old friend Lil Fuchillo having played together at Birmingham City eight years ago, he has also seen service over the years with Bristol Rovers, Bristol City, Man City, Exeter, Notts County and Plymouth.

34 Steve Howard
Born 10.5.76 Durham
Age 24. Forward
Signed from Northampton

Had an outstanding game here, but with no luck, for Northampton back in March, when he hit the woodwork twice. A tall target striker, Steve was surprisingly allowed to leave Sixfields in deadline week for a £50,000 fee. He had been at Northampton for almost two seasons, joining them for a then record fee of £120,000. Previously with his hometown club Hartlepool, who had signed him from Tow Law Town in 1995. He has a scoring ratio of a goal every four games, but it is his support play that is a feature of his game.



30

18 Tresor Kandol
Born 30.8.81 Zaire
Age 19. Forward
Former Trainee

A frustrating season for Tresor this term, as he has scored three goals in just six games, but remains in the reserves. He has scored five times in Avon Combination games, but still awaits another chance of first team action. His last appearance came in October, but he has made the bench since then. He was spotted playing in London schoolboy games when Luton signed him in the summer of 1997 and he made his debut two years later. Will be looking for further opportunities as the season comes to a close.

23 Jude Stirling
Born 29.6.82 Enfield
Age 18. Defender
Former Trainee

Another youngster who was given a professional contract in the summer by Luton. He then found himself on the bench for the first eight games, but never got on. He did, however, make his debut shortly afterwards, but it was to hold bad memories as the Hatters went down 4-0 at Swansea. He did not appear again until a bench appearance against Peterborough in the LDV Trophy, but he was given his chance again in January, and he started in four games, three of which were victories. May have to settle for a bench place again today.

30 Petri Helin
Born 13.12 69 Helsinki
Age 31. Defender
Signed from FC Jokerit (Fin)

Arrived in early November from FC Jokerit in Finland, Petri is a Finnish international. Signed to give vital experience to a young side, Petri was given his debut against Bury in November. He has since been virtually a permanent fixture in midfield, missing just three games. Petri was a captain of Jokerit, whom he guided to a runners-up spot in the Finnish League. He won his 20th cap for his country in the recent international against England. Though signed by Ricky Hill, he has kept his place under Joe Kinnear.

35 Paul Shepherd
Born 17.11.77 Leeds
Age 23. Forward
Signed from Scunthorpe

Having impressed on trial at the club, Paul signed on deadline day having also been at Scunthorpe this season. Played in mainly Avon League games for the Iron, he made just one substitute appearance for them in the League. He had previously played at Ayr United, having moved to Scotland in the summer of 1998 having been released by Leeds United. He had been a trainee at Elland Road since his schooldays, but made just one first team appearance there. Paul also had a spell on loan at Tranmere in March 1999.

39 Keith Rowland
Born 1.9.71 Portadown, NI
Age 29. Defender
Signed from QPR (loan)

Currently on a three month loan agreement at Kenilworth Road, which is due to end at the end of April. Keith has added vital experience to the side, this Northern Ireland international moved from QPR where he has now been for three years. Made his Hatters debut in the 1-0 victory at Northampton in February, he has been an ever present since then. Scored his first goal for the club in the 5-3 victory over Swansea. Beginning his career at Bournemouth, he joined West Ham in 1993, before moving to Loftus Road in January 1998.



Action from the game at Kenilworth Road

Calls charged at 60p per minute

Wrexham Club

31

All Our Yesterdays

Peter Jones delves through the archives for links with today's opponents

Phil Boersma

The Nomadic Scouser ...



Phil Boersma

Wrexham manager John Neal signed Phil Boersma on loan in 1970 from Liverpool, to help boost the club's final push for promotion to the Third Division following an injury to Ian Moir. Phil was to make seven League appearances, without scoring, as Wrexham went on to clinch promotion.

However, at the end of the season the young Liverpoolian returned to the Anfield club, whom he had joined straight from school having represented both Kirkby and Lancashire schoolboys before joining the apprentice ranks.

Phil had made his first team debut prior to joining Wrexham, in a League Cup tie at Manchester City in September 1969, coming on as a sub for Alun Evans in a 3-2 defeat. Following his loan spell at the Racecourse, he went on to clock up almost 100 appearances for Liverpool, winning a League Championship medal in 1973 and playing in the UEFA Cup final that same season, when he came on as substitute for Steve Heighway in the second leg of the match with Borussia Monchengladbach.

Boersma turned his back on Liverpool after he was left out of the 1974 FA Cup Final side against Newcastle, but he returned to collect a winners' medal in the infamous 'Bremner/Keegan' Charity Shield match prior to the start of the following season. He then scored six goals in the opening eight games of the new campaign, but this type of form never lasted, and in December 1975 he was transferred to First Division Middlesbrough for £72,000.

Phil spent almost two years at Ayresome Park, where he switched to play more of a midfield role alongside the emerging talents of Graeme Souness. It was here that they became firm friends, a factor which proved significant for Phil later in his career. He scored three goals in 47 League appearances at Ayresome Park, before being transferred to Second Division Luton Town in August 1977 for £35,000.

His stay at Kenilworth Road lasted for just over a season, scoring eight goals in 36 League games, before he joined up with his former Anfield playing colleague John Toshack, then player/manager at Third Division Swansea City, in September 1978.

He helped the 'Swans' to promotion to the Second Division in his first season at the Vetch, but that joy was overshadowed by a compound fracture and dislocation of the right ankle during a match against Swindon Town in April 1979.

Having retired from playing, he set out on a coaching career that has seen him coach at the Vetch, Lincoln City and Doncaster Rovers before linking up with his former team-mate from his Middlesbrough days, Graeme Souness, who had just been appointed manager of Glasgow Rangers.

He later followed Souness to Liverpool, a spell with Oldham Athletic was followed by a call from his old mate at Galatasary, then Southampton, Torino in Italy, Portuguese side Benfica and currently he is with Blackburn Rovers.

Billy Vaughan

And The Nomadic Midlander ...

Best described as a football nomad, Billy Vaughan had turned out for a number of clubs, including Bristol Rovers, Stafford Rangers, Merthyr Town and Shrewsbury Town before joining Wrexham in August 1924.

He spent one season at the Racecourse, scoring twice in eleven league games, before going on his travels again with Bilston United, Burton Town, Exeter City, Merthyr Town (again), and then to Kenilworth Road with Luton Town in February 1929.

A Third Division South side then, he made his debut for the 'Hatters' in a 2-2 home draw with local rivals Watford, with Billy scoring one of the goals.

That strike, despite being against Luton's staunch enemies, was not enough for him to keep his place, and it wasn't until four weeks later that he made his second appearance for the 'Hatters'. This time Billy scored yet again, in a 3-0 home win over promotion rivals Charlton Athletic, but he was to make just one more appearance for Luton in the following game, a 2-2 draw at Torquay United.

Having scored twice in three matches, Billy was to return to his native Midlands and joined Brierley Hill Alliance later that summer.

It's a funny old game!

Links

Others Who Have Played For Both

Jack Lewis, Harvey McCreadie, Tom Parker, Jimmy Pugh (WW1 Guest), Harold Readett (WW2 Guest), Gareth Salisbury & Eddie Tunney (WW2 Guest).



Jack Lewis

DID YOU KNOW?
IN OCTOBER 1981, LUTON TRAVELLED TO PLAY WREXHAM TWICE IN JUST THREE DAYS - AND THEY WON BOTH! THE FIRST A LEAGUE GAME (2-0) WAS FOLLOWED BY A 1-0 LEAGUE CUP VICTORY, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO OVERTURN WREXHAM'S 2-0 FIRST LEG WIN AT KENILWORTH ROAD.

Mad As A Hatter

A Game to Remember



Steve Fox

Today's match goes back to the old Second Division days and our second season in that league. Luton Town arrived at the Racecourse on 15th December 1979 on a crest of a wave, as they were lying second in the table to Newcastle United - just one point behind the leaders, while Wrexham were not doing so bad themselves at the time, in ninth place and just five points behind the 'Hatters'.

The Wrexham side for this game consisted of: Dai Davies, Terry Darracott, Alan Dwyer, Gareth Davies (Mel Sutton), Joey Jones, Steve Fox, Mick Vinter, Frank Carrodus, Ian Edwards, Dixie McNeil and Les Cartwright.

The Luton Town line-up was: Jake Findlay, Kirk Stephens, Mal Donaghy, Tony Grealish, Mike Saxby (Mark Aizlewood), Paul Price, Ricky Hill, Alan West, Brian Stein, Bob Hatton and David Moss.

In front of a crowd of 9,145, the 'Robins', who were parading their newest arrival, Frank Carrodus, who had signed a few days earlier for £90,000 from Aston Villa. However, it wasn't Carrodus who was to shine that afternoon, but the delightfully skilful Steve Fox, whose second-half goal must rank high on the list of best goals ever seen on the Racecourse.

The game itself was played in ghastly gale conditions, and it was the 'Robins' who were to break the deadlock on 15 minutes when Dixie McNeil, playing in a unfamiliar midfield role, burst forward as the extra man in the attack and followed in to put the finishing touch to an Alan Dwyer-shot that the Luton 'Keeper, Jake Findlay, failed to hold.

This goal was enough to separate the teams at half-time, but the second-half was to see Wrexham extend their lead with THAT goal by Steve Fox. He got position on the edge of the penalty area, and with a mass of bodies in front of him, shifts the ball to his right, this takes one body out of the line of fire, and then he delightfully chips the ball to perfection over the heads of the helpless Luton defence and goalkeeper into the roof of the net.

By this time Carrodus had revealed all the skills and vision that manager Arfon Griffiths knew would make him a bargain

buy. It was the new signing who put his mark on the game in the 75th minute, when he made a great 45-yard run and laid on the ball for Ian Edwards to score with ease.

Luton continued to look to get back into the game, and Bob Hatton pulled one back as the 'Robins' began to relax. Luton hit the woodwork twice more, but the result was never in doubt.

Wrexham manager, Arfon Griffiths said after the game: "I was particularly pleased with our victory over a Luton Town side who were of a very high standard. Our new signing Frank Carrodus did exceptionally well in what was not only his first game for Wrexham, but his first league game for 14 months. It can be difficult settling down in a new side, but Frank looked at home considering he had only been with us a few days. He will give us more balance and experience in midfield, an area where we have had a few problems this season."

Recent Meetings		
Season	Home	Away
1967/68	1-1	1-2
1978/79	2-0	1-2
1979/80	3-1	0-2
1980/81	0-0	1-1
1981/82	0-2	0-0
1996/97	2-1	0-0
1997/98	2-1	5-2
1998/99	1-1	2-1
1999/00	1-0	1-3
2000/01	??	4-3

(Wrexham score first)



Frank Carrodus

Head to Head v Luton Town

Our Football League Record against Luton Town

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Home	12	8	3	1	18	7
Away	13	3	3	7	17	23
Total	25	11	6	8	35	30

Biggest Home Win: 3-1 15th December, 1979

Biggest Home Defeat: 0-2 24th October, 1981

Biggest Away Win: 5-2 20th September, 1997

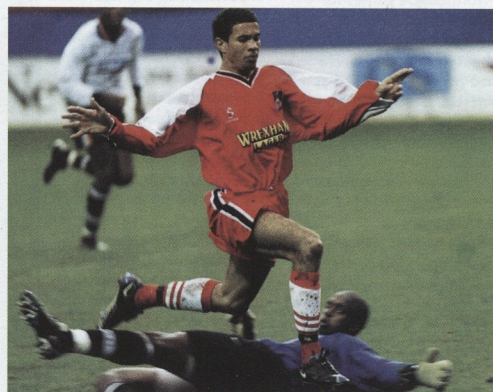
Biggest Away Defeat: 1-3 11th April, 1964 & 11th Feb, 1967

Biggest Home Attendance: 9,321 19th August, 1967

Biggest Away Attendance: 10,890 12th March, 1982

Lowest Home Attendance: 2,703 4th March, 2000

Lowest Away Attendance: 4,660 16th September, 1965



Last Meeting Here At The Racecourse

Football League Division Two, Monday 4th March 2000

Wrexham 1 (Allsopp 55) Luton Town 0 - Att: 2,703

Maintaining a six point gap over those teams in the relegation zone was of paramount importance to Wrexham and this victory proved to be only the 'Robins' third back-to-back win of the season. Luton had their chances in the first half with Andrew Fotiadis (twice), Emmerson Boyce and Phil Gray all being disappointed that they didn't do better in good situations, while Karl Connolly could also reflect on a headed chance in the 43rd minute.

The encouragement given by the 'Robins' faithful fans was finally rewarded in the 55th minute when Gareth Owen threaded a lovely ball through the centre of the 'Hatters' defence, and loan signing Danny Allsopp smashed an angled shot through the legs of Ben Roberts to score the decisive goal. As Luton pressed forward for an equaliser, Wrexham had several more chances to put the game beyond their visitors, with a Brian Carey header and a Kevin Russell pile-driver that Roberts tipped over the bar, but thankfully Allsopp's one strike was enough to give the 'Robins' three important points in their bid to pull away from the relegation pack.

Brian Flynn was a relieved man after the game, and admitted: "I thought the first half was a good one with both teams attacking and creating chances at both ends. But we had to hang on a little in the end when they threw bodies forward in search of an equaliser." Luton boss, Lennie Lawrence, was a disappointed after the game: "We had a lot of pressure, and I can remember standing here three years ago and experiencing the same thing."

Wrexham: Dearden, McGregor, Hardy, Carey, Ridler, Owen, Ferguson, Russell, Gibson, Connolly, Allsopp. Subs: Rogers, Williams, Chalk, Morrell, Stevens.
Luton Town: Roberts, McGowan (Taylor 71), Doherty, Watts, Johnson, Fraser (Boyce 26), Spring, Gray, Locke, Fotiadis (George 60), Douglas. Subs: Scarlett, Ward.

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Welsh Football Welsh Sporting Theatre Provokes Debate

Former much respected Welsh football internationalists Dai Davies and Leighton James were brought up not far from each other in South Wales, and neither is short of a word or two on all football topics Welsh, in their respective vocations as pundits. The pair are the media and football journalists dream, always guaranteed to supply plenty of copy, with forthright and thought provoking discussion never a million miles away!

The most recent 'debate' has seen Dai lending his support to an argument that Wales should play the rest of their World Cup games at the Racecourse Ground in Wrexham. Believing the team has a better chance of qualification at an intimate club venue, as is the home of the Robins.

Dai argues that Wales have yet to win a football match at the magnificent Millennium Stadium, losing two and drawing two of their four games to date in the arena. He makes the point that the opposition love to play there, and it is as much of an inspiration to the away side as to the Welsh players.

This is in many ways what the England side have had to put with over the years with teams giving their all to impress at Wembley Stadium, which had been a Mecca of world football (without looking too closely in recent years, of course). Now the English players will be playing on the provincial grounds like Anfield, Villa Park, Old Trafford and Pride Park, which is our situation on the past, with the likes of Ninian Park, the Racecourse and Vetch Field our home venues and with relatively more success.

In all probability, England will eventually find a permanent home at the rebuild Wembley, their situation now, is ours in reverse!

Dai goes on to say that many fans will disagree with him, as the FAW's pricing policy of £5.00 children and £10.00 adults attracted an attendance of 46,750 (unheard of in recent years) for a midweek fixture with the Ukraine, but he was critical of the atmosphere. This, by the way, has also been a grievance by the rugby fraternity in their internationals at the stadium.

He added: "Wales should take the games to Wrexham, where fans know their football." Who could disagree with that

last part!

Leighton, however, disagrees with his former Welsh team mate, pointing out that the state-of-the-art venue is the only option for the FAW: "The atmosphere against the Ukraine was a bit diluted, but nearly 47,000 (and only Greece against Germany had a better attendance during the week of the latest group games) is still a fantastic turn out. The Racecourse holds 15,000, but that would be reduced to about 10,000 as UEFA demands terraced areas be closed for internationals.

"I understand what Dai is aiming at, but how much will tickets cost if the games are taken to the Vetch, Ninian Park or the Racecourse?"

"Last year the FAW signed a 15-year contract with the Millennium Stadium PLC to play all international matches there and until a 25,000 all-seater ground is built, every game including the smaller nations should be there."

The former winger also feels that we must give our players the best opportunity to play in front of the biggest crowd and was confident that the Poland encounter in June will attract a 70,000 full house: "Where else in Wales could you hold that number of people for a football match?"

The Western Mail also entered into the spirit of the discussion by asking its readers for their views on whether the FAW had got it right by turning the Millennium Stadium into the home of Welsh football.

Most people will agree that both sides of the issue have their merits. It has to be said, however, that we must move with the times, the stadium giving Welsh football a profile it has never experienced in its 125 year live span and in these days the marketing of the game is all-important.

Nevertheless the 'North' must not keep quiet and there should be no stumbling block in the Racecourse being allowed a to stage certain friendly internationals, especially since the club eventually plan to make the 'Kop' all-seater like the rest of the ground.

After all, with Wrexham being the official birthplace of the game in Wales, home is where the heart is!

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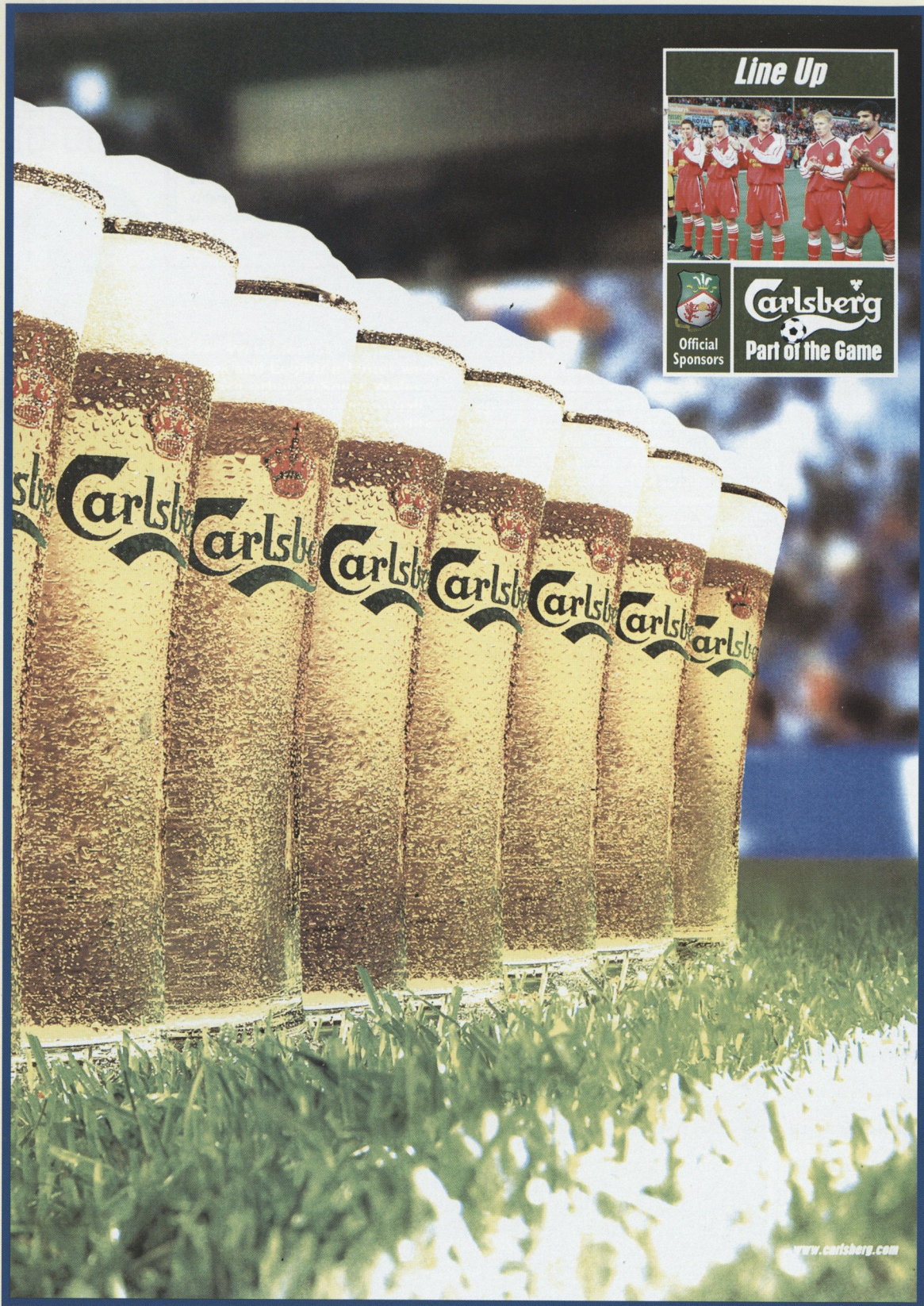
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- (1) The club has the right to refuse entry or eject any person who refuses to be searched by a steward or police officer.
- (2) Any person who fails to comply with instructions from a steward may be ejected from the ground.
- (3) Any person whose behaviour could reasonably be construed as constituting 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.
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 - (3) Go on to the playing surface at any time.
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Avon Insurance League Division One Season 2000-2001

Date	Opponents	Result	Scorers
16 Aug	Wigan Ath.	3-3	Chalk (pen), Morrell, OG
30 Aug	Scunthorpe	4-3	Pejic, Gibson, Morrell, Barrett
6 Sept	Walsall	0-1	
13 Sept	West Bromwich Albion (LC)	2-1	Gibson (2)
20 Sept	Blackpool	4-0	Morrell (3), Killen
27 Sept	Stoke City (LC)	1-3	Morrell
4 Oct	Lincoln	2-1	Morrell, O. Jones
11 Oct	Sheffield Utd	0-2	
25 Oct	Stoke City (LC)	1-3	Owen
8 Nov	York City	2-1	Morrell, Ridler
15 Nov	Grimsby	0-1	
22 Nov	Darlington	1-2	Russell
6 Dec	Shrewsbury	2-1	Sam, Gibson
13 Dec	Wigan Ath.	2-1	Gibson, Russell
10 Jan	Scunthorpe	0-1	
24 Jan	Shrewsbury	3-1	Morrell (2), Sam
30 Jan	Stoke City	2-1	Morrell (2)
14 Feb	Blackpool	4-0	Morrell (2), Trundle (2)
21 Feb	West Bromwich Albion (LC)	3-0	Morrell (2), Trundle
28 Feb	Lincoln	1-0	Faulconbridge
14 Mar	Sheffield Utd.	0-2	
4 Apr	Walsall	1-0	Morrell
9 Apr	York City	3-1	Faulconbridge (3)
11 Apr	Stoke City		
18 Apr	Darlington		
25 Apr	Grimsby Town		

FA Academy Under-19's

Date	Opponents	Result	Scorers
26 Aug	Chelsea	0-3	
2 Sept	Birmingham City	2-4	Pejic, Sweet (pen)
9 Sept	Newcastle Utd	0-0	
16 Sept	Middlesbrough	1-2	Sweet
23 Sept	Barnsley	3-5	Arkell, Watkin, Stacey
30 Sept	Sheffield Wed	0-2	
7 Oct	Nottingham Forest	2-6	Watkin, Cocks
21 Oct	Leeds United	2-4	M. Jones, Arkell
28 Oct	Blackburn Rovers	0-6	
4 Nov	Manchester United	2-1	Cocks, Arkell
18 Nov	Crewe Alexandra	0-2	
25 Nov	Bolton Wanderers	0-3	
2 Dec	Wolves	2-3	Simpson, OG
16 Dec	Stoke City	0-3	
12 Jan	Manchester City	0-1	
23 Jan	Liverpool	0-5	
27 Jan	Bolton Wanderers	0-1	
3 Feb	Crewe Alexandra	3-3	Drabbs, Arkell, D. Jones
17 Feb	Wolves	1-1	G. Williams
24 Feb	Liverpool	0-2	
10 Mar	Blackburn Rovers	1-4	Arkell
17 Mar	Manchester United	2-1	Legrand, Evans (played at Man Utd.)
24 Mar	Everton	0-5	
30 Mar	Everton	1-2	Watkin
7 Apr	Sunderland	1-3	Arkell
16 Apr	Stoke City (played at Wrexham)		
21 Apr	Derby County		
28 Apr	Manchester City		

ROBINS REVIEW SEASON 2000-2001

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Photographs: Wrexham Evening Leader

The views expressed in this programme are not necessarily those of Wrexham AFC.

Reserves & Academy

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This Is Turning Into Quite A Season

Back in January we reviewed the progress made by the Reds' reserve side in the opening five months of this season's Avon Insurance League campaign.



Rooster coaching from the side.

At the time we sat handily placed in fourth place in the table, four points off then leaders Walsall. Since then though, a further ten games have been played (9 League & 1 Cup) including last Wednesday's game against Stoke City here at the Racecourse.

Unfortunately, printing deadlines mean that this result was not known at the time of penning this article and therefore the situation at the top of the table may have changed slightly as a result.

Happily, can we say the situation at the top - for in the first nine games since the turn of the year the Reds had won seven and lost just two.

What all this meant is that the Reds sit proudly on top of the table, with even the outside chance that promotion might have been gained against Stoke, assuming two other results went our way, but if not then very much a possibility on Wednesday evening against Darlington (7.00) at the Racecourse.

With two promotion places available things are certainly looking good at the moment, especially as at the time you read this there will only be two games left to play.

However, the first game of the New Year brought a home defeat by next-to-bottom Scunthorpe United. After impressive wins over Shrewsbury Town and Wigan Athletic the visit of the struggling Iron gave the Reds an ideal opportunity to continue their push for promotion, but in this League nothing is ever that simple. Teams change from one week to the next, with the result that continuity is something rarely achieved. But, this was still a disappointing defeat with Mark Anderson grabbing the decisive winning goal for the visitors on 59 minutes after Darryn Stamp had dispossessed Adrian Moody near the touchline.

Maybe that reverse was just the fillip the Reds needed

for in their next match they completed a double over local rivals Shrewsbury with an emphatic 3-1 success at the Gay Meadow.

Andy Morrell opened the scoring on 16 minutes and Hector Sam doubled the lead six minutes into the second half.

Morrell added a third on 58 minutes before Chris Freestone grabbed a late, late consolation for the home side.

A week later brought a superb 2-1 victory at 'bogey' side Stoke City when Morrell continued his rich vein of form with two penalties at Newcastle Town's Lyme Valley Parkway Stadium.

After a 4-0 success at Bloomfield Road in September a rampant Wrexham side, including a certain trialist by the name of Lee Trundle, repeated the trick with a similar scoreline in the Racecourse return.

Lee quickly showed his potential with a well-taken brace, with Morrell once again adding a double of his own.

A quick respite from League action followed when, after numerous postponements, the League Cup-tie against Premier Division West Bromwich Albion took place at the Racecourse. Yet again Morrell grabbed two goals - bringing his tally for the season to 16 - with Trundle weighing in with the other.

On the back of the way the twin strike force of Morrell and Trundle had combined in the impressive defeats of Blackpool and WBA they were given the responsibility of leading the first team's attack at Walsall the following weekend. Both distinguished themselves, with Lee scoring a superb overhead kick to bring the Reds back into the game and later setting up substitute Craig Faulconbridge for the dramatic injury time winner. The rest, as they say, is history!

Back to the Avon Insurance League and a late Craig Faulconbridge goal saw off Lincoln City 1-0 in a disappointing performance at the Racecourse on February 28th to maintain the Reds' promotion push.

Bramall Lane hasn't been a happy hunting ground for the Reds in recent seasons, indeed some of us still have 'happy' memories of a snowbound 7-1 Cup semi-final defeat there a couple of years ago.

The occasion of March 14th proved no exception as the Blades ran out comfortable 2-0 winners.

Then came the important clash with Walsall at Bromsgrove Rovers' Victoria Ground 12 days ago.

A win for the home side would have put them above us but a last-gasp Andy Morrell strike (his 17th AIL goal of the season) gave us a superb 1-0 victory to put a little bit of daylight between us and the chasing pack.

Then came last Monday's key clash with York City at Bootham Crescent, a game that brought us a superb 3-1 victory (unfortunately, just like the Stoke result, the scorers weren't known at the time of writing). The win meant that the Minstermen, with only three games remaining, can't catch us, leaving only Lincoln City, Walsall and Sheffield United able to deny us promotion - let

Reserves & Academy

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alone the championship!

So there you have it - two games to go and all to play for. There is even the possibility of a championship heading for the Racecourse by a week on Wednesday.

With the club's Academy status secured for next season, subject of course to satisfying certain criteria for future development within the deadline of July 20th, there is every cause for optimism in the years ahead. Promotion to the Premier Division of the ALL would mean games against the likes of Birmingham City, Wolves, Bolton Wanderers, Barnsley and Preston North End amongst others, so the benefits of playing at a higher level of reserve football are there for all to see.

Similarly, the progress of the club's juniors has only been enhanced by the opportunity of playing in what is, effectively, the Premier League in terms of youth football.

The under-19s may have struggled results-wise but the progress of individuals such as Shaun Pejic and Adrian Moody into the first team, and Paul Whitfield's selection for the Wales under-21 squad to face Ukraine last month, are evidence of its success.

It will be a gradual process, for the club operates teams from under-16s down to under-9s in Academy football - not just the under-19s. It will take time for them to come through the system but early signs are encouraging, especially with Kevin Russell's successful under-14 side.

Also, a special word of praise should go to Simon Spender and Craig Morgan who play for the under-16s. Both played key roles in Wales Schoolboys' Victory Shield campaign - featuring live on SKY in games against England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Remember, the Reserves' next outing is this Wednesday when Darlington visit the Racecourse, kick-off 7.00pm. So if you have the chance of giving them your support it would be greatly appreciated.

Come on you Reds!

Monday, 9th April, 2001

Avon Insurance League Division One YORK CITY 1 WREXHAM 3

The Reds took a strong side to Bootham Crescent and what a good game it was. We started off at a cracking pace, Emad hit a post and Faulconbridge had a shot saved when clean through, before taking the lead after 12 minutes.

Thomas did well out on the left, beat his man on the edge of the box and the crossed from the byline to leave Faulconbridge with a simple tap-in.

The game went a bit scrappy after this, although we still had a couple of chances with Edwards having a shot saved when clean through after 40 minutes, but as we neared half-time the second arrived.

Gareth Owen drove a shot in hard and low from about 35 yards. The 'keeper could only parry it and Faulconbridge had chance to add another tap-in.

In first half injury time York were awarded a penalty. Emad's challenge may have been clumsy, but it looked a harsh decision. Anyway, Walsh guessed correctly and made the save. The ref blowing for half-time immediately

afterwards.

York must have had a rocket from their manager at half-time as they came out in determined mood and put us under pressure. Walsh kept them out for a while, but they finally scored a scrappy goal after the keeper had initially made a point blank save. Fortunately they didn't have a chance to build on this as we got our third soon after. A long ball down the channel saw the keeper, Faulconbridge and a defender all in a race for it. The ball stuck in a sandy patch in the right-hand corner of the box and left the keeper stranded. Faulconbridge just got there before the defender to slip the ball home.

Both sides continued to have chances and both keepers made good saves, especially in one on one situations, but no further goals came.

Good performances by Walsh, Faulconbridge and Warren and nice to see Phillips back for a brief sub appearance. Not all good news though as Faulconbridge left the field with a hamstring problem.

Team: Walsh, Warren, Bouanane, Roberts, Lawrence, Owen, Edwards, Barrett, Faulconbridge (O.Jones), Sam (Phillips), Thomas. Subs: Rogers, Campbell, Evans.

AVON INSURANCE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE (Up to and including Monday 9th April 2001)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wrexham	19	12	1	6	34	22	37
Sheffield United	18	10	2	6	24	17	32
Walsall	18	8	5	5	23	19	29
Lincoln City	17	8	3	6	38	31	27
York City	19	8	3	8	28	24	27
Scunthorpe United	20	7	6	7	35	31	27
Blackpool	17	7	3	7	22	28	24
Grimsby Town	17	6	5	6	20	21	23
Darlington	18	7	1	10	24	32	22
Shrewsbury Town	17	6	2	9	27	33	20
Stoke City	15	5	3	7	16	19	18
Wigan Athletic	19	5	2	12	20	34	17

Remaining Fixtures:

Sheff Utd:

Apr 18 GRIMSBY (H) 7.00
Apr 25 Shrewsbury (A)
7.00
TBA Lincoln (A)

Walsall:

Apr 18 STOKE (H) 2.00
Apr 25 Darlington (A)
May 2 Grimsby (A) 2.00

Lincoln City:

Apr 18 YORK (H)
Apr 23 Stoke (A)
TBA Sheff Utd (A)

Wrexham:

Apr 18 DARLINGTON (H) 7.00
Apr 23 Grimsby (A) 2.00

"IT WAS A DECENT PERFORMANCE AT YORK, BUT WE ALMOST LET THEM BACK INTO A MATCH THAT WE DESERVED TO WIN"

Steve Weaver



AVON INSURANCE LEAGUE ROLLCALL 2000-2001

	LEAGUE		CUP		TOTAL	
	A	G	A	G	A	G
Kevin Dearden	3	0	0	0	3	0
Mark Evans	3(2)	0	0	0	3(2)	0
Emad Bouanane	8	0	2	0	10	0
George Horan	4	0	1	0	5	0
Dave Ridler	6	1	0	0	6	1
Danny Williams	9	0	2	0	11	0
Martyn Chalk	4	1	1	0	5	1
Wayne Phillips	6	0	0	0	6	0
Andy Morrell	11	14	3	3	14	17
Paul Barrett	10	1	0	0	10	1
Dave Warren	16	0	4	0	20	0
Ian Cocks	2(1)	0	0(1)	0	2(2)	0
David Walsh	5	0	2	0	7	0
David Sweet	0(1)	0	0	0	0(1)	0
Gareth Williams	3(4)	0	1(1)	0	4(5)	0
Phil Hardy	7(1)	0	0	0	7(1)	0
Mark Jackson	1	0	0	0	1	0
Chris Hamill	3(1)	0	1	0	4(1)	0
Shaun Pejic	8(1)	1	2	0	10(1)	1
Adrian Moody	13(1)	0	3(1)	0	16(2)	0
Robin Gibson	13	3	3	2	16	5
Darren Jones	2(2)	0	1	0	3(2)	0
Danny Watkin	4(1)	0	3	0	7(1)	0
Adam Arkell	2(2)	0	1	0	3(2)	0
Steve Roberts	2	0	1	0	3	0
Craig Faulconbridge	2	1	1	0	3	1
Eirik Hemminghytt	0	0	1	0	1	0
Gareth Owen	6	0	2	1	8	1
Chris Killen	1	1	0	0	1	1
Paul Whitfield	0	0	1	0	1	0
Matthew Dabbs	0	0	1	0	1	0
Michael Blackwood	7	0	2	0	9	0
Kristian Rogers	10	0	1	0	11	0
Luke Campbell	2(2)	0	0	0	2(2)	0
Osian Jones	2(3)	1	0(1)	0	2(4)	1
Hector Sam	8	2	1	0	9	2
Dennis Lawrence	1	0	1	0	2	0
Brian Carey	2	0	0	0	2	0
Kevin Russell	5	2	0	0	5	2
Steve Thomas	5	0	1	0	6	0
Lee Trundle	1	2	1	1	2	3

(Up to and including Sunday 8th April 2001)

FA ACADEMY UNDER-19s ROLLCALL 2000-2001

	Apps	Gls		Apps	Gls
Craig Moody	9	0	Mike Simpson	7 (8)	1
Mark Jackson	14 (1)	0	Paul Whitfield	14	0
Chris Hamill	5 (5)	0	Alec Stacey	10 (4)	1
Darren Jones	17	1	Mark Evans	18	1
Shaun Pejic	16 (2)	1	Mark Jones	6 (7)	1
Adrian Moody	13 (2)	0	Paul Ellis	1	0
Gareth Williams	13 (2)	1	Gareth Sudlow	8 (1)	0
Danny Watkin	19 (1)	3	Rob Taberner	1 (3)	0
Ian Cocks	13 (2)	2	Leon Dixon	1	0
Adam Arkell	19 (3)	6	Peter Clitheroe	2	0
Osian Jones	15 (1)	0	David Le Grand	3	1
David Sweet	3 (2)	2	Scott Gordan	1	0
Luke Campbell	20 (2)	0			
Paul Douglas Jones	6 (6)	0	Own Goals	-	1
Matthew Dabbs	15 (1)	1			
George Horan	6	0			

(Up to and including Friday 13th April 2001)

Quiz Time

- Which side have Luton played in both an FA Cup and a League Cup Final, losing on both occasions?
- Name the current Welsh international who was sold by The Hatters for a fee of £2.5m in January 1995?
- Can you name the Luton legend who netted twice in their dramatic 1988 League Cup Final defeat of Arsenal?
- Who is the current Director of Football at a Premiership club and who has previously had two spells as manager at Kenilworth Road?
- In August 1983, Wrexham signed which player from The Hatters?
- The corresponding fixture last season finished 1-0 to Wrexham, who scored the only goal of that game?
- Which former Welsh international made his last League appearance for Wrexham in a match against Doncaster at the Racecourse in April 1992?
- Who is the only player to have scored the winning goal for an English club in a match against Barcelona at the Nou Camp?
- Less than a fortnight ago, a League of Wales match finished with an 11-0 scoreline. Can you name the two sides involved?
- The first UEFA Cup competition took place during the 1961/62 season. Can you name the two English teams to reach that historic first final?
- Brazil recently suffered a shock 1-0 defeat to which fellow South American country in a World Cup qualifying match?
- Prior to arriving at Leicester, goalkeeper Tim Flowers had played league football for which four clubs?
- At which Nationwide League ground would you be if you were sitting in the Roger De Vere Stand?
- Name the player who scored in both the 1982 FA Cup Final and the replay that same year?
- Nine players made their Wrexham debuts during our 1992/93 promotion season, can you name them?

The Answers can be found on page 47

Croeso Luton Town

Dyn ni'n croesawu'r 'Hatters' i'r Cae Ras p'nawn ma gan nodi tra er eu bod nhw tuag at waelodion y tabl maent wedi gwella yn syfrdanol ers i Joe Kinnear gymryd yr awennau. Ar hyn o bryd ar ol 35 o gemau, mae'r 'Hatters' yn gorwedd yn drydydd o waelod yr adran, naw pwynt y tu ol i Dref Swindon a Chaergrawnt. Yn afnodus, o ran yr 'Hatters' o leiaf, mae gemau yn dechrau rhedeg allan iddynt; gymaint felly, fel bod rhaid iddynt edrych i ennill pob gem er mwyn dringo allan o'r pedwar safle isaf. Os na allant wneud hynny o fewn deg gem yna bydd yr clwb o Swydd Bedford yn chwarae yn yr Adran Isaf tymor nesaf am y tro cyntaf ers canol y Chwedegeau. O ran y Cochion, tra profodd un gol yn ddigon i ennill y gem gyfatebol tymor diwethaf, mae gennyn ni atgofion melys iawn o'n hymwelidau a Ffordd Kenilworth tymor yma. Bryd hynny daeth y Cochion yn ol o 3-0 i lawr i ennill 4-3, diolch i gol yn y munudau olaf gan Darren Ferguson. Wrth gwrs, does dim gobaith am gem mor gyffrous a hynny p'nawn 'ma... nac oes? Wel, gan bod y ddau dim yn mynd am y triphwynt am wahanol resymau... cawn weld am bump o'r gloch. Mwynhewch y gem!



AFC BOURNEMOUTH

Current chairman Trevor Watkins is to relinquish his role at the end of the season, citing business commitments as the major reason behind this shock announcement.

He was instrumental in saving The Cherries when all seemed lost and them becoming a community owned club, thanks to an influx of donations from supporters and local businesses. This has since been hailed as a blueprint for the future for smaller teams and fans of many other clubs in similar financial difficulties have already contacted the Dean Court hierarchy for advice.

Watkins will remain as a director of both the club itself and their Youth Fund, but will relinquish his status as chairman.

The Directors have unanimously approved the appointment of Tony Swaisland as his replacement, with effect from May. He is currently a member of The Cherries' Board of Directors, and is also Project Co-ordinator with regard to the on-going redevelopment of their Dean Court home.

Bournemouth's plans to rotate their ground through ninety degrees has continued with the demolition of the dilapidated South Stand, which was the home supporters terracing end of the ground. The club has been forced to relocate their own supporters to the uncovered Brighton Beach End, which is where the visiting hordes normally congregate.

OLDHAM ATHLETIC

Veteran midfielder John Sheridan has pledged his future to The Latics by agreeing to extend his stay at Boundary Park for a further twelve months.

With his current contract due to expire in the summer, manager Andy Ritchie was quick to tie the

former Republic of Ireland international down to a new deal, which will now see him remain with the club until at least the end of next term.

Aside from his obvious playing qualities, Ritchie was keen to praise his off field attributes: "John is a crucial part of the on-going success of the team. He is a professional who contributes both on and off the field. His skill levels are an excellent benchmark for our youngsters."

Sheridan has proved to be an astute signing by Oldham, bringing composure and experience to the club's midfield. He has been back on top form since returning from a knee injury sustained earlier in the campaign.

WIGAN ATHLETIC

With the club in severe danger of actually missing the play-offs altogether, former Norwich, Birmingham and Manchester United defender Steve Bruce has been appointed as The Latics new manager.

The 40 year-old was obviously keen to get back involved in the day to day running of a Nationwide League club: "I am looking forward to the challenge of cementing our play-off position and achieving Wigan's aim of First Division status."

The ex-Huddersfield Town and Sheffield United boss has plenty of invaluable experience from both his playing days in the top flight and his time in management with the Yorkshire duo, and could well prove to be an astute appointment by Athletic.

Colin Greenall had been in temporary charge of team affairs following the acrimonious and surprising departure of Bruce Rioch back in February. Greenall will, however, remain at The JJB Stadium, along with fellow ex-Springfield Park hero Brendan O'Connell, to work alongside Bruce while the club's Director of Football John Benson will now take responsibility for

"WE DID ALL THAT WE COULD AND THAT IS ALL YOU CAN EVER ASK OF A TEAM. I AM PLEASED THAT WE GOT A GOAL AND PLEASED THAT 'RHINO' SCORED IT"

Lawrie Sanchez



Today's other Division Two Fixtures

- Bristol City v Wycombe Wanderers
- Bury v Wigan Athletic
- Oldham Athletic v Bristol Rovers
- Port Vale v Swansea City
- Rotherham United v Northampton Town
- Swindon Town v Notts County
- Bournemouth v Stoke City (Wed)
- Cambridge United v Millwall (Wed)
- Colchester United v Peterborough United (Wed)
- Oxford United v Reading (Wed)
- Walsall v Brentford (Wed)

overseeing their youth programme.

Bruce did not have the best of starts to life at Wigan, as his side suffered a 3-1 home defeat to Brentford. This result leaves The Latics with a real possibility of missing out on the play-offs and was described by the new boss as: "A huge disappointment for all concerned at the club."

WYCOMBE WANDERERS

They came, they saw and they so nearly conquered. The Wycombe FA Cup bandwagon finally came off it's wheels at Villa Park, but a spirited display saw the Second Division giantkillers give Liverpool a real run for their money.

The Chairboys central defensive trio of Paul McCarthy, Jamie Bates and Jason Cousins, ably backed up by experienced goalkeeper Martin Taylor, held out for 78 minutes. That was until Emile Heskey was allowed to roam free to head home unchallenged, following the very first corner of the match had only been partially cleared.

Just five minutes later, Robbie Fowler added a second for the Merseysiders with a precision free-kick into the top corner of the net, and all appeared over for the minnows.

A late strike from stalwart midfielder Keith Ryan, who has been with the club since their non-league days, with just two minutes remaining gave the Chairboys, and their near 20,000 strong band of supporters, a glimmer of hope. Unfortunately, the Liverpool rearguard held firm until the end to secure a meeting with Arsenal at the Millennium Stadium on 12th May.

Not surprisingly, Wanderers boss Lawrie Sanchez was upbeat about his side's showing: "We did all that we could and that is all you can ever ask of a team. I am pleased that we got a goal and pleased that 'Rhino' scored it."

"They [Liverpool] are a different class. You've got to appreciate that. The free-kick from Robbie Fowler showed that. However, for 75 minutes were in the game."

I suppose if he had been offered a semi-final meeting with Liverpool as his side faced up to Ryman League side Harrow Borough in the first round all them months ago, Sanchez would probably have taken it. Especially with a club that had never previously been beyond the Third Round.

Sanchez now needs to ensure that his side amass the points required to pull themselves away from the relegation zone, otherwise it could be a bitter end to a memorable season for the club.

"It's been a big thing the semi and our level of performance [in the League] has dropped. We can now get down to the league games and put the season to bed," was the boss' honest assessment.

SWANSEA CITY

It appears that The Swans may be set to join Oxford in playing Third Division football next term, just twelve months after securing promotion from the bottom level. This comes after a torrid season at the higher level for The Swans, even allowing for the skills of experienced manager John Hollins.

A section of the Vetch Field faithful have been calling for the former Arsenal favourite to be replaced in charge, but Hollins looks likely to be allowed to see the season out. There appears to be little chance of him being sacked at this late stage in proceedings, and he has already gone on record as saying that he will not leave the post.

"I'm not a quitter. I've never walked out on a job before, either in football or in business, and I will not start at Swansea," he vowed.

Former Welsh under-21 international Jonathan Coates has admitted that the club has little chance of retaining their Second Division status, but vowed that they would fight until it becomes mathematically impossible: "If we end up dropping to the Third Division, then we'll want to restore a bit of pride and show the supporters that we went down fighting."

"We cannot make any excuses, we just haven't played well enough," he continued. "We now need to stay positive and try to get three points from every game."



THE FINAL ACT FOR THE HIGHFIELD ROAD HOUDINIS?

Since their promotion into the top flight at the end of the Sixties, Coventry City have flirted with relegation on at least half of the seasons that they have been in the top division. On many occasions they have stayed up by the skin of their teeth.

This season, though, could it be that the Houdini act played out repeatedly before the Highfield Road faithful is about to end in tragedy?

It has to be said that they have left it very late to stage any kind of break for safety, so could they be going down after 34 years at the top (albeit usually floundering)? And yet, the Sky Blues' obituary has been written so many times before, and then the writers have had the words stuffed down their throats.

The most recent narrow squeak came five seasons ago, when Coventry really did look doomed. Having lost their penultimate game of the season at home to Derby; they had to go and win at White Hart Lane and even then rely on Sunderland losing at Wimbledon and Middlesbrough failing to beat Leeds at Elland Road. Needless to say the Highfield Road Houdinis pulled it off with a victory over Spurs, while the gods (who are all obviously Sky Blue season-ticket holders) guaranteed that Wimbledon beat Sunderland (smile Peter Read?) and Middlesbrough failed to beat Leeds.

Boro must have been feeling particularly sore as they had three points deducted for failing to fulfil a mid-season fixture at Ewood Park. Needless to say without that penalty, Boro would have stayed up, but...

If you go back a bit further to the mid-eighties (when, believe it or not, Everton were a good side), you will no doubt remember a particular Houdini act by Coventry that outshone even their escape at White Hart Lane five seasons ago.

1984/85: Everton were Champions, Manchester United won the FA Cup, while Norwich were the League Cup winners. Coventry had to win all four of their last games to have any chance of staying up. If by some miracle this came about, then League Cup winners, Norwich would be relegated (along with ironically enough League Cup runners-up: Sunderland). What made it even more difficult for the Sky Blues was that their final game was against Champions, FA Cup finalists and ECWC Winners Everton. Amazingly Coventry won three on the trot and then the ultra-miracle: managed to beat Everton 4-1! I wonder what odds you'd have got on that?

If that turn of events had the bookies scratching their heads, no doubt they were jumping up and down with fury back in 1977. Then Coventry were in free-fall, but, could, once again, stay up if the results elsewhere went their way. The final match of the season involved the visit of fellow relegation battlers Bristol City, while the other side involved, Sunderland, had to draw at Everton to send either Bristol City or Coventry down.

A (Jimmy Hill) delayed kick-off at Highfield Road meant that the game at Goodison finished beforehand. Sunderland lost 2-0, but defeat for either Coventry or Bristol City would keep them up. The furor arose because the result of the game at Goodison was broadcast over the tannoy at Highfield Road! As the score was 2-2 and thus meant that both sides stayed up, it is fair to assume that the final quarter hour or so of the game was played out in a very friendly spirit!

There were calls for an investigation by the League (not least from Sunderland), but nothing came of it, because no collusion could be proved.

So that's why, basically, I am as certain as I can be that Coventry will be in the Premiership next season!

Credulous Eddie (There's nothing fishy about Coventry's successful relegation battles over the years... honest!)

First Team Results and Appearances

Nationwide Division 2 Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Millwall	41	14	2	4	42	11	10	6	5	34	25	80
Reading	41	14	3	3	49	20	9	6	6	25	24	78
Rotherham Utd.	40	14	4	3	47	25	9	4	6	25	28	77
Walsall	39	13	5	3	46	20	6	5	7	21	23	67
Stoke City	41	10	5	5	32	19	8	8	5	33	26	67
Wigan Athletic	41	11	8	1	26	14	5	9	7	21	23	65
Bristol City	41	10	6	5	43	26	7	7	6	21	23	64
Bournemouth	40	8	6	6	32	23	7	6	7	35	28	57
Notts County	39	8	5	5	31	25	7	6	8	20	30	56
Wrexham	40	9	5	7	29	26	6	5	8	29	35	55
Northampton T.	40	8	6	5	24	21	6	6	9	20	28	54
Bury	41	10	5	6	24	20	5	4	11	16	29	54
Brentford	39	8	7	4	26	24	5	7	8	19	29	53
Colchester Utd.	39	9	4	8	28	20	5	5	8	19	27	51
Oldham Athletic	41	10	5	6	33	24	3	7	10	16	33	51
Port Vale	37	8	8	4	32	17	5	3	9	12	23	50
Peterborough Utd.	39	10	5	4	32	23	2	7	11	18	34	48
Swindon Town	41	5	8	8	27	32	7	4	9	16	25	48
Wycombe W.	38	8	4	8	22	21	4	6	8	15	25	46
Cambridge Utd.	40	7	6	7	28	23	5	3	12	24	43	45
Bristol Rovers	38	3	10	4	14	17	6	5	10	24	28	42
Luton Town	39	5	4	10	22	31	4	6	10	24	37	37
Swansea City	39	4	7	7	18	20	3	4	14	20	45	32
Oxford Utd.	40	4	3	13	19	30	2	2	16	25	55	23

Robins Rollcall

	League Apps	League Goals	Cup Apps	Cup Goals	Total Apps	Total Goals
KEVIN DEARDEN	35	0	4	0	39	0
MARK MCGREGOR	38	4	8	1	46	5
PHIL HARDY	7	0	2	0	9	0
GARETH OWEN	18(4)	2	7(1)	0	25(5)	2
BRIAN CAREY	27	2	6(1)	0	33(1)	2
DAVE RIDLER	21(2)	0	9(2)	0	30(4)	0
MARTYN CHALK	22(1)	4	5(2)	0	27(3)	4
KEVIN RUSSELL	20(1)	4	3(3)	0	23(4)	4
CRAIG FAULCONBRIDGE	28(5)	7	9(1)	5	37(6)	12
DARREN FERGUSON	37	7	9	3	46	10
WAYNE PHILLIPS	4(3)	0	1(1)	0	5(4)	1
PAUL BARRETT	22(2)	0	4(3)	1	26(5)	1
ROBIN GIBSON	13(10)	1	6(2)	3	19(12)	4
STEVE ROBERTS	6(1)	0	1	0	7(1)	0
DANNY WILLIAMS	8(1)	1	3	0	11(1)	2
ANDY MORRELL	8(10)	3	2	1	10(10)	4
HECTOR SAM	11(8)	6	2	17(8)	8	
CARLOS EDWARDS	28(2)	4	4(2)	1	32(4)	5
MICHAEL BLACKWOOD	2(11)	0	1(4)	0	3(15)	0
LEE ROCHE	36	0	10	0	46	0
STEPHEN THOMAS	0(1)	0	1(1)	1	1(2)	1
KEVIN HANNON	0	0	0	0	0	0
DAVE WARREN	0	0	0(1)	1	0(1)	1
DAVID WALSH	0	0	4	0	4	0
KRISTIAN ROGERS	5	0	3	0	8	0
EMAD BOUANANE	13(4)	0	7	0	20(4)	0
PAUL WHITFIELD	0	0	0	0	0	0
GEORGE HORAN	0	0	0	0	0	0
IAN COCKS	0	0	0	0	0	0
ADRIAN MOODY	2(1)	0	2	0	4(1)	0
CHRIS KILLEN	11(1)	3	2	2	13(1)	5
PAUL MARDON	6(1)	0	1	0	7(1)	0
GARETH WILLIAMS	0	0	0(1)	0	0(1)	0
LEE TRUNDLE	10(2)	8	1	0	11(2)	8
DENNIS LAWRENCE	0(2)	0	0	0	0(2)	0
SHAUN PEJIC	1	0	0	0	1	0
OWN GOALS	-	0	-	1	-	1

Nationwide League Division 2

Round	Date	Opponents	Result	Att	Pts	Pos	Away
1	SAT 12 AUG	BRISTOL CITY	L 0-2	5,852	0	-	1,745
2	Sat 19 Aug	Bury	W 4-1	3,613	3	7	713
3	SAT 26 AUG	WIGAN ATHLETIC	L 1-3	5,271	3	16	1,329
4	SAT 9 SEP	OLDHAM ATHLETIC	W 3-1	3,527	6	16	836
5	TUE 12 SEP	ROTHERHAM UNITED	L 1-3	2,126	6	18	71
6	Sat 16 Sep	Colchester United	D 1-1	3,724	7	18	200
7	SAT 23 SEP	WALSALL	L 0-1	3,766	7	19	843
8	Tue 26 Sep	Bournemouth	W 2-1	3,004	10	16	89
9	Sat 30 Sep	Northampton Town	D 2-2	5,595	11	13	400
10	Sat 14 Oct	Oxford United	W 4-3	3,884	14	12	300
11	Tue 17 Oct	Reading	L 1-4	10,350	14	14	250
12	SAT 21 OCT	SWANSEA CITY	W 1-0	4,008	17	13	649
13	TUE 24 OCT	WYCOMBE WANDERERS	D 0-0	3,016	18	13	163
14	Sat 28 Oct	Luton Town	W 4-3	5,341	21	11	350
15	SAT 4 NOV	STOKE CITY	L 1-2	6,447	21	13	2,447
16	Tue 7 Nov	Swindon Town	D 2-2	4,231	22	11	150
17	Sat 11 Nov	Millwall	L 0-1	9,607	22	14	291
18	TUE 21 NOV	CAMBRIDGE UNITED	D 2-2	1,584	23	13	99
19	SAT 25 NOV	BRISTOL ROVERS	W 1-0	2,579	26	11	381
20	Sat 2 Dec	Peterborough United	L 0-1	5,381	26	12	200
21	SAT 16 DEC	BRENTFORD	W 2-1	2,287	29	9	149
22	Sat 23 Dec	Notts County	L 0-1	6,206	29	12	200
23	TUE 26 DEC	PORT VALE	W 1-0	4,941	32	10	946
24	Mon 1 Jan	Wigan Athletic	D 0-0	6,515	33	12	866
25	SAT 13 JAN	BOURNEMOUTH	D 2-2	2,852	34	12	149
26	SUN 4 FEB	SWINDON TOWN	D 1-1	3,004	35	14	333
27	Sat 10 Feb	Oldham Athletic	L 1-5	4,703	35	14	350
28	Tue 13 Feb	Bristol City	L 1-2	9,500	35	16	112
29	SAT 17 FEB	COLCHESTER UNITED	W 1-0	2,492	38	14	118
30	Tue 20 Feb	Rotherham United	L 0-2	4,528	38	15	175
31	Sat 24 Feb	Walsall	W 3-2	4,958	41	15	350
32	FRI 2 MAR	NORTHAMPTON TOWN	W 3-0	2,940	44	11	314
33	TUE 6 MAR	OXFORD UNITED	W 5-3	3,009	47	10	92
34	Sat 10 Mar	Cambridge United	W 3-2	3,737	50	10	381
35	SAT 17 MAR	READING	L 1-2	5,080	50	10	691
36	TUE 20 MAR	BURY	L 0-1	3,388	50	12	252
37	Sat 31 Mar	Brentford	L 0-1	4,494	50	12	300
38	Tue 3 Apr	Port Vale	D 1-1	4,234	51	13	400
39	SAT 7 APR	PETERBOROUGH UNITED	W 2-1	2,678	54	14	221
40	TUE 10 APR	NOTTS COUNTY	D 1-1	2,741	55	9	164
41	Sat 14 Apr	Wycombe Wanderers					
42	MON 16 APR	LUTON TOWN					
43	Sat 21 Apr	Stoke City					
44	Tue 24 Apr	Swansea City					
45	SAT 28 APR	MILLWALL					
46	Sat 5 May	Bristol Rovers					

Worthington Cup

1-1st leg	Tue 22 Aug	Mansfield Town	W 1-0	1,152	-	-	153	Dearden
1-2nd leg	TUE 5 SEPT	MANSFIELD TOWN	L 0-3	1,447	-	-	81	Rogers

F.A. Cup Sponsored by AXA

I	SAT 18 NOV	ROTHERHAM UNITED	L 0-1	3,887	-	-	840	Dearden
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F.A.W. Premier Cup

Group A	Sat 2 Sept	Bangor City	W 6-0	312	-	-	150	Rogers
Group A	Tue 3 Oct	Carmarthen Town	W 1-0	998	-	-	75	Dearden
Group A	TUE 14 NOV	CARMARTHEN TOWN	W 3-0	505	-	-	30	Rogers
Group A	Tue 28 Nov	Aberystwyth Town	D 1-1	1,561	-	-	30	Walsh
Group A	TUE 19 DEC	BANGOR CITY	W 4-0	302	-	-	17	Walsh
Group A	TUE 23 JAN	ABERYSTWYTH TOWN	W 4-0	231	-	-	20	Dearden
Q-F	TUE 13 MAR	ABERYSTWYTH TOWN	W 3-0	635	-	-	20	Walsh

SF-1st leg	BARRY/TNS
SF-2nd leg	
Final	

LDV Vans Trophy

I	SAT 9 DEC	HALIFAX TOWN	L 0-1	1,545	-	-	104	Walsh
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Roche	McGregor	Carey	Roberts	Owen	Ferguson	Gibson	Blackwood	Faulconbridge	Sam	Dearden	Ridler	Williams	Chalk	Morrell	1
Roche	McGregor	Carey	Ridler	Owen	Ferguson	Williams	Edwards	Faulconbridge	Sam	Dearden	Roberts	Gibson	Chalk	Morrell	2
Roche	McGregor	Carey	Ridler	Owen	Ferguson	Williams	Edwards	Faulconbridge	Sam	Dearden	Roberts	Gibson	Chalk	Morrell	3
Roche	McGregor	Carey	Ridler	Owen	Ferguson	Barrett	Edwards	Killen	Sam	Dearden	Moody	Gibson	Chalk	Morrell	4
Roche	McGregor	Carey	Ridler	Owen	Ferguson	Barrett	Edwards	Killen	Sam	Dearden	Roberts	Gibson	Chalk	Morrell	5

Squad Check

Monday, 16th April 2001

In association with



WREXHAM		LUTON TOWN	
	Result		
1 KEVIN DEARDEN		1 MARK OVENDALE	
2 MARK MCGREGOR		2 GAVIN MCGOWAN	
3 PHIL HARDY		4 MATTHEW SPRING	
4 GARETH OWEN		5 JULIAN WATTS	
5 BRIAN CAREY		6 MARVIN JOHNSON	
6 DAVE RIDLER		7 PETER THOMSON	
7 MARTYN CHALK		8 PAUL McLAREN	
8 KEVIN RUSSELL		9 STUART DOUGLAS	
9 CRAIG FAULCONBRIDGE		10 MARK STEIN	
10 DARREN FERGUSON		11 LIAM GEORGE	
11 WAYNE PHILLIPS		12 ADAM LOCKE	
12 PAUL BARRETT		13 STUART FRASER	
14 ROBIN GIBSON		14 ANDREW FOTIADIS	
15 STEVE ROBERTS		15 MATTHEW TAYLOR	
16 DANNY WILLIAMS		16 NATHAN ABBEY	
17 ANDY MORRELL		17 EMMERSON BOYCE	
18 HECTOR SAM		18 TRESOR KANDOL	
19 CARLOS EDWARDS		20 PETER HOLMES	
20 MICHAEL BLACKWOOD		21 ANDRE SCARLETT	
21 LEE ROCHE		22 DEAN BRENNAN	
22 STEVE THOMAS		23 JUDE STERLING	
23 KEVIN HANNON		25 DEAN STANDEN	
24 DAVE WARREN		26 FRIEDRICH BREITENFELDER	
25 KRISTIAN ROGERS		29 KENT KARLSEN	
26 DAVID WALSH		30 PETRI HELIN	
28 LEE TRUNDLE		32 LEE MANSELL	
29 DENNIS LAWRENCE		33 RICHARD DRYDEN	
30 SHAUN PEJIC		34 STEVE HOWARD	
31 ADRIAN MOODY		35 PAUL SHEPHARD	
33 EMAD BOUANANE		39 KEITH ROWLAND	

Today's Officials:

Referee:

H. M. Webb

Assistant Referees:

S. J. Bratt

A. R. Brown

Fourth Official:

J. F. Tattan

MASCOT



Joining Wrexham captain Brian Carey to lead out the players onto the pitch this afternoon, will be Laura Watson who lives on the Goulbourne Estate,

Wrexham.

Aged 13, she is a pupil at St. Joseph's Catholic High School and lists her favourite subjects as Technology, RE and Science. Out of school, Laura enjoys tennis and running.

She names Martyn Chalk, Wayne Phillips and Emad Bouanane as her favourite players.

We hope Laura and her family have a very enjoyable time with us today.

Matchday Mascot Kit

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