



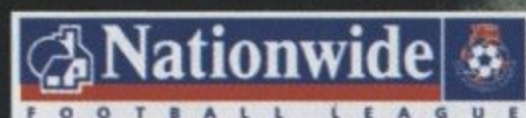
The Official Match Programme of Bristol Rovers Football Club Issue 3 **£2**

the Pirate



Luton

Sat 25 August 2001
Kick-off 3.00pm



Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to The Memorial Stadium for this afternoon's match against Luton.

We are obviously very pleased with the fine start we've made to the season and delighted to have won three consecutive matches. However, there is a long way to go and it's vital that we keep our feet on the ground and focus our minds on the task ahead.

The crowd of 10,100 for our opening game was tremendous and I would like to thank everyone who made the effort to be there. Although we started nervously, we improved as the game progressed against a lively Torquay side and in the end we got the result we wanted, with the only goal of the game coming from a set piece, Steve Foster knocking the ball home following Andy Thompson's header from Simon Bryant's corner.

I believe that set pieces are so important to a team, as over 50% of goals are scored from them and the goal against Torquay was the third time this season that a set piece corner has won us a game, the other two occasions being the pre season friendlies against Birmingham and Bournemouth.

Last Saturday saw us make the long trip to Scunthorpe. Roared on by a great away following, we picked up three more valuable points against a Scunthorpe side who, certainly going forward, will cause a lot of teams problems this season.

After early pressure from Scunthorpe, we began to look good on the break, with Ross Weare and

Work on set pieces pays off

Nathan Ellington linking well up front. From one such break, a good ball from Kevin Gall was picked up by Nathan and although he initially trod on it, he won it back to score a fine solo goal. Just before half time a set piece throw in enabled Ross to volley home his first ever league goal which, naturally, he was delighted with.

Unfortunately, we lost Trevor

Challis and Ross through injury before the break and they were replaced by Scott Jones and Martin Cameron.

Scunthorpe did pull a goal back in first half stoppage time, through Brian Quailey, but we made a few adjustments during the break and defended really well in the second half when we really should have extended our lead after creating one

or two good chances.

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"The crowd of 10,100 for our opening game was tremendous and I would like to thank everyone who made the effort to be there"

or two good chances.

It was a great three points for us and certainly made the long trip home a pleasant one.

On Tuesday, we faced Second Division Wycombe, in a Worthington Cup Tie, at Adams Park. The format of the competition has changed this year and ties are now decided over one leg instead of two. Therefore being drawn away from home made our task that much harder.

Wycombe beat Wrexham 5-2 last Saturday, with four of their goals coming from set pieces, so before the game we worked very hard on defending at set piece situations and I must say that Scott Howie and the team defended superbly against some very good deliveries.

It was a tight game and once again we received tremendous support from our fans. It always seemed as though one goal would be enough to settle things and fortunately it was David Hillier's great left foot volley which won the game and put us into the next round.

Playing four games in nine days is a big drain on fitness levels, so

I was pleased that the game didn't go into extra time, as we face a tough game today followed by the long haul to Darlington for Monday's match.

I would like to thank everyone who has written and sent cards to me since my return to the club. Your good wishes are very much appreciated and although it may take a little time, I intend to reply to you all personally.

A warm welcome to the Directors, Players and Supporters of Luton Town and in particular to Joe Kinnear. It's good to see Joe back in football after his health problems and I wish him every success for the future, after today's game, of course!

Luton have made a great start to their league campaign, so today's game will be a good test for us. It's vitally important that, just as you were at the Torquay game, you remain 100% behind the team no matter what is happening on the pitch. You really can make the difference between winning and losing.

I hope you all enjoy the game.
Come on you Blues!



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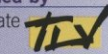
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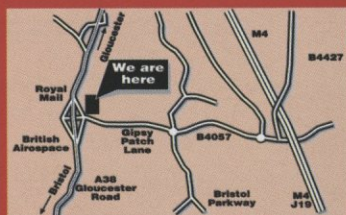
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Rik Lopez

By his own admission, it wasn't the comeback Dave Pritchard had hoped for. Delighted to be a part of the first team squad again, after some 18 months out of the game through injury, 'Pritch' came on as a second half substitute in the season's opener against Torquay, only to be substituted himself before the 90 minutes were up.

However, a few words from the manager after the game soon lifted his spirits.

'I'd really been looking forward to the game, but everything got to me in the end. Having been out so long, I was so excited to be involved again and got a massive adrenalin rush when I knew I was going on. My legs, though, just turned to lead. It was very disappointing, because I set myself such high standards. I've played in a reserve game since then and did a lot better, and the more games I play, the better it will be for me.'

'I have to thank Gerry Francis for taking the trouble to speak to me afterwards. He knows the situation with my injury and has been through it all as a player and a manager himself. It was a bad enough weekend for me just thinking about the game, but his little chat with me was a big help and I appreciated it very much. It was enough to give me confidence again, to get my head up and to get on with things.'

Shortly before that game against Torquay, Gerry made his fourth signing of the summer when he handed Rik Lopez a one-month contract. Lopez spent three years

News and Updates

with QPR, but failed to break through into the first team at Loftus Road.

He spent last season playing for Portuguese Second Division side Desportivo Fierence and now hopes to earn himself a longer contract with Rovers. His arrival will provide added competition for places in the side, particularly down the left flank, as he can play as an orthodox left back or as a wing back in a 5-3-2 formation.

Dwayne Plummer hopes to be back in action for next week's reserve match, as does Mark Walters, who missed quite a lot of pre season due to injury and illness. Mark McKeever is still some way off of retuning, though, as physio Phil Kite explains: 'Even though he didn't need an operation we shouldn't underestimate how serious Mark's injury was. He severely jarred and bruised the whole of his knee joint. He's had a couple of cortisone injections, but it's likely to be 3/4 weeks before he's training again.'

If you're looking for a report on the Women's first game of the season in today's programme, don't bother...their scheduled game against Barnet last Sunday was called off. Their parent club's relegation to The Conference meant that all financial support to the women's team was withdrawn and the majority of players left and the club will be withdrawing from the league.

Rovers Women's side now begin the new season with a home game against Ipswich Town at The Beeches tomorrow, kick-off 2pm and invite all supporters along to see them in action.

It's not often that two Nationwide league clubs in direct opposition can boast of having international athletes as their fitness coaches. Indeed

today may well be the first time it's happened. Luton Town's fitness guru is none other than Daley Thompson, who has twice been crowned Olympic Decathlon Champion, whilst our own fitness coach is former international athlete John Gingell.

'Ginge' won 27 international vests, competing for England and Great Britain in the 800 and 400 metres and was the British indoor Champion and UK record holder at 800 metres until Seb Coe appeared on the scene. At one point in his career, 'Ginge' also set a world best time in the 1500 metres in the Decathlon (4m 7secs).

Finally, congratulations to David Hillier who scored his first senior goal for the club at Wycombe on Tuesday. Playing in the Orange shirts obviously helped him break his duck!

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Reserves start with a win

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Our reserves began their season with a 2-0 win over Brentford at Griffin Park, thanks to goals from Martin Cameron and David Gilroy.

'We rode our luck a little bit at times,' said manager Gary Penrice, 'but so did Brentford. We had a couple of early opportunities, from set pieces and the home side also had a few chances to score before 'Jock' gave us the lead.'

'It was a superb goal. I always feel that if he's put through he'll hit the target as he has a great strike with either foot. Martin is deceptively quick and the only problem he has at the moment is that he tends to switch off during games. Once he overcomes that and learns to focus for the whole 90 minutes, he'll be a handful for any defence.'

'As for David Gilroy, he took his goal well. I don't want to build him up too much, because it's been quite a week for him and a lot for him to handle. When expectation levels are built up about a player before he's even made a first team appearance, people often expect too much from him when he does finally make it into the side. Things don't work like that. If Dave gets a chance to score, he'll put the ball in the net. However, he's a young lad who is still learning his trade. I like him, as he's got a great attitude and is someone who will make himself a player. He has to improve certain aspects of his game, but you can't coach someone to put the ball in the net as calmly as he does.'

As well as the goalscorers, there were good performances from several other players. 'I thought Ryan Clarke had an excellent game. He's a young 'keeper who made some very good saves and if he keeps playing like that, he could well be pushing for a first team place.'

'The experienced players in the side showed a very good attitude, as well. Some of them had picked up niggly injuries during pre season which had hampered their progress, but they all did well in this game.'

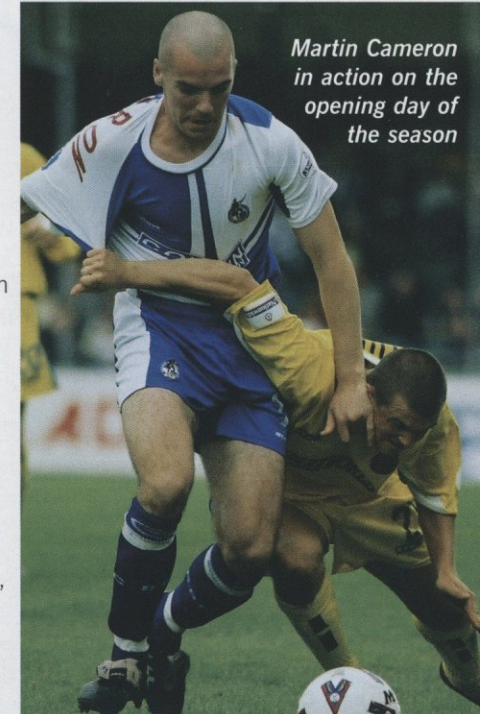
'I look to the senior players in the side to be professional in their approach to the game and to do as good a job as they can. I have to say that I was never the best when it came to playing reserve games in my own career and, looking back, I wish I'd focussed a lot more as those games are good to help you get your confidence back.'

'When you play well in reserve team games, it does wonders for your confidence so it's important that players focus and treat reserve team fixtures the same as first team games. That isn't always easy, as the games can be harder than playing in the first team, as there's no crowd there and it's sometimes harder to concentrate. However, they were really focussed in this game and I was very pleased with them.'

Team: Clarke, Lopez, Richards (Tealdi), Foran, Smith, Jones, Hillier (Shore AJ), Pritchard, Cameron (Bubb), Gilroy, Hogg.

Subs. (not used) Greaves, Spencer.

SECOND ELEVEN with Gary Penrice



Martin Cameron in action on the opening day of the season

RESERVE TEAM FIXTURES 2001/02

Wed 15 Aug	Brentford (2pm)	A 2-0
Wed 29 Aug	BRISTOL CITY	H
Wed 12 Sept	Portsmouth	A
Wed 26 Sept	SWINDON TOWN	H
Wed 3 Oct	Oxford United (2pm)	A
Wed 10 Oct	WYCOMBE WANDERERS	H
Wed 17 Oct	Brighton & Hove Albion	A
Wed 31 Oct	AFC BOURNEMOUTH	H
Wed 14 Nov	Norwich City (7.30pm)	A
Wed 5 Dec	SOUTHEND UNITED	H
Wed 12 Dec	Colchester United (2pm)	A
Wed 19 Dec	CHELTENHAM TOWN	H
Wed 9 Jan	CAMBRIDGE UNITED	H
Mon 14 Jan	Peterborough United (2pm)	A
Wed 30 Jan	Northampton Town (2pm)	A
Wed 6 Feb	LUTON TOWN	H
Wed 13 Feb	Barnet (2pm)	A
Wed 20 Feb	MILLWALL	H
Wed 6 Mar	Leyton Orient (2pm)	A
Wed 13 Mar	Cardiff City	A
Wed 20 Mar	GILLINGHAM	H
Wed 27 Mar	QUEENS PARK RANGERS	H
Mon 8 Apr	Crystal Palace (7.30pm)	A
Wed 17 Apr	READING	H

Kick off 7.p.m unless stated



Youth team squad hit by injuries

It wasn't a good start to the season for our Youth teams, who both lost their opening games, against Oxford and Cheltenham respectively.

OXFORD 3 ROVERS 0

Although we lost the game, I was really pleased with the way the lads played. For 75 minutes, in fact, we were excellent. However, as the game went on, we tired noticeably and conceded three rather sloppy goals in the final quarter of an hour.

We had three 14 year olds in the side, in Ben Wiltshire, Sam Jones and Jermaine Wright, along with Dene Wilson, who is only 15. The side was so young, I think I expected us to lose heavily.

The 3-0 scoreline, though, flattered Oxford a little bit. We were always up against it and, because of the injury situation, we didn't have any substitutes. To make matters worse, Andy Chambers picked up a slight groin strain during the warm up, so in addition to having no one else to play, we had to play Andy at left back, even though he couldn't run.

At right back, Ben Wiltshire had an outstanding game, even though he was playing against youngsters who are four or five years older than him. There's no doubt in my mind that he will go on to be a very good player for us.

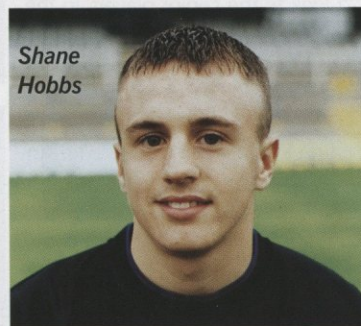
I'm not making any excuses for our defeat, neither am I downhearted. We kept our shape well for long periods and passed the ball well and I learnt an awful lot about the boys. The encouraging thing for me was that the Oxford manager told me how good it was to see our side play such good

football and that, I feel, augurs well for the future.

Team: Greaves, Wiltshire, Chambers, Webb, Scott, Wilson, Wright, Davis, Spencer, Kershaw, Jones.

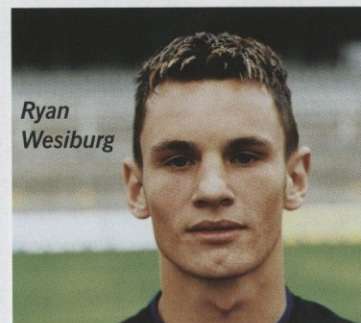
INJURY UPDATE

The injury list is quite lengthy and includes Neil Arndale and John Cordy, who could be out of action for a long while. Neil was due to have a bone scan on his shin last week, to determine whether or not he has a stress fracture, whilst John, who has had one knee operation, may well require further surgery to correct the problem.



Shane Hobbs

Shane Hobbs is suffering from shin splints, Ryan Weisburg picked up an injury in training the day before the game against Oxford and Danny Guibarra has a slight groin strain.



Ryan Weisburg

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Also, of course, we are missing David Gilroy, who has been called into the first team squad.

UNDER 17's

With so many youngsters drafted into the U-19 side, it meant that a number of even younger lads were called on to turn out for the U-17's in their game against Cheltenham.

With no recognised goalkeeper available, they lost 11-0. Nevertheless, the youngsters worked really hard and never gave up, even though they were up against players much older than themselves.



Neil Arndale, currently out injured, with Danny Greaves and Tony Davis, who played in last week's defeat at Oxford.

U-19 TEAM FIXTURES 2001/02

Sat 18 Aug	Oxford United	A	0-3
Sat 1 Sept	Plymouth Argyle	A	
Sat 8 Sept	Youth Alliance Cup		
Sat 15 Sept	Swansea City	A	
Sat 22 Sept	TORQUAY UNITED	H	
Sat 6 Oct	CIRENCESTER	H	
Sat 13 Oct	Youth Alliance Cup		
Sat 20 Oct	Cardiff City	A	
Sat 27 Oct	SWINDON TOWN	H	
Sat 3 Nov	Youth Alliance Cup		
Sat 10 Nov	Exeter City	A	
Sat 17 Nov	SWANSEA CITY	H	
Sat 24 Nov	Torquay United	A	
Sat 1 Dec	Youth Alliance Cup		
Sat 15 Dec	Cirencester	A	
Sat 12 Jan	CARDIFF CITY	H	
Sat 19 Jan	EXETER CITY	H	
Sat 26 Jan	Swindon Town	A	
Sat 2 Feb	OXFORD UNITED	H	
Sat 16 Feb	PLYMOUTH ARGYLE	H	

Merit Division matches will be played between 2 March and 4 May

POSITIVES

In spite of all our injury problems, I'm very proud to see so many of our lads in, or around the first team squad. Ryan Clarke, Drew Shore, Lewis Hogg and Simon Bryant are all there and Mike Trought and David Gilroy have joined them this season.

I still regard Mike as one of our lads, even though he has been a pro for a few years now. He enjoyed a good pre season and seems to be so much more confident these days. As for Dave, he deserves his chance. He's a natural goalscorer, quick and athletic and really wants to make it as a pro. He needs to work on his touch and movement a little bit, but as long as he keeps his feet on the ground, I'm sure he'll turn out to be a very good player.

HONOURS

Congratulations to Matty Hill and Jermaine Wright who, having successfully come through two trials, were selected to train with the South West England squad last week.

It's the first step along the road to England schoolboy honours and the two 14-year-old Bristol lads are treading the same path as Neil Arndale, who has been so successful with the England squad during the last 18 months.

We wish Matty, a full back and Jermaine, a centre forward, every success for the future.

U-17 TEAM FIXTURES 2001/02

Sat 18 Aug	CHELTHENHAM TOWN	H	0-11
Sat 25 Aug	Oxford United	A	
Sat 1 Sept	CARDIFF CITY	H	
Sat 8 Sept	Plymouth Argyle	A	
Sat 22 Sept	Torquay United	A	
Sat 6 Oct	SWANSEA CITY	H	
Sat 13 Oct	AFC Bournemouth	A	
Sat 20 Oct	CIRENCESTER	H	
Sat 27 Oct	Exeter City	A	
Sat 3 Nov	SWINDON TOWN	H	
Sat 17 Nov	Swansea City	A	
Sat 24 Nov	TORQUAY UNITED	H	
Sat 1 Dec	Cirencester	A	
Sat 15 Dec	AFC BOURNEMOUTH	H	
Sat 12 Jan	EXETER CITY	H	
Sat 19 Jan	Swindon Town	A	
Sat 2 Feb	Cheltenham Town	A	
Sat 9 Feb	OXFORD UNITED	H	
Sat 16 Feb	Cardiff City	A	
Sat 23 Feb	PLYMOUTH ARGYLE	H	





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BRISTOL ROVERS WOMEN'S FC 2001/2002

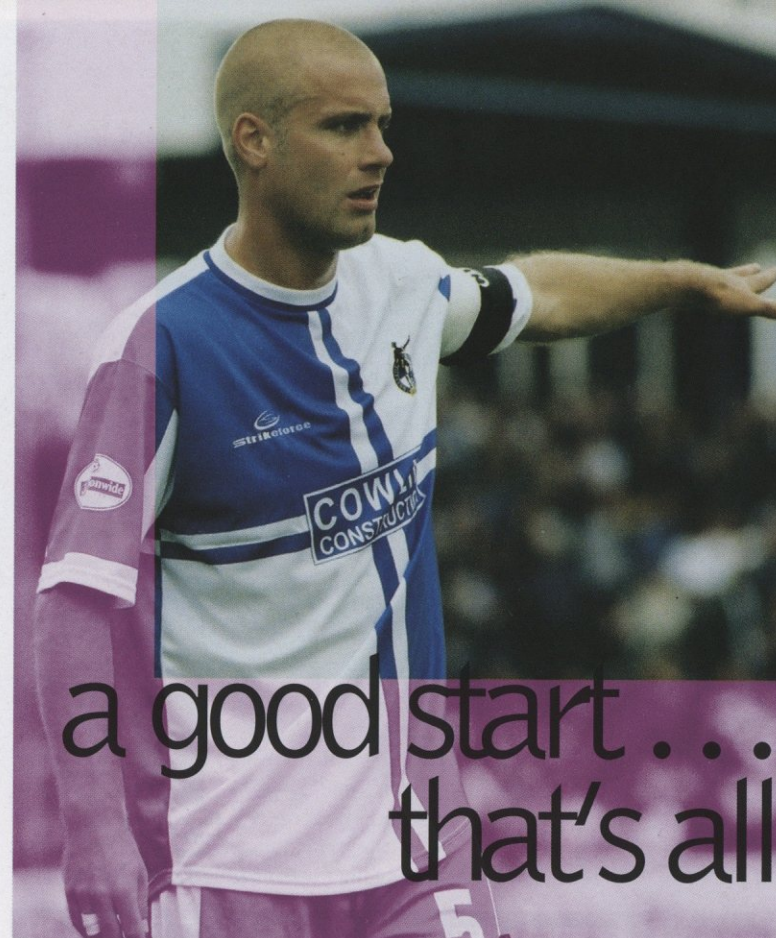
Back, l-r: Nicky Burnage, Louise Hutton, Sarah White, Wendy Davies, Stacey Smith, Jayne Pollock, Karlee Sullivan
Middle, l-r: Vanessa Leat, Kelly Cripps, Helen Done, Sarah Criddle, Michelle Peart, KJ Donaldson
Front, l-r: Lorette Spierenburg, Phil Criddle (Secretary), Simon Arnold (Chief Executive), Geoff Dunford (Chairman), Marcia Dean, Terry Peters (Assistant Manager), Lucy Hendy



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CAPTAIN'S COLUMN
with
Andy Thomson

games went on. That was certainly the case against Torquay, when we were desperate to do well. They had a couple of early chances which was down to some sloppy defending on our part, but once we got our passing game going we looked the more likely team to win.

It was pleasing that our goal came from a set piece. It's something we've worked hard on in training and it's always good to see something you've practised so much come off in a match. Naturally, we want to win games by playing well, but the most important thing is that we win and winning those first two league games has given us a good platform to build on.

It's been a good start to the season for two of the younger members of the squad, Mike Trought and Dave Gilroy. When Scott Jones joined us a year

ago, he made the left sided defensive position his own and 'Troughty' had to play second fiddle to him all last season. However, he came back very fit for pre season training, played well in our friendly fixtures and has done exceptionally well in all our games so far. To be honest, I'm not surprised, as he's a very talented player who is now showing everyone just how good he is.

As for Dave, he's a good example to all the other young lads at the club as it shows them what can be achieved if you are prepared to work hard at your game and play well at Youth and Reserve team level. Dave has been rewarded with a place on the bench and it's a fantastic experience for him.

It's only the third Saturday of the season and only two clubs in the division, Luton, and ourselves have 100% records so it promises to be an interesting game this afternoon. We have had a good home record against Luton in recent seasons, though we didn't do so well last season, as they held us to a 3-3 draw when we thought we'd take the points. We were both relegated at the end of the season and now we are both looking to go back up at the first attempt.

Luton have added a number of players to their squad recently and it's a big game for us today, possibly one of the biggest games we'll face here at The Memorial Stadium this season, so it will be important, psychologically, for us to win this one.

Thanks for your support so far, it's greatly appreciated. I hope you all enjoy the game.

Our first two league games have been remarkably similar, in that we started rather nervously and grew in stature as the

THE PIRATE 2001/2002 13



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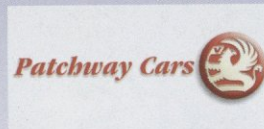
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Helpline

It seems strange to be talking about a top-of-the-table clash so early in the season, but if the bookies are to be believed today's match is just that. Both Luton and ourselves have been made favourites to go straight back up so it will be important to give the lads every encouragement to get the three points. Of course it is very early days and little can be read into results so far, but after a home win on the opening day which took us until February to achieve last year, followed by an away victory at Scunthorpe we are off to a fine start.

The Luton game produced a 3-3 draw last season so we must hope to go one better this year.

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Securicor Omega Express

A good start to the season and we hope today's result against Luton will keep us top of the table, especially as we welcome our Match Sponsor, **Wijsmuller Marine Ltd**. Steve Jellis, Regional Director, is delighted to support Bristol Rovers and in doing so welcomes some of his most valued contacts and customers from the local shipping community. We hope Steve and his guests enjoy this first visit as sponsor and trust he will return some time during this current campaign. Our Matchball Sponsor is **Securicor Omega Express**, a regular sponsor last season, and we are delighted to see Kevin Parsons again, who is the Area Sales Manager, based in Bradley Stoke. Enjoy the game with your guests. Your valued support is much appreciated and we hope to be able to host another visit in the Corporate Hospitality Lounge very soon.

Graham Bowen



Our Match Sponsors for the Torquay game were Mike Fitzpatrick and Tom Cowman. They voted Steve Foster as Man of the Match and Tom's sons, Luke and Oliver presented the award to Steve.



Steve was also chosen as Man of the Match by our Matchball Sponsors Jencan and is pictured here with Nick Cann and his wife Julie, and their sons Jordan, Joshua and Lawrence.

Bumper crowd against Gulls

Good afternoon and welcome back to The Memorial Stadium for our game against Luton Town. I must admit I feel a little bit silly when reading my last programme notes about the pitch, which were written at the beginning of the week. Honestly, it looked superb on the Monday!! However, we decided to top-dress the pitch on Tuesday morning and then during the afternoon it rained consistently for 14 hours. This stopped us rushing in the top dressing and on Saturday it looked like a sand pit, which everyone informed me everywhere I went around the ground against Torquay United!! That's all behind us now and I hope we can keep on top of the pitch – we have had two games of rugby on it since you were here last.

I must comment on the attendance we had against Torquay; it exceeded all our expectations. We had planned for about 8,500 and when we had to close the Blackthorn Terrace around 2.45pm we then knew it was going to be a bumper crowd. A big thank you to

everyone who attended and you certainly made some noise, especially when Mr. Francis came out – a magnificent reception.

He has repaid the faith with three straight wins and the Reserves winning as well. Let's hope we can keep going all through the season – Champions, Worthington Cup Winners, FA Cup winners – Oh well, only dreaming!

The facilities at the stadium are varied and can be used in several ways – function rooms, meetings, board meetings, trade shows, exhibitions and all sorts of parties. Please call Trish at the stadium to discuss further details on how we can offer tailor-made packages. Trish will be pleased to hear from you on 0117-9096648.

I am fully aware of the problems last game regarding children in the Bars. This is a very difficult one for the Club because the bars do not have a children's licence. It was particularly a problem at the Torquay game and although we pride ourselves on being a family club we have to adhere to the

licensing laws. For example, children being children they are apt to get excited at times and a collision with someone holding glasses could result in a child getting injured and this is the last thing the club or parents would wish to happen. The children only room at the back of the bar was unsuccessful, because they were unsupervised and were able to gain access to the bars. Please rest assured that we are dealing with this issue internally, having applied for the necessary licence. However, as you will appreciate this takes time and we will try and resolve this as quickly as possible.

We welcome Barry Saint, our post-match entertainer, in addition to which there will be the normal extended highlights video of the match. Come along to the Clubhouse Bar and support it, it's for your entertainment. Finally, get behind the boys today and cheer them to another three points.

C'MON YOU BLUES!

President's Club

Come and join us

Well what a storming start to the season on the pitch, three out of three so far. On Presidents Club matters you will have noticed that we arranged for an even better and more varied buffet at the first match and your committee would appreciate a feedback (sorry!) from our members as to your views on the quality etc. or are we missing anything?

It was great to see Geoff Luker at our first match. Geoff was a member until he and his family emigrated to America a few years back, but keeps in regular contact with Rovers news through members Doris and Ken. Apart from his regular job in the States, Geoff coaches youngsters in the art of British football and who knows one day we may see one of his lads in a Rovers team.

As reported in the previous programme notes membership levels are very encouraging, and no doubt as the season progresses we will reach our maximum.

Anyone reading this who is not a member but enjoys watching football, particularly Rovers in the relative comfort of a reserved stand seat, with the advantage of a car park space, top quality buffet food at half time, a bar facility before and

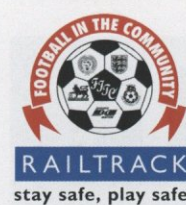


Nathan Ellington receives his bottle of bubbly from the Presidents Club after being voted Man of the Match at the Torquay game

after the match in luxurious surroundings, plus the opportunity to entertain guests, all at an affordable price, then membership of the Presidents Club is a must for you. Enquiries please to Roger Hynam on 0117 9760568.

NB. Membership is limited and strict dress code rules apply.

Roy Cowell, Hon President



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ROVERS IN THE
COMMUNITY
with
Peter Aitken

Playdays and Fundays



Today's photo is of Louise Stokes receiving a Raleigh Mountain bike from Club Director Ron Craig. Included in the picture are Mum Kaye and Dad Paul. Louise received her prize for designing a Railtrack Safety Poster, which involved schools from Bristol and Weston-Super-Mare, Louise, attends Milton Junior School in Weston.

ADIDAS NOVA MUNDIAL WANT TO PLAY DAY

The want-to-play day is now fully booked, I am sorry we could not take all the enquiries that we received. Thank you to all the hundreds who phoned in the week we advertised in the programme and the Evening Post. We look forward to seeing the sixty children that booked in for September 1st as I am sure they will enjoy the day and the Adidas gifts to be given away.

SATURDAY TEAM CLUB DETAILS

Training session in morning 10.15-11.45a.m
Lunch – Sausage/ Chips in a basket 12-12.45am
Dressing room tour and Autographs 1.00-1.20pm
Visit club shop 1.30-2.pm
Return to stadium collect tickets and programmes.
Price: all Inclusive £14.00 Children and Adults.

For more details phone the Community Department on 0117 9076555.
To make sure of the fixture you require book early.

SOCCER FUN DAYS

We have two soccer schools remaining, they are:
THE GRANGE SCHOOL, WARMLEY
THE MEMORIAL STADIUM
HORFIELD
DATES: 29,30,31August

RAILTRACK FUN DAY

I would like to say a big thank you to all the children who turned up on Thursday 16th August for a Railtrack Fun Day. I know you all enjoyed the experience of being filmed by the B.B.C. and hope you all got to see yourself on T.V. on the Friday. Once again thanks for turning out at short notice.

Community Van donated by
BARRY BRADSHAW



BRISTOL ROVERS COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

Community Officer

Peter Aitken

Community Coaches

Tony Cornelius

Darren Priest

Pete Wills

Telephone

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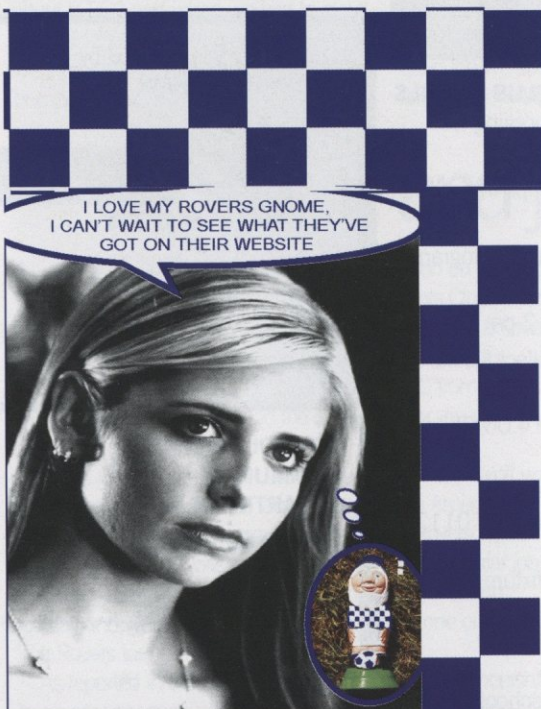
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COMING UP..

**DARLINGTON v
Bristol Rovers**
Nationwide Division 3
Feethams Ground
Monday 27th August 2001
Kick-off 3.00pm
Prices: Seats Terrace
Adults: £10.00 £8.00
Concs: £6.00 £5.00
Matchday programme: £2.00

**BRISTOL ROVERS v
Shrewsbury Town**
Nationwide Division 3
The Memorial Stadium
Saturday 1st September 2001
Kick-off 3.00pm

**LEYTON ORIENT v
Bristol Rovers**
Nationwide Division 3
Brisbane Road
Saturday 8th September 2001
Kick-off 3.00pm
Prices: (All Seats)
Adults: £16.00
Concs: £10.00
Matchday programme: £2.00

The Supporters Club
are running coaches to
Darlington leaving
Horfield and Kingswood
at 7.00am and Eastville
at 7.15am. Coach fare:
£18.50

By Car from the South (A1(M)): Exit A1(M) at junction 57 (s/p Darlington, Teeside A66(M) onto the A66(M). At roundabout after 2.4 miles go straight on (s/p Darlington, Teeside A66) continuing on A66 and over River Tees. At next roundabout after 0.8 miles, by Nissan garage take 2nd exit (s/p Darlington A167) into Grange Road. At Grange Road roundabout, by Safeway, after 1.1 miles turn right (s/p Durham A167, The North A1(M) into Victoria Road, Down hill to Feethams Roundabout, where there's a choice for parking.

The Supporters Club are
running coaches to
Leyton Orient leaving
Horfield and Kingswood
at 9.45am and Eastville
at 10.00am. Coach fare:
£10.50

By Car from M25:
Exit M25 at junction 27
and follow signs to
'London (NE), M11' onto
the M11 southbound.
After 7.1 miles where the road divides, bear right (s/p A406 N. Circ. Rd West, London N and W) onto the North Circular Road. Keep in left hand lanes and take first exit after 0.6 miles (s/p Walthamstow and City A104, then Whipps Cross A104, West End A503). At roundabout turn left (s/p Whipps Cross, Bakers Arms, Walthamstow A503) into Woodford New Road A104. At next roundabout (Whipps Dross) after 1.2 miles, take 2nd exit (s/p A104 Bakers Arms, Leyton) and follow road round to left, towards BP station, into Lea Bridge Road, After 0.5 miles, just after Esso station, turn left at lights (s.p Leyton, Stratford, then Leyton Leisure Lagoon) into Leyton Green Road. Filter left after 0.3 miles and turn left at T-junction into Leyton High Road. After 1.2 miles ground is down sidestreets on RHS

Stand Tickets are available from:

THE MEMORIAL STADIUM

Matchday Ticket Office
Tel: 0117 909 8848

PIRATE LEISURE

411/413 Gloucester Road,
Horfield,
Bristol BS7 8TS
Tel: 0117 924 7474
Fax: 0117 907 4940

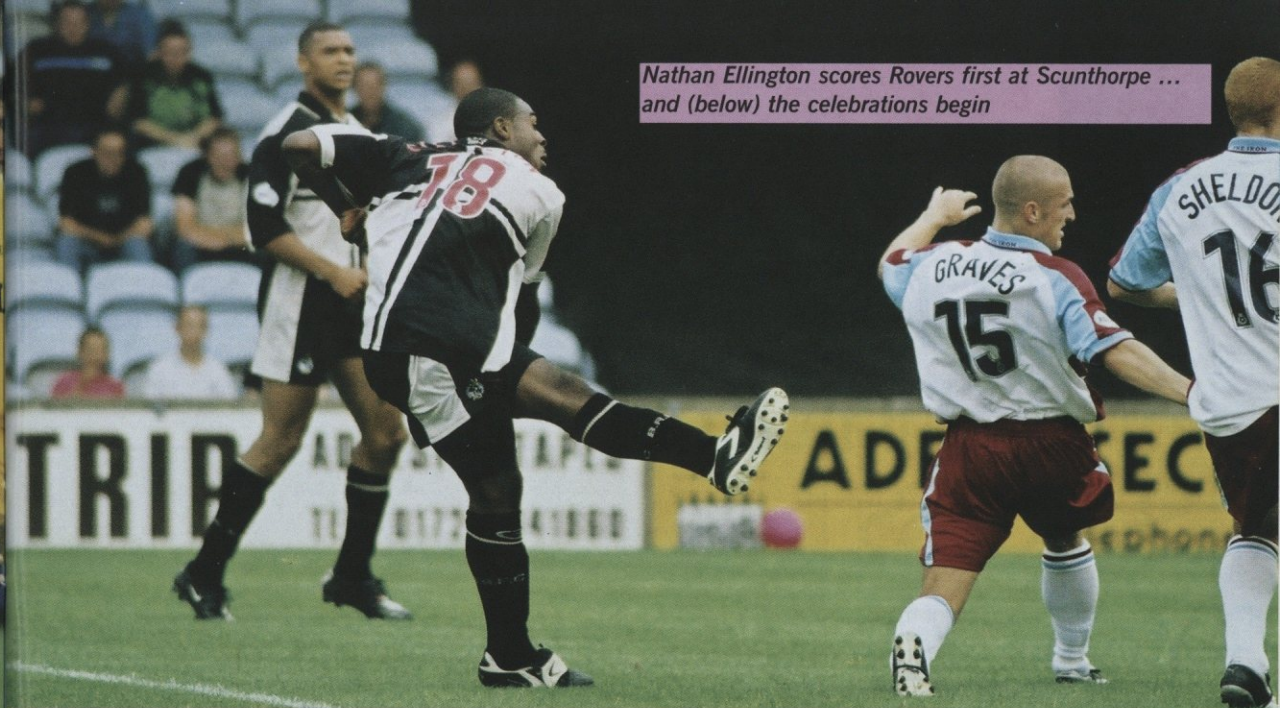
SUPPORTERS CLUB

199 Two Mile Hill Road
Kingswood Bristol
BS15 1AZ
Tel: 0117 961 1772
fax: 0117 961 1773



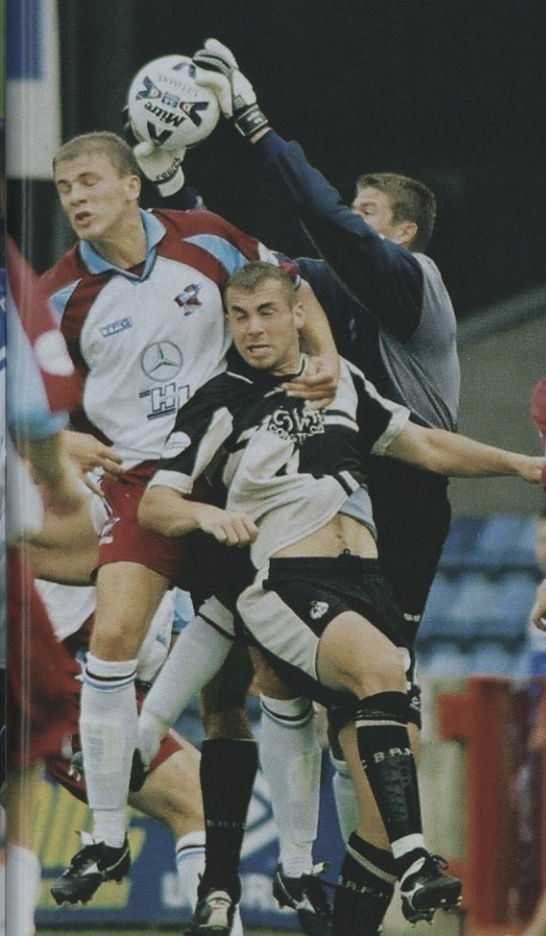


Steve Foster fires the winner against Torquay and (inset) gets up beaming, in time to receive the plaudits of his team mates (below) ... and (bottom left) Torquay defender Steve Tully attempts to borrow Ross Weare's shorts



Nathan Ellington scores Rovers first at Scunthorpe ... and (below) the celebrations begin

Mike Trought joins the attack at Scunthorpe ... Ross Weare (below, right) celebrates his first ever league goal for Rovers ... but unfortunately had to limp out of the action shortly afterwards





National Grid powers Millennium Cup success

Yet another major event that took place during the close season was our 2nd Annual Millennium Cup. This tournament was open to local club sides and featured the age groups U8's, U9's and U10's. Format was 7-a-side with each game lasting 10 minutes.

play on the pitch their heroes use every Saturday. Teams, as last year, came from near and far with

Once again the Directors made the superb facilities of the Memorial Stadium available to us for the whole day which meant that the occasion had that extra excitement for the youngsters who were able to



Minchinhampton U-10 Champions



Milton Nomads U-8 Champions



Trowbridge Youth U-10 Runners Up



Warmley Rangers U-8 Runners Up



Stoke Lane U-9 Champions



Trowbridge Youth U-9 Runners Up

some such as Minchinhampton travelling a good distance to get here.

The Finals day was organised initially on a group basis with each team playing the opposition once, the eventual top two then qualifying for the semi-finals.

In the U8 competition semis Milton Nomads defeated our own Supporters Club and Warmley Rangers won out against Milton Nomads, who went on to win the final.

In the U9 group Stoke Lane beat Minchinhampton in the semi final with Trowbridge Youth A also winning against Nailsworth in the other half of the draw. In a closely contested final Stoke Lane ran out champions.

The U10's competition once again found Minchinhampton making the semis and eventually winning through to the final at the expense of Eastville Boys. In the opposite half our Supporters Club once again just failed to make the final by losing out to Trowbridge Youth A squad. In another cracking final Trowbridge lost their second of the day with Minchinhampton running out as champions.

With the sun shining down on a very appreciative and supportive crowd the trophy presentation was led by representatives from National Grid our main sponsors and Ron Craig, Club Director.

Once again a superb footballing day out for local youngsters at The Memorial Stadium and one we hope to repeat again at the end of this season. Watch the press for details of how you can enter the Millennium Cup 2002 !!

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Winner: **Mr Brankin**

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Please buy a ticket so that we can light up our lives

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The service broadcasts live commentaries on Rovers games to 17 hospitals throughout the region and would like to thank the following sponsors:

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- McWhirter Air Conditioning

You can Bet on the Gas

It's been over 20 years since the supposed 'invention' of the Internet by a member of the American military, and now in the year 2001, its potential is catching people up fast.

More and more people across the UK are using their credit and debit cards on-line to buy anything from their weekly groceries to new cars, with the comfort of the study being preferred to the hustle of the high street.

On-line betting is a major product of the web's success, with all the big bookmakers reporting record amounts of stakes being placed through their websites. And with the imminent introduction of tax-free betting in this country later this year, the trend is set to rise yet further.

Here at Rovers we're keeping right up with the times - our very own on-line bookmakers 'The Gas Bet' in association with Bet365 is now over six months old. It's proved to be tremendously popular amongst Gasheads since its launch earlier this year, with thousands of supporters signing up for free

accounts already.

And as might be expected, the start of a new season is a busy time for us, as fans back their tips for success come next spring. Below are a selection of bets from The Gas Bet that feature tips for league titles and next year's World Cup that might just grab your interest if you fancy a flutter.

The odds are already out for the South Korea/Japan World Cup of 2002, with England joint 7th favourites to lift the trophy next June. Only Argentina, France, Brazil, Italy, Spain and Germany are better fancied by the bookmakers - amazing considering that were by no means certain of qualifying. 16/1 is how the bookies rate England at the moment, with Argentina and France the joint favourites at 9/2.

In the Premiership, Alex Ferguson's Manchester Utd remain odds on favourites to win the title for a record fourth successive time at 4/5, with Liverpool and Arsenal next best at 4/1. In Division One, Manchester City's indifferent start sees their odds lengthen

slightly to 11/4 although they remain favourites. Coventry City and Watford are second and third with odds of 5/1 and 13/2 respectively. Division Two sees Reading top of the fancied pile at 7/2 with Huddersfield Town, Bristol City and Cardiff City all joint second at 7/1. In our division, Hull City and today's opponents Luton Town are joint favourites while Rovers are third after their 100% start to the season with odds of 9/2.

North of the border in Scotland, Celtic are unsurprisingly 3/10 favourites to lift the SPL title with Rangers following in second place at 9/4. Hibernian are the third most likely side to lift the title at odds of 80/1.

In European football the various continental leagues are firing up at the same time as our own, and the odds are already out for the likely champions. In Italy, Juventus and Roma are best fancied at 9/4 with Lazio and Milan ranked joint third at 7/2. In Spain, Real Madrid are 4/9 favourites to win La Liga, with Barcelona at 5/2. Deportivo are third at 6/1. The less popular, but equally well contested Bundesliga, sees Bayern Munich 4/5 favourites with Borussia Dortmund second at 7/4 while Bayer Leverkusen are 11/2.

In all, The Gas Bet has over ten thousand different bets from all aspects of football and from sports across the world. Right now we're giving newcomers to the service a guaranteed 50% cashback from their first bet of odds 2/1 or greater - win or lose, as a welcome gift. Sign up today, have a flutter, and be guaranteed to get half your money back, regardless of the outcome!

Dwayne's on the way back

Had it not been for an injury picked up in a pre season friendly at Bitton, Dwayne Plummer would surely have been in the side that faced Torquay on the opening day of the new season.

Fortunately, though, his knee injury was not as serious as it might have been. 'My knee was just badly bruised. I didn't suffer any ligament or cartilage damage and now that the swelling has gone down, I'm building up the muscles again and hope there will be no further problems when I start playing again.'

There's never a good time to be injured, but when there's a new manager to impress, you don't want to be stuck in the treatment room. 'It was disappointing to be injured and to miss the start of the season, but injuries are part and parcel of the game. I'm working hard now to regain my match fitness and, hopefully, when I play in the reserves I'll be able to impress the manager and win a first team place.'

'I've missed a great deal of pre season training, so I know I have to cram an awful lot of hard work into a short space of time to catch up with everyone. However, that's not a problem. I don't think you get anything out of life unless you're prepared to work hard. I aim to come back as fit, if not fitter than the other lads and will be doing a lot of extra work with fitness coach John Gingell to make sure that's the case.'

Naturally, Dwayne hopes to get back in the side as quickly as possible. 'I'm aware that I might have to be patient before I can get back in, but things can change so quickly in football, so when the chance comes I have to be ready. I had to wait a long time for my opportunity last year, so I'll work hard on the training ground and in the reserves and when my chance comes I'll do my best to hold on to my place.'

The 23 year old, who has signed a new contract, which keeps him at the club until 2004, is confident that good times lie ahead. 'I'll always do my best and I hope that the team will do well in the next three years. We've got a good bunch of lads here and I enjoy playing for Rovers. Even though we were relegated last season, I feel this is a good time to be at the club and I'm sure we can stay at, or near, the top of the table and gain promotion.'

'As for myself, I hope I can do even better than last season and certainly score a few more goals.'

He's aware, though, that it's going to be a battle to get out of this division. 'If the first game is anything to go by, it will be. Torquay gave us a bit of a scare during the opening twenty minutes but, overall, I felt we were the better side. Ross had a good chance to score in the second half and Nathan had an excellent game. Even though we will face sides who may be difficult to play against, I think we are better than most teams in this division.'

Having captained the side in the last game of the season, after Simon Bryant's injury, he was a little bit surprised to be given the captain's armband again in the second half of the friendly against Mangotsfield. 'I captained the

youth team at Bristol City for a few games, so it's not a completely new experience for me, but it was a bit of a shock when the new manager gave me the chance to be captain so soon after he arrived. Hopefully it was because he'd liked what he'd seen of me in training, so maybe I'll get the chance to captain the side again one day.'

For now, though, he's concentrating on getting fit. 'I'm looking forward to getting back as quickly as possible and playing well enough in the reserves to earn a recall to the first team.'

Next week's reserve game against his old club should be the first step on the way back.



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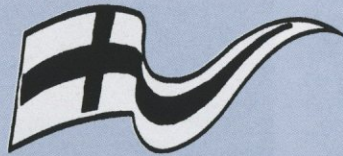
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SUPPORTERS CLUB NEWS with Jim Chappell

Gold Bond winner to receive keys to prize

Well, so far so good! Rovers' first ventures home and away in the basement division turned out successfully. Not spectacular by any means, apart from the two goals last Saturday at Scunny, but hard won and deserved in the end. Apart from the valuable points we can be more than pleased with a great turn-out here against Torquay, the biggest opening-day gate for 27 years, then a huge following all the way to Glanford Park. You supporters seem to be more than playing your part so please keep it up - your team needs you!

The Supporters Club's first 'Man-of-the-Match' this term was awarded to a player who took virtually no part at all last season, (so we can't blame him then!). Our members voted for Mike Trought who took his place in a new centre-back trio against the 'Gulls' and that is sure to give Mike the confidence to carry on the good work today. Well played Mike!

Amazingly, there will be at most just one club with a 100% record in Division 3 after this afternoon's clash with the 'Hatters' who are the only other team to have won both opening matches. So, it is sure to be a tough game no matter where the two sides end up next May. Please get behind the lads like you did against Torquay and hopefully the 'Gas' will be alone at the top tonight! At half-time today we are hoping to make a presentation to the Gold Bond winner, former Committee Member Sarah Hedges, and Steve Burns is giving some details at the end of this column. It pays to invest in the Supporters Club!

On Monday we make probably our most difficult trip of the season - not quite as far as Carlisle but right across country to Darlington. This will be new ground for me and for quite a few other

Gasheads I reckon, so we are bound to have another good following despite the League making us battle through Bank Holiday traffic for the 'pleasure'. There may still be some seats left on our coaches but this cannot be guaranteed at such a late date. If you want to take a day out in the North East call in and see Ralph Shaw in the Bristol Room this afternoon - definitely the last chance and we won't be ordering any more coaches!

Next Thursday, 30th August, the Supporters Club's Annual General Meeting takes place in the Clubhouse. As well as our traditional forum with invited guests from the Football Club, which takes place after the AGM itself, this year we have some very important business to get through - namely some rule changes which, if passed, will help the Committee to finance the purchase of property following the Football Club's request for us to take over the running of Pirate Leisure. With two full time retail outlets to run we need your support fund the operation properly and I trust you members will give us your backing!

As for the forum, all the Directors, Management and senior staff have been invited and hopefully Gerry Francis will be there to help answer your questions. This is a big night then for the Club and I look forward to seeing plenty of you on Thursday. Don't forget to bring your membership cards otherwise you will not be allowed in!

Up the Pirates!

GOLD BOND

At half time today, we will be handing over the keys of a BRAND NEW Vauxhall Corsa to Sarah Hedges, who won the car in our Gold Bond Draw for an outlay of just £1 per week.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported us in the past and who are already members of Rovers Gold Bond. Immediately after today's game we will be handing out leaflets to give those of you who are not already members, an opportunity to join.

Application forms will also be available at Kingswood and Gloucester Road. Remember; 'If you aren't in it, you can't win it!'



Weare off the mark

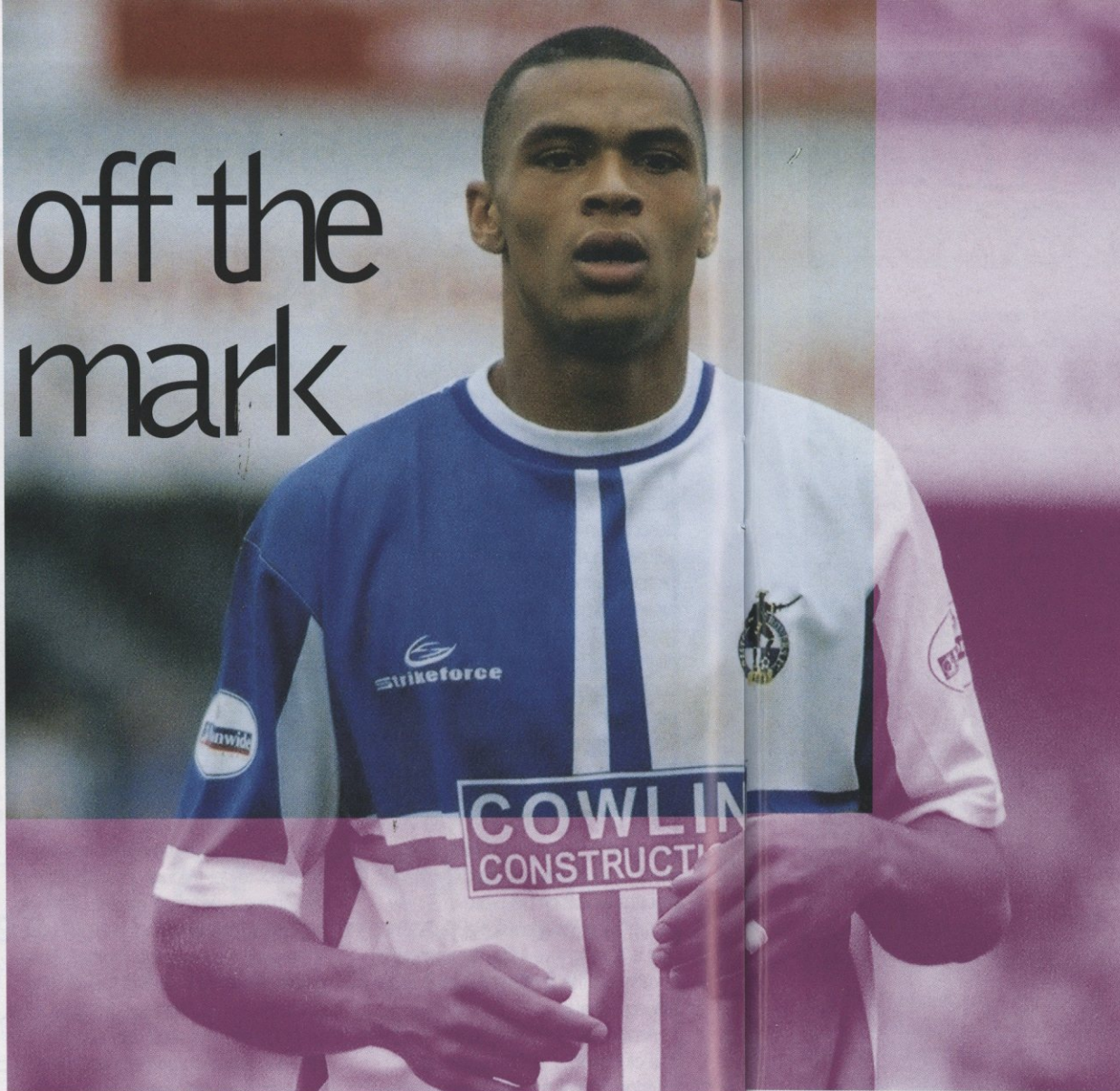
Whilst David Beckham can probably lay claim to having the most photographed tattoo in football, it's almost certain that Rovers new signing Ross Weare is the most tattooed footballer in the country.

'I've got a Black Panther on the right side of my chest, Bob Marley on my right shoulder and 'Only God Can Judge Me' on my right arm. My nickname at school was Sparky, so that's on my leg, in Japanese lettering and on the left side of my chest are the names of my wife and son. If I have any more, my wife will kill me!'

It's goals, though, not tattoos that occupy his thoughts at the moment and hopefully last week's effort will be the first of many in a Rovers shirt. 'I'd picked up a thigh injury and was just about to come off when David Hillier knocked the ball to me and I hit it with my good leg. I was delighted to see the ball hit the back of the net, but because of the injury, I couldn't celebrate as much as I would have liked.'

His career almost never got off the ground following rejection, by Chelsea, as a youngster. 'I played football at school, then for Ealing District, where Clinton Ellis was one of my teammates, and also represented Middlesex. I then had a spell at the Queens Park Rangers School of Excellence before signing schoolboy forms for Chelsea. When they didn't take me on, I packed up playing for two years.'

He remained involved in sport, though, and went off to College. 'I did a Sports Diploma course and gained coaching qualifications in football, basketball, volleyball and table tennis and did a lot of coaching in secondary Schools. I also did a bit of grafting, by working



on a building site.'

He began playing again after seeing an advertisement in a local paper. 'I was really missing football, and saw an ad from a local Sunday League side who were looking for players. I went along and started playing for them but within a couple of months, they said I should be playing at a higher level and put me in touch with Essex Senior League side East Ham.'

In less than a season with East Ham, he scored 47 goals, a total which persuaded Gerry Francis to offer him a contract with QPR in March 1999. However, the transition from part time to full time football was tough. 'I just wasn't

used to training on a full time basis. At East Ham, we were lucky if we trained once a week. No one wanted to do any running, they all just wanted to get a ball out and have a kick about. I think that because I wasn't used to training every day, the problems I later experienced with my back can be traced back to those early days at QPR.'

Those back problems began shortly after he'd made the breakthrough into the first team at Loftus Road. He made his debut, as a substitute, against Walsall, in November 1999 and made a further four appearances from the bench before the back injury forced him to stop playing.

Last season, therefore, was a dismal time both for Ross and for QPR who not only found themselves in dire financial straits, but also ended up being relegated. 'At the end of the season, they wanted to keep me and offered me a new contract. However, when Gerry Francis gave me the chance to come to Rovers I had no hesitation in signing. He gave me the chance of playing professional football in the first place and I wanted to repay the faith he had shown in me.'

It didn't take long for him to settle, though his pre season preparations were disrupted through injury and illness. 'I think I did well in the opening pre season friendlies and certainly hit it off playing alongside Nathan Ellington. Then I picked up a virus and also had a slight groin strain, which meant missing over a week of training.'

'I was very worried that I might miss our first game of the season, but following a fitness test on the day of the game, I made the starting line up. To be honest, I was so determined to play against Torquay, that I don't think anything would have stopped me but it was still a big relief when Gerry handed me the shirt and I went out to play my first full 90 minutes of league football.'

His desire to impress probably cost him a debut goal. 'I should have scored. I've watched the video of the game since and feel that I should have been more composed. I saw the opening, but I just couldn't get the ball out from under my feet.'

Nevertheless, his partnership with Nathan seems certain to trouble a lot of defences this season. 'Hopefully, we can share the workload and the responsibility of scoring goals. We get on well both on and off the field and I'm sure we can continue developing a strong partnership.'

Like everyone else at the club, Ross is expecting there to be a lot of games similar to the Torquay match in the months ahead. 'Every team we play will be battling hard to take

all three points. They all want to get out of this division as much as we do, but we are all working hard in training and giving it our best shot in every game. It's going to take an awful lot of hard work, but I'm sure that we can go straight back up.'

It's certainly been an eventful time for Ross, as he became a father for the first time just three weeks ago. 'My wife, Donna, and I moved into our new house in Bristol on the Friday and our son arrived the next day. He wasn't due until October, but he's fine though he will probably have to stay in hospital for a while. We've called him Pele, simply because we both like the name and because he was an inspiration to me when I was a child.'

Things can turnaround so quickly in football and now that he's settled in Bristol with his family, Ross is looking forward to good times with the club. 'I won't be happy until I'm scoring on a regular basis, but now I've broken my duck I hope that I'll continue to find the back of the net. I suffered relegation with QPR last season and it wasn't nice. Now I want to know what it feels like to win promotion.'

ELEVEN-A-SIDE

Your pre match meal

A bowl of pasta

The last CD you bought

Jagged Edge

The last book you read

Essex Boys

The team you supported as a boy

Arsenal

Your car

Ford Puma

The last match you paid to watch

An England game at Wembley

Your favourite ground

Nou Camp

Your superstitions

Playing in a long sleeved shirt with the sleeves rolled up

Your favourite holiday destination

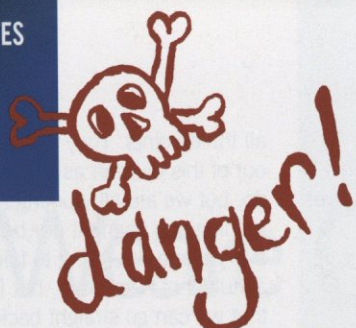
Spain

How do you relax

Listening to music

The best opponent you've faced

Karl Ready



Must be **Mars**
...so eat, drink and enjoy

A warm welcome to you all for this afternoon's game against Luton Town who, like ourselves, will be hoping to gain promotion back to the Second Division at the first attempt.

It will be especially nice to see Dave Lewis and the members of the Junior Hatters here today. We hope that everyone connected with Luton enjoys the game and trust they have a safe journey home this evening.

If any of you would like to be a mascot, please call into your clubroom today, with your membership card, and we will enter your name in a draw to be made shortly for mascots for our forthcoming fixtures.

We are hoping to run a trip to our game against Leyton Orient, at Brisbane Road, on 8th September, so please call in to see us today if you are interested in making the trip.

We would like to apologise for the fact that we had to cancel last week's trip to Scunthorpe at short notice, but there simply weren't enough people wishing to travel and had we gone ahead with the trip, we would have incurred quite a loss.

Do any of you know any good Pirate jokes? If you do, and would like to share them with us, please drop us a line, or leave your joke, together with your name and address, with one of our Committee Members.

It was great to see so many of you here for our opening game against Torquay and the support you gave the team was superb, so let's have more of the same today.

THE YOUNG PIRATES

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

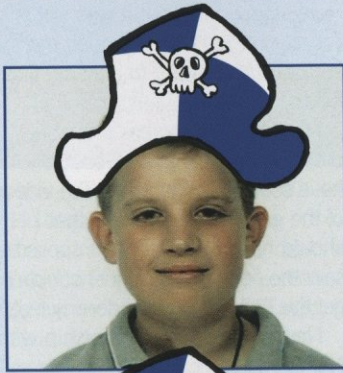


A very Happy Birthday to **Anna Hill**, who is 15 today. Anna lives in Kingswood and attends Kingsfield School. Her hobbies are Football, Tennis and Computers and her favourite players are Nathan Ellington and Steve Foster. Happy Birthday also to all Young Pirates who have birthdays between now and next Saturday, when we play Shrewsbury Town.



TODAY'S MASCOTS

Our mascots today are 11 year old Christopher Guttridge and his brother Michael, who is 8. They live in Winterbourne and attend Elm Park Primary School, where Chris has just finished Year 6, which means that he will be attending a new school next week! Sounds as though they thoroughly enjoy their sport, as they both say that their hobbies are Football Tennis and Cricket. In addition, Chris and Michael are big fans of Mark Walters.



JOLLY ROGER

A pirate walked into a butcher's shop and said "Have you got a sheep's head?" "No", replied the butcher, "I always look like this".

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Nathan Ellington



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A PUBLIC
ANNOUNCEMENT
by
Nick Day

Pie in the sky

Those of you that have read my previous attempts at literature in this column and, perhaps more importantly, the attempts at literature from unofficial Rovers fanzine, The Black Arab, will know that I have taken somewhat of a ribbing from that particular publication.

It all started with fake messages coming via the official Rovers website where we have a matchday page that encourages people to e-mail birthday dedications and music requests. I finally sussed it out when a couple of Latvians named 'Arhedvis Varkenjab' and 'Ewel Be Fayed' wanted me to say hello to them over the PA. Got it? Read it out loud, very slowly, unless you're under 18 years of age, in which case, read John Maluckyj's column instead.

I was very pleased with myself for weeding out that potential spot of embarrassment when, the next thing I know, I'm stood in front of the Blackthorn End, with a live radio mike, just about to play 'When Will I See You Again' for a Michael Hock! (Think about it!)

I stopped myself just in the nick of time and quietly gloated again at my triumph over those cads at Black Arab. I made a mental note to double and triple check all requests that ended up on the PA notes before broadcasting them and thought 'one-nil to the PA Announcer.'

Not so. They changed tack. I suddenly started getting bombarded with e-mail from around the globe asking me to play heavy metal tunes. Motorhead's The Hammer to be precise. Almost overnight, my inbox was deluged with hitherto sensible people all going metal mad! I couldn't fathom how The Black Arab had mustered such a Motorhead and Heavy Metal following in such a short space of time...until I saw their website.



It became clear that a parishioner of the Church of Black Arab is quite smart on the old world wide web. He (or she) had built a button on their site which, once clicked, automatically e-mailed my personal account with a head-banging request. I even played the damned tune to try and get them off my back! Nick Day 1, Black Arab 1.

I was beginning to enjoy the banter and was pleased that the half-time scores were level, until recently, when the Arabs raised the stakes. Their website published a 'Nick Day Tribute Page' with the headline 'Nuff Respect to the Pie Muncher.' Not contented with that, they are now trying to raise enough money to buy the Rovers by having me kidnapped and ransomed.

If that wasn't enough, I was honoured to receive a personal e-mail from Dr John Dee, the Maximum Leader of the Church of Black Arab, informing me that the Nick Day Pie Game has just gone live on line! Sure enough, if you log onto at

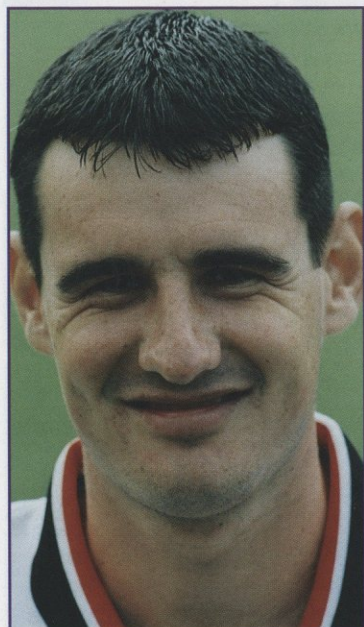
www.blackarab.org, you can control a miniature PA Announcer as pies rain from the sky above The Memorial Stadium! If you fail to feed me with enough pies your punishment is an electronic routine from The Blue Flames! What exactly are they trying to say!?!? So, I've given up, I am no longer gloating about my ability to give as good as I get and I admit the overall score is something like a six-one drubbing in favour of the Arabs. As for the telephone call from Graham Bowen in our Commercial Department telling me that Clark's Pies in Kingswood were interested in sponsoring me, that's a story for another day. Or perhaps another Nick Day. As usual, please give the lads ninety minutes of non-stop noise today and enjoy the game. Oh, and if I do finally get kidnapped by the darker forces in the Black Arab Church, please dig deep! Come On You Blues!

Luton Town



In the front row, pounding the turf from left to right are: Matthew Spring, Emmerson Boyce, Liam George, Daley Thompson (fitness coach) Matthew Taylor, Adam Everitt and Jermaine Hunter.

The Hatters have started the season on a high. Well you can't get any higher than the number one spot, and what greater challenge can there be than to pit your talents against the only other



Matthew Spring

team with a one hundred percent record. And it's only week three!

After the disappointment of relegation our visitors were rewarded with an opening day journey to far off Carlisle. Despite having manager Joe Kinnear banned from the touchline, former Bournemouth keeper Mark Ovendale suspended and the opposition fielding five central defenders, goals from debutants Paul Hughes and Carl Griffiths brought home the points.

Last Saturday seven players made their home debuts in the victory over Cheltenham Town as Joe completed his ban. It will be interesting to see if he sits in the stand this afternoon leaving assistant Mick Harford to continue to run the bench and clock up another ninety minutes of mobile phone charges..

The biggest selection surprise last week was at right back where Ian Hillier started his first ever League game the day after agreeing a month loan from Tottenham

Hotspur. The Welsh Under-21 International was introduced to his teammates only hours before the kick off.

It was a reshuffled defence. With Team Captain Aaron Skelton and Club Captain Marvin Johnson both injured, Emmerson Boyce moved from his full back role at Carlisle to partner Russell Perrett in the centre while Matthew Taylor dropped back from midfield to defend the left flank.

Skelton became Luton's first summer signing in July almost four years to the day that he left Kenilworth Road to join Colchester. He is three players in one, who can play a holding role in midfield, in central defence or at right back, and has been chosen as Colchester United's Player of the Year for the past two seasons. Johnson is the longest-serving player at Kenilworth Road with over 500 appearances to his name but managed only 11 games last term due to a series of neck problems. How frustrating that a hamstring injury at Carlisle

THE HATTERS LAST 8 RESULTS

21 August 01	Reading	4	0	Luton Town	WC1
18 August 01	Luton Town	2	1	Cheltenham Town	Division III
11 August 01	Carlisle Utd	0	2	Luton Town	Division III
5 May 01	Luton Town	1	1	Port Vale	Division II
3 May 01	Brentford	2	2	Luton Town	Division II
28 April 01	Bristol City	3	1	Luton Town	Division II
24 April 01	Luton Town	0	1	Rotherham	Division II
21 April 01	Luton Town	1	2	Bury	Division II

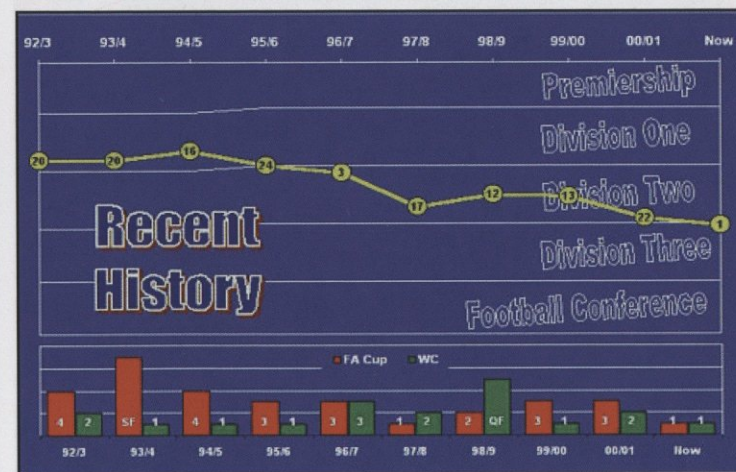
should rule him out last week.

Boyce is one of many to come through from Luton's schools and youth development programme, he was signed as a YTS boy in the summer of 1995, and graduated to the first team squad after a debut in the Auto Windscreens Shield in January 1999. Now established as a regular he played 48 games last term. Perrett played just twice in Cardiff City's promotion side and the summer spending spree at Ninian Park put his place in jeopardy so he accepted a free move on the eve of the new season. He began with AFC Lynton and was introduced to the League by nearby Portsmouth. Taylor gained his early experience with Abingdon United Youth team before joining Luton. He benefited from the opportunity that the 1999 receivership brought. As players were sold or given away to save money Taylor, still 17, went straight from Youth Team to being a regular

member of the League squad. Last season he won all the Player Of The Year awards and also picked up the prize for Goal Of The Season for a volley from the halfway line against Cambridge United, his only goal of the campaign.

The experienced Richard Dryden watched the first two League games from the bench while Kant Karlsen, Stuart Frazer and Jude Stirling did not make the sixteen. They will view with trepidation the recent transfer negotiations that may recruit defenders Matt Jackson from Norwich City and Shaun Maher from Irish part timers Bohemians.

Dryden is well known in Bristol for his early days at Twerton and his later spell at Ashton Gate. In between he played for Exeter City, Notts County, Plymouth Argyle and Birmingham City and moved to Luton from Southampton in February. Karlsen came from Norwegian Premier League



Luton Town

THE GAFFER Joe Kinnear



Joe Kinnear was born in Dublin and earned 25 International caps at full back for the Republic during ten years at Tottenham Hotspur and a 26th and final cap in 1976 after moving to Brighton.

He started coaching at Brighton under Brian Clough and Peter Taylor but found opportunities in England limited and so moved abroad, notably to Dubai.

The initial deal was to stay for a couple of seasons but he won the championship then the cup and stayed for five years. Sharjah offered luxury and the experience of running squads of 60 players but lacked football quality so he returned to England.

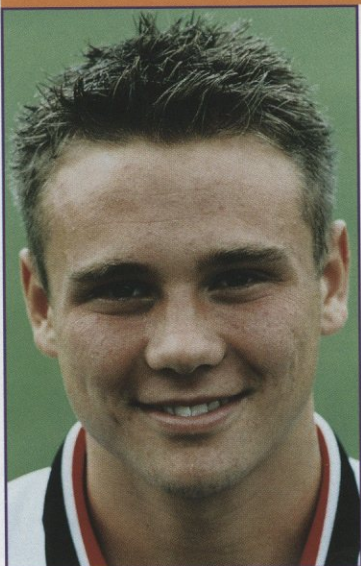
In 1992 Joe emerged from the backroom staff to replace Peter Withe as manager of a Wimbledon team in dire straights. He reinstated the traditional style and crazy gang spirit that had been lacking and enjoyed 7 years of success until a heart attack forced him to quit under doctor's orders.

After a brief spell as Oxford United's Director of Football Joe accepted an offer he could not refuse in February and became Luton's third manager of last season.

If you want to know more, Hunter Davies authorised biography 'Still Crazy' is recommended but perhaps the Hatter days will generate a second volume.



Luton Town



Matthew Taylor

Newcomers are dominating the midfield. Paul Hughes has bagged two goals in two games. The combative Kevin Nicholls has made quite an impression. A yellow card on his debut at Carlisle was followed by two more last week to prevent him enjoying a full ninety minutes as skipper for the day. Adrian Forbes recovered from a pre-season groin strain to make his delayed debut against Cheltenham and the quartet was completed by first year professional Lee Mansell.

Hughes was a Chelsea trainee who moved to Southampton but a serious groin injury dashed his chances and he was released in the summer. Luton have given him the opportunity to relaunch his career. Nicholls was signed from Wigan a couple of days before the season kicked off. He was a Charlton trainee who skippered England at Youth level then moved to the JJB in 1999. Right winger Forbes moved from Norwich in July where

side Vaalerenga last November but injuries limited his appearances to just nine. Fraser is a former skipper of the Youth team and Stirling is another home grown product who made his debut last September.

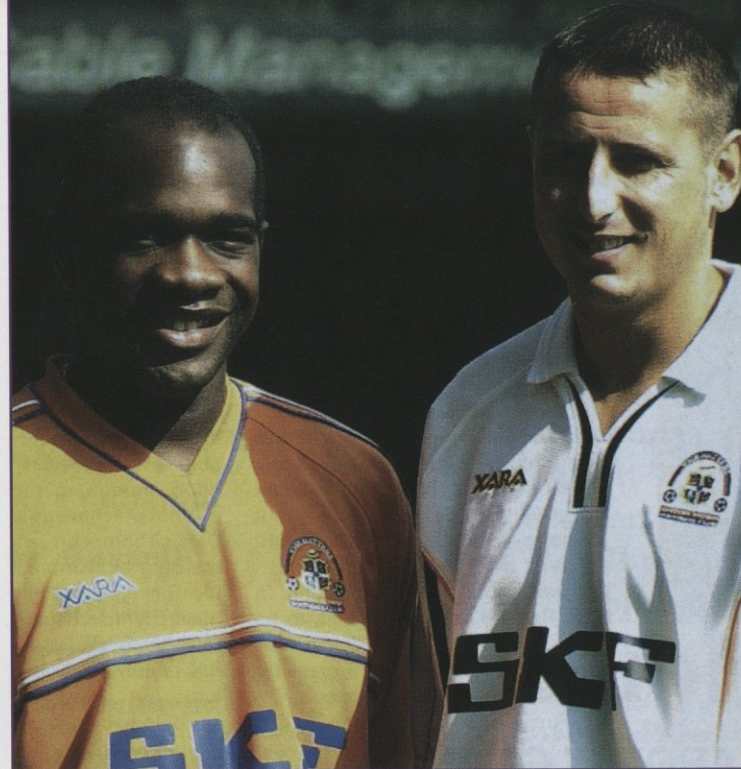


Adam Locke

he had made over 100 appearances since graduating from trainee. Mansell was thrown in at the deep end in the FA Cup Third Round against QPR in January and has held his place ever since.



Luton Town



Adrian Forbes and Carl Griffiths

Completing the midfield squad is former Colchester and Bristol City man Adam Locke, former Sheffield Wednesday trainees Dean Brennan and Peter Holmes, ex-trainee Matthew Spring and Dean Standen

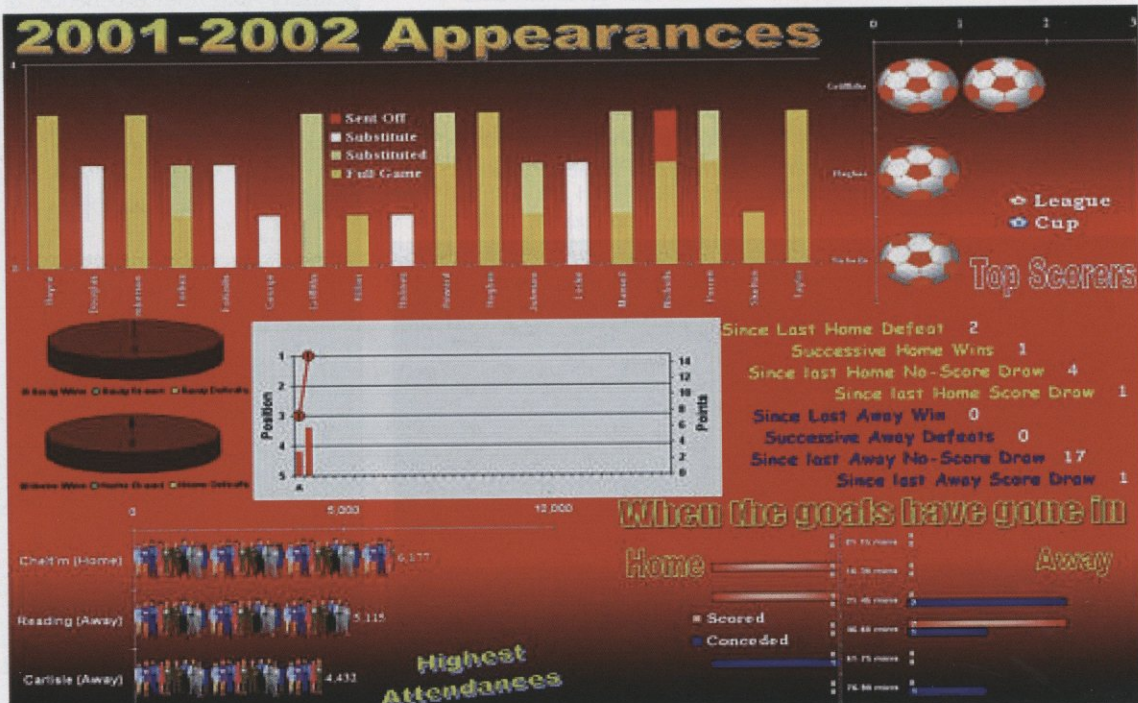
recruited from Welling United in 1999.

The preferred strike pair has been Carl Griffiths and Steve Howard with Stuart Douglas, Andrew Fotiadis and Liam George all getting

a chance from the bench leaving Peter Thomson, purchased from NAC Breda last September, unemployed.

Two goals in two games Griffiths was a Shrewsbury trainee who travelled via Manchester City, Portsmouth, Peterborough, Orient, Wrexham, Port Vale and Orient again until arriving at Luton in July. Howard crossed from Northampton in March. Douglas, Fotiadis and Eire Under-21 International George were all groomed through the Kenilworth Road Youth Scheme.

Carl Emberson, a free transfer from Walsall in July, has early possession of the goalkeeping spot with teenager Scott Ward on the bench at Carlisle and Ovendale taking his seat after completing his suspension last Saturday.



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Wedding belles

I do get myself into scrapes in order to provide you with some reading "fodder".

The "story" is the important thing, I always think; as a consequence "Pirate Eye" is always on the lookout for the "quirky and the unusual".

Pre-match I am normally to be found flogging 50/50 half-time draw tickets but I was allocated other duties at the Torquay match. In the absence of that doyen of the Supporters Club Committee, Mr Geoff Martin, it was left to yours truly to handle applications for membership of Rovers oldest support organisation.

I took my seat in the Bristol Room at 11.10am and was so busy that I barely had time to exchange pleasantries with Master Pirate Eye before the bar began to empty at 2.50pm.

It was at that moment that I caught sight of three young ladies finishing their "lemonades", they were dressed almost identically, they were not wearing "normal" match-day gear, and this was worthy of further investigation I thought.

It is fair to say that they treated me with a fair degree of suspicion as they explained that they were in fact a "hen party". In the four years that "Pirate Eye" has been running many people have offered some fairly silly excuses for an afternoon out at the Mem. but a "hen party" is a first as far as your correspondent is aware.

In true "Pirate Eye" tradition I suggested a photograph, I detected a degree of disbelief amongst my "subjects", getting the impression that they were beginning to regret drinking so many "Breezers".

I made the necessary arrangements with official "Pirate Eye" photographer Neil Brookman to take the snap at half time. A few minutes before the break I went to meet would be bride Debbie Murley and sisters Sophie and Amy Brennan in the Centenary Enclosure.



PIRATE EYE
with
John Malycky

Normally it is a fairly straightforward process to take someone for a photograph walking along the front of the terraces but with a bumper crowd all the normal routes were full and it would have taken an eternity to get around to the Family Enclosure.

With the benefit of hindsight I made a decision that I was later to regret as I broke the news to my now slightly nervous guests that "the only way we are going to get over the other side is to walk around the edge of the pitch."

It was all going smoothly until we got to the Blackthorn End when catching sight of the girls, those who take residence on that now famous terrace began to sing a song that made both myself and the girls blush, in which it was suggested that the trio "reveal certain parts of their anatomy".

As we reached the Family Enclosure Neil Brookman, and a less than impressed safety officer Mr Dave Harper met us, the latter being far from happy. I offered my apologies to Mr Harper for my lack of planning in the matter, realising that I had upset the great man I offered to "take the girls round the back of the Blackthorn" on their return to the Centenary Enclosure.

It is not often that club photographer Alan Marshall smiles but even he could see the funny side of my suggestion, "I bet you will" he said beaming from head to toe!

In the safety of the Blues Bar after the match I learned that it had been Sophie and Amy's idea to start Debbie's "hen

night" at the match, they were about to meet some more friends to enjoy the rest of the evening.

Debbie had met fiancé Jason Dimmock in a pub on Christmas Eve last year. Jason it transpired was a Rovers supporter and he persuaded Debbie to attend the Boxing Day encounter with Reading. "I've been to all the home games since then and to a few away as well" she said.

I asked where Jason was, "he's in Barcelona, for his stag weekend, it had to be arranged before the fixtures came out". The wedding, which is being held at Bristol's Marriot Swallow Hotel, had to be arranged early as well and unfortunately clashes with today's home fixture so the couple will be unable to make the game.

"Jason is planning a surprise honeymoon, and although we are missing the Luton match we will be going to Darlington on Bank Holiday Monday and then we are off on the 29th August". Debbie told me.

When I suggested to her that she might be honeymooning in Darlington she responded by saying "I've had to have injections and I don't think you need those for Darlington!"

So from "Pirate Eye" I wish Jason and Debbie a long and prosperous marriage, and hope that one day Debbie will tell her grandchildren about her "walk" in front of the Blackthorn End!

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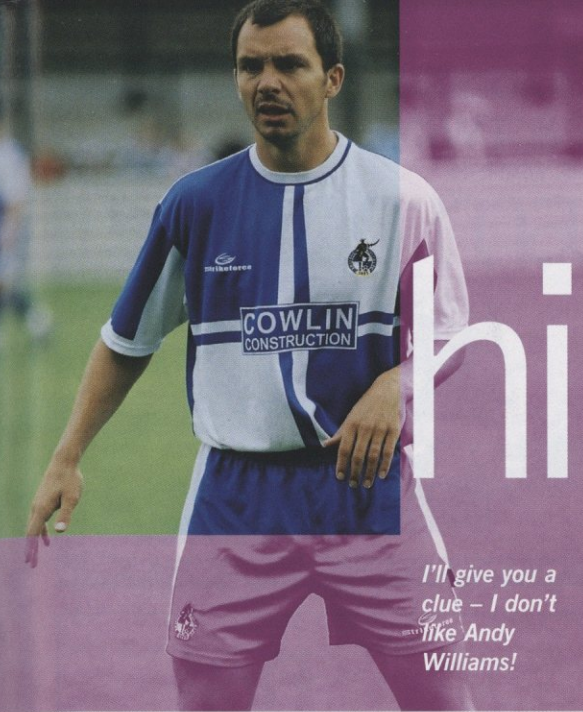
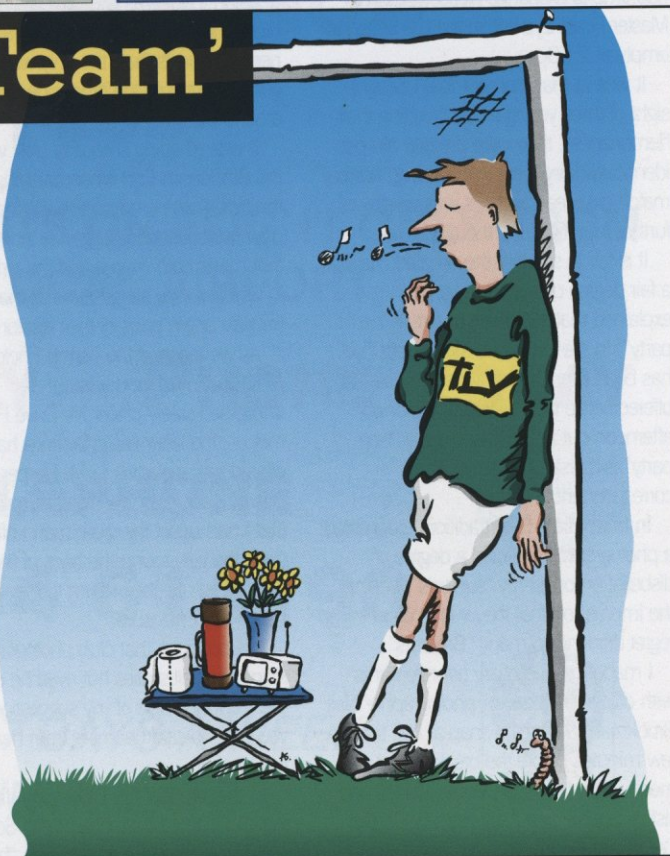
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I'll give you a
clue - I don't
like Andy
Williams!

hi pop pickers

ECLECTIC BLUE
with
Rick Johansen

Some things just don't go together. They are just chalk and cheese. They are diametrically opposed to each other. One of the most lethal combinations is footballers and music.

If you are as old as me, you may remember some of the early examples. The 1970 England World Cup Squad singing Back Home, shortly before they were on their way back home from the tournament when Sir Alf Ramsey decided to substitute his most skilful midfield player, Bobby Charlton, with the one-footed, one-paced (slow), hatchet-man Norman Hunter. (Fortunately for music lovers England did not qualify for another World Cup for 12 years so the Scots had to cater for the tone deaf.)

You'd have thought footballers would have learned their lesson after this serious assault on our ears, but no. In fact, if anything, the football songs got even worse. If you got to a final, even if it was in the Auto Windscreen Shield, your team had to record a song. Worse still, many of us even bought them.

I wonder how many Tottenham fans still get home from work and say 'Hey - let's all sit down and listen to 'Nice One Cyril'? Not many, I'll wager, but I imagine it will be a higher number than the number of Nottingham Forest supporters who will even own up to having bought 'We've got the whole

I am afraid our club has also been guilty in this area too. I have to say that slotted in the gap between the Beastie Boys and The Clash stands a series of versions of Goodnight Irene, at least one of which is by some of our players. (If the team shouldn't be playing football in the Third Division of the Nationwide League, they were playing Beazer League stuff with the music.)

Everything changed with Italia 90 when the England team actually managed to qualify. Instead of a lumbering sing-a-long with an Oompah band, the powers-that-be chose New Order's 'World In Motion' to kick football up the proverbial bum and drag it kicking and screaming into the real world. Apart from John Barnes' stilted rapping, it was a classic. It stood up not just as a good football song: it was a good pop song in its own right.

By 1996, everyone was singing the greatest football song of them all: the fabulous 'Three Lions' by the Lightning Seeds with Baddiel and Skinner (when they were still funny).

So, after only forty years of rock and roll, football had come of age. You could actually read a profile of a footballer and not discover that his favourite band was Dire Straits, or that his favourite singer was Phil Collins / Elton John.

This intrigued me. I wondered to myself: what sort of music is listened to

world in our hands' (recorded with Paper Lace who made the classic 70s smash 'Billy Don't Be A Hero').

by the officials and players at the Memorial Stadium. I set about asking as many of them as I could: 'What was the last CD you bought?' The answers were not what I expected.

But rather than just tell you who bought what CD, I thought I'd turn it into a competition. Could the pop-pickers of the Blackthorn End, the Presidents Club and everywhere in between, work out from a list of names and CDs, who bought what?

See how many you can get:

CDs

Beethoven's Violin Concerto
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Ash - Free All Angels
Oxide and Neutreno - Execute
Mobb Deep - Murda Muzic
2 Pac - Greatest Hits
Snoop Doggy Dog - The Last Meal
Sisqo - (Latest CD)
Euphoria - Dance Mix
Andy Williams Greatest Hits
Reloaded 2 (Compilation)
Shania Twain - Come On Over
The Faces - Ooh La La

Gas People: Barry Bradshaw, Davod Hillier, Gary Penrice, Ralph Ellis, Steve Foster, Andy Thomson, Geoff Dunford, Trevor Challis, Simon Bryant, Ron Craig, Garry Thompson, Dwayne Plummer, Martin Cameron

Two match tickets for the lucky winner who gets the most right. Entries to Rick@oneteaminbristol.co.uk, access after my website column on www.bristolrovers.co.uk. Answers by 15th September, please.

Good luck. You'll need it!

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Not too many fresh faces!

For me, today's Third Division looks quite strange. It might be the fumes from being in the basement for the first time in our history, but having had a look around we are actually among familiar faces. Only a handful of our opponents this season are new to us, like the fresh League faces of Cheltenham, Rushden and Kidderminster and for those of us in our infancy (and indeed the more senile among us) the stagnant likes of Darlington, Rochdale and Halifax, who hardly ever seem to pop their heads into Division 2.

The rest of them have more recently seen the daylight of the higher Divisions, and none more so than our fellow relegated rivals Oxford United and Luton Town. Fifteen years ago the pair of them were clashing in the top flight during parallel purple-patches in the mid-1980s, while also raking in the silverware. Oxford clinched the 1986 Milk Cup with a rousing 3-0 demolition of QPR in one of the first Cup finals I can remember as a six-year old, before Luton then picked up the mantle as the unfancied finalists in the same competition, which had by then changed its name to the Littlewoods Cup.

In 1988 Town played out a classic with Arsenal at Wembley, when at 2-1 down, Nigel Winterburn stepped up to take a penalty which would have realistically put the game beyond them. Andy Dibble, understudy to the late Les Sealey, who so sadly passed away last Monday, saved and Luton recovered in dramatic fashion to win 3-2 thanks to City boss Danny Wilson and Brian

Scott Jones - had a goal disallowed at Luton last season



Stein. They reached the final again the following season before losing to Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest and this was in fact the first defeat in that competition for three and a half years after they lost to Norwich in 1985 - the reason being that they withdrew in 1986/87 because of their stance over banning away fans from Kenilworth Road.

The triumph over Arsenal in late April 1988 certainly made up for what happened just a month prior to that, when Wembley was not such a welcoming venue for the final of the otherwise non-descript Simod Cup, which was the higher leagues' version of the Windscreens Shield.

In the semi-final against Swindon, Luton were let off the hook in comical fashion when former Rovers striker Steve White found himself clear on goal with only the goalkeeper to beat late on in the game. In a moment which was to be repeated here almost a decade later at the Mem when Marcus Browning scored past Brentford's dithering Kevin Dearden, White thought he heard a whistle and pulled up when

about to shoot past Sealey. In fact it was just a noise from the crowd and Luton cleared the ball seconds before the referee did indeed blow up for the final whistle with Luton 2-1 ahead.

However, Swindon might have allowed themselves a wry smile thanks to their Thames Valley rivals Reading, who were on the brink of relegation to the old Third Division and would not even qualify for the next season's Tournament. In a display of clinical finishing, Reading hammered Luton 4-1 and promptly failed to win again away from Elm Park for the rest of the season.

A year in football is certainly a long time, as Gasheads can no doubt testify from chilling recent memory, so fifteen of them can shake up even the mightiest of clubs; Middlesbrough went bankrupt in 1986, Sunderland fell into Division 3 in 1987, Millwall finished above Manchester United in 1989, Rushden & Diamonds were two separate village clubs and of course Luton were on the crest of a wave then and this is now - a top of the table clash in Division 3.

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BUCCANEERING
BANTER
with
Maureen Bell

remember the sixties

It's hard not to feel envious of those who travelled to 'Sunny Scunny' last week, able to take advantage of good weather and three points to boot. For the rest of us? A dismal day, pretty wet – however, a win at Glanford Park to brighten anyone's day. Too soon to get excited maybe, but encouraging signs of better times ahead if the Pirates can become the scourge of the 3rd Division and bring home the richest of prizes – promotion!

My appeal for memorabilia brought a response from a colleague, Eddie Weeks, who had a copy of the Evening Standard London Football Supplement (priced one shilling, that's 5p) dated October 1970 featuring Queens Park Rangers and a certain 18-year-old Gerry Francis. Gerry signed professional terms for QPR in June 1969 and made his debut at Portsmouth in September of that year and the potted history indicates that his hobbies then were dancing, horseriding, record playing and tennis (wo! No pigeons?).

The headlines on one page of the paper reads "Gerry Francis, 18, takes over Bridges goal role". Describing the departure of Barry Bridges to Millwall for £40,000 (that much?) as worrying because of the 25 goals he had scored the previous season, Rangers' Manager Les Allen and Coach Gordon Jago felt they had a ready-made successor in 18-year-old Francis.

However, Gerry – son of former Brentford pro Roy Francis – had reservations about himself as "a new Barry Bridges". He was quoted as saying that he preferred to play in midfield in a sort of Martin Peters role, coming in on the blind side and scoring goals. Roy Francis was an inside-forward for Brentford in the early 50's and gave tremendous encouragement to Gerry in his career.

Other familiar names in the team during the 1970-71 season were Terry Venables, Rodney Marsh, Phil Parkes, Alan Wilks, to name but a few. The

team photo formed the centre pages of the Evening Standard Football Supplement, so Eddie had it framed and presented it to Gerry Francis last week as a welcome home gesture from the lads on the Centenary Terrace behind the dugout. Indeed, the photo evoked many memories for Gerry as he spoke of those early days at QPR.

Nothing to do with football, but I was intrigued to see what was advertised on the Entertainments Page, eg Anna Neagle and Derek Nimmo in *Charles Girl* at the Adelphi Theatre, Val Doonican at The Palladium, Lee Marvin and Clint Eastwood in *Paint your Wagon* at the Astoria, then at the bottom of the page a furniture store advertising lounge suites at £45! It costs that to go to the

“Come on you blues!”

theatre or a pop concert today.

Anyway, back to the year 2001 and Gerry Francis, Director of Football at Bristol Rovers in charge of his third league game today against The Hatters. With Luton ably managed by Joe Kinnear, this game will be crucial to both clubs attempting to lead the division and a quick return to the 2nd Division. This is usually a game where our defenders get on the scoresheet, so could it be Steve Foster again? Winning is most important so get behind the lads and roar them on to victory.



GOOD LUCK



for the 2001/2002 season

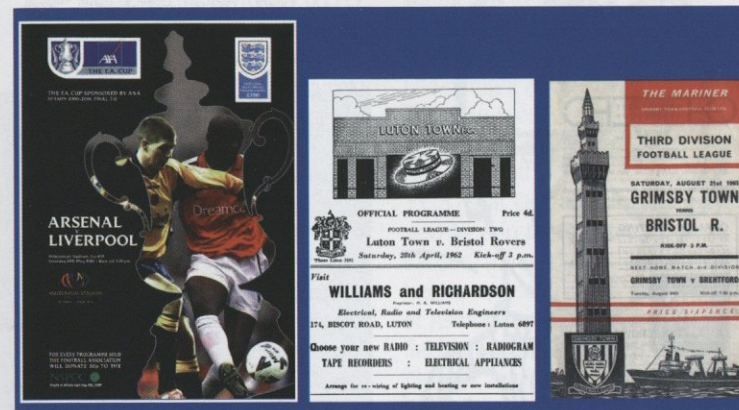
GOAL

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My life is in turmoil for two reasons! For the first time in -errm - many years I have changed duty nights at 199 Two Mile Hill Road. This means that any callers for old programmes will now have to come to the shop on **WEDNESDAY Evenings 1930-2030** and not Thursdays. This is all because of BRSC having two shops to run, and Pirate Leisure will be opening its doors on Tues and Thurs evenings, and Two Mile Hill on Mon, Weds and Fri evenings Secondly my patience finally snapped with the old ISP where I tried to upload new pages for Pirates Programmes website for nearly 2 hours without success. Within 24 hours I had moved the whole site to GeoCities, and had greatly expanded it too. Please let me know of any broken links you find, and look out for new pages in the coming weeks. URL <http://www.geocities.com/piratesprogs> should find us!

****Special Offer**** to Luton Town Fans (and anyone else!) - Copies of your League Cup Final programme v Nottingham Forest available from Pirates Programmes for only 70p each plus A4 S.A.E. (Address below. Cheques payable to BRSC.



Review

2001 FA CUP FINAL Arsenal v Liverpool Size A4 116 pages Price £7

More than a programme for many years, this has become the weightiest match-day programme of each season (unless you know differently!). It is the opportunity for the F.A. to blow its own trumpet and there are several articles of this ilk within the covers, viz. Schoolboy/Women's football, Setting up a Register of Football facilities, F.A. Annual Report summary - you get the idea. Adverts? Well quite restrained at 22 pages. Of course there are features on the FA Cup competition, history, and the expected articles on both clubs and teams, including a page each on "Celebrity Fans". As the first final in Cardiff, there are features on the building of the Millenium Stadium and Cardiff itself (a sort of Tourist Board page), as well as pages on "When Cardiff City Won the Cup". I had to smile at the first page though, bilingual, but with a plea at the foot to MIND YOUR LANGUAGE! There is plenty of nostalgia too, Arsenal and Liverpool's double winning squads of 1971 and 1986 are tracked down in a "Where are they now" double-spread, an article on FA Cup final programmes and the pages are littered elsewhere with reproductions of old programme covers. However the

most interesting feature for me was the reproduction of the cover of the programme for the 1971 Cup Final Replay programme. "HUH? There was no replay!" you shout. Well, true, but there was a programme prepared, as the replay was scheduled to take place on the following Tuesday at Hillsbrough. The F.A. were caught out by the Chelsea v Leeds final of the previous year going to a replay, and got prepared for the following year. All copies were supposedly pulped, but the cover of one is reproduced here. What would be the value of that edition then, a programme-that-never-was? Current value of 2001 final? Expect to pay £8 a copy. It was not a sell-out, unlike the Worthington Cup Final, which has doubled in value already. FA Cup Finals are featured on Pirates Programmes too, see <http://www.geocities.com/piratesprogs>.

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PIRATE
PROGRAMMES
with
Phil Draper

Past Pirate -
On the road - 1965/66
(by Jamie Howarth)

The smallest programmes in 65-66 once again measured 11 X 14 cms. Reading had stuck to the small format with 16 pages for a number of years now, but this time they were joined by Swindon Town. Theirs had a massive 34 pages although 50% of these were advertisements. Largest was Oldham Athletics' at 14 X 22 cms. It came with 32 pages but 16 of these were the "Soccer Review", a supplement that many clubs included in their programmes at the time. The full set consists of the standard 23 League games, one League cup R2 Replay at the Boleyn Ground with West Ham, one FA Cup tie with Reading and the Bi-annual trip to Ashton Gate for the G.F.A. Cup Final. The PastPirate award for best programme could go to any one of 6 or 7 clubs, but I think Hull City just about shade it. Wooden spoon is easy. QPR issued a single sheet folded twice to give a 3 page programme. It was advert free but still cost 6d, a very poor effort. Most programmes from this season will cost in the region of £1 or £2 each, but if you are prepared to search pages of catalogues and bargain boxes you could pay less. Have I missed any? If you know of one please write to me care of the supporters club or e-mail me on pastpirate@netscapeonline.co.uk

YOUR OLDEST PROGRAMMES?

I have already been beaten in the oldest issue stakes. Alan Ward has programmes from these games; Home - Blackburn (Friendly) 1949-50 and Walsall (Div 3 South) 1946-47. Away Wells City (Friendly) 50s and Millwall (Div 3 South) 1934-35. The Wells one is another I will have to try and find as I have never heard of it. By the way to help Alan and myself does anyone know exactly when or in which season it was played? Please let me know and I will pass the info on to you all.

The name's the same Howie & Weare

The promising league debuts on the opening match of the season against Torquay United of goalkeeper Scott Howie and striker Ross Weare meant they became the 672nd and 673rd players to represent the club in League Football.

There have been 876 different players for the club since they turned professional in 1899, the breakdown is as follows:-

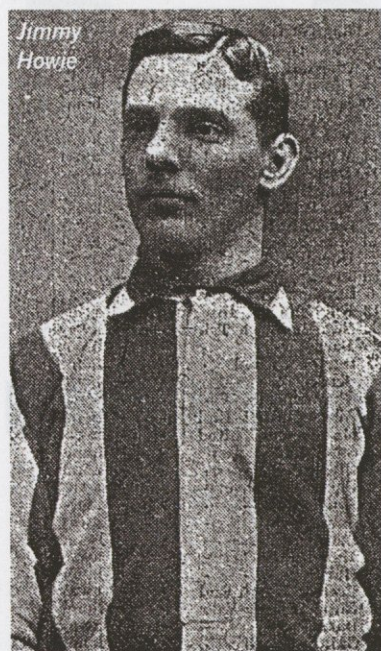
Southern League 1899-1920 – 214 players

Football League 1920-2001 – 673 players

The difference in the totals is because eleven of those players played both Southern League and Football League matches for the club following our election to the newly formed Division Three (South) in 1920.

JIMMY HOWIE

Both debutants Howie and Weare share their names with past Rovers players. Jimmy Howie himself a Scotsman, was with the club in Season 1902-03 scoring ten goals in 26 Southern



Jimmy Howie



Jack Weare

League games. His potential was spotted by First Division, Newcastle United and Gentleman Jim as he became known, was a firm favourite winning a remarkable three League Championship medals and an FA Cup winners medal in 1910. He also won three Cup runners-up medals as well as three Scottish International caps.

Howie had a brief spell at Huddersfield Town before going into management with Queens Park Rangers 1913-20 and Middlesbrough 1920-24.

JACK WEARE

Ross Weare, one of our two Summer recruits from Queens Park Rangers opened his goal account at Scunthorpe last Saturday. His namesake was

Newport-born goalkeeper Jack Weare. Weare joined Rovers following the Second World War in 1945. Like thousands of others, Weare had his professional football career seriously interrupted by the War. Jack's early career was with Lovells Athletic, before he moved onto Wolves in 1933 where he made 42 league appearances. In 1936 Jack joined West Ham United where he was for three seasons and made 58 league appearances.

Weare guested for St Mirren during Wartime football before signing for Rovers. A tall and consistent performer between the sticks Weare enjoyed a spell of 67 consecutive appearances for Rovers. He made his debut at the age of 33, some nine years older than Ross. After leaving the club he returned to South Wales to finish his career with Barry Town. His brother, Len was also a professional goalkeeper with Newport County making a remarkable 525 league appearances in a long career at Somerton Park.

Debut on this date: Irvine Harwood

Vince Harwood, born in Bradford in December 1905, was one of two new faces in the side which lost the opening game of the season 3-1 on this day in 1934. An inside forward of medium build and an excellent cricketer, he was one of a select band of players to have appeared for both league sides in his home city, scoring a hat-trick for Park Avenue against Nottingham Forest in September 1931.

It was from Wolves that he joined Rovers in 1934 and Harwood played in 51 league games over two seasons, scoring fourteen goals. In April 1935 he

25th August 1973: Bournemouth 0 Rovers 3

Both Rovers and the Hatters are setting off into the 2001/02 season with positive aspirations and a genuine belief in promotion this year. Rovers

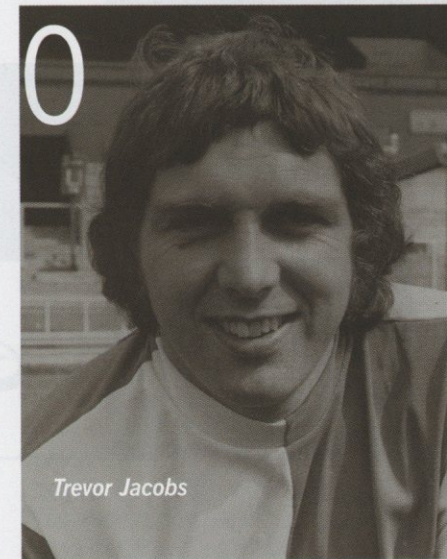


Alan Warboys

embarked on the 1973/74 season, on the back of strong form in the spring of 1973, with high hopes and Don Megson's side was to earn promotion to Division Two on a Friday night at Southend.

The new season started with a thoroughly convincing victory over Bournemouth, before a crowd of 11,379 at Dean Court. The only new face in the side was Trevor Jacobs, a free signing after 130 league appearances across the city at Ashton Gate. Otherwise, Rovers fielded a tied and trusted side and 'Smash' and 'Grab' helped themselves to the goals, Alan Warboys scoring twice and Bruce Bannister once. Phil Boyer, the winner of an England cap three years later, and the future Bournemouth manager John Benson both played for the Cherries.

On the same day, today's opponents Luton Town crashed 4-0



Trevor Jacobs

at Nottingham Forest, with Tom Jackson's two goals including a penalty and Neil Martin and Duncan McKenzie contributing a goal apiece. However, the season was to turn out well as they were promoted with Middlesbrough and Carlisle United, to Division One after an absence of fourteen years. Rovers, for their part, enjoyed a club record 32-game unbeaten league run and, with Oldham Athletic and York City returned to Division Two after twelve years away. A repeat performance in 2001/02 would be most welcome.

scored the winning goal as Rovers defeated Watford 3-2 to win the Third Division (South) Cup Final, their first major honour for thirty years. A season with Walsall included a return appearance at Eastville in a 3-0 defeat in November 1936 and he joined Burton Town in 1937 for three seasons. Harwood died in Walsall in June 1973.



Bristol Rovers 1935/36

Irvine Harwood is 3rd left middle row

'Motty' Brookman in practice for winning 'Commentator of the Year'

spectacular – the goalkeeping equivalent of Sean Goater disintegrating at Maine Road when Man City were slumming it in the lower leagues. Perhaps someone new will step in and take over the mantle for him...

As we all remember, both games last time round ended in draws – Rovers letting a 3-1 lead slip here at the Mem (Alternatively, a great Luton comeback – take your pick), and a goalless game at Kenilworth Road notable for a perfectly good Scott Jones 'goal' being disallowed – dropped points that would prove crucial at the end of the season.

That brings us to this afternoon – a top of the table clash between the two 100% records in the Division. Although it's way too early to be spouting this type of rubbish, this will surely be one of the big games when it's all totalled up next May. It's been a promising start for Gerry, and rewarding to see our strikers beginning to find a bit of form. By all accounts, the performance at Scunthorpe was greatly improved from the opening day.

I listened to the game via the website – complete with commentary from the reassuring tones of 'Motty' Brookman, the radio equivalent of the old 'sponsored by Prozac' Captain Gas. Ian Cole must be congratulated on getting this service up and running, and I'm especially pleased it's available again today.

You see, my old man, the reason for this football insanity that runs through me, and an adopted Gashead, now lives in Portugal. And for the first time, he'll be listening live to his 'old' team play his 'new' team via the wonder of the web, sitting in the sun with an ice cold beer or two.

I hope he remembered to get those boiled sweets in.....
Up the Gas!!



old hat(ters)

I always find our games against today's opponents strange. Although I'm now 16 years down the road of being a fully fledged Gashead, I spent my formative first decade or so of football-watching at Kenilworth Road, marvelling as a youngster at Bruce Rioch, Malcolm MacDonald, Andy King, Brian Horton, Alan West, Johnny Aston and others. Remember 'Max' Faulkner, away fans (of a certain age)? Now there was a Centre Half!

It makes it doubly disappointing for me that this afternoon's clash is taking place in the League's basement. Let's hope that when we meet next year, both clubs are moving upwards towards the right end of the pyramid.

It's a weird experience going back to Kenilworth Road as an away fan – I still park the car in the same side street off Dunstable Road that my old man used, although, disappointingly, the little shop on the corner where we got our pre-match boiled sweets has been turned back into someone's house. The Bobbers Stand where I went as a nine year old (Kenilworth Road end, tucked in front of the floodlight pylon), has been replaced by those very attractive executive boxes, and we're housed in the old home end, the Oak Road

Terrace (as it was then).

Sadly, bolting seats straight onto the old steps resulted in one of the poorest views at an away ground anywhere. And before you get too upset, Luton fans, I said 'one of' – I'm aware of where you're standing while you're reading this. Glass houses, stones and all that.....

Even in the 70's, the Hatters were looking to move to a new ground, and have twenty-odd years of thwarted planning applications to look back on (Sound familiar?). Then, of course, there were the 'plastic pitch' and 'no away fans' fiascos that so blighted them at one point. However, with the experience of Joe Kinnear, there's no reason why they shouldn't be very capable of returning back to Division Two, and I, for one, look forward to seeing them promoted, as long as it's in second place behind us.

Unfortunately for Rovers, one of our greatest assets has departed from Kenilworth Road – Nathan Abbey, a man who surely can claim to have had more goal 'assists' in our recent clashes than anyone else, including those who actually play in Blue and White quarters. His performance in our 4-2 away win the season before last was

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left: Roy Dolling receives a silver salver from Chairman Denis Dunford to mark his retirement after 38 years service to the club



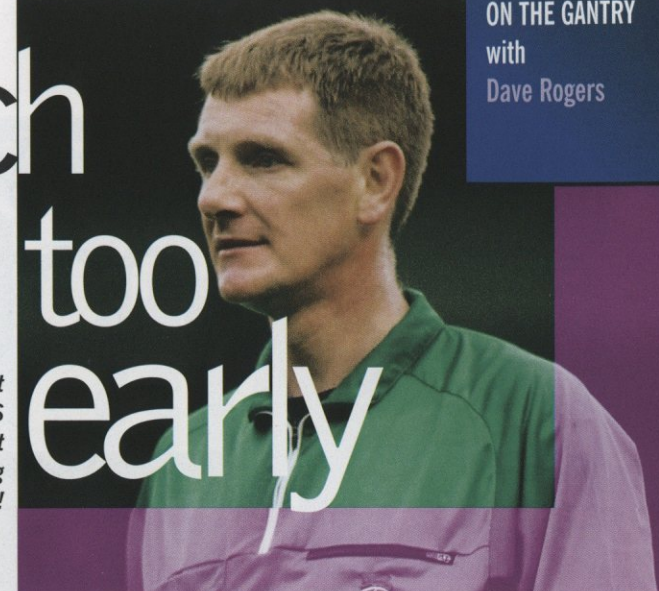
above: Alan and Jenny Bracey who were guests of the club for the Torquay game, were presented with a framed, autographed shirt by Director Ron Craig

left: Members of Airbus UK, winners of the Jelf IFM Cup, receive their trophy from Chris Jelf. The 7-a-side tournament, played in support of South Gloucestershire Drugs Action Team, seems set to become an annual event



Members of the successful Bristol Rovers Womens team on their lap of honour at the Torquay game

it's much too early



Watch it mate. I WAS that frustrating referee!!

It's surely no coincidence that the last time Rovers gained six points from their first two League games was during Gerry Francis' first spell as manager.

Victory today, in a match that could prove crucial, ultimately, to our promotion challenge, would equal the three-game winning start in 1989-90, a season which was the closest thing to heaven for any Gashead. If we also win at Darlington on Monday, this would emulate our best ever start, way back in 1936.

Given the battling qualities shown so far, that's not beyond us. Joyously positive words after the campaign from hell. I would have been satisfied with a win and a draw from the first two games, particularly as Scunthorpe are a strong home side and among the favourites for a play-off place, but to gain maximum points was fantastic.

No-one expected Torquay to hand the points to Rovers, but they must have surprised everyone – even their own fans – by the quality of their performance. The only aspect of their play that made them look like one of the worst teams in the Nationwide League was their finishing, footage of which is probably being sought out by Danny Baker and Nick Hancock at this very moment. However, Rovers rode their luck, hung in there and ground out a 1-0 win – words that rarely appeared in the same sentence last season.

After defeating the team from the English Riviera, next on the agenda was Scunthorpe, the St Tropez of North Lincolnshire. My Screen Soccer colleague Mark Brimson and I travelled to Glanford Park in optimistic mood and the omens were good. After a journey that took under three hours – less than the time it takes you to cross Bristol during rush hour – we were welcomed

by the best mannered car park steward I have ever met. After apologising several times for the fact that away fans are not admitted to the bar at the ground, he cautiously asked us for the princely sum of £1 – to leave our car just 100 yards from the visitors' turnstile! He was on the point of serving us a complimentary four course meal complete with a selection of fine wines when we bade him farewell.

So we headed for the pub directly opposite the stadium, a smart, new building with lots of hanging baskets: the sort of place you would take your mum on Mother's Day. The presence of three bouncers did not augur well, but they simply asked us to cover up our football shirts if we were sitting in the bar, adding that 'most of your lot are in the beer garden, so you can do what you like if you join them'.

Scunthorpe's greeting had so far consisted of a car park steward who could have been an international diplomat, and a bouncer who actually gave us two options. Three points were certain to follow.

By 2.00pm, both the beer garden and the bar were full of Gasheads, and the 'no football strip' rule was seemingly overlooked as Bristolians mingled happily with locals. We then made the short walk back to the ground, remarkably the first new Football League stadium in the country for almost 40 years when it opened in 1988. How many since?

If we had forgotten that we were now in Division Three, a reminder came from the zestful matchday announcer, who urged the home fans to make a noise as if there were 6,000 fans in the ground! No, I haven't missed a nought off that figure! When your home average is around 3,500, I suppose that is a fantasy crowd for a game other than a derby or a big cup-tie.

When the game started, Rovers clearly faced two major threats: the elusive Peter Beagrie, who appeared in 19 Premiership games for Bradford last season, and a frustrating referee who seemed hell-bent on only awarding free-kicks to the home side. After withstanding a barrage of Scunny corners, the quality in our team shone through.

Both our goals defied logic. First, the Duke proceeded to take on half the opposition single-handed and still had time to tread on the ball before sending a scorching drive into the net. Then Ross Weare, who was clearly struggling with a thigh injury, decided to make his mark before limping off by hammering home an unstoppable volley from an acute angle. Scunny's reply was inadequate, and after hearing that moneybags Hull City had been held at home our joy was complete.

Six of the best is terrific, but nine out of nine sounds even better. So Come On You Blues!

Saturdays are for football **not** weddings

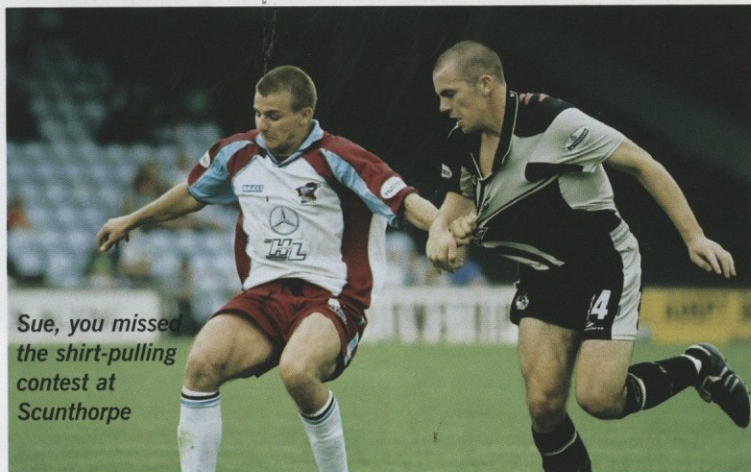
Great. The season is only two weeks old and already I will have missed two games – three if you include the League Cup tie on Tuesday night at Wycombe. Now, before you write me off as some part-timer, let me explain.

After the win against Torquay at home, my fiancé Chris and I had to miss the trip to Scunthorpe; it's inevitable for us to miss away games occasionally, alas. We are car-less and being the penny-pinching ex-students we are, we usually manage to hitch a lift with either one of our Dads, or, when we were living in Birmingham, with our good mate, Chris Stickler. Failing that we 'rely' on British Rail. And failing that, we save our pennies by listening to Radio Bristol, which, excitingly, we can pick up in Cardiff! So we had a slightly crackly commentary from Glanford Park last Saturday, as we were unable to travel to the game. It was bearable.

We've had to miss the Wycombe game too, as getting to Adams Park and back in one night is not feasible and certainly not affordable. Travel and the cost of it is a viable reason for unfortunately missing a Rovers game, just about.

But the reason for missing today's top of the table clash v Luton? A wedding. Argh! Who in their right mind plans a wedding for a Saturday in the football season? A non-football fan, that's who. My friend Laura's sister is marrying her bloke whilst I miss the Gas. Unfortunately for me (but fortunately for Chris) I was the only name on the wedding invitation so he gets to sing Goodnight Irene at the Mem whilst I sing hymns at a church in Clevedon.

Listen to me going on...I apologise.



Sue, you missed the shirt-pulling contest at Scunthorpe

I'm looking forward to the wedding, really, and I'll get to catch up with quite a few friends I haven't seen in a while. But Saturday afternoons are made for football so there should be some kind of law preventing weddings or any social gathering at this sacred time. During the summer, then that's fine; but between August and May, that's made for football.

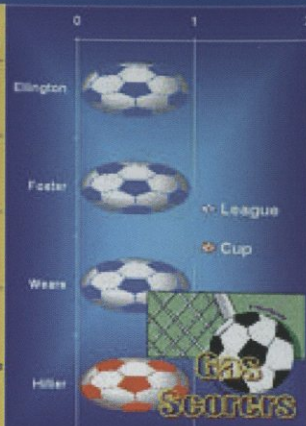
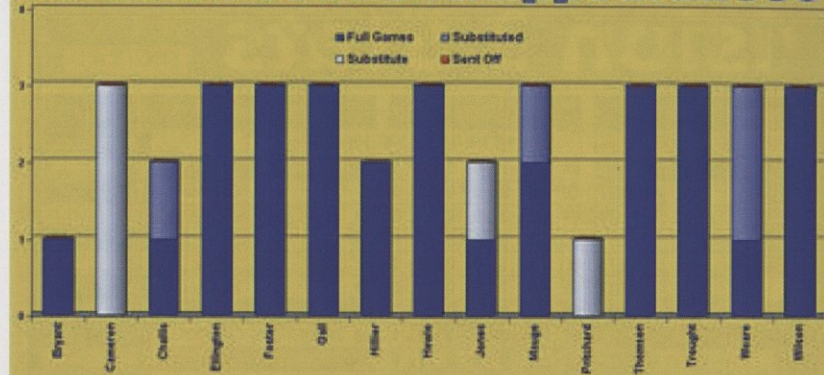
Actually I wonder what people do on Saturday's if – for some bizarre reason – they don't like football. My Saturday's revolve around the game, unless, of course it's still the cricket season: I'll get up in time for a cup of tea and settle down to watch Mark Nicholas on 'Cricket Roadshow' on Channel 4. I'll enter the phone-in competition (never win) and wish I had Sybil Ruscoe's job. And from then until late Saturday evening, the day is taken up with Rovers. The evenings will vary depending where we are travelling back from, and entertainment will now be the choice of the 7 o'clock edition of 'The Premiership' or, er, the later one. The

show has already had it's critics but I know I'd rather watch Ally McCoist than Alan Hansen.

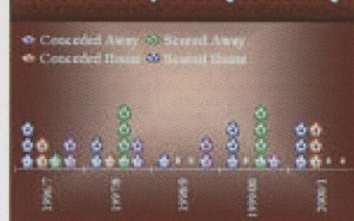
Some strange people miss out on this way of spending your Saturday – the ones who don't like football doubtlessly go shopping or do some DIY. I really cannot for the life of me imagine being without football. Ever since the days when my Dad took us to Twerton, since I read my brother's copy of 'Roy of the Rovers' and ever since I had Gary Lineker and Teddy Sheringham posters splashed across my walls – my Saturday's are football.

So back to today. Chris will be sending me text message updates from the Mem, so when a beep-beep-beep goes off in the church and all the grannies turn round and glare I will give an embarrassed smile before silently taking in the news. And fingers crossed, once the happy couple have exchanged their vows, Rovers will have exchanged their league places with Luton and they will be top. What a fairytale ending.

Season 2001-2002 Appearances



Recent History of League meetings

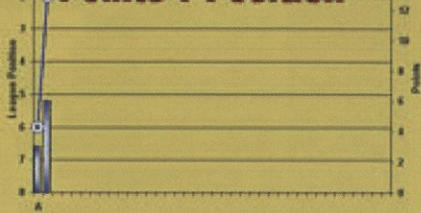


Rovers have had 74 League encounters with The Hatters

	W	D	L	F	A	% Success
H	18	12	7	73	43	64.86
A	5	9	23	38	58	25.68

Biggest Home Win... 5 - 0 1920/1
 Biggest Home Defeat... 2 - 4 1980/1
 Biggest Away Win... 4 - 1 1999/00
 Biggest Away Defeat... 0 - 12 1935/6

Points v Position



eagle coaches



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itv DIGITAL **Division 3 Stats** itv DIGITAL

Records	Average Attendances					Goals - When Scored					Form Guide: Home & Away					
	2000	4000	6000	8000	10000	0-15	16-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76-90	Home Form	Away Form			
Highest Gate 10,755 Hull v Plymouth					10,127	BR	0	1	0	1	0	W	Bristol Rovers	W		
Lowest Gate 1,937 Halifax v Exeter					4,432	CU	0	0	0	0	0	L	Carlisle	D		
Highest Agg Score					4,115	CT	0	0	0	0	2	D	Cheltenham	L		
Exeter1					3,677	Da	0	0	0	0	2	W	Darlington	L		
Hull3					4,677	EC	1	1	0	0	0	L	Exeter	D		
Macclesfield ...1					1,937	HT	0	1	2	0	0	D	Halifax	W		
Swansea3					3,534	HU	0	0	0	0	2	D	Hartlepool	W		
Shrewsbury1					10,755	HC	0	0	1	1	0	D	Hull	W		
Hartlepool3					3,173	Ki	0	0	0	0	1	W	Kidderminster	L		
Biggest Home Win					4,693	LO	0	0	0	1	0	D	Orient	D		
Darlington2					3,753	LC	0	0	1	0	0	L	Lincoln	D		
Kidderminster 0					6,177	LT	0	0	2	2	0	W	Luton	W		
Biggest Away Win					2,309	MT	0	1	1	0	0	L	Macclesfield	D		
Torquay0					2,774	MT	1	0	0	0	0	D	Mansfield	D		
York3					8,842	OU	0	0	0	1	0	L	Oxford	D		
Consec Wins Bristol Rovers, Luton2					5,087	PA	0	0	0	0	0	L	Plymouth	D		
Games Unbeaten 11 Teams2					3,346	Ro	0	1	1	0	1	D	Rochdale	W		
Consec Defeats Scunthorpe, Torquay2					5,018	RD	0	1	0	0	0	D	Rushden	W		
Winless Run 11 Teams2					3,593	SU	0	0	0	1	0	L	Scunthorpe	L		
Total Games 24					2,783	ST	0	0	1	0	1	L	Shrewsbury	W		
Home Wins 521%					4,725	SU	0	0	0	0	1	W	Southend	D		
Away Wins 1042%					5,501	SC	1	1	0	0	1	D	Swansea	W		
Draws 938%					2,659	TU	0	0	0	0	0	L	Torquay	L		
1-1 Draws 417%					4,307	YC	0	0	1	2	0	L	York	W		

Clubs' top scorer & the points their goals won	Biggest Wins & Heaviest Defeats				Numbers										
	see key below	Leading Scorer	GS	Sc1	Sc2	HT	Gms	Ave	Pts	Run	Club	Win -vs.	Defeat -vs.	PU	CS
Luton	Griffiths	2	2	0	0	2	1.00	2	2	Bristol Rov	2-1 Scunthorpe	-	15	1	0
Bristol Rovers	Ellington	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	2	1	Carlisle	-	0-2 Luton	17	1	2
Kidderminster	Ducros	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	2	1	Cheltenham	-	1-2 Luton	16	0	0
Rushden	Patmore	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	2	1	Darlington	2-0 Kidmnrstr	0-1 Southend	14	1	1
Southend	Rawle	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	2	1	Exeter	-	1-3 Hull	17	0	0
Hartlepool	Clark	2	2	0	0	2	1.00	1	2	Halifax	2-1 Lincoln	-	14	0	0
Macclesfield	Glover	2	2	0	0	2	1.00	1	2	Hartlepool	3-1 Shrvsbry	-	14	0	0
Exeter	Kerr	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	1	1	Hull	3-1 Exeter	-	16	1	1
Halifax	Swales	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	1	1	Kidminster	1-0 Scunthorpe	0-2 Darlington	13	1	1
Orient	Lockwood	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	1	1	Orient	-	-	16	1	1
Mansfield	Greenacre	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	1	1	Lincoln	-	1-2 Halifax	12	1	1
Rochdale	Ford	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	1	1	Luton	2-0 Carlisle	-	17	1	0
Cheltenham	Howarth	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Macclesfield	-	1-3 Swansea	14	0	0
Darlington	Mellanby	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Mansfield	-	-	12	1	1
Hull	Whitmore	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Oxford	-	1-2 Rochdale	15	1	1
Lincoln	Thorpe	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Plymouth	-	0-1 Shrvsbry	16	1	2
Oxford	Brooks	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Rochdale	2-1 Oxford	-	14	0	0
Scunthorpe	Quailey	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Rushden	1-0 York	-	15	2	1
Shrewsbury	Rodgers	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Scunthorpe	-	1-2 Bristol R	15	0	1
Swansea	Watkin	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Shrewsbury	1-0 Plymouth	1-3 Hartlpool	15	1	0
Southend	Nogan	1	1	0	0	2	0.50	0	1	Southend	1-0 Darlington	-	14	2	1
Carlisle	no scorers as yet									Swansea	3-1 Maccsfld	-	15	1	1
Plymouth	no scorers as yet									Torquay	-	0-3 York	15	0	2
Torquay	no scorers as yet									York	3-0 Torquay	0-1 Rushden	18	1	1

Key: GS=Goals Scored; Sc1=Games Scored 1 Goal; Sc2=Games Scored 2 Goals; HT=Hat-Tricks; Each club's leading league scorer and their goals per game (Ave). Next column shows taking off their goals, how many Points (Pts) lost. Last figure show best scoring Run in consecutive games. NUMBERS: PU = Players Used CS = Clean Sheets FS = Games Failed to Score

Foster seals Rovers win

Torquay sign Anton Greyling and Steve Woods, whilst near neighbours Exeter add Dylan Kerr from Hamilton, Andrew Walker from Colchester and Gary Birch from Walsall to their squad. Stuart Elliott and Peter Murphy, a free transfer from Blackburn, join Carlisle, together with Scott Willis from Crewe. York recruit Aiden O'Kane from Belfast club, Cliftonville and Michael Proctor from Sunderland. Macclesfield sign Richard Eyre, Stephen Hodgson and Andy McAvoy all on free transfers.

Scunthorpe sign goalkeepers Steve Croudsen, on loan from Grimsby, and Richard Siddall from Barnsley. Luton secure the services of Paul Hughes, from Southampton, and Russell Perrett. Former Bristol City goalkeeper Tony Malessa joins Oxford, who also take another 'keeper, Ian McCaldon from Livingston and David Savage from Northampton. Tony Naylor finally signs for Cheltenham, from Port Vale, whilst Dean Crowe joins Plymouth, on loan from Stoke. Meanwhile Argyle Chairman Dan McCauley steps down and former Labour Party leader Michael Foot becomes a Director of the club.

SATURDAY 11th August

Warren Patmore, playing his first game in the Football League since January 1995, scores the only goal of the game as Rushden & Diamonds win their first ever league match, by beating York at Bootham Crescent. Rovers win their first game in Division Three, beating Torquay at The Memorial Stadium thanks to Steve Foster's late strike.

Plymouth lose 1-0 at home to Shrewsbury, who had Karl Murray sent off before Nigel Jemson's goal gave them their first win at Home Park since December 1971. Exeter took the lead at home against Hull through Jamie Campbell, but goals from Theo Whitmore, Mark Greaves and Lawrie

Dudfield saw the visitors take all three points.

Goals from Gareth Phillips, Mamady Sidibe and Steve Watkin gave Swansea a three goal advantage on their visit to Macclesfield before Lee Glover scored for the Silkman. New signings Kevin Nicholls and Carl Griffiths found the net in Luton's 2-0 win at Carlisle, but there was no good news for Oxford, who began life in their new Kassam Stadium with a 2-1 defeat by Rochdale. Matthew Doughty gave the visitors the lead and although Jamie Brookes levelled, Simon Coleman grabbed the winner.

Matt Lockwood gave Leyton Orient the lead at Cheltenham but they were pegged back by Jason White's equaliser. Hartlepool were also held at home, Ian Clark grabbing a late equaliser after Chris Greenacre had given Mansfield an early lead. Andy Ducros scored the only goal of the game as Kidderminster beat Scunthorpe. Southend had Damon Searle sent off, but substitute Mark Rawle scored the only goal in their home game against Darlington. Halifax recorded their first win at Lincoln since September 1964, Craig Midgley and Paul Harsley scoring their goals in a 2-1 win.

THURSDAY 16th August

Rushden & Diamonds, playing their first home league fixture are held to a goalless draw by Lincoln.

SATURDAY 18th August

Luton had Kevin Nicholls dismissed near the end of their 2-1 home win over Cheltenham, whilst Rovers were 2-1 winners at Scunthorpe thanks to Nathan Ellington and Ross Weare, who scored his first league goal. Hartlepool won 3-1 at Shrewsbury, who took a first half lead through Luke Rodgers. However, the home side had Matthew Redmile and Mark Atkins sent off after



Steve Foster scored Rovers first of the season

the break and the visitors took full advantage, scoring through Ian Clark, Kevin Henderson and Paul Stephenson. Halifax drew 1-1 at home to Exeter who had Neil Whitworth dismissed, and veteran Tony Ford rescued Rochdale as they drew 1-1 at home to Macclesfield who took the lead through Lee Glover. Hull, Swansea and Mansfield all fired blanks in goalless draws with Plymouth, Oxford and Southend respectively.

All the action came within a five minute second half spell at the Feethams where Darlington, with Goals from Mark Ford and Danny Mallenby saw Darlington gain a 2-0 home win over Kidderminster who had goalkeeper Parfait Medou-Otye sent off. Lee Bullock, Michael Basham and Lee Nogan were on target as York won 3-0 at Torquay, whilst Leyton Orient and Carlisle shared the points in a goalless affair at Brisbane Road.

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a good start

You probably couldn't have found two happier people at The Memorial Stadium after the game against Torquay, than Mike Trought and David Gilroy.

Trought made his debut for the club, against Manchester City, at Maine Road in December 1999. After a promising start to his career, things didn't quite go as planned and his last appearance, prior to the Torquay game, was back in January 2000.

However, with a good pre season

behind him, he forced his way into Gerry Francis's plans for the new campaign. 'It felt brilliant to be back in the side. I was reasonably pleased with my performance and felt I got stronger as the game went on.'

'I think we all made a nervous start to the game, but we created a couple of chances in the second half and I thought we deserved to win. It was good to get three points and, as a defender, I was pleased that we kept a clean sheet.'

A couple of last ditch challenges certainly helped to steady his nerves in the closing stages of the game. Now all he has to do is hold on to the shirt! 'It won't be easy, I know, as there is a lot of competition for places. It's nice to be in the side at the moment, but I know I'll have to work hard to keep my place.'

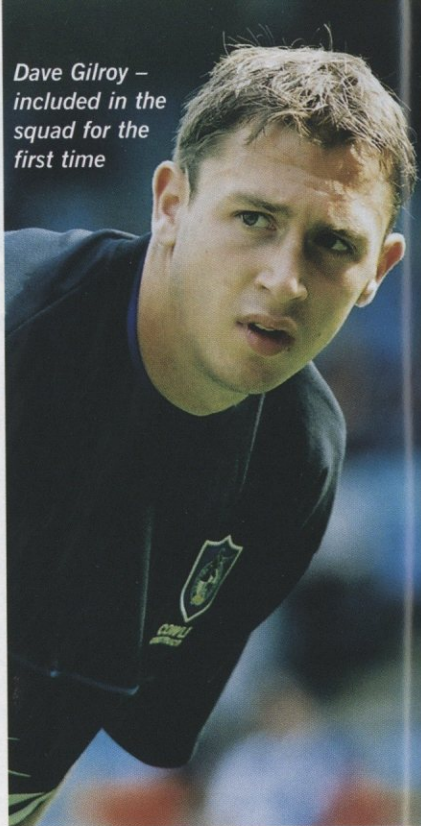
Trought is under no illusions, though, as to how tough it will be for him and his colleagues this season. 'I think every game will be a battle for us this season, just like that one. Torquay were really up for it and had a real go at us. However, our fans were brilliant. I thought we might get 8,000 to watch, but to get over 10,000 was unbelievable.'

Although he didn't get into the action, Gilroy was just happy to be included in the squad for the first time. Now into his third year as a scholar, his ability to hit the back of the net has propelled him into contention for a first team place, though the youngster still has his feet firmly on the ground.

'It was a big surprise to be included in the squad. I was quite fit when we reported back for pre season training and Phil Bater told me that if I continued to work hard I might be given a chance.'

On the strength of his scoring record in pre season friendlies, he trained with

Dave Gilroy –
included in the
squad for the
first time



the first team squad in the week leading up to the Torquay game. 'I think Gerry took notice of the number of goals I scored and that Phil put in a good word for me.'

'The experience was brilliant. Just warming up and then coming out of the tunnel with a 10,000 crowd there was something else. It was totally different to youth and reserve team games, where there are hardly any spectators. Now I've experienced that feeling, I just want more of it.'

'I was able to let my parents know that I was in the squad and they travelled up from Devon, where they were on holiday, to see the game.'

'I suppose, in a way, it was a little bit disappointing not to get on, but really it's just nice to be involved at the moment. Hopefully, I'll get an opportunity to play during the weeks ahead.'

There was no time to dwell on his weekend, however, as Monday morning saw him back to helping out in the boot room and cleaning the showers at the training ground. However, if he continues to make progress in the same way as his contemporaries Simon Bryant and Lewis Hogg, maybe those chores will soon be a thing of the past!



Mike Trought –
it's great to be
back



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Bristol Rovers

v

Luton Town



1	Scott Howie	■
2	David Pritchard	■
3	Trevor Challis	■
4	Stephen Foster	■
5	Andy Thomson	■
6	Mark Foran	■
7	Ronnie Mauge	■
8	David Hillier	■
9	Mark Walters	■
10	Kevin Gall	■
11	Ross Weare	■
12	Che Wilson	■
14	Martin Cameron	■
15	Vitalijs Astafjevs	■
16	Justin Richards	■
17	Rik Lopez	■
18	Nathan Ellington	■
19	Simon Bryant	■
20	Ryan Clarke	■
21	Lewis Hogg	■
22	Mark McKeever	■
23	Alvin Bubb	■
24	Michael Trought	■
25	Dwayne Plummer	■
27	Andrew Shore	■
28	Mark Smith	■
29	Marcus Andreasson	■
30	Scott Jones	■
32	David Gilroy	■

1	Mark Ovendale	■
2	Aaron Skelton	■
4	Matthew Spring	■
5	Russell Perrett	■
6	Marvin Johnson	■
7	Adrian Forbes	■
8	Kevin Nicholls	■
9	Stuart Douglas	■
10	Carl Griffiths	■
11	Liam George	■
13	Stuart Fraser	■
14	Andrew Fotiadis	■
15	Matthew Taylor	■
16	Carl Emberson	■
17	Emmerson Boyce	■
18	Adam Locke	■
19	Steven Howard	■
20	Peter Holmes	■
21	Richard Dryden	■
22	Dean Brennan	■
23	Jude Stirling	■
24	Scott Ward	■
25	Dean Standen	■
26	Peter Thomson	■
27	Paul Hughes	■
29	Kent Karlsen	■
32	Lee Mansell	■

Referee

Clive Penton, Sussex

Assistants

Stephen Head, Bucks

Kevin Friend, Leicester

Fourth Official

Simon Snartt, S. Glos

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