



Hatters close to spoiling the party

03/04

**Chesterfield 1
Luton Town 0**

THE Hatters came within two minutes of condemning Chesterfield to relegation to Division Three with a professional end-of-season performance.

A dull game burst into life when Glynn Hurst scored the only goal to leave Hatters in tenth place on 66 points.

It was not the first time that a late Hurst goal had sparked a pitch invasion and for Saltergate fans it was every bit as important as 1966.

Mike Newell made just one change to the side that beat Sheffield Wednesday in a game that meant everything to Chesterfield and absolutely nothing to Luton Town.

Top scorer Steve Howard picked up a knock in mid-week training, so Enoch Showunmi came in to partner Adrian Forbes up front.

Howard was rested as there was nothing at stake, but in complete contrast the Spireites occupied the third relegation spot and were three points adrift of safety. Only a win would do.

Saltergate was jam-packed with fans willing their side to pull off another great escape. The Chesterfield faithful saw their side beat Blackpool away last season to stay up and were praying for more of the same.

Predictably Chesterfield came out fighting for their Second Division lives, having all of the early play.

Defender Alan O'Hare tested Dean Brill with a stinging free kick but other than a questionable shout for handball against Emmerson Boyce in the area, the Spireites looked to be devoid of ideas.

Not that Luton looked much better, their two best efforts coming from long shots late in the half.

Forbes found himself in space 30 yards out but his powerful drive went just over and Steve Robinson's floated effort from the edge of the box did not worry Carl



■ Steve Robinson, one of the season's success stories, on the ball at Saltergate

Muggleton in the Chesterfield goal.

On the hour-mark Hatters almost rained on Chesterfield's aspirations. Steve Robinson's shot deflected into the path of Showunmi, six

yards from goal, and his goal-bound shot was somehow kept out by the on-rushing Muggleton.

The ball dribbled just wide of a post in front of the Town support.

At the other end Kevin Nicholls cleared off the line following a free kick scramble.

In the closing stages Chesterfield lay siege to Brill's goal but Hatters were filling their role of party-poopers without any real problem.

Much had been written about Luton's young stars but it was Newell's senior professionals Neilson, Robinson and Forbes, who stood out.

Driven forward by the sheer volume of noise, Chesterfield finally took all three points with Hurst's winner. A long boot from Muggleton was headed into the striker's path accidentally by Sol Davis. Hurst raced clear and kept his cool before chipping over Brill from eight yards to trigger off pandemonium as the crowd spilled on to the pitch.

Newell said: "It was difficult. We had nothing to play for but we showed a lot of desire and commitment. Chesterfield were playing for their lives and I am not unhappy with their performance."

■ Brian Swain, doyen of the Kenilworth Road press box, filed his last report yesterday after 30 years covering the Hatters. The Luton 'legend' is retiring to the Cornish coast.

LUTON TOWN: Brill; Neilson, Boyce, Coyne, Davis; Foley, O'Leary, Robinson, Nicholls; Forbes, Showunmi. Subs: Hyldgaard, Keane, Davies, Leary and Mansell

Referee: Eddie Evans (Manchester)

GOALSCORERS:
Chesterfield: Hurst (88m)
Luton:

SHOTS ON TARGET
Chesterfield: 8
Luton: 1

SHOTS OFF TARGET
Chesterfield: 8
Luton: 2

CORNERS
Chesterfield: 10
Luton: 5

OFFSIDE
Chesterfield: 8
Luton: 4

BOOKINGS
Chesterfield: Dawson (75)
Luton: Boyce (11), O'Leary (24), Coyne (64), Nicholls (83)

ATTENDANCE: 7,285

HATTERS STAR MAN:
ALAN NEILSON

Superb defensive display, almost earned a point

Division Two results

Brentford	1	Bournemouth	0
Bristol City	2	Blackpool	1
Chesterfield	1	Luton	0
Notts County	1	Oldham	1
Peterborough	1	Wycombe	1
Plymouth	2	Colchester	0
Rushden	0	Port Vale	2
Sheffield Wed	1	QPR	3
Stockport	2	Barnsley	3
Swindon	1	Hartlepool	1
Tranmere	2	Grimsby	1
Wrexham	0	Brighton	2

How they stand

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plymouth	46	26	12	8	85	41	90
QPR	46	22	17	7	80	45	83
Bristol City	46	23	13	10	58	37	82
Brighton	46	22	11	13	64	43	77
Swindon	46	20	13	13	76	58	73
Hartlepool	46	20	13	13	76	61	73
Port Vale	46	21	10	15	73	63	73
Tranmere	46	17	16	13	59	56	67
Bournemouth	46	17	15	14	56	51	66
Luton	46	17	15	14	69	66	66
Colchester	46	17	13	16	52	56	64
Barnsley	46	15	17	14	54	57	62
Wrexham	46	17	9	20	50	60	60
Blackpool	46	16	11	19	58	65	59
Oldham	46	12	21	13	66	60	57
Sheffield Wed	46	13	14	19	48	64	53
Brentford	46	14	11	21	52	69	53
Peterborough	46	12	16	18	58	58	52
Stockport	46	11	19	16	62	70	52
Chesterfield	46	12	15	19	49	71	51
Grimsby	46	13	11	22	55	81	50
Rushden & D	46	13	9	24	60	74	48
Notts County	46	10	12	24	50	78	42
Wycombe	46	6	19	21	50	75	37



■ Enoch Showunmi challenges for a high ball at Chesterfield