

It's Holmes, sweet Holmes

LUTON continued their early-season surge as Peter Holmes' strike sent Cardiff sliding to their first defeat in nine games.

The Hatters trailed as early as the ninth minute when Michael Ricketts struck for the home side.

It was the third goal in five games for the former England striker, who is on a four-month loan from Leeds in a last-ditch bid to rejuvenate his career.

But Luton shrugged aside that setback to level on the half-hour. Dean Morgan was on the spot to collect Warren Feeney's low cross and fiercely drill the ball home into the far corner.

For Morgan it was an early birthday present – he is 22 tomorrow.

The present Luton most wanted came after 57 minutes, though. Then midfielder

	CARDIFF	1	
	LUTON	2	

By **KEN GORMAN** at Ninian Park

Holmes scrambled home his first goal of the season after Steve Howard's far-post header had left the Cardiff defence wrong-footed.

Back came the home side and they went within inches of equalising when captain Darren Purse thundered a tremendous volley against the underside of the bar.

The ball bounced down inches from the goal-line as Luton rode their luck before tearing upfield and hitting the woodwork themselves. The industrious Feeney played

the ball back to Howard on the edge of the box and he smashed the ball against the post from distance.

Luton were then forced to anxiously survive a late bombardment.

Ricketts headed against the frame of post and bar before strike partner Cameron Jerome saw his shot brilliantly saved by Luton keeper Marlon Beresford.

But the Hatters held on – and are showing they are not near the top of the table by accident.

Cardiff manager Dave Jones will be disappointed to have seen his defence leak two goals after they had gone through their previous four games with clean sheets.

But that was testimony to an enterprising Luton side who were keen to attack at every opportunity.



■ **T-RICK SHOT** – striker Michael Ricketts grabs a goal for Cardiff