



Silver seal: Kevin Nicholls kisses the trophy with Tom Craddock

Defiant Luton in final protest

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY

LUTON TOWN	3
Martin 32, Craddock 70, Gnakpa 95	
SCUNTHORPE UNITED	2
Hooper 14, McCann 88	
aet, 2-2 at 90min	Att: 55,378

By David McVay

ON their first trip to Wembley, Luton Town were honoured by the presence of Field Marshal Montgomery, an echo of a not-too-distant global conflict that gave birth to Winston Churchill's famous 'V' for victory gesture.

Fifty years on from that FA Cup defeat to Nottingham Forest and stoic defiance was evident once more on their latest visit to the national stadium, in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy final yesterday.

Bottom of League Two by virtue of 30 penalty points deducted by the game's governing hierarchy, Luton beat Scunthorpe United to secure the Football League's showcase silverware in a hugely absorbing contest that was decided by substitute Claude Gnakpa's winner in the fifth minute of extra time.

Had Luton's overwhelmingly superior support, more than 40,000 Hatters fans filling one half of the ground, been able to muster themselves into the shape of two fingers, doubtless the symbolism would have been directed squarely at the dignitaries in the Royal Box. And not in a nice way.

Instead, they unfurled flags

of St George announcing "Thanks 4 Sweet FA" and booed every time mention was made of the watching Lord Mawhinney, the League chairman.

"They [the fans] were fantastic and their protests were in a fitting manner," said Luton manager Mick Harford.

Scunthorpe, striving to reclaim their Championship berth, deserved the early lead that arrived when Gary Hooper plundered his 30th goal of the season. Chris Martin levelled before half time and when Tom Craddock's 70th-minute finish nudged Luton in front their revival seemed complete.

Grant McCann's superb left-foot effort, arrowed into the top corner with two minutes remaining, carried the game into extra time where Marcus Williams' indecision was exposed by Gnakpa's pace as the Frenchman lobbed a stranded Joe Murphy.

Shorn of points by the ruling bodies, Harford will be shorn of most of his hair this week after a pre-match promise to have his head shaved by his players in the event of victory. By the time it grows back, Luton's third successive relegation may well be confirmed. In which case, will the holders be invited back to defend their trophy?

Luton Town (4-3-3): Brill; Spillane, Asafu-Adjaye, Pilkington, Emanuel; Nicholls, Hall, Keane; Jarvis (Parkin 118), Craddock (Gnakpa 85), Martin. **Subs:** Button (g), Davis, Roper. **Booked:** Nicholls, Martin.

Scunthorpe United (4-4-2): Murphy; Byrne, Pearce (Wright 85), Mirfin, Williams; Lansbury, Sparrow (Woolford 77), McCann, Hurst (Togwell 64); Hooper, Hayes. **Subs:** Lillis (g), May.

Referee: P Crossley (Kent).