

# LUTON & DUNSTABLE **Express**

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Luton Town -  
The Road to  
Wembley

Your 12-page  
Johnstone's Paint  
Trophy Final guide



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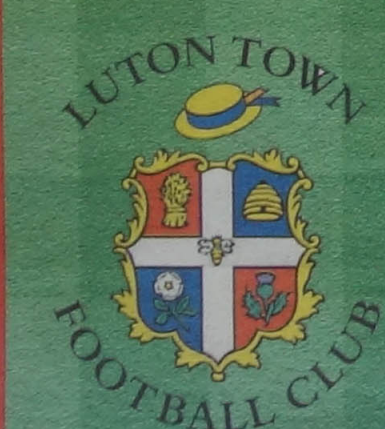
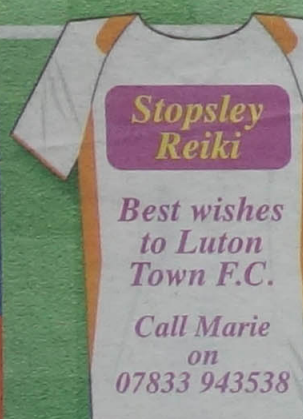
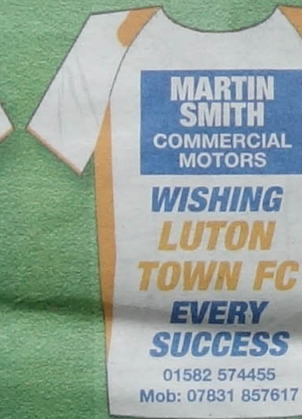


# COME ON YOU HATTERS!



## Wembley 2009

### Johnstone's Paints Trophy



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## Wembley in numbers

Captain Kevin Nicholls will hopefully face a 107 step climb to pick up the trophy. At the old Wembley there were 39. With 90,000 seats the new Wembley is the largest football stadium in the world with every seat under cover. There are 2,610 toilets. The circumference of the new Wembley is 1km. The new pitch is 4m lower than the previous pitch. There will be 35 miles of heavy-duty power cables in the stadium. Each of the two giant screens inside is the size of 600 domestic television sets. There are 680 food and beverage kiosks located across the stadium. They do not take credit or debit card payments or £50 notes. There are more than 20 lifts and 30 sets of escalators. There are 90 kitchens - the biggest one being a third of the size of the pitch. There are 7 ATM machines located around the stadium. **Plus:** Rubble from Wembley's Twin Towers was put into the foundations for the new Wembley so it's literally built on history.

# Harford's date with destiny

MANAGER Mick Harford says that Wembley holds a special place in his heart as a player and hopes there will be one more memory to add to the scrapbook if his side can claim the Johnstone's Paint Trophy.

Harford was a star of the Hatters' most successful side ever in the eighties when they were regulars in the old first division. Late in the decade the national stadium was almost a second home to the club as they won their first and only piece of silverware with the 1988 Littlewoods Cup triumph over Arsenal.

The next year the club returned to north London but were narrowly edged out by Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest side.

Now Harford has the chance to join a select band of men who have won trophies with the same club as a player and a manager.

On the prospect of the big day, he said: "I've thought about it long and hard and it is a massive honour.

"Hundred and thousands of managers down the years have never had the opportunity to lead a team out at Wembley. It's also a privilege that it's a Luton Town team.

"I'm delighted for the players more than anyone because I've played there numerous times. It's a fantastic experience which will live with the players for the rest of their lives. I want them to enjoy the experience because not only will they be there, their families will be there, so it's a fantastic day out for every one.

"It meant everything to me to win at Wembley as a player. This time it's not about me but because of the situation people are going to ask question about it. But my biggest honour was kicking off for England at Wembley. I'll never forget that day. I stood next to Peter Beardsley and I said, 'it doesn't get much better than this'.

"Obviously getting to Wembley and win-

ning the cup with Luton was a magnificent achievement for the club. To go back the next year was just as big as the year before. To get there twice on the spin was an unbelievable achievement for a club the size of Luton."

Since Harford's return last season there has been little else on his agenda apart from fire-fighting the enormous penalties imposed on the club by the game's authorities.

The manager believes that the final represents a chance for all involved with the club to escape from the trials of league football with a rare day out.

"I've been back at the football club for over 14 months," he said. "It's been tough but the fans have always been behind what we're trying to do. They're loyal, they come in their numbers despite setback after setback, and 30,000 supporters coming is a record for the new Wembley and testament to what they think and feel about the club.

"In terms of ups and downs, the last two years has mainly been downs, so maybe this is the fans' bonus. It's their day out where they can enjoy themselves and celebrate Luton getting to Wembley."

However there is still the ongoing battle to preserve the club's Football League status which the manager has said is still very much the priority.

He said: "We had a chat with the players about the final. It was a positive chat but there had to be a little bit of negativity because we don't want to go to Wembley and then get relegated. We don't want that bitter-sweet moment."

Asked if he thought winning the trophy will spur his team on to preserve their league status Harford said: "We believe so. We believe this competition has helped us.

It's obviously a bonus for the football club on the fiscal side of it.

"There's a great atmosphere about the place. The lads are buoyant, the staff are buoyant. I'm buoyant.

"It's going to be tough against Scunthorpe, they are a good outfit but we remain positive. We beat three League One teams to get to Wembley and we feel we can beat the fourth one."

HUNDRED AND THOUSANDS OF MANAGERS DOWN THE YEARS HAVE NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD A TEAM OUT AT WEMBLEY. IT'S ALSO A PRIVILEGE THAT IT'S A LUTON TOWN TEAM

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# The talk of the Town

kevinNICHOLLS

**CAPTAIN** Kevin Nicholls says that Wembley was part of a two-point plan for the Hatters at the start of the season – the other being survival.

Despite all the penalties and hardships that have been ever present during his second spell at the club the midfielder said that pre-season talks in the Hatters camp were dominated by these aims which he says are both still on track.

He believes that victory could spur on the last leg of the great escape in the league but insists it is this survival bid that is the most paramount.

"If we can get the right result at Wembley it's hopefully going to make us finish the season on a high note, taking the confidence from that into the last few games," he said.

"We had a talk at the start of the season and we said we wanted to survive and get to Wembley because we believed we had the best squad in the league. We can still survive and we've made it to Wembley so we've still got those two things to do."

"It's a great achievement to get to Wembley but if we keep stay up (in League Two) then it will just be a bonus for me."

"It will obviously be a great occasion for me and for the club that I love dearly, as well as for my family. But it will still be a bigger achievement if we stay up."

Nicholls, who has had an injury hit season, said that to get to play at Wembley will make up for being dropped by Wigan Athletic in the play-off final in 2000.

"I've only ever trained at Wembley, a very

long time ago with England under 18s, and that was the old stadium as well.

"It will be great because my kids and my parents will be there, they'll be proud. The last time I was involved in a game at Wembley was when I was at Wigan against Gillingham in the play-off final and I was dropped for the final. I was only young then and it was hard to take, so I got close to playing at Wembley but didn't."

"No-one's got a divine right to play, but hopefully this time, if I'm

playing well, it will be a good occasion."

But the experienced talisman is undaunted by a trip to the national stadium as he was part of the Town side that won the League One title and made it to the Championship where every week promised big matches.

He said: "Wembley will mean more to the younger players."

"When we were in the Championship we had big days and we've obviously played Liverpool a couple of times, we just don't have

them as frequently these days."

And the captain is not at all fazed by the capacity crowd of Luton fans travelling down the M1 for the game.

"I'm not surprised that many are going," he said. "It's going to be a good day with the amount of fans we've got going."

"When we were in the Championship the stadium was full and people were getting locked out."

"Unfortunately in the current climate, the fact we're in League Two and the way the world is at the moment, some people might not be able to come to every game. I understand that but the fans that do come have been fantastic."

**WE HAD A TALK AT THE START OF THE SEASON AND WE SAID WE WANTED TO SURVIVE AND GET TO WEMBLEY BECAUSE WE BELIEVED WE HAD THE BEST SQUAD IN THE LEAGUE**

"Especially at away games ours are the best fans. I've been at some big clubs and I can honestly say they are the best fans I've ever had, and they always will be."

"They are a credit to themselves and I always mention them because they are the most important people."

"I'm not really worried about Scunthorpe and it would be a boost to see our end full but the most important thing is the players doing the business for them and themselves. We have to be proud of ourselves and do what the manager asks."

lewisEMANUEL

**FULL-BACK** Lewis Emanuel is hoping that victory over Scunthorpe will wipe out the memory of an injury ravaged season.

The defender has only played a handful of games this term after two setbacks kept him out long term.

Now back to full fitness the Yorkshireman is hoping to stake a claim for the final.

On his injuries Emanuel said: "It's been frustrating because I've wanted to help the team. Then I came back and got injured again."

"Hopefully getting to Wembley will help erase the memory of those injuries."

"I've never been to Wembley so it's just amazing to get there, but I have had two big injuries so I've been taking every game as it comes."

Emanuel is another of the Town players who has never even been to watch a game at Wembley so the day will be extra special for him.

"I'm from the north so my family are coming down to watch the game. It will be overwhelming to play at Wembley and the highlight of my career so far, particularly if I start."

"It will mean a lot to play but we have a full squad now so everyone is fighting for their place."

"When you play football one of your dreams has got to be getting to play there and winning a trophy."

"We've got to believe we can get ourselves out of this situation in the league but the cup final will just be who is best on the day so it's important to take some good form into the final."

"We don't fear Scunthorpe. It's just another game. We go into every game wanting to win and this will be no different."

chrisMARTIN

**ON-LOAN** Norwich City striker Chris Martin believes that the team will be the beneficiaries of a twelfth man at Wembley – the crowd.

He expects the Johnstone's Paint Trophy final to be like a home game after the club sold its entire allocation of tickets.

Hatters' fans created a record for the new Wembley in doing so and the feeling is that the team can use the support to their advantage.

He said: "The excitement around the town is that great that I think we'd be able to sell out the whole ground with Luton fans."

"For the players that's encouraging because we are going to go there and it will feel like a home match for us."

"The fans have been singing about the final in every game since we beat Brighton. All the lads have been talking about it since and I think it gets magnified because of that."

"It might be the only time I ever get to Wembley. Touch wood it won't be but that's why you've got to savour it."

"I've never been there or to the old stadium so it's a totally new experience for me and hopefully it will be a good one."

"I've played in a few big grounds. Coming from Norwich they get 25,000 people but it will be the biggest at Wembley by an absolute mile."

"Wembley is the most famous stadium in the world so I think for every player it's a massive achievement. It will be a good honour to play there and I'm looking forward to it."

"We've been sorting out the tickets for families so it's always been there even though we've tried to put it to the back of

our minds. But it is such a big occasion and we can't really get away from that."

"You can't hide the excitement and you can tell that the lads have been buzzing."

With that excitement however, is a dose of reality every time he and his teammates look at the league table. Martin is wary of getting carried away with Wembley fever because they are still fighting for their lives at the foot of League Two.

He said: "I think we've always stressed that the league is a lot more important than Wembley. That's a bonus and I'm sure if you asked all the players and fans they'd much rather swap the final for survival in the Football League."

"The final could be seen as a distraction, and maybe if it had come at the end of the season it may have been a bit better. Then again, if it did come at the end of the season and we didn't stay up we'd be dejected and it would be very different."

"We've just got to stay positive in the league and in this competition and hopefully we get the right results."

What a prospect it is for a player, who now into double figures for the season, could mark his Wembley bow with a goal?

"If I was able to score it would be the highlight of my career so far but we've just got to go there, approach it right," he said.

"If I score then it will be great but if we win and I don't score then I don't really care."

keithKEANE

**HATTERS'** vice captain Keith Keane is relishing his first ever trip to Wembley and believes that the achievement of getting there will mean a chance for fans to get one over on the Football League who docked the club points.

But fan favourite Keane, who says getting on the Wembley turf will mean fulfilling the second of two boyhood dreams after playing at Anfield last season, knows that his side have won their way to the final on merit, and in spite of their league penalties.

"What's the point in getting to the final if it isn't played at Wembley?" he said. "I don't see that just because teams are in lower leagues they shouldn't get that chance."

"We've played teams in higher league and we've beaten them so we deserve to be in the final."

"Winning it would mean everything to everyone. At the minute we're all thinking about enjoying the day but the cherry on the cake would be winning."

"It would mean so much to the whole town, but we are going to give it our best and whatever happens, happens."

Turning his attention to Scunthorpe United – Town's opponents on the day – Keane said he is aware of the threat they pose.

"There's a reason why they are in the league above us. They are pushing for the play-offs and are doing well in the league," he said.

"They will be the best team we have played in the competition so we will have to be on top of our game. Anything can happen on the day."

"I'd like to think we'll give them a game. When we've got on a big pitch this season we have played our best football and we hope to use that again to our advantage. But we are not just turning up to enjoy the day. We are looking to win it."

League Two. We are close to taking double as many fans as Scunthorpe so we've got to try and use that to our advantage. It will be the highlight of a lot of people's

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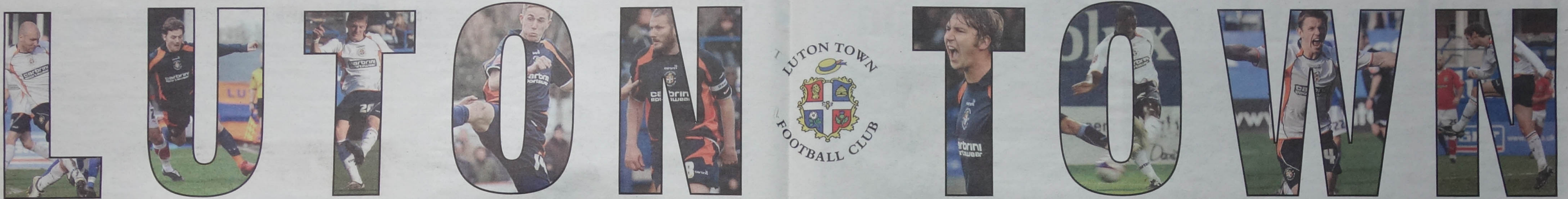


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## LUTON TOWN v SCUNTHORPE UTD

Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final  
Wembley Stadium  
April 5, 2009



# How they got there: JPT cup run

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY FIRST ROUND

LUTON were handed a bye into the second round of the competition.

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY SOUTHERN AREA SECOND ROUND

LUTON TOWN 2 BRENTFORD 2  
(LUTON WIN 4-3 ON PENALTIES)  
Tuesday October 7 2008

ROSSI Jarvis scored the decisive penalty after Luton had come from behind to level at 2-2 and take the game to spot-kicks.

But the game shouldn't have got that far as Mick Harford's men put in a domineering performance.

With Luton playing so well it would have taken a special goal or a gaffe for the Bees to score – and that is



BEES STUNG: Rossi Jarvis celebrates his winning penalty against Brentford

what came. First came a screamer courtesy of Glenn Poole who crashed home from 30 yards on 15 minutes.

Then came the gaffe as Marvin Williams caught Michael Spillane cold and nipped in to round Conrad Logan, doubling Brentford's lead on 37 minutes.

Two minutes later Chris Martin and Asa Hall jumped to head Ed Asafu-Adjaye's cross which gave Luton some hope before half-time, though there was confusion with who got the final header 'til manager Harford later said it was the striker's goal.

There was no doubt that Martin scored the equaliser nine minutes into the second half with a looping header.

Both teams had chances to win it, none more so than Hall who had a header cleared off the line in the fifth minute of added time.

The game went to penalties and though Luton youngster Harry Worley missed, on loan keeper Conrad Logan pulled off two saves to hand Jarvis the chance to win it.

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY SOUTHERN AREA QUARTER FINAL  
WALSALL 0 LUTON TOWN 1  
Tuesday November 4 2008

IN the first of three League Trophy ties against League One opposition this dull affair was settled by an 88th minute strike from the penalty hero of the previous round Rossi Jarvis.

Saddlers keeper Clayton Ince had



SADDLE UP FOR THE SEMIS: Jake Howells in action against Walsall

kept his side in the match with two first half saves, but the home side's ambition could only stretch to one effort all game from Michael Ricketts which Town keeper Conrad Logan did well to stop.

The winner came from a Luton counter-attack. Chris Martin saw an initial shot parried by Ince but the ball fell invitingly for Jarvis and the midfielder dispatched it to the relief of the travelling support who had been gearing up for a penalty shoot-out after the previous 45 minutes.

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY SOUTHERN AREA SEMI-FINAL  
LUTON TOWN 1 COLCHESTER UNITED 0  
Tuesday December 16 2008

FRENCHMAN Claude Gnackpa scored the only goal as Luton rode their luck against the U's.

Colchester hit the woodwork twice and missed a handful of golden opportunities to progress in the southern area final.

As a cup tie the game lacked spark until Wayne Andrews' shot from the edge of Colchester's box just before the half hour ricocheted off Gnackpa's leg and in to hand Town the lead.

A thunderous Scott Vernon volley rattled Luton's crossbar on 39 minutes and that was as close as the League One side came to making an impact before the break.

Luton were put under pressure straight from the restart and Johnnie Jackson again shook the Hatters' woodwork with a shot that cannoned off the post.

Ian Roper did his utmost to keep the U's at bay in one of his best performances of the season, but Luton's passage into the area final owed everything Colchester's lack of killer instinct.

In particular United's Anthony Wordsworth who, in five minutes of added time, missed a header from yards out and then saw Town keeper Conrad Logan save at his feet.

It wasn't pretty but it was a hard fought victory to set up a two-legged draw at Wembley.



COLCHESTER CLASH: Asa Hall strives forward while former Luton skipper Chris Coyne looks on

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY SOUTHERN AREA FINAL 2ND LEG  
LUTON TOWN 1 BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION 1  
(AET LUTON WIN 4-3 ON PENALTIES)  
Tuesday February 17, 2009

A DRAMATIC penalty shootout sent Luton to Wembley with on loan keeper Lewis Price acting as hero to save Jason Jarrett and Chris Birchill's spot-kicks.

The club's second spot-kick victory in the competition led to a Kenilworth Road pitch invasion as fans celebrated the prospect of their first Wembley final for 20 years.



After a hard fought first leg stalemate at the Withdean Stadium Tom Craddock got Luton off to a flying start in the second leg, capitalising on a mix-up between Seagulls keeper Michel Kuipers and defender Adam Virgo to stroke into an empty net.

The lead didn't last long and Brighton were level before the 20th minute when Jason Forster ran clear and slid a shot past Price.

The sending off of Albion's Dave Livemore (ironically now on-loan at Luton) just before half-time for a late challenge on Michael Spillane handed an advantage to Luton.

Despite the Hatters' possession and dominance they couldn't force a winner in normal time, so with the competition doing away with extra-time the game was decided on spot-kicks.

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If you are going out to the big game, get out your cameras and video phones and send us images and videos of yourself and friends enjoying the big day in and around the ground.

Send your pics and videos to our email address: [sport@LSNmedia.co.uk](mailto:sport@LSNmedia.co.uk). Please keep videos under

two minutes in length.

We hope to publish as many photos and videos as possible on our website [www.LDExpress.co.uk](http://www.LDExpress.co.uk), and the best photos will stand a chance of being published in the next edition of *Luton & Dunstable Express*.

Please make sure they reach us by 9am on Tuesday to be in with a chance of being published.

## Suits you, sir



LUTON'S players will be dressed for success when they make the trip to Wembley for the Johnstone Paint Trophy final.

The squad and the backroom staff have been measured up for their suits and the players were relieved to know that there will be no repeat of the infamous cream suits sported by Liverpool's 'Spice Boys' in the 1996 FA Cup final.

Tailors TM Lewis visited the club's training ground in Leagrave on March 20 to unveil the classy grey outfits.

Vice captain Keith Keane was happy with the choice, saying: "They're some nice suits."

"I'm glad they're not cream but I don't think anyone will ever make that mistake again."

Despite important league matches in between the fitting and the final top scorer Chris Martin said that getting measured up for his suit had started to ramp up the cup fever.

He said: "All the lads are talking about the final. The excitement is there and getting measured for our suits adds to that."

## LUTON TOWN

EST.



1885

## BETRAYED BY THE FA 2008

### Fans flag up injustice at showcase

HATTERS fan Nik Schimmel, who now lives just outside Scunthorpe, has planned for a giant 40-foot protest flag to go on display at Wembley.

The flag, made by Barnyflags.co.uk, includes an embroidered club badge with some rather choice but inoffensive wording in protest of the FA's punishment of Nik's beloved club.

It cost £510 to get made and Nik called upon fellow supporters to make a donation towards the costs of its manufacture.

Contributions to the flag fund have been received from around the world including Norway, Ireland, the Netherlands and South Korea.

Nik has been in touch with the club and will be presenting the Hatters with a cheque to be given to the youth set up at the club on behalf of all those who have

contributed towards the production of the flag.

Nik, 34, said: "It's the cup and it will be a fantastic day out."

"If the team keeps performing as they have in recent weeks then anything is possible."

Nik has followed the team since the early 1980's when he and his father arrived at Kenilworth Road on a Saturday when they were playing Tottenham on the off chance of getting a ticket.

Unfortunately they found that the game was an all ticket affair. They asked a policeman if there was anywhere they could get a ticket and the officer took them to the control room and after about ten minutes he emerged with a couple of complimentary tickets so the pair were able to watch the game. Ever since that day Nik has been hooked on the Hatters.

LOG ON TO OUR WEBSITE THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND AFTER THE GAME FOR COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE OF THE FINAL. [WWW.LDEXPRESS.CO.UK](http://WWW.LDEXPRESS.CO.UK)

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Rabia achieved a 48% pass rate for students achieving 5, A to C grades. This result is more than 200% better compared to the 2nd position Islamic school in the area, which scored a 22% pass rate for students achieving 5, A to C grades

Source: Islamic News, [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk).

"This community should be incredibly impressed that so many of its students have achieved excellent results with many exceeding expectations. We are delighted with the results this year. The commitment of these young people is outstanding and I am very proud to congratulate them. I would also like to thank the teachers who once again have shown outstanding professionalism in the quality of their teaching and their ambition to raise levels of attainment"

by Mr Creswell (Head of English)

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I'M SO PROUD AND THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT IT'S GIVEN LUTON TOWN FANS SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT, WHEN A YEAR AGO WE MIGHT NOT EVEN HAVE HAD A FOOTBALL CLUB. I'LL NEVER QUITE GET OVER HOW SHOCKED AND HURT I FEEL ON BEHALF OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY. A FOOTBALL CLUB IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF A TOWN. AND THEN ON TOP OF THAT WE HAD THE FA CHARGES ISSUED ON A TECHNICALITY DESPITE NO CORRUPTION, NO BUNGS AND NOTHING ILLEGAL. AN AGENT PAID PERFECTLY FAIRLY, IT JUST HAPPENED TO BE THROUGH ANOTHER COMPANY WHICH WAS A HOLDING COMPANY OF LUTON TOWN, AND WE GOT ANOTHER TEN POINTS. REACHING WEMBLEY IS A RELIEF THAT WE CAN CONSOLIDATE IN SUCH DARK TIMES FOR A FOOTBALL CLUB

— LUTON TOWN CHAIRMAN NICK OWEN

## Hatters will have to show steel to beat 'the Iron'

SCUNTHORPE'S road to Wembley ran a little smoother than Luton's.

All but one team they played came from League Two, a division below, whereas the Hatters had to knockout three League One teams to set up the Johnstone's Paint Trophy showpiece.

They also had home advantage in every tie until the two-legged northern area final.

The Iron started their journey back in September when they beat Notts County 2-1.

They won by the same score a month later against Grimsby Town.

Rochdale were their next victims as

United again used Glanford Park advantage to triumph.

Tranmere Rovers were Scunthorpe's only League One opposition in the northern area semi-final but they also found what tough prospects Scunthorpe are on home turf. A familiar score line of 2-1 eased United into the area final against Rotherham United.

Nigel Adkins' men brushed aside the Millers, who failed to register a goal. United won 2-0 in Lincolnshire and then clinched their first date at famous old stadium since 1999 with a 1-0 victory at the Don Valley Stadium.

### HEAD TO HEAD

THE two teams have never faced each other in knockout competition, but in their 12 league meetings Scunthorpe have just edged it with six wins over Town's four and two draws.

It has been seven years since they last faced off against each other in League Two when United beat the Hatters 3-2 at Kenilworth Road. That followed Luton handing Scunthorpe a 2-0 defeat at Glanford Park in the reverse fixture that season.

The Lincolnshire side also claimed their biggest ever league win over Luton when they won 8-1 in 1965 in the old division three.

### KEY CLASH

CENTRE-BACK George Pilkington is such a valuable player for Town. Injury has blighted large chunks of his season but when he features Luton are a much tougher prospect.

His return in March galvanised the side into their best form of the campaign and an unbeaten leading into Tuesday's game against Rotherham.

The defender will have to be at his best at Wembley to keep tabs on Scunthorpe's top scorer Gary Hooper who has netted 29 times since signing from Southend in the summer. The 21-year-old striker has Billy Sharp's club record goal tally for a single season of 32 in his sights.

The striker's efforts have helped the Iron into the League One play-off positions and helped himself into the division's team of the week after he netted twice on Saturday with two goals in the 3-0 win over Colchester United.

## Bring me sunshine...



LOG ON TO [WWW.LDEXPRESS.CO.UK](http://WWW.LDEXPRESS.CO.UK) FOR REPORTS, PICTURES & MORE

'Road To Wembley'. Words: James Cunliffe. Design: Tom Leech. Pictures: Gareth Owen, Keiron Hillhouse

## Come on you Hatters...

**WIGMORE FLOORING** wishes all the boys the best of luck for Sunday

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