

Hatters News

Issue No. 5

Summer 1995



A Luton 'signing' fans will see a lot of this season is new mascot Happy Harry, who plans to put in an appearance at every home game. One of Harry's first jobs was to welcome five-year-old Jack Holland, a young fan from Welwyn Garden City, and introduce him to his hero, Scott Oakes. Scott was only too happy to meet a brave young man who has undergone serious heart surgery and now shows signs of developing into an all-round sportsman.

Inside your free Hatters News



Match-day
with new
manager
Terry
Westley



The
thoughts
and
plans of
Chairman
David
Kohler



Two-page
action shot
of
Bulgarian
Bontcho
Guentchev

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Hatters News
 Published on
 behalf of Luton
 Town FC

Produced and Edited by
Michael K Howard Ltd,
 433 Luton Road,
 Harpenden

Editorial Contributions
 from Simon Oxley

Photographs
 Andy Handley

Design and Layout by
Calibra Marketing, 96
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Hatters happy as they join the Pony (Kit) express!

The Hatters kicked off the new season in new kit after securing a deal in the region of £250,000 - the biggest in the club's history - with Pony, one of the world's leading suppliers of sports outfits.

The four-year deal means that Luton become the first Division One club to team up with the sportswear giants. They join Premiership sides Tottenham Hotspur, West Ham, Coventry City and Southampton under the Pony banner. Town director Chris Green said: "The four-year agreement is a major boost for the club, and a further vote of confidence in our ambitious plans for the future."

"To team up with a company of Pony's stature in the world of sport can only be of benefit to us. They have designed home and away kits for us and we have been very impressed by their attitude. The home strip is the traditional white shirt with blue sleeves, blue shorts and blue and white hooped socks. The away kit is black and orange vertically striped shirts with black shorts and black socks."

Football clubs are often criticised for changing their strips too frequently, at the expense of supporters, but Mr Green insists that the Pony agreement is in the best interests of the club. "I hope our supporters will appreciate the continuity benefits to them and to the club that a four-year deal brings. The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages."

He said there will be no change of kit for the next two seasons.

He went on: "We reverted from a

brand-name supplier at the start of last season and produced a kit that was sold under our own Hatters logo. That was a success in terms of giving us an exclusive product but the opportunities from this agreement with Pony will give us the benefit of High Street sales as well as from our own club shop.

"We haven't always been able to cope with demand from one outlet and

I know many people were disappointed last Christmas. Now our shirts will be much easier to buy. "Apart from the kit, Pony will be supplying a wide range of items for our shop which we want to become a "one-stop" shop for the community. Pony are also sponsoring one of the stands at Kenilworth Road."

A number of leading companies

approached the Town club and Pony's managing director David Barrington said how pleased he was to have secured the deal. "Luton is an ambitious club with a lot of promising ideas, and the style of football they provide is always appreciated."

Here's hoping that the new kit brings with it a good portion of good luck.

USA sponsor Town for two more years

Universal Salvage Auctions are continuing their sponsorship of the Hatters. They have been the club's major sponsors for the last four years and the latest agreement, worth £175,000 over the next two seasons, will take their investment in the club to close on half a million pounds.

Their chairman, Cliff Bassett, who is also a member of the Town FC board, said: "Universal Salvage Auctions is a nationwide organisation, with many branches round the country. Our association with the football club has allowed our name to reach a really wide audience and has raised our public profile considerably."

"This season will be our fifth year of association with Luton Town and we are delighted with the results so



CLIFF BASSETT: delighted with the results of his company's sponsorship

far. Luton is very much a family club and our association with them will prove very advantageous in our development.

"The deal doesn't just mean we have our names on the team shirts and by integrating our two organisations Luton Town FC and Universal Salvage will be able to help many charitable causes and local promotions."

The sponsorship announcement co-incided with the new kit agreement with Pony and will be of enormous help to the club which cannot survive on gate receipts alone.

Universal Salvage Auctions, based at Wootton in the north of the county, is the United Kingdom's largest motor and commercial vehicle salvage company.

MATCH DAY WITH THE NEW MANAGER



A tough baptism but confidence is undented

The first match of the season provides a tense 90 minutes for any manager. It was especially so for Luton boss Terry Westley when his side took on the Canaries of Norwich City for it was his first League game as the man in charge.

Photographer Andy Handley's pictures show Terry just before, during and immediately after his first tough baptism of fire.

Unfortunately tactical plans for that big game were thrown out of gear when experienced attackers Dwight Marshall and Scott Oakes failed last-minute fitness tests and Terry was forced to field a rearranged side.

In the end the Town went down 3-1 to a spirited Norwich side determined to return to the Premiership at the first time of asking.

Despite that disappointment Terry remains optimistic. Promoted to the top job from youth coach when David Pleat left for Sheffield Wednesday, his career started at Ipswich Town, with their youth team. Later he played for Bury St Edmunds and Diss Town before returning to Portman Road for coaching duties.

He arrived at Luton when Pleat invited him to become youth team coach. When the managership opportunity presented itself he jumped at the chance. "I've got a year to prove myself" he said "and I've set myself an obvious target-promotion."

He made several close-season signings to increase both the playing strength and the competition for first-team places. He is under no illusions about the difficulty of the job, or the fact that managership is a precarious occupation.

At 35 he is one of the youngest managers in the game but he has a confident outlook. "I honestly believe promotion is a realistic aim. I know I have players of genuine quality. Given good luck with injuries and the right support from the fans I think we will do well."

"It would be foolish to be over-confident or unduly pessimistic after just a handful of games. There's an awfully long way to go yet."

Terry Westley is a fully qualified carpenter who built his own house. Now he believes he can build a side worthy of promotion.

Every true Luton supporter will be behind him as he works to make that dream come true.



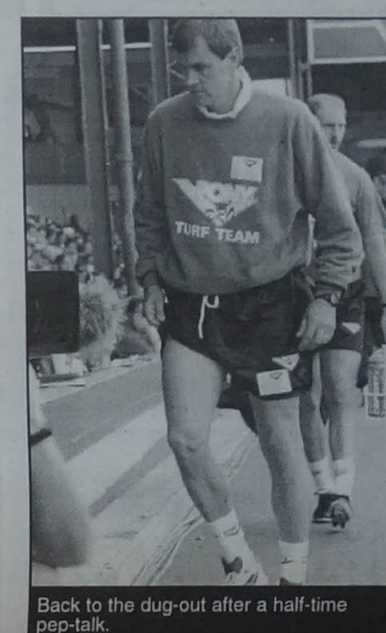
A few minutes before the kick-off Terry and Secretary Cherry Newbery wait outside the treatment room. Will Scott Oakes and Dwight Marshall pass fitness tests? They didn't!



Minutes to go but there's still time to sign an autograph for a young fan, escorted by Jan Bavister of the catering staff.



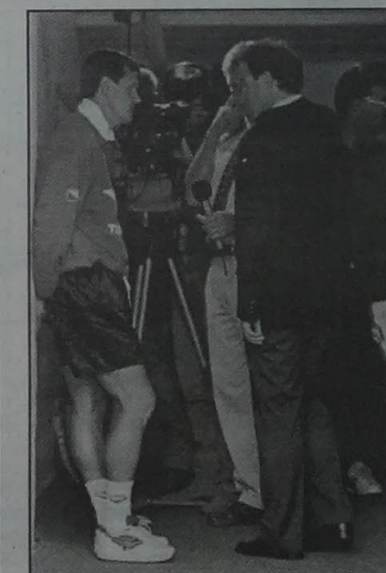
Tension mounts during the game. Terry wills his men to greater efforts.



Back to the dug-out after a half-time pep-talk.



Nail-biting time as Norwich take command.



The first game's over, but now the interviews begin.

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MEET THE NEW MEN WITH A MISSION

Five fresh faces to keep everyone on their toes

It's said that new brooms sweep clean. Whether or not that will be the case with Terry Westley in charge at Luton time alone will tell, but he certainly wasted no time in introducing new blood to the club.

Five new signings in just about as many weeks will ensure keen competition for first-team places and that can't be a bad thing.

THE NEWCOMERS

Back in the Luton fold six years after he left Kenilworth Road is 27-year-old mid-fielder David Oldfield who started his career here in the junior ranks and made a two-goal senior debut in a 2-1 win in the Sinod Cup against Everton in February 1988. He scored again in his full League debut in a 2-1 home win over Watford in May of that year and went on to make 29 League appearances, scoring four goals.

David, who played for England Under 21's although he was born in Australia, was transferred to Manchester City in 1989 for a fee of £600,000. He made 26 League appearances for City and in a memorable local derby against United he scored twice in a 5-1 victory.

His next move was to Leicester where he made 200 appearances but last season he was loaned to Millwall and played for the London club in the 1-1 draw at Kenilworth Road less than six months ago.

Westley said: "We were delighted when he became available at Leicester. He is a quality player with experience at the highest level. His career has been a bit 'up and down' in recent seasons but I believe it will be given a real boost by playing for us."

Oldfield was equally pleased to 'come home' to Luton. "There are a lot of new faces and ambitious players here and I am happy to be one of them. If we can get off to a good start, and show consistently good home form there's no reason we can't achieve a great deal."

A touch of real international glamour comes with Bontcho Guentchev who signed after being given a surprise free transfer by Ipswich Town. Bontcho is a Bulgarian star who played in their national team in the World Cup last year.

"It's a real feather in our cap to attract a player of Bontcho's quality to Luton. We believe he is going to score a lot of goals and his experience with one of the leading teams in world football is bound to help us" says the Town manager.

The Bulgarian's arrival here has increased Luton's profile in Eastern Europe for the Bulgarian media will follow his progress avidly. Interviews with club staff have already been featured on the BBC World Service for Bulgaria.

A few days before the start of this season a Football League tribunal decided that the Hatters would have to pay Burnley a £750,000 transfer fee for their talented skipper Steve Davis. That fee might well turn out to be a real bargain for Terry Westley describes him as "one of the best and most competitive centre-halves in the division."



David Oldfield

Steve is 26 and has had experience with Southampton and Notts County, but the bulk of his career has been with Burnley. When they were relegated to Division Two he wanted to stay in Division One. Luton scouts had been watching him for some time so they moved in for him immediately.

Steve is a central defender with a happy knack of scoring goals. He hit the back of the net 22 times during his spell at Burnley and says "I hope I can carry on my scoring habits at Luton. I scored eight last term and always like to move up when we are taking corners or free kicks around the box."

"I was very pleased to join Luton because they have a reputation for playing good football."

Graham Alexander was Mr Westley's first signing and he cost £100,000 from Scunthorpe. The Luton coaching staff had been watching the 23-year-old for two seasons and could see that he has great potential.

Graham said that he was 'really shocked' when the Town moved in for him but the prospect of moving up two divisions was a huge incentive for him to move south. "When I heard that the Hatters wanted me I just couldn't get to Luton fast enough!"

He impressed in pre-season training



Steve Davis

games and was described as 'man of the match' when the Town took on a Tottenham team earlier this month.

Last but by no means least is Gavin Johnson a mid-fielder who, like Bontcho Guentchev, joined the Town from Ipswich on a free transfer.

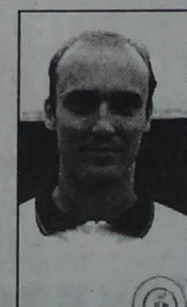
He is 24 and joined the Portman Road staff straight from school. In all he made 160 first team appearances for the East Anglian club and played in 22 Premier League games last season. He scored 16 goals for them during his stay there, including the one that sealed the Division Two championship in 1992.

"I'm looking forward to the new challenge" he said. "I enjoyed my football at Ipswich in the Premiership and I want to play in the top division again."

Luton were also hoping to sign defender Darren Patterson from Crystal Palace. The suggested fee was £200,000.



Graham Alexander



Gavin Johnson



L to R: Bontcho Guentchev, Gavin Johnson, Graham Alexander, Steve Davis, David Oldfield

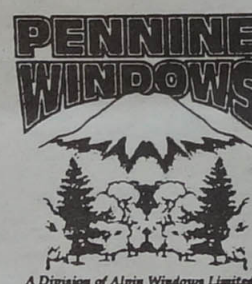
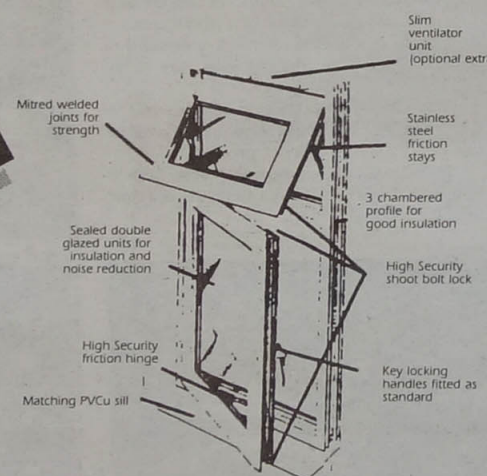
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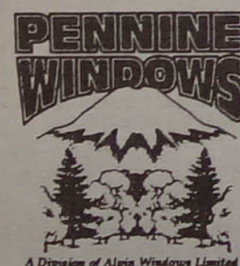
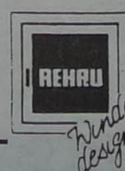
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Your View

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If you want to have your say, or get something off your chest in the next edition of Hatters News, write to "Your View" Hatters News, c/o 433 Luton Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 3QE. All letters must include the writer's name and address but these will not be printed if the writer so wishes.

SIR: I'd like to express my views about the controversial Kohlerdome plans. Personally I like it at Kenilworth Road, and I don't believe I'm alone in that. It's what I call a 'cosy' ground. It can accommodate all the fans that want to watch the Hatters.

I admit that if they get into the Premiership the crowds will be bigger but the Kohlerdome would take years to build so if Luton win promotion this season (we all hope so) the new stadium would not be anywhere near ready.

Sure there are problems at Kenilworth Road. It's hard to find a parking space etc, but a lot of work has been done on it and while it is certainly not a Kohlerdome it is comfortable and friendly.

I have been going to Kenilworth Road for many seasons. I've been half crushed in the days when they used to attract really big gates and I've been when gates were pitifully low, but I've always found it friendly, and I feel that lots of other fans share my views.

Name and address received

Not sorry to say Goodbye...

William Martin
Address received.

SIR: I wonder if I was the only fan who wasn't too sorry when David Pleat left Kenilworth Rd for a Premiership job in Sheffield. David did good work for Luton and managed some good transfer deals but we are still in Division One aren't we? Personally I think it was time for a change. I am sure he will rejuvenate Sheffield Wednesday (where he will not be obliged to sell all his best players all the time) but a fresh face at the helm at Luton might well have the same effect here.

I say good luck, and welcome, to Terry Westley. He may be something of an unknown in the managerial world but he has been given a wonderful chance by Luton. I've been impressed by the signings he has made. If he can inspire all his players to give of their very best in every match I'm sure we are in for a very good season.

H.A. Bell Luton Road Dunstable

Star Players earn far too much

SIR: According to accountants Touche Ross English football is heading for financial disaster because of the huge transfer fees so many clubs pay out - to say nothing of the ridiculously high wages they pay their players.

You don't have to be an accountant to work that out. I've been saying for years that transfer fees are crazy and the wages paid to some players border on the obscene. Just think a 'star' with a Premiership club can 'earn' as much in a week as the average fan earns in a year. Yet the player's wages are paid by the poorer fan! That has to be crazy.

I'd like to see a maximum transfer fee of a million pounds, or a maximum sum of three million pounds to be spent by any club in a year. As for wages, £2,000 is more than enough each week for any player, no matter how good he might be. Of course, my criticisms don't include Luton. They've never had

.. But I was

SIR: I'd like to put on record my dismay at seeing David Pleat leaving Luton for Sheffield Wednesday. I, and a lot of my friends, think he was the best manager Luton have ever had. He never had a lot of money to spend but he proved himself to be a wily negotiator and he was, and still is, widely admired for the brand of football he insisted upon. This letter is not knocking his successor Terry Westley who at this stage is a bit of an unknown quantity. I wish him every success but I think it only right that David Pleat should be thanked for everything he did for the Luton club.

"A supporter for 30 years"
Address received.

Wanted a Wednesday tie

SIR: The odds against it happening are very great but wouldn't it be interesting if Luton could be drawn against Sheffield Wednesday in the Cup (to be played at Luton). If that happened we supporters could compare notes about the teams. I think Luton would do well because many of their players would know how David Pleat would want his new side to play and could work out a plan to foil them. I don't suppose it will happen though.

Darren Warren
"Luton fan"

My old strip suits me

SIR: I cannot understand the kerfuffle caused by some fans because the Hatters have changed their strip again. I have the old strip which I wear at matches (and on other occasions too). I certainly won't be discarding it. I will continue to wear it proudly. It still shows, quite obviously, that I am a Hatters supporter and, anyway, there's not a lot of difference between the old kit and the new kit as far as I can see.

Throw my present shirt away? You must be joking. I'll wear it till it falls apart. Then I might think about buying a new one!

Alan Ferrier
Address received.

A breath of fresh air

SIR: I'm not Mystic Meg by any means but I would just say at this stage that it looks to me as if our new manager, Terry Westley, has brought a breath of fresh air to the club. I cannot remember a season starting with so many new players on the Hatters' books. Obviously I don't know whether all the new signings will be a success, whether they will blend and so on but at least there are new faces for us to get used to and that's a good thing.

I hope they all do well, hit a winning streak quickly and give Terry Westley a first season that he will remember happily for the rest of his career.

Jamie Fox
Amphill

This letter was received before the season started

Editor

Expert Advice

Tough words, but he leaves you in no doubt. "We've sought expert advice, consulted professional engineers and planners about how to overcome projected traffic problems and we are satisfied that any perceived difficulties can be overcome" he says.

If the ambitious venture gets the go-ahead where will the money, estimated to be at least £30million, come from? "Several sources, but we would certainly apply to the National Lottery for a good proportion of it."

However, apart from the ongoing Kohlerdome discussions there are more immediate matters to occupy his mind. Like the current season and reflections on what has not been, by any means, a quiet summer.

The club lost a manager dubbed by many as the best the Town has had. "I wasn't at all happy about the way David Pleat departed, but that's water under the bridge now. He's gone, we've won

Blackpool born

Perhaps it's not surprising that football should be so important to him for he was born in Blackpool and spent many of his formative years in the house that was once the home of the great Stanley Matthews. His parents still live in it and are quite used to Blackpool tour buses stopping outside while the guide tells passengers about its illustrious past. In fact Mr Kohler senior, "who looks a bit like Sir Stan", sometimes appears on a bedroom balcony, bounces a football and

Relaxed

David Kohler enjoys life and patently enjoys his job. He is the first Luton Town chairman to devote all his working hours to it. Most of his predecessors saw it as a part-time occupation to be shared with running other business interests.

He has taken more than his fair share of flak in the past but has never let that throw him off course. "I've been booed by spectators. I've been misquoted by reporters and sometimes what I've said has been twisted out of all proportion, but overall I'd say I, and the club, have had a pretty fair deal from the Press."

Whatever has been said about him, and whatever may be said in the future, David Kohler obviously finds the chairman's seat very comfortable. He succeeds in presenting a relaxed face to the public and believes the 'buzz' about the club and its prospects were more encouraging in the weeks leading up to this season than anything he can remember since he has been in command.

Like all Town fans he hopes that buzz will continue and gather even more momentum. If it doesn't it won't be for lack of effort. A great deal of that emanates from his office as he plots a path to a stadium that will be the envy of everyone in English football.

MEET THE DIRECTORS NO. 4: CHAIRMAN DAVID KOHLER

I see my job as a youthful fantasy come true



David Kohler with Coz, his four-legged friend. Picture by David Langfield.

Say what you like about Hatters Chairman and Managing Director David Kohler (and in recent years a lot has been said!) but never call him mealy-mouthed.

David Kohler doesn't mince words. He doesn't hide behind a smokescreen of platitudes, certainly doesn't suffer fools gladly and has a determined sense of purpose.

Those strengths - or failings depending on your point of view - didn't win him any popularity polls a couple of years ago. However, he was strong enough to suffer the slings and arrows that might have caused a lesser man to clear his desk and opt for a less controversial life. Today, happily, the verdict of the majority of the erstwhile disenchanted is that 'Kohler's OK.'

He still has his critics. Namely those who oppose his dreams of seeing a new super stadium built alongside Stockwood Park by Junction 10 of the M1. "I understand what the critics are saying but we've got to move from the present site and the one we are looking at is the only suitable place in the area. If we don't get it then we'll leave and move up the road to Milton Keynes. No ifs or buts. It's as clearcut as that. We build by the M1 or we go."

compensation and we have a new man at the helm."

So why was Terry Westley chosen for the key job?

"Simple. I believe that staff at a football club are no different from staff elsewhere. If they see a vacancy occur and realise it can be filled from inside then that must be good for morale. We promoted Chery Newbery from the ticket office when our secretary left. We've promoted Terry from our coaching staff. Now it's up to him. He alone will choose the team and he will live or die by his decisions. He's had money to spend and there's more available, although I think five newcomers is enough to be going on with at the moment!"

"There's another reason we chose Terry. Appoint a man from another club and it's a safe bet he'll want to bring his own coach and two or three of his favourite players. What starts as a single 'signing' turns out to cost a fortune!"

Like many observers of the game David Kohler is concerned about the ever-growing size of transfer fees. "They are absolutely barmy and make me fear for football's future. Of course we join in playing that particular game. We get as much as we possibly can when we sell a player - look at the money we received for John Hartson."

"But it's a game that is going to end in tears. Even Premiership clubs with wealthy chairmen prepared to lay out millions of their own cash are going to suffer in the end and many smaller clubs will go to the wall. It's inevitable."

He cites the example of Luton paying up to half a million pounds for a player. "That's more than a season's gate takings for us, and then there's his wages on top of that. That's why we have to sell more often than I would like and earn as much as we can from other sources."

Another summer talking point was David Preece's decision to seek a free transfer. "It was the way he went about things that really upset me. Once it was clear that he wanted to leave we wouldn't have stood in his way, but we did think we were entitled to a fee. We've appealed against the recent tribunal decision and I think a lot of reasonable people share our view. We always treated Preece fairly and paid him well. He didn't do at all badly out of his testimonial and it's sad that his association with us should end this way." With worries like that to wrestle with one wonders whether he ever thinks about

Blackpool born

Perhaps it's not surprising that football should be so important to him for he was born in Blackpool and spent many of his formative years in the house that was once the home of the great Stanley Matthews. His parents still live in it and are quite used to Blackpool tour buses stopping outside while the guide tells passengers about its illustrious past. In fact Mr Kohler senior, "who looks a bit like Sir Stan", sometimes appears on a bedroom balcony, bounces a football and

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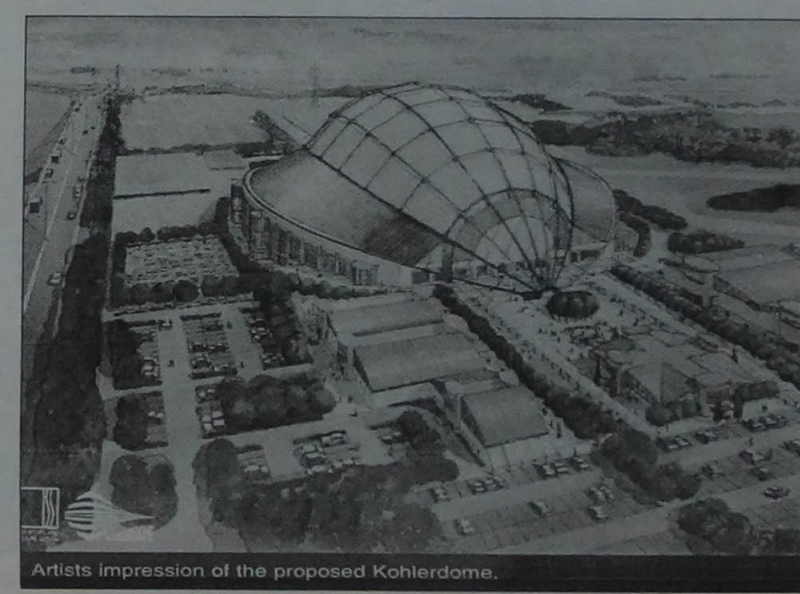
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Artists impression of the proposed Kohlerdome.

Bontcho brings a touch of World Cup class



The Luton manager was delighted when he persuaded Bulgarian international Bontcho Guentchev to join the Town. "It's a fine feather in our cap" he said. Luton are looking to Bontcho for a hatful of goals this season. He played for his country in the 1994 World Cup Finals in the United States and helped his country reach the semi-finals of the World's most prestigious football competition. He opened his account for the Hatters by scoring from the penalty spot in the first match of the season against Norwich City when this picture of him in action was taken. Guentchev's previous English club was Ipswich Town.

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What do you know? Test your soccer knowledge

There's no doubt about it - Luton Town Football Club fans are certainly knowledgeable when it comes to recalling facts about their favourite club, and football in general. Proof of that is contained in the number of correct entries for the quizzes we run regularly in Hatters News. Most of the entrants in the Spring edition contest scored ten out of ten so we had to draw the winning entry from the straw boater! First name out was Mr P Vass, of Pulloxhill and he wins two tickets for the League game of his choice at Kenilworth Road this season.

The correct answers were: 1, Liverpool; 2, Halifax Town; 3, John Hartson; 4, Watford; 5, 1905; 6, Nottingham Forest; 7, Bruce Rioch; 8, Iwerth Hughes (Wales); 9, Joe Coen; 10, Allan Brown.

Now try your luck with the following questions. Again, there will be a prize of two tickets for a League game at Kenilworth Road for the first all-correct entry drawn out of the hat. Send your answers, with your name and address, to SOCCER QUIZ (AEM), HATTERS NEWS, 433 LUTON ROAD, HARPENDEN, HERTS, AL5 3QE. Entries must be received by October 7, 1995.

- One of Luton's finest post-war defenders has the unusual record of being capped by Eire and Northern Ireland. Name him.
- Which post-war Luton player was a regular county championship cricketer?
- A post-war Luton player was appearing in the Town's reserve side when he was capped by Scotland. Who was he?
- From which Italian club did Paul Gascoigne return to British soccer?
- Name the Luton stalwart who had a benefit match against Manchester United this year.
- What was the score in that game?
- Who scored the Everton goal that won them the FA Cup in May?
- Ex Luton star Bruce Rioch, as manager of Bolton Wanderers, took them to the final of the Coca Cola Cup last season. Which club did they meet in the final?
- In the late 70's and up to the mid 80's Luton winger David Moss was a regular scorer, often from the penalty spot. From which club did he join the Hatters?
- He started his working life as a miner. He joined Luton from West Ham and later captained them. He became a Town FC director and later stepped in for a spell as acting manager. Later he became club chairman and finally president. Who was he?

THE GREEN GREEN GRASS OF HOME...



Everyone who has seen the Kenilworth Road pitch this summer has made the same comment: "It's looking better than it has ever done."

That is a fact. It is also a tribute to the hard work of groundsman Richard Bird and his assistants who have transformed the playing area. There can be few grounds in the country with a greener, grassier playing surface...and that includes Wembley!

The drought conditions haven't helped Richard so he has had to resort to the water sprays on the edge of the ground, as this picture shows.

Richard has been with the club for four seasons. Before he joined the Hatters he was groundsman at Tilsforth Golf Club.

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It was goodbye from him - and goodbye from them...

Although there were some warm 'hellos' for several new faces at Kenilworth Road during the summer there were several 'goodbyes', too.

The two best-known men to leave were David Pleat, who quit the manager's office to take over at Sheffield Wednesday (see separate story on this page) and long-serving mid-field man David Preece who demanded a free transfer to end more than 10 years with the Hatters. The Town were hoping to collect a transfer fee for him but a tribunal came down in Preece's favour and he eventually signed for Derby County.

Another favourite who will no longer grace the Luton stage is Paul Telfer, who was transferred to Premiership club Coventry City for a fee comfortably in excess of a million pounds - decided by a tribunal.

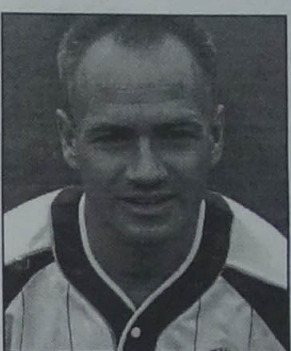
Four more players left after being given free transfers at the end of last season. Perhaps the



Paul Telfer

unluckiest of these was Tony Adcock, a striker who joined the Town a year ago from Peterborough. The management had high hopes of him doing well in the Town's colours for he came with a reputation as a highly skilled, dangerous goal-scorer. Unfortunately that wasn't to be. Tony was plagued with a string of injuries that restricted him to just three substitute appearances for the first team. Now he has joined Colchester and we wish him a successful, injury-free spell there.

Jamie Campbell spent much of last season on loan to Mansfield



David Preece

Town and Cambridge. He has since moved to Third Division Barnet while Martin Williams, who had a spell on loan at Colchester last term, has signed for Reading, who won a lot of admirers during their First Division campaign last season.

Greg Rioch, son of ex-Luton star of the 1960's, Bruce Rioch, was unable to make the breakthrough into the Town's first team squad and he was given a free transfer. At the time Hatters News went to press his name was being linked with Leyton Orient. His father, Bruce, is now manager of one of England's most famous and



Tony Adcock

well respected clubs - Arsenal. When Bruce left Luton it was to join Aston Villa in a sensational move that hit the headlines in all the sports pages, for the £100,000 fee Villa paid was a record for the Town. Later on Bruce played for Derby, Everton, Birmingham, Sheffield United and Torquay United. He also captained Scotland and won 24 international caps.

He will always be remembered as one of the best of the crop of Luton's 'home-grown' stars and Luton fans will watch his progress at Arsenal with keen interest.

FOR SO LONG A TARGET FOR THE 'BIG FISH'



David Pleat's move to Sheffield ended months of speculation

DAVID PLEAT left Luton Town FC to take up the reins at Sheffield Wednesday this summer. The Luton board were less than happy

with the way in which he departed but it would be unfair to a man responsible for a significant chapter in the club's history if his time with the Town went without comment.

Pleat's is a story worth telling for his career has been an interesting one. It has not been without moments of controversy and he has had to work hard for his success.

Nottingham born, he played for England at schoolboy and youth level but when he joined Forest as a relative youngster he was unable to win a regular first-team place and moved to Luton in 1964.

During a three-year spell here he met and married a Luton girl. As a player he was unlucky with injuries. After leaving the Hatters he had spells at Shrewsbury, Exeter and Peterborough before joining Nuneaton Borough as player-manager.

Next came a spell of unemployment that ended when Harry Haslam, then in charge of affairs at Kenilworth Road, invited him to become his general assistant. He was quickly promoted to the coaching staff, becoming chief coach in 1977. When Harry Haslam moved on to Sheffield United Pleat moved up to manager. He settled in quickly and looked like becoming a permanent until Tottenham Hotspur beckoned.

After a spell in London during which he brought glory to Tottenham his next stop was Leicester City. His subsequent return to Luton was spiced with

controversy for he replaced former Town winger Jim Ryan who, though not in charge for long, led a successful fight against relegation and was extremely popular with the fans.

But it didn't take long for Pleat to re-establish himself. It wasn't all plain sailing but his shrewd wheeling and dealing in the transfer market, and his insistence on his team playing attractive, open football confirmed him as a manager worthy of a place in the upper echelons of the game.

His soccer knowledge and his ability to put it into words saw him invited to comment regularly on football on television and radio. Towards the end of his last spell at Luton he was asked to take charge of an Endsleigh League Under-21 side that played in Italy.

He was also the subject of very serious attempts by Tottenham Hotspur and Aston Villa to lure him from the more modest surroundings of Bury Park.

Although he resisted these it soon became obvious that the 'big fish' in the Premiership would continue to look in his direction whenever a vacancy arose. While highly flattering to the man it was also bound to have an unsettling effect on him, the club and its supporters. So it was not altogether surprising when he decided to join Sheffield Wednesday and put an end to all the speculation.

This move to the wealthy Yorkshire club caused some bad feeling at the Luton end and there were serious threats to sue. Happily, in the end it was agreed to await the outcome of an FA tribunal's findings on the amount of compensation Sheffield Wednesday should hand over. A figure of £150,000 was agreed as a fair price for a man who has been described as the most successful manager in the Town's long history.

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When Luton first caught "Football Fever"



Not quite a super 'Kohler-dome', nor does it compare very well with the present Kenilworth Road facilities.

But this was how the Luton fans watched their team play in the years leading up to the First World War. In the last edition of Hatters News we published a picture of spectators during that era. Now we show you what was keeping them so interested. According to the book from which this picture was taken and which was published in 1907, "Luton has been bitten very strongly with the football fever...due to the adoption of professionalism by the Luton Town Football Club and Athletic Co Ltd." The caption continued: "Under the fostering care of the Beds FA the winter pastime has progressed very appreciably."

There's a lot been happening since I was last asked to write an article for Hatters News. David Pleat has moved on to Sheffield Wednesday and Luton have a new manager - so far relatively untried and untested.

I wish Terry Westley the very best of luck and support. I'm sure he deserves his new position. I'm very glad the Hatters decided to try what might be called 'new blood' rather than do what so many clubs do: jump on to the managerial roundabout and employ a man who has just been sacked from another club for being unsuccessful. That always makes me wonder!

It's a habit they probably picked up from Prime Ministers who make promises about Cabinet changes and then simply move a Minister who has made a botch of one important job into another so that he (or she) can make an equally unsuccessful stab at running another important Department.

But enough about that. The big talking point recently has been the proposed new 'Kohlerdome' the club hope will be built on the southern outskirts of the town.

It's a tremendously ambitious project and there are a good many hurdles to overcome before it becomes reality. I wonder if I'll see it completed in my lifetime! I can see both sides of the argument that is raging.

There's no doubting that a super stadium would bring prestige to the area for, from what I can understand, it would be used for many other purposes apart from football. I'm told it could be used for rock festivals and suchlike (I hope it's soundproof!). It's a shame the plans don't include a proper theatre that Luton so sadly lacks.

On the other side of the coin I can very well see the case against it, brought by people who live in the vicinity, and I don't blame them one bit for being NIMBY's. The possibility of traffic congestion also springs easily to mind. However good the road and parking arrangements are I can't help but believe there will be problems in that respect as the site is so near the M1 and Luton's

Back to the days when we threw coppers to the band

Another trip down Memory Lane with a man who has supported the Hatters for more than 50 years.

other main route to London.

We shall see. Meanwhile I would like to devote the rest of this article to my own memories of the Kenilworth Road ground, which these days is deemed unsuitable for soccer and suchlike in the 21st century.

Maybe it's not, but people of my generation will remember the crowds, the atmosphere, the excited anticipation and the friendly mingling of opposing fans in those not-so-far-off days when rowdiness was practically unknown and they didn't have to be segregated.

I was present in 1959 when the ground gate record was achieved. Hard to believe, but more than 30,000 of us crammed in to watch Allan Brown score against his old club, Blackpool, in a Cup replay on the way to Wembley.

I was one of the 25,802 fans who cheered ourselves hoarse when the Hatters

thrashed mighty Sunderland 8-2 in 1955. Nine years earlier I had witnessed what, in my opinion, was the biggest come-back that ever took place on the Kenilworth Road stage. The Town recovered from being three goals down against a star-studded Newcastle United and emerged 4-3 winners after a streamlined second half display.

These are special memories of special games, but when I was a young man all the games at Kenilworth Road were special! I can still see, in my mind's eye, the Christmas Day and Boxing Day games in the late Forties and early Fifties. Everyone would be in a happy frame of mind and the air would be full of cigar smoke as men puffed away at cigars bought as a special Christmas treat.

Those were the days when players like Gordon Turner, Jesse Pye, Syd Owen, George Stobart and Bob Morton weaved their own moments of magic.

Those were also the days when the Luton Band entertained before the game and again at half-time; their helpers parading round the touchlines with a huge sheeted contraption into which fans would toss their spare coppers. Young men carrying trays of chocolate bars would follow them, throwing their tuppenny treats with uncanny accuracy to fans standing yards away on the terrace.

If you were thirsty, or cold, you might have been lucky, if you could force your way through the crowd, to snatch a cup of very strong tea, and maybe a meat pie, from a stall standing adjacent to the Bobbers Stand.

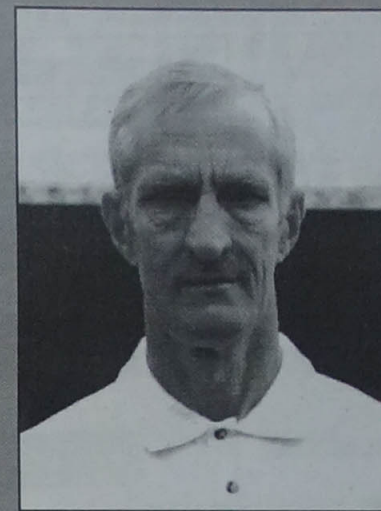
The point I've been rambling on about is that Kenilworth Road, for all its faults and perhaps no longer a suitable venue for events the present Board has in mind (despite the expensive upgrading that's taken place in recent years) will always hold a special place in the affections of old fans like me.

If - or maybe I should say when - the Town club moves its headquarters I have no idea what will happen to the present site. Blocks of ugly flats, a mini housing estate, industrial buildings, a new shopping mall? There's no shortage of options.

Whatever its fate I hope the planners will find room for a plaque, or even a statue of some kind. This should commemorate the great days and the great games that made Kenilworth Road the mecca for so many thousands of Lutonians (and their guests) when outside entertainments weren't so easy to come by and when the thought of watching televised matches from all over the world, taken so casually for granted today, seemed as unlikely as the chances of a man walking on the Moon!

Old Timer

John Moore - a man who has served Luton under seven managers



There are many words suitable for describing footballers and those connected with football. "Brilliant, mercurial, moody, hardworking, sporting, unsporting, consistent, inconsistent" are just a few of the adjectives favoured by sports writers.

The one that is hardest to earn is "loyal" - an accolade awarded to players who devote themselves wholeheartedly to one club, always give of their best and never give the impression that they are dissatisfied with their lot.

Luton's youth coach, John Moore, comes very close to being included in that honourable category although he has not spent all his career at Kenilworth Road. There was a considerable break in his association during the 70's but it is fair to say that the major part of his career has been spent at Luton. It is also a fact that the Town club has had few servants who have been more faithful.

John Moore is also one of a very small band who gave up the managership of a successful First Division club. Not because he was a failure but simply because I just didn't like the job. In fact the club was Luton Town and John had piloted them to seventh in the First Division - the highest placing the Town had ever achieved.

John Moore started his professional career with Motherwell in the early 1960's, after serving an engineering apprenticeship. He joined Luton on a free transfer in 1965 when the then manager, George Martin, offered him terms without having seen him play.

This was in the days when footballers lined up with a goalkeeper, two full-backs, a wing-half each side of the centre half and five forwards. Long before 4-3-3, sweepers and strikers! John was a left half and his only previous visit to England had been when he played for a Scottish Boys' Club X1 against an English Boys' Club side.

Nevertheless, he settled comfortably in cosmopolitan Luton and made 276 League appearances for the Town, figuring in two successful promotion campaigns - in 1968 from Division IV to Division III and in 1970 from Division III up to Division II. In 1973 he temporarily severed his Luton connections,

moving to Brighton and then Northampton, followed by short spells at Milton Keynes and Vauxhall Motors before joining Dunstable Town as player-manager.

That was a tough introduction to management for he was expected to run the team, with all its expenses, on £100 a week. In 1978, when David Pleat was appointed manager at Kenilworth Road he invited John to join his coaching staff. He was reserve team coach when Pleat left to take charge at Tottenham Hotspur and John was asked to become manager.

It came as a shock to the local football fraternity when he resigned after what everyone considered a successful debut as a League club manager. He moved from manager to double glazing salesman and then had a short spell in a double-glazing factory. Subsequently he became 'general dogbody' for a bakery firm and also tried his luck as an insurance salesman. But he never

been so modest about their contribution to the team.

"I was never one to look for huge cash rewards. That's probably because I was brought up during the days of wage restrictions, but I'm grateful to football for giving me a decent living for some 30 years and I'm delighted to be able to help the younger players.

"One of the great joys of coaching is to see a relative novice develop into a player of real quality, and that happens quite a lot at Luton." Now that he is responsible again for encouraging Luton's younger players what is it that he looks for?

"Youngsters, no matter how talented they may seem, must always want to get better. They must never rest on their laurels.

"They've got to be really hungry for success and be prepared to learn all the time. Some young players think they know it all when they are 15 or 16. They're the sort who very rarely make the grade in the top

As Boss himself he led Hatters to their best-ever position

lost his interest in football. In 1989 Pleat, by now in charge at Leicester City, asked him to join him as youth coach and the following year Jim Ryan, during his short spell as Luton boss, invited him to return as reserve coach.

Ryan was quickly superseded by the return of Pleat and John was soon asked to become general assistant to the manager.

Apart from his own spell in charge John has worked under seven managers at Luton and that must be some sort of record. They were George Martin, Allan Brown, Alec Stock ("last of the gentleman managers"), Harry Haslam, David Pleat, Jim Ryan and now Terry Westley. Among the Luton stars he has played alongside were Bruce Rioch, Terry Brantson, Chris Nicholl, Malcolm Macdonald and Peter Anderson.

He was never a headline-catching star himself - "I had my limitations as a player" he says - but few men who have donned a Luton shirt have shown more spirit on the field, or

class. Those who never stop working or wanting to learn are the ones who will succeed.

"I've always liked bringing on the youngsters, ever since I was awarded my coaching certificate more than 20 years ago. For as long as I can I'll continue teaching them, encouraging them and, hopefully, bringing out the best in them."

John and his wife, who hails from Cranfield, have three children - Scott, who is 26, Graham, 24, and Paula, 22. Neither Scott, who has a degree in economics, nor Graham, who is in the building trade, showed any great desire to follow in their father's footsteps, while Paula has a degree in hotel management.

John Moore can rightfully be described today as a member of that great army of backroom boys who have never sought the limelight but who, in a quiet way, have given more to the game than many of the people who, for one reason or another, are household names.

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Relaunch for Junior Hatters

Luton Town has announced a new look to the popular Junior Hatters club, with lots of fun events, and opportunities to enjoy football at Kenilworth Road.

The Football In The Community department have been busy organising coaching courses across the region, and have now taken on a new member of staff to organise all events for the Junior Hatters.

But there will be much more than just coaching to take part in. As you can see from the items listed we have a wide range of activities planned, ranging from day trips to the chance to be a mascot and leading the team out at Kenilworth Road.

The existing £2 fee will cover junior membership of Luton Town, with a further £8 securing a place in the new-look Junior Hatters.

When joining the Junior Hatters, youngsters can collect special free gifts from the Luton Town club shop at the start of the new season.

The benefits for Junior Hatters include:

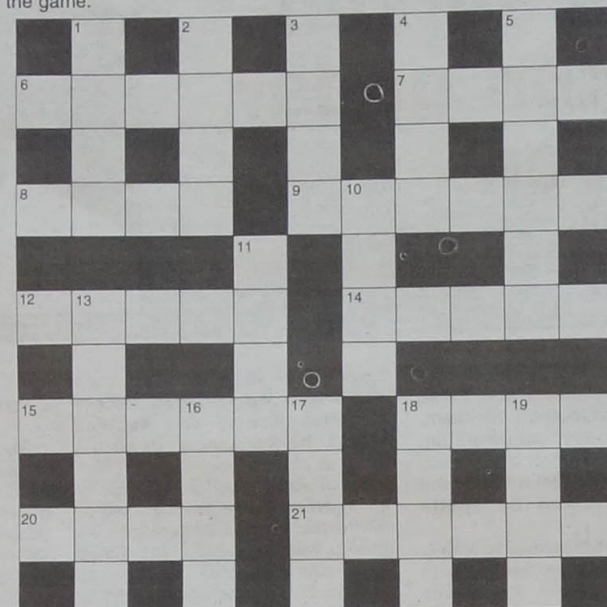
- Free LTFC gifts
- Xmas party with LTFC players
- Chance to be a LTFC ballboy
- Midweek coaching sessions
- Chance to be a mascot
- Monthly newsletter
- Travel to Saturday away games
- Saturday Club at all home matches
- Day trips and quiz nights

Football In The Community Officer Colwyn Rowe said: "Our young supporters are our future and we must make every effort to ensure that a trip to Luton Town is a day out to remember. There are plenty of matchday and non-matchday events to look forward to, including our very own 'Happy Harry of the Hatters' mascot, who will be pitchside at all home matches."

For more details you should contact Junior Hatters co-ordinator Sam Walsh on 01582 411622.

Junior Hatters X-Word

See how quickly you can complete this crossword puzzle. Like all of them that have appeared in Hatters News it has a strong football flavour but not all the answers are about the game.



ACROSS

- 6 Blackburn (6)
7 It comes before twice (4)
8 It is very, very small (4)
9 A cowardly colour (6)
12 No-one likes to play against footballer who is this (5)
14 When a team is losing they need to do this (5)
15 Holiday for you, but not for footballers (6)
18 Every good team has at least one (4)
20 King of the jungle (4)
21 In a football match the weaker team usually has to do this (5)

DOWN

- 1 You can't kick far without one (4)
2 Eleven players on the field form one (4)
3 Catch sight of (4)
4 It should produce a free-kick (4)
5 Where teachers are in charge (6)
10 A nobleman (4)
11 Each car wheel needs one in good condition (4)
13 A style of printing with sloping characters (6)
16 It's silly to go camping without one (4)
17 One of the nicknames for Manchester United (4)
18 A goalkeeper needs a pair of hands (4)
19 Girl's name (4)

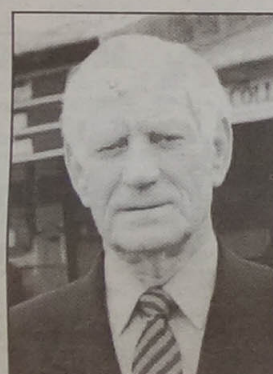
SOLUTION

DOWN: 1 Boot, 2 Team, 3 Emy, 4 Foul, 5 School, 10 Earl, 11 Tyle, 12 Dirty, 13 Yellow, 14 Foul, 15 Atom, 16 Foul, 17 Reels, 18 Safe, 19 Anne

'BACKROOM BOYS' BUT IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE TEAM



Mick McGiven
Assistant
Manager



Les Shannon
Scouting
Co-ordinator



Colwyn Rowe
Football in the
Community Officer



Geoff Lovell
Safety
Manager



Paul Lowe
Youth Development
Officer

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HATTERS FIXTURE LIST SEASON 1995/96

| Date | Opponents | F-A | Att |
|-------------|---------------------|-------|------|
| Sun Aug 13 | NORWICH CITY | 1 - 3 | 7848 |
| Tue Aug 15 | BOURNEMOUTH CCC1(1) | 1 - 1 | 2728 |
| Sat Aug 19 | SOUTHEND UNITED | 1 - 0 | 4630 |
| Tue Aug 22 | BOURNEMOUTH CCC1(2) | | |
| Sat Aug 26 | LEICESTER CITY | | |
| Tues Aug 29 | GRIMSBY TOWN | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Sat Sep 2 | DERBY COUNTY | | |
| Tue Sep 5 | PERUGIA AIC | | |
| Sat Sep 9 | READING | | |
| Wed Sep 13 | MILLWALL | | |
| Sat Sep 16 | SUNDERLAND | | |
| Wed Sep 20 | CCC2(1) | | |
| Sat Sep 23 | WOLVERHAMPTON W | | |
| Sat Sep 30 | PORTSMOUTH | | |

| | | | |
|------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Wed Oct 4 | CCC2(2) | | |
| Sat Oct 7 | TRANMERE ROVERS | | |
| Wed Oct 11 | GENOA AIC | | |
| Sat Oct 14 | WEST BROMWICH ALBION | | |
| Sat Oct 21 | IPSWICH TOWN | | |
| Wed Oct 25 | CCC3 | | |
| Sat Oct 28 | CHARLTON ATHLETIC | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| Sat Nov 4 | STOKE CITY | | |
| Wed Nov 8 | CESENA AIC | | |
| Sat Nov 11 | OLDHAM ATHLETIC FAC 1 | | |
| Sat Nov 18 | BIRMINGHAM CITY | | |
| Tue Nov 21 | WATFORD | | |
| Sat Nov 25 | BARNSELY | | |
| Wed Nov 29 | CCC4 | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| Sat Dec 2 | TRANMERE ROVERS FAC 2 | | |
| Sat Dec 9 | WOLVERHAMPTON W | | |
| Wed Dec 13 | ANCONA AIC | | |
| Sat Dec 16 | PORTSMOUTH | | |
| Sat Dec 23 | HUDDERSFIELD TOWN | | |
| Tue Dec 26 | CRYSTAL PALACE | | |
| Sat Dec 30 | PORT VALE | | |

| | | | |
|------------|------------------|--|--|
| Mon Jan 1 | SHEFFIELD UNITED | | |
| Sat Jan 6 | FAC 3 | | |
| Wed Jan 10 | CCCS | | |
| Sat Jan 13 | SOUTHEND UNITED | | |
| Sat Jan 20 | NORWICH CITY | | |
| Sat Jan 27 | FAC 4 | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Sat Feb 3 | LEICESTER CITY | | |
| Sat Feb 10 | GRIMSBY TOWN | | |
| Wed Feb 14 | CCC SF (1) | | |
| Sat Feb 17 | MILLWALL FAC 5 | | |
| Wed Feb 21 | DERBY COUNTY CCC SF (2) | | |
| Sat Feb 24 | SUNDERLAND | | |
| Tue Feb 27 | READING | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-------------------|--------|--|
| Sat Mar 2 | CRYSTAL PALACE | | |
| Sat Mar 9 | HUDDERSFIELD TOWN | FAC 6 | |
| Sat Mar 16 | PORT VALE | | |
| Sat Mar 23 | SHEFFIELD UNITED | | |
| Sun Mar 24 | CCCF | | |
| Sat Mar 30 | IPSWICH TOWN | FAC SF | |

| | | | |
|------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Tue Apr 2 | WEST BROMWICH ALBION | | |
| Sat Apr 6 | CHARLTON ATHLETIC | | |
| Tue Apr 9 | STOKE CITY | | |
| Sat Apr 13 | BIRMINGHAM CITY | | |
| Sat Apr 20 | WATFORD | | |
| Sat Apr 27 | BARNSELY | | |

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Sat May 4 | OLDHAM ATHLETIC | | |
| Sat May 11 | FACF | | |

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CCC= Coca-Cola Cup
FAC= FA Cup
AIC= Anglo-Italian Cup

Please note: Because of the possibility of matches being televised, and cup commitments, these fixtures are subject to amendment

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Hatters on parade - 1995 - 1996



Luton Town's hopes for the season rest with these players. This is the official picture taken just before the big kick-off. BACK ROW: L to R: Ben Chenery, Danny Power, Gary Simpson, Fred Barber, Paul McLaren, Rob Matthews, Gavin Johnson, David Greene, Steve Davis, Kelvin Davis, John Taylor, Trevor Peake, Julian James. MIDDLE ROW: L to R: Chris Green (director), Cliff Bassett (director), Clive Goodyear (physio), Paul Lowe (youth development officer), Richard Harvey, Aaron Skelton, David Oldfield, Mitchell Thomas, Des Linton, Marvin Johnson, Bontcho Guentchev, Matthew Woolgar, Wayne Turner (reserve team coach), John Moore (youth team coach), Les Shannon (scouting co-ordinator), Nigel Terry (director). FRONT ROW: L to R: Jamie Woodsford, Gary Waddock, Tony Thorpe, Ceri Hughes, Mick McGiven (assistant manager), David Kohler (chairman), Terry Westley (manager), Scott Oakes, Nathan Jones, Graham Alexander, Dwight Marshall. Juergen Sommer was in America on the day of the photo-call



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