

Herald

Wembley Souvenir

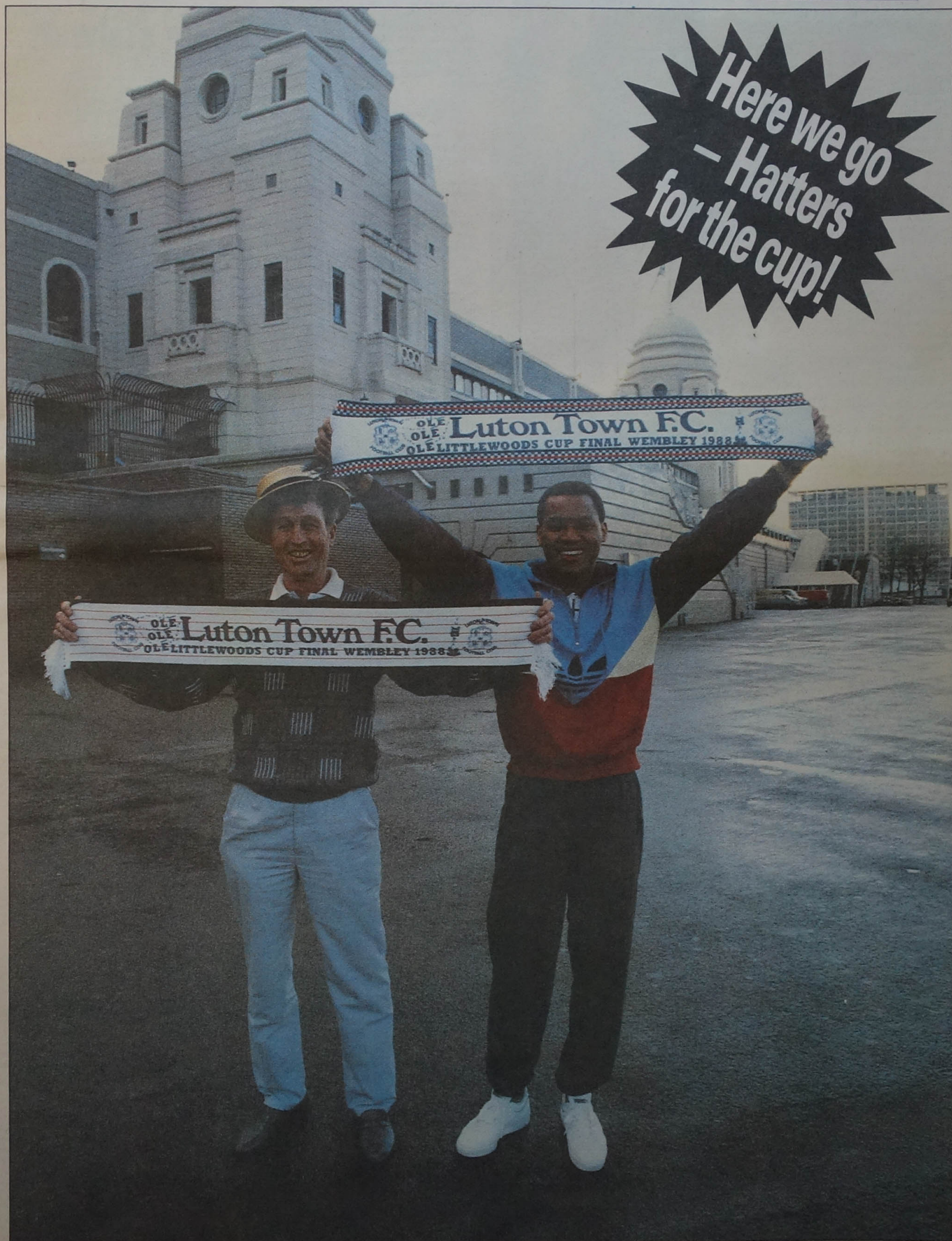
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FRONT PAGE

Dave Pacey, scorer of Luton's goal in the 1959 FA Cup Final, is pictured with Brian Stein outside Wembley Stadium.

Hatters get the Credit!

HATTERS' third Wembley spot is in the prestigious Mercantile Credit Centenary Festival.

The gala event will run on April 16 and 17 to mark the Football League's 100th year.

Sixteen teams, including Luton, qualified for the tournament on league form between November and February.

The 16 teams taking part are — Division 1: Liverpool, Wimbledon, Luton, Man Utd, Sheffield Wed, Everton, Nottingham Forest and Newcastle.

Division 2: Blackburn, Aston Villa, Leeds and Crystal Palace. Division 3: Sunderland and Wigan. Division 4: Wolves and Tranmere.

WEMBLEY SOUVENIR

Edited by Graham Punter. Articles by Dominic Biggs, Fraser Pearson, Mike Weinstein, Mark Stillman and Stephen Kingham. Pictures by Bruce Raidl and Nigel Wigglesworth.

We can win the cup!

SELF-BELIEF is the driving force behind Hatters' glorious cup-winning streak.

Fans' favourite, Brian Stein, is convinced the club now have the mental strength to go with their undoubted ability.

He said: "Maybe a couple of years ago we didn't believe in ourselves."

"When we played the big clubs we were in awe of them — it was like a mental block. But now we believe we can beat them all."

And he added: "This season we've got the confidence to go out and try to express ourselves."

The player who joined Hatters from non-league Edgware puts the new-found belief down to former manager David Platt.

Season

He said: "I could smell we were going to win something when we were here but we let ourselves down last season after he left."

"It started with him, and Ray Harford has his own ideas but has carried it on."

Special

Brian enjoys a special relationship with the Hatters' faithful.

As his testimonial against Aberdeen on April 12 approaches he said of the fans: "They call me Bruno after I tried to hit West Ham's Alvin Martin when he knocked my teeth out!"

"At corners I stand on the near post, sniffing and you get this terrific banter with them — it's brilliant."

Sky-high confidence makes the difference says Town stalwart

WEMBLEY will be the icing on the cake for Brian Stein in his testimonial year.

"It may be a cliché, but it's a dream come true," said the long-serving star. "Some of the players here have been through thick and thin together."

"We've seen promotion, fought off relegation, seen semi-final defeat and this means more to them than anything."

Harder

"We always go for it. So badly it hurts sometimes. And when people say to you 'why didn't you do this or that?' or 'why didn't you try harder?' you wonder how they could say it."

No-one could have asked any more of Stein when he powered a first-half header past Alan Judge in the semi-final against Oxford.

"It was a great ball in. I managed to steal a few yards on the fellow Briggs

and got my header in.

"I said before the game that the performance didn't matter, the result mattered. But it was a good performance for a semi-final."

Pressure

He added: "It was all very well people saying it was a formality for us to reach the final. But the pressure was on us while Oxford could go out there and relax."

"I was tense — and there are people who haven't been able to sleep."

His parting shot for the final was: "We're not just going there for the day out, we're going there to win it — there's no doubt about that."

As this Wembley Souvenir went to press, Hatters were enjoying a 10-day break before the first of their cup finals, the Simod Cup.

And Brian Stein was glad of the rest after suffering a wrist fracture against Swindon in the Simod semi-final.

The goal was money!

DAVE PACEY, Wembley scorer in 1959, jumped at the chance to join Hatters in 1956 — to earn some money.

The wing-half signed amateur forms with the club in 1954 before

joining the forces for two years' national service.

After two years Dave was earning the grand total of £2.50 a week so when Luton offered him £20 a week he was in like a shot!

Quick Cup Quiz

1. The trophy chasing Steins are not the only brothers to appear in Hatters' colours. Can you name two other pairs of brothers once on Luton's books?

2. Arsenal manager George Graham has particular reason to remember a cup tie at Luton. Why?

3. Two players joined Simod semi-final opponents Swindon from Luton in 1985 after distinguished careers at Kenilworth Road. Who were they?

4. Who was the last Luton player before Ricky Hill to be capped for England? Clue: He played in the 1959 final.

5. Luton played Arsenal in the FA Cup in the 1985-86 season. What was the outcome?

6. Two heroes of the Luton v Everton FA Cup semi-final in 1985 later played for Coventry, a club beaten by Luton in the current Littlewoods Cup run. Who were they?

Answers on this page.

CUP CASH CHEERS HARD-UP HATTERS

Final fling may mean £½m for Cinderellas of Division One

HATTERS' CUP EXPLOITS are a godsend to the crash-crippled club.

Luton could make more than £½ million from the Simod and Littlewoods finals.

And the money is vital to the club's existence — for they were almost £2 million in debt at the end of the last financial year.

By MICHAEL WEINSTEIN

increased and the working party charged with masterminding Hatters' relocation revealed that £750,000 would be needed annually to ensure the club's survival until the move.

The books were balanced last season thanks to huge cash donation from directors and compensation from the A505 relief road which is forcing Hatters to quit their Kenilworth Road ground.

Chief executive John Smith said: "Every year we have to climb Mount Everest to stay in the First Division."

"It's a constant battle, a constant nightmare we all live in here."

With such formidable debts hanging over the club, manager Ray Harford was pleased to collect around £800,000 this term from the sales of Peter Nicholas, Mike Newell, Stacey North and Robert Wilson.



Wembley Stadium have increased their ticket prices this year — some by as much as £5 — so Hatters' income from the final should be substantially more than the £325,000 Arsenal received last year.

The Gunners picked up £250,000 gate money and £75,000 for winning the cup.

The early rounds and three money-spinning semi-finals with neighbours Spurs brought the

North London giant's Littlewoods earnings to a cool £600,000 — one seventh of the club's total turnover.

Hatters' working party has devised a host of money-making schemes to keep the club in business for the five years before they move to a new ground at Sundon Springs.

But their cup cash must make their task — for this season at least — significantly easier.

Cashing in. Peter Nicholas, above, and Mike Newell, above left, helped swell Hatters' coffers. Now the cup run means another big cash injection.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Bruce and Neil Rioch, Paul and Ron Fletcher.
2. Graham managed Millwall on the night of the notorious riots in 1985.
3. Goalkeeper Jake Findlay and winger David Moss.
4. Goalkeeper Ron Baynam.
5. Luton won 3-0 in a replay after a draw at Highbury.
6. Right-back Kirk Stephens and midfielder Wayne Turner.

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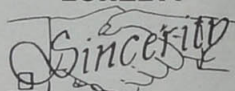
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Hatters in full colour

• That's my ball! Luton's Northern Ireland international Mal Donaghy closes down Arsenal winger Perry Groves.

• The action was during the match at Highbury in February and the two players can expect to clash again at Wembley.



Fourth time lucky?

PRACTICE makes perfect — that was the key to Ashley Grimes' wonder goal that confirmed Luton's place at Wembley. The free-kick hero decided to try his luck as soon as referee Lester Shapter penalised Oxford just three minutes before the interval in the semi-final second leg.



The left-back, pictured, curled a left-footer beyond helpless keeper Alan Judge to ensure victory.

Grimes has been to Wembley in Manchester United's squad three times but never played.

And as the happy Hatters' faithful hailed his wonder strike he said: "I've scored a few good goals but this one was sweeter because it was in the semi-final of the cup."

"I've practised them in training and if you practise enough they go in."

THE GENERATION GAME

WHEN SUPER STRIKER Brian Stein was starting out at Luton Town, a young apprentice was assigned to clean his boots.

Sadly Mick Pacey never made the grade as a player at Kenilworth Road, but his father once did — and his name is forever inscribed in Hatters' folklore.

For wing-half Dave Pacey slammed Luton's only goal at their last Wembley appearance, 29 years ago.

Born and bred in Luton, the 51-year-old gave up the game in 1969 for a less glamorous career on the shop floor at Electrolux.

When the Herald brought Stein and Pacey together the duo tendered different views on the best build-up to a Wembley final.

PACEY: "We stayed in the town for the week before the final and all the attention made us so complacent."

"Forest won 2-1 but we thought we would win easily. We voted to stay and keep things normal but if we had got away I think it might have made the difference."

STEIN: "No, we'll stay here — if you go away you can't forget the game and it plays on your mind."

"All the players get on well but when you are all together and feeling tense people get on each others' nerves and can snap."

PACEY: "It's a great feeling to score a goal at Wembley, Brian. I remember everything. Ken Hawkes crossed the ball and it was dummied by Allan"



• Stein, the star in 1988.

Brown and Bob Morton. I was the third man and I just hit it."

"There was none of this cuddling and kissing when we scored. You just turned and ran back to the centre circle, maybe shaking a few hands on the way."

STEIN: "You can't explain what happens after you score a goal. It's how you feel at the time, but you can't just walk away."

PACEY: "The temperament is different now, we didn't express our feelings."

STEIN: "I think there's more pressure now. If you don't do well, you're out."

PACEY: "Yes, but you talk of pressure. In those days we were on 12 month contracts. So each season you were playing for another contract."

"I don't go and watch football any more, I don't think the game is as interesting. I spend all

Head-to-head: Pacey, star of 1959, meets 1988 idol Brian Stein



• Pacey, goal ace in 1959.

my leisure time trying to play golf!"

"There's more emphasis on stopping goals now rather than scoring, like in my day. The scores were higher and we took more chances."

STEIN: "Yes, but it's big business now."

Both players made their first-team debuts at Manchester.

PACEY: "Mine was during Christmas 1956 against the Busby Babes."

STEIN: "How many did they do you by?"

PACEY: "Three and Duncan Edwards scored a cracker. He ran with the ball from the half-way line and hit a 25-yard shot that Ron Baynham did not even see."

Pacey had words of encouragement for Hatters.

"Arsenal have got a young side. I think the Luton lads have got more experience, so I'll go along with them to win."

STEIN: "How many

Hatters' triple chance

LUTON were still on course for their third major Wembley final of the season as this Littlewoods Cup souvenir edition went to press.

Victory over Portsmouth on March 12 earned them a place in the April 9 FA Cup semi-final against Wimbledon.

Goals from Danny Wilson, Mark Stein and Mick Harford gave Hatters a 3-1 victory at Kenilworth Road over Portsmouth in front of the Match of the Day cameras.

The route to the semi began with a 2-1 3rd round victory over Hartlepool, with goals from McDonough and Weir.

Southampton were the 4th round victims, losing 2-1, with Brian Stein and Allinson netting for Hatters.

A plastic battle ensued in the 5th round, Luton first drawing against Queens Park Rangers at Loftus Road with a goal from Harford.

The replay finished 1-0 thanks to a dramatic own goal.

Glory for the 'miracle man'

A HERO without a settled home.

That's the position Rob Johnson found himself in after helping Hatters through to their first League Cup final.

The 25-year-old utility player, who sent over the inch-perfect cross for Brian Stein to head Luton on their way to Wembley, was still on the transfer list as the Wembley build-up began.

The Bedford-born player, once dubbed "miracle man" by David Pleat after twice battling his way back from shattering injuries, was in dispute with boss Ray Harford before setting off on a regular run in the team around Christmas time.

But he was unhappy at not being reinstated to the side after missing the defeat at Highbury recently and might not have played against Oxford in the

semi-final had Ian Allinson not been cup-tied.

However, Johnson hopes to be in the Wembley line-up.

He said: "Arsenal won't write us off because they know that on the day the best team will win."

"We've got some tremendous players here. There won't be much between the sides, even though they've got more experience of Wembley."

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• On the ball. But Micky Weir was soon on his way back home.



Big chance scotched!

THE WAY to Wembley was paved with goals by a player who is certain to miss the big occasion.

Micky Weir's brief stay at Kenilworth Road before his return trip to Edinburgh produced three goals, all of them in cup competitions and two vital ones in early Littlewoods rounds.

The tiny 22-year-old winger got Luton started with the second round, first leg winner on his full debut at Wigan.

From that moment, the manager and players have said, the scent of Wembley was in the air.

The skilful Scot, who was homesick and asked to be sold back to Hibernian, struck again in the third round, when Hatters saw off Coventry 3-1 on neutral ground at Filbert Street.

But when the youngster felt his domestic situation had become untenable even boss Ray Harford's inducements of a possible Wembley place not sway him.

Harford said: "Early on, the players thought

By
DOMINIC
BIGGS

we were going to Wembley. When I tried to keep Micky Weir I used that as ammunition, but even that didn't change his mind."

From Edinburgh, Weir recalled: "The manager just pointed out that I had a chance of going to Wembley, but a whole lot of things seemed to crop up at that time for me."

"I didn't make it known at the time but my mum wasn't very well and I had to do something. I wouldn't

Homesickness costs wee Micky a great occasion at Wembley

THE MISSING MAN

have given up the chance of Wembley for nothing."

York

Weir, who watched the semi-final on TV while staying with friends in York, plans to watch the final there too and will be rooting for his old team-mates.

He confirmed: "We did have the feeling we would get to Wembley... but now I just wish them all the best."

"As soon as they drew Oxford in the semi-finals I knew they would get to Wembley."

"Luton always had the upper hand in the second leg and Ashley Grimes' goal was a cracker. Oxford never got started."

He added: "I think Luton have got a right good chance in the final."

"They have proved they can play on grass and Wembley is a big stage, which will suit players like Brian Stein and Mick Harford."

"I would just like to say that stories of me leaving because I didn't like the manager or the players were untrue — it was basically because I

was homesick. I think I was just a bit young to go south at the time."

"Now I'm pleased for them all to have reached the final."

Fine

Weir, who had lost only two matches in his first two months back at Hibs, went on: "I'm getting on fine. The move back has worked out."

He is now planning his own route to Wembley — as a full international with the Scottish team.



• Ian Allinson — tongue-tied and cup-tied.

the town of Luton. You could see after the final whistle against Oxford what it meant to everyone."

Allinson took a bow from the directors' box after the semi-final alongside the other players, and helped spray the crowds below with champagne.

He added: "The manager has included me in everything and it's great to be part of it."

reached the Littlewoods Cup final against Allinson's old club Arsenal.

Last season Allinson scored the goal that sent the Gunners through to Wembley, only to be left out of the side that beat Liverpool 2-1.

This season he is cup-tied and has had to sit on the sidelines during Littlewoods Cup games, despite being a first-team regular in the league.

The recent Simod cup visit from Stoke,

the club Allinson spent several months with en-route from Highbury to Kenilworth Road, provided a painful reminder of the single Littlewoods Cup game he played for them, in a victory over Gillingham.

No player is allowed to play for more than one team in the competition during the same season.

But still the 30-year-old looked forward to the final date.

"I'm pleased for the lads and it's great for

Double blow for cup-tied Allinson

THE NEARLY MAN

LEAGUE CUP nearly man Ian Allinson smiled through his disappointment and joked: "I haven't lost a league cup match in two years."

Allinson had his second successive Wembley torment confirmed when Hatters

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SUPER LUTON BOUNCE BACK FROM CUP BAN

By GRAHAM PUNTER

THE SMILES of satisfaction that abound in the boardroom of Luton Town are as much to do with football politics as soccer success.

For there is only a thin veil of disguise drawn over the club's metaphorical two-finger gesture in the direction of the league management committee.

Queen
Suzi
is on
the ball

• Supergirl Suzi Coates is backing the Hatters to spike the Gunners.

• Suzi, from Bromham near Bedford, was voted by Herald readers the Queen of Valentines earlier this year.

• See more of Suzi on the centre pages. Picture by BRUCE RAIDL.

It was this all-powerful outfit, supporters will recall, that wielded the hatchet and chopped Hatters out of the 1987 Littlewoods Cup competition.

It was an unprecedented move that plunged Luton under the national spotlight and had repercussions in Downing Street.

Chairman David Evans had offered Hatters up as the sacrificial lamb in a brave attempt to combat the hooligans who were ripping the heart out of England's national sport.

Away fans were banned from league games at Kenilworth

Road and there would be no concessions, pledged Evans, for the Littlewoods Cup.

That put the Hatters at odds with the rules of the competition, which demand that the visiting club be allocated 25 per cent of the tickets.

Evans' determined stance in September 1986 sent shock waves through the league management committee who planned an extraordinary general meeting.

Later that month Luton were kicked out of the cup, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Sports Minister Dick Tracey had spoken out against football violence and given soccer a clear message to put its house in order.

Luton's compliance had cost them a potentially lucrative place in a major

competition. The Herald invited Mrs T to visit Kenilworth Road to see for herself how the away fan ban was working.

Mr Tracey branded the league's decision a "mistake", calling it "unfortunate and untimely".

Luton's executive director John Smith was highly critical of the ban imposed, ironically, by the committee of which he was a member.

Within a month Mr Smith had resigned from the league's management team.

Top Luton police officer Glyn Spalding slammed the ban, calling it "disappointing and negative".

So John Moore, in his first and last season as Luton manager, had the prospects of one of the three main trophies snatched away.

Hatters found them-

selves increasingly isolated in their stance. The support of Government, police, the Luton populace and others weighed lightly against the entrenched attitude of the management committee.

But Hatters had made their point. They had proved, consistently, that the ban on away fans spelled little or no crowd trouble, inside or outside the ground.

As minds began to focus on the 1988 Littlewoods campaign, David Evans hinted to the Herald that the club might relent.

The fan ban would remain for league matches, but visitors might be allowed in for cup ties. August 1987 saw official confirmation of that policy.

What sweet irony that the competition that treated Luton like lepers should now provide a red-carpet welcome at soccer's shrine.

Good luck Luton — Masters of the Field.



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THE HATTERS' GLORIOUS ROAD TO WEMBLEY

Here Weir go . . .

2nd Rnd 1st Leg
WIGAN 0 LUTON 1

FLYING Scotsman Micky Weir netted a dream debut goal to set Hatters on the way in their glorious Littlewoods Cup campaign.

Playing his first full game for the Hatters, Weir curled a left foot beauty round Wigan keeper Nigel Adkins to put Hatters ahead after just 19 minutes.

Yet as Luton fans danced with delight they were not to know that just three months later the homesick youngster would return to his first club, Hibs.

Rough

The then Division Three leaders had been expected to give Luton a rough ride in this second round first leg affair.

But the famous giant killers, who had lost only two cup ties at Springfield Park in their history, froze on the night.

The home side's front-line was suffering from an attack of the jitters and missed a host of quality opportunities before Weir struck.



Take that! Mick Harford gives Wigan a hard time in the 2nd leg.

2nd Rnd 2nd Leg LUTON 4 WIGAN 2

MIGHTY Mick Harford sent Hatters into the third round with a stunning hat-trick against Wigan.

The super striker smashed home two marvellous headers and a sweetly struck left-footer to send a crowd of 4,290 wild with delight in the second leg tie.

Pin-point

He opened the scoring after 25 minutes — powering home Micky Weir's pin-point cross.

Boosted by a 2-0 aggregate lead,

Hatters poured forward and after 35 minutes, Harford produced an even better second goal.

Twisting in the air he sent a right wing cross back past the bemused Wigan keeper and into the top corner of the net.

The rampant Hatters were further in front just three minutes later when Darron McDonough's pile-drive flew off a post and rebounded in off the stranded keeper.

Luton went off the boil in the second half and Wigan pulled back two goals before Harford made it 4-2 on the night with a 10 yard strike.

And neutral soil can't foil mighty Micks

HATTERS PLAYED their third round tie more than 80 miles from Kenilworth Road — and demolished Coventry.

The Midlands outfit insisted on their full 25 per cent allocation of seats, so Luton — worried about crowd trouble — switched the tie to Leicester City's Filbert Street ground.

Mighty Mick Harford grabbed two goals and a last minute penalty miss robbed him of his second hat-trick of the competition.

Coventry lost skipper Lloyd McGrath after 20 minutes with a cut eye and a quarter of an hour later, Harford struck.

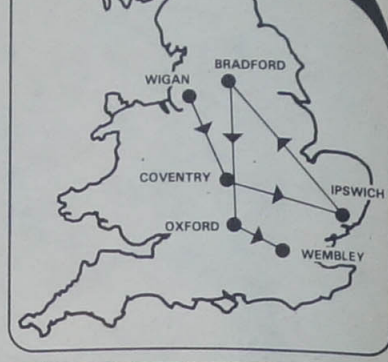
Range

The striker toe-poked a close range shot through keeper Steve Ogrizovic's legs after Brian Stein flicked on Tim Breacker's cross.

Harford made it two just minutes after the interval with a cracking

3rd Rnd
LUTON 3
COVENTRY 1

Eyes right! Coventry's David Speedie has his say but it's Luton's Danny Wilson who has something to shout about.



THE HATTERS' GLORIOUS ROAD TO WEMBLEY

HARFORD STOOPS TO CONQUER!

Wembley that way! Foster points to victory after scoring against Bradford.



'Babes' rattle Ipswich

Fourth Round
IPSWICH 0 LUTON 1

THE YOUNG ones rescued Hatters from a crippling injury crisis and steered the club to a fourth round win over Second Division side Ipswich.

Hill, Preece, Harford, Weir and Grimes were all sidelined before the kick-off.

Bold boss Ray Harford had no qualms about playing youngsters Tim Breacker, Richard Harvey, Kingsley Black, David Oldfield and Mark Stein.

And as early as the fifth minute, Harford's babes had helped Hatters on the way when Mark Stein set up his big brother for the only goal of the night.

The brothers played a neat one-two and Brian went round keeper John Hallworth to score.

Fifth Round
LUTON 2 BRADFORD CITY 0

FLYING MICK Harford celebrated his new three year contract with Hatters by clinching a semi-final spot for the club.

The big number nine dived in to make the game safe after Steve Foster's deflected free kick had put Hatters in front against Second Division pacesetters Bradford.

But the fans saved the biggest cheer of the night for villain turned hero, referee John Martin.

For the man who was Luton's public enemy number one after giving the free kick from which

Everton equalised in the 1985 FA Cup semi-final, changed the course of the game.

Bradford were hanging on grimly for a draw when after 55 minutes, Martin penalised the Yorkshire side's keeper for picking the ball up twice without another player touching it.

Danny Wilson rolled the indirect free kick — given a yard inside the box — to Foster and his crashing drive flew into the net off a defender.

In the 65th minute Rob Johnson's cross found Wilson with time and space to send in a fierce drive.

Keeper Tomlinson could only parry and Harford was on hand to fling himself at the loose ball and score from close range.

Heads we win! Harford stoops to conquer.

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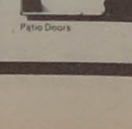
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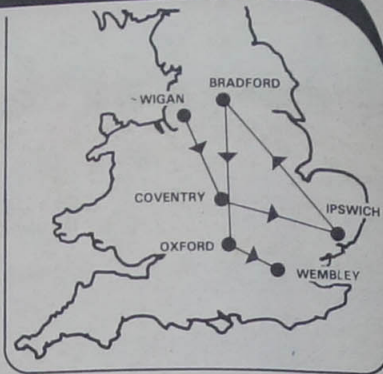
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THE HATTERS' GLORIOUS ROAD TO WEMBLEY

Sealey makes Oxford pay the penalty

Screen gems finish the job



HERO KEEPER Les Sealey kept Hatters on course for Wembley with a crucial second-half penalty save.

Luton had already been the victims of one dubious penalty from which Dean Saunders equalised Brian Stein's first-half cracker, when referee Keith Hackett pointed to the spot.

Hackett was swamped by players protesting that Saunders had dived when he clashed with Mal Donaghy.

But he refused to be swayed and it was left to Sealey — diving magnificently to his left — to see that justice was done.

Hatters had taken the lead at a snow swept Manor

1st Leg: OXFORD 1 LUTON 1

Ground after 40 minutes.

Brian Stein exchanged passes with Mick Harford and drilled a beautiful left footer past Luton old boy Alan Judge from 20 yards.

Only 33 seconds after the restart, Oxford were level. Saunders beat Donaghy to a Judge clearance, fell in the box and Hackett — still 40 yards behind play — gave the penalty.

Sealey failed to keep out Saunders' spot kick but made up for it with that brilliant 73rd minute penalty save — pictured.

THE SEMI-FINAL

THE SCOREBOARD at the end of 90 minutes said it all — Wembley.

Thousands of overjoyed Hatters' fans poured onto the Kenilworth Road pitch to celebrate the two second leg goals which gave Hatters a 3-1 aggregate semi-final win.

Only those who had witnessed the Second Division promotion campaign could remember anything like the scenes that followed the match, televised live.

2nd Leg: LUTON 2 OXFORD 0

Marvellous first-half strikes by Brian Stein and Ashley Grimes put the club through to Wembley after that 1-1 first leg match.

Hatters made all the early running and in the 33rd minute Stein powered them ahead.

Mick Harford laid off a high ball to Rob Johnson and his enticing cross hung over the penalty spot for Stein to head home.

Just three minutes before the interval Hatters struck again.

Ex-Gunner Tommy Caton fouled Harford just outside the penalty area. Full-back Grimes curled a brilliant left footer over

the wall, beyond the despairing lunge of Alan Judge.

Hatters batted down the hatches after the interval but still had the better second-half chances.

Danny Wilson came close in the 48th minute after some neat one-touch play with Harford and the Stein brothers.

And Brian Stein ran the length of the field on to a return pass by Harford but could not finish.

Hatters suffered nerves as fans poured onto the pitch surrounds in anticipation of the final whistle.

And when it came the players raced off and from the directors' box sprayed the adoring thousands with champagne.



● The scene that greeted semi-final victory over Oxford

HATTERS' ARCHITECT IS 'DELIGHTED' AT TEAM'S WEMBLEY SUCCESS

TUNNEL VISION!

'Good luck' wish from Pleat and a tip to beat those nerves!

NO-ONE WAS more delighted to see Luton reach Wembley than David Pleat, the manager who created the squad inherited by Ray Harford.

Nine of the players on duty in the semi-final second leg arrived at Kenilworth Road during Pleat's stewardship.

Now at Leicester after allegations about his private life obscured his success at Tottenham, Pleat is thrilled at the prospect of the players he has nurtured enjoying a Wembley cup final.

"They have worked hard for it," he told the Herald. "There has to be something at the end of the rainbow for players who have been splendid professionals for many years."

Did he feel cheated at not leading out the team he created?

"You can't think like that," he said. "I'm pleased that I helped build the foundations of what has happened."

"But I'm also pleased for people like David Coates (ex-coach), John Sheridan (ex-physio), John Moore (reserve team manager during Pleat's reign) and Trevor Hartley (ex-coach) who are also entitled to take pride in Luton reaching Wembley."

Why now, after the nucleus of the present

team has been together for many seasons, has success come Luton's way?

"Every dog has its day," said Pleat. "Perhaps the fact Luton were disallowed from the competition last season had something to do with it. Maybe that gave them more of a will to do well, to stick two fingers up at the authorities that banned them."

"Much of the credit must go to the board and to the chairman for keeping the good players together despite the size of the gates."

Pleat of course

endured the agony and ecstasy of Wembley last season when he took Tottenham to the FA Cup Final as favourites only to be beaten by Coventry.

"The lesson I learned from that day is that you must go to Wembley to enjoy it," he said.

"Coventry did that and they won. They had nothing to lose and the pressure was off them."

"Luton know they can win it and that they are good enough. They know that, so they can afford to enjoy the day. That attitude will help to stop them getting nervous."



By GRAHAM PUNTER

"It will help too if they wait until the last possible second to go out into the tunnel. They want to be waiting in the tunnel for the shortest time possible."

"And they mustn't crowd the dressing room — everyone except the players and essential people must be cleared out so the players can concentrate their minds."

The saddest aspect for Pleat is the non-appearance, as seems likely, of the injured Ricky Hill.

● Left: Ricky Hill. Spare a thought for the injured midfield maestro if he misses out on the big day, says Pleat.

with the other players and this has helped his form."

Tim Brecker: "There was a question mark against Brecker, about whether he had enough quality. But he has worked hard at his game."

Mal Donaghy: "I can pay him no higher tribute than to say he has been the perfect professional."

Steve Foster: "Foster has proved to be an inspirational buy. Respect him and he will respect you. If you keep getting on his back you will lose Steve Foster."

Ashley Grimes: "Ashley Grimes rippled when he joined the club, never quite making it and he had had luck with injuries. But his popularity with the players helped him pull through and now Luton play without an orthodox winger he has been able to come forward more and show some good touches."

Les Sealey: "We expected Andy Dibble to replace Sealey but Les has shown a splendid attitude to keep his place. He's very outgoing and popular"

Rob Johnson: "It's

incredible for him after what he has been through with injuries."

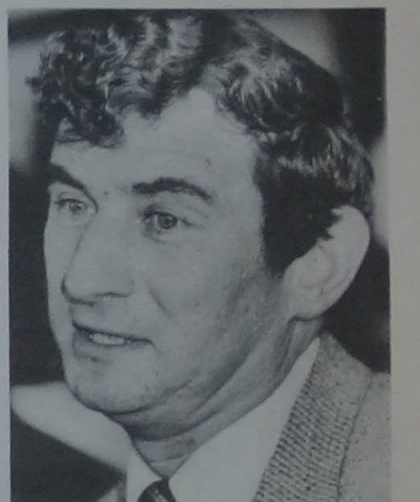
Mick Harford: "It was good to see Mick get an England cap after his injury traumas. He wished me well at Wembley when we went there with Spurs, and I certainly wish him well. He has an iron will to succeed."

Brian Stein: "When Brian Stein retires and puts his feet up he can look back on a fine career with a club that he has enjoyed being a part of and where he has been

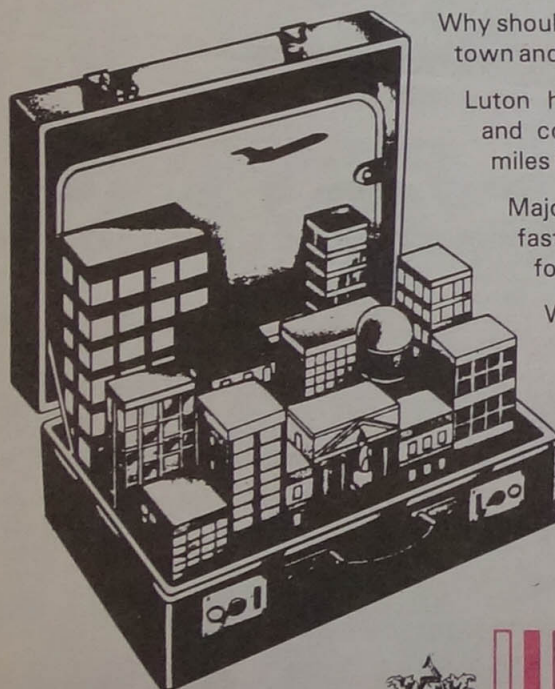
appreciated."

Mark Stein: "Mark used to think that his 'good enough' was good enough. He has found out that it wasn't and that he would have to work harder. He has done that and is getting the rewards. I'm especially pleased for the Steins' father, Isiah. He has been a pillar of strength to the boys."

And will David Pleat be at Wembley for Luton's big day? "I don't know yet. I read in one of the papers that I had been invited!"



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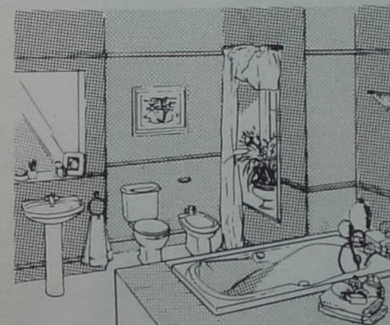
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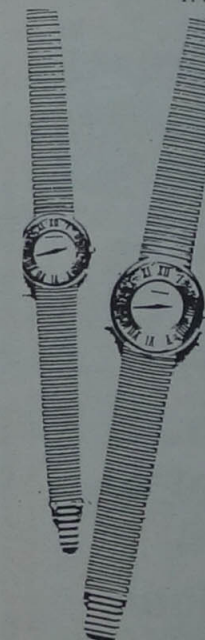
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The fun and the final

● The Luton lads practised lifting the Littlewoods trophy by elevating Suzi Coates.

● Suzi, the Herald's Queen of Valentines, called in at Kenilworth Road during a training session.

● It was fun before the final for the players who will be getting down to the serious business of beating Arsenal on April 24.



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Dream that came true too late for Eric

Good luck say 'old boys'

Danny boy's surprise

DANNY WILSON could hardly believe the surprise that was in store for him when he moved up from the south coast to Luton.

"When you come to a club like this you hope to have a good season in the First Division — maybe get into the top six and that's a success."

"But to get to Wembley is unbelievable! Wilson joined last summer from Brighton."

And another relative newcomer to the Luton ranks, Darron McDonough, took professional pride in the way Luton beat Oxford to reach Wembley.

"I feel fantastic — we did the job well. We did not let them play," he said.

McDonough had never reached round five of the competition with his previous club Oldham.

After grabbing his place in the first team through injury to Ricky Hill he said: "I got a chance and I have taken it well."

ONE MAN who would have loved to have gone to Wembley with the Hatters was the late Eric Morecambe — a fanatical Luton supporter and former director.

His wife, Joan Bartholomew, who still lives in Harpenden, told the Herald: "Eric loved football and, as everybody knows, was mad about Luton Town."

"One of his lifelong ambitions was always to be able to see his favourite team playing at Wembley but

Reporter Stephen Kingham interviews Joan Bartholomew, widow of former TV comic and Luton director Eric Morecambe.

— Eric would have loved the occasion.

"It is great for a small team like Luton to reach the final at Wembley," Joan added. "And I was glued to the television when the match against Oxford was on."

When the Hatters lost to Nottingham Forest 2-1 in the FA Cup final 29 years ago, Eric had yet to discover the joys of supporting Luton.

"We moved to Harpenden in 1961 but Eric did not immediately take to Luton," Joan recalled.

"It was not until our oldest son Gary began to take a keen interest in football that Eric decided to pick a team for Gary and himself to go and watch every week."

unfortunately that was never to be.

"But how thrilled he would have been now. I know he would have been so excited before the semi-final and I can imagine how happy he would have been when the final whistle went. He was never one to hide his emotions."

And he would have revelled in the atmosphere at Wembley

From the day that choice was made until his sad death in 1984, Eric was fanatical about

his Hatters and rarely missed a match.

Between January 1970 and May 1975 he was a director of the club and became a vice-president from 1975 until 1984.

'He was never one to hide emotion'

And the links between Luton Town and Eric's family still remain. Joan is a keen supporter and has vowed to keep her diary clear on April 24 so she can watch the match — but probably on the TV.

But her sons Gary, 31, and Steven, 18, will be trying their hardest to get their hands on final tickets.



• Comic Eric Morecambe clowning around on one of his frequent visits to Kenilworth Road.

CUP HISTORY

ARSENAL have made three previous appearances in the League Cup final, most memorable of which was in 1969 when lowly Swindon caused a sensation by winning 3-1.

A year earlier Arsenal had lost out to Leeds, going down 1-0. The Gunners had to wait until last year before they could bring the trophy

back to Highbury, on that occasion beating Liverpool 2-1.

The League Cup competition, later the Milk Cup and now the Littlewoods Cup, was introduced in 1961. It began as a low-key affair which failed to attract many of the top clubs, and the final was played over two legs.

The competition was given a massive lift in prestige when the final was played at Wembley, as a one-off game, from 1967.

SEMI-FINAL loser Alan Judge, the Oxford keeper who learned his craft at Luton, wishes Hatters well at Wembley.

He said: "I have got nothing but admiration for the club — on and off the field."

"I really think they deserve something."

The keeper had a special message for his former club. He said: "Good luck to them."

"I'm sure they will be the underdogs but that should take a lot of the pressure off them and I'm sure they are in with a good chance."

And ex-Hatter Mitchell Thomas surveyed Luton's semi-final victory almost unnoticed from the back of the main stand.

The full-back has been a regular at Kenilworth Road for Hatters' cup games.

He told the Herald: "I'm just so happy for the lads, they have done so well."

Mighty Mick nears his goal

WHEN mighty Mick Harford steps on to the Wembley turf for the Littlewoods final he will have fulfilled his second life-long ambition in just one season.

The giant Georgie realised his first in mid-February when he made his England debut as second-half substitute against Israel.

And now — barring injury — the 29-year-old super striker will be able to satisfy a burning desire to play in a major cup final at the home of football.

"Playing for England was the highlight of my career — it was absolutely brilliant — and my father was so proud," he said.

"But it's every player's ambition to get to Wembley on a big occasion and — touch wood — I should have done both by the end of the season."

Harford came close to opening the scoring for Hatters in the second leg against Oxford with a flying scissors kick after just four minutes.

"But the two goals we did score were fitting for any game," he said.

Simod final provides the dress rehearsal



• Happy days! Ian Allison bears down on the Swindon goal in the semi-final.

HATTERS qualified for their second significant Wembley final of the season as this Littlewoods Cup souvenir special was being prepared.

Just three games after joining the Simod Cup, Luton secured the March 27 warm-up for the big day in April.

The club were seeded through the early rounds of the Simod competition — known last year as the Full Members' Cup.

But Hatters were handed a tough away draw for their first match — champions Everton.

And with first-teamers Sealey, Donaghy, Harford, Wilson and the brothers Stein missing, their mission looked impossible.

But Harford's babes — a crop of promising youngsters — saw Hatters through with a stunning performance.

Striker David Oldfield was the star of the night — scoring twice to overhaul Paul Power's first-half goal for the Merseysiders.

Power's goal came in the 21st minute from a free kick.

Hatters drew level 17 minutes after the interval when Oldfield slotted into an empty net after Southall failed to stop Gary Cobb's curler.

With only six minutes remain-

Wembley 'double'

ing, the 19-year-old settled the issue by coolly turning in an Ashley Grimes cross.

Stoke travelled to Kenilworth Road to face Hatters in the quarter-finals and were crushed 4-1.

Strikers Brian Stein and Mick Harford grabbed two goals each to send the Potteries' outfit crashing out.

Stein opened the scoring in the 18th minute with a simple shot into an open net after Stoke keeper Scott Barrett could only parry Harford's shot.

The second-half was barely 60 seconds only when Harford headed Hatters two up. And just four minutes later it was 3-0 when Mark Stein intercepted a suicidal back pass to set up Harford.

Hatters were playing exhibition soccer and they simply sliced the Stoke defence apart for Stein to bury number four.

Graham Shaw got Stoke's consolation goal.

That emphatic win left Luton with a home semi-final against Swindon and the Second Division club put up a fight.

Substitute Kingsley Black was the inspiration behind Hatters' success.

The game was delicately poised

in extra-time and drifting towards a penalty shoot-out when the youngster picked out Mick Harford with a pin-point cross.

Harford, deputising as captain in the absence of Steve Foster, nodded back to Mark Stein and the pint-sized striker headed Hatters to Wembley and a match with Reading.

Elder brother, Brian, who suffered a broken wrist in the dying seconds, had put Hatters ahead.

The lethal forward somehow found his way between a sea of Swindon defenders to power home a 28th-minute opener.

Swindon pulled level 18 minutes into the second-half through Keiran O'Regan.

And before full-time was up, both sides missed glorious opportunities to settle the tie.

First Swindon's Dave Bamber shot wildly at Sealey believing he was offside — but the flag stayed down.

And four minutes later, Harford missed a penalty after Ian Allison was felled in the box by Bobby Barnes — keeper Fraser Digby punching clear.

But with brother Brian hospital bound, Mark Stein settled the issue in extra time and gave the Hatters' faithful the chance to dance a second Wembley jig.

Happiest man of the night was probably Ian Allison who put himself in with a chance of a Wembley appearance — he is cup-tied for the Littlewoods Cup.

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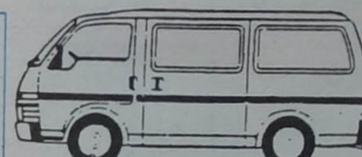
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Who's who at Wembley

HERE is the Herald's "who's who" guide to the probable Wembley squads. Reporter Mike Weinstein has been our spy in the stands at recent Arsenal games and he assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the Gunners. Our regular Hatters reporter, Dominic Biggs, describes the Luton men.

John Lukie: England under-21 keeper enjoying his best season with the Gunners. Good shot stopper whose weaknesses are coming for balls knocked over his defence and high crosses.

Nigel Winterburn: Left-back signed from Wimbledon is occupying the right-back position because of Kenny Sansom's consistency. Can use only his left foot.

Kenny Sansom: Concerned about his future, had an angry showdown with manager George Graham just days after Hatters' semi-final win. England's left-back with almost 80 caps is having a good season after recovering from a hernia operation.

Michael Thomas: Started the season at right-back taking over from Viv Anderson. But with Paul Davis and Steve Williams out he forced his way into midfield with some impressive performances.

David O'Leary: Needed two weeks off after Arsenal defeated Everton in the semi-final to rest his Achilles injury. Has been with the Gunners since 1975 has made more than 500 appearances.

Tony Adams: Like O'Leary made his debut at 17 and has gone on to secure a regular centre-back spot with England. Took over as Arsenal captain earlier after Sansom's row with Graham led to a story in a national newspaper.

David Rocastle: The creative player in Arsenal's midfield, Rocky scored in the semi-final win over Everton. Emerging as an England prospect,

ARSENAL

but he holds onto the ball for too long and tends to drift out of the game.

Martin Hayes: Arsenal's top scorer last season is operating from midfield this term. Frustrating player, has cracked some super goals but suffers long periods of indifferent form.

Paul Davis: Needed a hernia operation after Arsenal's Christmas campaign. Tremendous dribbler of the ball, eased himself back in with substitute appearance in semi-final second leg.

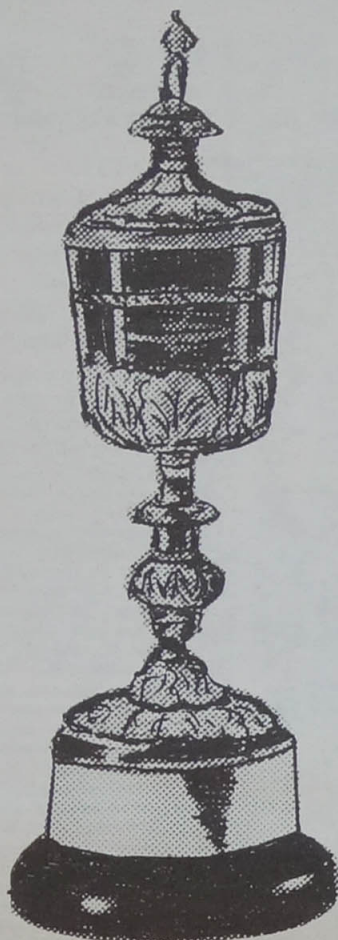
Steve Williams: Found it difficult to get back in the side after suspension in February. Gifted but upsets opposition players and fans with his constant whinging at referees.

Alan Smith: Signed last season from Leicester but was leased back to the Midlands to help them fight relegation. Scored an early season hat-trick against Portsmouth but then suffered a huge goal drought.

Hit scoring form against Manchester United in FA Cup fifth round.

Perry Groves: Flame-haired winger so often the whipping boy for the Highbury faithful, found form with vital FA Cup and Littlewoods goals.

Kevin Richardson: Signed from Watford at beginning of season. Forced his way into Arsenal's team with injury to Graham Rix. Works hard in midfield.



Les Sealey: A pillar of Luton's success this season, the 30-year-old goalkeeper is enjoying the best spell of his career, after some ups and downs since signing from Coventry.

Tim Breaker: A 22-year-old club product, whose surging runs from full-back have made him a firm favourite with the Kenilworth Road crowd. In his fourth year as a first team regular, an England U21 cap who has started to score goals too.

Ashley Grimes: Gifted 30-year-old Irishman, who arrived via Man Utd and Coventry, has one of the sweetest left foot in the business — as amply shown by his spectacular semi-final clincher against Oxford. An international who can play full-back or midfield.

Rob Johnson: Bedford-born batter who has overcome injury twice to realise a Wembley dream. A 26-year-old full-back or midfielder who has been a key player this term despite being on the transfer list.

Richard Harvey: Stylish and assured England Youth full-back, whose 19th birthday is in Littlewoods Cup final week can be relied upon to respond if given his chance of a Wembley celebration.

Mal Donaghy: Outstanding defender who, despite being a veteran of two World Cups for Northern Ireland is, at 30, only beginning to get the broader recognition he deserves. Mister Reliable, preparing to crown a brilliant career.

Steve Foster: Skipper, club coach and foundation stone in the centre of defence, upon which much of the side's success is built. Headbanded figure, has formidable aerial power, though tackling and leadership are his hallmarks. A former international and Wembley finalist with Brighton.

Darron McDonough: An absolute

LUTON

revelation this season, since converting to replace Peter Nicholas as midfield anchorman. Tenacious, scores goals and can play central defender too. Aged 25 and born in Belgium, he was bought from Oldham.

Danny Wilson: Another man in midfield, much-travelled Danny's knowledge of former Brighton team-mate Dean Saunders' penalty-taking helped Les Sealey's crucial semi-final save. A 28-year-old born on New Year's Day, his terrier-like playmaking and runs into attack have accounted for some important goals.

Ricky Hill: Loyal servant and a crowd favourite since his goalscoring debut at 17. Now 29 and an England cap, faces a desperate fight against injury to be fit for Wembley.

David Preece: Terrible fortune with injuries has cost him most of this season and last. Little prospect of imminent recovery, but at 24 he may still show Luton fans the best of his skilful brand of midfield industry.

Mick Harford: One of the game's top strikers, powerful in the air and an instinctive touch player. He is crucial to Hatters' chances of success and has already achieved one ambition this year, at 29, by winning his first full England cap.

Mark Stein: Brian's brother, emerged this season after gaining a reputation as a super sub. Aged 22, his darting runs and lightning strikes more than make up for a lack of inches.

Hatters need more of this

HISTORIC goal. This famous picture captures Luton's only goal in the 1959 FA Cup Final.

Dave Pacey slotted the ball into the Nottingham Forest net but it wasn't enough as Hatters crashed 2-1.

Town will be looking for more goals in the Pacey mould on April 24.



BOSS RAY 'PLEASED FOR FANS'

HATTERS' BOSS Ray Harford acknowledged the supporters' dreams as his side qualified for the Littlewoods final.

"It's important for the supporters because they've not been to Wembley for so long," he said after the semi-final victory.

And he was pleased for the long-serving players, like Brian Stein and Mal Donaghy, who knew what it was like to be the losers in a semi-final.

But the man who has enjoyed success in his first season as Luton manager refused to be carried away by the euphoria.

He insisted that the priority was still a top six place in the First Division and warned against a deterioration in form leading up to the final.

He described the players'

attitudes in divorcing each game from the last and the next as "remarkable".

But nowadays there are few excuses. With good wages paid to the top players, Luton are kicking their "small club" image and should be expected to enforce this by being among the league's best, Harford argued.

He recalled the start of the cup run: "Wigan were on a high and we had just been to Charlton and got murdered. We had to get a result."



• Boss Ray Harford.

'Don't rule me out' — Hill

CROCKED mid-field maestro Ricky Hill, pictured, has not ruled out a return to action in time for a Wembley appearance.

As Luton qualified for the big day, 29-year-old Hill was still unable to run after breaking his leg and damaging ankle ligaments in the Boxing Day clash with Everton.

But he said: "I'm in the hands of the physio but I'm hoping to be fit for the final."

"I'm not running yet, just building up the muscles with weights."

Hill received a massive boost from the Hatters' faithful as they poured onto the pitch at the final whistle of the Oxford game.

For they saved the



biggest roar of the day for their injured hero with a rousing chorus of 'There's Only One Ricky Hill'.

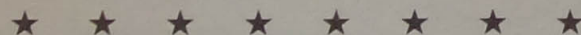
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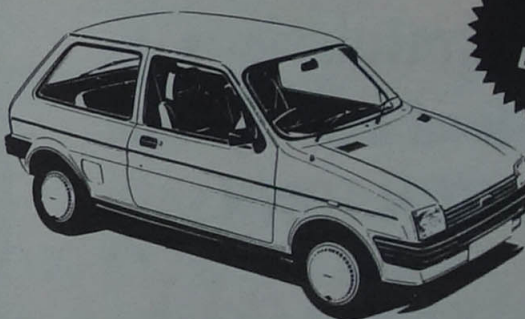
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Meet the 1959-ers!



●Luton's only Wembley appearance to date was in 1959. They lost 2-1 to Nottm Forest. Here are the Class of '59!

JOHN GROVES - right-half



4 TWENTY-nine years later, football is still very much a part of life for Cup Final right-half John Groves.

He lives near Derby, where he regularly teams up with Roy McFarland and other former County stars in charity matches.

He also plays five-a-side, and is a frequent visitor to the Baseball Ground and the City Ground, home of 1959 victors Nottingham Forest.

But Luton are still very special to the former England schoolboy trialist.

John, who works for Courtaulds, sent the Hatters a good-luck card before their semi-final clashes with Oxford and is praying they can go the whole way.

"Arsenal are perhaps considered the stronger side, but Luton must be in with a shout," he said.

"Either way, it's a fantastic achievement. I'm delighted for everybody at the club."

ALLAN BROWN - inside-right

8 ALLAN Brown went on to manage the Hatters, but in the last few years has retired from the world of football.

He now lives at Lytham St Anne's and is a keen golfer, playing off a handicap of nine.

Allan was boss at Kenilworth Road for two years from 1967. He went on to manage a number of clubs, including 1959 victors Nottingham Forest.

He had a spell in Kuwait before returning to manage Blackpool from 1980 to 1982.

He spent a couple of years scouting for various league clubs before finishing with the game.

Allan described Luton's 1959 FA Cup Final appearance as "a disaster". He added: "There was no build-up to it. It was just like a Tuesday morning practice match."

"I know it shouldn't have been, but it really was a big disappointment."



RON BAYNHAM - goalkeeper

1 LUTON had a false sense of security when they walked on to the Wembley pitch, recalls England keeper Ron Baynham.

For they had recently beaten Nottingham Forest 5-1 in a league match.

"It was the worst thing that could have happened to us," said Ron, who lives in Fernor Crescent, Luton.

"It would have been better if we had felt like the underdogs."

Ron, who won two of his three

caps at Wembley in 1956, works for plant maintenance at Britannia Airways in Luton.

He described today's Hatters as "a brilliant young side" and said he hoped they would reach the FA Cup Final, meet Forest and reverse the 1959 score.

"I'm thrilled to bits for them," he said. "Some players play for years and never manage to get to Wembley. They've already got there three times this season - let's just hope it ends up as four."



SYD OWEN - centre-half



5 THE CUP Final was England international, Footballer of the Year and Luton captain Syd Owen's last game.

He became manager the following season, before teaming up with Don Revie and Les Cocker at Leeds United for 16 years.

After a spell as coach at Birmingham City, he became former Hatter Dave Sexton's youth team coach and manager at Manchester United, where

he was responsible for grooming players like Mark Hughes to international stardom.

He ended his distinguished career back at Elland Road, where he worked part-time as a scout for Eddie Gray.

Now 65 and living in Leeds, Syd is a keen follower of Luton.

"I'm very much impressed by their skills and the way they use the whole width of the pitch," he said.

He added: "Whatever happens, it's going to be a wonderful day for all the players."

BOB MORTON - centre-forward

9 WHATEVER happens at Wembley, the Hatters' achievement this season will certainly go down in history.

So says Bob Morton, who notched up 494 appearances in his 19 seasons with Luton.

Bob, who lives in Ivinghoe Aston and works for Leighton Buzzard pub and club suppliers Dickens, said: "To get to three or possibly four finals in a season is fantastic."

"I think they'll have to put Luton in the Guinness Book of Records after this!"

Bob went on to be player-manager of Bletchley after leaving Luton and played until he was 41.

He still remembers how he felt when the final whistle was blown on his Cup Final.

"We'd had a bit of a shaky day. After the game I was heart-broken. I just wished we could go through it all again and have another go," he said.



Cup Final appearance - Luton Town's other Wembley heroes

BRENDAN McNALLY - right-back

2 DEFENDER Brendan McNally was involved in one of the most dramatic incidents of the 1959 FA Cup Final.

He collided with Roy Dwight - pop star Elton John's uncle - and the Forest player was carried off with a broken leg.

Brendan tore a cartilage, but had to soldier on because there were no substitutes in those days.

Former Eire international Brendan

went on to non-league management after his playing days ended, and had two spells in charge at Dunstable Town.

Although he is no longer involved in football, he watches as many local matches as possible.

He lives in Katherine Drive, Dunstable, and now works as manager of Zenith Windows in Luton.

Brendan said: "I would love Luton to win, because I know what it's like to lose. But on the day you just can't tell what will happen."



KEN HAWKES - left-back

3 LUTON'S brand of football should ensure them of victory against the Gunners, in the opinion of Ken Hawkes.

Ken, who watches the Hatters every week, said: "I think they've got a very good chance."

"They've never relied on kick-and-rush. They always play cultured football."

Ken, who supplied the pass from which Dave Pacey scored, lives in

Brompton Close, Luton, and has worked for the past 25 years for wholesale food distributors Walter Clarke in Sundon Park.

He has been coaching Electrolux for almost as long.

To this day he believes Luton lost the 1959 FA Cup Final because their approach was wrong.

"We didn't prepare ourselves properly for the game," he said.

"Steve Foster and his men have got to go out there and win it from the minute it starts."



DAVE PACEY - left-half



6 DAVE Pacey is the only player in history to have hit a Wembley goal for Luton ... so far!

He still remembers the moment well, but these days his interests have switched from the green turf of soccer pitches to the smooth green of the golf course.

He said: "I don't watch football any more - today's game is not as interesting. I spend all my spare time

trying to play golf."

The 53-year-old who plays off a 13 handicap is close to collecting his gold watch for 20 years' service on Electrolux's assembly line.

He still lives in Luton - at Calverton Road - and among his treasured possessions is the number six shirt he wore at Wembley.

For a more in-depth look at the Hatters' goal hero, see our super feature on Dave Pacey and Brian Stein in this supplement.

BILLY BINGHAM - outside-right



7 NORTHERN Ireland boss Billy Bingham is convinced Luton can overcome Arsenal in the Littlewoods Cup Final.

The man who shot the Hatters into the 1959 Final says their well-oiled passing game could be the key.

Southport-based Billy scored Luton's semi-final winner over Norwich 29 years ago and made 90 appearances for the club.

His second term as Northern Ireland

manager began in 1980 after spells in charge of Southport, Plymouth, Linfield, Everton, Mansfield and the Greek national side.

As the big day approaches, he said: "My heart is with Luton, and my head will be with them too if they play the sort of football that got them there."

"The Wembley pitch is well suited to their passing game. They must believe in their own game and not let the experience of Arsenal bulldoze them."



GEORGE CUMMINS - inside-left

10 PROUD ex-Hatter George Cummins lives in Liverpool, where the two Merseyside giants are always breaking records.

But he reckons Luton are about to rewrite the history books for good.

"It's really given me something to talk about up here," said George.

"Luton are definitely going to Wembley three times this season, and it may even be four. I think even Liverpool will find that impossible to

beat." Although he's proud of the piece of history he created with his team-mates in 1959, he's delighted his own record is about to go.

"And it's really going with a bang!" he said.

George, who won 19 Eire caps while at Luton, reverted to his trade as an electrician when his playing days ended.

But he's been unemployed for the past three years, and at 56 realises he has little or no chance of working again.



TONY GREGORY - outside-left

11 ENJOY yourselves! That's the message to Town's players from Tony Gregory, who was just 19 years old in 1959.

He scored four goals in the rounds leading to the Cup Final, and admits that he was "petrified" for the first half-hour of the historic game.

"You can be overawed on an occasion like this, and the game can be a long way through before you settle down," he said.

Tony is now international operations director of a large oil company and living in Cheshire.

He was just inches away from taking the game to extra time when his last-minute header scraped the Forest post.

Colleagues still talk about his footballing days, and he is often introduced at sales conferences as "the man who played at Wembley".

He's proud the 1988 side have reached it too, and hopes they'll go one better.

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Every Witch way but lose... Clairvoyant spells out victory for the Hatters

Vibes
say
2-1 to
Luton

STAR STRIKER

Mick Harford must stay on the pitch and Luton Town's fans must stay off the bottle if April 24 is to be a great day for the club.

This message has been "spelled" out by the White Witch of Buckinghamshire, who has used her special

Interview: MARK STILLMAN

and powers to predict the outcome of the Littlewoods Cup Final for the Herald.

Harford will score the Hatters' match-winner — providing he doesn't get sent-off, she says.

Clairvoyant Madame Morgana, from New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, told the Herald: "It's going to be quite a

battle and I think Luton will win by the skin of their teeth.

"But a few tempers have flared recently and they're going to have to remain cool, calm and collected.

"Harford has been a bit irate lately, but if he can keep himself under control I think Luton have a chance of winning

probably after extra-time.

"Harford is inclined to flare up and I think there could be a flare-up with him getting cautioned.

"Let's face it, the adrenalin's going to be very high for a thing like this and the image of Roman gladiators is the feeling I'm getting about

the match.

"Luton have to prove themselves and have had a battle royal to get to Wembley, but if they can keep those three Cs they can do it."

She's predicting a draw after 90 minutes with Luton getting the winner in extra-time.

Then it'll be up to Luton fans to emulate the performance of their Hatters' heroes.

Madam Morgana said: "The police are going to have to be on their mettle because there's going to be a lot of emotion afterwards.

Stadium

"It's going to be like the fourth of July for celebrations and the whole stadium is going to erupt.

"Let's hope there's no aggro and the fans lay off the drink."

The White Witch, who has been deep in conversation about the match with her groups and coven, concluded: "It's really going to be a clash of the titans. Both sides have a lot of fight in them... perhaps a bit too much!"



• Madame Morgana, who predicts a happy day for the Hatters

Lads up for t'cup!

HAPPINESS is football. The faces of these youngsters reflect the delight Hatters have brought to thousands this season.

These lads are pictured enjoying the sweet success of victory over Oxford in the semi-final.

Triumph over Arsenal will inject another dose of joy.



The time is right.



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Moore backs the Town

IT'S Luton for the cup! That's the prediction of John Moore, Hatters' manager last season.

"I've worked for the club for almost 20 years and been a supporter as well so there's no way I'm going to vote for anyone else," said Moore.

The manager quit after one season in charge of the Town, following a distinguished career as player and coach, for a job with double glazing firm Chiltern Windows.

He said: "Obviously when you are at a football club you strive for something like the success Luton are having and obviously it is disappointing not to be part of it.

"In my year as manager we weren't allowed to play in the Littlewoods Cup and we didn't take part in the Simod.

"There's no real explanation for why it has all turned out well this season, it's just a set of circumstances.

"But I'm delighted for the club."

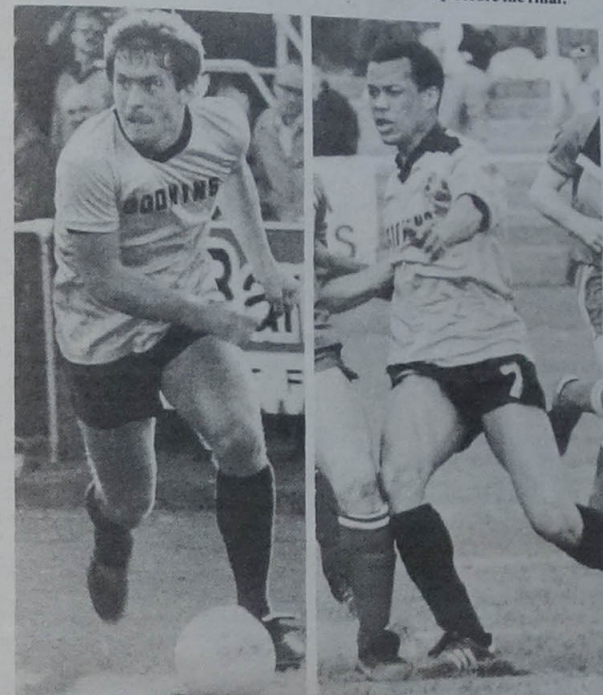
STEIN AND SANSOM bidding for glory in the same team just 24 hours before the Littlewoods Cup final — impossible?

No... for just down the road from Wembley, Edwin Stein and Dave Sansom are pushing little Barnet towards Football

League status.

The less famous brothers of Hatters' Stein strike force and Arsenal's Kenny Sansom are vital to Barnet's promotion push from the GM Vauxhall Conference.

The London minnows are locked in a battle royal with Lincoln for the Division Four spot — and will be scrapping for three points at Kidderminster the day before the final.



• Oh brother! Pictured are Barnet team-mates Dave Sansom, left, and Edwin Stein. Photos courtesy of Barnet Press.

STEIN AND SANSOM ON THE SAME SIDE!

Oh brother! Barnet's
title-chasers share
the same golden goal

By MIKE WEINSTEIN

Pro football had always been Stein's boyhood dream.

He said: "I had built up this illusion as a lad, and it blew up in my face when I realised the programme was not the glamorous profession I thought.

"When I met some of the people I had idolised, they didn't meet up with my estimates. They are just like you and me. Their whole world revolved around football and I thought there was more to life."

As the 31-year-old comes to the end of his career, he is learning to act so that another of his ambitions can be fulfilled.

"I was at acting school when I was younger and now I'm trying to make a career out of it," he added.

Arsenal with brother Kenny as a youngster. But when the pair moved to Crystal Palace things went wrong for the forward.

"I started watching Kenny's career. As his got bigger and better I took less interest in mine and I just drifted out of the game for a few years."

And their verdicts on the game: "I think with the Littlewoods Cup, the form book is nothing to go by," said Stein. "The underdogs have done well in the last few finals and I think Luton will win."

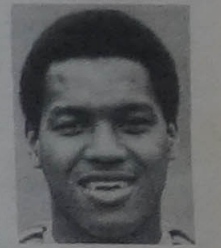
Although not an Arsenal fan, Sansom is convinced the Gunners will triumph.

"I think they'll win 3-0. Luton are better up front, the defences are well matched but

Arsenal's midfield is so far ahead and that's where I think the game will be won."



• Big-time brothers, Kenny Sansom, above, and Brian Stein.



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COACHING CLINIC WITH WEMBLEY-BOUND STRIKER MARK STEIN

Step up soccer skills

CALLING all players! Improve your soccer skills with the Herald's Wembley coaching clinic. It has been compiled with the help of Hatters' striker Mark Stein.

KEEP FIT

RUNNING exercises, using a lot of stop-start techniques, will help build up strength, speed and stamina.

One of the best routines to adopt is shuttles. Run from the goal line to the six-yard line and back again.

Then, without stopping, go from the goal line to the 18-yard line and back. Then run from the goal line to the half-way line and back.

Another good routine is pyramid training. Mark out a square with sides about the same length as the width of a football pitch.

Sprint one side, then walk three. Sprint two sides and walk two. Then sprint three and walk one. Finally, sprint all the way around.

WARM-UP

WARM-UP exercises before strenuous physical activity are essential to avoid injury.

1. Neck rolls. Roll your head through 360 degrees, 10 times in one direction and 10 in the other.

2. Arm pulls. Hold your arms out level with your shoulders and pull back sharply, bending at the elbow. Be sure not to lower your arms, even when they get tired. Thirty repetitions.

3. Stand with your feet slightly apart and bend your trunk to touch the ground with your knuckles, keeping your legs straight. If the exercise is done correctly you should feel the strain in your hamstrings. Ten repetitions.

4. Place your left leg out in front, bend at the knee and place your hands on the knee. Now stretch out your right leg as far as you can backwards, so your legs are wide apart. Really feel the muscles pulling.

Stretch hard on each side 10 times.

KICKING

A LOT of young players develop bad kicking habits early on.

Inaccurate passing, wrongly-weighted passes and wild, high passes can all result from poor technique.

The best passes are often low passes, because they allow the receiving player to continue the movement more easily and



quickly, particularly if he has to turn as he takes the pass.

The way to keep the ball low and under control is to place the non-kicking foot alongside the ball, keeping the knee of the kicking foot and the head over the ball.

Practise by asking a friend to stand opposite you and pass the ball back and forth. Try the technique over 10, 20 and 30 yards.

CONTROL

OFTEN the difference between a player performing well and playing badly is his "first touch".

• Mark Stein in action for the Hatters.

By that we mean how quickly and smoothly he controls the ball when receiving a pass.

The quicker the ball comes under control, the quicker the player can move with the ball or make a pass before being tackled.

In the First Division split seconds are the difference between success and failure so control is all-important.

Get used to trapping the ball with various parts of your body — you won't always get perfect passes to your feet.

Practise taking the ball with your instep, both sides of the foot, the sole, the thigh, chest and head.

HEADING

HEADING the ball is a vital technique to master, whether you are a defender, midfielder player or forward.

The first point to remember is to keep your eyes open and glued to the ball. A long high clearance from a goalkeeper will spin and swerve and may be caught by the wind.

Keep looking at the ball until you rise to meet it square on the forehead.

Try to meet the ball at the highest point of your jump and don't let yourself be put off by the close attention of opponents.

To perfect headed passes and headers at goal, learn to steer the ball with your head as you make contact.

One of the best ways to practise heading is to head the ball continuously against a wall, keeping it off the ground.

Another good idea is to play head tennis, using a volleyball court if one is available.

TACKLING

A TEAM can be full of the most skilful players but if the side cannot win the ball in the first place these talents are of little value.

The key to good tackling is timing. Do not rush in at an opponent and "sell" yourself. Hold him up, jockey for position, until you catch him off balance.

Keep your eyes on the ball and don't be fooled by tricky footwork. Make sure your weight is behind the ball when you go in. Light players can rob heavy forwards if they get this technique right.

Finally, be determined. Be totally convinced you are going to win the ball.

Tackling is a difficult skill to practise outside an actual match but there is a game called sieve which can prove valuable.

The pitch is divided up into bands about 10 yards wide. They alternate between safe zones and tackling zones. The

defenders stand in the tackling zones and the attacker advances with the ball. Attackers score points according to the number of safe zones they gain as they progress down the field.

The defenders' job is to win the ball and thereby end the attacker's involvement in the game.

MARKING

THE key element of marking is to make sure you remain goalside — that is between your opponent and the goal you are defending.

Positioning is all important. You must be near enough to anticipate a pass to your opponent but not so close that he can "turn" you and leave you stranded.

Concentration throughout the game is important to prevent this happening. Different coaches adopt different marking methods.

Zone marking is most common in Britain, with players responsible for areas of the field.

It is important midfield players and forwards play their part in covering zones and good communication is important when an opponent moves from one zone into another.

The alternative to zonal defence is man-for-man marking.

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