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Luton News

Thursday, May 2, 1974

3p Weekly



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INSIDE

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Luton News



**RARE DISEASE
KILLS DUCKS
IN PARK**
—page 9



Miracle escape
on motorway
—page 15



**WOMAN HURT
IN SENSELESS
ATTACK**—page 13



PLUS

36-page pull-out
classified section

WHAT A NIGHT!



● Saying it all with flowers—the players thank the fans.

It's bouquets all round as fans enjoy goal feast



Robert Keens

THE MEN WHO STEERED LUTON TOWN INTO THE FIRST DIVISION



Harry Haslam

Reception

Sunderland's players lined up at the start of the game to form a guard of honour as the Town ran out on to the pitch to the sort of tumultuous reception Town players have not heard since the club went to Wembley 15 years ago.

And on any other night, the smart football that Sunderland played—they went ahead three times in the first half—would have wrecked the occasion for home supporters.

But they took it all in good heart, singing, dancing and occasionally chanting "Halom is a Womble".

For Vic Halom, the man Luton sold to Sunderland, was the visitors' captain for the night. He was subjected to

plenty of good-natured abuse from behind the Oak Road goal. When Sunderland had the cheek to spoil Luton's night of nights by scoring in the third minute the crowd sang back defiantly "Ee-aye-addio we're going up."

Hughes scored for Sunderland, but the fans were on their feet when Jimmy Husband scored with a header 15 minutes later.

With all the season's pressure off them, both sides were happy to go goal-hunting and Towers ramed in a

second goal for Sunderland after 26 minutes only for Jimmy Husband to score another equaliser five minutes later.

To a background of incessant noise Sunderland went ahead by 3-2 after 35 minutes through Ashurst, and the Town came back yet again with a marvellous headed goal by Barry Butlin.

It came three minutes before half-time — and the crowd needed the interval to catch their breath.

In the second half, the Town really turned the pressure on but the Sunderland defence survived a pounding thanks to two good saves by Montgomery from Butlin, and then Sunderland came back to snatch a dramatic winner 12 minutes from time through Vic Halom.

Supporters

But although the result was wrong for them, everything else was right for the fans and despite the efforts of a line of police, hundreds of supporters invaded the pitch at the final whistle to acclaim their heroes.

The defeat was forgotten as they chorused "We want Haslam."

Manager's roaring send-off

THE scene as Luton said goodbye to Division Two was unforgettable.

A sea of singing, laughing cheering faces rippled with delight, covering the pitch from end to end as manager Harry Haslam and his team went to acknowledge the cheers.

They quietened when he appealed: "You're the best supporters in the land. Thanks very much for your grand support and I am sorry we have disappointed you tonight..."

And the crowd drowned the rest of the sentence by singing in unison "We're going up."

**MORE SPORTS
NEWS STARTS
ON PAGE 71**

DETAILS OF THE MATCH

LUTON TOWN 3, SUNDERLAND 4

HALF-TIME 3-3

TOWN: Horn, John Ryan, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, Garner, Jim Ryan, Husband, Butlin, West, Hindson. Sub: O'Connor.

SUNDERLAND: Montgomery, Malone, Guthrie, Longhorn, Watson, Belfitt, Kerr, Hughes, Halom, Ashurst, Towers. Sub: Bolton.

ATTENDANCE: 20,285 — highest league gate.

THE GOALS: Hughes for Sunderland, three minutes. Husband for Town, 18 minutes. Towers for Sunderland, 26 minutes. Husband for the Town 31 minutes. Ashurst for Sunderland, 35 minutes. Butlin for Town 42 minutes. Halom for Sunderland 78 minutes.

REFEREE: Reg Matthewson, Bolton: one of the best.

ENTERTAINMENT: Fantastic — what a night to remember!



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Best of luck in the 1st Division



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ON PROMOTION

to the

FIRST DIVISION



WELL DONE THE TOWN!

Best of luck in the 1st Division

The only reporter at all of Luton's matches

LUTON NEWS Sports Editor Brian Swain, pictured right, has been a bit difficult to live and work with for the last few months. But not any more.

After the occasional, and thankfully rare, weekends of black depression, he has been over the moon in recent weeks. And apparently drunk with happiness for the last fortnight.

He is the only journalist to have watched every Luton Town match this season—he even spent New Year's Eve driving to Carlisle for love of the job—and the Town's historic return to Division One writes a dramatic final chapter on his first full season in the Sports Editor's chair.

He took the job, after the death of Eric Pugh, in January 1973. But he has been a Luton Town supporter all his life, and a regular specta-



tor, too, save for a four-year break caused by National Service and a spell on newspapers in Lancashire

PROMOTION!



● THE MEN who did it: Dressing room scene after promotion was assured. With the Town team are coach Roy McCrohan, on the right, and Manager Harry Haslam and physio Reg Game.

WELL DONE LUTON!

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HISTORY MADE BY TOWN—ON A SHOE STRING

LUTON TOWN, for years the unfashionable and unfancied club with ideas above its alleged station, made history this week. By returning to Division One, after sliding out of it 14 years ago, they became the first club in British soccer to succeed in the long climb back.

And whatever else happens in the future, they have put a new entry into the record books: the first team ever to slide down from Division I to Division IV and then haul themselves all the way back up again.

And they have done it on a shoestring, counting the pennies while rivals could afford to splash out hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Their gates have been pathetic, at times derisory, as cynical townspeople with long memories have refused to believe that the Club really meant it when they said they were going for a place in the First Division.

But mean it they did. Backed by a go-ahead board of directors, Manager Harry Haslam, after only two years in the boss's chair, has moulded together a team which has confounded all its critics.

Not only has it won promotion. It has done it by playing open and attractive football, even to the point of giving away draft goals through the risks that entertaining soccer brings.

They were third on New Year's Day, and have held on to second place since late February.

And the amazing team spirit that has been built up kept the promotion wagon rolling even through the bad days. After a disastrous Easter—so often the time when previous promotion drives have crashed—the Town bounced right back, and none of their delirious supporters who shared last night's celebrations will ever forget the wondrous delight and pleasure

WHAT A SIDE!

NOT MANY soccer managers in Division II were surprised at the success of Luton Town. With few exceptions, their reactions after playing against Luton were the same: "What a team!"

Jack Charlton, on the day his side got a roasting at Middlesbrough but still managed to win, said then that Luton were the second best side seen at Ayresome Park — and later events have proved he was right to call his own outfit the best.

Brother Bobby Charlton, whose Preston team has been relegated, was just as sure that Luton Town were going to win promotion.

And he added: "I think they might turn out to be equipped even better for the First Division than for the second."

MEAD'S UNITED congratulate LUTON TOWN F.C. on their promotion to the FIRST DIVISION, and thank them for their generous help in the past

Our normal sports section is inside: Pages 71-75

TWO YEARS TO CLIMB TO THE TOP!

AMONG ALL the celebrations of Luton Town's success, one man more than any other has reason to feel proud today. For Harry Haslam, in two short years, has hit the top of his precarious profession as a league manager.

"Harry Who?" asked some of the fans two years ago when it was announced that Mr Haslam was to become manager in succession to Alec Stock. Well, now they know.

And they also know the other half of the dedicated duo which has put Luton Town into the First Division again—coach Roy McCrohan.

But Harry's success will surprise no one in football, because one of his greatest assets is a colossal number of friends and contacts in the game.

Haslam and McCrohan have both experienced the other side of soccer—the numbing tragedy of being sacked without notice, paid off with a week's wages, and being out of work.

It happened at Fulham, when the two of them were with Bobby Robson in the days when Johnny Haynes was coming to the end of his career.

The full story of the dressing room rows that led up to the triple sackings have never been disclosed, but Luton's achievement in winning promotion puts the final touch to the success story of the three Fulham rejects.

Harry Haslam will not knock Fulham. But Fulham's loss was Luton's gain. While Robson moved to Ipswich, and took that unfashionable

club climbing the First Division table, and then into Europe, Haslam and McCrohan picked up the pieces of their careers at Luton.

And they have proved their worth in the best possible way. They have given Luton a team to be proud of—and it is worth noting that they have done it their way.

On Luton Town's books today there is only one player, John Moore, who was with Luton before Haslam arrived to be entertainments and promotions manager, under Alec Stock.

And after Stock's departure, we really discovered what entertainment and promotion was all about. Well done the lads. But well done as well Harry Haslam and Roy McCrohan.

But what has turned out to be the



● HARRY HASLAM



● ROY MCCROHAN

WINNING PLAN

THE LAST time Luton won promotion to the First Division was in 1955. And on that occasion, too, the successful formula was to concentrate on attack, using Jesse Pye as a deep-lying centre-forward.

But Jesse, one of the most popular players Luton ever had, was transferred before the season's end to Derby County — and the club replaced him from their own ranks.

Bob Morton was converted from wing-half to centre-forward, and the Town more than consolidated their position as a First Division club.

Daily Duncan was manager, and Syd Owen captain, and the team included Bayham, Stretton, Dunne, Aherne, Morton, Shanks, Turner Cummings and Davies.

Phil Coley was Club Secretary, and black-haired Bob Readhead was in charge of the "A" team, with 25 years' service to the Club behind him. Today he is Secretary.

Harry Haslam played it cool all the way

By ERIC NORRIS

WHEN THINGS look good in pre-season training, it is always the temptation for any manager to boost his side as championship winners—if only to bring in the fans for the opening games.

But what has turned out to be the

most important promotion season for Luton—the rise to the elite of the First Division—was not heralded in traditional fashion at the start of the season by manager Harry Haslam.

Harry started by playing it cool, and has continued to play it cool, letting the results the lads have produced speak for themselves.

Before the season started, when he was under criticism for letting players like Viv Busby and Alan Slough move on to fresh pastures without jumping into the transfer market for substantial new signings, Harry Haslam was content to say:

"The Second Division is going to be harder than it was last season."

"And the margin between success and failure will be smaller, with the introduction of three up and three down. We will be as good as most and better than some."

Things looked black when the Town went to Nottingham Forest on the first day of the season and were torn apart, losing 4-0, but the lads were seething for revenge, and on their first appearance at Kenilworth Road the following week they reaped it in no uncertain terms, smashing Carlisle, who were to become one of their rivals for promotion, 6-1.

The results

Aug 25	Nottingham F (A)	0-4
Sept 1	Carlisle (H)	6-1
Sept 8	Bristol C (A)	1-1
Sept 11	Hotts C (A)	1-1
Sept 15	Portsmouth (H)	1-1
Sept 22	Sunderland (A)	1-0
Sept 29	Blackpool (H)	3-0
Oct 6	Palace (A)	2-1
Oct 10	Grimsby (LC) (H)	1-1
Oct 13	Swindon (H)	1-1
Oct 16	Grimsby (LC) (A)	0-0
Oct 20	Orient (A)	0-2
Oct 23	Grimsby (LC) (A)	0-0
Oct 27	Hull (H)	2-2
Oct 31	Bury (LC) (H)	0-0
Nov 3	Middlesbrough (A)	1-2
Nov 6	Bury (LC) (A)	3-2
Nov 10	Bolton (H)	2-1
Nov 14	Cardiff (A)	0-0
Nov 17	Sheff W (H)	2-1
Nov 21	Millwall (LC) (A)	1-1
Nov 24	Preston (A)	2-2
Dec 1	WBA (H)	0-2
Dec 8	Millwall (A)	1-0
Dec 12	Cardiff (H)	1-0
Dec 15	Villa (H)	1-0
Dec 22	Blackpool (A)	0-1
Dec 26	Fulham (H)	1-1
Dec 29	Bristol C (H)	1-0
Jan 1	Port V (FA C) (A)	0-1
Jan 9	Port V (FA C) (H)	0-2
Jan 12	Portsmouth (A)	0-0
Jan 19	Nottingham F (H)	2-2
Jan 26	Bradford C (FA C) (H)	1-0
Feb 2	Villa (A)	1-0
Feb 5	Hotts C (H)	1-1
Feb 16	Leicester (FA C) (H)	1-1
Feb 23	Palace (H)	2-1
Feb 26	Swindon (A)	2-0
Mar 5	Fulham (A)	1-2
Mar 9	Hull City (A)	3-1
Mar 16	Orient (H)	0-1
Mar 23	Bolton (A)	0-1
Mar 30	Middlesbrough (H)	0-1
April 6	Preston (H)	1-1
April 12	Oxford (A)	1-1
April 13	Sheff W (H)	2-2
April 15	Oxford (H)	0-1
April 20	Millwall (H)	3-0
April 27	WBA (A)	1-1



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Best of luck in the 1st Division

**THE TOP TEAM
BEHIND THE LADS**

Tom Hodgson has seen it all

PRESIDENT Tom Hodgson is the only member of the Town's "top team" who was on the Board when the club was last in the First Division 14 years ago.

Then, Mr Hodgson, who was later to become club chairman, was a director, and he had the distinction of leading the team out on to the Wembley pitch for the 1959 Cup Final as acting manager. At the time, Syd Owen was coupling the job of manager with that of player.

Mr Hodgson retired from the board three years ago to become club president, and has a unique record in football, because he is the only man to serve one club as a player, captain, director, chairman and president.

As president he has proved more than a figurehead, and has continued his active support for the club. He was at West Brom last Saturday to see the promotion issue settled, and said: "This is a great day for me, and for the club."

It was a great day also for the Town's vice-chairman, Len Hawkins.

FROM WORLDS APART

FEATURING largely behind the scenes in Luton's success this season are two men whose occupations are far removed from football, chairman Robert Keens and director Eric Morecambe.

Although he was a keen supporter of the Town, Robert Keens had no experience whatsoever of the administrative side of the game when he was elected chairman after the resignation of Tony Hunt.

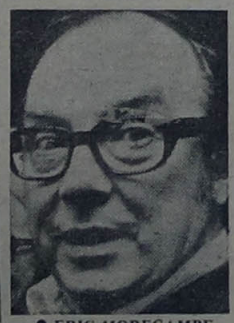
When he took the chair he decided that football had to be tackled in the same manner as any other business, and as an accountant he proved well equipped to tackle the job.

So Mr Keens and his team of directors got their drawing board out last summer, and the five-year-plan designed to take the Town into the First Division and keep them there was devised.

While Robert Keens comes from the serious world of accountancy, fellow director Eric Morecambe came to the Board with the white experience of a much different world, as one of the country's top entertainers.

But like the chairman, Eric Morecambe was already a keen follower of Luton. Apart from being a popular figure on every ground that the team has visited, Eric Morecambe can never resist the temptation to plug the Town in his television shows.

But as chairman Robert Keens points out: "Eric takes his football, and his job as a director very seriously." Even the Luton Town plugs on television are carefully considered. "It is serious work making jokes about Luton Town," said the chairman.



• ERIC MORECAMBE



• TOM HODGSON

Mr Hawkins joined the board in 1962 and is now the longest-serving director.

He served the club through the depressing years of relegation down to the Fourth Division, and in that time did tremendous work to rekindle spirit among the supporters. He is still identified with the true fans as president of the Bobbers' Club.

After the game at West Brom he said: "I am elated. When I came back from the pre-season tour I reported to the Board that my forecast was that we would have a very successful season. I am pleased to say that I was right, it has turned out to be more than successful."

Although he did not join the Board until 1962, Mr Hawkins' interest in Luton Town stretches right back to 1934 when he was associated with the Town through his father-in-law, Charles Jeyes, who was club chairman.

He said: "Since 1934 I have been travelling round the country for Luton, looking at players. I have travelled with 10 Luton managers, going back to the time of Ned Liddle."

The other members of the successful Town Boardroom team who planned promotion within five years and saw the team respond in record time, are Mr Jim Richardson, Mr Reggie Burr, Mr John Bain, Mr Denis Mortimore and Mr Roger Smith.

The other member of the team, Eric Morecambe, needs no introduction. Despite his professional reputation, he takes his football very seriously indeed, and gives support and encouragement to Town teams at all levels.



• LEN HAWKINS

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'COME ON, THE LADS ...'



THIS IS part of the seething mass that greets the Town players from behind the Oak Road goal at home matches—and still one of the best behaved crowds in the land. Numbers are often disappointing, but in the final weeks of the fight for promotion the Luton players have been left in no doubt that the supporters have been in good heart and good voice.



WELL DONE THE TOWN!

Best of luck in the 1st Division

Second hurdle: Stay up—and then into Europe



• Promotion smile from the chairman.

WITH PROMOTION won, Luton Town's directors are now looking to the next step up the ladder—into Europe. And that, says chairman Robert Keens, is not as far-fetched as it sounds.

The directors, he says, realise that the first priority next season will be to hold on to the new status in the First Division.

After that, the sky's the limit, and small town clubs can shoot up into the big time of European soccer.

No-one is making rash predictions. But Luton Town's achievements this year show that determination can become reality, no matter how difficult the ambition.

Said Mr Keens: "In April last year, the directors set up a five-year plan, to examine the set-up throughout the Club, and to take Luton Town into the First Division within that five years.

"We wouldn't have dared to ask that promotion should be won in the first year. But thanks to Harry Haslam and the team, we have done it, and naturally we are delighted.

"Now we have to look further ahead: the first hurdle was to get there. The next is to stay there. And I think that if we can stay there for two years there is no reason why we

'And it's not impossible'

couldn't be like Ipswich or Burnley.

"Burnley will be in Europe next season, and who's to say that Luton could not do the same in a year or two. But that is not the next objective for the team—the first objective is to hold on to our place in the First Division, and I am confident we can achieve that much at least.

"And if we do get into Europe the season afterwards...

But one major problem facing Luton Town in the fight for soccer survival in the First Division will be how to raise cash to buy new players.

Said Mr Keens: "The Board will have to see that Harry is supported, and that as much money as possible is made available to him.

"In our preparations for the First Division the money was found to buy Alan West and Jimmy Husband. Probably it will be desirable to buy one or two more players.

"But that will need better gates than we have had this year, and as a generalisation, Harry will have to balance his books in his transfer dealings."

And, like the Chairman said, Burnley and Ipswich have done that, and still stayed successful.

Good to be back

THE FIRST Division will not be entirely new to Luton Town, because for several players it will be a case of many happy returns. Manager Harry Haslam was there with Manchester United, as a new-war full-back. Players with First Division experience are Bobby Thomson (with Wolves), John Faulkner (Leeds), John Ryan (Fulham), Jim Ryan and John Aston (both Manchester United), Alan West (Burnley) and Jimmy Husband (Everton).

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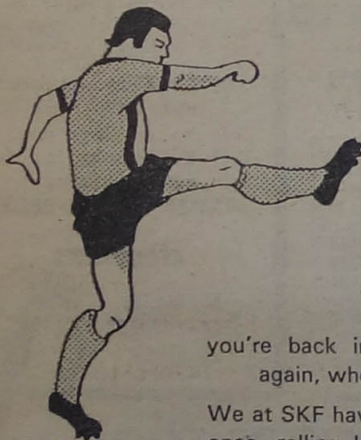
and wish them continued success in the coming season

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WELL DONE THE TOWN!

Best of luck in the 1st Division

New men well worth waiting for

ONE SPECTATOR at last night's match had even more interest than most as he prepared to take his seat in the stand—Alan Slough, who was a Town player for 10 years before leaving just before the season started.

Defender and midfielder player, he had been with Luton since leaving school, and his departure, along with striker Viv Busby, was the Town's first involvement in the transfer market this season.



● JIMMY HUSBAND

**£165,000
PAID FOR
PLAYERS**

ALTHOUGH Luton Town have been consistently mentioned in rumours about transfers, the 1973/74 season was not a hectic one. But it still cost the Town £55,000—£165,000 paid out and £110,000 received.

The season's income from transfers worked out like this: £80,000 for Slough and Busby, who went to Fulham last summer; £10,000 for Derek Hales, who went to Charlton in October; and £20,000 for Ken Good- eve, who was Brian Clough's first signing as manager of Brighton.

Players who came in: Peter Cruse from Arsenal and Billy Holmes from Millwall, free transfers last summer; Tom Finney from Crusaders, £13,000; Alan West from Burnley in October, £80,000; Jimmy Husband from Everton, November, £70,000, and Maitland Pollock from Burton, for £2,000 in March.

In addition, the Town signed John Sims on loan from Derby County, but although he scored on his home debut, against Sheffield Wednesday on November 17, he was not kept on after the month's loan period was up.

In an £80,000 deal, Slough and Busby went to Fulham, to team up again with Alec Stock, and the fans had to wait until late autumn before big signings were made to bring new men into the team.

But they were worth waiting for, because once they had settled in, Alan West and Jimmy Husband soon showed their value.

They overshadowed the Town's first signing of the season, 20-year-old Tom Finney, who started off looking as though he could be a world-beater.

After his early flourish, he has been pushed into the background, but no-one doubts that he will fight his way to the forefront again.

Now, the fans are waiting to see what sort of transfer activity this summer will produce. The Manager plays it cool, but says that of course he wants to strengthen his squad.

The difficulty is that players are not easily available—and time and time again, clubs with players to sell want a part-exchange deal rather than straight cash.

RUMOURS

Right through the season which has just ended, the Town have been the subject of rumour in the football world about possible transfers.

Newspapers have not always been helpful, with rumours given apparent respectability by being reported as facts.

The Town's talented mid-field pair of Alan West and Peter Anderson were the two names mentioned most often. The Luton Manager confirmed only once, early in the season, that Tottenham were showing interest in Anderson.

That came to nothing—but the rumours were still cheerfully published about who was going to offer what, and for whom.

THE CIRCUS

We even had them reported as fact in Luton, with players who were said to be on the point of being transferred in. Derby defender Peter Daniel was said to be "poised" to sign. But he didn't.

Bobby Moore was said to be on his way. But he wasn't. It's all part of the football circus it gives people some thing to talk about and usually it's a case of smoke without fire.



● ALAN WEST

The Town have been following up enquiries throughout the season. The Manager carries a long "shopping list" with him, noting the names of players in all levels of soccer who are worth watching.

And sometimes it takes months and months to turn the first decision into positive action, and get the man's signature on the transfer forms.

THE POLICY

But in all the welter of rumour and speculation, the Manager has hammered home his selling policy consistently.

He sums it up briefly: "I will not sell a first team player unless I can buy better. I will not sell any player unless that helps me to strengthen the first team squad."

And there is another aspect of Harry Haslam's method of doing soccer business that appeals to players: when Brighton asked to buy Ken Good- eve, the decision was left to the player himself once the Town had said they were prepared to sell if the price was right.

And when Malcolm Allison let it be known that he was interested in buying John Ryan, the decision again was left to the player. And what a wise decision he made—for First Division soccer instead of Third!



WELL DONE THE TOWN!

Best of luck in the 1st Division

THE MEN WHO DID THE WORK

IN ALL, the Town used 18 players in their promotion run, and only two of them, Bobby Thomson and Alan Garner, the stalwarts of the back four, were ever-present. They were due to complete their 100 per cent records against Sunderland last night.

In fact it was the men at the back who were most consistent, or more fortunate when it came to steering clear of injury, because John Faulkner also had a fine record, missing only two League matches.

Keith Barber, who started the season as first-choice goalkeeper, had the misfortune to be injured in the first match—the 4-0 defeat at Nottingham Forest—and this allowed Graham Horn, the former Arsenal goalkeeper, to come into the side and make the position his own. Barber came back for seven games before Horn took over.

In front of Horn, the back four were very consistent. Apart from Garner and Thomson, John Faulkner and John



● PETER ANDERSON

Ryan, from whom Thomson took over the captaincy, held on to their places tenaciously.

The Town's mid-field was a department that saw some changes during the season, but these were mainly brought about by the arrival of new players, such as Alan West, the big money signing from Burnley, and Jimmy Husband from Everton.

West, the England Under 23 International, showed great class in his early games, but the big success in this department was Peter Anderson, who with Barry Butlin takes credit for scoring most of the goals that



● JIMMY RYAN

took the Town to the First Division.

Outstanding too was Jimmy Ryan, who at one vital stage of the season scored a series of crucial goals in the closing minutes. On the other flank John Aston played a full part, and when these two former Manchester United men were buzzing, the Town were seen at their lethal best.



● JOHN FAULKNER



● ALAN GARNER, one of the two Town players who played in every first-team game this season, and made a name for himself in particular as the team's long-throated specialist.

Skipper Thomson



● BOBBY THOMSON

Double century

BOBBY THOMSON has set a real captain's example to the lads, and last night he was due to complete 100 per cent appearances for the second consecutive season in the Town's colours.

This is a remarkable performance for a player who thought his first-class career was nearing its end, when he was given a free transfer by Birmingham City the summer before last.

But Town manager Harry Haslam was quick to see the value of the vast experience of former England star Thomson, and in face of opposition from Wallsall, he swooped to bring Bobby to Kenilworth Road, and made him skipper in his first season with the club.

Apart from playing in every match, Bob proved so popular with the Luton fans, that the supporters voted him their player of the year last season.

Not resting on his laurels, Thomson, who earned his England caps when playing for Wolves, continued to prove in the promotion drive that he could use his head to save his legs, and proved himself as the classiest back-four player in the Second Division.



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The manager sat, a solitary figure, planning success

VICTORY BORN IN GLOOM OF DEFEAT

THE REAL STORY of Luton Town's rise to Division One started just over a year ago, on a night when no-one in the club could think of anything save disgust and disappointment. The 1972/73 season had blown up in their faces when a marvellous FA Cup run ended in fiasco at Sunderland.

It was one of the most miserable nights I have ever experienced. The Town went to the North East full of hope, with the chance to go into the semi-finals of the Cup.

But it all went horribly wrong. Just seven days earlier, the Town had beaten Sunderland at Kenilworth Road. Sunderland were not pulling up any trees in the League.

The Town had already shown their Cup power in the fourth round, when they took on Newcastle at St. James's Park and brought off the shock of the round with a 2-0 victory.

For the Sunderland game, the Town fans overcame a rail dispute and went to Roker Park to cheer the team to victory, using a fleet of dozens of coaches.

But Sunderland, newly revitalised by the appointment of Bob Stokoe as manager, had other ideas. The Town played badly, very badly, and Sunderland had little difficulty in winning 2-0.

And as the Town's team coach sped down the motorway on the way home, it overtook dozens of supporters' coaches. A few of their supporters managed a wave and a cheer.

By BRIAN SWAIN
Sports Editor

But the abiding memory for most of the Town party that night was the sad, shocked faces that stared blankly as the team went past.

And the Town manager, usually one of the most talkative and cheerful men you could ever meet, sat alone at the front of the coach.

He was hunched forward, staring silently at the floor. He sat like that, for all the world like an undertaker's assistant, for about two hours.

He produced pencil and paper, and started writing. And that, as it turned out, was the blueprint for success, born of the adversity of bitter defeat.

The Sunderland Cup-tie marked the end of Luton's happy days last season—but the manager told me many weeks later: "That was the night I sat down and thought hard and long about where we went from there."

The players on that long coach ride home eventually managed to cheer up. The champagne that had been brought for the victory celebrations was drunk to drown the sorrow of it all.

One player, no doubt with the best of motives, said: "Come on lads, cheer up. It's only a game."

That man is no longer a Luton Town player. Said the Manager: "If a professional footballer thinks that, I don't want him."

And a new type of professionalism came into Luton Town as the manager wrote

down his thoughts on how to turn failure into success.

The boss was almost fanatical in his demands for 100 per cent loyalty and professionalism—and he got it. After the disappointing end to last season, he lifted the team and set them on the long hard road to last night's noisy jubilation.

And even the traditionally apathetic football followers of Luton are at last beginning to realise that Harry Haslam and his team really meant business when they promised to put Luton Town back into the top bracket.



WELL DONE THE TOWN!

Best of luck in the 1st Division

Club's nap-hand of glory

By ERIC NORRIS

LUTON TOWN have reached the soccer pinnacle of a place among the elite of the First Division for the second time in their history, and are celebrating the fifth promotion in the club's long career, which began back in 1885.

It is 14 years since they last took the field as a First Division team in a match against Preston North End at Deepdale, which by coincidence was also the last appearance for Preston of the great Tom Finney.

Then, after five years in the best football company in the land, they went through a long, lean spell and plummeted down to the basement of the Football League, the Fourth Division. But in 1967-68 season began the revival that was to be just as dramatic as their collapse. That season they won the Division IV championship and began a rapid climb back to a place among the top 22 teams in the country.

There are still people in Luton who remember the Luton team that won promotion for the first time in the club's history. In 1936-37 season they were champions of Division III South and went up to the

Second Division. The previous season they had just missed out as runners-up.

There was a long wait before the Town celebrated again, when they were runners-up to Birmingham City in Division II in 1954-55 and entered the First Division for the first time.

Their next triumph was in reaching the FA Cup Final in 1959, when they were beaten 2-1 by Nottingham Forest. But the following season came relegation and the start of the big slide down the league.

This is how the ups and downs of Luton Town read:

1936-37 — champions Division III South; 1954-55 — runners-up Division II; 1958-59 — runners-up FA Cup; 1959-60 — relegated to Division II; 1962-63 — relegated to Division III; 1964-65 — relegated to Division IV; 1967-68 — champions Division IV; 1969-70 — runners-up Division III; 1973-74 — Back to the big-time.

Their highest-ever position in the football league was in 1957-58 when they were eighth in the First Division.

JIM RYAN — PENALTY SPOT KING



● JIMMY RYAN'S professional coolness and expertise played a big part in the Town's surge to promotion. The picture above shows him scoring a vital point-saving equaliser, with a penalty during injury time in the home match with Nottingham Forest on January 19. And he did it again in the Town's next league match, to give the Town a 1-0 victory at Villa Park, with another injury-time spot kick.

Hunt for stars was on before season started

WHEN LUTON Town were in Germany last summer, on their pre-season tour, there was plenty of time to sit and talk football. And footballers contrary to the opinions of many people, can do that better than most.

And on a hot sunny day in Bavaria, one of the Town's players expressed a view that was fairly generally held in the dressing room: "If we're going to win promotion we need some help."

That was realistic rather than defeatist. He said: "We're starting the season with the same team that we had last year — and we weren't good enough to get to the top, were we?"

A lot of football followers in Luton probably shared that view, and in his very first column in the Town's match programme, in September, the manager made it clear that he wanted more players.

Just before the new season opened Luton had signed Tom Finney, who made a swift impact, with five goals in his first four games. But Haslam declared: "Like nearly every other manager in the Football League I would like to boost the first team pool. . . ."

"We've tried for several players during the close season, but have just been beaten for their signatures."

"It's not the question of money that has beaten us for players, but the fact that the players themselves have preferred to move to other towns or cities."

"But the search is still on for top-class players, and if the right ones come along we will do our best to sign them and so boost our hopes of honours."

He was as good as his word, spending a club record of £80,000 on midfield man Alan West, who came from Burnley in October, and another £70,000 a month later on Jimmy Husband, from Everton.

And they have blended in with the established players, and the fans will argue for months about who was Luton's player of the season.

There are plenty of contenders — our Sports Editor picks Jimmy Ryan, for his all-round ability and his consistency throughout the season.

But really, we salute the team, not a bunch of individuals. Jim Ryan was one of a dozen players of the season, playing with a spirit and attitude that typified the whole team.

● The men who did it: Page 7.

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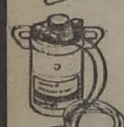
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