

HATTERS

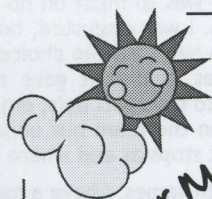
ISSUE 61 • SUMMER 2004

LUTON TOWN



SUPPORTERS CLUB

HATTERS CHATTER



Dear Members!

New Board, New Owners and New Stadium?

It has taken along time, but now, finally, the future is certainly looking alot brighter for Luton Town Football Club following the completion of the long drawn out takeover saga on Wednesday 26th May 2004.

The new consortium was put together by former Club Secretary Bill Tomlin, aided by John Mitchell. It includes the former Spurs Finance director, Derek Peters, who aided the club moving to Plc status and has a great deal of experience in football finance. Richard Bagehot with a legal background and a representative of the Luton trust, initially to be Mark Thompson, but the Trust is currently holding consultations as to how this representative will be elected. I, on behalf of the Luton Town Supporters Club would like to take this opportunity of welcoming them all to the club and wishing them success for the future.

The appointment of the Trust representative, and with the Trust acquiring a 10% shareholding, shows the new board and owners commitment to the fans and is to be welcomed. We now need this to be meaningful representation as opposed to the cursory position previously offered. This has the makings of a board which, having had the necessary operating experiences, has the credibility to take the club forward to a new stadium.

It is a new Stadium though, which is key to the future of the club. The new board have made a significant capital injection, reputedly £1.7 million, to stabilise the club finances but it is a new stadium which can offer the club long term financial security and avoid the periods of instability which we have seen over the past few years.

The new consortium are aiming for a completion date of September 2006. This is an extremely ambitious target and to realise this dream a planning application will have to be seen within the next 3 months. The council have given their backing with the scheme and given the impending arrival of the Translink (guided bus way) project this only adds to the urgency. Once completed the club will lose virtually all of the car parking it currently has.

It is a sign of more promising times that the club have already managed to secure the signatures of two of last seasons key players at the time of writing, Steve Robinson and Chris Coyne, along with 3 youngsters - goalkeeper Rob Beckwith, defender Curtis Davis and midfielder Stephen O'Leary and midfielder Michael Leary has signed an extension to his contract keeping him at the club until 2006. I expect and hope more to follow shortly. However, the club does need to avoid the mistakes of paying excessive salaries whilst chasing the dream. It is imperative the club lives within it's means despite the limitations this will bring whilst tenanting Kenilworth Road. For this purpose I do not believe large amounts of money will be splashed out in the transfer market over the forthcoming months, instead available monies will be used to fund the salaries of Bosman style signings. This will be a record year for the number of players out of contract, the excess supply should ensure that salary costs can more easily be controlled by the clubs .

We were unlucky this season, having just missed out on the play-offs but considering we have been in administration, been unlucky with injuries, had to deal with suspensions and been limited to a squad of only 20 players I think they did extremely well especially when you think back to our situation around this time last year when we almost didn't have a club to support anymore.

So I would like to say well done to the players, management and staff at the club for what has been a good season, and in advance, I'd like to wish everyone at the club good luck for next season. Also, don't forget the fixtures for the new season will be out on 24th June and the LTSC Annual General Meeting is being held on Monday 12th July, for more details please go to page 3.

Enjoy your summer!

Mark Chapman

LTSC Chairman



In this edition of Hatters Chatter:

Talk Of The Town
Cheers - A Hatter's
Farewell

The season belongs
to Boyce

LTSC Annual
General Meeting

Player Interview
Enoch Showunmi

Lifetime
Vice President

Three Cheers
to them All!

Fred Hawkes
The Loyal Lutonian

Luton Town
News

QUITE often when I get the Editor's reminder of a deadline to be met for this column I spend ages thinking about what I should write about. Not this time though. This is my swansong, the final article of the thousands I have put together in almost 50 years as a journalist.

It is fitting that LTSC should be publishing my last hurrah, because I have been a life-long member of the Luton Town family, as was my father before me. He was a football nut and my best friend, and was embarrassingly proud of me when I finally got the job I craved, being paid to watch Luton Town. I have been a lucky man, with so many memories of the Hatters. I'm no John Pyper - I haven't a clue what was the first Luton match I saw. It was soon after the last war ended, when my dad came home after seven years in the army.

I was a "Teddy Boy" in the fifties and already a committed regular at Kenilworth Road when the Town went into the First Division for the first time in their history. Gordon Turner, Syd Owen and Bob Morton headed my list of heroes, and that 1955 team was one of the best I ever saw at Luton.

I was a sad case when the Town went to Wembley for the first time. I was doing my National Service, stationed in Sussex, and waiting to be sent to Cyprus to take on General Grivas and his EOKA mob. We were given the weekend off before flying out, which meant I was in Luton for Cup Final day but couldn't get a ticket for the game. I watched it on a tiny black and white telly, before going out to drown my sorrows at the George. Two days later I arrived in Cyprus, with some trepidation at the prospect of active service, and two days after that I "celebrated" my 21st birthday. Celebration it was not. Like all my mates I was broke so the party was delayed until, thankfully, peace broke out.

Watching Luton after my return to Civvy Street was painful as we slid down the divisions. I went to Manchester to get a better-paid job, and was there for two years until the paper I was on folded and I was made redundant. By then I had become enthralled with Manchester City, who played the Luton Town way, which is why they are still my second club.

The Luton News took me back, and I began watching Luton from the Pressbox in the middle sixties, helping out the then Sports Editor, a miserable old you-know-what called Eric Pugh. But it was good training, and to succeed him in 1972 was a dream fulfilled, and I loved the job. What a way to earn a living!

People ask me to name my best-ever Luton Town side. Not easy, but I would go for the team that David Pleat put together to win the 1982 Second Division title. The first season back at the top level has to be the campaign I enjoyed most, with a succession of highlights - the attacking brilliance of Paul Walsh and Brian Stein, the 3-3 draw at Anfield when four goalkeepers were beaten, and the never to be forgotten finale at Maine Road when Raddy Antic netted the goal that saved the Town from relegation four minutes before the season ended, and sent Manchester City down instead. And no, I didn't shed a tear for City - it was them or us.

That season, of course, was the start of ten wonderful years at the top, and I count myself very fortunate to have been able to watch the Town home and away throughout that decade.

Wembley '88 was something special, and I find it hard to choose my best-ever Luton Town game between that Littlewoods Cup final and the Maine Road match. In terms of thrills, mixed emotions and eventually outright, delirious joy, there's not much to choose between them.

The best manager I have worked with? David Pleat for his single-minded determination to do well when he was promoted from youth coach to No. 1, and for the way he harnessed that determination into building a good footballing side. He also learned from experience: having got us into the First Division, he made sure no-one rested on laurels, and after the cavalier soccer of the promotion year he also proved adept at beefing

up the side to make it harder to beat. Signing Steve Foster from Aston Villa reserves was a master-stroke.

Pleat also did me a favour, although I didn't realise it at the time. Under Happy Harry Haslam, the Luton News and the Evening Post bought seats on the team coach to get Roger Duckworth and me to away games. But when Pleat took over, one of his first decisions was to insist on no "outsiders" being allowed on the team bus. I was disgusted, but it turned out to my advantage: the Luton News had no choice but to pay to let me drive to away games, and that gave me much greater freedom, and the ability to transport pals, enjoy a smoke on the move (as we had done on the team bus under Harry Haslam!) and to make refreshment stops as and where we pleased.

After 23 years of driving to games, I have a mental catalogue of the best pubs near every ground in the land, and I know a fair few within a few minutes drive of every motorway junction.

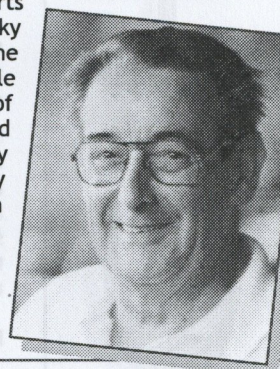
Best of all, I have a wonderful collection of good friends all over the country. There is a guy like me at almost every league club, a man reporting on the team he loves. We all meet each other twice a season, and over 32 years or so you are bound to get to know each other reasonably well.

I am going to miss so much with retirement, including so many good friends, especially those I have met through Luton Town. Kenilworth Road will always be dear to me. I hope that one day before I die the Town will have the new ground they have been looking for since I was a boy - 1948 was the first new stadium plan I heard about!

But I will be a little sad when Kenilworth Road is finally knocked down, and not just because of my football memories of the place. It is very special in a very personal way: one Thursday afternoon in November 1983 I wandered down to watch a reserve game, and my dad, as he often did, turned up as well. We sat together in the Pressbox, chatting away and enjoying each other's company. It was the last time I saw him alive, because he collapsed and died a few days later. I miss him still. But that reserve game holds a very special place in my memories of Kenilworth Road. I am going to miss so much with retirement, including so many good friends, especially those I have met through Luton Town.

And if you wonder why I am moving 300 miles to Falmouth, down in the far south west, there is a personal reason for that as well. More than 60 years ago, my dad was a soldier in the Beds and Herts Regiment, who were sent to Falmouth early in World War II to guard the docks. The young squaddies were farmed out to live with local families because there were not enough barracks to accommodate them. The family who took him in treated my dad like a son, and the close friendships forged then have continued to this day.

Like my dad before me, I have been going to Falmouth at every possible opportunity since I was first taken there as a toddler to meet our "other family." Like him I fell in love with the place, and it invokes wonderful memories of the times we enjoyed together there. A generation down the line, I am still part of that family. And we have a wide circle of other friends there, nearly all of them from families who remember with affection and gratitude the 1939 Beds and Herts Regiment visitors. My dad was lucky enough to survive the war, including the North African campaign, then to be able to return to enjoy the peace of Falmouth. A lot of his friends didn't, and their final memories of this country were of the kindness shown to them by ordinary folk in a little Cornish town. Oh yes, while I will always be a Luton Town fan, there are a lot of things in life more important than football.



Brian Swain

THE SEASON BELONGS TO BOYCE

AT THE ANNUAL PRESENTATION EVENING

On the evening of Sunday 2nd May, the Riverside Suite at Vauxhall Recreation Centre was packed with Luton Town supporters for the annual Presentation Evening held jointly with Luton Town Football Club and the Luton Town Supporters Club.

A lot goes into organising this popular event, and a hard working sub-committee from the supporters club got together last Autumn to start the arrangements. Firstly, they had to arrange the venue and date well in advance. Once that was sorted, their duties also included sorting out everything needed for the night including printing the tickets, table decorations, food, music, finding a guest speaker, collecting raffle prizes and selling raffle tickets for the grand draw.

As always, tickets sold out very quickly, and being an avid fan myself, and also being the editor of this newsletter, I had my ticket along with my Dad, brother, and 3 of our friends well in advance. We arrived in a taxi at the Riverside Suite at about 6.35pm. There was me thinking we were going to be too early, but the queue outside started to form very quickly and before long, it was round the corner and out of view.

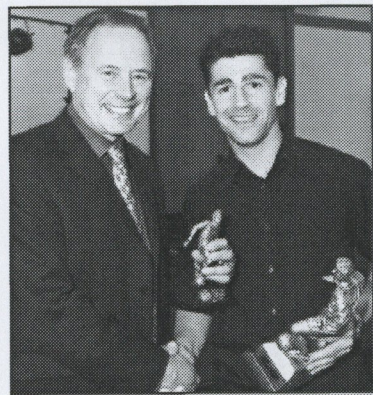
At 7pm sharp, the doors opened and we hurried in to choose our table. With the drinks soon flowing and the sound of Committee Member Ray Lelliott's band playing softly in the background, players started to arrive and we sat discussing which player we thought would be on our table! Once more of the players had arrived, we went round and got our pictures taken with most of the players, even Mike Newell and Mick Harford were happy to oblige! The players were all very polite and more than happy to sign autographs and have their pictures taken with everyone, whilst chatting amongst themselves and the fans. It was great to see John Moore in attendance too. He is a very well respected man at Luton Town Football Club and probably always will be. John was awarded a special presentation in recognition of all his hard work and efforts for the club and after giving a short speech, John was guided back to his seat by a standing ovation.

At around 8pm, everyone was to be seated at their tables for the first of the awards - the award for Goal of the Season, as chosen by Luton Town Supporters Club members. Undoubtedly so, the Barbara & Stamford Tripp Memorial Trophy went to Steve Robinson (shown top right with LTSC President, Nick Owen) for his tremendous strike at Blackpool back in December. I'm sure those of you who were there to see the goal will all agree it was a very good goal indeed, and deserved to be the Goal of the Season.

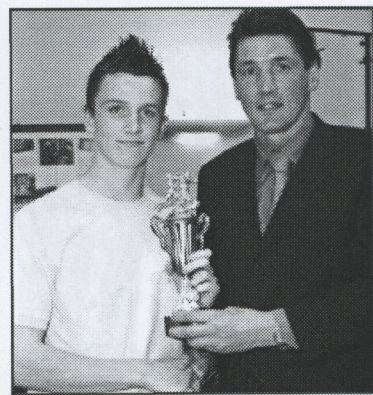
Next up was Young Player of the Year chosen by the Luton Town manager and coaching staff. Not a stranger to this award was young left back Kevin Foley, who won it for the third year running! (pictured middle with Mick Harford). I don't think this came as a surprise as Kevin had a good season, playing down the left, defending and attacking. This lad has a bright future and has certainly done well enough to deserve the trophy again.

It was the players turn to choose the winner of the next award - the Players' Player of the Season. Receiving this award was Emmerson Boyce pictured alongside Mike Newell, who has had an excellent season in defence. Mainly playing alongside Chris Coyne, the two had a good partnership in, winning things in the air and on the ground to stop the threats opponents had on goal.

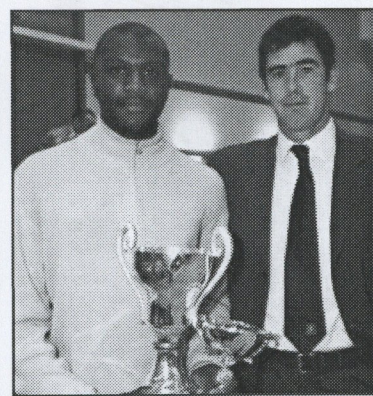
After the first 3 awards of the night, it was time for a break and a delicious hot and cold buffet was served, and while fans stocked up on drinks and filled their plates, the players mingled between each other, signed more autographs and posed for more photos.



Steve Robinson
Goal of the Season



Kevin Foley
Young Player of the Season



Emmerson Boyce
Players' Player of the Season

cont...

Luton Town Supporters Club

Annual General Meeting

Monday 12th July 2004 • 7.30pm • Eric Morecombe Lounge at LTFC

Agenda

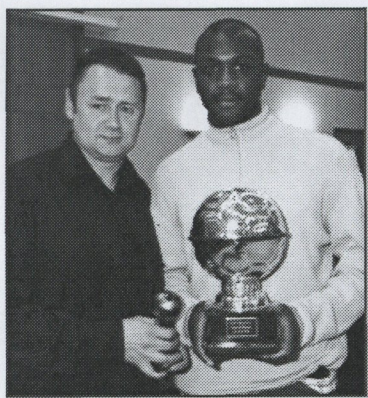
1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of Last Year's A.G.M.
3. Matters Arising
4. OFFICERS' REPORTS
 - a. Chairperson
 - b. Membership Secretary
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Press Officer
 - e. LTFC Representative

5. Special Reports (if any)
6. Additions or Amendments to the Club's Constitution
7. Membership Fees
8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
 - a. President
 - b. Vice President
 - c. Chairperson

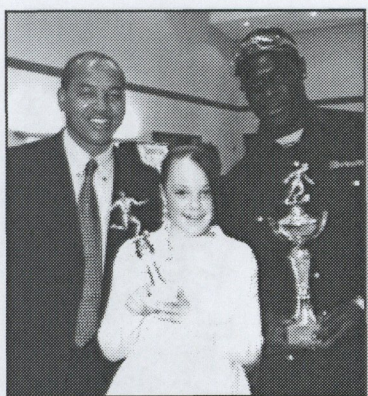
- d. Deputy Chairperson
- e. General Secretary
- f. Membership Secretary
- g. Treasurer
- h. Press Officer
- i. LTFC Representative
- j. Up to 10 Committee Members

9. Open Questions

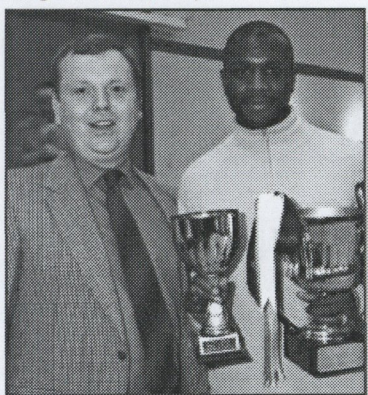
All are welcome.



Emmerson Boyce
Internet Player of the Season



Enoch Showunmi
Young Members; Player of the Season



Emmerson Boyce
LTSC Player of the Season

With everyone settled down with food and drinks, it was the turn of the Guest Speaker to take centre stage. This year, Bruce Rioch kindly came along to speak to everyone and he gave an entertaining speech on his career. Next was the turn of the Grand Presentation Draw. Members of the Supporters Club had been sent draw tickets to buy, and members of the supporters club committee had sold them at the ground on two different matchdays. Everyone rustled around and found their tickets and sat waiting to see if they were a lucky winner. There are still some prizes that are unclaimed, so if you bought tickets, check below to see if you were one of the lucky winners!

The next award to be presented was the Internet Player of the Season. This award is chosen by supporters via the official Luton Town website and Emmerson Boyce was to receive his second award of the night by claiming this trophy. Emmerson is pictured top left receiving the trophy from John Newman from Aylesbury Financial Services who sponsor this award.

The younger members of the Luton Town Supporters Club also had their chance to vote for their player of the Season, and winning those votes was Enoch Showunmi. The boy who had come from non-league football to Luton Town and is off to a flying start in his footballing career. A young member of the Supporters Club was chosen to present this award along with Brian Stein (pictured middle).

Finally, the big award is saved till last - the Player of the Season chosen by LTSC members. Everyone was sent a voting slip, and it was then your turn to decide who you thought was your Player of the Season, and after having counted up all the votes, not surprisingly, Emmerson Boyce was to scoop this award too. Pictured bottom left, LTSC Chairman Mark Chapman presents Emmerson with his third trophy of the night, and I don't think anyone will disagree and say he didn't deserve them. Not only was he solid in defence, but he also managed to score four goals in Luton's Division Two campaign as well. With his contract up in June, we have to hope we can hold onto Emmerson Boyce so we can keep the solid partnership between him and Chris Coyne for next season's promotion campaign, but if bigger and better things beckon Emmerson, I'm sure we will all wish him the best of luck and say thanks for his hard work at Luton Town.

Rounding up the night was a speech from Manager, Mike Newell who also received a standing ovation. He thanked everyone at the Club for their support and hard work throughout the season, and I'm sure you will all agree that we are pleased to have Mike and big Mick in charge at Luton Town.

We look forward to a good season starting in August, and with the season we have had, I think we can all be quite confident it will be a good season to come!

Helen Gatward - Newsletter Editor

GRAND PRESENTATION DRAW WINNERS

1	Colour TV and DVD Player	Val Robinson	05275
2	Season Ticket & Car Park Pass	R.Green	09611
3	6 Months Membership at a David Lloyd Health Club	Y. Fletcher	80888
4	Luxury Hamper	M. Passmore	04159
5	Bottle of Wine	S. Gurnell	00204
6	Gift Voucher	D. Fallon	08492
7	Town on Tour Trip for Two	Mr Wallace	08001
8	Signed LTFC Shirt	G. Richardson	00170
9	Chocolates	E.G.S. Laishley	04629
10	Signed LTFC Football	Pete Hartley	00532
11	CD's	D. Poulton	04055
12	Town on Tour Trip for Two	Mr P. Hosier	00870
13	Bottle of Wine	Des	05312
14	Selection of Books	P. Kelly	06646
15	CD's	Harrington	08323
16	Wine and Glasses Pack	P. Peacock	09198
17	Reversible Fleece Throw	M. Smith	06670
18	LTFC Club Shop Voucher	Ashton	09981
19	Whisky	Miss G. Skelton	02738
20	Picnic Lunch Set	S. Hamill	00452

Luton Town Supporters Club

As always, we welcome any new members to the Luton Town Supporters Club. If you have any friends or family who would like to join, no problem! Tell them to pop by at our kiosk in Kenilworth Road before or after home matches. We will be happy to give them details of how to join.

Being a member, you get priority for tickets to events we hold including the annual end of season presentation evening, the Xmas fun quiz and many guest speaker evenings, and of course, at a discounted price! We give you the chance to ask players and managing staff the questions you want to ask - an opportunity we are proud to give you.

Our events usually prove very popular to many Luton Town fans, including non-members, and being held in the Eric Morecombe Suite at Kenilworth Road we have use of the Bar facility and stewarded car park in Maple Road.

Upcoming events...

Annual General Meeting

Monday 12th July at 7.30pm. To be held in the Eric Morecombe Lounge at Kenilworth Road. All are very welcome to come along.

Look out for more evenings coming soon!

LUTON TOWN SUPPORTERS CLUB COMMITTEE • 2003/04

LTSC President • Nick Owen
LTSC Vice President • Brian Swain
Chairperson • Mark Chapman
Vice Chairman • John Pyper
General Secretary • Trish Johnson
Membership Secretary • Vic Fussell
Treasurer • Ian Kelly
Press Officer • Maureen Ingram
LTFC Representative • Cherry Newbery
T.O.T Co-ordinator • Christine Bray
Newsletter Editor • Helen Gatward

Additional Committee Members:

Yvonne Fletcher, Marilyn Fussell, Adrian Shotbolt, Audrey Bray, Caz Meers, Dave Baker, John Heley, Ray Lelliott, Peter Hosier, Maureen Barrett, Kevin Barrett, Tom Robinson.

We are always on the lookout for new committee members, especially to assist us with our 'Town on Tour' away travel service. If you have been a LTSC member for more than a year and are interested in helping out, visit our kiosk on first team games during the season and speak to one of our committee members. Or alternatively, leave a message on Town on Tour's mobile on 07960 567465.

FOR SUPPORTERS BY SUPPORTERS!

Enoch Showunmi

Born • London

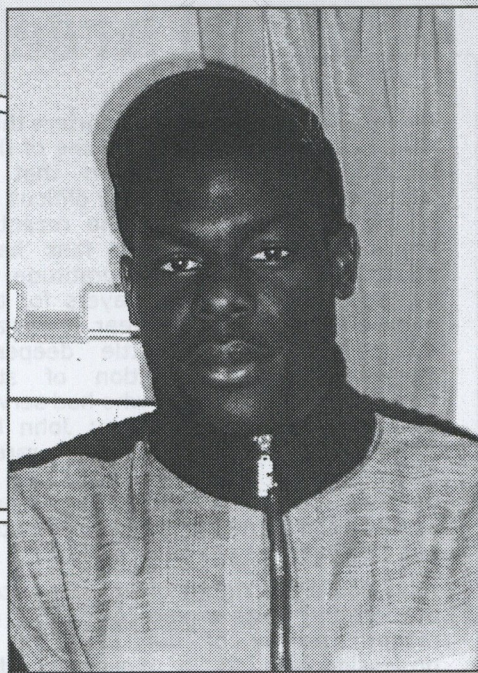
Height • 6' 4"

Signed for Luton • February 2004

Squad Number • 16

Position • Striker

Goals Scored in 2003/04 Season • 8



Player Interview

EARLY YEARS: Enoch started playing football when he was about 11 in a little five-a-side team. 'It just kind of came about when I joined a team at 17, they saw me and told me I could be good enough to play football at a professional level so I thought why not, I'd give it a go!' Before turning professional, Enoch carried on his education at university and completed a Business degree. Having asked him if that was what he wanted to do or whether it was a back-up plan incase the football didn't work out, Enoch replied 'It was a bit of both really! I was doing my A Levels when the football thing came about. It was actually when was when Ricky Hill was in charge at Luton, when he was manager here, and I came for a trial but it didn't work out, so I carried on studying.' Enoch was glad that he had the chance to become a professional footballer, 'I'm glad the opportunity came about, because I'm really enjoying it at the moment.'

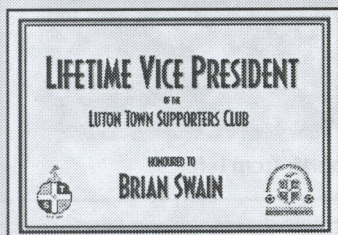
WILLESDEN CONSTANTINE: 'I played for clubs for my age group, but Willesden was like the only team I played for. When I was there it was last Summer, and we had like a game pre-season, and they spotted me there, and then they asked me back for a trial. When I was at Willesden, I think QPR were interested in me, and Sheffield United, but nothing really happened with them, so luckily I took up the chance to come to Luton for a trial.'

LUTON TOWN: Enoch jumped at the chance to come to Luton for a trial, because we were in administration, we obviously couldn't sign him on a contract, but the club paid him for travelling expenses to come to Luton from his home in London. 'I was only playing for travelling costs, I didn't mind playing for that, because it was a chance to play football professionally, I'm still living at home, so I didn't have any bills or mortgage to pay for, and I really wanted to have a go at professional football, so financially, it wasn't a problem at the time, but I got my contract out of it in the end so it wasn't all bad.' From non-league football to Luton Town, Enoch made his debut for Luton at Plymouth Argyle back in August 2003, and his first home debut was as a substitute at home to Port Vale on Tuesday 16th September 2003. I remember watching his first performance, and now remembering his last few performances, Enoch had improved greatly from when he first came to Luton. 'I'm learning all the time, some of the older players and more experienced players and Mick Harford, they have like pointed me in the right direction, and my progress had got better, it has been a quick advance for me.' Enoch's popularity at the club has made a group of fans set up a website dedicated just to him 'At first, I was a bit of an underdog, no one really knew me or what I could do, but now, yeah, I have a bit of a following, it's good to know the fans like you and the crowd help, if you hear them, it gives you an extra bit of a push, even if your not doing well and you can't hear them, it makes you think you need to push on and try and get a goal or something'. Speaking of this season, Enoch was quite pleased with how Luton had done. 'I think everything had gone against us this season, but it hasn't really been a set back. We had to blood in a lot of youngsters who have all done well, also not being able to sign players didn't help, along with injuries and that, but we will be looking forward to next season and pushing for a play-off place.'

INTERESTS: Every player gets spare time in between playing matches and training, and one of Enoch's favourite things to do read! 'I actually do like to read a book, I like reading, and I like to hang out with my mates, just chilling. I am not one of the ones who likes to play golf in my spare time, I haven't taken it up yet, I played crazy golf when I was about 12 and wasn't very good, it's supposed to be relaxing but I've not got into that yet!'

Many thanks go to Enoch for taking time out to do this interview.

Interview by Helen Gatward



Lifetime Vice President

Over the last 50 years, Brian Swain has written hundreds of reports and articles for Luton Town in his career as a journalist. But now, he will be 'enjoying the life of Riley' as he is heading to Falmouth to enjoy his retirement. Brian has also put in a lot of work for the Luton Town Supporters Club, and to recognise all his hard work, we decided to honour him the role of 'Lifetime Vice President' of the Supporters Club.

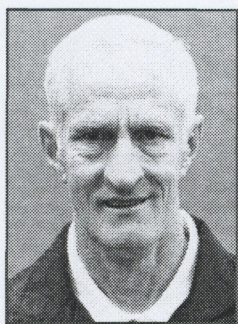
Good Luck Brian, enjoy your retirement.

Three Cheers to them All!

There is little doubt that supporters this year have been full of praise for some of the fine performances from a team that many expected to struggle in a very difficult period of the club's history. At the recent LTSC Presentation Evening loyal fans had the opportunity to show their gratitude to the management team and players for a truly noble effort over the past year. It was also an event that went a little deeper and characterized the affection of stalwart supporters for three men who had served the club so well over the years: John Moore, Bruce Rioch and that extremely rare bird, Brian Swain, a lovable hack! All three deserve and received a generous appreciation of their differing contributions to our club over the years.

John Moore was rightly given a long standing ovation and holds a place of honour on the modern history of our club. His steer professionalism as a player, coach and manager has been outstanding and I need add no more to two articles I wrote earlier in the year. (Issues 57 & 58). My admiration, like all true Hatters, is boundless and we all wish him well in the future. He will remain in our hearts and minds whenever we think of Luton Town.

Brian Swain also goes West with our blessing. It was not only his years of sterling dedication to his chosen profession that we admire, but also his lifetime affection and interest in Luton Town. The quality of his hundreds and hundreds of reports were essential reading, because of his accuracy, judgement and integrity. He told it as it was, but with the added ingredient of the fans' eye-view. It was a quality we appreciated greatly and has not been adequately replaced in the local press since he left the Luton News a few years ago. Most hacks are pretty unpopular. Not our Brian; and he



John Moore



Brian Swain



Bruce Rioch

leaves for the West Country with our genuine affection and profound appreciation for a job well done.

To talk of Bruce Rioch has a slightly different tenor, for his involvement with the Town lasted only five or six years: but what an impact he made. He had just turned 17 when he played his first game for Luton in 1964. Thankfully he took no part in the most appalling defeats that season. (7-1 by QPR, 5-1 by Exeter City, 7-2 by Shrewsbury at home! And 8-1 by Scunthorpe in the penultimate game of a very bad year. Two years later, with more than 70 games to his credit, he emerged (alongside John Moore) as one of the influential figures in the reversal of Luton's fortunes when the club was promoted to Division Three. Rioch, still only 21, terrified opposition defences with his strong running from mid-field and his thunderbolt shooting. Old hands had not seen the likes of it since the days of Bernard Moore, Bert Mitchell and the great Gordon Turner. Rioch's effect on the game was electric and the crowds returned to pack the old ground, just waiting for one of Bruce's specials. He scored 27 goals as Luton gained promotion and simply proved too successful for the Hatters to hold on to in Division Three. After several clubs eyed him up, he eventually went to Aston Villa for a Third Division record fee. He went on to gain 24 international caps and captained Scotland in the 1978 World Cup. Bruce Rioch was a magnificent sight in full flow and those of us who saw him play will never forget the excitement he brought to those games over thirty years ago.

To all three of these men we owe a big debt of gratitude and send our heartfelt good wishes.

Frank Batt - LTSC Member



The 1966/67 with John Moore pictured top row, fifth from left and Bruce Rioch pictured bottom row fourth from left

Fred Hawkes

The Loyal Lutonian

In the 119 years history of Luton Town Football Club there have been hundreds of players who played at First Team level. A select few have become legends at the club whose reputations have lived long in the folk memory of supporters. Hundreds more have been long forgotten and now only exist as a name in the record books - one such player is 'Frederick John Charles Hawkes'. Fred as he was known had a remarkable career playing for Luton for over 20 years. Only two of those games were played in the Football League. The majority of his career, Luton along with all the clubs in the South, played in the Southern League. As a consequence all the record books, wrongly in my opinion, ignore those twenty years and so his record breaking 510 games, which is considerably more than the recognised record held by another Luton legend, Bob Morton, has been forgotten.

Born in Luton on the 17th April 1881, Fred like other boys of his age learnt his football playing for a Sunday school team 'Christ Church' with whom he captained for two years. Whilst he was with Christ Church he met up with his name sake, long time friend and future Luton Town team member Robert Hawkes. Ironically, he was Robert's captain in the Sunday School team, which won the "Luton Reporter Shield" two years running.

On leaving school, Fred played for two Luton amateur teams, Stanley and Victoria. By an amazing coincidence Robert Hawkes followed him to both clubs and eventually to Luton.

Fred joined Luton in January 1897. He spent a season and a half in the reserves playing as a forward. Whilst there he gained medals in the Bedfordshire Senior Cup, the Bedfordshire League and Berks and Bucks Shield in 1899.

Fred made his full Luton debut playing as an Inside-Right (Forward) at home against Loughborough on 24th March 1900. He scored on his debut in a rare 4-0 win. Still only 18, he only played one further game, a 2-0 home defeat against Lincoln City.

Luton started 1900-01 back in the Southern League, and the 19 year old was not an automatic choice and had to wait till Christmas Day away to Kettering, replacing the popular and talented Andy Blessington. Fred did not get on the score sheet and was dropped and recalled four games later on 16th February 1901. He made his first start as a Half-Back in a 4-2 defeat at Portsmouth, but he proved highly effective in that position; but was still to play one further match in the forward line scoring the winning goal against Reading.

Charles Green was Luton's Secretary Manager and preferred to use him as a Half-Back for the rest of the season and a legend was born. A Half-Back at the turn of the last century had a dual role either supporting the forwards or helping out in defence.. Fred's career reflected this.

A model of consistency, Fred's best football came when the opposition defence was under pressure, he was a good reader of the game, able to time his tackles well as he could anticipate what an opposing forward would do. Good in the air, he knew how to head clear or chest the ball down, with accurate passes out of defence and tight situations.

For six consecutive seasons, Fred never missed a game from the Plymouth Argyle match on the 14th April 1906, until he missed the opening game of the 1912-13 season, which was Luton's first season in the Southern League Division Two. A total of 208 consecutive games. Fred missed one further game that season; but more than made up for it during the last two seasons, up to the outbreak of World War One when he missed two games during the 1914-15 season.

On the outbreak of War, he was not called up straight away and was able to play 29 War Time games, until he succumbed to injuries for the first time in his career. During the 1916-17 season, missing a massive 21 games, Wartime service during 1917-18 & 1918-19 seasons, greatly reduced his first team opportunities to just six games. Not being a first team regular when football re-started during the 1919-20 season, aged 38, his Luton career seemed over, as younger players began to be demobbed back in the civilian life.

The following season was a very poor season, although they had the goal power of Ernie Sims with players of the calibre of Dick Elvey, Archie Roe and Sid Hoar. The side lacked consistency and then went several games without a win. Called up from the reserves, Fred's steadying influence helped Luton to a vital 4-0 win over Merthyr Town. A defeat in the next game without him caused the fans to clamour for his first team return. On his 39th Birthday (17th April 1920), he scored his final goal in a 3-1 win over luckless Merthyr. Fred played the remaining three punishing games of the season, in fifteen days. His last game was played on 1st May 1921 in a 2-0 home defeat.

A loyal club man, and a proud Lutonian, there were many times when he could have turned his back on the Football League, but he remained at Luton even when he lost the captaincy to his best friend Bob. He continued playing football for local teams well into his fifties. It's believed that he died 1951.

Statistics:

Born: Luton 17th April 1881

Died: Luton 1951

Height: 5'7 1/2"

Weight: 11st 5lbs.

Appearances:

SL:508 FL:2 FAC:21

Wartime:41

Goals: SL:23 FL:1

FAC:1 Wartime 0

Brian Ellis
LTSC Member



Fred Hawkes



Bob Hawkes

Don't Forget...
The LTSC A.G.M.
is being held on
Monday 12th July at 7.30
in the Eric Morecombe Suite

Brian Swain tells the story so far...

Luton Town are defying the odds. Still in administration and under a transfer embargo, they go into March with real hopes of finishing the season in the play-offs. But then it all goes wrong, although survival itself is seen by many of us as considerable success after the worries we had last summer. Then the very existence of the club was under threat. Now, with the long-delayed end of administration, we are in pretty good shape to launch a new promotion campaign in August. But the tail-end of the season was a disappointment after the high hopes we entertained around the turn of the year.

MARCH

The Town are fifth in the table after the third away win of the season, at Peterborough. But that turns out to be the last away victory, a statistic that is to prove costly. Perhaps a referee's pitch inspection was also more important than we realised at the time.

March should have opened with a midweek home game against Bournemouth, with the Town on a roll and full of confidence up against a visiting team which will be without leading scorer Warren Feeney. But David Pugh, from Merseyside, upsets us all by ruling that frost in one corner of the pitch makes the surface too dangerous for football, and as the crowd is settling down to watch the postponement decision is announced a minute or two before kick-off time.

The let-down is all the greater when Brighton play, and their home win over Brentford drops the Town one notch. And we are down to seventh with a 0-0 draw at Barnsley before regaining a place in the play-off frame with a 3-2 home win over Blackpool.

Next up is a six-pointer: away at Port Vale, who have recently parted company with Brian Horton. A decent performance is worth the 0-0 draw that looks likely until the 85th minute, when Vale snatch the only goal.

Late goals are to be crucial. Four days later, at home to Plymouth, the Town look set for victory over the champions-elect thanks to a goal by Chris Coyne. Despite the loss of Kevin Nicholls, sent off in the first minute of the second half, we are ready to salute one of the best wins of the season, until Plymouth spoil it by equalising four minutes into stoppage time.

Deadline day sees the league allow the Town to make one signing if they also release one player. So Dean Crowe, homesick for the north of England, leaves to join Oldham and Mike Newell pulls off a real coup, recruiting Rushden skipper Paul Underwood. The Diamonds are in free-fall, having lost their wealthy benefactor and manager, and forced on deadline day to get rid of five first-team players. It will cost them, because they were to slip from mid-table and back to Division Three at the end of the season.



Paul Underwood

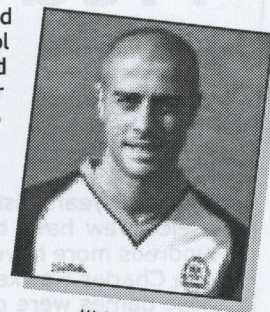
The arrival of midfielder Underwood gives us a boost in preparation for another big game: away to second-placed Queens Park Rangers. But this turned out to be the day that signalled the end of play-off dreams. The draw with Plymouth had left the Town seventh in the table, but although the Town earned a creditable draw at Loftus Road, Enoch Showunmi on target, the problems with injuries and suspensions are about to take a painful toll. Chris Coyne and Steve Howard, injured, and Sol Davis, suspended, missed the game, and it got worse after kick-off. Within 20 minutes

Underwood limped off with a hamstring injury, and long before the interval Peter Holmes and Paul Hughes also had to be subbed. It was the end of the season for all three players.

APRIL

A three-match suspension for Kevin Nicholls starts as we entertain Oldham in a game we need to win to get closer to the play-offs. But Sod's Law strikes hard: Dean Crowe marks his return to Kenilworth Road, on his full debut for Oldham, with a fluke goal, a deep cross that floats into the far corner of the net. Thankfully, Enoch Showunmi, now well-established as a cult hero, equalises within 60 seconds. But we are falling off the pace, down to eighth, so the

dodgy away record needs rapid improvement as we head for Hartlepool for a game that had been postponed earlier in the season. It was another six-pointer, with Hartlepool needing to put one over their old manager to leapfrog the Town to take seventh place. With Emmerson Boyce and Alan Neilson injured, 19-year-old Curtis Davies filled in at centre-half, and 20-year-old Michael Leary played in midfield. Steve Howard headed an early goal against his former club, and after 'Pool equalised Michael Leary



Michael Leary

regained the lead with his first-ever league goal, a cracking 30-yard drive. Just before the break Ahmet Brkovic missed a glorious chance to make it 3-1, and the miss proved costly. Two goals in three second-half minutes put Hartlepool 3-2 ahead, before Leary restored parity. But once more a late goal cost the Town. Davies gave away a penalty with a miss-timed tackle, and the 90th-minute spot kick sent the Town tumbling to their eighth away defeat of the season and down to ninth place.

The season tailed off after that. We lost by the only goal at Tranmere, when Steve Robinson had a penalty saved when we might have snatched a point, and Easter Monday brought the heaviest home defeat of the season, with Andy King's Swindon keeping their play-off hopes going with a 3-0 win.

By then we needed a miracle to regain a top six place, but mathematically it was still on, and hope flared again when we enjoyed a Titanic battle with Bristol City at Kenilworth Road. And this time it was our turn to enjoy late goals. Steve Howard and Emmerson Boyce scored to enable the Town to reach the last two minutes 2-1 up. City scored, but the Town roared back, and Keith Keane bobbled in the first league goal of his career to crown a memorable game.

Suddenly there is still an outside chance that the Town can make the top six, especially with another home game to come, the re-arranged meeting with Bournemouth. But a 1-1 draw (Steve Howard the Town's scorer) is no good to either side. The irony is that Bournemouth's goal was scored by Feeney, the man who would have missed the game if it had been played on the original date. Our faint play-off hopes finally vanish a few days later when we lose 2-1 at Wrexham.

MAY

At least we go out on a winning note at Kenilworth Road. Defensive slips present Sheffield Wednesday with a 2-0 interval lead, but the Town delight their fans with a rousing second-half show to win 3-2, with Howard's brace taking his tally to 16 goals for the season and Stephen O'Leary collecting the first league goal of his career.

The campaign ends at Saltergate, where Chesterfield need to win and hope that other results go their way to enable them to pull out of the bottom four on the last day of the season. They manage it, with an 88th-minute winner. We don't like losing, but those of us who remember some of the Town's last-day heroics, particularly at Maine Road in 1983, are happy for Chesterfield. And tenth place for us is no mean feat in view of all that has happened off the field.

The biggest and most-needed result, says Mike Newell, is still to come: he is desperate for the club to end the long-running and frustrating saga of administration so that he can get to work on re-signing the players he wants to keep, and, hopefully, bring in one or two more. And finally, the news we had all been wanting to hear for such a long time - we are out of administration on Wednesday 26th May!

Dates for your diaries... Pre-season friendlies

St. Albans - Away - Wednesday 14th July - k.o. 7.45pm
Hitchin Town - Away - Tuesday 20th July - k.o. 7.45pm
Ajax Amsterdam - Home - Friday 23rd July - k.o. 7.45pm
Falkirk - Away - Wednesday 28th July - k.o. 7.30pm
Fixtures may be subject to change. More details coming soon.

