

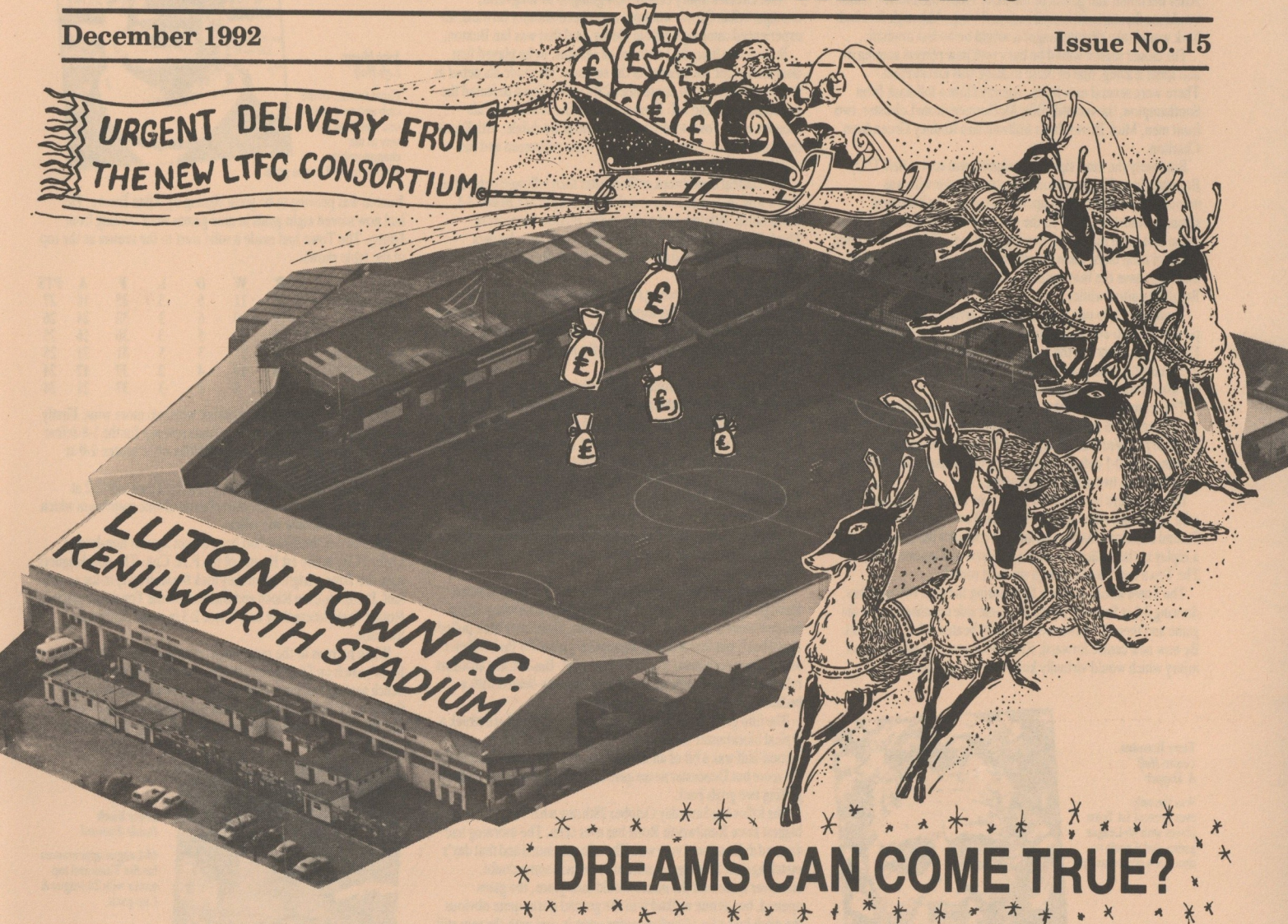


LUTON TOWN SUPPORTERS CLUB HATTERS NEWS

"VOICE OF THE FANS"

December 1992

Issue No. 15



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DREAMS CAN COME TRUE?
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STATEMENT from the Luton Town Supporters Club Committee

As the festive season approaches the thoughts turn to the past year, sadly those of Luton Town fans are tinged with the departure of many familiar faces and friends in Bill Tomlins, Ron Howard and Mick Harford as examples, and who knows who will be next?

Also the hopes of a swift return to the Premier League have disappeared and been replaced by a real and ever increasing threat of a further reduction in status at the end of the season if the present trend is not speedily halted.

We have consistently stated that a major investment must be made by person or persons outside the present board of directors if the club is to survive, and although Mr. Kohler claims that there is no "MR BIG" out there, he still refuses to enlighten supporters as to why previous deals failed? He also indicates that only a minority of fans are unhappy with his record at the football club, but he must know in his heart that this is not the case. Also, if he is the astute businessman he claims to be, why did he buy a club which he now admits he cannot finance. A year ago he promised to announce the site for Luton's new stadium, where is it Mr. K.?

Mr. Pleat's consistent criticism of the club's board is also an

indication that all is not well in the corridors of power at Kenilworth Road, and many people have voiced their opinion to the Supporters Club committee members that perhaps Mr. Pleat should not have returned to Luton. As Mr. Kendall is finding at Goodison Park it is almost impossible to return to the scene of previous success.

In line with Mr. Kohler's stated wishes we have been in discussion with moneyed individuals who have expressed an interest in the future of L.T.F.C., but are apparently unwilling to work with certain present board members. Also we feel that criticism of demonstrations at the ground has been inaccurate, although we do not condone any of the more extreme actions that are reported to have occurred.

Finally, our prayers are with the families of DARREN SALTON, Get Well Soon, PAUL TELFER and Mr. BARRY PHILMORE. We hope that 1993 will be a happier year for them and all persons with a genuine love of our Luton Town F.C.

*Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year
from the LTSC Committee.*

• SEASONS TO SAVOUR •

PART VIII • SEASON 1967/68 • BY MICK McCONKEY

After the doom and gloom of the early 1960's the 1967/68 season would see the start of the road back to the top. Although the climb back would take slightly longer it would be no less dramatic.

The closed season would be busy with new players coming in and some leaving, one of those to leave was David Pleat. There were several new faces, Tommy Hare a full back from Southampton, the versatile Billy McDerment from Leicester, two front men, Mick Brown from Millwall and Rodney Green from Charlton.

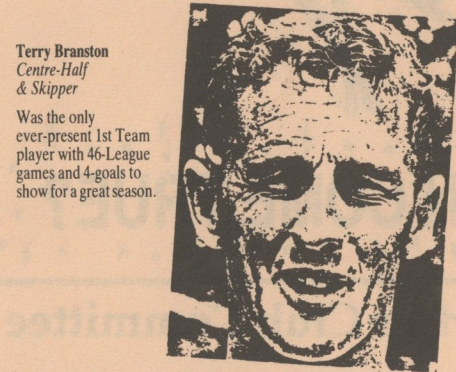
But surely the most significant signing was centre half Terry Branstom from Northampton. A natural leader who was immediately made captain upon his arrival. Of all the new signings Branstom would be the only one who would be a regular in the first team during the coming campaign. With the emerging talent of local boys, Alan Slough and Bruce Rioch, the Town looked to have the best squad that had been seen at Kenilworth Road for quite a while.

There were also two more important arrivals, this time not players but two ambitious directors, Tony Hunt and Reg Burr. Hunt was chairman of the V and G Insurance Group and would eventually take the chair at Luton Town F.C. So the scene was set for what would be a very successful season.

The season started with a visit to Wrexham on August 19th. A bad tempered match by all accounts with Graham French and Bradbury of Wrexham being sent off. The Town looked to be heading for a 0-1 defeat until Rodney Green popped up with an equaliser with two minutes remaining.

Barnsley were beaten 2-0 a week later in the first home match with Rioch and Allen the scorers. The Town then defeated Second Division Charlton in the first round of the League Cup in a replay at the Valley 2-1 after a 1-1 draw at Kenilworth Road. The Town lost 1-3 at Leeds in the next round.

The Town would stutter a little during the next two matches, drawing 2-2 at Swansea where the home side equalised late in the game and then the Town were soundly beaten 0-3 at Southend. By now new centre forward, Rodney Green, had picked up an injury which would virtually keep him out all season.



Terry Branstom
Centre-Half & Skipper

Was the only ever-present 1st Team player with 46-League games and 4-goals to show for a great season.

The Town's next home match was a 1-0 win over Hartlepool on September 9th. The all important goal was a superb solo effort by Bruce Rioch. Two days later a new local newspaper hit the streets, "The Evening Post". For the first time since 1939 Luton had its own Daily Newspaper and for Luton Town Supporters day-by-day news on our favourite team was now at our finger tips. Fifteen years later it would be gone with the advent of local radio, it outgrew its usefulness I suppose, but for me anyhow it was sadly missed. The Post's opening headline was one it would use on several occasions, perhaps with different variations, it read:

"25,000 Vauxhall workers start overtime ban and work to rule from Wednesday as pay talks break up."

An all out strike soon followed. It's also interesting to note that barely a quarter of that number are now employed at Vauxhall.

Back to the football, and the following Saturday a second half equaliser by Alan Slough earned the Town a point in a 1-1 draw at Newport. Former Town player Gerry King scored for Newport. The next home match would see the Town's best performance so far with a 3-1 over York City, this after the Town went a goal down. Rioch scored twice with Whittaker adding the third.

With Green's injury clearly now going to be long term, manager Allan Brown went out and signed another forward, an experienced campaigner from Derby, and that was Ian Buxton.

Buxton was literally a man for all seasons, as he played first class cricket for Derbyshire in the summer. He made his debut at home to Southend on September 27th as the Town defeated the unbeaten Southend 3-1. Four days later Buxton opened his account as the Town took a two goal lead at Rochdale, with Rioch the other scorer. However the home team recovered and the match ended all square.

A 0-2 defeat in midweek at Doncaster then followed before the Town won their first away match of the season at Chester 3-1, Keith Allen with two and new boy Ian Buxton the scorers. The following Saturday, October 14th, saw league leaders Chesterfield beaten 1-0 at Kenilworth Road, Buxton again on the mark.

Allan Brown was once again involved in the transfer market when he went back to his former club Wigan to sign an unknown winger called John Ryan. This John Ryan was not related to either of the other Ryan's who would play for the Town in the coming years.

Ryan was thrust into first team action straight away as the Town travelled to Exeter for their next match. He played a starring role too, as the Town thrashed their hosts 5-0 for a remarkable away win for the Town. But that was nothing compared with the next home match against Doncaster four days later.

In what was the most remarkable opening to a match Kenilworth Road has perhaps ever seen the Town were 4-0 up against Doncaster inside the first seventeen minutes. Buxton opened the scoring after five minutes after Rioch had made the opening. Sixty seconds later Buxton turned provider as he set up Slough for the second.

The third goal came on ten minutes when Ryan put Buxton through for his second goal. The fourth goal came when Allen headed home a free kick from Whittaker. Doncaster then pulled a goal back, but that was only a temporary relief for their defence as the Town continued to pound their goal. Buxton saw an effort rebound off the woodwork and Ryan was only denied with a brilliant save by the visitor's keeper.

The fifth goal arrived just before half-time when Rioch struck a typical blockbuster from outside the penalty area. The second-half was a bit of an anti-climax, the Town did not add to the score but Doncaster never gave up and restored some pride by pulling two goals back.

The following Saturday October 28th saw what I am sure is the biggest farce Kenilworth Road has ever seen. The morning had dawned dull and wet, very wet. The rain continued and that day's match against Darlington must have been in some doubt. However it seemed the match would take place, the gates opened, but as one walked into the ground it was quite obvious the pitch had a lot of surface water upon it, and with the rain still falling it could only get worse.

The match started but it was soon quite evident that conditions were more suitable for water polo than football, and after seven minutes of pure farce the match was abandoned. That sparked a mass demonstration outside the club offices by angry spectators claiming that they had been conned. They had a case too, but they were soon moved on by the police.

The Town were unlucky the next week too as the match at Aldershot was postponed. The Town were back in action at home to Workington the following week. It looked as though they were in for the same treatment as Doncaster, as Slough put the Town 1-0 up inside the first two minutes. The goals did come but not until the second half when the Town added three more.

The Town were at home again for a midweek clash with Swansea four days later on November 15th. The biggest crowd of the season so far 14,973 were to witness a match with an extraordinary finish. There was no score with under a quarter of an hour left for play with Swansea playing the better football on the night. Then Graham French scored a controversial goal when he netted from what looked an offside position.

There were strong protests from the Swansea players, but the referee allowed the goal to stand. The previously well organised visitors then completely lost their composure after this and the Town then hammered in three more goals inside six minutes. The last of which was another Rioch blockbuster when he scored a direct free kick from thirty yards out. Ian Buxton scored the other two.

John Moore
Left-Half

Great servant to the club and only missed one match on the way to the championship. Also scored 4-League goals.



Buxton was proving to be great signing by Allan Brown. He had now scored eight goals in nine games since coming from Derby. The Town had made a solid start to the season as the top of the table shows.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Chesterfield	18	11	5	3	35	16	27
Southend	19	10	6	3	32	24	26
Crewe	18	10	5	3	36	16	25
Bradford City	19	11	3	5	31	21	25
LUTON TOWN	16	10	4	2	37	17	24
Wrexham	19	8	8	3	37	21	24

The Town rounded off November with two more wins. Firstly at Lincoln by the odd goal in five (some revenge for the 1-8 defeat there the previous season). Then Halifax were beaten 2-0 at Kenilworth Road.

The first Saturday in December saw the Town lose 0-2 at Bradford City. This was the start of a run of nine matches in which the Town would only win twice.

Prior to this the Town had been drawn against non-league Oxford City in the 1st Round of the F.A. Cup. The non-leaguers gave the Town a fright when they took the lead early in the second half. But goals from Rioch and Buxton saw the Town through into Round Two, where they would lose 2-3 in a real thriller at Swindon.

When patrons to the main stand arrived at the Town's next home match on December 16th they would have noticed the old bench seating had been replaced by more comfortable plastic tip-up seats. Some 3,500 seats had been installed at a cost of £10,000, paid for mainly by the money raised by the Bobbers Club.



Bruce Rioch
Inside-Forward

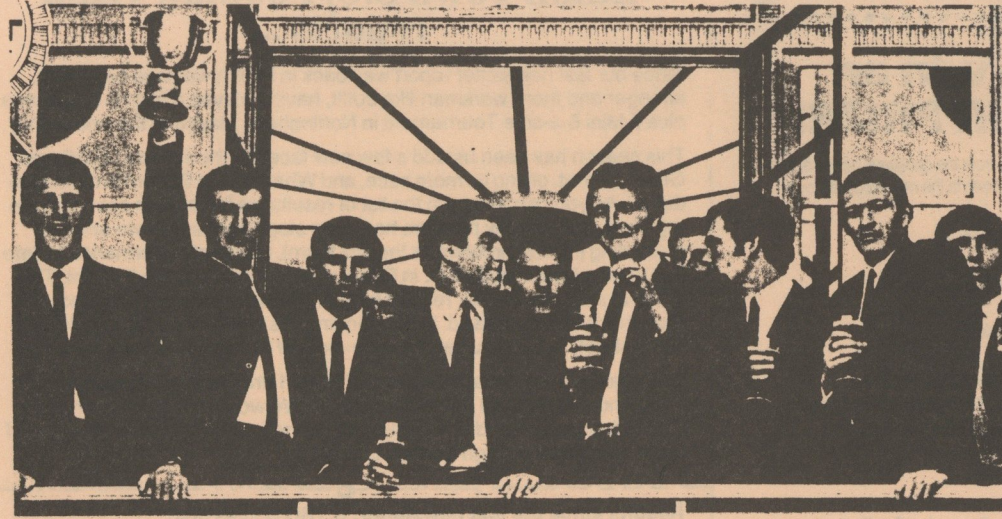
44-League appearances for the Town and top scorer with 24-league & Cup goals.

On the field that day the visitors Wrexham must have thought they would take a point back to North Wales. With the score a 1-1 with barely two minutes left, their hopes were dashed when Branstom headed home a corner from Whittaker.

On the Saturday before Christmas the Town gained a useful point in a 2-2 at Barnsley. The day was marred, however, by crowd trouble.

Over Christmas the Town had two matches against bottom club Bradford P.A. It marked the last time these Christmas double headers would be played. Goals from Branstom and Whittaker gave the Town a 2-0 win on Boxing Day, but four days later the Town surprisingly lost the return at Bradford 1-2.

The tenth anniversary of the Munich Air Crash, which virtually wiped out the Great Manchester United side, was marked by a documentary TV programme filmed in part at Luton Airport. The reason for this was that one of the airlines at Luton, Autair International, were I think the only airline still using the De Havilland Ambassador, the type of aircraft which was involved in the crash.



A civic reception for the Town players at the Town Hall. Can you name most of them? Plus the front cover to the official souvenir brochure to commemorate the last match and 4th Div. Championship.

Present on the location was the chief pilot who survived the crash, Captain J. Thain. He was still to clear himself of the blame for the crash. He was, however, never able to do so. Ironically the conditions in Luton the day of the filming were similar to what it was in Munich on that fateful day, very wintry with heavy snow falling.

Though the Luton area was snowbound the Town's next destination, Hartlepool, was not, though the Town may have wished it was as they lost 1-2.

The Town drew their next three matches at home to Newport 1-1, where the Town lost their so far perfect home record. They then drew 0-0 at Port Vale and 1-1 at York.

Meanwhile on the transfer scene the Town signed Peter Denton from Coventry City. Not a significant signing, as he only played a handful of matches for the Town. Denton, who these days works at Vauxhall, has over the insuing years raised lots of money for charity by organising charity football matches featuring ex-Town players.

The top of the table was now very tight with the Town in fifth position.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Bradford City	30	17	4	9	46	32	38
Southend	27	14	9	4	41	30	37
Crewe	28	14	9	5	53	32	37
Barnsley	28	14	8	6	37	29	36
LUTON TOWN	27	14	8	5	52	30	36
Chesterfield	26	15	5	6	51	26	35



Luton Town v Crewe Alex.
Programme cover from the game that clinched the Championship

The Town's first home match in February saw Rochdale as the visitors who were skippered by former Town player, John Reid. Not for the first time or the last during this season the visitors were blitzed by a first-half goal burst. Branstom, Allen, Buxton and Rioch all scored in the first half as the Town won 4-1.

A week later the Town won 2-0 at Brentford with Slough and Rioch the scorers. Lincoln were the next visitors and they too got the first-half treatment.

Whittaker and Rioch scored in the first ten minutes before Grummett pulled one back for Lincoln. Whittaker then scored his second, a penalty on the half-hour before Allen wrapped up the

scoring a minute before the break. Thom scored a second-half consolation a minute from time as the Town ran out 4-2 winners.

Two days later the Town played a rare Monday Night match when they entertained Darlington. The match was rearranged following the farcical abandonment back in October. Bruce Rioch was being watched by representatives from Arsenal and they must have been impressed when during the first-half he picked up a pass deep in his own half and ran sixty yards beating four defenders before unleashing an unstoppable shot from outside the penalty area, to put the Town 1-0 up.

A further goal by Allen gave the Town a 2-0 half-time lead. The second half would see mixed fortunes for John Moore, when he scored twice in two minutes. Unfortunately for him one was an own goal, which gave the Town a 3-1 win.

Those two wins put the Town top of the table, where they would stay.

On March 2nd the Town drew 0-0 at Chesterfield. Seven days later Port Vale were the visitors. Vale were managed by Sir Stanley Matthews, he left Luton that day ringing the Town's praises as they won 2-0, Rioch with one of his specials and Buxton the scorers.

It was a frustrating afternoon a week later when Exeter battled hard and took home a point following a 0-0 draw.

A tough midweek match then loomed as the Town travelled to Aldershot. Aldershot were unbeaten at home for twelve months, but a goal 20 minutes from time by Ian Buxton put paid to that. The gate that night was 9,724, happier days for Aldershot. That result left the top of the table looking like this.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
LUTON TOWN	35	20	10	5	68	34	50
Southend	34	17	11	6	53	38	45
Crewe	33	17	10	6	62	37	44
Bradford City	36	19	6	11	55	38	44
Barnsley	35	16	11	8	48	39	43
Chesterfield	34	17	8	9	59	35	42
Aldershot	34	14	13	7	55	40	41

The Town then proceeded to win their next five matches, which would almost certainly clinch promotion. On March 23rd they won 2-1 at Darlington. The unlucky Rodney Green on a rare appearance, scored one and Rioch the other. The following Saturday the Town beat Aldershot 3-1 at home, as usual Bruce Rioch was star of the show. He also scored once as did Mick Brown. He was starting his first match since September.

Into April now when promotion and the Championship were sealed. The month started with a 1-0 win at Workington, then came Easter.

On Good Friday the biggest crowd of the season, so far 16,631, saw the Town beat Notts County 2-0 at home, Allen and Rioch were the scorers. The Town were at Home the following day too. Disappointingly a smaller crowd turned up for the visit of Chester. The stay away's must have known something, the match was a disappointing 0-0 draw. The return match with Notts County on Easter Monday saw the Town lose a two goal half-time lead as County came back to draw 2-2.

With five matches left the Town needed two points for promotion and two more for the Championship.

On April 20th the Town travelled to Halifax. It would be the day when the Phoenix started to rise from the ashes. The first objective, promotion was clinched when Bruce Rioch scored the only goal of the game with just eight minutes remaining.

It would be party time the following Wednesday when Crewe, who were desperately seeking a win to accompany the Town into



Division 3, visited Kenilworth Road. The biggest crowd for four years 18,904 turned up hoping to see the Championship clinched. They were not to be disappointed.

Crewe got the first half treatment. The Town took an early lead when John Moore tapped in from close in after the Crewe keeper could only parry a shot from Rioch. Rioch himself scored in typical fashion after twenty minutes, before Alan Slough scored from close in following a goal-mouth scramble on the half hour. Rioch wrapped up the scoring on half-time with his second of the night. There was no further scoring in the second half as the Town ran out 4-0 winners.

At the end of the game the Town players ran a lap of honour and if my memory serves me right I don't think any spectators invaded the pitch.

The following Saturday the Town were at home again, this time to another side chasing promotion, Bradford City. The party would continue surely? After all the town were unbeaten at home all season. City had other ideas however, they spoilt the party by winning 3-1 to keep their promotion hopes alive.

By the penultimate Saturday of the season the Town were of course already Champions, Barnsley and Hartlepool (who had finished with a tremendous run) were assured promotion. The other place was between Crewe and Bradford City, who were playing their final matches that day.

Crewe had to face the Town at Gresty Road, while City entertained Doncaster. If Crewe won they were up. And that's what they did, gaining revenge for that 4-0 thrashing ten days earlier by beating the Town 2-1, City could only draw.

May 11th saw the Town wrap things up by beating Brentford 2-1 at Kenilworth Road in front of ITV Television cameras too.

Before the match the Championship Trophy was presented, along with the players' individual medals. Bruce Rioch took his season's tally to twenty-four as he scored one of the Town's two, Ray Whittaker scored the other.

POSTSCRIPT

Many new faces arrived on the scene for the 1968/69 season as the Town invested heavily in an effort to gain promotion to Division Two in one season.

With new boys Brian Lewis and Laurie Sheffield spearheading the forward line supported by Bruce Rioch, playing in a deeper role along side another new signing, Mike Keen, it so nearly happened. The Town just missed out, finishing third behind Watford and Swindon.

It was not all plain sailing, Allan Brown was sacked in the December when he unsuccessfully applied for the vacant manager's role at Leicester. When chairman Tony Hunt became aware that Brown had done this he felt that he had no choice but to fire him.

In his place came one of the most experienced managers around, Alec Stock.

At the end of that season Stock would also ring the changes, including, to every supporters disappointment, selling Bruce Rioch to Aston Villa. Among the players stock would bring in was a little known full back from Fulham called Malcolm MacDonald.

Read about his and the Town's exploits during the 1969/70 season in the next Seasons to Savour feature.

★ Your chance to win an L.T.F.C. SOUVENIR PRIZE!

For this Mastermind we want you to identify the eleven players from the questions below, and from the clues, player number 12. Also give the reason why he has been in the news recently for a non-football reason?

- No. 1 Ex-winger from Kettering Town I played for Luton in the 60's.
First letter of my first name.
- No. 2 I joined from Fulham as a full back but became a top striker.
First letter of my first name.
- No. 3 Australian born striker I scored my first goal against Watford.
First letter of my surname.
- No. 4 I signed from Leeds United on loan last season. *First letter of my first name.*
- No. 5 I scored for Luton against Arsenal at Wembley Stadium. *First letter of my first name.*
- No. 6 I joined Luton from Man United in the 1960's and I also played for the "Red's" in a Cup Final. *First letter of my surname.*
- No. 7 I was first choice left back in the 4th Div Championship side.
First letter of my first name.
- No. 8 I joined from Everton with John Bramwell and played for Preston in a Cup Final.
First letter of my surname.
- No. 9 I joined Luton from Chester City and left for Norwich. *First letter of first name.*
- No. 10 My twin brother is Paul. *First letter of my first name.*
- No. 11 I played for Luton in the F.A. Cup Final at left back. *First letter of my first name.*

Send all your answers (12 in total) on a postcard or the reverse side of a sealed envelope to: LTFC Supporters Club, "Hatters Mastermind" No. 14, c/o LTFC, 1 Maple Road, Luton, Beds. LU4 8AW. The deadline for these answers to reach us is NO LATER than first post 26th February 1993.

In the event of a tie the correct entries will be put into a hat and the winner drawn out at our nearest social event after the closing date.

* COMPETITION WINNER OF THE No. 13 HATTERS MASTERMIND *

Due to unfortunate circumstances we were unable to publish Hatters Mastermind in the last edition, but for those of you who have been waiting to hear who won we apologise. With again many entries, but very few 100% correct, we again put those into a draw with the winner being one of our regulars and 100% correct participant:

David Fleckney — Well Done!

Answers to H.M. No. 13 were as follows:

No. 1 Seamus Dunne. No. 2 Alan Slough. No. 3 Jim Standen. No. 4 Ron Baynham. No. 5 Mal Donaghy. No. 6 Ron Davies. No. 7 Keith Allen. No. 8 Dixie Deans. No. 9 Kirk Stephens. No. 10 Brian Lewis.

The odd one out was No. 6. All the others appeared in goal or as emergency keepers.

Luton Town S.C. Football Team reports ...

Since our last newsletter report way back in March we have become a stronger and more workman-like outfit, having played a further ten games plus a Mini 6-a-side Tournament in Nottingham, played at the end of May.

This season has seen us add a few new faces to the squad in Scott and Greer up front, giving us more pace, and Wharton and Barford in defensive duties. As you can see from the list of results we have been scoring quite regularly, but the only problem has been stopping the flow we are conceding (similar problem as the first team). Our best performance to date has to be v Portsmouth S.C. in October, 15-0. Yes, believe it or not. This came at a time when our regular keeper, Stoner, could not play and Richard Hedge deputised. When required he was always there to keep a clean sheet, but as you can imagine most of the play was in their half.

This season's matches to date read 2 wins, 1 draw and 4 defeats, but with a little more luck could have been closer. We would like to pass on to the LTSC chairperson and to whom-it-may-concern, our thanks for the use of facilities at Icknield High School, Luton.

Results since the last newsletter: (LTSC Scores first)

- 1991/92 v Sheffield Utd (H) 3-1,
v Notts County (A) 1-7,
v Oldham (A) 0-8
- 1992/93 v Birmingham City (H) 3-3 (19/9),
v Notts County (A) 2-4 (26/9),
v Portsmouth (H) 15-0 (3/10),
v Barnsley (A) 2-8 (10/10),
v Derby County 1-5 (17/10),
v Peterborough Utd 8-4 (24/10),
v Southend Utd 4-6 (31/10).

Forthcoming fixtures — v Wolves (A) 12/12, and Sunderland (H) 19/12.

Mini 6-a-side Tournament (played in Nottingham May 1992)

Bristol Rovers Lost 1-0, Leeds Utd Lost 2-0, Notts Forest Drew 0-0, Bury Lost 2-0, Exeter City Lost 2-0.

Note:

Anyone who plays football and may like to put themselves forward to have a trial game or session with us you can contact either: STUART PHILLIPS on (0483) 571372 or ADRIAN SHOTBOLT on (0582) 604079.

As you have read we play home & away, and enjoy the opportunity to talk football with fellow supporters after the games over a drink or two!

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HAPPY
CHRISTMAS
TO ALL L.T.S.C.
MEMBERS AND
COMMITTEE