



HATTERS

ISSUE 51 • WINTER 2001

LUTON TOWN



SUPPORTERS CLUB

HATTERS CHATTER

Dear Members!

Welcome to the first of the new format of newsletters.

John Pyper, who has produced the newsletter since its inception back in 1988 has had to reduce his involvement because of work commitments. I wish to take this opportunity of thanking John for all his hard work on the newsletter over the years and I am sure he will continue to be an active part of the committee.

Helen Gatward has offered to take over this key role within the supporters club, and we have taken the opportunity to revise the layout and coverage. Your feedback on the changes is needed so we can gauge the response of members. If you have any ideas as to what you would like changed, what type of articles you would like to see in the newsletter, or even help contribute with some articles yourself, we would be very grateful and glad to hear from you. Your comments are awaited.

Enjoy the read...

On the pitch the Town have had their best start for many a season, and are already starting to break away with Rochdale, Plymouth, Hull, Shrewsbury and Mansfield. With the club arguably having one of the best squads in the division, we should be well placed to build on this advantage as the winter period begins to set in.

The Town's following so far this season, particularly away from Kenilworth Road has been remarkable. Who would have foreseen a following of over 2000 for the games at Leyton Orient and Mansfield? Assuming the club build on their early season form, tickets will become increasingly more difficult to obtain. The club is looking to make facilities available in the Oak Road end for home fans, but this will put pressure on the matchday safety arrangements. I would therefore strongly recommend looking at the purchase of season tickets for the balance of the season; these do reduce in price as the season progresses. This will be seen as increasingly important for those who travel away, with some Luton matches being made all-ticket already! If things carry on as they are, I am sure this number will only increase as the season draws to a close.

The home game against Rushden & Diamonds on December 15th has been made all-ticket, being our local derby this season! Season ticket holders will predominantly take up available tickets, with only small numbers released for members. So the message is - do not miss out, sign up for a season ticket now!

It was disappointing to drop out of the FA Cup at such an early stage, it is a blow financially, but at the present time it could be a blessing in disguise, as we would wish to avoid any fixture congestion at a later stage. The priority for this year always has and will be promotion back to the Second Division and at the same time start to build a side which can look to mount a promotion campaign next season. The subsequent loss to Hull was more damaging showing potential weaknesses across the playing squad. This loss combined with an ever increasing injury list has damaged early season confidence. We now have to hope that we can build a substantial points tally before we next meet a current top six side, Plymouth at home in February.

Enjoy the rest of the season.

Mark Chapman

LTSC Chairman



In this edition of
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Loan stars and unlucky breaks

I WAS rather pleased when Dean Crowe signed for the Town after his loan spell from Stoke City. A goal on his debut was a decent start, even if we did lose that match, and four goals in five appearances suggested that the lively striker will be a very useful asset in a team which is more about banging them in at one end than keeping too many clean sheets at the other.

It very much reminds me of the 1981/82 side put together by David Pleat to win the Second Division championship. In modern times, that was surely the start of the best footballing side we have fielded. A touch too much of the cavalier, the critics used to say. Those of us who supported the Town never shared that view - you can let in three or four goals every game so far as I am concerned, so long as you score four or five.

And loan signings have always been a part of the managerial art of getting the right blend. In our case, as with Crowe's arrival, a lot have been inspired. And one or two have been very unlucky.

The impact Rory Allen made at Kenilworth Road is still fresh in the mind. *"The best loan signing I have ever made,"* said Lennie Lawrence about the striker who turned out to be too good for Luton. The 20-year-old was recommended to us by Pleat, and in eight games on loan from Spurs he scored six goals at the tail end of the 1997/98 season to spearhead our escape from the relegation trapdoor. A permanent move was never on - we hadn't got the £1million Spurs wanted for Allen, and he knew Luton's long-term prospects as a club which then sold players and hardly ever bought, were none too bright. Sadly for Allen, he too has had a struggle since leaving the Town. The following summer he became Portsmouth's record signing, when they found the million quid Spurs wanted. But within weeks he seriously injured his right ankle, and it took three months to recover. In his comeback match, he fractured the other ankle, and that was his season over. He had made just ten starts for Pompey, scoring three goals.

Loan stars and injury problems have gone together on other occasions at Kenilworth Road, cruel illustrations of how football can give you a lift one minute, then kick you in the teeth the next.

Remember Paul Wilkinson? He was a striker with a good pedigree, having played at the top level, most notably with Everton, Nottingham Forest and Middlesbrough. Lennie Lawrence had recruited him to Ayrsome Park from some club in Hertfordshire, and on deadline day in 1996 signed him on loan for Luton, again to try to stave off relegation, then from the First Division. At 31, Wilkinson was still a tasty player, but completed only two games for us - in the third, a 1-1 draw at Charlton, he fractured a toe, and that was not only the end of the loan, but also of his season. It was the end for us as well - a few weeks later we dropped into the Second Division. Wilkinson had two more years in him, spent at Barnsley and Millwall.

Even unluckier with a loan move to Luton was Graeme Tomlinson, who came at the same time as Wilkinson. Alex Ferguson rated the centre-forward highly, and was not looking to sell him, but was happy to see the 20-year-old come to Kenilworth Road to gain league experience. Tomlinson had to be patient: he was used as a sub six times before given his first start. He was one of the happiest men alive as he lined up at Port Vale, but his full debut for us was horrendous. He broke both bones in his lower right leg, and his Old

Trafford dreams vanished in an instant. Ferguson had paid Bradford £100,000 in 1994, but Tomlinson's unlucky break prevented him ever playing for United, the club he adored. After his shortened loan spell at Luton he was out of football for a year, and was then farmed out on loan to Bournemouth and Millwall before accepting that he had lost out at Old Trafford. He went on a free to Macclesfield, and after a couple of years moved on, as a free transfer again, to Exeter City.

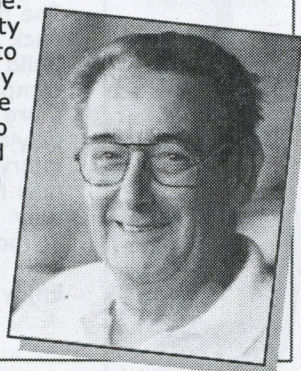
Another unlucky loan star at Luton was Lee Glover, who was a highly-rated 21-year-old midfielder when he answered David Pleat's invitation to join us for a month a decade ago. The background to the move was never publicly explained. To the best of my knowledge, Brian Clough allowed him to leave Nottingham Forest on loan as a prelude to a sale. Pleat knew the player well - the then Luton boss always had a very soft spot for Nottingham Forest, his first club, and he had previously signed Glover on loan for Leicester City.

On deadline day in April 1990 Clough offered Glover in part-exchange for Kingsley Black. But Luton wanted the cash. The deal fell through, with Forest's £850,000 offer rejected as too low. But in the summer of the following year, Black went to Nottingham for £1.5million. Pleat then revived his interest in Glover, and signed him on a month's loan in September 1991. Glover made an impressive debut in a 2-1 home win over Southampton, in the old First Division, now the Premiership. Except that after just 70 minutes of football for the Town Glover went off injured, and we never saw him again in a Luton Town shirt. Nor did he want one by the end of that season - we were relegated, and thus missed the first lucrative opening of the Premiership. Glover had three more good seasons at Nottingham, before moving on to Port Vale, Rotherham, and Macclesfield, where he is currently their leading scorer.

Another loan in that relegation season was a bit of a disaster - for the club, not for the player. We had been struggling at the wrong end of the league right from the start, and Pleat, in the first year of his second spell in charge, was actually given money to strengthen the squad that Jim Ryan had kept in the First Division against all the odds, only to be sacked.

After the Town trousered the Kingsley Black money Pleat was allowed to spend cash on the second coming of Mick Harford. He also bought Chris Kamara to try to stiffen a rocky defence, but by November we were stranded at the bottom of the table and Pleat wanted a replacement for over-worked Alec Chamberlain.

Again he asked his old pal for help, and Brian Clough allowed Steve Sutton to come on loan. Suddenly we started to keep clean sheets, and even scraped out of the relegation places for a spell. After two months on loan, Sutton hoped to make the deal permanent. Forest were asking for £300,000, and Pleat thought it was a fair price. But new chairman David Kohler - his partner and previous chairman Peter Nelkin had walked out when supporters went wild over the sacking of Jim Ryan - said sorry, no funds available. Sutton went back to the City Ground, Chamberlain returned to the side, and we were duly relegated. We will never know if the investment Luton Town refused to make might have prevented demotion, and thus brought a return of many millions in the first season of the Premiership. Derby County stumped up the £300,000 Forest wanted... and look where they are today!



Brian Swain

• Top Hatters Fan - My Favourite Team •

Journalists talk about ugly crowds but there can be few more pleasant faces in the Town crowd than Julie Parry who has been a regular Hatters fan since 3.00 o'clock on the 16th March 1974. It was the era of Harry Haslam, a wonderful man and a good manager, who introduced players like John Aston, Jim Ryan, the Futcher brothers and little Jimmy Husband who, on that day in 1974, scored a fine hat trick to help Luton on their way to promotion. It was an exciting introduction for young Julie, surrounded by a 17,000 crowd and all her family; and the neat brand of Haslam's football gripped Julie with a passion and fervour that has never waned.

Julie has always been a dedicated fan, from the time as a youngster she sold programmes in order to get into the ground, right up to the present time as a member of the LTSC committee. She has supported the Hatters wherever they have been and has visited 95% of current league grounds. She has missed only ten away games in the past decade and much of the travelling includes the extra mileage from her new home in Bracknell.

Julie's saddest memories include the final match against Notts County in 1991 when Luton were eventually relegated, ironically from Division One to Division One. She also regrets losing three FA Cup semi-finals, especially the match against Everton at Villa Park in 1985. It still provokes the greatest disappointment, not only with Julie, but also with thousands of Hatters fans. We deserved to win it - we woz' robbed! Another disappointment Julie highlights, was the closure of the Bobbers Stand. To her it was the warmest part of the ground, both physically and socially. It was closed after the Millwall riot of 1985,

But Julie avidly remembers the good times. Promotion in her first season! The magnificent Pleat-built side that went up in 1982, and clung on so brilliantly at Manchester City in the last game of the season. The cup run in 1985, and the final glory of the Littlewoods trophy in 1988, are further happy memories of the good old days. And the final day victory at Derby in 1990 takes some beating for sheer joy and tension. The best goal Julie has seen was the scintillating effort by Scott Oakes in the cup run of 1994 when Luton eventually reached the semi-final. Although Oakes does not feature in Julie's select eleven, it is very interesting to read her comments about the team and it shows that she's not just a pretty face!

Interview by Frank Batt - LTSC Member

Julie Parry - My Favourite Team: Formation 4-4-2

1. Les Sealey - I like a keeper who stops the defence from dozing off!
2. Kirk Stephens - Close between Kirk and Tim Breacker but Kirk's enthusiasm just edges it.
3. Mitchell Thomas - Mostly as I remember being so angry when David Pleat took him to Spurs!
4. Alan West - He always seemed so in control and he was very nice when I met him as a child
5. Steve Foster - (Captain) A captain should be vocal and in charge
6. Mal Donaghy - Did he ever have a really bad game?
7. Ricky Hill - I love to watch skilful players
8. Brian Stein - First time round for his speed and instinct for goal
9. Mick Harford - A classic centre forward
10. Paul Walsh - If he's good enough for Liverpool
11. David Moss - Penalty and corner taker, also entertained the Bobbers stand with his comments!

Subs: Milija Aleksic, David Preece, Brian Horton, John Aston, John Hartson
Not many defenders on the bench as I'd always prefer to have attacking options!



Below is a new feature to our newsletter! As we send out newsletters every 3 months, we thought it would be a nice idea to get together all the important dates Luton Town have coming up, including home and away fixtures and forthcoming LTSC Evenings. For your convenience, you can cut-out and keep the section below and put it up somewhere to remind you! On the reverse is a run down on the Members nights we have planned and how to get tickets. Hope you find it useful!



Luton Town FC • Important Dates!

December

Home Games

Saturday 15	Rushden & Diamonds
Saturday 22	Hartlepool United

Away Games

Saturday 1	Kidderminster Harriers
Saturday 8	Hartlepool United
Wednesday 26	Oxford United
Saturday 29	Southend United

LTFC Christmas Carol Service
Monday 17 - Luton Parish Church

January

Home Games

Tuesday 1	Exeter City
Saturday 5	Bristol Rovers
Saturday 19	Carlisle United

Away Games

Saturday 12	Cheltenham Town
Saturday 26	Darlington

LTSC Evenings

Thursday 17	Joe Kinnear Night
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February

Home Games

Saturday 2	Plymouth Argyle
Saturday 16	Scunthorpe United
Saturday 23	York City

Away Games

Saturday 9	Rochdale
Tuesday 25	Lincoln City

'TOWN ON TOUR'

What an interesting start to the season!

Changes in departure times due to problems reaching Plymouth, where we missed kick off by 5 minutes, tremendous support meaning us having to use two coaches to both Carlisle and Mansfield, plus new coach passengers who are also signing up to become members of the Supporters Club!

I don't have the stats to hand, but I'm sure that most of our regulars have stayed with us for yet another season, and I'm certain that we have had lots of new memberships, which is great and we thank you for your support.

With Luton doing so well this season, more people want to go and support the team, particularly at away matches, so our coach service is becoming very popular, which is good and bad from my point of view!

It requires a lot more organisation! I need to arrange two people to steward each coach, make sure there is sufficient food and drink, which John Heley has very kindly taken over, there are prizes from the Club Shop to get for "Predict a Score", choosing suitable videos, preferably with little or no violence, no loud gun battles, no swearing and if possible, linked to football, for everyone to watch, and also liaising with Peter in the Club Shop as to when I can pick up the bookings folder. We also need available seat numbers, price lists and sheets of paper for the score predictions to be written on. Not to mention arranging with Ian Kelly, our treasurer - to have a float available for payments on the day and for the food and drinks.

Last and by no means least, if we do have sufficient support and need more than one coach, these requirements double. We also need Hallmark to supply an extra coach - which is now done though the Club by Cherry Newbery. (I think Andy Finch and Wendi Arnold used to do all of this and am very thankful to all those who now give their support to the travel side of the Supporters Club).

We had a discussion after the unfortunately late arrival at Plymouth and have bought forward the departure times for 8 games. These new times were decided upon by Hallmark, Cherry and myself. Our apologies go out to those that have been on one of our coaches and arrived late for a match, we hope we will arrive in good time for future games.

It has come to my attention after a great away following to Mansfield, that some of Luton's upcoming away fixtures have been made all ticket. Please ensure that you have purchased a ticket before you book a place on the coach.

All travellers should be aware that there is an expected code of conduct, mainly relating to allowing fellow passengers to enjoy their journey - especially by not making a nuisance of yourself. We can and will enforce a policy of refusing bookings to any passengers who ignore these guidelines.

Please keep up the incredible levels of away travelling support, and hopefully next season we will be visiting Division 2 grounds again!

Christine Bray, Town-on-Tour Coordinator.

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.

Please note: those of you who still have tickets for the 'Meet the Chairman' evening with Mike Watson-Challis can either exchange them for another event, get a refund or hang on to them, we have been unable to arrange a new date as yet. Sorry for any inconvenience.

Our events usually prove popular to many Supporters Club members, most being held in the Eric Morecombe Suite where we have use of the bar facility and you get free stewarded car parking.

Up coming events...

17th January - Joe Kinnear Evening

Have you ever wanted to ask the manager of your favourite football club something? Well, this is your opportunity! We welcome you to the Eric Morcambe Suite for a question and answer session with Luton's main man - Joe Kinnear.

LUTON TOWN SUPPORTERS CLUB COMMITTEE • 2001/02

LTSC President • Nick Owen

LTSC Vice-President • Brian Swain

Chairperson • Mark Chapman

Vice/Deputy Chair • John Pyper

General Secretary • Trish Johnson

Membership Secretary • Vic Fussell

Treasurer • Ian Kelly

Press Officer/Deputy Gen Secretary • Maureen Ingram

Luton Town F.C. Representative • Cherry Newbery

T.O.T. Co-ordinators • Christine Bray (& various other members listed)

Additional Committee Members •

Yvonne Fletcher, Marilyn Fussell, Adrian Shotbolt, Peter Hosier, Ray Lelliott, Wendi Arnold, Cathy Crocker, Andy Finch and Audrey Bray.

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 home games during the season and speak to one of our committee members.

FOR SUPPORTERS BY SUPPORTERS!

Hatters Fun!... Hatters Fun!

Luton Town Xmas & New Year Quiz.

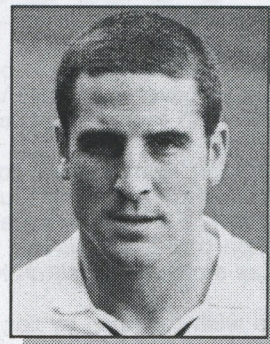
1. When Luton beat Peterborough United on Boxing Day 2000, where were they in Division 2?
2. What was the name of the Luton player sent off in Lennie Lawrence's first match in December 1995?
3. What was the result of Luton's last match in the 20th Century?
4. What was the name of the former Football League Club Luton beat on 26th December in 1968?
5. What was the name of the former Watford midfielder who made his debut on loan against Bournemouth in 1998?
6. What was the half-time score when Luton beat Norwich City 3-1 in 1981?
7. Which current Luton Town player celebrates his birthday on December 26th?
8. Who was the 19 year old centre forward who scored a hatrick in his second full match in 1975?
9. What is the biggest score Luton ever recorded over Christmas and New Year and who was on the end of it?
10. On 26th December 1999, Luton made history when they played Chesterfield exactly 100 years to the day, but what were the scores in 1899 and 1999?
11. Who was the captain who scored a penalty against Chelsea in 1991, only one of three scorers that season?
12. What was the result of the last time Luton played Watford on a Boxing Day?
13. In 1988, that years FA Cup holders beat Luton 4-0, who were the cup holders?
14. What is the name of the Luton player who scored his only league goal to date on Boxing Day last season?
15. True or False, Kevin Nicholls played against Luton for Wigan Athletic on 30/1/2000?
16. What was the name of the Luton Central Defender who scored an own goal for Northampton Town in 1997?
17. Over the Christmas and New Year in 1975, Andy King gave Luton a very lucky Christmas by scoring how many goals?
18. FA Cup matches have been played over New Year, who did Luton beat on 2nd January 1982?
19. How many goals were scored by both sides on New Years Day 1980?
20. What was the name of the former Tottenham player who was signed from Bournemouth and sold back to Bournemouth, he played 3 first team games and scored his only goal on Boxing Day 1989?

Good Luck!

You will find the answers to this quiz on page 7.

Brian Ellis - LTSC Member

Chris Coyne



Player Interview

Born • Brisbane 20/12/1978

Signed for Luton • September 2001

Squad Number • 12

Position • Centre half

WE WELCOME CHRIS COYNE to Luton Town Football Club, as he joins our ambitious team determined to win promotion this season.

EARLY YEARS: Chris was born in Brisbane in Australia. He doesn't have much of a "twang", probably due, he says, to his parents being English. "I don't talk like 'Neighbours' and all that rubbish!"

The family moved to Sydney, where his Dad also played football. Chris played for Eastern Suburbs, in a local league from a young age. Later in Perth he played for three different teams, and was a First Team Player at fifteen, playing in the Australian Under 17 Team as a semi-professional. He also played for Western Australia.

WEST HAM: In 1995, when playing in the Youth World Cup in Ecuador, South America, Chris impressed West Ham scouts, and after a few weeks' trial, he joined West Ham, where he remained for five and a half years.

DUNDEE TO LUTON: Chris has spent the last eighteen months with Dundee United, and he thinks he owes his move to Luton to the pre-season friendly game between the two clubs. "Joe and Mick are ambitious guys, and they sold Luton Town to me. This is a really good club, and I'm enjoying being here."

THE FUTURE: "Short-term it's all about going up to the Second Division. After that it's up to us!
Long-term I want to play for Australia in a full International game."

LIFE OUTSIDE: Chris lives in Luton and is married to Rebecca. They are expecting a baby boy shortly. His hobbies include golf and reading, and he used to be a keen cricketer, though now he only watches the sport.

Thank you Chris for taking the time to chat with us.
Maureen Ingram

Hatters Away Guide

Welcome to a new feature in our newsletter. In the next 3 months, we have 7 away games, and on the next two pages, we have tried to cover some useful information such as parking, places to get a drink before the game and any recommended food if you wish to travel to these games either by car, coach or rail.

As always, the Town on Tour coach service will be running their luxury coach service to all matches and places can be booked in the LTSC kiosk or at the Club Shop. Coaches depart from Maple Road Car park and you can leave your car in safe hands there for only £3 (members) and £4 (non members). Membership cards must be shown. Boarding commencing 15 minutes before departure time. Service stops will be included on longer journeys and eats and drinks are available on board. (* denotes a pick up at Milton Keynes Coach way approximately 20 minutes after departure).

If you do wish to travel by car, directions can usually be found in the most recent Luton Town programme prior to the away game. Your support is greatly appreciated at away games, and we hope you have an enjoyable time if you go.

December

Hartlepool United • 8/12/02 • Victoria Park

Town on Tour leaves at 08.30am*, Adult £16, Con £14, Non member £18

Away fans • Rink End: 741. Covered.

Parking • There is a car park on Raby Road and a large car park by the shopping centre. There is also lots of street parking.

Rail • Hartlepool Church Street.

Food & Drink • Churchill's and The Park in the town centre are popular for away fans or The Mill House on Raby Road for a drink. A 'must have' at the ground is a steak pie, 'Pie of the Year' in 99, gives you some idea of how good it must be!

Oxford United • 26/12/01 • Kassam Stadium

Town on Tour leaves at 12.30am, Adult £10, Con £9, Non member £11

Away fans • North Stand. All seated. Covered.

Parking • There's 1,100 parking spaces available at the ground. **Rail** • Oxford. 4 miles from ground.

Food & Drink • Being a new ground, there is most likely going to be a bar under the stands, no info available as yet for food.

Southend United • 29/12/01 • Roots Hall

Town on Tour leaves at 12.00am, Adult £10, Con £9, Non member £11

Away fans • North Stand: 2,382, North West Enclosure: 728. Covered.

Parking • There is lots of street parking available around the ground, just watch out for small parking restriction signs!

Rail • Prittlewell - About 0.25 miles away, Southend Victoria - 10-15 min walk, Southend Central - a further 5 minutes walk.

Food & Drink • The Bell welcomes away supporters and serves a good pint! You see it as you drive towards the ground and if you don't mind queuing, the Fish House on East Street is the best place to get something to eat, apparently burgers in the ground are only for the very hungry!

January

Cheltenham Town • 12/1/02 • Whaddon Road

Town on Tour leaves at 11.00am, Adult £12, Con £11, Non member £13

Away fans • Whaddon Road: 720, uncovered terrace and Wymans Road 'Top End' if sufficient demand: 750. Total 1,470.

Parking • There is some parking at the ground, but fills up quite quickly, there is plenty of street parking available, although take care as to what you leave in the car as unfortunately, the area is renowned for car break-ins.

Food & Drink • There is a choice of pubs near the ground, the Robins Bar (by the club), the Cat & Fiddle on Whaddon Road, where there is also a bookies and a good chip shop or on the corner of Cromwell Street is the Fox & Hound.

Darlington • 26/1/02 • Feethams Ground

Town on Tour leaves at 08.30am*, Adult £16, Con £14, Non member £18

Away fans • West Stand: 500, West Stand Paddock: 250, Total 750.

Parking • Around the ground there is plenty of on-street parking, or you can go to a car park in Victoria Road, or park in the town centre which is about a 15 minute walk.

Rail • Darlington. 10 minutes from the ground.

Food & Drink • There's many pubs in the town centre, recommended is The Falcion, which also serves cheap and good food.

February

Rochdale • 9/2/02 • Sandy Lane

Town on Tour leaves at 10.00am*, Adult £13, Con £11, Non member £15

Away fans • Willbutts Lane: 3,650.

Parking • The best place to park is Denehurst Park in Edenfield Road, there are also many side streets in which you can park.

Rail • Rochdale (Tel 0161 832 8353).

Food & Drink • You will be made welcome at several pubs here! Try Studs behind the WMG Stand or The Ratcliffe Arms on the corner of the Main Stand and Sandy Lane End. There is a good fish and chip shop outside the ground on Willbutts Lane although the food served in the ground is apparently above average too!

Lincoln City • 26/2/02 • Sincil Bank Stadium

Town on Tour leaves at 14.00pm*, Adult £12, Con £11, Non member £13

Away fans • Stacey West Stand: 1,934, all covered seating.

Parking • For car parking, you have to go into the town centre which is about a 10 minute walk from the ground, and the good thing is it doesn't get too congested at the end of the match!

Rail • Lincoln Central (01522 539502).

Food & Drink • You can enjoy a drink in either the Miller's Arms or the George & Dragon. Both are situated on the High Street just by the Scorer Street turning. As for food, the pies and sausage rolls are excellent and highly recommended!

Luton Legends

Jesse Pye

Jesse Pye

Jesse Pye

Jesse Pye

Jesse Pye

Mention the name of Jesse Pye to anyone old enough to remember his days at Luton and forgive them if their eyes mist over for he was a true master-craftsman in the art of football and his brief career with the Hatters was like a breath of cultured air.

Pye was born near Sheffield in 1918 and played for the Blades before the war. After military service he joined Notts County. In 1946 he signed for Wolverhampton Wanderers, and during his six years at Molineux, Wolves were runners up in the championship, and rarely fell out of the top six. They won the cup in 1949 with Pye scoring two of the goals and in the following season he was capped by England. There was little doubt about the quality of the man and consequently, when he joined the Hatters in the summer of 1952, it caused a local sensation and ticket sales went through the roof!

Some fans claim that Pye was probably the biggest name the Town had ever signed and in modern terms it would probably be akin to signing someone with the calibre of Robbie Fowler, for in many ways, Pye was regarded with similar respect: a fine footballer with insight, precision and the deftest of touches. Gordon Turner said of Pye that he could almost read his team mates next move before they could. He was virtually telepathic and the finest player Turner ever worked with, and there is little doubt that Pye launched Turner on the road to his own fabulous career.

In truth, Pye probably found more time and space to show his unique talent in a lower division, but he also came into a Town side that was beginning to look quite promising. With a secure and settled defence, the forwards had improved, and with players like Davies, Turner, Moore and Mitchell the last piece of the jigsaw was the talented Jesse Pye.

But things started badly for Jesse Pye and also for the Town. They lost the first game at Plymouth and in the following fixture both Pye and Owen were crocked. Bert Mitchell was also on the injured list and the depleted side managed only two wins in the first nine games.



When the whole team was fit however, the Hatters really took off, rising from near bottom to near top with a magnificent run of 15 wins and one draw in 19 games!

At the centre of all this beautiful football was Pye. He was the mainspring, the inspiration and the guide: full of tricks, flicks and subtle passes, he not only brought out the best in his colleagues but also led the way with 21 goals in that run of scintillating games.

In the end it wasn't quite enough to gain promotion as Town finished one place below, in third position. It was Luton's best performance, in historical terms, and looking back at that season, through rose tinted lenses and emotional mists of time, it seemed to be one long jamboree of neat, effective football with stacks of goals. It's only the blasted statistics that deny the dream of a near perfect season.

But the Town did score four goals on four occasions, five in two more games and six in three more matches. In total they scored nearly 100 goals with Pye getting 28 to equal Billington's Second Division record, and his example encouraged Turner, who scored 16, Moore, who got 14 and Mitchell with 13. There is no doubt it was a wonderful season to be a Hatter.

The following year Pye left suddenly half way through the league campaign. He went to Derby for three years, then on to Wisbeech and finally to March Town. He retired in 1966 and took a hotel in Blackpool and sadly died in 1984. But no one who ever saw him in Luton colours will ever forget the wonderful contribution he made to the annals of Luton Town.



Frank Batt - LTSC Member



Luton v Bolton FA Cup. Luton players Pye, Turner & Moore

A special set of mugs is now available from the club shop featuring Luton Legends from the 1940-50's, 1960-70's and 1980-90's. These mugs would make a great Xmas present, and are priced at £3.95 each.

Best Wishes for a
very Merry Xmas
& a Happy New Year!

From the LTSC
Committee



Answers to the fun quiz
1. 23rd. 2. Steve Davis 3. 0-0 against Bristol City 4. Bradford Park Avenue 5. Gerry Harrison on loan from Sunderland 6. 3-0 to Luton 7. Ian Hillier 8. Ron Fother 9. 8-1 vs Cardiff City 2/1/1937 10. 0-3 1899, 1-1 1999 11. John Dwyer 12. 2-0 to Watford at home 26/12/1986 13. Wimbledon 14. Peter Holmes 15. False 16. Alan White 17. 2 goals, he scored a goal in 5 consecutive games 18. Swindon Town 2-0 19. 6 - Luton Town 3, Chelsea 3 20. Richard Cooke

THE STORY SO FAR....

WE ARE sorry that our last newsletter suffered technical difficulties which wiped out our normal page of club news. To keep you up to date we have raided the match programme archives to recap on the events since the season started.

August

It began with a pleasant 2-0 win at Carlisle, where the crowd included a magnificent Luton Town following of 1,097. Six players made Hatters debuts: Carl Emberson, ex Walsall; Aaron Skelton, back from Colchester; Russ Perrett, ex Cardiff; Kevin Nicholls, £150,000 ex Wigan; Carl Griffiths, £65,000 ex Leyton Orient; Paul Hughes, ex Southampton. Hughes and Griffiths got the goals. Adrian Forbes, £75,000 ex Norwich would have been the seventh debut boy, but missed the game through injury. With Skelton and Marvin Johnson injured, Joe Kinnear moved swiftly to sign defender Ian Hillier, 21, on loan from Spurs. He and Forbes make good debuts in a 2-1 home win over Cheltenham, marred by two yellow cards and our first suspension of the season for action-man midfielder Nicholls.

August ends with another red card - Rawle of Southend gets first use of the bath soap as the Town win 2-0 at home.



Ian Hillier celebrating his goal at York

September

Here we go again: Hughes is sent off for two yellows during a 2-2 draw at Exeter, with one of the home team's goals netted by Lee Mansell. Nice to see former Town man Jamie Campbell still enjoying his football - well to a certain degree. He is captain of the struggling Grecians, who have a relegation battle on their hands already, while we are second in the table.

A 2-1 win at York includes a twice-missed penalty by Steve Howard, made all the worse because he was not the nominated penalty taker, but insisted, and was close to fisticuffs with some of his team-mates before the second was saved. Howard was subbed, and dropped for the next match, a home draw with Lincoln, who included Kingsley Black. Australian centre-half Chris Coyne, signed from Dundee for £50,000, and previously with West Ham, makes his debut against Lincoln, and scores a cracking OG to save a point for them in the last four minutes.



Jean-Louis Valois

After a brief trial, French winger Jean-Louis Valois, desperate to play in English league football, and rejected by Preston, becomes Joe Kinnear's 10th signing since the end of last season, and soon looks as though he might be something special.

His extravagant skills make him an instant hit with the fans, especially as he displays all the tricks possible to help destroy Torquay. Griffiths nets a hat-trick of headers, Howard re-instates himself with the supporters and coaches with his first goal of the season, and Valois caps an amazing display with a stunning 35-yarder. The ground erupts in delight - and even the Torquay fans stand to applaud, so good was it. And they have been thrashed 5-1!

We're going places, and a midweek match at Leyton Orient sees 2,089 Town fans swamp the turnstiles to cheer the Hatters back to the top of the table with a 3-1 victory. Matt Taylor, Howard, and, inevitably Valois with another special, get the goals.

But the injury jinx strikes again: Griffiths limps off with a mystery calf injury which is to keep him out for more than a month. Kinnear moves quickly to plug the gap, signing 22-year-old Dean Crowe on loan from Stoke. Without a trace of irony Joe explains that the nippy little striker had been "frozen out" at the Britannia Stadium by the arrival of a new manager and several of his favourite players... from Iceland!

Crowe is desperate to do well and end his Stoke nightmare, goes straight into the side, and scores on his debut at Plymouth. But we lose to a home team reduced to ten men, who fight back from Crowe's early strike to win 2-1, only our second defeat in the first 11 league games. The first had been at Bristol Rovers, 3-2 in late August, after which we went seven without defeat, and maintained an unbeaten home record.

Plymouth are to prove good enough to mount a promotion challenge, and this win knocks us off the top perch, down to third.

October

Kinnear wants more strength in depth, and after watching Croatian midfielder Ahmet Brkovic in a couple of trial games, signs him on a free transfer - "Berko" had rejected new terms at Leyton Orient in the summer. The paperwork goes through too late to enable him to play in a Friday night game at home to Darlington, which turns out to be a 5-2 romp. The Town are top of the table again, but are overtaken by Rochdale in midweek - they win 1-0 at troubled Swansea.

But it's our turn to be top again a few days later, with a 2-0 win at Scunthorpe, where Forbes becomes the super-sub, scoring the important first goal a few minutes after being sent on. By the end of the month he will have three goals to his credit, all netted as a substitute.

The win at Glanford Park sets the scene for the first big crunch of the season: at home to second-placed Rochdale. They are well-organised, well drilled, and willing to work hard. They survive a second-half onslaught to win 1-0, the first visiting side to lower our colours at home, and the first team in the division to prevent us scoring. They are top again, and we are third.

Kinnear stresses the need to bounce back rapidly, and the team responds perfectly with a 4-2 win at Halifax. Lively Crowe scores twice - that's four goals in five appearances, and his reward is a two and a half year contract. Stoke City give him a free, but will pocket half of any future transfer fee the Town might receive.



Dean Crowe about to score for Luton against Swansea

Crowe celebrates by setting us on the way over Swansea, who are lucky to escape a real hammering. At three down, their substitutions are to make the team stronger in defence!

Our defence, meanwhile, now has the services of Hillier on a permanent basis - he has been signed from Tottenham for £30,000, with another £20,000 due when he makes 50 appearances.

We are top of the table again, two points clear of the field, but 24 hours later we are second once more, with Plymouth regaining the leadership by winning at Bristol Rovers.

The month ends with an LDV Vans Trophy second-round tie away to Conference leaders Dagenham and Redbridge. Everyone who started in the Swansea game is rested - I'm not losing any sleep over this tournament, says Kinnear, who has gone on record with a promise to win back our Second Division status at the first attempt. A reserve team is selected - except for 18-year-old defender Rob Gillman, it is essentially the team that struggled in the Second Division last season. We are beaten by an extra-time golden goal, with Gillman's display the brightest feature. Too many chances were wasted, enabling the home side to win 3-2.

Not to worry - this season's A-team is good enough to win promotion! - Brian Swain

