



Issue 77
Summer '08

HATTERS

LUTON TOWN



SUPPORTERS CLUB

HATTERS

Dear Members!

So it is League 2 football to look forward to next season.

I must admit that when I volunteered to be Chairman of LTSC just under two years ago, I could not have imagined what would happen in such a short space of time.

Looking back, 2006/07 season and relegation from the Championship to League One seemed a low-point for Luton Town, but was a mere taster for what was to come. This season has seen everything, other than optimism for Luton Town fans. The final game of the season summed up the season as a whole: another loss and another lack-lustre performance by the players.

For many I have spoken to since then, this season is the worst they can recall seeing Luton play. I certainly can't remember a team which has played with such apathy and to be honest even without the off field problems, I think they deserved relegation.

Despite this though there have been glimpses of hope for our club. Firstly, the youth system is still producing talent and this season has given opportunities to youngsters such as Ryan Charles, George Beavan and Ed Asafu-Adjaye. Of course we cannot build the backbone of a new team around kids but we have always been a club that produces young talent and raises funds through the progression of that talent.

We have also seen some smashing individual displays and it was no surprise that Keith Keane won three awards at the Presentation evening. Keith played down his achievements but shone out as someone who always gave 100% regardless of what went on around him.

Looking forward, our club needs rebuilding both on and off the pitch and this is no mean task. Already the LTFC2020 consortium have worked tirelessly to bring us to a stage where the club has any future at all and I think the task ahead of them is still immense. On the playing side, I would hazard a guess (and also hope!) that there will be few of this season's squad around when we start next season. In Mick Harford we have a manager who may be relatively unproven but he has the desire to do well for Luton and truly loves the club.

There is no doubt that next

season will be tough, especially as we are likely to start with a negative points total. Being 'one of the biggest teams in the league' (where have we heard that before!!) will also make us a target for opposing teams and their supporters.

So what can we, as supporters do? Well I was told recently we need to do three things - support, support and support. It is what we do best and it is what we must continue to do. Without its supporters a football club is nothing and at the moment we may well be feeling sorry for ourselves and wondering if it is still worth it. Well I for one believe it is and we must get behind the club and see this latest trauma through. I know we have been largely ignored by previous administrations but I honestly feel that this time is different and we do have a part to play. On the other hand our expectations should be realistic. As I have already stated the task ahead is huge and it is not going to be sorted overnight.

One problem with 2020 not having full control at the moment is that we do not yet have details of the ticket pricing arrangements for next season. I would hope that these will have been issued by the time you are reading this newsletter and again I would urge fans to renew season tickets or buy one if you boycotted the club last year.

Finally thanks to all the fans who have given me their support over the last year and particularly to my committee for their help. I am sad to say a number of the current committee have decided not to stand for election this year and will be missed. However this does give the opportunity for other fans to come and join and help shape both the supporters club and indirectly the football club in the future. It is not a large commitment and you can do as little or as much as you want to help. If you are interested please let me know.

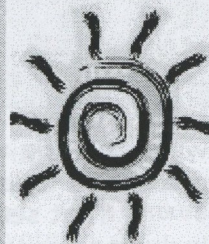
Have a good summer. Things can only get better can't they?



Kevin Barrett

LTSC
Chairman

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Luton Town SC



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Photography supplied by Gareth Owen

Looking forward to Accrington et al

ANOTHER season of travelling with the Town ended with a trip to Doncaster Rovers. How things have changed from the 2004/05 season when this trip was a celebration of automatic promotion to League 1.

That season we took three coaches, including one which was carrying passengers staying in Doncaster for the weekend. This time one half-full coach was all that could be mustered even though we were visiting a new ground.

Since our last visit Doncaster had joined the increasing number of clubs moving into a new stadium, though surprisingly one with no coach parking facilities, much to the disgust of Gareth, our driver!

It has been an up and down season travelling with Town on Tour. We have had the euphoria of a trip to Anfield and lows of a Tuesday night trip to Oldham which was only enlivened by the company of two reporters from *FourFourTwo* magazine.

Great camaraderie

We're a hardy lot though and the camaraderie on board coach (or for the trip to Carlisle - limousine - we only had eight people who wanted to go on that one) has been great.

No-one can have missed the fact that fuel prices are rising faster than players' wages at the moment and this obviously has an impact on coach prices. We are expecting an increase in charges from all coach companies and while we will try and keep prices for travel down, we can only do this if we can attract sufficient numbers of passengers travelling with us.

Next season's away fixtures may not be looked upon as exciting, but there are some highlights of the travelling. There are a number of clubs which we have not been to for many years and some we have never visited. In addition there are new grounds for certain clubs.

There is a select group of supporters who, by the end of next season, will be able to claim to have visited all 92 Football League and Premier League clubs with Luton. Unfortunately,

for other younger fans they will be missing the Premier League clubs. They may be waiting some time!

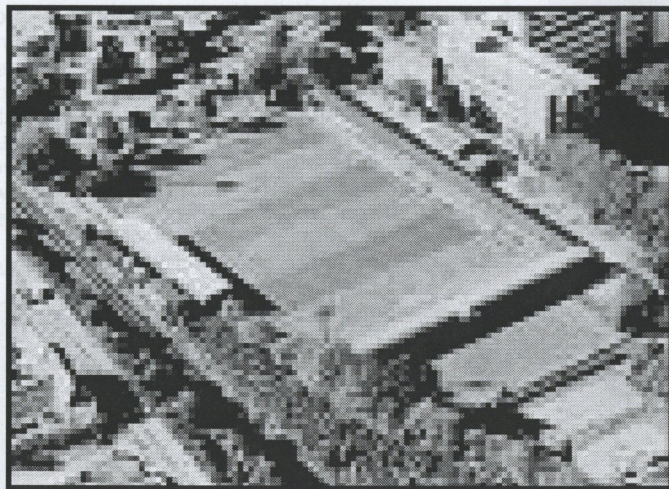
We have a number of thanks to give - firstly and most importantly, to you the supporters for travelling with us. Secondly, the stewards who have worked (voluntarily) on away trips hopefully to make your trip both comfortable and enjoyable. Next, to staff at the football club and in particular the car park attendants who do help us a lot (especially with the logistics of the Liverpool trip).

Then of course we could not run the trips at all without the coach company. We changed to Three Star this year and we have been pleased with that decision. Their support through pricing and providing a regular driver has been invaluable during a tough season.

Finally a big thank you to John Heley who has, yet again, tirelessly organised everything to do with the away trips and without whom Tour on Tour would not be the slick, well-oiled operation that we all know and love.

We look forward to seeing you all very soon and here's hoping we avoid the curse that is a midweek trip to Morecambe, Exeter, Torquay or Accrington Stanley to name but a few!

KEVIN BARRETT



* Aldershot Town's Recreation Ground.

88 empty chairs at LT creditors' vote

LIKE all Luton Town season-ticket holders, I was intrigued and surprised to receive a big sheaf of papers through the post a few weeks ago from the administrators at LTFC.

I waded through the list of creditors in one of the appendices, looking firstly for my own name and then the names of friends. I duly found myself listed, being owed the princely sum of £34.43.

Then I had a further look to see how much was owed to creditors other than season ticket holders. The sums owed, and the range of organisations we owed money to, was rather breathtaking. How on earth had our club got into this state? Anyone would think all the invoices had been filed in that little round 'filing cabinet' in the corner of the office by the door.

My eyes then alighted on the names of the players and who was owed what on the balance of their contracts. Talk about opening a can of worms! The figures subsequently appeared on the back page of the *Luton News*, as expected. This has meant that players' performance (or lack of it) on the pitch was now being assessed by fans against the backdrop of what was known about their wages. It seems that the best players are now the most affordable players.

By LTSC member BERNARD ELWEN

The paperwork gave notice of a creditors meeting to be held in London on 4th April at 10.30am. Its purpose was to enable the creditors to vote on the proposal that the club exit administration by means of a Company Voluntary Arrangement. This would mean that the football creditors would be given preferential status over all other creditors and that 2020 could have received the FA 'golden share' on exiting administration.

Working in central London as I do, I was able to take time off work to go along and see what came out of the meeting. I turned up at the New Connaught Rooms and found the conference room that had been booked. There were over 100 chairs laid out so I was quite surprised to find that I was one of only a dozen attendees, all but one of us being season ticket holders. Brendan Guilfoyle chaired the meeting and announced that several of the interested parties, such as the Inland Revenue, Football League and Professional Footballers Association, had sent representations by proxy.

He explained the club was caught between the policy of the Football League (who demanded that football creditors be given priority) and the policy of the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (who demanded HMRC be given priority). The HMRC had voted against the proposals to exit administration via the Football League preferred route which was not really surprising.

It was explained that the voting in this

Central London meeting was another hurdle on club's road to recovery

situation is weighted according to the amount of money owed to the creditor. The HMRC was the largest creditor in this situation, after removing the playing staff votes on the basis they were 'linked' creditors and thus not eligible to vote.

The Football League insisted on a 75% majority in favour of the proposals which could not be achieved, given that HMRC had effectively blocked the proposals. This left LTFC in the same position Leeds had faced a year ago, which was exiting through the special measures route. At the time of writing, our position was still to be decided.

Various questions were put to Mr Guilfoyle, including the following (*with answers*):

- 1. Why do we owe money to so many other clubs?** *These are loan fees in respect of various players loaned to us over the last year or so.*
- 2. What is happening about the Employment Tribunal lodged by a former manager?** *The application has been 'stayed', pending the outcome of the administration proceedings.*
- 3. What about the sanctions imposed for the allegations that we paid agents illegally?** *We could expect to hear an outcome on 25th May, after the FA Compliance Unit have had an opportunity to interview all parties involved.*
- 4. Why does the club owe the Inland Revenue such a large amount?** *It would appear that income tax on the players and staff wages had not been paid for some considerable time.*

The meeting was attended by a reporter from *BBC Look East*. We all bunched up as we had our picture taken to make it look as though there were more people present than was actually the case. The outcome of the meeting was no great surprise to anyone and it was pleasing that the Inland Revenue let us know their position very quickly. The situation in many ways mirrors what has gone on at Leeds United - although there are significant differences as well. At the time of writing this, Leeds had lost their appeal to have the 15 points reinstated that were deducted for exiting administration via special measures. We wait to see whether or not this has set a precedent or whether each case will be treated on its merits.

All this was anticipated by 2020 when they put their bid together, so they are now just holding their nerve to see how the situation unfolds. We supporters will just have to do the same and have faith we can extricate ourselves from this mess and start to rebuild in League Two next season.

A KEANE SWEEP!

On Sunday 4th May, it was time for the Luton Town Supporters Club Player of the Season Presentation Evening again. Just a day after the last game, of what was a sad and frustrating season that saw Luton Town get relegated down to League 2, the awards night still went ahead as planned.

A hard working committee carried on and planned what was to be, as always a very enjoyable evening at the Vauxhall Riverside Suite. Supporters, current players, former players including John Moore, Alan West and Ken Hawkes, management and new owners 2020 Ltd were present to see out the bad season we have just had to go through, and see in the start of something new and look ahead to much brighter times for the Club.

The tables were decorated with orange, black and white balloons, the room soon started to fill up and a steady flow began at the bar - some may say it was people drowning there sorrows after our poor season! Players and management chatted amongst themselves and with supporters and made for a nice relaxed start to the evening.

As the night was about to get underway, everyone took their seats, with the players kindly filtering out between tables to sit with fans. Before the important business began the night opened with chairman Kevin Barrett introducing the night and a welcome from Nick Owen, Chairman of new owners 2020 Ltd and also President of the Supporters Club.

Ian Pearce from BBC Three Counties Radio kindly hosted the evening and first called upon Nick Owen to present the trophy for Goal of the Season. Although this season has been poor, and with a lack of goals, it did not stop LTSC members voting for the goal that Ryan Charles scored against Oldham on his debut at Kenilworth Road as Goal of the Season. The youngster seemed quite surprised at this award, saying "There's been some brilliant goals this season and I'm really surprised to get it, but I'll take it!"

Club historian Roger Wash was next up to the stage to present the award for Young Luton Town Player of the Season. This is chosen by the Luton Town Manager and coaching staff, and they decided the award should go to Ryan Charles. So with his second trophy of the night the 18 year old said "I'm definitely surprised. I didn't really expect any awards tonight, it was obviously a nice surprise. I think any of Town's up-and-coming young players have done well this season. Any of us could have deserved this. Hopefully there is more to come and next season is going to be a good season I think and we will push on from there."

It was the LTFC playing squad who chose the winner for Players' Player of the Season. Another Legend, former player and Youth Team Manager John Moore was to hand this trophy to one of the youngster's that he helped make the player he is today, and that was Club captain Keith Keane. Keith paid tribute to former youth team mentor John Moore adding: "He was a very tough manager to play under and I probably didn't like him at the time. As I've got older he is probably one of the best managers I've had."

After the first half awards, it was time for everyone to fill up their glasses and to tuck into the gorgeous buffet that was supplied. It seemed to go down a treat, as there were lots of empty plates and not a lot left! Before proceedings got underway, it was time for the Grand Prize Draw, and the list of winners can be found on the opposite page, so congratulations if you were a winner.

It was next, the turn of the legends to reminisce over the good old days and they each in turn answered questions about there times at Luton Town Football Club. It was great that they could be with us on the night, and we thank them very much for coming along.

It was then time to get back to the trophies, and Alan West was to present the trophy for Internet Player of the Season, as voted for by via the official website. Keith Keane took to the stage for the second time to collect the trophy.

Dean Brill came in favourite for the Young Members Player's of the Season, as chosen by our Junior members. Dean was called to the stage to be presented with his award by Legend Alan West and one of our young members.

Last but not least, it was time for the main award of the night - the Player of the Season, as chosen by you, the Luton Town Supporters Club members. Unsurprisingly, Keith Keane's name was read out by Kevin Barrett to come and claim the accolade. A very modest Keith seemed pleased with his three trophies, adding "I don't think any of us really deserve any awards because of the way the season has gone. We have been losing games and not winning. It would be hard to pick a player. I wouldn't say we've had a great season or I've had a great season. I've just tried my best when I've got in the team and that's all I can do. I don't think I deserve it, but someone has got to take it."

And while he admitted this season has been a disappointment, he revealed that he is hoping to stay a Hatter next term. "At the minute I love Luton, I'm a Luton lad and I want to stay at Luton. To be captain at 21 of a club is unbelievable. You don't ever expect to be captain of a club. I've enjoyed every minute of it and I would love to be captain next season. As long as the club wants me, the manager and the fans, I'm sure I would stay."

After all the excitement and anticipation, it was turn of manager Mick Harford to take to the stage. He thanked the fans for sticking by the Club and seemed positive about the Club's future. I think we should all have raised our glasses to that!

The night ended with a disco and fans getting autographs and photos with players, some of whom will help us in having a successful season starting in August and some that will be leaving Luton now for pastures new. We would also like to thank all the players and management, along with 2020 Ltd, the former players and everyone from the Club who gave up their time and came along to our evening, we hope you all had an enjoyable time and wish you all the very best of luck for the future.

A special award was also presented on the night to Marilyn Fussell, much to her surprise. Marilyn works tirelessly every year to put together what is always an evening that ourselves and the Football Club are proud of. To have all the players and management in attendance is something very special, as not every club organises such a well turned out and professional evening for their fans to enjoy. So lots of thanks go to Marilyn again, and to Cherry Newbury and the rest of the working committee for putting on a great evening, yet again.

Here's to a promotion party next year!

Helen Gatward
LTSC Committee Member

PLAYER OF THE SEASON PRESENTATION EVENING SPECIAL REPORT

The Winners for 2007/2008

Goal of the Season

Ryan Charles against Oldham (H)

Young LTFC Player of the Season

Ryan Charles

Players' Player of the Season

Keith Keane

Internet Player of the Season

Keith Keane

Young Supporters Player of the Season

Dean Brill

LTSC Player of the Season

Keith Keane



Keith Keane with his trophies for Players' Player, Internet Player and LTSC Player of the Season



Ryan Charles receiving his trophy for Goal of the Season from LTSC President Nick Owen



Dean Brill with Ken Hawkes and a young member and his trophy for Young Members Player of the Season

GRAND PRIZE DRAW WINNERS

Washing Machine (Kindly donated by Electrolux)	
ORANGE 576	Denise Hollingsworth
LTFC Stand Season Ticket & Car Park Pass	
WHITE 656	Keith Rollings
TV & DVD	
PINK 81	Melvyn Hatchett
VIP Day for 2 at Luton Town	
PINK 1	Philip Anderson
Food Hamper	
GREEN 561	Joan Walsh
MP3 Player	
YELLOW 166	Keith Raeburn
'Town on Tour' Trip for 2	
BLUE 191	Leslie Marden
A Set of Football Lights	
YELLOW 410	Keith Raeburn
A Book Bag	
WHITE 576	Ann Chatterley
Who am I? Sports Edition Card Game	
ORANGE 216	Gill Hall
Luton Town Watch	
PINK 186	Phil Curran
Football video & book pack	
PINK 171	Caz Meers
Wine Bag	
GREEN 36	Ian Creamer
'Town on Tour' Trip for 2	
ORANGE 786	Helen Gatward
Top Trumps Football Legends 1	
BLUE 281	Gareth Chapman

Thank you to all of you who bought prize draw tickets and congratulations to all those who were lucky winners. If you have won a prize and have not yet claimed it, please contact Vic or Marilyn Fussell on 01908 569339.

WHAT A DAY!



Memories flooded back when LTFC celebrated the 20th anniversary of the 1988 Littlewoods Cup win over Arsenal. LTSC member JOHN PYPER looks back . . .

AS WE celebrated the 20th anniversary of the greatest day in Luton Town's history, it was timely to reflect on the good times and lift the spirits of everyone young and old associated with the club. As we ended what has to be one of the worst seasons I can remember in my 45 years as a fan, it was important not to let the anniversary go by without celebrating.

Sunday 24 April 1988 was a day I will never forget. The Hatters were successful in all areas that year, with three visits to the great Wembley stadium in one season (the Simod Cup final and the Mercantile Credit FA Centenary Competition, as well as the Littlewoods Cup) so it was a great time to be a Luton fan. In the weeks leading up to the final, the town was buzzing with the excitement of going to Wembley again, with shop windows and pubs decorated in the club colours.

Straw boaters galore

The day itself was a lovely sunny spring day, and very warm for the time of the year. 25-plus coaches, which I helped arrange, headed to London from all areas of Beds and surrounding counties. It seemed the whole town was heading south. Travelling down Wembley Way was one of many highlights, seeing so many Luton straw boaters, hats and flags.

After taking pictures, inflating balloons and watching the pre-match entertainment, the noise was deafening when the teams emerged, led by manager, the late Ray Harford, and captain and leader, Steve Foster, alongside Arsenal's George Graham and Tony Adams.

Luton won the toss and kicked towards the tunnel. After early pressure, we scored the only goal of the first half through Brian Stein, after a free-kick by the late David Preece. Hatters fans were in great voice and on the balance of play we could have been two up by half-time.

In the second half, Arsenal took the game to Luton early on, and had the edge with Luton tiring in the hot conditions. It was inevitable they would score, and it came from a set-piece free-kick that seemed harsh at the time, scored by sub Martin Hayes in the 71st minute.

What was to happen in those last 19 minutes will survive in my memory for as long as I live, and for everyone who witnessed it. Three minutes later, with Arsenal very much on top and kicking towards their own fans, they scored a second. I, like many of the 30,000-plus Luton fans that day, thought that our chance had now gone, and that became more evident when referee Joe Worrall then awarded Arsenal a penalty, which at the time and from where I was sitting, did look justified. But in the times I have watched the incident since, from many angles, defender Mal Donaghy never made contact

with the ball or the late David Rocastle. Looking back, I think the referee was unsighted, made a rash decision and the linesman should have intervened.

Anyway, what happened turned the game in the Hatters' favour, with the penalty being saved by Littlewoods' Man of the Match, hero Andy Dibble. What will go down as one of the greatest penalty saves to grace the Wembley Stadium was made with a save low down to his left, as he palmed it round his left hand post.

That Dibble save seemed to galvanise the whole Luton team, who from nowhere found another gear and tremendous energy, and within eight minutes were level, due to sheer pressure and partly down to mistakes from the Gunners' defence. Gus Caesar slipped in the box and Danny Wilson stooped low to head in a cross from Brian Stein, following good work from the ever-improving young winger Kingsley Black.

Myself, family and friends were on cloud nine. I was thinking "just hold out for extra time" even though the Hatters were taking the game to Arsenal. But that thought was wiped away with a moment I'll never forget.

With the clock ticking towards 90 minutes, the Hatters gave a last push and threw men forward, including late sub Mark Stein who was on for Mick Harford. I remember Tony Adams looking very tired in the sun and he made a crude tackle on Stein to concede a free-kick.

The greatest goal

With the Luton fans at that end shouting for one final effort with a chorus of Come On You Hatters (and by this time I didn't have much of voice left myself), the free-kick by Danny Wilson was headed out of defence to the right-hand side of the box. It fell to the other Luton sub Ashley Grimes, who took it to the by-line and with the outside of his left boot crossed for on-rushing Brian 'Bruno' Stein, who got there before Nigel Winterburn to slot past keeper Lukic. The greatest goal in the history of Luton Town FC!

What happened after the final whistle is a total blur, but I do get reminded from time to time by fellow supporters and family who were nearby of exactly what I did. If I was ever given the chance to relive a moment of my life, this would be up there in the top three: one of the greatest cup final comebacks ever seen at Wembley.

I floated out of the stadium, back to our waiting coaches and back to Luton, to what was going to be another great 24 hours-plus of celebrations, with the trophy being paraded around the streets and welcoming thousands outside the Town Hall.

For me, the highlight of the celebrations was seeing the heroes of the day pass through as many thousands lined the streets en-route to the town centre.

Your anecdotes wanted for new book

LTSC member and newsletter editor Rob Hadgraft is currently working on a new book about Luton Town FC.

It is due to be published later this year and tells the story of how The Hatters have survived crisis after crisis over the past 50 years - and have still come up smiling at the end of it all!

Rob is keen to include some of the views and anecdotes of fellow long-standing Hatters fans, and, with the kind permission of LTSC chairman Kevin Barrett, has submitted a short questionnaire which is featured below.

Born in Luton in 1955 (the same week we beat Sunderland 8-2!), Rob is the author of ten other sports books, but this is his first about Luton Town.

He would be very grateful if you would kindly answer some or all of the questions here and return your answers to him by no later than Friday June 13.

Please use e-mail address:

r.hadgraft@btinternet.com

Or postal address:

16 Park Avenue, Chelmsford CM1 2AA

(1) Have you had any funny/sad/bizarre experiences that seem to sum up why supporting Luton Town is unique?

(2) Have you ever done anything daft/out of character/embarrassing in the cause of supporting the Hatters?

(3) Luton first started planning for a new stadium around 50 years ago. Why do you think we still haven't got one?

(4) For all its faults, would you be sad to leave Kenilworth Road? What would you miss most about the old place?

(5) Off the field, Luton Town FC seems to have lurched from crisis to crisis over the years. Why has it happened here more often than at virtually any other club?

(6) During LTFC's many spells of trouble (under the likes of P.Mitchell, Hunt, Mortimer, Evans, Nelkin, Kohler, Watson-Challis, Gurney, Tomlins and Pinkney, etc, etc) which episode angered or depressed you most - and why?

(7) Through nearly 50 years of off-field problems Luton Town always seems to survive somehow. What is this due to? (A special spirit among fans/staff? Or is it just luck? Or are there other reasons?)

(8) Who deserves most credit for their efforts on behalf of Luton Town during the bad times - and why?

(9) Have you ever boycotted games, or been tempted to jack it all in? If so, why?

(10) In light of recent events (2020's arrival, the possible 15-pt deduction, etc), what are the club's prospects for the immediate future?

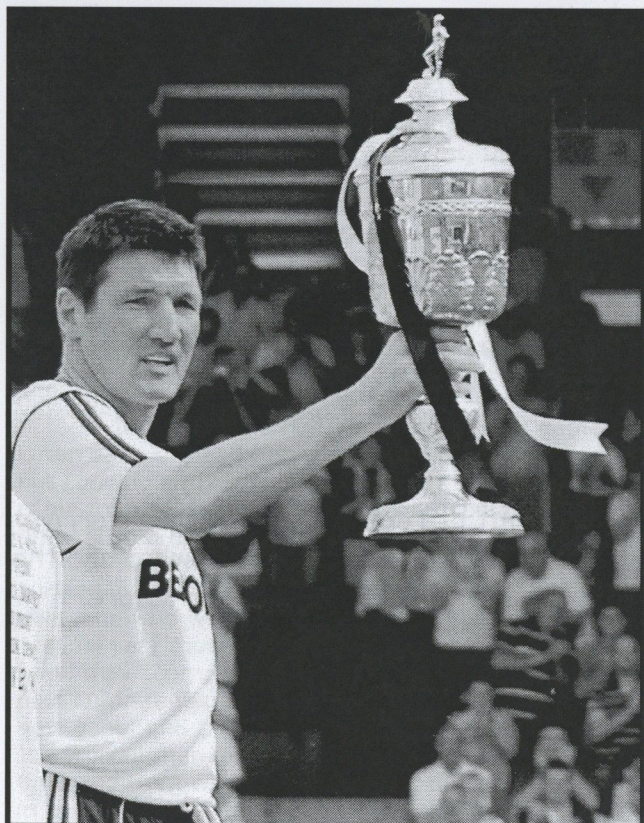
Thanks folks!

20th anniversary celebrations of 1988 cup win



RETURN of the feelgood factor! The 'Luton Legends' squad included McDonough, Harford, Thomas, Breacker, Foster, M.Johnson, Kharine, M. Stein, Oldfield, R.Johnson, Hill, Oakes, Turner and Black.

The feelgood factor!



* Mick Harford relives an old memory.



* Kevin Nicholls back where he belongs!