

HATTERS

LUTON TOWN



SUPPORTERS CLUB

HATTERS CHATTER

Dear Members!

WELCOME to the latest issue of the Supporters' Club newsletter, Hatters' Chatter.

Life as a Luton fan is never easy as I have no doubt written many times before. It seems the team never quite fulfil expectations that we place on them.

Sometimes you could say our expectations are unrealistically high, but in some instances it seems teams around us seem to have that something extra we are lacking - certainly in the last few seasons, whether it has been in a relegation battle or striving to reach the top of the Blue Square Bet Premier League.

We often read that teams lift their game against Luton and I am sure this sometimes true, but I cannot believe those same lowly placed teams are not wanting to beat Crawley just as much. Maybe, like Oxford for many seasons, we have just not quite adjusted to life in the lower leagues. We certainly lack that killer instinct to take the league by the scruff of the neck and drive forward.

I was pleased with some of the signings made in January and personally think Lawless is as good in many aspects as Drury was, but feel it is both at the front and back where we are weakest. Lloyd Owusu's arrival has at least given us a strong target man and he is becoming a fans' favourite with his unique goal celebrations.

In terms of our chances of promotion, I have to admit the title is probably Crawley's to lose, but with the distractions of a good FA Cup run and a hefty backlog of games there is always a chance they may slip.

They do, however, seem to have that uncanny knack of grabbing victories when defeat seemed likely. We only have to look at their win at

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

Kenilworth Road to see evidence of this type of performance. Similarly, their coming from two goals down against Wrexham recently, to earn a last gasp 3-2 win, shows their fighting spirit.

Despite their dominance at the moment, my eye is firmly on the chasing pack, and Wrexham and Fleetwood in particular are going to be tough teams to beat if we have to play either in a play-off game.

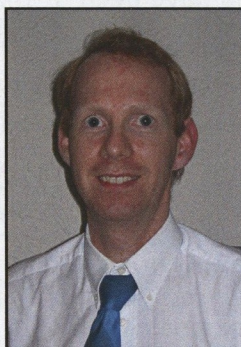
And if we have more of our off days (as against Fleetwood recently) we stand a good chance of being in the same disappointing position as last season.

Away from the league it's been encouraging to see the team doing well in the FA Trophy. It may not have the cachet of the FA Cup but for many of Luton's players it may represent the best opportunity they will ever have of playing in a cup final at Wembley and helping to add silverware to the club's trophy cabinet.

The FA Trophy has been an opportunity to see some of the up-and-coming talent at the club. First-team opportunities during the remainder of the competition may be limited, with Town manager Richard Money now putting experience over youth in an attempt to go all the way to Wembley.

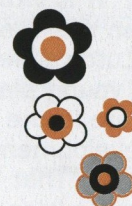
However, we have seen that there is an excellent crop of young players ready to step into the first team and stake their claim to be

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Kevin Barrett

LTSC
Chairman



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Photography supplied by Gareth Owen

Success in May would 'save' youth set-up

(Continued from opposite)
a fans' favourite of the future.
Yet again we are seeing how important the youth development set-up at Luton is to the future of the club. It is vital that it is kept intact, but without promotion this season, its future is in grave danger.
Luton's lifeblood is in the development of talented young players, with recent statistics showing that we are in the top six clubs who have products of youth development now plying their trade in the Premiership. That is a great testament to the ability of the youth development coaches who ensure that we locate and produce excellent talent. I think this is an area that the FA should be looking at and making sure that those clubs who have the desire and capability to run youth development programmes are both adequately funded and recognised for their achievements through reasonable transfer regulations.

Promises, promises

No doubt people will be aware that David Bernstein has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Football Association. His appointment has been accompanied with the usual list of promises to look at how the game is run and controlled. Actions speak louder than words and it will be interesting to see whether there will be real substance to his agenda or whether we will see that the real power and control in English football lies with TV broadcasters and the Premier League.
I have spoken to many fans who were outraged that Luton's cup match against Gloucester was moved to a Friday evening because of a planned march by the English Defence League on the Saturday. While I applaud the club and the police for advance planning to ensure that trouble did not endanger the safety of the fans and the club, perhaps the rights of anything up to 7,000 Luton fans should have taken precedence over the rights of what turned out to be 1,500 or so protesters?
This is yet another example of fixture changes which undermine the traditional Saturday afternoon game. A further example was the ludicrous decision to play in South Wales on a Friday night against Newport County. How many more Luton fans would have been encouraged to travel had it been played on the Saturday. Supporters of all clubs spend a significant amount of money following their teams (I don't like to think how much I spend following Luton around the country each year) and the football authorities need to get a handle on this and show that fans come first.
With the introduction of PremierTV coverage of non-league games, we are now subject to an ever-changing fixture list. There are rules to ensure that each club in our division has a maximum of four home games chosen for coverage. It is hardly surprising

that Luton, among other promotion chasing teams, have been chosen as the away team of choice for coverage as well. This might have been seen as a good thing for supporters but most Luton fans I have spoken to are unwilling to spend the money taking a subscription to this channel.
While the income from televised matches has been good for those clubs with a much smaller fan base who struggle financially, and it is benevolent of Luton's board to support the decision for televised matches on these grounds, ultimately it is the fan who yet again pays. I am in the fortunate position of running my own business and can choose to take time off for evening games, but I know this is not the same for many of you. I will take this issue up with the football club and if any of you have any comments you would like me to pass on please e-mail me at: townontour@btinternet.com
Off the field, the issue of a new stadium has been in the press again with various interested parties once again circling the club with their press releases and leaks. I am in regular contact with director Stephen Browne and managing director Gary Sweet at the club and they assure me that things are still moving in the right direction.
For over 50 years this has been both a problem and a political issue. There remains much hard work to be done to ensure that we end up with what is best for the club in the long term and not just the most expedient offer of a new home.
Darlington is the latest salutary lesson in how moving to a new stadium may not bring with it a rosy future. The Quakers have been facing the prospect of, at worst, losing their new stadium or at least not benefitting in the future from the full income stream from the stadium because of a badly planned ownership structure.
Let's look forward!
There's no point fretting over perceived missed opportunities in the past. We have to continue to look forward. Football fans are not renowned for their patience, and Luton's are no exception, so with 2020 having been in place for nearly three years, we hope that we are nearing the point where a stadium move can at least begin to be discussed again.
The next edition of the newsletter will include details of our end of season presentation evening - it is amazing how quickly these come round. We are asking you to pick your player of the season and goal of the season, so get your thinking caps on! Keep supporting the team and let's help them achieve the promotion we all feel we rightly deserve.

Best wishes, KEVIN BARRETT

FOLLOW THE HATTERS AWAY WITH TOWN ON TOUR

Come and support the Hatters at the last few remaining away matches of this current season by booking and travelling with the Supporters Club on Town on Tour!

We provide coach travel to all league away fixtures with on board eats and drinks available, along with a predict-a-score competition! Our coach departs from the club car park in Maple Road and, for your convenience, you can securely leave your car for a fee of £5 and on all northbound journeys we have a pick-up point at Milton Keynes.

BOOKING NUMBER - 07960 567465
or contact us ONLINE @ www.lutontownsc.co.uk

******UNDER 7s TRAVEL FREE******
when accompanied by a full paying adult
PRICES HELD AT 2009-10 LEVEL!

DEPARTURE TIMES + PRICES for remainder of 2010-11:

Date	Destination	Depart	Adult	U16/O60
Sat 26.03.11	Southport	09:30	£23	£21
Sat 02.04.11	Kidderminster Harr	11:30	£16	£14
Tue 12.04.11	Crawley Town	16:00	£14	£12
Sat 16.04.11	Mansfield Town	11:00	£16	£14
Tue 19.04.11	York City	14:30	£20	£18
Sat 25.04.11	Histon	13:00	£12	£10

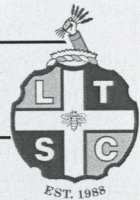
*** A supplement of £2 per trip is payable by non-LTSC members**

LUTON TOWN SUPPORTERS CLUB COMMITTEE • 2010/11

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Yvonne Fletcher, John Pyper, Janice Giddins, Brian Giddins, Emma Gale, Gareth Lemin.
We are always on the lookout for members to assist us with our 'Town on Tour' away travel service. If you have been a LTSC member for over a year and are interested in helping, visit our kiosk on first team games speak to one of our committee members. Alternatively, call Town on Tour's mobile: 07960 567465.
If you have any queries regarding membership, or would like to make a change to any of your membership details, like change of address, please call Helen on 07506 320522 or email ltsc.members@googlemail.com. If you wish to supply an article for future publication, please email r.hadgraft@btinternet.com.

FOR SUPPORTERS BY SUPPORTERS!





Members of the Luton Town Supporters Club of Scandinavia met up with the Luton squad at the training ground, the day before the 1-1 draw with Kidderminster.

Our Scandinavian pals celebrate 20 years



Nearly 50 club members came over from Norway, Sweden and Iceland, marking their 20th anniversary by becoming match sponsors of the Kidderminster game.



LTSCS collect their signed first team shirt, and enjoy the opportunity to chat with Town striker Matthew Barnes-Homer.

NEARLY 50 members of the Luton Town Supporters Club of Scandinavia enjoyed a great weekend when they visited the Hatters' training ground and the next day sponsored and watched the fixture with Kidderminster, making plenty of noise from the executive box area. Their visit marked the 20th anniversary of formation of their club, and Norway, Sweden and Iceland were all represented among the contingent. The group was led by founder member Lars-Petter Ronnestad, who set the club up in 1991 when Town were playing in English football's top flight. Much has changed since then, but it was great to see how LTSCS members have stayed loyal to the Luton cause - and they fully deserved the ovation from home-based fans when introduced via the PA system. As match sponsors, they had the privilege of choosing the man of the match in the 1-1 draw with Kidderminster, and their choice of Matthew Barnes-Homer proved to be a universally popular one.



An exclusive interview for our Scandinavian friends (in English!) with LTFC's leading scorer Matthew Barnes-Homer.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON PRESENTATION EVENING

Sunday 1st May 2011

7:00pm 'til late at The Riverside Suite,
Vauxhall Recreation Club,
Gipsy Lane, Luton

PROGRAMME FOR THE EVENING

Your chance to collect
autographs and have your photo taken
with players and management

Goal of the Season

Young Luton Town Player of the Season

Players' Player of the Season

HOT & COLD BUFFET

GRAND PRIZE DRAW

Internet Player of the Season

Young Members' Player of the Season

LTSC Player of the Season

The Manager

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

Disco with Diverse FM's Jim Carway

Smart Casual Dress

Tickets:

£16 Members

£22 Non-Members



LTSC members should have received by now the ticket order form for the big event described above, plus a Player and Goal of the Season voting form.

But if you find yourself without, you can still reserve tickets by calling 07506 320522, and you can still vote by emailing your best player and goal of the 2010-11 season to the following address:

ltsc.members@googlemail.com

Type the word 'VOTE' in the subject line of the email and send it off before Friday 15th April.

Winger who went like a rocket!

WINGERS who score goals are a rare commodity indeed. Their traditional contribution was always assumed to be belting down the touchline and delivering a decent cross for the centre-forward to thump home, or head dexterously into the corner of the

THE GLORY BOYS Part 7: GEORGE STEPHENSON (By LTSC member FRANK BATT)

net. Over the years at Kenilworth Road we have been privileged to witness some very fine exponents in the art of wing-play and there is no doubt that the player who performs each week almost under the shadows of his nearest supporters can very quickly become a favourite, or unfortunately, a villain of the crowd.

When the home winger suddenly races clear of the opposition, heading for the goal-line, or homes in on his target like a torpedo, it is one the surest ways of getting the fans on board and bringing a huge roar of approval from the crowd.

One who was adept at this art and thrilled the large crowds of the late 1930s was the robust character of George Stephenson who, according to my old grandfather, lived up to his namesake of locomotive fame and whistled down the wing like a rocket!

(Continued on facing page ...)

Deadly George

(Continued from opposite)

Stephenson was brought to Luton at the beginning of the 1934-35 season from Aston Villa and established himself as a durable outside-left who could not only run like a steam train and still deliver a potent cross, but could score a few goals as well.

The team Stephenson joined was already a very efficient Hatters side, having just finished sixth in the Third Division South. In his first year at the club George missed only two games and scored 13 goals in a season when the Town moved up two places and finished fourth in the league.

It was to improve even further for George and his team-mates in 1936, but also proved heart-breaking at the same time. In the days when only one team was promoted from the Third Division South, The Town missed promotion by a single point after finishing as runners-up to Coventry. Perhaps the most galling aspect was that the Hatters had started so badly winning only two of the opening nine games.

Hero of the hour

Certainly the Hatters didn't make the same mistake the next year and lost only two of their nine games at the beginning of the season and promotion was finally achieved with only one home defeat and 117 goals. The hero of the hour was, of course, the great Joe Payne, with an amazing record of 58 goals in the season. But there was a collection of very fine performers, according to my father, and Stephenson's contribution in a creative role was of paramount importance in the overall outcome of such a satisfying season.

George continued to play for Luton Town in the second tier of the English League, terrorizing opposition defences with his muscular athleticism and lightning pace. He was, as my grandfather used to say: "A really good old fashioned winger," adding, "They don't make 'em like that any more!"

Regular poacher

However, he did change the latter view when he saw Billy Bingham 20 years later. In the promotion year of 1937, Stephenson was the second highest scorer at the club with a total of 20 goals which as a winger is second only to David Moss' wonderful record of 24 in 1980. Stephenson must have been one hell of a player if he was as good as Moss. Although he was never to achieve such an impressive goal haul again, he remained a remarkably regular goal poacher as a winger every year until 1939.

By the time Stephenson left Kenilworth Road, the great promotion team was in the throes of disintegration. Payne disappeared to Chelsea, never to reach such heights again. The greatest



* Hot-shot winger George Stephenson

half-back line my grandfather ever saw at Luton: Finlayson, Roadby, the two redoubtable full-backs, Tom Smith and Tommy Mackey. When George departed for Leeds United he had scored 69 times in 212 games for the Hatters which puts him 12th on our all-time league goal scoring list.

After he left Luton George achieved very little else in football. However, with the ominous rattle of gunfire across the waters of the English Channel, Luton's loss of a star player, the disintegration of the team and the subsequent suspension of the Football League programme were not really people's major concerns.

FRANK BATT

Mr. Punch sees red

IN MODERN football, a player is more likely to receive a booking than score a goal, and his chances of being sent off are greater now than at any time in the game's history.

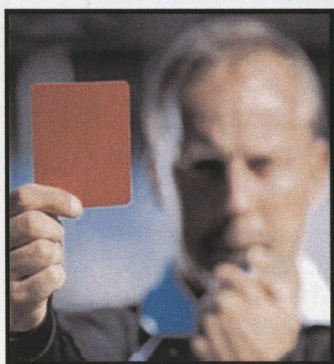
Until 1970 dismissals were very rare, despite the more physical nature of the game. In the early years of the last century a dismissed player would have faced a lengthy ban without pay and would have been reliant on whip-rounds from kindly disposed teammates in order to survive.

At the start of the 1970-71 season, following intense media pressure, the FA instructed referees to tighten up enforcement of the laws of the game. This led to such a rash of dismissals and bookings that both clubs and the PFA (the players' union) were soon petitioning the FA for a return to the old interpretation of the laws. The FA agreed and the number of dismissals and bookings reduced dramatically overnight.

Rough play continued to be a blot on the game until in 1982 the Football League and FA introduced a get-tough policy. Another huge increase in dismissals and bookings were seen and once again clubs lobbied for leniency. In order to appease the clubs and the PFA, the League and FA proposed a points system for bookings and an immediate one-match ban for a sending off, followed by a further ban depending on the offence and previous offences.

Very little research has been carried out on sendings-off but in his book *Red Missed: Sendings-off In English Football 1979-80 to 2000-01*, Tony Brown discovered that 35 Luton players were sent-off during those seasons in all competitions. The worst offender with five red cards to his name was Ceri Hughes, closely followed by Mitchell Thomas on four. Julian James was sent-off on his debut in the Full Members Cup.

The most sendings-off in one game



involving the Hatters took place at Bristol Rovers where three men saw red during the 90 minutes. In Luton's last season in the Football League, two players had the ignominy of an early bath, Keith Keane at Rochdale and Chris Martin at home to Bradford City. Luton's first

By LTSC member BRIAN ELLIS

season in the Conference saw five depart, and so far this season, to the time of writing, two (Keane and Drury) walked early.

The first Luton player to get marching orders was James McEwan, at Reading on October 20, 1894 in the Town's second-ever league match. In that era, full-backs were seen as the enforcers in a team, using their strength to push forwards off the ball. However, contemporary reports suggest that there was more to McEwan's game than just brute force. He was considered to be highly skilful with good passing ability.

At the time of his sending off Luton were 3-2 up, having earlier raced into a 3-0 lead. Reading were fighting back, although not literally, and with time running out, McEwan was holding off Reading's outside right, Wilson. He was known to the Berkshire locals as 'Tug' on account of his habit of tugging opponents off the ball. After over an hour of pushing and shoving the two players finally came to blows and started a full-scale fight.

The ruckus lasted several minutes in spite of the attentions of teammates and a burly member of the local constabulary. The referee eventually stopped the game with the two players still trading punches. He gave them both their marching orders but even that did not prevent the same policeman having to intervene again as they continued their fight in the dressing rooms.

Both players were extremely fortunate and avoided a lengthy suspension as the referee simply forgot to file a report. After their joint dismissals, the two players' fortunes contrasted greatly. Wilson never played a first team game again, while McEwan, like many other players of that age, was never sent-off again even though he now had gained the rather apt nickname, 'Punch'. His career continued until he was well into his thirties and even included a second spell at Luton. He ended his career on a high as Arsenal's trainer when they won the league championship three times in the 1930s.

Perhaps the strangest sending-offs in a Luton game came in the short-lived Zenith Data Systems Cup on 27 November 1989 against Crystal Palace when David Preece and Danny Wilson were sent off following a scuffle with each other. Luton lost 4-1 and Preece and Wilson were both given a two-match ban. A bad day at the office all round!

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