

MAD AS A HATTER!



A LUTON TOWN FANZINE

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60 PAGES FOR ONLY 50p

MAD AS A HATTER!

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Editorial

Relegation - like a lot of things, it's something you always expect happens to someone else, but now it looks almost certain that it'll happen to us. So, where do we go from here?

Provided the manager is given support by the board, ie isn't forced to sell half of the side, then the players have the ability to, at worst, consolidate in the Second Division (or whatever it's going to be called) if not push for an immediate return. We can also expect to see yet more home-grown young players staking a claim for a regular place in the side; Salton, Allpress, O'Brien, and Sommer come readily to mind, but they will need the experience of the likes of Preece and Harford to help them through.

So, relegation need not be a disaster, and, to many will come as a merciful release. However, the experience this season of Sunderland, and of many others over the years, should be borne in mind; the vicious circle of relegation has to be broken early. If not, anyone who can remember the early 60s will be able to tell you exactly what can happen.

This bumper packed 60 page issue is on sale at the usual price of 50p by way of thanks to you, our readers, for your support. Incredibly, we had enough material to produce an even bigger issue, but there is a limit to how much pasting up our enthusiasm will take, so some items have been held back for the next issue.

Reading through this one, it may become evident that a certain Mr. Kohler does not rate highly in the popularity stakes among our contributors. We can only assume that this reflects the views of a majority of the clubs supporters. It is our view that Luton Town F.C. will continue to struggle financially while Mr. Kohler is in charge as he seems to lack the will and the means to invest in the club. There are others who would, but they will not work with Mr. Kohler, for whatever reasons. In the meantime debts continue to mount and only sales of yet more players will keep the wolf (and the receiver) from the door. Our information suggests that

only a major crippling of the clubs finances will force Mr. Kohler out, so we are taking the unusual step of addressing a request to the players: If you care about the fans and the club, stay until Kohler has gone, it is you or him. For our sake please wait. We, the supporters, can do our bit as well, by waiting as long as possible to buy season tickets, or not buying them at all. Starve him of cash. It may not work, of course, but at least we'll have tried. Do something for the future of our club by doing nothing for its present.

Cricket Lovely Cricket

As the football season ends so the cricket season takes over, and Mad as a Hatter! brings you its unique fixtures service. Unique in that we are the only Luton based publication to give Bedfordshire full Minor Counties fixtures. The highlights of the season in the county are the Northants matches and the visit of the Pakistan side.

Beds.

May 24-25	Lincolnshire (A)
31	Suffolk (A) - Knockout Cup
June 7-8	Norfolk (Bedford School)
21-22	Northumberland (Henlow)
July 22-23	Hertfordshire (Luton)
28-29	Suffolk (A)
Aug. 2-3	Cumberland (Bedford Town CC)
16-17	Staffordshire (A)
18-19	Cambridgeshire (Leighton Buzzard)
30-31	Buckinghamshire (A)

Northants at Luton

June 26, 27 & 29	Glamorgan (Co. Champ.)
28	Glamorgan (Sunday League)

Also...

May 27-28	England Amatuer X1 v Pakistan Tourists
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Something to think about

"The club is to be run differently. It will be run my way, and anyone who stands in my way will be pushed out of the way". Chilling words indeed from our beloved M.D. David Kohler (as quoted in the Luton News) shortly after the dismissal of Bill Tomlins. They are not words to fill one with confidence, as they come from the man presiding over current losses of (at least) £15,000 per week. Obviously, it is not possible to appreciate what "differently" may mean without looking at some aspects of the clubs activities prior to the statement above. A fanzine cannot hope to cover all the activities in great detail, due to the constraints of space and of lack of detailed information and specialised knowledge.

Firstly, a look at the departure of Bill Tomlins, the clubs General Manager and Secretary. The club has claimed he was not sacked, but it is difficult to see why his contract is being paid up to December if he resigned, and comments made by Bill to the local press suggest it was not a matter of mutual consent. So why was he sacked? Again comments in the local press, stated that Bill and Kohler had barely spoken for some considerable time. We can then refer to the opening lines of this piece and assume that Bill was pushed for daring to differ with Kohler about the running of the club.

Ron Howard's departure from the club is probably a more straightforward case of a manager re-shuffling his pack, and, provided his contacts are maintained, should not cause too much damage. In this case it has to be said that David Pleat likes a greater involvement in all aspects of the club than many managers so the departure of Howard should also be seen in this light (perhaps).

It does the club no credit to have hidden the real reasons for these dismissals behind the excuse of cost cutting measures forced upon them by shareholders at the recent AGM. On the other hand another matter raised at the AGM was not fully explained. This is the case of the company cars, David Pleat's BMW 5 series and David Kohler's Range Rover. The need for David Pleat to have a company car is not disputed, but it would have been more of a boost to local industry, and

supporters, if it had been a top of the range Vauxhall in spite of the sponsorship having ended, or even a car supplied by Trimoco. However, Kohler's Range Rover seems a touch extravagant to say the least. Extravagant for the MD of a loss making football club but not for a property developer (see P.20 Issue 10). Is Luton Town subsidising property development now? It is not the ultimate extravagance though, that being the personalised registration, DAK 1, which must have cost close on £10,000. The defence of these cars is that they are typical of the rewards offered to Executives in similar businesses, although it could be argued that the reward for an MD of a company losing similar amounts to Luton Town would have only one thing in common with a Range Rover, that being a big boot!

While we are on the subject of rewards - we understand that Mr. Kohler is on a salary of around £35,000 a year from the club for his hard work. In fact he spends so much time at the ground that one is inclined to wonder when (and where) he manages to run a property development business.

Flying off at a tangent once more, has the quality of the pre-match burger or half time tea improved lately? Does it leave a bad taste in the mouth? No? Well read on. These exotic delicacies are brought to you by Kenilworth Catering Ltd. Who they? Well lets just say that the directors of this company include a Mr. D.A. Kohler and a Mrs. Nelkin. This may come as a surprise, and you may now wish to speculate on who is making money on this and which football club is not. Is this in the best interests of the football club?

Turning to the more mundane matters concerned with the running of the club, there appears to be something lacking, and a change is required. Look at the blank advertising hoardings, above the executive boxes, 19 of which could be empty next season as they remain unsold. Think back to the situation early in the season with the kit sponsorship and replica kit sales that both missed the first six weeks of the season. These are just a few points, but none of them reflect a well run company maximising its potential, regardless of a recession.

Finally, a look at those who run the club, the board of

directors. Something like 52% of the shares are owned by Sizematch Ltd., a company owned equally by Nelkin and Kohler. This gives Kohler a controlling interest in the club due to Nelkin's lack of interest since resigning as Chairman. Nelkin, however, remains a director. Of the others, all have a financial interest in the club as it is understood to be a requirement that a director should also be a guarantor for the clubs overdraft. (This only involves a risk of having to provide cash, and not "up front" money.) It is odd to find that only two out of seven directors actually have shares in "their" club, and only two have actually put their own money into the club in the form of loans. This, leaving Nelkin out of the calculation, leaves two directors whose only useful purpose is to maintain an overdraft with the bank. These two individuals are Peter Collins (of Luton & District Transport) who joined the board in May 1991 and Ed Pearson (a retired financial expert) who has been on the board since god knows when. Henry Richardson has shares in the club but no loans, possibly due to business difficulties of his Ribocon building companies, but is maintaining a family connection with the club as his father Jim was a director in the early 1970's. Another recent recruit is Nigel Terry who has shares and has loaned money to the club. His business is Fisher Frozen Foods. Finally, we come to the reluctant Chairman, Roger Smith (of Trimoco) who could be the only Chairman in the First Division not to own shares in his club, but he has loaned money to the club. He is said to want to end his involvement with the club and it could be that knowing what resigning would cause (very serious financial difficulties, if not a visit from the official receiver) is all that keeps him at the club. After all he was on the board at the time of the 1975 crisis, along with Mr. Pearson, who may have similar thoughts.

It is not the intention here to act in judgement of the board, but to provide some information to enable you to decide for yourself. This article does not claim to tell the whole truth as some of the information is only hearsay, and is not confirmed as fact. But it is worthy of a wider audience in spite of that. If half of it is true, Luton Town F.C. is a very unstable business and it will be a little easier to understand the heavy losses, but no easier to tolerate.

P.J. Smith

Just Deserts

In the event that eight isolated, inhospitable desert islands were placed at my disposal, I have eight ideal candidates to maroon on them.

1. **GRAHAM KELLY.** Mr personality of the football world. I'm sure no-one would miss him. Lets put him on a barren isle with nothing to eat. That would give the fat git something to be miserable about.
2. **JOHN MARTIN.** As referees go this man is in a league of his own. Well he makes the rules up to suit himself. He is overage and been on the list for 15 years, which is 15 too long. He'll go on my most hilly island. Remember Villa Park?
3. **JOHN FASHANU.** I bet we all recall some bad tackles but who can forget the head high feet first attack on David Beaumont. Fashanu is just a back street thug with long legs. I'll find him an island with ferocious wild animals.
4. **DAVID EVANS.** Looking back he did our club an incredible amount of harm. He treated it like a building society account. He wrote himself a wonderful interest rate contract. He's got to have the pebble island, then he can pretend to count all his cash.
5. **KENNY DALGLISH.** This man is one of lifes biggest whingers. What a super feeling though when we knocked his beloved reds out of the FA Cup after the two replays. Kenny can go on a volcanic island covered in a crusty lava to remind him of all of the meat pies which supposedly went to waste when snow stopped us travelling.
6. **DAVID KOHLER.** Our MD could have a really big island and I'd like to imagine him using his fat little legs to dash about pretending to buy and sell bits of it to well loved property developers.

7. **LARS ELSTRUP.** The dashing Dane would end up on Rockall, which is between Jockoland and Iceland and the inhabitants are seabirds. As a result it is covered in bird-shit, which reminds me of how he treated Luton when he left.
8. **PETER NELKIN.** I can't think of anything quite bad enough for Nelkin. But I would like him to really suffer. Perhaps I could find a tiny island in a tidal area so that he almost drowned twice a day.

David Fleckney

Raving Mad!!!

Dear "Mad"

How is it that you never seem to say a word against Brian "Surely" Swain of the Luton News, Luton Leader and Luton Town Soccerline. I know the press are supposed to be fair to everybody but it seems that in reporting matters off the field at Kenilworth Road "Surely" bends over backwards to give the clubs side of every story. Never a word of anything close to criticism, which you might expect from a fan. If he's not going to change, how about the Luton News providing a regular letters spot for Town fans? Then we could have our say regularly.

Keep up the good work.

Cheers

Ken Ross

Luton

What? Us never say a word against the Luton News? See elsewhere in this issue.

Dear "Mad"

On the subject of Brian Stein. An anonymous article in issue 10 slagged him off mercilessly because he was not scoring goals. I would like to know who is? Mick Harford should have put away more chances this season, ditto Pembridge. How can anyone suggest Nogan replaces Bruno when the Welshman has made fluffing open goals into an artform. Stein has put a lot of effort in this season, even if his legs are looking a

bit tired now. It is when one studies his whole game that one appreciates his constructive input. At times this season he has looked the class player in both sides - with much superior ball control and vision, and with a sharpness of turn that is a little hidden by his lack of subsequent acceleration. The second half at West Ham and first half at home to Norwich are good examples of his influence. Leave him alone - we could do a lot worse. Clifford Saunders
(The Optimist, Every Year)
Hemel Hempstead,
Herts.

Reply: Firstly, the article wasn't intended to be anonymous, we just forgot to give Phil the credit for his, erm, very personal view. Whilst agreeing with much that you say, unfortunately the bottom line for ANY striker has to be goals scored and sadly Brian does not come up to scratch, and whilst Nogan ain't a world-beater he may well have scored more goals, even if he lacks Stein's creativity. The real answer to our goalscoring problems, of course, hasn't played since November....

Dear "Mad"

Having seen the re-match fixture against Watford mentioned in the latest issue of 'Mad as a Hatter', I'd just like to remind you that I am available for the home leg on the plastic. I hope that the "team strengthening" doesn't mean I've been dropped or forgotten. Even if I only come on as a sub I'd be honoured to play against the Hornets again, after last years thrilling away win! (I've been doing the old exercise bike again and I'll be well stocked up on inhalers.) Hope to hear from you soon.

Richard 'Bob' Hewison

Luton, Beds.

P.S. This cutting was in 'The Guardian' at Christmas.

A SMALL thing, but interesting. At the Dillons bookshop in High Street, Watford, the Official Centenary History of Watford Football Club is outselling The Joy Of Sex (new version). That's all.

Dear "Mad"

Did anyone notice the number of ex-Luton players on the score sheet yesterday (22nd March) besides that Irish tosser Dowie? Breacker, Stein Minor to name but two! Grimes? Is it the famous Ashley at Stoke?

Paul Devall

Flitwick,

Beds.

Yes it certainly was our Ashley - Ed.

Dear "Mad"

When I was in Liverpool, after the Everton match, I bought the local sports paper, the Football Echo.

Attached is a copy of the Andy King column, and as you see I have pointed out one line in particular - it's nice to know everyone is 100% behind the Town in its hour of need!

Yours sincerely

Mr. G. Henman

Luton



days, he can still change the angle of the game superbly and keep play flowing.

I was at Goodison today for what amounted to a derby for me.

Movement and quality

I'm working for Luton right now on the commercial side, but I still look on Everton as my club.

Under David Pleat, Luton play football the way I love to see it, with movement and quality. I know Howard Kendall has the same principles.

They are both a million miles away from the 'Cambridge Diet' which is based on the big boot principle. Managers like this deserve success and I'm sure that somewhere down the line they will get it.

00



Reserve Judgement

10 March 1992. It was with absolutely no trepidation whatsoever that Mark, Ian and I left Dunstable to travel to Vicarage Road, world-famous home of Wealdstone FC, and, erm, somebody else, to watch Town reserves away from home for the very first time.

Arriving at the ground, my first impression was one of surprise - we weren't forced to walk about seven miles to reach the distant visitors' end. The second surprise of the evening was that Scotty wasn't playing - we didn't know then he was injured - as he seems to have played in just about every reserve game regardless of whether he's just played in the first team, or, indeed, whether he's playing next day for them. The third, and by far the biggest, surprise of the evening came during the first half when we heard a chorus of "Come on you Horns (oo-er!)" - this could have been the first time I'd ever heard them singing - mind you, there were only about 30 or so from Luton....

Anyway, onto the game. The first half was instantly forgettable with neither side able to produce much in the way of constructive football (no change for one of the sides, there), and thus the sides rested at 0-0. The game perked up after the break and Watford netted on the hour - the goal being scored by The Pitch, who cleverly deflected a weak shot wide of Petterson. Almost immediately, Town hit back with the best move of the match: four or five passes down the right and a cross being headed home firmly by, wait for it, Nogan. Town, lifted by the goal, proceeded to dominate the remainder of the match, playing the usual neat, constructive football although they couldn't force a winner. The nearest they came was when Watford's man of the match, Pitch, cleared off the line from the lively Williams. At the other end, Petterson was rarely tested, whilst the pairing of Allpress and Salton were very impressive, dealing coolly and calmly with Watford's, admittedly feeble, attack.

The game ended 1-1, so we could claim to be unbeaten in derby games this season, but my overwhelming thought as I left the ground was "Please God, preserve us from coming here next season!"

G.T.E.

Undefeated

It is early April and the Luton Town team are undefeated in League and Cup, for the entire season. Seventy-five goals have been scored and only ten conceded. Another great work of fiction, perhaps? Well, no. This is fact and the team referred to are Luton Town Ladies FC. Manager David Buey explains:

Luton Town Ladies FC: A Brief History

The club was founded in 1969 and was called 'Luton Daytels' due to the occupation of its founder members, telephonists at the old GPO exchange. It was in fact instrumental in the foundation of the Womens Football Association itself. Originally it competed in the South of England League but as more teams became interested in ladies football this became more and more impractical due mainly to the geography and the distances involved in travelling to away games. The Chiltern League was formed to localise things once more. The club in its early years competing in the Chiltern League enjoyed much success winning the league on a couple of occasions as well as the Cup. The playing of the game has always been the motivation for the club and if we can enjoy some triumphs along the way then that would be an added advantage. Two years ago the Chiltern Womens Football League and the East Anglian Womens Football League were amalgamated as part of the restructuring programme initiated by the WFA. The first season saw the league divided into two, Eastern and Western, mainly again down to the costs involved in transporting say, Luton, to Gt. Yarmouth for a fixture. The Eastern Region Womens Football League this season has been structured on an ability basis. A Premier Division and two feeder Divisions (Eastern & Western) each Division consisting of, at present, eight teams. The Premier Division champions can apply to join the National League providing they can satisfy the criteria laid down by the WFA, such as an enclosed stadium etc. In September 1991 I wrote to Luton Town requesting the opportunity to stage some pre-match entertainment in the form of a ladies football match. Providing we could arrange to play a team representing another First Division side on the same day they would agree. We played Villa Aztecs and won 2-1 shortly before the first team won 2-0. The girls were

given a great reception by the spectators who were by now filtering into the ground for the main event. As I sat in the main stand some people expressed to me that our game was in fact more entertaining than the main match. I wrote to the club, aware that the then Chairman Peter Nelkin, was interested in having a ladies football team to represent the club as this was something that was happening all over the country. It was good P.R. also. Discussions were opened and because of comings and goings in the club are to some extent still open. Bill Tomlins has been involved and we are grateful to him for his efforts. At the AGM of Luton Daytels the club voted to change its title in anticipation to Luton Town Ladies FC something that even at that stage Luton Town allowed us to do. We were then provided with last seasons White and Blue Kits and have now officially been 'Adopted' by Luton Town FC. We hope to strengthen our relationship in the close season even further.

The current season has been quite successful so far in that we are currently top of the Western Division requiring just one point from a possible six to secure the Divisional title. On top of this we are in the semi-final of the League Plate at home to Bedford Town Belles on Sunday, 12 April 1992, Lewsey Park, 2.30pm Kick-Off.

Our League statistics are as follows:-

P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	GD
11	10	1	0	75	10	21	+65

David Buey

Thanks

As another season draws to its climax we would like to thank everybody who has contributed to "Mad" during the last year. Your efforts have been invaluable and are, as always, much appreciated. Keep up the good work! Thanks also to you dear readers, for being just that. You make it all worthwhile.

Political Football

The Scene: The Houses of Parliament, 1998, during a debate on football policy. The ruling football supporters party has just passed a motion granting Aldershot another week before being wound up. This is the 977th time this has happened. The leader of the opposition; a grossly overweight, hideously ugly Tory MP, stands to propose a motion.

D. Evans: Gentlemen, ladies and football supporters, I wish to propose a scheme which we believe will totally transform our national sport and make it far more profitable. At present, wage bills are too much of a burden on small clubs, and too few clubs are making a profit. I therefore suggest that football players be banned as from next season, and that all money saved from this action should go to me.. erm, to Conservative Party funds. This scheme has been adopted with great success at Watford F.C. Indeed, it was so successful that nobody noticed.

(Loud cheers of approval from opposition bench, and shouts of "get rid of the jobs" can be heard from Colin Minnihan).

John Major: (Leader of the Football Supporters Party); This is a scandal. How can this possibly go ahead? Anyway, it's against my new Football Players charter. And I won't be able to watch Chelsea any more!

Jimmy Greaves MP: Aren't you the lucky one? Yeah, I reckon it's disgusting. What's gonna happen to me and the Saint. We'll have no job!

D. Evans: Don't worry, Jim, you'll still be able to work. You see, instead of live matches we're following the American model: 90 minutes of adverts. You can comment on them at half time.

George Best MP: Oy, fatso, where's the bar?

D. Evans: There you are, that's typical of footballers, setting a bad influence to our children. We should transform our football stadia into entertainment centres where people can go and watch good clean entertainment. Performing dogs, brass bands...

Norman Tebbit: Public hangings! Kick out the jobs!

John Major: This is an outrage. I won't stand for it.

D. Evans: You won't need to, we've abolished terraces. People should realise that football is all about profit, getting backsides on seats. Footballers have simply outlived their usefulness - we don't need them any more.

Football Supporter: Mr. Evans, could I ask you a question?

D. Evans: Yes, scumbag.

Football Supporter: Why don't you go and stick your head in the nearest available oven, you fat git? Oh, I'm sorry, there wouldn't be enough room for your chins. We football fans are sick and fed up, not unlike your stomach, of being kicked in the teeth all the time, just because you want to make your money. How would you like it if we abolished greedy chairmen? Or set up a Superleague especially for clubs who have never been on television. You're using football for your own gains: now you don't need it any more, you want to abolish it. You've forgotten one thing. The fans. We've had enough!

(Evans faints. Four people were taken to hospital after the tremor.)

Thinking on, there is quite a good case for banning some footballers, (*How about the entire Southampton team? - Ed*) what with the costs of the recession being as they are. For example, there should be an ugliness code to protect supporters and those of a nervous disposition from people like Vinny Jones, Iain Dowie and Peter "Quasimodo" Beardsley.

If we are serious about cleaning our environment then they should be banned, or at least issued with NHS masks. Then we should take action against persistently violent players like Neil Ruddock and, erm, Vinny Jones. And those with naff haircuts - our mate Vinny again. No, I've got a better idea - let's just ban Vinny Jones! But then, perhaps not. We wouldn't have anyone to laugh at! Apart from Watford, of course.

Graham Johnson

"Der Hatter, der in Deutschland wohnt"

Hatters abroad



Geoff Smith flies the flag at the pyramids. Is that the W*tf**d team we can see behind him?

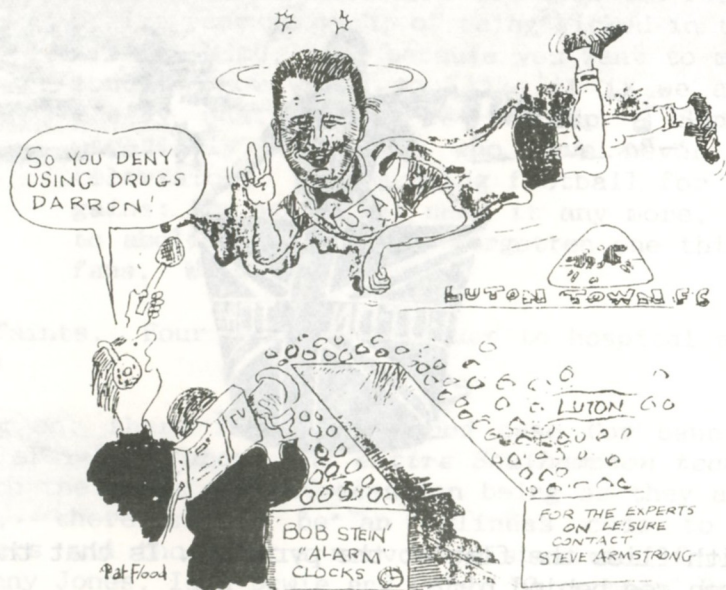
MOVE HALTS NIGHTCLUB TAKEOVER

News of Darren McDonk"E"s transfer shocked local nightclub bosses after he had agreed a deal to buy the club.

Mr. McDonk"E" had already gained a license for the premises and was ready for the takeover within the next few weeks. The club was to be called Ritz"E" and would have been a great success for Mr. McDonk"E" who said "I was surprised with the SPEED that the deal went through and I was in ECSTASY when I heard that I had been given a license for the premises, it gave me a real HIGH. I'm no DOPE and I think it would have really taken off. My mate CHARLIE was WHIZZING around trying to get things ready for the opening night. We were not going to make a HASH of it and no-one was going to TRIP us up. It was a real SMACK in the mouth to have to give up this venture, and I really thought I was going to CRACK up, but playing first team football is a priority. Maybe I could start up a Ritz"E" nightclub in my new town.

After much researching at M.A.A.H. we found out that Darren's middle names are Lee Simon Darren. That makes his real name Darren L.S.D. McDonk"E"!!!!!!

S.T.



R.I.P.

Aldershot was the smallest town in England to support a Football League Club, it was said, but in truth if the town had supported the club in greater numbers they would still be in the Football League.

Quite how a club the size of Aldershot can get over £1 million in debt, without even owning their ground is a mystery, and does no-one in football any credit. The only people to deserve any credit are the supporters, of Aldershot and eight other fourth division clubs who raised several thousand pounds in order that the clubs last matches could be played, albeit in vain. Also lets not forget the players who stayed loyal despite going unpaid for over 3 months.

But you have to feel sorry for the supporters, a small band of 1,500 or so hardy souls who supported their team through thin and thin, some of whom were optimistic enough to have bought season tickets. Their glory days were the rare acts of giant killing, and for the last of those, the 3-0 F.A. Cup defeat of First Division Oxford they had to pay £9 to watch. They were taken for granted, and in the end taken to the cleaners. For 30 years we have heard that clubs could go the way of Accrington. Now it will be Aldershot. And to make matters worse their last eight months of League football, officially at least, didn't happen.

This type of extinction shouldn't be wished on anyone, not even Watford. For the supporters trying to raise a new club Aldershot Town F.C. from the ashes of the old, we wish them the very best of luck. Because, as a reward for perseverance, they deserve it.

K.F.H.

Flamboyant Souness keeps himself in shape by training virtually every day with his players.

Liverpools injury problems explained?

Greens and Football

Here is an extract from an article "Why Should the Greens Worry About Football", written for the Green Party's Leisure Policy Working Group.

On Sunday, 15 March 1992, the Green Party passed an emergency motion on the new Premier League at its Spring Conference in Bridlington. The motion recognised the threat posed to many smaller clubs by the new Premier League structure, and also noted that the decision to split the existing league was made in spite of widespread opposition. The motion acknowledged the positive contribution to the game that has been made by supporter-led organisations, and has called for such organisations to be formally included in any decision making processes which will affect the future of the game.

So why should the Green Party be concerned about football, and football supporters in particular? I would argue that it is precisely because so many people regard football supporters as an unimportant, lower form of life that they are deserving of our attention. The fact is that before this emergency motion was passed, the Green Party had hardly ever said anything about football, and football, whatever your opinions on it as a form of entertainment, remains an important part of life in Britain, and in large parts of the rest of the world.

The 80s was a tragic decade for football, including as it did the Heysel Stadium disaster, the Bradford City fire and, finally, Hillsborough. All these tragedies reflected the dangerously inadequate way the game was organised and, crucially, that the people whose loyalty was always taken for granted - the fans - had never really been consulted on major decisions affecting the game. Throughout this period, however, the mainstream media never really talked about the supporters' needs, but chose instead to talk about hooliganism. In a crass, tar-brushing exercise, supporters were universally portrayed as a problem, ignoring the vast majority who were not interested in making trouble and who, incidentally, included an increasing proportion of women. It seemed to occur to no-one that perhaps the supporters themselves could provide some solutions.

Rejected by the media, the football supporters invented their own media: the fanzines. Football fanzines have been authentic grass-roots organisations with a locally-based, somewhat off-beat feel not entirely dissimilar to some local Green Parties! The fanzines and the Football Supporters Association, formed in the wake of the Heysel tragedy, have led campaigns against racism, sexism and homophobia in football. Indeed, the good example that has been set by the fans themselves has taken many people by surprise.

It was therefore unfortunate that earlier this season, just when supporters' organisations were beginning to achieve maturity, the Football Association chose to create a new Super League, comprising the biggest, richest clubs and effectively abandoned the remaining 70 clubs in the process, many of whom have proud local traditions going back into the last century. In this schism, described by Crystal Palace's manager Steve Copell (sic) as "the worst thing that has happened in football in a long time", the views of the supporters were once again steamrollered, and football, at a stroke, became even more of a centralised and avaricious enterprise.

Love it or loathe it, football has been a significant component in the cultural fabric of Britain. It holds the interest of several hundred thousands dedicated followers every week, whose support has hardly ever been rewarded with meaningful consultation. Football will not go away. So we have a choice: do we want a power-oriented, centralised game, or a more democratic, locally-based, green game.

In the event, the Premier League Motion was passed by a large majority at Bridlington. Having a deep-seated belief in the value of local democracy, the Green Party had the courage and vision to see that football supporters could and should be given a leading role in the government of the game.

I was over the moon...

Joe French

This article may seem to have little relevance now that the Election has passed, but we thought you might like to know anyway.

EURO 1992

I don't know about you, but at the moment the prospect of the forthcoming European Championships is leaving me distinctly underwhelmed, but as the Editor grovelled (and bought me a pint) to do a preview of the June "extravaganza", so here goes:

ENGLAND - After the 90 World Cup, England will be expected to be among the front-runners, but qualification for Sweden was unconvincing, as have been performances under Graham Failure. However England's defence is as good as any, so they will not be easily beaten, and Lineker will want to go out in style - so the semi-finals should be a realistic target. Much, will depend on the players if fit; Gascoigne will provide the inspiration desperately lacking in midfield, whilst Barnes will no doubt be a waste of space (again!).

SCOTLAND - We all know what fierce competitors the Scots are when they reach the final stages of major competitions! Their underdog status this time may well be an advantage as they won't be expected to do well and, as the weakest side in the competition, will raise their game against allcomers, but this won't be enough for them to make progress.

HOLLAND - Winners in 1988, but hugely disappointing (as Barry Davies would say) in 1990. Possessing enigmatic players such as Koeman, Van Basten and Gullit they are capable of beating the best, much will depend on them avoiding the internal wrangling seen in Italy. I can't help feeling though that the team as a whole is past its best.

GERMANY - Reigning World Champions and, as such, will start as favourites - rightly so. The addition of former East Germans appears to have been carried out smoothly and strengthened the side. Germany rarely disappoint in major finals and, if

Mattheus can be as influential as two years ago, I expect Germany to complete the double of World and European Champions.

FRANCE - The most impressive of all the qualifiers, yet they seemed strangely unconvincing at Wembley in February, and again against Belgium recently. Despite the lethal Papin, and the now-familiar Cantona in attack, France have the look of a team who have peaked too soon, and may well disappoint.

SWEDEN - Home advantage will undoubtedly be their biggest ally, as they are the Coventry City of international football - incredibly average. In fact, I can't think of much more to say about them...

CIS - One of the most consistent sides in Europe over the last few years but have tended to under-achieve when it really counts. Like most of the teams in Sweden they have the ability to win the competition, but whether their domestic troubles will inspire them in what could be their last major championship as some sort of unified team remains to be seen.

YUGOSLAVIA - No other side in Europe, let alone the world, could cope with the loss, for non-football reasons, of a player of Prosineski's ability as well as the Yugoslavs. Player for player, I reckon they are the best team in Sweden. - Look out for Savisevic and Pancev - but like CIS they have both domestic troubles which may affect them and the tag of being perennial under-achievers. A good outside bet nevertheless, but their meeting with England will be crucial.

It only remains, therefore, to wish England all the best. Whilst many people (me included) doubt the manager's abilities, let's all get behind the team whether you're watching at home, in the pub, or actually going to Sweden (and if you are, we'd love to hear your stories), and, who knows, we might yet see 150,000 people in Luton town centre again.

Too much of a "good" thing? Surely Not!

One of the highlights of travelling to away games in places like Manchester and Liverpool, for me, is the opportunity to get a match report in the local sports paper before settling down for the train journey home, and then turning to the letters page to read all the criticism of Peter Reid and Howard Kendalls team selection. This may seem strange but its a highlight because the opportunity doesn't exist here in Luton. Where we once had the Evening Post and Luton News, and then the Citizen and Herald to keep us updated with our football news, now we have the Herald, constrained by the need not to take up too much advertising space, and the Luton News and Leader both written by Brian "Surely" Swain, who also does the Soccerline.

Now I hate to moan (*no you don't, you love it - Eds*) but I somehow feel there is something missing from "Surely's" reports. In the match reports it is always difficult to find criticism of players even if they have had a real 'mare. I suppose "so-and-so was crap" would be a bit strong, but surely (there I go now) "so-and-so just didn't get involved enough" would be possible. As for the back page, the more general news, this seems, like Soccerline, to be a Brian Swain/David Pleat partnership with endless quotes and, on Soccerline, interviews. David Kohler seems to get more than his fair share of quotes as well, whilst supporters are given no opportunity to reply. As a consequence I feel that the questions the fans want to ask usually go unanswered. The saddest part of this is that "Surely" is a committed Town fan whose views are widely respected but it seems kept hidden from view so as not to offend the club. If this is the case then it is a bad policy as without the Luton News the club would miss out on an important lump of free publicity.

Some might argue that it is wrong to expect ""Surely" to give his opinions, but I don't agree as it would be easy to use the qualifier "as a supporter" when giving opinions. It is the responsibility of the press to report the facts and the opinions of those affected which in the case of football must be the supporters. It is also the duty of the press to ask questions which will reveal the truth behind the P.R. gloss. If the Luton News is avoiding this for fear of upsetting the

club then they have got it wrong, as without the News David Kohlers position would rapidly become untenable, as he loses the chance to put his side of the story unopposed. The paradox in asking for more balanced reporting is that "Surely" is paid by both the Luton News and the football club (for Soccerline) and each give each other publicity. Unfortunately as a change of style and content are unlikely to affect sales it must be doubtful whether change can be brought about.

In spite of all this, the first thing I do every Wednesday morning is read the back page of the Luton News, and I am also an addict of Soccerline. I suppose that is the crux of it. I don't like a lot of what I read, but I like it a lot more than not reading it, or in truth perhaps I don't know what I want at all! Apart from a winning team that is.

A.G.F.C.

Where are they now



Barnsdale Country Club

ALL YOUR QUESTI

During your stay we will invite you to take a sales sales executives who will be pleased to explain the membership could change your leisure and social a

I look forward to extending the hospitality and ser in the very near future.

Yours sincerely

William Kellock
Sales and Marketing Director

To book your introductory break at £60.00 telephone 50 callers will receive, in addition, a free gourmet Restaurant. (Drinks not included).



**John Ryan:
Capt Pugwash**

A LA RECHERCHE DU PSG

It was the end of October and we had gone to Paris for a long weekend. Virtually all games in France, except those in the lower divisions, kick off at 8.30pm - presumably those that don't haven't got any floodlights. Having grown up with 3pm as the kick off time 8.30pm seems very late. Opposite the ground, near the shop, there were a couple of bars open, there was no overt security there and no attempt to restrict the sale of drink. Having said that there was no obvious sign of mass efforts to get drunk but then at 20F (£2) for a half of lager I'm not surprised! Parting with 125F each (about £12.50) we entered the ground, were presented with free programmes, were half-heartedly frisked by some rather bored looking gendarmes and went off in search of seats. The seating tiers have an incredibly steep rake, the heads of the people in the row in front are level with your feet! It's almost like sitting on a cliff and the sensation that you might fall on the pitch if you stood up too quick took some time to go.

French football has come in for some stick in some quarters for being in a bit of a state. Financially it is certainly in a mess but their national side seem to be doing OK. One area where things are really bad though is with 'les incidents' - i.e. a spot of bother. There had been a major conflagration at the Parc du Princes at the end of the previous PSG home game - knowing this certainly added a spice to going! PSG lost 3-2 to Toulon, going down to a 88 minute goal. The home crowd in the Bolougne Tribune responded to this by tearing out seats and generally making a bit of a to-do. The press suggested they have been infiltrated by the far right National Front - how depressingly similar that sounds to the problems we had. Various measures have been put forward all of which are those we have had in place for a while, all-ticket matches for potential trouble games, better segregation, better searches etc. One solution that is novel though is that at the Bolougne Tribune end they have removed all the seats!

As for away supporters they were very subdued (perhaps wisely given the PSG reputation!) and few in number (about 100) - a couple of apologetic banners which were soon put away again and no apparent sign of chanting. The home supporters were frenzied though and they were singing an hour before and

waved flags and scarves, threw balloons, scattered paper, lit flares and made a terrifying din - it must be a very intimidating atmosphere for any visiting away side (and fans!). The songs they sang were mostly their own versions of English ones - I couldn't make out the words but all the favourites were there, even 'When the Saints go Marching In'. And so on came the teams - what a noise! We only go that crazy on Cup Final day!! I wondered: would the game live up to this build up!

The PSG team is liberally scattered with Brazilians including Geraldo who was bought from FC Porto and Valdo who was snapped up from Benfica. There is no-one particularly well known (not to me anyway) in the Nimes side apart from their captain, Cantona, who we now know and love as a Leeds player. The game had a steady pattern of PSG domination with the Nimes defence looking for a draw - when a moment of total genius brought the game to light. Simba had replaced Perez at half time and it was he who on 48 minutes got the opening goal. The ball bobbed around harmlessly on the edge of the Nimes box when he suddenly took the ball and flipped it over his head with a "bicycle kick" and past the bemused Nimes' keeper. It was worth the 125F entrance fee for that moment alone - needless to say the players and fans went spare! PSG eventually ran out worthy 2-0 winners.

The quality of the football played was very high: accurate close passing totally unlike the punt and run style that is creeping into so much of our game, even at the highest levels. The goalkeepers rarely kicked the ball upfield, preferring the quick throw. Even if there was a long ball it was a measured pass to feet or into space, not a kick and hope ball. If PSG qualify for Europe then I don't give any of our teams much of a hope - and if that's the way the French national side play they'll take some stopping in Sweden. Watch out for Simba in the European Championship!

The Expatriate

(A longer version of this article has just appeared in Hand of God, No.4. This fanzine covers international and foreign club football and is well worth the £1 (+ A4 size SAE) it costs from the following address: "The Hand of God", c/o David Bissmire, 237 Wendover Road, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP21 9PB.)

Rare Luxury



Two strikers in action for the Town, and in the same match. Welcome back, Phil.

91/92 "Mad" Poll

Once again its that time of the year when we ask you to undertake that most onerous of tasks, writing to us. We realise how valuable your time is, but would ask you to spare a few minutes, and a second class stamp, if its not too much to ask, to pass on your opinions to us. We hesitate to call it a poll, as your heartily sick of them by now, but thats what it really is. We did ask MORI to do it for us, but they were too busy with something called a General Election. As a reward you could win an all expenses paid trip to somewhere exotic, but as we can't afford that you'll perhaps have to make do with something from Luton Towns exciting range of souvenirs.

Anyway, enough of the grovelling, what we'd like are your nominations for the following categories:-

Player of the Season
 Young Player of the Season
 Best Match
 Best (Individual) Performance
 Best Goal For
 Best Referee
 Best Opposing Player
 Best Opposition
 Best Kit
 Most Inept England Player
 Worst Managing Director
 Thug of the Season
 Sending-off of the Season
 Signing of the Season
 Personality of the Season
 Best Radio/TV Sports Programme
 Five Reasons We're Glad To be Going Down (Or Staying Up?)
 Which Southampton Players Arse Would You Most Like To Apply A Red Hot Poker to?

Worst Match
 Worst Performance
 Worst Goal Against
 Worst Referee
 Worst Opposing Player
 Worst Opposition
 Worst Kit

Finally, for those of you with real imagination; you are David Pleat and find £2 million on your desk for team strengthening, but have to get rid of it before D.K. finds out. Who do you sign?

Austrian Soccer- A thrill or what?

Whilst away on a business trip recently (really I was job hunting!), I was paying an overnight stop in the Youth Hostel in Linz, Austria. This YH is right next to the local stadium and the floodlights beckoned me with their glare!

After parting with 100 schillings (around £5) I was allowed into the ground. Tonights spectacular involved LASK Linz and their hated opponents Sturm Graz, a name I remember from ancient European soccer tournaments.

It was freezing cold and after consuming some chips and a glass (plastic of course) of beer I was in the mood for a good match!

Both teams started off in traditional euro-style, lots of passing, no running and the goal keepers being involved with some dubious long back passes. They were 'putting out the feelers, testing each other' as the beloved John Motshun would say.

LASK turned on the pressure by changing tactics to Motshun's 'Route One' and the centre forward brought a save from the Graz 'keeper. Cue lots of cheering from 100% home support. Some chanting from the younger element at the corner came to nought as the 'keeper saved unchallenged. LASK looked strangely familiar in their white shirts and black shorts, they looked even more familiar when good work from the winger brought a weak shot or worse from the ineffective front man! Ring a bell? I decided to give them my support and after a chorus of "We all follow LASK, over land and sea" was over the Austrians around me had left a large empty patch of terrace around me! Being the only non-Austrian in the crowd and the loudest I could understand why!

Graz went ahead after 13 minutes when the left winger swung in a cross that beat LASK's Alec Chamberlain/Bruce Grobelaar type keeper and went in unhindered behind the far post.

The crowd groaned very loudly, just like at KR, and LASK took the fight to the enemy. 'Route One' paid off, big boot from the sweeper bounced kindly for Schwaber and bang, edge of the box it was in! Twenty five minutes 1-1.

LASK piled on the pressure, now reverting to 'Route 66', lot's of passing from one side of the pitch to the other via Bruce/Alec in goal! Slow build up or what! After at least thirty five passes the ball was angled through to the edge of the box and LASK's Scottie Oakes fired home number two. The Graz defenders must have been so surprised to see a pass longer than two yards that they ignored it. The LASK crowd chanted a bit and then went for another beer. 38 minutes 2-1.

The goal every twelve or thirteen minutes was broken when Schwaber received another 'Route One' ball and thumped it past the keeper from 25 yards! So far all four goals were scored from outside the box! LASK turned on the pressure and Schwaber was denied another on the stroke of half time when 'Route One' paid off again and his shot from all of 35 yards hit the bar with the Graz keeper nowhere! Talk about shoot on sight! Messrs Harford, Stein and co could do with lessons! Is the guy available on loan?

Half time everyone went for another beer and a frankfurter. The food was excellent with a good range of chips, sausages and beer! Whilst porking down a couple of tasty sausages and mustard I noticed for the first time that the lazy among the crowd could get a beer without moving from their spot. A couple of guys went round with crates of beer serving plastic glasses on call!

Of course there was no hooliganism due to the all seater stadium. Was it bollocks! The ground has one seater stand that was less than 40% of the ground. The rest was a big covered terrace and both ends were open standing! The crowd was about 4,000!

The second half had all the hallmarks of a Town game, plenty of attacking and no goals, then some awful defensive errors and Graz were 3-2 and then level! Both goals due to defenders making the sort of blunders that Tumble and co are experts at. Graz's second came from 'the weak header to the players feet' and the equaliser from 'the wait for the ball to run out of play without expecting the opposition winger to run past you' play. At least these two were scored from inside the box!

The crowd went home suitably happy, they hadn't lost! Mmm, seems familiar? To answer my question. Thrill or what? Definitely or what! Then again it was my first experience of a match abroad - although I did once see Fulham beat Santos 2-0, Pele and all back in the early seventies!

Dr. Big

A Frank View

It has to be said that should Luton lose the fight against the drop, it will not be so much a lack of ability, but the continuing behind the scenes debacle. We have had that many personnel changes in the last few years there can be no doubt whatsoever that it has not been possible for the playing staff to concentrate solely on playing football. Once again this was illustrated by the dismissal of Bill Tomlins, someone who has a genuine interest in the club (unlike Kohler), and the so called early retirement of club scout Ron Howard. D.K.'s excuses are pathetic to put it mildly, but then again that is something we have become used to of late. Running any football club is a complicated, involved business, not to be underestimated by anybody but when you have a two faced individual such as Kohler it is very difficult to concentrate on the real issues, ie, playing football. No-one inside the club, directors, managerial staff and players alike are safe. According to DK, Bill Tomlins was not sacked but he resigned. Firstly one simply cannot believe anything Kohler says, so who really knows what happened, and secondly if Bill Tomlins did resign there can be no doubt as to the reasons why. If we the supporters do not trust Kohler then I am sure the same applies to the staff behind the scenes. In Frank Warren we had a great chance of ridding the club of Kohler once and for all but needless to say the deal fell through. So come on DK, come clean for once. It doesn't take much effort to tell the truth. The fact of the matter is I would dearly like to say to Kohler what I really think face to face, but the prospect of hearing more bull shit from him is something I would rather avoid.

G.S.

Buddy can you spare me a goalkeeper?

Some teams struggle to achieve mediocrity (Notts. County) others have it thrust upon them (Coventry) but one thing that you can always say about us is 'it's never boring being a Luton fan'. We're either winning Cups or scrabbling to avoid relegation - not often do you find us in blissful mid-table obscurity.

This season has been every bit as frustrating as I feared it would be - Pleat didn't lead the team to greater glory but then with the resources available (i.e. sod all) who's surprised at that? He's done about as much as he could with bargain buys such as Oakes and Linton, old hands in Peake, Harford and Stein and his 'buddy, can you spare me a goalkeeper' approach with Sutton and Day. It's a poor show when a club can't even stump up £300,000 for player but I do feel so sorry for the board don't you? It must be so stressful for them to have to worry about when to get the Jag serviced, which port to get out of the cellar for dinner tonight and which property to redevelop this week. It's no wonder they can't find the time to look after a football club.

Oh, if I was as rich as Jack Taylor...

But, back in the real world... perhaps we'll scrabble out of the mire for another year but even if we do we'll be in the same position again next season if the board don't change their tune.

All gloom and doom? No, there have been some good times: the last minute winner against Oldham, Scotty Oakes jinking runs against Man. City, beating Arsenal and Chelsea within two days. Pat Flood's come back - yes, it's not been such a bad season - see you at Twerton next year?

Steve Bailey - The Expatriate

WHY DO LUTON GET SHIT GATES?

Allo Spotters,

Why do an article on such a topic.
Possibly to shut the gits up who say one of the following answers:-

1. Cos' they are a shitty team.
2. Membership scheme.
3. Possibly because they are not trendy to follow.

A better way to look at the problem would be to look at Luton as a community. It has grown up in the years between the 40's and mid 70's as a manufacturing town of mainly engineering, cars and hats.

As a result the attendances at Kenilworth Road were quite good given the fact that the places for entertainment were few and far between. It could take over an hour to get to London by train which meant that the people who these days are seen to be leaving Luton in their droves on trains to watch the "glamour" clubs were put off by the long journey. (These days it takes 40 minutes to get to Central London.)

So as a club we could make it a little easier for people to come and watch. Having said that it is a shame we cannot do a survey to see where the main base of Lutons support comes from. (At a guess I would say as much as 55% comes from the outlying villages of North Beds and West Herts.) Another criticism could therefore be that the club does not promote itself in the immediate local community as much as it should do. I know a lot of the immediate community is of the ethnic persuasion who have little or no interest in football as their country of origin has no history of football.

The town these days is also a place of residence only, people who work/socialise in London but come back to Luton to sleep and wash their socks. Another way that the club could promote itself would be to make these people aware of its existence and maybe encourage them to attend. (Personally I

feel that a baseball bat around the head is a little more persuasive.) Everyone has a choice but does everyone know the choices we have. Only recently have the towns Councillors had the foresight to put on live music for the community, something sadly lacking in the town for nigh on 10 years. The Queensway at Dunstable has had many name bands on over the years all well supported by the local community, again most of the patrons for such an event travel to London or Milton Keynes for their nearest fix.

We should also appreciate the amount of expatriate cockneys who came out to work in the motor town in the 60's, 70's. They are not going to watch the Town when they can get up to watch their heroes and not only that, they will encourage their offspring to watch their team as well. Should Luton play on another night and maybe attract a few more punters?

You then have the pose value of watching a big club who are always on the telly. When will Luton be featured in a live match again.

As you can see there are lots of reasons some of which I have not touched on (or thought about more like).

You never know someone else might like to put a few thoughts together on this subject.

The exodus from Luton for football is not only in the southern direction, also coach loads go to Man. United, Leeds. Still those of us that are left give the lads a cheer because the current style of football is winning a lot of new friends who with a little encouragement might come along hopefully in sufficient numbers for us to keep the Pembridge's, Hughes, Gray's of this world and may just lead to the signing of a goal keeper who looks as though he does want to play for the club. (Thanks for the gestures in the game against West Ham, Steve, we thought it was great entertainment.)

The Laughing Cavalier

Another Setback

On Saturday, 29 February, while Luton were losing at Leeds, pitch invasions were taking place at Upton Park and St. Andrews. The media, starved of such matters for a couple of years, jumped at the opportunity to make these things headline news. Politicians and others we should supposedly look up to started uttering comments like "nobody in football wanted the fences to come down". That nobody included us, the supporters, did it?

Looking at the "riots" separately, the one at Upton Park was a protest against the board, in which nobody got hurt. It was ill-considered and even more ill-timed, and certainly set back the sensible campaign against the Bond scheme which had been quite successful up to that point. But as a case for putting the fences back, the argument collapses like a pack of cards as Upton Park never had fences in the first place. Of course the media would not like to remember details like this, especially as they get in the way of a good story.

Events at Birmingham were of a different nature and quite indefensible. There was violence, it was on a large scale and there can be no excuse. To their credit, Stoke fans, in the main did not get involved. But the F.A. have to be seen to take strong action. However, using this as a case for all seater stadia is not valid. It was a 3rd Division match where all seaters are not required until 1999, and as for fences, it hasn't happened at every ground where fences have been taken down has it?

I don't claim to know either the cause or the solution to what happened at St. Andrews. But I do know that it has set back arguments against all seater stadia, and those for supporters to have a greater say in the running of the game and of clubs. Once again we will be seen as a bunch of illogical neanderthal thugs, and be treated as such. And just when we seemed to be starting to make some progress.

K.F.H.

Paying the price

I was just about to settle down to a good book, but having just found out from my Grandfather by 'phone that Steve Sutton has gone to Derby instead of making his proposed move to Luton, I felt compelled to write this article. The reason, said my Grandad, is that we cannot afford the £300,000 fee. Then why on earth did we bid for him in the first place? This strikes me as ludicrous for 2 reasons:

- 1) We have sold about half of our squad this season, getting £600,000 for Matthew Jackson alone.
- 2) We can afford the same price for 2 3/4 year olds, but not, it appears, for one of the best goal keepers in the country.

David Pleat has obviously got a serious case of confused priorities. We are a struggling side with the worst defensive record in the First Division. So what do we do? We buy a 34 year old defender with as much pace as a disabled snail! Great forward planning. Nobody appears to have thought that he will need replacing in a couple of years time, which means more expense.

Since the arrival of Sutton on loan, the team has, as far as I have seen (Admittedly not a huge amount) and heard, improved beyond recognition. Surely this is not co-incidental? When it comes to finance and the survival of the team and its development there should be no contest. If Spurs can carry on buying with a debt of £10M plus, surely we can afford a relatively small amount for a player of such stature? If the worst comes to the worst, then sell a squad player to make the balance (but NOT Pembridge or Preece, please!)

Once again the fans have been betrayed. If Clive Allen wasn't painful enough, we have been sorely punished this time. The board is making a huge mess, and I am sure that David Pleat's hands have been tied behind his back. I have said this before, and I will say it again. Gentlemen, your time has come. Get out now - if you stay longer, the club will die.

The team cannot be saved by "veterans". We have to look to the future. The signing of Sutton would have been the first step of a long road to recovery which now seems like an impossible dream. Luton Town F.C. has been denied two of the best players in the game, and are destined to pay the price.

Graham Johnson
(Your German Correspondent!)

Great Own Goals

To most supporters an own goal (at the right end) is no more special than any other goal, except for the sense of irony it gives you. We recently came up with a top five list of own goals scored at Kenilworth Road, and judging by the length of the discussion this could develop into a series of future articles (we hope). Anyway, our top five were:

- 1 Mick Harford
For Town v Derby '90/91
- 2 Keith Weller
For Town v Leicester '74/75
- 3 Alan Slough
For Blackpool '71/72
- 4 Steve Foster
For Wigan '87/88
5. Iain Munro
For Town v Sunderland '83/84

We reckoned Marvin Johnson deserves an honourable mention for his famous own goal, but the best own goal scored for Town for some years must be Nicky Tanners at Anfield this year. Souness was so impressed he gave Tanner a longer contract.

As we said before these are our Top 5, but if you know better let us know.

Goal Machine



David Preece, more lethal in front of goal than some strikers we could mention.

The Scientific Approach?

Rumours of a take over bid by Maharishi Yogi and a relocation of the club to an all-seater stadium near Leighton Buzzard have been rife. Perhaps this document will quash those rumours. This has fallen into our hands from a source who prefers to remain nameless, although he was sitting on a lotus leaf at the time.

THE NATURAL FLAW PARTY

THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID RELEGATION

Scientific research validates the programmes and promises of the Natural Flaw Party. During the past 35 years over 6 studies have shown CONCLUSIVELY that the TM-Sidhi programme can help YOUR club to avoid relegation. Recently the number of practitioners of the Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation Programme in the Southampton area has increased tenfold and look what has happened! They have leapt up the table to near certain safety. And why do Wimbledon confound all their critics and stay in the 1st Division year after year with gates of less than 5000? It's because all their real fans are at home optimising their brain functions and practising yogic flying.

It has now be shown conclusively that Newton's Laws of Motion and Einstein's Theory of Relativity can, under the influence of TM, be applied to the game of football. By simply allowing your awareness to settle down into a state of harmonious peace the crosses your team plays into the box will always find the head of your forwards, especially if they have perfected the art of yogic flying. Yes, do not be alarmed to see your 6'6" striker sitting cross-legged on the penalty spot for he will rise up, chanting sacred mantras, and the ball will, aspiring as it does to the state of perfect bliss (ie nestling in the opponent's goal net) find it's own course. It has been a mistake of footballers over the years to attempt to control the ball, to force it to conform to the petty ego desires but now we have shown CONCLUSIVELY with minutes of scientific study that the ball has its own conscious awareness and that all else is subservient to it. The answer is simple: chant the secret mantra that will be only revealed to those who enter into to communion with the dualistic eternal godhead.

How can this help Luton Town? Sorry it can't. Well, what did you expect? Miracles?

The Maharishi Ved Expatria

March Madness

The traditional last day transfer madness hit the football league again this year. 26th March 1992 saw £3,000,000 of transfers, and that figure would have doubled if the fifty or so loans had have been moves.

I was most interested to read on teletext on the day in question that there was nearly a £1,500,000 move. My interest turned to horror when I read that the player in question was our very own Mark Pembridge. My horror turned to disgust when I read that the clubs had agreed the fee but it was the player who had turned the move down (wise decision, Mark).

This is the view of all of the team at M.A.A.H. which we believe is shared by all supporters of Luton Town.

Mark Pembridge is a player of top quality, and if he is sold for anything less than £2,000,000, we hope somebody is going to have a good reason. We all know that Kingsley Black was sold for too little and we will not tolerate it happening again. A club in our situation cannot afford to sell international players for mickey mouse money.

S.T.



Why Town are down

An at-a-glance view of those thrown away points in full:

Date	Against	(H/A)	Score	Mins. of Goals	Points Dropped
28/09/91	Notts. Co.	(H)	1-1	86 mins (pen)	2
19/10/91	Sheff. Wed.	(H)	2-2	89 mins	2
30/11/91	Sheff. Utd.	(A)	1-1	88 mins	2
01/01/92	Nottm. For.	(A)	1-1	92 mins	2
11/01/92	Liverpool	(A)	1-2	85, 89 mins	3
01/02/92	Sheff. Wed.	(A)	2-3	77, 83 mins	2
21/03/92	Southampton	(A)	1-2	68, 82 mins	2
TOTAL					15 POINTS

The total was reached assuming we had at least drawn at Hillsborough and the Dell, and doesn't take into account the unfairness of goals against by Notts. County, and at the Dell.

These 15 points would after the Southampton away game, have put us in 8th place in the table on 47 points.

The most gutting were the late goals at Anfield after some gallant defending, and the utterly soul-destroying Des Walker goal on New Years Day.

Let us hope we learn our lesson for a difficult first season in the second.

Jez



FOOTBALL FANZINES BY MAIL ORDER - MORE THAN 50 TITLES ALWAYS IN STOCK. SEND S.A.E. FOR LATEST LIST: JUMA, FIRST FLOOR, TRAFALGAR WORKS, 44 WELLINGTON STREET, SHEFFIELD S1 4HD.



FANZINE REVIEWS

Fly Me To The Moon - 60p - 12 Emmerson Street, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough TS5 6JF. (Issue reviewed No. 67)

This Middlesbrough fanzine is produced for every game, and, frankly, it shows, as some of the articles are over-long, and obviously used as fillers in a relatively small 24 pages. There are, however, some good bits - the copy under review had an entertaining piece about football commentators, and a suggestion that certain clubs have stashed away a "grudge bank" and that the judgement day is drawing ever closer. Well, this might explain our season so far!

Over Land And Sea - £1 - P.O. Box 26, Dagenham, Essex RM10 8XY. (Issue reviewed No. 30)

West Ham fanzines (for this is one) are not noted for their tolerance towards their team's shortcomings, and OLAS certainly fits the bill in this regard. Constructive criticism is very much to the fore highlighted by the piece concerning ground redevelopment where an alternative to the popular bond scheme is put forward. However, an appreciation of football outside East London would be appreciated, and I cannot agree with their billing themselves as "West Ham's No. 1 Fanzine" - such self-appointed titles are unnecessary, and, having seen other West Ham fanzines, arguable.

The Tricky Tree - 50p - 149 Blake Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5LA. (Issue reviewed Vol. 3 No. 3)

At 44 pages, well laid out and presented, this is undoubtedly housewives' bargain of the month, and one of the best club fanzines I've seen. Match reports are detailed and lengthy yet punchy, as is the section detailing forthcoming awaydays, so as to be a good read for non-Forest fans. Plenty of other well thought out pieces, like their manager they're not afraid to voice opinions both on past and present. Having read this, Nigel Jemson's recent car crash comes as no surprise! Highly recommended.

Why are our Chairmen Arsenal fans?

ALLO SPOTTERS,

CAPTAINS LOG STAR DATE 00.50 21/3/92 well its looking very likely that at this stage that we could well have a new chairman.

Nothing new in that you say we seem to go through our fair share of them. Well now boys and girls the new one, one of over a dozen according to Soccerline (0839 664466) that Coco the Clown says he is talking to, is none other than MR. FRANK WARREN.

Well what a star we could have here. I reckon he could be no worse than Coco and the other kid who came with him (SULKIN)?

Think of the seriousness of it all, they thought if they could rip the heart out of the team it would be relegated (WRONG). They thought that trying, or not as the case may be, to get better credit would get us relegated due to no experience at the club (WRONG). Despite all the crap that has flown about, we have played some great football. Well done David (What would Jimmy have done?). Well I reckon the Mick Harford deal was done by Jim. The only real failure I would lay at the club was not to sign Clive Allen. Surely his goals would have been priceless, so much so that we would have been in the top half of the table.

Still back to Frank as has been said he is an Arsenal fan (GRADE 1 Qualification for a LTFC Chairman.) EVANS, NELKIN, etc. we always end up with gooners who do not have enough money to buy out Hill Wood but have just enough to fuck up Luton.

Again the main factor is a new stadium which he wants to get in with (Remember the Docklands Arena).

STOP PRESS HE'S PULLED OUT

The Laughing Cavalier

Almost end of Term Reports

THE MAIN PLAYERS

EFFORT ATTAINMENT

ALEC CHAMBERLAIN	- After averaging two goals against per game a change was needed. Good shot stopper but crap in the air.	B	C
STEVE SUTTON	- A great character and a sad loss to the club when not signed. Gave the defence renewed confidence.	B	B+
MERVYN DAY	- Done quite well after a long absence from first team football. Not over confident in the air.	B	B-
RICHARD HARVEY	- Consistent all season and vastly under-rated. Also has a good shot.	B+	B+
TREVOR PEAKE	- Dodgy start but improved quickly but needs to inspire the team more in his position as Captain.	B	B
JOHN DREYER	- Bad start to the season but helped by the arrival of Peake to put in some great performances. Penalties not a strong point.	B	B
JULIAN JAMES	- Seems to be out of position at full back		

and it often shows.
Sadly injured in his
best performance of
the season so far at
Southampton.

B B-

CHRIS KAMARA

- Much needed mid season
signing to add bite to
midfield. Unlucky not
to have got on score
sheet as yet.

A- B

PAUL TELFER

- Played well on right
hand side and in
particular helps James
defend when he is
struggling. Sadly kept
out through injury.

A- B

SCOTT OAKES

- A good piece of
transfer dealing and a
great prospect for the
future. Again lost
through injury.

B+ B+

MARK PEMBRIDGE

- Superb player worth at
least £2 million. Why
it took 30 odd games
for him to start taking
free-kicks god only
knows.

A- A

DAVID PREECE

- Best season so far for
the Town fitting in to
replace Kingsley Black.
Still can't believe he
scored in consecutive
games.

B+ B+

CERI HUGHES

- Often played out of
position since his come
back and hasn't looked
particularly comfortable
on the right hand side.

Not yet the player he
was last season.

C B-

MICK HARFORD

- First match back was
unbelievable and has
gone on to score some
valuable goals but
still gets booked
every other match.

B+ B+

BRIAN STEIN

- Sadly out of his depth
and basically hasn't
scored enough goals
despite being lucky to
have an extended run
in the team.

C- D

PHILIP GRAY

- What can one say about
the loss of Philip
Gray to the team?
Looked very promising
and knew where the
goal was. His goals
have been sadly missed.

B+ B+

KURT NOGAN

- Not good enough for
this level but still
far better than Brian
Stein and should have
played more games.

B- C

JAMIE CAMPBELL

- Still young and not
experienced enough or
good enough as yet.
Brought in in difficult
circumstances and
obviously struggled.

B- C

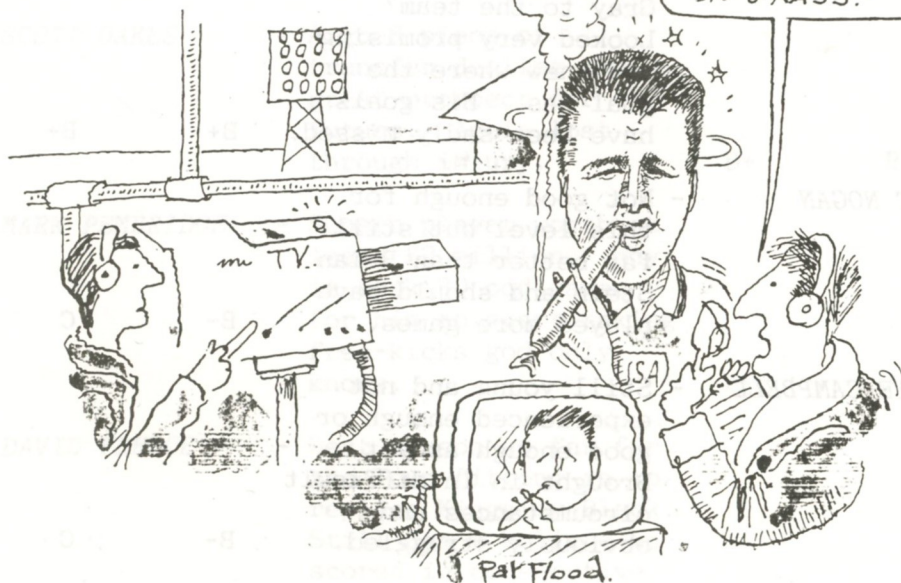
THE BEST OF THE REST:

Rodger, Beaumont, Farrell and McDonough all sold as surplus
to requirements. Black and Jackson sold to keep the Bank
Manager happy. Holsgrove was crap, Glover was injured,
Thompson left in a deal that benefited Town more than

Leicester. Linton and Salton look good prospects. Williams selection at Southampton was puzzling whilst not selecting Jason Rees until the last ten or so games was similarly puzzling.

P.I.

"THE LUTON TEAM HAVE ADAPTED WELL SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF THE PLASTIC PITCH, ONE PLAYER IN PARTICULAR DARRON McDONOUGH LOOKS VERY HAPPY ON GRASS."



Unfair Coverage

Yet again as the season draws to its conclusion, Luton have been overlooked for live tv coverage. Although highlights of the occasional match have been shown on 'Goals Galore', the main money clearly comes from live matches.

Recent figures have shown that the 'Big Five' clubs have all received well in excess of £1 million for the current ITV deal. Indeed, Arsenal, Man. Utd. and Liverpool are approaching £2 million. Add onto this additional revenue from Cup and European matches and one can see that the vast majority of tv money goes to a small minority of clubs.

After the 'Big Five' clubs, so called fashionable clubs such as Villa, Forest and Leeds have all done very nicely. The rest of the money is shared just about even between the rest although yours truly finished bottom of the money league with a mere £45,000 received.

The fact that the money has been distributed in such a way can only go on to reinforce the First Division as it stands today. The larger clubs can clearly draw on tv revenue as guaranteed income to pay higher wages and therefore attract the top players. The fashionable clubs know they will receive a nice regular windfall which will pay the odd signing on fee or offset any small debts. Meanwhile, clubs like Luton, despite having spent ten seasons in the top flight, receive no money from such matches thus losing the chance of a valuable source of income. This clearly doesn't help cashflow and can lead to players being sold to balance the books. Thus whilst the top clubs do very nicely, the lesser known clubs are kept firmly in their place.

Clearly, a fairer distribution of tv revenue is needed when the inevitable new tv deal is struck for the Premier League. Hopefully, some foresight will be shown so that all teams are covered and guaranteed involvement in at least one live game per season. After all, one only has to recall the live games Everton have been involved in this season for proof of the fact that the so called top teams do not always provide top entertainment.

P.I.

Who decked who?

Allo Spotters,

WHAT? The horror, the intrigue that would never happen at this club or would it? Or has it. YES.

The most recent who decked who must be the Stacey North/Ray Harford bout over 3 rounds. Stacey won the fight, he must have done he ended up at Fulham via West Brom. I am sure that we have had others like the Futchers twins one of which is rumoured to have decked a D. Pleat. Nothing in that except the fact that not only had one twin gone but the other one got lonely for his brother and left too. I don't know, but they both played for lots of clubs. So did they deck any others? Do any of you know of any others? If so, let us know.

And onto those on the pitch:

Five Great Knock Out Punches

- 1 Mick Kennedy on Fashanu
v Wimbledon at Home
- 2 Mark Stein on Gary Stevens
v Spurs at Home
- 3 Brian Stein on Alvin Martin
v West Ham Away (Thats where he got Bruno)
- 4 Mark Pembbridge on Anders Limpar
v Arsenal at Home this year
- 5 Sean Farrel v T. Peake
v Coventry Away this year

Yeah the unlucky ones got out of it but it's all good fun. All the same there will be others which we can debate later.

The Laughing Cavalier

GOING DOWN

29/2/92

LEEDS UNITED 2 TOWN 0

Like an idiot I didn't buy a ticket in advance for this match, and as a consequence purchased a £13 "Restricted View" seat in the soon to be demolished Lowfields Road stand. This has two disadvantages, the restricted view and the restricted outlook of the other occupants of the stand, who viewed the Stockport referee and St. Helens linesman as pure Mancunian. To be fair their decisions were just inept and the balance of poor decisions was about even with the balance of play. The Doncaster linesman was quite acceptable, if not whiter than white(!) As for the play, a better side than ours would have exploited the generosity of the Leeds midfield and defence who seemed to think they had got a day off, but in truth Lukic was rarely troubled. The Town defence held out well for 55 minutes then collapsed like the Berlin wall. If Cantona had missed, the ref would have given a penalty for Sutts bringing down McAllister. Being an away game, a second goal in the last 5 minutes was exactly what I, if not those around me, expected. Tumbles attempted clearance falling to Chapman, who must have thought it was Xmas again. At least this time there was a bright side, in that the Town didn't let me suffer the indignity/embarrassment/death wish (*delete as required - Eds*) of cheering a goal for the "wrong" team.

K.F.H.

7/3/92

TOWN 1 PALACE 1

This match was one which overall we should have won, although by half-time we could have been sunk.

Our only chances were from Pembbridge, a long range shot which whistled over the bar, and a point-blank range header miles over the bar. Palace on the other hand were all over us, and after scoring, Eddie (for Ireland?) McGoldrick decided to make a match of it by fluffing chance after chance.

In the second half the Town gradually took over, and a frustrated Palace's tackling became more and more cynical. McGoldrick (you can have him Jack Charlton) was lucky to stay on the park, as the ref lost control of the game.

Oh, and of Scottie's superb equaliser, as usual it took about a minute for the Kenny End to realise (a) it had gone in, and (b) it was onside!

J.D.

P.S. Thanks D. Pleat, for inviting Mr. Souness to the game.
I hope M.P. enjoys playing in ALL RED!

11/3/92 TOWN 0 SPURS 0

Summary: Spurs came; Spurs saw; Spurs defended. End of story.

Once Scottie got crocked in training (somebody up there seriously hates Luton), there was clearly only one likely result. I even bet on the exact score with a yid at work and won! Being as there weren't any highlights, I'll end here!

J.D.

14/3/92 EVERTON 1 TOWN 1

A price hike of £2.50? Typical scouse! The first thing I noticed after being robbed at the turnstile, was the lack of home fans(?).

Now to the match. When the teams run out, surprise, surprise, JASON REES is in the team (about time as well). Anyway they run out together Luton fans cheer, Everton fans spread themselves out to make themselves look like a crowd of (I thought unsuccessfully) 16,707. In the first 5 minutes Luton looked in control, then Pembridge and Stein combined to open the scoring. (Pembridge's use of the crossbar was BRILLIANT, but more than that, found Stein who then unbelievably got to the ball and found the back of the net.)

We then go and keep control, Jason Rees put some good crosses over, were the scousers that bad? or just Luton that good? They created only one chance which Merv saved with his legs (or was a crap shot at him).

Second half, we made the tactical error of shouting Wa****d reject at Mo Jonston. He then causes a few problems. i.e. He goes and scores. Anyway surprisingly we look like we may score another, and they look like they could score next week. The best chance of the game came in the 89th minute GOD

(Micky) tries a shot through Abbletts legs, Campbell, unmarked to the right of GOD, who should have had the opportunity to hoof the ball into the stand.

All in all a good performance just a pity we never played crap (like Sheffield Utd. at home) and take the 3 points.

D.K.



THE THINGS WE HEAR

Mervyn Days arrival came as something of a surprise, and it is probably fair to say that his signing left many of us somewhat underwhelmed. So imagine how we felt on hearing that 4 hours before making his debut he was receiving coaching from Colin Murphy on how to take goal kicks! And while we are on the subject of the old "Silver Fox", is he the only goal keeper immortalised in song by the Beatles? Listen to Please Mr. Postman, and you should hear what we mean.

Writing this report a week after the game has enabled me to be a little more objective than in the aftermath of this defeat. We did not play particularly well, and did not deserve to win. Here endeth the objectivity. After 20 seconds, Stein fell over, and we were awarded a free-kick in the heart of Pembo-land. The \$6 million man duly obliged to win his second bottle of bubbly this year. Five minutes later from an almost identical spot, only a fine save prevented a repeat performance. This was just about the last decision that went our way as from this point the referee gave up and handed over to Thug Ruddock and Gyppo Hurlock, who then proceeded to book Town players and give free-kicks for such heinous crimes as being on the pitch. Our two heroes meanwhile ventured to attempt to decapitate anything in a white shirt. I certainly cannot remember Gyppo making one attempt to win the ball at a tackle. Despite this extreme provocation, we were holding on quite comfortably until linesman Branfoot spotted Merv allegedly carrying the ball outside his area just like any other 'keeper does. We feared the worst and from the resulting corner, Shearer stopped whinging for long enough to beat Day's rather feeble flap (although to be fair, he may well have been fouled). The final nail came nine minutes from the end, from a typically cultured Southampton move. The bloke with the Prince moustache hoofed the ball aimlessly forward where Day's attempted claim was thwarted by Whinge whose boot was raised in the vague direction of the ball. As he fell into a blatantly offside position, Mr. Ugley tapped in what was (even for him) a sitter, and half-heartedly raised an arm expecting the goal to be quite correctly disallowed. Surprisingly, neither linesman Branfoot, nor referee Ruddock/Hurlock spotted anything wrong and the goal stood. Even then, we almost pulled back, and it was only another fine save from Flowers kept God's injury time effort out.

But it wasn't to be, and we could console ourselves with only a few thoughts: not having to go to that shithole of a ground next season; that the only side trying to play football had lost; that our manager did not whinge about totally incompetent refereeing (yes, I'm having a go at you Branfoot); and that the support had been brilliant both in numbers and noise. But, at the end of the day, it meant fuck all, and that we'd better look up the directions to Barnsley

for next season.

The Geoff Thomas Experience

And if don't believe us, this is what the Daily Telegraph said on the Monday after

Referee's decisions wreck Luton hopes

By Christopher Davies

Southampton2 Luton1

WHEN Alan Shearer, the best young striker in England for whom top clubs would willingly pay £3 million to sign, is a few feet from the opponents' goal-line, it is inconceivable how he could not be deemed to be interfering with play.

Yet referee Clive Wilkes and his linesman decided that Shearer was not in a position to influence play as Iain Dowie scored the late winner against his former club with a tap-in from six yards.

To compound the issue, just about everyone except Mr Wilkes thought Shearer had gone in on Day with a foot up, which prevented the goalkeeper collecting the ball.

Match officials, like strikers who miss goals, are prone to human error but the decision to allow Dowie's goal took this to a new dimension. If television have a Bad Decision of the Year competition, this goal would be a leading contender.

Shearer, whose talent means he can influence play from anywhere inside the penalty area, was inches from the goal-line.

It was one of several decisions which David Pleat, the Luton manager, diplomatically called "unfortunate and questionable".

Harford was cautioned for what amounted to simply being on the field. Flowers, clearing the ball, kicked it against the Luton striker who was turning away from the goalkeeper but out came Mr Wilkes yel-

low card, which was in danger of fading in the light it was used so much.

You would have been able to name your own odds that if five players from one team would be booked in this game, they would be from Luton.

It is said that teams represent their manager and while Mr Pleat was eloquent and educational, Ian Branfoot's view of the match leaned more to the sledgehammer.

Watching the winning goal on television he said: "Shearer fouled the goalkeeper and was offside — and I don't give a ****".

Southampton should escape the drop but Mr Pleat knows that it will take a miracle for Luton to be in the Premier League next season.

"We've got it hard now," said Mr Pleat. "It's not lost but we all knew the importance of this one."

The pity is that Luton play some delightful football but on Saturday they were beaten by a combination of dreadful officiating and Southampton's power.

Luton are lightweight in midfield and neither Harford nor Stein has the pace to trouble defences.

They had the perfect start, however, scoring in 44 seconds when Pembridge curled in a free-kick.

Southampton equalised when Day was judged to have carried the ball outside his area and as a result Shearer was able to head a goal the home side did not deserve.

The winner was cruel on Luton but perhaps it proved that nice guys do, after all, finish second.

With probably half of us already looking forward to next seasons trip to Twerton Park, our feelings were re-inforced by the return of Alec in goal. Six minutes into the game the Wombles scored and it could have been the start of an avalanche. All credit to Alec that it wasn't. Throughout the game he made some excellent saves and the old confidence should have flooded back. The equaliser was a goal untypical of Town style, owing more to the Cambridge diet, scrambled in at the near post by Imre Varadi. The second Town goal was yet another by "Mini" Preece, who seems to have forgotten how to shoot half a mile wide or over the bar.

As for the referee, Brian Hill is supposed to be one of the best, which doesn't say a lot for the rest. We should only be thankful that he seemed to have forgotten his yellow card. The Wombles were a disappointment as well, not crude enough in style or in the tackle to warrant any really heartfelt abuse.

Summary: Bad referee, good result, a few more weeks of worry about the drop.

A.G.F.C.

11/4/92 OLDHAM 5 TOWN 1

I hoped before the end of the season to write a match report on an away win. However, some things aren't meant to be. We lost again, Stein was as much use as a fart in a spacesuit and the habit of conceding late goals reared its ugly head. Some things never change. Anyway whilst on the subject of ugly heads a certain cheating scouser even scored four as if to underline how bad we actually were. To confound issues I was warned by a police officer for slagging off the aforementioned Stein whilst not even swearing in the process. The officer looked bemused at my reply.

"Some of us have to watch him week in week out mate. Anyway, who are you, his dad!"

P.I.

This was the sort of day that makes you appreciate the demise of the open terrace. If the rain hadn't stopped the match may not have been completed, but fortunately it was. The first half was hugely entertaining, with some superb passing football from what was a makeshift Forest side. Town seemed to find the conditions more difficult but used the wet pitch to introduce a new tactic, the aquaplane tackle. Kingsley's opening goal was inevitable and, from the Kenny end, looked a bit of a gift. But Town came back and battled their way to an equaliser by God from Kamara's cross. The second goal was preceded by a farcical couple of minutes with Town insisting on taking a throw in, until the corner was explained in words of one syllable. When the corner eventually got taken James appeared from nowhere to head the ball home.

The second half was quite ordinary in comparison, with some moments of desperate defending. The highlight had to be the appearance of Phil Gray, although he didn't do much. It just represented another decent attacking option at last.

Summary: At this stage the result is everything.

A.G.F.C.

JOCKSPOT



REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE ABSOLUTE GAME

TOWN TRAVELS

2/5/92 NOTTS. COUNTY

This could be either a meaningless dress rehearsal for next seasons Second Division football, or it could be the most important match in the Towns history since, erm, last May. Either way, it is a game that Town should win, although Nottingham seems to have an Indian sign over us this season. Think about it: an 86th minute penalty, Lee Glovers injury, Des Walkers goal, Steve Suttons move to Derby, all of them have Nottingham written large on them. Doesn't exactly fill us with confidence.

Whatever happens, Meadow Lane should see a good following for Town either to witness the usual Houdini act or to say a fond farewell to the First Division as we know it. The ground itself is like a museum of what football grounds used to be like, right down to the scoreboard. There are plans for redevelopment, and it may be that the number of away fans will be restricted but lets hope not.

The city is fairly good beer drinking territory, although the Home brewery is owned by Scottish-Newcastle, and Shipstones brewery has closed and the beer is shipped in. Across the road from the railway station is the Queens Hotel (Shipstones) and not far away is Ye Olde Trip To Jerusalem (Hardy & Hanson). If you arrive early enough go and find the Newmarket Inn (Home), and the Lincolnshire Poacher is also recommended. Another popular option on the day will be the Magpie in Meadow Lane, only 500 yards from the ground. Be there. There is also a decent estate pub on the way to the ground, in the Meadows area, the name of which escapes me.

Finally, if we do go down, and you spend the summer drowning your sorrows, remember to visit the Great British Beer Festival, which is at London Olympia from 4th to 8th August. Happy drinking!

A.G.F.C.

The Wallet Moth

From the world of zoology comes surprising news. A rare type of moth, thought to have been extinct for some years, has been rediscovered in the home counties. The moth (Lepidopteri Titefistii), also known as the wallet moth, came to light after a man working in Luton, Bedfordshire, accidentally opened his wallet at his business premises in the town. The man, Mr. Davey Cola, a Chartered Surveyor, who is said to be the inspiration behind his football clubs recent performances, was asked to describe the moth and how it was found. He said "At first glance it looked like a bundle of £50 notes, but I knew it couldn't be, as I never carry money, that way it can't be frittered away on anything unnecessary. I was momentarily stunned by what I had seen, but then it flew out, and it opened its wings which were square shaped and coloured like a £10 note. It flew past my hands a couple of times as I tried to stop it, and then straight out of my office window. That gave me quite a turn, I can tell you!" After this Mr. Cola asked one of his minions, a boy named David to try to stop the moth getting away.

"I asked him because he's been known to work miracles in the past, and he did stop it for a while, but then the hire spell on the net ran out, and it had to go back as its owner, Mr. Clough of Nottingham, wouldn't let us keep it for nothing. David and I tried to get it by climbing a ladder but the rungs broke and we fell off going through the rotten boards and into the cellar. We weren't hurt but we'll have to stay here for now as the only way out is to buy a ladder, but I'd rather wait until David can borrow one on the cheap".

Scientists have confirmed that the description is that of the wallet moth, and said it could have been in the wallet for several years, being strange creatures which thrive on solitude, and will stay in one place for many years if undisturbed. Indeed there is no telling how many years this rare specimen would have lurked unknown if Mr. Cola had been a little more careful with his wallet.

The Hatfield Hatter

Eds - This tale is of course pure fiction any identification with real people is purely co-incidental.

Jokers



These two thought they could run a football club. Notice how neither has his hands in his pockets. Somethings never change.