

MAD AS A HATTER!

A LUTON TOWN FANZINE

ISSUE 12
SEPT. 92

HI THERE GRINGOS!
IT'S A ME, YER OLD
MATE, BACK IN THE
ACTION FOR LEATOWN
AFTER A TEN YEAR
EXILE.



Still only 50p

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BOBBIN DINO?

SEARCH FOR A STAR



Chris Kamara searches for a player to pass the ball to. Difficult, as most of them have been sold.

MAD AS A HATTER!

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Editorial

Isn't it bloody typical - just when you think everything's going along smoothly, Luton Town crap on you again, and it's adios Big Mick again. How much of a blow to our hopes of promotion this is remains to be seen, as let's hope that the partnership of Gray and Claridge gels quickly and that both have an injury-free season.

What is even more worrying is the allegation that the manager will have to raise a further £1 million through transfer this season - just where has the surplus on transfers gone? Whilst there are still players in the squad who could command a large fee, the squad would really start to look thin. Yes, we have got good young players, but there's only so much family silver to sell, and being Luton Town, we'll no doubt manage to get far less than their "true worth" - example: Pembridge £1.3 million, Thomas £3 million plus - who's taking the piss? Anyway, it's a new season, and what's a new season when you can't show a bit of blind optimism! Or is it too optimistic to talk of promotion - most of last year's squad has remained and we all know that we weren't really one of the worst three sides last season. If we can stop throwing games away late on, if we can find a striker (or two) to score 20/25 goals a season, if we can replace Pembo's goals from midfield, if we can avoid selling our best players, if the manager's given the backing of the board, if Sinton plays for England so can I..... But I digress - let's get behind the team as we did last season home and away, and next May? Watch this space....

Lastly, we have to congratulate the club board on the price reductions for this season, which were most welcome. However, the price we pay is already obvious, and it's more player sales. If they thought we would accept one in return for the other they were sadly mistaken. The board are obviously quite willing to accept another season of struggle. Let them know (loudly) that we are not.

Meeting the Board

On Monday, 17 August the Luton Town board of directors met the supporters. You didn't know about this? Not surprising really, since the board only allowed a limited number of supporters to attend, totalling about 20 from the two supporters groups and the Bobbers Club. As the chairman had stated that such a meeting would be a waste of time, it was something of a surprise that it took place at all and we might reasonably wonder who gained from the meeting. Probably both sides gained a little, although not as much as they perhaps expected. The supporters were attacked for not supporting the club, a strange accusation when we've just watched our team throw away endless matches on the way to relegation. The board, in turn, were attacked for a lack of ambition, for selling players, for making the club unpopular, for relegation, and just about everything else. Trying to look at the arguments without emotion is difficult, but it probably all stems from a lack of understanding on both sides. After all, supporters are generally not businessmen and expect people with money to do as they would if they had the money, whilst businessmen tend to operate from behind a veil of secrecy.

However, the meeting failed to live up to expectations. From the board side there seemed to be a new spirit of openness (glasnost perhaps) with a willingness to show off budgets and talk real money, instead of vague losses and overdrafts. It would probably not serve any purpose to start going into figures here, further than to say the club is still losing money heavily and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. So more players will have to be sold, which is why David Pleat is manager.

Most of those present detected a split within the board, if only from the number of times the chairman and managing director contradicted each other. In addition to this David Kohler seems to be highly dissatisfied with his former partner, Peter Nelkin. At least Mr. K. is not totally unloved, as his pet dog showed after the meeting, although cynics might point out that the dog is only 6 months old, and still has much to learn.

The most important thing to come out of the meeting was that the club is still for sale, and the board seem keen on the idea, perhaps having realised that their best is not achieving what the fans want. A clear statement was made about the price involved, although it was stated that no advertising was necessary as everyone knows its for sale.

To summarise, the financial figures are quite horrifying, but losses and debts are surely in proportion to the size and success of the club concerned. At the end I couldn't help feeling a tinge of sympathy for the board, who would perhaps like to carry on but know that they can't. It could be that sympathy is what they want me to feel so it will remain shrouded in a large dose of suspicion and cynicism. We don't just want a new board of directors, we need them if we are to be anything more than a place where players come to develop their talents for a year or two. And to the present board, as soon as you get an offer for the club, take the money and run. We'll all be happier, at least for a while.

K.F.H.

Eds Note: We hope to enlighten you further to the clubs financial status in the next issue.



POLL RESULTS

As we suspected, most of you were heartily sick of voting by the time the ever prestigious "Mad" poll came round. Either that, or most of you couldn't be bothered. Anyway, thanks to those that did take the time and trouble, it's greatly appreciated.

On to the results:

PLAYER OF THE SEASON

1. Mark Pembridge
2. Richard Harvey
3. Mick Harford
Trevor Peake
Brian Stein

YOUNG PLAYER OF THE SEASON

1. Mark Pembridge
2. Paul Telfer
Scott Oakes

BEST MATCH

1. Manchester City (H)
2. Manchester Utd (H)
Arsenal (H)

BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

1. Scott Oakes v Manchester City (H)
2. Mick Harford v Oldham (H)
3. Mark Pembridge - Various

WORST PERFORMANCE

1. Coventry (A)
2. Sheff Utd (A) FA Cup
3. Everton (H)
Notts County (A)

BEST GOAL FOR

1. Mick Harford v Oldham (H)
2. Mark Pembridge v Villa (H)
3. Scott Oakes v Palace (H)

WORST GOAL AGAINST

1. Mr. Ugly - Southampton (A)
2. Mick Small - West Ham (H)
3. Des Walker - Forest (A)
David White - Manchester City (A)

BEST REFEREE

1. None
2. M. Bodenham - Manchester Utd (H)
3. T. Fitzharris - Forest (H)

WORST REFEREE

1. All
C. Wilkes - Southampton (A)
3. K. Breen - Manchester City (A)

BEST OPPOSING PLAYER

1. Ray Wilkins
2. Steve McManaman
Tony Coton

WORST OPPOSING PLAYER

1. John Fashanu
Tony Adams
3. Dave Peasant
Dean Saunders
Eddie McGoldrick
Mark Hughes
Mr. Ugly
Neil Ruddock

BEST OPPOSITION

1. Leeds
2. Manchester Utd
3. Sheff Utd

WORST OPPOSITION

1. Coventry
Palace
Wimbledon
Southampton

BEST KIT

1. Luton Town (H)
2. Manchester Utd (H)
3. Notts County (H & A)

WORST KIT

1. Arsenal (A)
2. Liverpool (A)
3. Luton Town (H)
Notts County (A)

MOST INEPT ENGLAND PLAYER

1. Geoff "Pele" Thomas
2. David Batty
Keith Curle
Martin Keown
All of them

WORST MANAGING DIRECTOR

1. David Kohler
2. Stan Flashman
Jimmy Hill

THUG OF THE SEASON

1. John Fashanu
2. Mr. Ugly
Neil Ruddock
Ian Branfoot
Sean Farrell

SENDING OFF OF THE SEASON

1. Sean Farrell
2. Anders Limpar
3. Steve MacMahon

SIGNING OF THE SEASON

1. Mick Harford
2. Brian Stein
3. Chris Kamara

PERSONALITY OF THE SEASON

1. Danny Baker
2. Chris Kamara
Gary Lineker
Brian Stein

BEST RADIO SPORTS PROGRAMME

1. Six-0-Six
2. Sport on 5
Match of the Day
Standing Room Only

SOUTHAMPTON RED HOT POKER

1. Mr. Ugly
2. Neil Ruddock
Gyppo Hurlock
All of them

WHO WOULD YOU SIGN WITH £2 MILLION TO SPEND

1. Steve Sutton
2. Tim Breacker
3. Thousands of others including:
Les Sealey
Kingsley Black
Matthew Jackson
Gianluca Vialli
Paul Merson
Mark Pembridge
John Aldridge

FIVE REASONS WE'RE GLAD TO BE GOING DOWN

- Most popular:
1. 2 Local Derbies = 6 points
 2. Avoiding Palace, Southampton, Dons, etc.
 3. Winning more, not struggling
 4. New grounds, teams
 5. Winning away
 6. Not having the worst ground in the Division

So what conclusions can we draw from this lot? Well, we asked a leading market research bureau to analyse them who told us "f**k all", but the first thing that strikes me is how much you, our readers are in tune(?) with us, your humble correspondents - where we've praised, you've praised; where we've slagged, you've slagged.

Pembo rightly voted player of the season and young player - shame we flogged him on the cheap - but it was significant that eight different players were nominated for player of the season, a category that usually is cut and dry. Obviously, everyone enjoyed the Man City game at Kenilworth Road, being voted best match and featuring the best individual performance of the season by Scotty - no-one who was there that day I'm sure will ever forget that most outrageous dummy sold on the City full-back. (*What dummy? - Ed*)

Other themes - referees and Southampton proved to be equally popular - at least one person voted for Southampton in every "worst" category. Let's hope we get promoted this season so we can avoid them and their delightful ground. Danny Baker seemed popular, even if he rabbits on about his dislike of Luton - well you'll get the chance to come and see for yourself this year. Biggest surprise of all - five people didn't vote for DK as worst managing director!

MORI GALLUP

(With an X in the box)

Product Review

FANSTADIA - Aerial Views

Ever wondered what the Kenilworth Stadium looks like from 2,000 feet? This is your chance to find out. An ideal gift for the real football addict, a 10" x 8" colour print (framed) sells for £12.00 incl. post and packing. The quality is good considering some parts of the ground are not exactly photogenic. A range of other grounds are also available, but that wouldn't interest you, would it?

Full details from: Fanstadia, 9 Victoria Terrace, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 OHW. Tel: 0249 816749 or 0836 297361.

Another early departure



Mick Harford will not be forgotten at Luton, if only for the way he seemed to specialise in the early departure.

No Going Back?

A couple of days ago I came across a rather interesting and not entirely serious article in a local newspaper, concerning the current lack of goals in European football, and the European Championships in particular. Having nothing better to do at work, I decided to translate it for "Mad", as it makes some valid points about the "men in suits" who are desperately trying to make our games as attacking and exciting as possible. Please excuse any dodgy English!

DEFENDING IS BANNED!

The important men of the European Football Union, always instantly recognisable in their elegant suits, have been nervously running from one meeting room to another for hours. They are in total confusion, startled by the exceedingly low number of goals in these European Championships. They are now frantically searching for solutions to this dilemma and have already asked their colleagues from other associations, who are currently gaining experience in Sweden, for tips. These men wear equally beautiful suits, which is why they are also easily spotted.

There has been no lack of advice about how to end the goal drought. The hockey representatives have suggested that short corners should also be introduced in football, as it is well known that a lot of excellent goals are scored from them in hockey.

As reigning world ice hockey champions, the Swedes have not only had the ingenious idea that the length of football matches should simply be increased by a third, to give forwards more time to score goals. They also propose punishing every foul with a two minute penalty: fewer players on the field means more space for everyone and thus more goals.

The International Handball Association has been furious for a long time because in football only the goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball. Its men are pleading for more equality

and suggest that their football colleagues lift the ban on handling the ball in the penalty area. This, so they believe, would certainly lead to a similar level of goals to that in handball.

Finally, the basketball people are simply full of well-meaning solutions. Football should finally abolish body contact, because hardness and athletics suppress skill far too much. In addition, goals scored in football should - as with every successful throw in basketball - simply count double, which would inevitably lead to a higher number of goals. Or even treble, if they are scored from long range. The hard-shooting Dutchman Ronald Koeman is also strongly in favour of this.

But the international football bosses have also turned down their basketball friends. They are now thinking more in terms of simply banning defending and in future only letting players who can be identified as skilled forwards take part in the European Championships. However, because no country has that many good forwards any more, the European Championship management want to reduce the number of players by five to 15.

Graham Johnson (Your German Correspondent)



Where do we go from here?

So here we are. It has happened after all. The promises of a bright new dawn for Luton Town Football Club have been proved to be complete nonsense, and instead we find ourselves back in the Second Division. Now that we have all got over the shock and trauma (which it was, given the circumstances - one up at one stage with Coventry losing), it is time to assess the situation and see what the future holds. If what I found out last night is true and nothing changes, the answer to that question is not a great deal. Flicking through the pages of "Match" in a German station, I discovered that the club have given free transfers to Alec Chamberlain, John Dreyer and, most unbelievable of all, David Preece. Were "Match" extracting the urine? I can only assume that they must be, because these players must have a combined value of around £1.5 million. Someone at Luton Town has forgotten that 2 seasons or so ago, Crystal Palace made a bid of £600,000 for Dreyer. Now admittedly, that may have been excessive, but surely he hasn't deteriorated so badly in that time?

As for the decision to give away Preece, the person responsible for this must have had a brain transplant with a retarded goldfish. Whenever I have seen him play (that's Preece, not the goldfish), he has been outstanding, having given 100%. Without him the team would have been dead and buried long before they were last season, and he will be sorely missed.

And can anyone explain to me the wisdom of giving away a goalkeeper when we are already struggling in that department? The people in charge of this club are losing their senses. My grasp of economics may be limited, but I have studied the basic principles of the subject, and it appears to me to be common sense that if you need money, which we undoubtedly do, you try to raise as much as possible. By giving these players free transfers, Luton Town has denied itself the possibility of a lot of money.

As I said before, the future is not a rosy one. I am usually the eternal optimist, but Mark Pembridge's departure is inevitable. Indeed, a Derby fan told me last week that he

almost signed for them, but apparently Arthur Cox changed his mind because he wants a team full of wingers! There is no money, so we cannot buy our way out of trouble, and the board seem intent on ruining the club. What with Stein also being given a free transfer, the rest of the squad looks highly dodgy indeed. Peake and Kamara are rapidly approaching the end of their careers, Big Mick cannot go on forever, and players like Harvey, James, Oakes, Linton, Telfer, etc. are still lacking the experience required for a concerted promotion effort. What we need is a miracle, because Kohler and Nelkin do not appear to be willing to move at the moment.

Having said all this, there are some mildly encouraging points. We have a quality striker in Phil Gray, who proved his worth in the first part of last season. He can learn much from Mick Harford, and they should make an exciting partnership next season. And whatever one says about David Pleat, he encourages good football, so hopefully he can extract the best from the squad next year (if he is still there - am I the only person who thought that he sounded rather cagey about his future in the interview after that fateful match at N**** C*****?)

Finally, relegation should be ruled out next season. If Watford can secure a comfortable mid-table position, then there is hope for us yet!

Graham Johnson (Your German Correspondent)



MATCH REPORTS

04.08.92 LETCHWORTH G.C. 0 LUTON TOWN 10 (RES)

Luton win away at last! (Even though it is the reserves.) A crowd of about 100 see Luton outclass the South Midlands League side (and so they should). Ceri Hughes, Paul Wright, Jurgen Sommers, looked good Steve Claridge looked injured. Still off to a winning start.

05.08.92 EXETER CITY 3 LUTON TOWN 2

A good allround performance I suppose, except for one or two. Firstly, Marvellous Marvin excelled himself. Imagine a free kick, left hand of the pitch, three players around the ball, (I can't remember who the other two were). Player 1 taps the ball to player 2 who then tee's the ball up for Marvin, what does Marvin do? He calmly stood and watched a defender hoof the ball up field with practically the whole crowd rolling around the terraces. What a star turn! Anyway we didn't lose the game in the last minute, that was something at least, Oh, and one last thing Petterson is worse than Chamberlain.

07.08.92 PLYMOUTH ARGYLE 2 LUTON TOWN 2

We couldn't get a sensible match report on this pre-season game, probably due to most of our correspondents viewing it through an alcohol induced haze. Anyway, it was Big Micks last game in a Town shirt, and of course he scored one of the goals in a thrilling(?) draw.

10.08.92 LUTON TOWN 0 Q.P.R. 3

The sort of match that made you wonder why you went through all the hassle of queuing to get in. (Haven't Luton heard of selling tickets on the turnstiles?) Livened up dramatically after Wright and Hartson came on and started giving the

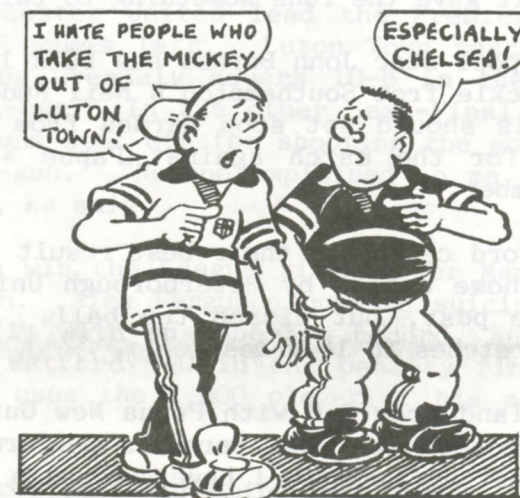
Rangers defence some trouble. Sadly, the ref didn't enjoy the climax as much as the rest of us and ended it in the 88th minute.

15.08.92 LEICESTER CITY 2 LUTON TOWN 1

Campbell put the Town ahead and then the players forgot about relegation and reverted to last seasons well rehearsed away match script.

22.08.92 LUTON TOWN 0 BRISTOL CITY 3

To be beaten 3.0 is bad enough, but at home by an average side..... A poor performance by the Town side, with little to inspire confidence for the remaining 44 games. No matter we should still make the play-offs. They do have play-offs for relegation don't they?



Crystal Balls

What will be the major highlights of next season? Well, after much gazing into my crystal ball, I can exclusively reveal what will happen in the coming months, as football enters its most historic season since Luton won an away match!

August: Blackburn Rovers prepare for the new season by buying the entire England squad for £25 million. Kenny Dalglish explains this surprise move by saying, "Ajingo hoots mcfraser scotland the brave, tamoshanter Dundee 1, Rangers 0, adiddly dee mchaggis". A translation of this will be given in a future issue, as soon as someone can understand it.

September: The Norwich v Wimbledon match on September 12th is abandoned at half time after all the players were controversially sent off for no apparent reason. Referee Kelvin Morton says he took the drastic action because "the game was getting boring and I wanted to liven things up a bit. At least it gave the fans something to talk about".

October: Liverpool star John Barnes has both legs amputated after a late tackle from Southampton's Neil Ruddock. Graham Taylor says this should not stop Barnes from being in the England squad for the match against Papua New Guinea at Wembley in December.

November: Watford celebrate their best result of the season so far, a 3-0 home defeat by Peterborough United. Luther Blisset hit the post, but missed the ball. Luton Town's unbeaten run stretches to 16 games.

December: England draw 0-0 with Papua New Guinea. Graham Taylor was impressed with John Barnes's performance, saying "That was the best performance I have ever seen from a man on crutches. In fact you couldn't tell the difference, because he always plays like that for England". Ian Hannah of Hucknall Town made his England debut up front, alongside Steve Norris of Chesterfield.

January: The F.A. Cup is changed to a penalty shoot-out competition. "The public want more excitement" said a man in a suit from the F.A., explaining the decision. Sampdoria make a £3 million bid for Trevor Peake, but Luton Town reject it. David Pleat says, "It's too much, and anyway, we need his valuable experience".

February: Shockwaves go through the football world as Graham Kelly is reported to have smiled, for the first time ever. The rumour is later reported to be a mistake. "It was a trick of the light", explained Burt Millichip later. "Graham is a Watford supporter and so smiling is alien to his nature".

March: Graham Taylor announces his team for next month's match against Sri Lanka. It's Aston Villa. Arsenal sell Tony Adams to Skegness Town for £300. The deal includes free carrots for Adams, who is said to be looking forward to meeting his friends on the beach and giving rides to children.

April: Manchester United lead the Premier League by 14 points with 5 games left. Luton Town reach the F.A. Cup Final, beating Greasely Rovers 10-8 in their nail-biting penalty shoot-out. In the other Semi-Final, Southampton's Neil Ruddock was sent off for shooting the goalkeeper with a sawn-off shot-gun. "No-one explained to me what they meant by shoot-out", he said.

May: Everton win the League title after Manchester United miss out again. Alex Ferguson commits suicide. Luton Town win Division 1, with an unbeaten record, and win the F.A. Cup, beating Watford 5-0 in the penalty final at Wembley. Graham Taylor uses the 1,000 player of his management reign of England.

So there we are, an interesting year ahead. Let's just hope that things go better for us this season. Who knows, we might be on television for a change! No, this crystal ball must be faulty....

Graham Johnson (Your German Correspondent)

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO: Bobbin Dino?

HE'S BACK, THE HATTER'S ONETIME HERO

ROBERTO DINO PLAYED AT LEATOWN IN AUGUST 1980



HE WAS GOOD, SO LIKE THE REST HE WAS SOLD



BUT BOBBIN FOUND IT TOUGH AT THE TOP



THE NIGHTLIFE BEGAN TO AFFECT HIS PLAY



NOW HEAR THIS JUICE HEAD YOU'RE NOW ON A FREE TRANSFER TO SKID ROW UNITED



HUH! LEATOWN IS STILL THE SAME OLD DUMP IT ALWAYS USED TO BE



THEN HIS LUCK TURNED



BUT... HELLO, HELLO, UP TO OUR OLD TRICKS ARE WE SIR?



WHEN ASKED WHY HE WAS OFFERING THE BOY MONEY THE DEFENDANT REPLIED: 'CAUSE HE'S A BIG STRONG LAD WITH LOTS OF RUNNING IN HIM.



MEANWHILE AT THE CLUB BOBBIN GOT THE ONCE OVER FROM THE PHYSIO



THE EXAMINATION WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE CLUB'S ENTREPRENEUR



MY DESPERATE DESIRE IS TO UNLOAD THIS LITTLE LOT ON THE FANS. I NEED FUNDS URGENTLY FOR THE NEXT INSTALLMENT ON MY RANGE ROVER, OTHERWISE I'LL HAVE GOTHER FROM THE REPO MAN!



ERR, DON'T PULL TOO HARD ON THE SEAMS!



MMM, A SHIT-HOT BIT OF STYLING. NEVER MIND THE QUALITY, JUST FEEL THE DISCOUNT!



ONE THING, DON'T HAVE IT WASHED UNTIL AFTER THE PHOTO SESSION!



THE ONLY PROBLEM WITH USING BOBBIN AS A MODEL IS THAT HE'S A LEAN MEDIUM SIZE..



.. WHEREAS MOST OF YOUR FANS HAVE THE PHYSIQUE OF DARTS PLAYERS!



BLUDDY CHEEPO SHIRTS, MY POOR NAVEL WILL CATCH IT'S DEATH OF COLD!!



Spotlight on Germany

After 8 weeks in the land of Borussia Moenchengladbach and Herbert Grunemeyer I eventually got round to going to a match yesterday. The 4 games I have seen on TV here involving German sides were bitterly disappointing. Instead of the fast flowing football on display in the World Cup, German teams appear to be favouring negative time-wasting tactics as displayed by a certain J. Klinsmann.

So, with mixed expectations, I set out for MSV Duisburg's Wedau Stadium to watch their local derby with F.C. Koln (Cologne). Not knowing where the stadium was, I managed to attach myself to a group of MSV fans.

Typically, the one player I wanted to see, Cologne's Pierre Littbarski, was suspended but the glorious weather made up for the disappointment. Before I start the match report, I must say that the prices here are amazing, just £5 to stand at a 1st division ground with an excellent view.

So, on to the game. MSV, who had recently ended an Aldershot-style run of 17 games without victory, started brightly, although their thoughtful approach play lacked the necessary punch. Their first shot was a free kick in the 7th minute. Cologne looked far more dangerous when attacking, and their first shot came in the 10th minute, a corking shot wide of an open goal worthy of old Luther himself. Six minutes later they threatened again, but somehow the stinging header was tipped over.

The whole pattern of the first half was one of missed chances for both sides. MSV enjoyed most possession but didn't seem to know what to do with it, and Cologne made Fazza look like Gary Lineker by wasting umpteen opportunities, most of them gifts from MSV, who appeared to have been taught the art of defending by Tony Adams. I have never seen such startling indecisiveness or immobility. Duisburg is obviously where old Watford players come to rest.

The first half somehow ended goalless despite countless efforts, most notably a gorgeous shot from MSV by their No.

7, the talented Steininger, who could be worth checking out if you're reading this, Mr. Pleat.

The second period offered more of the same, although MSV began to look increasingly dangerous up front. They had no less than 6 shots on goal in the first 29 minutes of the half, but went 1-0 down to everyone's amazement, after 74 minutes. However, they only had themselves to blame. The familiar defensive mix-up left Baumann, Cologne's No. 7, with a simple tap-in from 5 yards. This increased Cologne's fading confidence, and after 77 minutes it was 2-0, when "Jim" Steinmann scored with a beautiful first time shot from 15 yards. MSV woke up again, realising that "it only takes a second to score a goal". They got Cologne rattled, which led to the only booking (and only decent decision!) when Cologne's No. 8 was given the yellow card for repeated obstruction after 82 minutes. MSV's pressure brought a goal on 86 minutes, when Steininger scored the goal that he had been threatening all afternoon. It was a peach of a goal after he beat 2 defenders on a tricky run, almost lost the ball and then struck a sweet low shot from 18 yards just past the keeper.

Duisburg realised that they weren't dead yet, and pushed forward once more for the equaliser. However, their opponent's had other ideas, and Fuchs "fucked up" MSV's day with a last minute goal after the home defence was once more exposed.

So, yet another defeat to add to MSV's problems, although 3-1 was rather harsh. The visitors appeared to have provided both the referee and MSV's defence. Both were dire. The referee failed to see a clear handball by Cologne's keeper in the 54th minute, and 5 minutes later he ruled that an obvious MSV corner was a goal kick! Sadly it appears that English refereeing habits have reached the Continent.

A word about songs - the Germans, being the country that produced the legendary Herbert Grunemeyer (who could forget his seminal classic "Currywurst"?) are not widely renowned for their imaginative popular music, apart from The Scorpions perhaps. So it proved here. Despite a promising start with Cologne fans singing something to the tune of Bonnie Tyler's "It's a heartache", the standard dropped dramatically. MSV

fans favoured "MSV Duisburg, la la la la la la la", to the first 2 lines of "Roll out the barrel". This may become Germany's entry in the next Eurovision Song Contest, as it is far more inventive than anything being churned out over here at the moment.

Anyway, all in all it was a good exhibition of passing and attacking football, let down by the occasional duff pass and some refereeing that would put Keith Hackett to shame. I counted 23 chances altogether. So, 4 goals, great play and a friendly atmosphere. What more could you ask for? Well an MSV victory would have been nice...

Graham Johnson (Your man in Germany)



STOP PRESS: Coca Cola Cup 2nd Round: Luton v Plymouth Argyle. A visit to Home Park, where we have already failed to win this year. The only consolation is that those of us who did not bother to go to the friendly get another chance to do a new ground. I'd like to suggest a pub or two but this has got to be with the printer in half an hour.

Raving Mad!!!

Dear "Mad"

I always used to hate you lot, because to Geordies Luton symbolised David Evans, the fat Tory get, plastic pitches and a ban on away fans, yet all this changed over a few beers on Saturday, 2 May 1992. If you were one of the Luton crew getting it down your neck and singing in the Trent Bridge Inn before your game at Notts County, I salute you. There were about a dozen of us Newcastle fans on our way to Leicester and we were all united in our common belief that we would both beat the drop. Sadly of course you didn't, but I'm sure we'll both be there or thereabouts come this time next year. So when the fixtures come out for next year you can start planning your trip to Geordieland. Get yourselves into the Three Bulls Heads on Percy Street and we'll sink a couple before the match. If your team can match the pride and belief shown by your supporters, especially the nutters in fancy dress, the promotion is a certainty.

All the best for next season!!!!

Ian Cusack

Newcastle

Tyne and Wear

Dear "Mad"

In a funny sort of way I'm looking forward to next season. I guess that when someone has been feeling ill for a long time then they have to be physically sick before they can get better. This analogy might apply to Luton's situation over the past four years quite well. Then again, it might not! It was very disappointing to lose it in the final game, especially when it was ultimately in our hands, but it would have been too much to hope for that our dreadful away form would suddenly change at the last minute!

Regards

Richard Hewison

Luton

Beds.



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POLICE RESEARCH GROUP



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FOOTBALL: POLICING THE SUPPORTER

A Police Research Project examining the existing and preferred relationships between the Police and Football Supporters.

Dear Fanzine Editor,

As both a football supporter and a serving Police Officer closely involved with football policing, I recently applied for and was awarded a Home Office Police Research Group grant to research football policing. I will be looking at procedures employed by different police forces up and down the country.

I intend to survey and analyse the views of Police Officers from each ground. Perhaps more importantly it is necessary for me to understand the views of football supporters. I intend to do this by surveys at a number of grounds, by interviewing supporters, by contacting supporters organisations and by collecting letters and articles on the subject.

Realising that fanzines provide an effective voice for the supporters I am writing to you and many other fanzines to ask for assistance. I would be extremely grateful if you were able to send me any material relating to football policing. This could include fanzine articles, fanzine surveys, letters, opinions, or any recollections of police/supporter experiences that you or your colleagues may have. In addition, would it be possible for you to include the enclosed text appealing to your readers for help, in the next edition of your fanzine?

The results of the research will be presented in a report to the Police Research Group for circulation and hopefully will result in benefits to both the police and the supporter. I have recently written to 'When Saturday Comes' with a view to a future article. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address if I can be of any assistance to your publication.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation. I am sure you will agree that it is important for the fans' views to be heard.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Middleham

Consultants: Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research

Dear "Mad"

Evidence has recently come to my attention which suggests that a former Town favourite and prolific goalscorer was, allegedly, once a hardened criminal with numerous convictions for theft and various other petty crimes. The evidence centres on remarks made by a local police sergeant during a talk at my school recently. These concerned a current First Division footballer whom he had "come into contact with" in his early days in the police force. Unfortunately he declined to name the petty criminal/footballer concerned. However, he did mention that it was while he was stationed in the St. Albans area, which just happens to be the area where grew up. Also he mentioned that the petty criminal/footballer concerned had scored a goal the previous Saturday. Surprisingly, name had appeared on the scoresheet that weekend.

While this story may sound a little far fetched, I can vouch for its authenticity, although perhaps I was a little quick in jumping to the conclusion that was the man concerned. It is just possible that the story could concern another First Division striker with shifty eyes and a villainous looking face. On the other hand If was the man responsible we must consider ourselves lucky we were not deprived the chance of witnessing his magical footballing skills because of his wanton criminal streak.

Because of the current libel laws, I would be grateful if the above allegations were not published as I'm not really sure that I'd be able to make the case stick in court. (*Sorry but we just couldn't resist it - Eds*). Also, I would not like to be responsible for the closure of your fine fanzine.

I cannot understand why in the last issue you seemed to assume that we would not be playing Premier Division football next year when there were still nearly three weeks of the season left. Events have since proved you right of course but a bit of optimism never goes amiss.

Yours faithfully

Mark Stephenson

Putnoe

Bedford

Dear "Mad"

Just a short end of the season letter to empty out my mind of the disappointment and disgust with which we fans of LTFC had to endure once again. Over the Town's past decade in the First Division I've tried to remain an optimist in the face of their struggles. To me the Town was always a better side than their league position indicated. And for a few seasons towards the late 1980's they showed rival teams that they could, indeed, win and succeed at a top flight level.

While Luton might not have been a force in terms of footballing power, they weren't the soft push-overs the current side has evolved into either. Granted, there is a decidedly extreme difference in talent and experience in terms of sides over the past five years, and whether the off-field problems stem from money or directors or money and directors, as serious as the situation may be, matters only second to the primary goal which is to get results on the pitch.

Being a long distance fan my "sense" and "feelings" towards LTFC, and for that matter football in general, must come from what I read in the British newspapers, football periodicals and from my two close English friends, Phil Wash from Orpington and Neil Slater from Aylesbury. Yes, the same Mr. Slater who penned one of the letters in the last issue. Rather cheeky of him not to have mentioned how he enjoyed the articles of the American who writes for the fanzine but I'll discuss that with him the next time we talk.

Getting back to the point, the struggles of 1989, 1990, 1991, as bad as they appeared at the time, did not lack some aura of hope. This season, though, has been almost totally devoid of that emotion. The giddiness of the Christmas results seemed nothing more than presents to a child quickly replaced by boredom as the New Year and winter's cold drug on.

On my side of the Atlantic "sense" and "feeling" failed to arrive this season. The three matches I saw in person last September should have been a warning but I felt, once again, Luton was not a Second Division side. Now I'm open to argument.

You might be interested to know that my American friends who look through the issues enjoy the travel news. Particularly the best spots in the away towns to get the best beer. Sports fans are basically the same the world over. Seriously though, they are quite impressed with MAD's quality. And my friend in Detroit loves the anti-Watford sentiment. And

how's this for luck. With me living in the Boston area and Bert in Detroit between us we should get some pretty good 1994 World Cup tickets.

To show you that my country is not totally backwards concerning football and that my enjoyment comes only from my short-wave radio, I should tell you that on Sunday mornings one of my cable television stations, out of New York, carries a live Italian League match. Unfortunately, the commentary is in Italian but after a few minutes you can put a name to a uniform number and turn down the volume and catch the action. I've become a fan of AC Milan over the past four years of viewing and I still don't know any Italian. Still, one must be thankful for the game itself.

In June Foxboro Stadium, Boston's World Cup site, will host two friendly internationals: Republic of Ireland v. Italy and Italy v. Portugal. I hope to be able to attend both matches. Coincidentally, Irish, Italian and Portuguese make up the three largest ethnic groups in the Eastern Massachusetts area. The Boston area has more Irish residents than does Dublin.

I had better close for now as originally I had intended this to be a short note.

All the best

Brian Surette

U.S.A.

P.S. Television notwithstanding, I should point out that the newspapers sports reporters treat soccer stories with the utmost scorn. Though with the World Cup headed our way Boston's two daily's have, begrudgingly, added a weekly story or two. Sometime I'll talk more about this, it truly is fascinating.

WOT NO LIGHTS?

So where were the floodlights for the QPR friendly? Rumour has it that bills were unpaid, so no lights. The official line was that they were being refurbished. Which was true? Well, a little bird tells me that the work had been completed and the lights replaced, when with an unpaid bill in one hand, the contractor asked if he could make some "minor modifications". The club said yes, and there we were with a 6.30 kick off and no lights until the bill is paid thank you!

Not quite football

Now that the football season has started again has there ever been a better time to write about ... cricket? In the last Mad of last season there was the exclusive report of the Bedfordshire minor counties fixtures for the summer which included two games away against Suffolk. Being as that's where I live I went to them both: the first was a one day limited over game which Suffolk won by a mere 7 runs and the second a two day match which was a draw so overall it was clear that there wasn't much to choose between the two sides but that's enough about on what went on in the middle.

In the long strange summer months when there is no football to watch what can you do but go to the cricket? It's not easy to tell how many people go to both but I wouldn't put it much higher than 30% which is strange as there are so many similarities although having said that there are just as many differences. Minor Counties cricket is, for a start, nothing like non-league football. The gulf in terms of class is very evident and there is no such thing as automatic promotion to the First Class ranks, nor is there ever likely to be. It's more of a private club: a rest home for ageing professionals (Suffolk's captain is the ex-Essex star Ray East) and 'amateurs' who can wangle the odd (paid) day off work, with maybe the occasional overseas star. The crowd is rarely more than 60 odd and the average age of the crowd is also about 60 odd. They all know seem to know each other which adds to the exclusive atmosphere - I felt as if I was intruding on their genteel afternoon gathering, both games being played in the soporific atmosphere of private school cricket grounds. Most of the crowd are a bit on the posh side and it's a world where elderly ladies really do spend all day knitting, nobody gets very drunk and there are no streakers. And as for disputing umpire's decisions ... unheard of! That is of course one of the main differences between cricket and football - disputing decisions and questioning the parentage of officials is an accepted part of football, both spectators and players alike whereas cricket umpires are generally respected, revered even. Any dissent is treated like a major political crisis, questions are asked in the House ...

So only 30% go to both? Well there are those who wear their

football club shirts which is a dead give away (and yes, I think I was the only person at the recent Essex match at Colchester wearing the new Luton shirt) and there are those who wear their England one day shirts to the test matches but do many people travel the length and breadth of the country to support their side? Recently Essex put on sale 1,500 tickets for the Nat West semi final at Leicester - 4 days later they still had loads left which I'm sure wouldn't happen if, for example, Colchester Utd were in a cup semi. Odd when you think that many people would travel 200 miles to see 90 minutes but won't to see upwards of 6 hours of fun, I mean the lunch interval's nearly as long as the first half! And talking of food why can cricket grounds provide decent quality food and drink when football clubs can only provide crap?

Cricket? Well I think it's wonderful, not as wonderful as our beautiful game nor as liable to stir up such passionate feelings, much more of a relaxing yet absorbing day out. But I do wonder what that famous cricket writer Cardus would have said of Kenilworth Road: 'that place where it's always 10 past 4, always raining and Luton are 1-0 down'.

The Expatriate



TOWN TRAVELS

SUNDAY 13.09.92 BRENTFORD

Towns first visit to Griffin Park since 1968 when Slough and Rioch scored the goals in a 2-0 win. To get there follow the North Circular Road to Chiswick, then the South Circular for ½ mile. Turn right to the A315 then ½ mile later right into Ealing Road. This is the heart of Fullers brewery country, so decent beer shouldn't be hard to find. The ROSE & CROWN, St. Marys Road is a Fullers pub near South Ealing (Piccadilly Line) tube station (this being the nearest to the ground). Brentford Central is the nearest BR Station, with a service from Waterloo. The LORD NELSON, 9 Enfield Road is another Fullers house. Although why pubs will be any use when the match kicks off at noon beats me.

TUESDAY 15.09.92 WATFORD (Anglo Italian Cup)

Our first visit to the home of non-league Wealdstone, yet it should all look vaguely familiar. This donkey sanctuary comes complete with its own high security vegetable patch. Previous experience suggests only home supporters need directions to the ground. Its probably best to stick to St. Albans for beer. The GOAT, Sopwell Lane is a popular free house and the GARIBALDI, 61 Albert Street (off Holywell Hill) is a Fullers pub. However, it may be worth seeking out the HAYDON ARMS, 76 Upper Paddock Road (off A4008) at Oxhey, a Benskins pub, which apparently has a collection of Watford FC mugs behind the bar - a chance to nobble their players before the game!

SATURDAY 26.09.92 NOTTS COUNTY

The last visit to Meadow Lane lacked only one thing to make it a thoroughly good day out, namely the result, and nothing short of an absolute hammering of County will make up for that day. An easy trip by road or by rail (avoiding the police is recommended at Nottingham Station) and a casual couple of beers before the game. The usual pubs - the TRIP

TO JERUSALEM, near the castle QUEENS HOTEL opposite the station and the MAGPIES, a long 5 minute walk past the ground. For a change try the NORFOLK HOTEL, 66 London Road (Home Ales) which is also handy for the ground, which, incidentally will be almost unrecognisable from last May.

SATURDAY 10.10.92 BARNSELY

A simple journey for the motorist, up the M1 to Junction 37 then along the A628 into Barnsley. For the rail traveller its just as easy, with the added bonus of being able to go into Sheffield between trains for a beer or two, perhaps at the HOWARD ARMS opposite the station. In Barnsley itself try the MANX ARMS, 61 Sheffield Road, a popular free house with its own brewery and several guest beers.



England's Folly - France's Sorrow - Denmark's Secret

I've always been uncommonly patient toward England managers, indeed of club managers and club chairmen too, feeling that they are all too easy a target for abuse when things go wrong. I was willing to accept Taylor had to experiment awhile to build a good side - for me, as for all Luton fans, accepting the ex-Watford Taylor as England manager was like Catholics accepting Ian Paisley as Pope but I did it. Trouble was though, well, sorry Graham but you blew it. There aren't that many real world class players to choose from but when you take off our best goalscorer and replace him with a donkey called Smith whilst leaving that complete waste of space, that worthy successor to Bryan Robson as 'most overrated England player of our time' on (yes, I do mean Webb) then you have well and truly failed. Do I sound bitter here? Yes? Good - after this Taylor ought to be sent back to manage kick and rush teams like Watford again - let's offer the job to someone who can do it properly like Clough or even David Pleat - at least David's used to getting the best out of second rate players. I expect the F.A. though would prefer to offer the job to John Beck instead - now there's a man who understands the subtlety of football.

What made it worse was that France, my tip for the winners, got knocked out too - now there is one simple reason why they didn't win the tournament: cast your minds back to the last Mad of last season and my account of Paris St. Germain in which I warned you to watch out for Simba. Well, he was injured and so was unable to travel to Sweden - if he had been in Sweden it would have been thus in the final: France 5 (Simba 3, Perez 2) Germany 0. And all three Simba goals from 'les coups de bicyclette'. In fact Perez was the only PSG player in the side, no wonder they bombed out. However Denmark knew better didn't they? Who was it who scored the goal that ditched the French out? None other than dear old Lars Elstrup! And didn't he take that penalty well against Holland?

So, the secret to international success is fill your team with either current or ex-Luton or PSG players, avoid at all costs any whinging plonkers(© The Sun) from Manchester United, send Taylor back to Wealdstone and you can't go wrong.

The Expatriate

The Compleat Manager?

David Pleat is the best manager Luton Town have ever had. So goes the theory put about by his admirers, anyway. As it happens I'm not one of those admirers, and I have to differ. In terms of successful teams the accolade has to go to John Moore, who took the club to its highest ever league position, or Ray Harford who guided the team to the Littlewoods Cup. The idea that somehow both achievements were by David Pleats team is ludicrous, because management is about motivation and selection of the right players on the day. The common thread between these and Pleats earlier spells as manager was money in the shape of David Evans. Take him away (please) and the whole thing falls apart. Bring back the saviour and we go down.

What bothers me is that the '91 version of Pleat is not the same as the '85 version. Tainted by the tabloids, he seems to be on the defensive all the time. This is characterised by continued references to "the true supporters", a group who follow the club without question or criticism. Obviously, I am not one of them. However, these things are matters of personality, and managers should be judged by their record.

David Pleat had an excellent record as Luton Town manager before he left for the North London giants Tottenham Hotspur. Since returning, however, he has failed to gain the same sort of results. You may say players were sold, but I would argue that unlike the previous two seasons players were bought as well. But the manager failed to inspire them to achieve the required results. If anything highlighted this it was the number of times the lead was lost in games away from home. Also he did not appear to know which players could perform, as shown by the continued selection of Brian Stein ahead of others like Kurt Nogan and, at Notts County, Phil Gray. And the use of almost any goalkeeper bar Alec Chamberlain could hardly have boosted Alec's confidence.

Off the field it is difficult to see any other manager putting up with the continual interference of the managing director in selling players without consultation. OK so it happens at other clubs as well, but not to the same extent,

and other managers would resign rather than appear to condone such actions, or be sacked for disagreeing. From the comments he has made it appears that Mr. Pleat believes this is how a small club should be run, and as he seems to have ambitions of such power himself it does not bode well for the future. I suppose that he may also consider a salary of around £84,000 a year to be of some consolation, coupled with fees for being an expert summariser on live radio broadcasts.

I could go on, but I won't, suffice to say that I was not convinced at the wisdom of his appointment to start with, and I harboured my doubts throughout last season. My worst fears were confirmed and to add insult to injury he said on Soccerline that he knew 20 minutes before the end of the Notts County game that we were going down. Why the hell didn't he come across and tell us to stop cheering the team on?

K.F.H.



Premier League

Champions: Who cares?
Relegated: Coventry, Norwich, South Coast Thugs (Played 2, Booked 5, Sent-off 1! - Ed.)

Division One

Champions: Derby
Promoted: Swindon, Luton
Relegated: Watford, Cambridge, Bristol Rovers

Division Two

Champions: Stoke
Promoted: West Brom, Burnley
Relegated: Wigan, Preston, Chester, Swansea

Division Three

Champions: Cardiff
Promoted: Colchester, Walsall, Crewe
Relegated: Hereford

GMVC

Champions: Wycombe

F.A. CUP

Sheffield Wednesday

COCA COLA

Manchester City

Fair Play League

Top: Some whingeing Merseyside cheats (Red)
Bottom: Guess who?

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