MADASA HAMBR

A LUTON TOWN FANZINE As seen on TV

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MADAS A HATTER!

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Being a football supporter is not all it's cracked up to be, even less so if you follow Luton Town at the moment. After all the object of the exercise is enjoyment, and just now that seems to be in very short supply in this area. It is bad enough to watch a losing team, but to know that the only hope of improvement is to buy players, whilst the M.D. talks of selling again, well, it really is too much. And that, Mr. Kohler, is the crux of the matter. We pay our hard earned cash in the hope of gaining some enjoyment, yet all we get at the moment is anger and frustration. We know that the situation wil not improve while you are in charge, so you must go. And no, most of us do not expect you to go without receiving some payment for your shares, but you do not appear to be in any hurry to sell so we have to offer you some encouragement. And try what you like, be it loud music, or suggestions that we are frightening off potential buyers, we will not be silenced.

On a brighter note, we have at least seen some good things on the pitch. Andy Petterson has been much better than some of us expected, but could perhaps do with a rest in the reserves before his confidence goes. Chunky Claridge puts in 100% every game and is (thank god) scoring goals and looking worth his transfer fee. Julian James and Marvin Johnson are showing that they want to play for the Town and so look better than some more talented players. With Telfer and Harvey on the way back from injury ther is some hope of improvement. On the face of it things can only get better, so let's get behind the lads and see if we can cheer them on to victory. Stranger things have happened.



The Rise and Fall

With a quarter of the current season gone and Luton entrenched in the bottom half of the table an immediate return to the Premier League would seem to be a distant dream. The more realistic of us would now settle and be happy with survival and a top half finish.

After ten years at the top culminating in four appearances at Wembley the bubble would now appear to have well and truly burst. Further, unless money is made available for a team to be built or at the very least to enable us to hold on to the players we have then promotion hopes would seem to be beyond us. More likely would seem to be a return to the footballing backwaters currently occupied by the likes of Watford and Oxford to name but two who have fallen from grace in recent years.

Whilst the current board is criticised for both its lack of ambition and money the current problems facing the club can be traced back to our most successful period. Many of the current financial problems can be traced back to the selling of players after one Wembley success. Directors who left demanded loans be repaid along with interest. With the departure of players the success the team had enjoyed could not unfortunately be built upon and our days at the top were numbered.

Another important factor was the away fans ban which lost the club much needed revenue with attendances inevitably suffering. It seemed ridiculous business sense to say to clubs who attracted a large away support that they were not welcome and obviously proved costly in the long term. With dropping attendances and no away fans, talk of a new stadium subsided along with Lutons hopes of maintaining their position in the top flight.

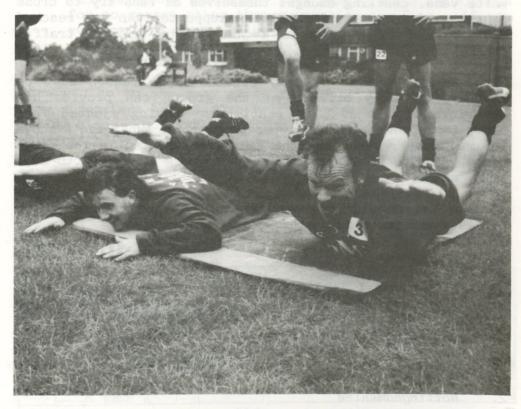
A further effect on the away fans ban was that the club also lost some of its home support and other potential supporters who don't want to watch football in a ground with no atmosphere.

The rest is of course history. Falling attendances led to the sale of players. Successive relegation battles and

inevitable relegation. Yet even now the decline seems to continue with at the time of writing Luton languishing at the foot of the table.

At this point I return to the present board of directors because unless they can show the ambition and financial commitment to help Luton return to the Premier League then they must stand down. With the clubs future now firmly in their hands they must either give the manager the backing to build a team that the supporters can once again be proud of or in the alternative attract new backing to make this possible. If not, the decline of Luton may not yet have ended.

vine 19 Thradmoore altest for crance start From a more more P. I.



Captain Peaky practises his parachuting routines, while in the background a mystery foot looks poised to cause injury to Phil Gray.

FAIR COPS?

Not many articles have been written about the people who are always present at any game you attend whether its up north or down south. They come under many names but most people dont use their official one, the police. The attitude the police have towards the fans differ from stadium to stadium.

Most chief constables if they could have their own way would ban away fans altogether. There would of course be a great outcry not just from the fans but also from their own officers. Why would fellow officers object, money thats why. They are on to a nice little earner policing grounds. Plenty of overtime and little trouble and with the cost passed on to the clubs. You must have seen them sitting in their bright white vans, chatting amongst themselves as fans try to cross on mass a busy road or the lucky supporter who has reached his car and is sitting in a jam due to lack of traffic control.

Why should there be so many police. One reason must be because the duty officer at the ground can provide his superiors with a list of statistics showing ejected fans etc., thus proving the need for the police. What isn't shown is the petty reasons why the fans were ejected in the first place. Its as if the police have a quota they need to meet every match.

I'm not saying all officers are bad but just a few of the places where you should mind where you go are:

1. Merseyside

Many times I have seen police officers watching on as the scousers attack rival fans. As the beaten fans protest to the police about their lack of action officers have been known to say "move on lads or I will nick you". You can see why Merseyside police are not very good by the amount of crime in the area.

2. Nottinghamshire

I will always remember the away match at Mansfield not

just for the goals but for the lack of atmosphere. The burly officer on greeting us at the gate said:

"No abusive language or gestures.

If you keep quiet you will be alright".

This was proved by the fact that the first fan to be seen avidly supporting the team was ejected. For the remainder of the match we stood to attention and didn't make a sound.

3. Southampton

The police force here is only concerned with packing you into one of their caged pens while keeping a watchful eye on you from the walkway above. Most Luton fans must have seen other Town supporters being ejected for no reason other than supporting the Town. If you ever get the chance to go there make sure you park your car safely because you might find that its missing, taken by the police when you return.

When you go to any away games most fans are careful about away supporters but it also helps if you are wary about the police also. Two final questions that I feel I must ask is: Why are their so many officers at the Kenilworth Road end of the ground and why when you are being frisked do the police say its for your own safety?

M.I.

team talk







100 Not Out!

So we've made it! It's now 2000 A.D. and Mad as a Hatter has reached it's 100th issue. It really is a great cause for celebration as it seemed a few years ago as if we'd never see the light of day again but now we've made it perhaps this is the time to look back over the last 12 years.

We all knew things were looking bleak when we fell out of the First Division into the just renamed First Division but the mid table position we got in that year made us feel, at least, a little more hopeful. Yet still Kohler came out with the same old story: there was no money, no-one wanted to buy the club and, like it or not, players would have to go. Off went Scott Oakes for £2M, we all know how well he did with his later transfer to Italy. And off went Linton, Claridge, Gray, Salton and then, predictably Pleat said he had enough and went to TV full time. The fund of young players coming through dried up and there was just no-one left to sell. Only the temporary generosity of the local council and the bank kept us going as long we did, plunging down two divisions with our average gate falling to less than 3,000. Then one day, half way through the 1996/7 season it happened. The bank demanded the loans be paid off, the council wanted us out of the ground and the police demanded payment for the last four matches or we'd have to play behind closed doors. Even the players hadn't been paid for a month. The rest was depressingly predictable as we followed the previous 13 clubs to go to the wall since Aldershot in 1992.

But like most of those clubs we would not give up. The loyal supporters, the ones Kohler had always called the 'unrepresentative minority, the yobs', got together and the club was reborn. In 1998 Luton Town were reborn as Luton Wanderers for such had we now become as the old Kenilworth Ground was being demolished and made ready for housing (I shall treasure the little plastic seat I prised from the terraces for ever). A ground share with Barton Rovers was agreed and into the Diadora Third we went. We didn't stay there long, winning the division at the first attempt in 1998/99. This season is already going well, and hopefully by May we'll be promoted again after last season's near miss. A new ground is being built in the Capability Green area which.

with a capacity of 8,000, will be good enough to see us back into the League by 2010 - that must be our aim. For now I look forward to next week's local derby with Hitchin with as much excitement as I once had for the Watford games. It's been a bit of a fall but we're on the way back - yet I wonder what would have happened if Kohler had left when we asked him to?

The Expatriate

Funny People At Football Matches No.1

Barnsley: I am sure I am not the only person to feel a sense of utter despair creep upon me when I hear that name but I have a particular reason to cringe. It always take me back to Saturday 8th November 1969 when we played Barnsley at home and standing next to me was a young brat (same age as me at that time to be honest) from the aforesaid place yelling at the top of his Barnsleyite accent "Cum on Barnsley". Words cannot express the piercing tone he reached and the effect it had upon me - like chalk on blackboard but infinitely worse. We didn't even manage to win the damn game which would at least have made up partially for this intolerable suffering. Fortunately we did not meet at home again until the last day of the 1981/82 season when Barnsley were our guests for the Championship party - I was in too good a mood then to worry about the Barnsley screecher but times have changed and now everytimeI hear the word Barnsley - aaghh, the screams return to haunt me still! I have a great fear: what will I do when I am sitting there on Saturday 27 February 1993 and I suddenly hear that shrill cry! Will I be able to restrain myself or will I lunge forward in uncontrolled anguish to silence those cries? Perhaps I'd better stay at home and watch Teletext - no! I shall bear up and face the Barnsley terror once more! In fact I feel so brave I might even risk a trip to Oakwell - now there's dedication for you.

The Expatriate

The Wrong Goal?

A quarter of the way into the league season we find ourselves in 23rd position, with our team scoring only nine goals in eleven games and conceding 10 in the last 3. This is disturbing enough, but as placings will be decided on goals scored, and not goal difference this season, it is clear where the greater problems lie. Not just with Phillip Gray. who seems to have forgotten more than he ever learned about goalscoring, but with the manager who continues to use Campbell as anything but a striker, and seems to think goals will come as if by magic. Least season Stein with 2 goals in 30 odd games, this season Gray. Hartson is the name on everybody's lips but as yet he hasn't even had a reserve game. The managers patience is clearly greater than ours, as recent chants of "Pleat Out" have shown. Also more and more people comment on the fact that Mr. Pleat is a regular on TV and radio matches as a summariser, and question whether Luton Town really have got value for money. And if what we hear is to be believed. D.P. is also involved with more than one of the aspirant takeover groups. We wonder if the team is being allowed to suffer from these outside activities.

K.H

On the Books

For a club that is losing money hand over fist, and whose manager has been forced to reduce his squad to a barely acceptable level, we wonder what is being done on the admin side to cut costs. We admit we have not carried out an in depth investigation, but we do wonder if the appointment of a Public Relations consultant was either necessary or cost effective. But whats more we find that recruitment is taking place as well. We don't mean the Community Development Officer, the post being externally funded. But it has come to our attention that an Accounts Supervisor (£12,500 p.a.) is being recruited. A club, or any business, in LTFC's position should be cutting staff across the board, not just on the production (i.e. playing) side. Or is it that the books are in such a mess that another salary just won't be noticed?

K.H.

Mismanaged

Many times we have been told about the way the club is being better managed these days in order to get it on a correct footing. Just a couple of instances at the start of the season must throw this into question.

On going to the pre-season friendly with QPR I was horrified to see a long queue snaking its way down from the ticket office. Why in hells name was a testimonial game all ticket and why didn't they just open the turnstiles. Due to the length of the queue the start of the game was missed but not by as much as some people. Due to the lack of information being given to the fans many turned up at the usual kick off time just in time to see the second half.

It really gets on my nerves when on entering the Kenilworth Road end of the ground season ticket holders have to queue up at one turnstiles with match day ticket holders, while all the other fans move quickly into the ground. Nice way to treat us season ticket holders. These are just a couple of instances on how the club is treating the supporters.

M.I.

Surprise of the season so far? Anglia TV showing the goals from the Blackburn-Norwich game (in which the sides shared 8 goals rather unevenly, in case you'd forgotten).

He put current losses at £15,000 a week, and until that figure could be wiped out the only way for the club to stay in business was to sell players.

He said the wages bill was £2.3m a year, and the income through the gates was £1m.

And well though the commercial department was doing, it was impossible to make up that shortfall through their heroic efforts.

Most of the salaries bill, he said, was down to wages for players, but he could not give an exact figure However, the £1.3 million due from Sky TV may just help, and could leave £175,000 to come from the Football League to pay a VAT bill. Or perhaps we are missing something?

Open Letter to David Kohler

Dear David,

In view of recent protests against you, I thought that you might welcome a letter of support. To me it is obvious that you care deeply about Luton Town and you are making excellent progress in sorting out the clubs problems. Surely anyone can see the sense in budgeting for crowds of 8,000 following relegation, especially when the breakeven figure is 16,000? The resultant loss of £750,000 (after the £1.3M from Sky TV) will obviously help to stabilise the clubs finances. And of course you should sell players whenever a half decent offer comes along, as paying the bills is obviously more important than having the team winning which could bring more people in and upset the budgets. Relegation wouldn't be a disaster as you could then reduce the budgets and the club would lose less money on a smaller turnover, which is a step in the right direction. In fact you could take this to the logical conclusion and close the club down - that would certainly stem the losses.

As for the insults, abuse and so on you have been getting from these so-called supporters, don't these yobboes, these mindless idiots realise that cheap insults and abuse are the preserve of the ignorant, stupid, and ill-informed. They expect you to speculate on players to accumulate finance when examples like Newcastle, Derby, Manchester United and Norwich

prove it is not worth it.

Finally, the new ground. I have absolute faith that you will make an announcement soon, at least before the end of the century (sorry that should read year) and that you will be able to raise the finance just as you have done to stabilise the club itself.

In closing, I wish you (and your dog) well. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely (not)

P.J. Smith

P.S. In case my message is not clear enough - PISS OFF AND LEAVE OUR CLUB ALONE. If its going to die then let it die, don't just sit there and kill it.

TOWN TRAVELS

CAMBRIDGE UNITED 03.11.92

By way of a change an evening match that is relatively local. An easy trip up the A505 and A10 which should only take an hour or so. The ground is pretty awful with the away terrace being only about 6 steps deep. For a beer before the game try the SEVEN STARS. Newmarket Road. a Greene King pub. Don't forget the game is all ticket.

14.11.92 OXFORD UNITED

Another easy trip by car, but a nightmare for the rail traveller, with the ground about 5 miles from the station. The away terrace is somewhat reminiscent of a P.O.W. camp, although the home terrace is not much better. There are several pubs on the main road which are not terribly exciting. Instead we recommend the BLACK BOY. 91 Old High Street, Headington, a little off the beaten track but worth the detour to sample Morrells ales.

05.12.92 BRISTOL ROVERS

A new ground for most of us and the second non League ground of the season. Twerton Park is the home of Bath City as well as Bristols second team. For the drinker Bath is something of a mecca for real ale. Close to the ground is the GOLDEN FLEECE, Lower Bristol Road (A36) a Courage pub with guest beers. However, we prefer to recommend an early arrival in Bath and a pub crawl before the game. Then the result won't seem half so important.

12.12.92 WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS

Another short journey, to what will one day be one of the best grounds in the First Division. For the moment it awaits completion, with bits being added annually. The pub to visit has to be the GREAT WESTERN , Sun Street, (off A4124, close

to the old low level railway station). It has recently won CAMRA's Pub of the Year award, serves good value food and beers from Bathams and Holdens breweries. And value for money - a pint of Holdens Bitter for £1.04 and the Special at £1.24. What more could we ask.

Cuttings

Little also exchanged Linton and Oakes for Luton's Steve Thompson, valued at £50,000. Thompson's vision and Oldfield's vigour set up a stream of possibilities for the forwards and full-backs overlapping from a five-man defence.

"It's causing us to take our eye off the ball and costs us money. We could do without it at the moment," said Richard Harvey.

A players comment on the state of affairs at Kenilworth Road?

If that is Thompsons true value, Scotty was a Bargain and Bolton robbed us.

☐ MORE of a mystery is what happened to the "invisibility paint" which Dan collected on his journey to Cryptos in Vol 6, No 43 (October 28, 1955). I have been waiting over 361/2 years to find out. - Ray Aspden (Horlicks Spaceman's Club Member No. XT 370926), Luton, Beds. Our cartoonists secret revealed

one. Has r the last Price dually seaso

A job on the side for "Surely"?

Luton (0)..0 6,302

CHARLTON: Bolder 6, Balmer 6, Barness 6, Pardew 7, Webster 6, Gatting 6, * LEE 8, Bumstead 6, Dyer 6 (wdrn), Nelson 6, Walsh 6. Subs: Grant 7, Minto.

LUTON: *PETTERSON 8, Linton 6, James 7, Falton 6, Peake 1, Luton 6, Claridge 7, Hughes 7, Gray 6 (wdrn), Preece 6, Rees 6. Subs: Oakes 6 Kimble.

6 Kimble. Referee: D Elleray (Harrow) 7. Bookings: Walsh (Charlton), Hughes (Luton)

Kimble? Falton? Who are they?

Big names on their way

CAMBRIDGE Dynamic striking duo Dion Dublin and Steve Claridge.

Experienced Brian Stein and Mick Harford, Ramsey-born keeper Alec Chamberlain.

The Peterborough Evening Telegraph demonstrates the pitfalls of making predictions.

Luton join in the siege of Testwood

TOTTON may not be taking the league by storm but their players are certainly in hot demand.

With the season less than two months old, Testwood Park has been besieged by rival managers queueing up to view the wealth of exciting raw talent on show.

Ref gets so shirty with fan

ORIENT fan Graeme Baumber thought Beadle was about when the Blackpool and ordered him out of his

"Me ref, what for?" asked 18-yearold Graeme. Official Kelvin Morton
with a linesman's flag.

Graeme thousand

Graeme thought it was a big windup at first but he said yesterday:
"There were only 15 minutes to go
that the ref said he wasn't joking and
began showing me to the exit because
they thought I was a troublemaker
and a steward came to my rescue.

More reasonable behaviour from our favourite ref.

Bashley, Newport and Lymington have been among the faces in the crowd, with Paul Williams, Pete Bush and 17year-old defender Simon Elliott the principal targets.

Manager Gary Chant has also heard whispers that First Division Luton Town are interested in sweeper/full back Seamus McManus.



HOME And Away star Les Hill was hurled off a pier by a mob of drunken soccer yobs.

Of course they were soccer yobs. Who else would do a thing like that?

Media Watch

In our capacity of watch-dog, we keep an eye on the local media, particularly for the balance of their reporting. In this respect it is good to report that in recent weeks the Luton News made a sudden change of direction. Reporting of protests has been stepped up and the match reports have stopped seeing only the good things. Brian Swain is once again becoming the man Town fans must read, which has got to be good news. The Herald & Post meanwhile features a regular David Pleat column, or perhaps it should be called this weeks excuse, sponsored by good old U.S.A. The editorial in the H & P is also looking up, with a small but well worded attack on Kohler in the 15th October edition. The two local radio stations are as consistent as ever, but on T.V., Anglia seem to have chosen to ignore football now that both Ipswich and Norwich are denied them. Gone is Goals Galore, on a Sunday lunch time, all we get now is the goals (most, not all) on the Monday local news. It's not really good enough Anglia. Finally, although more propaganda than media, is Clubcall. A solid diet of interviews with manager or players, no real comment and precious little news, it is already making me yearn for the much maligned Soccerline. Clubcall is bland and its reporters lack the knowledge of Luton Town which would give the interviews that vital bit of interest. So overall, the best diet for those who need their daily fix of Luton Town is the Luton News on Wednesday, H & P on Thursday, game on Saturday and starve the rest of the week, unless the local radio can find something to say.

K.H.



HORS JEU!

Mad as a Hatter's getting a bit cosmopolitan - articles about German football, minor counties cricket, where will it all end? Not yet if I've got anything to do with it - here's a bit more on France, this time the Second Division.

While on holiday in France recently I saw a match on TV channel France 2. It wasn't live but was shown in its entirety, transmission starting about an hour after the game ended. French TV coverage seems to have gone the same way as ours with the top games being shown on Canal + (satellite), with the other channels showing lower division football. The game was the Corsican local derby and is in the Division 2. Group A, which roughly speaking covers the east of France and, of course, Corsica. Like any local derby passions were fierce on and off the pitch. Although the crowd in the tiny three sided ground numbered only 5,000 the noise, the obligatory fireworks and smoke bombs gave an atmosphere to match any top ground. On the pitch the passions were no less intense with frequent scuffles breaking out. It was somewhat of a mystery as to how no-one got an 'expulsion' although there were 7 'cartes jaune', 5 of them to Bastian players.

The start of the game was very scrappy and not far different from what you'd expect to see at a poor 3rd Division game in England but when the first Bastian goal came, after 14 minutes, it was gem, which stood out all the more due to the dross that had preceded it. Camadini sent in a looping pass to the penalty area, Mangione let the ball come over his right shoulder, chested it down and shot sweetly past Chaumin into the corner of the net. The rest of the half, now much more open and entertaining, belonged to Bastia. Ajaccio's performance was summed by the last move of the half: an excellent cross from the left, after beating the defenders, was missed completely by Géraldès and then blasted wide by Larre.

The second Bastian goal, on 47 minutes was every bit as glorious as the first. A through ball by Camadini was lobbed perfectly over the advancing keeper by Di Fraya. Ajaccio looked to have no way back in until, from nothing, Pelletier

smacked the ball in from 10 yards from a nice lay off by a fellow attacker. Suddenly, with 25 minutes left, Ajaccio came alive and all hell broke loose as they sought an equaliser. A 30 yard free kick was deflected wide, a corner scrambled away, a volley from 16 yards just over the bar and then - Bastia scored with a fluke goal on 83 minutes: Bianconi crossed from the right and the ball curled in and crept off the far post into the net, Ajaccio held their heads, cursed their luck and that was that.

This game left Bastia in second place and Ajaccio down at tenth place in this regional second division which, if the evidence of this game is to be believed, is of a standard somewhere between our (in new speak) First and Second Divisions, which is after all about what you'd expect. The French Second Division is split into two, one covers the east and the other the north and the west. As French clubs are not evenly distributed over the country there is a lot of overlap in the north east with neighbouring teams playing in different groups. Below the second there are 6 regional third divisions. 8 fourth divisions and no fewer than 16 non-league divisions! I suspect there are strange and wonderful play-offs at the end of the season to see who progresses and rules which prevent reserve sides going up. For example, Marseille Reserves are top of their 3rd Division group. The gates in the third division are dire, with gates of over 1,000 being rare. Even in the second the gates are in a range of a few hundred to only a few thousand.

Every time I go to France though I am amazed by the depth of coverage the press give. L'Équipe is a daily sports paper which always gives football centre stage, and there are innumerable weekly and monthly magazines, the best being France Football that goes into intense detail on every game played in Divisions 1 and 2 and a fair amount on the others plus results from across Europe and Africa. And the best we get is 90 Minutes.

The Expatriate

KOHLER OUT





How to avoid......

1. Promotion and Cup runs.

29.08.92 CHARLTON ATH. O TOWN O

With Charlton riding high in the League and with Lutons away form over the past few seasons many people ask why do you go to such a game. After seeing the performance of both teams, I must admit I should have stayed at home. Very few chances were created by either team and those which were carefully handled by both defences. About the only thing that went the fans way was the fact we had a better view than you normally get at Upton Park.

M.I.

02.09.92 KEVIN KEEGAN'S NEWCASTLE 2 TOWN 0

Surrounded by 27,000 screaming geordies there was intimidation both on and off the field. The result could have been different if the chances had been taken early on. Rees and Gray were the culprits. As the rain increased in its intensity so did the geordies domination of the game. In the end the result could easily have been worse than the two we conceded. A round trip of 499 miles, back home by well after midnight but I would have been more gutted if I hadn't gone and we had won.

M.I.

05.09.92 TOWN 3 TRANMERE ROVERS 3

Due to Lutons excellent record against Merseyside teams at home, I was expecting us to give this minor Merseyside team a good beating. It was good to see that big nose was leading their attack so we could send him compliments about his facial appearance. The Towns performance could be said to have been up and down. Up in attack and down in defence. Why is it that we never go away from home and are gifted 3 goals? Probably because we have already gifted the home team a couple of goals and their confidence is sky high. An end to end match which Luton should have won and could have if

Phillip Gray hadn't missed another sitter from inside the six yard box.

.I.M. dreally savel lookingsupon & gages without reference.

13.09.92 BRENTFORD 1 TOWN 2

As we sat stationary on the M25 with the rain sheeting down around us the only thing I could look forward to was ticking off Brentford as another ground visited. The flood lights appeared through the rain which promptly stopped and the sun tried valiantly to show itself. The game passed quickly and in a daze I heard the final whistle pierce the air and the euphoria erupted. A man sat in a small concrete box as the air was full of happiness and disbelief. As he walked slowly down the tunnel with the chants of his name ringing in his ears, the fans departed from whence they came. The rain started to fall but we couldn't feel a thing.

M.I.

15.09.92 WATFORD O TOWN O

David Pleat said afterwards that this was like a home game. He was right. We didn't win.

The scoreline bore absolutely no resemblance to the match, which was as one-sided as you could wish to see as Town dominated from start to finish and only a combination of poor finishing, and the Horns' (oo-er!) best players, "Nine-past". Suckling and the ubiquitous W. Oodwork that prevented the game from being the joyous rout that it should have been, not to mention Poseur Milford's rather, ahem, eccentric interpretation of the back-pass law. i.e. A sliced clearance is deliberate, whilst a tackle sending the ball to the keeper isn't - no prizes for guessing which decision went which way.

Mind you, it could hardly have been the referee responding to the home crowd, who were as "noisy" as ever. Or, perhaps it was just that we couldn't hear them above the constant barrage of noise coming from the Town fans. Maybe THAT'S what David Pleat meant.

bebeen shopeer of Leagues to Traffick biver A.C.

19.09.92 TOWN 1 BIRMINGHAM CITY 1 and a bad ward of LLId

Things really are looking up, 3 games without defeat, including an away win. 'Ere we go, 'ere we go, etc.

Brum looked as though they came for a draw, and with a collection of donkeys like that I'd regard a draw as a good result anywhere. But no, they almost took all the points, until the last minute penalty. Chunky converts and lady luck shines on Luton for a change. Who cares whether it hit the net or someones hand or whatever. Four games undefeated and looking only slightly wobbly. Yahoo!

and how his and analy altered Lanty and Bread I am K.H.

23.09.92 TOWN 2 PLYMOUTH 2

GETTING AWAY WITH IT! Into a lee's a Tablugo ew dud Ila's of bearata

This was a game in which the Town, to be blunt, were completely crap. Apparently, this was even worse than the Bristol City match.

Even though we had scored after only 9 minutes, it was obvious that this was not going to be a walk-over. By half time it looked unlikely to me that we would even score again, having watched 45 minutes of misplaced passing, and pussy-footing sideways around the edge of Plymouth's box. When are we going to have a) someone who can shoot from more than 6 yards? b) someone who can put in a decent cross?

I did think there would be an improvement in the 2nd half - WRONG! The next 30 minutes must have been embarrassing for every home supporter watching, as we were completely out-passed and outclassed by the Pilgrims, during which time they equalised and deservedly took the lead. In fact, they nearly went 3-1 up, before the Town finally awoke, and made the score 2-2; thanks to Mr. Gray's clowning that's the way it ended.

The main culprits of this atrocious exhibition (to me) were as follows:

1. David Kohler, of course. No reasons needed.

- 2. David Preece. When the Town have a corner, what is the point of standing in a reasonable scoring position 18 yards out, if you're not going to shoot when the ball falls invitingly at your feet. PILLOCK!
- 3. Julian James. The horrendous mistake causing their 2nd goal summed your night up. NNEEIIGGHH!!!! Come back Dick Harvey NOW!
- 4. Des Linton. Why did nearly every Town attack end with you losing the ball on the right wing? 'Timbo' you're not! NNEEIIGGHH!!!!
- 5. Phil Gray. I just about forgave you for losing your bottle in that 1 on 1 against Shilts. But as for the other chance you had. You PLONKER! Why dive and look for the penalty when you've missed the ball from five yards out?
- P.S. The only way to get us supporters on your side is to play as though your heart's in it Phil, perhaps try a bit of running during the game!

As the last J and J and

26.09.92 NOTTS COUNTY O TOWN O

On arrival at the ground it looked most impressive, unlike last season. The seats were the most comfy I've ever sat in at a football ground. Maybe it was because I was sober, but I couldn't see either side scoring in a brothel, (especially us with Gray). The defence looked particularly untroubled (apart from a couple of times, usually it's a couple of dozen).

D.K.

The most impressive aspect of this game was the ground. Since that dreadful day at the end of last season the ground has been transformed into a stadium that most Luton fans would be proud to have as their own. But the fact is that we don't own a ground and are unlikely to until DK leaves.

M.I.

30.09.92 TOWN 1 BRISTOL CITY 1 point of standing in a reasonable scoring position

THE OPPOSITION GETTING AWAY WITH IT! fails that the clark ateyours feeters PILECOKY

This was the game where everyone had saved their annual leave and pocket money (well, a few of us did) in case we won and went to Italy. High I was a second because is on the

The first half had a distinctly Plymouth-esque look about it, although we looked slightly more likely to get a result.

The second half, well..., apart from the City goal, I haven't seen the Town completely dominate a match so much and not win since. W*****d away. The main reason we didn't give City an absolute walloping, or at least beat them 2-1, was old P.G. himself. Having said that, he performed vastly better than he had in other recent outings, at least appearing to try this time. There's hope yet (well... someone's got to be optimistic!). Joe Mangle's save from Junior Bent late on deserves a mention. Blinding! That makes 6 draws in the last 7 games - they'll be calling us Luton Park Rangers soon!

I suppose I'll have to go for a wet week in Bognor, though I'd have preferred a week in Bologna! long that this was not soing to be a walk-over. In he JEZ

03.10.92 TOWN 1 POMPEY 4

OUT-'WHITTINGHAM'

This was not an afternoon for 'pure' football as continuous rain had made the pitch barely playable. So what do the Town do? Try to play pure football! Well done Mr. Pleat...

Watching the first few minutes had me looking back to the Forest home game last season-when the pitch was even worse in the first half and Mick Harford aquaplaning all over the gaff. Memories. When we scored through Tumble's volley (hooray! - somebody shot from more than 10 yards out), I thought this was going to be our day. Actually, it turned out to be the cue for Pompey to humiliate us for the rest of the half. Most of the Town's problems came be pussy-footing about with the ball outside their own area. the ball stopping short in the water, a Pompey player steaming in, and Bob's your uncle. I'm sure I wasn't the only one praying for a monsoon at half-time to finish the pitch off.

Unfortunately, the rain eased off, and predictably the second half was more of the same, although the Town did try a slightly more direct style. But one more silly pass in defence later, and it was 4-1. Well played.

06.10.92 PLYMOUTH ARGYLE 3 TOWN 2

It was the 2nd round, 2nd leg and (in old speak) a 3rd Division ground so the result was a foregone conclusion. Even for a pessimist like me it was disappointing. As last year it was left to us to fight back, which is not the way to approach these sort of games. Peake had a nightmare after returning too soon from injury and several other members of the team looked to be suffering from the previous defeat. Scott Oakes appearance genuinely livened things up and Town looked like scoring, and then did when "Tina" Shilton fluffed a save and Chunky Claridge knocked it in. The second had a touch of luck about it, when Scottys drive hit a stray foot (owned by Preece) and looped over Shilton. So Preece gets on the scoresheet by accident, but wouldn't it be nice if he got there deliberately more often. Valiant efforts were made for a third Town goal but as usual it was too little too late. We were spared the misery of extra time in spite of the referees several minutes of injury time. Another cup run (crawl) grinds to an embarrassing halt.

The state of the

10.10.92 BARNSLEY 3 TOWN 0

Where does one begin to describe this? Worse than Portsmouth, worse than Bristol City, worse than

Yep, it was another of those Town specialities, the gutless surrender. Only this time to opposition who couldn't even be described as mediocre. Yet again, we lost to a side who simply had the greater desire to win the game - we've all seen enough of the First Division this season to know that the Town are hardly out of their depth in terms of ability, but it has come to the stage where you have to question the commitment of some of the players. By nature the younger players will take their lead from their more experienced colleagues and if they appear disinterested, it becomes a case of "Why should I try, so-and-so isn't?" The bottom line is that whatever players feel about playing for Luton Town, we are entitled to demand 100% from each and every one; if this is not the case then I'm afraid they deserve the stick and piss-taking they got at Oakwell.

Anyway, I suppose I'd best write a little bit about the game itself. They scored. We didn't. They scored. They scored again. We hit the post. And again. And again. Peterson made a brilliant save. And again. And again. And again etc., etc., etc., And I wondered why I bother.

A.C.

17.10.92 TOWN 1 DERBY COUNTY 3

For the first 15 minutes there was only one team in this game, and it wasn't Derby, but as so often happens this situation had reversed come the last 15 minutes. Rees and Dreyer were dropped (as scapegoats for Barnsley?) with Oakes and Matthew starting - big changes, eh! Derbys opening goal seemed to take place in slow motion, but thats probably because we're getting used to seeing goals scored against us. At half time we were still in with a chance, and when Marvin scored we should have capitalised on it. Instead we relaxed and lost the game, for though Derby scored two more Petterson was left wide open on at least two other occasions and almost made a hash of those. When he comes out to clear the ball the forwards look as though their lucks arrived. Bring in Juergen, he'll terrify them. Another defeat, best described as abject, and still not bottom - Bristol Rovers must be bad.

A couple of points: Marvin may not be the most talented player we've got, but he certainly looks the most committed. Yet again we had a striker on the bench, and brought him on to play on the wing. WHY? Oakes may not have had much of a game, but it was a damn sight more of a game than (expensive) poser Gray.

K.H.

Pavement - Paving the way?

Their drummer is an alcoholic Bruce Grobbelaar lookalike who does handstands onstage. Their other drummer looks like Gazza. The guitarist is... oh, never mind. Meet Pavement: shambolic bonhomie, free celery and the mother of all rock 'n' roll freakiness. How many other Californians do you know who support Luton Town FC?

It was a Wednesday night at 18:00 and I'd just arrived home from work in London. Do I put my feet up and watch T.V.? Do I have dinner and go to the pub? NO. I get changed quickly and make haste to Luton Station and get a train straight back to where I had just come from. I exit the tube at Tottenham Court Road and meet my mates outside the Astoria Theatre. The three of us who were wearing Luton shirts were receiving rather misterious looks (not surprising as we were there to see a Californian band called Pavement). Sitting on the balcony we were approached by a dodgy looking male who none of us had seen before. He muttered a greeting to us and lifted up his jumper to reveal a Luton shirt. Was this to be the start of something bigger?

The main act of the evening came on. The drummer appears with a full bottle of blue label vodka and is furiously swigging away. I was totally finished when, half way through the second song, the guitarist and singer produces a Luton Cap. A scarf of similar colours is thrown on to the stage and is eagerly gathered by the bassist who wraps it round his neck. Various cries of "Luton" come from around the hall and the lead singer seems rather surprised at the presence of so many Town fans. "Kohler Out" he cries, to the applause of the crowd. "Hello Luton brothers", he adds. The music is

particularly grungy/American rock, verging on Indie. By now the drummer has finished off his bottle of vodka and between songs is doing hand stands in the middle of the stage. The band all admit to being rather strange. Indeed they are. This is the lead singer/guitarists 26th band, the drummer is a self confessed alcoholic, and their manager is apparently from Luton. If that is not strange for a band, what is? I mean how many bands from California do you know who support Luton.

S.T.



Malkmus, in a cool Californian accent, advises the crowd to watch out for Luton Town FC's progress next season, as he reckons "they're goin' straight back to the Premier Division". Then he sings a song alone, watched in varying stages of interest by the rest of the band, and

Live, they're unbelievable. Malkmus particularly – despite his bizarre fascination with Luton Town FC – has the rictus smile of a sane man desperately trying to wing it while everything collapses around him.





Towns new Captain leads out his side while chatting with Julian James.



Chunky getting stuck in where it hurts.

Raving Mad!!!

Dear "Mad"

Looking at the games played so far this season, several things spring to mind:-

- 1. What the hell has happened to Gray?
- What the hell has happened to Petterson? When ever I've seen him play for the reserves, he made Allen McKnight look good.
- 3. (Might answer No. 1 partly.) Why does Pleat expect Gray, and Claridge, to play out on the wing as well, when they should be in the middle waiting for a cross. Maybe that is why we are not scoring the goals?
- 4. And, finally, what is the point of Campell playing midfield or on the wing? After all didn't he prove himself more capable as a centre-forward against W******d?

K.I. Darkby Dunstable

Dear "Mad"

How much longer are we going to put up with the inept performances we've witnessed so far? I'll admit that I haven't watched us away yet this season, but it's incredible to think that our away form is actually better than our home form!

The present board seem unable to grasp the idea that football clubs cannot be run like any other business. To make money you have to spend money, and generating money within a football club is almost totally dependent on the success of the team on the pitch. Talking of the team, when will they start playing like one? There are only three outfield players who put anything near the kind of effort I would expect from a first team player, (Rees, Preece and Claridge). The rest don't seem to be that bothered about the dire situation we are in.

How much longer can Scott Oakes popularity live on the memories of a small handful of moves last season? How much longer can Philip Gray play up front when he's only scored once? The answer to both is "as long as they like" due to the small size of our squad. The first team practically

picks itself because they are the only 'players' we've got! What on earth does David Pleat see in Jamie Campbell? Julian James is the only player I know who can suffer from the effects of concussion six months before and a year after the event!

The 8,000 loyal supporters who used to turn up to every game is now down to about 6,000 if our attendances so far are anything to go by. If the club gets relegated again down to Division Two then I can see this falling to about 3,000. With those numbers the club will undoubtedly collapse in front of our very eyes. This situation can only be averted by buying new players as most of those we have got are not up to the job of staying up. We all know what has to happen first before we can enter the transfer market as a buyer and not a seller!

I know that there are a number of fellow supporters who feel passionately about the terrible mess our club is in, but who do not feel that protesting on the terraces is 'their way'. Well, there are other ways. Any protest is worth doing, no matter how insignificant it may seem. For example, I am returning my recently received Christmas Draw raffle tickets straight back with a letter protesting about the clubs situation and the M.D. Letter writing to the club and to the local press is a positive step. The only thing you must remember is to argue your case sensibly and politely. Richard Hewison

Luto

Dear "Mad"
Why do we bother? I did not think that things could get worse than Bristol City but....

Any bets on who will be next to be sold? Marvin for Blackburn Rovers at £5M?

Thanks alot.

Steve Whitehead

Wingrave

Dear "Mad"

Thanks for the zines which were a good read. Firstly, let me try to explain why I have such an interest in Luton Town. As you probably know most people have a second team which they always look out for the result of and mine just seems to be

Luton. Whilst staying with relatives in Luton, (it was summer so I missed seeing a game) I was lucky enough to persuade the bloke in the club shop to give me a tour of the ground and let me take some photos. He gave up about an hour of his time as he took me up the tunnel, the dressing rooms, offices, etc. An excellent public relations exercise by the club, I thought, as they stood to gain nothing out of showing me around. i.e. I live the other end of the country and am not going to be paying through the gate regularly.

I have seen Luton play once though in a 4-1 pre-season friendly victory over Stirling Albion. I got talking to a couple of Luton boys one of whom gave me his scarf and I was further engrossed. I have since purchased the Luton Town shirt, (how to get funny looks in a Scottish pub) and was recently asked by the police to put my jacket on at a St. Johnstone away match as the officer concerned was convinced that I was in the wrong end of the ground.

Incidentally, going back to Stirling Albion, anybody who was up for that game might be interested to know that they have been banned from their plastic pitch and have to now play all their home matches in Stenhousemuir (about 35 miles away). This was due to the fact that the council owned their ground and were not prepared to rip up the pitch. A new 6,000 all seater stadium is presently under construction on the outskirts of Stirling though.

As I said in my original letter, I am a St. Johnstone supporter whom for those of you who don't know come from Perth and are the proud owners of Britains first purpose built all seater football stadium. This was made possible thanks to Asda Supermarkets who very kindly bought our old ground from us and built a new ground for us on the outskirts of Perth with excellent slip road access (easy to get into the car park but bring a tent as it can take hours to get out). Upon first glancing at the picture which I have enclosed, you will doubtless think the new ground far superior to the old one.

Stop though, think about it for a minute, do fans really want to sit down (were we asked?), you just need to look at the protests at West Ham, Norwich, etc. to see the answer. Saints at the time were in the First Division though, where 2,000 was considered a reasonably good attendance and the deal went through with no protest from the fans.

Don't get me wrong though, I do like the new ground, we got promoted in our first season there and local interest in the



McDiarmid Park in all its glory

club started to increase. There are also far more women and children as a percentage of the crowd then you see at most other Scottish grounds as they see it as a safer environment for families. The stadium also has good modern facilities, e.g. you can see the game on close circuit TV, if you go for a pie during the game and it is rumoured that the screens are to be put in the toilets as well. This is good as it tends to stop build ups at half-time.

Personally, I far preferred to stand though as you could at least create a bit of atmosphere and jump about a bit. McDiarmid Park is quieter than the local graveyard most games. I think this is probably due to the number of families in the ground and went a long away towards our home record looking something like your away record last year. Also how are you supposed to keep warm when winter sets in sitting down.

I feel it would have been much better if the front of the new grounds stands had been left as terracing but then after being at Hampden for the Skol Cup Semi-Final maybe all seater is not so bad.

All the best.

Graham Farquhar

Perthshire

Dear "Mad"

Please could you fix it for the Town to win a game at home or failing that (nobody could fix that) send me the next five issues (13-17) of "Mad As A Hatter". In return I promise to put some money in my bank account so that the enclosed cheque doesn't bounce.

Thank you. Gareth Jones Dyfed

Dear "Mad"

Herewith £3 towards the next 5 issues (I give this willingly even though your communication addresses me as Gareth). As I am no longer a season ticket holder they represent something even more precious than before. If you care to read this letter, perhaps you will all understand the reasons why.

Back in the spring of 1983 I was one of those euphoric fans up in Manchester at about 4:45 on that fateful Saturday whose jubilation was dashed somewhat by the news over the radio that LTFC were planning to relocate to Milton Keynes. Even as I heard the news I experienced mixed feelings, anger that such a decision should be made and broadcasted in such a fashion and a sneaky logical thought that perhaps there was no realistic prospect of a move within the town and that therefore there might be no option other than to relocate and consolidate somewhere else.

Moving through the ups and downs of the rest of the 80's, including the two Littlewoods finals and the financial suicide perpetrated by David Evans in order to get us to Wembley, we come to the Nelkin/Kohler era. When Jimmy Ryan was sacked I wrote to Peter Nelkin advising him that he had made a mistake. Sometime later, after Mr. Nelkin had resigned, I received a letter from David Kohler inviting me to meet him in the boardroom. This I did in October, after Matthew Jackson had been sold to Everton, who came straight back to Kenilworth Road to provide the opposition in the worst home match I have seen for a very long time. I was impressed by Mr. Kohler's knowledge of the game as a whole and of the Luton players in particular. His broad plan, he told me, was to sell players who could be replaced by other players equally or almost as good whilst he established the club's finances and secured the future of the club with a mega move somewhere within the Borough of Luton. An

announcement, he assured me, would be made before Christmas 1991. Incidentally, he also told me the "real reason" for Jimmy Ryan's sacking and the amount of money Jimmy - deservedly in my view - got as compensation.

Well before the end of the season I was beginning to see the light all too clearly: most of the family silver, including the ground, either sold or on the point of being sold, no investment in the immediate future - i.e. Steve Sutton, who would surely have kept us in the Premier League had he been bought for what was really a very modest fee - or long term future, and no sense of direction or hope emanating from the Board of Directors. The club was fast becoming bankrupt in all but name and I was no longer prepared to throw money at it.

We all have our own ways of expressing our disapproval of what has become of Luton Town Football Club. I respect the standpoint of those who petition or demonstrate, provided it is kept within legal bounds, but I hope my standpoint is also understood. On a personal level, it has been a real pleasure not to have had to experience at first hand pitiful performances in defeats by Bristol City, Plymouth Argyle, Portsmouth, Barnsley, etc. I hope things change for the better.

Yours sincerely, Bryan Collins Harpenden, Herts.



THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT WHEN I SAID, "PULL OFF A DEFENDER!"

And now, a spot of nostalgia

BUTEN POWN BLUES! "PLAY ON!" SAID THE REFEREE!

I went down to the Oak Road Enclosure To watch the Hatters play. But I'd wasted all my money 'Cause that week the team were playing away!

I was sitting in a bar with my guitar
When a man said. "Can you play for Luton son"?
I said. "I don't believe I know it.
But you just sing and I will strum!"



On my left stood Eric Morecambe. He is ever so keen. He took off his famous glasses And leant them to the whole of the team.

A lady once 'phoned Harry Haslem Said. "What time is kick-off my dear?" Harry looked at the empty terraces And said. "What time can you get here?"

You all know Ron and Paul Futcher They give opponants lots of trouble. They all go off with concussion 'Cause they're sure they're seeing double.

Bob Paisley was buying up players To keep Liverpool as the champs. He said. "I'll make a bid for John Aston 'Cause Luton Town give green shield stamps!"





Well they sold Andy King to Everton. Keith Barber's gone to Timbuctoo. But they got a striker from Vauxhall And a keeper from the Whipsnade Zoo

So now you've heard about the Hatters. The second divisions leading lights. But there's one thing sadder than the blues. It's watching the amber havy and whites!

TUNE : ST. JAMES INFIRMARY

WORDS : RAY ASPDEN @1976

KOHLER OUT

Try as we might, we just couldn't let this issue pass without mention of our beloved MD - sadly because he's still with us. As we go to press, he's reported to be negotiating with a number of parties (sounds familiar?) including Keith "Son of Harry" Haslam, so fingers crossed, let's hope that this deal doesn't meet the "last-minute hitches" that have plagued our hero in his desire to wash his hands of Luton Town Football Club.

Now, one phrase that we keep hearing is that there "aren't any Jack Walkers out there". Doesn't this just show DK's lack of understanding of what the supporters are asking? I don't know about you, but I don't particularly want another Jack Walker (alright then, it would be nice), but what I do want is someone with the love of the club to invest some real money into the club. I want someone who'll only sell players if it is GENUINELY "in the best interest of the club" and preferably not at all. I want someone who'll provide money for strengthening the squad before it's necessary. I WANT IT NOW!

A.C.



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