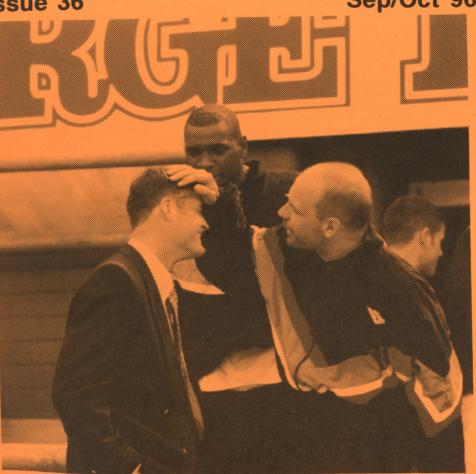
# MADASA HATTER!



ONLY 50<sub>p</sub>

Issue 36

Sep/Oct 96



Wayne "the Phantom Whistler" Turner prepares for a career in medicine, just in case the coaching doesn't work out. Either that or he's making sure that Frankie Bunn is real, not just an apparition.

# MAD AS A HATTER! THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE 50

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#### CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

Five more issues to go this season and, as ever, we need your help to fill them. Contributors receive a free issue of *Mad as a Hatter!* by way of thanks, so, to receive yours, get that match report, article, letter, cutting, cartoon or whatever off in the post to the above address. Deadline for issue 37 is 28th October, and it will be on sale on 9th November.

# EDITORIAL

Odd, isn't it, that just when I'm ready to write an editorial that really slags off the team for playing like a bunch of no-hopers against Chesterfield, they turn it on and beat Premiership opposition. The latter was an excellent performance in which Derby were outplayed and outfought, totally unlike the former when old style thud and blunder by the visitors overcame the Town's lack of ideas. We must now hope that the victory over Derby acts as a springboard for the season, convincing our players that they are actually capable of beating just about every team in our division. The trouble with that theory is that we've seen it happen before, with no beneficial effects. Printing deadlines mean that you will have more idea of the effect of that one game when you read this, than I have while writing it.

Comments by our esteemed leader, Lennie, after the Chesterfield game about players fitness were, it seems, somewhat misconstrued. Explanation a couple of days later revealed that the main victims of the 'two-games-a-week' syndrome were Oldfield, Fotiadis and Guentchev, none of whom can be faulted for the amount of effort they have put into our games so far this season. In Oldfield's case he has turned from last season's villain into this season's hero, running himself into the ground in every match, whilst allowances have to be made for Fotiadis, given that he has only been full-time for a couple of months. What is of more concern is that some had apparently done too much in training, whilst others had done too little. Given the age profile of our squad, they should be experienced enough to know how much is just right, and pace themselves accordingly. And if they are not doing enough in training, then they make bloody poor professionals.

Speaking of poor professionals, back in January the aforementioned Mr Lawrence imposed a ban on players going out drinking on Thursdays and Fridays before matches, on the basis of it being unprofessional. So, we might well ask why four players were seen out drinking in Luton the night before the Chesterfield match. Of the group seen in the Brewery Tap, three were in the team the following day, and we wonder if any of them were the 'fitness victims' of that game. This not only indicates a lack of professionalism, but an ignorance of their place in the public eye locally, and perhaps may be construed as showing contempt for supporters. And in case that group get away with it and think that going elsewhere may be a little safer, let's just say that we happen to know who was enjoying a quiet half (of London Pride) in a pub called the Three Tuns that night. A case of mice playing? On this occasion, no names, but only on this occasion. We care about performances on the field, and have every right to expect players to care just as much. They want us to get behind them on Saturday afternoons, but we don't expect them to be blocking our path to the bar the night before. Get it sorted lads, before it's too late.

# TACTICAL VOTING (PART 2)

Going on from issue 35 where we carried the voting for the first 14 or so categories, we continue, to finish the job this time around.

# Best Ground Visited Molineux

Winner for the third year running, although the competition are catching up. In second place was the excellent McAlpine Stadium at Huddersfield, with our very own Kenilworth Road sharing third place with The Hawthorns at West Bromwich. The Luigi Ferraris at Genoa may well have done better had more Hatters fans made the trip, but the vote for Elm Park "the last of a dying concrete breed" could only be down to nostalgia. The only ground to feature in the voting and not play host to Luton Town FC was the Olympic Stadium, Seoul, South Korea ("home to the 2002 World Cup Final?").

# Worst Ground Visited Elm Park

This was a really hotly fought category, with no less than 18 nominations, but Reading's fine example of terracing beat off the challenge of Southend's Roots Hall to take the prize for the second consecutive year. Kenilworth Road only got 1 vote, putting it on a level with the likes of Raunds, Buckingham Town, Torquay (a vote from a Stevenage supporter, perhaps?), Wigan and Doncaster.

# Low Point of the Season Dwight Marshall's injury

As this category was a close run thing, between four contenders, I'd like to offer my personal thanks to the individual whose answer said "Obvious really." Well, I'm sorry, but it wasn't, and through that comment you have failed to alter the course of history.

Quite clearly, three of the popular suggestions for low point are linked. Apart from Dwight's injury, the end of the home game against Stoke, and relegation itself/the Barnsley home game were nominated and, along with the Grimsby FA Cup game, these took the vast majority of the votes. Somewhat surprisingly, Homer's backpass did not feature at all. It is particularly interesting to note that one of those voting in this category was sunning himself on Waikiki Beach at the time of the low point, whilst another was in Montego Bay. Gosh, I bet that was a real bummer!

# High Point of the Season | Ian Feuer signing

There were lots of suggestions for what the high might have been but the signing of lan, which "at least gave us some hope," just beat off the challenge of Westley's departure and Lennie's Manager of the Month run, with the first 84 minutes at Vicarage Road coming in an honourable fourth.

#### Best Stewards/Police

#### West Bromwich/Luton

A rather hollow victory, as most of you managed to vote for individuals rather than being a little less specific. As a result the above two locations got the nod by virtue of getting two votes apiece. It seems from the voting that you are likely to find good and bad wherever you happen to be. A special mention must be made of a steward at Luton who also nabbed a couple of votes, apparently on account of her resemblance to Coronation Street's Vicki MacDonald. I have to say my favourite comment in this category is that, "Tosh and Burnside on The Bill repeats (UK Gold) are always good."

# Worst Stewards/Police Birmingham City

Well, given that again most of you voted for individuals, rather missing the point, it says something about how bad the idiots at Birmingham must have been to have wrested this away from the general unpopularity of our own <u>Stewards</u> at Luton (the Police at Luton are exempted by almost all those voting). The only others to get a mention more than once are the forces of incompetence at Vicarage Road, and, back to J Block, an individual dubbed the Luton Strangler.

# Best Away Pub Bar at Genoa (name unknown)

There wasn't one. It's our fault really. We should have realised that the big thing about a decent pub is that most of us don't remember what it is called, as in "don't remember, must have been pissed." So, there is an outside chance that the winner is a pub at Norwich, which is about the only town to have been mentioned more than once. But I don't like Norwich, so I'm using a casting vote to give the prize to the tiny bar outside the stadium at Genoa. A place the size of a postage stamp, it coped really well with the odd hundred English football supporters, drinking out on the pavement, singing and generally acting in a manner which would make our own British police get all stroppy. PC 699 was really quite bemused by it all.

# Things to Dread

As you read this, you might be alarmed to see how many of these fears have already been fulfilled. I can guarantee that the poll entries have been held securely, so this is pure coincidence. So, in no particular order, here are your worst fears.

More humiliating defeats.... Scott Oakes staying.... Playing fourth flight football in 1997/98.... Losing to Bristol City.... Losing to a Conference side in the 1st round of the FA Cup.... Going to the likes of Rotherham, Shrewsbury and Chesterfield and finding their grounds are better than ours.... Terry Westley returning.... The last 15 minutes of each match.... Small crowds, shit enttertainment.... Auto Windscreens Shield.... Kohler still being Chairman.... Not coming straight back up again.... Complacency.... Losing to York City.... Losing a match with about 6

minutes to go.... Nothing, not a thing!.... Losing to a pub team in the FA Cup 1st round.... No atmosphere at home, and getting lost in Shrewsbury.... Driving to Blackpool on a cold December night.... Losing Steve Davis/lan Feuer.... Finishing below Watford.... Hearing the draw for the FA Cup 2nd round after we've been knocked out.... Tuesday night away for a drubbing at Preston.... Shitford winning the second division — a very frightening possibility.... Taylor lining up for us ever again.... Trying to find these new poxy away grounds.... Luton's 2nd away strip in yellow and blue.... Missing an issue of Mad.... Marvin & Michell (our equivalent of Beavis and Butthead), Darren Patterson being in a Luton shirt.

# Things to Look Forward To

Or, mostly, a triumph of optimism over reality. Only time will tell of course. Julian's testimonial.... lan Feuer showing he cares like we do.... An announcement on Luton's future in Luton.... Getting through the first round of the Coca Cola Cup.... Winning the lottery and buying Kohler out.... The next issue of Mad.... Champions, Wembley.... Just winning more than we lose.... Beating Shitford in the playoff final in the 8th minute of injury time with a very dubious penalty, retaken twice after their keeper moved early and saved the first two efforts.... Blackpool away, Plymouth nightlife!.... 6 points off the scum.... Taylor taking the scum down again.... Not having to go to Barnsley or Grimsby for our usual defeat.... Scoring more than one goal in a season from a corner.... Winning the championship.... Stuffing W\*\*ford home and away.... Passing Portsmouth as they get relegated.... Good awaydays at Wycombe, Brentford, Watford?.... A good cup run (Auto Windscreens obviously).... The players who don't want to play for us leaving.... Winning the third division championship for the first time and getting 100 points.... Supporting your local team being fashionable again.... Being promoted with David Preece back at Luton.... Promotion.... New grounds and being able to stand up.... Single figure ticket prices and not going to Fratton Park.... Cricket season.... Being among the bookies favourites to win something.... Doing a Swindon and bouncing back in style.... Winning Div 2 by miles.... W\*\*f\*\*d floundering in mid-table.... Gary Waddock scoring a goal.... lan Feuer in short shorts.... The lads coming to Walsall.... Luton being the best team.... Auto Windscreens Shield (Wembley '97).... Loads of goals and bags of points.... Luton scoring more than 40 goals.... No Anglo Italian Cup, although a trip to Swansea on a cold January evening beats an October evening in Genoa anyday!.... Scott Oakes trying.... The return of Nick's red mac.... Skelton getting a game.... Two games in Bristol.... Getting rid of all the shit fringe players.... Kohler pissing off.... Happier Monday mornings at work.... A new ground — some hope.... New grounds = new pubs!.... Seeing loads of new teams.... Selling Oakes.

Finally, thanks to all of you who voted, and thanks for your kind comments about Mad as a Hatter! Looks like we must be doing something right.

The Hatters are never far from the thoughts of a true Luton Supporter. Even on holiday, on a hot Spanish beach in the summer, the bare boobs that surrounded me reminded one of those made in both penalty areas last season, with the net result that we are now back in the division we thought had been left for good twenty-six years ago. Now, quite a few of you will not remember that promotion winning season, but as a Luton-crazy schoolboy, I couldn't wait to get to Kenilworth Road in those days. And neither could most of the other boys in my class as crowds averaged nearly fifteen thousand.

The visitors on the opening day of that 1969-70 season were lowly Barrow, who now play in the Unipart Steradent Always-with-wings League, or some such competition. We ran out comfortable 3-0 winners that afternoon and followed this up with a single Malcolm MacDonald goal victory at Bournemouth the following week. Further triumphs came at home to Orient and Bristol Rovers, and these were followed by away successes at Southport, Plymouth and Walsall, with new signing Matt Tees scoring a brace in the latter two games.

And so, by the end of September, which is roughly the time you will be reading this terrific new edition of *Mad as a Hatter!*, Luton were sitting unbeaten at the top of the table.

Unfortunately, they are not unbeaten this time around, and it is a safe bet that they are not troubling the leaders. For the benefit of the young fans who were not around at the time and the senile who have probably forgotten, I thought it might be interesting to compare the squads from that era with those of today, (well, as interesting as another home defeat anyway) with time honoured marks out of ten:

# Sandie Davie (7) v lan Feuer (8)

Davie was on the small side for a keeper, and although agile, was not brilliant at crosses. For the most part a sound defence protected him but he got jittery towards the end of the season and was dropped after a defeat at Tranmere. It has to be said that, on the evidence so far, the big Yank ain't at his brilliant best, but hopefully this is only temporary.

# John Ryan (8) v Julian James (6)

Ryan was a marauding, tough tackling fullback who liked to get forward and have a crack. Quick and determined, he made the occasional error and notched the odd own goal throughout a career which peaked in the top division with Norwich. Jules makes more than occasional errors and scores the odd own goal. (For the benefit of the senile, this was the John Ryan signed in July '69, not to be confused with the John Ryan who left the club two months earlier — Ed)

Jack Bannister (8) v Mitchell Thomas (6)

Bannister was a solid, consistent performer, the type that did his job with the minimum of fuss, and that you hardly noticed. A bit like Mal Donaghy. You always seem to notice Mitchell though, don't you?

Mike Keen (7) v Gary Waddock (8)

Even in those heady days the Kenilworth Road faithful had their whipping boy and Keen was the chosen one. He was manager Stock's first signing but was considered slow and past it. His constant inter-passing with his mate John Collins upset a few, but at least the passes usually got to their intended destination. Which is more than Waddock's sometimes do. Never mind, he's 100% committed diamond geezer.

Chris Nicholl (8) v Steve Davis (6)

In those days, if a player had played a blinder against Luton they just went ahead and signed him. Such was the case when Halifax went home with an early season point, mainly due to his efforts. I just hope that Stevo plays a blinder against someone and that they fork out the three-quarters of a million that he cost, coz he just wasn't worth that amount.

John Moore (7) v Marvin Johnson (7)

Moore was a no nonsense half back who played the game simply and directly. Many local youngsters benefited from a new football as they flew high over the stand following his hefty clearances. It's amazing to think that Marvin's been around for nearly ten years and despite Mooro's coaching, has turned into a half decent defender at last.

Alan Slough (8) v Graham Alexander (7)

Before the moonies allegedly got hold of him, Slough was an excellent utility player and only missed two games that season. He went on to appear in an FA Cup Final with Fulham. "Bell" is also versatile; he reminds me of the old saying, "if Typhoo put the T in Britain, who took the c--t from Scunthorpe?" Some very unkind people claim that whoever it was sent him to Luton!

John Collins (6) V Bontcho Guentchev (7)

Like Bontcho, Collins was not often a crowd favourite. He was an ugly git, but scored several important goals from midfield. Like Keen, he was past his sell by when he got here. But like you and I, he's never played alongside Stoichkov etc. Yes, Bontcho is the only member of this division to have figured in Euro 96! Hope the peasants at Bury, Crewe, Gillingham and suchlike get the red carpet out for him — they jolly well ought to.

Keith Allen (8) v Tony Thorpe (7)

Allen was industrious, committed, skilful and knew where the goal was, once

scoring a hat-trick after coming on as a substitute. He will no doubt be having a chat with Town fans when they visit Plymouth, where he still lives after joining them from Luton. Somehow, I can't see Thorpie having much time for the Hatters next season, let alone in twenty five years time. Needs to smarten up in the shop window if he wants to be sold.

Matt Tees (8) v Kim Grant (6)

Tees was on the stringy side for a centre forward, but nevertheless was brilliant in the air, which helped him to 13 goals that season. He was also one of the bravest men around — not afraid to lose teeth or risk broken bones for the cause. He is still considered a God at Grimsby, where he had two spells. Grant, on the other hand, would appear to still have all his teeth, but shows little bite.

Malcolm MacDonald (9) v David Oldfield (8)

Bit of an unfair comparison, this one. MacDonald is still a legend in Luton. He burst upon the scene that year, was ever present, and his explosive pace, determination and lethal left foot got him 28 goals by the season's end. The rest of his career is history, as they say. Nobody, but nobody, works harder than "Skippy" and so far this term he has been the best Town player on view. Long may it continue.

Graham French (9) v Ceri Hughes (7)

There are obvious similarities with this pair. Hughes likes a drink, French drank more. Hughes has a temper and an attitude problem, French's was worse. Ceri pisses about, Graham pissed about more. Ceri scores good goals whereas Graham got brilliant ones. Hughes has talent (honestly!) but French had unbelievable skill which meant that all the rest was forgiven. Hughesie hasn't been to jail though—yet! In short then, no contest!

Other comparisons can be made between say Terry Branston (who lost his place to Nicholl) and Darren Patterson who also seems to be out of favour. Paul Showler seems a direct type of left-winger, as was Mike Harrison, but hopefully not as injury prone. Also, it is to be hoped that young Fotiadis' promise does not fade like a certain Viv Busby's did.

Christmas 1969 saw Town still leading the pack following a 5-0 thrashing of Bradford City, but had a bad spell afterwards which, including a 5-1 reverse at Shrewsbury, interrupted their progress. Another iffy spell in early spring pushed them further down the table, but they recovered well and vital wins against rivals Reading (twice) and Fulham put them back in contention behind Orient, achieving promotion on April 20th after a 0-0 draw at Mansfield. I'll settle for second place this time around too!

A.J. Robinson

# West Ludden La-La-La

Although the atmosphere at Kenilworth Road has often been given a morgue like status, nobody can deny that the away game atmosphere (when we take a large following) has been a loud, joyous (?) occasion where we all "sing our hearts out for the lads". But what are the new chants being heard from Lennie Lawrence's Blue and White Army this year?

First of all, 'Luton's Going Up' to the tune of 'Football's Coming Home' was heard loud and clear at the start of the season — but expect it to die out in the coming months if present form is anything to go by. To the same tune 'Watford's Full of Shit' will, I'm sure, become a popular one (especially October 29th) because of it's, um, well, truthfulness. Heard at Brentford was 'Ooh Aah - Alexander-a' which is quite frankly laughable — but quite catchy, but 'Ooh Aah - Gary Waddock' was going just that little bit too far.

As for the traditional chants, 'Poor Little Hornet' is still a long term favourite, and 'Feu-er, Feu-er' will always be heard. 'Bontcho, oh Bontcho, Bontcho' hasn't caught on yet, but can't we start singing 'Piss Off Mitchell' to give him the message (and before anyone starts having a go at me, saying "give him a chance", he has had 3 years to prove himself — how many more chances does he need?). Also, who else thinks that the 'Kohler Out' chants should start up again?

As for the chant in the title, that won't occur unless you were at the B&H Cup Final at Lord's in July and had a parrot sitting behind you (for those of you who don't understand this, don't worry, only one other person will).

I still have a copy of 'Hatters, Hatters' by the Barron Knights, I know the chorus, but I'm off to learn the verses ready for the next away trip. Altogether now — "Hatters, Hatters, What a great team......"

Evita, the mad Argie

# RADIO DAZE

I may have been hearing things, but I don't think so. It was 8.35 am on Tuesday 17th September, and Three Counties Radio were previewing the nights Coca Cola Cup ties, when David Croft said that Luton Town have had a good cup record in recent years, and would be looking to do well in the match against Derby to provide a springboard for the season. I've no problem with the latter part, but a good cup record? We've let in 13 goals in our last 2 FA Cup games, and before Bristol Rovers hadn't won a League Cup tie for 6 years. Is that a good record, David, or just journalistic licence?

K.F.H.

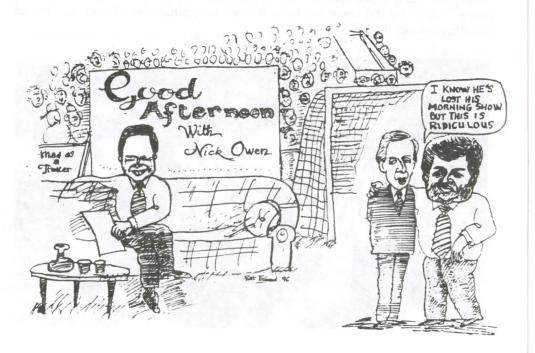


(Above) A grim look on the face of David Oldfield, a man whose determination this season has been a pleasure to behold. (Below) "What are we doing wearing yellow?" could be the comment from Mitchell (or perhaps we should use this for a caption competition).



An excerpt from Garry Nelson's excellent book *Left Foot Forward*, which is well worth reading, and now available in paperback. It seems his words have been ubheede since this was written. In fact probably the only way that we'll get a decent home run together is by locking the away team changing room after they've gone in. Just a suggestion Lennie, but worth bearing in mind.

Another win! Hot diggitty! And cold baths. Never mind. We were too happy to mind very much. But a word to the Luton wise might be in order. After seven home defeats this season it's surely worth them updating their gamesmanship ploys. I know the ground looks like something out of the Ark, but the roasting hot dressing rooms, the differently pressured kick-in balls, the half-time teapot that's oversugared to a Tottenhamesque extent, the icy cold baths – we've all been there, seen it and come away with three points. Aren't there any twentieth-century ways of loading the Luton dice before 2001 is upon us?



# American dream coming true?

For those who are drawn to the fraternal order of frivolous facts, step forward. If you love to pontificate on your extreme knowledge of the obvious, lend an ear. And if you can recite by rote the vital statistics of every number four who has ever pulled a shirt on for the local eleven, while at the same time completely missing your own wedding anniversary five years running, come and kneel at the altar in the Church of the Holy Sports Page.Major League Soccer, America's last-gasp chance turned over night success story, has just celebrated it's half season anniversary and we (that is, those of us on this side of the big pond who care) are giving thanks and singing hallelujah.

So, in keeping with the festive mood, sit back and relax as your eyes and minds wander through a litany of a few of Major League Soccer's greatest (so far) hits.

It took only 47 league matches to attract one million spectators. Original projections had been for this figure to be achieved in 84 matches (thumbs up then to the marvels of modern day merchandising). Two ex-Hatters found employment with MLS squads — Geoff Aunger with New England Revolution and Matthew Olson with Washington, D.C. United. Olson, who was only at LTFC for one month (his pal Juergen Sommer got him a trial) and played in two reserve matches before moving on, was later traded to the New York/New Jersey MetroStars and eventually released by that club. Ironically, he later had a two week stint with the Revolution. Aunger, in the meantime, has been a central player in coach Frank Stapleton's midfield, scoring three goals from the penalty spot and has captained the side in the absence of US national side team-mate Mike Burns. Speaking of the MetroStars, coach Eddie Firmani was fired after only six matches. At the time the NY/NI team had the league's worst record and if you don't win in the Big Apple you don't survive to taste the fruit. League big cheese (another tasty lead in, wouldn't you say?) Doug Logan says success is not going to change expansion plans. Expect new clubs, possibly two, to coincide with the league's new TV contract in 1999 (off the record Logan said Chicago will get the first new club). Canned music being played in the stadium is creating a false enthusiasm and is ruining what is slowly developing as a real atmosphere in many facilities. At this point the goal of the season belongs to New England's Alberto (Beto) Naveda. The Argentinian's 60 yard chip was reminiscent of Nayim's beauty against Arsenal in the 1995 Cup Winners Cup Final.

Foxboro Stadium's security chief John Barry says soccer crowds still "scare the hell" out of him. Though with the exception of one incident in New York, he readily admits the fans have been well behaved and represent a family type of crowd. Obviously Mr Barry tends to believe everything he reads in

the tabloids. The ten home openers averaged 33,821 fans (69,255 in L.A. and 46,826 in NY/NJ were the top two). Los Angeles also leads the league in average attendances (43,342) and, again, NY/NJ is second (28,154), with the other eight clubs averaging between 12,000 and 19,000 per match, with the MLS average at 20,476. Major League Success - Mauricio Cienfuegos of Los Angeles Galaxy. Major League Stiff - Leonel Alvarez of Dallas Burn, at least in his speak only Spanish approach to media writers from around the league. Unlike the nine other MLS coaches, the Revolution's Frank Stapleton appears to have a strong aversion to any player whose last name ends in the vowels a, i, o and u. In the 'there is still work to be done' department, the Kansas City Wiz (put your own comment here) biography sheet on Mo Johnston lists him as having played for both Protestant Celtic and Catholic Rangers, No doubt the boyos across the border would love that blunder. The New England Revolution are fast becoming Luton Town West due to their inability to hold on to leads and surrender killer goals in the last 10 minutes (8 in 13 matches).

Fanzines (that means there IS intelligent soccer life in the colonies) have started to appear. New England has Pictures of Chairman Mao, San Jose has The Keeper, DC United has Screaming Eagles and NY/NI (who else) has two— A Kick In The Ass and Stars And Beyond. First half match figures average thus: goals for- 1.6 per match (LA 33), goals against - 1.7 per match (Columbus 41) - yes, the joys of parity. Number of matches ending level and requiring a shoot-out were 20 (8%). NY/NJ defender Nicola Caricola scored five goals in the first eight matches, although unfortunately, three of them were own goals. Raul Diaz Arce of Washington, D.C. United had a four goal game. The New England Revolution have thus far been the only MLS team to score at least one goal in every game, and also became the only team to shutout runaway leaders Los Angeles Galaxy. The mid-season All-Star game (the best MLS game by far) ended East 3 (Ramos, Savarese, Pittman) West 2 (Preki, Kreis) and was played in front of 78,416 in NY/NI's Giant's Stadium. The crowd was a record for any sporting event at the stadium and only the visit last summer of Pope John Paul II drew a larger audience. Carlos Valderrama of Tampa Bay (East) was deservedly voted Man of the Match. At the halfway point Tampa Bay's American striker Roy Lassiter leads the league with 12 goals. And, finally, as you read this the second half of the season is fast winding down and eight of the ten teams (the top four in each division) are heading into the league playoffs. The Eastern and Western champions will meet in New England's Foxboro Stadium on Sunday October 20, Hopefully, the final match of MLS's first season will equal the thrill of what has developed into America's fifth major sport. Football has arrived (better extremely late than never) and is putting down roots!

Brian Surettee

# TOWN TRAVELS

So, our tour of discovery continues. But, as it's Autumn, we have some rare treats in store. The fixture computer, which really can't be very state-of-the-art, has given us some of our longest and most awkward away trips of the season over the next six weeks, and during midweek at that. Guaranteed to reduce the Town's travelling support, I'll wager.

First up is Wrexham, on October 1st. The town is handily placed around 40 miles from the nearest motorway, which will ensure the whole trip is a right pain. The ground is essentially three sided, with the Mold Road side closed (gone moldy?), and the visitors accommodation is likely to be all seated in the Marston's Stand behind the goal at the "Welsh" end of the ground. Apparently, the TURF HOTEL, which has a balcony overlooking the pitch, allows away supporters in, and is obviously handy for the ground. In the town centre, the ALBION HOTEL, 1 Pen-y-Bryn, and the GOLDEN LION, 13 High Street might be worth a try.

Shrewsbury is our next port of call, but at least it's a Saturday. Away supporters are housed in the Station End and Station Stand, presumably to try and lull opposition defences into being stationary! Apparently police advice is to keep clear of the Town centre, and not wear colours when walking from the station, in the interests of safety. The CROWN, on Abbey Foregate, allows away fans and is suitable for families, whilst the CASTLE VAULTS, 16 Castle Gates is just around the corner from the station and is highly recommended.

You've barely recovered from the trauma of Shrewsbury, and we're off again, this time to Stockport for another midweek game on the 15th. The consolation is that Robinson's Hatters Mild is widely available in the town. At the ground we get the joys of open terracing, and potentially, a thorough soaking — after all, it's got to happen sooner or later. The ARMOURY, Greek Street, is described as handy for Edgeley Park, and sells the aforementioned Hatters Mild, whilst the GREYHOUND, 7 Bowden Street, sells Boddingtons, and welcomes families. The town does have plenty of good pubs though, and if you have time you should try a few.

After all that travelling, the next away game is a whole fortnight away, and only down the road. But we all know that Hertfordshire police and WFC can't organise the proverbial visit to a brewery, so we'll probably be in the lower Rous again, rather than the Rookery where we should be. And drinking is a definite no-no. Fortunately, this won't be the case when we go to Plymouth the following Saturday, for another stint on an open terrace. Drinking is easier, and the finely named PENNYCOMEQUICK, Central Park Avenue, is certainly the best bet, although about three-quarters of a mile from the ground. It is 'child friendly', and has a selection of real ales, as well as doing bar meals including an all day breakfast.

That's it for now.

K.F.H.

# The Pirate of Luton Town

The Boring Old Fart's refrain from Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Pirates of Penzance' (with apologies)

# Verse 1

When the Chairman's not engaged in his employment, (his employment)

Or maturing all his architectural plans,

(tectural plans)

His capacity to hope for quick preferment,

(quick preferment)

Is just as great as any fervent fan's.

(fervent fan's)

# Verse 2

When the oldies finished cursing all the players, (all the players)

And wishing Town would score a goodly few, (goodly few)

He can dream about Steve Foster's Gunner slayers, (Gunner slayers)

And going up from old Division Two.

('Vision Two)

# Verse 3

When the board has finished guzzling down the champers. (down the champers)

And Len has finished choking on his bun,

(on his bun)

We can all take heart from opening Christmas hampers, (Christmas hampers)

Full of prospects for returning to Div One.

(we hope)

The Boring Old Fart

# "Mad" Merchandise



Have you got one yet? Because Jimmy Ryan hasn't. The new '74 away shirt from Mad as a Hatter! is available now, in wonderful white, blue and orange. Made in England in 100% cotton with an embroidered LTFC 'football' badge, and definitely not a replica of the one modelled in the picture. Already modelled at Town games by a select few, this is now on general release, and can be yours for just £28.95, including post and packing, and comes in two sizes -L & XI.

The home shirt, as pictured, is still available at £26.95, but only while current stocks last, after which it will also cost £28.95.

# **Another excellent product - Luton News**

Please send me a 1974 home/away	* shirt. I enclose a cheque for £26.95/£28.95*
	Size: L/XL*
Address:	Shelo - she is a same in
(*Dele	ete as appropriate)

Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* Send orders to: 292 Icknield Way, Luton, LU3 2JS.

# **Kenilworth Road Aerial Photo**

10"x8" Aerial colour photograph

A visual reminder of the ground's character before the days of the Taylor Report (and before the Kohlerdome?)



ONLY £3.50

Two versions available — new (as above) and old (as in Issue 34). Special price for the pair - £6.00

tor the part - 20.00
Please send me the new/old aerial photo. I enclose a cheque for £3.50/6.00
Name:
Address:
The state of the s
Cheques payable to Mad as a Hatter! Orders to 292 Icknield Way, Luton, LU3 2JS.

RAVING MAD

Dear "Mad",

Pathetic, weak, undisciplined, lacking any technique. These are some of the adjectives used by Mr Geoffrey Boycott to describe the state of the English national cricket team. They can also be used in describing our very own team, Luton Town. It's probably not right to panic just yet but the results are talking for themselves. For 3, against 10, points nil. What hope have we got for the rest of the season?

I haven't got any answers, but it is obvious that there are players who have been with the club too long, and take playing every game for granted. In the past the club has been somewhat of a shop window for bigger clubs, and I would have though that would have had a good effect on the younger element. If they see what happened to players like John Hartson, getting a dream move to the likes of Arsenal, it would make them give 100% every game, and act as a spur for new players coming in. I know that sounds as though it would mean we would stagnate and not get far, but not getting far is better than going downwards.

To add insult to injury we have also got a new kit, a third kit, that is yellow. What do we want with yellow. If I wanted to see a team play in yellow I would go and emigrate to Brazil. Hooray for Tim Kingston's comments.

Lastly, I know we haven't had much to cheer about in recent seasons, but how about some more humour in the magazine. Here's my attempt:

Q: What's the most popular song sung around Division 2 grounds?

A: You're going down with the Luton.

Lennie Lawrence walks into a restaurant and orders a steak. "What about vegetables?" asks the waiter. "They'll have the same." says Lennie.

Sorry, but I'm not very good at ironic humour.

Yours,

Gav,

Hemel.

PS. Reading the back of this season's first Mad (issue 35) and the reference to a prat in Hemel who supports the scum. The place is teaming with them. I would like to know if there are any more Hatters in Hemel.

Dear "Mad",

From Helsinki I come and stay in Luton which I enjoy, but not team of footballing. I am writing goodly to supply for win team.

Once you must a goal tall keeper who can gladly stop and you have lan Feuer.

Twicely be a good just defence don't panic muchly and stop attackers who are scoring plenty.

Fielders in the middle are good nicely also pass the ball and about a lot of running

but not too much puffed out. It is good if there are four but more sometimes to assist score many in net.

Two is a good number of scorers but not too much as total only eleven allowed. Goodly if immediately can score many and not waste chance or fall over unless bagging penalty.

Most importantly is boss who is Lenny and can say that team do tactics he makes up. Sometimes not make sense is not good. He must do sensible and then good team will be made for wins. As we say in Finland, "There is winners always and then also losers unless it's a tie."

All players must nicely polite to rule referees who confusion can sometimes do and hold up the coloured cards and get puffed out also.

From

N. Viren

Ed's note: I suspect that this letter is not intended to cause offence to our readers in Finland, and would like to apologise if it does do so.

Dear "Mad",

From my point of view the only good news throughout the abject 95/96 season was the relegation of my local club, Millwall. Relegation didn't go down too well around here. Westley, now at my local club's rivals, Charlton, said we were a top six side, whilst Jimmy Nicholl said Millwall would get into the playoffs when he took over. Does *Mad as a Hatter!* think that these two tipsters are in some way related?

Tom Kelly London SE8.

Dear "Mad",

Just a quick note to say thanks for the betting voucher. Ignoring my husband's advice to back Luton to win the Second Division this season, I put the money on 'Talathath' in Walter Swinburn's comeback race at Windsor — a 4/1 winner! Like finding money in the street, etc.

Regards,

Karen Maxfield Reading.

Ed's note. Karen won the £25 WILLIAM HILL voucher after finishing top of last season's HatterLeague. £100 (less tax, I suppose) for an outlay of 25p ain't bad going.

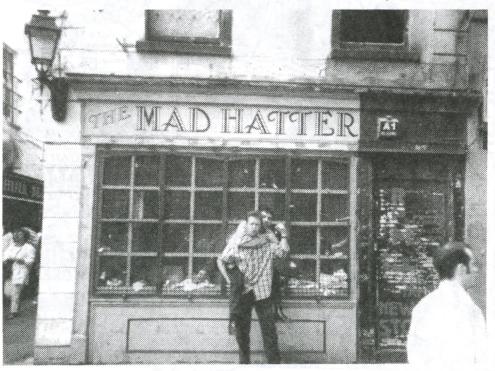
Dear "Mad",

I enclose a photo of myself and my mate, Pav Sangherra, two long suffering fans in front of an appropriately named shop in Dublin, taken during a friends stag do.

I thought I would share with you a slice of luck I had during the weekend (unfortunately, it didn't involve any buxom Irish lasses — we scored the same amount as John Taylor last season).

Part of the weekend involved the Irish Derby, and due to a few too many Guinesses I invested a blue drinking voucher on a no-hoper called Zagreb, because the jockey's colours were similar to the mighty Hatters' shirt. I then had the piss taken out of me for wasting my time on a 33-1 shot. Imagine my delight as it stormed down the home straight quicker than Dwight Marshall (before the broken leg), making the rest of the field look positively Trevor Peakish in the 89th minute. It seemed as though I was the only person on the whole racecourse who had backed it, and I was getting some very strange looks as I was jumping up and down, throwing Guinness everywhere, shouting "Come on Luton" as it romped home. I was even happier when I noticed that the stripes on the jockeys shirt were red and not orange and it was only a printing error in the racecard that had caused me to back it! It was about time supporting this club gave me pleasure..... Though I have invested the £160 winnings in another season ticket..... things can only get better...?

And here they are; Matt Hall and Pav Sangherra outside that shop in Dublin.



# more from the LT-X FILES



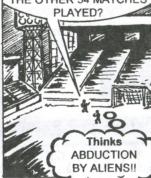
# with Bobbin Dino as Agent Mouldy



#### BACK TO THE PLOT . .



ASK YOURSELF AGENT MOULDY - WHERE WERE THE OTHER 54 MATCHES



MOULDY AND SCRUBBER LOOKED AT THE FILES



THIS OFFICIAL STATEMENT SAYS LTFC HAVE A LOT OF SHIT-HOT PLAYERS ON THE PAYROLL JUST WAITING TO BE BOUGHT UP BY BARGAIN



SEE ANY OF THESE PLAYERS?

SO WHY DO WE NEVER







THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE: I ALLOW ALIENS TO ABDUCT PLAYERS ON LOAN TO ALDEBARAN UNITED



IN RETURN THEY HAVE PROMISED TO SEND A FLYING SAUCER WHICH WILL SHAG MY DOME



AND I WILL HAVE LOTS OF LITTLE DOMES TO SELL AND I'LL MAKE LOADS O'MONEY!

BASTARDS



UNBELIEVABLE - OR IS IT?

# TOWN JOIN CHASING PACK

We've said it before, and we'll say it again, match reports are always welcomed from readers, if only to keep down the number of reports from the prolific *Beatle* that we have to use. Apart from that, it helps to provide a wider cross section of views about the games, so get writing, and send your reports to the usual address, please.

# 05.07.96 TOWN 4 WEST HAM UNITED 2

Four penalties in the stats column might seem a little bit far fetched, but at least it allowed John Taylor to score (at last). James missed his penalty, but followed up the rebound, and Grant made it 2-0 before half-time. The 'Ham made it 2-1 shortly after, but penalties from Guentchev and Taylor put it beyond doubt, before Dowie pulled back a late consolation. 2,800 odd turned up to pay 'homage' to Jules. It would have been more but for Preecey's farce last year. On this performance, things look bright for the coming season - but please note I am writing this while listening to Bristol City's fifth goal on Three Counties Radio.

The Beatle

#### 07.08.96 TOWN 2 NORWICH CITY 0

After a game like this, it was difficult not to be optimistic as a Town fan, but probably very easy to be worried as a Norwich supporter. Highlight of the game was the editor receiving a minor ticking off from the police (and a week's ribbing in the pub) after Rush's totally unjustified reaction to so-called terrace humour. After he sliced the ball wide of the Kenny end goal and was promptly subbed, the comment that "that might be called finishing" was surely justified.

K.F.H.

#### 10.08.96 BRIGHTON 0 TOWN 2

Once in a while the day out is far more important than the match. This was one of those occasions. A beautiful day in Brighton, with gloriously uninterrupted sunshine, and only slightly interrupted pubs and drinking. During the afternoon siesta Kim Grant scored twice, and the League's oldest player (Jimmy Case, at 42) decided to give this game a miss after playing in Brighton's three previous friendlies. Nothing to provoke optimism for the downtrodden Brighton faithful, but God was in his heaven for Hatters fans.

Ken Ross

17.08.96 TOWN 1 BURNLEY 2 "Everyone seems to know the score They've seen it all before...."

Did Skinner and Baddiel write this song for England in Euro '96, or did they write

it for the Town? I suspect the latter. New season, new division, same old crap. Burnley's only 2 tactics gave them a 2 goal lead within 30 minutes — that being kick and run, or blast the ball across the goal hoping for a deflection of some kind — with Luton old boys/rejects (delete as applicable) Thompson and Nogan scoring. Alexander hit the post in between, but we only woke up on 35 minutes, when Thorpe opened the Town account for the season. The second half was all Luton, but as usual crap crosses and our failure to take what chances we get — including a missed penalty — condemned us to a 1-2 scoreline, and no points.

The Beatle

# 20.08.96 TOWN 3 BRISTOL ROVERS 0 Was that really Oldfield?

As a general rule I don't usually go to the 1st and 2nd round matches of the League Cup, which, with our track record, meant that this was my first such match since the '89 Final against Forest. For a pleasant change, we actually won quite convincingly. The first goal came on half time, when Grant was tripped in the area and Thorpe slotted home the penalty — with Bontcho's job coming under threat. The second half started with a 2 minute spell that shocked even the most optimistic of Town fans. First, Bristol's 'dodgy keeper' comes out and misses a kick, leaving Grant to score into an empty net. Then, a cross by Thorpe saw 'Skippy' Oldfield power home a diving header — to send us into rapturous celebrations (well, almost). The teamwork was a big improvement on Saturday, with Hughes making a welcome return and Feuer again playing superbly — but Waddock was ridiculously sent off for two yellow cards late in the second half. Although we'll try our damn hardest, I don't think even we could let slip a three goal lead in the second leg.

The Beatle

#### 24.08.96 BRENTFORD 3 TATTERS 2

Same team, same players, same rubbish. All my early season optimism blown into tatters. In all honesty, Brentford were an ordinary side with, perhaps, two or three good players, but the difference between them and Luton was that they played for each other and even when losing never gave up. Lennie said afterwards that, even when ahead, Town didn't believe they were going to win. Say no more! The first half was poor, neither side really got going, with chances few and far between. 'Handbag' is slowly becoming one of our more consistent performers and it was his determination that won a penalty just before half time, which Tony Thorpe expertly put away.

At 1-0 you would expect a team to come out for the second half in a fighting mood. Ah!..... But this is Luton! Not so. They played so casually that an equaliser was inevitable and sure enough not long afterwards it happened.

Surprisingly, Town were able to get back in front through a heavily deflected

Ceri Hughes strike (deflected off of Watford reject Barry Ashby - Ed). With 15 minutes to go, you had to fancy Luton. However, making assumptions with Luton is not a wise move. Once again, after another bad defensive lapse, Brentford equalised on 80 minutes and you couldn't help but think "Here we go again". Two minutes to go, with Luton hanging on for dear life, the defence went AWOL and for Brentford, Christmas came early.

Talk about deja vu. To say we were all pissed of was an understatement. Another large Town following left thinking about what might have been. To coin a phrase, SAME TEAM, SAME PLAYERS, SAME RUBBISH.

J. S.

#### 27.08.96 BRAZIL CITY 5 TOWN 0

....at least, that's what we made them look like!

For the first hour, we were totally outfought and outclassed — by poxy Bristol City! The only players who showed any fight were Oldfield, Thorpe — until he got red-carded for the wrong sort of fight, and Hughes — who uncharacteristically managed not to lose his cool. On this evidence, local derbies with Stevenage Borough are only a year away. I wonder if Town fans from North Herts will still be our fans by then.

For us privileged few who witnessed this debacle, it was a total embarrassment. Some Town fans justifiably showed their disgust by providing the first "Lawrence out" chants. Most people thought we would comfortably cope in this division, and with the players we have this should be the case. Except they are so far showing as much stomach for the fight as they did at the end of last season. If Lenny can't give them the kick up the arse they so obviously need, maybe he should go. After all, just 5 miles up the A1081, there sits at home, twiddling his thumbs, a man who resurrected Bolton Wanderers — where his strict style of management worked. If things don't improve by the end of September, perhaps Kohler should give him a ring. Us Town fans can't take much more of this bollocks.

Objét

# 31.08.96 TOWN 1 ROTHERHAM UNITED 0

What possessed me to go to great lengths at work to attend this game, is something I will question for the rest of the season. Never have I witnessed such dross by a team who seem totally incapable of putting more than two passes together. As shocking a game as he had, I must admit to having a certain amount of sympathy for Kim Grant. Obviously low on confidence, he could well have done without the reception he got when he left the field. That said, his performance didn't give anyone much optimism for the rest of the season.

As for the match, the only bright spots were good solid performances from 'Handbag' and our very own super sub 'Botchup'. The irony of the day was that

the worst player on the pitch scored the softest of goals. A better side would have slaughtered Luton, heaven help us if we get through to the next round of the Pepsi Max Cup and get Manchester United! I wouldn't know where to hide my face at work.

J.S.

# 04.09.96 BRISTOL ROVERS 2 TOWN 1

On our second visit to Bristol in just over a week, at least we knew we couldn't lose 5-0 this time, at least on aggregate. However, there wasn't as much confidence among the supporters as might be expected. The general feeling was that if Rovers got an early goal, we would be in trouble. And so, it came to pass, that Rovers got an early goal, and optimism on the away terrace waned. When they got a second goal, it vanished completely, and we felt very fortunate not to be in a worse position at half time. Urgent action was needed, and it seems that whatever was said by Len in the upstairs changing room did the trick. Fotiadis came on as a sub, and linked up superbly with Oldfield to lay on the pass which Skippy converted to put the tie beyond doubt. Town played better in the second half, but in reality it was the change in Rovers performance that made the difference. They just didn't seem to believe they could beat us by a larger margin, and didn't seem to try. So, for the first time since 1990, Luton Town made progress in the League Cup.

A couple of other things to mention. First, the Memorial Ground, which might be fine for rugby, but seems very odd for football, with only two sides, and the changing rooms in stacked portakabins in one corner. The floodlights, in use for the first time, were really not of the standard expected these days and could do with improvement. But, if nothing else, the pasties were very good.

As for the announcer, they've managed to bring the same clown with them from Trumpton Park. In the course of wandering the terraces he picked out a Town fan to comment on the defeat at Ashton Gate, and well done 'Albino' for the honest assessment, "We were crap." But I'm still baffled by the team sheet, also read out by the said celebrity fan, which had Chenery playing at 7, when in fact Hughes took that shirt for the game.

Ken Ross

# 07.09.96 WYCOMBE WANDERERS 0 TOWN 1

The Town winning away from home is like students going back to college a day early — it happens, but not very often. Our 100% record at Adams Park was kept intact (!), but it's one of the hardest places to get a pre-match drink. Made to wear one of the biggest, thickest and oldest jumpers in the world (cheers Tony!) to hide my 1974 away shirt just to get into the pub was bad enough, but being baked alive through having to keep it on while in there was even worse. Anyway, on to the match, Wycombe gave a debut to someone even older than Homer — Ray

Wilkins — and what a good game he had! First half was enthralling entertainment (honest!) and the half time shootout wasn't much better, with 10 shots and 9 misses. Still, the Town juniors ran out 1-0 winners, to set a trend for the seniors to follow. And follow it they did, with Fotiadis heading down for Skippy to score from a yard out for the game's only goal. We still have a tendency to look nervous and try to throw it away in the last 10 — with the blues hitting the bar, and a sure equaliser if it wasn't for Marvin deep into injury time. However, with Williams missing a sitter in the first half (passing to Davis on the goal-line with everyone else beaten!) as well, Wycombe deserved — and got — nothing out of the game.

The Beatle

# A tale of woe....

All was going well until about 3 miles out of Wycombe on the A40. Objét roared that there was steam pouring out of the engine..... Oh, shit! This was about 2 pm. Fortunately, a procession of Luton fans were passing, one of which was a man of importance — a gent in a Luton "proper" away shirt (orange and black), driving a BMW and residing in Balham, no less (divorced and anti-marriage), who kindly whisked us to the ground.

Then, well done, Foti and Oldfield — a good away win and a damned good atmosphere.

Then back to the demic car, and many thanks to Haddaway for the lift, and Dave and Jez for your welcome patience.

Wheels (or not!)

# 10.09.96 TOWN 2 GILLINGHAM 1

Dear oh dear! What have we done to deserve playing against shite like this? 'Super' Gills? Ha ha! Surely this shower are going straight back down. They displayed probably the least skill I've ever seen at Kenilworth Road, and that includes W\*tf\*\*d, lain Dowie and Vinny Jones! Was anyone in their side less than 6'6" tall? Is Stannard now the fattest goalkeeper in the world?

The Town should have buried this lot long before they pulled a goal back. We weren't helped though, by a ref who let them kick us as much as they fancied, but penalised every Town tackle. When the Gills weren't fouling us they were trying to head the ball from one end of the pitch to the other. When they did try to pass the ball with their feet, it invariably went into touch — laughable stuff!

'Foti' had another good game, or at least as good a game as you can have whilst being kicked to f\*\*k. The pick of our lads was David Oldfield (again) — no wonder he got drug tested after the Wycombe game — what is the man on this season, apart from a one man mission to take us back up — brilliant.

Even with crap like Gillingham, it still managed to start to go wrong when we gave them a late goal. I almost had a heart attack when ex-scummer 'Andreas'

closed down on the Town goal with a minute left — "NO, YOU BASTARD" Thanks to Feuer, he didn't.

Obiét

#### 14.09.96 TOWN 0 CHESTERFIELD 1

It's depressing stuff, being beaten by a side as poor as Chesterfield. The fact that they went up to 3rd place after this match is less significant than their goal scoring record. Played 7, won 5, scored 6, conceded 4. It was obvious that we needed to break them down, while holding things tight at the back, so giving away a penalty to a side as entertaining as this was a real gift. Inevitably, having taken the lead they just sat on it, and we were unable to break them down. But the real mystery of the game was the substitution, in the space of 5 minutes, of both of our strikers. Fotiadis being replaced by Showler would have been fair enough, to provide better service for Oldfield. But to take Oldfield off, when he's looked the only Town player likely to score this season is just plain daft. We might just as well have waved the white flag, or told the home supporters to go home. The fury many of us felt after the game was more about being beaten by such an awful side, than a poor Town performance, but on this showing mid-table is the very best we can hope for this season, but not without relegation worries pervading most of the season.

K.F.H.

# 17.09.96 TOWN 1 DERBY COUNTY 0

Well, after the dross we witnessed on Staurday it was like watching another sport, let alone another team. We virtually dominated this match from start to finish, amazingly! OK, The deflected goal by Juless was somewhat fortuitous but, apart from that, we should have slain these 'goats'. A three or four goal lead would not have flattered us, but I fear a one goal advantage may not be enough. Still, why the f\*\*k can't we perform like this for a bread and butter league game which is far more bloody important...... I blame the management.

S.F.

This was the first time in 29 years that the Town had beaten a team from two divisions higher in a cup game. For the record, the last victims were Charlton Athletic, of the then Second Division, beaten 2-1 at The Valley (both goals by Bruce Rioch, since you ask) in the Football League Cup 1st Round, in 1967/68 when Luton were a Fourth Division side.

# SUBSCRIPTIONS

Mad as a Hatter! is available on subscription at £5.50 for the next seven issues (overseas surface mail £6.75, air mail rates available on request) from the usual address. Cheques payable to Mad as a Hatter! Please do not send cash by post.

Information on back issues held over until issue 37.

# THE LTFC OFFICIAL VIDEO - SEASON 1995/96

Or, as it is otherwise known, 'Danny Baker's Fabulous World of Freak Football'. For the small (!) sum of £11.99 (£10.80 for season ticket holders) you too can relive the thrills (some) and spills (too many) of the last season. The first thing you notice when you take the tape out of the box is the distinct lack of a label on the tape. Surely it's not too much to ask for some identification on the tape — we are paying £12 for it after all!

Before I go any further, let's get the jokes out of the way. This video does actually last more than 10 minutes, and does not consist of 100 best throw-ins.

The tape lasts for 53 minutes and 16 seconds (isn't modern technology wonderful - Ed), and the production team have blatantly struggled to get it to last that long. For example, it's fair enough showing Ceri getting sent off against Millwall, but do we really need a minute of build up preceding it? You get to see all of the goals for and against, home and away (except in Italy) as well as some of the Town errors — Doesn't Homer's back pass look worse on the telly? For an added bonus you get star interviews with Lawrence and Feuer — another example of making up time.

Simon Oxley once again does the commentary (although sounding as if he'd rather be elsewhere), and in the three years the club has produced the seasonal video they still haven't sorted out the sound of the crowd noise. Last year the timing was all wrong, but this year the way the noise is just cut at the end of the clips sounds so tacky and just gets annoying towards the end. A bit of music in the background wouldn't go amiss, LTFC and Viking Video!

VERDICT: Not sure if the price should be as much as £12, but a must for the loyal fans of the club. An OK production by Viking Video, but not as good as the heyday of CBS Fox and Martin Tyler (the late eighties) making the videos. Be warned though — the further through the tape you go, the more depressing it gets.

The Beatle

# RADIO DAZE (OK, IT WAS ON TV)

Seen on ITV Teletext, 3rd September, the following quote: "Only if you're a player whose (sic) had success and has become a star do you become conceited." This was David Pleat talking about the youngsters in his table-topping Sheffield Wednesday team. This comment might well explain a lot about Scott Oakes over the last couple of seasons, don't you think?

K.F.H.

# Through Thick and Thin

I've been meaning to write for some time now, but I think that the problems at Luton Town FC have become sufficiently bad enough for me to air my rather lengthy and highly critical opinions. However, before I start going into any depth I would like to assure all other loyal Town fans and of course all the lads at *Mad* that I will remain a Luton Town fan until the day I die and will always support them through thick and thin.

Let me give you a bit of background. I've been going to Town matches regularly since 1983; I had a season ticket with my dad in the main stand at the back for many years and I recall going to see quality football matches when Luton would play Liverpool and beat them, Arsenal, Spurs, Everton, Leeds, Chelsea and Notts Forest and beat them — not just beat them but play bloody good first touch passing football and play them off the park. This sort of football earned the club and most of the players a great deal of respect, not only from Luton fans but football fans all over the country. I remember distinctly talking to a Manchester City fan once and I remember him saying how Luton Town were highly thought of by fans from many northern clubs. I'm sure that I wasn't the only Luton fan to receive these sort of comments during the mid-eighties.

So, we won the Littlewoods Cup in '88, got to the final the following year scoring lots of goals - I can't recall Micky Harford having a bad game, nor Ricky Hill or Steiny. Everything was going well even though I couldn't help worrying about our consistently low league position at the end of each season. Then relegation.... I was really gutted and to tell the truth I have never recovered from it. I mean we go from beating the likes of Liverpool and Villa to losing to the likes of Grimsby and Barnsley in the space of one year. Suddenly all our best players vanish without any notice, Lars Elstrup bogs off to become a Duck Priest in a forest somewhere in Denmark. What was going on, I kept asking myself. I just couldn't get used to this league, losing 5-1 to Derby in the cup and constantly losing to nobody teams, with sod all history or style, like Grimsby. I'm sorry, but I've got this thing about Grimsby. I found it embarrassing when my mates at school said "So which shitty team are you going to see today?" and I would reply "err... Grimsby" with my hand slightly over my mouth. What comes to your minds when you hear the word Grimsby? I have always immediately thought of a putrid stench of dead haddock, stags (or was that slags? Ed) and concrete everywhere. It just really got to me losing all the time to these non-entity teams, my dad had pissed off ages ago muttering something about not paying good money to watch second rate football. When I look back now I don't blame him to be honest, but I did at the time because it suddenly dawned on me I had to start spending my money to go to the games. So, I moved to the Kenny End 'cos it was only about £3.30 to get in, and what a bloody good move it was. Standing at the back in the middle singing my bleedin' heart out every game until I was hoarse, with my good friends who are equally supportive to Luton's cause; Quazer, Saint, Tuft, Turney, Trigger and last and least Lomey (or is he Spurs?!).

I suppose I got used to it slowly, but what I never understood was why the top half of this league continued to elude us. I won't comment on this league too long because with the exception of that amazing FA Cup run there was not much more in my eyes that was very memorable.

All you readers must be wondering why I am writing all this shit, because everything so far written is obvious and has been written and said many times before. Well, I am writing "all this shit" because I now find Luton Town FC, once a a giant in footballs top league, in the bottom half of Division Two. Now, don't turn the page because I have been waiting sometime to say this, and I don't think words will express it well enough, so imagine me kicking chairs and tables while you read what follows.

I am disgusted that Luton are in this league and my patience, along with that of my friends, has finally snapped. I don't care if people argue "well, they deserved to go down". So what if they did. The fact of it is that we should not be playing football against the likes of Rotherham, Crewe, Bristol Rovers and Shrewsbury. Have you seen Shrewsbury's ground — GAY MEADOW. I have been there - it is a dump - Hitchin Town's ground is better and I'm not joking. Hitchin do not have a man who paddles off in a rowing boat to collect the ball from a river when it is chipped over the away end terrace, which is even lower than our crappy executive greenhouses. I think that it is about time that all loyal Luton fans received some sort of praise or reward not for the amount of dosh they've put into the club, but for putting up with appalling football and seeing our players go from bad to worse. I couldn't believe we have already been bottom of the league for a week. When I saw the fixture list I was nearly in tears. Having to go to 'Tin can alley' to watch Walsall, and other sides like Wycombe and Plymouth (who are top for f\*\*k's sake) (not any more! Ed).

Anything less than promotion this season will be a massive failure, but at this rate and on the standard of the last few performances we may well be playing Scunthorpe and Carlisle next season. You may well shout "early days" at me but look what happened last season; I don't think even Kevin Keegan could have resolved the ridiculous mess that Terry Westley created. I don't think we should have a go at Lenny Lawrence because I think that at the

moment the task is very much in the players feet. We have always had limited resources at the club but surely it would be essential to buy a striker who scores twenty plus goals a season, I mean, surely Kohler must realise that without a decent striker we will never get anywhere. When was the last time Luton Town had a decent striker who scored more than twenty league goals in a season? Phil Gray, Mick Harford — this was bloody ages ago. I want Luton back into Division One next season, and I refuse to tolerate any more of this bollocks. Leave Snotford where they are. I want them thrashed home and away because they are scum along with their pathetic non-entity fans. Realistically, Luton should not lose a game this season but already we've lost three, which is absolutely disgraceful. The ground is dead, attendances have dropped by 2000 and all of us are stunned that we are in this awful division and losing to teams that we haven't played since the 60's.

I do not go to Luton matches anymore to watch a very entertaining spectacle of good football, I would have to be blind to do this. I go because I feel I ought to, out of duty, and it fills me with sadness to look around Kenilworth Road and see so many frustrated and expressionless faces watching one inept side play against another. I still feel Luton should be in what is now the Premiership and I know people will laugh at this. When I first started coming to matches, the odd one or two, I was about 7 years old, and because this was when I first saw them something inside me tells me they should still be there. I also realise a lot has changed over recent years in football especially with regard to money, but Premiership football must always be Luton's objective, that is where they belong in my eyes and I want to see them back there competing with the best. I still feel proud to be a Luton fan which I suppose is the main thing, and I love being a part of the crowd on a Saturday afternoon wearing my Town shirt, hat and scarf, but I simply cannot get used to seeing us playing these crap sides which, in all honesty, we should be thrashing week in, week out. I sincerely hope the good times are not too far away again, but to all loyal Town fans I say, stick with it, as I'm sure you will, we'll get our reward some day.

James H. Cook

# **EXILED HATTERS FAN?**

If you are an exile, you'll want to keep up to date with what's going on at Kenilworth Road, and with Hatters Matters you can do just that. Hatters Matters is a monthly newsletter designed specifically for the exiled fan, and provides all the news that you won't find on teletext.

To subscribe for one year (12 issues) send a cheque for £6 (payable to Hatters Matters) to: Hatters Matters, 292 lcknield Way, Luton, LU3 2JS. Or just send an SAE for a free sample copy.



(Above) Ray Wilkins looks astonished to find himself wearing a Wycombe shirt, and well he might, on his debut/farewell appearance. (Below) They're in the net — ball, goalscorer, roadcones (?) and the crowd and stewards are on their feet. Oldfield and Alexander celebrate at Wycombe.



Are you, like me, becoming increasingly concerned about the mixture of words and actions from our manager? Or have you failed to notice how frequently our Len makes a statement which sits rather uncomfortably alongside an earlier comment. If that is the case, I may be able to help you out.

The first time I had a problem with Lennie's comments was after the Barnsley game late last season, when Lennie said, on TV, that "the fans won't see this group of players together again, if I have anything to do with it." For most of us this was seen to herald a major clear out of the playing staff during the summer, but, as we all know, new contracts were thrown about like confetti, and of that group of players only Oakes left. But what is worse is that the team that lost 5-0 at Bristol City included no less than 10 of those involved in the aforementioned Barnsley match. But it was that defeat at Ashton Gate that brought these things to my attention, when after the match Lennie apologised to the travelling supporters (not for the first time, and it had been predicted he would do this) and said that for the following game he would bring in a couple of loan players, and perhaps a youngster. Net result of this 'quick fix'? Darren Patterson dropped, and replaced (on the bench) by Matthew Upson, who gets on for the last 2 minutes. Wow!

Another comment after that debacle was that "When we dropped out of the First Division I assumed this group could cope." Strangely enough, I seem to remember that sometime in March or April Lennie said something along the lines of "this group of players are not good enough to avoid relegation from the Second Division, let alone the First." Now, that is not a direct quote, as I didn't keep track of Len's words early enough, but the gist of it is right, I'm certain.

Finally, the most damning pair of comments. After the end of last season the players spent a day at Lilleshall for a series of physiological tests, to assess their fitness, with some players being given "fitness homework" to do during the summer. I seem to recall the explanation was that "if we are not the best team in the division next season, we will certainly be the fittest." Again, not a direct quote, but a recollection. But we now come right up to date, and the day after being beaten by a poor Chesterfield side we are told that some of the players are tired, and cannot manage two matches a week. Not only that, but "they are not fit enough to play 60 games a season." After being told we will certainly have the fittest team, this really is a terrible admission.

To summarise, Lennie, sort it out, or just shut up. We expect better, and we are not getting it. And watch what you say, because I'll be monitoring the situation.

Ken Ross

# The straw that broke Led's back

To give you some sort of indication as to how I feel at the moment, I have just heard a scoreflash over the radio that says Luton (I now refuse to say 'we' as I don't want to be associated with such a bunch of losers any longer) are now losing 5-0. I think that I may have cracked as I have just started laughing and I don't think it'll be much longer until I'm down at the Star and Garter drowning my sorrows.

When we got relegated from the old First Division to the new First Division, although we all talked of immediate promotion, at the bottom of our hearts I think we all knew that we were kidding ourselves a bit as there were plenty of other teams in that division who were bigger and had the potential to be better than us. However, I didn't expect us to be relegated again within four years, the only saving grace being that the scum were relegated along with us — Kenilworth Road could have been renamed Kenilworth Sewer, so much shit has been seen week in, week out.

However, before this season started, I earnestly thought that Luton would have a good chance of promotion, and although we lost to Burnley, I saw enough things to retain this optimism. Being a Luton fan, I should've known better than showing such wanton optimism, and having lost to the mighty Brentford we are now losing to the footballing force that is Bristol City. Whilst listening to the latest scores on Radio Bedfordshire (sic), I found myself making an interesting analogy/comparison. At half-time Luton were 2-0 down, as were York City to Millwall, and both desperately in need of an early second half goal to get them back into the game. So, as usual, Luton cave in within 50 seconds of the restart and concede a third, not long before conceding a fourth. To make things worse Thorpe gets himself sent-off — oh joy, what's the point in getting yourself sent off when you're 4-0 down — it's a shame he didn't show so much fight when he was only 1-0 down. In the meantime York City fight back to take a 3-2 lead against Millwall. Before seeing the continual drivel that Luton have been churning out month after month I would have said that this was due to the fact that York are a better

It make be that people think that I'm being rather harsh, but being a student, I spend a large part of my disposable income watching Luton play, and I feel I've earned the right to have my say. I hope the players feel hurt if they read this, they ought to feel bloody well hurt even if they don't. Three days before Bristol wiped the floor with us they lost at home to Blackpool who were playing with only 10 men for the final 45 minutes, and only 9 for the last 10 minutes — surely Davis and Co's professionalism (presuming they have any)

should make them feel ashamed and embarrassed. No doubt, if recent history is anything to go by they probably they don't give a toss and the next performance will be as passionless and inept as usual. I just hope I'm proved wrong against Rotherham.

Already this season the defence has seen more mistakes than in a dyslexic spelling test, which even Davis and Feuer cannot count themselves immune. Whenever the ball is played towards the left side of defence I cringe as Marvin and Spider set out on their quest for the impossible — to try and get the ball under control. They could release a half hour end of season video between them called "Comedy Corner", although having seen Marvin's injury against Bristol Rovers it looks like it could be only a quarter of an hour long if we're lucky. Let's just hope Harvey makes a speedy recovery, or maybe it's worth giving Chenery a go. Also, with Lennie biting at the leash for a left footed player, surely David Preece should have been at the top of his list — a player with a bit of culture is just what we need at Luton.

No doubt some people will have a go at me for attacking the team; and no doubt these are the sort of people who sit back on a match day and don't shout/chant any encouragement to the players but sit there and look at you as if you were on day release from the house on the hill if you do something as bizarre as get to your feet and shout a bit of encouragement — I'm one of about only 5 people in the whole of the New stand who get behind the team. However, on nights like this I deserve the right to vent my anger. For the last seven years I've seen not so much a gradual decline as a plummet, and what's all the more painful is that there's been a certain inevitability about it.

The players don't seem to bothered about it, in turn Kenilworth Road on a matchday is more like a morgue; there is just a general lack of soul to the club — this is borne out in the disgusting new kit. Since when has yellow been associated with Luton? I heard it was introduced as the players couldn't make out the orange and black stripes against floodlights at night matches. In this case why not get rid of the black stripes and just play in orange? As per usual the fans were not even consulted, maybe because the results would have shown that the majority of Town fans would prefer to see us play in orange, even at home.

I'm off now to make last orders. I just hope that by the time this is published I have been proved completely wrong.

Led

# VIRAL INFLECTION

The Boring Old Fart was amazed to see the following team predicted on his grandson's computer (following it's attack by a virus) complete with programme notes.

In goal:

UNFEARIE

A tall uncompromising import of warrior stock.

Back four: VISTA SEED

The ship's captain whose tree trunk thighs are the envy of

E.J. 'JAM' NAILS

A ten-year stretch veteran. Motto; "They shall not pass."

'RAVIN MO' JOHNNS Mr Consistency.

PANDA RENTERSORT

The uncompromising Irish player whose tackles pander to no-one.

Midfield: DR 'AGA' DWOCKY

The all purpose, all covering, 24 hour movement man who cooks opponents to a turn.

TY THE PROON

Much promise shown by this twinkle toed left side player.

FIDDLE V. ODDIA

The didgeridoo tunester who will have to stop falling over.

HARA EX GRAND (MALE)

Our most improved player of 95/6.

Strikers: GRIM TANK

If given good service, a lethal shooter.

WONDER DI STAFIS

The new young shower built on Greco Roman lines.

(Apologies to those of thinly veiled identity above for taking their names in vain)

The Boring Old Fart



In here by popular demand, and for a sudden loss of credibility, proof that the editor does occasionally drink something other than real ale. And, by way of a curious reversal, is witnessed by a player making a fool of himself.



# LUTON TOWN WIN CUP!

Now isn't that the sort of headline you'd like to see in the Daily Mirror? Me too. Sadly, real life is more cruel, and the Town winning the Champions Challenge Cup Final was merely a figment of some warped imagination. However, Curtis Lockhart of Belfast, A Town fan himself, was the delighted recipient of this good news.

At this stage we've probably lost you completely, so a little explanation might help. Curtis has been taking part in a Play By Mail football game, and managed to guide his team (Luton Town of course) to this unexpected cup success. The official match commentary is reproduced opposite, but unfortunately some of the additional material is not of good enough quality to reproduce. The Town team, remembering you can do all sorts of things when real life isn't involved, was: lan Feuer, Steve Davis, Marvin Johnson, Trevor Peake, John Dreyer, Stuart McCall, Boncho Guentchev, David Oldfield, Ceri Hughes, Mark Carter, Kerry Dixon. This group succeeded in beating Port Vale 2-1 in front of a crowd of 30,732 at Vale Park (it's not real life, remember).

Over to Curtis for some further explanation: "The squad I started the season with was the 93-94 team with David Pleat as the managers name. Who's Mark Carter? A player I bought early in the season, and at this point hadn't changed his name (he's now Tony Thorpe). I'm not changing Kerry Dixon's name as he's my top scorer and I feel it would be unlucky to change it. Stuart McCall? How could I change his name when he looks so impressive in the Town's midfield. Two shots on goal — two goals scored. If only this resembled real life!"

An additional note from the Team Tactics section of the match report. It says, and I quote, "David Pleat motivated the strikers". Ah, if only real life had been like this! On the Port Vale Tactics it says that John Rudge told his attack "to find themselves space in Luton Town's area". Obviously the message didn't get through, but did he have to pass it on to every other team we've played in real life since?

Below are the details of the Luton players performance in the game. Note Marvin's passing — impressive, eh?

PLAYER	Form	Shots	Pass	Tack	Poss
Ian Feuer	9	0	73%	33%	6%
John Drever	7	0	50%	50%	5%
Trevor Peake	10	0	22%	63%	21%
Maryin Johnson	6	0	100%	50%	3 %
Steve Davis	9	0	50%	50%	198
Ceri Hughes	5	0	40%	0%	4%
David Oldfield	3	0	1%	0%	19
Boncho Guentchev	6	0	67%	30%	59
Stuart McCall	3	0	50%	0%	39
Kerry Dixon	4	0	75%	43%	229
MARK CARTER	10	2	33%	40%	109
	5 3 Inv	1	1		- 3

# MANAGER'S REPORT

slipped and yet came away with the win.

Me

# VATCH COMMENTABY

the sliding tackle Out Attack'. Seventeen minutes have from the referee for the sliding tag LAAN in Port Vale's territory, ROBIN V DER AST PAUL MUSSELWHITE. to his half. >0-1< After a couple Mark rain. This fixture's ref is John Martin, past PAUL MUSSELWHITE. Sixteen minutes have passed when Mark his gameplan and plays 'All Out Attack's a booking and a harsh word from the rehis sides' hopes of winning the game dry up. penalty area and hits the ball way back Carter and he hits the ball past Dixon earns a booking and a LAAN. Fourteen minutes later, makes his game off. as he decides to add to fans Carter kicks passed when Kerry on ROBIN V DER LAA the Port Rudge robbed by ball to the John

without bearers getting When way through the second half, GARETH GRIFFITHS is booked after a bad foul The crowd shouts at GARETH GRIFFITHS as he walks away cursing. After anot Town area, get away the park. half is taken by ROBIN V DER LAAN. stretcher the whistle. four minutes to celebrate just outside the Luton The lucky knees to when he hears drops. he the second half, with approximat out and he screams as past the keeper. DEAN GLOVER falls to in disgust DEAN GLOVER off. shouts ref and he has to be helped Trevor Peake is tackled by appoints Mark Carter PETRIE hacks down Trevor Peake and gives go wild as the kick off his right knee >1-2< Near the end of halfway through Port Vale the ball Trevor Peake the The supporters go w approximately halfw Boncho Guentchev. T gets fourteen minutes guides or Peake g EDWARD goal

was 30,732

Vale Park

# The Sharpe End

How many times have you wished you could give the team talk before the side comes out for a game?

Well, being the most successful manager Hatch End FC ever had — winning four consecutive Divisional championships and a couple of cups a few years back at Sunday morning level, I'd always fancied having a go at a higher level.

But my application for the job of England boss was rejected — Graeme Kelly wrote "I wouldn't bet on it" on the letter he sent me — and I also failed at Kenilworth Road after David Pleat left - not enough experience, or some such feeble excuse!

But at last I got my chance - and it worked, too.

After the abysmal defeat at Bristol City I just could not resist putting pen to paper to Messrs Kohler and Lawrence to express my feelings — and what do you know, I duly received a reply from the Chairman telling me that he had ordered my missive to be pinned on the dressing room wall before the next game — the home match against Rotherham.

And what happened? We won, of course.
For a small fee I will pen a letter for each match!
(A copy of the letter may be found opposite)

# 

When the New Stand was first built, and I purchased tickets there for the first time, I — and no doubt scores of other supporters who bothered to ask — was assured that the floodlight pylon, which is the only direct interference to the view from there, would be removed and placed on top of the stand out of the way of spectators.

We're still waiting.

Graham Sharpe

# HatterLeague Update

Well, the HatterLeague started on Saturday 14th September, and the first Man of the Match points went to David Oldfield, who thus managed to keep a lot of managers out of the red on the points table. You should all have received your confirmation by now, and you now have the facility to make transfers, but we won't be introducing any new players until the next issue. When that happens we will give a full list of players and their scores for you, but for now it doesn't seem worth the effort after only one match.

K.F.H.

28th August 1996

F.A.O: Mr D. Kohler, Chairman, Luton Town F.C., Mr G. Sharpe

cc: L. Lawrence, Manager, Luton Town F.C.

Dear Mr Kohler,

I write purely to express the frustration I feel today at being a Luton Town supporter - with four season tickets for which I have paid over £800 - probably the average weekly wage of most of the members of the Club's current squad of players.

I hope they will be able to accept the wages they have 'earned' so far this season with no qualms of conscience - I would not be able to do so had I performed so abjectly in carrying out the duties which I am paid to fulfil for the company I work for.

One can't completely absolve the manager of blame - although he has brought in only a handful of players since his arrival, he must take responsibility for motivating the side and he has depleted the squad of strikers by selling Vidar Riseth and side-lining John Taylor - who, to be fair, hardly managed a goal between them last season. He would no doubt argue that he should have been given the funds to strengthen his attacking options by bringing in the Scottish striker from Stirling. We are currently playing with no striking threat at all.

One can't completely absolve the Board of blame - they will argue that over £2 million has recently been made available for purchases, a substantial sum for a Club of Luton's size. However, it was so clearly mis-spent in several instances that in order to ensure the club's survival, let alone progress, more just has to be found to help steady the ship.

As for the players, with so many of them boasting international qualifications, it is inconceivable to accept that they do not have the basic ability to play at a higher level than they are currently occupying - and this may well be the nub of the problem. They feel they deserve better, but are not prepared to battle to prove it - the attitude of other 2nd Division sides has given them a culture shock - they won't stand around and admire our pretty, pretty but lightweight style, but actually have the temerity to play physically and directly.

I have always accepted that supporting Luton Town would never be an easy option with guaranteed success - but I can't stomach being laughed at and ridiculed for following the team. I am now reaching the stage where I am embarrassed to admit to supporting Luton Town.

Just thought you might like to know.

Yours sincerely.

Graham Sharpe.

