

# MAD AS A HATTER!

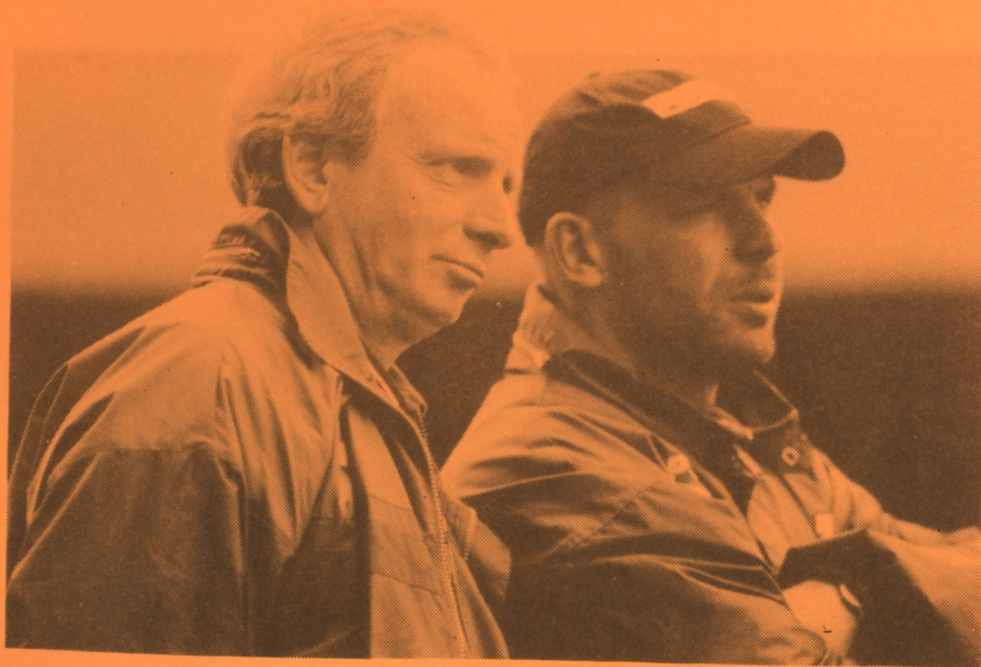
THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



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**TENSE? NERVOUS? GOING UP?**



Waiting to see what happens, the tension shows on the faces of Lennie and Wayne. Let's hope they're very soon smiling broadly after our promotion is confirmed.

60 PAGE BUMPER ISSUE



# MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



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## EDITORIAL

This makes a change. Writing the last editorial of the season, knowing that whatever happens in the next seven hours (it's 3 o'clock on Monday afternoon, 28th April) we're still in with a chance of promotion. Obviously we'd hope it will be by beating Stockport in the season's last game, but even if we have to go through the play off route, at least we're involved. This has been the most successful season since 1988, and has done much to restore our pride in Luton Town. It would, of course, be hugely disappointing if we did not go up now, but we must not lose sight of the fact that we have still witnessed a massive improvement. If we do go up, the aim next season will be to consolidate our position in the First Division, which is even more competitive now than when we left it 12 months ago. Let us hope that we can deal with that, and gradually build a team that can mount another promotion campaign.

It may seem a bit out of place here, but congratulations to Danny Wilson and his Barnsley team for achieving promotion to the Premiership for the first time in their club's history. It is a marvellous achievement and shows that smaller clubs can still do it, without having to spend millions on players. In fact, Barnsley's team even looks cheap by our standards. We all know that Barnsley will find it very difficult next season and are hot favourites to be relegated again at the first time of asking. But their fans will have what we all strive for, and that is the opportunity to see their team playing against the very best.

While we're handing out congratulations, a few words for John Moore and his youth team on their excellent season. Winning their Division in the South East Counties League and reaching the semi-final of the FA Youth Cup has been an excellent performance, and shows plenty of promise for the future. If it had not been for injuries to all the main strikers, the cup run may have been even better. We'll be hoping that this all augurs for the future.

And so to the summer, which from a football point of view will start either today (as you read this) or in about three weeks time. It will be a short one, with the football season starting again on August 2nd, and pre-season friendlies before that (Town playing theirs in the north east, we understand). That's a shame, because this memorable season will be all but forgotten in around three months. However, something to look forward to is the impending publication, we hear, of not one, but two new books both of which have Luton Town Football Club as their main subject. If this is true, it will be most welcome, as the last two books, both commissioned by the club itself, were little more than PR exercises. Let's hope that they both appear and make the best sellers list.

That's it for now. Have a good summer, and we'll see you next season.



## 10 Top Tips to make Tip Top Hatters

From the bottomless abyss which was losing the first three games, the season has turned into the most enjoyable one in eleven years of supporting the Town. Let's face it, we may bemoan the fact that we are playing the Rotherhams and Shrewsburys of this world, but just for one season (hopefully), it makes an interesting change to be able to sample life in the lower divisions. For instance, who could forget the poor old TV cameraman at York, running around on top of a shed roof battling against a force 10 gale to gather his various pieces of paper; the loser in love at Shrewsbury who tried to persuade his girlfriend to take him back by the use of the tannoy system at half time; or indeed the pastie throwing incident which almost caused a riot down at Bournemouth. Who needs all the shallow razzamatazz of the Premiership when you can have this much fun in the Second Division?

However, being a Luton fan, I am not satisfied with anything less than perfection, a Utopia which can be realised through the implementation of ten simple points.

### Promotion

The Second Division may be a laugh, and character building to boot, but only in small doses. Let's get back where we belong — Division One — and who knows, if and when the KohlerDome gets built, we may even be able to dream of the Premiership.

### Beating Watford in the play-off final

With a bit of luck the play-offs will not be required to get us back into the First Division, but if this is the eventual scenario, what a way to go up — beating the shit in the process. This would give us something else to gloat about as well as taking the piss out of them for playing unattractive football and having such pathetic fans.

### Keep the Backbone

In order for the club to progress we need to keep the backbone of the team, notably Messrs Feuer, Davis, Alexander and Thorpey. With a promising youth team coming through, all indications are that the team has a bright future if manipulated wisely.

### Management

I believe that Lennie is the right man to manage the club, in the short term at least. When he feels he has done as much as he can, then he could progress to a role which sees him less involved in the day to day running of the team, but with a broader spectrum of control over the youth, reserve and first teams. In

Wayne Turner and Peakey we have ready made replacements as first team coaches.

### KohlerDome

Every Football fan has the right to be optimistic, but I honestly believe that the KohlerDome could be the move which secures the Town's future and sees us become a force to be reckoned with once again.

### Terracing

Let's hope that, by the time construction begins on our new ground, the powers that be have come to their senses and recognised that there is still a place in football for terracing. I resent being dictated to by people telling me to sit down, taking away MY choice of whether to sit or stand. If controlled, standing is no more dangerous than sitting, and it infuriates me to hear people whinge "but I have difficulty seeing the game on terraces because I'm too short". I'm not saying make the whole ground standing room only, just a section, so you still have the opportunity to sit if you wish. This is the crux of my argument, you pays yer money, you takes yer choice, of which mine is to stand. Let's hope the wishes of the real football fans are considered, and areas of terracing included in our new ground.

### Orange

It has not gone unnoticed that in recent times the club shop has been swayed by the power of the fans, resulting in a more recognisable orange hue to the Luton following now. However, is it beyond them to produce orange headgear? Having lost my old orange hat a few years back I have had to make do with a rather distinctive home made job — quite handy if you want to be seen on "Kick Off" on a Sunday afternoon, but not if you want to be taken seriously.

### Programme

Quite justifiably us Luton fans are proud of our away following; such good away support shows how loyal and passionate we are. It would therefore be very interesting if our programme followed the same formula as a couple of other teams programmes this season — that is to include and 'away following' column to the "match facts" section of the programme. So, just as we can lambast Walsall for taking only 110 fans to Bournemouth, away fans could come to Luton and see that although we only average 6,000 at home, our away following will put many so called bigger clubs to shame.

### End of Season video

May is fast approaching, so we are coming to that time of year again; no, not the time that we cry into our beer trying to contemplate another relegation, but the time of year when we spend our hard earned cash on some tardily put



together end of season video. Admittedly, even though the video is a tad shoddy, we'll still continue to buy it, but it would be nice if the club made a bit more of an effort to improve it's quality. There could be a big improvement on the dubbing and the choice of action could be a bit more inspired.

### Turnstile operators

Rather self-indulgently, my last tip concerns the turnstile operators (*they used to be called gatemen in my day — Ed*). Today sees my last game working on the turnstiles before returning to civvy street as a season ticket holder. The turnstile operators are a great bunch of chaps, all of whom are Luton fans who do their job very efficiently, yet are continually chastised by the tyrannical Cherry Newbery for one reason or another. I'm sure Dave, Ian, Kev, Vernon, Terry and the lads would appreciate it very much if the rather egotistical Cherry would get off their backs and leave them to carry out their duties in peace.

Here's looking forward to the double over Portsmouth next season.

Led

## On the telephone

I've just got off the phone, having dialled 192 to speak to someone in an attempt to obtain Luton Town FC's ticket office phone number. I spoke to what sounded like a late thirties/early forties woman with a Welsh accent..... called Michelle, I think. Anyway, when I politely requested the number for the ticket office, she cheekily chirped back at me, "Does Luton have a football club" in an obviously sarcastic manner. I was quite surprised and annoyed at her insane comment and realising, some seconds later, that she was taking the piss I decided to ask her who she supported. Amongst the sounds of spluttering and nervous giggles she replied "Man United".

It's just the sort of unbelievably predictable answer I should have expected from her. She might think it's funny to quip silly comments at me but frankly I don't, and I can take a joke, believe me, before you label me a miserable bastard.

Another glory fan from Wales who clearly knows nothing about the trials and tribulations of being a real football fan. Anyone who phones 192 in the future give Michelle with the Welsh accent some grief — I found it pointless to waste another "loyal football fan" lecture on someone who will obviously never understand.

James H. Cook.

## ARE YOU DOWIE IN DISGUISE?

In the past few years, football has seen many thousands of faces. Some have been called "pretty", with the likes of Redknapp and Berger of Liverpool, that old ponce Oakes, the great Lineker, and even ex-Lutonian Phil Gray liked to think himself football's answer to Fabio. But then there's the ugly, the kind of player who should be paying you just to put up with the insult of a face he has. From big noses, no eyes, to the bald and toothless, here's a compilation of footballers, past and present, who all share on thing — they're far from pretty.

### Ian Dowie

Starting off with footballs finest in terms of ugliness.

As a player: Very much underrated and was a pretty useful player for the Town in the early 90's. Scores some important goals (*as Stockport will testify*) and on TV actually appears to be quite intelligent.

As an ugly bloke: King of them all. His style of play is somewhat awkward, as is his face. Has funny eyebrows which make him appear to have no eyes. Looks like he's been bottled many a time in a nightclub.

### Martin Keown

As a player: Very much a donkey who really pushes the likes of me to believe Hoddle is right to pick him in a recent England squad. What is it with Arsenal and four legged tailed animals?

As an ugly bloke: Only a short head behind Dowie, Keown resembles something that Mulder and Scully are always chasing on the X-Files. Big ears, pig of a face and stubble all over his snout, is he actually from this planet? The truth is out there.....

### Jim Leighton

As a player: Pretty much a shite keeper throughout his career, but has found himself some form for Hibs in the past couple of years. Prone to more than one blunder a game, Jim has proved that Scots and gloves don't go together.

As an ugly bloke: Without wanting to slag him off too much, Jim wouldn't have needed a mask to do a bank job, I think it's fair to say. Missing two front teeth and with an awful accent it seems that he's next lined up for TFI Friday's "Ugly bloke, without a talent".

### Iwan Roberts

As a player: A bit of a Dowie, with a style of play that is all arms and legs and a few goals to boot. Will never play for England..... (*er, perhaps because he's Welsh? — Ed*)

As an ugly bloke: Missing more teeth than an OAP without his dentures in,



Iwan is one hell of an ugly git. Resembles something between an alien from outer space and the Elephant Man. Only worse.....

### Mark Crossley

As a player: Perhaps it's a thing with keepers and ugliness, but Crossley is also crap. Flapping at thin air for the majority of his 90 minutes, he's now Wales number one choice for the keepers spot. Shame that.....

As an ugly bloke: Not profoundly ugly, but has a face which wouldn't look too nice in an Aussie soap opera. Looks like a bulldog chewing a wasp, but being Welsh, if he fails to meet up with some nice lass, there's always a sheep or two. Baaaaah!

### Fernando Nelson

As a player: Signed for Aston Villa at the beginning of the season from some top Portuguese side, it appears "Nando" has been doing a steady job at right back this season. Looked fairly solid in televised games on Sky.

As an ugly bloke: Would struggle to get past the audition stage for "Blind Date", and sports a killer hairdo. A revamped pudding bowl type that makes you wonder if barbers exist in Portugal. Obviously not.

### Gianfranco Zola

As a player: Signed in the close season as part of Gullit's brave attempt to convert Chelsea into one of England's premier clubs. Zola's arrival has seen one of Europe's top players arrive on our shores. In short, class, a pleasure to watch.

As an ugly bloke: Ain't the prettiest, but with rather a large nose that needs reducing in size. Often seen ghosting past five defenders and then rounding the keeper, before tapping it in with his hooter.

### Mark Prudhoe

As a player: A standard keeper who was last seen playing for Stoke, and having witnessed him a few times up there, appears to be a touch dodgy, but always keen to go along with visiting fans and have a laugh.

As an ugly bloke: Actually the recipient of our chants of "Ugly keeper, ugly keeper" last time we met, it's not hard to find why. His face just looks a mess. Also sports a perm like hair job, furthering his cause as a twat.

### Sasa Curcic

As a player: Superb for Bolton last season, transferred to Villa for a fee of around £4m, but has failed to find first team football. Silky skills, and can come and join Luton whenever he feels fit.

As an ugly bloke: Pretty much so, with a nose that Stephen Hendry could probably benefit from using as a cue rest. Also has one of those faces that

you just want to walk up to and slap. And by the looks of it, a few people have already done just that.....

### Jamie Pollock

As a player: As expected with a name like Pollock, pretty shite. Less skill than Bontch, he left Middlesbrough after arguing with boss Bryan Robson that his place shouldn't be under threat from Juninho..... Now with Bolton.

As an ugly bloke: Horrific. Looks like he's had 10 bottles of acid poured over his head, and the plastic surgeon hasn't finished with his face yet. Earned millions recently playing the part of the pig in the kids film "Babe". Nominated for "best lookalike" in the Oscars.

And just looking back in time here are two more contenders with faces that shook the world.....

### Eric Gates

As a player: Prolific scorer for Ipswich Town in the late 70's and early 80's. Small git who could probably appear in many "Where are they now?" magazine articles.

As an ugly bloke: Set the standard throughout the 80's for Dowie to continue through the modern era. The nose, complexion and haircut weren't the neatest and didn't seem aligned to one another. Likely explanation is that his face was made up by a couple of young kids who were doing a "join the dots" competition, and bodged it up.

### George Berry

As a player: What anyone remembers about him is hard, but was a Stoke City player for most of his career and played as a central defender. Apparently made over 120 appearances for Wolves too. Also an international for Wales.....

As an ugly bloke: One of the worst Afro haircuts too be seen on our shores, George also sported a thick beard. Indeed, from a distance it was as if you could have turned it upside down (his head) and you wouldn't have noticed the difference. More facial hair than ZZ Top.

Others that just missed out..... Steve Agnew (Sunderland), Mike Duxbury (ex Man United), and Charlie George (ex Arsenal). Peter Beardsley — far too obvious!!

*Tony Allbones, the Kempston Stud*



## A MATTER OF STANDARDS

Having read the last two issues of Mad in great depth, I have been somewhat shocked at the fact that no-one has really decided to write something about our referees. Is this because the topic is constantly being reviewed, week in, week out, by the media? Or is it because it doesn't affect football in general that much? Or is it simply because the subject as a whole is just irritating to hear about. Putting these possibilities aside, I have been encouraged to air my opinions on this matter because I feel something seriously must be done towards improving the standard in all departments.

Never have I been as dismayed as I am this season over referees decisions in matches involving Luton Town. Is it just Luton Town fans who have to endure such blatantly obvious refereeing errors, or does it affect clubs all over the country? I have followed Luton for years and to be honest, with the exception of one or two games every season, referee's performances have been commendable. I accept that at times it can be a very difficult task and I appreciate that during many games it is inevitable that there are going to be a few decisions which look suspect. But why the sudden drop? I'm sure the vast majority of Luton fans will agree that the standard this season has been appalling, and to try and prove that I'm not biased, that applies even in the games we've won. Is it because we are in Division 2? Do refereeing standards drop in accordance with the level of football — if this is true, I think the FA assigned refs from the HFS Loans League by mistake. But, on a more serious note, they are ruining potentially good games of football. I know recently the classic example regarding Luton was our home tie against Millwall, which everyone keeps harping on about. I don't mind too much if Luton lose as long as they give 100%. Against Millwall they gave 100% and lost 2-0. Although I was furious at the time, the free kick retake was probably justified because Gary Waddock had commenced his attempted run and block before the whistle was blown. But, oh my God! Marshall was so badly clattered on the half way line that I expected the Millwall player to be sent off, but twenty seconds after the obvious foul, we conceded another goal. Luton were destined to get nothing from the game and I can, hand on heart, say I blame the referee and his obnoxious, farcical decisions throughout the whole game. He was so corrupt that frankly I'm surprised fans didn't stampede the field. He should be struck off and.....

The Bristol Rovers game, at their ploughed allotment ground, was another example where one refereeing decision destroyed the whole game as far as we are concerned. I'm sure some Town fans will disagree but, having replayed the "Bontcho, sent off for elbowing" incident several times, I could see no reason why he was sent off — he didn't touch the opponent. Many teams find playing with ten men is usually an advantage..... not with Luton Town it's

not. I thought the referees at Crewe (away) and at home to Rotherham and Chesterfield were poor and, of course, Turfdown away when they equalised in the 97th minute; what was the referee's game that night, eh? What an absurd mess he was!

There are plenty more points I could make over refereeing inconsistencies during the season, but as they are similar to incidents in games already mentioned I shall not bore you with explicit details. Inevitably this leads us to problems solving. In short, what can the FA, or any of us, do to solve this increasing problem in our game? It has, of course, been drawn to the attention of the FA that refereeing standards have dropped in all four professional divisions, seemingly dramatically. People have put forward the suggestion of a fourth official like the third umpire in cricket, who uses a recording device attached to a monitor to over-rule or verify umpires original decisions. Although this sounds effective there is a danger of football becoming a very disjointed stop-start game like Rugby League, or of having three or four Vinny Jones's on the same side to create three or four times as many fouls in ninety minutes. Two referees on the pitch at once? I don't think so. FA cracking down on individuals constantly have bad games — have them struck off or fined. I don't think so either, who would want to be a referee if this was the likely case?

Difficult, isn't it? Some refs have done the game a great service, some have built up good reputations among supporters over many games, only to see them shattered after wrongly sending a player off, and awarding a penalty in the last minute in consecutive games.

I wouldn't have written this if I hadn't been so agitated about the goons we've had in charge of our games this season. I would love to spell out the answer(s), but I really believe that we have to "like it or lump it" and "take the rough with the smooth" because this problem in particular is virtually impossible to repair. I do sincerely hope that they do not hinder our promotion campaign any further; but I suppose if they do, and we stay in pathetic Division Two for another season we will have something or someone to blame, because I challenge anyone who refuses to believe that Lennie and the players have given anything less than 100%. Their fight and will to succeed and win have been admirable to witness and even if we do fail this time in our promotion bid, in years to come I will look back and remember that I was extra proud to be a Luton fan in the 1996/97 season. Good luck lads..... look forward to seeing you in Division One next season.

*James H. Cook*



## SHORT CUTS

# Thorpe tops 1,000

A bit of over optimism, perhaps?

But Dr John Taylor, assistant keeper at the British Museum in London, was more cautious.

Ex-Luton player gets job at museum (he's in charge of the section that shows his last Luton goal).

Chesterfield chairman Norton Lea has not earned his sourpuss nickname for nothing.

Not even a place in FA Cup history could change him. "I'd like to speak to the chairman, please," I told the doorman, brightly.

He pursed his lips. "Oooh, difficult, lad," he said. "He's a bit moody."

"Well, surely he's got five minutes?"

"I'll ask... but he won't like it."

Nor did he. The first reply indicated he was too busy, the second too shy.

"He'll be out in a minute," said a member of staff, knowingly. "He loves all the publicity really. He was out here earlier giving away sweets to the kiddies."

"Trebor's must have come up with a lorry load free, then," said a passing blue and white cynic. "When Luton played here, Nick Owen came down. You know, the

one on the telly with Anne Diamond. He was in the directors' box with his Luton scarf on. Chairman told him to take it off."

So, the Chesterfield chairman made Nick Owen take his scarf off when we played up there. It's surprising he could see him in all that fog!

## WEDNESDAY

FOOTBALL mad Matthew White is one Luton fan who really is mad as a hatter.

Around the time of the club's 1988 league win he was caught red-handed in his school library changing every reference to God to Mick Hartford.

Matthew, who now lives in Oakley, said: "I have been a supporter since I was nine and ever since then went to every match I could. When you are nine and play football you need someone to look up to and my idol was Mick Hartford."

"He was the hardest and best player at the time when Luton were really successful. He was God as far as I was concerned. He has authority and was a brilliant player, I really wanted to be like him."

"I got into trouble for writing his name in the books but I didn't really care at the time. My second favourite was Steve Foster, all the lads wanted to be like him because he wore a white head band. I know it all sounds a bit sad."

You said it Matthew.

1988 league win? Mick Hartford? Another classic from the Accuracy on Sunday.

## ONE WAY TO CURE A NIGHT'S BOREDOM

The date is April 3rd, and I am bored. There is nothing to do. I glance at the paper and see "FA Youth Cup 5th Rnd: Watford 1, Luton 1 (Luton win 5-3 on pens). Yesss! Having discovered this, I immediately decide to put pen to paper and say a bit about the world according to Beaker (the one from Slip End who worships Marv). So, firstly, these rather good extracts from that realistic Play-By-Mail league soccer. One revealing the truth about W\*tf\*rd and where they should be — it is genuine and not made up by me.

## TEAM SHEET - Watford

Team Number: 87  
League: Non League  
Division: 2

Next is a very accurate description of the man who lead QPR to relegation, and finally a query about the Luton stats; surely Kerry Dixon wasn't that fast. Maybe it relates to the number of tablets the players are on, which also explains the Bulgars speed.

8 . Sommer	8 (IF)	As good as a dead sheep
6045 Kerry Dixon	32 ATT 85	
6080 Dwight Marshall	28 ATT 75	
6262 Bontcho Guentchev	29 ATT 80	
6329 Jamie Campbell	21 ATT 70	

Column 3 refers to players speed!

Sadly, no Oldfield or Showler for me to slag off from this source (although for a second or two I will relent in my abuse and say that they did well against Brentford — but then didn't everyone?).

Also I notice some good and bad news with regard to the shite player Devon White. Bad news — he has left them for about 90p. Good news — he's joined the bastards at Notts County. They both go so well with each other, don't they?

Has anyone seen the edition of "They think it's all over" where Tommy Mooney makes a right fuck-up of trying to explain a goal celebration? They actually scored against Wimbledon, wiggled their legs in the air and got trampled by Mick Harford.

The only bad point was Nick Hancock saying they had to humiliate Mooney unnecessarily. There's nothing unnecessary about humiliating a W\*tf\*rd player.



Finally, I must conclude by having a pop at certain people who I know keep on about me supporting Luton even when they're in the Second Division etc, so here goes.... Mark Welch — we beat Brentford, we went top.... so 'koff as your sad little shits from down the road in Herts won't go anywhere. Drew — don't give that scummer a lift into work ever again, as I missed part of the Luton v Brentford game because we had to wait for him. Everyone at the Half Moon and Priory Bells — we're going up so shut it, otherwise you'll be the lot with egg on your faces and I shall take great delight in rubbing it in!

*Beaker*

## ***LISTENING FROM THE SIDELINES***

Owing to the nature of my job, the chances of watching every Town game are small. Occasionally I am forced to listen with baited breath for any scraps of information as to how the game is going. One thing I have found out about myself this season is that I am a bloody awful armchair supporter.

Radio coverage of Town games leaves a little to be desired, with a poor amount of air play on One County Radio and virtually no coverage anywhere else. This makes life difficult especially when I am unable to make it to a game. Thankfully, this doesn't happen often. Listening to Radio Five Live is a total waste of time, as all they bother with is Manchester Ushited. Working with a load of glory boys doesn't help either as all I ever get are wrong scores and the usual comments. I do not doubt it's any different for me than anyone else, but having to put up with a pair of Mancs, neither of whom go (one of them actually lives in Leagrave), a yid who hasn't gone in seven years (but actually lives in Shite Hart Lane) and the sad array of Gooners and Scousers who can't be bothered, can make life difficult when the Town slip up. Oh, and by the way, there is the W\*£\$?rd scum. He's been pretty quiet of late but the way this season has gone and after the disgrace at Walsall he may yet have the last laugh.

On the topic of the Walsall shambles, picture the scene; you're at work listening to Radio Five (as usual the whingeing Mancs are on) and hear that Luton have gone 2-1 up and are heading for second place, and then..... nothing. It's a fair assumption that on not hearing any more score flashes from a supposedly top Second Division game that 2-1 was the final score. You can imagine how pissed off I was when the final result was given as 3-2 to Walsall. After the cursing, and throwing my Luton cup against the wall (AGAIN), there was the realisation that Luton could well have blown it. The piss taking has started up again, only this time worse than before. God help Luton if they screw up at Blackpool. A transfer to Thurso may be needed.

*J.S.*



Thorpey (above) looks happy, doesn't he? And so he should, having just smashed the thirty goal mark at Rotherham. But that was a desperate day for the home supporters. We believe this (below) was a protester, rather than a suicide victim, being dragged off the pitch.





## AND IT'S NEVER GONNA BE THE SAME.....

The vast majority of people reading this article will have grown up reading the same man write about the Hatters in the Luton News every week. However, after almost 25 years as sports Editor of our local paper, today (May 3rd) marks Brian Swain's last match in the post — play-offs permitting — as he has resigned from the newspaper. But what about the man behind the reports we've been reading for years? Here's a little insight.

Brian has been a fan of Luton Town for as long as he can remember. "Ever since I was old enough to go along to Kenilworth Road on my pushbike I've been watching Luton", he said — but he wouldn't be more specific than "around 50 years". He became Sports Editor at Christmas in 1972, taking over from Eric 'Chiltern' Pugh when he died. "It's a pity I won't quite make 25 years, but that's life".

In all this time as Sports Editor, Brian has missed just one match — away at Cesena in the pointless Anglo-Italian Cup competition last season. The Anglo-Italian Cup has also produced his longest journey to go and watch the Town in his career — but it wasn't Genoa. He, along with very few others, went all the way to Rome to watch the Hatters do battle with Gazza's future club, Lazio, in the early 1970's. Domestically, Swainy has travelled all around the country with the Town, from Plymouth to Carlisle.

His most treasured memory as a Luton fan is that glorious day up in Manchester in 1983. "At about 22 minutes to 5 on May 14th when the ball came out to Raddy Antic," to be more precise. It even beat probably the greatest day of Luton Town's history — the 1988 Littlewoods Cup win at Wembley, "because at Maine Road it was so important to the club to stay in the top division. If we hadn't won and had got relegated then it was very possible that Luton might slide all the way down the divisions — like what happened in the 1960's".

The saddest moment of his Town career was at Meadow Lane in May 1992, when our defeat at Notts County relegated us from the top flight after 10 years. "If we had stayed up then we would have been in the Premiership. Sadly, defeat condemned us to no away wins that season, and I have to say that we deserved to go down," Brian said.

The Luton News wasn't the be all and end all however. As well as freelancing a lot for various Sunday titles and Teletext, Brian also commentated on the Hatters for Chiltern Radio from day one of their sports coverage — a 7-0 victory against Crewe if memory serves him correctly — until he was made redundant when Chiltern dropped their sports section last year.

Although Brian has resigned from the Luton News, it might not be the end of his journalism career. "If I can afford to retire (at the age of 59) then I will do, and go down to Falmouth", Brian explains. "If not, then I'll try and do a bit of freelancing for whoever will take me!".

A fair assessment is to say that Brian Swain is Luton's Number One fan. So, as far as Luton News reporting is concerned, so long Brian:

They think it's all over..... SURELY it is now!

Chris Lennon

## SHORT CUTS

**\*\* Hammers Kids:** The Hammers youngsters went to Watford last week and came away with all three points in a fairly nasty 5-3 victory. Watford set their stall out early and start kicking lumps out of our lads within a few seconds of the kick-off. However, the young Hammers went in two-nil up at half time following goals from LEE GOODWIN and CRAIG ETHERINGTON.

Watford grabbed two in quick succession after the break before Steven Purchase sent a cross over for a young Watford player to put through his own net. CRAIG ETHERINGTON hit a great edge of the box fourth before Watford grabbed an outrageous third for themselves. A Watford player punched the ball out of Neil Finn's hands and went on to score. Most odd.

The fifth Hammers goal came from right-back JASON MOORE., who had an outstanding game.

Two reports on the same match, between West Ham youth and Watford youth, taken from the West Ham match programme and the fanzine *Over Land and Sea*. Good to see that the scum are bringing up their youngsters to play football properly. Thanks to Richard of Maidstone for these.

An extremely physical approach from the Watford youngsters when we visited them in our League game on the opening Saturday of March meant that the referee was constantly halting proceedings as he whistled up for the numerous free-kicks that their style of play conceded.

Fortunately the attitude they adopted from the opening minute when they committed their first foul on our central defender Chris Coyne did not upset our lads unduly. Responding positively we took the lead in the 13th minute when Craig Etherington scored and four minutes before half-time added a second when Lee Goodwin netted for the second week running making his total for the season up to four.

Just after the interval Watford scored twice in quick succession to draw level but we immediately responded to go back in front when Stephen Purchase broke away and crossed into the area and the home defence conceded an own goal whilst under pressure in the 53rd minute. Etherington then scored the goal of the game six minutes later to restore our two goal advantage as he ran onto a loose ball following the opposing goalkeeper's punched clearance and hit a well taken volley from the edge of the penalty area.

Once again Watford reduced their arrears when they were allowed to score after one of their forwards punched the ball out of our goalkeeper Neil Finn's grasp in a goalmouth incident before knocking home the loose ball. To the amazement of all watching none of the match officials saw the infringement and thus let the goal stand.

Justice, however, was finally seen to be done with eleven minutes to go when a deep cross from the opposite wing was met at the far post by right wing full-back Jason Moore who forced home the ball for his second goal of the campaign to give us a thoroughly deserved 5-3 victory and thus complete a third win "double" of the season.



# 'Luther Blissett' still finds Italy a trial

## James Tandy in Rome

**L**UTHER Blissett, the former Watford striker, is on trial in Italy for resisting arrest and insulting a public official. Or to be more accurate, four Luther Blissetts are in the dock.

The trial of four Italian youths found travelling without tickets on a night tram last summer began in Rome on Thursday. When asked by police to identify themselves, all four gave the name Luther Blissett, in memory of the black British football player still

remembered in Italy for his disastrous 1982 season with AC Milan.

According to their lawyer, when the four were apprehended on the night of June 17 1995, they were staging an itinerant party with improvised music and dancing on the tram. The peaceful "socio-cultural happening" was being broadcast live on a local leftwing radio station, Radio Citta Futura.

In the words of the Blissetts themselves: "The forces of law and order arrived and, incapable of understanding the event, decided immediately to

repress it, even firing shots into the air."

The four are members of a loosely-knit anarchic youth movement that has adopted the identity of Luther Blissett as a cover for a series of hoaxes and practical jokes.

"The group considers identity to be the prison of the self," said Checchino Antonini, an editor at Radio Citta Futura. "Identity and fixity are the enemies of communication and have to be combated by nomadism and collective identity. When the conductor asked for their tickets, they replied that a collective

identity does not travel with a ticket."

He said the group had selected Luther Blissett, once known by British fans as "Luther Missit" as a cultural icon because his career in Italy had been so unlucky. Blissett was "famous for missing open goals and for the inexorable precision with which he would find the goalpost," according to an unforgiving account in an Italian newspaper.

The prosecutor, Gloria Attanasio, has failed to see the funny side, however, and the trial has been postponed until December.

Funny goes on in Italy. At least it seems that the Italians have seen the truth about Luther!

**That ain't us, we're all Luther!**



BLISSETT: Name game

FORMER England football hero Luther Blissett is the unlikely hero of a bunch of Italian anarchists.

People all over Italy, who are nabbed for anti-government stunts identify themselves as Watford's assistant manager.

The latest incident involved four men who were arrested for travelling on a train without a ticket.

Each gave their name to the court in Rome as Luther Blissett.

The real Blissett played one season for Italian giants AC Milan.

He said: "It's bordering on the ridiculous. But I don't mind these people using my name, whoever they are."

## Watford

20 things you didn't know about!!!!!!! More like 6 things you should know about the Hertfordshire Hoofers. Read and enjoy. By the way, there's a seventh. THEY'RE SHIT!

**6** Due to injuries, Watford were left with no option but play semi-professional goalkeeper Gary Plumley (son of the club's chief executive, Roy Plumley) in the 1987 FA Cup semi-final against Spurs at Villa Park. But there was no *Roy of the Rovers* scenario as Watford were thumped 4-1.

**7** Visiting fans at Watford have one of the longest walks in the League. Due to security worries the Watford police make away supporters endure a mile-long yomp through allotments before they eventually arrive at the turnstiles.

**8** The 1971/72 season will be well remembered by Watford fans as the grimmest on record. The club finished bottom of Division Two, winning only five games all season and scoring only 24 League goals.

**44** "Blimey! The ground looks a bit different to Watford. Where's the dog track?"

- Former Watford star Luther Blissett on his surprise transfer in 1983 to AC Milan

**12** Watford's first goal in the top division was an own goal scored by Luton's Marvin Johnson at Kenilworth Road... but the Hornets still lost 2-1.

**13** Watford, like Everton, run out to the Z-Cars theme tune. No-one is 100 per cent sure why!

**14** On 30 August 1975 Watford hit rock bottom. Losing 1-0 to Darlington meant that they slipped to 92nd spot in the Football League.

Mind you, if their first goal in the "top" division was scored by Marv, they had a much longer wait than anyone noticed at the time.

**29** "Elton John decided to rename Watford. He wanted to call it Queen of the South."

- Tommy Docherty

**100** "I hear Elton John's made a bid for an Italian club - AC/DC Milan."

- Tommy Docherty

A few other little space filling snippets from the *Sunday Mirror's Yes!* magazine.



## IN A BIT OF A STEW(ARD)....

Many fans, I have noticed recently, have phoned the 6.06 programme on the radio venting their anger and frustrations at their own clubs and, more specifically, their club stewards. I've listened to a few calls and thought, "well, that's a slight exaggeration", but no, my own recent experience matches most of what I've already heard.

It was the home match against Wycombe recently, so I thought that because the light before the match was pretty good I'd take my camera and get a few shots of the players with me. After all, I've been going 15 years and never had any pics of the players.

I went up to the steward and asked if he could take a picture of me sitting in the dugout with my LTFC shirt on — this was at 6.30 and there was no-one in the ground. "Sorry mate, I'll just have to see what my supervisor says." I argued with him that it would just take two seconds for him to press the button on the bloody camera. He was not giving way. The conversation continued, and this is the good bit, he said he was an agency bloke and that he'd been drafted in from..... Bolton, of all places, for the game. Basically, he hadn't a clue about football, and was reacting to instructions only. A flesh and blood "Robocop" if you like.

In the meantime I somehow managed to get photo's of myself with Steve Davis, Spider, Gary Waddock, Skippy and Ian Feuer, all of whom were extremely helpful and were more than happy to break from their pre-match routine for a few seconds for the shots. By this time the supervisor, who had obviously been informed by the Bolton bloke that I was taking pictures, arrived and mentioned that if I proceeded with what I was doing, he'd have no alternative but to confiscate my camera, and he even talked about ejecting me from the ground. The next five minutes saw a heated debate between me, the supervisor and anyone else who happened to be in the vicinity.

Because I was to the point and basically told him to eff off several times and do the job he is actually paid for (preventing crowd trouble, safety, etc.) he actually stood down, I think realising that I am a passionate supporter, who supports the players and just wanted a few shots. Why should something which should have been so simple turn into a half hour fiasco, involving the robots who get involved with everything that they don't need to, and know sod all and have no interest in the game. If any stewards are actually reading this (though why they'd be interested in a football fanzine is anyone's guess) then feel free to explain yourselves. I'd love to read your comments.

*Tony Allbones.*

## SOME KIND OF SUPPORTERS

AN ODE TO THOSE 'EXPERTS' WHO KNOW EVERYTHING  
PAY THEIR MONEY NOT ONLY TO WATCH BUT TO  
VOCIFERATE DOGMATIC BELIEFS

Num Nut supporters can be found  
In every single football ground  
They cheer their team through thick and thin  
And go bananas if they win  
They turn up in the snow and rain  
They freeze and piss off home again  
They travel far and spend a mint  
No wonder they are always skint  
Especially when their heroes lose  
Cos they drown themselves in lots of booze  
But in the heat of matches played  
You'll here expert comments made  
Like 'Spread it wide' and 'Keep it tight'  
And 'Kick his arse he's bloody shite'  
The poor old ref gets loads of stick  
Cos hes a gormless doozy prick  
When expectations are running high  
Others take deep breathes and heave a sigh  
For them its too much to bear  
their nerves are shot and tempers flare  
Yes Num Nut supporters shout of course  
They scream and make their voices hoarse  
They open their mouths before they think  
Half these people need a shrink  
During defeat the scapegoats there  
Bulgarian or Ghanaian they don't care!  
Shouting obscenities for no reason at all  
Just putting him off when hes on the ball  
For ninety minutes their completely mad  
Win, loose or draw, happy or sad  
When rival fans are homeward bound  
It hugs and handshakes all around  
They trot back home to the wife  
And do as their told not as they like





## AND SO TO THE PLAY-OFFS.....

The opinion on the way back from Blackpool was that the Town have blown it and will be involved in the play-offs. Oh great! A nice exciting finish to the season! However, our participation in this end of season spectacular raises a couple of important questions.

Who will we play? Hopefully we'll finish 3rd or 4th so as we get the second leg at home. There are, in my opinion, several potential opponents:

- **Watford.** There are two ways to look at games against the scum. We haven't lost to them in 10 years so we must be a bogey side to them. However, just like all good things must come to an end, unfortunately the scum will inevitably have some enormous stroke of luck and achieve a victory against us. Wouldn't it be terrible, but typical of our "payback decade" if that victory came in the play-offs and the 'entertainers' went up instead of us.
- **Crewe.** An attractive side who play the right way and in the two games this season didn't seem much of a threat. We thrashed them down here and looked the more likely victors at Gresty Road.
- **Bury.** Another 'attractive side'. If they don't win the championship (and I think they will) we'll have to rely on a home result as they have become almost invincible at Giggie Lane. Our 0-0 up there looks a good result now.
- **Stockport.** Proved to be good in the cups so could be a danger in the knockout formula. Worth a point at Edgeley Park in October. Could run out of steam due to having too many games.
- **Brentford.** One team I haven't been impressed with. How they beat us 3-2 at Griffin Park I'll never know, and we just about deserved our 1-0 victory here. Will be an easy opponent if Joe Omigie shows the same finishing skills he displayed at Kenilworth Road.
- **Bristol City.** Might just sneak in the top six and we don't want to play our bogey side. Apart from an FA Cup win we haven't beaten City since our fall from grace and usually play pretty shit against them.
- **Walsall.** Tricky opponents on a good run of form, the sort which usually sees a play off winner home. Good attacking side who capitalised on our woeful defending to full effect at the Bescot.

Of the other outsiders Millwall have blown it and will hopefully soon be in Division

3. Burnley have similarly fallen away which pleases me as they're managed by Adrian Heath. Wrexham are Welsh and should go back to their sheep.

So, there are our potential opponents. I hope it's Crewe, but fear it may be the Horns (oo-er).

Having got that out of the way, the second issue is ticket allocation. Luton Fans will always come out of the woodwork for big games, and most of those grounds will be inadequate for the extra support added to our excellent away following this season. Watford may just be OK — but is the Rookery big enough? We'll take the Rous Stand as well. At the home leg we'll give Watford the New Stand. That should be more than adequate for their away 'support'.

Being serious, Crewe's away end holds just under 1000. Walsall's away end wasn't adequate for our league match there and we took over part of the other stand.

Luton Town, in their wisdom, will as always offer away tickets to season ticket holders first. Now, unfortunately not all of us can afford to pay £200 each summer and are not privileged. However, many non-season ticket holders travel up and down the country following the team. If, for example, we play Crewe I'm sure the 100 away tickets will be taken by season ticket holders. Rightly so, after all they were there in their thousands at Wrexham, Stockport, Preston etc!!

Therefore committed fans who spend hundreds of pounds and many hours following the team, myself included, will be unable to go to this game. If you don't think this will happen remember the ticket fiasco for the cup tie at Newcastle a couple of years back. How many loyal fans couldn't get a ticket then?

LTFC will inevitably say there is nothing they can do to ensure fair distribution of tickets. But there is. Certain games this season (eg. at Crewe) have been all ticket for away fans. In order to buy a ticket for such matches you have to give the ticket office your membership number, which is recorded. Therefore, surely the purchasers of other away tickets should be given priority. If this is not done it makes the membership scheme even more ludicrous. At the very least tickets should be made available to all season ticket holders and members at the same time, first come, first served.

It's about time that the club appreciated it's loyal supporters. I urge every loyal, travelling non-season ticket holding fan to write to the club today with these points. After all, I and many others do not want to miss our first game of the season in the most important one of the play-offs.

Norm



# Whatever happened to \* \* \* ?

## INSIDE THE TOWN DRESSING ROOM



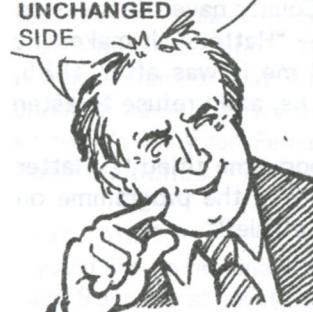
## LENNIE'S TEAM TALK CAUGHT THE MOOD OF THE MOMENT



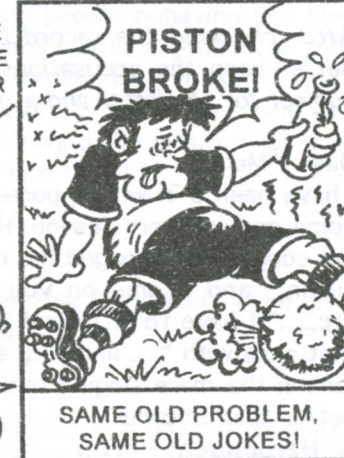
Lat A APRIL 1997

## ONE FINAL WORD FROM LENNIE

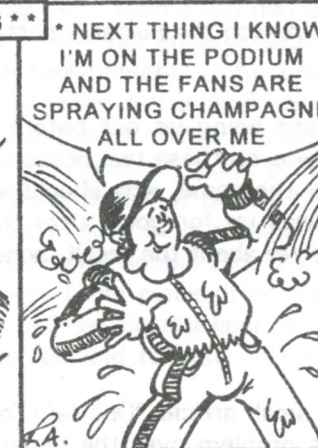
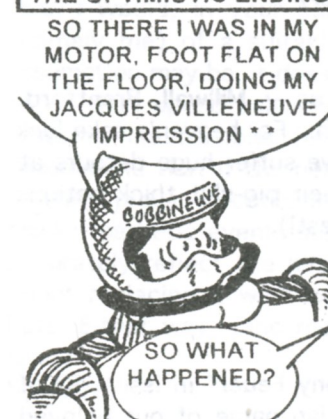
YOU CAN DO IT LADS, THAT WHY I'M PUTTING OUT AN UNCHANGED SIDE



## THE PESSIMISTIC ENDING \*\*



## THE OPTIMISTIC ENDING \*\*





## RAVING MAD!!!

Dear "Mad",

I was disgusted to learn a few weeks ago that Stockport County have the nerve to share the same nickname as our beloved Luton Town FC — "Hatters". It makes me sick. When were Stockport County formed? Please tell me it was after 1885, because as far as I'm concerned they stole the name off us, and I refuse to listen to any argument to the contrary.

I think Roger Wash should boycott the extract in the programme titled "A Hatter and a Bee/Lion/Scummer etc"..... Or, alternatively, write in the programme on that page for the final game of the season "A Hatter and a Thief!"

James H. Cook  
Steppingley, Beds.

*After checking the record books to see when Stockport were founded, we'd better keep the accusations quiet. And what's the betting that Roger Wash's subject for "A Hatter and a Hatter" is Keith Allen? — Ed.*

Dear "Mad",

I have been a Town supporter since I was 10 (I'm now 15) and go to nearly all home games every season. However, despite this I still cannot pick up some of the songs. I've managed the complicated ones, such as "Come on Luton, come on Luton", and "Come on you Hatters!" but when it comes to "Ee-i-ee-i-ee-i-o etc....." I have to sit/stand and join in where possible. And what's this new one that ends with ".... and your shit football team!" Please could you print these as I reckon the more singing the better. Oh, and who else reckons Bontcho is miles better than Showler?

A Harpenden Hatter

*Else? You mean someone does reckon the Bulgar is better?*

Dear "Mad",

Why the hell are the away fans being let out before us — Millwall, Brentford. They caused all sorts of problems on these two occasions. For heaven's sake lock THEM in for ten minutes after the game, why should we suffer huge detours at our ground. In fact, lock Millwall up for good after their pig-shit thick actions during the game..... (I'm not bitter about the result, honest!).

James H. Cook  
Steppingley, Beds.

Dear "Mad",

I have just been reading the small article "One Ian/Tony Feuer" in issue 40 of Mad. It seems there's a little problem over the christian name of our beloved

keeper. Well, here's to put the record straight.

At the Coca Cola Cup game earlier this season against Derby County, I asked Ian Feuer to sign my shirt and to sign it "To Tony" (that being my name), to which the keeper replied "That's the top name". I asked why, and he said "'Cause that's my real name". The conversation continued for a short while in which Mr Feuer explained that Ian is his middle name, and he uses it as his preferred christian name. So, for everybody reading this short piece, you are all now in the know. It's Tony Ian Feuer.

Tony Allbones, The Kempston Stud.

Dear "Mad",

I would like to nominate as "Tossers of the Season" those fans who make the mad dash from the all exciting Buffalo hillbillies coach over to the team coach to ponce complimentary tickets. At away games we watch you people behaving like flies around dog shit. We've got nicknames for all of you and continually take the piss out of you. If you could see yourselves and how pathetic you look you'll see what I'm on about, so when you're on the terraces and hear a group of fans laughing and looking in your direction, yes, it's you that we're taking the piss out of. Now pay your way like the rest of us and put some money into the club.

Yours,

Ticket paying fans.

*A letter received from someone so determined to pay that they didn't even give us an address so that they could receive their free fanzine!*

Dear "Mad",

I write to express my growing concern over the painfully unfunny but ongoing saga of Bobbin Dino. Why, oh why, persist with these cartoon capers when it is all too clear that it is nothing more than a big bag of shit. In a situation such as this, I would, in your place, expect an adequate suggestion from the critic (namely me) of a suitable replacement. Unfortunately, however justified this assumption may be, it does not take into account the fact that I have better things to do than spend valuable moments of my precious life composing moderately amusing illustrations for the likes of your publication. I might, however, recommend that if the next instalment of Bobbin Dino is beyond recall from the printing press. it could instead just be renamed "The totally humourless and frankly pathetic events surrounding Bobbin Dino", a title which I feel would more accurately reflect the nature of the piece. If possible you might want to think about replacing it with lots of sex-crazed lipstick lesbians covered in mud and hats. Either way, Dino must be laid to rest — it never has been, is or will be funny.

Spowie.



We're afraid that you'll just have to try skipping the centre pages next time you read Mad. And if you've really got better things to do, how come you found time to write the letter?

Dear "Mad",

Until recently my aspirations for Luton Town were at an all time low. The teams spiralling demise, plastic seating in the Kenilworth, relegation again, continuous flogging of promising prospects, public shaming of players (particularly that of Scott Oakes) and then a yellow kit.

My interest has never dwindled though. Even after the disastrous start to the season. I may not have a season ticket this year but I have attended most games in an effort to locate somewhere in the ground without twats sitting near me.

What is it with Luton fans? During the recent Wycombe home game, a 'fan' described Thorpe as complete shite and the team as a shamble. Yes, we want success, but come on! It's this sort of attitude which has blocked my encouragement to produce fanzine items. However, I thought it was because we had got used to suffering defeat, disappointment and relegation. But even now tempers flare and supporters mock the team! Why?

Anyway, my interest has now rekindled following my toddler's interacting with his grandad who tries to encourage him to support Spurs. No way! He now parades a proud Hatters badge on his chest.

Robbie,  
Hemel Hempstead.

Dear "Mad",

Graham Johnson will be interested to know that when I had my all expenses paid night out with Barry Took at the Balls Pond Road Pie Shop 'n Sauna, he said; "Are you the famous cartoonist from Mad as a Hatter?" Could I also take this opportunity of informing my many friends at the Inland Revenue that I don't get any royalties on sales of the News Quiz tape!

Ray Aspden,  
Luton.

## "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 & XL.

The home shirt, as pictured, is still available, but now also priced at £28.95.

### Another excellent product - Luton News

Please send me a 1974 home/away\* shirt. I enclose a cheque for £28.95

Name:..... Size: L/XL\*

Address:.....

.....

.....

(\*Delete as appropriate)

Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!*

Send orders to: 38 Twigden Court, Mount Pleasant Road, Luton, LU3 2RL.



# NOT ANOTHER ELECTION CAMPAIGN!

Well, no, not exactly, but certainly an opportunity to vote. Once again it's time for the end of season thing where we ask you to put forth your opinions on the people and events that have shaped the wonderful season we have enjoyed/endured. By way of a change, we're even providing you with a form for your voting, but you don't have to use it. If you don't want to take your copy of Mad apart, you can photocopy this or just use a sheet of ordinary writing paper. And, as always, any additional comments you want to make to support your nominations will be welcome.

The closing date for the poll is June 21st, after which we will have a prize draw of the entries, with the winner receiving an exciting item of leisure wear from the LTFC collection. Remember, send your votes to the address on page 2.

- 1 BEST TOWN PLAYER.....
- 2 BEST YOUNG PLAYER.....
- 3 BEST TOWN PERFORMANCE.....
- 4 WORST TOWN PERFORMANCE.....
- 5 BEST TOWN GOAL.....
- 6 BEST GOAL AGAINST.....
- 7 BEST OPPONENTS.....
- 8 WORST OPPONENTS.....
- 9 GOOD REFEREE.....
- 10 WORST REFEREE.....
- 11 BEST OPPOSING PLAYER.....
- 12 WORST OPPOSING PLAYER.....
- 13 WORST OPPOSING PLAYER OTHER THAN DEVON WHITE.....
- 14 IDIOT OF THE SEASON.....
- 15 HERO OF THE SEASON.....
- 16 BEST GROUND VISITED.....
- 17 WORST GROUND VISITED.....
- 18 LOW POINT OF THE SEASON.....
- 19 HIGH POINT OF THE SEASON.....
- 20 THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO.....
- .....
- 21 THINGS TO DREAD.....
- .....

And if there's anything you'd like to say about Mad as a Hatter!, like what we could do to improve it, whether we should double the price, that sort of thing, please feel free to mention it.



## 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

-----  
Please send me the new/old aerial photo. I enclose a cheque for £3.50/6.00

Name:.....

Address:.....  
.....  
.....

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Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* Orders to the address on page 2.

## ON THE BRINK....

Of what, we're not quite sure at the time of writing. It may be promotion, or it might be the play-offs and potential Wembley glory. At least we have the certainty of something at the end of the normal season. And we'll have done better than Watford!

We always like to receive reports from readers and would like to extend thanks to Martin Wren for those he sent which were, unfortunately, received too late for inclusion in issue 40 where the three matches were covered. Any other reports should be sent to us at the normal address.

### 15.03.97 CREWE ALEXANDRA 0 TOWN 0

Optimism was in short supply beforehand, but after recent results maybe that was no great surprise. Luton have been lucky in that a lot of results have gone in their favour elsewhere. It is incredible they have stayed second for so long. That said, Town did everything against Millwall except score and had a good first half at Wrexham. It went without saying that this was a game Luton could ill afford to lose.

The day started badly with the train from London being late, wasting drinking time and when I arrived, finding all the pubs I was hoping to visit either shut or having a miserable gorilla on the door..... roll on three o'clock.

We all have our own views on team selection, but I am sure we were all in shock as to why Botchup was on the bench. Surely there has to be a better option, even Liam George (no disrespect meant, Liam). The game was always going to be an anticlimax after the six goal demolition in December. Luton played well and it can only be a matter of time before they hit form again. Chances were few and far between and in all honesty Crewe could have played all week and not scored (and so it proved against Millwall during the following week). They play good football but seem clueless in the box. Ceri was very late with a tackle earning himself a booking, which in turn handicapped his performance for the rest of the game. 'Handbag' was as tireless as ever and should really have scored in the last seconds when mishitting from eight yards out. Graham 'The Great Enigma' Alexander was consistently inconsistent as usual. Brilliant one week, poor the next. He was great against Millwall but was awful today. Marvin, God bless 'im, looks a little lost without Mitchell, who I hope will return soon. The defence is a little lop-sided without him and has been exposed too often in recent games.

A point wasn't too bad as other results could have been worse. I'm astonished we are still second, even after the midweek games.

If anything sums up this division it has to be that Town can go top if they beat Brentford on Friday. It is very tight and will no doubt be decided in the final week of the season. I still feel Town are the best footballing side in the division, but I still question the commitment of some of the players. When the going has got tough one or two heads have started to drop. Thankfully this has not happened



often. We are still in a strong position, with a hell of a lot to play for.

J.S.

### 21.03.97 TOWN 1 BRENTFORD 0

*When he gets the ball, he scores a goal.....*

Excuse me (sport), but why do people have a go at Tony Thorpe. OK, he can be lazy and looks like his attitude could be better at times — but people seem to forget that he has already scored 25 odd goals this season. If Thorpe hadn't been playing this season, who would have scored his goals? Marshall? Oldfield? No. Grant? Definitely not. Obviously they would have got a few, but at the moment there is not another man at the club capable of 20+ goals. Although Thorpe and Grant can be lazy (in Grant's case it's all of the time) there is one big underlying difference — and that is that Thorpe has a considerable amount of talent. Grant has less talent than a thimble. So before you start criticising someone who is actually doing our promotion cause any good, just remember who could have been playing in the number 10 shirt. As it was, Thorpe even admitted on Sky that this was one of his worst games — but a great turn and shot by Tony for the 3 points. Oh, and by the way Brentford:

*"We are top of the league, say we are top of the league."*

*The Beatie*

### 29.03.97 BURNLEY 0 TOWN 2

On boarding the 06.52 train at Luton station on Easter Saturday none of us felt particularly optimistic about our chances of securing a positive result in Lancashire, especially considering that Burnley had won their last three games, including impressive victories at Brentford and Walsall. This feeling was compounded when, after changing trains at Derby, we ground to a halt for an hour just south of Sheffield..... our best laid plans — a staggered (*in more ways than one, perhaps*) pub crawl of a large section of West Yorkshire — looked to be evaporating away. Alas, we arrived in Leeds and duly changed trains alighting in Halifax and moving on to the picturesque setting of Sowerby Bridge, enjoying several pints and eventually arriving in Burnley at a quarter past two. A quick beer in a plastic glass was followed by a brisque (*sic*) walk to the ground. Turf Moor had changed somewhat since our last visit two years ago with two new stands erected and an excellent crowd of fifteen and a half thousand (second only to the Burnley v Preston derby fixture) provided a good atmosphere.

The match itself proved fascinating with the Town, giving debuts to on-loan signings Kiwomya and McGowan, dominating the early stages and deservedly taking the lead through Thorpe. When the same player doubled our advantage the travelling contingent went into ecstasy as the Town played, in my opinion, the best 45 minutes of the season. It could have been quite different had Burnley scored on the stroke of half-time after Feuer was clearly fouled but the ref played on with the ball whistling fractionally past the post.

The Clarets had obviously received a huge bollocking from their manager at half time as they looked a completely different outfit after the restart. This spurred on the vocal home support which, I must admit, was highly impressive given the two goal deficit. McGowan went off injured (another jinxed loan signing?) after looking pretty good during the second half and we somehow preserved our lead thanks to some excellent defending. Feuer's handling was immaculate, Waddock was superb and I thought Davis was without doubt the man of the match against his former club — a fact echoed by a few Burnley fans I was speaking to on the coach journey back to Manchester. Great stuff, and the scum losing at home to Bournemouth too. YESSS, What a day!

Steve F.

### 01.04.97 TOWN 2 BRISTOL CITY 2

*Mar-vin, Mar-vin*

For the first time for about 30 years I found myself watching the lads completely sober (I mean that I was sober, not necessarily that the lads were in the same condition). The reason? My 10 year old daughter was paying her first visit to the home of football, having previously been restricted to third rate venues like Ashton Gate and Anfield.

The Kings of Football took to the pitch. Rachel eagerly asked which was Marvin, a legend in our household from frequent reruns of the video of the Wolves match where his brace of own goals so nearly snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. Marvin did not disappoint. Even from our vantage point in the New Stand we could see him homing in on Agostino as he ran across the penalty area. "No Marvin!" we screamed as, almost in slow motion, the Australian fell. Rachel was ecstatic. Her hero had taken just 4 minutes to deliver.

But The Greatest Football Team In The History Of The Universe (TGFTITHOTU) were not finished. Excellent work by Alexander down the right followed by a storming header by Davis on the stroke of half time gave us our first league goal against City at Kenilworth Road since 1981.

Yet another penalty save from "Tony" Feuer, but Owers got the rebound, the lucky sod. Things got worse. Goater and Agostino were good. I wondered how I was going to face the City fans at work (this has been the most difficult feature of living in Bristol - 9 matches, 1 win) after Goater made it 2.

The second half was different. Dwight replaced Bontcho and McGowan, who showed some wonderful touches, made way for McLaren. TGFTITHOTU streamed forward and after missing a couple of chances Thorpy made it possible for me to contemplate going to work later in the week.

But Marvin had not finished. A superb Marvin-esque fall over with the ball 3 minutes from time gave City a clear run on goal. Panic turned to relief as I realised that the player was Junior Bent. Although Feuer's save was excellent he should not have been given the chance.

An excellent game, with the lads showing character to come back against an



impressive City. But given the state of my nerves I think that I will give it another 30 years before I watch them sober again.

Clark

#### 05.04.97 ROTHERHAM UNITED 0 TOWN 3

Was this a real game or just a practice match? I don't remember ever seeing a team play so badly at home, and in all my years of following Luton this was the first occasion where I have felt so sure that the opposition wouldn't score. Two wonderful headers in the first half from Thorpe, who was left completely unmarked both times, effectively sealed the game. The second half was literally a stroll, in fact a total non-event, with Luton conserving their energy, until Thorpe completed his hat-trick with a memorable chip over their keeper ten minutes from time. And guess what.... the scum again lost 0-1 at home!

Did I really consume two gallons of beer today?

Steve F.

#### 08.04.97 TOWN 0 WYCOMBE WANDERERS 0

*Frustrating in the extreme!*

I suppose we have come to the stage of the season when games like this should be won, and in style, except that Wycombe play with six or seven at the back, three in midfield and the 'invisible man' up front. For whatever reason I don't know there was as tense an atmosphere at Kenilworth Road as I have experienced in twenty years. We all want Luton to go up and I have no doubts we will, so let us enjoy the moment, and for those clowns who booed and jeered at the final whistle, bog off and watch W#?&\*rd, this was a minor setback and nothing more. Crap like Wycombe will always come for a point in this sort of game so their performance was no great surprise.

I can't help but feel there is less pressure away from home and so it has proved of late. Town seem able to play better on their travels and the supporters seem to be able to create the sort of atmosphere which we need really badly in the three remaining home matches.

In all honesty there isn't an awful lot to say about the game. We had two good shouts for a penalty turned down, one of which was as blatant a handball as you will ever see. Sadly Mr Furnandiz was too busy eyeing the blonde in the boxes to see the Wycombe defender push the ball away with his hand. Not surprising really, Mr Furnandiz was no better than most of the referees we have seen this season. Wycombe were content to soak up the constant Town pressure playing as defensive a game as you will see. That said, Luton huffed and puffed and created few clear cut chances. Both 'goals' we did score were clearly offside and really summed up the evening. It was a very frustrating night, not helped by Bury winning. I will gladly settle for second although I am greedy and want the championship. What I couldn't handle would be the play-offs. After so much hard work it would be a disaster for the Town if we had to face the likes of Burnley or

Stockport in a play-off situation because I honestly do not know how Luton would handle it.

J.S.

#### 12.04.97 WALSALL 3 TOWN 2

*Excuse me Sport,.....*

.... but I couldn't help noticing, like, that we appear to have scored considerably less goals than you! After only drawing against Wycombe, our chances of automatic promotion appear to have been blown with this shambolic display. Mitchell and Marvin had what can only technically be described as a 'mare, and like Brentford away early in the season, three defensive errors led to three Walsall goals.

How Mitch (sorry, the boy Hendrix) picked out Lightbourne with such ease for the second and what Marv was doing with that header for the third God only knows — but it condemned us to our first away defeat in a month. At least we were given six minutes to go mental in thanks to Kiwomya's deflected free kick and Davis' header, but that was little cheer in what, all in all, amounted to a shit performance.

A big hand (well, it would have to be big) goes out to Sumo — the half time Junior Saddler — who threw the shoot out match while Walsall were cruising at 3-0. And being a Brummie, it's a good job he's a good sport, sport.

The Beatie

#### 15.04.97 BLACKPOOL 0 TOWN 0

After their recent victory over table leaders Bury, the Seasiders were making a late charge for the play-offs. Whilst the Town, after losing out after a terrific fight back at Walsall, were after a more solid and tighter performance. With Hughes, Alexander and Showler missing there was a distinct lack of artistry and penetrating runs. While the return of Fotiadis was welcome, too much depended on him along with Thorpe and the ever industrious Oldfield.

It was the end of a bright spring day as the game kicked off, and unfortunately this had the effect of showing up the poor state of the once great football ground of Bloomfield Road. All plans for a new out of town stadium have been put on ice as a result of Mr Oyston's residency at one of HM Prisons. Hence the ground is in an awful state and unlikely to get any better for some time. The away supporters are housed on half of the open Kop, the other half being occupied by weeds and advertising hoardings. The Town's last visit here had been over twenty years ago, and it seemed as if very little paint had been added since to cover the drabness. On the good side it does make Kenilworth Road appear as a palace in comparison.

The match developed into a general midfield scrap, with the ball occasionally making an appearance on the wings. Both defences were solid and rarely in serious trouble. Feuer easily took a half chance in the first forty-five, and made



one fine save just after the hour mark. Thorpe, tightly marked, missed the best chance of the first half and the match when, after doing the hard work of weaving his way through the Blackpool defence, he shot over.

Blackpool were clearly the upper team after the break, but Steve Davis, rock solid as ever, had another fine performance and was well supported by Marvin. The injured Kiwomya while busy was lacking in pace so Dwight came on as a replacement, but still the Blackpool defence could not be opened. A series of heading competitions helped to frustrate open play, to the annoyance of both sets of fans. In the end a draw was fair to both teams, though a goal apiece would have given both sets of fans something to cheer and talk about.

It was easy to remember that this match should have been played on 11th January, as the match programme from that date was still used. So team news, views, tables and statistics were old news. While this was bad enough the club was still charging £1.70 for the privilege of buying good three months old.

*Normski — the Cheltenham Hatter (there is only one)*

#### 19.04.97 TOWN 2 SHREWSBURY 0

Four wins was what Lennie had said we needed with seven games to play, so having only got two points from the first two, we realistically now needed four wins from four. Equally desperate, Shrewsbury needed a win to stand a chance of avoiding relegation. As it turned out this was not a particularly impressive performance by Luton but, what the hell, the result was right, and just what we needed. Thorpe's 31st goal of the season was a penalty, after Fotiadis had been felled by a hapless defender while running on to McLaren's through ball. It was all settled in the second half when Dwight Marshall nonchalantly (in fact, accidentally) flicked in an excellent Oldfield cross with his heel. He looked almost too embarrassed to celebrate — but did anyway.

With a lot of the other results going for us, our interest in the promotion places was retained, but we'll need to be a bit better if we're going to keep that interest going. Perhaps all we need is to beat Bury on Tuesday.....

*K.F.H.*

#### 22.04.97 TOWN 0 BURY (a successful) 0

*New Wimbledon — new danger.*

Tonight witnessed surely the most negative performance ever by a visiting team at Kenilworth Road, on a night which was so important for the Town's future.

Bury, 5 points ahead of the Town, and with their next — and final — 2 games at home, where they were still unbeaten, knew that their task tonight was to knock the opposition out of the race for automatic promotion. A draw would be enough.

And how they played for it. Blatant time wasting commenced with only 10 minutes on the clock. Every Bury throw-in took at least a minute. When in possession, they made little or no attempt to threaten the Luton goal, quite satisfied instead to give the ball a good hoof. As always seems to happen with

every team that we play that way here, the Town were too easily sucked in, and resorted to the same style at times — an utterly pointless exercise with Fotiadis and Thorpe up front. Why are we always so brain dead against these teams?

With an off form (still unfit?) Hughes, a weary looking Thorpe, and a totally out of sorts Alexander (what has happened to him since Christmas?), we barely created a chance, and Bury's gameplan worked with ease, leaving the Town stuck in the play-off zone.

Had this match not been so crucial, the sight of Bury winning a corner, and the Town players standing in the box looking in vain for someone to mark — precisely nobody — would have been amusing. What an exciting team.

*Objét*

#### 26.04.97 BARRY FRY'S PETERBOROUGH 0 TOWN 1

On a waterlogged pitch (had we really had that much rain?) Peterborough made the better start to this game. Donowa always looked dangerous but Ricky "always scores against Luton" Otto was far less effective, despite a couple of good efforts, and the players in the middle didn't have the guile to get through a hard working defence. In fact, one of their best first half efforts was one that almost beat Feuer after hitting a puddle and creeping along the ground. Beaten by the lack of bounce, you might say.

Half time was probably seen as a bit of a relief for the Town players, and when they appeared back on the pitch, and waited a good three or four minutes for anyone else to arrive, it was beginning to look as though Peterborough had thrown in the towel. Andrew Fotiadis, waiting to come on as a substitute, would have been forgiven for wondering if he would ever get on to the pitch.

When Peterborough did arrive they hardly had time to catch their breath before Fotiadis was causing them problems, and eight minutes into the half he put Town ahead. When a slipping defender, pressured by Thorpe, hooked the ball in front of Oldfield, Fotiadis arrived in the eighteen yard box in time to collect the cross and, as a defender fell and the keeper failed to hold the ball, he slotted it home.

The reaction of the Peterborough manager was stunning. He did nothing. As we waited for the substitutions and the 'throw everything at them' strategy and, of course, celebrated our impending promotion, Peterborough wilted. They seemed to have accepted relegation as a certainty, rather than something they had a chance of avoiding. Otto was substituted, and two more subs arrived with about 10 minutes to go, but they made little difference, and the home side never seemed to get near to scoring. What the Peterborough faithful must have thought of this we will never know.

So now our fate rests on a match between Chesterfield and Stockport and, if Chesterfield get anything out of it, the last game of the season will decide which Hatters get second and third places. Or to quote some LTFC publicity material from late last summer, a 'Hatter get Hatter Promotion scheme'!

*K.F.H.*



## SHORT CUTS

24 Hours

# Harry Tilbury

A trialist with Luton Town

"It's a longish train journey up to Luton from where I live in south London, so I had to get up early to be there for the nine o'clock start. For the first two weeks I

had to go up on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Chas Held, the manager of my Sunday league side, went to school with Lennie Lawrence, but it still took months of writing before Luton would give me a trial.

When I was 14, Fulham spotted me in a five-a-side league. I played a few games for one of their youth sides, then went to Millwall. I enjoyed it there, but they dismantled that side after a year. By then I'd decided I wanted to be a professional, but I also wanted my education. I'm 18 now, I've done my A-levels and I'm trying to get into a club.

The training sessions at Luton lasted four hours with lots of sprints, relays and long-distance runs. I was slightly disappointed about that; it's much easier to impress if

you're playing rather than training. But it was pre-season and most clubs would've been doing the same thing – I'd have preferred to have gone at the back end of the season when they were playing more football. After training we'd go for a meal with the professionals, then we'd be sent home.

In the third week we got to play in an actual match against Letchworth FC. I had a long sleep in the morning and stayed relaxed until about 2pm, then I did a few stretches. Pre-match we warmed up with more stretching, but it was very different to Sunday league stretching. It was based on yoga and it really made a difference. It's something I'll keep up. I played the second half and we won 8-0.

I scored two and set up two, but it took me ten minutes to get into the game. It's a different type of football, a lot of it is back-to-goal, pass, then spin. I was used to chasing the ball and scoring. But I felt I was the best player on the pitch once I got into it and I didn't suffer from nerves really. Afterwards there were even young kids around the ground asking for autographs, which was funny.

After that first match Luton asked me back to play Hitchin Town, who've got Mickey Hazard and Clive Allen playing for them. I'm a Spurs fan so it was an added bonus playing against people I'd admired as a kid, especially Clive Allen. But I had a dead leg from the first game and was strapped up and on the bench for the first 75 minutes. Luton had been easygoing about the first game, but it really seemed like they didn't want to lose this one. When I eventually got on it was still 0-0, so not really a game for strikers. I had one chance and the defender just got his foot in.

So, that was it with Luton, one great match, one nightmare, no offer. It seems pretty hard to get into a professional club, impossible sometimes. But I won't give up."

Back in issue 37 we asked the question, "who the hell is Harry Tilbury?" This cutting from a glossy magazine may go some way to answering that. We've left out the photo so as not to offend!

The 22-year-old Leicester-born midfielder turned striker has scored 19 goals to date and could be the next Hatter to follow John Hartson and Paul Telfer into the big time.

**Could be a job for Sheffield Wednesday.** David Pleat has a keen eye for the lower divisions and will know Thorpe well from his own days in charge at Luton.

TONY THORPE



Luton Town

**SECOND DIVISION**  
Walsall centre-half Derek Mountfield has spent the past 15 years trying to stop strikers from earning their win bonuses. He was a part of Everton's impregnable defence in the '80s, so he knows a thing or two.



**Tony Thorpe (Luton Town)**

"He seems to be a guy that comes alive in the box, and having already scored over 20 goals this season, he has to be respected. To have hit that many by this stage is no mean feat."

**Micky Forster (ex-Brentford)**

"I know this is cheating a bit because Forster has just earned himself a move to Birmingham, but he is classy. Trevor Francis got himself a real bargain when he signed him for around £700,000 as he has pace, good spring in the air and real punch in his shooting. He destroyed us in a game last season."

**Kurt Nogan (Burnley)**

"He's scored goals wherever he has been throughout his career. Paul Smith and Nogan make a good pairing for Burnley. I rate him amongst the best in the League."

**Carl Aspinall (Brentford)**

"Up front with Robert Taylor at Brentford, Aspinall is a real handful. You know you're going to have a tough afternoon when you play against Brentford. The fact that I've

The Pro's Pros

had success in the past may count against me when players come to play in this League. They may just want to put one over on me."

**Shawn Goater (Bristol City)**

"Goater has been in fine form this season and works well with his strike partner Paul Agostino. It's hard to say who's the better of the two really."

**Ian Stevens (Surrey)**

"He scored a great goal against us this season – did nothing all afternoon and then punished us with his only chance – a sign of a decent striker."

**Kyle Lightbourne (Walsall)**

"I have to go for one of our lads and Kyle has scored a lot of goals at this level. He's a consistent scorer, with his height a big weapon. At 6ft 2in, you have to be pretty good in the air to beat him."

**Kevin Watson (Walsall)**

"Just to even things up, Kevin deserves a mention. In this League, you get a mix of great young players who are just waiting for their chance, and others who are more experienced. Kevin had a great career with Chelsea and Derby and is still a threat."

**Devon White (Walsall)**

"It is always a battle when you come up against this giant. You might think at my age I would rather play against a tall, lanky striker rather than a quick little bugger, but they're all the same to me."

**Ado Alababici (Birmingham)**

"He has had experience in the higher Divisions with Norwich which is always helpful, and if you let him run at you, his pace can be a real problem."

Some interesting stuff from 90 Minutes magazine on the league's best goal-scorers. Some fascinating choices from Derek Mountfield as well, but Devon White?



## Worldwide Hatters

Living away from Luton? In a foreign land perhaps? Want all the news and gossip as it happens? Want full match reports within hours of games finishing? Get yerself onto the internet and join WHOSH, Worldwide Hatters On the Super-Highway. And it's not just for passing of news - living away from Luton can make it tedious to get to games and a lonely passion. But, you'd be surprised at how many other Luton fans there are in your locality, be it Toronto, Oxford, Aberdeen, London, Sydney, Stuttgart, New York, Ipswich, San Francisco, Norway, Alaska, Bristol, Moscow, Singapore - we're EVERYWHERE (even Hertfordshire...)!

We started up about 3 years ago, and now have over 250 members who regularly meet up before games and who as a collective sponsor a player, currently the up-and-coming starlet Liam George. Once a season we hire an executive box and wherever the Town are playing we meet up in the nearest CAMRA recommended pub (us "computer buffs" enjoy good beer). But hang on! Shouldn't we all be computer nerds drinking coke and spending hours hacking? With specs, spots and hunched shoulders? Not quite... most of us appear happiest in the pubs and shouting our heads off.

So, what kinds of things emanate on the WHOSH mailing list? Firstly, we always get 3 or 4 match reports on each game, home and away, usually sent out within hours of the final whistle. This is great for people in the States where they get the match reports for evening games before going home and we've actually done live coverage of evening games several times to the US and other parts of the globe. We get some of the usual MAD stuff: "Bontcho is crap", "Kim Grant is a waste of space", "Don't knock the players support them", "I pay money to watch this crap I can voice my opinion" etc. Then the day of each game we get some real statto stuff including all previous scores against those opponents and all previous scores on that day. We also get the rumours as they happen from members of WHOSH and from other teams mailing lists (true and otherwise): "Man City are looking at Tony Thorpe" — imagine receiving that on your desk at work on the day of a big game.

Then we get interesting stories from all round the world, such as one from Canada sent from the Winnipeg Free Press about Len Jackson, the winner of the Manitoba Men's Curling Championship (a major sport out there), and Blair Du Gray, a WHOSH member:

"Len Jackson's bright blue ball cap has a story behind it that he will be able to take to the Canadian Curling Championships. The cap from the Luton Town Football Club of the English soccer league came to Jackson via the Internet and friend Blair Du Gray: 'He give it to

me last year and I feel it's lucky'."

Finally, if ever you travel to New York City, look out for the footy fanzine First Touch — sold in most of the football bars in the City. It's run by "Luton Dave" with contributions from several Luton fans, including the ubiquitous Ken Ilworth, who post from the UK via the internet and take every opportunity to knock "them down road". Here's a couple of samples from Ilworth's column, firstly about Man U after their defeat by Newcastle:

- "Sir Bobby Charlton, Sir Matt Busby, Terry Christian, Zoe Ball, Mick Hucknell out of Simply Red, that bloke that sang 'The Manchester United Calypso', Ryany Giggsy-Wiggysy..... Can you hear me?..... Your boys took a hell of a beating..."
- "I saw in the week that three Saudi Arabian players have been expelled from the national team and their club sides. The reason given is that they were convicted of immoral acts. One can only suspect that they've admitted a liking for Watford."

How do you join WHOSH? Simply email [ltfc-request@robots.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ltfc-request@robots.ox.ac.uk) and ask to subscribe.... it's that easy. If you don't have email, but can surf the web, then look at the WHOSH WWW page at:

<http://mkn.co.uk/help/extra/people/ltfc>

Ralph Highnam

 **Loyal Luton Supporters Club**   
**PLAYER OF THE YEAR 96/97**  
**PRESENTATION**    
**AND DISCO**  
 **Bank Holiday Sunday, 4th May, 1997**   
**6.00 - 11.00pm**  
**Kingsway Arms, Luton**  
**PAY ON THE DOOR £5.00**



## KEEP OFF THE BLOODY GRASS

Oh, for those carefree days, back in the early 80's, when I started going to see the Town regularly, and every season ended with a pitch invasion. No violence. Maybe some of the fans would go over and taunt the away support, but there was little menace. It was, in short, an end of season treat. Most of us are familiar with our own part of Kenilworth Road, but it was always something to see the ground the way the players do, to feel the grass (synthetic or otherwise) underfoot. To end a successful season by patting the sweat soaked shirt on Ricky Hill's back — and trying to avoid a snarling, swearing, Sealey.

But at the end of today's match, I fully expect a public announcement telling us that this year, as for the last four or five, such an invasion won't be on the cards. A line of policemen and stewards will no doubt line the pitch with licence to cuff "offenders" and ban them from the ground for life. It doesn't have to be this way, does it? When did any of those old pitch invasions turn into a full scale riot? How many were of the 'Scotland at Wembley in 1976' style? One. That Oldham game donkey's years ago. In recent history we've seen much happier pitch invasions, born out of celebration rather than a resurgence of a latent hooliganism tendency. How about at Southend where we joined the home fans in mutually celebrating First Division survival? And, this season, at other grounds, fans invading the pitch have seemingly made a conscious effort to show that they are not the rampaging lout stereotype the new law presumes them to be (and requires them to be seen). West Ham fans were angry when they invaded the pitch after losing in the cup to Wrexham, but their anger was directed at the board rather than the Wrexham fans, so we saw scenes of mutual applause and scarf swapping.

Perversely, it takes hundreds of people to deliberately break the law to show that they're not trouble makers. Most will be put off by the stewards and the police, the only people in the ground who will have any time for confrontation. They might just decide to step aside, keeping a presence in front of the goalposts and away fans and let us onto the pitch.

On the other hand, they're more likely to hold the thin blue and yellow line — and look on the avoidance of a harmless party on the pitch as a victory.

Tim Kingston

## SORRY

Amazingly, even with a 60 page issue, there's still not room for everything. If you've sent something, be patient — it'll probably be in the next issue.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Regarding the future, both long and short term, of Luton Town Football Club, the die may already have been cast by the time you read this. In the short term, the match against Stockport, even if we contrived to lose at home to Bury (this being written on the Tuesday morning) and away to Peterborough, will surely be worth something.

In the long term, the people's choice of Government, and thereby new Minister for the Environment, on Thursday may turn out to be the deciding factor as to whether David Kohler's dream comes to fruition at Junction 10. At a local level it doesn't take too much to work out that the biggest, and most powerful, anti-Dome campaigner is Sir Graham Bright. His efforts in securing a public inquiry and speaking up against the development are sure to have won him the votes of Slip End and Ludlow Avenue. And yes, maybe a monkey wearing a blue rosette might expect to win votes there too. That theory might have been put to the test by how many votes Marc Schiemann, of the Greens, accrues in the area. The environment has suddenly become a main concern to Slip Enders; and as Schiemann has been even more outspoken than Bright against the Dome proposals, surely the Greens will win plenty of votes there..... or maybe not. In any case, both have spoken up — for the vast minority of their (would-be) constituents.

On the wider picture, the prospects for Luton Town FC — even if we were to win the Second Division championship this afternoon — will surely be bleak if John Gummer is still Minister for the Environment. If the public inquiry goes against the junction 10 development then David Kohler believes the only route is up the M1 to Milton Keynes. He doesn't appear to be deliberately scare-mongering, as he may have been before, he's just stating the facts as he sees them — overly simplistic maybe, whether the club name, let alone the fans, would follow him is another matter entirely..... and one which, hopefully, won't need to be covered again. However, if we've voted in yet another Conservative government, who knows? By the time you read this fanzine, you might have a better idea.

Tim Kingston

## BACK ISSUES

Back issues are still available. We have sold out of issues 10, 11, 25, 27, 35, 36, 37 and 38. Issue 1 is free, 2 to 26 will cost you 25p per copy and all others remain at 50p each. When requesting back issues please include a stamped addressed envelope with sufficient postage. Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* Please do not send cash by post as it rarely arrives.





Above: Just when we've given him a new nickname (Jimi Hendrix) he goes and shaves his head, dammit. Here's 'Spider' in action against Shrewsbury. And below, Dwight Marshall looks embarassed about the goal he scored in that match. So he should, it certainly looked accidental from where we were!



## Pass Notes

No 991

### Elton John



**Age:** 50 today. Five hundred celebrity chums will celebrate the occasion at Hammersmith Palais on April 6.

**Appearance:** Second division football manager frazzled by relegation battle. Tries to keep the punters amused with horrifying suits and novelty synthetic hair.

**Status:** Beloved Entertainer. Possibly even more beloved than Sir Cliff, Sir Paul and Saint Cilla.

**Because of splendid hit records like** *Candle in The Wind*, *Rocket Man*, *Sacrifice* **and many many more?** A great help, but not the whole story.

**Or because of his spandex-and-rhinestone costumes, giant electrically-powered glasses, teetering stack heels and farcical ostrich-plume costumes?** All part of the legend of Elton John. Yet there is more.

**You must mean his heroic but doomed patronage of Watford FC, for whom the word "unfancied" is so exquisitely apt?** Yep, and that.

## SHORT CUTS



Is Harry the Hatter really an effigy of David Pleat?

### MANCHESTER UTD STAR CORNER



The appearance is very appropriate, but that last paragraph — "unfancied"? What a very generous description. A sort of coded way of saying what we already know — they're crap.



## NO MORE RIVALRY?

Ho ho, we've all had a laugh going north on the M1 recently at the message on the bridge that proclaims that 'LUTON "SHITON" WATFORD'. But, thankfully for the town's image amongst those who couldn't care less about our rivalry, I saw that it was being blasted off last Saturday night (along with that strange "big knob" message on the southbound side).

Hopefully, the message on the bridge will be the last word in the rivalry for a few years. One bonus of promotion would surely be the end of the Luton/Watford derby for a few years. The atmosphere at the matches has been getting, if anything, less ugly since the nadir of last season with the leafletting by Watford's naughtiest, but I won't miss the tie. It's too important to the fans and the players. Although Luton, of course, have kept up their unbeaten run against Watford (rumour has it that TOFFS are going to do a nostalgic Watford "last time they beat Luton" shirt), the amount of tense draws have done little good for either club.

I don't like Watford very much — but it'll be much nicer, and easier on the nerves, to laugh at them from afar once again.

Tim Kingston

## CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

That's it for this season but we are still going to need your help. We plan to produce another seven issues next season, but we can't do it without you. 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. We can even accept contributions on disk now, in either Apple Mac or DOS format, although a hard copy should accompany the disk to save the blushes of the techno-phobic editor. Issue 42 will be on sale at the first home game of next season, and the deadline for contributions will be somewhere around mid-July, due to the earlier start to the season. However, to allow for editorial holidays (as yet unplanned), the earlier the contributions arrive, the better.

## EXILED HATTERS FAN?

If you are an exile, you'll want to keep up to date with what goes 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 £6.00 (payable to Hatters Matters) to: Hatters Matters, 38 Twigden Court, Mount Pleasant Road, Luton, LU3 2RL. Or just send an SAE for a free sample copy.

## Good Friday? What was so bloody good about it?

Friday March 28th marked Mad as a Hatter's comeback to the fanzine football stage after an exile of nearly two years. We got ourselves a new organiser, a new manager and a new(ish) team — and we prepared to beat all comers. However, on that day it all went horribly pear shaped.

The traditional derby match against Clap Your Hands, Stamp Your Feet (the catchily titled Watford fanzine) on Good Friday was played at a ridiculously windy Wigmore Valley Park on a ridiculously bumpy and rock hard pitch. Kicking into the wind in the first half, chances were few and far between — and we thought we had done pretty well to be only two down at half time. However, we fell further behind before new player-manager Ross Manfredi (who was, incidentally, standing a number of yards offside) controlled a Lennon flick and put it past the reach of the scum keeper about 15 minutes from full time. In fact, during the second half our new boss was lucky not to get a booking after telling the referee in no uncertain terms that the Watford linesman was (and I quote) "a fucking cheat".

But, alas, the scum went on to score another to record a 4-1 victory over us for their third win in a row (fanzine games are the only matches Watford can beat Luton in!).

Team: Dobbs, Mick Patten, Mark 'Killer' Wilson, Joe, Keith Hayward, Ross Manfredi, Roger Holdstock, James Araci, Chris Lennon, Nick White. Subs: Mark Araci, Andy Byrne.

The second game came three weeks later against the Shrewsbury Away Supporters on April 19th. We had a new look team — with at least 6 of the 13 on duty not having played in the scum match.

After Shrewsbury turned up nearly an hour late due to minibus problems at their end, the match eventually got underway at around 11 o'clock at (a less windy but much colder) Wigmore Valley again. Like the first team match, we came out 2-0 victors — and like the first team match, we went ahead with a penalty. Duncan Komenda took the honours after a handball in the area by a Shrews defender. Nick White got the second scoring from long range.... OK, from about two inches, after a good ball in by Tony Masters. The match was made more interesting by the intervention of some urchins from a nearby "travellers" encampment who, not satisfied with wandering about the pitch as the match was being played, actually kicked off with one of the corner flags.

Team: Andy Komenda, Dave Mullins, Tony Bland, Nigel, Mick Patten, Paul Richardson, Roger Holdstock, Keith Hayward, Tony Masters, Duncan Komenda, Nick White. Subs: Dobbs, Ross Manfredi.

At this point our thanks go to new MAAH player/manager Ross Manfredi



(although he will also answer to Boss, Fake Russ (he is him!), Fake or Dross). His managing credentials include the Old Moat House (NHC Div 3 Champions) and Crawley Rams (who look to be heading to success in the U-18 age group) — and already he has guided us to an unbeaten one match winning streak! Not only that, he was able to supply goalnets, corner flags and the like, for which many thanks are due.

Thanks also to Luton Town FC (and Cherry Newbery in particular) for supplying, at short notice, the kit which enabled us to play out our fantasies of being real Luton Town players — if nothing else we could look the part and to Keith's mum, Mary, for washing the kit afterwards.

## We need you

As for the future, there will be more fanzine matches, but the number depends on having the players. Our appeal in the last issue produced a grand total of one — Nick White — for the first match and two for the second. If we can get a team together there is the possibility of further matches, both home and away. So, if you fancy a game as a warm up to the main event, get in touch please.

Finally, any fanzines that might be reading this and who fancy a game over the summer or sometime next season, then get in touch with us at the normal address.

*The Beatie*

## Thanks....

As we come to the end of another season and, amazingly, you read issue 41 of Mad as a Hatter! (if only I'd known what I was letting myself in for!) it is time to offer sincere thanks to all and sundry. Special thanks to all our contributors, who have played a large part in enabling us to produce seven more issues this season and a total of 324 pages. At the same time, apologies to those who have sent in items that we have not used, and those who we've omitted from the credits when we have used what you sent in. Thanks to all the lads (and, occasionally, lasses) of the sales team for braving the abuse of the paying customer and the weather, and thanks to you, the paying customers and readers for being just that. To Paul Hollingshead at Blue Print for producing the fanzine at such a good price and putting up with the editor's ideas of production schedules. Thanks also to Gareth Owen for the photographs, Ray and Adam for the cartoons, and anyone else I've forgotten.

## Thorpe-pedoe

ROTHERHAM O LUTON 3

TONY THORPE'S third hat-trick of the season maintained Luton's promotion push and effectively condemned Rotherham to relegation.

Thorpe headed in crosses from Ceri Hughes in the fifth minute and Julian James in the 42nd before clipping a Kim Grant long ball past keeper Kevin Pilkington in the 75th for his 30th goal of the season.

The striker said: "I hope I can get a few more to get us up to the First Division where we belong."

Hatters keeper Ian Feuer blocked a spirited attempt by Millers striker Junior McDougald.

From the *Sunday Mirror* and *News of the World*, two reports which left those unable to go to the game none the wiser as to who created the goals. At least they got the scorer right!

But what's this? Thorpe, 80 o.g., (?) or "FEUER TRANSFER SHOCK" (?)

## Second Division

TONY THORPE hit a hat-trick, his third this season, in Luton's 3-0 win at relegation-bound Rotherham to lift them to second place, two points behind Bury, who lost 1-0 at Bristol City.

Thorpe's first two in the opening half were headers after Graham Alexander and Julian James had delivered pin-point crosses, and the third, his 30th goal this season, was a delightful lob over Ian Feuer in the Rotherham goal.

## THORPE LARK! Rotherham 0 Luton 3

was virtually untroubled and Luton regained control.

Three minutes from half-time Thorpe took advantage of slack marking to head in another cross from Alexander, although it needed an immediate save from Feuer to prevent Junior McDougald pulling one back before the break.

Thorpe missed the chance of a hat-trick of headers but settled things 10 minutes from time when he ran onto a flick from Kim Grant.

TONY THORPE, the Second Division's leading scorer, kept Luton bang on course for promotion.

He bagged a hat-trick to take his season's tally to 30 and sink doomed Rotherham.

From the moment that Thorpe struck after only five minutes, it became a stroll for Lennie Lawrence's men.

Thorpe flashed in a header from a centre by Graham Alexander to get Luton off to their flyer.

Although Rotherham had a dangerous spell midway through the first half, keeper Ian Feuer

## SHORT CUTS

A blank space. Because we've got nothing to fill it with!



# TORY MP GOES MAD



RABID LOONY: Tory MP David Evans

**HE TELLS SCHOOL:**

What more can we say!

**Major's vindictive  
..Bottomley is dead  
from the neck up..  
The Birmingham Six  
killed hundreds..**

**WATFORD'S GOING UP..  
..My Labour rival's  
a single mum with  
three bastards..**



# WATFORD



WELCOME TO THE CLUB: Elton John on rejoining Watford as director (29)

And speaking of madness, here's Elton demonstrating why the Horns (oo-er) need his money. It's all those empty seats.

## BEING NICE.....

Urges, different urges. Saying one thing, then after fifteen years of repeating it, doing the opposite. I've committed a sin, and I'm truly sorry....

At the reserve game against the scum a couple of weeks ago, two Shitford fans approached me in the Main Stand toilets (I did suddenly hope they weren't too fond of Elton John). Being me, a slightly arrogant "Can I help you?" came out. "Er, um, er, yeah, where can we get something to eat?" came the reply from the two scummers. So I gave directions and after a "cheers mate", they ambled off.

I've had nightmares ever since. Would I go out and buy a Slag (sorry, Spice) Girls record? No, I decided, I wasn't quite that sad or musically warped (if you consider the Spice Slappers (sorry, Girls) music).

Anyway, recently, my true feelings came back. Up at the L&D, my fiancée's sister was having her baby (Hi, Jen, Steve and baby Robert). In the accident ward, to my complete shock and disgust was a lad in a Watford shirt. Many evil thoughts came to mind, including kicking his injured knee with my size 11 Reebok. But I decided to stay humorous. Was the lad playing football when a MiG came along with his son and said, "Hey son, do that kid in the scum shirt over there and I'll buy you the home kit for your birthday!"

Or did he just lose his way to the Farringdon Wing? I was told that instead of wishing doom on the lad, I should have had the parents arrested for mental torture. I mean, imagine bringing up a kid, and making him think that Shitford are a good football team!?!

Can I just sign off with a big "Hi" to Julian James, a cracking footballer; and the best guy ever to stand up a bar with. And if reality and truth would kick in, we'd go up as champions, everyone in the world would bow to Ian Feuer, and you'd all finally realise Marvin is SHIT, always has been, always will be, and we'd sell him. And no whingey "Marvin is God" letters, I can name you tons of occasions he's cost us goals, penalties and matches; what has he ever done right? Good thing MAAH isn't available now till next season, it'll take you that long to think of anything.

Peter

Julian James and Marvin Johnson at opposite ends of the ability scale, eh? That could provoke an argument almost anywhere. — Ed



## SAYING GOODBYE....

Inevitably, as the end of the season approaches, the summer will see us saying goodbye to a few players as they leave Kenilworth Road for pastures greener. It may be that they leave due to large amounts of money being offered, it may be just that they fancy a change, or, in the case of some of the youngsters, because they're not thought to be good enough. Whatever, it is certain that there is one player who won't be missed too much. Yes, step forward Bontcho Guentchev.

Of course, I could be a bit premature in writing this, but it seems unlikely. As one of the highest paid players on the club payroll, much was expected of this "world class striker" when he signed almost two years ago. Of all the Westley signings only the Bulgarian international and Gavin Johnson failed to perform. Johnson was allowed to leave, fortunately, but the Bulgar? Nope, we've had to put up with him. The sad truth is that Bontcho Guentchev has spectacularly under-achieved in Luton Town colours. During his first season he started off as a penalty specialist and, as time went on, we found out why. Because it was the only way he could get on the scoresheet regularly. He did get a couple from open play, but these always seemed to be flukes, and the abiding memory is of Botchup (as he became known) running at goal, losing the ball to a defender and turning to appeal to the referee for..... well, only he knows.

Some of us deluded ourselves that with relegation we would see a different player. That is, one who's class and talent would shine against the lesser defenders of these pathetic clubs. He would clearly be a star in the Second Division. Yep, he probably would be — in the Second Division of the Luton and District League. As it turned out, he was as hopeless this season as last, and made his greatest impact by getting himself sent off at Bristol Rovers. He also gave away a penalty at Gillingham, as if to apologise for scoring his one goal of the season against them back in September, almost costing us two points in the process. Even as a regular substitute you worry about what will happen if he comes on. As a midfield player he seems equally incapable of attacking or defending with any sort of competence, and has almost made not quite getting to the ball an art form. In fact, his game looks better than it really is, as he manages to look as if he's genuinely tried for every ball he doesn't get to.

You might just have gathered that I don't rate the Euro '96 star and you would be right. I'll be glad to see the back of him and I suspect that most of you will too. It's just possible that the club won't miss him too much either. It will probably set the club against the idea of foreign players for a few more years yet as well. As other clubs successfully bring in Dutch, Scandinavian and even Brazilian players what did Westley bring us? Johnny Vilstrup, Vidar Riseth and BONTCHO GUENTCHEV.



**How goal king  
Tony's goals  
have smashed  
SuperMac's record**



**Shattered...SuperMac**

	Game	Score	Shot	Set up by	Method	Description of Goal
1	H Burnley	1-2	RIGHT FOOT	WADDOCK	Pass	Trap, beat defender, shot
2	H Bristol Rov (Cup)	3-0	PENALTY			
3	A Brentford	2-3	PENALTY			
4	A Derby (Cup)	2-2	LEFT FOOT	THOMAS	Lob	Chest down, shot
5	H Walsall	3-1	RIGHT FOOT	HUGHES	Throughball	Touch on, shot
6	H Bournemouth	2-0	PENALTY			
7	H Bournemouth	2-0	RIGHT FOOT	Backpass		Slide challenged keeper
8	A Plymouth	3-3	RIGHT FOOT	ALEXANDER	Corner	First time shot
9	A Plymouth	3-3	RIGHT FOOT	HUGHES	Lob	Beat keeper, held off defender, shot
10	A Plymouth	3-3	RIGHT FOOT	GRANT	Cross	First time shot on turn
11	H Notts Co	2-0	RIGHT FOOT	GRANT	Cross	Trap, touch, held off defender, shot on turn
12	H Bristol Rov	2-1	PENALTY			
13	H York	2-0	LEFT FOOT	SHOWLER	Cross	First time shot
14	H Crewe	6-0	RIGHT FOOT	ALEXANDER	Cross	First time volley
15	H Crewe	6-0	PENALTY			
16	H Crewe	6-0	RIGHT LEG	ALEXANDER	Shot blocked	Chest down, kneed in
17	A Gillingham	2-1	RIGHT FOOT	Backpass		3 touches, shot on turn
18	A Gillingham	2-1	RIGHT FOOT	ALEXANDER	Pass	Touch to beat defender, shot
19	A Bolton (Cup)	2-6	HEADER	DAVIS	Head on (Corner)	Header
20	H Plymouth	2-2	RIGHT FOOT	OLDFIELD	Lob	Bounced off two defenders, shot
21	H Plymouth	2-2	HEADER	MARSHALL	Head on (Lob)	Header
22	A Bristol Rov	2-3	PENALTY			
23	A Chesterfield	1-1	PENALTY			
24	H Brentford	1-0	RIGHT FOOT	SHOWLER	Pass	Chest down, turned defence with 4 touches, shot
25	A Burnley	2-0	RIGHT FOOT	ALEXANDER	Shot blocked	First time shot
26	A Burnley	2-0	HEADER	THOMAS	Head on (Corner)	Header
27	H Bristol City	2-2	HEADER	HUGHES	Corner	Header
28	A Rotherham	3-0	HEADER	ALEXANDER	Cross	Header
29	A Rotherham	3-0	HEADER	JAMES	Cross	Header
30	A Rotherham	3-0	RIGHT FOOT	GRANT	Head on (Lob)	Lobbed the keeper



## HatterLeague 2 Final Update

It's not a sprint, but a marathon. Or some other crappy cliché. After 37 games of the HatterLeague we finally have a winner. So, congratulations to Simon Alcock of Cannock who, with a late surge, took the title by 10 points and wins a £25 betting voucher from William Hill. Simon's winning combination of players was Ian Feuer, Steve Davis, Mitchell Thomas, Tony Thorpe, Graham Alexander, Paul McLaren and Kim Grant. In second place, decided on countback (number of points scored in the last match) is Dave Pearson of Caddington, his 22 points from the Shrewsbury match giving him the lead, and £15 voucher, over the inseparable third placed teams, the Happy Hatters of Elizabeth Hansell and Dale Williams. As neither of these has made any team changes during the season, even a countback system won't separate the pair. We did say that the third place would get a £10 voucher, so for the moment we'll just hope that William Hill, the exceptionally kind and generous 'sponsor' of the HatterLeague can bear the extra cost of a voucher each for the Happy Hatters.

Down at the bottom end of the table Mike Hann was never in danger of being beaten to bottom place, but now has to face the prospect of re-election. After being so comprehensively hopeless will he be allowed to enter the HatterLeague next season? A tense wait in prospect.....? Next up the table, and bottom of those who actually appeared to select a team to try is Andrew Maslen of Bedford who narrowly missed out on the title by 400 points! Last year's winner, Karen Maxfield achieved mid-table obscurity in 66th place with 456, although being outshone by Edna Durbidge, bottom last time round, who made it to 42nd with 494.

The top and bottom teams after match 37 (Shrewsbury (H)) are as follows:

Pos	Name	Address	Team Name	Pts.
1	Simon Alcock	Kink	Zero	591
2	Dave Pearson	Luton	Derbyshire 1968	581
3=	Elizabeth Hansell	Luton	Happy Hatters	581
3=	Dale Williams	Bletchley	Happy Hatters	581
5	Andy Wesson	Luton	Andy's Top Hatters	578
6=	Chris Sharpe	Bedford	Badger's Nags Head Hatters	574
6=	Mark Nelson	Leeds	Showdown in Unicorn Car Park	574
6=	Jimmy Hill	Luton	Ore United	574
120	Trevor Emery	Bedford	And, Why Not	272
121	Noel Cresswell	Milton Keynes	Red Hatter 2	244
122	Andrew Maslen	Bedford	David Pleat Smells of Cheese	191
123	Mike Hann	St Albans	Minus 3 Every Game (And Cheap)	-98

Of the Mad as a Hatter! crew, the best position was achieved by the Editor, in 15th place after a late slide out of the top five, with a very respectable 553 points (*who's writing this? I'll give you three guesses...*) while the originator of the game was down in 32nd with 524, and the computer genius behind our results service Russell Bulkeley was 41st with 498.

It's probably not surprising to find that the top scoring player is Tony Thorpe with an amazing 174 points, followed by Steve Davis with, strangely, a snooker score of 147. Best of what we, pre-season, called strikers is Dwight Marshall who scored 30 in spite of starting the season injured and failing to command a regular starting place since his return. This surely says something about the Town's season as a whole.

Code	Player	£	Pts	Code	Player	£	Pts
<u>Goalkeepers</u>							
101	Ian Feuer	0.8 m	89	103	Nathan Abbey	0.2 m	-37
102	Kelvin Davis	0.5 m	-37				
<u>Defenders</u>							
111	Steve Davis	0.7 m	147	116	Mitchell Thomas	0.5 m	66
112	Darren Patterson	0.6 m	-29	117	Ben Chenery	0.4 m	-37
113	Marvin Johnson	0.6 m	57	118	Des Linton	0.5 m	-34
114	Richard Harvey	0.5 m	-35	119	Trevor Peake	0.4 m	-37
115	Julian James	0.5 m	56	120	Aaron Skelton	0.4 m	-25
<u>Midfielders</u>							
121	Gary Waddock	0.6 m	48	125	David Oldfield	0.6 m	68
122	Tony Thorpe	0.6 m	174	127	Paul McLaren	0.4 m	12
123	Graham Alexander	0.5 m	88	128	Sean Evers	0.3 m	1
124	Ceri Hughes	0.5 m	85	129	Paul Showler	0.6 m	27
<u>Strikers</u>							
131	Dwight Marshall	0.7 m	30	135	Stuart Douglas	0.5 m	4
132	Kim Grant	0.5 m	15	136	Jamie Woodsford	0.3 m	0
133	Bontcho Guentchev	0.5 m	8	137	Andrew Fotiadis	0.6 m	7
134	John Taylor	0.4 m	0				

So, another season comes to an end. Thanks to the 123 managers who entered the competition. As we still haven't worked out a way of printing the full league table, we'll offer a results service again. So, if you want to know how you finished up, send an SAE to the usual address and we'll send you a manager's results pack by return (when we say by return we actually mean a week or so later). And the HatterLeague will be back next season, perhaps with some refinements. Details in the next issue in August.

Chris Lennon, Russell Bulkeley and K.F.H.



## The Sharpe End

I've thought about this for a long time, and come up with what may prove to be a controversial theory, but nonetheless one which fits the circumstances.

How can we explain the hugely disappointing form slump which saw, by Saturday April 12, the ability to control our own automatic promotion destiny disappear? It may be that we have since recaptured that ability as there are so many tricky games to go for all the clubs involved in the argument, but to a certain extent that is irrelevant anyway.

I remember a few years back when Barnet were a non-League side who were always there or thereabouts in the Vauxhall Conference — or whatever it was called at the time — but who never quite managed to clinch the title and win promotion to the big time. There was a theory doing the rounds in the game that Barnet had a number of players who were earning good wages in full-time jobs and picking up a nice few extra quid by playing for Barnet.

If Barnet were to get promoted into the Football League, so went the theory, those players would lose their cushy positions because the club would want full-time players and they probably wouldn't fit the bill — so perhaps their hearts weren't quite in the promotion battle when the going got tough on the run-in.

These days Woking seem to beat all manner of daunting League opposition in Cup matches and are all but unbeatable in the FA Trophy, but they have yet to manage to win the Conference title.

Luton were relegated last season with a squad consisting largely of the players who have been involved this season. Were they to win promotion and go back up it doesn't take too much imagination to realise that players who failed in Division One two years ago and who are now two years older are unlikely to be able to survive this time around without the injection of new blood.

And if new blood is injected, what happens to the old blood?

You should not imagine that I am suggesting that the players are deliberately failing to give of their best, but anyone doing the job for which they have been paid by the same company for a considerable amount of time (like I have!) is always likely to have subconscious doubts about what might happen should that company suddenly find itself operating (or playing) at a higher level.

It would be only natural to ask oneself whether one would be capable of still doing the job well enough to be kept on — and if the answer was in the negative it might

well be that one might begin to think at the back of one's mind that it might be preferable if the status quo were to be maintained.

In other words, a footballer may look at it along the lines that — if we go up I'll probably be out of a job, but if we stay down I'll almost certainly still have a job. You can make up your own mind about the merits or otherwise of this theory, but unless we win promotion — which virtually everyone who has seen us play on more than one occasion this season thinks we should — I'll always have a nagging doubt about how we managed to chuck away what looked to be a gilt edged opportunity. And if you think I've been talking twaddle just reconsider what Lennie Lawrence said after the defeat at Walsall: "That is the tenth time we have taken the lead and failed to win and that is scandalous and unprofessional. WE DIDN'T SURRENDER, WE COMMITTED SUICIDE."



It is very nice of Sky TV to come along and cherry-pick a game or two to show from Kenilworth Road each season. I am not so impressed with their ability to stick up a contraption for their cameras bang in front of my line of sight in the New Stand. Why should I have to suffer every time they want to show a game? Does the club bother to check these things out? If not, why not?

I wrote to them to ask, and was told, "Prior to these matches every effort is ensured to make as little inconvenience to supporters as possible." I was offered alternative seats should I want them and also told that the figure of £60,000 which is usually bandied about as the amount the club receives for such games was over exaggerated and the true revenue is £30,000.

Can't help thinking they must be sick of me writing and complaining!



Just a quick word on the play-offs, regardless of whether we're involved or not. Would you not agree that a far fairer system than the current one would be for the 6th placed team to play the 5th team away in a one-off game with extra time and penalty shoot-out; followed by the winner of that visiting the 4th team on the same terms, followed by the winners of that taking on the third placed team again on the same system.

That way, at least, there is a significant advantage for the team finishing higher up the table.

Graham Sharpe





HOW IT HAPPENED

At 197