

MAD AS A FLATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE

Issue 42



Aug 97

TO THE POINT....



Looks like the ref and a Fulham player have already agreed the distribution of points from the game at Craven Cottage. No wonder Dwight Marshall looks disgruntled.

MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



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EDITORIAL

To start off, an apology. To anyone who has attempted to communicate with *Mad as a Hatter!* since, well, sometime around the beginning of May, sorry. You probably haven't had a reply, or received whatever it was you wanted. This is due to the editor being in a state of suspended animation, or something. The shock of losing the play-off to Crewe was just too much, and I've had a complete break from all things football related, to the detriment of those who think I shouldn't (not that I'm trying to blame you). But we're back now, and everything will be back to normal very shortly — so if you write you'll know not to expect a reply! And if this issue looks like it's been thrown together at the last minute.....

The start to the new season has been somewhat disappointing. Although we're already four points better off than at the same stage last term, we were daft enough to expect better. The performance at Blackpool was, by general consensus, abysmal, and things have not improved very much since. Let's hope the hot weather is to blame, as we know that won't last. We were probably expecting more new players than we have seen, as well. But Simon Davies seems to be adjusting to the different type of football played in this division, and looked quite good against Southend. Gavin McGowan looks very good indeed, but we will have to wait to see if he will be here in the long term. But the prospects for more new signings look to be limited, with it being dependant on other players choosing to leave.

It looks like we're having our injury crisis early this season, and it was a bit of a worry at Fulham with both Feuer and Thorpe missing at the same time. But Kelvin Davis did well, and we should count ourselves lucky to have got him back from his loan at Hartlepool. Let's hope we can have a full squad to choose from sooner rather than later. And I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing Ian Feuer a speedy recovery.

The burning question on the lips of Town supporters recently has been "What the hell is happening with the KohlerDome?" It has all gone quiet, and nine months after the public inquiry ended we should surely be getting an answer soon. An opportunity to find out may come on Friday 5th September, when David Kohler will be in the studio for a live phone-in on BBC Three Counties Radio's Team Talk programme (6.30 to 8.00). This is an opportunity to ask him some awkward questions, and have the answers go out publicly, so let's have some Town fans making good use of airtime on our local radio station. Listening to the station regularly, I notice there are always more callers wanting to talk about the Hertfordshire clubs than Luton. This is very tedious, but it can be changed, and this will be an ideal opportunity. The phone number is 0645 455555, and it's charged as a local call. So, don't wait to hear someone else, ring it yourself.

Eat My Poll!

Usually the first paragraph of this article announces the winner of the prize draw. Sadly, this is not the case this year, due to the minor hitch of the Editor not leaving a space for names and addresses on the entry form for those who did reply. So, for one year only, the prize draw has been scrapped (apologies to those with the imagination to give their name and address) which leaves us only needing to tell you the results.

Best Town Player

Tony Thorpe

This was much closer than Ian Feuer's landslide victory last year, with 31 goal Thorpe polling only 38% of the vote "despite the fact that he's a lazy, arrogant git." But he won anyway after "an outstanding season in a mediocre team." In second place, for the second year running, was Steve Davis, followed closely by Oldfield — "a 100% trier all the time" — and Feuer. Strangely, one person felt inclined to vote for Marvin.

Best Young Player

Andrew Fotiadis

This category was never going to be won by anybody else, with Fotiadis polling a mere 70% of the vote. "One bright light from a season that promised so much" was one view, and "he is a great prospect and could play on a bigger stage in the future." Hopefully (for us), that bigger stage will involve Luton. Of the others voted for, 25% went to players who never even made it into the first team (namely Liam George, Matthew Upson and Terry Sweeney), and Thorpe and McLaren also got a mention. One respondent was going to vote for Upson, "but am I to understand that Wenger is willing to pay £1 million for a player who is kept out of the first team by Julian, Marvin, Mitchell and Davis?" Hmm, it's pretty baffling isn't it? (Davis excluded)

Best Town Performance

Crewe Alexandra (H) 6-0

With a possible 60 matches to choose from only 10 matches received votes in this category, with the winner polling just under half of these. "Pity it wasn't in the play-offs," and "although I would have swapped this for a place at Wembley," are views, I'm sure, held by many Town fans, but "after the 6-0 drubbing I'm embarrassed to own up to possessing a Crewe shirt," is a view held by very few. The performance in September was also so great that "it was the first game I haven't moaned at the players." In joint second place on 15% was the Burnley (away) win and the Millwall (home) match — which must be the first time that a defeat has registered this high up in the end of season poll. I'm sure that the Worst Referee winner had something to do with this defeat though. The Coca Cola Cup also figured — with votes going to both Derby County legs and Wimbledon away — "why could we not defend like that in league games?"

Worst Town performance **Bristol City (A) 0-5**

I think that it was clear last August that this result was destined to win this category. "Very dismal," "Possibly the worst I've ever seen in thirty years" and "bottom of the league and relegation a real possibility" contributed to this match polling over two-thirds of the votes — in fact, it was the only match out of 10 voted for that got more than 3 votes! "5-0 - we were lucky to get nil" summed it up, but now is the time to sympathise with John Clark of Bristol, who, although not at the match, "the weeks of references to '5' at work on my return meant that it was by some distance the most distressing result of the season." Way behind in joint second was the Chesterfield (home) match and the Borehamwood FA Cup match (I'll have to take your word that it was a poor match — some were too pissed in the greenhouses to remember it). Also figuring was "every 3-2 away defeat" because "we had these matches won" before, erm, losing them.

Best Town Goal

David Oldfield (v Preston (H))

This category was a lot closer than I thought it would be, and it went right down to the wire between Thorpe's "cracker" against Brentford (home) and Oldfield's goals against Preston. In the end, Skippy came out on top by two votes, but there seems to be some confusion as to which goal was the best. There were votes for Oldfield's "first goal," "second goal," "third goal," and "all of them," "any of them," "the long shot," "the classic header," (? Ed) "the volley," so to avoid any hassle it has been awarded to the whole hat-trick, because all three goals were fairly special (particularly the third). Back in third place with 10% of the vote was Showler's Hall of Fame entry against the scum — "any goal against that shite must be a contender". Also worthy of a mention out of the 15 goals voted for (yes, apparently we scored that many good goals!) were Waddock against Bristol Rovers and James against Bournemouth (both away) — not necessarily because they were good goals, but probably more due to the shock of who actually scored them.

Best Goal Against

Kyle Lightbourne, Walsall (H)

"Can there be such a thing," was one response in this category, but on this occasion there is — due to the quality of Kyle Lightbourne's wonder goal back in October, which "rattled the stanchion" — earning nearly 75% of the votes. Walsall also surely set a record this year, with 3 of their 4 goals against us getting votes: John Hodge's winner and Lightbourne's second in the away match getting 3 votes between them. I was a bit surprised at the amount of votes for either Carl or Karl Lightbourne, as opposed to Kyle. "It is difficult to recall a goal which was not gifted by our back four" was a harsh, but fair, assessment of the goals against us last term, and of the nine voted for, the winner was the only one that polled more than one or two votes.

Best Opponents **Crewe Alexandra**

Worthy winners this year, but please note that this is for the "play-off version only." "It was nice to see a team play football against us" and "they kept the ball on the ground — pass and move..... instead of hoofing the ball downfield like most teams in this division did." Not far behind were Bristol City, Bolton (it must be being hopelessly outplayed and getting thumped in the process that did it) and Walsall — "one of a handful of good footballing teams in the division". Also worth a mention are "ourselves, when we're in the lead", Trevor West (understandably) and Chesterfield (in the away match): "You know that it is sometimes said that a player plays so well that you don't even notice he's on the pitch — well, Chesterfield must have had 11 excellent players, because I'm buggered if I could see any of them!"

Worst Opponents **Rotherham United**

I have come to the conclusion that Division Two really is crap, seeing as W*tf*rd were denied their fourth victory in five seasons in this category — and were even ousted from second place. Winners "by a long way" were Rotherham with a third of all votes. Many felt they were so bad that a comment wasn't necessary, but "they were the worst team I have seen in over 15 years of watching the Town" and "were lucky to end up 23rd", but when we played them away "how did we only get three?". Back in second were Bury, who were "utter crap" and "their performance at Kenilworth Road was an insult to the game of football", but "How the f.... did this bunch of boring bastards manage to win the league?". So, no-one was impressed by their 10 man defence and their inability to know what the word 'attack' meant, then. 2 votes behind were the scum, and votes also went to, among others, Peterborough, Notts County, Crewe (the 6-0 version) and Graham Bright ex(ha!) MP.

Good Referee **Uriah Rennie**

In our seemingly endless quest to get people to answer this question seriously, it turns out that Uriah retains his title (although he only polled one-fifth of the nominations for 'None of them' etc). I can't even remember him officiating for us over the season! Other referees nominated more than once were Gurnam Singh (Bristol City (h) & Millwall (a)) and Mick Pierce (scum (h) and Wimbledon). However, "is there any at this level?", "isn't this a contradiction in terms", "try Serie A in Italy", "N/A", "we established last year that there is no such thing" and "I fell asleep and missed him" shows the general view on the standard of refereeing last season.

Worst referee **Graham Frankland**

Officiating late on in the season (Millwall home game) helped him stick in the memory, but a resounding victory for the 'circus clown' (see Mad issue 40) who was "incompetent, fussy and a cheat". Being "unbelievably bad" helped him

gather 35% of the vote — while in second place was "all/any of them" etc. In third place with only half the votes that Frankland polled was last years winner Trevor "timekeeping" West — "for playing 24 hours injury time in October to let the bastards equalise". Yes, in case you had forgotten Trevor West (Fred West's less popular half-brother) was the scum's 12th man. Roger Furnandiz (Wycombe (h)) polled 6% of the votes, while just behind him was John Martin, voted for by two bitter and twisted Luton fans. Also getting a solitary vote was Kevin Lennon (he of Loyal Luton SC treasurer fame), not because he's a referee (he isn't), but more for the amount of abuse he dishes out to the officials (and Thorpe/Marvin!) for 90 minutes every game from the safety of the stand! Ah, who said refereeing was easy.

Best Opposing Player **John Hodge and Kyle Lightbourne**

Well, the Walsall attack just managed to scrape this award — with the two players tied on 13 votes apiece — the only two who managed more than a single vote! Lightbourne "made our defenders look poor and slow (which they possibly are in many cases!)" while Hodge "gave 'Jimi' a right run around". But, to be fair, who doesn't? Luton players getting nominations were Kim Grant — "why don't you just sod off", Marvin — "for all the goals he gave away", and the useless Bontcho. In answering this category, one respondent blames the whole business of us not getting automatic promotion on the fact that we didn't buy Micky Evans from Plymouth. Well, personally I blame it on the fact that we didn't sign Beckham, Shearer, Ronaldo and Zola — but then we all have our own opinions don't we.

Worst Opposing Player **Devon Shite**

Oh, what a surprise. The man they call 'Super Dev' (it's in black and white in the scum fanzine if you don't believe me) polled an incredible 75% of the vote (what's more incredible is that he didn't poll the other 25%) in his farewell appearance (for the time being, anyway), and he is so bad that not one respondent deemed it necessary to justify his/her choice with a comment. I must say that my everlasting memory of Mr Shite would be when he attempted that overhead kick last October, missed the ball completely and fell flat on his back. Goodbye Dev, we'll all miss you. In second place on 2 votes was the whole of the Bury squad, while coming a very respectable joint third on a single vote each were "Devon White's shadow", and "Devon White's reflection in a mirror". A total of 9 other players were nominated.

Worst Other Opposing Player **The rest of W*tf*rd FC**

We decided to include this category this year to give other really bad players a chance to shine through big Devon White. However, in counting the votes it looked for one minute that Dev might win the category he was barred from. As it was, the rest of his team mates pulled through (although only with 13% of the votes),

for being "all equally bad". In second place was "pass" — showing that a number of people believe that there is no such thing as another bad player (other than White). One vote behind in joint third was Devon White and the whole of Bury, while just behind these was Joe Omigie ("a serious contender for Big Dev's crown") and "the big bloke up front who played for W*tf*rd, who looks just like Devon White." Ah, you mean the Gifted (?) Noel-Williams — "tall, black, shit (oh God, we're back on Devon White)". In fact, if you count all votes for W*tf*rd as a whole (ie. individuals, rejects, etc.) you will find that the scum polled over one third of all votes — proving that they are as bad as we ~~think~~, sorry, know they are. There were a total of 24 nominations in this category.

Watch out for part 2 of Eat My Poll in issue 43.

The Beat

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

Continuing on from my article (titled above) from the last issue of Mad from last season, I was choked to see that indeed, the stewards, supervisors and whoever controls these dickheads, are, in fact, bigger twats than I referred to them a couple of months ago.

I refer to the play-off game v Crewe at Kenilworth Road. A cracking match, clever opposition, but overall disappointing in the fact that we had failed to get promotion.

But one thing stood out that evening, and that was the performance of David Oldfield. Forget his two goals, they are irrelevant to this piece, just his performance on the night was good enough to shame many other Town players. You get the feeling that he could have run two marathons back to back, and still looked good.

So, come the end of the match, Skippy was rightly held aloft by several fans who, like me, showed their appreciation toward him. A hero's parade towards the tunnel followed.....

But, in true Luton Town tradition, several stewards/supervisors/twats (delete as applicable) raced towards those fans, and immediately shepherded Oldfield towards the players tunnel. Excuse me, but was he endangered by us fans? There is a difference between dangerous behaviour by fans and fans who just want to give a little bit back to players.

My argument ends at this precise point. I'm sure all readers will appreciate what I'm saying. Abolish all LTFC stewards!!

Tony Allbones, the irate Kempston stud.

Freedom of Speech

Considering you actually printed my item in issue 41, I was going to write and thank you for printing. But after a typical "we'll print this so we can piss-take" editorial comment, I decided just to write.

I'm still trying to figure you all out. Considering I've seen Sunday league players better than Marvin Johnson, I guess the "Marvellous" part about him is that he's fooled you all. Do I wish Les Sealey had throttled him at the time of his infamous own goal! All the 'Soccer Cock-ups and Mistakes' videos pale in comparison to Marvin's utter f**k-ups over the years.

But it sums up most Luton fans. I bet even Shitford fans have more respect for each other (assuming people who attend Vicarage Road have brains, or a dictionary so they can look up two syllable words like respect). Luton fans are all little cliques of people, who all think they're right. And it's only been in the last three or so years that I've seen it come into play.

Here, in my opinion, are those cliques:

- 1 The "cheer when we're winning, but whinge when we're drawing or losing" types.
- 2 The "only go to away games" types. True we need away support, but where the hell are you at Kenny Road?
- 3 The "MAAH, we've been going 20 or more years, so of course we're right" types. According to the Mad as a Hatter clique, in about 5 or more years time, I can ramble about the past like it's relevant to now. The past is all well and fine for boozing sessions, but you all overdo it because you think you look clever reeling off statistics no-one else knows much about.
- 4 The "big game hunters" who only turn up for cup games, but think they have the right to an opinion. Nuff said.
- 5 The "go with the flows" who love Thorpey and Skippy now. Well, I got news for you losers — I loved the Thorpester when he made his debut, and Skippy was great first time round as well. And don't try saying Oldfield was shit first season back, cause Marvin's always been shit and I doubt he'll improve now.

so, as you can tell, I don't like your (or anyone else's) attitudes. But if you don't print me, then you're taking my freedom of speech and right to an opinion away.

So, while I'm here, Ian is God, Jules rules, Skippy's the man, and I've found a new career for Marvin and Mitchell: the all new Beavis and Butthead! 'Cause (heh, heh) THEY SUCK (heh, heh)!

Oh, and just one more controversial bit (PRINT THIS, MAAH!); You moan you'd like less trouble at games. So, have I got to put up with abuse from Shitford, Shitwall, and other fans because you said so? No way, I love Luton, and if it gets physical, well I don't like it, but so be it. And seating or standing? After 3 knee ops, I want to sit. And if some piece of shit (Luton fan or not) wants to take that right away from me, then go support Shitford 'cause it's all your fit for! If you want to stand, fine. But take my right to sit with a decent view away, and you can go stand in the middle of Hatters Way, and that's the bottom line.

The Cat in the Luton Hat

Watford's going down.....

With Turnip and Queerboy back at the helm, W*tf*rd seem to be attempting to recreate their past. Just as they were relegated under this setup ten years ago, I believe that this fate will also be repeated. Their over-rated (but still player of the year) goalkeeper, Kevin Miller, as well as promising strikers David Connolly and Kevin Phillips have headed for pastures new, as well as six more being given free transfers, and for what in return? Jason "ex-Pineapple" Lee, the laughing stock of football, and four other no-hopers, namely Chris Day, Micah Hyde, Peter Kennedy and David Thomas. My philosophy is that Turnip is only interested in signing players regarded as even bigger tossers than himself. Jason Lee is bad enough, but being unwilling to bid in excess of a million pounds in order to lure John Barnes and Carlton Palmer to the pigsty....! After finishing 13th the previous season, and with an undoubtedly weaker squad this time around, relegation looks a distinct possibility (sod the 10-1 crap the bookies are quoting). One thing for sure is that you can expect lots of big, high balls, and backs to the wall stuff if Turnip controls their style of play!

Patrick Johnson

FIVE REASONS WHY WE'LL MISS BONTCHO

- 1 We liked hearing the away announcers trying to pronounce his name.
- 2 We could tell everyone we had a Euro '96 star in the team.
- 3 His hairstyle reminded me of my youth in the '70s.
- 4 He was aiming to win the diving Gold at the Sydney Olympics.
- 5 He always made me laugh!

Jayne Bulkeley

Ten reasons why we didn't go up

- 1 My mum didn't wear her lucky knickers!
- 2 Kim Grant played.
- 3 Graham Alexander took the corners (not Ceri Hughes).
- 4 We liked the ground at York so much we wanted to visit again (shame about Rotherham though!)
- 5 We wanted to beat Watford next season.
- 6 There were three better teams (perhaps!?).
- 7 Marvin Johnson didn't fancy playing in Division One again.
- 8 We want to be promoted next season not relegated.
- 9 The referee at Watford played for 96 minutes.
- 10 It's much more fun joining the FA Cup in the First Round as we can win some games!

Peter Bulkeley

Whatever happened to SuperMac?

Unless something has gone drastically wrong with the production of this wonderful fanzine, today is the 16th of August (*ah, well, it's like this you see....*). Now, for the anoraks, Stattsos and saddos amongst us (and I know who you are!) the first league match that Luton played on this actual date was down at Bournemouth (or is it Boscombe?) in 1969. With all the talk at the beginning of April of Tony Thorpe being the first Luton player to score thirty goals in a season since SuperMac, there is another tenuous connection with this date.

It also happened to be the day that the legendary Malcolm MacDonald scored his first goal for us, and proved to be the only goal of the game at Dean Court, that day. And I must say that, at the time, this surprised me because manager Alec Stock had lead us to believe that he had signed him from Fulham as a full back! Indeed, I had seen him play at left back against the Italian under-21 side a couple of weeks earlier and had thought "what a waste of £17,500." Well, I don't think that he ever played at full back again.

It was, of course, dear old Harry Haslam who had been instrumental in bringing MacDonald to Luton. He had been like a father figure to him, first at Tonbridge and then at Fulham, where the young Mac had been used as both striker.... and full back! He had actually scored 5 goals for the Cottagers in 68/69 including one which upset the local demi-god, Johnny Haynes. As Mac recalled to me some years later, "I made sure a softish shot from him went in — it was the only goal of the game — but he went nuts, claiming I'd nicked his goal."

Following his success at Bournemouth, MacDonald scored in each of the next four league matches as the Town powered to the top of the table. These were wonderful times for Hatters fans, Major Stock continuing the revival started by Allan Brown a couple of years previously, after several years in the doldrums. Home gates were around the 16,000 mark and the young MacDonald kept his place at number 8 alongside Matt Tees at centre forward and Graham French on the extreme left. The Luton multitudes soon took notice of the raw power and blinding pace of this slightly bow-legged nineteen year old; Third Division defences quickly learned to respect his powerful left foot from which the goals continued to flow.

His first hat-trick came in December, in the 5-0 demolition of Bradford City, maintaining the Town's lead at the top of the table. There were some jitters in the New Year however, but a couple of vital strikes against fellow promotion rivals Fulham and Reading produced single goal victories and precious points. By the time that he scored his 25th league goal of the season in the

final match at Rochdale, promotion was already assured.

The higher status did not slow down the Town's momentum, or affect the MacDonald goal scoring machine. Attendances at Kenilworth Road rose even higher as, once again, Luton mounted another promotion challenge. Anyone who came to watch them at this time will surely remember the pure thrill of seeing Malcolm bursting through the middle, almost unstoppable as he bore down on goal. Who could forget his treble at Hillsborough as Wednesday were swept aside 5-1? Or the FA Cup tie against Forest when he got another hat-trick, though we still lost? By now he was the undisputed centre-forward, strong, aggressive, confident and powerful in the air. He also had a monstrous long (wait for it).... throw in, and actually won a competition for it on TV, although I can never remember him using it in a game. All these attributes meant, of course, that he was coveted by other clubs. From Xmas onwards there was constant talk of him going to Chelsea or, more likely, Man united. But Luton were still riding high in the table and to let him go did not bear thinking about.

Then two things happened. First, the Chairman's business, V & G Insurance, went bust. That was like the Town's money tree being chopped down. Then in just four days over Easter, promotion was all but blown. So, those supporters who went along to Kenny Road for the last game against Cardiff knew, deep down, that they were seeing SuperMac in a Luton shirt for the last time. Typical of the boy (for he was still only 21) he signed off with another treble, to bring his seasons tally to a nice round thirty. Two days later a Rolls Royce came down from Newcastle, bringing a nice fat cheque for £180,000 for the Town and taking our hero away to Georgie land.

His departure really was the end of that special era for Luton Town. The financial situation meant that little of that cheque could be spent on new players, so an adequate replacement was never forthcoming (no disrespect to Vic Halom, but he wasn't in the same league when it came to comparisons). Gates fell considerably, the excitement was gone and, it has to be said that even in the light of what has been achieved subsequently, never has been back to the level it was then.

As for Mac, he soon acquitted himself well on Tyneside, scoring —you've guessed it — a hat-trick on his home debut against Liverpool. He soon became as big a favourite in his five years at Newcastle as he was here. It was there that he developed his bushy sideburned, no teeth look, which seemed to frighten defenders even more. In 1976 Arsenal splashed out nearly a third of a million quid to bring him south, and he enjoyed a couple of seasons more before a bad knee injury finished his career. Although he scored over 200

goals in that career, he did not win too many honours in the game. He did play 14 times for England though, and once scored 5 times against a team of waiters. 'Cyprus', I think they called themselves.

After having to give up playing in 1980, he went back to Fulham as manager and it was a few weeks after taking this job that I last actually spoke to him. He had been speaking at a dinner and his speech was typically open, honest and forthright. We carried on talking into the 'small hours' at the bar. He had strong opinions on everything and everybody in the game and was not afraid to air them. I remember saying that I thought a certain Godfrey Ingram (anyone remember him?) should be given a chance by David Pleat. "He'll never make it," Mac slurred, "cos you watch him in the box, son — loads a skill, but he's got no bottle!" And I did watch him, and I knew what he meant.

MacDonald nearly took Fulham into the First Division the following season, but then things went wrong. There were domestic problems, I believe, before he went to run a pub on the south coast. Then came a disastrous spell as manager of Huddersfield Town, before he was next seen living in Milan where he appeared on the occasional "Football Italia" live match.

I did hear a rumour recently that he was back on Tyneside, and perhaps (allegedly, and all that) imbibing more than is perhaps good for him. I sincerely hope that's not true, for I would not like to think of the principal Folk Hero from that wonderful Hatters era, ending up like that.

Alan Robinson

Questions that need answering — 1 of 3

Why is it that when we desperately need a goal Steve Davis gets stuck up front? Surely if he's good enough to warrant being put up front then Lennie should play him in that position all the time — therefore never getting into the situation where we need a goal desperately.

The Beat

SHORT CUTS

Gnome from home

A THREE-foot tall garden gnome painted in the colours of Watford Football Club was stolen from the home of Doris Stevens in Lingfield Road, Stevenage, on Friday night.

Police are looking for a very disturbed thief. As for Doris Stevens....

SHORT CUTS

8 00 **CHOICE** ★ **School** — A Levels Aren't for the Likes of Us. A timely new series from documentarist Richard Denton, filmed at Francis Combe School, a struggling Watford comprehensive. Geoff Carr, head of a sixth form he describes as "an act of faith", appears to live and breathe his pupils' anxieties, and the dedication of the teachers working with their small group of A level students is as inspirational as the frustrations of the job are unmistakeable. (T) (S) [9403]

There's something you don't see everyday (*but should*): 'struggling' and 'Watford' in the same sentence — and they're not even talking about the football team!

Coverage of Luton Town v Southend United from the Nationwide Football League, Division One. Dwight Marshall (above) will be hoping to score for The Hatters, who narrowly missed promotion to the First Division. The Shrimpers were relegated last season.

So although we narrowly failed to gain promotion to Division One and Sarfend got themselves relegated from Division One — amazingly the match still takes place in the top Nationwide Division!

So, we only beat Hitchin 1-0 during pre-season, did we? Just how do the Accuracy on Sunday do it? Watch out for another AoS error next issue!

JOKE TIME

THIS bloke from Watford had terrible pains in his back and he was outside the Luton and Dunstable Hospital. He walks in going "Argh, my back, my back" and he sees a sign "Male patients/Female patients".

He goes through the male patients' entrance (he is crawling now) and he sees another sign "In patients/Out patients" so he crawls through the in-patients entrance.

He then comes to another sign marked "Luton supporters/Watford supporters" and crawls through the Watford entrance. He opens the door and finds himself back on Lewsey Road again.

An apt, if not exactly hilariously funny, joke at the expense of the friendly 'ornets down the road. Thanks to Don Newville's *Leader* column for that one.

By PETE KENYON

had cannoned back off the crossbar.

Already Luton had notched up 1-0 wins against Hitchin and Hartlepool and a 4-2 victory over Darlington, and on Friday night they looked a class apart from the Third Division side.

THE GENIE

One day, a man was walking along a beach and came across an odd looking bottle. Not being one to ignore tradition, he rubbed it and, much to his surprise, a Genie actually appeared.

"For releasing me from the bottle, I will grant you three wishes," said the Genie.

The man was ecstatic. "But there's a catch," the Genie continued. "What catch?" asked the man, eyeing the Genie suspiciously. The Genie replied, "for each of your wishes, every Watford supporter in the world will receive double what you asked for."

"Hey, I can live with that! No problem!" replied the elated man.

"What is your first wish?" asked the Genie.

"Well, I've always wanted a Ferrari," was his reply.

POOF! A Ferrari appeared in front of the man. "Now, every Watford supporter in the world has been given TWO Ferraris," said the Genie, "What is your next wish?"

"I could really use a million quid," replied the man and, POOF! One million quid appeared at his feet. "Now every Watford supporter in the world is two million pounds richer," the Genie reminded the man.

"Well, that's OK, as long as I've got MY million," replied the man.

"And what is your final wish?" asked the Genie.

The man thought long and hard, and finally answered, "Well, you know, I've always wanted to donate a kidney....."

David Hylden

SEEN ON THE BOX

The Ceefax Guide to the season 1997/98 (notice how we had a whole page while Watford only got 4 lines). According to Ceefax, Watford this season "were aiming to recapture their golden era". Er, recapture what golden era, exactly?

TOWN TRAVELS

With the late publication of this issue, there aren't many away games to cover here, but the first of them is the short trip to Northampton. The game is all-ticket and, I've heard, limited to 900 Town fans for what is really likely to be a sell out match at the compact Sixfields Stadium. This is not a match for anyone who likes to make a quick getaway, or if you like a good beer before the game. There is a pub, of sorts, at the Sixfields complex, but the beer was nothing to write home about when we were there last season, and with the town centre a couple of miles away..... Probably better to go up a bit later after a beer at home (but don't drink and drive).

The trip to Bournemouth, for a match against the early pacesetters, a week later should be slightly more fruitful for the beer fraternity. Although Bournemouth itself is nothing special in drinking terms, the COTTONWOOD HOTEL, Grove Road, is listed as being "near" to the railway station, and has Bass and Ringwood beers. A visit to Poole or Christchurch may well be more rewarding for the discerning drinker.

Next on the list is the journey to Bristol, where we will be looking to improve on last season's result against City. There is a fine pub crawl covered elsewhere in this issue.

We'll probably have another issue of Mad out beforehand, but the next away game on the fixture list is the trip to Wigan. Now, Wigan is a vast improvement and a pretty good area for drinking, although the pubs may be a bit fussy about who they let in on a match day. But assuming entry restrictions are not too harsh it is possible to make a good pub crawl on the way (indirectly) to Springfield Park. Best place to start is probably the SWAN & RAILWAY, which is within falling over distance of both railway stations. Also worth a visit, for those with a sense of adventure, is the ORWELL, at Wigan Pier, which is about 10 minutes walk from the stations, away from the town.

Finally, for this issue, Carlisle United. On a Tuesday night in October! A fixture dreamed up by someone who hasn't heard of the concept of away support, obviously. How many Town fans will make this trip? A hundred or so? Carlisle is another of those places where you would be hard pushed to build a decent pub crawl, but the CALEDONIAN CASK HOUSE, in Botchergate, is well worth a visit with a good selection of guest beers, as is the MALTSTERS' ARMS, John Street, for its Jennings beer. Oh, and in case you're in any doubt about the distance involved in the journey for this game, if you're driving you'll need junction 42 (yes, that's 42) of the M6! That's about 16 junctions on from Wigan.....

K.F.H.

RAVING MAD!!!

Dear "Mad",

Is it just me or have we seen a dramatic drop in the standards of referees since we were relegated from Division One last year? Do ref's really get worse further down the Football League or does this problem just occur to our beloved Hatters? For example, that blatant handball in our home matches against Millwall and Wycombe Wanderers, if these decisions had been given our way I have no doubt that Luton would have got promotion back to Division One where we belong. While I'm on the subject of bad ref's decisions, how many minutes did that ref play in injury time against the scum away? Too many.

James
Hitchin.

Dear "Mad",

Congratulations on another season's successful publications, and no, you can't double the price for next season!

As for LTFC's intention to increase admission prices for next season, even if we don't win promotion via the play-offs; I can only say they are having a laugh (and I'm not!). As an 'out of Town' Hatter with a large family and mortgage to support (7 Town members in all), the cost of coming to matches at Kenilworth Road is prohibitive, ie: next season, Division 2, myself plus three children, purchased less than 14 days before the game, £32.05 for the Kenny End, £41.45 for the New Stand if the little ones want to see! Plus travelling and food, programmes etc. As for star games in Division One?! Now let's look at the quality of entertainment on offer at that price plus the standard of facilities: value for money? I think not.

Oh well, whinge over. No doubt I will still try and get to as many games as possible, home and away, and conceal from my wife just how much money we actually spend on footie. Football is still the game of the people; is it too much to hope that a Labour government will allow the re-introduction of terracing?

David Collett, Cotswold Hatter,
Stratton, Glos.

PS: Just how many West Country Hatters are there down here? I have met Town fans from Gloucester, Cheltenham and Bristol this season, plus the Frampton Hatters who contribute to your publication. There ought to be enough of us to at least hire a mini-bus if anyone has the time to organise it — sadly not me!

Dear "Mad",

So, what's wrong with Hertfordshire? (Worldwide Hatters, p42, issue 41). Just because the scum is located in Herts (and it hurts) it doesn't necessarily follow

that residents of this beautiful county pledge their allegiance to this pathetic outfit; I would rather watch Barnet or Stevenage if I really had to!

Born in Hitchin, bred in south-east London, but matured in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamstead, St Albans and now Hatfield, I have been supporting Luton Town since my first year at Hemel Grammar in the mid-1950s, so don't you dare besmirch the loyalties of myself and my family, and those of many others who recognise and appreciate footballing quality based only just across the border.

Angry 'atter of 'atfield.

Graham R. Phillips.

Ed's note: It's a strange thing, that we declare such a strong dislike of all things to do with Hertfordshire, and yet so many Hatters fans actually come from that county. Perhaps we could arrange to annexe the parts where Hatters fans live into Bedfordshire!

Dear "Mad",

Well, it's been a long hot summer, or at least it has if you have had enough dosh to sod off abroad! Unfortunately, I have had a cash flow problem, namely because of unemployment.

I am saving all my money to sun myself in exotic places such as Darlington, Hartlepool, Cambridge and Colchester. Who knows, I might even take in a footie match while I am there. I hear a team called Luton have some pre-season friendlies there. Talking of Luton Town FC, what a very, very big man Lennie Lawrence is. To my shame I lost my rag/lost the plot/totally lost it/cracked up (choose your favourite from that lot) and swore at poor old Lennie — who has done a great job — after the "Black Wednesday" defeat (well, draw) with Crewe Alexander (*sic*) (also to my shame my middle name is Alexander).

Not only was he big enough not to make a complaint to the police, he wrote to me and said we should share a beer to 'kiss and make up'. What a decent geezer, eh?!

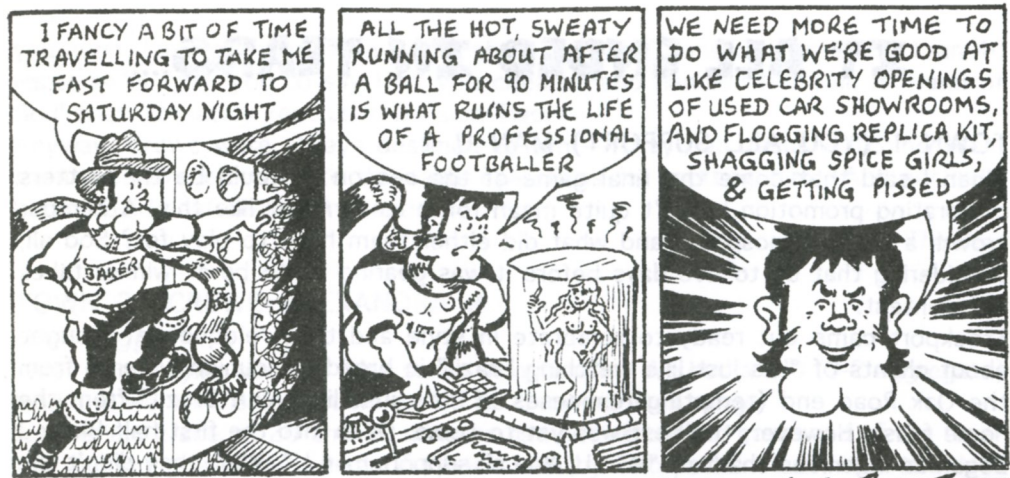
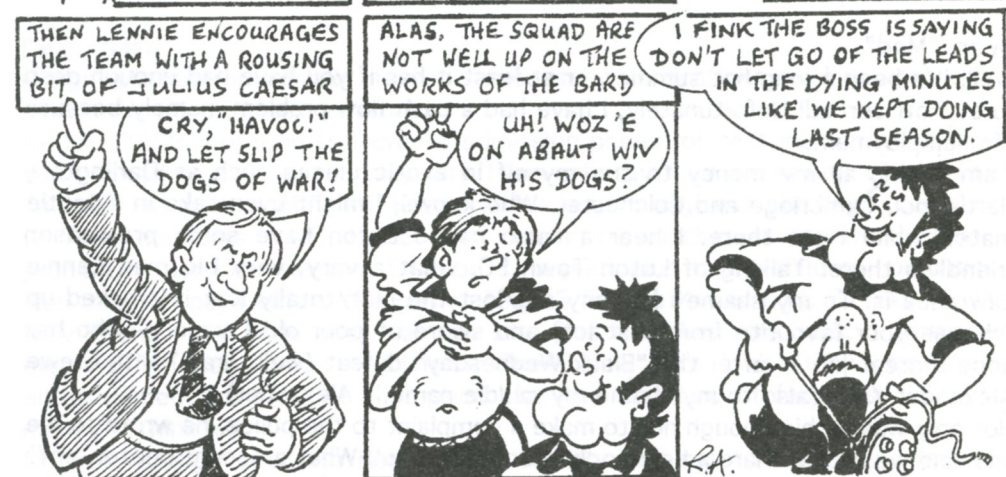
I hope he stays around and one day sits in a nice new stadium (in Luton/Dunstable, of course) and watches us thrash the likes of Arsenal and Man U in the big Sky money league also known as the Premiership.

One last thought. If Crewe survive in the First Division next season I will eat my straw boater.

One more last point. I have decided to be 'dry' this season. Please pray for him as watching Luton Town play whilst completely sober is a frightening prospect!!

Phil 'Dry (honest?!)' Darton
Islington, London.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BOBBIN DINO?



IT ALL ENDED IN TEARS.....

TOWN 1 (YOU ALL SUPPORT) MAN U 1

When I said that come the final game of the season it would be the Hatters celebrating promotion I didn't quite mean for it to turn out like this. A bumper crowd, a party atmosphere and what did either team have to play for? Sod all, considering that up to five days before it was gearing up to be a "winner takes all" contest.

Stockport came out ready to celebrate in style and their 'eloquence' brought about chants of "It's just like watching Brazil" in broad Mancunian accents from the Oak Road end (tempting responses of "It's just like Alan Brazil" from the home fans). However, the best was yet to come. Deep into the first half Block J began an ingenious chant of "Man U, You all support man U". Well, they didn't like that, did they, and have you ever seen away fans erupt like Stockport's did (Millwall excluded)? They were going mental — which only acted as a cue for the chant to get louder and louder (and it could have been worse still — we could have accused them of liking Man City!).

After a poor first half, we played miles better in the second, with only some incredible saves by Paul Jones stopping us from winning. An end of season standing ovation at the end for the Town — but the season was far from over..... next, the play-offs.

The Beat

PS: I would have mentioned something about the two goals, but for the fact that I can remember absolutely nothing about either of them — except for the fact that the Hatters scored first before the Hatters equalised.

CREWE ALEXANDRA 2 TOWN 1

The beginning of the end

There's always something that the Town do to us fans. They lull us into a false sense of optimism by doing quite well before getting soundly thrashed (see also second leg). Thousands upon thousands of Wembley seeking Town fans went up to Crewe for the match (sorry, make that about 900) and we were rewarded as early as the third minute when Oldfield poked the ball home for a potentially vital away goal. The game stayed fairly equal until the start of the second half when Jules got himself red carded (like against Millwall) for a second bookable offence (like Millwall) and the sending-off can only be blamed on his own stupidity (like Millwall). Within 10-15 minutes Crewe had snatched the advantage. Feuer was at fault for the first as the ball slipped past his near post, and a second goal was always on the cards — but we didn't imagine the circumstances it would come in. A long ball gets played through, Dele Adebola (a.k.a. Dele Maradona) blatantly uses his hand to control the ball past an oncoming Feuer and the ball eventually ends up in the net with the referee disgracefully giving the goal. Well, Adebola,

you might have got away with it, but there were 900 fans who were less than 40 yards away from you to say that you cheated and handled the ball. A 'Hand of God' that ultimately kept us in Division Two.

Anyway, Crewe were always destined to win — they had Jesus watching them from the terrace (credit to the eagle eyed Ross for spotting him). And not even Luton could beat divine intervention!

The Beat

TOWN 2 CREWE ALEXANDRA 2

Oh, bugger.....

What was I saying about a false sense of optimism? We had a 2-0 (3-2 aggregate) lead and were cruising, but we ended up throwing it all away.

An Oldfield brace on 20 and 32 minutes had put us back in command of the tie — the second goal after a beautiful back heel by Thorpe had outwitted the Alex defence and let Skippy clean through. "Yes," we all thought, "we're there" — but 16 seconds later Crewe equalised. 16 bloody seconds — we didn't even have enough time to finish the first line of "We're all going to Wem-ber-lee". And I know that teams are supposed to be at their most vulnerable when they've just scored, but 16 seconds takes the piss.

Crewe had got their away goal to cancel out ours and at 3-3 we now potentially faced extra time and penalties. Skippy hit the crossbar bravely going for his hat-trick — leaving him needing stitches — but for the Hatters it was already all over. Crewe had it psychologically and in the second half played good sensible football, while we didn't have a clue. Just after the hour, Crewe got the vital winning goal that put them at Wembley and us back in Division Two (oh great, another season of crap opposition and 2 draws with the scum to look forward to).

At the end, Luton supporters started to dish out blame for the dismal end to the season. Some blamed players like Thorpe, while others blamed the management. Personally, I think a combination of the two are to blame — but I have one major criticism to make of Lennie here. Namely, why the hell did he drop Foti? The youngster was our best player in the first leg and also in the league at the end, so what does he get rewarded with? A place on the subs bench.

The overall rating was that the better team over both legs got through to Wembley and, as a result, gained promotion.

The Beat

MOAN, MOAN, MOAN.....

Play-Offs. Bloody stupid idea. Who on earth came up with a system where a side who finish third in their division could stay in that division while the side finishing sixth get promoted? I mean, it is just so unfair. We'd done it all — scored the goals, got the points — and bloody Crewe get promoted. And all due to the play-offs. They should be scrapped. Mind you, if we'd have beaten Crewe.....

THE HEAT OF A NEW SEASON....

09.08.97 BLACKPOOL 1 TOWN 0

The start of the season and, shock, horror, Luton have a game at the seaside in the summer. For this reason the Town following at Bloomfield Road was a magnificent 1800. Unfortunately, this was a better day for developing the sun-tan (and skin cancer?) than for watching football. The Town performance was a huge disappointment, with Gavin McGowan one of the few players to impress. New signing Simon Davies looked totally out of place, and was subbed early in the second half having looked to be finding it difficult to adjust to the pace of Second Division football. Having conceded a goal as early in the game as the eleventh minute, Town were always chasing the game, but a determined Blackpool defence were not going to let go, at least to a poor and ineffective Town side. Still, to be charitable, it must have been hellishly difficult to play football in that heat — God knows, I found hard enough just to stand and watch.

K.F.H.

12.08.97 COLCHESTER UNITED 0 TOWN 1

For my first game of the new season it was nice to see some new faces in the team and the appearance of some youngsters. The crowd were all optimistic but still gutted at the let down on Saturday, the attitude was we should demolish this Third Division team and then finish them off on the 26th. Unfortunately that wasn't the case and with the absence of both James and McGowan, Alexander was played in the right back position and was a disappointment for a large majority of the game. We were surprisingly pressured quite a lot by a team that gave us no real problems in the friendly just a week before.

We were all stunned at the ref for not booking David Greene after he practically killed Douglas on a run down the wing. It was one of Douglas' many good runs that night in which he was clearly trying to keep his place in the team, and doing it quite convincingly as well. Aaron Skelton got substituted after a poor performance in which he couldn't mark Tony Thorpe, and he was clearly struggling against his old team.

To sum it up, the whole game was fairly boring and the only real entertainment was the twat in Colchester's stand who decided to take on the whole Luton Army by himself. Thankfully, the Tony Thorpe that we all know and love (!?) put the game to an end and sealed the win when, in the 87th minute, he beat two defenders and let off a world class shot that may, just, be the beginning of another season of goals.

Darwen

18.08.97 TOWN 1 SARFEND 0

Got into the pub late, and so missed the first five minutes, and Sky Sports' 4

hours of build-up. Looked promising though, Town on the offensive, some good passing, and Dwight looking sharp on the right. First view of the new kit; quite good, even if it's just a remix of the old one. Defence looks sound, Jools and Steve Davis especially. First half generally good in quality, and not lacking in talking points — Thorpy's penalty claim, Southend's (excellent) shot off the bar, and Feuer's worrying arm injury, which had the commentators inventing injuries then arguing among themselves over treatments. Luckily, Southend decided not to do the obvious and just hammer it from anywhere in the hope of troubling an obviously unwell Feuer.

Second half started interestingly, but credit must go to the punter interviewed by Sky, who said more words of incisive wisdom in two minutes than Barry Fry and Paul Walsh managed in all half time. Sign him up immediately, Sky! A scrappy half, Feuer having to do little. Marvin came bloody close with a header over the bar, but nothing concrete until the goal. Man of the Match (Simon Royce) in the Southend goal cleared it, only for Davis (?) to thump it forward to Thorpe, who hesitated before shooting. Keeper palmed it out, Douglas — possibly offside, but not sure — sidefooted it in. The crowd went wild, or at least I imagine so — Kenny Road looked a bit sparse from the camera, but having it facing the executive boxes doesn't help. I hope that Southend, as a relegated team, prove to be among the best in the Division (like us last year): if we play against everyone like we did for the first 20 minutes, Division One here we come.

Paul Gorman

PS: Interesting note — this match was advertised, without me having to ask, outside a pub in Edinburgh, during the Festival. Hoping to catch English tourists? We were the only (4) people in.

Most inane question ever asked in the history of television: Asked by Sky presenter to Barry Fry and Paul Walsh during the half-time interval. "So what do the two sides have to do to break the deadlock?" Hmm, let me see..... score, perhaps?

The Beat

23.08.97 FULHAM 0 TOWN 0

After a week of getting used to the idea of Nathan Abbey being the Town 'keeper for this game, we find that the more experienced Kelvin Davis has returned from Hartlepool instead. However, having got through that little crisis (no offence, Nathan) we took the field minus the goal machine Thorpe, apparently injured. With Marshall, Oldfield and Douglas up front, we knew the attack would be hard-working, but they've hardly been prolific in terms of goals. On another hot, sunny day, the game could have been more inspiring, but Town had the better of the first half, although few chances were created. The second half was more even and more, well, crap. In spite of this Town had a couple of good efforts saved by former Town keeper Mark Walton, although the saves may have made the headers

look closer than they were. On the whole this was not a particularly good game, and the highlight of the afternoon came about an hour after the match ended when England won the Test match at the Oval.

K.F.H.

PS: Could the result have been just reward for playing in yellow?

A VIEW FROM THE LOYAL LUTON SUPPORTERS CLUB

When is a supporters club not a supporters club? Does it need a large clubhouse, a long list of keen and attentive members who have a large input towards a steering committee, or an open dialogue with the club and it's board.

At Luton there are no facilities for a clubhouse and certainly no open dialogue with the board. We at the Loyal Luton Supporters Club have tried as hard as we could to build an amicable and informative relationship with the board, but for reasons that cannot be explained here we believe that we have reached an impasse.

This is following the sponsorship of four matches, three shirt sponsorships and now into the fourth season of the Junior Team of the Month award. Money isn't everything, of course, and we have tried to pass on ideas and suggestions as often as possible, but you can't build a bridge from just one side.

With still no decision on the new stadium yet, it is surely time for everyone to take stock of the whole situation and work together to achieve the same goal. But what views and expressions have we, the supporters, been able to put forward for the greater good of the club? No, we have just been told that it will be by Junction 10, under a dome with a 20,000 capacity, a movable pitch and a ridiculous name. But it's still better than what we have and it's what we want, isn't it? Don't believe it.

We, at the LLSC, believe in open frank discussions and debates where everyone can express and exchange views. That has to be the way forward but everyone must participate. We can't just be told, as that's just not good enough. There's still time for everyone to be involved, but it needs dialogue.

If you think something should be done then don't hang about, but don't expect any miracles. Why not come and tell us what you think. We can be found at the Kingsway Arms before and after every match, so come along and tell us your views. A supporters club is only as good as it's members, so join us and let's move forward together.

John Tiernan, Vice Chairman, LLSC.

PRE-SEASON PREDICTIONS FOR THIS TERM'S OPPONENTS

BLACKPOOL

Had one of the best records over the second half of last season. New manager this term with Nigel Worthington replacing Gary Megson. Possible play-off contenders, but will hopefully get off to a losing start!

BOURNEMOUTH

Once they had overcome off-field problems they finished the season quite strongly. Maybe mid-table placing this time around.

BRENTFORD

Finished last season disastrously. After looking like they would walk away with the title in February they made an even bigger bollocks up than us. Lucky to make the play-offs in the end. Beaten by Crewe in the most one-sided play-off final I've seen. New manager this season. Will struggle.

BRISTOL CITY

Form team of end of last season. If they have a good start they should do well. Nice ground and potentially good support. My favourites for the title.

BRISTOL ROVERS

Inconsistency means they usually finish in the lower half of the table. Not good travellers. I predict they will finish in the lower half again this season.

BURNLEY

Best supported club outside the top two divisions, but often flatter to deceive. Chris Waddle in charge this term. Ground has two smart new stands. Likely play-off contenders.

CARLISLE UNITED

Promoted last season. Last time they came up they went straight back down. They'll find it difficult again this time. Nice short trip for us on an autumnal Tuesday night.

CHESTERFIELD

Their cup run probably cost them a play-off place last season. Mid-table obscurity for the men from Pea Soup Land this term. Hopefully, we'll be able to see more than a third of Saltergate this season.

FULHAM

Promoted as runners-up last season. Impressive on the two occasions I saw them. Should do well this term, especially with their Arabic benefactor backing them. Probable play-off contenders.

GILLINGHAM

Enjoyed a good second half of last season. The Gills may be outside play-off possibilities this term. Hopefully we'll secure another 'double' over them this season so I can gloat at my work colleagues again.

GRIMSBY TOWN

Relegated last year — too many empty trawlers' nets. We need to avenge that embarrassing Cleethorpes FA Cup thrashing of two years ago. Possible play-off hopefuls.

MILLWALL

An awful end to last season. This term's outcome for our friends from south east London is hard to predict. If they start well they could make the play-offs.

NORTHAMPTON TOWN

Promoted after beating Swansea in last season's Third Division play-off final. The best they should expect is a consolidatory season. At least they should fill the Oak road on Boxing Day. Always well supported away from home.

OLDHAM ATHLETIC

Relegated last term, they should be in contention for the play-offs this season, but won't go up as Greater Manchester clubs can't be as fortunate this season as last.

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE

Argyle struggled last season but managed to stay afloat. Once again they'll probably finish in the lower echelons. Let's hope our games are as action packed as in 96/97.

PRESTON NORTH END

Mid-table at the end of last season. Good at home but crap away. Proud traditions mean good support. Once again mid-table this term for North End.

SCUM

Now that the clowns are all reassembling, hopefully the shit will be relegated to the division where they all started, i.e. the bottom one. With such inspired signings as Jason 'Pineapple' Lee (what an ideal replacement for Devon Shite), the Turnip should ensure this outcome. Oh yes, and that's at least two points for

Luton this season, preferably six.

SOUTHEND UNITED

Relegated in bottom place last season, the Shrimpers have changed their manager during the close season, but strangely have replaced Scouser with Scouser. Will struggle again this season.

WALSALL

After a bad start last term the Saddlers enjoyed a good run but faded towards the end. This season they will find it very difficult without the services of Kyle Lightbourne (now sent to Coventry), who I thought was the best striker in our division.

WIGAN ATHLETIC

Promoted as Champions last season, but I think they will struggle this term. Not the best supported club in a rugby mad town.

WREXHAM

Just missed out on the play-offs last season, following a good cup run. Difficult team to beat with patriotic supporters. Mid-table this time out.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS

Staved off relegation following disastrous first few months of season. Another season of struggle for the Adams family.

YORK CITY

Survived by the skin of their teeth last two seasons, but the Minstermen are favourites for the drop this time.

FINAL OUTCOME: All 3 teams promoted will be from the south/south-west but none of them will begin with the letter 'W'.

Steve F.

Questions that need answering — 2 of 3

Why, on the new home shirt, is the back longer than the front? I know that we now have the 'Arsenal-like' fancy writing on the back — but that doesn't automatically mean that the back has to be longer than the front. Also, why are half of the 'Luton Town F.C.'s' on the white bits upside down? Is it some kind of strange fashion statement or something?

The Beat

LUNATIC INTERLUDE

Here's a test for you. Do you dare to have a go at one of LTFC's sacred cows? All you have to do is print one of those bullshit anti-libel disclaimers about views being independent and not corporational, and for sure Mr Waddock can reply.

STING LIKE A BUTTERFLY, SWIM LIKE A BEE,
GARY WADDOCK'S A TO ZEE:

A is for Adrenaline (plenty)

B is for Bottle (plenty)

C is for crap (too often)

D is for dumb blond (sorry girls)

E is for effort (plenty)

F — better not say

G - get rid of him (quick)

H - harsh but true. He's a dead weight.

And that's enough. Yeah, I know you all love him, but open your eyes. Anyone in the crowd can go out and try their hardest, and good luck to all decent working people, but something else is needed. A tiny particle of skill would be nice. In games like Bury and Crewe it was becoming laughable, indeed embarrassing, to see the total lack of invention in the middle of the pitch. Picking Gary W is like cutting off 2 fingers and then trying to play Mozart's symphony number 36 on the piano. Or whatever.

Yes, we should strive for positivity, but if you've gotta moan, you've gotta moan, and this one comes from the heart. Call it Controversy Corner or Lunatic Interlude, whatever you like. If you like I'll have a go at Feuer as well, though we'll probably sell him this summer (*looks like you've still got time!*).

Maybe I am over perfectionist (brought up on Barry John and Gareth Edwards what else do you expect?), but I honestly think the side is hamstrung by the selection of non-footballers. No way can you play Waddock and McLaren in the same side and expect success, and McLaren offers far more than G.W., particularly in company with King Ceri. And I do believe class will out, style can be substance, an albeit negative proof is we didn't get promoted, and let's face it we should have been.

Well, at the end of the day I don't give a shit, I'm just interested to see if you really are the "voice of the people". To be fair I don't remember you claiming to be so, it's just an assumption of mine, and to be fair to me I do give the man credit for trying hard, I just don't think it's good enough, even in Division Two. Perhaps my problem is I wish for world domination — stuffing Watford is not enough for this particular Hatter. I say we should sign Juninho.

Ieuan Y Barrog

TOWN TRAVELS

Ashton Gate lies about 2 miles from Bristol Temple Meads station. The most direct route is through Bedminster. There is no shortage of pubs along West Street and North Street which would make a very respectable pub crawl. The pubs closer to the ground than this are not particularly good or welcoming for away fans.

For those who do not mind a slightly longer walk, there is an interesting pub crawl to be had North of the river. The crawl ends with one of the best approaches to a ground to be had in the league.

From Temple Meads walk out of the forecourt. Opposite is the RECKLESS ENGINEER. This is much better than it looks and does a range of ales from local micro-breweries. Not a great pub, but useful for those desperate after a long train journey. Head north under the flyover (left as you leave the Reckless Engineer; the flyover is due for demolition, so it may be gone by September) into Victoria Street. Go past the Shakespeare to the KING'S HEAD. This is the nicest pub in Bristol, but keeps erratic hours, Assume that it will be closed so anything else will be a bonus. Just past the King's Head fork right into Temple Street. Tucked away on the left is THE CORNUBIA. This is a very nice little pub, again specialising in local micros.

Back to Victoria Street, carry on north over Bristol Bridge, noting the Courage brewery on your right. Once over the bridge carry straight on and then left into Corn Street. On your left you will find the Nails which gave rise to the expression "cash on the nail" (get on with it Clark, we're wasting drinking time). Diagonally opposite is the COMMERCIAL ROOMS, a truly wondrous pub converted from a Gentlemen's club. Butcombe Bitter plus numerous guests available at reasonable prices. Leave the pub by the back door (near the toilets) and turn left down Small Street. This will take you to the WHITE LION. A pleasant little boozier with Smiles and Wickwar beers. Do not miss the Gents' here which is down a tight spiral staircase. Not recommended when pissed.

Now a little walk. With your back to the pub turn left until you come to the floating harbour. Bear right to College Green and head past the Cathedral (we're seeing the sights, aren't we). After about 5 minutes you will see the MYRTLE TREE on your right. This is a tiny pub, so do not go mob-handed, but offers one of the finest sights there is with half a dozen barrels of Bass racked behind the bar. Two doors away is the BAG O' NAILS, another fine little pub offering an interesting and unpredictable range of ales.

Still a way to go. Carry on along Hotwells Road, taking in a fine view of the SS

Great Britain. For those that cannot contemplate a 15 minute walk in one go, the PLUME OF FEATHERS, a Marston's pub, offers a good resting point. Carry on from here and turn left into Merchants Road, and over the first bridge we come to our final pub, the NOVA SCOTIA. Another fine alehouse with a choice of ale. Leaving the Nova Scotia, follow the crowd who will be jumping over a wall, crossing an old railway bridge over the Avon and then through a park where several matches of a rather higher standard than the one you are about to see will be in progress. Ashton gate is opposite this park, though bear in mind that the away fans are at the opposite end.

The total distance for this crawl is nearly 3 miles, so an hour or so in addition to drinking time should be allowed.

Clark

Fantasy Donkeys League

Since Mad started the HatterLeague, I propose a similar competition surrounding the donkeys at W*tf*rd. Points should be awarded as follows:

10 for letting in a goal (Goalkeeper/defenders)

50 for an own goal

25 for giving away a penalty

25 for missing a penalty

10 for getting booked

50 for getting sent off

20 for being Jason Lee

Players to be picked:

Goalkeepers: Chris Day, Alec Chamberlain.

Defenders: Keith Millen, Robert Page, Darren Bazeley, Dominic Ludden, Nigel Gibbs, Paul Robinson.

Midfielders: Steve Palmer, Peter Kennedy, Micah Hyde, Tommy Mooney, Clint Easton, Richard Johnson.

Strikers: Jason Lee (!), David Thomas, Gifton Noel-Williams, Wayne Andrews, Ronnie Rosenthal.

Pick one player from each position. All players are free of charge (after all, who'd pay for them!).

Anyone wishing to take up the challenge of making the biggest team of donkeys, send entries to MAAH.

Patrick Johnson

Questions that need answering — 3 of 3

Why do a large number of Luton Town fans make out that Lennie Lawrence is some kind of God? He's not all he's cracked up to be. He seems to continually mince his words (ie. promises major team changes and then pick the same line-up for the next match), his team selections are erratic (why continually persist with rubbish like Grant and Guentchev when there are surely better options), he doesn't appear to have a clue when it comes to substitutions (like Pleat) and his tactical sense is also strange. How many other managers would try to deploy a strategy (ie. defending a lead away from home) and only after ELEVEN failures complain publicly that it's the players fault for not being able to do it. Surely it's obvious that it is the wrong strategy to be playing.

Now I'm sorry to disappoint and upset a lot of you but Lawrence is not the best thing to have happened to Luton in a long time — as has been suggested.

The Beat

The Ultimate Conquest?

Over the last couple of years I have been a busy man. I have been taunting a scum fan about supporting such a shit team, and have gone to all lengths convincing him (to no avail, or so I thought) that life was a lot rosier in the Bedfordshire district than at Shitarage Road. Without making much progress, I continued to make his life hell until, one day, all very low key, he suddenly decided to ditch the scum and become a Luton fan! I feel very responsible and proud for the decision he made, and would urge any Luton fan in similar circumstances to follow my actions. This is the second instance I have witnessed of a scum fan seeing the light, something I am sure would never happen in the opposite direction. If you are Luton, you hate W*tf*rd and you carry this belief for life, although it will take away a part of my life not having a scummer to take the piss out of, I believe I have carried out the ultimate conquest.

Patrick Johnson

SHORT CUTS

LETHARGIC, laid back and, at times, downright lazy is the way Tony Thorpe describes himself.

One can only imagine how dangerous the Luton scoring sensation would be if he was pumped up and champing at the bit.

For it is highly improbable you will find a Second Division defender in the land prepared to back Thorpe's personal assessment.

So, there it's official. You might not hear a Second Division defender talking about Thorpe like that, but it's a regular occurrence among Town fans. But if he thinks of himself like that, what effect will our abuse have....?

HatterLeague 2 — The Finishing Post

Seeing as we're at (or just past) the start of a new season, let us begin by making a couple of apologies. At the end of last season we made a pledge to send out Manager's Packs to anybody who requested one. Well, after a staggering response we were inundated with an overwhelming 2 (yes folks, that's TWO) replies. And, instead of us sending off these packs (the sensible option) somebody (I blame the servants) managed to lose both letters (doh!) (does anybody think there's too much parenthesis going on here?). So, our sincere apologies go out to whomever wrote to us requesting these packs — and we'd love to hear from you again. Please forgive us. Please.

Anyway (grovelling now complete), onto the final results of HatterLeague 2 (in case you missed issue 41. Simon Alcock of Cannock took the second championship after his 'Zero' team bagged an amazing 591 points. His team selection of Feuer, Steve Davis, Thomas, Thorpe, Alexander, McLaren and Grant netted him a £25 betting voucher from William Hill. The £15 voucher for runner-up went to Dave Pearson's 'Derbyshire 1968' who were 10 points adrift of the winner on 581. There was a tie (ooh! exciting stuff) for third place. Although both managers were also on 581 points, the countback system meant that the 'Happy Hatters' of both Elizabeth Hansell and Dale Williams had to settle for the £10 voucher third prize. The first HatterLeague winner, Karen Maxfield, failed in her attempt to retain the title and could only manage mid-table obscurity with a disastrous position of 66th with 456 points. Meanwhile, at the bottom, Mike Hann's 'Minus Three Every Game (and Cheap!)' claimed the wooden spoon after finishing just 289 points short of the rest on -98 points. A controversial summer was had by all parties concerned with the HatterLeague as the HatterConference's champions were denied their promotion spot on the basis that they do not exist — and the result of the High Court legal challenge (a la Stevenage) was a successful one from Mike Hann's point of view as he escaped demotion and was allowed to stay in the premier fanzine fantasy football competition.

Of the players, only Thorpe (174) and Steve Davis (147 maximum break) managed to break the magical ton in the points scoring system, while only five (all 'keepers or defenders) ended up with minus figures. When all is said and done, the points system was a great deal better than the notorious 'minus season' of the first year of the HatterLeague.

123 managers endured last season in the HatterLeague, which was 25 down on the first season — but now we invite every reader and his dog to enter the third HatterLeague season.....

It's back....

HatterLeague 3

You just couldn't keep away, could you? So, we're back — with a slightly revised format and some new features — for our third season. The basic rules, as ever, are still the same (ie. finish top by having the most points), but the points system has been rejuvenated slightly (anybody heard the expression 'change for change's sake'?), Also, two players have been axed from your team — leaving you with only a HatterFive to select. Another new feature is that we will be awarding bonus points to a manager of the issue every HatterLeague Update — more about that later.

The Points system this year looks like this:

Goals:

- +2 points for a goal scored by a striker
- +3 points for a goal scored by a midfielder
- +4 points for a goal scored by a defender
- +10 points for a goal scored by a goalkeeper
- +2 point bonus to any player scoring a hat-trick

Assists: Awarded to the last Town player to touch the ball before the goalscorer

- +1 point if it is a striker or midfielder
- +2 points if it is a striker or midfielder

Defence: Awarded to goalkeepers or defenders
+4 points for a clean sheet (playing 30 minutes or more)
+2 points for a clean sheet (playing less than 30 minutes)
-1 point for every goal conceded

Performance: +5 points for Town Man of the Match

Discipline: -1 point for receiving a booking
-3 points for being sent-off

Appearances: -1 point for each defender or goalkeeper who does not play
+1 point for a player playing 45 minutes or more

Managers bonus: 5 points for the team awarded Manager of the Issue, each issue

As you can see, the nominated Manager of the Issue will receive a bonus five points to be added to their total. The Manager of the Issue is the HatterLeague manager who has gained the most HatterLeague points per issue (it's simple when you explain it!). If there is a tie then a countback system will come into

force again — and if, after that, there is still no clear winner then one of these will be randomly selected by the computer for the 5 bonus points. The points deadline for the award will be 2 weeks before the issue of *Mad* is due out.

Due to the lack of sponsorship, the money available in the HatterLeague fund has dropped to just (!!!) £3 million. However, this season you only have to pick five players. The formation that every manager has to adhere to is one goalkeeper, two defenders, one midfielder and one striker. The HatterFive players available to pick from are as follows:

Code	Player	£	Code	Player	£
<u>Goalkeepers</u>					
201	Ian Feuer	0.9 m	203	Nathan Abbey	0.3 m
202	Kelvin Davis	0.3 m			
<u>Defenders</u>					
211	Gavin McGowan	0.4 m	215	Darren Patterson	0.6 m
212	Julian James	0.4 m	216	Mitchell Thomas	0.4 m
213	Marvin Johnson	0.5 m	217	Richard Harvey	0.3 m
214	Steve Davis	0.8 m			
<u>Midfielders</u>					
221	Graham Alexander	0.7 m	224	Sean Evers	0.3 m
222	Gary Waddock	0.6 m	225	Simon Davies	0.4 m
223	Paul McLaren	0.5 m	226	Paul Showler	0.5 m
<u>Strikers</u>					
231	Tony Thorpe	1.0 m	235	Stuart Douglas	0.5 m
232	David Oldfield	0.7 m	236	Liam George	0.2 m
233	Dwight Marshall	0.5 m	237	Kim Grant	0.2 m
234	Andrew Fotiadis	0.8 m			

Once again we have tried to include every player who has a realistic chance of playing in the first team (oh, and Kim Grant). Any new players will be included in the game in due course — and you will be able to buy such players through the HatterSwap transfer market. However, due to the reduction of your team, you will only be able to make one HatterSwap this season, so use it wisely. Like last year, you will receive a transfer form with your confirmation letter. This HatterSwap can be used anytime during the season, but before the transfer deadline day of Thursday March 28th 1998.

HATTERLEAGUE TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- 1 All entries must be sent in on the managers form included in this issue. We will also accept photocopies, or handwritten forms in the same layout.
- 2 One loose 26p (first class) stamp per form must be included with your completed application form, to cover the cost of your confirmation.
- 3 Only one entry per person. There is no limit to the number of applications per household.
- 4 Non inclusion or value of players will not be discussed, although we have tried to include all Town players who might figure throughout the season.

- 5 Transfers of players are allowed through the HatterSwap transfer market. You will receive a transfer form through the post and you can use your HatterSwap at anytime until the transfer deadline of March 28, 1998.
- 6 Team selection must include one goalkeeper, two defenders, one midfielder, and one striker. Your total team value must not exceed £3 million. Teams that do not meet the selection criteria will not be accepted
- 7 Players scores and a managers update will appear in each issue of *Mad* as a *Hatter!*
- 8 Only Nationwide League Division Two matches count toward the HatterLeague.
- 9 All statistics for the compilation of points will be taken from the *Luton News*.
- 10 Team names must not exceed 40 characters in length, and any deemed offensive will not be accepted.
- 11 Entries must be sent to the address stated and should be received by 15th September 1997. The game will start on 20th September 1997 and end on 18th April 1998.
- 12 Letters of confirmation will be sent as soon as possible after receipt of entry.
- 13 Incomplete, illegible or late applications will not be accepted. We can take no responsibility for late entries. Proof of postage is not proof of receipt.
- 14 In the event that the manager of the issue is decided by computer (if there is a tie), our decision is final and no complaints regarding the selection process will be investigated.
- 15 The HatterLeague 3 Champion 1997/98 will be the manager with highest number of points at the end of the season. The winner will receive a £25 William Hill betting voucher, and runner-up and 3rd place will receive prizes to be decided at a later date. In the event of a tie, a count-back system will operate to decide the winner. The editor's decision is absolutely final.
- 16 The winner will be notified in writing, and results published in the last issue of the 1997/98 season.
- 17 Complaints about the HatterLeague (excluding those regarding term 15) will be investigated, but we shall not be obliged to enter into any correspondence. In any event, the Editor's decision is final.
- 18 We reserve the right to refuse participation or disqualify any entry which fails to comply with the rules, or to cancel the competition at any time in the event of circumstances arising beyond our control.
- 19 No individual will be excluded from entering, but the Editor, sales staff and others directly involved in *Mad* as a *Hatter!* or administration of the game will not be able to claim the prize in the event of winning the game (although may be awarded the Manager of the Issue bonus). In that event the prize will be awarded to the next placed manager in the HatterLeague.
- 20 "HatterLeague", "HatterFive", and "HatterSwap", are copyrighted to *Mad* as a *Hatter!* and the originator of the game, and may not be reproduced without prior permission. (Got it right at last!!!)

HATTERLEAGUE 3 ENTRY FORM

Manager.....

Address.....

TeamName.....

Pos	Code	Player	Price
GK			
D			
D			
M			
S			
Total Value			

Please enclose one 26p stamp per entry form and send completed entry to HatterLeague 3, 38 Twigden Court, Mount Pleasant Road, Luton, LU3 2RL.

The Sharpe End

Nick Owen reckons I've done him out of almost five hundred quid — and, as he, somewhat surprisingly, revealed to me recently that he never reads this august organ, I can quite safely acquaint you with the details of this situation.

Nick likes the occasional flutter and invariably rings me to place his wagers. At the start of last season he told me he was going to risk a few quid on Luton winning the Second Division title. I duly told him what the odds were and asked him how much he wanted to stake and whether he wanted a win only bet or an each-way bet — the latter paying out in the event that your selection occupies second or third spot.

He opted for a win only, whilst I joined him in a bet, but went for the safety-first approach of each way.

Somehow though, I was convinced that Nick, too, had bet each way, so when he rang at the end of the season and we were commiserating with each other, I said to him, "Well, at least you'll collect from your bet". At which he accused me of persuading him to bet win only and therefore preventing him from cashing in on Luton's third place finish as he would have done with an each-way bet. So, I suppose that's my chances of making any guest appearances on whichever show Nick happens to be presenting in the future gone up in flames.

As I say, though, I was most surprised that he confessed to never seeing, let alone reading *Mad* — perhaps the Editor should award him an honorary subscription — but only if he churns out an article.

Talking of betting, William Hill have made Luton 8/1 favourites to win the Division, although I must confess that my own input did slightly influence the odds put up by the company's odds-compilers.

This must be the first time we've started favourite to win a Division for a very long time, if not ever.

It has to be a justified position though, and anything less than promotion this season will by definition be regarded as abject failure.

The clubs coming down from Division One, with due respect, are all suffering from long-term decline, while those coming up, with the exception of newly

wealthy Fulham, who could turn out to be anything, are likely to struggle to emulate Bury.

Of the sides who were there and thereabouts with us last term, perhaps Burnley, with new boy Chris Waddle keen to make an impression, and Cup contenders Chesterfield, could emerge as serious contenders.

Lennie seems keen to maintain the nucleus of the side whilst strengthening it where possible — the departure of Ceri Hughes was inevitable, he's wanted away for a couple of years. Will he be the one who really fulfils his potential in the Premiership, rather than becoming just a decent squad player?

Isn't it odd that John Hartson, Scott Oakes, Paul Telfer, Matt Jackson, Mark Pembridge and Iain Dowie have all just failed to go that one step further to superstar status?

Sky didn't take long to mess about with our season, did they? Instead of cruising along in plenty of time to see the first home game on a convenient Saturday afternoon, we all had to rush home from work and battle against rush hour traffic on a Monday evening — and what's more, I suppose, I had to put up with the usual impeded view courtesy of Sky's cameraman. "Let us know in advance and we'll find you alternative tickets" said the ticket office last season. Why should I have to move? Wouldn't I have asked for tickets elsewhere in the first place if I didn't want to sit where I do?

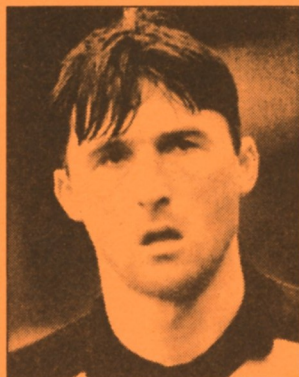
But who am I, after all? Just someone who hands the club the best part of a grand well in advance for season tickets each, money without which they might struggle to balance the books, that's all.

Graham Sharpe

SEEN ON THE BOX

Sign seen on Match of the Eighties - 82/83 season (BBC1) - "Watford — Always At The Top". Yeah, right on — always. Surely the sign would read better: "Watford — Somehow at the top for five years then reverting back to being shit".

SHORT CUTS



Performance of the week: Ian Feuer (Luton Town) whose Las Vegas birthplace presumably accounted for his ability to keep out Southend United with one arm on Monday after injuring a shoulder.

A delphic utterance from *The Guardian* (look it up - I had to). Hmm, Feuer - the One Armed Bandit?

Live Football League

SS3, 7pm

AFTER STARTING their season of Monday night coverage examining the expensive talents of Arsenal and Coventry, this week Sky take their cameras and assortment of light pens to the Mecca of football that is Kenilworth Road, where Luton will be hosting Southend United.

The two teams have managed just a point between them so far, with Luton currently bottom of Division Two. But that is the fun of tables at the start of the season. A big win for Lennie Lawrence's side could see them leapfrog to eighth, while the visitors, under new manager Alvin Martin, could achieve the dizzy heights of third place.

The trouble with satellite TV, though, is that if you're desperate to catch up on this kind of excitement you have to fork out £21.99 for monthly subscriptions. Obviously well worth the money if you're into that sort of thing.

MATTHEW DUNN

Not sure which paper this came from, but considering this was their "Pick of the day" they're hardly complementary, are they?

back.

The Town are likely to field what the manager believes is his strongest midfield formation: Graham Alexander reverting to the right, Hughes and Alexander in the middle, and Showler wide left.

More from the Accuracy on Sunday. It seems we've all underestimated Graham Alexander's workrate.

SKY MOVIES

6.0am ● **THE THREE FACES OF EVE.**

(1957) Joanne Woodward stars (38123)

8.0 **THE GIRL MOST LIKELY.** (1958)

Comedy, starring Jane Powell (25814)

10.0 **MAX DUGAN RETURNS.** (1983)

Comedy, starring Jason Robards (79036)

12.0 **BOSWELL.** (1988) Foot-and-hoof, 7.

'60s full back in shock return?

PETERBOROUGH: Griemlin 6 - Neal 5, Edwards 7, Bodley 6, Clark 6 - Donowa (wdrn) 5, Linfo 6, Bullimore 7, Otto (wdrn) 5
*WILLIS 8, De Souza (wdrn) 6, Sub: Carter 6, Rowe, Heald.
LUTON: Feuer 7 - Jones 6, Davis 7, Johnson 6, Mitchell 6 - Alexander 6, Waddock 7, Hughes 7, Kiwomya (wdrn) 6 - *OLDFIELD 8, Thorpe 7, Sub Fotiadis 7.
Ref: B Knight 7.

Peterborough 0 Luton 1

By PETER OAKES

From the *Sunday People*. Seems Mr Oakes wants Jules to be Welsh, but is on first name terms with Spider. Are all people with this surname incompetent?