

MAD AS A FLATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



Issue 45

Jan 98

LENNIE GETS DESPERATE



In a desperate attempt to improve results, Gary Waddock has been stripped of the team captaincy. His replacement is seen here welcoming a visiting referee.

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THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



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EDITORIAL

There are times when it is difficult to know what to write in an editorial. This isn't one of them. Yesterday, one of the local papers contained a plea from our favourite, heroic, goalkeeper that we should refrain from criticising him, while he is going through a bad patch of form. Personally, I heartily concur with the view that he should not be criticised — but for different reasons from other supporters. It is unfair to criticise players because they are not in the best of form, or indeed just not the best of players, during a match. After the game, in the pub or wherever, fair enough but not while the game is being played. Inevitably we all get frustrated during a game and will make comments, but we have to accept that most of the time the players are doing the best they can. You may notice that Ian Feuer is not the main subject here, for other players have had to put up with far worse than he ever will. Probably one of the worst cases is Kelvin Davis, who took an awful lot of stick for nothing more than not being Ian Feuer, even though he is a very good goalkeeper in his own right. But a lot of players have taken undue stick this season, when they have been doing their best. The real stupidity of this is that it usually ends up with fans arguing amongst themselves, and looking pretty daft in the process.

What's happening to our form? It's swinging from one extreme to the other, and we keep flattering to deceive (whatever that means). Just as we're starting to feel that we'll be able to give the opposition a run for their money (on February 14 for instance), we go back to the level of incompetence witnessed earlier in the season. It's looking more and more like the best we can hope for this season is a mid table finish, and that will be mainly thanks to Tony Thorpe's goals. Without him we'd be in big trouble — unless Phil Gray eventually proves to be equally lethal at this level. Dwight Marshall might be as well, but it seems that no-one has explained to Lennie that he is not a winger, but a central striker.

Wither the KohlerDome? As January ends there's still no decision and we're counting the time since the Public Inquiry ended in years, rather than months. It doesn't help when some Walter Mitty type decides to tell the gullible end of the local press that he's about to take the club over (the same branch of the press that reveals, two weeks later, that they've been victims of a hoax, but try to portray it as a major scoop — time to do a bit more research before printing the story chaps?) and so diverts attention from the facts.

Finally, we've had to leave quite a few articles out of this issue due to lack of space, but they'll be in the next one, even if they do start to look a bit dated. At the current rate of articles arriving at Mad Towers the traditional 60 page end of season issue will still be too small, but we are trying to catch up.

BEATING THE AWAYDAY BLUES

What do keen Luton supporters do when they can't get to as many away matches as in the past? This quandary has been with me for the last six years or so as a steady progression of children have arrived in the Craig household. three so far and all boys — one more and we can have our own 5-a-side team! — although Mrs C, for some strange reason, does not seem so keen on the idea. Anyway, the days of me gallivanting up the motorway to Boundary Park and Oakwell have been sadly and understandably, from Mrs C's point of view, curtailed.

So, what does the enthusiastic sports buff do instead? Luckily, I have been able to avoid the perils of Sainsbury's, Do It All, etc., by taking the junior offspring to a variety of other sporting events, albeit with one ear glued to Three Counties Radio. This is the first in a series of articles about alternatives to following the Town away.

Number 1: The Non League Scene

In the old days one could watch the reserves, but nowadays this is no longer possible as the powers-that-be insist on the reserves playing on Thursday afternoons at Top Field, Hitchin, kicking off at 2.00pm, no good to those seeking a Saturday afternoon fix. Accordingly, the alternative is to watch the local Non League scene which offers great choice at a variety of levels, ranging from the Conference (Stevenage) to the Spartan South Midlands League (Brache Sparta et al) but also including the Isthmian League and the Southern League (this league now rejoices in the title of the Dr Marten's League. Before that it was the Beazer Homes League, but this mercenary company ended its sponsorship once it had bought several of the clubs grounds, centrally located in towns and built Beazer houses on them, relocating the clubs at the edge of towns with identikit Lego type stands which all look the same..... lucrative or what?).

Anyway, plenty of choice. Some people like groundhopping, ie. visiting a new ground every other week, but living in St Albans I have adopted the local side as my team. Accordingly, when Luton are away I can be found at Clarence park watching St Albans City strut their stuff in the Premier Division of the Isthmian League. Clarence Park is a most picturesque spot for spectating, situated within a Victorian park and surrounded by mature trees, and therein lies a story. In the 1992/3 season Saints had an outstanding run and were just pipped for the title by Chesham (the virtual title decider between the two teams drew a remarkable crowd, in non league terms, of 4,200) but as Chesham's ground did not reach the necessary standard (sounds familiar to followers of Stevenage?), Saints, as runners-up, were invited to step up to the Conference, but then the rule book struck and St Albans were prevented from doing so because of the presence of two trees on the terracing! Obviously the

trees were regarded as a safety hazard. I have heard tales of the Enfield goalie being pelted with acorns in the innocent days of the 1950's but it does seem a pathetic reason to prevent promotion, although it is commonplace and the Conference does have a reputation for being a closed shop. The ground is council owned and the trees had Preservation orders on them so could not be chopped down and, therefore, no promotion for the Saints.

The appeal of the non league scene is varied. It is cheaper for one thing — admission for the terracing is £5.00 with an extra £1.00 being charged to sit in the stand, although at St Albans there is not much advantage in this as the "grandstand" is very low and the view is obscured by pillars and posts. Last season the club had a very good wheeze as it let in season ticket holders from League clubs at the concessionary rate of £3.00. Other local non league sides should take note as most of the crowd are supporters of a league team but often pop down to watch their local side in action. This is not exclusively the case as there are a band of die hard loyalists who will only watch the Saints, this includes travelling away which is relatively easy as the Isthmian League is also known as the M25 league as most of the clubs are clustered around or within its boundary.

Other advantages include no charge for children, or at least not yet as they are very small; the opportunity to enjoy a pint while standing on the terraces; reasonable grub as catering facilities are in house and strictly amateur, not like at most grounds where the big companies have taken over. Another plus is that behind one of the goals is an area of grass ideal for little boys to play football on so my son can be safely dispatched down there while I concentrate on the game. In fact, sometimes the boys games are more entertaining than the real stuff!

As to the football on offer it is not bad, indeed at times it can be very entertaining. The players are a mixture of youth, free transfers from League clubs, non-league stalwarts and old lags who have seen better days and just don't know when to retire. For example, Brian Stein successfully prolonged his career after the fateful 1991/2 relegation season and banged in goals regularly for Enfield, Stevenage, Boreham Wood as well as St Albans. Kerry Dixon has recently resurfaced at Boreham Wood (*and for St Josephs on Sundays in the North Home Counties Sunday League*). Some of them are quite promising and the non-league can be a fertile breeding ground for young talent. I know Ian Dowie isn't everyone's cup of tea, but he started off at Clarence Park and has done well in stepping up — several £500,000 transfers, international caps and a steady stream of goals. Dean Austin at Spurs is another ex-Saint to have made the grade.

Saints, like Luton, have a reputation for being a footballing side and always

try to play constructively unlike some of the opposition who are real "kick and rush" merchants. A couple of seasons ago when the notorious "kick in" temporarily replaced the throw in, Saints, to their credit, refused to use it as all it resulted in was the defenders walloping the ball as far upfield as possible for big forwards to chase. Steve Ketteridge, the manager at the time, threatened players with a fine if they used it.

Cup runs at this level can be great fun. Last season the team reached the dizzying heights of the Second Round proper of the FA Cup, after fighting its way through five Qualifying rounds and the First Round proper. The latter entailed a trip to the wilds of Wisbech and a last minute winner. To say that Wisbech is in the sticks is an understatement, covered terracing on one side of the ground consisted of an old barn! I also heard one of the funniest chants I have ever heard at a football match when the Saints choir baited the local yokels with a chorus of "You're inbred and you know you are." Sadly, it all ended in tears with a 9-2 drubbing at Ashton Gate at the hands of Bristol City in the Second Round.

So, there you are, the next time Luton are at the other end of the country and you don't fancy a slog up the motorway give your local non-league side a go.

Murray Craig

XMAS LOOMS — DOOM AND GLOOM

Dear Mr Lawrence,

Nov 4 1997:	Burnley	H	2-3
Nov 8 1997:	Preston	H	1-3
Nov 15 1997:	Torquay	H	0-1
Nov 29 1997:	Walsall	H	0-1
Dec 2 1997:	Gillingham	H	2-2
Dec 20 1997:	Bristol Rovers	H	2-4

Merry bloody Christmas to you too, Mr Lawrence.

The Beat

As a footnote, I'd like to point out that the above article was written (and published) contemporaneously (look it up) — and since then:

NEW YEAR — NEW CHEER

Dec 26 1997:	Northampton	H	2-2
Dec 28 1997:	Millwall	A	2-0
Jan 3 1998:	Southend	A	2-1
Jan 10 1998:	Blackpool	H	3-0
Jan 13 1998:	Brentford	H	2-1

Have a very happy and prosperous New Year, Mr Lawrence!

NO SOLUTIONS, BUT A FEW IDEAS

LUTON TOWN 2 BRISTOL ROVERS 4

OK, this was *another* disaster — but I do not know what the solution is! We could sack the manager and get someone new but he has to work with the same players (as it appears we have no money for new players — but how come we could find £400,000 for Phil Gray at the drop of a hat??). Would a new manager be able to motivate the players at home? What is the magic secret that a new manager would know but Lennie Lawrence doesn't?

Me? I hated today, I came home gutted but..... I still have faith. John Moore is in there somewhere and I put my faith in him. He was a great player in his day, was a great manager for the Town, and has worked wonders with the youth team. So, leave Lennie in the job a bit longer and allow JM to get to grips with the players — if he can't sort them out then no new manager will.

My five problems with the Town are:

- Why does every other side always look
 - Fitter
 - More eager
 - Faster to the ball
 - More organised
 - To run towards the man with the ball to support him?
- Why at a throw in do we always, Always, ALWAYS throw the ball down the wing? The midfield players standing at the same level with the throw in KNOW they won't get the ball so they just stand there, flat-footed, watching, with the result that:
 - The wing man when he gets the ball is immediately covered by the defender tight to the touchline
 - The midfielder is out of the game (Luton's midfield never, NEVER run upfield to get head-ons or make opportunities)
 - We lose the ball, the opportunity and the ball comes straight back at the defence.
- Why do we always punt the ball downfield and not work it through to feet? Rovers didn't today. With them there was always a man ready to take the short throw from the keeper and thus keep full possession and allow them to dictate the play through controlled passing. When Feuer had the ball all our players turned their backs and walked away! Like throw-ins they KNOW what will happen next and that the ball will pass them by.
- Why do we play silly knock-ons without looking? Bristol Rovers didn't. These knock-ons always seem to go to the opposition (or am I just biased).

- Why do we always look to pass the ball BACK, not take the harder option of going forward? Rovers today were onto our receiver like a flash and we got pushed back and back until our attack became their attack.

So, what would I do next?

- Drop Thorpe. make him play in the reserves and realise that he has to work for his money.
- Bring in Doherty and play him as a big centre forward. We need the height for Allen's crosses, we need someone to contest with their defenders (not keep falling over and whining to the ref), we need to give the youth players a run and let them gain the experience — that's what happened to Hartson, and look at him now!
- Bring in Spring — we need his enthusiasm.
- Start looking in the non-leagues for new full-backs — we need players who can defend and attack. The current lot can't.
- Find a strong midfielder to be captain. One who will drive the players on — dare I say it, like Hessen*****, ie; the player you happily boo but wish was on your side.
- Tell:
 - McLaren to buck his ideas up — he needs to be faster and more positive towards goal. He's got the ability, he needs to apply it.
 - Oldfield to stop running and running and running — most of the time he goes into touch or straight across the pitch which gets us nowhere (mind, his goal was very good today — when he headed towards goal for once).
 - White to look on today as his one bad game of the season. He is good, will be very good, but even now is so much better than Marvin (PLEASE don't bring Marvin back).

That's it then. I'll consign today to the memory and look forward to Boxing Day, and to Southend away, though my mate Dave isn't too sure he'll be going. But we will be there on St Valentine's Day!!!

The Cheshunt Moaner

PS: Please, please, please do not attribute the defeat to Waddock not being in the team. I cheered when he was not in the starting line-up, I groaned when he was announced as sub, and I held my breath that he would not come on.

Yellow Fever

Luton Town circa 97/98 wear yellow away - no matter what colour the home team is wearing. So far this season they've performed better in yellow than they have at home in white. Think about it folks - the current Luton Town players (until recently at least) seemed to hate playing at Kenilworth Road and liked to play in yellow. At the same time there were Luton fans saying that the Town should be playing kick and run..... You've all seen 'Invasion of the body snatchers', haven't you? It's coming true folks, in every respect (other than results) we're turning Watford!

Why do Luton wear yellow all the time away from home? Is it worth asking or should we seek comfort in the knowledge that the good people at LTFC, and the fashion reps at Pony, know what they're doing?

In my latter day role as part time supporter I didn't go to Southend. I just stayed at home and listened in to the radio, and clenched my fist and said "Yes" when the result came through; and then waited for Anglia News to show me the goals on Monday night. What Anglia News showed me was that the match was played between two teams wearing yellow and blue kits.

It's a bloody disgrace really. No doubt those who spend 2.6 seconds every other week deciding which kit to take to away games, glibly decided the yellow kit was OK because Southend were meant to play in blue. The fact that Southend United's latest (and particularly nasty) home kit is now at least half yellow was missed. In any case, there was no reason at all that the Town should wear yellow at Southend.

In a way it's a disgrace that the ref didn't send Luton back to the dressing room to either get the white kit on, play in Southend's away kit or make them play in skins. That's what happened (turning to my Definitive LTFC book here) on 7th December 1985, when Newcastle turned up at Kenilworth Road wearing a their horrible grey away kit. No, they didn't play in skins, but had to return to the dressing and come back wearing orange Town away tops. Newcastle lost 2-0 that day - Gazza and Beardsley never wore a Luton shirt again. Sadly the referees in the latter day Second Division seem as likely to make such a contentious decision as their linesman are of keeping up with a Tony Thorpe run without sticking their bloody flags up.

Nobody will convince me that Luton should play in the 2nd kit for every match away from home. Especially that kit - what happened to the old practice of away kits being a rotation of traditional home colours for the different emphasis? When did the marketing men shut that idea down? What might be nice, before Valentine's Day if possible, would be that those

deciding what kit should be worn could take a bit of time to see if there's any possibility of a colour clash before deciding to play the yellow kit again.

While I'm here, does anyone know, why did Luton play in their blue away kit for the home match against Sheffield Wednesday on (consulting the book again) 1st March 1986? Remember that? Didn't it strike you as a bit strange at the time?

Tim Kingston

HATTER 4 LIFE

Have I started a trend? I counted six different people slagging Marvin in issue 44, and I never bribed one of them! I'm now considering T-shirts with Marvin and Mitchell's heads superimposed on Beavis and Buttthead's bodies, with "Heh, Heh, They Suck!" on the back. You think I'm joking.....

Let me clear something else up. I don't give a damn if Tony Thorpe gives 100% every game, as long as he scores, or has a few chances. His job is to score, not tackle. And face it, Dwight Marshall should be in the team, and the hell with Lennie 'Loser' Lawrence! I guess now we've picked up in form, you'll stop hating Lawrence. But I sure as hell won't for 3 reasons:

- 1 His "over achieved" speech.
- 2 His interest in his reputation
- 3 His attitude towards players who are more Luton than he'll ever be, like Dwight, Ian and others.

I'm sick of people slagging off Ian Feuer. So called fans behind me criticise Ian, who's more Luton than they'll ever be. Ian truly cares, gives 100% and, trust me, if you're as privileged as I am to know him, he's a wonderful guy also. I'd tell you why, but none of you "real" fans would care.

But next time any of you moan, just go round the car park and speak to Ian, Dwight, Julian, Skippy etc. They care like we do. Try remembering that.....

Anyway, for you MAAH, the Cat in the Luton Hat is no more. Maybe now you'll print me without complaint. And maybe Watford aren't crap. Yeah, both are unlikely. But on Valentine's Day, I'll be waiting for a chorus of "You are my Luton, my only Luton.....", so with pride in my heart and a shiver down my spine, I can sing my favourite Luton song, and watch The Only Team That Matters, The Hatters™ embarrass a sad Turnip of dubious parentage, Dame Elton, and a shit football team!!!

Peter

SCRIBES CORNER

The first of what will be a regular column from our own trainee journalist at Harlow College, Chris Lennon.

With this being the last fanzine published before THE match, I'd like to take the opportunity to remind the players that (for the fans at least) this is the most important derby match for years — mainly because of the laughing stock they made of us on that fateful day in October.

To the 14 on duty on Valentine's Day, forget about where THEY are in the table, forget about THAT 4-0 scoreline, just remember the important fact that WE are BETTER than THEM.

I haven't seen us beat the scummers since 1993 (and wasn't it glorious seeing them have 2 sent off), but October 4th 1997 was the first time I have EVER seen them beat us. LTFC, don't let me see a second defeat, please.

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Ah, the Spice Girls (there's no escaping from them at the moment). There's Scum Spice, Shit Spice, Old Spice, Dumb Spice and Ugly Spice. Or, as she's more commonly known, Geri.

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Who else saw the Accuracy on Sunday the day after the Bristol Rovers match? I know we've criticised the paper, and reports in the AoS in the past (and rightly so), but wasn't Pete Kenyon's pantomime account just superb. 'Pussies in Boots' — not quite the work of a journo writing a serious report, but it brightened up my Sunday morning Alka Seltzer.

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Wasn't listening to ~~3CR~~ Radio Herts on 14th January brilliant (yeah, I know I should have been revising, but you try reading a Local Government book for longer than 10 minutes and see how bored you get)? I knew Pembridge and Oakes wouldn't let us down from the spot — and wasn't it absolutely heartbreaking hearing Micah Hyde miss his penalty. I did get a bit tired though, of David 'Watford, Stevenage and anyone else — but not Luton' Croft saying every two minutes how unlucky they were, and how they could be proud of going out of the Cup in this way(?).

~~~~~

I went to the Hertfordshire County Council Education Committee meeting on January 14th (not by choice). Item 5 on the agenda was regarding 'Secondary Transfer Review — Admission Rules'. The Conservative Group's point 8 read: "That it is noted with regret that these new proposed rules do nothing to help the situation in Watford."

So, even the council think that shithole is beyond help.

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I have been told by someone on my course that there is a bloody scummer at Harlow College. I assure that I am keeping an eye out for him (and if he even thinks about wearing a scum shirt...), More details next issue.

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While on the subject of that great Essex town, and further to what I said last issue, a Mr Leigh Wells of Old Harlow is also a Luton Town fan. So, unless he was the bloke I saw going into Motor World before Christmas, there are THREE Luton Town fans in Harlow. The place will be full of Luton fans before long if I keep finding another one per issue!

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At least our form has started to pick up now. Before Crimbo, teams coming to Kenny Road and taking all 3 points was as common as the words 'Greg', 'Sharon', 'fackin' and 'Ford Escort' are in Harlow. It also gives me a chance to wear my Luton shirts to college again (with pride and without facing to much ridicule) — which is nice.

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Excitedly unwrapped what was obviously a calendar on Christmas Day. Alas, it wasn't a Louise one, but the second best thing — the LTFC 1998 calendar. Went to flick through it and got the shock of my life when I turned to January. Lennie Lawrence, Wayne Turner, Happy Harry and (strangely) three ickle devils wearing war paint (the middle one hasn't even got the new shirt on!). Well, thanks a bunch, Luton — I don't think I'll bother putting it up until February.

Also, whose bright idea was it to mark down the date of the FA Cup Final? Are they trying to take the piss or something. Surely it would have been a lot better (and more useful) to have marked down the play-off dates.

~~~~~

Chris Lennon

## The text Files

Seen on Ceefax: "Luton manager Lennie Lawrence is looking to inflict Oldham's first home defeat at Boundary Park."

What? Ever? That is one hell of a home record if so!

Town fans, don't forget to look at Teletext page 175 (ITV) every Thursday for the "Fanscene" pages which now feature Mad as a Hatter!

## LAWRENCE IN? LAWRENCE OUT?

This is being written on the back of a five match unbeaten run (after Brentford (AWS)).

Before any of my fellow supporters start phoning up Three Counties Radio or begin preaching on down the pub about how you were 'right all along saying stick with Lawrence, etc' — just let me remind you of this:

Back in November and December when pressure was mounting on our wonderful boss to leave LTFC, was it not you lot (the pro-Lawrences) saying "It's not his fault — it's the players who are playing badly, losing the matches, etc"

So, using that very same (and rather absurd) logic, SURELY our recent good form (ie: 4 wins from 5 after Xmas) has absolutely NOTHING to do with the manager. Surely it's to do with the players playing well, winning the matches, is it not?

Now I know (and respect) that everyone is entitled to their own opinions. Mine is that I do not think that our current manager is going to be any good for LTFC. You might think Mr Lawrence is doing a good job — that's fine.

It'll just be interesting to look back in 3 or 4 years time (hopefully in the Premiership, possibly (and more likely) in the Conference) and see which view was right.

Oh, and I'm not wishing to be a killjoy — but just remember what happened last time we went five matches unbeaten.

The Beat

## Radio Daze

From the Three Counties Radio Sports Special: Sheff Weds v. Scum, 14th January. Commentary by David Croft.

"This game can't stay at 0-0 — surely" — Crofty finally realises the fundamental principle behind FA Cup replays going to extra-time and penalties.

"But Watford, you feel oh, oh so sorry for them..." Actually, I could name quite a few (thousand) people who don't feel that sorry for them at all.

"The glorious stunned silence when Pressman scored that last penalty — one of the few great, yet tragic moments of live broadcasting.

The Beat



## IN SEARCH OF A HOME VICTORY

OK, I admit it. I am half(ish) Welsh, my mother being raised in Cardiff. Therefore, through no fault of my own, I found myself stranded 170 miles from Kenilworth Road as our lads tried for the elusive home win against our anglican (*sic*) sheep loving neighbours Northampton. However, my personal holy quest of a home victory can still continue at quaint, friendly, English loving Ninian Park.

The Bluebirds (that's Cardiff City) were letting in women and under-17's for FREE! as a Christmas gift, so my first decision was whether to go in drag to save myself the eight quid entrance money. The word dignity kept springing to mind and, anyway, it was not as if the hot-dog stands outside the ground would be selling wigs (or would they? They can be a funny lot in south Wales).

So, could I witness a home team outscoring a visiting side (sounds so simple, doesn't it!). I settled into my seat equipped with pocket radio so I could listen to the scores filtering through from my spiritual home in Bedfordshire. Exeter were the visitors and Cardiff set about them, and soon were 1-0 ahead. Then they kept missing loads of great chances to make it 2-0. But the dark shadow of the Grim Reaper of home jinx lingered menacingly as the cold Welsh wind circled the now cursed home of Welsh footie.

A sweet little girl behind me chanted "Cardiff, Cardiff, Wales, Wales." as every attack mounted and then failed to break down the English defence. Little did she know that the very source of her frustration was sat right in front of her. The Luton home jinx was a powerful force that had breached the Severn Bridge and was now visiting itself upon Cardiff City. At half-time it was still 1-0 to Cardiff.

The second half started disastrously for me with the news of the Hatters stuttering start against Northampton. Still, could I at last break my personal nightmare in this far outpost of Nationwide soccer?

The answer was no. A funny looking bald headed midget (not quite as ugly as Ian Dowie) was allowed to head home the equaliser from a corner. As I shared the gathering cloud of failure around me, I glimpsed a strange sight. Was it a rather overweight Cardiff fan in a white shirt I saw disappearing behind a pylon or was it our own manic over-happy Harry? In panic I prepared to leave as the final jinxed minutes ticked away.

As I trudged away, my radio conveyed the joyous news that Luton had come from 2 down to snatch a point at home to Northampton. Still though, I was no closer to the home victory I had sought in the uncompromising valleys of Wales. I am hoping that by the time you read this we will have stuffed Blackpool and I might have left the jinx far behind me in that far off land.

*Phil Darton, Sad South Wales Hatter*

## "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.



## 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

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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.

## *All the lonely people.....*

In the current injury crisis it has become common to see a bunch of complete strangers running out in a Luton strip. How many of them will become established Hatters? Or will they drift off whence they came becoming nothing but a footnote in the illustrious history of the Greatest Team in the Entire History of the Universe?

Of course, over recent years the loan system has meant that the number of players making only a handful of appearances for a club has increased dramatically. We can all remember some of the dross off loaded onto us by other clubs along with the occasional gem whom we have invariably failed to sign on a permanent basis. How different things might have been had we signed Steve Sutton. Let's hope that Gavin McGowan stays.

But down the years there is a sad list of names of players who made only one appearance for the club. Not only did many of these appear for the Hatters only once but, unlike today's temporary signings, nobody knows where they came from or where they went to. What manner of man was Chipperfield, for instance, who made one appearance in 1914-15, the last season before football was suspended for the first world war? Was his a promising career cut short? Or was he somebody's mate, helping out in an injury crisis? I doubt if I will ever know. But an appearance for a club certainly confers a strange sort of immortality.

Over the years I have seen some of these one appearance wonders come and go. Sometimes the name rings a bell. More often I have no recollection at all unless there was something memorable about the player. It is two such that I celebrate here, notable for being almost exact opposites.

In the benighted season of 1966/67 we had two players who made their one and only appearances. George Yardley is well remembered. He proved to be not good enough for Luton in his match, a 2-2 draw at home to Bradford. So he went to Tranmere where he became the division's top scorer over the next couple of years. I saw that match but I cannot recall anything about Yardley.

But it was the other one who made the indelible impression, the great Roy Lunniss. I remember standing in the enclosure, close to the tunnel, for the New Year clash with Brentford. At about five to three the ground started shaking as 8,000 looked on in awed silence at the man-mountain lumbering onto the pitch. His shirt reached halfway down his midriff and the other 10 players looked like midgets alongside him (OK, Ray Whittaker was a midget but Tony Read and Derek Kevan were pretty tall). He had one speed: slow. And he could not change direction. But he had great timing. Every time



Brentford attacked down the left he would start thudding towards the wing. About 30 yards from the winger he would launch himself onto both heels and slide to the line, depositing both player and ball into the stand. It would have been simple to avoid the challenge. But the Brentford player was like a rabbit before a stoat. He lost all power of movement, standing there terrified as the 22 stone of fat and muscle slithered towards him.

We won the match 3-0. Lunniss did not play again. I was glad because I would not have wanted anything to taint the memory of a player who to me is one of the Hatters' legends. I have no idea what became of him. Nightclub bouncer, perhaps. Or Sumo wrestler. But if you are out there Roy, there is at least one person who can put flesh to the bare bones of the statistic:

Appearances: Lunniss 1.

Clark

## **The Golden Decade (1998-2008)**

Who would have thought that a small struggling club from the Home Counties could become the leading force in European football that Luton Town have become. Only ten years ago Luton Town were playing in Division Two in a crumbling stadium in front of dwindling crowds of 6,000.

When Richard Branson bought the club for only £1.5 million in January 1998 confessing his lifelong love for the Hatters, many thought he had lost his marbles. But when Sir Lennie Lawrence signed Shearer, Zola, Ronaldo, Maldini, Juninho and Devon White (only joking (*about Devon, or the others?*)) shortly after their emphatic 15-0 win against former local rivals Watford (now playing in the Hertfordshire League division 4) heads started to turn. The side then started a 3 year unbeaten run as FA Cups, League titles, League Cups, European trophies and the Auto Windscreen Shield started to roll in. Their manager, Lennie Lawrence, was knighted and went on to lead England to a World Cup victory.

A new super stadium, the impressive Virgin Dome which holds 165,000, was constructed at junction 10 of the M1. As Luton's success grew, children all over the country started wearing Luton's colours and sleeping under Ian Feuer quilts. The Luton fanzine grew into a 150 page glossy magazine with a circulation of over 100,000 each week (*the editor's bout of insanity was an unfortunate by-product of this*). Lawrence's successors, the duo of Ricky Hill and Mick Harford led the Town to 4 successive trebles. The pair have ensured that Luton has remained the world's premier club, and now the European Superleague is finally set to go ahead with Luton the clear favourites for the inaugural title, the future is dazzling for the Bedfordshire club.

Bumpkin

## **Restricted History**

Whilst attempting to compile a definitive history of all Luton Town's League and Cup results from 1897 to 1900, and from 1920 to date, we had to rely on what information was held in local newspapers. These are usually a very good source of finding out exact league line-ups and goalscorers and attendances but some matches that were played either in midweek or at Christmas or Easter were not recorded. So other papers, eg. Luton's opponents, had to be consulted. To get total accuracy for a project such as a Definitive History a statistician really needs access to the Football League returns (these are returns of the line-ups retained by the club, and copied to the League). But since the mid 1980's these haven't been available to anyone wanting to do research on the club. This wasn't always the case — when the late John Wilkinson was secretary he would allow anyone an appointment to come in and look at returns, photos etc. On one occasion when I showed him some pre-First World War photos I had come across he ..... photocopied for me a team photo of Luton Town from 1891 to 1920; and had it not been for David Pleat asking him to do something, I am sure I would have had a great deal more.

So why did it all change? When the club refurbished the offices at Kenilworth Road, the records were removed. The old photos now have a prominent place in the reception area, but unless you are visiting the club offices, these photos of past heroes are not freely available to the average supporter. As for the F.L. returns, and other artefacts from the club's past, I understand these are with Roger Wash, the clubs statistician and historian, who would have exclusive access to them. Old photos, record books and historical documents such as these should not be with just one person who lives in Newmarket. No matter how well taken care of, I feel clubs like Luton do nowhere near enough to show off their past. I realise that lack of space is a major consideration to showing over a hundred years worth of history, but I hope that if any new ground comes about, a room can be set aside for people to see a little more of the club's history.

Luton Town have been very slow in exploiting their history in print and (along with Watford, Preston North End and Sheffield Wednesday) are one of twelve clubs whose histories are unrecorded. Compare this with Fulham, or Brighton & Hove Albion, clubs who seem to have books published on a regular basis. The Fulham book "The Team" (published in 1996), was produced by the Fulham 2000 group with it's proceeds going towards the refurbishment of Craven Cottage (before the Al Fayed era). This is a finely produced work containing a team photograph from every season (except one) from 1903 to 1995; a directory of players, showing where they came from and went to; full lists of goalscorers, internationals, sendings off, and a brief description of each season. Brighton, I feel, produced the finest football history of all, detailing every league and cup line-up, first, second and youth team tables,



team photos from every season, players directory (where they came from and went to, date of birth and death). And it's updated every season. A complete Who's Who of players has also been published.

When these are compared with Luton's two books, Tim Collings 1985 Centenary book, and the 1988 'Luton Town: A Pictorial Celebration of their Cup History', the latter pair pale into insignificance. Collings' book, whilst well written, is set in a time warp between 1982 and 1985. Space was clearly a big factor but 44 pages were given over to the 'modern era', whilst the preceding years were only given 82 pages. The directors of the club were given half the space allowed for the players and almost 50 pages were given over to the 'great games', which were milestones in the club's development, the bulk coming in the modern era. The statistical pages (which in the first edition contained a multitude of errors) only gave a taste of the club's playing past. The photos were too selective, but there was a good section on the changes to the playing kit. Collings also wrote the cup history, again concentrating too much on the modern era, although Roger Wash did a good job with the line-ups. But why had it taken so long for a complete statistical book to appear? And why were the Floodlit Cup successes of the 1950's omitted. It would, incidentally, be interesting to know what happened to Tim Collings — "a Luton fan since 1963".

Our neighbours Watford's club historian ..... Jones has produced a brilliant Who's Who of every player ever to make a senior appearance for the club. Published by ..... himself, the book is a very good companion to the Watford Centenary book published in 1992. These two books put Luton's efforts to shame both in terms of the way the history of the club unfolds, and the statistics from the club's past, as well as containing some fine photos.

It's a fact that Breedon and other football book publishers have approached Luton Town FC on a number of occasions regarding publishing a book, and each time have been turned down. As we move towards the end of the century is it not time for someone to produce a club history which we can all be proud of? A book along the lines of Brighton's containing a photo of every team with the statistics and facts behind them, all the league and cup line-ups, reserve and youth team tables, a one line who's who of the players (a fuller Who's Who in a separate book?) and a short account of each season, with details of the managers, coaches and directors.

For the club, such a book would convey prestige as well as make money as with the Fulham book. For the fans it would give a permanent reminder of past heroes and great matches. So, is the time right for the club or Roger Wash to get together and work out such a project? If they are interested I could guarantee them a publisher, and I am sure a profitable best seller — as were both the Centenary and Cup books.

Brian Ellis

## A TINY IRRELEVANCY.....

It might seem a small point, and hopefully by the time of reading is a tiny irrelevancy as we charge up the table (yeah, right) but was anybody else totally disgusted with what happened against Bristol Rovers?

I'm not speaking generally, but specifically of when they scored their fourth goal. Stuart Douglas injured himself sliding off the pitch whilst wearing one boot. The referee held up play for some time, needlessly really as the man was not on the playing area, and we then carried on with ten men. It was obvious Douglas couldn't come back on, Clive Goodyear was there and was waving to the dugout indicating so. But did we put a sub on? Three choices: Fotiadis (straight swap); Davies; or even (but please no) Waddock (Oldfield up front). Sorry, four choices: dither about and do nothing. I said to the bloke next to me, "If they score while we're down to ten men the manager should be shot." What happened? Yes, they scored. Absolutely diabolical. Unfortunately, I'd left my Smith & Wesson at home, or there would've been no sad excuses from Robin Michael Lawrence that night.

I'm generally an easy going guy, as my psychiatrist will tell you, but that was an opinion changing moment leading me to believe that enough chances have been given to, and not taken by, the aforementioned incumbent of the hot seat, who currently appears to be clueless.

I don't think everything's down to Lennie (why is he called that?), the problem with the playing staff is a deep rooted thing. However, a change can be as good as a rest. Sometimes you can't see the wood for the trees, and at the end of the day it gets dark, so perhaps a new broom would sweep clean.

As I said at the top, I hope this sounds ridiculous, though I doubt that it will. If I'm in the Oak next year I think I'll be watching Cardiff, not Wrexham.

Black Belt Jones

PS: I think you do a great job of the fanzine, my one suggestion is more frequent editions. Perhaps this is impractical due to time/money, also maybe some quality would be sacrificed, but it would mean more topicality and on-the-ball-ness. Not that these are sadly lacking now, they just could be better.

*Regrettably, time is the main factor preventing more issues of Mad, as this is very much a spare time "job". Additionally, it would cause us major problems getting the sales team out of the pub more often. Tie that in to the amount of abuse we get when we're selling and things are going badly (a lot of people seem to think that the "bloody must be to come down here" comment is funny, and fail to recognise that we, as supporters, are as pissed off as they are), and you'll know why seven issues a season is enough for us.*



# RAVING MAD!!!

Dear "Mad",

Oh dear! I seem to have ruffled a few feathers, haven't I? I'm really sorry I caused any offence to anyone, particularly the Cat in the Luton Hat. If he reads this, please accept my sincere apologies. If I had realised how sensitive you were I would have been more circumspect. Anyway, sorry — again.

Secondly, this business about starting a sentence with "But". It seems a shame that a football fanzine has become embroiled in an English grammar debate, but I feel I should spell out the grammatical reasons for not doing it.

The words "but" and "and" are both co-ordinating conjunctions and strictly speaking should only be used to link together two or more main clauses.

I hope that's now clear and ends the argument.

I find it really ironic that my original letter, in response to one that purported to be controversial, has actually generated more controversy.

Anyway, that's it. However, can I ask the editor that should anyone be rude or offensive to me, he issue an immediate apology or disclaimer (*No — Ed*). Thank you.

Kelvin Dunn, BA (Hons) (sorry about that but I'm pretentious)  
Dunstable.

Dear "Mad",

I enclose the (Bristol) Evening Post report of the Rovers game. I find it difficult to disagree with the assessments (right) of the Town players.

Things are becoming alarming. For years, every time Junior Clark has said things like "that was the most crap performance I have ever seen", I have been able to go all misty eyed and recall the teams of the mid-sixties. Soon I am going to have to admit that this team is as bad. I shall make a point of being extra boring for the rest of the season because next year I will no longer be part of that select band to have followed them throughout all four divisions.

By the way, Eastville Stadium was demolished last week. The first away game I saw was there in the FA Cup in 1966/67 season. Derek Kevan scored twice to put us 2-0 up at half-time. Then we lost 3-2. This set the scene for the next 30 years. I must admit to shedding a nostalgic tear as I looked across the site.

John Clark  
Bristol.

## OPPOSITION FILE

### LUTON 4-4-2

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Ian Feuer        | 5 |
| Darren Patterson | 6 |
| Steve Davis      | 5 |
| Alan White       | 4 |
| Mitchell Thomas  | 6 |
| David Oldfield   | 6 |
| Graham Alexander | 6 |
| Paul McLaren     | 6 |
| Chris Allen      | 7 |
| Tony Thorpe      | 6 |
| Stuart Douglas   | 6 |

## Substitutions

Andrew Fotiadis (for Douglas, 37 mins)  
6  
Simon Davies (for McLaren, 79mins)  
Not used: Gary Waddock

Dear "Mad",

On Wednesday 10th December I was cycling around London's West End. I stopped to have a breather and was wheeling my bike along the pavement of Saville Row. As I turned the corner towards Regent Street, I came across two men holding a large glass case with a pristine scale model of the KohlerDome inside!

This truly surreal moment became even more surprising as the two men holding Kohler's Dome seemed as mystified as myself as to the purpose of it's visit to London.

When questioned, one of them said, "I dunno, we're just delivering it", but to where?

Can anyone shed any light on this mysterious close encounter?

Andy Hunt — Holloway Hatter

Holloway, North London.

Dear "Mad",

1998 should certainly be a far better year for the Town if they can build on the two recent away wins by sorting out their home form. I think that Saturday night, walking into my local after the journey back from sunny Southend, and mentioning the word "Stevenage" has been the highlight of the season so far, after all the grief I was getting with Swindon at the top of Division 1!!

Will Sherwood,

Swindon, Wilts.

Dear "Mad",

Things are looking up. Southend are worse than we are. Perhaps we won't go down after all. 7 games undefeated away. We should equal the record run at the scum, unless the Grimsby game is slotted in earlier.

By the way, excellent article by Tim Kingston. Now the worst has finally happened it is easier to gain a sense of proportion. Perhaps we can start to enjoy derbies again.

John Clark,

Bristol.

Dear "Mad",

Whilst leaving Roots Hall after our battling victory at Southen, a couple of things dawned on me. Without wanting to ramble on and bore too many, here are a couple of points I would ask fans to consider:

1. When the team play badly, Lennie gets the blame. When they play well (Southend, Millwall), the players get the credit, not the boss. Whilst not wanting to defend Lennie at any cost, and realising that this happens at every football club across the country, it does seem a bit odd. If you blame him for losing, then credit him for winning.
2. Of hearing that Stevenage had beaten Swindon in the FA Cup whilst leaving the ground, a massive cheer went up from the Town fans. Why?



So, we all get sentimental because they're local and non-league. But then we hear chants of "Hertfordshire, wank, wank, wank". Unless I'm geographically incorrect, Stevenage lies in the heart of said county, just like Watford. Again, a little odd, wouldn't you say?

3. Against Stockport (last game of last season) we taunted their fans with "You all support Man U", which was both original and subtly funny. Now, every team's supporters who visit get barracked with abuse that they support their nearest rivals, whoever they are. Once was funny, now it's bloody pointless.

The Kempston Stud,  
Kempston.

Dear "Mad",

This is my 29th season since I started supporting Luton Town (I'm now age 38). Definitely the worst. Mind you, last two games, both away, both won! But just how much more crap, nonsense can one take? At times the team seems totally clueless. Last season was bad enough, grasping defeat from the jaws of victory(!) time and time again. Since 1988, it's been downhill all the way — but WHY and HOW? Money from big transfers out being wasted or just disappearing, terrible management at the club, etc, etc, etc. Are you aware of the continual rumour that historically, Luton players are/were capable of far more than they ever achieve.... conciously underplaying (or sub-conciously, in some examples I've seen) themselves. The amount most of these players get paid, it's money under false pretences..... just wait until they have to do 'proper' jobs after retirement (if they can get one) then they'll see how shit work can really be! I think what I'm trying to say here is, why don't they use the skills they have, while they have the chance.

The best I ever managed was one guest appearance for the Vauxhall Motors youth team! So, these days I find myself having to deliver every day in my routine clerical office job — Zzzzzzz. In my view, to be a very good footballer, you need three things — fitness, skill and intelligence. There doesn't seem to be much of these in evidence in the current Luton Town team.

Ian Lee,  
Birmingham.

PS: Story for another time: the Christmas when Graham French turned up at my grandparents house with his father — who worked with my grandfather at AC Delco in Dunstable.

Dear "Mad",

As a Luton Town supporter since 1961 (and my parents before me), it is a matter of great regret that my employment in York prevents me from seeing many matches (I use the term 'seeing' advisedly, having been present at Chesterfield last season). However, I have managed to attend several recent home games, including the Blackpool match, and would like to make some comments about the

team's performances — and that of certain elements of the crowd.

It was a great relief to see the Town win with some ease and style against Blackpool. Everyone was on form and a major factor must have been the confidence stemming from a good run of away results. This was reflected in a more positive attitude from the crowd than was apparent against Torquay and Bristol Rovers. These were poor performances, but they were not helped by the abuse heaped on certain players and the manager; how ironic it was to here chants of 'Lennie Lawrence's blue army' rise during the Blackpool game from the same area in the Main Stand which only a few matches previously had loudly uttered the 'Lawrence out' mantra.

The supporter who said on the 'Three Counties Radio' phone-in after the Bristol game that vocal denigration of players was confidence-sapping and therefore unproductive made an important point. Simon Davies is one of several who might benefit from a more positive attitude from the fans. It is particularly galling to hear moans about Tony Thorpe. Yes, he can appear disinterested, but everyone has their off-days. Give him credit for where he excels, which is scoring goals. Since last season, Thorpe has emerged as the Town's most natural striker since Malcolm MacDonald; he is not the strongest of players physically and he cannot be expected to beat towering defenders in the air. Where would we be without his goals at present? I think he would be even more effective playing behind a front two, but a powerful Mick Harford we do not have. It was encouraging to see Darren Patterson perform well against Blackpool. If his form continues and he remains free of injury, this full back position will cease to be a problem. Chris Allen has added much-needed width and pace and let's hope that Showler is fit to return when the former's loan period expires.

The lack of money is a common complaint, but compared with most other clubs at this level, Luton Town has spent considerably over the last few years — and on the whole, wisely (Davis and Feuer particularly); judgement is still out on Davies and Gray.

Wishes for the future? Above all, a new stadium. Also more droll captions such as the cover of issue 44 of *Mad as a Hatter!* Another bouquet to *Mad* for recommending my local in York, the Minster Inn.

Richard Marks,  
Soulbury, Beds.

Dear "Mad",

I happen to know that my brother has written to you with some very disparaging remarks about Steve Davis. I would like to take this opportunity to distance myself from his view and state, that in my opinion, Stevo is our second best forward and any deficiencies in his defensive qualities will be more than covered when the very able Marvin Johnson storms back into the side after his recent injury problems.

P. Clark,  
Bristol.



## EASING THE PRESSURE

OK, we're not exactly a table topping side just yet, but we've definitely seen an improvement in results since you set eyes on issue 44. Thanks to those of you who have sent match reports — perhaps you will inspire others to do so. We always welcome match reports from readers, as it helps to vary the style and opinion. And if we use your report, you'll receive the next issue of *MAAH! FREE*.

### 13.12.97 CHESTERFIELD 0 TOWN 0 FOOTBALL 0

I waited three weeks before writing this (if the players can't be bothered to pull their finger out, why should I?) in the vain hope of thinking of anything positive to write about the game. Like Luton, I failed miserably. This was a dismal match which would have made Alan Green turn purple with rage. The only reason we kept a clean sheet was that Chesterfield were just as dire as us. Perhaps Lennie's plan was to bore them into submission. If so, it just about worked. The whole performance was shapeless, unimaginative and painful to watch at times. What few chances Luton created were wasted, possibly through sheer amazement that the ball had reached the penalty area. The midfielders were the main culprits. Alexander and Oldfield seemed engrossed in their own private game, determined not to let anyone else have the ball, and the sooner Chris Allen gets back to Forest, the better. Mind you, if he's married, his wife has nothing to worry about, because he is hopeless at beating people. Being fast is all very well, but no-one appears to have taught him to pass yet. And people wonder why Tony Thorpe looks fed up! He ran his heart out, getting into space and trying to chase aimless balls lumped forward by his team-mates, but eventually realised that he was fighting alone. A quick word for those who were slagging him off — take away his goals this year and where would we be? He could easily have said, "sod this for a lark, I'm off" — and who would blame him? Nobody forced him to stay, and it's about time fans and players alike started to appreciate him a little more. That said, he missed a couple of sitters, but given the general paucity of skill, he can be forgiven. In fact, the one memorable moment was when a rather corpulent Spireshite responded to the predictable taunt by revealing the most impressive gut I have seen for many a year. I can't even have a good moan about Marvin because he wasn't playing. There was one incident which proved quite revealing. Mitchell Thomas was just behind Stuart Douglas, and shouted something to the effect of "Give it here", which he then followed up with "Leave it!" Poor old Douglas, baffled, just swore in frustration. If that is was passes for team communication, it's no wonder we're struggling. All in all, it would have been better in the fog — at least we had something to talk about last time.

Graham Johnson

### 20.12.97 MARVIN IMPERSONATORS 2 ROVERS RESERVES 4

Ironical really. *Mad*, on sale today, was full of articles slagging off Marvin and

Julian and praising Steve Davis and Alan White.

It started well enough. A good goal by Chris Allen after Skippy's shot had been parried. But then Steve Davis decided to hand out some seasonal cheer, completely missing his tackle on Beadle. Cover was non-existent as the whole Rovers forward line bore down on Feuer, Cureton winning the draw for the privilege of putting the ball in the net.

Shortly afterwards a long ball found Davis chasing back. The defenders dilemma. Should he shepherd it back to Feuer? Or belt it into row W? No, as it's Christmas why not let Hayles make up 10 yards so he can nip in and lob the keeper.

An excellent goal by Oldfield following a good lay off from Thorpe brought the scores level. But then it was back to the pantomime at the other end with White taking over the role of Widow Twankey as he first failed his tackle to let Beadle in and then delicately glanced a header into the path of Hayles who ran unchallenged to beat Feuer.

The second half was worse. Rovers, quite reasonably, closed the game down. But still Davis found time to usher Beadle through to set up Cureton. And then White was caught dwelling on the ball and Hayles should have scored.

The Town plumbed new depths in this game. I am afraid that the myth of Steve Davis has finally been exploded. He has always won the respect of the fans, rightly so, because of his effort and commitment. But he has never had good positional sense. Against Rovers, when his tackling for once went wrong, he looked a very poor player. The truth is that the only defender we have who knows what he is doing is Mitchell Thomas.

The really distressing aspect of the Rovers debacle is not the appalling defending, bad though that was. It was that the lads did the unforgivable. They gave up. Twice towards the end Rovers had throw-ins in the Luton half. No Luton player tried to mark the Rovers forwards. It was around then that the travelling supporters sang "We love you Luton, we do".

In short, we were incompetent, gutless, clueless and unprofessional.

On Monday the Gasheads were waiting for me when I arrived at work. But instead of the customary stick they were sorry for me. "It must be terrible for you" etc etc. Being patronised by Rovers fans..... now I know how far we have fallen.

Clark

Ronaldo and Romario made our defence look like one you'd expect to find at the tail end of the 2nd Division. I don't want to comment too much more on the game as it would be unfair to our lads considering the level of opposition they were playing.

Good things to come out of the game:

Realisation that it could have been worse if they didn't have four players suspended.

People I felt sorry for:

Tony Thorpe. He at least worked very hard up front with absolutely no



support.

Me. My sister, over here from Australia, has asked me to buy her and her husband tickets for the Northampton game. She is an ex-season ticket holder who hasn't seen her beloved Hatters for 6 years — how times have changed. I think I'll tell her the game is sold out.

*Derbyshire*

### 26.12.97 TOWN 2 COBBLERS 2 (HT Cobblers 0 Cobblers 2)

As they say, "a match of two halves". This match, or at least the first half, could figure highly in the end of season awards — "Worst Referee", possibly; "Worst Own Goal", probably.

Yes, my sister did go to the game and, yes, she did enjoy it (luckily we all have such short attention spans — 1st half? What 1st half?).

*Derbyshire*

### 28.12.97 NICE NEW STADIUM 0 TOWN 2

The best minute of my life since Brian Stein volleyed a last second winner at Wembley in 1988 (remember that one?).

The clock showed 50 seconds left and Luton fans were willing the time away hoping for a 0-0 draw. 50 seconds, plus a minute or so of injury time, later we were 2-0 up thanks to a Davis header and another Thorpe one-on-one with the opposing keeper. Of course, we all went slightly mad. Feuer ran around his box waving his fists in the air, and the police and stewards braced themselves for their escort duties, which now had a bit of an added edge.

This was the New Den, Christmas '97, and it was the place to be.

If Millwall make the play-offs after this shambles I will clean the steps of St Paul's Cathedral with a toothbrush. As for us, well, the dream is there. All we need now is some luck (and good football) at Kenilworth Road to make us seriously start to look at where to turn off the M1 for a return visit to Wolves, and all those other glam 1st Division clubs.

*Phil Darton*

### 03.01.98 SARFEND 1 TOWN 2

At last, a battling performance. Not a classic but they all worked hard for each other. Some great running off the ball by the attack and midfield giving us, at times, too many options.

Only complaint — the clash of the kits. I'm sure it cost us a goal when Thorpey rounded Southall (a feat in itself) and left the ball to what he thought was a Luton player.

*Derbyshire*

### 10.01.98 KNIGHTS 3 GRIM REAPER 0

As the winter sun shone through the bar window in the humble Old Red Lion in the Angel in Islington a small group of travellers gathered, destined for a 3-0 defeat at Charlton (Middlesbrough). One sad person stood alone contemplating a more

local game down at the small yet friendly hamlet of Highbury.

However, 2 were destined (though they knew not at the time) to witness 'the changing'. Yes, the Grim Reaper of home defeat was about to be Thorped, and run out of Town by witchfinder generals Moore and Lawrence. The victims, Blackpool, surrendered to our hat-trick hero, the main Hatter himself. The 11 white knights were cheered from the field and in that moment Kenilworth Road didn't seem such a bad place after all.

In keeping with most of my reports here is a piece of news that has nothing to do with Luton Town FC or the game of football (though it did happen on the night of our 3-0 HOME!! WIN!!). My friend Stella has a cat but no cat flap. The cat, as cats do, still nips out when other people go out through the door. To get back in (and I swear this is true) the cat gets on to the outside window sill and jumps towards the door, catching as she does the door knocker and flicking it up with the underside of her paw, therefore making a rat-a-tat sound. In other words she simply knocks on the door like any other (?) human being to get in. Well, I think it's funny, but you do need to imagine the scene to get a good laugh.

A last point. A certain police officer mentioned he has read my little articles in MAAH, but totally unconnected with this information I would like the following to be noted:

1. Luton police are wonderful. Well, absolutely fantastic really.
2. Every one of them who looks after us at Kenny Road should be nominated for the Nobel peace prize, they do such a great job.

*Phil 'law abiding' Darton*

### 13.01.98 TOWN 2 BRENTFORD 1

The first half had less excitement than a pre-season friendly, and the only point for discussion was the attendance. This turned out to be a very respectable 3,106, quite impressive considering that a week earlier the club were talking about a crowd a about a thousand.

Thankfully, the second half was rather more impressive, and in due course we had a real shock when the Town scored from a free kick (no, really). Davis lined up to take the kick, spotted an opening and all of a sudden Thorpey was on his own in the 18 yard box with only the keeper to beat — which he did. When Oldfield broke through to score the Town's second, the threat of extra time receded — why does it always seem like a threat in these games? The spectre reappeared briefly when Brentford pulled one back in the last minute, after Steve Davis had managed to get himself needlessly booked, but all was well, and we now have to games against Fulham to look forward to.

*K.F.H.*

### 17.01.98 OLDHAM 2 TOWN 1

This was not, in any sense of the words, an exciting match. For the most part it was pretty dreadful. It was easy to see how a solidly defending Oldham side had not lost at home this season, but just as easy to see how they had failed to win



the last five games. Unfortunately, Town seemed to play most of the game in second gear, and failed to create too many chances. Thorpe had a couple, but could not capitalise on them. It was only after Oldham scored twice from almost identical corners, ten minutes apart, that the Town stepped up a gear. From that point there was enough passion shown for the Town to have snatched an equaliser. Alexander got the goal after good work by Simon Davies and Thorpe, but it was not quite enough.

As for those corners, it's no wonder that Oldham fans like corners so much. But Feuer? He really should have had both of them.

*Ashley Grimes Fan Club*

## Injury Blues

*Professional athletes in tip top condition,*

*Okay, we are in the Second Division!*

*Problems start when they kick a ball,  
And try to run through the "proverbial" wall!*

*Or our keeper tries to throw,  
The injury list starts to grow.*

*Another joins the list with a sprain,  
The sorry performances a strain,  
For us who pay "their" way,  
To watch the Town in disarray.*

*Fans become increasingly worried and afraid,  
That next season's sponsors will be Band Aid!  
Or that we try an audacious poach,  
And steal Christian Gross' fitness coach!*

*A committed 90 minutes is all we ask,  
Not this season's current farce!*

*Bill Church, "The Frampton Hatter", who strained a finger typing this and will still draw his hundred grand a year, but can't now play until March!*

## HARDMEN

"Never touched him ref!" as the ball stays in and the victim flies out of play. From defenders with international honours, to others who have no idea of which country they were actually born in, here is the definitive guide to those players who, in the last ten years, have bugged up many a ligament.....

### Terry Hurlock

Playing most of his football for Millwall, ten thousand nutters supporting an even bigger nutter, our Terry ran the Yorkshire Ripper" close for "Mutilations of the Year". Possessing close to no skill, vicious Terry invented his own 'ten second ruling', which was based on the player being scythed down ten seconds after the ball had gone. Also sported one of the worst perms this side of the 70's.

### Mick Kennedy

Whether we were lucky to have him play for us or not is open to debate, but boy, could he tackle. Tactically unaware, and mentally unstable, Mick's famous moment was at Charlton, where he was sent off for kicking a bloke's head, mid-air, about 6 years ago. At one point, both Kennedy and Kamara were operating in midfield (albeit for only a couple of games), the opposition, quite clearly, shitting bricks. There is a story though that Kennedy was once bundled over in a reserve game by one of his own team-mates, another nutter, Johnny Hartson.

### Mark Dennis

Perhaps the hardest bloke of the 1980's, Mark did things the easy way. Look around a bit, spot an ankle or knee, kick it. It was simple for the lad. Right wingers didn't stand an earthly. Booked more times than a Pavarotti concert and sent off, on average, at least twice a season, Mark has since quietened down a bit and now performs regularly on children's TV as 'Dipsy' from the Teletubbies.

### Pat Van Den Hauwe

Another left back, though slightly better than the aforementioned Dennis, Patrick was also naive when it came to winning the ball fairly. A Welsh international who hailed from Belgium, two of his clubs, Everton and Spurs, could wish he was still operating now. Sported a spiked hairstyle, but it was the spikes of Van Den Hauwe's boots that kept lodging into winger's shins that really showed him off.

### Mark Hughes

Perhaps the biggest whinger of the last decade, "Sparky" has also sported a crap perm throughout his career. One of the better players on view in this guide, but not exempt from throwing the odd tantrum, spitting a lot and giving defenders a good kick in the head. Apparently a player who's good at volleying balls. Which type we're referring to is anybody's guess.

### Vinny Jones

Not as tough as he is made out to be, but perhaps the benchmark for today's modern thug. Part of the team that upset Liverpool in the 1988 Cup Final, the only



thing Vinny's sure of beating nowadays are his team-mates — up. With a nonsense attitude of "Kick everyone — leave the ball until later", his exploits have led him not only to club captaincy, but to international honours (where he also captained!). If he walks into your local, look out, there's a madman around.

### Francis Benali

Scored his first ever goal a few weeks back, sadly though, it didn't take him that long to commit his first maiming. Another left back, it has been reckoned that Francis is the hardest bloke in the footballing world. Appearing recently in FourFourTwo magazine, Francis comprehensively described how to whack a bloke and get away with it. Regularly seen putting wingers over advertising hoardings, Benali has seen red as many times than a Spanish bull, if not more.

### Mick Harford

Regarded as somewhat of a legend by Town fans, and even a god by others, Micky Harford never took any shit. Numerous aerial challenges with elbows, and shown more cards than a audience member participating in a Paul Daniels trick, "God" could strut his stuff well enough when it mattered. Coach of Wimbledon's reserves, but would like to be seen in some capacity by Town fans at the club in the not too distant future. Hard, with a capital H.

### Keith Stevens

Still plying his trade at Millwall, where he's spent nearly all his career. Also one of the least pretty of players, Keith has a face that reminds me that the bloke who sits on the other side of the dugout is not that bad looking after all. Aging a bit with every foul, Keith leaves his half time cup of tea for a pint of blood instead. Keith going a game without a card of some sort is as rare as a good Lennie Lawrence post-defeat excuse.

### Julian Dicks

Most players get a rest between the end of May and beginning of August, but Julian Dicks gets six months off, four of them through suspension. Never one to shirk a challenge, the man who couldn't be more appropriately surnamed has become a folk idol throughout the East End, based on his vicious tackles and verbal volleys on refs. Quietened down a little during his short stay at Liverpool, but that was only because Scousers kept nicking his car.

### Stuart Pearce

Still going strong(ish) at Newcastle, but has lost his international place to the more promising Le Saux and Neville, based on their desire to win the ball, and not come out of a tackle holding a kneecap. Renowned for his ability at set pieces, one keeper once said he was more interested in his own safety than organising his wall. It was definitely true that he could whack balls with venom — just ask all those wingers that have had surgical repairs after what are euphemistically termed "groin injuries".

*The Kempston Stud*



Dwight Marshall has been placed on the transfer list, but hasn't really been given a chance under Lennie Lawrence. He is seen here (above) making a rare appearance at Oldham. Meanwhile, another striker almost had an immediate impact by scoring with his first touch against Brentford — Liam George is pictured below.





## KIM GRANT ISN'T USELESS

After many hours of deliberation and thought, I managed to think of some uses for our least favourite striker, Kim Grant.

### 1. Scarecrow

No motivation needed to keep those pesky crows off Lennie's allotment.

### 2. Car Park attendant

He wouldn't need much enthusiasm to look after the cars left behind in the club car park and collect the fees. Besides, he can recover some of the footballs he hit there from his days as an active member of the playing staff.

### 3. Corner Flag

If he misses being on the pitch, then he could just stand there and watch as he would from the bench, and be of use at the same time.

### 4. Andy Cole's stunt double

Similar finishing ability.

### 5. Lumberjack's Training Aid

Who could forget Peter Schmeichel's felling act on poor Kim in the FA Cup when Grant was at Charlton?

I'm sure you will agree that Kim's best use though would be (*or would have been*) as a strike partner for Thorpe if he can find some motivation and his haters can find some patience. Sadly, I doubt that either will happen and that he will move to Millwall for £100,000 (*oh well, we did OK with the fee then*).

*Bumpkin*

## Mellow Yellow?

Was I alone at Southend in thinking that the Luton choice of away kit was just a tad similar to that of the home side? Obviously, Mr B Knight, official supreme, could see no problem with it, but surely our snazzy "orange and black attack" number would have been more in keeping.

Saying that, it obviously agrees with the team as points from our travels are now easier to come by than those at the previous Fortress Kenilworth Road. Not true of recent time, granted.

A final thought though — what will we be wearing for the imminent St Valentines Day massacre?

*The Harrow Hatter*

## TONY THORPE — "FOOTBALLING GENIUS OR LAZY SOD?"

Tony Thorpe won last season's Junior Hatters Player Of The Year: no surprise there. He won last season's Player Of The Year proper: understandable. He also won the Player's Player Of The Year: unbelievable! Why would his fellow professionals vote for a man that asks so much of them but returns so little? A fellow supporter, who does not share my views, asked the titular question last season so I thought I would explore the subject now (*this was written last summer - Ed*), before the diminutive striker has a chance to prove me right or wrong.

Many opinions were passed during the course of last season whilst Tony Thorpe was scoring or not scoring, and I believe they fall into two main categories:

1. He scored 31 goals.
2. He should have scored more; he should do more running, he should pass the ball; he should attempt the odd tackle; he should lose weight, gain speed, fuck off to Tottenham for £2 million!

### Footballing Genius?

Tony Thorpe is the sort of player you pay money to watch. Some of his tricks leave the average spectator crying with their beauty. Good close control and fast feet, coupled with the desire to try something different and attempt something difficult makes Tony Thorpe a dangerous man. The opposition often take three men to mark him and Luton Town rely on him to unlock difficult defences. Rarely has a player been seen at Kenilworth Road who can go past two players on the touchline or byline with barely a foot wide to work in. These qualities make Tony Thorpe equally at home in midfield or attack, but it is up front that his dribbling can do most damage.

Season 1996-97 yielded 31 League and Cup goals. That sort of tally has not been seen at Luton for nearly thirty years. Capable of shooting with either foot and occasionally with his head: another five seasons would see him overtake Brian Stein's ten year aggregate. Against Brentford at home Tony Thorpe produced a goal from nothing to win a vital, hard fought game when all other avenues appeared closed. He also levelled a game at Plymouth Argyle in the closing minutes where the Town were down to ten men in pouring rain.

He obviously enjoys his football and also enjoys a rapport with the fans which bodes well for the future. Tony Thorpe always has time for the



fans: whether signing autographs for children or chatting to the elders over a pint. A credit to his club.

### Lazy Sod

Tony Thorpe puts as much effort into one season as your average Sunday footballer puts into one match. At the age of 23, he cannot use growing pains as an excuse. Tony Thorpe is obviously unfit, overweight and definitely too slow (note Watford away). He never challenges for the ball in the air and only does so on the ground if the ball is closer than two feet. Second Division defences had him sussed by the end of last season as his miserable run-in proved. When we needed a bit of magic in games at home against Watford, Wrexham, Wycombe and Bury: he singly failed to deliver.

31 goals is all very well, but many people believe Dwight Marshall would have got just as many, while setting up goals for other players as well. Remember this is only the Third Division. David Oldfield took some criticism for not scoring enough last season but he was doing all Tony Thorpe's running too! For £800+ a week, it is not enough to stroll through games.

His professionalism is in question in other areas. Constant handballing and diving in the area did not endear Thorpe to many opposition defenders, nor to many upstanding Luton fans. His attitude leaves a lot to be desired: some people do not know how lucky they are. David Kohler is quoted as saying no club has made any approach of any kind regarding Tony Thorpe, ask yourself why?

Personally I believe Andrew Fotiadis is a much better prospect and that poor Dwight Marshall was terribly hard done by last season. Tony Thorpe and Kim Grant have the potential to be great players but so have many other failures before them.

*Clifford Saunders*

## Help!

Desperate editor needs help. The editor has recently discovered that his own collection of Mad as a Hatter! is missing a copy of issue 27, a 60 page issue sold in May 1995. He would be very grateful if someone could let him have a copy of that issue, and is quite willing to pay. If you can help, please contact the editor at the address on page 2.

## WE'LL BE BACK...

It's a grey and misty Sunday morning in north Luton, and the weather sums up how I feel after watching Luton lose again. God must be fed up to create this miserable weather. Perhaps He's a Hatters fan too? The cloud is low and there appears to be no sign of a silver lining, let alone bright rays of sunshine streaming through the gloom.

To compound the feeling that the last twenty-four hours have been a waste of time has been the fact that a girl at work, whom I've fancied for ages, has not returned my call. Though it has to be said that she may not even know I called her, as I'm relying on her female intuition to dial 1471 to check her last caller was in fact me..... pleading for a date! Perhaps I should have bought her an answerphone for Christmas? You must be joking! Far too much money. I waste enough of my hard earned cash on going to see the Town's lame defence crumble under the weight of very mediocre Second Division teams' attacks.

I went to see Luton take on one of those very average teams yesterday — Bristol Rovers. Yes, really they aren't that good, it's just that we seem to be able to make a habit of making the opposition look like world beaters because, put simply, we can't defend properly! In about twenty-five minutes of gross ineptitude we gave away not one, two, or even three, but FOUR goals! Both the defence and midfield were thrown into panic because the Rovers' forwards had the downright nerve to run at us with the ball at their feet. Most players backed so far off they were trying to defend from the other side of the M1! Some of you may think that this is where most of the Luton players should be sent to play. In a muddy, cow-pat ridden field by Toddington service station! Some of them, yes, should have been put out to pasture years ago, but that's enough talk about Marvin Johnson!

I'm sure all of you out there in Mad Hatter land think that this is just another piece about slagging off the team and the man we all love to hate, manager Lennie Lawrence (oh yes, and my pathetic attempts to get a date from the girl at work!). True, I was rather scathing of the team's defence, if they do in fact have one. However, it has to be said that the constant barracking of players and managers alike persistently aired in the pages of this fanzine and on the terraces (sorry, luxury seated accommodation?!) is beginning to wear a bit thin for some supporters.

We're all entitled to an opinion and that could include the fact this team is, like my love life (!), under achieving. As well as having our customary whinging moan (I've known my mate who is a Man United fan berate his team for not living up to his expectations) let's try a bit more effort in supporting



the team, on the pitch especially. It is here we are often far worse at letting our heads and voices drop the minute things don't go our way. Yet we have the nerve to accuse the players of the same thing. We claim that we could teach them a thing or two about effort, yet our response is to drop our heads and leave the ground well before full-time. Much in the same way I left my work's Christmas party early because I was getting nowhere with that girl I fancy.

Some so-called fans have another response of course, which is to resort to downright personal abuse. Two of these people were a few rows in front of me on Saturday, at the Bristol Rovers game. Their constant abuse won them no friends in the ground, whilst their limited vocabulary just underlined what brainless numskulls they were. After a warning from the stewards they left of their own accord seconds before they would have been thrown out. Regrettably I'm sure, like Arnie, "they'll be back". Let's face it, won't we all?

Even the *Luton on Sunday* will be back to try and write about future matches. Today's article and headline describing the Luton V Rovers match was obviously thought to be clever. It was not. Pete Kenyon should be ashamed of himself for taking his inspiration for writing such drivel from the two aforementioned "fans".

I hope that when we do return we may try and support the team for the whole ninety minutes, even if things aren't going so well. I admit it, yes, I'm an optimist, and I never give up. Just ask the girl at my work. I'm going to try ringing her again in a minute! Besides, the law of averages says they must get the hang of this defending lark eventually?!

Steve Guy

## BACK ISSUES

Back issues once again available. We have sold out of issues 10, 11, and 22 to 37. Issue 1 is free, 2 to 21 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.

## 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.

# STATISTICS CORNER

## The Definitive Luton Town Managers Records

The table below shows all Luton Town managers and aggregate records for League matches under their management. The period between October 1958 and May 1959, when the team was chosen by committee, is not included. The final column of the table indicates the maximum points available for the matches under each manager.

| Manager                | Period in charge   | P   | W   | D   | L   | F   | A   | Pts | Poss |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| George Thompson        | (Feb - Oct 25)     | 29  | 11  | 9   | 9   | 46  | 37  | 31  | 58   |
| John McCartney         | (Sept 27 - Dec 29) | 97  | 40  | 23  | 34  | 210 | 183 | 103 | 194  |
| George Kay             | (Dec 29 - May 31)  | 68  | 28  | 15  | 23  | 109 | 92  | 71  | 136  |
| Harold Wightman        | (Jun 31 - Oct 35)  | 135 | 55  | 38  | 42  | 267 | 209 | 148 | 276  |
| Edward Liddle          | (Aug 36 - Feb 38)  | 73  | 40  | 9   | 24  | 163 | 163 | 89  | 146  |
| Neil McBain            | (Jun 38 - Jun 39)  | 42  | 22  | 5   | 15  | 82  | 66  | 49  | 84   |
| George Martin          | (Aug 46 - Mar 47)  | 41  | 15  | 7   | 19  | 65  | 70  | 37  | 82   |
| Dally Duncan           | (Mar 47 - Oct 58)  | 480 | 183 | 125 | 172 | 749 | 704 | 490 | 960  |
| Syd Owen               | (May 59 - Jul 60)  | 42  | 9   | 12  | 27  | 50  | 73  | 30  | 84   |
| Sam Bartram            | (Jul 60 - Jun 62)  | 84  | 32  | 14  | 38  | 140 | 150 | 78  | 168  |
| Bill Harvey            | (Jul 62 - Nov 64)  | 111 | 31  | 26  | 54  | 147 | 206 | 88  | 222  |
| George Martin          | (Feb 65 - Nov 66)  | 33  | 15  | 4   | 14  | 57  | 62  | 34  | 66   |
| Alan Brown             | (Nov 66 - Dec 69)  | 141 | 68  | 30  | 43  | 234 | 179 | 166 | 282  |
| Alec Stock             | (Dec 69 - Apr 72)  | 153 | 65  | 51  | 37  | 221 | 151 | 182 | 306  |
| Harry Haslam           | (May 72 - Jan 78)  | 238 | 97  | 58  | 83  | 321 | 295 | 252 | 476  |
| David Pleat            | (Jan 78 - May 86)  | 352 | 135 | 98  | 119 | 526 | 474 | 452 | 914  |
| John Moore             | (May 86 - Jun 87)  | 42  | 18  | 12  | 12  | 47  | 45  | 66  | 126  |
| Ray Harford            | (Jun 87 - Jan 90)  | 104 | 30  | 27  | 47  | 121 | 142 | 117 | 312  |
| Jimmy Ryan             | (Jan 90 - May 91)  | 55  | 14  | 9   | 32  | 63  | 90  | 51  | 165  |
| David Pleat            | (Jun 91 - Jun 95)  | 180 | 49  | 57  | 74  | 203 | 257 | 180 | 540  |
| Terry Westley          | (Jun 95 - Dec 95)  | 21  | 4   | 5   | 12  | 17  | 34  | 17  | 63   |
| Robin Michael Lawrence |                    | 100 | 36  | 30  | 34  | 125 | 120 | 145 | 300  |

During David Pleat's management 3 points for a win were introduced at the start of the 1981/82 season. The figures shown take account of this, using 2 points for a win from 1978 to 81, and 3 points subsequently.

Lennie Lawrence's record is complete up to and including January 17, 1998.

Whilst every care was taken in the preparation of these figures, details on which matches were under the control of the early managers, and where the team was chosen by committee (between George Thompson and Dally Duncan) cannot be guaranteed. If any reader has information on this, other than from local newspapers, I would be interested to see it.

Brian Ellis



# HatterLeague

## Update 3

This is the third update of the season, and we're now past the halfway mark. It would be nice to say that the competition is hotting up, but the truth is that it is cololing off a touch if anything. From the individual scores it looks like you'll have done best if you have Steve Davis, Graham Alexander, Tony Thorpe and David Oldfield in your side, although you'll have cheated somehow to be able to afford all of them. The scores given are up to and including game 20 (Oldham away):

| Code               | Player           | £     | Pts | Code | Player           | £     | Pts |
|--------------------|------------------|-------|-----|------|------------------|-------|-----|
| <u>Goalkeepers</u> |                  |       |     |      |                  |       |     |
| 201                | Ian Feuer        | 0.9 m | -3  | 203  | Nathan Abbey     | 0.3 m | -20 |
| 202                | Kelvin Davis     | 0.3 m | -7  |      |                  |       |     |
| <u>Defenders</u>   |                  |       |     |      |                  |       |     |
| 211                | Gavin McGowan    | 0.4 m | -25 | 215  | Darren Patterson | 0.6 m | -12 |
| 212                | Julian James     | 0.4 m | 7   | 216  | Mitchell Thomas  | 0.4 m | -2  |
| 213                | Marvin Johnson   | 0.5 m | -20 | 217  | Richard Harvey   | 0.3 m | -21 |
| 214                | Steve Davis      | 0.8 m | 30  | 218  | Alan White       | 0.5 m | 12  |
| <u>Midfielders</u> |                  |       |     |      |                  |       |     |
| 221                | Graham Alexander | 0.7 m | 55  | 224  | Sean Evers       | 0.3 m | 2   |
| 222                | Gary Waddock     | 0.6 m | 26  | 225  | Simon Davies     | 0.4 m | 5   |
| 223                | Paul McLaren     | 0.5 m | 39  | 226  | Paul Showler     | 0.5 m | 0   |
| <u>Strikers</u>    |                  |       |     |      |                  |       |     |
| 231                | Tony Thorpe      | 1.0 m | 57  | 235  | Stuart Douglas   | 0.5 m | 2   |
| 232                | David Oldfield   | 0.7 m | 43  | 236  | Liam George      | 0.2 m | 1   |
| 233                | Dwight Marshall  | 0.5 m | 0   | 237  | Kim Grant        | 0.2 m | 0   |
| 234                | Andrew Fotiadis  | 0.8 m | 2   | 238  | Phil Gray        | 0.8 m | 0   |

There has been no change in the top two places in the team positions, but Martin Blake has crept up to 5th place after winning the Manager of the Issue award, after being randomly selected by the computer from the four teams who achieved 52 points during the period under review. Martin's team, incidentally, is still short of a name. The unlucky three were Daniel Bennett, David Trillwood and Dave Pearson. Steve Lindsay holds on to 3rd place, but is still 19 points off the pace at the head of the chasing pack. Both the leading teams have the same line up, and are separated by a Manager of the Issue award. The players involved are Kelvin Davis, Steve Davis, Mitchell Thomas, Paul McLaren and Tony Thorpe. This line up comes at a price of £3.0 million, thus using up all the available money. So now you know what the secret is to having a winning team. Trouble is, it may not be possible to catch up with these two unless some sort of disaster strikes their teams.

| Pos | Team Name                            | Manager         | Pts |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----|
| 1   | DERBYSHIRE 1968                      | Dave Pearson    | 122 |
| 2   | THAMESLINK HATTERS                   | David Trillwood | 117 |
| 3   | LUTON 3 ARSENAL 2                    | Steve Lindsay   | 98  |
| 4   | VANISHING POINTS                     | Bobby Payne     | 97  |
| 5   |                                      | Martin Blake    | 96  |
| 6   | SCUM SPICE - DER, HOLIDAY TO TURKEY! | Terry Lennon    | 94  |
| 7   | LUCKY DIP                            | Daniel Bennett  | 92  |
| 8   | HE SCORES A GOAL, BUT NOT FOR US     | Mrs J Wurst     | 87  |

The points positions for most teams have improved dramatically since the last issue and now we have only 5 teams with negative points totals. The editor's public transfer request has worked wonders and he is now up to joint 62nd place with a wondrous 9 points. But lagging behind at the bottom are Maxine Whiting (who will probably never forgive Steve for leaving his own name off of their joint entry) and Roger Brown's Clowns, who at least give Maxine a chance of improvement.

|     |                          |                 |     |
|-----|--------------------------|-----------------|-----|
| 74  | MILK MILK LEMONADE       | Gerry Callaghan | 2   |
| 73  | ALAN'S MAD HATTERS       | Alan O'Dell     | 1   |
| 74  | PLAY HARRY THE HATTER    | A. Griffiths    | -5  |
| 75  | THE ONLY WAY IS UP FC 97 | Patrick Sammon  | -8  |
| 76  | DAN'S DUFFERS            | Daniel Ripley   | -9  |
| 77= | ROGER BROWN'S CLOWNS     | Roger Brown     | -28 |
| 77= | HARRY HASLAM LEGS ELEVEN | Maxine Whiting  | -28 |

Remember that your HatterSwap is available, and all you have to do to make the one change available to you is drop us a line (at the usual address) with details of which players you want in and out, and remember to mention your HatterCode number. To date 15 managers have used this facility but that's understandable, with money so tight and the choice of players so restricted. But why not have a go, there's no telling where it might lead. And remember, with the big prizes on offer thanks to our sponsorship with William Hill, it could make you rich.

KFH/RB

## CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

Well, there are another two issues to come this season. Your contributions are always welcomed, and we look forward to receiving your cuttings, articles, match reports, letters, drawings, photos, money etc, etc. We can accept contributions on disk, but would ask that you send a hard copy, and details of the format in which the item was prepared (and filename). Such items should be sent to the above address. The deadline for issue 46 will be March 9th, and it will be on sale March 21st.



## The Sharpe End

You'll remember the game against Plymouth when young Matthew Spring was sent off — and the Plymouth boss, Mick Jones, ran onto the pitch and was himself dismissed from the pitch by the ref.

Well, I don't know about you, but I was one of those who believed that Jones was interfering with what didn't concern him and addressed a few remarks in his general direction suggesting in no uncertain terms that he should get off the pitch a bit sharpish.

It transpired later that in fact Jones had gone onto the pitch to remonstrate with the ref over his decision to send Spring off, arguing that the youngster should have received merely a booking!

This really was good sportsmanship above and beyond the call of duty — especially as subsequent viewings of the incident suggested that perhaps Matthew hadn't been dealt with that harshly after all!

So, I dropped Mick Jones a line to apologise for the verbal abuse directed at him in the heat of the moment.

To his credit, he wrote back graciously, concluding: "Your comments are very much appreciated."

If there is a moral here perhaps it is that we shouldn't leap to judgement too hastily on occasions like this.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Oddest moment of the festive season had to be receiving a Christmas present from my best chum, a Watford fan no less, who gave me Kristina Howells' new book, 'A Hatter Goes Mad'.

He won't tell me where he bought it or how he even knew about it, or what mental torture he must have gone through to ask for it in a shop or shell out hard earned cash to pay for it.

Now that's what you CALL a mate!

By the way, having read the book, and enjoyed it for what it is I don't mean to sound churlish by saying that I think it is a lost opportunity. Kristina did indeed get to speak to many people deeply involved with the club as well as some just passing through, but she has not managed to tease any real revelations or deep feelings out of them and the result is a book without any wider appeal to casual fans, in the way that although Nick Hornby's 'Fever Pitch' was about Arsenal it also transcended any one club and appealed to anyone caught up in the sport itself.

Yes, I know, the classic answer to that criticism is — if you reckon you could do any better why not write one yourself.

Sadly, as a professional writer with seventeen books to my name, the only time I

put pen to paper for no worthwhile financial reward is when I hack out this column for Keith, or write programme notes for my 'other' club, Wealdstone!

And if you're interested — or, if you're not — my latest book is 'Gambling On Goals', published at £15.99 by Mainstream, which is a history of the relationship between football and betting over the past 125 years — and the cover does indeed feature the fact that I've been a Luton fan for forty years.

You never know, Keith may even review it for me at some stage. (*After a plug like that I expect the reviewers copy will be in the post any day - Ed*).

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Interesting to listen to Lennie, on the way to watch us take on Bristol Rovers at home, talking on the radio about how dangerous a player was their Barry Hayles and how highly he rated him.

Could that be the same Barry Hayles, late of Stevenage, who was widely reported to be available for sale for a figure not unadjacent to £100,000 a while back, but was rejected by the same Lennie as being an unproven prospect? Surely not!

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What a hoot the Newcastle — Stevenage affair was. How inept must the Newcastle PR machine be to allow Victor Green to come out in a sympathetic light! How is it, by the way, that last season when Stevenage were drawn at home to Birmingham in the Cup, they switched the tie 'on police advice' yet now there is apparently no objection to the game being played at Broadhall Way.

And, as a bookie by trade, I have to say that had Sky not decided to televise the match you could have had extraordinarily long odds with me about the game being played at Stevenage. But what an absolutely fantastic quote from Stevenage skipper Robin Trott who, when it looked as though the game would be switched to Newcastle, commented: "The lads will go looking for a result — and hopefully get them back to our ground."

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I'm having trouble getting my head around this season, like most people, but I have to say the least convincing excuse I've heard to explain our absurd home form has been the argument which runs along the lines of us being under too much pressure to do well at Kenilworth Road and therefore being inhibited and nervous.

Excuse me for asking, but doesn't every other team in the entire Football League and Premiership have to play fifty percent of their matches at home? So, how is it only our players who are under pressure to perform on their own patch? And why doesn't everyone have such a lousy home record as us (obviously excusing Crystal Palace at this point)?

Graham Sharpe



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