

MAD AS A FLATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



Issue 49

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MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



38 Twigden Court, Mount Pleasant Road,
Luton, LU3 2RL.

Tel: (01582) 573485

- Editor:** Keith Hayward.
- Backroom Boys:** Phil Ivinson, Mark Ivinson, Andy Collon.
- Executives:** Jerry Darr, Mark Wilson, Nick Gazeley, Rhiannon Gazeley, Jeff Smith, Steve Folliot, Dave Kirkby and Chris "Teletext" Lennon.
- Casual Help:** Trevor Norman, Steve Tyler and Paul Tindle.
- Contributors:** Our thanks to The Cheshunt Moaner and Richard Forsey (omitted from issue 48), Phil Darton, Norman Samuels, Tim Kingston, Russell Bulkeley, Will Sherwood, the Boring Old Fart, Tim Davis, Z. Russell, Sid Down, John Clark, Dave Pearson, Mick Squires, Howard Chandler, Clifford Saunders, Steve Wurst, Tony Burley, John Solomon, Terry Smith, K.T. Francis, Geoff Henman, Murray Craig, Lars-Petter Rønnestad, Patrick Johnson and anyone else we may have forgotten to mention.
- Cartoons:** Brilliantly drawn by Adam Lloyd.
- Action photos:** Gareth Owen.

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EDITORIAL

It's fascinating the way things change. On Sunday October 4th 1998, Lennie Lawrence took part in the Great North Run. It is reasonable to assume that if he had done the same thing a year earlier, he would have attracted quite a following from Luton Town supporters and would have either finished the run in record time, or have been thrown off the Tyne Bridge. But this year Lennie had the delights of a 3-1 win at Craven Cottage to take his mind off the pain of running a half marathon, rather than the pain of thousands of Town fans to take his mind off the delights of south Tyneside. Of course, we're not giving Lennie any credit for the improved fortunes this season, are we?

Whether Lennie deserves any credit or not, there is no doubt that the youngsters coming into the first team have impressed. We already knew about Matthew Spring and Sean Evers, but had barely heard of Michael McIndoe and Jimmy Cox, both of them having done well so far. With Ray McKinnon and Gavin 'Psycho' McGowan (already the League's most booked player), the team has a distinctly fresher look to last season, and Stuart Douglas and Phil Gray seem to have found some form. But, the obvious star of the team at the moment is Steve Davis — our most expensive player — who is scoring goals without playing as a striker. Good on you Steve, long may it continue.



At risk of suffering serious injury in a mysterious accident, I have to reveal that I may be a jinx. I have already missed three occasions this season when the Town have won 3-1 away from home. First Oxford, then Wigan and, most recently, Fulham (the latter after being unable to leave home due to a serious hangover). In my defence, I also missed Wrexham and Ipswich, but of the three away matches I have been to this season Wycombe is the only bright spot. I hope that by the time you read this the trip to York will have seen a change in my fortunes, but if it does not, I may start to worry.



As you have by now noticed, the price of this fanzine has increased by a whopping 20 per cent. We hope that you will appreciate that after 8 years and 48 issues of *Mad*, this does not represent a very high level of inflation, and it would be difficult to bring you price rises in smaller instalments. We could have done what many other fanzines have done and just doubled the price, but we still aim to bring this to you as cheaply as possible, hence 60p. We would like to think that we can go another 8 years without a price increase but, realistically, this may not be possible. What you can be sure of is that further price increases will only be made when necessary.



The next issue of *Mad* will be out in only four weeks time, so if you have a contribution, please send it in to us without delay.

BLIMEY - I'VE POLLED! — AGAIN

Carrying on the End of Season Poll results from last issue — the only difference being it's cost you a lot more money (well, 10 pence more) to read this half of the poll.

Idiot of the Season

Lennie Lawrence

Just in case you needed it spelt out to you after the clue given last issue, our wonderful manager won by a large majority — the only nomination to get more than a couple of votes. "No explanation required" is fair enough, but for those who do want an explanation for "sacking Wayne Turner for the bad results", "saying we over achieved last season", "his continual moaning and excuse making", "negative tactics", "bringing on a defender when 1-0 down to Torquay" and "slagging off Luton fans for being upset over results"..... Do you want me to go on?

Other nominations (out of over 20) in this category include Andy Dibble, the singer at Bristol Rovers, "me for going to every game", "whoever ordered St Albans pubs to shut", police at the W*tf*rd home game, "Alexander's hairdresser — Ginger! (does he share the same one with Showler)". Also worthy of a mention is Tim Kingston, "for shamelessly plugging his book in *MAAH!*". Ah, that would be *Kenilworth Sunset*, priced £8.99, available at.....

Hero of the Season

Rory Allen

"No contest." And it wasn't really — as Glory stormed it with 75% of the vote. In fact, this category had a more obvious winner than the previous one. "Saved us from the drop. Sign him up. PS: Thanks Pleaty." "His few games on loan has saved us from visits to Rochdale and Hartlepool next season." Way, way behind in second place was Kelvin Davis ("for his great saves") and also getting nominations were the Town fans at Carlisle, Marvin for his St Valentines Day goal, and "Alan Shearer — hopefully".

Best Ground Visited

The New Den / The Hawthorns

With 10 votes apiece, we had a tie in this category — and as I went to neither ground, I cannot even make a casting vote. In terms of Millwall's ground; "nice place, shame about the fans", whilst regarding WBA; "good ground, good view and a decent game". In third place was Shitarage Road, closely followed by Turf Moor. With one vote was "Boundary Park, Oldham — it wasn't, but it would be a sin to give the award to Scummerage Road". Finally, in this class, "Home Park, Plymouth. I am getting fed up with all these shiny new stadiums. We need a campaign for real football grounds. Home Park, with all of its period details is certainly one of them. And we won."

Worst Ground Visited

Priestfield

Not impressed by Kent's only Football League ground then — as the Gills took 20% of the vote for their shabby ground. "Paid good money to get cold/wet/watch crap footie", and "the police out-numbered us" — although that was more to do

with the tragedy against Fulham than standard policing. In joint second was the scum ("those poxy allotments"), Bristol Rovers ("their pitch is a disgrace"), and Springfield Park, Wigan: "usually any shite ground has one side to redeem it — Springfield Park doesn't. No wonder they want to move." Also featuring was our own Kenny Road — "it's a disgrace compared to the scum."

High Point of the Season

The end / Avoiding relegation

After such a dismal season, the obvious high came at the end when we managed to string a few results together and pull ourselves away from danger. Grouped together to win this category include: "winning at Grimsby — safe at last", "the point at Brentford was hardly a 'high' but it ensured safety", "staying up", "the relief at the end" and "not being in the Third Division this year". Joint second was Rory Allen coming on loan, and Marvin's crucial equaliser on Valentine's Day. Just outside the top three was "the grand finale at Millwall" and our two injury time goals, and "the anticipation of a promotion campaign at 3pm on 9/8/97 (Blackpool (a)) — everything after was an anti-climax".

Low Point of the Season

0 - 4

I wish I could stop being reminded about this — it's still painful over 12 months later, and as the lowest point of the season (possibly even decade) polled half the number of votes. "The first time I've walked out" and "Doh!" were the only things written by the respondents in relation to that black day. In second place was the sale (and the timing of it) of Tony Thorpe, and just behind this was the departure of St Feuer and our FA Cup exit at the hands of Torquay. Also getting nominations were the scum winning the league (cheers Bristol City), "the season", and "realising winning the championship by 15 clear points was going to be difficult"

The remainder of the poll follows in a few pages time. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people who responded and sent back forms. See you next year.

Chris Lennon

BACK ISSUES

Most back issues are still available. We have sold out of issues 10, 11, 22, 24, 35 to 38 and 47, and issues 3, 13, 23, 26, 27, 28, 42 and 48 are in very short supply. Issue 1 is free, 2 to 34 will cost you 25p plus SAE per copy and all others remain at 50p plus SAE each. When requesting back issues from us (at the usual address - see page 2) please include a stamped addressed envelope with sufficient postage (second class is 31p for one issue). Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* Please do not send cash by post as it rarely arrives.

FUTURE STARS — PART 2

Having covered goalkeepers, we now turn our attentions to defenders to see just who those budding Steve Davis' are in our youth and reserve teams. The success of the youth team in recent seasons has been built on a successful defence, with Upson, Doherty, Willmott, Fraser and Boyce all excelling at this level. With former coach John Moore being a defender himself, I am sure all the YTS lads benefit from his vast experience in the game. The current crop of young defenders appear to be equally capable, and in Matthew Taylor we appear to have unearthed another potential star. I hope they all continue to progress, as with both Stevo and Marv being 30 in October, it won't be too long before new blood has to be introduced in these positions. Let me introduce you to:

1 Gary Doherty

Although 'Dozza' has appeared for the first team, it has only been as a striker, where, although he can operate strongly as a target man, he lacks the finesse to be consistent in that position. He is far more comfortable as a central defender, where he has developed into a solid player. At 6 foot 2, he is very commanding in both penalty areas, and though he cannot be described as a tremendous ball player, his skills have definitely improved of late. Gained international recognition in the summer when, along with Liam George he represented Eire under-18, and was close to a full cap for the Republic.

2 Chris Willmott

Played alongside Matthew Upson in the youth team and is a very similar player — calm, composed but also very strong in the tackle. Chris suffered from injury last season, but regained his place in the reserves towards the end of the year. For such a quality player, it is strange that he has not yet appeared for the first team — in any other positions he may have been given a chance, but with Stevo, Marv, Whitey and Dozza ahead of him in the pecking order, he is still waiting.

3 Stuart Fraser

Made his first team debut at left back against Carlisle in the final game of last season, and with Mitch preparing to hang up his boots at the end of this season, I would expect him to be a regular before too long. 'Ken' was definitely one of the stars of last year's successful youth team — captaining the Hatters to double winning glory — and he was given a two year contract for his efforts, in the summer. He is very quick and strong in the tackle and is rarely beaten by any winger. Likes to push forward too, where he is capable of scoring the odd goal. A very good prospect.

4 Emmerson Boyce

Another product of last season's youth team, Emmerson can operate at centre back or right back, although I feel he is better in the centre. He is good in the air, and very cool in possession. Again, in a different position he may have been in the first team squad by now, as he has been very impressive at youth and reserve team levels. 'Emmy', I believe was drafted into the squad for one away game last season due to the number of injured players on the club's books, and a quick return to action after injury could see the 19 year old knocking on the door again.

5 Russell Lawes

'Russ', a right back, was given a three month contract at the beginning of the season, in which time he has had the chance to prove himself at reserve team level. Unfortunately, with the number of Combination fixtures decreasing this season, his and many other players appearances have been limited — a fact which seems particularly unfair on the short-term contract players. Quick and strong, he is able to get up and down the pitch well, but with so many defenders at the club, he will find it difficult to force himself into first team recognition.

6 Richard Clarke

Richard was the youth team's 'Mr Versatile' last season, playing at right back, left back, centre back and even centre midfield. Like Russell Lawes, his contract only runs until the end of November, when a decision will have to be made once again. Richard is another player who is suffering from lack of match practice, as he is too old for the youth team, but has not established himself as a regular for the reserves. 'Clarkey' is very tall, like most of our young defenders, but also has pace which makes him difficult to beat.

7 James Ayres

James is currently completing the second and final year of his YTS contract. He is a 17 year old centre back who stands well over six foot tall. He is captaining the youth team this season - a role which seems to suit him as he is a good communicator and natural leader. 'Ayresy' is very good in the air, and he often goes forward for set pieces. Scored his first ever youth team league goal earlier this season.

8 Darren Howe

Darren is the other youth team centre back completing his trainee period this season, and like James he is very strong in the air — perhaps the best header of the ball on our books. However, with two six footers at the back, both have limited ball skills, and defending seems to be their strength rather than going forward. If Darren does get taken on in the summer, my claim to fame can be attending the same school as a professional footballer, as he was at Manshead School (Dunstable) like myself before leaving to pursue his career in football.

9 Jude Stirling

Jude, who plays left back, was signed on as a YTS player at the beginning of this season. He is a good defender who likes to get forward at every opportunity. One thing about Jude is that he has a very long throw, something we have not had at Kenilworth Road for many years; he set up scoring sensation Tresor Kandol with a throw in from the halfway line.

10 Matthew Taylor

Matthew has recently been taken on at YTS level. I have not seen much of him yet, but he appears to be a very good left back, in the Stuart Fraser mould. His performances so far this season have been very steady, and if he maintains his current level of consistency, he should have a good future ahead of him in the game.

11 Ryan Moran

Another youth team defender who is equally at home at either right or centre back. He is currently being kept out of the team by the aforementioned four players. He is tall, and perhaps a better ball player than James or Darren. Hopefully will force his way into the youth team before too long.

N.B. Did anyone spot our deliberate mistake in the last issue? Having said what a wonderful future Nick Webb would have with the club, I now gather he has been released and was set to join a local non-league team. This sort of activity is rarely published in the local papers and, for the information of anyone else who likes to follow the progress of reserve team players, Robert Kean, Ian Jones and Andrew Barr were also released. On the other side of the coin, we have signed Lee Lough and Kofi Nyamah, both midfielders, on short term contracts from Ashford Town and Stoke City respectively. Both will be covered in more detail in the next issue.

Patrick Johnson



Where are they now? Extracts (opposite) from a feature in the *Evening Standard* on 1 June 1998 (appropriately a few days before the Derby). Pictured above, Keith Barber, then and now.

Barber's there, when push comes to shove

KEITH BARBER'S life has taken a bit of an about turn. You could say that he has gone from keeping them out, to shoving them in.

For the former Luton and Swansea goalkeeper is now slotting racehorses between the uprights as a member of the Southern Team of stalls handlers, which will be loading up a multi-million pound bunch of elite runners for Saturday's Epsom Derby.

It will be Barber's eighth Derby. Now in his 50th year he said: "I suppose I must have loaded the Classic winner on several occasions, but there is such a buzz down there and you want to get them in smoothly for the biggest occasion of the year, that you don't take notice of whether you are pushing the favourite in or a 250-1 no-hoper.

Barber is 5ft 11 and known to his eight mates in the stalls side as 'Lofty' because most of them have come from a racing background and were once aspiring apprentices.

Later, spotted at a Sunday match, he went for a trial at Southampton, where Mick Channon, now a top racehorse trainer, was starting to make his name, and Barber was waiting for a call from the Saints' manager Ted Bates to say he had been accepted. Instead, a call came from Luton, where chief scout Harry Haslam had recommended Barber to Alec Stock.

After being sent to Dunstable Town to transcend the step up in class, Barber was in Luton's first team within 10 weeks of signing and was their regular keeper for the next eight years.

A two-year spell with Swansea, run by John Toshack, followed, until a knee injury put an end to his career. He was part of the Luton side which gained promotion from Division Two to the old Division One, and also went up with Swansea from the Fourth to the Third.

Barber ran The Rose and Crown at Harpenden when he stopped playing, and he stayed there for six years until moving to Newmarket to run The Mount for two years.

Deputising for a stalls handler at Brighton just as a one off, he did well enough to be offered a full-time post and has been with the team since.

Like Barber, footballers are racing fans almost to a man. Keith recalls: "One of my funniest moments in the game was when Luton midfielder Peter Anderson went to phone racing journalist David Smalley to put a bet on for him and the team train went without him.

"Peter dashed back to his home in Luton and drove all the way to Portsmouth only to be told he had been dropped."

IT COULD BE WORSE

The fans of only 12 of the 92 teams (10 promoted and Arsenal and Chelsea) were really happy last season. Most of the other 80 suffered the sort of hell that is the usual lot of the supporter. It may ease the pain for Luton fans to consider those worse off than ourselves.

Man United The devil, to whom the Premiership sold its soul, has now asked to be paid. He is going to buy your team and ruin everything. You thought everybody hated you already, but just wait until you are Murdoch United.

Arsenal You are unlikely to win the double again, so this season is bound to be a disappointment.

Newcastle A man who took two teams to the league title has lost out in a power struggle with the jokers in your board room who failed to keep the God Keegan. They have appointed a false prophet and are currently basking in the warmth of your misplaced optimism. How you must have enjoyed the sexy football as you shared five goals with Liverpool — pity you only got one of them.

Spurs The only thing you have to look forward to is Raddy Antic taking over as manager, picking himself for the final relegation battle, scoring the winner and dancing across the pitch with David Pleat at the final whistle.

Everton As one of the Big Six, you know that you face another struggle to stay in the Premiership — and Hans Segers is unlikely to be in goal for your final day opponents. In your darkest moments you feel it would be better to go down and face teams of the same standard, instead of good teams like Liverpool.

Chelsea It costs an arm and a leg to watch eleven different Serie A rejects every other week and you don't even care about football really. You would like to take your children to watch the team, but cannot risk them seeing David Mellor and being scarred for life.

Man City You thought you would win the Premiership, then Division 1, and this season you think you will win Division 2. Why? Your team is not very good and teams that are not very good do not win things (often).

Barnsley Your best season is behind you and it is all downhill from now on. If you are one of the 7,000 who have only been watching for one season you had to make a decision — buy the season ticket again in case you go back up or take a chance. Probably best to buy the ticket but only go to the games if the team is winning.

Wolves You know that if things go well for a few weeks someone will offer Mark McGhee a new job and he will go. Your new hero Robbie Keane will be off to the Premiership before the end of the season. Your best bet is to finish 7th so you don't go through the heartache of losing at Wembley in the play-offs.

Fulham Things look good at the moment, but in the back of your mind you know that you will be playing your home games at the Dodi Memorial Stadium in Cairo within two years.

Brentford Ron Noades. You know it is only a matter of time before he picks himself at centre forward, sells the ground to Asda (but insists he is allowed to be store

manager), and tries to buy Fulham and amalgamate the two clubs. He will also be seen simultaneously managing the pubs at each corner of the ground.

Plymouth You have as much chance of going up as you have of winning your club lottery.

Doncaster Too sad to contemplate. A warning for all other fans.

Brighton Same as above, but perhaps with more hope.

Wrexham You are torn between struggling in the league of a foreign country or joining the League of Wales and winning a much easier but meaningless competition.

W*tf*r*d Whatever happens you support W*tf*r*d — what could be worse than that? They are the exception that proves the rule quoted under Man City.

Howard Chandler

SAFE — EVENTUALLY!

It seems that last season was so memorable that no-one wanted to write the final few reports — until now. So, to round off from issue 47.....

25.04.98 BRENTFORD 2 TOWN 2

Plenty of entertainment in this match with action at both ends. Marshall hooked in the first from close range, leaving the field with an injury in the process. Brentford evened the score, but shortly after half time the scheduled Rory Allen goal arrived, with the assist going to Kelvin Davis for his long punt. Before Brentford scored their second, Warren Aspinall almost caused a riot with his hideous, late, feet first challenge on Kelvin, which the referee thought warranted nothing more than a yellow card. All credit to Brentford boss Micky Adams for seeing things differently and subbing the assailant immediately. The Bees equalised on 80 minutes and went close in the last minute, but this was not their day, and at the final whistle they went down and we stayed up. Yippee!

02.05.98 TOWN 3 CARLISLE UNITED 2

Considering we had done nothing more than avoid relegation, there was a surprising party atmosphere at this match. Carlisle entered into the occasion but failed to notice that they were intended to lose, and their Graham Anthony scored the goal of the season with his equalising free kick. They then had the temerity to take the lead late on, but Oldfield levelled before setting up the winner for, inevitably, Rory Allen to sign off in style in the last minute of his last game.

05.05.98 TOWN 0 SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 2

Somewhat surprisingly Marvin Johnson's testimonial match didn't feature a guest appearance of the great man on a stretcher, since such things have been the hallmark of much of his Town career. The match featured two completely different Town teams — one in each half — with guest appearances from some old favourites. Most notable was Ricky Hill who may have slowed down a touch these days, but has lost little of the old magic. Micky Harford has retired to the midfield, and Brian Stein appears to chase nothing but shadows these days. However, Preecey still looked quite useful. Wednesday scored twice and some foreign chap (Emmerson Thome) playing for them didn't seem to understand that these matches are not meant to be taken seriously.

Mystery of Bontcho's King's Cross caper

Have had a tremendous reaction to an appeal for sightings of professional footballers wearing their kits outside of genuine club duties. Famous non-victim Neil Lennon sets the standard early on with an actual change of strip while on a recent holiday in the Caribbean.

It seems that early risers could have seen Neil selecting Bran Flakes and grapefruit segments from the breakfast buffet while brazenly wearing the shirt and shorts of Leicester City. So startling was this advertising that the more cynical football element at the three-star stop began circulating the plausible alternative that only a bogus Neil Lennon would be quite so gauche.

However, that evening jaws drop even further as he returns to the dining room for some swordfish and tiramisu this time in white slacks and a bona-fide Northern Ireland shirt complete with tell-tale creases where it has been folded for the packing case.

My correspondent says he affected a coincident trip to the toilets with this still unconfirmed professional during which he took a moment to ask, "Are you Neil Lennon, then?" to which the shameless showboater replied, "Yes... yes I am."

A rather more shaky sighting

DANNY BAKER



has David Platt — who always seems to pop up, whatever category you explore — exiting D.11. Evans in London's Oxford Street wearing a Hawaiian shirt, garish Bermuda shorts and a pair of Arsenal away socks rolled down to his Reeboks.

By far the most complete and perplexing tale though concerns

Bontcho Guenchev, of Luton. Two people called Steve and Graham had attended the Crystal Palace fixture against Luton at Selhurst Park despite the fact they had to leave early in order to attend a function in North London.

Some 30 minutes before the final whistle, they left their seats and set off on the complicated journey across the capital. However, all the connections clicked and they made splendid time. They were reflecting on this as they made their way 50 minutes later up the escalator at King's Cross underground station

... when the most incredible thing happened. Loping up the left-hand lane, so to speak, head down and muttering repeated "Excuse me" came Bontcho Guenchev.

The same Bontcho Guenchev they had left embroiled in a neatly balanced first-division fixture across London less than an hour previously. Even if he had been substituted moments after Steve and Graham had left the stadium, he must have run like the wind because Steve and Graham assured me they would have noticed a Bontcho Guenchev on their previous transports thus far.

Particularly this Bontcho Guenchev. Because this Bontcho Guenchev was still in his full kit and covered in mud. True, he had paused long enough to slip on a pair of trainers and they supposed

his boots were in the dark green Body Shop carrier bag that dangled at his side, but this slight nod in the direction of convention was hardly enough.

Here, while every other footballer in Britain was only just stepping into the sunken bath to soothe away the lumps and bumps of professional combat and probably striking up the off-colour songs, was one of their number legging it like fury up the stairs of a metropolitan Tube station in full and soiled dress uniform.

What on earth was going on? Steve and Graham naturally gave chase. What they witnessed only deepens the mystery. Guenchev hastened through the ticket barrier and out to the cab rank, where he was noisily greeted in a foreign tongue by another man. This man, if S & G are to be believed, was in a formal but tight coloured suit and sported a heavy black cape. A cape, sir!

So let us consider the image. We have a famous footballer still in his full kit and caked in mud not 20 minutes after giving of 110 per cent standing side by side with a babbling man wearing a cape in a North London cab rank. Now there's good two-piper, eh Holmes?

I need hardly tell you that other sightings of Off Duty Kits you may have will be treated in the slackest confidence.

This item came from *The Times*, and in a column by Danny Baker, has to be taken with a pinch of salt. Of course, we'd be interested to hear from anyone who can confirm this sighting or tell us what the hell the bungling Bulgar was up to. There are a couple of glaring anomalies, however — the bit about "running like the wind" when we all know he played at a snail's pace so as not to mess up his immaculate coiffure. Similarly, Bontcho "covered in mud" — very unlikely given his work rate and inability to tackle.

By the way, for the benefit of readers with anything less than 20/20 eyesight, sorry about the small print.

Rumours grow that Di Canio might have signed for a Division 2 side.

COMMENT FROM THE CAP

"If you don't buy a stamp, you're not going to post a letter."

IT'S ONLY PRACTICE

Pre-season match reports from Howard Chandler

21.07.98 HARROW BOROUGH 1 TOWN 2

A late decision to go to this match meant that I missed the first 20 minutes. The good news was that the lady collecting the entrance money (a rather steep £4) had gone home and we just drove in, parked the car behind the goal and walked 50 yards to the terrace. The advantages of watching a non-league team could become very attractive if Luton make a bad start to the season. The bad news was that I had missed the first Luton goal, which (as is always the case with a goal you miss) was said to be a real cracker. The Harrow players were keen to show they were just as good as the fancy dan League players and a couple of reckless challenges threatened to bring a premature end to the season for one or two of our stars. Not an enthralling game with the pitch not suited to our flowing passing football.

27.07.98 ELY CITY 0 TOWN 3

Not a first team match, but obviously any self-respecting Luton fan had to get to this one. A visit to the ground at 5 pm did not show any signs that a match was due to be played at any time in the next fortnight. After a walk by the river, and some refreshment in one of the pubs that bothered to open on time, I returned to the ground which was a hive of activity. A triallist, whose name or nationality I did not manage to establish (possibly Scandinavian), was kicked in the head by one of the Ely defenders. The referee imposed his authority and gave him a stern talking to, presumably warning him that if he did it again a yellow card was a real possibility. An Ely fan told me that all the players who took them to the coveted runners-up spot in the Jewson League had left in the close season, and most of the team we were watching had answered a recent ad in the local paper. The class of the Luton stars of the future eventually told with TK netting twice and another future star (*Andre Scarlett*) scoring the third.

28.07.98 HULL CITY 0 TOWN 1

Although we were deprived of the trip to Scunthorpe to sample the atmosphere that produced Graham Alexander, the Town managed to hang on to the prestigious friendly with Hull. Their fans were already preparing for the fight to stay out of the Conference and looking forward to the relegation decider with Brighton on 24th April. When David Lloyd, the former tennis player and leisure club magnate, bought the club the fans must have expected good times were ahead. This has not proved to be the case so far and a takeover bid is rumoured. Gregor Rioch was disappointingly quiet — he stars in some way every week on Nationwide League Extra, giving away a penalty, getting sent off or scoring — but in this match he just had a reasonably solid performance.

The only goal was scored late in the game when the promising substitute McIndoe showed poise and presence of mind to complete a run down the wing by picking out Steve Davis in the penalty area and putting a cross onto his foot. Stevo did the rest.

The only other incident of note was when a clearance on to the roof of the stand above the Luton fans resulted in a shower of rust descending on us. Apparently, part of the roof came off a couple of seasons ago, so perhaps we got off lightly.

31.07.98 TOWN 2 COVENTRY CITY 1

I did not bother to attend the match against Arsenal as I find these over-hyped pre-season

friendlies meaningless (how I can hold this belief and make the trip to Hull I leave others to explain). I could not turn down the offer of a free ticket from a friend who went to the Arsenal match but could not use the other part of his £15 purchase. I was looking forward to seeing Paul Telfer play, as I always admired him in his time at Luton. He is one of the few (two) ex-Town players who is a regular in the Premiership, but will need to be in fine form this season if he is to stay ahead of the two or three Carlos Kickaballs that Strachan signed in the close season. Of course, he did not play for some reason. Apart from the two goals by Herve I cannot remember anything significant in the game and it was hard to get any idea of what the season might hold for either club. The off the field highlight was the robust performance of Gordon Strachan when heckled by a couple of Luton fans. I think he was joking, as he did wink a couple of times, but I would not fancy being a Coventry player who has under performed for him.

TRAINSPOTTING 2

Choose United. Choose 7 failed attempts at the European Cup. Choose to be knocked out of Europe 5 times in 5 seasons. Choose to be the European laughing stock. Choose to waste countless millions. Choose to support a team from a city you've never even been to. Choose whining. Choose to wear shit grey shirts and then blame them when Southampton stuff you. Choose to release Cantona because he's the only one who recognises how shit Cole is. Choose cheating. Choose not to condemn your player after he has just been convicted of assault. Choose to spend your career in the reserves because the money's good. Choose a psychopathic Irishman for your captain and call him a gifted visionary. Choose to waste 7 million on Cole. Choose the arrogance to field your reserve team and then bleat about the consequences. Choose a racist albino with pink eyes and a red nose as your goalkeeper. Choose not to be liked by anyone and pretend not to care. Choose your own referee and assistants — except in Europe. Choose a Scandinavian paper boy as your top goalscorer. Choose to have the biggest squad in British football and then complain about injuries. Choose your club before your country. Choose Wales before England. Choose Paul Parker. Choose to be arse-licked by the media and then accuse them of anti-United bias. Choose to forget 1969 to 1993 even existed. Choose to change the team you support every ten years. Choose to shield your players from TV interviews until they can read and write. Choose Remi Moses. Choose to change your kit 6 times a season. Choose to be snubbed by every decent player around the world and pretend that you didn't want them anyway. Choose self-deception and delusions of grandeur. Choose, as your best ever player, an incoherent, wife beating, alcoholic Irishman. Choose to poach your "impressive youth policy" from other clubs. Choose to sign a world class centre forward beginning with SH and pretend not to care when you get Sheringham instead of Shearer. Choose to go for the triple and end up with fuck all. Choose embarrassment.

CHOOSE MAN UNITED!

The William Hill HatterLeague 4

This season's HatterLeague is up and running, with an impressive 121 teams entered, in spite of us not giving too much time for entries to arrive. Maybe the fact that there was only one combination of players which was not possible made it easier for you — if not too easy. There is a theory that this means that there will be a vast number of teams bunched in the lead in the competition, but time will tell.

The fact that the entry form for HatterLeague 4 said it should be sent to HatterLeague 3 etc, managed to fool many of you — but don't worry, no penalty points for that error. Quite a number of you wanted to know why we were asking for your age on the entry form. The primary reason for this is because of the prizes, in that we cannot give the betting vouchers kindly donated by William Hill to any winners under the age of 18, however, the additional benefit from our point of view is that we can get an idea of the age range of entrants and, to some degree, of our readers. It is pleasing to note that the fanzine appears to be read by those from under 16 to over 60.

We didn't mention the HatterSwap much, other than in passing, so this needs to be clarified. You will be allowed to make two changes at any time up to the transfer deadline of March 26th, 1999. These may be made together, or separately, and each application to make a Swap should be accompanied by a first class stamp. Be sure to use your HatterCode number on each application.

The HatterSix players are:

| <u>Code</u> | <u>Player</u> | <u>£</u> | <u>Code</u> | <u>Player</u> | <u>£</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------|----------|
| <u>Goalkeepers</u> | | | | | |
| 301 | Kelvin Davis | 0.7 m | 302 | Nathan Abbey | 0.3 m |
| <u>Defenders</u> | | | | | |
| 311 | Gavin McGowan | 0.5 m | 314 | Marvin Johnson | 0.6 m |
| 312 | Julian James | 0.4 m | 315 | Steve Davis | 0.8 m |
| 313 | Mitchell Thomas | 0.6 m | 316 | Alan White | 0.6 m |
| <u>Midfielders</u> | | | | | |
| 321 | Sean Evers | 0.6 m | 326 | Simon Davies | 0.4 m |
| 322 | Matthew Spring | 0.5 m | 327 | Ray McKinnon | 0.7 m |
| 323 | Graham Alexander | 0.7 m | 328 | Jimmy Cox | 0.3 m |
| 324 | Paul McLaren | 0.6 m | 329 | Michael McIndoe | 0.4 m |
| 325 | Paul Showler | 0.5 m | | | |
| <u>Strikers</u> | | | | | |
| 331 | Phil Gray | 0.5 m | 334 | Andrew Fotiadis | 0.4 m |
| 332 | Stuart Douglas | 0.4 m | 335 | Liam George | 0.5 m |
| 333 | Herve Bacque | 0.7 m | 336 | Dwight Marshall | 0.5 m |

With the competition in its early stages (only three matches played) there is plenty of bunching at the top. In fact, the leader is Pete Jones, with his team "Max Dougan Fan Club", on 43 points after winning the Manager of the Issue award. The chasing pack consists of 31 teams all tied on 38 points — the same as Pete had before the Motl award! Down at the bottom end, Andy Hunt's "Who are Ya?" already look out of touch with -5 points, 17 off 120th place!

Keeping it brief this time, there's just one thing to mention before closing which is that Christopher Murton and John Martin forgot to name their teams. So, chaps, if you are reading this, please let us know what your team should be called.

K.F.H./R.B.

PHILIP GRAY

Philip Gray is now recognised as one of Ireland's foremost artists to present Ireland in paint form. His studies have truly captured the exquisite beauty and unique atmosphere of the Irish countryside, its people and way of life. His work is now found throughout all corners of the world in both private and public collections.

What was Phil Gray up to during all that time off injured? I think we have the answer.

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Dear "Mad",
Thought you might like this cutting taken from the *Daily Mail* on Saturday 8th August.

Lennie warns big shots

LUTON TOWN manager Lennie Lawrence claims that the big trio of Manchester City, Fulham and Reading do not scare his side, who he believes are capable of beating anyone in the Second Division.

'It is once every 10 years you see a club the size of Manchester City, one with the spending power of Fulham or one with a 25,000-seater new

DIVISION 2

stadium in the division,' said Lawrence, who takes his side to Wycombe today.

'This season we have all three. But if my players are fit on a one-off, then I would back us against anybody, including those three.'

Lawrence has signed Ray McKinnon from Dundee

United and Monaco striker Herve Bactuet on free transfers this summer. With an almost fully fit squad, he is aiming for a play-off spot at the very least come the end of the season. He added: 'It is going to be hard with the quality of teams, but I would like to think that we could make a serious challenge.'

HENRY PETERS



Lawrence: confident

Given what he says, isn't it therefore rather ironic that, as we proudly sit in 2nd place in the table, our only league defeat to date was at Reading even if we did outplay them!

Incidentally, doesn't LL look like a serious cross between David Oldfield and Elton Welsby. Anyhow, it makes a pleasant change for him to show some optimism.

On a different note, I remember reading an article in the local paper here in Derbyshire after the Rams got promoted to the Carling Premiership a couple of seasons back. The reporter did an article of ten things he would or would not miss about Division One. Amongst the things he wouldn't miss was "anything to do with an away trip to Reading!" After this, this season's fixture — before a ball had been kicked my two brothers and I were thinking about this, having only 2 tickets between 3 of us, yet unable to buy a third even though we hadn't sold out our allocation. How did we lose 3-0 there?! And then the traffic was an absolute joke and that after you've walked through a bomb site. Nice ground, shame about the surroundings.

Bye for now.
Tim Davis,
Derby.

Dear "Mad",

Can I please recommend Ireland as a holiday venue for all Hatters fans? Not only is there fantastic scenery, excellent food and a wide range of methods of achieving inebriation but, in addition, when I left England at the end of August, Luton were languishing in 12th place. Ten days later I have returned to find the boys safely nestled in an automatic promotion spot and the papers proclaiming our best start to a season since 1969!

Is this true, or am I still suffering from the after effects of my trip to the Jameson distillery?

All the best,

Will Sherwood, Swindon Hatter,
Swindon,
Wilts.

Dear "Mad",

Although I do not want to praise the scum, I do believe their community officer is something we desperately need. Luton is an area which has a large Asian community. How many of them do you see going to the games? If we actually had a community officer we might actually see increasing crowds, instead of a half empty stadium. I do believe we have a large catchment area including Baldock, Letchworth, Hitchin, St Albans as well as Luton, and hope that crowds of over 10,000 will be seen in our KohlerDome — if it ever gets built. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the fans during the Burnley game — this is the first time I've heard for ages when there was continual support for the team, and not one negative point was thrown towards the team or an individual player when something went wrong. Let's hope that 1998/99 will see the Town keep up their promising start.

Z. Russell,
Bygrave.

Dear "Mad",

I would like to issue an invitation to any of those fortunate (?) enough to have Sky. Some of you may tune into the sports channel on a Saturday morning to watch 'Soccer AM'. For those not in the know, let me enlighten you.

Basically, it's a live show hosted by two very likeable people, namely Tim Lovejoy (Chelsea fan) and Helen Chamberlain (Torquay fanatic), who share four hours of debate, piss taking, and generally rambling on about the game we all love. Above all, it's hugely entertaining.

Why am I writing, I hear you mumble? Well, part of the show features "fans of the week", six fans of the same club who take part in the show, with a different club featuring each week. One week it's Gooners, the next it might be the 'orrible 'ornets. I'm looking for six Luton fans to appear with myself on this show. Anyone able to appear on live television on a Saturday morning, have the piss taken severely out of them, but get to wear our hallowed colours at the same

time, then get in touch with me at the address below. I'm ex-directory, so can't print my phone number (mum would kill me!).

Once I've got six, I'll write off straight away to sky, and hopefully we'll be accepted.

If you could send your name, address and phone number, then I can contact you to confirm your interest. A first come, first served basis will operate.

Tony Allbones,
9 Mulberry Walk,
Kempston,
Beds MK42 7NH.

Dear "Mad",

I really, really did try not to write anything about Wrexham this season, seeing as last season when I wrote a jokey piece about Welsh sheep..... well, some lads in the Brickies got the wrong idea about my liking for sheep. Enough said!

Anyway, although I slipped off the wagon (BIG TIME!!) this summer, I just about had enough money to stay overnight in Luton after the Bobbers coach dropped me off at around 1 am. So I woke up in happy Luton on Wednesday morning, slipped on my Luton track suit (an old one bought when we were in Division 1 — oh, happy days) and went off jogging around the ground. While sprinting (well, still jogging really!) down the alleyway leading to the Bedfordshire Yeoman I passed two school kids. "Allo mate," they chirped, "Allo lads," I chirped back. A few steps on I overheard one kid say to the other "He's a Luton player."

So, there you have it. Not only am I the best looking bloke in the Kenny seats, I also look like a Luton Town player!

Phil "Highbury Hatter" Darton.

Dear "Mad",

As a reader closing in on the big 40, I really enjoyed your article some years ago on recollections from the 70s (I got a mention as "Skiz" who got nicked all the time). Truth is I was just the one who was always in the wrong place at the wrong time — honest guv!

I wonder whether anyone of my age remembers the away game coach trip (in the days when we only took 1-2 coaches to the far north) when a lad, in true 70's hooligan style, pissed on the floor of the coach. The driver, on finding a small river running down the aisle, immediately threatened the culprit with expulsion from the coach (somewhere near Birmingham). He soon gave up trying to identify the lad as no-one in that era was going to 'split on his mates'. However, when we reached the next services 49 out of 50 Luton supporters ran from the coach bursting for a piss.

Last time I saw 'Skinhead', as we called him, was only a couple of years ago, being led from the Maple having spat on a linesman. Some people never change.

Before I bore you rigid with stories of the 70's could you please let me know if there is a 'Cherry Newbery Out' campaign. This woman has done more over the

last 10 years to drive supporters away than any other LTFC employee (including Kohler). I thought that marketing a product was based on focussing attention on customer needs and making it easy for them to say "yes". Cherry and her drones make supporting Luton almost impossible for all those other than hard core supporters. Answer: Sack Cherry, retrain her staff and abandon the membership card farce.

Keep up the good work,

Cheers

Mick Squires,
Dunstable.

Thanks for the letter, Mick. The article you refer to was actually in issue 12 (April/May 1992) of D.Pleated, the now defunct Luton fanzine that had an orange cover long before MAAH went for that colour. As for a campaign to get rid of Cherry Newbery, no, we don't know of one.

Dear "Mad",

It's been a very good opening to the season, and I guess you've had a lot to cheer about, and lots of celebration pints so far this season.

I've had a terrible season here in Norway. I was injured just days after I came back from England and could not get into the team at Hødd team. After playing for the Hødd reserves for some time I got a free transfer and I am now playing for Åram in the 3rd Division.

It was disappointing that our trip to Plymouth was not mentioned in *Mad*, as I thought one of the lads said they would write about the tour to Home Park.

I hate Vidar Riseth. I met him before the World Cup. He said he was glad he had left Luton Town and that the club still lives in the '60s. He also said that the manager was shit. In addition, he claimed he became a rich man while he was at Luton Town, as he got whatever he wanted.

Lars,

Norway.

I'm afraid that the lads have all pleaded guilty as far as failing to write about Plymouth is concerned. I'm sorry I couldn't be there, but look forward to meeting you next time you're over here. Ed.

Dear "Mad",

Thanks for your help — *Mad* is the only way I can keep up with what's happening with the Town, apart from results which I catch in the *Bangkok Post* every Monday, talking of which, I'm writing this after noticing the remarkable result of Luton 4 Ipswich 2 aet. Great stuff.

Ian A Studd,
Bangkok, Thailand.

DIZZY HEIGHTS

We mention this in almost every issue, but we always welcome match reports from readers. You've only got to read the next few pages to get the gist of what we use. Any reports should be sent to the usual address (see page 2).

08.08.98 WYCOMBE WANDERERS 0 TOWN 1

All the pre-season training, the long hauls to Ely and Hull, games against Premiership opposition and Harrow cannot prepare you for the real thing. The heat made this a very challenging fixture and we fans knew it was only the first of a minimum 50 gruelling contests. It cannot have been easy for the players either.

It was too hot to applaud very often which was all right for the Wycombe fans — they were given nothing to get excited about. Their team looked as if they had prepared for the new season by spending a fortnight in Spain eating and drinking, and then meeting in the pub to discuss tactics and choose the team. It never worked for my Sunday morning team either. My gambling friend had already backed Wycombe to get fewer than 58 points. On this performance I would back them to get less than 40. The points were won by Steve Davis with a great strike from a free kick. The lads were careful not to score a second and allow us to relax, but in truth Wycombe rarely threatened.

Howard Chandler

Giles, give us a wave.....

There's always something satisfying about being in the home end when supporting the away side (especially when you win) — I'm not sure whether it's the eerie silence all around you when celebrating a goal or the 'jocular banter' with the home support (or was it that policewoman, Kev?).

The upper tier of their new(er) stand gave us a great view of Farmer Giles ploughing the field behind the ground. In fact, the match was so poor we made Giles Man of the Match for his super effort (he narrowly failed to finish the field in the 90 minutes!) in the summer heat.

On the pitch, a blistering free-kick from Stevo gave us our first opening day win since beating the scummers in 1993 — and it came from a foul on Spring that, for some bizarre reason, the home fans disputed.

Liam George came on in the second half and tried to claim the fastest ever red card, only just missing out as the ref produced a yellow for his scything "tackle" on their 'keeper Taylor. The one goal proved to be enough, as we were able to cope with everything Wycombe threw at us, although we did receive a great help from the Wycombe strikers who managed to stray about 20 yards offside in every single attack!

Quick note for Alexander. Please, please, please sort your hair out (I'd sack your bloody "stylist"). If you want to make a fool of yourself with your hair then don't pay for the privilege (why don't you ask to borrow one of Spider's wigs?)

Match analysis: a poor game between two poor sides in very hot conditions — although I'd like to think we could have stepped up a gear if we needed to (which we didn't).

McKinnon looks a very useful player, the jury is still out on Bacque and Gray still doesn't know the meaning of the phrase 'fully fit'. However, it's points in the bag at the start of the season. We're joint top (!) and hopefully we can build on it.

Finally, Mr Lawrence — regarding Marvin's inclusion in the starting line-up. What has Alan White actually done wrong? Or do you just dislike him?

The Beat

11.08.98 TOWN 2 THAMES VALLEY ROVERS 3

As the cricket season again draws to a closing yawn, the name of Tim Henman is all but forgotten, and the World cup is lost until the new century, we welcome a brand new footy season. O glory be.

So, with a hot sunny evening upon us, Luton off to a winning start to the season, and the prices slashed for this Worthington 'E' Cup clash with Cowley, the crowd came back to the Kenny Stadium. Like hell they did — where was everyone? The queue was longer for 'Lost in Space' — don't go, it was a truly awful film. Only a Bruce Willis bogbuster could be worse.

After a shaky five minutes by the Men in White, the teams settled down to a thoroughly good match. With a few new faces, a couple of the youngsters and old hands, the Town looked a well composed team. Especially in midfield, where the ever eager Evers just shone as a great player for the future. The early departure of Thomas saw the arrival of McLaren, who put in a very solid performance. So solid in fact that he was booked for his first touch, which wasn't actually on the ball. It gave me an immediate flashback to the great days of Hughsie.

The game turned on the award of a very soft free kick to the Canaries, which was smartly dispatched past the flying Kelvin. Then, minutes later, with all composure at the back gone, a gaping hole in the defence gifted the yellows a second. Half time didn't come too soon.

Lenny certainly worked some magic during the break, as the Town came out in total attack mode. Panic set in in the yellows defence who quickly gave two blatant penalties away. Up stepped blondie Alex to Bury them in quick succession, to level the contest. It should have stayed that way but a tired defence gifted a late winner from a corner to ruin a fine second half performance. Though another corner nearly made it four to the visitors, who dominated the aerial contest after Thomas's exit. Kermit certainly impressed the Cowley boys — every time he had the ball two of the yellows were tightly on him. This highlighted the weakness in our attack, as Kermit and the two OAPs never really worried their defence. A team like Ox City, with a big strong defence will always dominate a team like Luton with so many small players. Our attack lacks height and there is no target man so all the high balls into the box are a complete waste. Clearly shown at corners. Mind you, if the midfield had the confidence to shoot at goal when the chances arise, it could have been a completely different story.

The shock of the evening was the late appearance of Steve MacManaman, coming on for Phil Gray. Same hair, same build, and the same run. Apparently it was McIndoe, but if only.

Thank goodness the teams no longer come out to 'Fanfare for the Common Man' and 'We Will Rock You'. Can I suggest Hawkwind's 'Masters of the Universe', or Madonna with 'Crazy for You'..... mmmmmmm.

Normski, Cheltenhamshire

15.08.98 TOWN 1 PRESTON NORTH END 1

Whatever happened to footballers from the South end of Preston? If they amalgamated surely the team would be a lot stronger.

The low point of last season for me was the 3-1 home defeat by Preston (I was out of the country for the whole of September and the start of October and missed the more obvious candidate for worst defeat). This, however, was definitely a point gained. Preston were impressive at times during this game and again Town did well to recover from some rocky patches and end up with a hard earned point. Luckily for us, Kurt Nogan had an awful game and did not put away the chances created for him in the periods that Preston dominated. Strangest moment was a terrible two footed lunge by Appleton at Dwight which got a richly deserved red card. It seemed out of character for both the player and the game.

Howard Chandler

18.08.98 OXFORD UNITED 1 TOWN 3

Oh, oh, oh, Oooxford!!!

Wonderful. Out of this world. Orgasmic. The best fast flowing football I have seen from Luton since Brian Stein and Ricky Hill! This was like the eighties revisited. We simply took them apart and hung them out to dry.

They took the lead against the run of play and then our attacking was fluid that Phil Gray could afford to miss a sitter before nearly missing a gloriously worked equaliser.

When the second half started Town's midfield and front 2 (or was it 3?) simply ran riot. McLaren got on the end of yet another Town attack, and the decent Town following celebrated with a growing belief that it was really going to happen.

I was in the toilet for the third, but it was the kind of night you did not mind missing a goal because you knew you were already part of a special performance.

At the end of the game the bond between the fans and the players was great. I even kissed my Luton badge — yeah, I know it's posy, but what a bloody great night. Nothing could have spoiled that cup winning evening.

The 'rather happy' Highbury Hatter

PS: Greenpeace have been invading Islington High Street, so I had a chat with a guy to find out what it was all about. Guess who he followed..... Oxford — great, eh? There is a God after all!

22.08.98 READING 3 TOWN 0

This was not the right time to play Reading, the first game at the egotistically named Madejski Stadium. I would like to have been at the meeting of the naming committee, chaired presumably by Mr Madejski. "I propose the name the Madejski Stadium — it's got a nice ring to it and I have put £10 million towards the cost — any other suggestions?"

All the pre-match flim-flam did not help the Luton cause. Stuart Hall thought he was hosting 'It's a Knockout', and a 15 minute delay to the start seemed to be due to the late arrival of the Skydivers as the crowd all seemed to be in place.

With Reading's average attendance last season well below 10,000 it would have helped the 8,000 presumably attending their first match ever, or at least for some seasons, if Stuart had explained the object of the game. The way they cheered when their flashy but unproductive Liberian Mass Sarr hit a shot almost on to the M4 mystified me. The game itself had echoes of last season with Dwight and McLaren both injured before the game was 20 minutes old. With Marvin withdrawing on the Friday, the team became radically different to the eleven who started at Oxford. Our worrying corner problem had given Reading a flying start and they scored two more — one from a very swift counter-attack started by the still useful Ray Houghton and one at the death when we were pushing forward. It will sound a biased view, but the score flattered Reading immensely, and if we had taken one of our own chances, even when 2-0 down, I think Reading would have panicked and we would have got at least one, possibly three points. The Reading team were not impressive and they could end up with the best stadium in Division 3 next season.

Howard Chandler

29.08.98 TOWN 2 PHIL GRAY & COLCHESTER UNITED 0

And Smith Gray must score.....

The keeper has just fumbled a shot and is on the floor. An international striker is bearing down on the loose ball, 5 yards from goal. Question: how is it possible for the ball NOT to end

up in the back of the net? Answer: I'm not too sure — but Phil Gray knows.

That miss was disgraceful, and was the icing on another "fine" performance by Gray (or 'Phyllis', as my bro' affectionately calls him). And how much did he cost us?

In fact, referee Roger Furnandiz did us a favour by brandishing that red card because it meant we go rid of Marvin and Gray in one foul swoop, as Lennie was forced into bringing Mitchell on for our star striker.

However, whereas against Preston we showed we couldn't play against 10 men, this time we showed we could at least play with the same amount. Douglas and Davis (this season's player of the Year, methinks) hit the target to send the U's (who were, incidentally, rather crap) back pointless.

The Beat

31.08.98 CLOGGERS 1 SEXY FOOTBALL 3

Luton started quite brightly and coped very well with the rather direct tactics employed by our northern friends. They did try to push down both wings using the aged David Lee to great effect early on, however he was nullified by Gavin McGowan during the first half. Luton took the lead just before half time when a corner by Alexander was steered home by our top scorer Steve Davis. We should have gone 2-0 up just a couple of minutes later when Liam George was clean through on goal, but he was brought down by the lumbering Scott Green who was only shown the yellow card (why are refs so bloody inconsistent — this was at least 20 yards nearer goal than Johnson on Saturday, Green should have walked). The second half brought on McIndoe as a replacement for Liam George and he looked very lively toying with his full-back at will. However, we gave away a silly free kick just inside our own half, and a long punt, crap marking and a decent finish by "barn door" Barlow gave the home side hope. Well, the sexy football of the Town materialised very quickly after slick interchange passing featuring the skills of Alexander, Gray and Evers we once again took the lead. In days gone by, the Town would have given away a sloppy goal for the opposition to equalise but not these days. It's attack as often as you can for this lot and great control by Gray after pulling down a high ball, ghosting past two defenders and sliding the ball past the despairing keeper gave us 3-1 and three points, thank you, ta!

One mention again of the clown of the day, Bill Burns of Scarborough — McIndoe, in toying with his marker, skipped past another only to be taken out in the most cynical fashion by "barn door", only for the former Scouse idol to be given a yellow card, when he too should have walked. I must say I thought a few of their players were wound up at being given the run around in midfield by our maestros.

Sid Down

A nice clear road north, a great performance from the Town and an almost perfect return trip. A perfect bank holiday, only spoilt by the overpriced tepid burger and coffee that can at best be described as 'brown'.

This was one game when the boys in white, or orange and blue in this case, totally dominated the day. Even when defending corners we were looking strong and in control. The big surprise was that their woeful keeper Carol only had to pick the ball out of the net three times. Sexy total football is here, but at times a pass less and a thundering shot instead should be the order of the day.

A very comfortable first half had the Hatters kicking into a stiff wind, with the only threat coming as a result of some poor marking on the Pathetics wing players. Even so, Kelvin was never in any real danger. The first goal from a well worked corner, which involved the Wigan

defence allowing the ball to land at Stevo's feet. Everyone stands still, while he takes his time and gives it a bit of a kick. The ball trickles over the line past a statuesque keeper with legs akimbo.

The half ended with Luton down to ten men as Liam was carried off after being hacked down when through on goal. An inefficient Man in Black just waved a yellow card.

The second half, with the wind fading, brought more ball play and less hoofing. Completely against the run of play, the locals grabbed the equaliser from a deflected free kick. Just like the Town's opener it was all down to sloppy marking.

The effect was just to see Luton on non-stop attack, passing to feet, movement down the wings, midfield domination. It was a joy to behold. The pressure finally paid off with Phil Gray holding the ball on the edge of the box, and slotting it through to the probing Evers who, in front of goal, pulled the trigger and potted the shot in the top left corner.

Minutes later McIndoe, on for the injured George, jiggled down the left wing, slipped through the defence and laid the ball to Gray. A quick turn and it was three goals and three points. Lovely jubbly.

This was the cue for the locals to depart at a great rate of knots. Clearly it had nothing to do with the score, it was time to walk the ferrets and tuck the pigeons in for the night. The home end had little atmosphere from the beginning of the game. By the end the terrace was all but bare. It was lovely and noisy down our end.

Normski, Cheltenhamshire

05.09.98 TOWN 1 BURNLEY 0

This was obviously the game where it would all go wrong. Sommer giving the ball to Heath in '94, Bontcho missing a penalty in '95, and Town giving away 3 goals to cancel out two great Alexander strikes last season. How would we screw up this season? In the first half, a typical flowing move ended with a shot on the turn by Douglas that hit the underside of the bar. Spring rocked the bar from 20 yards out and Kelvin had only one attack top deal with in 45 minutes. It was all set up to be a game of two halves with Burnley coming out a changed side and claiming a winner. Somehow it did not work out that way. Douglas was on hand to force the ball home when the goalie did really well to keep out a strong header from Steve Davis. Once they were behind and forced to attack, Burnley looked more of a threat and were only denied a point by a superb late save by Kelvin who managed to push the ball on to the bar. Steve Davis handled in the penalty area before the end but the referee and his assistant remained consistent and missed it. If I was a Burnley fan I would not be looking forward to watching the teams that Stan Ternent selects. Having endured two games against his successful but terminally dull Bury team in 96/97, the emphasis he places on strength and defence is obvious. A perfect day was ruined by arriving home to watch England lose to Sweden — when will Glenda show some faith and give Eileen Drewery her chance? She would have kept out at least one of the Swedish goals. I watched Ceefax for a while, staring at Luton in second place — have we peaked too soon?

We have a squad capable of challenging for promotion — the following very capable players were not on duty against Burnley due to injury or non-selection: White, Fraser, James, Doherty, McLaren, Simon Davies, Liam George, Showler, Marshall. I have a feeling that if we are to achieve anything this season five or six of these will need to play their part.

Howard Chandler

08.09.98 ONLY THREE STANDS 1 WHOLE GROUND 1

First of all, let's try and be a bit more positive about Phil Gray. His header should have got us

the extra 2 points, but for a very, very good save by the home keeper.

Steve Davies — what a great season he's having — his heading just gets better and better but Steve, when you're only four yards out, be greedy. Still, he's easily forgiven missing the chance late in the game as he's the best player at the club at present (apart from Phil Gray!!).

Kelvin did not have his best game, which was summed up by his self analysis at the end of the first half — two words, the first beginning with F, the second beginning with S (work it out!). However, grace is required, and I think he's a fine keeper and I've yet to see a better save than the one he made last season at Grimsby in our 1-0 win.

The goal was a good strike by Ray McKinnon, and after watching it twice on Anglia morning news it gets better every time! Wrexham, whose goal was down to our defensive error, looked goodish with great approach play but they need a goalscorer.

Sober again (just) Phil Darton

12.09.98 MIGHTY HATTERS 2 GAS 0

O Frabjous day! That rare event, a win against a Bristol club. At work on the following Monday morning Gasheads shrunk from my gaze. Even City fans looked envious and offered to exchange Thorpe plus £1 million for any of our players.

And an excellent performance. In the corresponding game last year Steve Davis and Alan White had nightmares. This time they had got their act together. Stevo roamed the field, reminiscent of Ruud Gullit in the great total football Dutch side of the eighties, popping up to slot home the first after good work from Douglas and Gray. But this time he remembered to tell Alan White when he was off so some semblance of defence remained.

Alexander and McGowan also played sensibly, covering when necessary but also going forward at every opportunity. Alexander's goal was wonderful. A quick bit of thinking from Kelvin, a 60 yard run beating two defenders, a superb return pass from Gray, and a quality finish.

Another fine performance from Spring supported by the impressive McIndoe and the effective Evers and McKinnon. Up front Gray looked a quality player, though his finishing let him down. Douglas continues to improve though his first touch is not always good.

We should have had more. Scoring is going to be the major problem. But if we continue to create as many chances as this we will surely put some of them away.

Credit to the Rovers. They were always going forward and contributed much to a good game. In Barry Hayles they have one of the best forwards in the division. It is a measure of our defensive improvement that he did not get a look in.

Promotion contenders? Maybe, but we will have to see how we fare against some of the stronger teams. But the improvement on last season is enormous and there are strong grounds for optimism. The local press in Bristol was impressed:

"Rovers were outclassed by a Luton team whose early season form makes them promotion favourites" — *Green 'Un*

"They went through us like a hot knife through butter" — *Ian Holloway*

"Luton rampant" — *Evening Post*

"A good job Marvin wasn't playing or we would have got a right thrashing" — *OK, I made that one up, but the others are genuine.*

Clark

19.09.98 BLACKPOOL 1 TOWN 0

A sunny seaside day turned cloudy as the titanic clash opened between the two new Unitarian Districts — there you have it, cartography and football in perfect harmony. The well represented travelling Hatters were crammed into just a third of the open terraces due to the continual erosion of the dilapidated Bloomfield Road ground. At this rate matches will be played on the beach in the coming millennium. A bright opening saw the evenly matched contenders swing the play from end to end. The early departure of Phil Gray in the fifth minute, and his return in the tenth, brought no slacking in the Town's effort to play an open game. But as the match progressed it was plain to all that while still playing Gray had no pace, so leaving Douglas as the Lone Ranger to batter against the rock solid Blackpool defence. Only great performances by Marvin and Stevo kept the sides level at the break, and Kelvin was clearly the busier of the keepers. Without either McKinnon or McLaren the midfield had a certain amount of bite missing and, quite literally, no attempts on goal, while the guys in orange had a policy of see goal and shoot. True, most attempts just endangered the seagulls cruising above, but they were certainly a team after points.

The second half saw most of the game concentrated in the Luton half, with the redoubtable Douglas and occasional forays by Stevo proving to be the Town's only avenues of attack. A flurry of substitutions announced the closing tragic act to the show. For once, Cox instead of playing wide on the right and giving little aid to the midfield, suddenly appeared centre field. With the ball at his feet he was off. Onward and onward through the valley of defenders he ran. Shoot, we all shouted. But on he came, only the keeper to beat. Shoot, we screamed, but on he still came. The crowd held it's breath as the goal beckoned. Not a blinding strike, but a mere scuff of a kick saw the ball deflected off the keeper for a corner. Travesty, from possible hero to anti-hero in seconds. I thought the bloke next to me was going to explode with rage.

So, another corner went sailing over the packed box, now the break was on for Blackpool. No messing about here. Clear concise move into the Town's area, and some local whippersnapper buried the ball where it really hurts. There only remained minutes to salvage a point, but to no avail. Damn.

Normski, Cheltenhamshire (top of the Conference)

22.09.98 TOWN 4 IPSWICH TOWN 2

Football does not get better than this. Evening cup ties at Kenilworth Road against higher opposition are always special (remember Newcastle and West Ham?), and this was a real cracker.

We looked down and out at half time as Ipswich increased their aggregate lead, but then the Hatters took control.

We destroyed Ipswich in the second half (and extra time), although we did get a helping hand from Foti's (blatant) push, and Douglas's equaliser took the tie into the extra 30 minutes. Stevo put us in front for the first time in the two legs, before he decided to make life difficult for all of us by heading Ipswich into a last minute away goal lead. Cheers Stevo!

However, as the now sombre Kenilworth Road listened to "you're not singing any more" taunts from the Oak Road end, up popped Marvellous to put us through in a Roy of the Rovers finale. So, who who was that who wasn't singing anymore, Ipswich?

And to think that up until 6pm I had been contemplating whether to go to the match or spend the evening in the pub. I think I made the right choice.

The Beat

A RATIONAL HATRED OF WATFORD

Apart from the fact that W*tf*rd is the closest league club to Luton, what is it about this bunch of scummers that makes them so detestable? Here are just a few suggestions.

Graham Taylor

Nationally recognised for being the world's worst manager after failing dismally in his time as national manager, "Turnip" makes the scum all the more easy to hate. As well as being a complete arsehole and an arrogant twat, he is almost illiterate, as anyone who has listened to his monotonous dronings on "Teamtalk" will, no doubt, have noticed.

Incidentally, was anyone else pissed off to see our local employers, Vauxhall, using him in an advert while the World Cup was on? No wonder they stopped sponsoring Luton.

Elton John

Songs are sung by many other teams' supporters about the sexual preferences of their rivals' Chairman/manager/star player, but when this happens at Kenilworth Road there's one difference — it's true. This bloke is a public disgrace, who has only made his fortune singing about dead blondes (no disrespect to Lady Di or Marilyn Monroe, who I'm sure would turn in their graves if they knew). After his forthcoming marriage to David, I wonder if he will be known as Lady Elton — after all, he seems to wear a skirt to every social event he goes to.

Harry the Hornet

Even if he did deny us a clear penalty, the referee at Scum away can be forgiven, having sent off W*tf*rd's ridiculous answer to Happy Harry. This year, without his massive arse, he was more annoying than ever, prancing up and down the touchline while the match was in progress, and that stupid fiasco before the match where the woman off the radio came and proposed to him was really pathetic.

The Allotments

Is there another ground in the country where you have to walk so bloody far from the car park or the station to get to your stand? I think not. Having had to walk amongst hundreds of scummers to get near the ground, you want to just sit down and clear your head before you throw up all over the floor, or suffer a heart attack but instead, you are forced to climb a bloody great hill, just because of some poxy allotments which look like they haven't been touched for years. Get it sorted for next year's visit when you've come straight back down.

Their Kit

If seeing a scummer in plain clothes isn't enough to make you want to throw up, wait until you see their kit. I hear they have produced another yellow and red monstrosity for the coming season, which will surely win Jimmy Hill's worst kit of the year award in FourFourTwo. OK, so some of Luton's kits in the past haven't been everyone's cup of tea, but at least we don't ponce around in Yellow and red, making ourselves look pathetic before the match has even started.

They're such Lucky Bastards

We're driving home from a Town away match and we hear the report of the scum home match: "...despite being totally outplayed and deservedly going a goal down in the first half, W*tf*rd notched another win, courtesy of a penalty which had to be retaken until they

scored, and an amazing own goal from.....". No wonder they won the bloody league. They could have won the Premiership with all the luck they had last season. I hope next time we play them, they have got 22 players out injured, then we'll really show them how to win a game.

Their Fans

This lot are such a pathetic bunch of losers. They have just won the second division, and still all you hear of them is moaning, such as "We'll come straight back down next year" or "Taylor's got to buy a bloody forward, 'cos Jason Lee's crap". Of course, I have to agree with these criticisms, but if we'd won the league I'd be over the moon. This is W*tf*rd you support for God's sake. They're shit, and they should be playing Sunday league football. Take your luck while you've still got it.

Patrick Johnson

A BREAK FROM THE NORM

Is this really Luton? To start a season so well is almost unheard of! The team seems positive, full of attacking and, for once, dangerous going forward. Has Lennie seen the light or is it the increasing influence of Messrs Moore and Hartley?



I've decided to give up drinking before away games. After a few pints my bladder needs relieving after 20 minutes and I can rarely wait until half time. Things came to a head when I was in the loo and missed Stevo's goal at Wigan — there were 3 others in the gents!

Then at Wrexham I missed our goal relieving myself again! My mates are considering locking me in the loo every game — think about it, we'd be promoted by Christmas!



One comment from Lennie puzzles me. As we pick up a few injuries in midfield he comments that this is one area we are not well equipped in. Surely, Mr Lawrence, with 30 professionals on the books it would be an idea to have a balanced squad?!



Feeling ill the other Friday, I turned on Sky Sports. Ninety minutes of hilarity later I felt much better. I'd been watching 'fantastic' W*tf*rd being outclassed by Wolves!

Cheer up Graham Taylor.....



Finally, a big thank you to Graham Bright and the few NIMBYs for delaying the KohlerDome. The need for a new ground is desperate as we can only go backwards at Kenilworth Road. Just think, if it hadn't been for those few NIMBYs we'd be in a new ground by now! After all, it's nearly four years since the council fully backed the scheme. I think it will be at least 5 years before we can move. Now, depressingly, the likes of Reading and Wigan are relocating and therefore have the potential to leave us behind.

Norm

football fans guide

'The best away kit money can buy' Tom Watt



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A CHANGE KIT FOR THE BETTER?

The last week in August this year was a torrid one for Luton Town supporters. The shock news that the public inquiry had decided against the KohlerDome, the revelation that it actually hadn't, and eventually back to the uncomfortable limbo situation, with the Club taking up the opportunity to send Mr. Prescott information that might help him change his mind. In this atmosphere of uncertainty, and not exactly sure which line to take for my Luton News column, I asked Mr. Kohler for a meeting in the hope that I might catch some of his optimism.

Our meeting, on Friday the 28th, was, in some ways, a bit of a waste of time, although this was nothing to do with our congenial host Mr. Kohler. He simply told us what he had already told the local press earlier in the week - that he was very optimistic, that all the local elected reps were onside, that he expected a final decision by Christmas and that we should be able to beat Colchester on Saturday.

The last point was made during a lengthy AOB section which made up about 80% of the meeting. Quite a lot of that was taken up with my brother's previously undeclared interest in hi-tech seating arrangements, and Mr. Kohler's enthusiasm for a new CD-ROM football mag. We also mentioned the new, highly popular, orange change kit, with Mr. K taking a quick survey of the opinions of the three fans present to the idea of possibly running it out as the home kit in the future. Considering we went into the meeting to discuss the very future of Luton's football club, this has to be seen as a trivial subject. However, in that a team's colours are important to the very identity of a football club, it perhaps shouldn't be seen as such when tampering is suggested.

Over the past ten to fifteen years, since the kit makers sussed that they can milk the supporters to buy a new, up to date, shirt every other season (now combined with change shirts, so that most clubs have at least one new shirt every year). The basic rule of thumb is that, although they can change the overall design, the colour of the home kits remains constant. Away kits are open to any nauseating colour scheme and design that the suppliers want, but changing the colour scheme of the home kit is different. There was a big controversy a couple of years ago when it was suggested that Arsenal's home shirt would lose the white sleeves. And, although they can attach poxy zips, Umbro wouldn't dare change Man Utd's red shirts (unless Rupert wants them to). The home kit colours, by and large, remain constant throughout a club's history.

Luton Town, as many of you are no doubt aware, are a little bit different. During the period of history known as the 1970s, the team played home games in orange. Frankly, it's all just a little before my time, but apparently it had much to do with a successful FA Cup run (Johnny Aston at Newcastle and all that) and the legend I heard is that the kit was actually designed by Eric Morecambe. The black trim of the first orange shirt (the one in the club shop, reproduced by TOFFs) was changed to navy blue by the time of the next orange kit (shirt available from *Mad as a Hatter!*). By the late '70s the home kit was back to predominantly white, but the orange and navy blue trim, and use as main colour for away kits, was well and truly established.

And so, when it comes down to it, there is a precedent for the main colour in LTFC's kit to be orange, so where's the harm in a change back to that now?

Maybe it should be considered that the reason the club are so enthusiastic about the orange shirts is because they have sold so damned well; something which, astonishingly, seems to have surprised the club. But isn't it obvious that a vibrant orange shirt is bound to be a winner after the horrendous yellow affair of the last couple of seasons? Three factors come into play here; firstly, a positive reaction to the fact that away from home Luton Town no longer dress up as Watford. Secondly, there is the historic relevance of orange to Town fans and, thirdly, the fact that orange

is a pretty damned trendy colour.

The club's wide eyed enthusiasm for the new kit, coupled with the fact that they sanctioned the yellow monstrosity beforehand, is the first, and maybe most important, reason why it's probably not too good an idea to encourage them to dabble with a wholesale change of the home colours. Even apart from the last away kit, we've seen that the club aren't too bothered about the colours - Navy blue becoming Royal blue for instance. There is also the sly tendency, when questioned, for officials to dust off the Luton Town story and reveal how, yes indeed, the Town once played in red and in blue and in salmon and pink etc, etc. Of course we can't remember those days — our fathers and our grandfathers can't remember them either. What they, and later we, can remember is players like Joe Payne, Gordon Turner, Malcolm McDonald, Ricky Hill, Brian Stein and Mick Harford playing at Kenilworth Road, playing in white.

In short, recent disastrous dabbling in the kit colours has shown that the current crop of Luton Town officials have unfortunately shown that they are not competent custodians of club tradition.

After writing a previous 'moaning about the kit' article in this fanzine during the 96/97 season, Mr. Kohler invited myself and a few more notable Hatter fans - including Messrs. Hayward and Pyper — to give a stamp of approval for the current home kit. It was nice to be asked along, and we all nodded in agreement that the kit was quite smart — but the choice had obviously already been made. It would be better if a supporters panel was given the job of liaising directly with the manufacturer (whoever that might be.....after DMF and 'LTFC own brand' it's a bit worrying isn't it?) about next season's all new kit. Whether or not such a liaison would create a classic Luton Town kit is questionable, but such a committee would surely be able to identify the fact that a yellow kit is possibly not going to be massively popular at Kenilworth Road.....

Until then we have to rely on decisions in the boardroom. The question of "what colours should we play in?", really shouldn't need to be asked. If, in enthusiasm for the new away kit, Town fans grant the Chairman carte blanche in the design and colour scheme of future Luton Town FC kits, then how long will it be, at a 21st Century club playing in the General Motordome, before the fans' ideas of club colours are over taken by those of our sponsors?

Right OK, that's my away kit conspiracy theory done with - now lets have a look at that Kennedy thing again.

Tim Kingston

CALLING EXILED SUPPORTERS

Do you struggle to get news of the Hatters where you live? If so, Hatters Matters could be what you need. HM is a monthly newsletter for the exiled supporter. A comprehensive compilation of news of LTFC every month, by first class post. To receive Hatters Matters send a cheque for £6.50 to Hatters Matters, 38 Twigden Court, Luton, LU3 2RL. For a sample copy, send a stamped, addressed envelope.

SCRIBES' CORNER

My plea to newspaper editors in the last issue worked a treat — as from November I will be a trainee reporter on the *Royston Crow* (nice paper, not too sure about the name though!). However, as a sports journalist I have to work Saturday afternoons — which means giving up the Hatters. So, while you lot will all be at Luton v Man City, I will be experiencing the likes of Royston Town or Saffron Walden Town. I don't know about you, but I know where I'd rather be. Is it good practice to phone in sick on your first week?

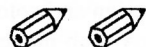


A couple of weeks ago, the *Accuracy on Sunday* were advertising for a journalist in their recruitment section (thankfully, I wasn't that desperate to apply for it). Hopefully, that means they might start to write something decent for a change — rather than the usual bollocks they push through our letterboxes on a Sunday morning.



Some things never change, do they. First game of the season: Pompey 1 Scum 2 — 2 goals in the last ten minutes (including an own goal). Well, the jammy bastards might as well start life in Division One as they mean to carry on.

Footnote: Sep 98 — How the fuck are they third?



New competition for the season: Who looks more like Gavin McGowan? McGowan himself or Stuart Douglas? Answers on a postcard, please (competition to be judged by John Motson).

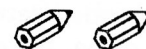


This is a plea to Luton fans (mainly those in J Block) to stop that pathetic "You all support....." chant. Yes, it was funny the first time (and relevant) — especially seeing how Stockport reacted to it — but now the process of picking the closest Premiership side to whomever we're playing and sticking it in the chant is just so crap. I'm sure the away fans just laugh at us now. Can you lot just not bother with it from now. Please.

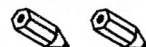


Hasn't the matchday programme improved dramatically this season. Enough for LTFC to begin to justify the price charged for it. However, I'm a little bit worried that the signatures of LL, Stevo and Clive Goodyear all appear to be very similar. Now, I don't know how I've come to this conclusion, but I'm not entirely

convinced they are actual signatures. In fact, I think they might be fake, you know.



David Kohler got angry with certain local newspapers when they reported planning permission for the Dome had been turned down. He was quoted as saying that the answer wasn't no, in fact it was as close to a yes as it could get. Being fair to the papers in question, Mr Kohler, I suppose that in answer to: "Has the KohlerDome proposal been granted planning permission: Yes/No?", then no is actually the closest you can get if the answer isn't yes (or did I miss the maybe option?)



Not that I remember too much about the Blackpool weekend (except that student nurse!), but I do recall someone coming up to me in the Palace and having a go at my column. Now, I'm not claiming it's brilliant (but hey, feel free to tell it is!), but I think I challenged him to do a better job (although as I was half-cut (*understatement* - Ed.). I can't be too sure about what I said). Anyway, the challenge is still there — you never know your luck, you might even have two Scribes Corners to read next issue.



While on the subject of Blackpool, if you read the enclosed cutting (from *The Sun*) Keef, Jezza and Killer — even John Prescott and Mo Mowlam made it down the Palace (although to be fair, f*** knows how I did!) (*If it's about being fair, the editor was refused entry, so there*).



It seems I owe a bit of an apology after my last column. In issue 48, I recall saying something about the club lacking ambition for this campaign. Well, after a string of good results, it seems that our ambition is to mount a decent promotion challenge this year (and a possible cup run?). Let's just hope we can keep it up over the autumn.



Before I sign off, a quick note to say you can now read Scribes Corner every single week. Just access the Fan-scene page on Teletext (p178 ITV) every Thursday, and I assure you that if you dislike the scum, then you won't be disappointed.

Chris Lennon

TOWN TRAVELS

The unpredictable nature of our publication dates means this column has failed to provide information for every away game. We can't make up for this, but will try and ensure a complete service for the rest of the season.

On October 24th, we're off to Gillingham, where we get to stand on that delightful open terrace stuck in the corner. The ground is only a short walk from the railway station, which itself is at one end of the town's High Street. For beers, THE CRICKETERS, Sturdee Avenue is not too far from the away end of the ground, serving Courage beers. For the connoisseur however, better to try the DOG & BONE, James Street (just off the High Street) which has a good selection of real ales, or the WILL ADAMS, 73 Saxton Street, another fine free house. Families will be welcome at THE NAPIER ARMS, Britton Street, a free house where, coincidentally, the home club was founded.

The trip to Stoke City on November 7th provides the excitement of visiting a new ground, the Britannia Stadium. Lovely. The bad news is that the ground is 2 miles from the railway station, and has no parking for the visiting fan — useful, eh? At the ground, the pies are apparently hot before the game, but only lukewarm by half time, while the beer in the ground, by contrast, is ice cold. As far as pubs are concerned there are none near the ground, and those further away are not terribly welcoming for away fans. The best advice is to drink well away from Stoke, perhaps in Stafford or Stone.

November 21st takes us to Lincoln City for our first match at Sincil Bank for 31 years and 3 days. Since that 3-2 win (Whittaker, French and Allen were the scorers), Sincil Bank has changed a lot, and away fans will be in the Stacey West Stand, where the seats have been removed to make it into a terrace (at the same time entrance prices have increased from £8 to £13). There are lots of good pubs in Lincoln, a city which compares very well with York from this point of view, and it would seem unfair to recommend any one pub. But what the hell, THE GOLDEN EAGLE, 21 High Street is a GBG recommended free house, and is OK for families. At the ground, the supporters' club, called the CENTRE SPOT, welcomes all football fans at no charge, and is the home of Lincoln City Pork Roll, an item of food that is legendary in the Third Division.

All being well, there will be another issue of *Mad* out before the Macclesfield trip on December 12th, but just in case, we'll cover it here. The Moss Rose ground is on the edge of town, but it's not a massive town. The likely pub for many Town fans will be the SILKMAN, a Tetley pub right next to the away terrace, but between the ground and the town centre, THE SUN INN, Mill Lane is a free house with four guest beers. In the town, try the GEORGE & DRAGON, 23 Sunderland Street, a Robinson's pub selling Hatter's Mild. There's no beer inside the ground, but the tea and coffee are recommended as among the very best in the league.

K.F.H.

BOOK REVIEWS

(Or, how to save £3.50 with this fanzine)

Football Fans Guide

by Janet Williams, Victoria Bennett and James Hilton.

pub. Collins Willow, £9.99.

A welcome appearance on the football book shelves is the third edition of the FFG, appearing after a two year gap, fully updated and revised for the current season, including details for all the new grounds. This book really should be the bible for the travelling football supporter, telling you everything you could possibly need to know about all 92 league clubs' home grounds. From the standards of the toilets and the burgers (could these be connected?), to full directions for every mode of travel. Pubs and restaurants, local radio stations, fanzines and websites — they're all here.

This is undoubtedly the best researched publication of its genre, and all the research is done by genuine football supporters, visiting the grounds as away fans — exactly the people the book is aimed at. Well worth buying, especially at the special price offered in the advert elsewhere in this issue.

Survival of the Fattest 4

Compiled and edited by David Jenkins and Judy Holly

pub. Red Card Publishing, £9.99

SOTF4 is an alternative review of the '97-98 football season, a review from the fanzines point of view. The fourth edition is actually a bit thinner than previous years, but this is no bad thing. Although this is the type of book that you will dip in to, previous editions have had that many pages as to be almost intimidating. This year is different. There are still over 400 pages, but it doesn't look like War and Peace. This is the book to buy if you want to know why Brentford's fans were so upset at their relegation last season, or you want to know what the hell is going on with Oxford and their new ground. It's also the place to find out what Arsenal supporters might have had to moan about. Nothing, you might say — but they could well disagree. On the other hand, you could read the Wrexham entry a dozen times and still wonder what the hell it's all about. But that is the nature of any book that is produced by the fanzines.

Essential reading? Well, that's what *The Observer* called it, but I wouldn't go quite that far. However, for a record of the '97-98 season you could do much worse, and you'll be looking at this long after the facts and figures have become irrelevant.

Available in all good book shops, or direct from the publishers £1.50 cheaper — see the advert in this issue for details.

K.F.H.

BLIMEY - I'VE POLLED! — AGAIN, CONTINUED

As always with this part of the poll, we find out what you were looking forward to and dreading about this season back in May.....

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

The big summer clearout (just like last years) • LL leaving — Bruce Rioch taking over • Youngsters coming through • A team composed of home grown players (Foti, Evers, Spring) • Challenging for promotion • “Next season we will have the nucleus of a very good team” • We can only do better in 98/99 because the standard of Div 2 is not high and we have some good youngsters • Playing Man City • Not losing to W*tf*rd • Tottenham letting us keep Rory Allen • News of a new ground • Not being worse than this season • John Moore's youth team coming through • Getting a decent manager who can pick the right team and then motivate them to play the way we know they can play and get us out of this shit league • Beating Man City again • Maine Road, the Britannia Stadium, Macclesfield, Lincoln, Notts County — as I live in the midlands this is great news • Winning in the last 5 minutes at Maine Road to secure promotion • Man City away • The club at least pretending to try to sign Rory Allen • Beating W*tf*rd in the cup and it being classed as giantkilling (not that they are giants) • W*tf*rd being humiliated in Div 1 • Going to Maine Road and the Britannia Stadium • Hopefully signing Rory Allen permanently • If it isn't too much to ask, a play-off place next season • Signing Rory Allen permanently • Doing the double over Man City • The young players • Dead wood leaving • New ground • Chatting up the women in the York tea rooms when we play up there • 11 fit players with fit subs on the bench • Lennie finally getting 11 players on the pitch at the same time with first names as surnames — he's been trying all season • No more Dick Harvey • Macca scoring • Somebody/anybody taking corners other than Alexander (a milk float takes corners better than Alexander) • KohlerDome • Promotion • Signing Rory Allen • Promotion next year • W*tf*rd getting relegated • Playing Man City • Any sort of improvement on last season • Luton following the lead of a growing number of clubs by printing the visiting attendance in the programme • Man City • New away strip • Rory Allen signing • Signing Rory Allen • Next issue of MAAH! (*creep* - Ed) • Next season's championship • Rory Allen signing four year contract • New ground • Massacring Walsall home and away • Alexander not taking a corner • Not getting wet at Preston • Visiting Maine Road • The future • Another relegation for Man City • KohlerDome • The club has got to be more positive re the future • Trip to Maine Road again • More young girls wearing LTFC shirts • Paying for a junior season ticket, when really I'm 23 • No defeats by W*tf*rd. No defeats by Bristol City • Maine Road, Britannia Stadium • AWS Final • Promotion • Signing Rory Allen • The sacrifice of Alexander • No trips to Carlisle or Plymouth • Macclesfield and Man City • Champions (!?) • Lennie pissing off (some hope) • Signing Rory Allen (doubt it) •

Proof that Paul Showler is still alive • Lawrence's excuses for failure — it can't be injuries again • KohlerDome • Promotion — Champions or Play-off winners at Wembley • W*tf*rd relegated • An unbeaten home season • Someone other than Alexander taking corners • Some decent players joining Town • W*tf*rd being relegated — as we go up • Lennie leaving • A run of wins back to back • A decent home record • A truck load of Bosmans arriving • Lennie running out of excuses and saying something sensible for a change • More issues of *Mad as a Hatter!*

THINGS TO DREAD

Watching another season like this one. No pride, commitment or shame — too many performances like that • LL staying • Another season of dismal mediocrity • Similarity of “next season we will have the nucleus of a very good team” to statement made 12 months ago • The heads going down again if we lose our first home match of 98/99 • Lincoln City's long throws • Another home season like this one • Realising that we're a long term Div 2 club, not just a better club visiting the lower leagues • Lawrence spouting off about how good we are when we're not • Lawrence blaming every fucker but himself • Having another shit season at home • Selling Kelvin • Lawrence signing more shit • Have we found our level??? • John Moore's youth team not coming through • Not getting a new manager • Selling Stevo/Liam George • Not selling Simon Davies/Douglas • Boring football instructed by Lennie • No match against the scum • Not signing Rory Allen • Man City away • The gloating of the village idiots in Slip End when the Dome is turned down • Losing to Lincoln and Macclesfield • Marvin staying and Patterson going • Steve Davis going to fund buying Rory Allen • LL still being manager • Another season with crap Alexander corners and Marvin, Julian and Mitchell in defence • Not signing Rory Allen permanently • W*tf*rd Div 1 champs • No new ground • Going back to Bristol Rovers rugby ground, listening to the blonde bimbo singing 'Irene' and getting a slow bus back to Bristol Parkway station • Re: signing players with first names as surnames — LL can't sign Nigel Martyn as he's too expensive, thinks Nathan Abbey is cheating with a girls name, so signs George Michael as a keeper • No Rory, Rory, Rory Allen • Alexander's corners • Not getting KohlerDome • Not getting promotion • Losing to PNE again on a wet Tuesday night in Preston • Another season like the last — unfortunately a real possibility • No visits to Carlisle this season • Rory Allen not signing • Not signing anybody new • Chris Allen returning • Thinking last season was a good season in hindsight • Losing to Macclesfield (or a non-league team in the FA Cup) • The 6 o'clock alarm • A repeat of 97/98 with no Rory Allen to save us • Anything but promotion • Getting found out I'm 23 when purchasing a junior season ticket • Mediocrity • Losing to a non-league side • Not signing Ronaldo • Our back four • Away games with no decent alehouses • Losing twice to Bristol Rovers • Getting crabs (not especially footie related, but a personal dread nonetheless) • Junior Clark (a gratuitous insult) • Yellow shirts • Another

season in Div 2 • Trip to Torquay • More excuses from Lawrence • Alexander's corners • W*tf*rd in the Premiership • Phil Gray's shorts ripping and his arse popping out as he stretches for another pie on the bench • Relegation • Losing Oldfield and the Davis's (K & S) • Marvin playing again • York away • W*tf*rd doing well in Div 1 • Lawrence staying and prolonging the apathy • Auto Windscreens again! • FA Cup 1st round exit again • No trip to Vicarage Road • Another season like this • Relegation • Not getting the KohlerDome • Losing our star players (only to be replaced by Micky Mouse, Donald Duck, Scooby Doo et al) • Relegation to Div 3 • LL staying • More inconsistency • Another crap season at home • No new blood arriving — worse still, only Lennie's old chums from the past arriving • The dead wood staying (again) • The scum having another good season — 12 months piss taking from the scummies at work was more than enough by about a year!! • Another season like the last one.

PARANOID ANDROID (OR AM I?)

Imagine the hypothetical scene — it's about 12 - 13 years ago and you are in that generally accepted hot-headed age range of 18 to 10. Your beloved team is playing away to the most hated team in the land and they have an away fan ban. Somehow you manage to sneak in and your team is stuffed out of sight on the dreaded plastic. Do you shrug your shoulders and accept it, or do you let it fester? Long memories and vindictiveness are surely two of the traits most commonly associated with football supporters.

Now roll the clock forward. You are in the age range of 30 to 43, you have settled down with a wife and 2.2 children, live in a small village and you have a responsible job. You work for the Government in one of the back offices, or for the Department of the Environment, or for Beds County Council, and in your spare time you are a Football League referee. Now, occasionally, in the normal routine of your job (or your hobby) you come across the name of the hated team — you don't let what happened all those years ago influence your decisions — do you?

I would like to reiterate that this is all hypothetical. It couldn't possibly happen, could it?

Derbyshire

CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

There should be another five issues of Mad! this season, with the next one to follow in a mere four weeks. We need you to help fill the space on these pages. So, if you would like to send any cuttings, articles, match reports, letters, cartoons, photos, whatever, get them in the post to us to arrive by October 31st (or sooner, preferably). The address is MAAH, 38 Twigden Court, Mount Pleasant Road, Luton, LU3 2RL.

The Sharpe End

Brian Alexander presents an excellent show on Radio 5 Live on a Sunday morning, called Sportsweek, which takes an in depth look at the biggest sporting talking points.

Shortly after Spurs had dispensed with the services of Christian Gross, he began a discussion about his successor with journalist Jeff Powell. The name of Raddy Antic came up and Alexander dismissed it with a sarcastic comment about his time at Luton. Now, I know Brian Alexander and have appeared on his programme. He's a very good journalist and broadcaster, but I was extremely upset about his cheap jibe at Luton — and wrote to tell him so.

I'm sure he'd have made no such remarks had the names of Danny Wilson, Bruce Rioch or Ray Harford been in the frame — and he had obviously overlooked the background of the temporary, caretaker boss at White Hart Lane, a certain David Pleat.

I'll let you know whether I get a response from the letter I wrote to him about the incident.

By the way, if you happen to be a *Daily Mirror* reader, then regard anything written by their football scribe, Mike Walters, with a rather large pinch of salt — he's a committed (and shouldn't they all be) supporter of the Vicarage Road mob.

I don't know whether *Racing Post* tipster Paul Johnson is a Luton Town fan, but he has taken to tipping us to win matches in the paper recently, showing off a pretty impressive knowledge of the club, too. I particularly liked his description of Steve Davis — "whose ability to attack the ball when opponents are standing around like dummies could easily pose problems for his former club" — written in his preview of the game at home to Burnley.

All a bit of a change for the *Post*, who at the end of last season passed comment that Lennie Lawrence seemed to be claiming a great deal of credit for Charlton's achievement in making the Premiership, and added wryly that Mr Lawrence's current form of gainful employment was "turning wine into water at Luton Town".

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I wonder what Simon Oxley makes of the situation at Three Counties Radio where this former Town programme editor has found himself carrying out live commentary duties for a number of Watford matches this season, with his colleague and (presumably) boss, Dave 'John Hartson is God' Croft, doing likewise at Luton games along with a new chap, Adrian something.

Presumably, Simon is now a full time employee and no longer able to specify which games he covers. Like all good professionals, though, he is able to disguise his own personal feelings when reporting on opposition matches — always assuming, that is, that his true leanings remain at Kenilworth Road.

All credit to him, because my own inability to display neutrality nearly cost me my job many years back when, as a cub reporter, I covered Luton's FA Cup humiliation at the hands of non-league Hillingdon Borough — as the paper's Borough reporter.

My story was slightly biased towards the Hatters, though and I was lucky to escape unscathed as irate Borough supporters demanded a face to face meeting to discuss the finer points of my report!

Brian Swain is now performing the Simon Oxley role as programme editor and, to be fair, he



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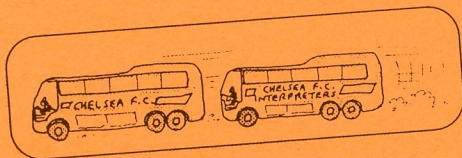
"**Glenn Hoddle** did little to challenge the view that a crisp packet would have shown more originality in front of the media"

WSC JULY 1998



"If **Cowdenbeath** are the Blue Brazil, then **Tow Law Town** are the Black and White Bolivia"

WSC JULY 1998

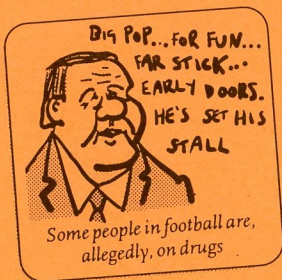


"Come on folks, what have the **Arsenal** ever done for us?"

WSC AUGUST 1998

"Is **Steve Staunton** really worth £30-40,000 a week? You start to feel, instead of affection, a sort of revulsion"

WSC SEPTEMBER 1998



"That Sir John Hall's ambition for **Newcastle** didn't include winning any trophies will no doubt come as a surprise to many fans"

WSC NOVEMBER 1997



"**Vauxhall Conference** here we come doo dah, doo dah, Vauxhall Conference here we come doo dah doo dah dey"

WSC MAY 1998

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