

MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE

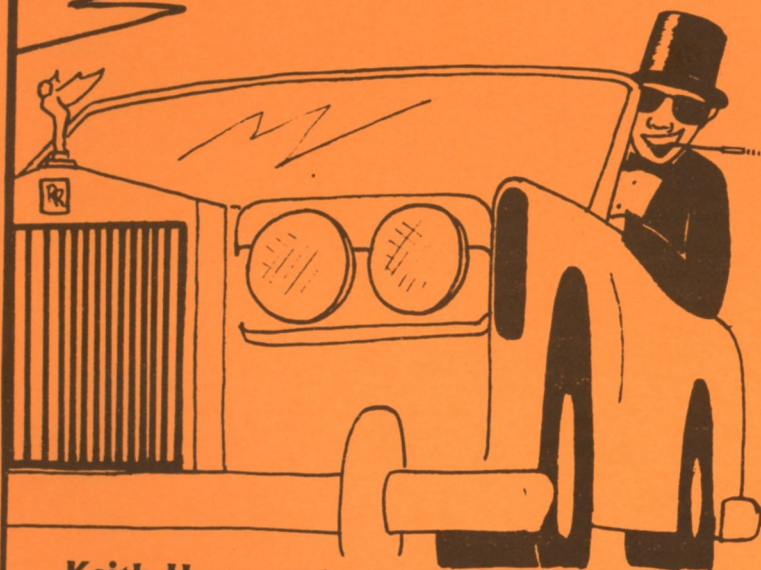


Issue 50

Nov 98

STILL ONLY 60P

"The money's neither here
nor there; it's in Geneva."



A198

Keith Hayward justifies MAAH's 20% price rise

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Cartoons: Brilliantly drawn by Adam Lloyd.

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EDITORIAL

KohlerDome. What history will record of that name is open to question. Will it be the new stadium that was the catalyst for a major improvement in the fortunes of LTFC, allowing them to compete with other clubs in the top two divisions. Or, as it seems the Department of the Environment are determined to ensure, will it be consigned to the dustbin of history as a footnote to the club's efforts, over God knows how many years, to relocate.

Just over a week after we took part in mass protest at Kenilworth Road about the delay in making a decision, the decision came — but not the one we wanted. The facts are that an interim decision to turn the scheme down because the M1 widening had been deferred turned into a final decision to turn it down because of inadequate car parking, and questionable financial viability. It could just be me, but I have this feeling that the goalposts are not exactly standing still.

David Kohler is not one for giving up without a fight — whether this is any help in the long run, only time will tell — and has already said that he will go to the High Court to fight the decision. He seems to have a good basis for this course of action. The Public Inquiry heard that the 12,000 seat football only stadium that Wyncote proposed to allow LTFC to build would not be viable, but that a multi purpose stadium would be. Don't be surprised if the High Court action also reveals much about the delays that have bedevilled the application. It is a fact that DAK feels that something underhand has been going on since the day the Public Inquiry started.

For now, we have the prospect that the whole saga will drag on for several more months, and that the further delay (and negative decision) will mean player sales, thus derailing the current promotion campaign — and possibly the cup campaigns. What is worse is that now the matter is out of the hands of politicians, and heading for the judiciary, there is next to nothing we, as supporters, can do to influence the speed of things. Once again, all we can do is wait.

Changing to a more cheery theme, it is a little surprising that we find ourselves still competing in two cup competitions — even before the Auto Windscreens Shield has started. The FA Cup we should have expected to be in, but the Worthington Cup run has been a source of great delight for us all. Have we ever had a cup run in which we have beaten four teams from higher divisions? Whether we survive the quarter final or not, Luton Town cannot be accused of getting that far with the benefit of an easy draw. All we want now is for that form to be repeated in the league, so that this can become a genuine promotion campaign. Player sales would not help, so we can only ask the board to hold that prospect off for as long as possible, in order to improve our chances. Of course if a few more people came through the turnstiles, that would help as well. All it should take is a winning team.....

A CHILDHOOD DREAM

It was pre-season in 1977. Kenilworth Road had a lush green pitch surrounded by terracing. The Kenilworth End was a vast open sprawl of concrete steps that every now and again sprung to dramatic life, for instance when a big London club visited or a bigish "Northern Giant" came south. The Oak Road end in the seventies was everything it should have been but never will be again. It was small compact terracing and its roof amplified the chants that rose from the middle section. It was as partisan as it possibly could be and, in short, it was bloody magic.

And me? I was sixteen, and I was about to walk down the tunnel and play there.

With a couple of references from my P.E. teacher and the manager of that 'famous' feeder Sunday side Shrubhill United, I was taking part in a trial for my beloved Luton Town Football Club. It was something my father felt I ought to do, lest I look back in later years and regret what might have been.

I might have been a complete lunatic at school (*I take that's a guilty plea then?*) but as far as football goes I was quite clued up. I knew it was just a dream and I sensed that I did not have it as far as being a pro went. I was just there for the big day out.

I sat in the changing room in awe of my holy surroundings. Listening to the waffle around me it was clear that not everyone shared my chosen religion. "Yeah," chirped one of the other twits, "I've been to this club and that club and now I'm trying Luton." Yeah, rave on mate, I bet you'll be really committed to the cause if we take you on!

But I remained silent. The coach, Roy McCrohan, gave us our pep talk, "Don't try and overimpress, lads, there will be a couple of coaches with me on the sidelines. We'll pick up on you if you have the skill we're looking for." Cheers Roy, out of my way now, I've got a game of football to play.

So, into the tunnel. Luckily enough, Town aren't a bunch of Scouse posers so no 'This is Kenilworth Road' bullshit sign to look at as I trotted out on to the green green grass of home.

So, there I was on the pitch. At other times when I ran on the pitch there was the chance a steward or policeman would be there to chuck me off. Not this time. The match got underway and I had hardly been near the ball. Then, minding my own business, I suddenly found the ball at my feet, and the keeper sprawled out on the edge of his area after smothering a breakaway from my side.

Breaking from midfield, I could see this was a chance for a bit of glory. With my instep, I hit the ball in a chip shot kind of way. I watched sail higher and higher in the air before dipping neatly under the crossbar and into the handily vacant net. The Kenilworth Terrace remained deathly silent, but no matter, I had scored a goal at the Town's ground. Of course, no one on my side came over to congratulate me — they were probably all thinking "Bastard, I bet they sign him instead of me". I wish!!

Anyway, the definitive moment had not yet arrived, but it was not too long before my ultimate ambition in life was to be gloriously fulfilled.

This time I was attacking the Oak Road end — **our** end. A long ball was hoisted forward, and I just ran onto it. Before I could reach it, two defenders also trying to impress with their 'technical skills' clattered into me, leaving me like the proverbial sandwich filling. As I picked myself up I saw the Town apprentice detailed to referee the game pointing to the spot. I shyly tried to lose myself, not wanting to take the pen, and risk the embarrassment of missing. However, fate was

thankfully never going to let me get away with that. The apprentice ref insisted that I was the only person to take it. His logic was that I had taken the tumble and won the kick, and therefore became the divinely appointed taker. So this, in front of our kop, in front of dear old Harry Haslam sat high in the Main Stand. I guess the adrenalin rush of the occasion just kind of takes over.

I had only ever taken one penalty for Shrubhill United, and missed — they are still looking for the ball. But this was like the beginning of Chariots of Fire. Everything seemed to go into a state of surreal slow motion. I placed the ball on the spot, took the conventional run up from the edge of the area, strode up and stroked the ball at waist height into the right hand side of the net. The keeper had taken the only sensible option and dived the other way. It was over and I could die happy.

I had played on the pitch and scored two decent goals, one at each end. But more important, I had scored at the Oak Road end — bloody magic to say the least.

Highbury Hatter

BOOK REVIEW

Luton Town: The Modern Era — A Complete Record

by Roger Wash.

pub. Desert Island Books, £16.99 (hardback)

It is a happy coincidence for the reviewer that this book covers the entire period that he has been watching Luton Town regularly, with half a season to spare (happier, that is, than the fact that I had to pay for this in order to review it!). Those 30 years, from 1967/68 to 1997/98, have seen Luton rise from the old Fourth Division to the First, and fall most of the way back but are nonetheless full of memories. For me, Roger Wash has done an excellent job of summarising that period, without losing the attention to detail that brings back plenty of memories. Each season is summarised over about 3 pages, followed up by a Match of the Season report — although those of us with long enough memories may not agree with all of the matches chosen for this accolade. After the first section, of 162 pages, there follows the statistical section of a further 186 pages. The stats are also presented in a seasonal format with full line-ups for both sides, results, scorers, attendance and even referees name, accompanied by a brief, two line, match report.

The detail is absolutely superb, and I would sincerely hope that, unlike previous books purporting to provide such information, it is error free. Perhaps a little irritating are the "Did You Know?" boxes that appear every few pages through the first part of the book. These get off to a bad start by revealing that in October 1967 Luton had to borrow a set of kit from W*tf*rd for an away game. In places they do drift away from the period covered by the rest of the book, but they are a very minor complaint. The photographs that intersperse the text are of good quality, considering that they are not printed on glossy paper as is usual, but this does mean that they are more evenly spaced.

All in all, this a very worth while book, and will be an absolute treasure for those of us who have watched the Town for most of the periods it covers, and is essential reading for those who haven't — if only for them to find that last season's suffering is nothing new.

K.F.H.

FUTURE STARS — PART 3

Looking at Luton's midfield this season, it must be the youngest we have had for a long time. 18 year-old Matthew Spring and 21 year-old Sean Evers have played every game, with Michael McIndoe, Andre Scarlett and Jimmy Cox, all 18, having regularly featured in the first team squad. Paul McLaren, also only 21, has been injured for most of this season, but has played when available with Ray McKinnon, 28, the only 'experienced' head. However, these youngsters have taken their chances very well, and have all impressed whenever called upon, with their youthful energy and enthusiasm noticeable and very welcome as a complement to the senior players. Here's a look at who might step in should Spring, Evers or Macca be sold.

1 Michael McIndoe

Michael, a stylish left winger or central midfielder, starred in last season's double winning youth team. He was given a one-year contract in the summer, and after an impressive pre-season, is now a regular in the first team squad. The 18 year-old from Edinburgh adds balance to the team as he is quick and capable of getting forward, but can also be used as a midfield anchorman. With McGowan and Showler (if we ever see him again) also used in this position, he may struggle to keep a first team place, but Michael is definitely an excellent prospect for the future.

2 Kofi Nyamah

Kofi was signed on a one month contract in the summer having been released by Stoke City. The 23 year old left winger has had previous experience at Cambridge United and Kettering Town and he has signed another short term deal at Luton having done well in his trial period. He is very strong on the ball and he loves to get forward and take on defenders. Kofi is under consideration for a place on the subs bench at the moment having impressed Lennie Lawrence in recent reserve team fixtures.

4 Andre Scarlett

Little was known about Andre before the pint sized winger burst onto the scene, scoring a goal to cap an outstanding debut against Oldham. The 18 year old has barely played a handful of reserve team games at Luton before this season, and I was surprised to see his name appear on the teamsheet. However, Andre took his chance with both feet, delighting the crowd with his pace, trickery and determination. He was only given a three month contract in the summer, but his 23 minutes of stardom against Oldham persuaded Lennie to offer him a new deal to the end of the season. In a league where 99% of defenders are donkeys, someone like Andre could cause a few problems, so it might just be worth trying him from the start.

5 Terry Sweeney

Terry is currently on trial at Plymouth Argyle with a view to a loan move, having not forced himself into the first team squad. He is a strong central midfielder who plays in the Gary Waddock role but with a bit more creativity and eye for goal. The 19 year-old is another player whose contract is due to expire in November and he may need a couple more reserve games to prove himself.

6 Lee Lough

Lee is another 19 year-old budding Gary Waddock. He was signed on a free transfer from Ashford Town on a three month contract in the summer and has performed solidly for the reserves this season. However, at the time of writing, I believe his contract has expired and I am unaware as to whether he has been offered a new deal. Lee is a strong tackler with good vision.

7 Moses Jerry

Moses is a central midfielder completing the final year of his YTS program. He is a very skilful and is a good distributor and crosser of the ball. "Mo" has played very well in a very young youth team midfield this season and he will probably be offered professional terms in the summer if he continues to progress.

8 Delroy McKoy

"Del" is another second year YTS lad who is playing for a professional contract at the end of the season. He can operate as an orthodox winger on either flank, where he is good at getting down to the by-line and putting the ball over. He is probably the most skilful player in the current youth team, but he must work on his defensive as he is sometimes criticised for not tracking back.

9 Alex Minton

Alex is a central midfielder who was taken on as a trainee in the summer. He has played every youth team game so far, and has looked a good all round player — a strong tackler, comfortable on the ball and with a definite eye for goal. Alex was recently given a game in the reserves when, still at the age of 16, he did not look out of place.

10 Joe Harrington

Joe is also a first year YTS player. He can play in central midfield or right wing, but I feel someone of his small size is more suited to the wing. What he lacks in height he makes up for in pace and skill as he is capable of taking on defenders with ease. Unfortunately, niggling injuries have limited his youth team outings to three this term, but he already looks one for the future.

11 Jerome Thomas

Jerome is the youngest member of the Town's youth team at fifteen. He has deputised for Joe Harrington on the right of midfield this season and has looked a very capable player. He likes to get forward and has a very good shot on him, and he also gets stuck in in the midfield which makes him popular with the fans.

Patrick Johnson

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.

Open Mouth, Insert Foot

It was with a mixture of emotions that I read the comments of Beds police Chief Constable Michael O'Byrne, which were reported in several of the local papers recently. In his statement he said that he supported the KohlerDome because it would get traffic out of the Town Centre and be an easier ground to police, and this was to all true Luton fans a very welcome message and gave yet more official support to the Dome.

Unfortunately he then made a statement which seemed to suggest he is completely out of touch with supporters of the game today. His statement, for those who did not see it was that: "Most of the resident population are Asian. There is a significant minority of football fans who have fascist or neo-fascist inclinations, and who create a real climate of threat for the residents."

Whilst I recognise that the vast majority of football fans are indeed white, I cannot concede that racism is tolerated by fans or clubs alike, and certainly although it may have been the case in the late Seventies/early Eighties for fans of certain clubs and national teams to have 'fascist inclinations' how can he justify that statement in 1998. Certainly within this ground, any moronic racist chants are not taken up by the fans, and indeed most would shout down any idiot stupid enough to start them. Last season when some Chesterfield halfwits began chanting some unfunny borderline racist crap they were shouted down by Luton fans and some of their fellow Chesterfield fans alike.

I dare say if a mere football fan had the cheek to say that a significant minority of police had racist tendencies it would be a much more accurate statement than the one Chief Constable O'Byrne made (and one which could be backed up by strong evidence!) but would doubtless be denounced by the police and the political right as rubbish.

I suggest Chief Constable O'Byrne thinks before he speaks on sensitive issues like this in the future (that'll be a first for a high ranking police officer) and maybe he should even consider actually attending a football match (shudder the thought!) where he will see a different culture from the one he recalls from the bad old days of the Seventies. Football fans are not the mindless thug stereotypes that prevailed then. Contrary to popular belief we don't all read the (sports pages of the) Sun, many of us actually read books (shock!), and some fans even write them!

Also, at long last, women are made welcome at football grounds, and my wife assures me they have (almost) pleasant toilet facilities at some grounds, but I am not naive enough to think that clubs have won the battle in boosting support from ethnic minorities. However, I do disagree with Chief Constable O'Byrne as I think supporters attitudes are helping rather than hindering that process.

Andy Whiting

JUST ABOUT MANAGING

It came as something of a shock to me that after my article in issue 48 some of you doubted its accuracy. I was accused of inventing Luton's new Chief Operating Officer. Laurence Lennison didn't exist, I was told. He was a figment of my imagination. A spoof.

Naturally, these accusations hurt, so when I decided to drop in on Mr Lennison again I brought lifelong Luton Town supporter Michael Rogan with me. Michael is a season ticket holder in the Enclosure, so if you won't believe me, ask him. He'll corroborate my story. Together we present:

Another interview with Laurence Lennison by Declan McCabe, with Michael Rogan

"Go right on in," Mr Lennison's pretty secretary said, "He's expecting you."

This came as something of a surprise as we had not made an appointment, but dropped in on spec. Still, not being one to look a gift horse in the mouth I simply thanked her and we entered the office.

"Sit down gents, can I get you a drink?" our genial host enquired. Once we were comfortable he slapped a manuscript down in front of us. "There it is, gents, the story of Luton Town's near disintegration after last season and how I saved the day. It also contains a frank account of how I got over my gambling addiction."

I must admit I was speechless. He wanted us to put this in the fanzine? It was dynamite! We emptied our glasses and Lennison refilled them.

Michael asked, "What's the title then?"

"I was going to call it 'Kenilworth Sunset'," Lennison told us, "but then some local scribbler beat me to that one. Can't call it 'Mad as a Hatter' either because the blasted fanzine is called that. I might call it 'A Dome Too Far'."

We both realised that Mr Lennison had been expecting visitors other than us, but who?

I asked, "So what startling revelations are there?"

"Well, first a harrowing account of how my office was wrecked when I told David Oldfield He'd never play for Luton again. Page 56." Lennison said.

We turned to the relevant page. "It says here that he telephoned you to tell you he was going to Stoke," Michael said, "And that you slammed the receiver down in a rage and broke it."

"Yeah, well, you tabloid boys can dress it up a bit, can't you?" our host enquired.

Tabloid? The penny dropped.

"Okay," I said, getting into the persona of a hack, "What else will excite our readers?"

"Gary Waddock is a spy," Lennison said.

"Come again?" Michael asked incredulously.

"It's true," Lennison insisted, "I got a call from 'Q', you know, from the James Bond films, saying he had a post for Gary. Naturally, as I'm a patriotic Brit, I let him go."

"That wouldn't have been 'Q' as in 'QPR', would it?" I asked.

Lennison thought for a moment. "Umm. Could be, actually"

He replenished our glasses again.

"It's all here, gents, and you can have exclusive serialisation rights," Lennison told us as we both took a fortifying gulp of whisky. "For fifty thousand quid."

I must admit it was a fearful waste of perfectly good Jamesons the way we both spluttered a mouthful of the stuff over the far wall. Fortunately Lennison took it in good humour, assuming we were surprised by how cheap his asking price was. He was fairly drunk by now. He refilled our glasses again.

"So, are you pleased by the good start to the season?" I asked.

"Well, I don't mind saying the excellent win against Oxford cost me a pretty penny," Lennison confessed.

"In win bonuses?" Michael asked.

"Nah! I had two thousand quid riding on Oxford winning. I'd doubled up on Cambridge doing Watford so I was on to a winner. Bloody Gray! Bloody McLaren! Bloody, bloody Evers," he groused.

"Don't you think we've done well so far?" asked Michael.

"Oh sure," Lennison slurred. When he replenished our drinks this time about half of the whisky splashed onto the table rather than into the glasses. "Mind, there was some opposition from the players wives and girlfriends when I introduced my new techniques."

"Why?" I asked.

"Well," Lennison said between hiccups, "When I told 'em I was calling in my new shpiritual advishor they got pretty cross, I can tell you."

"You have a spiritual advisor?" I asked, "Who?"

"Good ol' Reverend Moon," Lennison said, "Sun Sing..... Song..... Sang..... something. You know, the Unification Church chappie."

"Sun Yang Moon," Michael supplied.

"Thash the shap," Lennison confirmed, "Converted the lads during pre-season, except Patterson who buggered off to Dundee United. Shed..... said it was brain-washing, did ol' Darren. Utter rubbish, of course."

"You've converted the team into Moonies?" I demanded.

"So why did the wives complain?" Michael asked.

"H-had to go," Lennison confessed. "The Rev-Reverend Moon inshishted. We had a mass marriage cermo..... cereman..... ce-re-mony day before the season shtarted. All the lads got hitched to their new Korean wives. They can start having sex with 'em in three years. We're gonna start converting the shupp..... shu..... the fans next week." I replenished the drinks this time as Lennison was unable to stand up. "Sho you shee, thas the secret. No bonking." With that he passed out.

Naturally, it would have been wrong of us to take the manuscript without paying for it and, besides, Lennison was slumped over on top of it. Despite our best efforts, and we were both a bit squiffy ourselves by now, we couldn't shift him.

As we left, a pair of tabloid reporters entered the office, took one look at Lennison snoring on his desk, made their excuses and left.

Declan McCabe

MAD MERCHANDISE

What have we got in store?

We haven't abandoned the idea of selling things to you other than the fanzine, we just haven't had space for the ads in recent issues. So, what have we got for you at Christmas?

SHIRTS

We still have a supply of the classic 1970's orange shirts, as worn by Town players between 1974 and 1979. At a price of £28.95, the home version (mainly orange) comes in sizes L and XL. The away shirt, which is mainly white with the navy and orange stripe down the left hand side is also available in both sizes, and is available at £28.95. This shirt will be discontinued when current stocks are sold.

PHOTOS

We have two aerial shots of the Kenilworth Road ground, one taken from behind (and above) the New Stand, the other taken from behind the corner of the Kenilworth Road stand and Executive boxes. The pair of photos will cost you £6.00 including post and packing.

BOOKS

We still have three copies left of last season's best seller, The Definitive Luton Town FC. The statistical work charts Luton Town's entire Football League history and is a vital reference work for the Town supporter. Available from *Mad as a Hatter!* for £9.89, including post and packing.

Of course we also have back-issues of Mad and, more suitable for Christmas presents, subscriptions. Please see the ads for these elsewhere in this issue.

Please send me:

..... home/away* shirts in size L/XL * I enclose £28.95 each

..... sets of aerial photos. I enclose £6.00 per set

..... copies of The Definitive Luton Town FC. I enclose £9.89 each.

Name.....

Address.....
.....
.....

Send your order to: Mad as a Hatter! 38 Twigden Court, Luton, LU3 2RL

anyone in particular."

That's like saying The Fast Show's Michael Paine (nosy neighbour) is not based on actor Michael Caine.

WEDNESDAY

THE Luton Town fanzine Mad as a Hatter is always having a go at this paper for inaccuracies in its Luton reports - indeed it calls us 'Accuracy

on Sunday' for much the same reason that Robin Hood called Little John, Little John.

We have to admit to the odd glitch, I'm afraid, although in our defence I would say that the pages have to get to the printers about an hour and a half after the match report is phoned into the sports desk, so there isn't much margin for error.

Not so, however, at the *Luton News* which, despite having three days on which to reflect on Saturday's result before going to print, managed to turn defeat into victory for the Hatters by crediting the Kenilworth Road outfit with a 1-0 win in its scoreline.

Not content with that blunder, the Luton News then ran a picture story about striker Dwight Marshall - only to spoil it with a caption identifying the Jamaican forward as Scottish midfielder Ray McKinnon.

Needless to say, the two are different colours.

But it gets worse. The same caption tells us that Ray McKinnon is 'expected to recover from an ankle sprain and play at Blackpool' - a match which, of course, was played two weeks ago.

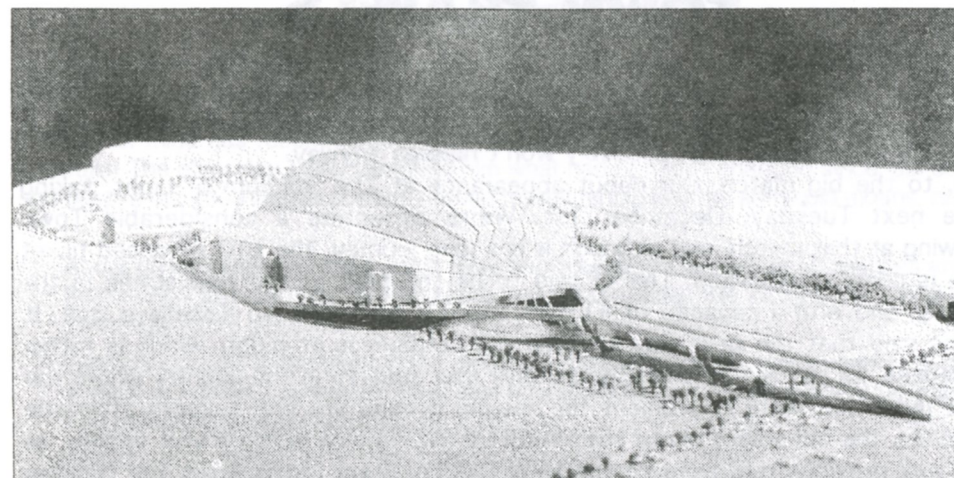
I hope the editor of Mad as a Hatter is taking notes.

Thanks to *The Guardian*, (4 May 1998), for this extract from their obituary to the late Justin Fashanu. If ever there was a case of unfair dismissal!

ACCURACY

Glad to see that our favourite Sunday newspaper, the *Accuracy on Sunday*, are also readers of this journal. I am sure they will be pleased that the editor was indeed taking notes when he read this on October 4th. They're quite right about the errors in the *Luton News*, and we'll acknowledge that the AoS have only a limited time to get everything to print after a Saturday match. However, after putting up such a stout defence of their acknowledged poor record of accuracy, it's a pity that the AoS had already blown their excuses with the paragraph preceding this item. Under a heading of "Tuesday", they printed this paragraph about *The Fast Show's* Michael Paine character. As we all know (don't we?) Michael Paine is a character from the TV programme *Harry Enfield and Chums*. And it's a bit tight to check that sort of detail between Tuesday and Saturday night, isn't it?!!

When rumours of his homosexuality reached Clough, the relationship deteriorated further. He was finally sacked after failing to turn up for a match against Watford. Fashanu refused to accept his dismissal and attended a training session. Clough, who later called him "a bloody poof", had him escorted from the ground by the police.



A model of the new Snow Dome.

Snow Dome? Look familiar, does it?

It should do. In case the pic hasn't reproduced well, that's Newlands Road running under the M1 junction 10 slip road Halfway down the right hand side. And I have in my possession a print of the very same picture of the original KohlerDome model. Mind, the second of the two paragraphs sounds horribly familiar.

Brentford 2 Luton 2 By PETE KENYON

LUTON are safe.

But boy, did 1200 travelling fans have to sweat after never-say-die Brentford snatched a second equaliser ten minutes from time - then missed an absolute sitter with the very last kick of the game.

ITS all systems go for Milton Keynes' very own theme park Gulliver's Land and the ambitious Snow Dome centre.

With no construction work starting on the city centre Snow Dome, the future of the £60 million pound project centre appeared to be on a slippery slope to oblivion.

Another from our favourite local rag, the *Accuracy on Sunday*. You'd think they'd mention that safety was assured with a blinding own goal by a ventriloquist!



● Ray Allen fires home Luton's second to ensure safety

TOWN TRAVELS

The Macclesfield trip was covered in issue 49, and the information provided in that issue stands. All we have to cover in this issue is the biggest match we've had for several years — the Worthington Cup quarter final at Sunderland — and a relatively minor match that probably won't happen anyway.

First, to the big match. Our debut appearance at The Stadium of Light, taking place next Tuesday, December 1st. We're expecting a considerable Town following at that match, and although it is a long journey, the £10 advanced ticket price is some consolation. This is said to be the best of the new stadia in the country, and with a capacity of 41,500, there is no reason to disbelieve that. It is also said that the best way to view the stadium is at night, which is rather convenient for us. This is probably the only new stadium in the country where the same pubs that were convenient for the old ground are still suitable after the move. So, the old advice about the HARBOUR VIEW being worth a visit applies, as does any previous reference to the NEW DERBY, Roker Baths Road. For families travelling independently, the award winning WESSINGTON, on Wessington Way (the A1231, near A19 junction) is recommended. Of course, many will be staying overnight or arriving early, which will give the opportunity to try some of the city centre pubs as well. Of the half dozen listed in the Good Beer Guide, it's difficult to know what to pick out, but the one to try might be FITZGERALD'S, at 10-12 Green Terrace, which often has the local Darwin beers on sale.

In the event of the FA Cup tie against Hull requiring a replay, we will at least have the advantage of knowing our way to the ground. Or at least, those who went to the pre-season friendly will. Boothferry Park is a long way out of the city centre — at least 2 miles — where there are plenty of good pubs. Nearer the ground there are also a couple. DARLEYS on Boothferry Road is good for families, with Vaux beers, as is the nearby FIVEWAYS, situated by a roundabout on the way in from the M1/M62. On Anlaby Road, towards the city, it may be worth trying the MALT SHOVEL, a small friendly local, or about a mile further on, the GBG listed ANLABY ALE HOUSE. But then again, we probably won't have to worry about any of them.

ON THE INTERNET?

JOIN WHOSH

**WORLDWIDE HATTERS ON THE SUPER
HIGHWAY**

email request-ltfc@robots.ox.ac.uk

Young Guns

(Apologies for the Wham sounding title, I can assure you it wasn't deliberate - Bleedin' Scummers.... but Young Hats doesn't have much of a ring to it.)

A friend of mine has recently become an expatriate LTFC fan by moving (extremely!) to Australia. The other day I was informing him what had or hadn't changed since last season and despite our good league position I found myself recounting the same old moans, namely :-

- About giving away last gasp goals (why can't our defence play for 90 minutes and not 86?! - And why can't our attack score last minute goals like lucky bloody W*tf*rd do seemingly every game?).
- Lennie's unusual statements to the press (i.e. saying we hadn't much chance of getting a result at Fulham - how much could that potentially harm the confidence of the players? And indeed how wrong he was....).
- Phil Gray.....

On a positive note I then began to go on with great enthusiasm about the young players who have come in and in my opinion without exception done a wonderful job. Who could tell from their composure and skill that Evers and Spring are, at 18 (*sic*), in their first full season and McIndoe and Cox have played only a handful of games between them. Certainly the enthusiasm and confidence of these players really shines and is the major factor in our successes this year. It was also great to field a 4 man midfield made up of three 18 year-olds and a "veteran of 20" (*sic*. Luton on Sunday) in a side all under 30!

Also, I don't think we should forget Kelvin Davis, Stuart Douglas and Andrew Fotiadis who although they are relative old boys compared with the others are not too long out of the youth and reserve squads.

With Fraser, George and White hovering in the wings and with the experienced players like Stevo and McKinnon guiding the youngsters along I believe this is the best set of young players I have seen since the great sides Pleat built in the early Eighties.

I remember fondly the debut of Spring for his maturity and skill (and also for the sending off!) in the same way as I remember those of the likes of 17 year-old Ricky Hill in 1976, 18 year-olds Mark Stein in 1985 and Hartson in '94. But I think the main difference between then and now is that all these players are coming through at the same time and as such have experience of playing alongside each other in the youth team under John Moore's excellent guidance. I don't think we should under-estimate his value and contribution to the club as he has developed players of skill and ability and, importantly, managed to always get the most out of his players (when first team manager finishing seventh in the old First Division and achieving 3rd at one stage(!) is certainly evidence of this).

Sometimes I think it's a shame Lennie does not seem to instil the same level of fighting spirit and confidence in the team as Moore, which is why I am always happy to see (and hear) Moore on the bench at matches yelling his head off (in Scottish) and receiving frightened looks off the young players (in English...and occasional sort of Irish from Liam George).

Anyway, I'm digressing a little from my initial point but before I sign off can I ask all supporters to give a little thought before they slate some of the youngsters when things aren't going well. The editor of this very tome relayed to me a story of some loudmouth who

sits near him abusively slagging off McIndoe for something insignificant in a home game recently. Remember how young and inexperienced these players are and how their confidence can be shattered by the crowd getting on their backs..... something parts of the crowd at Luton have become pretty good at in recent years. I suggest we sit back and enjoy their skills whilst we still can before they move to Man. Utd, Tottenham or the Arse.....

Andy Whiting

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GILLINGHAM ? LUTON ? AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

We made a 07.30 start from Luton in order to ensure that we arrived in the appropriately named Rainham, in Medway, for a rare treat — a pub which opened at 10 o'clock. On the way we stopped for breakfast at a favourite haunt in King's Cross. This was not an unusual event but for the fact that the tracksuit clad guy sitting alone at the next table enquired in a broad West Yorkshire accent as to the best route to get to Leyton Orient. He introduced himself as Lee Martin, the Halifax Town goalkeeper, who had been sent down to London on the overnight coach with the instruction to arrive at Brisbane Road as soon as possible, confirm that the team's match was going ahead and then contact their team coach to ensure their journey was to be worthwhile! This seemed hard to believe, especially as the bloke was only about 5ft 6in tall and was consuming a huge greasy breakfast. There was only one way of knowing if he was telling the truth, we decided, and that was to see him in action. We prayed for an Orient goal so we could see him in action (or not!) on the Nationwide goals programme on Monday and..... yes, the 'O's' scored and, yes, it was him.

Getting back to Rainham, we strolled into the Mackland Arms at 10.05, only to find that the brothers Grim had beaten us there. The heavens opened almost immediately and we proceeded to get thoroughly soaked in Rainham, and then absolutely drenched in Rochester where it took us 50 minutes to walk a journey of 5 minutes — among other 'attractions' we took in was a secondary school, due to navigational difficulties. Eventually we ended up at a pub in Gillingham, where we discovered that the editor had had a late change of plan and was attending the match — always a bad sign. Eventually, after failing to obtain any form of motor transport to the ground, we all left the Will Adams at about five to three. It was still pissing down, and as we walked past the railway station, nearly halfway to Priestfield, I thought "Bollocks! I'm wringing wet and I'm not paying £9.50 for the privilege of standing in a monsoon for two hours and watching the Town lose in the quagmire," so I returned to the pub — a good move as I missed Kelvin aquadiving to gift them the winner — and waited for the lads after the game.

I stayed in Chatham after the game until 10 o'clock with an ex-work colleague — a Gills season ticket holder — and to complete a strange day, on the train back between Bromley and London Victoria, whilst having a 'pony' in the bog, I had my jacket nicked.....

Steve F.

PS: After Plymouth two seasons ago, I thought I could never get more soaked. I was wrong!

Crocodile Tears??

OK. Let's start with an admission — I didn't see the tears, as the picture is very poor on the average radio broadcast. Now that I've got you wondering what the heck I'm on about, I'd better explain. It was Wednesday 28th October, and I'd made a point of getting up early so that I could hear the whole of Jon Gaunt's programme on BBC Three Counties Radio. I'm sure I wasn't the only one who did this, wanting to hear the Coventry supporting presenter ("We're going to hammer Luton 4-0" - Tuesday 27th October) having to eat humble pie. The fact that I don't particularly like his style of broadcasting would make it all the more sweet.

During the first couple of hours there were a good number of callers with some apposite song titles for the Town and Coventry, including one who played his copy of that Town classic "Hatters, Hatters, What a great team" down the phone line. Overall the phone in was a bit disappointing, as Gaunt had to admit that Luton had been the better team on the night. However, later on the programme the subject got on to the future of Luton Town and although we never got the promised phone call from Stevo, we did get David Kohler in the studio, and Margaret Moran MP on the phone. Margaret Moran gave some rather bland statements about the KohlerDome matter, and said she is doing all she can to put pressure on Minister's to reach a decision.

Now as we all know, DAK is always fairly forthright in the way he talks about football, and all matters associated with football. So, it came as something of a surprise when he elected to read out a prepared statement rather than speaking off the cuff as is usual. The gist of the statement was that the continual delays with the decision are causing financial difficulties for the club, and are likely to cause the club to have to sell players, with the inherent damage that course of action causes. The real surprise was the normally unflappable David Kohler was unable to read the whole statement without what can best be described as an emotional break. Part way through, he had to break from his prepared text due to what sounded remarkably like a man bursting into tears, and he clearly found it difficult to compose himself to complete the statement.

I have no intention of making fun of DAK over this, whatsoever. There are two ways of viewing this. Some will say that this was yet another case of DAK cynical manipulating the media in his favour. They may be right. Personally, I prefer to believe the evidence of my own ears, and feel that this was a man who really does care about the club (and, yes, the new stadium) being broken down by the frustration of trying to run the club in spite of the faceless bureaucrats dealing with the planning application. I suppose, in the end, only time will tell. But in truth, we will never know how real those tears were — unless Jon Gaunt feels fit to tell us through his *Luton News* column.

Ashley Grimes Fan Club

SHORT MEMORY?

A letter received by the editor from someone who thinks that one victory in ten years means he supports a superior team.

Dear Editor,

Your contribution on Thursday (November 5th) to Teletext p.178 did amuse me — but then watching L---n "play" always does make me laugh.

So, just because you've got Barnsley in the Worthington Cup you reckon* (and I quote) "Quarter finals here we come". I imagine Newcastle thought Hereford would be a pushover; Arsenal thought they just had to turn up to beat York in 1985 and did Liverpool really expect to lose a Cup Final to Wimbledon? The history of cup matches is littered with teams (and supporters) being over-confident. Don't count your chickens. And lest you say "Who have Watford got in the Worthington?" just remember you've got to get through Rounds One and Two of the FA Cup before you've even got a chance of being drawn against us in what is the more glamorous and prestigious competition.

As for your comments about playing Boreham Wood giving you the chance "to give Hertfordshire a footballing lesson" — nice one. To give ANY type of lesson you have to be taught it yourself first. Perhaps you managed to learn it last season. What was it again? 180 minutes of football and what did the H-tt-rs manage — 5 conceded and one scored (and that was a deflection). When you play Boreham Wood be careful for the first 30 minutes won't you? Oh no, it's only at home where you concede 4 so quickly isn't it?

I'd like to go to Boreham Wood to cheer on the home team but I've got a previous engagement that day. I'll be at a League game watching the Golden Boys — a proper team — playing in the First Division which is the one you're still trying to get into.

Let's hope you lot get all you deserve at Boreham Wood.

Yours faithfully,

Hatfield Hornet.

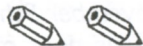
* *We were right, weren't we?*

CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

There should be another four issues of *Mad!* this season, with the next one out just before Christmas. 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 to us to arrive by December 5th (or sooner, preferably). Remember, we now have facilities to receive contribution by fax and email, as well as post. The postal address is MAAH, 38 Twigden Court, Mount Pleasant Road, Luton, LU3 2RL. Fax: 01582 653392, Email khayward@aol.com

SCRIBE'S CORNER

I hope you're all enjoying Luton v Man City, because I can tell you I'm having a cracking time at Royston v North Leigh in the FA Vase (it gets worse — I nearly had to watch Concord Rangers v Saffron Walden Town in the Harry Fisher (who?) Memorial Trophy last Saturday). There is some good news though. If Royston won their Herts Senior Cup match of November 17th, then their opponents in the next round will be..... the scum. Oh, for that to happen.



When I learned I had got this job, I started to look out for the Royston results in the paper. I was hoping the Crows would get through to the FA Cup first round, and draw the Town, therefore meaning my first match as Royston reporter would be against us. Unfortunately, the Crows got knocked out (2-0) in the third qualifying round by..... Boreham Wood. And then who did we get in the draw? Yup — Boreham Wood. What are the chances of that happening, eh?

I suppose it saved me from any awkward Graham Sharpe/Hillingdon Borough repercussions at work though.



Unless this issue has been delayed, you should be reading this the Saturday before our biggest Cup game for over 4 years. Now, although we knew whoever we got in the quarters would be tough (except Spurs, who are crap), we couldn't possibly have drawn a tougher match than Sunderland away.

However, as I said on Teletext, the last two times we reached the fourth round of this competition we went all the way to Wembley. So, let's be optimistic about Tuesday night. Ha'way the Town!



All very well holding up the 4 card in the Barnsley game, but what would we have done if the ball had been kicked off the pitch without bouncing?



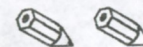
Coventry done themselves no favours by getting rid of Dion Dublin on the day of our Cup match. From their viewpoint, could it not have waited 'til Wednesday? I mean, what kind of club would sell their star striker at such a crucial point of the season.



The *Daily Mirror* obviously took its Match Facts from the AoS reporter for the Coventry game. In the paper, it reported that the Premiership side managed three shots on target (when, exactly?), and were caught offside three times compared to our six. What game were you watching mate? Three times? Try 33 instead. I don't think I've seen a team get caught by the offside trap more times than Coventry did.



The Loyal Luton Supporters Club are holding their Xmas Party on Friday, December 11, from 7.30pm. The venue is upstairs at Pitchers Sports Bar (Chapel Street), and admission is £5 — payable on the door or by purchasing tickets from any LLSC committee member. This always turns out to be a popular event (and probably X times better than any "Evenings with....."), and this year will benefit from a bar extension. See you there.



Although not exactly Mr Popular last season (and maybe not this one — yet), Lennie has won a lot of my respect in the past month. Why? Well, for saying "we're talking months rather than weeks" in relation to players not being sold. Well said, LL — now, take note Mr Kohler:

It is vitally important that we gain promotion this season. If you sell anybody (first teamers) at this point (ie. the Davises, Evers, Spring etc.) then we can forget all hope of ever leaving this division (except for Div Three). LL has got it right (and, for once, has talked sense) — we need to keep these players together for this season. Any break-up of the team will severely dent our promotion prospects. DK — I know we're a selling club, I know we're losing money (allegedly £40k a week), I know we're all waiting on the Government, but we have to speculate to accumulate. Think of the financial reward of Division One football (Sky money alone), think of the Dome, think about our chance to stuff the scummers 4-0 and rub their noses in it for another 10 years. Don't sell anyone — not now. If you do sell one of our important players (for crap money deals as well), then you're the same as W*tf*rd — ie. the scum of the earth.



Obviously, what I've just said doesn't apply to ludicrous offer. I mean, what right minded person would turn down £15 million and Sol Campbell if Spurs were desperate for Mitchell Thomas to go back (unlikely, I know — but not impossible!).



If Kohler wants a decision on the Dome (which, at this rate, will still be finished before the Millennium one), he should take the players for a training session on Clapham Common. Plenty of Government Ministers to be found there!



Don't forget Scribe's Corner on Teletext every week (flashing bits an added bonus) — Thursdays, ITV, p 178. Not only am I writing against one scum fanzine (CYHSYF), but now it's against two (Do I Not Like Twat). Although at least this second 'zine responds to what I say about them every now and then — placid CYHSYF were getting plain boring.



Anyway, have to go now — better go look for North Leigh on the map, just in case.

Chris Lennon

RAVING MAD!!!

Dear "Mad",
Seeing the enclosed photograph (right) I have to say hooray for *The Guardian's* accuracy in naming foreign (ie. Scottish) players correctly!

What an interesting summer for transfers! First of all the news — good on one hand, bad on the other — that Darren Patterson was leaving Luton Town to come to my Scottish club, Dundee United. How I revelled in being the only person up here to have heard of United's new signing, and how I thrill to hear Luton mentioned almost every time Patterson is, during match commentary. Sadly for Luton (though our defensive record to date is an impressive played 11, conceded 9) he is making quite an impression north of the border.

Better than this, however, was Ray McKinnon moving to the Town. A fine player who has struggled, mainly through injury, to hold down a regular first team spot at either Dundee United, Aberdeen or Nottingham Forest. Interestingly, he holds a unique record in Scottish football. Two seasons ago in an away match against Kilmarnock, he scored a hat-trick as Dundee United won 3-2. Nothing unusual in this, except for the fact that each goal came from a direct free kick, each one more spectacular than the one before. I was pleased to see that he got off the mark at Wrexham; a few more speciality hat-tricks and we might make automatic promotion (as opposed to just winning the play-offs). Anyway, I write after winning 3-1 at Harrods, so at the moment anything is possible.

Paul Gorman,
Edinburgh.



Best foot forward . . . Ray McCoullan tackles Sean Davis of Fulham during Luton's 3-1 win. PHOTOGRAPH: JAMIE McDONALD

Dear "Mad",
Nice to see Boncho hasn't deserted the profession. I'll always remember him for an unbelievable blast over the bar/stand at Palace whilst standing on the six yard box (that and taking 5 months to score a goal that wasn't a penalty whilst a Terry Westley ever-present).
Can't recall to much of the new found aggression he obviously displays for CSKA though!
Barry Mills,
London SE4.

Dear "Mad",
I have been watching LTFC away for nearly 30 years now and, although the memory fades, I don't think I have ever been so wet at a game as I was at Gillingham the other Saturday. Can anyone think of any worse wettings?
Dave Riley,
Luton.

Dear "Mad",
The extracts on Keith Barber from the *Evening Standard* printed in issue 49 of your organ brought back memories of his inability to gain, consistently, either length or accuracy with his goal kicks or punts. This is not to discount his considerable talents as a goalkeeper, but I recall one particular match where his kicking resulted in a highly audible and amusing *critique* from the terraces. The Town were playing Spurs during the 1974-75 Division One season; in the Spurs goal was one Pat Jennings. It was not the most enthralling of games and during a quiet moment, when the ball had been played back to Jennings, a loud and penetrating voice opened up from the home crowd. The comments were directed at the Town goalkeeper and went something like this: "Barber, are you watching this? Now, look at Jennings, *he* knows how to do it; see how he picks up the ball and kicks it properly." These words not only led to much laughing on the terraces, they were also heard and enjoyed by the players, including Barber. Perhaps to join in the fun, Jennings hoisted an enormous punt, which came direct to Keith. The latter grinned broadly when his critic concluded with, "Barber, you've seen what Jennings can do, let's see if you've learned anything from him."

I do not hear such good humoured exchanges nowadays, but I hope that other supporters can prove me wrong.

Richard Marks,
Soulbury, Bucks.

and mounted police had to step in to restore order in a local derby, which ended in a 3-2 victory for CSKA.

The trouble flared in the 67th minute with the game level at 2-2. CSKA's former Ipswich and Luton midfielder Boncho Genchev shoved the visiting defender Georgi Petrov, and then Genchev was knocked to the ground by the Kyustendil goalkeeper, Michail Rolev. The CSKA striker Valentin Stanchev attacked Rolev and then players from both sides became involved as the fighting spread. Mounted police stormed the pitch to break up the battle.

CSKA's Genchev and Stanchev were shown the red card and Kyustendil's Petrov was also dismissed. Despite being down to nine men, CSKA took the points when Rumen Khris-tov grabbed a late winner.

Dear "Mad",

I am writing to enquire about a letter you received last issue from Lars of Norway. I was wondering if this could be none other than Lars Elstrup, the former Luton Town player. I seem to remember, although I could only have been about 9 or 10 at the time, that Lars was a very promising player for Luton. Although he became homesick and returned home, leaving Dowie to hold the reins up front. I would be very interested to know what actually happened to Lars, as after he left Luton I never heard of him again.

I would also like to agree with Mick Squires about starting a 'Cherry out' campaign, along with the not so honourable LL. Last year was a shambles and we are now only starting to show how crap this division actually is. Luton should not be struggling each season to stay in business, and I would like to see a revival of the former Luton 'glory' days in the top flight (not to much to ask for Mr Lawrence)!

As a final point I would like to note, as many of you will have already observed, that Phil Gray is nothing but a Tellytubby who forgot his costume. When will we let the potential of Fotiadis and, most prominently, Liam George, be drafted into the starting line-up. This would no doubt at least decrease the dependence on 'King Stevo' for scoring all our goals.

Cheers for your time,

David,

Milton Keynes.

No it wasn't Lars Elstrup, who joined a religious cult called the Wild Geese and changed his name to.....

Liam George would probably not want a starting place until he has recovered from his broken leg and ankle ligament injuries.

Dear "Mad",

Thanks for printing my small letter in the last issue of Mad. You might like to know that Town got a mention on an English speaking radio station out here; Radio Thailand. Quote: "And now onto sport, where Coventry City added to their woes last night by going down 2-0 to second division Luton." I thought I was back home!

Ian Studd,

Bangkok, Thailand.

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, and 42 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.

UP FOR T' CUP

26.09.98 TOWN 0 WALSALL 1

After the excitement of the midweek cup win over Ipswich, this match was very much a case of 'after the Lord Mayor's Show'. There was general agreement that this was a crap match, and a crap performance. The fact that for the second week running we conceded the winning goal in the 86th minute of the match actually made matters even worse. It seems that beating Ipswich in a pulsating match could do nothing to improve the attendance for a league game the following Saturday, but in some ways that may not be bad news — imagine how many people would have been put off watching the Town for the rest of the season had they turned up for this match!

K.F.H.

03.10.98 CAPITALISTS 1 THE GOOD GUYS 3

Let's be honest, before the game most of us were hoping our boys would be up for it, would dig in, and perhaps get a point from Al Fayed's swaggering Premiership bound Fulham. How nice to have got it all gloriously wrong for once.

There are certain grounds where it always means that little bit more if a victory is gained. Of course, there's that lot down the M1 motorway who, according to well worn tradition, we all loathe. And then there's Milwall — I mean, you would not be human if that lot did not wind you up, even the so called fans who don't want to thump you are usually so mouthy it makes you want to thump them. Let's face it, our last minute double goal haul there last time out was akin to a good glass of vintage champagne (well, a whole bottle really)!

Anyway, in plitical terms as far as I am concerned it was the Social Republic of Luton v the immoral money grabbing capitalist from Harrods (I prefer to do my shopping in Sainsbury's anyway). And like any good story of good against evil, the good guys came out on top. Phil Gray's header looked easy and the Cottagers response to it was encouragingly bad — they couldn't even get near our goal let alone muster a shot at it. Kelvin became a spectator and, like the 1,500 of us behind his goal, he must have enjoyed the show. We sang "Where were you when you were shit" to the Fulham fans, all aware of the irony that they were still shit. It was 1-0 at half time and, for me, there was a kind of disbelief at just how easy it all was.

However, they were bound to come at us strongly at the beginning of the second half, after all, Keegan being such a quality manager would ensure that! Again we all got it gloriously wrong, and within a couple of minutes of the restart a great cross from the left, Douglas forgot to slip over looking for a foul and his looping header landed neatly in the net. 2-0 to the Social Republic. "What a waste of money," we chorused as still Fulham could not manage a decent shot at goal. We had a couple of other dangerous attacks and it looked for a few minutes as if we might really humiliate them, but we missed them and Fulham scrambled themselves back into the match. They even managed to score themselves and I did not mind that much. There fans had been pretty decent during the game with only the occasional chant of "You all support W'tf(rd," and considering their humbling they were OK about it all.

The whistle blew, 3-1 to the Luton Town. Keegan walked the gauntlet of away fans to the tunnel getting the predictable "Keegan, Keegan, what's the score," chant. As for our players, the celebrations with the Town hoards were a bit muted considering the result and performance. Come on lads, let's give it some when we stuff one of the big guns of this Division — on their own ground, at that!!

Phil 'Highbury Hatter' Darton

10.10.98 YORK CITY 3 TOWN 3

This was the game that would surely not be a Saturday 3pm kick-off cos England v Bulgaria was kicking off at this time. After all, what commercial sense did it make when, after our contemplating whether it would be Friday night, Saturday lunchtime or Sunday, YCFC confirmed it would indeed be Saturday at 3pm. And, lo and behold, it attracted their biggest home league crowd thus far..... so much for logic. By the end of the game I think every supporter in the ground was relieved it did clash with the England game as we had witnessed a very entertaining match and avoided watching the crap bore draw at Wembley.

The traditional start for a trip to York — "the insomniac's special" 0652 Luton to Sheffield — ensured arrival in York for opening time and the usual comprehensive "alternative visitors tour" of the city's hostels. Our taxi pulled up at Bootham Crescent at 30 seconds after 3pm just in time to hear the P.A. announcer acclaiming the scorer of York's first goal. When another defensive failure led to a well taken second goal for our hosts the optimism that had carried over from the previous week's practice match mauling of "Kevin Keegan's Moneybags Fulham" began to wane. However, the Town gradually settled and goals from Douglas, then Evers just before the interval gave the decent travelling support much joy and set up the second half nicely, and when Gray put us ahead it seemed we would secure the points. Then York stepped up their game and the impetus changed with City equalising and Kelvin suffering an injury. Strangely, Kelvin actually played better following his injury and made a couple of good saves to prevent a York winner.

Overall, fair result, good lively game and, as always, a thoroughly enjoyable trip to York.

Steve Follit

17.10.98 SPECTRUM 2 MYSTERONS 0

What's going on here you wonder? Well, let me enlighten you further. At one point today we had Captain Scarlett who managed to cause as much mayhem on his debut as perhaps Ricky Hill back in the halcyon days of '76 against Bristol Rovers. Then there was Colonel White, whose introduction late on paved the way for the last few minutes for Stevo to revert to his striker role. Then — now correct if I'm wrong — Captain Grey (Gray), who I thought led the line magnificently against a team best described as giants, especially at the back. If push comes to shove we could call the midfield trio the Angels; Harmony, Melody and Symphony, or to you and me Evers, McKinnon and Spring. Then, if we were to play..... ah, yes, what about Grimsby Town — back could come Captain Black (the traitor). No doubt the lack of a new ground would have us playing at Cloudbase. Well, we can always dream on..... No, that's a totally different programme. Until the next time S.I.G. (Scarlett is G O (d)).

Gerry Anderson

20.10.98 TOWN 1 NORTHAMPTON TOWN 0

Another clean sheet at home, and three points from our 'near' neighbours. A free kick from Graham Alexander after 20 minutes wins it for us. And only minutes after Rennie 'scored' with a free kick taken before the ref had blown and whilst the ball was still moving. You would think that professional players would know the rules..... COBBLERS!!!

For some reason Lennie didn't bring on Andre Scarlett, the hero versus Oldham — perhaps Andre hadn't finished all his homework!

Northampton couldn't even fill two thirds of the Oak Road end, shoddy really when it's their nearest away match.

How pleasant it was to return to the old routine of:

1. Beating a team who play in yellow (well, sometimes).
2. Beating a team who kick the ball into the clouds.
3. Beating a team who have awful away support.
4. Beating a team who have a big, ugly centre forward.
5. Beating a team who have a weasel faced pygmy manager.

There are other continuations to the above theme..... can you think of any?

The Charrett

24.10.98 GILLINGHAM 1 TOWN 0

Wet, wet, wet.....

Outside of a shower, a bath, and a swim, I doubt we've ever been quite so wet. Readers will be pleased to know that our clothing has now dried out — just! The game itself was a fairly drab affair with the players doing well to stay on their feet. Apart from the fact that Asaba took the goal fairly well, the blame lies solely and exclusively with the aquaplaning Kelvin. He clearly shouted for the ball, which Stevo left, and the rest is history. This was the only mistake of the game by either side, which was fairly impressive in the conditions. We also saw, for a change, some good refereeing, with the man in black making allowances for the conditions, rather than waving cards about all over the place.

K.F.H./N.G.

27.10.98 TOWN 2 COVENTRY CITY 0

What's it like to be outclassed.....?

When my alarm went off at 8 am and the bloke reading the sports news on the radio said Coventry had sold Dublin for £5 million, I thought I was still dreaming.

But it was true — and Dublin was out (by his own accord) for the cup tie, paving the way for a possible upset. Rather than it just being an upset, you'd have thought we were the Premiership side — we were that good. If you can't picture it, just think of the players standing on top of the exec boxes and pissing on Coventry from a great height — that's how much better we were.

We had to wait until the second half for the breakthrough — Gray hitting home an Evers cross which the keeper (strangely wearing our sub keepers shirt) should have collected. However, Coventry never came back at us, Kelvin had a very quiet game and Stevo then made sure of the victory with a header which had a helping head into the back of the net.

Anyway, are LTFC showing some initiative alongside the League's decision to use a yellow ball between November and February? Are we playing in orange at home just to "lighten up the dull winter months"? If not, I think we should. Two games in orange at home and two wins. Magic.

Back to the match — Wembley, Wembley, we're the famous.....

The Beat

31.10.98 TOWN v CHESTERFIELD

How typical is this? Myself and my partner Helen are down for a long weekend in London — seeing the sights, doing the shops, all that sort of touristy thing. We bought tickets in advance for the Chesterfield match and were looking forward (well, I was anyway) to my long, long awaited first trip to Luton. Glorious, crisp, autumnal weather greeted us on Thursday and Friday, but Saturday.....

We got the train from King's Cross and on the way Helen made a joke about the match being

called off because of the rain. As the train pulled into a freezing Luton station, it was clear Bedfordshire was suffering from the rain more than London. We got a taxi to the ground — thus spoiling the good old anticipation building walk with the other fans, but it was that or drown crossing Dunstable Road. I had my photo taken in front of the Kenilworth Stand, visited the Club Shop etc., and crawled into the Main Stand Enclosure. At last! After only about 14 years of waiting, I finally take my seat for a home match. Except I can't because it's practically under water, and anyway the seat numbers are delightfully random and scrambled, but never mind: I've frozen my extremities before in both Scottish and English football grounds and nothing, but nothing, is going to stop my enjoyment of this. So, it was with heavy heart — no, a huge, crushing blow — that the announcement comes over the tannoy that the game is to be cancelled. I felt sorry for the Chesterfield fans who trekked disgruntled out of the ground, but sorrier for myself; okay, we only had to catch the Thameslink back to London, but we had to come down from way up here in the first place! A consolation pint in the Nelson's Flagship helped a little, but only a little. My first experience of Luton, then, muddled a little by weather and by circumstance, came to a wet, unhappy and rather swift end, but at least I've been now; I can always come back!

Paul Gorman, Edinburgh



The William Hill HatterLeague 4

This latest update comes to you after 8 matches of the HatterLeague season, the latest being the away match at Stoke City. Some of the figures we have used are unconfirmed due to *Luton News* sports reporter Dave Flett being on holiday! Fortunately for us, although we didn't make it too difficult for you to spend your £4 million, the top scoring combination of players is outside that bracket — just as well really. We have added Gary Doherty, Andre Scarlett and Kofi Nyamah to the players list in this issue to give you more choice of how to spread your money in the transfer market. Anyway, enough of the waffle, on to the details.

The HatterSix players and their scores are:

Code	Player	£	Pts	Code	Player	£	Pts
<u>Goalkeepers</u>							
301	Kelvin Davis	0.7 m	6	302	Nathan Abbey	0.3 m	-8
<u>Defenders</u>							
311	Gavin McGowan	0.5 m	0	314	Marvin Johnson	0.6 m	21
312	Julian James	0.4 m	-8	315	Steve Davis	0.8 m	27
313	Mitchell Thomas	0.6 m	12	316	Alan White	0.6 m	6
<u>Midfielders</u>							
321	Sean Evers	0.6 m	31	327	Ray McKinnon	0.7 m	6
322	Matthew Spring	0.5 m	19	328	Jimmy Cox	0.3 m	0
323	Graham Alexander	0.7 m	30	329	Michael McIndoe	0.4 m	3
324	Paul McLaren	0.6 m	1	330	Andre Scarlett	0.3 m	0
325	Paul Showler	0.5 m	0	340	Kofi Nyamah	0.4 m	0
326	Simon Davies	0.4 m	0	<u>Strikers</u>			
331	Phil Gray	0.5 m	28	335	Liam George	0.5 m	0
332	Stuart Douglas	0.4 m	20	336	Dwight Marshall	0.5 m	0
333	Herve Bacque	0.7 m	0	337	Gary Doherty	0.3 m	0
334	Andrew Fotiadis	0.4 m	2				

The leading pack are apparently determined not to be separated, but the selection of the Manager of the Issue, along with the bonus of 10 points, has allowed Hilary Williams to leap into first place. The choice was again made by random computer selection. We have corrected last issue's error when the award was given as 5 points rather than 10.

Leading Places:

1	HILARY'S HILARIOUS HATTERS	Hilary Williams (Welwyn Garden City)	153
2=	CHRISTABEL'S KICKERS	Christabel Orr (Birmingham)	143
2=	SCIENTIAE ET LABOR DETUR	Mick Price (Kensworth, Beds)	143
2=	KENILWORTH KICKERS	Andrew Wallace (Hitchin)	143
2=	ANDY'S STOP HATTERS	Andy Wesson (Luton)	143
6=	DEBOYS DUNGOOD	Colin Guy (Luton)	135
6=	DOLLY'S DESTROYERS	Cheryl Knight (Luton)	135

Hiding in the mid-table positions (all 111 of them!) the editor's "Six Mad!" is showing some promise in 13th place, while the compiler of the results, Russell Bulkeley with "Last of the Big Spenders", holds 77th. Last season's champions Derbyshire 1968, managed to Dave Pearson, have a meagre 111 points in 65th place. To other teams worth a mention are Rick Hooper's "And in first place with", who actually lie equal 38th, and John Clark's "AAAAAAA Marvin FC" in

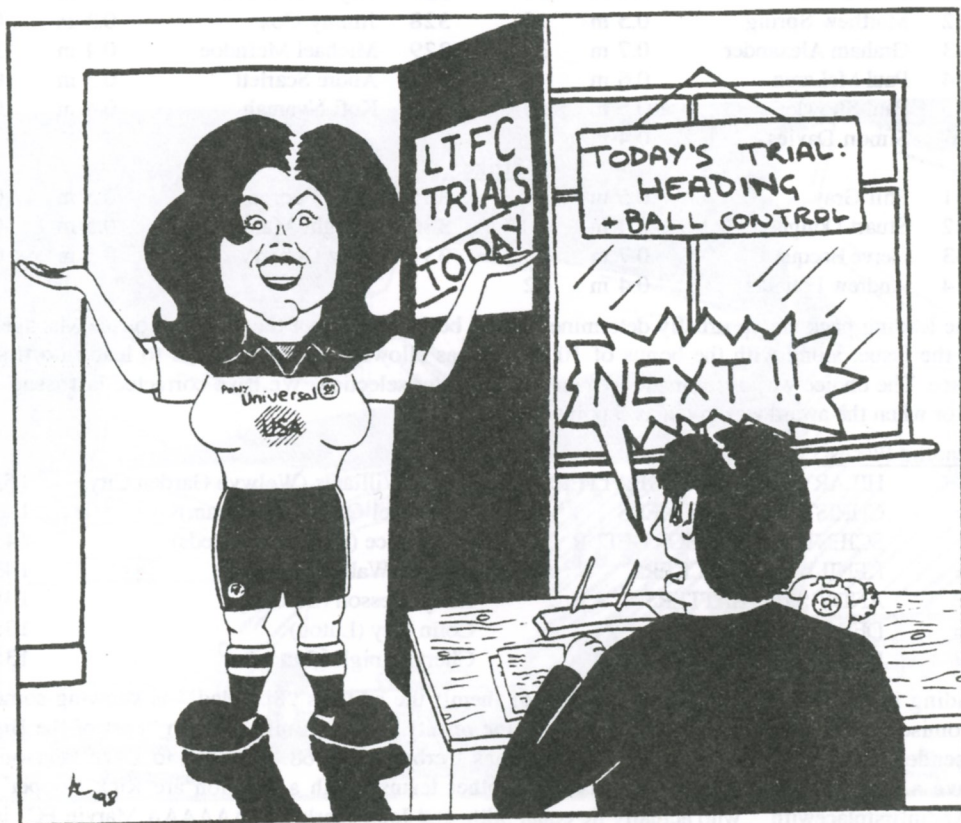
72nd. The latter team was so named on the basis that it would be the winning team in the event of a tie — looks like that strategy is failing. Last season's wooden spoonist, Maxine Whiting, have been relived of responsibility by her husband Andy, who chickened out of putting his own name on last year's entry, and is doing better this time, currently sharing 38th place — presumably you let Max choose the team this time, Andy! Looking favourite for this year's wooden spoon, I'm mystified how Andy Hunt could be in the red, points-wise, and he does look fairly secure in that position! The 35 point gap between the bottom two positions looks unassailable even at this early stage.

Bottom End:

117	BUMPS-A-DAISY	Mrs Sam Daniels (Sleaford, Lincs)	69
118	POD'SPLAYMATES	Karen Paxford (Reading)	66
119	DAVE'SDYNAMOS	David Harris (Southampton)	48
120	THEYOUNGONES	Kevin Roche (South Africa)	33
121	WHOAREYA?	Andy Hunt (London)	-2

Incidentally, we still don't have a name for Christopher Murton's team (also 38th), so if you're reading this.....

K.F.H./R.B.



JOKE CORNER

(This title is not a reference to Graham Alexander!)

The collective term for Jellyfish is a stuck.

The collective term for Geese is a gaggle.

*The collective term for Tossers is the W*tf*rd Supporters Club.*

- Q *What is the difference between a Hornet and a sperm?*
A *The sperm at least has the potential to be a human being!*
- Q *Why should all W*tf*rd fans be buried 100 feet under the ground?*
A *Because deep down they just might be decent people!*
- Q *How many W*tf*rd fans does it take to paper the bathroom?*
A *Two, if you slice them thinly enough!*
- Q *What sexual position produces the most ugly children?*
A *Go ask a Hornet's mother!*
- Q *What is the definition of a tragedy?*
A *A 53 seat coach going over a cliff with only 50 W*tf*rd fans on board!*
- Q *How do you keep a W*tf*rd fan occupied?*
A *Write 'Please turn over' on both sides of a piece of paper!*
- Q *What was Rock Hudson's main ambition in life?*
A *To play in goal for W*tf*rd — 10 pricks in front of him, 7000 behind him!*

A fire broke out at Vicarage Road and the fire brigade duly arrived. After putting out the inferno, the fire brigade informed Graham Taylor that the trophy room had been destroyed. "What about the cups", asked Graham. "Don't worry," came the reply, "the fire got nowhere near the canteen."

The Kelvin Davis Fan Club

However, whilst talking about Israeli stars who could ever forget the loveable Ronny Rosenthal? When he burst on the scene with that hattrick at Charlton and those goals towards the end of 89/90 and last title Ronny was a hero. But he never made it did he? Went to Spurs and never made it there either, went to Watford and that's not only the end of the motorway, but the end of the world as well when it comes to football.

A perceptive comment from the Liverpool fanzine *Red All over the Land*.

Standing on a chair to get a better view of the medal ceremony, the Malaysian coach was a patently proud man. And, with a name like Sid Allen, a patently non-Malaysian man.

He had taken a roundabout route to his current job - born in Romford, Essex, he emigrated to Canada at 16 and played and coached there before taking up his current post eight years ago. His nationality now is something he is unsure of. "I'm a mixture," he said. "But I still support Luton Town, so I guess there's a bit of England in me."

If the idea of the Malaysian bowling coach being a Town fan seems odd, then this is downright wierd. The cutting is from *The Guardian*, 11 September 1998.

According to Alf, the explanation is far simpler than that: Rudi is so like Waddle because for years he played him. Yes, it seems that in Norway English football is so popular that it has created a burgeoning market for tribute teams.

Like tribute bands such as Bjorn Again and the Bootleg Beatles, the tribute teams seek to recreate the look, style and on-field nuances of some favourite squad from football's past.

Rudi was one of the stars of Geordie Vision FC, an Arthur Cox-era Newcastle United playalike outfit who were good enough three years ago to win the Norwegian tribute teams' equivalent of the Premiership, the Binaryship.

This, it should be said, was no mean feat. Geordie Vision had to beat off stiff competition from the likes of Revie Revisited, a troupe who promise to "recreate Leeds United circa 1970 down to the very last kick (or spit, or punch)"; Wasgood, who offer to do the same for the Chelsea

team of that period, only with longer sideburns; Back to the Futchers (Luton Town mid-Seventies); Nishtalgia (Derby County, 1974); and Young Trafford, a unique cross-generational tribute team made up entirely of people looking and performing like those Manchester United players who have over the decades been hailed as "The New George Best". According to Alf, their Ralph Milne is so spot-on it's scary.

From *The Independent*, 14 September 1998. The medal ceremony was for ten-pin bowling!

FOOD TABLE — WITH PLACE SETTINGS

1 Cambridge Utd	21 Bristol Rovers	35 Carlisle	49 Nott'm Forest	62 York	76 Southampton
2 Huddersfield	22 Millwall	36 Luton	50 Crewe	63 Sheffield Wed	77 Swindon
3 Rochdale	23 Colchester	37 Barnet	51 Derby	64 Portsmouth	78 Man City
4 Chesterfield	24 Bradford	38 Newcastle	52 Blackburn	65 Exeter	79 Chelsea
5 Charlton	25 Northampton	39 Macclesfield	53 Mansfield	66 Southend	80 Oldham
6 Hartlepool	26 QPR	40 Aston Villa	54 Sheffield Utd	67 Gillingham	81 Bury
7 Rotherham	27 Torquay	41 Liverpool	55 Brentford	Brighton	82 Reading
8 Middlesbrough	28 Walsall	42 Bournemouth	56 Plymouth	69 Grimsby	83 Burnley
9 Stoke	29 Fulham	43 Scarborough	Argyle	70 Everton	84 Cardiff
10 Preston	30 Blackpool	44 Hull	57 C Palace/	71 Wigan	85 Peterborough
11 Notts Co	31 Leeds	45 Wolves	Wimbledon	72 Tranmere	86 Tottenham
12 Man Utd	32 Arsenal	46 Shrewsbury	58 Doncaster R	73 Stockport	87 Chester
13 Coventry	33 Sunderland	47 Barnsley	60 Watford	74 Darlington	88 Oxford
14 Lincoln	34 Leicester	48 Scunthorpe	61 Norwich	75 Port Vale	89 Wembley
15 Ipswich					90 Wrexham
16 Bolton					91 Bristol City
17 West Ham					92 Swansea
18 Birmingham					93 Leyton Orient
19 Wycombe					* list compiled by
20 West Brom					Colman's Football

● CAMBRIDGE are tops with their bacon roll "a spectacular high spot," says the report. Cambridge catering manager, Carla Frediani, said: "We use best back bacon and put two rashers into each roll. I'm a vegetarian but even I get tempted." Other high spots: Walsall's balti pies and Lincoln's hot pork rolls.

Food Guide

Two tables that put Luton in its rightful place, above W*t*f*rd. The top one is to do with quality of food at football grounds, the other is some nonsense about High Street shop rents.

THE RENTAL RANKINGS

BEST

Centre % Change
1987-97

1	Milton Keynes	218%
2	Newbury	200%
3	Aylesbury	150%
4	Luton	145%
5	Woking	129%
6	Watford	122%
7	Hastings	114%
8	Bracknell	100%
9	Camberley	100%
10	Leighton Buzzard	100%

NEW research from property consultants Colliers Erdman Lewis challenges the perceived wisdom that the boom in out-of-town retail centres has undermined the High Street.

Topping the list of best performing High Streets was Milton Keynes, where in-town rents have jumped 218% over the past 10 years.

Most of their parents were the kind of people who put Thatcher in power. "We've all got a certain common background. My parents are blue-collar workers," Nutter says. "My dad was a footballer with Luton Town but he never made any money and after that he was a petrol pump attendant and a security guard. They were working-class Conservatives and as soon as I was old enough to understand I just couldn't get my head around that."

Extract from an interview in *The Times* with Alice Nutter (really) of Chumbawumba (a popular music combo). As we've never had a player with the surname Nutter, who was her father? Answers on a postcard.....

Proud Luton cling to their youthful lifeline



Over this page and the next, we reproduce an article from *The Times*. What it says should make us all quite proud and, at the same time, very concerned for the future.

Tim Collings reports on how one club has managed to survive by developing its own talent

Lennie Lawrence has not bought a player for more than a year and, with average home attendances hovering just above 5,000, he has little prospect of receiving the funds he needs to end Luton Town's absence from the transfer market. While the fat cats of the FA Carling Premiership grow heavier, life for Lawrence and Luton is a continuous struggle.

The rickety old Kenilworth Road stadium, which once held 30,000 in its terraced heyday, was sold by the club's former directors after the cup glories of the late 1980s and there is nothing tangible against which to borrow if the need arises. Selling, not buying, to ensure survival is the rule as David Kohler, the chairman and managing director, tries to relocate the club to a modern home.

Despite all this, Lawrence has every reason to be proud. Luton teams sit third in the Nationwide League second division and top of the Football Combination and the South East Counties League. Tonight, they entertain Coventry City, of the Premiership, in the third round of the Worthington Cup.

It is no mean achievement, owing to circumstance as much as choice, that two thirds of Lawrence's 33-strong professional squad have come through the ranks and a similar proportion were under 22 at the start of the season. In Lawrence's considerable experience [which embraces Charlton Athletic and Middlesbrough], he has never worked with such a young, talented or determined squad.

"I know I could sell any three of my players tomorrow," Lawrence said, "but our ambition this season is to go up to the first division, if we can. That is what we have to do to improve the financial side and secure the immediate future. But it isn't going to be easy. I have got an excellent group of experienced professionals, guys like Steve Davis, around whom I can rotate the young boys and I can only hope we avoid injuries."

Lawrence knows that the time will come soon when clubs like Luton can no longer survive on producing home-grown talent and living off their sales. Generously and fairly, he deflects plaudits for the quality of his youngsters towards John Moore, the Scot

'We don't get the best boys, but we look after them'

most responsible for preparing the boys to grasp their early first-team opportunities.

Moore came to Luton as a player in 1966 and, apart from one short spell away, has re-

mained so loyal that he is virtually a part of the furniture. He is almost a coach without portfolio, acting as assistant manager for Lawrence and standard-bearer for everybody else. He epitomises Luton's values, the onus on skill, expression and honesty, but shrugs off memories of his one year as manager in 1987, when he guided the club to seventh place in the old first division.

To Moore, the targets for Luton are simple — promotion and a new stadium, together with the creation, if it is feasible, of one of the Football Association's new academies. This would ensure that he and the club can continue to nurture talented boys, aged eight to 21,

in the new world pioneered by Howard Wilkinson, the FA's technical director. However, he fears that Luton will be left behind among the also-rans, condemned to play other clubs left out of the elite in the remnants of the traditional youth football structure.

The problem is that an academy will cost about £750,000 to set up and such finance is beyond Luton's reach. "If we had that sort of money, I'm sure the fans would want us to buy a player," Moore said, "but what we need are other things like an academy, a training ground, better facilities."

Moore says that, without a registered academy, Luton will not be able to play against those clubs that have one as part of their set-up. It is one of the criteria for clubs with FA-recognised academies that they resign from the youth leagues in which their teams now play. No longer will Luton's youngsters gain the breadth of experience they have always enjoyed in the South East Counties League.

"We don't get the pick of the boys," Moore said. "We don't get the best boys at all, but we give them a chance and we look after them. But from next year, they won't be able to play the usual games."

"In the first 12 months, they know they will have a chance to work with, or around, the first team. They can see their own futures. We give them as much stability as we can. I always told 14-year-olds when they came here that if their schoolmaster rings up and says their schoolwork has gone down the tubes, I'll rip up their papers and send them home because I'm not allowing that. School is very important."

Moore's methods have worked. Another generation of his model young professionals has risen through the ranks to give the fans heart and keep the Bedfordshire club's hopes of survival, and perhaps promotion, alive.

Lowly Luton upset Coventry

Liverpool dispose of Fulham 3-1

London. Reuters

Premier league Coventry City, already looking certain to lose their top scorer Dion Dublin, suffered a further setback on Tuesday when they were knocked out of the English League Cup by second division Luton.

Coventry, struggling near the bottom of the premier league, were handed a 2-0 defeat away by their unglamorous rivals who sealed the third-round victory with second-half goals from forward Phil Gray and defender Steve Davis.

Versatile England international Dublin, one of Coventry's most important players in recent seasons, held transfer talks with premier league rivals Blackburn Rovers on Tuesday after the two clubs agreed a transfer fee.

Another accolade following that glorious victory, this time from *The Guardian*.

SURELY England's problem of identity (Letters, November 3) has much to do with our ingrained class system and the dilemmas posed by increased social mobility? The poet who has done most to explore the effects of this change is John Hegley. Who can forget his classic poem on the subject:

*I remember Luton
As I'm swallowing my
croudon*

The next poet laureate, I think you'll agree.

Carina O'Reilly.
Cambridge.

First up, a cutting from October 29th's *Bangkok Post* — one to keep the exiles happy!

Performance of the week



Steve Davis (Luton) who not only scored the second of the goals which knocked Coventry City out of the Worthington Cup but was an important all-round influence in Luton's victory.

Also from *The Guardian*, this letter clearly predicting the cover story of the *Leader* on November 13th.

LUTON'S famous comic poet, John Hegley, ought to be appointed as Britain's next Poet Laureate, says one of the town's MPs.

And the sonnet-spouting star

SHORT CUTS

Still more from *The Guardian*, where LTFC surprisingly featured amongst the lottery numbers for the same week. And below, it was nice to find some thoughtful, educated comment in the the serious end of the press!

IN A building which has destroyed many a reputation, Leboeuf immediately struck his audience as assured, confident and sure-footed in his adopted language; considerably more comfortable than he looks when facing a high ball with Robbie Earle bearing down on him, in fact.

His demeanour didn't visibly change either when, after fielding half-a-dozen questions from the Union President which were straight from the Shoot questionnaire school of interrogation ("You do a lot of work for charity, why?") the debate was opened up to the floor. There, lurking amid the bland ("What was it like winning the World Cup?") and the barmy ("I'm a Watford supporter") was a wannabe Jeremy Paxman, armed

This week's lottery numbers

20

Tries scored by that rugby powerhouse Japan on Tuesday in a 134-6 World Cup qualifying defeat of Taiwan.

45

Minutes spent by Luton Town watching a video aimed at curbing Dion Dublin in the midweek Worthington Cup clash. Dublin did not play.

19

International one-day centuries scored by India's Sachin Tendulkar after his 141 off 127 balls against Australia on Wednesday.

1

English players who have played a league game for Chelsea this season and have not been sent off.

48

Hours spent by Naseem Hamed waiting for a visa before boarding Concorde to fly to the United States for tomorrow's fight against Wayne McCullough.

16

Years since a Finn has won the Formula One World Drivers' Championship.

A BREAK FROM THE NORM

Didn't we have a lovely time the day we went to Gillingham?

Leaving Luton at 11.45, we felt we would be in Gillingham in an hour and a half. Ominously, it took 15 minutes to travel two junctions on the M1 and it didn't really improve. Crawling in traffic on the M1 and M25 through driving rain we eventually arrived in the wonderful Kent town at 2.30. By the time we parked we got to the 'ground' just in time for kick-off. There followed 90 minutes of rubbish. Heavy rain had left the pitch waterlogged, meaning that we couldn't play our normal passing game. Gusting wind hampered Gillingham from playing their despicable scum-like 'football'. The game seemed destined to finish 0-0 until Kelvin cocked up his sweeping and gave Asaba an empty net to aim for. To compound our woes, the Luton fans were soaked through by driving rain which was blowing onto our open terrace for most of the match. The view was poor, the open roofed toilet under about a foot of water, and the pie was still frozen..... Loyal supporters?!



Why did Luton play in orange for the home game against Oldham? The story was that Oldham brought a white away kit so therefore it would clash with our home kit. However, the Latics then wore their blue kit which would not have clashed with the Hatters white kit. I'm not complaining though, the orange kit has to be the best Luton one for years.



So Vidar Riseth finally made his big transfer, with Celtic paying £1.5 million for him. It seems Dr Venglos wants his stay in Glasgow to be as long as his stay in Birmingham a few years back.



The squad appears to be fairly strong at the moment. But surely it might be an idea to cut back and reduce the wage bill by getting rid of senior professionals who have little part to play (eg. Messrs Davies and Showler).



Our away support this season continues to amaze. How is it that we have such large away support (better than many 1st Division clubs), yet still have small home attendances? Having said that, I do wonder who it is that makes up home attendances. There were 5500 fans for the Oldham game with perhaps a couple of hundred from Lancashire. The Northampton gate was 6000 with 1500 Cobblers. Therefore, according to LTFC figures the home support was nearly 1000 down for the Northampton match! Perhaps we should let the tax man know!



Finally, am I the only one who is fed up with the national and, particularly, local media who treat Graham Taylor as some sort of Messiah. Every report on a W*tf*rd game praises him for uncovering another gem and formatting wonderful tactics before reporting W*tf*rd's 96th minute equaliser through a shot deflected three times and then turned into his own net by the opposition goalie. The truth is Taylor remains the man who took English football back a decade.

Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence

It was, I suppose, inevitable. After all, I'd had a good laugh at your expense last season when my team lot thrashed your lot 4-1. We were ahead of you in the table even though we had not played very well this season, Man City and Stoke excepted. Two dedicated Luton fans at work cried off going to the game, they were that convinced we were going to give you another hammering. Alison, the Bricklayers arms landlady, was on holiday, so I wouldn't even be barred from the pub if we won. Everything was set for a crushing Fulham victory as the teams entered the pitch.

3.00 pm: Kick-off.

3.04 pm: Doh!

3.29 pm: Rob Scott survives an assassination attempt but has to be carried off for treatment. At this point I must apologise to those of you behind the goal who were, apparently, chanting my name as I helped carry off the stretcher, since a few people have told me they were a bit miffed that I didn't wave. In my defence I would like to point out that:

- It is a little difficult to wave while carrying a stretcher with someone on it.
- I was concentrating on telling the rest of the team when to lift, etc. so that we were properly coordinated, and
- I couldn't hear you. There was a group of neanderthals in the Luton end who were hurling abuse at Scotty (why?) and their vitriol drowned you out.

3.45 pm: Ah well, Keegan can sort them out now. We're only 1-0 down so we can give them a good hiding in the second half.

4.05 pm: Second half begins.

4.06 pm: Hang on, we're still playing crap.

4.07 pm: Bugger!

4.25 pm: AAAAHG! What the hell is going on?

4.47 pm: Um, Yippee.

4.48 pm: Hey, Beardsley's through, he's only got the keeper to beat, there's still a few minutes to snatch a last minute equaliser, we can..... AAAHG! HE MISSED!

4.55 pm: Oh God, I have to go home. I have to face them. I have to admit that we were beaten by the better side. The fact that, today, Tow Law Town reserves would have been the better side is of no comfort. We have gifted Luton 3 points. Merry Christmas.

In retrospect, it was a thrashing waiting to happen. If you hadn't thrashed us, and it should have been four or more that you scored, somebody else would. Luton played well and deserved to win. McGowan should have been sent off when he mugged Uhlenbeek twice in the second half — the ref reached into his pocket but drew his hand out empty, realising he had already booked the idiot. This would not have altered the result, by the way. I wonder, if the next time an opponent is not sent off against Luton when he should be, will the local press describe it as 'sensible refereeing'?

On the subject of the local press, "No-Hoppers Luton" — says who? No one at Fulham. "£2.5/2.3 million Chris Coleman" — £2.1 million actually. Still, what's half a million to us? "Fulham, stuffed full of multi million pound signings" — apart from Coleman, name one. Peschisolido (£1 million) was out injured, Taylor cost £700,000, two players were free transfers, two products of the youth system, one on loan (please take him back Bolton), Lehman cost £30,000 and most of the rest were about the £50,000 to £100,000 mark. I don't mind the "Moneybags Fulham" tag — it beats the hell out of being poor, but I wish the press would do some research.

The Sharpe End

There are disturbing rumours that a player may have to be sold to help cover the club's continuing losses.

That set me wondering. Who would I make favourite if I were opening a book on which would be the NEXT Luton Town player to be sold for a six figure fee. Bearing in mind that I am writing this on November 4, I would have to make Simon Davies the favourite. After all, he's been out of favour yet cost a substantial amount, which we'd want to recoup. Against that is the fact that it is difficult to know who'd want to pay that sort of money without seeing him in competitive action.

So, I'd make him 5/2 favourite. Herve Bacque seems to be out of favour — to my personal annoyance — but as he cost nothing, that's probably what he'd go for, so for the second favourite I think we'd have to look amongst the players getting a regular game.

The media speculation has been about Evers and Spring and much though we'd hate to lose either I'd have to make them joint second favourites at 4/1 each.

Kelvin is definitely worth that sort of money, but for him to go would leave us with no experienced keeper cover, so I'd make him a 20/1 outsider at this stage.

Steve Davis? There'd be no shortage of potential buyers, but he's no spring chicken and his departure would definitely lop an instant few hundred off the gate — about 7/1, I reckon.

Graham Alexander would be a possible, but we might struggle to get a six figure sum for him — 6/1.

Stuart Douglas — well, I don't think he's quite made enough of an impact in the world at large, yet — 10/1.

Andrew Fotiadis might fancy a change of scenery, but he needs to change his potential into achievement — 12/1.

Ray McKinnon could be a dark horse. He's done well for us, I think, but if a decent bid came in Lennie might feel he could cover for him quite comfortably — 5/1.

Alan White has been kicking his heels on the sideline but shows improvement each time he plays and could be a contender — 10/1.

If I had reluctantly opt for Sean Evers, but I hope I'm wrong and that he's here for at least a couple more years.

Who would you back?

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Andre Scarlett arrived on the Kenilworth Road pitch looking like he was the pre-match mascot who had become disorientated and had ended up back on the ground while the game was going on.

But within a few seconds, the crowd who had sniggered at the way in which Andre's shorts were pulled up almost under his armpits were cheering the young man as he displayed a neat piece of skill when faced with an imminent challenge as two telephone-pole like Oldham defenders lumbered towards him.

Andre just chipped the ball between them, jumped over their combined lunge, and nipped smartly away, leaving the pair looking like stooges in a comedy sketch. It was a memorable

moment — rather like the one with which Scott Oakes wowed the crowd some several seasons back with an extravagant dummy.

We can only hope, though, that Andre's ultimate future is not the seeming oblivion into which the talented Master Oakes has apparently now disappeared.

How can such a thing happen? Okay, so he wasn't the busiest of players, but he certainly possessed considerable skill — as did Tony Thorpe, who currently seems to be on a lengthy sabbatical from his job at Bristol City, as I write — missing in action, presumed out of favour, I suppose.

And whatever became of Ceri Hughes?

Why do so many of our carefully nurtured stars seem to lose the plot when they depart from here — notable exceptions, of course, being Messrs Telfer and Hartson, while the jury is still out on Matthew Upson.

Anyway, does anyone else suspect that John Moore has set up some kind of cloning factory from which Andre Scarlett has emerged and which first produced Mark Stein, before coming up with Martin Williams and Stuart Douglas — while Gavin McGowan must have been kidnapped at Birth before being restored to his rightful home at a later date!

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Three Counties Radio's David Croft took me to task on air recently for accusing Simon Oxley of being a Luton supporter. Croftie assured the world that Simon was no such thing, but if he'd read my piece a little more carefully he would have noticed that I never said he was.

But I bet he prefers us to the other mob he's been foisted on this season!

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Heading off for the home game with Northampton recently, I was about to join the M1 to take my usual route to the match when Three Counties Radio traffic news warned me that things were looking pretty grim following a lorry breakdown, combined at various points and heavy rush-hour traffic.

So, I did a neat U-turn and decided to find another route, ultimately heading up the A1 and turning off after Stevenage to head cross country via Hitchin. Anyway, eventually we made the outskirts of Luton and followed a whole string of signs for the Airport, Town Centre and various industrial areas. But not once did we ever see a sign for the Football Club.

I'm not a local and don't know my way around Luton — in fact the last time I lost my bearings in the area every single passer-by I stopped denied all knowledge of there being a football ground in the town.

Eventually, we found our way to Kenilworth Road with, literally, a minute to go before kick-off — but it was certainly no thanks whatsoever to whoever puts up road signs in the area. I wonder if the club has ever addressed this problem?

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An interesting piece of Luton Town memorabilia has recently come my way. It is a 1959 copy of Charles Buchan's Football Monthly, priced at 1/6d — and it features "Inside: Cup Final Souvenir".

Of course, the Cup Final was the one between LTFC and Nottingham Forest, the outcome of which, I'm afraid to say, is accurately predicted by Charles Buchan himself in his preview of

the game when he comments: "My preference is for the Forest, I believe they are more likely than Luton to produce something like their League form."

The magazine features a two-paged spread written by Luton's Syd Owen, complete with photographs of him and keeper Ron Baynham, in which the skipper and winner of three caps for England, makes the prophetic remark: "Perhaps, however, one of these days a new football stadium will be built in Luton to cater for the ever increasing working population".

Perhaps, Syd, perhaps one day!

The Cup Final supplement includes a full run down of the teams, photographs of the two sides, plus full colour pictures of Luton's Bob Morton and John Groves.

The adverts are pretty fascinating too — including one which guarantees to make you taller "in 12 days or money back — details 2d". The big names endorsing football boots included Arthur Rowe (from 47/6 to 79/9); while Nat Lofthouse suggested snapping up a Wembley Mettoy Vinyl Football for a mere 6/11 and the state of the art football game was Soccerette, that magnetic marvel which used to result in severely bruised fingers and hands when I played it!

The magazine is a real stroll down memory lane — and I'm prepared to flog it to the highest bidder — now form an orderly queue.

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What it is to be famous! A fellow Wealdstone supporter (the non league club of which I am a Director) recently told me that one of the pupils at the school where he teaches had brought in a copy of *Mad as a Hatter!* to show him after noticing that I wrote for it and correctly predicting that as there are relatively few Stones supporters we would be very likely to be acquainted with one another.

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It is difficult to get too upset at the last minute decision to postpone the game against Colchester.

I had travelled up to Coventry earlier in the day and was coming back down the M1 on which driving conditions were horrendous in the driving rain and with conditions clearly deteriorating rapidly the referee can have had no alternative other than to have called the game off.

What a pity the same sensible decision wasn't made the week before to prevent the Gillingham farce going ahead.

Sour grapes? Yes.

Graham Sharpe

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Mad as a Hatter! is available on subscription at £6.25 for the next seven issues (overseas surface mail £7.50, air mail rates available on request) from the usual address. Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* Please do not send cash by post as it rarely arrives.

CLASSIFIED

BOF is back! Full of hope.
Promotion year? Is he a dope?

To help raise money for *Mad*, or transfers, or both here is BOF's Classified page:

Entertainment

Let us take you back to the glory days! Twenties to Nineties. Re-live Town triumphs. Professional productions, stylishly costumed (with authentic hats)
Tel: 01582 6691845

Lonely Hearts

Slim, attractive, scatty, retired lady seeks Town male for cuddles in Kenny Corners. Opportunity to score later.
Write to Box 0800

Help!

BOF needs an ear trumpet (plastic, collapsible) to listen to Town P.A. system which despite appeals continues to sound like sick going down a deep drain.
Box 99

Law

Crafty lawyer required to sew up Prescott for dome purposes. Confidentiality essential. No money at present available but future profits astronomical.
Phone you know who!!

Men

Improve your support power with Dr Buzzers Energising Ring.
Go to the match invigorated and fulfilled.
Buzzer, 532 Pak Long, Bangkok.

Education

Open College of Abuse has a wide range of home study courses in vulgar, coarse, disgusting and even refined abuse.
Your friends impressed — no more W*****s only — even 8 letter words.
email: openabuse@hatteronline.co.uk

Gifts

Posies for players — by post. A delight to receive before matches.

Alpenrose for Alexander
Dahlias for Douglas
Jasmine for Johnson
Lotuses for Lawrence

and many more. All inclusive prices: £6 to £10

To order, Fax 0258-999999

Medical

The cure for Ref's disease.
In this book a scientist shows how dramatic is a ref's sight improved by using the little known Stopw**k treatment. Not only that but hostile fans are at a loss what to say.
Makes your job enjoyable.
£6 from Bum Publications, Watford.

Clothes

Really good Willy Warmers in a variety of materials. Your favourite team colours! Fluorescent available!
All lengths — one size fits all!
Don't freeze in the breeze — enjoy your match.
Packet of 3: £2.50

Holidays

Wigan Pier in Winter!
The glories of Gillingham!
Strip-off in Stoke!
Just a few of the delights available for supporters of Luton.
Bargain Holidays, Maple Road, Luton.

For sale and wanted

Wanted: Straitjackets for 'supporters' who abuse their own side's players.

The Boring Old Fart

PRODUCT REVIEW

Luton Town FC 1997-98 video

LTFC Club Shop £12.00

The highlights (?) of last season, in glorious Technicolour. OK, so there weren't too many highlights last season, and watching vast numbers of goals conceded by our favourites may just be a bit masochistic. But what the hell, there are still plenty of us who will buy this to keep our collections complete. And there is the occasional high point — after all, we did win a few matches. And this does give a final reminder of players like Dibble and Peake who will never be seen again — thank goodness.

So how good is the video, leaving aside the content? I must admit that I'm not a collector of this type of thing, but I'm assured that the quality is a great improvement on last year. Simon Oxley provides the commentary, which is fine, but it could have done with a bit of explanation about league position and that sort of thing. The biggest problem for me was the lack of any breaks between matches, where a caption with the date and result would have been useful, if only as a point to stop the tape if, like me, you watch it in instalments. After all, with the season we had, it's a hell of a lot to take in at one go.

I would imagine that many will not buy this, in order to avoid being reminded of coming that close to relegation. On the other hand, it might be worth the expense as a record of two top strikers (Thorpe and Rory Allen, since you ask) and the occasional glorious victory.

Marks out of ten? Sorry, I'll have to duck out of that, as I've no previous videos to judge by.

And, at long last.....

1988 Littlewoods Cup Final Video

LTFC Club Shop £14.99

Another new product from the LTFC club shop, and it's one that I know many people have been asking for for quite a few years. Luton Town's finest hour has at last been captured in glorious Technicolour. All credit must go to Peter Lindau (the club shop manager) for not giving up on this, which would have been easy. The result is a video produced by ITV Sport, which not only has the final in full, but has highlights of the semi-final win over Oxford, and some pre and post match interviews — even a specially filmed introduction. And, although some of us have our own tapes of the final, this should be better quality as ours were produced with what is now 10 year old technology. It is genuinely a co-incidence that the video is out just in time for Christmas, but that will make the buying of Christmas presents just that bit easier. This one should sell really well.

K.F.H.