

# MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



**Issue 58**

**Jan 2004**

## SEEING RED!



Adrian Forbes sees red during the match against Stockport, pleading his innocence. And rightly so, as the sending off was later rescinded. Just in time for him to get injured...



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## **THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE**

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## **Editorial**

Since the last issue of *Mad* was published, the saga of receivership and the ongoing transfer embargo have continued. Mike Newell has coped well with the need to juggle the squad to provide sufficient players to field a suitable team. Enoch Showumni must be confused as to whether he is coming or going (or perhaps that's just normal...), he seems to have been released or re-engaged as a Town player with alarming frequency. Peter Holmes meanwhile, has coped remarkably well with his new mantle as the most frequently signed player in the club's recent history.

During this difficult period, Newell has impressed with his severely limited forays into the transfer market, with Gary McSheffery an astonishingly good loan signing and, since then, Marlon Beresford a superb free transfer signing. We can only hope, as we look to come out of receivership and into a more stable spell, that Morten Hyldegaard proves to be an equally capable keeper. The possibility of McSheffery returning seem to become more distant as the weeks pass by, but with Adrian Forbes' emergence as a striker, rather than an injured winger, this is perhaps less of a worry.

Prior to the start of this season we were concerned about the ultimate survival of our club, so our current position on the fringe of the play-off places and getting as far as the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the FA Cup has proved to be a major bonus. We might well have accepted this situation even without the events of last summer, so in the current circumstances it should give a lot of credit to both players and management.

Visiting Hartlepool it was interesting to hear how little the fans up there think of Newell. We heard plenty of gossip however, much seems to be based on the fact that he failed to win the Division 3 championship for them after taking over from Chris Turner, and we were left to wonder if things would have been different if Rushden had not pipped them to the title. We will not repeat that gossip in these pages and will judge Newell on his record here at Luton which, so far, is pretty good.

Finally, apologies for the late arrival of this issue. This is mainly due to the Editor taking a couple of overseas holidays before Christmas and not being around to chase up the contributors at the right time. Then there was Christmas and the New Year lethargy and ... well, I just didn't get round to doing anything!

Hopefully, better late than never!



# Cherry, the woman of Luton

**Luton Town club secretary, and summer heroine, Cherry Newbery is interviewed for Mad as a Hatter! By Dan Strode**

**Firstly, what do you love so much about the club?**

*"Like most supporters you cannot describe what you love about the Club – it is just part of you and you will do anything to protect it."*

**What drives you to work each day year on year?**

*"What drives me is my love of the Club, for me it is a privilege to work for Luton Town, and I get a pride just coming into the club each day. I also feel immensely proud when I walk along the corridor and see pictures of my grandfather when he played for the Club - I often wonder how he would feel if he knew I worked here".*

**You love Luton, as do many and over the summer you played a big part in getting rid of Mr. Blobby. Could you describe him in a few words?**

*"Even Mad as a Hatter! could not print how I feel about Mr. G. (We wouldn't mind trying though – Ed) and those terrible days in the summer. I recently viewed the BBC documentary "Trouble at the Top" which is scheduled to be shown in March/April and I am sure supporters will understand even more the bad times my staff and I went through during that time once they see the documentary. I said before that it is a privilege to work for the club, but I have to say that during those summer days there were times when I dreaded coming into the club not knowing what the day would hold. I have always said through my working life that if I ever, wherever I worked, got to the stage where I did not want to go into work I would leave. Life is funny in that when that time did come, I simply could not walk away; the Club was more important and it was vital that I stayed as an 'insider'."*

**What has been the best thing that you have ever seen at the club? Your favourite time...**

*"Naturally promotion is one of the best things and relegation one of the worst. Two other events that spring to mind are (and it might sound funny) receiving a telephone call on our first time in Receivership, from the Football League at 12.05 am to tell me that we were allowed to start the season and play the Notts County game, I remember standing jumping and screaming on my bed because we were allowed to start the season".*

*"Of course winning the Littlewood's Cup must be a tremendous highlight for any supporter, a day that none of us will forget".*

**What is the best part of your job? What do you get a buzz out of?**

*"The best part of my job is the buzz of a match day, be it home or away, the expectation, the atmosphere".*

**What has been the hardest point of your job ever?**

*"There have been many hard times over the years - but I believe it is better to learn from them, put them behind you and always look to the future."*

**Who do you ask when you don't know the answer to something, to do with the club?**

*"If I don't know the answer, than I would seek help from the Football Authorities or from one of my many friends who work in football. We all help each other".*

**Who is your best friend at the club at the moment, and who was your best friend at the club since you have been at Luton?**

*"I don't have a "best" friend at the club, we are a team and all work for each other, as was shown during the summer months. My best friend has to be my partner Gary who has always backed me, even foregoing our summer holiday as he knew I couldn't leave the club".*

**Did you ever play football yourself, or would you have liked to?**

*"No, I have never played football, I personally believe it is a mans' game (on the pitch - that is!). My sports were netball and basketball, and I am still involved behind the scenes in local women's basketball, as I like to think I can give a little back to a sport that I got so much enjoyment from".*

**Can you see yourself becoming manager of Luton one day? The first woman manager!**

*"No, I cannot see myself as Manager, nor would I want to be. How could a woman ever manage a professional football club, when she hasn't experienced playing the game at a man's level and therefore receive respect from the players? I believe the players respect me for the job I do, they know I will sort out any problem they may have, and will always ensure that behind the scenes everything runs as smoothly as possible for them".*

**Can you see Luton getting into the Premiership in your lifetime? Will the club still be going in 5 years time? It's hard to look further into the future, I**



understand. Even Manchester United could be out of business in 10 years time or less.

*"It is every supporter's dream to see Luton in the Premiership and why not? The management team and players have performed miracles to get us to where we are today - who would have thought we would be flying high, and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round of the FA Cup - so anything is possible!! With a new stadium on the horizon and with sound financial arrangements I believe Luton Town can grow and definitely get to the Premiership. I have a firm belief in 'You can do anything if you try'."*

Thank you very much for this Q and A session.

*"Finally, can I just say a big thank you to everyone who wrote, telephoned and emailed me during those dark days. They did help us get through, knowing everyone was behind us. Keep up the support, A Very Happy New Year to all and lots and lots of points!"*

## Why the Number 29 was Luton's Number 1

Marlon Beresford must be the best number 29 in the business. And, he has blessed KR and the Hatters with some fine displays. Much better than others in recent seasons! No names mentioned, Mark Ovendale. And getting Marlon on a free is even better! If we paid £425k for Mark Ovendale, Marlon must be worth around £4 million! And to many fans at Luton he is worth £4 million, but we wouldn't sell him for that anyway...

At the time of writing Luton are high in the table and in the FA Cup 3<sup>rd</sup> round, which QPha and Plymouth's Green Army are not. Town as well as flying high are on their best run for a LONG time! 7<sup>th</sup> place and only 2 losses in 12 games. When did Marlon arrive? Oh yeah, 12 games ago! Coincidence? I think not. Well done Marlon. A Luton 'keeper hasn't done this well for many a year. Plenty have tried and failed - since 2000 10 'keepers have been stuck between the posts and only a certain Cedric Berthelin really did any good. And this effort was negated by the Ovendale/Emberson pairing earlier in the season. Although, just think about it, at least it wasn't Abbey in goal, who played the whole 99/00 season and only made one save. And these 10 'keepers were the ones who played in the first team, don't forget the other 5 who played pre-season last year and the 30 other 6 foot 6 French goal keepers we had, didn't we Mr. Kinnear?

Still, it's hats off to Marlon, and I hope we can keep him for a few years to come and then maybe as GK coach for the young ones! A great player and entertainer at the same time, even the Notts County fans cheered when he caught the ball that rolled off the Oak Road stand behind his back! Magic!

You the main man Marlon, so, please stay and bless "The Fort" with more great goalkeeping.

Dan Strobe

*Ed - Sadly this was written before Marlon's departure to Barnsley.*

## **THE CONCEPT OF FOOTBALL**

So, the Westoning Trancer (issue 57) believes that a minority of Luton fans "seem to have absolutely no idea of how the game of football works," his own words. He obviously feels that he does know something about "the concept of football after playing and watching" the game.

Of course, Mr Trancer does confess to being a Luton fan of 13 years. Give it another 13 years Mr Trancer, and you will realise that NO Luton fans have any idea of the concept of football.

However, this is not a force that is at work alone at LTFC - there is an epidemic of people and persons who have no idea about the concept of football while pretending they have. And, for my part, I want to out these hypocrites. So, in a good old fashioned way, here's my...

## **TOP TEN PEOPLE WHO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF FOOTBALL.**

- 10 **Referees.** There is an irony here. As any referee will tell you THEY know the laws of the game. Do you? How is it therefore that people with such an in depth knowledge can be so lacking in their understanding of the game. They might have got all the questions right in the "You are the ref" feature in Shot! throughout their damn lonely childhoods but they know nothing of playing or supporting. DMAN YOU ALL (including linesmen and fourth officials).
- 9 **Tony Blair.** His cringe worthy attempts to pretend to be a Newcastle fan when he first descended on us, was spinning too far even at that stage. Did you see him drinking tins of lager with his 'mate' Gordon while watching some match on TV (I think it was Jocks 2 Scholes 2)? Gordon's facial expression suggested he was desperate to punch Tony's lights out - as we all are now.
- 8 **Kevin Nicholls.** I have never seen a midfielder at Luton who can pass the ball like Nicholls. He's so bad Wayne Turner would be embarrassed. Nicholls obviously knows about the concepts of work-rate, teamwork, suspensions, playing with 10 men. But passing, the most basic concept in football is way, way, way beyond him. As are most of his passes to his teammates.
- 7 **My mum.** With phrases like, "they're a dead loss," and "they don't seem to be trying," as stock answers. Hasn't been to a game in 15 years.
- 6 **Alan Green.** The foul-mouthed 5Live commentator who seems always to comment on the game instead of doing what he is supposed to - commentate on the game. Oh, for Bryon Butler (sorry Westoning Trancer, you're too young).
- 5 **Administrators.** Not you, Mr Ward - god bless you - but the bureaucrats, those who know sweet FA, sweet UEFA and sweet FIFA..
- 4 **Tim Lovejoy.** He of Sky Soccer AM fame. Chelsea fan and scum sympathiser. No further explanation needed.



- 3 **Women.** I'm not sexist but... they have no idea of the concept of football. The phrases that come out are pleasantries – "come on Forbes," "have a go Springy," "bad luck" – even when it is pure shit play. And lots of use of first names, "Catch it Robert," but when has anyone heard anything of the remotest intelligence and tactical awareness from a female supporter. I'll tell you – never! As for the media: Gaby Yorath; Hells Bells; Susan (5Live) Bookbinder. Please!
- 2 **Joe 'UB40@ Kinnear.** Huge budget, big wage bill, massive ego. Knows nothing about the game except how to reduce it to its lowest form – scum kick and run tactics with Wimbledon aggression – no finesse, class or dignity. Kinnear never realised it's the BEAUTIFUL game.
- 1 **Premiership "Can you see the floodlights from your bedroom" followers.** It's not those saps waiting for the Man U fans coach at junction 10. Have you ever wanted to run them over? Or cause an accident so that the coach can't get down the slip road to pick them up? Their idea of being a football fan is shallow. I guess they at least try and see their team. But those 'fans' we all know, of Premiership teams without the remotest connection to the team they support – maybe supporting them made them more popular at school. They watch coverage on TV and read newspaper supplements but NEVER go to a game. Please remind them that football is not a TV sport, it's a participatory sport or - if you are too old or too crap to play – a spectator sport.

*Andrew, Flitwick*

## A LONG WAIT

Many years ago, when I was a young and naïve apprentice in a large factory, it was a joke among the old hands to send the callow youths to the stores, under instruction to ask the storeman for "a long weight". The storemen were in on the joke, and would happily leave you standing there for hours.

I only mention this because it came to mind when I was writing the editorial, and wondering about the frequency of board meetings at the Football League. As a governing body, arguably the second most important in English football, it is amazing that major decisions can be made only once a month. Can't they put themselves out just a bit?

One may well wonder whether the monthly meeting is the League's equivalent of the old apprentice joke, and is a test to see whether the potential buyers of a club in administration have a sufficiently developed sense of humour to be allowed to join the club.

The only consolation is that Bill Tompkins and co have stuck around during all this. The other consolation would be if the League introduced a similar examination and waiting period for all who wanted to buy a football club, not just those trying to take one out of administration or receivership. If they did, we might never have suffered the Gurney experience.



Matthew Spring in action against Wycombe earlier this season



# THE DOOR IS OPEN, COME ON IN

I find it increasingly worrying that the great British public in this modern world feel it necessary to apologize for their beliefs or attitudes. We are all a product of our forefathers' genes and the environment in which we are raised (personality is 20% heredity and 80% environment according to Dr. Hans Eysenck 1919-1997) and all we can do consciously is tinker at the edges. Many of us make slow steady progress through life towards the person we want to be but in the October Edition of FSF News (Football Supporters Federation newsletter) a lady called Sarah Watts of Brighton & Hove Albion Supporters Club stated that she is trying to eradicate the 10% of her character that she believes is racist? Only 10% seems pretty good to me, as we all need to have a balance in our views. The oft-used line "Now I'm not racist but..." indicates a desire for so many in society to appear politically correct in public whilst reserving more radical views for private conversation or individual voting preferences. Ms Watts asks without evidence "...why should a non-white person have to prove himself or herself anymore than a white person? They shouldn't but they do." Despite it being unfashionable I disagree.

There is a trend followed by those in the public eye, particularly radio phone-in hosts, which I call 'glory by association' where someone attempts to elevate their status by proclaiming a worthy character trait that is impossible to prove and difficult to disprove. The best recent example is that of Princess Diana's untimely death. Everyone that thought they could be heard spent hours expounding what a tragedy it was and how sorry they were and how the country would never be the same again. Most of these people had never met the Princess and I suggest that their lives didn't change one iota following her funeral. Racism (thus used but 'racialism' as it should rightly be termed) is another good one. "I have loads of black friends" is probably true in some areas of the country but how many black people are keen to tell their peer group that white friends are numerous in their acquaintance? Why not? It all seems a bit one-sided to me.

As we all know, Luton Town, is in the heart of the Asian area of Luton. There is periodic trouble in this district between rival Asian factions (I hesitate to say religious groups) but rarely are these fiercely parochial individuals seen at the football. There is apparently nothing to stop them coming but their own prejudices. However, maybe, just maybe, they don't want to. Maybe they don't like football; difficult to believe I know but some people don't! Some people like football but work on Saturdays, which prohibits their attendance, particularly those in the retail sector and sometimes the editor of this fanzine. Luton Town has long had a reputation for introducing black players since David Pleat gave Ricky Hill and Brian Stein their debuts in the late seventies. Both players remain firm favourites with me and other Luton fans because they were skilled and loyal employees of our club. There used to be a chant at Kenilworth Road along the lines of "We're black, we're white, we're f\*\*king dynamite; Luton Town, Luton Town!" does this kind of atmosphere intimidate a prospective black or Asian supporter? Luton Town would love the local population to get involved and swell their gates but it is not to be despite, like many other clubs, extensive community projects.

Taking my own experience, I can count on one hand the number of incidents I have seen at football where racial abuse has taken place. Even then, it has mostly been directed at officials who get much abuse on a weekly basis whatever their colour. Is someone screaming "You useless Paki linesman!" any more offensive than "You useless fat linesman!" or "You useless bald linesman!"? Surely it depends on how sensitive the recipient is, and football officials must have thick skin to do the job in the first place. Why is there so much money and time spent on "Kick racism out of football" when football has more pressing problems and should be concentrating on improving the lot of long-serving football fans rather than trying to change society?

I am not condoning abuse of any kind or in any way but just grouping it all together. A member of a female pop band recently 'got away lightly' after her assault on a nightclub door-person (lets not be sexist either) was adjudged to have not been racially motivated. What difference does the motive make to a person with a broken nose or black eye? I have had both and they hurt more than name-calling. It appears that as racism/racialism decreases: the left-wing propaganda increases, presumably fanned by the reduced risk of any backlash because those who disagree are pilloried themselves. I think it ironic that someone who has a personal view in a free country gets shouted down and branded a neo-Nazi by the so-called liberals who decry such behaviour towards ethnic or any other so-called minority group. These people never seem to have a coherent argument themselves and just resort to name calling, but is "racist" officially an insult I wonder? Imran Khan got away with it.

Statistically, the professional game has an inordinate number of black players just as there are more Asian players in the game of cricket than mere demographics would suggest likely, so rôle models are not an issue. There are also thousands of black and Asian footballers playing in this country at amateur level and as far as I can see nothing to stop them spectating as well. If they don't want to join in then they shouldn't be forced to; but if they do then my advice is simple: the door is open, come on in.

*Clifford Saunders*

## BACK ISSUES

Most back issues are still available, in spite of my best efforts to reduce the numbers while moving house. We have sold out of issues 10, 11, 22, 24, 26, 27, 35 to 38 and 47, and most other issues are in very short supply. Issue 1 is free, and all others will cost you 40p per copy, inclusive of postage. Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* Please do not send cash by post as it rarely arrives.



# JOHN MOORE — LIVING LUTON LEGEND

On behalf of all Luton fans I would like to thank John Moore, who stepped down just a few weeks ago at the end of 2003, from being youth team coach. His contribution to football, as well as to Luton Town FC has been great.

John has been at Luton for many, many years and given great service to the club. He played in 274 matches, scoring 13 goals, from the central defensive (old fashioned half-back) role during the late 1960s, and is remembered as a solid and reliable if unspectacular player. He later served many non-league clubs, as well as Northampton and Brighton. He has been at other clubs in non-playing roles including Luton and Leicester. He became manager of Luton Town in 1986, following the departure of David Pleat (the first time) and steered the club to its highest ever league position, 7<sup>th</sup> in the old Division One, in 1986/87. He was boss for just 47 games, winning 19, drawing 15 and losing only 13. This excellent start was cut short after a year in 1987, as he found pressures too hard to handle, particularly in terms of dealing with the media. But, after this he moved on, and he found himself back at Kenilworth Road as assistant manager (more than once) and in a variety of coaching roles, most recently bringing through a great crop of young players as the youth team manager.

We wish John all the best and hope he will visit the club, even in his retirement. Best wishes to John, and to his family, as he starts a time of refreshment and relaxation, without the strains of football. From the bottom of our hearts, Thank you, John.

Dan Strobe

*Ed's comment: John's departure from the club may well be an unfortunate case of cost-cutting connected with the club being in receivership. If that is the case and it is purely Barry Ward's decision, to maintain the position of the club as presented to potential buyers, then fair enough. However, during his tenure, cost cutting measures have been presented as such and accepted with little argument by supporters. On this occasion though, an own goal was scored by presenting this publicly as John retiring. As he has now revealed himself, he was made redundant. And with such a popular figure, this is unfortunate. Les's hope he still gets the benefit match most of us think he deserves, and that it sees Kenilworth Road packed to the rafters to thank a man who has made a significant contribution to the club for so long.*

# NET RESULTS

## The Lutonfc.com Message Board — a saviour from so many things

I'm from Watford. Well, near enough. When I was growing up in the '70s and '80s there were only four options for kids round my way: Liverpool, Arsenal, Spurs and, of course, my local side. Make no mistake; I went to Vicarage Road a lot as a kid. I even had my tenth birthday party there, watching the local heroes from that year's FA Cup Final failure, but even then I didn't like them. "Welcome to Vicarage Road, the family ground," the PA used to announce. Even at ten I thought that was pretty crap. And that yellow strip? Jesus.

So I rebelled. I went the other way. I thought I'd go to the other side and became the only Luton fan in my area that I knew of. My dad knew someone involved with the club and just the mention of its name had been enough to plant the seed in my young mind. While being a rather worthy pursuit, there was a crucial flaw to my new career as a Hatter: I knew no one else who supported Luton. Indeed, my first game was when my dad, a lifelong Chelsea fan, took me to Wembley to see the Town beat Arsenal in 1988. My second game? The same fixture the following year. Apart from the odd away game here and there, I rarely watched the team I claimed to support. Frankly, I felt a bit of a phoney.

So after I left university in 1997, I started going on my own and that was fine. Sitting on the F/G Block fringes in the Main Stand for atmosphere, legs twisted round into the aisle to save myself from a fate worse than DVT, I enjoyed seeing the team, even if it wasn't the most auspicious time in our history. I lived in central London by then and I would so rarely get to see any reports of games that I still felt a bit cut off. I wasn't in Luton often enough to catch the fanzine, the national papers hardly gave us a mention (no changes there) and the furthest north London Weekend Television would stretch was Hertfordshire. So all I could do was record Nationwide League Extra and watch it before going to work in the morning. It wasn't much, but it made me feel closer to the team in its own little way.

Having always been a bit of a secret IT spod, I knew my way around the internet when it was all just porn, and when kids knew Amazon was the name of a river. Luton's online presence was hardly huge; WHOSH was around but it seemed so weakly maintained that I gave up on it. But then, in mid-2000, I found Lutonfc.com, a classic "for fans, by fans" site, full of reports, history and, "this is the really crazy bit", a message board. I became a bit of a "lurker" at first, reading the posts and not really contributing. If there was something that really wound me up I might dart out of the shadows with a quick comment then retreat to the safety of the real world. Using the name Fanley — a nickname from school — I couldn't resist becoming a fairly regular poster as my job bored me and I was happy to find people that I could talk about Luton with, as if it were some dirty secret, some taboo that I couldn't really share with my friends.

The beauty of the message board is that it's not just football that gets discussed. The subject of people's favourite vegetables, that was started by MR. X about three and a half years ago, was one that people still remember. It doesn't seem that interesting a thread when I look back on it now but it was a great leveller. Everyone just came out and said what their favourite vegetable is, simple as that. Football debate is aggressive, with people posturing behind knowledge, stats and entrenched opinion. If you tell me that Chris Kamara was the worst ever player for Town, I'll disagree with you and say that it was Peter Thompson. Then we'll sit there, getting more and more shouty and annoyed, until the only thing we can agree on is that the other bloke's a twat. But if I tell you that I like the humble potato as it's just so versatile, I won't expect a row about it.



Clearly defined characters appear every day – if it's not PDW's excellent match reports and ratings or Patrick's updates on the youth team then it's betting tips from Finchley or unfair comments about my y's colourful trousers. Names such as Shep, TBC, Hatsworth and Exile are engrained on our minds and we know what to expect from each of them when we click on their posts, even if we've never met them. But when one like-minded poster offered to meet up with me at a game, I nervously met this stranger at Leyton Orient and we've been good friends since. And then some bloke called Tootin' Luton, who had learned from various posts that I work in the same industry as him, emailed me to ask me if I might fancy joining his company. We met up at King's Cross (and admitting this to my non-Luton friends is still a bit awkward), went to a game together, and I took the job. He sits next to me at work and sadly he can gauge my productivity by the number of times I post on the board every day. Through these people, and others I've met in the pub with an "Ah, so you're Fanley", the stigma of my solitary Watford heritage has now faded and I now sit in the Enclosure with people that I enjoy meeting up with every week.

The message board is a powerful medium. When the club faced near extinction in the summer of last year, it was on this forum that people clubbed together and formed Trust In Luton, the fans' body that helped force out the nefarious turd that wanted to ruin us. There may be cliques, there may be some pretty spicy banter that some find intimidating, but I urge you to go and make yourself heard there. One thing we have in common is our love for Town, so it doesn't matter if you're there to say what you think of Steve Howard, to find out what Cherry Newbery's email address is, or to register the artichoke as your favourite vegetable. We know that certain players and club staff read the board, so it really is the voice of the fans. And we should be grateful to the guys who work so hard so that these supporters can be heard. Even if they're from Watford.

*Fanley*

## CONTRIBUTIONS... PLEASE!

Finally, another issue appears. Poviding enough contributions are received, the next issue will come out in mid-March, giving a deadline for contributions of Tuesday March 2<sup>nd</sup>, so please send any articles, match reports, letters, cartoons, photos, press cuttings, or whatever, either by post or email to the addresses below asap:

Snail mail: MAAH, 195 Cutenhoe Road, Luton, LU1 3NQ.

Email: keith.hayward1@ntlworld.com

## PARTING ON BAD TERMS?

The boos that greeted Chris Kamara during the half-time interval against Tranmere in the FA Cup made me wonder about the ex-Luton players who have left the club on bad terms with the fans. Kamara was a player who publicly didn't want to come to Luton, played rubbish whilst he was here in the early 90's, and then couldn't wait to scarper back up north once we were relegated out of the top division. Not that I've read what he's written or paid any attention to his media career since then, but apparently he has also criticised Luton on a few occasions in the past and can't work out why Luton fans never took to him. Strange that!

A number of other players have fallen out of favour with some of the more fickle fans in recent history. Scotty Oakes' departure was soured by his apparent poor attitude in the last 12 months or so that he was a Hatter. His youthful eagerness to impress had vanished by then, replaced by an attitude that made him look disinterested in what was happening around him on the pitch. Even David Preece came in for criticism from some fans when he delayed announcing his decision to leave the club until after he'd had his testimonial against Manchester United.

Paul Telfer took a side-swipe at the club after he departed for Coventry City, and going back much further than that, I seem to remember Vince Hilaire had a go after his move to Luton lasted less than a season. We sold him on to Portsmouth, and I think he was quoted as having said he would have "walked to Portsmouth" to get away from Kenilworth Road. However, there have been a number of players in recent times who have parted on good terms with the fans. One example that springs to mind is John Hartson. Maybe it was because we actually got a decent transfer fee for him (for a change!) but he had nothing but praise for Luton when he left for Arsenal and he always gave everything whilst he was here. He never asked for a transfer and appeared to be genuinely interested in Luton's fate after he left. Obviously, Mick Harford got a brilliant reception from Luton fans the few times he played against us after he left the first time around.

Tony Thorpe falls into both categories. He was welcomed back when he played against us after being sold to Fulham when he didn't want to go. He was also welcomed back with open arms when he played for us on loan (twice!) and then again when he re-joined at the start of last season. Unfortunately, he has destroyed all of that good will by jumping ship in the manner that he did just a few games into this season when he went to QPR. The fans felt betrayed by that cowardly, mercenary move at a time when things couldn't have felt much lower. Having a go at Luton at the QPR press conference when it was confirmed just made things worse.

It doesn't just happen to players. I'm sure that if Joe Kinnear ever comes back as an opposition manager, he will get a superb reception. However, I seem to remember that the late Ray Harford was given a torrid time when he came back to Kenilworth Road as manager of Wimbledon, as was David Pleat when he first returned as manager of Spurs in



John Moore's one and only season in charge. I missed Lennie's return to Luton with Cardiff last season, but I've been told that was pretty vociferous too.

Many players have come back to Luton as a player or to work behind the scenes afterwards, so in general the club must be held in high regard by some of them.

It also seems strange that Ricky Hill has now had a go at the club years after his sacking as manager. Ricky is one of the few sacked ex-managers who will always get a good reception from the fans for what he did for us in the past as a player. The fans don't hold that woeful five months or so that he was in charge against him, yet he obviously feels bitter about his sacking.

Some ex-players and managers really seem to go out of their way to get the fans backs up when they depart. Sometimes the fans have been harsh, but if a player or manager shows passion or effort during their time at a club, then most fans will welcome them back with a cheer first, before having a go afterwards!

Anon

## Football diary

**Simon Burnton**

●Fifa 2004 is the big computer game release for Christmas, a recent flurry of publicity promising "the most complete and authentic football experience" and "advanced levels of player detail". So lifelike is Wayne Rooney, "when he saw the finished result it was a bit of a shock because it was like looking in a mirror", according to a spokesman for the game's manufacturers. "It was too identical and it freaked him out."

Other players have been even more freaked out after seeing their computerised

selves in action, if for other reasons. Take, for example, the shaven-headed and very much black Watford striker Bruce Dyer, who in the game is white, has a blond mullet and, even more ridiculous, scores goals. It appears the game's researchers lost their way when it came to the Nationwide League.

A cutting from the *Guardian*, revealing shortcomings in a computer game. Bruce Dyer scoring goals? Never!

## TANNY AND KELVIN

Many of you might've read on Teletext that Tanny Abbey had signed for Ipswich on a month's loan, and you might've thought how a team who beat Inter Milan just a few years ago could stoop so low. Once again, I am on hand to reveal all....

*Ring, Ring, blah blah blah*

Tanny: Hello?

Kelvin: Hi, this is Kelvin here.

T: Oh hi Kelvin, I didn't hear you come in. How are you today?

K: Oh brill ta. How about yourself?

T: Terrible. I've just suffered the ultimate humiliation in life, being released by Stevenage. Said something about them not needing anyone to help with the sale of the hot dogs, so they turned me down.

K: Um, right. Well, your luck is about to change mate. You remember the days we had at Luton? Well the good times are back again.

T: You mean Ian Feuer has returned or you've got me a contract at Luton?

K: Nope, but I can get you a loan contract for one month. We've only got one fit goalie and....

T: He's useless right?

K: Wrong, he's me.

T: Oh, sorry.

K: And then after a month, I've got you yet another job.

T: Ace! So what club is that at then?

K: Um, it's not a club of sorts. I know someone who works with a circus. They need a right idiot to act as a clown, and you fit the bill perfectly.

T: Oh, cheers mate! I owe you a pint!

K: Thought that would put a smile on your face!

T: Well I'd better get me coat, me wife's expecting me back for tea.

K: Um, Tanny you are home.

T: Eh? What you talking about? Oh, yeah. Well, see ya later.

K: See you soon Nathaniel.

Peter Bulkeley



# FA CUP DRAW BLUES

As the 4<sup>th</sup> round draw unfolded, I let out a groan as we drew Tranmere or Bolton at home. However, I came up with ten fixtures that could've been worse.

Tranmere or Bolton away. At home we have support on our side and would surely draw a larger crowd than at Bolton or Tranmere. If you're a Bolton fan, you wouldn't want to see Man U and Villa and then Luton, would you. After all, they don't know the art of proper football in the north.

Telford away. From Walsall, it's not much of a journey for me, but it's Telford. Imagine the embarrassment if we lost! And if we win, then we'd be hated nationwide for knocking out 'poor little Telford'.

Watford or Chelsea away. Imagine if, by some miracle, Watford did actually knock out Chelsea and then knocked out us. Imagine the embarrassment! (Ok a bit far-fetched I know but I thought I'd mention it)

Southend or Scarborough away. For Scarborough, see point 2, and for Southend, well we'd all love to see mighty Luton Town taking on the mighty Sarfend, wouldn't we!

Arsenal away. Let's face it, at least we've got a decent chance of being in the hat for the 5<sup>th</sup> round. If we had Arsenal, our cup dream would end there as they would play their youth team and make us look silly. How about we beat Bolton and draw Arsenal in the fifth round.

Kidderminster or Wolves away. Bit of a personal one this, but half of my friends at school are Wolves fans, and I couldn't bear going back on Monday morning if we lost. On second thoughts, forget that one.

Manchester United away. Yes, I know it's a plum tie, but for one factor - the weather. As Eric Morecambe once said, 'She (Eric's sister) first saw the light of day in Stockport. She was actually born two years earlier in Manchester'. This sums it up perfectly. Man U at home would be fine and would be less of a trip for all their fans in Devon.

Accrington Stanley away. See the last sentence for point 2. Not sure where it is either so we might get lost!

Millwall home. Because - a) It's not exactly a plum tie and b) it would be switched to 12:00 on police advice and I'd have to get up at the crack of dawn.

Wimbledon. See point 3.

So there you have it - it was a good draw. Now Jay Jay (so good they named him twice) is out and they'll play their reserves anyway, so we can get into the fifth round. And if Tranmere win, well we've already beaten them this season haven't we?

*Peter Bulkeley*

# SHARPE ANGLE

Mike Newell is still in the comparatively enviable position of being unjudgeable as manager given the restrictions which have prohibited him from introducing a significant number of players into the squad which, in turn, has meant that he has also been unable to release players.

An analysis of those he has used when he has had choice does suggest that he has a potentially worrying belief in the abilities of Ahmet Brkovic who, to be fair, usually puts the effort in and makes a useful squad man, but who equally clearly lacks something in the quality department when faced with good quality 2nd Division opponents.

His spat with Kevin Nicholls indicates, though, that he will not be compromised by player power, a very positive attitude for any manager to exhibit.

Whoever persuaded Marlon Beresford to join the club deserves a pat on the back as his performances have been outstanding, and he thoroughly deserved his man of the match award against Notts County, despite the opinion of the bloke a row or two behind me whose loudly stated opinion was that the decision was a joke. Yes, Adrian Forbes scored and did a great deal of running, but without Beresford's safe handling all of Forbes' work would have counted for nothing.

The Dean Crowe situation has been very unsatisfactory and illustrates clearly the real difficulty the club has of keeping players on the fringe of things active without any reserve team games. Crowe cannot have become a bad player in such short a space of time and there have been times when with Steve Howard looking either disinterested or struggling for fitness, it may have been worth giving Crowe the chance of proving himself.

One or two Hartlepool supporters suggested that Mike was a man who preferred to try to hold on to what he'd got rather than looking to increase his hold on a game and perhaps that was borne out in the Barnsley game where most spectators could feel a goal coming and were mentally urging Newell to make a change or two before that happened.

The signs are that Newell has taken lessons on board from his time at Hartlepool and that he will be a better and more popular manager for us, particularly having felt confident enough in his position to bring Mick Harford on board - an obvious, ready-made replacement should things not work out for MN.

It is very ironic that this season is going so comparatively well for the side when one feels that the team we were putting out in Division 3 would have beaten the one currently on show. It can only suggest that this is far from being a vintage Second Division. However, the euphoria of staying close to the play-off places should be tempered by the reality that this squad is nowhere near good enough to make any sort of impression on the First Division, without significant strengthening.

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Bill Tomlins is the brother of one of my best mates - we are god-parents to each other's children - John Tomlins, a one-time season ticket holder at Kenilworth Road but a long-standing Chelsea supporter. I visited him just before Christmas and threatened to start a rumour that he was being lined up by his brother as a wealthy mystery investor who could well become Chairman when the takeover was complete. Unless Roman Abramovich's fortune disappears overnight and Stamford Bridge goes with it, that just won't be happening.

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I feel like writing an open letter to Mike Newell asking him to let me know the next time he intends not trying to win a game so that I don't have to waste money going to watch the resultant mess. What was the thought process which made him send out a side against Tranmere in the Cup which proceeded to play like an away team, with five across the middle desperately trying to hang on for a draw?

Okay we had lost Forbes and Howard, so Showumni was the only option up front. Yes, but on his own? A guy who has never scored and lacks any sort of experience, being slung up there with no support? You might as well send a non-driver out in a car on his own and expect him to teach himself how to drive. Why did Newell not take a chance by starting Crowe up there with him? I know he reportedly wasn't fully fit, but he did okay when he came on for a few minutes and at least that way Enoch would have had someone alongside him to point him into the right positions and perhaps to get on the end of some of the flicks and headers that Enoch did win and ended up putting into no-man's land. Had Crowe broken down we would have had plenty on the bench to replace him and then to institute the draw tactics, but we never even gave him a shot at proving that he still has something to offer.

We were at home in a Cup match against a side below us in the table who we beat last time they came, and we bottled it by playing for a draw - Newell hinted as much in his 3 Counties interview prior to the game - and again afterwards, suggesting that had we got a draw we'd have had players back for the replay and would have had a fair chance of winning it. With our away record this season? No, the best chance was at home against a side which also came for a draw and only nicked the winner with one piece of skill which would not even have mattered had we attacked from the start.

When Mike Newell arrived I heard a couple of Hartlepool supporters talking about him, suggesting that he lacked a sense of adventure and would always settle for what he'd got rather than push on and try to win - admittedly he didn't do that when we went down to ten against Stockport but perhaps it was because we didn't then go on to win that game, although we might well have done, that he then reverted to type and attempted to play safe in the Cup.

*Graham Sharpe*

## RECEIVERSHIP AND EMBARGOS

18.10.03

BRENTFORD 4 TOWN 2

A warm sunny autumn day Fuller's day out by the Thames was only marred by the period between 3pm and 4.50, during which The Hatters were thoroughly outfought, and run ragged by the home team's impressive attacking play, which Coyne, Perrett and Dean Brill were unable to live with. The only bright spot was Forbesy's brace, the second of which many resigned Town fans managed to miss, and this was the better of the two.

To make matters worse for the absentees and early-leavers, Sky Sport's Goals On Sunday deemed there was no point in showing the goal!

*Objet*

21.10.03

AFC BOURNEMOUTH 6 TOWN 3

This trip to the seaside unfortunately took place on an atrocious day, so the pre-match pub-crawl was severely curtailed to only include boozers near stations! By the time we had taken our places in the away section, the score was already 1-1, and we were angry. Very angry. We had arrived at the away end cash in hand 5 minutes before kick-off, but for some stupid reason you could only purchase tickets at the exact opposite end of the ground. At the ticket office we had walked straight past 10 minutes beforehand. Grrr...

We had arranged a lift back as returning by train from an evening game this far afield is impossible, and were mindful that if the Town were being thrashed our chauffeur wouldn't be hanging around for the full pain. As Bournemouth scored their 6th, I looked over, and sure enough Phil had left his seat, so we followed. Luckily, Five Live advised us that neither had the Town been stuffed out of sight, nor did we miss any more goals. I dozed off in the car, and woke up as we approached Luton...at only a quarter to eleven! A quick phone call to the Bricklayers, and a couple of last order pints were ordered...and why not!

*Objet*

25.10.03

TOWN 1 POSH (?) 1

If you'd have asked me at the start of the day, then a draw with Peterborough would've been a poor result. But with Hillier being sent off, a draw wasn't all that bad. We still should've beaten them out of sight though. Berky got booked for a great tackle on Callum Willock (or should that be pillock?), but Forbes put us ahead on the half-hour with a strike which was once blocked. Hillier then got sent off for a second bookable offence on Pillock, which resulted in Neilson coming on. He played against the same winger, Clarke, last season and was terrible, but this time he was a lot better. McKenzie equalised with about half an hour to go with a header. Two other things worth mentioning. One is an impressive debut from Beresford, and an indication of what was to come over the next three months (and hopefully longer). Second is Fotiadis coming on as a sub for Peterborough. He got quite a good reception, but did nothing really.

*Peter Bulkeley*

### 01.11.03 BRISTOL CITY 1 TOWN who have been leaking goals like a sieve 1

After conceding 10 goals in the last two away games and having the equal worst defensive record in the division we approached this game with some trepidation. For us West Country exiles this is our nearest Div 2 ground so equally worried about the flack I will get if we are thrashed again as we have been in the past!

90 seconds into the game we are a goal down and we already checking the exits! However, the pessimism is misplaced, midfield with Spring, Mansell (local boy), Robinson, and Brkovic start getting a grip and at times playing some fluent football, linking well with the buzzing strike force of Forbes and McSheffery we gradually get in top. Great equaliser, Boyce dribbles his way out of defence and finds Spring in our half, he turns and threads a great ball to McSheffery who times his run brilliantly to outpace the defence and slot home.

Home crowd silent in the second and Luton boys doing all the singing. Enoch fails to connect to McSheffery's cross at the death. Encouraging performance. Beresford looks okay in goal although he needs to improve his kicking.

*Frampton Hatter*

### 04.11.03 RUBBISH DIAMONDS 1 MIGHTY HATTERS 2

Well what a game, home end and I nearly missed the Enoch goal, (I ducked, I've seen his shooting before). A doggy penalty, and Enoch running the show causing mayhem in their defence. Then Davis gets sent off again the PRATT! They then somehow score to make the game more interesting. The game I couldn't care less about, but the R&D fans seem too. Oh well, we beat them again.

*Dayoff*

As expected we made wholesale changes to the team that drew with Bristol City at the weekend. Among the younger players to stand out was Leon Barnett who looked calm and composed at the heart of our solid defence. The Noch put in another battling performance and thoroughly deserved his tenacious and well taken early goal. Our lead was doubled when Showumni was fouled in the box and Leary kept his nerve to slot home from the spot, with less than 20mins played. Luton slept at a corner and Rodney Jack delighted the crowd with a cheeky back-healed flick into the top corner, midway through the 1st half to make a game of it. However the impressive looking Town were able to hold on for the win despite losing Davis (Sol) to 2 booking.

I wonder where we'll be off to next round???

*Pratty*

### 07.11.03 THURROCK 1 TOWN 1

#### *Pikey central*

When the FA Cup first round was drawn, the reaction to getting an away match at Thurrock was along the lines of "Where's that?" Some internet research revealed that it was near Purfleet, but not actually there. So, with Sky deciding that we were top candidates for a giantkilling, we landed up in Stockbroker country on a Friday night. Actually, Stockbroker country is a different Essex as we soon discovered as we investigated the alcoholic delights

of Tilbury – all hairdressers and chippies and very pikey! We retreated to civilisation, in the shape of Grays Athletic FC who at least have a decent bar at their ground, and then to Thurrock FC. As there was no segregation in the ground, it was inevitable we would be greeted through the turnstile by Bedfordshire's finest, PC Palmer, to be told we were in the wrong part of the ground. And so, in the right bit, we settled down to enjoy the game. Another mistake.

What we were served up was a pretty inept performance by the Town, and a spirited effort by the home side, particularly Town reject Cliff Akurang. Boycie put us ahead before half time, but we rarely looked like scoring again, and it was no surprise when Thurrock's England international (at beach football) Terry Bowes equalised. With four minutes to go Tresor 'Thameslink' Kandol had a break through on goal, but to our relief had clearly forgotten to get a ticket again, and fired wide.

Sky must have been dead chuffed with the result, although what their pundits found to talk about is anyone's guess. The general feeling after the game was Mike Newell should have carried out his threat to play himself. He certainly couldn't have done worse than the Town's strikeforce that evening – particularly Showumni and Crowe.

*KFH*

### 15.11.03 TOWN 3 WREXHAM 2

#### *It's all about the timing...*

Picture the scene. It was Saturday afternoon at about 2.25pm and I was in the bar of the Power League football arena in Barnet, north London, having a post-just been knocked out of a five-a-side tournament pint.

Having already given my ticket to a mate to try and get rid of that morning, I wasn't planning on being at Kenny Road - especially as it was my company awards night and I had to be back in London for about 6pm.

However, there were still 35 minutes to kick-off, and I was pretty sure no one would have been champing at the bit to claim my ticket and go watch the match.

So, one quick phone call to my mate to confirm he still had said season ticket on him (he did!) and, swelled by a "I can still make it" sense of optimism the pint had swelled in me, I was off. I raced up the M1 in a desperate, some may say foolhardy, attempt to get there for kick-off and, although I didn't quite make it, I am at least claiming I was back in Luton before 3pm.

Parking, I thought, was going to be a problem - if only for the additional minutes wasted walking to the ground and back. But, for whatever reason I still don't know, I took a chance on trying right outside the ground. And my luck was in - at the very top of Hazelbury Crescent, in sight of the "stadium", was one parking space. It was obviously meant to be!

Of course, I was questioning that around 10 minutes later when Wrexham took the lead, and even more so when they scored a second.

But Forbesy pulled one back straight from the restart and, just before half-time, it gave us hope and me another dilemma. I already knew I was going to have to leave early, to get to



said awards night on time, so I gave myself until 4.15pm - at the very, very latest - before I went.

Bugger, I thought, as Robinson equalised with a fantastic turn and half volley. I reckoned we were on course to win, and I was going to miss a rousing finale. My cut-off time came... and went, as I gave myself another 60 seconds before I definitely had to go. Still no goal, so off I trudged.

But it turned out it was definitely my day as, just as I got to the exit, Mansell picked up the ball on the right wing. "I'll watch this attack and then go", I told myself. And, stood directly behind the line of the ball, I saw his cross-cum-shot sail in all the way. Get in!

I missed Ferguson's red card but, having seen us win three points and also getting to my awards night in plenty of time, who cares!

*Scoop*

### **18.11.03 TOWN 3 THURROCK 1**

This first round replay produced a much better performance than the original match 10 days earlier, although the Town were still not totally convincing. It took nearly 40 minutes to break down the Thurrock defence, with Forbes scoring the opener, but 4 minutes into the second half Akurang equalised and our thoughts turned to extra time and penalties. But this time Town were the better side and persistence was rewarded with a second goal for Forbes on 76 minutes. Then it was just a matter of holding on.

It was during this spell that it became increasingly noticeable that Thurrock were heavily dependant on one player. Step forward David Collis. The poor bloke was not only having to take all the goalkicks for their injured goalkeeper, but if the kick resulted in them winning a corner he had to rush up the field to take the corner! In between times he was the dead ball specialist and took all their free kicks and most of their throw ins. So when he brought down Ahmet Brkovic on the edge of the box for a pen, it was probably a mixture of being plain knackered and wanting to put an end to his own suffering! It has to be said he didn't argue about the penalty - but then he probably didn't have the energy.

Naturally, Forbes stepped up and knocked the ball home to claim his hat-trick and our place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round and the delights of a trip to Rochdale.

*KFH*

### **22.11.03 SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 1 TOWN 1**

*Swing Low...or very low if you support Wednesday!*

A very, very good awayday. 0645 train from Luton to Derby, a quick fry-up, then a most enjoyable few pints of Deuchars IPA whilst watching England kick the convicts' arses in a sport that I still struggle to get into. Even today when Jonny kicked the ball over the bar for a goal kick, I could only find myself smiling and applauding, whereas the rest of the pub were going absolutely mental! Onto Sheffield, where I find that our tour guide has cried off sick. A few enquiries in the Wetherspoon's later, and we found ourselves in the superb Devonshire Cat, a pub brim full of real ales and bottled foreign lagers. Paradise.

Arrive at the ground as usual 5 mins before KO, to find one of only 2 turnstiles just being closed, this despite about 300 Lutonians baying for blood, knowing that yet again we were going to miss the start of an away game due to incompetence. And at Hillsborough of all places, need I say more? Eventually another turnstile opened and we only missed a couple of minutes of what turned out to be a commendable defensive performance by the Town, with Stevo back from injury, not looking too mobile but doing a sterling job, in central defence due to there simply being nobody else fit or unsuspended. He was one of several heroes today, the main ones being the Magnificent "Marleene" Boyce, and Marvellous Marlon, whose last minute save from Owusu gave Luton a just about deserved point, and sent the natives home miserable as sin.

After the game, several tried to take it out on us Railway Children on the tram back to the Devonshire Cat, but our day was not to be ruined. When are the football supporters of Sheffield going to drag themselves out of the 1980s? It's folk like these that the phrase "Northern Monkeys" was designed for. Back safely on the train to Leicester (to change for Luton), the Senior Conductor turned it into a direct train to Luton. Very nice of her! She probably did it for the good folk and constabulary of Leicester, as much as for us Hatters, Leicester station being a regular battlefield for rival footie fans on Saturday evenings.

*Objet*

### **29.11.03 TOWN 1 CHESTERFIELD 1**

Not a good performance and the match certainly wasn't an exciting one, but we won, and at the end of the season, that will be all that matters. Howard's looping header from Forbes' cross separated the two teams. Apart from that, we probably should've increased our lead, but it didn't matter in the end as we won. The Shef played his last game for the club before his return to Coventry City. Unfortunately, he didn't get a goal, but his performances and his contribution certainly won't be forgotten.

*Peter Bulkeley*

### **06.12.03 DALE 0 TOWN 2**

If you're expecting a blow-by-blow account of this match, then you've come to the wrong place. This is written just before our fourth round match with Tranmere, and you will hopefully be reading this as we await our home match against Moan U or Arsenal or someone in the Premiership. So, as far as I can remember, Robinson scored a penalty after a foul on Forbes, and he missed a penalty after a foul on Forbes. Mansell completed the win in the second half with a tap in from the edge of the six yard box. Quite a good performance, but not a memorable game.

*Peter Bulkeley*

### **09.12.03 SOUTHEND UNITED 3 TOWN 0**

I don't know why I let optimism overtake me so early but I really thought we would do it this year. Our lack of progress in the LDV/Autowindcreens/Freight Rover/Sunbeam Alpine cup has been a source of immense disappointment to me. I know it is the least valued of the cup competitions but that is the point: with Luton Town's great cup fighting tradition we

should have won the damn thing by now. This year I haven't been got the excuse that our manager didn't take it seriously as the team for the third round match was virtually first choice. Maybe they had luck on their side, but why has the previously awkward but oh-so-pink Sammy the Shrimp mascot suddenly joined the Ku Klux Klan? This apparent crustacean is now in a white outfit with a black tunic and a ludicrously pointed hat; maybe he is the Wizard of the Coastal Reaches.

Unfortunately for the Hatters, Lucky/Happy/Slightly Camp Harry was not lending his good fortune to this game and there were no friendly wizards in sight so we got stuffed. It is not that we played particularly badly but just that Southend United were particularly fired up for this one; don't ask me why. They followed a 3-0 demolition of Lincoln City in the FA Cup second round with a 3-0 thumping of Luton three days later, so no doubt the law of football logic will see them soundly beaten in their next league game. Tuesday was their night though. Southend chased and harried Luton from the off, not just first to loose balls but very quickly onto Luton players when we had possession. Matthew Spring and Peter Holmes tried to get things going in midfield but they were out-fought and often out-numbered by the energetic Shrimpers. The first goal came after only two minutes and, whilst a soft one, was no more than we were expecting. A 20-something yard shot hit reasonably firmly seemed to be covered comfortably by Marlon Beresford until the last second when he misjudged the bounce and palmed it into his own net. Not dissimilar to Carl Muggleton's fumble for Chesterfield but this time the shot was low. Still Luton should be able to create enough chances to get back on terms shouldn't they? Well, yes they should and yes they did except we missed all our opportunities and managed to concede far too many others to them. the game could easily have finished 5-3. Two more goals followed, the first of them just before half-time (whilst I was getting a hotdog) was apparently down to sleeping sickness in the defence; their final goal being down to crap defending sickness where all fluid marking dries up. Chris Coyne was all over the place in this game and whilst young Deeney looked good on the ball and tracking back, his distribution will need to improve if he is to make it big. Were there any plus points? Not that I recall.

Say what you like about Dean Crowe, he runs his socks off. Say what you like about Dean Crowe his first touch is worse than Stuart Douglas'. When we dominated matches in the Third Division, Crowe bagged a few goals but I never rated him highly. Now he cannot score and is therefore not worthy of selection as he offers little other than nuisance value. We looked much more likely when Adrian Forbes came on late in the second period but unfortunately Enoch 'Rivers of Blood' Showumni came with him. Say what you like about Showumni but his first touch is worse than Dean Crowe's.

One more thing, the attendance was appalling from both home and away fans. Luton took well over a thousand to both Stevenage Borough and Rushden & Diamonds in earlier rounds so why only 250 or so (where was Mickey Enwright) to Southend? It looked like being even fewer until the kick-off was delayed by 15 minutes due to heavy traffic problems: do the Essex Police do this at every home match because I have never had an easy run into Southend? I'm told that Mike Newell has started the Town playing football again unlike that old hooper Joe Kinnear. As far as I can see he is only making it easier for the opposition to work us out. Under Joe we had an enormous away support for most games fuelled by the excellent away record that he created. Now the vicious circle is ever-decreasing and I predict the reduced numbers of Luton fans on our next away trip will not boost sales of Blackpool rock extravagantly.

*Cliff Saunders, Milton Keynes*

**13.12.03**

**BLACKPOOL 0 TOWN 1**

We thought we would get wet and we thought we would lose. The weather two days prior to this fixture was appalling and on the day it was still tipping it down in temperate Milton Keynes, so we wondered pessimistically how much worse it would be up North. Fortunately, the skies cleared as we approached Lancashire and by the time we reached the old Stanley Matthews seafront there was more sky blue than cloud. The lack of precipitation was followed by another watershed in the emergence of Steve Robinson as a useful player for Luton Town. Leaving aside his dipping, long-range effort which the man himself was as surprised to see drop in as we were, Robinson delivered a tremendous display of midfield industry and creativity. Always looking for the incisive through ball, the little Irishman provided chances for Mansell, Spring, Forbes and Howard during this game whilst chasing after the always-lively Blackpool midfield when the Seasiders were in possession. Hopefully, this is a sign of things to come and an incentive (if one is needed) for Mike Newell to drop the curmudgeonly Nicholls at the first opportunity. Paul Hughes, Ahmet Brkovic, Lee Mansell and Steve Robinson have all played in wide positions for the Hatters, despite all insisting that central midfield is their preferred and best position. Now Robinson has his chance he is making as big an impact as Paul Hughes did earlier in the season; so if Kevin Nicholls needs examples of how to behave in the team's best interests: he does not have too far to look.

Back to the game and Blackpool still look good. Their midfield is quick and creative, with a well-conceived game plan that all the players appear to be familiar with. One difference from last year was how we played them. Following the Southend LDV debacle, it was Luton's turn to press the opposition and upset their passing game; especially the young right-winger (whose name escapes me) who was restricted to the point of substitution by the oft-maligned Brkovic. Now don't be deceived because Blackpool caused problems for Luton in this match, but in a reversal of the normal pattern it was the home goalkeeper and not Marlon Beresford who had the busier afternoon despite greater tangerine possession. Though desperate at times, Luton Town defended forcefully with Mansell helping Kevin Foley throughout and Brkovic protecting the sometimes suspect Sol Davis on the left.

It could actually have been more decisive if Steve Howard had made better use of two good chances with his head. One chance in the first minute or two looked easier to score but he got on top of it and headed it down without the required venom. Nevertheless, one goal and three points at Bloom Road (it's only half a ground at the moment and therefore only deserves half a name) were as welcome as they were unexpected. We did get one thing right though, when despite the fine start the heavens opened with ten minutes left to soak the unprotected travelling army. Did we care? Did we bollocks.

*Cliff Saunders*

**20.12.03**

**TOWN 0 BARNSELY 1**

Walking around Luton prior to the game in the gale-force winds, I realised that an entertaining game was unlikely today, so I braced myself to forgive the Town for whatever lay ahead. Though we didn't cope with the conditions, sadly The Tykes did, and looked slightly less inept than Luton throughout. Their only failing was in the delivery of their countless corners, all too often Spring-esque. Until the 91<sup>st</sup> minute, when a corker of a ball



was sent over, Marlon was stranded in a rare moment of indecision, and the ball was poked past him. An opportunity to leap over Barnsley, deep into the play-off places, and tuck-in behind QPha and The Muff was missed, and we sulked into Xmas back in 7th place

*Objet*

## 26.12.03 COLCHESTER UNITED 1 TOWN 1

I forced myself to go to this one; by Boxing Day each year I always feel an urgent requirement to get away from my family, and fast! Even if it meant braving nasty little Colchester. A lift to Welwyn Garden City with my brother, for a lift forward with Dayoff into darkest Essex- sorry, lightest Essex, they don't like anything dark in Colchester, that includes people!

Despite two 'pit-stops' en route, we were desperate for sustenance having parked up by a quarter past 2, so we braved that corner pub near the ground with separate bars for home and away fans. Horrible place. No real ale, and no beer glasses left, so I resorted to a bottle of Becks, my chauffeur preferring Smirnoff Ice - very strange watching this real ale desperado supping a girls' drink.

Inside the packed tiny ground Luton started very slowly, Colchester dominated proceedings for the first 20 minutes, and should have been more than 1-0 up. Mansell then scored a decent equaliser, and back in the game our hopes were high for a win. Luton then went on to have about 80% of possession for the first half-hour of the second half, many pretty patterns were weaved across the park, yet the boys seemed scared to take a shot on goal, preferring the extra pass, which was all too often misplaced. The ref saw fit to give us our statutory ration of bookings- including Stevo of course, yet this wasn't a dirty game. In fact, for much of the 2nd half it was like watching a friendly. Colchester then roared back for the latter stages, and the Town were a tad lucky- and grateful again to Marlon- to hang on for the point.

I note that while I'm out of the country, Luton manage to win twice, yet as soon as I get back...

*Objet*

There are times when you question your sanity a four hundred mile round trip from Glos to North Essex on Boxing Day when everyone seems to be on the M25! Still a much improved performance from the Barnsley game. Just managed a quick drink with my mate a Colchester season ticket holder before the game, he was worried about Howard after last season's 5-0 thrashing.

Colchester looked a useful side especially their front two who were lively and their midfield linked well and closed us down quickly. They scored a good headed goal and our defence was creaking. Was not sure where a goal was coming from when Mansell fires home after Spring's shot is blocked. Second half we are well on top with our final ball lacking that killer punch. Near the end we were nearly caught napping and Beresford saves well. Fair result (my mate agreed), useful point and we are still hanging in despite everything.

*Frampton Hatter*

## 28.12.03 TOWN 2 NOTTS COUNTY 0

Well, it wasn't one of our best performances of the season, but a win is a win nonetheless. It was a win that we all expected against one of the divisions bottom sides. We dominated the first half, with Forbes scoring after five minutes with a lob over their keeper. In the second half, County came back, but with Marlon in goal, they had no chance of scoring. With about ten minutes to go, the brilliant Emmerson Boyce scored after a Coyne cross, one of Howard's shots was blocked and Boyce finally put it away.

*Peter Bulkeley*

## 03.01.04 BRADFORD CITY 1 TOWN 2

*"Surely you mean 0-1?", says Editor*

Why, oh why, oh why? How many times? Where do these people get their information? They only had to ask! Yes folks, this was another administrative disaster for an English football club who surely need all the gate receipts they can get. Bradford City had not hosted a league game against Luton Town for decades and the last cup encounter was back in the early nineties (the same day that Tim Breacker was sold if memory serves) so there were always going to be many Hatters fans making their first trip to Valley Parade. Add to this 3<sup>rd</sup> Round Cup Fever, mix in a chance to upset a team from a higher division, tinge with the figures from Charlton Athletic and Aston Villa in the Tooth-Rot Cup: and now tell me why Bradford were only expecting 900 Luton fans (600 *actually* - Ed)? Apparently, only 450 tickets were sold in advance for an 1800 capacity away end and a local steward told us that they usually double that figure to estimate the final number. Maybe, and this is only a suggestion, they should have contacted Luton Town F.C. or the Bedfordshire constabulary or the fanzine or even my mum who could have told them that we would take 2000-ish to this game! I write this only two days after the match so I am missing some information such as why did Cherry Newberry not tell Bradford City that we needed more room, even if this information was unsolicited (*She did*)? In fact, Bradford could easily have given us half of their ludicrously out-of-proportion ground, which was barely a quarter full in the other three stands. Did all Luton ticket-holders gain entry (*Yes*)? How many people were stranded outside (*None*)? How does Bradford get away with such limited toilet and refreshment facilities in a stand that size? How do they cope with Stoke City, Derby County, West Ham United and other clubs with large travelling support in their division (*God only knows*)?

Fortunately, no other team will need to visit Valley Parade in the cup this year because we won. A tremendous first goal displayed hitherto unknown psychic abilities for the Luton Town front two. Steve Howard challenged strongly for a ball wide on the right and flicked on for Adrian Forbes to collect and beat both defender and keeper to finish calmly. For once, Forbes was in the right place to collect and it made the difference. Howard has been unenergetic in recent games but he still causes problems for opposition defenders and it is soul-destroying to see hard won flicks not capitalized upon. Nobody had a bad game for Luton but Lee Mansell's distribution let him down as he constantly robbed the opponents only to return it straight to them; ditto Ahmet Brkovic. Matthew Spring and Steve Robinson were much more accomplished in the centre and, while I wouldn't say they ran the midfield, they came out on top of the Bantams' headless chickens (groan). Sol Davis played well, keeping it simple against a speedy right-winger and Emmerson Boyce seemed always to be in the right place. Chris Coyne produced many good interventions and Marlon Beresford caught what he had to in a game where we looked less comfortable as we tired. Bradford

City played with a confidence I wasn't expecting from a team rooted to the foot of Division 1 but they failed to score goals when the opportunities arose and the Hatters made sure that opportunities were scant. Some of the passing out of defence early on with Spring, Boyce and Kevin Foley was delightful.

Luton went further ahead in the second half when a right-wing cross was headed down and Forbes was the first to get there, striking to ball into the roof of the net from seven yards for his second of the match. The Bradford goalkeeper was furious as he had been winding up the away fans during a half-time warm-up and he knew the stick would follow. With about fifteen minutes left Bradford were awarded a penalty, which looked a bit harsh from 100 yards away but was converted firmly. The City players had been looking for penalties from the start and Coyne was lucky not to give one away in the first half with a gentle push on 'Whinging' Dean Windass. Colchester United had the same tactic on Boxing Day, are we known to be susceptible to this approach? A set-piece had looked the most likely way for the home time to get back into the match and Luton Town needed all their resources to resist a late onslaught inspired by the penalty, especially when the controlling influence of Spring was lost with a recurrence of his groin injury I suspect.

Still, the game was not yet over as Luton produced one last concerted attack, which ended with Steve Howard alone against three defenders. Showing intricate skill, Howard twisted and turned until he was decisively tripped as he beat the last man to deny him a goal-scoring opportunity. Without Spring, the penalty kick was left to the in-form Forbes who fluffed it badly to miss out on a hat-trick and leave the Hatters faithful a nervous last five minutes. We need not have worried as the mighty Town shut-out the Bradford attack as comfortably as the Bradford administration had shut out our supporters. It finished 2-1 to us, so there.

*Cliff Saunders*

#### **10.01.04 RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS 2 TOWN 2**

Did anyone actually go to this game? I couldn't get a report off anyone so, for the record the Hatters drew 2-2 after taking an early lead through Forbes, restoring the lead through Holmes, and late penalty save by Beresford. During the game both Howard and Robinson got themselves booked and therefore suspended from the cup match against Tranmere.

*K.F.H.*

#### **17.01.04 REAL HATTERS 2 PLASTIC HATTERS 2**

After an encouraging start, we fell behind against the run of play to a softish goal, then levelled courtesy of an o.g. following good work by Robbo. Turning point of the game arrived before half time when Forbes appeared to square up to an opponent and was duly shown the dreaded 'carte rouge'. Stockport became more adventurous with their numerical advantage during the second period and scored following some hesitant Town defending and it seemed as though the game was lost. That is, until a moment of madness from the Stockport 'keeper, who unnecessarily handled a 'back-pass??', led to an indirect free kick in the area and Stevo despatched to level matters. For once, a home draw actually felt like a victory.

*Steve F.*

#### **24.01.04 TOWN 2 TRANMERE 2**

As co-sponsors of this 4<sup>th</sup> Round FA Cup tie, the MAAH crew enjoyed the club's hospitality prior to the game in the Eric Morecambe suite and we took our seats in the directors' box just before kick off.

If the truth be told, given the team news, we would all have been happy to have held our fellow division 2 opponents to a draw and gone up to Birkenhead for a replay with surely a much stronger team in the hope of securing a place in Round 5.

An awful game remained at stalemate until 10 minutes from time when Mellon ran unchallenged from midfield and scored from the edge of the area via the inside of the post to end our cup involvement for another season...

Monday's 5<sup>th</sup> Round draw predictably gave the winner of this tie a home draw against Swansea and therefore a great opportunity for progression and much needed income! Que sera!!

*Steve F.*

#### **31.01.04 HARTLEPOOL v TOWN**

Damn! Damn, damn, damn!!! Of all the places... After spending all week worrying about snow killing this game, we didn't expect rain to do it. Heading north on the train it became increasingly likely though, and phone calls resulted in the news that the pitch was, "very wet, but no inspection is planned." Such is the contempt with which we supporters are treated. On the way to Hartlepool from Newcastle locals assured us that waterlogging was not an option as the pitch has really good drainage and is below sea level (not sure I can see the logic but...). So, a 2 o'clock phone call from Luton, relaying the news came as no surprise to us, but much surprise to the locals. Trouble is, it came just to late to escape from Hartlepool and get anywhere else as there were no trains and the local cabbies seemed to be on an extended lunch break. Thus we were condemned to a couple of hours in Hartlepool – a fate you wouldn't wish on anyone. We finally got back to Luton about 9pm. Round trip of nearly 600 miles and 14 hours for nothing more than a few beers!

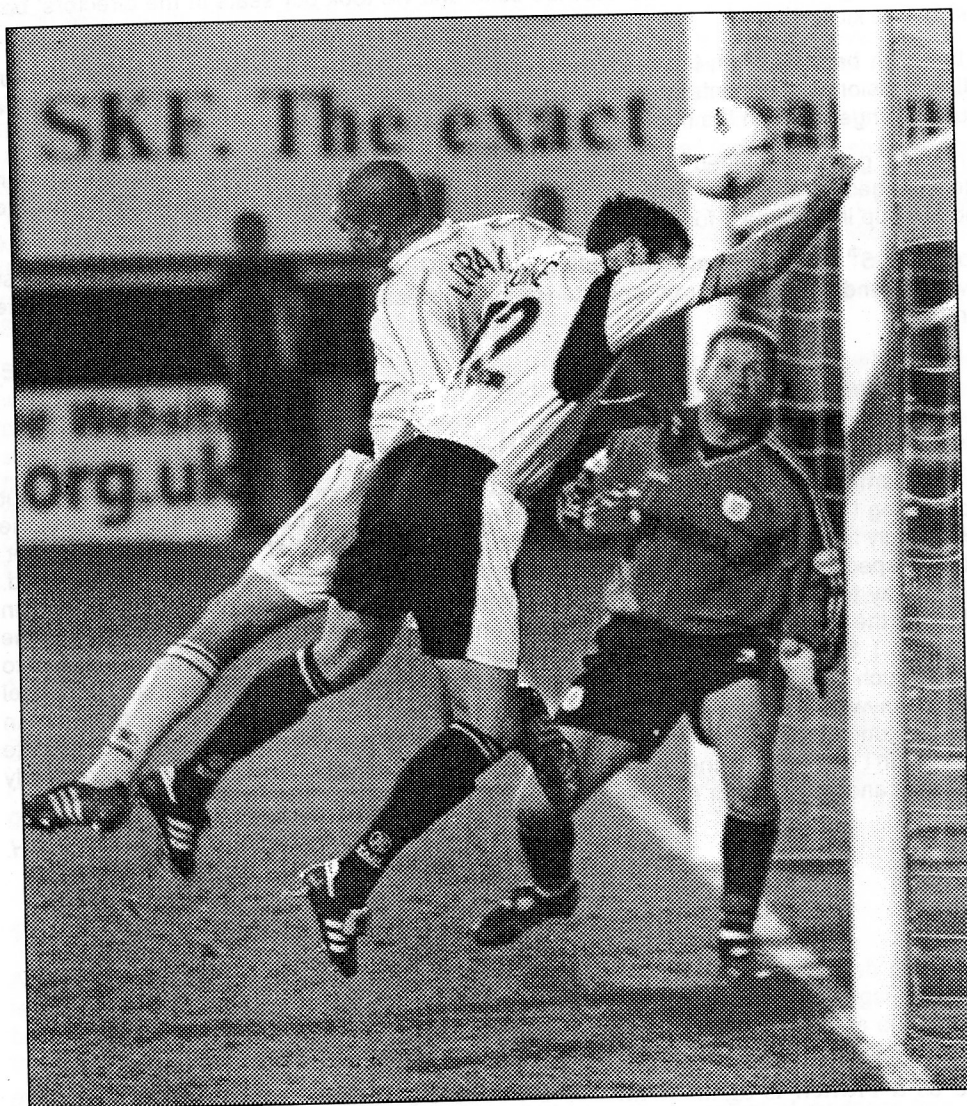
*K.F.H.*

### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

*Mad as a Hatter!* is again available on subscription at £6.50 for the next five issues from the address on page 2. Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* Please do not send cash by post as it rarely arrives.



## COYNE-ING IT IN?



Chris Coyne in action at the sharp end against Stockport

Forget New Zealand. A lower budget version of Tolkein's epic has been filmed right here in Luton.

## THE FRAUD OF THE RINGS

**Directed by**

Barry Ward

**Produced by**

Trust in Luton

Long ago in the land of Mal-odour the Ring of Power was forged by the evil Sauron. He desired to destroy Middle-Worth and rule over all Bedford-Shire. The resistance was fierce. A last alliance fought for the freedom of Middle-Worth on the slopes of Birming-doom where Sauron was defeated and lost the Ring. Now he is re-gathering his strength and desperately seeking for its return. Only the heroes of Middle-Worth stand between him and his goal. Can Frodo and the other members of the quest carry the Ring of Power back to Birming-doom and destroy Sauron forever?

### **Starring**

John Gurney      Sauron

Cruel and deceitful – seeks to cover Middle-Worth in darkness

Kevin Nicholls      Elrond

The first time he saw Sauron he knew he was a tosser

Joe Kinnear      Bilbo Baggins

Secretly kept the ring for many years

Mike Newell	Frodo Baggins	Wide-eyed innocent – has no idea what he is taking on
Cherry Newberry	Sam Gamgee	Faithful servant – pulls Middle-Worth out of the shit many times
Mick Harford	Aragorn	The rightful king of Middle-Worth, exiled by Sauron but returns triumphant
Adrian Forbes & Gary McSheffrey	Hobbits of Bedford-Shire	
Matthew Taylor	Legolas	Pretty-boy elf – leaves for the Grey Havens
Sol Davis	Gimli	Bad-tempered dwarf
Russ Perrett	Boromir	Brave defender – suffers multiple injuries
John Moore	Gandalf the Grey	a.k.a Gandalf the wise
Chris Coyne	Treebeard	Tall – treads on orcs
Mike Watson-Challis	Theoden	Elderly ruler – falls under a spell but recovers
Tony Thorpe	Grima Wormtongue	
Alex Ferguson	Gollum	Snivelling little whinger – has spent too long in the evil corners of the world

Rupert Murdoch	Shelob the Spider	Monster bloated by greed
David Kohler	Saruman	Wants the Ring for himself – tries to outwit Sauron
Ray Lewington	Lord of the Nazgul	

Sound: G Block; Score: Steve Howard; Hair design: Ahmet Brkovic; Continuity: Marvin Johnson; Special effects: Matthew Spring; Best-boy: Dean Brill; Script: Eric Morecambe; Presentation: Nick Owen.

With special thanks to the Donkey Sanctuary at Vicarage Road for the loan of various wargs, goblins, orcs and slimy creatures of the deep.

Basford Hatter

## BAAAH!

Referee Mick Brookes returned to the Elmscroft Park Stadium at West Farleigh having previously called off matches there because of sheep droppings on the pitch.

Following recent improvements, including a stock fence used to keep woolly supporters away from the playing surface, Brookes found no problems this time.

A cutting here from the *Kent Messenger*, revealing a new hazard for football. Will sheep on the pitch be the excuse for postponement when we visit Wrexham?



## Seeing How The Other Half Live

When the FA Cup 3rd round draw was made, one of my more attentive mates, a Gooner, noted that Luton and Arsenal were playing in West Yorkshire on the same weekend, and on separate days. It didn't take much persuasion for him to set the ball rolling for a great weekend, and he secured 7 tickets for the away end at Leeds United v Arsenal the day after the Luton game. After the main event at Valley Parade, we were nicely set for a double away win. I won't bore you with a laddish account of a boozy Saturday night in Leeds, so I'll move straight onto the Elland Road fixture.

With my North London (red side) roots, I was obviously going to support the Gunners for the day, but in a relaxed way, unlike the afternoon before. If they lost, then hey ho, no matter. Parking was surprisingly easy, in a side street a 15 minute walk from the ground. My first reaction on the approach to the away end, was how silly the ground looked overall, with a heeuge stand in the shape of a bulldozer 'bucket', and 3 far shallower old stands. A little unfinished if you ask me. Arsenal had the whole stand behind the goal, the last time I frequented this stand I stood, and Luton won 2-0 with 10 men (Ju-Ju-Julian James sent off on his debut). But in those days Leeds were in the second division, and we were in the old first. I was impressed with the entrance fee, only £20, pretty damned reasonable I thought.

After the bizarre opening goal, Arsenal's Kraut keeper taking too long to kick the ball upfield and it bouncing off Viduka into the net, followed by about 15 minutes of home side domination, Arsenal finally settled down and totally outclassed Leeds for the rest of the match. And to be honest, like 'em or hate 'em, it was pretty damned impressive stuff to watch. Some of the play by Henri that you don't notice on the box - especially back in defence - was awesome, a couple of things he and Kanu made the ball do were just a different planet from what your Luton player could do with a football. Another thing that struck me, was that even if a pass was misplaced, the Arsenal recipient was in the main still agile enough to reach the ball before it went out of play, such was their level of fitness.

Arsenal cruised to a 4-1 victory, yet even with the score at 3-1 with a minute to go, the Leeds fans sang Marching On Together. I couldn't see Town fans still singing after they'd been played off the park somehow. Most probably wouldn't have still been in the ground. Fair play to the Northern Monkeys. After the game, we had to wait 15 minutes outside the ground for the rest of the lads to emerge from the ground away, and I didn't see even a hint of hostility between fans. Times have changed since my last visit!

All in all, a great afternoon, but totally lacking the buzz of watching Luton Town away. Despite the massive gulf of class between the 2 games I had seen, I know what I'd rather watch. The second division plodders representing my beloved Luton Town of course!

*Objet*

## STAT ATTACK

### A statistical preview of Town's forthcoming fixtures

Luton v Colchester ties have only happened on 7 occasions in the league at Kenilworth Road, with the Hatters holding a 4-2 advantage, and scoring 3 goals in 3 of these victories. Having said that Colchester have their two wins from the last two matches! By 3-0 in December 2002 and 2-1 two years later! The only draw came in April 1966, when Gordon Riddick scored one of his 16 league goals for the Hatters.

Last time: 14th December 2002 Lost 1-2 (Andrew Fotiadis)

Valentines Day sees Luton travelling to Wycombe. At the Causeway Stadium (previously Adams Park) Luton have picked up 14 points from 6 games, with 4 wins and 2 draws. The first ever encounter in September 1997 was settled with a solitary goal scored by David Oldfield. The following season Luton claimed a point in a 2-2 draw, with Oldfield again scoring, and Tony Thorpe adding the second.

The opening game of the 98/99 season and a Steve Davis thunderbolt free kick was enough for all 3 points once more. One goal was enough again on the final away game of the 99/00 season, but this time it was late in the day before Matthew Taylor netted. The two sides met again 4 months later when Tresor Kandol scored in a 1-1 draw.

Last time: 28th December 2002 Won 2-1 (Steve Howard 2)

Brentford are the visitors on Saturday 21st February and there have been 30 previous encounters. The Hatters certainly have the advantage with 20 victories, and only 5 each draws and defeats. The Hatters won the first 10 fixtures from December 1920 through until April 1930 with a goal advantage of 29-9!! Three draws followed, including a 5-5, in February 1933, the only time this has happened to Luton in the league, you should have already read about it happening in the FA Cup! Luton won 4 more fixtures before, at the 18th time of asking, Brentford took all 3 points, with a 2-0 win in October 1951. Only once has there been a goal-less draw, in February 1993. Luton last won in 1999/2000 when Stuart Douglas scored twice in a 3-1 win.

Last time: 22nd February 2002 Lost 0-1

Finally in February it's the East Anglian derby at Peterborough United and the statistics are almost as even as you can get! Two victories for the Hatters, four draws and just the one defeat, back in 1965! Goals scored is equal on 6 a piece. Luton won with their 3rd visit to London Road, 3-2, with Phil Gray scoring twice, the start of a run that saw him score 6 goals in 4 league games! Paul Telfer netted the other that day. After a goal-less draw the following season it was another 3 years before the two sides met again. The Hatters won 1-0 with a goal by Andrew



Fotiadis, who in doing so relegated his current side to the basement division. The last two encounters have both ended 1-1.

Last time: 1st February 2003 1-1 (Steve Howard)

A midweek match at Kenilworth starts the March fixture list and Bournemouth are the visitors. Of the 23 previous encounters Luton have won 12, with 5 draws and 6 defeats. The opening fixture in December 1923 saw Luton win 6-2, one of four times when the Hatters have scored more than 3 goals. Bournemouth won the fixture the following season 2-0, and this is the only time Luton have been beaten by more than a goal. Luton have scored in all but four of the fixtures, but have kept eleven clean sheets. The highest attendance for this fixture, 18065, were hardly treated to a goal fest though, as the match in October 1969 ended 0-0!!

Last time: 26th August 2000 Won 1-0 (Matthew Spring penalty)

Barnsley are the hosts on 6th March, provided neither side are in the FA Cup! Again there have been 23 previous encounters and again the stats are one sided. The home side have won 18, with the Hatters victorious on just 4 occasions. The only draw came in December 1963 when both sides were in the old fourth division, Bruce Rioch and John Ryan scoring. Luton's first win was in September 1948, 2-1, a feat they repeated 3 years later. The following season it was 3-2, with Jesse Pye, twice, and Charlie Watkins scoring. The next 12 fixtures saw just one pointed returned, that draw in 63. It took 50 years to stop the rot and it was achieved in the most unusual circumstances. A goal down within a minute the Hatters soon found themselves a man down as well when Carl Emberson was sent off for handling outside his area. The Hatters stuck at it though and Matthew Spring levelled before the break. Amazingly in the second half Luton took a 3-1 lead with 2 goals from Tony Thorpe, before a late penalty made it 3-2!

Last time: 18th January 2003 Won 3-2 (Matthew Spring, Tony Thorpe 2)

Cheers

*Simon "Statto" Pitts*

Don't forget to check out more statistics at [www.lutonfc.com/stattoindex.asp](http://www.lutonfc.com/stattoindex.asp)

## FIVE REASONS WHY...

### **Enoch Showunmi is the best striker at our club this season**

1. He hasn't yet left the club in a dirty money-grabbing search for more cash. So that's Tony T\*\*r\*e sorted.
2. He's scored a goal - Dean Crowe is now out of the running.
3. He is the only striker this season to liven up the crowd whenever and wherever he appears. His magical silky skills mean you are never quite sure what trick he will bring out next. McSheffrey cannot claim this as his shots predictably were on target.
4. Enoch has replaced Forbes in a few matches - Forbes has never replaced Showunmi. That says something doesn't it?
5. He has darker hair than Steve Howard making him far more like a striker in the mould of Mike Newell, Mick Harford and Brian Stein and less like Helguson. This surely means he's better than Howard doesn't it? (Getting very desperate now!!)

So there you have it. Proof that Enoch Showunmi is our best striker this season and is undoubtedly the most gifted player Luton have had on their books since the mighty John Taylor graced the hallowed turf at KR. He has instantly become a Luton legend and is worthy of all the praise he gets. Drop those has-beens Howard and Forbes and get Enoch on - we want entertainment!

Next issue: Why Enoch should be fans' PFA Player of the month / year / decade / millennium.

*Peter Bulkeley*



# ENOCH!



A slightly awkward looking cult hero in action (or is that inaction?)  
against the plastic Hatters!