

MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



Issue 59

Mar 2004

OFF? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, OFF?



Luton groundstaff throw sand on the pitch in an attempt to keep the Bournemouth match on. The referee watches, probably having already made his decision. They are like that after all. Aren't they?

MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE

195 Cutenhoe Road, Luton, LU1 3NQ.

Email: keith.hayward1@ntlworld.com

Editor: Keith Hayward.

Backroom Boys: Phil Ivinston, Mark Ivinston, Andy Collon,

Executives: Jez Darr, Dave Kirkby, Steve Follit, Jeff Smith, Chris Lennon, Nick Gazeley, Mark Wilson, Kevin Wilson, Steve Witchard and the Brothers Different.

Casual Help: Steve Tyler.

Tech Support: Sue Hindler.

Contributors: Our thanks to B Dave B, Johnnie Vee, Dan Strode, Bill Church, Cliff Saunders, Andrew Connor, Peter Bulkeley, Russell Bulkeley, Roger Holdstock, Norman Samuels, Simon Pitts, Graham Sharpe, Richard Ward, Mark Araci and anyone else we may have forgotten to mention.

Action photos: Gareth Owen.

All material contained in this publication is copyright of *Mad as a Hatter!* and may not be reproduced without prior permission. The views expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor. Anyone who feels offended, misrepresented or misquoted will be given the right of reply.

Mad as a Hatter! is also available from:

BRICKLAYERS ARMS, High Town Road, Luton.

THE CLUB SHOP, Luton Town FC, Kenilworth Road, Luton.

***SPORTSPAGES**, Caxton Walk, 94-96 Charing Cross Road, London WC2.

***SPORTSPAGES**, Barton Square, St Anne's Square, Manchester.

(*Sportspages are only supplied if we have copies left after publication date)

Editorial

Let's start with the congratulations. To Mike Newell on being voted Division Two Manager of the month for February, to Enoch Showunmi on scoring his first hat-trick and being elected Umbro Isotonic (or something) Division Two Player of the Month for February, to Mick Harford for resisting the temptation to walk out on us for Forest, and to Bill Tomlins on bringing our beloved club out of receivership... oops, sorry, a bit premature on the last one there! Oh well, can't have everything. Still, we've had a couple of things to celebrate, along with form that has taken us into the play off places, rather than just sitting on the fringes.

Mike's award came as a bit of a surprise, as we tend to expect it to go to whichever manager is in charge of the side at the top of the division, or one who has led his team on a glorious unbeaten run with a cup win thrown in. If we had dreamt that our man was in with a chance, then we would have expected the defeat at Grimsby to put an end to it. For once, this was not the case and Mike got a deserved accolade which he accepted with due modesty.

The Player of the Month award for Enoch was an even bigger surprise, as it seems pretty rare for it to be given to someone recognised as a learner in the trade. It might be said that the hat trick against Brentford could have swayed the judges, and it was pretty special – a number of questions arose afterwards: when was the last triple by a Town player that didn't include a penalty, or any headers for instance – but I would prefer to think that it was the overall performance in games against Colchester, Brighton and Brentford that did it. Just a few months ago Enoch looked like a joker in the side, nothing more than a park player, but he has made rapid progress. Let us hope that the advance continues.

Before, during and after the game at Wycombe's Causeway stadium many fans thought that Mick Harford's reaction to the chants from the Luton faithful was that of a man who would shortly be plying his trade elsewhere. Surely, we thought, the loyalty he owed to BFJ would be too much. Like our early judgement of Enoch, we were wrong. The announcement that Mick had turned Forest and BFJ down was a welcome boost to us all, and was reflected in the performance the following Saturday. It makes a change in modern football to be able to celebrate loyalty.

And Mick's decision was apparently swayed by the conviction that we could be out of receivership within the week, after he had met with Bill Tomlins and members of his consortium.

So, well done to Mike, Enoch, Mick and... well Bill, we're waiting. Still.

FUTBOL SUR AMERICA

Part 1: Brazil and Ecuador

Summer of 2002 saw me head off for a year, on my travels to South America. I was looking forward to these travels for seeing new and exciting countries, learning a new language and doing absolutely jack sh!te for a year or more! The only draw back would be missing a regular fix of football. However, what occurred on my travels was probably the best way of getting to meet and know locals on their own level rather than through the production line like organized tours and the somewhat annoying street peddlers trying to sell you model tall ships made out of coral and sea shells.

First port of call on my travels was Rio de Janeiro, the day before the World Cup Final. Needless to say Rio was an excellent place to be for Brazil v Germany. I was woken up early on the day of the game (the match kicked off at 8am Brazil time) by a rash of explosions as the eager Brazilians awaiting the match started letting off some rather amusing and dangerous looking fireworks. These fireworks were about a metre long and contained 6 explosions, 5 loud bangs followed by one monster bang. But this was nothing compared to the fun and games that started after the final whistle. The place went nuts. All the buses to the beaches were teaming with people shouting 'Penta Campeol!' (5 times champions) and just enjoying the celebration. However, the most memorable moment I have of that day was on the beach at Ipanema. A young lad, who would surely of been sporting a Burberry cap if he was English, had in his hand one of the aforementioned fireworks. To detonate, all he had to do was pull the string and hold the firework aloft. However, the young chap had a dud and I will never forget the sheer Roadrunner-esque moment that followed. As he pulled the string, the whole firework exploded in his hand and he was enveloped in a massive cloud of smoke. The best bit was, after the smoke cleared, he was still holding the spent firework tube aloft and now had a soot covered face ala Tom and Jerry. Most amusing.

Due to the World Cup, I never actually saw a live game in Brazil but I certainly got a few in the other countries I visited. I did manage to get to play some football in Brazil though and I was delighted to find that Brazilians matched up to their national stereotype of graceful, inventive and beautiful football! I was left in awe of some of the tricks they could produce and never before have I been delighted to be nutmegged so many times in a game. Mind you, it got a bit irritating when one lad aged about 10, kept on nutmegging me! Speaking of stereotypes, I find it quite strange how people from different countries fit their national stereotypes when it comes to playing football. As I've said here, the Brazilians lived up to my expectations with their silky skills and later on I was to find that Peruvians don't like it when you get physical with them, the Argentines will do anything to win (including handling the bloody ball!) and us Brits are very direct in our approach to the game!

After nearly 4 weeks in Brazil, it was time to leave. A night in Panama City and then it was 2 weeks in Ecuador and the first live game in South America. Nacional, the Army team from capital Quito were entertaining Barcelona from the second city, Quayaquil. The stadium turned out to be a standard South American ground, big concrete bowl dedicated to local historical figure (Atahualpa, the ruling Inca Emperor when the Spanish arrived in South America and son of Quito) with a running track around it. The food was top though, fried empanadas, very similar to pasties, with a nice chilli sauce and beer, brought to your seat in a pitcher, how very civilized! The game itself was a drab 1-1 draw with both the goals being nothing special. The real star of the match however was a certain Byron Moreno, the referee from the World Cup who managed to upset the whole of Italy with his decisions in the South Korea v Italy match. He now has a toilet block named after him in Sicily

Byron was the star of the show, no question, and was greeted akin to David Beckham walking into a girl's school! The place went nuts when he walked out onto the pitch and the majority of the people in attendance were there to watch him, not the teams. Later on that year, Byron took charge of another match with Barcelona, this time against another team from Quito, Liga de Quito. With the home team losing 3-2 going into the last minute, the 4th official held up the added time board to show that Byron had decided to add on 6 minutes of added time. That didn't really upset Barcelona, as with South American football 6 minutes of added time is not a huge amount to expect. What did upset them was when the other team scored an equalizer in the 10th minute and then the winner in the 13th minute of added time! To rub Barcelona's nose in it even more, it turned out that Moreno was standing for parliament in the very region of Quito that boasts Liga de Quito, the team Barcelona lost to. Needless to say the FA of Ecuador clamped down on this and banned Moreno for 20 matches with FIFA following that up with striking him off their international list of referee's. Nice.

Racism/Racialism -another viewpoint

Surely the FA is being racist when they quote "Viv Anderson (or whoever) was the first black player capped by England". What is black? Is Kieran Dyer black? Is Rio Ferdinand (remember him) black? Was Gary Lineker the first brown-eyed player to score a hat trick against Poland? Were Ralph Coates and Bobby Charlton the only blond haired comb-overs to play for England?

Kick racism out by not distinguishing anyone by his or her skin colour. Skin/eye/hair/nail varnish colour is irrelevant. If a player's birthright qualifies him to play for England and he goes and battles for his country (with the exception of John Barnes of course, (*am I being racist here?*)) then that should be all that matters.

Johnnie Vee

CHAMPION MOANERS

The esteemed editor of this fine organ had a right, maybe, to scowl at me and my bro the other night, before the lightning frost incident before the Bournemouth game almost kicked off. We had, after all, both of us, promised an article for this edition and we were already horribly late. Sorry Keith.

He didn't though, have as much reason to moan as we all did later, trudging the wrong way down Hazelbury Crescent after the crazy late postponement of an eagerly anticipated game. Our football fix was subsequently unsatisfied by the dire Norwich v West Brom 'match', which had been predictably whanged up as some kind of Battle of the Probables, but more resembled the Darren Huckerby 'Nearly-but-no-way-Premiership-skills-and-bad-haircut' Show.

Desperate stuff, especially as we were hoping to further consolidate a playoff place. Oh yeah, on that night we all had real reason to moan, none more so, it should be said, than the Bournemouth fans.

Still, in our division, there is such a thing as perspective. Chief baddie seemed to be the ref, although I don't think he's going to get any death threats. Town fans may have made rash statements in the past (mainly about Gurney), but at least they don't feature too often on such shocking shows as 606. Okay, the editorial policy and 3CR's local equivalent contribute to this, but 606 is a show choc full of stupidity. It's like a tame, censored and humourless chat board dragged, like Frankenstein's monster, to a horrible, repulsive "life".

How do I know this? I used to listen to it. For example, I know that to leave a message on the 'rant line' you:

1. introduce yourself quickly and quietly, and say that you support Liverpool;
2. use weird inflections to mask your non-Scouse accent, and also to show you're sincere;
3. make it sound like you're reading from a piece of paper;
4. say 'fair dos, Gerard's had his chance,' and that his death threat is 'bang out of order';
5. go incoherently mental and say if you had one, you'd consider using your season ticket as toilet paper, 'cos it's not as good as when Souness used to play - that was when they had a good team with no average foreigners playing blah blah blah, and the last time I saw them - no, 'cos they're not worth it now and Heskey and the backroom policy and Shankly...
6. end with an idiot refrain centred around the words 'Houllier' and 'go'.

Yes, I listened enough to know that the 'clever' rant messages involved impressions of Brian Clough and that every one of them was witless and appalling. I tend to find I have better things to do in the evening now, like collecting toenail paste, rolling it in pellets and sniffing for as long as I can. I find this eminently more rewarding than listening to the

blathering of self-avowed know-all armchair fans who, frankly, you're glad don't go to games, or to the disenfranchised people who say they can't afford to go anymore, but who you now damn well have got Sky TV coming out their ar*seholes.

As a concept, the phone-in scrapes the barrel. The 'public', like the 'expert', should exist as 'necessary background' to be effortlessly avoided. The last time I heard 606, several really upset and angry people were berating James Beattie's omission from the England squad and I nearly choked with vexation. The last time I opened my mail I was informed that my routine operation (removal of mole at the L&D) was a lesion type seborrhoeic wart, and I nearly died of fright.

Still, there's the normal folk in between. Not 'your average man' (supporting Luton Town is not average) and not a bloody expert. Anyone buying *MAAH* is most probably allowed to moan about football in the same way that people who vote are allowed to moan about political issues. People who frequent proper pubs serving proper ale are allowed to moan about Wetherspoon's betrayal of our great drinking culture. We're engaged in the 'just cause' you see. We're terrified of losing and have every right to speak out and save Luton Town, AFC Bournemouth, proper political debate and pints of Goalden Hatter. But those crazies on 606? Forget it.

Elliot Smoke

GOOD COP BAD COP

What a pair of colossuses Boyce and Coyne have been all season. They complement each other perfectly. I feel Hollywood could learn a lot from the characteristics of this fantastic pair and they could be portrayed in a film to provide a unique cinematic experience. A suggested plot.....

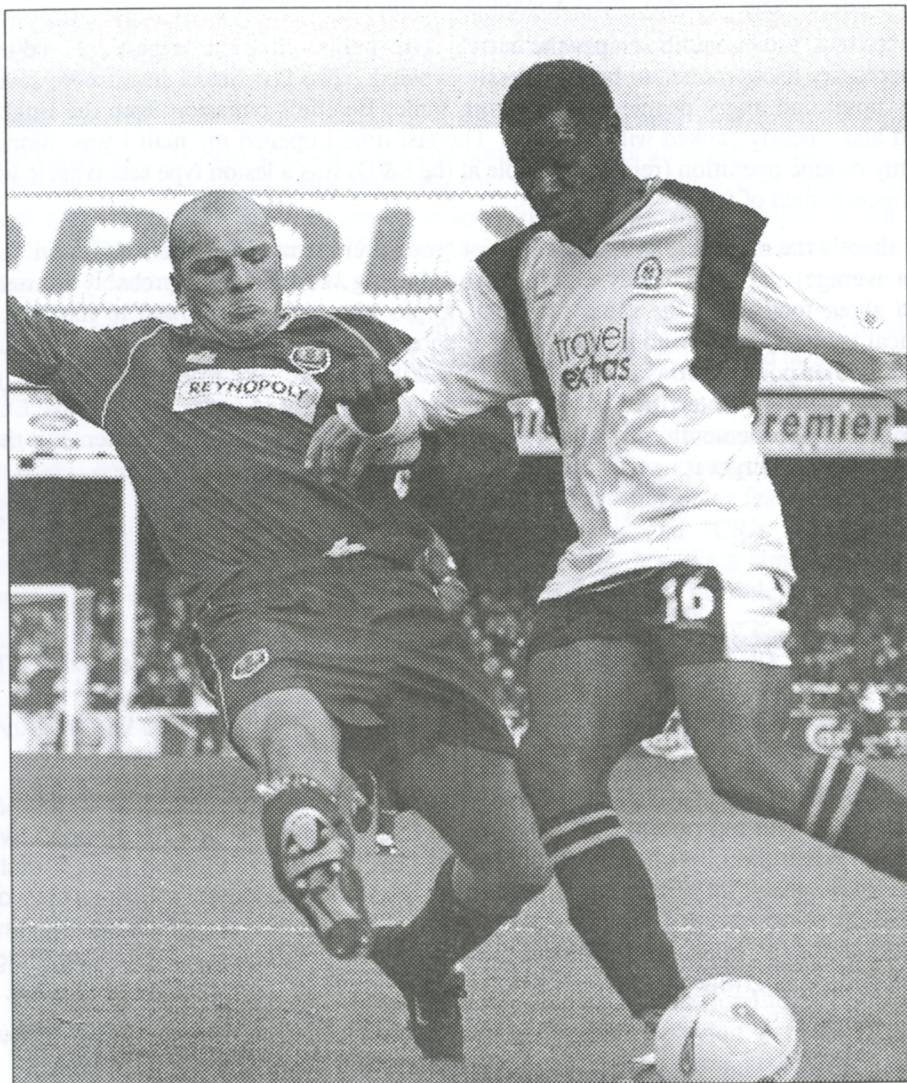
Good Cop Boyce (played by Will Smith) has all the local knowledge, is charismatic and popular with his peers. Bad Cop Coyne (Russell Crowe) is a hard-nosed, well-travelled Australian, never smiles but knows how to get results even if he stretches the rules to the limit. Together they can try and rid the Capital's City streets of a double-crossing crook, Thorpe (Joe Pesci) who would do anything, however immoral, for a buck and betrayed his former colleagues. First screening - Shepherds Bush, March 27th. Let's hope the crook fells the full force of the law.

Andrew - Flitwick

TOWN TEASER

During the 1986/87 season Luton met Liverpool in the 3rd round of the FA Cup. The tie took 3 games to settle, Luton winning the third game 3-0. Luton scorers that night were Brian Stein, Mick Harford and Mike Newell. What links these three players with the current squad?

Answer on page 37.

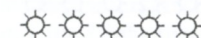


The man of the moment: Enoch Showunmi, Umbro Isotonic Division Two Player of the Month (really rolls off the tongue, doesn't it?) seen in action at Peterborough.

SHARPE ANGLE

I remember once a few years back turning up for a Boxing Day match and wondering why there was no one around when the game was due to kick off imminently. Of course it had been postponed and I hadn't heard. But I don't remember the last time the crowd was in the ground waiting for kick off and it was then abandoned. I wasn't too upset - we managed to hare off to see my local team Wealdstone draw 2-2 with Oxford City, arriving at the ground just before half time so the evening wasn't entirely lost. But I did wonder why the decision to postpone could not have been made earlier to save the Bournemouth contingent a wasted journey. I don't think it can have been that the ground was beginning to freeze, as there was no frost around. It must have been that the pitch had never properly thawed out, so surely an afternoon inspection could have spotted that and resulted in a more timely announcement.

Talking of abandonments, I'm sure this incident will spark memories of the famous time we were 6-1 down against Man City in the Cup with Denis Law having scored all their goals, only for the game to be abandoned with Luton winning the replay 3-1 - with Denis Law getting their one, surely the only time any player ever scored all seven of his side's goal in a Cup tie and lost.



Well done Mike Newell on winning Manager of the Month and well done Mick Harford on deciding to stay. Just what will happen, though, if as looks likely at time of writing, Big Fat Joe turns Forest around, gets a long-term contract and then comes back with a tempting close-season offer to Mick? He'll have to be very committed to turn that down, particularly if we either haven't made the play-offs, done so but lost, or discovered that coming out of administration has made no real difference to our situation.

I'm not at all surprised at the galvanising effect Joe had on Forest, nor the way his outspoken views have made people aware that he will only work on his terms. If nothing else he gave LTFC their pride back. No longer were we what Lennie Lawrence seemed to delight in almost belittling as a 'nice little club'. Joe would never accept that we should be grateful to be on the same pitch as some teams, never believe that if we were lucky we might scrape a draw in particular matches. Joe would never have settled for the negative approach to a match that we took against, for example, Tranmere in the Cup this season. He would wind up players and supporters to create a hostile atmosphere for the opposition - okay it meant that every other game seemed to become a grudge match, but it was a great roller-coaster ride while it lasted and I for one would welcome him back.

Which is no disrespect to Mike who, through no fault of his own, got the job under false pretences. He has done well so far but only inasmuch as he has virtually had to work with Joe's squad plus the a few youngsters and loan players. I don't know how much credit he personally deserves for Enoch, Marlon Beresford, Gary McSheffrey and we really won't know just what he can do until he can bring in his own new players, which probably won't be until the end of this season.

In staying here you wonder whether Mick has at the back of his mind that he may well end up as manager sooner rather than later. Far be it from me to speculate on behind the scenes wheeling and dealing and I know it turns everything into a kind of soap opera, but Mick is an ambitious fellow who surely must want to make his own mark on a team eventually. If he is happy to do that as part of a partnership with Mike then fine but who remembers Steve Gritt who used to partner Alan Curbishley, or Roy Evans who was joint boss at Liverpool with Houllier - two into one job doesn't go and eventually something has to give. So I hope for his sake that Mike wins a few more Manager of the Month awards to put on his CV.



I was interested to read that the sainted Jean Louis Valois (just how good was that Taylor-Valois left of the field partnership?) has left Hearts to play in Spain. I'm sure that the right deal might tempt him back to England next season and a club in the First Division with a few bob to spend just might be able to sign him up. The classiest player I have seen in a Luton shirt in the forty five years I've followed the club - although Lomana Zahana Laundryman, or whatever his name was, might have run him close, given another twenty seven seasons to develop.



I was very interested to read that Mike Newell was upset at the postponement of the Bournemouth game because his parents had come down from Liverpool for the match - which means that that bloke I heard insulting him the other day, must have been inaccurate... think about it

Graham Sharpe

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.

SPURS - WE'LL MEET AGAIN

There are a few constant laws of the Luton Town Universe. We all hate Watford and thus it shall always be. Given the opportunity we will come to hate Milton Keynes/ Wimbledon/ MK Dons or whatever they will be called. This of course depends on whether or not they remain in existence. Fortunately I doubt that very much. It's easy too to hate Premiership teams and for a wide range of reasons -

Being successful - Man Utd, Arsenal
The F.A. Cup in 1985 and 1986 - Everton
Ugly and/or excessively fat supporters - Newcastle
Particular players i.e. Robbie Savage - Birmingham

However teams like Watford are in the same Universe - the Football League - so we share the difficulties (mainly financial) and fans have the same outlook (often survival). With regard the team I have a particular animosity towards, Tottenham Hotspur, there are no common themes. But there are plenty of reasons why I so revile THFC: -

- Ideas well beyond their station - A constant Tottenham Fans cry - "we should be challenging." However their average attendance is around 35,000 much smaller than the likes of Newcastle and Man City. Clubs that can't win anything either.
- What sort of name is "Hotspur" - it ranks alongside with Alexander, Academicals, North End or Thistle in the realm of ridiculous names.
- Mr. Pleat has stated that he believes that the possibility of "feeder clubs" should be explored for Premiership Clubs. Well, I wonder who he could have in mind for that? He must be really miffed that quality players such as Upson and Hartson have wisely gone to the red side of North London.
- Nevertheless, over time THFC have stripped us of some of our better player (isn't this what happens to feeder clubs). International players such as Paul Price, Mitchell Thomas and Gary Doherty. All for bargain basement prices - then proceed to make them worse players.
- The amount of media London luvvies who "support" THFC and raise the profile of THFC onto our radios, TV's and Newspapers every day. e.g. Simon Mayo, Richard Littlejohn. The fact is THFC are no bigger a club than Birmingham or Middlesbrough but going with the media coverage you wouldn't believe it.
- The THFC billboard advertising to watch "the boys live" by the Telford Way roundabout. Of course "live" means watching the game in your living room in an armchair as opposed to actually going to a game.

But my main reason for disliking Spurs is invariably linked to their current plight. THFC were one of the "big five" (ideas beyond their station) who pushed so hard for the development of the Premiership and the all the inequalities that have ensued. But the

wonderful thing is now THFC are barely one of the top five teams in London – let alone the country. The club has truly found its level. Fantastic

THFC has been screwing us directly (allegedly the Mitchell Thomas transfer was backed up with some creative accountancy ENRON officials would be proud of – in order to minimise the transfer fee) and indirectly (the greed of the Premiership Clubs is illustrated best by THFC). The great news is now THFC may enter our Universe soon, if Mr. Pleat and Mr. Antic weave their magic and screw THFC we may be visiting the Lane in the very near future.

Andrew - Flitwick

Watford Withdrawal Symptom

QPR? QPR?! Why are so many of my fellow Hatters becoming so worked up with QPR? Normal people don't feel this way. This is a quote from Danny Baker (OK, he may not qualify as being 'normal' but don't nit-pick!) from one of his footy gaffs videos: "QPR? I've got no problem with QPR. I've always thought they're like a courtesy side; like a kindly old aunt that you can't feel too badly about – they're no trouble are they."

So why are so many of us becoming obsessed with QPR then? I have attended many of the games that have led to this and although the "Nogan-handball" and then the "cheating in the away game to deny us the FA Cup game against Arsenal" still grates, I could mention other teams and other games which also provoke.

And now Tony Thorpe has gone to them - so what? Who cares? Tony Thorpe was not part of the promotion side which gave us our first promotion in ages (it was Griffiths and then Crowe partnering Howard - for those with short-term memories). Thorpe returned for just over one season and lead us to... missing the play-offs, in return for the club's top (and it turned out unaffordable) wage. A big loss? I don't think so. QPR's gain? Thorpe without Big Mick's regular kick up the back-side will probably slack off again, put on weight, become the archetypal lazy player and be on their bench soon enough (Fulham, Bristol City fans will agree).

So, if Watford didn't exist, would we have to invent them? It seems so. Although some may be bothered about QPR and before them Plymouth (Plymouth?!? I mean what were we thinking!) I don't think anyone would rejoice so much if we beat them 2-1 away in the League Cup, and then buy a video to watch and re-watch whenever spirits need lifting.

And there is nothing more glorious than the fact that Watford have only beaten us once in the last 16 years. Can you imagine any other losing streak to local rivals? No wonder so many of their fans are insufferable tw@ts! Long may it continue!

B. Dave. B.

RAYING MAD!!!

Dear *Mad*,

First of all may I congratulate you on the content of Issue 58 which is possibly the best issue ever (creeping!).

I must also say that the article 'The door is open, come on in' by Clifford Saunders concerning 'racism' could not have been bettered. Football fans could not care less what colour a player is or where he comes from. The only point of interest is whether a player is any good or not.

Here at Luton Town many of our most loved and popular players have been black such as Ricky Hill or Brian Stein and of the current team Emerson Boyce may turn out to be the same. By the same token Ricky Hill was not sacked as a manager because he was black (nor was Carlton Palmer although he seems to be deluding himself this was the case) but because he was not up to the job.

The 'anti-racism' campaigns which even our club occasionally participate in are irrelevant and insulting and are purely politically motivated. Unfortunately many well meaning individuals get taken in by such political correct claptrap.

Let's keep spurious politics out of football!

Andrew Wallace.

Dear *Mad*,

The magazine is extremely important for a foreign supporter because it gives the view of other supporters. *Mad as a Hatter!* is the only magazine I ever read from start to finish, and I enjoy reading it. Keep up the good work.

Per-Eigil Eriksen,

Norway

Dear *Mad*,

I'm glad *Mad as a Hatter!* is back. I was lucky enough to have watched the Thurrock v Luton, 1-1, FA Cup 1st Round match. A cable television channel that carries, how can I put this, non-American sports such as football, cricket, rugby etc., picked up the Sky broadcast of the match. Despite the disappointing result, I was thrilled to get to watch the Town.

I hope things are going well with you, and will look forward to seeing you in April.

Brian Surette,

Greensboro, NC, USA.



Above: Past (recent) and present: Marlon Beresford and Kevin Nicholls in opposition at Barnsley.

Below: Steve Howard getting a facefull in the same match. Probably just before being booked for complaining to the referee.



The signing of Morten Hydlgaard has seen our fifth goalkeeper this season, with six being used last season. So, to pay tribute to the men in between the sticks, I am proud to present.....

THE LUTON TOWN GOALKEEPERS THAT I CAN REMEMBER!

1. **Ian Feuer** – Surely the best Luton keeper that we've seen for a while, Ian received legendary status with the crowds of Luton, and is still fondly remembered, partly due to a piece on the Lutonfc.com website, in which he said that Luton would always be his club, and that he could launch John Gurney as far as the casino down the street. Great guy, and a great keeper. Can now be found doing training sessions in America. Can't we have him back?
2. **Kelvin Davis** - If he can keep out Ian Feuer at two different clubs, then he must be a good keeper. With experience at England U-21 level and in the 1st division, he is another great product from our youth team, and can now be found in between the sticks at Ipswich Town.
3. **Ben Roberts** – Reliable keeper who made the odd mistake, but was a consistently good performer. Had two spells at Luton on loan, and can now be found at Brighton & Hove Albion.
4. **Nathan Abbey** - Well, what can you say that hasn't been said before about Tanny? Well how about "Reliable performer and a firm favourite with the fans. Everyone was furious with Joe Kinnear when he let him go in 2001. Particularly good at catching crosses and will be missed at Kenilworth Road." Has now had several loan spells at 1st division clubs.
5. **Cedric Berthelin** – Took some time to get going when he joined, but proved himself to be a good shot stopper and also a good all round goalkeeper and many fans were disappointed when we didn't sign him. Is now at Crystal Palace with a dodgy defence in front of him, so he has had plenty of experience to help him out there.
6. **Carl Emberson** – Once seen, never forgotten, another keeper that will be remembered by the Town faithful. He had kicking skills to make Jonny Wilkinson proud, he communicated well with his defenders (particularly Chris Coyne) and you will never find him doing anything stupid, like picking the ball up well outside his area and pretending he was inside. Can now be seen on the pier at Southend on alternating Saturday's.
7. **Andy Dibble** – Is remembered by Town fans for his one performance in 1988, and hopefully not remembered for his one performance in 1997. During this home game

against Wrexham, he teamed up with Trevor Peake, who set a record for the oldest Town player during that game. Along with Marvin and Mitchell at the back, we lost 5-2! Still receives his rightful place in Luton Town folklore because of the Littlewood's Cup Final, and can now be found at Wrexham, ironically!

8. **Lars Hirschfeld** – Canadian on loan from Tottenham Hotspur. Can't remember much more, but was better than the other clowns last season.
9. **Rob Beckwith** – Still got a lot to learn, not quite ready for first team football yet, but he is only 19, and he is certainly a great prospect, otherwise Arsene Wenger wouldn't have tried to sign him (allegedly). The futures bright.....
10. **Marlon Beresford** – Oldest keeper in this article, but surely one of the best we've had in recent years. Made two mistakes while he was here, both of which cost us the match, but if he was perfect, he wouldn't have playing for us, would he? Now sadly at promotion rivals Barnsley.
11. **Morten Hydlgaard** – Current keeper. Danish. Hailed as the next Peter Schmeichel. Punches too often instead of catches, and should've saved the goal against Brentford, but has also made a few good saves while he's been here. Didn't see the Grimsby match so can't judge his performance, but it sounded bad! Kicking sometimes suspect, but he is a good keeper. If you don't believe me, look at the stats. Played 5, conceded 4, clean sheets 3. And he's played against prolific strikers like Leon Knight, Scott McGleish and, umm, Jermaine McSparran.

And the best one of them all.....

12. **Mark 'Ovengloves' Ovendale** – Consistent in all areas of his game. Hardly ever makes any mistakes, and his shot-stopping is out of this world. Another fan favourite, who hardly ever lets you down, can now be found playing at York City, as he is the only keeper in the whole city over 17 and over 5 foot 5.

Peter Bulkeley

Why Luton are better than Arsenal

1. The only point: Arsenal haven't lost in the Premiership this season, but Luton have never lost in the Premiership
2. S'pose our cup final win also counts, especially if your looking for a REAL reason!

Dan Strobe

Dressing for football

Replica tops, fleeces all have their places, but for heavens' sake, once you've done the honourable thing and given your ££££s over to the club's coffers, they should remain firmly in one's dressing room. The more sartorially minded visitor to Kenilworth Road should tog up in more distinctive clobber. In deciding what to wear at football, choices need to be made, based on peculiar factors of that particular day. Also of course, social conventions and prejudices should be borne in mind. It's not right that Plus Fours and Jodhpurs have been claimed by the horsey brigade; and that leather chaps have been nabbed by cowboys and gays, but they have. Some folk I know just have to accept the fact and move on.

What follows is a carefully considered suggestion of attire for this season's run in. I have tried to leave some room for interpretation, but hope that these ideas will, at least, give you some inspiration, and go some way to unsettling the opposition team and supporters.

Blackpool (H) – They think their damned Pleasure Beach is so fine. We've got Wardown. A day for Cuban wedding shirts and ripped jeans.

Port Vale (A) – If you were thinking of going to a match in drag, this might be the best one.

Plymouth (H) – Famously became our rivals under Joe Kinnear, and for a while used to bring a ridiculously high number of fans. Tattoos and trainers.

QPR (A) – The Superhoops. People who support QPR have three or four other teams they follow (usually including Crystal Palace), because really, they don't like football. Jump suit.

Oldham (H) – lies, lies, lies. Paisley tie and zoot suit.

Tranmere (A) – Tranmere are the third team in Merseyside, and their fans are sensitive about the fact that the first four letters in their team's name are the same as in 'transvestite' and 'transsexual'. Hoods and brogues.

Swindon (H) – Strangely, Swindon fans get hysterically upset by the sight of away fans in wigs. Clown outfits and cuff links.

Bristol City (H) – Gaberdine suit (whatever that is).

Wrexham (A) – Welsh team who should remember Nathan Abbey with fondness. Worn ironically, metal gloves may catch them reminiscing.

Sheffield Wednesday (H) – the steel city. Homburgs and neckerchiefs.

Chesterfield (A) – A place with a big twisty spire. Kinky boots and leg warmers.

Elliot Smoke

As promised last issue...

Ten Reasons Why Enoch Showunmi Should Be PFA Player of the Decade (so far)

1. Enoch Showunmi scores more points in Scrabble than Mark Viduka or Adrian Mutu. (If on a triple word square).
2. Alan Smith hasn't scored a hat trick against Brentford, Showunmi has.
3. When Enoch scores, he doesn't feel the urge to show off in front of everyone by doing backflips, cartwheels, somersaults etc. Robbie Keane and Shaun Wright-Phillips, you are not model professionals, Showunmi is!
4. Do you see Enoch prancing off to play for his country, rather than his club? I think not. Freddie Kanoute, take note.
5. We didn't have to wait three years to see the true abilities of 'The Daddy'. They are available to us every Saturday (for just a few pennies) within six months of his signing. Villa fans had to wait about three years to see Juan Pablo Angel at his best. The Enoch effect is immediate, Angel needs time, time and more time.
6. Because Enoch has short hair, it doesn't go in his face and therefore prevent him from seeing properly. The same cannot be said of Ruud Van Nistray (or whatever his name is), can it?
7. I've no idea how tall Enoch is, but he's big. Therefore, he is taller than Alan Shearer and therefore a better player, surely?
8. Enoch had to work his way up from the bottom before he got any recognition from the media (except me). Whereas Rooney took the easy option by coming in at Premiership level.
9. As mentioned last issue, Enoch doesn't turn down the Hatters for a club with more money, does he? This rules Louis Saha out. (If this seems a dodgy reason, then you are wrong. Both Sheffield United and QPha were interested in him at the start of the season. Unfortunately for QPha, they had to make do with Tony Thingy. Who gets the better deal, eh?).
10. 'The Daddy' is tougher than certain strikers, as he never wears gloves or tights in the winter whilst he is playing, which is more than can be said for Thierry Henry and Nicolas Anelka (Wimps).
11. Enoch actually played in central midfield and centre half for Willesden Constantine, so he is more versatile than the likes of Ronaldo and Raul. Can you see Raul managing to play at that level?

12. Mick Harford and Brian Stein haven't played this decade.

13. Enoch signed photos sold out at the Luton Town club shop. James Beattie and Michael Owen have never achieved that.

So there you have it. The campaign trail for PFA player of the decade starts here for The Daddy.

Peter Bulkeley

MIKE NEWELL - THE STORY SO FAR

Some points about BFJ's replacement

- Waited patiently for God to return to the Club thus prompting Block F to compose a classic chant "Micky & Mike, Micky & Mike, Micky & Mike, Micky & Mike, Micky & Mike, Micky & Mike, Micky & Mike etc..." (to the tune Tom Hark by The Piranhas).
- Stood his ground with Nico, when Nico thought he was being played in a position where he wouldn't be able to pass the ball accurately!!!!!!
- 0-2 down against Wrexham at home but won 3-2 thus avenging that game where we were 3-0 up and ...well, you know the rest.
- Beat a First Division club, Bradford, away in the 3rd round of the FA Cup before an injury ravaged 4th round exit.
- Got all his senior players back (except Forbesy) and stuffed Brighton 2-0.
- Persisted with Enoch.
- Signed 2 quality players on loan and, circumstances permitting, would have got them on contracts (McSheffrey & Beresford).
- Lost Thorpey, who is 1st Division quality no matter what else you think he is, and we still look good up front when everyone is fit.
- Sounds OK on 3 Counties after matches.
- Has not spoken about Fantasy Island aka the new stadium.
- The football is better this season.

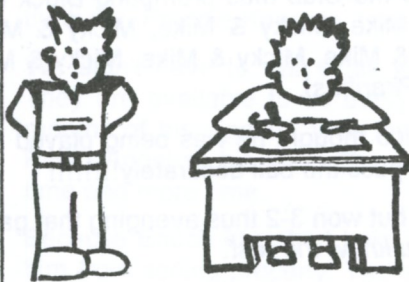
This was written after the Brentford game.

Conclusion : Keep up the good work.

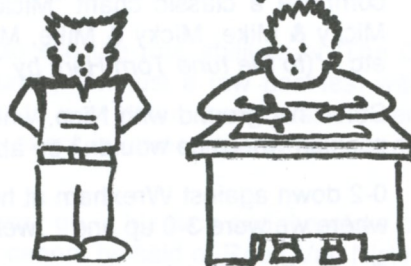
Johnnie Vee

THE GOALKEEPER'S FEAR OF THE PUN-ALTY

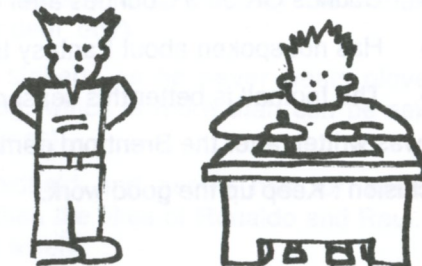
SO, ARE YOU FINALLY
GETTING ROUND TO
DOING A CARTOON
FOR 'MAD AS A
HATTER'?



YEAH, I'M THINKING
ABOUT DOING ONE
RENAMING
TONY THORPE -
TONY THE-WHORE-PE.



NO, THAT SOUNDS
RUBBISH.



B. Dave. B.

ONWARDS & UPWARDS

It's a fair cop! Turns out that we got a few results wrong in the last issue, claiming a 1-1 draw away to Sheffield Wednesday, but to make matters worse we gave Chesterfield a goal and a point at Kenilworth Road, and claimed a draw in the 4th round cup match. We would like to apologise for this lapse of concentration and departure from our usual standards. You can be assured that we have checked the results with a great deal more care this time, and such errors will happen again in the future. Probably.

07.02.04 TOWN 1 COLCHESTER UNITED 0

One of those games where the result was more important than the performance. Following last week's fruitless excursion to the North East, it was just good to see a game – though Colchester were easily the better team in the first half and we were grateful to reach half time goalless.

Highlight of the match was undoubtedly Enoch's inaugural league goal, which was well taken early in the second half. After that our opponent's minds drifted off towards their cup dreams and three points were duly bagged.

Steve F.

10.02.04 TOWN 2 BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION 0

Getting your own back – crapping on the Seagulls!

Our home performances this season are becoming as comfortable as they were in the old First Division and I now travel to Kenilworth Road with as much confidence as I used to travel to away games in the good old days of BFJ (remember him?). I am worried about Steve Howard though, as his most telling contributions seem to be heading away corners in his own penalty area, reminiscent of Phil Gray. I don't think Stevo likes conceding his hero status to the new kid Enoch Showman as my spell-checker likes to call him but he needs to respond in the appropriate manner – with goals.

Though Luton lack any true wingers, it is just possible that if the understanding between Peter Holmes and Sol Davis down the left can continue to flourish then we just may get enough crosses in to move up the table. Holmes should score more himself as he gets into good positions but he still lacks the strength and purpose to make the most of his obvious talents. Benjamin for Brighton, however, has lots of strength and purpose which unfortunately fail to make up for his equally obvious lack of talent.

Both sides claimed penalties in the game, Leon Knight of Brighton & Hove getting booked for diving when I thought he had a good claim for a push whilst Howard also seemed to get pushed at the other end. With his hands outstretched skywards after every decision, Howard has a future career as an evangelist already mapped out. Don't take any notice of the sending off, Knight deserved it for his second booking and all it did was remove the faint glimmer of hope that the Seagulls had of getting anything from a match that Luton Town deserved to win, especially our defence. Even the away fans in the Yeoman after the game agreed that we were the better side, which was a shame for the weighty travelling support of

the Albion who deserved better. However, if we could all take boyfriends too then we might have had just such a following at their place; or maybe we thought £21 was too much for a day at the beach.

Cliff Saunders

14.02.04 TONY ADAMS 0 ONE MICKY HARFORD 1,800+

My first visit to Wycombe and after sitting through this turgid affair it may need the promise of good ale, to be chauffeured, and the company of lap dancers to bring me back. Being slow on the uptake or naïve I had totally missed the sub plot building about "Super Mick" rejoining "Big Fat Joe" at Forest. Once in the ground that was about all that was interesting. The way "God" acknowledged the support before, during and after the game "its bleeding obvious he's going" was the general consensus. What did we know!

Wycombe were as expected a poor side and we gave an indifferent performance. In fact I am sure our midfield were suffering from colour blindness unable to distinguish between their smudged blue and our own kit. I rate Spring and have seen him give some great performances with intelligent passing and running as well as competitive tackling, however in this game his passing was dreadful. The only time we looked like scoring was when Coyne pushed his marker out of the way to volley just round the post. They missed a couple of good chances especially right at the end. Morten looked good in goal (do we have a thing about keepers having slightly different first names beginning with M?) and Keith Keane did well especially after a shaky five minutes at the start of the second half.

A crap game, a crap performance (started to dream about lap dancers near the end) but at least "One Mickie Harford, there's only one Mick Harford.....etc". The news on Tuesday that he is staying gives us all encouragement not least the players who are out of contract. Lets hope that the news on administration is equally good- perhaps when *Mad* is published it will be history!

The Frampton Hatter

21.02.04 TOWN 4 BRENTFORD 1

The Enoch Show(unmi)

The combination of a young family and a 300 mile round trip to Kenilworth Road means that this is the first season since 1977/8 that I have not attended games at Kenilworth Road on a regular basis. Before the Brentford game I had only seen the Town play four times, all away from home and all victories (you should be able to work out which games they were from that!).

The saying "absence makes the heart grow fonder" is certainly true, and I drove up the motorway feeling quite excited. I parked up and went for a drink in the Brickies and soon got back into the ritual of leaving the pub five minutes before kick off. The only disappointment of the day was that I missed the rousing reception for Mick Harford when he emerged from the tunnel.

Onto the game itself. I was surprised to see that Brentford fielded a few players that were under 6ft, although they didn't disappoint with their two centre halves. Both tall and both

incredibly crap at football! They didn't have a lanky centre forward with protruding elbows, which makes a change, but we did!

First half was uneventful, but Marlene did the business and is looking like a class act in Division 2. Half time came and went, and then came the main event.

I hadn't seen Enoch play before but I had heard a lot, and not a great deal of it was particularly complementary. On his first half performance I can't say I was overly impressed, although he did seem to be making a bit of a nuisance out of himself if nothing else. What then happened needed to be seen to be believed. All three goals looked like they had been scored by a seasoned pro who had power, pace, agility, skill and finishing in abundance. This simply wasn't the man that I had been told about. It was also nice to see the other 10 players celebrating Enoch's goals like they'd scored them themselves, especially Howard.

Driving home listening to Mike Newell's comments on One County Radio made me giggle. Apparently he knew Enoch had it in him from day one. Question Mr Newell - If that's the case, why hasn't he scored 20 so far this season and why isn't he the first name on the teamsheet every week?

My next game is likely to be Port Vale away (on the basis it's the second nearest league ground to where I live). On the basis that I've seen five games and five wins, let that be an indication of what the result might be a Vale Park.

The Cheshire Hat.

Luton were always going to be up for this one especially on the terraces, sorry comfort seating areas, where spirits were lifted above the arctic temperatures by the continued presence of the Great One. Some may say we have Micky Enwright to thank but I believe Nottingham Forest are in worse financial trouble than the Hatters, so let's just be thankful for nationwide incompetence in football administration.

The game started at a good pace with Luton making the early inroads and, come to think of it, the middle and late inroads too. You can forget Brentford's goal: a good strike after the Luton defence and midfield had backed off in true Terry Fenwick style was scant consolation for an uncoordinated looking Bees team. Not the aggressive, physical bees of seasons past, nor the accomplished, confident Bees of last autumn but just a side who knew it was not to be their day. The day of the Daddy (Longlegs?) it was, however.

Few people would have disagreed with Enoch Showunmi's Man-of-the-Match award for this tie but that just shows how football is a striker's game. Emerson Boyce was phenomenal and continued the form which has shown him outshine Chris Coyne at the heart of Luton Town's one-goal in four games recent record. Whilst Showunmi's energy and pace caused Brentford problems all day, Boyce was assured at all times and read the game very well. No one played badly for Luton, whilst the young Michael Leary and even younger Keith Keane played so well that Spring and Foley were hardly missed. I still don't know if Morten Hyldgaard is a good keeper because the big Dane has hardly had a save to make however he looks like he has been attending the Carl Emberson course of kicking which is worrying. Even Beckham can't swerve the ball like that consistently!

We need to sign Showunmi now because he is the sort of player that attracts attention and hence offers. He has not been with Luton long enough to engender any loyalty so if another club offers him a contract he will go. Correct me if I am wrong but the transfer window does not apply to non-contract players, so it could be next week. Raw he may be but he is still

more dangerous than the current Steve Howard who looks overcooked and covered in a thick sauce. Three goals is a good performance any week but it was the positive way he went about things that impressed the fans. Cue a song, with due deference to Darts.

I saw a crazy striker, running down the street;
I said I can't believe that he can stay on his feet;
They said Wow! What a tube don't you dig the scene:
Daddy is the latest Luton Goal Machine!

Cliff Saunders

24.02.04 CLEETHORPES 3 HATTERS 2

On a freezing cold night it was time to head north to the banks of the mighty Humber for a midweek catch up game against Grim Town. So awful is this place that the footy ground is in the more up market seaside resort of Cleethorpes. So, here we headed to a small patch of green only two streets away from the murky, cold waters of the North Sea. The one good point about this place is the route in. Straight down the M180, which becomes the A180 and takes you to within yards of the ground.

An important match for both teams, Luton after a more secure placing in the play off lottery and the Fish Processors trying to get clear of the relegation dog fight. So, who would be more determined to cash in on the three points? I would have called them the Trawlermen or such like, but as there are now no British trawlers working from Grimsby, with the fish mostly coming from Iceland I thought... *(Cut out the socio-economic claptrap and get back to the footy, this isn't the Open University you know)*. Anyway, thank goodness both teams came to play an open, fast game, otherwise a hot pie and coffee at half time would have been the only reward.

The grim people attacked from the first whistle with fire in their stomachs, while Luton, with a weak midfield, played the counterattack game with silky skills. Against the run of play the lumbering Steve H was in the clear, a powerful shot that the hobbling keeper could only deflect, gave us a one-nil lead at the break. Grimsby, fast and furious, were incapable of actually getting the shots on target.

The half time chat certainly fired up the Sea Folk bringing the play once again into the Luton half. It was on the counter attack that Cleethorpes Rovers ripped Luton open leaving Jeavons clear on our right, who sent a cracking shot into the far corner. Morten the Viking never had a chance. The Mariners were after all three points now, sending waves of attacks in and soon the Northern folk grabbed the lead. It came from the sot when Rankin became the sardine in the Luton can and went to ground.

Luton came right back, great passing, flowing play, no panic, playing the Mike Newell way. Holmes missed a sitter right in front of us when only a couple of yards out. Enoch was struggling after being bundled off the pitch and into the dugout, only to reappear a couple of minutes later after much treatment. Clearly, if we had another striker on the bench he would not have continued. But with Howard not that mobile where would the goal come from?

The trick was to change the team around, a couple of substitutions, confuse the opposition and let Steve H bag his second with a cracking shot into the bottom corner. Now just hang on for a well-deserved point. It all went well until the 93rd minute when the scales once again

swung. From a free kick a Haddock out leapt our defence to glance the ball over the giant Viking and into the net. Arse.

It was a long trip home which, apart from a layer of snow south of Doncaster, was pretty clear. Back home in Cheltenham by 1.30 am *(Good going – I know some people who didn't get back to Luton until 2.30, although the petrol consumption was quite good thanks to the AA! Car better now Dayoff? – Ed)*.

Shock notice: A word of praise for the local police. I picked my cousin up before the game. He is disabled, being rather weak on his pins. So, stopping to ask plod where we could park, he arranged on his walkie-talkie for us to park right outside the away entrance. So, a big thank you for the local boys (and girls) in fluorescent yellow.

Normski 'The Cheltenham Hatter'... there is only one

28.02.04 POSH 1 TOWN 2

Big Fry beat big Fry's small fry

After the disappointment of Grimsby in the week, the Town needed to start to improve on a poor away record and leave the freezing fens with three points if we had serious play off hopes. The early stages hardly saw us threaten with former 'longest throw' winner Andy Legg keeping us camped in our own area. This changed when Stevo, probably fed up with defending throw-ins, put us in front midway through the half, reacting to an uncleared ball and blasting in from twenty yards off the underside of the bar. Coyne also came close with a volley.

Second halves are always more interesting and this was no exception. Boro' improved and we got worse. Boycie wasn't his usual imperious self at the back and Posh were able to send in cross after cross which generally caused panic in the Town's defence. The midfield was largely nonexistent too, although Robinson was excellent and carried Hughes, Nico and Brkovic for the rest of the match. Fair play to our boys though, we never stopped working our socks off despite being on the back foot. The dreadful referee didn't help matters either. It was hard enough without this tosser giving every aerial challenge, every 50-50 contest as a free kick against us. Sol Davis conceded a free kick just for standing his ground and heading the ball clear. Both sets of fans appealed for penalties, but ours looked the stronger shout when Enoch was tripped, as he was about to shoot. Enoch was also trodden on by a Boro' defender near the dugouts (unnoticed of course) and when Micky Harford protested a bit too much, he received his marching orders. Good to see the great, great man is up for the Luton cause though. And Newell for his sendings off earlier in the season. Could you imagine Lennie getting off his arse to do the same thing?

Despite all the defending, the Town went two up when Brko headed a good Robinson free kick into the bottom corner at the Luton end of the ground. If you're only gonna do one thing during a match, you might as well score. Unfortunately, we did not take this as a cue to slow the game down and coast to the finish, as Willock pulled one back only two minutes later. Good tackles, good saves, poor finishing and luck kept the score at 2-1 and a typically good Town following (Judas Thorpe's mum getting plenty of stick) went home happy. Man of the match was Stevo for some fine defensive work and a goal, which Barry Fry would have described as 'magnificent'.

Richard Ward

Compared to what we've seen in February, this was a bit of a bad performance to be honest. Howard and Showunmi, who are supposed to be our two in-form strikers, never looked like scoring. The midfield never really looked like creating anything for them either, probably due to the absence of Springy. But on the plus side, our defence never looked like conceding either. Their in form striker Hayter was nowhere to be seen. Hydigaard made no mistakes either, which is an improvement from Peterborough. And he kept a clean sheet. And he caught a few crosses as well. In the pre match warm-up. Once again, we found ourselves the victims of another poor referee. But I suppose you've got to try and look at the positive side of things. At least I had time to do my homework.

Peter Bulkeley

A New Law? Not quite

Law Eleven- Offside

In recent weeks there has been much confusion about law eleven, the offside rule. I'll explain it, and show you there has been NO CHANGE at all to the rule.

The first thing to realise is that it is not an offence to be in an offside position. An offside position is if a player is nearer to the opponents goal than both the ball and the second last opponent, which can include the goalkeeper. You can't be offside if you are in your own half, level with the second last defender or level with both the two last defenders. You are offside, however, if you are interfering with play, interfering with an opponent or gaining an unfair advantage, i.e. a rebound situation (and are behind the second last opponent). There is no offside given if the player receives the ball from a goal kick, throw in or corner kick.

The part of the body that offside is measured from is the feet, and not the body. There is no new rule but a new way of looking at it. The FA wishes to encourage more goals, and will give a "late flag", which is where the linesman can call an offside later than normal. He has time to think about his choice, whereas before he must have made his choice straight away.

Basically now to sum up the rule that has been around for many years; you're not allowed to prevent an opponent getting the ball if you are in an offside position and you are not allowed to play a ball if you are in an offside position.

This rule is a hard one to enforce accurately, especially with the quality of second division refereeing! But, hopefully you will understand the rule better now! And you can shout at the lino's even more when they make a hash up.

Dan Strobe

GIVE US A BREAK?

So, the prophecy is finally fulfilled. Following the great influx of foreign players into the Premiership, not to mention a foreign coach into the England set-up, a winter break had to come. Freezing temperatures and snow on the pitch are not the sort of conditions the displaced continentals should have to put up with; after all, they were getting their tights dirty.

Previously it has been suggested that a winter break be introduced at Christmas? Apparently it is not fair to ask professional footballers to miss Christmas. Leaving aside the fact that many of us mere mortals go out of our way to avoid the repetitive, festive season, let us consider what the poor footballers have to reward them for missing getting drunk on Christmas Day. They get paid a lot of money: even some Conference players get hundreds of pounds of a week, and that is on top of their 'proper' wage. They have fame: though just local fame for some, it doesn't half help when chatting up the girls; how else would Robbie Fowler and Phil Neville pull? They have sponsored cars, sponsored boots, sponsored training kit: tell me why fans who mostly earn much less than footballers are asked to fork out for 'home shirts' and 'away socks'? They have a summer holiday period only exceeded in duration by school teachers. Is it really too much to ask these young men to forego maybe 15 years of Bonne Noël? No the real reason this idea is unworkable is because the Christmas holiday gates are the largest for any club in any season, so for once money sings the common sense tune.

Apparently the break will come in January. It is, on average, the coldest month of the year, closely followed by February and December. It has the greatest rainfall and the most days of air frost too. So January would look the most likely month to miss in most years; except we are not talking about a whole month. With only two weeks to allocate do we take the first half of January or the second half? What happens when, as in 1963, almost the whole of March is lost to snow? In actual fact, whatever the worse month is in England, the weather is rarely too bad to play football so why not just play on? I actually like the changing climate, it keeps things interesting, and football is an outdoor pursuit after all.

Scandinavian countries get much worse weather and have a mid-winter break by necessity but then they don't play cricket in the summer, nor have much horse racing so the sporting competition is less too. Our summer sports already use enormous natural resources so how can we justify pushing the football season further into the summer and using even more water to keep the pitches playable when they are baked hard instead of frozen? Which club has even considered under-soil cooling?

We are told that English players play too much and are always tired when it comes to the big tournaments, but how is extending the domestic season right up to these tournaments going to help? A two week break would have been long forgotten by the tired legs (bless 'em) of football's elite come June 12th 2004, less than two weeks after the domestic football season ends this year! As the Premiership contains many foreign players at least they will be knackered too.

Another salient point is how much of a break will players actually get? There is talk of banning clubs from playing friendlies during the mid-winter break but this is legally unenforceable. Former players have mentioned how bad it would be to just put your feet up for two weeks, thus losing match fitness. So the players will be training instead of playing, thus avoiding physical contact. Why are there so many 'training ground injuries' if training is non-contact I wonder? A number of players already go to the gym in the afternoon for further fitness work and if they are stopped from doing this – well you know how quickly footballers get bored...

To summarise we don't need a winter break in England. Only Shrewsbury Town seem to suffer postponements on a regular basis and that is not down to the weather alone but to the nearby river as well. Players will always use tiredness as an excuse but the answer there is to get early nights and consume less alcohol the whole year round I feel. Myriad supporters in this country do a full time job and play football twice at weekends along with midweek training so who should be more tired: the players or the payers?

Clifford Saunders

JUST SAY NO!

(The first thing Bill Tomlins should do.)

Should the unimaginable happen, and we don't get promoted this season, then we will be playing Franchise FC next season.

I will not be attending either the away game or the home game against these parasites as a protest against them being allowed to move a club 60 miles from home. An insignificant thing for one person to do, but who else will join me in boycotting both games? More than anything, I would like to see the new board take a similar stance and not only not attend, but also tell the League that Luton Town will not play the MK Dons, and if need be forfeit the six points.

Franchising is the wrong step for English football to be taking. I would not have gone to MK if Luton had moved there, so I won't be going whoever moves there.

Winkelman! What a great name to make fun of!

Roger Holdstock

Why did we like Joe Kinnear anyway?

Kinnear is no great loss. Why? What did he do that was so fantastic? Let's think:

- He took at least 400 grand a year as a wage
- He sold Taylor for peanuts... surely cash in on him before him and Harry made their own deals
- He bored fans with his 6 foot 6 goalkeeper talk each week
- He bored fans with his frequent trips to Wolves reserves
- His "friends" Wenger and Ferguson never helped him, as he claimed they would
- He took so long to cross the pitch, holding the game up!
- He gave Luton bad PR when he signed for Forest
- We were relegated under him, surely if he was that good we would have stayed up
- How much money did he spend? He got us 12 million in debt
- He fantasised a stupid dream about Plymouth being our arch rivals – what was the point?
- He picks his men regardless of form
- He slags players off in public
- He thinks he's the god
- He doesn't fight people himself, he always had Big Mick to back him up
- He didn't know when to shut his trap
- Oh, and, he isn't our manager anymore.....

Best wishes to Newell and Big Mick!

Dan Strode

Matthew Spring – 250 Not Out

What is it about Matthew Spring and the Luton supporters where I sit?

Matthew Spring has been a Luton player since the last millennium, and although having his good and bad games for Luton like all players do, he runs his socks off for the team. When Springy plays badly, likely as not, so do his colleagues. When he is buzzing, so is the team.

At Wycombe, Spring notched up his 250th league game for the mightiest team in the world. (well at least the mightiest in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire!) and at the age of 24, this is an incredible achievement. Quite clearly the likes of Lawrence, Hill, Fuccillo, Kinnear, Harford and Newell all at various stages considered he was what they wanted. Spring along with Boyce and Taylor, remained in the first team as Kinnear carved his way through the squad two years ago.

He also misses very few games due to injury and suspension. He does not pick up 12 cards plus per season for arguing. If he gets booked, it is at least trying to challenge for the ball. And he is the best tackler we have in midfield, in my opinion better than Nicholls – certainly far less suicidal and less affected by red mist.

I spoke to him at Hartlepool a few weeks ago – for some reason there wasn't much else to do. He was going to play although not fit. He was also not fit at Wycombe but still played. This is not his fault; he is only trying to do the best for a team short of resources.

He is also our most creative player, looking for the ball that will set a move going, create an opportunity and change the game. Sometimes the ball is not quite right and is given away, but this is expected from a creative player. However, I have sat in the stand week in and week out and every time a pass goes astray the complaints are audible. How can this be when the likes of Hughes can give the ball away all day and is still acclaimed by the famous 'Hughsey' cries or utterances such as 'Bad luck!'

So come on, give the lad a bit of encouragement. I don't think people realise sometimes what we have. When he is fit again, take five minutes out of the game and watch the ground he covers. Then take any other player in the side and do the same. You may be surprised.

Here's to 500 not out Matty!

Russell Bulkeley

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.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

Fed up of watching from the stands? Prefer to be out on the pitch playing? Want to bend it like Robinson? Want to score goals like, erm, Crowe? Well, look no further. With this guide, you can learn the basics of becoming a Town player and maybe break into the first team a few years later. As approved by former Luton and Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear, now at Nottingham Forest.

When an opposing player runs onto a through ball, hold your hand up high and look meaningfully at the linesman for three seconds. If he doesn't give it, then run.

This tactic is not only used by lower division players, it was also perfected by Fabien Barthez at Man Utd against West Ham.

As the opponents get a free-kick, make sure you stand right in front of the ball so that they cannot take it quickly.

Influential and cool-headed midfielder Kevin Nicholls has perfected this. He uses it frequently and successfully. Robinson now appears to be his student.

If an opponent should try No. 2 on you, then just kick the ball straight at them, hold your hand up and look at the referee.

Also used by Kevin Nicholls to try and get the opponent booked and the free-kick moved forward ten yards. It even worked once.

When you are given offside, hold your hands up and look at the linesman. If you're feeling very daring, you can even confront him and start an argument.

Big target man Steve Howard was taught to do this, and certainly does it very well indeed. Useful for strikers if they fancy having two or three games watching from the directors box.

When a foul is given against you, go over to the referee and start asking him why he gave it and start an argument, using the appropriate body language. Referees are renowned for frequently changing their minds and the attempt is likely to be appreciated by your manager.

Steven Howard is also known for doing this, and he frequently gets into arguments with referees about decisions.

If the referee for some reason doesn't change his mind, then start begging with him not to book you.

Another favourite tactic of Steve Howard, who can frequently be seen begging with the referee.

Peter Bulkeley

FUTBOL SUR AMERICA

Part 2: Peru

After Ecuador, I headed south to Peru and took in a total of 3 games there. By a sheer fluke, I ended up following one team around Peru, Estudiantes de Ica from the town of, er, Ica. Now, unbeknown to me, the fans of Ica have a bit of a reputation not dissimilar to a certain Millwall in this country. I wasn't to know this until much later on in Peru when I witnessed a very amusing moment. First off though was Juan Arich, the team from the northern town of Chiclayo. My fellow travellers, another Hatter by the name of Objet and Ian, an Irish lad from Dublin, and I headed off to the match nice and early to see if we could blag a ticket. Objet and myself sported England shirts while Ian had his Irish shirt on. We thought this might aid our blagging technique, obviously forgetting that 3 gringos of varying size in height and waist would easily blend into the melting pot of Andean Indians who struggle to break the 5ft height barrier! We had luck though. Our hanging outside the main gates paid off as one of the directors of the club spotted us and invited us in to watch the forthcoming match from the delights of the executive stand. Result! However, upon entering the ground we saw that the executive stand consisted of just a couple of school chairs in a fenced off area! Still, it was a story to tell the grandkids. As for the game, again nothing special. Estudiante ran out winners, which annoyed the home fans. At one point we thought a spot of bother was coming our way as we were sitting next to the chairman, a chap who made Mr J Gurney look positively anorexic. The fans were getting quite 'boisterous' and a spot of bottle throwing seemed to be in the air. So we made our excuses and left rather sharpish!

Next on the grand tour of Peru was a slight detour to probably the best named team in the whole world, one that our friends down the M1 may well feel a strong bond to. The city of Huancayo is the capital of an ancient pre-Inca kingdom. The locals are fiercely proud of the history of their region and delight in tourists stopping by. If only they knew the real reason as to why Objet, Ian and his girlfriend Bridget and I had stopped by. You see, Huancayo is the capital of the Nacion de Wanka and the home of Deportivo Wanka. Everywhere you go in Huancayo, you will see businesses dedicated to the nation like Cyber Wanka, the Internet café and Big Mama Wanka, a restaurant. However, the Holy Grail of travellers to Peru, certainly English ones, eluded us. The green shirt of Deportivo Wanka, which sports the corking slogan 'D Wanka' across the chest, could not be purchased. A great shame.

Next on the hit list was Ica. Now I've got bad memories of this place as some bastard nicked a £100 from my bag, thieving gimp. Again we went to see Estudiante de Ica play, this time on their own patch and against the Peruvian equivalent of Tottenham, Sporting Cristal. A once big team now going through a sticky patch which their whinging, whining fans cant stomach but to the amusement of everyone else in the country! As it happened, Cristal, were staying in our hotel but being the ignorant Gringo, I didn't recognize any of them, much to the annoyance of the players. Once again, the stadium was the stereotypical would be Olympic ground, running track etc. A massive scrum greeted us at the turnstile,

as this was the game to be at for the season. Compared to the quaint surroundings of Chiclayo, Ica's ground had an all too familiar 'atmosphere' to it. A lot of police were on duty sporting a range of weaponry from 3 foot long night sticks to pump action shotguns with a rather menacingly shark painted water cannon 'tank'. The police knew something that we didn't. We entered the ground after haggling over the price of a ticket with a tout who instantly tripled the price for the Gringos and found a nice empty spot in a very packed ground. We did not give it a second thought as to why such a large area would be empty so happily sat down on the cold concrete for the game. Next minute, the Supporters Club of Ica descended around us and the real reason as to why the seats were empty became clear as a cacophony of out of tune instruments from tubas to trumpets to f*ck off bass drums kicked into life to welcome the players onto the pitch. While this was quite amusing for the first 30 seconds, the realization of having to put up with this noise for the next 2 hours did not go down too well. Still, it added some colour to, yet again, another boring 1-1 draw despite Ica being reduced to 9 men after 40 odd minutes.

But what I will really remember of the game in Ica is what the cheeky 'lads' of Ica got up to. With about 20 minutes to go we noticed a bit of a commotion going on outside the ground. Looking out we could see a bit of bother 'going off' but thought nothing of this. It just seemed to be a bunch of kids being cheeky with the police the only difference between Peruvian cheeky scamps giving grief to their local police force and their British equivalent is that the Peruvians got chased round the streets by baton wielding coppers intent on doing damage to them! The next minute, on the far side of the ground to us, the gates burst open to some scrubland that backed onto the away fans stand. Into this scrubland burst about 300 'lads' who promptly steamed towards the away fans. Seeing the oncoming horde heading for them, the Cristal fans literally flew down to the fence separating them from the pitch and quickly gathered up their flags before getting as many lose stones, bottles and poles that they could lay their hands on them as the Ica fans headed towards them. Thinking that this was going to be a Peruvian re-enactment of Zulu (the Cristal fans numbered about 40), we started to pay attention to this little episode. However, as quickly as it had started, the trouble was over thanks to 2, yes 2, Peruvian police men vaulting a 10 foot fence into the scrubland and chasing the 'lads' off while swinging their batons over their heads. The fact that the 2 policemen were of a thick waist line and struggling to keep their oversized riot helmets on their heads, made this all the more comical! With the game over, we made our way outside to see that the trouble had continued and by now the aforementioned water cannon was bombing up and down the road squirting at the cheeky scamps. This was all highly amusing for us until the water cannon came careering round the corner to face us. Thankfully recognizing 4 Gringos brought an end to the impromptu shower for the locals and we all breathed a sigh of relief.

Mark Araci

STAT ATTACK

A statistical preview of Town's forthcoming fixtures

March 13th - Blackpool (Home)

Just one defeat in the last ten meetings is an impressive run for the Hatters, especially with 5 consecutive wins included in that run. Blackpool have just four victories from eighteen matches played, with the 4-1 win in April 1972 the biggest of these. Luton's best victory came in March 1978 with Alan West, Ron Futch, Phil Boersma and Lil Fuccillo all on the scoresheet in a 4-0 win! There have been just three draws with a different score-line each time!! Luton lead the goals scored by 34 to 19!!

Last time: 11th February 2003 Lost 1-3 (Tony Thorpe)

March 16th - Port Vale (Away)

A total of twelve previous encounters, and Vale lead seven games to three; with two draws. Luton have only scored in five of these matches, whereas Vale have only failed to score twice. Having said that they've only managed a single goal on all but two occasions! Luton's rare wins have come in 1965/66, 1994/95 and last season. These games hardly provide a goal fest as it's just 15-7 in Vale's favour!

Last time: 9th February 2003 Won 2-1 (Tony Thorpe, Kevin Nicholls (pen))

March 20th - Plymouth Argyle (Home)

Thirty previous league meetings and the Hatters are unbeaten in 25 of these, with 13 wins and 12 draws. The last Plymouth victory was in January 1970. Luton have kept 3 consecutive clean sheets in more recent times. Luton have only failed to score on four occasions. Before and after WW2, Luton were beaten 4-3, although in a 7 goal thriller in March 1930 they were victorious by a 5-2 scoreline. Plymouth's other 3 victories were all 2-0. A total of 89 goals scored, with Luton leading 52-37.

Last time: 26th February 2003 Won 1-0 (Tony Thorpe)

March 27th - Queens Park Rangers (Away)

The team that Luton have played the most in the League entertain the Hatters for the 41st time, and hold a serious advantage, 24 games to 6, with 10 draws. Luton managed just one win and two draws in the first seventeen matches, the solitary victory coming in February 1924! A 3-0 victory in December 1938 was well worth the wait! It took another 22 years before Luton fans were celebrating again though! The early 80's were good for the Hatters, 3 consecutive wins!! It's 8 games without a win now though! Luton have been thrashed 7-1 (1964/65) and 6-1 (1990/91). Luton will be hoping to at least score as they've only managed this in 3 of the last 6 games.

Last time: 12th April 2003 Lost 0-2

3rd April - Oldham (Home)

Just 19 previous league meetings at Kenilworth Road, with the home side holding an 8-4 lead, and 32 goals to 18 advantage. The first ever game in August 1953 saw the sides share the points in an 8 goal thriller, with Johnny Downie scoring a hat trick for the Hatters. Luton's biggest win came 25 years later, again on the opening day of the season, with a 6-1 scoreline. Bob Hatton and David Moss both bagged two goals, with Brian Stein and Lil Fuccillo also adding their names to the scoresheet. The visitors have only ever won by one goal, and they haven't won in the last 9 attempts, although they have gained a point in the last 3 visits.

Last time: 18th March 2002 Drew 0-0

10th April - Tranmere (Away)

Not a single draw in 10 attempts between the two sides at Prenton Park. Luton won the first ever meeting, 3-2, in November 1938, and have been victorious on three occasions since. Tranmere have 6 victories and 18 goals to their name, and have twice scored 4 goals in a game.

Last time: 30th November 2003 Won 3-1 (Matthew Spring, Ahmet Brkovic, Steve Howard)

12th April - Swindon (Home)

Luton have a very impressive record against Swindon, with 17 wins from 26 encounters. Add 6 draws to the figures and you'll soon work out that the visitors have only gone home with maximum points on 3 occasions. There's always a long wait for their fans between victories as well, October 1933-November 1972-September 2000! Luton have blasted in 65 goals, compared to just 27 from the visitors. Luton hit 6 in successive seasons, winning 6-0 in April 1932, and then 6-2 just 12 months later. Tommy Tait hit 5 of his 50 league goals for Luton in the first match, and Andy Rennie hit a hat-trick a year on.

Last time: 28th September 2002 Won 3-0 (Steve Howard, Andrew Fotiadis, Steve Robinson (pen))

17th April - Bristol City (Home)

The statistics are relatively even between the two sides, with Luton holding a narrow advantage from the twenty five previous matches. Unbelievably the visitors are undefeated in the last 8 matches! City have won five in this run, which only leaves two other victories, in October 1963 and March 1973. All but two of their wins have been by at least two goals as well! On a brighter note Luton have won 9 matches, and lead 36 goals to 30. And when they do win the Hatters score goals, as at least 3 have been scored in 7 of these wins!

Possibly the best match between the two sides was in January 1933, as Luton finished 5-4 winners!!

Last time: 19th April 2003 Drew 2-2 (Steve Howard (2))

24th April - Wrexham (Away)

OK so we all recognise the date, and maybe the statistics should focus more on the League Cup final of 1988 than the history between the two sides.....and to be honest they would make far more interesting and enjoyable reading!! Having said that you'll probably just say that it was 16 years ago and you all know the details anyway....so instead I will give you the grim stats of Luton's previous trips to Wrexham! With just 1 win and 3 draws from 13 matches Luton don't often come home with points! The opening three fixtures all ended in 2-0 defeats, before Luton managed a point in August 1967. Two more defeats followed, and a draw, before the Hatters finally won at the eighth time of asking. 24th October 1981 (yes, the Championship winning season!) with Mal Donaghy and Steve White scoring the goals in a 2-0 win. Four more defeats and a draw since mean we must be due another win, surely?!?

Last time: 16th April 2001 Lost 1-3 (Julian Watts)

1st May - Sheffield Wednesday (Home)

It's 104 years since the first league meeting, which Wednesday won 1-0. Luton have won 10 of the 23 matches since then though, with Wednesday adding 5 more victories, including a 5-1 win in November 1938. The two sides met in the 1939/40 season prior to the outbreak of war, with the Hatters winning 3-0, although this fixture doesn't appear "officially" as the season ended after only 3 games. Luton repeated the feat of winning by 3 goals though with a 4-1 win in August 1946. This was the start of a 7 match unbeaten run which included a 5-3 win in November 1951. The last 7 meetings have all been in the top flight, and you've got to go back to October 1991 for the last meeting at Kenilworth Road.

Last time: 19th October 1991 Drew 2-2 (Mick Harford, Kurt Nogan)

8th May - Chesterfield (Away)

Again you go back 104 years for the first fixture, and again it was a defeat for the Hatters, this time 2-0. Just 4 victories for the Hatters, compared to 7 defeats, and 5 draws. Chesterfield lead 22 goals to 16. Luton's first win came in April 1939, 2-1, but there was a 10 year wait for another maximum. It was 17 years before another, and then a further 34 years for the 4th! Luton won 3-1 in Mar 1966 and despite the wait it was only the 2nd match since their last win! Four draws and defeat followed before the scoreline was repeated in March 2000. Gary Doherty opened the scoring before further goals from Julian Watts and Liam George sealed the win.

Last time: 1st January 2003 Lost 1-2 (Ahmet Brkovic.....direct from a corner!!)

TBC - Hartlepool (Away)

This won't take long as there are only 5 matches to talk about, and Luton have lost 4 of these! All the defeats came in the 1960's when Luton were struggling, where as the victory came in the 2001/02 season when the Hatters were on their way out of the 3rd Division. Mike Newell will be looking to repeat the August home victory over his former Club.

Last Time: 8th December 2001 Won 2-1 (Dean Crowe, Matt Taylor)

Don't forget to check out all the Hatters stats at www.lutonfc.com/stattoindex.asp

Simon "Statto" Pitts

CONTRIBUTIONS... PLEASE!

After that long gap between issues 57 and 58, we're playing catch up now, and have this issue out thanks to the fine efforts of our unsung heroes who have contributed everything you read in here. According to the master plan (you believe that...?) the next issue will come out in mid-April or thereabouts, possibly for the last home match of the regular season. But to achieve that we need your help, so please send any articles, match reports, letters, cartoons, photos, press cuttings, or whatever, either by post or email to the addresses below, preferably by April 3rd (although this could change, so get in touch if you want an update):

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

Email: keith.hayward1@ntlworld.com

TOWN TEASER ANSWER

Brian Stein is coach, Mick Harford is Director of Football & Assistant Manager and Mike Newell is Manager. Why on earth did any self respecting Luton fan have to look this up? Answers on a postcard...

Luton were caught on the counter-attack and a long ball up field found Kandol, but he was tightly marked by Boyce. The Luton reject broke free and dodged past Boyce like he was a Thameslink ticket inspector. He found himself one-on-one with the 'keeper but as Luton fans' hearts stood still, Beresford didn't and rushed off his line forcing Kandol into a decision. Kandol chose a tame lob that Beresford saved with ease.

After such a poor second half display Luton will be glad to take Thurrock back to Kenilworth Road on Tuesday, November 18.

This little comments comes from the *Brighton & Hove Leader* in February.

One manager he calls regularly is Arsène Wenger, and not just on the off chance of borrowing a Premiership superstar for a month. The two men live a few doors apart, and Kinnear used to watch Arsenal reserves, sitting next to the Frenchman in the stand. "I know every single player at that club. I saw Jérémie Aliadière's first game; Arsène told me he'd got someone special. I tried to persuade him to let me have him at Luton for a month or two, toughen him up for him." Kinnear lapses into a fair impersonation of the Arsenal manager: "No, no, Joe, not zees one. Ee's too precious."

SHORT CUTS

One from our old friends at the *Accuracy on Sunday*. Not a misprint or cock-up this time, but a fine turn of phrase from the 1st round cup match away to Thurrock.



WHEN Luton visited Withean back in August I denounced them as the worst team I had seen for years. (Pause as I start eating both my words and humble pie.)

On Tuesday at Kenilworth Road they beat us and beat us decisively to earn this accolade from boss Mark McGhee: "They were as good as any team we have played since I have been here."

Five months is a long time in football.

From *The Times*, 29th February, a feature on Joe Kinnear in which he continues to peddle the myth of his many friends in football and great contacts that brought us the likes of Jupp and Kimble.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Maidens head for happy United

RYMAN PREMIER Maidenhead United claim to offer the best post-match hospitality in Non-League after signing a one-year deal with Honey Pot Ltd who run clubs in the Berkshire town and nearby Slough and Reading.

Away supporters producing a programme are given single day membership of the Honey Pot Maidenhead - a table dancing club 50 yards from the York Road ground.

Manager John Dreyer and assistant Phil Gray say they are "delighted" with the deal which gives all members of Maidenhead free membership and reduced rates for drinks.

Commercial manager Paul Swannell arranged the one-year deal to sponsor travelling kit for the first and reserve team.



HONEY TRAP: Manager John Dreyer with new supporters, left to right, Savanna, Samantha and Dion. PICTURE: Mike Swift



BACK: Mitchell Thomas.

Mitch plays in friendlies

MUCH-TRAVELLED Mitchell Thomas is keeping fit at the age of 37 by playing some local football.

The former Luton, Spurs, West Ham and Burnley player has been involved in pre-season friendlies with North Home Counties Sunday League side Crawley Green.

Thomas was still on Burnley's books two seasons ago and he played 318 games for the Hatters.

Mitchell escaping the limelight a few months ago having been put out to pasture, while Dreyer and Gray seem to be enjoying themselves. Familiar surroundings for them, perhaps?

ENOCH'S EXPENSES

Before signing a full time contract, Enoch Showunmi was playing for expenses only. *Mad as a Hatter!* is now able to reveal the truth of this...

LUTON TOWN FC DAILY EXPENSES (FORM 10)

Name: Enoch Showunmi

Details of expenses incurred

£

- **Car travel costs (£0.36 per mile)**

270.00

Got a bit lost and travelled from home to Luton via Lands End and John O'Groats

- **Food**

200.00

I have a special diet and can only eat at the Ritz

- **Accommodation**

500.00

The Ritz - I have to stay there for food (see above)

- **Other**

My special entourage - 100 people to follow me chanting "Enoch, Enoch".

6750.00

Cost of my website

0.01

TOTAL FOR DAY

£

7720.01