

MAD AS A HATTER!

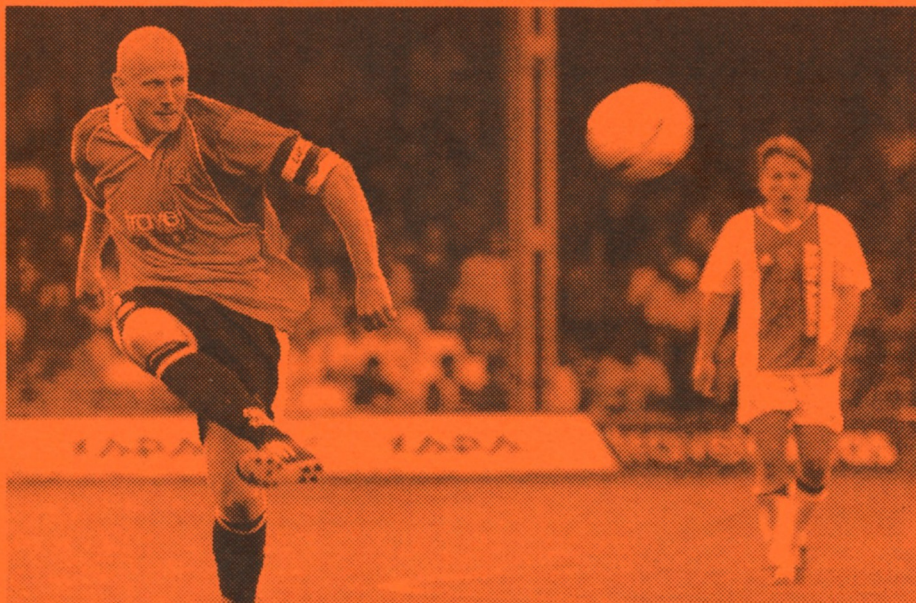
THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



Issue 61

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NICO IN INTERNATIONAL SELECTION SHOCK



Well, only an international friendly actually. He's pictured playing against Ajax, and it looks like that's the product he used to wash his hair before the game!

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THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE

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Ed Lines

Well, here we are again, at the start of a new season. Writing this three games into that season, with three wins, and nine goals scored (and, admittedly, six conceded), I would say this is a good start. Even the pessimists would struggle to disagree, and whilst they may argue that we are conceding too many goals, we are doing what counts and scoring more than the opposition. These are probably the same pessimists who were saying in late July that we would struggle because of our lack of signings. Let's hope that in nine months time they are eating their words.

We find ourselves starting the new season with a new board of directors, and indeed a new company running our club. Gone are the holding companies put together by Kohler and Watson Challis, instead the business is now Kenilworth Road Football Club trading as Luton Town. And a 10% shareholder in the new company is Trust in Luton, who played a pivotal role in bringing the Gurney era (mini-era?) to a swift end. The Trust shareholding means that we now have an elected representative on the board, and he is their by right, rather than by the favour of the major shareholder as was previously the case. This is good news for supporters, but we have a duty to understand his role. It is not to broadcast to the world every word that is uttered in board meetings, or to give us the lowdown on players contracts. He is there to represent our views and feelings to the board, and to report back on those matters. It has to be remembered that the boardroom is the place for discussion of detailed financial matters, and much of this must remain confidential. Our representative must respect this if they are to keep the respect of other board members. At the same time, our expectations must respect this.

It is already clear that there is no significant money to spend on players, and so we must work within a tighter budget than has been the case in the recent past. However, there is also no imperative to sell at this stage, which is why Steve Howard remains with us. This is encouraging, as it shows that the budgeted approach being taken by the new board does not rely on windfall sales to make up the shortfall created by paying excessive wages for the division we find ourselves in. This fiscal care is the way ahead for many clubs if the spectre of administration is to be avoided.

The one item of big news we await is the application for planning permission for a new stadium. So, no change there. We've been promised an application "by Christmas" almost every year since this fanzine was first published, apart from a couple of years when we were waiting for a decision on the KohlerDome. We haven't had that promise yet this year, but it seems to be there by implication. And still, we wait!

INCOMING...??

Worried about the lack of transfer activity pre-season? Worried about us only bringing in four players? Not to worry. We did try to bring in more, and below are the deals that nearly went through but collapsed at the last minute. Starting with our old favourite....

Tony Thorpe – This piece of gossip could have been made up by people on the various Luton messageboards or it could possibly have had an element of truth about it. Either way, the impending move collapsed somewhere along the line and the charitable Thorpe is now in the first team squad at QPha, and even managed to get into the starting line up against W**f**d (the two scums of football meeting). When asked why the move collapsed, Mike Newell replied, 'Because he's a big, fat ugly immobile donkey – and he's too expensive.'

Warren Feeney – Apparently, Feeney turned down Luton to join his ex-national boss Sammy McIlroy at Stockport, although it's hard to see how anyone would turn down the footballing superforce of Bedfordshire for dreary struggling Stockport. Perhaps a confused journalist got his two Hatters' mixed up. If so, it was probably a journalist from The Sun

Didier Drogba – Mike Newell found himself locked in a battle with Mourinho for the highly rated Marseilles striker. He apparently did want to leave the UEFA Cup runners-up for the Hatters, but Luton pulled out of the race, leaving the path clear for Chelsea. Mike Newell decided not to pursue his interest in Drogba as we already had Forest Green striker Alex Meechan on trial. Who needs more than 3 strikers anyway.

Alex Meechan – Surely the most pointless triallist ever to have been on trial at Luton, and possibly ever will be unless Tresor Kandol decides he is ready for league football. Failed to make the grade at Bristol City and Swindon seven years earlier, so there was no hope of it really working out with Luton. Incidentally, Mike Newell should really have spotted the danger signs, because he was born in Plymouth and Tony Thorpe was in the Bristol City first team when Meechan was in the reserves. No striker is ever going to do well with those two setbacks.

Morten Hyldgaard – Fans always breathed a sigh of relief when the Danish goalkeepers name was read out over the tannoy. The Town were about to sign the Great Dane, but Mike Newell had a change of heart at the last moment and decided to sign Marlon Beresford instead of the new Peter Schmeichel. That decision will surely haunt the Kenilworth Road faithful for years to come.

Scott Taylor – This was the deal that very nearly went through. Scott was supposed to sign for the Town just in time for the Charlton friendly, but it appears Newell had an eye problem as he travelled up to Blackpool to meet Scott and he mistook Matthew Blinkhorn for Scott Taylor and signed him on a three month loan. He should have recognised him really – they played together in the reserves at Blackpool. Stevo would probably have liked Scotty as both of them had been signed by Sheffield Wednesday over the summer. However, despite Newell's mistake, it could turn out that Blinkhorn will do better than Taylor would have done, as Taylor does seem to be a bit like a Thorpe rather than a Howard.

Avun Jephcott – Now it appears that Mike Newell thinks of himself as a bit of a

comedian, or perhaps he doesn't seem to like tannoy speakers. If this guy ever played up front with Enoch, then the whole lot of them would let out a groan. Perhaps he only got a trial because Newell wanted to annoy the Hitchin coaching staff. It is really a shame that Mike didn't sign him, as him and Enoch would have complicated team talks across the whole country.

Paul Gascoigne – This rumour circulated the last time Gazza was looking for a new club. That season was the one we gained promotion, and although last time there was no truth in the rumour and it was created by those wags on the messageboard who wanted to see how many people latch on and believe the rumour. This time around, it could have been made up by the same people, other people on the messageboards, a journalist desperate for something to write about or Gazza's agent. This rumour was actually extinguished by the big Geordie himself. No, not Gazza but Mick Harford. His statement read, 'There is only room for one big Geordie at this football club.' So expect Stevo to be on his way out.

Adrian Mutu – Once again, Luton looked to be locked in horns with Juventus to bring in Adrian Mutu. However despite Juventus' prestige it was Luton who were given the first option of signing the Romanian (compensation for Drogba, see above). However, Newell decided not to pursue his interest in Mutu because he had found another Eastern European player by then, whom he had witnessed scoring four goals against footballing superpowers Arlesey Town. Juventus also decided to pull out of their deal and rumour has it that they are planning an ambitious swoop for Ahmet Brkovic. Let's hope for Luton's sake that we can hold onto him.

Steven Gerrard – The tabloids report how Steven turned down Moneybags Chelsea to stay loyal to his home club. Rubbish. Once again Luton got the better of Chelsea but were turned down by the Scouse Sensation just as he was about to put pen to paper on his new contract. The only problem was Enoch Showunmi. Enoch revealed this season how his favourite player was Steven Gerrard, and the feeling is mutual. Therefore, Steven decided that he didn't want to sign for Luton because he might upset Enoch when they were in the same team by not passing to him, and he couldn't bear the thought of Enoch thinking badly of him.

Stuart Douglas – It would have been great to sign Stuart Douglas back – but only as cover for Enoch on the bench and only if he was paid expenses. This was the stumbling block in the deal to bring the quick striker back to Kenilworth Road. He apparently wanted a better contract than Luton were prepared to give him, but he still wished the club well. Shame he won't be playing for Boston when we go there – I personally would have given him a rousing reception. He was at the W*tf*rd Luton game a couple of years back in our stand. Despite not being able to sign a contract this time around, I hope that he signs for a good club and has a good career.

So those were the signings that nearly were but were ill-fated. However, despite missing out on Drogba and Gerrard, I'm sure that Town fans are pleased with Mike Newell for signing Beresford, Seremet, Vine and Blinkhorn. Marlon and Rowan played well against Oldham, so lets hope that they will continue to play well for the Town for the whole season. By the end of the season we will hopefully be saying, 'Who needed Mutu and Drogba anyway?'

Peter Bulkeley

MK - To go or not to go?

Relegation of what was the former Wimbledon club brings Luton up against the team many call Franchise FC. This could so easily have been Luton; had it not have been for the sterling efforts of supporters back in the 1980's. For those of us over the age of 35, memories of those dark days are still fresh in the mind. Had the same kind of determination been around in 1984 as when the current owner of MK Dons finally took the club from their South west London roots, then what kind of football would we have been watching today in Luton? Would supporters of Luton Town have had the instincts to do what the founders of AFC Wimbledon have done in forming their own club? I think not! (*This was actually a distinct possibility in the autumn of 1983 - Ed.*) At the time as supporters of a First Division club we could look forward to watching the top clubs in the country and I suspect that once the furore had died down and coaches had been ferrying fans back and forth memories of Kenilworth Road would soon have been forgotten. How many Sunderland and Middlesbrough fans are nostalgic for Roker Park or Ayresome Park?

Looking back, Luton supporters at the time were the first to take on millionaire directors and win, not only that but to force them out of their club. It should not be forgotten that this was done at a cost, as there was a considerable drop in support with some fans never coming back to the club. It could also be argued that the roots of the problems the club has suffered in the past twenty years go back to that time. The selling of the ground, the lack of financial stability, and near closures all stem from that period. But at least we still have a Football League club to support - more than can be said for supporters of AFC Wimbledon, despite going through the whole of last season without losing a game in their league.

Anyone who went on the famous march from Popes Meadow to Kenilworth Road on 7th May 1984, signed a petition or joined the boycott of home matches at that time - along with anyone too young to remember all those events - should think twice about going to Milton Keynes on November 20th. If the reasons set out in the previous paragraphs have not convinced you then just give your minds to the following: Your own conscience - did you not say to yourself or mates at the time that you would never set foot in MK to watch a football match? Secondly, as I said earlier, had the move been successful would you have carried on watching football, and what sort of football would there have been in Luton? Just think, we would never have seen the greatest moment in the club's history, the winning of the Littlewoods Cup. Thirdly, a great many Luton supporters come from the MK conurbation. There is evidence that MK Dons already have a hard core support of around 2000. What if they gain success and emulate the old Wimbledon club and we lose support?

More what ifs: Suppose Luton Town do not get planning permission for Junction 10? Take this scenario further, the club discovers it needs to do more costly

work on the present ground and some of the financial backers pull out? And then there is a proposal to ground share at Denbigh Hall? A really way out scenario, but still possible is that MK Dons have some success, grow their fan base to 5000 and another Developer or Entrepreneur decides to bring an ailing football team to a new town. Given the eccentricities of the footballing authorities in this country which allowed Wimbledon to move to MK in the first, who could rule out the possibility of them sanctioning a move of Luton Town to another new town without a league team like... Telford. Would you support Telford Hatters?

My final point is this, MK Dons have thus far prospered through the backing of wealthy people and the support of away fans. Last season Sunderland, Norwich City and West Bromwich Albion all visited them. As we know, away support at this level is around 500 at best, so it will be interesting to see how they cope. So do you really want to spend £20 sitting on scaffolding in the open air in a venue you vowed you would never set foot in, watching a team that may one day pose a major threat to our own team? Please think about going there on November 20th.

JUST SAY NO!

Brian Ellis

SHORT CUTS

One here from the *Luton on Sunday*, which leaves your editor feeling duly castigated for his lack of research. You will notice however, that they do not acknowledge that they are rereading a free copy of *Mad as a Hatter!*, of which they receive every issue - an arrangement which is sadly not reciprocated.

I'M flicking through a copy of Luton Town FC fanzine *Mad As A Hatter* today which exposes an error by what it describes as our 'sister paper' *Northants on Sunday*.

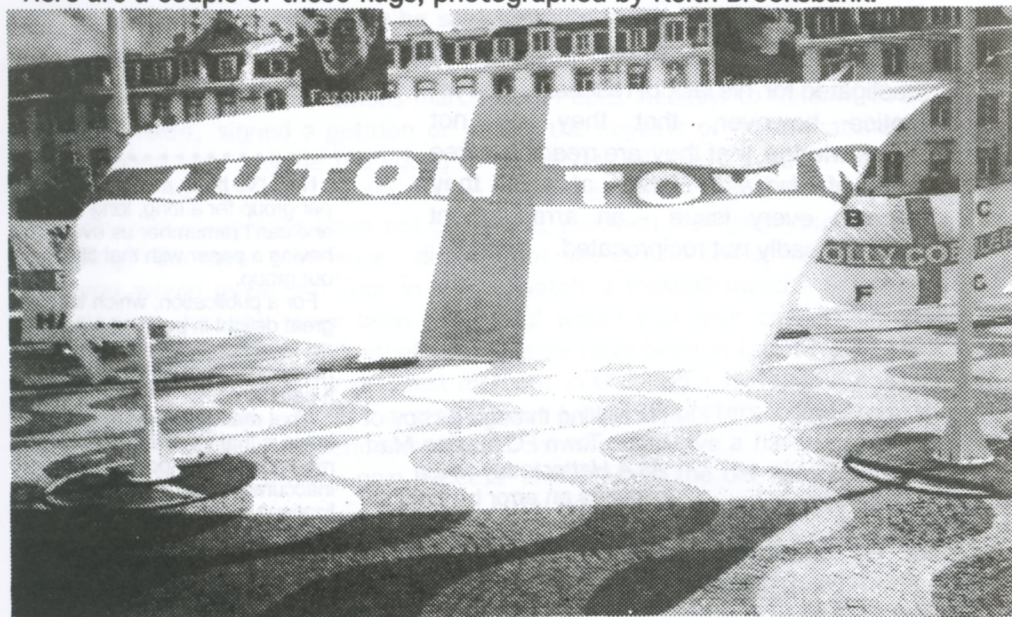
.....
Now I've been at this newspaper group for a long, long time and can't remember us ever having a paper with that title in our group.

For a publication, which takes great delight in pointing out honest mistakes by newspapers, national or local, what an unfortunate error.

What makes it even more ironic is that the mistake was made on a page pointing out inaccuracies made in other publications. Glass houses, throwing stones...



There was a marvellous number of, what were at the time, Nationwide League clubs represented by flags (and supporters) in Lisbon this summer. Here are a couple of those flags, photographed by Keith Brooksbank.



ON A ROLL??

PRE-SEASON

Just a summary, as I didn't go to all the matches, and no-one else has bothered to write anything!

The build up started with a low key triallists night out at St Albans. Quite well supported by Haters fans, which seemed to catch the home side out a bit. The turnstile operator was at, 7.35, struggling to get everyone in before kick-off and wasn't helped by kick off happening a good 4 minutes earlier than scheduled! This provoked some panic, and the bloke in front of me got in free because there was no change for his £20 note - cue irritation for me, carrying the right money! Many of those behind me benefitted from the turnout, as the turnstile operator then ran out of tickets and so stopped taking money! The match itself was much as expected, with a selection of first teamers and triallists taking part, none of the latter stood out. The revelation of the match was our own Ahmet Brkovic, with a couple of stunning goals. It was, as expected, almost impossible to keep track of substitutions, although the home side went as far as changing the whole team - kit included - at half time. In the end a comfortable 4-0 win for the Town.

I didn't bother with the games at Dunstable or Rugby, so the next one was the prestigious home game against Ajax. The bare facts of this are a 0-4 home defeat for the Town, but this does not tell the true story. This was actually one of the best 0-4 defetas we are ever likely to see. Ajax fielded a strong side, including several players who had played in Portugal a few weeks earlier, and gave the Town a footballing lesson that was a joy to watch. Although defeat was a certainty by half time, there were few who left early, or felt it was not good value for money. Just sad to say that this may be the biggest attendance all season at Kenilworth Road!

A quick trip to Scotland followed for a match at the impressive new Falkirk Stand. This was not a good performance by the Town side, and Falkirk were the better team, deserving their 2-1 win.

Another home, this time against Premiership opposition in the shape of Charlton saw a more even match with Town deserving their 1-1 draw. Charlton were useful, but did not do well in the comparisons with Ajax. No doubt they would blame the heat for their performance.

Finally, in my absence, a team of fringe players represented Town in the Beds Senior Cup Final at Arlesey, where Ahmet Brkovic was the star of the show with a hat-trick, as he staked his claim for Steve Howard's place in our starting line-up. If judged on goals alone he might have got that place. Fortunately, it isn't!

So, at last, it was time for the real stuff to start. And still no new signings...

07.08.04 TOWN 2 OLDHAM ATHLETIC 1

A sparkling start to the new season with a home win. Not the most convincing maybe, but good enough. The defence struggled a bit, especially against the pace of the Oldham winger Johnson, and it had looked like the same old story when the visitors took the lead through Haining, heading in from a corner. It was just 10 minutes later when Howard got the perfect start to his season knocking in Robinson's corner. Twenty minutes into the second half Town's efforts to get something out of the match were rewarded, when Paul Underwood belted Howard's downward header into the net from 15 yards, despite being on the floor at the time (mysteriously the media almost unanimously awarded this goal to Kevin Foley!). This capped an excellent home debut for Underwood, who looks a very good acquisition, even though he appears to suffer from a lack of pace - and a Peter Stringfellow hairstyle!

A good start, although too early to get carried away.

11.08.04 SWINDLE TOWN 2 TOWN 3

OK, time to own up. I was at work, having decided that £23 was a bit much to pay for our inevitable defeat, especially when combined with needing a day off and the cost of getting to Wiltshire! And so it came to pass that I found myself trying to follow the match on the BBC website. Those who feel fit to criticise BBC 3CR's commentary ought to try it sometime.

An opening goal by Kevin Nicholls from the spot after a foul on Vine lifted the spirits, but the highlight of the match was reading of Fallon's own goal, which was reported as being a 35-yard header from a Robinson free-kick taken in his own half. Try visualising that! It dominated the rest of my evening. It was almost disappointing to find out the Beeb had got it wrong when I finally got an eyewitness report.

Parkin reduced the deficit, but Howard put us back in command, until Reeves narrowed the gap again with 25 minutes left. It would have been very tense had I not been distracted by the need to do some work, and the match was well over before I got to check the final score and find that we had a first away win of the season.

KFH

Late decision to attend this one. Good football first half, tremendous performance from Sol Davis who was fired up as usual against the Robins, Steve Howard looked good too. Second half became hanging-on-by-the-fingertips time again but we made it. Great burgers, felt a bit ill after the third one though.

The Tadley Terror

14.08.04 TYKES 3 CHAMPIONS-ELECT 4

Top of the league - we're having a laugh!

Ok, so technically we aren't top of the league, but on points we are equal top and that's good enough for me. We were top outright at one point during this match, but our ever reliable defence put the goal difference down so that we weren't, although even if we had won 4-1 then we would still have been second.

And we would have thoroughly deserved to have won 4-1 as well - it was a footballing lesson to Barnsley. We passed short and straight to a white shirt and so did they, we looked like scoring every time we went forward, they looked like scoring whenever the ball went near Curtis Davies. We were superior to them in every area of the field. Things started badly with them going ahead after just two minutes, and we were temporarily deafened by the PA playing the wrong part of 'Hey Rock N Roll'. We were then temporarily deafened again two minutes later by our own cheering as the superb Stevo headed over Colgan and into the empty net (why didn't they keep Marlon?) and from then on for the rest of the half we shaded the play and had the better chances. Vine in particular had two which he should have buried past the keeper. The first half was marred early on by the loss of Foley, as he was still injured and was getting beaten every time. Neilson dealt with the guy much better despite being much less quick than him. O'Leary was no help either in defence and did very little going forward either. He was also withdrawn with an injury and the brilliant Brko came on to replace him, who played much better and scored the third goal, a stooping header within the 6 yard box - don't get me wrong, I think O'Leary is talented for his age but he wouldn't have got into the position Brko got into for the goal, and he had a much better game than O'Leary would have done, even defending better than he usually does. The second goal was scored by Rowan, who dispossessed one player, turned two others and fired home, and this chance was a lot harder than the ones he missed. The win was sealed by Robbo's strike with about 25 minutes to go, after someone won the ball and threaded him through. Then the "Top Of The League" chants started.

However, the defence still looked shaky and ended up letting in two more goals. The first was a free-kick in a dangerous position which was a bit like the one Zidane scored against England - given away stupidly and into the far corner. At least Beresford made more of an effort than James did. The third was in the last minute, and it was a ball that we really should have cleared. So, what was the problem? It wasn't the midfield - Undie, Brko, Robbo and Nico were all excellent, except Robbo picked up his third booking in as many games. It wasn't Coyne or Sol either, and Sol went three games in a row without getting booked! Neilson did well when he came on, but I think Davies needs a bit more experience. He is another great prospect but was showing that he is definitely not an immediate replacement for Boycey, but give it time and he could be. Remember that Boycey himself wasn't made overnight. But if we play and create chances like we did

today, then who cares how we defend, as we'll end up promoted anyway! (The result also meant that I stayed at the top of the Prediction League (out of 4 people!))

Peter Bulkeley

The car park is poorly designed at Barnsley as it always takes ages to get out but the upside is the local sports centre bar provides excellent service. Not to the tastes of our esteemed editor and CAMRA member I am sure but it can be so difficult to get served these days even when there are only two customers waiting; so I like a place where the queuing is short: Bedfordshire Yeoman take note.

On now to the football and we look dangerous. With nine goals in three games and numerous chances to add to this tally in Yorkshire, I am not too concerned about our firepower. Steve Howard has clearly lost weight and is looking lively so as long as we can get the service to him: I am sure his head will continue to prove deadly. Howard equalised in the fifth minute of this game with a classic centre forward's jump and finish after the Tykes had taken an early lead. Rowan Vine looked okay but still needs time to settle in. Here he missed two good chances before scoring a harder one where he turned two players and held off challenges to slot home low to the keeper's left. Ahmet Brkovic is God's gift to late runners into the box on this evidence so goal scoring does not look to be an issue at present.

The problem is we look vulnerable too. Our defending was frankly shambolic on Saturday with Alan Nielson's experience not making up for his lack of pace and Curtis Davies' pace not making up for his lack of experience. Chris Coyne stands out as an individual but I don't believe he marshals those around him at all. I hope that Russ Perrett and Dave Bayliss will one day breathe again but I am not holding my breath in anticipation! This game could have finished 8-7 but still with Luton Town on top so the result was probably just. However, Mike Newell was right to criticise the team for putting themselves under needless pressure and I cannot see us lasting the season with someone as young as Davies in the back four.

A similar situation exists in the midfield where Stephen O'Leary gave away possession about six times in the first half and was fortunate we didn't concede from most of his mistakes. He was subbed in the first half due to injury (injured before being pushed you might say) and replaced by the much-maligned Brkovic who impressed enough to secure his starting place, and capped his performance with a tremendous midfielder's goal. A curling free kick by the reliable Steve Robinson found the new arrival unmarked at the near post to head home with his first touch after coming on. Arriving just before half-time it would have killed the game if it wasn't for the Hatters wayward defending in the latter stages of the second period. Paul Underwood is still involved too little for my liking but he sent up one of Vine's misses with a perfect inside pass following a Robinson tackle, so there is definitely potential there. Kevin Nicholls avoided a booking for

once and contributed most to our effort in the centre. Paul Hughes and the promising Michael Leary are still in the running for Nicholls' place on this performance though.

It was entertaining stuff in the second half with Barnsley always pressing and both goalkeepers making excellent saves. Luton had the audacity to go four up when Robinson showed energy and composure to run half the field, following an interception, and score without fuss. Unfortunately, the Town seemed to think that was the end of it whilst the home side disagreed. Barnsley will take something from this game as they didn't give up but this is the most encouraging start I can remember from Luton and looking around the division I see few threats to our championship charge this year. Remember, a pessimist is never disappointed but an optimist enjoys life more. Nine points - count them.

Cliff Saunders

SHORT CUTS

A cutting from the *Independent* some time back in April. Just because you play for W*tf*rd reserves doesn't make you gay. Or does it?

They're certainly neatly turned out. And look at the American Ryder Cup tradition of hiring a dozen drag queens as cheerleaders. I don't know, just a thought.

There was evidence to the contrary on Thursday, when they showed Mike Weir last year getting his green jacket from Tiger Woods, who murmured, "There you go, Weir-sie." Weirsie? You'd think they were playing for Watford reserves. Maybe they're all gay except Tiger, then.

On Thursday, finishing on four over with a few to play, the world's greatest sportsman was less happy. When he's playing badly he moves slowly, like an old man. After one missed birdie he walked off the green like a man on tranquilisers, brooding and shaking his head. Come tomorrow, though, he and that green jacket are unlikely to be too far from each other.

NEW BADGE, NEW ERA

So, the badge has changed – not a big deal surely! The club is changing, and hopefully for the better

It looks more modern now as well as turning back to the earlier type designs such as the 1988 year, Littlewoods cup final.

The “chunky” blue and orange have gone as well as the two footballs and traditional straw boater hat. But, with the writing now curved around the main logo it looks good, in my eyes and is a nice change.

Luton is going forward, and so should the badge in being more modern, which it has done. Maybe fans should have been consulted, but it’s a nice design and should have been a nice surprise. So don’t whine, instead cheer on the Hatters for a great coming season!

Come on Luton!

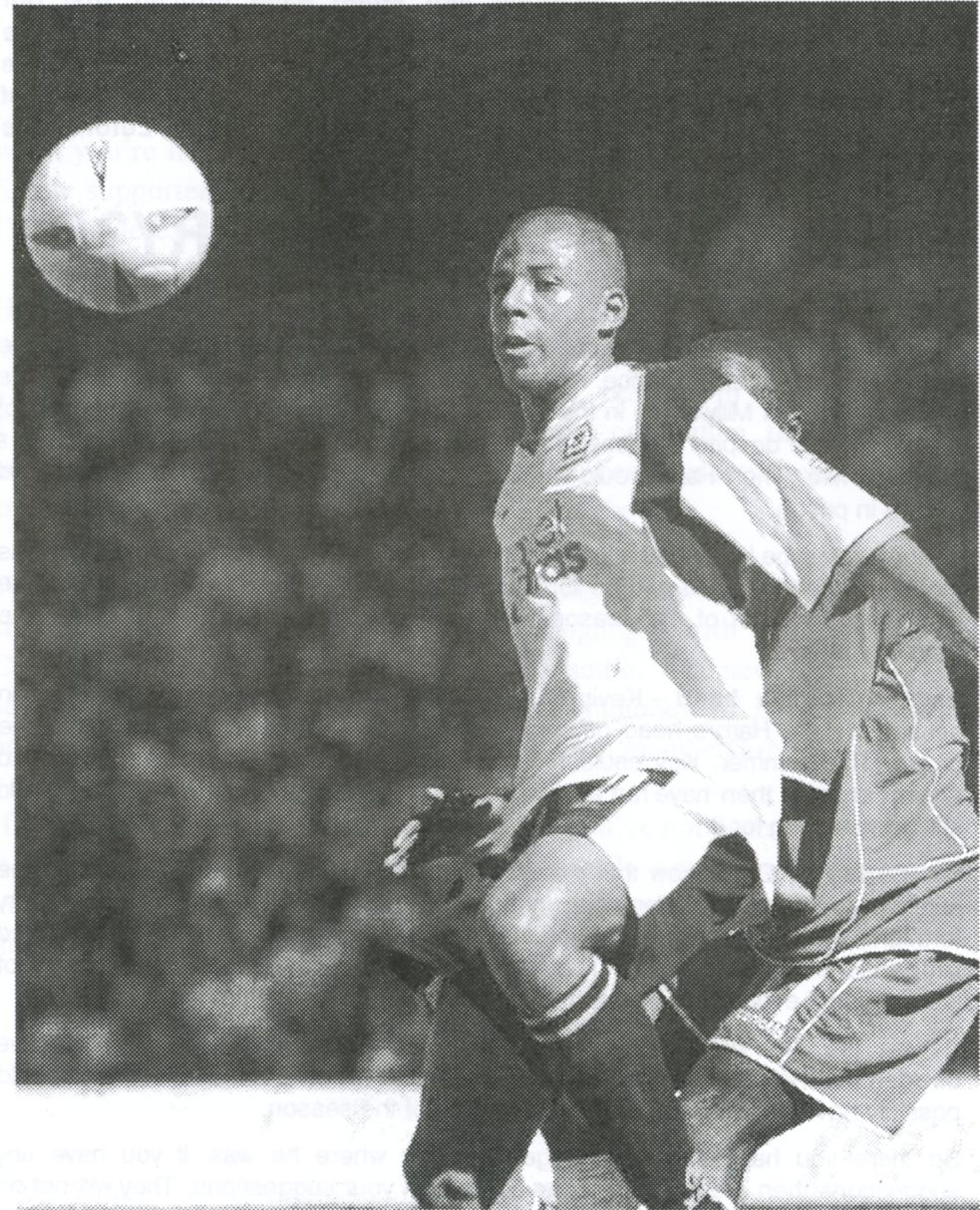
Dan Strode



The “new” badge - simplicity and style, (although a pity the Boater is missing - Ed).



The old badge, complete with “Kohler’s rainbow”. Proof that people with time on their hands shouldn’t be given toys



Curtis Davies seen in action against Oldham. The promising youngster has stepped up into Emmerson Boyce’s position, and me find himself under pressure if Perret and Bayliss (ever) achieve full fitness.

The sharp eyed people amongst you might have noticed that our biggest fan was not at the Oldham match on the first day of the season. No, I don't mean Marvin. The legend that is Happy Harry was notable for his mysterious disappearance on the first Saturday of the season. This left many Luton fans worried, and all Luton fans asking the question...

WHERE IS HAPPY HARRY?

Some possible suggestions.....

In prison in Portugal – Harry could have been in Portugal to cheer on the mighty England against France. However, things turned sour because of England's loss that night. A Millwall fan in the same pub as him might have been annoyed of his happy face despite the loss, then mistook him for a Frenchman and started a fight with him. Then Harry would have been wrongly blamed for the violence and thrown in prison.

At home – Maybe Harry had a long night and overslept, and when he woke up it was too late to get changed and go to Kenilworth Road for the match. Or perhaps he just forgot the start of the season was that Saturday and he thought it was the Saturday after.

Looking for his head – Kevin Nicholls made a point at the end of the promotion season to take Harry's head off, put it on himself and then drop-kick it into the crowd. This summer, Kev could have seen Harry in Luton and nicked his head again. He could then have ran away with it and drop-kicked it away, and Harry could still be searching for it.

On holiday – Ok, I know that it must seem a bit of a stupid suggestion with the summer gone and with Harry only needing to turn up for work about once every fortnight, but maybe the new owners were desperate to re-sign Harry, and asked him what terms he wanted. They then overlooked the clause that Harry got weekends off every week, which makes employing him quite pointless.

It was his day off – On the same lines as the idea above, Harry might have decided that he wanted days off to be written into his contract. One of these could possibly have been the opening home match of the season.

So there you have it, a few suggestions for where he was. If you have any suggestions then please write to the editor with your suggestions. They will not be printed in the next fanzine or used in any way, but if a sufficient amount are sent, then they will annoy the editor a lot.

Peter Bulkeley

TRUST UPDATE

One of the most frustrating aspects of being involved with Trust in Luton is when you're helping out on the membership stand, and Luton fans – your fellow supporters, your brethren, your kindred spirits – say, "No thanks, I'm not interested."

How can a Hatter conceivably not be interested in Trust in Luton? It is a fact that had TiL not formed and mobilised so quickly in July 2003, Luton Town FC would possibly, nay probably, not be in business today. Thankfully, with hard work from the interim committee, the club is still here, with a new board - a board on which TiL has an elected representative, and who have gifted TiL a 10% shareholding in the club.

The acquisition of shares in Hatters Holdings, Luton Town FC's major creditor, and the subsequent legal wranglings with the Melodious Corporation has left TiL with costly bills to settle. The new committee has set the fundraising target for 2004-05 at a minimum of £20,000. We're hoping that at least a third of that will come from membership fees.

If you've not joined the Trust – or indeed if you've not been "interested" in it before – please do consider it. If you're already a member, thank you for your support so far. If you have any questions about TiL and its work over the past year and in the future, don't hesitate to ask.

Carrie

TiL Communications Officer
carrie@trustinluton.com

Membership Application Form

The Trust is an Industrial and Provident Society.

Please return the completed form and remittance to: Trust in Luton, c/o The Luton News, Media House, 39 Upper George Street, Luton, Beds LU1 2RD

Please complete in block capitals.

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss or Company Name _____

First name: _____ **Surname:** _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ **Date of Birth** _____

Phone No: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Minimum membership donation for 2003/04 season is as follows. Please tick where appropriate.

Adult – Full annual membership £10 Over 60 – Full annual membership £5

Junior (under 16): annual membership (Please note - no share issued or voting rights) £5

Additional donation - amount _____

I enclose cash/cheque/postal order to the total value of £ _____. Cheques etc should be made payable to Trust in Luton.

I understand that the sum of £1 from a full member's first payment will purchase a share for that member in Trust in Luton. This will give that person, or their proxy, the right to vote at all "Trust in Luton" meetings and elections.

I agree to abide by, and be bound by, the rules of the Trust's Constitution, which is available on the Trust website www.TrustinLuton.com or on application to the membership secretary at the above address.

Signed Date:

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29601R

For the Purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998 I confirm this information can be held on Computer file for the purposes of (1) Group administration. (2) To inform you of matters, including marketing material, relevant to the Trust and Luton Town F.C. No information will be passed to other parties without permission being obtained. Please tick the box should you not wish to receive this material

I want to receive further communications from TiL by e-mail. Y/N

I would like a receipt please Y/N

TiL 2003 Ltd

RAVING MAD!!!

Dear Mad,

I've just read your fanzine issue 60, and would like to congratulate you on a very good, honest and humorous read. I am a full blooded Hartlepool United supporter, so I thought I would try and clear up a few points your readers are a bit uncertain on.

"What is a Hartlepool supporter doing reading a Hatters fanzine?" I hear you ask. Well, my nephew is a Luton Town fanatic, he was born in the North East, but moved to Luton when he was a child. He now resides back in his native homeland, however that doesn't stop him trailing down the M1 to follow his beloved team. Hence he brought me back a copy of your *Mad as a Hatter!* booklet, the title being very apt for my nephew Adam.

I must first of all clear up your mate Cliff Saunders version of the last minute penalty awarded to Pools at the Victoria Park (not Ground) against your team. The incident was at the home fans end, and I was right in line with the challenge your man made on Stephen Istead. I can honestly say, with my hand on my heart, it was a penalty. Your man made a rash challenge and caught Istead who wasted no time in going to ground. It was a foul inside the penalty area, no more, no less than that. It wasn't malicious, he wasn't the last man, so it wasn't a yellow or red card offence, just a mistimed tackle and a definite penalty. I can, however, understand your fans frustration at losing the game, which I have to say was one of the best football matches I've seen in a long time. Both teams really went for it and a seven all draw could easily have been the outcome. And yes, Luton deserved at least a share of the spoils.

Next let me turn my attention to Mike Newell, who you rightly say got us promotion and that Hartlepool fans are ungrateful idiots. Well, not all of us let me tell you. I for one thought Newell did a good job for us under difficult circumstances. When he took over we were three points clear at the top of Division Three, he went on to lead us to 14 points clear after an amazing eleven game unbeaten run. My only criticism of Newell was, as our team lost form he was frightened to make changes, he kept faith with players who were struggling and that cost us the league title. However, at the start of that season promotion was our main goal, Chris Turner deserted us at a crucial stage of the campaign and Mike Newell came in and got us our goal - promotion.

Finally, your man at the Vic was a bit perplexed by the fifty-odd year-old wearing a blue twin-set and black tights. Yes, I see why he thought the lemon would have suited him much better. This colourful character is called Lawrence, but what he was doing in the away end or how he was allowed in there is beyond me. Lawrence is a Pools fanatic with a difference, basically he's completely mad, indeed mad as a hatter! I don't know how he hasn't been sectioned, but he still walks the streets of Hartlepool. The men in white coats haven't tracked him down just yet - I have heard they are too busy looking for a guy called Adam, who is walking around out town with a Luton Town shirt on his back! Now, come on, nobody's that MAD!!

Keep up the good work, and all the best for the season.

Andy Dove,
Hartlepool.

Dear Mad,

In case you are running short of items for the next issue of the fanzine, here's a few favourites of mine (at this moment in time):

Favourite Team: Baynham, Breacker, Jardine, Hill, Foster, Donaghy, French, Turner (Gordon presumably), Harford, Rioch, Moss.

Reserves: Read, Stephens, Buckley, Pacey, Faulkner, Moore, B.Stein, Preece, MacDonald, O'Rourke, Whittaker.

Favourite seasons: 67/68 and 68/69, with 55 and 57 home goals respectively (many before half time!

Favourite day: Luton v Arsenal. Meeting people I hadn't seen for ages (wonder why?). My friend spent the last 30 minutes saying "We're gonna win, we're gonna lose, we're gonna win, etc, etc..." (Hello Moby).

Mind you, Luton v Crewe 24/4/68 wasn't bad either. Crowd of 18,904, 4-0 up after 36 minutes to clinch the 4th Division championship.

It's not the same any more!

Steve Wurst,
Southampton.

SHORT CUTS



Prophecy? Or new jobs for Town players!

Joining the 91 Club

Having followed Luton around the country for years, I am nearly eligible for the 92 Club. However, the National Hockey Stadium is one ground I won't be visiting. The reason is simple: I will not put my money into the hands of Franchise F.C. A club's league status should depend only on the team's performance on the pitch, and not on Byzantine business deals and independent (or should that read 'ignorant') panel decisions.

Some supporters will argue that it is a league match and we should support our team, but I am sure Howard and the rest are perfectly capable of beating Milton Keynes without us. If you really want to support the team, boycott the game and send your ticket money to Trust in Luton. 2,000 fans at £15 per ticket is £30,000 for the club. A big turnout of away fans will only boost the MK Dons income and attendance figures – they already count all known life forms within a five mile radius just to get an average gate of around 4,000.

Time and again football fans have had to pull their clubs out of the mire when owners with grandiose schemes, little money and no feeling for the grassroots of the game take over. This is an opportunity to strike back. The swift demise of the MK Dons coupled with hefty financial losses will discourage other businessmen from trying the same stunt. The sooner we throw this particular cuckoo out of the nest, the better.

Basford Hatter

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

This issue appears a bit later than planned due to a slight shortage of contributions, and we would love to have more for the next issue. Don't feel you can't write for us as we can usually knock something into shape, so why not give it a try? The plan is that the next issue will be out at the end of October, so the deadline will be October 16th, although it always helps to get your stuff in earlier. So if you have any articles, match reports, letters, cartoons, press cuttings or whatever, get them off to us as soon as possible. Send by post or email to the addresses on page 2. Thanks.



Nothing unusual in this shot. After all, we see Steve Howard being spoken to by referees week in, week out, although more often than not they have a yellow card in hand.

SUMMER HOLIDAY

Ever wondered where our heroes take a break every summer? Me neither, but I can still exclusively reveal to *Mad As A Hatter!* where our players or people once connected with Luton went on holiday in May and June. So while you reminisce on your memories of trips to America or Australia etc. I hope that you take a moment to think of those who were not so lucky and went to Wolverhampton and Margate instead. And then laugh at them.

Enoch Showunmi – The left-footed Daddy did not opt to go to Nigeria to visit some relatives and instead decided to spend his holiday at the Majorca of Southern England, in Margate. Well, to be honest he had no choice as he still had very little money to spare. Apparently he did consider going to Ireland to offer his services to an Irish club for free, but he couldn't afford it. So Margate it is.

Kevin Nicholls and Sol Davis – The two hard men of Kenilworth Road spent their time in Lisbon and Algarve following England through Euro 2004. These were two hooligans that the authorities did not manage to prevent from leaving the country to watch the football. Although for Nico and Sol, it wasn't so much about watching the football but getting into a few fights with foreign fans. If you don't feel sorry for them, then just remember it would have been three months without scuffles if they hadn't gone.

Steve Howard – The big front man also decided to spend his holidays watching England, but for him it was about watching England rather than fighting. He particularly enjoyed the last game against Portugal – there was a lot of times that he could complain about Swiss referee Urs Meier, although you have to sympathise with the guy sitting in front of him.

Ahmet Brkovic – Everyone's favourite Croatian winger did not get to Portugal to watch his home country in action, but he made sure that he got back home to Dubrovnik so that he avoided all of the England supporters laughing at him back home. However, he made sure that he kept the phone on the hook just in case Otto Baric decided it was worth a try to play Brko against Ashley Cole.

Paul Hughes – There was no sea, sun and sand for Paul Hughes. It was off to Iceland for him, where he was sure not to get sunburnt on the top of his head. There was one bad moment for him on his holiday, when a Spanish

tourist accused him of hitting him on the head with a football (he must have seen his stray passes at Kenilworth Road). However, it turned out to be David Beckham's penalty.

Tony Thorpe – Iceland is a very expensive place to visit, and Tony at first did consider joining Paul Hughes – until he saw the prices. He then decided to take the cheap option and flew on a cheap EasyJet flight to Alicante. He could enjoy the beaches and the clubs without spending too much of his precious money.

Joe Kinnear – For yet another year, Big Fat Joe visited the same place in the summer, a trip to sunny Wolverhampton to watch Wolves Reserves pre-season games. However, he had to fit this around his training with Nottingham Forest and he did seriously consider going to Sweden to look at the talent on offer there. While at Wolves he met Arsene Wenger, and he tried to persuade him that Andy Reid is worth £4m, just like he tried to convince him two years earlier that Matthew Taylor was worth £2m. The same tricks won't work again Joe.

So next year, if you visit any of these places then keep an eye out for any of these people, in case they visit the old haunts again. And if you do see them, then make sure that you talk to them/run away from them/start a fight with them/thank them for the season.

Peter Bulkeley

BACK ISSUES

Will nobody ever take these off my hands? We've still got tons of them, and we will almost give them away. The only issues we've actually run out of are numbers 10, 11, 22, 24, 26, 27, 35 to 38 and 47. Issue one is free, and all others up to issue 55 will cost you just 40p per copy including postage, but that will drop to 25p per copy if you order more than 3 at a time. For issues 56 to 60 the price is £1.00 each including postage. Cheques should be made payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* and sent to the address on page 2. Please don't send cash by post as it never seems to arrive – although this should not be seen as a slight on our wonderful postmen!

TOP TIPS

Who do you fancy for the newly named League-One this season? Have YOU placed your money where your mouth is, thrown away your money on Luton or still not sure?

Take a peek at my prediction league.

I would favour Bristol City, as do most bookies, to win the league, but, fans at Ashton Gate are not so sure and could have another year of frustration particularly if they don't start well. They would settle for the runners-up stop right now! New boy, Paul Heffernan, should do well if he settles in.

Tranmere and Swindon in my eyes will be going strong and fans should be disappointed for anything less than the play-offs. Jason McAteer will be one to watch in a Tranmere shirt.

Walsall and Hull, who have come down and up respectively, both look really handy. Walsall have kept a strong team and Hull splashed 100k on Aaron Wilbraham from Stockport, one of only three cash transfers to date.

Sheffield Wed. will be strong with their new look side and the 125k signing of QPR's Mr. MacLean. They seek to do well.

Two longer shots would be the well moulded and matured Stockport and Hartlepool. Our very own Luton could be included, and we all hope will do well.

It's a very hard league to predict, so I would save your money until Christmas time at least and don't bet more than you can afford to lose.

On a "sadder" note my tips for the drop are: Torquay, Peterborough, Wrexham and the most hated team in the league, the MK Dons.

BUT, we shall see.

Dan Strobe

SHORT CUTS

Hot news from South Wales: Cardiff fans have opinions on Lennie Lawrence. A rare case of agreement with us, or has he just been found out!



Cardiff City

CHAIRMAN Sam Hammam has publicly backed manager Lennie Lawrence, who has been the subject of fierce criticism after just two pre-season friendlies.

Lawrence has come under fire from sections of the Ninian Park faithful, but Hammam remains defiant Lawrence is the man for the job: "I've total commitment to Lennie Lawrence. People have opinions, but he's the man for Cardiff."

7/8 Crewe (A) 10/8 Coventry (H) 13/8 Plymouth (H)

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FOR A NO OBLIGATION QUOTE

The Sharpe End

THE FOOTBALL merry go-round is underway yet again and we will all be invited to believe we are watching the best football in the world being played in the Premiership - pardon me while I laugh uproariously. Those of us who are fortunate enough to support teams not involved in the hype and hypocrisy of the so called top flight, will also be invited to believe that our teams were spontaneously promoted during the close season purely by the ludicrous renaming of the three divisions by the new sponsors who have inflicted the title 'Championship' on what was Division One, and Leagues One and Two on what were Divisions Two and Three. In the dim and distant pre-Premiership days - which those young enough not to remember such a time are now encouraged to believe never existed or certainly no longer matter - we used to have Divisions One, Two, Three and Four, and that system seemed to work well enough, yet a team which has remained in the same division for the intervening period, now finds itself nominally two rungs higher up the ladder - yet still as far from the top as it ever was.

An optical illusion, that's all it is, and it deserves to be treated contemptuously by all of those who retain a feel for the tradition of a sport now being sold down the river (letting teams change their names for specious reasons - MK Dons spring to mind - is another disastrous mistake) by its so-called masters, most of whom are concerned purely with feathering their own nests and letting all but the new elite go unmourned to the wall if that's what it takes to keep the gravy train chugging along.

++++=====++++

TO BE FAIR, I haven't often felt that I was being stung when attending games at Kenilworth Road - but to launch the season, in the opening game against Oldham my son was indeed savaged by a wasp, which gave him a little bit of a fat lip - but the medics came to the rescue with an ice pack to deal with the swelling, and the battling performance on the day meant that we didn't feel that the incident may be a metaphor for the likely progress of the campaign. A long standing pal of mine who has followed Oldham for years rang me the day before the match to place a fairly substantial each-way wager on them and told me that there was a very positive feeling around their prospects, so to come from a goal down looked a decent display. Paul Underwood got the man of the match award but I felt he was run pretty close by Kevin Nicholls, who obviously relished getting the skipper's armband back and had been talking in very upbeat terms in a pre-game interview with 3 Counties - did anyone else pick up the 'damning with faint praise' of Matthew Spring during that chat? It certainly left the impression that Kevin, at least, would not be missing the presence of Springy in the side - perhaps because he kept him out of his favoured middle of midfield role?

++++=====++++

Talking of 3 Counties, I for one will miss Geoff Doyle now that he has moved on - I thought his double act with Pearcey was always entertaining and you did get the feeling that you were listening to blokes who were as committed as you and as disgruntled if and when (almost inevitably in away games) it all went wrong. So, welcome Euan (Ewan? Iwan? Uan? Youan?) Duncan, who looks like taking over the Doyle role this season and did pretty well in his first outing of the season away at Swindon - particularly when he castigated his partner for speculating on where a win would leave us in the table - when there was plenty of time left for it all to go wrong!

There's only one thing which upsets me more than going a goal down in a game - and that's going a goal up, at which point I become convinced that humiliation is on its way and we will inevitably concede once, probably twice. Going two up? Well, that's even worse. Three? I was there against Wrexham - say no more.

I'VE NEVER BEEN a Sven fan - don't care about his indiscretions off the field - although I might do if he was working for me, but I'm more concerned with the dismal displays of his sides ON the park. England have become the new Italy - get a goal up early and try to hang on - but aren't good enough to see it through. Most of the managers whose countries reached the Quarter Finals at Euro 2004 did the decent thing and quit - not Sven. But, I hear you say, his players have rallied around him. Of course, they have - he bloody well picks them! The England team should be managed by an English person - international football should be one nationality against another - and the memory of the England 5-1 thumping of Germany, his only real victory of result has long been devalued by Germany's subsequent decline. Cheers, Sven, off you go - so we can give Alan Curbishley a run in the job.

THE REDESIGNED programme looks very professional... I can't understand why credit cards can't be used to purchase season tickets... can someone who lives in Luton explain to me the logic behind the ludicrous bus-lane system on the way up into the town from the M1 which almost invariably on a Saturday afternoon is completely bereft of buses whilst those struggling to get to the ground in time for kick off sit and fume in the one remaining lane. Why can't the bus-lane be open to other traffic at certain times?... can anyone think of a less likely club for Adrian Forbes to go to than Swansea? I give him six months there... does anyone know what happened to Graham French?... why does Mike Newell look so uncomfortable on the telly? Interviewed after the win at Swindon when he should have been upbeat he was very dour, looked everywhere other than at his interviewer and used the new buzz-phrases 'we were pleased' and 'you can't ask for more than that'. I know Mike doesn't have matinee-idol good looks but a bit more spark would not go amiss - contrast his interview with the one shown immediately before with a certain Joe Kinnear, whose team had not even won their game against Ipswich - 'We murdered them' he said, 'We hit the woodwork five times...' you know the rest! ... where is Jean Louis Valois, last heard of at Spanish 2nd Division side, Almeria, now?

Graham Sharpe

SHORT CUTS

Looks like our latest export to the Premiership is a man of many talents - but then we always knew he was composed!

12.00 Composer of the Week: Boyce

4/5. Donald Macleod looks at how Boyce coped with the demands of court and theatre. *Come, Holy Ghost; The King Shall Rejoice; Corydon and Miranda; Ode for the New Year, 1774; Pass But a Few* Repeated from Thu

1.00 AM Through the Night



Dodgy Characters? The Mad as a Hatter! team show their defiance shortly before being ushered off the pitch by the groundstaff.

TO GO OR NOT TO GO, THAT IS THE QUESTION.

"Go where?" you ask but I am not sure of the answer. Is it the National Hockey Stadium? Is it the ground of Wimbledon FC? Is it the temporary home of the fledgling MK Dons? Is it treasonable even to mention 'Franchise FC'?

The Football Supporters Federation have a policy of encouraging individual supporters clubs not to run coaches to away games at The Stadium (its official title) in Milton Keynes and hence endorse a semi-official boycott of Pete Winkelman's reluctant plaything. The reasoning is that to support such an enterprise financially with ticket money and merchandise would be to assist its survival. The FSF were against Wimbledon's relocation (as were the Football League apparently) and would like to see the original football club go bankrupt, whilst backing the new AFC Wimbledon side by urging supporters to go and watch them in place of your team's scheduled fixture in Milton Keynes.

This raises a number of questions. On the side of the boycott, one has to ask if the reduction in cash flow from, let's say, 50% of the expected travelling support will be anywhere near enough to make a difference? Surely, the multi-million pound debt of Franchise FC is too large to be affected by a few thousand quid every other week? Is it too late anyway? The powers-that-be should have blocked it but it has happened so maybe we should accept the situation and move on. If they go bust then people will lose jobs which is not a situation that any decent worker should wish for. However, there is a principle at stake too. Regardless of the financial impact of one's decision to attend or otherwise: should one not make the decision based on one's personal view? I believe too many people snub General Election polling because they agree with the policies of a smaller party but think it pointless voting because only two parties can ever win. If all these people reversed their opinion and turned out: would the effect be significant or not? Should it matter if it is significant or not?

On the side of attending, fans of Luton Town or any other club will say that their prime motivation is to support their team and the peripheral issues are not important: they will follow their side wherever they play. The argument is that, if supporters do not travel to Milton Keynes, the team's performance may suffer and points could be lost. Why should the away team be penalised by a lack of support when the contentious situation is not of their making? What if it is the last game of the season and a win is desperately needed...

You may notice that I live in Milton Keynes and therefore have a feeling for the local population's views on this subject. Many people who could not be bothered to attend games in London (where most of their antecedents are from) are looking forward to having a team on their doorstep whatever level of football it is. Many more think that one of the two major non-league teams in

our 'new city' should have been invested in instead of stealing one from somewhere else. Local support would be much larger for Newport Town or Bletchley Town/Milton Keynes City if they had been brought up through the pyramid in the normal way. This would have given Pete Winkelman a better reputation than he currently enjoys too; maybe a standing similar to Max Griggs. Then there are the amateur players, such as myself, who took part in the many seven-a-side leagues that played on The Stadium's artificial turf throughout the year. Some of these games have moved and some have been lost but the facility is definitely no longer one for the wider community but simply one for the minority of recent live football converts. Any fan that used to follow their team around the country from Milton Keynes will still be doing so and won't have switched allegiances at the drop of a bobble-hat.

Personally, I will not be going. I will be sticking to my principles and taking the view that there is something greater at stake here than the result of one fixture for Luton Town. There is no guarantee that a strong away following will achieve a good away performance on the pitch; and there is no guarantee that the result of one match will affect the team's season one way or another. I shall be taking part in a pub crawl through Milton Keynes that day and may even stand outside the ground at kick-off but I won't be giving my money to people with no sense of the history and traditions of football. I will not be going to AFC Wimbledon either because frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn. Good luck to them but I could not get enthusiastic about such a match.

What I won't be doing is criticising anybody that does go. I can understand both sides of the argument and if my fellow Luton supporters wish to see their team in action on that day then that is their choice. I would hate to see such an issue cause a schism in any supporters group at any club in the country; I just hope we never have to make such decisions about other relocated clubs in the future. If football be the food of love, play on.

*Cliff Saunders
Milton Keynes*

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Mad as a Hatter! is available on subscription at the bargain price of £6.50 for the next five issues, including postage. Cheques payable to *Mad as a Hatter!* should be sent to the address on page 2. Overseas rates are available on request (I can't find them right now!)

STAT ATTACK

Sat 21st Aug - Torquay (Home)

Torquay have won just once from 14 visits to Luton, and that came on their second trip with a 2-1 win in 1929. Luton had won the first encounter 5-0, and went on to record a 6-1 win in 31/32, 10-2 in 33/34 and more recently 5-1 in 2001/02. Andy Rennie hit a hat trick in the 5-0 win and went one better with 4 in the 10-2 victory. Tommy Tait hit a hat trick in the 6-1 win, and a feat that Carl Griffiths repeated in 2001! With only a solitary draw, 1-1 in 69/70, Luton have taken maximum points from 12 matches, and have scored 46 goals in the process, conceding just 13! The last encounter saw a certain Jean-Louis Valois make a very impressive debut which was capped off by a long range thunderbolt of a goal!

Last time: 22nd September 2001 Won 5-1 (Steve Howard, Carl Griffiths (3), Jean-Louis Valois)

Wed 25th Aug - Boston (Away) League Cup 1

Luton have never played Boston in a competitive match, but they have a good record in single match away games in the first round. Prior to the introduction of a 2-legged first round, and since it's reverted back to a single match Luton have only lost once, against Reading in 2001. There's certainly no forgetting the last time the Hatters were drawn away in the first round of the League Cup... September 10th 2002 ring any bells?!?

Previously the Hatters have recorded wins at Port Vale, a replay at Charlton, and at Gillingham prior to the introduction to a 2-legged round.

Last time: 10th September 2002 W*tf*rd Won 2-1 (Matt Spring, Steve Howard)

Sat 28th Aug - Blackpool (Away)

Blackpool away on the August Bank Holiday weekend... thank you fixture computer!! It's not been a happy hunting ground though with just 4 wins from 19 trips! Add a further 4 draws and you'll soon work out that there's been 11 defeats. Luton have managed less than a goal a game on average whereas the hosts have knocked in 34. The first win came in 1898, 3-2, and was followed with a 2-1 victory in August 1957. Thankfully the wait wasn't as long for the next one, but it was still 14 years later in 1971, and 32 years passed before it happened again last season.

Last time: 13th December 2003 Won 1-0 (Steve Robinson)

Mon 30th Aug - Bournemouth (Home)

It's 12 wins from 24 for the Hatters from this fixture, although it's been 3 of each outcome in the last 9 matches. The first encounter saw Luton stroll home with a 6-2 win in December 1923, but Bournemouth gained revenge a year later with a 2-1 victory. The 1920's continued with 4 more wins for Luton and a high scoring 3-3 draw. There was a gap of 27 years between 1-0 wins in the Octobers of 1936 and 1963, and the same length of time separated a 0-0 draw in October

1969 with a 2-0 victory for the Hatters in 1996. Bournemouth have recorded victories 2-1 in 97/98 and 99/2000, with Luton winning 1-0 in August 2000 courtesy of a penalty converted by Matt Spring.

Last time: 20th April 2003 Drew 1-1 (Steve Howard)

Sat 4th Sept - Sheffield Wednesday (Away)

Luton have only won twice from 25 visits and 9 draws means there's been 14 defeats. Only 25 goals scored, with 53 conceded means an average of 3 goals per game. The first win, in 1970, came after 8 defeats and 3 draws. An emphatic victory it was though, courtesy of a Malcolm MacDonald hat trick and a brace from Don Givens the Hatters ran out 5-1 winners. It was 17 years, and 9 games later before maximum points were achieved again, this time it was a 2-1 win.

Last time: 22nd November 2003 Drew 0-0

Sat 11th Sept - Chesterfield (Home)

17 matches and 10 home wins, with just 3 defeats. Chesterfield's biggest win, 3-0, came on Boxing Day 1899, which was also their first league visit to Luton. It was 66 years before the feat was repeated, this time just a 2-1 victory. Luton had thumped their visitors 5-0 in December 1938, and have hit 3 goals past them on 4 occasions. All 4 draws have been 1-1, and Luton have only failed to score on 2 occasions.

Last time: 29th November 2003 Won 1-0 (Steve Howard)

Sat 18th Sept - Stockport County (Away)

The other Hatters won the first 4 encounters, but then failed to win in the last 4! Luton's biggest defeat came in December 1965 when they lost 4-1, and they failed to score in the next two matches. 1-1 draws followed in 69/70 and then 96/97 before the first victory in October 2002, by 3 goals to 2. Matthew Spring scored twice with Andrew Fotiadis bagging the other. Last season Luton put themselves on top of the table after just 2 games with a 2-1 win at Edgeley Park, Alan Neilson was one of the scorers with his only senior goal to date.

Last time: 16th Aug 2003 Won 2-1 (Alan Nielson, Steve Howard)

Sat 25th Sept - Peterborough United (Home)

Again only 8 games played and the statistics are fairly even. Posh won the first encounter back in March 1964, with a 3-2 scoreline. Two draws followed in 63/64 and, after a long gap between fixtures, in May 1993. Luton won the next 3 fixtures, Kerry Dixon scored both goals in a 2-0 win in 93/94 and Paul Showler repeated the feat in a 3-0 win in 96/97. Boxing Day in the year 2000 saw Matt Spring, Peter Holmes and Emmerson Boyce all hit the target in another 3-0 win. Luton then lost on the opening day of the 2002/03 season, by 3 goals to 2, before a draw last season.

Last time: 25th October 2003 Drew 1-1 (Adrian Forbes)

Simon Pitts

Check out Statto's Corner at www.lutonfc.com/stattoindex.asp

MORE STATS

A few figures from last season, supplied by our man Simon Pitts. The table below, arranged alphabetically, shows all players who appeared for Town last season, with the total number of minutes on the pitch, number of appearances, average minutes per appearance, goals scored and interval between goals. From this, we can deduce that Russ Perrett would have been one of our top scorers had he remained fit, and that Dean Crowe was unlucky to have missed so many games, when he would have been a rock of our defence... Actually, I'm not sure what to make of it all, but try not to get to depressed looking at the relative figures of the assortment of goalkeepers we used. Guess which one had the most appearances?

	Mins	Apps	Mins/App	Goals	Mins/goal
David Bayliss	495	6	82	0	N/A
Rob Beckwith	1149	13	88	0	N/A
Marlon Beresford	990	11	90	0	N/A
Emmerson Boyce	3705	42	88	4	926
Dean Brill	381	5	76	0	N/A
Ahmet Brkovic	2073	32	64	1	2073
Chris Coyne	3918	44	89	2	1959
Dean Crowe	151	8	18	0	N/A
Curtis Davies	477	6	79	0	N/A
Sol Davis	3038	36	84	0	N/A
Kevin Foley	2904	33	88	1	2904
Adrian Forbes	1895	27	70	9	210
Ian Hillier	631	11	57	0	N/A
Peter Holmes	1034	16	64	3	344
Steve Howard	3026	34	89	15	201
Paul Hughes	1751	22	79	1	1751
Morten Hyldgaard	1620	18	90	0	N/A
Matthew Judge	12	1	12	0	N/A
Keith Keane	1230	15	82	1	1230
Michael Leary	763	14	54	2	381
Lee Mansell	1020	16	63	2	510
Gary McSheffrey	1553	18	86	8	194
Alan Neilson	1012	14	72	1	1012
Kevin Nicholls	1819	21	86	2	909
Stephen O'Leary	294	5	58	1	294
Russell Perrett	480	6	80	2	240
Courtney Pitt	955	12	79	0	N/A
Steve Robinson	2875	34	84	2	1437
Enoch Showunmi	1711	26	65	7	244
Matthew Spring	2138	24	89	1	2138
Tony Thorpe	180	2	90	2	90
Paul Underwood	20	1	20	0	N/A

A Great Dane

Reading through a magazine a while back I came across this. A list of five footballs "fallen" from grace. Justin Fashanu topped the chart, followed by...? If we consider the modern era at the club, there's a chance that Lars Elstrup might be considered one of the better players we've had (as well as the most expensive). I remember him, from my young teenage days, as a very dynamic, pacy left sided striker, with a left boot to match. He could drift in and out of matches, but on his day was a man of exceptional talent.

I remember us playing away to Nottingham Forest in the early 90's, he scored twice. Firstly, a curling sweet footer into the top corner from 20 yards, before outstripping the quickest defender of his generation, Des Walker, over 50 yards to score his second. I'd be interested to hear from anyone who was at the city ground that day. A shame then, his fall from grace, and he will surely always remain our record signing. A class act (as a footballer, anyway).

Tony Allbones, the Kempston Hatter



Elstrup: flashed at shoppers

2 Lars Elstrup

Who is he? A

member of Denmark's Euro '92 championship winning team, and Luton's record signing.

How he blew it: In 1993, midfielder Elstrup quit football to join the Wild Goose Buddhist sect, changing his name to Darando (which means "the river that streams into the sea"). After falling out with them he attempted suicide, before being arrested for flashing at shoppers in the centre of Copenhagen. He's since returned to amateur football and was last seen on these shores in 2000 having a kickabout in a park in his boxer shorts.

PRESENT DAY - KENILWORTH ROAD

I like Joe Kinnear



I like Mike Newell



I don't like Mike Newell. If Joe Kinnear is ever to come back to Luton Town, I must never be unloyal and like Mike Newell



I don't like Joe Kinnear. He nearly bankrupted us.



I think that Ricky Hill & Lil Fucciolo were never given a proper chance to manage



Yeah & I like Lenny Lawrence



10 YEARS AGO - A GIRLS SCHOOL

I love Robbie Williams



I love Gary Barlow



I don't like Gary Barlow. If Robbie Williams is ever to come back to Take That, I must never be unloyal and like Gary Barlow



I don't like Robbie Williams. He is a twat.



I think that Mark Owen & Jason Orange are never given a proper chance to sing



Yeah & I like Howard Donald

