

MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE



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HOWARDS WAY...



... of looking a bit disgruntled at recent results, and his own loss of goalscoring power. Let's hope we see the smile back on his face pretty soon.

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THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE

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Ed Lines

We are unbeatable. Or, at least, we were. It was a stunning start to the season, the best since 1969, but the first defeat was still a disappointment, even if it was going to happen sooner or later. The trouble is that one defeat wouldn't have been to much of a shock, but writing this after the third loss on the trot, things don't look so clever. Whilst we are still four points clear, this looks to be as much due to the incompetence of the rest of League One as it is down to our own outstanding start. At least it means that we have not completely blown the good work already done. It is fair to say that we are all wondering at this point why the wheels have so suddenly and unexpectedly come off, and what needs to be done to rectify the situation. If anything. Is this just a case of a spell of bad luck or is there more to it. The most noticeable thing is that these results have coincided with suspensions for our midfield players, and our good run was driven by our ability to control the midfield. If that is the case, it's not going to improve quickly with Nicholls getting himself a silly ban.

The other factor is Marlon's injury. His replacement by Dino Seremet did not seem to upset the rhythm of the team initially, but when news came through that he could be out for 4 to 6 weeks more than first thought, things changed, and the defence and goalkeeper seem to have broken off diplomatic relations. The lack of apparent confidence is deeply worrying, and we must hope that Marlon returns sooner rather than later. At the same time we might wonder why both this season and last our best results have been with Marlon in goal, and form contrasts so drastically when anyone else takes up that position. It's difficult to believe that it is simply that Marlon is that much of a better keeper.

Away from current results, Kenilworth Road has been 'voted' second worst football ground in English football by the *Observer*. Some of the other grounds in the top 10 gave us some crumbs of comfort, but it seems that those who voted have a bit of a fear of real life, and prefer their football grounds not to be surrounded by houses, especially the terraced variety. We might also wonder whether Luton heading the latest list of 'Crap Towns' might have influenced those who voted. This smacks a bit of being easier to kick a man when he's down (please ignore this Mr Nicholls). What the *Observer* missed is that we know the faults of our ground, but we still love the place, a point made superbly by one John Denton in a letter to the paper a week later defending the home of football.

In this issue, we were fortunate to have a few more articles submitted than we were able to use, but I am pleased to say that we will be able to use the surplus in the next issue. We always try to use the most topical articles in the current issue and, where necessary, retain those that will not date for future use. Thanks to everybody who wrote for us this time, and please keep up the good work.

The Kenilworth Road Experience

There was a time when a few 'visionary' sadists thought it would be good to root a football club up and move it to a completely different place. Milton Keynes, for example. This, in the early to mid 80s, was mooted for the Hatters but was too evil, even for the usually fairly evil MP John Carlisle. Ground relocation is still an issue for the Hatters, especially as there seems to have been some furious one-upmanship in promises for the J10 relocation; from the ambitious floating pitch inside the Kohler Dome to John Gurney's even more ambitious plans for the new Tracey Island.

Now that the Dons have been franchised in Milton Keynes, relocation there is highly unlikely. However, if times get hard, there will be space at some disused barn designed by some coke-addled nutcase in the late 70s. The MK Bowl might be too big but the Stony Stratford International Lion Taming Stadium is bound to be going spare, and presumably the Bletchley International TrikeDome is in need of new tenants...

It's time then, to re-examine The Kenny, especially as it's #2 'crap' ground in a recent poll compiled, not by smart-arsed wanna-be media types who do their research in chat rooms, but by The Observer Sport Mag. There's a whole world of difference. Clearly. No, there is. C'mon.

We've heard some encouraging murmurs from the club about looking at the facilities at The Kenny. By all means put in a few more seats in the Kenilworth Road and new 'Fast and Furious' ads in the toilets. Maybe, though, a little imagination could be used into turning the stadium ground into an 'experience' which can be enjoyed all year round. For starters, we could learn from local history and folklore to celebrate:

The Farthing Club Spirits and Opium Den

Few know about the breakaway faction of the Bobbers, the Farthings, who refused to pay full price. This grotesquely unfounded tale is recalled in a newly retarnished bar area under the exec' boxes. Relive how old members would stay holed up in their own little club room, catching glimpses of matches through the gaps in the slats and quaffing ridiculous liquor like absinthe, straw flavoured schnapps and Banks and Taylor "Black Bat". The Farthing Club Spirits and Opium Den never really overcame its constant struggle against collective alcohol poisoning, malnutrition, a localised outbreak of Black Death (1938-72) and injuries caused by trying to emulate their well-heeled brethren "upstairs", in the ancient Bobbers art of waving the rolled up programme at the referee. Tours depart at the entrance to the old Bobbers club cellar at noon every matchday, and never ever come back.

The Joe Payne goalscoring experience

On the European mainland, politics was beginning to stink. Hitler was putting the finishing touches to Fascism's campest march and Franco was being a bastard in Spain. It would take four years for Blighty's first (ill-advised) bash against the Bosch, so Joe and the boys decided to take it out on hapless Bristol Rovers keeper Jan von Gashead (name changed for hatred incitement purposes). Now you too can take pot-shots at a European student, specially driven in from Bristol University, and aided by wheezing team-mates with wispy facial hair and padding like frickin American football players. Play the one man version, or bring a team. Any impediments to the keeper or necessary 'illegals' will be laughingly overlooked by mad officials.

Kohlerdome J10 Ground Search

An excursion this, to the rolling hill banks, pylons, psycho pheasants and sodden, possibly pornographic material left in carrier bags around the Junction 10 site. The object is to find Kohler's string and balsa wood scale version of the Dome Stadium which was stolen from the Arndale by the burghers and crackpots of Slip End, in the mistaken belief that if they stole the model, the full-size version couldn't be built. Or grown. Or something. But hurry... this is a real

race against time. As the rumours go round the Rising Sun, a mob of angry villagers is likely to tank up on carrot wines, form a posse and set after you with sharpened hoes and barrows to defend what they perceive as 'their land'.

'Saint Cherry', The Musical

The amazing Rags to Ritzys story of the Hatters sweetheart set to a soundtrack of contemporary classics - written by Ben bleedin' Elton and the Barron Knights. Many heartrending scenes depict the trials and tribulations of Mrs Luton Town FC, notably focusing on the Gurney fortnight, during which our heroine sticks to her guns like a fiercely belligerent post-it note. Musical score includes "The Haslam Shuffle", "Pleat Please tell me now", "Do you, Sealey, want to hurt me?" and "Showler-la-la-lee". There's also a classic rendition of 80s rock anthem "Wired for Sound", featuring "our Cherry" effortlessly roller-skating through the Milton Keynes issue. Features Sir Cliff Richard as Darth Evans.

Thameslink Roulette

Adults! Another simulation recreating an out of ground experience, for non children and non seniors only. Anyone wanting to recreate the buzz of being a squad player in a struggling team or the PM's wife might choose to play Thameslink Roulette and begin to put themselves into the World of Tresor Kandol and/or Cheri Blair. In a game of luck and nerve, select an invalid ticket and try to outsmart the Thameslink guard at our specially recreated barrier gates.

Fit for a Hatter, the Souster collection

View, in hushed reverence, the glass encased suits in which the Town squad looked nervous before the Cup Finals of '88 and '89. Includes an audio-visual treat as, every hour on the hour, the big screen lights up to reveal Ray Harford clearing his throat to inform Elton Welsby that "aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaandydibblewillplayingoal". But hurry, Mr Souster's collection is only here for a limited time before he buggers off out of town.

Rats Pack

Don ratty wigs and proto-chav clothing and join reconstructions of Paul Walsh and Darren McDonough for a night down a reconstruction of Ronelles.

Lottery man confessional

He's over there, in that box. Enter and apologise to the erstwhile lottery ticket vendor man for wasting his time back in the Oak Road end - shouting "over here mate" and avoiding eye contact when he looked round. If he accepts your apology he may present you with a brand new scratch card. Winning recipients will be rewarded with the timelessly bitter/acrid fragrance of the bogs at the back of the terrace (pre lighting/sanitation era).

Terrence Westley Aqua Bemuseathon

Can ex-youth team coach Terry spend 24 hours, dressed in a tutu, treading water in a giant tank full of Sea Monkeys and algae?

Drop a Baby Zone

Run by Abbey, Emberson, Hyldgaard and Sommer, this area is not for the light hearted, faint hearted, brittle boned or soft boned (replaces 'French Zone', formerly run by Messrs Valois, Bacque and, err, Graham French, which had promised much, but vanished into thin air before delivering). For more kiddy danger, DreyerNets, manufacturers of the ball stopping device over the Executive Boxes, have donated a useless trampoline for guaranteed twisted limb misery.

T and A Kingston

Humble in Victory

I don't think anyone thought we'd have the kind of start that most fans just dream about. As I'm sure Mike Newell is constantly reminding the players, we haven't won anything yet. We haven't even achieved safety! Once that particular milestone has gone, then we have three more to reach - qualification for the playoffs, automatic promotion and then the title. All of those are still months away, assuming that we manage to maintain our 1 defeat and a couple of draws every 13 games ratio.

So what has changed since last season? Well, we aren't in administration for a start, and most of the players have a few more years to go on their contracts. That kind of stability and reassurance must have taken a huge weight off the player's minds after last season. We have also won a string of games this year that we would have drawn or lost this time last season. The defence is looking far better with Curtis Davies alongside Chris Coyne than it did with Boyce, and the concentration levels have gone up a couple of notches. In fact, defending a single goal lead has become a speciality and I never thought I'd be saying that about a Luton team! Even Sol 'psycho' Davis has become a changed man in the last 12 months or so, no longer getting his retaliations in first and getting booked or sent off for enthusiastic but late and unnecessary challenges.

Before his injury, Marlon Beresford had settled back into life at Luton nicely after the (defensively) dodgy first three games. Conceding only 12 in 13 league games is a fantastic statistic when you consider that half of them (six for those of you without calculators) came in the first three matches!

Underwood is working his socks off on the left, Ahmet Brkovic is turning around his poor performances of last season, and Steve Robinson is playing some great stuff in the middle. The whole midfield is much more dominant this season. We aren't missing Matthew Spring at all, but then I wasn't that convinced that we would anyway. He was probably a bit too 'nice' for a midfield player, and his idea of a tackle was nearly always a weak two-footed lunge. It was curious to read the Leeds Utd manager describing him as 'tough tackling' because that's the last thing Matty Spring is!

Steve Howard still doesn't have much pace, but he's always going to be a handful upfront. Unfortunately, he would have benefited from being a pro twenty years ago when the laws of the game weren't quite so against the old-fashioned bustling centre forward as they are now. Meanwhile, Rowan Vine is deceiving to the eye. His debut on the opening day saw him running around like a man possessed, but that energy has now been replaced by much more subdued performances. However, he has started to produce the goods, and bagging 3 goals in September and an award to go with them can't be all bad.

He's improving as the weeks go by and he looks like he's enjoying getting some first team action.

As I see it, the main reason for our success is a strong team spirit, good players in all areas of the pitch and the most important ingredient - consistency. None of the other teams in this division are consistent. That's why they keep leapfrogging over each other into 2nd place every week. We lost at home to Huddersfield but we still have an eight point lead because only one team in the top five won that afternoon. Not having too many injuries (touch wood) is also a great help considering we don't have an enormous squad to choose from.

Dare we dream of promotion? Will we fritter away an eight point lead? Most of us are detecting a hint of ambition about our team this year. They seem determined not to lose, and that attitude is giving us the wins we need. There's bound to be the odd blip along the way, but we've not become a good team overnight. It started when Joe Kinnear reinvented the club, and Mike Newell has now added his own ingredients with the impressive additions of Beresford, Underwood and introducing young lads like Foley and Davies.

It's been interesting to see the reaction of fans from other clubs about our impressive start to the inaugural 'Coca Cola League One' season. It's actually quite amusing to see them struggling to come to terms with the fact that Luton are so far ahead of everyone else at the moment. They would love to be top, and have an eight point (or greater!) cushion to fall back on. The best that a visiting Chesterfield supporter could come up with was "Enjoy it while you can". Funny that, I thought we were!

Tranmere fans complained about injuries and suspensions to explain why they could only draw with us the other week at Prenton Park. Conveniently, they forgot to mention that we were without our top scorer (suspended) and our first choice goalkeeper (injured) that day as well.

I don't know who said that you should be "humble in victory and magnanimous in defeat", but it's generally good advice. We are 'top of the league' but we need to make sure that we don't celebrate five months too early. Keep the faith, enjoy being top but let's not get too bigheaded about it. None of us thought we'd be so far ahead at this early stage, but then none of us thought it might be nine years (fingers crossed) before we'd grace the 'old' 1st division (or the 'old old' 2nd Division) again. Take nothing for granted!

Anon

Arsene Who?

Pick up any of the papers, turn directly to the back page and the first thing you will see is hype about 'top' managers like Wenger, Mourinho, Santini etc. So obsessed they are with the foreign legion that they fail to give good enough coverage to the best manager currently in professional football in England. He has more ability than the above three bosses put together, and he is being hunted by every football chairman and love struck teenage girl. He is...

Mike Newell

From unemployment 16 months ago, Mike Newell has gone on to become one of the most popular sports personalities in England, because of his skills as a manager and his stylish brown shoes. But surely he can't stay at Luton for ever. So, what next for the Liverpudlian genius?

Well, the great man basically has 9 job options, and listed in order of priority, they are:-

Take over as Wales boss. Since the departure of Mark Hughes to Blackburn, Wales have been in need of a man to help them achieve fourth place in their group, and Mike Newell seems the obvious choice to achieve this ambitious target. He is, however, not Welsh, which would be a problem. Not for Luton obviously.

Become a Clarks model. Mike would be able to stay on as Town manager if he took this option, so it seems a reasonable choice for the great man. His brown shoes have been the awe of the 6,000+ in Kenilworth Road everytime he steps out of the tunnel, so it seems only logical that he makes money out of his shoes. It could mean that the players get free shoes, and Clarks eventually go on to sponsor Luton Town Football Club in a lucrative multi-million pound deal. And we could then name the new stadium 'The Clarks Stadium'

Take over as England rugby coach. Clive Woodward is reported to be moving to the Beautiful Game, and Mike has been rumoured with a move to the Ugly Game as England coach. Now that I've written this it has been rumoured anyway, and he has a lot more preferable offers anyway.

Take control over the Labour Party. It appears that Tony Blair is willing to step aside and let younger blood take over the reins in four years time, and Mr Newell is the obvious choice. Blair's cabinet has come in for criticism recently, so total reformation would be on the cards for Michael, with Mick Harford as Deputy Prime Minister, Brian Stein as Chancellor and Ahmet Brkovic as Foreign Minister. The great one has ruled this option out, as in four years time he will be concentrating on Luton's second consecutive treble.

Become Mr Universe. His recent elevation into the media spotlight has meant that Michael hasn't just been noticed by various chairmen. The ladies also like everything about Michael, from his dark hair to his brown shoes. However, he does have strong competition from Borgon from Neptune, and it's not worth throwing away a secure job at the Hatters.

Take over as Arsenal boss. Speculation that Wenger is poised to take over at Real Madrid has meant that a new manager would be needed to continue Arsene's legacy at Arsenal, and if David Dein is going to replace Arsene with someone even better, then the obvious choice is Newell. Then again, would Newell want to leave Luton for a small club like Arsenal?? I think not; dream on Mr Dein.

Take over as England boss. Beckham, Owen and James are three out of form players that Sven has kept faith in despite them being over hyped, overrated and useless. Michael wouldn't keep these has-beens in the team - he'd bring in better players, and he certainly wouldn't spoil friendlies by bringing on as many substitutes as Sven. However, the FA will not want to give Sven a pay-off, so we'll have to wait for a few years until we have to worry about him in charge of England. But will we really need to worry?

Take over as Real Madrid boss. Real Madrid have already sacked ex-Moan Utd assistant Queiroz and ex-Spain boss Camacho, so surely the next option for them would be to try and lure yet another Englishman to Madrid. After all, they've had an Englishman before with reasonable success, and Bobby Robson was successful at Barcelona, so why shouldn't he work? Also, Newell is never satisfied so he would get on well with the Real Madrid president. However we don't need to worry about this, as Real Madrid get through more managers than even Southampton get through, so Newell will want to stay at a bigger club where his job is safer.

Take Luton to the Premiership. He would get an enormous windfall for doing an easy job of taking the sleeping giants of Division 2 up a couple of divisions, so this option is basically the best one. After all, would you rather be able to pick a team which includes Steve Howard, Curtis 'Rio' Davies and Croatian Sensation or Thierry Henry, Sol Campbell and Robert Pires. Stupid question really. Newell will be staying put for a while, no question.

Peter Bulkeley

The Sharpe End

It rather looked as though Mike Newell emulated Corporal Jones from Dad's Army during the Huddersfield game. I don't actually recall spotting him rushing up and down the sideline shouting 'Don't panic, don't panic' whilst doing just that, but there is little doubt that his substitutions betrayed the fact that when things were not going well, there evidently wasn't much in the way of a Plan B to save the game, other than to sling on as many forwards as possible. Which is all well and good but only results in them getting in each other's way most of the time.

The decision to replace Leary with MacSheffrey just before half time was odd. Mike later said it was to avoid the youngster being sent off, but there was so little time left that the chances of that happening must have been remote. But once Mac was on there seemed little thought as to how best to use his pace, trickery and eye for goal. Rowan Vine is a hard worker with plenty about him but he is never going to be the type of natural goalscorer which the Little Chef quite obviously is.

Steve Howard was being contained by Sodje in this game and a case could be made for having taken Howard off and bringing Enoch on, but having all four strikers on meant that there were fewer options in terms of getting the ball up to them - other than Seremet's long clearances, which weren't really coming to any positive conclusion.

I'd have thought about bringing Perrett on and switching Curtis Davies to full back to add a bit of defensive steel to that position which was not forthcoming via Foley, plus a bit of pace to get forward, which he clearly likes to do.

Brkovic had an eventful afternoon, playing in three or four different positions, possibly having a hand in the start of the move which led to their opening goal and then spurning an excellent chance to save the game when Howard's header came back off the post. He has definitely performed better than last term, and has been in the right place at the right time to plunder a few goals, but regardless of the magic tricks we are told he can produce in training he is no world-beater at this level, and too often flatters to deceive.

The writing had been on the wall when Hartlepool played probably as well as Huddersfield in the first half but were unable to hit the target, and our battling display in the second half disguised the fact that an away win in the match would not have been outrageous.

So, of course, we all hold our breath and just hope that the defeat will not herald a run of disappointing results as the next sequence of matches contains one or two potentially tricky contests.

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It seems churlish, I know, but once again I find myself resenting the apparent attitude towards Cup matches. It is all very well saying that the DVD or LVD or

whatever it is called doesn't matter to anyone, but it certainly matters to the tens of thousands of fans who invariably turn up for the Final which Blackpool always seem to win. I know we should have been able to get through with any side we cared to put out and that it didn't help to be down to ten men for most of the game, but I for one would have liked to have seen it given a slightly higher priority. And yes, I know that we had a pretty strong team out against Boston, but no-one connected with the side appeared too upset when we lost it - even without Gazza playing.

Well, I was miffed to lose it and I suspect that should the wheels come off in the League then so will a lot of other people be.

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Mike Newell would clearly leave like a shot if a Blackburn or Leicester made him a definite offer. And why shouldn't he, of course? How would fellow fans feel if a Newell departure happened to coincide with the end of the Joe Kinnear reign at Forest? Would people still be pleased to see the return of Joe? Would Mick Harford want to take over as manager on his own, or would he welcome his old mentor back? Would Joe even want, or be prepared, to come back? Could the club afford to have him back? Me, I'd have him back like a shot - but what do I know!

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Listen, of course I am delighted at our start to the season, but I am well aware after the best part of fifty years as a supporter that so many good things that happen to Luton only serve to set us up for a humiliating or embarrassing fall in the not too distant future - which is why I won't be celebrating until we are sixteen points clear with five games to go.

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2nd worst ground in the country, eh? So what? We're all pretty used to it, it often deters the opposition and knowing the Sports Editor and one or two of his colleagues at the Observer pretty well, I wouldn't be over surprised if they hadn't made up the whole thing just to wind me up! Do YOU know anyone who voted? No, me neither.

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So, what was the point of signing Blinkhorn on loan if he wasn't ever going to get near playing a game? If it was obvious that he was useless from the time he arrived, why not send him straight back? If he was any good, why not give him a chance or two to show it?

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How must Enoch be feeling at the moment? Hailed as our potential world-beater last season, but virtually a bit part player this season, left on the sidelines in favour of loan players. Yes, he was very raw indeed last season but he seemed to be improving with every game and a full close-season of training and coaching should surely have brought his game on in leaps and bounds. Yet we don't know whether it has or not because we've seen so very little of him and he's been left kicking his heels on the sidelines for most of the season. Such a cold-shouldering

can't have helped his attitude or loyalty and I wonder whether he will be able to overcome a feeling that he is not really rated by the men in charge.

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

Who'd have thought that much travelled former non-Irish Irish striker Tony Cascarino would have a soft spot for the Hatters. He does, though, and confessed as much in the gambling magazine *Inside Edge*, revealing that he once staked seven grand, yes, seven thousand of your English pounds, on us to win a match. Mind you, we were 1/7 favourites to do so. It was an FA Cup match against Guiseley in November 2002. "I reckoned Luton were more 1/20 shots," he explained. "I did my homework and worked out it was worth putting £7000 to nick a grand."

He placed the bet and went to, not the match, but the movies. "I ducked out of Lord of the Rings at half time to check the score. Luton were already 3-0 up. I munched my popcorn in peace in the second half". Mmm, he's obviously not that well acquainted with our propensity for losing leads then, is he!

And there's more, in his column he also said, "So who do I fancy this season? It's back to Luton again. Manager Mike Newell is doing a tremendous job and looks like he could be taking them places." Oh well, as long as those places are not Roots Hall, the Abbey Stadium etc, we'll all be okay, won't we!

Graham Sharpe

TO GO OR NOT TO GO

No this is not another rant or otherwise about MK dons but whether I, a passionate supporter of the one and only Luton Town for the past 38 years, should go and see the Hatters play.

You see, as I write we sit proudly on top of League One, undefeated and nine points clear. And I haven't seen them yet!! A fair weather supporter you may ask?

No, just responsibilities mean I can't go as often as I would like. Home and away would be my choice, like I did for many years but alas it is not to be. I have to make do with the web site, text messages or three counties radio (when they are not doing the other lot on 98fm and the radio is pointed in the right direction).

So if I go, and they lose, it will be my fault and I would not be able to go again... until they lost again. But is this superstition fair on my grandson, nephew and niece who too haven't yet been to see their team play because of me.

I hope as you read this I haven't been and the Hatters continue to fly so they are promoted by Christmas and then if I came and they lost it would not matter... but then again what if they were going for record points, games undefeated etc. etc. I couldn't go... could I??

Can anyone help!!!!

Graeme Jones

HOWARD'S WAY?

Poor old Steve Howard probably cannot believe it. It's the Torquay home game; he breaks the Luton record for scoring in 8 consecutive games and what's the biggest crowd chant of the day? "Eno, Eno, Eno" and Showunmi's still on the bench.

Sure Howard gets his "Stevo, Stevo, Stevo" after scoring but, and this is the key thing, only after scoring. Even as Luton's top-scorer for the past 3 seasons the Kenilworth home-crowd faithful still don't chant his name as easily as Eno.

Two things to talk about: why this is happening and how Steve has reacted to this.

Why? If you look at their histories, it all becomes a bit clearer.

To start - A brief history lesson of the life of Eno. When Eno first burst on the Luton Town scene he was rubbish (I think he'd admit that himself). Well out of depth in Division 2 and normally wouldn't stand a chance at Luton, or anywhere, of becoming a professional footballer. But life's a funny old thing and sometimes it's about being in the right place at the right time. As Luton were in administration Eno was offered a chance as Luton couldn't afford anyone else. Eno paid his own way and lived on expenses. Injuries in the Luton team led to him getting a game. His first game brought him to the attention of the Luton faithful. Unfortunately he was awful but Eno knew this was a one-off chance and failure would lead to part-time football in the lower leagues so he gave 100%. And there's nothing us Luton, and indeed all footy, fans like more than effort. The Eno Eno Eno chant started but (and not meaning to be cruel to The Daddy here) with tongues in cheeks. And then something brilliant happened. Eno started scoring. He actually made it. With confidence grew the party tricks. Who doesn't love to see Enoch run at defenders with the ball seemingly glued to his feet as he weaves past them and into the box. And his Beckham-style freekick against Blackpool. Simply marvellous. Roy-of-the-Rovers stuff right in front of our eyes. Tongues are out of cheeks and we all chant "Eno Eno Eno" now.

And now a brief history lesson in the Luton career of Stevo. Steve was bought from Northampton (not a good start as they are rubbish). He bludgeoned and battered defenders to become Town's top scorer. Or is that meandered and moaned his was to become top scorer? Is he really a bit lazy sometimes? The York away game penalty incident (Steve yet to score in 2001/02 season missed a penalty and, argued with BFJ and fought Nicholls for the retake) didn't help. Also Steve's normal weight appears to be overweight. The year that Eno came on the scene, Steve was blighted by injuries - so his efforts tended towards the minimum and he struggled with match fitness. It was only at the end of the season with games running out that things started to click.

Comparing the two - Eno has more of an "us" feel to him. We see, we chant. Howard may be the better player (and at the start of this season Steve looks to have kept his fitness up out of season. He must have worked bloody hard to get into, and keep to, the condition he is in) but Eno is something special to us.

How is Steve reacting to this? It looks like Steve has stopped passing to Enoch! I can almost see him thinking "I can't believe they're still chanting for him and not me. "Stuff that, if you think I'm going to pass to him today!" I'm not sure if I'm being paranoid about this, as if Mike and Mick thought this were true they'd give Steve a good going over but it still looks like that to me.

Even when Steve passes to Enoch it never seems to be into a goalscoring situation. It always seems to be to release him down the wing so he can run and pass back to Steve (which never works out like that - as Eno crossing skills are a bit wonky and normally Eno only ghosts into the box for a shot anyway).

Compared to his previous striking partners Crowe, Thorpe, Forbes – Howard always linked up far better with them. But with Eno they appear to have little ability to link up. As a partnership - chalk and cheese.

But this is no bad thing as working independently Steve's strength, brute force and heading skills and Eno's dribbling and running have had many of this league's defenders wetting themselves already.

If only they could work together.

Does Enoch need to improve his crossing for that to happen? Is Steve is too greedy? Can Steve swallow his pride and start playing more for the team and link with Eno? Maybe not - as a greedy-for-goals Stevo has proved his style works. 8 in 8 was amazing. 9 in 9 beyond belief! You can't criticize him on current form.

But if they could work together... If only.

B Dave B

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!

WE NEED YOU!!

This issue is bang on schedule following a slight increase in the level of contributions, but we would still 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 December, with a deadline of December 8th, 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.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE RIVALS GONE?

As the dust settles on the Division Two 2003/04 season, I look around and ask "where have all the rivals gone?" The big two went up automatically of course. There's no doubt BFJ genetically engineered our Plymuff rivalry but it was good while it lasted. Would their hordes of fans consistently travelled the 257 miles and packed out the Oak Road End without The Mighty Joe winding them up? I don't think so. Well done Joe.

The other, QPha, was a more natural vendetta. The FA Cup games, Tony Thorpe etc etc. But now they're gone. Back to Division 1 to resume being patronised by West Ham, Millwall and their other 'true' rivals. We'll miss them like we miss playing against Lenny Lawrence's Cardiff side, I suppose.

At the other end of the table it's bad news too. Firstly 'local' team Wycombe crashed down to Division Three. So too, one of my personal hated 'local' teams, Rushden & Diamonds. Although they've never beaten us (and never will), there's nothing like working alongside fans of a team who are complete idiots to cement a rivalry, but alas now they've gone.

I remember an article years ago in MAAH promoting ire towards Notts County for being the team who relegated us from the top division (& quite right too! Why couldn't they have played like we did at Chesterfield!!). But County also have gone and got themselves relegated.

Which leaves us with faceless and anonymous teams. Bristol City, Swindon, Port Vale, Bournemouth, Col U, Barnsley, Wrexham, Oldham, Sheff Weds, Brentford, Stockport, Chesterfield. Mostly identikit sides with no history with us. Likewise to the promoted Hull, Torquay, Donny Rovers and Huddersfield.

There is hope though. Maybe we'll grow to be irritated by Hartlepool - they hate our Mike after all. Or Tranmere? It was a past FA Cup game that started the QPR rivalry. & Peterborough are 'local' enough - but could anyone ever hate a Barry Fry party side?

But wait. Who's this been relegated to our Division. Forget 'more of the same' Walsall and Bradford. I'm talking about MK Franchise Dons FC Wimbledon (or whatever they're called this week). They're already universally hated for being so business-minded with the attitude of 'screw the fans, let's move away'. For some, the only way they could get any worse was if they moved to the Old Den. Or maybe installed a plastic pitch and an away fan ban! But how will we react to them. MAAH has already seen someone promoting boycotting the home and away game. I think really having any kind of proper hatred towards them would be too like kicking a dog when it's down, but then again if they end up anywhere apart from bottom of Div Two, I'll change my mind.

So what of this season? Maybe it'll just be a time to get behind our side and go for promotion to finally get back to playing Twatford (or even better get promoted as they get relegated!). After all if we don't play them in any cups this season, it will be 17 years with only one defeat to them - yes, they are that bad!

B.Dave.B.

CRISIS, WHAT CRISIS?

Well, there we all were after the Hartlepool match, 10 points clear and going well. Two games later, things do not look so bright and with a difficult match at Hull to come, what price Luton Town this season?

What had added to our success so far this season? I list the following possible contributing factors:

Marlon Beresford – a quality addition to the squad generating confidence in the defence.

Paul Underwood – a natural left-footer on the left. He allows Sol Davis to go forward and has freed up Brko to sit in his more natural right-sided role.

Youngsters – a little older and wiser. Foley and Davies in particular.

A settled team / squad – few injuries to key players and of course, the beginning of the season means no bookings!

So what has gone wrong? The seeds were there at Tranmere and Hartlepool. Hartlepool in particular outplayed us for 45 minutes and were extremely unlucky not to have a couple of goals lead at half-time. Let's take each in turn:

Marlon Beresford – any coincidence that his injury and replacement by Dino has been at the same time as the defence begins to look shaky again?

Paul Underwood – has not performed over the past month.

Youngsters – Davies seems to have improved from a shaky start to the season, but since Foley's absence with the Irish squad, his performance has significantly dipped.

A settled team/squad – injury to Beresford coupled with suspensions to Robinson and Howard have meant the team having to change, and with the squad we have, the quality on the bench does not provide natural replacements. Our substitutions have sometimes been a little strange it must be said. For the Huddersfield game, we had four strikers on at the end coupled with Coyne up front. This meant our supply line of Brkovic sitting at full-back and Vine in midfield! Not surprisingly the 'hoof-up-the pitch' tactics were then adopted. Regrettably, the 'hoofing' tactics continued at Walsall, with both these games characterised by Howard struggling to beat his defender (didn't we just know Sodje would play a blinder at Kenilworth Road?).

So, crisis? No, I don't think so, but I have to put myself in the group that believes our early season form will not be sustained and that times will get tougher. I hope I'm wrong and will be the first to admit it when we win the League 1 Championship with 100 points!

Russell Bulkeley

Luton Town Supporters' Club – Walsall Branch

WORRYING TIMES

When MAAH ceased publishing I worried about ever seeing my favourite magazine again. Now it's back on the streets as good as ever.

When Matty Taylor inevitably departed to Portsmouth to play at a higher level I worried about replacing this cultured left sided goalscoring defensive winger.

In came Sol Davis, an aggressive little left-sided defender who would steam into tackles at the wrong time giving away free kicks unnecessarily in dangerous places, pick up loads of bookings, get into good positions and then cross the ball into the executive boxes, launch long hopeful balls upfield and head butt opponents at a time when the club could ill afford to lose anyone through suspension. Still I thought as a short-term replacement he would do. But in this most remarkable of seasons, ably assisted by Paul Underwood is there a more improved player than Sol? Now if he could just start scoring now and again!

I worried about the very existence of the club when John Gurney somehow took over and when he left would BFJ return? If not who would be the new manager? Enter Mike Newell, back comes Micky to guide us to a top ten finish playing good football. A remarkable achievement considering the burden of administration.

When Matty Spring moved up a rung to Leeds I worried about replacing this talented young midfielder whose skills I felt were never fully appreciated by the Kenny faithful. Lo and behold he is replaced by a goalscoring midfielder named*Ahmet Brkovic*. Is this the same Ahmet Brkovic who would often prompt Ian Pearce (3 Counties Radio) to jovially exclaim during matchday commentary "that move broke down, blame Brkovic". Berko with 4 goals already to his name this season and a man of the match award as well. Extraordinary.

When the popular Adrian Forbes went to Swansea of all places I worried about finding anyone to partner Stevo and get 15 goals a season. Would the mercurial Enoch score consistently enough? Then the services of Rowan Vine are secured for the season and Gary McSheffrey returns. Wow.

When Emerson Boyce moved to the famously misspelt Chrystal Palace I was shattered (*geddit?*). Another player who has graduated through the ranks only to move on. Still, I thought, it will be interesting to see how he fares at the top level, but who replaces him? The classy but often injured Russell Perrett? The classy but often injured David Bayliss? In this unbelievable season when the best game thus far has been a 4-0 home drubbing by Ajax, Curtis Davies emerges, a player who looks like he's going to be even better than Boycie.

Now the FA are looking to send Sven back to the fjords where he belongs and the Premiership clubs are sacking their managers I've started worrying again. There will be vacancies.

Maybe I worry too much... maybe.

Percy Vere

Apathy Rules

Before I start I should make it crystal clear that I am not a member of any of the Trust in Luton's Committees. I respect those that are but I felt that I didn't want to get involved this year. I did do some paper folding, envelope stuffing and stamp licking last year. The comments below are my own.

At a recent home game I was talking to the Trust people at their table, generally chatting and saying hello. They told me that less than 500 people had joined the Trust this year, this is less than half of last year's membership and well short of the 7000 supporters that turn up at the Kenny. I have to say that I'm quite shocked with this low figure. Apparently the comment is often, 'I can't see the point.' Well, we do not have a rich multi-millionaire chairman in the Walker, Hayward mode, nor do we sell thousands of shirts in China and the like.

This club isn't down to the Board, (our last few Chairmen have been Evans, Nelkin, Kohler, Watson-Challis, all, for different reasons, have left us in a poor position when they have left): nor down to the players, we have lost Boyce and Spring in the summer and Howard was (allegedly) more than willing to go to Sheffield Wednesday. No, the only group with any feelings for Luton are us, the supporters, you and I.

The input from the Supporter's Trusts vary from club to club. I doubt that Spurs or Moan Utd take much notice of their trusts whereas for clubs like Exeter, the club is owned by the Trust and they have monthly direct debits to pay for the club, and buckets outside the ground for immediate problems. Luton's Trust is somewhere in the middle. We need Tomlins' consortium (few of which, I suspect, are Luton supporters) to keep us at this level, but the Trust has 10% of the shares. Shares that cannot be sold by the consortium, if the consortium moves on.

I very much doubt we would have a club at all if Gurney had stayed on, he didn't pay the players, some clever work by Ms Newbery ensured that the players were paid. The players would've been allowed to leave if they didn't get paid. There was all that talk of merging with Wimbledon, and his previous track record with rugby and football clubs didn't bring any confidence. To get rid of the tosser took considerable amounts of money, this has to be repaid.

So, let's be blunt, no Trust last summer, no club. All those that pass the Trust's desk wouldn't be doing so this season. They would be gardening, shopping, doing jobs round the house, watching TV etc. but not following Luton.

I firmly believe that a good strong football trust is in the interests of all us fans. It cannot be the fee, as I'm sure nearly everyone can afford £10, a CD, 3 or 4 pints of beer. It is not just the money, the Trust needs supporter numbers. Trust in Luton is not a short-term protest group nor is it a supporters club. The Trust has long-term goals and for this it needs a large fan base and should the unthinkable happen and we are threatened with another Gurney-esque situation we need a supporters group to ensure we are not put in that position again.

If anyone can explain to me why they haven't rejoined I'd be interested, as, I'm sure, would the Trust committee.

Dave Yeoman

A CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP GUIDE TO...

TRUST IN LUTON

What is a Trust?

A Supporters' Trust is a democratic organisation of supporters. Over 100 clubs have one.

Although Trust in Luton was formed in the aftermath of a takeover, it is not a protest group, nor is it a Supporters' Club. We are an umbrella organisation; we have a good relationship with both the LTSC and the LLSC, who were instrumental in the Trust's set-up and the interim committee.

Rather, a Trust is the long-term solution for supporters to have a say in the future of their club. A Trust aims to strengthen the bonds between the club and the local community, to work for the football and financial success of the club, and to create a supporters' stakeholding in the club.

What can a Trust achieve?

Trusts own or control three football league clubs – Brentford, Lincoln and Chesterfield. They also own five non-league clubs – York, Exeter, AFC Wimbledon, Enfield Town and Clydebank.

At Luton, Trust in Luton were instrumental in the sequence of events that seized control of Luton Town FC from John Gurney's Melodious Corporation. By acquiring shares in the club's major creditor, Hatters Holdings, who appointed an administrative receiver, TiL were able to have a say in the future of the club.

Now, with a new consortium at the helm of Luton Town FC, the Trust has a 10% shareholding in the club, and is the means by which the fans' representative on the board is elected.

Who is the Trust?

The Trust is its membership; that is, every single person who has signed a Trust membership form. The committee is just the vehicle by which the Trust acts. Suggestions and assistance from members are always welcome.

What is the Trust planning to do this year?

Ultimately, what the Trust does is up to its membership! Last year was incredibly successful, with huge numbers of people signing up and backing the Trust's work. We now need to build on this.

Fundraising

TiL have been raising money for several reasons.

To cover the balance of the legal expenses accrued over the past year.

To pay the running costs of Hatters Holdings.

To promote the club in the community, and will be working with Luton Town FC's Football in the Community department to this effect.

Because TiL accumulate various administrative costs in its day-to-day business, eg copying, postage, domain costs.

How will we do this? Some fundraising schemes are already up and running.

The Goalscorers' Lottery is open to members only. Entrants guess who will score Luton's goals in each calendar month, total up their shirt numbers, and put £1 on this final sum.

Goalden Hatter, TiL's very own beer, was launched last summer, and is now available in bottles.

A scheme promoting the option of making a regular donation to TiL via standing order was launched on 1st September.

December 16th has been earmarked as the night of the TiL Christmas party – more details to follow.

We also have other plans in the pipeline, both long-term and short-term, including a darts tournament, a pool tournament, nostalgia evenings, a celebrity football match and auctions. We would welcome any members who would like to run their own event.

Membership

As previously stated, a Trust consists of its membership – not a clique or a committee. With that in mind, we'd like as many people as possible to sign up to the Trust, to make us truly representative and democratic. The membership committee are working to secure benefits for TiL members. Currently, those in possession of a TiL membership card can obtain discounts at the following establishments:

10% off at Home or Away Taxis, Dudley Street, Luton 01582 413413.

10% off at Scrubbers Hand Car Wash, Dudley Street, Luton 01582 413413.

25% off all food and drink at Flying Pizza, Bedford Street, Ampthill 01525 840000.

33% off all purchases at Evil Twin Records, www.eviltwinrecords.co.uk

10% off motor parts from Top Gear, High Street, Flitwick 01525 715299.

10% off computer consumables from Regen, Masters House, High Street, Clophill 01525 861999.

Goods for businesses at cost + 10% + VAT from Abacus Cleaning and Hygiene Supplies, Shefford 01462 628847.

Fantastic competitive deals are also available to TiL members from IBS Vehicle Leasing (www.ibsleasing.co.uk). Director Ian Driscoll is a Luton fan, and for all transactions made by TiL members, IBS Vehicle Leasing will donate a percentage of the income to Trust funds. E-mail them for further information at til@ibsleasing.co.uk.

Who are the committee? How can I contact them?

The committee were elected in July after the end of the constitutional nomination process. Their names and e-mail addresses are as follows:

Chair: Reg Harper – chair@trustinluton.com, reg@trustinluton.com

Vice-Chair: Mark Chapman – vicechair@trustinluton.com, markc@trustinluton.com

Secretary: Iain McGill – secretary@trustinluton.com, iain@trustinluton.com

Treasurer: Les Miller – treasurer@trustinluton.com, les@trustinluton.com

Fans' representative on LTFC board: Kelvin Dunn – kelvin@trustinluton.com

Membership secretary: Kevin Harper – membership@trustinluton.com, kevin@trustinluton.com

Fundraising officer: Nigel Conroy – fundraising@trustinluton.com, nigelc@trustinluton.com

Communications officer: Caroline Dunn – comms@trustinluton.com, carrie@trustinluton.com

Committee members: Ian Warboys; John Pyper – john@trustinluton.com

You can write to any of the committee members at Trust in Luton, c/o The Luton News, Media House, 39 Upper George Street, Luton LU1 2RD.

All the committee members have a profile on the Trust in Luton site – www.trustinluton.com. If you have any comments about the website, you can e-mail the webmaster at webmaster@trustinluton.com, or the Communications Officer at comms@trustinluton.com.

I hope this goes some way to answering any questions you might have had about Trust in Luton. If you have any questions not answered by this piece, then please do contact me!

Thanks for your support so far.

Carrie

TiL Communications Officer.

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:**

Registered office 17 Grove Place, Bedford, MK40 3JJ
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

UNBEATABLE. WELL, ALMOST...

21.08.04 TOWN 1 HELEN CHAMBERLAIN'S TORQUAY 0

Thanks Mr Howard, 9 in 8 and another 3 points. I had the pleasure of being guest in a famous executive box. With Ricky Hill sitting close to me I was sure this would be the day. After being wined and dined by my generous benefactors, who shall remain nameless, 3pm drew close and the sunshine was glorious. Out came the teams and across came Mr Newell in his usual mahogany shoes, gave ME a wave, Yes ME... at least I like to think that.

Early Luton pressure finally turned into a goal in the 36th minute after Vine put the ball through to the big man who headed into the bottom corner. Brkovic played well, despite being shouted at by Big Mick for the whole 90mins. And Luton looked good 'til the 80minute mark. Then Torquay put on some final minutes of pressure, but Sol Davis and co did well enough. A clean sheet served us well.

Curtis Davies was probably my man of the match, he looked solid. Sol was the only booking and despite Mike's after game comments saying he wasn't 100% happy, I think the fans were. In fact... Mike's never happy after a game is he, so I think the players may have been pleased to move clear at the top of the league too.

Dan Strobe

25.08.04 BOSTON v TOWN

I can't go to the rearranged date. I hope it's not the last chance I ever get to go to Boston. Still, at least I can say I've sat in Grantham in the rush hour traffic before!

ST

28.08.04 BLACKPOOL 1 TOWN 3

I had completely forgotten that it was a Bank Holiday weekend, and when I got to Preston I had to let the first train go to Blackpool without me because it was so packed. In fact it wasn't only me who couldn't get on the train, there were another hundred people still on the platform and I was concerned that I might miss some seriously valuable drinking time before the game. Fortunately another two trains came along immediately and whilst all the stag and hen parties squeezed onto the train on platform one, I walked over to the unnoticed train on platform three and got a seat... and my train went first!

I arrived at Blackpool North and my Tangerine mate was waiting to pick me up, so we went to the ground and got our tickets and headed for the pub to meet up with some of the other MAAH crowd. They took the piss out of me for going in the Blackpool end for the second consecutive season and I took the piss out of them for getting soaked last season and predicted it might happen again.

The game started and it started pissing down with rain. I took the piss (by text) and was amused by some of the responses! The first half was dire and it looked like we weren't up for it. Especially disappointing considering we hadn't played midweek but Blackpool had.

A pint at half time (another good reason for going in the home end) and the second half was a different story. I managed to keep my emotions to myself when we scored, but enjoyed the look on the miserable faces around me. It was as though we had toyed with Blackpool and let them think they might win, just to step up a couple of gears in the second half and finish them off in a little more than a minute.

I was particularly confused as to why all the Luton fans were being moved to different sections of the ground during the second half. I later found out that it was because the makeshift stand at Blackpool was beginning to collapse! I am reliably informed by my Blackpool mate that they will finish off their ground once they have agreed lets on the offices that will be included in the stands. On that basis we can look forward to sitting in a decent stand at Blackpool in about 2020. Until then I will have to continue going in the home end!

The Cheshire Hat

30.08.04 TOWN 1 AFC BOURNEMOUTH 0

A good crowd of over seven thousand turned up on the bank holiday to see if the Town could carry on with their, frankly, unbelievable start to the season, and few will have gone home disappointed after this show of complete dominance. Bournemouth have always been something of a bogey side for us (away defeats and home draws) but they looked a shadow of their usual selves today. After Newell rightly voiced a few concerns about ropery defending and the inability to kill games off after the Barnsley and Torquay matches, he was equally correct in praising the lads after the second half heroics at Blackpool. And it was clear that we responded to that praise.

The best chances of the first half came within a minute of each other. First, a Coyne header from a corner produced an excellent reaction save from Moss and from the resulting corner Davies headed onto the bar. Our only major scare in the match was early in the second half when an awful kick from Marlon went straight to peroxide boy who had a clear run at goal. But he opted for a flash finish to match his hair style and came closer to hitting the Oak Road burger bar than the back of the net. Up at the Kenny end, Vine should have scored when clean through but it was pushed wide for a corner. This is not the strongest part of his game and he lost confidence from then on. Just as the unthinkable (two dropped points) was looking likely, Nicholls produced a moment of real class by advancing with the ball and curling a beauty round Moss with nine left on the clock. It capped a good game for Nico, who has always been our most committed player and, with experience, is maturing into a good passer too - on occasions. Bournemouth had spent the whole match time wasting (as they always did when I went to Dean Court) so it was nice that their cheating was in vain for once.

Showunmi then came on for Vine, something that should have occurred much earlier. We've not seen too much of the old Enoch lately, as he only comes on for the last ten minutes and the Town have been in the lead and running the clock down. Hardly a problem - long may it continue, in fact. But Enoch is not just someone to hold it in the corner. His unpredictability can really scare defenders at times, and we are becoming a little over reliant on lofted crosses into the box for Stevo. But these are minor complaints. The important thing today was our attitude and from the first whistle to the last, Bournemouth simply were not allowed to compete. Much more of this, Town, and even I'll start to believe.

Richard Ward

04.09.04 LEAGUE ONE WHIPPET BOYS 0 UNBEATABLES 0

I went up to Sheffield a day early to sample the city's nightlife, and I wasn't disappointed. Unfortunately, this made drinking before the match an extremely difficult experience, but I made the best of the adverse conditions inside my body.

Thankfully, the club and police made better work of getting the travelling army into the ground than they made last year, though I nearly didn't make it in, due to... extreme sarcasm. ME (at the 3rd turnstile I had tried to enter as a ticket holder): Where do ticket holders enter the ground?" STEWARD: "Have you got a ticket?" ME (insert reply here!).

The game was tough going, as Wednesday seemed to have pumped themselves up for the Mighty Hatters. There weren't too many clear chances, they hit the post, Stevo missed a sitter, and Robbo fell on his arse instead of scoring after 90 minutes. A point though was a pretty satisfying result, even though crappy Colchester had managed to stuff The Owls here. And we even managed to avoid any altercations with those welcoming home supporters after the game for once.

Objet

07.09.04 BOSTON 4 TOWN 3

On a winning run, we probably were right in thinking that this cup was much less important than promotion. So, the worst thing to come out of this match was the 5 bookings acquired by our players. And a touch of embarrassment.

York Street is a fine old-fashioned football ground, the ideal sort of place to watch lower division football, and Boston is a nice town with a good selection of pubs, and several excellent chippies. Pity about the football then. Whilst Gazza failed to make the anticipated appearance, Pitt and Abbey gave a bit of added interest for Town fans. In the event, Abbey played a blinder and Pitt not only scored the opener, but was responsible for three of our players' bookings. Thanks. The second half was when all the real action took place, with Jason 'Pineapple' Lee beating Abbey for a lovely O.G. and then making amends at the other end. Nicho levelled from the spot after a foul on Vine before the subs took control. Three strikers on in the last two minutes, and Lee Thompson gave Boston the lead before Enoch equalised with his first touch to take it to extra time. Blinkhorn must have felt left out!

Thompson scored again 4 minutes in to the extra 30, and from then on resolute defending by Boston and confusion among the Hatters strikers meant that the score was unchanged. And so our first cup 'run' of the season ended.

KFH

11.09.04 TOWN 1 CHESTERFIELD 0

Following the loss of our 100% league record 7 days earlier, it was important to maintain our faultless home record, especially as the Spireites were second in the table, albeit several points behind... how many fans who witnessed the final game of last season at Saltergate (when Chesterfield were a mere 2 points from being relegated) would have thought that this fixture could possibly be 1st v 2nd? The game itself was very ordinary as is normal with this fixture. Vine scored the only goal not long after the restart, then the Town's numerical advantage told after Vine cleverly got between Blatherwick and the ball and was 'professionally' fouled by the Spireites' captain. Nicholson, the left back was then harshly yellow carded for the second time in the final moments to make it 9 v 11.

SF

18.09.04 FAKE HATTERS 1 TOP HATTERS 3

Getting boring now.....

What kind of a person would follow Luton Town anyway? Glory-hunters in the Midlands have

stopped saying that they support Arsenal, Moan U or Chelski and there has now been a sudden influx of Hatters fans, who coincidentally used to be Blues, Baggies or Wolves fans a few weeks ago. Those hardcore fans from Molineux and the Hawthorns are now very quiet after boasting about how well they'd do this season, and there was me quietly fading into the background, with a cautiously optimistic view of the season. As I said, it's now getting boring.

We got to Stockport in reasonable time and finding the ground wasn't too difficult. Unlike two years before, the roads weren't congested and the ground wasn't a nightmare to get to. The only notable thing that I encountered outside the ground were two teenage boys, and the gobby one said to me 'You're gonna lose' in his Northern accent. It's quite funny that he should think we're going to be scared by two boys when we were already unbeaten this season in the league and we had only dropped two points. It was only as we were walking past the club shop that it occurred to me to reply 'One day, I'm sure we will lose'. Later than most of us actually thought as well, but it was results like these that meant that defeat didn't really matter as much because we would be miles clear.

The ground was the same as it always has been - one nice stand, one stand which was a dump, one stand half complete and our stand wasn't brilliant either. How Kenilworth Road can be ranked the second worst ground in the country when compared to places like this is a mystery, but then again I don't suppose the people who voted have been to grounds like this. Other grounds that fall in the category 'Dump' are York Street, Boston, Moss Rose, Macclesfield, Vetch Field, Swansea despite it being the scene of the Hatters' greatest success this millennium, and Bloomfield Road, Blackpool, surely the worst ground in the country. Two nice stands the other stand with no top, no support underneath and falls down when you stand up. Anyway, back to the match. Brilliant. Always in control, we looked confident on the ball and dominated the whole game. It was only a matter of time before the Hatters broke the deadlock, and it was deservedly us who broke it. Robinson ran a bit and had a shot from just outside the area, which didn't look particularly strong but well placed. Only a few minutes later Vine was in the clear and slotted the ball past the Hatters' keeper to make it 2-0 to the Hatters. The Hatters had more chances before the break and could have been even further ahead, but 2-0 was still a fair reflection of the Hatters domination, and this continued after the break. Two chances fell to Brko, who I must say has been superb this season and whose talents I cannot stress enough. He missed the first chance, but a well-placed header from the man dubbed by the tannoy speaker (and him only) as the Croatian Sensation saw the Hatters take a 3-0 lead, and the fact that it was Brko who gave the Hatters the 3-0 lead would keep his loyal contingent of fans in Block B happy until the Hartlepool game. We then stepped down a gear for the rest of the match, and with about ten minutes to go the Hatters scored a consolation goal from a free-kick on the edge of the area, but this couldn't spoil the Hatters' day out. The fans were also in good spirits after the match, chanting 'We Are Unbeatable'. We were all chanting songs in the first half, but most of us quietened down in the second half, all except the bloke behind me, which is typical. Well done to him - it's not easy singing on your own for 45 minutes and making up new songs such as 'We were born on the banks of the river Lea' and 'Underwood, Underwood, running down the wing', but it was just bad luck that he was sitting behind me (I get enough of that at home games) and no one else was singing along with him. Never mind - at the end of the season I won't remember this game for being slightly annoyed with the person behind me, I'll only remember this for the three points that we picked up to help us achieve the title. Hopefully.

Also worth mentioning is the return of the Little Shef. He didn't do much today, but he didn't really have time. He is still the best loan signing I have seen, although hopefully Rowan will give him a run for his money this season.

Peter Bulkeley

25.09.04 TOWN 2 POSH 1

So, it was that time of the season again for Mr Fry to see his beloved team win - fortunately though, for us, he is not the manager of that team! Posh played quite attractive football for a Fry outfit, and although we took a first half lead through Vine they equalised shortly after the interval. Whether this was related to Marlon's injury we'll never know. Then Underwood was credited with the winner in spite of nearly making a complete hash of a virtually open goal! Still, when you're luck is in...

Still unbeaten in the league and 5 out of 5 at home!

SF

28.09.04 SWANSEA CITY 2 STIFFS 0

An utter waste of an evening, but in light of our form (bar Boston) I was unable to repel against the forces of evil dragging me onto the train from London. The trip got off to a bad start with the nice barmaid in the pub at Paddington giving me a life-expired £5 note concealed in a tenner when she gave me change for my pint. Fortunately the turnstile operator at The Vetch was as unobservant as me and that paid for my entrance into the ground.

When I got into the away end it was obvious that few Hatters had taken the game seriously, and when the Town took the field, it became obvious that Mr Newell had taken the same attitude, as it was difficult to identify half of the players. With Lord Enoch and a youngster called Calvin Andrew making his first team bow, it was immediately difficult to see the Town winning. My fears became amplified when Leon Barnett got a straight red early on. The game then settled into the pattern of Swansea doing all the attacking but not threatening too much. Predictably and sadly Bayliss soon went off injured, replaced by the other 'crock' Russ Perrett. To his credit though, Perrett was by far Luton's best player, defending superbly the wave of attacks. But still we had no shots on The Swan's goal. As my interest in the footballing feast decreased even more in the 2nd half, 3 of us decided to count the away attendance, all eventually agreeing that the 'army' amounted to a massive 79! The home fans had taken the game far more seriously, and were delirious that they were giving League One's champions elect a footballing lesson; nobody had told them that there wasn't a single Luton first-teamer on the pitch. They also seemed well satisfied with their scummer manager.

As full-time approached, with a 3 hour drive home awaiting us, some of us were screaming for Swansea to finish us off; it would have been the ultimate pisser to go to extra time, penalties and then out (of course!). Finally Swansea made the break-through in injury time, we breathed a huge sigh of relief and sped out of the ground to the car, hearing another roar as their 2nd goal went in.

Ah, I'll never have the chance to piss in that antique pebble-dashed bog again!

Objet

02.10.04 TRANMEEAIR 1 TOWN 1

I wouldn't like to meet Chris Coyne in a well-lit alley let alone a dark one. The big Australian managed to flatten (and I do mean flatten) three Tranmere players in separate and fair incidents at Prenton Park, and then powered in the deserved equaliser in time to rescue this game from the depths of mediocrity that it was in. Apart from the penalty incident, there was little to get emotional about in the first 75 minutes of this game as the top-of-the-table clash became a flop-of-the-table mish-mash. The away support was a bit disappointing too, both in numbers and in vociferousness. However, it was not as disappointing as Tranmere's seemingly endless supply of 6' 4" donkeys who somehow seem to have gained cult status in Birkenhead. Eugene Dadi is anything but the daddy as he spent the entire game on his arse and Calvin Zola is neither a relation nor a top class footballer.

The last 15 minutes was as full of incident as the first 75 was devoid of it but if any of Tranmere's post-scrapping chances had gone in it would have been rough justice on a competent Hatters side. Competent except for Paul Underwood, that is. At the start of the season, Underwood impressed me by holding the ball and keeping things simple; he hardly gave the ball away at all. In recent games he has reversed his philosophy and now seems intent on passing to the opposition at every opportunity. His total lack of a right foot is also becoming tiresome.

Now to the penalty incident. This was the biggest farce since Steve Howard at York City. The Tranmere right back Ryan Taylor made a run towards the box and Sol Davis tried to put him off with a gentle body check. Taylor kept going however and when Curtis Davies naïvely tried the same manoeuvre in the penalty area: the Tranmere man went down like a porn star. Having made such a meal of the tumble, of course, Taylor felt obliged to act all injured but then miraculously arose and lined up the spot kick. Oh no, the Luton players were not having that so Kevin Nicholls, Coyne and company surrounded the referee (quite unthreateningly I might add) and pointed out that Taylor had to leave the field following his (feigned) injury. For once the match official could not argue with the logic and Taylor stood on the touchline as Hume (I think) hit the penalty kick low to Dino Seremet's right. The Luton keeper reacted smartly and parried the shot with Coyne following up and heading the ball out; so we all celebrated. However, this is Luton so the w**ker in the black ordered a retake. This is where it gets silly. You can always argue about whether penalties should have been awarded and even about whether the keeper moved before he saved it, but can someone explain the logic behind letting a different person take a second spot kick? I know we have benefited in the past (Danny Wilson and Roy Wegerle spring to mind) but in this case the penalty was retaken by a man who had been off the field when the first was taken. Surely if the penalty was illegal then no official time has passed and everybody needs to revert to 'as they were' at the second attempt? In this game Seremet actually saved the retake but Taylor stuck in the rebound and proceeded to gesticulate towards the away fans which I thought was a bookable offence...

Anyway, Rovers got the point that their lack of ambition deserved and Town survived another game without the oft-suspended Stevo. Rowan Vine and Gary McSheffrey looked able to develop a partnership but were not given much service in this match. McSheffrey needs to remember that there are ten other players trying to score in the same net as him but his pace and trickery will be vital if we are to win this division. One more thing, I hate Mark Rankine.

Cliff Saunders

08.10.04 TOWN 3 HARTLEPOOL UNITED 0

Powerade Player of The Month? Just goes to show how much lower division football these so called experts watch. Don't get me wrong, Rowan Vine tries hard enough and he has some pace about him but he is no Gary McSheffrey. The soon-to-be former Coventry man has something extra about him and if there is one forward from the five currently on our books who you would expect to see perform in the next division up it is McSheffrey; let's hope we sign him.

In this game McSheffrey could have come on much earlier but still managed to get a solo goal which depended on his determination as much as his quick feet. However, he slotted home the chance comfortably which is more than Vine has done with his one-on-one chances this season. Also, if the website writer is reading this, Vine did not leave to a "standing ovation" but simply a warm round of applause: even in these times of journalistic hyperbole there is a difference.

3-0 flattered us. Hartlepool United will be very disappointed to have lost 3-0 and even more disappointed to have gone in 1-0 down after dominating the first half. Recent games against Hartlepool have been invariably entertaining and I always look forward to them because the Pools play proper football. During the first 45 in this game they kept possession, passed the ball well and made us run around; but with hindsight they failed to trouble the keeper. Having wasted two glorious chances, the Monkey Hangers went behind not long before half-time when a deep Steve Robinson corner found the surprisingly quiet Steve Howard who headed firmly towards goal. The goalkeeper will not be as distraught as the Welsh U-21 keeper on the same night (who virtually palmed the ball into his own net) but he will have expected to have done better and not conceded a goal to a header that was less than bullet-like. Nevertheless, Luton Town went in with an advantage and we thought that maybe this is our season and we are "unbeatable"!

The second half was much more like it. Mike Newell seems to have the half-time team-talk knack and Luton were much improved in the second period. At times we even played pretty football and showed the one-touch passing that Town teams have always been better at. Ahmet Brkovic is proving a new-season revelation and got the second goal with a typical piece of quick thinking as he followed up Vine's shot and placed the ball into an almost unguarded net. The result was never in doubt from then on.

Chris Coyne got the sponsors' man-of-the-match award which was just reward for last week's magnificent performance at Tranmere but in this game Curtis Davies stood out. Davies has pace, composure, height, skill on the ball and time to develop; my mates would certainly have given him the champagne on this night (if only for one glorious recovery tackle). In fact, Coyne, Davies and Sol Davis are the bedrock of this season's run of results; and hats off to the guy who predicted Marlon Beresford's injury because Dino Seremet is the business. Kevin Nicholls says he wants us to go unbeaten this season - ambitious maybe but I cannot see who is going to turn us over at the moment. Roll on Hull.

Cliff Saunders

16.10.04 TOWN 1 HUDDERSFIELD TOWN 2

The Yorkshire team surprised us from the start. Not only did they bring the biggest away following so far this season (perhaps they wanted to see what was so bad about the ground), but their team actually looked like they had some ambition. They started by attacking with a ferocity that suggested they believed that all three points were there for

the taking, as opposed to the one that every other team this season has appeared to believe they were entitled to. In truth, the Terriers were the better side through the first 45 minutes, and although they did not monopolise the attacks, they deserved their lead. Junior Mendes was dangerous throughout, and scored a superb opening goal from around 25 yards out. The second, credited again to Mendes, was rather more fortunate and was probably an own goal - step forward Sol Davis. A couple of chances for the Hatters, but no more than that.

The introduction of McSheffrey just before half time signalled the intention to get the match back and prevent the three points going north. The way the Town started the second half backed up this theory, and it took only eleven minutes for Paul Underwood to pull one back. From this moment Huddersfield showed the level of their ambition, and defended desperately. For all the best efforts of the Town the second goal just would not come, certainly not as soon as we wanted, but in spite of this we appeared to have built up a rhythm that would pay off eventually. Then, puzzlingly, a double substitution was made, with O'Leary on for Underwood, and Enoch (our fourth striker!) on for Foley. This seemed to have the opposite effect to what was desired, and the rhythm was gone. The passing game disappeared to be replaced by 'route one', and the strikers played 'excuse me' leaving the chasing to someone else every time. Even 5 minutes of added time couldn't help (although the ref didn't play all 5) and the points went to the visitors.

It's worth mentioning that the last time Luton went unbeaten for the first 12 games of the season, they went on to draw the thirteenth and then lose the 14th. The end of that season, 1969/70, saw the Hatters promoted from the 'old old' Division Three, in second place.

KFH

19.10.04 WOEFUL WALSALL 2 LACKLUSTRE LUTON 0

Lucky we had a good start to the season

Typical that my only home game of the season should be a performance like that. The Walsall Hatters fan club left the house at about 6:15 and arriving at 6:20. There were four of us - my dad, my mum, me and my West Brom supporting friend. He is obviously used to matches of that quality, but the rest of us certainly weren't. Both teams were terrible, although we were easily the worst team out of the two. The evening started off badly after just 7 minutes when Davies failed to connect with a header away and Merson ended up drilling in, the evening then got worse when we came out in the second half just as bad as in the first, and the less said about the end the better, when Fryatt scored. Apart from that it wasn't too bad. As for the players:

Seremet:	Terrible. Bring back Feuer. If not then bring back Abbey. 4
Foley:	Didn't seem to want to defend the wing or attack, so was pretty useless. 4
Davies:	Gave away the goal, but not much else went wrong for the centre-back. 6
Coyne:	Did well considering he was the only player who did anything. 7
Davis:	Hardly noticed him down the left-wing at all. 5
Nicholls:	Fought hard, but passed badly and fell over a few times. 5
Robinson:	Got the ball a few times, did nothing with it each time. 5
Underwood:	Terrible. 3
Brkovic:	Good effort, but didn't get the ball much and couldn't link with a poor Foley. 6
Vine:	Invisible until he got subbed, and it should have been earlier. 4
Howard:	Missed quite a few chances and was our only too predictable option when

going forward. Got himself stupidly booked again. 5

Showunmi: Ran hard, tried hard, had nothing around him, man of the match. Seriously. 7
O'Leary: Didn't do anything, but wasn't on for long. 5

The game could have been so much different if Julian Bennett had been sent off for an assassination attempt on Dino, but luckily for them he didn't even get booked. Even luckier for them Dino didn't get injured. Bennett did get booked in the second half, so if he had only got booked then he would have been off later on. Never mind, at least we didn't have far to travel home, and I think I'll try and catch something serious enough to keep me in bed all day tomorrow, then I won't have to face any Walsall fans and I'll be able to miss the sport on Midlands Today tomorrow. I feel sorry for Nick Owen, who will have to keep his head down on the news tomorrow. Somehow Paul Merson got man of the match, despite him being behind the run of play all match - in fact he wouldn't have looked out of place in our starting 11. Oh well, at least we still have that 5-point gap. Shame we had to lose today of all days.

Peter Bulkeley

Dan's DVD Review

The Football Factory -

"What else you gonna do on a Saturday?" is the catchphrase for the most violent football film of all time. The story is based around one young thug who enjoys going out and fighting at football. He can see trouble is ahead and when his team Chelsea take on Milwall in the FA cup things are sure to explode. With drugs, sex, fighting, drink and thieving sums up the Milwall fans just about right, nothing about fire however in the film.

Just wait and see what happens to this young thug when he doesn't grow up and realise life isn't about sniffing white power and having a settled family. Will he even care?

Definitely one to watch just so you can say you have seen it. May turn into a classic among the Burberry lovers around us.

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The month of September 2004 will always be remembered by Luton fans as the return of the Shef, and despite him not having the same impact as he had the first time around, it still meant a lot to Hatters fans that he returned, and Mad readers will also be delighted to hear that it has given me another idea for an article...

Players who have had two spells at Luton

And here are those legends, leg-ends and Tony Thorpe...

Marlon Beresford

The safest man that we've had between the sticks since Smiler Lawrence decided to take us on a one-way trip down the table by getting rid of Feuer. His second spell has been every bit as good as his first so far, only his injury has made it worse. He commands his area well and has been as safe as houses. Luckily he's still got a few years left in him.

Gary McSheffrey

Little Shef has certainly made a strong impact on the Kenilworth Road faithful in his first loan spell (sorry for stating the obvious). In his second spell he was less successful, although that was probably due to him being only on the bench, and hopefully by the time you are reading this he will be in his third spell at the club, hopefully permanently.

Tony T*****

And then there's TT. He's had three spells at the club. I would say more about him, but I don't want to put too much offensive material in someone else's publication, or they might get the blame.

Mick 'Mr Luton Town' Harford

Whereas Mr Luton Town himself is the complete opposite. Turned down more money at Forest to stay at Luton, scored a hat-trick against the Scum in a 3-2 victory and also scored an own-goal that kept us in the top division for another season whilst playing for Derby. We won 2-0, with Elstrup getting the other goal. Since then, he has been part of two of the most popular management teams Luton have had for a while. Everyone has their favourite memories of the man, though the two above will take some beating for a lot of Luton fans.

Brian Stein

Another integral part of the current coaching set-up and another legend of the years when we were in the (proper) First Division. The moment that he is most remembered for is obvious. He has written himself into the list of Luton legends by placing himself as the 2nd top post-war Luton goalscorer, although he will be overtaken by Howard, Brkovic and Enoch this season.

Mitchell Thomas

Legend - What else can you say about the man? Well you could say that I put the

hyphen in the wrong place in the above sentence, and it should have been in between the g and the e. However, he did establish himself as a goalscorer in a game against the Scum, and was an established part of the defence that got us relegated. Him and Marvin, in fact, and what a double act they were.

Peter Holmes

Technically speaking, this is Peter's second spell at the club, because after he was released by Joe he was re-signed by the administrators. He played a lot better with Newell (like most of our players) but seems unlikely to feature much this season, and probably won't be missed by many Luton fans.

Aaron Skelton

At Colchester he was voted Player of the Year and was one of their best performers while he was there. At Luton he was a flop both times, and the second time around was even worse, as he dropped down a division and still didn't perform. He scored a few times, but was obviously not one of Kinnear's better signings. Last I heard of him was he was plying his trade at Merthyr Tydfil.

Mike Newell

After a reasonable period as a striker in the 80's, Newell returned as manager in 2003 during the Great Crisis, much to the disappointment of fans who preferred Kinnear. Now those same fans love Newell, and never miss an opportunity to criticise Kinnear. Funny how times change, and it is Newell himself who brought about those changes.

Enoch Showunmi

'And now you're just being silly' I hear you cry. Technically that's not true. He had a trial with us under Ricky Hill, and Hill's failure to sign him was another nail in the coffin that was his managerial career with Luton. Coincidentally, the latest Enoch news is that Patrick Vieira is to star in a Nike advert as Enoch's body double.

Peter Bulkeley

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"I DON'T BELIEVE IT"

The only question I have about the start of the season is "Is it a dream?", if it is a dream then it's a bloody good one. When a dream is this good I usually wake up by the time Oldham equalised, thus missing the best bits. It could yet be a unique season. It is certainly has been dominated so far by unique events, things I thought I'd never see, things I will never want to see again as well as some things missing. Here is my summary of the all those:

Things I never thought I'd see:

Kevin Nicholls passing and discipline: a revelation

Sol Davis anonymity to referees – (and less funds for the F.A. to boot)

Corner routines that work.

Overhead kicks from Berkovic!

A manager who is appointed in a phone vote, a rigged phone vote at that, then actually turns out to be a good manager.

Such an amazing start – A word of warning!! The last time something like this happened (in the proper Division 3), we had mixed results. In 1968/9 we were unbeaten after 8 games only to finish 3rd. Worse still only 2 went up, even worse than that The Scum won the league. The following season (1969/70) we were unbeaten for 12 and then finished 2nd.

Looking forward to examining the league table each Sunday.

Some things I miss:

Enoch - the highlight for me last season was watching an anonymous Brentford defender being consoled by his team mates after Enoch had barged him into the prawn sandwich brigade in the boxes on route to scoring. The defender was not getting moaned at by his teammates, as you would expect, but was on the receiving end of genuine sympathy from his colleagues. The sort of "don't worry we won't have to play them till next year" sympathy. Where has this Enoch gone??

The real world - isn't supporting a football club suppose to be painful. (I know it may be yet).

Reminders that we are actually only in DIVISION 3.(its definitely not Division 1)

Atmosphere at home games – please, please someone think of catchy new tune !!!!!!!

Some things I never want to see again:

Mike Newell's red shoes (10/10 for management. 0/10 for fashion sense)

Fat, short, Division 1 goalkeepers – I want tall, clumsy, championship keepers with foreign sounding names.

Pathetic away followings like Torquay.

Teams defending/ time wasting after 30 sec. (Chesterfield, Peterborough)

Kinnear – obviously he bought good players and proceeded to make them ordinary.

Andrew.C.

RAVING MAD!!!

Dear Mad,

A sign of the Times? I had one of those moments recently in a Gloucester car park where you rub your eyes in disbelief. Just as I drove in I noticed a familiar shirt in the distance. Narrowly avoided ramming the car in front as I exclaimed to spouse "Look at that, look at that, I don't believe what I am seeing!"

With true concern she snapped "Just watch where you are going!"

I was now a bit closer to the "lad" (no idea of age as his back was to me) I could read "SPRING" on his back, so yes it was out of date but a "Town" shirt in Gloucester? Normally you see Gloucester rugby shirts galore with the odd smattering of Premiership football in Town.

Is this an indication of our wonderful start, or an exiled fanatic like me?

Yours no longer the only one

Bill The Frampton Hatter

P.S. I of course was wearing my MAAH! retro 70s away shirt at the time!

Dear Mad,

Once again Cliff Saunders has written an excellent article, this time regarding the MK Dons away fixture.

There can be hardly anyone involved in football who agrees with the sanctioning of the relocation of Wimbledon to MK. However I do believe that it is very probably a one-off and unlikely to be repeated for the following reasons:

(1) Wimbledon did not have a suitable ground in their area to return to from Selhurst Park and would probably have gone out of business other than by moving. There was never really a place for them in the Football League anyway despite their playing achievements as their support was always going to be minimal against the longer established clubs.

(2) How many other cities the size of Milton Keynes do not have a football club? It is unrealistic to think that clubs will be moved round the country willy-nilly. For example, Fulham is hardly likely to move to say Bristol to get better support as Bristol already has 2 clubs. The American situation is different in that there are only a limited number of franchises available for a much larger number of cities who do not have top league baseball/American football/soccer. Also tradition does not play the same part as over here.

I do not think that a boycott of away supporters would have much effect. The average away support in this division is around 600 so that even if one-half of those were to boycott the fixture, the revenue lost from 300 people every home game is fairly insignificant.

It would be better to accept that the decision has been made and to hope that MK do get relegated and go bust due to the poor home attendances. Fan power in England is unfortunately generally ineffectual unless violence is threatened or present but we

should be concerning ourselves more on other more important issues. In Germany there has been a 'Saturday 15.30' campaign which has succeeded in retaining 7 of the 9 weekly Bundesliga matches at that time and also standing has been kept in virtually all the stadiums even with the newly built ones. This is really making the supporters' voices heard. There are many other issues such as the harmful influence of the Champions League on football generally about which one rarely hears objecting voices raised.

I very much intend to be at the National Hockey Stadium for the Luton match without any guilty conscience at all although I do respect the opinions of those who will not attend.

Andrew Wallace.
Hitchin.

Dear Mad,

I come to every home game, which is good as I'm on a crap wage and have a family, and having come to the Peterborough game on 25th September I got the local paper for my area, which is the *Peterborough Evening Telegraph*, but I couldn't work out what Alan Swann (PET Chief Sports writer) was trying to do with his report. I was pleased with the centre pages as he said things like, "Luton's self confidence must be soaring to Mohammed Ali levels," and "give or take a few Frenchmen, Luton Town are League One's answer to Arsenal - undefeated in ten league games now, and according to their understandably cocky supporters, "We are unbeatable". Barry Fry even added, "We were always up against it against a side with tremendous self confidence and belief, they will take some stopping as they don't appear to have any weaknesses and the way they are going they will have won the league by Christmas."

So, I'm thinking, what a write up, we are a great team this season and as always I'm proud to be a Luton fan. In the past I have taken some stick, I only know 2 other Luton Fans in Wisbech, down here it's all Norwich Peterborough and the normal armchair Moan Utd, Chelski and Liverpool fans, but I've not met a scummer yet. So, I turn the page to find the headline "Slippery surface blamed for defeat", and reading on I find that "the heavily watered Kenilworth Road pitch was blamed as Posh slipped to a 2-1 defeat at League One leaders Luton on Saturday." What a twat, from a typical paper only telling half the truth, which was the part in the centre pages. So let's piss off every team that comes to the Kenny and at half-time, let the water flow!

Crossy,
Wisbech.

STAT ATTACK

Sat 30th Oct - Bradford City (Home)

This won't take long as there have only been 4 previous league meetings at Kenilworth Road, and all in the 1960s! Bradford won the first encounter in December 1965 by 3 goals to 2. The following season saw a 0-0 draw, with the visitors winning again in April 1968, this time 3-1. Luton cruised the encounter in their promotion season of 1969/70, winning 5-0! Last time: 13th December 1969 Won 5-0 (Malcolm MacDonald 3 (1 pen), Matt Tees, John Collins)

Sat 6th Nov - Wrexham (Home)

Certainly more of a history between these two teams, but again starting in the 1960s. Luton won the first 6 encounters, scoring 13 goals and conceding just 4. The Hatters were unbeaten at Kenilworth Road for 33 years against the Welsh side before they won in January 1997, at the 10th attempt. It was fairly convincing though, as they achieved a 5-2 victory. They won again in the 98/99 season, just 2-1 this time. It's the game on October 28th 2000 that everyone who was there will remember, the Hatters were leading 3-0, but it was Wrexham who went on to win 4-3! It was 3 years before the sides met in the league again, and it was the Hatters who had some sweet revenge as they came from 2-0 down to win 3-2.

Last time: 15th November 2003 Won 3-2 (Adrian Forbes, Steve Robinson, Lee Mansell)

Sat 13th Nov - v ?? FA Cup 1st Round

Luton have appeared in the first round proper on 36 occasions, (oh how I remember when the FA Cup run started in Round 3!) and have a very good record. Just 7 defeats, 7 draws, and an impressive 22 victories. Interestingly, the Hatters have won all 7 of the replays! At home Luton have lost just 3 times, Most recently to Torquay United in the 97/98 campaign. The Hatters have seen off non-league opposition over the past few years, Thurrock, Guiseley and Kingstonian have all been beaten at Kenilworth Road. The most notable 1st round result came in the 1927/28 season, when Clapton Orient were soundly beaten 9-0! Jimmy Yardley hit 4 goals, Syd Reid and George Dennis both hit a brace with Harry Woods netting the other. The best away win came in 1931/32 when the Hatters won 5-0 at Swindon. Jimmy Yardley was again on the scoresheet, as both he and George McNestry hit a brace, with Andy Rennie scoring the other.

Last time at home: 16th November 2002 v Guiseley Won 4-0 (Matt Spring, Tony Thorpe, Ahmet Brkovic 2)

Last time away: 7th November 2003 v Thurrock Drew 1-1 (Emmerson Boyce)

Sat 20th Nov - Wimbledon / MK Dons (Away)

As Wimbledon the Club have hosted Luton on just 6 occasions. The first of these was in 1986 and the home side were beaten by a solitary goal scored by Mark Stein. This was followed by consecutive defeats in March and December 1988, 2-0 and 4-0 respectively. Luton won 2-1 on Valentines Day 1990, with goals from Kurt Nogan and Iain Dowie. The Hatters then lost again twice in the same year with 2-0 and 3-0 defeats in January and Septemeber 1991.

Last time: 7th September 1991 Lost 0-3

Sat 27th Nov - Doncaster Rovers (Home)

Just 9 previous encounters with the Hatters coming out with 7 victories and just 2 defeats. Luton have scored 25 goals and conceded 14. The opening match between the two sides was played in December 1947, with Luton winning 2-1 courtesy of goals from Bobby Brennan and Allenby Driver. A 3-1 victory in March 1951 was followed by 2 defeats the following year as Wimbledon won 4-1 and 2-1. Luton have won the last five matches at Kenilworth Road, firstly with 2 victories in 1954. Just two meetings in the 1960s and despite Doncaster scoring 6 goals in these matches Luton won 4-3 and 5-3! It's over 34 years since the sides met in the league.

Last time: 7th February 1970 Won 4-0 (Alan Slough, Malcolm MacDonald 2 inc 1 penalty, Matt Tees)

Sat 3rd Dec

Well this date is reserved for the 2nd round of the FA Cup, so should the Hatters have progressed to this stage here are the stats. Of the 22 matches, 5 have gone to a replay, but Luton have progressed on 13 occasions. The Hatters won their first ever 2nd Round tie, winning 4-0 at South Shields in January 1921. The next two victories were impressive, 6-2 at home to Northfleet United in December 1926, and then a year later beating Norwich 6-0. Luton won a 2nd Round tie in 1932 beating Stockport 3-2, and it was a further 29 years before they played again in this round, and again they won this time 2-1 against Reading. There was another long gap between 2nd round ties, after the Hatters lost 2-1 at Hillingdon Borough in 1969 it was a further 27 years before they beat Boreham Wood 2-1.

Last time home: 19th November 1999 v Lincoln City Drew 2-2 (Gary Doherty 2)

Last time away: 6th December 2003 v Rochdale Won 2-0 (Steve Robinson penalty, Lee Mansell)

Tues 7th Dec - Brentford (Away)

There have been 31 previous meetings where Brentford have played host to the Hatters. The home side have the advantage, with 16 wins to 8, and of the 7 draws only one has been goal-less. Luton's first five victories were all achieved by keeping a clean sheet, but it was there sixth win that was the most notable. A 6-2 result in February 1964 was one of only two occasions when the Hatters have scored 6 away from home in a league match. (Southampton on 30th October 1937 was the other). There's been 6 matches since the last win, when goals from Julian James and Phil Gray secured a 2-1 victory in September 1992.

Last time: 19th October 2003 Lost 2-4 (Adrian Forbes 2)

Sat 11th Dec - Port Vale (Home)

Luton have a 12 match unbeaten run at home to Port Vale, in fact the only defeat was the very first encounter, back in November 1898 when the visitors were known as Burslem Port Vale. Seven wins and five draws have followed, interestingly four of the draws were 1-1 and the other was goal-less! All of the victories have been by only one or two goals, except the victory in May 1966. The Hatters won 5-0, courtesy of a brace from both John O'Rourke and Gordon Riddick, with Ray Whittaker netting the other. Luton have scored 23 goals in the 13 matches and conceded just 10.

Last time: 16th September 2003 Won 2-0 (Gary McSheffrey, Kevin Foley)

Sat 18th Dec - Bristol City (Away)

It's 31 years and 11 games since Luton last won a league match at Bristol City. Goals from John Aston, John Ryan and Tom Finney gave the Hatters a 3-1 victory. This win came a year

after the previous victory, when a solitary John Faulkner goal was enough. Luton also won in successive seasons in the 30's with 2-0, 2-1 and 3-1 victories. They have suffered some big defeats at City as well though, 6-0, 5-0, 5-1 twice, and 5-2. Luton have scored 23 goals and conceded 53. The last two matches have both ended 1-1.

Last time: 1st November 2003 Drew 1-1 (Gary McSheffrey)

Sun 26th Dec - Chesterfield (Away)

Luton don't have an average of a goal a game in league meetings at Chesterfield, managing only 16 goals in 17 games. Meanwhile they have conceded 23 goals, in 4 wins, 5 draws and 8 defeats. It was third time lucky for the Hatters as they won in April 1939, with Billy Redfern scoring both goals in a 2-1. It took 3 more matches before Luton took maximum points, with George Stobbart scoring the only goal of the game. That started a run of 7 matches without defeat, including a 3-1 win in 1966 courtesy of goals from John O'Rourke, Gordon Riddick and Fred Jardine. Another 3-1 victory took 34 years, this time with goals from Gary Doherty, Julian Watts and Liam George.

Last time: 8th May 2004 Lost 0-1

Tues 28th Dec - Colchester United (Home)

Although there's 40 years of history since the first league meeting there's only a total of 8 games played at Kenilworth Road. Luton have the advantage with 5 victories to 2, with a solitary draw, 1-1 in 1965/66. Luton won twice in 1964 by 3-1, first in January when Harry Walden, John O'Rourke and Gordon Turner scored. Seven months later Tommy McKechnie scored twice and Gordon Riddick scored the other. Luton won again at the start of the 1998/99 campaign with goals from Stuart Douglas and Steve Davis. The Hatters showed great bouncebackability to come from 2-1 down to win 3-2 in the 1999/2000 season. Julian Watts, Gary Doherty and Matt Taylor scoring the goals. The visitors won in December 2000 for the first time, and followed that with another victory 2 years later.

Last time: 7th February 2004 Won 1-0 (Enoch Showunmi)

Simon "Statto" Pitts

Check out more stats at www.lutonfc.com/stattoindex.asp

MILTON KEYNES - SHOULD WE GO ?

Of course we should. The players tell us a decent away support is worth a goal. We are top of the league. Imagine this scenario - we boycott and draw at MK. Then come the end of the season MK stay up by a point and worse still we don't get promoted by a point? What a futile protest.

Go to MK, Cheer on the lads. Help send MK down. The best way to punish franchise football it to send them back from where they came. Relegation and then oblivion. Points not principles !!

Andrew C.



Kevin Nicholls tries a new, and much more subtle, method of knobbling the opposition... Having a friendly chat and hoping they don't notice having their boots removed!