

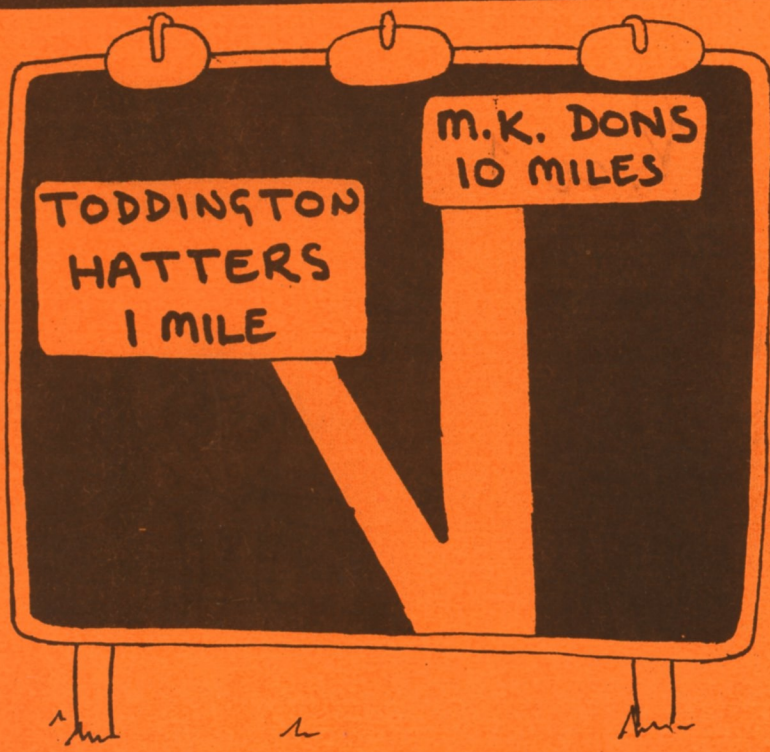
MAD AS A HATTER!

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THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE

Issue 68

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Is this really the only option???

MAD AS A HATTER!

THE LUTON TOWN FANZINE

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NOT SPORTSPAGES, as they're now in administration!

Ed Lines

Well, finally, it happened. A public announcement about the new stadium at Junction 10. We've waited years for this, particularly the last couple of years since good old (well, 55 allegedly) Uncle Bill appeared on the scene. And as it finally emerged the good news was... that there was no good news. The first pronouncement on progress at Junction 10 was that there has been no progress whatsoever in the 18 months since LTFC came out of receivership, and in fact, the project was now dead. This, of course is entirely the fault of Luton Airport and there expansion plans. In fact, it's a good job that things hadn't gone further or else that would have been money down the pan. Great.

But all is not lost... not if you are of a fairly gullible disposition anyway. It seems that Bill and Co. have found a new site for the new stadium just a couple of junctions up the M1, but not quite as far as MK (although surely that would be easier?). At Harlington! We're going to build a 20,000 seater stadium on a plot of land, that no-one has yet clearly identified, half a mile from Harlington station where it will cause little or no disturbance to the residents of that village. Erm, pull the other one Bill. With the sort of access and disturbance issues that are suggested by this, it looks unlikely that planning consent could be granted by the local authority without it being referred to the Department of the Environment, and a possible public enquiry. Developers are being appointed soon, we are told, but don't expect to be moving in in the next couple of years. I'd guess that we might be looking at over 12 months before there is a hint of that planning application (perhaps Graham Sharpe could offer some odds on this?).

Meanwhile, just what are Luton Borough Council doing to help? Their patience and encouragement over J10 has been a credit to them, and if an application had been made, they would have sorted the airport problem, I have no doubt. But what now? Having spent years establishing that there is no alternative site within the borough, the football club have pushed them into a corner there appears no way out of.

Get your kits out... for Christmas? Apparently not. Questions are being asked about just what sort of kit deal LTFC have got with Diadora. There have been rumours of a 'grey market' deal for some time, but whilst supply of replica kits wasn't a problem this seemed irrelevant. However, as Christmas approaches and every other club fills its coffers with sales of replica kits, at Luton the 'sold out' signs remain in place. Replica kits have been out of stock since, what, September? This is starting to make Diadora look a bit of a Mickey Mouse organisation. But then, we might ask, why would Diadora not be proudly mentioning that Luton Town are among the clubs they supply and ensuring supplies of replica kits at this time of year. And why, for a televised match at Southampton, is it necessary for Luton Town to blank out the name of the kit manufacturer? Is there something we are not being told?

THE REAL FIRST GAME AT KENILWORTH ROAD

September 2nd 1905 is a date that means very little to the organisers of the recent hundredth anniversary of Kenilworth Road, but through authenticated research I've discovered that the very first competitive game played under association rules at Kenilworth Road was on that very date.

Whilst researching the life of Charles Green, Luton Town's first Secretary Manager (it was Green who helped purchase Kenilworth Road) I came across an article in a long defunct local newspaper that the first game played under association rules and in a league, was played on that day. The competition known as the South Eastern League was for reserve teams and contained the second strings of Spurs, West Ham United, QPR and W*tf*rd. The article read "The first match of the reserve season on the town ground on Saturday, resulted in the defeat of the home side by their neighbours from W*tf*rd by 2 goals to 1". So, the first team to win at the old ground were them. Well, I was shocked. As I read more from this bizarre article I was further amazed to read that owing to the W*tf*rd team arriving later than the time published there was very little enthusiasm for football. The Luton team, mostly made up from local amateurs was up against a full strength side who won the toss. Playing against the wind the visitors had the bulk of the early play but it was Luton who came close to scoring the first goal. It was former Hatter Sammy Eaton who provided the move which led to the first goal. His move and shot was a scramble which led to C Barnes scoring the first ever goal at Kenilworth Road. Luton's outside right Woods went close to pulling a goal back but Brown, the normally reliable goal scorer, failed to find the target. Ten minutes before half time Watkins, Luton's right back, slipped and allowed George Brown, W*tf*rd's centre forward, to pick up on the slip and make it 2-0. Unruffled by being two goals down, Barrett, Luton's inside right, ran the ball into W*tf*rd's half and forced a corner which was not properly cleared and H Parsons (who normally turned out for Luton Amateurs) found himself unmarked to become the first ever Luton player to score at Kenilworth Road. Luton continued to push for an equaliser but had to go in at half time a goal down. Luton started the second half where they left off the first having more of the play and getting more shots on target, but Bert Higgins in the W*tf*rd goal was in fine form and won them the day.

Every story should have a happy ending, and this one is no exception. Seven weeks later the return match was played and with a much stronger Luton team that included Patrick Gallagher (who turned out in the Plymouth game). In a very even game, Luton drew first blood when Barrett, now at centre forward, found the net. Ten minutes later Barnes, who played so well in the first game, popped up again to draw the scores level. The score was unchanged until eighty-nine minutes had passed. Just as the game was looking to draw to a close Eling, at inside right for the Town, stole in with the last kick of the game to give the Town 2 points. At the end of the season Luton finished four places higher in the South Eastern League.

Six games were played between the two clubs that season as both sides played in a supplementary competition called the United League, which was won by W*tf*rd who won both games in that, but in the competition that really mattered, Luton won one game and drew the other and finished in fourth place well above our neighbours.

Brian Ellis.

The Hatters Hall of Fame

Welcome back to the Hatters Hall of Fame, last published just over 10 years ago, and now freshly updated in anticipation of a flood of new entrants in the coming months... This is a celebration of some of the greatest names in the history of our club, and Ian Benjamin. Entry to this exclusive club, membership of which brings true legendary status among Town fans, is restricted to those who have performed the deed closest to our hearts, putting the ball in the net to hoist the Town's colours against the forces of evil, the scum, the piss-stained... call them what you will, but we all know who we're talking about. The list is made up from all competitive matches in the League, FA Cup and League Cup (in its various guises) and the Anglo Italian Cup and Southern Professional Floodlit Cup - the latter allowing Bob Morton entry into the list for the first time. As previously we have excluded the Rigby Taylor Cup as no-one cares about it; this was an annual "friendly" played at the Pigsty between 1953 and 1962, when both clubs were in their proper places in the Leagues - that is, we were in the top flight and they were in the bottom!

In the list that follows, the names being listed in chronological order from the date (shown) of their first gaining admittance to this list along with the total number of goals scored in derby matches. Where the first goal was in a cup match, this is also indicated.

DOW, Jack	29.10.1898	FAC	1	HILL, Frank	2.04.1920	1
DURRANT	29.10.1898	FAC	3	ELVEY, Jack	2.04.1920	1
GLABRAITH, Hugh	2.11.1898	FAC	1	MATHIESON, Allan	28.03.1921	1
BROWN, William "Roland"	18.11.1899	FAC	2	REID, Sidney	1.04.1922	-3
BROCK, John	18.11.1899	FAC	1	CLARKSON, William	18.11.1922	1
FAIRGREAVE, Walter	18.11.1899	FAC	1	AGNEW, William	23.01.1926	3
SAXTON, Arthur	29.09.1900		1	DENNIS, George	23.01.1926	2
BLESSINGTON, James	7.12.1901		4	THOMSON, Norman	30.10.1926	1
MOODY, Herbert	7.03.1903		7	THOMPSON, James	19.03.1927	1
DAVIDSON, Jack	7.03.1903		1	BLACK, John	19.03.1927	1
TURNER, Ted	14.11.1903	FAC	2	RENNIE, Andy	4.02.1928	5
MCKEE, James	14.11.1903	FAC	1	YARDLEY, James	4.02.1928	-6
ALLSOP, Thomas	14.11.1903	FAC	1	POINTON, Joe	4.02.1928	1
ROSS, David	17.09.1904		2	BEDFORD, Lewis	2.10.1928	2
WHITE, Fred	26.12.1905		1	VAUGHAN, William	2.03.1929	1
HAWKES, Bob	26.12.1905		2	BIRCH, Wallace	18.01.1930	1
BROWN, Sandy	13.04.1906		2	MCNESTRY, George	24.01.1931	1
WARNER, Alf	25.12.1906		1	BRYCE, Robert	24.01.1931	2
PICKERING, John	25.12.1906		1	HUTCHISON, David	22.10.1932	2
HAWKES, Fred	29.03.1907		2	ROWE, Douglas	26.04.1933	2
WALDERS, John	25.12.1907		1	ANDERSON, Sam	21.10.1933	1
RANKIN, Bruce	17.04.1908		1	MARTIN, George	21.10.1933	1
MENZIES, Alexander	9.04.1909		2	PEASE, William	3.03.1934	1
SMITH, John	15.09.1909		1	STEPHENSON, George	10.11.1934	3
STANSFIELD, Harold	15.09.1909		1	BALL, Jack	10.11.1934	5
MOORE, Thomas	15.09.1909		2	CROMPTON, Wilfred	9.11.1935	1
SIMMS, Ernest	2.04.1915		-2	ROBERTS, Fred	9.11.1935	-2
ROBERTS, Harold	2.04.1915		1	PAYNE, Joe	17.10.1936	4
HOAR, Sidney	2.04.1915		1	DAWES, Albert	20.02.1937	1
RUTHERFORD, John	2.04.1920		1	CUMMINS, George	7.11.1956	SPFC 2

GROVES, John	7.11.1956	SPFC	1	DONAGHY, Mal	10.01.1984	FAC	1
MORTON, Bob	7.11.1956	SPFC	1	WALSH, Paul	10.01.1984	FAC	3
O'ROURKE, John	1.04.1964		2	ELLIOTT, Steve	20.10.1984		1
RIDDICK, Gordon	26.12.1964		1	HILL, Ricky	6.03.1985	FAC	1
WHITTAKER, Ray	26.12.1964		1	TURNER, Wayne	9.03.1985	FAC	1
HARRISON, Mike	14.08.1968	FLC	2	THOMAS, Mitchell	23.11.1985		1
LEWIS, Brian	14.08.1968	FLC	1	HARFORD, Mick	26.04.1986		3
BUXTON, Ian	30.04.1969		1	FOSTER, Steve	12.12.1987		1
ALLEN, Keith	30.04.1969		1	OLDFIELD, David	2.05.1988		1
KEEN, Mike	12.12.1970		1	WILSON, Danny	2.05.1988		1
MACDONALD, Malcolm	13.02.1971		1	BENJAMIN, Ian	29.11.1992		1
HALOM, Vic	13.11.1971		1	OAKES, Scott	29.11.1992		2
STEPHENS, Kirk	26.12.1979		1	TELFER, Paul	14.08.1993		4
HATTON, Bob	5.04.1980		1	DIXON, Kerry	14.08.1993		2
WHITE, Steve	19.08.1980		2	PREECE, David	31.08.1993	AIC	2
MOSS, David	26.09.1981		2	DREYER, John	19.12.1993		1
STEIN, Brian	26.09.1981		5	DAVIS, Steve	21.11.1995		1
GOODYEAR, Clive	27.12.1982		1	SHOWLER, Paul	29.10.1996		1
AYLOTT, Trevor	4.04.1983		1	JOHNSON, Marvin	14.02.1998		1
HORTON, Brian	4.04.1983		1	SPRING, Matthew	10.09.2002	FLC	1
BUNN, Frankie	26.11.1983		3	HOWARD, Steve	10.09.2002	FLC	1
NWAJIOBI, Emeka	7.01.1984	FAC	2	?????	2.01.2006		?

RAVING MADI!!!

Dear Mad,

Quite a few players from other clubs have been awarded testimonials lately. For example: Andy Hessenthaler, for 10 years loyal service to Gillingham, Roy Keane for 12 years with Manchester United (*does that offer still stand after his sudden departure?*). Loyalty is appreciated by many football clubs. When are Luton Town going to award a testimonial to John Moore? He served Luton as player, coach, manager, etc for over 30 years. Could one of your editorial staff please comment on this matter? Loyalty seems to be one of the seven deadly virtues.

P Miller

Luton.

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!

Sharpe Angle

THEY OUGHT to get Mike Newell on 'Grumpy Old Men'. That's one thing I do like him for - his permanent tetchiness - particularly in interviews when we've lost. He was very good after the defeat at Coventry when he just about tolerated questions throughout the 3CR interview until he was asked to close by saying how nice Coventry's ground was. 'Huh, its not properly finished yet' he harrumphed. Nice one from the curmudgeonly cove, who really does get miffed by some of the questions put to him by Messrs Oxley and Duncan - and long may it continue. It's much better than bland agreement, or the so positive it is almost negative psycho-babble which comes from the chap a few miles down the M1.

I have been accused of being anti-Mike Newell, which is not true at all. But I am, and remain, pro-Kinnear. After all, look around at the squad and there are still a good number of Joe's boys in it, whether they are playing the way they would be if he was still around or not.

And you can criticise him all you want - and it does surprise me that so many seem to be able to forget conveniently just how much he did to put this club back on the straight and narrow - but you must never forget that he was the first manager we had had for a considerable amount of time, who would not play the 'nice little club' card that so many before him resorted to.

Joe gave the club back self-respect. He insisted that players and supporters should be proud of the club, not apologetic on its behalf - and that we should let others worry about us and not vice-versa.

Mike Newell is carrying that attitude forward which is to be applauded and why it is even more important that he should not be allowed to slip through our fingers to move to another club. He says he is quite happy staying where he is, to complete the job he believes he has put in motion here. I believe that - but just what would constitute 'completing' that job, I'm not sure. But I suspect that getting us into the play-offs would come pretty damn close. If he did that and we won them then I suspect he would like to stay for at least a season, but if he manages that and we lose in the play-offs he might well find it irresistible to take what would be a burgeoning reputation and cash in on it.

If he just fails to get us in the play-offs I am sure that most fans would still regard that as a job pretty well done for a first season back in the Championship. But Mike might think that without an input of resources he would find it difficult to replicate that in the next season and might decide to cut and run before an upward moving reputation began to plateau out or even decline.

And there is the vexed 'new stadium' question hanging over all of this speculation. Because Mike is clearly not happy that he - and probably any other manager - is going to be kept out of the loop as the negotiations inch forward. Most of us probably feel that recent developments have been anything other than positive and can only lead to an even greater delay - and we don't have to work and train in these conditions like the manager and players.

As for who would succeed Mike Newell, I know that is speculation which could well be influenced by events at the time he leaves, but it is looking increasingly likely that our eternal hero and former Newell right hand man, Mick Harford may soon be on the look out for a new position.

>>>> <<<<

What a fascinating accent Carlos Edwards has - Trinidadian mixed with Welsh. Now you don't hear that every day, do you?

>>>> <<<<

It was really good to hear that Paul Hughes is hopeful of making it back into the action before the end of the season. His continued absence has been a real mystery with only the occasional piece of news coming through. His interview in the Luton News explaining that there has been something wrong with his blood count which has contributed towards keeping him on the sidelines at least gave some hope that the end is in sight from what must have been a frustrating and concerning time for him. If we get him back fully fit it will be like making an exciting new signing. I look forward to seeing him back in the first team – in time for the play-offs.

>>>> <<<<<

Watching the side line up before kick off these days reminds me of the literally big improvement on seasons not that far gone by, when our sides seemed to be packed with good little – if not downright tiny – footballers – the David Preeces, Jason Reeses, Andre Scarletts, Liam Georges, Stuart Douglasses, Tony Thorpes, Mark Steins – of this world. When changing our name to Lilliput Town may have been appropriate. But now we have big, strapping, physically intimidating fellows in the side. Perhaps it is just an optical illusion thanks to the svelte, figure-enhancing lines of the excellent white shirts they wear. Perhaps those other players just seemed microscopic from my angle of vision. Whatever, it prevents the depressing sight of our lads being intimidated and out-muscled as used to happen so frequently before the big boys arrived on the scene!

>>>> <<<<<

So, an interesting FA Cup draw – makes a change from the non league sides we've come up against in recent seasons. Liverpool used to hate coming to Kenilworth Road to play on the artificial surface, so perhaps the best plans would be to cover the turf with an approximation of that and hope no one notices the difference. We'll have to put Enoch up against Peter Crouch and invest in a few copies of Teach Yourself Spanish in order to decipher Rafa Benitez' instructions to his players. Oh well, it is at least a no-lose situation in which the team can go out and give it their best and measure themselves against the European champions – and it must be a very long time indeed since we last played the reigning title holders. In fact, I would hazard a guess that it must have been back in the distant days when Liverpool, or perhaps even Forest, last won what was then the European Cup.

>>>> <<<<<

Talking of Forest - the day they beat us in the 1959 Cup Final was the day I began supporting Luton – what a fateful 'toss of a coin' decision that was! In the Forest team, although he later signed for Luton – and was then sold while he was asleep! – was Stewart Imlach, the father of current American Football and Cycling tv presenter, Gary Imlach. Gary has written 'My Father and other Working Class Football Heroes' (Yellow Jersey Press) which recently won the award I instigated for my company, the William Hill Sports Book of the Year. This is a seriously good book for anyone interested in football from the late fifties and early sixties before it exploded into the George Best era, and those interested in the relationships between sons and fathers. Gary also tells the amazing story of the reason why his Dad, who played for Scotland in the 1958 World Cup never got an official cap for his achievement. Because he didn't play one of the home countries. Yes, that's right. Despite campaigns to try to get him the cap he deserves, the SFA have refused to hand one over posthumously – despite the fact that Bob Wilson also never played against a home country yet was awarded a cap by the SFA - who now say that as they have no record of having given one to Wilson they don't have to give one in honour of Imlach. You couldn't make it up - and he didn't. Great book, several good Luton bits in it, get it with one of those Xmas vouchers.

Graham Sharpe

GETTING BETTER

Some of you may recall my article "What's happened to the Luton matchday programme?" this time last year (Mad 63). My criticisms then included:

- No reports of recent games
- Photos without captions
- Reduced space for Roger Wash's historical features
- Poor team statistics
- Some downright silly spacefillers.

In a drastic move, I threatened to boycott the programme until it improved, keeping my money for an extra pint at the Bricklayers Arms. Well, someone at the club must have been reading Mad As A Hatter, because I am now pleased to be able to report that there has been some improvement this season (though I'm still having that extra pint at the Bricks).

- There are proper match reports, and the photos have captions again. A new feature is the teams listed in formation on a graphical representation of a pitch, plus match statistics.
- Roger Wash is back to a full two page spread, plus a look at a "classic encounter" between the Town and the day's opponents. In the recent Crewe programme, for example, we had a resumé of the 1974/5 season in Division 1, plus a report of the 1968 4-0 walloping of Crewe.
- There are features on forthcoming opposition, and articles about Luton players. Again, from the Crewe programme, there were features on Carlos Edwards and his World Cup success with Trinidad & Tobago, plus an interview with Marlon Beresford. If I can be allowed one small gripe here, it would be about the use of the phrase "speaking to today's matchday programme", which appeared not only in the two articles already mentioned, but also in Marvin Johnson's two pieces on the youth team and the reserves. This is just excess verbiage and a waste of space.
- Recent efforts by Bill Tomlins have read less like the ramblings of a semi-literate orang utan than previously, so presumably someone is exercising some editorial control at last.

Speaking of which, there is still the occasional embarrassing lapse, like when a quote from an article about Wolves striker Tom Huddlestone talked about him being on loan from "Sprus". Another in the same programme was where the banner on the match report of the Burnley game was unchanged from the Coventry match in the previous issue, but overall the improvement is very welcome.

We've still got a long way to go, though. Some of our opponents this season have programmes that put ours in the shade. Coventry City, in particular, deserve a vote of thanks for featuring Little Shef so prominently on the day they played us. Too often there is virtually nothing of interest for the away fans in these programmes, but Coventry really seem to have made the effort and it was much appreciated.

So, to whoever on the editorial team of the match day programme is reading this, "Well done!". I hope you'll keep up the good work until we have a publication that all Hatters fans can be proud of.

Will Larter

NEWSFLASH

Luton Town Football Club have announced that they have finalised plans with the local council to move the club to a new stadium just north of Birmingham, outside Junction 7 of the M6. Chairman Bill Tomlins (56) said, "We are delighted to have succeeded in finding a site for the new stadium, particularly a site situated as close to Luton as possible. We hope to announce plans just in time for the local derby in January (with Wolves of course) and hope to start the construction of the stadium in 2007. It should be completed for the start of the 2009/10 season".

Chairman Bill Tomlins is 56.

More on the proposed stadium next century.



Carlos Edwards vies for the ball with Salman Isa Ghuloom Ali of Bahrain during their World Cup play off match in Port Of Spain. Carlos is likely to become the first Luton player to appear in the World Cup finals since Mal Donaghy in 1982.

Drinking in Yorkshire

Part 2: Sheffield Wednesday (Tuesday, 31st January)

The **Bath Hotel** is also a good place to start for the Wednesday match, being convenient for the same tram line (West Street stop) that you will need for getting to the ground (buy a Day Rider ticket). Others worth a try, that will be well known to previous visitors to Sheffield, include the **Cask and Cutler**, **Kelham Island Tavern** and **Fat Cat**, all within a few minutes' stroll of Shalesmoor tram stop.

Also highly recommended is the **New Barrack Tavern** (601 Pensitone Road), now a Tynemill pub but previously in the same ownership as the Sheaf View. A similar refurbishment to the latter, it has retained the same beer policy and atmosphere. Good food available, and it is less than a mile to the ground.

Part 3: Leeds United (Saturday, 25th February)

Although I haven't lived in Leeds for a few years now, there are still a few pubs there that I can recommend for the real ale fan. When in Leeds, **Whitelocks** is a must-visit pub, situated in a narrow alley off the main shopping street (Briggate) in the city centre. Both interior and exterior are the subject of preservation orders, and despite the changes in beer policy over the years there is still real ale to be had here.

Take a ten minute walk north up Briggate and over the inner city motorway, past a small park on the left and turn right at the next traffic lights. A left turn at the bottom takes you to a roundabout with an unexpected pub called the **New Roscoe** (Bristol Street, Sheepscar). The original Roscoe was the victim of road-widening about 25 years ago, and the New Roscoe commemorates the old while being a real pub in its own right. There is a scale model of the old pub in one of the bars.

Walk back towards the city centre, this time going straight on at the roundabout, with the inner city motorway now seen ahead on a flyover. Just before you get there, turn left down a side street to find the **City of Mabgate** (45 Mabgate) on the next corner. The chief glory of this pub is the original tiled exterior, though the beer also comes recommended. It is a short walk from here to the bus station, for the bus to the ground.

Will Larter

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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A CRISIS AT LUTON?

Do you remember the days when we were the team with the hottest young talent in the league? A day when you could go into school or work, hold your head up high and say you supported Luton Town, and nobody sniggered or made rude remarks. Some would even come up and shake you by the hand and say 'well done' or 'great team'?

Well I can, and the reason for that was not the football being played on the park or the quality of the Community Programme, but the figurehead of the team, the man being talked about on the street – Happy Harry. His slim lithe body would grace stadiums up and down the country and the ground would echo to the cries of 'Harry! Harry! Harry!'. A true legend.

But what has happened to this once great institution? Recent sightings of the mega-star have shown that there is a distinct bulge in the stomach area and early indications are that the bulge is growing match by match. Perhaps Harry is pregnant?

Remember the exuberant goal celebrations? Well, they have been replaced by far less energetic running past the post and 'looking quite pleased'. Rumours of frequent trips to KFC and McDonalds have been vastly exaggerated in my opinion as record profits reported by both these businesses recently can only be partly attributed to the Luton branches.

What we need is a return to the good times. With little to moan about on the pitch, we need to now concentrate our efforts on the more important parts of football. Do we want to be represented by a slightly podgy, burger-eating icon? I think not. No longer will we accept excuses that the mascot derby was not won because of the boots. We need a return to the day when you could guarantee Harry would win races against all opposing mascots, whether by fair means or foul.

We need winners at Luton not losers!

Russell Bulkeley

CALENDAR

I had a crazy thought the other day, why does a football calendar start in January? For your everyday normal year the traditional January through to December works very nicely, but for football it's a no starter.

So, let the year start in August, the same month that the new football season starts, right through to pre-season warm up in July. This way a whole season gets covered on one calendar rather than two half seasons on the traditional type. Kit colours will not look out of place when they get changes in August, and players sold mid season will not pop up in November. OK, I know this would not have helped in the case of Curtis, but no system is perfect.

The best part of all though is that the fixtures could be printed on the calendar, along with dates for the FA, League and White Van Man Cups, plus international weekends. True, some games would be shifted when Sky gets to work, but at least most would be fine. All in all this style of calendar would be far more useful for the fan. So, not a chance of it ever coming off.

As a follow up I would like the Town to play in all white with blue/black/orange trim. The old fashioned white shirt and socks with black shorts has had its day. If an orange and blue number is not to the club's taste, the all white just sparkles. A look of the Real Madrid rather than Bolton to match the style of play.

Normski

AND THEY KEEP ROLLING ON...

15.10.05 RAILWAYMEN 3 DERAILED HATTERS 0

The Hatters swaggered into this game with bottom club Crewe; odds of 11-8 on the away win. My Crewe hosts wondered how many we would win by! Town were quickly in their stride with the home keeper Ben Williams called to make early saves. Howard's presence continually unsettling the home defence. Edwards looked sprightly on the right, Super Kev strong in the middle, Morgan confidently taking on players on the right, no worries! I had some concerns about the fluency of our play and the uncertainty in defence especially when Crewe hit the bar twice in the first half, Lunt's dead ball kicks causing moments of panic. When Morgan showed good control to thump the Town in front, the home crowd were resigned to yet another defeat and we began to take control. However, a game of statues in the Town defence allowed Jones time to pick his spot for a surprise equalizer. Williams continued to make good saves and Feeney should have scored when Howard squared the ball to him in the box, but he hit tamely at Williams.

The second half saw some barnstorming runs by Edwards that saw Berko and Howard go close. Morgan started to give the ball away on the left and nearly cost us a goal, Feeney looked off the boil (perhaps warming the N.Ireland bench had taken its toll). Morgan and Feeney gave way to Foley and Enoch as Town stuttered. The bloke next to me said "it's like Port Vale last year, we were complacent that day as well", he was right - it was deja-vu! My feeling of foreboding grew as the game headed towards injury time. Luton's generosity in defence settled the game when three opportunities to clear saw us give the ball away three times allowing Lunt to finally head Crewe in front with gift wrapped ribbons. A third goal on the break in injury time rubbed salt into the wound! I hope this result has the desired effect and remind the boys why people have rated them this season and we go back to the simple hard working quality football! The defence continues to look hesitant on occasions.

Bill Church

18.10.05 SUPER HATTERS 4 NAARDGE 2

Beating Norwich is something to savour and for one reason - the local television. Can anyone remember a Lars Elstrup hat-trick at Carrow Road in 1990 which turned a one-nil reverse at half time into a three-one win? The following day on Anglia's 'highlights' programme, Gerry Norwich City Football Club Harrison proceeded to show nearly all the first half and just our goals of the second. He even called him Larstrup! I can also recall an early issue of MAAH complaining of their wildly differing coverage of both club's civic receptions for League Cup triumphs in the eighties. You could say I hold a grudge, but Anglia TV and BBC East are as one-eyed now as they've always been. Pre-match, there was an air of disbelief on both channels sports desks that Luton Town could even be sharing a pitch with the mighty Norwich City.

One of the many great things about the Town these days is that we respond to a defeat. Newell was quick to mention after the blip at Crewe that it was good that we didn't have a whole week until the next game, so we could put things right quickly. There was no guarantee that we'd beat Norwich, but you knew that we would give them a good game. Norwich hit the bar early on from a lovely shot that left Bez stranded, but Feeney put us in front against the run of play from close range, benefiting from Howard's persistence. The Canaries continued to attack and caused us problems but thankfully their finishing was a bit

crap. When Huckerby could be bothered to play football and stop moaning he was their best player. Edwards did a good job against him, though, and was rewarded when 'England's number one' slipped when about to collect what King Carlos insisted was a shot. Peter Holmes, our longest serving player, has spent five years trying to remain in the side on a regular basis and he made a case for himself tonight as he stole the show before half time. First, he ran at the defence, played a one-two and fired past Green into the corner. Not long after, Holmes made space for himself and put in a lovely cross for Stevo to soar above Doherty for the fourth. According to my Norwich supporting boss (I enjoyed the next day at work) the Sky Sports reporter said that the Canaries huge deficit was all their own doing due to poor defending and missed chances. Very harsh on our boys, I thought, as we'd played some lovely football which Norwich simply couldn't handle. I still felt relieved when they hit the post in injury time because they looked the most dangerous team we've played this season, despite the first half mauling we'd given them.

Nicholl's leadership was missing in the second half and the Town didn't seem to know whether to carry on in the same vein or understandably protect what we had. In the end, we did neither. Norwich had plenty of corners as we panicked and scuffed our clearances, and it was no surprise when Ashton scored a good goal. But we calmed down, took the game to Norwich and kept possession, without reaching the heights of the first half. Let's not forget that the ref was pretty poor. How Stevo must must yearn for the leniency that Doherty and Ashton got tonight. Davidson got a second booking for a tackle late enough to be a straight red and Jarvis scored a late consolation.

This was a really satisfying victory. Not just for the great football, but also to stick two fingers up at the regional news. There's nothing finer than watching the likes of grinning half-wit Stuart Jarrold (Anglia) and smug twat Stuart White (Look East) squirm whilst reporting that their beloved Canaries were thrashed by the black sheep of the region. Don't the inbred yokels realise that regional footballing supremacy will always be in Luton?

Richard Ward

22.10.05 TOWN 1 PLYMUFF ARGYLE 1

Not that long ago our tussles with Plymuff were good games, plenty of entertainment, lots of chances and, above all else, worth paying the entrance fee for. My God! What has happened to them? They were dreadful. Negative tactics, 5 across midfield, no attacking ideas, little or no interest in passing the halfway line and, worst of all, time wasting the likes of which I haven't seen for many years. Plymuff were, in one word, a disgrace. God help their fans if they have to watch that rubbish every week. To the neutral it's probably a case of sour grapes, especially with such an undeserved late equaliser, but to a football fan rarely can a team deserve a point after contributing so little. I went with a 'muff mate who will probably never speak to me again after what I said to him after the game. But then again, they do say that the truth hurts!

Luton certainly never reached the heights of Tuesday night but, at the same time, looked by far the better side. At least we tried to play football, create some chances to win the game, whereas 'muff seemed content with a draw and to bore the oants off us with their stifling negative tactics.

Warren Feeney is without doubt the man of the moment, his all round ability and prowess in front of goal proving to be the ideal foil for Steve Howard. Peter Holmes is proving what a valuable all round player he is - the butt of a few jokes a couple of years ago, he has become one of our most consistent performers and a great sidekick for Super Kev.

There's no point saying too much about the match itself as only one team bothered to

turn up. On the minus side for Town is that we still need to find a more ruthless streak in front of goal. Warren Feeney and Steve Howard were guilty of glaring misses, one in each half which would have killed the game off with well over half an hour to play. I don't want to be overly critical of the Town as we are having a wonderful season which has exceeded most of our expectations but we must learn to take chances more clinically. It certainly cost us at Crewe and in the end against the Muff. Tony Pulis and most inbred Muff fans will no doubt be proud of the draw and their reaction at the final whistle said it all. God knows, you'd think they'd won the league. What a disgrace they have become when a draw at Luton is celebrated in such a way. I suppose we should think of it as a compliment, it's just a shame that the game of football suffered because of it.

My Muff mate did say he felt embarrassed by the result. He could count the number of decent Muff chances on one hand and still have six fingers and a thumb to spare!

Victor Meldrew

29.10.05 COVENTRY CITY 1 TOWN 0

Coventry away was really a continuation of the lethargic performances that Luton had put in against Plymouth and Crewe in the previous few games. The signs were also there in the second half of the Norwich home match, when we let them score twice for no reply.

At Coventry, our players seemed disinterested at times, standing still and waiting for the ball to come to them. Coventry wanted it more than our lot, and their players simply chased us down and nicked the ball with little resistance.

The only goal came just into the second half, with Keith Keane having only been on the pitch a few minutes. He was caught cold down the right flank and a simple cross and header put us 1-0 down. The rest of the game was a scrappy affair, and despite our enormous away following, our support was unusually quiet.

A word or two about the Ricoh Arena; it looked an impressive enough new stadium, but it was a fairly soulless ground that could have been anywhere. The acoustics were good at magnifying the crowd noise (when there was some!), but it was awful as far as understanding the PA system was concerned! The toilets were also a bit on the small side at the away end, and the lack of a scoreboard (electronic or otherwise) was obviously becoming a bit of an issue with some of the locals!

The last time I went to see Luton play away at Coventry we also lost 1-0, but at least we had a penalty that day (saved unfortunately by Bobby Gould's son)! This run of results and performances is obviously our predicted sticky patch!

Anon

01.11.05 SHEFFIELD UNITED 4 TOWN 0

This was really just the hammering the result suggests. Not that Town played particularly badly, just that the Blades were a class above. They had the advantage of having been in the division for somewhat longer, and having assembled a squad of players that reflected that - having Keith Gillespie on the bench, while we had Showunmi on the pitch!

As it was, our performance was not too bad to start off, but once Jagielka was in position to open the scoring there didn't look to be a way back. Morgan's looped header five minutes into the second half sealed it, and by the time Pericard scored the third our thoughts were turning to home. When the fourth went in we were already well on the way.

KFH

05.11.05 TOWN 2 BURNLEY 3

Luton went one down against the run of play when our entire defence stood around appealing for a handball that wasn't given.

Luton went two down when the much-maligned Adi Akinbiyi let rip a blistering shot into the top corner. However, it would have helped our cause if we had marked him I think.

Burnley gave us a lifeline when their Danish keeper Jensen inexplicably handled outside the box and got sent off.

With no pukah keeper on the visitor's bench, Luton did the sensible thing and bombarded the Claret's area; finally scoring after a succession of corners. Half-time came at 1-2.

Luton played like amateurs in the second half and failed to put the Burnley keeper under pressure at all, whilst the team with ten-men inevitably looked like they had twelve and were first to all loose balls.

Adi Akinbiyi then showed his pace again as he burst into the Luton area (left-hand side) and brought an ill-judged challenge from youngster Leon Barnett. The dreadlocked wonder dispatched the penalty himself and the game was over.

Luton huffed-and-puffed and pulled one back through Warren Feeney after a scramble but a succession of incorrect substitutions killed off any hope we had.

2-3 it finished. I said after Coventry that it was downhill from here...

Cliff Saunders

19.11.05 COOK'S CITY 2 PUDDING TOWN 0

Not too bad a trip for a local, but for someone like myself from out west in deepest spicy sausage Gloucestershire, this was long day out. Cheltenham was covered in a blanket of thick pea soup fog as I climbed the Cotswolds into radiant blue skies. As it turned out the pea soup finally cleared from Cheltenham on Sunday afternoon. After that it was fog on and off all the way there and, surprise surprise, on the way back as well. This was a clash between two teams who know how to lose. Norwich had suffered twelve (? are you sure) straight defeats while the Hatters had three on the trot.

Something had to give. Based on these performances the size of the crowd was quite extraordinary - 25,383, 93% of capacity the scoreboard proudly announced at the close of the game. This included the Town taking their full allocation.

Norwich started the game with three loan players, two coming from the division higher. This seems a tad extreme to me. Is there a limit to how many non-club players a team can field? I'm sure the editor would know? (*Sadly, your faith is misplaced - over to the readers*)

It was the same old kick off with a high dough ball to Steve Howard on the wing. I'm sure every team in the land by now know we start a game in this manner. It's about time some originality was employed. We might keep the ball longer that way. After one quick Town attack Delia's custard shirted carrot crunchers came hurtling on. The right side was wide open, the defence was in a pickle, not helped by Unders' jogging backwards instead of closing down. Mind you it was a good shot and Marlon never had a chance.

For some time after that the Town looked like a warren of stewed rabbits, frightened to hold onto the ball, and at times looking like strangers. The linoman on our side did not help by waving his chicken drumstick arm only for the grilled cheese yokel surprise side (*what?*). Brkovic tried a deep fried Croatian kipper in a tangy sauce dive, but the referee was having none of that.

At the earlier meeting at the Kenilworth Palace, calypso Carlos ran BBQ squid legs around medium rare Huckerby lamb chops, today was different. While the Windyman was still in

World Cup party mood Foley was putting on a hard boiled sprout of a performance. The said lamb chop just cruised past the toffee pudding Irish international and stroked a beauty of a shot past the stretched Marlon. It looked like it was going to be a hard cheese day. After that the Town actually tightened up on marking, slung some passes together and held the worse of the Norfolk stew off.

The game drifted along slowly as darkness closed in, it was time for the crackers, cheese and onion relish. Luton's front two were off and the reserve forwards of a fine rounded Vine and snappy Enoch were on, and the game came to life. At last Norwich were on the rhubarb crumble back foot. Enoch was a twisty garlic loaf on the right while Vine would have grabbed a soufflé of a goal, if he hadn't instead received a boot in the head. Not an aroma of a penalty.

Straight after in a fifty fifty butter spread challenge Perrett received a second yellow card. Harsh, ref. And that was about it until I got back to the jam jar and found out from BBC Norfolk that the skipper had been red carded from the kitchen after the final whistle.

Then it was the joy of a slow slog getting out of the car park and a similar slow crawl to the road home. I would like to name the A11 as the second most boring road in Britain. At number one I have the M6 between Walsall and the Thelwell Viaduct.

Normski, the Cheltenham Hatter

22.11.05 TOWN 4 CREWE ALEXANDRA 1

Odd game. Very odd. We were informed, reliably or not, that the final score here was 4-1, although if you were sat at The Kenny, the thick fog and even thicker first half suggested this was a big porky-pie. Apparently, all goals for the Hatters were pinged in at the Oak Road end, although I didn't have my halogen glasses and had no way of knowing what was actually, really happening. Enoch and Vine looked sharp but ineffective in the first half, before they both - and particularly Vine - really caught fire in the second. But still, after 70 (?) minutes, it was looking nil-nil and feeble moans afters, until Vine scored (so they say), before adding a penalty about 30 seconds later. Crewe had a man sent off. They looked neat enough, but there was no way on earth they were going to score. No way, not ever. Until they did, that is. On the way back to the pub, we were reliably informed the final score was 4-1.

K1

26.11.05 TOWN 2 PALACE 0

No doubt ITV's cameras were at KR to witness Palace thump the out of form Luton Town. But how wrong could they be? Was it a super Luton or a woeful Palace which lead to an "easy" Luton win... I'd say a bit of both. No team enjoys coming to the Kenny, especially not an ex-premiership team. From the start the Hatters put Palace under the cosh, with Vine and Enoch the all leggy God linking up well with each other just like in Tuesday week. Howard had been dropped due to a fall out with Newell on Tuesday over the pre-match warm up and Feeney "rested" after Stein said if he had the chances Feeney had this season he would have scored 40 goals a season. The Luton team scored two in 21 minutes and could have had more, which was a criticism that Newell bought up after the match. Dowie however felt his Palace side didn't play well at all, which they didn't and were lucky not to get thumped themselves. Palace's goalkeeper seemed more interested in arguing with the Luton fans at the Kenny end and Clinton Morrison the so called "super-star" had a verbal battle with the ref all game long after forgetting his shooting boots. Palace only one

tested Bez in the Luton goal even with England striker A Johnson on the field. The whole of the Luton team however tested the Palace back four over and over again with precision and venom. The Luton back four pushed up well and caught the Palace "attack" offside many times to the frustration of their team. Stand in captain Robbo did an extremely good job and showed real passion, I'd like to pass my thanks to Matty Spring for leaving the club and letting Robbo mature into a better player than you will ever be. Foley and Marcus had great games also. This was a much-improved Luton performance of late. The Palace fans were silenced after 10 minutes of the game and for the rest of the game. However, the football, especially on Luton's half, more than made for an entertaining game.

Dan Strobe

04.12.05 READING 1 TOWN 0

I shared Mike Newell's optimism that this was going to be a special day for the Hatters; who would turn it on and end Reading's excellent run. Pubs difficult for this game so we had to settle for a drink on the concourse, so it wasn't the greatest of starts. Noisy boisterous support greeted both teams. What a bench we had with Feeney, Howard, and Super Kev! Understandable selection but we thought we would need someone to hold the ball up effectively. Both teams played a game of cat and mouse with neither side really creating too much. Vine's volley was well saved by Hahnemann and a couple of speculative long range shots by Reading were the only real chances. Sitting high up in the stands we made the fatal mistake, we commented on how good the defence was looking especially Marcus and surprisingly Perrett. So it was our fault that poor Marcus deflected Sidwell's shot past Marlon going the other way. The second half urged on by our marvellous support we pinned them back although we didn't create too many clear cut chances. Home crowd went quiet, Morgan got on the end of a deep cross at the far post but was well saved, Perrett knocked another cross back across but a tame header (from Enoch I think) was straight at the keeper. Marcus limped off at 70 mins and with it went the game. Barnett naively gave away a free kick, Little's probing cross found Marlon mistakenly coming out and was headed home into an empty net by Kitson. Near the end the defence went missing on another cross to allow Doyle to head home for a third. We were left scratching our heads, how did we lose and by three goals at that! On reflection we didn't look too good up front poor touch on occasions and were over elaborate in and around the box. We do look thin with cover at the back and I feel we must sign another central defender.

I wasn't sure I agreed with *The Guardian's* Man of the match being their keeper!

The Frampton Hatter

Meeting the Devil

The title might appear a little dramatic, but what else can be used to describe the experience I had recently when meeting the man with the most despicable job on the planet? That's right, I actually exchanged words with none other than Adrian Boothroyd, Manager of W**ford.

This unfortunate event came about through attending a Coaches and Managers Association meeting led by Boothroyd. Not only did I talk to the man, but I was supposed to be educated about football by him. Can I sink any lower? I work for the County Football Association in Middlesex and sessions are run quarterly for aspiring coaches to watch an 'expert' in action as well as to pick up and trade new ideas with each other. Previous sessions have been conducted by the likes of Les Reed (formerly Technical Director for the Football Association), John McDermott (England U16's Coach) and John Harbin (Crystal Palace Fitness Coach and key motivational tool for any game against the Eagles according to Mike Newell...).

Taking place in early November, at an unlikely time in the season when W**ford sat in third and the Hatters occupied fourth place in the table, I dreaded attending even further. However, the opportunity to watch how Boothroyd had managed to perform a miracle and shift such a mediocre and shoddy team to such a lofty position proved too tempting to resist. Speaking with a colleague of mine who organised the session, he explained how Boothroyd's Secretary (I know, you wouldn't think such a shambles of a club would be organised enough to employ such a person) had mentioned that the W**ford Manager was actually nervous prior to the session as to how he would get on. So, it came as little surprise that when I arrived at the session the man himself, Boothroyd, was sat cowering like a reprimanded schoolboy in the corner. How, I thought, has this lost-looking man done (and I hate to say it) a decent job in getting the scum to third in the league?

After being introduced, he stood and explained the details of the session he was about to deliver. Using fifteen year olds from a local side, Boothroyd would demonstrate how a coach would go about teaching 'Creating space in the attacking third'. It should come as no surprise to us Hatters fans that I can report two sports heavily cited by Boothroyd to succeed in this area: Netball and Gaelic football. Firstly, this literally meant playing netball except the only difference being two goalkeepers instead of nets to aim at. Movement was then introduced and eventually the Gaelic interpretation of football using half-volleys and punching the ball with the hands. That's how W**ford have achieved some level of success then!

Boothroyd continued to deliver the practical element of the session to varying levels of success. However, I would allow him some leeway considering the level of player he was using. The ball did eventually find the floor and it could be seen what he was trying to teach. This was interesting to watch, but it wasn't until afterwards, during the debriefing, that I could finally get some insight into the man who is in charge of all that is evil in the world today.

Fielding a variety of questions, including some bemused QPR coaches asking why Ian Holloway never picked up on W**ford's tactics in a recent game (that should be obvious - Holloway isn't quite all there and W**don't have 'tactics'), Boothroyd began to come across as, how shall I put it...quite...eloquent. I was trying not to laugh though when he explained the attributes that he demands from his central midfield players (willingness to receive the ball from the back, vision, can tackle etc.) knowing who he was going to mention as an ideal player in his team...Matthew Spring.

The most revealing answers demonstrated that he is clearly a coach who likes to embrace the more modern techniques. This is not to say he's going to hire Eileen Drewery for the scum anytime soon (we can but hope), but he is open enough to consider ideas which might help individual players. I won't bore you any longer with the details as it will just annoy you as much

as it does me, in that Adrian Boothroyd is an intelligent guy.

It pains me to say it but Hertfordshire's most hated do possess a good coach. Whether he will make a good Manager in the long run remains to be seen, as players may become wary of his different techniques further down the line. I've not met Mike Newell properly (walked past him once and said hello) but he and Boothroyd do appear to be total opposites in the way they manage. This certainly isn't to say W**ford have a better Manager than us. Mike Newell has proved more than Adrian Boothroyd in his career so far. This is just a little insight into the man who will be leading the team in Yellow that we all hate with a passion.

Oh, and what did I say to him? Just said that I supported the mighty Hatters and there was no way possible I could wish him luck for the season. To which he replied 'That's nice'. Even the Devil can come up with random replies.

Steeven Sharpe

Bluebirds 1 Super Hatters 2

I have strong links in Cardiff, one son at Uni there and my brother Mike works in the city so we all had to go to this one. My first visit to Ninian Park since that infamous debacle after our cup win in 94, then amazingly I had managed to get boy and I back to the car unscathed. So it was with some trepidation that I arrived to meet our group of Luton fans, university students plus a couple of Cardiff season ticket holder friends of Mike's in the designated bar! Mike was already worked up - "we've got to win this one otherwise I can't go to work on Monday! Come on you Hatters" A good crack in the bar and we dispersed to go to the match, the uni lads had to go for tickets in the Cardiff section, our Cardiff hosts left us warning us to take care on the way to the ground - didn't need that warning after last time!

What a game! A couple of promising moves before our defence fell asleep to let Ricketts in for a gift wrapped goal. Then the boys took control with sustained attacking football, Super Kev and Holmes bossing the middle with Brkovic and Morgan causing problems down the flanks. Howard and Feeney's movement and link up play was excellent, chances went begging and we worried that it might not be our day! Still with echoes of 94 we scored an equalizer with a player (Howard) in an offside position but not "active" as Berko's cross reached Morgan who couldn't believe the space he had as he buried the ball emphatically! It was wave after wave of Luton attacks and their keeper Alexander pulled off a couple of fine saves. Holmes eventually scrambled home after Howard's header found him clear. More action followed with Howard's thumping drive crashing off the post and Alexander made another fine save to the follow up shot. We had a couple of nervous moments near the end as Cardiff bombarded our goal hitting the upright and Edwards hooking the ball off the line. It would have been an injustice if they had managed to scrape a draw but the defence does need to tighten up, there were moments of hesitation that should have been punished.

It was a great team performance winning at a difficult ground with a partisan crowd. Afterwards we made it back to the bar to enjoy listening to the Cardiff boys tell us "the best team we have seen this season!" I eventually left Mike who was smiling and looking forward to Monday morning!

The Frampton Hatter

The Wiltshire 'Atturrrr

Greetings once again from deepest, darkest and (at the moment) foggiest Wiltshire.

At the time of writing this (if this crap can be described as writing) we are 5th in the table after 20 games. If anyone had offered this league position at the start of the season I would have bitten their hand off. However, from in November has been worrying with 4 or 5 losses on the bounce and it now seems that "illegal and uninvited possession of an opponent's spit" is a red card offence. I was wondering what Bob Carolgees' dog was doing these days.

So big sighs of relief when we tonked Crewe 4-1 and S@*+&ord only drew.

Hardly surprising to hear Junction 10 is no longer an option; if you leave it long enough something is bound to come up. Just think; 15 years ago - planners, surveyors etc standing at the Junction 10 site. "What's the rush? It's not like we're going to win the Olympics or anything."

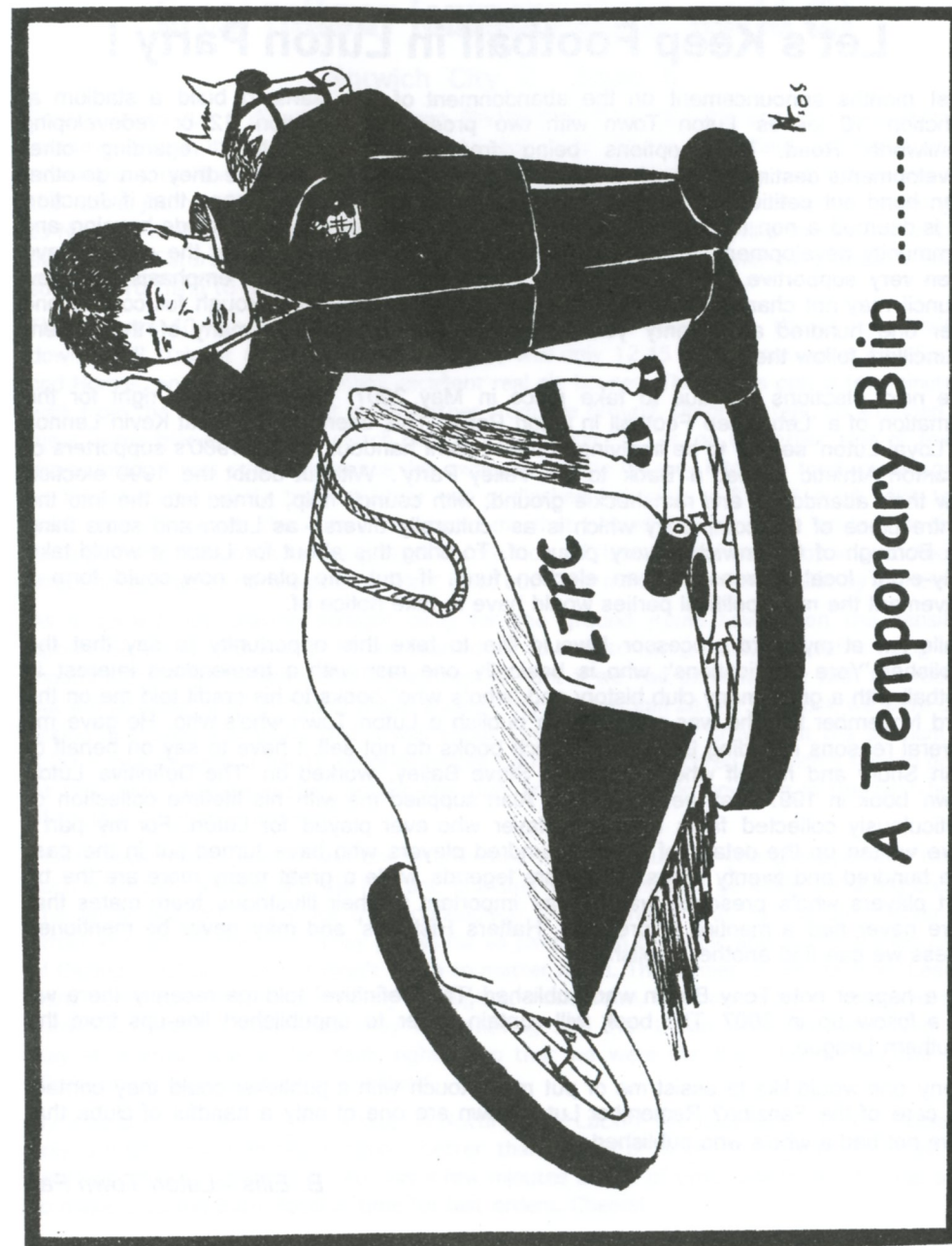
As the chief of the Manhattan Indians said to his tribe 300 odd years ago, "no hurry pitching the tents, lads....."

Now it seems a site at Junction 12 is a "goer"! Are we seeing a trend here? In 15 years will they abandon that because Toddington Services is being turned into Mos Eisley Spaceport and suggest Junction 14? And excuse me, but aren't the first two words in LTFC "Luton" and "Town"? How can it be anywhere other than in the town of Luton (or are we to be The Toddington Hatters)? Ok, a town centre site would be difficult (or would it; they bulldozed it once to build the Arndale) but surely the town can find room within its boundries for its football club.

I still maintain the only positive that could come out of the disgraceful closure of the Vauxhall plant in Luton would be to use part of the site for the new stadium. The site now occupied by the Brache would have been perfect but it is not the only option. The road and rail access is superb and opposing fans can pop into Toys R Us across the road and stock up with things to throw out of their prams when the lose.

Additionally, you only have to look at what happened to Wimbledon when they up-rooted. The fan base disappeared. And the fan base pays the wages.

Finally, a quick joke: How many inhabitants of Vicarage Road does it take to change a light bulb? None, because that s@*t hole is so backward it doesn't have electricity.



A Temporary Blip

Let's Keep Football in Luton Party !

Last months announcement on the abandonment of the plans to build a stadium at Junction 10 leaves Luton Town with two prospects: Junction 12 or redeveloping Kenilworth Road. Both options being fraught with difficulties regarding other developments destined for each site. For supporters there's very little they can do other than hand out petitions to anyone and everyone that matters and hope that if Junction 12 is deemed a non runner Luton Council change their plans which include housing and community development. In fairness Luton Council since they brought the ground have been very supportive. But who is to say that a dramatic change of emphasis by a new council may not change things. It would only take one proposal through full council and over one hundred and twenty years of history has gone. How many of the current councillors follow the club?

The next elections are due to take place in May 2007. So the time is right for the formation of a 'Lets Keep Football in Luton Party'. This seems to be what Kevin Lennon of 'Loyal Luton' seems to be implying in their recent handout. In the 1980's supporters of Charlton Athletic formed a 'Back to the Valley Party'. Without doubt the 1990 election saw their abandoned and ramshackle ground, with council help, turned into the centre piece of the community which is as culturally diverse as Luton and some thing the Borough of Greenwich is very proud of. To bring this about for Luton it would take forty-eight local citizens and an election fund. If put into place now could form a movement the main political parties would have to take notice of.

While I'm at my word processor I would like to take this opportunity to say that the publisher 'Yore Publications'; who is basically one man with a tremendous interest in football with a great many club history and "who's who" books to his credit told me on the 23rd November that he was not going to publish a Luton Town who's who. He gave me several reasons including the fact that such books do not sell. I have to say on behalf of Alan Shury and myself who, along with Steve Bailey, worked on 'The Definitive Luton Town' book in 1997 that we are gutted. Alan supplied me with his lifetime collection of meticulously collected facts on every player who ever played for Luton. For my part I have written up the details of several hundred players who have turned out in the past one hundred and twenty years. Some are legends while a great many more are the bit part players who's presence was just as important as their illustrious team mates that have never had a mention in previous 'Hatters Histories' and may never be mentioned unless we can find another publisher.

On a happier note Tony Brown who published 'The Definitive' told me recently there will be a follow up in 2007. The book will contain hither to unpublished line-ups from the Southern League.

If any one would like to assist me or put me in touch with a publisher could they contact me care of the Fanzine? Remember Luton Town are one of only a handful of clubs that have not had a who's who published.

B. Ellis - Luton Town Fan

Great railway journeys of the world (2)

Norwich City 2 Town 0

Central Trains run a direct service from Sheffield to Norwich - it's one of those strange journeys where it works out cheaper to buy four singles (Sheffield to Nottingham, Nottingham to Norwich, then the same in reverse order) than to buy one day return for the whole journey (Thanks, Keith). With the train departing at 8.38 in order for me to get to Norwich in time to have a pint or two before the game, I was having to get out of bed earlier on a Saturday than I would on a weekday to go to work. Somehow it doesn't seem such a hard thing to do for your team as it is for your employer.

The 3 hours 40 minutes journey was stretched to a full four hours, thanks to a broken down GNER train at Grantham station. Still, it was only 12.45 when I arrived at the Coach and Horses, one of Norwich's many excellent real ale houses. This one is only a few minutes' walk from the station, and not much further from the ground. Unfortunately, I'd arranged to meet some friends for a pre-match pint at the famous Fat Cat, on the other side of town. Never mind, it was only a short bus ride away, so I made my way into the town centre only to find that the whole traffic system was gridlocked following an RTA. A quick visit to a book shop to consult the A to Z convinced me that I could still get there on foot in time for a pint and then back to the ground before kick off. Leaving the bookshop in a southerly direction instead of northwesterly didn't help, but I still made it to the Fat Cat by 2 o'clock.

As it turned out, leaving straight away for the ground would have been the sensible option. So we stayed until 2.30 and started off to walk to the ground, the traffic being still mostly motionless. Which would have been all right if we had been familiar with the route, but it's amazing how confusing these ancient city centres can be. At 3 o'clock we were still asking directions and being told it was about a mile away. Finally arriving at the stadium at 3.20, I took my seat a full 10 seconds before Darren Huckerby scored Norwich's second goal. At this point I was regretting leaving the pub, and we didn't do anything in the next hour of football to change my mind.

The tedious return journey was briefly enlivened by two groups of young supporters, three each from the Canaries and the Hatters, chanting and singing and generally behaving badly. The latter got off at Ely for their connection to Stevenage, but not before making an effort at trashing the train. They got as far as jumping on the table and crushing their cans of Carling - full or empty, it didn't seem to matter much. The former, students from Leeds, were very drunk indeed and barely intelligible. Moderation, lads, moderation. They did say something about a Blades fan they knew having said that Luton were the best team to play at Bramall Lane so far. Yeah, right. Also that we were the first club to sell the full allocation of away seats at Carrow Road.

My itinerary included an hour's stop in Nottingham. Luckily the excellent Vat and Fiddle is only a brief stroll from the station - better than sitting on a bench, anyway. The train to Sheffield, due to arrive at 22.40, was a few minutes ahead of time, which meant I was able to make it to the Bath Hotel in time for last orders. Cheers!

Will Larter

Football Intelligence

I've just listened to Enoch Showunmi on *Hatters World*, fresh from scoring 4 (or was it 5?) goals for the reserves. But it wasn't his goal scoring feat that surprised me (how good are Barnet reserves?) but the fact that he was intelligent, polite and articulate in his post match interview. He even structured his responses using numbers! I felt kind of embarrassed; I had expected Enoch's discourse to be akin to the way he plays; i.e. awkward, gangly and uncomfortable. I couldn't have been more wrong. I like him even more now as a player now I know that he can express himself verbally. Maybe he listens to Radio 4 and can complete *The Times* crossword in 7 minutes? Does it matter? Would you rather have a shit for brains Wayne Rooney or an intelligent Stuart Douglas? (Now there's a comparison...) Well it got me thinking... what is the most intelligent footballing side MN could go out and buy?

I'd love us to get Jody Craddock from Wolves (he is a commissioned artist) and he'd be able to stroke the ball around (see what I've done there?). Or maybe Jason Wilcox from Leicester (A grade for French A Level) to give us a certain "je ne sais quoi".

But who am I kidding? Does it matter if Dean Morgan can't do quadratic equations, or if Brko can quote Shakespeare? At the end of the day (why does everything happen then for footy players???) they are more able than us at the one thing most of us would give our eye teeth to excel at. Anything else is a bonus. Just to reassure us that some footballers still follow the stereotype, I've unearthed some golden oldies from some of the leading lights (and Ade Akinbiyi) of the intelligent game. Right, where's my copy of "Nuts"...

'My parents have been there for me, ever since I was about 7.'

David Beckham

'I would not be bothered if we lost every game as long as we won the league.'

Mark Viduka

'Alex Ferguson is the best manager I've ever had at this level. Well, he's the only manager I've actually had at this level. But he's the best manager I've ever had.'

David Beckham

'If you don't believe you can win, there is no point in getting out bed at the end of the day.'

Neville Southall

'I've had 14 bookings this season - 8 of which were my fault, but 7 of which were disputable.'

Paul Gascoigne

'I've never wanted to leave. I'm here for the rest of my life, and hopefully after that as well.'

Alan Shearer

'I'd like to play for an Italian club, like Barcelona.'

Mark Draper

'You've got to believe that you're going to win, and I believe we'll win the World Cup until the final whistle blows and we're knocked out.'

Peter Shilton

'I faxed a transfer request to the club at the beginning of the week, but let me state that I don't want to leave Leicester.'

Stan Collymore

'I was watching the Blackburn game on TV on Sunday when it flashed on the screen that George (Ndah) had scored in the first minute at Birmingham. My first reaction was to ring him up. Then I remembered he was out there playing.'

Ade Akinbiyi

'Without being too harsh on David Beckham, he cost us the match.'

Ian Wright

'I'm as happy as I can be - but I have been happier.'

Ugo Ehiogu

'Leeds is a great club and it's been my home for years, even though I live in Middlesbrough.'

Jonathan Woodgate

'I can see the carrot at the end of the tunnel.'

Stuart Pearce

'I took a whack on my left ankle, but something told me it was my right.'

Lee Hendrie

'I couldn't settle in Italy - it was like living in a foreign country.'

Ian Rush

'Germany are a very difficult team to play...they had 11 internationals out there today.'

Steve Lomas

'I always used to put my right boot on first, and then obviously my right sock.'

Barry Venison

'I definitely want Brooklyn to be christened, but I don't know into what religion yet.'

David Beckham

'The Brazilians were South America, and the Ukrainians will be more European.'

Phil Neville

'All that remains is for a few dots and commas to be crossed.'

Mitchell Thomas

'One accusation you can't throw at me is that I've always done my best.'

Alan Shearer

Billy Bradshaw

NEXT ISSUE...

A bumper issue this time, with some stuff left out for want of space. Thanks to all who helped in this: The publication date for issue 69 will, all being well, be around February 14th to 17th, and the deadline for that issue will be Wednesday 1st February - although feel free to be in touch sooner (please). All contributions will be welcome, sent to the usual address, as featured on page 2.

STAT ATTACK

Mon 26th Dec Derby County (A)

Another new ground for Luton, and a chance to improve on just 3 away wins previously at Derby. The league history goes back to 1953/54, when the Hatters won the first fixture between the two sides, by two goals to one. It is therefore unlikely that many Town fans also witnessed the next win at Derby, 35 years later! Again by a solitary goal, Mick Harford the only scorer. Thankfully the next win at Derby was only a season away, and what a critical game it was! Luton travelled to the Baseball Ground needing to win on the final game of the season to avoid relegation from the top flight. Kingsley Black was the Hatters hero, scoring twice, with Tim Breacker netting with a fantastic long range effort, in a 3-2 victory. In the 35 year gap there were 8 fixtures, with the home side winning 5 and on 3 occasions the points were shared. Luton's biggest defeat of the 74/75 season was the 5-0 reverse at Derby. Luton have failed to score in 7 of the 16 fixtures, and have kept 4 clean sheets. There have been 5 matches since that dramatic win, twice the Hatters have lost 2-1, and the other games were draws.

Last time: 21 February 1996 Drew 1-1 (Dwight Marshall)

Wed 28th Dec Brighton & Hove Albion (H)

Luton have played host to Brighton on 26 previous occasions, and have come out on top an impressive 17 times, with a further 7 draws. The Hatters have banged in 54 goals and conceded just 25, (and 5 of those came in the rare defeat in 1927/28!). The visitors last won in April 1934, 71 years and 12 games have passed since, with Luton winning 10, and Brighton managing just 7 goals! Luton won 4-0 on Christmas Day 1934, and went one better on their return to the top flight in 82/83. Brian Stein netted a hat trick in the latter match, with Wayne Turner and David Moss also putting their names on the scoresheet. It was 22 years before the sides met again in February 2004, again the home side were victorious. There have only been two goal-less draws (1923/24, and 32/33) and these were the only times the visiting defence have stopped the Hatters scoring.

Last time: 10th February 2004 Won 2-0 (Peter Holmes, Kevin Nicholls (pen))

Sat 31st Dec Ipswich Town (H)

It's 10 years since these two sides were in the same division, and Luton claimed victory on that occasion with a solitary goal scored by David Oldfield. In fact Luton have a strong record at Portman Road, with 3 victories, matching the 3 defeats. Given there have only been 8 previous meetings it doesn't take a mathematician (or even a statistician!) to work out that there have been 2 draws. Both of these were 1-1, in 1984/85 and 1985/86. There was only one meeting in each of the decades 1950's through 1970's. The home side were victorious by 3-1 in 1954/55, but the Hatters claimed a 1-0 win (courtesy of Alwyn McGuffie) in 1960/61, and the same scoreline made it consecutive wins in 1974/75. The latter result was particularly impressive given Luton were relegated in that season, with Ipswich finishing 3rd, and only losing 2 games at home all season! Ipswich maintained their record of scoring 3 every time they beat the Hatters, and in February 1983 and March 1984 these goals were scored without reply.

Last time: 22nd October 1995 (David Oldfield)

Mon 2nd Jan w*tf*rd (H)

From Division 3 South to the top flight the two sides have met on 37 occasions with the Hatters playing host. Luton have won 21 of these fixtures, and there have been 9 draws. The first encounter was on 28th March 1921 and Luton won 1-0 courtesy of a goal from Allan Mathieson. The next victory, 23 January 1926, saw Luton's biggest victory over their rivals, with Billy Agnew netting twice in a 5-0 win. George Dennis, Jimmy Thompson and Norman Thomson were the other scorers on this memorable day. This match started a 6 match unbeaten run at home to the Hornets, further victories followed, 3-2 in 27/28, 2-0 in 29/30 and 4-1 in 1930/31. After a rare defeat in October 1931, Luton returned to winning ways in April 1933. A 3-2 victory was secured courtesy of goals from Davie Hutchison (2) and Doug Rowe. The following season the Hatters were victorious again, Sam Anderson and George Martin scoring the 2-1 win. After a 2-2 draw in November 1934 Luton won the next 3 fixtures, 2-1 in 35/36, 4-1 in 36/37 and 2-1 in 63/64. Watford failed to score during the 1970's at Kenilworth Road, in fact they managed only one goal in nearly 15 years! Luton started the 80's with successive home wins, in less than 18 months! The last of these came in the Championship winning season 1981/82, with David Moss netting a brace of penalties and Brian Stein also scoring twice in a 4-1 victory. The 4th consecutive win came the following season, with both teams in the top flight Luton were 1-0 winners courtesy of Clive Goodyear...with one of his only 3 career goals for the Hatters! In 1984/85 Luton were victorious 3-2, Frankie Bunn with two and Steve Elliott the other. The following season it was the same scoreline that gave the home side all the points once more, and on this occasion it was courtesy of a Mick Harford hat-trick! The 2nd May would nowadays be the final weekend of the season, however in 1988 Luton played another 5 matches after winning 2-1 against Watford, thanks to David Oldfield and a Danny Wilson penalty. The Hornets were relegated at the end of the season so it wasn't until 92/93 that the Hatters were given the opportunity to win again, and this they did in front of the TV camera's with Iain Benjamin's only goal for the Club and a second from Scott Oakes. The following season started with this fixture and Paul Telfer and Kerry Dixon were on target in a 2-1 win.

Last time: Just remember 10th September 2002 and a 2-1 victory in the League Cup, as the less said about the last time at Kenilworth Road the better!

Sat 7th Jan FA Cup Round 3

Liverpool at home... and they haven't won at Kenilworth Road since 1987!

Fri 13th Jan Wolverhampton Wanderers (A)

There has only been 12 league encounters with Luton travelling to Wolverhampton, and the Hatters have come away with maximum points an impressive 5 times, the same number of wins as the home side have managed. There has been an amazing 46 goals which is only 2 short of an average of 4 goals per game!! To be fair this is largely due to the home side having found the net 5 times during 3 of these meetings! In March 1956 Luton won 2-1, thanks to goals from Roy Davies and Tony Gregory. Just 5 months later the two sides met again and in 9 goal feast of a match the home side were victorious 5-4! Gordon Turner scored a hat-trick yet still finished on the losing side! Mick Cullen was the other goal-scorer that day. Luton conceded 5 again, this time without reply, in 1958/59, and again in the relegation season 74/75, this time John Seasman and Jim Ryan did manage to make the score slightly more respectable! The next three encounters all finished in 2-1 wins for the Hatters. John "Dixie" Deans and Jimmy Husband were the scorers in 1976/77, Gary Parker

and Paul Walsh in 1983/84 and Phil Gray netted twice in 1992/93. The last win came in 1994/95 when Kerry Dixon, Dwight Marshall and David Preece all scored in a 3-2 win. Last time: 23rd September 1995 (as above).

Sat 21st Jan QPR (H)

A long history of fixtures between these two sides, with 41 league meetings at Kenilworth Road previously. Luton have 22 victories, 13 draws and just 6 defeats in this fixture. The long term history may be good but in the short term it's not such a good picture, as Luton haven't won in the last six, or putting it another way since 19th April 1988!! The first fixture was back in October 1920, and Luton won this 2-1, and in fact they went on to win the next 6 league meetings between the two sides at KR as well, including a bizarre sequence of 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 4-0 in the 1920's! QPR were victorious 1-0 in 1927/28, but it was back to winning ways for the Hatters after this meeting, with a further 6 consecutive wins. (And this run included 2-1, 3-1, 4-1 and 5-1 score lines!) Luton's next 3 victories were all by 2-0 scorelines 1935/36, 1950/51 and 1964/65). There were 5 consecutive draws after this last victory, before the Hatters won again, 3-0 in 1980/81, courtesy of strikes from Godfrey Ingram, Brian Stein and Raddy Antic. Since a 1-0 defeat in January 1952 Luton were now halfway through a 16 game unbeaten home run against QPR. A 3-2 victory followed in the following season, with Ricky Hill, Steve White and a David Moss penalty providing the goals. It was a further 4 wins and 3 draws before Luton were beaten again, 2-1 in February 1992, 39 years since their last defeat! Rangers made up for lost time, winning again 9 months again.

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

Tues 31st Jan Sheffield Wednesday (A)

Hillsborough has never really been a happy hunting ground for the Hatters, with just two wins in 26 attempts! Luton had lost 8 and drawn 3 before they eventually beat the Owls, but what an impressive victory it was, 5-1!! It was the 1970/71 season, and a Malcolm MacDonald hat-trick, and a brace from Don Givens, meant the Hatters were comfortable winners. Four draws, four more defeats, and 17 years later Luton doubled their win tally with a 2-0 victory, Ian Allinson and Mark Stein were the scorers that day. In the 26 encounters Luton have managed only 25 goals, (bearing in mind 5 of those were scored in one match!) and have conceded 53. The worst defeat was in fact the first ever meeting, when the home side were runaway 6-0 winners.....although few Hatters fans will remember this one, as the match was played 2nd December 1899!! In Luton's promotion season of 1981/82 there was also a 6 goal match, although this time it finished 3-3! Steve White, a David Moss penalty and Brian Stein were the scorers that day. There have been 3 goal-less draws, and two of those have come in the last two matches!

Last time: 4th September 2004 Drew 0-0

Sat 4th Feb Hull City (H)

Well who could forget last season's encounter between the top two sides in the division, Ahmet Brkovic's late header almost bringing the roof off the Kenilworth Stadium! Strangely this was the first of the 7 victories that the Hatters only scored one goal! Hull have won on 6 occasions and there have been 4 draws. Three of these were 1-1, (1952/53, Christmas Day 1954 and 1977/78) and the other finished 2-2 in October 1973 when Peter Anderson and Barry Butlin scored. Unusually it wasn't until the fourth match that Luton were

victorious at home, with a 3-2 win in 1952/53. The Hatters made it two from two, in the following season, when Gordon Turner (2) and Charlie Watkins scored in a 3-1 win. The early 70's brought two defeats and a draw before Luton won two on the bounce once more. On the opening day of the 1975/76 season Ron Fletcher and Andy King scored in a 2-0 win, with John Aston and Jimmy Husband scoring in a 2-1 win in 1976/77. There was then a 24 year wait before the two sides met in the league again, and it was the visitors, courtesy of former Hatter Rob Matthews, that went home with maximum points.

Last time: 12th February 2005 Won 1-0 (Ahmet Brkovic)

Sat 11th Feb Preston North End (A)

Like the trips to Sheffield Wednesday, Luton fans rarely return from Preston celebrating 3 points. In fact Luton have never celebrated 3 points at Preston as their only victories came in 1949/50 and 1971/72, when Clubs were only awarded 2 points for winning! Everything started so well in this fixture though, with the Hatters winning the first encounter, courtesy of a goal from Wally Shanks. It was 4 defeats in a row against Preston following that fixture, before a point was gained in a goal-less draw in April 1959. A further 3 defeats followed before the Hatters were 1-0 winners in January 1972, with Alan Slough the scorer. Luton were defeated 2-0 in December 1972, and in this run of 11 trips had managed only 4 goals! The other scorers were Peter MacEwan, in a 2-1 defeat in August 1955, and Gordon Turner, in a 3-1 defeat in 1962/63. Therefore it was a very unusual site to witness the Hatters scoring twice (John Aston and Rodney Fern) in November 1973, and even more unusual to see them do it again in April 1979, when an own goal and a David Moss strike gave Luton, as in 73, another 2-2 draw. The run of draws continued in the following season, with Bob Hatton scoring in a 1-1 stalemate. Since then the home side have had the upper hand, winning the last 5 meetings!

Last time: 18th March 2000 Lost 0-1

Tues 14th Feb Cardiff City (H)

This will be the 27th meeting at Kenilworth Road, with the Hatters holding a 15-3 advantage. Luton also hold a massive 69-26 goals scored advantage! As you can see scoring isn't normally a problem for the Hatters in this fixture, and in fact they have only once failed to score, a 0-0 draw in March 1950 (the second in a run of four consecutive goal-less draws that season!). In 20 of these matches the home side have scored at least twice, and amazingly have scored 7 or more on 3 occasions! October 1932 and Luton were 8-1 winners, including a hat-trick for Tommy Tait. There were two hat-tricks in January 1937, with Joe Payne (4) and George Stephenson (3) scoring in another 8-1 victory. (Trivia time and Luton have only scored 8 or more against four other current league Clubs, can you name them?!?). The other big win came in September 1978, 7-1, and although there were no hat-tricks David Moss and Brian Stein both scored a brace. It took Cardiff 14 attempts to beat the Hatters at Kenilworth Road, 3-2 in April 1963, but it took another 17 years to celebrate again, this time 2-1 in 79/80. Luton's Championship winning season of 81/82 saw them lose just twice at Kenilworth Road, and they both came in the first 3 home games of the season! The second of these was to Cardiff, despite goals from Mike Saxby and Raddy Antic the Hatters lost 3-2. The two sides didn't meet for 18 years in the league after that fixture, and Luton won in 1999/2000 courtesy of a Phil Gray strike.

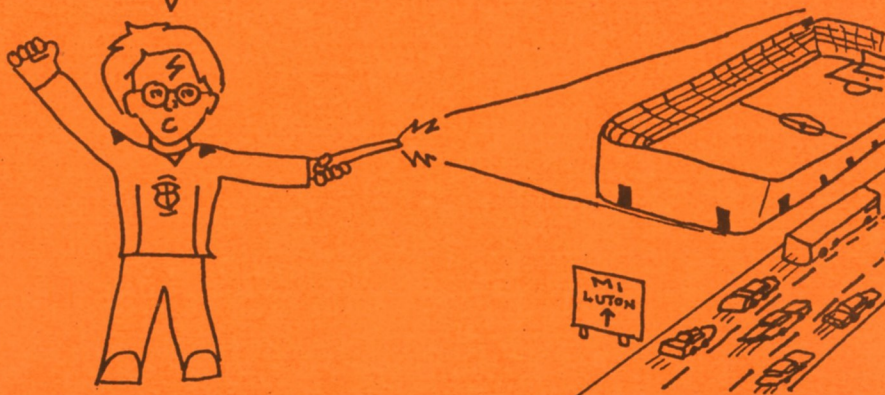
Last time: 26th December 2002 Won 2-0 (Tony Thorpe, Steve Howard)

Simon "Statto" Pitts

Directed by Mike Newell:

HARRY POTTER & THE STADIUM OF DIRE

THE MOVE TO JUNCTION 10 IS
F**KED, SO WE'LL JUST HAVE
TO MOVE TO JUNCTION 9³/₄!



Starring: Happy Harry as Harry Potter, Kevin Nicholls as Ron, Ahmet Brkovic as Hermione, Bill Tomlins as Dumbledore and the faceless Luton Council/Luton Airport/Government stadium hope destroyers as the equally faceless evil followers of Lord Voldemort.

BDaveB