

THE HATTER

issue 3
30p



Featuring:
David Preece
Interview
.....
The Mr Men
.....
Hatters
Diary



The Hatter,
18 Dewpond Rd.
Flitwick,
Beds.



Editor: Simon

A big thanks to: Mick, Paul, Ken, Paul Stewart and David Preece.

Availability: The Hatter is available on match days from our selling points at Oak Road, Maple Road and Kenilworth Road. Back issues are available from the address above.

Please send any articles or letters to us so we can print them in future issues. Any contributions are much appreciated and entitle you to a free copy.

The Hatter is not connected to Luton Town Football Club in anyway (except we support the team).

Anyone who feels misquoted or offended has the right to reply.

All views contained in this publication are those of the individual contributor and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

Any outlets who would like to help us sell are most welcome.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to Issue 3 of The Hatter. As you can hopefully see, we have improved the look of our fanzine.

Our last Editorial was very critical of things at the time and over Christmas we were proved wrong, as the lads won three out of three and were very unlucky at Forest. But since then we haven't won, we are out of the Cup and we keep on chucking games away in the last few minutes. We realised at Sheffield United in the Cup how much better the whole defence look with Steve Sutton in goal. We will just have to hope that the board will make money available to sign him.

Troubles still lie off the pitch. Kohler said on the local radio that we are losing thousands of pounds a week. He complains about a decrease in attendances this season. He forgets that there is quite a lot less space for home fans now that the Oak Road has been allocated to away fans and the capacity of the Kenilworth Road End has been reduced. He also moans about the cost of police bills. Perhaps he should have considered this before he announced his (welcome) decision to scrap the ban on away fans.

A source tells me that David Pleat is earning double the amount that Jimmy Ryan was earning last season. Considering that Jim Ryan had Luton in a much healthier position this time last year, you feel that David Pleat is being paid a lot because of his so called, "High Profile" image.

Anyway that's it for this issue. Please send any articles, letters, cuttings etc to the usual address.

Come on you Hatters!

DAVID PREECE

interview...

Ed: How do you think the season has gone so far?

DP: Very disappointingly. At the beginning of the season, after three years being in the relegation fight you hope we'll get away. We're a little club and you just hope for a Cup run and to stay in the First Division. This year with Mick back and the young players doing well we hoped to come about midway in the table. But we've chopped and changed the team and the manager is getting to know the players. We had a bad start so we were in trouble from the beginning.

Ed: How confident are the players about staying in the First Division this season?

DP: You've got to be confident all the time, if you're not then you'll stay down there and get tailed off. We've been a few points a drift and come back already this season but eventually you run out of games.

Ed: Who do you think the main rivals are in the relegation battle this year?

DP: You have to look at the teams down there. You've got Notts County, West Ham, Southampton, Wimbledon. We've got to play them all so we really need to beat them to catch them up. If we can do that we'll be alright.

Ed: How disappointed are the players when we keep on conceding last minute goals?

DP: Very disappointed. The last dozen or so games we've only lost by the odd goal or drawn. It's disappointing to play the best teams in the country

and lead for 80 minutes and then concede a couple of goals in the last few minutes. It gets the players down.

Ed: It seems as though without Mick Harford we cannot score enough goals?

DP: When you've got the best striker in the country at the team, unlike the big clubs we haven't got replacements of the same standard. No disrespect to our boys but our reserve strikers are very young. They are not very experienced and you can't expect too much of them.

Ed: What about Sean Farrell?

DP: Sean went to Fulham and is playing quite well. Maybe the manager just thought it was time to sell.

Ed: How do you feel when your team mates are sold off by the board?

DP: Well it's been the same since I came to the club in 1984. When you see players going at the time you think it's part of football. But you need someone to come the other way-It would be nice to see a player brought to the club. It doesn't matter what sort of player, it's just that you see players go without suitable cover.

Ed: What do you think about Steve Sutton? Do you think he will stay?

DP: He's a very good 'keeper and it's up to the board to sign him I suppose. But certainly Steve is a very good player.

Ed: How did the players feel about the sacking of Jim Ryan?

DP: I think the players were very upset. On what

sort of reign he had here he did quite well. He hadn't really bought anyone and he had to sell players. He brought the football back to Luton, as David Pleat has done, and the public liked that. The players and the fans thought he had a rough deal.

Ed: How do you think this Luton side compares to others you've played in?

DP: Well when I first came here in about '84, it was the best side I've ever played in and we progressed between about '86 to '88 were the best years. Players like Sealey, Breacker, Donaghy, Foster, Donaghy, Thomas, Nicholas, Hill, Stein, Nwajobi and Harford. They were probably the best team I've ever played with and they never really did justice because they should have won more things than they did.

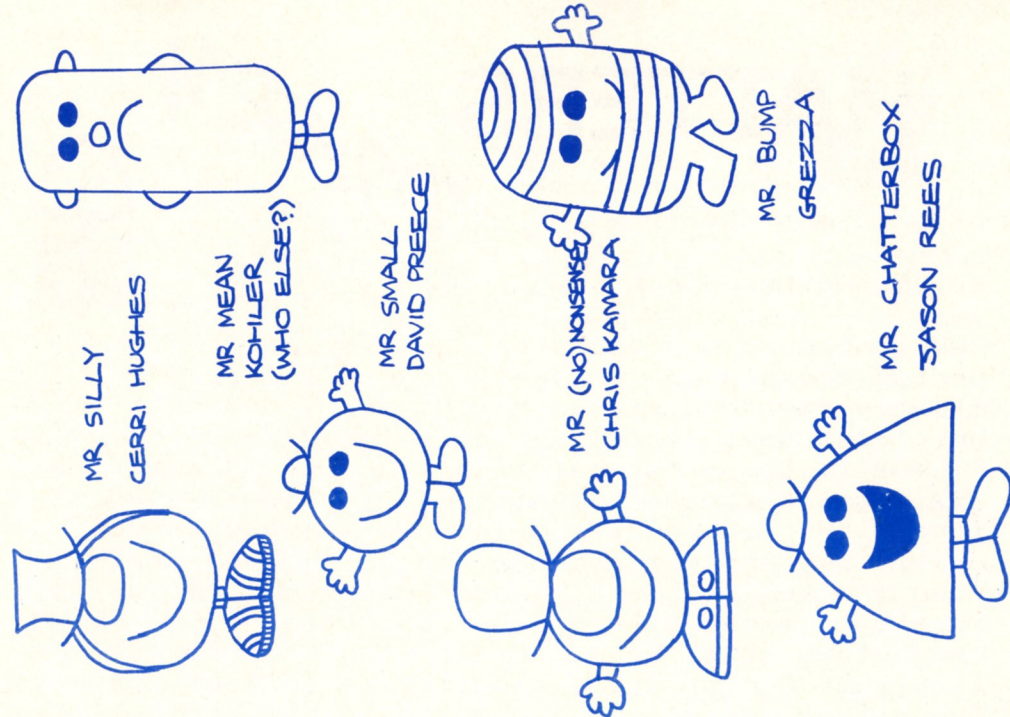
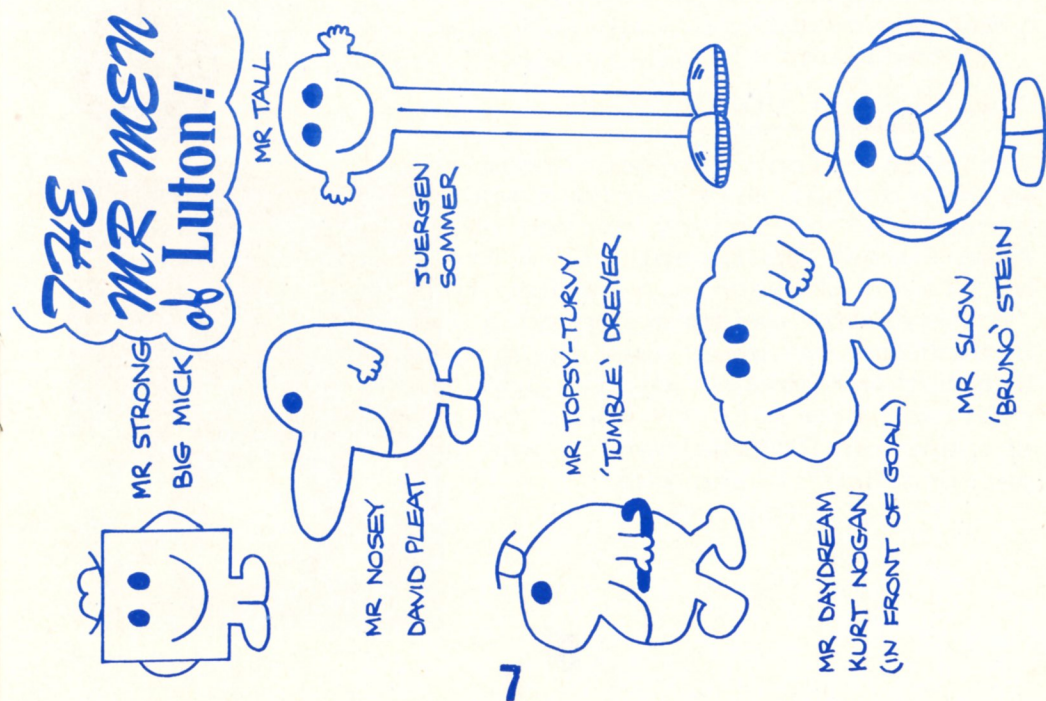
Ed: What are your thoughts about the Super League?

DP: I already think it's a Super League. I think the Super League are trying to get the big grounds and I know the clubs with the big grounds are trying to put the clubs with the smaller grounds in the Second, Third and Fourth Divisions. Well I think it's a Super League at the moment with the best 22 clubs in the country.

Ed: Perhaps if we go down this season we may never get into a Super League...

DP: I've been thinking about that myself, not about the Super League but if we happen to go down, I've seen signs during the last dozen games that we've been playing very well and if we kept most of the players, I think we could come straight back up but it would be very hard. But I don't want to go down.

John



HATTERS

D9ARU



1.1.92 Notts Forest

We continued our unbeaten run over the Christmas period and played very well. Mark Pembridge was clearly the "Man of the Match" and scored a brilliant goal after just 30 seconds. We outplayed Forest in the first half and had many more chances.

We started the second half as we played in the first, but for about the last 20 minutes Forest really put the pressure on. We defended well and even blocked a Stuart Pearce free-kick. In the last couple of minutes Forest had about five corners in a row but we still held out. It wasn't until injury time that Forest stole a point. We lost the ball to Des Walker who scored a good goal (his first ever). What was he doing in our half? Anyway a draw isn't a bad result.



4.1.92 Sheff Utd (FA Cup)

It didn't look too good from about 2 o'clock when we heard that Mick Harford would not be playing because of an injury picked up the previous day. Also Forest would not allow Steve Sutton to play, so we played Chamberlain rather than a goalkeeper!

Anyway, the defence looked a lot worse without Sutton and we gave away four fairly soft goals. Without Harford we didn't look like scoring and realised how much he would be missed during his suspension. Altogether it was another crap performance in the cup!

11.1.92 Liverpool



Once again our defence gave up for the last five minutes. In the first half we were by far the better team having more chances. Paul Telfer came close after just six minutes when his long-range shot was deflected onto the crossbar. From the corner, Dreyer struck a good volley which Grobbelaar saved. Our luck came in the 31st minute when Nick Tanner played a terrible back-pass which ended up in the net. Liverpool were quiet until the closing stage of the first half when John Barnes forced a great save out of Steve Sutton.

Ronny Rosenthal came on for the second half and proved to be a handful. Liverpool stepped up the pace and had two scoring chances—Dreyer blocked a fierce shot from Thomas and Ray Houghton hit the post. Dreyer was in brilliant form and we looked set for victory until the 85th minute. Harvey should have cleared a low cross and allowed McManaman to score. We were all disappointed with a draw but worse was to come. Dean Saunders scored the winner well into injury time. The Scousers had robbed us again!



QUESTION

Will Nick Tanner score more goals for Luton than Brian Stein this season?

ANSWER

Probably!!

Playing Away

This is the first of a series of articles about players who have recently left the Town and how successful they have been.

KINGSLEY BLACK

Having recently attended the Forest game and having been told by a number of Forest fans in the pub before the game that we were welcome to take him back to Luton on the Team Coach, clearly Kingsley is not too popular at the moment. Mark Pembridge was the best player on the pitch during the first half of the Forest game and I remarked that Clough had clearly bought the wrong player, nobody around me disagreed. I gather that early in the season Clough had been watching Phil Gray but bought Kingsley by mistake, obviously Clough is colour blind!

Kingsley was of course a popular player during his Town days being the local "Mr Nice Guy" and who could possibly forget the roasting he gave Niggie Winterbum during THE FINAL, or the two goals at Derby but to be honest he has no pace, is not aggressive and was usually fairly anonymous for two games out of three for the Town. To achieve the fee which we did was magnificent and it was a pity that we were not able to spend more of the money to strengthen the team.

I hope Kingsley has some success at his new club and that he will help us in the inevitable fight against relegation by beating the likes of West Ham, Southampton and Sheffield United, and who knows, he may do a Luther Blissett and return to us for a fraction of the transfer fee which Forest paid.

CUP WINNERS '88

Part 3-November 1987
Town v Ipswich (4th Round)

The draw for the fourth round gave Luton a somewhat tricky tie, away at Ipswich. At the time, they were chasing promotion and were unbeaten at home all season.

A crowd of 15,000 at Portman Road saw Luton's toughest battle yet. Brian Stein scored what proved to be the winner after only four minutes. He received a pass from brother Mark, took it past a couple of defenders and ended with a shot past the Ipswich 'keeper. A brilliant solo goal.

For the rest of the match Town found themselves defending as Ipswich pushed for an equaliser. It did not come. Foster and Donaghy proved to be immovable in defence, and Breacker and Harvey also had solid performances.

The whole team came back to defend for the last few minutes but Ipswich, who had many more goal attempts than us, couldn't find the net. So we had held on for a place in the fifth round, and this defiant performance had left us thinking a Wembley appearance may be on the cards.

Team: Sealey, Breacker, Harvey, McDonough, Foster, Donaghy, Wilson, B.Stein, Harford, M.Stein, Black

Att: 15,643

Next issue: Part 4 The Quarter Final-Luton v Bradford at Kenilworth Road.

GAME after GAME

There has been a rather alarming pattern forming over the course of the season, one which has cost us many points already, and that is that dreadful last-minute goal.

Game after game it seems to happen, and, of course, you tell yourself it can't happen again-but it does. For some reason we just can't seem to hold on to benefit from the tremendous work done for the previous 85 or so minutes.

Our recent football has been very good, and we could have been looking back at some very momentous victories-not just at home, but away too. So rather than marvelling at our successes at Bramall Lane, City Ground, Anfield and Hillsborough, we are struggling at the bottom end of the table again.

At home and in the cups we have seen similar misfortunes. Against Notts. County, Sheffield Wednesday (home), Birmingham and Ipswich. So what can we do about these last-minutes jitters? It seems the players, Manager or coaching staff cannot answer that. Is this a symbol that we may not have the bottle for the relegation battle ahead this year? I hope not. Certainly there seems to be a problem, but the lads do look determined for 95% of the game.

Can we point a finger of blame on anyone? Certainly on some occasions players have been out of position when doing so was ridiculous, or the lads could be accused of sitting back on a one-goal lead. The blame for that must lie in the half-time talk. The message must be for the players to stay calm, and play a normal game for the WHOLE match.

We must hope we can tighten things up, and put a stop to these conceded goals, which are so often unfair (but can't always be put down to bad luck), and start getting the results we deserve. The football can do it, if only the nerve will hold.

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IN SHORT



GREZZA LEAVES...

After a brief spell on loan, centre half Graham Rodger has signed for Second Division Grimsby for a fee of £135,000.

"Grezza" signed for the Town in 1989 for £150,000 from Coventry. He only played a handful of games and was fairly injury prone. He was slow, clumsy and overall a bit of a donkey!

But let's wish Graham a more successful career at Grimsby and hopefully the money gained from his transfer will be used to sign Steve Sutton.

INJURED AGAIN...

After making a comeback from injury and scoring for the reserves against Watford a couple of weeks ago, Phil "Earl" Gray is back on crutches. If the injury is serious he may not even play again this season.

Phil has proved that he is a very good striker but it seems that we have bought someone who is constantly injured. His career at Tottenham was ruined by injuries and he has already been injured for over three months so far at Luton. Anyway we hope he will recover soon to play alongside Mick Harford in attack.

Phil Gray



A Luton fan living in Liverpool is trying to start a L.T.F.C Northern Supporters Branch and would like to hear from any Northern based Town fans. If you can help, please contact:

Keith Brooksbank, 5b Sunnyside, Devonshire Road, Liverpool. L8 3TD.



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ALL SEATER STADIA...

We have recently received a letter concerning a proposed "National Show of Strength Against All Seater Stadia" from "The Hammers Independant Supporters Association".

They asked for our advice and support in a national demonstration by all clubs on February 29th, involving all home and away fans in every ground in the country. The proposed demonstration is that at 3pm at kick off time, for one minute, everyone standing sits down and everyone sitting down, stands up. A similar demonstration successfully took place at Upton Park recently.

We would like to hear your views about all seater stadia and see how strongly you feel about the matter. Please write any letters to us here at The Hatter.

