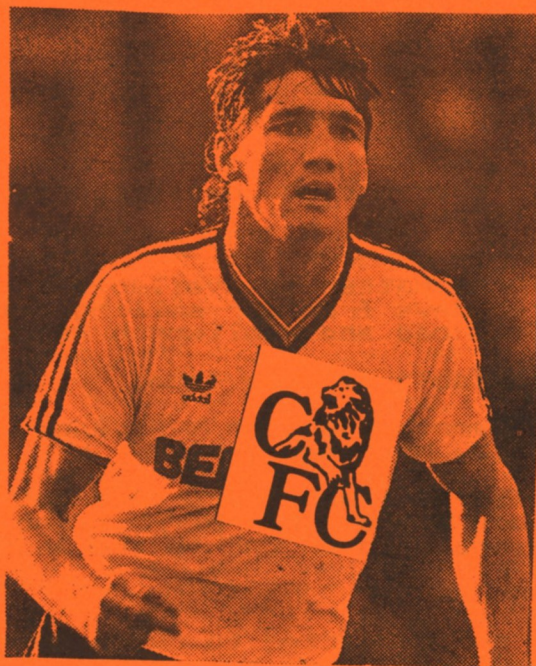


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Issue 5

THE HATTER



WHO'S NEXT?

THE HATTER

54, Osprey Rd, Flitwick, Beds.

Editor: Simon

Sellers: Scott, Dave, Paul

Also cheers to everyone who has supported us and those who write to us.

Availability: The Hatter is available around the ground on match days from our selling points at Maple Road, Oak Road and Kenilworth Road.

The Hatter is also available from:

The Beautiful Game: King John's Arcade,
Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham

Back issues: Issues 1 and 2 are sold out but copies of issues 3 and 4 can be obtained by sending 30p along with an SAE to the above address.

The Hatter is not connected to Luton Town Football Club in any way (except we support the team). All views contained in this publication are those of the individual contributor and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor. Anyone who feels misquoted or offended has the right to reply.

Please send any articles, letters or cuttings that can be used in future issues to the above address. Any contributions are much appreciated and entitle you to a complementary copy.

Editorial

After the disastrous day at that crappy ground named Meadow Lane, the start of the close season was very quiet. This was until the inevitable sale of our brightest young talent for some time, Mark Pembridge. Although one and a half million pounds may seem a lot of money to pay for a youngster who has little over a year's experience of first team football, when you consider Pembo's prospects and the fact that players such as Geoff Thomas are retailing at around three million pounds, you feel that he could have fetched at least two million.

We had a successful tour of Sweden but were then defeated by the likes of Exeter and struggled to come away with a draw at Plymouth. After attending the friendly match against Q.P.R, I must admit I began to wonder where the hell our goals would come from this season. Okay we have Claridge and Gray but with Claridge already out and Gray so injury prone, I can't think of anyone else who is capable of scoring a few goals. I have often said we could do with a player such as Danny Wilson in the team. Perhaps we will have to rely on Lord Lucan (Julian James) to be our target man this year.

Regarding the departure of Mick Harford it is an absolute disgrace. If what the press say is true and Kohler arranged the deal without even Pleat's knowledge then all that can be said is that it's absolutely scandalous. No other club I can think of has to put up with these sort of disgraceful dealings that go on behind the board's back. At the moment our only financial hope is to produce fine young talent that we can sell for large fees. But with players diminishing as fast as an England cricket innings, we will eventually be left with worse and worse youngsters in the team that will not be able to fetch any transfer fee. Then what will happen? Our only hope must be for a millionaire who is a Luton supporter to come along and put some money into the club unlike any of our current board.

We welcome Steve Claridge whose fee is still undecided and Chris Brooks who we signed from some unknown team. Also our Yankee trialist Paul Wright who we have for a month. For those who don't know he was the black guy who came on against Rangers. The only other major change is the return of Wayne Turner who replaces Colin Murphy as assistant coach. Murphy of course is the new manager of Southend and if his past record is anything to go by then relegation is a certainty for Southend! Lets just hope Turner is a better coach than he was a player!

91-92 REVIEW

When David Pleat was appointed as manager we thought that we may have a chance of avoiding relegation. We had made a couple of signings in the close season but we were firm favourites with the bookies for the drop. After losing all our friendlies in East Anglia including a 4-0 defeat at the hands of Peterborough I began to agree with William Hill and Co.

The first day of the campaign saw a trip to Upton Park against a fancied West Ham team. Bruno Stein made a comeback to the First Division and was the man of the match. After a tough performance we were fairly satisfied with a 0-0 draw. A couple of days later we had the midweek trip to Coventry which saw us lose 5-0. We had a goal disallowed, the defence were crap and Fazza had an early bath after elbowing Peakey in the face!

Our first home game saw the return of grass and away fans and we held the scousers of the red variety to a 0-0 draw. We then had a couple of away defeats losing 2-0 to Arsenal and 4-1 to Chelsea where Phil Gray scored our first goal of the season. Next we played Southampton at home and we won! The score was 2-1 in a thrilling contest. Kurt Nogan showed us all his enthusiasm after losing 3-0 to Wimbledon at Selhurst. His two fingered gesture to the crowd summed up the twat!

The visit of Oldham to Kenilworth Road remains one of the most memorable matches of the season. Mick Harford made his return a day to remember by equalising with about ten minutes to go and then scoring the winner in the last minute. "Micky is back", was the chant of the day. The next few games were very disappointing losing to Q.P.R, Manchester United (5-0) and then going out of the Rumbelows Cup to Birmingham when we conceded a last minute goal.

Neil Warnock had been complaining about unfair penalties going against Notts, County and then his team scored a last minute equaliser from the spot in the 1-1 draw at Kenilworth Road. Morale went down after this game and we had a poor sequence of results. This was until the Christmas period when we beat Coventry, Arsenal and Chelsea at home before getting a draw at Forest on New Year's Day when Des Walker equalised in injury time with his first ever goal. January was a disappointing month with defeats against Liverpool, West Ham and a 4-0 drubbing at Bramhall Lane in the F.A. Cup.

The highlight of February was beating Sheffield United 2-1 at home with Bruno scoring his first goal of the season. Steve Sutton played his last game for the Town in a 2-0 defeat at Elland Road and then Mervyn Day played his first game on-loan against Crystal Palace. We drew 1-1 with a great goal from Scott Oakes. We had a couple more draws against Tottenham and Everton before the real six pointer against Southampton. Town were given a dream start when Pembo scored a brilliant 20-yard free kick. We held on for most of the game until the officials decided they wanted us to lose. Day was alleged to have carried the ball outside the area and from the resulting corner, Mervyn looked to have been fouled and Southampton scored. The winner came right at the end after a foul on Day by "Sheep" Shearer, ugly man Dowie scored from an offside position. I remember leaving the Dell and thinking we were definately down.

We had two vital home victories against Forest and Wimbledon and then lost 5-1 at Oldham. The Q.P.R. away game was a real sickener. As it turned out if we could have held on to victory we would have stayed up. But we made the usual cock up of conceding a late equaliser and then a winner in the last minute.

So it was all down to the usual last day escape where we had to win and Coventry had to lose at Villa. The latter went as planned with Villa defeating Coventry 2-0. It's just ashame we failed to win an away game all season. Warnock's team were determined to take us down with them and succeeded. Harford and Pembo, both playing their last games for the Town came close on a number of occasions before Julian James eventually gave us the lead. We looked set to go into the interval as leaders but County equalised with a fairly soft goal. We missed a number of good chances in the second half before County took the lead. For the last 20 minutes or so we piled on the pressure but failed to score. The final whistle went and we had lost 2-1 and that was the end of ten years in the top flight. We had one of the best records in the league at home last season but failed to win just one game on our travels.

Promises?

In August of 1991 when David Pleat was appointed as manager we were told by Kohler that there was no pressure to sell any players and Pleat himself said before his appointment, that he would only sign a contract with Kohler if he was promised that no players would be sold without his backing. Kohler must have agreed to this and if so, what a load of crap! We all know this has not been the case and after one year we can see that Pleat has made over £4.5 million through player sales and only one million of that has actually been used to buy players. So despite Kohler's promises Pleat has already been forced to raise £3.5 million in just one year and still we have the prospect of selling further players.

These are the players that have been sold under Pleat:

Lars Elstrup	£250,000
Kingsley Black	£1,500,000
Matthew Jackson	£600,000
Dave Beaumont	£110,000
Sean Farrell	£100,000
Graham Rodger	£135,000
Darren McDonough	£90,000
Mark Pembridge	£1,500,000
Mick Harford	£300,000
TOTAL	£4,585,000

The following have been bought under Pleat:

Phil Gray	£275,000
Trevor Peake	£100,000
Steve Thompson	£180,000
Mick Harford	£325,000
Chris Kamara	£150,000
TOTAL	£1,030,000

(Steve Claridge's fee is yet to be decided)

Pleat was only able to buy these five players last season and already one of them has been sold. Despite making a trading profit of £3,555,000 Kohler told us that we couldn't afford £300,000 for Steve Sutton. Enough said.

U.S.A. LESS

Again it seems we begin the season like the last without a shirt sponsor. With yet another new kit hitting the streets, setting the fans back another thirty quid, it appears that Mr Kohler, our hard working M.D. has once again failed his task of finding a sponsor.

Rumour has it that Universal Salvage, who initially agreed a one year deal, were willing to continue sponsoring the Town for another year. Apparently Kohler insisted on a better deal and ended up with nothing (smart business move, eh?). Perhaps U.S.A wanted to auction Kohler's Range Rover as part of the deal or maybe first refusal on the scrap metal from the old floodlight pylons.

At a time when teams such as Peterborough, to name but one, have signed up new three year better deals with companies it seems that once again Luton Town are way behind other clubs and it's about time a certain bearded git learnt to negotiate without losing vital deals.

Oh! Mickey, Mickey!

Once again our hero Big Mick has been sold off by the board this time to that scummy team Chelsea. David Pleat told the press that he was disappointed to lose Harford and that it was a decision made entirely by the board. Apparently the deal had been arranged without even Pleat's knowledge and it was a case of Mick choosing his club as Everton and Coventry were also interested. Harford was informed by Pleat and despite wanting to stay at Luton, he was a Chelsea player the next day.

Harford made a vital contribution to our battle last season and without his goals and his good influence on the rest of the team, we would have no doubt been relegated well before the last day. According to the press and those who attended our friendlies in the west country, Mick was about our only decent player in the team and he was finally playing alongside Phil Gray.

We wish Mick the best of luck in the future and hope his services will be appreciated somewhere and who knows in a year or two he may return to the Kenny. Lets hope so!

HATTERS DIARY

Luton's pre-season tour of Sweden proved to be successful with the team scoring plenty of goals. Here are the results of the matches.

July 22nd TOWN 1 SPANGA 1

Scorer: Brooks

July 25th TOWN 4 KRYLBO 0

Scorers: Claridge(2), Dakes, Rees(pen)

July 26th TOWN 4 MARITIMO 0

Scorers: Dakes(2), Campbell, Salton

July 28th TOWN 6 ALTA 1

Scorers: Gray(3), Dakes, Rees, Johnson

July 29th TOWN 4 EMTARNA 1

Scorers: Gray, Dakes, Harford, Campbell

TOWN 0 Q.P.R 0

On the day that Mick Harford was sold, Luton Town demonstrated their inability to organise anything, this time a friendly fixture. They barely advertised the 6:30 kick-off which was due to a row with the electricians resulting in no floodlights on one side of the ground.

I had previously heard on Luton Town Clubcall that tickets would be sold on the night and were available for the Main Stand only and that there would be no reserved seats. When I arrived at the Kenny I realised that the game was already in progress and discovered that the queue for tickets extended halfway down Kenilworth Road. If there were no reserved seats then why the hell was it forbidden to pay at the door? Instead you had to queue for ages outside the ticket office while the game was going on and then once again at the turnstile. When will L.T.F.C ever learn?

Anyway on to the game. In a pretty boring first half both teams were evenly matched with the best chance falling to Phil Gray after about twenty minutes. It came from a good build up and ended with Gray stumbling his shot wide of the target from about ten yards away with only the keeper to beat.

Q.P.R dominated the second half hitting the bar once and forcing many good saves out of Petterson who had a good game in goal. Our Yankee trialist Paul Wright replaced an ineffective Campbell as a late substitute and started to liven up the attack. The match ended a couple of minutes early with a bit of a brawl in the middle of the pitch!

PS: Congratulations to the Police who outnumbered the Rangers fans in the Oak Road!



Leicester 2 Town 1

A good following of about two thousand travelled to Filbert Street (home of that crappy terrace) for the opening day of the campaign and we would have gone home happy if it wasn't for our familiar routine of chucking games away in the last minute of games.

Our opening goal of the season came after just half an hour from none other than Jamie Campbell (was that his first ever touch?). But Leicester equalised on the stroke of half-time when Town's defence decided not to bother marking anyone.

We looked pretty much on top in the second half although we had Petterson to thank for keeping us in the game on numerous occasions with some brilliant saves. Hughes had a good game and nearly scored after an excellent run and shot. Gray also came close but was denied by a post. Steve Claridge came on as a late substitute and added some much needed strength into the attack. On the whole the team looked quite good until the inevitable last minute cock up. Dreyer and Co. failed to clear from a corner and Leicester scored an easy goal.

The highlight of the day must have been for the ten or so of us who surged through the wall of stewards and booted the gate open to get out at the end!!!

We have researched footballer's surnames and found the following amongst different clubs in the Football League.

FOOTBALL'S MENU

The Paul Price includes a service charge for our Lee Butler and Richard Cooke.

MAIN COURSE:

PAUL BACON
BARRY VENISON
JESSE ROAST ANDY LEGG OF ALAN LAMB
DAVID CURRIE WITH BRIAN RICE

FISH MENU:

CHRIS PIKE
PETER HADDOCK
MICHAEL SALMON

(All served with Bert Millichips)

DESSERTS:

DARREN McDoughnut
MICHAEL MELON
STEVE PEARS
STEVE CHERRY
PAUL LEMON

BEVERAGES:

STEPHEN STOUTT
PAUL McGuinness
ADRIAN WHITBREAD
JASON PERRY

Our drinks come from the Scott Sellars and are served in an Allen Tankard.

IN SHORT

After attending the Leicester away game I would like to say how badly the match was policed. They certainly provoked trouble and ended up arresting about six Luton fans from the visitor's seats. Okay the fans were giving the linesman some abuse but the Police totally over reacted and when a couple of fans danced about on the pitch when we scored the Police took further action. They escorted about five or six Town fans out of the ground whilst chants of "Luton aggro, Luton aggro" came from the terrace. This was the first piece of trouble involving Town fans at an away game for ages and the cause being the Police.

Once again Alec Chamberlain has been left in the cold by David Pleat. After desperately trying to find a goalkeeper to replace Alec last season, Pleat even preferred to play Mervyn Day in the team. Chamberlain came back into the team at the end of last season and made some good performances. He was then placed on the transfer list at the end of the season and now Aussie rookie Andy Petterson has been given the breakthrough and has taken his chance well with an excellent game at Leicester. So surely now Alec Chamberlain will never play for the first team again.

The transfer of Steve Claridge has finally been completed at a Football League tribunal with Luton agreeing to pay Cambridge £160,000 for Claridge now with a 25% share of any future transfer fee. Claridge looks to be just what we need up front and he had an excellent goalscoring record at Cambridge. Will he be the new Mick Harford?



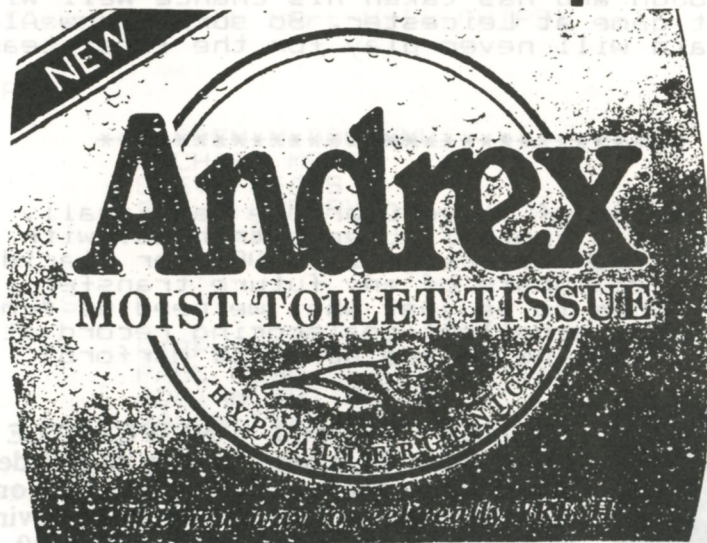
FORMER England striker Brian Stein has joined Barnet as a non-contract player where elder brother Edwin is coach.

NEWCASTLE are ready to sell defender Darren McDonough, who cost Kevin Keegan £90,000 from Luton in March and has played only two first team games.

Top 10 Chart

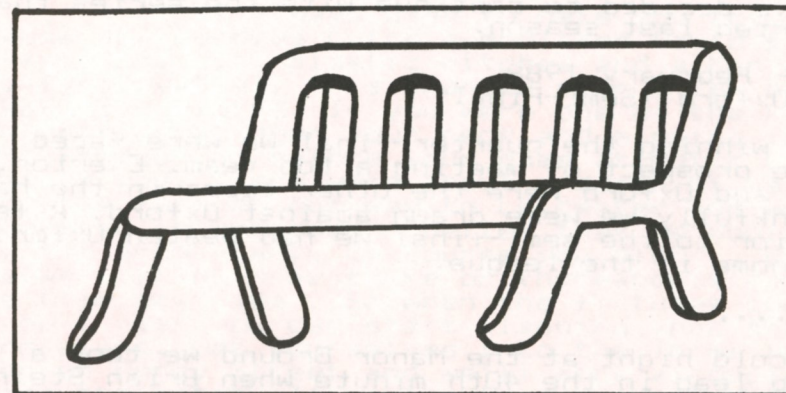
- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I'M TOO SEXY | Iain Dowie |
| 2. ALL STOOD STILL | Luton's defence |
| 3. THE JOKER | Peter Neilkin |
| 4. SILENCE | The Norwich fans |
| 5. THE CHANT HAS BEGUN | The Kenilworth End |
| 6. SO MACHO | Mc Doughnut |
| 7. SCANDAL | The Jimmy Ryan affair |
| 8. SHUT YOUR MOUTH | Neil Warnock |
| 9. I'M YOUR MAN | David Pleat to Kohler |
| 10. THE ROAD TO HELL | Last Season |

New at L.T.F.C Shop....



"For those final few minutes of a Luton Town away game!"

In an attempt to bring Vicarage Road up to scratch with the Taylor Report, Watford F.C last week revealed plans to seat all of their season ticket holders next season. Below is an artist's impression of the proposed new stand.



Clubcall Con

IF YOU CAN'T GET TO THE GAME

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**FULL LIVE MATCH
COMMENTARY &
POST MATCH CHAT
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**THE NEXT BEST THING
TO BEING THERE**

You will probably know that Luton Town have recently replaced Brian Swain's Soccerline and we now have Luton Town Clubcall. I recently found this advert in one of the local papers and was amazed to see that for the Leicester game they were advertising "Full live match commentary". So the advert is obviously aimed at those who maybe couldn't afford to go to the game. It states in tiny print at the bottom that calls are charged at 48p per minute and of course the game was in "peak time". So for those who couldn't afford the £7 entrance fee at Leicester the alternative was to listen to the whole game and half-time chat which would cost £50.40 - over seven times more than the entrance fee!

CUP WINNERS '88

We have decided to continue with the series that was started last season.

Part 5 - February 1988
Town v Oxford (Semi-Final)

After winning the quarter-final we were faced with the prospect of meeting a top team. Everton, Arsenal and Oxford were the other teams in the hat and thankfully we were drawn against Oxford. A few days prior to the semi-final we had beaten Oxford 7-4 at home in the league.

1st Leg....

On a cold night at the Manor Ground we took a deserved lead in the 40th minute when Brian Stein curled in a superb 20-yard shot. We went in at half-time as comfortable leaders.

The second half saw two dubious penalties awarded to Oxford. The first came when Dean "Cheato" Saunders fell over Mal Donaghy's feet. Saunders scored the penalty and later he used his cheating tactics once again and was awarded another penalty. He hit the penalty to the same side as before but this time Sealey saved it. In the late stages of the game Saunders went down after a challenge by Sealey, but this time the referee waved play on. All together we were lucky to go home with a draw.

Team: Sealey, Breacker, Johnson, McDonough, Foster, Donaghy, Wilson, B.Stein, Harford, M.Stein, Grimes

2nd Leg....

The second leg was played on a Sunday in front of a live TV audience. Oxford's tactics of playing with a sweeper didn't pay off and Town were soon ahead thanks to a great header by Stein on the edge of the box. It didn't take long to increase the lead and Ashley Grimes did so with a delightful free kick. Oxford never looked like coming back and we held out in the second half to secure a place in the final against Arsenal. The fans poured onto the pitch at the end and were delighted with the prospect of going to Wembley.

Team: Sealey, Breacker, Johnson, McDonough, Foster, Donaghy, Wilson, B.Stein, Harford, M.Stein, Grimes

Letters Page

Dear Hatters,

I always used to hate you lot, because to Geordies Luton symbolised David Evans, the fat Tory git, plastic pitches and a ban on away fans, yet all this changed over a few beers on Saturday 2/5/92. If you were one of the Luton crew getting it down your neck and singing in the Trent Bridge Inn before your game at Notts County, I salute you. There were about a dozen of us Newcastle fans on our way to Leicester and we were all united in our common belief that we would both beat the drop. Sadly of course you didn't, but I'm sure we will both be there or thereabouts come this time next year. So when the fixtures come out for next year you can start planning your trip to Geordieland. Get yourselves into the Three Bulls Heads on Percy Street and we'll sink a couple before the match. If you're team can match the pride and belief shown by your supporters, especially the nutters in fancy dress, then promotion is a certainty.

All the best for next season!!!!

Ian Cusack, Newcastle

Dear Sir,

I am writing to ask whether you could promote my football booklet, "From Accies to Ayr" in your fanzine please. It details my tour to see a game at each of the Scottish League grounds, giving details about each ground, directions, as well as a report and views on the matches I attend. It's a must for football supporters with an interest in the game in Scotland. It is also an interesting read for the neutral. Copies, which will be available in September, priced at £1.20 (inc P&P), can be obtained by writing to:

GRAEME HOLMES
C/S ACCOUNTS 2ND FLOOR
J.M CENTRE
OLD HALL STREET
LIVERPOOL L70 1AB

Yours faithfully, G.HOLMES

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