

ASTON VILLA

NEWS & RECORD OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 7p

Scope ar

On Her Majesty's Service

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WHY THIS ISSUE
IS BEING SENT
TO 630 M.Ps.

See Pages 10-11

General guide

MATCH NUMBER 10

VIC CROWE TALKING...

In the second half of last season, when the Aston Villa attack was well on the way to setting a Third Division record of 85 goals in a season, I decided we would need to find a player to add power and scoring potential to our front line for this season.

Alun Evans duly arrived, after a long search, considerable negotiation and a hefty outlay in cash—even though I felt he clearly was not as fit as he could be and despite being in the doldrums with Liverpool.

I make this point solely to emphasise that we take nothing for granted at Villa Park. The fact that we would face better defences in the Second Division was pretty obvious last term. The fact that we signed Alun Evans is proof that we put theory into operation.

The fact that our goalscoring

ability has dropped way off last season's achievements is due neither to any fault of Alun Evans—in my opinion he has already proved his value—or to any one single individual. Nor has it proved that despite our small tally, our present players cannot get goals.

On one hand you have people like Frank O'Farrell, a man I greatly respect, saying: "If Ted MacDougall can get goals in the Third Division, he can get goals anywhere." On the other you have people who believe that there is too great a gap between the Divisions to accept that kind of logic.

As far as Aston Villa is concerned—and it is my only concern—we are not getting as many goals as we would like because we are not playing as well as we can. Our goalscorers are not playing to their

full potential. One or two have not adjusted to different playing patterns adapted for this season, and so we have had to re-adjust.

When things are not going as well as they might, of course, it is inevitable that criticism will occur. The first demand is usually 'play the youngsters'. The second is 'buy new players'. Two easy solutions on paper, which never quite seem to work out in practice. So far, of last seasons Youth Cup winning team Jimmy Brown, Brian Little and John Gidman have reached senior status. If we get only those three through to a successful professional career it will be far more than the average.

The fact that these three young men still know they have a long way to go is a tribute to their own common sense. It is simply impossible to believe that



The Lions Club has become a focal point of many interesting social events for Villa supporters and, as Vic Crowe explains, the club idea is planned to spread from headquarters at Villa Park.

Pictured below are personalities involved in recent events . . . (Left): Some of the Villa darts team who tried their luck against the Sports Argus team—John Gidman, Roy Stark, Tony Betts, Doug George, Keith Leonard and Greg Fellows. (Right): Sue and Ray Graydon chatting back-stage with singer Gerry Monroe.

One player who has been missing from the scene recently is John Gidman, pictured above while recovering from a cartilage operation. Here's wishing John a quick return to full fitness.

youngsters can be introduced in bulk and develop as a squad. Successful teams are a balanced mixture of youth and experience. In many respects the one cannot survive without the other.

The F.A. Youth Cup was won by a team. It was a team achievement and we must never forget it. The fact that two of that team were not offered professional engagements at Villa Park indicates the standards needed further ahead, just as it is significant that not one of Arsenal's Youth Cup winning team of the year before has yet won a first-team place.

So you just cannot turn on the tap and expect youngsters to blossom overnight. To spring from Youth football to the hard world of League Football in one instant step. Nor can you expect Managers to go out with shopping bag and a cheque

book and expect to come home loaded with ready made talent that will instantly fit the bill. We have evidence every season of huge spending outlays not providing instant success.

My job, among other things, is to carry out selective buying. It means constantly searching and waiting for the right time to pounce for the right player. It needs patience. It also needs tolerance. And it needs the confidence in your own ability to play this kind of waiting game. The fact that we have been right in buying players like Graydon, Cumbe, Nicholl, Ross and Evans—is in itself proof that this waiting game works. They all took a long time to sign and a short time to pay back dividends.

In short there is no quick way to success in soccer—be it playing or managing. Beware of those who try to insist otherwise.



PERSONAL POINTS

KEITH BARBER, Goalkeeper. Came into the game late as a professional after being spotted in London senior football. Following trials with Luton, he went to Dunstable Town for a spell. Was recalled by Town and displaced the experienced Tony Read in the first-team last season.

WILLIE CARRICK, Goalkeeper. Newcomer who was freed by Manchester United at the end of last season. Born in Dublin, is a former Eire Youth international and, at 18, is regarded as a highly useful prospect. Made his League debut this season.

JOHN RYAN, Full-back. Although he had played games in their League team, Fulham released this capable defender two seasons ago and, since joining Luton, has improved out of recognition and is now in the big-money class. Kent-born, he had a spell with Arsenal before going to Craven Cottage. A keen golfer, he won the Kent Amateur Championship this summer.

DON SHANKS, Full-back. Like Ryan, he found his way to Luton via Fulham, with whom he had been an apprentice, but they did not sign him at the end of the prescribed period. Went on to earn England Youth honours—playing together with Trevor Francis (Blues) in 1971—and other Clubs have already been taking notice of his progress.

BOBBY THOMSON, Full-back. Not so many years ago, Thomson was regarded as the best left-back in the country and has a handful of England caps to prove it. Was then with Wolves from whom he moved to Birmingham City for a big fee. Somehow or another, he never really settled with Blues, who loaned him to Walsall during last season and then gave him a free transfer.

ALAN GARNER, Centre-half. His big chance came when Chris Nicholl was sold to us last March, and he went on to play confidently and earn himself a regular place. Was previously with Millwall, who gave him few opportunities, and released him on a free transfer. Strong and assertive.

JOHN FAULKNER, Centre-half. As Nicholl was being sold to Villa, Luton were negotiating with Leeds United for Faulkner as a replacement. However, this former Sutton United amateur never got a chance last season through Garner's consistency, but has now taken over at number five, either with Garner or Alan Slough alongside him. Scored his first League goal a fortnight ago.

with Shrewsbury and later played for Swindon, Watford and Wellington.

RODNEY FERN, Forward. Luton's biggest close-season signing, because he cost them a reported £44,000 from Leicester City, for whom he played in their 1969 losing Cup Final side. Strong, bustling type with a highly-developed goal-sense, but he has not, so far, been as strong a marksman as hoped.

JOHN ASTON, Forward. Several other clubs were disappointed when Aston moved to Luton for a fee of £30,000, which begins to look a bargain figure. Now only 25, Aston has a load of First Division experience gained with Manchester United with whom he was a member of the first-team squad for some seasons. Played in the European Cup Final. Has proved a valuable acquisition, scoring half a dozen goals for Luton.

JIMMY RYAN, Forward. Another player who took the now well-beaten track from Old Trafford to Kenilworth Road and he was valued at around £20,000 at the time. A Scot, he had a most unlucky last season through injuries and illness, but has been showing his best form this time.

VIV BUSBY, Forward. Recruited from Wycombe Wanderers and spent two months on loan to Newcastle United during last season. In the end, Newcastle decided not to meet the £50,000 fee Luton were asking and he was allowed to return.

PETER ANDERSON, Forward. Another recruit from senior amateur soccer. Anderson was with Hendon and actually made his first-team debut for Luton when he was still an amateur. Top scorer last season with ten goals. Now playing in midfield with outstanding success.

VIC HALOM, Forward. Costly £30,000 signing from Fulham last season as a replacement for Malcolm Macdonald. Was previously with Charlton Athletic and Orient. Vic has been in top scoring this season, heading the Second Division with nine goals at the end of October.

GORDON HINDSON, Forward. Although this youngster had only limited experience at the time, Luton paid Newcastle United £25,000 for him. Was used mostly as a winger last season and has a considerable turn of speed. Has played in midfield recently.

STEVE LITT, Centre-half. Close-season recruit from Blackpool, who did not sign him at the end of his apprenticeship. Aged 18.

ALAN SLOUGH, Half-back. During the last two seasons, he has been regarded primarily as a member of the back-four, but it has now been decided to use his undoubted talent and driving power in midfield. A local, he joined Luton straight from school.

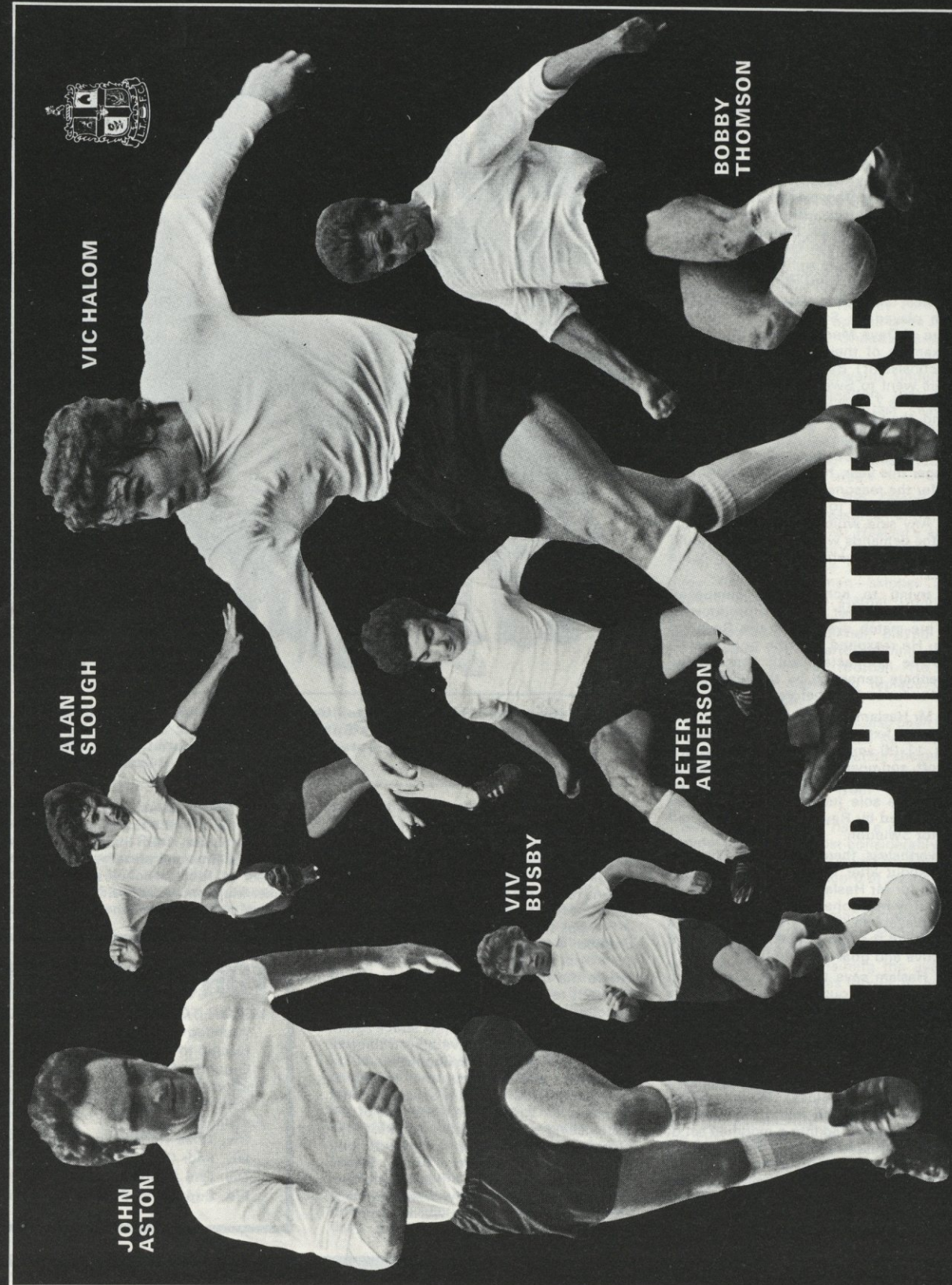
JOHN MOORE, Half-back. Luton's longest-serving player, he has been with them nearly eight years, having had previous service with Motherwell. A dour Scot, he has been a regular member of the back four and struck up an uncanny understanding with Chris Nicholl. Has been on loan to Brighton recently.

KEN GOODEVE, Half-back. Was one of four Manchester United players to join Luton two years ago, but has received few chances in the first-team. Such as have come his way have been at left-back, whereas it was as a centre-half that he was signed originally.

LES HARFIELD, Half-back. Former England Youth international, released by Southampton at the end of the season and given a two months trial period by Luton, who were well pleased with his form in pre-season training. Has been named as first-team substitute this season.

ROBIN WAINWRIGHT, Half-back. A tall local product who has never really commanded a regular place although he has been on the verge of it at times.

GRAHAM FRENCH, Forward. Wolverhampton-born former England Youth international who recently joined Luton for a second spell. After signing as a junior with Huddersfield, he made the League grade



JOHN ASTON

ALAN SLOUGH

VIV BUSBY

PETER ANDERSON

VIC HALOM

BOBBY THOMSON

TOP HATTERS



"It's crazy," admits Luton Town manager Harry Haslam. "We are in the position of having won more points away than we have in front of our fans . . . where would we be in the table if just a couple of home matches had made sweeter music?"

The bare statistics of Luton's record show that they have won more away games than any other side in the country—five out of eight trips—but have won only three out of nine at Kenilworth Road, where they have been beaten by Oxford, Hull and Swindon, as well as drawing with Burnley, Blackpool and Portsmouth.

Luton's last home defeat—in the first match played by Swindon after the departure of Dave Mackay—was, if you like, an example of their consistent ability to be inconsistent! Back in September, The Hatters went to Swindon and skated to a comfortable 2-0 victory—yet, on their own ground, the tables were turned round.

Mr Haslam, the club's former chief scout who succeeded Alec Stock as manager this year, has searched hard and long for the reasons behind the two faces of Luton, but has to say: "It's unaccountable. Any side which can come to terms with the demands when they travel should be more relaxed when approaching home games."

In trying to achieve this composed frame of mind, Mr Haslam introduced a new pre-match system for the Swindon game. He reasoned that the good results could be connected with the 'family' atmosphere generated by the team being together for so long before the game.

So Mr Haslam tried to repeat the formula for a home fixture. The players were called in at 11-00 am, four hours before the kick-off, and giving them plenty of time to talk about the game. But, if results pronounce the sole judgment, then the idea was doomed by Ray Treacy's second-half goal for Swindon.

Nevertheless, there is much for Luton to smile about after their first three months playing for Mr Haslam. Together with new coach Roy McCrohan, the former Norwich City, player he has re-shaped Luton's tactics with the aim of making them more attractive and goal-conscious.

Mr Haslam says that every time Luton have won, his thoughts have wandered a couple of thousand miles . . . to Turkey. That's where Luton's plans for a bright new season were developed in a four-match summer tour.

It was a time when the new signings—Bobby Thomson (Blues), Rodney Fern (Leicester) and John Aston (Manchester United)—were fitted into a modified set of tactics. "I stressed time and again that we had to get our attitudes right," recalls Mr Haslam. "We have taken some results on the chin, so to speak, but the team has done the management proud by never letting their heads hit the floor."

ALL ABOUT LUTON



Back row: Terry Robinson, Derek Hales, Les Harfield, Gordon Hindson, Bob Hatch, Vic Halom, Bobby Thomson, John Faulkner, Paul Price, Peter Anderson, Jimmy Ryan, Gerry Jones, Nicky Sparkes. Centre row: Tony Castiello, Alan Garner, Robin Wainwright, Ken Goodeve, Keith Barber, Willie Carrick, Tony Read, John Moore, Alan Slough, Steve Litt, Michael Gilchrist. Front row: Roy McCrohan (coach), John Ryan (captain), John Aston, Harry Halsam (manager), Rodney Fern, Viv Busby, Ken Whitfield (coach).

This was most noticeable in a three-match League Cup 'series' against Birmingham City. Neutral opinion was that Luton were the more positive side in all the games, but fortune turned sour on them when Trevor Francis's goal won the second replay at Northampton.

Perhaps there was a reaction, for Luton crashed 4-0 at Sheffield Wednesday in their next League outing. But that was where the character came through. They then put together an unbeaten run of five matches and were in close pursuit of the top teams until that home jinx struck again.

So far, The Hatters have played three of the leading teams, drawing at home to Blackpool and Burnley and losing at Hillsborough. Mr Haslam says he is not surprised by strength and position of the pacemaking teams and says of Villa: "I'm pleased to see them being pushed along by a Luton discovery, Bruce Rioch. Appreciating that he is a first-class player is also power to our elbow when we meet, and I'm sure Aston Villa will be a test to enjoy."

Chris Nicholl is a further link between the two clubs and it is a great disappointment to Luton folk that the club was forced by financial pressures to lose such players as Rioch, Nicholl and Newcastle striker Malcolm Macdonald.

They received somewhere in the region

of £370,000 for this threesome, but no money could compensate for the loss of outstanding talent. Rioch was top scorer with 24 goals when Luton won the Fourth Division in 1967-68 and, after his departure to Villa Park in 1969, Luton unearthed Macdonald, from Fulham, and Nicholl,

from Halifax, to launch another promotion team.

'Big Mac' smashed home 25 Third Division goals and then found the Second Division no more demanding. Macdonald collected 24 League goals in 1970-71 and Luton, on the tidal wave created by two promotions in the previous three seasons, moved to the brink of the First Division.

The revival was initiated by a wealthy Board—and carried on by shrewd managers, Allan Brown and Alec Stock. It seemed that Division One was only just around the corner, but the financial situation changed in the summer of 1971.

Macdonald, having signed off his Luton career with a hat-trick in his last match against Cardiff City, was sold to Newcastle for a sum reported to be £180,000. The loss of such a prolific scorer inevitably took a large chunk out of the team's power force.

While Macdonald was on his way to an England cap by scoring 23 First Division goals last season, Luton were forced into deep defence to preserve their Second

Division status. Their scoring record dipped from 62 in Macdonald's last campaign to an average of a goal-a-game.

In an attempt to improve the attack, around £50,000 was spent on Fulham striker Vic Halom and Newcastle winger Gordon Hindson. But the newcomers could not bridge the gap left by Macdonald and, with gates falling dangerously low, Luton reluctantly accepted Villa's Spring-time offer for Nicholl.

This fee—plus the £40,000 sale of Don Givens to Q.P.R.—gave Harry Haslam scope to build the team during the summer. A club record sum was spent on former Leicester Cup Finalist Rodney Fern, and another sizeable figure bought John Aston the star of Manchester United's European Cup success in 1968.

The emphasis on forwards underlined Mr Haslam's determination that there should be no repeat of last season's defensive stalemates. And the new set-up, based on single spearhead Viv Busby and backed up fast-raiding midfield players, has certainly done the trick.

Generally, however, the defence has coped well with the pressures—and that is a true compliment to Mr Haslam's ability to spot a player. In many games this term, Luton's back-four has been formed by three free-transfer men—skipper John Ryan (Fulham), Alan Garner (Millwall) and Bobby Thomson (Blues)—and the centre-half, John Faulkner, played only two League games after joining Leeds United from amateur football. He cost £10,000 when signed to replace Chris Nicholl last March.

The goalkeeping spot has also been filled at minimal cost. First-choice Keith Barber was spotted in London amateur soccer and deputy Willie Carrick was signed in the summer on a 'free' from Manchester United.

So, in effect, Luton have a promotion-hopeful team which cost considerably less than the money they received for Malcolm Macdonald. That is a record of which to be proud.

Like most of the smaller-town clubs, Luton are restricted in their ambitions by low support. No doubt their home failings have contributed to chaining the average below 11,000, but this figure is not in keeping with the club's League position.

Luton accept that the bigger crowds will not roll up until they are top of the table or smashing down the opposition as in the Macdonald era. In those days, gates frequently nudged the 20,000 mark, and the club remains confident that they could maintain satisfactory support if regaining the First Division status which they held for ten years from 1955.

During that steady period of top action, Luton's best achievement was to reach the F.A. Cup Final in 1959 when they lost 2-1 to Nottingham Forest.

FOR THE RECORD

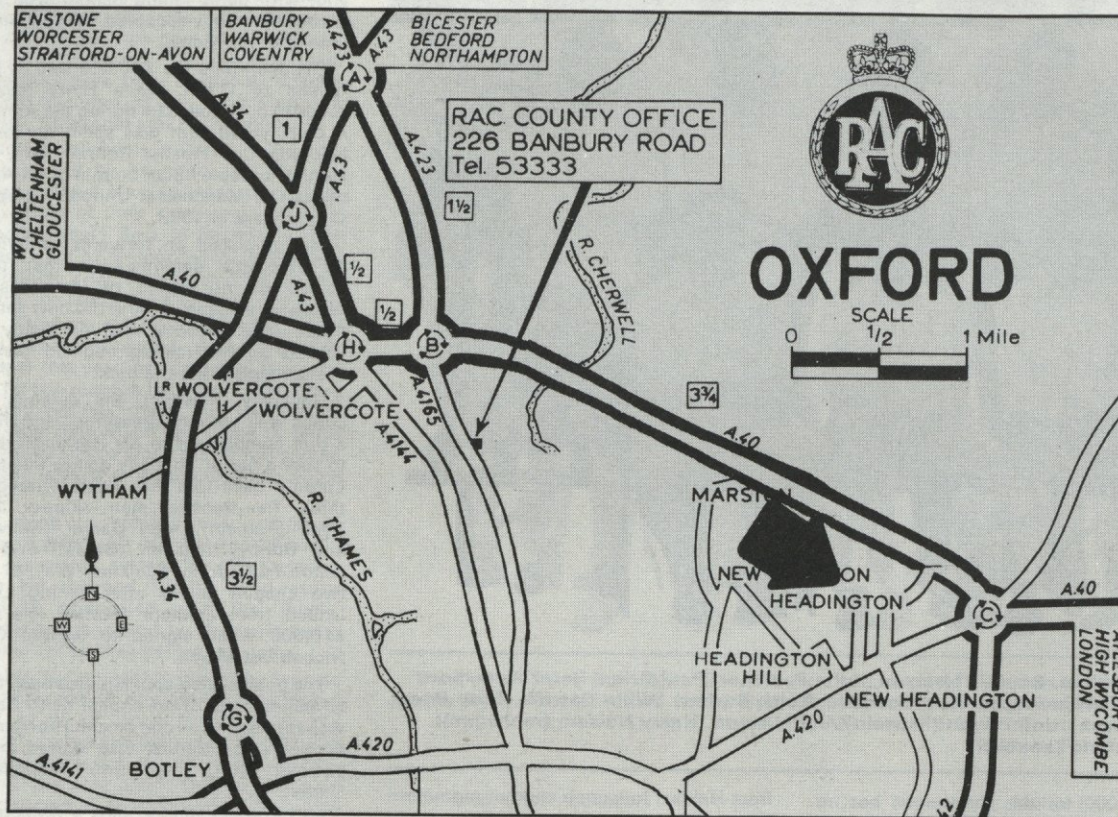
LUTON TOWN HISTORY . . .

Founded: 1885.
Elected to League Div. Two: 1897.
Ground: Kenilworth Road, Luton, Bedfordshire.
Record Attendance: 30,000 against Arsenal in 1952.
Div. Three Runners-up: 1969-70.
Div. Four Champions: 1967-68.
Div. Two Runners-up: 1954-55.
F.A. Cup Runners-up: 1958-59.

Ten Year Record . . .

Season	Division	Position	Won	Points
1971-72	2	13th	10	38
1970-71	2	6th	18	49
1969-70	3	2nd	23	60
1968-69	3	3rd	25	61
1967-68	4	1st	27	66
1966-67	4	17th	16	41
1965-66	4	6th	24	56
1964-65	3	21st	11	33
1963-64	3	18th	16	42
1962-63	2	22nd	11	29

VILLA TRAVEL



OXFORD UNITED v VILLA

Saturday, 25th November, 1972 (Kick-off: 3-00 pm)

Leave by A.34, Stratford Road and continue via Henley-in-Arden to Stratford-on-Avon. Proceed still on the A.34 through Shipston-on-Stour to

Oxford Northern by-pass. Continue on by-pass A.40, to Headington Roundabout at junction with A.420. Turn right along A.420 (London Road), and approximately three-quarters of a mile on turn right into Manor Road and Oxford United Football Ground. Total distance: 65 miles.

ADVANCE TICKET BOOKINGS

BRISTOL CITY

Saturday, 9th December, 1972

Stand Seats: 80p

Available 14 days in advance

Apply to:
Bristol City Football Club
Ashton Gate,
Bristol, BS3 2EJ

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

Saturday, 23rd December, 1972

Stand Seats: 90p, 75p, 60p

Available 21 days in advance

Apply to:
Sheffield Wednesday F.C.
Hillsborough
Sheffield, S6 1SW

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN

Saturday, 30th December, 1972

Stand Seats: 90p, 80p, 60p

Available 14 days in advance

Apply to:
Huddersfield Town F.C.
Leeds Road
Huddersfield HD1 6PE

Always enclose a stamped addressed envelope and the correct remittance.

VILLA LINE UP WITH CADBURY'S



Many Villa fans took the chance to shop early for Christmas last Saturday by buying Cadbury's Chocolate Selection Box, complete with a special Villa wrapper, including players' autographs.

The Selection Box is again on sale today (price: £3) at a bar in both the Trinity Road and Witton Lane stands. It is also stocked during the week at the Club Shop and the Lions Club.

You can also order through your Pools Agent.



TWO GREAT YOUTH TEAM GAMES

Next Wednesday evening a Cambridge United team will play at Villa Park for the first time when we entertain their Youth team in the First Round of the Southern Junior Floodlit Cup. Now in their second season in the Football League, Cambridge have not yet had the opportunity of meeting us at first-team level, and this is the first time a Cup draw has brought our clubs together.

In the Preliminary Round of the Floodlit Cup Cambridge drew a bye, while we beat Oxford United last month at Villa Park with goals by Bobby Campbell and Bryan Place. It was the first real run-out for Frank Upton's 'new' Youth team, for of the F.A. Youth Cup winning team of last season only Bobby McDonald, Alan Little and Dave Smith remain eligible. The performance of the team gave us all real encouragement, that with experience and support, we have another really good youth-team in the making.

Cambridge United's youth-team play their matches in the Mercia League, a midweek Youth League in East Anglia which begins this month. Five of their team are apprentices.

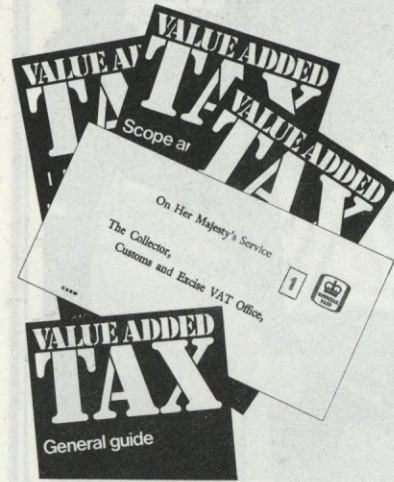
In the Midland Youth League we hold third position on goal average to the leading two clubs, both of whom have played more games, and in fact Villa are the only unbeaten team in the League with five wins and five draws. Certainly another pointer to a good team in the future.

The following Wednesday—29th November—we begin our defence of the F.A. Youth Cup with a home tie against Boldmere St. Michaels at Villa Park. As a contrast to Cambridge's first visit, this fixture repeats our first game of last season's successful campaign, when we also met Boldmere at Villa Park and won 8-0.

This season we can expect a much harder game—we have almost a new team but Boldmere will be fielding nine of last year's team and so far this season they have already beaten League opposition in the Youth Cup—Crewe Alexandra, and Northampton Town. When you consider that Northampton have taken ten points from their eight games in the Midland Youth League you will understand Boldmere's achievement and that we have no easy task on our hands.

In both matches we believe we can offer you attractive football, and especially with this first year team, your support is invaluable to the lads. The games will kick-off at 7-30 pm, and the Trinity Road and Witton Stands will be open together with the Trinity Road enclosure. Admission will be by payment at the turnstiles on the night of the games, with prices at 30p for the Stands (boys 15p) and 15p for the enclosure (boys 10p).

VAT £30,000



On 1st April Value Added Tax will be introduced, and at the present moment there is no indication whatsoever that professional football clubs will be exempted from the full rate. We feel that V.A.T. could be a crippling burden on the game with disastrous results to a great number of clubs smaller than ourselves. Our Secretary, Alan Bennett, puts forward the club's viewpoint in the following article. To emphasise our point of view, we are sending a copy of this programme to every Member of Parliament and the other 91 Football League Clubs.

Up to a few months ago, V.A.T., followed by the appropriate figures, brought to mind a rather nice Scotch whisky—a pleasant prospect, indeed! Now, the initials conjure up a rather less pleasant prospect, that of Value Added Tax, which is due to come into force in April of next year.

In common with thousands of other Companies, we, at Aston Villa, have last month taken the first positive step in the direction of V.A.T. by completing the Customs and Excise V.A.T. registration form. It was a step taken reluctantly, for while we, as a Football Club, would not feel ourselves qualified to express our opinions on the right or wrongs, in general, of a particular form of National taxation, we are convinced that, in application to sport, V.A.T. is very wrong indeed.

The booklets on the tax issued by the Government contain many pages and some rather complicated wording, so it would be quite impossible to explain the tax fully to you on this page. However, very briefly,

the principle is to apply tax of, at present, 10% to all items sold or services given for remuneration, with the exception of certain exempt categories, such as food and transport. The set-up of the tax requires the tax to be charged at each stage of manufacture of an article, but that each stage can also claim back the tax already paid so that the final charge to the man in the street is still 10%. At the same time, Purchase Tax and Selective Employment Tax are being abolished.

The figures issued by the Government try to show that the effect of the introduction of V.A.T. and the abolition of S.E.T. and Purchase Tax will not greatly affect the cost of living, and that the saving to many Companies through the end of S.E.T. and Purchase Tax will just about balance the V.A.T. charges. This is very probably true in many cases, but as far as sport and Association Football is concerned, we know that it is very far from true.

Ignoring the tax which will probably be charged on inter-Club items, such as transfer fees, payments to Visitors, etc., which can be claimed back, we shall be left with, in effect, a 10% tax on our Gate Receipts. On last season's working, that would have been for Aston Villa a tax in the region of £37,500, and, on the increased receipts this season, we would expect it to prove to be higher.

To offset this large sum, we shall no longer have to pay S.E.T. or Purchase Tax. Our S.E.T. bill for a year, has been in the region of £4,000, and the items we have paid Purchase Tax on, such as kit and printing, have been very limited and do not exceed £2,000. **We are obviously faced with a loss on the 'deal' of certainly over £30,000 a year, and probably considerably more.**

These figures are similar in proportion to every other Club in the country. Clubs taking more gate money than ourselves, such as Arsenal or Manchester United, will be harder hit in the amount they will have to pay, but, at the other end of the scale, those less fortunate than ourselves on gate receipts, and who are already desperately struggling to survive in the lower Divisions, will also have to pay 10% of their gate receipts and this extra imposition may prove to be the last straw. Other sports tell the same story and look forward to the tax with equal foreboding.

The figures are no last-minute revelations. On behalf of soccer, the Football Association has joined with the ruling bodies of other sports and they have put

the case of sport very clearly to the Government, without favourable response, and an Amendment to the Finance Bill on 15th May, 1972, to exempt Sport from V.A.T. was defeated in the House of Commons by 255 votes to 232. We have tried very hard to have sport exempted from what we all believe to be a re-imposition of Entertainment Tax under another name, but have failed.

It is not our duty to take sides in political matters, and, on many occasions, we have strongly supported the view to keep politics out of sport. It has, therefore, hurt even more to find that on this fundamental matter for sport, the Government have themselves brought politics into sport, insofar as the Opposition has supported sport in its fight to avoid V.A.T., while the Government has insisted on the imposition of the tax and has brought its Whips to bear in the House of Commons to ensure its own way.

Having heard the same Government on other occasions declaim its desire not to interfere in sport, and, in our opinion, rightly so, one would have thought they would at least have allowed a free vote in the House on the matter.

Now, it would appear that the die is cast, unless public pressures can bring about a last-minute change of mind when the Budget is debated in the House next Spring. Otherwise, next April, we shall have to pay a tax of one-tenth of our Gate Receipts to the Government. One glance at Football Club Balance Sheets will show that it cannot be done without reducing expenditure—almost impossible in these days of rising costs—or by passing the

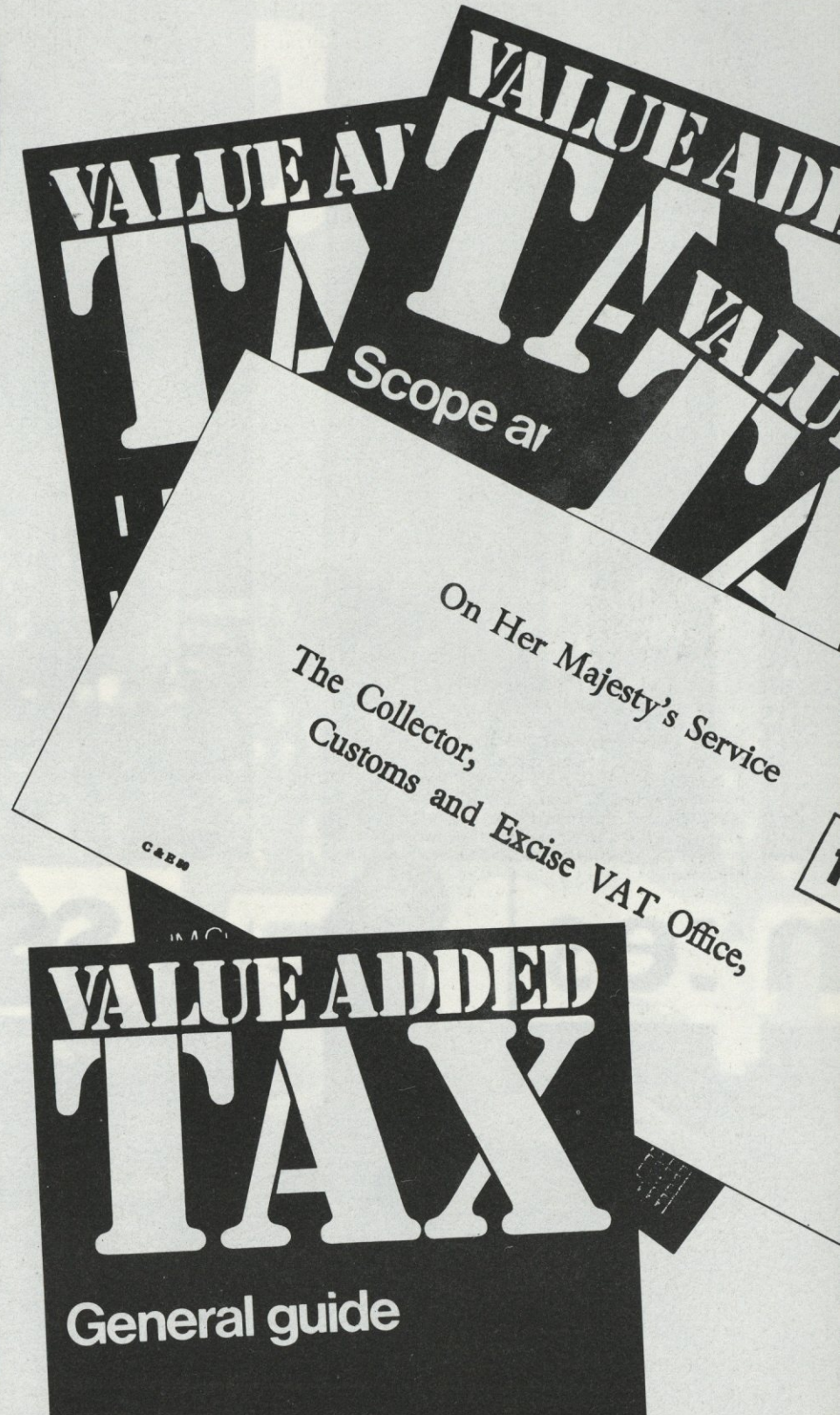
charge on to you, the Supporter. And, to be honest, the intention of the tax is that the public should pay it, and that we should be the collectors. **How will attendances stand up to a further increase in charges? We do not know—but we fear for many and worry for ourselves.**

The impression has been given that our entry into the Common Market has made the imposition of V.A.T. on sport inevitable. This is not true—today, in Europe, amateur sport is exempt from V.A.T. and, in most countries, professional sport is zero rated. Our friends in the House of Commons advise us that when orders for the introduction of V.A.T. come before the House next Spring, moves can still be made to have Sport in this country zero rated—provided that M.P.'s are made fully aware of the plight that the tax will bring in Britain.

At best, it would seem that, through V.A.T., football will cost you more. At worst, clubs may be forced out of existence through financial problems, and football in this country, as we have known it for years, will be radically slashed. Only one last outcry could save us from V.A.T.—and it would have to be your voice, that of the thousands of soccer supporters, who could make the Government listen. We have tried—but our appeal perhaps needed your support to succeed. We ask you to write to your M.P. at The House of Commons, London S.W.1., especially if he supports the Government, and request him to consider the matter yet again.

FOR THE SAKE OF SPORT IN THIS COUNTRY, IT REALLY DOES MATTER.

LOBBY YOUR M.P.
LOBBY YOUR M.P.
LOBBY YOUR M.P.
LOBBY YOUR M.P.
LOBBY YOUR M.P.



ACTION



Blackpool's powerful defence again proved its efficiency by holding us to a goalless draw last Saturday—the fourth successive time the Seaside had kept a clean sheet. One of our closest attempts at breaking down the barricade came when Willie Anderson's cross caused this goalmouth scramble. Goalkeeper John Burridge is seen scrambling the ball away with his feet. Picture: Terry Weir.

Villa Fans! Save £40



Villa shareholder Nicholas J. Ratcliffe invites all Villa fans to save just **three** of these advertisements and pop along to any of the N.J.R. showrooms — produce the vouchers and have **£40** taken off the price of any car over **£150**.

Among our many satisfied customers are Villa star players — Join our team of contented purchasers!

the nicholas j. ratcliffe motor co. ltd.

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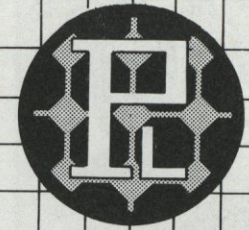
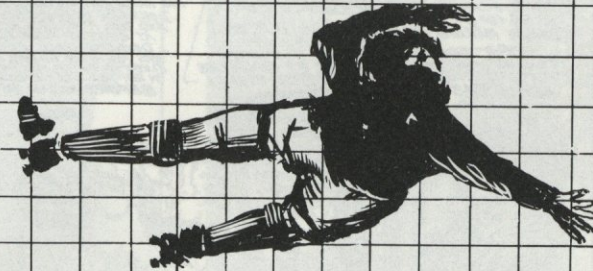
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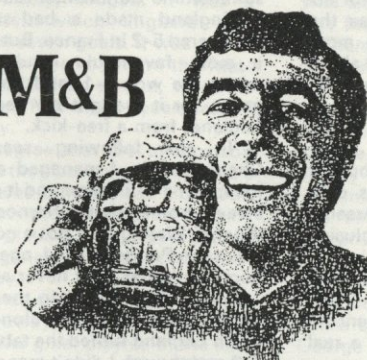
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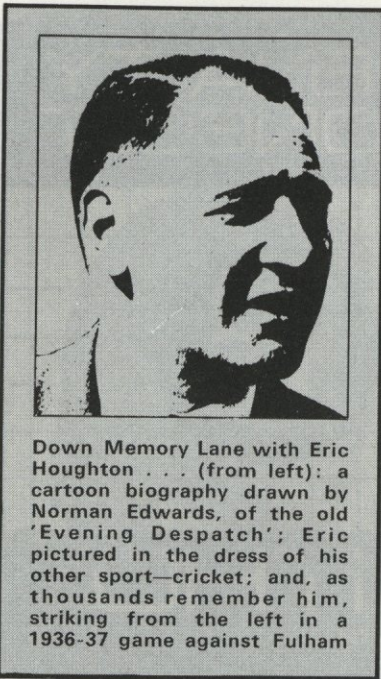
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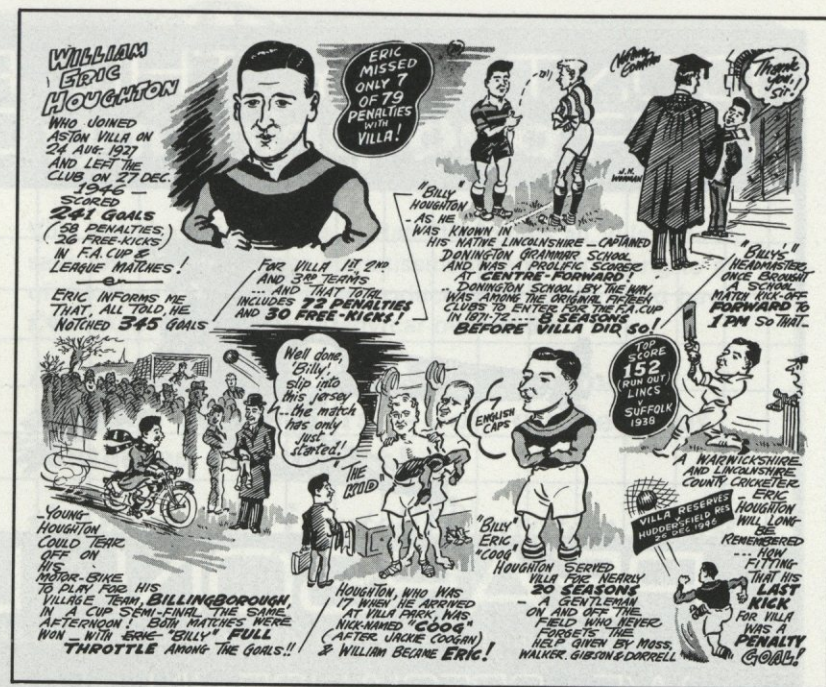
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Down Memory Lane with Eric Houghton . . . (from left): a cartoon biography drawn by Norman Edwards, of the old 'Evening Despatch'; Eric pictured in the dress of his other sport—cricket; and, as thousands remember him, striking from the left in a 1936-37 game against Fulham



THE ERIC HOUGHTON STORY

It took ice-cool marksman, Eric Houghton, the incredibly short period of just nine months to take-off from League soccer into the aristocratic circle of international class in 1930.

On that fateful, but very memorable day of 4th January, 1930, when young Houghton took and missed his first-ever penalty in Villa's League side, little did he, or anyone else, for that matter, appreciate that, come October, the lad from Lincolnshire would be in the England action-group for the first time.

Eric, who rose from player, to manager and who now is on the Board of Directors at Villa Park, cherishes every kick of those kind days to him, when he dominated the outside-left position during Aston Villa's swashbuckling crusades of the 1930's.

Young Houghton's progress raced along at an unbelievable tempo and it was difficult in the early years to value his improvement at club level greater than his efforts for his country. But both Villa and the international selection committee knew they had found a winner.

Villa's outside-left went into his first England game in the company of Harry Hibbs, Birmingham's greatest goalkeeper, Goodall, Blenkinsop, Strange, Leach,

Campbell, Crooks, Hodgson and the ill-fated Jimmy Hampson, the Blackpool forward.

He was a colleague of Eric's in the 1931 games against Ireland and Wales. But Hampson was lost to soccer the same year when he was drowned in a boating tragedy off Blackpool beach.

The outbreak of the 1939-45 war, which stamped on Eric Houghton's toes for six never-to-be recovered seasons, was the only stroke of misfortune to have more affect on his career than that brought about by the production of another great left-winger of the same era, Cliff Bastin.

Had they not clashed in the same years, Bastin and Houghton might have commanded the same prestige position for ten to fifteen years. But there was only room for one and, after 1933, the Arsenal expert went on to have a virtual exclusive claim, finishing with 21 caps.

Like a true professional, Eric Houghton has tremendous respect for Bastin—"One of my biggest rivals from the moment he hit the scene, and, frankly, he was a real artist."

Eric, taking up his international story, told us: "I played against Wales a few months after the Ireland victory, but was

disappointed to miss Scotland up at Hampden Park. Let's remember, 35 years ago, there were far fewer opportunities to play for one's country than there are today, so every cap carried a far greater value.

"But I did manage an international trial in the March and after England had lost 2-0 against Scotland, with Crawford, of Chelsea, at outside-left, I was recalled for a summertime Continental tour.

"England made a bad start by being hammered 5-2 in France. But we fashioned a more favourable result in Belgium, where we won 4-1, and I remember that game, for it brought my second goal for England, from a free-kick.

"In the following season's Home Championship, I managed a pair against Ireland in a 6-2 center and it seemed home sweet home that afternoon, for Tom 'Pongo' Waring also got a couple. (It was the year Pongo played against all three home countries—yet never again).

"I was happy to be in the team against Scotland at Wembley, alongside Pongo, when England turned the tables to triumph 3-0 and though I didn't manage to hit one, I was pleased when my Villa team-mate added his contribution."

The clash of the giants—Villa 5,

Arsenal 3—was a match which attracted not only a packed house of supporters, but also the bulk of the England selection panel and, after what they had so pleasantly digested, Billy Walker, Joe Tate and E.H. were all in the England team to play Austria at Stamford Bridge.

"Austria were considered the top side in Europe and the brains behind them belonged to Jimmy Hogan. It was a wonderful match which England won from the best of seven goals. It was a thrill to meet Jimmy a man to whom the footballing world looked up to and, when he was at Villa Park four or five years later, I discovered why."

Few will disagree that the one person responsible for the rich harmony in Villa's early Thirties' was Billy Walker. But 1934 brought the inevitable moment when Billy had to quit his playing days, stepping into his first managerial position with Sheffield Wednesday.

"Billy's absence coincided with a period when Villa fell away as a power, probably because the other great players in the side couldn't keep up the pace. The 1935-36 season brought the crashing impact of Villa's relegation campaign, the first time in the history of the club that Second

Division football came to Villa Park."

The Directors had tried to buy their way out of trouble, but, though 35 points were collected, generally sufficient in those days to ensure safety, Villa tumbled.

Eric recalls: "It was a very depressing time for the team. It seemed like the end of the world had come. I found it very humiliating as a player to be a member of a Villa side out of the First Division for the very first time in their history."

Changes were made on the Board. Fred Normansell became Chairman and one of his predecessors, Fred Rinder, at the ripe age of 80, came back and immediately took the train and travelled to Vienna to capture Jimmy Hogan, as manager, after Jimmy McMullen.

Rome wasn't built in a day. But Hogan had Villa back in the First Division two seasons later. His secret . . . "Simple methods and a wonderful team spirit" . . . reflects one of the players who went on that uncomfortable ride 35 years ago.

The squad was boosted by the flair of George Cummings, Alex Massie, Ronnie Stirling, Freddie Haycock, Frankie Shell and Frankie Broome, players who looked certain to fire Villa back to the rightful spot under the captaincy of Jimmy Allen.

"They would have put together another all-great Villa team but for the War. I will remember Freddie Haycock for being a very superstitious man. He hung onto a certain pullover for years and years, believing it to be a lucky omen. We ribbed him about it when it got a bit tatty. It disappeared. But only went under his shirt. Where it went from there, I don't know!"

War-time football followed for Eric Houghton along with a number of the Villa side. After a couple of years, the team was one of the strongest of the War League and they took the Cup from Blackpool in a see-saw thriller in 1944.

When the War finished, Eric Houghton had been forced to fritter away vital years and when the League picked up again, the pre-war hammer shot of Eric Houghton left Villa Park for Notts County, where he retired in 1949 with a clean record, never having had his name taken in 23 seasons. After serving three years as County's manager, Eric Houghton came back to Villa Park in September, 1953, to lead them on a Cup crusade that will never be forgotten.

■ Norton Jones continues the Eric Houghton story in the next programme.

VILLA CALENDAR

FOOTBALL LEAGUE—DIVISION TWO 72-73				CENTRAL LEAGUE, 72-73					
Date	Opponents	Att	F A	Date	Opponents	F A	Date	Opponents	F A
Aug 2	Tottenham H (Friendly)	23,538	0 0	Aug 12	Preston North End	4 1	Dec 9	Derby County	
5	Manchester City	34,867	0 1	15	Huddersfield Town	2 2	16	Nottingham Forest	
12	(F.A. Charity Shield)			19	Burnley	1 0	23	Huddersfield Town	
9	Preston North End	17,371	1 0	21	Blackpool	1 2	26	Preston North End	
16	Hereford U. (L.C.1)	32,113	4 1	26	Newcastle United	2 0	30	Burnley	
19	Huddersfield Town	34,483	2 0	30	Wolverhampton W.	1 2	Jan 6	Newcastle United	
26	Burnley	14,804	1 4				20	Stoke City	
29	Carlisle United	29,047	1 0	Sept 2	Stoke City	1 3	27	Sheffield Wednesday	
Sept 2	Brighton and Hove A	30,750	1 1	9	Sheffield Wed.	0 0	Feb 3	Blackburn Rovers	
5	Nottingham Forest (L.C.2)	17,665	1 0	16	Bolton Wanderers	2 0	10	Bolton Wanderers	
9	Cardiff City	15,729	2 0	23	Manchester Utd.	2 0	10	Bolton Wanderers	
16	Swindon Town	30,865	2 1	26	Everton	0 4	17	Manchester United	
23	Nottingham Forest	18,082	1 1	30	Liverpool	1 4	24	Liverpool	
27	Sunderland	29,895	2 0	Oct 7	Bury	2 1	Mar 3	Bury	
30	Millwall	31,524	1 0	14	Manchester City	2 2	10	Manchester City	
Oct 4	Leeds United (L.C.3)	46,185	1 1	21	Everton	1 2	24	W. B. Albion	
7	Fulham	17,576	0 2	28	W. B. Albion	0 1	31	Sheffield United	
11	Leeds Utd. (L.C.3 Replay)	28,894	0 2	Nov 4	Blackpool	2 0	April 7	Coventry City	
14	Queens Park Rangers	34,045	0 1	11	Blackburn Rovers	2 0	14	Derby County	
17	Blackpool	15,043	1 1	18	Leeds United		16	Nottingham Forest	
21	Portsmouth	13,524	1 0	25	Sheffield United		21	Leeds United	
28	Middlesbrough	30,345	1 1	28	Coventry City		28	Wolverhampton W.	
Nov 4	Sunderland	18,717	2 2						
11	Blackpool	31,651	0 0						
18	Luton Town								
25	Oxford United								
Dec 2	Hull City								
9	Bristol City								
16	Orient								
23	Sheffield Wednesday								
26	Nottingham Forest								
30	Huddersfield Town								
Jan 6	Burnley								
13	F.A. Cup (3)								
20	Brighton and Hove A								
27	Cardiff City								
Feb 3	F.A. Cup (4)								
10	Swindon Town								
17	Preston N.E.								
24	Orient (F.A. Cup 5)								
Mar 3	Fulham								
10	Queens Park Rangers								
17	Portsmouth (F.A.C. 6)								
24	Middlesbrough								
31	Oxford United								
April 6	Hull City								
7	F.A. Cup (S.F.)								
14	Bristol City								
21	Luton Town								
23	Millwall								
24	Sheffield Wednesday								
28	Carlisle United								
May 5	F.A. Cup (Final)								

MIDLAND INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE 72-73		
THE LEAGUE CHALLENGE CUP		
Group 'B'		
Date	Opponents	F A
Aug 12	Coventry City	3 3
19	Derby County	0 6
26	Mansfield Town	0 1
Sept 2	Leicester City	1 4
9	Nottingham Forest	3 0
16	Coventry City	2 2
23	Derby County	0 1
30	Mansfield Town	0 2
Oct 7	Leicester City	1 4
14	Nottingham Forest	3 1

Advance Bookings for Home League Matches: Reserved Seats for individual home Football League matches are bookable in advance from the Ticket Office either by post or by personal application.

Applications by Post: Are accepted one month before the game and should be accompanied by the correct remittance—cheque or postal order—and a self-addressed return envelope.

Personal Applications: May be made during office hours—9-15 am to 5-00 pm—during the two weeks prior to the game.

Prices: 90p and 70p for Reserved Seats. Unreserved accommodation, Children and Senior Citizens—half price. Seats: 60p. Ground: 40p.

All enquiries for back issues of the *Villa News* should be addressed to H. & H. Promotions Limited, 550 Chester Road, Aldridge, Nr Walsall

Division 2 Statistics

Up to and including Saturday, 11th November, 1972

	HOME					AWAY				
	P	W	D	L	F A	P	W	D	L	F A
Burnley	17	5	3	1	19 10	2	6	0	12	9 23
Q.P.R.	17	5	3	0	21 8	3	4	2	12	13 23
VILLA	17	5	3	1	10 4	3	3	2	9	10 22
Luton Town	17	3	3	3	14 12	5	1	2	10	8 20
Middlesbrough	17	5	2	1	11 7	2	4	3	6	12 20
Blackpool	17	4	4	1	14 7	2	3	3	10	12 19
Sheffield Wed	18	6	0	3	19 10	1	4	4	10	14 18
Fulham	17	4	3	2	15 9	2	3	3	10	12 18
Oxford United	17	5	0	3	15 10	3	2	4	8	10 18
Preston N.E.	17	3	3	2	5 4	4	1	4	10	11 18
Notts Forest	17	4	4	1	12 9	2	2	4	8	14 18
Hull City	17	5	3	1	19 8	1	2	5	6	13 17
Huddersfield T	17	3	4	1	8 6	1	4	4	9	15 16
Bristol City	17	0	5	3	7 10	4	2	3	14	12 15
Swindon T	18	3	5	1	12 11	1	2	6	11	18 15
Carlisle Utd	16	5	1	2	18 10	0	3	5	4	12 14
Sunderland	16	3	3	1	11 8	1	3	5	11	19 14
Portsmouth	17	3	1	5	9 12	2	3	3	10	12 14
Orient	17	2	4	3	9 10	1	4	3	5	9 14
Brighton	17	1	6	1	14 15	1	3	5	9	18 13
Cardiff City	17	5	1	3	13 10	0	2	6	5	19 13
Millwall	17	4	1	3	11 8	1	1	7	9	14 12

Leading Scorers

Givens, Q.P.R. 11
 Pearson, Hull City 10
 Curran, Oxford Utd 9
 Halom, Luton T. 9
 Wood, Millwall 9
 Bowles, Q.P.R. 8
 Fletcher, Burnley 8
 Gowling, Hud'field 8
 James, Burnley 8
 Joicey, Sheffield 8
 Earle, Fulham 7
 Holme, Hull City 7
 Lathan, Sunderland 7
 Mitchell, Fulham 7
 Murray, Brighton 7
 Owen, Carlisle Utd 7
Rioch, Villa 7
 Treacy, Swindon T. 7

ATTENDANCES—League Division Two				
	Best	Average	Best	Average
Aston Villa	34,843	31,440	Middlesbrough	24,145 12,888
Blackpool	15,043	12,312	Millwall	13,207 11,097
Brighton H.A.	18,699	16,329	Notts Forest	18,082 10,355
Bristol City	15,648	13,351	Orient	9,492 6,045
Burnley	14,804	12,489	Oxford United	11,330 9,143
Cardiff City	16,364	12,617	Portsmouth	16,419 11,413
Carlisle United	10,969	7,628	Preston N.E.	17,371 11,505
Fulham	17,576	10,652	Q.P.R.	17,356 12,700
Huddersfield T.	12,840	9,323	Sheffield Wed.	30,197 20,919
Hull City	13,426	9,627	Sunderland	18,717 14,168
Luton Town	12,197	10,933	Swindon T.	15,304 10,775

HIGHEST ATTENDANCE
 34,843, Aston Villa v Huddersfield Town on 19th August, 1972.

BIGGEST WIN
 Blackpool 6, Brighton 2, on 19th August, 1972.

LOWEST ATTENDANCE
 4,482, Orient v Bristol City on 9th September, 1972.

TOP LEAGUE SCORERS
 Don Givens (11) for Queen's Park Rangers.
 Stuart Pearson (10) for Hull City.

APPEARANCES AND GOALSCORERS										
First-team	League		Cup	Central League						
	A	G	A G	A	G	A	G			
Aitken	16	—	4	—	Anderson	1	1	McMahon	4	—
Anderson	13	1	2	—	Bradley	11	—	Rioch, N	10	2
Cumbes	17	—	4	—	Beard	13	—	Rudge	2	1
Evans	10	3	3	2	Betts	2	—	Stark	9	—
Gidman	13	—	3	—	Brown	15	2	Tiler	13	—
Graydon	13	1	2	1	Child	8	3	Turnbull	12	—
Hamilton	3	1	2	—	Evans	1	—			
Little, B	3	1	—	—	Findlay	2	—			
Lochhead	12	3	3	—	George	15	1			
McMahon	11	—	4	—	Gidman	4	1			
Nicholl	16	—	4	—	Graydon	1	1			
Rioch, B	16	5	4	2	Gregory	2	—			
Rioch, N	1	—	—	—	Hamilton	10	2			
Ross	17	—	4	—	Hoban	11	—			
Tiler	1	—	—	—	Hughes	16	—			
Turnbull	6	—	—	—	Little, B	12	3			
Vowden	17	3	4	1	Leonard	15	9			
Wright	2	—	1	—	Lochhead	1	—			
Own goal	—	1	—	—	McDonald	8	—			

FOR THE RECORD

28th October, League Division Two
VILLA 1, MIDDLESBROUGH 1
 At Villa Park. Attendance: 30,345
 Scorers: Villa: Vowden. Middlesbrough: Armstrong.

VILLA: Cumbes; Gidman, Aitken; Rioch B., Nicholl, Turnbull; Little B., Evans, Ross, Vowden, Anderson. Sub: Lochhead.

MIDDLESBROUGH: Platt, Craggs, Spraggon; Stiles, Boam, Maddren; Gates, Hickton, Mills, Armstrong, Jones. Sub: McMordie.

Central League
W. B. ALBION 1, VILLA 0
 VILLA: Hughes; Hoban, McDonald; Stark, Beard, George; McMahon, Brown, Child, Leonard, Hamilton. Sub: Bradley.

Midland Intermediate League
WALSALL 4, VILLA 2
 Scorers: Pelosie, Place
 VILLA: Findlay; Wright, Barrett; Roberts, Dyer, Overton; Place, Pelosie, (sub Hunt), Campbell, Betts, Fellows.

1st November, Midland Youth League
VILLA 2, WOLVES 1
 Scorers: Pelosie, McDonald
 VILLA: Peyton; Smith, McDonald; Roberts, Dyer, Overton; Taylor, Pelosie, Campbell, Place, Hunt (sub: Ridley).

4th November, League Division Two
SUNDERLAND 2, VILLA 2
 At Roker Park. Attendance: 18,717
 Scorers: Sunderland: Hughes, Kerr. Villa: Rioch B., Little B.
SUNDERLAND: Montgomery; Malone, Coleman; Horswill, Pitt, Porterfield; Kerr, Hughes, Watson, Chambers, Tueart. Sub: McGiven.
 VILLA: Cumbes; Gidman, Aitken; Rioch B., Nicholl, Turnbull; Little B., Evans, Ross, Vowden, Anderson. Sub: Brown.

Central League
VILLA 2, BLACKPOOL 0
 Scorers: Graydon, George
 VILLA: Hughes; Hoban, Bradley; Stark, Beard, George; Rioch N., McMahon, Graydon, Lochhead, Hamilton. Sub: Child.

Midland Intermediate League
WOLVES 4, VILLA 1
 Scorer: Fellows
 VILLA: Findlay; Barrett, Overton; Barnes, Dyer, Place; Pelosie, Betts, Campbell, Fellows, Hunt. Sub: Ridley.

7th November, Midland Youth League
LEICESTER CITY 1, VILLA 2
 Scorer: Taylor (2)
 VILLA: Peyton; Smith, McDonald; Overton, Dyer, Place; Pelosie, Masefield, Campbell, Taylor, Hunt. Sub: Roberts.



VILLA VILLA VILLA VIEW VIEW VIEW

There's a sizeable map of Great Britain hanging on one of the walls of Neville Brigg's office at Villa Park.

On to it are stuck pins which carry a letter. Each pin represents a scout and the interesting thing is how the number of pins (and correspondingly the areas covered by Villa's network) have increased since I first started popping in for a chat with the Villa Chief Scout nearly three years ago.

Briggs inherited an ailing system, and starting virtually from scratch, has stamped his own personal enthusiasm on to an operation which now competes successfully in the crowded and often cut-throat schools scene.

It's incredible how much has been achieved in such a short while. Neville, at the moment, can look with pride on how John Gidman, Brian Little and Keith Leonard have developed. He can look back with satisfaction to the Youth Cup success, which was fashioned by Frank Upton out of the raw materials supplied by Briggs.

A scout must have good contacts, lots of patience and a memory like Leslie Welch. He must also have complete faith in his own judgment. He told me, for instance, of the time he went to Paignton to see a schools match and one lad in particular. When he got there, another lad took his eye and so Tony Ridley became a Villa apprentice and not the boy whom he had specifically gone to see.

The search goes on relentlessly. With today's six-figure transfer market intensifying the demands to produce your own players, the Chief Scout is under constant pressure. Clubs are now seeking out top schoolboy prospects when the lads are as young as 14.

A lad can sign a schoolboy associates form for Villa as long as he is 14 on the 1st of September. New regulations have been brought out this season to prevent any unscrupulous dealings.



NEVILLE BRIGGS

Neville explained: "When a lad signs, two forms—one pink, one blue—are completed. The pink one is signed by the headmaster concerned and forwarded to the English Schools Association. The blue one goes to the Football Association and the two organisations then cross check the registration.

"This method was introduced to prevent a practice by which some scouts were signing lads before they were old enough and then sending on the completed form when their 14th birthday arrived."

The fact that the governing bodies thought fit to bring in new regulations underlines just how competitive scouting has become. You have to have your wits about you at this game and Neville has

pulled off one shrewd move by recruiting an extremely young batch of eight new apprentice professionals.

"We have taken these lads at 15 because the school-leaving age goes up to 16 next Autumn and this will enable the coach to benefit from an extra year with them and we shall have no gap in our pipe-line. Establishing continuity is an extremely vital factor.

"Let me introduce the new lads. From Rotherham, we have John Overton, who used to come to Villa Park for training and coaching during his school holidays. Robert Campbell is a six foot centre-forward from County Antrim whom I first saw when the Irish Schools played the English Schools at The Hawthorns.

"I was impressed and watched him against Wales at Swansea. We invited him and his father over to see our facilities and they must have liked what they saw. Stephen Hunt, an outside-left, has come through Stanley Star and has shown a quick appreciation of the game.

"Keith Masefield, a midfield player, is another local lad. He played for Warwickshire and Aston Boys, while, from Scotland, there is Ian Taylor, an inside-forward who played for Possil Park, and John Pelosie, an orthodox outside-right who played for Cowllairs junior team in Glasgow.

"Frank Pimblett, a midfield player from Huyton in Liverpool, played in all eight England Schools matches last year. Frank has just had some bad luck, for he was rushed into hospital with acute appendicitis. He'll be out of action for about three or four weeks. And, of course, I mentioned Tony Ridley, the inside-forward from Paignton, earlier."

Villa have 12 apprentice professionals in all. A club is allowed 15 at any one time so there's still some scope for Neville. One thing is for sure—he'll be looking just as hard as ever.

JOHN MOXLEY

SECOND SCENE...

ASTON VILLA OXFORD UNITED PRE
TON N.E FULHAM LUTON TOWN HUL
L CITY HUDDERSFIELD TOWN SUN
ERLAND BLACKPOOL CARLISLE UNI
TED MILLWALL MIDDLESBROUGH BR
IGHTON QUEENS PARK ORIENT NOT
TINGHAM F W N BURNLE
Y CARDIFF MOUTH BRI
STOL CITY WED ASTON
VILLA OXF PRESTON N
E FULHAM HULL CITY
HUDDERSFI UNDERLAND
BLACKPOOL CARLISLE UNITED MIL
LWALL MIDDLESBROUGH BRIGHTON
QUEENS PARK ORIENT NOTTINGHAM
E SWINDON TOWN BURNLEY CARDIF
F CITY PORTSMOUTH BRISTOL CIT
Y SHEFFIELD WED ASTON VILLA O



SUNDERLAND reported a massive postal response to their first series of advertisements for a successor to departed manager Alan Brown, but there were no signs of an immediate appointment.

The local evening newspaper, *The Echo*, urged the club to be most careful in selecting the man "to build on the excellent foundations which have been laid by Mr Alan Brown." They commented: "From extremely limited resources, he produced a playing framework of great potential and, at the same time, was the inspiration behind a training complex at Washington, which is second to none in Britain."

Preston manager Alan Ball Snr, also underlined the respect that Mr Brown had within the game. "I believe Alan had done the hard work," said Mr Ball. "For my money, he had overcome many obstacles and built the foundations of a fine young team. Sunderland may not gain promotion this season, but I believe they are close enough to being good enough to go up—and stay up."

As you all know, Sunderland drew 2-2 with Villa in the first game after Mr Brown's departure—and then caretaker manager Billy Elliott tried an interesting experiment in the next fixture at Carlisle.

Dave Watson, who had played at centre-forward throughout the two years since his £100,000 move from Rotherham, reverted to the centre-half spot which he held so often at Millmoor.

Sad to say, the change coincided with a defensive collapse and, although Sunderland recovered from 3-1 down to equalise, they were beaten by a Stan Ternent goal.

It was a welcome win for Carlisle, whose small staff had been stretched by several injuries. There was brighter news concerning full-back Derek Hemstead, just returning after nine week's battling against ligament trouble, but new Scottish striker Kenny Wilson went down with the same problem.

PRESTON NORTH END sank to their first home defeat since Villa won at Deepdale on the opening day of the season. They were beaten last Saturday by a solo goal from Middlesbrough's John Hickton



Ron Linney, the former Assistant Secretary at Villa Park, met up with many old colleagues when we visited Sunderland. Ron, now Secretary at Roker Park, is pictured with our Physiotherapist Fred Pedley.

and once again suffered from their shortage of home goals.

In eight matches, they have scored only five times before their own fans—but conceded only four. The Middlesbrough games marked the return to action of Hugh McIlmoyle after breaking an ankle.

BLACKPOOL were well satisfied with their point from the goalless draw at Villa Park and there is growing confidence in the camp that they can come through for a strong promotion challenge.

Manager Bob Stokoe points out that they have more points than at this stage last year. "We finished with 47 points at

the end of last season," he says. "I shall not be satisfied unless we have done considerably better by the time our present programme is ended."

What has pleased Mr Stokoe most of all is the team's ability to battle on against continual disruption through injuries. When £20,000 midfielder Frank Barton was taken off against his old club, Carlisle, a fortnight ago, he became the ninth first-team squad man to suffer a serious knock. The figure became ten when Paul Fuschillo turned over an ankle the following week.

BURNLEY, of course, crashed to their

NEWS & VIEWS..

first defeat of the season—and their first since last Easter—when ORIENT's former Crystal Palace striker, Gerry Queen, scored the winner two minutes from time at Turf Moor last Saturday.

One player who has particularly enjoyed Burnley's good run this season is Keith Newton, the former England full-back who had an unhappy two years with Everton before being granted a free transfer.

While in the reserves at Goodison, Keith even considered dropping out of the game, but he's glad he changed his mind and took a new chance with Burnley.

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN's battle to re-adjust to Second Division life has had some compensations—notably the form of apprentice forward John Dungworth, who scored on his debut at Middlesbrough.

Manager Ian Greaves says of the former Don and Dearne Boys player: "If I had to give him a nickname to suit his personality, it would be 'The Fox'. I don't mean that unkindly, it's just that he is such a shrewd young lad. His play suggests this craftiness and I agree that he looks very good, indeed."

Dave Mackay, preparing for his first match in charge of NOTTINGHAM FOREST, dropped a bombshell when announcing the departure of three members of the coaching staff—Bobby McKinlay, the former club skipper, Frank Knight and Alan Hill. He bought in his own replacements as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, Forest went down 2-1 at Cardiff last Saturday, Andy McCulloch scoring his second goal since leaving Q.P.R. for Wales. Consolation for Forest: Neil Martin was again on target while enjoying a new lease of first-team life.

Alec Stock, the man who signed Malcolm Macdonald for Luton Town and made them a profit of over £150,000 when selling him to Newcastle, reckons that he has a similar type of player on parade at FULHAM.

He is John Mitchell, a strong striker who justified his manager's rating by

scoring twice in the 2-2 draw at Hull last week. He has scored four times in the last two games.

Happy man in the OXFORD UNITED camp last Saturday was teenager Geoff Bray, who scored the winner while making his League debut against Sheffield Wednesday.

This result made up for Oxford's recent home lapses and leant weight to the theory of manager Gerry Summers that it is often harder to win on your own ground.

BRISTOL CITY won't disagree with Mr Summers' thoughts. They have yet to win in eight games at Ashton Gate and went down again last Saturday when Don Givens scored both goals in Queen's Park Rangers's 2-1 win.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRESS...

No-one has a greater admiration for the British Press than I. So I was most concerned when I was told that a light-hearted remark I made at the E.G.M. on 25th September had offended members of the Birmingham branch of the National Union of Journalists.

That remark was: "You don't want to believe all you read in the newspapers". While it is, I suppose, the sort of banter that many have used on the spur of the moment—as I did—it has been pointed out to me that my words could, on this occasion, reflect on the accuracy of press reporting in general.

So to the gentlemen of the Press—my sincere regrets. I would only add that, knowing the speed with which you usually have to work, I am amazed that you maintain such a very high standard of factual accuracy.

Pat Matthews, President

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SPON LANE WEST BROMWICH

Aston Villa v Luton Town

FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION 2 SATURDAY 18th NOVEMBER 1972 KICK-OFF 3.00 pm

TEAMCHECK...

29144 ASTON VILLA (o)	TEAM CHANGES	LUTON TOWN	TEAM CHANGES
Claret & Blue Shirts, White Shorts		White Shirts, Black Shorts	
1 JIMMY CUMBES		1 KEITH BARBER	
2 IAN ROSS		2 JOHN RYAN	
3 CHARLIE AITKEN		3 BOBBY THOMSON	
4 BRUCE RIOCH		4 ALAN SLOUGH	
5 CHRIS NICHOLL		5 JOHN FAULKNER	
6 FRED TURNBULL		6 ALAN GARNER	
7 RAY GRAYDON	LOCKHEAD GRAYDON	7 JIMMY RYAN	
8 ALUN EVANS	LOCKHEAD EVANS	8 GORDON HINDSON	ANDERSON
9 BRIAN LITTLE		9 RODNEY FERN *	
10 GEOFF VOWDEN		10 VIC HALOM	
11 WILLIE ANDERSON		11 JOHN ASTON *	
12 MCMAHON		12 GOODEVE	

SCORECHECK...

Blackpool v Bristol C	A	Arsenal v Everton	L
Brighton v Burnley	B	Coventry v Sheffield Utd	N
Carlisle v Oxford	C	C. Palace v Leeds	P
Fulham v Portsmouth	D	Leicester v Tottenham	S
Huddersfield v Cardiff	E	Liverpool v Newcastle	T
Nottm Forest v Preston	F	Man City v Man Utd	V
Q.P.R. v Millwall	G	Norwich v W.B.A.	W
Sheffield W v M'brough	H	S'hampton v Chelsea	X
Sunderland v Hull	J	Wolves v Ipswich	Y
Swindon v Orient	K	Walsall v Kettering	Z

OFFICIALS...

Referee: **D. SMITH**, Stonehouse, Glos.

Linesmen:

E. BLUNSTONE, Crewe, Red Flag

A. R. HUMPAGE, Market Drayton, Orange Flag

David Smith, the highlight of his refereeing career was when he handled the F.A. Centenary Cup Final last May. A chargehand linesman for the Midlands Electricity Board, he is married with a son, is secretary of the Stroud and District League and serves on various committees connected with this league.