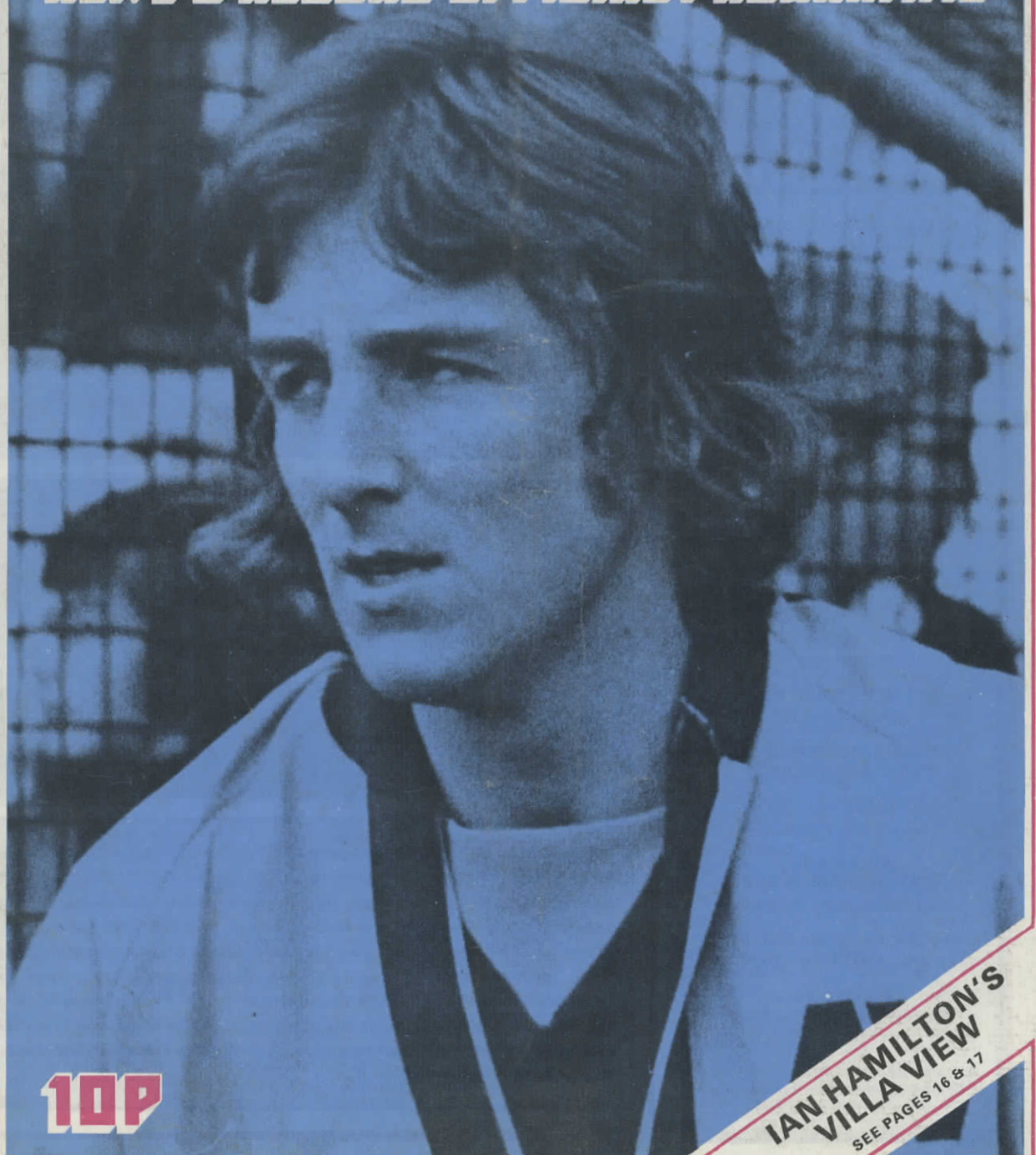


ASTON VILLA

NEWS & RECORD OFFICIAL PROGRAMME



10P

**IAN HAMILTON'S
VILLA VIEW**
SEE PAGES 16 & 17



VILLA NEWS & RECORD

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF ASTON
VILLA FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 15

PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR
1970-71—1971-72—1972-73

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The Super Sub . . . that was certainly Sammy Morgan when he came on to score two goals in the second-half of our 3-1 F.A. Cup win against Chester. "It was a real tonic to get those goals after being in the reserves," said the Northern Ireland centre-forward—and, of course, it was all the better for keeping his name before Irish team chief Terry Neill. With the score 1-1 at half-time, Sammy had every reason to celebrate when he put Villa ahead again (top). Then it was a race against Ray Graydon to claim the distinction of our third goal (middle) and so nearly a hat-trick when a diving header was saved by goalkeeper Grenville Millington (bottom).

VIC CROWE TALKING..

Remember the North American Soccer League, that pioneering attempt to place the football game on a sound professional basis in the United States and Canada, which has been written off more times than a battered school blackboard?

Well, it's very much alive and kicking, if you'll pardon the pun. In fact, there is now real hope that the game is set fair for a dramatic development on the other side of the Atlantic.

Despite all the problems, the doubts, fears and dismal forecasts, the N.A.S.L. has increased its club strength this year from seven to fifteen—and the most impressive fact of the lot is that the West Coast clubs have joined the battle again.

The significance of this fact may be lost to you unless you remember that the distance between one side of the States to the other is just as great as that from England to America.

In other words, if a club in New York plays in San Francisco they are travelling 3,000 miles for an away game. Think of the cost! And the fact that four clubs are opening up on the West Coast means that the hard-headed business men who are investing in soccer's future clearly believe there is tremendous growth ahead.

The development is a tremendous achievement, and a lasting accolade to the immense efforts of all those involved, particularly my old Villa mate Phil Woosnam, who since 1968 has been the top man in the organisation as the League's Commissioner, and has spent most of his life in an airplane since then, jetting all over the place, spreading the soccer gospel, convincing all and sundry that good times are on the way.

Soccer is now acknowledged as the fastest-growing sport in the States. Not just on a professional level. Development among the paid ranks is quite useless unless the growth is even more spectacular among the youngsters—and so it is proving.



Last year, the American champions, Philadelphia, were coached by an American, and had a number of American players in their ranks. The team they beat in the Final, Dallas, who have former Villa player Ray Bloomfield in their ranks, have a highly-rated American player in their line-up, who caused a sensation purely because he played the game at all.

He happens to be the son of one of America's immortal grid-iron football players. It was as if Stanley Matthews Junior had been hired to play professional basketball in the States.

The fact that such an all-American boy elected to play soccer in preference to his father's game was startling enough; what made it even more revolutionary was the added bonus of his father applauding his decision and speaking up very forcibly for the merits of soccer in comparison with other games.

And why not? A couple of weeks ago, the ITV network spent valuable time in their Saturday afternoon programme to show details from the top American grid-iron game of the year. It's right that we should exchange these sports and see how the other side gets its enjoyment.

I found grid-iron football incredibly complex at first, but then, that's what most Americans say about soccer and the offside rule. Both games benefit from a little tolerance and an attempt to find out how it works.

Certainly world football will benefit from the game's development in the States. They are a long, long way away from top European or South American standards yet, but given the same drive and development which is taking place right now I can see American teams being good enough to tour Britain well within the next decade.

At the moment there is a gradual fusion between imported talent from all over the world, and the home grown youngsters who have been recruited from college soccer. The local lads can learn from the experience of the imports and also the skills of the clubs which tour the States and Canada during our close season.

In recent years America has imported teams from Russia, England, Germany, Israel—you name it, they've had them.

I hope we have lost that smug feeling about the game's development elsewhere in the light of modern results. I still remember the sneers and nudges the North Korean qualifiers to the 1966 World Cup received, until those little men who stepped out of the mountain mists began waltzing around their more fancied opponents.

AMERICA WILL HAVE TO TAKE TIME TO BUILD A REPUTATION IN INTERNATIONAL SOCCER — BUT THEY WILL GET THERE IN THE END—AND THOSE WHO IGNORE THAT PREDICTION DO SO AT THEIR OWN PERIL.

Finally, I would like to make contact with one of our younger supporters who wrote to me recently. His name is Jonathan Ritchie but, unfortunately he did not put his address on his letter.

So if Jonathan, or his parents read this, perhaps I can find out how to reach him.

PETER ANDERSON, *midfield*. Born: Hendon. Former manager Alec Stock gave Peter a dramatic introduction to Second Division football when signing him from Hendon and putting him into Luton's promotion-chasing team in 1971. Peter, a left-winger at that time, was still an amateur when he made his debut. A professional for only two-and-a-half years, he switched to midfield last season, having been top scorer with ten goals the previous term.

JOHN ASTON, *winger*. Born: Manchester. The son of the post-war Manchester United star, John followed in his dad's foot-steps by joining the Old Trafford club and reached a career highlight when playing a storming game in the final of the European Cup against Benfica at Wembley. John broke a leg afterwards, but came-back to win an England Under-23 cap in 1970. He joined Luton for around £30,000 in 1972 and scored nine League goals in his first season.

DON SHANKS, *defender*. Born: London. Don was also signed on a free transfer from Fulham and, soon after joining Luton, he was a member of England's 'Little World Cup' winners' team in 1971. He has since been watched by a number of First Division clubs.

BOBBY THOMSON, *defender*. Born: Smethwick. The most widely-experienced member of the Luton staff, Bobby enjoyed a tremendous League comeback last season when he was appointed Luton skipper and won their 'Player of the Year' award. He had been signed on a free transfer in 1972 from Birmingham City, where he had never quite lived up to the heavy transfer fee paid to Wolves. City sent him on loan to Walsall in 1971-72, but he turned down a move to Fellows Park in order to join Luton. Bobby, of course, was an England international in a long career with Wolves, collecting eight full caps and another 15 with the Under-23 side.

JOHN RYAN, *midfield*. Born: London. Another of Harry Haslam's shrewd free signings, John was allowed to leave Fulham three years ago after playing in over 40 League games. Previously with Arsenal as a junior, he has progressed rapidly in three years at Kenilworth Road, playing at full-back or midfield, and was club captain for a time. A keen golfer, he won the Kent amateur title in 1972.

GRAHAM HORN, *goalkeeper*. Born: London. Powerfully-built goalkeeper who was a regular choice for Portsmouth in the first-half of last season, yet 'Pompey' didn't get a penny when Graham joined Luton for a five-figure fee in February this year. The money went to Arsenal, who had only loaned him to the Fratton Park club.

PERSONAL POINTS LUTON

JIMMY RYAN, *winger*. Born: Stirling. Joined Manchester United as a junior and went through the Old Trafford ranks to play in 24 League matches as well as several important Cup games. He cost Luton £20,000 three years ago and is now past his 100th League game for 'The Hatters'.

BARRY BUTLIN, *forward*. Born: Roslington. Barry opened his relatively-inexperienced League career with Notts County and then joined Derby County, where he became a prolific scorer in the side which won the Central League in 1971-72. He also played in the winning Texaco Cup final team, but he had only four League outings before joining Luton for a hefty fee half-way through last season. He scored four goals in 11 games, but was struck down by knee trouble and recently recovered from a broken jaw.

JOHN FAULKNER, *defender*. Born: Orpington. Leeds United's famous F.A. Cup trip to Sutton United in 1970 was the day a professional career opened for John. Although Sutton were trounced 6-0, Don Revie was impressed enough to take him to Elland Road as a potential successor to Jackie Charlton. However, he was unlucky enough to break a leg and had only two First Division games before signing for Luton in 1971.

TOM FINNEY, *forward*. Born: Belfast. Last season Tom was working as a pipe-fitter in Belfast and preparing for a new season as a part-time professional with Crusaders. Then Luton moved in with a £13,000 bid and Tom Finney (Mark Two) hit the Football League with five goals in four matches.

ALAN GARNER, *defender*. Born: Lambeth. When Harry Haslam was chief scout to Alec Stock, he

made a habit of picking up free transfer bargains and, now he is manager, Mr Haslam is glad that he signed Alan when Millwall released him in 1971. He took over the number five spot from Chris Nicholl in his first season and proudly recalls the goal which took Luton into last season's F.A. Cup Sixth Round.

JIMMY HUSBAND, *forward*. Born: Newcastle-on-Tyne. Signed from Everton for a reported £80,000 last November. He had joined the Merseysiders from school and progressed rapidly to add youth international honours to his schoolboy caps. A member of Everton's F.A. Youth Cup-winning side in 1965, he made his debut that year and went on England's Under-23 tour in 1967, winning three caps. He played in the 1968 F.A. Cup Final and the following season had his best scoring spell with 20 League and Cup goals.

ALAN WEST, *midfield*. Born: Hyde. Another of this season's big signings, Alan arrived from Burnley in October after spending 18 months in the shadows at Turf Moor. He played in Burnley's 1968 F.A. Youth Cup-winning side and won an England Under-23 cap against Wales in 1971, but surprisingly managed only one substitute's appearance when the 'Clarets' won the Second Division title last term.

PETER CRUSE, *forward*. Born: London. A former Arsenal apprentice who was signed on a free transfer last summer, Peter didn't get a League chance with the 'Gunners', but has made several appearances for 'The Hatters'.

RODNEY FERN, *forward*. Born: Burton-on-Trent. Luton paid a sizeable fee to sign Rodney from Leicester City in time for the start of last season. He was a regular in the early part of the campaign, but later lost his place and went on loan to Coventry City without playing in their League side. At Leicester, he was a useful marksman, with 27 goals in 132 League games, and played in the beaten F.A. Cup Final team in 1969.

LUTON TOWN F.C.—1973-74—(Back row): Billy Holmes, Alan Slough (now Fulham), Jimmy Ryan, Paul Price, Viv Busby (now Fulham), John Faulkner, Ken Goodeve, Peter Cruse, Phil O'Connor. (Centre row): Rodney Fern, Ken Whitfield (coach), Alan Garner, John Moore, John Ryan, Stephen Litt, Graham Horn, Keith Barber, Barry Butlin, Peter Anderson, Graham French, Ray King (coach), Nicholas Sparks, Roy McCrohan (chief coach). (Front row): Reg Game (physiotherapist), Bobby Thomson, Alex Malcolm, Vince Melisi, Harry Haslam (manager), Derek Hales (now Charlton Athletic), Gordon Hindson, Don Shanks, John Aston.

LUTONTOWN



ACTION REPLAY

Ray Barlow and Johnny Dixon...
later to meet in the
1957 F.A. Cup Semi-Final.



The snows of Christmas 1956 had thawed, and soccer grounds from Sunderland to Southampton were sodden green and dirty brown carpets ready to greet the New Year endeavours of the big names as they joined the F.A. Cup trail in the Third Round.

In common with many of their counterparts, Villa were looking forward to an extended spell in the Cup as a means of inspiring their tame League form which had slipped through the first half of the season and into 1957 with only a handful of wins in the First Division.

The luck of the draw had posed them one of the rather familiar Cup tasks, a travel ticket to Luton, a team not expected to sever Villa's ambitions but one which had a rising reputation at the time as a side

pretty fresh in Division One with a good-class football outlook.

At the time, as they prepared to meet the Villa challenge, Luton enjoyed the knowledge that they had already sampled the power of the Cup opponents in an earlier League encounter and blunted it so effectively that Luton's goal stayed intact.

But Luton's manager was forced to grapple with a scoring problem showing a season's total of just 58 goals, the second lowest figure in the League. The lowest was credited to Cardiff City, and it was the reason why they left the premier division.

Consequently, Luton were concerned with their problems in attack as the Cup approached. They had only averaged a goal a match for two months, yet many were convinced that Gordon Turner was only saving them for the big day. His

clinical sharpness near goal had been re-inforced by the arrival of a new centre-forward, George McLeod, a 22-year-old Scot, both men ready to feed on the subtle service of Bob Morton, an all-rounder who could make them and score them.

One of the key figures behind Luton's notable progress in the 'Fifties' was the well known 'Brummie' character, Syd Owen, who left Birmingham City in the late 'Forties' to have a super-sized impact on Kenilworth Road. But he was out of commission at the time, and so was another Luton import from Birmingham, goalkeeper Ron Baynham.

This England international, who slipped through the local scouting net, found his place between the posts occupied by another England 'cap', Bernard Streten. A junior in Norfolk football, Streten went via Shrewsbury before linking with Luton

just after the War, reaching his professional peak with England recognition in 1949.

Luton were a team of many assets, and combined a mixture of class and skill with determination and a good club spirit.

Hence *Sports Argus* writer Tom Duckworth's preview warning for Villa that though Luton had not been finding the net consistently enough to be feared in any respect, they would provide a tough battle which Villa might have to settle for a replay and decide the issue at Villa Park.

So began a memorable Cup trail, 17 years ago, when manager Eric Houghton set off with a squad of hopeful and confident players who were later in the year, to be feted as Cup heroes.

But when they arrived at Kenilworth Road, it was obvious that the winter had taken its toll of the playing surface. After the sparring session had been completed, the pitch turned into a 'glue-pot' giving the creative players no opportunity.

The mud clung to boots and ball, and unless the players gave it a hefty thump, it stuck well before it reached its intended destination. Strength, power and stamina were the key factors of the day.

Dennis Shaw, the *Sports Argus* man-on-the-spot, saw Johnny Dixon open Villa's offensive, but it was Nigel Sims who was first to handle Shaw's version of a 'Christmas Pudding'. 'Luton's young centre-forward, McLeod, moved quickly and snapped a shot to the far post, but Sims timed a splendid dive to grasp it near the post.'

The old War-time RAF motto, 'Wings for Victory', was certainly applicable in a different sense that afternoon, when wingers had the chance to exploit the inviting green stripes flanking the muddy expanse of the middle.

It was a day when players hit the ball hard and hoped for results afterwards. It was such a thought which inspired Les Smith to crack over a 12th minute corner with a mighty whack from the flag. Johnny Dixon always had a deadly eye for cross balls, and he was able to flash the ball home inside the near upright to put Villa ahead.

Luton's recovery creations and Villa's attempt to endorse their early advantage were swallowed up by the adhesive surface, and the only 'goal' prospects before half time were restricted to a couple of run-and-crash efforts from Stan Lynn.

Both sides resumed after the interval looking fresh and as if they had all gone through a quick ten minutes car wash! But the bright clean togs soon lost their sparkle. After losing an earlier appeal, Luton voiced a united claim in the 57th minute when Stan Crowther clawed into a shot from Bob Morton right on the spot.

It was, agreed the referee, a penalty and Gordon Turner stepped up to take Villa back to square one. The equaliser seemed to drain a lot of lead out of Luton's boots and they came back in hungry fashion. The key men at Kenilworth Road began to swing the ball around more and it was Turner's cross which sank Villa's spirits into the mud shortly afterwards, for winger Davies beat Sims with a header to put Luton ahead, 2-1.



The hammer blow arrived 20 minutes from time, but, as he so often proved during his wonderful career, Peter McParland was the Villa prize-fighter.

Villa battled on, muddy and bruised, in search of an equaliser. There was no short or pretty way to goal, just an honest slog in the hope that there would be strength left at the end to knock it in. There was, and the man was McParland, who settled a goalmouth melee, nine minutes from time, by thumping a loose ball through the packed goal area into the Luton net!

Neither side had the strength left to argue against a 2-2 scoreline, that would be settled in 48 hours on the 'Park' in the replay. Fate had decreed also that replays faced Blues, Walsall and Albion, who found none other than Charlie Williams, no comedian, but a stumbling block of a centre-half for Doncaster Rovers.

Villa's was up first on Monday afternoon, when they were unchanged. So, too, were Luton who again included Shanks at left-half, a footballing link at Luton now carried on by Don Shanks who pins down a regular spot in Luton's promotion hunt.

Villa looked keen and industrious before their own fans, no player showing more enthusiasm and love for the Cup than right-winger, Les Smith.

It seemed that Luton had difficulty in getting the memory of the previous Saturday out of their system for though full-back McNally knocked out Les Smith with a tackle, the 'fisherman-footballer' was quickly back to dazzle the Luton defence.

With McParland looking dangerous on the other flank, Villa's attack had Luton swapping their attentions in double time and the surprise was that Villa had to press on into the second-half before prising an opening for the lead. It sprang from the understanding between Smith and Dixon, the winger spotting his 'Geordie' pal sprinting through the Luton cover and hitting a centre right to the button of the inside-left's impact point.

Streten was left stranded by the pace of Dixon's header and though the 'Hatters' came back with the hopes of repeating Saturday's success, the compact nature of the Villa defence gave it no chance to take seed.

Jimmy Dugdale, Brian Aldis and Stan Lynn stood out like formidable granite pillars and the passport to the Fourth Round and the next hurdle on the way to Wembley was sealed eight minutes from time when Dixon darted in to polish off Luton's hopes.

HOW THEY LINED-UP...
Saturday, 5th January, 1957.

Luton: Streten; Dunne, McNally; Pearce, Kelly, Shanks; Cullen, Turner, McLeod, Morton, Davies.

Villa: Sims; Lynn, Aldis; Crowther, Dugdale, Seward; Smith, Sewell, Pace, Dixon, McParland.

Result: Luton 2 (Turner pen., Davies) Villa: 2 (Dixon, McParland)

Monday, 7th January, 1957.

Teams unchanged.

Result: Villa 2 (Dixon 2) Luton: 0

ALL ABOUT LUTON

Luton Town have reversed the trend of selling star assets, such as Bruce Rioch, Chris Nicholl and Malcolm Macdonald, in a determined effort to march back to the First Division for the first time since we exchanged places in 1959-60.

Manager Harry Haslam has spent around £170,000 this season in bringing together an exciting collection of new forwards—former England Under-23 international Jimmy Husband (Everton) and Alan West (Burnley) and Irish cap candidate Tom Finney (Crusaders).

The Luton chief had earlier built up his buying fund by negotiating a £70,000 package deal with Fulham for the sale of Viv Busby and Alan Slough. Even so, the heavy spending represents a courageous gamble by a club with an average gate of just over 10,000 this season.

But that is the present Luton style—AMBITIOUS. They have left no stone unturned in seeking out a promotion formula which is settled on all-out attack. Mr Haslam says: "One aspect of British football in recent years has been the lack of attacking play. We are basing our existence on a policy of attack, not only on the field, but in every department off it, and to such an extent that the only thinking I want is a positive one in all directions."

And Mr Haslam proclaims: "If British football requires a lead in this respect, then we will supply it."

'The Hatters' stated their intentions in a dramatic start to the season. Beaten 4-0 by Nottingham Forest in the first fixture, they refused to back down from their aggressive principles—and promptly put six goals past Carlisle United in the first 45 minutes of their home programme!

Goals continued to flow as Luton settled down among the pacemakers. Finney, in particular, made a terrific impact with five scoring successes in his first five English games and Barry Butlin, a sound buy from Derby County last season, proved an effective leader of the front line.

Indeed, every member of the regular side got on the scoresheet by November and perhaps the most illuminating statistic was that Peter Anderson, a midfield man, became top scorer with 11 goals after scoring twice in the third round F.A. Cup replay victory over Port Vale.

Manager Haslam's crusade for goals includes the modern rarity of playing two orthodox wingers—the former Manchester United pair, John Aston and Jimmy Ryan. Both are capable of scoring goals as well as laying on the chances.

Additionally, Luton have plenty of reserve strength in the forward section. Rodney Fern, a £50,000 capture from Leicester City at the start of last season, Gordon Hindson, a five-figure purchase from Newcastle United, and Peter Cruse, a summer 'snip' from Arsenal, are among the men who give Luton the most feared attack in the Football Combination.

Unfortunately for Town's promotion dream, the scoring scheme has slipped off course in recent weeks. Starting with a 2-0 home defeat by Albion on 1st December, they managed only five goals in a run of nine fixtures, but they still managed to

FOR THE RECORD

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

TEN-YEAR RECORD

Season	Div	Pos	Won	Pts
1972-73	2	12th	15	41
1971-72	2	13th	10	38
1970-71	2	8th	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	8th	24	58
1964-65	3	21st	11	33
1963-64	3	18th	16	42



JOHN ASTON



JIMMY RYAN

ALAN GARNER

collect ten points in that period after snatching 1-0 wins against Millwall, Cardiff, Villa and Bristol City.

Most disappointing was the failure of Husband to hit the target in his first eight games after leaving Everton. The 26-year-old striker was always a dangerous marksman for the Goodison club, playing in their 1969-70 Championship side, but explained "It always takes time to settle with a new club. I have been particularly affected by a delay in finding a house in the Luton area. The travel has been a real drag when I spend the week-ends with my family in Liverpool and you naturally worry about being away all the week."

When Husband's partnership with Butlin eventually reaches its full potential, Luton will obviously present a formidable challenge for one of the promotion 'passports'. They have a favourable balance of home fixtures — including money-spinning clashes with Middlesbrough and Orient — and, as they proved in reaching the F.A. Cup quarter-final last season, few sides get more successes away from home territory.

A First Division place would be a deserved reward for all the hard work that has revived the club from the depths of despair in the early Sixties. Luton's fall from the top section came only 12 months after the shattering blow of losing the 1959 Cup Final to ten-man Nottingham Forest and continued to the lower levels of the Fourth Division.

The first signs of recovery came under the management of Allan Brown, the current Nottingham Forest chief who had played in Luton's beaten Wembley side. He took them into the Third Division and built the majority of the squad which Alec Stock steered to the Second Division in 1970.

Although Bruce Rioch was sold to Villa for a six-figure profit, Luton were a tremendous scoring force because of Malcolm Macdonald, who hammered 24 goals in helping 'The Hatters' put in a sustained promotion challenge in 1970-71.

However, it was perhaps inevitable that they could not hold on to his precious talents and a massive fee transferred him to Newcastle United in the following summer. This appeared to be a damaging blow to Luton's continued progress and they suffered a disappointing campaign in 1971-72.

At the end of the season, Alec Stock resigned for personal reasons and Luton looked no further than their own staff for a successor, promoting Harry Haslam from chief scout. In that position, he had served the club superbly by finding such players as Don Shanks, Peter Anderson, Alan Garner and John Ryan.

It is much to his credit, for instance, that Luton regularly field a back-four which cost them only a modest fee for centre-half John Faulkner from Leeds United. Shanks, Garner and skipper Bobby Thomson were all snapped up on free transfers.

That's all part of the skilful business acumen which has lifted Luton to their present position. And they have found another money-making scheme this term by introducing sponsored matches which are reported to bring in £1,000 per game from major industrial concerns.

ALAN GARNER

DON SHANKS

JIMMY RYAN

BREW XI

For the men of
the Midlands

M&B



Mitchells & Butlers Ltd.
Birmingham

DOES THE CAP FIT?



Northern Ireland's team plans for this season's Home International Championship will be watched anxiously by everyone at Villa Park—hoping that Sammy Morgan continues his tenancy of the number nine shirt and that Chris Nicholl will be considered to wear the green shirt of his father's country.

The Irish Press have frequently pushed Chris's name forward for selection since the publicity of his transfer from Luton, but manager Terry Neill has stood by regular squad members Allan Hunter, of Ipswich Town, and Liam O'Kane, of Nottingham Forest.

Vic Crowe believes that Chris is well worthy of an international chance. He said: "Chris has had an outstanding season for us. If any other player with Irish qualifications is doing better than Chris, then that surprises me. I would be delighted to see him in the Irish team because he is playing well enough to be there and that is the only yardstick by which you can reason his qualifications.

"I spoke to Terry Neill last season and put him in the picture as to his eligibility for selection, but I have not had the chance to have another word this season."

RISING STARS

Villa's professional ranks were swelled by three talented young teenagers last month when we up-graded Bobby Campbell, Steve Hunt and John Overton from the apprentice staff. They all celebrated promotion by appearing in the Central League side's convincing 2-0 win against Sheffield Wednesday.

Bobby, a former Northern Ireland Schoolboy international, was born in Belfast on 13th September, 1956, and joined Villa in May, 1972. His goal against Wednesday was his fourth in five successive reserve games.

Steve, who collected his first Central League goal against Wednesday, is a Birmingham-born winger and joined the club as an apprentice in July, 1972. An England Youth trialist this season, he was 17 last August.

John, a defender in the Ian Ross mould, hails from Rotherham and celebrates his 18th birthday on 2nd May this year. He first signed apprentice forms in August, 1972.

We wish them all well in their search for League football and are particularly pleased to report that Bobby and Steve will still be qualified for next season's F.A. Youth Cup competition.

Picture: Courtesy of the Birmingham Evening Mail.



BOBBY CAMPBELL

STEVE HUNT

JOHN OVERTON

ACTION



Chris Micholl may be listed as a defender in all the record books but there are few more dangerous players when he ventures into opposition goalmouths. So it was surprising that Chris had to wait until the Cup tie against Chester for his first goal of the season—but what a perfect way to get off the mark with this header from Brian Little's corner! He would love to get another against his old Luton team-mates today.

Photographer: Terry Weir.

Harry Parkes

THE COMPLETE SPORTS OUTFITTERS

HUGE STOCK OF FAMOUS MAKES OF FOOTBALL BOOTS

ADIDAS			
2000	£12.95	Brazil	£4.70
Penarol	£7.95	Gerd Muller	£7.95
Santiago	£6.95	Mexico	£5.35
Austrian Cup	£6.45	Beckenbauer	£5.50
		Inter	£6.48

PUMA			
King Pele	£10.50	Cruiff Super	£8.95
Wembley	£11.20	Flamengo	£4.85
Benfica Super	£8.50	Pioneer	£3.75
Pele Rio	£7.75	Star	£5.80
Pele Santos	£6.27	Hat Trick	£7.27

GOLA			
International	£7.20	League	£4.95
Goal Master	£5.15	Star	£4.10

WINIT			
Saturn	£5.20	Wolf	£6.75

TRAINING SHOES

ADIDAS			
Achill	£10.00	Samba	£7.25
Mexicana Blau	£7.95	Bamba	£5.50
Olympia	£6.95		
Rom	£5.48	Patrick	£2.90

PUMA			
Top Fit	£4.38	All Round	£7.75

GOLA			
Royale	£4.25	Cobra	£5.10
Supa Cobra	£6.70		

ADIDAS SQUASH SHOE

Jonah Barrington £6.48

ASTON VILLA BRI-NYLON TRACK SUITS

Sky Blue Jackets, Maroon Pants, with contrasting stripes and A.V. on the pocket

26 in	28 in	30 in	32 in	34 in	S.M.L.
£5.20	£5.20	£5.70	£5.70	£6.40	£7.90

JERSEYS

Cotton by Umbro. With an Embroidered Badge

22/24 in	26/28 in	30/32 in	34/36 in	38/40 in
£1.25	£1.25	£1.35	£1.50	£1.70

Plain

22/24 in	26/28 in	30/32 in	34/36 in	38/40 in
£1.00	£1.00	£1.15	£1.25	£1.35

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All Colours

22 in—65p	24/26 in—70p	28/30 in—70p	32/34 in—75p
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INTHE DARK



Like most sections of industry and commerce, the Villa Park office staff have taken steps to overcome the three-day ban on the use of power in offices. When the lights are off on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, we maintain our normal service for customers and visitors by illuminating the offices with hurricane lamps. Below, Pam Taberner is pictured at work in the Ticket Office and, right, Pam Millard keeps the club switchboard "on the air".





VILLA VIEW

It is the flare, not the flair, of Chico Hamilton that has been concerning manager Vic Crowe and his assistants over the months and Chico himself admitted to me that he has put in a lot of work this season in an endeavour to be a consistent fizz-kid rather than a disappointing fizgig*.

Remember those epic League Cup battles of 1970-71 with Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur? Recall how Chico rose to the occasion to bedevil those First Division defences with exhibitions that demonstrated his natural flair or keen perception on the ball.

But the biggest flaw in his game has been the flare qualities, in that he has seemed to burn up his natural gift in a couple of outstanding matches when he might well have sustained his impact in the game for much longer periods but for his self confessed 'breakdown in concentration'.

This season, however, Vic Crowe has been pleased at the way Chico has worked at his problem. He told me: "In some ways, Chico is too nice a fellow when he steps on to the field. He is an extremely affable lad off the park and sometimes he has not seemed aggressive or competitive enough during a game. This is purely because this is the kind of lad he is in every day life.

"We have talked over this problem with Chico and this season we have seen a noticeable improvement in him, especially with respect to the way he copes with physical challenges and reacts when he loses the ball.

"Chico's strength is in his close control and naturally he cannot expect to win every man-to-man confrontation. We were concerned firstly to impress upon him that his part was not over just because he had lost the ball and we also wanted to make him a more difficult man to dispossess in the first place.

"We have talked with him many times and stressed that he needs to be that extra bit stronger when he is on the ball and that he can be of great use to the side by harassing, chasing or getting goal-side of the man who may have taken the ball away from him. Happily to say, he has done a lot to improve these specific points about his performance."

Of the many professionals I have interviewed over the years, the vast majority maintain that consistency is not only the most vital quality they seek, but also the most difficult to attain because so many other attributes such as confidence, the form of one's team-mates and recent results are all involved.

So I was very interested to hear Chico's views when I asked him just how he was going about the task of becoming more consistent. "In a nutshell, it is all about my becoming more involved and concentrating on the game 100 per cent for the whole 90 minutes," he said.

"It is strange that over the season I have been able to come out of what I could call the big game far better. Against Manchester United and Spurs I feel that I did

quite well and I can remember when, as a teenager, I made my debut for Chelsea in the London 'derby' against Spurs. I managed to score and did quite well.

"Vic has mentioned the importance of consistency to me for a season or more and I have to admit that there have been occasions when I have had lapses of concentration and, as a result, have been out of the game more than I should have been. But I feel that I am improving this side of my game as a result of the consistency of the advice I have been given by Vic and Ron.

"I think I have shown a more determined attitude towards the game, especially with regard to getting the ball back should the defender have beaten me. If that is the kind of aggression that Vic wants, then I think I have given it. I am not by nature an aggressive sort of fellow, but I would prefer to describe this particular facet of the game as being more competitive. It all boils down to involvement and I am trying hard to reach the level of this that Vic is seeking."

It is a simple fact of soccer life that if you look after the bread-and-butter matches, the champagne occasions will occur as a natural consequence. Whilst Chico seems to thrive on the bubbly, he has also shown a keener appetite for a more staple, less glamorous—but still rewarding—diet this season.

* *Fizgig—a firework of damp powder that just fizzes.*

JOHN MOXLEY

VILLA VIEW



CALENDAR

FOOTBALL LEAGUE—DIVISION TWO

DATE	OPPONENTS	ATT	F	A	DATE	OPPONENTS	ATT	F	A
Aug 18	LEICESTER CITY (Friendly)	15,153	0	1	1974				
25	PRESTON NORTH END	28,861	2	0	Jan. 1	MILLWALL	20,905	0	0
29	LEAGUE CUP 1				5	CHESTER (FAC 3)	16,545	3	1
Sept 1	MILLWALL	12,009	1	1	12	MIDDLESBROUGH	26,906	1	1
8	OXFORD UNITED	28,078	2	0	19	PRESTON NORTH END	10,766	0	0
11	CRYSTAL PALACE	20,858	0	0	26	ARSENAL (FAC 4)			
15	MIDDLESBROUGH	19,656	0	0	Feb. 2	LUTON TOWN			
19	FULHAM	30,162	1	1	9	ORIENT			
22	ORIENT	26,685	2	2	16	BOLTON WAND (FAC5)			
29	NOTTS COUNTY	15,872	0	2	23	CARDIFF CITY			
Oct 2	FULHAM	11,776	0	1	Mar 2	W B ALBION			
6	CARDIFF CITY	24,473	5	0	9	NOTTINGHAM FOREST (6)			
9	YORK CITY (L.C. 2)	7,981	0	1	16	BRISTOL CITY			
13	BOLTON WANDERERS	19,206	2	1	*20	CARLISLE UNITED			
20	BRISTOL CITY	26,918	2	2	23	PORTSMOUTH			
23	CRYSTAL PALACE	26,670	2	1	30	SHEFFIELD WED (FAC SF)			
27	NOTTINGHAM FOREST	17,718	2	1	Apr 6	SWINDON TOWN			
Nov 3	SHEFFIELD WED	28,559	1	0	13	HULL CITY			
10	PORTSMOUTH	12,678	0	2	15	BLACKPOOL			
17	HULL CITY	23,773	1	1	16	BLACKPOOL			
24	SWINDON TOWN	8,476	0	1	20	SUNDERLAND			
Dec 8	SUNDERLAND	20,784	0	2	27	CARLISLE UNITED			
15	LUTON TOWN	10,020	0	1	May 4	FA CUP FINAL			
22	NOTTS COUNTY	20,825	1	1					
26	W B ALBION	43,084	0	2					
29	OXFORD UNITED	10,149	1	2					

CENTRAL LEAGUE

Aug 25	W B ALBION	0 0	Nov 7	BLACKPOOL	0 0	Feb 2	EVERTON	
28	SHEFFIELD U	2 2	10	MANCHESTER C.	2 1	9	MANCHESTER U.	
Sept 1	BURNLEY	1 1	17	PRESTON N.E.	P	16	BOLTON W.	
5	BLACKBURN R	0 0	21	W B ALBION	1 0	23	STOKE CITY	
8	SHEFFIELD W.	0 1	24	DERBY COUNTY	2 0	Mar 2	NEWCASTLE U.	
12	LEEDS UNITED	2 0	Dec 1	COVENTRY CITY	P	9	BURY	
15	HUDDERSFIELD T.	1 0	8	LEEDS UNITED	2 1	13	BLACKBURN R	
29	EVERTON	2 0	15	NEWCASTLE U.	0 0	16	LIVERPOOL	
Oct 2	NOTTINGHAM F.	1 1	22	STOKE CITY	1 3	22	MANCHESTER C.	
6	MANCHESTER U.	2 0	29	NOTTINGHAM F.	1 1	30	BLACKPOOL	
13	BOLTON W.	1 1	Jan 1	BURNLEY	2 1	Apr 6	DERBY COUNTY	
15	WOLVES	0 2	5	SHEFFIELD U.	P	13	PRESTON N.E.	
20	LIVERPOOL	0 0	12	HUDDERSFIELD T.	1 5	16	WOLVES	
27	BURY	2 0	19	SHEFFIELD W.	2 0	27	COVENTRY CITY	

MIDLAND INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE

Aug 25	BIRMINGHAM C.	1 1	Nov 3	WALSALL	P	Jan 19	WALSALL	2 2
Sept 1	LEICESTER CITY	2 3	10	WOLVES	2 2	26	SHREWSBURY T.	
8	MANSFIELD TOWN	1 2	17	LEICESTER CITY	P	Feb 2	WOLVES	
15	DERBY COUNTY	0 5	24	DERBY COUNTY	1 2	9	LEICESTER CITY	
22	COVENTRY CITY	0 1	Dec 1	BIRMINGHAM C.	4 0	16	DERBY COUNTY	
29	BIRMINGHAM C.	1 2	8	BIRMINGHAM C.	1 1	23	COVENTRY CITY	
Oct 6	LEICESTER CITY	0 2	15	STOKE CITY	P	Mar 2	STOKE CITY	
13	MANSFIELD T.	5 3	22	COVENTRY CITY	2 7	16	SHREWSBURY T.	
20	DERBY COUNTY	2 2	Jan 5	W B ALBION	0 1	23	W B ALBION	
27	COVENTRY CITY	0 0	12	MANSFIELD TOWN	P	30	MANSFIELD T.	

DIVISION TWO STATISTICS

Up to and including Sunday, 20th January, 1974

Teams	P	Home					Away					P	Leading Scorers				
		W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		League and Cup				
Middlesbrough	26	11	2	1	23	6	5	7	0	15	9	41	Brown (T), Albion	18			
Orient	27	8	3	3	21	10	5	7	1	23	15	36	Fairbrother, Orient	17			
Luton Town	26	8	4	1	26	14	4	4	5	11	18	32	Bullock, Orient	16			
Carlisle United	26	7	4	2	24	12	5	3	5	15	18	31	McKenzie, Forest	16			
W B Albion	27	7	5	2	19	11	4	4	5	14	15	31	Wood, Millwall	16			
Blackpool	27	6	4	3	19	9	4	6	4	17	18	30	Halom, Sunderland	14			
Nottingham F	26	7	3	2	23	11	2	8	4	12	14	29	Byron, Bolton	13			
Notts County	25	5	4	5	21	25	5	3	3	17	14	27	Davies, Portsmouth	12			
Hull City	27	6	7	0	16	5	1	6	7	11	23	27	Anderson, Luton	11			
Portsmouth	25	7	3	3	18	11	3	3	6	13	27	26	McCulloch, Cardiff	12			
Aston Villa	26	5	7	0	20	9	2	4	8	6	16	25	Burns, Blackpool	11			
Sunderland	26	4	6	2	16	8	4	2	8	15	19	24	Curran, Oxford	10			
Millwall	26	6	3	5	19	13	2	5	5	12	18	24	Foggon, M'brough	10			
Cardiff City	27	5	5	4	18	12	2	5	6	13	25	24	Queen, Orient	10			
Bristol City	27	5	4	4	14	12	4	2	8	12	20	24	Randall, Notts Co	10			
Fulham	26	6	3	3	11	8	2	5	7	9	17	24	Rogers, Palace	10			
Preston N E	27	6	6	2	20	14	1	5	7	9	23	24	Tueart, Sunderland	10			
Bolton W	26	8	2	3	19	10	1	3	9	6	17	23					
Oxford United	26	5	6	2	20	13	1	4	8	6	19	22					
Sheffield W	26	5	5	4	19	16	1	3	8	7	18	20					
Crystal Palace	27	2	5	6	14	19	2	4	8	9	23	17					
Swindon Town	26	5	4	3	15	12	0	2	12	8	29	16					

APPEARANCES AND GOALSCORERS

Division Two						Central League							
Lge		FLC		FAC		A G		A G		A G			
A	G	A	G	A	G	A	G	A	G	A	G		
Aitken	26	2	1	—	1	—	—	Betts	21	4	McMahon	13	2
Brown	22	—	1	—	1	—	—	Beard	14	1	Masefield	2	1
Cumbes	26	—	1	—	1	—	—	Brown	1	—	Morgan	8	2
Evans	17	2	—	—	1	—	—	Campbell	15	5	Overton	7	—
Gidman	16	—	—	—	1	—	—	Evans	3	1	Pelosi	4	—
Graydon	11	5	1	—	1	—	—	Findlay	24	—	Peyton	1	—
Hamilton	14	—	—	—	1	—	—	Gidman	4	—	Rioch (B)	3	1
Hockey	21	1	—	—	—	—	—	Graydon	4	—	Rioch (N)	20	2
Little (B)	23	5	1	—	1	—	—	Hamilton	10	1	Robson	11	1
McMahon	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	Hunt	5	1	Stark	14	1
Morgan	8	1	1	—	S	2	—	Leonard	6	—	Turnbull	21	—
Nicholl	26	—	1	—	1	1	—	Little (A)	21	2	Vowden	4	—
Rioch (B)	17	7	1	—	1	—	—	McDonald	24	2	Wright	8	1
Rioch (N)	3	—	—	—	—	—	—						
Robson	10	—	1	—	—	—	—						
Ross	26	—	1	—	1	—	—						
Vowden	15	2	1	—	—	—	—						
Own goal	—	1	—	—	—	—	—						

MIDLAND YOUTH LEAGUE											
Teams		P	W	D	L	F	A	P			
Leicester City		12	8	3	1	17	7	19			
Birmingham C		9	5	4	0	19	9	14			

CENTRAL LEAGUE

Teams	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Liverpool	25	17	6	2	50	16	40
Everton	27	15	7	5	52	24	37
Blackpool	24	14	5	5	38	22	33
Aston Villa	25	11	10	4	28	20	32
Wolves	24	12	6	6	42	28	30
Coventry City	25	11	8	6	39	35	30
Sheffield U	24	11	6	7	40	28	28
W B Albion	25	10	6	9	37	30	26
Manchester U	24	9	8	7	27	24	26
Derby County	23	9	7	7	33	25	25
Manchester C	26	9	6	11	51	44	24
Sheffield W	22	8	7	7	35	28	23
Blackburn R	23	8	7	8	28	28	23
Bolton W	26	8	6	12	37	45	22
Stoke City	22	8	5	9	28	32	21
Nottingham F	24	5	11	8	28	40	21
Leeds United	25	5	9	11	22	40	19
Newcastle U	23	6	6	11	32	33	18
Burnley	26	7	4	15	27	45	18
Preston N E	23	5	5	13	28	32	15
Bury	24	5	3	16	30	73	13
Huddersfield T	24	3	4	17	23	53	10

INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE

Teams	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
W B Albion	11	8	2	1	19	8	18
Leicester City	9	6	2	1	21	9	14
Bristol City	8	4	2	2	19	12	10
Wolves	10	4	2	4	20	13	10
Coventry City	11	5	0	6	25	20	10
Shrewsbury T	10	5	0	5	19	21	10
Birmingham C	10	4	2	4	12	15	10
Derby County	10	4	1	5	17	19	9
Walsall	7	3	1	3	13	15	7
Aston Villa	7	1	3	3	12	15	5
Stoke City	8	2	0	6	9	19	4
Mansfield T	9	1	1	7	7	27	3

FOR THE RECORD

24th November—Central League

VILLA 2, DERBY COUNTY 0
VILLA: Findlay; Robson, McDonald;
Rioch (N), Stark, Betts; Little (A), Beard,
Campbell, Leonard, Hunt. Substitute:
Overton.

Midland Intermediate League

DERBY COUNTY 2, VILLA 1
Scorer: Lawrence.
VILLA: Peyton; Smith, Ridley; Bates,
Pimblett, Williams; Howells (sub: Dug-
gan), Pelosi, Lawrence, Deehan, Sandi-
lands.

28th November—F.A. Youth Cup

W. B. ALBION 1, VILLA 0
VILLA: Peyton; Masfield, Ridley;
Overton, Bates, Pimblett; Pelosi, Williams,
Deehan, Campbell, Hunt. Substitute:
Howells.

1st December—Intermediate League

VILLA 4, BIRMINGHAM CITY 0
Scorers: Williams, Pelosi, Deehan, Hunt.
VILLA: Peyton; Masfield, Taylor;
Pimblett, Overton, Little (A); Williams,
Pelosi, Deehan, Campbell, Hunt. Sub-
stitute: Ridley.

8th December—Division Two

SUNDERLAND 2, VILLA 0
Scorers: Tueart, Halom. Attendance:
20,784.

SUNDERLAND: Montgomery; Malone,
Bolton; Horswill, Watson, Ashurst; Kerr,
Hughes, Halom, Porterfield, Tueart. Sub-
stitute: Hegan.

VILLA: Cumbe; Gidman, Aitken;
Hockey, Nicholl, Ross; Vowden, Brown,
Evans, Hamilton, Little (B). Substitute:
Rioch (N).

Central League

VILLA 2, LEEDS UNITED 1

Scorers: Robson, Beard.
VILLA: Findlay; Robson, McDonald;
Turnbull, Stark, Beard; Little (A), Overton,
Campbell, Betts, Hunt. Substitute: Leonard.

Midland Intermediate League

BIRMINGHAM CITY 1, VILLA 1
Scorer: Pelosi.
VILLA: Peyton; Masfield, Ridley;
Bates, Pimblett, Williams; Pelosi, Deehan
(J), Conway, Clayton (sub: Deehan (R)),
Lawrence.

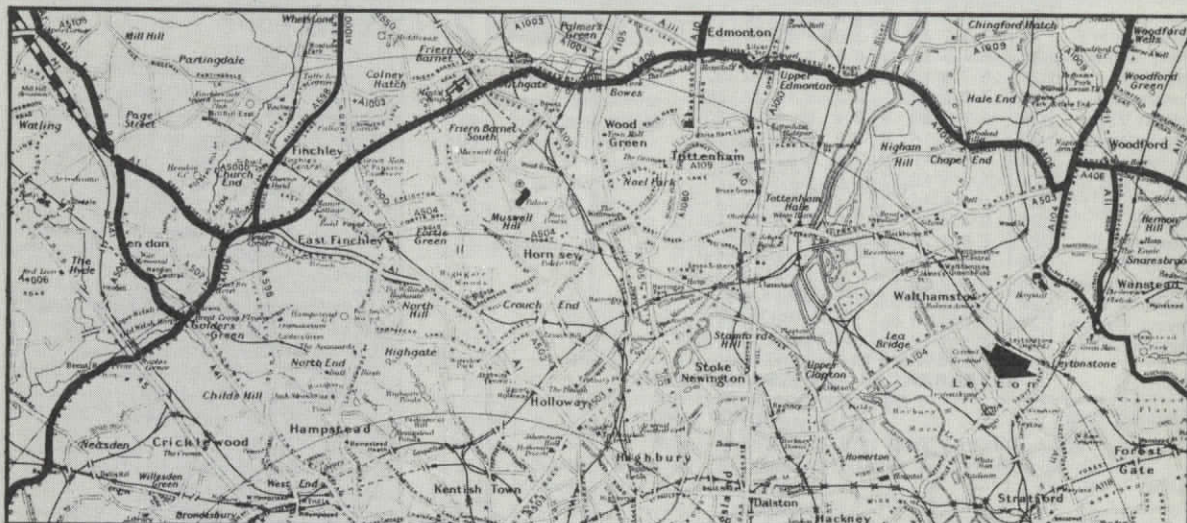
15th December—Division Two

LUTON T

TRAVEL

ORIENT v ASTON VILLA
SATURDAY 9th FEBRUARY 1974

Leave Birmingham via the A.38(M) Aston Expressway to join the M.6 motorway at junction 6 (Gravelly Hill). Continue Southwards to the end of the M.6. Joining the M.1 motorway at junction 19. Continue Southwards to the end of the M.1. Then take the A.1 to the junction with the A.406 (North Circular Road). Follow the North Circular to Chapel End. Turn right along Chingford Road and Hoe Street to Walthamstow. Turn right along Lea Bridge Road. Take the second turning on the left. The football ground is on the left. Total mileage: 122 miles.



ANSELLS BITTER



Aston Villamen. You can't beat 'em

CLUB SCENE

YOUTH INVITATION

We have accepted an invitation for our youngsters to take part in the Blauw-Wit Youth Tournament in Amsterdam, starting on 31st May and continuing until 3rd June. This is one of the strongest competitions of its kind, attracting top-class clubs from all over Europe, and it is always regarded as a compliment to be invited.

We previously played in the tournament in 1969 and 1970, but that was in the early days of our youth development programme and this year's invitation clearly stems from the Dutch club's observation of our success in the last two seasons. Our achievements in winning the F.A. Youth Cup (1972) and the Southern Junior Floodlit Cup (1973) put us among the most successful English clubs.

SOUTHERN JUNIOR FLOODLIT CUP

Because of the ban on the use of floodlights, this popular and important competition has been suspended until the Government restrictions are relaxed. We are scheduled to play a home tie against West Bromwich Albion and this will be an ideal chance to extract revenge for our defeat at The Hawthorns in this season's F.A. Youth Cup competition.

LIONS CLUB

The big event starting in February is the *Rothmans Sporting Quiz*—a competition open to teams of four players and played on a knock-out basis. Any Villa supporter is welcome to enter a team and you can get full details by writing to Secretary Charles Taberner at the Lions Club, Trinity Road, Aston, Birmingham 6.

F.A. CUP—5th ROUND

SAT 16th FEBRUARY 1974
BURNLEY v VILLA
at **TURF MOOR, BURNLEY**

The match will be **ALL TICKET**, and prices of admission will be:

Reserved Seats **£1.50** and **£1.00**

Standing **.50p**

(Juveniles and OAP's **25p**)

Our allocation of Reserved Seats will be well below our total of Season Ticket Holders, and they will, therefore, be reserved for Season Ticket Holders until Saturday, 9th February. Season Ticket Holders wishing to apply for tickets should apply by POST enclosing Voucher Number 28 from their Season Ticket Books and the correct remittance. Tickets will be limited to one per Voucher enclosed, and applications will be dealt with in the order received until the supply of Reserved Seats is exhausted. Season Ticket Holders should indicate in their application whether or not they would be willing to accept Standing Tickets in the event of all seats being sold before their application is received.

Any Reserved Seat Tickets left and the Standing Tickets will be put on sale on Sunday, 10th February, at 10-00 am at the Trinity Road Enclosure turnstiles. Tickets will be limited to one or two per person. All available tickets will be sold at that time, and postal applications will only be considered AFTER that time in the event of any tickets remaining unsold.

*(from non-season ticket holders)

In the event of a draw at Burnley, the Replay would be at Villa Park, on Wednesday, 20th February, kick-off: 7-30 pm. This match would NOT be all ticket, and reserved Seats would be £1-00 and 80p. Season Ticket Holders wishing to claim their own seats must apply to Villa Park on Sunday, 17th February, between 10-00 am and 1-00 pm, or Monday, 18th February, between 9-15 am and 7-00 pm. They must be in possession of the F.A. Cup Round Five Voucher from their Season Ticket Books, and no postal applications for tickets can be entertained in view of the short time available. Tickets will also be available at 80p to Non-Season Ticket Holders on Sunday, 17th February, from the Ticket Kiosk at Trinity Road from 10-00 am to 1-00 pm, these will be limited to two per person.

CLUB SCENE

TRAVELLERS CLUB

Hundreds of Villa supporters took advantage of this well-organised club by travelling to Arsenal last week-end in an 'armada' of coaches. Trips are run to every away League match—why don't you make your travelling easier by enrolling at the Lions Club?

Bookings can also be taken up until the Wednesday before a Saturday match at the following venues: 'The Unicorn', Church Street, Cannock; 'The Fox', Edward Street, Redditch and 'The Market Vaults', Tamworth.

GOLDEN GOALS

£50

Among the prize-winners in this season's Golden Goals competitions are:

D. Stacey, Severn Road, Brownhills
B. Hurdley, Newfield Road, West Hagley
J. Thompson, Moor End Lane, Erdington
J. Connolly, Anchorage Road, Erdington
G. Lloyd, Mayfair, Stourbridge
A. Franklin, Folliott Road, Kitts Green
B. Homer, Greenwood Road, Selly Park
W. Blower, Castle Bromwich

£5

W. Colley, Barford, Warwick
F. Norbury, Kingshurst
K. Davies, Droitwich
D. Smith, Kingstanding
A. Clarke, Birmingham 22
P. Martin, Lozells
T. Galvin, Saltley
J. Hill, Edgbaston
M. Abrahams, Handsworth

SECOND SCENE

Graham Atkinson, the former Villa Central League forward, was transferred by OXFORD UNITED three months ago and seemed on the verge of linking up with brother Ron, the manager of Southern League Champions Kettering Town.

But things changed dramatically at the start of December when Graham was recalled to the League side. A goal against Manchester City in the F.A. Cup was his fourth in four games and manager **Gerry Summers** said his display against the First Division side was 'magic'. "He has really found his form again," added Mr Summers.

Graham, rated among the best midfield players in the Second Division three years ago, felt that his career was nearing the end when he battled against a troublesome ankle injury 18 months ago. He had only five first-team games last season and though he fought off the ankle problem, Mr Summers obviously believed his days at The Manor were numbered.

"I suppose I could have been at Kettering by now," says Graham. "But my brother, Ron, wasn't prepared to pay the fee (reported to be £6,000) and, although I am still on the list, my career has taken a new lease of life."

He believes that the ankle injury was a psychological handicap to his game. He says: "Whereas I might have hung back from a ball, now I am quite ready to go for anything and I am sure this has improved my game. The goals have helped as well."

So it seems that Graham, 31 in May, has found that soccer life can begin at 30!

Another ex-Villa player enjoying brighter times is **Willie Anderson**. After being dropped at Luton early in December, the CARDIFF CITY winger spent five weeks as the costliest reserve in Welsh football, but bounced back in his best form and had a particularly good Cup game against Birmingham City's promising defender, **Joe Gallagher**.

Willie admits he was a "bit annoyed" at being left out by caretaker manager **Lew Clayton** and it appeared that the arrival of **John Farrington**, signed by new boss **Frank O'Farrell**, would affect his chances of a first-team return.

"Looking back, my being left out of the side may have been a good thing," said Willie. "It made me determined to show

what I could do. I thought I had done well towards the end of last season, but, because of injury, I had only four games at the start of this season and this is the first decent run I have had."

Meanwhile, the Cardiff spotlight also hovered over midfield player **Tony Villars**, who was selected for the Welsh Under-23 squad against England, and **Jack Whitham**, the former Sheffield Wednesday striker who went to Ninian Park on a month's loan from Liverpool.

The 26-year-old Whitham was reckoned to be one of the best prospects in the country when at Wednesday, but has always suffered from serious injury and, after joining



GRAHAM ATKINSON

Liverpool for £60,000 three years ago, he went through a nightmare chapter of knee injuries.

Cardiff were obviously impressed by Whitham's scoring rate of 35 goals in 72 First Division games and gave him a comeback chance in their reserve side.

Joe Durrell, a bearded Cockney who played half-a-dozen League games before being listed by West Ham United last season, had a choice of joining three clubs last summer—Aldershot, Walsall and BRISTOL CITY.

He chose the Second Division outfit, but admits that he wondered about the decision when confined to the reserves for the first four months of the season. "It did cross my mind that I could have been playing in the Aldershot or Walsall first-team if I had made a different choice," he said.

But everything came right for Joe when he went on as substitute against Middlesbrough and he made his full debut at Luton on 29th December. The 20-year-old midfielder says now: "I know I made the right decision in coming to Bristol. I have learned a lot from the coaching of **Ken Wimshurst** and **John Sillett**. I enjoy breaking down the left because I am a natural left footer."

SWINDON TOWN's Directors gave a vote of confidence to manager **Les Allen** as he battled to lift the Wiltshire club out of the bottom three. He signed a new 12-month contract and Chairman **Mr Cecil Green** said: "We feel it shows the Board is right behind the manager."

More good news from the County Ground was the debut of 17-year-old striker **David Syrett** in the England Youth-team which beat Wales at The Hawthorns. Only a year ago the Salisbury-born player was helping Swindon win the Midland Youth League... now he is a regular in the Second Division side.

"His progress has been really terrific," says Mr Allen. "He has done tremendously well to reach this level so quickly."

Still with Swindon... the club finally sorted out the long-term dispute with League Cup Final goalkeeper **Peter Downsbrough** and he parted company to join Fourth Division Bradford City for a reported £5,000. Incidentally, his young successor, **Jimmy Allan**, couldn't believe

his luck when PRESTON NORTH END allowed former Town striker **Ray Treacy** to take a penalty at Swindon. Of course, he had faced the Irishman's spot kicks on countless occasions in practice and guessed the correct direction to make a vital save.

At the other end of the table, ORIENT are offering a £15,000 'prize' to their first-team squad if they clinch promotion. Success would be worth around £1,000 a man to every member of the pool and an added bonus is a scheduled three-week tour to Australia, Hong Kong and Tahiti.

Manager **George Petchey** says: "The important thing about winning promotion is the status of going into the First Division. If we go up, the players would have earned the bonus and, of course, they can expect higher wages."

Frank Saul, a specialist striker when scoring one of Tottenham's winning goals in the 1967 F.A. Cup Final, has found a new position at MILLWALL, and at 30, he says that he hopes to carry on for another five seasons.

He explains: "Now that I am in midfield, I get more time to look around. Playing up front is not so hot when you are getting on a bit. I feel I am playing some of the best football of my career. I have asked for a transfer a few times in the last year because I was not getting first-team football. Now I am off the list and very pleased with the way things have turned out."

Football will be losing one of its most valued administrators when SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY general manager/secretary **Eric Taylor** retires at the end of the season. Having started as a 7/6d a week office junior, he has served 'The Owls' for 45 years and claims that "there is not a bigger Wednesdayite living."

The *Sheffield Star* reported several tributes to Mr Taylor's work for the club. New Chairman **Mr Matt Sheppard** said: "He has made substantial contributions to the benefit of soccer generally." Sheffield United Chairman **Mr Dick Wragg** added: "Eric Taylor has made a magnificent contribution to football. This is recognised not only in Britain, but all over the world and that fine ground at Hillsborough is a monument to him. Football will be much poorer for the loss of a man like Eric Taylor."

DIVISION 2 STATISTICS

HOME ATTENDANCES...

	Best	Average		Best	Average
ASTON VILLA	30,162	26,068	Millwall	15,143	9,820
Blackpool	14,784	9,984	Nottingham Forest	17,718	12,432
Bolton Wanderers	23,315	14,782	Notts County	30,036	13,262
Bristol City	19,126	13,639	Orient	20,611	10,975
Cardiff City	14,799	10,114	Oxford United	10,161	7,752
Carlisle United	11,152	7,325	Portsmouth	20,062	14,872
Crystal Palace	30,054	19,983	Preston North End	21,747	12,925
Fulham	14,971	9,601	Sheffield Wednesday	16,332	13,071
Hull City	17,409	8,507	Sunderland	31,935	24,815
Luton Town	15,259	10,481	Swindon Town	13,991	9,068
Middlesbrough	37,038	21,293	W. B. Albion	43,080	16,397

HIGHEST ATTENDANCE...

43,080, W.B. Albion against Aston Villa, on 26th December, 1973.

LOWEST ATTENDANCE...

4,973, Fulham against Oxford United on 22nd December, 1973.

MOST GOALS IN A MATCH...

4—Brown (T), W.B. Albion v Nottm Forest, on 12-1-74.

BIGGEST HOME WIN...

Luton Town 6, Carlisle United 1, on 1st September, 1973.

TOP LEAGUE SCORER...

Duncan McKenzie (16) for Nottm For.

BIGGEST AWAY WINS...

Crystal Palace 1, Notts County 4, on 25th August, 1973. Notts County 1, Sunderland 4, on 1st September, 1973.

Up to and including Sunday, 20th January, 1974

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: £1 and 80p for Reserved Seats. Unreserved accommodation: Seats 70p (children and Senior Citizens

40p). Ground 40p (children and senior citizens 20p). All prices include VAT.

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



Aston Villa v Luton Town

MATCH No. 13

FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIV 2

SAT 2nd FEB. 1974

KICK-OFF 2.00 pm

TEAMCHECK

ASTON VILLA

Claret and Blue Shirts, White Shorts

- 1 JIMMY CUMBES
- 2 JOHN GIDMAN
- 3 CHARLIE AITKEN
- 4 BRUCE RIOCH
- 5 CHRIS NICHOLL
- 6 IAN ROSS
- 7 PAT McMAHON
- 8 GEOFF VOWDEN
- 9 SAMMY MORGAN
- 10 IAN HAMILTON
- 11 ALUN EVANS
- 12

TEAM CHANGES

LUTON TOWN

Orange Shirts, Navy Blue Shorts

- 1 GRAHAM HORN
- 2 JOHN RYAN
- 3 BOBBY THOMSON
- 4 DON SHANKS
- 5 JOHN FAULKNER
- 6 ALAN GARNER
- 7 JIMMY RYAN
- 8 TOM FINNEY
- 9 PETER ANDERSON
- 10 ALAN WEST
- 11 JOHN ASTON
- 12

TEAM CHANGES

SCORECHECK

Arsenal v Burnley

Coventry v Man Utd

Derby v Newcastle

Ipswich v Southampton

Leeds v Chelsea

Liverpool v Norwich

QPR v Leicester

West Ham v Birmingham

Wolves v Stoke

Blackpool v Oxford

A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
J
K

Bristol City v Cardiff

Carlisle v Orient

Fulham v Sheff Wed.

Hull City v Notts Co.

Nottm Forest v Middlesbro

Sunderland v Millwall

Halifax v Walsall

Port Vale v Brighton

Wrexham v Bristol Rovers

Everton Res. v A Villa Res.

L
N
P
S
T
V
W
X
Y
Z

OFFICIALS

Referee:

H. DAVEY, Nottingham

Linesmen:

G. A. ROSE, Whitwick Red Flag

B. L. UZZELL, Swindon Orange Flag

Harold Davey, a carpenter and joiner who is married with two children, reached the League list in 1965 after service with the Central League. Refereed an amateur international in 1966 and has officiated on the line in European games.