

aston villa

NEWS & RECORD 1982/83 · PRICE 40p · WEDNESDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 1982

LEAGUE DIVISION ONE · ASTON VILLA v LUTON TOWN

Gordon Cowans
celebrates Villa's first
goal of the season.



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TEAM TALK

BY MANAGER TONY BARTON

A home defeat by Sunderland, followed by a heavier defeat at Everton, gave us a more disappointing start than we could ever have envisaged. Not only for the fact that we were beaten but also because we let in eight goals.

The frustrating part was that in the first half against Sunderland, we looked capable of winning and getting off to the good start that we needed, but in the second half, we were a different side. There's no other description than that it was a Jekyll and Hyde performance.

Of course, we did miss Peter Withe, the one player who was causing problems for Sunderland's defence, but after saying that, we were one up and we still had 11 players on the pitch. If we had stayed solid at the back, there's no doubt that we should have won.

At Everton, last Tuesday, we did reasonably well at the start and looked to be in the game, but once they had scored the first goal, we were always on a hiding to nothing. Frankly, it was a dismal performance and, at the end, it was a humiliating experience.

The players have to understand, and very quickly, that just because they are European champions, they have no divine right to win games. Victory must be earned by the total commitment of 11 players.

We won the European Cup because every player played to his capability and strength, but at Everton, we were the complete opposite. Discipline and commitment deserted us — and the answer was only in the players' hands. We must work and work until we get it right.

I don't think anyone here imagined that we would have travelled to Southampton last Saturday with two defeats behind us, but, there again, I don't suppose people expected Southampton to go through two games without a point.

It's a strange game when two of the previous season's most highly-rated teams can find themselves struggling in the first week of a new campaign. But Southampton and ourselves were not alone. Ipswich Town and Arsenal, two more clubs who are qualified for Europe, managed only one point in two games.

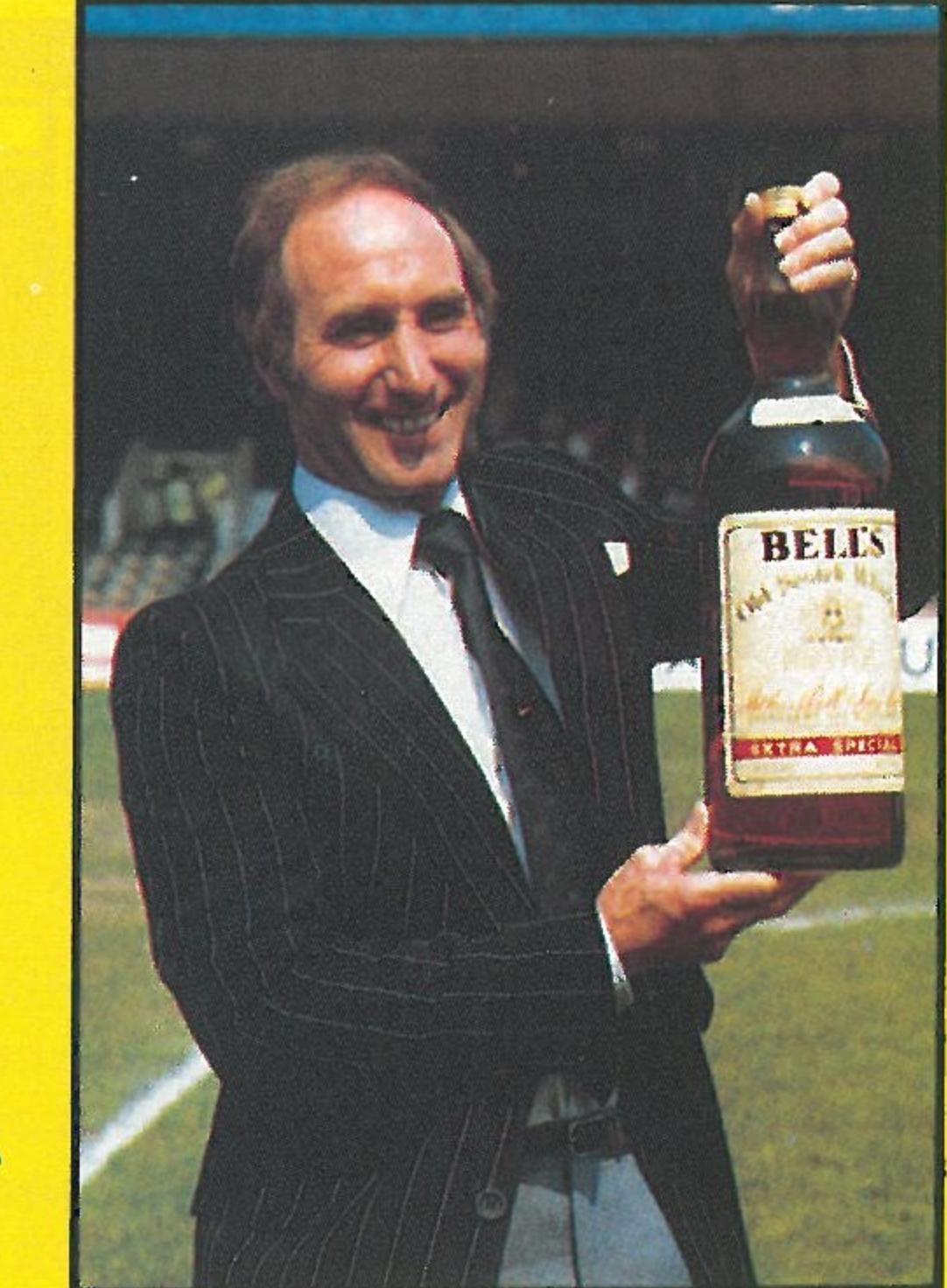
Obviously, I cannot speak for other clubs, but, in our case, the most frustrating aspect is that we lost the first two games for the second year in succession and, each time, after winning a trophy.

The fact that this happened again would suggest that our players did not learn their lesson. And it's quite a simple one. Every team tries twice as hard to knock League champions or European champions off their pedestal.

Opposition managers have an easy team talk. They only have to tell their players that they are playing the champions of Europe and what a feather in their caps it would be to beat them. They don't need to say any more.

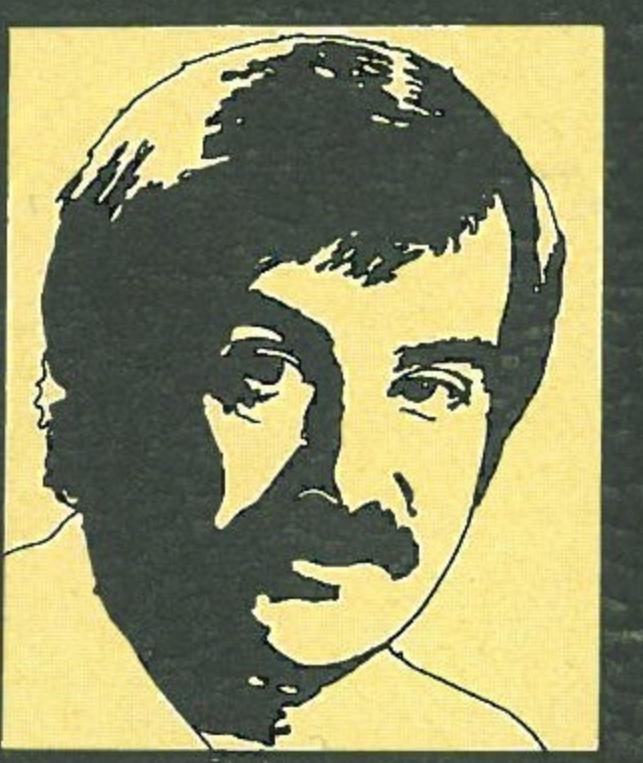
For our part, we have to produce the mental and physical effort which will counter the enthusiasm of the opposition. I shall be looking for that tonight when we welcome Luton Town, champions of the Second Division last season and a team recognised for playing skilful, attractive football.

Finally, a more encouraging word from the early displays of our reserve and youth teams. They both got off the mark with 3-1 wins against Wolves and it was good to see David Geddis returning from suspension with two goals in the Central League at Molineux last Wednesday. He was immediately put into the squad for the game at Southampton.



WHITE LINES

PETER WHITE OF THE 'SPORTS ARGUS' WRITES ON VILLA



• Just over a year after being forced into early retirement because of recurring knee trouble, Brian Little has been 'signed up' again by Villa . . . as a youth team coach.

Brian was picked out for the job from an application of more than 50, including several managers from the lower divisions.

And it was a coincidence that shortly after Brian's appointment, Villa named Malcolm Beard as the new chief scout.

Some fans will no doubt remember Brian and Malcolm playing together in the Villa side in the early 1970's.

The last occasion I can find them in the same first team line-up was back in December 1972, in the home match against Orient. Villa had just returned to the Second Division, after their brief stint to Division Three.

Neither player managed to get on the scoresheet against Orient, although Villa took the points from a 1-0 result.

Now both can be seen again at the Bodmoor Heath training ground, and Brian says of his appointment: 'It is a fresh challenge, and one that I am thoroughly enjoying.'

'I remember that when I came down to join Villa after living in the North East I often felt homesick. So I can understand the feelings of the lads I am now working with.'

'Some are a long way from home, and I hope they will come to me for any help and guidance, as well as the coaching.'

Brian was also in action the last time Luton visited Villa Park. That was in November 1978, when 'The Hatters' then of the Second Division caused an upset by winning the League Cup fourth round tie 2-0.

Jimmy Rimmer, Gary Williams, Allan Evans, Ken McNaught and Dennis Mortimer were also in the Villa line-up that night, with a young Gordon Cowans on the substitute's bench.

• Among the players to leave Villa during the summer was midfield utility man Terry Bullivant.

Manager Tony Barton was quite prepared to offer Terry new terms, but the player decided he wanted regular first team football, so moved on to Second Division Charlton Athletic.

I am sure all Villa fans will want to wish him all the best with his new club. Although his senior chances in claret and blue were limited, whenever he was called into the action he always performed admirably.

Terry made 11 first team appearances, 65 Central League outings scoring six goals, and joined Villa from Fulham in November 1979.

• Another former Villa favourite, Alex Cropley, has finally lost his battle against injury, and has reluctantly given up the game.

One of Villa's pre-season friendlies was for Alex's testimonial against Portsmouth at Fratton



MALCOLM BEARD

Park, Villa took the decision by the odd goal of seven.

• The Sports Argus Man of the Match awards, held over from the back end of last season, were presented recently at the Selly Park British Legion Club, with Allan Evans scooping the first prize.

Allan's consistency last season earned him the overall first prize of £500 and a rose bowl.

The Argus writers award points out of 10 for each League and FA Cup game involving Villa, Birmingham City, West Bromwich, Wolves, Coventry and Walsall.

The early Villa pacemaker this season was young debutant Mark Walters, who picked up seven points in the disappointing home defeat by Sunderland on the opening day.

• Young reserve team midfielder Robert Hopkins has been sporting a couple of black eyes these past few weeks, following a car accident.

Another knock during the summer involved two first teamers. On their way to a Villa function Gary Shaw bumped into the back of Kenny Swain's car, but both were unscathed.

• A reminder that the majority of reserve team games this season will be played in midweek.

The Central League has now been split into two sections, with Villa and all their West Midlands neighbours in Section A.

Villa have made Wednesday their Central League night, so look out for home reserve team matches in future programmes and in the local Press.

• Any fans who go along to the club's training ground at Bodmoor Heath to watch youth team games, should note that these will kick-off on Saturday mornings at 10.45 a.m. NOT 11.00 a.m. as in previous seasons.



The Witton Lane clock shows the time as 3.22 as Gordon Cowans rises to meet Peter Withe's cross to head home Villa's first goal of the season in the home match against Sunderland. Before the kick-off the European Cup was paraded in front of the fans by apprentices Tony Dorriga and David Norton and Tony is pictured below with one young Villa fan enjoying the experience of holding the Cup.



BACKTRACK

LEAGUE RECORD

• Newly promoted Luton Town tonight make only their eighth League visit to Villa Park, and it's their eleventh appearance on the ground all told.

Past clashes between Villa and Luton now total 19 — 14 in the Football League, three in the FA Cup and two League Cup meetings.

• Villa's League record against Luton Town at present reads thus:

	P	W	D	L	F	A
HOME	7	4	0	3	11	8
AWAY	7	0	2	5	4	11
TOTAL	14	4	2	8	15	19

CUP RESULTS

• In the FA Cup, Villa won a second round home tie 1-0 in 1921-22, and then they beat Town 2-0 in a third round replay in 1956-57 after the teams had played out a 2-2 draw at Kenilworth Road.

Both League Cup matches have ended in away wins: Villa won 1-0 at Luton in a round two battle in 1964-65, and then Luton claimed a 2-0 victory at Villa Park in a round four game in 1978-79.

LUTON ON TOP

• Going back to the previous League encounters . . . the first meeting between Villa and Luton in this competition came in season 1937-38, when both teams were in the Second Division. It was played at Villa Park on 6th September and Villa won comfortably by 4 goals to one.

The return game resulted in a 3-2 win for Luton in front of 10,225 fans.

It was then 17 years before the sides met again — and this time they did battle in the First Division in 1955-56. Villa won their home game 1-0 and Luton were victorious in theirs by 2-1.

The following season Luton took three points off Villa by drawing 0-0 at Kenilworth Road and then winning 3-1 at Villa Park.

The 1957-58 fixtures both ended in home wins: Villa 2 Luton 0 (29,000), and Luton 3 Villa 0 (18,000).

In Villa's relegation season of 1958-59 they beat Luton 3-1 at home but lost the away match down in Bedfordshire by 2-1.

Thirteen years then passed before the pair met each other again — and when they did (in 1972-73) both were back in the Second Division.

It was Luton, even then, who still proceeded to get the better overall results and they won 2-0 at Villa Park



The brothers Neil and Bruce Rioch — Villa signings from Luton in July 1969. Neil later moved to Plymouth in 1975 while Bruce moved to Derby a year prior. Below: George Stephenson.

and drew 0-0 in front of their own supporters at Kenilworth Road. The attendances at those two matches were 29,000 and 11,000 respectively.

In 1973-74, with Villa going for promotion back into the First Division, they failed to pick up a single point from Luton — losing both games 1-0. A crowd of a little more than 26,000 saw the Villa Park clash and there were 10,020 present at Kenilworth Road. This, in fact, is the only time a 'double' has been achieved by either Villa or Luton. And you'll have noticed, too, that Kenilworth Road has been a disaster ground for Villa, who have still to win there in League competition.

In the FA Cup Luton have yet to beat Villa, while in the League Cup the record book shows that each team has won one game apiece so far — on the away ground.



PLAYED FOR BOTH

• Among the few players who have represented both Villa and Luton on a soccer field are George Stephenson (1930s), the Rioch brothers, Bruce and 'Neil', Jimmy Adam, Chris Nicholl and goalkeeper Jake Findlay.

Stephenson was a versatile player who could turn out at inside- or centre-forward. He made two League appearances for Villa in season 1931-32 and then threw in his lot with Luton, and later with Leeds United.

Bruce Rioch has served seven League clubs in a career which began in 1963 at Luton. He made over 170 senior appearances for the 'Hatters' (1963-69) before becoming a Villa player in a £200,000 transfer deal which also saw his brother 'Neil' come to the Midlands (July 1969). After four-and-a-half seasons with Villa (155 League games) Bruce moved to Derby County (February 1974). From there he switched to Everton, went back to Derby for a brief spell in the late seventies, and then had a short spell on loan with both Birmingham City and Sheffield United, plus a summer stint with Seattle Sounders in the NASL, before returning to England, and Torquay United.

Capped 24 times by Scotland, Bruce has scored over 160 goals in nearly 550 League games.

Brother 'Neil' made 23 appearances for Villa before transferring south to Plymouth Argyle in 1975 after serving York City and Northampton Town for a time on loan. He also played in the NASL, with Atlanta Chiefs. Scot Jimmy Adam played 137 League games for Luton (22 goals) and

24 for Villa (3 goals) during his playing days which started in earnest with non-Leaguers, Spennymoor United in 1948-49. He progressed to Aldershot (1950), then to Luton (1953) and joined forces with Villa in 1959. He went to Stoke City in 1963 and finally ended up with Falkirk. Chris Nicholl, an Irish international over 40 times, had spells with Witton Albion and Burnley before becoming a professional with Halifax Town in 1968. Joined Luton a year later and had made well over 100 senior appearances for the 'Hatters' when Villa signed him in 1972. He had some

250 outings in the claret and blue strip (210 in League combat) and then moved to Southampton in 1977. Goalkeeper 'Jake' Findlay had 14 League games for Villa (1969-78) and was then sold to Luton Town in November 1978.



Villa's opening match of the season against Sunderland resulted in a 3-1 defeat for the European Champions but saw an encouraging League debut by Mark Walters, pictured above with Sunderland's Shaun Elliott. Des Bremner came close to narrowing the 3-1 margin late in the game (below) but Turner managed to turn the ball outside the post. Our bottom picture shows Elliott again, this time robbing Peter Withe on the edge of the box.



DiARY

Monday 16th August

• Allan Evans has not recovered from injury to face FC Schalke in Villa's final West German tour match. It was suspected that Evans had fractured his ankle but a hospital check discounted any fears.

• A much improved performance by Villa but they're still losers by 4-2. Withe scores for Villa and so does Mark Walters with his first kick of the match after substituting for Gordon Cowans.

Tuesday 17th August

• Manager Tony Barton, although disappointed, is not disheartened over Villa's three defeats in West Germany and looks on the games as fitness builders. The Germans had a three-week start on Villa in their pre-season preparations.

Wednesday 18th August

• Ken McNaught is still undecided on his terms with Villa and says he has an open mind about what could happen in the future.

Thursday 19th August

• Villa's final offer is rejected by Ken McNaught and Tony Barton says the situation is stalemate.

Friday 20th August

• Tony Barton is in touch with Brighton to discuss the availability of transfer listed England defender Steve Foster. Meanwhile, McNaught is included in Villa's squad to face Dukla Prague on Saturday.

Saturday 21st August

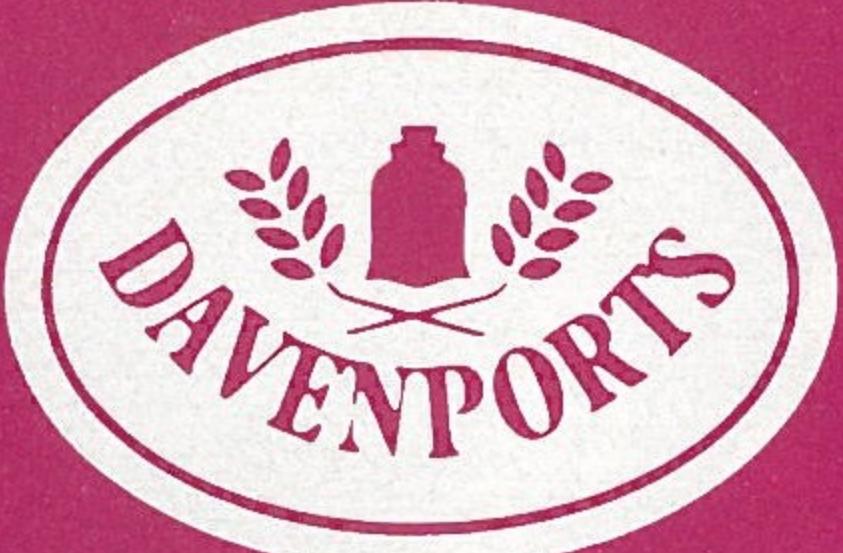
• A first half goal by Dennis Mortimer is not enough to put Villa on the winning trail against Dukla Prague. The Czech army side reply with two second half strikes before a 3,746 crowd at Villa Park.

Monday 23rd August

• Villa travel to Portsmouth for Alex Cropley's testimonial match. The result is 4-3 in Villa's favour with goals from Withe, Walters (2) and Mortimer.

Tuesday 24th August

• Manager Tony Barton is supported by the Board to approach Sunderland in a move to sign Shaun Elliott.



DAVENPORTS

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1	_____	7	_____
2	_____	8	_____
3	_____	9	_____
4	_____	10	_____
5	_____		_____
6	_____		_____

name and address _____

home game of your choice _____

WIN TWO FREE TICKETS FOR THE HOME GAME OF YOUR CHOICE!

To celebrate our sponsorship of Aston Villa, the European Champions, we are giving away 10 pairs of tickets for every Villa home league match this season. All you have to do is solve the Davenports Competition in your programme.

This week you have to find the names of **EIGHT** Davenports beers or lagers hidden in the Word Square, along with **TWO** of the Villa team from the European Cup Final. (You might find a clue or two for the beers on the advertising boards).

The names can read up, down, diagonally, forwards or backwards, but always in a straight line.

Write your answers on the coupon along with your name and address, and the home game of your choice and send it to Davenports/Aston Villa, PO Box 353, Bath Row, Birmingham B15 1NB, to arrive not later than Thursday 16th September 1982.

All winners will be notified by post and announced at the next home game. The decision of the judges is final.

If you don't want to spoil your programme, just write all the information on a postcard and send it to the same address.

SIDELINES

TUNE IN TO BRMB

BRMB will be covering Villa's European match against Besiktas next Wednesday. George Gavin will be providing commentary regularly during the Phil Reilly Record Show starting at 2 p.m. The match will be played behind closed doors and no supporters will be allowed inside Villa Park.

SPECIAL ISSUE . . .

A special issue of the Villa News & Record for our home match against Besiktas will be produced and is expected to be on sale at Villa Park this Saturday for the Forest match. It's a 16 page production costing 40p and because of the nature of the match will be looked on as a collectors item. Only a limited edition will be printed so make sure you buy your copy early to avoid disappointment.

CENTRAL LEAGUE MATCHES . . .

Villa have switched playing their Central League home games from Saturday to Wednesday for this season, although there may be the odd occasion when a game will be scheduled for Saturday. Kick-off for Wednesday evening Central League games is 7 p.m. and for Saturday 2 p.m. Only the Trinity Road Stand and Enclosure will be open for these matches.

HALF-DAY CLOSING . . .

When there is no match at Villa Park on a Saturday the ground will be open from 9.15 a.m. until 12 noon only.

CAR PARKING . . .

A limited number of Season Passes for the ASDA car park are still available. The pass, price £14, covers all first team home League matches. Application forms are available from the Commercial Office at Villa Park.

TRAVELLERS CLUB . . .

The Travellers Club is organising a three-day tour to Istanbul for Villa's return leg European match against Besiktas. Leaving on 28th September, travellers will return late on Thursday 30th September.

match will be played on Sunday 12th December.

REDUCED ADMISSION PRICE . . .

Tonight's match is the first opportunity young supporters have of watching the game for just £1 instead of the normal £2. The reduced admission applies to terracing only and for supporters under the age of 16, covering all first team home matches.

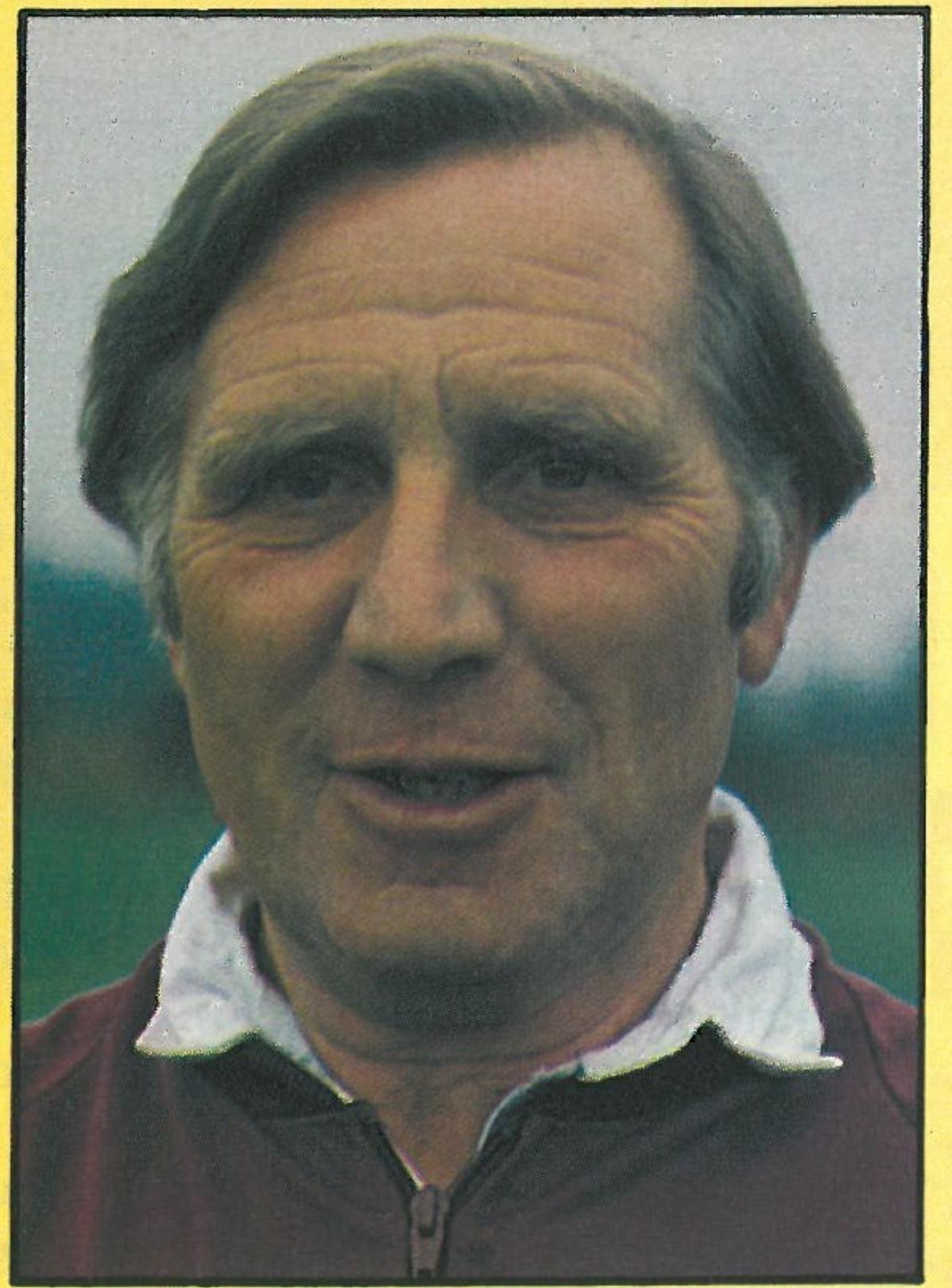
The club is conscious that young supporters are the lifeblood of the club and every step must be taken to encourage young people to Villa Park on a regular basis. The reduced admission price will go some way to easing the financial burden on parents who take their children to Villa Park matches. Villa Cub members can also take advantage of reduced admission in all parts of the ground providing they purchase their ticket before the match, and produce their membership card.

CONGRATULATIONS . . .

To Angela Ramsay, secretary to club secretary Steve Stride, who recently celebrated her 21st birthday and to Debbie Briggs, secretary to manager Tony Barton, on her engagement to Andy Ritchie last Saturday.



Special guests at Villa Park for the Sunderland match were three Japanese visitors Messrs Inoh, Usami and Fujito representatives of Toyota, the company sponsoring the World Club Championship match in Tokyo. The three men were here to finalise details for Villa's trip to Japan in December. It was the first time they had watched a live English League match and were most impressed with the Villa Park organisation and facilities. After the match they presented vice-chairman Donald Bendall with a charming encased model of a traditional dressed Japanese lady for the boardroom. Donald also presented a gift of Royal Doulton Crystal from Villa to the guests.



3-1 victory over Wolves at Molineux.

Coach Bill Shorthouse hopes that this result could be the beginning of a concerted effort to win the First Division title in a new-look competition which is now split into two sections.

'We played very well against Wolves and could have won by more goals,' he said. 'What has pleased me so far is that all the lads are doing very well in training and we have a very good atmosphere in the squad. Players who should be thinking of the first team — Nigel Spink, David Geddis and Andy Blair, in particular — have been getting on with the job with exactly the right attitude.'

This was reflected in our performance at Wolverhampton. We played some great football, one-touch and two-touch, pushing the ball about and working as a team. The defence did a good job as well and I thought Brendan Ormsby had a good game.

'I have no doubt that most of the Reserves could go into the first team

and do all that could be expected of them.'

David Geddis, back from a two-game suspension, showed the way for all the challengers for First Division football by scoring two goals at Molineux and then stepping into the first team at Southampton last Saturday.

'Both his goals were from good headers,' said Bill. 'He glanced in the first from an inswinging corner by Andy Blair and he was in at the far post for the second crossed by Alan Birch. I have always thought that heading is one of David's great assets and this was a good example.'

Noel Blake had to go off with a twisted ankle in the second-half at Molineux and substitute Tony Rees went on to score the third goal. 'I didn't think he had a chance of scoring,' said Bill. 'He broke on the right, took the ball along the bye-line and then put it through the goalkeeper's legs from a very narrow angle.'

The Reserves played five warm-up

BILL SHORTHOUSE

Aston Villa Reserves, third in last season's Central League table, started the new campaign in promising style last Wednesday with a

COACH REPORT

BRIAN LITTLE

Brian Little was recognised as one of the most unflappable players on the big occasions during his career with Aston Villa. But he confessed that his debut as youth coach was 'nerve-wracking' during the first game of the season in the Midland Intermediate League.

Happily, the youngsters gave their new 'boss' a winning start with a 3-1 victory over Wolves on Saturday 28th August.

'We had a good blend in the squad — six young professionals and six first-year apprentices — and I was delighted with one or two players in particular,' said Brian.

'All the lads did really well and we should have won by more goals. It was a good, all-round performance, especially as Wolves put out quite a strong side, including two players with first team experience in pre-season friendlies.'

'As it was my first competitive

match with the Youth team, it did seem a bit strange, and I could understand how managers feel when we let Wolves get back in the game after we had gone one up. We should have been well on top and it was frustrating to let it slip.'

Six apprentices were making their debut-proper for the club. Stephen Barnes comes from Bristol and Tony Dorigo is a young Australian who wrote for a trial and came over to England last season. The other newcomers — Darren Bradley, David Norton, Leigh Palin and Tony Obi — are all local lads from the Birmingham area.

Bradley was appointed captain for the first game. 'I am sure he is the type of lad who will benefit from leadership,' says Brian. 'Although he is in his first year, I was quite happy to make him skipper even though we had young professionals in the side.'

'All the new lads made a noticeable improvement in their first month together. We played five pre-season



games, winning three and losing two against Highgate United and Rushall Olympic, who really beat us because of their strength. They had big and

powerful senior players who were a bit too much for youngsters straight out of school.

'After the first game against Highgate, I saw a lot of improvement and, in many ways, it was good that we started with a defeat. It opened their eyes to what is ahead of them. It's only natural that lads sign as an apprentice with a big club and think they have made it, but the Highgate result put their feet back on the ground.'

'They responded very well and perhaps the most pleasing pre-season result was when we beat Arsenal 3-2 with six schoolboys and six apprentices.'

SATURDAY 28th AUGUST
Midland Intermediate League
Aston Villa 3 Wolves 1
Scorer: Kerr (3)
VILLA: Poole, Barnes, Rogers, Bradley, Glover, Mackenzie, Norton, Palin, Obi, Rees, Kerr. Sub: Dorigo

PRESS COMMENT

A LOOK AT VILLA MATCH REPORTS FEATURED IN THE PRESS

It may not have been all plain sailing on the opening day of the season when Sunderland came to Villa Park and won 3-1 but there was one good thing to come out of the day . . . according to Ian Johnson in his *Sports Argus* report.

Ian was obviously impressed with his first look at Mark Walters and, before the bottom fell out of the Villa world in the second half, Ian had this to say:

'Young Mark Walters had a sparkling debut making the Villa front line sizzle in the sun. The 18-year-old's super skills were a constant threat to the Sunderland defence and it was not surprising that Villa took the lead after 22 minutes.'

'Villa's constant efforts paid dividends when Peter Withe, who later went off injured, headed the ball back across the Sunderland penalty area for Cowans to score comfortably with a header which beat Turner easily.'

The journalists at the match were in no doubt that it had been a game of two contrasting halves and that Villa could really blame nobody but themselves for the defeat.

In the *Sunday Mercury* their man said: 'Villa were looking as though they would open the season with a controlled success after Gordon Cowans had given them the 22nd minute lead.'

'But three incredibly irresponsible blunders let the mediocre Geordies score three times in a second session which amazingly transformed the match.'

Simon Smith puts it in a nutshell with his crisp comment in the *Sunday Express*: 'Sunderland came from behind in a terrific second half revival to create another opening day sensation.'

In the *News of the World*, Roy Peskett took a kinder view and made it clear he felt Villa's injury problems had contributed to their downfall.

Peskett wrote: 'Villa, already without flu victim Gary Shaw, lost Peter Withe at half-time with a thigh injury.'

Pat Collins in the *Sunday People* commented: 'Villa allowed cheeky Sunderland to hang on for half this game and then somersault back on the hour with two fine breakaway goals in four minutes.'

'The unforeseen break went their way when Withe failed to go out for the second half because of a leg injury. For it was Withe, showing the bite England did not employ in Spain, who had caused endless first half unease with his aerial command of the Roker defence.'

On Monday morning in the *Daily Mirror*, Dave Horridge was in full agreement about the Withe injury being a critical factor in the match.

He wrote: 'An injury to Peter Withe turned the game round. The big striker had Sunderland's defence in constant trouble and you could sense their relief when he failed to show up for the second half.'

The *Birmingham Post* also adopted a similar theme with Ian Willars saying: 'In fairness to Villa everything started to go wrong from the moment Withe pulled a hamstring in the 34th minute having a header disallowed. The England striker did not come out for the second half and Villa went into dramatic decline.'

'With Cowans nursing a bruised thigh after a clash with Elliott received in the early stages Villa's play after the interval became decidedly disjointed and sloppy.'

By the time Ian Johnson had spent the weekend reflecting on the game and sat down to write his piece for Monday's *Birmingham Evening Mail* he had produced this stunning statistic.

'In the space of two competitive games Aston Villa have climbed the heights of winning the European Cup and slumped to the depths of a 3-1 home defeat by Sunderland. The euphoria of Rotterdam has flipped amazingly. Villa are going through a crisis.'



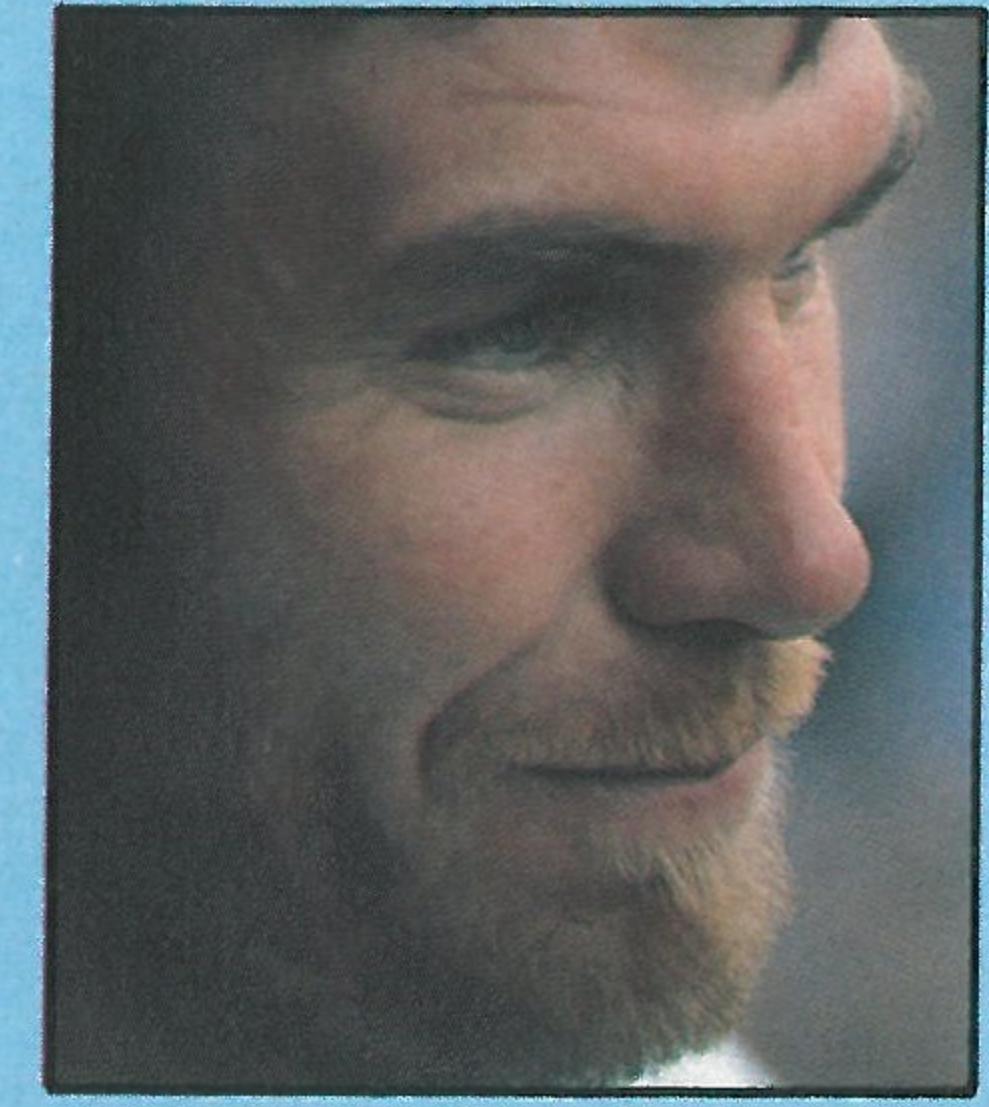
ASTON VILLA 1982-83

FRONT ROW: Paul Birch, Tim Langford, Darren Bradley, Leigh Palin, Tony Obi, David Norton, Stephen Barnes.

SECOND ROW: Tony Morley, Des Bremner, Ken Swain, Tony Barton (Manager), Dennis Mortimer, Peter Withe, Gary Shaw.

THIRD ROW: Brian Jones (Youth Development Officer), Brian Little (Youth Team Coach), Jim Williams (Physiotherapist), Kevin Rogers, Gordon Cowans, Andy Blair, Nigel Spink, Kevin Poole, Jimmy Rimmer, David Geddis, Gary Williams, Mark Walters, Roy MacLaren (Assistant Manager), Bill Shorthouse (Reserve Team Coach).

BACK ROW: Eamonn Deacy, Dean Glover, Mark Hutchinson, Ray Walker, Robert Hopkins, Mark Jones, Colin Gibson, Allan Evans, Ken McNaught, Pat Heard, Martin McKenzie, Tony Rees, Paul Kerr, Noel Blake.



PETER WITHE

Peter Withe celebrated his 31st birthday recently and joked about the hamstring injury he picked up in the opening game against Sunderland.

'Old age must be approaching,' he laughed, before quickly knocking that theory on the head.

'There's plenty of soccer life left in me yet both at international and club level.'

Of that there can be little doubt. But it may be significant that after returning with England from the World Cup finals in Spain on 5th July, Peter had just 29 days to rest his aching limbs before reporting back for training again.

Medical men in sport would probably argue that this is insufficient time for top athletes to recharge their batteries, although top individuals in other games, notably tennis and cricket, seem to play all the year round without too much trouble.

Peter argues against feeling any stresses or strains and furthermore he does not believe that the preparation work for the new season has been too hurriedly undertaken.

In his short close-season break he still had time to take his wife and three sons — Jason (11), Stephen (5) and Gareth (3) — for a holiday in Majorca.

'I came back feeling thoroughly rejuvenated and I still feel that way despite the disappointment of pulling a hamstring,' he said. 'But it is not as if I struggle regularly with this type of injury.'

'I think I have had only three

pulled hamstrings in all my playing career. I was annoyed about having to miss the Everton game and I just hope that I am not out of action for very long.'

'I don't like being injured. It's the most boring part of a footballer's career, particularly if you are like me and enjoy every minute of training as much as playing in full-scale matches.'

Peter felt the tell-tale twinge of the hamstring very early in the game against Sunderland and it went again as he unselfishly headed Kenny Swain's right-wing cross back across the face of the goal for Gordon Cowans' 22nd minute goal.



'I knew it was a possible hamstring strain but I thought it might just wear off,' he said. 'I realised otherwise after my headed goal had been disallowed 15 minutes before half-time.'

'But I signalled to Jim Williams that I would be able to stay on until half-time. Whether that was the right thing to do or not I don't know. Perhaps I should have come off straight away.'

With the first round European Cup-tie against Besiktas approaching and England playing in Denmark in the opening game of the European Championships on 22nd September, Peter obviously does not want to be hanging around on the injured list.

His first priority is to help Villa retain the European Cup which made him a household name on the continent, if not throughout the world, when he scored the solitary goal in the 1-0 win over Bayern Munich in Rotterdam last May.

And then he is determined to force his way back into the England side for the forthcoming qualifying games in the European Championships. Winning a place in the World Cup squad of 22 was a great thrill for him.

'Just being part of the squad was tremendous although I suppose that at the end of the day I was lucky to make it,' he said. 'But having been in the squad then everybody, of course, wants to play in the team as well.'

'It's only natural and clearly I was itching to get off the

substitute's bench. But the team played well and kept on winning until the semi-finals and there was no way that Ron Greenwood was going to change the formation.'

'I said before we left for Spain that I would have a hard job in trying to dislodge Paul Mariner from the team. And that's exactly how it turned out. Paul scored a goal or two and it would have been difficult to drop him.'

Now that former Ipswich manager Bobby Robson has taken over the England supremo's job Peter appreciates that he might have an even tougher job in convincing him that he should wear the No. 9 shirt.

'It goes almost without saying that he knows all about the strengths and weaknesses of Paul having signed him for Ipswich from Plymouth. But I am determined to battle my way through into the side again and it's up to me to prove to Mr Robson that I have better qualifications to lead England's attack.'

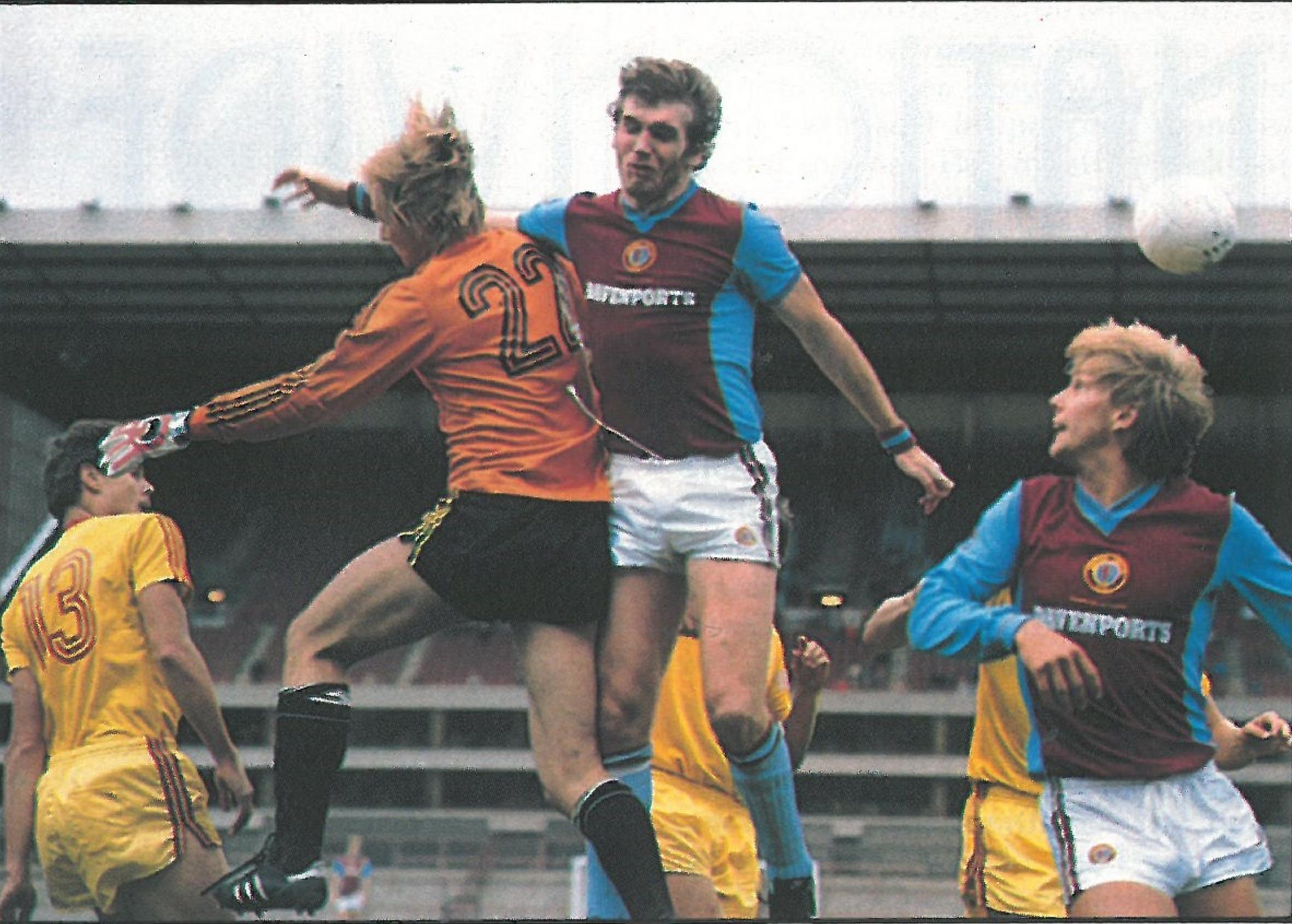
Even though Peter did not actually play in the World Cup finals the experience he gained in living and training with the rest of the squad in Bilbao and later outside Madrid should prove to be invaluable to him.

'I think I learned a lot about the different training and coaching styles and it was fascinating working with 21 other international players,' he said. 'I picked up a lot of new ideas which I have stored away to be used in the future.'

'One of the most interesting features revolved around tactics and how different coaches think in certain situations. It was all very valuable experience for me especially as I hope to be playing for England again this season.'

'Since he took over Mr Robson has said that he hopes each First Division club will recommend at least two players to him every season. I know he is really perhaps referring to younger players coming through.'

'But I aim to prove to him that the more experienced and older players like myself cannot be ignored or overlooked.'



PETER THE COMPETITOR

Villa's pre-season match against Dukla Prague saw Peter Withe causing all sorts of problems for the Czech defence. Their goalkeeper Netolicka went off injured and was replaced by Karel Stromsik. It wasn't long before Stromsik discovered just how strong a competitor Peter was and found himself under constant pressure by the England striker. In the end Stromsik had a few words to say to Peter. Whether Peter understood we don't know but we invite your suggestions. Just put a suitable caption to the picture below. The best received will win two tickets for a match at Villa Park. Send your entries to: Caption Competition (No.1), Villa News & Record, Aston Villa FC, Villa Park, Birmingham B6 6HE.



NATIONWIDE

MILLIONAIRE MIDDLESBROUGH

Relegated Middlesbrough took their transfer income to around £2 million for four players in 15 months when England Under-21 centre-forward David Hodgson followed Craig Johnston's route to Liverpool.

Boro had previously banked large sums from selling Mark Proctor to Nottingham Forest and David Armstrong to Southampton. But the Ayresome Park club were unable to live like 'millionaires' after tumbling out of the First Division on average gates of less than 14,000.

Manager Bobby Murdoch is plotting a promotion bid mainly with young players who came up through the ranks when he was in charge of youth coaching.

He added some experience to the squad with a £30,000 deal for Newcastle United's former Scottish international full-back, John Brownlie, but also released some of his other established players.

Striker Billy Ashcroft went on a free to Twente Enschede (the Dutch club who exported Arnold Muhren and Frans Thijssen to England) and no fee was involved in full-back John Craggs' return to former club Newcastle.

Middlesbrough pulled in a reported £180,000 by selling left-back Ian Bailey to Sheffield Wednesday and midfield man Bobby Thomson to Hibernian. Thomson was at Ayresome Park for only 11 months, having cost £200,000 when signed from Morton in September 1981.

FOREIGN LEGION

Middlesbrough's Ashcroft was one of a number of British players attracted by offers from Europe. The main deal, of course, was Trevor Francis's £1 million move to Sampdoria, of Genoa, but Leeds United took a hefty loss in selling England winger Peter Barnes to Real Betis, of Spain, for a one-season agreement priced at £115,000.

Foreign players have not enjoyed total success in England, but it was sad to see the exit of Ossie Ardiles to Paris St Germain, even if he could be back at Tottenham within 12 months.

Other clubs have not been as lucky with their overseas investments. Coventry City, for instance, exchanged Roger Van Gool for Rudi Kaiser last year and now they have sold the Dutchman to Nice for £50,000.

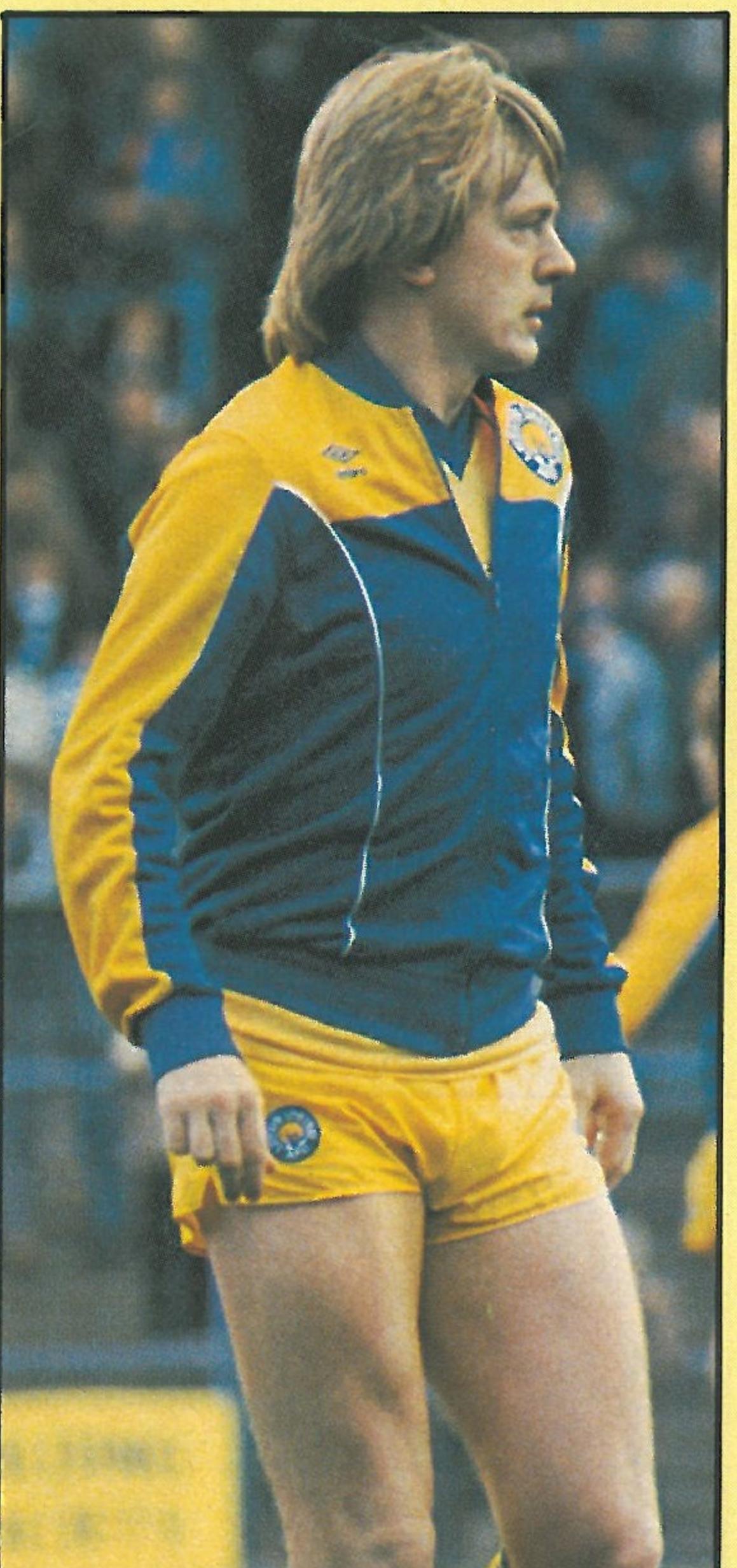
Nottingham Forest also had their

disappointments. Swiss international Raimondo Ponte went into the French League last season and the German midfield man, Jurgen Roeber, was with them for only eight months before moving to Bayer Leverkusen for £150,000.

However, Brian Clough was not afraid to go into Europe again to sign a replacement for Peter Shilton. Hans van Breukelen, the Utrecht goalkeeper, was due at the City Ground last week after completing an obligation to play for Holland in an international against Iceland.

BUSY AT MAINE ROAD

Although Manchester City indicated the need to raise money by selling Trevor Francis, manager John Bond was as busy as ever in the transfer market.



Leeds United took a hefty loss in selling Peter Barnes to Real Betis for £115,000.

He paid out two six-figure fees — a reported £225,000 for Southampton's England Under-21 midfield player, Graham Baker, and £135,000 for West Ham United's top scorer last season, David Cross.

City are Cross's sixth club, but his first in his native Lancashire since he left Rochdale to begin his trail to Norwich, Coventry, Albion and West Ham. He picked up more than 160 League goals along the way, as well as playing in FA Cup and League Cup Finals.

Manchester City stepped into the free market. Ian Davies, a left-back who was with Mr Bond at Norwich City, moved from Newcastle and Chris Jones, an England Under-21 cap in his earlier days with Spurs, happily accepted a chance of re-building his First Division career.

ALL-CHANGE SHREWSBURY

Player-manager Graham Turner had a hectic summer at Shrewsbury Town. Apart from losing assistant Graham Hawkins to become manager at Wolves, he transferred a number of players associated with the Shropshire club's climb from the Third Division.

Having exchanged Ian Atkins for Sunderland striker Alan Brown, he also negotiated a swap deal with Liverpool, signing the champions' giant reserve goalkeeper, Steve Ogrizovic, and releasing Bob Wardle to Anfield.

Ogrizovic collected European Cup honours in his time with Liverpool, but became disappointed when he didn't get a first team chance on the departure of Ray Clemence. But Wardle was prepared to sacrifice his Second Division place at Shrewsbury for the challenge of competing with Bruce Grobbelaar at Anfield.

Other departures from Gay Meadow included striker Steve Biggins to Oxford United, full-back Jake King to Wrexham, striker John Dungworth to Mansfield and midfield man David Tong to Cardiff.

Oxford's success in signing Biggins and Wrexham forward Micky Vinter gave manager Jim Smith replacements for Keith Cassells, who went to Southampton last season, and Ollie Kearns, who moved to Walsall on a free transfer.

DERBY DOUBLE

Derby County manager John Newman used his knowledge of other areas to produce two summer signings. When he was manager at Exeter City, he first noticed George Foster, the Plymouth centre-half who moved to the Baseball Ground for £45,000.

And during his time in charge at Grimsby Town, he bought Mike Brolly, the former Chelsea and Bristol City midfield player who re-joined him at Derby without a fee.

CHARLIE'S CHAT

By Charlie Taberner
Co-ordinating
Officer for the
Association of
Aston Villa
Supporters Clubs

• We are still hoping to see more of our members take advantage of the excellent facilities at the Aston Villa Leisure Centre, provided to our Association on match days. We have use of the lounge bar from 12.30 on Saturdays and 6.00 on Wednesdays. So do try and come along. Children can be accommodated in the adjoining cafeteria. Individual supporters that would like to come along can apply for membership by writing to me at Villa Park enclosing two passport-type photographs and £2.50 membership fee.

• Dudley Lions Club were pleased to welcome recently Johnny Dixon and the European Cup. Johnny kept the audience at the Royal Oak, Rowley Regis, fully interested with his comments on the game and memories of the 1957 FA Cup Final in which he led Villa to victory over Manchester United. The evening also saw Johnny presented with a cheque towards the Villa Social Fund.

• The Villa Social Fund was started to assist, in particular, former players who are not in a position to provide for themselves and many of our member clubs and individual supporters have generously offered support. Chairman of the Fund is Trevor Gill and Donald Bendall also serves on the committee.

Any donations to the Fund should be sent to: The Treasurer, Aston Villa Social Fund, 2 Bevington Road, Aston, Birmingham. All donations will be acknowledged.

• Our Small Heath Branch recently held its first meeting and another is scheduled for Thursday 23rd September at the Legion Club, Coventry Road, at 8 p.m. Villa personalities will be in attendance and I hope that many of our supporters from the Sheldon, Hall Green, Small Heath and Stetchford areas will go along and join in the fun. The branch members are planning to meet at the Legion Club at mid-day for Saturday matches at Villa Park, travel together to the ground, and return to the Legion Club after the game. Membership details are available from Mike Kelly, 177 Mansel Road, Small Heath, Birmingham.



The Aston Villa Jubilee Club recently marked Villa's European Cup achievement with a presentation to Aston Villa of an inscribed flag. George Cummings, president of the Jubilee Club handed over the flag to Villa's vice-chairman Donald Bendall and Donald was also on hand to receive another gift — this time from Leslie Smith — a statuette to be kept permanently in the Villa trophy cabinet. Johnny Dixon, Charlie Taberner, Trevor Gill and son Mike, and Brian Hawthorn, mine host at the Aston Tavern, were also present at the occasion (pictured left).



A treat for Telford as members welcome the European Cup at the headquarters in the Red Lion, Wellington. Pictured left to right are: Charlie Taberner, Ron Jeffries, Ron Poulter, Cec Williams, Alan Munn, Terry Hanney and Dennis Potter.

(Picture by courtesy of the Shropshire Star)

• Our Oxford Supporters Club are looking forward to Thursday 9th September when Roy MacLaren and Brian Little will be popping along as special guests. The meeting kicks off at 8 p.m. and will be held in the Wheatsheaf, George Street, Banbury. Membership details for the branch can be obtained from Secretary Neil Jones, The Stores, Kirthlineton, Oxford. Telephone Bletchington 50356.

• Dennis Howell, MP, is visiting our Sutton Coldfield Branch on Monday 13th September. New and former members are most welcome to come along to the Cricket Pavilion in Rectory Park, Sutton, for what promises to be an excellent evening. Further details are available from Secretary Ron Price, 8 Chadwick Road, Sutton Coldfield. Telephone 329 2287.

• Tina Tidmarsh, secretary to the Longbridge Lions Club for many years, has moved to Canada for a year. Her father Ron was elected to take over the secretary's role at the club's recent AGM. Wilf Pyatt was re-elected as chairman. Longbridge Lions meet at the Hawthorns Social Club, Rednal Hill Lane, Rubery.

• We are all looking forward to the visit of Swansea City later this month. Their Supporters Club are due to play a match against a Villa Supporters XI on the morning of the Division One fixture, Saturday 25th September. It's a splendid way to encourage goodwill between clubs and I'm certainly looking forward to the event. Further details will be announced later.

• It was with regret that we learned of the death of Albert Scott, a lifelong Villa supporter and for many years chairman of the Alcester Lions Club. Albert contributed greatly to that club's activities before ill-health forced him to take things more easily. We extend our condolences to his wife Lily.

AVERAGE ATTENDANCES AND DIVISION ONE TABLE 1982-83

Highest	Average	Manchester City	Home						Away			Pts		
			P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L			
29,617	28,732	Manchester City	3	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	1	9
11,712	11,703	Swansea City	3	2	0	0	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	7
35,652	35,652	Liverpool	3	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	0
19,239	19,118	Sunderland	3	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	3	1	7
30,553	27,289	Everton	3	2	0	0	8	1	0	0	1	0	2	6
25,014	18,280	WBA	3	2	0	0	8	1	0	0	1	0	2	6
48,673	48,673	Manchester United	3	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	4	3	6
19,630	19,630	Watford	3	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	4	2	6
15,504	15,504	Stoke	3	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	4	2	6
23,748	18,728	Nottingham Forest	3	1	0	1	4	3	1	0	0	2	1	6
13,403	11,237	Luton Town	3	1	0	1	5	5	0	1	0	2	2	4
10,356	10,356	Coventry	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	3	4	
39,180	39,180	Tottenham	3	0	1	0	2	2	1	0	1	3	4	4
23,796	23,796	West Ham	3	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
18,714	18,328	Southampton	3	1	0	1	2	4	0	0	1	0	1	3
25,000	20,831	Ipswich	3	0	1	1	2	3	0	1	0	1	1	2
8,061	8,061	Notts County	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	6	2
36,429	29,540	Arsenal	3	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	1	1	2	1
22,638	22,638	Norwich	3	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
20,176	17,294	Birmingham City	3	0	1	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	3	1
13,641	13,641	Brighton	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	9	1
22,945	22,945	Aston Villa	3	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	2	0	6	0

Up to and including Saturday 4th September

CENTRAL LEAGUE FIXTURES 1982-83

Date	V	Opposition	F A
Sept 1	A	Wolverhampton W.	3 - 1
Sept 4	H	Liverpool	1 - 3
Sept 8	A	Huddersfield Town	
Sept 22	H	Leeds United	
Oct 13	H	Everton	
Oct 30	A	Blackburn Rovers	
Nov 10	A	Blackpool	
Nov 17	H	Stoke City	
Nov 24	A	West Bromwich Albion	
Dec 1	H	Newcastle United	
Dec 8	A	Sheffield United	
Dec 15	H	Manchester United	
Dec 18	A	Liverpool	
Jan 5	H	Huddersfield Town	
Jan 19	H	Coventry City	
Jan 26	A	Bury	
Feb 1	A	Sheffield Wednesday	
Feb 8	A	Leeds United	
Feb 16	H	Blackpool	
Feb 22	A	Everton	
Mar 2	H	Blackburn Rovers	
Mar 8	A	Coventry City	
Mar 16	H	Bury	
Mar 23	H	Sheffield Wednesday	
Mar 30	H	West Bromwich Albion	
April 6	A	Stoke City	
April 13	H	Sheffield United	
April 20	A	Newcastle United	
April 30	A	Manchester United	
May 11	H	Wolverhampton W.	

MID. INTERMEDIATE FIXTURES

Date	V	Opposition	F A
Aug 28	H	Wolverhampton W.	3 - 1
Sept 4	A	Derby County	1 - 2
Sept 11	H	Birmingham City	
Sept 18	A	Mansfield Town	
Sept 25	H	West Bromwich Albion	

MID. INTERMEDIATE 1981-82

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Walsall	24	18	2	4	61	24	38
Shrewsbury Town	24	14	2	8	60	37	30
Aston Villa	24	12	6	6	47	28	30
Wolverhampton	24	13	2	9	37	35	28
Leicester City	24	10	7	7	46	36	27
Derby County	24	10	5	9	38	29	25
Coventry City	24	11	3	10	35	33	25
W.B.A.	24	8	5	11	31	47	21
Nottingham Forest	24	7	6	11	39	45	20
Birmingham City	24	7	6	11	25	36	20
Notts County	24	9	1	14	41	52	19
Stoke City	24	7	4	13	30	52	18
Mansfield Town	24	4	3	17	20	56	11

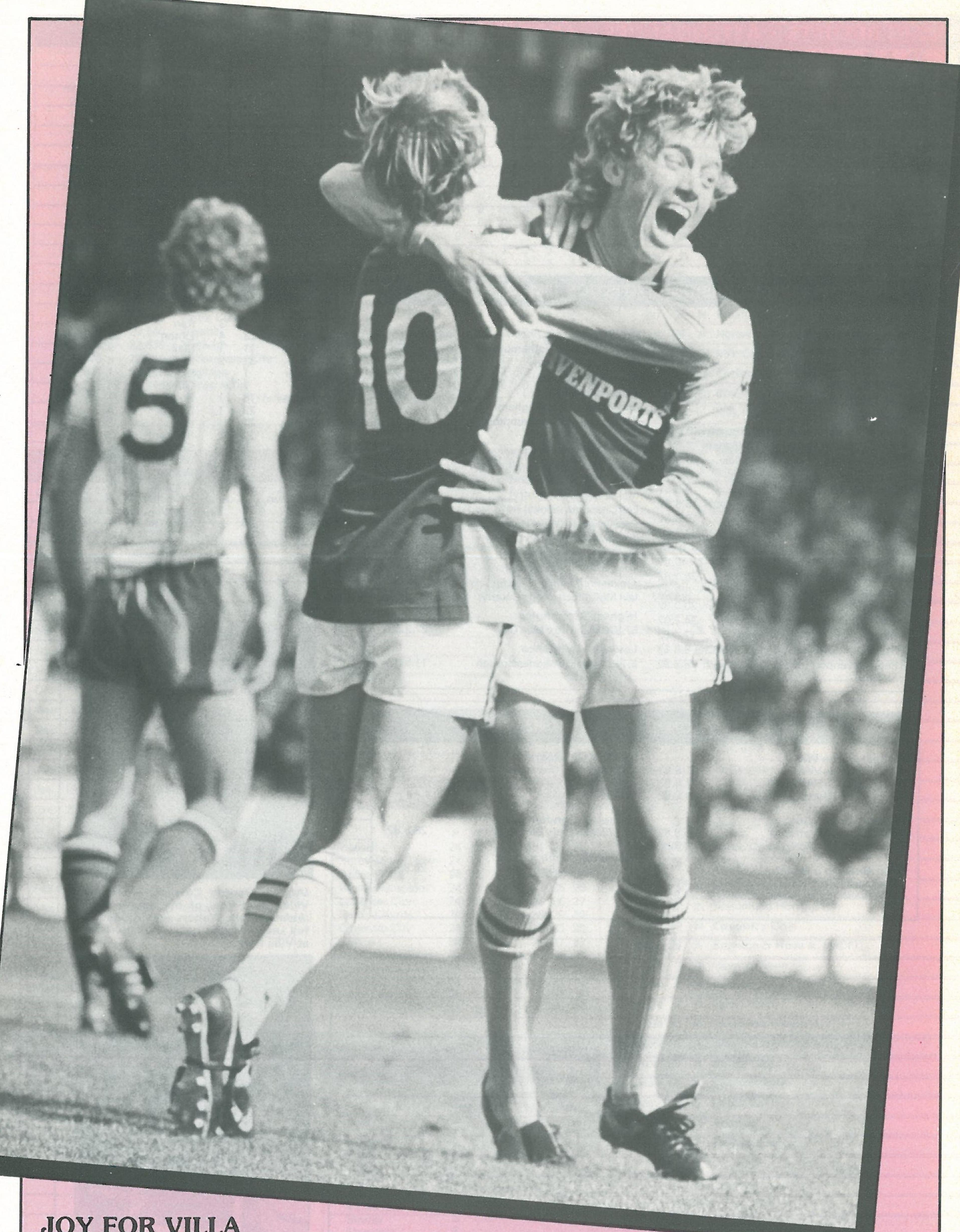
FIRST TEAM APPEARANCES 1982-83

League	App	Gls	Cups	App	Gls
Blair	1	—	—	—	—
Bremner	3	—	—	—	—
Cowans	3	1	—	—	—
Evans	2	—	—	—	—
Geddis	1	—	—	—	—
Heard	1	—	—	—	—
Jones	1	—	—	—	—
McNaught	3	—	—	—	—
Morley	3	—	—	—	—
Mortimer	3	—	—	—	—
Rimmer	3	—	—	—	—
Shaw	1	—	—	—	—
Swain	2	—	—	—	—
Walters	2	—	—	—	—
Williams	2	—	—	—	—
Withe	2	—	—	—	—

Up to and including Sat 4th Sept

FIRST TEAM FIXTURES

Date	V	Opposition	F A	Att.	Pos.
Aug 28	H	Sunderland	1-3	22,945	—
Aug 31	A	Everton	0-5	24,025	—
Sept 4	A	Southampton	0-1	17,943	—
Sept 8	H	Luton Town			
Sept 11	H	Nottingham Forest			
Sept 15	H	Besiktas (EC1-1L)			
Sept 18	A	Manchester City			
Sept 25	H	Swansea City			
Sept 29	A	Besiktas (EC1-2L)			
Oct 2	A	West Bromwich Albion			
Oct 6	Milk Cup 2 (1L)				
Oct 9	A	Notts County			
Oct 16	H	Watford			



JOY FOR VILLA

Tony Morley's happy face tells the story after Gordon Cowans had put Villa into a first half lead against Sunderland.

VILLA



CUBS

match will be looked on as something of a collectors item and may prove quite valuable in years to come.

- The giant-sized Villa Team Poster is selling fast! Priced at £1.20 and available from the Club Shop on the ground and other Villa souvenir outlets.

- There are still some Villa Cubs who have not renewed their membership. Renewals are only £1 and remember only paid-up members are eligible for competition prizes and other benefits given to Villa Cubs.

- New membership costs £4. In return you will receive your club badge and membership card, a Villa Cubs T-shirt, autograph book and pen, plus the opportunity to watch games at Villa Park at reduced prices. To join the Villa Cubs just send details to include your name, address, telephone number, date of birth, school, favourite player and hobbies, plus two passport-type photos, along with your £4 enrolment fee to: The Villa Cubs, Aston Villa FC, Villa Park, Birmingham B6 6HE.

- Well, we said it was going to be tough at the top in our last column and Villa's first two League games were certainly that. Still, there's a long way to go yet before any honours are handed out and there's no reason at all why Villa's name can't be inscribed on some more silverware by the time May comes next year.

- Tonight we welcome newly promoted Luton Town. David Pleat's side stormed to the Second Division Championship last season and are a team and a club equipped for First Division football.

We also welcome back former Villa player Jake Findlay, a goalkeeper who contributed much to Town's success last term.

- Be sure to get a copy of the special Villa News & Record for our European Cup home match against Besiktas played next Wednesday. The programme is expected to be produced in time to go on sale at Villa Park for Saturday's match against Nottingham Forest. That means there will be two issues of the programme on sale that day. Because the Besiktas game is behind closed doors the 16 page programme for that

date for the competition is Wednesday 15th September.

- As you know Villa Cubs have the opportunity of watching Villa first team games at reduced admission prices. Now all young supporters can watch the game from the terraces for just £1 instead of the normal £2. It's a move by the club, who are fully aware of the expense incurred by young supporters who watch Villa on a regular basis, to help ease the financial strain on pocket money and encourage more parents to bring their children to Villa Park.

- Here's a letter passed on by Kenny Swain, the Villa Cubs President. It's from Joanna Warner (373) who lives in Torquay: 'Dear Kenny, my sister and I are Villa Cubs from Torquay and we often travel to Birmingham with our Dad to watch Villa play. We travelled by car to Rotterdam for the European Cup Final and it was the best game I've ever seen. What made it even more memorable was at the end of the game when we all ran towards the fence where you were standing. You had only one sock on and a bandage on your leg. One supporter asked for your sock and you gave it to him and then you took your other sock off and my Dad called "Give it to the girl Kenny" and wasn't I surprised when you handed it to me. Now it's one of my most prized possessions!'

- That's it for now — here's hoping for a good result for Villa tonight!

MATCH MASCOT

Jamie Paul Thompson (81) is our mascot for tonight's evening game against Luton. Jamie is only five years old and lives in Manta Road, Dosthill, Tamworth. Apart from football his main interest is bikes. We wish Jamie good luck tonight and we're sure Dennis will look after him out on the pitch.



LUTON TOWN

Aston Villa supporters were given an early preview of Luton Town's promotion-winning style nearly four years before the Bedfordshire club clinched their place in the First Division.

The potential of manager David Pleat, then in his first season in charge at Kenilworth Road, was advertised back in November 1978 when Luton reached the quarter-finals of the League Cup with a 2-0 win at Villa Park.

No fewer than six members of the 1982 promotion squad were already installed in a team which changed dramatically when Mr Pleat was promoted from his job as first team coach to take over from Harry Haslam in January 1978.

At 33, he was then one of the youngest managers in the country but he held no inhibitions about the task ahead. He immediately organised a massive shake-up, selling four players and bringing in nine newcomers on a transfer turnover of £900,000 in eight months.

Only three players — midfield pair Ricky Hill and Lil Fuccillo and last season's top scorer, Brian Stein —



MANAGER DAVID PLEAT

LUTON TOWN ROLL CALL

Player	Birthplace	Previous Clubs	Full Internationals	Date Signed
Mark Aizlewood	Newport	Newport	—	April 1978
Raddy Antic	Yugoslavia	Zaragoza	Yugoslavia	July 1980
Frank Bunn	Birmingham	—	—	May 1980
Mal Donaghy	Belfast	Larne	N Ireland	June 1978
Jake Findlay	Blairgowrie	Aston Villa	—	Nov 1978
Lil Fuccillo	Bedford	—	—	July 1974
Clive Goodyear	Lincoln	—	—	Oct 1978
Ricky Hill	London	—	—	May 1976
Brian Horton	Hednesford	Walsall, Hednesford, Port Vale, Brighton	—	Aug 1981
Alan Judge	Kingsbury	Aston Villa, Cardiff, Norwich, Millwall, Kettering, Peterboro	—	Jan 1978
Billy Kellock	Glasgow	—	—	July 1982
Richard Money	Lowestoft	Lowestoft, Scunthorpe, Fulham, Liverpool	—	April 1982
David Moss	Witney	Witney	—	May 1978
Mick Saxby	Mansfield	Swindon	—	July 1979
Mick Small	Birmingham	Mansfield	—	May 1981
Brian Stein	South Africa	Edgware	—	Oct 1977
Kirk Stephens	Coventry	Nuneaton	—	June 1978
Wayne Turner	Luton	—	—	April 1978
Paul Walsh	Plumstead	Charlton	—	July 1982

have survived the full course, although reserve goalkeeper Alan Judge had signed his first professional contract just three weeks before Luton embarked on the Pleat revolution.

The new manager's background was mainly in the lower divisions after he had won England Youth honours with Nottingham Forest. He had three seasons with Luton, but injuries affected his career as he moved on to Shrewsbury, Exeter and Peterborough.

He furthered his ambition to stay in the game by enrolling on FA coaching courses and then came his first break in management with Nuneaton in the Southern League. By 1975, he was back at Luton as reserve coach and things moved rapidly two years later. In December 1977 he became first team coach and within two months he was up-graded again when Harry Haslam moved to Sheffield United.

Despite a whiff of success in the League Cup, his first full campaign brought a relegation near-miss — Luton were safe by only two points — but the next three years identified the team and their manager as promotion material. They were pipped by four points in 1980 and only two in 1981, and then ran away with the Championship last season.

Inevitably, their glorious return was associated with memories of the last time Luton were in the First Division. They were relegated after one season in 1974-75 and the effort almost wrecked the club. They were saved from extinction in the following season only by the £70,000 sale of Peter Anderson to Royal Antwerp.

But David Pleat is quietly confident that Luton are better prepared this time. He says of players' triumph last season: 'They really believed that they were up to First Division standard, and, more than anything else, they wanted to get there and prove it.'

'Our success has been a triumph for skill, confidence, endeavour and the ability to finish our attacks in the manner that will pull the crowds back — with goals.'

Instinctively, he followed his attacking principle in his summer spending. Although centre-forward Steve White scored 19 goals last term, he was part-exchanged (valued at £100,000) for £350,000-rated England Youth starlet Paul Walsh from Charlton Athletic.

Twenty-four goals in two seasons as a teenager stamped Walsh as one of the most exciting prospects in the League. He is still three weeks away from his 20th birthday as he forges a striking partnership with South African-born Stein.

Further goal-potential was added to the Luton line-up when Mr Pleat paid a reported £25,000 in July to sign 28-year-old midfield player Billy Kellock, who scored more than 30 goals in three Fourth Division seasons with Peterborough United.

Glasgow-born Kellock is one of two former Villa players at Luton. He was signed as an apprentice by Tommy Docherty and was followed from Scotland by Jake Findlay, the genial giant who was No. 2 goalkeeper to John Burridge and then Jimmy Rimmer before taking a six-figure move to Kenilworth Road nearly four years ago.

Right-back Kirk Stephens, who cost £5,000 from Nuneaton, is another player with Midlands connections, and, likewise, skipper Brian Horton trailed around the West Midlands circuit before captaining promotion-winning teams at Brighton and Luton.

Now 33 and approaching his 500th League outing, Horton was an inspired signing last year when Luton swapped him for Eire international Tony Greasham. He already has two seasons' First Division experience with Brighton and feels that Luton's footballing style will suit the top division.

Horton's strong personality made him the leader of the midfield engine room. His style complemented the pacey skills of Ricky Hill, who was on the fringe of England Under-21 honours, and touchline craft of David

Moss, a penalty expert with 69 League goals in four seasons with Luton.

The fourth midfield spot usually went to Lil Fuccillo, who overcame a broken leg to re-ignite his career, but Luton also called on Raddy Antic, a Yugoslav international signed from the Spanish club, Real Zaragoza.

Luton's defence was re-shaped last season. Clive Goodyear, a 21-year-old centre-half, claimed the No. 5 spot in November and developed in partnership with Mal Donaghy, the Northern Ireland World Cup player. Late in the campaign they were joined by a new left-back — Richard Money, signed from Liverpool at considerably less than the Champions paid to Fulham.

Luton have now arrived in the First Division on a sound financial footing and boosted by a sponsorship deal, worth up to £350,000 over four years, with Bedford Trucks. But they are treading carefully and not committing themselves to a lavish standard of living.

As Mr Pleat explained in the Daily Telegraph in July: 'Had we increased basic salaries, it would have become intolerable if failure followed. The players have been told that we must regard next season as a first stage; to learn to accept what we can do and, if we succeed, we shall see what can be done for them. We have to stay in the First Division. We cannot afford to go down.'

But Luton are certainly not overawed. 'The excitement and challenge has stimulated everyone,' says Mr Pleat. 'In football, every club need something each season, be it a new manager, coach, player or system. There is nothing worse than each season being the same.'



STRIKER BRIAN STEIN



TEAMS

VILLA	4:1	LUTON TOWN
JIMMY RIMMER	1	JAKE FINDLAY
MARK JONES	2	KIRK STEPHENS
PAT HEARD	3	RICHARD MONEY
DES BREMNER	4	BRIAN HORTON
KEN McNAUGHT	5	CLIVE GOODYEAR
DENNIS MORTIMER	6	MAL DONAGHY
ANDY BLAIR	7	RICKY HILL
DAVID GEDDIS	8	BRIAN STEIN
PETER WITHE	9	PAUL WALSH
GORDON COWANS	10	RADDY ANTIC
TONY MORLEY	11	DAVID MOSS
	12	KELLOCK

SCOREBOARD CHECK...

Manchester United v Everton	Millwall v Bournemouth
Norwich v Birmingham City	Orient v Cardiff
Stoke City v West Bromwich Albion	Oxford v Doncaster
Tottenham v Southampton	Reading v Brentford
Derby County v Chelsea	Hereford v Swindon
Leicester v Leeds	Peterborough v Wimbledon
Newcastle v Middlesbrough	Torquay v Aldershot
Exeter City v Portsmouth	

VILLA'S NEXT HOME MATCH
LEAGUE DIVISION ONE - THIS SATURDAY
ASTON VILLA
v
NOTTINGHAM FOREST

OFFICIALS...

Referee:
DEREK OWEN
Wirral, Cheshire

Linesmen:
A. FENN (Red Flag)
C. J. PEAKE (Yellow Flag)

Derek Owen joined the Football League in 1972 having gained promotion through local leagues. Lined Quarter-Final of Football League Cup in 1973-74 and 1975-76, plus several FA Challenge Cup appointments. Also lined a European Cup Quarter-Final in 1980, and the 1982 UEFA Cup Final second leg game between Hamburg and Gothenburg. Keen on most sports with emphasis on physical fitness, Derek is a member of the Management Committee of the West Cheshire League, and Chairman of Wirral Referees' Society. He is married with a son and daughter and is an inspector with a leading insurance company.

ASTON VILLA
VOUCHER 89-3

v LUTON TOWN
8th SEPTEMBER 1982

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