

# LUTON TOWN F.C. v PORTSMOUTH

Match Day  
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Magazine



**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1994**

**KICK-OFF 7.45pm**

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# Our feet must remain firmly on the ground



ON THE BALL WITH DAVID PLEAT

**T**onight we welcome the supporters, players and officials of Portsmouth Football Club. A particularly warm welcome to one of my closest friends in football, Jim Smith. Over the years, he has proved consistently to be one of the most successful and affable men in the game.

I hope that we have got our feet clearly on the ground and our eyes focussed cleanly on the task ahead. Not only have we 18 league games to battle through, but we have undeniably a marvellous opportunity of gaining some glory in the FA Cup.

The players appreciated tremendously the support at Cardiff despite the high prices and the difficult arena. Under some provocation, we came through, resisting Cardiff's attacking thrusts, with Thompson prominent, and broke out well with our movement off the ball.

As a club, we would like to to say how sorry we were to learn that in their disappointment, some Cardiff supporters acted so badly. We trust that no-one has any lasting injury. The thrust of the Cardiff argument was from their view of the laws of the game. It saddens me as a football-lover to realise that so many people who watch and play our great game do not fully understand the most controversial law of all.

The linesmen have onerous tasks, but their job is clear: to advise and aid the match official and quite clearly to carry out the International Board's decisions one and two relating to Law 11. These laws must be digested, understood and applied consistently for the benefit of all in the game. It is important that referees remind, and insist that, their linesmen should indicate only offside OFFENCES. Any deviation from this instruction will lead to uncertainty.

It is especially important that linesmen indicate, therefore, ONLY when a player is seeking to gain an advantage or interfering

with play or an opponent. Linesmen must NOT raise the flag merely because a player is located in an offside position. Read and digest. I would like to think our supporters understand and therefore do not howl derisively when a linesman may not raise his flag even though they may feel there was an opponent offside, but not seeking to gain an advantage. A further directive went to all clubs early in February.

**"NOT ONLY DO WE HAVE 18 LEAGUE GAMES TO BATTLE THROUGH, BUT WE HAVE A MARVELLOUS OPPORTUNITY OF GAINING SOME GLORY IN THE FA CUP"**

Portsmouth this evening will be a stern test, but for some weeks now we have begun to develop our team pattern more effectively and there is an understanding of how we are trying to exploit the opposition. All the players have done well and whilst some of the younger element have snatched the odd headline, it should not go unnoticed that Trevor Peake has captained the boat through choppy waters for the past two seasons. Now a magnificent 37, he is proving that, like wine, some footballers mature even more with age.



Scott Oakes sends the Town into round five with our second goal against Newcastle United on February 9.

There is also some irony in the fact that when the calm Mr Cliff Bassett and the sartorially elegant Mr Chris Green joined our board, we strengthened our resources. Mr Bassett's help has been immeasurable. The mere fact that I did not have to worry about the knock on the door has meant that I am able to get on with the football rather than spend time inducing other managers to try and satisfy our creditors.

I hope that the present relationships can continue in such a positive vein. We are all pulling together and I ask all our genuine supporters to make every effort, if you feel there is some future progress around the cor-

ner, to support the club commercially in every way possible and to bring a friend to help improve our home gates. This is vital.

I will be reminding our players consistently that you are only as good as your next game and with a concerted effort from all, we should have nothing to fear.

Enjoy the game.

# Hughes collects Wales' B cap and returns to action



## AROUND THE TOWN

### A QUERY OVER CERI

Fans have been asking 'Why was Ceri Hughes allowed to play for Wales while he was still under suspension from playing for Luton?' Well, the answer is simple. The game for Wales B (against Scotland B) was a friendly and therefore did not constitute a competitive match. Ceri's suspension ended after the game against Newcastle on February 9, and he took his place back in the team for our game at Leicester City last Saturday.



### SPORTING MEMORABILIA AND ANTIQUES

Sports fans should head for Vicarage Road Stadium, Watford on Sunday, February 27 when Bonhams the auctioneers will be running a sporting memorabilia and antiques valuation day.

There will be a sporting and football memorabilia specialist to give an opinion on those old football programmes, autographs and souvenirs from years gone by. The highlight of the day will be a sporting auction which will feature, amongst others, the boots Paul Gascoigne wore at the England v Poland match in September, a cricket bat signed by the 1993 England and Australia test teams, Steve Davis's cue and signed Watford, Arsenal and Tottenham shirts.

There will also be several exhibitions with a football theme, including Ray Kennedy's caps and medals and historic items loaned by the PFA. Entry to the event will be £2.00 for adults, £1 for children and there is a £1 charge for any item valued. The event will be open from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm with the auction at 2.30 pm. refreshments and snacks will be open all day.

### CONGRATULATIONS TERRY

We extend our congratulations to Terry Westley and wife Theresa, on the birth of their first child, Samuel, a fortnight ago. It proved to be a good couple of days for Terry: his side also won their South East Counties game against Bristol City 4-0. (Again, see page 27).

### BUSY WEEK AT KENILWORTH ROAD

At the time of going to press, F.A. Cup fever had again hit Kenilworth Road in preparation for the Town's visit to Cardiff City on Sunday in the fifth round. Reading this tonight, you will either be looking forward to the sixth round, anticipating the replay at Kenilworth Road on March 2, or skipping this item completely! In any case, we travelled to Ninian Park with the best wishes of Newcastle boss Kevin Keegan, who stated after we had knocked out the Magpies in round four on February 9: "I hope Luton go all the way. They certainly deserved to beat us. They might have flair in Brazil and quality in Spain, but give me a game like that any day. It had everything."

### TOWN STARS OF THE FUTURE?

Associate schoolboys Sean Douglas, Chris Wilmott, Sam Turner, Sean Evers and Jay Thomas have all been offered Y.T.S. traineeships for season 1994-95. All five have featured this season in Terry Westley's youth side and they played a major role in the youth team's recent 2-1 victory at East Thurrock in the Eastern Junior Cup (see page 27 of tonight's match magazine).

### CALLING POMPEY FANS

The Portsmouth Football Supporters' Club (London) offer group travel to games outside of London and produce a club magazine 'The Pompey Chimes'. They currently have over 400 members and welcome enquiries from any Pompey supporters. Please write to The Membership Secretary, Portsmouth Football Supporters' Club (London), PO Box 2493, London NW1 9AF

### BOBBERS TRAVEL CLUB

Coaches for the trip to Cardiff City will cost adults £9.00 and children/OAP's £7.20. Departure time from Cranfield is 8.30 am and 9.30 am from Luton, with the normal pick-up point en route.

Bookings can be made by popping into the Bobbers Club kiosk in Kenilworth Road tonight or by calling Paul Deason on (0234) 750996.

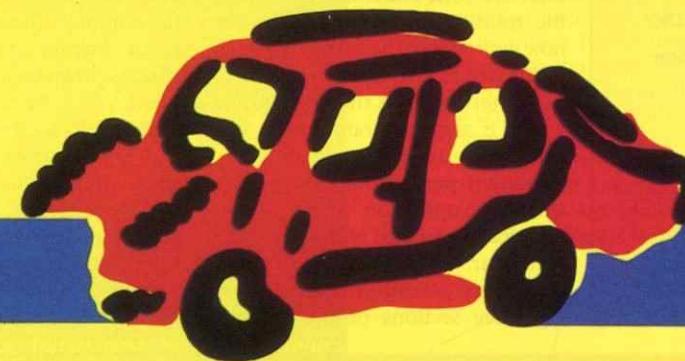


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# Crowd control and spectator safety is our first concern



ON THE INSIDE BY JOHN SMYLIE

Kenilworth Road Stadium,  
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Fax: (0582) 405070.  
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Manager: David Pleat

Coaches: John Moore,  
Wayne Turner, Terry Westley

Physiotherapist: Andy McDade

Youth Development Officer:  
Paul Lowe

Scouting: Les Shannon

Commercial:  
Kathy Leather (Manager),  
Cherry Newbery (Admin Manager),  
Gary Hooper (Executive)

Medical Officer: Dr Bill Berry

Club Dentist: A. Chris BDS (Syd)

■ Our very welcome success in the league and the FA Cup in recent weeks has seen the attendances at Kenilworth Road increasing, particularly for such attractive cup-ties as the fifth round replay against Newcastle United. This has been most satisfying for us all, but has also drawn attention to the need to remain forever vigilant on spectator safety and crowd control.

■ It was drawn to my attention, especially at the Newcastle fixture, that we could develop difficulties if we do not do our best at all times to ensure we maintain our excellent record of behaviour and our good reputation. For that reason, I have been referring to the legislation introduced, in relation to football, during the last few years and tonight wish to draw everyone's attention to some of the most salient points which are now written into the laws of the land.

■ I would also like to remind all supporters that it is their own safety which is always paramount in our thinking and our stewards are a very important part of our crowd management operation and should therefore be treated with respect. In particular, I would like to draw all supporters' attention to the following three sections of the Football

(Offences) Act 1991, all of which are punishable by arrest and, possibly, trial in the local Magistrates Court. The result could then be a fine and/or exclusion from all future matches.

**GOING ON TO THE PITCH** - A person going on to the playing area, or any area adjacent to the playing area to which spectators are not generally admitted.

**THROWING AN OBJECT** - A person throwing an object at or towards:  
a) The playing area or any area adjacent to it where spectators are not generally admitted.

b) Any area in which spectators or other persons are, or may be, present.  
**INDECENT OR RACIST CHANTING** - A person taking part in chanting of an indecent or racist nature.

We do have a very good record of behaviour at our stadium and wish it to continue. However, it does not harm to remind our supporters of situations whereby they can be punished.

■ Finally, we have vacancies at the club for hostesses in our executive suites on match days. If you know of anyone interested, please contact me for an appointment. Please write to: John Smylie, Club Secretary, Luton Town FC, 1 Maple Road, Luton LU4 8AW, or telephone (0582) 411622.

## Honours

Littlewoods Cup winners 1987-88  
FA Cup finalists 1958-59  
Littlewoods Cup finalists 1988-89  
Simod Cup finalists 1987-88  
Champions - Division Three (S) 1936-37  
Champions - Division Four 1967-68  
Champions - Division Two 1981-82

## SAFETY NOTE

The Chairman and Directors of Luton Town Football Club undertake to ensure as far as humanly possible that all activities that take place at the Kenilworth Stadium are conducted in such a way that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of everyone working at or attending the stadium is assured.

The club's primary responsibility through the Safety Officer, Officials, Staff and Stewards will be to ensure the reasonable safety of those attending the stadium.

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# Let's focus on our improved league form



CAPTAIN'S COLUMN BY TREVOR PEAKE

**T**he past month or so has been full of cup talk, both on and off the pitch at Kenilworth Road, but we must now concentrate on continuing our climb up the First Division league table.

Our last home game, against Newcastle, will stick with me for a long, long time. It was a complete team performance against one of the giants of the English game and we fully deserved to win.

From the early exchanges, when we went close on a number of occasions, I had the feeling it could be our night. Scott and John did a marvellous job in attack and kept their back four busy all evening. The midfield won a lot of the ball and from a defensive point of view I was delighted. We held firm, kept out the threat of Beardsley and Cole and left Juergen with a comfortable game.

I must congratulate Des Linton on his performance. He made some super runs down the right

wing to help out 'Mr Consistency' Paul Telfer, and his pass which set up our second goal was first-class.

We therefore went into the Leicester game with confidence and I think that showed in our play. Leicester opened the scoring with a super goal which no keeper would have had a chance of stopping. Both sides then went on to score a goal each, so that opening 'strike out of the blue' proved to be a match winner. It was disappointing to lose our ten-match unbeaten run, but because of our good performance, we were not too downhearted.

These notes are written before our trip to Cardiff, but let's hope we have given a creditable performance. We went into the game knowing that the task would be just as tough as when we went up to Newcastle United...

Tonight we welcome Portsmouth to Kenilworth Road. They have had a disappointing season by their own high standards, but they will be a tough test for us tonight. I am sure they will want to make a concerted effort for a play-off place again this season and, at the same time, make sure they do not slip down into the relegation battle.

Let's have a similar atmosphere to the one we enjoyed against Newcastle. As you all witnessed then, it can make a great difference.



'Mr Consistency' bursts past Newcastle's John Beresford on February 9.

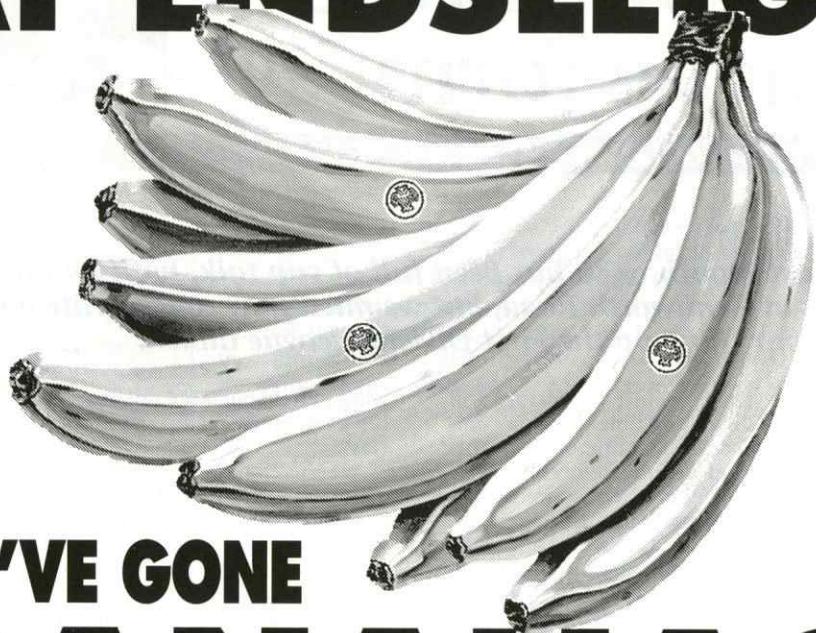
*Enjoy the game.*



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# Hatters contribute to the 'night of the underdog'



**LUTON TOWN V NEWCASTLE UNITED: WHAT THE PAPERS SAID**

**G**oals from John Hartson and Scott Oakes, in front of a live television audience, knocked Newcastle out of the FA Cup, put the Hatters back on the map and into round five against Cardiff City. Euphoric scenes greeted the final whistle, and while the players and fans celebrated with champagne, the journalists in the press lounge were busy at work preparing for the following day's newspapers...

On a night when fellow Division One sides Bolton Wanderers and Oxford United also grabbed the headlines for their equally-impressive wins, against Arsenal and Leeds respectively, the Hatters made headline news. 'HATS OFF TO PLEAT' said *Today*, whose reporter, Alex Montgomery, stated: 'David Pleat and the wonderful Luton side he has rebuilt from nothing revived memories of more prosperous days with this extraordinary Cup win. It was magnificent, it was against the odds and the winning goals from youngsters Hartson and Oakes left Kevin Keegan's high-flying Newcastle gasping for air.'

Montgomery's sentiments were echoed by Martin Samuel in *The Sun*, who added: 'Brave and brilliant Luton beat the kings of the passers at their own game. They did not look at all fazed by the big names lining up against them and there was no greater hero on the night than Oakes. His pace and enterprising play ripped Newcastle's defence to shreds.'

'LUTON ENJOY YEAR OF THE UNDERDOG' was the headline in the *Daily Telegraph* as the Hatters matched the feats of Bolton and Oxford. Reporter John Ley focused on this fact by saying 'Kevin Keegan's side departed



John Hartson sets the Town on the road to glory with the opening goal...

the FA Cup to join the growing litany of Premiership victims. They began the day as second favourites but left Bedfordshire comprehensively beaten.'

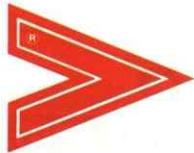
'MIGHTY OAKES FELLS KEEGAN' was the eye-catching heading in *The Guardian*, where Russell Thomas angled his story around the impressive youngsters and experienced heads at the club. 'Luton earned a deserved trip to Cardiff in round five. Fittingly, an 18-year-old Welshman, John Hartson, set them on the road with a coolly taken 16th-minute opener. Luton have a fascinating assortment of youth and experience, superbly marshalled by captain Trevor Peake.'

Finally, the *Daily Express* rounded off the lavish praise by focusing on the Hartson/Wales/Cardiff connection. 'John Hartson knocked Kevin Keegan's Newcastle out of the Cup', was Steve Curry's introduction. 'and set up a family reunion back home in Wales. The 18-year-old Swansea lad scored the goal which ignited this inspired replay victory by David Pleat's side. He set the tone for a night of high drama and purring action.'



...And the media attention is already firmly focused on him as he leaves the pitch.

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# Fans' Forum



## GREETINGS FROM DERRY

Dear Sir,

I am writing to express my thanks to David Pleat for taking the time to meet my father and I when Luton Town came over to play their friendly with Derry City last month.

Although Luton were beaten 1-0, it was a highly enjoyable game played in good spirit and if any team was to beat Luton, I'd rather it was that of my adopted home town, Derry!

This was the first time I had seen Luton play live, as I left England in 1968 when I was four years old, and their visit this year coincided with my birthday!

Once again, many thanks and good luck for the rest of the season.

Brian McMonagle, 14 Benevenagh Gardens,  
Creggan, Derry, N. Ireland.



*Brian (left) and his father Charlie, who used to work at Vauxhall Motors, meet David Pleat on January 11.*

## A GREAT EVENING HAD BY ALL

Dear Sir,

I had to write in to say what a great evening was had by my friends and I at the game with Newcastle last week. It was great to see a big crowd at Kenilworth Road again and with the game being an FA Cup tie, the occasion had a great feel to it. Despite the intimidating 'Geordie' presence, the atmosphere was light hearted and all players came out of the game with credit. A great advert for British football.

Dave Challis, 139 Bronte Paths, Stevenage,  
Herts SG2 7PG.

Everyone at Luton Town was saddened by the death of loyal Town supporter Cecil Henry Creed, who passed away on January 28, 1994. A season ticket holder for 50 years, our thoughts are with Cecil's wife Anne and his children.

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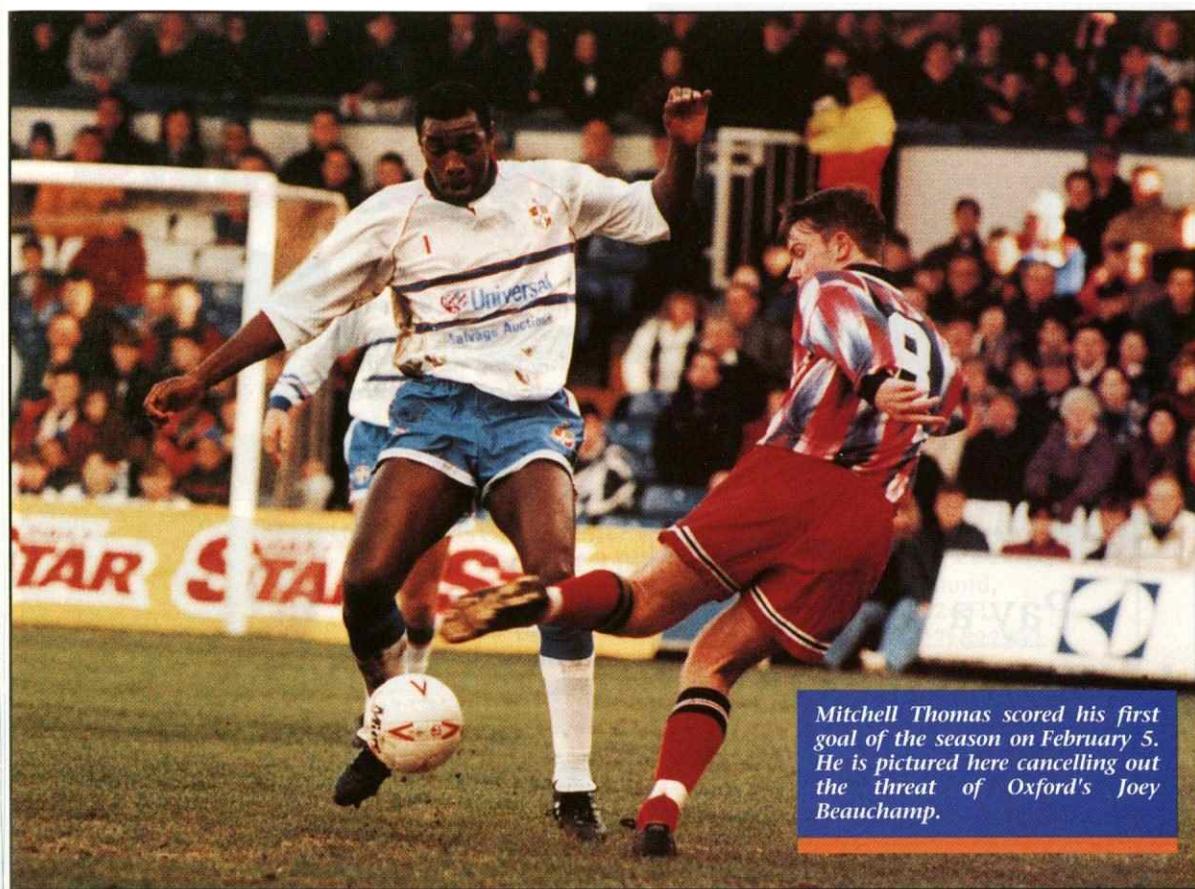
# Action Replay

From: Kenilworth Road  
Date: February 5, 1994  
LUTON TOWN 3  
(Oakes, Thomas, Thorpe)  
OXFORD UNITED 0  
Attendance: 7,366

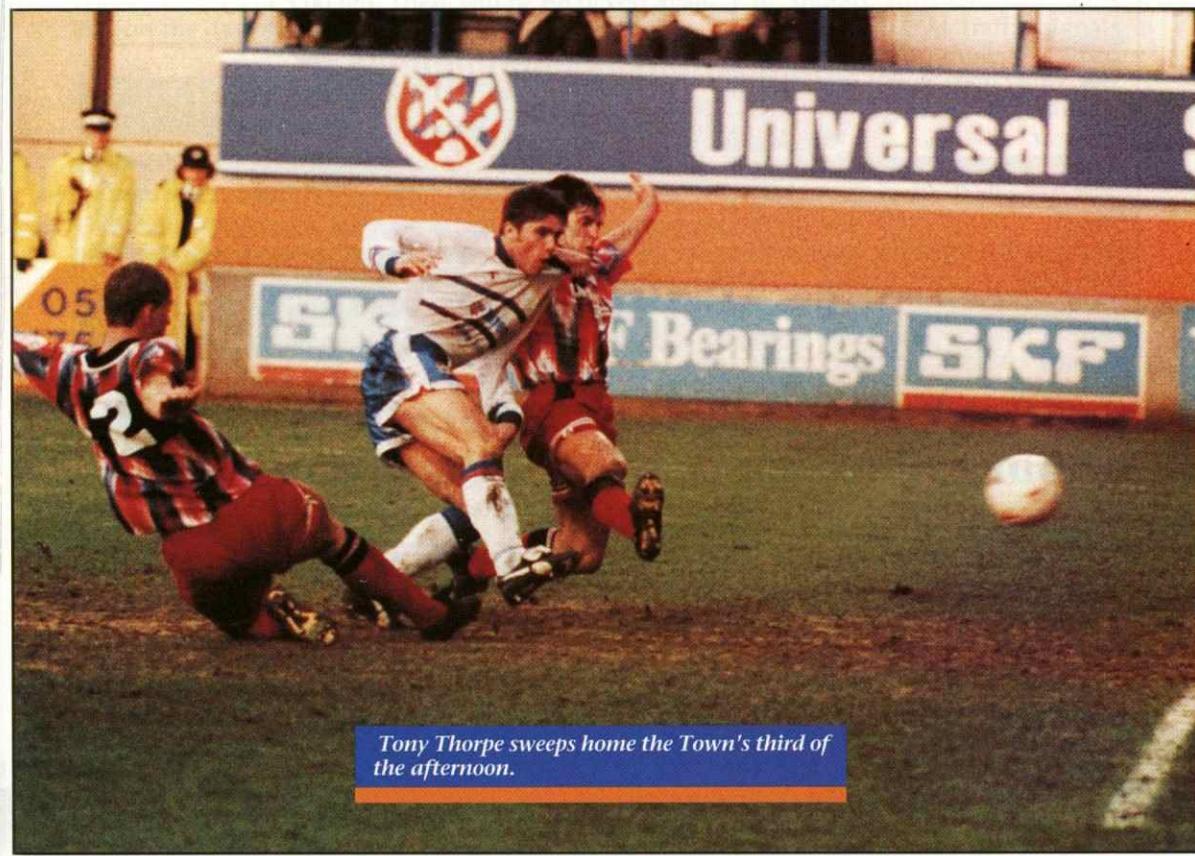
PICTURES BY JOSH LEVY, APEX PHOTOGRAPHY



*Alan Harper congratulates Scott Oakes on his opening 25-yard strike against Oxford, his second 'super strike' in consecutive games at Kenilworth Road.*



*Mitchell Thomas scored his first goal of the season on February 5. He is pictured here cancelling out the threat of Oxford's Joey Beauchamp.*



*Tony Thorpe sweeps home the Town's third of the afternoon.*

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# Ticket Office news update



BY CHERRY NEWBERY

## Luton Town v Sunderland

ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE  
Saturday, February 26, 1994 - Kick-off 3.00 pm

Tickets for this match are now on sale at normal league prices. Normal guesting facilities apply.

## Nottingham Forest v Luton Town

ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE  
Saturday, March 5, 1994 - Kick-off 3.00 pm

**THIS IS AN ALL TICKET MATCH FOR LUTON SUPPORTERS SEATS ONLY** are priced at £12.00 (no concessions) and are available from the Ticket Office in Kenilworth Road until Friday, March 4 at 5.00 pm. There will be no tickets available on the day of the match.

## Luton Town v Middlesbrough

ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE  
Saturday, March 12, 1994 - Kick-off 3.00 pm

Tickets for this match are now on sale at the discounted price. Normal guesting facilities apply.

## Bolton Wanderers v Luton Town

ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE  
Tuesday, March 15, 1994 - Kick-off 7.45 pm

Tickets for this match are only available at Bolton on the day of the game. Seating is priced at £10.00 (no concessions) Standing is priced at £7.50 (no concessions)

## Ticket Office Hours

Monday - Friday 10 am - 5pm.

Non-Match Saturdays 10 am - 1pm.

Match Saturdays 9am - kick off, after the match 4.45 pm - 5.15 pm.

For bookings, membership and enquiries, ring the Ticket Office on (0582) 416976. Supporters wishing to order by credit card can do so by using the 24-hour Credit Card Hotline on (0582) 30748.

## Travelling to...

### Nottingham Forest

Address: City Ground,  
Nottingham NG2 5FL.  
Telephone: (0602) 822202.

Take the M1 north to junction 24. Follow signs Nottingham south (A453). In 7.6 miles branch left (signs Grantham A52) then at roundabout take 1st exit B679. Follow signs West Bridgford (over mini-roundabout) then in 1.3 miles at traffic signals, turn left A60 (signs Nottingham). At traffic signals turn right (A6250) into Radcliffe Road then turn left into Colwick Road for ground.

### Bolton Wanderers

Address: Burnden Park,  
Bolton BL3 2QR.  
Telephone: (0204) 389200.

Take the M1 north to junction 19. Branch left to join the M6 (signs North West then Preston) to junction 21A. Branch left (signs Leeds) to join M62 to junction 14. Branch left (signs Bolton) to join M61. In 2.1 miles forward take the A666 to leave motorway. In 1.8 miles branch left (B6536) and at the end turn left. At T-junction turn right into Manchester Road the right again into Croft Lane for ground.

Directions courtesy of the  
Automobile Association.

# Spotlight on tonight's visitors



## PORTSMOUTH F.C. 1993-94

■ Two seasons of desperate near misses appear to have taken their toll on Portsmouth this term, as Jim Smith's men have failed to find consistency in the league. In 1991-92 Pompey reached the semi-finals of the FA Cup for the first time in 43 years, only to lose on penalties in a nail-biting replay against Liverpool at Villa Park. Youngsters such as Darren Anderton, Kit Symons and Andy Awford came under the spotlight, and it was no surprise when Anderton left for Tottenham Hotspur in a £2 million deal during that close season.

■ If that wasn't enough for the Pompey fans to swallow, automatic promotion to the Premiership was missed last season by just one goal in a dramatic final Saturday of the season. Although the club finished level on points with West Ham, the Hammers secured promotion courtesy of a single goal. That left Portsmouth to contend with the play-offs, and they succumbed to Leicester City who, in fact, had finished the season 12 points behind Pompey.

■ As season 1993-94 approached, the club also had to come to terms without the potent goalscoring talents of Guy Whittingham who left for Aston Villa in a £1 million deal. With 47 league and cup goals in 56 games last season, Guy broke the club's goalscoring records and his replacement, John Durnin, has since found it difficult to

match such feats following his arrival from Oxford United.

■ At the time of writing, Pompey lie in 15th position in the league table, having won just three games away from home. Their 3-1 defeat at Tranmere Rovers on February 11 was the first time they had scored in 11 hours of football. They have, however, shown glimpses of their true capabilities this season, with creditable draws against Premiership giants Blackburn (3-3) and Manchester United (2-2) in the FA Cup and League Cup respectively. Unfortunately, they lost both replays at Fratton Park.

■ Pompey will be looking to repeat their 4-1 win at Kenilworth Road in the league last season, to put their play-off aspirations back on track. According to defender Jon Gittens, they can still gain promotion this season. "All we need to do is put together a run of five or six games to give ourselves a chance," he said. "We are creating a lot at the moment without actually putting the ball in the net. All we need is a little bit of luck. That would lift both the players and the supporters."

■ Portsmouth's FA Cup semi-final appearance was the closest they had come since winning the trophy in 1939. They also won the Division One championship in 1949 and 1950; the Division Three (S) crown in 1924; and the Division Three title in 1962 and 1983.



Back row (left to right): Mark Chamberlain, Mark Blake, Lee Russell, Andy Awford, Mark Kelly, Darryl Powell, Ray Daniel.  
Middle row (left to right): Mike Bailey (reserve team manager), Graham Paddon (assistant manager), Chris Burns, Shaun Gale, Brian Horne, Alan Knight, Guy Butters, Kit Symons, Neil Sillett (physiotherapist), Gordon Neave (kit man).  
Front row (left to right): Paul Hall, Mark Stimson, Shaun Murray, Paul Walsh, Bjorn Kristensen, Jim Smith (manager), Lee Chapman (now West Ham United), Warren Neill, Alan McLoughlin, Roy Young, John Durnin, Jon Gittens.

## VISITORS ON PARADE

**ALAN KNIGHT** (goalkeeper) - Currently Pompey's longest-serving player, Alan joined the club as an apprentice in 1977. He has represented Portsmouth in every division of the Football League and has represented England at youth and under-21 levels.

**JON GITTENS** (defender) - Jon joined Pompey last summer after being released from Middlesbrough. He started his career on the south coast with Southampton in 1985 before moving to Swindon Town for £40,000 in 1987. He returned to The Dell for £400,000 four years later, but failed to establish himself in the first-team and moved to Middlesbrough, whom he helped to the Premiership.

**RAY DANIEL** (defender) - An £80,000 signing from Cardiff in 1990, Ray returned to the Pompey side last season after a long spell out with injury. He started his career at Luton Town before spells at Gillingham and Hull City.

**TONY DOBSON** (defender) - A strong and robust left-back, Tony joined Coventry City as an apprentice in 1985 and made his league debut a year later. An England under-21 international, he joined Blackburn Rovers for £300,000 in 1991, before moving to Pompey last year.

**ANDY AWFORD** (defender) - A former Pompey apprentice, Andy has represented England at youth and under-21 levels. Capable at playing at sweeper or centre-back, he made his league debut against Crystal Palace in 1989, aged 16.

**KIT SYMONS** (defender) - A former Fratton Park apprentice, Kit is a full Wales international. He made his debut in 1989 and is one of the most sought after young defenders in the First Division.

**WARREN NEILL** (defender) - Warren arrived at Fratton Park from QPR for £110,000 in 1988. He made his debut for the London side in 1980 and went on to make over 180 appearances for Rangers, winning Division Two and FA Cup runners-up medals in the process.

**ALAN MCLOUGHLIN** (midfield) - A former Manchester United apprentice, Alan started his career with Swindon Town. He moved to Southampton for £1 million in 1990, but failed to establish himself at The Dell. He joined Pompey for £400,000 in March 1992. This season he has established himself as a goalscoring midfielder, scoring against United and Portsmouth in this season's cup competitions.

**MARK BLAKE** (midfield) - Mark joined Aston Villa from school and made his league debut against the Hatters in 1989. An England under-21 international, he failed to command a regular place at Villa Park and joined Pompey last summer as part of the deal which took Guy Whittingham to Villa. He has suffered this season with injury, but now appears to be over his problems.

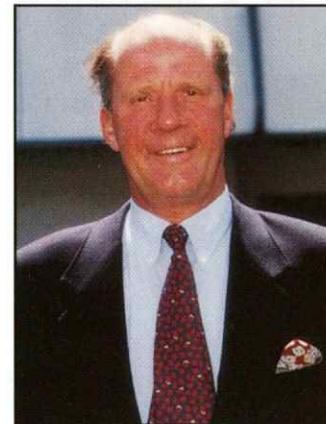
**BJORN KRISTENSEN** (midfield) - 'Benny' joined Portsmouth from Newcastle United in March 1993 for £100,000. He began his career at home in Denmark with Aarhus and won league and cup honours with the club as well as a host of international caps. He was signed by Jim Smith, for Newcastle, for £240,000 in 1989.

**PAUL WALSH** (forward) - Club captain, Paul joined Portsmouth during last summer for £400,000. An England international, he started his career at Charlton before moving to Luton Town in 1982. Liverpool captured his signature in 1984 for £750,000 and he moved to Spurs three years later.

**GERRY CREANEY** (forward) - Gerry joined Portsmouth for a club record fee of £500,000 towards the end of last year. A Scottish youth, under-21 and full international, he enjoyed a fair degree of success at Parkhead and will be hoping for the same with Portsmouth.

**JOHN DURNIN** (forward) - John joined Portsmouth from Oxford United last summer as a replacement for Guy Whittingham. He started his career with Liverpool before joining United for £250,000 in 1988. He has good memories of facing Luton Town: scoring four goals against the Town, at the Manor Ground, last season.

## MEET THE BOSS



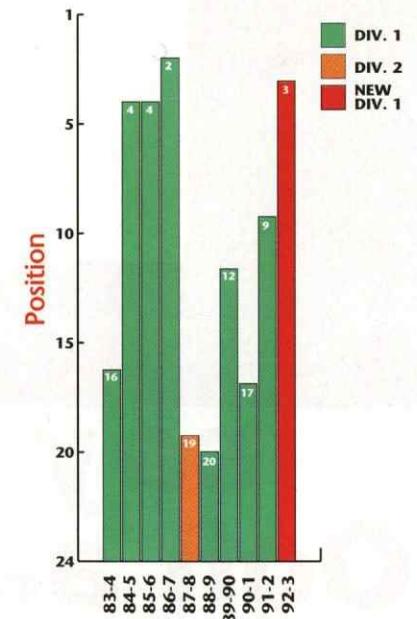
Jim Smith started his playing career as a wing-half with Sheffield United in 1956, before enjoying spells at Aldershot, Halifax and Lincoln City.

After spending three years as player-manager with Colchester, who he took into the Third Division in 1973-74, Jim joined Blackburn and later Birmingham City.

In March 1982, after guiding Birmingham into the First Division, Jim took the reins at Oxford United. Within two seasons he had taken the club into the First Division, via the Third and Second Division championships.

He then moved to QPR, who he took to the final of the 1986 Milk Cup Final, before moving to Newcastle in 1988. After internal conflict and a crippling injury list, he resigned in March 1991 to take control at Fratton Park. Following cup disappointment in 1992, he led Pompey on the promotion trail last season, with the side narrowly missing out on the Premiership after finishing third.

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# HARRY OF THE HATTERS



## JUNIOR HATTERS

**A** hearty welcome to the players officials and supporters of Portsmouth to Kenilworth Road this evening. We hope you enjoy the game which is always exciting whenever we meet.

We are getting used to excitement here at Luton and all those Junior Hatters who managed to attend the game with Newcastle United will vouch for that.

It was a brilliant time for filling up your autograph books too, with players like Ruel Fox, Andy Cole and Peter Beardsley happy to stop and chat. We saw some famous past players like Dave Watson, who earned many caps for England, our own favourite Ricky Hill, Kevin Keegan of course and it was rumoured ex-England manager Graham Taylor was also amongst the crowd.

Hope you are all enjoying the Junior Hatters activities arranged so far. Don't forget to try our special family evenings at Pizza Hut Dunstable and Pizza Hut Luton on Wednesday nights where you can eat a tasty meal and meet our players as well.

Look out for the next issue of the 'Harry of the Hatters' newsletter which will be coming out soon and please write in with your comments and suggestions.

*And finally, keep those tonsils wobbling, 'Come on you Hatters!'*

## MATCH DAY MASCOT



Name: Nairon Janes  
 Date of Birth: 5.5.82  
 School attended: Streetfield Middle School  
 Hobbies: Football and swimming  
 Favourite Luton player: Scott Oakes

Who accompanies you to Luton matches: My Dad

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## JUNIOR HATTERS TRAVEL

Travel arrangements for the away games at Nottingham Forest and Barnsley are as follows:

5.3.94 Nottingham Forest - depart Kenilworth Road forecourt: 12.00 mid-day. Arrive home approximately 7.00 pm.

26.3.94 Barnsley - depart Kenilworth Road forecourt: 11.00 am. Arrive home approximately 8.15 pm.

The price for all matches this season has been fixed at £5.00 for Junior Hatters and £8.00 for accompanying adults (price includes tickets for the match). Booking and payment can be made via the Ticket Office up to four days prior to the match.

## JUNIOR HATTERS' BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

February 16-25: Jessica Corradine, Michael Mead, Louis Fry, Kristopher Parker, Darren Dudley, Neil Marshall, Philip Cuff, Andrew Crick, James Taylor, Paul Coles, Barry Laggan, Mark Scaife, Dawn Marshall, Sarah Nolan, Stephen Hyde, Matthew Riley, Thomas Lane, Laura Smith, Kevin Smith, James Bennett, Emily Horn, Stuart Cooper, James Cobb, Yasmin Newman, Alex MacCaulay, Hannah Twitchen, Sarah Harper, Shane Murphy, Charlotte Godden, Matthew Redmond, Stephen Barringer, Karl Barton, Ben Collier, Daniel Pilgrim, Simon Wright, Richard Wheeler, Natasha Barringer, Stephen White, Jade Coleman, Marcus Perch, Jennifer Tysoe, Christopher Caiulo, Katy Hann, Darren Cook, Kevin Laggan, Craig Nicoll, Andrew Meek, Stephen Leaning, John Dillnutt, Alan Woollard, Christian hanson, Nico Disalvo, Darryl Bannan, Matthew Nolan.

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Much of this has been achieved with the help of the Football Trust. As part of its commitment to Football, The Trust has granted £4M to set up the National Football and Community Development Scheme.

Bringing club and community together, Trust-backed initiatives have provided a variety of local amenities, including:

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- Support for women's football
- Facilities for people with disabilities

The Football Trust is helping the game at all levels.



THE FOOTBALL TRUST  
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## THE LAST TIME WE MET

Heroics by Juergen Sommer in the Luton goal ensured a close and exciting game at Fratton Park back in August. He made a number of memorable saves, most notably from Lee Chapman and Alan McLoughlin, to earn the man-of-the-match tag by the local press contingent present.

He was, however, beaten in the 38th minute when a slip by Kerry Dixon (below) let in Pompey debutant Paul Hall to score the only goal of the game. The Town's best effort came from Scott Oakes (above) who shot narrowly wide in the opening minutes of the match.

Said Sommer after the game: "It was hot out there and the balls just kept coming back. But despite the goal, I was pleased with my individual performance." One man who was not so happy after the game was Kerry Dixon. "I am gutted," he said. "The mistake was just one of those things and I tried so hard to make amends later."

Town team: Sommer, James, Peake, Dreyer, Johnson, Telfer, Hughes, Preece, Oakes, Williams, Dixon. Subs: Houghton, Benjamin, Petterson.

Pompey team: Knight, Neill, Symons, Awford, Stimson, Hall, McLoughlin, Brake, Burns, Chapman, Walsh. Subs: Aspinall, Price, Horne.



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## Neville Ovenden Football Combination Season 1993-94

Wed	18 Aug	West Ham United	4-1
Wed	25 Aug	Queens Park Rangers	4-2
Wed	1 Sept	Watford	5-1
Wed	8 Sept	Wimbledon	1-1
Thu	16 Sept	Norwich City	2-3
Wed	22 Sept	Tottenham Hotspur	1-2
Mon	27 Sept	Langford (BPC)	2-1
Wed	29 Sept	Oxford United	4-3
Wed	6 Oct	Portsmouth	4-2
Wed	13 Oct	Swindon Town	2-1
Tue	19 Oct	Watford	2-4
Wed	27 Oct	Southampton	1-3
Mon	1 Nov	Queens Park Rangers	1-3
Wed	10 Nov	Southampton	1-1
Wed	17 Nov	Arsenal	1-1
Wed	24 Nov	Portsmouth	0-1
Mon	29 Nov	Oxford United	0-4
Fri	3 Dec	Crystal Palace	0-1
Mon	6 Dec	Stotfold (BPC2)	1-0
Tue	14 Dec	Arsenal	3-2
Fri	17 Dec	Norwich City	1-4
Mon	17 Jan	Barton Rovers (BPC3)	1-0
Wed	19 Jan	Bristol Rovers	1-0
Mon	24 Jan	Chelsea	1-5
Wed	2 Feb	Ipswich Town	2-2
Wed	9 Feb	Brighton & Hove Albion	1-1
Mon	21 Feb	Millwall	1-1
Wed	2 Mar	Brighton & Hove Albion	
Tue	8 Mar	West Ham United	
Wed	16 Mar	Bristol Rovers	
Wed	23 Mar	Millwall	
Mon	28 Mar	Charlton Athletic	
Tue	5 Apr	Crystal Palace	
Tue	12 Apr	Bristol City	
Mon	18 Apr	Swindon Town	
Sat	23 Apr	Tottenham Hotspur	
Mon	2 May	Bristol City	
Wed	4 May	Charlton Athletic	

T.B.A. Wimbledon and Ipswich Town (both away).  
Chelsea Home T.B.A.

## Neville Ovenden Football Combination League Table

(up to and including 5.2.94)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	22	15	5	2	52	21	50
Norwich City	24	10	7	7	45	36	37
Southampton	23	9	8	6	33	34	35
Arsenal	24	10	4	10	50	45	34
Millwall	23	9	6	8	42	40	33
Swindon Town	18	10	1	7	27	22	31
Oxford United	24	7	9	8	40	38	30
Tottenham Hotspur	20	8	5	7	38	26	29
Ipswich Town	19	8	4	7	34	32	28
<b>LUTON TOWN</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>28</b>
West Ham United	18	7	6	5	27	22	27
Bristol Rovers	21	6	9	6	26	28	27
Q.P.R.	20	8	3	9	28	32	27
Wimbledon	23	6	9	8	25	36	27
Crystal Palace	22	6	8	8	28	30	26
Brighton & H.A.	18	6	7	5	23	17	25
Portsmouth	23	5	8	10	26	40	23
Bristol City	18	5	4	9	21	41	19
Watford	19	4	5	10	30	41	17
Charlton Athletic	15	4	2	9	16	24	14

# RESERVES

## AUNGER SCORES IN GOOD DRAW AGAINST THE SEAGULLS

Brighton 1  
Luton Town 1  
Neville Ovenden Football Combination, Thursday, 10 February, 1994.

The Hatters' reserves had to endure a frustrating journey down to this fixture, played at Bognor where they arrived only 35 minutes before the kick-off. But once they had recovered, Wayne Turner's team played a full part in an open and exciting game against a team coached by Jimmy Case. "I was quite pleased with the overall display," said Wayne. "We had done a lot of work with our front players on their movement and it paid off with the goal, scored by Geoff Aunger from a cross by Justin Gentle. "We started well and for 25 minutes we created scoring opportunities. But they scored against the run of play from the rebound after a free-kick. After that, we lost our way for a while, but we regrouped at half-time and start-

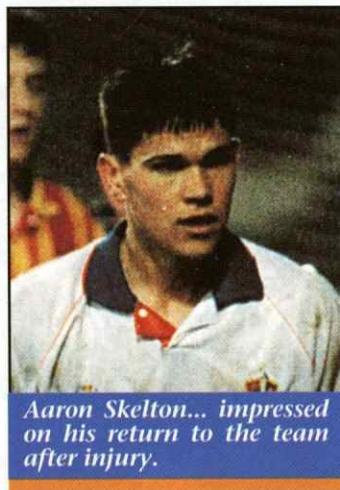


Geoff Aunger... claimed a well-deserved equaliser.

ed well again in the second half and fully deserved our equaliser." Wayne reported that the Brighton side included five or six players with first team experience and that the second half produced plenty of exciting football. "It was a hard-fought game and I thought a draw was a fair result," he said.

He reserved special praise for the encouraging return to the team of Aaron Skelton who, in his first game since his long injury lay-off, played for an hour. "I thought he did well. It was good to see him back in action," said Wayne. Marvin Johnson and David Greene were both also playing, in their third appearances since returning after injury, and they performed well too, according to Wayne, "It was good to see them playing with confidence and I thought it was a good game. We had shots from Geoff Aunger and 'Billy' Williams which hit the woodwork and I am sure the spectators at Bognor enjoyed it."

**Team:** Petterson, Philp, Greene, Johnson, Rioch, Gentle, Skelton, Ryan, Houghton, Williams, Aunger 1, Subs: Woolgar, Power.

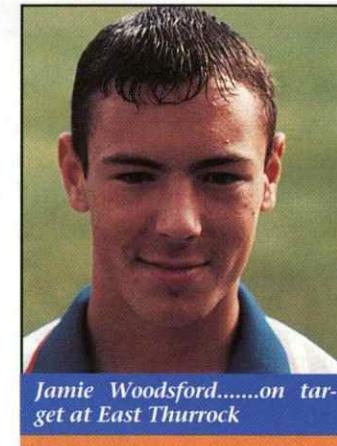


Aaron Skelton... impressed on his return to the team after injury.

a  
n  
d



BY WAYNE TURNER  
AND TERRY WESTLEY



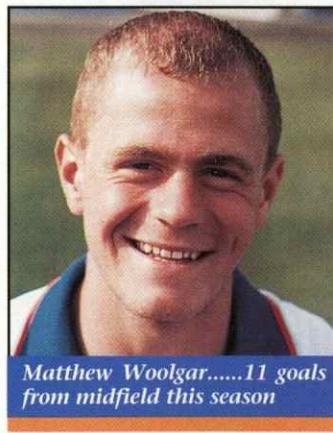
Jamie Woodsford.....on target at East Thurrock

## BACK ON TRACK WITH A RESOUNDING VICTORY

Luton Town 4  
Bristol City 0  
South East Counties League Division Two, Saturday, February 5, 1994.

Following two successive 4-1 defeats, Terry Westley's side showed great character to win this encounter against, it must be said, one of the weaker sides in the division. Midfielder Matthew Woolgar took his total for the season to 11 and Westley was pleased with the way the defence responded after their recent poor performances. "We had worked with the back four all week and they looked much stronger in this game," he added. "We went two goals up within 20 minutes and were coasting. We then started to get sloppy at times and missed the opportunity to score more than the four goals we ended up with. Nevertheless, it was pleasing to get back to winning ways."

**Team:** Davis, Wilmott, Jukes, Simpson, Chenery, Goodridge, Power 1, Woolgar 2, Gibb, Butler 1, Woodsford. Subs: Issott, Turner.



Matthew Woolgar.....11 goals from midfield this season

# YOUTH

## South East Counties League Division Two Season 1993-94

Sat 14 Aug	Swindon Town	1-1
Sat 21 Aug	Crystal Palace	1-1
Sat 28 Aug	Reading	1-2
Sat 4 Sept	Wimbledon	1-0
Sat 11 Sept	Tottenham Hotspur	0-1
Wed 15 Sept	West Ham United (SJFC1)	1-1
Sat 18 Sept	Charlton Athletic (SECLC1)	3-1
Sat 25 Sept	Brighton & Hove Albion	2-3
Sat 2 Oct	Oxford United	1-1
Mon 11 Oct	West Ham United (SFJC1R)	3-1
Sat 16 Oct	Brentford	1-1
Sat 23 Oct	Chelsea (SECLC2)	2-5
Tue 26 Oct	Derby County (FAYC1)	1-1
Sat 30 Oct	Bournemouth	2-1
Thu 4 Nov	Cambridge City (EJC1)	4-1
Sat 6 Nov	Southampton	2-1
Sat 13 Nov	Colchester United	5-3
Tue 16 Nov	Derby County (FAYC1R)	1-1
Sat 20 Nov	Bristol Rovers	1-0
Tue 23 Nov	Arsenal (SUFC2)	1-2
Wed 1 Dec	Derby County (FAYC1, 2R)	0-1
Sat 4 Dec	Bristol Rovers	0-5
Sat 11 Dec	Swindon Town	2-0
Sat 18 Dec	Crystal Palace	2-1
Sat 1 Jan	Reading	2-1
Sat 22 Jan	Brighton & Hove Albion	1-4
Sat 29 Jan	Oxford United	1-4
Sat 5 Feb	Bristol City	4-0
Mon 7 Feb	East Thurrock (EJC2)	2-1
Sat 12 Feb	Brentford	1-4
Sat 19 Feb	Bournemouth	
Sat 26 Feb	Southampton	
Sat 5 Mar	Colchester United	

T.B.A. Bristol City, Wimbledon, Tottenham (all away)

## South East Counties League Division Two Table

(up to and including 5.2.94)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Crystal Palace	17	9	4	4	33	22	22
Brentford	19	8	6	5	28	21	22
<b>LUTON TOWN</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>
Swindon Town	17	9	3	5	35	20	21
Oxford United	17	8	4	5	34	23	20
Wimbledon	18	10	0	8	45	35	20
Reading	16	7	5	4	29	24	19
Bristol Rovers	19	8	3	8	33	33	19
Brighton & H.A.	21	7	5	9	32	39	19
Tottenham Hotspur	18	7	2	9	26	35	16
Colchester United	21	6	4	11	28	45	16
Bournemouth	18	7	1	10	30	36	15
Southampton	17	5	4	8	18	20	14
Bristol City	17	3	3	11	18	36	9

# Aaron Skelton: on the way back after a 'nightmare' six months



## PLAYER INTERVIEW

**T**own youngster Aaron Skelton was all set to make 1993-94 the season in which he would make a claim for a regular first-team place. It started brightly enough, with inclusion for the first-team's pre-season trip to Scotland, but then disaster struck...

Aaron caught his studs in the ground during a light-hearted 5-a-side training session in Scotland and he felt a tremendous pain fire up his leg. Unknown to him at the time he had, in fact, ruptured a thigh muscle. "It felt like someone had shot me in the leg," he recalled. "I was in agony. A local surgeon checked out the extent of the injury and he said I had ruptured a thigh muscle. There was talk of an operation to help heal the damage at first, but in the end it was decided that a three month lay-off was best."

Following an impressive 1992-93 season in Terry Westley's youth team, Aaron was hoping to continue his progression this term, and following his inclusion in the first tour match against St Johnstone, hopes were high. The injury, therefore, was devastating news for the 19-year-old from Welwyn Garden City, who had to start all over again.

"It was so frustrating just sitting watching the players train and play matches," he continued. "It was important to get off to a good start this season, so to find out that I would be out for three months was hard to take."

"I had also been training with the England under-18 squad, the one which won the European Championship last season, which made it all doubly disappointing."

His long, painful wait has finally come to an end. Aaron returned to full training two weeks ago which, he admits, was tough going. He is gradually finding his fitness and his first test was inclusion in the Town's reserve side which played at Brighton 12 days ago.

"I just want to ease myself back in," he added. "I have done plenty of body work, but there is nothing like playing to get my fitness

back. You never lose your natural skill, just the fitness. So, once I have re-discovered that, I should be well on the road to full recovery."

"Luckily, I am only young, so I have plenty of time on my side to get back in with the Luton first-team squad. I have not set myself any targets, but to be involved by the end of the season would be a nice bonus."

Aaron has been at Luton since he was 13 years old. He attended the club's School of Excellence backed by Vauxhall, before signing schoolboy forms at the age of 16. He is hoping to follow the long line of youngsters to have progressed through the ranks at Kenilworth Road and into the first-team. John Hartson and Matthew Woolgar have both been involved at some stage this season, and Aaron believes their involvement will help him settle in.

**"IT FELT LIKE SOMEONE HAD SHOT ME IN THE LEG. I WAS IN AGONY"**

"We all played together in the youth team last season, so I can ask, particularly John, if I need any advice. It helps having young players around in the first-team squad. It helps settle you in because you know how they play, their capabilities and their problems."

"Playing more and more reserve games also helps. I am learning from the players around me all the time. You can never stop learning at my age."



# Re-vitalised Town silence the Pompey chimes



BACK TRACKING BY ROGER WASH

**R**emember season 1987/88? It proved to be our most successful to date. However, when we visited Fratton Park in the early weeks of the campaign, Wembley glory and a five league campaign seemed a long way off.

Portsmouth were back in Division One for the first time since 1959 and by the time of our meeting at Fratton Park on October 10, were sitting happily in mid-table. We, on the other hand, were sliding down the table with only two wins from ten starts.

Miserable weather kept the crowd down to 12,391 - the lowest of the season at Fratton Park - and it was Portsmouth who always looked the likely winners. Kevin Dillon opened the scoring in the 55th minute when he hammered in a shot which deceived Luton goalkeeper Les Sealey and went in off a post.

Dillon was on target again 20 minutes later, from the penalty spot, when former Luton player Vince Hilaire took a tumble in the area. The game was wrapped up just before the end when Paul Mariner was left with a free header to put the result beyond doubt.

Mick Harford, mulling over a £1 million transfer bid from West Ham, scored a consolation from a hotly disputed penalty in injury time but that mattered little as the local press, as well as chairman David Evans, were scathing when talking about teams display. Comments ranging from 'utterly depressed' to 'players not pulling their weight' filled the papers and manager Ray Harford came under pressure for the first time.

The Town then put together a run of nine wins and only three defeats from the next 14 games. It saw the team rise up to eighth position in the table passing Portsmouth on the way. By the time of the return against Pompey on March 29, the Town had entered into their marathon attempt at winning all three domestic cup competitions and were falling behind with league fixtures: They had played

only seven league games since the turn of the year and had not played a game at home for almost two months.

I seem to remember being a little worried at the time as, although we had plenty of games in hand, other teams were overtaking us as we seemed to be concentrating on the cups.

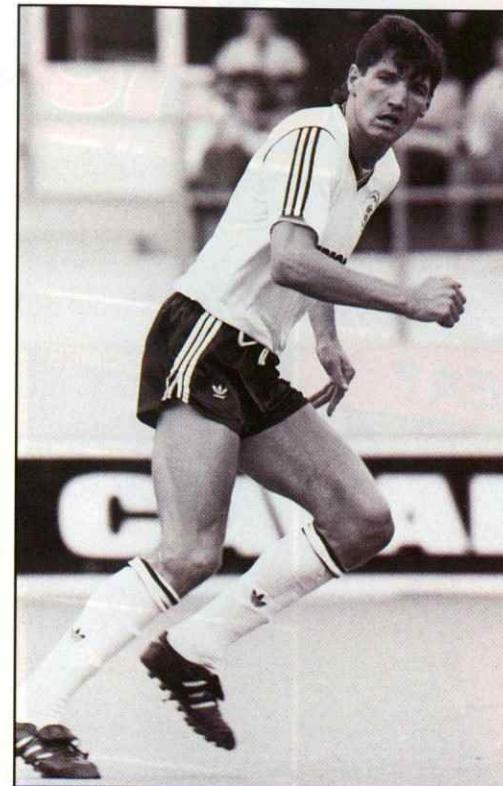
Only 6,710 turned up at Kenilworth Road for the league clash. This was explained by a mixture of expensive cup games and a pathetic performance in the Simod Cup final two days. We need not have worried, however, as Danny Wilson crashed home a 25-yard free kick in the eighth minute to settle the nerves.

Pompey did shock the Town by equalising, courtesy of that man Dillon again, shortly after half-time, but within 60 seconds Mark Stein had restored the Town's lead, heading home from a corner. Ten minutes later Paul Mariner, in attempting to mark Town captain Steve Foster, headed a beauty into his own net and the scoring was completed just before the end from the boot of Brian Stein, shortly after Pompey had missed from the penalty spot.

The Town lost only three home league games that season, finishing ninth as well as winning the Littlewoods Cup. What were we worried about?

## Previous Encounters

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Away	17	11	4	2	36	24
Home	18	4	6	8	20	31
Total	35	15	10	10	56	55



Mick Harford - on target against Pompey in 1987.

## DOWN THE YEARS

**5** 5 years - A solitary goal from skipper Steve Foster was enough to earn all three points as Middlesbrough were seen off at Kenilworth Road. The game marked the league debut of Dave Beaumont. (18/2/89).

**10** 10 years - Following a 5-0 thrashing at Kenilworth Road the previous week, a 0-0 draw against Liverpool was welcome indeed. (18/2/84).

**15** 15 years - Barry Silkman made his Luton debut in a hard-earned 2-1 home win over Blackburn. Alan West and Chris Turner were the second-half goalscorers after we went in at the interval 1-0 down. (24/2/79).

**20** 20 years - After the 4-0 thrashing at home to Leicester City in the FA Cup the previous week, the Town bounced back in style, seeing off Crystal Palace at Kenilworth Road. Jim Ryan (penalty) and Barry Butlin were the scorers.

## HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT LUTON TOWN

- ? Who was the young Pompey striker, partnering George Graham at the time, who later played for the Town?
- ? Who made a league debut for Portsmouth at 17 and became a Town player at 33?
- ? Who put four Pompey goals past the Town last season, and where is he now?

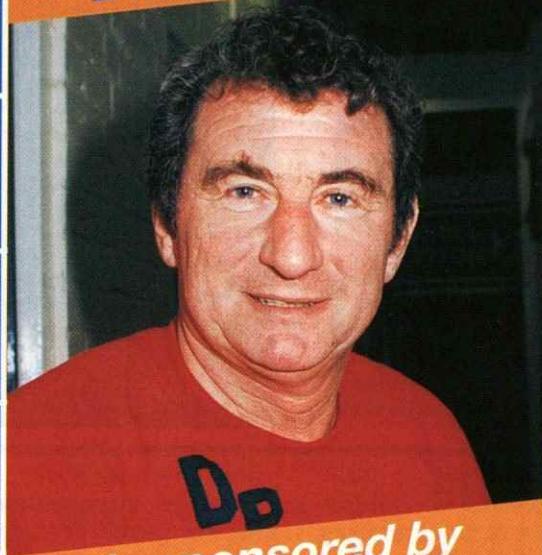
For the full Match Report, read —

Brian Swain's **SPORTSVIEW**  
IN THE **Luton News** AND **DUNSTABLE GAZETTE**



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## Oakes or French: Whose goal was the best we have seen?

GOLDEN GOALS AT KENILWORTH ROAD

**S**cott Oakes' goal against Derby County prompted many older supporters to recall similarly stunning strikes from the past. The names came rolling back: Dally Duncan, Billy Bingham, Gordon Turner, Bruce Rioch and Malcolm Macdonald. But did anyone score a better goal than that of Graham French in the home game against Mansfield in 1969? Club statistician Roger Wash reports.....

Having been asked by three Town fans for a 'memory-jerker' to remind them of the match against the Stags nearly 25 years ago, I have first to declare that I shall not be drawn into any arguments over the quality of the goals, but instead will recall the story of the night as I remember it. It is the safest way.

To set the scene: we were on the crest of a wave back in September, 1969. The Fourth Division championship had been won the previous May.

Crowds were back to the levels of the First Division days of ten years earlier and the team was unbeaten after seven games of the new season.

The attendance that evening was 19,315. The supporters packed on the terraces had hardly taken their places before the Town were down to 10 men.

A goalmouth melee ended with Alan Slough in the back of the net and punches being thrown. The referee, Malcolm Sinclair, emerged from the fray waving his note-book. He ordered crowd favourite Bruce Rioch off the pitch for a 'crime', it was later proved with the use of press photographs, he did not commit.

Bowed but not beaten, the remaining Luton players knuckled down to the task with a grim determination. Their determination paid off as they went one up after 20 minutes through a penalty expertly converted by left-winger Mike Harrison.

Mansfield, however, were in a lively mood too and they levelled the score soon after the half-time interval. When John Moore and captain Terry

Branston were forced to leave the pitch for treatment, they began to look the sharper team.

Then, as if to even things up, the referee sent off Phil Waller of Mansfield for a harmless tackle on Brian Lewis. Rejuvenated by this, the Town players tore into the Stags' defence, regaining the lead in the 69th minute with a Laurie Sheffield header.

More excitement followed when Lewis, chasing on to a Harrison pass, dribbled round two men, drew the goalkeeper and coolly stroked home the third goal to send the crowd wild.



Graham (second left) watches team-mate Terry Branston sign a match ball in April 1968. Also in attendance are Tony Read (far left) and Ray Whittaker (far right).

With 10 minutes to go — and the crowd still buzzing — came the moment which Scott Oakes has revived in the memories of so many Kenilworth Road regulars.

French, collecting the ball in his own penalty area, loped the length of the field, showed the ball to three defenders and then beat them all before hitting a low shot past Dave Hollins in the

Mansfield goal. It was a goal that you never forget.

That Mansfield scored again in the last minute mattered little. We only wanted to talk about THAT GOAL. Did we really see that?

Having been privileged to see both games, I can point to the off-the-ball running of Lewis, drawing defenders, in the first match, but counter it with the fact that French ran almost the full length of the pitch.

Oakes, on the other hand, did not have so far to run, but his finish was more explosive.

The only similarity, of which we are certain, is that they were both scored at the Kenilworth Road end. So, no arguments, please. It must be a tie... I rest my case!

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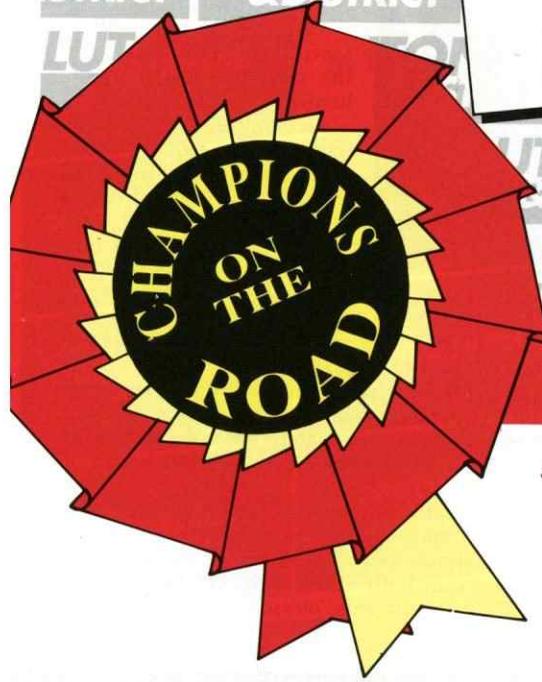
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# Cup success throws our division under the spotlight

# 1

NEWS ON ONE BY TIM COLLINGS

**J**ust what is it about our First Division this season which has put the cat among so many Premiership pigeons in the cup competitions? No sooner had the furore surrounding a week of FA Cup fourth round giant-killing passed by than Tranmere Rovers were at it again, moving within clear sight of a place in the Coca-Cola Cup final at Wembley...

So, Tranmere look like enjoying a trip to the Twin Towers. Their 3-1 victory over Aston Villa in the first leg of their Coca-Cola Cup semi-final was a truly rasping rah-rah night and makes them Merseyside's outstanding team of the moment. No wonder John King, their manager, was both happy and philosophical afterwards.

"The secret here is no secret really," he said. "I like to try and keep a footballing team together. Players who like to play enjoy sticking together when they can and we have a strong chairman too. That explains a lot, but the credit is due to the players and their attitude — although I was pretty disappointed with the goal we gave away.

"When our third went in, I thought that was wonderful. But to give them a goal keeps the tie alive and takes the shine off our result." Even with that unwelcome stain on their performance, Tranmere still came away from Prenton Park as favourites to meet Manchester United or Sheffield Wednesday in the final. Now wouldn't it be a coup if Tranmere went on and finished the job by hammering United at Wembley?

It may not sound that likely, but it could happen. Just read the FA Cup results from the fourth round. Who would have thought that Bolton would beat Arsenal (even after their miraculous feats against Liverpool last year and Everton in this season's third round) or that Charlton Athletic could travel to Blackburn and knock them cold? Even more unlikely was Oxford United's replay win over Leeds United at Elland Road. (Modesty prevents us crowing too much over our own success against Kevin Keegan's Newcastle United....)

By tonight, of course, we will know the outcome of the fifth round ties, but whatever the results, we all know how entertaining and successful our Division One teams can be and it is satisfying to see how well our old boys from Luton have been doing. Bolton, after all, are praised not only for their results, but also for the brand of football they play under Bruce Rioch, who, younger supporters may not be aware, played here at Kenilworth Road in the same team as David Pleat in the mid-1960's. So, too, did John Moore for that matter and Barry Fry was always around then as well.



Tranmere Rovers - the pride of Merseyside at present.

Fry is now at Birmingham City, of course, and not enjoying life anything like as much as he did by the seaside at Southend. A 2-1 defeat at Millwall was the latest in a line of disappointments. But Fry is anything but defeatist. "It's a terrible, terrible, terrible position to be in," he said. "But it's still basically in our hands whether we can get out of it and with the players I've got

becoming available, I feel confident we can improve and win enough games to stay in this division."

By comparison, Rioch is revelling in life at Bolton where the passing game, as taught at Kenilworth Road, flourishes anew. It spreads everywhere doesn't it? And don't forget the effects that another intelligent ex-Lutonian has had with his management efforts at Peterborough. Chris Turner only took over recently, but he has inspired a revival which has seen the Posh start living up to their nickname again. In fact, Posh might be a good name for the way most of us play in this division....

# Our words ring true as match day sponsorships blossom

## COMMERCIAL FOCUS

**A**fter the hectic build-up to our memorable and exciting cup win over Newcastle United, the Commercial Department has returned to something like normal for tonight's league match against Portsmouth.

A few weeks ago we wrote 'success on the field breeds success off it'. That has certainly been borne out, as we have had numerous enquiries from companies regarding executive sponsorships for matches for the remainder of the season.

It has been encouraging from our point of view that a lot of the enquiries have come from new companies who obviously see the association as a worthwhile commercial investment.

Finally, we wish to extend a warm welcome to Mr Fox who is in executive box 7 and to Mr A. Baringer in executive box 5.

For further details regarding our executive boxes, clubs suites or function rooms, contact the Commercial Department on (0582) 411622.

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Commercial Executive Gary Hooper is pictured with young guests in one of our highly-popular birthday boxes.

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