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ENTRÉE

A MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN JOHN MADEJSKI



I HOPE you all had a most enjoyable Christmas and that today we can continue the festivities.

Against Wolves eight days ago you supporters created an atmosphere of sheer enthusiasm and passion, the like of which I doubt has ever been experienced at Elm Park.

My fellow directors, the staff and players were moved by the depth of feeling coming from all parts of the ground. After the traumatic events of the previous few days it was an amazing demonstration of support for all that we are doing here.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your contribution to that most exciting occasion.

I would also like to thank all of the players - especially Mick Gooding, Jimmy Quinn, Adrian Williams and Jeff Hopkins - Dave Armstrong, Paul Turner, Ron Grant, Bill Henderson and everyone helping with team matters, along with all of the office staff for the extra effort that has been demanded in recent days. You have all been magnificent. Looking forward to 1995 we have to be clear on our objectives of Premiership football. With your backing, your enthusiasm and commitment, we will do everything in our power to bring the dream alive.

Get behind your team this afternoon, create the wonderful atmosphere that is now becoming special to Elm Park and cheer the players on to another great performance. See you again on Saturday when we take on Grimsby Town, and don't forget to bring another friend.

I wish you all a prosperous and happy New Year!

INSIDE NEWS

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ROYALS FACT FILE travel and ticket news

ROYALS GALLERY

WELCOME to LUTON TOWN

ARMSTRONG'S ARMY

AT FIRST GLANCE

SKIPPER'S SOAPBOX

NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW THAT

Cover Picture: Royal celebrations, picture by Andrew Evans

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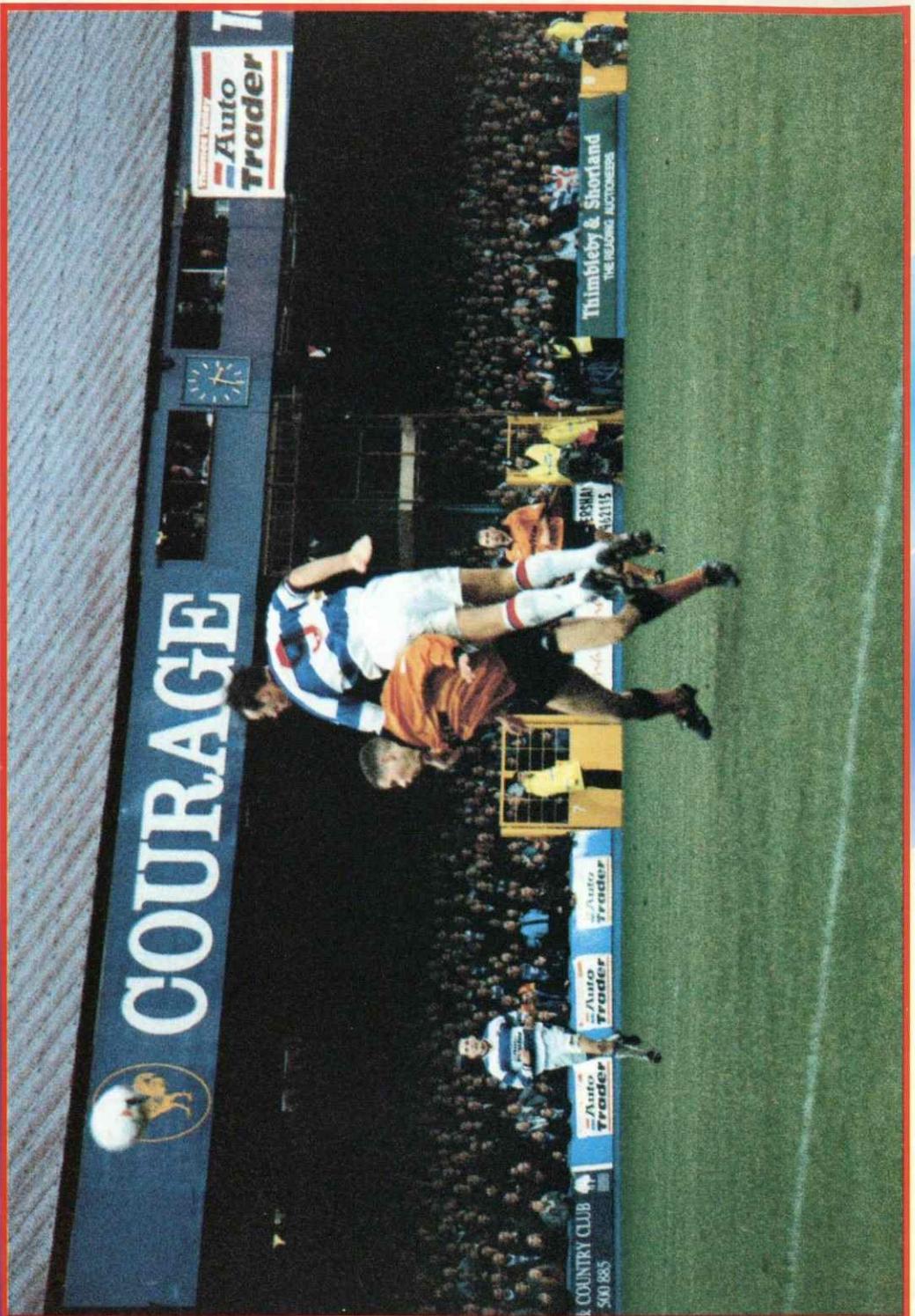
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Volume 49 Issue No. 14



The mighty Quinn soars above James Smith to give us the lead against Wolves. Picture: Andrew Evans.

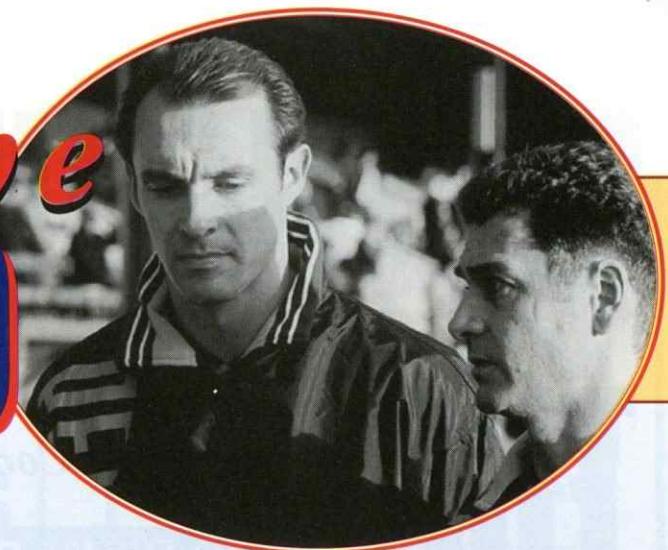
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FROM *the* TOP



Picture: Andy Batt, Reading Chronicle

with Mick Gooding and Jimmy Quinn

EVERYONE was in a state of shock when Mark McGhee and Colin Lee left the club so suddenly but obviously the show had to go on and we were happy to accept the responsibility when the chairman asked us to take over.

The lads were absolutely brilliant from the word go and, because they're a great bunch of professionals, they made it very easy for us to maintain the continuity so that the preparations for the Wolves game could go ahead as normal. The main thing we stressed to them was that, although everyone had the greatest respect for all that Mark and Colin achieved here, they were now gone and there was no point in dwelling on it.

There was no question of any panic because we were still the same players and we all know the style of play inside and out, so it was just a matter of concentrating on doing the things which have brought us success over the past couple of seasons. We also stressed that any potential new manager would probably be watching the game on the television, or might actually be at the ground, so it was important that individually everyone did themselves justice with the future in mind.

fired up

The lead-up to the game was also a little unusual, to say the least, for the two of us. Instead of simply taking care of our own fitness and form there were suddenly plenty of other things we had to get involved in.

Throughout our careers we've been used to finishing training and then going home to relax for a couple of hours with our feet up. But on the Thursday, for example, we didn't leave the ground till about 6 p.m. because we were making phone calls to try and get one or two players in on loan.

That situation continued last week when we were out and

about at times when normally we're not even heard, let alone seen.

Whatever the management situation had been nobody would have needed motivating to face Wolves anyway, because we felt we were desperately unlucky not to get a result up there on the first day of the season. Everyone was fired up and we knew it was time to put the record straight.

The only change we made was the decision to knock the ball forward a bit earlier to put pressure on the Wolves defence and unsettle them, particularly the big Dutch lad De Wolf who's still adapting to the English game after arriving from the continent where he was used to a slower build-up.

winning run

On the day our supporters were absolutely magnificent - the best either of us have known in all the time we've been here - and the noise was incredible. All the lads fully appreciated it and the crowd was the main topic of conversation in the dressing room long after the game was over.

Even when we went behind to the early goal, caused by a lapse in concentration after the long delay while the Wolves lad was getting treatment, any disappointment that may have been felt by the supporters certainly didn't reach us on the pitch.

The message came across loud and clear that you were all right behind us. We thank you all for that and would love it to continue today and in the matches to come.

For our part it was obviously a case of all hands to the pump and we got tremendous support from the injured lads, Adie, Jeff and Dariusz, and from David Armstrong.

On behalf of all the players we hope you had a great Christmas and that, by the time you're here next for the Grimsby game on Saturday, we'll have been able to maintain our winning run.

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ON THE AIR

THE AIR

THE problem with Christmas is that it plays havoc with the printer's deadlines. So although you're reading this as the turkey, Christmas pud, mince pies and brandies begin to wear off, and a bracing Elm Park afternoon stretches ahead, I'm feeling far from festive.

I write with a pile of unsigned Christmas cards beside the word processor and a turkey still unbought and innocent of the purpose for which Paxo was invented.

I was thinking of writing something clever about what Mark McGhee had found in his Christmas stocking yesterday morning - perhaps a

With Phil Coope

BBC Radio Berkshire

couple of Premiership-class players brought down the chimney by a man in a jolly red suit.

And, just as I'm wondering whether John Madejski does own a jolly red suit, I suddenly hear that McGhee has become someone else's Christmas present, which puts an end to that idea!

Maybe the weather would be a suitable topic instead. But as the exceptionally mild weather outside right now - with the grass still growing and spring bulbs putting in an unseasonal appearance - could suddenly revert to the bleak midwinter that's a subject best avoided.

I could attempt to predict whether the faithful have come to the match in answer to the chairman's call for the missing fans to turn out.

Or I could turn to David's city for inspiration. But Luton's a town and, at this time of the year, always reminds of that classic Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show sketch when



Eric played a Roman soldier carrying a Luton Town banner.

But then again, I could be here till midnight with still no clear idea of what to write. So instead I'll wish you a very Happy New Year, hope the rest of your Christmas is made more enjoyable by a Royals victory this afternoon, and raise a seasonal toast to the team for giving us such a splendid first half of the season.

And don't forget BBC Radio Berkshire will continue to give their support to the Royals with the best coverage of the team, at every match, home and away.

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we wish them and their guests a festive Elm Park
afternoon**

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SUPPORTING CAST



PETER BROWN'S NEWS - AND SOME PERSONAL VIEWS - FROM THE SUPPORTERS' CLUB.

We extend a Christmas welcome this afternoon to the players, officials and supporters of Luton Town on a day when our visitors arrive boasting a League record which seems to defy all logic.

While they've struggled all season at Kenilworth Road their away record is one of the best in the four divisions so the Royals had better be on their guard.

It's 20 years since we played Luton in a League match but Royals supporters will never forget that superb March day in 1988 at Wembley and a repeat performance today will help everyone forget the traumas of the past couple of weeks. Let's hope Michael Gilkes has a good memory and can help serve up an action replay Royals victory!

AWAY TRAVEL

We head for Port Vale on Wednesday night, with a 7.45 kickoff, where the wide open spaces of their pitch was certainly conducive to the Royals' style last season and the lads will be looking for another display like that. Coaches will leave Elm Park at 2.30 p.m. with a £10 fare.

On New Year Bank Holiday, January 2, we're off to Burnden Park aiming for a bit of revenge after Bolton did the 'double' over us in their promotion season two years ago.

You can see the Royals start the new year on a winning note by joining us on the coaches which will be leaving Elm Park at 9 a.m. The fare for that one is £13 and you can book for both trips by seeing Dave or Denny at the Social Club.

* If there's sufficient interest the North Hants Branch will be running transport to Bolton from Basingstoke Railway Station, leaving at 8.30 a.m. for £16 per head. If you're interested call Graham Upton on 0256-470876.

CHILDREN'S PARTY

The annual Christmas Party for children of Supporters' Club members - postponed from December 18 because of the Wolves game - will now take place on Sunday, January 8 at 3 p.m. in the Royals Rendezvous.

It's open to members' children under the age of 13 but numbers are strictly limited to 100 so get your name down NOW on the list which is behind the bar at the Social Club.

GET WELL SOON

Most of us at Elm Park today are in the middle of a break from work but, as ever, the players will have done everything possible to stay in peak condition and certainly won't have been indulging themselves like the rest of us were yesterday.

However, please remember some of the players on the sidelines today who might have been able to have an extra mince pie or two but would give anything to have been involved.

At the time of writing injuries look like ensuring a relatively inactive Christmas for Adie Williams, Jeff Hopkins, Dariusz Wdowczyk, Paul Holsgrave, Dylan Kerr, David Bass and Lea Barkus. We all wish you a speedy return to full fitness so that you can figure in the Royals' plans for 1995 as we strive for even greater glory.

And to all the players, thanks for proving in recent days that you are the true professionals we knew you were, and here's to a super new year.

VOTE OF THANKS

Away travel is obviously a regular feature in these notes during the year but there are some unsung folk behind the scenes who ensure that it all works smoothly without ever getting any public thanks.

So a special mention to Denny Fullbrook's wife Anne and daughter Claire who spend endless hours on the phone, taking bookings and answering queries. A big thank you to you both. Best wishes and a big hand to Ray Lander, the regular driver of coach number one, who puts up with all our banter and ferries us brilliantly up and down the country, be it on Saturdays or long, midweek trips, with unfailing good humour.

To the rest of you, enjoy the remainder of the holiday period, have a happy New Year and we'll see you on Saturday!



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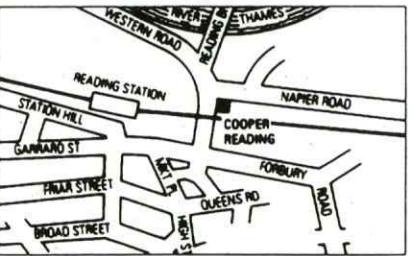
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BACKPASS

ALAN SEDUNARY

looks at match days past

EVEN though we've won nine of our 16 home League games against Luton Town you must go back 59 years for our last victory - but I'm retreating even further to October 28, 1933.

Reading had proved a real Jekyll and Hyde team so far that season, earning just a solitary point on our travels but dominant at Elm Park where we'd scored 19 goals in six games.

So it was something of a shock when **Kirkham** headed in a cross from **Pease** to give Luton the lead, but we were on level terms before halftime when **Frank Newton** scored with a back header - a bit of a novelty 60 years ago.

After the break Reading at last took control, although we needed a fair slice of luck to put the game beyond Luton. First **Newton** saw Luton's **Mackay** deflect a shot past his own keeper to put us in front, and he then completed his hatrick from a position which even the local press described as having a hint of offside about it.

Not that Newton needed a lot of luck because he had scored seven times in his first six games since signing from Fulham a month earlier.

Near the end **Joe McGough** made it 4-1, heading in **George Johnson**'s freekick, while **Percy Whittaker** was defying Luton at the other end with a debut display of the skills which would make him a permanent fixture in the Reading goal for most of the thirties.

Reading: Whittaker, Ridley, Rowe, Johnson, Hayhurst, Wright, Butler, McGough, Newton, Oxberry, Fielding. We remained unbeaten here all that season and ended up scoring 70 goals at Elm Park, although we were still a long way short of Stockport County who found the net 84 times at home during that 1933-34 campaign.

After his hatrick against the Hatters, Newton could have been excused if he'd blown his own trumpet...but instead he was blowing his trombone as a new member of the crack, local Spring Garden Band.

THAT WAS THE DAY THAT WAS - a look at December 26 down the years.

1928: A thriller against Spurs is watched by a 22,770 crowd

and we go 3-0 up through **Harry Goodwin**, **Tommy Meads** and **Bob Oswald** before the visitors make it all square. But, just like **Gerry Francis**' first game in charge in 1994, the Spurs fightback is in vain because Oswald hits our winner with five minutes left.

1935: Our fans complain about the lack of goals as we ONLY manage to beat Northampton Town 5-2 - because on the same day Tranmere Rovers beat Oldham Athletic 13-4 to set a League scoring record for one match! **Bunny Bell** gets nine of Tranmere's goals, but his record lasts just four months until it's beaten by Luton's **Joe 'Ten Goal' Payne**.

1947: A bad day for Leyton Orient keeper **Stan Tolliday** as he lets in six goals at Elm Park - four from **Tony MacPhee** and one each from **Freddie Fisher** and **Bill Green** - before being carried off unconscious near the end of our 6-2 win.

1987: If you fancy winning here on Boxing Day your name must begin with an 's', like Stoke, Stockport, Swansea....and Swindon, the only other team to do it, seven years ago today. **Stuart Beavon**'s brilliant goal is disallowed because someone else is offside and, apart from the referee, the most hated man on the pitch was the scorer of Swindon's goal....some bloke called **J. Quinn**!

AND FINALLY...Boxing Day has always been a good day for goals because, apart from the 17 at Tranmere, Darwen beat Walsall 12-0 in 1896 and Oldham beat Southport 11-0 in 1962.

One Boxing Day later, no less than 66 goals were scored in the old Division One when Fulham beat Ipswich Town 10-1, West Ham United lost 8-2 to Blackburn Rovers at Upton Park and Burnley beat Manchester United 6-1. And if that last result is left out then you'll know who the editor supports! (United won the return 5-1 a day later, so there! Ed.)

But don't mention high-scoring games to Luton, because on Boxing Day 1927 they went in at halftime 5-0 up against Northampton....and lost 6-5! What on earth was in their half-time cup of tea?

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The Young Ones



Scorer Matthew Stowell

Reporting on the youth team

BOURNEMOUTH staged a 2-1 smash and grab raid on Coombe Park to steal their second win in a week against the young Royals. But at times the Reading youngsters had the visitors chasing shadows and deserved at least a share of the spoils for a hard-working display full of guts and enthusiasm.

They were up against it from the sixth minute when Bournemouth were able to launch a right wing raid from a throw-in which should have gone Reading's way. When the ball was switched to the edge of the area a snapshot took three deflections before leaving keeper Steve Staples stranded.

Staples plunged to his right to save the day four minutes later when a freekick from the left found its way through a crowded area, but on 17 minutes the Royals crafted the move of the game.

Gary Bastable began it deep inside his own half when he found Derek Simpson whose precise ball was met with a superb flick from Mick Murphy to send Charlie Higgs racing clear down the left. A last ditch challenge took the sting off Higgs' shot, but the keeper was forced to make a good save at the nearpost.

Five minutes later Gareth Randell cleverly darted behind the Bournemouth defence to find himself in a one-on-one situation with the keeper who guessed correctly and saved left-handed.

With the Royals in dominant mood the visitors were proving no threat up front, but they grabbed a shock second on the half hour when a deep freekick eluded everyone and looked to be running behind until one of the Bournemouth youngsters caught the ball and hammered an angled shot high into the net.

It was all Reading after the break too and they were again unlucky when a James Curran freekick was knocked down by Murphy for Matthew Stowell to strike from close range and the keeper knew little about it as the ball flew off his legs and over the bar.

With Bobby Wilkinson prompting well from midfield and the runs of right back Paul Freeman always causing problems, Bournemouth had to look for chances on the break and almost succeeded when a powerful effort clipped the top of Staples' crossbar.

Andre Shepherd was making an impressive Royals debut on the right wing, and the 16 year former Reading Schools star's pinpoint cross almost brought a goal with 20 minutes left but Murphy's header from the edge of the area slid just the wrong side of the upright.

The tiny figure of Randell was getting a right old buffeting from his giant marker, but the plucky 17 year old kept battling away and almost got his reward when he wriggled away from a challenge in the box only for the keeper to make a fine blocking save.

A great piece of acceleration from Murphy took him clear into the area on 85 minutes, but again the keeper spread himself well to turn the ball aside.

Higgs was the next to suffer when Simpson picked him out with a great ball down the right but, as he cut in, his low shot zipped agonisingly wide of the far post with the keeper flatfooted.

But the goal the Reading boys deserved finally came with three minutes left when Simpson fired in a perfectly flighted freekick from the left and skipper Stowell nipped in behind the defence to hammer the ball home.

And in injury time the Royals were denied what looked a clearcut penalty when Randell's legs were whipped away as he looked certain to grab the equaliser but the referee turned a deaf ear to the spotkick appeals.

Reading: Steve Staples; Paul Freeman, Matthew Stowell, James Curran, Gary Bastable; Andre Shepherd (sub Lee Rogers), Bobby Wilkinson, Derek Simpson; Charlie Higgs, Gareth Randell, Mick Murphy. Subs not used: Matthew Jones, Stuart Jones.

Team boss Bobby Williams said: "I thought they did exceptionally well, particularly after all the upheaval following Mike Hickman's departure.

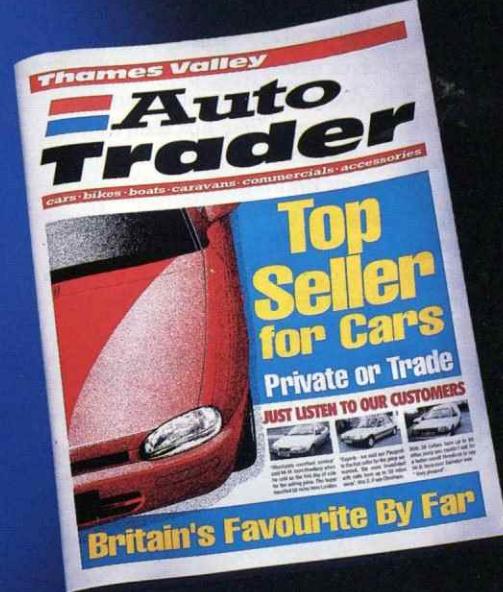
"They all worked hard but those chances just wouldn't go in. With a little more luck we could have won well, but the boys can be very encouraged because it was a good, battling performance."

Youth team fixtures

South East Counties League Division Two 1994-95

Aug 13 v	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR H	0-6	Dec 17 v	AFC BOURNEMOUTH H	1-2
Aug 20 v	CRYSTAL PALACE H	0-4	Dec 31 v	Tottenham Hotspur A	
Aug 27 v	WYCOMBE WANDERERS H	3-1	Jan 7 v	Crystal Palace A	
Sept 3 v	Brighton and Hove Albion A	3-1	Jan 14 v	Wycombe Wanderers A	
Sept 10 v	LUTON TOWN H	0-4	Jan 21 v	BRIGHTON AND HOVE ALBION H	
Sept 12 v	COLCHESTER UTD H SJFC (1)	1-2	Jan 28 v	Luton Town A	
Sept 17 v	Brighton and Hove Albion LC (1) A	0-3	Feb 25 v	BRISTOL ROVERS H	
Oct 1 v	Southampton A	3-1	Mar 4 v	Colchester United A	
Oct 8 v	OXFORD UNITED H	1-4	Mar 11 v	WIMBLEDON H	
Oct 15 v	Bristol Rovers A	1-1	Mar 18 v	Brentford A	
Oct 22 v	SOUTHAMPTON H	2-1	Mar 25 v	BRISTOL CITY H	
Oct 25	Southampton FAYC(1)A	0-1	Apr 1 v	Swindon Town A	
Oct 29 v	COLCHESTER UNITED H	0-2	LC: League Cup		
Nov 5 v	Wimbledon A	2-5	SJFC: Southern Junior Floodlit Cup		
Nov 12 v	BRENTFORD H	0-2	FAYC: FA Youth Cup		
Dec 3 v	SWINDON TOWN H	0-1	To be arranged: Bristol City A		
Dec 10 v	AFC Bournemouth A	0-1			

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ELM PARK ECHOES

IT was on a par with memories like the Simod Cup semi-final against Coventry City and the legendary 4-3 comeback which sank Plymouth Argyle - and rarely can the Elm Park faithful have been in better voice.

The turnip placed on top of the Wolves dugout was a little excessive, but otherwise the South Bank wit and humour was brilliant right up to the moment when they sang 'cheerio, cheerio, cheerio' to the backs of the early departures from the Town End.

Steve Bull caught us cold after the lengthy hold-up for treatment to Steve Froggatt but Simon Osborn levelled with a super header after 23 minutes - his first Elm Park goal - and Parky's fabulous run allowed Quinny to nod us in front 15 minutes later.

Quinny's 60th minute deflection on Son of Fergy's freekick fooled Shaka, Brian Moore, Theo Foley and everyone else until we saw the action replay. But we were in front again three minutes later when Stuart Lovell refused to be eaten by John De Wolf, and Gilkesy made sure when Archie's shot stuck in the mud. Big Shaka had to earn his Endsleigh Man-of-the-Match trophy with some sparkling goalkeeping before a move between Scotty Taylor, substitute Uwe and Quinny set up Cool Hand Gilkesy for the fourth in the dying moments.

UNTIL Adie Williams turned up in the dugout for the Wolves game, supersleuth Alan Sedunary reckoned he'd detected a mystery surrounding the Royals skipper's absence from first team duty.

Alan spotted this extremely select off-licence while on holiday in bonny Bridlington with his wife (someone knows how to give a girl a good time) and captured the moment for posterity.

We know Adie doesn't rate 'abroad' too highly, but setting up in business on the Costa Del Humberside does seem a bit extreme.



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AND, talking of moonlighting, what was Jeff Hopkins up to last week? Providing some pre-Christmas entertainment in the Broad Street Mall last Thursday was 'Mr Topper and his unique blend of magic and humour.'

MICK GOODING came in for a bit of ribbing when Burnley were visiting earlier this month after an announcement came over the Elm Park PA system during the game....requesting that his car be moved immediately!

Says Geordie: "I didn't hear it myself but the lads recognised the number as mine. They thought I must have gone off to move it - because I went missing for 20 minutes in the second half."

ANOTHER offbeat Elm Park moment featured in a profile on Notts County's Andy Legg in '90 minutes' magazine when he was asked what was the most unusual thing he'd ever seen on a football pitch.

Legg was in no doubt, replying: "When we played Reading there was a fire scare so they evacuated all the fans on to the pitch. There were still a few minutes left to play and our manager Russell Slade was trying to give a team talk as we stood there surrounded by thousands of people."

THE many friends of long-time supporter William West, an Elm Park regular for many years, will be saddened to hear that he died recently at the age of 92.

Mr West, who used to drive himself from his Spencers Wood home to take up his favourite position under the clock on the South Bank, will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

CONGRATULATIONS to another of our senior supporters, Arthur Bloomfield, who's stood on the Elm Park terraces for 40 years and celebrates his 70th birthday today.



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Now's the time to become part of the Reading F.C. Local Business Lottery, sponsored by the Reading Evening Post roaring around with the Royals. The simple but unique scheme means that for just £1 you can buy a chance for a member of your staff to receive a free scratch-card lottery ticket in their pay packet. Just think how exciting it will be for one of your employees to win the £2,000 jackpot prize! As you can see from the impressive list below there are already a lot of companies participating in the Business Lottery but there's room for plenty more and if you'd like to help your local football club then contact us on 0734 464008.

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A Striking Partnership...with Reading Borough Council and Reading F. C.



Reading
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CHRISTMAS PRIZE WORDSEARCH

To celebrate a year of partnership between Reading Borough Council and Reading Football Club, here's a special competition for you to try.

The following team line-up is hidden in the grid:

1. Hislop	H	A	V	E	K	Y	Z	C	W	O	D	W
2. Bernal	I	A	W	I	L	L	I	A	M	S	R	R
3. Kerr	S	Y	R	H	A	P	B	E	R	N	A	L
4. Wdowczyk	L	P	Y	T	N	C	H	G	R	I	N	S
5. Williams	O	J	O	N	E	S	G	I	T	M	R	A
6. Jones	P	S	I	A	N	N	D	L	N	E	A	Y
7. Barnard	A	U	R	T	I	O	B	K	A	L	B	L
8. Gooding	Q	R	O	D	Y	L	L	E	V	O	L	A
9. Quinn	S	S	O	U	P	P	O	S	R	R	T	K
10. Lovell	E	O	S	B	O	R	N	R	S	G	F	E
11. Osborn	G	R	D	R	A	P	P	E	H	S	E	R
SUBS 12. Hartenberger	M	C	P	H	E	R	S	O	N	O	M	R
13. Sheppard												
14. McPherson												

Once you have circled all 14 names in true wordsearch fashion, look again - there is one more Royals player still hidden. Find that name and return the completed form below (a photocopy will do if you don't want to cut your programme) to:

Royals Competition, Marketing and Public Relations, Reading Borough Council, Level 6, Civic Centre, Reading RG1 7TD by Tuesday January 10.

The first correct answer out of the hat will win a meal for two at the Town Hall's 3Bs Cafe. The 3Bs serves top quality, value for money meals throughout the day, and is a great place to meet friends for a town centre drink.

NEW YEAR'S EVE FOOTBALL....

Don't forget that you can get 50 pence off terrace admission at the Grimsby Town match this Saturday, New Year's Eve, if you have a Reading Borough Council Passport to Leisure. You can also get £1 off seats with your Passport, but you must buy your tickets in advance from the Elm Park Box Office.

AND CELEBRATIONS!

If you are planning to see in the New Year - and celebrate a Royals victory - in the town centre, here's some good news on how to get home.

There will be a free New Year's Eve late-night bus service from Reading Buses, sponsored by Reading Borough Council, Carling Black Label and the Reading Evening Post. Buses run from all parts of the town, from 11 p.m. until at least 2 a.m. For more details look out for the advertisement in the Evening Post or telephone 594000. Don't Drink and Drive, Drink and Ride!

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Reading Borough Council.

CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH COMPETITION

Name..... The mystery player is:

Address.....

.....

Telephone.....

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1871

ROYAL SPOTLIGHT

THE folk in Trinidad may have abandoned plans to put local hero Shaka Hislop's face on one of their phonecards but it's still on the wanted posters above a few Premiership managers' desks.

Because if the 25 year old keeper's performances won admiring glances last season then his seven clean sheets in the first 10 games of the current campaign really made football folk sit up and take notice.

Former England and Sheffield United keeper Alan Hodgkinson, now a coach at Old Trafford, has rarely been far away in recent weeks when the Royals have been in action and a lot of other good judges have become members of his fan club.

But the ever-modest Shaka, London-born but raised in Trinidad, just smiles and says: "I'm very flattered by all the attention but I try not to take any notice of it."

"Apart from the odd couple of games I've been pretty happy with my form this season and I hope I'm learning from my mistakes. But I know I'm still relatively inexperienced and there's plenty to learn yet."

In fact it's sometimes hard to believe that it's barely two-and-a-half years since he arrived from the United States for a trial, having just completed a degree in mechanical engineering at Howard University in Washington DC.

Just over two months later he made his League debut at The Hawthorns against West Brom, displacing Steve Francis and keeping the experienced former Chelsea man on the sidelines for 12 matches.

Steve eventually won his place back and, apart from injuries, kept it until the end of the season. But Shaka's increasing mastery of the skills of his trade doubtless influenced Steve's decision to move on to Huddersfield two summers ago.

As fate would have it our first game of last season took us to Leeds Road where the Terriers couldn't find a way past Shaka, but the Royals beat Steve three times and we were on our way to the Second Division title.

That was the first of 20 clean sheets in an ever-present season for Shaka and when he headed for his summer break he'd certainly earned the right to put his feet up for a couple of months.

Instead he headed for the States to renew some old acquaintances in Washington and take in a few World Cup matches.

Says Shaka: "It was a great experience. The atmosphere in the stadium was fabulous, particularly with the rival supporters getting on well with each other and the fact that they were there just to enjoy the football."

Next Home Game

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31st v GRIMSBY TOWN

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Shaka smiles his way to a First Division honours degree

"The football played in the tournament was superb, a real spectacle. From the games I saw I managed to pick up a few bits and pieces from watching the goalkeepers - and a few things not to do - but then again I always watch other keepers closely to see if there's anything I can learn."

He adds: "It's been very different in the First Division this season, not only because the standard of play is obviously higher."

"Last season there were some strikers who, for the whole 90 minutes, just wanted to clatter you all the time. At this level referees are more protective anyway, but players don't want to waste their energy by clattering into you every time."

"I like to dominate my area if I can and, even though you know your opponents will try to put you off, at least it's within the laws of the game."

"It's also terrific to be visiting grounds which are steeped in history, like Roker Park and Molineux, places that I dreamed of playing at when I was a boy."

Shaka was based in London last season but moved to Bracknell in the summer and jokes: "That gives me an extra hour in bed every morning."

But then again, when asked what he does outside football he replies with a broad grin: "Rest and eat...and I read a lot, anything from novels to Time magazine."

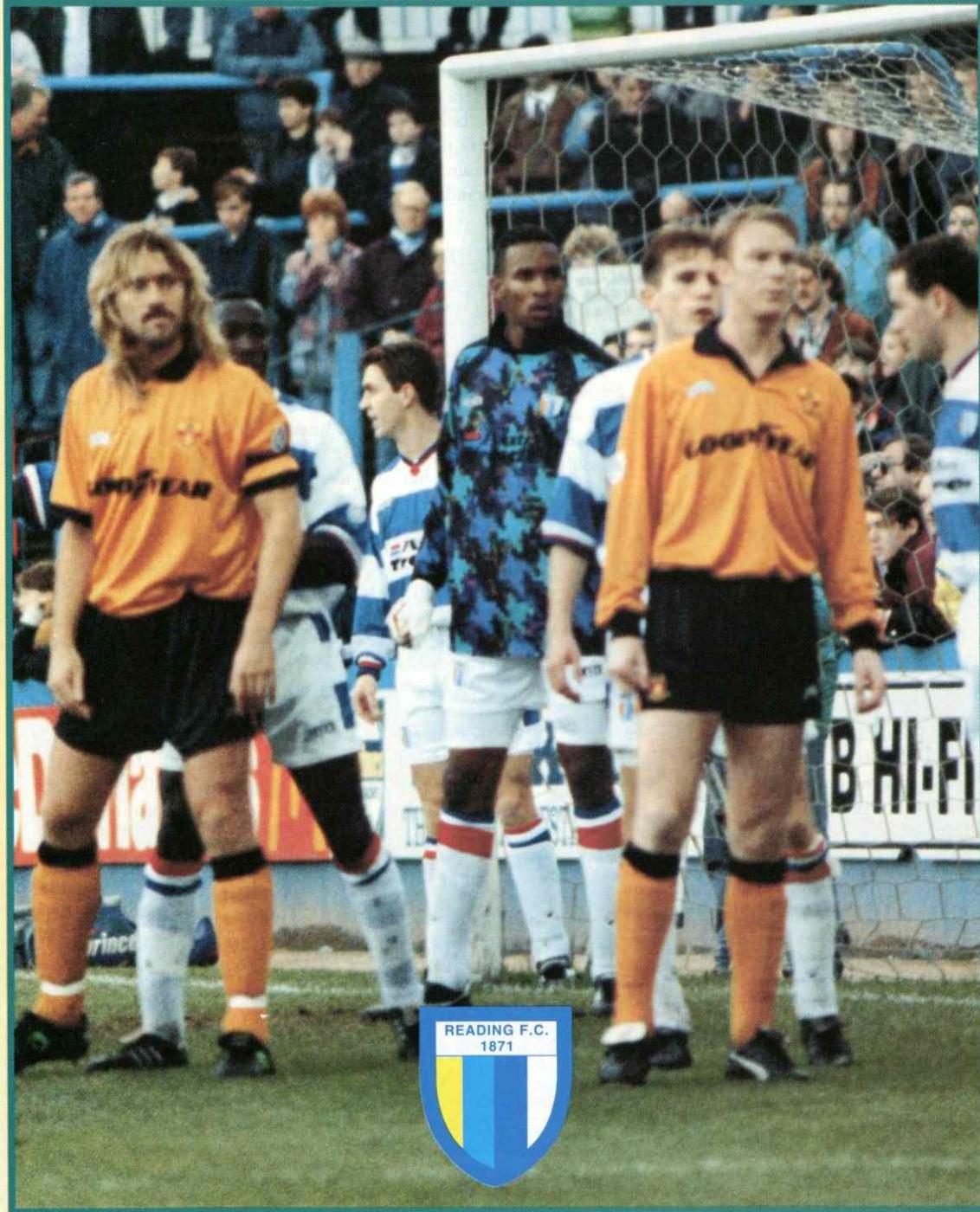
Plans to add to his robotics qualifications by undertaking a cybernetics course at Reading University have had to be shelved though.

He says: "I visited the university and spoke to a couple of professors but obviously my first obligation is to the club and the work involved would mean I couldn't devote enough time to it as well as following my football career. So that's something for later, and I'm very happy with my life as it is."

So why did they drop Shaka's smile from Trinidad's phonecard? He says: "I think it happened because I decided not to play for them when they called me up for an international. Apart from the fact that it was during our season and my first duty is to the club, I wanted to hold onto my English status...just in case."

Goalkeeping coach Peter Bonetti reckons Shaka has what it takes to win international honours, and who would bet against that increasingly famous smile following the likes of Gordon Banks, Peter Shilton and Bonetti himself into the England side?

Royals top man Shaka



Picture: John Hawken

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ROYALS FACT FILE

HOW TO GET THERE

Vale Park, Burslem, STOKE-ON-TRENT
Take M6 Motorway until junction 15 and follow A5006 and A500. After 6.3 miles branch left and take A527, third exit off roundabout. In 0.4 miles turn right onto B5051 in Newcastle Street and over the crossroads at the end, into Moorland Road. Then turn left into Hamil Road for Port Vale FC.

There is street parking available, but also ample visitors' car parking at £2 behind the Railway Stand and close to the Hamil Road entrances. Nearest rail station: Longport, Stoke-on-Trent.

There will be 4,715 standing places available on the covered Hamil Road terrace at £8.50 with no concessions, with uncovered terracing available at £6.50 and £3.50 for under 14s. Limited numbers of seats are available in the Family Stand at £7.00 for adults and £4.50 for children under 14.

CHRISTMAS MASCOTS

Leading out the Royals this afternoon is 10 year old Matthew Ryan who's a pupil at Rivermead Primary School in Woodley and has been an Elm Park regular for two years.

He tells us his hobbies are football and Gladiators and his favourite player is Scott Taylor. Matthew apologises for the fact that he also supports Arsenal, and is duly forgiven.

A luckier mascot than most is 14 year Tanya Tucker who won the job in the Supporters' Club Christmas Raffle.

She goes to Denefield School in Tilehurst, lists her pastimes as



Matthew Ryan



Tanya Tucker

swimming and watching the Royals, and her favourite players are keeper Shaka Hislop and full back Dylan Kerr.

Hoping to prove a lucky charm for The Hatters today is nine year old Matthew Boast who is a pupil at Burnham Copse Junior School at Tadley, near Reading.



Matthew Boast

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Matthew's a Junior Hatter and season ticket holder at Kenilworth Road, even though today's match is more of a 'home' game than the usual home games he watches. He plays football for the Kingsclere Boys Under 10 team in the Peter Houseman League where he tries to emulate hero David Preece.

TODAY'S REFEREE

The man in the middle this afternoon is Wolverhampton accountant Gurnam Singh who makes his first visit to Elm Park since the Second Division victory over Fulham in October last year.

A married man with two young children, he began refereeing in the Wolverhampton area in 1978, became a Football League linesman in 1986 and graduated to the Referees' List three years later. He enjoys most sports, but particularly football and cricket.

IN THE WHOSH

Calling all exiled Luton fans with access to the information superhighway, otherwise known as the Internet.

An electronic newsgroup called WHOSH - Worldwide Hatters On the Superhighway - exists to keep you up to date with all the latest happenings at Kenilworth Road. Members from the USA, Holland, Germany, Scandinavia and many parts of the UK can exchange news and views, without charge, through the newsgroup. There are also ftp and WWW services dedicated to Luton which can also be found via the newsgroup.

Any Luton fans who'd like to subscribe to WHOSH should send their E-mail address to: request-ltfc @ robots.ox.ac.uk.

BURGER KING SHOOTING STARS

Harmans Water Junior School overcame Bracknell neighbours Great Hollands Junior School 8-4 in the Burger King Penalty Shootout as we all drew breath during the halftime interval against Wolves.

Great Hollands: Sean Corney; Paul Bowles, Richard Sanders, Nicholas Bale, Sean Gillett, Nicholas Hazel, Garry Sargeant. Harmans Water: Charlie Dunlop; Lee Wiltshire, Stephen Rust, Jamie Kulas, Tom Robinson, Robert Prince, Chris Hobbs.

GOWRINGS ROYAL LINE



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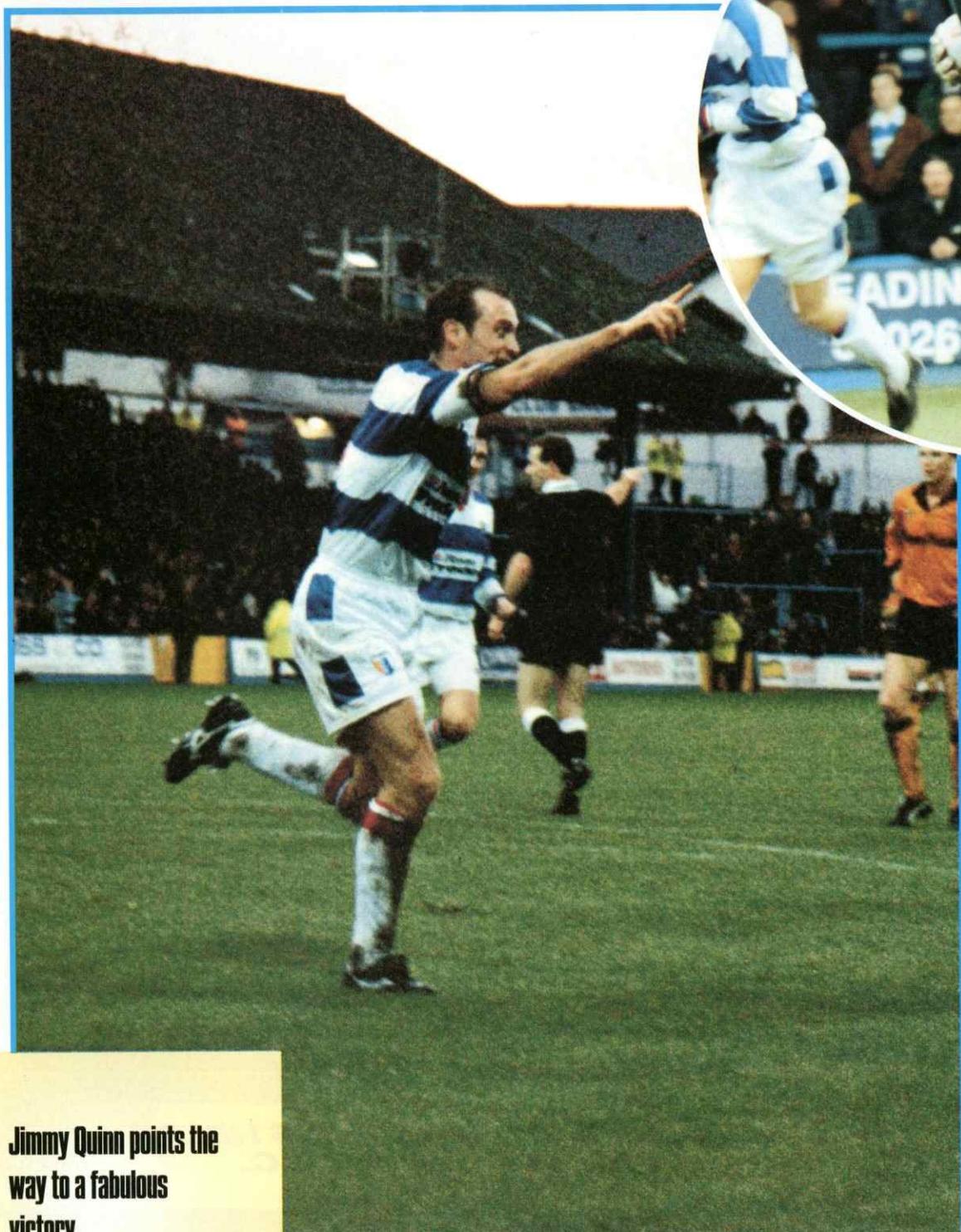


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Royal Gallery

Reading 4 Wolves 2



Jimmy Quinn points the way to a fabulous victory.

Pictures: Andrew Evans



Two goal Michael Gilkes gives James Smith a teasing time. (inset) Shaka nose we're on a winner!

**ENDSLEIGH GIVE YOU THE
CHANCE TO PLAY AT WEMBLEY**

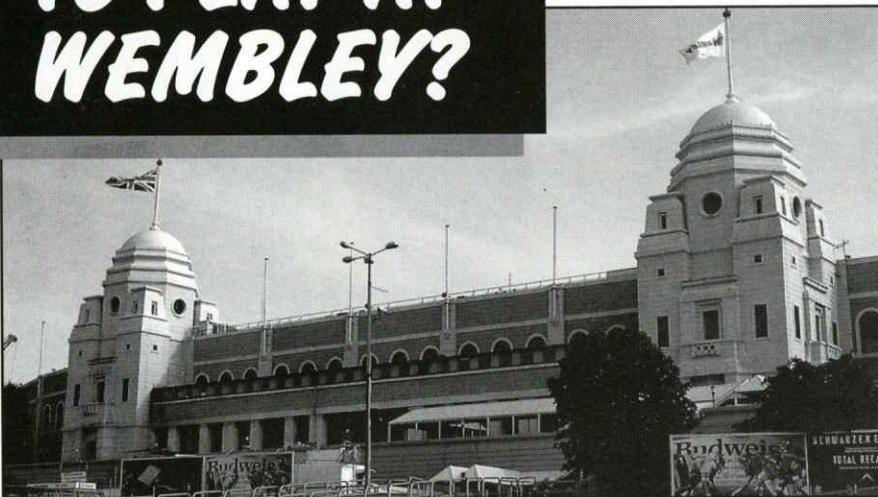
Ever dreamt of playing at Wembley Stadium? Well now's your opportunity to tread the hallowed turf where World Champions have been crowned, FA Cup legends created and League Cup winners honoured. And don't forget that in just eighteen months time, Wembley will also stage the Final of the 1996 European Championships!

The Football League and the major supporters' organisations have joined forces, and with the backing of Endsleigh Insurance, have created an opportunity to turn the dream into reality for supporters of Endsleigh League clubs.

To have a chance of appearing at the most famous football stadium in the world, simply fill in an application form for the Endsleigh Supporters' Challenge and send it to The Football League by 31st January 1995.

Applications are invited from all male* fans over the age of seventeen (as at 1/1/95) to

**DO YOU WANT
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WEMBLEY?**



* FA Rule 37 prevents mixed football over the age of 11



**THE ENDSLEIGH INSURANCE LEAGUE
SUPPORTERS' CHALLENGE APPLICATION FORM**

Please return completed application forms to be received by 31st January 1995 to:

**SUPPORTERS' CHALLENGE,
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS DEPT.
THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE,
LYTHAM ST ANNES,
LANCASHIRE FY8 1JG.**

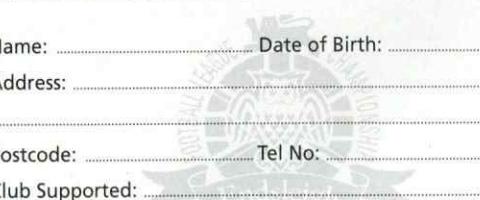
No acknowledgement will be made but please tick this box if you do not wish to receive details of other offers from The Football League

Name: Date of Birth:

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LUTON TOWN



Back row, from left: Tony Adcock, Des Linton, Mitchell Thomas, Juergen Sommer, Marvin Johnson, David Greene, John Hartson.
Middle row, from left: Clive Goodyear (physio), Martin Williams, Richard Harvey, Julian James, Kerry Dixon, Aaron Skelton, Scott Oakes, Dwight Marshall, John Moore (coach).
Front row, from left: Ceri Hughes, Scott Houghton (now Walsall), David Preece, David Pleat (manager), Trevor Peake, Tony Thorpe, Paul Telfer.

HOW do you make a Hatter mad? Mention the names Simod Cup and Reading in the same breath.

But while the events of March 28, 1988 might still haunt Luton Town fans, the followers of both clubs can look back with great affection on a 28-day period which produced two of the most momentous events in our respective histories.

The pundits, as ever, knew exactly what was going to happen when Luton found themselves in both the Simod Cup and Littlewoods Cup finals that year.

Standing ninth in the old Division One there was no doubt at all that they'd demolish Second Division strugglers Reading in the Simod and suffer a similar fate themselves at the hands of mighty Arsenal, the League Cup holders, a month later.

However 61,740 people discovered that going to Wembley is a whole different ball game when, despite Mick Harford's opener, the Royals stormed back to win 4-1 with a brilliant Michael Gilkes equaliser, Stuart Beavon's penalty and second half strikes from Mick Tait and Neil Smillie.

And to prove the point, Luton donned their underdogs' mantle in front of a 95,000 full house to win a thrilling 3-2 seesaw battle against the Gunners with a couple of goals from Brian Stein and another from Danny Wilson.

But with Gilkes and David Preece the only survivors of that last meeting it's to be hoped that nobody used it as a form guide when they hurriedly filled in their three pools coupons before the Christmas break!

Because Luton have proved something of a tipster's nightmare this season - a happy band of travellers almost unbeatable away from home but curiously

vulnerable at Kenilworth Road.

Indeed they couldn't win a thing at home - including a Coca Cola Cup tie with Fulham - until October 15 when they suddenly produced a sparkling display to crush Middlesbrough 5-1 with an own goal from Paul Wilkinson, two strikes from Dwight Marshall and one each by Preece and John Hartson.

The only other side to leave Kenilworth Road feeling glum were Portsmouth last month - and Luton promptly followed that with a 6-3 home defeat by Sheffield United - but nobody's safe once they've crossed the Bedfordshire border to head for foreign parts.

Among the highlights of this season's travelogue have been a 4-2 victory over local rivals Watford, 2-1 wins at Stoke City and Swindon Town, 3-1 at Bramall Lane and 3-2 over then leaders Wolves - with only a late penalty and an own goal allowing Graham Taylor's men to give the scoreline a respectable look.

So it's a sure thing that Luton won't be pulling their punches this Boxing Day afternoon, and only the most foolhardy forecaster would have put his money on a no-score draw.

But, if Luton harbour any thoughts of revenge for the fact that the Simod Cup sits in our trophy cabinet, Reading fans with slightly longer memories still have a bone to pick over a wet, Wednesday evening back in the spring of 1970.

With literally seconds left on the clock Malcolm McDonald ploughed through the Elm Park mud to hit a marvellous goal which, ultimately, saw the Hatters promoted from Division Three and left Reading facing a 16 year wait to imitate them. Now that's really worth avenging!

REPORT: By Maurice O'Brien

MEET THE BOSS

DAVID PLEAT has done the rounds in a football career which has now stretched past the 30 year mark but to most people he will always be Mr Luton Town. As a player he started out at Nottingham Forest but joined Luton in 1964 and spent three years at Kenilworth Road before having spells at Shrewsbury Town, Exeter City and Peterborough United until his retirement in 1971.

His management career began at non-League Nuneaton Borough, he was appointed Luton's reserve coach in 1974 and took over first team coaching duties three years later before succeeding Harry Haslam as manager in 1978.

Pleat took The Hatters into Division One in 1982 but joined Spurs in 1986, leading them to the FA Cup final in May 1987. He then had a three year spell at Leicester City but moved back to Kenilworth Road for the third time in June 1991.

His exciting side reached the semi-final of last season's FA Cup before losing out to Chelsea, and he confirmed his place in the supporters' hearts last month by rejecting the chance to become general manager at Spurs.

New Yorker **Juergen Sommer** waited two years to make his Luton debut but has made up for lost time by establishing himself as the club's first choice keeper, winning a place in the U.S. World Cup squad and making his international debut as a substitute against England at Wembley in September.

He's being understudied by veteran **Fred Barber**, who made Luton his ninth club when he arrived from Peterborough United for £15,000.



in the summer, and 18 year old **Kevin Davis** whose League debut came at Stoke City in the final game of last season.

The defence is built around the experience of 37 year old club captain **Trevor Peake**, an FA Cup winner with Coventry City in 1983, who is partnered at the centre of the back four by Republic of Ireland Under 21 skipper **David Greene** or 26 year old fellow youth team graduate **Marvin Johnson**.

Former England Under 21 international full back **Julian James** is another home grown star, who's in his fifth season of League football, but 23 year old **Des Linton** followed manager Pleat from Filbert Street in October 1991.

Crowd favourite **Mitchell Thomas** also earned Under 21 honours with England and is back at Kenilworth Road, where he first made his name, after spells with Spurs and West Ham United, while 19 year old **Greg Rioch** is hoping to match father Bruce's glittering career.

Rhonda-born midfield man **Ceri Hughes** won a call-up to the full Welsh side last season, after representing his country at youth and Under 21 levels, but was sidelined last month after damaging knee ligaments.

Paul Telfer was born in Edinburgh but joined Luton as a youngster and made his debut at Everton in 1991, his performances on the right side of midfield in the past two seasons winning him

Scottish international honours at Under 21 and 'B' level.

Aaron Skelton overcame a serious thigh injury to make his debut at home to West Brom on the opening day of the current campaign, while fellow 20

year old **Tony Thorpe** exploded onto the scene with a goal on his maiden appearance at Newcastle United in the fourth round of last season's FA Cup. And midfielder **Paul Allen**, on a month's loan from Southampton, knows all about the FA Cup having been to Wembley with both West Ham United and Spurs.

But the doyen of The Hatters' midfield is 31 year old **David Preece** who's repaid his £150,000 fee from Walsall many times over in the past 10 years. He played his 300th game for the club earlier in the season, he's won three caps for the England 'B' side and appeared in both of Luton's League Cup finals in the eighties.

Scott Oakes was one of the leading lights in last season's FA Cup run, grabbing a sixth round hatrick against West Ham, and has won both an England Under 21 call-up and the attentions of the Premiership scouts

- just like exciting 19 year old fellow striker **John Hartson** who's a Welsh Under 21 international.

The Hatters brought in two new strikers during the summer - much travelled **Tony Adcock** from Peterborough United and **Dwight Marshall**, who hit 14 goals in Plymouth Argyle's unsuccessful pursuit of the Royals in Division Two last season.

But one face needing no introduction to Elm Park is 33 year old former England international **Kerry Dixon**. He hit 51 goals in just 116 Reading appearances before moving on to Chelsea and Southampton, and finally got to play for his home town team last year.



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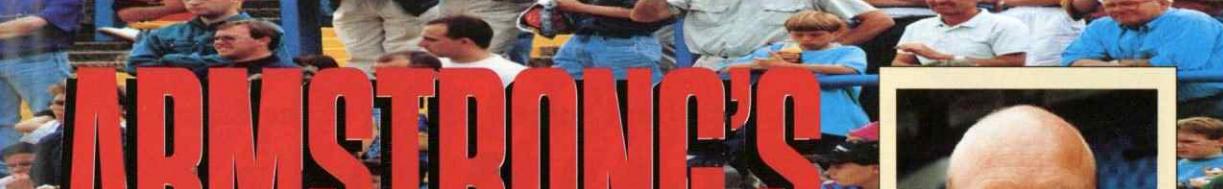
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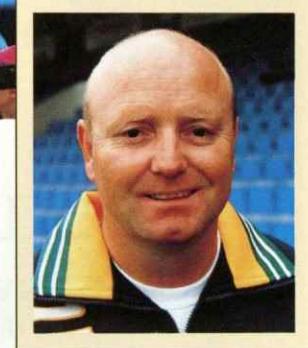
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ARMSTRONG'S ARMY



A GREAT DAY

I must say how pleased I was to witness the tremendous support all you fans gave the chairman and everyone at the club during the Wolves game.

It would have been very easy for everyone to drop their heads after Mark's unexpected departure, but I think we all proved just how much determination there is at this club - both on and off the pitch.

I was delighted to be asked to help out on the bench, which was immensely enjoyable, and I hope some of the experience I gained with England and playing with the likes of Keegan, Channon and Ball was some use.

Rest assured that, if required, I will continue to help the players and the chairman in any way I can.

NEW YEAR PLANS

I hope all our Junior Royals had a great Christmas and are all geared up for the new year when we've got some great activities planned and will be aiming to get out and about even more than in 1994.

We intend to stage a six-a-side tournament some time in 1995 and will be inviting all local youth teams

DAVID ARMSTRONG

to take part. So look out for details in the programme or in our regular Friday column in the Evening Post.

RABBIT RESCUE

The lads from Rabbit's Vehicle Hire really got us out of a hole over the Christmas period when they hopped to the rescue in typical fashion.

Of course they already supply me with a sponsored car but, with so much working and running about to be done in the days leading up to the holiday, one set of wheels just wasn't enough.

So like two Christmas fairies (are you are sure about this? Ed.) they loaned us another vehicle so that my assistants Bob and Tony could rush around town and keep up with their heavy workload.

I'm sure if Santa had lost his sleigh Rabbit's would have been able to help him out as well. Any chance of getting it permanently lads?

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Junior Royals celebrating their birthdays around this time are Alex Munro and James Hope, who were both 16 on Christmas Eve. Andrew

Cox was 12 on Christmas Day and Stephen Panting is 13 today.

Tomorrow: Jack Burton, 12; December 28: Matthew Smith, 14; December 29: Jamie Pettiford, six, and Jonathan Summers, 13.

NEW YEAR WISH

On behalf of myself, Bob and Terry, I hope you all had a great Christmas and we wish the chairman and board, players and staff and especially all our supporters a happy New Year. Of course we've still got one home game to come in 1994, against Grimsby on New Year's Eve, and we hope to see you all again then.

HOW TO REACH US

If you'd like information on any of our schemes then write to us, stating clearly your interest, name, address and a daytime phone number at Reading FC Community Scheme, Elm Park, Norfolk Road, Reading RG3 2EF.

You can also call either myself David Armstrong, or my assistants Tony Russell and Bob Hussain, on 0734-560898 or 507878.

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At First Glance



MAURICE O'BRIEN LOOKS AT LIFE IN THE REST OF DIVISION ONE

ABSENT from the multi-million Wolves lineup on show at Elm Park two Sundays ago was winger Tony Daley, whose summer move from Aston Villa looks like turning out to be the season's most expensive signing.

Apart from a couple of pre-season friendlies, Daley has played just 14 minutes for Wolves and a knee injury has ruled him out until next summer. He cost £1.4 million and, not counting his salary, it doesn't take a genius to work out that he's so far cost them £100,000 per minute!

BEFORE that trip to Elm Park, Wolves keeper Mike Stowell was adamant that his side wasn't suffering a TV jinx - despite the fact that they'd taken just a solitary point in four appearances on the box.

He said: "We haven't got a complex about 'live' TV, we've just played badly. We've got lots more TV games coming up, so we've plenty of time to kill off this speculation about a TV hoodoo." Maybe next time Mike!

BRISTOL City boss Joe Jordan is in hot water with the FA only weeks after returning from his travels to Hearts and Stoke City for a second spell in charge at Ashton Gate.

Heaven knows what he said to Swindon referee Keith Cooper during City's home defeat by Grimsby Town on December 3, but the furious official raced 60 yards across the pitch to tick him off. And the upshot is that Jordan faces a trip to Lancaster Gate to answer a charge of bringing the game into disrepute.

MEANWHILE Stoke City have been on a raid north of the border to sign up Partick Thistle's splendidly named general manager Jez Moxey as their new chief executive.

PORTSMOUTH'S troubles are mounting following the decision by the Department of the Environment to refuse them planning permission to build a new stadium at Farlington on the outskirts of the city.

And with the Government having cut off their escape route the local council has now warned that, under the safety regulations, the capacity at Fratton Park could well be cut to around 6,000 next season.

No such problems from First Division leaders Middlesbrough with boss Bryan Robson leading the local glitterati at the turf-cutting ceremony to officially launch work on their new super stadium.

Robbo was joined by local legends Wilf Mannion, George Hardwick and Harold Shepherdson on the site alongside Middlesbrough docks and the River Tees where the 30,000 all-seater ground should be ready for occupation in time for next season.

Apparently the Boro boss can already see the pitch and other foundations taking shape when he arrives for work by helicopter from his Cheshire home - something which has undoubtedly cemented his relationship with chairman Steve Gibson.

Mr Gibson says: "The biggest selling point to Bryan when we asked him to start his managerial career at Middlesbrough was a model and artist's impression of our new stadium. I told him, 'If you join us I will deliver that to you.' Don't tell poor old Pompey.

BORO seem intent on breaking a few records this season and another one tumbled eight days ago when John Hendrie's hatrick set up their first ever win at Burnley - on their seventh visit since 1952.

But some old traditions keep rolling along. The same weekend saw Oldham Athletic fail to win at Charlton Athletic at the 18th attempt, Swindon Town maintaining their record of just one victory in 19 visits to Port Vale, and a goalless draw at Vicarage Road meant that Watford have still never beaten Sheffield United.

BURNLEY central defender Steve Davis has dropped the 'e' from his first name to become 'Seve' to his team mates after proving the star turn during a three-day club break at midlands golf mecca The Belfry - venue for the next Ryder Cup.

The tenth hole is a notoriously nasty par four, needing a massive drive to get within sniffing distance, but Davis stepped up and coolly tamed it by claiming a birdie!

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READING MATTER

ROGER TITFORD explains the first step to football addiction

ARE you watching your first ever 'live' football match today? Is this first visit to Elm Park a Christmas present? Lucky you (I hope you are anyway) and lucky Reading Football Club too.

Okay Mr First Timer, or it might well be Miss, let me tell you a little about yourself. You're very likely to be between the ages of six and ten and you're here today with your dad, grandad or uncle. In 50 years' time you'll still remember this occasion, Reading versus Luton, as your first game (you never forget the first game).

And the best Christmas present of all? Well, certainly as far as the club is concerned, you have a better than evens chance of becoming a Reading FC supporter for the rest of your life! Over 50 per cent of football fans support the first team they ever saw play - especially if they were taken to the match by a male relative. It's a curious form of bonding, or imprinting. Just as new-born ducklings think the first thing they ever see is their mother (whether it's a watering can, canoe or another duck) so the new-born football fan falls for the first team he, or she, sees. Generally. Think back to your own first match - does it fit the theory?

Sam, aged 10, from up towards Oxford somewhere came with his step-brothers (Reading fans) to the Wolves game, stood on his beer crate for 90 minutes and went home absolutely thrilled. I reckon he'll turn out to be one of us, something wrong if he doesn't after a game like that.

But if some dodgy character had taken him up to the Manor Ground first he could have been 'lost' forever! If you've got children or grandchildren, nephews, nieces and you want to turn them into Reading fans - thus avoiding unnecessary and time-wasting family arguments for the next 40 years - make sure you get them into Elm Park before some Swindon-loving teacher takes them on a 'school trip'.

It doesn't always work out as planned. Notoriously fanatical Burnley fan Dave, I think he's actually changed his surname to Burnley, was originally from Stoke and his first match pitched his home side against the Clarets. He liked Burnley's colours better and fell for them instead, thus incurring a lifetime's crippling travel costs. So don't take a chance, get them used to the hooped kit beforehand!

Unless or until Reading get into the Premiership, young fans are very likely to have a favourite Premiership team too. Don't worry too much about this. It's like acne, a phase they'll probably grow out of.

At 10 or 12 it's important to have childish arguments in high-pitched voices about whether Cantona is better than Rush. (He is, as a matter of fact, but let that pass). If most kids around actually watch Reading there isn't too much to argue about. Isn't Shaka great? Yes, very. End of argument. Straight back to Cantona v Rush.

My belief is that if Reading were to beat Liverpool in the FA Cup these 10 and 12 year olds who support both



teams would actually be utterly delighted - even though they would take some stick at school. Home is where the heart is, after all.

By the age of 18 to 20 most fans have made up their minds where their first loyalty lies and that loyalty will be hard to change - unless they cease to be interested in football.

My first game was a 1-1 draw with Bristol City which did not do too much to raise expectations, although the next match I saw ended in a 6-1 victory. But if, like Sam, you began your football life watching Wolves you started with a game straight out of the top drawer.

It was fabulous to see the team and the fans pull together to inspire each other in a time of need and in a really important match. Often the South Bank seems to have emptied before the team are off the pitch, but this time it looked as if everyone stayed to applaud the lads. People were even singing 'C'mon you Royals' in C stand!

It felt like the most positive and committed atmosphere inside the ground for several years, since perhaps the Simod Cup semi-final or some of those great games in the 1985-86 championship season - Wolves (again), the Plymouth comeback and the Derby decider.

As a football match it will rank with the best in terms of excitement. And it was our second consecutive win in front of live, terrestrial TV cameras - the first being our 1954 triumph over Racing Club de Paris. Hopefully it won't take ITV 40 years to come back again!

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= 2 & 3
JO-ANNE BERNES = 5, 6 & 7

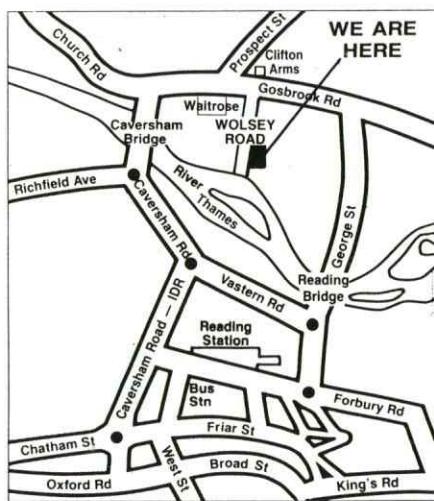
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So you think you can drive perfectly well after a few drinks?

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Do you ever drive knowing full well you're over the limit?

Well, you know what's going to happen. One night you'll see a flashing blue light in your rear view mirror and you know you're going to get pulled. You blow into the breathalyser, then they read you your rights. You sit cuffed (yes, cuffed) in the back of the police car while they park yours. You wonder what the hell's going to happen to you. You're facing a five grand fine, ridiculous insurance premiums and one year of begging for lifts off friends. The old cliché goes through your head, 'I can't believe this is happening to me'. You're a fool. Do-not-drink-and-drive-or-you-may-live-to-regret-it. Issued by The Portman Group.

FACE in the CROWD

Sponsored by the
Reading Chronicle

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Simply visit the main office of the Reading Football Club in Norfolk Road, Reading before 5.30 pm next Wednesday taking the programme containing this photograph along with you.

Then, provided the officials are satisfied you are indeed the person circled, you will be handed a £10 note.

If you're not the winner this time watch this space – and watch the pages of the *Reading Chronicle*.

After each Saturday home match a crowd photo will be published in the next edition of the *Reading Chronicle*.

Look out for it. If you are in the frame then make sure you buy the programme at the next home game to see if you are the lucky winner of a tenner.

Members of the staff of the Reading Football Club and the *Chronicle* are ineligible.

The decision of the Elm Park personnel will be final and no correspondence can be entertained by either the club or the newspaper.



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PROMOTING THE ROYALS

READING F.C.
1871

THANKFUL CHANT

Promotions Manager Phil Chant writes: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who have supported the Promotions Department over the past 12 months and helped to raise funds for the Royals."

"To the hard-working agents who sell door-to-door, the shopkeepers, the members of all our schemes and the folk taking part in them, and the companies involved in the Local Business Lottery - a big thank you to you all."

"It's very important that the Promotions Department continues to raise this much-needed cash to maintain the high standards already set here at Elm Park and I call upon you all to keep up your support over the next 12 months."

"A very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year from myself and all the staff in the Promotions Department."

BUBBLING ANNE MARIE



The executive boxholders voted Keith McPherson their star man in the brilliant display against Wolves and Reading Sporting Club manager Anne Marie Marshall handed over his bottle of bubbly.

BUILDING BALL



Wargrave builders S.J. Callender & Sons provided the right foundations by sponsoring the match ball against Wolves and acting boss Jimmy Quinn presented Stan Callender with an autographed souvenir afterwards.

SELLING NEW DRAW

We still need more sellers for our super new Halftime Draw which will be launched at the FA Cup tie against Oldham Athletic on January 7.

Draw tickets at £1 each will be on sale before the game and if it proves the big hit we think it's going to be then some lucky person could walk away with up to £1,000 in prize money after the final whistle.

Sellers will need to be on duty from 1 p.m. until kickoff time and there's good commission on offer. Interested in helping? Then call Phil Chant soonest on 0734-464008.

TOP FORM TIPSTERS

The super win over Wolves foisted most of our tipsters in the Royals Skill Competition but the Royals couldn't fool contestant J. Wanklyn who got the 4-2 scoreline exactly right.

Leading tipsters: G. Dearlove 73; D. Woodyer 70; G. Pearce 66; A.R. Tillen 64; G.S. Downing, P. Rouse 63; I. Watson 60; W.E. Swann 59; P. Downing, G.F. Foley 58; I. Scuffle 57; R. Newton, R. Ouseley 56; T. Buckingham, K. Goodchild, K. Norris, J. Wanklyn 55.

JUNIOR WANTED

Want to work for the Royals? We are looking for a willing office junior to help our hard-pressed staff with reception and telephonist duties and become a valuable member of the Elm Park team.

Please apply in writing to Adrian Porter, General Manager, Reading Football Club, Elm Park, Norfolk Road, Reading RG3 2EF.

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HALF TIME POSERS

1. Who is Luton Town's most capped player?
2. Where was Kerry Dixon born?
3. From which club did Andy Bernal join the Royals?
4. Who plays at Boothferry Park?
5. Which Scottish club is nicknamed The Bairns?

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ADIDAS SPORTS WATCHES

ON ONE SEASON 1994/95

DIVISION ONE SEASON 1994/95			Res	Pos	Att
AUG	13	Wolverhampton Wndrs.	0-1	—	27,012
	16	Gillingham (CCC 1-1)	1-0	—	2,556
	20	PORTSMOUTH	0-0		9,106
	23	GILLINGHAM (CCC 1-2)	3-0		3,436
	27	Barnsley	2-0	12	4,771
	30	STOKE CITY	4-0	5	7,103
SEPT	3	MILLWALL	0-0	6	8,715
	10	Oldham Athletic	3-1	2	8,412
	14	Swindon Town	0-1	4	11,551
	17	SHEFFIELD UNITED	1-0	3	9,036
	20	DERBY COUNTY (CCC2-1)	3-1	—	6,056
	24	Watford	2-2	5	8,015
	28	Derby County (CCC2-2)	0-2	—	9,476
OCT	1	NOTTS COUNTY	2-0	3	7,465
	8	Charlton Athletic	2-1	3	10,544
	15	BRISTOL CITY	1-0	2	9,389
	22	SUNDERLAND	0-2	2	10,757
	29	West Bromwich Albion	0-2	4	14,313
NOV	2	Derby County	2-1	4	10,585
	5	BURNLEY	0-0	4	8,150
	19	Southend United	1-4	5	5,511
	26	TRANMERE ROVERS	1-3	8	7,887
DEC	3	Sunderland	1-0	5	14,021
	6	MIDDLESBROUGH	1-1	5	10,301
	10	Portsmouth	1-1	6	8,578
	18	WOLVERHAMPTON W.	4-2	5	10,136
	26	LUTON TOWN			
	27	Port Vale			
	31	GRIMSBY TOWN			
JAN	2	Bolton Wanderers			
	7	(FA Cup 3)			
	14	WEST BROMWICH ALBION			
	21	Burnley			
	28	(F.A. Cup 4)			
FEB	4	Middlesbrough			
	11	DERBY COUNTY			
	18	Tranmere Rovers (F.A. Cup 5)			
	21	SOUTHEND UNITED			
	25	Notts County			
MAR	4	WATFORD			
	8	Millwall			
	11	BARNESLEY (F.A. Cup 6)			
	18	Stoke City			
	21	OLDHAM ATHLETIC			
	25	Sheffield United			
APRIL	1	SWINDON TOWN			
	8	Grimsby Town (F.A. Cup Semi)			
	15	PORT VALE			
	17	Luton Town			
	22	BOLTON WANDERERS			
	29	Bristol City			
MAY	6	CHARLTON ATHLETIC			
	20	F.A. Cup Final.			

Key: Goalscorer - CAPITALS Penalty - (P)

Endsleigh Insurance League Division One
Up to and including 18/12/94

	HOME					AWAY					HOME LEAGUE ATTENDANCES 1994/95						
	Pt	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Average	Highest			
Middlesbrough	22	8	1	2	21	8	5	3	3	14	11	43	18,194	23,435 v Burnley			
Wolverhampton Wanderers	22	8	1	2	23	11	3	3	5	16	16	37	25,781	27,764 v West Bromwich Albion			
Bolton Wanderers	22	7	3	1	21	8	3	3	5	15	19	36	11,031	12,127 v Bristol City			
Tranmere Rovers	22	8	2	1	26	12	2	4	5	9	14	36	7,035	8,482 v Swindon Town			
READING	22	5	4	2	14	8	5	2	4	14	14	36	8,913	10,577 v Sunderland			
Barnsley	22	7	3	1	16	7	3	2	6	8	16	35	5,248	8,737 v Derby County			
Sheffield United	22	7	2	2	19	8	2	4	5	14	15	33	14,109	16,820 v Watford			
Grimsby Town	22	6	4	1	18	9	2	5	4	14	18	33	5,812	8,930 v Sheffield United			
Stoke City	22	6	2	3	20	10	3	4	4	6	15	33	13,143	15,928 v Wolverhampton Wanderers			
Derby County	22	5	4	2	14	8	3	3	5	9	11	31	12,973	14,659 v Middlesbrough			
Southend United	22	7	1	3	14	8	2	3	6	9	9	25	4,856	5,833 v Millwall			
Luton Town	22	2	3	6	14	18	6	3	2	17	12	30	7,133	8,640 v West Bromwich Albion			
Watford	22	5	5	1	14	9	2	4	5	8	15	30	8,347	10,108 v Wolverhampton Wanderers			
Oldham Athletic	22	6	3	2	18	11	2	2	7	10	18	29	8,167	11,310 v Burnley			
Millwall	22	5	4	2	19	12	2	3	6	9	16	28	7,833	8,809 v Derby County			
Sunderland	22	2	6	3	10	10	4	4	3	14	10	28	15,422	17,926 v Millwall			
Charlton Athletic	21	4	3	4	16	14	2	5	3	16	18	26	9,406	10,876 v West Bromwich Albion			
Port Vale	22	5	3	3	17	12	1	4	6	9	7	25	8,710	10,324 v Bolton Wanderers			
Swindon Town	22	5	5	2	18	14	1	1	8	12	23	24	9,933	14,036 v Wolverhampton Wanderers			
Burnley	21	2	5	3	12	14	3	4	4	9	14	24	13,338	17,765 v Wolverhampton Wanderers			
West Bromwich Albion	22	6	2	2	12	8	0	4	8	7	22	24	14,003	14,616 v Oldham Athletic			
Portsmouth	22	2	4	5	11	17	3	4	4	11	16	23	8,606	13,466 v Wolverhampton Wanderers			
Bristol City	22	3	3	5	9	15	2	1	8	8	17	19	8,132	11,127 v Sunderland			
Notts County	22	3	4	4	13	15	1	2	8	8	17	18	7,188	10,088 v West Bromwich Albion			



13 0 4 0 Adrian Williams
*Career totals for Reading, include League, FA Cup, League Cup only.

Reading Appearances and Goalscorers Up to and including 18/12/94

League	1994/5			CAREER
	FA	CCLC	GOALS	
0	0	0	0	Lea Barkus 9 (8) 1
3 (1)	0	0	0	Darren Barnard 3 (1) 0
0	0	0	0	David Bass 7 (1) 0
14	0	3	0	Andy Bernal 17 0
0 (1)	0	0	0	Alan Carey 0 (2) 0
17 (2)	0	2	6	Michael Gilkes 315 (37) 46
21	0	4	0	Mick Gooding 234 (4) 25
3 (2)	0	0	1	Uwe Hartenberger 3 (12) 3
22	0	4	0	Shaka Hislop 92 0
8 (1)	0	2 (2)	1	Paul Holsgrove 10 (3) 1
11 (1)	0	3 (1)	1	Jeff Hopkins 99 (4) 4
7 (1)	0	0	1	Tom Jones 42 (7) 2
21 (1)	0	4	1	Dylan Kerr 76 (1) 3
0 (3)	0	0	0	James Lambert 14 (26) 3
13 (1)	0	4	6	Stuart Lovell 124 (28) 43
0 (1)	0	0	0	Mick Murphy 0 (1) 0
5 (4)	0	0 (1)	0	Keith McPherson 177 (7) 6
22	0	4	5	Simon Osborn 26 5
13 (2)	0	3	0	Phil Parkinson 106 (3) 8
19	0	4	8	Jimmy Quinn 122 66
0	0	0	0	Ray Ranson 27 (2) 0
0	0	0	0	Simon Sheppard 0 0
10 (10)	0	2 (1)	5	Scott Taylor 160 (46) 24
20	0	2	0	Dariusz Dowdowczyk 22 0
13	0	4	0	Adrian Williams 181 (3) 13

South East Counties League Division 2
Up to and including 17/12/94

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oxford United	17	8	6	3	34	22	22
Swindon Town	16	10	1	5	38	20	21
Crystal Palace	12	9	2	1	32	12	20
Wimbledon	13	8	3	2	52	21	19
Bristol City	13	8	3	2	31	10	19
AFC Bournemouth	16	7	4	5	28	37	18
Brentford	16	6	4	6	21	22	16
Tottenham Hotspur	16	7	1	8	30	32	15
Southampton	16	5	5	6	21	23	15
Brighton & Hove Alb.	14	5	3	6	27	37	13
Colchester United	14	4	5	5	19	30	13
Luton Town	15	6	0	9	32	25	12
READING	16	4	2	10	17	37	10
Bristol Rovers	14	1	6	7	17	30	8
Wycombe Wanderers	16	0	3	13	15	56	3



SKIPPER'S SOAP BOX

*Captain ADRIAN WILLIAMS
writes for The Royal.*

WHAT a great way to show the millions of people watching on TV how we play football at Elm Park!

Nobody could have failed to be hugely impressed by the way we took hold of the game against Wolves. I know I was...and I'd been watching the lads train all week.

It was a great boost for everyone at the club to hear England manager Terry Venables being so complimentary, particularly as some people seem to think the only place you'll find good football being played these days is in the Premiership.

With everything that has gone on in the past couple of weeks I think the lads should give themselves a pat on the back because they didn't let it affect them and, in fact, were even more motivated than they would have been in normal circumstances.

We fell behind to an early goal from Bully and it would have been so easy for the boys to let their heads go down. But to their credit they battled back and we deservedly took the three points.

brilliant job

The crowd were absolutely fantastic and even though Wolves are used to 27,000 of their own fans cheering them on, the support our lads got throughout must have surprised them a bit and was certainly a major factor in the victory.

I've found it pretty difficult watching the team play while I've been injured and it was even more tense sitting in the dugout, but at least it allowed me to be a bit more involved than I have been in recent weeks. Quinny and Geordie have done a brilliant job since taking over and Jeff Hopkins and I have done our bit, but as I say the lads needed very little motivating

and it was just a question of remembering to do everything that has been drummed into us over the past couple of years.

And, as the chairman said after the Wolves game, the conductor might have gone but the orchestra's still here and very much in tune.

It's been interesting to look at things from a different angle, getting involved with the youth team and so on, and the young lads were unlucky not to beat Bournemouth the morning before the Wolfe game.

terrific spirit

They battled away and worked very hard, typifying the terrific spirit which has run right through the club over the past fortnight.

Of course the most frustrating thing is that I can still only give advice from the sidelines, particularly as I reckon I'll go crazy the next time anyone asks me if I'm finding my injury a pain in the neck!!!

I'd have loved to be playing today so that I could face Kerry Dixon who, of course, was a big hero at Elm Park before moving on to Chelsea and becoming an England international.

Kerry's been knocking in some useful goals this season and Luton have been getting some great results away from home, so the lads will need to show just as much determination as they did in the Wolves game.

It goes without saying that, on behalf of the players, I hope you all had a great Christmas and can look forward to an even better 1995. We'll probably have a new manager by then but I'm sure our style of play won't change and we'll be looking to build on what's already been achieved.



NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW THAT...

ALAN SEDUNARY looks at the festive season and pulls no punches

THE season of goodwill doesn't always extend to the football pitch and Boxing Day frequently manages to live up to its name as players take out their frustrations just because they got another pair of socks from Aunty Maud or Santa forgot to bring them the latest Royals video.

And somebody must really have ruffled the feathers of our centre forward Tommy Tait before the game with Millwall here at Elm Park 60 years ago today.

He had two goals disallowed and, adding injury to insult, was then given a rough time by visiting centre half Turnbull. When Turnbull fouled him once too often Tait retaliated and the referee, who needed a police escort at the end, made him the first Reading player to be sent off in a League match.

One of the reasons for violence on the pitch on December 26 used to be because clubs always played each other on Christmas Day, with the return coming 24 hours later. As a result the second match would see some players looking for 'a bit of afters', and I don't mean cold turkey!

Our visit to Swansea on Boxing Day 1948 was just such a game. The meeting at Elm Park had been tough, but the return got totally out of control and at one stage 21 players were brawling in the Reading area after our keeper George Marks had saved a penalty.

Consequently both sides finished with nine men - Reading's Ron Moyse was carried off injured while two Swansea players were sent off along with our skipper Tony MacPhee.

Three red cards would hardly be news these days, but in 1948 it hit the headlines. So I wonder how the press would have reacted to events at Elm Park in May 1921 when a referee sent both TEAMS off!

We were playing Southampton in a so-called 'friendly' for the Royal Berkshire Hospital Charity Cup and things began to boil over when Harry Weston was carried off after a bad foul by a Southampton defender. The play got so rough that the referee was forced to send both teams to the dressing rooms to cool down and play eventually resumed with 10 men on each side. Weston was unable to continue and the Saints' sinner decided he'd be safer sitting things out!

Luton seem to have had quite an influence on our disciplinary problems in earlier times (Tommy Tait had previously played for them), because they were also involved with the first ever Reading sending-off.

Back in the 1890s, when we were still playing at Caversham Cricket Club, Reading's 'Tug' Wilson was sent off for fighting with Luton's aptly named full back

'Punch' McEwan. Apparently the punchup continued long after they left the pitch, but the referee 'forgot' to report the incident so they both escaped suspension.

Not so lucky was Selwyne Baptiste who was handed a two year ban by the Trinidad F.A. back in 1956. Unimpressed by the penalty, Selwyne promptly played again the very next day and this time the F.A. got really serious - by banning him for a THOUSAND years! Let's hope Shaka toes the line the next time he goes home.

I assume that punishment must be some kind of a record, but Reading's Lawrie Sanchez also created a bit of unwanted history when he took an early bath at Elm Park in August 1982.

Playing against Oxford United in the Group Trophy, Sanch handled deliberately to break up an attack and promptly became the first player in the country to be sent off for committing a professional foul.

The so-called professional foul has led to some strange sendings off, but none as silly as our own John Chapman's in 1968. Nicknamed 'Chopper', you'd have expected him to be sent off for some bloodcurdling tackle, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Play had stopped during our League Cup tie at Colchester, while an injured player received treatment, when manager Roy Bentley ordered Chapman to the touchline to receive some tactical instructions. The referee immediately called him back onto the field - and sent him off for leaving the pitch without permission!

Confused? So were the F.A. because they let Chapman off without any further punishment.

A sending off usually ruins a player's day, but maybe not in John Murray's case. Before joining us Minty played for Bury and he achieved a pretty rare double in a game against Doncaster Rovers in 1973 - a hatrick and a dismissal in the same game!

But what about the sending off that never was? It came at Bury (there must be something in the water) when Reading were there in December 1930.

After an apparently innocuous tackle the referee decided to send off Reading defender Len Featherby. But, as he made the long walk to the dressing room, the Bury skipper sportingly interceded on Featherby's behalf and amazingly persuaded the referee to change his mind and call him back to complete the game.

However the F.A. weren't as delighted as Reading were with the official's decision. Somebody had to be suspended...so they banned the soft-hearted referee!

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team line-up

READING

Match Officials

Referee: Gurnam Singh
(Wolverhampton)

Linesmen:
M. D. Dearing (yellow)
D. R. Spicer (red & yellow)

Reserve Official:
A. Doran

Next Home Game

Endsleigh League Division One
Saturday, December 31st, 1994
GRIMSBY TOWN
Kick Off 3.00 pm

Mitre Matchball Sponsors



Lingwood Cleaning Services

1	Shaka Hislop
2	Andy Bernal
3	Tom Jones
4	Dariusz Wdowczyk
5	Scott Taylor
6	Phil Parkinson
7	Michael Gilkes
8	Mick Gooding
9	Jimmy Quinn
10	Stuart Lovell
11	Simon Osborn
12	
14	

SUB GK: Simon Sheppard

LUTON TOWN

1	Juergen Sommer
2	Julian James
3	Marvin Johnson
4	Paul Allen
5	Mitchell Thomas
6	Trevor Peake
7	Paul Telfer
8	Scott Oakes
9	Kerry Dixon
10	David Preece
11	Dwight Marshall
12	
14	

SUB GK: Fred Barber