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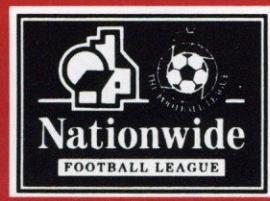


BOLDON
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CREWE ALEX

v

LUTON TOWN



DIVISION TWO PLAY-OFFS
SEMI-FINAL, FIRST LEG

SUNDAY
11th MAY, 1997
Kick-off 3.00 p.m.

Price £1.50

Season 1996/97 Issue No. 27

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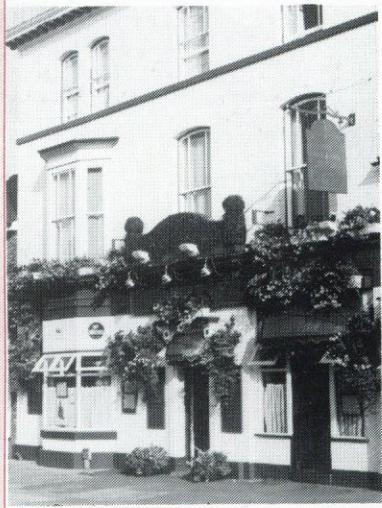
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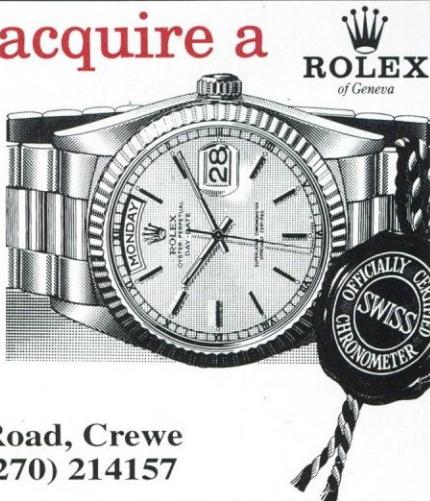
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Programme Editor: Harold Finch
Crewe Alexandra Official Programme

Views expressed by individual contributors are
not necessarily those of the Football Club



Dario Writes

are planning to do! The application is in for the new synthetic pitch on our old training ground and the plans have been drawn up for the final improvement to our ground.

You think I'm proud of our achievements? - too true I am!!

The latest recommendations from the DELOTTE TOUCHE report suggests that the Third Division regionalise incorporating several Vauxhall Conference sides. Believe me when I say that it is the first and inevitable step towards part-time football. This report states that most First Division sides lose £1m a year and most Second Division sides lose £1/4m. How can Third Division sides continue full time on gates of around 2,000. We are at that in-between stage and must strive to get into that second tier. In the foreseeable future we are not going to compete with the top Premier League Clubs. Not even the top First Division, but we want to be in the next group.

That means getting promotion and we have another chance to progress that today. If we make it this year it means we can pay our players more which means we are more likely to keep more of them with us. So anyone who tells me we do not want promotion should now know that he/she is talking rubbish.

I'm delighted to welcome Lennie Lawrence and his Luton side to Gresty Road today. I've known Lennie since we were both young coaches in the Surrey Coaches Association and he likes to see the game played the same way as I do, that is the beauty of the pairing of us with them. They have the advantage over us with the results in the league matches, but we are confident we have improved enough to cope with them.

Nearly all of our players are fit now, only Brian Launders and Stephen Pope are definitely out of contention for selection. We are spoilt for choice.

Enjoy the day, and remember how the fans of less fortunate clubs are feeling at the moment. I hope you don't take this the wrong way, but think how all at Hereford are feeling at the moment.

The Players, Directors and I thank you for your support and we hope we will be able to take you to Wembley again!

SAFETY AT SPORTS GROUNDS ACT 1975 and 1985

The Stadium at Gresty Road is a sports ground designated under the above acts. In the interest of spectators safety certain conditions must be observed at all times. These are listed on the Football League Regulations which are posted on entry and in different areas of the stadium.

The Main Stand is designated as a no smoking area. Any spectator acting in contravention of these conditions is liable to ejection from the ground or arrest.

Encroachment on to the playing area is forbidden at all times. Closed circuit television is in operation at the stadium and can be used as evidence in a court of law.

First aid and medical facilities are provided at the stadium with first aid posts at the Family Stand, Gresty Road Stand and Main Stand Areas of the ground.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency, Club Stewards/Police, will put into operation set procedures and direct spectators accordingly. Spectators are asked to comply with these instructions. Please remain calm and observe the directions given to you.

Please remember the Club Stewards are here to assist you and we hope that you have an enjoyable visit, in a safe environment at the Stadium.

Cliff Simpson - Stadium Manager

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Now that this is definitely the last game this season played at Gresty Road, Clair and myself would like to thank all the sponsors we have had the pleasure of working with this season. However, we are still looking for new business, and as far as Clair and myself are concerned, the summer break will not be filled with time off and holidays, we will begin again on our "Selling Campaign" and putting things in place for next season.

Alison Bowler

— THE —
ALISON - CLAIR
— PAGES —

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CHRISTOPHER



Christopher Sherwood, pictured with friends prior to the Chesterfield fixture.

Please contact Clair or myself for Birthday Party Bookings for next season.

The total cost, which includes a meal at McDonald's, Tour of the Ground, Meet the Players, Photographs and tickets to view the game (including complimentary tickets for the parents) is £10.50 per head.

Simply the Best!



John Huxley is pictured with our Chairman John Bowler being presented with the Division Two Groundsman of the Year Award from Jack Taylor.



Seth - Rolls Royce's No. 1

Pictured after the Chesterfield fixture played on 26th April is Seth Johnson being presented with his Man of the Match Award from Mike Yeomans, of Rolls Royce.

Mike commented that "Seth not only played outstandingly well against Chesterfield, but was also excellent on the previous Tuesday night at Wrexham" - Well done Seth, I'm sure we will be seeing you as the sponsors' choice many more times.



Red Lion Winner

Our latest happy
RED LION
Winner receives her £1,000 cheque from Steve Macauley



AWAY TRAVEL

LUTON TOWN

Wednesday, 14th May – Kick-off 7.45 p.m.

Please note: This game is ALL TICKET

All tickets must be purchased prior to the match day from the Club Shop

No tickets will be available on the day.

Admission: All Seating: £12.50 Adults
£6.00 Concessions

Coach: Members £8.00
Non-Members £12.00

Departs: 2.30 p.m.

Directions:

Exit M1 at junction 11 and follow signs for Luton (A505) into Dunstable Road. Follow the one-way system and turn back towards Dunstable, take the first left into Oak Road.

Nearest Railway Station: Luton (1 mile)

Today's Ball Sponsors

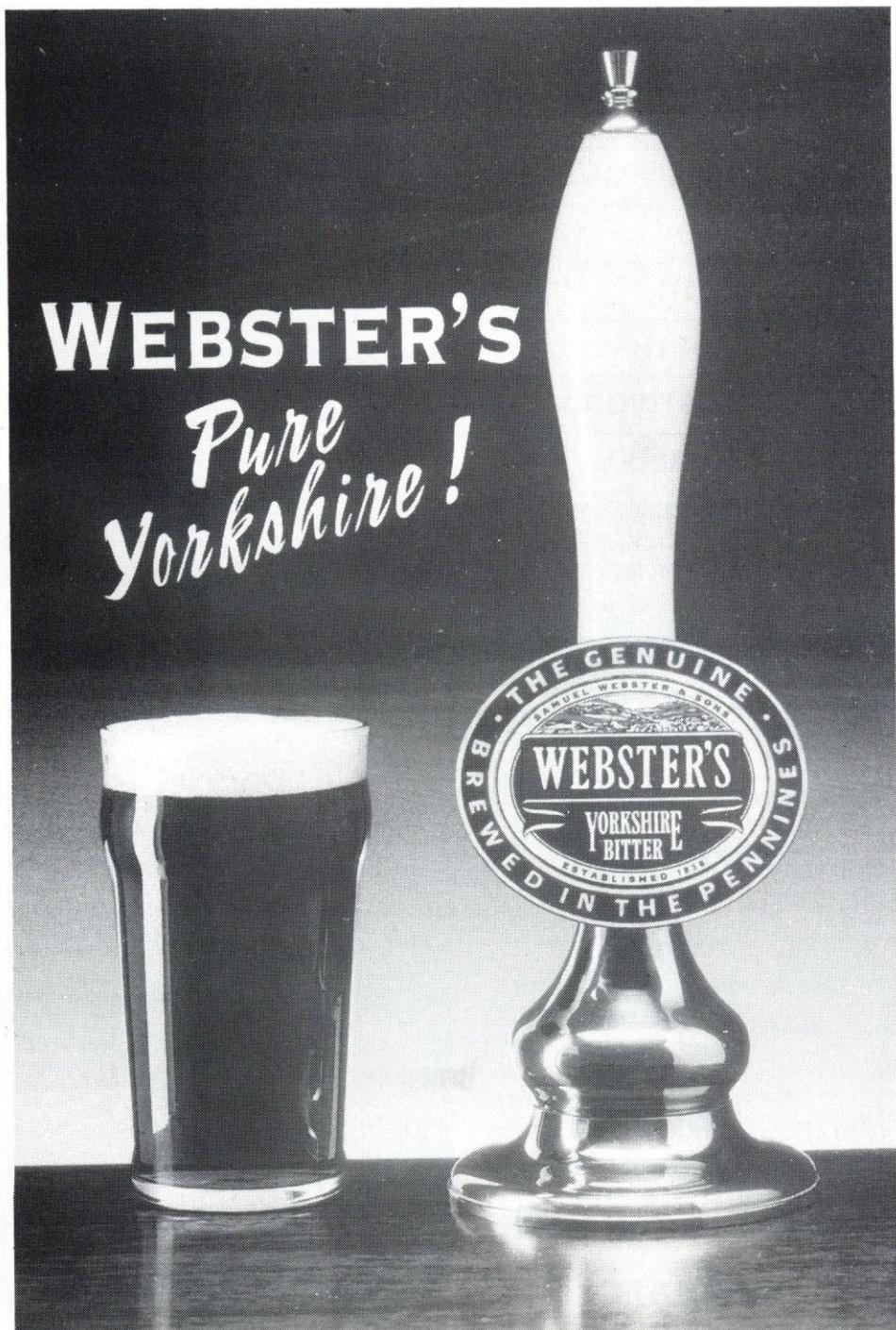


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(d) "From Brenda, Concorde, with love from
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(a) In Memory of E. Latham (b) Peter Hallett

PHIL CHARNOCK

(c) Salford Travelling Alex

STEVE GARVEY

(a) Angela and Arthur Carter
(c) Pete Witten from Luxembourg

MARK GAYLE

(Full Kit) Junior Alex

BRIAN LAUNDERS

(a, b, c) Trish and Paul, The Office Bar,
Benalmadena

STEVE MACAULEY

(Full Kit) Sandbach Travelling Alex

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LEE UNSWORTH

(a,b,c) Lee Arnold (d) Jayne Bowyer, Middlewich

ASHLEY WESTWOOD

(Full Kit) Sandbach Travelling Alex

GARETH WHALLEY

(Full Kit) Crewe Alex Official Supporters Coach

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would like to sponsor part of his kit, then call to see Elaine or
Clair in the Club Shop

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31/8 Watford Advasport	C. Hulme
3/9 Port Vale Ridgway Caterers	Omega Music
10/9 Bury Courage	
14/9 Wrexham ClubCall	Crewe Training Centre
1/10 Blackpool Courage	Gwyneth Dunwoody M.P.
12/10 Brentford	In memory of Norman Warham
15/10 York City Nurdin & Peacock	CEF
2/11 Wycombe Royal Bank	Dagfields Craft Centre
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20/12 Notts Co. Robert Eardley	C. Hulme
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1/3 Gillingham N.W.F. Agriculture	Rickie Garner
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15/3 Luton Town CLS	"Clarke & Son", The Beer Cellar 150-151 Market Street
18/3 Millwall Royal Bank	CEF/Graham Geary
22/3 Peterborough Utd. Sentinel	Toad Innovations Ltd.
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11/5 Luton Town (Play-off Semi-Final) Omega Music	

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FOOTBALL IN THE COMMUNITY

with *Chris Walters*



Crewe Alex Community Programme is staging two two-day coaching courses at Shavington Leisure Centre during the school holidays at the end of this month.

There is a strikers' course on May 27 and 28 and a goalkeepers course on May 29 and 30. Each course costs £14 for the two days and sessions will be from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Application forms are available from the

Alex Community Programme office at Gresty Road (Tel: 216682).

The Community Programme has also arranged two-day fun sessions at £14 at Hartford High School (May 27 and 28), Cuddington Primary School (June 3 and 4) and Holmes Chapel Primary School (June 5 and 6). The Hartford sessions are for boys and girls aged 6 to 16, and the Cuddington and Holmes Chapel events aged 6 to 14.

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NATIONWIDE LEAGUE - DIVISION TWO

Final Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bury	46	24	12	10	62	38	84
Stockport	46	23	13	10	59	41	82
Luton	46	21	15	10	71	45	78
Brentford	46	20	14	12	56	43	74
Bristol C.	46	21	10	15	69	51	73
Crewe	46	22	7	17	56	47	73
Blackpool	46	18	15	13	60	47	69
Wrexham	46	17	18	11	54	50	69
Burnley	46	19	11	16	71	55	68
Chesterfield	46	18	14	14	42	39	68
Gillingham	46	19	10	17	60	59	67
Walsall	46	19	10	17	54	53	67
Watford	46	16	19	11	45	38	67
Millwall	46	16	13	17	50	55	61
Preston	46	18	7	21	49	55	61
Bournemouth	46	15	15	16	43	45	60
Bristol Rovers	46	15	1	20	47	50	56
Wycombe W.	46	15	10	21	51	56	55
Plymouth	46	12	1	16	47	58	54
York	46	13	13	20	47	68	52
Peterborough	46	11	14	21	55	73	47
Shrewsbury	46	11	13	22	49	74	46
Rotherham	46	7	14	25	39	70	35
Notts County	46	7	14	25	33	59	35

CREWE ALEX GOALSCORERS SEASON 1996/97

Lge	C.C.C.	F.A.W.S.	Total
Adebola	16	1	1
Murphy	10	-	3
Rivers	6	-	-
Smith	4	-	1
Tierney	3	-	-
Barr	4	-	-
Macauley	2	-	1
Whalley	3	-	-
Westwood	2	-	1
Ellison	2	-	-
Lightfoot	1	-	1
Savage	1	-	-
Garvey	-	-	1
Charnock	1	-	-
Johnson	1	-	-
Opponents	-	-	1
Totals	56	1	10
		3	70

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A Personal View

by Harold Finch

The valuable headed goal by Ashley Westwood at Bootham Crescent, York has ensured that for the third successive season, Crewe Alexandra take their place in the Semi-Final stage of the Play Offs. Should they now go and reach the Final and then even win it, the First Division would be uncharted territory. When reflecting on Season 1996/97, one of the topics supporters will be talking about will be the sequence of four games, two scheduled and two rearranged when our haul of points from the 12 on offer turned out to be just three. Had the Alex even secured half the points then the final league position would also have been different.

Of the four games at Gresty Road that ended in defeat for the Alex, it may have escaped your notice that not one of them was against a team which has been automatically promoted into Division One, i.e. Stockport County and Bury, they both went home pointless. Watford, strongly tipped to go straight back up a Division were the first side to lower our colours and York City were the second. So far as York are concerned their away win at Rotherham in the final away game of the season ensured their own safety in the Second Division. Bristol City and Chesterfield were the other sides to win at Gresty Road, Bristol City are also in the play offs and also completed the double over us. The same can be said of Chesterfield, in the case of Chesterfield, they have had a tremendous season, taking Middlesbrough to a replay in the F.A. Cup Semi Final.

Now to a few facts and figures about the season, not since Season 1958/59 have the Alex had to use 5 goalkeepers in a league season, older supporters will recall that Season 1957/58 was the inaugural one of Division Four. To refresh your memory over the names of the keepers, they were David Evans, Gerry Lowery, Brian Dobing, John Goodman and Keith Jones.

Of the five used this season, two of them have been Australian's, firstly Steve Mautone, here on loan from West Ham United but now with Reading on a permanent basis. Jason Kearton is also an Australian who joined us from Everton and is at present out of the side due to an injury sustained at Brentford. Mark Gayle had started the season in goal but the injury he got in the Coca Cola Cup against Port Vale has kept him out ever since and he is now on loan with Birmingham City. The last one to be mentioned is another keeper who came on loan, Martin Taylor from Derby County. On this subject, the club now have a new record for the number of clean sheets in league games in a season, the previous one was 17, it is now 18, add two in cup competitions then the final tally goes up to 20. When was that other season? - you now have the close season to work it out for yourself.

No modern season would be complete without changes in some form or other, and 96/97 has been no exception. Clubs participating in European Competitions were exempt to the third round of the Coca Cola Cup but despite the exemption neither finalist came from those clubs. The A.W.S. saw the mini group games dispensed with, all games being decided on knock out basis from the first game. Changes were also made on the domestic front, Adidas, taking over from Vandanel in supplying the club with kit, replica kit items and sportswear. Both the home and away strips were changed, the way one in particular being quite different from anything the club have had before. There have been others, but, knowing my place, I will not comment on them.

Call me old fashioned if you like, but to use one expression, it is possibly "too late to teach an old

dog new tricks" and the thoughts of having to rely on a computer or even the internet to carry out my duties do not really interest me. I can state quite categorically that the memory is still fine, the incentive to carry out constant research is still as strong as ever. I still enjoy using my typewriter and despite the number of words used for each edition more than one finger gets its fair share of exercise.

One of the great pleasures of my valued association with Crewe Alexandra is being able to meet so many people on a regular basis at home and away. One new contact this season has been a gentleman from Audlem who confronts me with quiz question on the Alex before every game. So far I have a 100% record, match days or nights would not be the same without his visits.

Coming to my contacts on the away trips, for two long standing friends, for one it has ended in joy and for the other a great disappointment. Firstly, Peter Cullen of Bury, our association goes back a

long way and we have helped each other out on more than one occasion. When Crewe won the game at Gresty Road earlier in the season, who would have thought at that time that Bury would be Second Division Champions - not so many! Now to the one at the other end of the table, Ian Mills from Notts County, I well remember at Meadow Lane seeing him after our exit from the Semi-Final stage of the Play offs last year to wish him and his club well, here we are one year later with his team being relegated. They will not be coming here unless it is in the cup competition but thank goodness there is still a telephone.

What a great atmosphere the Crewe fans provided at York last Saturday, visits to York have been good in recent seasons, not only in respect of the precise results but there is a genuine feeling of respect from their fans from Crewe Alexandra. Here again no trip to Bootham Crescent would be complete without running into Ray Wynn, the Alex team coach and Ray almost arrived at the same time.

Can the Alex score a goal against Luton in this Play Off Semi Final, the two league games did not provide one on the credit side - we shall very soon know. Finally, my thanks to Dario and the team for another good season, hopefully this time it is now our turn for another trip to those twin towers at Wembley.



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THE PRESS PAGE

with Graham McGarry

BBC RADIO STOKE - THE NUMBER ONE STATION
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Good afternoon everyone to what is beginning to be a regular appearance in the play-offs for Dario Gradi's side.

Many supporters may take this achievement of reaching the top six granted but ask the likes of those involved at Burnley, Watford and Millwall the feeling of not reaching the heights that Crewe players have done again.

Without doubt all those connected with the Alex will be hoping now to go one better than in previous seasons and reach the finals at Wembley, although the two legged tie against Luton Town will present a difficult hurdle to

overcome.

No disrespect to one of our former players who likes to attend Gresty Road when he's not playing in the Premiership but one hopes Ashley Ward is not taking up his seat in the stand.

He told me on his previous visit against Chesterfield that every time since his move to Norwich he's never seen his ex club win. Surely a case to put your feet up at home Ash.

Anyway I hope you've all enjoyed reading the Press Page this season and now let's get behind the team this afternoon and then again on

Wednesday and cheer the lads on to Wembley.

The season has had many memorable moments already, I hope there's more to come.

The pairing of Ashley Westwood and Steve Macauley has once again been steady, the arrival of Jason Kearton must be one of Dario Gradi's best signings, the workrate of Rob Savage cannot be faulted, the skill in midfield of Danny Murphy and Gareth Whalley has been consistent, the power of Dele Adebola has terrorised opposing defenders, but the highlight for me was that Shaun Smith special at Brentford.

Have a good summer and I'll hopefully see all of you and more in around ten weeks time.

GRAHAM

What have David James and Frank Bruno got in common?

Both don't know how to use a pair of gloves.



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The Men from Kenilworth Road

Welcome to LUTON TOWN

It is only 8 weeks since Luton Town were at Gresty Road to fulfil a league fixture, a game which ended in a goalless draw. This particular meeting does not have league points at stake, instead there is the opportunity of going on to Wembley and the hope of a promotion place as well.

For Crewe it is the third successive season that they have reached this same stage, the semi-finals. Last season it was Notts County who ended our hopes of a trip to Wembley by a single goal margin whereas in the previous season Bristol Rovers had ended our hopes, that was at Gresty Road and on that occasion it was the away goals rule that halted our progress.

For Luton Town, having missed one of the automatic promotion spots by just one place it is their opportunity to go back into Division One after an absence of just one season. Having been relegated at the end of the 95/96 Season they had been widely tipped as a side to go straight back up, it may still happen but nothing is certain in football.

In the first few weeks of the season, Luton had suffered three successive reverses, it started with a 2-1 defeat by Burnley on the opening day of the season to be followed by a 3-2 defeat at Brentford and then their heaviest reverse of the season, 5-0 at Bristol City, one of the teams also contesting the play off games!

The first victory of the season came on the 31st August when Mitchell Thomas scored the winner against Rotherham United at Kenilworth Road. Their league position at the time was 19th. From then onwards they steadily improved their league position until, by the 18th December, after winning 1-0 at Millwall they were in top place in the Division. They only remained there for a week before going into second spot but they have been in a leading position all the way through and it is only in the final weeks of the season that they came down into the play off places. This came at a time when Bury, who became champions and Stockport caught up on their outstanding games.

Apart from Burnley who won on the opening day, the only other teams to have won at Kenilworth Road in the season just ended have been Chesterfield on the 14th September and Millwall on the 8th March. The complete playing records of Luton and Crewe are not so very different except for the fact that Luton have more away draws than Crewe and have scored more goals on their travels. The complete records read as follows:

Luton	Home	P.23	W.13	D.7	L.3	F.38	A.14	Away	P.23	W.8	D.8	L.7	F.33	A.31
Crewe	Home	P.23	W.15	D.4	L.4	F.38	A.15	Away	P.23	W.7	D.3	L.13	F.18	A.32

Final thoughts - Luton's first goal of the season was scored by Tony Thorpe and the last one by Andrew Fotiadis while Crewe's first goal was scored by Francis Tierney and the last one by Ashley Westwood. It will be interesting to see whether any of these names appear on the scoresheet in the play off games.

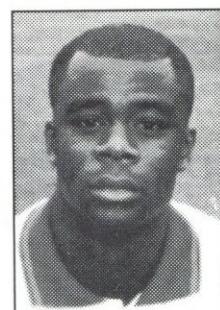


Manager **LENNIE LAWRENCE** has been in charge since December 1995 and in that time he has seen his side relegated from the First Division and now in the play off games in the hope of a quick return. Lennie is the 21st manager in the history of Luton Town.

The line up for Luton Town shows that during the 96/97 campaign, the defence has not seen many changes throughout the season. Starting with the American born keeper **IAN FEUER** who came to the club from West Ham United for a fee of £580,000 in December 1995 and has played in all league games and missed just one cup game, the A.W.S. fixture against Leyton Orient on the 10th December. **JULIAN JAMES** at No. 2 missed two league games and the A.W.S. game against Northampton. He had joined the club as a trainee and later became a full time player with them. Scored just one league goal and one in the cup this season.

MITCHELL THOMAS. He was recruited from Spurs on a free transfer in March 1994 and has now passed the 200 mark in appearances with the club. Normally wears the No. 3 shirt, has missed very few games this season. **GARY WADDOCK.** Another experienced defender who came on a free transfer from Bristol Rovers in 1994. This season has played in 38 league games and that took his total to over the 100 mark.

By sheer coincidence, central defender **STEVE DAVIS** was missing from the first game of the campaign and also the last one against Stockport County. In his other games he has scored 8 league goals and one in the cup. He was a £750,000 capture from Burnley in July 1995. Deputising for Steve against Stockport County was **DARREN PATTERSON**, he is a Northern Ireland International and came to Luton from Crystal Palace for a fee of £150,000.



MARVIN JOHNSON is recognised by the club as a versatile defender playing either at full back or in the centre of defence. He first joined the club in 1985 and it was in 1988 that he made his debut against Wimbledon.

PAUL MCCLAREN. Joined the club straight from school, signing in July 1993. His club debut came in October 1995 at Prenton Park, home of Tranmere Rovers. Has also been capped by England at Youth International level. **GRAHAM ALEXANDER.** Born in Coventry he joined the club from Scunthorpe United for £100,000 and has played in 44 league games and 11 in the cup this season. **DAVID OLDFIELD.** Born Perth, Australia, he is now in his second spell with the club. He left Kenilworth Road in 1989 to join Manchester City for £600,000. Later moved to Leicester City and then in July 1995 came back to Luton from Leicester for a fee of £150,000. Has scored 6 goals during the 96/97 Season and that included a hat trick in the 5-1 home win against Preston North End in February.

Luton F.C. - Season 1996/97



BACK ROW (left to right): Stuart Douglas, Jamie Woodsford, Sean Evers, Kim Grant, Paul McLaren, Darren Patterson, Gary Simpson, John Taylor, Ben Chinery, Bontcho Guentchev, Graham Alexander, Matthew Upson, Robert Kean, Chris Wilmett. **THIRD ROW:** Cherry Newbery, (Club Secretary), Clive Goodyear (Physio), Wayne Turner (First Team Coach), David Oldfield, Des Linton, Marvin Johnson, Nathan Abbey, Ian Feuer, Kelvin Davis, Mitchell Thomas, Aaron Skelton, Andrew Fotiadis, John Moore (Youth Team Coach), Trevor Peake (Reserve Team Coach), Les Shannon (Chief Coach). **SEATED:** Julian James, Tony Thorpe, Steve Davis (Club Captain), Nigel Terry (Director), David Kohler (Chairman), Lennie Lawrence (Manager), Cliff Bassett (Director), Chris Green (Director), Gary Waddock (Team Captain) Dwight Marshall, Richard Harvey. **FRONT ROW:** Liam George, Gary Doherty, Jimmy Cox, Steve Augustine, Andrew Barr, Nick Webb, Russell Lawes, Terry Sweeney, Matthew Spring, Andre Scarlett, Andrew Smith, Ian Jones.

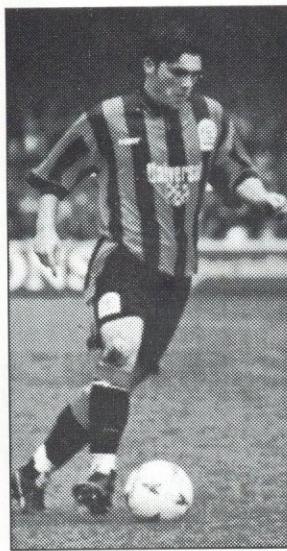
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ANDREW FOTIADIS. Born in Hitchin, Herts. He stayed on at school to complete his 'A' Level studies before signing for the club on a full time basis. It is during the 96/97 Season that he played his first league games for the club. He notched his first league goal on the 12th April against Walsall and also scored in the final game against Stockport. Most definitely one to watch for the future.

STAR MAN



The player who has appeared on the scoring lists with regularity this season for Luton is **TONY THORPE**. Born in Leicester he joined his home town club but it was in the early part of the 92/93 Season that he moved to Luton. He had good reason to recall his debut for the club, it was in the fourth round F.A. Cup tie at Newcastle in

January 1994 and he also scored in that game. In the 94/95 Season he was to make only five appearances and they were all as substitute. During last summer he signed a new contract and it has been a remarkable season for him. In his 39 league appearances he has scored a total of 28 league goals and also 3 in cup games. He has scored three hat tricks during the season, against Walsall, Rotherham United and also at home when Crewe were the visitors in mid December.

RICHARD HARVEY has been with the club since July 1996 and he is a former England Youth International. Has had his career badly interrupted with injury, he had to undergo surgery for a cruciate knee ligament injury. He was out for the whole of the 93/94 Season. He fought his way back to fitness and into the side, but in the pre-season build up for the 96/97 Season had further problems. Has once more come into the first team reckoning. **KIM GRANT** was born in Ghana and he moved to Charlton Athletic for £250,000 in March 1996. He scored on his debut against Ipswich Town. He is a regular member of the Ghanaian National side. Has been in the side on some occasions in the season but as substitute more than in the starting lineup.

A name that was a familiar one during his time with Ipswich Town was **BONTCHO GUENTCHEV** the Bulgarian International. He moved to Luton Town on a free transfer in July 1995 but has been unable to gain a regular place in the team. Finally a newcomer in recent times has been **ANDY KIWOMYA** who moved down to Luton from Bradford City on loan. He is an experienced forward player and has been with several clubs during his career. Made his Luton debut against Walsall on the 12th April and he made it a scoring one.

TEAM CHECK

Crewe Alexandra 2

Red Shirts, White Shorts Manager: **Dario Gradi**

TEAM	Changes	Goal Time
1 ADEMOLA BANKOLE		
2 LEE UNSWORTH		
3 SHAUN SMITH		
4 ASHLEY WESTWOOD		
5 STEVE MACAULEY		
6 SETH JOHNSON		
7 GARETH WHALLEY		
8 ROB SAVAGE		
9 STEVE ANTHROBUS		
10 DANNY MURPHY		
11 DELE ADEBOLA		
12		
13		
14		

LUTON TOWN 1

Colours to be announced Manager: **Lennie Lawrence**

TEAM	Changes	Goal Time
1 IAN FEUER		
2 JULIAN JAMES		
3 MITCHELL THOMAS		
4 GARY WADDOCK		
5 STEVE DAVIS		
6 MARVIN JOHNSON		
7 PAUL McLAREN		
8 GRAHAM ALEXANDER		
9 DAVID OLDFIELD	1	
10 TONY THORPE		
11 ANDREW FOTIADIS		
12		
13		
14		

Officials

Referee: **T. Heilbron** (Sheffield)
Assistant M.L. Dean (Red & Yellow Flag)
Referees: P.M. Roberts (Yellow Flag)

Meet the Referee

TONY HEILBRON has been refereeing since 1981, becoming a League Linesman in 1989 and then to the Referees List for the 93/94 Season. Was involved in the Play Off Semi Final last season. Enjoys golf and keep fit.



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CLIFF SIMPSON'S STADIUM NEWS

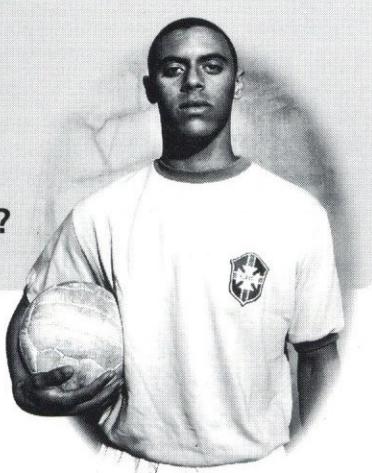
Welcome to what is the last game of the season at Gresty Road, and another exciting play off game. The play offs certainly keep the interest going right until the end of the season.

Looking back over the past season it has mainly been a successful one off the field with only minor incidents at some of the matches spoiling the occasion for supporters. Whilst we have had marvellous support and assistance from the vast majority of our supporters we have had a

couple of incidents which has surprised us. The first was a case of racial chanting which was dealt with at the ground and then later in the local magistrates court.

The second has been the persistence of a few supporters to continually stand during the duration of the match. This problem has been highlighted at many grounds during the past season and has resulted in the football licensing authority to warn clubs that if the standing continues they will have no alternative but to issue clubs

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with reduced capacities. This outcome is obviously very damaging to clubs but especially at grounds where the capacity is already small like our own.

Below is a letter from the Marie Curie Cancer Care who recently held a collection at the ground. This is one of many letters we receive from charities who hold ground collections and they all would like to pass on their thanks to all supporters who have contributed to their causes.

On a personal note a big thank you to our sponsors Boldon James who have supplied us with a personal computer and printer which will certainly be a big help for record keeping etc.

Enjoy today's game.

Cliff Simpson - Stadium Manager

**Marie Curie
Cancer Care** 

Dear Mr. Simpson

Crewe Alex Collection - 12 April 1997

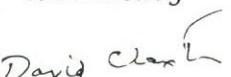
Thank you very much for allowing Marie Curie Cancer Care to collect at the Bristol Rovers match which resulted in the splendid sum of £241.40 being raised. I attach our official receipt No R 274881.

The sum far exceeded my expectations and it will be used to support the Marie Curie Nursing Service within the local Area Health Authority. The nursing service is free of charge to patients and their families, but it costs £12.50 for one hour's nursing care so all our fundraising efforts are very important.

Once again, thank you and your colleagues for your support and I hope we may be allowed to make a similar collection at one of your home fixtures next season. By then, I hope Crewe Alex may have been successful in being promoted to the First Division and I send my very best wishes for your remaining matches.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

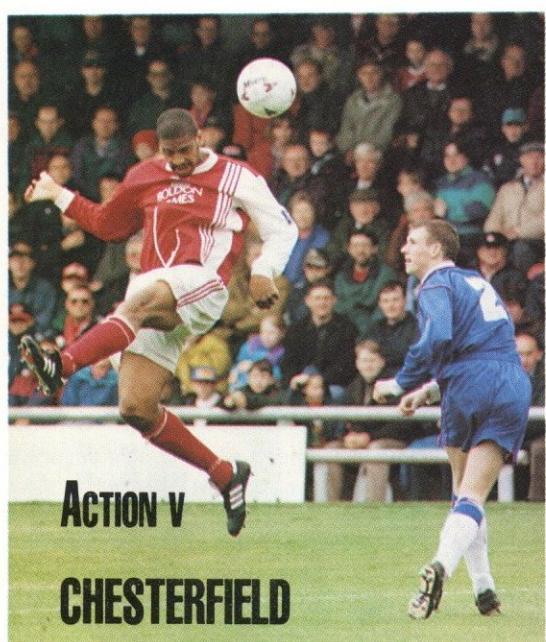
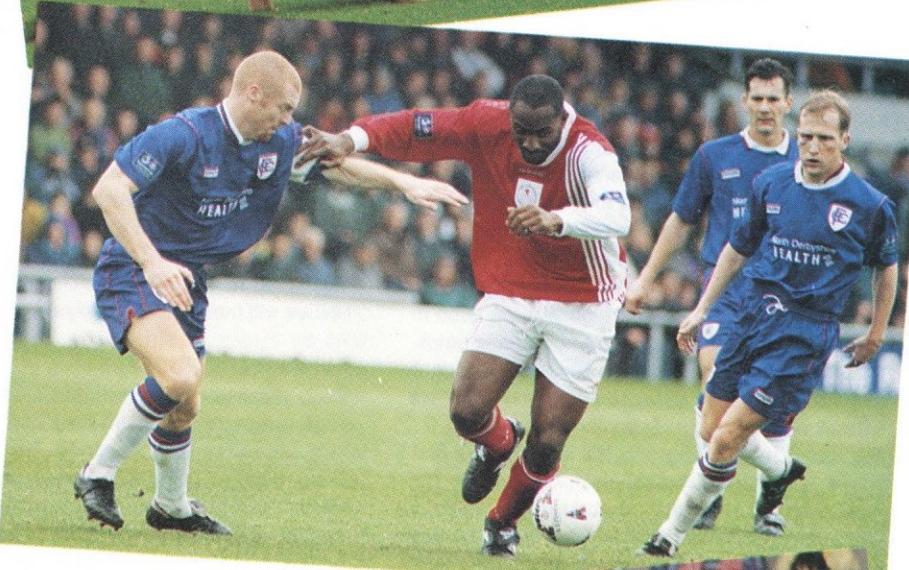
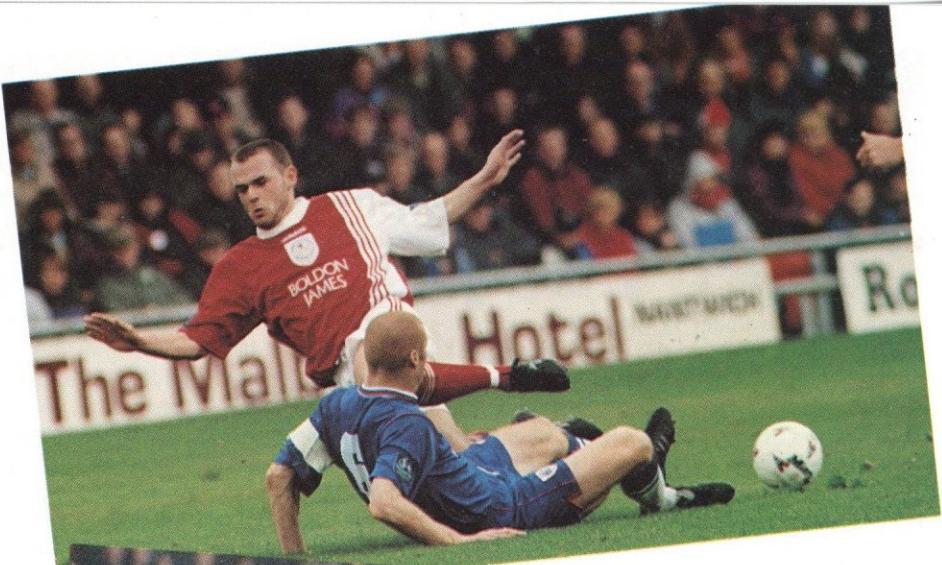
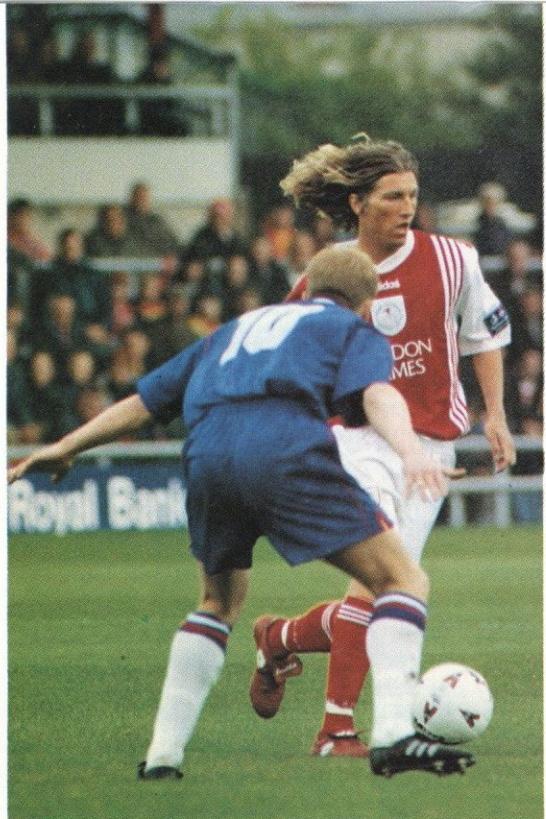


David Claxton - Area Fundraiser

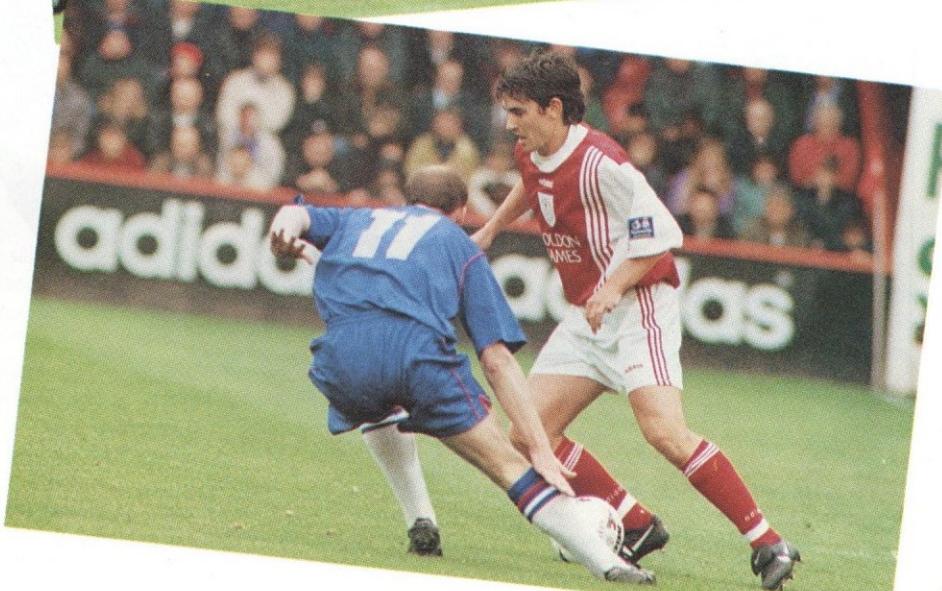
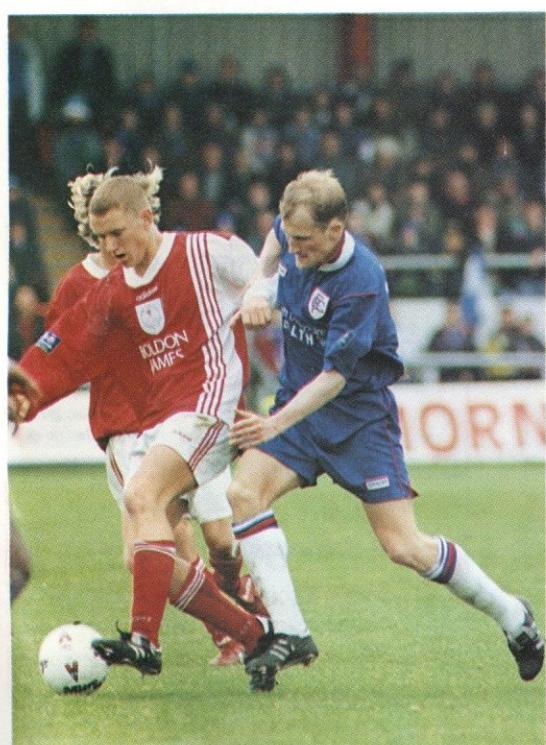
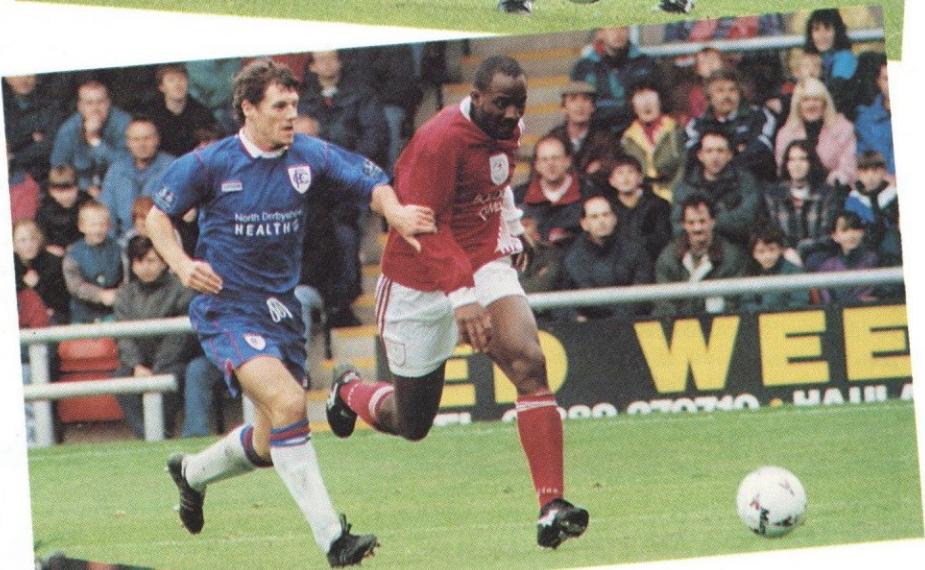
c.c Councillor Ray Stafford

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YOUTH NEWS AND VIEWS

Compiled by Malcolm Hughes

IRISH GROUP SUCCESS

Last Sunday the Under 14 group that will tour Ireland during the summer came up against Blackburn Rovers in a friendly match. The game gave Chris an early opportunity to see some of the players from both the Under-14 and Under-13 groups that will make up the squad prior to the Milk Cup Competition. Highlight of the team's performance was an excellent hat trick by forward Dean Ashton from Holmes Chapel.

RECOVERING FROM OPERATION

I am pleased to tell you that James Robinson has now had his back operation. He is now at home recovering and we wish him well on the long road to recovery. He will have to wear a heavy support to keep his back straight during the initial few months of recuperation.

REGULAR RECOGNITION FOR PLAYERS

The season has again brought regular recognition to many members of the Youth Squad in varying forms. Both Youth Trainees Kenny Lunt and David Wright have had recognition at England Under 17 level. We have also had England Schoolboy recognition for defender Chris McCready who will complete his first year at The National School at Lilleshall soon. The younger groups saw many members of the Under-14 group reach the final selection for places at The National School for next year. Also many players were selected for Football Association courses at Padgate College at Warrington. This shows that the hard work that the boys put in throughout the year is recognised.

EXCELLENCE PLACES NEXT SEASON

In what is fast becoming an ever increasingly competitive world, I am pleased to tell you that all the boys offered places for next season have signed. This is always rewarding and recognises the work of Dario, Steve, Neil, Chris and Terry throughout the year. The facilities will of course be developed at Alexandra Park and Shavington by the end of the year

all being well. I had the chance to view the facilities at Alexandra Park with Dario recently and I can assure you of their quality.

AUSTRALIA BOUND

The completion of the Lancashire League season saw Ben Burrows (Youth Trainee) returning to his native Australia for a holiday. He has spent his first year with us in digs and has been looking forward to a chance to visit his family for a couple of weeks. He will return in June to be ready for the youth teams pre season training, hoping to have an injury free year.

ASSOCIATE SCHOOLBOY SIGNINGS

We are in the process of signing two further players on the Associate Schoolboy forms. The players are Lee Bell (Alsager) and Clark Davies (Chester) who play in midfield and forward respectively. We wish them both well over the next couple of years with us and we will introduce them to you early next season.

SUPPORT IMPORTANT

Can I thank everybody who has assisted us during the current campaign in both the coaching and scouting of the stars tomorrow. We look forward to their return in July for the beginning of what will undoubtedly be another exciting year ahead. Also the support of you the fans at the many Lancashire League games played by both the Reserve and Youth teams throughout the season. These games will be played at Alexandra Park next season and the players always appreciate your attendance.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

The purpose in writing this page is hopefully to keep you informed of what is happening at Youth level throughout the club. Hopefully you will have enjoyed reading the column throughout the season and we look forward to returning in August. If you would like to obtain any further information regarding Youth development please write to me care of the football club offices.

LANCASHIRE LEAGUE - DIVISION ONE

Final Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man. United 'A'	28	22	4	2	108	30	70
Stoke City 'A'	28	18	5	5	57	24	59
Crewe Alex Res	28	17	4	7	64	34	55
Everton 'A'	28	13	7	8	58	46	46
Liverpool 'A'	28	14	4	10	46	36	46
Oldham Ath. 'A'	28	13	5	10	41	42	44
Tranmere R. 'A'	28	13	4	11	40	48	43
Wrexham 'A'	28	13	3	12	49	45	42
Burnley 'A'	28	12	3	13	44	49	39
Bury 'A'	28	10	4	14	26	47	34
Blackburn R. 'A'	28	9	6	13	44	40	33
Bolton W. 'A'	28	6	4	18	38	52	22
Marine Res.	28	5	7	16	28	68	22
Preston N.E. 'A'	28	6	3	19	26	65	21
Morecambe Res.	28	6	3	19	31	74	21

LANCASHIRE LEAGUE - DIVISION TWO

Final Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man. United 'B'	32	20	4	8	89	53	64
Man City 'A'	32	19	7	6	56	29	64
Liverpool 'B'	32	19	3	10	67	39	60
Crewe Alex 'A'	32	17	6	9	72	63	57
Chester City 'A'	32	15	7	10	49	44	52
Everton 'B'	32	14	7	11	74	58	49
Burnley 'B'	32	15	3	14	55	51	48
Oldham Ath. 'B'	32	12	10	10	54	46	46
Blackburn R. 'B'	32	12	9	11	53	40	45
Stockport C.	32	12	6	14	52	62	42
Blackpool	32	11	7	14	50	49	40
Tranmere R. 'B'	32	11	7	14	60	62	40
Carlisle U. 'A'	32	11	7	14	50	60	40
Wigan Ath. 'A'	32	10	9	13	49	58	39
Rochdale 'A'	32	10	5	17	43	64	35
Bury 'A'	32	8	5	19	40	69	29
Marine Youth	32	2	6	24	29	95	12

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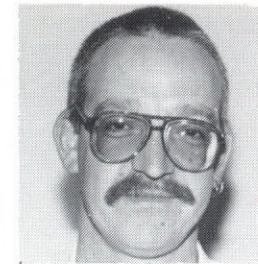
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In the Crowd

by Marco

Looking back in anger?



Well? We done it again! For the third season on the trot we've reached the play offs. In fact since we were relegated at the end of the 1990/91 Season, we've reached the play offs every season except 1993/1994 when we finished in an automatic promotion place. That looks to me like a reasonable standard of consistency from one season to the next, even if we can't sustain it from one game to the next.

But, what about this season? At times we were absolutely awesome. Wicked! The games which, without doubt, fall into this category are those home games against Brentford and Wimbledon. Then a few short days later we would put on an abysmal performance which left me close to tears. This secondary category definitely included the home performances against York City and Chesterfield.

Probably the most noticeably bad part of this season has been the away record. Won seven, drawn three and lost thirteen. It does look quite bad. However, when you look at the away statistics for the previous five seasons, it is only marginally worse. In the 1995/96 Season we won nine, drew four and lost ten. In 1994/95 we won eleven, drew five and lost seven (and this was the most away games that the Alex had ever won in a season). In 1993/94 it was nine, six, six. In 1992/93 eight, four, nine and it was the same in the 1991/92 Season.

When you look at these figures it is probably about twelve points worse than the best of those seasons. Admittedly, that twelve points would have made one hell of a difference. It would have given us eighty five points and we would have gone up as champions.

On the whole, our home form was good. We won fifteen, drew four and lost four. That is actually slightly better than the previous five seasons which looked like this:

Season	Won	Lost	Drawn
1991/92	12	6	3
1992/93	13	3	5
1993/94	12	4	5
1994/95	14	3	6
1995/96	13	3	7

Again though, it has to be said that if we had drawn the four games that we lost and won the four that we drew we would have gained another twelve points which, again, would have put us up as Champions. Could this be put down to the dozen or so games that Dele missed as the result of his injury? It is a very tempting conclusion to draw.

This is all ifs and buts though and everyone knows that ifs and buts don't win championships.

Probably the most notable difference between this season and its predecessors is the number of

goals scored. The total goals scored in all competitions for the last six seasons (this is of course not including the goals we shall score in the next three games are:

Season	Goals
1991/92	96
1992/93	110
1993/94	99
1994/95	101
1995/96	105
1996/97	71

Even if we compare this season's total with the worst of those seasons (1991/92) we are still twenty five goals short. Compared with the best of those seasons, we are thirty nine goals short. The average shortfall is thirty one. That would be enough to have won us the six games we drew 1-1, the seven games we lost 0-1, the two games we drew 0-0 and the four games we lost 1-2. That would have given us the princely total of forty nine extra points - giving an end of season total of 122 points. With that we could have won the first division as well.

This idle conjecture is all very well and brings a smile to the face (or maybe a frown depending on your disposition), but it is all nothing more than that and achieves nothing.

What I think I am trying to say though is this. This season has not felt as good as the season that preceded it. There hasn't been that feeling of well being that I have had through most of the others. There has been a feeling of uneasiness and discontent which has only been dispersed by those outstanding performances that we were treated to now and again. The season sort of stuttered to a hesitant start against Stockport County and we spent the season on impulse engines, rarely getting the warp engines on line.

We struggled away, although as I have said above, probably only slightly more than usual and our home form, which was marginally better than the previous five seasons, hid the teams failure to really get into top gear and football the opposition into an early grave.

This perception of a worse than usual season has not, as I have already said, been helped by the substantial, and very noticeable, drop in the team's scoring rate.

Having said all that though, has it really been a bad season? We've got to the play offs once again, having never dropped out of the top ten all season. This is more than can be said for Watford and Millwall who, at the beginning of the season, were favourites to go straight back up again and who finished thirteenth and fourteenth respectively. We're in with a shout. On Sunday the 25th May we could be on our way back up the M6, celebrating the club's rise to its highest ever position in the Football League.

At the end of the 1992/93 Season we faced Walsall in the play offs lost to them both home and away in the league and went and pulverised them 5-1 (at home) and 4-2 (away). Whilst I have to admit that I am a hopeless optimist and, as such, continually look for good omens everywhere, I do have a good feeling about this. We all know we are capable of disposing of Luton if we play the way we did against Wimbledon or Brentford.

The only question is whether the players will turn it on for just three more games. Can they go that last mile. The incentive is certainly there. The club would get £1m no questions asked from BSkyB for each season they spent in the First Division. The players would be playing against big sides like Wolves, Notts Forest, Man City, Palace and maybe even the likes of Middlesbrough and Sunderland. From the point of view of the players' career progression, playing in the First Division has to represent a bigger shop window than the Second Division. Their chances of being noticed must be significantly increased by such a move.

So our emotional well-being is at the mercy of fourteen men (or boys) and two hundred and seventy (hopefully) minutes of football. And if, on Sunday the 25th of May we are celebrating, we shall look back on this season as a good one, despite the many disappointments and heart-rending moments most of us have experienced over the last nine months.

If our Wembley outing is not a successful one or if the next two games are lost then the feeling of unease and discontent that seems to have pervaded the whole season will simply be confirmed and it will be looked back on as yet another frustrating season.

Assuming, for a moment, an almost Spock like logic, I have to say that we are not the only ones being wracked by the frustration of dashed hopes. Think of the supporters of Wolves, Palace, QPR, Sheffield United, Norwich and Man City, for example. Every season since their relegation they have been amongst the favourites to return to the 'top flight' and have failed, sometimes miserably. We, on the other hand, are rarely amongst the favourites at the beginning of the season but we are always there or thereabouts.

It has taken the club one hundred and nineteen years to get where it is now and many of you have been here for a good few decades of that. You've waited this long, and if it does take another season (and I'm convinced that it won't), what's one more season in the greater scheme of things.

And anyway I would rather be cursing over the fact that we didn't get promotion than be cursing because we couldn't avoid the drop.

MARCO

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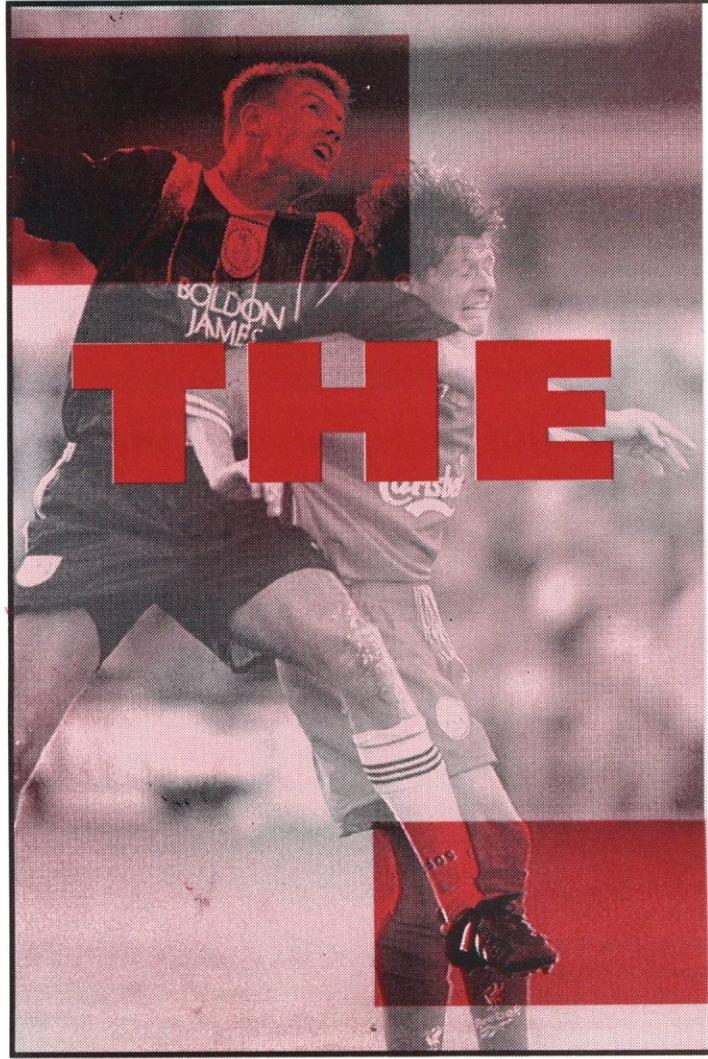
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Send all your jokes, letters and ideas to:

Grr-esty and Claire, Crewe Alexandra F.C., Gresty Road, Crewe, CW2 6EB

Hi Kids, back again for the first leg of the play off semi final. Today's opponents are Luton Town, a team we have yet to beat this season. Maybe today is our lucky day. Thank you for your support throughout the season, let's hope we have a trip to Wembley and promotion to Division One. May the best team win.

Claire XXX

Half Time Teasers

Unscramble the following to reveal teams that are in the divisions play offs, but what league are they in now?

1. mroatpnothn twno
2. tolnu otwn
3. srheetc ticy
4. nesawas iyct
5. reewc leax
6. owlvse
7. syartcl caelpa
8. rislobt yitc

Guess the Result

CREWE ALEX.....LUTON TOWN.....

Welcome to my pride

A big warm welcome to Jack Whitby. Jack is believed to be the eldest member of Grr-esty's Pride. Jack's grand-daughter, Laura helps Grr-esty on matchdays with NESTLÉ treats. So a big hello to Jack and Laura.

Thank You List

The Pride would like to thank everyone who has helped us over the season. A special thanks goes to:

NESTLÉ
 Mummy Grr-sty
 Claire, Debbie and Laura
 Chris Walters
 Omega Music

and to all the children who have written in to us. If you have not received your certificates yet don't worry, they will be with you soon. Thank you all once again.

BIRTHDAY MESSAGES

Grr-esty and Claire would like to say HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Adam Parker who is 8 on the 10th May. Happy Birthday from Mum and Steven.

Kirsty Louis will be 11 on the 21st of May, love from Nanny and Grandad

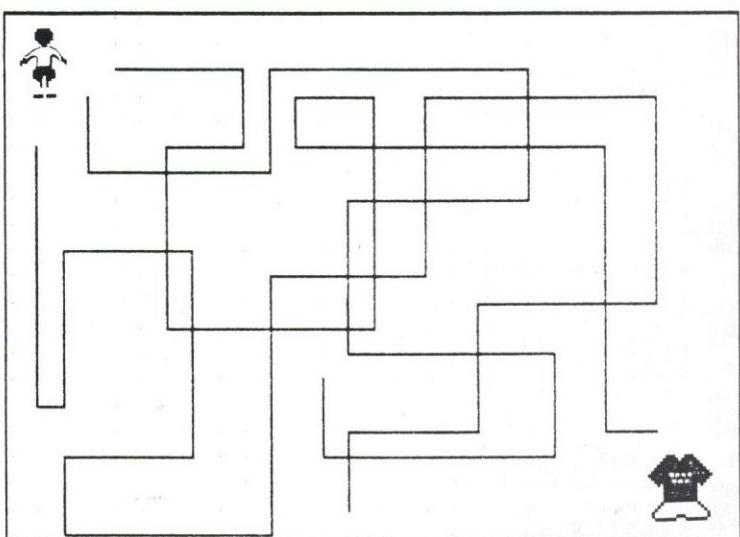
GRR-ESTY'S MESSAGE

To all my Pride, have a lovely summer and see you all in August. Remember to be careful and stay safe. Thank you for being friends with me. Keep saying hello to me.

Kids, if any of you had a photo taken with me before the Chesterfield game, I've had them all developed and they are available from the Club Shop.

PUZZLE

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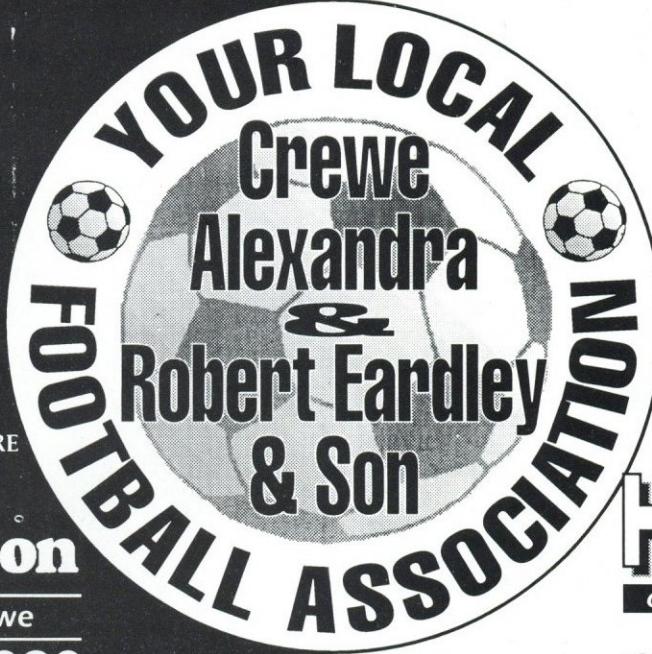
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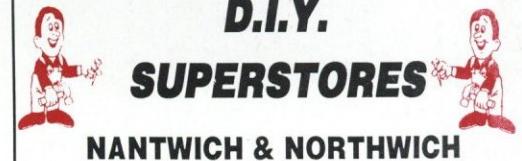
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Picture Collection No. 26

RICHARD NORRIS

