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**WEST BROMWICH
ALBION**



THE CARABAO CUP

**ROUND 1
TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2018
Kick-off 8p.m.**

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**The Hawthorns
WEST BROMWICH**



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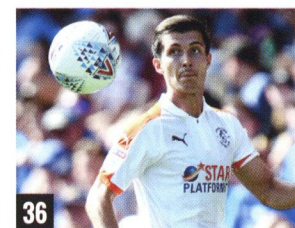
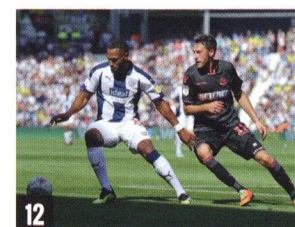
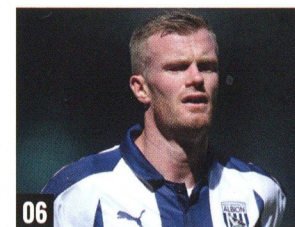
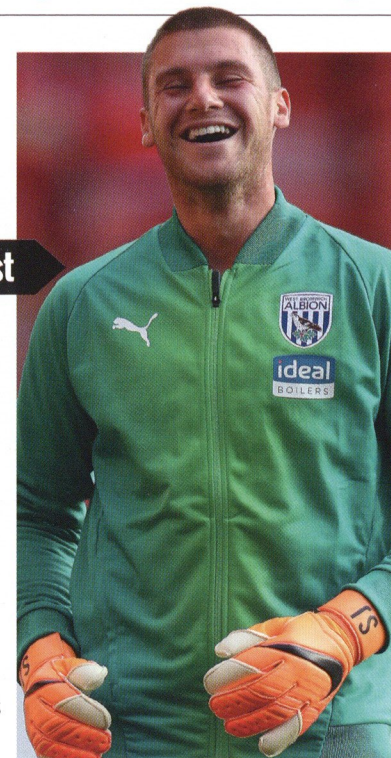


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Matchday Programme

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DARREN MOORE

Good evening everybody and welcome to The Hawthorns for the first round of the Carabao Cup and the visit of Luton Town.

We've had a very busy first ten days of the season with three games behind us already and there's no let up with another very important game in front of us this evening. I'd like to welcome Nathan Jones, the staff, players, officials and fans of Luton Town to The Hawthorns tonight and congratulate them on their great achievement of winning promotion last season. They'll be coming here still with the wind in their sails from that, so it's important that we don't underestimate them.

But we come to the game in confident mood too after winning our first game of the season at Norwich on Saturday. It was a very important win for us as we get to grips with the new challenges that life in the Championship

DARREN MOORE



brings with it. I feel that over the course of that first week of football, we have started to do that and have put in better performances, one game after another.

It was very disappointing to lose to Bolton on the opening day, especially so late in the game. The Hawthorns was packed and we wanted to reward the supporters for the faith shown in us, but it wasn't to be.

Perhaps we'll look back on that later in the season as a little wake up call, a reminder that you can't take anything for granted in this division because as the cliché goes, in the Championship, any team can beat anybody on any given day. For all that, I felt we deserved something from the game, but the positive thing in this league is there's no time to dwell on it because by Tuesday night, we had an opportunity to put it right.

We did that to some extent at Nottingham Forest. They have spent a lot of money and assembled a good team and for spells of the game, they were on top. But we were resilient through those spells, we stayed in the game and then later on, we came into it more and showed good character to turn things around. We got our equaliser and had good chances to go and win it at the death, but a draw at the City Ground will be more than a lot of teams manage over the course of the season.

We had our third game in a week down at Norwich on Saturday, against a team who had the advantage of not playing in midweek. In warm conditions again, it was a game that asked questions of our fitness and character as much as anything, and we came through well on both counts.

The players had to dig deep at times, especially when we went behind, but they showed a real desire and hunger to come out on top. A win on the road after an exhausting week shouldn't be underestimated and it shows that we are growing into the season. We are not the finished article by any means and there is a lot of hard work left to do, but there are things for us to be encouraged by in that first week of football. Now we have to continue to make progress.

I said ahead of the Bolton game that what was most important to us if we want to succeed was to stick together and show the unity we had at the end of last season, on and off the pitch. I'm delighted with the way the players have helped and backed one another and just as pleased by the way the supporters have backed us in great numbers and have got behind the team from first to last. If we maintain that through the season, we will be a tough nut to crack for any side.

But we have to do that every time we step out on the field and tonight is no exception to that. Winning games is a good habit to get into and after the victory at Carrow Road, we would love to back that up tonight with another one and the chance to go further in the Carabao Cup. We will only do that by respecting our opponents, by putting everything into the game and by sticking together.

This is my first game as head coach under the lights here and I'm really looking forward to it because that helps create a special Hawthorns atmosphere. We will need that atmosphere and your backing tonight if we are going to progress to the next round!



I think we've already managed to cram the entire Championship experience into one week – it's a bit different from life in the Premier League, that's for sure!

With two away games in the mix, I don't think four points from the first three games is a bad return but probably people would feel a lot better about it if the results had been flipped about a bit and we'd won our first game at home instead.

That was the big disappointment of the opening week, to get a full house against Bolton and then lose the game. I don't think we deserved that, but at the same time, I don't think we did enough to win it either. A draw would have been fair enough and that would have got us on the board and there's a lesson there that sometimes, you might have to take an ok result rather than risking getting a bad one instead. It's a long season and it's as much about accumulating points when you have to as it is winning them with the kind of fireworks we saw at Norwich.

At Forest, we didn't play as well as we could have against a good side but we dug in and in the end, we might even have come away with a win. Looking back, the equaliser that Matt scored there could be a very important goal in the context of the season. It's a big goal and a big result in terms of confidence. Losing two goals on the spin going into a trip to Norwich would have been very tough but we found a way to get the result and when that one hit the back of the net, it really lifted everyone.

The Norwich game was a real reminder of what the Championship can be like, absolute chaos! If every game is going to be like that one, players, staff, supporters, we'll all be out on our feet by Christmas!



They were on top early on, especially when they scored first, but we managed the game well from there and got back into it. Thankfully Sam saved the penalty because going in at the break level was an important foothold in the game for us.

We had a bit of luck with a goalkeeping mistake to get us in front early in the second half and from there, I felt we were worth the win. There were a few scary moments in there, but the Championship is like that, teams keep coming at you in this league and you have to stand up to that.

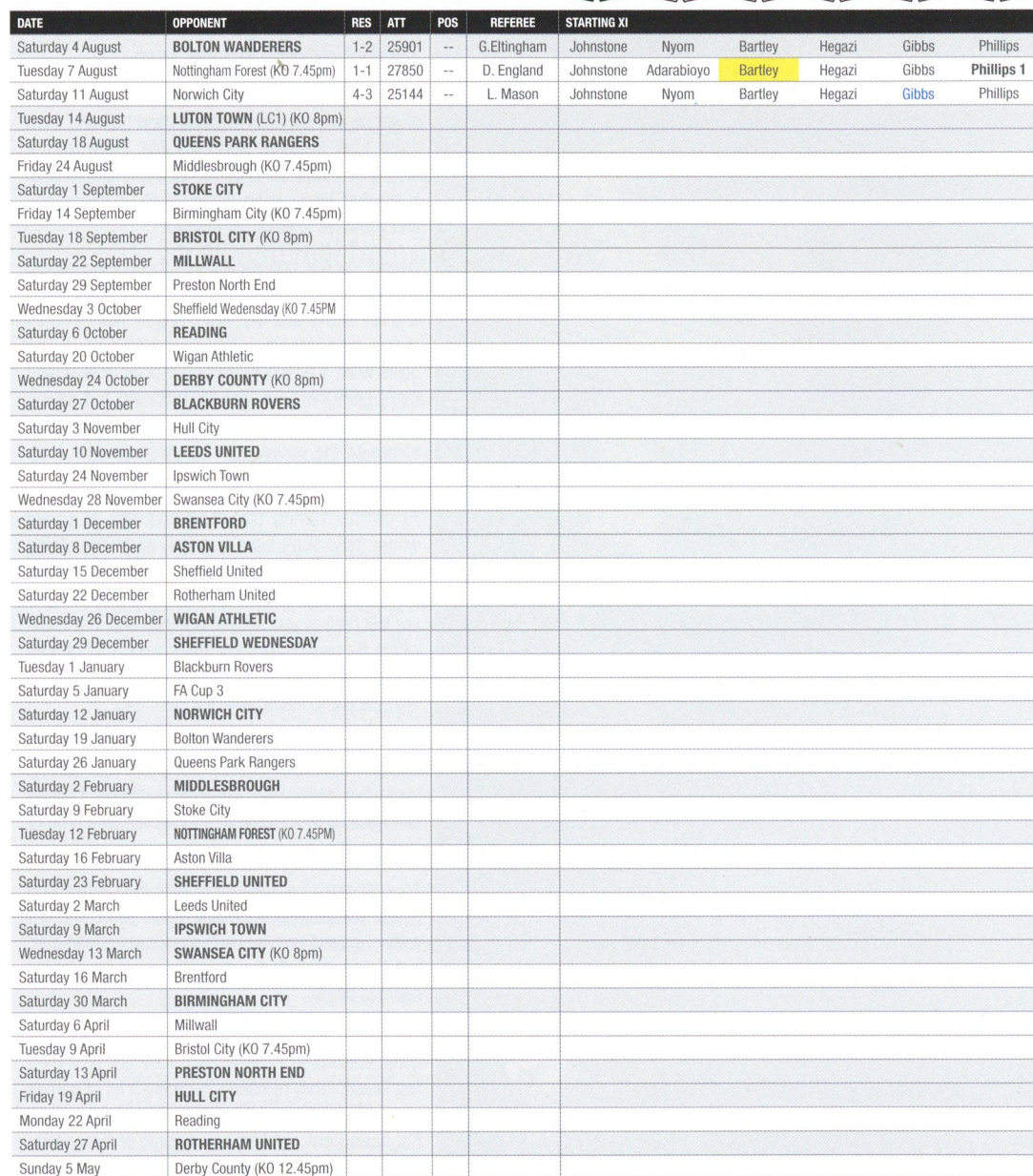
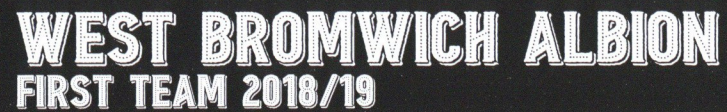
Overall, second half especially, I thought we played some good stuff, and we should have been home and dry at 3-1 and 4-2, but credit to them, in front of their home fans they threw everything at us. The goals were a bit sloppy from our point of view and that's something we need to address, but saying that, once they got it to 4-3, we managed the later stages of the game well. We were resilient from there and saw the game out.

To do that having played in midweek at Forest where they didn't have a game, that's something we can be pleased with because it is a test of your fitness, especially so early in the season when you are still finding your way into things and in a week where it's been so hot too. There were a lot of tired legs in the dressing room afterwards, but having won the game takes care of a lot of that.

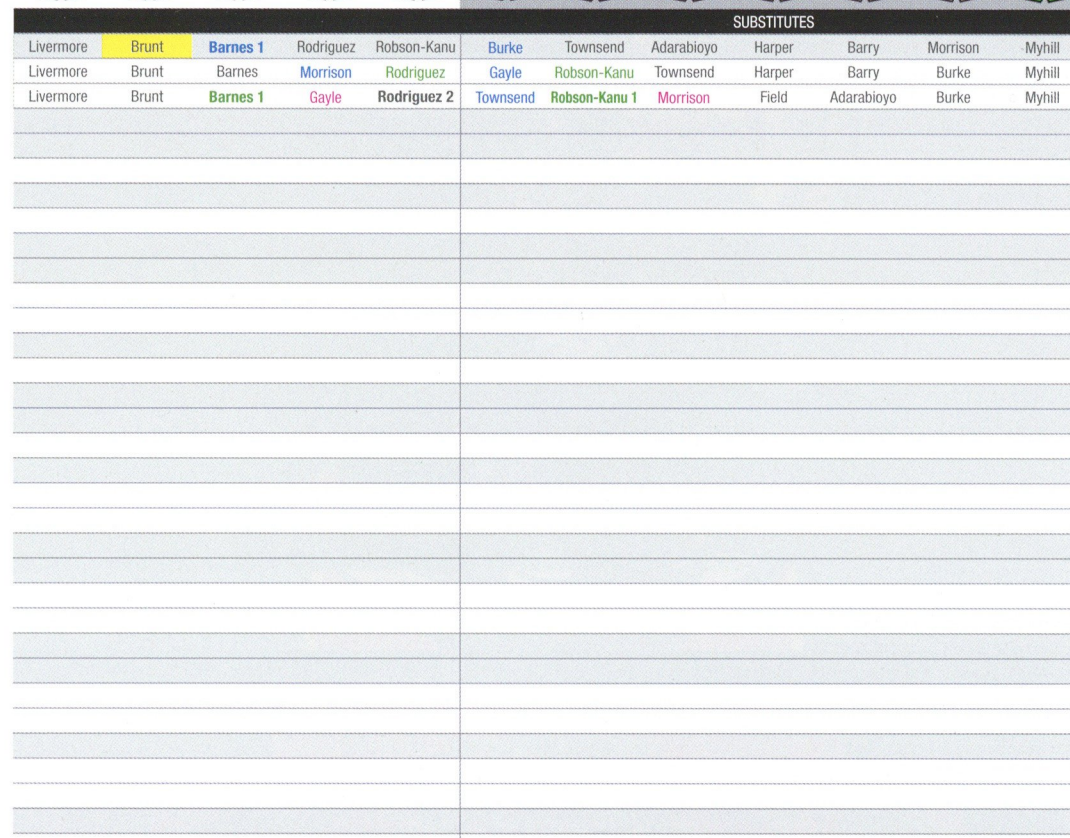
That was a very important result because you always want to get that first win under your belt. As I said, four points from those three games, it isn't a bad opening in a new division that will take a bit of getting used to.

It's a change of scene tonight with the League Cup game. You're always pleased when you come out with a home draw, you can't ask for more than that, but that's especially the case after such a punishing opening week.

We have to give Luton respect, they've had two very good seasons in League Two, they got promoted last season, they're used to winning a lot of games and that's a good habit to have, whatever the level. But having lost our first home game of the season against Bolton, it's important we get the first Hawthorns win under our belts to set us up for QPR on Saturday.



Goalscorers in **bold** ■ First Sub
 ■ Booking ■ Second Sub
 ■ Sent Off ■ Third Sub



As a special feature this season, in the cup competitions, our programme covers are going to echo those from times past in the relevant competitions – what a shame there's no Watney Cup any longer...

For this League Cup opener, we go back to the final of 1970, the club's last major cup final, when we took on Manchester City. The score you say? We don't need to bother ourselves with minor details do we?





WEST BROMWICH ALBION FIRST TEAM



CAREER STATS

NAME	LEAGUE		FA CUP		LEAGUE CUP		TOTAL	
	A	G	Apps	Gl's	A	G	A	G
SAM JOHNSTONE	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
ALLAN NYOM	56+7	0	2	0	2	0	60+7	0
KIERAN GIBBS	35+1	0	2	0	1	0	38+1	0
HAL ROBSON-KANU	14+39	6	1+2	0	1	0	16+41	6
KYLE BARTLEY	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
JAMES MORRISON	230+62	34	16+2	5	5+4	0	251+68	39
JAKE LIVERMORE	48+5	2	1+1	0	0+1	0	49+7	2
MATT PHILLIPS	52+8	7	2+1	1	2+1	1	56+10	9
CHRIS BRUNT	301+45	41	18+6	2	7	2	326+51	45
BOAZ MYHILL	62+1	0	8	0	11	0	81+1	0
CONOR TOWNSEND	0+1	0	0	0	0	0	0+1	0
HARVEY BARNES	3	2	0	0	0	0	3	2
DWIGHT GAYLE	1+1	0	0	0	0	0	1+1	0
OLIVER BURKE	2+14	0	0+1	0	0	0	2+15	0
GARETH BARRY	22+3	1	3	0	1	0	26+3	1
JAY RODRIGUEZ	34+6	9	3	3	2	1	39+6	13
JONATHAN LEKO	3+11	0	0	0	0+2	0	3+13	0
KYLE EDWARDS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NACER CHADLI	29+7	6	0+1	0	1	0	30+8	6
JONATHAN BOND	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOSIN ADARABIOYO	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
CRAIG DAWSON	149+4	12	12+2	0	10+3	1	171+9	13
AHMED HEGAZI	41	2	2+1	0	1	0	44+1	2
SAM FIELD	11+8	1	0+2	0	1	0	12+10	1
RAYHAAN TULLOCH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
REKEEM HARPER	0+1	0	0	0	0+1	0	0+2	0
CALLUM MORTON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATHAN FERGUSON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALEX BRADLEY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALEX PALMER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KYLE HOWKINS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

SEASON STATS

NAME	LEAGUE			FA CUP			LEAGUE CUP		
	A	G	B/S/O	A	G	B/S/O	A	G	B/S/O
SAM JOHNSTONE	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALLAN NYOM	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KIERAN GIBBS	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HAL ROBSON-KANU	1+2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KYLE BARTLEY	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
JAMES MORRISON	1+1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JAKE LIVERMORE	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MATT PHILLIPS	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHRIS BRUNT	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BOAZ MYHILL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONOR TOWNSEND	0+1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HARVEY BARNES	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DWIGHT GAYLE	1+1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OLIVER BURKE	0+1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GARETH BARRY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JAY RODRIGUEZ	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JONATHAN LEKO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KYLE EDWARDS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NACER CHADLI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JONATHAN BOND	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOSIN ADARABIOYO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CRAIG DAWSON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AHMED HEGAZI	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAM FIELD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RAYHAAN TULLOCH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
REKEEM HARPER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CALLUM MORTON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NATHAN FERGUSON	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALRX BRADLEY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ALEX PALMER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KYLE HOWKINS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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MATCH *Action*

ALBION 1 BARNES (45)
BOLTON WANDERERS 2 MAGENNIS (18), WILDSCHUT (89)

**WELCOME BACK
 TO THE
 CHAMPIONSHIP
 THEN.**

For all that we busily reminded ourselves in the run up to this opening game that everything about this league barring the existence of a ball, some posts and two sets of XI was different, the culture shock that is life back in the Football League had its way with us, just as it did on that grisly, and equally sweltering day at Walsall away back in 2003 when the erstwhile Premier League side was humbled by the Saddlers.

You'll recall that we dusted ourselves down and went on to win promotion that year, just as we did after losing on the opening days of 2001/02 and 2007/08, so let's not be giving in to panic after one reverse.

Instead, let's take this one on the chin as an unpleasant, but probably necessary, wake up call about life back at this level. It's more physical for a start off, referees are less wont to award free-kicks and penalties at the slightest contact. We're going to have to get used to the kind of aerial bombardment that you seldom get when you play Liverpool, Manchester City or Arsenal.

Above all, we're going to have to have a 180 degree change in mindset. After years of being the smaller club in the Premier League, now we are the big fish

in the smaller pond. We are going to face teams at The Hawthorns who will try to do what we used to do at Old Trafford – sit in, defend like dervishes and look for a goal from a set piece or a breakaway.

Now, we have to go on the front foot, face teams who are going to throw a blanket of nine men in front of their goalkeeper and ask us to find a way through a massed blockade. That is a big change to come to terms with inside 90 minutes and, in truth, we failed the test in one of those weird games where we were the better team but Bolton probably deserved their win for their industry and sheer bloody-mindedness under fire.

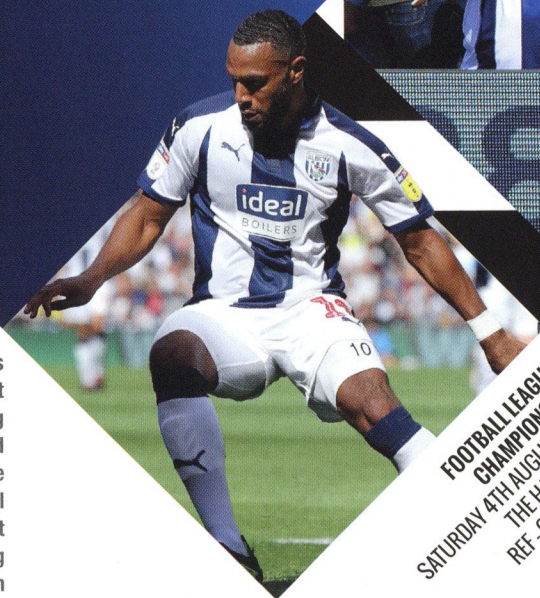
Again, before we get over excited, let's remember that the opening weeks of the season tend to be fraught with odd results because in those early fixtures, the chance of getting caught cold by ring

rustiness is always there. Shaking off the relegation hangover can take a game or two too, while the passing of the transfer deadline and the turbulence the window can cause will do us no harm either.

For all that the result stung though, we shouldn't be blind to signs of encouragement either. Harvey Barnes and Matt Phillips both offered plenty on the flanks and in those two – plus the likes of Oliver Burke and Jonathan Leko – the seeds of Albion success might be sown. After all, if the middle is a mass of opposition bodies that you can't see a way through, going wide and getting round the back of them might offer a more fruitful route at times.

We kept possession of the ball better than for some time too, even if the use of it wasn't always penetrative. That will come though, part of the way in which we need

FOOTBALL LEAGUE
 CHAMPIONSHIP
 SATURDAY 4TH AUGUST 2018
 THE HAWTHORNS
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to grow into the season and develop a different way of playing to that of the last few years. And, on another day, Ahmed Hegazi might have been coming off with the matchball for a hat-trick but for one stunning save, the width of the crossbar and one miss that he'll have been reliving in his nightmares. The fine margins aren't exclusive to the Premier League.

We'd started confidently if without asking too many questions when, in Bolton's first real venture forward in the 18th minute, we were behind. A half cleared corner was worked out to their right, Ameobi darting to the byline and crossing to the near post where Magennis got up highest and strongest to head down and into the corner to take the wind out of the sails of a packed Hawthorns. It might have been worse three minutes later, Wheater's glancing header going inches wide from Vela's corner.

We settled ourselves and on 21 minutes, Allan Nyom cut inside before dragging a left footed shot wide of the target from the edge of the box. A Phillips effort from a similar position six minutes later was

threatening the goal until Lowe got in its way and the ball bobbled just wide. From the resulting corner, the ball found Barnes out on our left to produce a cross that picked out Hegazi around the penalty spot, but the centre-half guided his header over the bar, much to his obvious dismay.

With the interval beckoning, Albion finally found a yard of space, Barnes cutting in from the right before bending a superb left footed shot across nearly 30 yards and into the far top corner. First day or not, we won't see many better gals than that this season.

The second half was largely attack against defence as we camped in the Bolton half without opening them up often enough. It was the 66th minute before we really threatened, a Chris Brunt corner finding Hegazi at the back post, his downwards header somehow brilliantly pushed over by Alnwick. Bolton responded with a frenzied attack that brought three shots at goal, the first the best, Sam Johnstone stopping a Magennis piledriver.

We might have grabbed the lead on 78 minutes when Phillips drilled a cross-

shot through the six yard box and inches in front of Jay Rodriguez, but it was Bolton who found the winner from an 89th minute Vela corner, Wheater heading down for Wildschut to hook a volley across Johnstone and in.

We almost salvaged a point with an injury time header from Hegazi that crashed off the bar as he got on the end of a Brunt corner, but it wasn't to be. An early reminder of just how hard this league is. But that's not a bad lesson to learn on the first day. Plenty of time to put it to good use.

ALBION: Johnstone, Nyom, Bartley, Hegazi, Gibbs, Phillips, Livermore, Brunt, Barnes (Burke 76), Rodriguez, Robson-Kanu

Subs not used: Myhill, Morrison, Townsend, Barry, Adarabioyo, Harper

BOLTON WANDERERS: Alnwick, Olkowski, Wheater, Beevers, Taylor, Lowe, Murphy (O'Neil 60), Ameobi (Noone 50), Vela, Buckley (Wildschut 78), Magennis

Subs not used: Williams, Little, Le Fondre, Hobbs

MATCH *Action*

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 1
ALBION 1

GUEDIOURA (59)

PHILLIPS (87)

IT MIGHT NOT HAVE QUITE THE FINESSE OF THE PREMIER LEAGUE BUT FLAMING HELL, THIS CHAMPIONSHIP LARK IS LIVELY STUFF ISN'T IT?

There was as much incident packed into the last ten minutes of this fixture as we saw in half a dozen Premier League games last term, an early reminder that for simple, high octane, utterly bonkers football, the Championship takes some beating. This is going to be some ride.

On the evidence of this game, Nottingham Forest are going to take some beating too, certainly at the City Ground, for their expensively assembled new team played some very slick, neat football and, with a raucous home crowd scenting better times after 20 years away from the top, they exuded confidence.

In the face of that, Albion's point is not one to be sniffed at, dug out in the dying moments of a fixture where Forest bossed the middle hour but where the first and last 15 minutes belonged to the yellow and green clad Throstles. I'm not sure too many other sides will get that much joy on the fringe of Sherwood Forest if the tricky trees maintain this standard.

There are going to be a few proper contenders for promotion this season, Forest included, but the result we took home is a reminder that we have credentials that way too. Those have only been increased with the arrival of Dwight Gayle whose very presence on the pitch marked a significant change in the game,

Forest's fear of his pace automatically pushing their defensive line ten yards deeper and giving Albion both respite and more room to play, room we used to our advantage in grabbing our late equaliser through Matt Phillips' explosive finish.

We started as we finished, by looking the more dangerous side in the opening exchanges as we soaked up the joy of seeing Albion in those yellow and green stripes once more. Few clubs have a change kit that is so universally recognised as that and, judging from the numbers in the crowd who were wearing the shirt, it's made a welcome return.

It almost had the perfect start as Albion raided forward from a fifth minute free-kick from just inside the Forest half. Chris Brunt picked out Kyle Bartley in the box and his clever chest pass almost got Jay Rodriguez in, the ball just a shade too high

for him as he tried to manufacture a volley under pressure from Fox, his effort going over.

Gradually, Forest got their game together and began to impose themselves on Albion with some sharp give and go movement through the middle. It finally gave them their first real opening on 22 minutes when Dias lobbed the ball over the top and into the marauding run of Grabban. He fired in a first time shot from a tight angle, the ball soaring over the bar when a shot back across goal might have been more fruitful as Sam Johnstone assiduously guarded his near post. Grabban got one on target six minutes later but Johnstone stood firm to fist the ball away from danger.

Debutant Tosin Adarabioyo, otherwise composed on his debut, gave Forest their next sight of goal, his short backpass forcing Johnstone to dart off his line to

initially deny Grabban. The Forest man wouldn't be beaten though and he eventually got control of the ball, feeding it across goal to Lolley who slashed his shot over the gaping goal from the edge of the box. Lolley had another chance on 43 minutes as he collected a Carvalho pass, Bartley across quickly to get an important touch to deflect the shot wide.

We ended the half on top though, Phillips driving in a waist high cross into the six yard box, Rodriguez onto it again, but as with the earlier chance, the striker was unable to keep the ball down as he looked for a first time finish.

Lolley continued his personal nightmare in front of goal seven minutes after the break, Osborn overlapping on their left, getting to the by-line and picking his teammate out, but Lolley, anything but ice cold on this sweltering, humid evening, skied his shot from just inside the area.

Sadly, just before the hour, Guedioura was rather less profligate. Collecting the ball 30 yards out, he advanced a couple of paces and, without a challenge, unleashed a wicked, skimming shot that flashed past Johnstone and into the net,

a goal which, in truth, Forest probably deserved at that point.

Forest looked to ram home the advantage, Ahmed Hegazi making a vital tackle to deny Dias after a great ball from Carvalho had put him in on 65 minutes but from there, the hosts began to cede ground and we began to take advantage.

Ironically, our territorial improvement could have sown the seeds of disaster in the 80th minute when Forest broke swiftly after Rodriguez did well at the back post to head back a Brunt corner. With options all around him, Guedioura chose instead to smash the ball goalwards from 60 yards or more, Johnstone ferociously backpedalling to produce a good save, tipping the ball wide.

That was critical for now we grabbed hold of the game. A bustling run from Harvey Barnes in the 82nd minute saw the ball bounce kindly for Gayle whose shot came back off the post, Forest breaking quickly from the rebound only for the ball to fall to Lolley 16 yards out. The rear of the cow remained entirely untroubled by the banjo.

Three minutes from the end, we built a move up patiently. Brunt to Gayle via Barnes, out to Kieran Gibbs. As he played in a deep cross, Phillips came barrelling in from the right as good wingers should, meeting the ball crisply on the full, an arcing shot searing into the top corner.

We might even have won it, Phillips' cross from deep looping onto the bar, Gibbs picking out Barnes from the rebound, his drive smashing against the bar. Then Forest could have won it, Grabban rising to meet a corner, Jake Livermore rising to nod it off the line.

Breathless stuff. Good fun though.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST: Pantilimon, Darikwa, Fox, Figueiredo, Osborn, Guedioura, Colback, Dias (Goncalves 77), Carvalho (Soudani 84), Lolley, Grabban

Subs not used: Smith, Watson, Murphy, Robinson, Dawson

ALBION: Johnstone, Adarabioyo, Bartley, Hegazi, Gibbs, Phillips, Livermore, Brunt, Barnes, Morrison (Gayle 61), Rodriguez (Robson-Kanu 90+4)

Subs not used: Myhill, Townsend, Burke, Barry, Harper

FOOTBALL LEAGUE
CHAMPIONSHIP
TUESDAY 7TH AUGUST 2018
CITY GROUND
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ATT: 27,850



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into the

Throstles'

Every summer nowadays requires football clubs to go into transfer overdrive, drafting in new names at an alarming rate of knots before the authorities haul up the transfer drawbridge and you find yourselves stuck with the squad you've got until the whole jamboree kicks off again in January.

This year, the summer has been particularly tough given the early closure of the window - loan deals apart - and the further complication of a World Cup summer that meant the market didn't really kick into gear until the middle of last month. For all that though, Albion have had a busy window and so it's about time that we caught up with the seven new faces that are populating the Throstles' dressing room.



It's been a busy summer in the goalkeeping department, with two incomings to fill the gloves of the departing Ben Foster and give us additional strength in depth between the sticks. With Boaz Myhill going and coming, we have a strong triumvirate of senior goalies all pushing for a regular slot in the first team.

Ahead of the pack at present is Sam Johnstone. He's an experienced shot stopper for a comparative youngster, over 150 senior games to his name, all of them prior to this season in a string of loan moves, most notably at Aston Villa over the last season and a half. Having come through the youth ranks at Manchester United, he has also had loan spells with Scunthorpe United, Walsall, Yeovil, Doncaster Rovers and Preston but this summer, he concluded it was time to put down some permanent roots at the age of 25.

"I'm happy to be here. I've spoken to a lot of people about the club and heard nothing but good things. I've played Championship games and won a promotion from League One with Preston but I always seemed to end back at Manchester United and then going somewhere else.

"Now it's time to settle down and take my game up to the next level which I believe I can do here."

Albion's goalkeeping coach Neil Cutler has already worked with Sam at Scunthorpe and was delighted Albion could bring him in.

"I took him on loan at Scunthorpe. I know all about his character and the way he plays. He's a confident boy; he's driven to be better, driven to be the best. He's a Premier League goalkeeper without a doubt. It's about getting him into the Premier League with us and I want to get him into the England team. That's my ambition for him.

"His qualities? Athletic, quick, powerful. His all-round play is really good. He's also calm, never looks flustered. He's already got experience and has played plenty of Championship games. He's calm in possession too. I believe he is a great asset to the club. In my view, he was the best keeper in the Championship last season".



Sam is equally delighted to be reunited with his former mentor. "I've worked with 'Cuts' before when I was younger and I've kept in touch with him. He knows how I work, I know how he works and I'm glad to be back working with him.

"He's told me this is a great place to be. The people at the training ground, the staff, the players, they make it a family club where everyone gets on. I've also spoken to a lot of people who had good things to say about the club. I was in the Midlands last year and I liked the area. It's a good chance for me now to continue my career. I'm hopefully going to be here for a long time.

"My aim is to do a job and help us get promotion straight back up where we all know this club belongs. With the squad and the players here, we're not even talking about a Play-Off final; we're talking automatic promotion.

"Don't misunderstand me. It's a tough league. It's two games a week and everyone is fighting to either go up or stay up, but the quality in this club and the experience puts us in a good place to go straight back up."

Sam was joined in the Goalkeeping Union by Jonathan Bond after he left Reading earlier in the summer and it turned out to be something of a reunion.

"We've known each other from England U21s and it's always nice to know someone when you're coming into a new club", said Bond.

"The goalkeepers spend most of the day with each other so that has made it very easy for me to settle. We're going to look forward to working together throughout the season.

"Neil Cutler heads up the department and there's a good atmosphere, as well as a high standard, within the group. Sam's a good goalkeeper and I am here to challenge as best I can. It's exciting to work with that kind of quality.

"I've had experience of my own in the Championship before. I know I can play at this level and I feel comfortable there."

Reshaping and reinforcing the defensive line in front of Bond and Johnstone has also been a feature of the summer in the wake of the departure of old heads Gareth McAuley and Jonny Evans.

Slotting straight into central defence at the start of the season has been 27 year old Kyle Bartley, drafted in from Swansea City. Kyle has experience of Championship life though after an outstanding season on loan at Leeds United in 2016/17 and, after an injury interrupted season with the Swans last time around, he's looking to reignite his career at The Hawthorns.



"I've got good experience of the Championship; I know what it takes and how long the season is! It's hard and it's important to have players who are aware of the ups and downs and are able to maintain a consistent level.

"I like to think I'm a leader, a committed player who will always give 100 per cent. I play with my heart on my sleeve. I'm a nonsense centre back but I like to play as I've come from an Academy background at Arsenal and then been a part of Swansea's style. But I definitely defend first!

"This is a massive club and with the new manager coming in at the end of last year, he brought something new and fresh. After speaking with Darren I knew this was the place I wanted to be. He let me know his ideas for the season and the next few years, his ambitions for the club and he told me about the fan base and the facilities.

"It's always nerve-wracking meeting your new team mates but I used to play with Kieran Gibbs at Arsenal and know him well, while I've also come across a few of the other lads over the years as well.

"I will give my all for the club and the fans. I think we all know where this club wants to be and we have to push as hard as we can to achieve that."

Further defensive strength arrived in the giant form of Tosin Adarabioyo, here on loan from Manchester City. A centre-back by trade, he has already shown his versatility with a composed display at right-back at Forest last week. Darren Moore was delighted to sign one of the few men in football who can actually look down on him – physically speaking of course...

"Tosin is a young man but in terms of his football age, he is way in advance of his years. We've seen a number of young players prove that they are good enough to make an impression on the world stage and he falls into that bracket. I feel this is

"The manager attracted me here. He's really enthusiastic about my game. I'm buzzing to come down and can't wait to get started."

a fantastic opportunity for him and for the Club. He has speed, balance, presence. He's very comfortable in possession of the ball and he will 100% be a first team contender."

For Tosin, coming to terms with new surroundings after a lifetime at City is part of the challenge: "It feels very strange considering the amount of time I've been at Manchester City. I think it's the time in my career where I need to play as many games as I can. The challenge of the Championship is playing two games a week, so it's about adapting to that."

"Darren Moore was a big part of my decision. He's a great guy. I can't wait to start working under him. In terms of his personality, how he comes across and his history of being a centre-half, I think I can learn a lot from him."

Conor Townsend is the third of the defensive reinforcements that arrived over the course of the summer, this time from Scunthorpe United. An attack minded full-back with a dazzling left foot, Conor is very much in Darren Moore's mind as he looks to evolve Albion's playing style.

"I'm really pleased to get Conor in because the qualities he will bring into the group are just what I am looking for. He's an exciting, energetic, bubbly character who loves getting forward with attacking intent. He's got a good left foot and will inject further energy into the team."

"He's been on our radar for quite a while and I'm particularly pleased we've been able to get him in because two other clubs were also trying to sign him."

"There is more to come from him. He's going to be joining an experienced group of players who will be able to help develop him in the working environment we have here."

Conor is just as thrilled to be joining the Albion at the age of 25: "It's a massive chance for me. I've worked hard throughout my career to get to this stage



and I'm proud of what I've done so far. As a young player you always want to play at the highest level but sometimes the route isn't straightforward and you have to do it the hard way.

"I've plied my trade in the lower leagues. To get a chance here is massive and I want to take it. I want to kick on now and hopefully get us back to the Premier League. As soon as I knew the Club were interested it was always the place I wanted to go."

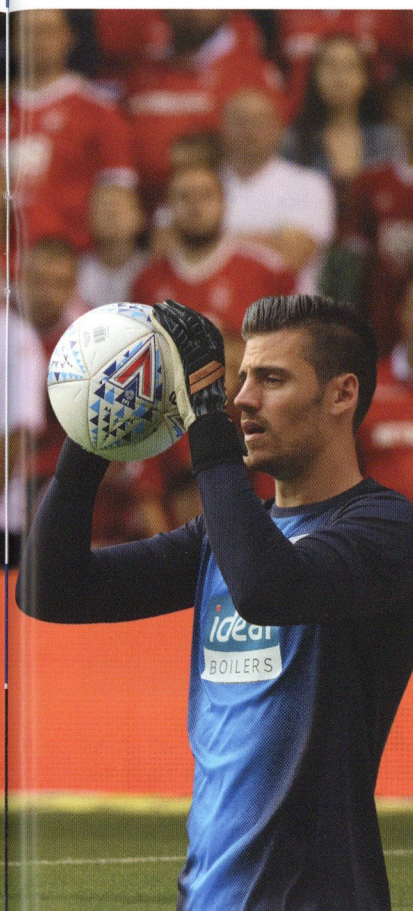
"It was a no-brainer coming here as soon as I spoke to the manager about what he wants to do. I've spoken to a lot of people who've been here and they've nothing but good things to say."

"I'm attack minded. I like to think I get up and down the pitch and try and affect the game going forward. I like to get crosses in. I've still got stuff to work on - as anyone has - so hopefully I can keep improving and help the team."

"You're always learning off everyone; players and coaching staff. Darren has a wealth of experience that I can tap into. Hopefully he can help me improve, but it's also down to me to put the hard work in."

"The squad here is unbelievable and to come into that group is a privilege. But it's my job to get into the team and stay in it. I'm ready for the challenge."

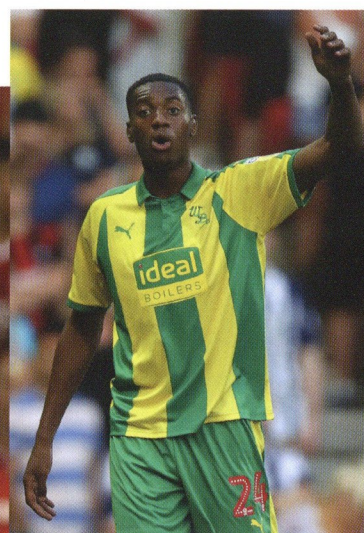
Picking up the same challenge is another injection of youthful talent into the team,



Harvey Barnes, on loan from Leicester City. He didn't take long to introduce himself to the Throstletariat, scoring two and making another in the first half of the Regis Shield game against Coventry and then scoring a screamer against Bolton on the opening day, a strike that's already a contender for "Goal of the Season".

It's not his first loan move after being at MK Dons and Barnsley in the past but he's clear that this season is the biggest of his career so far.

"I got speaking to Leicester about what was going to happen this season. They said they were happy for me to go out on loan. I heard about the West Brom interest, took a liking to it and thought it was the right place for me to go."



"There is great ambition for this season. I spoke to the gaffer. The way he's put things across and the way he wants to play will suit my game."

"I've enjoyed the last two loans - the whole process of it, meeting new players and settling into a team. The excitement of going out every Saturday in front of a crowd is the main thing I enjoy. You go into some games with 25,000 people in the Championship. Every week is a different test and there's some big clubs."

"First things first I want to be part of the team and have a successful season. Beyond that, I want the same as everyone here - we are hoping for promotion."

"On a personal level I want to hit my targets for goals and assists and play in a lot of games. Game time is very important to me. I'm a positive player. I love scoring and making goals. I try to be as creative as I can be on the pitch."

Six of the best they may be, but it could be that our seventh summer signing will be magnificent for, if you want goals, there are few better sources at present than Dwight Gayle - 23 goals in 32 games as Newcastle won promotion from the Championship two seasons ago underlines those credentials.

Darren Moore certainly sees Gayle as being integral to his plans for the season: "Dwight is a proven goalscorer in the Championship and to have someone with that goal threat and prowess in our numbers was attractive

to us - I think this loan swap with Salomon Rondon could work out for both clubs. We're delighted to have him on board."

"I believe that Dwight's talents will soon establish him as a fans' favourite. He is quick, sharp off the back of the last defender and is a natural goalscorer - left foot, right foot, in all positions. Somebody with those qualities where it really matters is going to be very important to us."

On his debut against Nottingham Forest last Tuesday, it was very clear what a threat he is going to be. Not only did he hit the post and get involved in the build-up for Matt Phillips' equaliser, his arrival as a second half substitute clearly terrified the Forest defence who immediately went ten yards further back towards their own goal, changing the whole dynamic of the game. It's clear goals are going to be Gayle's currency this term.

"I love scoring goals and hopefully I can score as many as I can here and help the team by doing it. It's a difficult league to get used to. You need a bit of variety."

"At Newcastle when we won promotion, we didn't start strongly but it was about mentality, getting results and building on performances each week. I know the experience and quality we have in the dressing room. I'm looking forward to getting out there, performing, making the fans happy and getting promoted."

"The manager attracted me here. He's really enthusiastic about my game. I'm buzzing to come down and can't wait to get started."

"I've spoken to the few of the boys who play here and they've all had good things to say. I spoke to James Morrison and I know Jake Livermore from when I was younger."

"The whole club is moving in the right direction towards getting promoted this season. We've got a great team and we're all focused on achieving our aim."

It'll take time for the new players to settle in and time for the existing ones to adapt their games to get the best from our new style and their new colleagues. But didn't your mother ever tell you that patience is a virtue? Mom knows best...



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THE ALBION ASSEMBLY IS RECRUITING



Since its inception a little under four years ago, the Albion Assembly has evolved into a vital connection between Club and supporters.

It has provided valued input on all aspects of the Club's activities from the perspective of you, the supporter, and today there is a fresh opportunity for Albion fans to join in a consultation group which has been hailed by the football authorities.

We are looking to "refresh" the membership with some new blood and new perspectives on the wide range of issues the Albion Assembly will tackle.

Let's remind ourselves why Assembly exists. We can't get 25,000 fans into a room on a regular basis but we can meet 25 or more five or six times a year to hear what you are thinking.

The topic range is as broad as it is long - anything from food on the concourses, entertainment in the Fanzone, strips, prices, pieces of flimsy and issues of major interest. We've staged and filmed Q and As with senior Club officials about transfer business, consulted on season ticket prices and fielded the groans about queues for a pint! The Assembly cannot solve all our problems but it can and does play a key role in keeping the Club on its toes about the good and not so good elements of The Hawthorns experience.

Members have also joined sub-committee groups to look into match day experiences, diversity issues and our unique digital archive project which continues to grow and develop towards a launch point.

We're grateful to all the members who have devoted time and energy into making the Albion Assembly such a vital forum. Some eventually have to relinquish the commitment because of work commitments or changes in personal circumstances and we can now accommodate a fresh influx of members.

If you're interested then all you need is the time, the devotion and that love for the Baggies to ask not what the Albion can do for you but what you can do for the Albion.

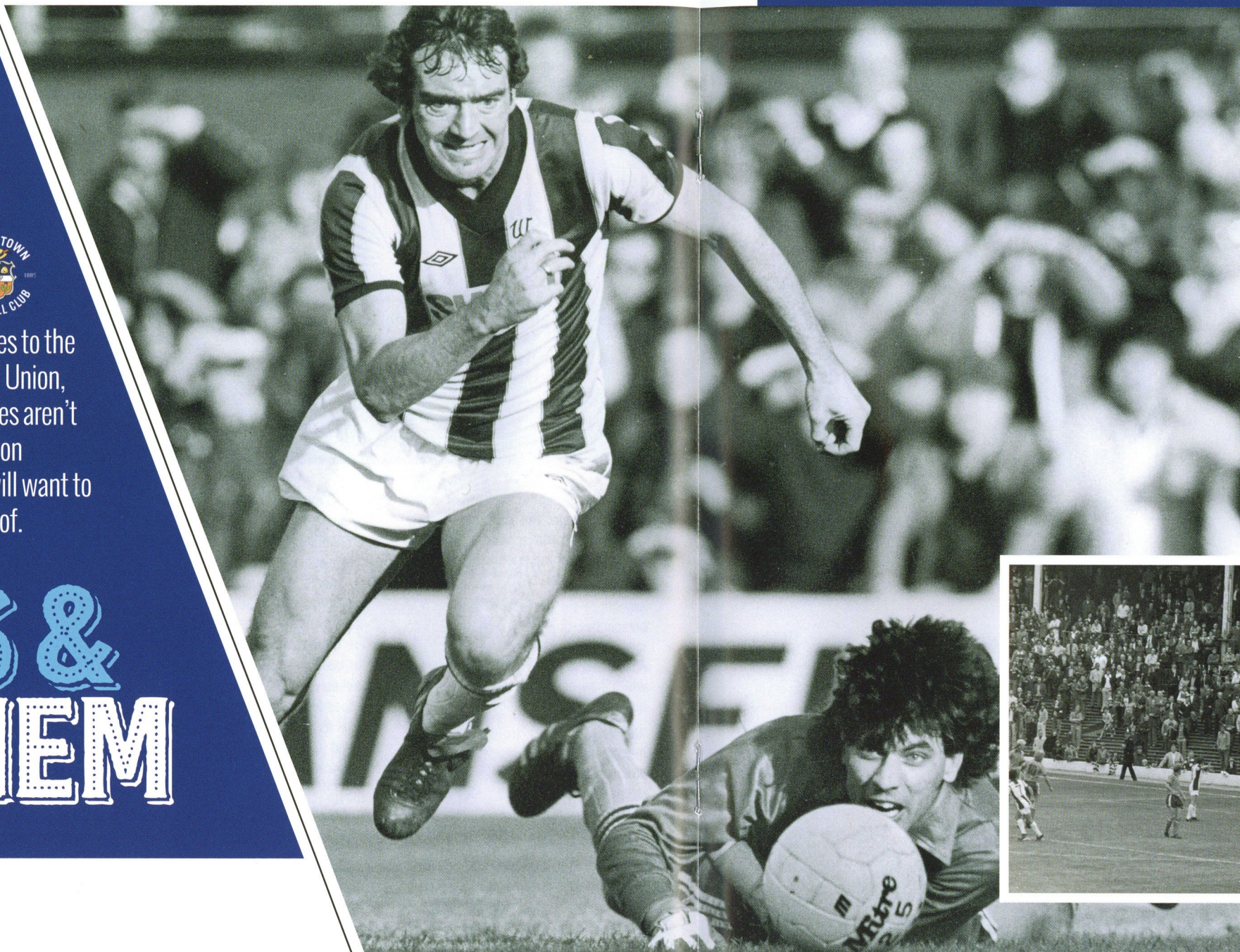
Want to get involved? Simply e-mail us at fans@wba.fc.co.uk and give us your vital statistics - your name, age, years supporting the club, where you sit at The Hawthorns. Why do you want to join? What would you be able to bring to our discussions? What subjects are most important to you?





With apologies to the Goalkeepers' Union, today's images aren't ones that Luton custodians will want to be reminded of.

US & THEM



Our main picture features Action Man – Alistair Brown, not the Money Supermarket one – going around Alan Judge in the Luton goal back in October 1982, though on this occasion, the ball didn't finish in the back of the net. The Throstles did get a 1-0 win however, Clive Whitehead on the mark.

Back in August 1975, the sides met after a sluggish Albion start to the season, one point and no goals from two games. Some 75 minutes in and we still hadn't scored until John Trewick pounced. Judging from a stoically unimpressed Smethwick End, they didn't fancy his chances but like Keith Barber in the Luton goal, they had misjudged him. The ball clipped the inside of the post and went in. 1-0 to the Albion and promotion at season's end.





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Travel details:

Friday 24th August 2018 @ 7-45pm
MIDDLESBROUGH v ALBION

Coaches depart:

Kidderminster 1-00pm, Stourbridge
1-15pm, West Bromwich 2-00pm.

Fare: £23-00

Friday 14th September 2018 @
7-45pm

BIRMINGHAM CITY v ALBION

Coaches depart:

Kidderminster 4-30pm, Stourbridge
4-45pm, West Bromwich 5-30pm.

Fare: £10-00

Booking details:

Call 0121 227 2227 for credit card
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evening before departure, subject to
availability, by ringing Dave Holloway
on 07887 928083.

Dates & kick off times of all Albion
fixtures are subject to alteration.

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NO racist, homophobic or sexist
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The West Bromwich pick up is on
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BAGGIES TRAVEL

DEFEAT AT PALACE ON THE FINAL DAY OF LAST SEASON
MEANS WE HAVE TO START THE CARABAO CUP IN
ROUND ONE IN THIS SEASON'S COMPETITION.

Had we won that match, we would all
be sat at home tonight, so we have to
be thankful that we are here at The
Hawthorns instead of a night in front
of the telly.

At present, Baggies Travel bookings are
being taken for our trips to the Riverside
later this month and to St. Andrew's in
September, both fixtures being shown
live on Sky Sports and both matches
moved to a Friday night. Welcome to the
Championship! Travel times and prices
can be found elsewhere on this page.

In Saturday's issue v QPR, I will include
our travel information for our trips to
PNE in late September and Sheffield
Wednesday in early October as match
tickets are due to go on sale for both
games on 27/28 August. Travel details
to Wigan will appear in the Stoke issue.

Next up away from home is a trip to
Teesside on Friday 24th August to take
on Middlesbrough.

I knew we would get a few games
moved at the start of the campaign and
I just hope that Sky Sports want to show
even more of our games throughout the
season as it means we are doing well. It
was obvious our first match against Boro
would be selected as it sees us travel to
take on our former boss Tony Pulis. Our
last visit to their ground ended in a 1-1
draw on transfer deadline day in January
2017 and the last time we played them
away in the Championship, we came
away with a 5-0 win.

These notes had to be written before our
long trip to Norwich City last Saturday
so naturally I can't comment on the
result but I have a feeling that we didn't
wear our new green and yellow shirts
at Carrow Road as we did at the City
Ground last Tuesday! Both trips will get a
mention in Saturday's programme.

Just like in the last two campaigns, our
U21/U23 team are competing in this
seasons Checkatrade Trophy against
League 1 and League 2 teams. So far,

we have lost all six of our matches in
the competition. Two years ago, we lost
at Millwall and today's opponents Luton
Town, as well as our only home game so
far against Gillingham (attendance 284).
All games ended 2-0 to the opposition.

Last season, we lost at teams closer to
home, namely Walsall, Shrewsbury and
Coventry.

Baggies Travel ran a coach to Millwall
and Luton in 2016/17 and it confused
the officials at Kenilworth Road as they
thought we were the team and tried to
park us by the players' entrance!

I mention the Checkatrade Trophy as a
few people have asked if we are running
a coach to any of this season's games?
The answer to that question depends
on whether we get enough people
interested to fill a coach, so if you are
interested, give me a call ASAP on 07887
928083 and we will see what we can do.
This season's matches are:

CHECKATRADE TROPHY –
NORTHERN GROUP C

Tuesday 9th October 2018

BLACKPOOL v ALBION

Tuesday 6th November 2018

ACCRINGTON STANLEY v ALBION

Tuesday 13th November 2018

MACCLESFIELD TOWN v ALBION

(ALL GAMES KICK OFF AT 7-45PM)

And finally, should we progress to the
second round tonight and we get an away
draw, Baggies Travel will be running
coaches to the game. As we won't have
another home fixture to publish the
travel information before the next round
(played the week commencing 27th
August) details will be available on the
club's social media sites (@wba) and
also on mine (@baggiestravel). Should
we lose tonight, I would like to wish
Luton Town all the best for the rest of the
competition.

See you on the coaches.

Dave Holloway

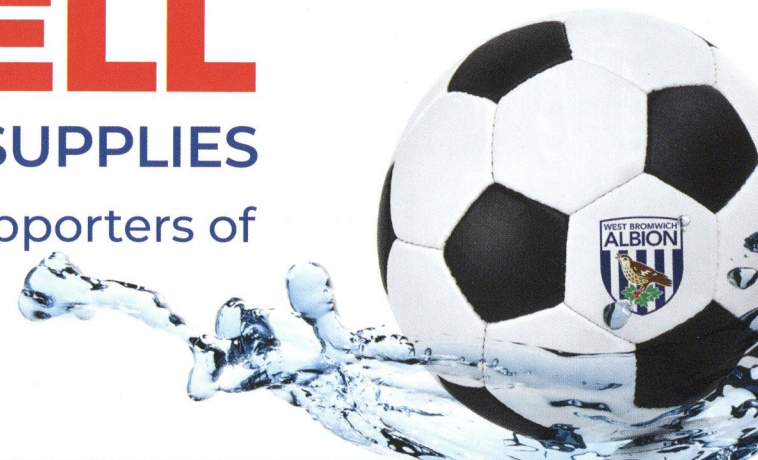
We know the score!



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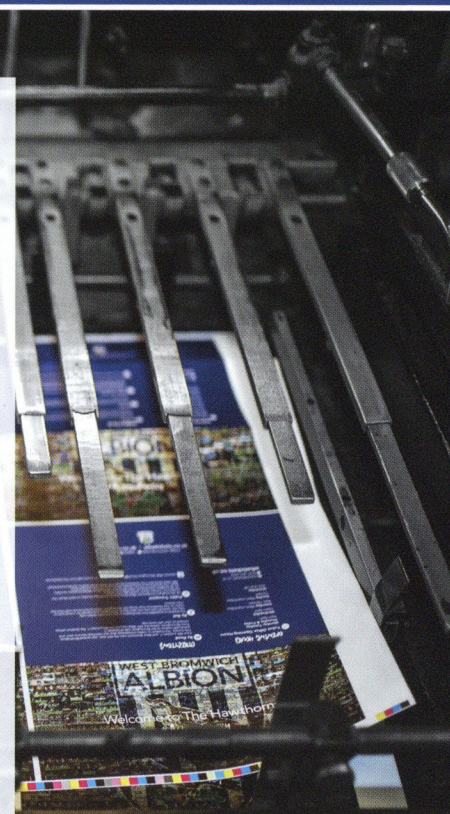
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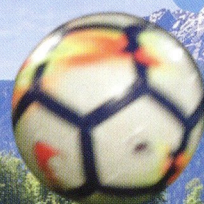
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THESE ARE A FEW OF MY

FAVOURITE THINGS



**NATHAN
FERGUSON**
17, DEFENDER

**Raindrops on roses? Whiskers on kittens?
Bright copper kettles? Warm woollen mittens?**

Are these among the favourite things of Albion's academy stars? Let's find out shall we?

Football moment: Featuring on the bench against Liverpool last season in the Premier League. Truly a surreal moment for me and my family.

Goal: Probably my first goal for the under-23 side. It was a good ball into the box and a decent header. The celebration could have been better though!

Game: The Floodlit Cup final where my under-15 squad beat Chelsea 2-1. It was a great game and a memorable result.

Player: Samuel Umtiti. He's a great player - fast, strong and good on the ball. You can tell he's got a great personality on and off the field.

Stadium: Wembley. My boyhood dream has always been to play at Wembley. I haven't managed it yet but hopefully I will in the future!

International kit: England's red away kit.

Boots: Nike T90s. The retro black and yellow ones were the best. They were the first boots given to me, size 6. At the time I was only a size 4 so I was able to wear them for almost 4 seasons. I was still squeezing my feet into them when I was a size 7!

World Cup moment: The whole of 2018! It was probably the best World Cup that I've watched as England made it so far. Even though they didn't win they truly did their country proud.

School lesson: French. I'm only saying this instead of PE because for however long the lesson was, I honestly thought I was French. It was interesting to learn something new as well.

Animal: Panther. It resembles strength and power.

Colour: Midnight purple.

Chocolate: Hershey's. I highly recommend it if you haven't tried it.

Drink: Listen closely. Tropical Rhythm is the best drink I have ever had. Honestly tingles my taste buds with every sip I have.

Holiday destination: I love going back to Jamaica to see my family and to just relax by the beach. The people and the food are great.

TV show: The Fresh Prince of Bel Air. It makes me laugh with every episode. There's a lot of diverse characters that make a very strong family.

Car: Porsche. I saw it in "Fast and Furious" once and have been in love ever since.

Albion moment: The 5-5 with Man United. It's so historic to me because I was ball-boy.



WEST BROMWICH ALBION

YOUTH 2018/19



DATE	OPPONENT	RESULT	STARTING XI
PREMIER LEAGUE 2			
Monday 13 August	NEWCASTLE UNITED (ko 2pm Training Ground)		
Friday 17 August	Wolverhampton Wanderers		
Monday 27 August	NORWICH CITY (ko 2pm Training Ground)		
Monday 3 September	Sunderland		
Monday 17 September	MIDDLESBROUGH		
Friday 21 September	Reading		
Monday 1 October	STOKE CITY (The Hawthorns)		
Tuesday 9 October	Blackpool (Checkatrade Trophy ko 7.45pm)		
Friday 19 October	Fulham		
Monday 29 October	ASTON VILLA		
Friday 2 November	Southampton		
Tuesday 6 November	Accrington Stanley (Checkatrade Trophy ko 7.45pm)		
Tuesday 13 November	Macclesfield Town (Checkatrade Trophy ko 7.45pm)		
Friday 23 November	MANCHESTER UNITED (The Hawthorns)		
Monday 10 December	READING (ko 2pm Training Ground)		
Friday 14 December	Middlesbrough		
Monday 7 January	WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS		
Monday 14 January	Newcastle United		
Friday 1 February	Norwich City		
Monday 18 February	SUNDERLAND		
Monday 4 March	Stoke City		
Monday 11 March	FULHAM		
Friday 5 April	Manchester United		
Monday 15 April	SOUTHAMPTON (The Hawthorns)		
Monday 29 April	Aston Villa		
U18 PREMIER LEAGUE NORTH			
Saturday 18 August	Newcastle United		
Saturday 25 August	Liverpool		
Saturday 1 September	SUNDERLAND		
Saturday 15 September	Wolverhampton Wanderers		
Saturday 22 September	MANCHESTER UNITED		
Saturday 6 October	Everton		
Saturday 20 October	DERBY COUNTY		
Saturday 27 October	MIDDLESBROUGH		
Saturday 3 November	Blackburn Rovers		
Saturday 24 November	STOKE CITY		
Saturday 1 December	Manchester City		
Saturday 5 January	NEWCASTLE UNITED		
Saturday 12 January	Middlesbrough		
Saturday 19 January	LIVERPOOL		
Saturday 2 February	Sunderland		
Saturday 23 February	WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS		
Saturday 2 March	Manchester United		
Saturday 16 March	EVERTON		
Saturday 30 March	BLACKBURN ROVERS		
Saturday 6 April	Derby County		
Saturday 13 April	Stoke City		
Saturday 27 April	MANCHESTER CITY		

■ Home games

Goalscorers in **bold**
■ Booking
■ Sent Off
■ First Sub
■ Second Sub
■ Third Sub



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PREMIER LEAGUE 2

All games kick-off at 7pm unless otherwise stated.
All home games take place at Aggborough,
unless otherwise stated.



SUBSTITUTES

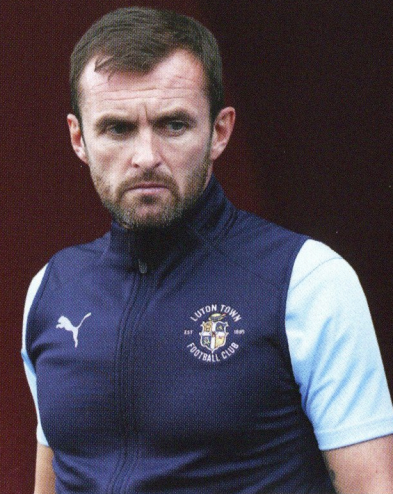




THE OPPOSITION



LUTON TOWN



Newly promoted Luton Town are our first opponents in the Carabao Cup this term, coming here on a high after a thrillingly positive end to last term, just as was the case with Bolton Wanderers in our last home game.

As we saw then, momentum can be a very significant thing and something that's tough to combat, so there'll be no underestimating lower division opponents here at The Hawthorns this evening.

Over the course of the last couple of years at Kenilworth Road, 45 year old Nathan Jones has built himself a strong reputation as one of the most promising young managerial talents around. The Welshman went through much of his development, both as player and coach, at Brighton, clocking up plenty of games for the Seagulls at left-back, before moving behind the scenes after a period playing with Yeovil.

He had a brief spell as Brighton caretaker boss prior to the arrival of Chris Hughton, then was given the chance to take charge permanently at Luton in January 2016 as the Hatters were battling relegation from League Two. A sustained winning run took them to the comfort of mid-table by season's end, at which point Jones' revolution really took hold, substantial changes to the playing squad across the summer bearing real fruit in 2016/17 as Luton went all the way to the play-offs before losing on aggregate to Blackpool.

“

Last time Luton were up against midlands opposition on League Cup duty back in 2016, they humbled Aston Villa 3-1, albeit at Kenilworth Road.

Jones was determined not to miss out again and, adding experience to the squad, Luton made much of the running last term, ultimately ending up as runners up to Accrington Stanley as they clinched promotion back to League One. The Luton fans are certainly on board too, taking more than 2,000 fans to Portsmouth on the opening day and enjoying a sell out at home to Sunderland last Saturday afternoon.

They were certainly competitive on the opening day of the season, unfortunate to lose 1-0 to Portsmouth at Fratton Park, two of the summer's four new signings starting on the south coast. Midfielder Jorge Grant will doubtless have been on the phone to his mates at Nottingham Forest ahead of this one after his loan move to Luton from the City Ground. The 23 year old has had similar loan moves to Notts County over the last couple of seasons, last year especially successful as he weighed in with 15 goals as County just missed out on joining Luton in winning promotion.

Matty Pearson also began his Luton career after making a summer move from Barnsley. It was the 200th game of the central defender's league career across spells at Rochdale, Halifax, Accrington and the Tykes, though he was restricted to just 17 games for the Oakwell outfit last season.

Coming off the bench in that game was Andrew Shinnie – brother of Graeme

who we encountered in our pre-season game up at Aberdeen – having made his switch from Birmingham to Luton permanent after a successful loan spell last term. Also coming onto the pitch late in the game was the fourth of the Luton summer buys, Sonny Bradley, formerly of Plymouth Argyle. It was a return to familiar haunts for the defender who had a previous spell with Portsmouth, as well as representing Hull City, Aldershot and Crawley.

Importantly, Luton have kept hold of the prolific goalscorers who fired them to promotion. James Collins scored 19 goals in his first season at Kenilworth Road after a move from Crawley last summer, continuing to terrorise lower division defences as he has done with the likes of Shrewsbury Town and Swindon Town in previous seasons. The tall 27 year old will pose a real threat tonight.

That's also true of Danny Hylton who missed the Portsmouth game through suspension. He has been almost as regular a figure on the scoresheet as the teamsheet in his time with Luton, knocking in 50 goals in 90 games for the Hatters after leaving Oxford United in July 2016.

Elliot Lee offers further attacking options after joining this time last year, grabbing ten goals in 32 appearances for the Hatters. The son of former England international Rob, Elliot started his playing career at West Ham United. Harry Cornick also has Premier League credentials,

joining Luton from AFC Bournemouth last summer, scoring five times in the promotion winning campaign.

At the other end of the park, Czech goalkeeper Marek Stech played a big role in Luton's promotion push last season and the imposing shot stopper who spent a lengthy spell on West Ham's books without being given much opportunity looks set to retain his place between the posts for Jones' team. Former Arsenal trainee James Shea will be looking to keep the pressure on him though, having joined with Stech last summer after being a regular at AFC Wimbledon.

In front of him, competing for the right-back position with be James Justin and Jack Stacey. James can also play in midfield and the 19 year old is already carving out a big reputation for himself, having played over 60 senior games for the Hatters and featuring for England at Under 20 level.

Stacey, meanwhile, was a regular last term after being drafted in from Reading. He really made his breakthrough on loan at Exeter in 2016/17, playing in the League Two Play-Off final with them before moving to Luton last June and going one better by winning promotion.

Alan Sheehan skippered Luton through the promotion run and continues with the armband this term. He is especially strong on the left, either at centre-half or full-back. With over 400 senior games behind him, the 31 year old Irishman is an important source of experience that will



ALAN SHEEHAN
SKIPPED LUTON
THROUGH THE
PROMOTION RUN
AND CONTINUES
WITH THE ARMBAND
THIS TERM.

prove invaluable for Luton at the higher level.

Like Sheehan, Dan Potts can play in either of the left sided defensive positions, his prowess in the air proving important at set pieces at either end. Potts was the Players' Player of the Year last season and is carving out a strong career at Kenilworth Road having come through the academy at West Ham earlier in his career. He has also represented England at youth levels.

Irishman Alan McCormack is another experienced voice in the Luton changing room, the 34 year old just shy of 470 senior games at clubs as varied as Preston, Southend, Motherwell and

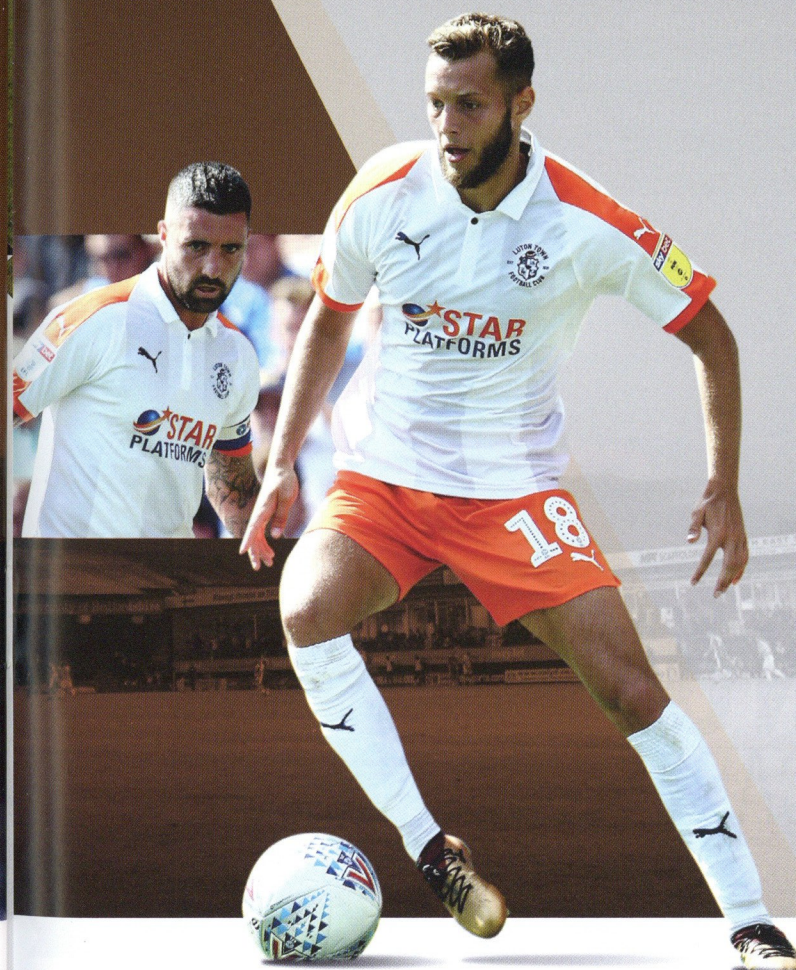
Brentford. Injury curtailed his involvement to a degree last term but able to play at full-back or in the middle, he will have a big part to play this season.

Versatility is important in these marathon football league seasons and Irish under 21 international Glen Rea offers that, able to play at centre-half or as a holding midfielder. He has well over 100 Luton games under his belt after moving north from Brighton where he began his career, coming through the ranks for the Seagulls while Nathan Jones was coaching there.

Pelly-Ruddock Mpanzu made his way into the game through the academy system at West Ham and has become something of a cult hero in his time with Luton. Joining as Luton won the Conference in 2013/14, since then he has played all over the team, though predominantly in a midfield role. He has a knack of scoring spectacular goals and the powerhouse with number 17 on his back could well catch the eye this evening.

Maltese international midfielder Luke Gambin is still looking to nail down a regular starting berth at Luton after joining from Barnet in January 2017, but he is a good option for Jones to call upon and will be looking at making this a real breakthrough season, having been on the bench at Portsmouth. The well travelled Jake Jervis came off the bench in that game, his 11th appearance for Town since joining back in January. Quick and direct, the Wolverhampton born former Blues striker will be on familiar ground as he returns to the midlands this evening.

Last time Luton were up against midlands opposition on League Cup duty back in 2016, they humbled Aston Villa 3-1, albeit at Kenilworth Road. That's a timely reminder of just what cup football can do to big reputations...



Beginning this season, and marking 130 years since the Football League came into existence, the Albion will be presenting very special caps to the footballers who have represented us in league games – in our 4,782nd league game, away at Forest last Tuesday, Dwight Gayle became number 916 in the line appropriate enough for a centre-forward wearing 16.

A TOKEN OF CAP-PRECIATION...

Many are long since passed and are being honoured through their families, plenty are still with us and are being busily tracked down, some receiving their caps at The Hawthorns ahead of kick-off throughout the season. But the whole thing seems like a good excuse to begin creating an Albion version of Wikipedia, only accurate. So here we go, with a couple of recent players who we came across in the course of the first week of the season...

903. MARC WILSON

Signed: January 31st 2017, on loan from AFC Bournemouth to season's end.

Debut: May 6th 2017, Burnley 2 Albion 2

Games: Premier League: 3+1 games

As Albion were busy chiselling out a 1-1 draw at Middlesbrough's Riverside Stadium on transfer deadline day in January 2017, back at the ranch, or the training ground anyway, we were making a late addition to the ranks by drafting in Marc Wilson from Bournemouth.

Wilson offered an important versatility to a relatively slim squad, being able to play right across the back or as a

defensive midfielder too. Marc was already well known to then head coach Tony Pulis from time spent together at Stoke City, Pulis having bought him in from Portsmouth and established him in the Potters' team, so much so that he appeared in the FA Cup final in May 2011 as Stoke lost 1-0 to Manchester City.

Marc had the misfortune to arrive as the Throstles were fielding a very settled back four – Craig Dawson, Gareth McAuley, Jonny Evans and Allan Nyom – and with those remaining in resolutely good health and with Darren Fletcher and Jake Livermore patrolling centre midfield, opportunities to play were limited.

Indeed, Wilson sat on the bench on ten occasions without getting a sniff of the action before, eventually, he was given a first team start at Burnley's Turf Moor following a run of four straight defeats. Albion went to a back five, Dawson and Chris Brunt at wing-back, Wilson lining up alongside Evans and McAuley as we halted the slide with a 2-2 draw.

The return of a back four for the visit of champions elect Chelsea – they sealed the title with a 1-0 win at The Hawthorns – saw Marc back on the bench, a second half replacement for McAuley, before rounding out his Albion career with starts at left-back at Manchester City and Swansea City, both defeats.

838. BEN WATSON

Signed: February 22nd 2010, on loan from Wigan Athletic to March 28th 2010.

Debut: February 27th 2010, Albion 3 Derby County 1

Games: Championship: 6+1 games, 1 goal.

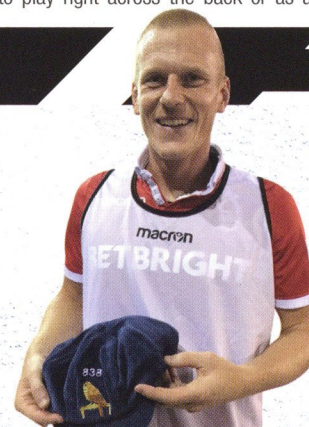
As we will be reminded in the coming months, if the Premier League is a marathon, not a sprint, then the Championship is a triathlon on top of that. It is exhausting, demanding and can devour players in its wake.

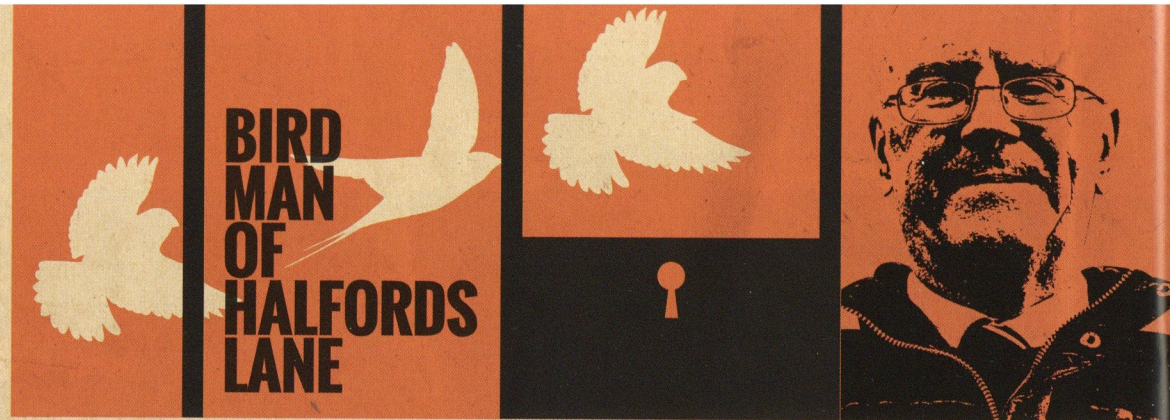
For all that things were going well under Roberto di Matteo in 2009/10 and we were closing in on an immediate return to the top flight, a little bit of freshening things up never did any harm and nor did giving a break to the regulars who had slogged through the winter months. Come late February we had a run of three games in which we drew away at Cardiff City, lost at Bristol City and were then knocked out of the FA Cup by Reading at The Hawthorns.

Looking to inject a little bit of a spark to a fatigued looking team, we went into the loan market and drafted in midfielder Ben Watson from Premier League Wigan Athletic. Ben had enjoyed a good loan spell at QPR and his energy and industry were exactly what Albion needed as we defeated Derby 3-1 at The Hawthorns.

We were sluggish again in defeat at QPR, Watson then dropping to the bench for the visit to Sheffield Wednesday, then he was back in the fray as we beat promotion hopefuls Blackpool 3-2 and played particularly well as we held slick passing Swansea in check at the Liberty before two late goals won the game and effectively sealed promotion. An early Watson goal against Preston paved the way to a 3-2 home win, the start of a good week where we also beat Coventry and drew at Reading.

Wigan had clearly noted his good form for at that point, they recalled him to the colours. But his was a contribution to promotion that shouldn't be forgotten.





IN THE SUMMERTIME, WHEN THE WEATHER WAS HIGH, IT WAS A BUSY TIME FOR US THROSTLES. ON MAY 24TH AT THE CRESCENT THEATRE, BIRMINGHAM, THE NEW PLAY ABOUT JEFF ASTLE, "THE JEFF ASTLE STORY: FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME", OPENED FOR FOUR DAYS.

The play, written and directed by Mike Howl, tells the life story of Jeff. Family, friends and former teammates were consulted at length to give the tale full provenance. The result was a minimalistic production full of humour, nostalgia and pathos. His family, several of his playing pals and plenty of fans attended the premiere on the 24th and were suitably impressed by the project. All proceeds from the ticket sales were donated to the Jeff Astle Foundation.

Albion were represented at the World Cup in Russia. Ahmed Hagazi and Ali Gabr turned out for Egypt in their three group games against Russia (1-3), Saudi Arabia (1-2) and Uruguay (0-1). Nacer Chadli played for Belgium in their group matches against Panama (sub), and England. In the game against Japan (last 16) he came on as a sub and ran 82 yards in the last minute to score the winning goal in Belgium's 3-2 win, thus becoming only the third Albion player to score in the World Cup finals. (Derek Kevan (2) in Sweden in 1958 and Robert Koren in South Africa in 2010). Chadli started in the games against Brazil (quarter-final) France (semi-final) and the third place play-off against England.

To fill my long summer evenings, I read a couple of new books. The first was "When Footballers Were Skint" by James Henderson. This is a great book which covers those far away days during the 1940s, '50s and '60s when football was a very different game. Featuring extensive interviews with old stars, including our very own Alec Jackson, it paints a

picture of austerity and servitude until the maximum wage was abolished in 1963. Here is a great fact uncovered in this tome. The judge appointed to oversee the maximum wage case in 1963 was Justice Richard Wilberforce, whose great-great grandfather was William Wilberforce who had led the movement that resulted in the abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807.

There have been two books about former Throstle and Manchester United legend Jimmy Murphy. The third and latest one, "The Man Who Kept The Red Flag Flying", is by far the best. It truly captures the life and times of the fiery Welshman who played for Albion in the 1935 FA Cup final. Authorised by Jimmy's family and written by Wayne Barton, this is one of the best football books I have ever read.

A couple of years ago, I reported a story about the clean up of All Saints Churchyard in West Bromwich, which includes the graves of Billy Bassett (a wonderful sight to behold) and George "Spry" Woodhall. The project leaders there are still looking for volunteers to help them maintain the churchyard and carry on the good work undertaken so far. If you wish to help the last resting place of two Albion greats amongst others, please ring David Lord on 0121 588 2647.

Back in May, I mentioned that Joe Smith's 1920 League Championship medal was up for auction. Still not having won the lottery, I was prevented from bidding and in June it sold to some lucky person for £22,000. I hope it was a Throstle or someone who appreciates its significance in the history of our great club (and the story of Netherton too, which is where Joe came from).

Our pre-season friendlies were many and varied. We opened up at Barnet on July 7th. It was the first time our senior side had visited The Hive and our side included trialists, Kieran Richardson (a hero of the Great Escape) and Martin Cranie who could include Coventry and Southampton amongst his former clubs. Before the game, Barnet Chairman Anthony Kleanthous took Dave Holloway and I around the Medical Centre attached to the ground. Costing £6million to build and furnish, it includes the most sophisticated MRI scanner in Europe which cost £1.2million. The facilities are used by teams from all over the world. We also bumped into David Pleat who sends his regards to all. Oh, the result? 3-1 to the Albion (Robson-Kanu 2 (1 pen) and Kyle Edwards). Coloured teamsheet, no programme.

Next port of call was Swindon Town on Saturday July 14th. This was a strange exercise and probably cannot be classed as a "friendly" as such because the teams played two practice games, each lasting an hour and featuring over 40 different players! The first game finished 1-1 (Rodriguez) and the second 2-0 to the Throstles (Edwards and Jameson). Coloured teamsheet, only given to the press and corporate areas. No programme.

Aberdeen was the highlight of the pre-season programme on Friday 20th of July. Some hardy souls travelled up to Kircaldy on the Thursday to spend an evening with Willie Johnston. Some of us travelled early on the Friday morning, arriving in Aberdeen at 3pm. In all, 262 Throstles

made the 854 mile round trip to visit Piittodrie, to watch Albion draw 1-1 with the Dons (Livermore). This was a unique trip, representing the most northerly point in Great Britain that Albion have played a game.

The Dons were most accommodating and, after the game, a number of our fans met up with Derek McInnes for a chat. Derek said that at some point he wanted to visit The Hawthorns and hopes to make the long trip south some time this season. No doubt he had a chat with his old pal Darren and they exchanged notes for the season ahead. Superb programme with a great photograph of Doug Fraser in his Scotland strip in 1968. Photocopied teamsheet.

We also had the pleasure of meeting Craig Brown, the former Scotland boss, who is now a director at Piittodrie. He took great delight in telling us three times that he was the assistant manager at Derby when they beat us on the play-off final in 2007. We took this in good fun, but it did hurt! The rest of the night was spent talking sense about football in general with a wonderful, funny man who is a legend of Scottish football.

The following day we started the journey home, calling in at Forfar Athletic to have a look at the home of Dave Holloway's Scottish team. It was shut, so we looked at a brick wall and journeyed on. There was time for half an hour's stop at Dundee, where we visited Dundee and Dundee United, whose grounds are just 39 steps apart. Dundee were playing Dunfermline the following day and were selling a special souvenir programme for the match, celebrating the life of one of their greatest players, Alan Gilzean. His funeral had been the previous Thursday and was attended by, amongst others, Craig Brown who had been a teammate at Dens Park. Wonderful programme, great player.

In the city centre I had my photo taken next to the statue of Desperate Dan (once a kid, always a kid!). The publishers of the Dandy and Beano comics, DC Thompson and Co, are based in Dundee.

Having looked at a number of fixtures, we decided on Albion Rovers versus Ayr United in the Scottish BetFred Cup, a group stage game played in Coatbridge on the outskirts of Glasgow. This was a little bit of a pilgrimage as Coatbridge was the birthplace of much loved and sorely missed Baggie, Ray Duffin. He always had a soft spot in his heart for the Rovers.



The Rovers' ground, Cliftonhill Stadium, was opened on Christmas Day 1919 when they entertained St Mirren, who spoiled the party by winning 2-0. The record gate at the Stadium was set on February 8th 1936 when 27,381 fans crammed in to watch a Scottish Cup tie against Rangers. The capacity now is 1,572.

Apart from Ray and the obvious Albion moniker, there is one other connection with the Rovers. The late Danny Hegan, who played 14 games for us in 1969/70, was also born in Coatbridge and began his football career with Albion Rovers in 1959. He made 25 appearances (four goals) for the Rovers before leaving for Sunderland in 1961. I spoke to a chap who had followed Rovers for over 73 years and asked him if he remembered Danny. "Aye", he replied. "I remember the wee man's last game for us. He turned up drunk and couldnae play" A portent of things to come. Only a teamsheet and Ayr won 2-0.

Back north to Barnsley on July 24th. 2-0 down after just eleven minutes, we recovered to win 3-2 with goals from Robson-Kanu, Morrison and an own goal from Cavare. A landmark result for not since 1947 had an Albion senior team won at Oakwell when, on August 30th, we triumphed 1-0 in a Second Division game with a strike from Dave Walsh. Although it was only a friendly this time round, grown men were crying, a lifetime ambition achieved. Multi-game programme, ultra rare coloured teamsheet.

The U23 side played the following friendlies. On Tuesday July 17th, they travelled to Quorn where they played in the Ryan Evans Memorial Match. Evans passed away in May aged just 18. He was a promising player at Quorn, where Russell Houlst is the goalkeeping coach. All proceeds from the game went to Ryan's family. The match was drawn 1-1 (Soule). Programme.

On July 20th, same night as Aberdeen, goals from Jamie Soule and Callum Morton earned us a 2-2 draw at Leamington. Teamsheet.

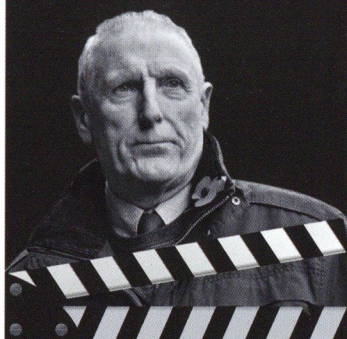
There was another trip to Aggborough on July 25th, where we drew 2-2 with Kidderminster thanks to two goals in a minute from Callum Morton and Digie (og) against the Harriers' first team squad. Multi game programme, coloured teamsheet.

Finally on Tuesday July 31st, we sent a team to Chasetown, our first ever visit to Church Street. Boaz Myhill played his first game since re-signing but it was the Scholars' goalie, Pond, who played a blinder keeping the score down to 2-1 (O'Shea and Soule) to the young Throstles. No programme, coloured teamsheet.

Apparently the ground is not far from where Chasetown Colliery once operated and the Mine Manager's office was next to the Church that almost backs onto the Scholars' ground. The office had electricity, which the manager eventually piped through to the Church which, in the late 1800s thus became the first Church in England to receive electricity. This little tale is courtesy of John Richards, the genial Welsh secretary of Chasetown F.C.

Tonight, we welcome Luton Town. We have met them once before in the League Cup, back in 1997/98 when the second round was a two-legged affair. On September 16th 1997, Bob Taylor netted in a 1-1 draw at Kenilworth Road in front of 3,437 fans. In the return leg at the Hawthorns on September 23rd, Albion won 4-2 (McDermott, Peschisolido (2) and Raven). The gate was 7,227. Albion went through 5-3 on aggregate but lost at home to Liverpool (0-2) in the third round. Good luck tonight lads and see you on Saturday.

Keep out th' oss road
John Homer



Every summer brings change to a football club, not least with players coming and going.

TONY BROWN

I'll talk more about a few of the new recruits in the Stoke issue at the start of September, but tonight, I just wanted to say a few words about three players who have been proper stalwarts of the football club and have left us after giving us years of fantastic service.

Nothing lasts forever, but I'm especially sad to see Gareth McAuley go on his way because I think he is one of the best bits of transfer business that this football club has ever done. To think that Roy Hodgson brought him here on a free and we got 200 Premier League games out of him at an outstanding level, that is remarkable. You can count on the fingers of one hand the

number of bad games there were amongst that lot. That is fantastic consistency.

Time and again, I had Gareth in my top two or three players of the season. He was one of the rocks that we built our Premier League stay on and the partnership that he had with Jonas Olsson was absolutely brilliant for us. Without them, I think we'd have carried on being a yo-yo team but they were so solid, they gave so little away, it always gave us a chance of getting points.

Both of them were proper leaders too, desperate to win, do anything they had to do for the team to get the results. That's probably the best defensive partnership we've had since John Wile and Alistair

Robertson and to be mentioned in the same breath as them two, that's an achievement.

Gareth was like a magnet for the ball in the box over the years. The number of times that crosses would get slung into the middle and he would meet them with his head and power the ball away from danger, you could just put the commentary on a loop sometimes! Then to add to that, he did a great job for us from set plays at the other end too, getting on the end of corners and free-kicks from Chris Brunt and planting another header in the net.

He was quicker than people gave him credit for too, he could cover the ground fast enough when he had to – you can't



play 200 games in the Premier League if you're not mobile. Plenty of forwards tried to outrun him but he gave as good as he got.

Whatever was going on, however he was playing or how the team was playing, Gareth always gave 100% in every minute he was on the field, never anything less and he really is one of the modern day heroes of the club for me. He will leave big boots to be filled.

Claudio Yacob was very much in that same mould, somebody who gave his all for the cause throughout his time at The Hawthorns. He was another one who was desperate to win every

game, every tackle, hated losing and would put absolutely everything into his performances to try and come out on the right side of a result.

It's hard nowadays to find those kind of defensive midfielders, those destroyers in the middle of the park who stop the other team from playing and make it a minefield in there. Nowadays, everybody wants to have their flicks and tricks on YouTube and all of that, they want to be the centre of attention, but Claudio just wanted to do his job.

He certainly worried a few Premier League players over the years because the sight

of Claudio coming and steaming into a challenge was enough to put the wind up anybody! But that's what you need in a team. It can't all be playmakers and tricks and video clips. You need somebody to go and do the digging for you and make it possible for others to do the fancy stuff.

He knew his limitations, he knew what he was good at and what he was good at was winning the ball and then giving it to somebody who could use it. He wasn't the kind of player that was going to knock raking passes all over the pitch and open teams up. He was the one who wanted to make that possible for other players to do, so he did his job, and did it very well for us.

His attitude was always right. He gave everything he had for the shirt, he was genuine, he always cared about the team and the club. He was a winner and again, 150 plus Premier League games for him over the years shows just how important he was to us in that good spell that we had in the top division. The fact that he and Gareth didn't play so much last season and were perhaps coming towards the end for us was a big factor in things not going so well here because people like them are not easy to replace, not by any means.

Ben Foster will be a tough act to follow for Sam Johnstone too! It was a pity that things ended with a bit of controversy because

very much about the Championship season, but he is a Premier League goalkeeper, you can't dispute that. It could have all been handled better perhaps, but that's what happens in football.

I hope that doesn't blind people to what a big figure he has been for us and how well he has played over the last seven years. He was an outstanding goalkeeper for us, he won us so many points over the years with his displays alone and for that, we should remember him fondly because he has done superbly for us.

Onto tonight and I think this is going to be a very important game for us. Having

This is a special competition for me anyway, because I was lucky enough to be in an Albion team that went and won it, back in 1966.

like McAuley and Yacob, he has been an absolute stalwart at the club in our best period in the last 35 years.

Ben came in with Gareth in 2011, a year before Claudio, and his impact was every bit as immense as the others. I'm not sure that over that period, there's been a better English goalkeeper because he has been fantastic for us and, going back to the player of the season vote, for me, if it wasn't Gareth, it was usually Ben! He had one or two injury problems along the way, but again, with over 200 Premier League games for us, he has been another foundation stone that we've built on.

He was my player of the season last term, he carried on making great saves to the end and he's as good a goalkeeper as we've seen since John Osborne – high praise again! I've been a very big fan of his over the years he's been with us and you certainly can't blame Watford for coming in and taking him back to the Premier League. I think it came as much of a surprise to Ben as anybody because I know he was thinking

lost our first game of the season here at The Hawthorns against Bolton, it's really important that we get the right result this evening. If things were to go wrong, it really would ramp up the pressure for the QPR game on Saturday, so a win is essential. It won't be easy because Luton will still be on a high after winning promotion last season, but if we approach the game in the right manner, we have a great chance of progressing to the next round.

More than that, winning cup games are great for confidence. I've never believed that cup games are a distraction from the league which is an idea that's crept in over the last 15 years or so. I think winning is a good habit to have whatever the competition and good form in the cups can feed into the league. Look at our last two promotion seasons if you want proof. We went to the semi-final of the FA Cup in 2008 and then the quarter-final of the League Cup two years later. Neither of those cup runs did us any harm in the league did they?



The League Cup is a special competition for me anyway, because I was lucky enough to be in an Albion team that went and won it, back in 1966. That was a great run for me because I became the first player to score on every round of the competition and I really did cement my place in Jimmy Hagan's team over the course of that cup run. That year was a dream really, because I finished up top scorer with 27 goals – more than Astle or Kaye, not bad for a kid!

It was my breakthrough season and I put a lot of that down to the way things went for me and the team in the League Cup. We fancied our chances in the competition because we started the season really well. We got a smashing start, drawn against Walsall, and it turned out to be a massive tie. I can remember the noise now, it was unbelievable.

Walsall brought a lot of fans because it was a derby, we hadn't played them in ages, it was a big occasion for them because they were playing the league leaders in Division One, an established side. Our fans were up for the game because we'd just put six past Stoke on the Saturday, it was a bit special, historic because it was the first time we played in the competition, and it just created an unforgettable atmosphere. That still sticks out 50 years on.

We had a good run in the competition. We were away at Leeds next and they were a fabulous side, moving towards being the best in the country, but we beat them 4-2 at Elland Road. It took a replay to beat Coventry, but once we got them back here, we murdered them 6-1 and then that set us up to play the Villa here in the fifth round, which was a big night.

It was a great atmosphere and we gave them a chasing. Jeff had a shot, the 'keeper parried it and I pounced on the loose ball and nicked it in, I set one up for Yorky, I had a pretty good night all round! I can only remember the goals mind, I get the rest out of the record books! We won 3-1, came through it easy enough, and that's when we really felt we were in with a shout of winning it, especially when we got Peterborough in the semis, a two legged thing, meaning we

missed West Ham and Cardiff, who were the other game.

We only had a one goal lead here after the first leg but we took them apart at London Road and won 4-2. We played well and it was one of those where I always felt comfortable about the outcome. I scored early on and Ray Crawford got another from a corner just before half-time and that was it wrapped up. I got another header after that and then we got a bit sloppy, let a couple in, but I finished it off when I got my hat-trick, a tap-in after Chippy got away on the break.

We had West Ham next and were pleased to be away from home for the first game. We could drub teams here, the fans loved it, the football was exciting. It was a question of getting a decent result at Upton Park so that we were still in it when we came back here, and then we fancied our chances. Saying that, West Ham were the cup team – they'd won the FA Cup in 1964, the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1965, they were the favourites, no doubt, they had a top side – Moore, Peters, Hurst among them. We were doing well but they grabbed a couple of late goals to win 2-1. Even so, we were happy.

The game here was the best performance I've ever been involved in. We were 4-0 up in 35 minutes and the game was dead and buried. There are things that stick in your mind all your life and I can remember being in the dressing room before that game as if it was yesterday. We couldn't get out quick enough, we were lining up, tearing the doors down, we were that confident we were going to win. That spilled onto the pitch, we went at them and nobody could have stood up to us in that first half hour. They didn't know what day it was!

We got to pick up the trophy here, on our own ground, which was very special. This year, they'll give out the cup at Wembley of course. What I wouldn't give for another chance at playing in a cup final!

“ McAuley and Yacob were both real stalwarts through much of the Albion's most successful period in 35 years and they leave with our thanks. ”

MORE THAN 100

OBJECTS

A HISTORY OF THE ALBION IN



**ALAN ASHMAN'S
FA CUP
WINNER'S MEDAL
1968**

Many and varied are the pieces of memorabilia, art and general detritus that the football club has gathered about itself over the years. Over the next season or three, we are going to select some of these, in no particular order nor importance, to help tell a tale of Throstles down the years. It's not a definitive history, might at times be apocryphal and at others completely fabricated, but these odd shafts of light will give you a sense of who we are and where we came from.

Confused? You will be...

Medal presentations. They've got a bit out of hand these days haven't they? Huge, bloated affairs where seemingly everyone, right the way down to the groundsman's cat gets themselves a little, shiny disc after a cup final or a title has been won and lost. Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin is the only fella who's got an umbrella.

In days of yore, the demarcation lines as to who got a medal and who didn't were rather more sharply drawn. Famously in 1966 for instance, only the 11 England players who took to the field and beat West Germany received the golden gongs, the other 11 members of the squad having to make do with just a share of the £22,000 bonus, an omission rectified by a FIFA ruling to retrospectively award medals to squads rather than teams in 2007.

But the non-playing squad members were not the only ones to suffer in that way. If you were a manager or a coach, you too were left with your nose pressed up against the glass as your team went cavorting around Wembley, occasionally opening up the little case to take a peek at that winner's medal. The chap who picked the team, made the substitutions, set the tone, he wasn't thought worthy of reward.

That was the lot of Alan Ashman after he had masterminded Albion's assault on the FA Cup in 1968,

a campaign that took us beyond Colchester United, Southampton, Portsmouth, Liverpool, Birmingham City and on to a Wembley meeting with Everton.

For Ashman, that was the crowning moment of his first season here in charge at The Hawthorns, an adventure that had been started on cup final day the previous year, Ashman offered the job by the Throstles just as Tottenham and Chelsea were heading out onto the Wembley turf.

It was an enterprising appointment by Albion, for newspaper reports at the time dismissed him as nothing more than a chicken farmer. True, on retiring from playing through injury in 1958, he had taken on the running of a poultry farm owned by a Carlisle United director, initially taking up management with Penrith as a sideline. But on taking charge of Carlisle in February 1963, he won back to back promotions from Fourth and then Third Divisions in 1964 and 1965 before establishing them in Division Two before his opportunity at Albion arrived.

Initially seen as a bit of a pushover by the players, especially after the Jimmy Hagan era, Ashman read the Riot Act after a League Cup defeat at Third Division Reading and from there, the side went from strength to strength, culminating in that Wembley triumph.



Ashman played a big role in that, evolving a style of playing that utilised Jeff Astle as a lone striker, quickly seeing the value in converting John Kaye to centre-half and, above all, marking himself down as a terrific manager of men. He was able to get the very best out of players who would run through the proverbial brick walls for him.

But as Graham Williams led the troops up the 39 steps to the Royal Box and medals, for Alan there was none. To Albion chairman Jim Gaunt, never a man known for being unduly sentimental, that seemed unfair and so he sent out to the Jewellery Quarter to have the omission rectified.

These medals are not replicas, the front of them more likely some kind of standard image used for a multitude of local and national competitions. But on the reverse, along with the Birmingham Assay mark for nine carat gold, the all important details – "West Bromwich Albion FC – FA Cup Winners 1968 – A. Ashman – Manager".

Not bad for a chicken farmer was it?

“

The chap who picked the team, made the substitutions, he wasn't thought worthy of reward.

”

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THE WRITE STUFF



Columns penned – or not – by footballers is almost as old as the game itself and over the next few months, we'll be looking back at some penned by bygone Throstles.

As Luton are our visitors, we feature former Hatter, the late Andy King, telling Shoot! magazine about his move from QPR to The Hawthorns in the autumn of 1981...

King's in love with West Brom



I was training one morning when I had a message to go in and see [manager] Terry Venables. My first thoughts were, "What have I done now?"

Terry told me to telephone Ronnie Allen, who wanted to talk over a possible move. He wanted to know if I was keen to join Albion. I told him I would be in the Midlands in 20 minutes – and that included getting a shower! I watched the team play at Ipswich and signed the next morning. On the evidence of my early matches with Albion, I believe we can become a really good side. I'm confident they can help me win an England cap. I'll settle for as good a time here as I had at Everton.

If anyone had asked me what my ambition was during my spell with Queens Park Rangers, I would have told them, quite simply, to play at Everton. [When I made my Albion debut there] I shed a tear, I'm not too proud to admit that.

After leaving Goodison Park, I went through hell, I knew it was a mistake to go to QPR [in the Second Division]. Running out at Cambridge in front of 5,000 supporters as opposed to running out at Old Trafford in front of 50,000 just isn't the same, and I don't mean any disrespect to Cambridge.

Running out for a reserve team fixture in front of 500 is worse still!

I know a lot of professional footballers say they don't mind where they're playing, but I don't believe that. For me, there's only the First Division!

I was a little hot headed at Everton. I didn't agree with the way they wanted to play the game under coach Eric Harrison. I had been used to getting forward and entertaining in Gordon Lee's early teams. Eric wanted to change all that. I didn't like it, and I said so.

It's nonsense to talk about me not getting on with Gordon Lee though. He is one of the warmest, most honest men I've ever met. I can't blame Eric totally though. If I had kept my mouth shut, I would still have been at Everton today.

If I'm honest, there's only one fella that messed things up for me at Everton... Andy King!

I would be stupid to do that again [at Albion] wouldn't I? If I'm as happy with Albion as I was at Everton, I won't want for anything else.

I'm in love with the place already!

Andy King joined Albion on September 23rd 1981 and left – to return to Everton in a swap deal with Peter Eastoe – in July 1982. He made 33 starts and five substitute appearances and scored six goals for the Albion. He passed away on May 27th 2015, aged 58.

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44 Alan Sheehan



**LUTON
TOWN**



0

OFFICIALS

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AR1: Andrew Fox | **AR2:** Graham Kane | **FOURTH:** Ian Hussin

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