

Southend United Supporters Club



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NEWSLETTER - No. 2

IF Tony Blair thought he had a problem in the Balkans, he should come down to the Roots Hall battle zone. Are we in crisis big-time, or what? The way we are headed, that long lost date in the play-offs will look small beer to the momentous tussle we could be facing on May 8 - Blues v Hartlepool with Football League survival the prize for the winners and Northwich Victoria and Forest Green Rovers awaiting the losers.

So farewell, Alvin. And thanks for.....errrr, nothing. Many of our members would say he has gone not a moment too soon. In fact, more like many moments too late. Personally, I always tried to resist slugging the bloke. But where he was coming from finally hit me during the Hull catastrophe. If you throw two big men up front like Conlon and Campbell, you do not then withdraw their one source of supply from the wing, Lee Hodges, back into central midfield. We also reverted to a five-man defence just when we should have been pushing our hardest at least to have forced City's keeper to make one save on the night. It was at this point a revelation such as that which blinded St Paul on the road to Tarsus did come upon me. Chipmunk, in a nutshell, had totally and irreversibly lost the plot! OK, he bowed out 'honourably' - and with a nice little goodbye sweetener, no doubt. But only after a relegation and then dumping us right in the brown stuff again with just nine games of this season to go. By the time you read this (penned March 27) we may well have a new man in the hot-seat. Hoddle? Bassett? Cruyff? Thompson? Wignall???? To be honest, I hope not. If we have, it is likely to be a panic appointment. And, boy, since Barry Fry quit we have had enough of those to last us a lifetime. Spud, Ronnie, Alvin, those who are about to sweat for six weeks salute you - with two fingers.

Anyway, enough of my spouting off in strictly unofficial mode. Welcome to SUSC NEWSLETTER NUMBER TWO. And straight on to the other major chestnut that has been simmering away over the last couple of weeks - the (whisper it) sell-off. I think you will find Comrade Coxell has given this the in-depth probe elsewhere. Suffice to say you would have filled the Breitling Orbiter 3 for its round-the-world journey with all the hot air that has been blowing about in the wake of the news Roots Hall was being offloaded to clear Blues' debt mountain. It has been a bit like the Wall Street Crash with all the wailing and gnashing of teeth. You could almost see certain people climbing to the top of the Customs and Excise building in Victoria Avenue and lobbing themselves off.

Panic stations or genuine cause for concern? Well, to try to find out the answer, the SUSC arranged an emergency Q and A forum with John Main on March 22. Around 130 people packed Boots and Laces to give John both barrels - though one disappointment expressed was that we eventually spent too little time on ground matters and too much on the already well aired Alvin/players issues. Work commitments kept yours truly away. To me, though, it always seems encouraging these days when a football club chairman agrees to face the fans and explain why certain courses of action have been deemed necessary. I like to think we can save thoughts of suicide for the morning when we wake up to find the East Stand has mysteriously done a Doncaster and burned down. Then we will really know we have been sold a pup. Yet with our notice to quit apparently reduced from six months to 10 days and more upheaval on the board allegedly imminent, who knows what the future holds? Keep those fingers well crossed.

I saw Vic Jobson in The Cherry Tree at Rochford one lunchtime a couple of weeks ago. He was sipping a half a lager and, though he still looked pretty sickly, appeared not to have a care in the world. And why not on the money he has

made out of the club. I expect Colin Murphy is feeling equally chipper. After all, surely not every manager picks up £150,000 EXTRA for doing what a manager is supposed to do - buying and selling players. We handed Murphy the review the chief issues discussed at the committee meetings on March 4 and March 25.

The Quiz Night, SUSC's first social event of the year, was held on March 20. Around 35 people attended, with trips to such diverse locations as Bali and Cardiff keeping other stalwarts away. Congratulations to Richard Coxell and his line-up of brainboxes for coming out on top and to Kathryn Medcalf for being able to recite the names of the seven kids in the Sound of Music. Is there a doctor in the house? A big thank-you to my brother, Guy, for his entertaining questions, the marking was brilliant - apart from the Stade de France - and Irene's nuts and crisps went down a treat. We made £55.31 for SUSC funds, but should still have had MORE people there!!!

The Karaoke Night planned for Friday, April 23 has had to be ditched because Boots and Laces is no longer available to be hired out for such events on a Friday night. The social programme is now being directed towards a repeat of the very successful 5-A-Side tournament for local clubs and open day of last summer. That will almost certainly be in liaison with Blues bigwigs. Also contemplated is a possible separate event involving fans from other supporters clubs and, if you like a flutter and the dates are right, a day at the races.

Next to the financial front. Ron Pountney has received the sum of £1,655.20 from activities organised by the Supporters' Club, including interest. A new Committee has now taken

over responsibility for any West Ham fixture.

The committee feels it has learned a major lesson from this experience and, though our heart was definitely in the right place, such an undertaking will only be repeated in future after a great deal of thought.

Our SUSC coach travel was nicely in the black for Cambridge and sadly in the red for Darlington. But whatever happens, one thing SUSC coach travel will always be is operated on a break even basis ONLY. Excess funds will be ploughed straight back at the first available opportunity to enable our fans to get to games even cheaper than normal. The only people to gain from the SUSC service are our members. You know it makes sense. And bearing that in mind, SUSC brethren can now look forward to the sort of offer dreams are made of. It is planned to give all existing members and Junior Blues the chance to join the Supreme machine for the trip to Plymouth on April 17 for a mere FIVER as a thank-you for your continued undying support. Non-members can still travel, but it will cost them £20. The pre-Christmas Torquay bonus went well and, hopefully, this will be the same. Naturally the journey will be less stressful if we can start rising above a date with the Conference.

All enquiries for bookings to any of our remaining away games should be addressed to Clare Crammond. So devoted to duty is Clare that she now has her own exclusive phone number - Southend (01702) 469959 - on which seats can be reserved. A vote of thanks was unanimously passed for Clare's efforts in getting three coaches to Cambridge. A repeat for at least Leyton Orient and Barnet (May 1) would be nice if your nerves can stand it.

Apparently there was a bit of a problem with one of the coach drivers on the way back from Cambridge. We have written to Supreme to express our displeasure and trust such a thing will not happen again. Another occurrence that has caused uproar was the behaviour of Darlington boss Dave Hodgson and his Quakers acolytes in giving our devoted band of fans the middle digit in the wake of the injury-time disaster at Feethams. Police at the ground had numerous complaints and advocate that anyone who wishes to should complain by letter to the FA. That is what SUSC will be doing, along with additional communications to the Chief Constable of Durham, Darlington's chairman and the pathetic Hodgson.

Apologies again for the non-appearance still of those 1999 membership forms. Blame the problems of the computer age, but they are on their way. When they do arrive, please rejoin a.s.a.p. We hope John Main might allow us to have a recruitment drive at a home game before the end of the season. Trevor also hopes to commence planned regular meetings shortly with John to discuss items such as season ticket prices, use of United facilities on match days

etc on our members' behalf.

Richard Coxell has got our SUSC badges ready, so stand by to splash £1.50 on one of those. He is keen for us to have a flag as well. There is no stopping the boy. Meanwhile SUSC member Tony Cowell is busy setting up an SUSC Web-site. If you wish to contribute, either write something and post it to Richard Coxell at his home (see officers' addresses above) or e-mail it to him at coxell@easynet.co.uk It can be about anything Blue and your love of the club, but please NO abuse of the players, team or other clubs unless sidesplittingly funny. Save that for the fanzines. There is also an SUFC e-mail mailing list that several SUSC members are part of. If you want to join the mailing list send an e-mail to listserv@isfa.com and in the body of the e-mail (not the subject) type: join southend. It is as easy as that. Or so Richard says.

Anyone travelling in Germany in the near future should look out for Jerry Moss' Hi-Tec Blues shirt. On a sojourn in India he came across a fellow traveller from the Fatherland who had lost all his clothes in transit. So selfless Jerry immediately handed over the sacred top and international relations were furthered fostered in the best possible way.

And now an apology. In some convoluted way, it seems I erred in the last newsletter by suggesting two individuals rather than a corporate body were behind trying to summon us up a mascot worthy of Southend United. So, with no wish to polemicise the point, anyone wanting to make a donation towards a new super non-genetically modified shrimp should send their loot to: Shrimp Season-Mascot Trust Fund, 17 Briarswood, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 6UH. Cheques / postal orders only (no cash) payable to Shrimp Season-Mascot Trust Fund. Include your name and address so an acknowledgment and receipt can be issued. SUSC remains willing to aid the project - and may be in a position to do so sooner rather than later.....

The committee's next meeting will be on April 15, by which time we will have played Rochdale, Leyton Orient, Mansfield and Cardiff and should know exactly which way we are going. The next newsletter should reach you all soon after that. Any feedback on this one should be sent to nigel.rickard@the-sun.co.uk As long as your e-mails don't resemble those I have found from colleagues following the Hull debacle, I won't mind. The Col U loony and the Watford nutter are having a field day. Aaaah. The joys of supporting the Blues.

NR.

To Help - Not Hinder

Thanks to Nigel Rickard and Richard Coxell for writing and putting together the main and exiles newsletters. From my point of view it is always handy to have two volunteers rather than have to "press gang" committee members to write.

Much has happened since the last newsletter and Nigel and Richard have more than adequately covered the ground. We even have a new manager following the resignation of Alvin "the Chipmunk" Martin. Let us hope that the future is rosier than it appears to look from the financial view point (i.e. 10 day notice to quit Roots Hall if the right financial bid received).

BADGES

Richard Coxell has been extremely busy over the past copy of months. He has migrated from organising the David Jacks plaque to arranging for the production of two badges for sale to members of the Supporters Club. These are reasonably priced at £1.50 and if you are interested please contact Richard at the address on the front page or see one of the committee members at either a home or an away fixture.

- Southend United Supporters' Club
- Southend United Junior Blues

INCIDENT AT ROCHDALE

Did any member, their family or friends who travelled to Rochdale on Tuesday 30 March 1999, witness the half time incident which led to one of our members being arrested and charged?

If the answer is yes and you are prepared to make a statement to a local solicitor and possibly the police I would like to hear from you. What will happen is that I will pass your name onto the solicitor and they will make contact as necessary. I can be contacted at home on 01245 362742.

The Supporters' Club had made a complaint about the stewarding and policing at this game but our member needs your support.

Thanks in advance for your assistance.

TRAVEL TO PLYMOUTH

I hope that you have read about the discounted price (i.e. £5.00) for members and Junior Blues for the marathon journey to Plymouth on 17 April 1999. This is the committee's way of saying thank you to these members and Junior Blues who have supported us through what has been a difficult season. If you are interested please contact Clare Crammond on 01702 469959 as soon as possible so that we can accommodate as many interested members as possible.

I know I have said it before but a big thanks from me to Tony Hall and Clare for their willing efforts in taking the bookings, liaising with Supreme travel and more often than not running the coaches on match days. I know others like John Campbell, Chris Berry and myself have run coaches but the lions share of the work has been handled by Tony, with considerable assistance from Carol, prior to his departure from the committee and Clare from January onwards.

Last but not least thank you to everyone of you for your ongoing support of the Supporters' Club.

Trevor Bashford
Chairman