

# **SUSCT NEWSLETTER 34**

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**YES, they are back. In all their glory. No, not Blues after humbling Hull. The leading officers, or as many as we can muster at present, are in place in the header field again should any of you out there wish to contact them on whatever matter of Trust business takes your fancy.**

**You will certainly note one important change, in that Terry Jeffreys has now replaced Theresa Wellham as our membership secretary. Theresa has stepped down after doing a fine job and with our grateful thanks. Terry, our resident man of leisure thanks to the munificence of BT, is now firmly at the helm and happy to take on the Trust's 'Dear Deirdre' role. In other words, any queries of any sort you have about membership - want to join, want to rejoin, know someone else who wants to join, think your membership is due etc - just contact Terry on [terry.jeffreys@btinternet.com](mailto:terry.jeffreys@btinternet.com), at 32 Herondale, Basildon, Essex. SS14 1RR or on 01268-523974. He will also, as ever, sort you out if you want your newsletter sent down the wire in future. And, I am afraid, he will be cracking down on late payers and non-payers after renewal notices have been sent out. Cough up your fiver immediately or miss receiving my ramblings for a start - and there cannot be a more fearsome threat than that. Meanwhile Paul FitzGerald is doing another revamp of his highly artistic membership form.**

**Well, the Cup dream was blown apart in somewhat lamentable style. As for the play-offs, let's stay optimistic. I think we will just about know for sure if we are going to be in or out of the running after tackling Torquay on Saturday (26th). Four away games out of five after the Gulls clash should then get us truly sorted.**

**Interesting to see how the gate collapsed from 8,164 v Tranmere to 3,300 v Mansfield in the space of four days. That is a 59.57 per cent fall - about the same as that in the number of Pulse Cheerleaders. Only four v The Stags. People will be demanding their money back. Seriously, though, it merely shows our hardcore support is still stuck fast at around the just over 3,000 mark and that has to remain a major cause for concern as we move on into 2002.**

**But while Ron sweats, one man who has definitely had a cool, stress-free Yule is Pete Gibbons. Pete was the man whose SUSCT Christmas Draw ticket earned him a very sweet one thousand smackers. I understand from a source close to the action that his mates are still trying to help him drink it. Anyway, well done Pete. He was in it and he won it. Angela Merry bagged the £500 for taking second prize - probably all gone in the sales by now - and Guy Divor the £100 for third. There were also five £20 vouchers for the club shop won by Richard Coxell, Peter Borland, Harvey Thomas, Jim Bailey and Kath Bolton. Our vice-chairman has already used part of his windfall on a new Blues woolly hat, replacing the one with a worrying big brown stain on the side. I would hate even to hazard a guess where that has been. And no mention of the draw would be complete without a final huge vote of thanks to Donna Fillary for organising it again, Terry for taking in all the ticket stubs and cash and to all of our members out there who took the time to sell the books of tickets they were sent and put us in the black to the tune of around £1,400. For all those who for some unknown reason could not be bothered to do the biz - sadly, more than we would have hoped - I have just one simple question. Why?**

**Hang on, I've got a bit of a stiffy. Ahhh, that's better. Of course, I'm talking about my leg. What else could it have been? At least I'm mobile again and back in the East Greens. But the estimate is another four months before I am soaring skyward to salute a Blues onion-bag buster with all the old spring. Still, when you might have gone 'tits up', anything is a blessing. I am also hoping to get to a committee meeting again soon. After missing only two in three years, I have been absent for the last three thanks to war wounds and work. But other footsoldiers have been present and here is an amalgamated round-up of the main items of business at the gatherings on December 17 and January 7.**

**Our Liaison Group duo of Kevin Feasey and Paul were due to meet the football club's representatives on December 19, though this date was later put back to January 9. Details later.**

Richard proposed that the Trust set up a Hall of Fame in the Shrimpers Bar, with reference to that on the website ([www.susc.co.uk](http://www.susc.co.uk)). Members would be asked if they had any memorabilia available that they might agree to have exhibited. Only one snag in this glorious time for British society - everything would need to be made secure (ie screwed to the walls) to prevent it being nicked! It seems a fair amount of stuff has gone missing in the past from the bars at Roots Hall, including some signed shirts. Basically, our Hall of Fame would be framed photos plus a short description of achievements. Brian Cotgrove, Terry, Mike Smith and Kevin agreed to look into this.

Another quiz night is in the pipeline for March / April so start swotting now, while Kevin is still working on the logistics of the planned fund-raising visit to 92 clubs in 92 hours. That is a major undertaking. All committee members have to come up with a new fund-raising idea for the next meeting, so the thinking caps are on.

Richard has spoken to Steve Sweeting, developer of the Blue Boar, and Steve has agreed to fund the project to renovate the grave of United founder Oliver Trigg in Sutton Cemetery.

Meanwhile Terry is trying to lay hands on the blockbuster 50s/60s movie - The Team They Call United. As a lot of it is likely to be horror material of a particularly disturbing nature, this will probably not be for the faint-hearted.

Computer whiz Dave Scriven is looking at the possibility of a revamp for the Trust website, even though, thanks chiefly to Richard, what is on it already must make it one of the best supporters' sites around. Once I can get back in the groove, it will also hopefully not be too long before the committee page is updated with new pix and potted biogs of the current crew.

Carl Hutchings got the vote as the Trust's Player of the Month for December. He should be collecting the trophy against Torquay. But we now want to include all our members in the voting process, so votes for your January nominee should go by e-mail to Kevin Feasey on [kevin.feasey@ntlworld.com](mailto:kevin.feasey@ntlworld.com) or by post to 4 Beeches Close, Hockley, Essex. SS5 5EG We also want some members to volunteer to do the presentations. So if you fancy going out on the pitch for the handover to one of your heroes, let us know. And don't worry if your mates laugh at you. In fact, take a bow Mr G. Congratulations as well to Mark Rawle for his PFA award.

Chris Berry has had a hectic time on the travel front, but, as usual, has come through with flying colours. I have one no-show only to report since last time - Derek Jacques (538), AWOL from the coach to Spotland. I hope that did not cost any of your fellow travellers money, Derek. Remember Halifax is now on Tuesday, January 29, a masterly rearrangement when we are playing Cheltenham on Friday February 1. And then there is the descent on Brisbane Road now planned for Tuesday, March 12. We want revenge again. All travel calls to Chris on the usual numbers - 01702-558978 or 07703-898698.

The Hull trip cost the Trust a few bob, but in the nicest possible way. It was agreed that all those who went to Boothferry Park dressed as Santa Claus would travel for free. But then, in another heart-warming act of generosity, SUFC stepped in to offer subsidised travel for all at £5 each. It meant we ended up paying the 19 Santas we had their £5 to travel to the game, so they still went for nothing. Well done to everyone who dressed up as the bearded wonder. I heard Trevor tried to take down the particulars of the stalker, but that is another story.

So how did we get on in that game and all the others since No 33? Read on worldwide and find out.

ROCHDALE (A, 15/12, W 1-0): Thunderboots Stephen Broad netted us the points with his early 22-yard, left-foot missile. Good to see him back as he is too decent a player for us to let go for nowt. Victory marred only by Darryl's 'handball' outside the area, red card and automatic ban to follow. Shame, as he could probably have left the lumbering Dale striker he foiled to Leon Cort. Rob Newman admitted it was 'not pretty'. But so what? At least we were on. Imagine how the Hartlepool faithful felt after making the 275-mile trip to Bristol and then seeing the game abandoned after 10 minutes. One more gem of consideration for the travelling supporter.

**CHESTERFIELD (FA CUP 2nd rd replay, H, 18/12, W 2-0).** Surely the 18/12 overture. Early drama as Phil Whelan hit the right note by nodding us ahead, then some quality play as we build to the crescendo provided by sub Barrington Belgrave's neat finish. Ticket chaos meant some fans missed the skipper's second-minute strike. Yet the gate was 'only' 5,518. How did we cope so effortlessly 30 years ago when we were hauling in near to 14,000 on a regular basis? That's progress for you. Still crocked, this was the first match I have ever listened to live on Essex FM. Hardly a substitute for the real thing, though. Never knew that odious Eric Hall had a show on the station.

**HULL (A, 21/12, D 0-0).** Chris Berry got together two subsidised coaches to transport our brave band to the former paupers but now moneybags of the Third Division. The reward was an unspectacular, yet highly valuable, point. After all, we have not taken three on Humberside for 39 years. Rob revealed he can still pull the defensive strings, even at 38 - though subsequent performances have shown he should not get too carried away! Bitter weather meant Boothferry Park's second-lowest gate of the season - just under 8,700! What we would give for a regular poor attendance like that.

**RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS (H, 26/12, W 4-2).** Hoped to make it back for this one, but still could not get in my car. So it was live radio again, while watching Arsenal v Chelsea on the box. When Rob took himself off in an apparent admission of defeat as we slumped to two-down, there seemed no way to turn this game round. Wrong. The lads did us proud with a magnificent recovery. Leon Cort, improving with every game, got us on our way and Tes - delighted you are staying another 18 months - added to his growing tally. But BB's double stole the show as he proved he prefers life up front to wide right. What will Mark Rawle make of that? Just under 6,000 again will have added to Ron Martin's Christmas cheer. And the news that Steps had split up made it almost the perfect day.

**LUTON (H, 29/12, L 1-2).** Back at last. Did myself a major mischief to the ailing knee leaping to hail our cracking goal. Yet it was surely painkillers all round as we then surrendered everything to a Hatters side who never lost their belief there was something up for grabs. They looked surefire promotion material, while we showed over 90 minutes we still have a way to go. Stand-in keeper Daniel Gay did not let us down, with some vintage Sammy waiting in the wings on emergency call. But battling Stuart Thurgood is not really a wide man, Tes had an off day and BB had no chance with any of our tedious pumped balls against a marker five inches taller than him. All our danger came when we kept it on the ground - again. Anyone else reckon we might have preferred to win this one more than the Cup game? The fourth official was Mr J Beadle. If only the result had been a stunt for You've Been Framed and not the real thing.

**TRANMERE (FA Cup 3rd rd, H, 8/1, L 1-3).** To think I was on the phone for three days to get my ticket for this. I cannot remember being so dejected after a defeat in recent seasons. The Pools Panel, who forecast an away win, must have known something. A performance that let down the 8,000 fans we had in the ground. This was our big home chance to go all out for victory, yet, for some reason I will never fathom, we opted for five at the back and let Rovers dictate totally. Rob said he was 'very pleased' with the way we played in the first hour. But was anyone else? We then went behind and HAD to attack. That left us open to the quick break and look what happened. Tes and BB had no support all night. At least I have never seen a side start with five defenders before and finish with five forwards. We pulled one back, but the plot had been well and truly lost by then. Surely we were not afraid of a Second Division side? After all, this is the level we aspire to. Perhaps we just did not fancy facing Cardiff and entertaining their Hammam-led bother boys in the fourth round. But whatever the reasons for our defeat, this was a genuine sickener. The only person who ended up a winner from it was SunSport's Fixed Odds 'expert' and Layer Road layabout A Totham. He revelled in telling me his bet on us to lose netted him £90.

**MANSFIELD (H, 12/1, W 1-0).** Back to normal. You knew the glory-hunters had stayed away as there was an acre of room again in the Far Post bar pre-match. Any Stags fan who saw this would wonder how they left the Hall with sweet naff all. To say we were under the cosh for the last 20 minutes is an understatement. Back to 4-4-2 was a plus. But we had nowhere near enough threat out wide and Tes, who took his goal beautifully, and BB were fighting for scraps again in a lone war up front. Are our midfielders scared of the opposition area? Steven Clark may have talent, but needs to show a bit more self-belief. Three much needed points, though, and

no noses can be turned up at that. Not sure about the goal time. Someone has forgotten to wind the Frank Walton stand clock again. Mr J Beadle was back as reserve official. He's determined to get that video.

**DARLINGTON (A, 19/1, D 2-2).** The original report received in the News of the World office gave the attendance as 33,650. How many coaches did we take, Chris? Rob selected himself again only to regret it as we had to try to haul ourselves back from two-down after 57 minutes. But a sweet Kevin Maher volley and BB's strike almost at the death capped an impressive fighting comeback, after Tes had earlier rattled a post and Mark Rawle had a 'goal' disallowed. Deserved reward for all those who made what is a hell of a long haul up to the north-east. I see the Quakers did not entrust their penalty - awarded after some WWF tactics from Phil Whelan - to Barry Conlon. No wonder. His spot disaster against Peterborough helped cost them a dream home FA Cup tie with Newcastle.

**HULL (H, 22/1, W 2-0).** Tes was on fire. It was no exaggeration when the vice-chairman branded his second-half, left-foot rocket, which almost shattered a post, as 'a Collymore moment'. I said he could be the Third Division's Emile Heskey this season. Actually, he looks like the Third Division's Michael Ricketts. No Kevin Maher - banned - but the inclusion out wide of Mark Rawle and Scott Forbes plus the midfield marauding of Carl Hutchings made us so much more potent going forward. And that is what will win us games. Mark nudged us in front and Carl's confident penalty left the Tigers tamed. Possibly our best home performance and deserving of a bigger audience. Let's now make it two wins in a row in the league for the first time in 2001/02 against Torquay.....

OK, back to the Liaison Group get-together. Derek Willshire and Geoffrey King attended on behalf of SUFC, with Kevin and Paul there for us.

The Trust passed on its thanks for the recent subsidised coach travel to Chesterfield and Hull and the continuing occasional 'Kids for a Quid' at home games. Sadly, touts were apparently trying to buy up kids' tickets pre-match v Tranmere so they could then sell them on at a higher price. Can you believe that? This means there may have to be some limit on future children's ticket sales.

If you have been having CATERING problems in the West Stand, these should have eased thanks to the appointment of a new catering supervisor. GK is also to investigate the amount of pre-cooked food on offer to check it is sufficient. As for the loss-making outlet in the Upper South, this was never due to reopen and will not.

Many members have expressed concern about STEWARDING in the West Stand, especially alleged heavy-handedness around Block F and the shutting of gates behind Blocks E and F resulting in congestion. GK has now told security personnel NOT to shut the gates in question and has also dealt personally with some individual complaints.

A lot of people wish to stand in Block F, but our nanny government in the grovelling guise of the Football Licensing Authority has apparently decreed that no seated area can be reverted back to terracing even if a club wishes that to happen. That's democracy for you. Paul and Kevin will now sound out fans in that area about a meeting with GK, the police and Eamon Sheridan of the FLA to discuss the issue further. Paul will also contact Sir Teddy Taylor to see about lobbying for a change in the current law, which, naturally, appears to mitigate against clubs in the lower divisions.

Problems that have caused the buying of tickets over the phone recently to become difficult - especially during Christmas - should now have been resolved. The option to buy over the Internet ought to become available next month.

The Hall of Fame plan has club approval and they will also help us to move on plans to try to get Frank Banks some recognition for all his community work on behalf of SUFC.

The next Liaison Group meeting date has still to be arranged, but thanks for all their efforts to Kevin and Paul.

It was shocking to see in the programme for the Mansfield game details of the tragic death of James Dorrington, one of last year's Blues Under-17 squad players. He was clearly a great all-round sportsman, looked a really good lad and the Trust can only send its condolences to his family. Equally sad was the death of Jeff Astle. I know that mishit shot against Brazil in the 1970 World Cup will go in one day.

Striker Adrian Coote preferred to join C\*\* U on a permanent deal from Norwich rather than Blues on loan. By now he must surely have realised the grotesque error of judgement he has made. And farewell Roscoe Dsane. I am afraid you looked more like Roscoe Dsaster in your one short Hall appearance.

Meanwhile, mixed news on other recent ex-Blues. Scotty has been told to seek gainful employment elsewhere by the Os, despite being one of their leading scorers, while Leo - no surprise here - has obviously got on the wrong side of Carlton Palmer after a promising start at Stockport and been told his future now lies at another club as well. Not back at the Hall, in case you were wondering.

David Lee has joined the ever-increasing SUFC influx at Brighton and David Morley popped up recently on loan from Carlisle at Oxford, scoring with a bullet header against Mansfield. Wonders never cease.

Interesting to see Martin Carruthers was stuck on 99 League goals for a time, like Michael Owen. Pity he did not stick one or two more away last season. No such problems for Andy Thomson, still one of the leading Second Division scorers at QPR.

The recent C\*\* U v Huddersfield clash was a 3-3 crowd-pleaser. And no wonder. The keepers were Andy Woodman at one end and Martyn Margetson at the other. More than once the rival defenders were left looking at their net custodian as another strike flew in thanks to a gaff by one or other of the old Southendians. I rated both as duds. Right or not?

Andy Harris may have been an abysmal full-back, yet he did have a brain. He is the only current pro footballer who is a member of MENSA. But it seems you would never know it from his appearance on Britain's Brainiest Footballer. He had a 'mare.

As for Tommy Mooney, goals for Birmingham and plenty of fight. While Brum were being drubbed 4-0 by Sheffield United recently, Mr M and team-mate Martin Grainger squared up and indulged in a spot of what was termed 'pushing and shoving'. Team spirit is clearly soaring at St Andrew's.

Stan the Man envisaged his future career in management, even if Bradford City supremo Geoffrey Richmond disagreed. Spanish club Osasuna might not have been too happy either. They plan to bankrupt him if they can for leaving them in the lurch after playing less than one game for the club last season. (The Master is always welcome back at his spiritual home, of course.)

Delighted to report that TheresonlyoneteaminEssex FC are currently leading the SunSport Dream Team competition by a massive 140 points. But after bringing in Jonathan Woodgate at the transfer window to join Lee Bowyer and John Terry, both already in the side, should I should change the name to the Fun Loving Criminals?

Question: When Blues' game at Orient was postponed on New Year's Day, how did Grays Athletic manage to play? The only match that went ahead in the Third Division was at Torquay. The decision to play it - they were routed by Kidderminster - was blasted by both teams. The ref's name? Yes, spot-on - Joe Ross.

Bit of useless information for anyone thinking of popping their clogs. Did you know you can have your ashes buried at the home of Essex football? But only in 'certain areas' and not on the pitch. I dread to think where those 'certain areas' might be.

Anyone else seen that story about Conference side Stevenage planning to do a series with Channel Four which allows fans to part-select the team and tell the manager during matches which subs he should play? It is the craziest idea I have ever heard. Imagine them trying it at Roots. Hang on a minute.....it's brilliant!

Dave Oliver tells me West Leigh School (see No. 33) remains first-class academically. But sport has gone out the window. Glad I went there when I did then.

Who listens to the totally Premiership-orientated TalkSport? The other day a call came through from 'Terry of Southend'. Yes, he was a United fan - M\*\*\*\*\* U\*\*\*\*\*. Said he had been one for 40 years. Funny, though, he sounded as Mancunian as the cast of EastEnders. Come back to the real world 'Terry' - and start supporting your local team.

Finally, it is time to go on a war footing. It seems not even club mascots are safe any longer from the meddling dead hands of the Football League's men in suits. Sammy and Elvis J Eel are under threat as the League seek to bring in a 'code of conduct' that will effectively make the mascot as boring as hell. More importantly for the League, though, they will be controlled, sanitised, neutered - and that is the way the grey men behind the scenes like football to be these days. Totally bland and inoffensive.

OK, maybe Swansea's Cyril the Swan should not have kicked the head of Millwall's Zampa the Lion into the crowd on one occasion. Perhaps Wolfie of Wolves might have thought better of coming to blows with the Three Little Pigs representing a double glazing firm one day at Molineux. And Robbie the Bobby from Bury definitely went over the top when he put in a swift uppercut that broke the nose of Cardiff's Barclay the Bluebird. But the stories they generate are fantastic. Sammy is famous nationwide as the slowest thing on two legs thanks to three last place finishes in three years at the Mascots' Grand National at Huntingdon. He also needs sprucing up as apparently one of his past lifeforms has revealed the irradiated pink shrimp is 'riddled with mildew'. But he and all the rest are famous for antics which, in general, give everyone a right good laugh and create a focal point for their clubs' support.

Yorkie the York City lion, renowned for his goalline runs every time the Minstermen find the net (so he has not had much exercise lately) is threatening a mascots' strike. Good on him. He should be backed all the way in yet another battle against the sponsor-appeasing chattering classes of the League's upper echelons.

And there you have it. Any comeback or comment on any of the above, don't keep it to yourself or air it where your breath is wasted. Contact me on [nigel.rickard@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:nigel.rickard@the-sun.co.uk) I always reply.

NR (22/1)

PS 1. Any computer buffs out there? Why does my Word 2000 freeze my whole system every time I click on a Word file. The computer tells me each time I am 'dangerously low on resources', but that has to be nonsense. I have 8.2GB of space left. Both Word and Windows 98 have been uninstalled and reinstalled to no avail. Assistance gratefully received. Current problem explains the lack of 'dropped caps' and other twiddles.

2. I feel Beethoven's Sonata No 14 in C sharp minor, opus 27 no 2 'Moonlight' welling up. Where's my Steinway?

3. Pssst! Has anyone walked away from SUFC with £320,000 lately?