

SUSCT

NEWSLETTER 62

AGM – OCTOBER 28 – DON'T MISS IT / AGM – OCTOBER 28 – DON'T MISS IT

A bookie who supports Cardiff City, an insurance underwriter from Horndon-on-the-Hill who knows Dickie Spooner and the Republic of Ireland's most knowledgeable Millwall follower. It's amazing the people you meet while spreading the Blues gospel on the golf courses of southern Spain.

But, sadly, it's back to the real world now – though if our cracking performance at Colchester is anything to go by, even that might start to look not such a bad place. Unless, of course, Darlo mode becomes the norm.....

I know you will all be delighted to receive the enclosed SUSCT Christmas Draw tickets. And if your newsletter arrives by e-mail, don't worry because they are in the post! This is the Trust's biggest annual fundraiser and we are asking all our members just to put in that little bit of effort to flog as many tickets as possible to mums, dads, brothers, sisters, cousins, wives, girlfriends, mistresses, workmates, neighbours, acquaintances and anyone else you know in human form. There are the big £1,000, £500 and £250 prizes to be won, United have thrown in a signed shirt and ball, there will be a few bonus bits and pieces, so get stuck in, PLEASE. As Richard Coxell and I have bagged up 12,000 of them, it's the least you can do! All stubs should be returned asap to Richard at the address on the tickets or to Terry Jeffreys at 32 Herondale, Basildon, Essex. SS14 1RR. And in case you should forget, there will be plenty of reminders before the big draw at half-time v Mansfield on December 28.

We've clearly been looking much hotter stuff of late, with the exception of the antics at the Williamson Motor Stadium, so what better time to enjoy a curry night. That was on September 15 at Le Raj in Leigh-on-Sea. Organiser Paul FitzGerald reported an excellent tuck-in enjoyed by an audience of nigh-on 50 guests. Almost £250 was raised for the current account, including the usual welcome contribution from the AP raffle. The one downside is that we should still be attracting more people for such a relaxed social event, both from our membership and the club. If you did not attend for a specific reason – eg fear, embarrassment etc – let Paul know on 01702-478373 and allow him to put your mind at rest. By the way, did anyone see Bill Garner? An inability to get time off was my non-attendance excuse.

The Q & A session at the Shrimpers Bar on September 7 pulled in an audience of 75 to hear what Tilly and Paul Brush had to say about our current status and, overall, the evening appears to have gone down well. Mein host Brian Wheeler stated he hoped it would be the first of many such get-togethers and 'hear, hear' to that. Tilly and PB had to rush back from watching the reserves flop at Northampton to attend – as did Robert Craven, whose Trust website observations on www.shrimperstrust.co.uk I have had to borrow to cover for my absence at work.

Pre-season, Tilly and the lads endured a barrage of wet sponges while stuck in the stocks at the Meet the Blues Day. There seemed a danger that some fans might demand a repeat following what was not quite the start we wanted. But with the Macclesfield and Rushden performances at the time offering hope for much better times ahead, the Trust audience was in forgiving and supportive mood in the wake of a rousing Bashers scene-setting.

MOST questions concerned individual players, nothing much on the tactical side and with no great revelations from the top table on relationships with the men in suits, finances for future purchases etc, the potential impact of Fossetts and so on.

Kevin Maher's disciplinary record, which saw him banned within a month for mostly mouthing off, was swiftly raised. The attitude seemed to be: he knows what he is doing, we know what he is doing – and we are not doing much about it. 'We've had words' said Tilly. Clearly not very effective as Kevin, a vital cog in the midfield machine, has a Blues record of picking up a booking at a rate of worse than one every six matches. Paul Brush quoted the 'internal disciplinary structure' of fines – though I suspect these are risibly low. Certainly not enough to make a player say: I must keep my gob firmly shut. The logical step would be to threaten the withdrawal of the captaincy. But as that suggestion was greeted with apparent derision, it looks like we will just have to sit back and rely on our skipper's fragile temper holding firm in future.

Darryl's weakness on crosses and high balls was pinpointed. It seems that we have a goalkeeping coach and, according to Tilly, as long as the keeper in question is positive and comes for crosses, that is all we can ask. The next logical question did not appear to have been posed. What about when he does not come for crosses in circumstances where his defenders clearly feel he should? Let us just keep our fingers crossed that one does not raise its ugly head again during the current campaign. The jury is still out since his return to duty in the wake of Bart's KO, though by all accounts he had to be at his peak during the Quakers catastrophe.

Wayne Gray has not given enough in his league appearances so far and few would disagree with that. 'But once his confidence is there, he is the quickest forward in the division,' said Paul Brush. Phew, that's a relief.

Pre-season preparation was queried. Tilly declared: 'We couldn't have done more. We did running and exercise in the morning and then went to Kingswood in the afternoon, where we did yoga and the like.' I would like to have seen him add 'and then I made them all go out and practise their ball skills until every one of them could say 'Hey, I no longer have a weaker foot'!

It appears Michael Kightly has had 'Osgood's Slaughters disease'. Sounds deadly, but in fact is linked to pain felt below the kneecap purely as a result of adolescent growth. It should clear in time and, hopefully, our promising young midfielder will be off the bench and back in the thick of the action.

ON the question of Drewe, it seems that Tilly is quite happy with whatever else he does other than score goals. Bizarrely, he blithely admitted: 'We all know Drewe doesn't score'. But, surely, no matter how well the big man holds up the ball and flicks it around, isn't an inability to score something of a liability in a forward? Let's face it, two league goals from 30-plus games is simply no good to us – no matter how nice a bloke he is. He is currently being 'handled' by 'Mystic Mogsy', so who knows what might happen next.

Tilly revealed that Jay Smith is likely to be back in first-team contention before the Christmas programme. As he will want a central midfield slot, it should make things very interesting. It seems Jim Corbett is another who is going to have to graft hard to get the exact place in the side that he covets.

There was the revelation that Tilly made an inquiry about the Caravan Club's goal-grabber Lee Boyland, but nothing came of it. And that just about wrapped things up, barring the thank-yous, some post-event chat, the drawing of the raffle – which raised £55 – plus the auctioning of a Drewe shirt (£65 raised) and a signed team photo (£50).

These events are crucial in fostering better relations and understanding between management and fans. This latest one seems to have gone well and we hope it will not be too long before we will be asking Tilly about what changes he plans to make to cement our newly-won place in League One.....

While we are on the subject of Q & As, 'Friday Night Legends' is kicking off in the Shrimpers Club every six weeks or so. This joint venture between the Trust and United will take place on Friday nights before a Blues home fixture and feature posers and responses between Blues supporters and Hall legends of the past. All funds raised will go towards 'Friends In Sport United', who will direct the money to former Blues players now finding it difficult to make ends meet. Entry is by £10 ticket only, which will include a programme and raffle tickets,

and there will be a mere 120 available for each date. Which may well not be enough for the opening event on Friday, October 29, the day before we entertain Northampton, when 'Big' Bill Garner and the outstanding Billy Best will get the ball rolling in style. You can get tickets from the club shop, the Trust stand on matchdays or commercial. I hope Tes turns up, as BB could give him some invaluable tuition on timing your run to meet a target man's flick-on.

This was one of the matters considered at the committee meeting on September 13, where, as you may have seen, attention is starting to focus on the AGM set for the evening of OCTOBER 28. Again, an agenda is enclosed or will be coming to the e-mail brigade along with your Christmas Draw tickets.

We would like to see as many members present for the occasion as possible in the Shrimpers and also want to hear from members who feel they might like to join the Trust's committee. There is always room for new faces and new ideas, as some of those who have been on board almost from the start are now entering the home straight for the final time. And that is definite. We are sad to be losing Kathy Jeffreys, as she gave us some invaluable female input. So surely out of our 152 lady members, there are one or two of you out there who would like to play a more active role. If so just contact our secretary, Terry Jeffreys, on 01268-523974 or terry.jeffreys@btinternet.com or have a chat at the Trust stand on any match day. For further updates on this key event, check the Trust website – just to repeat, that's www.shrimperstrust.co.uk - and Paul Napper's jottings in the Echo and elsewhere in the local press. But most important of all, just be there.

Check the website too for anything of key importance from the committee meeting of October 4, which could not be married into this newsletter because of the deadline for sending out the AGM material. This is likely to include how you can bid to be the Essex Radio summariser at the game v Oxford on November 6.

THE Trust's website now has a 'PayPal' transaction facility, lovingly installed by Mr Beaver, so new members can sign up on line and Trust merchandise can be easily purchased. Also keep tuning into the site for regular news snippets, updated committee profiles (yes, they are coming), Quid A Goal and 100 Club info and all the travel details you require, including the away travel tables.

Talking of hitting the road, next up it's Scunthorpe (Oct 19 – lovely on a Tuesday) and Shrewsbury (Oct 23). To get on board the Trust vehicle/s on the day contact our regent of road haulage Chris Berry on his usual numbers – 07703-898698 (no texts) or 01702-558978. The on-board raffle is being spiced up so that the prize offered is an away trip travel voucher to a fixture at the travel team's discretion.

The Centenary Committee has had its first tete-a-tete, with Paul Yeomanson, Robert Craven, Helen Giles, Brian Wheeler and Ross Hill brain-storming in fine fashion regarding United's 2006-07 anniversary. Some great-sounding ideas are already flying around, including a prestigious pre-season home friendly against top-quality opposition. The club will be writing to the likes of Arsenal, Tottenham, Newcastle, M***** U**, Chelsea, Rangers and Celtic, or perhaps Spud could help sort out an England Select XI. This may not come cheap but would surely be a sell-out as long as we knew the game would not be too toothless. Other notions mooted included: an end-of-season ball on the Roots Hall pitch, an open-air concert at Roots Hall featuring music from different decades but with one headline act to draw the crowds, a centenary exhibition in Southend Library, a charity auction night, a golf day (Messrs G and I should have their handicaps by then) and a centenary kit to match the first one ever used. There is also talk of the 'History of Southend United', the club bible written by Peter Mason, being updated for the occasion. Sounds as if things are moving ahead nicely and all power to those involved in what is likely to end up as a major undertaking. And if you have an idea you think might be worthwhile, don't hesitate to share it with PY, RC or Terry J.

Quid-A-Goal received a major funds injection thanks to the Rushden rampage, almost doubling its money in one day. Player participation remains in the melting-pot, with the total tally £588.50 after the C** U eclipse. Sadly, we still have the issue of unpaid pledges from last season hanging over our heads – despite Alan Perry's over-generous *four* written reminders. Jack Kershaw, Matt Overall, Lee and Adam McKenna, Clive Burton, Kevin Talbot, Dave Evans, Darren Gibbinson, Martin Bessant, Michael Goodchild and Peter Wallis still owe sums ranging from a ludicrous £1 up to considerably more and this issue will not go away until a payment is made by all concerned. The 2004-05 pledge total now stands at 127.

The 100 Club has 73 active members to date, who, it seems, might as well just start handing their cash to moneybags Richard Coxell, following his second win in five draws. This time he picked up £33.50. But he did let Peter Hall of Corringham collect the £33.50 in the draw after, with John Cornwall of Basildon (£34.50) and Charles Ball of Southend (£33.50) striking lucky as well. Envious? As usual, you have to be IN IT, to win it.

The Quiz Night is still set in stone for October 16, following the Swansea encounter, and is on course to be a monster 15-table sell-out. The start-time is dead on the dot of 8pm, with the usual grub fest at the break.

The Trust will also be holding another of our popular 'Golden Bowl' 10-pin bowling nights on Monday, November 8 at the Kursaal Bowl, getting under way at 7.30pm. There are 22 lanes for teams of four, all you have to do is book and turn up. It has been confirmed that four players from the current SUFC squad will be in attendance. So if you want to join them, contact Alan Perry now on alanperry4@hotmail.com or 01702-476458.

MANY thanks to Lou Lewis, who generously donated back to the Trust the £30 that he won in the Meet the Blues Day raffle. A 94-year-old gentleman by the name of Bernard Riley has also offered to donate 180 United shares to us, an offer we will be gratefully taking up.

The Friday night football debate seems to have reached its climax for this season. Overall, the vibe I have picked up seems to be that if for no other reason than travel and convenience our fans want no more than the bare minimum. After all, just how many clubs play on a Friday these days? Virtually none. Why? Because in 2004 it puts you right out of the loop. Let's hope our leaders have been listening and I can praise them again as, wait for it, I am about to do now. At the last liaison committee meeting it was agreed that the Trust could have 30 tickets for Orient, out of the pathetic 450 that will be available, to ensure our most regular away travellers do not get left out after the season ticket holders have had their cut. That is a farsighted decision and much appreciated.

We have also asked the club if we can do an interview with Mark Gower for the Trust website. Geoffrey King has suggested that perhaps the club could vet the questions first. I think that successfully rules me out of doing the interview. At least Mark is probably ready to talk, which is more than you can say for the pitiful England crew post-Poland. Some of these prima-donnas simply don't like it up 'em Mr Mainwairing, chiefly because they spend most of their lives surrounded by fawning sycophants telling them how wonderful they are. I could take you through three goals that David James gifted to us in his Watford days. The bloke has always been a disaster waiting to happen and if there more were top English keepers around he would never have got a sniff of international football. But the truth can hurt – and the egos of Jamesy, Becksy, Gary Neville and the rest are so fragile they simply cannot face it, especially if, like the adulterer, it begins to hint at your career being on the downward spiral. Thank God for Mavis the donkey.

Geoffrey King has asked for feedback on Blues TV and got the response he dreamed of. It's top-notch and very popular in the Shrimpers on match days.

GK also revealed that Chelmsford Council had refused permission for the Blues road show to visit this summer. He did not elaborate, but can you think of a more pathetic response from a bunch of tired, old, self-serving, political non-entities? I think you should move, Bashers!

Crying your eyes out because of newsletter receipt problems? It's understandable. But this affliction can be cured if you are on e-mail by contacting our membership secretary, Paul Yeomanson, on 01702-302373 or p.yeomanson@bluevonder.co.uk If your newsletter should come by post, tell secretary Terry Jeffreys – terry.jeffreys@btinternet.com

TALKING of membership, PY has revealed the present tally stands at 1,184 – another all-time high – made up of 993 adults and 191 SJS. Carl Watts is so enthusiastic he has even tried to sign up his unborn baby. Not that there is anything wrong with starting them young.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS (Total 44): Francis Evans, Eileen Jeeves, Lee Tanner.

WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS SINCE NEWSLETTER 61: Kurt Bessant, Stephen Butfield, Liz Chalcraft, Gemma Connolly, Rob Day, Joshua Fosh, Kerry Fossett, Kevin French, Michael Gaster, Christine Hall, John Harrison, Paul Harrison, Alan Haywood, Duane Jackson, Danny Kershaw, Kevin King, Thomas Osbourn, Chris Perryman, Adam Pickering, Kevin Pollock, James Rumsby, Tina Smith, Chris Spanton, David Stevens, Lee Summerfield, Mike Torode, John Watson, Richard Whitwell, Joe Wood.

FINAL REMINDERS: 1258 Katie Adams, 314 Tim Armstrong, 1243 James Bentall, 1249 Jonathon Coshever, 1262 Matt Coulson, 860 Terence Dangerfield, 1239 Trixie Davis, 852 Scott Elder, 1248 Andrew Eva, 836 David Freeman, 1231 Leonard Frewin, 1254 Kean Grigg, 1003 John Hall, 1251 Kevin Hawkes, 990 Paul Hewitt, 1250 Graham Howett, 1359 D. Howett, 1281 Adam Lang, 1246 Stuart Manley, 1240 Mr. B Martin, 1241 Mrs. A. Martin, 1255 Lee McKenna, 904 Mike Mimms, 905 Ann Mimms, 358 Chris Nice, 993 Scott Peters, 1004 Julie Sarll, 1257 Paul Taylor, 1235 Robert Thorpe, 1265 Jon Williams.

Paul is also the man to contact should you wish to alter the quality of your sartorial state by investing in the latest SUSCT polo shirt. This £16 bargain in navy blue with silver Trust badge on the left front and 'Shrimpers Trust' on one arm is a must for all those who like their fashion statements to reveal them as paragons of good taste. Buy now – all the usual sizes available.

We have been made aware of the 'Stand Up, Sit Down' campaign currently growing in strength to try, finally, to get some sense into the standing at matches issue. We will be discussing this with the club at future liaison committee gatherings and also adding our voice to what is a vital national debate.

A tasty £7,251.75 has winged our way from United as the final settlement of what we were owed from the Cardiff jaunt. Sending the cheque was apparently one of the last acts of the second accountant to leave the Hall in a year. Next into the hot-seat is a Blackpool fan by the exotic moniker of Chantel Summers.

So how have the lads been doing of late? Well enough overall to deserve better than 15th. Read on.

RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS 1 SOUTHEND 4 (A, League Two, 4/9/04): Our best away league win since the Millwall lions were tamed by the same score in the first-ever match at the New Den back in 1993. A treat for the near-600 of the faithful who were present and a just reward for forking out £17 a head to get in. Boy has Max Griggs' departure from Nene Park made a difference, on and off the pitch, though the food, drink, toilets, Doc Marten shop facilities etc remain excellent. Lessons for our future venue to be learned there. We found ourselves actually facing Rushden and Diamonds and anything less than a crushing victory for Blues on a superb playing surface in 80-degree heat would have been a major disappointment. We were totally dominant from the first whistle and the only time we looked under threat was when we tried to over-elaborate, as Spinner did when he lost the ball to let them make it 1-1. But sporting our sky blue away kit for the first time, United finally showed perhaps they really are capable of making a major league impact this season. Ron called Tilly over for a touchline pep-talk pre-kick-off, probably to tell him that, like me, he had stuck £1 on a 2-1 victory at 14s and was relying on the lads to net him enough to get a round in for the buddies in his luxi-box. It worked a treat. Our midfield of messrs Gower, Maher, Bentley and Pettefer had all the time in the world to spray the ball around and open up the home side at will. The only slightly worrying aspect was that all the chances created went begging and our goals came from set-pieces. Dudders, suddenly looking lethal after discovering he actually has a fourth gear, put us in front when he touched in Adam Barrett's knock-back from a Gower corner. Bart's first save on 35 minutes then saw him carted out of the fray for six weeks thanks to a sprained left knee, with Darryl enjoying a virtually stress-free hour as his replacement. Dudders was hacked down for the penalty he blasted away to restore our lead, while the guilty Diamond was invited to leave the pitch. Rejuvenated Tes powered in a header from a Maher corner (£14 down the plughole) and right at the death a Maher free-kick pinged off the ankle of their No 10 past hobbling fatboy Turley. Adam Barrett rather disappointingly tried to claim it and the League were absolutely right to take his credit away. The

Trust coaches left full of happy, smiling faces, though Mr Berry was not at his most joyful having been stung for an unjustified £10 parking fee which he could then not get refunded due to jobsworth intransigence. Where do they get these lemon-jacketed lemons?

SOUTHEND 1 WYCOMBE 2 (H, League Two, 11/9/04): Bring an instrument or drum said the SUFC website. And that was before the mystery of the missing kazoos. But why try to create a phony atmosphere at the Hall, which is far more likely just to get on people's wicks? We could probably have a genuine one if we stopped chucking points down the drain like we did here. We'd be banging the drum for certain, then. This was a result that must have had every self-respecting Blues fan tearing his / her hair out as all the good work of Rushden was undone and Tony Adams and Co departed with the luckiest three points they will collect all season. For an hour, in blustery conditions, one team ruled almost untroubled – Blues. Our lone goal from Mark Bentley, following a cracking build-up close to half-time involving the silver-booted Tes, Dudders and Carl Pettefer, would surely have been at least three if we could only have shot on target or found a killer final ball. And therein lies the current winter of our discontent. A basic 1-0 lead is never enough for us, especially when you have a clown of a linesman like David Cann let loose with a flag in his hand. I would have put Nathan Tyson at least five yards offside as Cann, probably the same distance off the last man, tossed a mental coin in his head, decided he had not got a clue what was going on and kept his flag down. Tyson netted comfortably – and normal service was resumed. We missed chances, CP rattled a post with a thunderous left-foot drive and, seven minutes from time, an out-of-thin-air Wanderers 25-yarder carved its way into the top corner with Darryl left groping. Could Bart have got a fingertip to it? Cue total deflation. It is virtually impossible to criticise as we did so little wrong – apart from slinging on Drewe 'We know He Doesn't Score' Broughton instead of Jim Corbett – and played some good stuff with everyone contributing. Yet we lost and Wycombe went top. A sick Mark Gower admitted he missed a couple of golden opportunities to tie the game up. Surely the curse of the Trust's sponsorship has not ensnared him as well? Lucky we did not need a sub keeper – we didn't have one. Adam Barrett, who deservedly collected the first SUSCT Player of the Month award from SJS member Lawrence Priddle pre-match, took over from banned Kevin Maher as skipper. Adam's £50 for charity has gone to Little Havens. Season ticket holders were granted the post-match period as their head-start over the pack for buying tickets for the LDV trip to Colchester. Was that all we got? Nice little fixture card from our sponsors, though.

NOTTS CO 1 SOUTHEND 2 (A, League Two, 18/9/04): Stayed at home to do my holiday packing and bitterly regretted it as the score flashes came through on Radio Five Live. What can you say about two-goal Adam Barrett? Let's hope plenty more rival defences fail to notice him creeping forward with lethal intent. The talk from the game was that we were easily the better side and should have been well out of sight by the time they sneaked a wobbly one with about four minutes to go to make the finale a bit of a jitter session.

SOUTHEND 1 KIDDERMINSTER 0 (H, League Two, 25/9/04): Derek Wilshire partook of the matchday experience in the company of Bashers, who appears to have had such a traumatic time he has lost most of his hair. Frank Van Wezel was also lined up to do his duty, but declined at the last minute because apparently he was being trailed by Dutch TV cameras. Nothing sinister, I hope. While Derek apparently enjoyed mixing with the proletariat, he is likely to be back in the bosom of the directors' box for Boston. Let's at least hope he learned something about what the less cosseted fan has to endure occasionally at a game. A stunning Mark Gower strike sealed the points for us to break his duck for us this campaign in welcome fashion. Mr I, my spy in the camp, reported – as ever – that Kiddie should have been despatched far more easily than they were, especially following the red card exit of Abdou Sall. Our inability at times to retain the ball and our lack of a plan B at throw-ins brought the usual problems, with Dudders and Spinner rated below-par and Mark Bentley again providing the best overall contribution.

C*** 1 SOUTHEND 1 (A, LDV Vans Trophy 1st rd, 29/09/04, Southend won 5-3 on pens):** 'There's Only One Team in Essex' reverberated round the apology for a football ground that Layer Road remains at the climax to a game which kicked off at 8pm and finished 2hrs 43 mins later. C** U have had a good start to the season in League One, but found Blues fired right up to more than match them all over the pitch. We thoroughly deserved to advance to the tournament's second round in the Southern Section, despite paying a high price. The physical toll was clearly huge and losing Mark Bentley to a highly dubious-looking red card that is likely – barring an 'appeal' miracle – to cost us his services for three matches was a cruel blow. I got

sick of the sandy-haired loudmouth next to me constantly screaming we could never win a penalty shoot-out. His opinion was shown to be about as on the mark as just about every other one he felt obliged to share with those unfortunate enough to be in his vicinity, as Wayne Gray, Lewis Hunt, Kevin Maher, Drewe and Jim Corbett rattled away our spot-kicks and Wayne Brown missed the crucial fourth effort for them. The celebrations were rightfully raucous as we hit the road to Cardiff once more and even Ron – presumably taking a night off from the nearby ‘Ron’s Plaice’ fish and chip superstore – felt entitled to join the throng. The three-coach Trust convoy enjoyed its usual police escort, though the anticipated fire station search proved to be not so much perfunctory as non-existent. At least the two-cubicle Laver Road toilets had had a lick of whitewash since last season, some new tiles and there were actually bulbs in the lights. I didn’t bother with a ballcock check. The deadlock was broken by Tes’s cracking drive, which, from my vantage point, was in from the moment it left his right boot. On the night, Tes was one of our major successes. After a great half-time penalty competition for the kids, C** U promptly fluffed a sitter before Mark Gower curled a right-footer millimetres wide. Mark Bentley lost control when clean through and Wayne Gray hit a post in the 90th minute. Darryl’s key fingertip for a corner got us through extra-time and then came the glorious finale. Performances like this every week in League Two, especially topped off by more goals, would see us top three for sure. Great night, with Shrewsbury at the Hall next up.

DARLINGTON 4 SOUTHEND 0 (A, League Two, 2/10/04): If you spent £200 for a one-way flight, you will have been happy. At least the option to have chucked yourself out at 30,000ft on the way back from this nightmare was taken away. As mentioned above, the toll from Layabout Road must have told and we never got out of the traps. Was it significant that Spinner returned in place of Andy Edwards? But, even more critical, if ever the lesson needed to be learned of what quality strikers can do for you, this was it. An Alun Armstrong, Clyde Wijnhard, Craig Hignett or similar would be a massive plus for us. We desperately need a proven goalscorer as this is the one area of the side where we are currently clearly badly lacking. Hopefully, our anticipated new signing – again too late for the deadline – will fit the bill. A 528-mile round trip to see us crushed was not supposed to be on the menu – especially as Darlo had gone six games without a win. Trust us to be first up to face their new goal machines. Only Darryl at his best saved us from further punishment, so let’s bury this one and move on. Fast.

I think Chris was planning a possible small rebate to all travellers if everyone fronted on the SUSCT coach. Should that have proved a non-starter, it would appear to be down to the inconsiderate duo of NICKY KEYS and DEAN ALLUM, who both missed the coach for the second time this season with no thought of a phone call of explanation. These two gentlemen will now have to PAY UP FRONT if they wish to join our travelling parties in future.

ANYONE else agree with me that this season’s ITV / Sky coverage of Leagues One and Two is absolute c**p. I have just informed ITV of same, having obtained a contact within their publicity set-up. I will let you know what he says. Meanwhile the Premier League’s latest attempt to control Press photography at matches has only just been repelled. Their dream is a totally sanitised presentation of the game that must be fought on all fronts.

Sir Stanley is down on The Farm on Channel Five. I have already heard the title of this programme should have been changed to One Man and His Dogging. What must be worrying Becks’ mistress and the rest of the Rymans-level female celebs is whether or not The Man has brought his chocolate fingers with him. He has already given Ms Loos a sample of his massaging powers, though she might be slightly put off by the October 3 main headlines above the latest Stan saga in the *News of the World*. ‘DEPRAVED. Forget Collymore’s life story lies.....the Real Stan was violent, drug-taking pervert’. That was followed up by sub-decks including: ‘Dogged by the sordid truth’, ‘He used to spy on me having sex’ and ‘I put up with years of his aggression’. Quite a character reference for the legend who could have been our manager. He certainly needs to be a bit careful, though – Rebecca has just whipped the b***s off a bullock!

I had a new back fence put up a few weeks ago – by a West Shamster! Had I seen the old club badge a bit earlier on the shorts being sported by Ray from The Fencing Centre in Thundersley I might have had to show him the red card. But he was doing such a good job I let him finish it off. Definitely worth giving a call if you need some panels put up or a few replacement gravel boards.

Roots Hall is a national treasure! English Heritage have designated it worth a visit, which sets in motion a guided tour by the likes of Ray Davey. Whether that is with or without his Madonna mic I am not sure. What was not made clear, though, on the recent little slot on the telly revealing this news was how English Heritage will greet discovering that the Hall is, of course, due to be bulldozed once the Fossetts dream palace is in place. Could be interesting if they slap a preservation order on it.....

WATCH out for some extra Trust and Blues talk in the Southend Times, scheduled to be bringing out a regular eight-page sports pull-out that our Echo / programme correspondent Paul Napper will be endeavouring to help fill with further relevant info.

Leo Roget's excellent televised goal for Oxford from a diving header against Wycombe in the 1-1 draw on September 3 may well have been helped by the fact he appears to have rather a lot more on top than he ever used to possess during his days with us. On the other hand, Leon Cort is now bald as a coot – but struck again in the Hull win at Brighton. David Lee has washed up at Oldham, while Leon Con is clearly paying dear for taking the tainted Fry shilling. No sooner had he got in the Posh side against Bristol City than he is out with a broken nose and a suspected rib fracture – and has still to open his account for the season. Tragic. As for Mark Rawle trying to wheedle his way back after selling us down the river, no wonder Tilly gave him short shrift. What goes around, comes around. At least he has the consolation of that doll from the Orient – and I don't mean Leyton – that he brought along with him to Rushden. Michael Husbands can depart permanently or on loan. A pity it has never quite worked out for him with us.

There is a worrying update concerning Chris 'Southend to be relegated' Waddle's psychic powers, as revealed in Number 61. On September 6, one of the headlines on his column in an illustrious daily newspaper said: 'Sou's the right man for Toon'. Next day, to the nation's surprise, Graeme Souness became Newcastle manager.....

I know Blues are a bit strapped for cash but isn't inviting fans' bids for Laurie Dudfield's ripped shirt from Rushden pushing things a bit far?

Want to get in touch about any of the newsletter content or to make a point of your own or simply have a moan? If so, you can contact me, as usual, on nigel.rickard@the-sun.co.uk

NR (4/10)

PS1. After much hunting, I found the answer. It's Jarnail Singh.

2. A sad loss.....

CHARLES CLENSHAW

It is with great regret that the Trust has to report the death on September 23 of Charles Clenshaw, aged 78. Charles, who lived in Garstang, near Preston, became a member after receiving Paul FitzGerald's letter to shareholders and donated his shares to the Trust. He also donated to us the original deed document over Roots Hall. His father was C W Clenshaw, one of the founding fathers of the SUSC and who later became a director of Southend United. Our condolences go to Charles's brother, David, and the rest of his family.

AGM – OCTOBER 28 – DON'T MISS IT / AGM – OCTOBER 28 – DON'T MISS IT