

SUSCT

NEWSLETTER 63

WE had almost forgotten it.‘and now you’ve gotta believe us, the Blues are going up’. But there were plenty in full voice as the anthem reverberated round the Hall again after the humbling of Oxford, when our boys showed the rest of League Two that there is a team back in town to fear again. Now all we have to do is keep it going – and ensure our big-hitters stay fit.

Talking of hitmen, the Trust is always looking for high-profile members – and ‘Sir’ Stanley Collymore has now added his name to that short but illustrious list of the elite.

No one who saw him in his six-month pomp at the Hall in 1992-93 will ever forget the impact he made on a struggling Blues side, adding a class, quality and goalscoring power few of us would ever have expected to see in a United shirt. When he left the Hall for, let’s say £2.8million, to join Nottingham Forest – anyone for a chorus of ‘Where’s The Money Gone?’ – he seemed to have the world at his feet. Then Liverpool beckoned, they rarely played him as they should have done and the slow reversal of fortune set in for a player who had all the abilities required to have been England’s central striker for years.

I don’t need to catalogue here the list of ‘misdemeanours’ that have blighted his career since. Let us just leave it that one place Stan is always guaranteed a top welcome is at SUFC. And that proved the case once again when he fronted up at the Shrimpers Club before the Northampton game on October 30 to sign copies of his new book ‘Tackling My Demons’. After all, this is the bloke who rates the aftermath of Southend v Luton in May ‘93, his final game for us, as one of the two highlights of his career – along with scoring the winner in that 4-3 Liverpool v Newcastle epic of April 1996. The Trust’s removal men, bar those ‘conspicuous by their absence’, prepared the annexe area for the midday kick-off with no shortage of the faithful anxious to snap up a copy. Some had queued for more than half an hour. Stan happily did a 90-minute stint and not only helped make a few bob for himself but did the Trust a big favour by signing some merchandise for which we shall now be able to find new homes at a goodly contribution to Trust funds. James Mutimer, for example, has paid £40 for a dedicated ‘Attitude’ T-shirt. Stan’s reward? A year’s honorary membership. Cheap at the price. Reflecting on the Premier League view that nothing exists outside that elite world, Stan says in his book: “No one gives a **** about Southend in the bigger picture. But I understand.” That alone makes him one of us.

The Man then took his place in the directors’ box and got a fine reception when he went out on to the pitch at half-time to do the 50-50 cash and match ball draw. It may well have been his last visit to our historic green sward, but, whatever has gone on off the pitch, he has left an indelible memory for every United supporter. I wonder what would have happened had he got the manager’s job? Then again, when I see Dave Martin could have been his No.2, I think we will leave that one.....

SADLY, Stan swiftly found himself back in the headlines yet again after enjoying a ‘tete-a-tete’ with some Bath rugby players in the vicinity of a Dublin Burger King that left him nursing a broken hooter. The accusations flew, legal action could be pending, the headline writers had a field day and stunned Colly was once more being represented in a way someone of his clear intelligence ought to be desperate to avoid – as a figure of fun. Looks like the book may have come out a tad too early! Best of luck, mate.

But let's not forget our 2004 goal machine. Fredy Eastwood is, after a few scares, signed, sealed, delivered, he's ours on a staggering three-year deal and is currently in tip-top nick. Needless to say, there were some rival vultures hovering around. But Ron appears to have coughed the cash just in time and now all Fredy has to do is match his 37 goals for Grays last season! Remember, though, we always had a fallback position. Recalling that other net-buster.....Drewe.

Next a mention of the Chester fixture change from Saturday December 18 to Friday December 17. The spurious reason? Christmas shopping. Oh, and it took THREE MONTHS to work that out. Absolute garbage. If every club was that worried, why has the whole programme not been switched? Well, Geoffrey, my holiday days are too precious to keep using for unnecessarily rearranged United fixtures so next season you can probably SING for my £300 season ticket money. And I hope that goes for many of the others who I know are p****d off with this Friday night farce. It has become almost tantamount to fraud. And all, it really seems, on the spurious grounds of a Tilly whim. I also feel as sorry for the Chester fans, suddenly up the creek if any of them use public transport, as I would for our travellers dumped on in the same way and with the same contempt. In case anyone failed to notice, our biggest gate yet was for the Saturday date with Northampton. Fans will always turn out to watch a winning team, playing some decent stuff – as we mostly are at the moment. I await those Friday nights if we are ever back in the s**t. I am not exactly jumping for joy that the Luton FA Cup-tie has been brought forward, but at least I accept that is completely different. A TV switch is always a possibility, if usually remote, and was made in two days. United benefit with £75,000 of Sky greenbacks so can hardly say 'No thanks'. As for league games, though, stop the con, Ron.

WE must be learning from Barry Hearn, who has so thoughtfully knocked down half of Brisbane Road for his redevelopment project without remembering that some people might like to go and watch the odd game at his ground. Notably, the usual 1,500 or so of the faithful – though not on December 7, when we are limited to just a scandalous 500 places. I suppose I will go in the 'lottery', but what the hell were the Football League doing to sanction this fiasco in the first place? It's yet another kick in the teeth for loyal backers of ours who will not now be able to follow their side for a match which could have a crucial bearing on the outcome of both clubs' seasons. As I revealed in NUMBER 62, United deserve a pat on the back for at least awarding the Trust 30 tickets for our most devoted travellers. But there will be plenty missing out. Thanks a lot, Barry. You will doubtless be sympathising with the absentees from the cosy tranquillity of the directors' box.

If I might just be permitted one more gripe. We changed Windows systems at the Currant Bun recently and I lost my connection to the official United website. Can I get it back? No way. And with what looks an even more intrusive list of questions to have to answer before I can re-establish the link, I think I will simply rely on Rob Craven's lovechild, The Little Gazette, for all my Blues info in future. Unofficial, of course.

At least I am happy to report one other off-field plus point for the club over the past month, in addition to the 30 tickets. Trust member Morgan Jones found himself off work for eight weeks following a shoulder operation in the wake of a football injury. His wife sent in a 'Get Well' card to United, asking if the players would sign it. Sixteen bothered to do so and the card was sent back by return. Such a commendable level of thought and consideration from the squad is always welcome. As for on high.....

Just returning momentarily to the Luton Cup-tie, Trust member Jamie Reeves informs me that the match will be the first to be televised live via Sky to Singapore. Jamie would normally be doing his resident commentary / pundit stint on their network telly, but incredibly had fixed up the weekend in question to go visiting the Angkor Wat temples in Cambodia so will miss a likely historic one-off. Perfect timing. His place will be taken by Malaysian commentator Shebby Singh – and they will also be broadcasting Thurrock v Oldham.

The Trust held its AGM in the Shrimpers Bar on Thursday, October 28. I think it would be a slight exaggeration to say the venue was packed to the rafters. In fact it would be a slight exaggeration to say the venue was packed – the raffle made just £28 – and I have to apologise for work keeping me away. No Ron, either. Does anyone see him these days, apart from on the pitch after a victory? But enough hearty souls were in attendance to make the evening worthwhile and luckily one of them was Robert Craven, whose bible-length report on the Trust website I have sifted through to enable me to pass on a few relevant details.

CHAIRMAN Trevor Bashford kicked off proceedings with a run through the committee personnel, one or two of whom were unavoidably 'conspicuous by their absence'. He then gave his in-depth report on the year's proceedings for the Trust, its highs and lows, sprinkling his words with general observations on the state of the national game from the top to the bottom and naturally hoping that eventually Blues would complete their much trumpeted move from the Hall to the luxury surroundings of Fossetts Farm. With the six-month timescale since the passing of the B & Q application, there are quite a few supporters now who really would appreciate a snippet or two of information on where we go next.

On the field, Bashers reported Steve Tilson and Paul Brush had transformed things following the exit of relegation-haunted Steve Wignall, while the Trust has gone from strength to strength as its financial position has grown sounder. This has been thanks in no small part to the fund-raising antics of Alan Perry. His efforts on the Quid A Goal, 100 Club, Christmas Draw, raffles and numerous other schemes are invaluable, along with the endeavours of those involved in the quiz nights, bowling evenings, curry nights, Q & A sessions and the Kevin Feasey-inspired Player of the Year evening. Trevor again thanked all those involved in the monumental Cardiff operation, which saw the fantastic Berry-Yeomanson coach extravaganza and Blues' support on the day praised by the police, Blackpool and the Millennium Stadium. And, who knows, we might even end up doing it again.

The Trust is now successfully organising the Shrimpers Bar on match days and will continue to fight for Trust representation on the board. The newsletter continues to appear – you are reading it now – though I have to say, regrettably, it cannot continue for ever in its current guise. Be warned. I see Trevor allegedly said I do not intend to offend. Wrong there, Trevor. I love to if I feel I have to. The efforts of the Beaver, Robert Craven and Kevin Feasey have transformed the Trust website – www.shrimperstrust.co.uk – and Paul Napper continues to spread the Trust word in the local media. We remain members of the Football Supporters Federation.

There are various projects ahead in which the Trust aims to be involved, starting with United's centenary celebrations in 2006 for which a Trust / SUFC liaison committee is already in existence. Key issues for the coming year also encompass the continued pressing for that board spot, trying to bring in even more members, marketing ourselves even more proficiently and increasing the funds available to assist United and selected borough community projects in whichever way we can.

TREVOR then gave a more in-depth rundown of the committee personnel, with retiring treasurer Craig Fillary being rewarded with the last of the 'Great Escape' decanter sets for his sterling efforts over the last four years. Craig will be remaining on the committee. In addition, the big chief hailed Steven Clark and Wyndham Plastics for their great help towards the Trust over the past 12 months, especially as regards LDV Vans Trophy final sponsorship and their contribution towards the cost of the new Trust membership cards. And, at last, Trevor was talked out.....

Craig Fillary's TREASURER'S REPORT produced quite comforting listening, as he revealed the Trust made £24,000 in 2004 as opposed to £9,000 in 2003. This was chiefly due to Alan Perry's brilliant fund-raising, worth a stunning £14,000, and LDV Vans Trophy final income which produced another £10,000.

Donations to Southend United included £2,700 to John Stannard from the Quid-a-Goal money, as well as £1,500 to Football in the Community and £450 to various charities from the Player of the Month award.

The balance sheet on 30th June showed that Trust funds stood at just under £40,000, up £16,000 from the same time last year. One major debtor has been United over the credit card money for the Cardiff trip and negotiations have been ongoing with a view to getting this done and dusted as quickly as possible.

After thanks to Craig from Bashers, next up was the imposing figure of our MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Paul 'Beaver' Yeomanson.

Beaver announced that the current number of Trust adult members totalled 1,008 (up 202 from last year's AGM), Southend Junior Shrimpers membership was 191 (up 68) and the total was therefore 1,199 (up a massive 270). Paul, not unnaturally, regarded this as a healthy increase in membership – especially as there had been more than 130 lapsings over the past 12 months. He urged all present members to renew when called on to maintain the Trust's growth. Life Members, a scheme started only in February, already stand at 52.

CHRIS and Rosemary Berry were thanked for their running of the SJS, with Paul then revealing the new membership cards that were being brought in gradually for renewals and 'lost' cards. Future losses will incur a 50p administration charge, so keep 'em safe! More credit was given to Steven Clark of Wyndham Plastics for sponsoring the cards and Dave Wenborn for designing them.

Paul told how PayPal has now been set up on the Trust website for new memberships and renewals, plus the large range of merchandise. He gave the good news that there was to be no increase in membership charges this year, but followed up by declaring he would propose an upping of costs at the next AGM in 2005. Again, Bashers hailed Paul's tremendous efforts in a crucial post.

Next came the re-election of auditors, no problem there after six untroubled years, followed by the election of officers for 2004-05. Re-elected were:- *CHAIRMAN: Trevor Bashford. VICE-CHAIRMAN: Paul FitzGerald. SECRETARY: Terry Jeffreys. TREASURER: Darren Posnack. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY / CLUB LIAISON OFFICER: Paul Yeomanson. PRESS SECRETARY: Paul Napper. FUND-RAISING OFFICER: Alan Perry. MEMBERS: Chris Berry, Nigel Rickard, Richard Coxell, Kevin Feasey, Craig Fillary, Robert Craven, Joe Elliott, Jon-Paul FitzGerald.* Elected new: *Lee Tanner.* No ladies following the resignation of Kathy Jeffreys but we live in hope.

Questions then followed from the floor, with the focus, needless to say, on Fossetts Farm. With Ron 'unable to attend', Paul FitzGerald did his best to give an update. The update consisted chiefly of the fact Ron is keeping mum at the moment and therefore the amount of info in the public domain is somewhat less than limited. TB declared that the Trust would now be pulling out all the stops to try to get some statement on the next moves.

And that was that, with Trevor thanking all those in attendance for turning up – and promising not to hold the 2005 AGM during half-term week.

Trevor then gave over the floor to United physio John Stannard, the largest recipient of funds from the Trust, who was asked what difference our cash had made to him. He replied: "A huge difference. Before I arrived there was very little here. As you know, the old physio took it with him. But now we have a lot of rehab equipment, not just for injured players, but also those in the squad who can use it as part of an exercise. There is specific stuff and that is brilliant. I can't thank the Trust enough. I do want more, but, in general, the facilities here are brilliant for a League Two club." John then went on to answer various other general points concerning player fitness. For those details I refer you to the Trust website. And that was.....that for another 12 months.

BEFORE we come to recent committee business, let's just relive some of the moments from recent matches that suggest Blues might just be about to do something significant in the promotion stakes after so many years of hurt.

SOUTHEND 2 BOSTON 1 (H, League Two, 8/10/04): Having not been absent for a home league game for 21 months, suddenly it's two in a row. Never mind, Mr G does a Philby-style spying job from the East Greens and gleefully informs me: "You missed our best home performance for at least two years." A lot of people were hoping to see Gazza turning out for the Pilgrims. But he had moved on again to who knows what planet a few days earlier so that was off the menu. As it turned out, Boston were treated to a first-half football lesson. We bagged two fine strikes from Mark Gower and Wayne Gray, while Darryl had to wait 35 minutes before his fingers were subjected to a telling touch of the leather sphere – or whatever substance it is made of these days. Sadly, his next touch right on half-time was outside the box, out comes the red card and, with no keeper named on the bench and supposed first 'reserve' Mark Bentley still on the banned list, step forward Tes 'Banksie' Bramble. He must have been a bundle of nerves and having to pick Boston's goal out of the net inside four minutes cannot have calmed his jitters. But after that, with the defence set to 'protect at all costs', Tes started to look more comfortable and even as if he was enjoying himself. His late full-length paw showed that. A shame we missed one or two additional opportunities which might have made our task a little less taxing, but on the final whistle no one was complaining – only cheering. Mark Bentley – did anyone seriously think the FA would give him a break over his sending-off? – collected the Player of the Month trophy from 13-year-old SJS member Michael Abdul and has given his £50 from the Trust to a national cancer charity.

SOUTHEND 4 SWANSEA 2 (H, League Two, 16/10/04): If you thought it couldn't get better, it could. It is always special seeing history made – especially if you are there in person at the critical moment.

Which is what made our first goal against the Swans such a spectacular. No one could have expected it. After all, isn't the ball always laid back to Kevin Maher to pump into the crowd down by the left corner flag? And you had to feel sorry for anyone still purchasing their hot dog, thinking to themselves 'I'm OK, nothing ever happens in the first few seconds'. They may since have seen it on video. But you had to have seen it actually happen. This old fogey is in his 42nd season of supporting Blues and I rate Fredy Eastwood's strike probably the most incisive, planned team goal I have ever seen us score. Lewis Hunt's touch to Fredy, the ball to Mark Gower, his dash forward and pass to Wayne Gray, one touch and then a pinpoint right-foot cross right on to Fredy's head for a finish that left Swans keeper Willy Gueret groping thin air. Done and dusted in 7.7 secs for the quickest goal in Blues history – beating by more than two seconds the previous best by the legendary Sammy McCrory. What followed, with Fredy going on to claim a hat-trick, merely added to the sense of occasion. From the sensational opening to the last blow of referee Mark Russell's whistle this was a super advert for League Two football marred for many only by the loss of the Blues Belles to Rugby League duty at Old Trafford. Terry Alderton's absence from the goalmouth was greeted with just about universal relief – though, to be fair, he probably never really expected to play. And at least this genuine United supporter happily allowed himself to be the subject of a week of surmising which gave United a bit of free publicity, so great credit to him for that. There seemed to be fewer Swans fans than usual, odd as they arrived top of the table. Perhaps they knew something. They certainly did not know what hit them in that eighth second as Fredy made his stunning first mark or for the next five minutes as we laid siege to their net. Then we suddenly seemed to become aware of how well we were playing – and the errors started to creep in. Notably allowing Lee Trundle's left foot to mesmerise us as he set up their equaliser. But Spinner marked his 500th career appearance with a fierce downward header from Kevin Maher's corner – it helped his marker had gone AWOL – and Wayne Gray, suddenly looking 10 times the player of yore, almost made it three before the break. It was another pinpoint WG cross that landed on Fredy's bonce five yards out to make it 3-1 on 56 minutes and really the only times we found ourselves in trouble were when we gave the ball away by trying to be a bit too clever. A wicked little Trundle cross to the smallest man on the pitch with just eight minutes to go had the nerves jangling again, only for Fredy to plant our deflected fourth into the Frank Walton Stand onion bag from 20 yards soon after. Defeat was clearly too much for those of the Swansea followers with intelligence deficit syndrome to take and Dickie and the boys were called upon to deal with them in the time-honoured fashion. Just about the final piece of action saw Trundle rattle our bar from 50 yards. Everything was good about this game and credit to ref Russell as well. He let one or two early clatters go without waving yellow cards about in Ross / Kettle fashion, allowed the game to flow and both teams responded. 90 minutes no one who saw them will forget in a hurry.

S CUNTHORPE 3 SOUTHEND 2 (A, League Two, 19/10/04): And another backward step. Fredy put us in front with a quality header from another pinpoint Wayne Gray cross, Jim Corbett rattled us level at two-each with a wicked half-volley from 20 yards, but still we could not salvage a point against the high-flying Iron. More worryingly, the consensus of opinion from those present was we did not really deserve anything. It could have been worse had not most of our rivals drawn. One travel no-show to be named and shamed: non-member JIM BRANNING.

SHREWSBURY 1 SOUTHEND 1 (A, League Two, 23/10/04): There is only one problem with being in the Republic of Ireland when Blues are playing on a Saturday afternoon. It is impossible to find the result. RTE teletext does not descend below the Premiership and, errrr, that's it. But my anguish at having to wait two days to get details of this draw was clearly matched by the traumatic time that those Trust journeymen who had placed themselves in the sanctum of the Berry buses enjoyed. When we take two coaches to Shrewsbury, you know things are looking up. But the videos caused controversy, the raffle was a Berry masterpiece and at Gay Meadow there were some scenes straight out of Holby City as Dr Bashers took the lead in tending an unwell female fan with his best bedside manner. Lucky for the lady concerned she did not need the kiss of life. But the real joy of the day came on the return trip when the wipers failed on the Berry vehicle, leading to what must have been a superb two-hour sojourn at Toddington Services. Arrival home was a tad late for all concerned. And the match action? A 20-yarder into Darryl's top left corner saw us fall behind on 14 minutes, with Wayne Gray's neat 59th-minute header from a Carl Pettefer cross sending our 300 or so followers into a nice frenzy of delight. But as the Shrews were bottom of the table at the time, we should really have expected three points. Three coach no-shows to report: SJS members BEN THOMPSON and JOE LOPEMAN and adult member ADAM PICKERING. Hopefully, there will be a price to pay. They might, of course, like to do what DEAN ALLUM had the courtesy to do after missing the trip to Darlington – write and apologise.

SOUTHEND 2 NORTHAMPTON 1 (H, League Two, 30/10/04): The new Blues fanzine doing the rounds is entitled: All At Sea. Very apt on this occasion as that is exactly what we were for worrying swathes of the last hour of this game. If I had been a Cobblers fan I would have been well miffed at not netting a point. We have one of the worst defensive records in the division and yet Tilly, I suppose understandably, is happy to keep saying 'same again' to the surprise of many. Is there no one who can offer us more width on the right than Carl Pettefer? It was pretty nip and tuck until Mark Gower unleashed a glorious 20-yarder to give us a 27th-minute lead. But the danger signs at the back were there for all to see as Che Wilson hauled down Eric Sabin to concede a penalty, which produced a superb and utterly crucial Darryl save to his left from Martin Smith. After the break we looked lifeless as Town took charge. Yet after Adam Barrett had toe-poked just wide, a rare quality move saw Lewis Hunt send Wayne Gray rampaging through to fire in a tasty second. Town then had the gall to bring on the disgusting Julian 'Bum-nana Man' Alsop before we showed we had not learned the Trundle lesson. In the same way we kept laying off the Swansea dangerman when he had the ball instead of standing all over him, we repeated the error with the dangerous Sabin. He was allowed to turn three minutes from time, ease forward and stroke away a 20-yarder. Thank heavens we hung on to hit the heady heights of seventh, after making it four home wins in a row for the first time in nearly 10 years. Incredible. Yet surely the biggest talking-point of the day was Drewe hitting a hat-trick for Rushden and Diremonds. How? Oh, and the fanzine? A fine effort from committed Blues fans – but is there still a market?

SOUTHEND 4 SHREWSBURY 1 (H, LDV VANS TROPHY, 2ND RD, 2/11/04): A gate of 2,599 showed it was crackers trying to jam everyone in the East Stand for this slice of LDV action. The pre-match ticket queues more than made that clear from an hour before kick-off. Wake up, backroom. We are doing well! At least someone had the sense to get the South Upper unpadlocked, but not before the likes of Steve Stone and plenty of others – particularly those with young children – had endured an unacceptable nightmare trying to gain entry. On the action front, Tilly seemed to have been threatening wholesale changes, but we were almost at full strength as the scent of Cardiff hit our nostrils again. Fredy added a few more thou to his value with two further well-taken strikes, Wayne Gray owed a linesman a pint after the ref was finally persuaded to hand us a first-half penalty and Mark Bentley tucked away a classy late side-footer from the edge of the box. It sounds easy and should have been, though Spinner's habit of going into statue mode almost gifted the Shrews three goals. Only the alertness of Darryl prevented Duane Darby making it 2-2, with Fredy's superb second then taking the score to 3-1 almost immediately after. We seemed to feel we had won it at 1-0 – hence their equaliser as our tackles turned powder-puff. Going forward – great. Going backwards – still must do better. Can I also nominate another section of fans for instant ejection? Those who love the sound of their own voice for 90 tiresome minutes. Our reward? Northampton away. Maybe our luck has run out.

SOUTHEND 4 OXFORD 0 (H, LEAGUE TWO, 6/11/04): Graham Smith coughed up £180 to win the Trust auction to be BBC Essex's match summariser and must have been hoarse by the end of his stint. Money well spent, I would say, as we hoisted ourselves up to fifth. Old boys abounded – 60s legends Tony Bentley and Peter Goy in the Shrimpers pre-match, Tommy Mooney, Leo Roget and, whisper it, Mark Rawle in the Oxford gold. But it was man of the moment Fredy Eastwood who was first to the fore, picking up the SUSCT Player of the Month award for October from SJS member Patrick Eglinton once he could persuade Patrick to let it go. The result makes it look comfortable again, but the Us hit the woodwork twice – at 0-0 and 1-0 – as the spectre of what sloppy defending could still do to us this season revealed itself for all to witness. Neither keeper saw much action first half. The second was different altogether, as Blues showed that when we are firing up front, watch out. Trust-sponsored Mark Gower rattled in a classy opener on 47 minutes, then 15 minutes from time Fredy rattled in another stunner. After wandering past three men on the edge of the box, he turned back inside and lashed a left-foot curler into the top corner from 18 yards. Quality! Adam Barrett nodded in a Kevin Maher free-kick and, with Wayne Gray subbed, Lawrie Dudfield whacked in a last-minute penalty. It was so good the gang of four did not even mind seeing £12 of bets go down the gurgler. And Harry Redknapp tipped us.

When you've had as fine an afternoon as we did against Swansea, what better way to follow it up than with an SUSCT quiz night? Which is what 12 tables of members and friends did on the evening of October 19. Trust film director Kevin Feasey was on hand to allow us all to relive the glorious disposal of the Swans while quiz master Guy Rickard got himself set up and his faithful sidekick prepared for another night of quickfire mental arithmetic. One problem was immediately noticeable. A table of 'veterans' were rightly recognised as being

***** for the two music rounds. Guy needs a tip-off if anything earlier than the 60s is to be included. The action started soon after 'Dave' had won £30 in 'Heads and Tails', with the other £30 going via Alan Perry to the Trust. Things ran as smoothly as ever, the fish and chips were as good as ever and the finale saw Guy oversee an auction in his own inimitable style which brought £30 from yours truly for a signed squad photograph, £30 from Bashers for a signed football and £35 for a Roots Hall road sign obtained off the internet. The total take for the night was another excellent £650, with the honours for the biggest brains going to Table Four – Trevor and Irene 'Road Rage' Bashford, Robert Craven, Martin, Zoe, Ron and Thelma Cranmer. But well done, as ever, to all involved – especially Alan and Paul Yeomanson for the organising, Guy for the quizzing and the marker for marking.

WHILE I am singing praises, there are some due from the last newsletter. Firstly to Guy Rickard for enabling me to get a copy of Number 62 out of my computer when the system froze just as I was sending the finished article to Terry Jeffreys for our e-mail recipients. Secondly to Paul Yeomanson for his IT expertise and guiding me by phone through a tickle to the innards of my computer which got my Microsoft Word up and pumping normally again. Thirdly to the FitzGerald family for addressing and stamping the 850 envelopes needed to send out the newsletter / Christmas Draw tickets / AGM agenda. And finally to myself, Mrs Netta Rickard, Richard Coxell and Wayne Gollin for packing the said envelopes with their assorted contents. It took around three and a half hours all told. Richard was left with four huge cardboard boxes to lump down to Short Street Post Office. Terry Jeffreys provided the draw tickets, with Alan Perry i/c organisation. Anyway, next time you hear someone ask 'What does the Trust do?', send them to any of the above and we will put them straight.

Sadly, the 10-pin bowling night had to be called off on November 8 through lack of participants. This is another very disappointing effort by our members and belied all the hard work Alan Perry put into setting it up.

Your committee met last on October 4 and October 25. On the fourth we kicked off with welcome details of how well Darren Posnack is easing himself into the treasurer's chair and the mountain of headaches that go with it, while Travel Tsar Chris Berry insists he wants to find ways of cutting prices even more when possible. So stay tuned – and turn up! The Trust will next be hitting the road to Yeovil (Nov 20), Leyton Orient (Dec 7) and Bury (Dec 11). Get your seats booked in the usual way, by contacting Chris on 01702-558978 or 07703-898698 (no texts). *Anyone wanting to cancel MUST in future quote their Trust membership number*, so we no longer get any 'comedians' playing silly buggers.

Final plans for the AGM were made and that passed off successfully. Anyone wanting to check out details of the committee, or even to view horror pictures of certain of them, can investigate the updated profiles on the Trust website – www.shrimperstrust.co.uk Those members where an update is still required from last season must have something dark and secretive to hide.

The Trust's Football in the Community sponsorship is coming up for renewal, though we shall be monitoring what benefits we have had from this before deciding whether or not to continue.

It seems the name of United's new finance wizard is even more exotic than I thought – Shantelle Lee-Summers. Impressive.

Quid A Goal hit £1,148.40 after the defeat of Shrewsbury. Much more like it. 129 are now signed up. The situation with regard to last season's non-coughers remains under close scrutiny.

THE latest 100 Club prizes went to Paul Brice of Grays, Simon Dodd of Canvey, Simon Karkoski, Bryan Woodford and a certain Irene Bashford of Chelmsford. The total of entrants currently stands at 73, meaning more than 1,100 of you are missing out. Why? And don't tell me you cannot afford £5 a month.

It seems one voice was raised about the choice of video on the Trust coach back from Shrewsbury. Our resident Barry Normans usually seem to get it right and are always careful not to screen unsuitable material in front of impressionable eyes – ie most of those on board. But in future we will make titles known before they are screened and anyone with an objection – except to say the film is c**p – can speak up.

LIAISON COMMITTEE INFO: a) Geoffrey King agreed that plaques could be placed on a memorial wall at the club at a cost of £150.

b) Frank Van Wezel is anxious to make up for missing his previous chance to be a match guest of the Trust and enjoy that intimate experience amongst the masses. A date is being arranged, with Paul FitzGerald his 'host'.

c) Staff and change problems in the Shrimpers Bar should have been resolved.

d) GK revealed sponsorship for the Centre of Excellence has still to be finalised.

e) It was agreed that the Trust could help man the Arriva 'Southend United' bus at the next torchlight parade and distribute club and Trust literature.

f) Paul Yeomanson expressed reservations about the ill-received 'sit down' handouts distributed in the West Stand at a recent home game and asked for some balance as away fans had not received them as well.

g) GK explained why we are still waiting for our Cardiff travel cash. (Presumably we are getting interest!)

HOW are those **CHRISTMAS DRAW TICKETS** selling. Well, we hope. And once they have gone, send your stubs and cash straight to Terry Jeffreys, 32 Herondale, Basildon, Essex. SS14 1RR or Richard Coxell, 20 Redcliff Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. SS9 1AY Steve Stone has apparently already sold more than 700, so please don't say you cannot sell 15. Do your best for us.

Remember that all membership renewals can also now be done via the website – www.shrimperstrust.co.uk as well as the usual pen, paper and cheque to Paul Yeomanson. Someone from Corringham was the first to do £26 of merchandise business via PayPal, so many thanks. The area you now want is 'Trust Shop'. Paul – p.yeomanson@blueyonder.co.uk will also investigate if you are not getting your newsletter by post, while Terry Jeffreys will do so on the e-mail front – terry.jeffreys@btinternet.com Terry's current big project is working on a Trust / Supporters Club 75th anniversary badge. He has triumphed on this front in the past and no doubt will do so again.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS (Total 52): Michael Child, Peter Coster, Dave Goody, Mr & Mrs Martin, Peter Mason, Michael Nash, Andy Thome. **NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER:** Suzanne Armstrong, Howard Banks, Margaret Brett, Clare Brooks, Daniel Clark, Neil Clark, Stan Collymore, Charlotte Cook, Lisa Dine, David Esdaile, Dave Goody, Paul Haines, Mike Hall, Paul Lewis, Andrew Minett, Steve Nutkins, Chris Phillips, Keith Riley, Jeff Sharp, Leigh Simpkins, Paul Thornton. **FINAL REMINDERS:** Phil Alsford, Matt Brown, Steve Bushell, Leonard Clements, Jason Farr, Hilary Galvin, Peter Gilbert, Chris Gordon, Alan David Hale, Richard Hill, Steve Hodis, Shannon Law, Sarah Noble, Matt Overall, Brad Pierce, Ian Robinson, Craig Rowland, Claire Smith, Peter West, Steve Whyley.

Meanwhile, the Friday Night Legends appearances of Billy Best and Bill Garner on the night before the Northampton game failed, sadly, to materialise. The evening may take place later in the season. The Hornchurch players' wages failed to materialise in the same way this month. I know some big bets have been placed on them getting promotion this season, so it will be fascinating to see how that cock-up pans out.

Michael Kightly has gone for a loan stint at Conference side Farnborough, managed by Dean Austin, and hopefully the match practice will do him good. Well done to Adam Barrett on being voted the PFA's League Two Player of the Month for October.

It appears the Trust is due a feature in the Evening Echo. I await it with interest. The Trust is also doing an interview with our sponsored player, Mark Gower. So if you have a question that you would like to ask him, within acceptable limits, send it to gowerinterview@blueyonder.co.uk

WHEN / if Fossetts Farm rises into the sky, the plan is to have a statue of a Blues 'great' at a prime location. Rob Craven has been drawing up a list of potential candidates for this great honour and if you want to make further suggestions before he pulls down the shutters then have a word.

Many thanks to Trust member Mike Child for donating four bottles of blended whisky for future draw and raffle prizes. Cheers, Mike, most generous.

Good to see Sky have reverted to their old hour-long Football League Review format and now show all the goals from the Coca-Cola League. It's a pity ITV are still failing to see the same sense.

And there, once again, you have it. Any comeback on any topic, send it to nigel.rickard@the-sun.co.uk

NR (7/11)