



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



### THE INTRODUCTION – Editor Robert Craven

**WELCOME TO a bumper edition of the Trust Newsletter, which is unfortunately just a tad later than expected...**

Incredibly, during the time that I have been composing this piece, Steve Tilson's Shrimpers have cruised from one win to the next, a 'Magnificent Seven' equalling an 81-year-old club record. As if to point towards history, former European Champions Nottingham Forest will be the visiting team to Roots Hall on Sunday, live on SKY television, and would be the record-breaking club to beat.

Of course, nothing like this is a given, so Tilly and the boys will be working exceptionally hard during training over the next few days to ensure that yet another TV appearance doesn't leave the Seasiders flat on their faces. Thankfully League form on the box – two Play-Off wins and a draw – compares favourably to a pitiful recent Cup record: the 3-0 Carling Cup defeat against Southampton followed some nine months after a similar scoreline against Luton Town in the FA Cup.

Interestingly, Luton and Hull City were the two promoted sides in Coca-Cola League One last season, and the Tigers, having finished as runners-up in the final year of the Third Division, have managed successive promotions under ex-Blues boss Peter Taylor. It's still far too early to start making predictions on who will go up this time around, but these seven wins on the trot mean that United already have 26 points in the bag, with 34 matches remaining in the season. Any thoughts of merely surviving will most probably have been put out of the mind.

What has been even better about Southend's football in this run is that it has been exciting. Aside from a resounding 3-1 triumph over Colchester United that started matters off, there have been a 3-1 win against Tranmere, a 4-2 smashing of Rotherham at Millmoor and a 4-1 revenge success at home to Yeovil Town. It's certainly not been boring at this end of the football world.

Which brings me nicely to the Premiership, and the England team under Sven-Goran Eriksson. What on earth is going on at the top level of the game? Just because Jose Mourinho has found that 4-5-1 works for champions Chelsea doesn't mean that six other managers have to

revert to the formation, especially when sides like Bolton Wanderers and Blackburn Rovers use it against each other.

Luckily I'm too engrossed in what our sponsors term 'The Real League' and the local non-League scene to watch some of these bore draws of 1-0 wins, but when you see sides with a history of attacking football like Liverpool and Manchester United blank each other out, it can get quite depressing. Anfield thrives on success and legend – witness that incredible European Cup win in Istanbul during May – but the 'Spanish Way' has stifled stars like Milan Baros, Djibril Cisse and Harry Kewell during their times on Merseyside.

And while it is fine for the Blues of Stamford Bridge or Reds of Anfield and Old Trafford to bore their fans, paying up to £50 a time to witness these matches if they so wish, every other week in pursuit of glory if that is the route that they wish to take, it will kill the once self-styled 'Greatest League In The World' if it filters down to the mid- and lower-table teams.

It has been refreshing to see West Ham United and Wigan Athletic take to the Premiership with a more conventional 4-4-2 formation, and take on the established teams as though they have nothing to lose. They have been rewarded with top ten positions into October. What has been even better has been watching League One football in the flesh, with nearly every side playing 4-4-2.

But what has happened to the pinnacle of English football – the national team? Under Swedish Sven, they have come to epitomise all that is wrong with the top level of club football and whilst, without Michael Owen, you could just about stomach a defensive 4-5-1, even if it deprived such talents as Jermaine Defoe of a chance to play alongside Wayne Rooney.

Against Northern Ireland though, with Owen back, why oh why did Eriksson continue with this defensive football? In all seriousness, Southend United could probably beat Northern Ireland, given that a substantial number of the Irish team are taken from the Coca-Cola League and the Shrimpers play every week, and not once a month. So England should have been looking to win 3-0 or 4-0. Now they must beat both Austria and Poland in their last two qualifiers.



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



I won't be watching them, not because I'm anti-England or because I'm not interested in the national team, but because I'd rather be watching a non-League fixture or Cup replay than watch England. I've even watched reserve games over international ties, because I'd rather be at a live game than watch a game on the box.

To that extent, I hope that the Coca-Cola League doesn't succumb to the ridiculous kick-off times that the Premiership has. Our Play-Off ties were OK – 17:15 against Northampton Town was the worst – but on New Years Eve, Reading will host Derby County at the same time. 17:15, when most people are getting ready to revel in bringing in the New Year is just plain stupid. Today, Everton play Manchester City at 11:15 in the morning. Please – I can cope with 16:00 on a Sunday, but when we start continuing down that route, less and less people will be able to watch our national game.

I have to admit that League One has surprised me a little. I wasn't quite expecting the jump in standard that we have seen from the hoof-ball tactics of League Two. It is a huge testament to the coaching skills of Steve Tilson and Paul Brush that the Shrimpers have made such a giant leap with such ease thus far.

True, we had seen sides from the third tier of English football quite a bit in the last couple of years, and Luton, Blackpool and Wrexham had all given us a slight glimpse of what could happen with flying wingers causing Che Wilson, Duncan Jupp and Lewis Hunt all sorts of problems. But we had visited other clubs who had given us no worries.

This year has been a struggle. Any game could have gone either way, and just as we always look capable of scoring, we have only managed once to keep a clean sheet. But in every match, we have given as good as we have got, even in the defeats to Port Vale and Scunthorpe United.

And for the first time in a long while, we now have two flying, natural wingers at the club in the form of left-sided Mitchell Cole and Rotherham player Jamal Campbell-Ryce. The latter is with us, initially, on a three-month loan deal, but Ron Martin is expected to fork out £150,000 in January to bring the Londoner

to Roots Hall. He should be commended for that, as a two-pronged attack will continue to see Blues win their fair share of matches. Look at the impression that Campbell-Ryce and Jay Smith made against Yeovil.

What Martin should not be commended for is his treatment of Freddy Eastwood's red card. When the manager comes out after the game and says, live on local radio and to the regional and national newspapers, that his star striker deserved to go, and then the said star striker, in an interview with the *Southend Evening Echo*, confirms that he should have been dismissed, you should quickly realise that there are no grounds for an appeal.

Now, the crux of what our chairman appears to have said in justification of his case is that he, personally, felt that Eastwood's red card was not an offence worthy of its treatment. What I would say in return is that what right does he have to say that, and then launch what was correctly labelled a "frivolous" appeal by the Football Association, when two people, steeped in football knowledge, have said that it was?

Whilst generally I am supportive of what Ron Martin has done and is attempting to do for this club, I think that getting involved in football matters is maybe a step too far. As a result, the extra one-match ban added to the end of the already-imposed three should act as a warning not to do it again.

What it also served to do, after Wayne Gray picked up a knock, was to introduce Basildon-born James Lawson into first-team football, and what a start he made, netting just minutes into his full debut at home to Oldham Athletic. That he has managed to hold down a place before aggravating a knock has proven that players from the youth team can make it in senior football, although Lawson still has a little way to go yet.

Under Ricky Duncan, who remember cultivated John Ruddy at Cambridge United in his time there, I am sure that Blues' Youths will go from strength to strength. Ricky has kindly offered to give up some of his time on the evening of 20th October to come and answer your questions about youth development at Southend United in a Question & Answer session at the end of our Annual General Meeting. Along with this newsletter, you will find formal notification of the evening, and a



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



copy of the Draft Accounts can be requested from our Secretary, Terry Jeffreys, at 32 Herondale, Basildon, Essex, SS14 1RR.

This has been a period of slight change within the Shrimpers Trust, with people moving within roles and taking on new responsibilities as we approach 1500 adult members, life members and Junior Shrimpers. This is your opportunity to become involved – and we have already welcomed three new faces to our

three-weekly meetings during the past twelve months – and to look at what we do.

Please get to as many games as you can, and don't forget to pay us a visit in the Shrimpers Bar before each home match.

**Up the Shrimpers,**

**Rob**

### THE TRUST – What We've Done

#### Committee Meeting (15/08/2005)

The Trust have been approached about supporting a new book called 'Kick-Off', which has been expanded this season to incorporate Leagues One and Two and not just the Premiership and Championship. Paul Yeomanson has been working hard to make sure a number of the books will be available from the Trust stand in the Shrimpers Bar over the next month or two, with a percentage of the sales going to the Trust.

Secretary Terry Jeffreys is in the process of attending a number of Supporters' functions including the Supporters Direct conference at the British Museum in London on 30th September 2005, and their AGM on Monday 31st October. Alan Perry has also been looking into our policy with Stamp Insurance Services regarding how we are covered in the Shrimpers Bar.

Trevor Bashford and Chris Berry were at the fore of negotiations to make sure that the Away Travel section of the Trust continued to run smoothly with Supreme Travel having gone into administration. Anita's were the agreed firm for the trip to Scunthorpe United.

#### Committee Meeting (05/09/2005)

Phil Alsford joined the troops to look in on the goings-on at a Committee Meeting, where it was reported that the Torchlight Parade (more later) had been a great success. The Travel situation continued to rumble on, with SBC Leisure taking over the old Supreme contract for taking away coaches for the Shrimpers Trust. They have experience of maintaining coaches in the local area, and would be able to make sure that the Trust could take fans to games at a reasonable price. Look out for a press release over the next few days with regards to one very special project with the new company.

Terry Jeffreys and myself then led discussions on the Centre of Excellence. The CoE has recently obtained a new sponsor, so there was little point in the Trust attempting to do this, but it was agreed that a sum should be agreed to provide Ricky Duncan with a good start at Southend United. It was agreed that a sum of £1500 should be agreed with the club and Duncan himself, in much the same way that the Trust made a donation to John Stannard before setting up the Quid-a-Goal scheme.

#### Committee Meeting (26/09/2005)

The last Committee Meeting took place a week or so ago, where it was announced by Chris Berry that the Rushden & Diamonds match would be the fixture on which the top supporters would be rewarded with discounted travel. This was because it was the eighth away match of the season.

The subject of long-term investment was discussed, with the need to take educated risks with the Trust's funds mooted. The balance had to be struck between being able to get hold of money



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



quickly in case of crisis at SUFC and also making sure that this figure was as large as it could possibly be.

It was agreed that Paul FitzGerald would look into the acceptance of local MPs as vice-presidents of the Trust following Sir Teddy Taylor's stepping down at Westminster. He currently holds the honorary position.

Alan Perry stated that he was "over-the-moon" with the pledges so far for 2005/6 Quid-a-Goal. There are a number of people who have yet to pay up for last season, but seeing as they have ignored four letters from Alan, there is little point at this stage in naming and shaming. We are getting closer to the time when this will happen, though.

Southend United have decided that they will not be purchasing a batch of away programmes to sell in the club shop. Look out over the next few weeks for programmes at the Trust stall in the Shrimpers Bar, starting with the trip a week on Saturday to Doncaster Rovers match. This will be done strictly on a basis of demand, so you must place an order before we purchase.

John-Paul FitzGerald cheekily suggested that there could be a paint-balling venture between the Supporters Clubs at Southend and Colchester United. It may just be a good idea, and a good laugh, so come and visit us in the Shrimpers to register your interest. In the purchasing stakes, 'Goat masks' are high on the order, as is the repair of the mascots at Roots Hall.

### Liaison Meeting (20/07/2005)

Geoffrey King confirmed that, despite the comments of the club's chairman, Ron Martin, at the Annual General Meeting, the smoking arrangements at Roots Hall were to remain in place. Thus far, both signing-in and smoking arrangements at the Shrimpers Bar have gone well. Inside the Bar, it was agreed that we could carry out our own redecoration project: the results can be found by paying us a visit on a matchday. SUFC agreed to remove the football table...honest!

The U-choose system for season tickets remains in place, if not particularly well advertised by the club. Supporters unhappy with the way that the fixture list was composed were advised that it would be best to go with U-choose. The swipe-card system would be in place for the sixth home League match of the season (this was subsequently put back by two games, although a trial run occurred in the West Stand for the Yeovil Town clash).

In terms of low ticket allocations for Cup matches, the recent policy of ballots would continue to be enforced, with all season ticket holders going into a hat and then having a certain amount of time to claim their tickets. With an increase in the number of season ticket holders, we better hope that we don't draw Canvey Island or Colchester away again...

The Trust asked for players to be made available for our Bowling Night on 14th November, GK said that he would have to consult with Steve Tilson, so more news on this as we get it. The club were also reminded that Ron Martin and the players had yet to pay their pledge for Quid-a-Goal. Car parks around Roots Hall will be open between one and six o'clock on matchdays for three o'clock kick-offs. We await the new SUFC wine range to be sold at outlets around the ground.

### Liaison Meeting (17/08/2005)

The club were thanked for providing goods to hand out on the Torchlight Parade which would take place three days later. The availability of the BlueBelles was still unforthcoming, but eventually they did turn up. SUFC were also wholesome in their praise of the Training Wall, which was purchased by the Trust and showcased at Meet The Blues Day.

The club were asked if they would provide tickets for visiting youngsters in reciprocal relation to some clubs offering deals for Southend Junior Shrimpers at away games. It was agreed that up to



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



20 free tickets would be made available for away teams, although as yet Blues fans haven't been offered such a deal.

The Trust had asked previously if they could produce a 'Feed The Goat' T-shirt. GK had not been able to get back to us on the matter, so it was some surprise when various websites started hawking ideas for them. Unfortunately a case of the club stealing a Trust idea again. On the wine, boxes of twelve will soon be available from the Club Shop.

*\*\* Full details of these meetings are available online at [www.shrimperstrust.co.uk](http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk) \*\**

### Centenary Meeting

The first meeting of the Centenary Committee of the final season before 100 Years are up was perhaps disappointingly low-key. Possible opponents are still being looked into, but in the event that no big clubs, the perennial East London draw of West Ham United or first foreign opposition Hertha Berlin are not available, it transpires that a mini-tournament may be played instead. Hopefully the Germans will come through for us – after all, they have a section of their museum dedicated to the Shrimpers!

Any ideas about the kit have been put to bed – SUFC have a deal with Nike, so it will be dark blue as usual. Although Nike can produce special one-off kits for the likes of Manchester United, Arsenal or Real Madrid, they can't do it for a Coca-Cola League One side, or rather, whoever the people making it on behalf of Nike can't. Hopefully something special will still be available.

What we have been able to do is arrange for a first-day cover for the Centenary Match(es). And it gives you a chance to enter: there will be an adult and junior winner, both of whom will have their designs published, will be able to meet the matchday squad and obtain free tickets for the day. The youngster will also be the mascot for the match(es).

### 100 Club

Phil Cox, Paul Brice, Mrs C. A. Harvey, Steve Aldridge, Paul Manning and Susannah Harding have all been winners in the 100 Club during the past month or two, so to join them, you know what to do: the prize fund is getting bigger and bigger, but the only way it can continue to grow is through your involvement. Email Alan Perry or call him on 01702 476 458 for more details on how to become a winner! At the moment, almost £40 is on offer every week, and the Christmas Bumper Draw is coming up soon!

### Quid-a-Goal

At the moment, with goals galore flying in all over the place, Quid-a-Goal is currently in line to pull in £600 more than it did in 2004/5 and, with Mark Bentley doing well in not picking up many bookings and James Lawson playing an ever-increasing role in the first-team, I'm standing to fork out more than I did last season as well!

Paul Yeomanson and Terry Jeffreys visited Boots & Laces again last week to showcase the Cardio-Vascular equipment purchased for physiotherapist John Stannard by the Trust. The results, as ever, are on the website at [www.shrimperstrust.co.uk](http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk), and Shaun Goater was one of those who was impressed by the standard of our application to the task of building John's Gym! We only hope that he doesn't need to use it too often.

### LDV Pennant Around The World

Germany, Malta and South Africa have all been the proud recipients of this Shrimpers Trust/ShrimperZone initiative. To see pictures of Dave Russell outside Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria, Mark and Miriam Christie in the Med and Alan Cowdrey at Jeffrey's Bay, go to



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



[www.shrimperstrust.co.uk](http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk) and click on the interactive map. The pennant will soon be in Spain before winging its way back to Blighty.

### Stadium Tour

On the evening of 19th August, four Scottish football fans visited Roots Hall as the 46th of 136 English, Welsh and Scottish grounds on a tour to raise £36,000 for Mavisbank School in Airdrie, which caters for severely disabled children. The 3,500-mile trip would take just 80 hours, and the Trust were proud to present them with a cheque for £50 to help them towards their target at the home of SUFC.

### Torchlight Parade

The very next day, twenty volunteers from the Shrimpers Trust and four of Southend United's very own BlueBelles took part in the Southend Carnival Torchlight Parade to raise the profile of the Club and the Trust around the town. A great time was had by all, as is shown by the pictures on the Trust website, [www.shrimperstrust.co.uk](http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk). We hope that our T-shirts, proclaiming 'Support Your Local Club' encouraged some of the youngsters on route to visit Roots Hall.

The Trust thank the following people for their help: Trevor Bashford, Chris, Rosemary, Thomas & Ben Berry, Colin & Steve Brind, Peter & Billy Brock, Matt Donohue, Tony & Lee Leveret, Paul & Glen Marshall, Alan & Andrew Perry, Adam Pickering, Darren Posnack, Bryan Woodford, Paul & Jenny Yeomanson, The BlueBelles, SUFC, Arriva Buses and SX Sports.

### New Life Members (total: 99)

David Clenshaw, John Clench, Ben Bishop, Kevin Kirby, Robert Craven, Victor Peretti, Phil Truscott, Raymond Johnson, David Harbage

### The Shrimpers Trust wish to welcome the following new members:

Jerry Alsford, Phil Alsford, Matt Appleton, David Ashworth, Steve Bacon, Michael Ball, D. Bell, J. M. Bell, Kurt Bessant, Alan Bird, Donna Blowers, Paul Boarer, Stuart Braithwaite, Martin Brooks, Peter Bryant, Robert Cater, Stuart Cheesewright, Mr. R Childs, Mark Coates, Glen Compton, Simon Cox, Christine Cunningham, Stephen Dadds, Gary Daley, Alicia Davis, Steven Day, Mark Dunn, John Eagles, Mark Eagles, Ian Faraday, Jason Freemantle, Matt Furber, Ricky Garrard, D. Gibbs, Stuart Graham, Lewis Green, Paul Green, Mark Griffiths, Simon Gush, Neil Hadden, Mark Harforth, Nigel Harris, Rebecca Harris, Cherie Hayward, Dave Hennell, Mike Hennell, Yvonne Hidveghy, Richard Hollands, Terry Hollands, Glen Holman, Gary Horn, Peter Hubbard, Tina Hughes, Chris Jeffrey, Mark Jiggins, Tony Jones, Oliver Knight, Phil Lamb, Adrian Latham, Reece Lawrence, Andy Lewis, Mike Lightfoot, Chas Matthews, John McCain, Raymond McLellan, Kevin Miles, Sue Miller, David Molyneux, David Mortimer, Adam Moyse, Elliott Munts, David O'Fallon, Gordon Patterson, Mark Pearson, Graham Reed, Matthew Rice, Richard Sexton, John Sheppard, Richard Sheppard, Debra Sims, Anthony Smith, Mark Stoddard, James Taylor, John Townsend, Paul Tubby, Ian Tuttlebury, Kevin Webb, Paul Webb, Richard Webb, Simon Wood, Tony Wood, David Wordley.

## COMING UP – The Trust Events Schedule

### Shrimpers Trust Annual General Meeting (20/10/2005)

A 7:30 start for your forum to voice your views. How do you think we are all doing on the Trust committee, and what else so you think we can do for you? This is your opportunity to air your opinions, so come and join us in the Shrimpers Bar. Ricky Duncan has also confirmed that he will be in attendance for a Question & Answer session at the end of the formal part of the evening, so to quiz him on the goings on at Boots & Laces and his ideas to make Southend United's Under-18 team capable of progressing into the first eleven, come along on the evening.



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



### Race Night (22/10/2005)

Contact: Paul Yeomanson (01702 302 373 or [p.yeomanson@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:p.yeomanson@blueyonder.co.uk)) for more information

Admission this evening is by ticket only, so you must purchase one in advance. They are now available from the Shrimpers Bar, priced at £3 for entry. Once then, you will have the opportunity to participate in a unique night of racing and enjoyment, following on from our successful opening attempt last year. We are also looking for sponsors for races, so contact Paul for more information.

### Bowling Night (14/11/2005)

Contact: Alan Perry (01702 476 458 or [alanperry4@hotmail.com](mailto:alanperry4@hotmail.com)) for more information

For just £10 (plus a £1 shoe hire) you can meet a number of your favourite players (star names still to be announced) and enjoy another fun evening. This is a great chance for youngsters to get together a team and obtain autographs, but it is equally pitched at adults, who will also have a great time at the Kursaal Bowl in Southend.

### Curry Night (07/12/2005)

Contact: Alan Perry (01702 476 458 or [alanperry4@hotmail.com](mailto:alanperry4@hotmail.com)) for more information

A tenner will enable you to choose from an all-you-can-eat buffet and mingle with fellow Southend fans for a more adult evening. On the last couple of occasions, Alan and other committee members have been able to invite a couple of surprise guests to the event, so you never know who might turn up!

## THE NEWS – Away from Home

### Derby County

The Rams managed to secure a 'Protest Special' in the *Derby Trader* to explain the problems at Pride Park during early September. Investigative journalist Neil Hallam was at the front of calls for the County board to leave after the £2 million departure of Grzegorz Rasiak to Tottenham Hotspur on transfer deadline day. The move was a culmination of a number of surprising moves away from Derby, not least Tom Huddlestone, the England Under-21 player, and previous manager George Burley, who it is no coincidence, is succeeding with Hearts up in Scotland having led the Rams to the Play-Offs last season.

### Wrexham

On 17th September, supporters not just from the Red Dragons, but from across the country, joined in marching through Woking, the venue of the offices of United Plottolders Association, who are involved in the bidding process for the Racecourse Ground. It is believed that UPA chairman Andy Smith stood in the way of a buy-out for the 132-year-old club that would have kept Wrexham going.

## THE MATCHES – Blues in Review

### pre-season round-up

Ashes fever had barely gripped the nation when the Shrimpers opened their pre-season campaign at New Lodge against Ryman Premier Division club Chelmsford City. There were plenty of familiar names in the home side's team, including Jamie Moralee, and ex-Shrimpers Craig Edwards Jnr. and Richard Halle. Boss Craig Edwards Snr. also had a spell coaching Southend's college side, but he was powerless to stop the visitors running out narrow 1-0 winners, Michael Phillips putting through his own net under intense pressure from that man, Freddy Eastwood.

Next up were two Championship teams at Roots Hall, starting with Millwall. That rarity – Steve Claridge on a day that he was in charge of the Lions – awaited Blues, but an extremely under-par opposition should do nothing to deter the rave reviews that Mitchell Cole received. The former



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



Grays Athletic man surged constantly down the left flank, and capped his performance with a low strike from an acute angle from a Mark Gower cross. A sign of things to come arrived thirteen minutes from time as James Lawson burst through, and Eastwood tapped in the loose ball after the youngster was fouled.

So, Millwall might not be a true representation of things to come, as they even lost, humiliatingly, at home to Leyton Orient. Surely Norwich City would put us in our place? A match to celebrate fifty years at Roots Hall – United won the opening match 3-1 in August 1955 – was preceded by the unveiling of Dickie Dowsett, one of the remaining Shrimpers from that game, but it did not inspire United into the lead, as Simon Charlton curled a third-minute free-kick around the wall and into the net. However, Eastwood stepped up for his second goal in three games after rounding Gary Doherty and firing in off a post, and England international stand-by Robert Green was beaten again minutes later when Mark Bentley drove home from eighteen yards.

Typically, Blues had to finish pre-season with a series of uninspiring displays. If the appearance of Kevin Gray, the cousin of Wayne at Chelmsford had been uninspired, the 21 minutes of Nigerian Babatunde at Maldon Town's Wallace Binder Ground was laughable. That he was replaced, with the game still goalless, by Kezie Ibe, another trialist, was embarrassing. The result, too, could have been poor had man-of-the-match Cole not hit the crossbar after a solo run for Ibe to net the rebound and Bentley smash in his second peach of a goal in two fixtures.

The regular clash with Grays Athletic was expected to conclude the friendly frenzy, and it was frenetic at the New Rec, much-improved from United's last visit. Their fine Nationwide Conference position is now reflected off of the pitch with fantastic facilities. The thrill-a-minute action started when Jamie Slabber tapped low through Darryl Flahavan's legs. Gray (that's Wayne, not Kevin) slotted home a dubious penalty and then Spencer Prior rose highest to nod in a Kevin Maher corner. Shocking defensive work allowed the hosts back into the contest after the break, Gary Hooper and then ex-Blue Jamie Stuart making it 3-2. That it stayed until the seventh minute of injury time – one-time Southend trialist Sam Wright had to be stretched off with a suspected broken leg after a wild lunge – when Daniel Woodards, once one of Roman's Russian Army at Chelsea, drilled low into the net.

Three days later, most of the trialists got their last chance to shine. Nicola Jozic, a German-born Serbian, led the list allowed to move on after showing that they were not quite up to the standard required. Central defensive colleague Andy Edwards rifled in Southend's first with a free-kick, that in reply to Gianni Frankis' opener. Jozic also hit a post soon after the break, where Ibe was on hand to tap in a rebound again. He is now plying his trade at Shrimpers' grazing ground Canvey Island.

### **aug 06: port vale (h) 11-2 [league one]**

So, here we were, in Coca-Cola League One. The Goat wasn't fit, but Mitchell Cole made his debut. Third-year scholar James Lawson was named on the substitutes' bench, and came on as an 83<sup>rd</sup> minute substitute for the 19-year-old. Steve Tilson had to scrimp together a side from just 17 fit professionals, but that doesn't explain why Blues treated Port Vale like Brazil in the opening 45 minutes. It took only 12 for Nathan Lowndes to grab his first of the season, given the freedom of the six-yard box to stab in.

It was a similar story half-an-hour in, when the ginger-haired striker's effort was deflected past Darryl Flahavan to make it 2-0. Thankfully, the Shrimpers showed that they will not lay down and die this campaign as they battled their way back in the second period. Wayne Gray inspired his team-mates twenty minutes from the end with a spectacular overhead kick to connect with sub Mark Gower's cross. He then left them exasperated in stoppage time when he hit the 'keeper's legs whilst one-on-one, and wasted the best chance the Essex side would have to level.





# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



### aug 09: bradford city (a) w2-0 [league one]

It's only a few years since Bradford City were in the Premiership, hosting the likes of Manchester United and Liverpool. Now it is Colchester United and Yeovil Town that visit Valley Parade, sorry, the Bradford & Bingley Stadium. And it is well worth the long journey, with a brilliant club shop and museum facing the monuments to the victims of the ground's tragic fire in 1985.

The Bantams were soon struggling against a confident Southend side. The inspired Wayne Gray caused havoc in Bradford's box a quarter-of-an-hour in, and was able to feed Adam Barrett, whose shot was deflected in off of the unfortunate David Wetherall. Despite their dominance, Blues would still have found it difficult had Darren Holloway not incurred Trevor Kettle's red-card wrath for a savage, rain-aided, studs-up challenge on the halfway line just before half-time. That was the cue for the visitors to double their lead, Luke Guttridge side-footing in from Gray's cross for his first goal for the club.

### aug 13: walsall (a) d2-2 [league one]

'Feed the Goat and he will score!', the cries rang out across the Bescot Stadium after the Bermudan international nodded in Kevin Maher's late, late cross. It was almost a carbon copy of Gray's effort some forty minutes earlier that had handed the Shrimpers the lead after a drab first 45 minutes. That time, the speedy striker had used his head to loop the ball over Andy Oakes' hands in slow-motion to direct Carl Pettefer's right-wing centre goalwards.

In between, star striker Freddy Eastwood had no less than three opportunities to put the game beyond the Saddlers' reach. Unfortunately, he failed to find his range, and the introduction of Steve Staunton gave Walsall the impetus to fight their way in front, and threaten to extend their club record seven-game winning streak. England Under-20 forward Matt Fryatt swivelled to level the scores, and Staunton delivered the cross that Jorge Leitao hit home. The Portuguese man also had the chance to make it 3-2 at the death, but Flahavan pulled off the save of the season.

### aug 20: huddersfield town (h) d1-1 [league one]

Freddy Eastwood quickly went from hero to villain as he scored his first competitive goal of the campaign but then mindlessly saw himself sent off in the second period after the Terriers had fought their way back into the game. Gray was again the main man early on, nodding Gower's cross onto the crossbar, from which Eastwood was on hand to slam in, a la his goal at Cardiff barely two-and-a-half months previously. As the game threatened to boil over, Pawel Abbott palmed away Che Wilson and drove past Flahavan. Freddy then shoved Andrew Holdsworth, and Paul Melin had no choice but to send him off.

### aug 22: southampton (h) l0-3 [carling cup]

Down came SKY television, scenting an upset with Harry Redknapp under pressure to perform, and Sir Clive Woodward peering over his shoulder. It just didn't transpire. Paul Smith, the former Brentford goalkeeper, was inspired to keep out a Shaun Goater header, and Dexter Blackstock and Nathan Dyer, two of Saints' promising youngsters, tapped in rebounds after Flahavan had made a couple of magnificent saves. The final goal came via a deflection in the closing stages. Blues' League Cup misery continues.

### aug 26: scunthorpe united (a) l0-1 [league one]

The less said about the first half at Glanford Park the better. The winless run was stretched to four matches as Tilson's charges were denied by some more poor officiating. Quite how Andy Woolmer failed to award United a penalty when Goater was tugged to the ground by two Iron defenders early in the second half, and then missed the most blatant of handballs from Scunthorpe shotstopper Paul Musselwhite, nobody knows. The custodian's ridiculous reaction to rub his chin in the faces of



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



the visiting supporters and also, later, Andy Edwards, has led to Humberside Police investigating the matter. Ian Baraclough had earlier put Scunny, decisively, in front.

### **aug 29: colchester united (h) w3-1 [league one]**

Suddenly, the home match with the U's meant much more than just the 'Battle of Essex', the first meeting for more than fifteen years in the Football League and local pride – it was imperative that Blues took three points to assure them that they could win at Roots Hall in League One, and to put them safely in mid-table at the end of August. We should never have had any fears, especially with the Goat in our midst.

It took just three minutes for the blue torch-paper to be lit, and the ground to shake with ecstatic emotion. Luke Guttridge threaded the ball through to Bermudan Shaun, who controlled it with his thigh before smashing it high into the top right-hand corner. Unfortunately, Chris Iwelumo soon won a flick-on to assist Sam Stockley in levelling affairs.

Half-an-hour in, Mitchell Cole started to justify the £45,000 reputedly paid for the winger. The new Steven Clark is the title that no-one wants to inherit, but Cole was starting to look dangerously like that man. Suddenly, in a moment of inspiration, he raced fully sixty yards, from inside his own half, to stun the entire ground with a low finish that left Shrimpers supporter Dean Gerken with no chance. Goater finished the job in the second period with a fluky shin over the 'keeper to make it comfortable. Freddy who?

### **sept 4: oldham athletic (h) w2-1 [league one]**

There is nothing better than a local boy done good, and James Lawson is certainly that. The Basildon-born attacker has worked his way through the youth team at Boots & Laces, and scored a goal for all those who have helped him to progress after just eight minutes of the Sunday afternoon fixture, when he nodded in Cole's left-wing cross. When Mark Gower added a second from another Cole centre, all looked rosy, and although Richie Wellens pulled one back with a spectacular strike, it was not enough to prevent United rising to eighth spot, and the verge of the play-off positions.

### **sept 11: swindon town (a) w2-1 [league one]**

I suppose we were all starting to get just a little bit worried that Adam Barrett was not finding the net as easily as he had done in 2004/5. It took barely a minute for the defender to get off the mark at the County Ground, where Blues fans gave Nicky Nicolau their own, very special, appreciation of his talents. Kevin Maher's corner was whipped in to the far post, and Barrett planted the ball back in the far corner.

That it was only 1-0 at the break was astounding, and the longer the scoreline stayed the same, the more the match hung on a thread. But Maher was again the provider with a set-piece and substitute Wayne Gray headed powerfully home, before Rory Fallon gave the Robins a late lifeline.

### **sept 18: tranmere rovers (h) w3-1 [league one]**

If the other matches had been a chance for Southend to get points on the board, the visit of Tranmere Rovers should have been a bigger test. However, James Lawson is starting to specialise in early goals, and this clash was no exception, the 18-year-old taking just 16 minutes to put Blues 1-0 up from Mitchell Cole's cross. Fifteen minutes on, Mark Gower, the creative genius on this occasion rather an unfit wide man, was tripped and Shaun Goater stepped up to slot home the spot-kick.

The match was given new life when the Scousers pulled one back seventeen seconds after the break, whilst most people were still returning with their cups of tea. Poor defending allowed Delroy Facey an easy shot on goal and it was 2-1. Barrett's courageous blocking managed to keep



# SHRIMPERS TRUST

## NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 5



Southend in front long enough for four attackers to fashion one last opportunity, Freddy Eastwood setting up Goater for his second of the afternoon.

### **sept 25: rotherham united (a) w4-2 [league one]**

Four Manchester City supporters, complete with 'Goat' masks, arrived at Millmoor along with the 400-strong Southend support to roar their former marksmen to goals galore against another one of his old clubs, but as it was, he missed three simple second-half chances before Blues made sure of yet another three-point haul.

A slow start was ignited on 18 minutes when makeshift right-winger Mark Bentley bundled a Mitchell Cole cross into the back of the net from close range. If that was surprising, Adam Barrett's second headed goal in three games eight minutes later left Southend fans rejoicing in amazement. The visitors were, by now, well on top, but the Millers never gave up, and after Deon Burton hit the crossbar and Colin Murdock touched one goal back, the former was given a chance to level right on half-time with a ridiculous penalty decision.

The hosts revelled in taunting the Shrimpers contingent during the break, but an even second-half was decided when Steve Tilson brought on Wayne Gray. Within seconds of his introduction seven minutes from the end of the match, the former Wimbledon man headed home Kevin Maher's free-kick and then added a penalty kick minutes later. Two goals up, and we didn't "f\*\*\* it up" second time around.

### **sept 28: yeovil town (h) w4-1 [league one]**

Despite winning five on the trot going into the game, and topping the table but for Swansea City's goal difference, there was a justifiable cause for the Glovers, and not Southend, to be favourites going into this game having won all four previous League meetings between the clubs. And when Phil Jevons all-too-predictably fell over just outside the penalty area and won a free-kick from which he scored himself seconds before half-time, the story was familiar.

Inspired by an unpunished foul on Mark Bentley on the hour mark, Southend stung the Glovers with Luke Guttridge's 20-yard dipping, deflected half-volley, and then Gray knocked in Maher's free-kick in textbook style. Tilson introduced the rampaging Freddy Eastwood for a tiring Goater, and it paid dividends as he hit home into the bottom right-hand corner twice in two minutes to send Roots Hall into ecstasy.

### **oct 1: gillingham (a) w2-1 [league one]**

All the talk pre-match was of equalling an 81-year-old club record, so it is no wonder that Southend played with fear prominent. Darryl Flahavan made a wonderful save from Andrew Crofts on the half-hour, and Rayleigh-born Neil Harris was guilty of a terrible missed opportunity on the stroke of half-time as the hosts dominated the first period.

After the interval, the Shrimpers were marginally better, but they were still fortunate on 56 minutes when Mark Bentley was in the right place at the right time to toe-poke home Wayne Gray's square pass. The midfielder gained a fortunate second when goalkeeper Jason Brown had to head out under pressure from Eastwood and the ball fell straight to the ex-Dagenham & Redbridge man, who tapped home from 25 yards into an empty net. Alan Poulton pulled back a deserved consolation for the Gills, but the Blues bandwagon continues to gather momentum.

### **Up the Shrimpers!**

**Robert Craven (02/10/2005)**