



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 8



THE INTRODUCTION – Editor Robert Craven

I ALWAYS hoped that I would be concluding my latest newsletter with Southend United top of the League One table, and in the end, a 3-0 victory at Essex rivals Colchester United meant Blues lead at the pinnacle was comfortable...

I'm lucky in that my age determines that, as yet, I've not seen Colchester United beat Blues in a first-team fixture. However, not for one minute did I believe that, when I turned up at Layer Road on Saturday, I would be seeing the Shrimpers crush their north Essex rivals.

The truth was, Blues weren't in the best of form. Sure enough, we had beaten Rotherham United and Chesterfield, and drawn with Walsall, but the four games since an historic trip to Huish Park had seen, on the whole, lacklustre performances (Freddy's heroics at Saltergate aside).

Colchester weren't either. They had drawn 0-0 at home, like us, to Walsall. They had been heroically beaten by Chelsea at Stamford Bridge in the FA Cup, but they had drawn a blank in a 1-0 defeat to Barnsley at Oakwell. They hoped a recuperation period in Portugal would recharge the batteries – they face seven matches in March and a further seven in April alone because of their cup runs.

In the end, Southend proved to be a long way ahead. Colchester's direct tactics, a success for much of the season, left them exposed to United's counter-attacking style away from home. If Wayne Gray had been fit to play alongside Eastwood, who knows what the final scoreline may have been!

The confidence of the U's defence must have been shot to pieces. Before the game they had the best back-line in the division, now Southend hold that accolade after an avalanche of goals elsewhere. The crowd, too, were silenced after Blues' first half blitz. Phil Parkinson has work to do to recover the lost ground, even if the north Essex club have games in hand.

So does Steve Tilson. But Southend's destiny is in their own hands. Win all ten games left this season, and the Shrimpers will be promoted as champions. Even if we don't, automatic promotion is now the aim. There are

thirty points to play for, Wayne Gray and Mark Bentley should be back to bolster the squad shortly, and a winning mentality is entrenched.

Rotherham United may not be everyone's cup of tea after some of the adverse publicity suffered by the Shrimpers at their hands during their recent sagas, but nonetheless it is important that football fans stick together in times of crisis.

It would be easy for all of us to denounce the (not so-) Merry Millers after the South Yorkshire outfit castigated Ron Martin, Steve Tilson and the club as a whole as being partly to blame in the transfer of Jamal Campbell-Ryce. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the switch, the supporters of both clubs should show solidarity.

The non-payment of a disputed £117,000 for Campbell-Ryce is not the sole reason that Rotherham United Football Club need to raise £2 million before the conclusion of the 2005/6 campaign in order to survive – years of mismanagement have led many lower-division clubs to be battling for their life in these uncertain times.

I have heard many sanctimonious Premiership pundits and supporters – though not, by any stretch of the imagination, all – saying that football should allow clubs like Rotherham to die. 'It only affects 4,000 people,' they claim, 'and of they can't cobble together enough to help them exist, then they don't deserve a football club.' 'There are too many professional clubs,' others insist.

Unfortunately, these misguided individuals miss the point. British football is great because of its tradition: the FA Cup, incorporating 650 sides, four divisions north and south of the border, but most of all, because of the volume of support. The Football League, not the Premiership (much to the chagrin of SKY and the national press I'm sure), is the most watched league in the world.

And every single person who has sat in a wonky seat in the south, or stood on an ankle-breaking terrace in the north, been battered by the North Sea in the east or been lambasted for doing strange things to sheep in the west, deserves football. Lose one of those to computer games, to watching television or



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 8



pressing the red button to interactive – just one, let alone 4,000 – is a tragedy.

So my advice to you all, if you have the means, is to visit www.rufctrust.co.uk, is to click on the interactive buttons, is to text the word MILLERS to 84131, is to ring the hotline on 01709 512 343. Let's make sure we don't lose one club, because if we do, then it could open the floodgates.

On a slightly different theme, if there is one question that I have been asked over and over again in the last month or so, then it surrounds the abandoned Chelmsford City versus Braintree Town Essex Senior Cup clash. I use the word clash, but it is probably ill-advised in this instance.

All the way along I have only honestly been able to announce that I do not know what sort of decision would be taken, and could only quote the fact that the Football Association had charged both clubs with failing to control their players and Craig Edwards, Michael Haswell and Robbie Martin individually.

Now, incredibly, I wasn't actually at the game (anyone doubting my devotion to the Shrimpers Trust should be aware that I was at a committee meeting that night), so I don't have my opinion on what actually happened, but the furore and reaction that has followed should leave no doubt as to the popularity of football at all levels in this county.

Firstly, there were 1248 people present at the fixture, an Essex Senior Cup semi-final. Where else in the world would that happen? Secondly, as I walked through the streets of Chelmsford on my way to work the next day, I heard nearly everyone I strolled past talking about it in one sense or another. And thirdly, it was covered, not just on ITV Anglia or BBC's Look East, but in the Guardian and the Times.

Football means a lot to the people of this country, and this incident leaves that statement in no doubt. It is not a situation the Essex County FA would want to happen, but in a sense it has raised the competition's profile. Hopefully, the right decision, whatever that may be, will be reached, and next season maybe the likes of Southend United, Grays Athletic and Dagenham & Redbridge will take it seriously. Who knows, even Colchester United may enter!

One of the wider issues to shoot to prominence in the past month has been diving. To their credit, The Times have led the charge courtesy of a 'Supporters Say No To Diving' campaign (my office is currently sporting an A3 poster to that effect), and the Football Association, Professional Footballers Association and League Managers' Association, as well as UEFA, have all thrown their weight behind the campaign.

League Two, and now League One, has its fair share of 'simulators' as the authorities like to call them, and during my time at The Little Gazette, myself and Mark Wallis pinpointed the criminals ruining our game. I'm sure it will astound no-one if I mention Phil Jevons and Lee Trundle amongst their number.

My main point, with all divers, is that they don't actually need to do it. Arjen Robben, when he went over against Jose Manuel Reina in the recent Chelsea/Liverpool clash, did not need to go down as the referee would have sent Reina off for raising his hands anyway.

Likewise, players such as Jevons and Trundle are uniquely talented individuals. Why, for instance, are clubs like Everton interested in the latter? Because they light up the lower Leagues. We are lucky at Southend, although on occasions Wayne Gray and Freddy Eastwood have gone down a little too easily for my liking. But the sport as a whole must be rid of the practice. And the sooner the better.

Just before the match against Colchester United, Ron Martin announced that he had bought out Delancey's shares in the club, effectively leaving the future of Southend United Football Club and their ground in the hands of the chairman.

The Trust have been attempting for some time to obtain a Question & Answer session with Ron for our members, and this now has added significance. Mr Martin has indicated that he would be pleased to oblige, and the Trust have supplied a list of possible dates for the event to take place, so the ball is now in Ron's court.

Up The Shrimpers,

Rob



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 8



THE SHRIMPERS TRUST KIDS

The Shrimpers Trust is committed to youth team football at Southend United, and already our hard work in raising money (partly through the Quid-a-Goal scheme) is paying off. You may recollect the name Joel Ledgister from somewhere deep in the recesses of your mind, and that is probably because you heard the name in our FA Youth Cup run or saw him warming up with the first team on a couple of occasions.

The Trust offered to pay Joel's travel fares when it was revealed that the club were wary of footing the cost of someone coming from southeast London every day. Eventually this progressed so that we paid for his lodgings in the county. The 17-year-old has continued to progress, so that now Southend United are willing to pay his rent themselves.

While Joel sets his sights on obtaining a professional contract, we have continued to help supply Ricky Duncan with equipment that he requires, and thus far that has listed objects as diverse as simple footballs to the rather more complicated SMART board.

And it seems that Ricky Duncan has spotted another Londoner worth a second look in 16-year-old Reiss Noel. The Stratford-based talent and his family are keen that he gets a chance to feature for Blues Youths, and as such the Trust have agreed to sponsor his travel in order to give him that opportunity.

Myself, Paul Yeomanson and Terry Jeffreys all visited Boots & Laces for an Under-18s versus Under-16s trial match on Saturday 11 February to see the fruits of the Trust's labours, and the news was positive. Noel even treated us to a late goal himself in a 5-1 success for the older lads.

THE TRUST – What We've Done

Committee Meeting Minutes (30/01/2006)

Following the announcement that Blues boss Steve Tilson would be running in the London marathon, it was agreed that the Trust should make a donation to Tilly's designated charity, the YMCA. The sum of £100 was agreed within the committee, and left to Treasurer Darren Posnack to organise.

There is good news for our top travellers at the end of the campaign as well, as the trip to Swansea City's brand spanking new Liberty Stadium will be subsidised for the top 30 journey-makers for the season. As with our previous two initiatives, the top 20 will go free and the next 10 at half-price. The race is well and truly on!

As we move towards the Centenary, the Shrimpers Trust is thinking of other occasions that require commemorating, and with the club failing to produce anything to mark the 50 years that we have enjoyed at Roots Hall, plans are afoot to produce a pin badge. We are also looking into a new pin-badger for members for the 2006/7 campaign.

Also, Paul Yeomanson and Terry Jeffreys have been in regular contact with the Bushell brothers over their late-1960s release 'There's Only One United'. The Trust have agreed a deal with the siblings for a DVD production of the 100-minute piece, whereby we will front the initial cost of a 1000-strong run, and once we have passed the break-even point, profits will be split slightly in the Bushell's favour. The cost to Southend supporters for the DVD and a reproduction of the original programme will be just £10.

Committee Meeting Minutes (20/02/2006)

The old problem regarding standing at Roots Hall has reared its head again. You have probably seen the various articles on the official Southend United website and in the Southend Evening Echo regarding the issue. There is no doubt that the main problem arises when away sides consistently stand in the North Bank, the spiritual home of Shrimpers supporters.



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 8



This was discussed at the committee meeting, and concern was expressed at comments made by Stadium Manager Chris Baker, a man with a self-professed background in the non-League game (at Gravesend & Northfleet), where terracing, and therefore standing, is rife.

Baker said, *"The issue of away supporters is more complicated than you may imagine. As many of you will have seen West Ham were recently fined for the behaviour of their fans at an away fixture against Chelsea and this has caused quite a stir amongst my fellow safety officers. This ruling implies that the visiting club has overall responsibility for the behaviour of its travelling support (please remember this on your travels). Therefore we have to put our own house in order first before we can begin to confront the away fans, as we are only liable for Southend supporters."*

This insinuates that it is not Southend United's responsibility to steward away supporters at Roots Hall. This, in the Trust's view, poses a bigger problem: a) if an away fan at the Hall is involved in a Health & Safety issue, who is responsible?, and b) can we use this statement to our advantage away from home?

The best scenario for all football supporters would be some sort of return to widespread terracing from the Premiership downwards, with safe standing areas seemingly the way to go. Current legislation, of course, prevents existing or new grounds implementing safe standing sections, but the Stand Up Sit Down campaign is at the forefront of trying to get this amended.

What football supporters want, surely, is a choice – parents and elderly fans will favour seated areas, whereas mainly those who want to sing or who can remember the days of the terraces want the chance to stand.

Alan Perry will be charged with contacting BBC Essex over the coming days to try and organise another summariser's spot in the radio commentator's box at Roots Hall. Our last auction was very successful, and it is hoped that an announcement will be able to be made before the end of the current campaign. In another fundraising move, we may also be found at the Southend Airshow this year – watch this space!

The name of Southend United and its supporters were slurred in December by the allegations of racial abuse by Bradford City Football Club and particularly their goalkeeper Donovan Ricketts. There is a full statement on the Shrimpers Trust website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, which outlines our current position following the dropping of charges against one of our members, Nick Hanshaw. Meanwhile, Southend United have informed us that they have been lobbying on Nick's behalf.

Shrimpers Trust Sponsored Leg Waxing

At the time of going to print, the total amount raised was not known, but well done nonetheless to Lee Bird, Phil Alsford and Joe Elliott for braving the cold conditions at half-time in the League One clash with Walsall and having their legs waxed. Unfortunately, our intrepid trio were not joined by Trevor Bashford, who was detained in Belfast. Those who were present experienced great difficulties in getting to pitchside, and were not treated to indignation in front of the stadium as expected, but it was a great effort regardless.

100 Club

Alan Perry is still looking for new volunteers for this initiative, and will welcome emails at alanperry4@hotmail.com or calls to him on 01702 476 458 for more details on how to become a winner in the weekly draw. Recent successes have been Alan's wife, Teresa, committee member Terry Jeffreys, my predecessor as editor of this newsletter, Nigel Rickard and Paul Nobbs, all of whom have taken away over £40.



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 8



Quid-a-Goal

Before the 3-0 demolition of Colchester United, Quid-a-Goal pledges stood at a very commendable £3351, with nearly £250 raised when Blues (and Freddy Eastwood in particular) blasted four past Chesterfield. With more of the Layer Road/Saltergate action in the final ten games of the campaign, we could yet push £5000, although getting past £4000 remains the initial target.

New Life Members (total: 105)

Welcome to one new Life Member this month: **Peter Woodfield**

The Shrimpers Trust wish to welcome the following new members this month:

Andrew Bettis, Ronald Bright, Geoffrey Caplan, Lorraine & Robert Copeland, John Eton-Griffin, Graham Jolly, John Joyce, Andrew & Gary Lench, Simon Lennox, Trevor Mapes, Jo Mayo, Gaye Overall, Graham Palmer, Anthony Philpott, Gareth Pummery, John Sargent, Andrew Soul, Bradley Thompson, Brenda & Brian Tilson, Bruce van Biene, Steve Waller, Mark Winspear, David Wintar.

COMING UP – The Trust Events Schedule

Race Night (11/03/2006)

Contact: Paul Yeomanson (at the Trust stand or via the website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk) for more information

For the first time in 2005/6, we unleash a second Race Night on our membership inside one season. Our second Race Night, held earlier in the year, saw less people attend, but conversely, more money raised for the Trust, but we would like to see an upturn in both attendance and fundraising for this event. £3 is all that is required to gain admission to this all-ticket event – you must have purchased your ticket in advance to gain entry to the Shrimpers Bar on Saturday March 11. This is groundbreaking stuff for the Trust: the event is being held the night after Blues host Scunthorpe United in Coca-Cola League One, so hopefully many will attend despite the lack of a fixture earlier in the day.

Shrimpers Trust Commentary Auction – BBC Essex summariser's spot

How to bid: at the Trust stand or via the website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk

Following on from our first successful BBC Essex Auction won by Graham Smith, the Shrimpers Trust, in association with BBC Essex, are offering a further opportunity for its Members and Southend fans.

For one day only, you can have the opportunity to appear as a co-commentator on a live internet broadcast for the home match against Blackpool on Saturday 8th April 2006.

The Shrimpers Trust is auctioning this place off to the highest bidder, and therefore we invite your bids by email to trustauction@blueyonder.co.uk or alternatively you can place your bid in person at the Shrimpers Trust Info Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to the home games against Scunthorpe United or Hartlepool United. Please ensure you include your name, daytime phone number and, of course, your bid amount.

The highest bid will be updated on our website daily and will be on display at our stand in the Shrimpers Bar before the home games versus Scunthorpe and Hartlepool, where people will again have the chance to bid again or higher for this special prize. The winner must be available on Saturday 8th April 2006 and will be notified soon after midday the 4th April, when the auction will close.

Listen out as well for updates and more information on both BBC Essex and our website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk.



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 8



Don't forget, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for all you budding Motsons out there - so bid now to be in with a chance of winning.

Quiz Night (08/04/2006)

Contact: Paul Yeomanson (at the Trust stand or via the website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk) or Alan Perry (alanperry4@hotmail.com) or 01702 476 458 for more information

After the match against Blackpool at Roots Hall on April 8, the Shrimpers Bar will host the final Shrimpers Trust Quiz Night of the 2005/6 campaign. Guy and Nigel Rickard will primarily be setting the questions and marking your papers, maybe with a little help from Paul Yeomanson. As usual, admission is £8, and includes a meal from the highly-recommended Fish House. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. for an eight o'clock start.

Football Programme Directory Annual Southend United Programme Fair (23/04/2006)

Contact: David Stacey of the FPD for more details – information available from the Shrimpers Trust stand

Last year I made the massive error of omitting the FPD Fair at the Shrimpers Bar, underneath Roots Hall, from the Newsletter, and I hope that I am making it up to David Stacey now by giving it a huge plug this year! Thankfully myself and Paul's Yeomanson and FitzGerald did not forget to look after our stand at the event, but aside from the usual goodies available there, the Fair contains a number of stalls offering programmes, badges and other merchandise for the football collecting connoisseur in Southend. Admission is just fifty pence, and with that you are entered into a prize draw to win a year's subscription to the FPD.

THE NEWS – Away from Home

Supporters Direct

Away from the Rotherham United situation, the South East Regional Forum of Supporters Direct met recently to discuss their relative positions. The Shrimpers Trust were not represented, but it was interesting to read that Gillingham are currently experiencing problems with club chairman Paul Scally, and Queens Park Rangers are concerned at the manner and speed of changes in the boardroom at Loftus Road.

Arsenal are launching a sharesave scheme to build up a unit of Trust shares in the club, while at Reading and Enfield Town, success on the field (the Hertfordshire club are second in Southern League Division One East compared to the Royals' Coca-Cola Championship-leading outfit) is proving difficult to manage.

THE MATCHES – Blues in Review

sat 4 feb: yeovil town (a) w2-0 [league one]

Whilst our old foes Colchester United gained a club record ninth straight success with a 3-1 win against Bradford City, the Shrimpers maintained their unbeaten run with a 2-0 victory at Huish Park, their first at the venue in a League fixture.

The opening quarter-of-an-hour was tough going, but after Blues got used to the usual antics of front men Phil Jevons and Matt Harrold, and the duo had inspired the ire of the away support, they were able to take control, and Mark Bentley blasted home Freddy Eastwood's slide-rule pass to give the visitors the lead.

Shaun Goater added a second when he touched home a rebound, but it could have been many more with the Goat, Eastwood and captain Kevin Maher all going close, with Mark Gower twice being denied blatant penalties, the first when Nathan 'Southend reject' Jones took away his legs and secondly as defender Miles handled his fierce drive. Incredibly Adam Barrett then saw red for two 'bookable' offences, the second for obstruction, an offence barely recognised in the modern game.



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 8



fri 10 feb: rotherham united (h) w2-0 [league one]

There was to be no unlucky thirteenth match in a row as Blues easily disposed of Rotherham United 2-0 at Roots Hall in the second of three Friday night fixtures in 2006. The Merry Millers were sent away glumly from southeast Essex with their very future in the Football League, if not simply League One, in the balance.

Like the previous home clash with Swindon Town, equally struggling at the wrong end of the table, United could have scored an awful lot more, but this time Darryl Flahavan proved his worth as one of the finest shotstoppers in the division.

However, in the early stages it was the hosts that ran riot – Marks Bentley (twice) and Gower, who hit the post, going close before Shaun Goater slotted home his second in successive matches. He played a part in the second, setting up Freddy Eastwood for the 36th-minute sealer.

John Mullin and Jonathan Forte both brought out the best of Flahavan in the first half, whilst Lee Williamson, Luke Guttridge and Kevin Maher were all a little lucky to remain on the pitch during a spiteful second period. Paul Shaw forced Flahavan into a superb double save as Rotherham ended strongly, but they could not breach United's defence.

tues 14 feb: brentford (a) 10-2 [league one]

In their wisdom, the Football League decided that the only midweek fixtures in 2006 would be on Valentine's Day. Alright if you haven't got a girlfriend, but a nightmare if you have (well, if you have and they can't stand football at least!). Or, for our female members, vice versa of course.

In the event, those who decided that a bunch of roses and a box of chocolates was the safe option for the well-being of their relationships probably made a sensible decision – for only the second or third time all season, the Shrimpers were dreadful.

That's not to say that there were chances – Freddy Eastwood had a possibly legitimate goal ruled out for offside and both he and Luke Guttridge rattled the woodwork, but Martin Allen's men exacted their revenge for the 4-1 Roots Hall drubbing in January courtesy of Adam Barrett gifting them Duncan Jupp's own goal, and then Marcus Gayle rising highest at the Bees third consecutive corner. The only plus point was that Colchester and Swansea also dropped points.

sat 18 feb: chesterfield (a) w4-3 [league one]

Believe it or not, the Shrimpers have actually won an away fixture 4-3 in the past – at Colchester United in the League Cup (stat supplied by Phil Cox) – but surely that clash never matched the drama of Saltergate.

The first half was a non-event: Colin Larkin has a knack of netting against Blues and he did it again on the half-hour with a suspiciously offside-looking finish, and Southend went in one down. How the game changed seven minutes after the break when Freddy Eastwood rifled a shot at the top of the net and Hungarian Janos Kovacs was adjudged by referee Darren Deadman to have handled.

Deadman harshly sent Kovacs off, and Eastwood compounded the Spireites misery by smashing the penalty kick home. He then added a second with a deflected finish after a magnificent solo run. Hold on for 2-1 now, and top place is assured for another week...

The hosts had other ideas. They may have had only ten men, but spurred on by the injustice of Kovacs' dismissal, Derek Niven nipped in to fire in and Kevan Hurst shot low past Flahavan within ninety seconds to make it 3-2. Southend needed all their resolve to turn it around once again – Eastwood flicked on Mark Gower's corner and Shaun Goater rose to head home, and then Freddy sealed his hat-trick with a splendid 25-yard free-kick.



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 8



Eastwood could have had two more, but was denied by the legs of goalkeeper Barry Roche both times, and despite the shotstopper carrying a knee injury, he galloped the length of the pitch to try to connect with an injury-time free-kick. It was a match in which you really could not rule anything out!

sat 25 feb: walsall (h) d0-0 [league one]

It was inevitable after the fireworks of Saltergate that the next contest would be a drab 0-0 draw. Blues missed suspended Freddy Eastwood, the 'Dad's Army' frontline of Shaun Goater and Lee Bradbury failing to really ignite, despite their past career at Manchester City.

Worse still, Spencer Prior and Mitchell Cole were both carried off with injuries inside the first 25 minutes – their knocks will leave them out of Southend's promotion push for the next month. Cole's replacement, James Lawson, probably had United's best chances to win it, but lacked conviction, and Darryl Flahavan again pulled out the stops to claim a clean sheet at home.

sat 4 mar: colchester united (a) w3-0 [league one]

The rest of League One failed to capitalise on the Saturday, then Barnsley and Brentford drew in midweek and the Tykes, Swansea and Huddersfield all collected a single point upon the return of the white ball on the first weekend in March, leaving Southend to steal the show at Layer Road.

The importance of the match has been discussed earlier in this publication, but the bare facts are thus: the returning Freddy Eastwood converted his 17th goal of the season, and could have taken his tally to 20, captain Kevin Maher ended a year-long drought and Che Wilson continued his new-found scoring form with a composed finish. Luke Guttridge could have added a fourth, and the U's hit the bar and forced Flavs into a fine double block, but on the whole it was comfortable.

Up the Shrimpers!

Robert Craven (04/03/2006)