



SHRIMPERS TRUST



NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 15

THE INTRODUCTION – Editor Robert Craven

IT HAS BEEN a month of contrasting fortunes for Southend United. The news that plans had been submitted for a new stadium at Fossetts Farm has quickly been forgotten in a swathe of defeats for the team at the foot of the Coca-Cola Championship...

Let's start with the positives. Ron Martin was finally able to announce just as the last newsletter was going to press that the Shrimpers had requested planning permission for an as yet unnamed ground at Fossetts Farm, just north of the club's training ground at Boots & Laces.

Of course, there will always be questions surrounding the financing of the deal, but my personal opinion – and one that is not shared by the Trust committee in its entirety – is that the move is the only option to Southend United looking forwards into the future.

I love Roots Hall – it is a decent enough lower League ground, but recent progress has shown that it is a little too antiquated for the Coca-Cola Championship and the second tier of English football.

It will always have a special place in my heart as the venue for my first ever match as a spectator of a football match, and there will be plenty of brilliant memories of fantastic fixtures in my time following the Blues, as there will be for all of you as well, I'm sure.

However, you only have to go back three years to remember a time when Southend United were quite conceivably six months from extinction. The club do not own Roots Hall, and although we have been fortunate in that debts have been lowered and written off, until we have our own ground we will never be secure. Had we gone down in 2003/4, it could easily have spelt the end for the club.

Mr Martin truly believes that the club has the potential to become a permanent fixture in the Championship, and for that an increased capacity is required.

It might also have come in handy had the ground miraculously been in place in time for the upcoming Carling Cup Fourth Round fixture at home to Manchester United. It is some time since the Shrimpers faced a club at the top

end of the top division, especially at home. You can go back to League Cup ties with Tottenham Hotspur and before that the FA Cup match-up with Liverpool, which puts the clash into a little perspective.

Much more important than that, it is the first time that the Shrimpers have reached the last sixteen of the League Cup, and might just mean that we do not have the worst record of any League club who has been in the competition for any length of time!

There have been massive queues for four days outside the club's ticket office, and you will find elsewhere in this newsletter a statement from the Shrimpers Trust regarding the situation with ticketing for the matches against Manchester United and Colchester United.

That statement appeared first on our website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, and that is the place to go over the next few weeks as we dedicate a section to the projected move to Fossetts Farm.

It is the prerogative of Southend United to present the positives behind the move, but as a way of marking the possible new ground, we will be taking a look at the club's previous homes and giving fans guidance on how they can support Fossetts Farm by lobbying different groups.

Also on the website is a full review of our Annual General Meeting. An abridged version appears later in this publication, with the best bits from Ron Martin and Geoffrey King, who we were delighted to welcome for a Question & Answer session after the formal business of the evening had been completed.

Our thanks are once again extended to Ron, Southend United's chairman, and Geoffrey, as SUFC's chief executive, for their attendance and frankness in answering our attendees' questions.

We were pleased to see over fifty of our members in the Shrimpers Bar for the evening, but as ever, we would like to see more, and the draw of Messrs Martin and King should have seen many more members at the venue.

We at the Shrimpers Trust are always interested to know what our members think



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about the organisation – indeed we intend sending out a questionnaire with a future newsletter this season – so if you have any thoughts on the above matter, please get in touch with us through our email address, info@shrimperstrust.co.uk.

Trust secretary Terry Jeffreys and myself attended the recent Supporters Direct National Conference with a view to seeing how the Trust could better represent the supporters of Southend United, and as well as passing on that information to our committee, you can see some of the results in the 'Away From Home' section later on.

Well, I have put off the inevitable for long enough – having looked through the positives, it's time to give an overview of the team's performances on the pitch.

Apart from the Carling Cup victory at Leeds United – we held a 100% record at Elland Road for all of four days – it has been a mix of the unbelievable, the unforgivable and the unfortunate.

Take the second visit to Leeds for a prime example. I don't think that any of the 1500 Shrimpers present will be able to offer an explanation for the 2-0 reverse other than Blues were simply unlucky.

Leeds were lifted by the arrival of Dennis Wise, and they competed much more keenly than they had in the League Cup, but they could only have had three real attempts on goal, and they scored from two of them.

Southend, by contrast, dominated possession (in the second half especially), hit the post with a deflected Steven Hammell shot and saw Graham Stack deny Freddy Eastwood with two magnificent saves at full-stretch. Add in nine consecutive corners and you get the picture.

Three days later, Hull City were the visitors to Roots Hall, and the Seasiders display was the complete opposite, lacking imagination and any idea of how to break the ten men Tigers down.

It was a pitiful display, but because Blues are in the Championship, I am trying not to get too downhearted about it. We are punching above our weight, but at the moment we

resemble a flyweight taking on a super-heavyweight. No League victories since clueless Sunderland arrived at the Hall, no away wins at the second tier in a season's worth of football at that level, and at times, no recognised centre-forwards.

It was a strange moment for me when Simon Francis prodded home his first Shrimpers goal, in the midst of the 3-1 defeat at home to Ipswich Town. Having been thoroughly depressed at trailing 3-0 to a side who had been thumped 5-0 by West Brom a week earlier, I couldn't help myself falling about laughing at the fact that a right-back, starting out on the right-wing and now playing as a centre-forward had just scored with his 'wrong' left foot!

But however depressed I was at that time, it could not match the malaise I found myself in after the Hull fixture, which just left me in absolute shock.

The major problem, even taking into account the fact that we haven't won in the League for ages, that we keep conceding goals in the last five minutes of the first half and the first five of the second (equating to seven points and seven places at the last tally), and that we cannot defend set-pieces, is that the team just cannot retain possession.

When the Tigers were reduced to ten men, that should have been the trigger for United to stroke the ball around, find blue shirts and pass Hull into submission. Instead, Blues kept lumping it forward, surrendered possession to Danny Mills and conceded a third goal.

After pre-season, I was confident that the Shrimpers would at least be able to pass the ball quickly and well. That has been proved wrong, and without correcting it, we will continue to flounder near the foot of the table.

November will make or break the season. The home games against Preston North End and Plymouth Argyle must yield points, as must away trips to Colchester United and Barnsley. It's time to do.

Up The Shrimpers,

Rob



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SHRIMPERS TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Thursday 19th October 2006

Time: 8:00 p.m. - 10:00p.m.

Venue: The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall

The Shrimpers Trust held its Annual General Meeting for 2006 on Thursday 19th October 2006, being joined after the formal business for a Question & Answer session by Ron Martin and Geoffrey King...

Over fifty members attended the evening at the Shrimpers Bar beneath the Main Stand at Roots Hall, and although they were treated to speeches by Trust Chairman Trevor Bashford, Treasurer Darren Posnack, Fundraising Officer Alan Perry and Membership Secretary Paul Yeomanson, the main event was to follow when Southend United's Chairman and Chief Executive arrived.

Throughout the night, when the Trust Board, Executive Committee and elected Officers were all re-elected for a further year's service, a model of the club's proposed new stadium at Fossetts Farm was available for members to peruse, and club staff Dave Scriven, a former Trust committee member, Nina Drew and Anthony Pearce were on hand to answer queries.

The Q&A session began with Martin giving a brief run-down of the current situation with Southend Council. *"I have had around nine formal meetings and one informal one with the Council about the new stadium,"* he explained. *"The likelihood is that the proposals will be recommended in early January and that the plans will be accepted. We have already spoken to contractors, and if everything is OK'd, then we can start three months after getting the go-ahead."*

There will be three stages to the development, with the ground being the priority in the short-term. *"Firstly we will build the stadium, then we will fit-out the hotel and finally the residential areas. However, with a fair wind, we would like to be playing at Fossetts Farm in time for the start of the 2008/9 season,"* Martin declared. *"Although the hotel is an integral part of the West Stand, the foyer would be completed for the opening and it could be four or five months later that the hotel was completed."*

Rochford District Council could prove a thorn in the Shrimpers side given that three training pitches are situated on their land. *"It is dangerous to talk about the past,"* Martin revealed. *"We made a presentation to Rochford District Council and they raised concerns about noise and cars, but were generally pleased. I have written to them now, requesting a formal meeting."*

It appears that this meeting is vital to the future of the club, since any future development hinges on Rochford District Council backing it. *"I was asked if the scheme would go ahead if they rejected the proposals. I told them no, and that we would have to come up with an alternative proposal."*

Fossetts Farm would also enhance living standards Southend as a whole: *"CCTV cameras would be installed in those residential areas, and people will feel safer. I want there to be activities throughout the week, not just on a matchday. There will also be much better transport links to Southend town centre. As well as the on-site car parks, we are in talks with the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) about remote parking close to Tesco, and shuttle buses would run from there and from stations at Southend Victoria and Prittlewell."*

With Brighton & Hove Albion being continually frustrated by the Government over their move to a new stadium in Falmer, Martin has already taken the steps of contacting the current administration. *"Hopefully it will not need to go to a Public Enquiry. There is nothing unusual about the plans, so they should be approved at local level, and that will be sufficient."*

Another club struggling with stadia is Darlington, whose 27,500-capacity ground outside of town is barely one-seventh full each week in League Two. *"These plans will not be downgraded, even if we find ourselves in the Conference. We will always be able to get money from outside developments."*



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Far from downsizing, the chairman was eager to emphasise that Fossetts Farm could be upgraded. *"We can put in plans to lift the roof on the East Stand and raise the capacity to 30,000, and for this reason, the flats will not overlook the stadium, even at 22,000. That is a realistic capacity. Manchester United and Newcastle United's grounds have grown topsy as they have increased, but this would not happen here, even up to 32,000."*

"Showcase Support, who are the leading name in stadium design, have been involved," Geoffrey King added before Ron took over again. *"You have to have enabling developments, and Roots Hall is not big enough for that - this is a fifty-acre plan. In the next month, members and supporters will be provided with a DVD of five or six minutes which will outline the plans."*

"I will not cap investment at a certain figure. Yes, I want the project to be self-sufficient and self-generating above just receipts. But I want to do this because I want Southend United to be successful," Martin added.

There were anxious statements from the membership that a letter sent out by Southend Council was inherently negative about the plans in asking for objections, but Martin attempted to quell those fears. *"I have not seen this letter, so I cannot comment on that, but they will have a wide consultation process."*

"What they will be saying is, 'Can we have your views?' I think all fans should write in with their support, ideally before November 13, which is the Council's closing date. They will still accept opinions after that date before it goes to Committee."

Elderly and disabled supporters will also be pleased with the proposals. *"The disabled have been considered at the new ground,"* Martin stated. *"There will be an open concourse eight metres wide except in certain restaurant areas. We also believe that we will be able to agree with the Licensing Authorities that the concourse will be open to the pitch, although not selling alcohol."*

"In addition to that, we will have quick-release seats that means that some seated areas can be taken out to accommodate wheelchairs and as many carers as an individual likes can sit with them. We know that Roots Hall is not great, but at the new ground we meet the requirements of a 1:60 gradient and the concourse will be level all the way round. There will be no need to use lifts or the stairs."

"There may be some slight changes to the model that you can see [it is available to all supporters on three nights a week, and this will be extended to cover weekends] including the shape of the roof so that it does not cast a shadow. When the final model is revealed, and the process is complete I would be happy to donate it to the Shrimpers Trust."

Conversation moved to the naming rights of the new ground, and the property developer used Coventry City as a case study. *"We don't know the name of the ground at the moment, but Ricoh has invested £10 million over 10 years at Coventry, and think of what £1 million-a-year could do for Southend United."*

"RBS would be a great option for me, but I haven't spoken to them yet. Ideally, it would be nice for a large employer in the southeast Essex area to be involved," Martin commented, as he looked again to forge links with the local community, *"I would like to hear any suggestions for a new name from Trust members."*

He was keen for the Shrimpers Trust and its membership to help quash negative comments in Southend. *"Don't let negative people take over in the press. We had to prove in transportation terms that it would work, and we have. We also carried out a Retail Impact Assessment, and the Council conducted their own survey in 2004, where they said there was a necessity for more retail outlets in the town. We can provide these at Fossetts Farm."*

Martin was also eager to end the evening on a defiant note. *"I think about what I can do for the town of Southend. I also think that the Council should stand up and applaud what we are doing. If they do not accept it, then maybe there should be a different Council,"* he declared.



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"We respect the Shrimpers Trust as a body, but you need to put forward your views. You must be heard. We must overcome the dissenters in Sutton Road and in Bournemouth Park Road. The noise levels in those areas simply will not change."

The pair were only too happy to answer questions on any subject, and were not confined to talk of the new stadium. Instead, they disclosed information on Steve Tilson, Freddy Eastwood and Michael Ricketts. Perhaps the most candid section involved former England international Ricketts, who Martin revealed had "left by mutual consent".

Despite saying that he did not want to go into detail, the chairman had plenty to say on the matter: *"He went very quickly. Steve Tilson saw glimpses of brilliance in his play, and at the same time I was approached by his agent, who he shares with Stan Collymore. We had a great contract with Ricketts, but in the past he had not been either focussed or fit."*

"I believe that, as a pairing, Steve and Paul Brush are brilliant at man-management, and if anyone could get the best out of Ricketts, it would be them, but it takes two to tango, and he did not want to dance. The settlement is in our favour, and over the last ten days the team has been much more united. I think you could see that at Burnley."

Throughout the evening, Martin was gushing in his praise for the pairing, and he gave an insight into his working relationship with the duo. *"Steve and Paul went into immediate four-year contracts as soon as we got into the Championship. I asked if they would like to change that at the start of this season, and we have now added a further year onto that."*

Martin was equally unequivocal in his appraisal of Freddy Eastwood's situation: *"Freddy is not going anywhere, whether we get an offer of £2 million, of £3 million or of £5 million. He has another year on his contract after this season, and financially we can equal anyone in the Championship in terms of his wages. Of course, we can't match the Premiership, but if we are successful in this division, I do not believe Freddy will want to leave."*

The club chairman was asked what clubs had approached the Shrimpers about signing the highly-rated forward. *"Plymouth Argyle, Cardiff City, Sunderland, West Bromwich Albion – they were really fed up when I said, 'No' – Norwich, Ipswich Town and Derby County were all turned down. I wouldn't even let Jeremy Peace [the West Brom chairman] make an offer. Leeds United and Crystal Palace have not yet approached us."*

And Roots Hall, or more likely Fossetts Farm, could even see international football in the future? *"I think that people will want to come to Fossetts Farm, and if Steve continues to enjoy a very good relationship with Peter Taylor and the Under-21 set-up, then it could be a possibility."*

Ron Martin would certainly like to see Championship football remain in the town. *"I believe that if you are ambitious, then you cannot afford to cap wages or fees. I do not want to be in League One, I want to be in the Championship. I prefer being here, in the upper echelons, with the standard of football that we see every week."*

"I am not surprised that Southend United are in the Championship. We have a massive geographical base in southeast Essex, and if we can keep our prices down, at the new ground we will be able to compete with Chelsea, West Ham United and Ipswich Town for support. With attractive football and a new stadium, we should continue to grow."

****To read a full review of the Question & Answer Session with Ron and Geoffrey, please visit www.shrimperstrust.co.uk. Our thanks are extended to their above pair, Dave Scriven and Nina Drew for affording us their time****



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SHRIMPERS TRUST STATEMENT

Following on from complaints received from Members and Supporters, the Shrimpers Trust Committee would like to outline its position regarding the pricing and distribution of tickets for the upcoming fixtures against Manchester United and Colchester United.

Contrary to the statement on Southend United's official website and outside the offices of the main club ticket office, the Shrimpers Trust was not consulted regarding the distribution of tickets for the match against Manchester United. Had it been asked about this then a way of rewarding regular supporters would have been suggested.

In addition to this, the Shrimpers Trust was only asked for their thoughts about the price of adult tickets for the Carling Cup match, and not about the cost of tickets for children, senior citizens or student concessions.

Furthermore, the Trust are disappointed that their discussions with the club regarding the arrangements for the Coca-Cola Championship match at Colchester United have not been widely publicised. At our regular liaison meetings, the Trust were consulted about how tickets should be distributed for the fixture, and suggested a ticket stub policy to reward Southend United's loyal away fan base. This policy has subsequently been followed.

The Shrimpers Trust intends to raise supporters ticketing concerns about the above fixtures at our next liaison meeting in mid-November, and to help Southend United in the improvement of this process. If anyone would like to email the Trust with their suggestions for further representation, please get in contact at info@shrimperstrust.co.uk.

THE SHRIMPERS TRUST KIDS

Blues' Youths Results

Sat 30 Sept | Puma Youth Alliance League | Rushden & Diamonds (h) | L0-1

Sat 07 Oct | Puma Youth Alliance Cup | Gillingham (a) | L0-3

Sat 14 Oct | Puma Youth Alliance Cup | AFC Bournemouth (h) | D1-1 | Henry

Sat 21 Oct | Puma Youth Alliance League | Gillingham (a) | W7-2 | Forshaw 2, Priest, Lindie 2, Henry, Patten

Sat 28 Oct | Puma Youth Alliance League | Northampton Town (a) | D2-2 |

IT WAS A MIXED MONTH for Blues' Youths as a 7-2 thrashing of Northampton Town failed to mask two disappointing draws and, worse still, two further defeats, albeit in the midst of a bout of flu amongst the squad...

Back in late September, United followed up their defeat to Swindon Town with a 1-0 reverse at home to Rushden & Diamonds, and with a depleted squad through illness and injury, made their first trip to Beechings Cross for a fixture against Gillingham. The Kent side ran rampant, winning 3-0 with goals from Craig Stone, Charlie Glyde and Luis Chambers.

Seven days later, United hosted AFC Bournemouth, with a 1-1 draw leaving them with no chance of progressing from Group C of the Puma Youth Alliance Cup. Rhys Henry equalised with a stunning free-kick after both sides had wasted numerous chances in blustery conditions.

Then came the remarkable clash at Beechings Cross, with braces from Scottish James' Forshaw and Lindie being added to by midfielder Richard Priest and defender Carl Patten, back after a horrific injury gained at Brighton, and omnipresent Rhys Henry, the young attacker's fifth of the campaign. Last weekend they consolidated their lofty position with a 2-2 draw at Northampton Town despite falling behind in the first half.

Meanwhile, Charles Ademeno and Joel Ledgister, on work experience at Bishops Stortford and Lewes respectively, met in Conference South on the south coast, while Charles was the hero of Stortford's 2-0 FA Cup third qualifying round victory against Stratford Town, scoring both goals.



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THE TRUST – What We've Done

Committee Meeting Minutes (30/09/2006)

There was some consternation at the last meeting after the realisation that Southend United had launched a Junior Blues section. The Shrimpers Trust version, Southend Junior Shrimpers, was set up in conjunction with the football club some time ago, and the Junior Blues scheme undoubtedly encroaches on that. It could not rival the Trust's offers for subsidised travel, but negotiations are ongoing at Liaison Meetings for a new agreement to be set out.

Full Minutes of the Trust's Liaison Meetings with Southend United are available to download from the Shrimpers Trust website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk. The archive goes right back to the very start, over five years ago, and includes meetings up to 2006

Race Night (21 September 2006)

45 people turned for the latest instalment of our Race Night series, which took place two days after the AGM in the Shrimpers Bar. Unfortunately, we would still like to encourage more people to attend these events, with this one in particular costing just £3 to come to. A list of upcoming events can be found below. The positive was that the evening raised over £400 for the Trust coffers.

Shrimpers Trust Events List

****STAR EVENT** Wednesday 29 November: Curry Night**

Venue: The Maharajah, 358 London Road, Benfleet | **Time:** 7:30 p.m. | **Price:** £10

For more information: contact Alan Perry on 01702 476 458 or at alanperry4@hotmail.com

Alan Perry has finally been able to arrange another Curry Night, and we are proud to announce a change of venue to the Maharajah in Benfleet. The price is unchanged at £10, and both members and non-members are welcome to an evening of chat and curry. Former Shrimper Peter Goy has expressed an interest in attending, and Ronnie Pountney may also be invited. Club chairman Ron Martin has also been spotted at previous Curry Nights.

Saturday 20 January: Shrimpers Trust Quiz Night

Venue: The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall | **Time:** 7:30 for an 8:00 p.m. start | **Contact:** Alan Perry on 01702 476 458 or at alanperry4@hotmail.com | **Tickets:** £8 (adults) or £5 (children) including supper.

****COMING SOON** The Team We Call United DVD**

The Shrimpers Trust will soon be launching 'The Team We Call United' on DVD in association with the Bushell brothers, who made the original recording, to help celebrate the club's centenary. There will also be a Question & Answer session with some of the stars of the time. Please visit www.shrimperstrust.co.uk for up-to-date information.

100 Club

Southend United are currently celebrating their Centenary Season – albeit rather quietly at times – and the Trust also have their own 100 Club. The number of members currently stands at around 80, but we would love for that figure to reach a round ton. Please contact Alan Perry on alanperry4@hotmail.com or by calling 01702 476 458 to register your interest. The kitty each week at the moment is £40, but remember that, should there be 100 members at Christmas, our Christmas special will be worth £500! Victor Peretti, our very own Terry Jeffreys, Simon Rayner, Barry Phillips and Andy Thorne have all scooped the weekly prize recently.

Quid-a-Goal

Whereas in the past few seasons, we have committed our money from Quid-a-Goal to physiotherapist John Stannard, we are now looking to help Head of Youth Ricky Duncan. We have helped Londoners Joel Ledgister and Reiss Noel to make the trip to Boots & Laces, and are this season sponsoring Joel's shirt.

It looks like John may have picked a good time to declare that we have helped him just as much as we can – so far we have struggled to reach £1000 as we enter November, so we need more pledges in order to reach the totals that we have attained in the previous two campaigns. Please get in touch with Alan Perry via the usual methods (01702 476 458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com) or



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download a form from our website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk. You can monitor the total at the same place.

Away Travel

Once again, we would like to reiterate that the Shrimpers Trust will not tolerate poor behaviour on coaches to away games this season. Following the actions of two Shrimpers Trust members this season on the away trip to Burnley, they have been suspended from all coach travel until the end of the season and, in one case, until the end of the 2007/8 season for a second offence.

Life Membership (total: 117)

The Shrimpers Trust would like to welcome the following new Life Members: **Jacqueline Hill, Michael Ossowski, Paul Southgate** and **Robert Wright**. If you are interested in becoming a Life Member of the Shrimpers Trust, please contact Paul Yeomanson at info@shrimperstrust.co.uk or by meeting him at the stand in the Shrimpers Bar on any home matchday.

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

David Abrehart, Robert Allen, Sam Allison, David Ansell, Gary Bell, Colin Billham, Shane Bird, David Bracci, Doris Bracci, Callum Bradford, Jonathan Burt, Barry Cochrane, W.H. Davey, Jamie Day, Gareth Drake, Edward Findlay, Jon Foan, Tim Ford, I. Groom, P. Groom, Kelvin Grossmith, Arthur Herbert, Brian Hood, David Jones, David Kenley, Lisa Kinsella, D. Layzell, Adam Manning, Kirk Marshall, Mark Montgomery, Robert O'Connell, Tom Overing, Lloyd Poulton, Christopher Purkiss, David Rahi, Ronald Richardson, Luke Robinson, Laura Sharp, Robert Sharp, Steve Shelsher, Daniel Smith, Paul Southgate, Joe Steward, Robert Tuttlebee, Bill Whitmore, Maria Wood and Ian Woolner

THE MATCHES – Blues in Review

sat 30 sept: derby county (a) 10-3 (championship)

Blues' second 3-0 defeat in succession was, if anything, worse than the one before at home to Cardiff City. Apart from the opening twenty minutes, and a late spurt after the introduction of the now-departed Michael Ricketts, when Derby 'keeper Lee Grant made a stupendous save to deny the ex-Leeds United front man, the Shrimpers offered nothing in attack, and little more at the back.

The Shrimpers' fate was sealed in the 40th minute when the Rams took the lead through on-loan centre-forward Arturo Lupoli. The youngster, the latest from the production line at Arsenal, beat Darryl Flahavan to a Matt Oakley pass to open the scoring, and it took only three minutes of the second period for Southend's lazy restarting habit to resurface, Michael Johnson powering home a header from a corner.

The homesters were not particularly special, but they were aided in that United did not target front men Freddy Eastwood and Gary Hooper along the ground where they could trouble centre-half Johnson, and when Lupoli fired home again with 26 minutes remaining, a rout looked likely. Thankfully it did not follow.

fri 13 oct: coventry city (h) 12-3 (championship)

A double from star striker Freddy Eastwood was not enough for Southend as they slumped to a second successive home reverse, again conceding three goals. Flahavan's point-blank double save from Leon Mackenzie deserved to help the Shrimpers to take the lead, and that arrived when Luke Guttridge was bundled over and Eastwood (just) converted from the penalty spot.

United's inability to defend either side of half-time then arrived with three minutes remaining, Stephen Hughes' long-range effort taking a massive deflection off of Adam Barrett to bring Cov level. If that was unlucky, a rampaging run from Mackenzie ended in Simon Francis hauling the pacey forward down, and Colin Cameron made no mistake from twelve yards.

Captain Kevin Maher was inspired, consistently worrying Andy Marshall, and Spencer Prior nodded onto the stanchion before Eastwood bagged his eighth of the season, Maher's fantastic lofted pass being driven into the net. The hard work expended to draw level was promptly wasted ten minutes



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from the end as Dele Adebola, just the sort of striker Blues struggle to keep out, tapped in from close range.

tues 17 oct: burnley (a) d0-0 (championship)

If the first two fixtures covered were disappointing, then at least the long trip to Turf Moor was more rewarding, United picking up a second away point of the campaign against the side sitting second in the table. Ironically, West Bromwich Albion, who are also in the play-off mix-up, were the other team to fail to take maximum points against the Seasiders.

The first half was evenly-matched, Gifton Noel-Williams going closest by diverting a diving header inches wide of the post, and substitute Peter Clarke enjoying his best performance of the season in denying the Burnley forwards with a succession of brave blocks.

In the second period, Blues dominated the chances, and deserved more than the solitary point. Eastwood fired past the post and also narrowly failed to lob Brian Jensen in the Clarets goal, and strike partner Harrold glanced a header just wide, but it was not to be.

sat 21 oct: ipswich town (h) l1-3 (championship)

All the morale gained from a point in Lancashire was promptly lost when Ipswich Town raided Roots Hall and became the third team in row to plunder three goals from Roots Hall. There was little sign of what was to follow when Lewis Price had to go off after a challenge from Matt Harrold, but it was an injury replacement, this time up front in Billy Clarke, who gave the Tractor Boys the lead when Jaime Peters' centre was ignored by the United defence and the smallest player on the pitch was allowed to head home unchallenged.

If Southend were to get back into the match, they would be reliant on Eastwood playing well, but a virus laid him low and in injury time, the impediment proved pivotal as he raced clear one-on-one with Shane Supple, but his shot was stubbed past the left-hand upright.

Town then proceeded to flatten Blues with two quickfire goals after the break. Frenchman Sylvain Legwinski should have been sent off later for shoving Simon Francis, but his piledriver from 25 yards to make it 2-0 was worth the entrance money alone. Alan Lee was then afforded the freedom of Prittlewell to add a third on 50 minutes. Steve Tilson's desperation, albeit with Eastwood and Harrold finally succumbing to their bug, was emphasized when Francis was paired with misfiring Billy Paynter up front, and he grabbed a consolation midway through the second period. There was no miraculous comeback this time against East Anglian opposition.

tues 24 oct: leeds united (a) w3-1 (carling cup third round)

And after the horror show against Ipswich, suddenly there was light! Dennis Wise was unveiled as struggling Leeds' new boss just minutes before kick-off, but he could do nothing as the Yorkshire club were played off the park by an upbeat Shrimpers outfit, again with Francis up front, this time alongside Gary Hooper, after Billy Paynter was carried off injured.

Tony Warner made a magnificent save to deny Efetobore Sodje, but he was culpable for the second goal as Hooper chipped Luke Guttridge's cross through his hands. The Fulham stopper could do nothing minutes earlier when Steven Hammell drove home a penalty kick after Francis had been brutally hacked down in the box.

The hard work was marginally undone when Ian Moore was allowed to level, but thankfully the second period saw Southend push forwards enough to continue to cause the former European giants problems, none more so than Hooper, who tapped underneath Warner on 64 minutes. He was denied by the custodian his hat-trick when Warner made a fine reactionary block, but nothing could deny Blues their home tie with Manchester United in round four, the first time that they had reached that stage of the competition.



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 15



sat 28 oct: leeds united (a) 10-2 (championship)

Oh the irony! Four days after visiting Elland Road for the first time in our 100-year history, Blues were back, but in a match that we really wanted to win, fell short against the newly-revitalised Leeds. Or at least that is how the media would like to portray it.

In truth, Leeds were no better on the Saturday than they had been in the preceding midweek, and the Shrimpers were much better, but somehow the footballing Gods contrived to hand 'Wisey' all three points and Blues absolutely nothing. United had held their own in the first period without ever truly threatening Graham Stack, but it still came as a surprise when Ian Moore was allowed to drive the metaphorical bus through the centre of the Southend defence and give the hosts the lead...just before the break (as usual).

The second half saw Southend dominate, Eastwood denied twice by Stack, Hammell by a post, Maher, Gower and the Scot in a succession of nine corners and United camped out in the Yorkshiremen's half. And then there was the final seconds, Robbie Blake curling a fine free-kick over the Shrimpers wall and past a flailing Flahavan for 2-0. Oh the injustice!

tues 31 oct: hull city (h) 12-3 (championship)

Back to the Hall, and recent service resumed as Southend shipped three goals at their fortress once again. Quite how it happened, with Ian Ashbee sent off for a reckless stamp on the hour with the game somehow evenly poised at 2-2, is anyone's guess. Yet there is still the niggling feeling that all the excuses are valid.

The Shrimpers simply did not turn up – long balls were chucked down the experienced Danny Mill's throat, the bald-header blocker contrived to elbow, holler and tangle himself into Eastwood and Matt Harrold at every opportunity, Blues couldn't keep the ball, there was the obligatory goals before and after the interval and yet United led twice and should have won.

Harrold didn't know much about his opener on 28 minutes, sliding the ball past Boaz Myhill with a mixture of backside and shin, but when Southend needed to keep things tight, they allowed Jon Parkin to level from eight yards. Eastwood restored the lead just after half-time, Stuart Elliott responded and then came Ashbee's dismissal. Yet, despite being a man down, Hull mustered the pressure for ex-Colchester United forward Craig Fagan to guide past Flahavan, and there was never the impetus to fight back. Rock bottom on the first freezing day of the year, and it felt like it.

Up the Shrimpers!

Rob Craven (2 November 2006)

****STOP PRESS** Unfortunately, due to space constraints following our account of the Shrimpers Trust AGM, there has not been room to accommodate a review of myself and Terry Jeffreys' visit to the Supporters Direct National Conference in October. This will now appear in Issue 16.**



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****COMING SOON****

FOSSETTS FARM STADIUM – designated page

SUPPORTERS DIRECT NATIONAL CONFERENCE – full review

SOUTHEND UNITED COMMUNITY & EDUCATIONAL TRUST – complete transcript