

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

THE INTRODUCTION – Paul FitzGerald

Welcome back and here's to a good season culminating in a return to League one!

For some strange reason I felt more optimistic pre-season than in many of the last few years. Whilst finances are still clearly stretched and Ron's Ostrich act continues its record breaking run, we do appear to be stable. The squad assembled does not suggest we are going bust anytime soon and an opening period with three wins is not only a joy but it just adds to the mixed signals that our beloved club bestows upon us. A particular delight was to see Anthony Straker get his goal last weekend. A personal delight because I part sponsor him with the SUFC exiles and also a general delight that he has started the season so strongly after the "issues" at the end of last season.

Liaison meetings between the Shrimpers Trust and the Football Club are now held approximately every six weeks and I hope some of you get to see the minutes. If anyone would like anything raised at these meetings, then please feel free to ask me or Paul Yeomanson. Typically, we do not minute items where questions are not answered (usually Planning or Financial). However, following some constructive criticism in this area, we have decided to minute the question - even if no answer is provided.

The much heralded Fans Forum has not met recently and this is something Steve Kavanagh is considering especially as a new Fans Group has been born. The Shrimpers Trust has met with the Chairman of SUISA (also a recent Trust renewal). Dickie Spooner ex-Police Liaison explains that SUISA is not a competitor of The Shrimpers Trust but aims to add "bums on seats" and ask searching questions. Coincidentally another Trust member (Aaron Holmes) approached me recently with similar aims and as with any group attempting to improve the lot of our beloved team the Shrimpers Trust will be only too willing to help. Aaron is aiming at an age group (young adult) not well represented in the Trust - so of anyone is interested in getting in touch with Aaron let me know and I'll put you in touch.



You will hopefully have seen that the Trust has just confirmed its' continued sponsorship of the youth team. This is something we are very proud of. Every single one of you has effectively contributed to this and for that I'd personally like to say thank you. As you will know, we are long-time supporters (both financially and vocally) of the work Ricky Duncan performs. Despite the changing youth setup nationally and our financial woes, it's nothing short of a miracle that this has been kept going. Also that Ricky continues to bring players through that are making a significant impact to the first team squad.

And while we're on youth.....Southend United Football club have re-launched the Junior Blues - more on this below. The Trust are to administer this for the club and will morph SJS members into the new set up. The Junior members are our future fans and we are delighted to be able to help the club grow this section, whilst providing our own junior members with more benefits.

Our fund raising champion has asked me re-iterate how grateful we are to those members and friends who donate unwanted items to us. Whether it's an unwanted present, a piece of Southend United memorabilia or just a used item generally - we can use them for a raffle or indeed auctions, in some cases.

The Trust has just published its' proposed Events list for the season and I hope that we'll see some new faces at some of the events, as well as welcoming back the regulars. If anyone thinks of an event that they believe Trust members would be interested in, then please don't hesitate to contact us.

As ever we always appreciate your feedback and if you have any questions or comments on any Trust matteryou can contact me on pfitz666@aol.com - I try to reply to every e-mail sent to me.

FUNDRAISING

100 Club

The latest winners in the scheme, pulled out of the hat during weekly draws since the last newsletter were **Wally Despy, Paul Manning, Mrs C.A. Harvey, John Smith, Donna Stone, Graham Hart, Chris Karkoski, Valerie Fane, Bryan Woodford, Graham Hilder (three times), Peter Hall and Philip Endell.**

The nature of the 100 Club means the more people that sign up, then the bigger the weekly prize. To register your interest, you can still contact Alan Perry at alanperry4@hotmail.com or by calling 01702 476458 and put yourself in with a chance of winning the weekly prize.

We have also included a 100 Club Flyer with this newsletter which you can complete and return to us either by post to the address shown on the form or by handing in at the Trust Info Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to any home game.

Remember, the more people that sign up to the scheme, then the higher that prize will be. By setting up a standing order for just £5 a month (or just £60 a year), you put yourself in with a chance of winning around £28.00 per week at the present time.

Quid-a-Goal

Our Quid A Goal scheme is now up and running for the 2013/14 Season.

So the season has only just started and we have raised £133.75 already. It took us 8 games to get to this total last year!!



The aim of the scheme - like most of the Shrimpers Trust's activities is to raise money for Southend United Football Club and make sure that there is a club for us to be supporting in the foreseeable future.

In particular, some of the money raised from this Season's "Quid a Goal" scheme will be donated to the Southend United Physio Ben Clarkson and his Department to help purchase much needed equipment.

This is how it works:

Those who support the scheme with a pledge have their name and details of their pledge displayed in the United match program each week and are detailed on this web site.

We ask you to pledge £0.25, £0.50, £1.00 or more under various headings such as clean sheets, various players scoring goals, or team goals. This does not have to cost you a fortune as you can easily judge in advance how much your pledge will cost you come the end of the season.

For example, the Blues rarely manage more than 80 goals in a season from 1st team matches. A £0.25 per goal pledge would therefore most likely not cost you more than £20.00 come the end of the season. If funds are tight how about £1 for every goal scored by our full backs? The 08/09 season would have cost you £3.00. If you chose to do £0.50 per point and we finished up with 80 points. At the end of the season we will write to you thanking you for your support of this initiative and asking you to send us a cheque for the amount of £40.00.

Last year this scheme raised around £1,300 from the 40+ people that helped us. This includes support by some of the Southend United's directors.

If you would like to help raise funds for this worthy cause you can do so by completing the QAG Entry Form which has been included with this newsletter and return to us either by post to the address shown on the form or by handing in at the Trust Info Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to any home game.

Entry forms are also available from the Trust Website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP

Life Members



Life Membership of the Trust currently costs £100.00 if you have an email account or £125.00 if you prefer to receive Trust Mailings by post.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact our Membership Secretary, Paul Yeomanson via email at membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk.

You can also join up as a Life Member in the Membership Section of the Trust Website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, and postal applications will also be accepted at **Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9FD**.

Welcome to New Members since the last Newsletter

David Brett-Pitt, Jay Calvin, Albert Chittock, Connor Chittock, Mr. Edwards, Matthew Evans, Paula Evans, Kenny Goodbourn, Emily Halley, Peter Halley, Lewis Hammond, Nicholas Hammond, Daniel Lamb, Gary Mayle, Archie Merrin, Malcolm Shaw, Richard Spooner and David Roy Wood.

***Please note that the Shrimpers Trust would like to know if any of its members' addresses change, or if they have a new email address so that newsletters and other correspondence can be sent to the correct address. Please send any change of address details to **The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend on Sea, SS1 9FD**, by email to membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk or alternatively fill in our on-line contact details form which can be found in the Membership Section of the Trust Website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk ***

FORTHCOMING FUNDRAISERS

CHINESE NIGHT

Thursday 29th August 2013
East, 33 Alexandra Street, Southend on Sea

The evening begins at 7.30pm with the meal from 8.00pm and the cost will be £15.00 per person for an 'all you can eat' buffet.



We welcome Members and Non Members alike so why not come along for some good food and chat.

For further details contact Alan Perry: (01702 476458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com)

SUPPORTERS FORUM and PHIL BROWN Q&A

Monday 2nd September 2013
The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall

The Shrimpers Trust will be hosting a Supporters Forum on Monday 2nd September 2013 when you will get your first chance to ask questions of Phil Brown as he embarks on his first full season as SUFC Manager.



Trust Chairman Paul FitzGerald and United's CEO Steve Kavanagh will also be on hand to answer any questions you may have about the Trust and Southend United.

The Forum will be held in the Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall on Monday 2nd September 2013. Doors open at 7.00pm with the event starting at 7.30pm prompt.

Admission is free of charge, and is open to Members and Non-members of the Trust.

For further details contact Paul Yeomanson: (01702 302373 or info@shrimperstrust.co.uk)

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 28th September 2013
The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall

The Shrimpers Trust will be holding their first Quiz Night of the 2013/14 Season in the Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall on Saturday 28th September 2013.



The doors open at 7.00pm with commencement of the quiz at **7.30pm sharp**.
The cost will be £10.00 for adults and £6.00 for under 16's.

Included in the price will be a choice from 5 meals (*Chicken & Chips, Chicken Nuggets & Chips, Sausage & Chips, Fish & Chips or Vegetarian Spring Roll & Chips*). The meals are provided by the Fish House and will be served at around 8.45pm.

Ideally we need tables of 8, but if you would be happy to join others who will come in parties of less than 8 please let us know.

For further details or to book a table contact Alan Perry (01702 476458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com)

QUIZ NIGHT with the PLAYERS & COACHING STAFF

Tuesday 15th October 2013
The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall

Want to pit your wits against the SUFC Players & Coaching Staff?
Well now's your chance.



The Shrimpers Trust will be holding a Quiz Night in the Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall on Tuesday 15th October 2013 and the Players & Coaching Staff of SUFC have entered a team.

The doors open at 7.00pm with commencement of the quiz at **7.30pm sharp**.

The cost will be £5.00 per person.

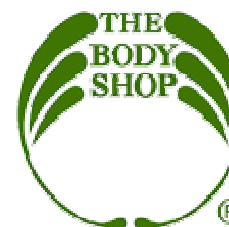
Ideally we need tables of 8, but if you would be happy to join others who will come in parties of less than 8 please let us know.

For further details or to book a table contact Alan Perry (01702 476458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com)

ONE FOR THE LADIES - BODY SHOP EVENING

Monday 11th November 2013
The Platinum Suite, Roots Hall

The Shrimpers Trust are holding a Body Shop Fundraising evening on Monday 11th November 2013 in the Platinum Suite, Roots Hall, Southend on Sea.



The Bar will be open from 7.30pm with the demonstrations starting at 8.00pm.

We welcome Members and Non Members alike so why not come along and sample some of the fantastic range of Body Shop products.

There will also be a Raffle during the evening where you will get the chance to win some fantastic Body Shop prizes.

Please note that payment can be made by cash or credit/debit cards. Cheques are not accepted.

For further details contact Kay Fogg: (01268 569697 or juniors@shrimperstrust.co.uk)

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

CURRY NIGHT

Monday 18th November 2013
The Raj, London Road, Westcliff on Sea



The evening begins at 7.30pm with the meal from 8.00pm and the cost will be £12.00 per person for an 'all you can eat' buffet.

We welcome Members and Non Members alike so why not come along for some good food and chat.

For further details contact Alan Perry: (01702 476458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com)

JUNIOR BLUES



The new Junior Blues is being run by the Club in association with The Shrimpers Trust to provide the best possible junior membership scheme for all SUFC fans aged 16 or under.

For just £10 (a one off payment until 16 years of age) members will receive a range of discounts, offers and exclusive events.

Our two clubs with the Junior Blues are Little Shrimpers, for fans aged 11 and under, and Club Blue for those aged 12-16.

Benefits for all members include:

- ✓ **10% discount on Community Soccer Schools**
- ✓ **£2 discount for Cup matches at Roots Hall**
- ✓ **Membership Card**
- ✓ **Membership Pack**
- ✓ **Exclusive Christmas Party**
- ✓ **Birthday and Christmas cards**
- ✓ **Exclusive Meet the Players Day**
- ✓ **Discount at the following: Adventure Island, Kursaal Bowl, Skirmish Paintball, Marsh Farm, Partyman World, Smyths Toy Shop, Laser Combat, Papa John's and Playfootball.net**
- ✓ **Photo of your favourite player**
- ✓ **Chance to be a mascot at a first-team game at Roots Hall**
- ✓ **Reduced travel prices to away games on Shrimpers Trust Coaches**



+ More discounts and offers being added all the time

If you would like to sign up any family member or friends aged under 16's a membership form has been enclosed with this newsletter (we will accept photocopies if for more than one application). Please complete and return to Junior Blues, The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 1FD.

Alternatively you can visit the new Junior Blues website <http://juniors.shrimperstrust.co.uk> where membership forms can be downloaded and printed off.

Also on the website you will find all the details of our partners including discounts offered.

If you have any enquiries please email Kay Fogg at juniors@shrimperstrust.co.uk

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

WELCOME ABOARD

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome aboard our new recruits for the season; John White, Ben Coker, Craig Reid, Will Atkinson, Conor Clifford, Julian Bennett and I think it is fair to say from our first 4 games both Anthony Straker and Freddy Eastwood could be like new signings this season.

The signings all seem to be settling in well and looks like despite a shaky start from Phil Brown last season, he now has his own squad together and he has them fit and ready for the new season. The most exciting from my perspective has to be Conor Clifford.

Conor is a former Republic of Ireland youth international and has represented them at under-17, under-19, and under-21 level. He has been previously called into the senior Ireland squad but is yet to net a cap having been called up to the senior team for the friendly against Croatia and was an unused sub for the game and he was called into the senior squad for their 2014 FIFA World Cup qualifier against Germany on 12 October 2011.

FANCY A FLUTTER?

Well the odds over Southend achieving success this year have been cut dramatically after our great start to the season.

The best odds available are with Ladbrokes who are still offering 18/1. Saturday's opponents Chesterfield are still bookmakers favourites at 5/1, Fleetwood 11/2, Portsmouth 7/1 and Oxford at 9/1.

We are available at 4/1 to gain promotion through Sporting Bet, or if you think it is all going to go horribly wrong and we are exiting the football league for the first time you can get 33/1 on this through betway.

Freddy Eastwood is still available at 66/1 through BetVictor to be the league's top scorer and I have already got my fiver on this one. Duh Duh Duh Duh Duh Freddy Eastwood! Super Barry Corr is Available at 40/1.

THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO! – SUFC 1st TEAM MATCH REPORTS

Welcome to our new Southend United 1st Team Match Report section for the 2013/14 Season.

This season the match reports are being written by Trust Member Gary Beard, and as you read them you will realise that they are not your normal run of the mill reports, which you have probably gathered from the title.

The Trust Committee would like to thank Scott Barber for providing us with match reports in previous seasons.

Saturday 3rd August 2013
Southend 1 Plymouth 0



Barbour jacketed, double-barrelled shot gun toting, Range Rover drivers revere the 'Glorious' 12th of August. Small people and some big ones too, worship December 25th, whilst in the Albert household they simply count the days. But, compared to the first day of a new football season, these dates fall into insignificance.

The build-up starts with the announcement of the pre-season friendlies. Kissing cousins to the real thing of course but they serve well as appetisers and they also provide an early opportunity to view new blood. Accordingly Denzil "I don't do meaningless games" was having to be 'introduced' to the team by Boycie who took full advantage of this opportunity to rub in the fact that they were now familiar faces to the 'real' supporters.

Baiting our village curiosity is a rather common Thunderbird activity. However, whilst we wait for his bottom lip to stop quivering, there is just enough time for others. Accordingly Triggers head was buried so far into his match programme that even Tony Robinson would have had a problem excavating him. The production known as 'Albert Unleashed' was providing the usual colourful theatre, whilst in the nearby stalls; Marlene was warming up her tonsils with a blow torch.

Indeed it was only Mike who was looking a trifle distracted and distant from events. The electronicsphere had been a buzz with twitters making exciting promises. Legally binding agreements, which indeed even now were

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

being re broadcast over the stadium's speakers. And yet, of the promised goodies, in four different favours mind you! there was not a sign. His research of the subject so exhaustive that few would disagree that he has it totally licked, he had hopefully wandered from market stall to market stall seeking his goal; only to be disappointed. Where was the frozen gold?

In the ruddy Family section that's where! What gormless idiot decided to sell Rossi, yeah Rossi's, ice cream only to those too young and inexperienced to be able to fully appreciate its subtle, yet impacting, charms. No wonder the club's broke. Indeed so was Mike's heart!

A goodly sized crowd had packed itself into Roots Hall. Over a thousand of which were away supporters. A fact that many expressed amazement over given the distance that they would have had to travel. 'Would' being the operative word as Plymouth have a very active London based group of supporters. With smuggling and wrecking no longer considered quite P.C many people have abandoned the West Country to find employment elsewhere. And London, bearing a name that even the Wurzels would struggle to mangle up, was an obvious destination. Still their 'Ooh Ah's' added a certain something to the atmosphere.

Plymouth, in light blue, kicked off attacking the South Bank with some energy. The ball flashing from boot to boot at worm snout breaking height; earning them an early corner. It's not recorded whether or not moles also inhabit the subterranean world beneath the golden turf, but if so, the ceilings of the tunnels must have been reverberating, as Blues then responded with some, delightful football of their own. This was going to be a game for the connoisseur.

As indeed it was. Goal kicks and corners providing the only opportunity for the ball to earn air miles. Our visitors had the best of the opening minutes, stretching our midfield with accurate passing. A few signals from the bench solved that problem though and, as we closed down the opposition, so it became we who were passing the ball around to the distraction of others.

And it was from just such football that we scored our first goal of the season. Some neat interchanging of the ball eventually releasing Straker out on the wing. He advanced into space before releasing it square into the area, where it was then played across the box by Laird, to where both Eastwood and Corr were lurking. For a moment it appeared as if we had over cooked the egg. With the back of the net begging to burst was no one actually going to hit the ball? And the, to the glorious joy of all, Corr struck it well and true to send Blues deservedly into a 1 – 0 lead!

The term 'team goal' is much abused these days but if ever there was an example of one, this was it. Its birth cries had been uttered within the crib of our defence, its adolescence was spent being introduced to all of our midfielders and then it's coming of age occurred as it reached the feet of our forwards. If this is a hint of things to come then Roots Hall is going to be purring louder than a pride of lions watching Homer Simpson come over the hill!

Plymouth immediately tried to respond but Blues stood firm before commencing to take over almost full control of the game. A period of superiority ensuing that, although unfortunately being devoid of any goals, was still rich in the art of football. Our midfield play at times was sublime, Plymouth chasing shadows as we moved the ball around both accurately and fast. Atkin –son (Yeah, we were listening Albert!) particularly impressing the eye, but praise too to Straker, Leonard and especially Laird who was always there to tidy up on the rare occasions that a wobble did occur.

Indeed it was only strange decisions by the grey clad personage from Hobbiton that provided Plymouth with any ball time at all. Our forwards were being manhandled every time the ball went forward. Indeed it was the only way that Plymouth could stop us from scoring again, and yet the creature, that would enquire what the weathers like up there off gnomes, saw nuffink! So odd then that he had no problem being a whistling witness to our stepping on shadows whenever they entered our half of the field!

Given the amount of running that we were doing, one can only put down the free kick, awarded directly outside our box deep into first half injury time, to heavy breathing. Certainly no foul whatsoever had occurred. Nevertheless there was the runt of Baggin's family measuring out 10 yards, 300 footsteps to the inch! with Bentley (Until then unemployed) anxiously aligning his wall.

Humour strikes at curious moments. But the injury time, caused by one of their defender colliding with his goalkeeper, was in itself creating health problems for one particular spectator. Never one able to hold his beer, even as a teddy boy's mascot, Uncle Albert's bladder was playing up again as his pre match lemonade sought egress. Now, with a fussy referee, re measuring and then re measuring again the position of our wall, pressure was mounting. His hands between his thighs, his eyes squeezed tightly, more lines than British rail running across his farrowed forehead our errant OAP was about to bring a touch of Brussels to the Essex Riviera, aka a Mannekin Pis.

His moans and cries of distress were like an elephant giving birth. But even he grew silent as the dreadful moment of truth approached. The stadium falling as quiet as Colchester's as the referee's pip squeak echoing around its rafters. And yet the ball did not move. Seconds passed, Jumbo was becoming as contorted as an M.P's pay rise claims, but still the ball remained stationary. What was going on?

Then all became clear, an anti-climax sweeping around the ground, as instead of the ball being blasted at the wall, it was just gently chipped over it and straight into the hands of our grateful goalkeeper. The whistle for

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

half time blowing almost immediately afterwards. But, as almost simultaneous as that event was, it was still preceded by the sound of a toilet door slamming as someone broke the Old Gits 40 minute mile to reach relief.

Whilst Denzil and Trigger happily spent halftime trying to determine what had been the fastest goal of the day the other Thunderbird's focussed upon our tactics. In particular we were all impressed by our midfield play and we wondered how Plymouth's manager was going to respond. The referee had come to his sides rescue upon numerous occasions but it would be dangerous to depend upon his bias too much. That said, we were running them ragged, so some cunning plan had to be derived otherwise all their overconfidence (So delightfully expressed by their oh so eloquent supporters upon message boards across the country) was going to come back and bite them. Hard!

And so Route 1 became the outstanding feature of the second half as a startled ball found itself being lofted towards the heavens every time it encountered a Plymouth boot. And the tactic worked. When a ball is falling towards you, post stamped Space Station; it does rather present difficulties in terms of re-introducing it to a flight path with an altitude of zero feet. Accordingly whilst we dealt well with the situation; our headers out of defence were tending to only result in the ball being hoofed straight back. The beautiful game had gone all punk!

Although disappointed, at the poetry of the first half turning into pose as sung by Marlene, it was nevertheless interesting to see how we were going to cope with this form of attack. Would we be bullied out of our game, would we merely whimper a bit before surrendering, or would we be able to weather a storm that many, many other side are going to direct our way over the coming season ?

At first our timbers did shiver a bit and we began to find it harder and harder to maintain our control over the game. Indeed we too began launching balls forward towards Corr rather than gliding them to the feet of our willing midfielders. I guess the heat was also taking a toll. A cloudless blue sky, perfect for holiday beaches, less so for a game of football (Qatar !, really FIFA ??) had brought out the sun cream and, in certain, privileged, places ice cream as well. But conducive to our game? Well possibly better than the mud laden pitches we can expect later on. But it was still extracting a certain price. Had we the funds to cover it?

With a 20 man squad it is certainly going to be a challenge, particularly when injuries and suspensions begin to extract their toll. But today, with a fit and healthy bench, backing us up, we withstood the test well. And although there was only a rare glimpse of the football we had played in the first half, our game becoming longer and more stretched as a result, we were nevertheless still more than the equal of our visitors.

A very encouraging start then. Our defence looked organised, our midfield talented and our forward line alert and prepared. We are a small squad though and there is an awful long way to go. Word is that our youngsters will get a chance to get more blooded on Tuesday in the League cup against Yeovil. If so it's a wise and thoughtful decision. Because although monies from further rounds would be of undoubted benefit to the club, if, make that when, we need to depend upon the kids it's going to be vitally important that they have as much experience under their belts as possible.

Nice to kick off the season with a win though!

Come On you Blues!!

Tuesday 6th August 2013 Southend 0 Yeovil 1



Missionary work isn't supposed to be easy and this certainly wasn't! Blues, now doubt, thought it a grand idea to fill the East stand with live people for a change. But I have to say the whole experience was rather unedifying. For starters the players were running the wrong way! It was like watching the game in a mirror. Everything was back to front.

Then there were the seats and, without wanting to make too much of it, C.S.I would only require a single swab to identify the age group that usually bed down in them. Loos were nearby but getting to them involved steps! However, on a more positive note, just for once, I wasn't going to get my ribs broken every few minutes by the flying elbows of our fidgety O.A.P. Why?

Well the credit/blame goes to Rodney who thought it might be an idea for the Thunderbirds to spread out over several perches rather than be just one amorphous group. Whilst I strongly doubt that we could ever, ever, be accused of being that, the idea had some merit in that we could thus cast our considerable influence over a wider area and maybe even get a chant or two of support going.

Accordingly, through clever timing following a schedule of 'D Day' proportions, we contrived to be broken up into separate groupings; albeit all within conversation range of at least one other. Rather oddly only Mrs T volunteered to chaperon Albert. But as he was going to be only one amongst a whole nest of ~~boring old gits~~ elderly gentfolk we felt it safe. Boycie on the other hand obviously required close watching. The East Stand just wasn't ready for referee baiting upon any scale. So clearly he and Mike needed to be separated.

Accompanied then by our mobile siren and Rodney, his roost was strategically positioned halfway up the stand (Albert was higher up and thus closer to the still showroom condition loo's). Mike and Sid opting for one closer

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

to the action. Trigger was there too as were Alan and his missus; all of them opting to exercise crowd control over the Green's. Indeed only Denzil was absent from duty; happily curled up at home with his collection of Big Brother and Corry DVD's.

So there we were and although the 'Alice through the looking glass' experience was at first off-putting, our proximity to the away dugout was rather fun. But more on that later, because to the background noise of cockle sandwiches lovingly being gummed, the game kicked off with Yeovil, our opponents from the Championship, attacking the South Bank.

Facing them was a much changed Blues team from our opening fixture that featured pretty much all of our new signings. Brown obviously wanted to give them an airing; particularly as one or two of them had missed a large chunk of pre-season. A run in this cup competition would bring in badly needed financial rewards but that needed to be balanced against our need to maintain the fitness levels of our squad. Besides winning both the League and F.A cups in one season would be a bit greedy!

Yeovil showed their intent early on in the game taking it to Blues; matching our own swift short passing style to good effect. In fact was quite revealing and just say that Brown does hang around for longer than his critics suggest, then this could well be us in a few seasons time. Our visitors had not only height advantage over us but also, as you'd expect given their exalted league status, better players. We had more heart though and weathering, the early storm, we too began to ask questions of the opposing defence.

Rather unexpectedly Cowan was playing out wide, rather than as a partner to Reid. This left the hard working ex Aldershot player rather exposed but, on the other hand, Cowan's explosive bursts of speed often caught Yeovil's midfield off guard meaning that they were often hurried into passes to our advantage. With Atkinson again providing the flair and Clifford and Payne the energy, control of the centre of the park was thus being fiercely contested.

In the centre of our defence we welcomed Bennett (ex Nottm Forest) to the club. A late arrival, he had not been really a feature of our friendly engagements so this was our first opportunity to assess the replacement for Cresswell. Well, for starters, he has more hair and whilst a few inches are lacking, he certainly knows how to put in a tackle and, as his match fitness improves so will his timing in the air. Early thoughts are that he is a solid, if perhaps injury prone, signing that will do a decent job for the Blues.

Bentley was much the busier of the two goal keepers but generally he was only having to deal with shots from outside of the box. On occasion though, Yeovil were having some joy down the wings and so, as the crosses came in and corners were conceded, so the pressure began to rise. Even so we were bearing up well. Indeed the team in green hoops often had to resort to underhand tactics to prevent us from launching quick counter attacks. This was to the discomfiture of not only the maimed Blue, but also the regular patrons of the East Stand as Boycie, Marlene and Mike all gave vent to their feelings.

Didn't we know that this wasn't quite the done thing. The collective grinding of many indentured (sic) tombstones revealing just how much our 'advice' to the officials was being frowned upon. Someone else getting an unwanted earful was Yeovil's manager, Mike enquiring of him; as yet another home player was battered to the ground, if he had a licence for his animals?

Then, from the visiting menagerie, came a moment of unexpected class as, following a spell of play outside and to the right of our box, a shot was fired in that left Bentley totally stranded. On overall play Yeovil did deserve the lead and few could begrudge the manner in which it had been taken. Unfortunately though it stirred their 100 + supporters, many of whom were surely drunk, to launch a green flare. An event that saw security men running in from every quarter. None of the expected arrests were made but the flare was quickly extinguished leaving the North Bank full of smoke.

Plymouth had let off a similar firework too during their visit on Saturday. Given that both clubs hail from far to the west, hopefully this is just some strange pagan ritual. But if it is a sign of things to come then it is an unwelcome one. The Premiership has been wrecked by foreign imports, if now supporters too are going to be affected by European customs, then the bottom of the hill is closer than I thought.

Half time and a welcome opportunity for the splintered groups of Thunderbirds to really give the officials an earful. To the general discomfort of the Old Folks home we poured down our scorn at them for not taking tougher action against the thugs that were maiming our players. Skilful, Yeovil certainly were. But there was a spiteful edge to their game too, and we wanted them muzzled!

Amazingly their manager was also complaining. Although just what about we could not comprehend as Straker had been crunched from behind by a player who only got a caution and not the red card that his attack merited. Still, referee, linesman, opposing manager; all legitimate targets and, yep it was fun!

The second half was a much more even battle. Acute substitutions, Corr adding height and Leonard experience to the side also helped. However its highlight was not an equalising goal, which incidentally we thoroughly deserved, but instead the result of a race between the two physios. Corr, the subject of many sniping attacks since his introduction to the game, had been challenged to the ball and the net result was two players being floored and a race initiated.

Cheered on, not only by the two sets of supporters but also both teams of players, it was neck and neck between Ben Clarkson and his similarly framed opposite number. But it was the man from Yeovil who, on the

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

home gallop, edged just ahead of the home favourite to win it on the nod. The result was unimportant though, just seeing all the beaming smiles on the player's faces was sufficient. They had so just loved watching their respective medical staff getting some exercise!

Towards the end of the game we began to apply a lot of pressure. Two headers going very close to sending the game into extra time. Alas though it was not to be. But Blues had played well, and providing that our ever growing injury list, Laird, Bennett, Leonard and Clifford, is reduced by the weekend then a positive result can be hoped for at Hartlepool.

Getting out of Roots Hall, (The car park behind the East Stand was packed with private ambulances), was a challenge. But once we had wielded our way through all the Zimmer frames and cane fields it became possible to reflect upon the season ahead. We have a team, no doubt whatsoever about that, but do we have a squad capable of supporting it?

The consensus was 'No'. But add another forward, (We had huffed but very rarely puffed!), perhaps another defender (Bennett went off injured rather too easily for comfort) plus a few squad players and we could well be up there challenging for the honours. As things stand though, mid table is probably the best that we can hope for with, alas, relegation not entirely out of the question. A few key injuries/suspensions, pitches like Accrington's and anything could happen. Still, looking at the bright side, work on our new stadium is supposed to be starting soon!

Come on you Blues!!

Saturday 17th August 2013
Southend 2 Northampton 0



Challenges come in many forms but few are tougher than the one that was set up for Mike by both our beloved Blues and the rather slightly less adorable Thunderbirds. For some reason SUFC have decided to make iced confectionary (Code name Rossi's ice cream) only available from the bar within the kiddies area of the West Stand! Now if toddlers are allowed to get drunk then surely upright, deserving citizens such as Mike should have access to the goodies hidden away inside the fridge. And, with four flavours on offer, vanilla, strawberry, chocolate and blue bubble-gum! the Thunderbird pilot was understandable upset that his access to them was barred by miles of fencing and two security guards.

Not so his fellow T'Birds who all thought it spiffing fun to send him tweets throughout the week preceding this game, all describing the iced delights that he couldn't reach. Trolls the lot of 'em! But cunning plans aren't just the preserve of knighted purveyors of curiously shaped vegetables, and so the candles burnt low as a devilishly wily strategy was developed. Furthermore it worked too! Mike happily collecting his reward after he had lied about his age to one of the guardians of the gates.

Inspiration doesn't come much better than that! And the vibes of pleasure being transmitted as a plastic spoon got employed to very good effect, obviously had a positive effect, not only upon him, but also the team who were warming up in front of him. Heads being visible raised and backs straightened as waves of positiveness rippled out from his perch high up inside the West Stand.

Mike's day was then further improved when he was presented with a new team shirt courtesy of the Green's and Rodder's. Neither the home nor away strip being sources of stimulation, Thunderbird II's ace pilot, asked by the tribal elders to express his preference, opted for the team's training shirt instead. In his view, one shared by many others according to the club shop staff, its design should have formed the home shirt. Furthermore, enhanced as it had been by the addition of four letters M.O.T.U on its back, (The Thunderbirds fondly refer to Mike as being the 'Master of the Universe' for some reason) it was now going to be modelled at grounds all around the country.

So it was very, very understandable then that so many in the West Stand swooned when he revealed his manly chest as he swapped the shirt he had been wearing for its replacement. Boycie extending their moment of pleasure and awe by holding onto its neck, thus preventing Mike, for many seconds, from shielding his fine frame from view. A practice that sadly only encouraged Albert to then pull up his shirt to reveal a few twisted grey hairs amidst acres of relaxed muscle. Our intransigent example of why old people get hidden away in homes, (He's also been barred from all the local café's for slurping tea through his gums), was for some reason quite proud of his naked prairie, populated only with tumbleweed. It certainly succeeded in bringing a whole new meaning to the term 'moonin'g'!

With Aidy Boothroyd you know exactly what to expect; lumps being kicked out of your players and the unedifying sight of a ball being sent into orbit! We weren't disappointed, and within seconds of the game kicking off Corr had two extra knee caps growing out of his legs! A Northampton supporter had earlier claimed upon ShrimperMoan that his team were playing neat football this year. In comparison to just what?

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

Subtle hints that I've provided over previous reports might have suggested to you that I am not over enamoured with the Premiership and its troops of ballerina's. All very true, but compared to what Boothroyd considers to be football, sign me up for a years' worth of Sky bucket slop now! With an apparently blind referee and two similarly affected linesman Northampton were being granted a hunting licence with no limit. And they were taking full advantage of it. Sir Alf Ramsey once referred to the Argentinian's as being 'Animals' but they, compared to this bunch of thugs, were just representatives of 'Pets corner'.

It was therefore somewhat laughable (Well, you know what I mean) when a penalty got awarded against us for the only proper tackle in the game so far. Atkinson gained the ball fair and square, but the referee, totally intimidated by the howls of anguish NOT being emitted by the Northampton players (Not a single one of them had the cheek to claim the penalty!) couldn't wait to point his arm at the spot.

We protested of course, but Brown has obviously warned his team against receiving any cautions for dissent, and so after some fairly polite intercourse (Not echoed by the enraged Thunderbirds) the kick was taken. Only to then be brilliantly saved by Bentley, who is fast turning such events into his trade mark. Roots Hall just erupted in salutation, its stand's echoing to cheers and shouts of joy at such a travesty of justice being overturned. Given that the Football League have just reversed just another referees' poor decision (Corr's sending off at Hartlepool) have the ref's got it in for us? Again!!

Boothroyd's admiration of the referee then began to develop a downward curve as the official began collecting the names of his player's in his little book. Given that their 'tackles' were arriving even later than Denzil does at work, he had nothing to complain about. But given his less than gracious remarks post match you'll have thought his team was comprised only of milk monitors. Indeed it was notable how he didn't refer to any cutting out of the scything, mistimed tackles, but instead he just said how he was going to improve his team's cries of innocence in situations that leave their opponent's writhing on the ground in agony. Presumably they are going to blame the attacks on ninja worms!

Eventually even their tame ref lost patience and as yet another cynical foul resulted in Straker learning to fly without the benefit of either an engine or wings, so Northampton were reduced down to 10 men. Bones, as white as Albert's chest, might have been strewn about the pitch, hyena's, their voices perfectly pitched against Marlene's, could have been sniffing about for scraps and still Boothroyd and his herd of jackals would have claimed that they were being hard done by. As it was, almost their entire team surrounded the referee, pleading their case. If Boothroyd is intending to improve that part of their game then he is going to need someone of the stature of Rumpole!

Some credit must go their way though, because, despite being reduced in number, they almost opened the scoring. And, but from a goal line headed clearance by White, they would have done so. I think all of us have lamented Clohessey's departure but White, both as Captain and a player, is proving to be an extremely worthy replacement. In our last home games he was a candidate for Man of the Match and today he again turned in a magnificent performance.

The nice problem is, so is every other man jack in a Blue shirt! Prosser had an outstanding game, as so too did Thompson who was making his debut alongside him in the middle of our defence. Despite Northampton introducing taller, much heavier (Read 'lumps') later in the game not one of our defenders buckled and we won almost every ball in the air.

Our midfield was ticking along nicely and even when Laird finally succumbed to the brutality of the battle field around him, (hopefully his injury won't prove to be long term) Clifford took his place very successfully. Upfront Eastwood and Corr were leading the line and, but for the officials inability to count the number of arms around their necks, midriff and thighs (Some of the 'tackle's would have embarrassed rugby players) they might have had some joy before we did eventually achieve the break through.

A misplayed ball, running loose in midfield, was picked up by Eastwood who advanced towards the North Bank goal with real intent. Unable to resort to guerrilla tactics, Northampton's only option was to retreat before him. This provided our experienced forward with just the opportunity he had been waiting for and, drawing back his right peg, he let loose one of his trademark bullets of a shot. However some imbalance in the earth's rotation introduced a touch of curve which resulted in the ball not being buried in the back of the net, but instead soaring skywards. This encouraged their goal keeper to advance of his line in an attempt to catch it. As he did so, Straker also entered the picture, perhaps hoping to steer the ball goalwards. What actually happened next though is somewhat a matter of some conjecture.

From our roost, it appeared as if both players misjudged the drop of the ball; allowing it to bounce over their heads and into the goal. Therefore we were a might astonished, although pleased, to hear Straker being credited the goal. His all-around play certainly deserved one, but in all truth we hadn't witnessed him touching the ball. Indeed some of us wondered if he had been offside; the goal's award being the deciding factor that he hadn't indeed played a part in the goal. However, authorities, such as the press, positioned in the opposite stand were positive that our defender turned winger had had the ultimate touch.

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 9 Iss. 01. – August 2013

Did we care? Not much, it was just great to be up on our feet celebrating our goal. Last weekend we had been down to ten men and 1 – 0 to the good; it was now going to be interesting to see how the 'hard' men from up the M1 were going to deal with the same situation, albeit suffering from a negative rather than a positive scoreline.

Actually they made rather a fist of it. They continued to attack us, both with and without the ball, and as a result the neat passing that has been such a feature of our game was proving to be hard to establish. Gradually though, as they tired and more names got recorded, so we took over control of the game and it soon became just a question of just how many we would score.

However, halftime arrived with the scoreboard being untroubled any further. Brown was undoubtedly going to use our experience at Hartlepool to good advantage but what about Boothroyd? Would he place muzzles over his wild dogs or, convinced that the officials were still in his pockets, would he continue to let them run unleashed?

Well at least that was the speculation that was being performed amongst some of the Thunderbirds. Others were far more interested in their pocket jewellery. Indeed, far, far into the second half, Trigger and Denzil saw far more electronic characters than ever they did a ball. In fact it's doubtful that either of them could relate what passed for the first 20/25 minutes of the latter period so engrossed were they in performing swipes and taps.

Which was a pity because during that period Blues began to assert their authority over the game, running Northampton into the ground with some quick neat triangular passing that left their visitors chasing shadows. Our fine play was rewarded in the 62nd minute as a beautifully played ball by White down the wing, split open their defence enabling Eastwood the relative easy task of finding the back of the net.

Minutes later, two should have become three, as White (Yes, him again) was floored inside the area, but strangely neither the referee nor linesman was interested. Boycie and Mike are going to have a fantastic season if we keep on getting officials like these. Their voices are, after months in the doldrums, boomed into full richness and many terms from our own Thunderbird Dictionary were being employed to good effect. Well, we enjoyed them anyway!

Should we then have scored more? In truth, yep, but today, given the malevolent intentions of Boothroyd and his team of vultures vomit, two goals were enough. It preserves our 100% record and gives us a great lift before the next challenge; away to Chesterfield, third in the table behind us, next weekend.

Come on you Blues!

21st August 2013