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# Matchday Magazine

Editors: Susannah Hollins and Dave Johnson Writers: Leigh Edwards, Tony Matthews, Jim Cooper, Gerard Austin, **Eddie Jackson and Benjamin Browning** Contributors: Brian Lewis, Tom Holdcroft, Chris Harper, Dave Johnson and Susannah Hollins, Lindon Roberts. Design and layout: Susannah Hollins and Dave Johnson Printed by Lion FPG Ltd, Oldbury Road, West Bromwich. Tel 0121 553 5754



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# **Gaffer Talk**

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We probably saw the best and worst of us in the space of four days last week.

I thought the lads were super against Chesterfield and any latecomers would have been stunned to have missed the early firework display.

To go four goals up in the opening 18 minutes was the most fantastic start I have ever been involved in - and it could have been more. Their keeper made a couple of excellent saves and then we contrived to give them a couple of goals before half time.

In the second half we produced a professional performance in which we scored another goal to seal the points and send us off to QPR in good heart.

It was difficult to change the team after such a sparkling performance but, with the benefit of hindsight, I should have done.

We survived until half-time and had a chance to score from a corner. Mark Goodlad made a couple of good saves but I would not say QPR bombarded us.

Unfortunately, on the restart we conceded a goal from a corner, which we are good at, and from then on it was men against boys.

There was no kicking of boots afterwards, although I have been involved in incidents like that both as a manager and player. It was a freak accident which, to my mind, should have been kept within the dressing room.

It is a heated game and I, for one, cannot change the way that I am. I wish I could be like David Pleat,my boss at Luton,who was a quiet man who would hold his feelings over until a meeting on Monday.

We did have some strong words because we are in a scrap and it is not all about playing good football, as Juventus proved at Old Trafford this week.

They outpassed Manchester United for much of the time but were left to chase the game after four minutes.

I must admit the players disappoint me at times. It was a great win against Chesterfield that had the crowd buzzing for a change, for they have endured a lot. We are not consitent or strong enough and although there are a lot of young players in the sideeven Steve Brooker and Steve McPhee are in only their second season -they have to grow up quickly. I have been fortunate to be given the go-ahead by the adminstrator to add a couple of players to the squad in Adrian Littlejohn and Peter Clarke who I would expect to make their debuts this afternoon.

When you are in administration it is not just a question of agreeing a deal with player and club.The Football League also has to be satisfied with the arrangement and the reasons. I felt we had reason enough with the likes of Michael Walsh, Michael Cummins, Rae Ingram, Phil Charnock, Liam Burns, Steve McPhee all injured and Marc Brige-Wilkinson and Steve Rowland both suspended.Our visitors today, Swindon, have also had their trials and tribulations as has their manager, Andy King, who has done a good job in difficult circumstances.

Hopefully, our own future will be resolved within the next three weeks but until such times it would not be appropriate for me to comment save for the fact that everyone wants to see Port Vale still playing at Vale Park. The former regime did a good job but the club now needs to be taken on. I don't want to be here struggling at the botttom end of the division. I would rather be judged when I have the resources to strenthen the squad. The lads had the disappointment of having their FA Youth Cup tie at Tranmere called off this week but, hopefully, the same big following will be at PrentonPark to urge them on in the rescheduled game next Monday.

#### Brian Horton.





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Port Vale Matchday

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# Profiles



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# TOP 10 HITS AND MISSES

#### Top 5 hits

<u>Top 5 Away Grounds (Anywhere)</u> Liverpool - Anfield Everton – Goodison Southampton – St Mary's Middlesborough – Riverside Manchester United – Old Trafford

<u>Top 4 Football Commentators/Pundits</u> John Motson Brian Moore Gerald Stinstadt

<u>Top 3 words to describe yourself</u> Quiet, Thoughtful, Happy go lucky

<u>Top 2 Pre-match Superstitions</u> (before or after a game) Never believed in them

<u>Top 1 Game you've played in</u> <u>or watched this season</u> Arsenal v Man Utd (FA Cup), Port Vale v Chesterfield (first 25 minutes)

#### **Top 5 Misses**

<u>Top 5 Celebrities from Hell</u> Chris Eubank Anthea Turner Graham Norton Michael Barrymore

<u>Top 4 Holiday's you wouldn't entertain (i.e. – 18-30's)</u> Turkey Greece

<u>Top 3 Missed Opportunities</u> Ryan Giggs Me – Everton away, but I scored later to make up for it

<u>Top 2 Fashion Mistakes (or styles you</u> <u>wouldn't wear)</u> My orange and green shirts – the scholars love them!

<u>Top 1 Downside to being a</u> <u>Pro footballer (If any)</u> Working the Christmas period Not very popular when losing games

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## The club's Past Players Co-ordinator Leigh Edwards traces former favourites

Four goals by Harry Oscroft plus Cliff Portwood's strike and an own goal gave Port Vale a thrilling 6-1 Third Division victory over Swindon Town in front of 5,514 at Vale Park on 30th April 1960. It was the final match of the 1959-60 campaign and came five days after Port Vale conceded six goals at Mansfield.

#### WHATEVER HAPPENED TO PORT VALE'S TEAM?

KEN HANCOCK: Highly-rated goalkeeper who made 241 League appearances prior to joining Ipswich Town in December 1964, then played for Tottenham Hotspur, Bury, Stafford, Northwich and Leek. Now living in Ipstones, he was a maintenance man for Dairycrest in Hartington until illhealth forced retirement.

SELWYN WHALLEY: Long-serving rightback who contested a first-team slot with David Raine and netted seven goals in 178 League games during 13 seasons at Port vale until a foot injury ended his career in May 1966. A part-timer who was a PE teacher at Hanley High School, he still lives locally in retirement.

**ROY SPROSON:** Long-serving defender who scored 30 goals in a record 760 League games for Port Vale before joining the coaching staff in May 1972. He was manager at Vale Park from January 1974 until sacked in October 1977, then became a newsagent and remained local until his death in January 1997.

HARRY POOLE: Versatile right-half who netted 73 goals in 451 League outings for Port Vale prior to joining Sandbach Ramblers in July 1968. He ran a newsagents in Bucknall until 1979, then one in Leek until handing it over to his son two years ago. Still living in Leek, he is a Port Vale season-ticket holder.

**COLIN DAVIES:** Centre-half who made his League debut in Port Vale's 0-0 draw at home to QPR in March 1960 and played 13 Third Division games as Peter Ford's understudy, including the last ten matches of the 1959-60 campaign. He

joined Stourbridge in June 1961 and still resides in his native Shropshire.

**NOEL KINSEY:** Former Welsh international who scored six times in 72 League outings prior to joining Cheltenham Town in July 1961, then had a spell at King's Lynn and became Lowestoft Town's player-coach. He subsequently worked for Norwich Union insurance and is now retired, living in Norwich.

BRIAN JACKSON: Fast outside-right who moved to Peterborough United in July 1962, then played for Lincoln City, Burton Albion and Boston United. Now living in Lincoln, he spent 17 years as a

maintenance man for Rushton & Bucyrus engineers, then was a self-employed landscape gardener until retiring in 1998.

CLIFF PORTWOOD: Versatile forward who netted 32 goals in 61 League games prior to joining Grimsby Town in July 1961, then played for Portsmouth, Colchester United and South African side Durban United. He forged a successful career as a professional singer in Australia and has since performed in Las Vegas.

JOHN ARCHER: Young centre-forward who scored three times in 10 League games before moving to Bournemouth in July 1961, then played for Crewe, Huddersfield, Chesterfield, Sandbach and Nantwich. He is now able to indulge his passion for golf as greenkeeper of the

Malkins Bank course near Sandbach.

STAN STEELE: Inside-forward who moved to South African side Port

Elizabeth in April 1965 and briefly returned for a third spell at Port Vale in January 1968, scoring 88 goals in 335 League games overall. He then played for Eastwood and Armitage before coaching Great Harwood and lives locally in retirement.

HARRY OSCROFT: Ex-Stoke City outsideleft who contested a first-team slot with Cliff Portwood and netted 12 goals in 47 League games before becoming Brantham Athletic's player-boss in May 1961. He now lives in Cattawade and was a fork-lift operator at Bexford/ICI plastics factory until retiring in 1989.





Text your Man of the Match. Just type in TXT2 and the players surname to 83222

This afternoon the Robins fly into Vale Park on the back of a surprise 3-0 home defeat at the ands of Wycombe Wanderers last Saturday afternoon. Prior to that, they had slowly edged their way up the table and Andy King's charges are now lying in 12th position, still eleven points behind on conquerors a week ago, QPR, who occupy the last play-off spot.

Back in late November, Swindon Town were lying eighth from bottom, having bagged just 22 points from 19 games. Over the past three months they have improved ten-fold and, despite that recent hiccup, are regarded as one of the form teams in the Division, playing some excellent football - at home and away - and must still surely fancy themselves for a top-six finish.

But manager King, vastly experienced in the world of soccer - he made his playing debut for Luton Town 29 years ago - is taking each game as it comes



and although deep down, he is confident his squad is good enough, and strong enough, to be among the play-off contenders, he will insist his players keep their feet on the ground and don't get carried away.

Last season the Robins huffed and puffed before finishing a moderate 13th in the Second Division ... 19 points short of the play-offs, due perhaps to a disappointing away record which saw them lose 11 and drew seven of their 23 matches, scoring only 20 goals.

That disturbed King to a certain degree and this time round he and his coaching staff has worked with the strikers and on their day the front men are as good as any in this Division, with top-scorer Parkin leading the way with almost 20 goals to his credit already.

So far this term the Robins have played 16 away games, five have been won, five drawn and six lost. Their victories have come at Chesterfield (4-2), Huddersfield Town (3-2), Stockport County (5-2), Tranmere Rovers (1-0) and Wycombe (3-2).

The draws have been gained at Barnsley, Blackpool, Cardiff City (this was an exceptionally well merited display), Notts County and Plymouth Argyle.

Their heaviest defeat so far - 3-0 - was suffered at Luton.

#### THE SOUAD

The Swindon Town team of late has included the following players: Dutchborn goalkeeper Bart Griemink. On Ioan Spurs defender Dean Marney. Former Bristol City and Burnley defender Matt Hewlett. David Duke, who was signed from Sunderland in 2000. Jerel Ifil, another loan player from Watford. Skipper Andy Gurney who can occupy either the right wingback or centre-half position. Stefani Miglioranzi, who suffered a toe injury before Christmas but is now back to full fitness. The Australian Danny Invincible. French midfielder Eric Sabin. Matty Heywood, another Burnley star. Veteran former campaigner Alan Reeves, 36 later this year. Attacking midfielder Steve Robinson, ex Spurs, Bournemouth and Everton, In-form striker Sam Parkin, who was once a junior with Chelsea. Youngster Craig Farr. Aussie Gareth Edds. Chris Taylor, recently promoted from the youth team and one for the future. And finally John Sutton, who was recruited in late December. Unfortunately Adam Wills (ankle) is out of action for at least another fortnight while Kevin O'Halloran (broken leg) is out for the rest of the season.

#### **ONES TO WATCH**

· Striker SAM PARKIN, 22 in three weeks time, was at Stamford Bridge as a teenager and made his Football League debut for Millwall (whilst on loan) in September 2000 and he was also loaned out to Wycombe Wanderers, Oldham Athletic and Northampton Town before joining Swindon last summer. Standing 6ft 2ins tall and weighing a fraction over 13st, Parkin certainly has the right physique for a front man and he knows where the net lies. He started this season with 15 goals to his tally (in only 73 senior matches). This time round he's more than doubled his account and is looking for a few more, confident he can reach the 25-goal mark and hopefully secure a play-off spot for the Robins. A powerful runner, strong in the air as well as on the ground, Parkin will prove a handful of the Vale defenders this afternoon.

 Robins' captain ANDY GURNEY, now 29 years of age, started his career with Bristol Rovers for whom he appeared in more than 130 League and Cup games before transferring to Torquay United in July 1993. He had 78 outings for the Gulls, following up with 84 for Reading after his £100,000 move from Plainmoor in January 1999. He arrived at Swindon (on a free transfer) in July

# Swindon Town

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2000 and has now made around 70 first-class appearances for the Robins, with his career record now touching the 375 mark - and rising. A versatile performer, who over the years has turned out at right wing-back, centrehalf, as a sweeper and in midfield, Gurney is comfortable on the ball, he loves bringing it out of defence and contributes some vital goals with some sweetly struck shots from outside the penalty area.

 Dutch goalkeeper BART GRIEMINK, 31 next month, played for WK Emmen in his homeland before joining Birmingham City in November 1995 (signed by Barry Fry). He followed Fry to Peterborough United (in October 1996) and was on loan at The County Ground in February 2000 before joining the Robins on a permanent basis five months later. A fine shotstopper, but sometimes erratic with his kicking (he admits this himself) Griemink has now accumulated more than 200 appearances in senior football...and at 6ft 4ins tall and tipping the scales at 15st 4lbs, he is also one of the tallest and heaviest 'keepers in the country.

 MATT HEYWOOD is another hefty footballer, standing 6ft 2ins tall and 14st in weight, who joined Swindon Town from Burnley on a free transfer in January 2001. He had just 15 outings for the Clarets but has now pressed on to take his overall appearance tally well past the 100-mark. Aged 23 and a native of Chatham (Kent) he is a solid, unflappable central defender who has produced some excellent displays over the last 18 months or so and was voted Robins' 'Player of the Year' in 2001-02. Tough and uncompromising, he has adapted well to the various systems used by his manager and wherever he plays he gives nothing less than 110 per-cent effort.



**Danny Invincible** 



#### THE MANAGER

Andy King was born in August 1956 and was a midfielder with Luton Town (his hometown club), Everton, Queen's Park Rangers, West Bromwich Albion, Everton (again), Wolverhampton Wanderers, SC Cambuur and FC Orebo (in Holland and Sweden respectively), Luton Town (for a second time) and Aylesbury, Waterford Aldershot. United (as player-manager) and Cobh Rangers (both in Ireland) and Southport (player-manager), finally retiring in 1987 with well over 400 senior appearances under his belt (exactly 350 in the Football League), as well as gaining two England Under-21 caps. He has since worked as a coach, and indeed, as Commercial Manager at Luton and was manager of Mansfield Town, assistant-boss at both Doncaster Rovers and Grimsby town, a scout for Sunderland and then assistantmanager at Swindon before taking charge of team affairs himself at The County Ground in November 2000. He left the club the following year before returning for a second spell in January 2002.



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London calling again for the second time this season. Mob handed to the capital today with wife and son in tow. Taking them to have the time of their lives.

What better than a dose of Vale blues to stir all those emotions for a weekend? Well I thought we'd play in blue. What did you think I meant? Not that we would lose of course.

Trips to London I generally enjoy. I wouldn't care to lay my hat in our capital permanently, but a whet of the appetite occasionally is enough to keep you interested in how the city dwellers live.

Could be a busy weekend with an anti war march on the go. Would Vale march to victory on a grassy patch that had been comprehensively taken apart on on their last occasion there? Rangers currently have lodgers down South Africa Road way. Having made our way through Holland Park, past an estate agents beforehand we know how lucrative that can be. That was because we spied an advert for a 1 bedroom bed-sit at a cool £2,000 per week. What price a telephone box then?

Rangers' Loftus Road stadium is always a place I feel comfortable in. Though small, the feeling of comfort and warmth is welcoming even if on Saturday the temperatures were sub zero. The biting wind cut deep as Vale took the field with new addition Adrian Littlejohn signed just too late for an inclusion in proceedings.

A pricing structure that allowed for an attendance swelled to over 13,000 souls was welcome, as the term 'London Prices' was anything but in a forward thinking show of marketing.

We occupied the lower tier of the School Lane end of the stadium and sat back for a second half lesson...in finishing.

Vale really do enjoy pressing the self destruct button in the capital these days, as recent visits to Loftus Road bear out. Whilst a first half of what a wily old fox tended to call 'nip and tuck', Vale held their own against a Rangers side whose very league position pumped them up encouragingly. Vale's should have done too as the side surely do not want the ultimate ignominy of relegation into obscurity, in this most trying of seasons.

What followed in the second period absurdly suggested that they did as capitulation more common with spades hearts clubs and diamonds was evident. Vale did the proverbial as Gallen, Padula, Furlong and Shittu all made their mark as Vale's Mark.....Goodlad that is, attempted to repel the tide all on his own. Vale were a sorry sight. As Chris Birchall and Neil Brisco were charged with the task of resurrection, Vale looked to be already on the cross. All we can do now is pray.

Five days passed and we've seen the good and bad in the Vale boys. A stylish polished performance of panache on Tuesday's menu, but today the left overs in an unwanted lunch, which was clearly past its sell by date.

By the time this prose is read the club should have more than an inkling which way it is going off the pitch. On the field matters, though at present have an all too familiar air. Looking for positive's after a capital capitulation isn't easy. A classy Italian feast was very easy to appreciate for this threesome in Kingston on Saturday night. What everyone else's plans were that evening I don't know, but I just hope the healthy band of Valiant followers cheered themselves up with something. Great weekend, shame about the result.



Mark Goodlad



# Football In The

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Tuesday 18th February Holiday Courses Biddulph Leisure Centre Dimensions Leisure Centre Congleton High School

Wednesday 19th February Holiday Courses Biddulph Leisure Centre Dimensions Leisure Centre Congleton High School

Thursday 20th February Holiday Courses Biddulph Leisure Centre Dimensions Leisure Centre Woodcroft First School

Friday 21st February Holiday Courses Biddulph Leisure Centre Dimensions Leisure Centre

Saturday 22nd February Saturday Soccer Dimensions Leisure Centre Port Vale F.C Gym

### Good afternoon, a warm welcome to all the Swindon Town fans who have made the journey to Vale Park for today's game.

#### Saturday Soccer

Coaching for boys and girls aged 6 to 13 years old is available every Saturday morning at Dimensions Leisure Centre in Scotia Road Burslem between 10am and 12.00pm.

Qualified Port Vale F.C Community Scheme staff supervise the sessions which, have become so popular that we have had to organise additional sessions in the club gym.

Some weeks in excess of 100 players are receiving advice and tips from our staff and occasionally talent is identified and

# invited to the Centre of Excellence for advanced training.

Advanced booking is not required and any telephone enquiries should be directed to Dimensions Leisure Centre.



Saturday Soccer sessions have good supervision and are well organised by Port Vale F.C Community Scheme staff

#### **Midnight Football**

Each Friday evening youngsters and adults alike from the Stanfields estate in Burslem make the short journey down to Dimensions Leisure Centre. Once they reach there they meet up with coaching staff from Port Vale F.C. community Scheme and take part in football activities.

This is Midnight Football, and is the direct result of a partnership between the Stanfields Youth Inclusion Unit and Port Vale F.C Community Scheme. Only a short while ago some of these youngsters would have been involved in anti-social activities on Friday evenings, and in some cases were endangering their own health and



#### even risking their freedom.

This programme has played a major part in the dramatic reduction in crime in the area and has led to some very positive links between Port Vale and it's local community, including the formation of a drumming group, which practices in the club gym once a week. Final rehearsals are due to take place to see if participants can become part of the matchday activity programme at Port Vale Football Club, with the clubs permission, they soon hope to be beating out a rhythm in tune with the fans chanting, which may help to create the sort of atmosphere that will drive the players on to success.





# Community

With Jim Cooper

# pvfcfitc@hotmail.com - 01782 575 594

#### After Schools Coaching Programme

After half term we begin a new programme of after schools coaching sessions,

Port Vale Community Scheme staff visit a school once a week and deliver a one hour session to boys and girls.

Running with the Ball, shooting, dribbling, heading, turning and small-sided games are all included in the programme.

Talented youngsters are identified and invited to train with the Port Vale F.C Centre of Excellence.

#### Port Vale Junior Membership

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Community Officer Jim Cooper (left) and assistant Dean Cotterill pictured with youngsters from the Stanfield Youth Inclusion Group.







# **Team Check**

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16

Port Vale
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2. Matt Carragher
3. Rae Ingram
4. Sean McClare
5. Michael Wałsh
6. Sam Collins
7. Neil Brisco
8. Michael Cummins
9. Stephen Brooker
10. Steve McPhee
11. Marc Bridge-Wilkinson
12. Dean Delaney
13. Levi Reid
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15. Ian Armstrong
16. Steven Rowland
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20. John Durnin
21. Liam Burns
22. Ryan Brown
23. lan Brightwell
24. Peter Clarke
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26. Simon Eldershaw
50. Iain McIntosh

### Swindon Town 1. Bart Griemink 2. Gareth Edds 3. Dean Marney 4. Matthew Hewlett 5. Adam Willis 6. Adam Gurney 7. Keith O'Halloran 9. Sam Parkin 10. Stefani Miglioranzi 11. David Duke 14. Eric Sabin 15. Darren Dykes 17. Daniel Invincible 18. Craig Farr 19. Matthew Heywood 21. David Brampton 22. Alan Reeves 25. Steve Roninson 26. Alan Young 28, Nathan Edwards 31. Kevin Halliday



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#### **Bens Bits & Bobs**

With Benjamin Browning

The stakes are getting higher as we continue into the advanced stages of the league season – Swindon Town are 5 places above Port Vale and so have a more comfortable position in the table than us. Mind you, they are 8 points clear of us at the moment.

Swindon formed back in 1894 were set up by Reverend William Pitt and became founder members of the Southern league division one. Known as the Robins because of their colours – will the Valiants see red on the pitch today?

Swindon's financial position started poorly and was set to continue thus. Some of the more interesting history that the club has enjoyed was being used as a prisoner of war camp in the Second World War. Will they be taking any prisoners here today at Vale Park?

Let's not forget that they only finished last season one place above us but they did beat us 2-0. I think that there may be a little more to play for today.

Let us hope that by the time the game kicks off today we all know a little more about Port Vale's future. I am sure we are all of the same mind and want whoever takes over to look after the interests of Port Vale as a football club first and foremost. You can play your part by getting behind the team and cheering them on – when they are on a roll and also if they struggle – this is not the time for fans to be fickle.

Looking at the playing form of the two teams, Vale really need to get back into their stride and start knocking goals in. More importantly it is imperative that the defence is intact. Once that is sorted out – we will power ahead.

Buoyed by the new era in which we are all now entering with the club – why not cash in on our success and have a bet – I won't beat around the bush today. I think that we are going to reverse the scoreline from this match last season and hammer Swindon 2-0.

For a more interesting bet – I would have a few quid on it being a draw at halftime with an outright Port Vale win. As far as first goal scorer is concerned – I'll have to leave that up to you to pick your favourite player.

#### **Programme Nostalgia**

www.port-vale.co.uk www.valeshop.com

Part 17 of a series by the Editor of "Programme Monthly & Football Collectable" magazine

### WHAT TO COLLECT - PRE AND EX-LEAGUE PROGRAMMES

We have stated earlier in this series that football programmes are the best recording annals of the varying and conflicting fortunes of football clubs. In no area is this more pronounced than in programmes of clubs who have moved in and out of the Football League. This extends right back to the early decades of this century, to such names as Thames FC, Aberdare Athletic and whose League Tydfil, Merthyr programmes are very much sought after and command very large sums on the rare occasion they are offered to the market.

Post-war, the first club to fall victim were New Brighton, voted out in 1951, whose red and white 8 page programmes can only now be obtained by offering up to £100 at auction. Clubs who came into the League after the war, such as Gillingham, Scunthorpe and Colchester (all elected in 1950) are in demand as non-league clubs with last season as non league and first season as League particularly sought after.

Gateshead and Accrington Stanley were next to fall. Both were prolific programme producers, with the former issuing brief, stark issues until they were voted out to be replaced by Peterborough United in 1960. The Posh were prolific non-league issuers, and many programmes of their pre-league era remain on the market. Accrington Stanley failed to complete 1961/62 season, and the red on white programmes they issued that season are greatly sought after. Oxford United changed their name from Headington United and stepped up from the nonleague ranks.

Others since then include Hereford United for Barrow in 1972, Wigan Athletic for Southport in 1978, Wimbledon for Workington in 1977, and Cambridge United for Bradford Park Avenue in 1970. In every instance, pre-league programmes are plentiful for the incomers, while League programmes for the clubs who had the misfortune to be voted out are becoming increasingly harder to obtain, although most remain on the open market at prices of a few pounds.

Up to the present date, there has been a considerable resurgence of interest in this category of collecting with recent movements between the Conference and the Third Division. Some collectors actively seek "last season in the

Conference" for a promoted club, or first season there for a relegated club, and vice versa in the Fourth Division. One of the great tantalising aspects of football programme collecting is - will the Maidstone United issues of 1992/93 (their last in the League) be as sought after in 50 years time as those of New Brighton are today ?

\* "Programme Monthly & Football Collectable" contains up to 160 pages each month on all aspects of programme collecting. The current edition is available priced £2.50 (inclusive of postage) from 46 Milton Road, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1TL or send 9 x 1st class stamps. www.pmfc.co.uk



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Fast Forward

With Eddie Jackson

#### Luton VALE PARK • Saturday 8th March Kick-off 3pm

This is Blackpool's tenth consecutive season in Division Two. Last season was spent almost entirely just below mid-table and they finished in 16th spot. On only one occasion did they manage back-to-back wins, putting any fanciful notions of a play-off position out of the question. They sold the prolific Brett Ormerod in December of last season, his final appearance for them being at Vale Park. Last season was not all gloom for the Seasiders. Like Vale the previous season, they combined moderate league results with a victory in the LDV Vans Trophy at the Millennium Stadium.

During the close-season popular Manager Steve McMahon brought in only Simon Grayson on a free from Blackburn, since when he has added the vastly-experienced Colin Hendry to the squad. Out went Neil Murphy, Eifion Jones, Wayne Maden, Mike Milligan, Gary Parkinson, Ian Marshall, Jon O'Connor and Phil Thompson. Like most clubs they have tightened their belt and reduced the size of their playing squad.

Blackpool are currently on a good run of undefeated games and are just below the playoff positions. At home they have beaten Brentford, Cardiff, Cheltenham, Colchester, Luton, Northampton, Peterborough, Vale and Tranmere. The 3-2 victory over Vale last September was a fluctuating game in which Vale were at their most obliging. They have drawn with Bristol City, Huddersfield, Notts County, Oldham and Swindon. They have lost at Bloomfield Road to Stockport and Wigan. Away they have won at Colchester, Luton, Northampton, Plymouth and Wycombe. They have drawn at Huddersfield, Oldham, Swindon and Wigan. They have lost on their travels on seven occasions, to Barnsley, Brentford, Bristol City, Chesterfield, Crewe, Mansfield and QPR.

John Murphy with thirteen goals and Scott Taylor with eight have led the way up front.

Bloomfield Road has improved considerably in recent times, with fine stands replacing rather ramshackle structures. At present the away end does, however, still leave much to be desired, as experienced by Vale's tremendous support there last September. This season Blackpool are averaging over 6,700 through the turnstiles. If only we could match that figure these days!

From a selfish point of view I hope we stay in the same division as the Seasiders for next season. Then I shall look forward with interest to the fixtures for next season. Dare I again hope to be travelling to Blackpool during the Illuminations, visiting Fleetwood and, for once, seeing a Vale victory?



#### www.port-vale.co.uk www.valeshop.com

The takeover talk surrounding Port Vale since the club entered administration inevitability brought with it talks of Robbie Williams, Vale's most famous fan, bailing them out of trouble. I have heard it said that he is 'not a true fan' for not coming in with money in Vale's time of need. Other Vale supporters who I have spoken to believe that Robbie should merely give money to the club without any shares in return and allow the owners to spend it how they see fit.

This would be the only manner in which it would be feasible for Robbie to help the Vale, as in the life of a pop star there would be just no time for Robbie to have any say in the running of the club, and he also has no experience in this area. I suggest that, surely, it is not fair to expect anyone to give away millions of pounds without having a say in how it is spent so I personally do not blame Robbie at all for not helping out the club financially at this time. It may well be that when his singing career is drawing to a close Robbie Williams will purchase a controlling stake



Robbie Williams - 'Wonder of You'?

in the club, and continue to throw funds at it, allowing us to rise up the leagues in the same manner as Fulham have in recent years if the millions were spent sensibly. For the time being, Vale fans must accept the fact that it is not fair to expect him to buy the club at this time and continue to commend Robbie Williams for the way in which he has helped put Port Vale on the map and continued to proudly show his allegiance to Port Vale throughout his blossoming career. It would, perhaps, be a nice touch if Robbie were to release our famous anthem 'The Wonder of You' on single and donate a percentage of the profits to the club. This would make a huge profit for the club as any single that the man releases would make number one with his current popularity. The truth is that he could release his own rendition of 'The Flintstones' and still make millions out of it.

The subject of managers' tantrums has become topical lately after Sir Alex Ferguson's outburst a week ago left David Beckham with a gash above the eye. This is not an isolated incident in football, earlier this season Trevor Francis was fined for striking his substitute goalkeeper Alex Kolinko. I imagine that the whole football world are united against managers using physical violence or putting their players in danger in any way, and I hope that Sir Alex is punished harshly for his conduct in this incident.

What an astonishing miss it was from Ryan Giggs in that game! It seems unbelievable that one of the most talented players in the country can miss such an opportunity. All the Welshman had to do was roll it in along the floor; he could have even dribbled the ball into the back of the net!

Crowds at Vale Park are falling to very disappointing levels and must be improved, because it is obvious that not enough money will be going into the club on crowds as low as 3000 as there was against Chesterfield last Tuesday. The supporters such as yourselves I commend



for continuing to attend, and lets all try to do our bit to get more people inside Vale Park. Let us all bring a friend to games from now on and create some more atmosphere in the stands.

I am completely baffled by the fact that more people do not attend football across the Football League.

The buzz of watching the game and supporting your club is terrific, I couldn't live without it!

Following the two home games this week, I call on Vale fans to attend the two away games at Colchester and particularly Notts County as both are huge 6 pointers, and I'm sure the players would love as much support as possible. Notts County is not far away and easy to get to and is a ground where Vale have a good record so lets invade Nottingham next Tuesday and give our lads some support.

Up the Vale! - Tom

# EPORTS)







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#### **Clinic In A Box**

Port Vale Football Club and local health services are teaming up to help young people have easier access to health information and advice. Nationally recognised as 'best practice' Clinic in a Box is a young person's health clinic that visits youth venues across north Staffs, but this is the first time a football club has opened its doors to the scheme.

Confidential clinic sessions will be held in the Physiotherapy room in the Lorne St Stand on home match days from January 2003. Viv Bradford, leader of this North Staffordshire – wide Teenage Pregnancy initiative says: "Port Vale FC not only has an excellent track record of working in partnerships with other agencies to the benefit of the local community, but sits within one of the local target areas, and was a natural choice for this innovative and ground breaking idea."

It is hoped that by working with the Football Club Clinic in a Box will attract a new group of young people who can take advantage of the expertise of a fully trained nurse and receive information and advice on their diet, how to reduce or quit smoking, drugs or alcohol and about cancer prevention, relationships and sexual health. They may also be able to receive condoms and emergency contraception following a discussion with the nurse.

All enquiries about Clinic in a Box or the service at Port Vale FC should be directed to Viv Bradford at the Teenage Pregnancy Team on 01782 400520

Port Vale and Britannia Building Society are running a special promotion from Saturday 1st March to Friday 14th March inclusive. All new Valiant Saver Accounts opened during this period, will qualify for entry into a fabulous prize draw to be drawn on Saturday 15th March.

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Answers to

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6 ERIC SABIN, 7 ANDY GURNEY, 8 ANDY KING, 9 MATT HEWLETT, 10 MATTHEW HEYWOOD



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