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Manager's Notes

After the excitement of Tuesdays Cup-tie with Spurs, today sees us get back to the bread and butter business of League football. Last Saturday we gained a fine 2-0 win at Oxford where, as at Colchester, two goals from Robbie James did the trick.

Robbie's goal against Spurs was his eighth this season and he certainly is causing defences a lot of trouble just now.

Saturday's win at Oxford was all the more pleasing as we were without two of our regulars. Alan Curtis and Dave Bruton both missed the game through injury, and although Alan came back against Spurs, Dave is still being troubled by his foot injury. The fact that both Dave Bruton and myself missed the Spurs match gave us the opportunity of playing teenagers Nigel Stevenson and Stephen Morris at the centre of our defence. Both players gave a tremendous performance and I am sure that they have a very promising future in the game.

Today we welcome the players and officials of Bury Football Club with whom we hope to have an open, entertaining game.

Good luck,

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In OPPOSITION TODAY

BURY

The season has not started too successfully for Bury. Although the Lancashire side have failed to score in only one of their five games so far, they are still seeking their first victory.

After losing 1-2 at Swindon on the opening day of the League season, they then fought out an enthralling 3-3 home draw against newly promoted Southend and were held 2-2 on their own pitch again last Saturday when Gillingham came close to capturing their home League record.

It needed an own goal from Gillingham defender John Overton to pull back a point for Bury and they will be looking for a victory today to get their campaign under way. It is not such a remote possibility as it may look - they won six away League matches last season and that was a tally beaten only by a runaway Third Division champion - Wrexham.

By a co-incidence, Bury have tangled once already this season against the North Wales club. They were drawn against them in the League Cup and lost 0-2 at the Racecourse in the first leg: in the return they failed to make the most of home advantage and went down 1-2.

Bury have been out of the Second Division, their 'home' for decades, since 1969. Between 1971 and 1974, they even dropped into the Fourth but have since established themselves back in the Third Division. The season before last, they made a strong bid to regain Second Division status but finally missed the boat.

Last season disappointingly failed to produce a repeat challenge and Bury had to settle for a lower mid-table position - largely due to shaky form on their own Gigg Lane pitch where they managed a meagre seven wins.

PEN PICTURES

JOHN FORREST. Worked his way through Bury Junior Team and got his first chance in 1967-68 season. No. 1 choice for the past seven years.

GERRY KEENAN. Got his first chance four seasons ago but really came into his own during season 1976-77.

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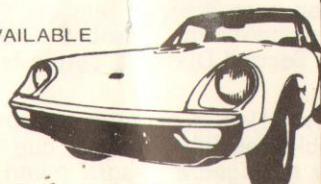
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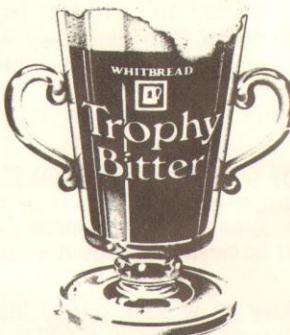
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KEITH KENNEDY. Joined Bury from Newcastle in 1972 and since has maintained a consistent record of appearances. His brother Alan has just transferred to Liverpool for Three hundred thousand pounds.

RAYMOND LUGG. Recent signing for seventeen thousand pounds from Crewe Alexandra.

BILLY TUCKER. In his third season with Bury after being signed from Hereford who he had been with from their Southern League days.

DANNY WILSON. Hails from Wigan, another youngster who is consistently showing some fine displays so far this season from the mid-field role. Eighteen years of age.

BRIAN STANTON. Was given a couple of outings in 1976-77, but really 'arrived' last season when he hit home some vital goals.

PETER FARRELL. Hails from Liverpool, a very talented youngster with fine individual skills, a fine prospect for the future.

ANDY ROWLAND. Signed from Derby County at the age of 19, and has proved himself in the 3rd. Division since. Bury's top goal scorer for the past two seasons.

PAUL HILTON. Hails from Chadderton in Lancashire. Signed professional forms only last July and his promise to date shows that he could have a good future in the game. Has represented his country at under 18 level.

GORDON TAYLOR. Another experienced player signed by Bury during the summer on a free transfer from Blackburn Rovers. His previous clubs are Bolton and Birmingham with whom he won promotion to the First Division. A member of the Professional Footballers Association Committee, working alongside Cliff Lloyd.

DAVID HATTON. Player/Manager. A very experienced and in his sixteenth season as a professional footballer. Previous clubs are Bolton and Blackpool.

HALF TIME SCORES

Blackpool v. Carlisle	Chesterfield v. Oxford
Exeter v. Brentford	Gillingham v. Watford
Hull v. Chester	Lincoln v. Sheffield Wednesday
Peterborough v. Tranmere Rovers	Swindon v. Mansfield
Walsall v. Shrewsbury	Bristol Rovers v. Cardiff
Wrexham v. Leicester	Wigan Athletic v. Newport
Liverpool v. Tottenham	Manchester United v. Everton
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with the reserves

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A fine performance by our very youngest players - that is how I rate our 0-0 draw at home to Newport County last week. With manager John Toshack taking regular reserve players like Nigel Stevenson and Chris Marustic to Colchester, we ended up with a side that included five 15-year-olds.

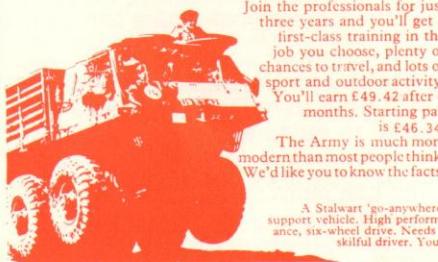
In the circumstances, this was an outstanding result . . . although I must confess to some disappointment that we did not win because we were easily the best side!

The highly promising displays by these 15-year-olds (all of them, of course, still at school) springs from the hard work that we put in to help these youngsters make progress in the game. We have training for them every Tuesday and Thursday evening.

This is handled in turn by myself, John Toshack and Terry Medwin. At this time of year with the long light evenings, we work outdoors; as the winter comes on, we have a gymnasium ready and waiting.

In terms of matches, none of them will go short. With the policy of including the leading young professionals in the first team squad for away trips, there will be plenty of opportunities in Welsh League games - plus, naturally, our fixtures in the South Wales and Wessex Youth League.

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From 'OUTSIDER'

When a club is hell bent on success - as Swansea City at this moment - the vital ingredient is to have the ability to fire on every cylinder in every game. That is why the rush of goals this season by Robbie James are further evidence that the Swans have the equipment of a promotion side.

The victory at Oxford last Saturday came without the firepower of Alan Curtis. His absence, this Welsh International, often projected as indispensable, was overcome without a ripple of alarm or anxiety. The Swans clicked into full gear just the same and Robbie cracked in both goals.

Ask player-manager John Toshack how he will fit himself, Alan Waddle, Jeremy Charles and Curtis into the same front line and he will answer 'You can never have enough forwards.'

Already this season, Curtis and Charles have been missing through injury while Toshack has played himself in defence. Yet the Swansea side are now showing five points from their first three league games and decisively slammed Newport County in the League Cup.

All of a sudden, Robbie James has matured into an outstanding player. The potential has been there for years; the flashes of exceptional skill have been revealed time and again. Now the years of 'growing up' are over: he has arrived in a highly exciting way with top quality consistency.

James is the kind of player every club wants. An attacking mid-field player whose finishing is just as deadly as that of an outright front man. There is no kind of goal more exciting than the one that rockets in from 20 to 30 yards range - and he can hit those as crisply as any player in British football today.

In terms of creative mid-field ability, he has more than done his share. Watch the way he can sweep out a 30 yards cross field pass or uses his pace to break through a hesitant defence.

The time is not far away when Wales will need new faces in mid-field. Obviously Brian Flynn is there for years to come but skipper Terry Yorath and John Mahoney may have no more than two seasons left at the highest level - and, anyway, manager Mike Smith does not function on the expectation of having the same three available every time that Wales face an international.

With the European Championship programme due to get underway shortly, there is a tremendous chance now for James to break into the national squad and launch his challenge for a full cap.

On shooting ability alone, his presence would add an extra attacking weapon to the Wales armoury. The handful of goals from mid-field in recent years have come invariably from beautiful touches of skilled control to round off three and four man moves.

Not for years have Wales possessed a player who can hammer in a shot from 25 yards and know that he has an even money chance of beating the goalkeeper.

There is a case to be made out for not wasting a moment and putting in James straight away, for the opening European Championship game against Malta.

The Maltese have only one hope against Wales at Wrexham: of packing their goal and funnelling back into total defence. Faced by those kind of tactics a year ago, against Kuwait in a friendly, Wales were far from their best. Recruiting a player like James who can bring the powerful addition of long range shooting would prove a valuable asset.

As you would expect from a man who is every inch a professional, Tommy Smith is steering clear of the one pitfall that his signing at the Vetch Field implied - leaving his football on the motorway.

There will never be an occasion, he promises, when he thunders down the M6 and the M5 to reach Swansea shattered from the strain of negotiating traffic, weather, roadworks and all the other hazards of a long drive.

I haven't worked out every detail yet except to establish one principle - that there is now way that I am going to arrive here worn out," says Smith. "A friend drove me to Oxford last Saturday and that arrangement can be maintained without any problem: there are also train and plane services."

"I am well aware of just what hours of driving can do to your game. No matter how fit; how great the powers of concentration or how easy the journey looks on paper with the miles of motorway, long distance driving is a strain."

If the weather is bad, Smith will come early and stay in hotels; if a major tactical replanning is needed, he will come to Swansea and help work it out in training for as long as needed. He is a man who makes no concessions to the standards of professionalism.

A few years ago, then manager Billy Lucas signed a Welsh player who should have used the greater opportunities at the Vetch Field to blossom into an outstanding matchwinner - but Len Hill failed miserably. He blamed the strain of negotiating the A48 between Newport and Swansea twice a day . . . and he was right.

At the highest competitive levels a player depends on being match fit with reflexes as sharp as the edge of an unused razor blade. Even coping with the short distance between Newport and Swansea proved too great a handicap for Len Hill . . so what damage could Liverpool to Swansea have inflicted on the man whose captaincy by example is such a key factor in this club's plans ?

It is the small decisions made out of public limelight which finally add up to the decisive contribution which tips the scales towards success in any one game - let alone in any one season. It is good to know that Tommy Smith has the right answers to start with !

Man in the Middle LESLIE BURDEN (Dorset)

Qualified as a referee in Dorset (1953), then via Southern League to Football League in 1970. Has acted as linesman in England v. Denmark - Under 23 in 1973 and a U.E.F.A. Cup match and under 23 International in 1975.

Married with three children, he is a Company Director designing interior furnishings for hotels and private houses. He is Secretary to Association of Football League Referees and Linesmen (West of England Section) and also serves on the training committee.

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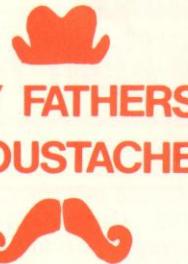
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You're in the team - Yes You!

Any Swans supporter in the crowd to-day could supply a list of players who have thrilled him over the years. Our elder friends may well span time back to Billy Hole, Wilfy Milne, Joe Sykes and Jack Fowler. Immediate post-war fans might include Trevor Ford, Roy Paul and Jim Feeney, while the younger might well still be enthusing over Herbie Williams, Robbie James and Alan Curtis.

Probably no list would be exactly the same. Some might include colourful characters like Kitch Fisher, Cyril (Tulyar) Beech and Rory Keane, while others might go for the delicate skills of Ivor Allchurch, or the thrusting speed of Jackie O'Driscoll. But we could be sure to find a tremendous gallery of names to conjure with - players who have written their names into the club's history through their skills on the field.

However, the Swans team is part of a larger team. It includes the management, the administration and the supporters, for no side can achieve its potential unless it has the right kind of support. Behind the scenes that support is flourishing, but how about that in the stands and on the terraces?

Over the years the club has been blessed by tremendous backing from the crowd. It is interesting, for example, to read contemporary newspaper accounts of the decade just after the war, for they frequently refer to the quality of the Club's Support.

'A knowledgeable Swansea crowd applauded the play of both sides.'

'The Vetch Field crowd must be worth a goal start to Swansea Town when they play at home.'

'One reason for Swansea's tremendous home record must be the proximity of a fair and enthusiastic crowd to the field of play.'

and 'It is a pleasure to go to Swansea - not only for the football, but to see and hear supporters who appreciate the finer points of the game.'

The theme of these and many other writers, was the part played by the home crowd in lifting their team. In providing 'atmosphere' for the players to demonstrate their skills. Since T.V. football was in its infancy, the tone, methods and style of that support was of local manufacture. Not for them some dudge copied from 'Match of the Day', not the negative, destructive, cynical chanting which is common on many grounds to-day. They were in business to support - not only the Swans but the game of football. Swansea football reflected the quality of that support, it was a joy to watch.

For most of the last decade it can be argued that there has been little on the field to fire that kind of enthusiasm. Conversely, the small numbers and lack of atmosphere must have had a negative effect on the players out there on the field. The two are inextricably interlinked. That is why the job undertaken by Harry Griffiths and Chairman Malcolm Struel in the worst period of the club's history was so vital. As part of the Swans team, with the players they strove to bring back that special Swansea brand of support.

John Toshack and his staff are doing a tremendous job to continue that development. That old confident brand of football is coming back and it is there for us to enjoy. But let each of us supporters remember the vital part we have to play in supporting that enterprise. It is extremely doubtful if any fan of the future will include your name or mine in their list of Swans giants. But collectively we can ensure that the Vetch is noted once again for positive warm support and fine football. 'Tosh' has asked me to tell you that you are in the team for today's game. Yes, You - in the crowd part - Up the Swans!

Fixtures HOME



SWANS FACTS

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THIRD DIVISION REVIEW

Peterborough, pipped for promotion in a last-gasp finish with Preston last season, are hoping to make no mistake this winter.

Maximum points from tough opening fixtures with Jackie Charlton's Sheffield Wednesday and Watford, last season's Fourth Division champions, have given the Posh just the early season boost they needed.

Peterborough have never played in the Second Division but their form so far suggests that this could possibly be their season.

After defeating Sheffield Wednesday on the opening day of the league season Peterborough went to Vicarage Road last weekend to face a Watford team who had trimmed title favourites Blackpool 5-1 a few days earlier.

At the interval there was little to choose between two well-matched sides but Peterborough gradually got on top and two goals from Alan Slough earned them a narrow 2-1 victory.

It was certainly a blow for newly-promoted Watford, many people's choice to follow the footsteps of Cambridge, Fourth Division champions the previous year, who went straight through to the Second Division.

But unlike last season when Wrexham justified their pre-season rating as title favourites, it does not look quite so clear-cut this winter. Of course, it's early days and over the next couple of months one team could emerge to follow the Welsh club's lead. It could be Chester who went to the top of the table as a result of their 3-0 home win over Exeter with goals by Edwards (2) and Mellor (pen.). The Sealand Road club made a late challenge for promotion last season, finished in the top six and are obviously intent on building on those impressive foundations. Just how good they are Swansea will discover later this month when they visit Chester. It should be an intriguing match between two sides committed to attacking football.

Swansea certainly underlined that point at Oxford where two more goals from Robbie James earned maximum points against a side beaten only twice at home all last season.

Another club who could come into the reckoning after escaping the drop into the Fourth Division last season is Plymouth, now managed by the flamboyant Malcolm Allison. After picking up both points on the opening day of the season with a 3-1 win at Chesterfield they defeated Lincoln 2-1 at home with goals from Megson and Perrin. That early season form represents a significant improvement on last season's dismal performances when nothing really went right. Now they seem to have struck a better balance with Allison permanently at the helm and they could surprise a lot of people.

So could Hull, anxious to climb back into the Second Division at the first attempt. Bannister, Lord and Edwards scored the goals which earned them a 3-1 win at Tranmere.

Brentford, one of the teams to come up from the Fourth Division, continue to struggle. They drew 15,000 to their Griffin Park ground for the match against Chesterfield and lost 3-0. Southend, also promoted, went into today's match still searching for their first success. A point at Mansfield with a goal from Parker in a 1-1 draw kept them in the middle of the table while Shrewsbury stayed in touch at the top as a result of a scoreless home draw with Swindon.

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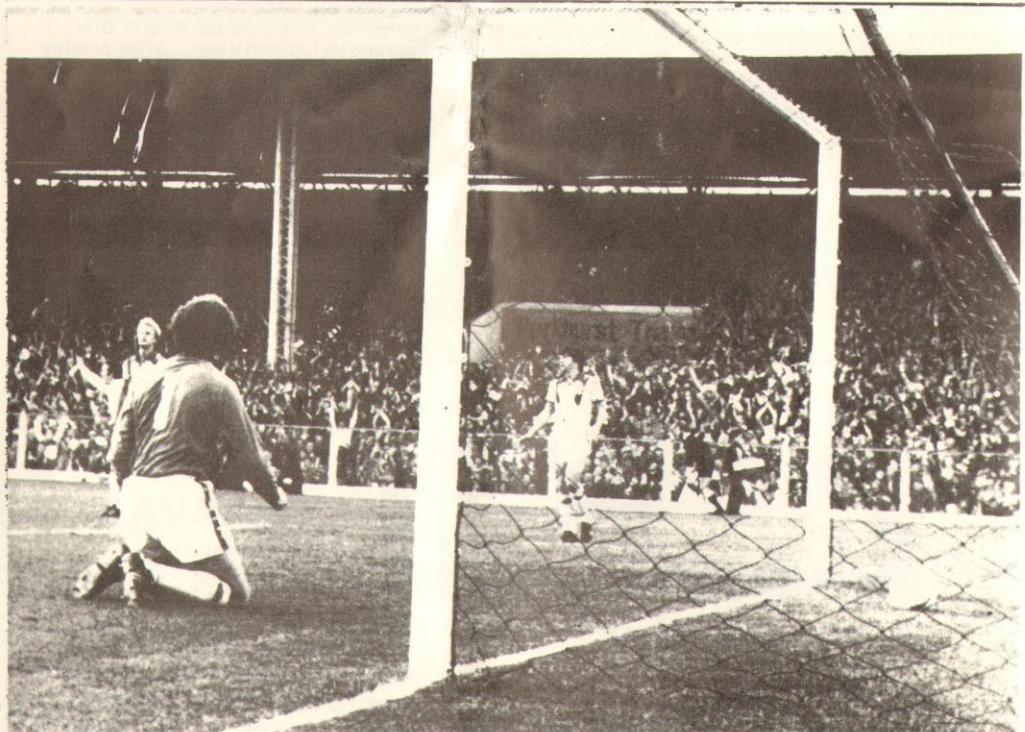
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FACE IN THE CROWD

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The 'Spurs' defence looks disconsolate as ROBBIE JAMES' volley hits the back of the net for Swansea's first goal in the Football League Cup tie this week

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JEREMY CHARLES turns away in ecstacy after putting the Swans 2-up against Tottenham Hotspur.

Down Memory Lane

with BRINLEY E. MATTHEWS

Our visitors, Bury, were at one time a leading light in English league football. From 1896-1912 the Shakers were in the First Division. Following a period in the Second Division the club regained First Division status in the twenties and it was on January 8th, 1921 that Bury, then a First Division side visited the Vetch for the first time. Drawn against the Swans in the First Round of the Football Association Cup, Bury had no illusions about their Welsh opponents who six years earlier had defeated the then famous Blackburn Rovers at the Vetch Field by a single goal in what was a sensational cup upset.

Such was the interest in the Bury match that queues formed at 11 a.m. and the gates were closed an hour before the kick-off with a record attendance of 21,300.

Once again Swansea Town then members of the Southern League First Division proved their cup fighting ability, winning 3-0. Bury had come to the Vetch with a considerable reputation as cup fighters, having won the F.A. Trophy in 1900 and 1903, but it was reported at the time that a Bury Director stated "We were beaten on merit".

However, the first time Bury met the Swans in a league match at the Vetch was on December 14th, 1929. On that occasion both clubs formed part of the Second Division. Despite leading 1-0 at half-time which was increased to 2-0 after the interval, brilliant forward play by Bury swung the game and the visitors won 4-2.

FOR THE RECORD :

Swansea Town v. Bury (First Round F.A. Cup 1921)

Teams : BURY - Corrithwaite, Allen, Perry, R. Heap, Peake, McCrae, F. Heap, Murphy, Bullock, Trotter, Aitkin.

SWANSEA TOWN - Denoon, Robson, Milne, Williams, Collins, Gray, Hole, Jones (Ivor), Edmundson, Brown, Spottiswoode.

Referee : Mr. H. E. Spiers, Redditch.

Swansea Town v. Bury (Second Division League Match - December 14th, 1929).

Teams : BURY - Maughan, Cheater, Bradshaw, Porter, Bullock, Evans, Chambers, Davin, Smith, Brant, Amos.

SWANSEA TOWN - Ferguson, Williams, Milne, Freeman, Sykes, Lloyd, Hole, Deacon, Fowler, Gunn, Handley.

Supporters Club

What a great start the boys have made in the Third Division. Usually the start of the season has meant successive away defeats but this year 3 points out of 4.

The match on Tuesday last (result not known at time of going to press) was a very important landmark in the history of the Swansea City F.C., but it is still the bread and butter matches in the football league that are even more important.

It was noticeable in the league match versus Lincoln that the visitors were affected by the vocal support given the lads from the terraces. Our vocal encouragement from an attendance better than even many Second Division attendances, is at least worth a goal start for the boys.

Let us keep it up and I am sure that they will respond and get the results we are all striving for.

We unfortunately were remiss in our programmes for the last two home games in welcoming Tommy Smith to the Vetch. We would therefore like to welcome Tommy officially, may he have as much success here as he has had with the greatest team in the country - Liverpool.

We are still open at the back of the North Bank for membership for the current season, Adults - 50p; Juniors and Senior Citizens; - 25p.

Vetch Pitch is Gleaming

Just about every aspect of Swansea City's success story of recent months has been covered in detail - except one. That is the state of the Vetch Field pitch which is now immaculate after the ravages of recent seasons.

If it looks good enough now to sink an accurate 30 yards putt, that is no coincidence . . . for the groundsman is Tony Davies whose previous post was with Morriston Golf Club.

"I'm very pleased with the progress that we have made in the summer," he reports. "I'm certain that it will stand up to wear and tear and weather far better this season. My aim is to gain a little every year until it becomes one of the finest playing surfaces in the League."

The state of a pitch is vital to the success of any team. The best side in the world cannot play on bare, bumpy ground and the surface is one of the most important tools in the footballer's trade.

"We have ploughed in a great deal of sand to break up the clay; then laid six full length drains and four shorter 'link' ones to 'feed' into the main drain which runs beneath the centre line," explains Tony.

"The effect has been that the grass has grown strongly this summer while rain water is now being carried away quickly by our diamond shape lay-out drainage system."

Tony joined the club last February and had to wait a couple of days to assess the extent of his problems - because the pitch was covered by the heavy snows of that now famous weekend.

"When it thawed, I had a shock about the extent of the problem," he says. "Now I believe that we are well on the way to beating the difficulties".

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HOW TO GET THERE

Leave Swansea along route A48 joining M4 and continue over Severn Bridge to exit 6. Follow signposts on route A412 via Denham and Rickmansworth into Watford. The ground is situated at Vicarage Road and the phone number is Watford 21759.