



View from the Chair

Welcome to the first members' newsletter of the season.

The editorial in the Chester City programme spoke of a 'bright new Notts County' and it is clear that work has been carrying on apace during the close season. A modern ticketing system has been installed; a new season ticket package has been introduced along with a 'six pack' initiative; the Marquee Suite (to be renamed The County Suite) has been renovated; and there have been many other changes around the ground.

However, for the 'average' fan (if such a person exists) turning up at Meadow Lane on the opening Saturday of the season, it would appear little has changed and lessons need to be learnt. First off, limited number of staff in the Meadow Club struggled to cope with queues at the bar. There were also a number of pumps not working, and no guest real ale available – something which the Trust with the assistance of Steve Westby had helped to organise for

last season. As a result fans walked out, frustrated at waiting an age to be served, thus losing the club money, which we simply cannot afford to do.

Second, catering in the Sirrell Stand attracted even bigger grumbles from supporters. On a sweltering hot Saturday afternoon, the stalls ran out of soft drinks and bitter after five minutes, and the lager also went off for a short time. The queuing was as disorganised as before, adding to fans' frustration. One suggestion could be servers having pre-poured pints of beer ready for the half-time rush or how about investing in a beer serving pump that can pour eight pints at a time (like at beer festivals) or a facility to order and pay for beer in advance so it can just be collected at half-time?

To put it bluntly, the club struggled to cope with a decent sized gate. From 2.30 until after

kick-off there were queues both at the turnstiles and the ticket office, which added to the problems of adults and juniors using different turnstiles, that was highlighted in the fans' survey.

This is not meant as a rant against the club, but merely to flag up concerns voiced by supporters to members of the Trust Board. No-one expects everything to work like clockwork especially on the opening day of the season, and given our recent history fans have a certain amount of patience. The Trust hopes that progress that has been made can be maintained and the problems encountered at the Chester game are ironed out. We want to work closely with the club over the coming months and we hope that the club also realises that working closely with supporters can only be of mutual benefit in the long-term.

David Hindley

WIN THE HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME

...a total of 18 nights on the other side of the world – including 2 nights in Hong Kong, 7 nights in Sydney, 7 nights in Cairns (for Barrier Reef) and 2 nights in Singapore!

See page 6 for details



The new season has started and the club is still in business. Just a year ago what would you have given to hear this news? Never lose sight of that. You nearly lost your club but because of your loyalty and commitment it is still here and has the chance of being financially secure in the future if guided properly.

That's all well and good I hear you say but what changes have happened since the Trust got involved? The first part of that answer is above, the Trust was there to find some of the finances required to buy the club. The second part of the answer is what has been happening since.

When I came into the club as director I was astounded at just how dead the club was. There was nothing. 18 months of administration had taken its toll on the players, the staff and the building. In my job as a lawyer I often see companies that are run down but NCFC was one of the worst. To resurrect the club would be a massive task made harder by the fact that we have very little money to spend.

I want you all to know just how hard the Trust has been working to resurrect this club. It seems at times as if nothing has changed, but be assured it has. Before any business can go forward it has to have solid foundations or it will fail. That is what we have been trying to do, build up those foundations. So behind the scenes a lot of work has gone into the corporate facilities so that we can generate much needed revenue to build the team. We

have also had to totally restructure the staffing levels. Many people have left or been made redundant as part of the business reorganisation. We have been working hard to bring wage levels down and I am pleased to tell you that they are down by over 50%.

This is a difficult and lengthy process but is nearly completed. Now that this is nearly done and we can start to look at issues most fans will recognise and see. We have to have better communication with fans, cleaner facilities and address the concerns of the fans. All this will come but please do not lose sight of just how dead this club was and what few resources there are available.

Either directly or through me the Trust has been involved at the highest levels in all aspects of the clubs growth. From the provision of staff contracts, finance and advice the Trust has been there. I have drafted all the employment contracts at the club, negotiated the players contracts down, and ensured that the club will never again expose itself to contracts it cannot afford. What I will now be addressing is the match day experience. We will get there we

have had some difficult challenges. One issue is that certain suppliers will not deal with NCFC because it was in administration or the old company owes them money. That is why we can not get credit card facilities. All these issues will eventually be resolved.

As your elected director I work at the club on average around 15 to 20 hours per week. I charge nothing for my time, nor do I claim expenses and I buy my own season ticket. The legal services the Trust can provide is saving the club thousands of pounds. The input you give as fans is priceless.

Importantly, I want to ensure that communication with fans is a key part of my role. As the Trust Supporter-Director I want to continue to keep supporters informed of the things that are happening at their Club and also to ensure that the views of fans are both heard and taken into account.

Please renew your membership and encourage others to join because without the Trust there will be no voice. The work has only just begun.

Steve Thompson

Elections 2004

Along with this newsletter, you should have received a nomination form for the 2004 Notts Trust board elections. Last year there were 11 places up for grabs in the first Notts Trust board elections. However when the nominations closed only ten candidates were put forward and thus they were all elected. John Armstrong Holmes, Mark Durkin, Darrin Foss, David Hindley, Eric Kerry, Nigel King, Phil Marshall, Fred Mosselmans, Carole Stapleton and Keri Usherwood.

Since then Mark has resigned when he became an employee of the club and recently Darrin has resigned as he could no longer find the time to fulfil his role on the board. The rest of the board are grateful to Darrin for his efforts in particular in the successful Iran earthquake collection. The board can have up to 14 members and over the course of the year Steve Thompson and more recently Ken Carter, Martin Naylor, Alan Scott and Cheryl Thompson have been co-opted on to the board. All co-opted members have to stand down at the next AGM.

Our rules give elected members a normal term of two years, however half the first elected board have to stand down after one year, so that half the board are up for election each year. We held a draw to see which of the elected members would stand down and John Armstrong-Holmes and Nigel King were the two chosen. Recognising the amount of work that board members have to do, it was decided to

fill the board with elected members after this year's poll, thus there are eight places available. Next year's board will thus consist of David Hindley, Eric Kerry, Phil Marshall, Fred Mosselmans, Carole Stapleton, Keri Usherwood, and eight new elected members.

Nominations forms plus an election statement must be returned by the 11th September. If more than eight people stand, a ballot will then occur. Luton Town Supporters Trust has kindly agreed to help us in this process. Members of the Trust, who are not standing, will do the paperwork, but members of the Luton Town Supporters Trust will approve the ballot paper and do the counting, with the results announced at the AGM in October.

Any of the elected board members will be eligible to stand for election as our Supporter Director. If more than two board members stand, an election for Supporter Director will be held towards the end of the year.

We encourage all members, who both want to and have the time to get involved, to stand. Normally board meetings are held monthly on weekday evenings, but it is the work done outside the meetings by board members and other willing helpers that drives the Trust forward.

Fred Mosselmans



Trust AGM

The date for the next Notts County Supporters Trust Annual General Meeting is set for Thursday 21st October 2004.

We hope this will be an interesting and enjoyable event and that as many Trust members as possible will come along.

Full details will be announced soon.



Wembley May 1991, Tommy celebrates our win over Brighton with Neil Warnock.

A Trust Patron (and a Legend) speaks...

Who can forget that moment on Sunday May 27th 1990 in the Wembley heat when Tommy Johnson trapped the ball, lost his marker & with his “wrong” foot, scored Notts first ever goal at Wembley? And who can forget the two he scored (again, one coming from his “wrong” foot!) the following season as we beat Brighton to regain our place in the top flight? Moments like those and countless others help form the basis of why we are all Notts fans and are memories that we’ll all take to the grave with us.

This time last year, you could be forgiven into thinking that memories such as these were all you may have left as the protracted Bhatia and Strang takeover collapsed, leaving our beloved club staring into the abyss. Thankfully, with the hard work of many people, including the Trust, this did not occur and this season we have started with one of the strongest financial footings of any club in all four divisions, and long may this continue.

At the recent Open Day, we caught up with NCST Patron, “The Pale Genius” and picked his brains as to why he felt the need to get involved.

Q: “What first alerted you to the Clubs plight?”

A: “I came back from training one morning with Gillingham and was asked by the receptionist to call someone called Martin Naylor from Notts County Supporters Trust who had left a message. I took his number & phoned him the following morning & Martin explained the serious situation that Notts were in & that there was a Legends game being organised at Meadow Lane to raise funds. He asked if Andy Hessenthaler (Gillingham Manager) would allow me to play in some or all of the game. He also mentioned that along with other people, he was organising a big Auction night in Nottingham. I agreed to send him some of my own personal memorabilia to auction to help the club and said that I’d be interested in getting a ticket to come to the event itself. That’s where it all started really.”

Q: What are your memories of the Legends game?”

A: “Well I’d asked permission from the Gaffer & he said it was OK to play, so I drove up to Nottingham on the Saturday morning & met up with a few of the



old Notts boys for a couple of pints the night before the game. On the day of the match I arrived at Meadow Lane & couldn't believe how many people were there. I got to the dressing room & all of the lads were there. It was brilliant to see so many old mates &, of course, I knew a lot of the old Forest lads too including Millsey, which made it special as well."

Q: "Of course you scored in the match."

A: "Yes, I don't remember that much about it really, but it was fantastic to hear the crowd chanting "Oooh Tommy Johnson" again. It made me realise how much support there still was for Notts, bearing in mind that they might not exist a few weeks later. The atmosphere was friendly too as rival fans mingled together in the ground to support what was a fantastic day."

Q: "What did you donate to the Auction Night Tommy?"

A: "A signed pair of boots and a signed shirt that I wore for England U-21's. I also got in contact with another old club of mine Celtic, who donated a pair of VIP match tickets to an Auld Firm game."

Q: "Are you aware that the person who successfully bid for your boots was NCST Chair Dave Hindley?"

A: "No, I didn't realise that (laughs)! I remember having my photo taken with the guy who won the shirt, a big scarier looking chap you're never likely to meet!"

Q: "What are your memories of the Auction Night?"

A: "Well I was sat at a table with a bunch of ex-players. Shorty was there & Deano (Yates), Dean Thomas, Phil Robinson, Steve Cherry and a few others too. It was a great night and I really enjoyed it. Paul Hart (then Forest manager) was there and as Darren Fletcher was asking me questions on the microphone he mentioned Marlon King, who had that day signed for Forest. Darren asked me what I thought of Marlon and I said something like "He's a good player & a nice lad. He's had his problems,

well he's been in prison for one" and the room erupted with laughter. The highlight of the night though, was at the very end when it was announced that the Trust had reached it's magical £250,000 mark & the club was finally saved. You could see the relief and outpouring of emotion on everyone's faces, a night that would make anyone proud to be a Notts fan."

Q: "When were you asked to be a Patron for the Supporters Trust?"

A: "A few months back, Martin phoned me to ask if I'd be prepared to act as a Patron and explained to me what it may involve."

Q: "How did you feel to be asked?"

A: "It was great, a real honour. As you know I still have family & a house near Nottingham, so I tend to come back to the area quite a lot. This means that, subject to Gillingham games of course, I can be around to support whatever events they have planned. It's always great to get back to Meadow Lane, I have some very, very fond memories of my time at Notts."

Q: "Of course, you're here for the Open Day as Trust Patron."

A: "I know, it's amazing how many people are here, and I've caught up with some old friends that I've not seen for years. There are so many familiar faces here too which is always nice."

Q: "Everyone seems to want an autograph or a photo taken with you?"

A: "Yes, it really is great to see, I'm surprised how even some of the younger fans seem to recognise me. I'm sure their Mam's & Dad's have just told them 'Go and have your photo taken with that ginger bloke.'"

Q: "How is the future planned out for you at the moment?"

A: "Well I'm now in the final year of my contract here at Gillingham and I'm not sure whether I'll be offered another deal yet. I may move back to the East Midlands and try & find a club to play for next season, who knows? Wurzel (Richard Dryden) is currently the Manager at Tamworth & we're still good friends. Maybe I'll tap him up & see if he's looking for a striker next season?"

Well thanks Tommy & the best of luck for the rest of the season at Priestfield.

A Year ago we asked you to “get involved” and help to save our Club by selling tickets for our raffle. You responded magnificently, and the raffle raised around £32,000 towards the target we had to reach!

As we all know, with your help we achieved what many perceived to be an impossible task. But, the doubters should never have underestimated the commitment, loyalty and sheer determination of Notts County Supporters when it came to the salvation of our Club.

OK, we did what we had to do then and as a result the Trust acquired a 30.2% shareholding in our Club on behalf of its members. That's some achievement.

Well, a year on we STILL need to continue our fundraising efforts so that we can continue to invest in our Club. We may not be in a “life-threatening” situation this time around, but we do still need your help, and the Trust's raffle is a key element in our efforts. The more raffle tickets you buy or sell, the more we can help take our Club forward.

John Armstrong-Holmes

So, we ask you to get involved, help the Trust's efforts and you could be a winner! And, what a first prize awaits...

How many people do you know who hold the dream to visit places like Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and the Great Barrier Reef?

For many, it's simply out of their reach.

Well it was until now... 'cause a £1 ticket could turn that dream into reality!

How can I sell as many tickets as possible?

Ask family and friends to buy tickets to help our club. They don't have to be supporters. Explain why we need their help and why we need to raise the funds. Anyway, wouldn't most people you know want to be in with the chance of winning the Holiday of a Lifetime? It's got be worth a few quid of anybody's money.

Do the rounds at work or in the office. Think about how many people you work with and how many tickets you could sell with just a couple of hours of effort. Does your workplace have an intranet site or notice boards? See if you can get details of the raffle posted up for as many people as possible to see.

Try local newsagents or convenience stores to see if they will help. We can supply posters and batches of tickets. Contact us for advice and information.

Who can sell raffle tickets?

Anyone over 16 can sell tickets.

What do I need to put on the ticket stubs?

Every ticket sold needs to have have the contact details of the purchaser filled in on the ticket stub. Make sure you enter the purchaser's name, address and, if available, their phone number. This will enable us to contact the winners when the draw is made on **24th December 2004**.



1ST PRIZE

IN OUR DRAW

IS THE HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME

...a total of 18 nights on the other side of the world – including 2 nights in Hong Kong, 7 nights in Sydney, 7 nights in Cairns (for Barrier Reef) and 2 nights in Singapore!

In anyone's language, that's got to be worth a punt! At just £1, it offers you, family and friends the chance of a lifetime but, you've got to be in it to win it, or one of the runner-up prizes on offer.

2nd Prize – Sony Digital Camera • 3rd Prize – 2 Vice Presidents Season Tickets

Winners will be notified by telephone and the details published in the Club's programme and on the Trust's website.

Remember, any ticket stub returned without a name and contact details cannot be entered into the draw.

When I have sold my tickets what do I need to do?

Simply return the ticket stubs and money in the following ways:

In person – hand them in to a Trust representative in the Club Shop at Meadow Lane before and after the game on match days. Or contact the Trust to find details of your nearest collection/delivery point.

By post – send the filled-in ticket stubs and payment to:

**Notts County Supporters Trust
Meadow Lane
Nottingham NG2 3HJ**

For further advice or information please get in touch with the Trust at
support@nottscotrust.org.uk
or ring 07968 161682

**Annual
RAFFLE 2004**



Notts Trust Survey 2004

Firstly, we would like to say a big thank you to everyone who filled in a copy of the Trust's first ever fans' survey. Your views matter and the survey was an important step in collecting these on a wider scale, to find out your opinions on a range of issues, including communications, merchandise, tickets, and toilets! Please continue to contact any of the representatives on the Trust board on any matter that concerns you – you can find us in the Meadow Club and behind the Trust desk in the club shop on match-days. There's even a suggestion box at the Trust desk for you to use!

The response rate was encouraging – the Trust received 238 written and 131 web responses. The numbers in detail are on the Trust website, and paper copies available on request.

Responses to questions regarding the Supporters Trust were very positive, with more than 90% of those who expressed an opinion agreeing or strongly agreeing with the positive statements about the Trust.

Many respondents also took time to fill in the comments section of the survey. We have read through each one, and compiled a list of the common themes and important issues. Some of these themes, in no particular order, are:

- **The Trust is doing an excellent job, and has had a positive influence on the club and has helped represent fans' views**
- **Pay-on-the-day prices are too expensive, especially for family groups**
- **The quality of the club shop merchandise was flagged up as being of a low standard, especially the replica shirts**
- **The female toilets are poor**
- **Away supporters should be relocated, allowing home fans to use the Kop**

There was also concern that adults and young children have to use different turnstiles when entering the ground, which can cause distress.

We'll be taking these views on board in discussions with the Club, and will feedback in later editions of the newsletter.

Black and White Pages

***From tiny acorns...
...the Germans made 'coffee' during
the war.***

Well here it is, the first Black and White pages; remember, these businesses are run by Trust members, so think well of them. If you would like to see your business listed here, just get in touch with your details and your Trust membership number.

**Christian Duplicating Services - 0115 9475311
3 Castle Road, Nottingham**
Black and white (naturally) and colour copying, newsletters (for the Trust and 'The Pie'), etc.

**SDH Joinery – 0115 9879226 / 0797 0376360 –
41, Eastdale Road, Bakersfield**

**Sue Giles – Ecoflow Magnatherapy –
0115 8781776 Website: www.magneco.co.uk**