

palace **ECHO**

encore!

Dougie Freedman

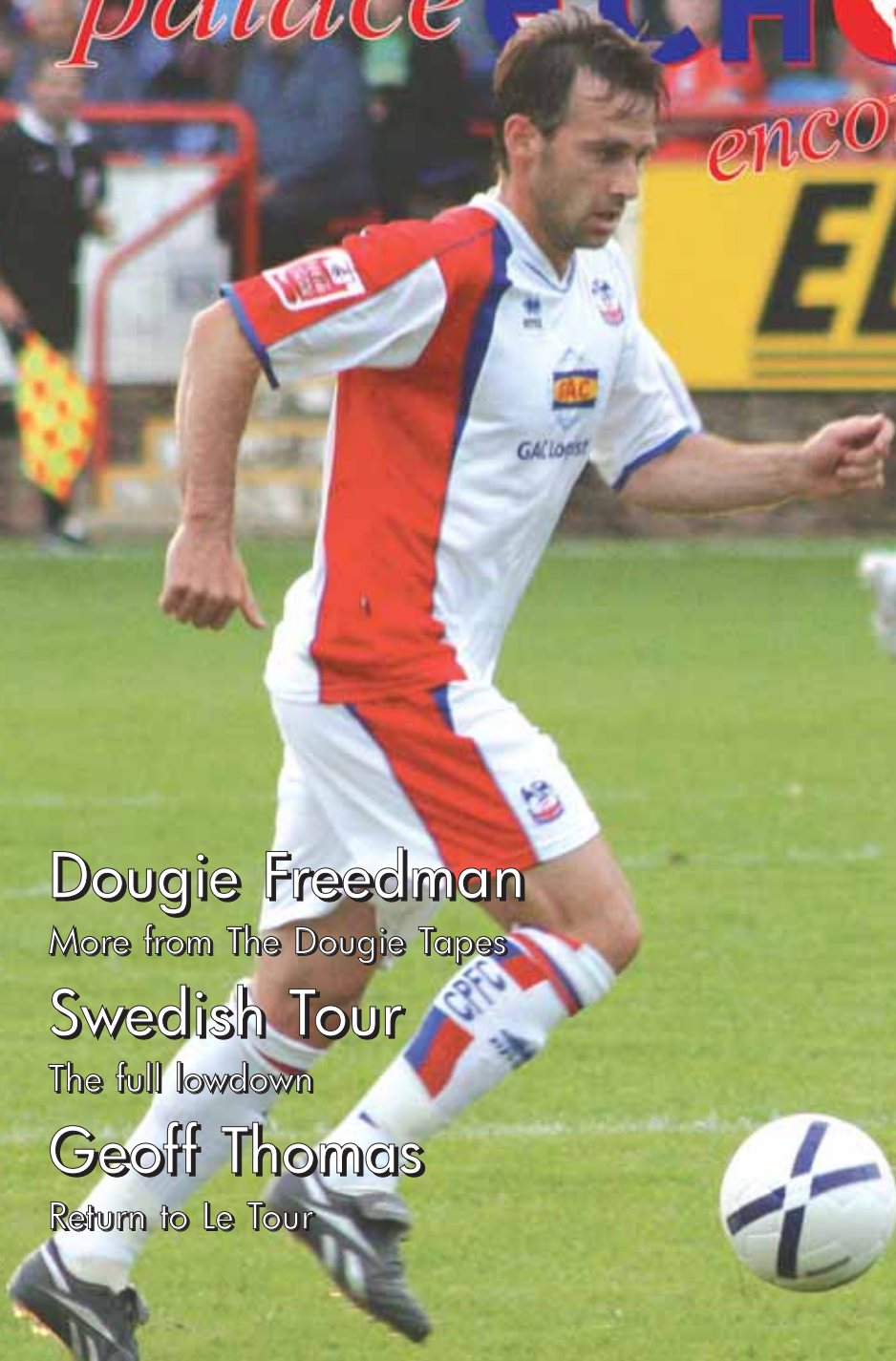
More from The Dougie Tapes

Swedish Tour

The full lowdown

Geoff Thomas

Return to Le Tour





Young Guns

Johnny Bostock

Already an England Youth International regular, sixteen year-old Johnny has just tasted first team action in the friendlies against Dartford and Barnet. Particularly impressive at Dartford, where he bossed the midfield with Ben Watson and produced a range of sublime passes. Peter Taylor has promised that he will see further first team action in the coming season.

Never say, 'never ever', or so I'm told. However, I do confess some slight surprise at being back here, in Echo mode, so quickly after the final goodbye. The reason for this 'slight return' is simple - to raise funds for the Geoff Thomas Foundation. Thank you for your donation to the one of the most worthwhile of causes. If this has somehow found its way into your hands without you making a donation, well shame on you. Make sure you visit www.geoff-thomas.com and pay your dues right away.

In truth, it was a fairly easy decision to make one more curtain call. I was truly staggered by the overwhelming amount of kind messages that flooded through our mailbox and on the internet forums after we announced that the fanzine was to end. I am only sorry that I didn't get the time to reply to every one personally. It was a real eye-opener to see that the Echo seemed to mean a hell of a lot to so many people. The fact that we sold out on the first day of sale was also a very touching event.

The Simon Jordan interview was especially well received and added a great deal of fat to the fiery arguments that have been raging over the internet forums as to the exact nature of the ground ownership. For me, it's all a question of trust and I have to say after the interview, I did find myself far more relaxed about the whole position and SJ's intentions. And I really can't give a stuff whether the wording of those 'Reunited' T-Shirts sold last autumn stands up to retrospective legal inspection. What's happening on the pitch will always be my primary concern.

In that respect, last season ended on something of an up and that note has been continued throughout the unbeaten pre-season. I don't usually read too much into friendlies, but the signs on the whole have been encouraging, with some nice football played on occasion. Our defence was one of the more miserly in the division, certainly better than most teams who achieved a play-off place and, despite the loss of Gabor Kiraly, I see no reason why we can't continue along these lines, especially if Jose Fonte performs like he did against Everton. The midfield has been bolstered with the return to fitness of the industrious Stuart Green and the form of Paul Ifill (before he pulled his hamstring, at least) and we appear to have some further sound options in our youth ranks. Hopefully, the emphasis this season will be on providing better service to the strikers. The one area of concern, however, is where the goals are going to come from if we are to truly compete for promotion. It's all about lack of service, however, in most games Shefki Kuqi has quite simply failed to deliver and cuts an uncomfortable, unsmiling figure both on and off the park. The size of his price-tag (whatever it actually was) and fans frustrations are clearly weighing too heavily on him. James Scowcroft for all his intelligent aerial work, doesn't find the net nearly enough. I have less of a problem with Clinton Morrison or Dougie Freedman, providing the supply lines improve. We really need some pace and the loss of Jobi McAnuff, even if it was for a surprisingly large fee, has not been addressed.

At the time of writing, no new forward has been signed, although Peter Taylor maintains he is close to a loan signing - given the names that have been touted around - Scott Sinclair, Hogan Ephraim - this is going to be a young striker from the Premiership, here to gain experience. My worry is that what we will need is someone closer to the finished article.

Get behind the lads and enjoy the season..

Neil the Eagle

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New Recruits

It's that time of year again - the buzz of anticipation of a brand new season is in the air and there's some new faces to welcome down at Selhurst Park.

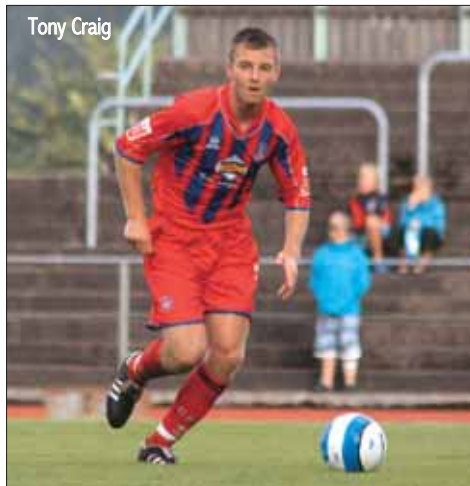
Tony Craig

Our first signing of the summer and for the third year on the bounce, we raid Millwall for another of their defenders. This time it's a 22 year old left back with almost 100 League appearances and two goals to his name

Judging by the immediate internet reaction to him signing, the initial rumours seemed to be universally damning. In the pre-season games, however, in which he has taken some part in every one, he has come across as another 'steady-eddie', albeit very one-footed, similar in many ways to last season's Den capture, Matt Lawrence. He also appears to possess a half decent cross, but like his predecessor Gary Borrowdale, rarely gets far enough forward to deploy it.

One potential issue already displayed, several times, is that he does have a penchant for the crunching and, at times, illegal tackle which will probably make us less likely to win the Championship Fair Play award this season. He has been sent off three times in his career to date and he's already earned the tag 'Psycho' amongst those who have seen him.

Craig came up through the youth system at Millwall and made his League debut a few days after his 18th birthday. He missed Millwall's Cup run due to a long term injury, following which he spent three months on loan at Wycombe Wanderers breaking back into the Millwall side on his return and was almost an ever-present, allowing for suspensions, until last season, when a dip in form led him to fall out of



favour with new boss Willie Donachie. Despite that he still earned Millwall's 'Young player of the season' award in the last two years.

The transfer fee was said to be undisclosed, but rumoured to be in the quarter of a million bracket and he has signed a three year contract.

Jeff Hughes

Another long term Peter Taylor target, who also operates on the left arrived from Lincoln shortly after Craig. A Northern Ireland international, 22 year old Hughes began his career in the province with Larne and also had a spell with Ballymena, before moving to Lincoln after an impressive trial in 2005 and being almost ever-present since.

It was his goals in the Division 2 play-off semi-final, last season, when operating on the left flank that brought him to the attention of a number of sides, but Palace for once had the jump having already made enquiries last season.

His pre-season at Palace has been blighted by a groin injury and as such, we are only just beginning to see him perform. In the Oddevald game, he made a second half appearance on the left side of a central midfield. He looked solid enough, but was understandably a little off the pace. Against Anderlecht and Everton, he played wide left and there were nascent signs that he could build a useful partnership there with Craig.



Jose Fonte

Confounding those who maintain Peter Taylor doesn't 'do' foreigners, he finally got his man after protracted negotiations and a long wait for international clearance.

The Portugese centre half has been signed from Benfica on a season long loan, with an option to purchase at the end of the term. The delay in securing the signature and papers means he has had very little first team action to date and Taylor admitted after the Anderlecht game, that he has some way to go before he is fully up to speed here.

The transfer seemed to take an inordinately long time, we were linked with the 23 year old as far back as mid-June and Peter Taylor confirmed that he has been a long time admirer. The obvious question to ask with any foreign signing is whether he will settle here, but the signs are good. He speaks very passable English and his younger brother Rui Fonte is also in London, on Arsenal's books.

He is no stranger to the loan system having been farmed out twice before by Benfica to Pacos de Ferreira and C.F. Estrela da Amadora where he gained the vast majority of his first team experience.

Lack of experience is perhaps the biggest worry in this signing. Before he was snapped up by Benfica, he had played only eight first team games for Vitoria Setubal. he has managed just one in Benfica's senior side and his

loans only add a further 39 games, which means at his age he has only amassed a season's worth of appearance and a single goal.

A one-time transfer target for Fulham, when Chris Coleman was in charge there, he replaces Darren Ward who has moved to Wolves. Judging by his two outings so far, he appears encouragingly more mobile and quick-footed than his predecessor and was Man of the Match, by a mile, in the Everton game. That said, it is impossible to make any sort of proper judgement on such short pitch-time, so we look forward to seeing how he progresses in the coming weeks, but don't be too surprised if he isn't a first choice centre-half initially.



Well done Agent Supa,
Mission Accomplished!

Reserve Round-up

These days it seems to be getting harder and harder to write a summary of the reserves and their players, purely down to the lack of games. Due to a re-organisation of the FA Premier Reserve league by the Premier league themselves, a number of clubs (Palace included) that made the grade before, found themselves expelled last season.

Membership of that elite is now only open to clubs that compete in the Premier league, so Palace, Ipswich, Norwich, Southampton, Coventry and this season Charlton and Watford have all had to find a new home for their second tier football.

This has meant returning to the Combination League, which is now a very different animal to the one we left behind in 2004. Instead of having one league of 18 teams, the divisions are divided between South and North which, rather ridiculously, is not that Northern at all as it merely contains teams along the lines of Ipswich, Norwich, Northampton, MK Dons and umm, Leyton Orient – no, I don't how they ended up there either. Why this has happened is anyone's guess, but it certainly hasn't helped any of the clubs participating, as Palace's league now contains only 8 teams and as a result, a complete lack of games.

Between August and April of last season, Palace played only 14 Combination league games and often had the ridiculous scenario of playing only one match a month. Not helping the cause was the now usual apathetic run in the Surrey cup which consisted of only two matches. The season was topped up with 3 friendlies (one other planned game was cancelled) and one benefit match - consisting of a total season of 19 games - hardly ideal when trying to maintain a first team squad or prepare young players for first team football.

So how can we sum up the season then? In one word,

average. Following on from an un-defeated pre-season period of three games (all against non-league opposition), the season proper began in August with a home spanking of Aldershot who were put to the sword by a tally of 4-1, first team cast off Jon Macken starring with two goals. The month ended with one of the poorer displays of the season, a 3-0 defeat away to Brighton. Palace would

repeat that poor showing later in the campaign against the seaweed again, but the only bright spot from this first fixture was the lively second half showing of substitute James Dayton, who had replaced the dis-interested Marco Reich.

Dayton himself got the winner in the very next match, away to Wycombe which turned out to be the only game during that month. This also proved to be the first of many matches during the season that at very short notice had their date or kick off time changed, not helping those who try to follow the team at this level.

The next month saw defeats to Southampton and Millwall (at our training ground at Beckenham), but there was also a convincing win at home to QPR with Lewis Grabban and Ryan Hall getting in on the goals - the latter now more regularly switched to a central midfield role.

November arrived with the prospect of no games at all, so friendlies at their training grounds against Fulham and Chelsea were rapidly arranged, and resulted in two defeats. December and Christmas arrived with only one game on the calendar for that month. In the convivial surroundings of Frimley Green FC, Palace began their Surrey Cup endeavours for the season with a 5-2 win over the home side with striker Charlie Sheringham getting his name on the scoresheet twice.

Despite defeating Bournemouth 4-1 early in the new year, the Surrey Cup run didn't last long and on a cold



evening at Tooting and Mitcham, the Palace youngsters didn't look keen in putting up a fight and after taking a lead through a long range thunderbolt from midfielder Lewis Spence, rolled over to a 2-1 defeat to the side that would eventually win the tournament.

February only had one game scheduled so again it was friendly time, and Palace made a short trip to East London for a 2-0 win over Dagenham and Redbridge's first team. The game also saw the debut of newly signed David Martin in Palace colours, but it was Spence and Clinton Morrison who put the ball in the net. The other game at home to Wycombe finished all square at one a piece.

From an inactive period suddenly sprang life, as there was then the mad scenario of having to fit three league games into each of March and April. Not an impossibility of course, but surely the fixtures could have been spread around much better. Four of the six games had already had their dates mucked about with, particularly the Aldershot and QPR games still to come which had each been postponed twice.

March saw defeats to Bournemouth (away) and Brighton (home), the latter game once again showing that while the Tesco bags were keen to put another one over on Palace, the youngsters in red and blue weren't keen on a fight or battling to get a win. A one sided 4-1 defeat with Tommy Black scoring.

A well fought 2-1 victory over a good Southampton team, which ironically ended up handing Brighton the title, wrapped up the month, strikers Ben Kudjodji and Lewis Grabban scoring.

The last month of a disappointing and dragged out season finished on a sombre note as Palace honoured non-league footballer Stuart Vaughan. A match that was arranged as a benefit fixture for the terminally ill player, ended up as a tribute to his memory as he had sadly passed away two days before the game. The score of this one in the end was largely irrelevant, but a well fought and competitive game played in the right spirit saw Palace finish 5-1 winners, including a brace from Lewis Grabban.

An 8-2 home drubbing of Aldershot during April proved to be the high point of the season, but also showed the folly of having non-league sides mixed in with teams of football league level. Grabban claimed a hat trick in this one, and there was a first goal in the colours for winger Dave Martin. Two away games completed the fixture list.

First was our dear friends at Millwall and a trip to the Den. A slightly more experienced Palace line-up than normal saw run out's for Danny Butterfield, Paul Ifill and the departing Danny Granville. A well deserved win was secured through Jamie Smith's head, after menace and persistence from Palace's young Irish international striker Sean Scannell.

Disappointingly after picking up a bit, the final game against QPR at Loftus road saw a 5-3 defeat, although they did field a number of players who've played first team football. Tommy Black wrapped up his Palace career with one of the goals, the others coming from Jamie Smith and Ryan Hall. Palace's final league position ended up as 3rd out of the eight sides, but with the major problem though of trying to find football to play most of the time. Not surprisingly reserve team manager Kit Symons has sounded off, as has Peter Taylor on this very subject, talking of a potential move to another league, but we start this forthcoming season, again in the Combination South.

The logical outcome to the problem that would suit all sides would be to merge the two leagues back, but this doesn't appear to have occurred to anyone at an administrative level. This season, at least there will be four more games, with the appearance of Charlton and Watford. Leyton Orient have also replaced Bournemouth.

On the playing front, the season end has seen a large chunk of the playing staff at junior level not offered professional playing contracts. Whilst I've been surprised at some of those released in the past, this time round it's hard to find fault with any of the names that have been let go. Indeed, Palace have moved to ensure that the more promising players of the bunch including James Dayton, Jamie Smith and Moses Swaibu (midfield and defence respectively) will still be here.

With them of course are the likes of Ryan Hall, Grabban and Spence, plus younger players just breaking through such as Aaron Dalhouse, Ben Kudjodji, Ashley Robinson and the promising Sean Scannell. The next crop of youngsters including highly rated Victor Moses and John Bostock (already England Youth internationals) could be even better.

The promise is there once again, the challenge now is to find them the competitive football they need to learn and flourish.

Alan Russell

Who let the Doug Out-takes



The concluding part of The Dougie Tapes, the extra footage from last season's DVD documentary, filmed in mid-September 2006.

In issue 77, we left Dougie having just scored the vital goal up at Stockport. Due to space reasons we weren't able to bring you the rest of the footage in our final print issue, so we are delighted to bring you the rest now...

On Steve Bruce's reign as Manager and his departure:

It was an exciting time for myself and Clinton, and he'd really got the defence sorted out as well with Hayden Mullins and Steve Vickers and he got us playing some fantastic stuff. When he left... hurt isn't the word I use, I was more annoyed maybe. I was driving and I heard Simon Jordan speaking and he was very, very annoyed – why wouldn't he be? He was annoyed at the way the football world works. I personally was annoyed for a couple of minutes, then I got over it. That's just the way it goes. We were still here as a team and as a club and we are top of the League, so let's just get on with it. Unfortunately again, it didn't quite go that way because we were now known for off-the-field antics: the whole thing of Steve Bruce going there, Trevor Francis coming in. They weren't talking about us being top of the League or playing some fantastic football, they were talking about why managers come and go. That dipped our season and it petered away.

On his brief International career:

It was sad that I didn't have a better opportunity, but when I looked at it. I'm the only one to blame if I'd wanted more caps I should have gone to play in Scotland, but I didn't, I played here and I'm happy



Dougie heads home Goal number 100 for Palace

with the decision. So overall, I am happy with my career and what I've achieved down in England.

On the rivalry with Brighton:

I didn't really get it at first. I'd been told and I'd expected it to be big, but I was coming at it from the time we played Charlton in the second leg of the Play-off Semi-final. I thought that was a great atmosphere and that we were close rivals. I played in the Millwall game when Dean Gordon scored and there were fans on the pitch and I'm thinking 'Jesus Christ!', but I went from that to the Brighton game and it pretty much topped it. That first game (5-0) was one I will always remember.

On Stevie Kember's departure:

I was gutted for him, he's Palace through and through. To this day, I still can't really look Steve Kember in the eye and talk about that time, it's quite hurtful. Although we do still speak it's hard looking back on that time because it was very disappointing. Stevie Kember and Terry Bullivant had got us out of the sticky patch we were in when we played Stockport, so it wasn't through them. In football it

happens sometime that people underperform in certain situations. We were in a situation where we couldn't get a bloody result to save us. We played Ipswich at home, we'd gone 2-0 up, then 3-2 then lost 4-3 in the final minute! We just couldn't get a result for love nor money – it wasn't for the lack of trying, it was just one of those things that happens in football. It's one of those experiences that you go through and it's how you come out of it, how you deal with it and how you learn from it that counts. That's what I put it down to. Players underperforming on the day, nothing to do with any lack of effort off the pitch or tactics and Managers get the sack through that. It's football and it's devastating when it happens, especially to someone as popular as Steve.

On the 2004 promotion run-in:

The West Ham game at home was big one for us. They were challenging and we were getting a lot of question marks about whether we could do it against the big teams. Fortunately, I got my chance and was picked for the game. I was ready for these games, these are the sort of games you want to play in - I got the goal, we played well and we



won. It was a turning point, now the fans as well as the players believed we could be in the Premiership. We'd been sold the idea by John Harbin that we could do, now we firmly believed it from that result. That was the turning point.

On the Sunderland penalty shoot-out:

The pressure was intense. When you are standing there pretending to love and hug your team-mates in that 'we're in this together' spirit, really you thinking 'Jeez, I've got to take a penalty in a couple of minutes. You aren't thinking of the consequences if you miss or score, you just thinking 'I've got a penalty to take here and I've got to score'. You are all hugged but you are just thinking 'Score, score, score.' When I was walking up there, it was massive pressure. There's no doubt about that it's a huge experience and I would only tell experienced players to take penalties, to get there, think about what you are going to do and do it. So that's what I did, I placed the ball knew roughly what I was going to do and fortunately I did it. I got back to the halfway line as soon as possible, looked at a few other players and thought 'Right, it's your turn now...'

On what promotion means to a footballer:

When you wake up on a Saturday morning and know you

are playing the likes of Everton, Chelsea and Man Utd at home, it's lot better feeling than waking up knowing you won't be – no disrespect to other clubs.

On the Premiership season:

I felt I could have influenced the season more. When I did play okay, against Tottenham at home for example, I then found myself out of the team for two or three weeks which isn't ideal for a striker - you need to play regularly. I understand the Manager was under massive pressure to get results and reverting to just one upfront, but I felt I could have played a bigger part. I think it did demonstrate that in the last game of the season at Charlton, that in the right frame of mind, I could have made the most of the right opportunities. I had opportunities throughout the season to go and play elsewhere, but I came back to the decision that I made the first time I left. This time, I thought I'm going to hang about and see what happens, unfortunately I wasn't given a big enough chance.

On the League Cup win over Liverpool:

That was a good night. It put us back where I think we should belong, in that Premiership playing against big teams on a Tuesday night at Selhurst Park. The grass had a kind of frost over it, those are the nights that I remember. We played well that night and I got a goal – it was one of many good nights I've spent at Selhurst. A win, a goal and happy drive home.

Summing up his Palace and football career:

When you turn up on the first day, you think I'll score goals, I'll play well and I'll make friends, which is what I did. As you spend time here, you get to know the feelings of the fans, what they expect and the previous history of the club. You learn what they are looking for in the future and the different ambitions, what they need in players - you get a feeling for all that and think that's what I maybe give. From there you kind of bond yourself to a fan kind of feeling and as you get more experienced you know what the club needs and expects and the key things. I feel as if I've got that and can pass that across. There's been many



Dougie auditions for a remake of 'Alien'

a night where I've sat in a Chinese Restaurant and spoke to happy Palace fans and I've been thinking I've had a small part in making them happy – that gives you a lot of pleasure. So I know what it feels like from that side.

It's also been a pleasure to play with the players I've played with and the managers I've worked with. My goodness me, I've worked with some fantastic managers, chairman, coaches and other international players. It's been fantastic for me to have played and been established with Crystal Palace, to be able to say: 'Yeah I did play there'. I feel I didn't just potter along, I contributed at certain times and in certain ways. It probably won't be until I've finished and I look back on this time, that it'll all sink in and I will be able to say exactly how I feel. As of now, I'm hoping to play for another three or four years and, please God, it'll be at Crystal Palace.

With grateful thanks to Dougie Freedman, Terry Byfield and Alan Ryan. The 2005/06 Season review, including the Dougie Freedman '100 not out' documentary is still available from CPFC Club Shops. Price £29.99.

What goes around, comes around...



In your own words...
"Enjoy the championship,
you tosser"



Swede Memories

The 2007 overseas pre-season tour saw Palace make a return to Sweden after nearly 10 years. As ever, Palace Echo was there to record both the games and the trip.

After the trials and tribulations caused by the late announcements of the two previous tours, Palace caught everyone by surprise, by announcing their 2007 pre-season plans in early March - a return to Gothenburg in Sweden for a two game tour against local sides between 21st and 28th of July.

The fine detail took a while to filter through, but in the meantime, supporters minds turned to travel and accommodation arrangements in the ensuing weeks. The high Swedish booze prices did little to diminish the travelling fans' enthusiasm for the trip, who were in loud and boisterous form throughout the week. Indeed, it was an impressive turnout across the two games with an estimated 150 supporters travelling from overseas. The red and blue numbers at each game were also bolstered impressively by Palace's Scandinavian supporter groups, revelling in their first opportunity in almost ten years to

see Palace in action on local turf.

The travelling fans started to descend on Gothenburg over the weekend, with the majority arriving on Monday and Tuesday. The red-eye flight from London Stansted to Gothenburg City airport proving the most popular option. Our party of four opted for the Monday flight to lessen the potential for problems in getting to Grebbestad the following day. Just after 11am local time, we found ourselves abroad on the streets of Gothenburg looking for a bar. The first one we came across was the aptly-named Palace bar and, after a bit of door-rattling persuasion, they opened early to accommodate us. Within an hour, over 15 fans had found their way to this bar and a lively opening session ensued, followed by a light lunch. Napkins bearing the bar's name were secreted away with the intention of hanging them alongside our flags on the fences at the first game. This minor comedy was eventually thwarted on two counts; firstly we completely forget to take them to the game and secondly, there were no surround fences at Grebbestad anyway.

After another heavily portion-controlled meal, the rest of the day was spent wandering the streets of Gothenburg, investigating various bars and cafes, whilst bumping into some of the recently arrived players, taking coffee on

Avenyn – the main strip. The local ale, Spendrups, was sampled but was generally found wanting.

Paul's Billiard bar proved a popular venue with some and the strains of 'Red & Blue Army' could be clearly heard for several surrounding streets throughout the early evening. We elected to finish the evening by returning to an old haunt from Palace's last encounter in Gothenburg: The Dubliners. With both Guinness and Bishops Finger on tap and in reasonably decent nick, a good night ensued.

Up bright and early the next morning for the 10am train to Tanum, the closest train station to Grebbestad. Hopes of a few traditional tinnies on the train were dashed when the shop assistant in the train station declared, with a wicked glint in her eye: 'This is Sweden, we do not sell beer before 11am.' The more intelligent or alcoholic fans, depending on your point of view (i.e. Baldy's lot), had anticipated this and purchased suitable supplies from the previous day from Systembolaget – the government run off-licences.

We arrived in postcard-pretty Grebbestad marina after an onward bus journey from Tanum, at around 1pm and fell into the nearest 'Kök & Bar' – for a delicious and hearty seafood lunch, which was naturally washed down with a beer or two. Grebbestad is noted for its local beer, but unfortunately this particular bar had none to offer us so we settled for a bottled Mariestad, but again this failed to hit the mark.

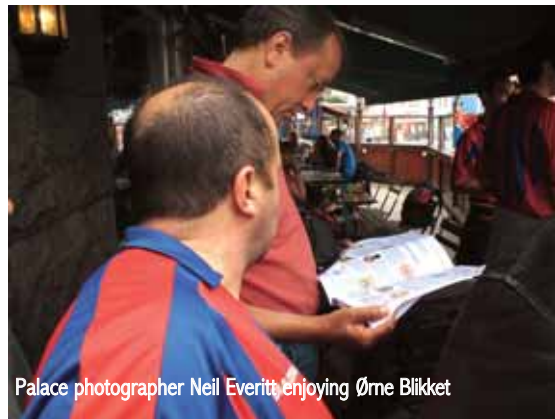
After lunch we headed off to what was to become 'base camp' in Grebbestad – the Pub Hörnet, who were able to offer the local drop 'Granit'. To my palate, at least, it was the best of the Swedish brews tasted so far. Numbers were soon swelled by another busload from the noon train and flags were gradually plastered across the pub wall. The flags, sing-songs and general good humour attracted the attention of the local people who drove up and down past the pub taking photographs of the friendly invasion. Even the occasional unofficial traffic hold-ups for the purposes of photographs were taken in very good part by the Swedes. It was good to see so many faces from the Scandinavian supporters group anxious to make friends with their travelling brethren. It was particularly good to see our old friend Inge Lauritzen, the editor of Ørne Blikket – the Norwegian version of Eagle Eye and now the longest-running Palace fanzine.



Goalmouth action of a different kind in Grebbestad



Goalscorer Scowcroft outjumps his IFK marker



Palace photographer Neil Everitt enjoying Ørne Blikket



Soon it was game time and we headed in uphill for the short journey to the stadium, I use the word stadium loosely here. It was basically a park pitch with a few benches and picnic tables scattered around it and one tiny stand. The ground itself was very attractive, nestling in a pine forest, with a fifty foot high rock face running along one side. The weather was less attractive; a steady shower through the game and without floodlights, the light was extremely poor. The match had been well promoted within the town and a fair few IFK fans had also travelled up, which led to an officially declared attendance of 1,300, although you couldn't help thinking that quite few locals had simply wandered in through the forest.

The programme for the game was a simple black & white four-page A5 size affair, given away free upon entry, but it soon became apparent that there were actually two versions of the teamsheet: one with completely incorrect squad numbers and a much shorter players roster for Palace. This sent the collectors into something of a frenzy as they tried to round up copies of the misprinted edition.

The game itself started very brightly for Palace with Paul Ifill latching onto James Scowcroft's cushioned knock-down header, before swivelling and drilling it into the roof of the

net within 90 seconds. The lively Ifill had the ball in the net again shortly thereafter, but it was well after the whistle had been blown for offside and he earned himself a booking from an over-officious young referee. On the half hour, Ifill collapsed clutching his hamstring and had to be helped from the pitch, but Palace responded to this setback in fine style just five minutes later, when James Scowcroft received a long ball from defence and powered a fierce volley home from 25 yards.

IFK had the better of possession thereafter, but never threatened with any sort of accuracy or consistency. With fifteen minutes left, IFK sub George Mourad met a far post header to pull one back, but it was too little, too late. In the final stages of the game, Pontus Wernbloom was finally dismissed for his overly aggressive and physical play throughout the game. There had been fears that IFK would only be sending a reserve side, but the starting eleven showed only three changes from the team that contested their last competitive first team game. As such, the win represented something of a scalp for Palace, whose pre-season games in England prior to the tour had generally been against low standard opposition.

The rest of the night was spent frequenting the bars and

kebab shops of Grebbestad, with Pub Hörnet again a very popular choice amongst the Palace faithful. As the beer flowed, so did the songs with Glenn Bastin a.k.a. Colonel Britain leading the 'choristers'. Many old classics were dusted off, including lusty renditions of 'Two Little Boys', 'She wore a yellow ribbon' (all five verses) and a particularly spirited version of 'We've got the Best Team in the Land' with the entire chorus rising to its feet to emotionally acclaim the 'Geoff Thomas, number 8' line.

The following morning, we wend our hung-over way back to Gothenburg, eschewing the train for a bus ride which seemed to be slightly quicker. The previous day, we had been told that there was a Champions League qualifier on the Wednesday, an hour east of Gothenburg in the city of Borås, involving Swedish Champions and current league leaders, Elfsborg and Northern Ireland double winners, Linfield. The tie was well poised at 0-0 from the first leg and that their was some Palace interest in the tie as our former swedish centre-forward Matthias Svensson now leads the line for Elfsborg.

So barely two hours after arriving back in Gothenburg, a party of 15 Palace fans headed east on another bus. After a walk through the town and a reasonably warm reception by the Linfield fans, congregating in the main square, we headed to the recently built BoråsArena. We had been told that the home stands were sold out, but provided we got there early we should have no trouble getting into the away end and so it proved.

The game was a fairly drab affair with Matthias Svensson being credited with the only goal that send the Swedes through, although his meatball header did rebound off the crossbar and back onto the keepers outstretched arm before finding the net. Svensson managed to enrage the very vocal Linfield contingent with a range of dives and play-acting that brought memories of his time in a Palace shirt back into sharp focus. Linfield only made a proper go of it in the last few minutes, but were eventually denied the away goal that would have seen them through as one of the shocks of the round. A bit less caution earlier in the half might just have paid dividends.

A quick beer (the infamous Cruzcampo!) back in town whilst we waited for the bus, which was packed to the rafters for the return journey to Gothenburg, where the evening was finished back in Dubliners, which was absolutely heaving with very drunk Swedes. We had

previously been told that it was pay-day in Sweden, but hadn't quite expected such numerous displays of public inebriation.

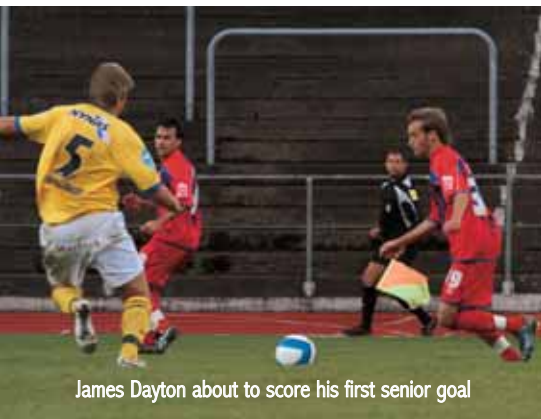
Although there was a small programme of Swedish football scheduled for the Thursday evening, none was within a reasonable travelling distance of Gothenburg so we made the most of a day off. Swimming in the hotel pool, enjoying river and sea cruises as well as visiting the local theme park, Liseberg, which is purportedly the biggest in Scandinavia. Others tracked down the 'Crystal Palace' in Tradgardsforeningen Park built in 1878 — an exact replica of our Crystal Palace, theirs, however, is still standing and blooming as a Roseutium. Some decided to head for Uddevalla a day early to scout the bars there with Harry's Bar being noted as 'the place' to be.

The match in Uddevalla co-incided with the city's annual Fjord Festival and accommodation was at a premium. The advance guard pitched up in the City Square at 11am and took over a large area of the outdoor bar, set up especially for the festival. Between heavy showers, the Palace fans enjoyed the local entertainment joining in with the band and the afternoon's Pop Quiz, despite it being totally in Swedish (Our answer to every question: ABBA, naturally.) Another brand of swedish beer was sampled, Phipps Blå which is best summed up in one word: Avoid.

The rain showers became heavier and more prolonged and so when Harry's Bar opened at 3pm, most of our support decided to congregate there to continue the pre-match beers and sing-song. Before long, it was time to head off to IK Oddevold's Rimnersvallen stadium, which has a definite air of a 1960's municipal sports track about



Now then Agent Flounders,
what went wrong?



James Dayton about to score his first senior goal



Clinton Morrison grabs the second against Oddevold



The Swedish scenery was often quite stunning...

it. Nevertheless it was a tidy little ground with a main stand on one side, a covered terrace on the other and fairly shallow open terracing behind each goal.

By kick-off, the rain had eventually eased, but the pitch was particularly heavy in places which led Peter Taylor to use almost a completely different team in each half and some unusual player positioning. Palace took the lead on 25 minutes after Dougie Freedman, operating on the right flank, cut back a perfect pass for young left winger James Dayton to score his first senior goal with a low, bobbling shot.

At half time, an impromptu game of football broke out between Palace fans and Swedish youngsters on the running track behind one goal. This appeared to unduly alarm the stewards, who had no success in trying to usher the fans back to the terrace until the teams re-appeared. According to the local press, a recent pitch invasion at a Sweden v Denmark international game, which saw the Referee being struck and game abandoned, left the stadium officials unnecessarily twitchy. Amidst this friendly kickabout, The Colonel had a brief contretemps with the long jump pit and had to retire to the terraces, battered and bruised.

Fifteen minutes into the second half, Oddevold equalised when a speculative, but strong long range drive from Marcus Larsson which Scott Flinders could only parry and the rebound was finished off by David Engelbrektsson. In the end, fitness played a part as Palace steamrollered their part-time opponents in the last 20 minutes. A goal from Clinton Morrison, on his first appearance on the pre-season, back from injury on 72 minutes was quickly followed by a tap-in from David Martin after good work from Stuart Green. Ben Watson rounded out the score with a syntillating strike from a 25 yard free kick, in the dying minutes. The second half also marked the debut of Jeff Hughes, signed over the summer from Lincoln City.

After the game, some headed straight back to Gothenburg by bus to catch the early flight on Saturday morning. For those staying, it was back to party time at Harry's before winding their way back to Gothenburg and then home over the course of the weekend, accompanied by memories of a very satisfying tour on and off the pitch.

(And I didn't even mention all the glorious totty wandering around once - that's what marriage does to you - Ed).



Old Pals Act

When Geoff Thomas announced he was going to ride the Tour de France course for a second time, after his record braking exploits in 2005, his old pal Ian Wright decided to get in on the act as well.

Ian's involvement in this year's charity fundraiser seemed, publicly at least, to have stemmed from his absence from Geoff's Liverpool replay night. As a 'penance' for missing the game, he had to accompany Geoff on the early stages of the Tour. How much truth there is in that story we shall probably never know, but it's a nice story.

Fast forward three months and the start of the tour is suddenly upon Geoff's team. Wrighty is true to his word and all present and correct, if rather under-trained by all accounts. Geoff was also accompanied on this assault by a new Team Thomas: other riders whose lives had been deeply touched by cancer: Mike 'Grizz' Grisenthwaite, Steve Timmins, Dave Grainger, Phil Bullas and Pete Slater. They were also joined by guest riders along the way, including Mitchell Thomas, the ex-Spurs full-back.

The Tour, this year, started in London and took in Belgium before dropping back down into France for the meat of the race. Ian Wright ended up cycling four stages, before bidding the team a fond farewell. He later took time to post on Geoff's website about his experience, which appears to have left him very humbled.

The first part of the tour was dogged by the weather, especially strong head winds and heat. Other tribulations included occasional navigation difficulties, one such incident caused a delayed start to the day's riding, which meant a descent after one of the steeper climbs in near darkness. Geoff, who suffers problems with his vision since his treatment, found that especially tough.

It was on stage twelve that Geoff was laid low by a nasty chest infection which got him off the bike and into a French hospital for treatment. He was naturally frustrated that he couldn't complete the entire course himself, but he was able to rejoin the Team for the final stages and the emotional finish in Paris on 31st July.

Geoff's 2007 Tour exploits were filmed for a documentary and given the furore surrounding the professional event, should provide a very interesting contrast. Some of the footage is already online at:

www.cyclefilm.com/geoffthomas.html

Shortly before commencing this Tour, Geoff's book 'Riding the Storm' was released, which tells the story of the first Tour de France ride, alongside his battle with leukaemia. It is an emotional and, at times, difficult read, but truly uplifting at the same time. If you haven't already you really need to buy and read it.

Producing this Echo in an effort to increase donations has been the very least I, as a cancer survivor myself, can do to support such a worthwhile cause. So on this occasion, rather than simply passing this copy on to your mates to read, in that time-honoured fanzine tradition, get them to pay for their own copy for once. It's for Geoff, after all.



Simon Jordan's new look - styled by Errea?



Parliamo Italiano?

A treat from the Palace Echo archive, rare colour photos from the 1971 Crystal Palace v Inter Milan Anglo-Italian Cup game at Selhurst Park.

The Anglo-Italian Tournament gave rise to one of Palace's best, if rather obscure, claims to fame: Palace were the first British team to have won at the San Siro in a competitive match - indeed up until Arsenal's 5-1 demolition of Inter in 2003 we were the one and only. However, despite being the performance of the tournament, the 2-1 win with two goals from Bobby Tambling, wasn't enough to earn Palace a place in the later stages of the competition, which awarded a league point for every goal scored.

The photo's shown here are drawn from the home leg, a 1-1 draw as seen by 25,752 spectators down at Selhurst and a few million more later that evening on Match of the Day.

Inter had many of the stars of their National squad who had reached the World Cup Final a year previous, including the goalscorer in the Final itself Roberto Boninsegna and Sandro Mazzola.

Steve Kember recalls the game at Palace was a very robust affair with several players booked on both sides. Alan Birchenall scored Palace's goal on 6 minutes, when he intercepted a sloppy back pass from Cella and rifled past Bordon. Palace had further opportunities to be out of sight by Half Time with Tambling, Queen and Birchenall all squandering good chances.

The second half saw Inter come right back into it and on 73 minutes, Boninsegna, rounded the entire palace backline and a couple of midfielders to score low under the advancing John Jackson. From it's description it sounds like one of the best goals ever scored at Selhurst.

Bert Head admitted afterwards: 'We should have had the game won in the First Half. It would have made a great Final.'



Opposite page: Mazzola and Corso argue with Tony Taylor.
Above: Gerry Queen tangles with Roberto Boninsegna
Below: Steve Kember tackles Bedin with Corso looking on





No, nothing to do with our assistant manager. The unveiling of the latest kit designs has had fandom in the right old stew. Within hours there was an online protest and petition imploring the club to have an urgent rethink and, oh while we are at, can we have a sash away shirt too please.

It's not like it was unexpected though, as soon as we heard Errea – the Seaweed's long term manufacturer - were involved, we feared the worst.

The home design is predominately a red shirt with a blue stripes contained within a heart shape on the front, a very fussy collar design and retro 'on-show' stitching (for retro read sadly dated). The away design is pretty much of a muchness, with red & blue motifs on one sleeve and down one side, but again featuring the ridiculous collar. The main beef with the away kit appears to be that the club 'ignored' a fans petition on the BBS calling for the return of the sash.

So what can be done? As well intended as the petition is, it will be seen by the club as stick to be beaten with. The real goal should be getting the club to agree to a more open consultation process making use of fan focus groups, in the future.

Also questions have to be asked whether Errea is completely to blame for these designs, after all there have been some real shockers in the last few years. And we note they seem perfectly capable of designing a

completely normal and acceptable red and blue striped shirt for Inverness Caledonian Thistle.

So is there really nothing that can be done about next season's home travesty? Actually there is something... in some other countries, they have a traditional 'fan shirt' - a simply designed 'classic' shirt of the team, with the proper logos and sponsorship (albeit printed on), but made by a un-named manufacturer, reasonable quality and usually half the price. I have a ten year old Marseille fan shirt that still looks as good as the day I bought it. It's one step up from the market fakes you see on your foreign hollibobs. If the proper designs get too outlandish, the supporters buy the fan shirt. Thus the club and kit manufacturers try to ensure their designs are acceptable to the fans.

Back in the early days, Palace Echo produced a hard-wearing 'TOFFS Style' red & blue striped short-sleeved shirt with a V neck for £15 - no logos, no sponsor, indeed nothing to actually connect it to Palace - but it sold like hot cakes - I still see people wearing them at Selhurst 12 years on. So much so, that if we were still in contact with the manufacturer and the fanzine was still going, I'd seriously think about getting some more in.

A small group of fans have already organised something along these lines - a copy of the early-eighties adidas white sash kit, which is selling via the internet, although no longer via ebay, due to 'a concerned, yet anonymous Palace fan' dobbing them in over copyright. (By the way, if you fancy one of these shirts try looking on other auction sites.)

Much as I hate to suggest stuff that takes income away from the club, if these designs are as unpopular as the internet forums suggest, then perhaps it's time for the Trust or PISA to think about producing something similar. Or better still, maybe the club could produce one itself, along the same lines as the retro shirts they sell in the club shop. It is clear from the lack of these shirts on display at the home friendlies, that they don't seem to have been very popular to date.



With our Stateside franchise up and running you can now follow Palace all year round! But how have Crystal Palace Baltimore fared in their inaugural season? Not so bad at all all things considered. With the season drawing to a close, a comfortable mid-table finish is on the cards. Things looked very different at the start though, as they lost their first four games on the spin, got dumped out of the US Cup by a Non-league side and the English loanee's were all injured long term and had to come home.

Goalscoring seemed to be their biggest problem, but with the introduction of Gary Brooks, a Stateside soccer "vet", Palace have started banging in the goals, including a fine 8-1 thrashing of Bermuda Hogges recently. A satisfactory first season on the pitch, but worryingly, the crowds have been much lower than expected.

Moving back home and Palace have had an unbeaten fore-season campaign. The opener was away at Chelmsford on Friday 13 July and Dougie Freedman notched a late brace in the 2-0 win. Less than 24 hours later, the same squad turned out against Bromley and earned a 2-2 draw, courtesy of an own goal and last minute equaliser from Stuart Green.

Conference League Aldershot provided a step up in class, the following Tuesday, but also succumbed 2-0. Ben Watson with a penalty and Shefki Kuqi were on target at the Recreation Ground. Fast forward to Friday and a visit to Princes Park, the brand new eco-friendly stadium of Dartford FC. The game was part of the Dave Martin deal, but the hosts offered very little as the visitors ran out easy 3-0 winners with goals from Carl Fletcher, Stuart Green and Paul Ifill.

Ifill was on also on the scoresheet the following day at Barnet, along with Watson and another o.g. Despite being three goals to the good, Barnet staged a spirited fightback and the game finished 3-2 in torrential rain.

The Swedish tour is covered in greater detail elsewhere in this issue, so we move swiftly onto Tuesday 31st July and a visit to Selhurst by the Belgian Champions RSC Anderlecht. Despite the visitors fielding a somewhat understrength side, they still provided a stern test and Palace did well to earn a 1-1 draw, with another Watson penalty. The first team pre-season was rounded out with the visit of Andy Johnson's Everton in blazing sunshine. Given the heat it was no surprise that the game finished goal-less.





Rounding up all the quotes and stories from the final four games of last season...

"I thought the players of both teams gave it everything today and you can't ask for much more than that. "It was a disappointing second half for both teams. We knew Wolves after having a man sent off would be hard to break down. We started well and scored a couple of good goals, although I thought we were a bit too pleased with the first one and switched off for the equaliser. "

Peter Taylor rues giving away an early lead in the 2-2 home draw with Wolves.

"That could turn out to be our most precious point of the season.."

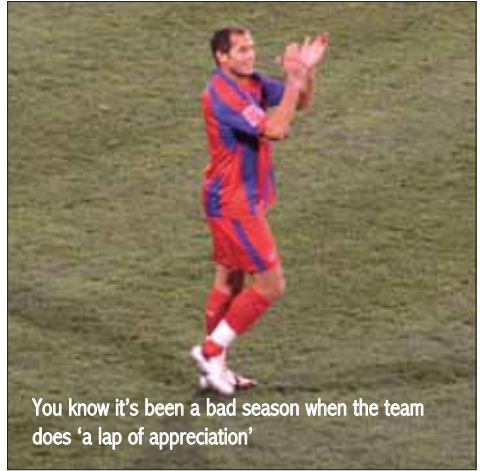
Wolves manager, Mick McCarthy is, by contrast, far more delighted with the point that keeps his side firmly in the play-off hunt.

"Whether Julian Speroni moved too soon or not I don't know, but what I do know is there are hundreds of instances like that and nothing is done about it. This guy ordered a retake when that never really happens. There's no consistency. if the score had stayed at 1-0 then we had a chance, because we were creating chances, but 2-0 killed us."

Peter Taylor reacts angrily to the controversy over a twice taken penalty for Barnsley in their 2-0 victory, which sees them take a massive stride towards safety.

"There was a lot of pressure on Derby today, because they knew they had to win the game. Some of their play was excellent, though. They are a very good team and play a really good system. They will possibly be the favourites to go up through the play-offs. We are as good as Derby, but we are not as consistently good as they have been."

Peter Taylor believes we are on a par with the teams at the top after a televised 2-0 home win over Derby. A result which promotes Birmingham and Sunderland and



You know it's been a bad season when the team does 'a lap of appreciation'

condemns the Rams to the Play Offs. Their manager Billy Davies admits they bottled it.

"It was all about handling the occasion, and we did not get a grip of the pressure we had to face. Palace came out with nothing to play for. It was a Sunday stroll for them: no pressure, no problem."

And on the last day..

"It was nice to finish the season so well. We didn't finish as high as we'd have liked to but you live and learn. We've tightened up a bit over the last two games but Colchester have had a better season than us on a tighter budget."

Peter Taylor's honest assessment of the disappointments of the season after another 2-0 win away at Colchester, which ended the Essex side's slim play-off hopes.

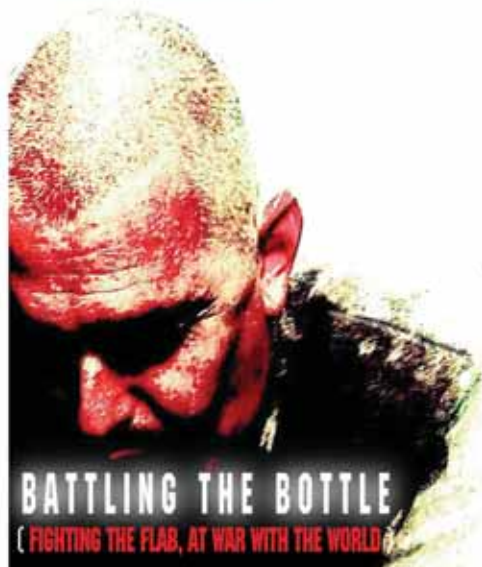
And Finally...

the very last word goes to Simon Jordan after winning his Court Case against Iain Dowie in the summer...

"It's a good day for football. A judgement has been found in favour of contracts, The allegations made were not put forward in as dignified a manner as I would have wanted but I'm delighted that they were proven. It's been a long hard slog..."



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