

FROM THE MILL



HAVE YOUR SAY

Contents:

- SSA News
- SSA Merchandise
- Fans Forum
- Away Travel
- Michael Sisson
- Managerial Changes

First of all we'd like to wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. Included with this issue of our bigger than usual newsletter is a Fans Survey, your chance to let us know how you feel about things related to our football club. The survey asks you a range of questions about the club and SSA. There are also opportunities for you to raise your own points on major issues. Please complete the survey and return it to us in the envelope provided, either to our postal address or drop it off in the box provided in the club shop. Results from the survey will be published in early February. Also inside this issue is a review of the very successful Fans Forum held in early December as well as details of our away travel offers. We also look back over a turbulent week which saw the departure of Stuart Watkiss and Neil Richardson and saw the arrival of Keith Curle as the new manager and promotion of John Gannon from the Football in the Community to the new Assistant Manager.

FUTURE EVENTS

Events planned by MTFC & SSA:

24th January 2003: MTFC **Millionaires Night** at Field Mill. Cost £5 (Price includes Pie & Peas plus £2,500 play money). Details to follow in match programme and local media.

1st March 2003: SSA **Race Night** at William IV, Sutton Road, Mansfield—Free entry, more details in February's newsletter.

14th March 2003: MTFC **Classics Meets Pop Dinner** at the Renaissance (formerly the Swallow), Junction 28 off the M1.

8th April 2003: MTFC **Golf Day**.

9th May 2003: Stags **End of Season Dinner**.

Further details of the last 4 events will be in our February Newsletter.



Contact The Stags Supporters Association

Contact us by any of the following means:

Leave a message on our mobile: 07967 689597

E-Mail: ssa@stagsnet.com - Internet at: <http://www.stagsnet.com>

Post: SSA, PO Box 6430, Kirkby-In-Ashfield, Notts, NG17 8RA

SSA LATEST NEWS

RACE NIGHT SSA's next function will be a Race Night on Saturday 1st March—details are on the front page of this newsletter.

FIELD MILL REDEVELOPMENT MAGAZINES—HALF PRICE We now have just 20 magazines left, which are available at half price (£2.50) plus 50p P&P. Please send a cheque for £3 per magazine made payable to "SSA" to: SSA Magazine, PO Box 6430, Kirkby-In-Ashfield, Notts, NG17 8RA.

MEMBERSHIP FIGURES Current membership figures (at 16 Dec 02) are as follows: Blue: 668 Amber: 125 Junior: 343 TOTAL: 1,136

JUNIOR STAGS Members of the Junior Stags acted as ball boys for the last home match with Blackpool. The following day our younger junior members attended the SSA Kids Christmas Party at Field Mill. More information about both events will be published in the next Junior Newsletter.

SSA MERCHANDISE

T-Shirts (XL & L) in blue or white—£7

T-Shirts (Age 6-7 & 9-11) in white—£5

Key Fobs, blue leather back—£3.50

Metal Pin Badges—£2 (£2.50 to non-members)

Add 50p postage and packing to each order. Please send your order to our address at the front of this newsletter.

FANS FORUM

As part of the deal between the Stags and Team Mansfield, the club hold a Fans Forum every 3 months. The latest Forum was held on Tuesday 2nd December at Field Mill and came just a day after the dismissal of Stuart Watkiss and Neil Richardson. In attendance were Stags Chairman Keith Haslam, new manager Keith Curle, his Assistant John Gannon, Youth Team Manager Paul Holland and Mansfield MP Alan Meale. In a packed sponsor's lounge the panel were bombarded by a series of questions relating to both on field and off field matters. Keith Curle spoke about the need for discipline in the camp and clearly sets his priority on the Stags defending, confirming that he will indeed be a player-manager for the Stags and that he hopes to continue past 40. The Chairman confirmed that Curle's appointment would be made the following morning once severance details had been worked out with Stuart Watkiss. Paul Holland said he was excited by the crop of youngsters coming through, one of them in particular could make it right to the top, though he didn't say which player it was. Keith Haslam was then asked if the release of Michael Sisson was for financial reasons and he confirmed this was the case, saying that the PFA, who had paid half of Michael's wages since August, had reached the end of the three month period and that the club would now have to pay the full wage. He was asked who's decision it was to release him and answered it was the "staffs". Once again the issue of the Director's Loan was raised, that is money loaned by Keith Haslam from Mansfield Town FC. He stated that he had paid off over 50% of the loan, but when asked would not say precisely how much. The Chairman was then asked a series of challenging questions about the new Academy in Skegby. He was asked to confirm that the land for the Academy was purchased by Stag Ltd, a holding company owned by Keith Haslam, and not the football club. He confirmed that this was the case and also confirmed the money had been loaned from the football club to this holding company to fund the purchase. Despite being pressed several times he would not answer why the football club had not purchased the land itself. He was then asked if he had any plans to change the ownership of Field Mill and the land adjacent, in effect separating it from the football club, he denied that there were any such plans. SSA once again raised the issue of a supporters bar at Field Mill, having been promised one for three years and still no sign of anything in place. The Chairman replied that further development is taking place for an internet café and other class rooms and maybe one of these rooms could be used on a match day. When asked when this would be he replied by the start of next season. SSA were due to take part in a CCT meeting with the Chairman on 14th December—details of this meeting will be in the next newsletter and also posted to the Team Mansfield web site at www.team-mansfield.co.uk.

AWAY TRAVEL

As I'm sure you all know by now, SSA operate the club's official travel service and is the only service which will travel to every competitive away fixture the Stags play this season. We have also been able to offer substantial discounts, including discounts to the longer away trips coming up soon and have managed to secure Premium Class coaches for the remainder of the season. Below is the list of remaining away fixtures, the price, time of departure and details of how to book.

Date	Kick-Off	Opponent	Competition	Coach Leaves	Cost
January					
Wed 1st	3pm	Crewe Alexandra (a)	Div 2	12 noon	£8 *
Sat 18th	11am	Chesterfield (a)	Div 2	9.30am	£5
February					
Sat 1st	3pm	Plymouth Argyle (a)	Div 2	7.30am	£25 **
Fri 14th	7.45pm	Colchester (a)	Div 2	1pm	£20 **
Sat 22nd	3pm	Queens Park Rangers (a)	Div 2	10am	£15
March					
Sat 8th	3pm	Cheltenham (a)	Div 2	11am	£13
Tue 18th	7.45pm	Huddersfield Town (a)	Div 2	5pm	£8 ***
Fri 21st	7.45pm	Cardiff City (a)	Div 2	1.30pm	£25 ***
April					
Sat 12th	3pm	Bristol City (a)	Div 2	9.30am	£17
Mon 21st	3pm	Blackpool (a)	Div 2	11am	£12
Sat 26th	3pm	Tranmere Rovers (a)	Div 2	11.30am	£10
*	Crewe Double - Those who travelled to Crewe for the FA Cup tie received a voucher				
**	Plymouth/Colchester Double - Book both trips and pay £40, saving £5.				
***	Huddersfield/Cardiff Double - Book both trips and pay £30, saving £3.				

TO BOOK PHONE SSA AND LEAVE A MESSAGE ON : 07967 689597
or
E-MAIL SSA: ssa@stagsnet.com

MICHAEL SISSON

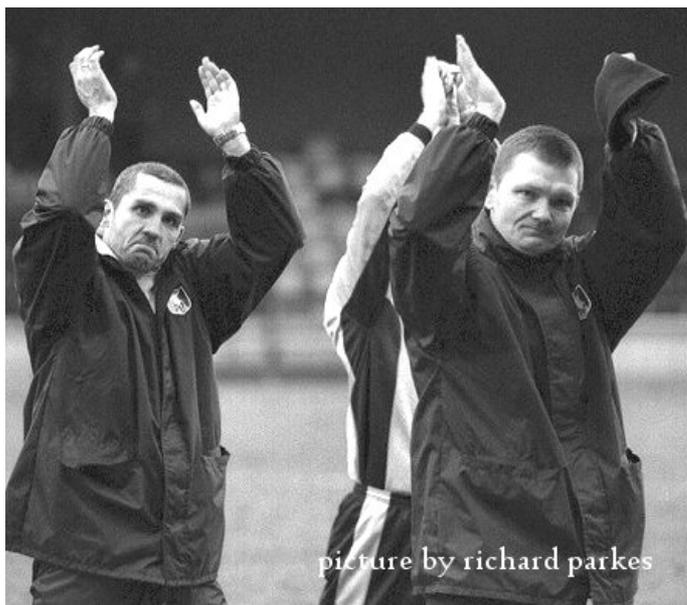
It was with great sadness that we heard Michael Sisson was to be released from Mansfield Town FC. Michael has battled for two years following a cruciate knee ligament injury sustained at Exeter in September 2000. Michael had burst onto the first team scene and was the pick of the excellent crop of youth team players who have graduated into the first team. He was released for financial reasons just when it appeared he was close to resuming training. He will continue to train at the club until regaining fitness and then will be looking for a new club—we wish him all the very best, if anyone deserves another chance its Michael.



MANAGERIAL CHANGES

STUART WATKISS & NEIL RICHARDSON.

On behalf of all Stags fans and all SSA members we feel it important to express our gratitude to Stuart Watkiss and Neil Richardson for the magnificent service they have given to Mansfield Town FC. Stuart first joined the club as a player under Andy King back in 1997 but sadly was forced into early retirement due to an ankle injury. Neil joined in the Summer of 1999 when the Stags squad was down to just 9 players and helped the side maintain its place in the Football League. Stuart was a natural leader and was highly regarded by all at the club, after his retirement he was given the responsibility of Youth Team Manager. During his spell as Youth Team manager the club produced



picture by richard parkes

many fine young players who eventually formed the backbone of the Stags promotion squad last season, indeed the Youth Team itself enjoyed a period of great success. When Mark Kearney left for Northampton at the beginning of last season Stuart was seen as the natural choice to take over as Assistant Manager to Billy Dearden, with Neil taking over as Youth Team Manager after also being forced to quit playing through injury. It was no coincidence that the side immediately blossomed with the fast attacking style of play we all enjoyed last season. Players such as Bobby Hassell, Liam Lawrence, Lee Williamson and Craig Disley were all first team regulars and all learned their trade under Stuart. With the side riding high, manager Billy Dearden quit to join Notts County and Stuart was the choice of the majority of Stags fans to guide the Stags to promotion, which he duly did with the help of Neil as the new Assistant Manager. This season was always going to be a tough one at a higher level, but was made even tougher by losing key players through injury. In many games this season we have seen the potential the side clearly still has and just one or two new players of the appropriate standard could have made all the difference. Stuart & Neil both always gave 100% to our club and have always been readily available to discuss issues with a refreshing openness, they will be sadly missed and we wish them both every success in the future.

KEITH CURLE & JOHN GANNON. SSA would like to welcome new Stags manager Keith Curle to the club and congratulate John Gannon on his promotion to Assistant Manager from the Stags Football in the Community programme. Keith has already declared his intention to continue playing and it is hoped his experience will help ease the Stags appalling defensive record this season. Keith and John join the Stags on a year and a half contract. On his appointment Curle said "John Gannon is coming in to help me and Paul Holland will be helping on the professional side as well but the one thing the club needs at the moment is stability. Paul is doing a very good job with the youth team and the centre of excellence is going well. That structure stays in place. He is going to continue doing the youth side of things but also helping me out a bit as well. I've known John for about 14 years. I have got a lot of respect for him and I have played against him many times. I was aware he was at the football club in the job he was doing and it is a case of all hands on deck. He is a local lad, he knows a lot about Mansfield and he knows a lot about what Mansfield people are like and their expectations. He knows all the people around the football club that I am going to need to know." It has also been announced that Scott Sellars will remain with the club until at least the end of this season and will assist Paul Holland with the Youth Team as well as being an important member of the 1st Team Squad.