

RICHARD LUSMORE

FOREWORD BY
ALAN FETTIS

SPECIAL ATTRACTION

**ANOTHER JOURNEY
THROUGH HULL, HELL
& HAPPINESS**



SPECIAL ATTRACTION

**ANOTHER JOURNEY
THROUGH HULL, HELL
& HAPPINESS**

RICHARD LUSMORE

**FOREWORD BY
ALAN FETTIS**



Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Foreword by Alan Fettis	11
Prologue: Except in Hull	15
1. 'It's not the programme, mate'	21
2. Up for the Cup	40
3. On Cloud Seven	60
4. Stan's the man	81
5. Hull, north (east) of Manchester	104
6. Don't believe the hype!	123
7. 'Going down with the Tigers'	139
8. Back home	155
9. 'We can't wait to get to Exeter!'	174
10. Tigers, Tigers, burning bright	192
11. 'No cash, no ambition'	214
12. 'Knees up Linton Brown'	240
13. 'Su-per, super Ter'	260
14. Where was I when we were shit?	280
15. Fish out, Dolan out!	299
Bibliography	315

‘It’s not the programme, mate’

AUGUST 1988. After eight years of travelling the country, watching my team rise from the lowest of low points to within touching distance of the Football League’s top tier, I was at something of a crossroads. The final game of the previous campaign somehow felt like the end of an era. I now had chance to don the boots and actually play again (or at least try). My Saturdays could be spent travelling around the rustic heartlands of the East Riding County League in the back of a works van, enjoying the banter in the court of striker Melvin Douglas, followed by post-match drinking sessions of often epic proportions. Who cared that Easington United had recently marked their 40th anniversary year by finishing bottom of the basement division (not quite living up to the ‘Pride of Holderness’ tag we’d given them as kids). My mates made it sound like a team in which you couldn’t fail to enjoy yourself. So, in early August I signed on for manager Mike ‘Mickey Bo’ Wilson. Late summer was duly spent striving to cement my place in the team, while also attending gigs by Hull soulsters The Mighty Strike (TMS) *and* trying to make the most of a dalliance with an attractive young summer intern at my place of work. Renewing a season pass for Hull City AFC no longer appeared an attractive proposition.

It wasn’t just in Hull. Watching English football wasn’t an attractive proposition. That same summer, the national team’s dismal showing at the European Championship in West Germany had been accompanied by the latest outbreak

of the so-called 'English disease'. Across the border in Austria, where my mates and I were on holiday, we cringed as the local news screened pictures of what appeared mass disorder on an almost daily basis. The low point came on a day trip to Innsbruck when a local youngster pointed at me (resplendent as I was in Alpine Tyrolean hat, a 'Hull England' T-shirt and 'wacky' patterned beach shorts) and said to his mates, 'Oh no, Engländer hooligan!' To be fair, 'Engländer toursitenfotze' might have been more accurate. Nonetheless, his comment seemed to reflect a general attitude towards four young Yorkshiremen out for a spot of cultural enlightenment in the land of the Von Trapps. And who could blame them? English football was a pariah sport with a thug following.

Hull City had stalled the previous season, after recent years of improvement. They finished 15th in the old Second Division of the Football League, and were also managerless, after one of the most contentious dismissals in their history. Prior to a slump in form, Brian Horton's team had played some wonderful football en route to a place up among the leaders. Following his sacking, assistant manager Dennis Booth stepped up to oversee team matters for the remaining four games. With victory at the first time of asking, and being allowed to spend £100,000 on Watford defender Steve Terry during the summer, Booth appeared certain to get the gig full time. He didn't. Instead, City chairman Don Robinson went for Eddie Gray.

* * *

Eddie Gray was my boyhood hero. More pertinently, he was also a hero of Don Robinson's. In his book *Look Back In Amber*, David Goodman quoted the chairman as wanting someone who wasn't 'too close to the club' (as Booth was) and Gray was the 'name in his head' he went for. Gary Clark, in *From Boothferry To Wembley – We'll Keep The Hull Flag Flying High: The Amazing Story of Hull City's Promotion to*

the Premier League, suggested he was ‘starstruck’ having supposedly met the former Scotland international at a Yorkshire Television sports dinner. Robinson later admitted that he’d ‘done no research’ on his new manager. Not that there was much research to actually do in terms of Gray’s managerial career. The latest in a series of ex-Leeds United players tasked with returning their former club to the top flight, he’d come agonisingly close to doing so when missing out on the final day of the 1984/85 season. A slow start to the following campaign saw him sacked in October, ending a 20-year association with the Elland Road club. After a brief stint at non-league Whitby Town and a short-lived coaching role with Middlesbrough, Gray took over at Rochdale, where operating with limited financial means he oversaw their 1986/87 escape from what looked to be near-certain relegation from the Football League. Perhaps this achievement had caught the eye of The Don.

Despite doubts among my peers, I was fairly giddy about the appointment and immediately felt a swell of ridiculous optimism with regard to the forthcoming campaign. Like many City fans, I believed the squad good enough to bring the good times back and I was determined to be a part of what I now considered to be a brave new era. But how would that determination marry up with the decision I’d already made, as to where I’d be spending my Saturday afternoons? In the event I reckoned that with the later start date at grassroots level, the usual bout of postponements, the occasional blank Saturday due to cup fixtures etc., and of course the numerous midweek games, I could still manage at least a dozen or so City matches over the course of the season. As such, I renewed my club membership and on Saturday, 27 August 1988, I took my place in the ‘members only’ reopened Kempton for the visit of promotion favourites Manchester City.

Ahead of the campaign, the *Hull Daily Mail* (HDM) brought out its traditional sports preview supplement, focusing on the city’s ‘Big Three’. By September this trio of

City, 'ull and Rovers (as they are referred to locally) would be joined by a fourth professional side in the shape of ice hockey team Humberside Seahawks, whose initial success would threaten to leave their more established counterparts in the shade. But that was still to come. In assessing the Tigers' prospects, City reporter David Bond wrote, 'I must admit, first and foremost, that Hull City may find it difficult to sustain a promotion run.' That said, he thought them 'more than capable of holding their own and there is no reason why they should not emerge as a surprise package'. For his part, Eddie Gray used his first match programme notes to thank Booth, reserve team coach Tom Wilson, 'and all connected with Hull City' for the 'warm welcome' he'd received. He then extended a welcome of his own to a trio of new signings: the aforementioned Steve Terry, striker John Moore (£25,000 from Sunderland) and young midfielder Lee Warren (who had followed his manager from Rochdale). Gray expressed his hope that their time with the club would be 'extremely enjoyable and rewarding for them and the rest of the players'. The new trio aside, this was still very much Brian Horton's squad, with a spine of the experienced Tony Norman, Pete Skipper, Garreth Roberts and Keith Edwards, augmented among others by fellow fans' favourites Billy Askew, Alex Dyer, Richard Jobson and Charlie Palmer. With a host of promising youngsters – Nicky Brown, Neil Buckley, Wayne Jacobs, Leigh Jenkinson, Gavin Kelly, Andy Payton, Mike Smith, Les Thompson and the slightly more experienced Andy Saville – all waiting in the wings, it was easy to see why Bond wrote that City had 'no need to feel inferior to most of the Second Division'.

The Tigers had remained unbeaten in pre-season, playing seven games in 19 days¹. In a foretaste of what

1 City's pre-season opponents: North Ferriby United (away, won 3-0), Harrogate Town (away, won 4-0), Bridlington Trinity (away, won 4-0), Mansfield Town (away, won 3-2), Seattle Storm (USA) (home, drew 2-2), Middlesbrough (home, drew 2-2), Aston Villa (home, drew 1-1).

was to follow, 30-year-old Edwards netted nine times. Meanwhile, Moore scored three goals in successive matches in what proved something of a false dawn. It was all very encouraging, even if the opposition hadn’t for the most part been of the highest standard. *Gray said he had* ‘been most impressed with the attitude of the players’ but that ‘although we are undefeated in our games so far, I will only find out if we are strong and good enough to make a serious challenge for honours when we have played a number of league games’. The manager singled out the opening day’s visitors, along with Chelsea, Leeds, Leicester and Portsmouth as ‘the type of clubs which I think will be challenging for promotion’. He said that time would tell if City were good enough or consistent enough to compete with the best but added, ‘I hope over the course of the season we provide you with some exciting and entertaining football.’ He’d previously told David Bond that he wanted his players to enjoy the game but with the expectation that they must also work hard. They would certainly be made to do so on the opening day.

The large away support in an attendance of 11,653 arrived complete with inflatable bananas, continuing a trait that had begun at Maine Road the previous season in reverence to striker Imre Varadi (‘Imre Banana’ as he became known). The trend quickly caught on and soon involved more than just inflatable fruit, as remembered on the Manchester City Info Via The Alps website, ‘The M62 was packed with inflatable-wielding motorists. Frank [Newton], the man responsible for “the first appearance of an inflatable banana at a British football ground” the previous season, had moved up to a six-foot crocodile, but the rest of the fans had caught up with him. At a pub outside Hull he was joined by fans carrying a toucan, a seven-foot golf club, a spitfire, a Red Baron and two bananas. At the ground there were still more: parrots, gorillas, panthers and literally hundreds of bananas. You really had to see it to believe it.’

From my place among the privileged few scattered around a sparse Kempton, the sight of three other packed stands created quite the spectacle, especially given our visitors' accessories. Coupled with the sense of anticipation that comes before a season opener, it helped me forget the stonking hangover I'd woken up with (courtesy of a Friday night foray through Spiders' cocktails board with my former dole office workmate Mark Hudson). The vivid colours on show were further enhanced by the Tigers' new strip. Ending their association with Admiral in favour of Scottish company Matchwinner, it was another predominantly amber shirt (as opposed to stripes) which again included a black and red trim and the logo of sponsor Riding Bitter emblazoned across the chest. Overall, it was a far sharper-looking affair than its predecessors and when matched with suitably trimmed black shorts and amber socks, it cut quite a dash on a beautiful August afternoon. All three of Gray's new signings were named in the opening-day starting 11, but missing from the squad were Billy Askew ('tendonitis in the left achilles heel', according to the programme) and Ray Daniel ('injured medial ligament'). The club's new stadium manager, John Cooper, had prepared a pristine pitch that demanded to be played on. But despite failing to do it justice, the Tigers somehow managed a winning start in one of the most one-sided matches I've ever seen. So much so that a mixture of disbelief and hilarity greeted Keith Edwards' winning goal from City's only effort on target. I went home thinking that 'lucky' Eddie might just be the man to lead us to the top flight after all.

It wouldn't take long to convince me otherwise. The August bank holiday Monday found me up early for the trip to Mark Lawrenson's Oxford United. I paid seven quid to sit in the Cuckoo Lane Stand at the Manor Ground and watch City fall to a narrow defeat against a side looking to make a swift return to the First Division. Another defeat followed at Plymouth on the first Saturday in September, which I

suppose vindicated my decision not to make the trip (my old mucker Gary Hook wasn’t so lucky). On the day that I played my first league game for Easington (a home defeat by Walkington), City were held at home by Barnsley in the first of five draws from the opening 11 games. I was then to be found supporting TMS at their own ‘hard away match’ in front of an acid house crowd in London the day that the clinical Edwards bagged a brace in an eye-catching away win at Portsmouth. Writing in his next match programme notes, Eddie Gray called it ‘the best result since I joined the club’. Buoyed by the win, I was in optimistic mood at Boothferry three nights later for the visit of Blackburn Rovers. Edwards was again on target but this time to no avail in another 3-1 scoreline. It was already proving something of a rollercoaster ride and hopes were raised again when the Tigers showed a ‘first-class’ attitude to rally from two down and force a draw at fifth-placed Oldham. The game was notable for young keeper Gavin Kelly deputising for Tony Norman, whose run of 226 consecutive league appearances (stretching back to 1983) was finally ended by injury. But while such a point was creditable, just three wins in the first 15 competitive matches wasn’t the sort of form to set pulses racing. However, it was *exactly* the sort of form required by those involved in the launch of City’s first fanzine.

* * *

The football fanzine boom was already well under way by the time it spawned City supporters’ first contribution to the genre. The first such offering, 1972’s *Foull*, had actually been put together by two Cambridge students. But it was the London-based *When Saturday Comes* (first printed in March 1986) and Birmingham’s *On The Ball* that were at the forefront of the latest wave. The mid-1980s also saw the appearance of the earliest club fanzines, such as *The Pie* (Notts County) and *The Leyton Orientear*, while Bradford’s *The City Gent* was first ‘sold on coaches to away games in

1984', justifying editor Mike Harrison's claims in a 2020 interview with media and culture website Huck that it's 'the longest continually produced printed fanzine in the country'. Responding to the dark days of English football and adopting the same DIY ethos as their punk predecessors of the late 1970s, the fanzines addressed the issues that directly affected fans. In fact they were often the only mouthpiece available to them. By 1989 there was an underground movement of over 300 fanzines in existence, with almost every club in the country having at least one title.

This rapidly spreading phenomenon for 'non-professional soccer literature' (a term used by David Bull in *We'll Support You Evermore* in 1992) appeared a godsend for any aspiring author. For perhaps the first time, ordinary supporters had somewhere to share their opinions with thousands of others. The often shoestring production operation belied the quality of writing within and fanzines quickly came to provide a genuine alternative to the official mouthpiece of the club, the match programme. Will Magee wrote in the aforementioned Huck article, 'With predominantly working-class roots, fanzines were a form of DIY rebellion against a hostile environment for football fans. To the backdrop of dodgy dealings and opaque financial interests – problems which afflict the game to this day – they also provided a form of free expression away from official club material, which still ranges from the heavily censored to the deliberately anodyne. Before long, fanzines had become a huge subculture, not to mention a campaigning movement which championed popular causes.' As more and more titles came into being, the bar was continually raised in terms of quality.

Over the course of five or six years, I got to co-edit and/or contribute to several Hull City publications, namely *Hull, Hell & Happiness*, *From Hull To Eternity*, *Look Back In Amber* and to a much lesser extent *Tiger Rag*. Because of this I became even more wrapped up in all things black and amber, despite my limited attendance at matches. Over

the next few years, along with trying to champion national common ‘causes’ for football supporters, there were many items specific to *our* club that were up for discussion; from boardroom battles and High Court hearings to comparatively mundane matters such as Gary Clark’s ongoing crusade to reinstate a matchday social club at Boothferry Park. We provided an alternative platform for supporters to voice their opinions, as opposed to just venting their spleens in the likes of Three Tuns, Silver Cod and the Griffin, or sending letters to the *HDM* signed ‘Angry of Anlaby’. Increased exposure helped and in time we’d even be given a monthly slot in the local Saturday *Sportsmail* (or ‘Green Mail’ as it was also known). It really did feel as if we were providing a service for an increasingly beleaguered Tiger Nation. And it all began in September 1988.

* * *

Some might cite the 1940s publication *Tiger Mag* as one of the earliest City supporters’ magazines (albeit one produced by the club) but by the time *Hull, Hell & Happiness (HH&H)* first hit the streets, it had been many years since fans had had anything similar to read. The brains behind the latest offering belonged to Andy Medcalf, a Holderness lad who was in the year below me at Withernsea High and who I didn’t really know that well at the time. As an undergraduate at the University of Staffordshire, he’d first mooted the launch of a fanzine in conjunction with fellow City fan (and Staffordshire-based exile) Ian Websdale. The duo’s aims were to produce a publication dedicated to the activities of Hull City AFC and local music groups, with all profits going ‘in some way’ to City and the Hull Music Collective. Above all, they stressed the fanzine’s independence, saying, ‘We are not accountable to anyone.’

On gaining an internship at the BP terminal at Easington, Andy soon picked up on my interest in City and asked me if I’d like to come on board. It seemed a really good

idea – until a first encounter with my boss at the photocopier as dozens of sheets of amber paper, adorned with a picture of Brummie comedian Jasper Carrot in Hull City kit, settled in the out tray. Although I was still on my lunch break, a charge of using works equipment for personal business was probably enough to get me severely reprimanded or even sacked. Thankfully, the boss in question, a lovely guy called Pete, turned a blind eye to this cottage industry taking place right under his nose. Eventually we managed to produce 350 copies thanks to a succession of ‘working lunches’ and hours spent staying back on a production line that consisted of the copier and a long-handle stapler! There was a real sense of achievement when the first 250 were neatly boxed up and ready to go, to be ‘furtively flogged out of Jackson’s carrier bags at the top of Bunkers’ as recalled by Andy in *The Decade*. The 44 pages were split between football and music, with the inclusion of the latter soon provoking complaints from some readers. Overall, though, we felt we’d struck what appeared to be a good balance between life’s two greatest pleasures.

28 September 1988

Football League Cup second round, first leg

Hull City 1 Arsenal 2

Boothferry Park: East Stand terrace; no ticket; programme 60p (fanzine 50p)

Anticipation surrounding the appearance of our ‘tacky’ first edition didn’t quite match that for the first visit to Boothferry Park since 1954 of Arsenal, along with the return of one of the Tigers’ post-receivership heroes. It was four years since Brian Marwood’s last City game on that desperate night at Burnley in May 1984. A close-season move to Sheffield Wednesday had seen his career blossom enough to tempt the Gunners to spend £800,000 on him in March 1988. While Bunter was guaranteed a warm reception, we wondered if the same would be true for our fanzine. In the event I’m not sure many people had a clue what it was. If I had a pound for

every time the words ‘No, it’s not the programme, mate’ left my lips, as another unsuspecting customer attempted to pay me 60p in order to get Eddie Gray’s latest view on things, I’d probably have taken in more than we did in actual sales. As for the game itself, things started well when King Edwards wonderfully fired City into the lead, having outpaced both Steve Bould and a Tony ‘Donkey’ Adams still being berated mercilessly for his mauling by Marco van Basten at the Euros. But Arsenal, winners of the competition in 1987 and beaten finalists the previous season, turned things round through Nigel Winterburn and that man Marwood (who else) to make the second leg fairly academic. We still planned to go, if only to shift a few more fanzines.

After the hesitant start, a bit of welcome publicity helped to push first issue sales and within a week the initial print run had all but gone. On the whole reviews were favourable, not only from City supporters but from those of other clubs. *WSC* called it ‘a very impressive first issue’, *The Arsenal Echo* said it contained ‘plenty of good reading’ and the *HDM* described it as ‘a Hull of a good idea’. Pieces on the fanzine appeared in the *Yorkshire Post* and on t’wireless courtesy of an appearance on local radio’s *Great Northern Rock* programme. This would be followed in time by welcome exposure via BBC Radio 1’s Simon Mayo and – to my delight – John Peel who displayed genuine enthusiasm about this new wave of ‘alternative’ literature. Twice I had the surreal pleasure of speaking to him during his live late-night shows, using the home landline to bring him up to speed with events out East Yorkshire way before dashing back upstairs to press ‘record’ on my stereo as the legendary broadcaster relayed the information to his loyal listenership.

The only initial disappointments we had were with the local paper and the club itself. But whereas the *HDM*’s refusal to allow use of photographs was purely a commercial decision, the club’s initial reluctance to sell the fanzine in the club shop was apparently content-related, specifically in

response to an article written by Ian Websdale. Re-reading his 'New Era' piece without my 22-year-old 'purveyor of subversive literature' hat on, I can easily see why. The author was hardly fulsome in his praise of the squad that Eddie Gray had at his disposal. His criticism of Garreth Roberts was said to have particularly irked the club. City's longest-serving player was described as 'a lost cause' whose 'ability in the last two seasons has fluctuated from bad to worse'. He wasn't the only target; in fact Tony Norman and Keith Edwards were about the only two Websdale did rate, although some praise was also reserved for what he termed City's 'lifeblood', namely the youngsters coming through the ranks who would 'hold the key to the future at Hull City'. Not surprisingly, this 'olive branch' of praise wasn't enough to persuade the club to take a batch for general sale. However, if that was perhaps understandable, their knock-back to our offer of player sponsorship appeared far less so at a time when money was supposedly tight.

* * *

Despite my local football commitments, as anticipated beforehand, I still managed to get to a fair few City games, mainly at home where Gray admitted to feeling really frustrated. The Boothferry faithful hadn't seen a victory since the opening day, with City unable to put teams away. A goalless affair against Walsall was watched by a season-low crowd of just 4,845. This was followed by a midweek 2-2 draw against Leicester, in which Billy Askew made his only first-team appearance in ten months! Keith Edwards and Ken DeMange scored in a game I took in before racing into town to catch another TMS gig. Gray maintained his belief that his players had 'as much ability as the majority of the Second Division sides'. In his 'Team Talk' piece for the Leicester game, he wrote, 'From the matches I have seen so far this season there is not a lot to choose between most of the clubs.' However, he also warned that the Tigers' inability

to pick up maximum points at home needed to be addressed quickly. The following Saturday, a brace from Edwards and a Roberts goal secured a 3-1 win at Shrewsbury that lifted the team up to 12th in the table. It was as good as it would get.

Cited reasons for such inconsistency were wide-ranging, from Askew’s injury to lack of home atmosphere, while the front cover mock-up for the second *HH&H* suggested that the Welly Club’s new ‘Acieeee Night’ on Fridays might have something to do with it! Whatever the reason, the natives were getting restless and John Moore became the main focus of their ire. His one goal in 14 appearances tells only half the story as the Boothferry boo boys took aim. Singled out as a target man of the greatest ineptitude, critics such as Gary Clark certainly didn’t hold back, writing in *From Boothferry To Wembley*, ‘Moore was supposed to be a centre-forward but that would have been questionable under the Trades Descriptions Act.’ He added that his only claim to fame involved being listed in more supporters’ ‘worst ever Hull City team’ than any other player. The targeting of individuals was nothing new (in his fanzine piece as ‘Honorary President’ of *HH&H* issue seven, playwright Alan Plater waxed lyrical about the similar ‘targets’ from his youth). During my earlier years following City, I’d noticed the need some fans had for a scapegoat, somebody solely responsible for the team’s failings. Bobby McNeil was that player during the Don Robinson renaissance, despite 138 appearances for a club on the up. That said, from what I’d seen of Moore, the boo boys had a point. When a letter in *HH&H* suggested the striker’s best performance so far had come at the Buccaneer pub in Brough, it only served to fuel the fire. Acting on the observations of ‘a very reliable source at the club (who for obvious reasons wishes to remain anonymous)’, Paul Heathcote described how City’s non-firing striker was seen to ‘floor the home defence with four killer pints in the opening hour’ before winning over those in attendance ‘with a 19-pint performance of sheer quality’. Oh dear.

As planned, I went to Highbury for the League Cup dead rubber. It was a low-key affair in which City played quite well in the first half, with the Gunners' first goal coming slightly against the run of play. The second half saw the Arse take control to complete a 5-1 aggregate win. Just a few hundred from East Yorkshire formed part of a crowd of 17,885. Among them was Paul Furness who remembers, 'The Clock End had just reopened (they'd put executive boxes at the top) and their fans were chanting D Mob's "Acieed"². I was stood there thinking, "Silly fuckers!"' Those same silly fuckers would have a first league title in nearly 20 years to celebrate at the season's end.

My memories are much less vivid (the vibrant Old Trafford of the previous year's competition this certainly wasn't). That said, this was also a different streak of Tigers. Andy's next fanzine editorial bluntly asserted that 'nothing's really changed ... we follow a crap team'. But at least we now had a half-decent fanzine to sustain us. Although we bemoaned 'the lack of support we've received to bring this issue out', several names were coming to the fore. Gary Hook was now part of an editorial 'gang of four', while Gary Clark, Jivin' Jeff Pullen, Tim Allison and Chris Warkup quickly became core contributors. In addition the fanzine was blessed with some excellent offerings from numerous 'occasional' writers. And there were plenty of things to write about.

25 October 1988

Football League Second Division

Hull City 3 Chelsea 0

Boothferry Park: East Stand terrace; no ticket; programme 60p

A crowd of 11,450 (Boothferry Park's highest since the opening day) had watched the first Arsenal cup tie – about double City's regular league gate. Without much to cheer by way of wins, the mood among those in attendance was

2 'We Call It Acid', debut single by D Mob, released 3 October 1988.

further blackened by the September departure of fans’ favourite Pete Skipper to Oldham Athletic and rumours of more to follow. It all made for a dispiriting home match experience, one that was compounded by the distinct lack of atmosphere. The latter was something that ‘dismayed’ the manager, according to what he’d told David Bond. Even against Arsenal, Boothferry had failed to bounce. This wasn’t normally so, especially for night matches, regardless of fortunes on the pitch. For the main reason why, one only had to look across to the east side of the ground where the once imposing Kempton stood largely deserted save for the few hundred souls who’d bothered to enlist in the post-Popplewell membership scheme. It was a point picked up on by Gary Clark who urged Don Robinson to open the stand up again for a three-month trial basis, offering free membership to all fans wanting to take up residence there. To his credit, The Don agreed and a few days later, news of the offer was splashed across the local paper’s back page. Rumours of the move spread quickly and on a murky night in late October, the Kempton found its voice again.³

It was during the second half of the Chelsea game when the East Stand contingent among the 6,953 present were ‘sprung into life’, as recounted by Clark in *HH&H* and again in *From Boothferry To Wembley* in 2008. He describes it as ‘one of the best memories of the 80s’ when a ‘downtrodden Chelsea team’ were ‘bullied all over Boothferry Park’. In his fanzine piece, Clark recalled the moment a thunderous ‘COME ON CITY’ chant erupted from the darkness, much to the surprise of the travelling support housed on the Grandways terrace at the north end of the ground and – in particular – to the players on the pitch. ‘The difference in

3 The Popplewell reference relates to the Committee of Inquiry chaired by Sir Oliver Popplewell, that was set up under the Safety at Sports Grounds Act to investigate the causes and find ways to improve safety, following the Bradford City fire disaster of 1985.

City's play was quite noticeable,' wrote Clark, with 'players like Keith Edwards (who thrive on vocal support) suddenly playing with belief in themselves, knocking the ball through defenders' legs and generally looking confident again'. While the home players revelled in the Kempton's return, the same could not be said of those in blue. The usually prolific Kerry Dixon missed a sitter in front of a gleeful Bunkers Hill, but it was centre-half Graham Roberts who had the most torrid time. 'Edwards was ripping him to shreds, much to the delight of the East Stand, who kept reminding him that he was slightly overweight,' wrote Clark. He described how 'a deafening mocking lament of "RANGERS REJECT" greeted Roberts when he gave away a throw on the touchline', which saw the player raise his middle finger to the crowd in response. 'It showed we had unsettled him.' Minutes later his temper again got the better of him and he axed Alex Dyer down in the box to give City a penalty. Roberts was red-carded. Clark wrote, 'Glaring at the East Stand full of laughing hyenas, he gave us the V-sign and sulked off the field.' An Edwards brace and youngster Mike Smith's only goal in 15 starts sealed a win that Alastair Burnet on *News At Ten* read out as 'Hull three, thrashed Chelsea, nil', as remembered by a happy Matthew Rudd. It all hinted at better times ahead.

Instead, five of the next seven games were lost, the popular Alex Dyer was sold to Crystal Palace, and the talk was that Tony Norman and Richard Jobson would be next. The one win in this sequence was secured thanks to John Moore's solitary strike, at home to Swindon; albeit a fluke, according to Rudd, 'He didn't have a clue about it. DeMange hit a shot towards goal that smacked the useless Mackem on the cheek and deflected in.' Still, many of us hoped he would kick on from it. Instead, Moore was subjected to abuse from home supporters before and during the next game, a 1-1 draw against bottom club Birmingham. Subbed at half-time, he didn't play another home game and within weeks he was

transfer-listed, eventually moving to the Netherlands with FC Utrecht, following a short loan spell at Sheffield United. It prompted the other Gary to spring to his defence. In an article in the ‘Special one-off Boothferry Boo boys New Year issue’ of *HH&H*, he described the turn of events as ‘surely the most disturbing news to emerge from Boothferry Park in recent times’. He added, ‘With such disdain towards some of City’s own players, Eddie Gray must now realise the extent of his mission to bring success to East Yorkshire.’ Gary bemoaned the fact that Chris Chilton was no longer around to give the type of guidance from which Billy Whitehurst gained so much benefit, as well as highlighting recent comments by City goal ace Edwards in which he praised Moore as a player who always gave 100 per cent. The piece was accompanied by an unofficial ‘Boo boy of the Year’ list, which dated back a decade to 1978/79. Malcolm Lord was the inaugural ‘winner’ while, unsurprisingly, the 1982/83 nomination was a certain Bobby McNeil.

Prior to the Birmingham game, Moore and his teammates had endured another wretched afternoon at the Victoria Ground where Stoke – yes, *fucking Stoke* – put four past the Tigers without reply. Making it more miserable was that it cost me £6.50 to suffer proceedings from the Butler Street Stand. Thankfully, my Easington commitments protected me from the next two away defeats. The first came at Watford, followed by a 5-1 hiding at Bournemouth in which Eddie Gray bemoaned his team’s first-half attacking profligacy before the game turned after the break. In his programme notes for the home match with Brighton at the start of December, the manager said his team had ‘disintegrated from then on, which is very worrying for everyone’. He tried to reassure supporters that ‘the players are as disappointed as anybody with their present form and are working hard to put things right, even though a lot of their work on the pitch seems sometimes misdirected’. He urged everybody to ‘pull together’ to help them ‘get out of

the present run'. Right on cue, a potential saviour-in-waiting arrived in the form of Andy Payton.

The 19-year-old striker – who earlier in the season had netted all five goals in a 5-2 reserve-team win over Blackpool – scored a wonderful solo goal as part of a brace in the first team's demolition of Brighton by the same scoreline. Thanks to having no Easington commitments, I attended the game as part of a busy weekend agenda, which also involved a 'half-five start' for the pre-Spiders session round town, followed by my first visit to Craven Park the next day. A week later, Payton looked set to find the net for the second game running, away at West Brom, only for Edwards to use his hand to convert an already goal-bound header. This came just moments after City's top scorer had seen his tame penalty saved by home keeper Tony Naylor, which in turn followed Steve Terry's sending off on what proved to be another away day to forget. Don Goodman's brace consigned City to a 2-0 defeat, a result that left them lying 19th in the Second Division. Immediately after the game, with no fixture scheduled until Boxing Day, the City players jetted off to Bermuda for a pre-organised three-match, 11-day mid-season tour. Their manager didn't go with them (Robinson said in *Look Back In Amber* that Gray didn't agree with the idea). Instead, he delved into the transfer market, completing a deal that would further divide opinion among an increasingly fractious supporter base. Meanwhile, as David Bond later told us in the *Hull Daily Mail*'s 'City Cup Special' edition on 11 February, it was during their brief stay at the Excelsior Hotel 'in the shadows of London's Heathrow Airport' ahead of departure that the City players learned of their somewhat uninspiring draw for the FA Cup third round: Cardiff City or Enfield away.

While I didn't envy those hardy souls who were witnessing defeats like the recent Bournemouth shellacking, I also didn't begrudge the amount of time taken up by my new fanzine commitments. The quality was increasing issue

on issue. From those first few lunch breaks spent in covert operations, it eventually grew to what became one of the more professional-looking fanzines on the market and a firm favourite among the football and music fans of Hull (indeed, local mod band Chase Ambition even penned a song titled ‘Hull, Hell & Happiness’, although I can’t claim with absolute certainty that it was done with us in mind). Ironically, though, it was this initial success that indirectly led to the first piece of adverse feedback, courtesy of our decision to get subsequent editions printed professionally. Choosing Sheffield-based Juma Printers riled a few people who felt that we should be supporting local business. But Juma ticked all the boxes. They were cheap, they already printed a whole range of football-based publications and owner Martin Lacey was an editor himself, of Wealdstone FC fanzine *The Elmslie Ender*. He knew what we wanted. The result was a much more professional-looking issue that came out in late November. Despite the increased production costs, at 50p for 44 pages it remained great value. Sales were up and *HH&H* was lauded in reviews for its slightly offbeat content – the music, our ‘Auntie Social’ problem page and ‘An Outsider Writes In...’ in which we invited submissions from supporters of other clubs. The Tigers may not have been producing the goods on the pitch but in the world of football fanzines their supporters were more than holding their own.