



SWANSEA CITY SUPPORTERS' TRUST

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Programme Notes – Rotherham Utd, 13th April 2024 – Diane Hughes writes:

Welcome back to the Swansea.com stadium for our match against Rotherham United. Despite relegation for the Millers being confirmed, I am sure they will now be playing with freedom and could pose a dangerous threat to the Swans today. However, I hope the Swans can build on Wednesday's positive result against Stoke, a welcome win against one of our bogey teams.

This season has not been the best for the Swans, in terms of results or performances. However, it has given me the opportunity to reflect on the past.

Back to 3rd May 2003, the game against Hull which ensured the Swans league status with that James Thomas hat-trick. A vital result that kept the Swans in the league; if we had lost that game we could still be playing non-league football and worse still, be out of business. In the programme notes from that day Brian Flynn, our manager referred to 'the twists and turns' of the season whilst Ant O'Connell (now our regular presenter on SwansTV) said of the team 'They have turned a desperate mid-January situation into this final day shootout'. That team included Leon Britton and Roberto Martinez who were both key personalities going forward, with Roberto introducing 'the Swansea Way' and Leon playing in all four divisions for us.

Those of us who were there that day never envisaged that only eight years later we would be at Wembley, beating Reading and celebrating promotion to the Premier League. We visited the Etihad for our first Premier League fixture, a Monday evening game on Sky when the Swans were proudly led out by the one and only Alan Tate. The programme notes acknowledged our rapid rise and said 'theirs is a story to inspire any club that may be struggling in League Two today'. As predicted, we lost the match (4-0) but I felt positive driving home that night and had a feeling that we would be okay for the rest of the season.

However, the experts and many of our own fans expected a rapid return to the Championship. But we stayed there for seven years, giving us many highlights including holding our own and winning against the top teams. We spoiled Louis van Gaal's first match in charge of Manchester United in August 2014 by winning at Old Trafford. Then there was the strangest away end crowd I have experienced at Arsenal in March 2016 – London tourists seemed to outnumber the Swans fans and I was asked for a selfie with a foreign tourist who wanted to have his photo taken with 'a real Swansea fan' (I was proudly wearing my Swans top)

There was the League Cup win and the subsequent European adventure. The highlight for me was the 3-0 win at the Mestalla in Valencia when we were so high up in the stand that I had to text home to get the team news. The Swans fans took over the main city square for a few days. In St Gallen the game was less memorable (what we could see through the fog) but the group of our fans dressed as 'Swiss misses' in the local pub was a sight to behold. Sadly, the less said about Naples the better, not only the result but the transport to the match when the Swans buses were deliberately taken on a long route and arrived late at the stadium.

So many wonderful memories, and I now have a room covered in 50 years of football programmes that I have been reading through as I write these notes.

As Swans fans, we have had fewer positive memories in recent years, but overall, the past 20 years has been an exceptionally successful period for our football club and I hope I can see the Swans return to the top flight for a third time. In less successful times please remember how well this small club of ours has done, come on the Jack Army, shout 'loud and proud' and get behind Luke and the boys for the rest of this season and going forward.

If you want to learn more about the work of the Trust please come and see us at the Supporters' Trust Pod, next to the club shop, before any home match. You can also join the Trust online at <https://www.swanstrust.co.uk/join-the-trust/>. Alternatively, email us at supporters@swanstrust.co.uk

Enjoy the game YJBs.

Dí Hughes