

Fuller Flavour

Karl Fuller column...



A day I never thought I'd see again - my greatest season as a Town fan

What a day. What a season. What a couple of years. Where on earth do I start?

This column was once awash with misery and too many soul-destroying déjà vu moments. Feelings of apathy, disconnect, and sometimes shame, was commonplace.

I saw it as nothing more than pure addiction as to why I continued my unconditional love of the club. We were down to the bare bones in stands of like-minded people.

When enough was enough, we demanded more. And all we heard was to be careful what we wished for.

Little did we know it at the time, but December 15, 2021, and the FA Cup defeat at Barrow was where rock-bottom was hit and the club would then be rescued.

Sure, Gamechanger20 were already in place by then. But they had spent eight months finding their feet and laying the first of the foundations.

But the day after that Barrow defeat, Kieran McKenna was announced as our new manager. Who? Many of us wondered if a 35-year-old embarking on his first managerial post really could pull us out of the mire.

Fast-forward 115 league games, of which 101 saw us undefeated. Two full seasons in charge, have brought us two promotions and just like that, we are in the Premier League.

It sounds so easy. But it never

was. The owners, the board, Mark Ashton, McKenna, and every one of the support staff deserve immense credit for their roles.

Not to mention these players. Many of whom were with us in League One. Barely anybody gave them a chance to finish above any of Leicester, Leeds, Southampton, and several other Championship clubs. Me included!

What they have achieved is the stuff of football fairy-tales. And a romantic fable it has been. It is astonishing what we have achieved. It really is.

I am pinching myself as I write this. Did this season really happen? It feels like only yesterday that we were winning at Sunderland on the opening day.

Who saw this outcome in the first 20 minutes of that game!

This season has been full of many moments for us all to cherish forever.

Culminating in the events of Saturday. Around a dozen of us left on the 8am train from Clacton to join the thousands in expectant mood in Ipswich.

We joined hordes welcoming the team coach. After which, my daughters' eyes looked as if she had lost an argument with some blue eye shadow from the smoke of the flares. No matter.

An early goal from Wes settled our nerves and, in all honesty, the rest of the game became a blur as the dreams became a reality.

On the final whistle, I held my daughter's hand as we raced onto the pitch. That was a beautiful moment in the life of this sappy 52-year-old who never thought this day would come again.

Being on that pitch was akin to



Main and inset left, Town fans are in dreamland!

Image: STEVE WALLER

being in a blue heaven. I thought of those with me. My two sons elsewhere on the pitch, as were my football buddies of all these years.

I looked up to the sky, as blue as the scenes around me, and shared a thought with lost relatives who would have been looking down with pride. It took an eternity to get off that hallowed turf.

Then I remembered my friend Julian Rose who had flown in on Saturday morning from Bermuda to take in the game. Our meeting point afterwards was in the Sir Bobby Robson suite.

And there, we had the fortune of coming across some of our players. Still in full kit, with medals adorned around their necks.

As we were leaving the building, in came Kieran McKenna. There was just the three of us and what a moment that was.

We shook hands, had a photo, and I told him I could not thank him enough. I was smitten.

Then into the town centre for more celebrations. We already had our club back. We have for a long



The scene after Ipswich Town were promoted at Portman Road - Karl Fuller is in there somewhere!

Image: STEVE WALLER

time.

But now, we also had our place back amongst England's elite after a 22-year absence. It has been my greatest season as an

Ipswich fan.

By the time this fairy-tale finishes, who knows where we will be.

The boys are back in town.