

Many of my 18 years as a Grimsby fan have been spent wondering why. Why, at the end of a great season, did we lose 4-3 at home to Doncaster the first time I ever went? Why did they sell Wilkinson, Drinkell and Lund? (Does the latter still hold the Havelock long jump record, I wonder? he did in my day...) Why Mike Lyons? Why couldn't flyin' Brian control his temper? Why, when about to embark upon a goal drought, did we sell Jamie Forrester just for him to score in every game for Scunny?

Many of these questions will always, like the peace of God, pass all understanding, but one, perhaps the most elusive of all, is now within our grasp. Today *I can reveal why Town fans add an 'S' to the end of players' names*. If, like me, you have often found yourself wondering, 'Peter *Handysides*? Who the hell's he?' then wonder no more.

My initial thesis was suggested by a member of the Huddersfield side we trounced 4-1 in the 1979-80 League Cup run. 'Grimsby played like they had 17 men on the pitch,' commented the hapless player. One early subject of the pluralising tendency, Bobby 'Cummings' Cumming, was among the apparent 17 that day; likewise, the pre-depressant form of 'Handysides' suggested that the players in question are of such presence on-field that spectators and players alike believe them to be present in duplicate or triplicate. Sadly, though, this possibility was refuted by the reference of a recent *SWWF* correspondent to a certain Graham 'Rodgers'. *Rodger* (as he was christened) is having a good game if he appears in singular; indeed, he is usually only noticed at all when he gets sent off.

The real answer is simpler. My New Year's resolution of a month's teetotalism was thwarted by seeing Town lose to Barnsley on January 28 1997, which necessitated several pints of Directors at the Spiders Web. Supporting Grimsby drives you to drink; enough drink, in certain cases, *to make you see double*. Like the toilet bowl the next morning, it was staring me in the face.