

Painting it White

Following Leeds absolutely everywhere...



Bikini tops, Bangkok stops and bungled bank jobs

As we're playing Hartlepool I thought I'd give this week's column a rather more exotic feel.

An hour before I married Lesley at Elland Road last summer I was on all fours dressed only in my Calvin Kleins – no, that's not the exotic bit.

My mate Rich had asked me to paint him a flag to take to the World Cup in Germany. So there I was sprawled out on the floor painting this huge banner which, after the World Cup, ended up at a resort hotel in Venezuela. *That's* the exotic bit.

This 'Lads Holiday' is run by Paul, a mate of mine from Kippax, and he sent me a photo of the

flag in its new home with some of his employees. As you can see, it's a well-run establishment providing the highest quality service and, of course, everyone there is a Leeds fan.

Continuing the exotic theme, I'd like you to spare a thought for my mate Jeff. He is a frequent traveller to Thailand – his passport has that many Thailand stamps, it looks more like an old book of Green Shield stamps. There is not a museum, castle, mountain or any other tourist attraction that Jeff hasn't visited. Last season, whenever Leeds didn't have a game, he used those two weeks to jet off to Pattaya. This season, however, Jeff is like a caged animal as no such opportunities will arise. Now the normally placid fella snaps and snarls at everyone who dares speak to him.

Another reason for Jeff to be unhappy is that over in Pattaya he has a lady friend who this summer surprised him with a gift – a son! Jeff is known to fall asleep quite easily and when on an away trip, he's asleep long before we reach Denby Dale. The son's name? Kipp.

Another mate of mine is also a regular visitor to Thailand and he too is finding it difficult to get across to his beloved Bangkok. Not for the same reason as Jeff, though. Mark, you see, is in Wetherby Prison. He got caught robbing a bank. While not advocating that you try this at home, he was a tad unfortunate to get nicked. He got away alright but when he and his two associates opened the case they had snatched, the three of them, plus the family's white Scottie dog were doused head to foot in a bright pink dye. At least they got the kitchen redecorated. Apart from the white silhouettes on the wall.



➔ Jeff, my fellow traveller, photographed in the late '70s looking like he needs a holiday.

⬅️ ⬆️ A taste for the exotic: even in Venezuela all the girls love a Leeds fan.



Gary Edwards is the author of two books on watching United, 'Paint It White' and 'The Second Coat'.