

# LUTON TOWN YORK CITY



BLUE SQUARE BET PREMIER PROMOTION FINAL

WEMBLEY STADIUM

SUNDAY 20TH MAY 2012 3PM



OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME £5

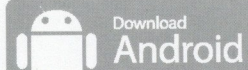
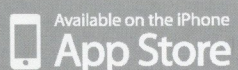
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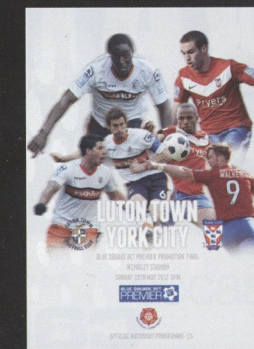
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### TODAY'S MATCHDAY PROGRAMME



This afternoon's programme has been edited by Mark Johnson and would not have been possible without the assistance of the following:

**Editorial:** Dave Boddy & Brian Lee (Football Conference), Alan Alger & Mark Jones (Blue Square Bet), Graham Hill (The Football Conference Youth Alliance), Sue O'Brien (The Football Conference Trust), Dave Simpson, Mike Blake, Gerald Butler, Leigh Edwards, David R. Gray, Stuart Hammonds, Andrew Barringer (Luton Town FC),

Mark Comer, Phil Howden, David Batters & Rob Guest (York City FC)

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**THE CHAIRMAN**

# BRIAN LEE

It is my great pleasure, as the Chairman of the Football Conference, to welcome you all on our return to Wembley Stadium, for the Blue Square Bet Promotion Play-off Final between Luton Town and York City.

We are extremely fortunate to be able to play our most prestigious game at one of the world's best Stadiums. We continue to be grateful to Chairman David Bernstein and the Football Association for their continued support to our level of the game.

Also from The FA, it is my particular pleasure to welcome our Principal Guest today, Sir Trevor Brooking. To football lovers, Sir Trevor needs no introduction, one of the rare 'one club men', he played with creativity, style and total respect for the spirit of the game and his opponents. He was a great credit to both West Ham and England and now continues as the Director of Football at The FA.

Luton Town and York City have both been here before - in the case of York City, only last week! They successfully won The FA Trophy against Newport County but today is the 'big one' for both clubs. The Yorkshire team have been so well supported by the McGill family over the years and they have plans to move from Bootham Crescent to a new Stadium, subject to local Council support and we wish them well in their application. They play the game in the right spirit and in Manager Gary Mills, have a man with wide experience of nurturing talent in a positive way and York are always difficult opponents.

Luton Town still harbour the wounds of old but today presents another opportunity for them to return to the Football League. Whilst the Club continues to move forward, so much is expected of them and sometimes patience 'really' can be a virtue. Led by an astute and most respected Chairman Nick Owen and Managing Director Gary Sweet, they made a recent managerial change when appointing Paul Buckle, himself no stranger to the Conference when he took Torquay United back to the Football League in recent times. Passion and commitment will not be missing in their team today.

We have enjoyed another extraordinarily competitive season in the Blue Square Bet Premier, with Fleetwood Town proving to be excellent Champions, both on and off the field. In addition to the League, they enjoyed a good FA Cup run, taking Football League scalps before succumbing to near neighbours, Blackpool. Chairman Andy Pilley, is to be congratulated for overseeing several promotions and developing their ground Highbury in readiness for League Two football next season.

In last week's Blue Square Bet Play-off Finals Nuneaton Town won the North and Dartford won the South. Nuneaton Town is a 'new' Club reborn from Nuneaton Borough whilst Dartford return, as another new Club, to the Premier after 25 years but with a new Stadium.



Supporters continue to follow their Clubs in abundance in the Blue Square Bet Premier. This season has seen the highest number of fans exceeding 1.2 million, giving an average of 2056 people each game. In addition, the four Premier Play-off Semi Final games attracted over 32,000 spectators.

We continue to be grateful to the Premier League for their solidarity payment and for the financial support for our work in the community. Susan O'Brien continues to Project Manage our Club Community Development Fund which has now been turned into 'The Football Conference Trust', a new Charity funded by the Premier League and the Professional Footballers Association.

After the whistle blows on Saturday, a great deal of activity takes place in the local community. Nearly £1M has now been offered to projects across 49

Clubs, an outstanding statistic of which the Conference can be very proud.

Finally, we would like to thank our Sponsors, Blue Square Bet and their Chairman, Mark Jones who joins us this afternoon. JD Sports and Carbrini have made an impact in their first season of support and our thanks to Martin James from 'sports360' for his involvement and also to Premier Sports Television.

We have witnessed some exciting televised games, so ably led on the night by Steve Bower and his colleagues, PST have done us proud and we hope they feel the same way about us! To the Chairmen, Managers and Supporters of both Clubs, may we witness a game fit for the Stadium, fit for the occasion and fit for the Football League!

Thank you all for coming, please enjoy the game.  
Brian Lee

“To the Chairmen, Managers and Supporters of both Clubs, may we witness a game fit for the Stadium, fit for the occasion and fit for the Football League!”



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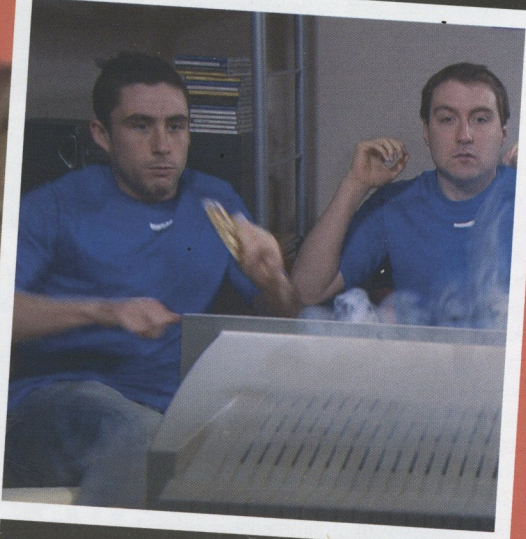
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## MARK JONES



On behalf of Blue Square I'd like to welcome you all to Wembley Stadium this afternoon.

The home of English football is a fitting venue and a great way to end what has been another exciting season in the Blue Square Bet Premier.

We are delighted to be associated with a showpiece occasion of this kind with so much at stake for both sides.

The fifth season of our sponsorship has been as rewarding as the previous four and congratulations must go to champions Fleetwood Town who claim a place in The Football League for the first time.

The second promotion place will go to one of two clubs with roots and history in the Football League, similar to recent winners of this final.

Last year's victors AFC Wimbledon consolidated their rapid rise through the pyramid with 16th place in League 2 this season. Successive promotions for clubs like Stevenage and Crawley Town have also shown the abundance of quality at this level. I hope today's victors can follow in their footsteps.

For today's losing team there will be the obvious disappointment of falling at the final hurdle. I would hope there would be some consolation for that club in looking forward to what promises to be a very exciting Blue Square Bet Premier division next season.

As always there will be an intriguing mix of former League clubs, traditional Conference clubs and an array of progressive Non-League teams hoping to make their mark on the professional ranks of the game.

Play-Off Semi-Final losers Wrexham and Mansfield Town will surely be towards the top of our prices when we focus on next season's potential title winners. It therefore gives us great pleasure that our sponsorship of the three Football Conference divisions remains for at least one more season.

At Blue Square we look forward to these occasions throughout the year. As the first betting company to sponsor a high profile football division in this country, our involvement has not stopped at boards around grounds and logos on shirts.

We continue to take an active interest in games played in all three of our divisions.

Our monthly player and manager awards have been presented in person at a number of matches up and



"The home of English football is a fitting venue and a great way to end what has been another exciting season in the Blue Square Bet Premier."

down the country. We also have the unique rewards scheme which helps clubs earn more from our sponsorship when fans place their bets with us.

Special thanks also go to our partners at the Football Conference and the people at Sports 360.

Good luck to both teams!

It's been another wonderful season as sponsors of this great league and we'd like to thank all of the clubs involved, the players, the managers, the staff, the directors and of course the fans.

**Mark Jones**  
Managing Director, Blue Square Bet  
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# The Heart of Football

TERRY BROWN

IT WASN'T THE WAY I WOULD HAVE WANTED TO WIN THE GAME BUT AFTER LOSING ON PENALTIES TO SHREWSBURY AT STOKE CITY'S BRITANNIA STADIUM AND THEN LOSING A PLAY-OFF SEMI-FINAL TO CARLISLE THE SAME WAY THE NEXT YEAR AFTER BEING 3-0 UP DURING THE SHOOT-OUT, THERE WAS A SENSE OF PERSONAL JUSTICE TO DO IT THAT WAY.

As soon as it looked like we were going to be in the play-offs we made penalty taking a main staple of our training sessions. For two or so months before we went into the semi-final against Fleetwood we built up the confidence and preparation for the players so that if it came to it we would have the advantage.

After the referee blew for the end of extra time we felt we had a real edge over Luton. Even a year on I can remember looking at Seb Brown our keeper who, although the same build as Luton's Mark Tyler, looked huge in comparison. There was a real confidence and belief to him and with the strikers knowing exactly what was needed from them I really felt this was our time, as it proved to be.



## THIRD TIME LUCKY

For Terry Brown, manager of last year's Blue Square Bet Premier play-off winners AFC Wimbledon, it was a case of third time lucky. He was on the receiving end of two play-off ending penalty shoot out defeats when in charge of Aldershot, so seeing the Dons' success had an even sweeter feeling as he explains.

Having tasted defeat in that fashion, I felt for Gary Brabin and his Luton side. They had really played a part of what had been a fantastic game of football that although it had ended goalless had just about everything fans of both sides and any neutrals watching could have asked for.

Both sides had chances that could have won it and any Luton fan there would have thought Walker's header in the 89th minute had won it for them. I was looking across The City of Manchester Stadium pitch directly in line with it as it hit the woodwork and dropped straight into Seb's outstretched arms; I've watched the video back 30 to 40 times still not knowing how it didn't go in.

This league must be the toughest in England to get out of. Fleetwood have been worthy Champions this year; good players, a great style of football under a fantastic manager, but when you look at the four clubs who went into the play-offs you can give reasons for any one of them being the ones to follow in our footsteps and I'm sure today's winners will go on to emulate the successes that previously promoted clubs have had.

It would be nice to see two clubs go up automatically with a third gaining promotion through the play-offs but being the Manager of a

Football League club now I can honestly say I wouldn't be voting for it. Yes that's selfish, but after a season of increased revenue on all fronts and the funding given for youth development you would be mad not to want to protect what we are now part of.

Whichever club emerges victorious today will find the step up a massive one. Like any league, the clubs with money to spend will work their way to the top; if you look at this season, of the clubs near the foot of the table only Bradford and Plymouth could be described as 'big clubs' at our level and the latter's off field problems led directly to their predicament.

Though saying that there is always hope. Look at what John Still has achieved at Dagenham & Redbridge; their promotion two years back to be

playing the likes of Charlton and Sheffield Wednesday is an incredible achievement especially as they are a club that have constantly had to sell their talented players. But good management and a motivated team with focussed belief can do that for you. John is one of the best and someone we can all learn from.

So what have I learnt this season? One thing is that loyalty to the squad who took you up only goes so far in league football. I can tell the manager of today's winners that he needs to be looking for strikers and centre backs with the right level of experience. That, as we have found ourselves, can be the big difference in success or failure when you step up to the Football League.

*Terry Brown was talking to David R Gray*

“ It would be nice to see two clubs go up automatically with a third gaining promotion through the play-offs but being the Manager of a Football League club now I can honestly say I wouldn't be voting for it. ”

# LEAGUE 2 BOARDING GATES ARE NOW OPEN.

Best of luck to The Hatters.

#turningWembleyorange

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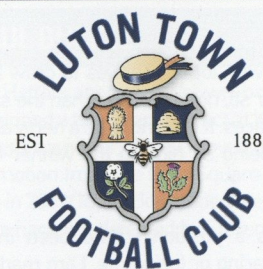
## THE HATTERS

Luton entered their third season at this level once again among the favourites to challenge for promotion, but needed a strong run-in to book their play-off place.

The close season saw defender Dean Beckwith join from Northampton whilst Curtis Osano moved from Rushden & Diamonds. In midfield, James Dance switched from Crawley and John Paul Kissock was signed from Southport. The attack was boosted by Rushden's Aaron O'Connor.

During the campaign, striker Stuart Fleetwood moved from Hereford, alongside defender Janos Kovacs who returned to the club from the Bulls, whilst defender Greg Taylor arrived from Darlington and Craig McAllister signed on loan from Newport County. Midfielder Andre Boucaud switched from York in the New Year, and Andre Gray was loaned from Hinckley United on transfer deadline day.

The season began with an impressive ten match unbeaten run, putting the Hatters at the summit on goal difference, ahead of four other sides. A home draw with Forest Green began proceedings before a 5-1 home victory over Southport and 1-1 draw at Mansfield, whilst a 3-1 home success against Braintree kept the early momentum going. Draws were claimed at Hayes and Stockport prior to a burst of three straight wins: 3-0 at home to



# LUTONTOWN

Darlington, 2-0 at AFC Telford and 1-0 at home to Lincoln, followed by a draw at Bath. However, the good start was ended by a double defeat at York (0-3) and at home to Cambridge, by a single goal.

They soon recovered their form into October through a 5-1 home victory over Barrow and a 2-1 win at Kidderminster, whilst a 2-2 draw at Ebbsfleet preceded another 5-1 home win, this time against Gateshead.

The Hatters suffered damaging successive home losses to fellow challengers Wrexham and Fleetwood, though, either side of a 1-0 win at Grimsby. Momentum was slowed further by a trio of 1-1 draws at Cambridge, at home to AFC Telford and at Lincoln, alongside a solitary win at Newport, but December brought an improvement, seeing a 3-1 victory at Tamworth and 5-0 home win against Kettering, which saw the Bedfordshire club in fifth at the end of 2011.

This was the start of a thirteen match unbeaten stretch which would take Town up to third. The 5-0 scoreline was repeated at Kettering before a 2-0

home win over Newport and 1-0 home success against Stockport, ahead of draws at Southport and at home to Mansfield. A 1-0 home win against Alfreton completed January, preceding a 3-0 home victory over Tamworth, but the run ended in the 1-0 loss at Barrow.

Although a 2-0 win came at home to Bath, a run of two points in the next six games brought a slide to seventh as draws at Darlington and at home to Grimsby sat alongside losses at Wrexham, Forest Green, at home to York and at Braintree, spelling the end of Gary Brabin's spell as manager.

Paul Buckle was the replacement, and the four wins and two draws in the last six games confirmed fifth spot on the last day. He opened with a 4-2 home win over Hayes, before a 0-0 draw at Alfreton, a 3-0 home win over Ebbsfleet and a 1-0 home success against Kidderminster, a result which was the decisive factor in beating the Harriers to the final play-off place.

A 0-0 draw at Gateshead and 2-0 win at champions Fleetwood rounded off the campaign meaning the

Hatters met Wrexham in the play-offs for the second time in a row. At home this time in the first leg, Town established a 2-0 goal lead, and though they lost the second leg 2-1, they progressed to Wembley 3-2 on aggregate.

In the FA Cup, the campaign opened with a 5-1 home win over Ryman League Hendon before a shock 1-0 home win over League Two Northampton in the First Round, only for Cheltenham to end their involvement at the next stage.

The journey to the Trophy semi-finals started in a 2-0 home win over Southern League Swindon Supermarine, and continued with a 0-0 draw at Hinckley before a 3-0 replay win.

A 2-1 win was secured at Kidderminster, and a Quarter Final with Gateshead brought a 2-0 home win before the Hatters bowed out to York in the Semi Finals, 2-1 on aggregate, the 1-0 loss at Bootham Crescent proving decisive.

Gerard Butler

Welcome to Wembley and a massive welcome in particular to all of our supporters. The sales figures are absolutely incredible - we hope you act the 12th man this afternoon like you have done many times before.



# PAULBUCKLE

**IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT TODAY IS A HUGE GAME. EVERY MATCH SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE HAS GOT BIGGER AND THIS LAST ONE IS THE BIGGEST.**

That crucial win over Hayes & Yeading United on Easter Monday kick-started it all and I am delighted to be in the position we are in today where we are

one victory away from winning a place in the Football League.

We might have snuck into fifth place but our performances in recent weeks means we deserve to be in this position. Our victories over Kidderminster, Fleetwood and Wrexham - all in front of big crowds - have set up today's final meeting with York City.

It will be a tense atmosphere, that I know for sure, but, from what my players have given for me in training and in those high-pressure games over the past few weeks, I am incredibly happy with how we have prepared for this game.

The players and coaching staff cannot wait. It's great to see the players itching to get on with it. Our preparation has been flawless. Physically and mentally.

If you asked me the date I took over, or the date it is today, I wouldn't be able to tell you. My concentration has been solely on the training ground. Every game has been important and we have never, ever, taken our eye off the ball.

We need to keep our focus and yes, we will need a bit of luck along the way. But if we step forward and continue to do what we have been doing then I will be a happy man. We've been solid at the back and have been scoring goals.

There's an awful lot of positives to draw from the last month or so, none more so than the smiles on the players' faces. It is going to be a nervy affair with the stakes being so high in the winner-takes-all situation.

However, it's a position I have been in before. Nothing is fearing or fazing me. I am ready and so are the team. They look ready. Sometimes you stand there and watch them in training and you just get that feeling.

I have kept saying to the players to keep smiling and today we won't be doing anything different. We've done all the right things to get here in the first place so we'll be making sure we finish the job off.

The biggest thing we must do is wear the shirt with pride. There's been a lot of sweat on the training ground and masses of effort and desire in games. That will not change. Our work ethic and organisation is key and come 3pm I know the players will do their best.

I know that we will be roared on by over 25,000 of our own supporters. What greater incentive for the players to reward your backing this afternoon.

So thank you. Thank you for your support. We need every single one of you to scream your hearts out like you never done so before.

Enjoy the game.

# LUTONTOWN

An in-depth look at 'The Hatters'



## THE MANAGER



### PAUL BUCKLE

The Hatters appointed Welwyn-born Paul Buckle in April 2012 following the departure of Gary Brabin. He signed a two-year contract at Kenilworth Road three months after leaving League Two side Bristol Rovers having originally moved to the Memorial Ground from Torquay United, with whom he won promotion from the Blue Square Bet Premier via the play-offs. After a 17th place finish in League Two in 2009/10, Buckle guided the Devon Club to the League Two play-off final last season where they were narrowly defeated by Stevenage at Old Trafford.

In his playing days, he was best known for his spells in midfield for Colchester, Brentford, Torquay and Exeter.

## GOALKEEPERS

Hugely experienced goalkeeper **Mark Tyler**



arrived at Kenilworth Road in June 2009 following his release from Peterborough United. He made 483 appearances in 15 years at London Road and was rewarded for his loyalty with a testimonial against Liverpool in 2007. After falling down the pecking order at Posh the former England Youth international found first team opportunities hard to come by and in 2008/09 he was loaned out to League Two Bury.

**Lewis Kidd** is a young goalkeeper who has yet to make a first team appearance having signed professional forms in the summer of 2011. Often appearing on the Town bench, he spent a month on-loan at Swindon Supermarine this term.

## DEFENDERS

Highly experienced defender **George Pilkington** joined the club on a free transfer in August 2008. Having began his career as an Everton trainee, Pilkington joined Port Vale in June 2003, after a loan spell at Exeter City. Having started 223 league games for the Valiants, the highly-regarded defender has been named Player of the Year twice.

Left-back **Greg Taylor** signed from Darlington in November 2011, leaving the financially-troubled northeast club after eleven months. He started his career as a junior with Northampton before joining Kettering Town in the summer of 2009.

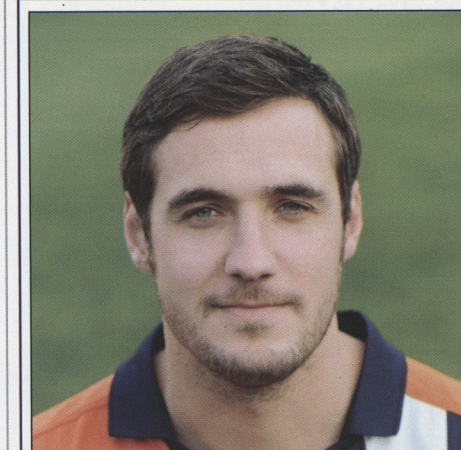
Equally adept at centre-back or at left-back, Luton-born **Shane Blackett** arrived at Kenilworth Road in 2009. Blackett began his career with Dunstable Town before making a switch to Arlesley Town in 2003. His form with the United Counties

side alerted the attentions of Dagenham & Redbridge who signed the 6ft 3in defender in May 2004. After helping the Daggers win the Conference title and earn promotion to the Football League in 2006/07, his reputation as a pacey defender alerted the attention of Peterborough who snapped him up in January 2007.

Young centre-half **Alex Lacey** made his first team debut as a 17-year-old in the FA Trophy first round tie against Welling, earning the man-of-the-match award for an excellent performance.

Centre-back **Dean Beckwith** joined the Hatters' in the summer following his release from League Two side Northampton Town. The commanding 6ft 3in defender has experienced promotion from the Blue Square Bet Premier before having been

## ONE TO WATCH



### DAN GLEESON

Tall and athletic defender, primarily a right-back, Dan Gleeson signed for the Hatters in the summer of 2010 from his home town club Cambridge United.

A product of the U's academy, Gleeson made his debut at 18 and soon became a regular at the Abbey Stadium before Notts County secured his signature in 2006. Gleeson only lasted a season at Meadow Lane, featuring 17 times before he was back at the Abbey, firstly on-loan before re-signing permanently in 2007.

Recognised as one of the best right-backs outside the Football League, Gleeson's performances have seen him rewarded with seven England C caps.

## LUTON TOWN

part of the Hereford United side that won the Play-Off final against Halifax Town in 2008.

Lightening quick attacking defender **Curtis Osano** was signed by Luton following his departure from Rushden & Diamonds in July 2011. Able to play anywhere along the backline, the strong Kenyan-born defender began his career at Reading as a youngster. He failed to make an appearance with the Royals but enjoyed loan spells at Aldershot, Woking and Rushden before making the move to Nene Park permanent in 2008.

Hungarian defender **Janos Kovacs** signed on-loan for his second spell at the club in September 2011. Formerly with Chesterfield and Lincoln, Kovacs first signed in January 2010 before joining Hereford United in the summer of that year.

### MIDFIELDERS

Harlow-born winger **Robbie Willmott** put pen to paper with the Hatters in January 2011 after hitting 10 goals for Cambridge United. Capable of playing on either wing or behind the front two, Willmott came through the ranks at the Abbey Stadium and wowed the home faithful with his pace, dribbling, close control and eye for goal.

Young winger **Jake Howells**, who can also play at left-back or in central midfield, came through the ranks at Kenilworth Road, making his debut in 2008.

### ONE TO WATCH



### ALEX LAWLESS

Former Wales Under-21 midfielder **Alex Lawless** signed in November 2010, initially on-loan from York City, before a permanent deal went through in January 2011. Lawless joined York in 2009 having impressed then boss Martin Foyle enough to prise him away from Forest Green Rovers where performances in a variety of positions - in defence and across midfield - had also caught the eye of Football League scouts. A former Cardiff City scholar he took-up non-league football in Wales before he was snapped up to earn his first professional contract with Premier League Fulham in 2003. Having not featured for the Cottagers, subsequent moves took him to Torquay United and Forest Green in 2006 before arriving at Bootham Crescent in the summer of 2009.

### ONE TO WATCH



### KEITH KEANE

Having made his debut as a 16-year-old in November 2003, Keith Keane went on to enjoy an extended run in the side from February onwards whilst still in the first year of his scholarship. Capped by the Republic of Ireland at schoolboy level, he joined the Hatters at the age of nine and made a rapid progression through the club's centre of excellence and youth teams. Over the course of his career at Kenilworth Road Keane has proved to be one of the, if not the most, versatile players to pull on a Luton shirt. Capable of playing right the way across the back four or in midfield the only positions he's not featured for the Town (yet) are in goal and up-front.

After making 36 appearances for the Hatters in the 2008/09 the England C international was rewarded for his efforts with a professional contract.

Tenacious defensive midfielder **Godfrey Poku** signed from Blue Square South outfit St Albans City in January 2010. A tough-tackling and no-nonsense midfielder, the Town beat off competition from several Football League clubs for his signature.

Tricky winger or left back, youngster **JJ O'Donnell** also arrived from St Albans City in January 2010.

A young midfielder who is capable of playing in attack **Adam Watkins** signed professional forms at Kenilworth Road in June 2010. A self-confessed Hatters fan, he broke into the first team squad during 2010/11 campaign scoring twice on his full debut in the 4-0 FA Trophy win over Uxbridge. Watkins then scored his first



league goal on his first league start in the 3-1 win over Braintree in August 2011.

Energetic, tricky winger **James Dance** joined the Hatters from Crawley Town in July 2011. Able to play on either flank or as a central striker, Dance began his career as a trainee at Birmingham City but, after being released, he made his name in non-league circles in the West Midlands before catching the eye of Kettering Town in 2009. He signed for Crawley in January 2011 but after picking up a Blue Square Bet Premier winners' medal last term, Dance found himself out of the Red Devils' starting XI.

Trinidad & Tobago international **Andre Boucaud** signed for the Town in the January 2012 transfer window from York City. He began his career in the QPR academy before signing for Reading in 2001, where he went on to a sign pro forms a year later. After two loan spells at Peterborough United, he made the move to London Road a permanent one in 2004. Moving to Kettering Town when his contract expired in 2006, further switches to Wycombe

Wanderers, Kettering (again) and York City followed; arriving, initially on loan at the latter, in November 2010.

Creative attacking midfielder **John Paul Kissock** arrived at Kenilworth Road from Southport in August 2011 for an undisclosed fee. The former England Under-16 and Under-18 international began his career as a trainee at Everton. After a loan spell at then Scottish Premier League Gretna, he was released at the end of the 2008/09 campaign before for he signed briefly for Hamilton Academical. He dropped down to Cheshire county league level in a bid to resurrect his career where performances Newton and Formby, alerted the attention of Southport who signed the Liverpoolian in December 2010.

### FORWARDS

Frontman **Craig McAllister** signed on loan for the rest of the 2011/12 season from Newport County having joined the South Wales club in the summer, just months after helping Crawley Town win the Blue Square Bet Premier title last season. Although born in Glasgow, McAllister was raised on the South Coast of England and began his career

with Eastleigh before moves to Basingstoke Town, Stevenage Borough, Woking, Grays, Oxford and Exeter followed - the latter coming in 2008. In 2010 he signed up for Crawley's 'Project Promotion' plan last season which he helped achieve - not only scoring a dozen goals for the Red Devils but also proving to be the perfect foil for prolific strike partner Matt Tubbs.

A nippy poacher of a striker, **Danny Crow** joined the Hatters from Cambridge United in May 2010 following the expiry of his contract at the Abbey Stadium. The front man started his career as a trainee with Norwich City and made his senior bow in the Premier League for the Canaries in December 2004. A loan spell at Northampton followed before he was released by Norwich and signed for Peterborough in the summer of 2005. After a short spell loan at Notts County, Crow was released by Posh and was snapped up by Cambridge in September 2008.

A quick, young forward who is capable of playing down the flanks, **Dan Walker** penned a deal in July 2010 after impressing in pre-season in games for and against the Hatters. Previously with Bedford Town, Walker has also played for Stony Stratford Town and Leighton Town.

### ONE TO WATCH



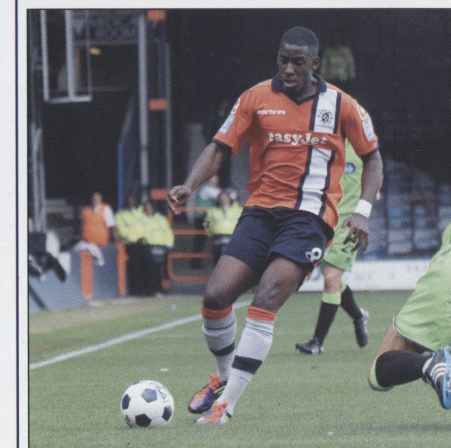
### STUART FLEETWOOD

Prolific striker Stuart Fleetwood signed for an undisclosed fee from Hereford United in August 2011. The Gloucester-born frontman, who began his career as a trainee at Cardiff, scored 28 goals the last time he played at Conference level whilst with Forest Green Rovers.

After a short spell at Hereford he signed for Forest Green in June 2007 where his 32 league and cup goals in a season attracted plenty of attention. The Wales Under-21 international signed for Charlton in June 2008 but was loaned out Cheltenham, Exeter and Brighton before returning to Edgar Street in 2010.

## THE HATTERS

### ONE TO WATCH

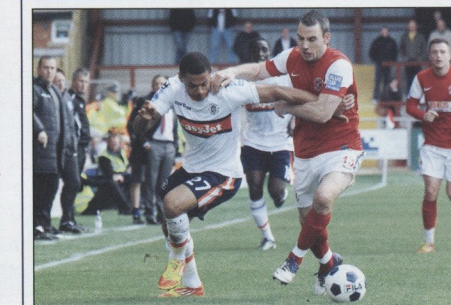


### AMARI MORGAN-SMITH

Striker or wide man **Amari Morgan-Smith** arrived at Kenilworth Road as a free agent following a two-year spell at Ilkeston Town with whom the frontman's impressive form had earned him a call-up to the England C squad. Wolverhampton-born Morgan-Smith started his career as a trainee with Wolves. He then signed for Crewe and then Stockport where he made one Football League appearance before moving to Ilkeston.

Striker **Aaron O'Connor** arrived at Kenilworth Road in the summer following the expiry of his deal with Rushden & Diamonds. He scored 27 times in two seasons at Nene Park after arriving from Mansfield Town and went onto to be a huge favourite at the Northamptonshire club. O'Connor started his career at with Derby County before moving to Ilkeston. He then had spells at Scunthorpe United and Nuneaton Borough before returning to Ilkeston. He joined Gresley Rovers and scored 80 goals in 127 games before moving to Grays Athletic and Mansfield prior to his switch to Rushden in the summer of 2009.

### ONE TO WATCH



### ANDRE GRAY

Lightning-quick forward **Andre Gray** signed from Blue Square Bet North Hinckley United on loan transfer deadline day in March 2012. The prolific striker had scored 39 goals in two seasons for the Knitters after being released from Shrewsbury Town in 2010. He has also spent time on-loan with AFC Telford United.



# GOOD LUCK TO LUTON TOWN



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## LUTON TOWN

Founded in 1885 through a merger between local clubs Wanderers and Excelsior. It was a difficult birth, with an argument at the initial meeting to discuss the merger over the use of the name 'Luton Town'.

The club turned professional before joining a league! They took the decision to pay three players 1890 and go fully professional the following year despite, apart from their annual foray into the FA Cup, only playing friendlies at the time.

A professional club not playing in a league was a strain on finances, so the invitation to join the Southern League in 1894 was grabbed with both hands.

During the 1936/37 season, centre forward Joe Payne scored 55 goals in 39 games, including ten in one match which remains a Football League record. Until that season he had previously played wing-half.



Luton first played in the top flight of English football in 1955. They may have done so earlier but for the intervention of Adolf Hitler! They were top of the old Second Division when the outbreak of the Second World War brought the suspension of the league in September 1939.

London Luton Airport opened in 1938 and doubled as an RAF base during the Second World War.

The Luton Carnival, which will be held in July this year, is the largest one-day carnival in Europe.



The Hatters won the League Cup in 1988, Brian Stein's last minute strike clinching a thrilling 3-2 win against Arsenal. They were runners up to Nottingham Forest the following year.

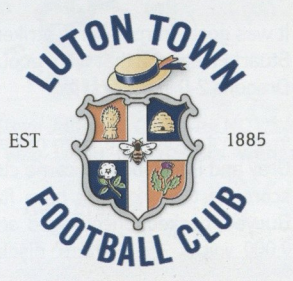
The club was League One champions in 2005, sealing the title with a 2-1 win at Wrexham on St George's Day.

Although the ground is called 'Kenilworth Road', the official address of the club is '1 Maple Street'.



# LUTONTOWN

Ten things you may not know about Luton...





# THE SEMIS

How The Hatters' reached today's final.

For the second season running the Town booked their place in the Play-Off final to leave them just one step away from a return to the Football League. In typical Luton Town style, the trip to Wembley was won courtesy of a 3-2 aggregate victory that had seen the Town lead 3-0 before almost being pegged back by league runners-up Wrexham.

It was goals from in-form strikers Andre Gray and Stuart Fleetwood that were enough to slay the Red Dragons 2-0 in the first leg.

In truth it could have been more. Robbie Willmott, Gray and Fleetwood all came close to extending a scoreline that wouldn't have flattered the Town. Buoyed, backed, encouraged and swept along by 9,000 voices, the Hatters' display was worthy of

victory as a first leg advantage was secured in style. The Town started the brightest of the two sides and, after Mark Tyler had kept out Andy Morrell's 14th-minute effort had almost given Wrexham the lead against the run of play, Paul Buckle's side took the lead.

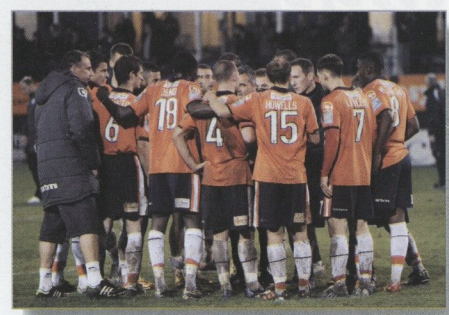
Having waited for their chance in a period of domination in midfield the Hatters took the lead in emphatic style on 22 minutes. Keith Keane, whose name was to reverberate around Kenilworth Road throughout the evening, spread a searching pass looking for Fleetwood down the right.

Faced by left-back Neil Ashton the striker brilliantly nipped around the wrong side of the defender on the touchline and pulled the ball back perfectly for

partner in crime Gray and bang, 1-0, Mayebi left with no chance with the youngster's powerful strike from six yards. The sweetest of connections and is sixth goal in just 10 games.

Shell-shocked, all of a sudden Wrexham had no answer to the Hatters' verve going forward. Willmott winning another corner four minutes later, swung over by Howells and headed goalwards by Pilkington and Willmott but eventually cleared by the visitors.

Pace was the name of the game and in Fleetwood, Willmott and, in particular, Gray, the Town were running the Dragons ragged and, on the half-hour, a superb goal doubled the lead. Alex Lawless robbed Nat Knight-Percival of the ball and fed Gray,



An exquisite back-heel from the frontman fed Fleetwood who nipped past Mark Creighton before tucking home a confident left-foot finish beyond Mayebi to send Kenilworth Road into ecstasy.

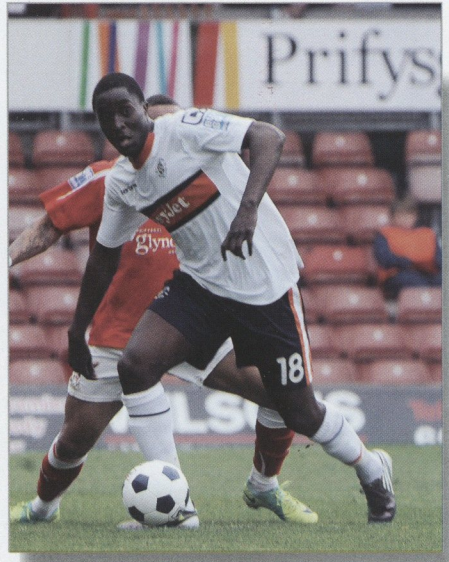
Wrexham came out all guns blazing in the second half but having weathered an early storm as the rain came lashing down the Town resumed control and were unlucky not to add to their lead. Gray was denied by a stupendous stop from Mayebi on 73 minutes before the Wrexham goalkeeper was almost left red faced when mis-communication with Neil Ashton almost saw the defender chest home an own goal with only a last-ditch goal-line clearance preventing the scoreline increasing.

Four days later a sell-out Racecourse it was, as predicted, the home team that began on top. However, just like the Hatters did in the first leg, they denied Wrexham any clear-cut chances in the first half.

The Hatters' 2-0 first leg lead was extended to three on 25 minutes. Having ridden an early storm from the hosts intent on a crucial early goal to get them back in the tie, captain George Pilkington coolly slotted home from the penalty spot to give Paul Buckle's side the lead.

From that point there only seemed one winner but goals in games like these are always so important and Wrexham, out on their feet and down and out moments before, were rejuvenated by the Adrian Cieslewicz's close range effort on 63 minutes as the Town failed to defend a right-wing corner.

All of a sudden it was all the home side and 14 minutes later the Hatters' lead was down to just



one when player/boss Morrell rifled home to give Town followers a nervy final 15 minutes.

But, as boss Buckle would later go on to say, his team were immense in their 18 yard box - just as they were immense in the Wrexham 18 yard box in the first leg - and that proved to be the crucial factor as, after eight minutes of additional time, the Town held on to celebrate a second trip to the new Wembley and a meeting with York City - extra-time victors over Mansfield.

## FIRST LEG

**LUTON TOWN 2 WREXHAM 0**  
**Luton Town:** Tyler, Osano, Pilkington, Kovacs, Howells, Lawless, Keane, Watkins (Kissock 83), Willmott, Fleetwood (McAllister 71), Gray (Morgan-Smith 87). **Subs not used:** Taylor, Blackett

**Wrexham:** Mayebi, S. Wright, Creighton, Knight-Percival, Ashton, Harris, Keates, Tolley, Cieslewicz (Hunt 87), Pogba, Morrell (D. Wright 68). **Subs not used:** Westwood, Maxwell, Clarke

Att: 9,012

## SECOND LEG

**WREXHAM 2 LUTON TOWN 1 (aggregate: 2-3)**  
**Wrexham:** Mayebi, Alfei, Creighton, Knight-Percival, Ashton, Keates, Little, Harris (Tolley 88), Pogba (Cieslewicz 56), Speight D. Wright (Morrell 56). **Subs not used:** Maxwell, Westwood

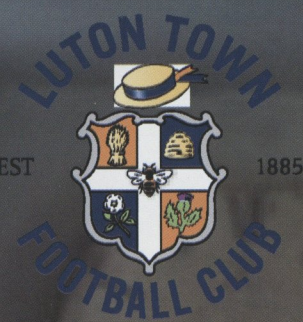
**Luton Town:** Tyler, Osano, Pilkington, Kovacs, Howells, Lawless, Keane (McAllister 66), Watkins, Willmott, Fleetwood (Taylor 57), Gray (Morgan-Smith 81). **Subs not used:** Blackett, Gleeson

Att: 9,087

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### CLASSIC CAMPAIGNS

#### 1954/55

Gordon Turner scored 32 goals as Luton Town won promotion to the top-flight for the first time in 1954/55. The Hatters began with a 3-0 victory at home to Nottingham Forest and soared up the Second Division table with six straight wins. Gordon Turner grabbed a hat-trick as Luton trounced Blackburn 7-3 and they triumphed 5-1 at Nottingham Forest. Dally Duncan's side maintained their challenge, slamming four goals past Hull City, Rotherham, Liverpool and Port Vale. Tom Aherne and Shay Dunne were ever-present as Luton pipped Rotherham to the runners-up slot on goal average with a 3-0 win at Doncaster.

#### 1967/68

Bruce Rioch netted 24 goals as Luton Town won the Fourth Division title in 1967/68. New captain Terry Branston made his debut as the Hatters kicked off with a 1-1 draw at Wrexham and Ian Buxton arrived from Derby in September. Luton lost just two of their first 18 matches and beat Charlton in the League Cup first round, scoring 27 goals in a run of eight successive wins. Allan Brown's side went top of the table with a 2-0 win at Brentford in February and Keith Allen, Max Dougan, Fred Jardine, John Moore and Ray Whittaker also starred as they remained in pole position, clinching the title with a 4-0 victory over Crewe.



## LUTONTOWN

Football historian Leigh Edwards selects post-war Luton Town 'Classic Campaigns'

#### 1969/70

Malcolm Macdonald scored 25 times as Luton Town won promotion in 1969/70. The Hatters had narrowly missed promotion the previous season and Bruce Rioch was sold to Aston Villa for a record fee, with Alec Stock signing Malcolm Macdonald, John Ryan and John Collins. Luton were early leaders after remaining unbeaten in their opening 13 matches, recruiting Chris Nicholl from Halifax and Matt Tees from Charlton. Malcolm Macdonald grabbed hat-tricks in 5-0 wins over Bradford City and Reading, with Luton unbeaten in their last six matches and clinching promotion as Third Division runners-up with a 0-0 draw at Mansfield

#### 1981/82

David Pleat guided Luton Town to the Second Division title in 1981/82. The Hatters had narrowly missed promotion in the previous two years and Tony Grealish was swapped for Brighton's Brian Horton. They raced to the top by winning their first three games and hammered rivals Watford 4-1, then Steve White scored four times in a 6-0 demolition of Grimsby. Richard Money arrived from Liverpool and was an influential figure as Luton were unbeaten in their last 14 matches. Leading marksman Brian Stein, Mal Donaghy, Kirk Stephens and Steve White

were all ever-present as Luton won the title with 88 points.

#### 1987/88

Ray Harford plotted Luton Town's 1988 Littlewoods Cup final triumph. Danny Wilson replaced Peter Nicholas in midfield, while Micky Weir arrived from Hibernian and Mike Newell moved to Leicester. The Hatters won 5-2 at Oxford and Ian Allinson was signed from Stoke in October, with Luton losing just twice in 12 matches including a 7-4 win in the return match against Oxford, finishing ninth in the top-flight. They defeated Wigan 5-2, Coventry 3-1, Ipswich 1-0, Bradford City 2-0 and Oxford 3-1 in the Littlewoods Cup before beating Arsenal 3-2 in the final. Luton were also FA Cup semi-finalists and Simod Cup finalists.

#### 2001/02

Steve Howard scored 24 times as Luton Town won promotion in 2001/02. Joe Kinnear's side were early leaders after winning their opening two matches and newcomer Carl Griffiths netted a hat-trick in a 5-1 win over Torquay. The Hatters briefly regained pole position after beating Darlington 5-2 in October, signing Chris Coyne from Dundee, Jean-Louis Valois from Lille, Dean Crowe from Stoke, Ahmet Brkovic



from Orient and Dave Bayliss from Rochdale. A run of 12 successive wins, slamming five goals past Halifax and Mansfield, took Luton back to the top with two games remaining but they finished runners-up to Plymouth.

#### 2004/05

Mike Newell managed Luton Town to the League One title in 2004/05. The Hatters stormed to the top of the table, winning 10 of their first 12 games before three successive defeats. They beat Bradford City 4-0 and Wrexham 5-1, then Steve Howard netted a hat-trick in a 4-1 win at MK Dons. The 1-0 victory over Port Vale in December heralded a 14 match unbeaten run and Luton bounced back from a 3-1 defeat in the return fixture to hammer Bristol City 5-0. Briefly displaced as leaders by Hull, they triumphed 4-1 at Torquay and secured promotion with four games remaining. Luton won the title with a record 98 points.



# The Football Conference Trust

## Going from strength to strength



On 25 April, club representatives and coaches gathered together with their MPs at the House of Commons to launch the creation of a new charity - The Football Conference Trust. Hosted by Ian Lucas, the MP for Wrexham, the reception allowed clubs to showcase some of their projects.

The Football Conference Trust has been created as a charity to distribute grant support to clubs in the competition, the aim being to support, develop and improve the delivery of their community programmes. This has been made possible by the generous support from the Premier League and the PFA, who have each contribute £400,000 a year for three years, creating a total fund of £2.4m.

The Trust has grown out of the successful Football Conference Community Club Development Fund, which has been supporting projects since October 2010. In that time it has offered £900,000 in grant



### 'Supporting clubs in their communities'

support to 50 clubs for 87 different projects. As grant aid doesn't cover all the costs, clubs are encouraged to look for other funding sources and almost £500,000 has come into projects from other funding sources and grant aid.

To illustrate the difference funding can make, Jane Spong from Woking Football Club's community programme described their work - which covers many areas from helping disabled and excluded groups to supporting community events, tournaments and football activity. They have received a grant of £15,000 this year towards this.

Clubs in the Premier are eligible to apply for

£20,000 and those in the North and South £15,000. Projects so far have included working with young people at risk of offending, supporting health initiatives, cheerleading, music, dance and other arts activities, encouraging volunteering, work with young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), helping different disability groups to play sport, creating educational initiatives for adults and children, work with isolated community groups, green projects, healthy eating and lifestyle and working in partnership with schools to deliver football coaching and other initiatives.

Trustees are drawn from across the world of football. Under the chairmanship of Brian Lee, there is the former deputy chairman of the Football Trust, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, former Manchester City and Sheffield Wednesday midfielder Denis Leman, who represents the PFA, former Fulham captain Simon Morgan, now Head of Community Development at the Premier League and Jack Pearce, associated with Bognor Regis Football Club for over 42 years, an FA Councillor and Chairman of the Alliance Committee.

When clubs come to the Conference from the Football League, they will have an established community programme. But the competition has many clubs who have travelled from the other direction, and there are now 15 clubs in the North and South divisions who have fully developed programmes.

Clubs like Basingstoke Town, working with young disabled children, Bishop's Stortford who run a number of projects, Chelmsford City - working with disabled adults, Guiseley AFC - also running a number of projects, Havant & Waterlooville - who have secured grant support from their local council, Harrogate Town - working with health initiatives, and Solihull Moors - working with young children enabling them to play football. It is estimated that projects have so far touched the lives of over 10,000 young people.



communities for several years, mostly supported from their own funds. We hope that the support that the Trust can give will allow more clubs to grow and sustain their work.

The 68 clubs playing in the Premier, North and South divisions of the Football Conference are as important to their communities as any club playing in the Premier League or the Football League. Some of those clubs may have played at a higher level, others may aspire too - the important aspect is that there is more to all of these clubs than simply playing competitive matches.

This important work is not easy to achieve, and praise should be given to all clubs for the hard work and effort they have contributed to ensure that their projects succeed.

Brian Lee, Chairman of the Trust said:  
-The creation of the charity has given a tremendous boost to Football Conference clubs, many of whom have been working with their local



"We do not underestimate the important part football has to play in helping local people improve their lives - through sport, volunteering and education."





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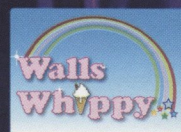
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# KEY GAMES

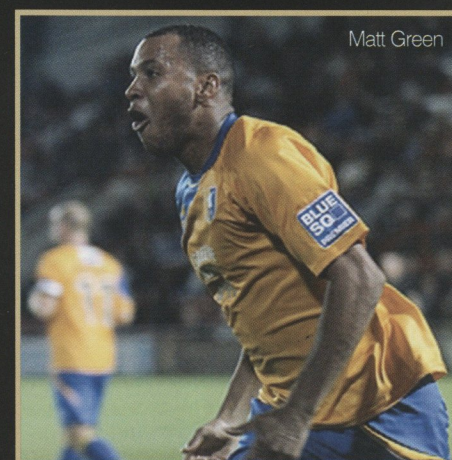
Gerard Butler looks at ten games that shaped the Blue Square Bet Premier season.

**1) WREXHAM 2-0 FLEETWOOD TOWN, MONDAY 29 AUGUST, RACECOURSE GROUND**  
With both sides suffering heavy defeats in the play-off semi-finals last time around, this was an interesting early clash between two sides expected to figure in the promotion race once more. Jake Speight opened the scoring after two minutes, and Morrell added the second just before the hour. It kept the Red Dragons at the summit with five wins from the opening six matches, some eight points ahead of their rivals.

**2) WREXHAM 0-3 YORK CITY, SATURDAY 17 SEPTEMBER, RACECOURSE GROUND**  
Having lost their unbeaten record at Barrow in the previous game, this was a damaging loss to emerging challengers as they slipped to third, and City stood eighth. All of the goals came in the first 25 minutes, as Patrick McLaughlin, Ashley Chambers and Jamie Reed were all on target.

**3) YORK CITY 3-0 LUTON TOWN, SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER, BOOTHAM CRESCENT**  
Unbeaten in their first ten matches of the campaign, the Hatters were well beaten in Yorkshire. Chambers scored twice, whilst former Town player Jason Walker got the other goal, all in the first half. The defeat saw the Hatters edged out of the top five on goal difference, just behind City.

**4) WREXHAM 1-3 MANSFIELD TOWN, TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER, RACECOURSE GROUND**  
Mansfield cemented their place in the top five with this impressive away win, narrowing the gap on their fading hosts to a single point. A Danny Wright own goal put Town in front after 41 minutes, but Lee Fowler made it 1-1 on 64 minutes, only for Matt Green to convert a penalty within three minutes, which also saw Nathaniel Knight-Perceval sent off. Reduced to ten men with seven minutes left after Tom Naylor was sent off, Mansfield nevertheless sealed it through Paul Connor.



Keith Keane mobs goalscorer Craig McAllister following his goal at Fleetwood Town

**5) LUTON TOWN 0-1 WREXHAM, TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER, KENILWORTH ROAD**  
A miserable September behind them, this was a fifth straight win for Wrexham, giving them a four point lead at the summit, whilst the Hatters remained in the top five on goal difference only. Matias Pogba scored the only goal in the 73rd minute.

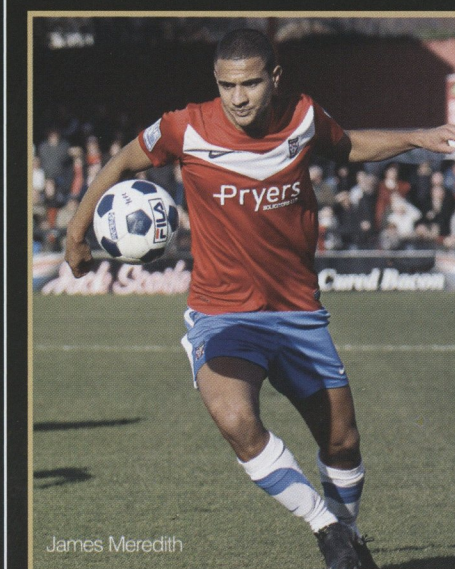
**6) LUTON TOWN 1-2 FLEETWOOD TOWN, SATURDAY 5 NOVEMBER, KENILWORTH ROAD**  
Unlike last season, when Luton tended to slip up against sides not in the promotion race, they were defeated in a number of 'six pointers' this time around. In terms of the top of the table, this win left Wrexham and Fleetwood neck and neck on 40 points, whilst Luton slipped out to seventh. Jamie Vardy gave the visitors an eleventh minute lead, which Jamie Milligan doubled from the spot on 67 minutes. Janos Kovacs got a consolation for the Hatters, deep into stoppage time.

**7) WREXHAM 2-0 LUTON TOWN, WEDNESDAY 7 MARCH, RACECOURSE GROUND**  
This fifth win in sixth effectively confirmed the title as a two horse race, with Wrexham five points behind Fleetwood with a game in hand, but Luton some 15 points further back in third place. Danny Wright opened the scoring after six minutes and Dean Keates settled it in the 39th minute.

**8) LUTON TOWN 1-2 YORK CITY, FRIDAY 30 MARCH, KENILWORTH ROAD**  
Shortly after York's Trophy Semi Final win against Luton, the sides met again, with the Minstermen completing a significant double. Andre Gray put the home side in front with just five minutes played, but McLaughlin equalised on 81 minutes, and James Meredith struck the winner five minutes later. York tightened their grip on fourth place, but Luton were three points short of the top five.

**9) YORK CITY 0-1 FLEETWOOD TOWN, SATURDAY 7 APRIL, BOOTHAM CRESCENT**  
Richard Brodie's goal at his former club saw Town come through a stiff test in their quest for the title, hitting the 101 point mark and establishing an eleven point lead and left York with some work to do to ensure their top five spot, as they only held fourth on goal difference.

**10) FLEETWOOD TOWN 0-2 LUTON TOWN, SATURDAY 28 APRIL, HIGHBURY STADIUM**  
With the title won two games previously, the hosts still had the chance to beat the Conference points record, whilst Luton needed a point to guarantee fifth place. In the event, Kidderminster's defeat to Mansfield meant Luton would have held on to a play-off place, but it was still a hugely impressive victory. Goals from Craig McAllister and Gray set up the victory.



James Meredith



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## From Kenilworth Road to Bootham Crescent - and Back Again



Early in the 1934/35 season Luton Town Reserves put six goals past Charlton Athletic at Kenilworth Road and ruined the visiting goalkeeper's afternoon. Red-headed trialist Sam Bartram was making his debut that day and time was running out for him to fulfill his dream of becoming a professional footballer.

As a 14 year-old wing-half he had been selected for England Schools' but ruled ineligible to play because he had already started work at Boldon Colliery to support his family. As a teenager he had trials with Reading but was not retained. He then developed into a free-scoring centre-forward in north east non-league football but again failed to gain a professional contract.

Fortunately Charlton manager Jimmy Seed, himself a former Durham miner, kept faith in his new 'keeper by extending his trial period and later offered him the professional status he craved. When the Hatters visited The Valley for a Third Division (South) fixture four months later, Bartram was first choice goalkeeper and went on to help Charlton to the most meteoric rise in Football League history.

Sam had been discovered by Charlton playing for Boldon Villa as a stand-in 'keeper in a Tyneside cup final on Good Friday 1934. Three years later he was an ever-present member of the team that finished runners-up in the top flight of English football. By then he was acknowledged as one of the country's best 'keepers and challenging for international honours.

When league football was suspended during World War II Sam entered the RAF and played as much football as duties allowed. He turned out as a guest for many clubs, notably Liverpool and Bournemouth but most prolifically for York City, for whom he made 75 appearances between 1942 and 1945. In a Tyne Tees Cup tie against Dartington in April 1945 he scored both City's goals from the penalty spot in a 2-0 victory. Whilst stationed in the area he also showed his versatility by appearing at centre-half for Harrogate Railway!

Bartram collected three wartime England caps and played in four successive Wembley finals from 1944 to 1947; helping Charlton to victory over Burnley on the last occasion. He continued to be first choice at The Valley for 22 years during which his spectacular and daring goalkeeping made him a favourite wherever he played. When in 1956 at the age of 42 and still performing at the highest level, he was offered the manager's job at York City, he jumped at the opportunity to return to Bootham Crescent.

Sam inherited a City squad that had reached the semi-final of the FA Cup in 1955 and after some



funds made the manager's position impossible and Sam resigned in June 1962. His professional career ended as it started, in disappointment at Kenilworth Road.

rebuilding led York to their first Football League promotion in 1959; lifting them out of the newly formed Division Four. Unfortunately a year later the club slipped back down again but Bartram had shown sufficient managerial promise to be given the chance to take over Second Division Luton Town in 1960.

Sam found the situation at Kenilworth Road uncannily similar to his experience at York. He took over an aging staff and made an array of signings. In all 33 players were used in his first season and inconsistent results restricted the club to a mid-table finish. There was one element of good fortune that season. Town were losing 2-6 to Manchester City in an FA Cup tie - all six goals scored by Denis Law - when the game was abandoned. The match was replayed days later and Luton won 3-1!

The following campaign raised hopes for a return to Division One, with the Hatters well placed in December but again erratic form saw them finish in mid-table. Frustration at the club and restricted

Bartram didn't fail as a manager but was unable to match the heights he achieved as a player, when he was and remains an inspiration. At Charlton, where he made 800 appearances, an entrance to the ground was named in his honour in 1954; Sam Bartram Close was added outside the ground in the 1970s. To mark the club's centenary in 2005, a nine foot statue of their hero was unveiled at The Valley and Bartram's bar and restaurant was added in 2006.

When his boyhood club Boldon Villa switched on their new Sam Bartram Floodlights in April 2011, York City manager Gary Mills honoured his predecessor by taking the 'Minstermen' to Tyneside. Boldon, inspired by the 'Bartram factor' led until the final minute, when City levelled the score at 2-2 from the penalty spot.

Mike Blake

Mike Blake is the author of 'Sam Bartram the Story of a Goalkeeping Legend'.

# STATATTACK 1112



## RESULTS : BLUE SQUARE BET PREMIER

	AFC	ALF	BAR	BAT	BRA	CAM	DAR	EBB	FLE	FOR	GAT	GRI	HAY	KET	KID	LIN	LUT	MAN	NEW	SOU	STO	TAM	WRE	YOR
AFC Telford	XXX	1-0	1-0	2-1	1-0	1-2	3-3	0-2	1-4	2-0	1-2	0-0	1-1	3-1	2-1	1-2	0-2	0-0	2-1	0-1	1-1	1-0	0-2	0-0
Alfreton T	0-0	XXX	2-1	2-1	0-1	2-1	3-1	2-2	1-4	1-6	1-1	2-5	3-2	1-1	0-2	1-3	0-0	3-6	3-2	0-0	6-1	5-2	1-4	0-2
Barrow	2-1	1-0	XXX	0-1	0-4	1-3	3-0	1-1	4-0	1-1	1-2	2-2	3-1	3-0	3-1	1-0	1-0	2-3	3-1	2-2	1-0	1-1	3-1	0-0
Bath City	3-1	0-3	0-1	XXX	1-1	3-4	2-0	2-3	1-4	0-2	4-2	2-2	0-1	0-1	1-2	2-1	1-1	3-2	1-2	0-2	0-2	0-2	0-2	0-1
Braintree T	2-1	1-2	1-0	3-3	XXX	3-2	3-1	2-3	1-2	1-5	3-1	5-0	0-3	2-1	1-4	1-0	3-1	1-1	0-0	2-2	3-1	0-0	0-1	0-1
Cambridge U	1-0	3-0	1-0	1-1	2-0	XXX	2-0	2-0	2-0	1-1	0-1	0-1	2-1	2-0	1-2	2-0	1-1	1-2	1-1	3-0	2-2	0-1	1-1	0-1
Darlington	1-0	1-1	0-1	2-2	1-0	2-0	XXX	0-2	0-1	0-0	0-1	0-0	1-1	3-1	1-0	3-1	1-1	0-2	2-0	0-3	0-1	2-0	2-4	2-2
Ebbsfleet U	3-2	1-2	1-2	3-0	1-1	0-0	1-3	XXX	1-3	1-1	0-1	3-1	3-1	1-0	3-3	2-3	2-2	0-3	1-1	1-2	2-1	3-0	0-5	1-2
Fleetwood T	2-2	4-0	4-1	4-1	3-1	1-0	0-0	6-2	XXX	0-0	3-1	2-1	1-0	3-0	5-2	2-2	0-2	2-0	1-4	2-2	2-1	2-2	1-1	0-0
Forest Green	2-1	4-1	3-0	3-0	0-2	2-1	2-0	3-1	1-2	XXX	2-1	0-1	1-3	0-1	1-1	0-2	3-0	1-1	1-1	2-3	1-1	3-1	1-0	1-1
Gateshead	3-0	2-0	2-0	1-0	2-2	1-1	1-1	2-3	1-1	1-0	XXX	1-0	2-0	1-1	2-1	3-3	0-0	3-0	2-3	2-3	2-0	1-1	1-4	3-2
Grimsby T	2-0	5-2	5-2	6-0	1-1	2-1	1-2	4-3	0-2	2-1	2-0	XXX	3-0	2-1	1-2	3-1	0-1	0-0	2-2	0-1	7-0	0-0	1-3	2-3
Hayes & Y	0-0	3-1	1-1	1-1	1-2	0-0	3-2	1-2	1-3	2-0	2-3	1-2	XXX	1-0	1-3	1-2	2-2	1-3	0-4	0-2	1-2	1-0	0-2	2-4
Kettering T	2-1	0-2	1-1	1-1	2-1	0-0	0-0	2-2	2-3	1-3	2-1	1-2	3-5	XXX	0-1	1-0	0-5	0-3	3-2	2-3	1-3	0-2	0-1	1-5
Kidderminster	2-2	3-1	1-2	4-1	5-4	0-0	3-1	2-2	0-2	1-0	2-3	1-1	3-1	6-1	XXX	1-1	1-2	0-3	3-2	2-0	1-1	2-0	0-1	1-1
Lincoln City	1-1	0-1	2-1	2-0	3-3	0-1	5-0	3-0	1-3	1-1	1-0	1-2	0-1	0-2	0-1	XXX	1-1	1-1	2-0	2-0	1-1	4-0	1-2	0-2
Luton Town	1-1	1-0	5-1	2-0	3-1	0-1	2-0	3-0	1-2	1-1	5-1	1-1	4-2	5-0	1-0	1-0	XXX	0-0	2-0	5-1	1-0	3-0	0-1	1-2
Mansfield T	1-1	3-2	7-0	1-1	4-1	1-2	5-2	1-0	1-1	1-0	1-1	2-1	3-2	3-0	0-3	2-1	1-1	XXX	5-0	1-3	2-1	2-1	2-0	1-1
Newport C	0-0	1-0	2-2	1-0	3-4	0-1	0-0	0-1	0-1	0-0	1-0	0-0	4-0	3-1	1-3	1-0	0-1	1-0	XXX	0-3	1-1	1-2	0-1	2-1
Southport	3-2	2-1	2-1	2-1	0-4	1-0	2-0	3-3	0-6	1-3	1-3	1-2	1-2	0-0	1-2	2-2	3-3	3-1	1-1	XXX	5-0	1-1	0-0	1-1
Stockport C	2-2	0-0	3-2	4-0	1-1	0-1	3-4	1-1	2-4	0-1	0-1	2-0	3-3	1-0	2-1	4-0	1-1	0-1	2-2	0-1	XXX	2-0	1-0	1-2
Tamworth	2-2	2-2	2-3	0-1	1-0	2-2	1-0	1-0	0-3	0-1	1-1	1-1	2-1	2-2	0-0	4-0	1-3	0-1	2-1	2-2	1-1	XXX	1-2	2-1
Wrexham	4-0	0-1	2-0	2-0	5-1	1-1	2-1	1-0	2-0	1-2	2-1	2-2	4-1	4-1	2-0	2-0	2-0	1-3	0-0	2-0	4-0	3-0	XXX	0-3
York City	0-1	0-1	3-1	1-0	6-2	2-2	2-2	3-2	0-1	1-0	1-2	2-1	2-0	7-0	2-3	2-0	3-0	2-2	1-1	1-2	2-1	0-0	0-0	XXX

## FINAL LEAGUE TABLE : BLUE SQUARE BET PREMIER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Fleetwood Town	46	13	8	2	50	25	18	2	3	52	23	54	103
Wrexham	46	16	3	4	48	17	14	5	4	37	16	52	98
Mansfield Town	46	14	6	3	50	25	11	8	4	37	23	39	89
York City	46	11	6	6	43	24	12	8	3	38	21	36	83
Luton Town	46	15	4	4	48	15	7	11	5	30	27	36	81
Kidderminster Harriers	46	10	7	6	44	32	12	3	8	38	31	19	76
Southport	46	8	8	7	36	39	13	5	5	36	30	3	76
Gateshead	46	11	8	4	39	26	10	3	10	30	36	7	74
Cambridge United	46	11	6	6	31	16	8	8	7	26	25	16	71
Forest Green Rovers	46	11	5	7	37	25	8	8	7	29	20	21	70
Grimsby Town	46	12	4	7	51	28	7	9	7	28	32	19	70
Braintree Town	46	11	5	7	39	34	6	6	11	37	46	-4	62
Barrow	46	12	6	5	39	25	5	3	15	23	51	-14	60
Ebbsfleet United	46	7	6	10	34	39	7	6	10	35	45	-15	54
Alfreton Town	46	8	6	9	39	48	7	3	13	23	38	-24	54
Stockport County	46	8	7	8	35	28	4	8	11	23	46	-16	51
Lincoln City	46	8	6	9	32	24	5	4	14	24	42	-10	49
Tamworth	46	7	9	7	30	30	4	6	13	17	40	-23	48
Newport County	46	8	6	9	22	22	3	8	12	31	43	-12	47
AFC Telford United	46	9	6	8	24	26	1	10	12	21	39	-20	46
Hayes & Yeading	46	5	5	13	26	41	6	3	14	32	49	-32	41
Darlington*	46	8	7	8	24	24	3	6	14	23	49	-26	36
Bath City	46	5	4	14	27	41	2	6	15	16	48	-46	31
Kettering Town*	46	5	5	13	25	47	3	4	16	15	53	-60	30

\* Darlington deducted 10pts for entering administration \* Kettering Town deducted 3pts for failing to pay football creditors

# FINAL TABLES



## FINAL LEAGUE TABLE : BLUE SQUARE BET NORTH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 Hyde	42	15	5	1	55	17	12	4	5	34	19	+53	90
2 Guiseley	42	15	3	3	52	24	10	7	4	35	26	+37	85
3 Nuneaton*	43	13	4	4	35	18	10	8	4	38	22	+33	75
4 Halifax	42	10	5	6	41	33	11	6	4	39	26	+21	74
5 Gainsborough	43	14	2	6	38	23	9	3	9	36	38	+13	74
6 Stalybridge	42	13	2	6	48	33	7	9	5	34	30	+19	71
7 Worcester	42	10	7	4	31	20	8	4	9	32	38	+5	65
8 Altrincham	42	10	6	5	49	31	7	4	10	41	40	+19	61
9 Droylsden	42	10	6	5	46	35	6	5	10	37	51	-3	59
10 Bishop's St.	42	8	4	9	35	30	9	3	9	35	45	-5	58
11 Boston Utd	42	6	8	7	28	29	9	1	11	32	38	-7	54
12 Colwyn Bay	42	9	3	9	31	39	6	5	10	24	31	-15	53
13 Workington	42	8	6	7	31	28	6	4	11	25	33	-5	52
14 Gloucester	42	8	3	10	25	27	7	4	10	28	33	-7	52
15 Harrogate T	42	7	7	7	25	26	7	3	11	34	43	-10	52
16 Histon	42	5	9	7	41	41	7	6	8	26	31	-5	51
17 Corby	42	6	1	14	33	43	8	7	6	32	28	-6	50
18 Vauxhall M	42	8	4	9	27	32	6	4	11	36	45	-14	50
19 Solihull Moors	42	9	4	8	29	25	4	6	11	15	29	-10	49
20 Hinckley Utd	42	5	5	11	36	43	8	4	9	39	47	-15	48
21 Blyth Spnrs	42	5	5	11	30	38	2	8	11	21	43	-30	34
22 Eastwood T	42	1	7	13	22	53	3	1	17	15	52	-68	20

\* Nuneaton Town deducted 6pts for fielding an ineligible (unregistered) player

## FINAL LEAGUE TABLE : BLUE SQUARE BET SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 Woking	42	15	4	2	43	18	15	3	3	49	23	+51	97
2 Dartford	43	16	4	2	53	19	11	6	4	37	21	+50	91
3 Welling	43	14	6	1	42	18							

existence was under threat, whilst Bath City failed to build on an impressive second half to last season and struggled throughout.

The other relegation place was less clear cut. Despite playing some distance away from their area at Woking, Hayes & Yeading United suggested they could make a late escape, but failed to capitalise on a glut of home games, meaning AFC Telford United, the North play-off winners, and Tamworth escaped, having slipped into trouble.



At differing times of the campaign, the pair of sides relegated from the Football League, Lincoln City and Stockport County flirted with a second consecutive relegation, but City won a crucial match at Hayes, and pulled clear, having replaced Steve Tilson with David Holdsworth earlier in the season, whilst Stockport County started with Dietmar Hamann in charge, but he was succeeded by Jim Gannon. Alfreton Town improved their position after the North champions had made a slow start to life at the higher level. Forest Green Rovers, meanwhile, recovered too, as the longest serving members of the division enjoyed one of their highest ever finishes, whilst fellow early strugglers Newport County were in danger until the latter weeks of 2011/2012, as former Rushden manager Justin Edinburgh delivered survival and a Wembley final.

In the FA Cup, it was a decent season for the Blue Square Premier clubs. Fleetwood Town took their league form into the competition as they beat League One side Wycombe Wanderers 2-0, whilst Luton Town edged out their local struggling League Two rivals Northampton Town 1-0 at Kenilworth Road. Grimsby Town secured a 0-0 draw at Port Vale before winning the replay 1-0. Other sides to progress were Tamworth, seeing off Blue Square North Hinckley United in a 1-0 home win after a 2-2 away draw, whilst Gateshead won 2-0 at another North side, Blyth Spartans. The all Blue Square Premier match between Cambridge United and Wrexham ended 2-2 before the Welsh side won the replay 2-1.

Moving into the Second Round, and pride of place went to Wrexham, who secured a 1-0 success at League One Brentford; Fleetwood Town were held to a 2-2 home draw by Yeovil Town, but secured progress with a 2-0 win in the rematch. Tamworth won 2-1 at Gateshead, but Luton lost at home to Cheltenham and Grimsby reached the end of the road as they lost a home replay to Blue Square South side Salisbury City in extra time following a 0-0 away draw. The trio of sides remaining all bowed out in the Third Round, although Wrexham secured a 1-1 draw at Championship side Brighton & Hove Albion before repeating the score at home and losing on penalties. Fleetwood Town were handed an intriguing derby with their Championship neighbours Blackpool, and lost 5-1, whilst Tamworth gave an excellent display in a 2-0 reverse at Barclays Premier League side Everton.

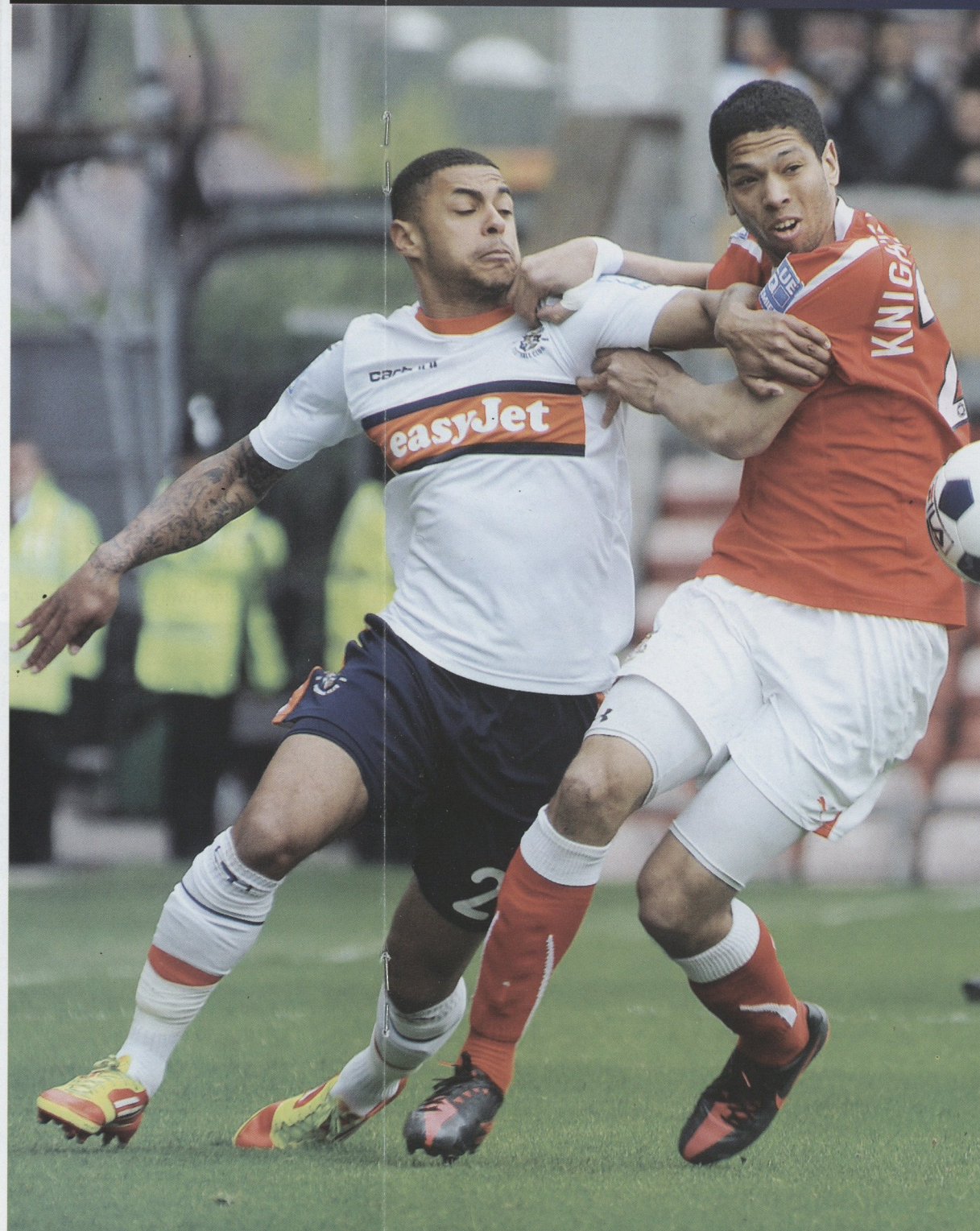
Switching to the Trophy, two of the promotion frontrunners suffered surprise defeats in the First Round, as Wrexham lost 2-1 at home to Hinckley United, and Mansfield Town were undone at another North side, Droylsden, by the same scoreline. Tamworth were edged out by the only goal at Evo Stik League side Worksop Town, and Hayes & Yeading United were eliminated at Blue Square Bet South outfit Hampton & Richmond Borough. Into the Second Round, and Lincoln City were knocked out 3-1 at Ryman League Carshalton, whilst Barrow succumbed at Wealdstone, another Ryman Premier side. There were no slip ups in the Third Round, however, as Luton recorded a 2-1 win at Kidderminster, and Grimsby claiming the win at Bath City, progressing to the last eight alongside Cambridge United, Gateshead, York City and Newport County.

However, there was a major upset in the Quarter Finals as Cambridge United were beaten at home by Wealdstone. Luton overcame rivals Gateshead 2-0, whilst York won by a single goal at Grimsby. Newport County progressed to the Semi Finals with a 3-2 success at Evo Stik side Northwich Victoria in a match played at Macclesfield Town's Moss Rose. In the Semi Finals, York took a first leg lead against Luton, and secured a 1-1 draw in the second leg to take their place at Wembley, whilst County created a decisive 3-1 advantage in the home leg against Wealdstone to progress following a 0-0 draw in the away match. York lifted the Trophy as Matty Blair and Lanre Oyebanjo set up a 2-0 win.

Gerard Butler

# SEASON REVIEW

Blue Square Bet Premier Season Review 2011/12



**L-R**

Top left: Fleetwood Town celebrate the Championship  
Middle left: Gateshead's promotion charge was fuelled by the goals of prolific striker Jon Shaw  
Main picture: Luton's Andre Gray battles Wrexham's Nathaniel Knight-Percival during the play-off second-leg  
Top right: Justin Edinburgh delivered survival and a Wembley final for Newport County



**A REMARKABLE 29 MATCH UNBEATEN RUN FROM OCTOBER THROUGH TO APRIL SAW FLEETWOOD TOWN FOLLOW UP LAST SEASON'S PLAY-OFF BERTH WITH THE CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP, NARROWLY FAILING TO ECLIPSE CRAWLEY'S RECORD POINTS HAUL OF 105, AS THEY LOST THEIR LAST TWO GAMES. TOP SCORER JAMIE VARDY, WHO TOOK THE BLUE SQUARE BET PREMIER GOLDEN BOOT WITH 31 GOALS, IS ALREADY ATTRACTING BIDS FROM OTHER FOOTBALL LEAGUE SIDES.**

In the closing weeks, Wrexham were the only remaining challenger for the title, and when they failed to beat Grimsby, Town were champions with two matches left to play. The Welsh side had to be content with second, but the departure of manager Dean Saunders and his replacement with Andy Morrell, as player manager, was a seamless transition which had no effect on their promotion bid.



Mansfield Town achieved their potential this time around, with manager Paul Cox making the short move from the successful Eastwood Town side which was denied a place in the Blue Square North play-offs, whilst their opponents in this season's knock-out, York City, continued their progress under Gary Mills. Whilst this trio of sides were pretty much fixtures in the promotion race during the course of the season, despite being among the favourites, Luton Town seemed in danger of missing out.

As with the last campaign, they acted swiftly by making a late season managerial change with Gary Brabin making way for Paul Buckle, who previously won the Blue Square Premier play-off final with Torquay in 2009. They successfully brushed off the challenge of Kidderminster Harriers, who just missed out again for the second season in a row.

The play-offs paired Luton Town with Wrexham, in a repeat of last season, although with the home and away legs reversed this time. Once again, the Hatters took a decisive first leg advantage as Andre Gray broke the deadlock after 22 minutes and Stuart Fleetwood

doubled the advantage eight minutes later to win the home leg 2-0. George Pilkington stretched the aggregate advantage to 3-0 in the second leg, as he opened the scoring with a 25th minute penalty, but Adrian Ciesielwicz drew the sides level on the night after 63 minutes.

Morrell made it 2-1 to the Red Dragons, but it wasn't enough, as Luton reached their second successive play off final and the runners up suffered a 3-2 aggregate loss. In the other contest between York City and Mansfield Town, it was even tighter. Ross Dyer put Mansfield ahead in the 26th minute at Bootham Crescent but an own goal from Exodus Geohaghon made it 1-1 just before the break and that was how it stayed. At Field Mill, it remained 0-0 deep into extra time, but Matty Blair scored the 110th minute winner and a 2-1 triumph which meant that York would visit Wembley twice in the space of eight days in the Trophy and Blue Square Premier finals.

Other less fancied sides also played a role in the play-off race, though. A much improved showing by Gateshead even saw them challenge for the summit at one stage, helped by the goals of the prolific Jon Shaw, whilst the reprieved Southport occupied a play-off place for a number of weeks. Braintree Town also adapted particularly well to their new surroundings, featuring in the top five following their elevation from Blue Square South, before slipping back into a mid-table berth.

There had been a surprise managerial change at Cressing Road where promotion winning manager Rod Stringer was replaced by Alan Devonshire. Of the other new arrivals, Ebbsfleet United had a solid campaign free of relegation worries as they resumed their place in the top flight after one season's absence.

Once again, the relegation equation was dominated by off the field issues. Kettering Town's financial problems brought the loss of three points, and, more importantly, experienced playing staff. Ironically, they had moved from Rockingham Road to Nene Park in the close season, following the demise of Rushden & Diamonds, which reprieved Southport. Darlington were deducted ten points in a campaign during which their very

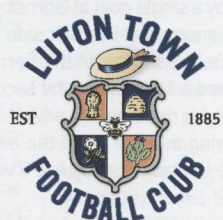


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# WOULD YOU BET ON IT?

By Alan Alger from league sponsors Blue Square Bet

Although the tension, drama and ultimate prize of a place in the Football League makes them unmissable, it's entirely fair to say that during the first four seasons of our sponsorship of the Football Conference we have not been blessed with a genuine classic Promotion Final.

Since Morecambe's thrilling comeback against Exeter City, the season before Blue Square became sponsors, the finals have been tense affairs in which some sides have just not 'turned up' on the day! Exeter City of course came back from that disappointment in 2007 to win the 2008 version - complete with new Blue Square branding. Luton Town will be aiming to become the second side to complete that 12-month turnaround after losing out to AFC Wimbledon in a penalty shoot-out last year.

The prices for today's match suggest we are in for another game that could go 'all the way'. We cannot split Luton and opponents York City and we quote 5/6 for each team to earn promotion. The 90-minute match prices are also in line with that expectation. Both sides are 8/5 to win the game whilst the draw is on offer at 11/5. We of course like to cover all the eventualities and either team can be backed to win in extra-time at 9/1 or via a penalty shoot-out at 11/1.

This will be the tenth Conference Premier Promotion Final and only 21 goals have been scored in normal time in the previous nine. That's an average of just 2.33 per 90-minute game, which is in sharp contrast to an overall figure of just over 2.8 per game in regular season matches. A stat which makes the Blue Square Bet Premier the highest scoring professional division in the whole country. It's natural to expect that figure to drop off for such an important game though. We make 'Under 2.5 Goals' the 8/11 favourite on our 'Total Goals' market for today's final. A repeat of last year's goalless game is offered at 8/1 on our 'Correct Score' prices. Four of the last eight teams to be in this final have failed to score in the game. Our popular 'Both Teams To Score' special is priced at 4/6, but has recent history up against it.

Last Sunday Gainsborough Trinity felt the full force of an historical jinx - which has never seen the winner of the Blue Square Bet North Promotion



Final come from the semi-final contested by the third and fourth placed teams.

That's now eight years where either the second or fifth placed team have earned a place in the Premier. Luton Town have a similar hoodoo to bury this afternoon as no team that has finished fifth in the final table has gone on to win this final since that second promotion spot was added in the 2002-03 season.

York City have met today's opponents six times in the division over the last three years and also in a two-legged FA Trophy semi-final tie during this campaign. Luton have been victorious just once, when a nine-man York team were thrashed 5-0 at Kenilworth Road after losing goalkeeper Michael Ingham early on in the game, back in the middle of the 2010/11 season.

The Minstermen didn't have a goalkeeper on their bench and will feel that the result was harsh on them and their makeshift stopper Chris Smith. That aside they do hold a recent advantage over the Hatters with three wins and a draw in this season's meetings between the two. That includes a 3-0 win at Bootham Crescent earlier in the campaign.

The clubs were only separated by two points in the final table so any real advantage could be minimal. City completed their FA Trophy journey with a victory here at Wembley last Saturday and aim to become the first team to win both finals in the same season which would be an incredible achievement for Gary Mills' side.

Opposite number Paul Buckle saw his unbeaten run as Luton manager ended at Wrexham in the play-off semi-finals but that second leg defeat was not the worst way to lose his first game in charge of the club as the ultimate aim of a place in this final was achieved on aggregate.

It was a hectic start for the former Torquay boss but he has had the luxury of 12 days without a game to get his squad in the right frame of mind to perform today. He, of course, knows what the occasion is all about having won here with the Gulls in 2009.



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Former Curzon Ashton manager Gary Lowe was appointed as Hyde manager in the close season, and what proved decisive in their championship win was the blistering start which they made to the campaign.

Lowe made a number of signings from his former club, as well as former Lincoln striker Scott Spencer, who collected 32 goals in only 36 starts.

The new look side won their first ten matches, including a significant win against Gainsborough, and remained undefeated in the league until well into October when they lost at both Guiseley and FC Halifax Town.

However, they remained unbeaten until the New Year, and though suffering a slight wobble, recovered their form following consecutive defeats to Guiseley and Nuneaton in March, as six straight wins took the title, the clinching game being the 4-1 home win over Boston on 21 April.

Guiseley had missed out in the play-offs last season but bounced back to chase hard for the title, and will particularly point to their home and away wins against the eventual champions, including inflicting their only home defeat.



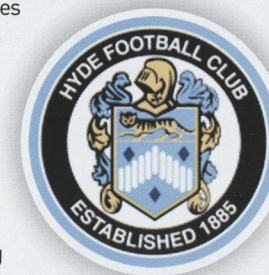
## Blue Square Bet North Review 2012

# NORTHREVIEW

The dramatic transformation of Hyde saw them move from avoiding relegation on the last day of 2011/2012 to taking the title with a game to spare, and Nuneaton Town joined them after winning the play-off final.

They too made a strong start to the campaign and were never outside the top four all season. The remaining three sides only confirmed their top five spots on the last day, though.

AFC Halifax Town overcame a modest start to life in the Blue Square North to nail down a top five spot under Neil Aspin, with a run of seven straight wins around the turn of the year being particularly important.



Gainsborough Trinity collected fourth place as the early season managerial change from Brian Little to Steve Housham appeared to be effective, and though they drifted in and out of contention, a strong start and finish to the season proved to be enough as their experienced line up met its potential.

Completing the play-off qualifiers were Nuneaton Town, making a second successive appearance at this stage, after taking the place of Eastwood last time around, and the loss of six points due to an

administrative error didn't affect their play-off spot as they followed up last season impressively. The play-offs paired Gainsborough Trinity with AFC Halifax Town, and Trinity looked on course for the final as Paul Connor's brace put them two goals up inside twelve minutes, but Lee Gregory pulled a goal back for the Shaymen, two minutes before the break and added another goal in the 86th minute to make it 2-2.

In the second leg at The Shay, Trinity collected a 1-0 win through Shane Clarke's 64th minute goal to progress to the Final, 3-2 on aggregate. Nuneaton Town hosted Guiseley in their first leg, and took the lead just two minutes in through Danny Glover, but, it ended all square here too, as Matt Wilson netted the equaliser in stoppage time.

With penalties looming as the second leg at Nethermoor Park remained goalless, Andy Brown's goal late in extra time saw Town advance to meet Trinity. Nuneaton came out on top in the

final as Brown scored the only goal to set up a 1-0 win at Gainsborough.

In the relegation battle, Eastwood Town finished bottom, with only four wins all season, as a side who finished in the play-off places but were denied the chance to compete in them due to ground grading regulations, never recovered from the loss of manager Paul Cox to Mansfield, whilst Blyth Spartans were relegated three weeks before the end of the campaign as they lost 3-2 at home to Gainsborough Trinity.

The remaining relegation place was far less clear cut, as reflected in a final league table which saw just six points between 11th place and the final relegation spot. The battle went to the last day, with no less than eight sides still in trouble: Corby Town, Histon, Vauxhall Motors, Colwyn Bay, Solihull Moors, Workington, Harrogate Town and Hinckley United.

In the event, Hinckley stayed in the bottom three, as they lost 4-2 at play-off hopefuls Stalybridge Celtic, who just missed out on the top five.

Gerard Butler

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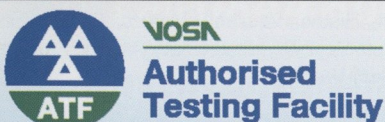
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Garry Hill had taken over during the previous campaign but had seen Woking lose in the play-offs. He kept the core of the side together, but added vital experience to the squad including goalkeeper Aaron Howe and midfielder Dale Binns, as well as some powerful additions in attack such as the returning Giuseppe Sole, who scored 19 goals to finish second in the Golden Boot rankings, and Wayne Gray.

A 5-0 opening day win at Sutton set the tone, and there were many more commanding victories, especially at Kingfield, but equally important was that there was just one defeat in the league before the end of 2011. Sole set a club record by scoring in the ninth game in a row in the 1-0 success at Maidenhead which sealed the title with two weeks to go.

Dartford finished the season as the main challengers to the Surrey side, cementing second spot as they won six of the last seven matches of the regular season, but losing home and away to Woking proved the decisive factor in the destination of the title. However, it was another impressive season for the Kentish side, who were in the Ryman One North as recently as 2008 and again enjoyed excellent support.

Garry Hill



## Blue Square Bet South Review 2012

# SOUTHREVIEW

After two consecutive fifth placed finishes, Garry Hill led Woking back to the Conference National as champions, whilst Dartford will join them after winning the play-off final.

Welling United overcame the disappointment of missing out on the top five last season by getting off to a superb start, as they won six out of their first seven games, including a 3-2 home success against Woking, but, despite holding down a play-off berth comfortably, they couldn't keep pace with the leaders, especially after losing the return fixture.



Andy Pugh

However, they recovered from the mid-season sale of striker Danny Pugh to Cambridge United.

Sutton bounced back well from their opening day defeat and made solid progress following their Ryman League Championship last time around, and, intriguing faced Woking in the final of the Surrey Senior Cup. Craig Watkins and Harry Beautyman were the crucial players for the Surrey side, with 27 goals between them.

Basingstoke Town, though, proved to be something of a surprise package, and though they tended to lose out in matches against fellow challengers, successfully held off the challenge of Chelmsford City to book fifth spot on the last day of the season. Fairly unusually, the Golden Boot was won by a striker at a club outside the top five, as Frannie Collin, of ninth place Tonbridge Angels, took the honours with 29 for the Kentish side.

The play-offs saw Town host Dartford in the first leg at the Camrose Ground, where Lee Noble gave the visiting Darts a 1-0 lead, which was doubled in the second leg by Elliot Bradbrook. Shaun McAuley equalised on the night to put Basingstoke back into it, but Luke Wilkinson had the final word as he sealed a 3-1 aggregate triumph for the Kent

hosts. An away advantage proved decisive for Welling United too, as Lee Clarke and Joe Healy were on target in the 2-1 first leg win at Sutton, who benefitted from an own goal. The second leg at Park View Road finished goalless which was enough to set up an all-Kent final with local rivals Dartford, in which the Darts prevailed 1-0 through a Lee Noble goal.

At the other end of the table, there was no reprieve for Thurrock this time, as they finished in last place; managers Grant Gordon and Lee Goodwin leaving the club at the end of the campaign. However, the remaining two relegation places were only settled on the last day of the season.

These were occupied by Maidenhead United and Hampton & Richmond Borough at the start of play, with Havant & Waterlooville the other side in danger. The Hawks' 3-2 win over Staines meant that Maidenhead's 4-3 win against Eastleigh and Hampton's 2-0 success at Thurrock proved academic.

Both of these sides had managed to stay up on the final day last time around, but missed out this time.

Gerard Butler

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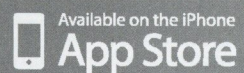
# IT'S IN A DIFFERENT LEAGUE

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**Alan Alger:** It's been a great season for you and your team Micky, you can sit back and enjoy this today but how do you think both managers will be feeling?

**Micky Mellon:** We were involved at this stage last year and obviously it was a real disappointment the way it ended. We've used that to bounce back positively and win the league this season. This game looks so tight and for both managers it could come down to one simple thing.

They'll be wanting to keep their players focused and most importantly calm whilst inside they may not be feeling that themselves. The main thing I took out of last year was the fact that you cannot afford to panic if things go against you. The team that handles the occasion will be the team that has the best chance of going up.

You don't know how any of the players will react in different situations, who will win that important header with ten minutes to go or clear the ball properly when panic is setting in. It's no surprise to me that Paul Buckle was able to win this final with Torquay after suffering disappointment the year before. In the other dugout you have a man that has played in and won a European Cup Final but I bet the pressure will be even heavier as a manager in this situation.

You have to calmly make decisions whilst knowing that everyone in the ground is expecting you to get it spot-on and you're on your own, as a player you have 10 other people with you.

**AA:** You mention that the game could be tight and rest on one single incident or mistake, what can you say to players to help them handle it?

**MM:** I'd want my team to settle quickly and get comfortable with the pitch and the stadium. It's a huge event and the prize at stake is so important for the clubs involved. Ideally you'd want to remove your players from that talk and try your best to make it 'just another game'.

That's easier said than done though, but York have had the advantage of getting to grips with the place



in last week's FA Trophy Final. Some of the Luton players are experiencing playing at Wembley for the first time and it will be important for those ones not to let their mind wander.

Extra-time could play a part and it will be interesting to see how each team pace themselves through the game.

**AA:** You mention the pace of the game, how do you see the match shaping up?

**MM:** I imagine that York City might have a lot of early possession and that Luton won't be too bothered by that as long as it's not in a threatening area. You can see that Paul (Buckle) has focused on making Luton hard to beat and the run of clean-sheets coincided with his influence on the training ground.

I think Luton will also bring the counter-attack into force because they have forwards with pace as we saw in the first leg of the semi-final against Wrexham.

We played Luton in the final game of the season and I was impressed with the way they defended. York are a good footballing side and they will feel in good form.

Jason Walker will be a huge threat to Luton but they know all about him. Matty Blair is in fantastic form and this could be his kind of match to shine.

**AA:** So let's have a prediction then Micky?

**MM:** It's honestly far too close to call, I can't predict a winner but I will predict that there won't be more than a goal in it either way and I certainly would not rule out Extra-Time and a penalty shoot-out having to separate them.

**AA:** Just a final word then on your hopes for the future at Fleetwood and your exciting new life in the Football League.

**MM:** The last two champions of this division will be playing in League 1 next season so we know that it can be done. It also tells us that we shouldn't have anything to fear about the next level. Those two teams did not lose big players as they came up and it looks as though we will be.

It's going to come down to how we recruit, particularly up front. We'll have the nucleus of the team from last season, but a few of the departures will need covering. We have some exciting targets that will hopefully come off over a busy summer period.

## EXPERT EYE

Blue Square's Alan Alger caught up with Blue Square Bet Premier title winning manager Micky Mellon of Fleetwood Town

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**THE MINSTERMEN**

The FA Trophy holders make a quick return to Wembley as they look to complete a now rare Non-League double having being in the play-off zone for the whole of the season.

In the close season, keeper Paul Musselwhite signed from Lincoln and in defence, Lanre Oyebanjo moved from Histon, with ex Kettering player Jon Challinor arriving with the campaign underway.

Midfield-wise, ex Stockport winger Danny Pilkington arrived at the club, alongside Blackburn's Michael Potts, Patrick McLaughlin from Newcastle, Matty Blair of Kidderminster and Adriano Moke, who joined from Jerez Industrial in Spain. The attack was boosted by Jason Walker from Luton

In the New Year, midfielder Scott Brown moved from Fleetwood, whilst winger Erik Tonne joined on loan from Sheffield United and midfielder Eugen Bopp signed following a spell in Germany.

Striker Matthew Blinkhorn switched from Sligo Rovers, alongside defender Chris Doig, who moved from Aldershot and Middlesbrough loan defender



Ben Gibson. Striker Moses Ashikodi converted his loan from Kettering into a permanent move. The season got off to a solid start with a 2-1 success at Ebbsfleet, whilst the first home game saw a comfortable 3-0 home win over Barrow.

A surprise home loss to AFC Telford United followed, but the month concluded in sixth spot following a 5-1 win at Kettering. Into September, and a draw was collected at Fleetwood ahead of successive defeats at home to Alfreton and at Tamworth, but a late 1-0 home win over Bath began an improved run of form which took in a superb 3-0 success at Wrexham as well as a 2-2 home draw with Darlington and a 3-0 home victory over Luton. However, September finished in eighth following a 3-2 loss at Gateshead.

October was undefeated, apart from a Cup exit at Wrexham, with four wins and two draws collected. A 2-1 win was earned at Stockport before Braintree were brushed aside 6-2 at Bootham Crescent ahead of a 1-1 draw at Southport, a 2-1 home victory against Grimsby, a 2-2 draw at home to Cambridge United and 4-2 win at Hayes, putting City in the heart of the top five.

A subdued November saw three consecutive

# YORKCITY

defeats at home to Wrexham, and at Barrow and Forest Green before being rounded off by a 2-0 home win over Lincoln City. In contrast, December began with a 7-0 home win over Kettering, ironically followed by a 0-0 draw at Barrow, a 3-2 home loss to Kidderminster and 1-1 draw at Mansfield to end 2011 in fourth place.

The unbeaten run stretched to seven games as the Minstermen cemented their play-off place in the early weeks of 2012. A 2-2 home draw with Mansfield preceded a 2-0 success at Lincoln City, whilst a 3-2 home win over Ebbsfleet was followed by a pair of draws at Kidderminster and Darlington. Stockport were beaten 2-1 before the next home game brought a loss to Gateshead.

However, Hayes were seen off 2-0 ahead of a 0-0 home draw with Tamworth, and March was rounded off by a 3-2 win at Grimsby, a home loss to Southport and significant victories at Bath and Luton, as they held fourth spot.

Losses followed at Newport and at home to Fleetwood, but four wins and a draw from the last five held this place, as a 2-0 win at Alfreton was followed by a home draw with Newport and three successive 1-0 victories at Cambridge United, Braintree and at home to Forest Green. The play-offs brought a 1-1 home draw with Mansfield and a 1-0 extra time win in the away leg to set up a 2-1 aggregate win.

The Trophy-winning journey began with a 2-2 home draw with Blue Square North Solihull Moors before a 3-0 replay win, and continued with a 6-2 win at Salisbury before a 1-0 home win over Ebbsfleet in the next round. Another single goal won the Quarter Final at Grimsby to earn a two legged semi-final with Luton.

A single goal lead in the first leg proved decisive as a 1-1 draw at Kenilworth Road secured the first of two trips to Wembley.

Gerard Butler

I've always started my notes throughout the season by welcoming the opposition to our Bootham Crescent ground, so today is a great opportunity for me to welcome our own fans to Wembley.



# GARY MILLS

**I HOPE YOU'VE ALL HAD A SAFE JOURNEY DOWN AND ENJOY WHAT WE HOPE TO MAKE A MEMORABLE DAY FOR ALL OF US CONNECTED WITH YORK CITY FOOTBALL CLUB.**

Where do I start? What can I say? My players, you the supporters and all of us deserve to be here today. From Day One we have all worked so hard together but, as Manager of my squad of players, I can honestly say in my years of management so far that these are the most honest, hard-working bunch of players I've ever worked with.

Our road to achieve the right to participate in the game this afternoon has not been an easy one. We have had some tough, tough games along the way, not least the two legs of the Play-Off Semi-Final against Mansfield Town, the victory that got us here to Wembley today.

What I will say is that from the very first day of this season, I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I feel as a team we have produced some excellent performances this season and, although we have had the occasional blip, you would go a long way to find any team in any division that hasn't

experienced a blip at some point during their campaign.

Individually my players have had an excellent season but, most importantly as a team, we have pulled together, built a strength, built a bond within the dressing room and have shown the sheer desire to never give up no matter what.

As York City Manager I know what this game means to everybody connected with my football club. The heartbreak was there two seasons ago. As a player I witnessed and experienced both the highs and lows of the Play-Offs, so my ultimate aim is to give all our fans that winning feeling travelling home after the game this evening.

It is a great achievement for any club to get to Wembley in any competition. We have achieved the opportunity twice in one week and it is absolutely fantastic that we've done that but, ultimately, there is only one thing that matters and that is winning today.

We know the prize for doing that and what it would mean for the wonderful City of York at a time when we are looking to move to a new stadium and looking to build a sustainable future for our club. So, if everything goes how I want it to, then it could be a magical time for York City, my and our football club.

I've got a fantastic relationship with my Chairman and his wonderful family. I know what they do for this football club, and I know what it would mean for them to make York City a Football League club once more. They work so hard and I would love to be the Manager to help them achieve their dream.

Football clubs at this level can't survive without sponsorship, so I would like to thank CLP Industries and all our other major sponsors for their support of our football club.

So, as usual with my notes throughout this season, I would urge all York City supporters to get behind their team today. Believe in the club and yourselves like your squad of players have done all season, and let's make our journey home a happier one than two seasons ago.

Enjoy the game.  
The Gaffer.

# YORK CITY

An in-depth look at 'The Minstermen'.



## THE MANAGER



### GARY MILLS

Appointed in succession to Martin Foyle in mid-October 2010, Gary Mills had a distinguished playing career and as an 18 year old played in the 1980 European Cup final for Nottingham Forest when they beat SV Hamburg to lift the trophy. A midfielder, he was capped for England at Under 21 level and went on to play for Derby County, Notts County and Leicester City as well a spell in the USA with Seattle Sounders.

His first managerial appointment was with Grantham whom he led to the Southern League (Midland) title. He then moved to Kings Lynn before joining Tamworth for his first spell as manager of the Lambs in 2001. A period as first team coach at Coventry City followed before his appointment as boss of Notts County in 2004. After managing Alfreton Town, he returned to Tamworth in January 2007.

## GOALKEEPERS

Now in his fourth season at Bootham Crescent **Michael Ingham** joined the club from Hereford United in the summer of 2008. Capped twice for Northern Ireland he had a spell on loan with City from Sunderland in 2002-03 making 17 Football League appearances. He also had loan spells with Carlisle United, Darlington and Doncaster Rovers before joining Wrexham prior to his move to Edgar Street. A virtual ever present in the last three seasons he started this campaign with over 150 senior appearances to his credit. He captained the side in the closing weeks of 2009-2010 leading the side out at Wembley in the play-off final.

Experienced 'keeper **Paul Musselwhite** joined the club during the close season from Lincoln City and, in addition to providing cover for Ingham, he

has taken over as goalkeeping coach. He started his career as an apprentice at Portsmouth in 1986 and made his Football League debut for Scunthorpe United two years later. He went on to have two spells with the Iron plus eight years with Port Vale and then Hull City and Lincoln to chalk up 616 Football League appearances. With stints also at Kettering, Eastleigh and Gateshead he has over 700 games to his credit in a long and distinguished career.

## DEFENDERS

A summer signing from Histon with whom he spent the last three seasons, **Lanre Oyebanjo** had previously been on the books of Brentford. The son of a Nigerian father and Irish mother he has represented the Republic of Ireland at Under 19 and under 21 level.

Comfortable either at full back or in the heart of

the defence, former Wales Under 21 international **Daniel Parslow** is in his sixth season at Bootham Crescent having joined the club from Cardiff City in the summer of 2006. He figured in two promotion play off campaigns for the club and captained the side when they reached the FA Trophy final in 2008-09.

He was voted 'Clubman of the Year' that season and twice has won the 'Community Player of the Year'. Whilst with City he has captained the Wales non-league side and at the start of this season had 211 senior appearances for the club to his credit. He was again voted the Billy Fenton 'Clubman of the Year' in 2010-2011.

Central defender **Chris Smith** re-joined City in October 2010, initially on loan from Mansfield Town, and was appointed captain.

## ONE TO WATCH



### DAVID MCGURK

The club's longest serving player, central defender David McGurk first appeared for City on loan from Darlington in 2004/05. The following campaign he had a full season on loan from the Quakers before signing a permanent deal in August 2006. He has twice helped the club reach the promotion play offs and FA Trophy finals and in 2007-08 was voted Clubman of the Year.

He started his career as a trainee at Leeds United and then Reading and first moved to Bootham Crescent in 2001. In three seasons with the club he made 88 League and Cup appearances before leaving City when they dropped out of the Football League in 2004. Since then he has had spells with Stafford Rangers, Worcester City and Tamworth before moving to Mansfield at the start of last season.

31-year-old **Chris Doig** has had an interesting twelve months. This time last year he was patrolling the left side of defence for Australian outfit Central Coast Mariners but after falling out of favour at the new South Wales club he opted to hop across the Indian Ocean to play for Pelita Jaya of Indonesia. A former Queen of the South trainee, Doig also played for Notts County and Northampton Town prior to leaving the UK. On his return to the country, he played for Aldershot earlier in the season before signing for York in January.

A utility player operating at either full back or left wing **Jamal Fyfield** joined City from Conference South club Maidenhead United in September 2010 and scored on his debut. He later went back on loan to Maidenhead but returned to Bootham Crescent in the closing weeks of the season when he impressed at centre back.

ONE TO WATCH



**JAMES MEREDITH**

Left sided defender James Meredith has been a virtual ever present for the club making over 100 senior appearances since signing from Shrewsbury Town in the summer of 2009. Equally at home in the centre of defence when called upon, he won the Players' 'Player of the Year' award last term.

Born in Australia he started his career as a youngster with Derby County. After a loan period at Chesterfield and a spell with Irish club Sligo Rovers he joined the Shrews in 2007. In 2008-09 he played on loan with AFC Telford United.

MIDFIELDERS

**Jon Challinor** joined City shortly after the start of the season from Kettering Town. An experienced midfielder he has played in the top tier of non-league football for a number of years helping three clubs reach the promotion play off final - Aldershot 2004, Exeter City 2007 and Cambridge United 2009. His other clubs include Rushden & Diamonds, Forest Green Rovers, Mansfield Town and Newport County.

Signed from Lincoln City in January 2011 just before the transfer window closed, **Scott Kerr** is an experienced midfielder who started his career on the YTS with Bradford City. He turned professional for the Bantams, who were then in the Premier League, in 2000 and later played for Hull City and Scarborough. He then joined Lincoln City in 2005 with whom he made 249 appearances.

Born in Portugal, **Adriano Moke** spent last season

at the Glenn Hoddle Academy in Spain playing for Jerez Industrial in the Spanish Fourth Division. As a youngster he was on the books of Manchester United and then played for Leeds United under 16's before serving a youth team scholarship at Nottingham Forest.

Another newcomer this season **Michael Potts** he was snapped up after been released from Blackburn Rovers. A first year professional at Ewood Park last season he was a regular in Rovers' reserve side and was a member of their under 18 team that reached the semi finals of the FA Youth Cup in 2009/10. Before joining Blackburn he spent nine years as a member of the Manchester United's school of excellence.

Signed from Fleetwood in January, creative midfielder **Scott Brown** came through the Academy at Everton where he was capped by England at schoolboy level. He also spent time with Bristol City, Cheltenham Town, Port Vale and Morecambe.

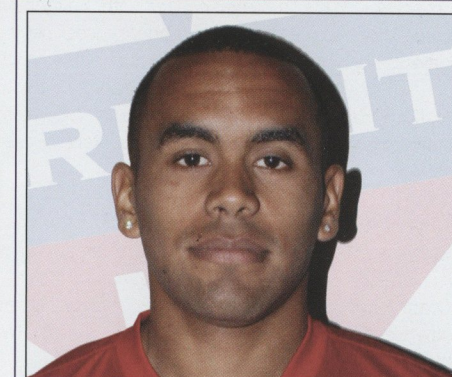
ONE TO WATCH



**JAMIE REED**

Joining City in January 2011 from Bangor City, Jamie Reed made his debut for the club when coming on as a substitute in the Third Round FA Cup tie at Bolton Wanderers. He went on to finish second top marksman last season with nine goals in 12 starts plus 12 substitute appearances. Formerly with Wrexham he was a prolific scorer while at Bangor and at the time of his move to Bootham Crescent had notched 17 goals for them that season making him the leading marksman in the Welsh Premier League. He had a loan spell at Tamworth when Gary Mills was manager and in the summer of 2010 was in Australia where he played for Melbourne based club Dandenong Thunder.

ONE TO WATCH



**ASHLEY CHAMBERS**

Equally at home as a winger or a striker, Ashley Chambers joined the club on loan from Leicester City in November 2010 and spent the rest of the season at Bootham Crescent. He made his senior debut for the Foxes at the age of 15 and has represented England at under 17, 18 and 19 level. In 2009-10 he had loan spells with Wycombe Wanderers and Grimsby Town. Chambers signed a permanent deal with City during the close season after he was released by Leicester.

**Matty Blair** joined City from Kidderminster Harriers in the close season. He can play on either flank and netted 11 goals for the Aggborough club last season; a total he matched for the Minstermen this season, including the extra time goal that clinched today's play-off final appearance. Blair has had spells with Stratford, Redditch and AFC Telford along with Bedworth Town for whom he played against City in the FA Cup in October 2009.

**Danny Pilkington** joined City early in the season and scored on his debut when coming on a substitute at Kettering. He made his Football League debut for Stockport in 2008/09 and made a total of 38 League appearances for County before his release in January 2011.

**Liam Henderson** is another newcomer this season after spending the last five years at Watford. He made several substitute appearances for the Hornets in the Championship and also had loan spells with Hartlepool United, Colchester United, Aldershot Town and Rotherham United. Born in Gateshead he was a product of the noted Redheugh Boys Club, Henderson ended the season on loan to Forest Green Rovers.

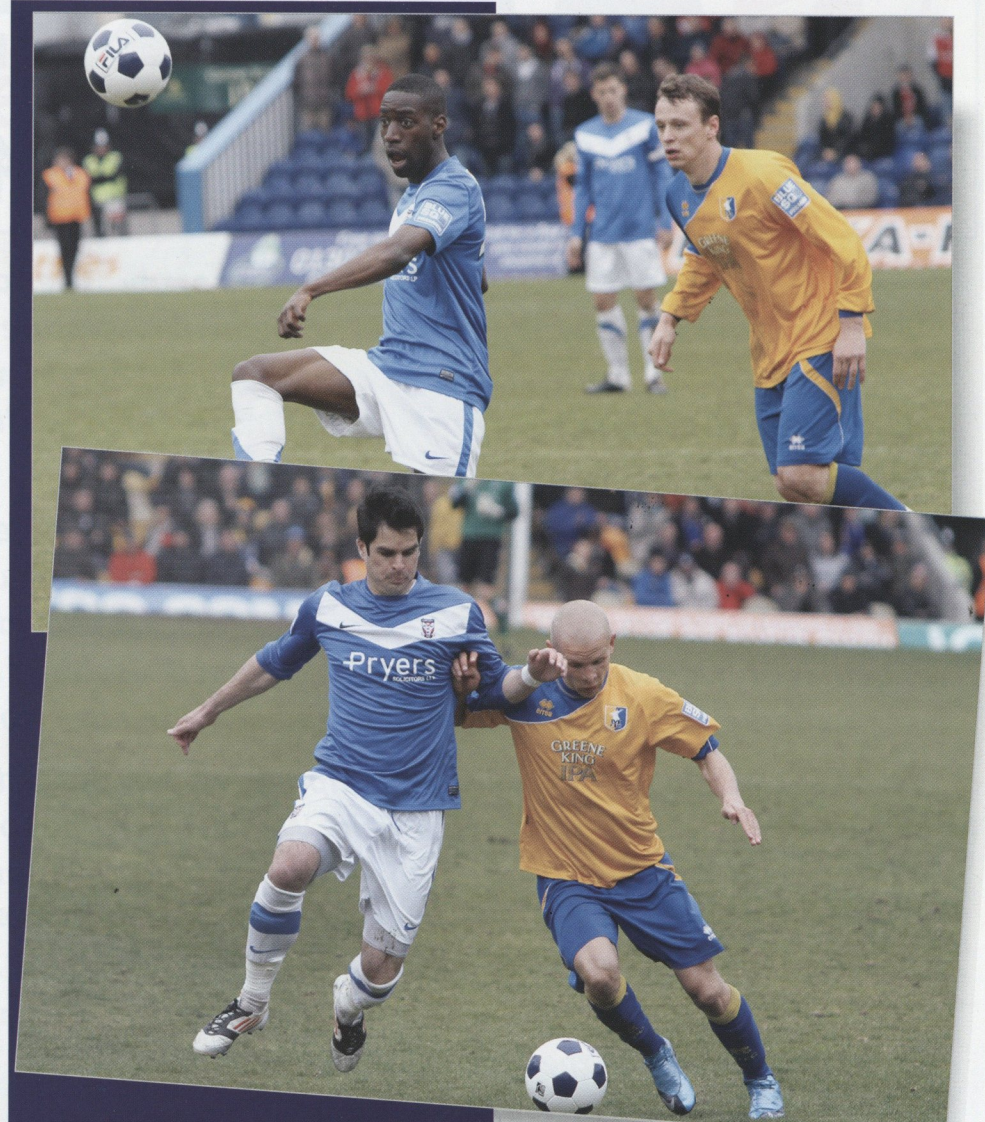
Signed from Luton Town for a reported fee of £60,000 in June 2011, **Jason Walker** was born in Barrow and spent four seasons at Dundee and then moved to Greenock Morton in 2004. After a short spell with Morecambe he joined his home town club in 2007 helping Barrow win promotion from Blue Square North the following year. He represented the England 'C' team in 2009 and netted the winning goal for Barrow in the FA Trophy final against Stevenage in 2010. He moved to Kenilworth Road in November 2010 and helped the Hatters reach the promotion play off final. Since his arrival at Bootham Crescent, Walker has netted 18 goals from 29 Conference starts for the Minstermen.



ball when contesting with Ingham in the area. Despite York's numerical advantage and the introduction of Adriano Moke, Mills' side couldn't take advantage leaving the game on a knife edge ahead of the trip to Field Mill.

Some people may have seen the draw as a missed opportunity especially with Mansfield being so strong at the One Call Stadium. However, the Minstermen had everything to be positive about following their impressive form on the road throughout the campaign which saw them pick up wins at Wrexham, Luton and Grimsby.

After a goalless first period, York coped admirably in the closing stages with the hosts upping the pressure on Ingham's goal through danger man Lindon Meikle and, of course, Geohaghton's long throws. City weren't without their chances however, as Walker and Moke both went close in normal time.



**FIRST LEG**

**YORK CITY 1 MANSFIELD TOWN 1**

**York City:** Ingham, Challinor, Parslow, Doig, Fyfield, Smith, Meredith, McLaughlin (Moke 82), Chambers, Blair, Walker. **Subs not used:** Musselwhite, Reed, Potts, Brown

**Mansfield Town:** Marriott, Riley (Andrew 17), O'Neill, Sutton, Geohaghton, Murray, Dyer (Rhead 89), Howell, Roberts, Green, Meikle (Briscoe 79). **Subs not used:** Redmond, Stevenson **Att:** 6,057

**FIRST LEG**

**MANSFIELD 0 YORK CITY 1 (AET) (AGG 1-2)**

**Mansfield Town:** Marriott, Sutton, Riley, Geohaghton, O'Neill, Roberts, Murray, Howell (Rhead 64), Meikle, Dyer, Briscoe (Stevenson 104). **Subs not used:** Redmond, Thompson, Andrew

**York City:** Ingham, Challinor (Moke 60), Smith, Doig (Fyfield 87), Meredith, Parslow, Oyebarjo, McLaughlin (Potts 72), Chambers, Blair, Walker. **Subs not used:** Musselwhite, Reed **Att:** 7,295

By Rob Guest

**THE SEMIS**

**How 'The Minstermen' reached today's final.**

With a place in the FA Trophy Final already assured of, not many people were tipping the Minstermen to return to the national stadium for a second time in eight days especially after drawing favourites Mansfield Town. Try telling that to Gary Mills and the York squad.

Passion, determination and a never say die attitude are just some of the match winning qualities that the ex-European Cup winner has brought with him to Bootham Crescent and these were all evident as York upset the odds and prevailed against Paul Cox's side with a 2-1 aggregate win.

Matty Blair may have stolen all the headlines once again with a carbon copy of his FA Trophy winner

against Luton, but this was a team effort. Throughout the season Mills may have ushered the words 'we are in this together' more times than Blair has hit the back of the net, but the fact is York's team spirit is there for all to see, and it is, certainly, one of the reasons why they are back at Wembley for a second time today.

Earlier in the campaign, the league fixtures had failed to separate the sides with two draws either side of New Year and this was very much the case once again in the first leg. Play-Off ties are always tight and tense and this one was no different. From the offset City had to defend a barrage of long throws from Exodus Geohaghton and they did so valiantly. However, the pressure finally told on the home side midway through the first half as Ross

Dyer got a telling touch from another long throw to divert the ball past Michael Ingham.

On the cusp of half-time, York finally got a leveller with Geohaghton involved once again, but this time it was for all the wrong reasons as he diverted Jon Challinor's superb delivery into his own net. The goal seemed to galvanise York and moments later Jason Walker was put through by Ashley Chambers but he could only drag his shot wide of the target.

After the break, Jamal Fyfield was lucky to escape with a second booking after a foul on Luke O'Neill that enraged the visitors. The decision certainly incensed Mansfield especially when Matt Green was later given a second yellow after handling the





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Originally formed in 1908 as an amateur side, the club folded in 1917 and re-formed in 1922.

York City were members of the Midland League until their election to the Football League (Division 3 North) in 1929 when they took the place of Ashington.

Although they have worn red shirts for the majority of the club's history, they changed to chocolate and cream stripes in the 1930s - a reference to the City's association with the confectionary industry.

To mark their promotion to the old Second Division of the Football League in 1974, a bold white 'Y' was added to the front of their red shirts. Inevitably, the shirts became known at the 'Y-Fronts'.

Although they had to apply for re-election on six occasions, their 75-year spell in the Football League was not ended until they were relegated in 2004 when a calamitous run saw them fail to win any of their last 20 games.

They built a reputation for 'giant-killing' with the earliest example coming in 1937/38 when, as a Division Three (North) side they knocked out two sides from the top flight - Middlesbrough and West Brom.



They reached the semi-final of the FA Cup in 1954/55 - beating a Blackpool team that included Stanley Matthews in the quarter final, before losing to Newcastle United in a replay.

One of the City's most famous attractions is York Minster, whose full title is actually 'the Cathedral and Metropolitical Church of St Peter in York'.

York City reached the quarter final of the League Cup in 1961/62.

Called 'Eboracum' by the Romans, 'Eorforwik' by the Vikings, the place name seems to come from the Celtic meaning 'estate of yes trees'. The City was the capital of an independent Northumbrian state that ruled much of northern England and part of southern Scotland from 654 to 876.



# YORKCITY

Ten things you may not know about York ...



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**1954/55**

York City took eventual winners Newcastle United to an FA Cup semi-final replay in 1954/55. Arthur Bottom grabbed a hat-trick as York began with a 6-2 win at Wrexham but Jimmy McCormick resigned as manager in September. Tom Lockie and Billy Sherrington took charge, with a ten-match unbeaten run including five-goal wins over Carlisle and Chester. In the FA Cup, York beat Scarborough 3-2, Dorchester 5-2, Blackpool 2-0, Bishop Auckland 3-1, Spurs 3-1 and Notts County 1-0 before drawing 1-1 with Newcastle in the semi-finals. They lost the replay 2-0 but finished fourth in the Third Division (North).

**1964/65**

Paul Aimson was top scorer with 26 goals as York City won promotion in 1964/65. Other newcomers included wingers Derek Weddle and Andy Provan as York remained unbeaten in their opening six Fourth Division games. After a poor spell, they surged up to second place with ten wins in 11 games, trouncing Chesterfield 7-1 on Boxing Day. The run ended with a 2-1 defeat at leaders Tranmere but York hammered Newport County 5-1 and went top as Derek Weddle grabbed a hat-trick in a 4-0 win over Tranmere in late March. Skipper Billy Rudd, Tommy Heron and Andy Provan were ever-present as York finished third.



**YORK CITY**

Football historian Leigh Edwards selects post-war York City 'Classic Campaigns'

**1970/71**

Tom Johnston managed York City to promotion in 1970/71. The Minstermen made a bright start but by the end of January they were mid-table, ten points behind fourth-placed Northampton. They took top-flight Southampton to an FA Cup fourth round replay and a 3-0 victory at Newport in late February heralded the start of the tremendous promotion surge, with ten wins in 11 matches. York climbed into the top four with a 4-1 win over rivals Northampton in late March, then won 5-4 at Lincoln and held on to fourth place. Paul Aimson was leading marksman with 26 goals, while the back four missed only six games between them.

**1973/74**

Chris Jones and Jimmy Seal scored 34 goals between them as York City won promotion to the Second Division for the first time in 1973/74. The Minstermen kicked off with a 4-2 win at Charlton and went 21 League games without defeat until Charlton gained revenge with a 1-0 victory at York. They equalled the Football League record by going 11 matches without conceding a goal. York were never out of the top three after mid-November and clinched promotion with a 1-1 draw against champions Oldham in the final home match. The

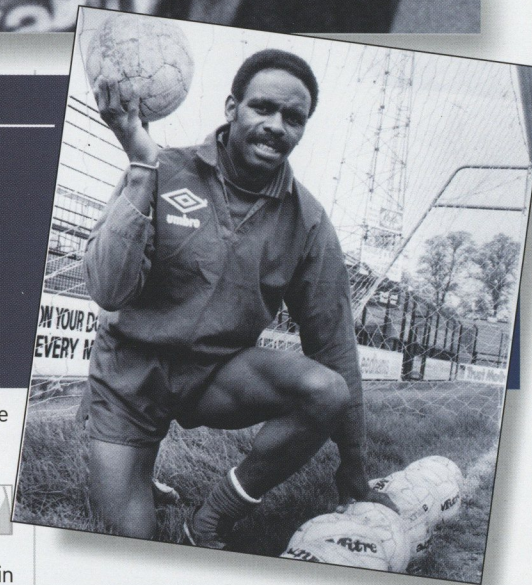
players who formed the magnificent defence missed only six games between them.

**1984/85**

York City made headlines as they defeated Arsenal in the 1984/85 FA Cup fourth round. Newly promoted York were early pace-setters, winning six of their first eight League matches. John Byrne moved to QPR in October and Dale Banton was signed as his replacement shortly after York won 7-1 at home to Gillingham. In the FA Cup, Denis Smith's team defeated Blue Star 2-0, Hartlepool 2-0 and Walsall 3-0 before Keith Houchen's late penalty clinched a 1-0 fourth round win at home to Arsenal. They drew 1-1 with Liverpool in the fifth round before losing 7-0 in the Anfield replay and finished eighth in the Third Division.

**1992/93**

Alan Little plotted York City's 1992/93 Third Division play-off final triumph. The Minstermen raced to the top of the table, losing just one of their opening 14 League matches and slamming four goals past Wrexham and Hereford. A mid-season run of six successive draws saw York lose pole position but they maintained their promotion challenge as



leading marksman Paul Barnes netted four goals in a 5-1 victory at home to Scunthorpe, then grabbed a hat-trick in a 5-1 win at Barnet. They finished fourth, despite winning five of their last seven games, beating Crewe 5-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw in the play-off final at Wembley.

**1993/94**

Paul Barnes was leading marksman with 24 goals as York City qualified for the Second Division play-offs in 1993/94. Newly promoted York began with consecutive wins over Swansea and Exeter, then won at Fulham and Hartlepool before trouncing Cardiff 5-0 in early October. Alan Little's side failed to win any of their next eight matches and slipped to 17th place. Paul Barnes scored twice in a 5-0 victory at Blackpool as York climbed back up the table. Dean Kiely, Andy McMillan and Steve Tutill were ever-present as they finished fifth after losing just once in their 13 games. York were defeated 1-0 by Stockport in the play-offs.



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Salisbury City, Wrexham, Tamworth and Fleetwood Town took pride of place in this season's FA Cup competition, all reaching the Third Round and all doing the Football Conference proud along the way.

Blue Square Bet South Salisbury City reached the Third Round Proper for the first time in their history; beating Swindon Supermarine, Poole Town, Bishop's Cleeve, Arlesey Town, and Blue Square Bet Premier side Grimsby Town to set up a trip to League One Sheffield United. There was to be no fairy-tale ending at Bramhall Lane, but Lloyd Mackin's goal late in the second half was some consolation for the Whites in a 3-1 defeat.

The Red Dragons brought back memories of their famous cup-fighting past as they took Championship side Brighton & Hove Albion penalties in front of 8,316 at the Racecourse Ground. Having drawn 1-1 at Brighton's Amex Stadium the score line was repeated after 120 minutes in North Wales to set up a tense penalty shootout for the right to host Newcastle United in the next round.

Although Wrexham netted four of their five spot kicks, Brighton scored all five to snatch victory. Andy Morrell's side had reached the Third Round the hard way, having seen off the challenges of fellow Blue Square Bet Premier sides York City and Cambridge United (after a replay), before winning 1-0 at League One's Brentford to set up the tie with Brighton.

Tamworth reached the Third Round for the first time since the 2005/06 season thanks to narrow wins at home to Kings Lynn (2-1), Hinckley United (1-0) and at Gateshead (2-1); the latter two coming courtesy of last minute goals from Kieron St Aime and Kyle Patterson respectively.

Their reward was a trip to Goodison Park to face Everton; and the Lambs certainly didn't disgrace themselves. Johnny Heitinga's fifth minute header and a late, somewhat soft, penalty by Leighton Baynes eased the Premiership Club's way into the next round in front of a gate of 27,564; the highest ever to watch a Tamworth game.

Blue Square Bet Premier champions Fleetwood Town were the third Conference side to reach the Third Round Proper, doing so for the first time. Having convincingly disposed of Mansfield Town in a Fourth Qualifying Round replay, the Cod Army netted themselves a couple of giant-killings as they ended Wycombe and Yeovil's interest in the

competition; the latter thanks to a 2-0 away win in a televised replay.

Their reward was the tie they really wanted - at home to Blackpool, their neighbours from just nine miles down the Fylde coast. Dreams of further cup glory were dashed as the Championship side won 5-1 in front just over 5,000 at Highbury.

Gateshead, Grimsby Town and Luton Town all reached the Second Round. The Mariners inflicted FA Cup misery on League Two's Port Vale after a replay, before losing a Second Round replay at home to Salisbury City. The Hatters also put paid to the cup hopes of Football League opposition, knocking out League Two's Northampton Town before they bowed out 4-2 at Cheltenham.

As previously mentioned, Salisbury City took the plaudits in the Blue Square Bet South, but the FA Cup exploits of Chelmsford City and Sutton United should not be overlooked either.

Chelmsford took League Two side Macclesfield Town to a Second Round replay before bowing out to the only goal of the game in front of the television cameras at Moss Rose, while Sutton United also featured in a televised match, losing 2-0 at League One Notts County. Both the Clarets and the U's put paid to Blue Square Bet Premier opposition in the previous round, with AFC Telford United being hammered 4-0 at Chelmsford and Kettering Town losing 1-0 at Sutton.

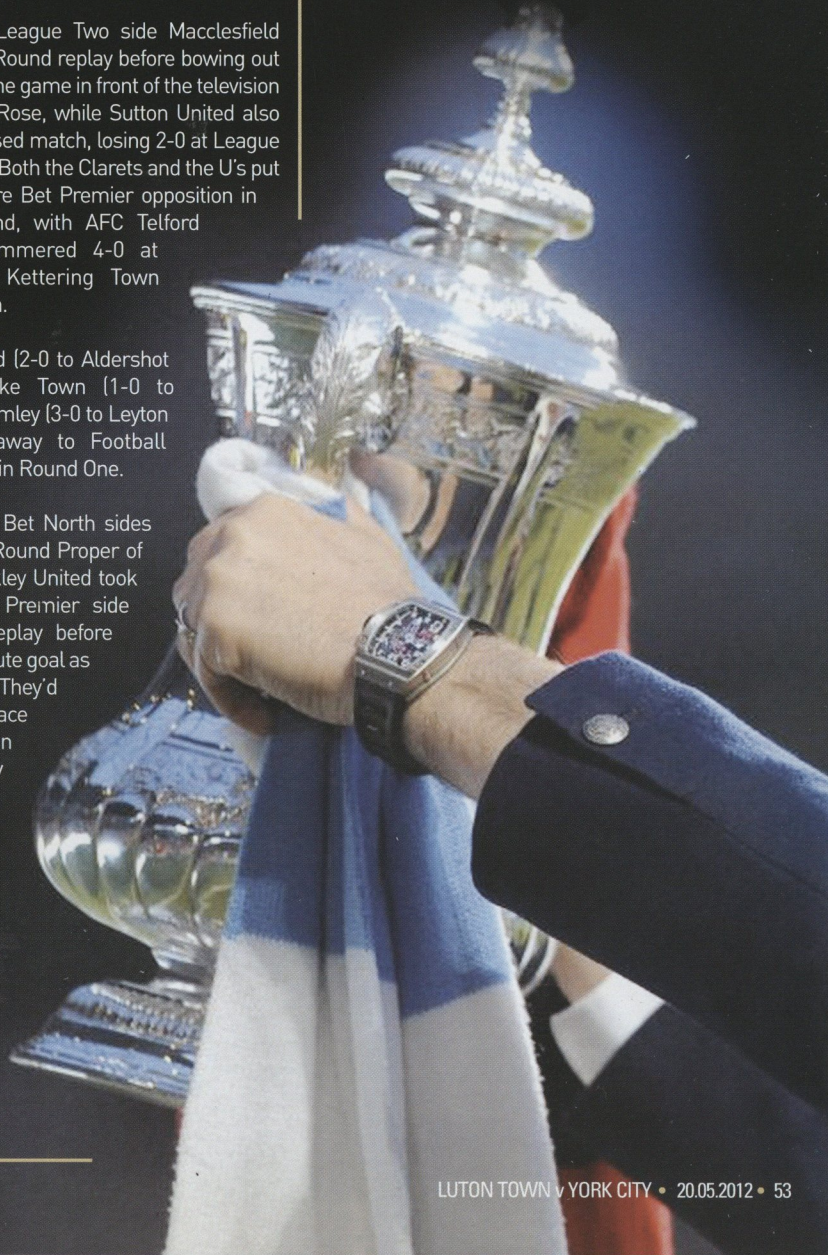
Maidenhead United (2-0 to Aldershot Town), Basingstoke Town (1-0 to Brentford) and Bromley (3-0 to Leyton Orient) all lost away to Football League opposition in Round One.

Four Blue Square Bet North sides reached the First Round Proper of the FA Cup. Hinckley United took Blue Square Bet Premier side Tamworth to a replay before losing to a last minute goal as mentioned earlier. They'd won the right to face higher division opposition by

ending Darlington's interest in the competition thanks to a convincing 3-0 replay win at the Greene King Stadium. Corby Town also eliminated Blue Square Bet Premier opposition in convincing style; beating Kidderminster Harriers 4-0 in a replay at Steel Park thanks to goals from Paul Mayo, Callum Reynolds (2) and Andy Hall.

Their reward was a trip to League Two side Bristol Rovers where Reynolds gave their hosts a nervous few moments after equalising before the Pirates netted twice in the final 15 minutes to seal their passage into the next round with a 3-1 win.

FC Halifax Town's tie against Charlton Athletic attracted the television cameras to the Shay. They were not to be rewarded with a 'giant-killing' however, although the 4-0 score line did rather flatter this season's League One champions. Blyth Spartans also made it into the First Round proper; seeing off Whitby Town and Droylsden before bowing out 2-0 at home to Gateshead.



Up for the  
**CUP**

# THE FOOTBALL CONFERENCE YOUTH ALLIANCE

On behalf of the Chairman and Management Committee of the Football Conference Youth Alliance, I would like to congratulate both teams on reaching the Blue Square Bet Premier Promotion Play-Off Final. The prize for the winners is massive - promotion back to the Football League, and despite the obvious pressures, I am sure we will see a game befitting the occasion, in what is a magnificent stadium.

The Football Conference Youth Alliance has just completed its twelfth season, with the aim being to provide high quality education and football for 16-19 year olds.

Originally it had been developed as a result of a partnership with Bedford College who negotiated partnerships between clubs and their local colleges. This was known as the PASE-Programme for Academic and Sporting Excellence.

Nowadays, a number of clubs have taken over the whole educational responsibility themselves via Learning Skills Funding's and other agencies, and delivered NVQs and BTEC qualifications.

During the 2011-12 season, 70 teams have taken part in the competition, from 65 Member Clubs, with over 2700 players being registered and playing in League and Cup matches in a competitive developmental environment. The League is made up of six divisions, while the cup is played on a knock-out basis with the early rounds being regionalised.

The final of the League Cup, which was sponsored by the Coventry Building Society, was played at the One Call Stadium, home of Mansfield Town, and despite an extremely wet evening, the two finalist's - Birmingham City Whites and Watford Hertswood produced an excellent game of football in difficult conditions with Birmingham eventually proving to be too strong as they ran out 5-1 winners.

Birmingham took the lead in the 31st minute when Jamie Spencer headed home a left wing cross from Leroy Coates, only for Watford to equalise eight minutes later through a well-executed free kick from Romaine Walker.

Crucially, Birmingham scored twice in three minutes, either side of the break, firstly through Omari Sterling-James and then Tom O'Sullivan. Watford tried hard to get back into the game, but it was Birmingham who continued to look the more dangerous side and they added further goals through a Ryan Edmunds penalty, and Kyle Shepherd to win the cup for a second time.

This completed a League and Cup double for -The Blues- who also won the Central Division, remaining unbeaten with two games to play, at the time of writing these notes. Weston super Mare won the South Premier Division title for the first time in their history, while the North Division ended with Gateshead, in their first season in the competition, holding off the challenge of Ilkeston, but only on goal difference.

JMA Reading lost just two games in winning the South A Division, while Redbridge did the same in South B. The best record, however, went to Charlton Athletic Trust who were undefeated in their 22 games in the South C Division, scoring 94 goals in the process.

## 2011-2012 SEASON FOOTBALL CONFERENCE YOUTH ALLIANCE

Premier Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Weston-super-Mare	22	13	5	4	49	30	+19	44
Histon	22	12	5	5	36	22	+14	41
Dartford Whites	21	12	2	7	38	22	+16	38
Bromley Blues	21	10	6	5	51	30	+21	36
Havant & Waterlooville	22	10	4	8	42	38	+4	34
Ebbsfleet United	21	9	4	8	38	33	+5	31
Dover Athletic	22	9	4	9	40	40	+0	31
Oxford United	22	8	7	7	34	34	+0	31
Woking	21	8	3	10	40	39	+1	27
AFC Sudbury	22	7	3	12	27	39	-12	24
AFC Wimbledon	22	6	4	12	25	42	-17	22
Basingstoke Town	22	1	3	18	16	67	-5	16

North Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Gateshead	18	12	3	3	54	15	+39	39
Ilkeston	18	12	3	3	60	25	+35	39
FC Halifax Town	18	12	2	4	38	24	+14	38
Mansfield Town	18	9	6	3	44	24	+20	33
Newcastle Town	18	7	3	8	32	42	-10	24
Fleetwood Town	18	7	2	9	31	35	-4	23
MMU Newcastle	18	7	1	10	24	37	-13	22
Birmingham City Blues	18	3	7	8	23	30	-7	16
Boston United	18	4	3	11	30	49	-19	15
Stalybridge Celtic	18	1	2	15	20	75	-55	5

Central Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Birmingham City Whites	20	16	4	0	84	20	+64	52
Chasetown	22	13	3	6	40	23	+17	42
Oxford City	22	13	3	6	63	50	+13	42
Watford Hertswood	20	13	2	5	55	28	+27	38
Corby Town	21	12	1	8	47	36	+11	37
Hitchin Town	22	11	3	8	59	37	+22	36
Tamworth	22	10	4	8	60	46	+14	34
Kettering Town	22	9	4	9	42	39	+3	31
Kidderminster Harriers	22	9	0	13	46	46	+0	27
Footballv Reds	22	4	4	14	29	57	-28	16
St Albans City	22	3	3	16	32	66	-34	12
Luton Town	21	0	1	20	15	124	-10	9

Watford Hertswood 3 pts. Deducted.

South A Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
JMA Reading	22	17	3	2	87	28	+59	54
Eastleigh	21	15	1	5	78	41	+37	46
Watford CSE	22	13	4	5	78	41	+37	43
Carshalton Athletic	22	12	2	8	63	44	+19	38
Kingstonian	22	11	3	8	54	42	+12	36
Tooting & Mitcham United	21	9	4	8	51	53	-2	31
Boreham Wood Whites	22	10	0	12	44	70	-26	30
Leatherhead	20	8	3	9	44	57	-13	27
Wingate & Finchley	22	6	4	12	34	53	-19	22
Wealdstone	21	6	3	12	47	48	-1	18
Hampton & Richmond Borough	21	3	5	13	37	67	-30	14
St Albans Saints	22	2	2	18	18	91	-73	8

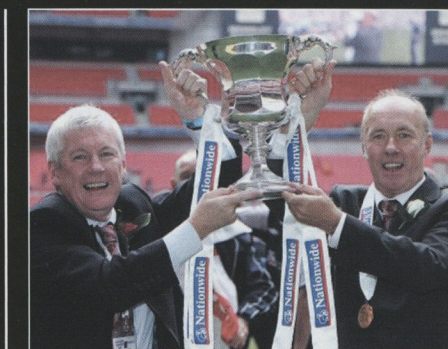
Wealdstone 3pts. deducted.

South B Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Redbridge	22	17	3	2	68	26	+42	54
Dagenham & Redbridge	21	15	3	3	76	24	+52	48
Thurrock	22	12	4	6	50	35	+15	40
Winchmore Hill	22	10	3	9	41	38	+3	33
Romford	22	9	6	7	48	53	-5	33
Tilbury	20	9	5	6	51	43	+8	32
Bishop's Stortford	22	7	5	10	29	33	-4	26
Halstead Town	22	7	3	12	48	56	-8	24
Waltham Abbey	21	7	4	10	54	63	-9	24
Chelmsford City	20	6	4	10	34	41	-7	22
Boreham Wood Blues	22	5	3	14	29	68	-39	18
Tottenham Hotspur	22	3	1	18	36	84	-48	10

Waltham Abbey 1 pt. deducted.

South C Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Charlton Athletic Trust	22	20	2	0	94	26	+68	62
Cambridge United	22	16	3	3	85	34	+51	51
Deal Town	22	13	5	4	60	38	+22	44
Dulwich Hamlet	22	13	2	7	40	28	+12	41
Welling United	22	11	3	8	50	30	+20	36
Cray Wanderers	22	8	4	10	36	36	+0	28
Bromley Whites	21	8	2	11	31	46	-15	26
Croydon Athletic	20	7	4	9	35	43	-8	25
Tonbridge Angels	21	5	4	12	26	42	-16	19
Dartford Reds	22	6	1	15	34	55	-21	19
Sittingbourne	22	4	1	17	19	76	-57	13
Maidstone United	22	3	1	18	25	81	-56	10

# PREVIOUS PROMOTION FINALS



This afternoon sees the Promotion final celebrate its tenth birthday having commenced in 2002/03. Since the inaugural final four stadiums have hosted the ten matches which have involved sixteen teams. Only Cambridge United have lost two finals but will be joined on that figure by the runners up this afternoon.

The first final was certainly an example of the drama Conference supporters had in store. Doncaster Rovers and Dagenham and Redbridge battled it out at Stoke City's Britannia Stadium. Headers from Paul Green and David Morley gave the South Yorkshire club a two-goal lead, but the Daggers hit back through Mark Stein.

They then turned the game right on its head after Tarkan Mustafa weaved his way through the Doncaster defence to level the scores. It meant then that the very first play-off final headed into extra time and was ultimately decided by a golden goal. It was Donny who got it. Paul Barnes set up Francis Tierney who scored the goal that started Doncaster's very impressive journey into the Championship.

19,216 watched an equally dramatic play-final the following year. This time it was Aldershot and Shrewsbury Town who took part in the showpiece and once again the match headed into extra time. The match finished 1-1 after ninety minutes thanks to first half goals from Aldershot's Aaron McLean and Shrewsbury's Duane Darby. Extra time however on this occasion couldn't separate the sides and in 2004 promotion was settled by a penalty shoot-out.

The Shots had the initial advantage after Luke Rodgers missed the very first penalty, but that was as good as it got for them. Shrews' keeper Scott Howie saved all three of their penalties, and after Shrewsbury scored their next three penalties it

was they who looked forward to an immediate return to the Football League.

It was a much tighter affair the next year with one goal deciding the final between Carlisle United and Stevenage Borough. That goal came in the first half and it ensured Carlisle followed Shrewsbury in returning to the league a year after suffering relegation. Peter Murphy was the hero, heading home a Tom Cowan corner. Carlisle had to survive a late surge from Stevenage, who peppered the Cumbrian's goal. But they could not force an equaliser and had to prepare for another year in the Conference.

The goals returned for the 2006 final which was held at a new venue; Leicester City's Walkers Stadium. Halifax took an early lead against Hereford United through Lewis Killeen but that lead lasted for just seven minutes when Andy Williams headed Hereford back on level terms. Second half substitute John Grant restored Halifax's advantage.

But Hereford brought on a sub of their own, and it was Guy Ipoua who headed their second goal ten minutes from time. Extra time was once again required to settle a Conference play-off final. Whilst the golden goal rule had been removed, one strike was enough to decide the tie. The goal was scored by Hereford's Ryan Green with what was only his second senior goal of his career.

The final then moved to Wembley Stadium with Morecambe and Exeter City facing off a day after the very first FA Cup final had been held at the new ground. 40,043 watched the game including an impressive 30,000 from Exeter. Lee Phillips gave Exeter the perfect start with an eighth minute goal but that was as good as it got for the Devon side after Morecambe established a stranglehold on the match.

Exeter's goalkeeper Paul Jones performed admirably but he was unable to prevent Garry Thompson, and then Danny Carlton from scoring allowing Morecambe to prepare for the first ever foray into the Football League.

Their experience in the following year's final was to be a much more joyous one. This time 42,511 made the journey to Wembley to watch a tense match against Cambridge United; a match that was decided by just the one goal. Rob Edwards was the scorer of the goal, stooping to score from a Dean Moxey free-kick. The goal was the least that Exeter deserved and they were perhaps a little unfortunate not to have won by a more handsome margin. Nevertheless Edwards strike was enough and Exeter have hardly looked back since.

Cambridge's disappointment was repeated in 2009; defeated for the second time by a side from Devon. It was Torquay United's turn to celebrate at Wembley. They took the lead in the first half following a terrific strike from their captain Chris Hargreaves. Cambridge then found themselves down to ten men after Phil Bolland was given his marching orders and their fate was sealed after Tim Sills headed home a Wayne Carlisle cross. Torquay's triumph came after only securing a place in the play-offs on the very last day of the season, following a win at champions Burton Albion.

2010 saw another two former Football League sides lock horns in the quest for a return ticket. A competition record 42,669 attended a rain-lashed Wembley to see Oxford United battle it out with York City. Two goals in the space of five first-half minutes put the U's in charge, Matt Green firing them in front from 18 yards with a neat half-volley then James Constable doubling their lead with a fierce left-foot drive. U's keeper Ryan Clarke fumbled in Ben Purkiss' cross to give York a lifeline shortly before half time. York pressed for an equaliser with the U's attacking on the counter but in the 90th minute Alfie Potter sealed Oxford's promotion.

Last season saw the final move to Manchester City's City of Manchester Stadium for one season with Luton Town facing AFC Wimbledon. Despite both sides hitting the post and Dons striker Danny Kedwell's goal being ruled out for offside, the game ended goalless after extra time. In the penalty shoot-out Dons' keeper Seb Brown saved from Alex Lawless and Jason Walker before Kedwell scored the goal which meant Football League action would return to a team called Wimbledon nine years after it disappeared.



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It feels like Groundhog Day. Just like last year, I can only write about how pleased I would be for whichever manager returns to the Football League this afternoon, and the disappointment I would feel for the one staying in the increasingly-competitive Blue Square Bet Premier.

At The Non-League Paper, we have to work with managers, not against. When you're relying on them to answer the phone, or open their office and give you a beer or a cuppa as well as a quote, you inevitably strike up friendships. It's part of the human element of this level of football that we all love.

So, as I wrote about Luton's Gary Brabin and AFC Wimbledon's Terry Brown 12 months ago, I wish both Gary Mills and Paul Buckle could succeed.

Over the past 19 months, York City fans will have grown to know how Gary handles his men, while the Hatters will be starting to understand how Bucks works after the impact he has had in little more than six weeks since replacing Brabs at Kenilworth Road.

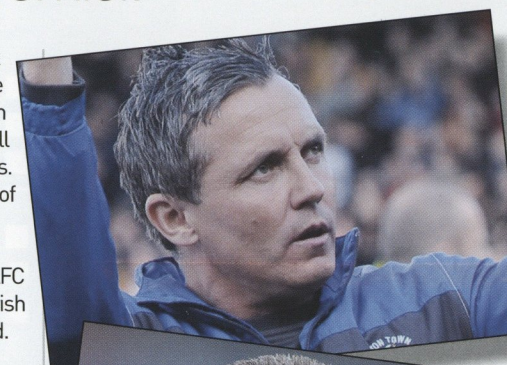
But from my personal dealings with both, let me give a little extra insight as to how they operate away from what you see on the pitch.

As a Notts County fan, I'd worshipped Gary the player at Meadow Lane, but when I signed for Arnold Town in 1996, he had just got on the managerial ladder as player-boss of Southern League club Grantham Town.

With the winter weather biting and games postponed for several weeks, he and Darron Gee - his long-time assistant - got together with our management team to organise a friendly at a local leisure centre.

As the snow fell during the day, the old-style astroturf was turning into an ice rink. It was a Friday night, and we all wanted to be out on the town, taking advantage of the fact we knew the following day's game was off.

But Millsy and Geebo spent all afternoon with their shovels, clearing the white stuff as quickly as it fell - and in the game that followed, Gary was like Christopher Dean while the rest of us struggled to stand up!



This man just loves football, indeed sport in general, as I discovered recently with the disclosure that in 1977 he scored a goal here at Wembley for England schoolboys, then a try at Twickenham for the rugby union national side the next!

One of Bucks' strengths is building a family atmosphere at a club. At Exeter he was known as the senior player who would take newcomers to Devon under his wing and show them and their family the sights.

And one of those players, Chris Todd, best illustrates his mode. I rang Bucks on November 18, 2008 and as we chatted about the weekend's game, I could sense something was wrong.

Eventually, his voice breaking with emotion, he told me that Todd had found out the day before that he was suffering from leukaemia and was about to break it to his team-mates.

"It was one of the hardest things I have ever done, especially standing there watching grown men cry," Todd later wrote in his book, 'More Than Football in the Blood'.

That night, the Gulls celebrated the first goal in their 4-1 win over Lewes by getting his No.6 shirt from the dugout and holding it up in respect and support.

"I know people will say 'Oh, we've heard that many times before', but the team spirit at this club is incredible," Todd, now at Forest Green, added. "We are a family, and that includes the players, management and staff."

The centre-half capped a remarkable comeback from his illness by starring in this game three years ago as Buckle led the Gulls to promotion on an emotional afternoon.

Of course, that doesn't stop Buckle eventually taking the hard decisions every manager has to in moving players on, however close they have become, in order to progress the team.

It's the evolving nature of football, and whatever the outcome this afternoon, both Mills and Buckle will know that they will eventually wave farewell to players who have carried their own work ethic and comradeship onto the pitch for them.

Just as we will to one of them. Sitting comfortably on the garden fence, I wish them both well.

Stuart Hammonds



## THE NON-LEAGUE PAPER

ESSENTIAL READING FOR FOLLOWERS OF THE NATIONAL GAME

Stuart Hammonds, Chief Reporter, The Non-League Paper (out every Sunday throughout the summer, priced £1.50)

# LINE-UPS

LUTON TOWN



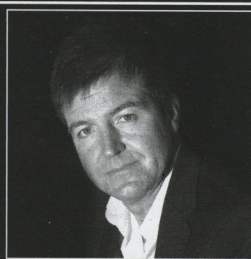
YORK CITY



Player	Pld	Sub	●	●	Player	Pld	Sub	●	●
1 MARK TYLER					1 PAUL MUSSELWHITE				
2 DAN GLEESON					2 LANRE OYEBANJO				
3 GREG TAYLOR					3 JAMES MEREDITH				
4 KEITH KEANE					4 CHRIS SMITH				
5 DEAN BECKWITH					5 DAVID MCGURK				
6 GEORGE PILKINGTON					6 DANIEL PARSLow				
7 ALEX LAWLESS					7 JAMIE REED				
8 AMARI MORGAN-SMITH					8 SCOTT KERR				
9 CRAIG McALLISTER					9 JASON WALKER				
10 DANNY CROW					10 ASHLEY CHAMBERS				
11 ROBBIE WILLMOTT					12 DANNY PILKINGTON				
12 SHANE BLACKETT					13 EUGEN BOPP				
13 STUART FLEETWOOD					14 MICHAEL POTTS				
14 AARON O'CONNOR					15 ERIK TONNE				
15 JAKE HOWELLS					16 JAMAL FYFIELD				
17 ANDRE BOUCAUD					17 MATTY BLAIR				
18 CURTIS OSANO					18 ADRIANO MOKE				
19 JAMES DANCE					19 SCOTT BROWN				
20 JOHN PAUL KISSOCK					20 JON CHALLINOR				
24 ALEX LACEY					21 MATTHEW BLINKHORN				
25 GODFREY POKU					23 CHRIS DOIG				
26 JJ O'DONNELL					24 MICHAEL INGHAM				
27 ANDRE GRAY					25 REECE KELLY				
28 ADAM WATKINS					26 PATRICK MCLAUGHLIN				
29 DAN WALKER					27 BEN GIBSON				
31 LEWIS KIDD					28 MOSES ASHIKODI				
34 JANOS KOVACS					29 BEN WHITE				

## MARTIN TOAL - ENGLAND'S WINNING TENOR

Performing the national anthem today is one of the country's leading tenors Martin Toal, who has performed LIVE at all the major UK sporting venues including Old Trafford, the Millennium Stadium, Twickenham, and Wembley stadium in front of 90,000 people and a TV audience of millions. Martin is known as "England's Winning Tenor" as the England football team has won without conceding a single goal each time he has sung the national anthem before the game - now five times! In 2009, Martin met and sang the national anthem for Her Majesty the Queen at an official royal event in Lancashire. For more information on Martin and his music, visit [www.martintoal.com](http://www.martintoal.com)



## ROSE JANG - SOUTH KOREAN SOPRANO

Performing with Martin at Wembley today is Princeton-born Rose Jang, an acclaimed award-winning Korean-American pop opera artist. An official Ambassador for Korean Tourism, Rose has performed in concerts and at events throughout the world including at the Lincoln Center in New York, and during the 2010 South Africa World Cup in Johannesburg. She has sung the national anthem for the South Korea international football team and also for the 2011 Formula One Grand Prix of South Korea. Rose recently broke the record for the most weeks at no1 on the Korean classical charts with her rendition of "You Raise Me Up" from her Songs of Hope series. For more information on Rose and her music, visit [www.rosejang.com](http://www.rosejang.com)



**Ball Boys (Supplied by Dorchester Town FC):** Josh Lucas, Lukin Wilson, Sam White, Thomas Cheeseman, Taylor Stokes, Zak Charman, Dean Boggust, Callum Watts, George Peach, Daniel Diaz, Adam Diaz, Harvey Hearn, Liam Gosney, Josh Legg, Ben White, Matt Fry, Sam Old, Billy Evans, Tom Mead, Sam Downton



## TODAY'S OFFICIALS

Referee: Jeremy Simpson  
 Assistants: Glen Hart  
 Adam Matthews  
 Fourth Official: Tony Harrington

Jeremy is 36 years old and works as a Head of Physical Education.

He started refereeing at 18 and progressed through the West Lancashire League and Contributory League system before being promoted onto the Panel Referees list in 2008. Jeremy has been a Football League and Premier League Assistant Referee for seven years and was a FIFA Assistant Referee from 2007-2010.

He was Assistant Referee at Wembley for the FA Vase Final in 2007.

This will be his 25th Football Conference game of the season and he will be assisted in today's final by Glen Hart and Adam Matthews with Tony Harrington as fourth official.

## TIMETABLE OF EVENTS

- 13:00 Turnstiles Open
- 14:10 Players Warm-up
- 14:53 The teams enter the Arena
- 14:56 Singing of the National Anthem led by Martin Toal and Presentations of the teams to principal Guest Sir Trevor Brooking, Brian Lee, Chairman of the Football Conference, Mark Jones, Managing Director, Blue Square Bet and Dennis Strudwick, General Manager of the Football Conference.
- 15:00 Kick Off
- 15:45 Half Time
- 16:00 Second Half
- 16:45 End of match and presentation to Match Officials, Runners Up, Winners

In the event of the score being level at the end of normal play, 30 minutes extra time will be played in two equal periods of fifteen minutes. If the score remains level at the end of this time the winners will be decided by penalty kicks.

# EVERYONE LIKES A NICE PROMOTION.

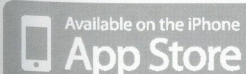
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