Halc-time By Hatters for Hatters

Season 09-10 No8

Wrexham Edition



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hatters matters

a word from the editor

EVERY player we spoke to after Mick Harford got the sack said how sorry they were to see him go.

Most admitted that it was largely down to their own shortcomings that the popular gaffer and former fans' favourite had got the heave-ho.

And it was probably the dreadful 3-0 defeat in North Wales back in September that set the danger bells ringing for the board.

Harford described it as the worst performance in the club's history and, while that might be going some, it certainly left 2020 with a question that they were forced to answer when they parted company



with the former Town talisman.

He has since seen his temporary reign at QPR end in failure, which I'm sure saddened us all.

Well, this afternoon the players have the chance to avenge that sorry defeat.

They owe it to themselves to put things right.

They owe it to the fans who travelled all that way. And they owe it to Big Mick too.

Need any more motivation boys?



Life at Luton Town is never dull. So why not send us your views on the Hatters by emailing

orange@bedsnews.com

The best messages will be featured in this fanzine or the letters pages of the Luton News/Dunstable Gazette

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Why are we struggling to beat teams?

WE may be challenging for a playoff spot, but it hasn't been the season many fans were anticipating.
We certainly thought we'd bag a
few more goals against the so-called
lesser sides. Take the Eastbourne
away game, which ended in just a
1-0 success despite the inadequacies
of the opposition as shown here.
They say there are no easy games
in this league... who are they trying
to kid. Stevenage managed to beat
Eastbourne 6-0 the other day!

Another bird-brained idea

THE club is always looking for innovative ways to boost attendances. The latest theme is finding ways of boosting the number of female fans as they're easily outnumbered by the guys. One employee got the wrong end of the stick, though, and started sprinkling breadcrumbs on the Kenny end roof. "Look I've increased the number of birds here already," he cried, as the men in white coats dragged him off.





'Au revoir' snow

SOME people love the snow, some people hate it. It's fair to say that Luton Town aren't the biggest fans of wintry weather because of the cost involved with postponements. One surprising exception is Claude Gnapka, who most fans may think is inclined to go missing when the temperatures start to plummet. Contrary to that theory, the enigmatic Frenchman is seen here getting all upset, clinging on hopelessly as the last snow melts away.

Ken

Rumours, speculation, gossip and half-truths





Are we fielding a scratch team?

BOSS Richard Money is demanding big improvements from his squad as he wrestles with the task of keeping Town in the promotion race. And, as these photos clearly show, he's told the team he's decided to start from scratch to ensure the players are more on the ball. There's also going to be increasing emphasis on winning possession back quickly, with tackles far more to the fore.



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Town 3 Wrexham 1 Revenge is sweet for the Hatters after

their horror show in Wales

13 pts

swann

struggle, but

Town 2 Wrexham 0 Town 1 Harriers 0 Luton were The home dreadful in form is slowly Wales. They're getting better. much better It's a close run this time thing though

nome as Town

Town 2 Harriers 0 Luton scraped a win in the Black Country but this is an easier victory

he shows what

A late winner

gives Town

another poor

Another open Ebbsfleet 1 Town 3

Ebbsfleet 0 Town 2

Fleet looked a

good outfit in

Luton but this

is now a mat-

ter of honour

Town 5 Hayes 0

At long last

the Hatters

turn on the

thump Hayes

auite. but I'll settle for thre

Town 0 Hayes 0

Not the best

of the season

the result

style and

Fleet were a handful last time, but playing away the pressure is off

to victory with day showing

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finance agreement was for longer than this, did the advise make it clear that the insurance

these circumstances.

Amid further claims that people were being sold policies that were of no use to them as a condition of being accepted for a loan, the Financial Services Authority (F5A) stepped in and the industry for serious failings in its PPI telesales practices.

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Lookie likies...

HE is quite clumsy and he often gets injured, but at least Liam Hatch can take solace in the fact he has two lookie-likies, writes James Heneghan.

At 6ft 3ins, Hatch hasn't had the best luck when it comes to injury but there is still every chance he might bring some joy back to Luton fans.

Since his latest return Hatch has already proved his worth after scoring the crucial winner against Barrow.

He also seems to have a close resemblence to Sid the Sloth from Ice Age.

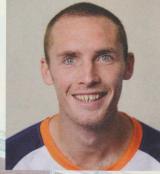
Well either that or it's his clumsiness that reminds me of him.

The Luton players also



seem to share the view. having screeched out 'Ice Age' to the big man while doing a post-match interview recently.

Due to a number of ankle problems this season Hatch has only a handful of Luton appearances, with one of those resulting in a red card. Whatever the case, though, I feel that Hatch, like Sid, still has the potential to bring happiness



back to the most miserable of places.

However, here at HTO we also feel he bears a slight resemblance to cartoon favourite Skeletor.

Neither of them are a vision of health with He Man's nemesis all bone and

Come to think of it. Hatchy could probably do with a little extra for his worn ankle...

How much would you have paid?



Mansfield allowed their fans to decide how much they would pay to watch the clash with Gateshead James Heneghan applies the same principle to some of the Hatters' games from the current season

WHEN I first heard about Mansfield's new idea of allowing people to pay what they wanted to watch their game against Gateshead I didn't like it much.

But having thought about it, and being a Town fan, it may not be such a bad idea.

You never know what Luton side will turn up and that's why I think that this crazy idea might actually work at the Hatters.

This is what I would have paid for some of the games this season:

Tuesday, August 11, Blue **Square Premier:**

Luton Town 4 Mansfield 1

I WOULD have been happy to pay almost anything to see this match.

It had a bit of everything; goals, own goals, red cards, entertainment and of course a good Luton performance - as rare as hen's teeth this season!

Saturday August, 22, Blue Square Premier:

Luton Town 0 Chester City 0

BORED, bored, bored, I think I may have just gone to a pound for this one.

Not only was it a bad result, but Chester were the better team and had the better chances despite the fact that they were in such a disastrous situation.

Woeful!



WORTH A FEW OUID OF ANYONE'S CASH: Keith Keane's injury-time winner against Oxford United capped off an encounter that was well worth the admission money

Tuesday, September 29, Blue Square Premier:

Luton Town 0 Stevenage 1

OH dear. Well for this game I would have struggled to reach a fiver.

It was a dire match and a very poor Luton performance summed up by a dreadful miss by Pilkington when it was still 0-0.

Saturday November 7, FA Cup first round:

Luton Town 3 Rochdale 3

FOR sheer drama this was worth at least 15 quid and it would have been more had

Town hung on for the win.

Until the 86th minute this was a superb Town performance but somehow we let a 3-1 lead slip away in the last three minutes.

Tuesday, February 9, Blue **Square Premier:**

Luton Town 2 Oxford Utd 1

WELL, what a night!

I was scrambling around for the loose change in my pockets until those last few miraculous minutes.

You couldn't really have scripted it any better to be honest, so I'd have emptied my wallet.

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Exiled Hat

Ramblinas from a Luton

EVERY so often, you get a football match which is so exciting that even the commentator loses control.

Barry Davies, so sorely missed on Match of the Day - nowadays the majority of BBC television commentators have about as much charisma as a dead kipper - had a voice-cracking moment in a match between Derby and Manchester City in the seventies.

As Francis Lee unleashed a shot, Davies gushed: "Interesting... VERY INTERESTING! Look at his face! Just LOOK at his face!"

However, this effort was blown away last

The scene - Tuesday night at the Kenny, Luton pressing for a last-gasp winner against Oxford, Keano mysteriously on setpiece duty and Simon Pitts describing the action on Diverse FM.

He said: "Keane curls it into the b-IT'S IN! IT'S IN! KEITH KEANE - HAS SCORED - DIRECT - FROM A CORNER

- KEITH KEANE
- FOR THE HATTERS
- IT'S 2-1 GET IN MY SON YOU BEAUTY!"

I was gutted to miss the Oxford game. though my exile is nearly over now with most of our remaining home games falling in



GET IN! Keano's great goal

the Easter holidays.

I did have a break

Not dissimilar to the wall, in fact, that was deemed to constitute the 'toilets' in the away end. It's beginning to

look like the best we can hope for is the play-offs.

However, any Luton fans feeling sorry for themselves should think about poor old Chester and stricken Portsmouth and appreciate how fortunate we are to have 2020 in charge.





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Steve's line-up for today



SUBS: Gore, Blackett, Nelthorpe Nwokeji, Craddock

If Half-time Orange's Steve Nolan was in charge of the team, this is what he'd do.

INCONSISTENCY seems to have become a theme in Luton's season. Just when things start to look up with wins at Barrow and the mighty Eastbourne, and that late late show against Oxford, the Hatters go four games without a win (at the time of writing at least), managing to score a paltry two goals in the process.

What's going on?

And Money's first team lineup seems to have been just as inconsistent as his side's form.

But hopefully that inconsistency will stop today and Money's men will start performing well regularly. Mark Tyler would keep his place between the sticks in my line up with the ever-reliable George Pilkington and giant Kovacs in front of him in the defence. Gnapka would sit at right back, reversing his recent transformation into a makeshift

winger, with Freddie Murray taking the left back berth.

Keane has looked solid in the midfield in recent weeks and would take the place of Nico who has looked well past his best and is now injured'.

I still prefer Adam Newton playing on the right wing as opposed to right full-back as he seems to be massively wasted sitting back there, with young Jake Howells lining up on the left flank.

Town seem to have been goalshy all season, so there isn't necessarily any automatic choices up front, but Hatch seems to be returning to full fitness and looking dangerous so would partner Barnes-Homer up front.

Should those two not make an impact, Money has Nwokeji and Craddock on the bench to ring the changes.

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From the Kenny End



THE question is, even now, have we still stopped talking about the Oxford game?

A lot of that game will not be remembered fondly, for varying reasons, and it was only the last seven minutes that we'll choose to think back on romantically and enthusiastically - but what a seven minutes they were.

We were worth, at the least, a draw that night and George Pilkington's header caused scenes of mayhem down in the Kenny End that I love so much that I named my column after it.

Nothing quite compares to the sheer madness when Keith Keane's corner went straight in though. Words barely do it justice. I still get chills just thinking about how much sheer emotion there was in the space of those

two minutes or so from when Keane was dragged into the crowd by blocks A and B, to the look on his face as he celebrated.

Those who have watched the footage of the goals will see Tommy Craddock make a sudden break from the circle of Luton players, and that's often where the camera angle changes.

Those in Block D with me know that Tommy came running over to behind the goal to find yours truly and to high five me. due to an ongoing conversation we'd been having recently. A moment for me that won't ever be forgotten, and seven minutes of life that every Luton fan will always treasure.

Going back to the internet after that game was something else entirely.

All the fans were buzzing and were posting

messages and creating Facebook groups in memory and celebration of an amazing moment.

I must mention at this point some of the people who sit around me. Football, and especially Luton, can bring you some really great friendships from sitting with the same group of people, and no Luton game for me is quite the same without any of the guys and girls who are huge Hatters fans and can be found at nearly every game. Oh, and a manly hug from my friend Happy Harry before a game always makes the difference too!

On a final note, it's fair enough right now to say that the Hatters are a good bet for the play-offs. To many I speak to, that was the least that was expected of the squad.

I said, and stand by it,

that on paper we have the best side in the division.

But you've still got to prove it on the day, during the game, and we've seen some frustration all the way around on various levels.

But if we're going to make this, if we're going to make that last minute typical Luton-style run for the BSP title, then we need to stay behind the team as much as possible and stand together loud and proud.

We've proven before, as a crowd, what we can inspire the boys to do and we have our part to play.

So let's get behind our Hatters, and show them that we think they're the only football team that matters!

> Take it easy. Petev



O'Cahan you believe it?

IN the month I've been living in Zimbabwe. I've seen more Arsenal. Liverpool, Chelsea and Manchester United shirts than I ever saw back in the old country - most of them are fake, mind, but when you're in the Mbare market and you have a choice between a \$5 shirt and a \$50 one. which do you choose - the one with the Adidas logo on or the

one without? They're more or less the same otherwise.

I am quite disappointed to see this. I'd been hoping that I'd be introduced to a whole new world of football here, and even took the time to find out about

the major teams and players here before I came. Even the biggest clubs have suffered in recent years because of the cheap and ready alternative of satellite television and England's Premier League, Spain's La Liga or Italy's Serie A.

Attendances have fallen catastrophically, even though admission for a match at Dynamos, the most popular and successful team. costs about £2.

Going to sports here is a new experience: it's summer here at the moment, so cricket is all the rage. Entrance to a Twentv20 game between Matabeleland and Westerns the other

week cost me about £3 and a pint of beer is about £1. Cheers!

Predictably enough. Tuesday evenings and Saturdays now crawl along until Diverse FM online commentary will fly across Europe and Africa to keep me informed.

I was listening to the Oxford match on there. I think half of Helensvale thought I'd gone crazy when the first went in, and when we got the second my next-door neighbour came over to see if everything was all right!

I'm amazed that the commentary didn't cut out during the last few minutes, as my internet connection is

dodgy to say the least, let alone the mains power, which is so unreliable that anyone who can afford it has at least one diesel generator constantly on standby just in case!

I miss the matchday atmosphere and experience - collecting the whole family from around two counties. the drive into town. the pre-match drink and grub, the walk to the ground, standing on the terrace before the game, watching it fill up and then finally watching my Luton Town... It's something I'll never be able to have here, unfortunately, and that's a crying shame.

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The boy done good

BOB Hawkes was born in Breachwood Green in October 1880 and played junior football in Luton before signing on for the Town on amateur forms in 1900.

He took some time to make his breakthrough as a regular in the first team but once established there was no looking back.

Hawkes looked nothing like a footballer, but his slight frame belied a rare talent and it was not long before he was regarded as the best left-half in the country.

A true amateur. Hawkes rejected many overtures from Foot**NOW AND THEN: Current Luton** Town left-back Freddie Murray, left, and one of his earliest forerunners **Bob Hawkes** represent very different eras

ball League clubs and remained loval to the Town throughout his career.

Hawkes was picked to play for the full England side on five occasions starting off with a game against Ireland in 1907 but also won 19 amateur international caps as well as playing a part in



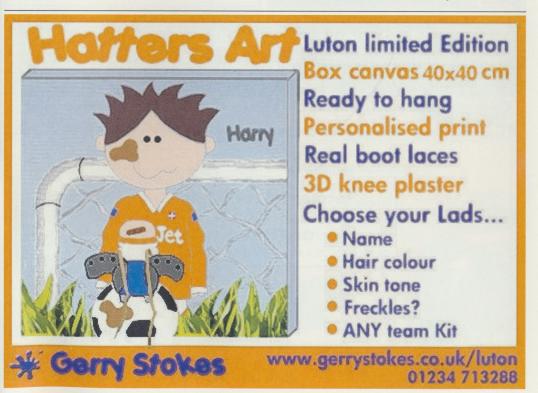
England's gold medal winning football side in the 1908 Olympic Games.

Throughout his career it was always thought that his aversion to heading the ball was down to the fact that he had a gold plate under his ginger hair which protected an old skull fracture.

Hawkes, though, thought that football should be played with the feet and preferred to bring the ball down before playing an inchperfect pass out of defence.

Hawkes eventually turned professional in the 1911-12 season and was immediately made the highest paid player at the club.

He finished his Luton career at the end of the 1919-20 season and, after a short period at Bedford Town, Hawkes fully retired from playing and went back to his old trade in the hat making industry.





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from the allotments

...with 'orrible 'ornet Don Monty

SO how was the recent airport derby clash? The tussle of the titans? Gatwick v Luton – or Crawley v Luton, as it's sometimes known.

Rumour has it airport control in the South East of England nearly crumbled with orange coloured jets carrying your fans on the short hop to Sussex. Well, a byplane. I'd like to say it was a long journey back, but maybe just a short and miserable one. Losing at Crawley? Ouch.

Still, probably a little less painful than a trip to Scunthorpe that the Golden Boys had to endure. Yours truly decided to make a day of it and take the train.

Yes, for those of you that have made the trip, you'll know you can see the mighty Glanford Park from the railway line, it goes right past it.

But in true British style we couldn't put a station near to the ground, you go all the way into the middle of Scunthorpe and walk right the way out again.

And if you've walked it, you know

just how far that is.
And I have to say
Scunthorpe's ground
is as small as – well,
as small as yours
really.

To add insult to injury our first away win in 10 – yes, 10 long games, get crowing – was cruelly denied by a late penalty. At least it's not a long walk back up a hill to the station... oh yes it is!

Never mind about my travails, you've got the big important derby less than a month away. The mighty Stevenage Borough at Broadhall Way, or whatever it's called now. I hear the game is all ticket and beautiful yellow Watford shirts are banned. Well, we wouldn't want to rub it in that it's your derby now, would we? Not when they're on a double over you anyway.

Mind you, the way we're going right now you could be playing us again sooner than you think. Away from home we're more wobbly than a jelly in a jacuzzi so it's the Fortress Vicarage that's keeping our heads above water at the moment.

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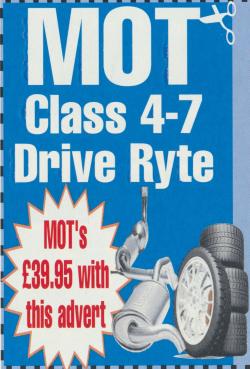


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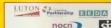


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