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# hatters matters

... a word from the editor

THE excitement of the January transfer window has somewhat passed us by.

A lot of big names have been mentioned but, at the time of writing, none of them have yet arrived at Kenilworth Road. The clock is ticking and time is running out if we are to improve our squad and our chances of promotion.

We have of course captured target man Craig McAllister on loan for the rest of the season from struggling Newport County. Of course we hope he's a success at Kenilworth Road, but we can't help confess that we are slightly un-



YOU THE MAN? Craig McAllister in action

derwhelmed by our activity thus far.

Although there are quite legitimate reasons for so many squad players arriving in town this season, now is the time that we undeniably need quality if we are to realise our dream

of promotion – and that is unlikely to come cheap.

To catch Fleetwood and Wrexham is unlikely. To win the play-offs, as we sadly know, is extremely difficult. Here and now we need to set ourselves apart.



Life at Luton Town is never dull. So why not send us your views on the Hatters by emailing [orange@bedsnews.com](mailto: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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**The Luton News Dunstable Gazette Herald & Post**

With special thanks to Gareth Owen

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## Odds on

by Graham Sharpe, Media Relations Director, William Hill.



HOW long did you think we'd spend outside the Football League when we went down into the Conference/BSP?

I have to admit, even though it will sound like after-timing, I was pessimistic about the first season when we appeared to be playing up to a media agenda that we would be the Manchester United of the BSP.

Well, we never showed their mindset, for sure, nor their results, and eventually ended up allowing Stevenage to run away with the title. The only advantage they had appeared to have over us was that they had a ruthless, single-minded manager who didn't give a damn what anyone thought about his tactics as long as they produced the goods.

We wimped out in the play-off semis against York, unable to cope with the pressure and their tactics.

Season two began with the warning that Crawley would be making a big spending bid to land the division.

They had a ruthless, single minded manager who didn't give a damn what anyone thought about his tactics as long as they produced the goods. And he spent the money he was given wisely and well.

We chuntered along hoping that something, anything, would turn up in the shape of a run of form. We finally plucked up the courage to discard a manager who was clearly the wrong man for the job.

With the pressure of chasing Crawley off, we finally put together a run of form under the new boss. We charged past Wrexham in the play-off semis – but in the final we wimped out big time.

Not the first time we'd done it, not the first time our manager had presided over such a flop. Nonetheless, we permitted him to discard our big money striker and the boss was reappointed with indecent haste, as though no-one on the board had bothered to sit down and seriously contemplate making a change.

This season, lo and behold, Fleetwood are the big money boys. Once again we can't cope with the pressure of living with them.

Not sure how much more money their boss had to spend than us, but he sure has spent it more wisely and well.

Time and time again we've flattered



### DISAPPOINTMENT: Hatters suffer another play-off defeat

to deceive. Time and time again we've surrendered leads which should have been straightforwardly defended.

Time and again we've brought in new players, all given a big build up – Samuel, Beckwith, Brunt, Kissock, Hand, Henry, Antwi, Fleetwood, Wright, McAllister. None of them has established himself as a regular in the side.

One or two mistakes in bringing players in is acceptable. That many isn't. And where are the signings who have made an impact in that time? Morgan-Smith, Dance and Taylor for sure – O'Connor, maybe. Kovacs, yes, but we already knew he was good.

But, the crucial proof of our ineptitude must be the fact that as I write we are a dozen points or so behind Fleetwood/Wrexham.

The same Wrexham we saw off comfortably in the play-offs, the same Wrexham who have had all sorts of money problems, have changed manager, who when they came to Kenilworth Road this season took a ruthless, single-minded attitude to the game, didn't give a damn what anyone thought about their tactics of time wasting more blatantly than even Watford, Stevenage or Crawley ever did, as long as they produced the goods.

I'm sure we are better financed than them. We're told we have better players. We're even told we have great team spirit. So why are they up there ahead of us?

We will probably end up playing York and Wrexham in the play-offs again. How much are you prepared to gamble that we'll beat either or both of them this time round?

## Hatters Q&A

HTO bullies a Luton Town player into answering questions from Hatters fans. Why not follow @LutonNews\_LTFC on Twitter for the chance to put your own question to next month's victim

> **Q.** What were your first impressions of Luton when you joined?

> *My first thoughts were that I was at a proper football club, everything is done professionally. Just little things that you don't get at every club such as food after training/ matches and recovery drinks/ice baths.*

> **Q.** Who is your favourite member of Steps?

> *Erm I had to google Steps to find one, I'm going with the girl Lisa.*

> **Q.** What's your favourite cheese?

> *Cheddar.*

> **Q.** What has been your greatest football-

ing moment to date?

> *Playing for the England C team. I didn't think I'd get to represent my country at any level so it was definitely my greatest moment so far!*

> **Q.** How would you sum up your time at Luton so far?

> *Started quite well but I've still got a lot more to give.*

> **Q.** Where do you get your hair cut?

> *At McNallys in Bedford. Always give me a fresh trim!*

> **Q.** What is your favourite joke?

> *What do you think of wind turbines? Big fan.*

> **Q.** Who is your favourite team?

> *I'm a big West Ham fan. I try and get to as many games as I can.*

> **Q.** What do you think of all the financial probs clubs such as Kettering and Darlington are having?

> *It would be sad to see any club fold. I'm not sure what's going on at Kettering, but I'm really hoping Darlo get saved because I loved my time up there.*

> **Q.** If you could score a winning goal, who would you want it to be against and why?

> *Probably against Millwall or Tottenham purely for the fact that they are West Ham's big rivals!*



Greg Taylor

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**Town 4 Alfreton 0**  
We've done really well against the league's struggling sides and this game is no different.

**Town 5 Alfreton 1**  
Alfreton have been shipping lots of goals, so I'll go for the 5-1 thrashing we often dish out.

**Town 3 Alfreton 0**  
It's quite tight for long periods against a defensive Alfreton, until Town ease home.

**Town 3 Alfreton 0**  
Town coast to a comfortable win against struggling Alfreton to keep up pressure at the top.

**Kid'ster 1 Town 1**  
I figure that we may as well go for a record number of midweek games, so it's another draw!

**Kid'ster 1 Town 0**  
Town come unstuck as an understrength Trophy line-up doesn't quite have enough.

**Kid'ster 2 Town 0**  
A second string Luton sprinkled with youngsters are knocked out of the Trophy.

**Kid'ster 1 Town 0**  
Hatters' poor record against teams around them in the league continues, albeit in the Trophy.

**F Green 1 Town 2**  
We struggled to break down Forest Green at home but a late winner gives us victory.

**F Green 0 Town 1**  
A tight encounter which we edge thanks to a first half advantage we just about cling on to.

**F Green 1 Town 1**  
Green recently beat leaders Wrexham on their home patch and they battle to earn a point.

**F Green 1 Town 1**  
Luton scrape a late away point after falling behind early on as they fall further behind.

**Town 3 Tamworth 0**  
Yet another win as our phenomenal form continues and we're right back in the title hunt.

**Town 3 Tamworth 1**  
A Town equaliser just before the break sees us recover to take the points by the end.

**Town 3 Tamworth 1**  
Another comfortable home victory for Hatters in a reverse of their scoreline at the Lambs.

**Town 2 Tamworth 1**  
Town battle to a home win against mid-table Tamworth thanks to two first half goals.

**it's 1pt for a right result and 2pts for a precise score**

**our survey says...**

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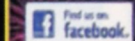
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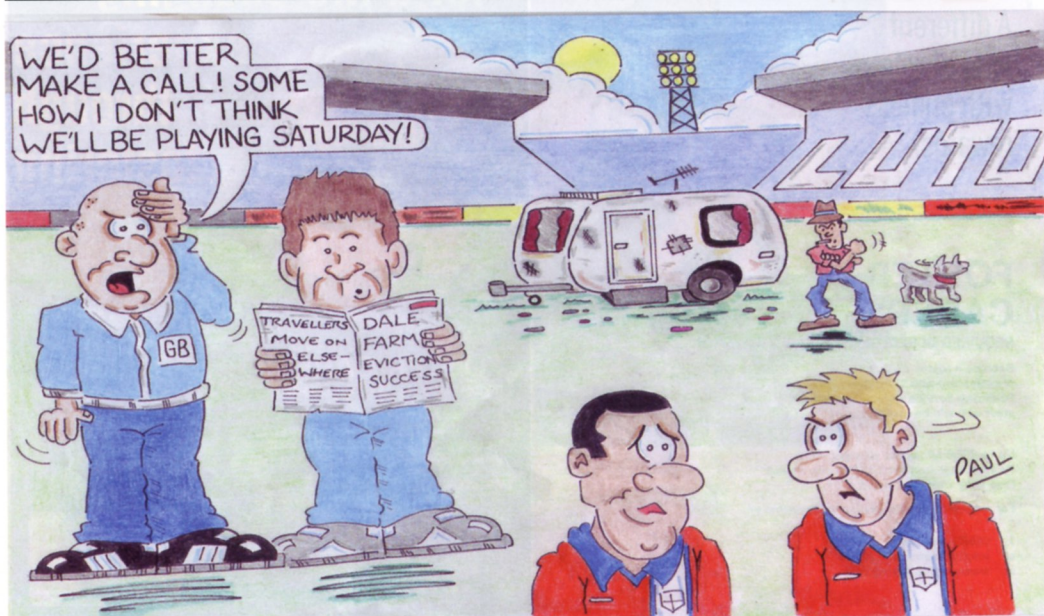


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# Tom's take



Tom Skinner gives his thoughts on the latest Hatters news

SEEING Aaron O'Connor, Jake Howells and Danny Crow chasing down and harrising Stockport's players as we held on to the three points was evidence of exactly the sort of determination required to get out of this league.

"When we were getting all those draws the manager analysed things and pointed out that we just weren't working hard enough as a team," Crow explained in the match-day programme.

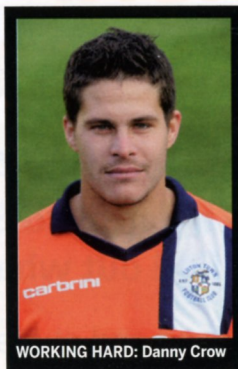
"We're now working much harder, getting fitter."

I'm delighted to hear this is the case, though I'm disappointed that

it's taken half of yet another season in this league to realise that no-one's going to give us promotion on a plate.

Graham Westley's recent departure from Stevenage threw speculation on whether their 'glory days' might be nearing their end.

Maybe the memories of Stevenage's gamesmanship - including their famous 'time out' routine - and dirty play have faded a little. But I have to admit, I'm getting to the stage now that I've got to grudgingly admire the progress of a team who at the time of writing are sitting in



WORKING HARD: Danny Crow

the League One play-off places.

Unlike Crawley and Fleetwood, they haven't thrown obscene amounts of money around to achieve their success.

It's been gained by hard work and deter-

mination, epitomised by a demanding 9am-5pm training regime.

I can't help feeling that if we had got our act together from day one we could have had Wrexham's points tally, as I feel our players have a very similar level of ability.

We can't change the past, and assuming that the top two don't implode, we've got to prepare for the likely scenario of facing one of these teams in the play-offs, who will be gutted at not securing top spot.

Let's continue the hard graft of recent weeks and show the league we really mean business in 2012.

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If you'd like to put yourself, or a mate, forward for this feature then send an email to [orange@bedsnews.com](mailto:orange@bedsnews.com)

# Rosie & Chloe

What a beauty!

Full name: Rosie Stanyer (white shirt)

Age: 22

Occupation: Holiday designer for a travel company

Attached? : No

Been a supporter since: As long as I can remember!

Best looking Hatter: James Dance

Most valuable player: John Paul Kissock

Player to flog: Curtis Osano

Ideal night out: Drinks with friends followed by plenty of dancing, finished off with cheesy chips

Favourite TV shows: Desperate Housewives, New Girl, One Born Every Minute!

Full name: Chloe Painter (orange shirt)

Age: 22

Occupation: Holiday designer for a travel company

Attached? : No

Been a supporter since: Birth

Best looking Hatter: James Dance

Most valuable player: James Dance for obvious reasons

Player to flog: None, they're all lovely

Ideal night out: Cocktails, Wetherspoons and cheesy chips

Favourite TV shows: Fresh Meat, Spaced, Green Wing & Geordie Shore





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



### Steve's line-up for today



SUBS: Tyler, Fleetwood, Lawless, Kissock, McAllister

EVEN the most optimistic fans among us would probably admit that our title chances are pretty much gone. Too many draws and a pretty dismal record against the teams around us in the league look to have confined us to the play-offs at most yet again.

Despite Wrexham slipping up on Tuesday night (I write before the Mansfield game), it's difficult to imagine either Wrexham or Fleetwood, let alone both, slipping up enough for us to finish better than third. I guess the least we can do is pick up wins and hope for a minor miracle.

It's great to see Amari Morgan-Smith featuring again after his injury woes, I think he's been badly missed. Providing he's fit to start, he'd be in my starting line up alongside Danny Crow. The normally reliable Kevin Pilkington had an unlucky

afternoon at Southport, but worked hard to gain his place between the sticks so would keep his place for today's match for me. Greg Taylor has impressed me since signing and looks a class act at left-back.

Janos Kovacs and George Pilkington almost pick themselves in defence, and although Dan Gleeson struggled a little at Southport, he'd keep his place on the right.

With James Dance out and Keith Keane struggling, the midfield poses a little more of a problem.

If I were in charge I certainly wouldn't tolerate tantrums on the touchline by players when substituted, so JP Kissock would be dropped. Godfrey Poku impressed while out on loan, so would start in the middle of the park in place of Keane, alongside Adam Watkins, with the ever-excellent Jake Howells on the left and O'Connor playing on the right in place of Dance.



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# From the Kenny End



With Petey Staniforth

CURIOUS times at Kenilworth Road. An unbeaten run? Clean sheets?

And in the biggest shock of all (I write this the morning after the home game with Stockport), we actually scored a penalty!

Though, to be honest, perhaps the most amusing side of the latter happening is the fact that Kevin Pilkington refused to watch it, and looked to us in the Kenilworth Road end instead to calm his nerves!

I think some praise needs to go out, also, to Aaron O'Connor.

After my predicting he would be a very good signing for us, at the start of the



season (check your HTO back issues!), he made a very slow start and fans were not convinced. But he has proven himself in recent weeks, and definitely deserves a lot of credit for his recent performances.

The same type of praise should also go

to Danny Crow, who is definitely in the best form he has been in since signing.

It's great to see players like this play as well as we all know that they can, and perform in the Luton shirt that we love.

As a final note, everyone knows what I do. I run Power Trip Wrestling, a professional wrestling show suitable for all the family. On Friday, February 10, at Stopsley Working Men's Club, in Luton, I'm promoting another charity show, and raising money and awareness of the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Tickets are only £5 each, and can be reserved by calling

07594 304455. Cancer affects so many lives, and many of us have lost someone special because of it, so I ask you all to consider coming out on the night and supporting a wonderful cause and having a great evening out with your family.

The added bonus to that is that I'm currently holding one of the belts.

My world champion from South Africa, has even been converted to being a Luton fan (we gave him a shirt, and I brought him to a home game recently), so we would love the support.

*Take it easy, Petey*

# A Diverse view



Steve Moore at Diverse FM has his say on all things Hatters

SO suddenly, a decent run. Win after win chalked up over Christmas.

The only problem seems to be that half of them are bound to be taken away when Kettering fold (I realise that I should put 'if', but the odds are so poor it seems obsolete).

Not to mention Darlington too and judging by the fact they have just sacked the manager and every single player as I write this, I am guessing that will happen before you even read this.

But, the momen-



**SHAW THING?** Jon Shaw tum created will not be taken away no matter what happens (presuming we have taken at least four points from the Southport and Mansfield games) at that is what will put pressure on Wrexham and Fleetwood.

It is also January

and the transfer window. Fleetwood have already signed four midfielders, was their old midfield not good enough?

In fact, it brings back memories of Chris Wilder and Oxford getting to January on top and strengthening the squad, but in the process ruining the chemistry of what they had created.

It is a slippery slope and Micky Mellon is falling into the same trap.

What of our own ambitions in the market? It is pretty common knowledge,

from every angle, that there is interest in Jon Shaw from our side.

There is no question that like everyone else, an addition of a 20-goal-a-season striker can never hurt, half of the teams in the country want one.

Yes, Jon Shaw is an upgrade on Tommy Wright in the target man position but we already have a 20-goal striker, who is in hiding until February to avoid the attention that Vardy and Shaw will generate, named Amari Morgan-Smith.



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# From beyond these shores

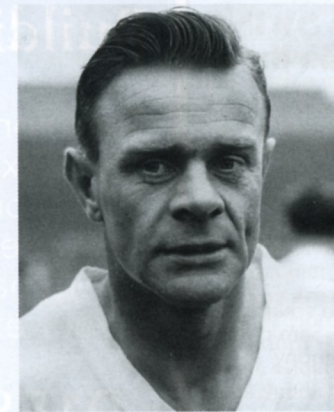
Roger Wash goes globetrotting to feature players born across the world who found their way to Hatters

ALTHOUGH born in Malta, Wally Shanks was brought up in Scotland and was on the brink of joining Aberdeen when war broke out.

After the war, during which time he formed a great friendship with Tommy Walker the ex-Hearts player, Shanks toyed with offers from both Blackpool and Spurs but decided to follow his old friend, now at Chelsea, to Stamford Bridge.

Unfortunately there were around 70 professionals at Chelsea at the time and seemingly more arriving daily after de-mob and Shanks was always going to have a job getting into the first team.

Joe Payne, the ex-Luton player who was at Chelsea at the time, recommended him



**FINDING A HOME:** Wally Shanks

to Luton and so began a happy 14-year career at Kenilworth Road.

Shanks made his debut at Bury on January 18, 1947, and

made a further seven appearances that season all on the wing, following on with 10 games in 1947-48 again in the number seven shirt.

The breakthrough eventually came in 1949-50 when 30 appearances were made together with his first league goal – the winner in a 1-0 victory at Preston.

Shanks then remained virtually ever present until 1957 when he joined the Town's coaching staff.

Following relegation in 1960, Shanks left the club in the general shake-up and concentrated on his thriving sports business in Luton with Gordon Turner.

After going on to run the 'Brown Owl' for many years before retiring, Shanks sadly died in November 2010.

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## from the allotments

...with 'orrible 'ornet Don Monty



BY the time you read this the Glory Horns will have played their epic FA Cup tie at home to Tottenham.

Obviously our printing deadlines for Half-time Orange (Half-time Yellow always sounded better to me but I was outvoted) means I'm writing this before I know Friday night's result.

So, just to be safe, I've offered two versions of the match below. Please read the right one accordingly.

Version 1: Today the cleaners are sweeping up after joyous scenes in Watford High

Street. No, it wasn't two for one at the kebab shop, the mighty Golden Boys had dumped the mighty Spurs out of the FA Cup in style and fans had celebrated well into the small hours.

The thousands packed into the iconic Vicarage Road (so many I couldn't bag a ticket) – and the millions watching on telly – watched in wonder as the Horns come back from 2-0 down to win 3-2 in the final minute (or half an hour after Van Der Vaart stomped down the tunnel after being subdued).

The golden boy of the night was of course Marvin Sordell, with a stupendous hat-trick to cap the signing of his new five-year contract and commitment never to leave the club until we've won silverware (no sniggering).

Version 2: Today the cleaners are sweeping up after riotous scenes in Watford High Street. Gloating victorious Spuds fans had gone on the rampage after their FA victory at Watford and left the town centre looking like, erm, Luton on a Friday night.

I had my pick of the

seats in a half full, slightly ramshackle Vicarage Road, and we were joined by the 50,000-odd watching on digital TV in seeing the Horns go behind in the first 10 minutes and collapse to an embarrassing 5-0 defeat.

We were sadly missing the services of Marvin Sordell, who was sold for a paltry £2million to West Ham the day before. That's the season over, we're hoping for the delights of mid-table obscurity come May.

Take your pick.

Good luck against Alfreton...

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