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By Hatters for Hatters



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## hatters matters

... a word from the editor

SO that's it then.

We've known it for a while, but we're finally ready to concede the title. Fleetwood or Wrexham, one of the two will enjoy the sweet taste of success – but for the other it will be the bitterest of pills to swallow.

We've experienced that horrid feeling of failure after chasing so hard and perhaps this way will be better for us all. But the race for the play-offs is hotting up and we certainly can't rest on our laurels. We need to cement our place in the play-offs, but hopefully with some of the pressure off we will be able to play in a more care-free and



**HAPPY DAYS:** Hatters celebrate at Wembley

entertaining way.

It also makes that nuisance competition the FA Trophy become ever more important. It was probably written in the stars we would face York and we could still face them five more times this season.

There is also the potential of two Wembley visits and this is not something that should be scoffed at.

It's a rare opportunity to watch the Hatters at the home of English football and here's hoping for a double dose.



**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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With special thanks to Gareth Owen

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## Odds on

by Graham  
Sharpe, Media  
Relations Director,  
William Hill.



GARY Brabin has at last achieved something no other Luton Town manager has come close to – he has made me quite happy to give up watching a home game and go horse racing instead, despite effectively forfeiting the money I have already paid to watch the game via my season ticket.

I've finally had enough now that we are so far behind Fleetwood that it only remains for us to amass enough points to yet again face the potential crushing disappointment of play-off failure.

Still, I think my wife is happy enough with him. When we went away for a few days to celebrate our anniversary earlier in the year it coincided with the game at Stockport, to which I was listening on 3CR before we went down for dinner. We were a goal up and cruising, so off we trotted to the restaurant.

After a pleasant repast I quickly nipped upstairs to check on the score, being thrown into an unholy rage to hear us give up the lead by conceding a late goal – a phenomenon which has become a regular part of our season.

When I returned to the table I could barely speak for frustration and anger, and our anniversary almost turned into a divorce dinner.

But when we recently enjoyed another short sojourn, I was so sure that we were going to disgrace ourselves again that I made a point of booking dinner BEFORE the game at Barrow kicked off and didn't bother to check the score at all, safe in the knowledge that we would again take the lead only to blow it.

As you well know, we didn't even bother with the taking the lead bit, but just perfected the 'blowing it' part.

My wife was, unknown to her, saved another tantrum and to this day – unless she reads this – doesn't even know we were playing that night.

THAT is what Mr Brabin has reduced me to – indifference at yet another abysmal result/performance, because I have come to expect and come to terms with them from teams under his stewardship.

On the same night as the Barrow game, my 'other' team, Wealdstone, were pulling off an against-the-odds triumph – by winning the replay of their FA Trophy last 16 game against Dartford.



**Town boss Gary Brabin**

I started supporting Wealdstone, the team from the town where I grew up, in 1958, a year before I acquired Luton – at which point there were some seven divisions between the two.

Anyway, I decided to forego the Trophy quarter-final v Gateshead in favour of a trip to Cambridge United to see Wealdstone take them on.

I travelled more in hope than expectation and saw Wealdstone produce such a spirited performance that they completely out-fought and embarrassed a side which has given us enough tough times in recent seasons, to put themselves into the Trophy semis.

You'll have gathered that I am well and truly in the anti-GB camp, and as a result I take some regular Twitter stick from people who say, in essence, 'Leave Brabs alone, give him time, he's doing okay, look where we are in the league and how well we're doing in the Trophy.' To which I respond, 'You or I could get us where we are in the League and Trophy.'

Problem is, we are virtually guaranteed a play-off place and the law of averages could just conspire to ensure that at long last Mr B actually manages to win one of the damned things. That would then put us in the Football League but with the awful prospect of a season of struggle before GB is properly found out.

Alternatively, he fails in the play-offs – yet again – which I suspect is the more likely outcome, and we're stuck in the BSP for yet another season and 2020 are left with the problem of how to make yet another spectacularly inept managerial appointment.

## Hatters chat

This month with Town defender Shane Blackett

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 was your highest ever league finish and where?  
> *League One promotion as runners-up with Peterborough in 2009.*  
> **Q.** Who's your favourite team now and as a kid?  
> *My favourite teams have always been Arsenal and Luton.*  
> **Q.** What have your career highlights and lowlights been?  
> *Highlights have been getting three promotion medals and playing for England C. Lowlights are the injuries.*  
> **Q.** What is the squad's infatuation with Nandos?  
> *Apart from it being unbelievably nice food, we've got an alliance*

*with them thanks to a certain individual.*  
> **Q.** What is your favourite film?  
> *Casino, Boyz in the Hood, Toy Story. Anything with Will Smith, Denzel Washington or Robert De Niro in it.*  
> **Q.** What was your best moment playing for Sunday FC Houghton?  
> *Haha. doing the pre-match warm-up in the car with the heaters, then still winning!*  
> **Q.** What is your favourite car?  
> *It's gotta be the Bugatti Veyron but the new Ferrari 458 and the new Aston Martin One-77 come very close!*  
> **Q.** Who's the best

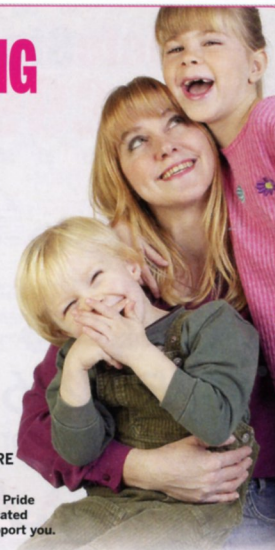
FIFA player at the club?  
> *Me, Crowy and Keano like to have comps and I've got the champ medal. The worst has to be Godfrey Poku and Charlie Henry – dead players with no numb thumbs!!*  
> **Q.** Whats on your Sky+?  
> *Inside Men, Celebrity Juice, Benidorm, Match of the Day, Big Fat Gypsy Wedding, Top Gear, EastEnders, Geordie Shore, The Only Way Is Essex, Sun Sex And Suspicions Parents, Take Me*



*Out, Homeland, Gadget Geeks, Fresh Prince of Bel Air.*  
> **Q.** 10) Do you have any pets?  
> *Yes I've got a little beast of a dog called Doug, he's a pug!!!*  
> **Q.** 11) What was the last film you paid to watch at the cinema?  
> *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo - Decent film to be fair.*  
> **Q.** 10) Who has the worst taste in music at the club?  
> *It's gotta be Alan Neilson!*  
> **Q.** 11) Who's your most famous friend in the game?  
> *Not sure how famous he is but Craig Mackail-Smith at Brighton.*

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mark wood

13 pts



Town 7 Bath 0  
With expectations of claiming top spot gone, Town play with a new-found freedom and verve.

Wrexham 0 Town 1  
This victory all but ends Wrexham's hopes of taking the title – roll on the play-offs.

York 0 Town 2  
Revenge is so, so sweet. Having been thumped by the York earlier in the season Town reply.

Darlington 0 Town 1  
Ailing Darlington make a good fist of it, but short of their best players Taylor nets against his old club.

steve sims

18 pts



Town 5 Bath 0  
A stroll in the park as Town come off disappointed at only smacking in five goals.

Wrexham 2 Town 1  
Town get ahead, concede in the second half and then injury time disaster strikes.

York 1 Town 0  
A semi-final Trophy defeat, leaving a tricky task ahead for the second leg at home.

Darlington 1 Town 3  
Good away win, but too little too late in terms of the title race. Greg Taylor a cert to score.

mike simmonds

15 pts



Town 3 Bath 0  
Up against another side who will look to park the bus, Town struggle until a late barrage.

Wrexham 1 Town 0  
A solitary goal is enough to keep the hosts title hopes alive while properly ending Town's.

York 2 Town 1  
York take a two-goal lead, probably with Walker scoring, but tie remains in the balance.

Darlington 0 Town 2  
The hosts are nowhere near the side they used to be and Luton emerge victorious.

steve nolan

11 pts



Town 4 Bath 0  
Hatters win comfortably against bottom club Bath who now look dead and buried.

Wrexham 2 Town 0  
Wrexham further the gap as Luton's poor run against fellow contenders continues.

York 1 Town 0  
Luton's record against York away is pretty poor – that run continues at Bootham Crescent.

Darlington 1 Town 2  
Hatters scrape a win against the financially-troubled Quakers in the deep north east.

our survey says...  
it's 1pt for a right result and 2pts for a precise score

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With Paul Stewart



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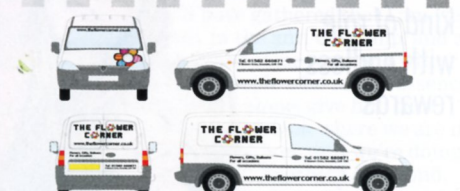
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# Tom's take



Tom Skinner gives his thoughts on the latest Hatters news

SO, the Magpies have pinched Pilkington. I thought those birds were more attracted to shiny things, and KP never inherited the gleaming nose of former team mate Peter Schmeichel, but I guess there's a lack of silverware in Nottinghamshire to choose from these days, so beggars can't be choosers.

Best of luck to Kevin in his new role as goalkeeping coach at Meadow Lane. He has showed commendable professionalism in never whining about

being understudy to Mark Tyler, and never let us down between the sticks. KP was consistent, never showy, unlike the enigmatic 'English' batsman who shares his nickname.

During the last couple of years, we've not only had an excellent Number 1, but an equally solid back-up choice. When you think of some of the cross fearing keepers we've had - the hapless Hyldgaard, the amiable yet abject Abbey - you realise how blessed we've been in this depart-

ment recently.

This is why it disappointed me a few weeks ago when the goalkeeping situation was needlessly blown up into a huge issue. There are other key areas we need to sort out first, never mind confusing the centre backs as to who is going to be playing behind them.

The right back position seems up for grabs - especially as the two players who have looked most comfortable there are midfielders, Lawless and Dance.

Then there's the

twin issues of selecting the right blend of players in midfield, which probably has a knock-on effect as to who plays upfront.

My starting XI would be Tyler, Taylor, Kovacs, Pilks, Lawless, Keane, Watkins, Kissock, Howells, O'Connor and Fleetwood. However Boucard and McAllister will have something to say about that, and if Morgan-Smith can get himself fit, Brabs will have some tough decisions to make before those play-off games.

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# What a beauty!

Emma Jayne

## VITAL STATISTICS

Full name: Emma Jane Boyle

Age: 19

Occupation: Student  
studying Broadcast

Journalism

Attached: Yes

Been a supporter since: I  
was ten!

Best looking Hatter: Stuart  
Fleetwood

Most valuable player: George  
Pilkington

Ideal night out: Champagne  
pre-drinks and DIY cocktail  
party followed by a  
superclub and Domino's  
Pizza hangover cure the  
following day!

Favourite TV shows: Alan  
Partidge, The Office, The  
Apprentice



Steve's line-up for today



SUBS: Kidd, Kisson, Watkins, Blackett, Willmott, Crow

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



AFTER that dismal defeat against the boys from Barrow, any remote title hopes are surely as dead as the Oak Road end at a Tuesday night game against Southport, despite Mr Brabin's slightly irritating optimism.

And personally, although a trip to Wembley for the FA Trophy final would be a lovely day out, I can't help but feel it's still an unwelcome distraction from doing what the boys have failed to do for the last two seasons – actually finish the job.

Call me a pessimist but I'm not looking forward to the prospect of another outing in the play-offs, mainly because I can't help but feel that this side is, in my opinion, the weakest squad we've had in the Conference so far.

That squad is all the weaker for number two keeper Kevin Pilkington leaving for Notts County, in any other Conference squad he would have

been hands down number one between the sticks, but provided superb cover for Mark Tyler and will be missed.

In front of Tyler in my line-up would be Taylor, who has become an extremely consistent performer at left-back, Pilkington in the centre alongside Kovacs, and Ed Asafu-Adjaye – who looked brighter in his start against Gateshead – at right-back.

Elsewhere, Andre Boucaud seems to have made a promising start to life at the Hatters and would take his place alongside Keane and Lawless in a midfield three.

After a disappointing run of form, Fleetwood seems to be looking a bit more like the player we all hoped we'd signed after his impressive first couple of outings in a Town shirt back in the autumn, and I'd like to see Howells and O'Connor playing off him.

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# From the Kenny End



With Petey Staniforth

HELLO, and welcome to another installment of my column.

I start on a cheerful note, and a personal and heartfelt thank you to all the Hatters fans who came out to my professional wrestling show in Luton, as we raised £500 for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

I really appreciate the support from you all, and the enthusiasm towards what we are achieving currently.

It's been another odd month in the world of the Hatters.

The transfer window came and went, and we welcomed back Janos Kovacs to the fold; which I think every Luton fan is pleased about.

We also signed Andre Boucard, and we all wish him the best of luck in his



**SHOOTING BOOTS:** Stuart Fleetwood

career with us at Kenilworth Road.

Judging from his debut, he's going to become an important player for us in midfield.

Credit also goes to Stuart Fleetwood, who certainly appears to have found his shooting boots once more; and I feel that

this could be a deciding factor in the final months of the season, and our potential success in the league.

I must admit though, that I'm probably the only person who refuses to look at the league table currently, as whilst I believe that we can

still catch up and get promoted automatically; it frustrates me to see us below, or around teams that I personally believe that we are better than.

In fact, I've noticed that our current run of form has coincided with the fact I'm not looking at it, so I'm going to keep it that way; as a silly kind of 'superstition'.

All we need to do, is to keep up the support that we give the players, and keep believing that we can do this.

Because when we're all on the same page, the fans and the players, there's nothing that Luton Town FC cannot achieve together.

So keep the faith, and keep cheering our boys!

*Take it easy,  
Petey*

# A Diverse view



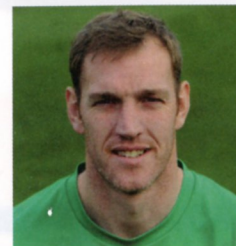
Steve Moore at Diverse FM has his say on all things Hatters

SO, KP has retired and I think it is safe to say the reaction was quite mixed.

Having read an article about the 'other KP' recently though, it struck me how similarly they are viewed right now.

Every little thing Pietersen does wrong right now is pounced upon as a reason he should be dropped despite having the third highest post-war Test average of any England batsman to have played as many matches.

Whereas, Luton fans pounced on every Pilkington



mistake because Tyler was the fans' favourite, when the ability difference was about as miniscule as the dignity anyone wearing a home shirt at Stadium:MK has left.

It is only when Pietersen retires that cricket fans will appreciate how good a batsman he was and

the hole he will leave when he is gone.

The hole that Pilkington leaves will do the same for us Luton fans.

What is left is a 34-year old starting goalkeeper that, despite how good he is, has a back problem that could flare up at any point.

That is when the hole behind him is deeply exposed.

All that is left is Lewis Kidd, who may well develop into a quality keeper, but if he was anywhere near ready, he would have played in Trophy games by now.

So we will need to loan in another keeper.

However, who is going to loan us anyone when they have as little hope of playing while Tyler is fit as they do at their current club?

Mind you, when Brabin took Cambridge United to the play-off final in 2009, and found himself without his first-team goalkeeper he managed to bring in the conference's 'goalkeeper of the year' on a one game emergency loan, so he could do that again!

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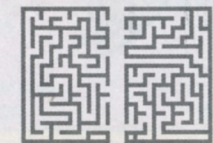
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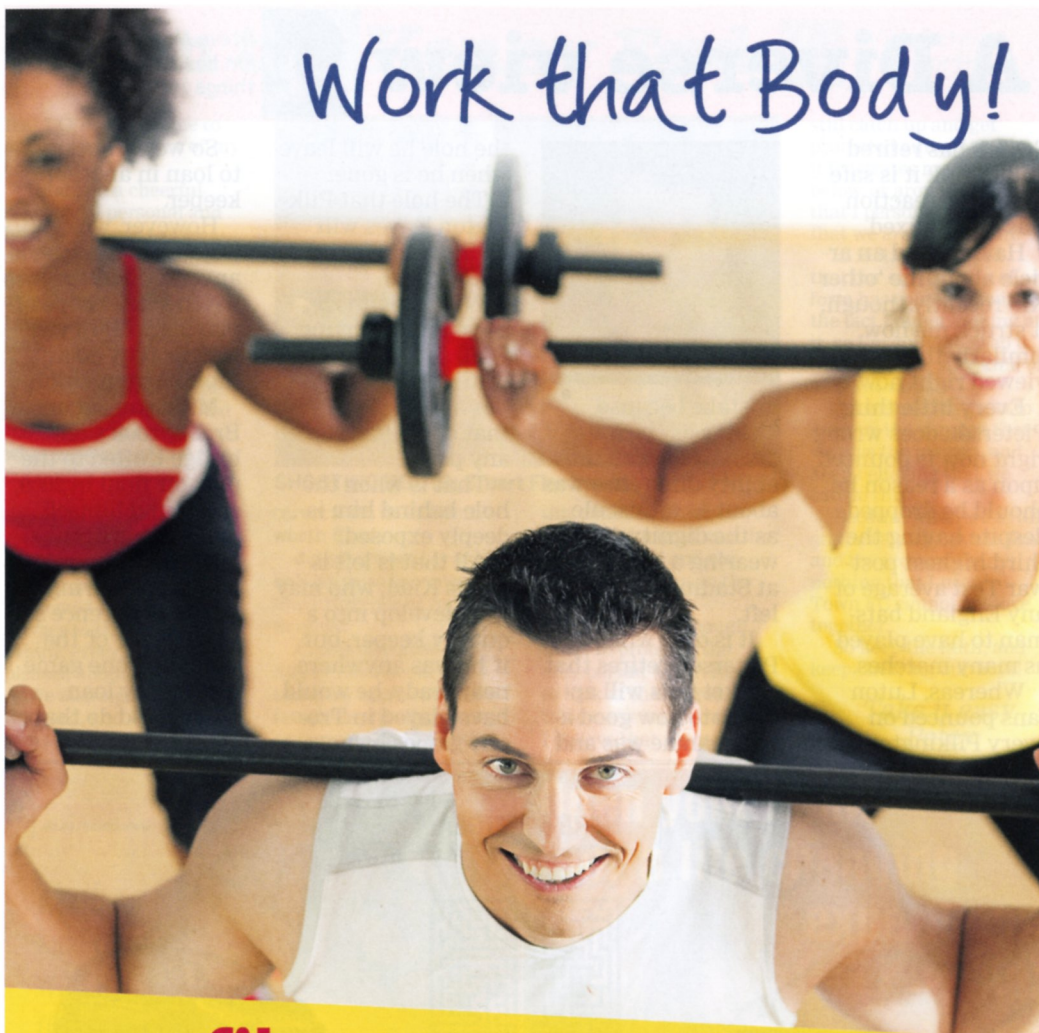
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# From beyond these shores

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

## Ahmet Brkovic. Croatia:

The 'Croatian Sensation' came to England after meeting a Romford girl who was on holiday in Croatia. The former Dubrovnik midfielder had trials at both Millwall and Luton before accepting a contract with Leyton Orient in November 1999.

In East London he starred as the 'O's won through to the 2001 play-off finals, where they lost 2-4 to Blackpool, before signing for the Hatters that summer on a 'Bosman' free transfer.

He then became a regular in the Luton side that climbed from the basement to the Championship and won the fans over with his clever footwork, intelligent use of the ball and occasional spectacular goals from overhead kicks – also not forgetting his stunning header in the final minute of the promotion clash with Hull at Kenilworth Road in 2005!

Brko sadly moved on to Millwall during the 2007/08 campaign and was sorely missed as the Town plummeted through the divisions.



Ahmet Brkovic celebrates against Crystal Palace

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## from the allotments

...with 'orrible 'ornet Don Monty



I GUESS congratulations should be in order, just one step away from another Wembley final. Only York stand in the way.

The Trophy of course, not one anyone cares about.

The jury's well out as to whether getting there will be even less of an achievement than your plastic pitch/away fans ban inspired Littlewoods Cup visits to the Twin Towers in the late 1980s.

And could that be two visits in 2012, if you make the play

off final again?

Which all gets me seething into my yellow, red and black scarf about how it seems easier to get to Wembley the further down the leagues you go.

Take the Championship. We have three chances to get there - reaching the final of the FA Cup (not easy), reaching the final of the Carling Cup (well I know Cardiff did but they didn't come up



against the might of Bristol Rovers as we did). Or we reach the play-off final, the self-proclaimed richest game in football - and in the lottery of the Championship even the big budget clubs can't guarantee that.

Drop down to League One and all of a sudden you're in the Football League Trophy, take it half-way seriously and you could be hopping off at Wembley Park station before you know it.

League Two, and the play-offs stretch down to seventh

place.

Anyway, I shouldn't moan, these cup runs and play-offs can be stressful times.

That's why I'm so glad we're out of the cups (lucky Spurs) and we can look forward, hopefully, to a lower mid-table finish. Trust me, there's not much to quicken the pulse about that.

A final word on today's visitors Bath. It's looking pretty grim but let's hope if the worst happens, they'll be back soon.

Yellow army.

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