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By Hatters for Hatters

ORANGE

Season 11-12 No.9

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hatters matters

... a word from the editor

SADLY it had to happen. Gary Brabin was a very affable man but simply hadn't produced the goods on the pitch.

But was his departure too little too late? Let's hope not. The appointment of Paul – been there done that – Buckle has certainly galvanised a side that seemed bereft of intent and backbone at the end of the Brabin reign.

So far Buckle's been saying all of the right things. He's far more eloquent than his predecessor and as he showed at Torquay he might just have that je ne sais quoi we so desperately need to get out of this



REJUVENATED: Stuart Fleetwood fires home

division.

As we all know time is desperately running for us to secure our play-off dreams and even if we make it we probably don't deserve to go up. But the boot's certainly been on the other foot in the past so

I'd happily see us lace up our promotion shoes.

Today is a massive game. Win the next two and there we are, sitting pretty in the play-offs.

And who knows what can happen? Buckle does.



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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Odds on

by Graham
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**William HILL
ONLINE**

I FEEL a sort of calm since Paul Buckle arrived.

Not because I know he is the answer to all our prayers, but because after the frustration and frenzy of the last days of GB I am no longer prepared to allow myself to get carried away with thoughts and hopes of a play-off place.

I've resigned myself to us missing out – but that is no disrespect to PB, who really should have been brought in at least four games earlier if he were going to be able to get to know his squad thoroughly enough to be able to fashion a decent line-up and then try to gradually up the momentum as we headed into the play-offs, peaking just at the right time, for the final.

I don't see that happening now as it is clear he is still sussing out what a hefty percentage of fans already know – which of them can't play, which of them won't play and which of them shouldn't be anywhere near a Luton Town first team line-up.

But I am enjoying, and being grateful for, the novelty of hearing an after-game summing up by the boss which appears to be uttered in the Queen's English, rather than the strangled, desperate version of the language, punctuated by erms, disappointments and 'still on course for promotion' which we had to put up with week in, week out, from, the old guard.

And while we're on the subject of GB, can someone explain to me just why it made it any more difficult to realise he was doing a rotten job as boss just because he was allegedly and quite probably, a really nice bloke?

What's that got to do with the price of beans? I for one, really don't care if a boss has the personality of a third world despot, as long as he does his job properly and well.

But I don't get the impression that Mr B is anything other than a decent cove, although thus far (and I write before the Ebbsfleet game) I haven't had to listen to him defend



NEW BOSS: Paul Buckle

his side after an inexplicable defeat.

I notice that when he took over at Bristol Rovers he promptly brought in 19 new players.

Now obviously how many new signings we make in the close season will depend on whether we are still in this division, but I'm sure that, like me, you're already speculating on who may no longer be here when the next campaign – amongst those I anticipate being gone (whether I think they should or not) include Messrs Gleeson, Beckwith, McAllister, Crow, Willmott, Blackett, O'Connor, Asafu-Adjaye, Boucaud and Osano.

And ones that I really hope do stay are Messrs Tyler, Taylor, Kovacs, Poku, Kissock, Howells, Watkins, Walker, Fleetwood, Gray, Morgan-Smith (only if properly fit), Dance.

Those my own jury is out on include KK, Pilks, Lawless, Henry (not seen enough of him), and a few of the promising youngsters who really haven't been given much of a chance to shine here of late.

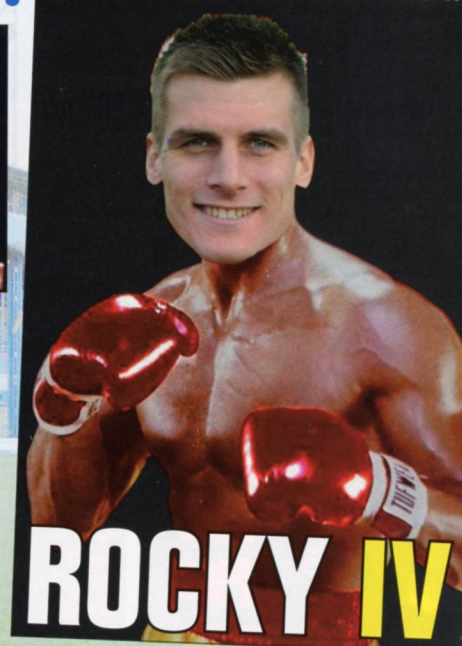
PB will need to bring a few in and I'm sure most of them will have some sort of connection with the various clubs he's been at. Maybe Lee Mansell will return! There have even been suggestions Claude wants to come back. Who knows?

But probably I'll change my opinion after Saturday's game! As, I suspect, will Paul Buckle!

Lookie likies...



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15 pts	Town 3 K'minster 2 Games between the two have been entertaining affairs in recent years and this is no different.	G'head 0 Town 0 What a horrible, horrible ground this is and I certainly won't be sorry to see the back of it.	F'wood 0 Town 1 The champions don't turn up and Luton win to ease any worries there may still be.	Outcome: Promoted. I've been far too hopeful this season, so why spoil it now? After the pain comes the joy.
25 pts	Town 2 K'minster 1 Let's be positive. A Town win when it matters... Although a late goal back causes a panic!	G'head 1 Town 0 It's a tough match and I'm afraid we're going to draw a blank when it really matters	F'Wood 2 Town 1 Away form continues to let us down as a late goal means the hosts can party in style.	Outcome: Failure. Let's be fair, we don't deserve to go up, but since when is football fair. Pray for a miracle.
21 pts	Town 3 K'minster 1 A cracking game in prospect lives up to its billing with Hatters snatching a vital victory.	G'head 1 Town 0 Town have struggled on their travels recently and this continues once more.	F'Wood 2 Town 0 Hatters' play-off hopes are ended in disappointing fashion at the champions.	Outcome: Failure. Buckle's appointment, exciting as it is, comes too late this time, but next season...
17 pts	Town 2 K'minster 1 Town scrape a must-win home victory and strengthen their play-off hopes.	G'head 0 Town 1 Hatters secure a play-off place thanks to a dramatic late goal.	F'Wood 2 Town 0 A disappointing defeat at the champions is irrelevant as the play-off semis loom.	Outcome: Failure. When will Town ever get the rub of the green? Different season, same old sob story.

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

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VITAL STATISTICS

Full name:

Alison Underwood

Age: 23

Occupation: Field Sales

Representative

Attached? Single

Been a supporter since: 2008

Best looking Hatter:

Stuart Fleetwood

Most valuable player:

Andre Gray

Player to flog: Andre

Boucaud

Ideal night out: Drinking

with the girls

Favourite TV shows: The

Only Way is Essex

If you'd like to put yourself, or a mate, forward for this feature then don't be shy send an email to orange@bedsnews.com

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Tom's take



Tom Skinner
gives his thoughts
on the latest
Hatters news

I NEVER imagined I'd be so relieved to beat Hayes & Yeading.

It's perhaps an indication of how badly our season has gone that I was expecting the worst going into the game with the team we trounced 8-0 two years ago, but at last the team played some excellent football to bring our winless run to an end.

What a difference it made to have two lean, pacy strikers leading the line, feeding off each other and stretching the opposition's defence.

Whisper it quietly... so far, so good for the new gaffer too.

Of course, by today's

game we'll have probably been tonked by Alfreton and Ebbsfleet, as the manager from Torquay heads up the cast of Luton's rather more tragic version of 'Fawlty Towers'. "Don't mention the York" as they say...

Reassuringly though, Paul Buckle seems to have already identified some of the most infuriating aspects of our failure this season - the arrogant complacency, the unforgivable lack of fitness and the aversion to attempting to score a second goal.

Three reasons why Gary Brabin had to go, and why he should have been sacked after



ON TARGET: Stuart Fleetwood

our draw at Lincoln in December.

Whatever our fate this season, we simply must do better next year. We need to be more on the ball in the

close season, identifying and securing our transfer targets early, rather than leaving it to mid-July.

We need to realise that all 46 league games matter equally, and that leagues can be won and lost in September, despite Brabin's assertion to the contrary.

Returning to the present, hopefully we are still right in the thick of things going into today's game and that we can win a crunch match for the first time this year.

Let's pray this dismal season has a happy ending - I think us long-suffering fans deserve one, don't you?



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Steve's line-up for today



SUBS: Kissock, Gleeson, Blackett, McAllister, Poku

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



I MUST confess that having been out of the country in sunnier climes since I last wrote (and in a completely different time zone) I haven't seen or really heard much of the Town in the last month or so. Not that I've missed much for the most part of it!

While it's never nice to see someone lose their job, it was with a sigh of relief that I read the news on Twitter that the board had finally dispensed of Mr Brabin's services. It was a long time coming, and, while I appreciate the powers that be not wanting the club to be sacking a manager per season, performances have been below par for a fair chunk of the season and I can't help but feel that not acting sooner and thus potentially jeopardising the club's play-off chances borders on Saint-like patience. Anyway, I'm sure the change of manager will instill a fresh charge on the play-offs with just a few games remaining, starting with what is effectively a play-off six-pointer today, so Buckle-up for an exciting run in (I'm sure there'll be hundreds more of those lame jokes banded

about during Mr Buckle's reign).

Andre Gray has been something of a revelation since his signing. Although something of a raw talent (or so I'm told), as long as he keeps banging the goals in, he'd be in my starting line-up. And Fleetwood has certainly found his shooting boots in recent weeks - amazing what a striker can do when he's actually played in the right position! With even McAllister ending the mother of all goal droughts on Tuesday, perhaps we suddenly have an embarrassment of riches in terms of on-form strikers.

The likes of Tyler in goal, Pilkington and Kovacs in defence and Keane in midfield more or less pick themselves these days. Howells and Osano make up the rest of the defence.

Hopefully Buckle won't inexplicably use Watkins quite so sparingly either, so he'd be in the middle with Keane, with Willmott on the left and Lawless on the right. Seven points from the last three was probably no more than you'd expect looking at the fixture list, let's hope we can make it nine from the next three and secure a play-off place.

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From the Kenny End



With Petey Staniforth

AFTER the events of the last home game against York, I decided that it was time to get away for a break.

The next thing I know, the club have sacked the manager!

It must be said, I tried to give the benefit of the doubt to Gary Brabin for as long as I could.

But, come January time, the cracks were starting to heavily show, and couldn't be papered over for much longer.

I also feel, as I believe many Luton fans do, that the decision to relieve him

of his duties, was left too late for all concerned.

If something clearly isn't getting better, then it's best to deal with it sooner before later – before it quite literally breaks.

If I'm honest, I really can't tell you that I'm sorry Gary Brabin is no longer the club's manager, so I won't even attempt to.

Back to my holiday anyway.

So, there I am, with nothing more than a mobile phone, and a poor signal due to being quite literally on the seafront, and

you've got all the speculation and hype as to who could be the new manager of the club would be.

What a time to be somewhere where you're struggling to get text messages and your internet connection is rather weak!

On the bright side, being two minutes walk from a scenic beach did kind of make up for it...

Anyway, I managed to find out through the magic of BlackBerry Messenger (at least that wanted to work!), that we had appointed Paul

Buckle as manager.

So, with that, I want to wish him the best of luck at Kenilworth Road in what is probably the highest pressure managerial job in non-league right now.

It's going to be another bumpy ride, as life at Luton Town Football Club is never normal.

So with a pun that just about everyone else has used so far, and I figured I may as well predictably use and steal – let's Buckle up!

*Take it easy,
Petey*

A Diverse view



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

SO it starts again.

Another new era at Kenilworth Road, one that some fans have already given the twitter hashtag #Bucklevision.

Somehow, I reckon that might go down about as well with Paul as calling one of his predecessors 'Dickie Dosh'!

Talking from a purely radio point of view about the first impressions of the new guy though, it is great to have someone as engaging as Paul to talk to.

As anyone who heard his opening press conference on



Diverse over Easter weekend will know, it lasted a full 45 minutes and could have been twice that if he hadn't had to leave to take training.

That is to take nothing away from Gary Brabin, but as various members of our chatroom would point out

with their counting of his 'you knows', Brabin would hardly fare well on 'Just a Minute'.

Admittedly, being engaging in the media is no better indication of on-field success than being uncomfortable and repetitive. What we can take from it is some bullet points of what type of manager we now have.

Fighter: He was adamant that one thing he wants is that his Luton side no longer be considered a soft touch.

Fitness: A Buckle side will never be

outworked by, or less fit than, the opposition.

Reactive before creative: He mentioned how much the ball changes hands at this level, highlighting the limitations in how much quality can be brought in at this level. A misplaced pass is fine, not working to correct the situation is not.

Attacking over skilful: Despite this talk about putting workrate above quality, if Luton go one-up it will be a push for more, not a 1-0 grind.

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DREAMS of play-offs cruelly denied.

Not yours (well, not yet). Yes, for one brief week we thought Watford could have another sensational run to the Championship play-offs.

The club marketing was cranked up. The bunting was out (well maybe not). The stadium was full – and if anyone says that's because it was cheap admission and we only have three sides, that's just sour grapes. And then we promptly lost to Blackpool. We followed that up with a draw at



Cardiff – a respectable draw, mind, and that's from someone who has never seen us beat a Welsh team in Wales – and the dream was over.

Easter's always that great period when hopes are realised or shattered. If you're at the bottom you start the weekend thinking you're only a win

or so away from safety. Two defeats later, you're miles adrift and it's all over. Mentioning no Wolves of course.

Agghh, do we have to go to Wolverhampton again next season? For those statos out there, I can share with you that come next August, out of the last 25 seasons we have kicked off, 21 of them in the second tier. Two above, two below. Which is making us the bog standard Championship side. And it does get tedious to be going to the same old places year after

year. Cardiff (always at Christmas and Easter), Bristol City away in midweek, Blackpool away in January. And Barnsley and Burnley, well they're just grim any time of year. And don't start me on Palace.

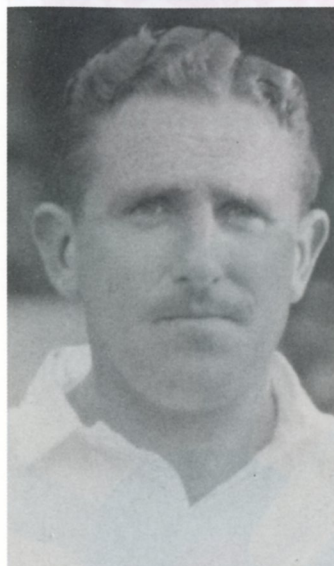
Wolves and Charlton should be in the mix next time. One of the Sheffields. And hopefully, let's all laugh, moneybags QPR.

And I've done all that without mentioning your season, which you'll probably thank me for right now.

Yellow army.

From beyond these shores

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



IRISH EYES: Thomas 'Bud' Aherne

Bud Aherne

ALTHOUGH born in Limerick, Thomas 'Bud' Aherne moved to the North in 1946, after leaving the army, to turn out for Belfast Celtic.

Bud would probably never have thought of playing in England but an infamous riot in 1949, involving players being attacked by supporters, ended with Belfast Celtic being thrown out of the Irish League and eventually folding.

Luton chairman, Charles Jeyes, was the first person to offer terms and a fee of £8,000 changed hands for an established Irish international full-back.

Bud was one of the few players at the time who qualified

for both Eire and Northern Ireland.

Bud gave the Hatters 10 years valuable service with many cultured and reliable displays and was proud of the fact that he was always able to keep wing maestro Stanley Matthews quiet each time they met.

As age took its toll a hairline fracture of the ankle took a long time to heal and, by the time he was able to return, the shake-up following the FA Cup final defeat meant him stepping down from the playing side to look after the Town's youth team.

The playing did not stop, however, as he turned out for several years with Luton Celtic before finally hanging up his boots well into his forties!

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