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10 years of Eden

Look back at how a shopping centre changed the town

Picture special - Page 26 to 29



CRASH TRAGEDIES



Two women die in different crashes...while yet another killer driver is jailed for being distracted on a phone **Page 5 & 18**

COMPETITION

Mother's Day picture special



Page 40

NEW REG

12-page guide to the perfect motor



Pull-out

Another housing explosion?

By Jasmine Rapson

YET more land across Bucks could be turned into housing, it is feared, after the government announced it will enforce new building targets for councils.

Housing secretary Sajid Javid warned authorities could be

stripped of planning powers if too few homes are being built - as new planning rules to tackle the country's "housing crisis" were unveiled this week.

Campaigners who previously fought against plans to build on Bucks beauty spots have said homes will need to be built in areas

previously dismissed by the council - or the Government will have to reduce the building requirement in Bucks. The revelation could have "significant implications" for towns and villages in Buckinghamshire, according to Bucks County Council (BCC) leader councillor Martin Tett, as new targets mean

even more houses will be required across the county than those already factored into the Local Plan.

The new rules will also crack-down on developers who "sit on" land after planning permission is granted in order to increase their profit.



See page 2 Where next?

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Wycombe Wanderers fans have seen it all



WITH Wycombe Wanderers' season coming to an exciting climax we take a look back from the fans perspective at matches which have concluded seasons in the past.

Top: Some of the Wanderers fans at the FA Amateur Cup final with Bishop Auckland at Wembley Stadium which the Bishops won 3-1, April 1957

Middle left: Members of Wanderers' Supporters Club enjoy a social at Loakes Park, High Wycombe, mid-1960's

Middle right: In the post-war years the final match of the season was between the Wanderers and another local team for the Wycombe Hospital Cup. Here a crowd of supporters are watching the presentation of the cup to the winners Sutton United, Loakes Park, High Wycombe, May 1951

Bottom left: The FA Amateur Cup Final in April 1931 was played at Highbury in front of over 32,000 fans, the Wanderers beat Hayes 1-0

Bottom right: The Wanderers' supporters, all dressed in the team's colours as hats, ties, rosettes etc, queuing at the railway station to travel to the Amateur Cup Final match with Bishop Auckland at Wembley

Send your pictures to deweymiked@aol.com

NOSTALGIA

Looking back at goal-den team

By Mike Dewey

OVER the years, Wycombe Wanderers have produced a list of Golden Greats – stars who are remembered long after their playing days are over. In 1975, Alan Hutchinson wrote a series for the club's programme entitled Star Gallery, interviewing many of those Blues' true greats.

In the Nostalgia page over the coming weeks we will be reproducing some of those articles written by Hutch, with additional material provided by his Wycombe Ex-Players Association colleague John D Taylor. As many readers will know, Hutch has links with the Wanderers which go back over 70 years – he was a former club secretary and ex-media chief at Loakes Park and Adams Park.

Paul Bates – a natural goalscorer

ONCE in a while a player comes on the scene with a natural talent for scoring goals. Paul Bates possessed this exciting brand of football.

He is the Wanderers' second highest scorer of all time behind Tony Horseman, collecting 314 goals in 431 appearances for the Blues during his two spells at Loakes Park between 1953 and 1962 and from 1964 to 1968.

Born in High Wycombe on 10th March 1935, the son of a former Wycombe player and committeeman, Harry Bates, he was a pupil at Green Street School and then Mill End. His first appearance at Loakes Park was for Mill End Road School in the 1949-50 Thurlow Cup Final. By 1952 when he was 17 he had already won youth international honours while with Castlefield Minors.

At the age of 18, while doing his National Service at RAF Halton, he was spotted by a committee member and in 1953 signed for the Wanderers. His first game in a Blues' shirt was for the reserves against Leytonstone, a match they won 4-1 with Paul netting twice. Shortly after



The Wycombe Wanderers players and officials in a coach as it proceeds slowly along the High Street after the 1956/57 Amateur Cup Final. April 1957

joining the club he was selected to play for an FA Youth XI against the Public Schools at the Oval.

In front of Tommy Lawton and many other top managers of the day, Paul scored five goals in a 10-0 win. Lawton, an England international and a Chelsea great, commented after the game: "Bates has a great future. With his shooting power and hunger for goals he is one of the best prospects I have seen for a long time."

But this was only the beginning. An England Youth cap followed against Wales at Swansea, where the local paper described his performance as 'dangerous, exciting, a real handful.' With his constant goal scoring for the reserves, 45 in his first season, it was only a matter of time before a regular first team place was made for him.

For a while he played on the left

wing, inter-changing with Malcolm Hunt at centre forward, a position he loved to play. His big break came when Malcolm Hunt was forced to retire from football after a bad injury and Paul became the automatic choice for the leader's spot. Under Sid Cann he developed into one of the best strikers in the country. Paul said: "Sid was a great bloke and a lot of my early success was due to his guidance."

He never looked back, finishing leading scorer for the next six seasons - winning two Isthmian League medals and two Berks and Bucks Senior Cups. It was in 1955 Paul first tasted the atmosphere of big cup-tie football. He was a member of the Wanderers' team that played at Doncaster in the Amateur Cup semi-final against Bishop Auckland. Although the Blues went down 1-0, a hint of greater success was just round the corner. Two years later he played a vital part in taking Wycombe to Wembley with a blistering performance in the semi-final at Highbury against Corinthian Casuals, scoring twice in the epic 4-2 victory.

Of the Wembley final, again against their bogey side the Bishops, Paul said: "Although we lost 3-1, this was the greatest moment of my playing career. Although I played there again for Sutton later there is nothing like the first time, and the reception the lads got when we arrived back in Wycombe is something I shall remember for the rest of my life."

He did have a great deal to celebrate in the year 1957 however, when a few months after the Wembley final he married June Standage. The couple went on to have two daughters, Julie and Kim. They remember being taken by their Mum to watch Paul play both football and cricket around Wycombe and district.

Bates was Amateur Cup runner-up again in 1963 when he moved to briefly rejoin legendary ex-Wycombe boss Sid Cann at Sutton Utd. But he won virtually every other honour in the amateur game, touring with the British Olympic party

and gaining two full amateur international caps for England.

Although he grabbed a record 45 goals in the 1965-66 season, he then wound down his football career by becoming manager of the Wanderers' reserves, before short stints with Chesham Utd and Aylesbury. However he carried on for many more years with his other great sporting love of cricket, starring for Ernest Turners, where he worked for many years, and Bledlow Ridge.

The only football he watched was on the television, watching his beloved Aston Villa, a passion he passed on to his grandsons – Daniel 18, Connor 17 and Dominic 13 and even granddaughter Rachel 16.

All are sports people in their own right with Connor, who plays at Wycombe Cricket Club with his brother and cousin, having just signed a semi-professional contract with Northants. Mum Julie says her Dad Paul would have been so proud of him and all the grandchildren.

Paul and his wife June lived in Totteridge Avenue. June was also extremely active behind the scenes at Loakes Park for many years. She died in June 2015, seven years after Paul passed away. Jackie Tomlin, who played alongside Bates in that memorable 1957 Cup Final, was amongst those to pay tribute to his former team-mate when he died aged 73 on March 19, 2008. Jack said then: "We had a lot of exceptional players at Loakes Park in the 1950s including Len Worley, Cliff Trott, Frank Smith, Mike Wicks and the Truett brothers. Sid Cann made us all play to a plan. Paul Bates was the exception. He was a maverick who was allowed to do his own thing up front. Our success and his scoring feats prove that as usual Sid was correct."

If you have any other memories of Paul, or other Wycombe greats who we will be featuring later, then please pass them on to Alan Hutchinson or John D Taylor (john@calcioitalia.co.uk / 02494-562413). WWEPA will be delighted to hear from anyone with old Wanderers' photos or memorabilia.

Can readers help us find missing High Street painting?

READERS will be aware that local history enthusiast Willie Reid and myself are trying to find the present whereabouts of the 1772 painting by William Hannan of the High St in Wycombe, writes Mike Dewey.

Recently we have been able to establish that in 1905 the painting was owned by Thomas Thurlow, who was an architect and prominent inhabitant of High Wycombe at that time.

This information comes from a press-report about an Archeological Exhibition in Aylesbury to which "Mr T.Thurlow of High Wycombe sent on loan a water-colour by William Hannan of High Street, High Wycombe, 1970, an engraving of the above (S.T.Sparrow, sculp), Nov, 30 1772; a description of figure portraits, depicted as above..."

Thomas Thurlow was born in Wycombe in 1859.

He married Kate Harsant Butler, the youngest daughter of William Butler the founder of the Bucks Free Press, in 1892.

The couple had a son Eric and two daughters Phyllis and Alice.

Thomas died in 1948 aged 89, the main beneficiaries in his will being his children.

One of these may have inherited the Hannan painting.

It is known that at the time of Thomas's death on October 12, 1948 his son Eric was a chartered accountant in Guildford, Surrey.

The three children of Thomas and Kate subsequently married and had children, who themselves may have had children, Thomas's grandchildren and great grandchildren. Some of these may still be alive today.

It is known for example that his great grandson Donald Edward Symonds was living as recently as 2014 in Reigate, Surrey, and was a Company Director.

If any reader is descended, or knows of someone who is descended, from Thomas Thurlow, we would be very pleased to hear from them.

Please contact Mike Dewey on 01494 755070 or email him at deweymiked@aol.com.

History talk shows town's contribution to aviation industry

HIGH Wycombe's Contribution to Aviation is the title of the talk to be given by Dave Scott at Flackwell Heath Library, 7.30pm on Monday, March 19. Tickets are £5, or £3 for Friends of the Library.

For further information ring Mike Dewey 01628 525207 or email him at deweymiked@aol.com

Gt War timeline

TO remind ourselves of the progress of the World War I, we are detailing the main events affecting Great Britain which took place each week.

In the week up to March 8:

Private Henry F Gerrard from High Wycombe, born in West Wycombe, was killed in action at the Western Front on March 8.



Paul Bates won a huge haul of medals during his Wanderers career

Wanderers stalwart passes away

By John D Taylor

KATHY Hutchinson, wife of Wycombe Wanderers Ex-Players Association chairman, Alan Hutchinson, died in Stoke Mandeville hospital earlier this week aged only 63.

Having undergone a kidney transplant 26 years ago, Kathy suffered many complications over the past few years culminating in blood lymphoma and had been in and out of hospital constantly in the past six months.

Kathy had been a great support to Alan when he set about forming WWEPA a decade ago. And when they needed their finances properly looked after in those early days, she volunteered to take over as Treasurer and still held that onerous post despite ailing health.

She was a valuable worker around the football club when Alan took over as the Blues' secretary, and continued an active behind-the-scenes role when he was media boss for the Blues. It was in that unpaid role where she came in regular contact with Martin O'Neill during his five-year tenure.

The former Wycombe boss was amongst the first to pay tribute today. He said: "Such sad, sad news. My heart goes out to Hutch. Kathy was so loyal to him in every respect and she will be sorely missed by not only her family but by all at the club."

A former local councillor for four years, Kathy was well known in Bourne End where they lived and ran the family Crocs & Crystals family business. She was still working in the accounts department as Credit Controller of William Hands Furniture at the time of her death.

Hutch and Kathy first met back in 1974. They got together in 1986 and married in 1992 when she became a step-mum to Alan's boys Geoff and Richard. John Maskell, president of WWEPA and a friend for many years, was among those to pay tribute.

He said: "Although working full-time and having to cope with a terrible run of serious illnesses, Kathy did a sterling job for us as well as supporting Hutch in all his efforts for the Association and at the club before. Our thoughts are with him and his family at this very sad time."

Funeral details will be announced..



Inspirational mum on Tesco card

A MUM from High Wycombe who battled breast cancer twice is set to feature on a Mother's Day card that will be sold nationwide in a bid to raise money for a cancer charity.

Mum-of-two, Jeanne Paul, was 38 when she was first diagnosed with breast cancer in September 2010 after finding a tiny, pea-sized lump in her armpit while taking a shower.

Working as a Wing Commander engineer in the RAF, Jeanne visited the RAF Medical Centre who referred her to Wycombe Hospital where she had a mammogram the next day. When that failed to show anything, Jeanne had an ultrasound and was told the devastating news that it had shown a suspicious shape that surgeons were 99 per cent sure was cancer.

Jeanne returned to hospital a week later to hear that her biopsy results confirmed she had cancer. She had the lump removed and then started chemotherapy.

Her personal story and photograph will now be included on a card designed by Hallmark which is now for sale in a selection of large Tesco

stores around the UK in support of Cancer Research UK.

Describing her ordeal, Jeanne said: "Losing my hair was the worst part for me.

"I had always had long, dark hair and I worried that my children – Laura was six and Andrew was five at the time – wouldn't see me as their mum if I was bald. But thankfully they took it in their stride."

Jeanne underwent radiotherapy and started taking Tamoxifen while having annual check-ups, but three years after her original diagnosis came the bombshell news the cancer was back.

She said: "I felt so shocked. Mentally it was so much more difficult to deal with a second time round. I felt very frightened and wasn't sure I could face the treatment again."

Jeanne opted for a double mastectomy and had the operation in May 2014, leaving two scars across her chest.

Jeanne said: "The idea of any further surgery for reconstruction wasn't something I was prepared to

contemplate – I didn't want any more trauma. Being an engineer by trade, my approach was almost clinical. I'd had my two children and finished breast feeding, so as far as I was concerned the system could be decommissioned.

"As far as I was concerned, reconstruction still wouldn't have looked or felt like me – it seemed a lot of trouble to go to and I chose not to do it."

That was almost four years ago and since then Jeanne has left her job and went on to complete a masters degree in aviation safety and now works as a freelance aviation safety consultant.

Jeanne and her daughter Laura, now 14, will be guests of honour at Race for Life at The Rye, High Wycombe, on Sunday July 22 and will be officially starting the 5k race.

Jeanne's card is one of six specially made designs that will help raise vital funds for Cancer Research UK. It is on sale in a number of large Tesco stores.

To sign up for Race for Life in High Wycombe visit raceforlife.org.



Jeanne Paul

From birthdays, marriages, deaths and other important milestones and events, we want to know about your family occasions. Call 01494 755096 or email stephanie.wareham@london.newsquest.co.uk

SNOW SPECIAL

Bucks Free Press
Sport is sponsored by

MICHAEL
GRAHAM

Beast from the East tightens grip on south Bucks as 16 games postponed

SPORTS teams across south Bucks saw their fixtures called off as the 'Beast from the East' wreaked havoc across the country.

A whole host of football and rugby teams also saw their games postponed at the weekend due to the brutal nature of the weather.

Football:

Crawley Town v Wycombe Wanderers
Merthyr Town v Chesham United
Risborough Rangers v London Lions
Beaconsfield Town v Dunstable
Cambridge City v Chalfont St Peter
Holmer Green FC v Stotfold
AFC Aldermaston v Flackwell Heath
Marlow v Fleet Town
Marlow United v Newport Pagnell
Penn and Tylers Green v Chinnor
Thatcham Town v Burnham

Rugby:

Beaconsfield v Wallingford
Hemel Hempstead v Amersham
Aylesbury v High Wycombe
Witney v Marlow
Chinnor v Barnstaple



Adams Park was hit badly by snow. Wanderers saw their game at Crawley postponed



Marlow FC were unable to beat the snow at Oak Tree Road



Chesham's away game at Merthyr



HWRC saw their game called off



COMMENT

With
**NICHOLAS
TUNNEY**



IT was certainly a quiet weekend sports-wise across south Bucks. The Beast from the East certainly gripped this area with freezing weather and hazardous conditions which saw fixtures postponed across the county. Wanderers saw their trip to Crawley called off on Friday afternoon, giving them an 11-day break before tomorrow's game. Even the press conference before the Crawley game had to be on the phone as it proved nigh on impossible to get to the training ground. I even had to speak to Gaz on the phone covering for shelter under an outside staircase in Boots in Beaconsfield. This week, the weather has been much kinder and with 11 games to go, the heat is definitely on in the League Two promotion race. The Chairboys welcome

Cambridge United to Adams Park, who have seen an upturn in form since Shaun Derry departed. They held league leaders Luton Town to a creditable draw last week at home and have some very dangerous players in their ranks, including the likes of Uche Ikpeazu and George Maris. Ikpeazu is like a younger version of Adebayo Akinfenwa. He causes defences constant problems with his physical presence and the likes of Dan Scarr and Adam El-Abd will know they have been in a game come 5pm tomorrow. Wanderers produced an excellent display to win at the Cambs Glass Stadium in early October, inspired by loanee Ebere Eze. Eze showcased his talent in this game with two wonder goals, one on either foot, with the other goal being added by another loan star, Josh Umerah. Come the end of the campaign, a game like that where two young loanees scored could prove crucial. It goes to show how priceless signing these young gems and both

did very well for the Blues in their short time in south Bucks. However, that game was marred by an injury leading up to it for one of the Blues' key players and a serious-looking knock to another during the match. It is great to see Michael Harri-man edging closer to a return. He was on fantastic form before that game and he is without a doubt one of the best full-backs in the league.

He does face competition for his place from Tafari Moore but am sure he is relishing the challenge. Nathan Tyson suffered a bad looking knee injury in that fixture. Fortunately, it didn't turn out as bad as first feared and he has scored so many important goals in recent weeks. Although it will be a tough game I am backing another Blues win. COYB!



Tyson has been in great form since coming back from injury

Wycombe Wanderers

LAST FIVE LEAGUE GAMES: DWWLL

VS

Cambridge United

LAST FIVE LEAGUE GAMES: WWWLD

OPPOSITION VIEW



- 1. David Forde
- 2. Brad Halliday
- 5. Greg Taylor
- 12. George Taft
- 3. Jake Carroll
- 16. Liam O'Neil
- 4. Gary Deegan
- 8. Billy Waters
- 21. Medy Elito
- 9. Uche Ikpeazu
- 20. Jevani Brown

THIS week's Opposition View comes from Andrew Georgeson of Cambridge News.

How have Cambridge fared since the last meeting between the sides?

Joe Dunne, has been placed in temporary charge alongside first team coach Mark Bonner. Since their appointment Cambridge's form has picked up massively, securing 10 out of a possible 15 points, winning three out of a possible five. This is even more impressive given the teams they have played - Accrington, Luton, Notts County.

What is the target for this season?

It's difficult to say, really. Probably just win as many games and play as aesthetically pleasing football as pos-

sible. From Dunne's point of view, he's been tasked by the new director of football to play "courageously, energetically and entertainingly." He's managed that so far.

How did you rate Cambridge's business during the January transfer window?

We didn't bring in any permanent signings and let club legend Josh Coulson join Leyton Orient after a six-month loan spell there. Billy Waters joined on loan from Northampton and has done well so far. He scored 16 goals at this level last season but hadn't scored all season before arriving at the Abbey.

How do you assess Wycombe?

I have a lot of admiration

for the likes of Wycombe and Accrington in this league. I think they prove what can be done on limited resources if you plan well and manage the team properly.

Prediction?

1-0 Wycombe

Andrew Georgeson

In the CHAIR



WYCOMBE WANDERERS SUPPORTER
MIKE DEWEY



Wycombe supporter Mike Dewey shares his views on the run-in

WITH 11 games to go, we speak to lifelong Wycombe Wanderers supporter Mike Dewey about his thoughts for the rest of the season.

It has been a truly fantastic season so far for the Blues with goals flowing regularly from all parts of the pitch and Mike feels this is the most exciting campaign for a very long time.

He said: "Wycombe are playing really entertaining football. In the past few seasons, we haven't scored that many goals and this season pretty much every game has been entertaining.

"It is the sort of football that will bring the crowds back so it is really good for the club."

Mike, a fan for over 70 years, pinpoints the signings Gareth Ainsworth has made as key to their improvement in attack this season.

He added: "Akinfenwa has been a fantastic signing for us but to add Tyson back is great. He has looked really sharp and fit for his age and still has the acceleration and Mackail-Smith has been a great acquisition.

"The recent signings by Gareth have been fantastic and they have been responsible for a lot of our goals this term."

There are 33 points to play for and although every game is crucial, Mike explained one match in particular stands out for him.

"Accrington at home will be crucial but every game is important and any team in League Two can beat each other so we have to be on our guard but that Accrington game could be a six-pointer," added Mike.

With a plethora of players performing to a high level this term, Mike thinks that three players in particular will be very important on the run-in.

He said: "I am a big fan of Sam Saunders and the way he plays. Unfortunately he is injured at the moment but he could really be key for the rest of the season.

"Akinfenwa, obviously, will have a big say and Luke O'Nien is a fantastic player for us.

"It is going to be exciting and I hope we can go up automatically."

WANDERERS RECAP

Ainsworth hopes postponement helps

By Nicholas Tunney

WITH the Beast from the East wrecking football fixtures across the country last weekend, it came as no surprise to see Wycombe Wanderers' game away to Crawley fall foul of the weather.

The postponement of that fixture meant that the Blues will have an 11-day break before their next game at home to Cambridge on Saturday.

After two home defeats, Ainsworth was keen to play at Crawley but explained that the training regime this week has been very good and that the squad have looked extremely sharp ahead of their '11 cup finals'.

He said: "This week we have done some extra training. Because of the snow last week, it was difficult to get training on.

"It has been a really good week for us. We have managed to do match situations with 20 players on the pitch so it has been really good to paint pictures and get match situations under our belt.

"The energy levels have got to be right and perfect for Saturday so there will be no hammering because they didn't play. They should be fit and they are. We have seen that. We run hard to the end of games and scored a lot of late goals.

"We have been keeping the boys ticking over but the early part of this week was just about getting the legs going as if they had played a game at the weekend.

"It is a tough ask but that is what your sports scientist and medical team are there for. We haven't got the best resources or technology here but we do what we can and you know if the boys have given their all and it has been a really good week for us."

With 11 days in between games, Ains-

worth hoped the break would be beneficial to his squad ahead of such an important run in and backed his squad to 'achieve' this season.

He added: "They say time is a great healer so let's hope so.

"Those two defeats are distant memories but again I keep harping back and you look at the last nine games and it looks fantastic.

"When you look back at the last 35 games, it looks even better than fantastic and I am really pleased with where we are.

"We have a great platform from this bunch of boys who told me in pre-season they don't feel like underdogs anymore.

"They know how the club sits financially but they themselves believe they can achieve this season and they have proved it week in, week out.

"They have eight or nine weeks left to keep proving to me that they can achieve. They have a manager who believes in them and they believe in me as well.

"I was so pleased when they said those words because as a manager you know what you sign and you know what you have got and I believe we have enough to get out of League Two."

Next seven games:

Cambridge United- (h)- March 10

Barnet- (a)- March 17

Port Vale- (h)- March 24

Notts County- (a)- March 30

Grimsby Town- (h)- April 2

Yeovil Town- (a)- April 14

Lincoln City- (a)- April 17



Ainsworth hopes the long break will be beneficial in the long run

BLUES: Defender relishing chance to get back in Harriman patient on comeback trail

WYCOMBE defender Michael Harriman gave a positive bulletin on his injury explaining his comeback is getting a lot closer.

Harriman broke his leg in the lead up to the Cambridge away game in October after a fine run of form since the start of the campaign, including a scintillating strike against Crewe which paved the way for a last-gasp victory.

It has been a long road for Harriman but the right-back remains bullish he will feature very soon.

He said: "The recovery has been very good and am back on the grass which is nice.

"It is just a waiting game at the moment. It is a case of being professional and building my fitness up and we can go from there.

"I have had two good weeks of training now and I am looking forward to it but when my time comes, it will be sooner rather than later."

Standing in Harriman's way for a return to his favoured position is Arsenal loanee Tafari Moore, who has impressed in that role since signing in January.

Harriman relished the opportunity to win his place back with some healthy competition. He added: "You don't mind competition. That is always a brilliant challenge.

"We are such a great team, we don't see anyone as competitive. We are one big group and the team spirit is absolutely brilliant.

"It is competition but hopefully I will win my place back. If I don't that's football and that's the way it



Harriman is close to a return

goes sometimes and I am just going to keep concentrating on trying to get fitter and working really hard. "We are all determined to bounce

back from those two defeats [against Morecambe and Coventry] and I know the boys are getting back and raring to go."

PREVIEW: Boss delighted with clean bill of health

WANDERERS boss Gareth Ainsworth is hoping he can have a full squad back as the run-on for promotion hots up.

With no new injuries to report, the injured players, such as Sam Saunders, Michael Harriman, Scott Kashket and Anthony Stewart are getting closer to a return to the matchday squad.

Ainsworth said: "We have everyone back on the training pitch bar Anthony Stewart, who is days away now from returning to training."

"It is fantastic to see. Anthony had

a bad one at Coventry but it's great to see him close and we have a clean bill of health which is absolutely fantastic for these last 11 games.

"We have worked on stuff and cut the season in bits and to have everyone back at this stage will be a real boost to us.

"There are one or two who need match fitness and one or two who need minutes but it is great to have everyone back on the training pitch and everyone is on their toes now to try and keep their shirt and it gives me a great selection problem."



Anthony Stewart is close to returning for the Blues

BLUES: Club captain revels in promotion race Wycombe hope to Bloom

By Nicholas Tunney

MATT Bloomfield has seen it all in his time at Wycombe.

Promotion to League One, relegation from League One, memorable FA Cup runs, play-off finals and a great escape on the last day of the 2013/14 season at Torquay.

With 11 games to go, Bloomfield enters yet another shot at promotion with his beloved Wanderers.

Manager Gareth Ainsworth has described the rest of the season as '11 cup finals' and Bloomfield is excited at what lies ahead, although he is still ensuring he and the squad try not to get too far ahead of themselves.

He said: "It is really exciting to be part of the promotion race. There is still a long way to go with a quarter of the season left."

"It is 11 games and if we play well enough in those games and pick up the points that we need then it is really exciting."

"I am sure every one of us, supporters and players, would have accepted this position at the start of the season with 11 games to go and we have to look forward to it and embrace it."

"It is a great position to be in with trying to get out of the right end of the league and get promoted and everything that comes with that."

"It is a fantastic opportunity and a really exciting one and it is a great time for us to really get back on track."

"Win or lose against Cambridge, it isn't going to get us promotion or lose us promotion but if we can get the three points then it will be a big step forward to where we want to be."

Bloomfield was part of the League Two promotion-winning



Matt Bloomfield is excited for the last 11 games

sides of 2008/9 and 2010/11 and he will draw on that experience on the run-in.

With the likes of Adebayo Akinfenwa, Adam El-Abd, Nathan Tyson and Craig Mackail-Smith also in the squad they have that experience to call upon.

As one of those senior professionals, Bloomfield explained that some of the younger members of the squad may not have been in this position before.

He added: "The young lads know we are there for advice if they want it."

"The boys do come to us from time to time but equally sometimes that naivety in this situation can be a positive as well."

"They will embrace this situation to try and play football and to try and win games and that enthusiasm at times is brilliant but there are times when you need those older heads to offer that experience and we have plenty of them around to offer that when needed."

"It is a time for knowledge and a time for cool heads and I am sure we have enough in that changing room to know what's needed to get

over the finishing line."

Cambridge are Wycombe's next opponents to Adams Park and Bloomfield warned that this game will be a lot tougher than it would have been a few weeks ago.

He said: "They have been a good run and they will come to us full of confidence. They got a good point against Luton last week and that will be a boost for them and they will be looking forward to the game as much as we are."

"We need to get back on track and we have worked hard to get ourselves back and it will be tough."

Cambridge coach expects tough match

CAMBRIDGE United interim head coach Joe Dunne is expecting a very tough game for his side as they prepare to face Wycombe tomorrow.

With Cambridge sitting in 14th, they have made progress under Dunne since he took over from Shaun Derry in recent weeks.

With the challenge of facing Gareth Ainsworth's troops at Adams Park a daunting one, Dunne admits his side will be in for a tricky test in south Bucks.

He said: "They are another good team we're playing against in this run that has us against the top teams, pushing for promotion and that's a great challenge for us and it's one we've accepted and will continue to accept."

"We know Saturday, going there, as we found out last year is going to be tough and in previous years it's been tough, even at home it's been tough. They're a good outfit, aiming for promotion this year."

Dunne also pinpointed what he believes has been Wanderers' big chance from last season, which has helped them to the lofty heights of fourth in League Two.

He added: "I think they've certainly added a lot of goals to this game, you can see that in the goals column, but consistency is always something all managers ask for and I think they've been pretty consistent this year."

"I think there was a period last year when both ourselves and them were at the wrong end of the table and both teams galvanised to get to play each other in a game where either could have made the play-offs depending on results elsewhere. So it's good progress from Gareth and his team and they deserve a hell of a lot of respect in this division, as do all the other teams at the top."

Despite losing their last two league encounters, Dunne said he wouldn't be drawn into complacency and focus on those last two losses.

He said: "No, not at all. Football changes very quickly week to week. You can win some, draw some, lose some. What they've done and how they've played in the last few games we've obviously looked at. However we just try to keep the focus, as we've always done on ourselves."

SPORT

Motorsport

Owen looks for flying start to the new season

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TOTAL WHITEOUT!

Matches cancelled as clubs defeated by Beast from the East

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Impressive record on line

WYCOMBE Wanderers hope to keep up their fine record against sides from outside the top eight as they get ready to face Cambridge United.

Outside of the current top eight in League Two, Wanderers have only lost to Morecambe this season and with Cambridge in 14th, it represents a good chance for the Blues to keep up that impressive record.

However, since new Us boss Joe Dunne took over from Shaun Derry, their form has been much better and Ainsworth knows his side are in for a tough test at Adams Park tomorrow.

He said: "The new manager syndrome has obviously helped. Shaun Derry was there quite a while and with Shaun leaving and Joe taking over it has given them continuity but also seems to have freshened their team up and given them a new lease of life so it will be a tough game.

"It will be different to the game in October when we won 3-1 but we will be doing everything we can to get the three points.

"We are at home and we want to win our home games. If we win our remaining home games we will

have a right chance at the end of the season of finishing in that top three.

"It is a great opportunity but we can't go on records like that. We can't just go out there and expect to beat them because they aren't in the top eight.

"It is going to be hard work and we have to have consistent focus and our concentration levels have to be high.

"In the last 10 games, I have only seen one bad performance and that was in the opening 45 minutes against Morecambe and the rest has been acceptable for me as manager.

"There have been mistakes and you get those but if we can keep playing consistently we will pick up enough points to finish in the top seven and hopefully break into that top three at some stage.

"Nothing is a foregone conclusion, though, and we aren't resting on our laurels. We haven't done anything yet. Let's beat last season's total and see what we can add to that."

Although Wycombe have dropped to fourth, they sit handily placed in fourth, seven points off league leaders Luton Town.

When the Chairboys beat Luton in

January, the Hatters had the chance to move 12 points clear of second if they had reversed that result.

Luton are now just one point ahead of second and Ainsworth felt that win has opened up League Two.

He said: "I think because of that result we have kept the excitement going in the league.

"That game we keep referring to, we went there and beat the league leaders. Everyone thinks that they should win this league including themselves and those around them. They are a good side and that win gave me so much belief."