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# Bucks Free Press

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## 'BEAUTIFUL SOUL'

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# ARMED RAID ON JEWELLERS



### Trio storm shop with bat and meat cleaver in £200K heist

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# A match to remember

DESPITE losing 2-1 at home to Farnborough, it was a day to remember for Beaconsfield Town FC as they raised an incredible £1,500 for the mental health, Wycombe Mind.

Fans visited the Rams' Holloways Park on March 5 as spectators were allowed to watch the game for free, on the basis that a donation of their choice was made to the charitable organisation.

It was also one of the club's highest ever attendances in their history, as a total of 246 people descended on South Buckinghamshire, with some of the onlookers hailing from locations far and wide to watch the match.

People from villages in Norfolk, hamlets in Yorkshire, areas of Manchester, civil parishes in Hampshire, and of course, locals from Buckinghamshire, attended the fixture.

The club's vice-chairman, Peter Bromage-Smith, said: "It's been a good day.

"The whole day was about making people aware of the mental health charity, Mind, and yes, of course, we would have liked to have won the game.

"But, I think it's fair to say that Farnborough aren't one of the top two teams in the division other than the fact they are a really good side.

"We put up a good performance, it was very windy which I don't think helped both sides.

"However, the real success was, and I don't want to sound as if I'm using a cliché, was the money that was raised for Mind.

"The people who came from Mind where really happy com-



The day was enjoyed by many people as thousands was raised for Mind (Neale Blackburn Photography)

ing along so I'm really pleased.

"We are very grateful for the number of people that attended today.

"We had the support from those at Farnborough and fair play to them as they bought two minibusses of fans with them which was good.

"We had a lot of local people, a lot of youngsters as well, and on the whole, we achieved what we wanted to achieve and I am very happy."

On the match, Beaconsfield

took the lead inside two minutes when Nathan Minhas scored, before the away side equalised through John Oyenuga on 17 minutes.

They then scored their winner on the stroke of half-time as Paul Hodges smashed in an unstoppable strike from just outside the box.

However, despite the defeat, the day focused on the successes that were made off the pitch.

To donate to the charity, go to [www.wycombemind.org.uk](http://www.wycombemind.org.uk).



An attacking display (Neale Blackburn Photography)

## Non League games over the weekend



### Matchday ready

Although most sporting eyes in south Bucks will be on Wanderers' League One clash with Rotherham this weekend, there are still some non-league games taking place in the county.

The majority of them come in the Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division, where Risborough Rangers went back to the top at the weekend.

Despite Risborough's fantastic record of 22 wins from 27 games, New Salamis are just one point behind, and are in action just outside Buckinghamshire on Saturday when they travel to Hertfordshire to take on 15th-placed Tring Athletic.

Rangers themselves are at home against Crawley Green as they look to move a step closer to the title, while there's a meeting between two Bucks sides at Wilks Park as Plackwell Heath play Aylesbury Vale Dynamos.

Also in that division, Holmer Green host Harpenden Town at Watchet Lane and Milton Keynes Irish welcome Broadfields United to Manor Fields.

The only other fixtures in Buckinghamshire on Saturday are both at neutral venues, as Amersham's Spratleys Meadow plays host to London Tigers v Winslow United, and Chalvey Sports play London Lions at The Gore in Burnham.

That lack of games is in part down to there being a reduced fixture schedule in the Southern League. In the Premier Division South, neither Chesham United or Beaconsfield Town are in action this weekend, and in Division One Central, Aylesbury United don't play either.

There are matches on that will directly affect Chesham's play-off bid, though, as Weston-super-Mare could go level on points with the Generals if they beat Metropolitan Police.

Yate Town could also close the gap to two points with two games in hand, but their opponents Farnborough, like Met Police, are in contention to go up automatically.

In the eighth-tier Isthmian League South Central Division, Marlow and Chalfont St Peter are both away.

The Blues travel to Bedfont Sports attempting to reignite their play-off bid, while a win for Chalfont at Sutton Common Rovers would move them out of the bottom two.



Marlow's home is the Alfred Davis Memorial Ground

## Non League game off

MARLOW United's match against Mortimer FC was postponed on Saturday, March 5 due to a waterlogged pitch.

The Flying Blues, who play their games at the Alfred Davis Memorial Ground, confirmed the news just hours before they played their Thames Valley Premier Football League match, after the

wet weather caused havoc in the town.

A new date for the rearranged match has not yet been confirmed, but it will more than likely be played as a midweek fixture.

The club groundshare with Marlow FC who play their games in the Isthmian League South Central Division.

## Helping those who need it the most in the county

A WILL writing business have offered their services to Beaconsfield Town Football Club to help those battling with mental health issues.

The Rams, who play their games at Holloways Park, took on Farnborough in a Southern League Premier Division South fixture, which saw spectators attend the Non League clash for free, on the basis that a donation was made to Wycombe Mind.

And to help those battling with mental illnesses within the county and beyond, A.D.E Wills, which is based in Oxford, will donate 20 per cent of their service proceeds from the match to the club's donation pot.

In order to help the charity, all customers and fans have to do is quote 'BTFC20' to the team of professional will writers online, or mention



Beaconsfield Town FC play their games at Holloways Park

the initiative to them over the telephone.

Edward Richings, owner of A.D.E Wills, said: "The last couple of years have demonstrated to us the importance of our mental health and ensuring we make efforts to let others know we are there to listen, help and support".

Peter Bromage, Managing Director of Beaconsfield Town added: "We are extremely grateful to A.D.E. Wills for their contribution to our charity event and their continued support for MIND, offering such an important range of services to the club's supporters."

## SPORT

WanderersTV is halted in Russia due to Ukraine invasion



TV camera man at Adams Park

**WANDERERSTV will no longer be available in Russia following the invasion of Ukraine.**

The decision is in line with the EFL to stop all broadcast feeds of its matches in the Russian Federation.

In a statement on Twitter, the club said: "In line with this new EFL policy, WanderersTV will no longer be available in the Russian Federation."

An EFL statement said: "Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent humanitarian crisis that is unfolding in the region, the EFL has suspended the broadcast feeds of its matches in the Russian Federation."

"Access to the EFL's iFollow service and other Club streaming services have also been withdrawn in the territory."

"Echoing the views of the Premier League and other organisations around the world, the EFL remains deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict."

"As has been demonstrated at EFL grounds around the country, 'Football Stands Together' with the people of Ukraine and all those impacted."

## Date for Ascot trip confirmed

**WYCOMBE Wanderers will play Ascot United in the semi-finals of the Berks and Bucks Cup.**

A date for the fixture has now been announced with the Chairboys taking to the turf at the Berkshire side's famous Racecourse Stadium on March 22.

Ticket details are yet to be announced but Ascot say this will come shortly.

The club also called Wycombe's visit an "amazing occasion".

Milton Keynes Dons will face Reading FC after they beat Chesham on penalties in the quarter-finals.

Wycombe eased passed their quart-finalist opponents beating Long Crendon 4-0.

# Fantastic future for the magic Mehmeti

By Taylor Toney-Green

WYCOMBE boss Gareth Ainsworth believes Anis Mehmeti can go 'right to the top' following his positive performances for the Chairboys this season.

Wycombe starlet Anis Mehmeti stole the show on Tuesday evening as the Chairboys ended their seven-game run without a win.

The Albanian midfielder scored twice and assisted as they beat Cambridge 3-0 at Adams Park.

Ainsworth was keen to heap praise on the youngster as he said: "I believe that's he's got enough to go right to the top."

"Anis has this ability to absolutely shine in small spaces and there's still more to come from him."

"He can go onto to be a Championship/Premiership player, but it takes a heck of a lot."

"He's working really hard to make sure one day he will be."

The 21-year-old played had played in Norwich City's academy as well as Fulham and Tottenham Hotspur as a schoolboy.

Mehmeti joined the club in September 2020 as apart of the club's new development squad, but quickly progressed into the first team.

He made his professional debut in October against Millwall and has since played over 50 times for the Chairboys, scoring nine times.

In that time, he has began to extend his mark on the international scene playing for Albania's under-19s and under-21s.

He's featured on 25 occasions this season, most notably scoring twice in the 3-0 victory at Plymouth. Tuesday's brace totalled his tally up to six for the season - Wycombe's joint-third



Anis Mehmeti has scored six goals so far this season, which has included two braces. They were against Plymouth and Cambridge. Pictured scoring against Sheffield Wednesday on November 27 in a 2-2 draw (PA)

top scorer.

In December 2021, he signed a three-year deal with the club that will keep him at Adams Park until 2024.

The youngster has impressed so much that he has been compared to Crystal Palace midfielder and ex-Wycombe loanee, Eberechi Eze.

Ainsworth said: "I would rate him up there with the best that have been here."

"Ebs is the most naturally gifted and best player I've ever coached here and you could see that."

"He had that power and strength which Anis is working on in the gym."

In the 16 occasions that Mehmeti has started for the Chairboys, they have won eight, drawn and lost four.

No player in League One and Two has more goal ending open-play sequence involvements in as many or less minutes than the Albanian (11), per TheAnalyst.



Ian Holloway managed Gareth Ainsworth at Queens Park Rangers (PA)

## Ian Holloway's kind message to the boss

**FORMER** Queens Park Rangers, Blackpool and Crystal Palace manager Ian Holloway has praised his former winger, Gareth Ainsworth, after the latter managed his 500th game in charge of Wycombe Wanderers.

Ainsworth took charge of his milestone match on March 5, as his side defeated Crewe Alexandra 3-1 at Gresty Road.

A double from Lewis Wing and a Sam Vokes strike sealed the points for the Chairboys in what

was an important win against the League One basement team, as Wycombe re-entered the play off places, going into the final stretch of the season.

The victory has lifted Wycombe from seventh to fifth as they move onto 61 points, just 11 points off the automatic promotion places with 10 games remaining.

And Holloway, who signed Ainsworth at QPR in the summer of 2003 following his release from Cardiff City said: "Well,

having been his manager for a while at QPR, it's very difficult to describe him."

"He was the most unorthodox winger you would have ever met in your life."

"His hair was unruly, the way he played was unruly and his personality is all about believing and being positive and the biggest credit I could give him is, he would make you believe you were alive even if you were dead. "That's how great he is."

# Loan move to Woking

WYCOMBE Wanderers have confirmed that central midfielder Olly Pendlebury has joined Non League Woking on loan until the end of the season.

The 20-year-old, who signed for the Chairboys at the start of this season, has played 10 games for the club and has scored three times.

He began the current campaign starting the first three league games against Accrington Stanley, Cheltenham Town and Wigan Athletic respectively, where he also bagged a brace against the Robins in what was Wanderers' first away league fixture of the season.

Pendlebury also featured in the League Cup away matches against Exeter City and Stevenage which were both won on penalties, before playing in Wanderers' three EFL Trophy defeats.

His last league appearance came in the impressive 3-0 win away at Plymouth on November 27.

The former Reading man also scored in Wycombe's 4-0 away victory at Long Crendon in the Berks and Bucks Cup.

Pendlebury will don the number 27 shirt for the National League side, and was in their squad to face Grimsby Town on March 5.

# Wonderful Wing stars for the boys in blue



Lewis Wing (PA)

WYCOMBE winger Lewis Wing has been named in the recent League One Team of the Week.

The 26-year-old, who signed for the Chairboys on Transfer Deadline Day in January, bagged a brace in Wanderers' 3-1 away win against Crewe Alexandra on March 5.

These were his first goals for the club following his move to Adams Park from Middlesbrough this year in his sixth appearance.

It was only the second time that he had completed 90 minutes for Chairboys.

Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth said: "I've always known he has this ability from range."

"The fans know as well because they're always screaming at him to shoot."

"There is nobody better going forward and shooting from outside the box than him."

"He's a goal-scoring midfielder and that's a great commodity to have."

The North-East native joined the Chairboys from Middlesbrough, having played 18 times for Sheffield Wednesday until his loan was cut short to facilitate the move to Adams Park.

Wing's arrival came as the Blues were in the middle of a seven-game winless run.

His debut was marred by frustration as Wycombe failed to score past Shrewsbury in a 0-0 draw.

However, his performances against Cambridge and Crewe helped save the Chairboys from spiralling, winning the last two.

His combination play with Garath McCleary and Jason McCarthy for Wycombe's opener last Saturday was "like clockwork", according to the Chairboys boss.

Although he has slotted straight into the starting eleven, his presence provides much needed depth in the midfield.

Wing knows all too well of Saturday's opponents having played 20 times for Rotherham in the Championship last season.

Millers manager Paul Warne was keen to bring him back to the New York Stadium but Wing opted for Hillsborough instead.

"He was trying to get me back all the way through the summer," Wing said.

"Paul texted me quite a lot and I have got a good relationship with him."



Olly Pendlebury (not pictured) has played 10 games for the Chairboys this season and has scored three goals. Three games were played at AP (PA)

# Garath the great is praised by the boss



Garath McCleary has been one of Wanderers' best players this season and scored in the recent win over Cambridge United (PA)

GARATH McCleary has been heralded as an 'example' to everyone at the club, Wycombe boss Gareth Ainsworth has revealed.

Since arriving at Adams Park at the start of last season, the 34-year-old winger played 63 times, scored 11 goals and has provided seven assists, which included a strike and a set up in the 3-0 win over Cambridge United on March 1.

This ended his longest-barren spell of the season with a goal [13 games] and manager Gareth Ainsworth was quick to commend his performance but suggesting that 'McCleary was outstanding and back to his best.'

The Chairboys manager continued to speak of his admiration for the winger at Thursday's press conference as he said: "We have great mutual respect for one another and we speak on a real respectful level."

"He's an example to all the players on how to look after yourself and prolong your career."

"He's kept himself ridiculously fit."

"He takes his top off often, too often for me because he looks a million dollars."

Following his exit from Reading in the summer of 2020, the winger found himself in limbo and was desperate to get back into the game.

He wanted to join his boyhood club, Oxford United, but was told he was 'too old'.

Since opting for the club south

By Taylor Toney-Green

of the M40, he has starred under Ainsworth and the respect is mutual between the two former top-flight players.

McCleary said: "The gaffer is brilliant. He is definitely up there as one of the best I've had."

"He speaks to the boys, he is empathetic in certain situations that we're going through behind the scenes, and he gave me a chance when many other teams didn't."

"His man management, for me, is definitely up there."

The 34-year-old ranks second in goals scored and assisted for the Chairboys this season, whilst Jordan Obita and Sam Vokes are the only outfielders to have featured more times than him this campaign.

Not only is he excelling in the Wycombe squad, but League One as a whole.

Ranking joint-second in expected assists per 90 in the division (0.24) - only four players across the 92 clubs produce better numbers than the winger.

In terms of carrying the ball, there is no one more proficient.

He is joint-third in key passing carries (21) and first in assist-ending (five).

Ainsworth added: "I definitely expected this level of production from Garath."

"I'm glad he's delivering because players like him will make the difference."

# SPORT

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## Ainsworth praises 'brilliant owners'



Gareth Ainsworth ahead of Morecambe clash (PA Media)

By Taylor Toney-Green

BACK-TO-BACK wins have boosted spirits around the Adams Park camp, but even in times of struggle, the focus has remained on the process.

From the takeover in February 2020, the club has undergone a remarkable transition on and off the pitch to propel the Buckinghamshire side to one of the league's big hitters.

Scepticism surrounded the takeover but in the two years they've controlled the club, all of those fears have disappeared.

Ainsworth, who managed from the infancy of the Trust's ownership to the present day is delighted with the structure.

He said: "This is not a business venture for them, it's about making Wycombe Wanderers better because they love the club.

"It was a big challenge to take this club on with a lot of hoops to jump through.

"We wouldn't have made the Championship without Pete, Rob and Missy."

In the first full season under their ownership the acquisitions of Daryl Horgan, Uche Ikepeazu and Jason McCarthy showed their intent.

The days of signing players backed by fan donations are of a distant memory.

Off the pitch, the board has embarked on improving the experience at Adams Park. 'Lifetime' season tickets, advertising

boards and proposals for a new training ground have all helped the club strive forward.

The creation of the development squad has proved to be lucrative.

Anis Mehmeti and Chris Forino have been the highlights with the likes of Olly Pendlebury, Andre Burley and Tjay De Barr all bolstering the ranks.

Wycombe's aim for the season remains an immediate return to the Championship, however, the process takes priority.

Ainsworth said: "The club is growing and Rob has a real understanding of the process.

"He understands that it can't happen overnight.

"Too many clubs try and do that and come a cropper.

"Myself, Rob and Pete won't let

this club suffer that fate."

Brandon Hanlan and Sam Vokes have proved to be stellar signings by adding serious quality to the Chairboys' frontline.

The pair have combined for a tally of 18 goals and eight assists this season.

In January, there was clamour amongst the supporters for multiple additions. Jack Young and Lewis Wing were scooped up late in the window with the latter already proving fruitful.

Patience and progression is the mantra around Marlow Road, as it has been since Ainsworth took over 500 games ago.

Championship football is in the club's sights, but in the peripheral lingers the doldrums of non-league which they so nearly faced.



The game will be on March 19

## Adams Park to host non-league game

Wycombe Wanderers are set to host a league fixture between Jersey Bulls and Banstead Athletic on March 19, kicking off at 3pm.

Lifelong Chairboys supporter and Jersey Bulls board member Simon Webster is seeing his club, the southernmost side in English football, are upgrading their Springfield Stadium this month.

They therefore needed to seek alternative venues for three matches, with Wanderers offering up help with Pete Couhig saying the club is "happy to help".

Jersey and Banstead compete in the Cherry Red Records Combined Counties Football League Premier Division South, with Jersey currently sitting third in the table, and Banstead in 19th.

Simon, the founder and CEO of SHUFL Capital – the shirt sponsor of the Bulls – said: "Adams Park is very special to me, having stood on the terraces in my school uniform as a teenager, through to being a box holder for the last five years and recently even seeing SHUFL Capital sit on 'the shoulders of giants' when we were the sleeve sponsor for Wycombe's historic Carabao Cup match at Manchester City last year.

"Facilitating non-league teams to play on a surface like Adams Park and to witness the professional set up the club has is fantastic.

"It will be a great occasion for me and for Jersey Bulls."

Pete Couhig, CFO of Wycombe Wanderers, said: "Simon has been a fantastic supporter of Wycombe Wanderers for many years, and it's been great to see the on and off-field progress made by Jersey Bulls during his involvement with the club.

"When he asked if we could accommodate one of their league fixtures at Adams Park due to renovation works at their stadium, we were only too happy to help and we look forward to hosting Jersey Bulls' players, staff and supporters at our proud home."

Ian Horswell, CEO of Jersey Bulls, said: "This match has created not only an exciting opportunity for our squad to experience the exceptional and exhilarating playing conditions of a top tier EFL club, but the prospect of our club developing far reaching relationships with EFL clubs such as Wycombe Wanderers and others is a huge and worthwhile benefit."