

U'S ON THE ROAD

"...LUTON'S GROUND IS BASICALLY SOMEONE'S BACK GARDEN - IT IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A GROUP OF HOUSES..."

Worthington Cup 1st Round 1st Leg

Luton Town (a)

Tuesday 11th August 1998

Won 3-2

PRYOR'S CARS

EXECUTIVE CAR SERVICE

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JOURNEY: No real problems here. This journey was all cross-country and not for those with a weak stomach.

PRE-MATCH DRINK: At last, a pub in Luton that was almost good. The Bedfordshire Yeoman was a large pub which served, much to "The Godfather's" delight Abbott Ale and IPA. Service was friendly, but put too much lemonade in the bitter shandy.

PRICE FOR A ROUND

(Based on two and a half pints):

£4.80 Total Spent So Far: £16

FEATURES ON THE GROUND:

Luton's ground is basically someone's back garden - it is in the middle of a group of houses. One side is a row of executive boxes whilst the old terraces behind the goals have had rows of plastic seats stuck on top. Luton are definitely a team who need to relocate.

FACTS ON LUTON: Luton banned away fans in the mid-1980s after a riot by visiting fans. They were also one of the first sides to install a plastic pitch. Lorraine Chase and Nick Owen are from the area. Used to have a chairman who was a Tory MP!!!! Eric Morecambe was an avid Hatters fan.

PRE-MATCH ENTS: None

MASCOT: The image of some bloke walking round the pitch in an overly large top hat was sadly missing from this game.

HOME CROWD: Very small and very quiet. Only really made a noise after they scored and then after that, the faint murmur faded into nothing again.

AWAY END/VIEW: What a pile of This "stand" was a complete joke. As I said earlier, Luton have basically bolted a few plastic seats on top of the old terrace. As a result of this there is inadequate leg-room for a mink let alone someone in excess of six foot. With pillars 20 feet apart, trying to get a good view proved futile.

DISTANCE FROM CAR PARK:

As with many grounds around the

country, it was street parking only. If you arrived early enough, there was no problem, however if you arrived later than 7.00pm, it was probably quite difficult to get a space.

AWAY CROWD: It was the First Round of the Worthington Cup and 533 supporters made the journey to Luton. It was an excellent turnout for the team and the support was vocal for long periods. There was a couple of occasions when there was a lull, but on the whole a great effort from the boys and girls of Oxford.

POLICE / OFFICIALS: All credit to the stewards. As there was inadequate leg room, I perched on my seat rather than sitting in it properly. During the first half, one steward asked me to sit in it so I explained the problem. He replied "I quite understand, I have the same problem, but I am just the peasant farmer carrying out orders". Fair play to him though, he let me stay as I was. In the second half another steward came up and asked exactly the same and got the same reply. He tried to argue but when the hospital bills for our knees were mentioned, he beat a hasty retreat and was never seen again. What is it about the Dreadlocked Geordie that attracts the police. They are constantly giving him grief, just because he is passionate about the game - or is it because he has dreadlocks.

JOBSWORTH

FACTOR: 6/10

ADMISSION: Luton reduced the price of the ticket for this match to £10 for adults.

PROGRAMME: £1.00.

16 page special edition. Full colour. Two pages on the visitors and a page detailing the last occasion the two clubs met in what was then called the Littlewoods Cup.

FOOD: The Chicken and Mushroom

pie was hot and quite nice. The burger was well cooked and not too hard, but the hot-dog was cold and looked raw. Luton were obviously not expecting so many from United as they ran out of pies and burgers before half-time.

U'S PERFORMANCE: We went 2-0 up with one of the best goals you will see this season. A superb team move led to the ball falling to Matt Murphy who fired in a superb first time volley into the roof of the net. However defensive frailties were again evident.

OXFORD MAN OF THE MATCH:

Matt Murphy - he scored two great goals, but his general all round game was good as well. He looked strong on the ball and tried to bring others into the play. Seems to be relishing the opportunity handed to him by Malcolm.

HOME TEAM PERFORMANCE:

Luton played exactly how you would expect a Lennie Lawrence side to play. They tried to pass and move all the time and created problems for us. However they lack someone up front who can hold on to the ball.

HOME TEAM MAN OF THE

MATCH: Matthew Spring - a talented young midfielder who will surely go on to bigger and better things.

REFEREE: Mr. B. Knight - Orpington. Unfortunately, he did not have a very good game. Missed two incidents which possibly should have been penalties for Luton and then decided to give two which were debatable to say the least. I have previously

said that maybe we should lay off referees, but with performances like this from the man in the middle, it is difficult to see how or why we should.

BEARABILITY FACTOR:

7/10 An away win and so early in the season.

LASTING MEMORY OF THE

DAY: The concentration in Simon Weatherstone's face (circled) as he powered his header home in the dying minutes.

