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Saturday 11th April 1998 KO 3pm

Nationwide  Division 1

The Official Matchday Magazine of Oxford United FC

Volume 49
Number Twenty Seven
£1.50

O.U.F.C.

UNIPART

Oxford's Food for Thought...

BANGERS AND MARSH

PHOTOS INSIDE!

Joey and Kev see off Norwich City ■ Fordy Profiled...

In Off The Post

Clearly today is another important game and as with our recent encounter with Reading, there will be plenty of local pride at stake with a sell out crowd. That this is a game that we all want to win goes without saying.

As we come to the end of what could rightly be called an eventful year, I'm sure a lot of us will reflect on a number of the high and low points. Few were lower than our visit to the County Ground back in December. At that time it was difficult to make much of a case for us remaining in business let alone the first division! Against that background to have made it to the to the lofty heights of mid-table is little short of miraculous.

The spirit and commitment throughout the club has carried us through and it has been great to have been a part of it. There are still plenty of things to sort out but at least on the pitch the second half of the season has been a reminder of what it should all be about. Indeed we could be mathematically certain of staying up before we are mathematically certain of missing the promotion play offs! A strange season indeed.

On that subject look out for details of the Supporters Player of the season voting on page 21. There are many worthy candidates for the Trophy. Please can you get your votes to Gary Whiting in the Supporters' Club by Friday 24th April.

Come on you Yellows!



Ian Davies, Editor

PS: Congratulations to Wendy and Robert on the birth of Lucy Ellen Davies, just before our home game with Norwich; by the way the screaming that day was coming from the JR11, not the disgruntled Norwich fans in the Cuckoo Lane end! Cheers Uncle Ian.

Volume 49 Number Twenty Seven

The OX

The Official Matchday Magazine of Oxford United FC

Editor: Ian Davies

Sub-Editor: Ambrose Landon

Contributors: Andy Howland,

Tony Bugby, Dave Crabtree,

Football Information Services, Justin Temple

Photography: Steve Daniels, Tony Bailey, Stuart Fletcher, Associated Sports Photography

Designed & Printed By:

Queensway Publishing Limited, Nobel House, Nobel Road, London N18 3BH Tel: 0181 807 7669

OXFORD UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Manor Ground,
Headington, Oxford.
OX3 7RS.

Telephone: 01865 761 503

Facsimile: 01865 741 820

Clubline: 0891 440 055

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1962 Elected to Football League
1964-65 Division Four promotion
1967-68 Division Three Champions
1983-84 Division Three Champions
1984-85 Division Two Champions
1985-86 Milk Cup Winners
1995-96 Division Two Runners-up

Management

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Manager: Malcolm Shotton
Reserve Team Coach: Mark Harrison
Youth Team Coach: Mickey Lewis
Physiotherapist: John Clinkard MCSP
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Club Secretary: Mick Brown
Commercial Manager: Trevor Baxter
Youth Development: Les Taylor
Football Community Officer: Peter Rhoades-Brown
Soccer Course Director: Mark Jones
Stadium Manager: Mick Moore
Ticket Office Supervisor: Darren Bowler
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Club Doctor: Dr G E Sacks MRCGP
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Watching Us Watching You

This ground is equipped with CCTV installed with the help of a grant from the Football Trust.

The views expressed by individual contributors in this programme are not necessarily the views of Oxford United but of the writer concerned.

Welcome to the players, officials and supporters of Swindon Town to the Manor for this eagerly awaited fixture. I hope that you enjoy the day but not necessarily the outcome of the game!

Swindon will be making things very difficult for us today. Although they have not had the best of luck of late they have some very good players and have shown a great deal of determination particularly on their travels. This is a big game for both clubs and I am sure that Steve McMahon will also be wanting to end the season on a high.

We showed against Reading that we are keen to compete in derby games and will have to do so again to get three points. A repeat of that performance and result would do us very nicely.

At Port Vale we played a side fighting for their lives and failed to match their commitment. At this stage of the season a lot of teams towards the relegation zone find that higher gear and it is up to us to match it.

In the first half we did ourselves no favours by trying to pass the ball in crazy areas of the pitch. As a result we got ourselves needlessly into trouble too often. Although we improved in the second half this was an unacceptable performance. The players know what is expected of them today and I expect to see a marked improvement.

"...Swindon will be making things very difficult for us today. Although they have not had the best of luck of late they have some very good players and have shown a great deal of determination particularly on their travels..."

After today our next two games at QPR and at home to Tranmere are against teams still in the thick of the relegation fight. We will be looking to end the season with a flourish and to do so we will have to match our opponents' desire to win.

Many thanks for those of you who followed us to Vale Park for your excellent support, despite the result. We have been working hard all week to hopefully ensure that you have rather more to celebrate today.

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MALCOLM Calls The Shots



Back Row L-R Wayne Allison (now Huddersfield Town), Mark Seagraves, Fraser Digby, Steve Mildenhall, Frank Iain, Steve Finney, Kevin Watson **Middle Row L-R** Alan McDonald, Mak Walters, Craig Taylor, Gary Elkins, Mark Robinson, Scott Leitch, Ian Culverhouse, Frederic Darras, Alex Finlayson **2nd Front Row L-R** Lee Collins, Peter Holcroft, Phil King, Darren Bullock, Wayne O'Sullivan, Ty Gooden, Steve Cowe **Front Row L-R** Jason Drysdale, Jonathan Trigg (Physio), Ross McLaren (Reserve Team Coach), Steve McMahon (Manager), Mike Walsh (First Team Coach), Les O'Neill (Chief Scout), Alex Smith

Steve McMahon - Manager

Led Swindon to the Second Division Championship during his first full season as player/manager, making 21 appearances along the way. Rates this as the highlight of his career so far, despite having collected almost all the honours available for both club and country as a player.

Began his career at Everton, making 100 league appearances before a £175,000 move to Aston Villa. Kenny Dalglish then took him to Liverpool for £375,000 where he emerged as a midfield general of the highest quality, bagging League and FA Cup winners' medals during the glory years at Anfield. Also gained International recognition with 17 full England caps and was a member of the 1990 World Cup squad in Italy. In 1991 Manchester City paid £900,000



for his services and he continued to perform at the highest level until taking over at Swindon in November 1994.

Fraser Digby - (Goalkeeper)

Town's longest serving player celebrated his testimonial season in 1996/97, and to cap another marvellous campaign was voted Player of the Year. Served his apprenticeship at Manchester

United and after a successful loan spell at the County Ground signed for the club in a £32,500 deal in September 1986. This former England Under 21 International returned to United on loan in 1992/93 but his only senior appearance at Old Trafford was for Town during their season in the Premiership.

Mark Robinson - Defender

Started his career at West Bromwich Albion, joined Barnsley on a free in 1986 and such was his form there that Newcastle snapped him up for £450,000 in 1993. After

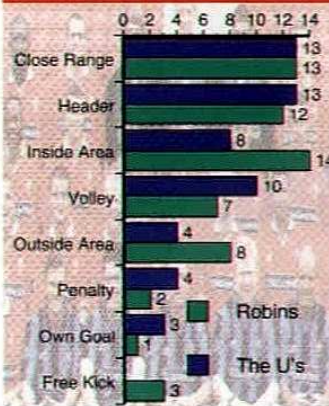
losing his place in the first team through injury, Swindon paid a club record £600,000 for his services in 1994 and he has been a regular and consistent performer since then. Can play at full back, central defence and was also a success as a sweeper this season before injury ruled him out for three months.

Craig Taylor - Defender

Younger brother of former Town favourite Shaun, Craig signed a three year deal in 1997 after impressing during a trial period. Town paid non league

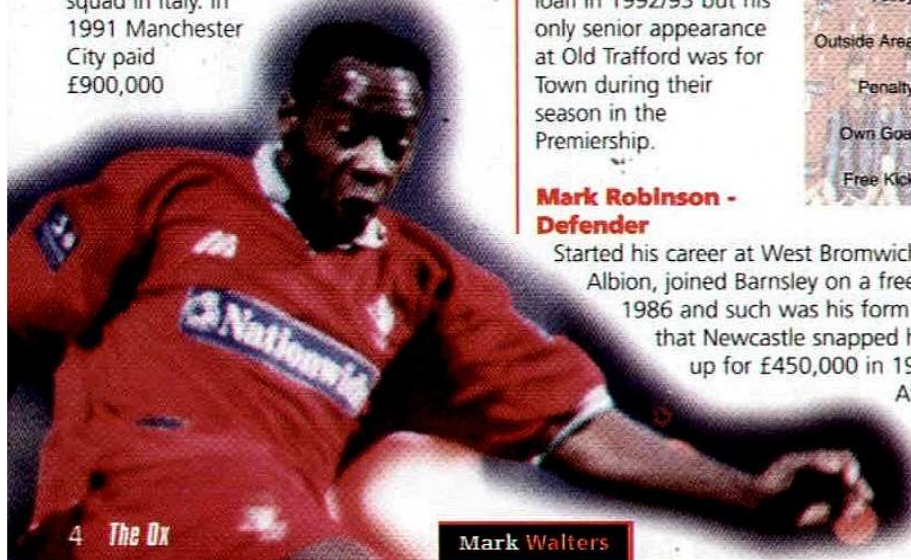
Dorchester Town £25,000 to bring him in and despite a pre season injury set back, he made a dream debut, scoring against Port Vale in October. Strong in the air and determined in the tackle, Craig has certainly carried on where his brother left off.

how goals were conceded



Brian Borrows - Defender

This former Everton, Bolton and Coventry defender signed an 18 month contract in 1997 following a highly successful two month loan spell from Highfield Road where he made well over 400 appearances. Comfortable anywhere along the back line, but particularly effective as sweeper, Brian still has



Mark Walters

goal scorers



1987-9. Enjoyed success at Sheffield Wednesday and Aston Villa and gained an England B cap before two serious injuries almost ended his career.

Phil was brought in from the cold at the end of the 1996/97 campaign and made five appearances. Has struggled to break into the team this season, and had a spell out on loan at Blackpool in November. Currently on the transfer list.

Alan McDonald - Defender

Having spent his entire career at Queens Park Rangers Alan made his first move last Summer in a two year deal. A highly committed defender with 53 Northern Ireland International caps to his name, many of them as skipper.

Darren Bullock - Midfielder

A tough tackling midfielder, Darren signed a three and a half year deal in February 1997 after a £400,000 move from

Huddersfield Town.

Scored 20 goals in 156 appearances for

the Terriers and netted on his debut for Swindon against Birmingham City. Could be described as a late developer as he was only

drafted into the full time game in 1993 following a £55,000 step up from Nuneaton Borough.

Ty Gooden - Midfielder

Signed by John Gorman in 1993 having been released by Wycombe

a great appetite for the game.

Phil King - Defender

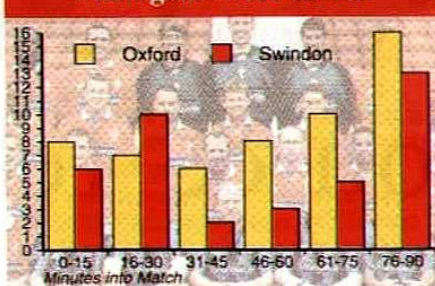
Now in his second spell at the County Ground having played under Lou Macari from

Wanderers. Made over 30 appearances in Swindon's Second Division Championship season, but was hindered by injuries in 1996/97. Having regained full fitness Ty has been an ever present this term and has proved a real asset either as a wing back or attacking midfielder.

Scott Leitch - Midfielder

Former Motherwell, Dunfermline and Hearts midfielder signed for Swindon in the Summer of 1996 for a bargain price of £15,000. Enjoyed a successful loan spell at the County Ground during their Second Division Championship season and manager Steve McMahon was quick to bring him in on a permanent basis.

when goals were scored



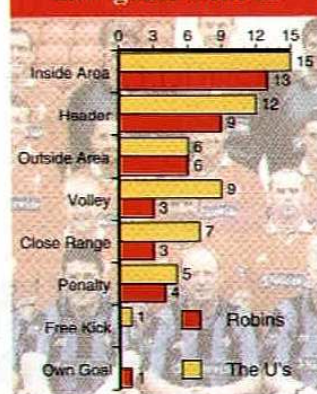
Mark Walters - Midfielder

A former England International, Mark signed for Town in July 1996 after being released by Southampton and immediately showed the silky skills which had made him such a hit at Aston Villa, Glasgow Rangers and Liverpool. A serious knee injury ruled him out of the last few months of last season.

Lee Collins - Midfielder

Missed the majority of the 1996/97 campaign through injury but signed an extension to his contract during the Summer. This ball winning midfielder has been used several times this season and is keen to get a regular place in the first team. Joined Swindon from Scottish Club Albion Rovers for £15,000 in 1995.

how goals went in



Philippe Cuervo - Midfielder

This gifted Frenchman impressed during a trial period and was quickly signed on a three year contract from Sochaux (free transfer) just before the start of the current campaign. Was a revelation during the first two months of the season but then spent several months out with hip problem.

Stephen Howe - Midfielder

Stephen who likes to be known as Bobby, is an attacking midfielder who signed for Swindon in January from Nottingham Forest where his first team opportunities had dried up. Made 17 appearances for Forest and has had loan spells at Kettering and Ipswich Town.

Chris Hay - Forward

This pacy young striker was drafted in from Scottish giants Celtic for £330,000 a week before the current campaign started and what a bargain he proved to be, scoring 13 goals in 20 appearances before Christmas.

Steve McMahon spent a year tracking this goalscoring ace who was finding it hard to break into Celtic's first team on a regular basis.

Steve Finney - Forward

A series of injuries restricted Steve's appearances to just nine starts last season, this after suffering a broken ankle at the tail end of the previous campaign.

A loan spell at Cambridge in November seemed to work wonders as Steve returned refreshed and hungry for goals and promptly scored three in three games after taking over from the departed Wayne Allison. Signed on a free transfer from Manchester City in 1995.

Steve Cowe - Forward

What he lacks in height he makes up for with his pace and skill on the ball. This

league form over the season



livewire of a front man scored seven goals in 32 starts last season but has failed to find a regular slot this term.

Brought in from Aston Villa in 1996 for £100,000.

George Ndah - Forward

After the departure of Wayne Allison to Huddersfield, Steve McMahon moved quickly to find a replacement and was delighted to pick up the lightning quick Ndah from Crystal Palace in a £500,000 deal in November.

Scored a stunner on his debut against Middlesbrough. A former England Youth International, George made almost 100 appearances for the Eagles.

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Voluntary contributor, **Andy Howland**, who with his brother Roger is our Club historian, looks at the **1970 and 1974 World Cup Campaigns...**

World Cup
Campaign

The Howland Report

Cyprus Concede 20 Goals in 5 Days

As holders, England did not have to play in the qualifying round for the 1970 World Cup Finals. The Republic of Ireland took only one point from its six qualifying matches in a group which was won by Czechoslovakia. Wales lost all four of their matches in a group which also contained Italy and East Germany. Northern Ireland beat Turkey twice and then drew at home to Russia. Russia then beat Turkey and Northern Ireland (with George Best absent) leaving themselves with the task of avoiding defeat in Turkey to win the group (they won 3-1).

Scotland were drawn in a four team group with West Germany, Austria (away) before drawing 1-1 with the Germans in front of a 95,951 Hampden crowd. They then beat Cyprus 8-0, who lost 12-0 in Germany just four days later. The group was decided at Hamburg where Scotland, needing to win to force a play-off, lost 3-2. Scotland's team contained the likes of Bremner, Eddie Gray, Jimmy Johnstone and Gilzean but could not quite match a side inhabited with quality such as Beckenbauer, Seeler, Muller and Haller.

Italy Win Group Despite Netting Just Once in Three Matches

The Finals were held in Mexico. Group A was won by Russia with Mexico progressing as runners up. Group B was short of goals, the six matches producing just six of them. Despite scoring just once in three matches, Italy won the group with Uruguay runners up. Group D attracted attendances averaging below 19,000, just 8,000 seeing West Germany's victory over Morocco. The Germans won all of their matches, Muller scoring two hat-tricks plus a single-goal. Bulgaria and runners up Peru were the other group members.

Bobby Charlton is Replaced by Norman Hunter in his Last International as England Lose a 2-0 Lead

England arrived with what I felt was a stronger line up than that which had won the trophy. Hurst scored the goal in the win over Romania. Czechoslovakia lost to both Brazil and Romania before England met Brazil. Fielding six of the 1966 winning side (Banks, Moore, Bobby Charlton, Peters, Ball and Hurst) plus Mullery, Lee, Cooper and Everton's Labone and Wright, England fell behind to an often shown Jalezinho goal (59 minutes).

With substitute Astle missing a very good chance, this was the own goal of a game which featured a famous save by Banks from Pele. England, needing to get more points against Czechoslovakia than Romania did against Brazil managed a victory thanks to Clarke's penalty, whilst Brazil won 3-2. Thus all four mainland American finalists qualified for the quarter finals. The quarter finals resulted in extra time wins for the Germans (over England) and Uruguay over Russia whilst Italy (over Mexico) and Brazil (over Peru) gained comfortable wins. England went into a two goal lead but the substitution of winger Libuda by Grabowski caused many problems. Soon afterwards, Beckenbauer scored a soft goal past keeper Bonetti, who was deputising for the indisposed Banks. Bell was brought on for Charlton and Hunter for Peters, two minutes after which the veteran Seeler back headed an equaliser. Muller scored Germany's winner in extra time.

A Sensational Semi Final Despite There Being Just One Goal in the First 88 Minutes

Uruguay met Brazil in one semi final and led their great rivals for the 18th minute until the 44th. It was not until the 75th minute that Jairzinho gave the Brazilians the lead, Rivelino netting a third (89 minutes). The other semi final produced the tournament's greatest match. After 88 minutes Italy led Germany 1-0 only for Schnellinger to force extra time. With star man Beckenbauer playing with his arm in a sling the Germans went ahead through Muller (94 minutes) only for Burgnich (98) and Riva (103) to restore Italy's lead. Muller equalised (109) only for Riveria (110) to give the Italians a 4-3 victory. West Germany won the third place match.

Jairzinho Nets in All Six of Champions Brazil's Matches

In the Final, Pele gave Brazil a 17th minute lead only for Boninsegna to equalise. Brazil's winner came after 65 minutes via a superb strike from Gerson. Jairzinho and skipper Carlos Alberto netted to give Brazil their third triumph in twelve years. Jairzinho had netted in all six of Brazil's matches but Muller's ten made him the tournament's top scorer.

Poland's Draw Causes The Elimination of England

For the 1974 World Cup Finals, Scotland

beat Denmark twice and Czechoslovakia at Hampden before 100,000 in order to qualify. Eire lost out to USSR and Northern Ireland could beat neither Bulgaria nor Portugal. Poland, England and Wales comprised Group 5.

England won in Cardiff and then drew at home to Wales. When Wales beat Poland 2-0 in Cardiff, England looked favourites to qualify. Poland then beat England 2-0 and Wales 3-0 before 120,000 in Chorzow. This meant that England needed to beat Poland at Wembley in order to qualify. Domarski gave Poland a second half lead and almost incessant second half pressure yielded only one goal and one point for England via a Clarke penalty.

East Germany Beat West Germany and Scotland Needed One More Goal in any Match to Reach the Second Round

The Finals in West Germany saw progress to the second round by the host nation who had lost to East Germany, whilst undefeated Scotland were eliminated at the first stage. Despite losing to East Germany in Hamburg, the West Germans, having beaten both Chile and Australia had already qualified. Group 2 saw the worst Brazilian and the best Scottish squads which I have seen. Scotland beat Zaire 2-0 and drew with Brazil.

Denis Law, who had returned from League football played his last International against Zaire. Scotland's final match was with the Yugoslavs who had drawn with Brazil and beaten Zaire 9-0. Scotland drew with Yugoslavia and would have qualified had they scored one more goal in any of their three games. Holland and Sweden qualified but Italy lost out to Argentina on goal difference behind Poland.

Jack Taylor Awards Two Penalties in the Final

Holland and Germany won all of their second round games to reach the Final, whilst England's conquerors, Poland, beat Brazil to get third place. The entertaining Dutch who included Cruyff, Neeskens, Van Hanegen, Krol and Haan were awarded a first minute penalty which was converted by Neeskens. Wolverhampton referee, Jack Taylor, gave a more controversial penalty to the hosts which was converted by Breitner. Muller scored the Germans winner and was wrongly denied another for off-side.

Our New History - 'Oxford United, The Headington Years'

A cheque for £9.50 (payable to A Howland) and sent to 10 Redshots Close, Marlow, Bucks, will secure a copy at a reduced price which will contain your name among the subscribers.

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The Football Trust has been providing support for the game at every level throughout the UK for over 22 years. Its present priority task is to help League clubs to complete the implementation of the Taylor Report recommendations.

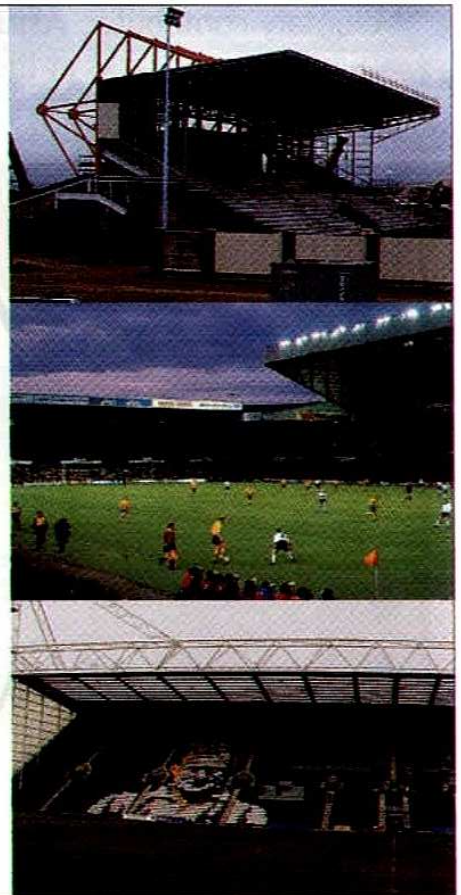
Thanks to the Government and to the Football Association, the FA Premier League and the English Sports Council, a major new funding package to secure the future of the Trust has been put in place.

These funds will be in addition to income derived from the football pools companies Littlewoods, Vernons and Zetters, and will enable the Trust to complete its Taylor task, carry on its essential safety work and continue to grant aid football at every level. The Government's commitment to the Trust has the support of everyone who cares about our national game.



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WILSON'S WINNING WAY...

Julian Wilson can claim enormous credit for the most successful chapter in Swindon Town's history. Without the former BBC racing presenter's contacts it is doubtful whether Swindon would have ever appointed Lou Macari as manager.

Julian, a Swindon supporter since 1953, introduced sponsors Lowndes Lambert to the club when they were languishing in the Fourth Division at a low ebb in their history.

He takes up the story:- 'Rocky Shaw, the owner of Grand National winner Hello Dandy, was connected with Lowndes Lambert.

'The company put up the money for Lou's wages and that appointment completely changed the fortunes of the club.

Under Macari's guidance, Swindon climbed to the fringe of the Second Division play offs (today's First Division) before he left to manage West Ham. Ossie Ardiles, the former Argentinean World Cup winner, continued the good work and appeared to have guided Swindon to the top flight for the first time, again through the play-offs.

The joy was short lived as Swindon never took their place among the elite as they were dramatically relegated two divisions - reduced to one on appeal - after being found guilty of financial irregularities. Julian describes the emotions of that traumatic time as the glory was tainted by scandal.

He said: 'To win promotion to the First Division, as it was known, was the fulfilment of a life's dream for me.

'We were wrongly relegated because of financial improprieties which have later been proved to be on a smaller scale than suggested, and not as serious as others in the game.

Julian didn't have long to wait as Glenn Hoddle, who succeeded Ardiles

in 1991, finally guided them to the Premiership two years later.

Hoddle's departure for Chelsea was a blow which ultimately led to Julian distancing his love affair with the club.

He said: 'I went to the opening home game in the Premiership against Oldham, and I knew then what our fate would be. Oldham, who were not one of the top teams, won 1-0 but it could easily have been four.

'I had looked forward for 40 years for Swindon to climb to the top of the mountain and yet within weeks I could see the work being undone as we rolled down the hill. And though I don't watch them so often I still follow their results and look to see how they are faring.

Julian's close involvement in the club's affairs until recent times is a far cry to his childhood when, as a 13 year old, he used to cycle from his home at Faringdon ten miles to the County Ground. That was along the A420 Oxford to Swindon road, something he says would be a non-starter these days with increased volumes of traffic.

Swindon were members of Division Three South with Julian recalling his favourite players from that era - centre-forward Maurice Owen, central defender George 'Rock' Hudson, defender Harry McShane, father of television's Lovejoy, and inside-left Bob Edwards.

The 1969 League Cup Final when Swindon, still a Third Division side, beat the mighty Arsenal at Wembley will always be remembered as Don Roger's finest hour for the Robins. Fate dealt Julian a kind hand that afternoon as he was supposed to be on racing duty that day.

He said: 'I had only been working for the BBC for three or four years so daren't ask for the day off. Amazingly the racing at Chepstow was

abandoned so I was able to be at Wembley for the Final'.

Julian has also been to Wembley on two further occasions with Swindon for the play off finals. Swindon have been victorious on each of those three Wembley visits with Julian describing them as three of the best days of his life. The Robins were also triumphant in the Division Three play offs before the finals were staged at Wembley. Julian describes the eventful '80s as the most memorable period and it meant even more as he helped shape the successes. He recalls favourites from this era such as David Kerslake, Steve 'Chalky' White, Jimmy Quinn, Paul Bodin, Colin Calderwood and the long serving Fraser Digby who remains with the club.

Julian was also involved in a racing syndicate with players Kenny Stroud, Chris Kamara, Brian Williams and Chic Bates. They had a share in 'Sea Aura' which won its maiden race at Lingfield in 1981 ridden by Lester Piggott.

Julian, who is a member of Kent County Cricket Club and Western Province in South Africa where he spends much of the winter, has played football for Denis Waterman's XI and a Racing Press XI. He also remembers the anti-climax of setting foot on the County Ground pitch in August 1994 at the Oldham game.

Julian had been invited to take penalties on behalf of the Lord Taverners and recalled the night with embarrassment.

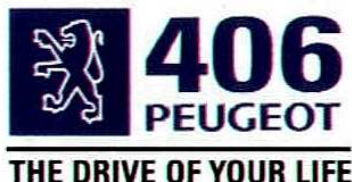
He said: 'I am left footed but because of trouble with my hip couldn't swing my leg so had to take them right-footed. The first hit the bar, second struck the stanchion while the third and fourth were saved. Luckily the fifth went in much to my relief.

by Tony Bugby

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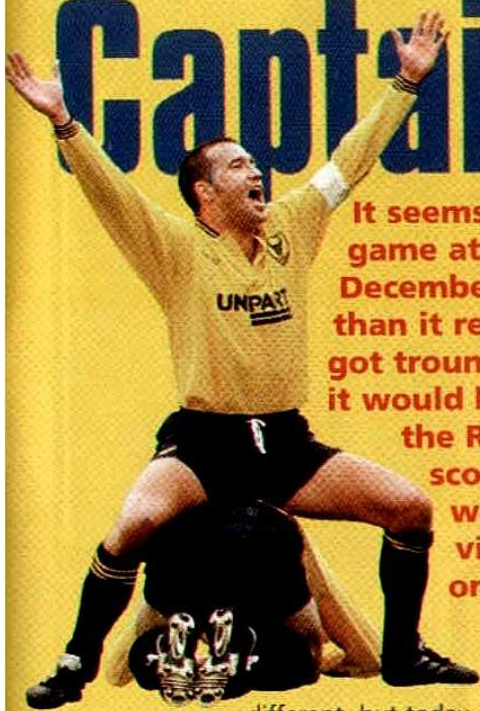
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Captain's Column



It seems an absolute age since the game at the County Ground in early December. It maybe seems longer than it really is due to the fact we got trounced 4-1 on the day! I know it would be sweet revenge to beat the Robins by a considerable score-line, but I am sure we would all celebrate a 1-0 victory just as well as a 4-0 one.

I know just recently both teams forms could not have been more different, but today all that goes out of the window. Both sets of players and fans start on an even keel, the two things that might give us a slight edge is home advantage and, of course, once again people have not found the Manor an easy place to come to. Also, because we have been on a great run recently our confidence could not be any higher, high enough to know we are good enough to win but not too high that we become complacent. The gaffer will make sure our feet remain firmly planted on the floor. In fact the threat of 'running your n.... off' has certainly inspired the lads in recent games!

In my last programme notes I forgot to congratulate 'Big Kev' on his call up from the International wilderness to be in the St Kitts and Nevis squad, for the Shell Umbro Gold Cup Competition, with the winning nation gaining qualification to the Concacaf Tournament later on in the year.

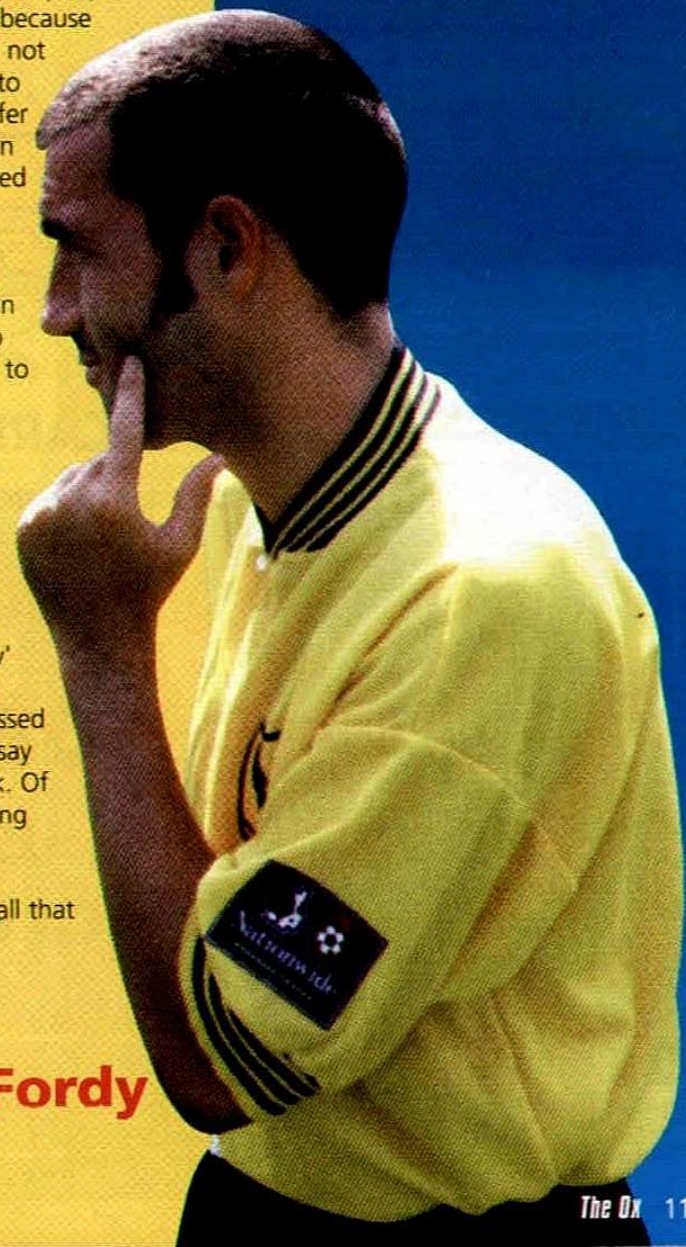
I had to get my atlas out to find the location of the said islands. Basically they are in the Caribbean and I think Kev' gained his qualification having spent a couple of weeks there on holiday during his early twenties. The latest update I had prior to writing these notes was that St Kitts had beaten the Dominican Republic 4-0 in their first game which was great but, unfortunately, they did it without Kev' due to allegedly going down with a bad case of 'flu'. But I hear from an extremely good source that the reason he missed the game was due to a bad case of sun burn! And he did say he wasn't going for a holiday, but was going there to work. Of course, Kev' because you always get peely skin from working hard!

Back to today, as long as we win and let's be fair, that's all that counts today in what will be an very enjoyable game.

Enjoy the game.

"...I know it would be sweet revenge to beat the Robins by a considerable score-line, but I am sure we would all celebrate a 1-0 victory just as well as a 4-0 one..."

Fordy



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The

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MANOR

Howard Stacey

Our condolences to the family of staunch United supporter, Howard Stacey who died on 17th March, aged 86. Howard never missed a home game, choosing to stand on the terraces - even when his family helped with funds to enable him to buy a seat. You will be missed Howard.

SPONSORS

Match Sponsor

Welcome to today's Match Sponsor, Canon. Canon Thames Valley Business Systems Ltd is the local Canon Direct Supplier of office equipment to Oxfordshire and the surrounding areas. We are pleased to be involved in today's match, with Canon (UK) Ltd being a major sponsor of France 98.

Matchball Sponsor

Today's matchball sponsors are Oxford Project and Facilities Management. Welcome to Roy Tuttle and his guests, we wish them a good day at the Manor and hope that they bring us luck.

Associate Match

We are pleased to welcome, once again, Associate Match Sponsors Thames Cable Co of 60 Robert Place, Cumnor, Oxford OX2 9QT, tel 01865 863603, fax 01865 862970. Thames Cable are civil engineers specialising in cable laying and jointing. We hope their party enjoy the afternoon.

Associate Match Sponsors

Welcome to David Drew and his party from the Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Co-Op. David is a keen Oxford fan so lets hope for a good result this afternoon so he can go to work with his head held high. The Club has had a long association with the local branch and we are delighted to have them here today. We hope they have an enjoyable day.

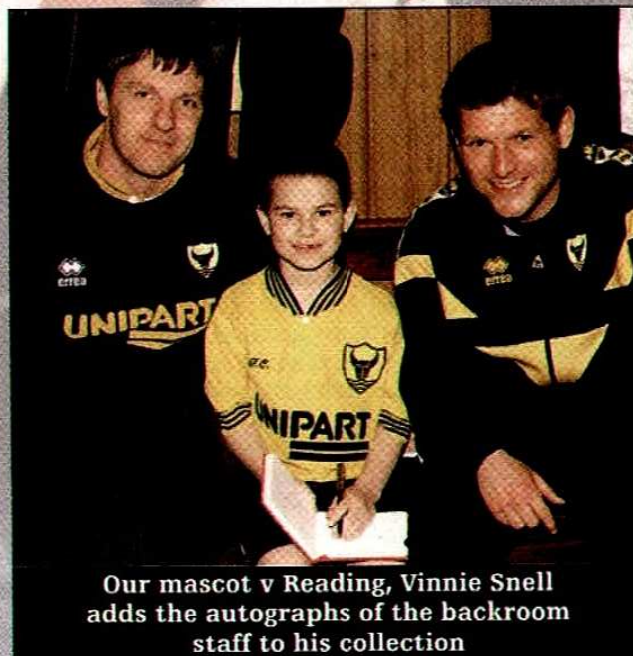


Associate Matchball

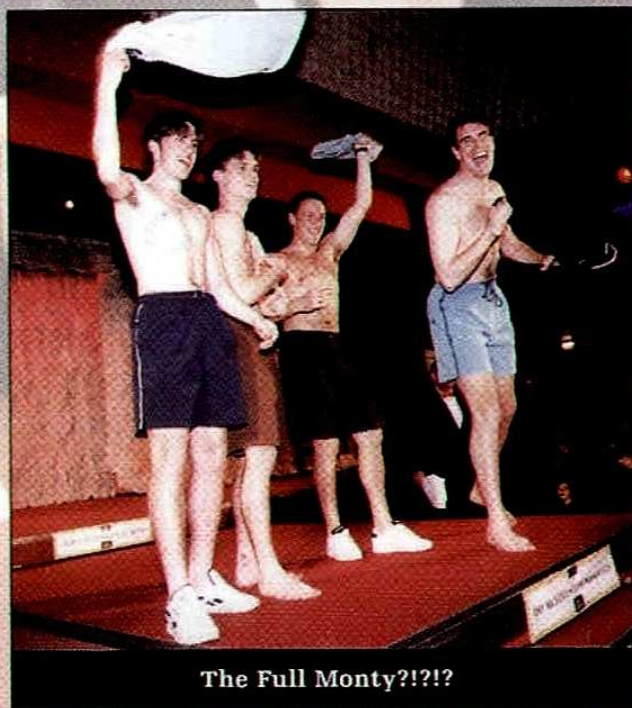
Thanks to the Cleenol Group for today's Associate Matchball Sponsorship and welcome to Alf Smith and his party. We hope they thoroughly enjoy their day here at the Manor.

Birthday Package

Happy birthday and many happy returns to Mr Hopton from his family, friends and all at the Manor. We hope you have a fantastic day.



Our mascot v Reading, Vinnie Snell adds the autographs of the backroom staff to his collection



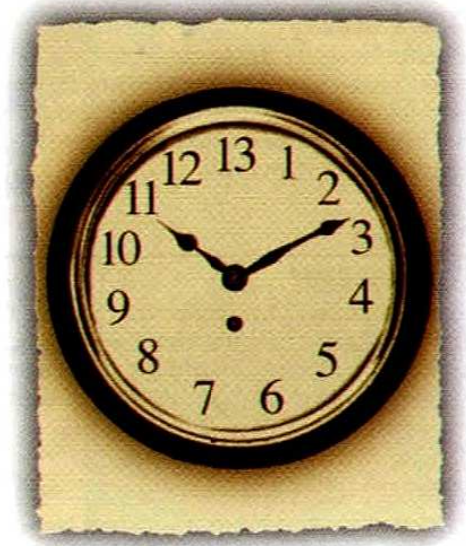
The Full Monty?!?!?



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U's ON THE ROAD

AN OFF-THE-WALL LOOK AT LIFE ON OUR TRAVELS

Journey: The M6, oh how I have missed the roadworks at every other junction and the two car mini pile up on the hard shoulder. Welcome back and long may you reign supreme on the football supporters' favourite motorway.

You Must Have Come In A Taxi (sponsored by *Dave the Taximan*): Had you gone to the game in a taxi it would have cost you £207.50 just for one way.

Pre-Match Drink: The Fallowfield. This pub was a good ten minute walk from the ground, but once you got there it was a good size and served the biggest food portions known to mankind.

Price for a Round: (Two and a half pints) £3.74. Total Spent so far £102.53

Features on Ground: Quite simply a magnificent stadium which will be the best in Division Two next season. The Kippax stand is a giant construction and would not look out of place if featured as the SS Starship Enterprise.

Facts on Manchester: Home of Moss Side. Oasis, The Happy Mondays, Stone Roses - anyone to have helped shape the music industry over the last 10 years has come from Manchester. Also has some great night clubs and of course Manchester United. Repeatedly lost out in a bid to host the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and any other games you can think of. Expect them to try for the World Tiddlywinks Championship next year and lose to Barrow-In-Furness.

Pre-Match Ents: Oxford Juniors Vs City Juniors in a penalty shoot out - We won of course!

Mascot: The greatest mascot of them all for complete weirdness - Moonchester!! Can someone explain this one to me, I knew that drugs were rife in Manchester, but the person who designed this one must have been on one hell of a trip.

Home Crowd: Despite all the problems, 28,000 City fans still turn

Nationwide Football League Division One Manchester City (a)

Won 2-0

Saturday 7th March 1998

up week in week out to cheer on their team. However the biggest cheer came when Lee Bradbury was taken off shortly after missing his sixth chance. The original haters of the other side in the city and arguably the strongest.

Away End/View: 843 supporters were situated in the North Stand. The view was good and the seats gave adequate leg room.

Distance from Car Park: Plenty of car parking around the ground, but you needed to be wary of any parking restrictions if you elected for street parking.

Away Crowd: What can be said that has not already been said about our supporters. Yet again they were magnificent

Police/Officials: After the most Jobsworth stewards in the history of stewarding came the most laid back. Fears that we would all have to remain seated and that the stewards would actively enforce this proved to be fruitless. **Jobsworth Factor:** 1/10

Admission: £10 for adults and what a bargain. City certainly have their pricing policy spot on for Division Two next season

Programme: £1.80 - Good content, good layout, probably the best in the division - again.

Food: One word can describe the food on offer at Manchester City - excellent. The food was so good that even the smallest child could eat it and not be reminded of the disgusting babyfood his or her mother used to feed them when they were younger. 'Er had one of the pasties and was overwhelmed by the sheer tastiness of it.

U's Performance: This could prove to

be the most important away victory of the season. Had we lost, we would have been below City and deep in relegation trouble. Although we are not safe by any means yet, this victory has given us an excellent chance of being well clear of any danger at the end of the season. The team showed all the battling qualities which have been the trademark of Malcolm Shotton's side since he took over.

Oxford Man of the Match: The defence was magnificent and defended extremely well as a unit.

Martin Gray (right) did an excellent job of man marking Peter Beardsley and Joey Beauchamp was a constant threat to City on the left wing. If I had to single out any one player it would be Steve Davis. He was dominant in the air and showed great positional sense.

Home Team Performance: This is a poor Manchester City side who will be going down to Division Two unless they can find some consistency. Guilty of one of the worst deals in the history of football - £3.5m for Lee Bradbury, Portsmouth and Terry Venables must have pinched themselves when they saw that offer.

Home Team Man of the Match: Jeff Whitley at right back looked a decent player.

Referee: Bill Burns - Missed a couple of nasty challenges on Beauchamp. I'm convinced that both Man City and ourselves should have had a penalty. Gilchrist appeared to handle the ball in the first half and Joey was held at the ankles by Tommy Wright after the keeper had parried Joey's original shot. 4/10

Bearability Factor: 10/10 - do I need to explain myself.

Lasting Memory of the Day: Lee Bradbury provided some great comedy moments, but obviously another great away victory from the mighty boys in Yellow and Blue.

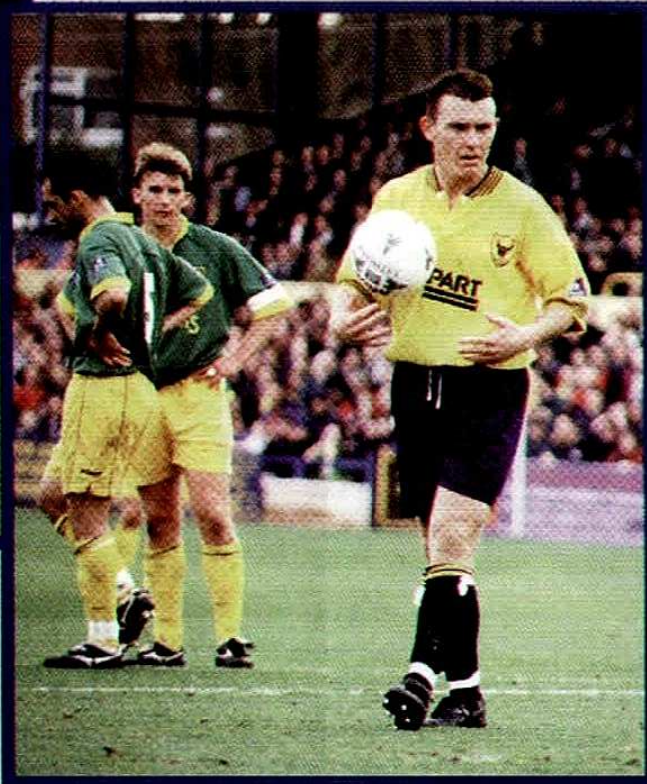




Big Kev and Joey see off
Norwich City at The Manor
two weeks ago...



Canaries get th



MAIN PIC:
Big Kev gives the Canaries a fright

LEFT TO RIGHT:
Jamie Cook - tricky on the wing

Nicky Banger's trickery earns a penalty

Joey prepares for the spot kick...

...and settles the match



one bird...

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Here we are, still with five games of the season to go, but for many supporters of both teams at the Manor today, this local derby represents the last really important match of the campaign. The spectre of relegation has been banished to haunt other clubs, while the prospect of a play-off place is no longer in anyone's thoughts, either here or at the County Ground.

All that remains then for Oxford and Swindon fans is to try and finish above each other in the League. Despite being just one place and two points apart at this stage, the two clubs have had widely differing seasons. While Oxford struggled for consistency throughout the first half, finding ourselves in 21st place after the 4-1 humiliation at the County Ground in December, Swindon did not drop out of the top six until almost the turn of the year.

The Swindon board must have been confident at that stage in their pledge to refund season ticket price increases if the team failed to make the play offs come May. At the same time, the Oxford Board were confronting the Club's much publicised financial problems.

Early season optimism turned to disappointment for many Town fans, however, as the team drifted further and further from the promotion frame, taking just 13 points from a possible 48 since the New Year, while the Board increased ticket prices until the end of the season.

Shotts' magic for Oxford on the other hand, has seen United not only pull away from what seemed to be certain relegation, taking 26 points from the 14 games since early January, but start to consolidate in the top half of the table as well.

Whatever the final respective placings of the two clubs, both are destined still to have a bearing on the promotion and relegation fights. On the final day of the season, we are destined to play Middlesbrough at the Riverside Stadium, while Swindon entertain Boro's arch-rivals Sunderland.

In recent weeks Middlesbrough have surrendered the initiative at the top of the table somewhat. Having been three points clear of Forest and seven ahead of Sunderland at the end of February, they now find themselves four adrift of Sunderland and eight away from Forest. Despite games in hand, they now have to reply on one of these sides dropping points, while winning all of their own games in order to re-enter the automatic promotion frame.

Nottingham Forest dented Ipswich's outstanding form last weekend, winning 2-1 at the City Ground on Sunday, while Sunderland also recorded a valuable Friday night win at

Justin Temple studies the goings on in and around the First Division

Tranmere. Middlesbrough, on the other hand, slumped 2-1 at the Hawthorns to Denis Smith's out-of-form West Brom. Paul Gascoigne's first English League game in almost seven years brought him very little but a yellow card. Although it does still remain a three-horse race for automatic promotion. I am convinced that no-one from outside the current top six will now feature in the play-offs. Birmingham and Wolves have not done enough to overtake Charlton, Ipswich or Sheffield United, all of whom are still enjoying rich veins of form.

Down at the other end of the table the situation is nowhere near as clear cut. Stoke's defeat at Reading confirms them as the most likely candidates for the Second Division, while Manchester City's surprising 4-1 win over Stockport (made all the more unbelievable by Lee Bradbury's two goals!) has edged them out of the drop zone and above Portsmouth, who could only manage a point at home to Birmingham, despite their good form of late. QPR have plunged into the mire over recent weeks, although the recent signings of Vinnie Jones and Neil Ruddock may give them the steel they need to battle it out. Not so Norwich who seem to have gone from being a lower midtable side to virtual relegation certainties. Bury and Port Vale are also not yet out of the woods, despite their recent victories over Oxford. With just six points separating the bottom eight,

relegation is still anyone's for the taking.

On a different note, it has been good to see three Division One sides featuring prominently in the final stages of both cup competitions, which suggests perhaps that the gulf between us and the Premiership is not so wide after all

(although, disappointingly, the three sides that look like they will rejoin us next season are again those who were promoted last season). Sheffield United and Wolves were not, in the end, strong enough to overcome Newcastle and Arsenal in the FA Cup Semi Finals. Middlesbrough, too, were outclassed again by Chelsea in the Coca Cola Cup Final and, if they fail to win promotion this season I will

almost start feeling sorry for them after two Cup final defeats and relegation last year. Still, at least they got that far!

Now, let the contest begin!

Nationwide		League Div 1											
@ 7/4/98	Pld	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Gls	Pts
Notts Forest	38	14	2	3	43	19	9	6	4	22	15	65	77
Forest	41	16	2	3	48	20	9	6	5	24	19	72	83
Sunderland	40	12	6	2	42	19	11	4	5	32	22	74	79
Middlesbro'	39	14	3	2	41	10	8	6	6	24	28	65	75
Charlton	40	13	5	1	41	17	8	4	9	31	32	72	72
Ipswich	40	11	4	4	37	17	7	9	5	28	23	65	67
Sheff Utd	38	14	4	1	36	14	3	10	6	20	27	56	65
Birmingham	41	9	6	5	23	14	7	9	5	30	20	53	63
Wolves	39	12	5	3	34	18	5	4	10	13	21	47	60
Bradford	41	10	8	2	24	16	4	6	11	20	29	44	56
West Brom	41	9	6	6	23	22	6	5	9	18	25	41	56
Stockport	41	12	5	3	41	18	4	2	15	21	42	62	55
OXFORD	41	11	5	4	33	16	4	3	14	22	39	55	53
SWINDON	41	9	5	7	26	22	5	4	11	13	38	39	51
Crewe	40	7	2	11	21	33	8	3	9	25	24	46	50
Huddersfield	41	7	5	8	25	24	5	6	10	22	36	47	47
Tranmere	39	7	6	6	24	20	5	4	11	19	28	43	46
Bury	41	6	10	5	20	21	3	9	8	19	29	39	46
Port Vale	41	7	6	8	25	22	5	3	12	25	36	50	45
QPR	41	8	8	5	27	19	2	7	11	18	37	45	45
Norwich	41	7	8	6	22	27	4	4	12	17	38	39	45
Man City	41	6	5	10	26	23	5	5	10	21	26	47	43
Portsmouth	40	7	6	8	25	29	4	3	12	17	27	42	42
Reading	41	8	4	9	27	29	3	5	12	11	40	38	42
Stoke	41	6	5	9	24	34	3	8	10	14	29	38	40

Off you go! Vinnie is ordered to Loftus Road



**Avon Insurance
Football Combination
v Crystal Palace (a)
Lost 0-3**

Team: O'Connor, Rose, Lewis, Remy (Brennan), Wilsterman, Whelan, Angel, Shepherd, S Weatherstone, Nix (Henshaw), Richards, **sub not used:** Shephard

The positive side of this match was the return of Phil Whelan to action after his broken leg, and Mark Angel's return to fitness. The game also featured trialist Derek O'Connor, recently released by Huddersfield Town. The downside was a bad back injury inflicted on Christophe Remy, which will sideline him for a while.

We went behind after eight minutes but Lee Nix and Simon Weatherstone each had a chance to level. Three minutes from the end Palace scored a second and a third just before the final whistle.

**Avon Insurance
Football Combination
v Tottenham H (a)
Lost 0-4**

Team: Jackson, Rose, Powell, Lewis, Wilsterman, Whelan, Folland (Shephard), Wright, S Weatherstone, Shepherd (Brennan), Angel (A Davies)

'The lads played well, despite the scoreline, against a very experienced Spurs' side', reported Mark Harrison. 'They worked their socks off, didn't bottle it and will have learnt a valuable lesson about the standard required', Mark

**AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION
FIXTURES AND TABLES**

Aug 13	Wed	Luton Town (a)	1-1
20	Wed	BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION (H)	2-1
27	Wed	Charlton Athletic (a)	2-5
Sept 3	Wed	PORTSMOUTH (H)	0-0
10	Wed	WIMBLEDON (H)	0-0
18	Thu	Norwich City (a)	1-1
24	Wed	SOUTHAMPTON (H)	4-1
Oct 1	Wed	Ipswich Town (a)	3-2
7	Tue	Arsenal (a)	0-5
15	Wed	CHELSEA (H)	4-1
22	Wed	WEST HAM UNITED (H)	1-1
30	Thu	Queens Park Rangers (a)	1-4
Nov 3	Mon	MILLWALL (H)	1-0
12	Wed	Swindon Town (a)	1-5
26	WED	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (H)	0-5
Dec 3	Wed	CHARLTON ATHLETIC (H)	0-1
23	Tue	West Ham United (a)	1-2
Jan 7	Wed	Wimbledon (a)	3-1
13	Tue	LUTON TOWN (H)	2-1
21	Wed	Southampton (a)	2-2
28	Wed	ARSENAL (H)	3-1
Feb 2	Mon	Chelsea (a)	0-4
10	Tue	WATFORD (H)	3-2
14	Sat	SWINDON TOWN (H)	1-1
23	Mon	Brighton & Hove Albion (a)	1-1
Mar 4	Wed	Millwall (a)	1-0
9	Mon	QUEENS PARK RANGERS (H)	1-2
23	Mon	IPSWICH TOWN (H)	0-1
31	Tue	Crystal Palace (a)	0-3
Apr 6	Mon	Tottenham Hotspur (a)	0-4
8	Wed	Watford (a)	
21	Tue	NORWICH CITY (H)	
28	Tue	CRYSTAL PALACE (H)	
May 1	Fri	Portsmouth (a)	

**AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION
TABLE 1997/98 SEASON @ 2/4/98**

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Charlton Athletic	25	19	4	2	62	13	61
Arsenal	29	17	8	4	64	23	59
Tottenham Hotspur	25	16	6	3	51	21	54
Norwich City	31	11	11	9	38	42	44
Millwall	28	12	5	11	34	35	41
Wimbledon	29	11	7	11	36	33	40
Southampton	27	9	12	6	44	33	39
Crystal Palace	28	12	2	14	39	38	38
OXFORD UNITED	29	10	8	11	39	54	38
Portsmouth	28	10	7	11	37	37	37
Ipswich Town	29	9	10	10	41	52	37
Queens Park Rangers	28	9	9	10	41	38	36
Chelsea	29	7	10	12	37	50	31
Swindon Town	28	9	3	16	41	52	30
Luton Town	25	7	8	10	32	35	29
Watford	27	6	10	11	27	45	28
West Ham United	25	6	6	13	29	45	24
Brighton & Hove Albion	26	1	8	17	21	69	11

continued. We could have been 2-0 up in the first 20 minutes but Brian Wilsterman missed an open goal and Simon Weatherstone fired just wide.

However, Spurs scored just before half time and again ten

minutes after the re-start. We battled to keep the score as low as possible, but Spurs added two more.

'We were punished for four mistakes, but it was a good lesson', Mark added.

**SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE
DIVISION TWO FIXTURES AND TABLES**

Aug 9	Sat	BRISTOL CITY (H)	4-3
16	Sat	BRENTFORD (H)	0-3
23	Sat	SOUTHAMPTON (H)	3-1
30	Sat	Luton Town (a)	1-5
Sept 1	Mon	COVENTRY CITY (H) (SJFC-1)	3-3
13	Sat	WATFORD (H) LC1	2-4
17	Wed	Coventry City (a) (SJFC-1R)	0-1
27	Sat	COLCHESTER UNITED (H)	1-2
Oct 4	Sat	Bournemouth (a)	1-4
11	Sat	BRISTOL ROVERS (H)	4-2
18	Sat	Colchester United (a)	1-3
25	Sat	Wycombe Wanderers (a)	4-2
Nov 1	Sat	WIMBLEDON (H)	5-1
8	Sat	Swindon Town (a)	3-1
13	Thur	Reading (a) (FA Youth Cup.1)	2-3
15	Sat	Tottenham Hotspur (a)	2-2
22	Sat	Barnet (a)	1-7
29	Sat	BARNET (H)	2-1
Dec 6	Sat	Brighton & Hove Albion (a)	2-1
13	Sat	BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION (H)	2-0
20	Sat	Bristol City (a)	1-4
Jan 10	Sat	Southampton (a)	1-2
17	Sat	LUTON TOWN (H)	1-1
24	Sat	Reading (a)	1-3
Feb 7	Sat	Bristol Rovers (a)	2-1
14	Sat	BOURNEMOUTH (H)	0-0
28	Sat	WYCOMBE WNDRS (H)	1-2
Mar 14	Sat	SWINDON TOWN (H)	1-3
21	Sat	TOTTENHAM (H)	1-1
Apr 11	Sat	READING (H)	
18	Sat	Brentford (a)	
25	Sat	Wimbledon (a)	

**SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE DIVISION TWO
TABLE 1997/98 SEASON @ 4/4/98**

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Luton Town	27	18	6	3	71	24	60
Bristol City	25	15	6	4	50	32	51
Brentford	26	13	9	4	46	31	48
Wycombe Wanderers	26	11	9	6	42	27	42
Colchester United	26	10	8	8	42	37	38
Swindon Town	24	12	2	10	44	40	38
Southampton	26	10	5	11	52	52	35
Wimbledon	26	10	4	12	41	47	34
OXFORD UNITED	25	10	4	11	45	55	34
Bristol Rovers	27	8	7	12	48	49	31
AFC Bournemouth	27	7	8	12	38	54	29
Barnet	28	7	7	14	47	61	28
Reading	24	7	5	12	32	43	26
Tottenham Hotspur	24	6	5	13	28	45	23
Brighton & Hove Albion	25	3	7	15	29	58	16

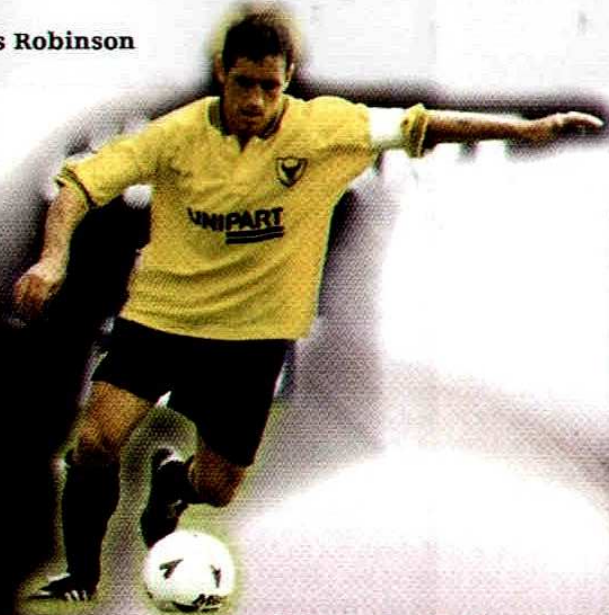


RESERVES

and Youths

With Mark Harrison and Mickey Lewis

Les Robinson



Phil Whitehead



Martin Gray

Send in your votes to Gary Whiting at the Club

Jamie Cook

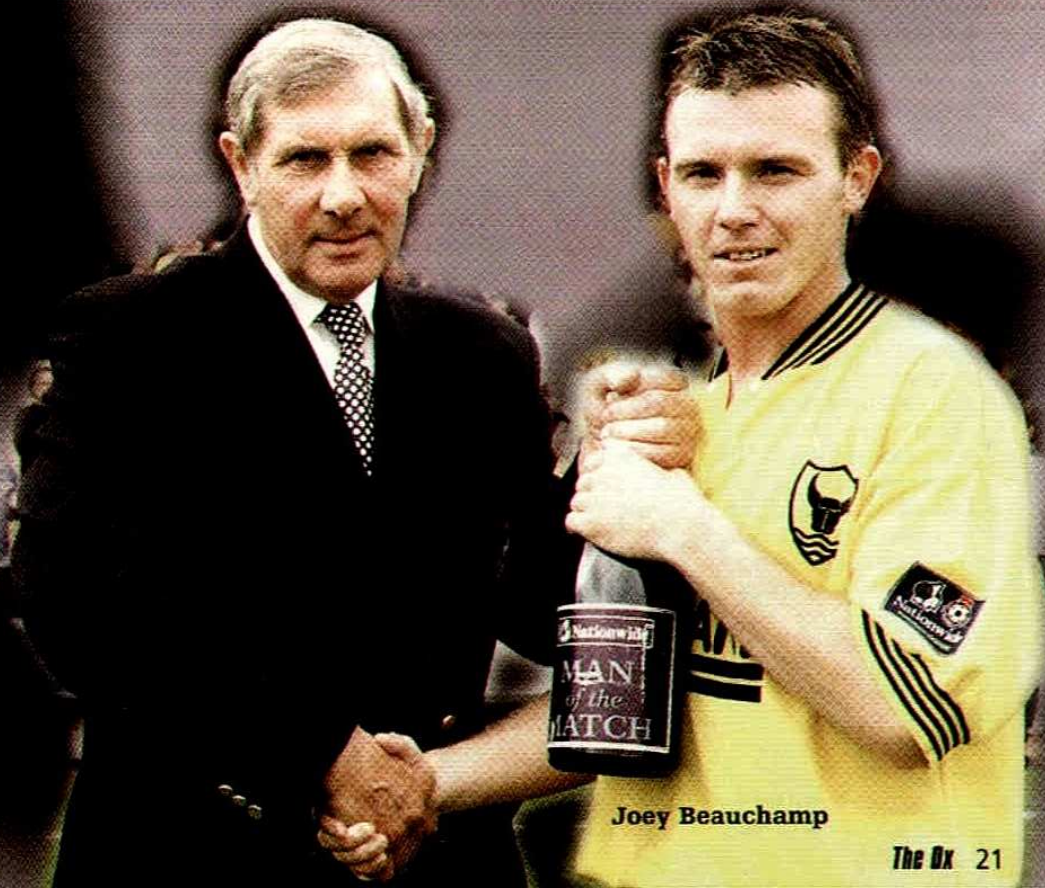


SUPPORTERS

Player of the

Year 1997/98

Phil Gilchrsit



Joeey Beauchamp

In an age when footballers are moving about from club to club, Mike Ford has been a loyal servant to Oxford United for almost ten years. In June, Mike will be celebrating a decade of involvement with the club and in that time he has become one of the most influential players in the side.

FORMATIVE YEARS

Mike has always been involved in the game even as a child. This was because his father - Tony, was a player, coach and manager. "In my formative years, my dad was a player. He packed in due to injury and went into coaching and management". Because of his father's position, Mike never settled in any one area and it was when his father was at Hearts that he started to get the attention of both Scottish and English clubs. "I played in a very good standard of schoolboy football in Scotland called "Boys Club Football". All the scouts came to the games and I went to Rangers for a trial. Aberdeen wanted to sign me on "S" Forms that are the equivalent of Schoolboy Forms. As long as my dad was at Hearts I was always going to sign for them. However, he got the sack from there so I had a trial at Leicester and the rest as they say is history".

RELEASED BY LEICESTER

After two years as a trainee at Leicester, Mike was released and went to Cardiff to try his luck. "I think that is one of the occasions when my dad's past came to help me. He knew people still in the game and he phoned around. I went to Cardiff on a trial basis, I did well, signed a contract and that was 14 years ago". Whilst at Cardiff, Mike was allowed to play for Devizes Town to get some match fitness. "I did play for Devizes but that was because when I first joined Cardiff I was on non-contract forms and they never had a Reserve side. So in order to play games, I played six games for Devizes, in fact I played centre-half and my dad was right-back. My last game for them was at a place called Poulton Rovers on a Saturday morning and we lost 6-0 and the following Saturday I played at Elland Road and we drew 1-1. It was a big step up in class and quite a contradiction". Within four years, Cardiff had won the Welsh Cup and promotion to the old Division Three and Mike was spotted by Mark Lawrenson who put in a bid for the player.

SIGNS FOR OXFORD

June 6, 1988 is a date Mike remembers well for it was the first day of his honeymoon. However before he could go, he had to meet the then Oxford manager Mark Lawrenson to discuss terms for his move to The Manor. "I was actually sitting in the bath on the morning of my wedding when the phone went. I jumped out and ran down the stairs and it was Frank Burrows the Cardiff manager. He told me that there was a club interested in signing me and I told him that I was getting married that day. He said that it was for the day after and I told him that I was going on honeymoon. He asked me what time I was leaving and I replied that I would be leaving in the evening. So he told me to get up to Oxford by 11 O Clock, speak to the Oxford manager Mark Lawrenson and see how I got on. Oxford had just been relegated from the top flight and I thought that this would be a great opportunity so I went and spoke to Mark. I actually asked if I could go and think about it whilst I was away for two weeks. Mark said what is there to think about and I said well nothing really so I signed the forms there and then and I've been here ever since".

Despite signing in the summer, Fordy's debut for the club was delayed due to a serious back injury. "When I first came, I did not get off to a great start with my back injury. I can put the record straight, I was definitely not jumping from chandeliers or tops of wardrobes. It was just one of those things".

GAINS THE SUPPORT OF THE FANS

It took a while for Fordy to get a rapport with the supporters, but if any one game can be described as a decisive moment, then Fordy feels it was that game against Hull City. "I remember being on the sub's bench when Alan Judge went off, I went in goal and kept a clean sheet. I think it was really from that day onwards that I established myself with the fans. I remember going back to the

dugout and Brian Horton just looked at me, we both knew what he was thinking and I went and put the goalkeeper jersey on. I wouldn't say I made a load of saves because I don't think I made a save the whole game. I do remember Billy Whitehurst running through one on one with just me to beat and falling over. That was the only scare I had all game, I made a few catches, but all credit to the lads in front of me.

TRANMERE

If there is a game that stands out for Mike, then it is the Tranmere match on the last game of the 1991-92 season. United needed to win to have any chance of staying up and even then that might not have been enough with other clubs in a far better position.

In Depth Profile on Michael Paul Ford

Birthplace: Bristol
Date Of Birth: 9 February 1966

Marital Status: Happy, I have one daughter called Gabriella

CAREER

Influence: My Dad

First Professional match: Leeds United Vs Cardiff City, 28 December 1984, we drew 1-1 to a Leeds side that included Peter Lorimer.

Clubs Played For: Cardiff (1984-88), Oxford United (1988-)

Highlight: There has not been a lot of highs but there has been the occasional one.

Winning promotion and the Welsh Cup with Cardiff, signing here, two goals at Cambridge, staying up at Tranmere and promotion here two seasons ago.

Disappointment: When I first came here, I suffered a back injury that delayed my debut.

Superstition: I used to be very superstitious but I was getting a lot of bad luck at one stage so I thought what was the point in being superstitious if I am getting bad luck. So I am no longer superstitious (touch wood)

Nickname: Busy

PERSONAL

Idea of a good night out: We have had some good days here where we have gone to the races, had a few drinks there and gone on to pubs and clubs afterwards. Some of them have been good because all the lads have been there, taking the p**s out of each other. I do not want to say I have got an ideal night out because one week I might fancy a quiet

meal with my other half or a night out with the boys. But I do enjoy the days and nights out with the lads. We have had some good nights out and the gaffer has said he wants us to go out and get all together and have a good day out. We actually had a night out before the Stoke match on the Tuesday that was fairly lively shall we say and we beat Stoke 5-1.

Ideal woman (excluding "Other Half"): I have got a thing for Zoe Ball at the moment but that might pass - and then it might be someone else.

First girlfriend and kiss: Sarah Patterson - a very attractive young lady, I was 14, it was on a hill in Hereford and it was snowing. I remember being blooming freezing and thinking do I use my tongue or not (I did, she did not).

When did you first get served in a pub and what did you buy: I remember it vividly. It was in 1981, the night of the wedding of Charles and Di. I was 14 and I assume it was a lager. I also remember throwing up the morning after.

First hangover: 24 July 1981
How do you relax: I do not really. A few years ago, I would have a kip in the afternoon but I do not anymore. I like a good night's sleep. I like to watch plenty of sport on the TV but I am always out and about keeping busy.

Last film you saw in the cinema: "Titanic" - with Kate Winslett and Leonardo DiCaprio.

"I do not know what it is like to win the FA Cup, but when the final whistle went on that game it must have been a similar feeling. I remember the day like it was yesterday. The final whistle had gone and we just had a feeling everything had gone well. There was an Oxford fan in the disabled enclosure and he had a radio from which we tried to get the other results. I said "come on lads, just get in the changing room, if everything has gone alright, well come back out. We went into the dressing room and within seconds we were told Plymouth had lost to Blackburn, the results had gone for us and we were staying up. We came back on the pitch, went straight to our supporters and we had a bit of a sing-song with them for five to ten minutes. We went back to the changing room and the champagne was out. We then got absolutely slaughtered the whole weekend, I remember going home on the Monday afternoon and going straight to bed because I was absolutely knackered".

Mike also scored two stunning goals against Cambridge that season, a feat he has not managed to repeat. "I was watching the Italian football on Saturday morning and it was still fresh in my mind when the first ball came out to me, I just drilled it and it flew in. The second one came to me and I thought I've done it once, why not have another go and to be honest that one was even better. We had some decent centre-halves then and I think I've had to cover for Gilly too much over the last few years. So I've not been able to get myself forward because I've been covering him and the chances to shoot at goal have been less than they used to be".

TEN YEARS

Mike has now been at the club for virtually ten years and in that time he has seen it go through all the highs and lows of football. Generally over the ten years it has been a struggle and we've always finished in the bottom half of Division One. We had one good year where two games to go we could have made the play-offs, but apart from the two years in the Second Division it has always been a struggle really. I think the managers who have come in have appreciated what I've been all about, but until this season, it has never been thrust in front of me that I would have the opportunity of leaving. You do not know what has gone on over the years but up until this season when there was the Blackpool and Stoke offers I've never really had the option of saying 'yes', I want to leave or 'no' I want to stay. I think for that reason alone that's why I've been at the club so long. But you get an affinity for the place. It is a very warm club and the supporters, although we do not get big crowds, there is a good nucleus of following and they appreciate what you are doing. I think they have appreciated what I have done over the years. I have certainly appreciated how they have felt towards me.

THE SEASON SO FAR....

This season has seen Mike struggle with one injury problem after another. "It's been a big let down for myself. I worked really hard in the summer and ran everyday on holiday. I started playing squash for the first time in ten years and I even played five-a-side football. I felt really fit and I've picked up a few injuries in pre-season. I had a niggle, played three games, got fit again and then I realised I did have a problem with one of my hamstrings. I went to see a specialist who told me what the problem was, worked on it and felt great with no problems at all. Then I picked up a neck injury at Leeds which knocked me for six really. Then I picked up this dead leg at Bradford which was virtually a complete rupture of my thigh and that's what I've had since. I've had a few injuries but I've always come back fitter and stronger than before and I cannot see this being any different from the others. You have got to be strong mentally, you've got to get on with it. It's a lonely life down in the gym, you work on your own but that is sometimes beneficial because you can just get on with it with no distractions".

THE NEXT JIMMY HILL?

At 32, Mike is now nearing the twilight of his career and has already tried his hand at a couple of possible future careers. "I've had a go at TV and radio work, but I think Gilly has more chance of being the next Jimmy Hill. My chin is not nearly big enough, but I've had a little dab at it and I quite enjoyed it. When I was on the TV, I missed being involved with the lads in the dressing room, at dugout level and on the pitch. I like the involvement of it all and as I've always been around football, it's just maybe something I will continue to be in. I would like the opportunity to get into coaching or management but those are few and far between". Mike has also tried his hand at stage work in the comedy quiz "Shooting Stars". "I really enjoyed that, the second night was after our Christmas party at the club with the staff so it is all a bit of a blur. But the first night was very good. I was told that the second night was also very good although my impersonation of Tommy Cooper was not the best so I'm still working on that one".



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MARKETING

With Trevor Baxter
MATTERS

Good afternoon and welcome to this afternoons local derby. I hope that you enjoy the match and find time to visit the Club Shop just in time for Easter.

Shop News

White Away Kit.

We now have a full complement of white away kit, an ideal gift for Easter and perfect for your summer holidays. Why not call into the Club Shop and try one out for size.

Commercial News

1998-99 Fixture Planner -

The Oxford United Fixture Planner will be displayed in pubs, clubs and businesses throughout Oxford and the surrounding area.

Advertise on the planner and get two tickets for matchday sponsorship.

SPONSOR NEXT SEASONS SWINDON FIXTURE FOR £4,999

For that you will get 20 tickets in the Directors Box as Official Match Sponsor **plus** your company will be the official sponsor of the clubs **End of Season Video**.

You will have the opportunity to advertise your company to a captive market through the popular medium of video at a price you can afford.

PERIMETER ADVERTISING BOARDS

We are now reserving places for next seasons perimeter advertising boards. To obtain a prominent TV location, get your reservation in now.

With at least one game live on national television and highlights on Central after every match, it is too good an opportunity to miss.

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*Enjoy this afternoons match and
remember that the Club Shop is
open for half an hour afterwards.*

Clubline - 0891 44 00 55

For all the latest news and views on the club. This service is regularly updated with live reports on matchdays both at home and away.

This is the only official telephone information service for Oxford United F.C.

**0891 44 00 55 Calls charged at
50p per minute**



BLUE BOND

The Blue Bond Club is a weekly draw run by Oxford United Football Club, bringing badly needed finance into the Club.

For just **50p a week**, there are seven chances, five days a week, to win a £100 and a monthly draw for Electrical goods. Phone the club for more details and **get behind the lads** and join now!

Nationwide

FOOTBALL LEAGUE

1**Q. P. R. (A)****Queens Park Rangers v Oxford United**

Nationwide Football League Division One
 Tuesday 14th April 1998 - Kick off 7.45 pm

Seating: We are currently selling tickets from the Manor for the School End lower tier, priced £13 adults, £7 under 16s/over 65s, although the view is not as good as the lower tier. Any unsold tickets will be on sale at Loftus Road at the turnstiles costing £15 adults and £8 concessions. If we fill the 1,200 seats in the lower tier, the upper tier will be opened with tickets costing £13 adults, £7 under 16s/over 65s.

Wheelchair supporters: Pre-book by contacting Steve Birkes at QPR on 0181 743 0262.

Car Parking: Street parking only.

How to get to Loftus Road:

Keep on M40 over the M25, M40 becomes A40 and runs through West London - allow extra time for this section, especially during the evenings. Exit A40 after 13.5 miles (s/p White City A40, Harlesden A404). At T-junction/lights turn right (s/p White City, Shepherds Bush), and through another set of lights under A40. At next lights, just past BBC White City complex on RHS, turn right (n/s) into South Africa Road. Ground is on LHS after 0.3 miles.

Nationwide

FOOTBALL LEAGUE

1**Middlesboro'(A)****Middlesbrough v Oxford United**

Nationwide Football League Division One
 Sunday 3rd May 1998 - Kick off 1.30 pm

Seating: We have been allocated 880 seats priced £17 adults, £10 for under 16s/over 65s. These tickets are on sale, one per season ticket holder or member. They will remain on sale on this basis until 5.00 pm on Friday 17th April.

Any remaining tickets would be available for members and season ticket holders for guests (subject to availability) from 9.30 am on Saturday 18th April.

Season Ticket Holders/Members

With the end of the season fast approaching, and renewal letters to be sent, could any members/season ticket holders who have moved since last Summer ensure that the Ticket Office has your current address on file. Thank you.

We hope to announce the price details for the 1998/99 season before the end of this season, and it is anticipated that the cheap rate deadline, and deadline for applications paying on the direct debit installment scheme, will be Friday 29th May.

Anyone who is not a current member or season ticket holder, and would like details sent, should send a request - accompanied by a large stamped addressed envelope - to the Ticket Office by the end of the month.

Directions to away grounds are kindly supplied by the Football Fans Guide, an invaluable guide for all travelling fans.

Nationwide

FOOTBALL LEAGUE

1**Birmingham (H)****Oxford United v Birmingham City****ALL TICKET**

Nationwide Football League Division One
 Saturday 25th April 1998 - Kick off 3.00 pm

Members who did not attend the Norwich City fixture can purchase one ticket until 5.00 pm on Wednesday. Tickets go on open sale from 9.30 am on Thursday. The Club reserves the right not to sell home area tickets to anyone we suspect to be away supporters.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ANY TICKETS AVAILABLE ON THE MATCH DAY.

London Road Club

**Queens Park Rangers
 Tuesday 14th April**

Fare: £6 adults, £5 juniors
 Departs: Castle Street 5.00 pm
 Manor Ground 5.15 pm

**Middlesbrough
 Sunday 3rd May**

Fare: £10 adults, £9 juniors
 Departs: Castle Street 7.45 am
 Manor Ground 8.00 am

Tickets & Travel

Executive Security,
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Executive Security is a
24-hour locksmith. During
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Mark Jones
OUTSET DAY NURSERY,
BICESTER

COMMUNITY

WITH PETER RHOADES-BROWN



and

JUNIOR NEWS

Welcome to you all for another local derby match. For your entertainment before the game we have a relay, using kids that have been on our Saturday Special Soccer Course this morning. One group will be in the yellow of Oxford, the other in the red of Swindon. Please encourage them all.

G-A-Sides - Local

Last week I refereed a competition for four schools - Bletchington, Tackley, Bladon and Kirtlington. Even though the weather was cold and horrible the football was very good and all the players did very well. The eventual winners were Bladon. It was a pleasure to be involved.

G-A-Sides National- Panini - Wembley!!

They made it. Last week Headington Middle School (right) got through to play at Wembley before the Autoglass Cup Final on Sunday 19th April, against Nottingham Forest.

In the South play-offs we topped the League, beating Millwall, Wolves and Swansea. Well done boys. I'm looking forward to another great day out.

Mothers Day Winner

Our Club winner is Katie Knight (age 10) from West Oxford School. She wrote in her card why her Mum, Marylin, deserves a bouquet of flowers. 'You deserve a bouquet because - besides looking after me, my Mum looks after my gran who lives with us, and she isn't very well. I love my Mum'.

This was another competition organised by Wagon Wheels, the Community sponsors and, once again, has been very successful. Katie will present the flowers to her Mum at half time.



Eynsham Youth Group

Last Friday evening Mike Lewis asked me to pop over to the youth club to chat to the group about fitness, health, my career as a professional for 11 years with Oxford and Chelsea, and the job I am doing now. It went very well and I am looking forward to returning in the Summer to do some coaching outside.

Come on you yellows.

Mal Says Thanks

Malcolm Elias departed as Youth Development Officer last week to take up a similar position at Swansea City.

He has rung and asked me to say a very big thank you to all Oxford United supporters for the wonderful reception you gave him at the Norwich match. It is something he will never forget. Thanks.

Mascot

Today's mascot is 12 year old Matthew Brain from Cutteslowe, Oxford. Matthew attends Marston Middle School, and enjoys football, darts and television. His favourite players are Joey Beauchamp and Martin Gray.



Birthdays

Happy birthday to the following Juniors:

Hannah Nicholas (8) and Hayley Woods (14) both on 29th March, Benjamin Davis (5), Matthew Taylor (8) and Alex Walton (10) all on the 30th, Daniel Taylor (10) and Kayvon Dizaei (10) both on the 6th April, and to Jermo Wilsterman who was 6 yesterday. Hope you all had a lovely day.

And apologies to Darren Clare, whose age was incorrect in the last programme - he was actually 14, not 12 as quoted.

SCHOOLBOY



■ Kelvin with his Mum and Dad, signing schoolboy forms

Welcome to the Manor to our Centre of Excellence youngsters who will, no doubt, be out in force to watch what should prove to be an exciting derby match against our local rivals.

Malcolm Departs

For those of you who follow the 'Schoolboy Scene', it must come as quite a shock not to see the smiling face of Malcolm Elias. Malcolm left to join his home-town club, Swansea City, as Director of Youth Football. Our loss is Swansea's gain. Malcolm built up a Centre of Excellence at Oxford which is second to none. He employed staff very astutely who have proved to be very loyal to the Club and have raised the standards of coaching to give the boys an excellent chance of reaching the top.

On a personal note, Malcolm has been a great help to us all in our office, and we wish him best of luck for the future.

Decisions

What an important time to take over; this time of the year we have to select and register boys who are regular assessed, for our Centre of Excellence, ready for next season - from ages under 9 to under 16, as well as organise trials and also fixtures. Talk about being thrown in at the deep end!

Under 15s

I was delighted this week to sign Kelvin McIntosh on schoolboy forms. Kelvin, pictured above, attends Cheney School, Headington and can play in either defence or midfield.

Sunday Teams

Unfortunately, our Under 14 and Under 15 home fixtures had to be cancelled because of the weather, but we were represented at Peterborough (Under 12s) and Coventry (Under 13s).

SCENE

With
Les
Taylor



Under 12s

A good performance from our Under 12s. Manager Pete Foley and Jeremy Charles were delighted with the all-round team effort in poor conditions, which saw us score four well taken goals.

Under 13s

Peter Rhoades-Brown commented on how the Under 13s are starting to put in consistent performances which has helped individual displays. Picking out Adam Garner and Paul Hedger along with Michael Alexis who had fine games against Coventry.

Soccer Courses

Our Soccer Courses for 4-11 year olds start week beginning Monday 27th April, and we still have spaces available at the following venues:

John Mason, Abingdon (Monday 6.00 pm - 7.00 pm), Didcot Leisure Centre, Drayton School (Banbury), Chipping Norton School, Park Sports Centre (Wheatley), Peers School (Littlemore), Henry Box Secondary School (Witney), Bicester Sports Centre, Thame Sports & Arts Centre, Carterton Upper School.

If you want to be involved with the Club there is no better way than the courses. So why not call our Soccer Course Director, Mark Jones, on 01865 761503 for more information?

Juniors Last Away Trip

The last trip is on Tuesday evening when we visit Queens Park Rangers. We are now accepting non-member family groups. Prices are £14 adult, £8 junior members and £10 junior non-members. Please apply at ticket office after today's game or by phone, from 9.30am Tuesday on 01865 761503, subject to availability.



■ Les Taylor after a week in the hot seat!

Oxford United

KIT

Yellow shirts, Blue shorts

1 PHIL WHITEHEAD

2 LES ROBINSON

3 SIMON MARSH

4 MARTIN GRAY

5 STEVE DAVIS

6 PHIL GILCHRIST

7 MATT MURPHY

8 DAVID SMITH

9 NICKY BANGER

10 JAMIE COOK

11 JOEY BEAUCHAMP

12

13

14

Swindon Town

KIT

Red shirts, Red shorts

1 FRASER DIGBY

2 DAVID KERSLAKE

3 BRIAN BORROWS

4 ALAN McDONALD

5 DARREN BULLOCK

6 MARK ROBINSON

7 MARK WALTERS

8 SCOTT LEITCH

9 IFFY ONUORA

10 GEORGE NDAH

11 TY GOODEN

12

13

14

MATCH OFFICIALS

Today's referee is 34 year old **SCOTT MATHIESON**, a joiner in the building trade, from Stockport. Scott is married with two children. He began refereeing in local leagues, progressing to the national list of referees four years ago. Scott competes in various sporting activities - for example tennis, golf and 5-a-side football.

ASSISTANT REFEREES:

K R Buller (Red Trim Flag)
A C Harvey (Yellow Trim Flag)

RESERVE OFFICIAL:

M Scholes

MATCHBALL SPONSORS

Oxford Project
& Facilities
Management



Mascot

This afternoon's mascot is 12 year old **MATTHEW BRAIN** from Cutteslowe, Oxford.



Next Home Game

TRANMERE ROVERS

Nationwide League

Division One

Saturday 18th

April 1998

Kick-Off 3.00pm



1