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The FA Cup run of 1970 and 1971, courtesy of U's fan and long standing U's feature writer in the Gazette, Brian Waller

At the age of 18, I was privileged to see most of another of Colchester United famous F A Cup runs which started back in November 1970. This saw the visit of Sussex based non league amateur side Ringmer. In the match it was the experienced Ray Crawford the star as he scored a hat trick. The U's took a seventh lead as he got onto a long ball forward by Mick Mahon, before slotting the ball past visiting keeper Finch. Then right on half time, he netted a second as the pair combined again, when Crawford got on the end of a Mahon cross. His third came six minutes from time, when he side footed home a Bobby Cram cross.

Three weeks later and it was another home tie, this time against Cambridge United. Missing a few of their regular players, they still managed a 3-0 win. The first goal came just after the half hour mark when Ray Crawford got on the end of a poor back pass by Grant, and he set up the chance for Ken Jones to score. The goal saw the U's get on top and it came as no surprise when they got a second one before half time. A centre from Mick Mahon was deflected by a defender to Crawford, whose neat flick back was driven into the net by John Gilchrist. After Jones then limped off, he was replaced by Brian Owen, but it was to be dramatic few seconds for him. With his first touch he set up for Brian Garvey to lob the ball over the keeper's head to score a third goal for his team. However the joy of the scoring was tempered by the fact that Owen was laid out on ground, which then transpired to be a broken kneecap.

Having seen both the home ties, I went on the coach on the first Saturday of the New Year towards Barnet. Sadly enroute we then found out that the match was cancelled due to the conditions. When the match was rescheduled for the following Tuesday, I did not attend, but it saw the U's win 1-0 thanks to a sixth minute goal by Mick Mahon on a pitch that was still like a skating ring and an iron hard ground.



Round 4 and it was another away tie as my brother and myself boarded a football special train to Spotland in Rochdale. The home team had created a shock in the round before as they had beaten a higher ranking team in Coventry City 2-1.

In those days supporters could change ends in the ground and just in front of us, we were to witness Ray Crawford giving the U's an early lead on three minutes as he headed in Brian Hall's free kick. Colchester had to battle hard but it was level at 1-1 by half time as Joe Arrowsmith hammered in a 35 yard free kick.

After half time, and with us at the other end of the ground now, the home team then got on top as they scored twice through Buck within seventeen minutes of the start of the second half. At this point in the game, a man in the crowd was heard to have ordered his son to go away and spend a £1 buying a load of pies for him and his friends. Another interesting fact from the game was that referee Capey at one point considered calling the match off as the U's keeper Graham Smith was bombarded by coins thrown at him by home supporters in the crowd.

However if this had happened it would have denied the watching spectators a magnificent conclusion to the game. At 3-1 down, the U's were given a life line but the home keeper smothered a weakly hit Bobby Cram penalty. Then with seven minutes remaining and the U's still well behind, and with some of their supporters having already left the ground early, they were later amazed to hear in disbelief the dramas that were to ensue in those last few moments. Dale somehow relaxed too much, thinking the job was done, but when Crawford squared the ball to Brian Lewis to score there was still hopes and that was to materialise a couple of minutes or so later, Brian Hall dashed down the wing and from his cross over, David Simmons side footed the ball into the net to make it 3-3. The local paper report suggested the man and his friends who had eaten the pies would now be suffering with indigestion.

It was to be a joyous walk back to the railway station to be met by the early leavers who found it hard to believe that the U's had somehow managed to draw the match. On the train trip back, we were joined by the Colchester players who were very happy to autograph our programmes. As I look through my cuttings to remind myself

of my memory, I indeed found my bus tickets for the ride from the station to the ground, which was 8d which was equivalent now to be 3p.

On the Monday at work several people were gathered around my radio to hear the Fifth Round draw and we were all happy as we could be seeing the mighty Leeds United at Layer Road. They were the star team of the day in England and Europe. In those days, replays were quick and ours was on Monday night and there were no mistakes as we convincingly won 5-0.

In a closely fought first half, the visitors missed a glorious chance on 38 minutes before the U's took the lead three minutes later as Mick Mahon broke free on the left, Dave Simmons headed the ball down for Brian Lewis to slide the ball into the net. Almost at once Smith cleared off the lead from Brian Gibbs but immediately Simmons scored from a Brian Hall cross. Into the second half and Gibbs struck the bar from 25 yards out and then the U's got a third as Hall broke down the left and it was an own goal as Parry was turning the ball into his own net. Ray Crawford who earlier had also hit the bar, then headed in Hall's cross. The final goal came when Mahon scored one of his spectacular efforts. Saturday 13th February 1971 dawned, a date I always remembered for two reasons, first it was a glorious day in the history of the club and it was also two days before the whole change of the currency in this country.

This saw no more 1d, 3d, 6d, 1 shilling, 2 shillings, 2 and sixpence coins and ten shilling and one pound notes, to be replaced by the decimal currency, when 240 old pence equaled 100 new pence, it led to fun at work as an accountant when we had to convert client's figures in their cash books. So it was to be the pre-decimalise battle between the two Uniteds, fourth division Colchester and first division Leeds. I always recall the picture in the National paper, the Daily Express of a smiling Alan Clark saying how my team were not going to win 2-1. I think that he was not smiling after the match. Just a week before the Leeds match, Leeds manager Don Revie was seen huddled up in the U's stand watching Colchester playing a league match on a Friday night, eight days before the big game. This saw a 2-1 home win for Colchester over Cambridge United.



Around 1pm on the big day, I was standing on the top corner of the ground in my usual spot with my brother David with little chance of moving once we were there in the crowd of 16,000. The local paper also published a cartoon of three dogs talking saying one offered to mark Jack Charlton, this was a reference to an incident a year before when the Brentford keeper Chic Brodie was badly injured as a dog on the

pitch then chased the ball and careered into the knee of the visiting player. The serious stuff then began at 3pm and was captured on TV and what a game we were to witness. The U's began the match and were soon pressurising a panicky Leeds defence with the unpredictable Leeds keeper Gary Sprake at his error prone best. His first mistake came when Brian Lewis swung a free kick into the box and as Sprake came out and missed the ball, it was Ray Crawford doing a lot better as he made the perfect run before heading the ball into the net. Better was to come for Colchester as a Crawford header struck the back of Paul Reaney and whilst grounded, the U's striker swung a foot to turn the ball into the net. On 54 minutes, the unbelievable happened and the home team went 3-0 ahead as Lewis played a deep ball into the Leeds box and it was Dave Simmons who outjumped the hesitant keeper Sprake.





Ray Crawford celebrates goal number 1



Grounded Ray Crawford hooks in goal number 2

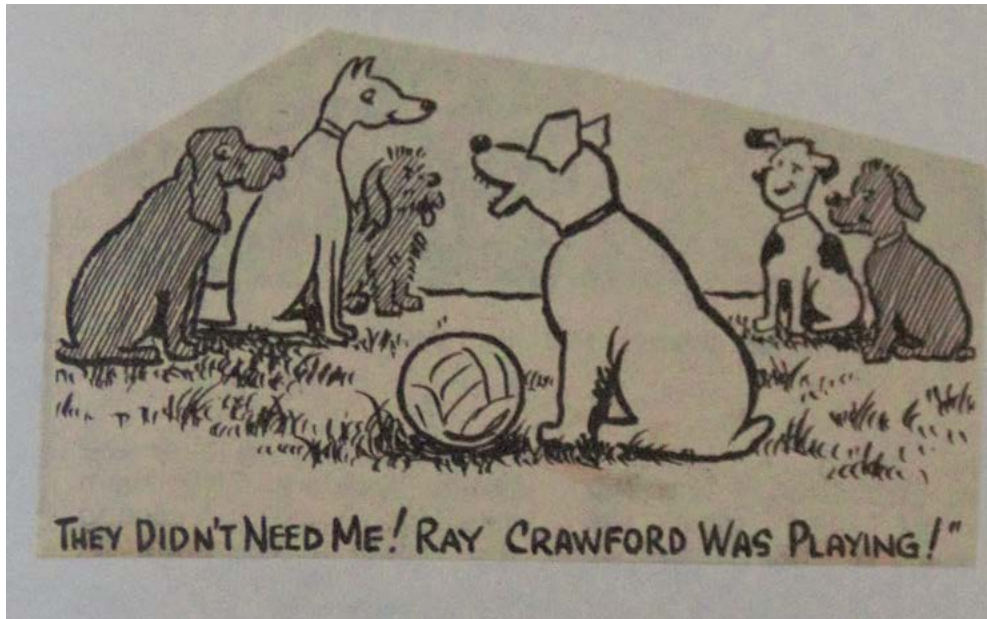


Dave Simmons outjumps keeper Gary Sprake to head in number 3

On the hour mark, the visitors got a goal back as Norman Hunter headed home after a short corner. Sixteen minutes from full time, it was 3-2 as Johnny Giles swiveled to score. The U's had their chances to score again, but it needed their own keeper Graham Smith to preserve the lead as he made a superb save from Mick Jones after a cross by Peter Lorimer. So the U's hung on well to secure the narrow victory and the result earned them an away sixth round draw at Everton in early March 1971.



Dick Graham said he would climb the Town wall if we beat Leeds



At Goodison Park, it was where the U's hopes were blown away by a devastating spell of scoring by the home team as they scored four times in just over ten first half minutes. Again we were all off on one of three specials trains as coaches and cars, saw a travelling crowd of around 8,000 U's supporters who were in a crowd of 53,028 for gate receipts of £26,000, that works out at less than 50p per person. Colchester began the match very well and created numerous chances before they fell behind on 23 minutes as Alan Ball's free kick was headed in by Howard Kendall. Then it all went wrong. On 32 minutes as Kendall turned home Ball's cross and after John Kurila dallied after a pass from Brian Garvey. The former was robbed by Joe Royle who netted a third goal. It went from bad to worst as Jimmy Husband drove in the next and it was 4-0. Colchester battled on and deserved a goal but seven minutes from time, keeper Graham Smith saved well from Royle, but Ball was on to put away the rebound as the home team won 5-0.



Howard Kendall heads home for Everton's first



Graham Smith made another good save



Alan Ball scores the fifth goal