



where United's fans will be stationed, workmen are completing last-minute upgrades to the dressing rooms, while a marquee is being erected to provide work space for media representatives.

The excitement is understandable. Yeovil are the original FA Cup giant-killers. Though in truth their record against United in the competition is not distinguished. Back in 1949, when they played in the Southern League, they beat Sunderland at Yeovil's old ground in the town centre (these days a Tesco) where the slope was so substantial the pitch could have doubled as a ski-jump course. With the entire country behind them, they then travelled to Manchester in the next round, only to lose 8-0. They played United again in 2015, when a team containing six of Mourinho's current squad beat them 2-0. But the manager is determined to reverse the losing trend.

"Just look at that pitch," he says, pointing at the sandy, rutted surface. "It may not have the slope, but that's not like the pitches they're used to playing on. Will we make it wet and horrible on the day? Possibly."

If there is history around the place, Way is more than aware of it. A sniping, snappy Jack Russell of a player, during the noughties he formed a formidable midfield partnership with Lee Johnson, now the Bristol City manager, as the club first gained league

membership, then tore up the divisions. After a career-ending car accident in 2008, he joined the Huish Park backroom staff, first as a coach under Lee's father Gary, then from December 2015, as manager.

"Other managers go into clubs and don't really know the place but the emotional attachment I have is 17 years of history. I'm going to do my best to protect it." He knows all about doing that: he has spent much of his time in charge firefighting against relegation from League Two. "We were doomed when I took over," he says.

Though after two seasons successfully coordinating last-ditch escapes, the club still remain in relegation danger. Which has made their form in cup competitions all the more pleasing a distraction. In addition to beating two League One sides on this FA Cup run, they are still in with a chance of making the last four of the Checktrade Trophy.

"League football brings different pressures," explains Way. "We've



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got a young team. I've probably got four players who have experience. But with the FA Cup my players have had no fear. This could be one of the club's biggest achievements.

"I don't say that lightly because I've been involved in the joy of reaching the Championship. But to

Feeling at home: Darren Way acknowledges the fans (main), the small but revamped changing rooms (top right) and Yeovil's Dickie Dyke saves in the 1949 win over Sunderland (right)



beat one of the best clubs in the world, or take them back to Old Trafford, would be a fantastic moment." He believes the Cup also offers some of the more grumbly elements in the fan base the chance to relax.

"I'm just a little bit disappointed, I can't lie," he says. "One or two are trying to set up little conspiracies against us. My message to them would be live the moment. Being a Yeovil fan, you may never get this opportunity again. Get behind the team, get behind the manager, and feel proud for the day."

In the attempt to give the fans something to revel in, Way has rigorously exploited his contacts. His friendship with Johnson saw him take the entire Yeovil squad to Ashton Gate on Tuesday to watch the Carabao Cup semi-final against Manchester City. On Wednesday and Thursday his players used Bristol City's facilities to train, making particular use of the cryotherapy unit to ease tired muscles. And in between sessions, he took the opportunity to pick Johnson's brain about how he might repeat the West Country reverse United suffered in the Carabao Cup quarter-final.

"How do we do it? Put a brick wall front of the goal, make sure we're tactically astute, concentrate," he says. "No stone is being left unturned. It's a chance of a lifetime and I've asked the players to dream bigger than ever before. Though the truth is, I won't enjoy it unless we draw or win."