

ON THE MARCH

DRUM MAJOR: Sixteen-year-old QPR fan Jennifer Shepherd on the six-mile march from the club's Loftus Road ground to Wembley Stadium.

B EING the underdogs and in the Third Division, how confident were you going into the final?

That is an interesting question. Honestly, we were very confident because we were a fantastic wide-open and attacking team. We didn't really fear anybody. We had beaten Leicester City and Birmingham City on the way to the final and in those days they were very good teams. We scored four against Leicester and seven against Birmingham over two legs in the semi-final. Perhaps the only worry was that West Brom had a handful of current or future internationals in their team and we didn't have one.

How were the nerves?

Not too bad actually. In my particular case it was more excitement. I was excited to play at Wembley in a final because that's what I always wanted to do as a kid. When you were growing up in those days you wanted two things – to be a professional footballer and to play at Wembley in a final. That was the aim in life for most young lads. It was happening to me so I was excited and it was an incredible feeling.

What did it feel like to walk out at Wembley in front of such a massive crowd?

I think Wembley had a 100,000 capacity at the time and it was nearly full to the brim. It was huge because a lot of QPR fans had actually walked the six miles from Shepherd's Bush to Wembley. They marched up the A4, thousands of them, carrying a coffin with West Brom written on it. It was brilliant. It was a magical day, that is the only way I can describe it.

What was the atmosphere like?

It was indescribable. You can't explain it to somebody who has never played in front of 100,000 people. You can't tell them what it's like because it's impossible to get that actual feeling across to people. It's intangible. It's like someone trying to describe what it's like to sky-dive – until you've done it you can't describe it. I suppose I am one of a small crowd to have experienced it and I consider myself very lucky.

Is there a specific memory or moment from the day?

It has to be my goal. It made it 2-2 and I think everybody knew we would go on to win from that point. Both sets of players, the referee, the crowd – everyone knew.

Why do you think QPR made such a slow start?

I think that certain players were overawed by the occasion. There were players in that team who would normally never have had a chance of playing at Wembley. It took us 45 minutes to realise we were in a fight.

Going 2-0 down, did you still believe you had a chance?

Personally I thought there was no way we could win after the second West Brom goal. What was lucky was the half-time break. It broke up their rhythm and momentum. When we came out for the second half we were a different team.

What did your manager, Alec Stock, say at half-time?

Do you know what, I can't remember if he said anything much at all. Alec



EMOTIONAL: Marsh at the final whistle.

Stock was in as much shock as everybody else. We were all numb. Players were wandering around the dressing room saying "We shouldn't be 2-0 down, this is ridiculous." But we were. I don't think Alec said anything other than go out and win the second half. But we had a team that could score goals from anywhere and at anytime. I had scored 11 goals on the route to the final alone, so we knew we were capable. We played proper football. Little one-twos, passing, passing, passing – proper football.

You scored a stunning bicycle kick but it was disallowed – should it have been?

I wish it was on TV, they would've caught it nowadays. The guy that was marking me saw, or thought he saw, that I was offside. From his view I was, but there was a left-back who was about 30 yards away who was playing me onside. The linesman flagged, but I maintain that I was onside. He robbed me of a stunning goal at Wembley.

How did you feel when your equaliser went in off the post?

It's something I wish every fan could experience. Because in front of 100,000 fans at Wembley, when you're a Third Division team and 2-1 down, to get the equaliser, and the way I scored the goal by dribbling past a few players ... It was just amazing. The veins of your throat open wider, the blood rushes through to your head and you can smell the grass and you can hear the crowd. Your senses are heightened. This incredible euphoria comes over you and you don't actually know what you are doing.

How did you feel at the final whistle? There is a great picture of Jim Langley with his arm around you and you look emotional. What was it that caused the tears?

It was the understanding that you've done something very special. Also, the let-down that it's all over and you can let it all out. It was just one of those magic moments where time stands still and it's recorded forever. I absolutely knew that it was something people would still be talking about in 50 years' time – and they will be.

There are things that happen in football that you'll never forget. They are indelible because in those days word of mouth was more important than actually seeing it.

For the QPR fans it was the first major trophy the club had ever won. It is the only time a Third Division team has done the double. It will never happen again. It was history in the making and something everyone associated with QPR will never forget.

I got thousands of fan-mail letters. I got sent all kinds of different stuff such as St Christophers, scarves and women were even sending their knickers in.

But there is one person I want to mention who never gets the credit

CHRISTOPHER EVANS looks back at QPR's famous 3-2 win over West Brom in the 1967 League Cup final ... in a question and answer session with ex-Loftus Road star Rodney Marsh



LEVEL FOOTING: Marsh drives in the QPR equaliser.

he deserves. That is Jim Gregory, who was the chairman at the time. He was a down-to-earth Londoner, rough-and-ready guy with an extreme passion for football and QPR. Without him we would never have won the trophy and QPR wouldn't be the club they are today.

How did you celebrate that night?

We had a party at the hotel, as is usually the case. Drinking was a massive part of football culture back then. We'd drink pints and pints of lager. You'd hit the wall by 2am and then that's it, you're shattered. I don't remember much so it must have been a cracking night.

QPR also won Division Three that season. Which was better, a victory at Wembley or the Third Division title?

Easily Wembley, as it's something that you can't replicate. It's 46 years ago and people still talk about it today. It was unique.

Do you think it is one of the biggest-ever cup upsets?

I can't think of a bigger one. A Third Division team playing one from the First Division at Wembley and being 2-0 down at half-time. It is unheard of. At Paddy Power you would've probably got 10,000 to 1 at half-time on QPR winning.

In a pre-match article from 1967 you are described as the El Cordobes of Football (The Matador) and The Clown Prince of Football. How did you feel about those nicknames?

Everybody had a nickname for me. *El Cordobes* was a bullfighter who used to stand in the middle of the ring and let the bull charge him. It was usually dancing and poncing around and getting out of the way. I think Norman Gillier of the *Daily Express* first coined that. I quite liked that one. I was also known as The Clown Prince of Football and The Wizard – they are all b*****s, it's typical press though. My team-mates used to give me loads of stick about the nicknames and take the pee out of me – especially Mark Lazarus. He was always winding me up – but he was such a fantastic lad.

QPR wore an all-white strip for the first time that day – why?

We had played the whole season in blue-and-white hoops at home and away we wore red. We arrived at Wembley and suddenly Alec Stock unleashed this all-white kit on us. White shirts, shorts and socks – it was hilarious.

But nobody said anything, we were all just laughing and thinking 'where has this come from? What are we playing in this colour for?' It wasn't as if our colours clashed with West Brom. We all speculated that Alec must have got a few quid to change the colours for the day.



RIP: QPR fans marching to Wembley with a West Brom coffin.