

# FROM BARRY STOBART TO NEIL YOUNG

WHEN THE FA CUP *REALLY* MATTERED

VOLUME 1 - THE 1960s



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# Introduction

**T**HE FA Cup doesn't matter anymore. Not really. Not like it used to. That is not to say the competition doesn't still have romance and the ability to shock. Just ask the fans of recent winners like Wigan Athletic or Portsmouth or finalists like Millwall or Cardiff City.

It can still mean a memorable day out at Wembley and a shot at Europe and the earlier rounds can still throw up some extraordinary results. But it still doesn't matter like it used to and especially the Cup Final itself. Dare I say that in these times of wall-to-wall satellite television and more live games in one weekend than there once was in the whole of a season, it is just another match, albeit still a fairly high profile one? For the big boys, the FA Cup is a 'nice to have' whereas it used to be a 'must have.'

You see the FA Cup Final used to stop this nation in its tracks. Once the semi-finals had been decided the talk in football was of little else. And, unlike today, everyone knew who was in the final. That is the difference. It is impossible to compare the FA Cup finals of, say, the 1970s, with those of today. Back then, the final was the season's showpiece. Always played at 3pm, usually on the first Saturday in May and it was always live on the two major broadcasting channels, BBC1 and ITV.

The streets would start getting quieter at around lunchtime as people took their places. Friends and relatives would gather at each other's houses. Many people used to dress up for the match, even just to watch it on the television. I remember in May 1974, just after we had acquired our first colour television,

my grandfather came over wearing a suit and tie. The reason? It was FA Cup Final day – and it was special.

The FA Cup was instantly popular and the final itself retained its unique glamour and kudos throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Perhaps its most magnetic charm in those days was that it was live during a period when live television of any type was rare. Any live television back then was ‘must-see’ whether it was the *Eurovision Song Contest*, *Miss World* or *The Royal Variety Show*. But the FA Cup Final was the ‘daddy’ of them all. The one day of the year when even people with no real interest in football at all would settle down to watch this special, royal-tinged occasion.

It was in the 1980s that a number of factors conspired to start rendering the cup final less relevant or unique than it was. In the early 1980s, terrestrial television companies began tentatively screening live league matches at weekends. Then the arrival of satellite television resulted in several live matches a week which started to remove some of the gloss from the ultra-rare ‘live experience’.

Then came the Premier League and its accompanying riches which turned already wealthy clubs into gluttonous behemoths. Winning the Premier League became the undisputed, ultimate domestic achievement and, on the back of that, the Champions League moved the focus even further away from the poor old FA Cup. Before long, clubs were resting players for FA Cup matches, not just those clubs already in the Premier League (who all, without exceptions did it, and continue to do it) but those clubs outside the so-called elite, desperate to scramble into the top tier to feed off scraps from the King’s table.

This book and its accompanying volumes takes us back to a time when the FA Cup was without doubt the biggest club competition in the world and the FA Cup Final arguably the most important and famous club football match on the planet.

FOR MY BARRY

# Wolverhampton Wanderers v Blackburn Rovers

Saturday 7 May 1960

**I**N a late-night coffee bar just off Piccadilly Circus, a fit-looking, sandy-haired young man, with boyish features and a soft Yorkshire accent, sits opposite his beautiful girlfriend. It is early summer, two o'clock in the morning and the young pair are beaming. In the background, the lilting strings of Percy Faith's waltz 'Theme from A Summer Place' enhance the mood.

The young man is clasping a small box. Resting snugly on the velvet-lined casing is a gleaming medal. The man, exhausted yet euphoric from the day's exertions, stares inside and shakes his head in delighted disbelief. In his quiet, understated voice, he repeats to his girlfriend, 'I still can't believe I've got this. It's just fantastic, the best thing ever.' The girl smiles radiantly and, taking the box from him, she peers inside and says, 'I know, it's absolutely brilliant isn't it? So few people are lucky enough to win one of these.'

It is 8 May 1960. The young man's rise to sporting glory has been meteoric.

Fifty years later the same man sits opposite the same woman, now his wife. He rarely takes his eyes off her during this, his daily visit. The rain is beating down on the conservatory roof

of their warm, welcoming Black Country home. The woman produces the same medal, now slightly tarnished with age, but as special today as it was all those years ago.

This time there is no recognition from him as the medal is produced. It could be an old two-pence piece or even a chocolate coin, rather than an FA Cup Final winner's medal. But, tragically, the man has no idea that he was ever a professional footballer, no idea that he played for one of the country's top clubs during their greatest period, no memory of a scorching hot day at Wembley when he wore a famous gold shirt with black trim with such distinction helping bring joy and acclaim to a proud area.

The man's name is Barry Stobart and his wife, still utterly devoted to him though devastated by his condition, is Mo, short for Maureen. But Barry couldn't tell you any of those things. Because the young man whose dramatic inclusion in the all-conquering Wolverhampton Wanderers team which won the 1960 FA Cup Final was a resident of Bellevue Court, in Bilston, a care home specialising in the provision of nursing care for adults with enduring mental health needs and dementia.



Wolverhampton Wanderers were unquestionably the team of the 1950s. Pivotal to their success was the brilliant stewardship of manager and ex-club captain Stan Cullis. Taking over the reins in 1948 at the tender age of 31, Cullis built a magnificent team which gelled immediately. They were FA Cup winners in 1949 and league champions in 1954, 1958 and 1959.

Cullis had strong views about the way the game should be played. An early proponent of direct football, he said, 'We insist that every player in possession of the ball makes rapid progress towards the business of launching an attack and our forwards are not encouraged to parade their skills in ostentatious fashion.'

Though not popular with everyone, the record books show that Cullis's philosophy was a highly effective one.

Molineux became known throughout football as a uniquely atmospheric stadium, no doubt abetted by the installation of floodlights in the early 1950s and a series of high-profile evening games against foreign opposition like Racing Club of Argentina, Spartak Moscow and, most memorably, the Hungarian giants Honved.

In a match that was televised live, Wolves came back from 2-0 down at half-time to beat Honved 3-2. It is a game which has passed into footballing legend and was the first game Mo Stobart ever attended.

Born Maureen Littlehales in Bilston in 1940, she recalls, 'I loved football and I can still remember my lovely Dad, Simon, taking me to that Honved game. Those floodlit games against foreign teams were incredible. Wolverhampton was a very special place then. The town and the football club was buzzing. Even reserve games used to attract thousands of people. To go to Molineux then was always a thrill.'

After leaving school, Mo landed a job in the post department at the town's popular evening paper, the *Express & Star*. She was an effervescent and outgoing girl who thrived in her new environment.



Barry Stobart was born in 1938 in Doncaster, South Yorkshire. He had a difficult upbringing as his father walked out on the family when Barry was just six, leaving his mother Elsie to bring him and his sister Margaret up. He was a quiet child but thoughtful and studious, which is why, much to his mother's delight, he became head boy at Doncaster High School. He loved cricket, fishing and comics but what he really loved was football. And he excelled at it.

Barry joined Wath Wanderers, a Wolves feeder team, and eventually moved to the Molineux club in 1953, turning professional two years later. But, with the likes of Peter Broadbent, Jimmy Murray and Dennis Wilshaw playing up front – and the exceptionally high standards which manager

Stan Cullis demanded – it proved very difficult for Barry and others to break into the first team.

While plying his trade in the reserves, Barry did his national service at RAF Bridgnorth in Shropshire. He lived in digs on Waterloo Road, close to Molineux, at the house of Sarah Clamp, the mother of Wolves' tough-tackling half-back Eddie Clamp. For a while, a young Lancastrian boy with flame-coloured hair and a high-pitched voice was also staying at Mrs Clamp's house while Wolves took a look at him. They decided against giving him a full contract so the young man called Alan Ball returned home to try to find footballing success elsewhere.

One day, in 1957, Barry walked into the offices of the *Express & Star*, to order a photograph that had appeared in the sports section. It was the first time that Mo Littlehales had seen him and, after they got chatting, he asked her out on a date. Mo remembers, 'I was not attracted to Barry at all at first. But I did go on a date with him and found him to be a really nice sincere guy with no hang-ups. He did not talk about being a footballer but I would have still felt the same about him whatever he did.'



At the start of the 1959/60 season Wolves were, unquestionably, the top side in the country. Every Wolves fan of a certain age recalls this time with immense pride. Ray Brown first went to Molineux, aged nine, in 1938/39 and missed only a handful of home games in the next 70 years.

Now in his 80s, Ray can still recall his match day ritual during this magical period. Then employed as a chief designer at the Ever Ready Radio Factory on Park Lane, he says, 'When Wolves were at home I would meet my friends in the Queen's Cinema restaurant. This would be followed by window shopping in James Beattie's department store and having a look at the women in Boots the Chemist! Then a group of us would retire to the Sir Tatton Sykes pub near Wolverhampton railway station for a pre-match drink.'



‘We would then walk to Molineux and I would take my usual seat in the old stand right opposite the players’ entrance. I would then wait for a small-statured man called “Titch” Harding to open the old-gold painted doors. I knew then the players were about to come out as the traditional military band blared out over the public address system and the real reason for Saturdays was about to begin.’

Another Molineux regular at this time was Steve Gordos who was born in Bilston in 1945 and went to Tettenhall College School in Wolverhampton. He recalls, ‘This was a magical time to follow Wolves. They were always being talked about although often under fire because they put the accent on direct football which brought lots of thrills and lots of goals.’

‘People tend to recall the half-back power of Bill Slater, Billy Wright, Eddie Clamp and Ron Flowers but it was the artists I warmed to – players like Johnny Hancocks, Jimmy Mullen, Dennis Wilshaw and the gifted Peter Broadbent, a man admired by the young George Best.’

But what made this collection of fine players into a team was Cullis, as Ray says, ‘In all my years of supporting Wolves, Cullis was the best manager and our success in those years was down to him. We adored him. As both player and a manager, he was a tough disciplinarian and ensured others toed the line but he was also fair and never expected anything from his players that he wouldn’t do himself.’



Wolves start the 1959/60 season strongly and produce some tremendous performances including a 9-0 demolition of Fulham, a 6-4 win at Manchester City and a 5-1 win at Luton Town. By the turn of the year, they are odds-on to win the league for the third year running and are also the side to beat in the FA Cup which starts in round three with a potentially tricky tie against Newcastle United at St James’ Park.

The story dominating the news at the start of the decade is that Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts will run for

President in America. His inexperience and his Catholicism are viewed by some as obstacles but others see his boyish, handsome smile and engaging manner as potential vote-winners.

As the Wolves fans prepare to make their way to St James' Park, the big song in the charts is Emile Ford and the Checkmates' 'What Do You Want to Make those Eyes at Me For?' which has been at the summit for three weeks.

Before the Newcastle game, *Mirror* football reporter Bill Holden writes, 'I take Newcastle to beat Wolves and name them now as one of the four clubs most likely to win at Wembley in May.' Holden's other three tips are Aston Villa, Fulham and Manchester United.

Travelling up to Newcastle that day was 14-year-old schoolboy Steve Gordos and his father. Steve recalls, 'We set off by train at some unearthly hour. My dad had organised a party of people for the trip and had a poster made for the carriage window which said, "Taking goals to Newcastle" which was a pun on the old saying "It's like taking coals to Newcastle".'

'I can remember the roar at St James' Park which seemed ten times louder than Molineux's. I don't know if it was the Geordies' accent and sterner voices but that sound was awesome.' An excellent, action-packed game finishes 2-2.

The pitch at Molineux is covered with snow for the replay. And just over 39,000 fans witness a classic with goals from Jimmy Murray, Norman Deeley, Ron Flowers and Des Horne giving the men in gold and black a 4-2 win. Wolves are on their way.

While all this was going on, Barry Stobart was still dutifully plying his trade in the reserves, scoring regularly and doing his best to catch Stan Cullis's eye. His wife Mo recalls, 'Barry's life was centred on getting in the first team but, because there were so many other good players, it was really hard. Yet he never complained. He was a fitness fanatic and would do extra training in the afternoon. Stan Cullis was a real taskmaster and Barry knew this. Every day Barry would stay behind practising heading for a couple of hours.'

Mo believes this constant heading a heavy ball was the cause of Barry's problems in later life. But, back then, there was no hint of what would happen in the future.

As Mo says, 'Barry was just happy pulling on a Wolves shirt. The money never came into it. They were doing something they loved and getting paid for it, even though it was a pittance. Molineux was always full in those days and I used to wonder where all the gate money went because it certainly wasn't to the players.'

It was a far cry from today's pampered, cosseted players surrounded by agents, hangers-on and the dreaded WAGs.

'There was none of that,' says Mo. 'I knew most of the players, their wives and girlfriends and we were a very happy lot. There was no bitchiness. We did not have anywhere to go after the game so we just stood outside the ground waiting for our partners. Not like the WAGs of today.'

Their socialising, such as it was, was done at the local dance hall. 'We loved to play cards on a Friday night while listening to singers like Johnny Mathis, Matt Monro and Frank Sinatra,' recalls Mo. It was a happy, care-free time for the young couple. If only Barry could break into the first team, life would be perfect.

In round four, on 30 January, Charlton Athletic come to Molineux and are seen off 2-1 with goals from Horne and Broadbent.

Round five is played on 20 February and the front page of that day's *Daily Mirror* screams 'Oh Boy!' with the news that the Queen has given birth to her third child, and second son, who is called Andrew and becomes second in line to the throne. At Kenilworth Road, two goals from Bobby Mason and one each for Jimmy Murray and Eddie Clamp sweep Luton aside 4-1 to take Cullis's men into the last eight.

Things go less well for Wolves in the European Cup and they are obliterated 9-2 over two legs by Barcelona – 4-0 in Spain and 5-2 at Molineux. Whether this has any bearing on Cullis's thinking is uncertain but suddenly Barry Stobart, who

has been scoring goals for fun in the reserves, is called up for his first team bow at Old Trafford against Manchester United along with 20-year-old Gerry Mannion.

Repaying Cullis's faith, Mannion and Barry both play well with the latter scoring in the 85th minute to seal a 2-0 win for Wanderers. It is a dream start for the young, shy Yorkshireman.



The sixth round ties are the toughest, tightest and most intriguing since the war. Two genuine, juicy derbies – Burnley v Blackburn Rovers and Sheffield United v Wednesday plus an all-Midlands affair involving Leicester City and Wolves. And for the trip to Filbert Street, Cullis keeps faith with Barry who is still on cloud nine after his exploits at Old Trafford. Asked by reporters if he is nervous Barry replies, 'After the 60,000 crowd at Manchester United last week, nothing is likely to worry me.'

Despite the build-up, the game at Leicester is a poor one. *Mirror* reporter Ken Jones describes it as 'crash bang soccer with hardly one breath of imagination'. But the Wolves fans don't care. They head back to the Black Country with a 2-1 win under their belts, thanks to Broadbent and a Len Chalmers own goal.

Barry has a quiet game but, the following Wednesday, impresses again during a 3-3 draw with Preston at Molineux. After 27 minutes he brilliantly heads a Broadbent cross past North End goalkeeper Fred Else to give Cullis even more to think about. The 21-year-old Yorkshireman is hitting form at precisely the right time. The champions are now starting to think of Wembley for the first time in 11 years and excitement is growing.

And so to the semi-finals and what a tie for the Midlands, Wolves v Aston Villa at The Hawthorns. As the *Daily Mirror* reports, 'It's the match that has thrown the Midlands into a Cup frenzy!' Steve Gordos recalls the shock among the Wolves faithful when manager Cullis decides to play Gerry Mannion at outside-right, another strong indication that the Wolves boss has no qualms about plunging relative rookies into big games.

It is not just in the Black Country that cup fever is being felt. Far away from the West Midlands – in Malta to be precise – a 19-year-old printer and Wolves fanatic called Alfred Camilleri is preparing for his first ever visit to England.

Now 72, he recalls this exciting time, ‘I went to a boarding school run by English and Irish priests which is how I got interested in English football,’ he says. ‘When I was ten, I saw a cousin’s scrapbook documenting Wolves’ 1949 cup success and fell in love with the club.’

Alfred books his ticket for the first two weeks in May, just in case. On semi-final day, 26 March, he chews his fingernails, praying for a Wolves win so that he might, just might, be able to see them at Wembley. He recalls, ‘Back then, television was in its infancy in Malta and we only received Italian channels so I used to get the results of matches from the BBC radio.’

Listening intently to the results coming in from England, Alfred punches the air with delight when he hears that Norman Deeley’s 31st-minute goal has been enough to beat the Villa and send Wolves to Wembley.

‘I was ecstatic as I would be in England on FA Cup Final day,’ he says, ‘and I was determined to do everything I could to be there.’



But before the FA Cup Final, there is the small matter of the league championship to sort out. Wolves, looking for their third consecutive title, face stern challenges from a Burnley side which has secured regular top ten finishes throughout the 1950s and a fast-improving Spurs.

On 30 March, just four days after the Villa victory, Wolves hammer Burnley 6-1 at Molineux. As a statement of intent, it couldn’t be starker. The *Express & Star* proclaims, ‘Wolves must go for the double after this.’

Wisely, perhaps, Cullis refuses to get carried away. Asked whether he thinks Wolves will now clinch the Holy Grail of

league championship and FA Cup, he tells reporters, 'If I could forecast like that, I would be on the stock exchange!'

Either way, it has been another superb season for Wolves and, irrespective of what happens at Wembley or in the championship, the town's mayor, Alderman Norman F. Bagley, announces there will be a banquet for the club at the Civic Hall on 25 May with tickets priced at £2 10s, including wine.



At Wembley, Wolves will meet Blackburn Rovers. Promoted to the top tier in 1957/58, the Lancashire side finished a respectable tenth in their first season but struggled in the traditionally difficult second year. However in the cup, they have played superbly, propelled largely by the goals of the excellent attacking midfielder Peter Dobing and the feisty, out-spoken Ulsterman, Derek Dougan.

They force a draw at Sunderland in round three before disposing of them 4-1 at Ewood Park. They then win a fourth round replay at Blackpool before a stunning performance at White Hart Lane results in a 3-1 triumph over Spurs. The quarter-final against arch-enemy Burnley results in a classic 3-3 draw at Turf Moor but is followed by a 2-0 extra-time victory in the replay with goals from Dobing and future Scotland boss Ally MacLeod.

Two goals from Dougan then help them to a 2-1 victory over Sheffield Wednesday in the semi-final during which, according to Rovers fan John Mitchell, Dougan, after scoring his second, whispers to Owls keeper Ron Springett, 'Don't worry, I'll get you tickets to Wembley.' It may be apocryphal but it would be in keeping with the man.

The team has some fine players in its ranks. As well as Dobing and Dougan, they have the brilliant Bryan Douglas at outside-right, England captain Ronnie Clayton at right-half, 6ft 2ins Louis Bimpson at inside-right and Irish international Mick McGrath at left-half, while Harry Leyland keeps goal.

They are managed by former Scotland winger and Luton Town manager Douglas 'Dally' Duncan. But though Rovers have plenty of talent, the smart money remains on the men from Molineux.



And so the scramble for tickets begins. There were regularly between 40,000 and 50,000 at Molineux during this period but the FA's scandalous allocation of tickets means that each participating club receives only 15,000 meaning a whopping 70,000 go elsewhere.

The whole ticketing situation is fraught, tense and perennially controversial, and pits friends, neighbours and family members against one another. In Wolves' case, the first 6,500 tickets, quite rightly, go straight to Molineux season ticket holders, leaving just 8,500 more. In total, 31,907 Wolves fans apply for these, including fans in Hong Kong and Canada. The applications – in bundles of 50s – are placed on a table in the boardroom at Molineux and watched over, day and night, by a security guard.

To keep the whole, sensitive process above suspicion, the club asks Alderman Bagley to conduct a ballot for the remaining tickets. 'The mayor made a good job of it,' says club secretary Jack Howley later. 'He walked around the table picking here and there to make the whole thing as fair as it could be.'

Those fans that get lucky are, of course, ecstatic. They include a young man called Paul Bowyer of Blakenhall and his German-born bride Fraulein Ute Thieme, a nurse at a Walsall hospital, who met her man when he was serving part of his national service in Germany.

Many tickets go to firms with football teams affiliated to the FA like Imperial Smelting at Bloxwich. There, lab assistant John Benton looks on despondently when his West Bromwich Albion-supporting friend Pete Garner wins the raffle to get the prize ticket. But Pete charitably gives the winning ticket to his delighted work-mate.

There is a similar scramble for tickets in Blackburn. On Thursday 14 April, the first post alone brings 30,000 applications containing payment for the 15,000 allocation, with many thousands more expected. Within a week, all the tickets have gone and tens of thousands of disappointed Rovers fans start receiving letters from the club containing words of regret and remittance.

Over the coming days, officials at Ewood Park are besieged with grumbles from disappointed fans that the postal system was unfair. The letters pages of the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* feature a single subject. A Mrs F. Jolly, from Dale Terrace, Chatburn, writes, 'I have waited 30 years to see the Rovers at Wembley and was willing to queue for a ticket only to learn we had to apply by post. It was a bitter blow when no tickets came.'



Preparations continue and, on 23 April, the FA reveals the man to take charge of the final will be Kevin Howley, a 35-year-old factory clerk from Middlesbrough. He will be the youngest referee to officiate at the annual showpiece.

Though Wembley is at the forefront of everyone's minds, the league title is going to the wire. Wolves want it badly. If they win the title for the third year in succession, they emulate the astonishing achievements of Herbert Chapman's Huddersfield and Arsenal teams and establish themselves as the greatest and most successful club side ever in English football.

With Cullis's men playing with confidence and panache, the title looks like staying in the Molineux trophy cabinet but, at a crucial point, they wobble slightly, drawing 0-0 at Nottingham Forest.

Then, two weeks before Wembley, Wolves entertain rivals Spurs for a match which brings the area to a standstill. It is a game that goes some way to determining the destiny of the championship. To the horror of the Wolves fans, they lose 3-1 and their grip on the championship – and the double – loosens. Cullis is not happy and prepares to make changes



for the do-or-die fixture at Chelsea, the last league game of the season.

No one is sure what is going through his mind but – with just seven days to go before Wembley – Cullis produces what the *Daily Mirror* calls ‘a soccer sensation’. For the must-win game at Chelsea, he leaves young right-winger Gerry Mannion and inside-forward Bobby Mason out of the team. Norman Deeley moves to the right to replace Mannion and Mason’s place is taken by Barry Stobart whose smiling, boyish face is pictured alongside the article.

Cullis refuses to use the word ‘dropped’ and says Mannion and Mason are both being ‘rested’. Reporter Bill Holden believes him and writes, ‘I expect Cullis to recall them both for next week’s final against Blackburn Rovers.’

Whatever Cullis is thinking, Barry Stobart knows he now has a golden opportunity to force his way into the cup final 11.



A massive week for the nation begins. The FA Cup Final is unquestionably the biggest event on the sporting calendar, attracting interest across society. But, not only that, there is also a royal wedding taking place in London on the day before. The *Daily Mirror* can barely contain itself. ‘It’s going to be a great, GREAT week for news and pictures next week’, it trumpets as it carries a picture of Princess Margaret and Tony Armstrong-Jones heading off for a quiet weekend at Windsor with their pet King Charles spaniel, Roly.

At Stamford Bridge, in their last league match, Wolves turn on the style and, with Mason and Mannion watching anxiously from the sidelines, Barry Stobart plays the game of his life. He is the outstanding player on the pitch in a superb 5-1 win for Wolves. He has done everything possible to force his way into the Wembley reckoning.

Barry’s wife Mo recalls, ‘Eddie Clamp’s mum, Sarah, went to the Chelsea match and, when she got back, she told me how

wonderfully Barry had played. She said, “Barry will definitely play in the final now. Believe me”’

The win at Chelsea keeps Wolves at the top of the league by one point and edges them closer to the coveted double. But a win for Burnley at Manchester City on the Monday night will see the title go to Turf Moor. The Wolves team does not travel to Maine Road to watch the showdown match because Cullis draws up a rigorous training schedule which does not allow for what the papers calls ‘an out of town jaunt’. Cullis, though, is there.

The *Daily Mirror* says Burnley must have been a ghost town on that Monday night with ‘most of the men’ – and doubtless quite a few women too – helping to swell the Maine Road crowd to almost 66,000. After just four minutes, a mistake by legendary City goalkeeper Bert Trautmann gives the Clarets the lead. Despite a 12th-minute equaliser from Joe Hayes, a 30th-minute winner from Trevor Meredith is enough to give Burnley two points and pinch the title from under Wolves’ noses. It is Burnley’s first title since 1921.

There is despondency at Molineux but the *Express & Star* sums up the feeling in the town in an editorial piece, ‘This is a result,’ it says, ‘which does nothing to dim the good record of Wolves in the past season. Despite some reverses they have continued to hold their reputation high.’

So now – with the title and double lost – the thoughts of all Wolves fans turn to Wembley. Still no one has any idea which team Cullis will pick and the canny manager isn’t telling anybody, even though he knows full well. On the Tuesday before Wembley he informs reporters, ‘My team selection problems were simple. But you have no idea what mental torture a manager goes through when he faces the job of telling players who have to be left out.

‘Tomorrow, I shall inform our directors of my selection at the weekly board meeting. On Thursday, the team will be posted in the dressing room – then I shall be able to announce it.’

The press has a field day trying to second-guess the line-up and, in the *Mirror*, Bill Holden believes Barry will NOT play at Wembley. 'I think the team will show only one change from that which beat Chelsea – Bobby Mason in for Barry Stobart,' he writes.

Indeed, that is the general consensus. In the *Express & Star*'s player profiles, it says, 'Two months ago, it is fair to say that, in the soccer sense, nobody had heard of Barry Stobart and he was ploughing a routine course through the Central League.'

Describing how he was plunged into the game at Old Trafford, scored, kept his place for the quarter-final and then played a blinder against Chelsea, the profile says he remains on the fringe of the Wembley 11.

But Stobart himself thinks differently and, in his quiet, unassuming way, feels he has done enough to earn a place in the starting line-up.

'Every day,' says Mo, 'Barry was expecting to be called into the office to be told that he would be playing at Wembley.'

But still Cullis won't reveal his starting line-up. The Wolves players, accustomed to success, did not like losing the championship one bit and are determined to compensate by lifting the FA Cup. Every player is desperate to start. Though Cullis has pledged to tell each player individually, the whole town is abuzz with rumours. Then, at the end of Tuesday's training session, the popular trainer, ex-player and club stalwart Joe Gardiner approaches Barry and confirms the news that he has been craving. He is in. All those extra hours of training, the incessant heading, the sprinting and the running had paid off for the young man from Doncaster. He was going to play in the world's most famous sporting event.

Mo recalls, 'We were all so overjoyed. I was elated for Barry because I'd seen how hard he'd worked in training. Every day, at the *Express & Star* someone from the sports desk would ask me questions about Barry. They all knew how ecstatic I was. I did not get much work done that week. I was working in

the reception area and all the customers who came in were questioning me.

‘I was on cloud nine. Barry and I had pictures taken of us hand-in-hand walking through the town. And I have another memory, which is sad really. All the Wolves players were kitted out with new blazers and flannels and they all looked so smart. But they had to go around town in pairs into the shops asking for sponsorship. I thought that was a bit degrading and Barry hated doing it.’



Back in Malta, the young Wolves-mad printing apprentice Alfred Camilleri leaves the island on a twin-engined aircraft and, after an eight-hour flight, arrives at London Airport before making his way to Birmingham where he is staying with a pen-friend. ‘I was so close to Wolverhampton,’ recalls Alfred, ‘that I decided to take a taxi to Molineux.’

These were very different days and the young Maltese man is able to simply turn up, enter the ground and visit the dressing rooms. ‘I met Norman Deeley there,’ he says, ‘and then I went out on to the pitch and got a picture with him and Eddie Clamp.’

The following day is even better for Alfred, as he recalls, ‘I finally met the great Stan Cullis and he invited me to go with him in his car to see the players train at Aldersley stadium. There I took some more photos of Bill Slater and George Showell which I still treasure.

‘While with Stan, I asked him for a ticket for the final but he said there was no chance of getting one, even though I told him I had come all the way from Malta. But I didn’t resign myself to not being at Wembley on the big day.’



Meanwhile, Wolves’ opponents, Blackburn, have some problems of their own to contend with. Outside-right Louis Bimpson has been battling with an injured right knee but plays

in a full-scale practice match at Ewood Park to test it. Derek Dougan and right-back John Bray are both given injections for thigh injuries and goalkeeper Harry Leyland remains confined to bed with a sore throat. Rovers boss Dally Duncan refuses to name his team until Friday at the earliest but hints he will take a party of 14 to Wembley.



On the Wednesday, all is calm at Molineux where Cullis has stressed the need for ‘normality’ – that is, for the squad to retain its usual routine. Tony Cox of the *Express & Star* writes, ‘Molineux had the atmosphere of a funeral director’s office. Opinions and views were as hard to obtain as a final ticket.’ But Cox senses that Wolves’ 11th-hour failure to land the championship has instilled a new note of determination among the players and says, ‘This indicates Blackburn are in for real trouble in the green Wembley bowl.’

Those Wolves fans with tickets, like John Benton, Steve Gordos, Muriel Bates and Ray Brown, are jealously guarding them with their life, preparing for the trip to Wembley and nervously counting down the hours.

The weekly *Wolverhampton Chronicle* is inundated with letters after it purchases a 3s 6d Wembley ticket for £3 10s and offers it to the person giving the best reason for going. There are plenty of contenders: A Mr G. Blanton, of Portobello, near Willenhall, has followed Wolves since 1904/05 and never missed a home game; a Mr B. Naylor says he used to live in Blackburn and followed Rovers but then moved to Wolverhampton and switched allegiance to Wolves; while dustman Mr A.A. Turner of Fordhouses says he has followed Wolves everywhere for more than 40 years, frequently hitch-hiking to watch them.

But the precious ticket finally goes to Lol Jones of Bradley, who is nominated by his disabled brother-in-law Albert Rookery who says that big-hearted Lol takes him everywhere including all Wolves matches.

But surely there is no Wolves fan as intrepid as 57-year-old Tom Perrins of Coseley, deep in the Black Country. On Thursday morning he stands watching the Wolverhampton Town Hall clock wearing a port wine tracksuit, special boots and a placard around his neck which reads, 'Wolverhampton-Wembley. By foot.' Yes, he is walking it.

'It's 50 miles today, 50 tomorrow and that will leave me 20 on Saturday,' says the veteran road walker as he sets off at 9am, planning to sleep in police stations or army barracks. He will stave off blisters by soaking his feet in potash and smearing them with Vaseline every night. I'll try and get a ticket when I reach Wembley.'

Barry Stobart has been bursting to tell people that he is starting at Wembley. But there has been a strict gag on everyone with Stan Cullis adamant that nothing is said until he officially announces the team. On Thursday morning, 15 squad players gather for one final training session before Cullis finally breaks his silence. It is the same team that thumped Chelsea and leaves Barry and left-winger Des Horne delighted and Bobby Mason and Gerry Mannion devastated. Mason cuts a dejected figure as he trudges out of Molineux, at precisely the same time as the indefatigable Maltese teenager Alfred Camilleri arrives again to try and secure a ticket and rub shoulders with his heroes. He sympathises with Mason. 'I could understand Bobby's feeling,' he recalls, 'as he had played in all six matches on the way to the final.'

The press are gagging for official news and now, just after midday, Cullis gives them what they crave. There is genuine shock that Barry will play instead of Bobby Mason. The *Express & Star* describes it as 'dramatic news' and, next day, the *Daily Mirror's* back page screams, 'Wolves Shock – Stobart in the Cup Final: Mason out.' Cullis tells reporters, 'The most painful task was to tell the unlucky ones they were not playing. I did that when I announced the team in the presence of all the 15 players who have been concerned in the cup games.'

And now, at last, in his usual quiet, understudied way, Barry is able to express publicly what he has kept under wraps for two

days. As the train taking the squad to Wembley steams out of Wolverhampton, he tells reporters, ‘This is my big thrill of the season. It is a great chance and it is up to me to take it and do really well on Saturday.’

That evening’s edition of the *Express & Star* carries a picture of the squad, all nattily dressed in suits and ties while preparing to leave the West Midlands. On the far right of the picture, looking directly at the camera, is that same boyish, slightly quizzical face that has become increasingly familiar over the last few days. Barry Stobart’s moment has come.



On the day before the final, the *Wolverhampton Chronicle* features profiles by reporter Ken Collins of the Wolves players off duty and at home. Collins writes, ‘I travelled to lovely Claverley to interview Gerry Harris; to Bilbrook for Peter Broadbent behind his grocery shop counter; to Brewood for Malcolm Finlayson.

‘Then, when you find these glamour footballers, you discover you could be talking to your next-door neighbour. Away from the roaring crowds, the Wolves are home-lovers, family men, gardeners, golfers, anglers, television fans...yes, just like the folk next door.’

As if to prove the point, Collins’s fascinating report shows a picture of full-back George Showell mowing the lawn, Des Horne watching television with his fiancée Janice Roden and Ron Flowers playing with his young son, Glen.

Readers discover that goalkeeper Malcolm Finlayson, off duty, is a sales rep for a Stourbridge steel firm; tough-man wing-half Eddie Clamp started shaving when he was nine; skipper Bill Slater is a physical training lecturer at Birmingham University and winger Norman Deeley never eats before a match.

And there’s Barry Stobart, pictured hand-in-hand with Mo. The paper says the ‘baby-faced’ striker loves Wolverhampton but misses the coarse fishing available around his native

Doncaster. 'Strong-limbed Barry likes a spot of swimming and tennis if the weather's good,' the report concludes.



The clock is ticking down. Those Wolves players picked for the showdown with Rovers will wear a brand new kit with Wolverhampton's town crest emblazoned on the famous umber shirts. The new shirts have been made at a mill in Macclesfield, Cheshire. Eleven girls from the mill pose in them, accompanied by a brilliant caption which reads, 'Looking *chic* in Wolves clothing are the mill girls from Macclesfield, Cheshire.' The caption writer then lets themselves down by writing, 'and a pretty "team" of wolf-bait they make too...'

Most neutrals think that Wolves will beat Blackburn but *Mirror* reader D.L. Davies from Tredegar, Monmouthshire, has his own theory and points out that the title winners in each division are Burnley, Aston Villa, Southampton and Walsall. 'Take the first letter of each team,' he writes, 'and you get BASW, which could mean "Blackburn Are Sure Winners". But Mr Davies's interesting theory is undermined somewhat when the paper points out that if you reverse the letters you get WSAB, which could equally mean 'Wolves Should Annihilate Blackburn!'

The Wolves squad arrives in London with the capital preparing for the spectacular royal wedding of Princess Margaret and Tony Armstrong-Jones. In 1960, a royal wedding followed the next day by the FA Cup Final is very special indeed.

On Thursday morning, the Blackburn squad leaves Ewood Park for the short coach journey to Preston station to catch a train to London. Last to board is boss Dally Duncan who tells waiting reporters, 'I have every hope that we will pull it off.'

And the next day there is good news from the camp: they will be at full strength after Bimpson, Bray and Leyland all win their fitness battles. Then, after an hour's strenuous work-out at Hendon, Derek Dougan tells Duncan, 'I'm fine. I will



be playing.’ Little can anyone know that the Belfast man – to whom controversy attaches itself like a second skin – is about to drop a bombshell that will have huge ramifications.



On Friday, the exodus of fans from the West Midlands and east Lancashire begins. For many, it is the first time they have travelled on the newly opened M1 motorway and much excitement surrounds this. But the AA issues a warning, ‘If you want to get to the match, you should make doubly sure your car is up to fast motoring standard – and you should swot up on the rules of the traffic lanes.’

One man travelling down is 51-year-old Rovers fan William Chambers from the small moorland village of Belthorn. He is at the wheel of a specially-adapted three-wheel car. Mr Chambers, who has no legs, also travelled to the 1928 final. His bright blue car is covered in blue and white rosettes, a replica of the FA Cup in Rovers’ colours and a mass of pennants and slogans.

Gold and black and blue and white favours are waved from the cars that travel south. Thousands of these fans do not have tickets but are making the journey in the hope of buying them cheaply from touts just before kick-off when the bottom will drop out of the black market.

Among those desperately trying to land a ticket is that man from Malta, Alfred Camilleri, who, despite valiant attempts, still doesn’t have one but his determination to watch his beloved Wolves at Wembley remains undiminished.



In the hit parade is an impeccable pop song which has been at the top of the charts for seven weeks. The Everly Brothers’ wonderful ‘Cathy’s Clown’ proves immediately identifiable by its unusual skipping rhythm by drummer Buddy Harman, trademark, watertight harmonies and Phil’s drawled, Nashville-inspired vocal on the verse.

The royal wedding goes ahead on one of the hottest days of the year so far and the forecast for Saturday is that the temperature will rise even further.

That night, London throbs with crowds teeming through the streets until the early hours. Thousands and thousands are toasting the wedding and thousands more are arriving hourly for the footballing showpiece. There is a cacophony of rattles, whistles and bells as the capital prepares for the biggest match of them all.

Among them are Wolves devotees June Spencer and Hazel Brown, who carry a placard showing a cartoon wolf.

Fans of both clubs hit the sack nervous with anticipation and praying for cup glory. It is hardly the weather for Ovaltine but the makers decide cup final eve is the perfect opportunity to promote the virtues of the popular drink. An advert says, 'Whatever the result of the cup final, opinions are bound to differ about the respective merits of the teams. But there is no argument about the outstanding merit of Ovaltine as the final cup at bedtime.'

At Blackburn's Hendon hotel, there is high drama when *Evening Telegraph* reporter Al Thornton receives a call from a Mayfair hotel asking him to get Bryan Douglas on the phone. The call is from Rovers' club doctor, T.W. Burke, who rouses Douglas from his bed to tell him that his wife, Joyce, has just given birth to their second son. 'This is the best omen of all,' says skipper Ronnie Clayton. 'We must win now.'

But the bookies firmly favour the men from Molineux. And by some distance. In the *Daily Sketch*, reporter Laurie Pignon writes, 'I expect a Wembley massacre. The red-blooded, cool-headed, hot-footed, mighty men from Molineux, whose hearts are filled with anger over not winning the League Championship, and a passion to save their smarting faces, will win the Cup. And they will win, I reckon, by 4-0.'

As Barry Stobart turned in that night, he knew that his date with destiny was virtually upon him.



Finally, the big day dawns. The forecasters are right. It is hot and cloudless with weather more suited to cricket or tennis than football. In east Lancashire, thousands of Blackburn fans rise at the crack of dawn and begin heading to London to join thousands more already in town for Rovers' first final since their 1928 win over Huddersfield. They are attempting to equal Aston Villa's record of seven wins.

Among them, on one of countless coaches heading for Wembley, is a 25-year-old sales representative called Bernard Dickinson who recalls, 'It was an extremely hot day and I can still see the sun starting to burn off the early morning mist as we drove south. This was a final that Blackburn wanted to win so much and, on the day, our proud cotton town was deserted.

'As we travelled down, the weather was getting hotter and hotter and we were all starting to feel the oppressive heat. Our concerns were for the players from both teams and how they would manage to cope with the high temperatures.'

Already in London is 17-year-old Albert Yates, who works in the compositing room at the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph*. Albert has travelled on the overnight train with a friend and his dad. His mother, Phyllis, has travelled down with the official Rovers party as she worked in the laundry at Ewood Park.

At 5.30am, around 750 Blackburn Rovers fans arrive at St Pancras station and walk along the platform, cheering, shaking rattles and ringing bells. The appropriately-named Gerry Blackburn, of Abraham Street, Blackburn, tells waiting reporters, 'None of us could really sleep on the train, we were all too excited. I'm now tired out but it's been worth it.'

At around 7am, in Wolverhampton, approximately 3,000 fans begin boarding coaches to take them to London. A few sensible ones have taken cold drinks and headgear to shield them from the sun. Most haven't.

The steam trains are also starting to chuff out of Wolverhampton. Twelve special trains – each carrying an average of 500 passengers – set off from High and Low Level

stations between 6am and 11am. Among the thousands of Wolves fans on board are Steve Gordos and Ray Brown.

Ray recalls, 'My father, Charles Edward Brown, who had his own grocery business on the north side of town, had been taken ill with diabetes and thrombosis and was in the Wolverhampton Royal Hospital. But he said there was no way he was going to miss his beloved Wolves at Wembley and so, completely against doctors' advice, he signed himself out and came with us. That Saturday morning we took a taxi to High Level station, found our reserved seats in the restaurant car and, en route, lived high on bacon, fried eggs and fried bread, washed down with copious cups of coffee.'

More and more fans begin to pour into London, most arriving at St Pancras and Euston stations. Ticket touts, clutching wads of cash in one hand and wads of tickets in the other, are waiting at station barriers trying to buy tickets from those who have them and sell some to those who don't. It is most definitely a sellers' market – 3s 6d tickets are being offered for £1 and £5 is being asked for a 50s ticket.

Once past the touts, most fans are heading immediately for the route of the royal wedding to see the decorations, while others congregate in Trafalgar Square or near Eros in Piccadilly Circus. The vast majority are dressed in jacket and tie, but it is shirt-sleeve weather. The first confrontation between fans happens in Trafalgar Square and it's touchingly convivial. Laughing and joking with each other, the worst thing that's shouted is, 'You've wasted your time coming this far, you've got no chance.' At Hendon, there are few signs of nerves in the Blackburn camp. After a hearty breakfast they relax in the sun in the hotel gardens. Despite being underdogs, they are quietly confident. Sprawling in the sunshine is Derek Dougan, reading a paper. It is the calm before the storm.



With Barry Stobart and the Wolves squad already in London, his girlfriend Mo has travelled down on Saturday morning

with her mum, dad and auntie and uncle. They leave their car outside London and complete their journey to Wembley by Tube.

‘I was very tense, but all the travelling took the edge off me worrying,’ she remembers. ‘I just wanted Barry to play well. We had terrace tickets and found ourselves standing behind the goal to the right of the Royal Box.’

As the crowd inside the stadium increases, so does the temperature. It is well into the 70s and everybody agrees it is the hottest they have ever been at a football match.

The preliminaries begin at 1.30pm when the Massed Bands of the Irish and Welsh Guards emerge from the tunnel and strike up, opening with a march called ‘Triumph of Right’ by H.R. Lovell. The atmosphere is building.

Train after train pulls into Wembley Halt station and fans of both clubs pour off and race towards the famous twin towers. With the band now playing ‘The Can Can’, the excitement is palpable. Ray Brown and his father are among the crowd but Brown senior – who just days earlier ignored the advice of doctors – cannot make it, as Ray recalls, ‘My dad collapsed. He was only a few hundred yards away from the stadium – just a few hundred yards from his old golden heroes – but he just couldn’t walk.’ There was only one thing for it.

‘Our friends got him on to my back,’ says Ray, ‘and I set off with him down Wembley Way which was crammed with Wolves and Blackburn supporters. Then, all of a sudden, an open-backed lorry stopped by us and the driver asked us if he could sit him in the back and take him to the entrance so we both travelled in style and then, at the turnstiles, the first-aiders carried him to his seat.’



The players of both sides are now in the dressing rooms, the famous gold shirts of Wolves and the blue and white halves of Blackburn being pulled on. Except all is not well in the Rovers dressing room and the reason is centre-forward Derek Dougan.

News breaks that, not long after declaring himself fit to play, he has slapped in a transfer request to Blackburn's stunned board. His timing appals everyone associated with the club.



After a rendition of Sir Vivian Dunn's 'The Cockleshell Heroes', the musicians leave the field to be replaced by the Coldstream Guards and a man in a white coat, who takes his place on a strange contraption – a raised, white podium on wheels. He is Arthur Caiger, a London headmaster who, every year, leads the community singing at the cup final.

When the Guards produce the plaintive opening notes of 'Abide With Me' it is the signal for real panic outside the ground as thousands of fans without tickets, frantically try to strike a deal with someone, anyone.

As ever, the only real way of achieving this is to sell your soul to the devil and do business with a tout. Alfred Camilleri, the Maltese teenager, had arrived early and done everything in his power to secure a ticket. But, with the clock ticking down, he still hasn't succeeded. As kick off approaches, the touts still holding tickets get bolder, knowing there will be last-minute takers. Alfred is one of them and he says, 'Eventually, I got my ticket from a tout who was being very public and shouting "anyone want tickets?" just under the noses of some police on Wembley Way.'

Alfred's wages as an apprentice were three pounds and five shillings a week but he hands over £3 10s for a ticket which cost three shillings and sixpence at face value. 'Today these sums look meagre,' recalls Alfred, 'but I had paid more for the ticket than I earned in a week. But I've never regretted it.'

Another Wolves fan at Wembley that day, Bryn Williams, recalls the ticketing situation thus, 'People are always staggered when I tell them that the price of the ticket was three shillings and sixpence (17½p in today's currency) to stand on the vast, uncovered West Terrace, although my dad had to pay £3 10s for each ticket as they were fetching a pound

for every shilling of face value on the black market. It was 20 times face value which, I suppose, is the rate one would have to pay today.'

The community singing which includes 'She's a Lassie from Lancashire', 'She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain' and 'Clementine', concludes and finally, at ten minutes to three, the teams emerge from the tunnel with Cullis and Duncan leading out their sides.

For Alfred Camilleri, it was the moment he had dreamed of. 'I'd found a place behind the goal opposite the players' entrance and when the teams came out, it was a fantastic sight,' he says. 'Both sets of supporters and other neutral fans were together, not knowing what the word segregation even meant. In those days everybody got on well together.'

The teams are presented to HRH The Duke of Gloucester, referee Howley blows his whistle and the 1960 FA Cup Final is at last underway. From the word go Kenneth Wolstenholme – six years prior to uttering the most famous line in commentating history – refers to the searing heat. 'Absolutely no wind at all,' says the great man, 'both sides will surely try and slow things down.'

On *Pathe News*, the typically plummy-voiced reporter describes the conditions as 'like mid-summer' as 'the match for the most highly-prized trophy in the whole realm of sport' finally gets underway.

Within the first minute, Barry Stobart gets a touch of the ball and Wolstenholme's voice rises with excitement. 'Stobart, this is young Barry Stobart,' he says. Barry is tackled but a couple of Black Country accents can be heard shouting from the stands, 'Come on Barry lad!' They are willing the rookie youngster to succeed.

Seconds later, Blackburn's brilliant midfielder and new dad, Bryan Douglas, finds Derek Dougan in the inside-left channel. Dougan has a sight of goal but looks laboured, indecisive and spurns the opportunity. Everybody in the ground, especially the Blackburn fans, thinks the same thing, which Wolstenholme

voices, 'Now I don't know what you thought when you saw Dougan move to that ball but to me he seemed rather slow and as though he was dragging his leg.'

More than 50 years later, Rovers fan Bernard Dickinson is in no doubt what the trouble was, 'Dougan had not only slapped in a transfer request just before the game but he had also declared himself fit when he obviously wasn't. He could barely run. It was a disgrace.'

From the off, there is a sense that the fans are restless – perhaps all feeling a bit tetchy from the hot sun and all that brown ale.

Every time the ball goes near Dougan there are rumblings of discontent coming from the terraces, which now appears to consist almost entirely of people in white shirts. 'Everybody in shirt sleeves – this is really the white-shirted final,' says Wolstenholme.

There is a buzz of discontent from the terraces. Wolves adopt a highly-effective but rather tedious offside trap. When Blackburn's Clayton is brought down by Wolves' South African-born winger Des Horne, the boos from the non-Wolves fans in the crowd ring out even more.

Young referee Howley is having his work cut out but both sets of fans think he is being too lenient and failing to clamp down on a series of niggly fouls.

'Come on youuu Ro-oooo-veers' screams a Lancastrian voice from just behind the mike.

Behind the goal, Mo and her family are shouting their support for Barry. And he has an excellent first half, making some good, darting runs, playing quick accurate passes and always looking to make something happen. Wolstenholme comments that his performance suggests he is not nervous.

But, in truth, it's a poor game, punctuated by offsides and fouls. Just before the half-hour mark a cross from Bimpson causes panic in the Wolves box and the on-rushing Douglas collides with Wolves goalkeeper Finlayson. The big Scot stays down. The photographers behind his goal, who have



had precious little to snap up to now, start fiddling with their Kodaks, clambering to their feet and snapping away. Cup final injuries have become big news.

The game needs a goal and, just before half-time, Barry justifies Stan Cullis's faith in him. Hovering on the left flank, he accepts a ball from Ron Flowers. Stobart feigns to come inside but then drops his left shoulder and skins Rovers right-back John Bray. It is great wing-play. Behind the goal, Mo and her parents hold their breath. Barry fires a low left-footed cross just where the Lancastrians don't want it. Rovers left-half Mick McGrath can do nothing but turn the ball into the net past Leyland and it is 1-0 to Wolves.

It is completely out of the blue and Wolstenholme sounds almost shocked when he says incredulously 'a goal!'. By today's standards, the celebrations among the Wolves faithful look curiously low-key. A few rattles are shaken, scarves are twirled and there is a lot of enthusiastic clapping, but not much leaping about. Perhaps it is simply too hot.

Arguably, the goal is against the run of play but two minutes later, Blackburn are plunged into further despair when the so-called curse of Wembley strikes again.

It seems that barely a cup final in the 1950s passed without a serious injury to someone. Twelve months earlier Nottingham Forest's Roy Dwight broke his leg following a collision with Luton's Brendan McNally. In 1957, Manchester United's goalkeeper Ray Wood was stretchered off after just six minutes following a violent collision with Aston Villa's Peter McParland and, a year before that, Manchester City's Bert Trautmann broke his neck after saving at the feet of Birmingham's Peter Murphy. And now, what the press have dubbed a 'hoodoo' is about to strike again.

The classy Broadbent wins the ball in midfield for Wolves and plays the ball into the right-wing channel. It is a classic 50-50 between Deeley and Rovers left-back Dave Whelan. Right in front of Barry, the two players reach the ball simultaneously. Mo Stobart says, 'Barry was right there and he heard a crack.'

Both players are down but though Deeley eventually struggles to his feet, Whelan does not.

The game carries on but Barry alerts referee Howley to Whelan who is lying prostrate, clearly in agony. Barry then gesticulates that a stretcher is needed. 'This is a real tragedy,' says Wolstenholme. 'Yes, it's a stretcher case.'

Sensing another injury-related story the photographers behind Leyland's goal edge on to the pitch and move gingerly towards Whelan in a way that would not – indeed could not – happen nowadays. Viewed today, there is something unsettling and distasteful about the sight of the photographers clamouring around the stricken Whelan. 'Get those cameras off the pitch,' shouts a voice from the sidelines.

Whelan will play no further part in the game and leaves on a stretcher, with a broken leg, prompting *Daily Sketch* reporter Laurie Pignon to write the next day, 'This morbid slow march with the stretcher is almost a permanent fixture on the Cup Final programme. And the treacherous, stud-binding turf is undoubtedly to blame.'

Whelan, who years later will become the multi-millionaire businessman and owner of Wigan Athletic, later claims it was a horror tackle by Deeley, a view totally rejected by all associated with Wolves. Steve Gordos says, 'It was totally accidental and innocuous with even Rovers skipper Ronnie Clayton confirming it was a pure accident.'

Whelan's injury effectively ends the game as a spectacle and infuriates the already irritable Blackburn fans further. Bernard Dickinson recalls, 'After Dave Whelan went off and, because of the situation with Dougan, we were effectively down to nine men. It was an absolute farce.'

During the interval, the fans do whatever they can do to stay cool. Wolves fan John Benton recalls, 'It was the warmest I can ever remember being at a football match. I hadn't come properly prepared, had no cold drink and it was sweltering. I remember a chap in front of me did have a drink and I couldn't stop staring at it. I felt like snatching it, it was that hot!'

Bryn Williams recalls the effect the heat was having on a young woman who appeared totally disinterested in the match, 'She was sat on the terrace step in front of me and, whether due to the heat or sheer boredom, never once got to her feet and saw nothing of the game at all. What a waste of a ticket!'

A special 'roving-eye' camera films the players as they emerge for the second half. There are only 21 of them. 'We've heard from the dressing room that Whelan has broken his leg,' says Wolstenholme. The second half is not much better than the first with the intense heat sapping the energy of the players and subduing the crowd.

The *Pathe News* camera even picks out two Wolves supporters with white knotted hankies on their head, the classic 'mad Englishmen in the sun' look.

Though Rovers don't give up and continue to hold their own with ten men, with Dougan not at the races, they never really look like scoring.

It seems only a matter of time before Wolves increase their advantage and, on 67 minutes, Ron Flowers passes to Des Horne on the left wing who looks like he might be offside. The Rovers players think so but the flag stays down and Howley waves play on. Horne crosses low. The ball evades the Rovers defenders and right-winger Deeley deftly places it past Leyland into the net for 2-0.

This time, sensing the cup is now surely theirs, the Wolves fans celebrate with more gusto. A woman in an iridescent housecoat smiles broadly; a young boy leaps up and down holding his programme; a man in a suit and tie signals 2-0 with his fingers.

With time almost up, Wolves goalkeeper Finlayson plucks a corner out of the air and throws the ball to Deeley on the right. Deeley meanders unchallenged, almost lazily, 30 yards into Rovers' half. It seems an apt metaphor for the match and Wolstenholme is moved to comment, 'There never seemed to be a great deal of urgency in this game, there's even less now.'

The ball eventually finds its way to Flowers who plays in Barry Stobart on the left. The young man is in acres of space and fires in a cross which Leyland makes a complete hash of. The ball falls to Blackburn's Woods who dithers and miskicks, allowing Deeley to knock the ball into the net for 3-0. Game over.

Finally the Wolves fans let rip and an elderly lady, who looks like everybody's grandma, waves her gold and black scarf with delighted enthusiasm.

Two minutes later Howley blows his whistle and immediately a chorus of boos from the Blackburn fans resounds around Wembley.

The camera goes straight to Barry who looks oddly solemn but who is, no doubt, bursting with pride inside. He is a Wembley winner.

Bill Slater leads the team up the famous Wembley steps but still the irreverent boos echo. Slater approaches Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester and receives the cup. Slater, a much-admired and highly-respected professional, barely cracks a smile as he raises the trophy aloft. 'Well that's it. That's what all the trouble has been about since last September,' says Wolstenholme as the camera homes in on the famous silver cup.

This is the moment the Wolves fans have been waiting for, none more so than Alfred Camilleri, who says, 'We were all just elated when Bill Slater received the cup from the Duchess amid a sea of gold and black colours. What a day to remember for all followers of the men from Molineux!'

In contrast to his captain's subdued reaction, Barry is now all smiles as he receives his medal. What a moment for the young lad from South Yorkshire. 'Barry Stobart,' says Wolstenholme, 'a cup winner's medal after only six first-class games.'

Strangely enough, Rovers captain Ronnie Clayton looks happier than his Wolves counterpart Slater when he leads his losing team up. He gets two medals – one for himself and one for the unfortunate Whelan.

The biggest boos, though, are reserved for the three officials – Messrs Howley, Windle and Reid.

The two teams then line up in front of the Royal Box and the national anthem is played again. In those days of total respect for all things royal, it has the effect of subduing the jeers and catcalls and is impeccably observed.

Wolves then parade the cup around the pitch. Steve Gordos can still recall this moment. ‘My Dad turned to me,’ he says, ‘and said “savour this son, I don’t know when we’ll see it again”. It seemed a strange remark as Wolves had just missed out on the double and were at the height of their powers. He must have had a gut feeling that the club would be lucky to ever get so many fine players in the same team again.’

It had become traditional for the losing fans to offer their congratulations to the winning team during and after the lap of honour, but not this time. A large proportion of the Blackburn fans boo Wolves around. ‘The game was a joke,’ is Bernard Dickinson’s opinion. ‘My wife and I left as quickly as we could and bought some sandwiches at a coffee bar within the stadium. They were incredibly stale which summed up our day really.’

But it is those Blackburn fans amassed around the players’ tunnel who really vent their spleen. As the Wolves players and the three officials make their way back to the dressing rooms they are pelted with rubbish, fruit, drinks cartons and screwed-up paper.

In the *Daily Sketch*, under the headline ‘The Dustbin Final’, reporter Laurie Pignon later writes, perhaps with some journalistic licence, ‘I ducked...I dodged...I shielded my head in my arms – but still I was hit with orange peel, apple cores and rubbish as I walked down Wembley’s famous tunnel.

‘Referee Kevin Howley was the target, but in their fury and bitter disappointment the angry crowd didn’t care who got hit so long as they were hurling solid insults.’

As the players filter back to the dressing room, the fans stream away from Wembley. Wolves fan John Benton recalls the horror of seeing hundreds and hundreds of coaches in the

Wembley car park with their engines motoring and not having a clue where his one was.

Soon the coaches start pulling out of the car park and the trains start heading north. All the coaches and trains are abuzz with the excited chatter of Wolves fans singing the praises of their team. Many are praising the contribution of Barry Stobart who everybody agrees performed excellently.

Bryn Williams recalls a 'jubilant journey back up the recently opened stretch of the M1 motorway on one of Kendrick's bone-shaker "charas" making this one of the most memorable days of my life'.

When Bryn finally arrives home to the small Black Country village of Gornal at 1am, he parades down the main street blowing his boy scout bugle with all his might. 'I still have that bugle today,' he says, 'along with the match programme and the rosette I wore.'

'Although I returned to Wembley with Wolves in 1974 and 1980 for the League Cup victories over Manchester City and Forest respectively, there is no doubt that your first visit to the famous old stadium is the one that stays in your mind forever.'

Mo Littlehales, Barry Stobart's girlfriend, is in heaven after the game and says, 'We stayed at Wembley for quite a while after the game because everyone was rejoicing. Eventually, we made our way into London and went to the Regent Palace in Piccadilly which was where we were staying.'

Mo says she got 'all toffed up' and then Barry came to collect her and they walked the short distance to the Cafe Royal on Regent Street, where they were entertained by Marion Ryan, a hugely popular singer at the time.

'We had a lovely meal followed by some speeches,' recalls Mo, 'and everyone kept saying how well Barry had played. It was a fantastic night.'

'At about 2am Barry and I went for a walk and we sat in that Italian coffee bar off Piccadilly just looking at his medal. That was when he was saying he couldn't believe he had it. Eventually Barry took me back to the Regent Palace and he

went back to the team hotel. There was no “hanky panky” in those days – Cullis would have gone nuts!’

It was the perfect end to a wonderful day for Barry and Mo. Life was wonderful for them.

But, if the Wolves banquet is a celebration, Blackburn’s is anything but. First of all Derek Dougan wolfs down his meal and then leaves the venue before the speeches with his beauty queen fiancée, Valerie Martin. That is bad enough but then the club’s chairman, Mr Norman Forbes, delivers a speech which leaves members of the Blackburn party, including six of the nine surviving members of the 1928 cup-winning side, cringing with embarrassment.

After praising players and officials for their part in taking Blackburn to Wembley, Forbes then says, ‘And now we come to the manager. I don’t know what to say about him. Mr Duncan has not been with us very long. He has been very fortunate.’ After praising the efforts of Duncan’s predecessor, Johnny Carey, he turns to the players and warns them to ‘pull their weight’ next season. It all makes for a pretty dismal affair.



The following day, all over the Black Country, fans wake with aching heads, sore throats, dry mouths and a feeling of utter euphoria.

Back in London, the Wolves party leaves its hotel to catch the train back home where a huge reception awaits them.

Hundreds of well-wishers line the tracks as the locomotive steams towards Wolverhampton Low Level station where the players transfer to a motor coach containing specially erected scaffolding.

Nobody quite knows how many are in Wolverhampton to greet the team. Estimates vary between 80,000 and 100,000. It means that the five-minute drive to the town hall takes over half an hour. Traffic in the town centre comes to a standstill. Drivers stand on the tops of their vehicles to get a better view, other people clamber up lamp posts and walls.

At the town hall, the cup-winning party is met by the Mayor and Mayoress of Wolverhampton – Alderman Norman Bagley and Jean Bridgwater – before stepping on to the town hall balcony to a tumultuous reception.

To huge cheers, skipper Slater holds the FA Cup aloft and says to the sea of delighted faces below, ‘Well, here it is. There are some people who do not think we are the best team in the country, but we think we have the best supporters.’ Slater then introduces each team member one by one, including, of course, Barry, still smiling that distinctive smile and looking like the happiest man on earth. With the generous spirit and modesty that has typified his meteoric rise to stardom, Barry has a special word for Bobby Mason, the man he displaced. ‘I must say a word about him,’ he tells the crowd. ‘I was proud to play at Wembley, but I thought about Bobby such a lot.’

Praising Barry for this gesture, the *Express & Star* writes, ‘Stobart had no call to feel apologetic, for he played a valiant part in what must have been a terrific ordeal. Much of his football was thoughtful and he was always eagerly in search of the ball. That’s what made him able to lay on two of three goals.’

Despite the euphoria in Wolverhampton and the rest of the Black Country, there is widespread condemnation of the match in the media and an occasion that failed to live up to its billing. The press has plenty to write about including the antics of the Blackburn crowd and the no-substitute rule which effectively killed the game before half-time.

Whelan’s injury sparks the now perennial debate about substitutions. And, at last, the FA appears to relax its stance on the issue. Interviewed on radio, FA secretary Sir Stanley Rous says that, with the toll of serious injuries growing, the FA Cup Committee could soon ask the FA to allow substitutions. ‘It could happen at any time,’ he says.



All that summer, Barry Stobart was euphoric, basking in the glory of FA Cup victory. He takes a short break but, typically,



can't wait to get back to his football. Zealous though he was, what the young man needed, after his meteoric rise, was plenty of rest. Mo says, 'He was 21 and had no one to advise him.'

Day after day Barry trained and trained, pushing himself to the limit, determined to capitalise on the dream start to his career. But he was trying too hard and, by the time the season dawned, he was exhausted.

Barry played in the Charity Shield, the traditional season's curtain-raiser against Burnley. But, in a 2-2 draw, he was clearly off the pace. After that, it was mostly downhill at Molineux. Barry lost his place and, once more, found himself largely consigned to the reserves for a couple of years. He forced his way back into the side in the 1962/63 season and scored some impressive goals but the feeling was that Cullis no longer fancied him.

In fact, the club as a whole was on the wane as, most notably, Spurs assumed the mantle of the country's top side and both Merseyside clubs began to flex their muscles.

Mo says that, by this point, Cullis and Barry had fallen out and Barry claims that the manager treated him poorly. When Manchester City put in a bid, Barry decided to leave the club he loved and kick-start his career. Mo recalls, 'It was ironic actually because a friend of ours who was in the know at Wolves advised Barry not to leave because he said Cullis was going to be sacked. Well, nobody believed that could possibly happen and Barry went ahead and signed for Manchester City. Two weeks later Cullis *was* sacked. How uncanny was that? Barry should have stayed.'

By now Barry and Mo were married, Barry proposing on Christmas Eve in 1961. 'It was a lovely surprise,' says Mo. 'He just took me to the shop and bought the ring. We married on 6 October 1963 when it rained all day! We held a reception at the Mount Hotel in Tettenhall Wood which most of the Wolves team came to and then we went on to the Leofric hotel in Coventry.'



Even though Barry had a reasonably successful time at Manchester City, playing alongside two great goalscorers – his former team-mate Jimmy Murray and Derek Kevan – he failed to settle at Maine Road and returned to the Midlands in November 1964, joining Aston Villa for £22,000 and scoring 18 times in 45 appearances.

At Villa Barry was joined by one of his old Wolves teammates, the brilliant Peter Broadbent, who had been signed from Shrewsbury Town – and it was to the Salopians that Barry moved in October, 1967. But it ended for him after 42 games and ten goals when former Manchester United goalkeeping legend Harry Gregg became manager in 1968.



At not quite 30, it seemed like his career was over. Then, out of the blue, one of Barry's friends from Durban, in South Africa, asked him if he would like to go and play there. After long deliberations, in April 1968, Mo and Barry decided to go.

Despite being distinctly uncomfortable with the racist, apartheid regime, the Stobart family had a wonderful time in South Africa. 'We enjoyed every minute,' says Mo. 'It was such a glorious country to look at and Barry was playing for a good team, Durban Spurs, who were winning everything. Durban was a fantastic place. Everything was so easy and Sean had a wonderful time running around with no shoes on down to the beach every day with the other children.'

'I got a job with an English guy and loved it. Barry also worked in a factory that made shirts and did very well. I think he would have liked to have stayed longer but I missed everybody so much. I also wanted to have another child and home was the best place for that so, in 1971, we came back and I fell pregnant with Loy.'

Back in England and now in his early 30s, Barry and his family faced an uncertain future. His legs were still strong enough for a brief stint at Kidderminster Harriers but, realistically, his playing days were numbered. Mo says, 'It was

a hard time. We bought a fish and chip shop and grocery store but it was so hard to run at the same time as bringing up our two boys. My dear mother was fantastic and we would not have survived without her.'

In 1978, Barry and Mo sold the shop as the small profits did not justify the long hours they were putting in. Mo returned to her old job at the *Express & Star* and Barry, with the help of a friend, started up a window cleaning business which, from humble beginnings, flourished.

But football was in Barry's blood and, when a managerial opportunity presented itself at Dudley Town, Barry took it. He showed great aptitude for management and, from Dudley, moved on to Willenhall Town, where he enjoyed genuine success, taking them to the FA Vase Final in 1980/81 and the first round of the FA Cup v Crewe the following season.

Though Barry only managed at semi-professional level, he was a highly-talented coach, tactician and motivator. Gary Matthews, an excellent centre-forward and goalscorer at this level and then a successful provincial journalist, says, 'My memories of Barry are all good. He spent endless hours teaching me positioning, the timing of runs or tracking back. When Barry took over, Willenhall Town went from strength to strength.

'In many ways, Barry was an innovative manager. Long before full-backs at professional level were overlapping for their lives, Barry introduced this at Willenhall. He was an excellent coach, meticulous in his preparation. But he also worked us very hard at training and this paid off as we were the fittest team in the league.

'He was also very good at man-management and the players grew into a tight-knit group of friends. In short, he was comfortably the best manager I ever played under and a thoroughly decent man, bright, witty, funny and kind. I'll remember him for his stirring team talks, and his instructions that you ignored at your peril, but also as a lovely family man

liked and respected by everybody. In a nutshell, “Stobie” was pure class.

During the 1990s, both Barry and Mo’s parents died. ‘Life was very sad for a time,’ says Mo, ‘but we kept going. I took up golf and Barry was a keen fisherman, especially trout.’ Life continued at their Wolverhampton home and Barry’s window cleaning business continued to thrive. There was no sign whatsoever of what was to follow and change their lives forever.

In 2006, Barry and Mo went to visit Barry’s sister, Margaret, at her holiday home in Florida. One morning, Barry woke up with a terrible, thumping headache and was very sick. The condition lasted two days. Mo knew Barry was not himself and, on returning to England, their doctor sent him for a brain scan. Scar tissue was discovered on his brain and a consultant told Mo that, eventually, Barry would get dementia.

Though shocked by the news, Barry insisted on carrying on with his window cleaning business. But soon Mo observed worrying signs. Previously Barry had been able to sail through his book-keeping but now he was having real difficulty and it was taking him an eternity. It wasn’t long before Mo discovered that Barry had been cleaning windows but not collecting any money. It was then that alarm bells really started to ring.

Barry’s behaviour became increasingly odd. Always a fit man, who enjoyed walking, he now became obsessed with it and would walk for miles and miles, sometimes going for 18 hours without sitting down.

Mo says, ‘I decided to get him assessed and it was confirmed that Barry had vascular dementia. But he also went down with an illness called polymyalgia rheumatica which affected every muscle in his body. Barry lost so much weight it was awful. He could not walk upright or put one foot in front of the other. He had to go on steroids for nearly a year.

‘After this, he just got worse. Almost overnight, and I hate to say this, Barry virtually became a cabbage. In January 2009, he ended up throwing a coffee table through the front room window. It was awful.’

Barry had always been a gentle and peaceful man but began to have more frequent violent tantrums which were both frightening and distressing for Mo, their sons and his carers.

Mo says, 'After the incident with the coffee table, Barry was taken to hospital and placed in a psychiatric unit where he stayed for ten weeks, but he had the most awful experience there.

'We brought him back home and arranged for full-time carers to come in to give me a break. This was okay for a while but then Barry started to become aggressive again and started trying to hit me and then actually did hit his carer. So that made things impossible for us all. He was taken back into psychiatric care, staying for 16 weeks this time.'

With Barry's condition deteriorating at an alarming rate, Mo, Sean and Loy took the agonising decision to move him into a residential care home where he could get round-the-clock help.

'It is something we desperately did not want to do,' says Mo, 'but we were at our wits' end and felt we had no other option.'

Every day Mo, Sean or Loy would collect Barry from the centre and bring him home for tea.

'We did this just to stimulate him,' says Mo. 'We'd then take him back and I would put him to bed every night and wait until he was asleep. It was just something I felt I had to do. The doctors and psychiatrists could not believe how fast Barry deteriorated. Within two years he needed constant care and supervision. He couldn't do anything for himself at all.

'Sometimes, when Barry had trouble sleeping, the nurses would show him a collage they put together in the home all about Barry from when he was a boy. When they showed him this he would become calm. He knew himself as a child and he knew he played football but he never remembered people by their name.

'He had no sense of what was happening around him and could not watch TV or read. In the latter years he had difficulty

talking and also had no long- or short-term memory. We used to go out and come home but he never had any idea where he had been. For a time, he looked fit and good for his age, but mentally, there was nothing there.

‘In the end, Barry was paralysed. He was in dreadful pain and could not swallow. His breathing was horrendous and he fought for every breath.’

The man who had lit up Wembley on that hot day in 1960 now had no quality of life and, when he died at the care home on 28 August 2013, there was a sense of relief.

‘When I went to view him at the funeral home, the pain was still etched on his face,’ says Mo. ‘I could only recognise him from an eye infection he had and by his hands. I still had to have my last hug and kiss with him, which I will treasure forever.’

‘Barry always told me how much he loved me. He loved so much and he was loved so much. He was a wonderful, caring man. We had our moments, like all married couples do, and I would never put him on a pedestal now he has gone but I honestly could not have had a better husband, friend, lover and father to my children.’

‘He was also a gentle, caring grandfather. Shortly after Barry died, his grandson Jacob told his dad he was going to score for his granddad and he did, twice.’

Barry Stobart was a decent, honest man, a product of a bygone age. These are the qualities for which he will always be remembered. Those and a wonderful performance on a sunny day at Wembley more than half a century ago.

## **Postscript**

Wolves became the first English side to compete in the European Cup Winners’ Cup in 1960/61 and reached the semi-finals before going out to Rangers. The 1960 FA Cup win would be the beginning of the end for Stan Cullis’s fine side, which was relegated to the Second Division in 1964/65 but won promotion back in 1966/67. In 1974, however, they

reached Wembley again and won the Football League Cup, under Bill McGarry, thanks in no small part to the efforts of their reserve goalkeeper Gary Pierce.

After working as a printer and linotype operator, Alfred Camilleri joined the sports department of a daily Maltese newspaper and reported on the fortunes of the Maltese national team. Alfred is still involved in the Maltese Wolves supporters' club and since it was founded in 1960 has been a member, treasurer and, since 2003, the club's president.

Steve Gordos has been a Wolves fan for well over half a century. He worked for the *Express & Star* newspaper for 40 years and was sports editor when he retired in 2003. He has since written books on Wolves greats Peter Broadbent, Derek Dougan and Peter Knowles and is a regular contributor to the Wolves programme.

Bryn Williams retired in 2002 as deputy head of a primary school in Dudley after 40 years' teaching. He married Marilyn (a West Bromwich Albion supporter) in 1976 and they have two daughters, Jane (a Manchester United fan) and Ruth, who, according to Bryn, doesn't know a football from a cricket bat. Bryn became very disillusioned with Wolves during the dark 1980s and, in recent years, has become more interested in rugby and cricket with, says Bryn, 'football now bereft of all integrity, honesty, morality and loyalty'. He still follows Wolves but far less frequently these days: nevertheless, he is optimistic for the future.

Ray Brown was the public address announcer at Molineux for 12 years and press officer to Graham Turner and Graham Taylor and, for 20 years, commentated on home and away Wolves matches for hospital radio. He barely missed a Wolves game in over 70 years. He died in 2012 aged 83.

Mo Stobart still lives in Wolverhampton and stays active by playing golf. She is still friends with many of the wives and girlfriends she got to know while Barry was at Wolves.

Blackburn trod water for six more seasons in the First Division before finishing bottom in 1965/66. Their next

Wembley appearance was in 1987 when they won the Full Members' Cup Final.

Bernard Dickinson worked as a salesman for most of his working life before becoming a security consultant. His beloved wife Marlene, who he married in 1959 and travelled to Wembley with for the 1960 FA Cup Final, lost her brave battle with cancer in 2013. Bernard lives in Rishton and still has a season ticket at Ewood Park.