

QUESTION & ANSWER

A new-style series of interviews with the personalities of Chelsea F.C. Today's questions put by Albert Sewell to

HARRY MEDHURST

WHENEVER it comes to Chelsea and the Cup, I see Freddie Cox scoring that freak corner-kick goal against you in the 1950 Semi-Final at Tottenham — the goal that sent Arsenal to Wembley instead of Chelsea. Does it still haunt you?

It always will. We were leading 2-0 (Roy Bentley scored both) when Arsenal got that corner. It was the last kick of the first half. Cox drove the ball hard across, it went over our left-back Bill Hughes and swerved violently inside the near post as I rushed from the far one. Arsenal forced a replay and won it, but it was Cox's corner that really knocked us out.

Was that the nearest you have been to appearing in a Wembley Final?

No, I was 'keeper for West Ham when they reached the 1940 War Cup Final against Blackburn. I had played in every round, but couldn't get Army leave for the Final. They gave me a medal, but it wasn't the same as playing.

Before we turn to the trainer stage of your career, can you briefly sketch in the details of your playing days?

I was born at Byfleet, decided when I was about five that I wanted to be a footballer, joined Woking as an outside-left, was converted into a goalkeeper at 17 and signed pro for West Ham in season 1934-35. In 1946 I joined Chelsea (Joe Payne went to West Ham in an exchange deal) and was a player here till November, 1952, when I joined Brighton. I came back the following summer as assistant-trainer to Jack Oxberry, and became head trainer in 1960.

Did you find your height, 5 ft. 8 in., any disadvantage as a goalkeeper?

I would have liked to be a couple of inches taller with the sort of reach Frank Swift had. But there have been good keepers, before and since, shorter than I was. I knew I had to make up for lack of inches with extra agility and quicker reflexes.

When did you first see yourself as a trainer?

I was in the St. John Ambulance Brigade nearly 20 years ago, and held certificates for first aid. My interest was probably increased through my sister being a nurse (she is now a matron) and as a player I saw a lot of injuries — mostly other people's, though I suffered five finger-joint fractures and a broken wrist myself. When a vacancy occurred here, I gave up playing to take it. I studied hard on the medical side, and was among the first to gain the F.A. trainers' certificate. I've been on their summer course every year since 1959. You're always learning in this game, whether you're a player, manager, coach or trainer. If the day comes when you think you know it all, you might as well pack up.

What training honours have you earned?

England Youth, Amateur and Under-23's. I went on the 1962 FIFA course at Macolin, Switzerland, being selected to attend along with Walter Winterbottom, Billy Wright and Les Shannon.

How does the Chelsea set-up of 1964 compare with the days when you were a player here?

There is not a better-run club in the country than Chelsea today. And, thanks to Tommy Docherty, we now have the one great thing the club had always lacked on