

# PAGE FROM THE PAST: SEASON 1949-50

IN the light of more recent successes, to describe the fourth post-war season of 1949-50 as one of the most memorable in Chelsea's history might at first seem an exaggeration. But the bald recording of our fifth F.A. Cup semi-final appearance hides a wealth of excitement and drama, never to be forgotten by Chelsea fanatics of that time.

As 1949 drew to its close a position in the League table just above half-way, with 27 points from 25 matches, gave no indication of what the next three months held in store. The third round Cup hurdle at Brentford was safely cleared thanks to a lone goal by Jimmy Bowie.

The visit of Newcastle United followed, with nearly 65,000 to see an inspired display of attacking football on a frozen pitch—and a 3-0 victory. For individual brilliance the third goal still ranks among the best ever scored at Stamford Bridge. With seven minutes remaining and following a desperate assault on Chelsea's goal, Bobby Campbell was alone on the half-way line to pick up a long clearance. Away he went at tremendous speed, outstripping everyone in a 50-yard dash which ended with the ball triumphantly planted in the net as the goalkeeper advanced. The standing ovation was prolonged and unforgettable.

Next came a 1-1 draw at Chesterfield, a comfortable 3-0 replay win, and Manchester United paired with us in the quarter-final. This time more than 70,000 squeezed into Stamford Bridge before the gates were closed, and another memorable game ended in a famous victory. After Bobby Campbell had put us ahead after six minutes, a Cup-tie classic swayed agonisingly to and fro.

With twenty minutes remaining, a Winter-Gray-Bentley-Gray movement put Roy Bentley in possession some twenty yards out on the right-hand angle of the "box". Advancing three or four paces, the centre-forward unleashed a shot of devastating power to score the second goal and

clinch a place in the semi-final against Arsenal at White Hart Lane.

There, two early goals by Bentley seemed to have made our first peacetime Wembley appearance a formality, but a freak Arsenal goal, by Freddie Cox, direct from a corner on the stroke of half-time, cracked with the outside of the foot and aided by the wind, spun viciously into the net past Harry Medhurst to reduce the lead. In the second-half Leslie Compton, disobeying captain Joe Mercer's instructions, left his defence and headed in brother Denis's corner kick for the equaliser, and four days later, again at White Hart Lane, came the awful anticlimax. In extra time, Cox scored the only goal of the replay . . . and Arsenal went to Wembley instead of Chelsea.

Roy Bentley was the club's outstanding player of the season, capping a wonderful year by scoring the only goal for England against Scotland at Hampden Park, and securing his passport for the Rio World Cup trip. Only Hughie Billington, with 20 goals in all first-team matches, approached Roy's own score of 22.

The half-back line of Ken Armstrong, John Harris and Frank Mitchell was the backbone of one of the best Chelsea sides up to that time, and the defence was completed by Harry Medhurst in goal and Danny Winter and Bill Hughes at back. Both Dick Spence (after sixteen years as a player and still, of course, with us today), and Len Goulden (recalled for both semi-final games) retired as players and joined the "back-room boys" of the training staff.

## HOW THEY FINISHED IN 1949-50

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts.
Portsmouth	42	22	9	11	74	38	53
Wolverhampton W.	42	20	13	9	76	49	53
Sunderland	42	21	10	11	83	62	52
Manchester Utd.	42	18	14	10	69	44	50
Newcastle Utd.	42	19	12	11	77	55	50
Arsenal	42	19	11	12	79	55	49
Blackpool	42	17	15	10	46	35	49
Liverpool	42	17	14	11	64	54	48
Middlesbrough	42	20	7	15	59	48	47
Burnley	42	16	13	13	40	40	45
Derby County	42	17	10	15	69	61	44
Aston Villa	42	15	12	15	61	61	42
<b>Chelsea</b>	42	12	16	14	58	65	40
W.B.A.	42	14	12	16	47	53	40
Huddersfield	42	14	9	19	52	73	37
Bolton W.	42	10	14	18	45	59	34
Fulham	42	10	14	18	41	54	34
Everton	42	10	14	18	42	66	34
Stoke City	42	11	12	19	45	75	34
Charlton Athletic	42	13	6	23	53	65	32
Manchester City	42	8	13	21	36	68	29
Birmingham City	42	7	14	21	31	67	28