

REWIND SPECIAL: QPR v WEALDSTONE ANNIVERSARY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7th, 1978



▲ **LIGHT FANTASTIC!** QPR's international stars Leighton James (far left) and Don Gives applaud Stones keeper Chris Lightfoot for an amazing save in the second half of the game at Loftus Road. Our defenders Paul Thomas and Dave Parratt (foreground) seem to think it's a bit patronising, and they weren't wrong. Right: Stones boss Alan Fogarty has a pop at the referee

BY TIM PARKS and MARTIN ALLEN
TODAY is the 34th anniversary of the Stones' trip to face QPR in the FA Cup Third Round - the furthest the club have ever got in that famous competition.

To our younger fans it must seem a lifetime ago. In fact even our most recent flirtation with FA Cup glory against Rotherham just two years ago probably seems like ancient history!

But when you look back on the fantastic occasion that was Wealdstone v Rotherham in November 2009, just imagine the excitement that surrounded the club's glorious exploits in the 1977-78 campaign when we beat TWO league sides - Hereford United and Reading - and made it all the way to the Third Round Proper and that glamour away tie at Queen Park Rangers.

Looking back on those days now, as a Stones fan of some 40 years standing, it's all a little unbelievable. Will we ever get to play a top-flight club again? Could the dream ever be repeated?

Personally, it was all the more amazing as I was an occasional QPR fan at the time and had seen about a dozen of their games each season through the early 1970s. Being too young to go to the Stones away games, I bagged a lift with my schoolmate Derek and his dad for most of the Rs games at Loftus Road, suffering occasions like QPR v Newcastle, QPR v Leeds and QPR v Chelsea when I'd rather have been at Bideford v Wealdstone, Salisbury v Wealdstone or Poole Town v the Stones.

Fogarty slams referee

Wealdstone manager Alan Fogarty was highly critical of referee Mr. Ron Crabb who handled Saturday's FA Cup Third Round tie between Southern Premier League Wealdstone and First Division Queen's Park Rangers at Loftus Road, writes Pat Mooney.

Fogarty said that Mr. Crabb, who has been banned from refereeing for a month by the Football League, had "bottled it a bit".

"He booked three of our players but none of the Rangers players," he added.

However, the Wealdstone boss had high praise for his team. "I was proud of the lads. They tried and I really enjoyed it. The penalty was the killer blow. But we have made history and I'm pleased. We gave a good account of ourselves and we showed that we can play good football."

"We did the negative things reasonably well, such as making James go down the line, not allowing Rangers to play one twice around the box and generally working hard. It was a day I'm sure the players will always remember and certainly one I'll always remember."

REWIND SPECIAL CONTINUED

The crackling radio in Derek's Dad's car, on those long-ago trips to see Rangers, would bring good or bad news at about 5.30 when Radio London (I think it was) would carry a round-up of 'Minor League Results' involving the capital's teams.

The thrill of having seen players of the calibre of Stan Bowles, Dave Thomas and Gerry Francis at their peak would fade away as the faint tones over the radio announced 'Bideford 4 Wealdstone 1' or 'Dunstable 2 Wealdstone 0', Banbury 3 Wealdstone 1' and suchlike.

But as the 1970s advanced, the Stones came of age. We won promotion to the Southern League Premier Division and suddenly Derek and his Dad (and quite a few other QPR fans) started to come along to Lower Mead when Rangers were away.

The boot was on the other foot.

Rangers finished the 1975-76 season as runners-up to Liverpool in Division One. Their best-ever season. And two years later they were drawn against Wealdstone in the FA Cup 3rd Round. Can you imagine just how sensational that was for this then 20-year-old?

The press cuttings on these pages, again supplied by long-time fan Martin Allen (who was there beside me on the terrace all those years ago) reflect the joy and agony of that day in West London.

Of course, we came up short. Nobody could realistically have expected otherwise (although I had recorded a spoof radio report a couple of years earlier in which the Stones had reached that



▲ BOWLED OVER! Leighton James fires in Rangers' clinching second goal in the second half after a mesmerising run from Stan Bowles set him up. Bobby Moss (7) and Fred Barwick (6) are the Stones defenders. Left: Willie Watson (bearded) is shown a yellow card by ref Ron Crabb as the game boils over. George Duck (right looks on)

Q.P.R. ready for Blyth

QUEENS Park Rangers will Blyth in the second of today's cup draws. That's the message of team confidence at the moment. And RANGERS fans were told WEALDSTONE had left to go at it. Manager Alan Fogarty was only being polite when he said: 'We saw the difference between a First Division side and one from the Southern League today.'

By Norman Dixon

For 45 minutes there was a bit of a difference at it. The first goal landed on the Park players was a gift. The second came from a Stan Bowles' run, unopposed, with little to no danger. And the goalkeeper was named before Eddie H we hammered in the last. That leaves only the second goal to remind us that a First

Division side was out on Parkia today. The classic building and layout of the stadium was a sight to see. Manager Frank Swift was away Blyth is breathing the same air as the first a few years as well as new players. Only John Helms played throughout as though victory was a matter of life or death. What an example for the rest, not what little effort it had on most of his colleagues.

AND CONTINUED....

Stan sparkles

QUEEN'S PARK RANGERS manager Frank Sibley, who was away watching the Carlisle v Manchester United match, would not have been pleased with his team's lethargic F.A. Cup performance against Wealdstone.

Although victory for Rangers was never in doubt, it was only the occasional burst of brilliance from Stan Bowles and John Hollins' splendid midfield performance that raised any enthusiasm from their supporters.

Wealdstone were obviously outclassed yet I was sorry to see them so discredited in defeat. Three of their players—Alan Fursdon, John Watson and Steve Brinkman—were

by DENIS COMPTON
Q.P.R. 4 Wealdstone 0

booked and they were fortunate that more weren't shown the card.

Rangers' first goal after just six minutes should have led to an avalanche, but they simply went through the motions for the rest of the half and showed no urgency whatsoever.

That goal was the result of a mistake by goalkeeper Chris Lightfoot. He went down far too late and allowed a gentle header from Don Givens to pass gently under his body.

DEFLECTED

Wealdstone went close to equalising in the 35th minute when Parkes dropped a cross and Purphy's terrific shot was deflected just wide by one of their own players.

A magical run by Stan Bowles brought the second goal in the 48th minute. He went by three defenders and squared to Leighton James who crashed the ball into the roof of the net. Stan Bowles rapped in number three from a penalty after David Parratt brought down Leach.

Another piece of Bowles' magic brought the fourth goal when he laid it on for Ernie Howe to crack the ball home.

JOHN TUNES UP RANGERS FOR VICTORY

JOHN HOLLINS, Rangers' skipper, was late for a local radio phone-in programme yesterday morning. But he deserved a lay-in.

Struggling Rangers owed much to Hollins' inspirational midfield play the previous day when they ended Wealdstone's gallant cup run.

Hollins, plus the genius of Stan Bowles, gave Rangers four goals for the first time this season.

But as Hollins admitted: "They had us going for 20 minutes. I only hope these goals give us confidence in the League so we can move up the table."

Manager of Southern League Wealdstone, Alan Fogarty, didn't think Rangers' last two goals should have counted.

And he accused ref Ron Crabb of "batting it" in the second half.

Booked

"He booked three of our players and none of theirs," he said. "That must indicate something."

I thought we deserved to be level at half-time but Rangers hit a fine second goal because of a great run by Bowles.

An error by goalkeeper Chris Lightfoot who was slow in going down for a Don Givens header — gave Rangers

By KEVIN MOSELEY

QPR 4
Wealdstone 0

the lead after only seven minutes.

Yet Wealdstone didn't fold and with 19-year-old Arsenal reject Steve Brinkman in eye-catching form, they could easily have equalised.

Four minutes into the second half, Bowles added his way past four defenders to provide Leighton James with the second goal.

David Parratt was judged to have brought down Mick Leach in the 62nd minute and Bowles scored from the penalty spot.

Eight minutes later, defender Ernie Howe hit his first goal for Rangers.

▲ **AND THE PRESS SAID..** A few of the reports from the National papers in the wake of our defeat. Pretty honest too. Sadly there is no room here for a Harrow Observer article reporting on how a couple of young fan Nick DuGard's mates were attacked by Rangers supporters on the way back to White City station after the game. Well, it was the 1970s...

exact same round, had been rewarded with the exact same draw but had won the game with a sensational last-minute goal from our Dutch winger Adriaan Eglite).

Truth was more sobering than fiction. An early mistake from our keeper Chris Lightfoot, who had been brilliant in the wins over Hereford (after a replay) and Reading, allowed Don Givens' header to slip over the line in the opening minutes. And although the Stones strove manfully against a Rangers side packed with internationals - and our midfielder Steve Brinkman was arguably the most creative player on the pitch - three late goals from James, Stan Bowles (with a contentious

penalty) and Mick Leach saw Rangers into the Fourth round with the 4-0 scoreline predicted by most.

However.... West Ham were walloped 6-1 by Rangers in the next round so perhaps we wouldn't have done too badly against THAT Division One side!

As a footnote, the 18,000 crowd inside Loftus Road that day is (I believe) the third-biggest to have watched the Stones in our club's proud history, bettered only by the 45,000 at Wembley for the 1966 Amateur Cup Final victory and the 20,000 gathered at the same stadium for our win over Boston United in 1985.