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By Richard Lewis

IT TOOK Yeovil 108 years to get as far as the Football League. Now, just a decade later, they are in the Championship.

And as half the population of the small Somerset town basked in the sun at Wembley, they won a League One play-off final that showed how football's destination can turn on one kick going right or wrong.

Three weeks ago Brentford were on the cusp of automatic promotion when striker Marcello Trotta missed a penalty in the final seconds of their dramatic last game of the normal season against Doncaster.

It meant the play-offs and it is a penalty that will be rued for even longer now after Gary Johnson, the manager when Yeovil won the Conference title in 2003, took the men in green and white hoops to their greatest football heights.

Johnson has not been with them for all those 10 years, but he returned 15 months ago. And his champagne-drenched suit told the only story he wanted to hear as he celebrated this momentous moment.

"We are a relatively small club on a small budget," said the manager. "But this is what you can do. If you have big ambitions for a little man, then you can get this. It is a great achievement."

With a Huish Park capacity of just over 9,500, Yeovil stand just a division away from the glamour and the fortune of the Premier League. There is a truly remarkable story.

Yesterday they had 20,000 fans here at HQ as a touch of brilliance set them on their way when Irish striker Paddy Madden curled home a magnificent goal after only six minutes, before Dan Burn headed in the second just before the break.

The Bees responded well after the restart and, in six minutes, Harlee Dean's header brought them back into this game.

But this was to be Yeovil's afternoon. What a season it has been for a club that began as one of the favourites for relegation and will now be welcoming Harry Redknapp's QPR, Leeds, Birmingham and Nottingham Forest to their little ground. But Brentford have now missed out on promotion from the play-offs seven times.

Yeovil snatched a lead with a goal that showed diamonds can be found in the lower divisions. Johnson has called Madden the "bargain of the century". He



HOOP AND GLORY: Yeovil celebrate the play-off victory which took them up into the Championship

# Win and bust for Johnson

cost only £20,000 from Carlisle and, when he curled the ball in from 20 yards with the outside of his right foot, you could see what the manager meant. It was his 24th goal of the season.

"The way he took it was a sublime piece of ingenuity," said Johnson.

Yeovil never had another real chance in the first half until they stretched their lead four minutes before the interval, as Burn's header from a corner squeezed through a crowd of players and past Simon Moore.

Brentford had to raise their game and they did that with immediate impact in the second

half as Adam Forshaw's corner from the right found Dean unmarked and his header flew past Marek Stech.

But that was it. Stech was not going to be beaten again and his fine diving stop from Bradley Wright-Phillips' shot was the best of his heroics.

Bees manager Uwe Rosler remained philosophical, having seen his club come so close twice over. "It does not kill you," he said. "It makes you stronger. The second half was fantastic for my players and we really should have got extra time."

Maybe now Johnson will be granted a wish for which he has

waited 10 years. "The chairman promised me a bust after we made it into the League from the Conference and it is not there yet," said Johnson.

"Winston Churchill got his bust – and he did not do half as much as what I have done for Yeovil."

**BRENTFORD (4-4-3):** Moore; Logan, Dean, Craig, Bidwell; Forshaw, Diagouraga (Hayes 82), Adeyemi; Donaldson, Trotta (Wright-Phillips 62), Forrester (Saunders 67). **Goal:** Dean 51.

**YEovil (4-4-2):** Stech; Ayling, Webster, Burn, McAllister (Maksimenko, 77); Dawson, Upson, Edwards, Foley; Madden, Hayter (Dolan, 88). **Booked:** Upson, Dawson, Williams. **Goals:** Madden 6, Burn 42.

**Referee:** A D'Urso (Essex).

# Bradford turnaround complete



A YEAR AGO Bradford just survived staying in the Football League; 13 years and six days ago

**MONDAY FOCUS**  
BY RICHARD LEWIS

could have experienced such mixed emotions at this stadium – in its old form and new – as has

and what it meant was handling the occasion. This was a far bigger game than the Capital