

## PASSING SHOT ALEC STOCK GAVE YEOVIL THE PUNCH TO KNOCK OUT GIANTS



By Tom Dart

HANDS UP if you have witnessed one of the greatest shocks in FA Cup history. Yeovil Town were part-timers, seventeenth in the Southern League; Sunderland were one of the biggest clubs in England. Yet the unthinkable happened and Yeovil won 2-1. More than 17,000 crammed into their Huish ground but demand was so high that the fixture could have sold out three times over.

Alec Stock, the Yeovil player-manager, is the man raised shoulder-high. An inside right,

he scored the winner. "No team could be assured of a warmer welcome to Yeovil this afternoon than Sunderland, who for so many years have maintained the best traditions of soccer," Stock wrote in the programme. "No more worthy opponents could have been selected for the most memorable game in the Yeovil club's 25 years history."

The programme refers to a "Football Dance" that evening, likely to be the one pictured: "Tickets 2/6, dancing 8 to 11.30 and a licensed bar."

Yeovil scored first but Sunderland then dominated

**DATE:** January 1949

**PLACE:** Assembly Rooms, Princes St, Yeovil

**EVENT:** Cabaret celebrating Yeovil Town's victory over Sunderland in the FA Cup fourth round

and equalised, taking the tie to extra time. The non-league team were battling not only the likes of Len Shackleton but also a fog that enveloped the Huish and almost caused the game to be abandoned.

Energised by their pre-game drink, Stock's egg and sherry punch, Yeovil scored again and held on desperately. The excitement was such that when the referee blew for a free kick near the end, several thousand supporters thought that it was the final whistle and invaded the pitch.

Ralph Davis, now 82, was the Yeovil left back that day. "I still picture it, I shall never forget it," he said. "Fantastic. Everything in town was green and white. The atmosphere was like a lot of bees round a jam pot. We fought from the first tone of the whistle until

the last and that's what did it. Shackleton was a bit shocked."

Yeovil's reward was a fifth-round tie against Manchester United, played at Maine Road in front of a crowd of 82,000. They lost 8-0. Stock, who died in 2001, went on to manage several League clubs. Another of his great achievements was leading Fulham to the 1975 FA Cup Final. Davis will be at the new Huish tomorrow when Yeovil host Liverpool. "I think Yeovil's got a good chance. I'm going to be there with my green and white scarf," he said. ■ Thanks: Joseph Lewis, David Stevenson