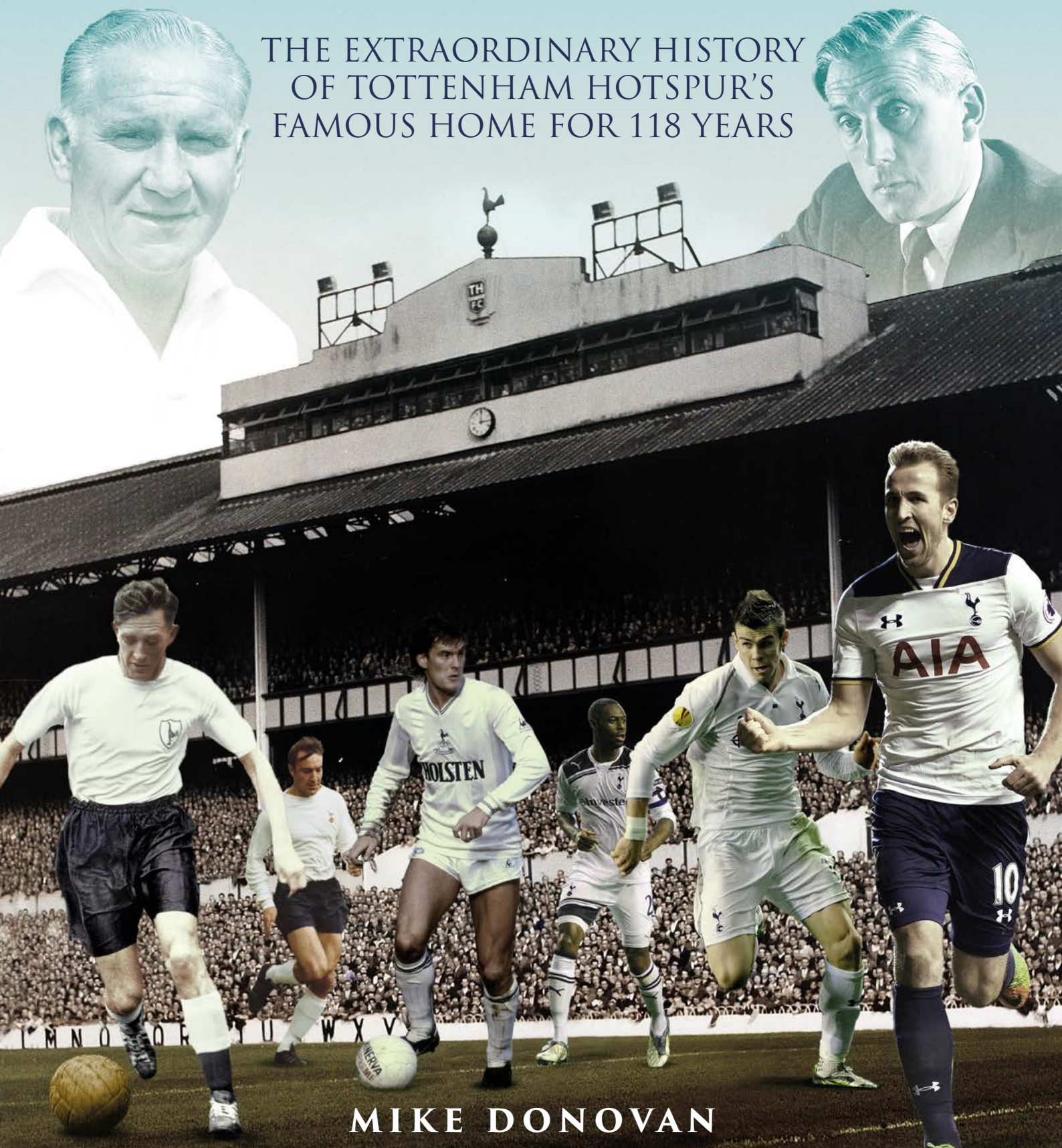


GLORY GLORY LANE

THE EXTRAORDINARY HISTORY
OF TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR'S
FAMOUS HOME FOR 118 YEARS



MIKE DONOVAN

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GLORY, GLORY
LANE

THE EXTRAORDINARY HISTORY
OF TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR'S

In association with
THE  **TIMES**



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Spurs' Push and Run team led by Arthur Rowe



Bill Nicholson with the League Cup



Danny Blanchflower leads out Spurs at the Lane

The Finale: Somewhere Over The Rainbow

IT is coming up to eight o'clock on the evening of Sunday, 14th May 2017. The rain soft, the sun weak, light fading. A spring freshness in the nostrils, excited chatter in the ears and the sight of the babbling Spurs believers pouring out of their cathedral one last time. We had all gathered at White Hart Lane Stadium, the 'world-famous home of the Spurs' for 118 years, to say goodbye to it.

Not long before, a host of legends had stood in the centre of the field of so many dreams. Double winner Terry Dyson pointed a finger and Glenn Hoddle his umbrella at the skyline. Both to draw attention to what they had seen. A fully-arc'd rainbow across the back of the iconic East Stand. All those in the West, North and South Stands and each corner swiftly caught on and averted their gaze towards the heavens.

And those at the front of the East Stand twisted round to fix their eyes on the natural phenomenon behind and above the copper-coloured cockerel reflecting the remaining shafts of sunlight perched on the roof of the structure which had stood since 1934. It was appropriate, being the last surviving stand designed and developed by Archibald Leitch for Tottenham Hotspur's third home.

The celebratory wake for the Lane had just finished in a flurry of ticker tape and around 30,000 white and navy blue flags being waved from side to side. One choreographed with love. To reflect what the club had stood for down the Lane, down the years: entertainment, class, glory. It struck exactly the right note with reverence for the past and adulation to touch all the senses.

It followed Harry Kane preaching to the converted by scoring the last winning goal for the club at its traditional home; the 2,533rd and final competitive match to be hosted by Spurs at a Lane bathed in sunshine. Fittingly, the 2-1 victory over Manchester United ensured a sense of closure for the old ground. United were the opposition when Spurs played their first top-flight game at the ground on 11th September in 1909. The win also bettered Spurs' First Division newcomers of yore who drew 2-2 in front of Archibald Leitch's newly-built West Stand after winning promotion in their debut season in the Football League; Bobby Steel converting two penalties for the Lilywhites.

But Mother Nature stole the show as Dyson, Hoddle, all of us, witnessed the rainbow emerge out of dark clouds. It seemed to point the way to Spurs' future. As Yip Harburg's lyrics in the song 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow', immortalised by Judy Garland's Dorothy in the film *The Wizard of Oz*, had it, 'Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue and the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true'. ('Dare' apposite given the club motto of To Dare Is To Do.) And the players – in navy blue tracksuits – charged with realising a few of them lined up on the hallowed turf with incumbent manager Mauricio Pochettino in parallel to more than 40 'kings of White Hart Lane' who had helped create the club's illustrious past.

The weight of expectation on their shoulders had been made all the heavier by the squad's performance that day and throughout the season. The stylish win over Jose Mourinho's pale Red



Lane legends applaud the fans during the emotional closing ceremony at The Finale

Devils – understood to be distracted by an upcoming and ultimately successful Europa League Cup Final against Ajax ten days later – sealed runner-up spot, the club's highest league position in 54 years; title hopes having been ended with Chelsea securing the championship with a victory at West Bromwich Albion two days earlier.

It ensured Mauricio Pochettino's outfit had remained unbeaten at the Lane for a season for the first time since the 1964/65 season when Jimmy Greaves was the striker wreaking havoc for visiting defenders. It secured them a record 14th home league victory in a row (17 if you take in the FA Cup) at the Lane. Marked Pochettino as the first Tottenham boss to guide their side to two home wins over United on the bounce.

And, of course, there would be the living up to the high praise garnered by the manager and the team. A combination which pundits predicted in the summer of 2017 would deliver heaps of silverware. First while lodging a season at Wembley before moving into a new 61,559-capacity, £800m super stadium aimed at transforming Spurs into a 'super' club from 2018/19.

Spurs dubbed the day they faced United as The Finale. On the commemorative programme. And on posters hanging from Tottenham High Road lampposts, including the one – or at least the site

of one – purported to have witnessed a group of schoolboys gathering in 1882 to form the club. The build-up to it began in earnest on a sunny-spells-with-clouds afternoon two days earlier, a few hours before a Michy Batshuayi goal for Chelsea at the Hawthorns ensured Spurs missed out for a second successive season after maintaining a championship bid almost to the last.

The scene was Spurs' plush, state-of-the-art-with-bells-on training ground. It featured a giant glass-fronted building shaped like a spaceship, greenery, including a shrub shaped into a cockerel by a topiarist, and a road system in 77 acres on Hotspur Way, just off the Great Cambridge Road (the same routeway known as Tottenham High Road a few miles south) at Enfield. It is 30 minutes trot from Turkey Street station. Not far from Cheshunt where Bill Nicholson trained up his Double-winning team on more modest fields of green.

The media was gathered in a waiting room filled with natural daylight pouring through the glass, eating bananas, sipping tea and tapping keyboards in between exchanging friendly banter, awaiting the arrival of Mauricio Pochettino in an adjoining auditorium behind double doors for a press conference to discuss the Manchester United match. Through one of the glass walls, I saw smiling Spurs goalkeeping legend Pat Jennings, in dark suit

and navy blue and white tie, walk on by with players and coaches from the morning sessions. Pochettino appears and takes his place on the stage, assistant Jesus Perez to his left and Simon Felstein, Spurs' Head of Communications, conducting proceedings to his right behind a long table. Microphones set up, water bottles and glasses adjacent.

There are newlines discussed pertaining to the last game, United in general, Chelsea and the move to Wembley in front of the cameras of broadcasters before the No.1 football writers of national newspapers and your author are ushered to huddle around Pochettino, who remained in his seat. After newlines are introduced and developed, I get my opportunity of an audience with the manager with the responsibility of turning the 'super' project – outlined to him by chairman Daniel Levy when he first joined the club from Southampton on 27th May 2014 – into a reality. I asked him simply, 'What does White Hart Lane mean to you in your heart and what do you think it means to the fans?'

His answer betrayed the perfect balance between passion, pragmatism and an open mind. Aware of the expectations of playing for glory in a glorious way. Bill Nicholson and Nicholson's captain Danny Blanchflower would have approved.

Pochettino looked me in the eyes and said, 'For myself, because I am a very sensitive person and so emotional, it will be difficult not to cry, maybe, Sunday, because you always suffer for the people that will be so emotional. I think for the fans it means a lot. But in the same way – I don't want to be wrong – but I think our fans are so excited to welcome the new stadium too. That doesn't mean they are happy it is the end of White Hart Lane. But that they are excited towards the progress. They are excited to the future of the club. Sure it will be very, very emotional but at the same time it will be very, very exciting to welcome the new stadium.'

I said, 'Thank you.' He gave a knowing nod and smiled in reply. He appeared pleased with his answer. One that also reflected how the Argentine's command of English had developed from when he arrived using an interpreter. He believed respect for the fans was paramount to how the club could achieve. Perhaps that's why Harry Kane slowed down and beckoned me across the road as he drove into the training ground as I left it.

Walthamstow-born Kane was the local lad turned local hero. Spurs' talisman. The subject of the most heartily song sung by the Lane faithful, 'He's one of our own, Harry Kane is one of our own'. And the song received its loudest performance around 24 hours later at The Finale as Kane scored that historic goal.

The Finale day itself began quietly in spring sunshine around the Lane. By noon, the early hordes made the journey by rail up from Liverpool Street to White Hart Lane station, took pictures of the station sign and either went snapping around the stadium or repaired to the nearest hostelry. Up Creighton Road, where Bill Nicholson lived in a modest end-of-terrace house throughout his time at the club, the only activity was a couple of young mates walking side by side chatting, and purposeful individuals heading towards White Hart Lane station 200 yards away.

The street just off Creighton Road, White Hart Lane itself – where Bobby Buckle, the founder who



'Farewell' to White Hart Lane T-shirts

helped the club move into the Lane lived in a small white house – was equally low-key with a dad trying to make a babe in arms comfortable in a buggy with mum’s assistance. Morgan Parker, 26, had set up a stall selling the match programmes just down from the station en route to the High Road. Ten quid a pop. Trade began to get brisk after midday even though it was over four hours to kick-off.

Turn right into the High Road and you saw, set back, the concrete shell of the developing new stadium towering over the 1982 West Stand. Cross the road and there was a stall selling souvenirs such as scarves, T-shirts and badges – in front of Percy House, the club meeting place set up by Spurs’ first president John Ripsher. Gary Mabbutt, the Spurs legend and 1991 FA Cup-winning captain, drove past and the owner Mario gave him a wave. Mabbutt turned into the entrance gate. He was to be one of the ‘kings of White Hart Lane’. Joe Kinnear, arguably the club’s finest right-back, made his entrance on shanks’s pony with wife Bonnie. He made slow progress surrounded by autograph hunters. One of which told another he had got Kinnear’s signature but had ‘just missed Terry Dyson’.

The Doyle brothers hovered halfway down a 200-yard stretch of hoardings covered in Spurs pictures from the end of the terrace where Percy House stood to the preserved Warmington House, the former home of the supporters’ club and part of the redevelopment. The siblings, wearing replica shirts, had made the 260-mile round trip from Nottingham – or ‘Tottingham’ as they put it – even though they were without a ticket. ‘We just wanted to be there,’ said the elder, Michael.

Further along in front of the site of the Tottenham and Edmonton Infirmary, a war hero stood in his army beret, with his medals pinned to his uniform jacket raising money to help take veterans to Normandy for the D-Day commemorations the following month. Bill Parr told me he was a club driver in the 1980s. He said, ‘I used to drive Gary Lineker to the hospital when his son George was being treated for leukaemia. Got sacked for punching Alan Sugar’s chauffeur in a row over parking at the ground!’

The Spurs Shop on the east corner of the High Road and Park Lane was packed to the gills as it completed its last hours of trading with store



Posting the way to The Finale

operations manager Paul Moynihan guiding his troops. Customer, American Tyler Rodgers, 30, sporting his Washington DC Spurs Supporters’ Club scarf, said, ‘The stadium was what got me into the club. The atmosphere, the intensity, the singing, the sense of community. A sports culture I’d never experienced before.’

Turn left into a road-blocked Park Lane in the shadow of the South Stand and an Australian couple wearing Spurs Sydney strolled down the middle of the road arm in arm. Further down the smells familiar to my youth drifted up my nostrils. Fried onions. A couple of burger vans were doing a brisk trade. Left into Worcester Avenue at the back of the East Stand, members of a Spurs supporters’ club from the south coast were trying to pose for



Fans wave flags as Spurs pull the curtain down on the Lane

pictures with a people-high flag. Given the club's association with his religion, it seemed emblematic that an orthodox Jewish male with long sidelocks and wearing a kippah on his head should casually weave his bicycle around fans in replica shirts, meandering along what was another closed-off road and heading towards Park Lane.

I went by the enclosure my dad took me into the ground at East Stand's north-east corner, which had been demolished to allow for the contractors to start work on the new structure during the final season. You could view the South Stand's jumbotron which would screen the action later. And turned left into where Paxton Road used to be onto a walkway which took me down to an informal piazza where dwarfed fans either clicked stills or filmed videos of the gigantic new stadium being built, with the onsite cranes stretching high into the sky like metal giraffes. The North Stand behind them.

The pubs filled. The Coach and Horses up the High Road towards Edmonton had a beefy, but polite bouncer informing those seeking to enter that its bars were full. It was close to that way at another popular haunt for a pre-match drink. The Antwerp Arms just up Church Road from the corner of the High Road closest to THAT supposed lamppost. As

it was at No.8 hostel south beyond the Park Lane turn-off, formerly known as the Bell and Hare whose clientele once included sixties legends such as Dave Mackay, Terry Dyson, John White and Jimmy Greaves who chewed the cud with supporters after games.

The Bill Nicholson in Northumberland Park had at least 200 relaxed punters on its forecourt enjoying the sunshine. Just across the street, a few yards to the east is the site of Spurs' second home – pinpointed between 69 and 75 Northumberland Park by Spurs fan and historian Bob Goodwin – the street named after Tottenham landowners who were descendants of Harry Hotspur (Sir Henry Percy himself).

Supporters made their way up from Northwick Park station which once stored Spurs' goalposts when they played at their first base on the Marshes over the tracks. You reach the site of it when you venture further east over the station's level crossing to an industrial estate to the Marshes and down along the River Lea, London's second river. Proof all of Spurs homes were – and will remain – within walking distance of the other.

Spectators collected their commemorative T-shirts and flags on entry to the old stadium as it



Last day of business for the Spurs Shop



The Finale programme sellers



Burgers doing a brisk business



No.8, formerly the Bell and Hare pub, hosts Spurs fans

filled to its limited capacity – with just 31,848, who would be able to say ‘I was there’. The sun shone as the players stepped out of the dressing rooms, onto the pitch and into the history books. The deafening roar might have provoked complaints from the Noise Abatement Society. The Lane always had an intense, passion-filled, intimidating atmosphere at the best of times. The legs of the opposition of the past could turn to jelly as they entered the arena, especially with the tumult emanating from The Shelf, the mid-tier on the East Stand, when it was a terrace packed with the most committed.

You wondered if Jose Mourinho’s Reds would be made of sterner stuff as they followed the likes of legendary teams containing George Best, Bobby Charlton, Denis Law, Duncan Edwards, Billy Meredith et al, onto the Lane’s green lawn, pristine in late season in contrast to the worn out, mud-cracked heaps of the past. After all there had been some classic encounters against United. One in 1966 saw Alan Gilzean and Jimmy Greaves seal a victory over a team featuring Best, Charlton and Law with Spurs one goal down until three minutes from time.

And the classic 2001 encounter when Tottenham gave up a three-goal lead to lose 5-3 against visitors fielding another formidable triumvirate, David Beckham, Ruud van Nistelrooy and Paul Scholes.

But the volume, with a maximum of ten, was turned up to 11, perhaps in an unintended tribute to guitarist ‘Nigel’ in the cult spoof rock film *This Is Spinal Tap*, when Victor Wanyama headed Spurs in front from a Ben Davies cross after just six minutes.

It was loudest even the oldest folk present could remember (bar perhaps the first *Glory, Glory Night* against Gornik Zabrze in 1961 – more later). The East Stand especially. The foundations of Leitch’s structure seemed to be rocking as inhabitants, endorphins flowing, bellowed out songs to departed heroes like Paul Gascoigne, the late Cyril Knowles and, reacting to his recent mental health issues, Aaron Lennon. And the modern ones: ‘We love Eric Dier’ (to the tune of ‘Land of Hope and Glory’) and ‘We’ve got Dele Alli’. And of course, the Harry Kane anthem.

Spurs went close to doubling their advantage but the players returned to their inner sanctum at the interval needing a second to remove doubts that the team might revert to a type of past incarnations – one that dominated, missed chances and got caught out at the end. Musical duo Chas and Dave, whose songs like ‘Glory, Glory Tottenham Hotspur’ had been adopted by the ‘choirs’ all round the ground, gave the fans a wave and ‘rabbited’ in a half-time interview pitchside while Pochettino prepared his



The construction continues behind The Finale banner in the gap between the North and East Stands



Martin Chivers, Terry Dyson, Tony Galvin, Glenn Hoddle, David Ginola, John Pratt and Allan Nielsen

troops for their final half of football at the Lane. To a man each of the Lilywhites were determined to sign off with a victory, even if one of the world's most famous clubs stood in their way.

Kane put thoughts into action when he darted in to convert an inswinging Christian Eriksen free-kick at the North End. 2-0 three minutes after the restart. If we thought the roar was loud when Wanyama gave his side their dream start, it was increased the moment the ball hit the back of the

net from Kane's flick. 'He's one of our own, Harry Kane, he's one of our own' rang around the old stadium again. The Lane talisman had said he had been desperate to score the winning goal, insisting it would be 'so special'. His wish had come true to the delight of Spurs fans either in the stadium, watching on the TV in pubs or at home or abroad. The Butterfly Effect in a nutshell.

The hero of the hour said in *The Sun*, 'What a way to finish. We wanted a win so badly in our last

game here. I said before I'd love to score the winning goal and for it to happen is brilliant. To see it go in was special. We so badly wanted to win this game.' Pochettino said to the newspaper, 'It was a perfect performance and I am happy for the victory for our fans.'

Wayne Rooney consoled United 19 minutes from time to comparative silence bar the cheers from visiting supporters up in the south-west corner. It made all us Spurs fans a little edgy – a hangover from the bad old days, I guess – but this was the new Spurs. One with the best defence in the Premier League. Fit, drilled, solid, dependable. And they enabled themselves and all those chanting 'Come on you Spurs' to enjoy the dream ending.

Supporters invaded the pitch – pulling up clumps of grass for souvenirs – to hold up the stadium's closing ceremony. Once cleared, Sir Kenneth Branagh, the esteemed actor, recited the pre-recorded club's history up on the jumbotron screens at either end with the crowd hushed and the Kinks, from up the road, providing part of the soundtrack to black and white images.

The 'kings' came out individually to receive rapturous ovations as they waved to the crowd. Cliff Jones, who belied his 82 years by trotting out, Terry Dyson, Les Allen and Terry Medwin, all from the Double squad. Les's son Clive. David Ginola and Ray Clemence, who have suffered serious illnesses. Alan Gilzean, to many the original King of White Hart Lane, almost raised the roof and, perhaps, loosen the structure for demolition. And Glenn Hoddle received the loudest ovation.

They all appeared alphabetically, others including Paul Allen, Darren Anderton, Steve Archibald, Ossie Ardiles, Phil Beal, Dimitar Berbatov, Stephen Carr, Martin Chivers, Ray Clemence, Garth Crooks, Peter Crouch, Edgar Davids, Justin Edinburgh, Mike England, Mark Falco, Tony Galvin, Micky Hazard, David Howells, Pat Jennings, Robbie Keane, Ledley King, Joe Kinnear, Gary Mabbutt, Paul Miller, Terry Naylor, Allan Nielsen, John Pratt, Graham Roberts, Jimmy Robertson, Paul Robinson, Vinny Samways, Teddy Sheringham, Paul Stewart, Erik Thorstvedt, Ricky Villa and Chris Waddle.

Lane appearance record-holder Steve Perryman, now an Exeter City director of football was

There will be a bit of despair along the way but it's a great, great club with so much tradition – yet so much history about to be made.

Steve Perryman

otherwise engaged with the Grecians in the League Two playoffs, sent a message: 'There will be a bit of despair along the way but it's a great, great club with so much tradition – yet so much history about to be made.' So did Jürgen Klinsmann, 'I've never felt the connection so deeply between the fans and the players in a stadium.' As did Paul Gascoigne, 'The time I had at Spurs was phenomenal. The thing is sometimes I wish I hated it because then I wouldn't miss it so much. The worst thing is when I watch them I think about my time there and that's the time I can never get back.' They were joined by the current crop after a recorded message from Daniel Levy in which the chairman declared, 'We are building what will be one of Europe's best stadiums and we will be one of Europe's top clubs.'

All represented themselves and the ghosts of Lilywhites past, their managers, beyond those who were there like Keith Burkinshaw, Harry Redknapp,



Harry Kane celebrates his goal at The Finale

Final defeat
would cost
United £22m

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Lane for a victory against Southampton two months earlier.) Ian said to the club's website, 'We've got a big family spread far and wide and we're all massive Spurs fans, for the reason that our great-grandfather was one of the founders of this great football club. Since we were young children, Spurs has been a massive part of our lives with everybody involved



David Ginola applauds the fans at the closing ceremony

Gary Mabbutt claps the crowd



Kyle Walker

really. We're immensely proud to be associated in that manner.'

The crowd burst out, 'There's only one Paul Gascoigne' before the London Gospel Community Choir, in transparent plastic ponchos to protect themselves from the rain, sang, 'When the Spurs go marching in' as the kings of yesterday and the would-be kings of today – and tomorrow – took

“The time I had at Spurs was phenomenal. The thing is sometimes I wish I hated it because then I wouldn't miss it so much.”

Paul Gascoigne



Ledley King acknowledges the cheers at the closing ceremony



The message is clear

it all in. Levy, the face of the Northumberland Development Project which includes Spurs' new home at its centre, looked on with all the other fans reflecting and, no doubt, thinking forward, especially as he was handing over the keys of the place to Mark Reynolds, the chief executive of demolition firm Mace the following morning when the pitch would be ripped up to begin an estimated three-month process.

The crowd held up their home-made signs proclaiming 'Thanks Poch, you're magic' and, cheekily from one young female supporter, 'Toby (Alderweireld) and Jan (Vertonghen) get your kits off' as others dug out their favourite chants such as 'Tottenham 'til I die' and 'We are Tottenham, super Tottenham of the Lane'. It became an outpouring of emotion when opera singer Wynne Evans, famed for his appearances in an insurance company television advert, stood on a platform between the legends and repeated the song most associated with White Hart Lane, 'Glory, Glory Hallelujah... and the Spurs go marching on'. Your author choked as his late dad was among the gathering which first sang it at the

stadium when Polish champions Gornik came to the ground in 1961.

Then there was the ticker tape. And the rainbow. Perhaps with a pot of gold at the end of it to represent all the dreams come true of future glory coursing in all the imaginations of every man, woman and child who supports Spurs. First at Wembley for the 2017/18 season and then the hoped-for new Glory, Glory Lane. The crowd – young, old, male, female – had sung their hearts out and dispersed for the last time, carrying their commemorative flags and T-shirts, with a few season ticket holders clutching on to their blue plastic seats.

I spoke to a New York couple, a group of thirty-something north London lads, two former Spurs Ladies players, one of whom, Louise Cooper, had trod the hallowed turf, and a father of a seven-year-old representing the next generation. Each felt 'emotional' but that it was a 'new beginning'. Others repaired to the No.8 where they adapted a familiar stadium chant to 'Beers up if you love the Lane' as they held pint glasses aloft – we will all drink to that.