

Wembley will be full for this year's FA Cup final but hopefully it will be the players in the headlines, not a police horse!

HOW A WHITE HORSE SAVED THE FA CUP

I did warn you about standing behind him!

1. WEMBLEY EXCITEMENT

Most FA Cup finals are remembered for players who score winning goals, but the 1923 final is remembered for a white horse called Billy who saved the day after the huge crowd spilled onto the pitch.

The match was the first to be played at the brand new **Wembley Stadium**. It was the biggest stadium in the world, able to hold **125,000** people, but this match was attended by an estimated **250,000**.

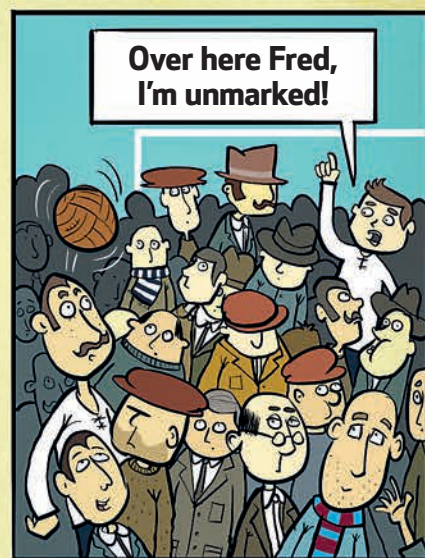
WHITE HORSE AND THE FINAL!



2. BRINGING IN THE CROWDS

The two finalists were **Bolton Wanderers** and **West Ham United**, and both teams brought tens of thousands of supporters. Many more fans of other clubs travelled by train, bus and underground to experience the first Wembley final.

The ground was completely packed long before kick-off. But fans continued to arrive in their thousands, and swarmed through the turnstiles. With the stands and terraces full, the crowd spilled onto the pitch, completely covering the playing surface.



3. HORSING AROUND

There was no crowd trouble. In fact the fans were very well behaved, but the match couldn't get started until they were cleared from the field. Enter Billy the police horse and his rider **Police Constable George Scorey**. Billy was one of ten horses who helped clear the pitch, calmly using his nose and tail to ease the crowd back behind the touchlines.

The match eventually kicked off 45 minutes late, and Bolton won 2-0 with goals from **David Jack** and **Jack Smith**. Without Billy, the match could not have been played. So this was not the Jack Final, it was the **White Horse Final!**

4. BILLY THE HERO

Although he is remembered as a white horse, Billy was actually grey! His light colour made him appear white in black-and-white photographs and film footage. As a reward, PC Scorey was offered free tickets for every FA Cup final, but he never took up the offer because he didn't really like football!

After Billy died in 1930, PC Scorey was presented with another gift he probably didn't want - an inkwell made from one of Billy's hooves! Today, Billy is commemorated with a footbridge leading to the new Wembley Stadium named the **White Horse Bridge**.

