

London goes wild



The World Cup is an international football tournament that has been held since every four years since 1930. This article from the *Observer* newspaper describes the thrill that Londoners felt when England won the World Cup in 1966.

Britain erupted with joy last night after England had won football's World Cup final at Wembley.

Patriotic fervour, unequalled since VE day, spread all over the country in celebration of the 4-2 victory over West Germany.

As the team arrived at the Royal Gardens Hotel in Kensington for a banquet, armed linked cordons of police popped open like seams when a crowd of over 6000 mobbed the players. Cries of "England", "Ramsey", "Moore", "Stiles", "Charlton" greeted them on a balcony before the Union Jack-waving crowd.

Traffic in the West End was at a complete standstill. Thousands of cars and pedestrians jostled around Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar and Parliament Squares.

Teenagers who had not been at the match clambered into the Trafalgar Square fountains. The pubs were full and cinemas and theatres empty. Groups of people danced and sang in the streets.

An AA spokesman said, "It's like VE night, election night and New Year's Eve all rolled into one."

*** *** ***

This was the most dramatic of all World Cup finals, with England scoring twice in extra time after Germany had drawn level in the closing minute and roused the crowd of 93 000 to a frenzy. And it had riveted the attention of nearly 600 million more – one fifth of the world's population – by television and radio.

From the *Observer*, 31 July 1966

Glossary

AA stands for Automobile Association. The AA would have helped to keep the traffic moving in London on the night of the World Cup final.

cordons lines or rings

VE stands for 'Victory in Europe'. It marks the day at the end of World War 2 (1939-45) on which Germany surrendered to the British and to the armies from other countries which had supported them (known as the Allied Forces).