

Thirteen years ago today at Hampden Park

Today marks the 13th anniversary of Hibs' memorable CIS League Cup victory over Kilmarnock at Hampden Park. After emphatic victories over Peterhead (4-0) and Gretna (6-0) Hibs met Hearts in the quarter-final under the Easter Road floodlights.



Tony Mowbray had recently left the club for West Bromwich Albion and had been replaced by John Collins who received a tremendous reception from the home supporters as Hibs dominated throughout and emerged as deserved winners thanks to a first-half goal from skipper Rob Jones.

The semi-final against St Johnstone took place in front of a full-house at Tynecastle and Steven Fletcher gave Hibs an early lead before the Saints equalised late in the second half. Extra time goals from David Murphy and Abdessalam 'Benji' Benjelloun secured a place in the final against Jim Jeffries' Kilmarnock.

Jeffries had bitter memories of facing Hibs, playing in the famous 7-0 defeat at Tynecastle and managing Hearts when they lost 6-2 at Easter Road, but he had built a strong side at Rugby Park.

Despite this, the massive throng of Hibs' fans who made the

trip to the national stadium were in confident mood and rightly so.

Jones opened the scoring in the 28th minute with a trademark header from Murphy's corner and Hibs went in at the break with a 1-0 lead.

'Benji' doubled Hibs' advantage with a superb goal in the 59th minute and Steven Fletcher appeared to have wrapped things up seven minutes later.

Gordon Greer pulled one back with 13-minutes remaining before 'Benji' secured the victory in the 85th minute. Fletcher's second of the day was the icing on the cake.

Jones invited Scott Brown who had put off a big money move to remain with the club to jointly lift the cup in front of the celebrating supporters.

After the final whistle, the Hibs' fans gave a never to be forgotten rendition of 'Sunshine on Leith' which was broadcast live to the TV audience.

The team returned to the capital with the trophy and took part in a memorable open topped bus parade which started at the City Chambers and ended at a packed stadium.

Former defender Chris Hogg later recalled: "I didn't play in any of the League Cup games apart from the final which was a fantastic day. I don't remember much about the actual game apart from it being four seasons in one day with snow, sleet and sunshine.

“With ten minutes to go, I remember Scott Brown, Steven Whittaker and Jonah (Rob Jones) all laughing whenever we looked at each other as we knew that we had won the cup. It was a surreal experience at a national cup final.

“The celebrations on the pitch including the fans singing ‘Sunshine on Leith’ is something I will never forget then we did a night time open top bus parade. Grown men were crying as Hibs hadn’t won silverware for some time.

Former manager Collins recalled: “The quarter final against Hearts was only my second game as Hibs manager. Hearts had a strong team which had cost a lot of money but we were fired up and dominated the game from start to finish. It was a full house and we used our brains and stayed clam. Sometimes players get carried away during derbies but that night we played controlled football and created lots of chances.

“Although the score was only 1-0 it should have been a lot more but we did enough to qualify.

“We were then drawn to play St Johnstone at Tynecastle, and I watched them the week before the game. They were really poor so I thought that we would win the game comfortably.

“That was a big lesson because they raised their game after Fletch scored a great goal in the first minute. The match went to extra time and I moved Murph and Whitty into midfield and brought Lewis

and Kevin McCann
on at fullback. We eventually got our momentum back and won
3-1. The atmosphere
was brilliant that night and Tynecastle is a great place to
win a semi-final.

“I was very confident going into the final. We attended a
training camp in Marbella and it was great to train in the
sunshine instead of
the muddy pitches in Scotland. I’d been at many training camps
when I played in
France but it’s unusual for Scottish teams to do this due to
budget restraints
so I was grateful to the board for sanctioning the trip.

“We had studied Kilmarnock and I knew how they would set up
so I told the boys that it was all about us and they did it in
style.

“The way it all panned out that day made it even more
special with the snow, sleet and sunshine, the fact that every
player had a
great performance and the celebrations at the end from the
supporters.”