



MAY 2011 NEWSLETTER

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Willie O'Neill RIP

It was sad to hear about the death on 28 April of Willie - a member of the Celtic squad in that greatest ever season - 1966/7. Willie was one of the surviving squad members who signed the shirt the Bhoys auctioned for charity last year in honour of our 10th anniversary. He played in the opening four games of that great campaign before being ousted by Tommy Gemmell. Described as an old fashioned full back he made most of his appearances that season. One story is recounted courtesy of celticwiki: "Jock Stein gave O'Neill his chance and he turned in some fine performances most notably against Rangers in the League Cup Final in 1966. Before the game Rangers fans released balloons and one of them was headed for the goal at the Celtic end. A young Celtic fan ran on the field and booted the balloon from the goal to a huge roar from the Celtic end. Incredibly with Celtic leading 1-0 and under severe pressure with only minutes remaining Alec Smith prodded the ball past Ronnie Simpson towards the Celtic goal where the balloon had headed earlier and Willie O'Neill saved the day by clearing it in exactly the same way the unsung Celtic fan had done earlier. One other anecdote went as follows: "I once asked Willie about the injury he got at Carlisle after Stein sold him - the injury finished him in the game but Willie said "Truth be told son I got an injury but this (he clasped his heart) was never in it - I was brought up with and loved the Celtic and having been fortunate and privileged enough to have played for the club my heart just couldn't be anywhere else and I just wanted back up the road." God rest you Willie a true Celt who was lucky enough to play for his and our beloved club.

Izzy Player of the Year

Talking about full backs leads me to the fantastic news that Emilio Izaguirre is Scotland's PFA Player of the Year. The Honduran Internationalist in his first season lifted the award at a ceremony on Sunday. Great news for a truly gifted footballer. The award is voted for by fellow players and recognises his outstanding season for Celtic - which was shown again on Sunday when he put in a tremendous performance as Celtic beat Dundee United 4-1. Former Celtic defender, Everton manager David Moyes presented the award and afterwards Assistant Manager Johan Mjallby said "Emilio has been magnificent for us and is probably the signing of the season. He has a few things to work on but he could become one of the best left backs in the world." Like Tommy Burns Izzy is religious and always makes sure he says a little prayer before going on the pitch. So far the Big Man seems to be listening and let's hope the lines of communication stay open till the end of the season.

The GB: Something to Sing About

Another special element this season has been the strong emergence of the Green Brigade or GB if you're John Sweeney!! If you haven't made it up to Celtic Park this year, the Green Brigade is an ultras group consisting of Celtic fans who describe themselves as "a broad front of anti-fascist, anti-racist and anti-sectarian Celtic supporters". Their moto "Until the Last Rebel". They bring colour, passion, pride and continuous vocal support to our great team. They have clear views on life in general and bring a fresh and exciting element to Celtic. Whether or not you support their politics, their total commitment to all things Celtic is warmly applauded by this writer. Forget daeing a work oot wi the Green Goddess boi-ing along wi' the Green Brigade for 90 minutes would probably see you shedding half your own body weight. According to Tam, whose nephew is one of their cohort they head out to Celtic Park in just their shirt sleeves and

head back looking like they've spent an hour and a half in a sauna. Certainly no mean feat in Glasgow. The Celtic hierarchy and board should make damn sure they appreciate what is happening here - and start being quicker to applaud than they were when they were busy condemning Poppygate. When asked "Do the Green Brigade just want to sing republican songs?", they answered as follows. "A common question and understandable given the media misconceptions and confusions between sectarianism and politics. The Green Brigade is a broad front of anti-fascist, anti-racist and anti-sectarian Celtic supporters of many faiths and backgrounds and does not endorse any political party or group in Scotland or Ireland. All members support a 32 county Irish Socialist Republic and an Independent Scottish Socialist Republic in principle and the achievement of these ends by peaceful means of struggle. On the issue of songs we feel if a song does not have sectarian lyrics then it should not be offensive to anyone. Irish rebel songs go back to the 1798 Rebellion and the United Irishmen which was started by Presbyterians like Wolfe Tone. These songs have been passed down through the ages and are political but not sectarian. Songs of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 like the News fae Moidart, Roses of Prince Charlie and Will ye no come back again are sung by the Tartan Army on away trips as well as songs commemorating Bruce and Wallace however no one seems to be pressuring the Tartan Army to stop singing those." Well said lads - and as a Scot of Irish descent - I'd be just as proud to sing the Soldiers' Song along with the Green Brigade as I would be to sing Flower of Scotland with the Tartan Army - and would challenge anyone to show me the difference.

Happy Easter

Thanks to everyone who helped make the TFOD match memorable on Easter Sunday. Thanks to Mr Dempsey for organising the band who were great - and to those who made the excellent food. Apart from Sammy on the penalty spot - another triumph.

Active and not So Active Members Wanted

A colleague of our secretary Keith runs an annual five aside football tourney in aid of MS. This year it is taking place on Wed 8th June 7pm to 10pm in Croydon. They are looking for 16-20 teams for the men's competition and 4 teams for the women's competition on a first come first served basis. There is an entry fee of £70 per team - £10 a player with 5 players and 2 subs. This covers pitch hire, trophies, ref fees and a post tournament buffet - with all remaining funds being donated to the MS charities. Those interested in joining a Bhoys team or teams should speak to Keith. Five more wins please and we hope to see Lenny and the Bhoys get their just rewards. See the fixtures below - and the host of televisal opportunities.

HAIL HAIL

Games fae May

May 4 (18.00) - ICT v Celtic (SPL) - ESPN
May 8 (12.45) Killie v Celtic (SPL) - Sky
May 11 (19.45) - Hearts v Celtic (SPL) - Sky
May 15 (12.30) - Celtic v Motherwell - (SPL) Sky - tickets taken
May 21 (15.00) - Celtic v Motherwell (SC) - BBC Scot