



Belfast Celtic

"That's what it was all about for him and it was never about money or fame. Also, the relationship he had with the Celtic supporters was something completely unique and something he cherished.

"The incredible thing is that we are talking about him 50 years after he played," he added. "But he is remembered in song, in print, in poems and in his achievements. He now has a permanent place in Celtic history.

"That is the legacy he has left us and we are all the richer for it."

In a team of true talent, which was hamstrung by boardroom interference, Charlie's star shone the brightest and despite the many inconsistencies and anomalies of that particular era, he enjoyed success and secured his place in Celtic history.

He was a key player in the league championship win in 1954, won two Scottish Cups, two League Cups, the St Mungo Cup and although he missed out on the Coronation Cup final win, he played a major role in getting Celtic there.

His greatest achievement however was the part he played in Celtic's historic 7-1 win over Rangers at Hampden in 1957 and today, such memories provide comfort for a family who lost their father at just 47 years of age.

"They genuinely do," said Charlie Junior, "because the unusual thing is that we learnt more about him after his passing in 1971 than we ever knew beforehand and that was so important to the family.

"The honours that have been won by him, the leagues, cup medals and international caps, are something we are immensely proud of and the reality is that what we are left with is his memory and that memory is long and lasting.

"No-one can ever take that from us and that is worth more than any amount of money. In those days the players played for honour and glory, they

did not play for money, because money was never a big part of the game.

"I have one of his original contracts, signed by Jimmy McGrory, which agreed a wage of 12 guineas a week, plus a win bonus and in the summer he got no pay whatsoever. So in the summer he would write a few columns, make a few guest appearances and basically get by, that was the reality of it."

It's hard to imagine one of the current squad struggling to get by in the summer, but this was a different age, one that sadly saw many Celtic players disgracefully treated by the old board.

Players were often sold without their knowledge, others were coerced into moves they did not want and, having courted controversy throughout his career, Tully was unceremoniously freed on September 2 1959.

"As far as the club was concerned, there are people in every era who will dislike you or not get on with you, so there was that in the background," explained Tully Jr.

"I think that it's fair to say that when my father wrote his book in 1958 that was the beginning of his demise at Parkhead, because several people on the board at the time, Desmond White in particular, didn't like it.

"They didn't altogether like idea of a footballer writing an autobiography during his career, instead of waiting until he was finished.

"But it happens to all players, you have your peaks and troughs and eventually get older and go out of favour.

"But I know that it broke his heart when it was over, because Celtic had become his life and Glasgow his home and that was something he carried with him, even in later years."

There are other, more personal recollections that his son cherishes and Charlie Jr was just 21 years

of age when his father died in his sleep in his native Belfast.

His passing hit the local community hard, with thousands packing the Falls Road, all the way up to Milltown Cemetery.

Looking out across the throng, Celtic goalkeeper John Bonnar turned to another of Tully's former team-mates, Jock Stein and commented: "Charlie would have loved this Jock."

Charlie Junior continued: "We still have bits and pieces from his career. My dad was someone who hoarded a lot of things, newspaper cuttings, photographs and the odd medal.

"At the time he died, he died virtually penniless and I can say that truthfully, not with any particular pride, but reality and it again highlighted the era and the realities of the time for a lot of people.

"But we still have a lot of bits and pieces and what I am now trying to do is keep the memory alive and with that in mind, I am working on a Charlie Tully website.

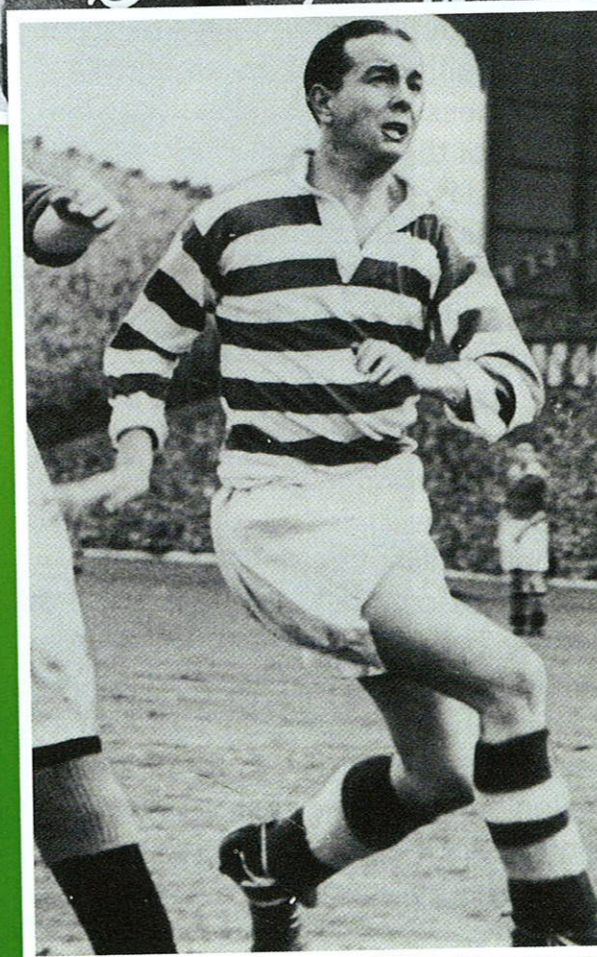
"If that's something that I could do in my lifetime, to leave behind, I think that would be the greatest honour I could give him, because he has left us rich with his legacy and achievements."

The domain for the site has been secured and Charlie Junior is already working on the content and general construction, with the help of the Belfast Celtic Society.

"It will definitely happen and it would be a great thing to have, even just to let people of younger generations know who he was and what he achieved," added Charlie Junior.

News of the site will be welcomed by Celtic supporters worldwide and by many fans of other clubs and of Irish football in general.

However, for as long as there is Celtic, the exploits of the legendary Charlie Tully will never be forgotten.



The Belfast Hoops

WHILE Charlie Tully will forever stand as one of Celtic's 'immortals', there is another club that held a special place in his affections.

A few weeks ago a crowd gathered in his native Belfast for the unveiling of a mural, depicting three Belfast Celtic greats, including Tully.

Charlie started his career at his local club, under the guidance of the 'Grand Old Team's' great manager, Elisha Scott, with exceptional performances leading to his move to Glasgow for what was then a fairly sizeable transfer fee of £8,000.

"It was a great day," said Charlie Junior as he looked back on the unveiling ceremony. "We had a tremendous turn-out and fantastic support from the local people. All in all, it was a very memorable event.

"It means a lot to me and all the family and he's in a select bunch of players to have played for both Celts.

"As people know, he died in 1971 at just 47 years of age and for him to be remembered in this way is tremendous for the family and means so much to us."

In one of Irish football's greatest tragedies, Belfast Celtic were forced out of existence in 1949 after a terrible act of violence, which saw striker Jimmy Jones attacked and have his leg broken by Linfield fans on the pitch.

Sadly, for Tully and the club's thousands of fans, they never recovered.

"One of his big ambitions was for Belfast Celtic to come back again and for him to be re-involved, that sadly never happened," explained his son.

"There was a saying back then, 'when we had nothing, we had Belfast Celtic' and the club's demise has left a tremendous void that exists to this day. People still miss it and the Society is doing a tremendous job of keeping the club alive, including personalities like my dad."

Tully Junior has other memories connected to the Belfast club and, when he returned to Ireland, his dad would go with him and other local children to the old Celtic Park for a kickabout.

"We went down every Sunday morning, we got the caretaker to open the ground and we played about for an hour, perhaps an hour-and-a-half," he said.

"We would get the ball out, the other kids would be there and he'd do his famous scissor kicks. He was still able to do it then, even though he was out of shape and overweight and had finished playing.

"He was managing then in the Irish League, but he still had the old touches, he'd still put it through your legs two or three times in a row and make you look a fool! The corner kicks, the scissor kicks, there was no end to what he'd do.

"He used to get one of the lads to play a corner out to the edge of the box and would scissor kick the ball into the top corner of the net. When he did it once we all said it was a fluke, he'd then do it five or six times in a row, putting it into different corners of the net! Football was his life, from start to finish."

To find out more about the work of the Belfast Celtic Society, visit www.belfastceltic.org.