

Belfast Celtic Society

The Belfast Celtic Society was set up as a charity in 2004 with the specific aim of preserving the history, the spirit and the ethos of the Grand Old Team.

A substantial collection of memorabilia is now on show at the Belfast Celtic Museum situated in the Park Centre in west Belfast, the site of Paradise, the club's famous stadium.

The society encourages reconciliation and mutual understanding through its education and outreach projects, together with its involvement with the Irish Football Association's EU-funded Football for All programme. Each year the society makes a donation to a local charity.



Four legends on the terrace at Paradise
L to R: Norman Kernaghan, Harry Walker, Jackie Vernon and Charlie Tully.

The Trail

The Belfast Celtic Society is grateful to the IFA's Football for All initiative for supporting the establishment of this history trail. It marks the latest step in raising the profile of a team, which eschewed sectarianism and which, for many years, provided a much needed sporting and social lifeline to the impoverished residents of Catholic west Belfast.

Visitors and local people are invited to walk through the colourful history of the club, tracking its development via a series of significant sites. Green Celtic Circles have been installed at selected landmarks along the trail, indicating places where the club was founded, where important games were played, where players were born or lived and where major figures have been laid to rest.

The Belfast Celtic History Trail is an innovative addition to the cultural heritage of this part of the city and will be of interest to people who are passionate about sport, as well as those who enjoy taking a walk through living history.



The Belfast Celtic Society wishes to thank the Irish Football Association and the European Union Regional Development Fund, without whose support this project would not have been possible.

A History

Belfast Celtic, one of the most famous football clubs in Ireland, was formed in 1891, following the amalgamation of two junior teams Clondara and Millvale. Celtic entered the Irish League in 1899 and finished at the bottom of the table in its first season. From that inauspicious start, however, the club would emerge as a major force in Irish football.

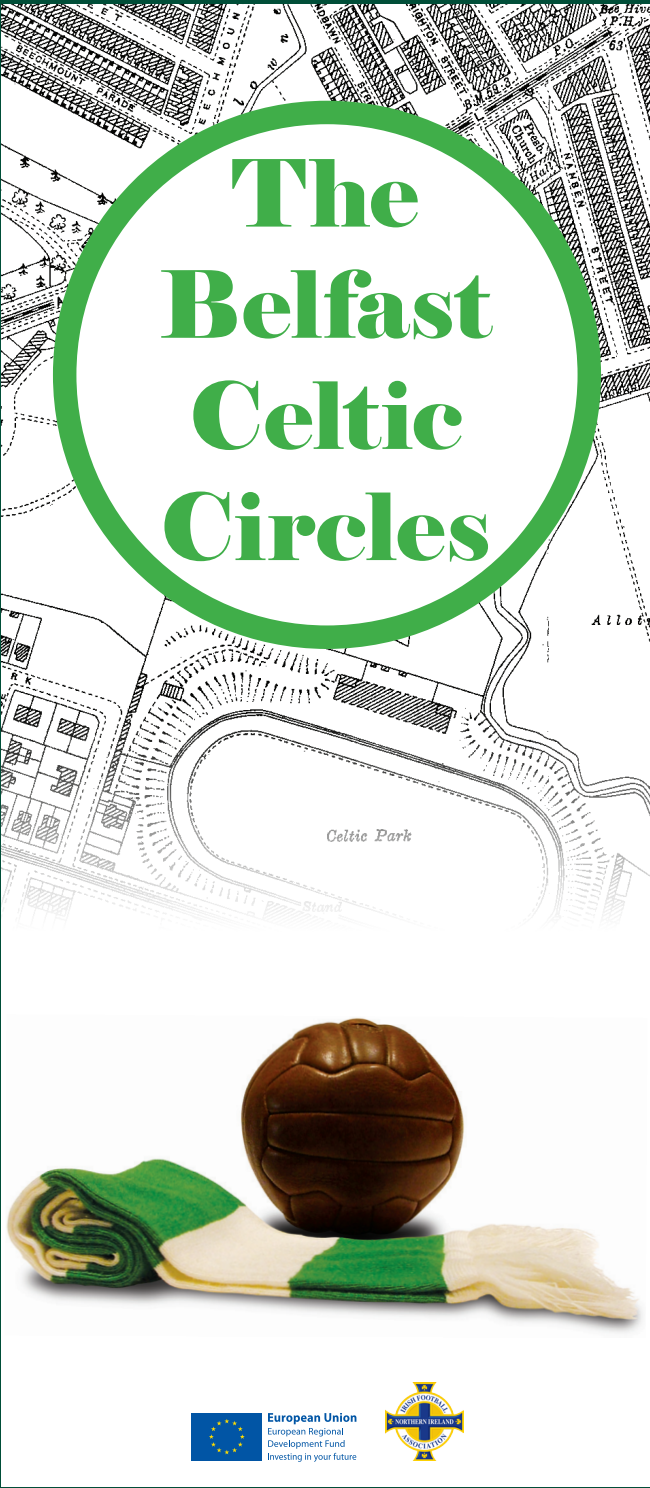
Among its many triumphs, the club won fourteen league titles and ten Irish Cups. Many of its players were selected to play for Ireland.

The club's most famous manager was Elisha Scott, who returned to his native Belfast in 1934 after 22 years as Liverpool's goalkeeper.

In 1949, when it was at the height of its success, Belfast Celtic withdrew from the Irish League as a consequence of a sectarian attack on its players at the end of the 1948 Boxing Day derby at Windsor Park against long time rivals Linfield. In the chaos that ensued, Celtic's star centre forward, 19 year-old Jimmy Jones, suffered a broken leg at the hands of a section of the Linfield supporters.



The Belfast Celtic team of 1948 / 49 in front of the main stand of Celtic Park, with trainer Mickey McGuigan (L) and manager Elisha Scott (R). Jimmy Jones is 3rd left, front row.



Belfast Celtic Circles



- 1 CENTRE HALF BAR, 68 FALLS ROAD**
On this spot stood the Centre Half Bar, whose proprietor Mickey Hamill was one of Belfast Celtic's greatest players.
- 2 88 FALLS ROAD**
Belfast Celtic FC was formed at 88 Falls Road in 1891 and named in tribute to Glasgow Celtic FC.
- 3 JACKIE VERNON'S SHOP, SPRINGFIELD ROAD**
Belfast Celtic defender Jackie Vernon (1919 – 1981) was the proprietor of the butcher's shop, which stands on this spot.
- 4 SHIELS STREET, FALLS ROAD**
Belfast Celtic FC's first home ground was close to this spot.
- 5 WEST CLUB**
The West Belfast Sports and Social Club boasts among its members the family of Celtic legend 'Cheeky' Charlie Tully.
- 6 THE PARK CENTRE**
From 1901 to 1983, this was the site of Celtic Park, affectionately known as Paradise.
- 7 PADDY BONNAR'S HOUSE, 11 RODNEY PARADE**
Irish international Paddy Bonnar played a leading role for Belfast Celtic, scoring more than 20 goals in a single season.
- 8 O'DONNELL'S GAC, WHITEROCK ROAD**
MacRory Park was home to Belfast Celtic FC between 1897 and 1901, before the move to Celtic Park on the Donegall Road.
- 9 JIMMY M^CALINDEN'S GRAVE - CITY CEMETERY**
Jimmy McAlinden won Irish and FA Cup honours with Belfast Celtic and Portsmouth.
- 10 ELISHA SCOTT'S GRAVE - CITY CEMETERY**
The grave of Elisha Scott, manager of Belfast Celtic FC between 1934 and 1949.
- 11 KEVIN M^CALINDEN'S GRAVE - MILLTOWN CEMETERY**
At Milltown Cemetery's gates lies Kevin McAlinden, goalkeeper for Belfast Celtic in the 1940s and a member of the Great Britain team in the 1948 Summer Olympic Games.
- 12 TOMMY BREEN'S GRAVE - MILLTOWN CEMETERY**
Tommy Breen was a famous goalkeeper for Belfast Celtic, Manchester United, Linfield and Glentoran.
- 13 CHARLIE TULLY'S GRAVE - MILLTOWN CEMETERY**
'Cheeky Charlie', one of the game's most talented inside forwards transferred to Glasgow Celtic in 1948. He won 10 international caps.
- 14 JIMMY FERRIS'S GRAVE - MILLTOWN CEMETERY**
Jimmy Ferris was known as Belfast Celtic's brilliant schemer, who helped the club win four Irish League titles in the 1920s.
- 15 RODDY M^CCORLEY CLUBROOMS, GLEN ROAD**
Moyard House (its original name) was the home of Hugh McAlinden, chairman of Belfast Celtic from 1923 to 1938 and president of the Irish League.