

The mural that was unveiled in Belfast recently depicts three of the Celtic greats, one of whom will be well known to 'Glasgow' Celtic supporters and is recognised as one of the club's legendary entertainers.

Charles Patrick Tully is a name that continues to bring a smile to the faces of Celtic supporters and he is pictured on the wall alongside Jimmy Jones and Paddy Bonnar.

"The murals were done by a local community group and they chose the figures, who were fully endorsed by the Society," explained Coyle. "Tully and Bonnar were from the area, while Jimmy Jones is a legendary centre forward and is a name very much associated with the club, after being attacked at the end of the Linfield game.

"He had actually been on Linfield's books but had come across to Celtic and was a prolific goalscorer who had had a falling out with his old club and had very much nailed his colours to the Celtic mast.

"His career was threatened by that injury, but he continued to play and remains the top goalscorer in this league.

"Even today, his name has a special effect on people and whenever there is an event and people know that Jimmy is going to be there, they just seem to come out of the woodwork for him.

"He has such endearing qualities and is just

such a lovable guy and it was best seen on the day of Martin O'Neill's first championship win as Celtic manager in 2001.

"We had taken a team of former players across to the game against St Johnstone and we had arranged for Martin to meet them and learned that he absolutely adores Jimmy Jones.

"Meeting Jones that day was like meeting an all-time hero and it was wonderful to see someone of Martin O'Neill's standing so enamoured by the presence of this former player. "And at half time, when the players went out onto the pitch to meet the crowd, Jones came out, got down on his knees and kissed the turf and the place went wild!"

When you take into consideration this proud history and the great players who are still remembered, it makes the Belfast Celtic story an even greater tragedy and one can only wonder what might have been had they continued on their path – especially when you look at the successes that the original Celtic went on to enjoy in Glasgow and beyond.

It is largely accepted that one of the main reasons for their demise was that the police and government could no longer guarantee the Celtic players and supporters' safety after the Linfield match, but as Coyle explained, the Society is today building a fuller picture.

"It's terrible and I kind of liken it to the Marie Celeste mystery," he said. "There was a team and then it was gone, with no real explanation.

"I feel incredibly sad for the people who supported them and when you talk to people about those times, you realise that there was a huge gap in their lives when Celtic disappeared.

"Could you imagine if that happened in Glasgow? If you picked up the paper in the morning and discovered that Celtic would not be playing in the SPL next season – full stop.

"People would go berserk, they would react and there would be petitions, but back then people kind of accepted it and there was no great explanation as to why it happened.

"We have since discovered that the board had maximised the sale of players, by moving them on before anyone discovered that there wasn't going to be a team next season. There was a lot of subterfuge on their part and it's a situation that is almost impossible to comprehend.

"There are people for whom Celtic was the most important thing in their lives. That might sound like an exaggeration, but there was huge unemployment, poverty and disease at the time and the only thing that worked in people's lives was their football team – which was cleaning up in every competition."

The recent unveiling of the mural and restoration of the grave of their former manager is the latest example of a growing interest in the club.

"Above the mural are the words, 'If You Know Your History' and there has been an awakening in recent years," continued Coyle. "We have been in talks with the curator of Liverpool FC and have recently restored the grave of Elisha Scott, Celtic's former manager and a Liverpool great.

"We are talking now of having a forum for some of the young people so that they can discover the links between Belfast Celtic and Liverpool and of course the link with Celtic in Glasgow.

"We are now trying to establish a trail in West Belfast where some of the prominent players are laid to rest and when you enter the Milltown Cemetery, two of the Celtic goalkeepers are buried on either side of the avenue. It's almost as if they are keeping guard on the cemetery.

"So there is something there that we are trying to establish that will be a permanent memorial."

GLASGOW CELTIC (Colours: Green and White)

	BONNAR	
FALLON		ROLLO
EVANS	STEIN	BAILLIE
WEIR	WALSH	PEACOCK
	McPHAIL	TULLY
Referee: D. MAXWELL		
Linesmen: J. WALKER and P. MORRIS		
BONNAR (Aldershot)	McMORRAN (Barnley)	CAMPBELL (Fulham)
O'NEILL (Walsall)	DENVIR (Glenavon)	
LAWLOR (Fulham)	VERNON (West Bromwich Albion)	CURRIE (Bradford)
AHERNE (Luton Town)	GALLOGHY (Huddersfield Town)	
	K. McALINDEN	

NEWRY TOWN SPONSORED XI (Colours: Green Shirts, White Collars and Cuf)

The Scottish Connection

THERE was another Scottish connection at the recent ceremony in Belfast with Jim Walker, the son of former player, John Walker, travelling across from Edinburgh. John, better known as 'Scotty', played for the club during some of the most successful seasons under Elisha Scott.

He was the brother of the famous Tommy Walker of Hearts, Chelsea and Scotland, a player fondly remembered as a Tynecastle great, known for his 'gentlemanly conduct' on and off the park.

Hailing from Livingston, John played for the League of Ireland, lining up in the side that once beat England and is regarded as a Celtic great.

"My Dad played in a very famous Belfast Celtic team, one which kind of broke the mould," said Jim. "He went over there in the early 1930s and returned home in the 40s when the war broke out. We are very proud of my father.

"The Belfast Celtic story is fantastic and when you read the history books the successes they enjoyed were remarkable. In fact, I believe that was part of the problem in that when they started to beat the likes of Linfield and Glentoran, jealousy started to set in.

"I once read an article with Jimmy Jones who said that if going out of business was the price they had to pay to stop someone being killed or hurt, then so be it. But I think it's very sad.

"The Belfast Celtic story is a bit like that of Elvis Presley," he added. "He died and became immortal and in some respects, that's what has happened to the club.

"You meet people all over the world who remember them and we even met an Irish lad in Poland once, whose father had seen my father playing.

"We went to see his dad about a year ago and took my dad's photographs and medals with us and he was over the moon, absolutely stunned.

"The Society are doing a great job of ensuring that the club's history is never forgotten."

