

LISH AND GERRY

AT THE SHRINE

**Senate Chamber at
Stormont Buildings
17th February 2011**



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MESSAGE

FROM THE BELFAST CELTIC SOCIETY

The Belfast Celtic Society was formed as a registered charity several years ago by a group of people determined to preserve the memory of the club that withdrew from the Irish league in 1949. There was a real danger that the Belfast Celtic story would disappear into history and that much of its heritage would be lost forever.

The society set about hosting talks on the history of the club as well as gathering items of memorabilia. Through its fund raising efforts it makes an annual donation to a locally based charity. In 2010 the society opened the Belfast Celtic museum in the Park Centre where the club was based and with the encouragement of the Irish FA's Community Relations Department continues this project continues to develop. Along with other proposed schemes and cross community initiatives, it is hoped that the non-sectarian ideals of the Grand Old Team will live long.

In 2004, *Paradise*, a play about Belfast Celtic and written by myself and the actors Alan McKee and Conor Grimes was performed on the stage of Belfast's Lyric Theatre. It was based on my book *Paradise Lost and Found: The Story of Belfast Celtic*. One of the enduring characters in *Paradise* was Elisha Scott, Celtic's Protestant manager who had made his name as Liverpool's goalkeeper back in the days of his infamous duels with Everton's



Pdraig Coyle
Belfast Celtic Society
Chairman

famous centre forward Dixie Dean. Lish, as he was known, had grown up on the Donegall Road and had little interest in the religious persuasions of footballers. He just wanted the best players for his club.

At a chance meeting with the IFA's Michael Boyd in 2008, the idea of bringing the Belfast Celtic Society and Linfield together emerged and I wrote a monologue in which Lish told his story. The response to this event which allowed football people from different communities to deal with issues from the past was so positive that I expanded the drama to include Gerry Morgan's story. Morgan, a Catholic, had been trainer of Linfield at the same time that Scott was in charge of Belfast Celtic. These men were friends. In many ways their story was one of tolerance and respect for each other. It's an example that the rest of us could learn from. Above all they were football men.

For more information visit www.belfastceltic.org

MESSAGE

FROM THE IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Good evening all and welcome along to this historic event supported by European Peace III funding here at Stormont. The Belfast Celtic story is a prominent piece of our shared cultural and football history, and the play this evening intelligently illustrates attitudes, situations and lessons we can learn from the past.

We are very proud to be working in partnership with Healing through Remembering and the Belfast Celtic Society to deliver tonight's dealing with the past facilitated discussion. It is important that we use events such as tonight to highlight lessons that can be learned from a time gone by, in order to build for the future. The work of Community Relations can use football as a powerful tool to remove barriers, empower communities and individuals so they can develop and prosper aiming towards a shared future for all.

This witty, clever and moving drama was first shown at Windsor Park in 2010 and was so successful that MLAs Conall McDevitt, Danny Kennedy and Chris Lyttle decided to bring the event to a bigger stage at Stormont. The Irish Football Association has learnt from the past and moved on to become a community focused organisation which is mainstreaming Community Relations into the heart of its operations. Football has a universal power which when used



Michael Boyd
Irish Football Association
Head of Community Relations

intelligently can build bridges, create unlikely friendships and empower change both at a deeply personal level and in the community. I sincerely hope that tonight will help more people to use their imagination to embark on their own personal journeys to tackle bigotry.

At this time we are pro actively supporting domestic league clubs with community audits, strategy development and funding plans, so they can use their trade of football as a tool to develop relationships with their local communities and create a more sustainable future embedded in their town or city.

If you would like to know any more about some of the work we do or have any queries, please do feel free to contact us at the Community Relations Department at the email shown below

For more information email - FFA@irishfa.com

MESSAGE

FROM HEALING THROUGH REMEMBERING

Sport is an integral part of community identity. It can exacerbate existing tribalism, but it can also be a common link that crosses boundaries. Tonight we are looking at a difficult and controversial issue from our shared sporting past.

Healing Through Remembering is pleased to be a partner in this event with the Irish Football Association and Belfast Celtic Society and working with them for better relations through sport.

Healing through Remembering (HTR) is an extensive cross-community project made up of a range of individual members holding different political perspectives working on a common goal of how to deal with the legacy of the past as it relates to the conflict in Northern Ireland.

HTR carried out an extensive consultation in 2002 which asked individuals, organisations and communities this question: *"How should people remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and in so doing, individually and collectively contribute to the healing of the wounds of society?"* Since then HTR has brought people together to consider the ideas recommended for consideration in that report - a



Kate Turner
Director
Healing Through Remembering

Day of Reflection, collective Storytelling, a network of Commemoration project, Truth Recovery and Acknowledgement and a Living Memorial Museum. HTR also facilitates conversational workshops with groups and organisations to assist them in opening debate on issues which so often are not discussed.

Tonight's dramatisation will help us take an informed look at contentious historic events in the hope that we can learn from remembering the past. The discussion after the drama is intended to be a safe space to consider the impact and implications of past events on our current attitudes and understandings. I hope it will enable us to build an understanding of the present that helps us all to build a more peaceful future.

For more information visit
www.healingthroughremembering.org

RUNNING ORDER

Welcome to the event

- Michael Boyd Irish Football Association Head of Community Relations

Brief comments from MLAs

- Danny Kennedy, Chris Lyttle and Conall McDevitt

Introduction of 'Lish and Gerry at The Shrine'

- Pdraig Coyle Chairman of the Belfast Celtic Society

PLAY

- 'Lish and Gerry at The Shrine'

Facilitated Discussion

- Joe Blake and David Gardiner Healing Through Remembering

Closing remarks

- Patrick Nelson Chief Executive Irish Football Association

Finish

LISH AND GERRY

AT THE SHRINE

Tonight the story of two Irish football legends, who crossed the sectarian divide for the love of their sport, will be brought to life at Stormont in the play *'Lish and Gerry at The Shrine'*. The play is based on footballers Elisha Scott and Gerry Morgan – Lish and Gerry,

Gerry Morgan was a Catholic from Carrick Hill, who played centre-half for Cliftonville, Linfield and Nottingham Forest and won eight Ireland caps. After his distinguished playing career ended, he became a trainer/physio with Linfield and was a member of the backroom staff with Northern Ireland at the 1958 World Cup.

Elisha Scott was a Protestant, born in Belfast in 1894, who started his career in football as a goalkeeper at Linfield. From Linfield, Scott moved to Liverpool where he made over 500 appearances for the club and to date is its longest serving goalkeeper. He returned to his native city in 1934 and was appointed player manager of Belfast Celtic. With Scott in charge the west Belfast club won every major domestic trophy and dominated Irish football until its withdrawal from the Irish League after the dramatic game against Belfast rivals Linfield on Boxing Day 1948.

The Celtic team had to flee the pitch when a section of the Linfield support climbed over the barriers at the end of a 1 - 1 draw. Centre forward Jimmy Jones was thrown over a parapet, kicked unconscious and left with a broken leg. Defender Robin Lawler and goalkeeper Kevin McAlinden were also seriously hurt. At a meeting the same night Celtic's directors decided to withdraw from football once the season's

commitments had been fulfilled.

The play centres on the fall-out from this incident and the acrimonious exchanges that took place between Nationalist and Unionist politicians in the Stormont Parliament in 1949. Some of Northern Ireland's best known actors have recreated the sounds and atmosphere of those debates.

The play's writer, Pdraig Coyle, states:

"Hansard perfectly preserved the debates in the Stormont chambers in the wake of this infamous game and they are proof that some of those in political office at the time were almost as badly behaved as the people who took part in the rioting at Windsor Park. The sheer venom of the opposing parties is tangible and it is clear that this was much more than a football match - this was war by another means."

This is what the characters of Elisha Scott and Gerry Morgan have to say in the play about the Boxing Day riot and the subsequent decision by the Directors of Belfast Celtic:

Lish: *And of course the biggest losers of all were the ordinary supporters from the west of the city. For many of them Celtic was the most important thing in their lives. And Linfield, you were losers too. Gone was the great rivalry.*

Gerry: *Gone was the team we wanted to beat most.*

Lish: *Gone forever was the great Belfast derby.*



On Thursday 29th April 2010, after a gap of 61 years, Belfast Celtic and Linfield came together again for the first time when the Irish Football Association held an evening of storytelling and performance at Windsor Park. The event was arranged by the IFA's Community Relations Department and the audience included former Belfast Celtic players and their families.

The dramatic highlight of the evening was a 15-minute monologue written by Pdraig Coyle and performed by prominent Irish actor Lalor Roddy in the role of Elisha Scott. This monologue was subsequently developed into the play *'Lish and Gerry at The Shrine'* which you will witness tonight.

As Gerry Morgan's character in the play explains the *'Shrine'* in the play's title is a reference to Windsor Park:

Gerry: *Want to know how some people came to call Windsor the Shrine? That was down to me. Our Danny was helping me one day to brush out the dressing rooms and J.O. Mackey comes in and says "you're making too much dust. Use water on the floor." Our Danny got some water and I pointed out where to put it.*

Gerry gestures with imaginary long spoon and glass and pretends to sprinkle holy water using an exaggerated sign of the cross.

Gerry: *Danny says "Da the priests do this up at Clonard." I said "Son, this is a shrine, too." Mackey was hopping mad. Knew what I was up to. You could see it in his face. Stormed off shouting at the top of his voice... "Windsor is no shrine". Well after that day it was.*

The Belfast Celtic Society, the Irish Football Association and Healing Through Remembering would like to thank you for attending and hope that you enjoy the play and the subsequent discussion.



THE TEAM



TEAM: IFA

Michael is head of the community relations department at the IFA, a position he has held since 2000. He played a key role, working alongside the fans, in transforming the atmosphere inside Windsor Park at international games. Michael is currently a part-time PhD student at the University of Ulster at Jordanstown, where he also completed an undergraduate degree in Sports Science and a Masters degree in Communication, Advertising and Public Relations.

MICHAEL BOYD 1



TEAM: LINFIELD

Born in 1899, the centre-half, who won eight Ireland caps, began his playing career as an amateur at Cliftonville before moving to Linfield. He was part of the squad which won seven trophies in the 1921/22 season. He was transferred to Nottingham Forest where he stayed for several seasons before returning to Belfast. After a distinguished playing career, Gerry became a trainer/physio staff with Northern Ireland at the 1958 World Cup. He died in 1959.

GERRY MORGAN 2



TEAM: SPORTING EQUITY

Vincent is an actor and writer for County Antrim. He played Gaelic Football for Con Magees, Glenravel and Association Football for Star United, Ballymena. He was also one of the recipients of the 2003 UEFA Fair Play award.

Vincent's grandfather, Tommy McReynolds, attended the infamous match in 1948 between Belfast Celtic and Linfield at Windsor Park. He never watched another soccer match again.

VINCENT HIGGINS 3



TEAM: BELFAST CELTIC

For 20 years, Padraig Coyle was a senior radio producer at the BBC. He is now a freelance writer and broadcaster, who regularly contributes to BBC, RTE, Culture Northern Ireland and a number of newspapers and journals. He is the author of three published books. His first play Paradise (co-written with Conor Grimes and Alan McKee) was produced by the Lyric Theatre, Belfast in 2004. He is chair of the Belfast Celtic Society.

PADRAIG COYLE 4



TEAM: BELFAST CELTIC

Born in 1894, Elisha was a highly respected goalkeeper who represented Linfield and Liverpool before returning to Belfast in 1934 when he was appointed as player manager of Belfast Celtic. At the helm of the west Belfast club, he won every major domestic trophy until the team withdrew from the Irish league in 1949 following the Boxing Day riot at Windsor Park where Jimmy Jones was attacked. Elisha won 27 caps for Ireland and like Morgan passed away in 1959.

ELISHA SCOTT 5



TEAM: SPORTING EQUITY

Lalor played college football in America in the mid 1970's and was awarded all-American intercollegiate status in 1976. He has acted on stage and screen both nationally and abroad for many years and is delighted to revisit one of his favourite characters, Elisha Scott.

LALOR RODDY 6



TEAM: IFA

Patrick Nelson is the Chief executive of the Irish Football Association. Prior to life in the beautiful world of banking, most notably as Director of Corporate communications for Capital One. His move into football followed on from his lifelong passion for the sport, and the great depth of business knowledge now acquired. He became Chief Executive of Notts County FC and Macclesfield Town FC, where he rebranded and re invigorated the North West Club before making the move to join the IFA in 2009.

PATRICK NELSON 7



TEAM: HTR

With over 15 years experience in the voluntary sector Kate has been involved with Healing Through Remembering (HTR) since February 1999. Having previously been working as a freelance consultant she was appointed as full time co-ordinator for HTR in May 2004. Kate was appointed Director of the organisation in December 2008 and manages all aspects of the organisation's development in conjunction with the Board of Directors.

KATE TURNER 8



TEAM: HTR

Joe is an independent consultant who has been working in the statutory, voluntary and community sector for the last 20 years. He has a particular interest in working with local community groups in the field of good relations. He is currently a council member of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and represents Comic Relief in Northern Ireland.

JOE BLAKE 9



TEAM: HTR

David has over 23 years experience in the design, delivery and management of services to young people and those who work with young people. Having worked in the youth and community sector since 1987 he established his own consultancy practice in 2006. David has considerable experience in the design and facilitation of Community Relations work and has represented both Ireland and Northern Ireland as a cyclist and provides Sports Massage Therapy services for the current Irish elite and Paralympic squads.

DAVID GARDINER 10



TEAM: UUP

Danny is a former employee of British Telecom and was first elected to Newry and Mourne District Council in 1985. As part of a UUP reshuffle in October 2010, Kennedy was appointed to the post of Employment and Learning Minister in the Executive, replacing former party leader Sir Reg Empey. He is a former Deputy Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party and former Chair of the Committee for the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister. He was a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board from 2006-2007.

DANNY KENNEDY 11



TEAM: ALLIANCE PARTY

Chris Lyttle was born in East Belfast and studied at both Queens University Belfast and Harvard University. Before earning the nomination to replace Naomi Long as MLA for Belfast East in June 2010, Lyttle worked as Long's constituency and research assistant in East Belfast. He is vice-chairman of the East Belfast sub-group of the Belfast District Policing Partnership and is a member of the Employment and Learning Committee in the Assembly.

CHRIS LYTTLE 12



TEAM: SDLP

Conall became an MLA on 21 January 2010 replacing the retiring Carmel Hanna in the SDLP Belfast South constituency. He is a former this role during the negotiations and held 1998 Good Friday Agreement, subsequent an SDLP reshuffle in May 2010, Conall became a member of the Regional Development Committee and the Justice Committee in the Assembly. He is party spokesperson on regional development issues.

CONALL MCDEVITT 13

QUESTION TIME



What does football mean to you? What team(s) do you follow?

Danny Kennedy: I love football – always have! My favourite teams are Linfield, Arsenal and, of course Northern Ireland.

Chris Lyttle: I am a genuine fan of all sport but for me football is the beautiful game. I have played competitive amateur football every year since I was a kid and have also been involved with clubs as a qualified UEFA B Licence and Disability Coach. This participation has allowed me to develop discipline, communication and teamwork skills and to meet people from many different backgrounds and communities. As East Belfast MLA, and given my Dad was once on their books, the Glens are very much my local team.

Conall McDevitt: It's like Nick Hornby said when you go through the turnstiles, you enter another world. I support Manchester United.

Who is your favourite player (past or present), and why?

Danny Kennedy: The legendary Pat Pennings – because of the wonderful example he set, and he's from Newry.

Chris Lyttle: Ryan Giggs is the best player and role model of my generation. His skill, discipline and achievements over a twenty year period have seen him voted Manchester United's greatest ever player. He does however have serious competition from a certain Frenchman called Cantona and to think that a lad named George Best from Burren Way, Cregagh Estate, East Belfast, is mentioned in any consideration of who is the all time greatest is an incredible inspiration to anyone from Northern Ireland.

Conall McDevitt: Present Ryan Giggs. He's the same age as me and has proven that this is a game which, despite all the prima donnas, still rewards hard work and team players.

What is your fondest football moment?

Danny Kennedy: Gerry Armstrong scoring against Spain in the 1982 World Cup finals – I was there that night in Valencia! Unforgettable, Unbelievable!

Chris Lyttle: There are many. The grace, courage and skill of George Best in full flight. Gerry Armstrong hitting the back of the net in Valencia. However, investing your time in preparing a coaching session that brings a group of people together in personal and physical development, teamwork and enjoyment, regardless of background is one of the most rewarding experiences possible.

Conall McDevitt: That famous save that put Ireland in the quarter finals of Italia 90.

Why do you feel it is important to sponsor this event by the Irish FA, Belfast Celtic Society and Healing Through Remembering?

Danny Kennedy: Football can help bring people together with a shared love for the game, in a way most other sports can't.

Chris Lyttle: Sport, and football in particular, has great potential to be a positive and uniting force in any community. It can also however be exploited as a vehicle for negative behaviour and division. As someone who believes in the positive potential of sport and as an Alliance Party MLA I am proud to support this event that brings the IFA, Belfast Celtic Society and Healing Through Remembering together with cross-party political support to promote improved community relations in Northern Ireland.

Conall McDevitt: When I saw the play at Windsor I felt I needed to stand up and say it should be seen in Parliament Buildings. History is always a little less simple than politicians claim it is. This play reminds us of that.

What do you think 'Lish and Gerry at The Shrine' can contribute to discussions at Stormont, in football and in society?

Danny Kennedy: I think it can demonstrate the absolute need for Teamwork based on Respect, something we are short of most times here at Stormont.

Chris Lyttle: 'Lish and Gerry at The Shrine' is a

brilliant play that facilitates shared understandings of history in a challenging way. Whilst our political leaders continue to debate the best ways in which we can deal with a challenging past in Northern Ireland I am hopeful that creative initiatives like this play will demonstrate ways we can share our stories to break down preconceptions and help us work closer together to build a more positive future.

Conall McDevitt: It explodes a few myths. Reminds us of the consequences of bad government, challenges us to build reconciliation and unites us all in our love of football.

Can sport play a role in helping a society deal with its past?

Danny Kennedy: Yes, I think so. Football is a common denominator to a great many people, we can use it as a positive example of people working together and playing as a team.

Chris Lyttle: If our sports are open to acknowledging both the good and bad ways they may have contributed to the past and recognise there may be better ways to build a more positive future than absolutely.

Conall McDevitt: Yes.

Which MLA do you think might be the best football player and what position would they play?

Danny Kennedy: I understand that Chris Lyttle is a talented footballer, because he "plays" for Alliance, he probably plays in the centre! I prefer Right Wingers!

Chris Lyttle: Having seen the MLAs football ability in a number of recent defeats against a Media Team and Belfast Deaf United, we all may hope we get elected in May as I don't think any of us will be receiving phone calls from Jose Mourinho if we don't!

Conall McDevitt: It's not about individuals, it's about the team and our record is, well, colourful!



football for all

Programme edited by Ruairi Rowan

Produced by Healing Through Remembering

Photos from Belfast Celtic, Press Eye, Pacemaker Press and own sources

Design by Doghouse Creative