

FROM ALBERT, WITH LOVE

7 MINUTES THAT SAVED CELTIC
...AND MANY OTHERS

BY PAUL LARKIN



Foreword by Tosh McKinlay

Contributors include: Average Joe Miller, Phil Mac Giolla Bhain, Tony Hamilton, John Paul Taylor, Graeme Sharp, Paul Brennan and Albert Kidd

This book is dedicated to Francey Larkin, the standard he sets is what all Tims should aspire to, and to Mark O'Neil whom I realised when doing this is my oldest friend, amazing given we don't agree on anything, apart from Hosey.

Thanks

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Foreword by Evan Watson (The writer's wing-man following Celtic)

So how did I come to call Paul a friend? I mean strong friendships don't just happen? I guess the years or so of traveling across Scotland, England & Europe following the club we all love so much would help?

I met Paul when I started traveling to the games on the Edinburgh No1 Celtic Supporters club in 1992, a supporters club like the many other Celtic supporters clubs across the world, it was full of dedicated or more appropriately faithful people that had Celtic embedded in their hearts, Paul is one such supporter. The first few times I traveled through to the game on the No1, I didn't really speak to Paul all that much but as the weeks went by I became a regular on the bus & found myself sitting with "the back stalls" you know, the vocal & normally youthful crowd at the back of the bus!! Paul was amongst this group, tucked away in the corner on the back row, not that Paul was one to fade into the background, far from it, he was a cheeky fella, like us enjoyed the banter amongst the Bhoys & was confident in giving his opinion. Whenever he spoke about Celtic he did it with a passion. It's a game of opinions & you don't always see eye to eye with everyone on certain subjects but in Paul I'd met someone that I agreed with an enormous lot on. Getting to know Paul as I would I found out he was in a long line of Larkin's that followed Celtic, his father James & Uncle "El Presidente" Francey & after meeting them I could see where he got his love for the club. He was drenched in Celtic.

I think in your typical supporter mind, the more games you attend together the more respect for each others opinion you have. Not that I am suggesting that supporters that don't go on a regular basis opinion is of any less value, as we all have the same common goal, I merely mean that when your traveling all over the place you forge a real bond, a camaraderie, there beside you seeing what your seeing, feeling low when it's not going well & sharing that same feeling of elation at victory, then having the autopsy or handing out man of the match awards walking back to the coach park & more often than not the majority of the journey home after, with a few songs thrown in win or lose. So at times when the news broke of Fergus McCann taking over the club in 1994 I got a phone call from Paul "have you heard the news?" I'd get a lot of these phone calls over the years, whichever Celtic related issue it was at the time, he'd need to talk about it to a fellow supporter. Paul was a strong supporter of the Bhoycott, as much as it hurt him & he found it difficult at times, he believed this was for the greater good of our club & thankfully it was. Going up to McDiarmid Park on 5th of March 1994 for our match against St. Johnstone, Paul was in what can only be described as in euphoric mood telling me how this was the start of us, Celtic going back to where we belong. When we got to the ground in merry mood, it was bathed in sunshine & as we walked by the main stand who should be arriving but Fergus. Paul grabbed me by the arm pulling me towards the front of the crowd that had now gathered trying to shake his hand & thank him for his part in saving our club. The day was topped off by our view of Paul Byrne's winning goal which sent us & three sides of McDiarmid Park into delirious celebrations.

This bond between us was only strengthened by the numerous trips across the border & further afield to Europe that we would take. So many of these journeys bring back great memories for me, testimonials where we'd show the English clubs we didn't do "friendly" matches, well it was hard for our Bhoys not to put their hearts into it as they would see & most definitely hear the support that would have inevitably traveled in huge numbers to follow the Bhoys. Europe was more a case of traveling in hope but also filled with enormous pride

at how welcome we would be made due to our ability as a support to make friends wherever we visited. One of the most memorable, although not until we'd all spoken and managed to piece together the happenings of the previous days Shennanigan's was a friendly match against Birmingham City in the July of 1995. We'd normally leave early on, around 5am so to get out the city before rush hour, which meant you had to be organised the day before & Paul was at the forefront of organising who was bringing which refreshments, snacks for the journey, down to if we were having t-shirts done for the trip but on this occasion Celtic had just released a new strip & what with it being the middle of summer we decided on shorts shades & the new top. Leaving the house at 4am I wasn't too optimistic this particular combo was going to be a winner & as I arrived outside the pub for the bus to pick us up, it was a terrifying site!! All these peely-wally milk bottle white legs on show. Pretty much as soon as we were outside the city you could hear the opening of various drinks being opened, now I am not advocating drinking to excess but it doesn't half help get you in the mood for a sing song. You looked forward to these trips for days sometimes weeks depending on the opposition, venue. We'd arrive in Birmingham around lunchtime, on the merry side, I'd never been to Birmingham before so it was time to explore as many of the local public houses as possible before the game. We wandered around a few places, every corner we turned we'd find another bar packed out with Celtic fans & before too long we got comfy on the balcony of a bar in the city-centre. By this time the sun was putting in a good show for us, it was scorching, the shorts & shades didn't seem so daft now. We'd buy rounds of drinks, well some folk eh Gary? have a good sing song & before you know it we're heading to the game. Surprisingly I don't remember too much about the match but in these games you'd spend most of your time bouncing around & singing well that's my excuse anyway. By the time the game had finished & we'd head back to the coach park most folk wanted a bite to eat & I was always on the end of the "you greedy, hungry git" jibes, a fairly routine accusation thrown in my direction on a weekly basis. On these trips across the border it was customary for us to stop off for a few hours for a drink or 2 before heading home. We'd had suggestions of stopping in Blackpool, which was vetoed by the bus convenor for obvious reasons, but somehow we ended up deciding on Morecambe, a kind of mini Blackpool. I thought I'd planned in advance pretty well for the trip but hadn't counted on it being so hot, which left the drinks I'd left on the bus for the return trip warm. As we sat on what can only be described as a sauna of a bus, people fading away, I thought not too many people will have run through our minds "I can't wait to get to Morecambe". When we arrived there Shieldsy the bus Convenor would call a time for everyone to be back on the bus or they would be left!! 11.30pm we had a good couple of hours. So off we would go again, exploring the local entertainment!!! We came across a club but thought there's no chance they'll let us in dressed the way we were but fortune favoured us, the doorman was from Paisley, a Tim and in we went. I am not sure I should put down in black & white some of the things I witnessed in there not least the dance moves!!! Shieldsy who was with us gave us the ten minute warning, I saw that as the time to grab something to eat for the journey home so said I would see all back at the pick up point. I sat there with a few others waiting on everyone to arrive as there were only some 20 folk on the bus, we left with 48. More and more traipsed back but was obvious that four of them, including Paul, were staying. So it wasn't until the following day I found out what had happened to them. Of course they'd missed the bus & had to stay, running around trying to find a b&b at 4am in the morning can't be very easy? escaping in the morning out the window, dodging & blagging their way home on trains almost impossible. It was stuff like that kept us going through the 90s.

Of course this book is about the 80's, just slightly before my time. So I hope Paul can remember a lot more than I probably could have said about Morecambe.

Evan Watson, February 2011

Introduction

I never thought I'd write another Celtic book. Ask anyone in the Celtic world who puts their head above the parapet, there are thousands out there, armed to the teeth with laptops, read to knock it off. I've had plenty of that in the past and who needs it, right? Don't get me wrong, I don't shirk a debate anywhere and can rub people up the wrong way but I was found Not Proven for that. I almost wrote one in 2006 about the first season of Gordon Strachan but, like many of my friends, he infuriated me more than he inspired me. I guess now, getting older, I probably don't care what people think or say, I've enough trouble trying to keep the people in my own house happy without worrying about what the rest of the world thinks which will be handy when I am being slaughtered on a message board near you soon. So there was one reason for not doing it removed. The second is, this was very much a passion project, for two reasons, no, three actually. The first one is that May 3rd 1986 was the best football day of my life. Celtic won the league with a performance that would have blown most teams in the world away and they did it when no one and I mean no one expected it. Secondly, apart from the money raised for Guillain-Barre Syndrome research, the best thing to come out of my first Celtic book was a friendship with Albert Kidd. Albert is one of the nicest most sincere guys you'll ever meet and I always

feel bad any time I talk to him because I inevitably bring up THAT day at Dens and it's unfair because there is so much more to him, then again, I think he understands. Hopefully. Lastly, I've never written anything in my life that made me feel so good. The warm feeling thinking back to that season and era has never left me. I've been throwing stuff around the net, jogging people's memories without saying why because if people think it's going in a book, the story changes and that's not what you want, you just want what they remember and because of that, the memories are even better. Some people thanked at the start won't even know they helped but they did, immensely, I had to do it in a secretive way, so apologies for that.

1985/86 was different era. It was probably the last time Scottish football really belonged to the people. The season after was the start of big money and big signings and the result is the mess the game is currently in. It may look from the cover like this book has been done to deliberately upset Hearts fans, which isn't the case at all, but let's face it, Scotland is one of the most polarised societies around, everyone gets upset about something and, quite frankly, most of the Jambos I know can take it, then again most of the Jambos I know are from this era too. You won't many news stories from that era in here, Challenger for example, simply because if it didn't appear on the sports pages, it didn't exist. There is a big Hibs influence in the book simply because there was a big Hibs influence on season 85/86. The Celtic-Hibs thing has changed a lot in the last 20 years. When I was growing up there was a sort of unwritten respect between both sets of fans. On every occasion I went to Easter Road to watch Celtic, I drank with Hibs fans, I've had countless sessions in places like The Iona and Hibs club. Never a problem. When Wallace Mercer tried to take over Hibs, I was one of the very first people at Easter Road that day simply because I knew this was arch-Tory versus club of the people of Edinburgh and there's only one side I'm ever going to be on in that situation. I distinctly remember the Celtic supporters clapping the Hibs team onto the park in 1991 when they had just knocked Rangers out the League Cup. That's how it always was for me, you didn't like them as a team but you certainly didn't hate them. It's hard to put a finger on when this began to change. Certainly there was a lot of players leaving Hibs for Celtic in the last few years and there is definitely a ramped up hatred of Celtic evident at Easter Road now that I never saw growing up. In fact, the day we effectively kissed goodbye to four in a row at Easter Road in May 2009, the Hibs fans were loving it and goaded us in way they could, a mentality summed up by Derek Riordan getting the ball on the halfway line in the 90th minute and just kicking it as far out the park as he could as the teams were locked at 0-0. I'm not for one minute suggesting that there should be some sort of love-in or gimmes when results are needed but the Hibs fans who see Celtic as bad as Rangers are as daft as the Celtic fans who take banners taunting Hibs about being a feeder club. Karma has bitten both on the backside, of that there is no doubt. Think guys, think, it's a big picture. 20% of proceeds from this book are going to the Good Child Foundation, why? Watch their videos, that's why.

So, I hope you enjoy this book and can sit back one night, wallowing in the fact that things aren't as good as they used to be, a brilliant concept given that most of this season, from a Celtic perspective, was awful. I said most, not all....

Paul Larkin
January 2011

A word from Tosh...

As a professional the only thing on my mind on May 3rd 1986 at Dens Park that day was trying to get Dundee into Europe. Sometimes fans don't get that but it honestly is the case. Growing up a Celtic supporter of course, I wasn't going to be unhappy with any positive outcome for Dundee having a positive outcome for Celtic. The game itself that day was a strange one, bizarre even. The atmosphere was very tense but Hearts had been playing well most of the season and were clear favourites and had started the game well until a strange thing happened. Big Colin Hendry brought down Sandy Clark for an absolute stonewall penalty. The Ref that day was Bill Crombie from Edinburgh and I don't think it's a secret that he's a big Hearts fan. He didn't give the penalty though and I'm sure every Hearts player was expecting to be given. After that Hearts missed a few chances and John Colquhoun in particular, after being brilliant all season, was the worst offender. Half time came and went it was noticeable that the Hearts players were beginning to wilt, everyone in the ground was now aware that Celtic had put four past St Mirren in the first half. It was also obvious to our team that Rangers were beating Motherwell as well so Europe was going to be beyond us and although Hearts were clearly feeling the heat, it did look like it would end up 0-0.

I ended up in The Cotton Club in Glasgow that night, rolling about the floor with a guy who thought it would be a good idea to kick the official Celtic celebration cake. I've no idea why they had a cake there, or why I thought it would be a good idea to be the one to pull the guy up, then again, it was a one of those days...
Tosh McKinlay

Chapter 1-Rambo

Here we go again. The opening day of the season, you're always that bit more keen than most weeks. I was even more eager than that as for the first time in my life, I was getting a train to a football match. Ok, so it was only from Edinburgh Waverley to Edinburgh Haymarket but still. I went with my big cousin Kevin and his mate, both of whom worked for the railways and on the train we encountered some huns who were on their way to Ibrox. There was abuse towards us but, being 11, most of it went over my head. I do though distinctly remember stepping off the train to the song "No Pope of Rome", from the Huns like, it wasn't being played over the tannoy system of the train or station. We left them a finger each and walked along Gorgie Road towards Tynecastle, it was a searingly hot day in Edinburgh that August and any thoughts of us getting into the ground in good time were banished as we stopped in the Balmoral pub for a soothing half or six. I say "We", I stood outside of course. Bastards. Leaving the pub around five minutes before kick off meant gaining access to the traditional Celtic end behind the goals was impossible unless you didn't mind only seeing the second half of the game. So we took a right on McLeod Street and headed for the enclosure under the main stand. The enclosure was like an unofficial Celtic part of the stadium for the day, if you want an explanation, I guess it was where your less rabid Jambo bastards and your more clued in drunk Tims went to watch the game.

John Colquhoun was making his debut for Hearts and I must admit to having a wee soft spot for him when he was at Celtic, primarily because I saw him scoring against Hearts at Celtic Park, which clearly caught the eye of the watching Jambos too. He left Celtic that summer for £50,000 to sign for Hearts(that makes it sound like we had to pay him, which when you think about it, you should have to to make someone sign for Hearts) as he wasn't able to displace Davie Provan who, in true Celtic style, retired about four months later. Even with my young eyes it was obvious that Colquhoun was having a great game and opened the scoring in 28 minutes right in front of us in the enclosure. To my right Jambos jumped about like lunatics, as opposed to before where they stood about like lunatics, and my cousin and his mate scowled. It looked like Colquhoun was going to run all over the top of us until around 40 minutes where all he had to do was run onto a ball, with our goalie Pat Bonner down, and tap it into an empty net. I say all, he did have Roy "The Bear" Aitken bearing down him and, for want of a better phrase, Colquhoun shat himself as Big Roy put in the kind of tackle that created the kind of spectacle that you normally only see when a wrecking ball is launched into a building. Colquhoun drifted out the game after that.

Half time came and I remember sub Alan McNally running past us to us singing "Rambo, Rambo, Rambo, Rambo", he looked right at me and said "Thanks Wee Man". In Scotland, before the rise of the internet(maybe), everyone was either called "Wee Man" or Big Man" depending on their size. A few years later I was at Hampden for a Scotland v Poland game and was there when the Scotland team bus arrived, Alan McNally got off the bus and was universally ignored. Except by me. As he walked past me I said "Good luck Rambo" and he turned round and said "Thanks Big Man".

Second half came and at last Celtic started to get into the game, you could tell that with amount of abuse we were getting alone. Paul McStay had started to make an impact. The Maestro to everyone except himself, you'd be hard pushed to find a Celtic supporter, post Danny pre Henrik, that didn't list Paul as their all time favourite player. He just had everything and anyone who lists "Celtic Reserves" as their other favourite team is ok in my book, which means he's ok here, get it?

To be fair to Hearts, they were defending well and looked like they might be good for two points until the 91st minute where Celtic got a free kick at the Gorgie Road end, just outside the box and towards our side of the enclosure. I remember the disbelief around me as it looked like Peter Grant was going to take it and folk screamed at Davie Hay to tell him to leave it(or words to that effect). Just as it looked like he was placing it, he touched it to Paul McStay who rifled it into the bottom corner off the post and grown men around me embraced like they had just been told they were leaving Death Row for the Playboy Mansion.

There was no time for anything else and the sheer dejection around us from the Jambos was very apparent. We walked all the way along towards Princes St after the game and I met my Mum at the Grosvenor Hotel. That night I went back to play football and talk about the game with my mates. Very few people supported Hearts in the area and there was a large Hibs support around from the generation above me. There were a few Tims and a few Huns too. I always known as Celtic to everyone who knew me, people fluctuated between teams, some didn't go at all but I always was Celtic, always wore the colours, never hid. It was around this time I got my first Celtic Supporters Club jumper. It was a forest green v neck with the club crest and my name on it and I loved it. One day I was up town with a mate, Stebo, and was in John Menzies in Princes St. Stebo was elsewhere in the

shop and as I looked at the records, someone punched me in the mouth. As I looked, shocked, I realised right away it was because of the jumper. So twice within in a couple of weeks I got a taste of what you're up against when you support Celtic and it wasn't nice, nor should anyone have to suffer that because of they support. It was, however, preferable though to the broken jaw the guy got when Stebo, at 12 years old a towering 6 ft 2, caught him as he tried to leave the shop and hit him harder than Mike Tyson could.

Years later I found out that this game had been listed in the programme of events for the Edinburgh Festival. I wonder if any tourists trotted along and, if so, what had they made of it all? Did they know, for example, just how important that McStay goal would turn out to be...

Chapter 2-Everybody wants to rule the World

The thing about Scottish football then was it was completely different. You see what I did there? First of all, Aberdeen and Dundee Utd were brilliant, Rangers were awful and had been for years.(If that doesn't give you a warm glow, you're reading the wrong book) Aberdeen were a tremendous side(feels like a joke saying that now). Led by Alex Ferguson, they had won the league in 1980, 1984 and 1985, they had also won the Scottish Cup in 1982, 1983 and 1984, the League Cup in 1985, the European Cup Winners Cup in 1983 and the European Super Cup that year as well. It's safe to say they started the season as odds on favourites to sweep up again. It looked that way in the League Cup anyway, the tournament then being played out between August and October, with lots of exciting midweek games springing up and with games played to a finish on the night, happy or sick were only two emotions up for grabs. Inevitably the League Cup would have a sponsor and this year it was Skol Lager, so the Skol Cup it was. Celtic's progress that year was straightforward up to the last eight. Home wins against Queen of the South(4-1) and Brechin (7-0) saw us given an away quarter final tie at Easter Road against a Hibs team who had been rank rotten thus far this season. For some reason, I ended up in the enclosure again, this time 100% Celtic and it was packed again, so a big guy with a moustache and black hair sat me on top of the pie stand in the enclosure. I was quite chuffed when one guy said to me "Hey Wee Man, gies a pie and bovril hahaha" as it made me feel like an adult. Of course after it was said for the 500th time, it made me feel like killing an adult.

The teams came out and nothing that had went previous had suggested what was about to unfold. Mo Johnston put us ahead with a deflected shot and it looked like it would be business as usual. I distinctly remember the whole enclosure bouncing to "Mo, Mo Sing for Mo" after that goal before the song evolved into "Mo, Mo Super Mo" and then "Die, Die, Die, Die ya hun" in later years. In typical Celtic fashion though, one minute we were comfortable, the next we were 2-1 down and for the first time I noticed there were Hibs fans in the ground. The terracing opposite us was under construction and therefore empty which made for a strange atmosphere that night. Davie Provan brought us level with a typical great goal. Davie Provan was always a big hero of mine and the goal he scored in the previous seasons Scottish Cup Final lives long in the memory even if my hero worship stopped the minute he picked up a microphone.

As we celebrated, you kind of got the impression that this game had a long way to go and that was rubber-stamped when Colin Harris came off the bench and scored with his first touch of the ball. It was that kind of night. However Hibs could barely get their goading out to us before we equalised again, from kick off Paul McStay played a great ball to Provan who crossed for Johnston and he bulleted a header in off the bar for 3-3 and extra time loomed. Just before full time Alan "Benny" Brazil almost crippled Johnston right in front of us and there was a huge surge to the front where we all gave Brazil dogs abuse and a Policeman told me to sit down(on the pie stand) and shut up. I'm sorry about that Alan, hindsight and all that.

Eight minutes into extra time Roy Aitken scored easily the best goal of his career and again another goal I saw, that TV didn't, which took my breath away. Running towards the Hibs goal at the Dunbar end, he got to the edge of the box and started going past people in a way that only Paddy McCourt wouldn't be mesmerised by. After going past four defenders, he shifted his body shape and delicately dinked the ball past Alan Rough who adopted his usual "stuck in treacle" pose. We erupted and the chant of "Feed The Bear" filled the Leith night, surely we were through now? Naw. Durie got a flukey shot in which took a huge deflection of Danny McGrain and we were at 4-4 and penalties.

It looked like penalties would be a formality for Hibs, shooting towards the Cowshed, as we missed our first two penalties. However Bonner started saving and we were back in it until the unfortunate Pierce O'Leary hit a shot so far over the bar that planes had to divert.

So that was that, we were out and Hibs, who hadn't won a league game all season, we were through to the semi finals. What was that like then? Well we will probably never know. See this part here was supposed to be a Hibs fan's view of the League Cup run that year, unfortunately I asked not just the the laziest Hibs fan around but quite possibly the laziest man on the planet. Six weeks after agreeing to do it I am sitting here, February 7th 2011, having written 28,000 words in that time, still with no League Cup piece! Not only that, he agreed to go to George IV Library in Edinburgh to look over match reports etc from season 85/86, again nothing. I blame myself. I told Mark O'Neil about it and his reply was "Hosey is lazy. That's news?". There are so many examples of his laziness and sometimes it so blatant, you can scarcely believe it, like this one time we were going to a game and I was meeting him at 10am at the bottom of his stair. He says to me "Give me a phone when you're there" Why would I need to? Simply because the notion of him going downstairs and having to wait even a minute, is far too much for him to comprehend. Then there was his room he grew up in. Anyone who has been in it will tell you to walk into you had to reall wade. There was so much stuff around the bed that the floor level was easily a foot higher than it should have been. This went on for years, without any sign of any resolution. One time a mutual friend sat down on a chair and heard a snap. It was a single, the aptly named "You're History" by Shakespeares Sister. It didn't belong to, yes I'll name him, Allan Hosey Jr, it belonged to another friend. When the other friend heard about it he blamed Hosey, simply because the room was in such a state no one could have known except him. Hosey took exception to this, no one else did. Then one day I walk in and something is up, the room has been cleaned, once then, ever. This is not a hatchet job either I should say, it should be in the lazy bastard's neck like, but no, he does have a lot of qualities, a lot more than most people I know, it's just it takes effort to put them on show, you see where I am going here?

So, you just read that instead of a Hibs fan's view of their League Cup run that year and...oh hang on, he's just sent it, scratch all that, he's done it.

Chapter 2(Part 2)The Schizophrenic Wednesdays

v. Cowdenbeath 6-0 (2nd Round)

The first midweek game of the season, and already it was a welcome relief from what was looking as though it was shaping up to be another mediocre at best league season for Hibs. Fair enough, it was a reasonably difficult start to the season with a trip to Pittodrie, then a home game against the bastard huns, but one goal for and six against was not a particularly good return from that regardless.

There had been some optimism floating about pre-season down Leith way as an experienced striker in the shape (round mostly) of Stevie Cowan had been signed from Aberdeen. He was going to be expected to partner the youthful (and not yet bastard hun) Gordon Durie. Durie had been signed from East Fife a few months earlier after basically ripping Hibs apart in one of the more humiliating exits which they had managed to engineer from the albatross round the neck that the Scottish Cup was (and is) to the club. So a bit of an older head who had decent experience and was liable to score a few goals patnering a rapid young forward who definitely knew where the goals were sounded pretty good after the experience of Colin Harris being the main striker in the previous season. There was also some talk of a pretty good young midfielder coming through from the reserves, and he had made his debut off the bench in the first game of the season. He looked decent, but he also looked as if he might weigh about 7 stone if he was dripping wet in a wooly jumper whilst carrying a previously submerged fillie. But the young John Collins had been getting a bit of notice and he was expected to be joining a lot of other young players who had been coming through over the previous couple of seasons. So aye. Optimism was about, but it wasn't really being justified up till this game.

So this game played in front of a couple of thousand die hard cynics was a little glimmer of hope. We scored 6 goals. And even Benny Brazil scored! Which probably meant Cowdenbeath weren't very good. But still. Through to the next round. That's what counted.

v. Motherwell 6-1 (3rd Round)

A week later. Another defeat in the league on the Saturday, this time at home to St Mirren. So no points yet. But at least we'd scored a couple of goals.

In our current era of football where season tickets are prevalent, cup competitions have been devalued. So

looking back and seeing an extra few hundred at a midweek league cup game than those that had attended a league game on the Saturday is a bit of an eye opener about how times have changed. There was only 5 and a half thousand at this game but it felt somewhat crowded. This was because at the tail end of the previous season the big terracing at Easter Road had been guillotined. The vast terracing built at the time of the Famous Five, which turned out to be the only side who could ever fill it, was gone. And in it's place was the response by Hibs to the vitriol which was directed at the Hibs board every time it rained and they refused to let the soaked terracing inhabitants into the drier (not dry) Cowshed behind the goals. They were putting a roof on the chopped down terracing. And each time you went you could see some progress towards that glorious day when you could stand on the terracing and be dry. From the skeletal bare stanchions (later to be known as "they fucking pillars") to a wall going up at the back, to the roof going on, and all the while you went to the soul vacuum of the cowshed which horror of horrors made you sit down! And you still got wet if it rained because the minimalist brief of the architect appeared to have consisted of "if you cover a bit of it and we have wooden benches in it, it's an all seated covered stand which we can charge people an extra 50p to get in".

So another Wednesday night. And another 6 goals! Questions were starting to be raised amongst the faithful about why these fuckers could only play well on a Wednesday! But it was still August, and you had to have a bit of faith that the form would even out at some point. Still we were in our first quarter final of a cup since losing the never-ending Scottish Cup Final to the bastard huns in 1979. In those more innocent times, the trip home for my 11 year old self meant asking everyone on the bus who we had got in the QF since I had no radio and they made the draw straight after the games. Then I found out. Celtic in the quarter final it was... There was derby in between though and that was against what pretty much everyone had down as the most mediocre of Hearts sides and I was casting aside the Wednesday/ Saturday dichotomy in the full expectation that we'd definitely fuck them.

We didn't. It was my 10th competitive derby. We'd been the better side in about half of them (the other half were about even!). The record read W0 D5 L5. Every defeat by a late goal. This time it was Sandy Clark. My intense dislike of Hearts was turning into downright loathing.

v. Celtic 4-4 (Quarter Final)

A bit of the terracing was open! It was a Wednesday! We had to win this one! Oh aye, it's against Celtic, let's see how this will go...Surprisingly well. The game looked to be won at least twice. Pegged back, behind, and finally to penalties. I was still in the Cowshed. This was the end the penalties were going to be taken. It looked to be won, then it didn't. Then it looked to be lost. Then we won as Pierce O'Leary cleared the stadium with his effort. I'd never seen Hibs beating the bastard huns or Celtic. And Hibs were in a cup semi final. This was the game that I'm utterly convinced made me want to be a complete bevvie merchant because there had to be some way to celebrate that was better than just going home and taunting the jambo mum before heading to school the next day to taunt everyone who wasn't a Hibby.

v the bastard huns 2-0 (Semi Final 1st leg)

3 weeks between the quarter final and 1st leg of the semi, what a travesty of scheduling that was! In the league games in between there had been an absolute horsing by Celtic 5-0 at home, and a 1-0 loss away to Dundee. In case you haven't been keeping count Hibs record on Saturdays in the league now read;

P6 W0 D0 L6 F4 A17

And on a Wednesday in the League Cup it was;

P3 W2 D1 L0 F16 A5

Well fine, the team was officially schizophrenic. So Dr Jekyll would come out against the bastard huns maybe.

And so it came to pass. Hibs did the unthinkable and actually strengthened the side before the semi by signing someone. Gordon Chisholm was signed from Sunderland. And up he popped to score the crucial 2nd goal in a 2-0 win. That was an official cushion. And the terracing was fully open. My home for the next 20 odd years was complete. And as a house warming present I was being allowed to enter the belly of the beast in a couple of weeks for the first time.

V The bastard huns 0-1 (Semi Final 2nd leg 2-1 agg.)

I was being allowed for the 1st time to go to Fort Hunbrox. It was not going to be welcoming. Various stories had lodged themselves in my consciousness about how every trip there was a nightmare. At best you could expect the windows of the bus tanned. And the chances of getting a decision off the ref was about the same as The Pope being drafted in by the huns to play centre forward.

But still, I was quite excited. We didn't even have to win, just avoid losing by more than 2 and we'd definitely win on penalties with the Girvan shitehouse in goals for them. Excitement on the trip through went through stages of change to utter despair as a crash on the M8 meant the traffic was at an absolute standstill. It was 7 o'clock, and we hadn't reached Harthill yet. We were going to miss the game. So the driver perhaps spying the chance of an all time classic whip round on the way home took the courageous decision to abandon every bit of respect for road traffic rules he had ever held and decided the hard shoulder was fine. He raced past everything. We were still going to miss the kick off, but we were going to make the game.

The bus pulled up outside the ground, and up we rushed to the turnstile. We got in. I climbed to the top of the steps, I glanced at the horde of inhuman ugliness populating three sides of the stadium, I started to make my way down to my seat (bottom tier, brown section. What sort of a shower of cunts have a fucking brown section, presumably the reason for this was because they actually wanted their shirts in that colour the fascist fuckers that they are!) and looked at the pitch. And noticed the bastard huns had a free kick on the edge of the box. Which Davie Cooper smacked into the top corner well before I had reached my seat. I had been able to see the pitch for about 5 seconds before my first ever disappointment in the Dante-esque confines of the Govan pit. But that was the last of that night. The few hundred Hibbies who had managed to get through in time for the goal were eventually joined by a few thousand more as the traffic evidently had cleared. By the start of the 2nd half the Broomloan was rocking.

Hibs held out reasonably comfortably. In the last seconds Gordon Durie had a chance to break through from the left wing. He held it up. What the fuck was he doing? He held it up just long enough to let the huns get back to defend. And pinged a beautifully weighted 70 yard pass straight back to Alan Rough. Who held it long enough to let the huns come back up the pitch towards him before smacking it long. The whistle went. Hibs were in a Cup Final. But we had lost on a Wednesday. Which was no great surprise, as we'd started to win on Saturdays. From the last great Wednesday night at Easter Road in the 1st leg, we'd won a couple of home games, and got a decent point at Tannadice. Following the 2nd leg we got a point against Aberdeen at ER, and an away win at Ibrox. But the League Cup Final was going to be on a Sunday! What sort of day was that to have a guess on which Hibs would turn up!

v. Aberdeen 0-3 (Final)

Turns out that Sundays were the new early season Saturdays. Well beat. Early. And tears, lots and lots of tears. And the most insulting song I've ever heard sung at my team with Aberdeen fans singing "Are you Rangers in disguise" after the third goal.

Epilogue:

The rest of the season played itself out. The hope of the good league run and the sensational League Cup run fizzled out into general mediocrity. And the dread crept up as the news of the apparently never ending 1-0 results for Hearts ran on in a seemingly never ending cycle of "how the fuck are they doing this". The Scottish Cup seen another decent run by Hibs including another all time classic against Celtic which was won 4-3. It ended predictably enough at the hands of Aberdeen in an ill tempered semi final at Dens Park (but I could never bring myself to hate Dens after 85/86 as I could with Hampden). Blackley would last as Hibs manager for another year before being replaced by the anti-football ethics of Alex "Bastard Face" Miller. This was his only real hurrah as a Hibs manager. Gordon Chisholm turned out to be very average. Turned out the 7 stone 17 year old was a bit of a player. And the newly covered terracing became my life long partner until it was ripped down for a brand new meccano set having been continually emaciated as the people who controlled the finances at Hibs kept on cutting it's capacity as every new rule about grounds came round.
Allan "Not That Lazy" Hosey

You can tell a book is about another time altogether when it talks about Scotland qualifying for a World Cup. Being Scotland of course it was done the hard way and after wins against Spain and Iceland at home, there were losses against Wales at home and Spain away with only a late Jim Bett goal getting a win in Iceland. That meant that in the last game v Wales, at Ninian Park, Cardiff, Scotland needed a draw and Wales needed a win. Seems strange that the game was played at Ninian Park and not the much bigger Cardiff Arms Park and even more so when the crowd was packed in like sardines as we sat and watched on TV. Wales started like an express train and deservedly went one up through a brilliant goal from Mark Hughes. Half time came and Scotland hardly had a kick. Spirits weren't raised (or actually, were raised a lot in households all over Scotland) when Alan Rough appeared for the second half. This was in the days that Jim Leighton was regarded as good so no one really held out much hope. It was later discovered that the reason Leighton didn't play in the second half was he lost a contact lens. I still think he'd have been a better option than "Roughie". To their credit though, Scotland started to get into the game and Jock Stein brought on Davie Cooper for the ineffectual Gordon Strachan. Graeme Sharp was starting to ruffle a few feathers upfront and came close a couple of times but it was looking to be all in vain. Then with just nine minutes left, a nation moved closer to their tellies. The ball bounced around the box and before we knew it, a David Speedie shot had hit a Welsh arm, Graeme Sharp claimed immediately and Scotland had a penalty. Davie Cooper stepped up and slotted past Neville Southall and that was that, Scotland were in the World Cup. Kindae. Unfortunately, even more dramatic events were unfolding. On the final whistle Jock Stein collapsed in the dug-out and medics were called. Stein had suffered a massive heart attack and was dead soon after. What was a triumphant occasion now became sombre and shocking. Alex Ferguson couldn't look, Souness openly wept and Scotland had lost its greatest ever football son.

Due to the bizarre nature of Scotland's group, the draw in Cardiff meant Scotland had to play a two legged play off against Australia. Of course, as is the wont in Scotland, Australia were dismissed a pushover and easy qualification predicted. The first leg was played at Hampden on the 20th of November 1985 in front of 63,500. For most fans in Scotland this was one of our first chances to get a look at Frank McAvennie who had been scoring for fun every week in England but a strike by TV companies meant we didn't see any of them.

Alex Ferguson was caretaker manager in light of the recent events and McAvennie, along with Kenny Dalglish, were the notable additions to the team that had got the point in Cardiff. If truth be told, Scotland were pretty comfortable throughout and just at the point where people might have started to panic, Davie Cooper slotted in a free kick from twenty yards and two minutes later Dalglish sent McAvennie through with a brilliant ball and it was 2-0 and game over.

The second leg took place two weeks later and the time difference meant most people would be at school or at work, the three people that had a job in the Thatcher era that is. In our school were allowed to go into the small hall and a TV had been set up in there for us to watch the game. Of course for us that meant the chance to misbehave even more than normal and make hilarious jokes about the Australia goalies name being "Greedy". The game itself was dire. Dalglish didn't travel, so Paul McStay replaced him and it seemed right from the kick off that Scotland went there to shut up shop. Jim Leighton had a good game but Scotland never really looked like losing and were soon on their way to Mexico 86 and their fourth World Cup in a row.

An ex pat in Australia, Brian McAvoy, recalls "I made the fucking mistake of driving down with two fucking Aussies. Finished work at 11.20pm Tuesday night and left about midnight for the 15 hour drive down with two fucking Aussies (did I mention that before?) They wanted to stay at Portsea with an old friend of theirs which was another 100km or more south of Melbourne. After dumping our stuff I wanted to get back up to Melbourne straight away and these two fucking Aussies wanted to have a wee kip before we tore back up the road. I wanted to get their ASAP as I wanted to have a session before the kick off but not knowing the way etc etc and because these two fucking Aussies who wanted a wee nap we got there just on kick off so I was livid and the same after the game I wanted to kick on for a few hours with the other Scots but these two fucking Aussies wanted to head back down to Portsea. ARGH ARGH. Lost it totally with them and the next day on the drive home the tension was horrendous. Actually I remember we stopped for petrol on the way down and there was a bus full of Scots stopped as well and the bus was rocking, jumped on and got a couple of beers off them. I wish I went by bus but stupidly I allowed myself to be talked into driving down as these two fucking Aussies only wanted to go and see their pal in Portsea. Plus the TV station that was showing the game live was on a channel SBS that at that time couldn't be picked up from where I came from so one of the two fucking Aussies was going to get it recorded for me, only for his wife to tape the wrong channel. One of the two fucking Aussies I have never seen since that day. I remember that I went straight to work after the 15 hour drive and did a shift then drove up to Sydney that night to go to a gig. Oh to be young again."

You can't be overly dramatic when it comes to talking about Jock Stein's impact on Scottish football. After a good career as a player, winning the League, Scottish Cup and Coronation Cup with Celtic, he was soon, after a few stops, manager of Dunfermline and winning the Scottish Cup. He moved to Hibs where he won the Summer Cup before returning home to Celtic where he amassed an incredible 25 trophies in just 13 years. The pinnacle of course was The European Cup in 1967 where afterwards Bill Shankly said to him "John, you're immortal now". Millions of words have been written about Jock Stein so to measure his real impact, just look at the sick, demented minds of people who have spent a lot of their lives trying to discredit Jock Stein because he was a Protestant who made the modern day Celtic. Their allegation is that Jock Stein knew about child abuse within Celtic Boys Club, an outfit affiliated with Celtic to bring kids through the ranks, and did nothing about it. The reality is somewhat different of course. After learning of what had been going on, Stein informed all the families immediately and brought them into the club. He asked them all, "Do you want me to get the police involved?" They all answered no. After this he summoned the man responsible for the abuse and gave him the biggest battering of his life and then he literally threw him onto the street. The people responsible for this campaign are no more than cowardly bigots who cannot stomach anything to do with Celtic. People say ignore them, I say confront them.

When Jock died, it hit everyone connected with Celtic. The following Saturday after Cardiff Celtic played Aberdeen and produced a breathtaking performance that Aberdeen manager Alex Ferguson remarked was as good as anything his Aberdeen team had played against. The 2-1 victory was small comfort but comfort all the same.

Asked for his thoughts about Jock Stein's death, Gordon Strachan said "It's not a night I want to remember. I had thought at the time that he wasn't at his bubbly best. He wasn't as sparky as usual at the dinner table. He was still able to make big decisions, though. He started out making great decisions and he went out with a great decision - taking me off! We were 1-0 down and the man he replaced me with went on to score the equaliser... Some say people worshipped big Jock, but it's better than that. People loved him," Whilst Alex Ferguson remarked "I didn't shed a tear until I had flown from Cardiff to Glasgow and set out on the drive to Aberdeen. On the way up, I pulled into a lay-by and just broke down... For people like myself, Jock was the precursor of all the deeds and challenges we needed to aim at. He would never take the praise himself. It was always about the players and how great the team were. That magnanimity tells you everything about him. For any man seeking to further his education in football, Jock Stein was a one-man university"

The impact of Jock Stein remains to this day, bask in it, it's the greatest of all in Scottish football, don't try to belittle it because it's cold in his shadow.

Chapter 4- Weird Science

October, November and December were pretty awful months for Celtic. Just at the point we looked like we were about run away with the league, we collapsed. I remember it well, we beat St Mirren 2-0 at Celtic Park in a performance that was as good as anything we'd seen outside of European nights and remember the buzz around coming out that game that we now had a team that could win our first league in four years. The following week Hearts came to Celtic Park and we fully expected the same quality and result, we got the quality, not the result. For the first time in my lifetime, Hearts won at Celtic Park and it was a strange feeling. For a start Hearts had been a nonsense team for the best part of 20 years and the notion of them beating us was absurd. At least to me anyway. When Hearts came to us that day they looked like a side heading back for the first division. When they left, they were on the second game of unbeaten run that would last all the way to the last day of the season. We played well enough on the day and missed a ton of chances but when Robertson scored for Hearts, it gave them a lift unlike anything they had know in probably 25 years. The defended stoutly and when the final whistle went, the boos rang out around the stadium and I remember being dumbstruck by the score, not least give the amount of abuse I'd get from pals when I got home that night.

The following week we won 2-1 at Motherwell, Paul McStay getting both and the second coming late on in what was a hard fought game against a rank rotten Motherwell side. The signs were there that something was just not right. There was, perhaps, a knock on effect from the European "campaign". A weak board had allowed UEFA to punish us for the Rapid Vienna fiasco by ordering a replay against them the season before and if that wasn't bad enough, we had to play our first and, what turned out to be, only European home game that season "behind closed doors". I'm actually boiling up writing that. Things started off well,, after drawing Atletico Madrid, the first leg was played in Spain and we played brilliantly well, with a Mo Johnston goal and Pat Bonner save earning us a well deserved 1-1 draw. The second game was at home and therefore all fans were banned. It was played on a Wednesday afternoon and with no 12th man, Celtic played terribly and lost 2-1, with

our one merely a late consolation from Roy Aitken. Manager Davie Hay said after "The players were badly affected by the flat atmosphere. It shows us how much our supporters mean to the club. We just did not play at all" McNamara from the forum www.celticminded.com said "my mate wrote to Jim 'I'll Fix It to get him into the game, never worked" Looking back at it now, it seems an incredibly harsh punishment that UEFA inflicted on Celtic given that the offence was a beer bottle being thrown onto the pitch. It is inconceivable that any Celtic board of the last 15 years would have entertained any such punishment yet the board at the time accepted it meekly some would say readily as the chance of another big pay day with a "home" tie, third game, at Old Trafford dangled at them. Given what I know now, I would say it is most certainly true and the board saw it as a no-brainer, another cash cow and we'll beat them again. We all know football doesn't work like that. To accept the third game was bad enough, to then say nothing when had to play the Atletico game behind closed doors the following season is absolutely shameful but then, as we later were to find out, we weren't dealing with men thought about the big picture.

It was about this time that I met a living legend. All the schools in my area were told to go to one other school for a seminar on traffic awareness. Great. Tensions were running high due to the fact that we'd be mixing with people from other schools and threats were flying all over the place. Needless to say nothing happened and I actually knew people from the other schools so there was never going to be any grief. We went in and sat on the big hall floor. As usual we all messed about until silence went over the hall. Standing in front of us was The Green Cross Code Man. This was excitement enough for any young boy. Then he revealed he was actually Darth Vader as well. I suppose at that time Star Wars was the other great love of my life. I had all the figures, the ships, everything, now since long gone to my eternal disgust. Ebay motherfucker, Ebay. I almost fainted when he told us he was Darth Vader and he actually told us then that there were three episodes before Star Wars and three episodes after Return of The Jedi. See I could have started TMZ right there.

The next few weeks for Celtic were as bad as any as I can remember. First up were "Bogey Team" Dundee Utd. After we beat them on the 6th of April 1983 2-0 (a game we thought put us in pole position for the league that season, how wrong could we be?) our league results against them up until the end of the 85/86 season make for very grim reading (Celtic score first) 2-3, 1-2, 1-1, 1-3, 1-1, 1-1, 3-1, 1-2, 0-0, 0-3, 0-1, 2-4, 1-1. Yes, one solitary win in three years in the league. We knocked them out the League Cup once at Tannadice and they did the same to us the following year (and that big bastard John Clark scored the winner right in front of me, then danced a jig right in front of me) and we beat them in 1985 in the 100th Scottish Cup Final, with a memorable Roy Aitken-inspired comeback. This particular game was the first time we had met since that game and it's fair to say they absolutely gubbed us in a 3-0 win. After the game Jim McLean thanked the Celtic supporters for their sporting acceptance of the defeat (Dignity..?). I'm not sure he would be as gracious if he knew that, despite beating us three times that season, Dundee Utd would finish only 3rd that season. A year after appearing in the semi final of a European Cup, it does show you the strength of Scottish football at the time but does beg the articulately put question: How in fucks name did Dundee Utd only win three trophies, all at Dens Park bizarrely enough, in the 1980s? This is a team that reached a European Cup Semi and a UEFA Cup final between 1984 and 1987. They did bottle a few Scottish Cup Finals, not that I am complaining about that mind, but still.

The next game was another gubbing, this time 4-1 at Pittodrie. Davie Provan had briefly with a free kick by self-confessed Celtic fan Frank McDougall rammed in four against us to confirm the notion that it's only Celtic fans who will play well against the team they support, never Rangers fans against Rangers. Joe Miller scored every time he played at Celtic Park v us, Paul Hartley reveled in scoring against us, Chic Charnley scored a screamer v us and then there was Scott McDonald, anyway, enough of that.

Rangers were next and at this point were truly an awful side. An awful club, an awful support, awful policies, just awful. By the end of season 85/86, they hadn't won the league for eight years and had won a paltry three cups in that time. Of course at this point they were very much wrapped in the stigma of a "No Catholics Need Apply" signing policy, not that you would have known it at the time of course because, as usual, very few journalists would even mention far less tackle. One exception was the bold Ian Archer, who never let Rangers forget what an utter disgrace they were with a famous quote that still hangs over them to this day "This has to be said about Rangers...as a Scottish Football club they are a permanent embarrassment and an occasional disgrace. This country would be a better place if Rangers did not exist". Despite the media denial, Rangers supporters themselves were slightly more open about it and it was often the number one topic at their AGMs. Indeed in 1985 "Comedian" Andy Cameron was barracked by fellow Rangers' shareholders when he asked the club's chairman Mr John Paton to "come out and be honest" about the board's policy towards Roman Catholics. Mr Cameron, whose earlier remarks about the calibre of the Rangers' team had drawn laughs and cheers from the floor of the club's annual meeting, was heckled and told to sit down. Minutes later, a number of shareholders milled

round Mr Cameron and exchanged angry remarks with him. Remember this was only in 1985. Right now, modern Rangers supporters would tell you that it was a myth they had a policy of apartheid. These are the same people mentioned before, the types who try and fail to discredit Jock Stein. Like with Jock Stein, it's facts that let them down, like this quote from Sandy Jardine: "When I came here in 1964, we had no Catholics," he said. "Not just the playing staff, anywhere. There was no bit of paper, it was an unwritten rule. David Murray changed that and it moved on significantly in 1989 when Mo signed. You cannot clear up 80 years of sectarianism in eight months, but we are a huge way down the road." It's really hard to argue against that, right? Still, they do, so what about this quote from their Vice Chairman in the 1960's, Matt Taylor, when asked about the policy in 1967: "It's part of our tradition....we were formed in 1873 as a Protestant boys club. To change now would lose us considerable support." I can hear them now "That was years ago, lost in translation" blah, blah, blah. Ok, here's David Murray in 2009, when asked about the signing of Maurice Johnston, a Roman Catholic: "We signed him as a football player firstly, and also to break the tradition of this club in not signing a Roman Catholic. That was wrong," The last quote is the closest Rangers have ever come to an apology for this policy. Just for luck, here's Terry Butcher: "At the time, it was a very strong principle that Rangers did not sign Catholics, but Graeme Souness was no fool and particularly anxious to break the mould. He had played in Italy and Liverpool and knew the only way to be successful was to encompass everyone. His only concern was in signing good footballers, regardless of their chosen God. When I'd signed he was desperate for me to be a Catholic, but I wouldn't tell him what I was. I remember in my first few weeks there were all kinds of rumours going round and I'd be asked by Rangers fans which school I had been to and what my parents' names were. I didn't say. I simply told them I was an English footballer. It eventually came out in the newspapers. They pointed out my marriage had taken place in St Peter's, a High Anglican church and therefore similar to Catholicism. My son Christopher also attended a nursery called St Mary's, which increased the rumours, but eventually they became convinced I was Church of England."

Until we get an actual full and frank apology from them, how can they ever be taken seriously when they comment on eradicating sectarianism?

The fact is Rangers were an awful side in the 80s and their fans traveled round Scotland, and occasionally Europe, chanting Anti-Catholic songs. Indeed in 1989, just before they purposely signed their first Catholic, one of the songs coming "loud and proud" from the Rangers end at Hampden in the cup final was "Hate Roman Catholics, we fucking hate Roman Catholics". It is no coincidence that in recent times the emergence of the "famine" song came just as Celtic clinched three in a row. Celtic games v Rangers will never be meaningless but if there was ever a time they did mean less, then the early to mid 80s were it, with games v Aberdeen being the number one fixture Celtic fans looked out for. It can't be underestimated just how awful Rangers were then so far be it from me to try. First of all, let's look at their league positions from, say, 1980 to 1986, just for fun:

1980-4th
1981-3rd
1982-3rd
1983-4th
1984-4th
1985-4th
1986-5th

A warm glow went around me then.

Rangers were never a threat to us in this period. Their biggest achievement in that time was to beat us 3-2 aet in the League Cup Final in the sort of game that always seems to happen to Celtic. We had better players, we were a better team yet we somehow contrived to lose the game. For me as a young pup, I was particularly distraught after this game as we just did not normally lose to Rangers. In fact, throughout the entire 80s, they only won twice at Celtic Park, right at the start of the decade and right at the end. Both scabby 2-1 victories they should never have got. The Bastards. Anyway. Of course, not being a threat, that infuriated Rangers and this was the beginning of the big Aberdeen-Rangers hatred, not later as some think with the Neil Simpson/Ian Durrant incident although obviously that intensified it. There was also the thing that Aberdeen were to Rangers what Dundee Utd were to us and they dished out a few severe gubbings to them, once scoring nine goals in one week against Rangers in 1982, although Rangers lay down for the first five to try, and fail, to stop us winning the league. Where I lived, there were two big Rangers fans in my block, Ian Smith and Colin Hutchinson, or Olin as every called him. We used to try and ridicule each other every day throughout growing up and obviously it was a lot easier for me given how hopeless they were although as previously said, the Celtic self-destruct button

getting pressed in games like the 3-2 cup final mentioned, used to drive me insane. Thankfully though Rangers offered so many moments of hilarity that you were never down for too long. One of the very best was when Hearts went to Ibrox on the 28th of December 1985 and in a kind of bigotfest both sets of supporters were joining in with the "The Sash" and loving it. The irony being that the two goals that day for Hearts, in a fine 2-0 victory, were scored by Catholic and Celtic supporter John Colquhoun who later admitted "I had no idea what they were all singing, so I just stuck the ball in the net twice". In season 85/86 Rangers actually lost more league games than they won. They were knocked out the UEFA Cup by Spanish "giants" Osasuna in the first round and lost in both cups to Hibs and Hearts, the latter coming in the first round. Ally McCoist actually scored 27 goals that season, 25 in the league and you have point out that they could easily have been in a relegation battle without him. Yes, these were golden times. It has to be said though, why were Rangers allowed to carry on this signing policy for so long? Quite frankly in Scotland at that time, it was a figure of fun. Rikki Fulton poked fun at it on Scotch n' Wry every Hogmanay, Robbie Coltrane also did in a Kick up The Eighties and as hilarious as both were you look back on that now and think that people get that they were making jokes about it because if you didn't laugh, you'd cry? Somehow I doubt it. One of the reasons I have to back that theory up is an experience. In 1987, on the way back from the first Celtic-Rangers game of the season, a game we had hammered Rangers 1-0 in and that's the truth, our bus pulled up beside a Rangers bus not far from the M8. We were in a double decker, bus not sweet, and so were they and of course we consoled them after their defeat... Anyway, as the lights changed and they pulled away a collective gasp went across our bus before everyone burst into hysterical laughter. One the back window of the top deck of their bus was their supporters club plaque and the name of their club? The Alf Garnett Loyal. The fact that the character was played by a Jewish actor and that it was created by a writer known for writing stuff that poked fun at peoples prejudices was clearly lost on them so I have no doubt that they laughed along with Rikki Fulton's portrayal of the bigoted Rangers manager and held Coltrane's "Mason Boyne" in high esteem for his views not realising that whilst they were nodding at them and laughing with them, the more rounded human beings were laughing at them.

The four fixtures against Rangers that season yielded one classic, more of which later. Before the 3-0 gubbing we got at Ibrox to continue on the horrific October/November for us, there was a 1-1 draw at Celtic Park, Paul McStay equalising a McCoist goal. Revenge was gained on New Years Day 1986 when goals by Paul McGuigan and Brian McClair gave us one of the easiest victories against them I can ever remember. New Year games were always great occasions, especially in the 80s when I was younger (could have something to do with us losing loads of them in the 90s). I'd normally get sent to my Nana's for Hogmanay whilst the adults got pished but come New Years Day I'd be at the game and back to my Auntie Mary's for the traditional family party. That is exactly what I did this day and can still taste the beautiful tattie soup she always made if I put my mind to it. The rest of the evening would be spent watching the adults drink themselves into a coma, plenty of laughing and, of course, the traditional tears when someone sung the John Thomson song. Something that used to always make us tickle was the Rangers fans assertion that the Celtic directors refused to enter John Thomson's funeral because it was in a Protestant church. The funeral, of course, was open air due to the thousands who showed up. Rangers must have been really awful then too.

Chapter 5-The Color Purple

There never used to be any shops open on a Sunday morning where I lived. If you wanted your rolls and Sunday papers, you had two choices, either get a bus to another area (and who wants to do that on a Sunday morning?) or deal with China. China was a guy who every Sunday morning used to push a cart around the area full of rolls and papers and shout, er, "Rolls and Papers". Hail, rain or snow, you went down, got what you wanted and left, that was it. The posher people in the area had an actual van that came, driven by a man called John Cuggy. China is a character, you'd need to be, right? Why am I telling you all this? Because China was one of the few genuine Hearts supporters I knew pre 85/86 and then, suddenly, they were everywhere.

There was no warning of this. After the 1-1 draw v Celtic on the opening day, Hearts were trounced 6-2 at Love St and most football fans barely raised an eyebrow as Hearts had been rubbish for years. Out of their next six league games, Hearts lost four of them and Darlinda would have been hard pressed what was about to unfold. A home draw against Dundee was hardly the stuff dreams are made of but it was the first game in what was about to be an incredible 22 game unbeaten run that would almost culminate in the greatest season Hearts had ever known. The seeds of this were sewn when Wallace Mercer bought the club. It was the spring of 1981 when Donald Ford said to Mercer "Look we're in trouble" and the former Hearts striker was right - Hearts had finished bottom of the Premier League after the worst season in their history and were facing not only a third relegation in four years but financial oblivion. At the time Mercer held a small amount of Hearts shares but was hardly a Gorgie regular. Indeed at the somewhat desperate Hearts shareholders meeting in May 1981, it was Mercer's

wife Anne who was present as Wallace was entertaining business clients in London and was heading to see Scotland record a rare victory over England at Wembley Stadium. The emotional occasion of seeing the Scots defeat the Auld Enemy helped to convince Mercer to take a decision he would never have contemplated in any other business. He would sign a cheque for £265,000 to buy Hearts newly released shares.

Wallace Mercer's first season as Hearts major shareholder would see the 35 year old sample the delights of watching his team at the likes of Dumbarton, Queens Park and Clydebank. When East Stirlingshire won 1-0 at Tynecastle on Halloween 1981, Mercer must have felt he had walked into a real horror show. It was clear Hearts were going to struggle to gain promotion but Mercer secured a deal with Dundee United to bring former Scotland international striker Willie Pettigrew to Tynecastle (the £120,000 transfer fee would be paid by instalments) as Hearts tried to salvage the wreckage of another woeful season. Mercer dispensed with the services of manager Tony Ford and appointed former Rangers player Alex MacDonald as player-coach. It would prove to be a masterstroke. Hearts failed to get promotion that season and endured an embarrassing Scottish Cup defeat from Second Division Forfar Athletic at Tynecastle. One memory of that season was in the final game against already promoted Motherwell at Tynecastle. Hearts had to win to go up alongside the Steelmen but lost 1-0. An angry Hearts support began to cause trouble on the crumbling Tynecastle terracings but Wallace Mercer was having none of it. He marched from the Tynecastle stand to confront the troublemakers head on. Hearts faced the very real prospect of part-time football and Mercer wanted the fans to know he and them were all in it together. The gamble was taken to keep Hearts full-time. Alex Macdonald rebuilt the team, secured the services of another Rangers great Sandy Jardine as player and assistant manager - and Hearts didn't look back.

Promotion was duly gained at the end of season 1982/83 and Mercer wasted no time in reminding people that Hearts were on the way back. Hearts had played Rangers in a two-legged League Cup semi-final towards the end of 1982. For the second leg at Tynecastle, Mercer produced a special souvenir match programme which doubled as a prize draw for a £35,000 house! The publicity this created was unsurpassed and over 19,000 fans turned up on a night you wouldn't send the dog out in to witness the start of the rebirth of the Hearts.

Mercer continued to court publicity in the years that followed as, under MacDonald and Jardine's leadership, Hearts began to make steady progress. The club had stabilised and were signing players of the calibre of John Colquhoun and Sandy Clark to complement talented youngsters such as Gary Mackay and John Robertson. It will irk a lot of readers of this book but you have to give Mercer and Hearts credit for the fact that they were able to make a challenge for the league despite the presence of three really good teams in Scotland who were capable of holding their own with most teams in Europe at the time. Of course, with this run taking shape, Hearts fans flooded back to Tynecastle and the sneering sense of entitlement and establishment that all Jambos have was also re-born. It should also be said at this point that support was swelled a little bit by Rangers supporters who had abandoned Ibrox for the first bandwagon they could find that would tolerate them. Before you knew it, Hearts were top of the league and seemingly unbeatable and as we entered February, they came to Celtic Park in a game that I personally hoped would see us end their run and shut their fucking faces up. Alas, it wasn't to be. With the biggest Hearts support I've ever seen at Celtic Park behind them, they managed to equalise a Johnston goal, again through Robertson and I'm sure I am not only Tim who felt a sense of Deja vu at this point. Celtic were frittering away points at this point and that easy win v Rangers on New Years Day had been followed by a serious 4-2 gubbing at, where else, Tannadice. At full time and 1-1, I got a real feeling, for the first time, that Hearts could actually win the league. What's the big deal with that? Both Aberdeen and Dundee Utd had won it in recent years? Well for a start, Aberdeen and Dundee Utd weren't on my doorstep. Also, it was Hearts, the cousins of William, Grandsons of Beelzebub, we couldn't have them winning anything at our expense.

Chapter 6-The Sun always shines on TV(Hats, Scarves, Badges and Tapes Remix)

It increasingly looked like, once again, the Scottish Cup would be our only chance to save our season. In a spooky way, our Scottish Cup campaign looked like it was replicating our League Cup one as straightforward home wins against St Johnstone and Queens Park saw us paired against Hibs at Easter Road again for a quarter final tie. There was a huge, expectant Celtic support there that day despite the fact that games v Hibs that season had been about as predictable as Leith weather. As usual I spent the first two, ok four, hours of this day out standing outside a pub, this time Middletons on Easter Road. Eventually my Father and Uncle came out the pub and I distinctly remember my Uncle immediately let rip with his party piece of:

"Craigavon sent the Specials out,

To shoot the people down,
He thought the IRA were dead,
In dear old Belfast town...."

My father drunkenly joined in as did all other 30 year old plus Rebels amongst the support heading over the Bothwell Bridge. My Father then turned to me and asked if I wanted a new scarf? Of course I agreed and picked a white one with green and yellow trim on it and a huge picture of Pope John Paul the 2nd on it. I was so happy to get it and I remember this as being one of the few times my Father ever bought me anything at a football match, whereas my Uncle always bought me two pies and a coke at every game as well as the first rebel tape I ever owned, Live Alive Oh by The Wolfe Tones. The funny thing is, both were bought from the same guy, a man I only know as Gordon but someone who would be recognisable to anyone who has attended a Celtic game in the last 30 years. He sells all sorts of memorabilia, Celtic and Rebel and was the main source of all this when I was growing up.

We queued at the Dunbar end and I was lifted over by my Uncle and we got up the hill at the back of the terracing just as the team was coming out and I feel that nowadays that is something that has been lost, we, as supporters, don't get excited enough at football. We're all too cynical, myself included. All football commentators do get excited to the point where you become immune to it. Radio Scotland used to have it to perfection. I've always been a radio listener and would almost always have a radio at the games from the age of 10 until 16 when I rebelled against it and liked music, then again from the age of around 26. Tom Ferrie was dulcited-toned presenter of Sportsound in the 80s and this was in the days where you got commentary from the last five minutes at the end of the first half and then the whole of the second half. The reason for this was they felt that everyone would be in the games by now and it would be safe to transmit one without denying the clubs some fans. Yes, I know. Even to my young ears, it was obvious that Tom was a Tim. He used to alert you to a goal by saying "And I gather there's been a goal scored at Tannadice, let's hear about it from David Francey" and you could always tell by his voice whether it was for or against Celtic, ditto Rangers. What was brilliant about Tom was it was his job to fill in the 40 minutes before they went live to a game for commentary and he could do it with ease. He was the sort of guy who could relax you in one minute. David Francey wasn't. Quite frankly, David Francey made every game sound like it was the most, exciting, earth-shattering, can't believe what is unfolding before my eyes phenomenon that had ever been played out. Christmas 1985 I got a cassette recorder and used to ask my mum to tape the games on the radio, sounds mad I know but how I wish I'd kept them. Not for research purposes, Ebay motherfucker, Ebay. The other thing about the radio then that is completely different is not all the game was heard. You see the league in Scotland actually thought if punters knew the game was on the radio, they wouldn't go to the game. I'd heard this often and thought surely no one could be that stupid so I called up Richard Gordon at Radio Scotland and asked him and this is what he said: "It was purely a contractual situation. Back in the day the authorities and clubs somehow felt that full radio commentaries might stop people going to the games (that was of course back in the day of Saturday 3pm and Wednesday 7.30pm kick-offs) and so weren't prepared to sell those rights. You might remember we weren't even allowed to advertise beforehand which match we were doing, and were strictly limited to a set number of score-flashes. That only changed when the SPL was formed and they realised the value of promoting the game as much as possible"

There is something frightening and wonderful about outlook.

It's easy to look back in your life and assume everything was great when often it wasn't but we banish the bad memories and quite often don't even understand when things are bad anyway. Looking back at my childhood, it was so much immersed in supporting Celtic, that you could just check the Celtic results at that time you want to know whether I was happy or not. A lot of people think it is crazy to treat and take football so seriously and to only worry about that but let's face it, as an adult, wouldn't you love a life where all you had to worry about was football?

It was also about this time that I started wearing my first hat, something I did for vanity purposes as my hair started to fall out later in life but quickly got bored with. I have mentioned in a previous book, that when I first went to football I used to wear a hard-hat, decorated in Celtic colours, but this was more a necessity rather than a statement (Didn't want head split open by beer bottle flung from back of terracing). The hat I first wore was like a flat cap with a Celtic badge towards the front and green, white and gold colouring towards the back. With my newly acquired Pope scarf and ever present Celtic sweatbands (What, you didn't wear them?) I thought I was, and looked, the business. I also started putting badges on my scarf, patches too. I distinctly remember getting a patch that had had a guy in a Celtic strip waving a flag that had "The Popes XI" (the flag that is) on it and was emblazoned by the words "PROUD TO BE A TIM". People may look at that in horror but in football, it's

always about oneupmanship and point-scoring against your rivals.

Take my favourite TV programme of that time, "Stookie", now here is a perfect example of what I mean. Now, first of all, this was ground-breaking for STV to actually make a programme aimed at my generation that didn't patronise us. You knew you were onto something good when in the opening scenes of the first episodes a group of young guys are singing about kicking a policeman to death. YouTube it if you don't believe me. It gets better, after singing they see two perceived posh kids bird-watching and decide they have to teach them a lesson. For being posh. This isn't Play School. As they get close our hero, Francis Doyle "Stookie", decides he likes the look of the posh girl and stops the bully of the gang from hitting her and subjecting her to humiliation by headbutting said bull right across the napper. Remember this is children's TV. Stookie befriends the two posh kids, brother and sister and they decide to make a bird hide. Stookie goes off to beg, steal and borrow as much wood as possible before the bully, Big Harper, comes back to confront him, with the police breaking it up before anything could really happen. The backdrop of all this was two criminals stealing stuff from The Burrell Collection then hiding it near the proposed bird hide. This was fantastic TV. For someone my age to watch others my age on TV get into the same sort of scrapes I did was a sort of coming of age for me. The recognition that there were other people on the planet that were just like you is something we all cherish.

More important than all that though was, in the second episode, Stookie wore a Celtic top and he drank from a Celtic mug. Right there was reason enough to tear into your non-Tim mates. Of course by episode two, if ever proof were needed that the whole of Scotland were against us, after Big Harper and his gang attack Stookie with a club, the Police intervene and guess what? Celtic top wearing Stookie is the only one lifted. Even STV hates us. I'm only joking of course but they must be the only organisation in the world that had a BLUE Thistle as its logo. Where else have you ever seen a BLUE Thistle! All this TV talk is a bit ironic as in season 1985/86, between September and March, there was no Scottish football on TV. If you told anyone below the age of 30 that, not only would they probably not believe you, they'd look at you like you were born in the 19th century.

TV plays a huge part in the lives of most youngsters and I was no different. So to have no football on TV, this was happening in England as well as Scotland, was horrible. In fact it was so bad, we had to settle for The Saint and Greavise, and they highlighted it one day when they took Frank McAvennie, England's leading goalscorer at the time, round central London and asked people if they knew who he was? No one did. Nowadays my eldest can tell me about players who play in the Spanish 2nd Division and yet in 1985, no one in London had a clue what the top scorer in England looked like. If ever a story was needed to show how much football has changed, that is it. So if you didn't go to the game, your only source was the radio. Even Grandstand only told you the scores at HT and then had what was called "The Videoprinter" come on around 4.30pm as the scores started to come in and long before all games started to finish at 5pm (what's the deal with that?, why do so many games now take forever to finish?) and the programme changed to "Final Score", can't think why. Len Martin's familiar tone would guide you through all the full times. They always had Football Focus on before it, which we normally arrived in Chapelhall for, I say for, we went there for drink, it just happened that it was starting when we arrived. It was always presented at the time by Bob Wilson, ex Arsenal goalie and kid on Scotman and ex Coventry City goalie David Icke. Whatever happened to him then? For some reason Grandstand mostly covered sports no one I know was even the slightest bit interested in. They had some competition from ITV in the shape of World of Sport presented by Dickie Davies, commonly known in my house as "The cunt who paints his lobby every week". World of Sport was more working class my view. First of all it had Wrestling on it that looked as though they just grabbed two guys from the boozier and threw them in a ring. The voice of Wrestling was the inimitable Kent Walton, who always welcomed you with a "Good Afternoon Grapple fans" Brilliant and he actually came from Egypt as well. I only say that as I always thought he was a Canadian. Who lived with Kirk Stevens. However the real reason the it was better is that one week host Dickie Davies mispronounced an athlete's name and called him "Cock-Sucker", that kept us laughing all the way through primary school.

Apart from those two giants of TV...there were very few other Sports programmes on TV. Well apart from Sportscene and Scotsport in Scotland of course. Now for old school people, Sportscene was 10.15pm on a Saturday night and Scotsport was 5pm on a Sunday. Stookie would be on before Scotsport. That's how it always was. Why on earth did they change that? I couldn't tell you when Sportscene is on now and Scotsport's last rites were read the day Jim Delahunt, Juliyan Sinclair and Sarah "O" (can't have a full Fenian name presenting the fitba can we) kicked balls into a net after they re-vamped the whole show. Well that and them letting my mate Paul and his mate with the enormous head into the audience one night. I used to love these programmes. In fact, outside Celtic, I lived for them. Growing up, fitba was our lives and I never hung around with anyone who wasn't into it. Growing up in Edinburgh, there were supporters of all teams, Aberdeen were the team of choice

of the bandwagon jumpers. Hibs had a good following, Hearts, as mentioned earlier, were on the rise and Rangers still had the odd lunatic who would be seen in their jersey. In fact my next door neighbour then was one and we had banter every single day of my youth. There was the perfect balance to our relationship, he was bigger and older than me and could easily batter me but he was also petrified of my father so the banter never went further than that. Even though he was prone to the odd "Ulster Says No" badge which clearly had little effect on the peace process of later years. I've said earlier in this book that Rangers were never a threat then but it didn't stop this guy, mentioned earlier in the book as well, as always having the new Rangers top and going to a few games as well. We all always played football too and I was always much younger than everyone else but was picked for my phenomenal talent or the fact I always owned a ball. You can buy a football anywhere now and it will cost you peanuts but in those days I was the only one in my building, of 28 houses, that had a ball. So if it was late or I was kept in, often people would come from a load of my ball which would be returned last thing or a fiver would be put through the letterbox. You figure out why.

Films like Neds and Made in England make it look like growing up in the 70s and 80s was a war every day. Except it wasn't and I lived in one of the most impoverished and therefore toughest areas in the world that was nicknamed "The Aids Capital of Europe" Gordon Strachan comes from the same area but has a memory lapse about it everytime he starts on one of his rants about "kestrel drinking pit bull owners". The other players that came from there at this time were Scott Nisbett, who was just being heard of, Mark Curry who had a very brief flirtation with Hibs, Jimmy Sandison who is best known for not handling a ball with Airdrie, Lee Bailey again at Hibs and Kenny Lyall who played fitba with us at night played for Rangers and Motherwell during the day. Not at the same time like. To be fair to Strachan, he did do a lot for the area, he pumped money into local schools, organised trips to Old Trafford for local football teams and came back for regular visits. The area itself always had a bad rep but I loved it. For most of my childhood I was surrounded by friends, we played, watched and talked football all the time and your mother would actually cook all your meals for you. Things you take for granted then but would love now. As I started to get a little older I mixed with more people my own age. The O'Neils were always prevalent. Four brothers, all Jambos, all football crazy, one just crazy. I think I first met the older brother Mark around the summer of 1980. I'd just moved into Pennywell and went across for my pal Richie to play football. Mark, or Sparky as we all called him, was there and was pretty good at football then although got worse as he got older haha. It has just occurred to me that Mark is my oldest friend, simply because we have had a friendship of 31 years uninterrupted, no gap years, nothing. A lot of friends I had then I've not seen for years, decades even, so I can't say the same about them. The closest then would be another friend Allan, mentioned and has written, in this book, who I've known, again uninterrupted, for around 26 years. Why am I telling you this? Well I am Celtic obviously, Mark is Hearts and Allan is Hibs and all we ever do is argue about that when we meet. It got so bad once that we stopped doing it for years, meeting as a three not arguing, as it was scaring others around us! More often than not I'd be the one they looked to to verify their latest Anti Hibs/Hearts theory and I never would. Their favourite pastime in these nights was to compare their teams player by player and perfect the "stunned disbelief" looks on their faces when one claimed someone was better than another. Even yesterday, January 18th 2011, Mark said to me in an e-mail that at this point he was certain that Allan, or Hosey as we all call him, could not claim that one Hibs player would get in the current Hearts team. Which of course is nonsense. Hosey would never not claim that. I do love them both though, just not when I am with them.

The other O'Neils are Steven, Kris and Paul. Steven is hard to describe, headcase when he was younger, now a sort of cog in the Capitalist wheel. Heehee. Paul is the youngest and I am convinced he was born 35. As lucky in love as Denis Thatcher, he's been a really good mate of mine for years, which he should be given that I practically brought the cunt up. Then there is Kris. Now, to the public, Kris was a professional football player who played with, amongst others, Hearts so lived his dream. To those who know him though he's madder than Mad Jack McMad. Trying to explain why will probably be the hardest thing I've ever written simply because there are so many reasons. First example, I'll say "Kris, what was your score today?" and Kris will reply "Chris Finch, bloody good rep". Second example, one time he text me saying he had thought about going to Australia for a year, fancied it and what did I think? I said it was a good idea and he should go for it. By the end of the conversation he was accusing me of trying to force him to go to Australia. Or there will be the arguments, pointless, long ones that would suck the life out of Dracula. So Kris got picked up by Hearts as a teenager and went on to play some games for the first team, scored in the UEFA Cup and was being offered a four year deal when manager Jim Jeffries got sacked and replaced by Craig Levein who promptly freed Kris. He played for a few clubs afterwards, Hamilton, Clydebank, Berwick, a stint in Finland, a few in the MLS but his mind had gone from his dream and if he's honest he will tell you that he never really recovered from it. Or he will just say "Die Levein".

It was about this time I starred in my first play. I say starred, I was in the choir. I say first, I could easily say last.

What happened was at school we were doing the play Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. We got in touch with the Playhouse in Edinburgh to get tickets with for the real thing and then someone called back asking if we would like to audition for it as they didn't like the original choir. We did and we passed it. So we had three weeks to prepare for nine shows in one week. It should have been daunting but being young and daft all we could think about was "A week off school, ya beauty!" It has to be said it's no joke being in a proper play, the conductor of the show would regularly berate us at half time and at the end but the hardest part was keeping a straight face as we were on stage all the time and when certain cast members would turn their back to the audience and do anything and everything they could to make us laugh. The payment for us was a new library for the school, a school we were leaving in a couple of months and has long since been knocked down. Great. The other thing I remember was we used to take two mini buses up every day and after every show we would race home. One the Wednesday night Frank Bruno was fighting Gerrie Coetzee to see who would fight Tim Witherspoon for the Heavyweight Championship of the world. Being a huge Boxing fan I was desperate to see the fight and told our driver that we really had to fly down the road that night. This was in the days before PPV and it was on Sportsnight at 1030pm on a Wednesday. Our driver went faster than the headcase boy with the school bus on Dirty Harry, like him, endangering the lives of a lot of school kids and, when I got dropped off, I flew up the stairs, tapped the door, got in, burst into the living room in anticipation only to see Gerrie Coetzee lying spark out on the canvas with photographers holding his head up. Big Frank had knocked him out in the first round.

So, anyway, there we are in the Dunbar End, needing a win to keep the season alive, we noticed immediately that Peter "Gas Meter" Latchford was in goals. In truth was awful, the rain was pouring down on a not quite cold, nowhere near warm typical March day in Edinburgh. On 42 minutes Brian McClair put us ahead and I distinctly remember the water coming off everyone as we jumped up and down. McClair was playing in mid-field that day, something he did often and people tend to forget that, especially when you consider he was top scorer for us four seasons in a row. I'd grown up loving Danny McGrain. The reason, I think was standing in the front of The Jungle and used to see those number two shorts bombing up and down the touchline all day. Then I got given a framed Danny McGrain picture and that was it. However there is no doubt that by this time Brian McClair was the apple of my eye. Primarily because every game I went to, he seemed to score in. Signed from Motherwell in June 1983 for £75,000, he was deemed as replacement for Charlie Nicholas which didn't go down well with anyone given that Charlie had gone for 10 times that. Billy McNeill signed him but he never played under Billy as he was gone before the start of the season and Davie Hay took over. He scored on his debut but seemed to be down the pecking order, behind Jim Melrose ffs, until one day at Dens Park where he scored four goals in a 6-2 win and everyone knew now we had a player on our hands. Which made the decision to drop him for the next game, a UEFA Cup tie in Denmark, all the more baffling. Brian scored 32 goals in his first season for Celtic although we didn't win anything and the pressure was mounting, given our last trophy was in December 1982 and was only the League Cup. Season 84/85 came and in typical no nonsense McClair fashion he stated in an interview that he would like to play in England one day which saw him booed in the next game as loyalty was still something fans expected in those days. One of McClair's finest hours in a Celtic jersey came soon after, scoring a hat-trick from midfield in a 5-1 win at Tynecastle. We managed to win the Scottish Cup in 1985 but Brian started the final on the bench, another bizarre decision given that although Frank McGarvey scored the winner, he was sold that Monday. Davie Hay was a decent manager but he always gave you the impression he didn't quite get McClair and he was dropped at the start of season 1985/86 for Mark McGhee. It is no coincidence that as he came back, we started to click. His main assets were he was a natural finisher and he always seemed to find space in the box. The supporters never gave him as much adulation as they did Mo Johnston but in my eyes, he was the main man. You can't argue with 122 goals in 175 games, most from midfield.

Hibs came out fired up in the second and Steve Cowan, who was forming a formidable partnership with Gordon Durie, scored on 51 minutes. This seemed to gee us up a bit and Mark McGhee scored a brilliant goal to make it 2-1 on the hour mark. You did get the feeling that something was in the air, again, and Gordon Chisolm equalised for Hibs and it was freakily like not only the 4-4 game but the recent 2-2 league draw at Easter Road. Then, disaster. With six minutes left Hibs got a penalty that looked like Durie had gone down like Greg Louganis. Cowan scored again and we were staring down the barrel of yet another trophyless season. From kick off we punted it long, too long for Gordon Rae, who made the foul, we got the penalty, McClair(who else?) dispatched with aplomb and we'd take 3-3 and a replay. My Uncle started moving us towards the exit as Hibs moved forward and we were standing at the gap at the top of the terracing when Eddie May scored what turned out to be the winner. Our season was over, yet another barren year and we wondered what had happened to this club that had dominated the 60s and 70s. Crowds were dropping, standards were dropping and the humiliation of school every Monday was getting too much. Keith Lightbody, someone I still know and like walked past us and said "Fucking disgrace" I felt like crying and think I did. My Uncle Francey and I looked at each other in

disbelief and I saw fans, for the first time in my life, throwing their scarves on the park. I looked at mine, I'd just got it, so fuck that.

Chapter 7-When the going gets tough

Just at the point where it looked like things couldn't get any worse, they got a whole lot better. Firstly the TV companies resolved their dispute and football highlights were back on TV. The first game shown was our 4-4 draw at Ibrox. Before that and just after the cup exit was a 1-1 draw against Dundee Utd, with Murdo MacLeod equalising late on for us but by then it felt over. Davie Hay even took the unusual step of sacking his assistant manager, Frank Connor and deciding to go it alone for the rest of the season. The 4-4 game was played in torrential rain and it looked like we were ready to take out the frustrations on Rangers as we raced into a 2-0 lead. Then, Willie McStay stupidly got himself sent off and they scored through Cammy Fraser. That makes my blood curdle just typing that. Tommy Burns raced through to put us 3-1 up but then in a horror spell, we lost three goals in 11 minutes, Fleck and McCoist scored and then Cammy Fraser, Cammy Fucking Fraser, scored to put them 4-3 up. I'm not bitter it's just that in 52 games for Rangers he managed to score six goals and two of them were versus us in this game! Thankfully Murdo scored another peach and it ended 4-4, our hopes of the league evaporating easier than the rain did. Leaving Ibrox that day, there was a feeling of resignation. We knew we were better than them but yet another point dropped and another season without a league championship win.

As I was getting older and thinking about things more it did start to occur to me that Celtic were in terminal decline. We'd be losing cup finals regularly, we'd been frittering away leads worse than a heavy-handed dog walker and our defence was living up to it's nickname "The Sieve". We had the shining lights of Paul McStay and Charlie Nicholas, the grit of Roy Aitken, the poise of Tommy Burns, the class of Danny McGrain and goals of McClair and Johnston but for every Paul there was a Willie. We never seemed to spend decent money and you could tell the supporters, fiercely passionate still, were starting to get sick of things and the rumblings were getting louder. The board had little imagination and the first real seeds of doubt about them were sewn the season before when they took money of a third game rather than fight UEFA on the ridiculous punishment we got. The board played on the fans devotion to the club and to this day, in 2011, no one really knows what has happened to all the money we made in the 60s and 70s when long European runs were the norm at Celtic. It certainly didn't go on players and the stadium was fast becoming a relic. I've heard rumours of course, you only had to look at the ridiculous attendances Celtic would give out as you'd stood in The Jungle or Celtic end like a sardine to know that something was up. I had a Celtic employee tell me once that the gate receipt money from every home game was taken home in a duffel bag by a certain Chairman at 6 o'clock on a Saturday. The figure quoted was £27,000, each home game, every home game. It would be easy but not nice to name that Chairman and there would be no ramifications, and given the pain and suffering we would later go on to experience in the 90s, some would say it would just do it. I just take solace in the fact that if they didn't do it, there would have been no 90 crisis, stick with me, and therefore no Fergus and no re-birth. No Martin and no Seville. Still a Shower of Bastards right enough.

After the 4-4 game there seemed to be a tidal of expectation that Hearts were going to clinch the league any day now. The same day as the 4-4 game, Hearts had won 2-1 at Easter Road in the sort of game that Champions win. After taking the lead in the first half through Sandy, Hibs had equalised through in 64 minutes through Steve Cowan. Hearts ran right up the park, got a penalty and scored through John Robertson and won the game. The sort of game you win on the way to winning a league. This was followed up with wins against Hamilton and Rangers and the purple juggernaut was seemingly unstoppable. They beat Dundee Utd in the semi of the Scottish Cup at Hampden in front of just over 30,000 and went home happy that they had also just secured a first cup final in a decade. They probably didn't even notice that Celtic were playing that day, at Love Street of all places. They may have heard through their radios that St Mirren had equalised an early Murdo MacLeod goal but I assume they were too busy celebrating at Hampden to notice that Paul McStay had scored a tremendous later winner to win the game 2-1. My Auntie Joan certainly did not notice when I returned from Love Street that day and walked past her house she was singing "Hearts, Hearts Glorious Hearts" out her window followed by "Your team is rubbish". My friends didn't notice as the triumphantly waved their scarves and flags. My team mates at my Sunday football team didn't notice as I was greeted with "You're gonnie win fuckall" from them the next day (12 year olds FFS!) and Hearts certainly did not notice as they took they staggeringly arrogant decision to bring out a single proclaiming them already League Champions and Scottish Cup winners. They even had a sponsor on it (Marshalls, the Chunky Chicken Champions) John Colquhoun later admitted "As a Joy Division fan, I was disgusted" (Knew there was something I liked about him). The last hope had of it being de-railed

was at Tannadice where Hearts faced a Dundee Utd team still very much in the mix for the league. We felt that this was a chance here for them to get beat, lose the unbeaten record and gets some doubts in their head. Typical then that in the first half John Robertson scored the goal of his career, from a long Levein punt, Clark knocked it down and he hit it on the half volley from 25 yards right in the top corner. Clark forced one over the line in the second half from a Robertson head back before Robertson again ran through, past Billy Thompson who made the decision for him, and slotted for a fine 3-0 win. The scenes that followed this goal were scenes of a team about to win the league for the first time in decades, the emphatic win, at a big rivals ground, was enough to convince all of a Hearts persuasion that left Dundee that day that they were going to be Champions. We were at Pittodrie that day, and the first thing I noticed was that Jim Leighton, often our scourge, wasn't playing and Bryan Gunn was in goals. If truth be told, Aberdeen were at the end of an era, Strachan and McGhee had gone, Eric Black's mind was elsewhere and Alex Ferguson was going to leave at the end of the season. Still, it was Pittodrie and a point there was normally a good result in those days. Johnston scored just after half time and we held on for a good 1-0 win, a 1-0 win I am sure no Jambo would have noticed. We had two home games left, against Hibs and Dundee, both won 2-0 and 2-1 respectively (although why I don't know), and two away games left at Fir Park and Love Street. Hearts had three games left, home to Aberdeen and Clydebank and away to Dundee on the last game of the season. The Aberdeen game was historic in that it was the first ever league game shown live on TV in Scotland. So the TV companies had gone from pissing everyone off for six months to flexing their muscles and showing a full game live. The viewing figures were huge and a crowd of just under 20,000 went to Tynecastle as well. Aberdeen scored first, Sparky still claiming to this day that Willie Miller awarded the penalty and when you see the footage of it, it's hard to argue with that! I remember, when Peter Weir scored it, jumping off my couch and thinking "at last, they're going to get beat" Hearts had been awful in the game and never looked like scoring until three minutes to go when the ball bounced around the box at the Gorgie Road end and Colquhoun stabbed it into the net. I was deflated but a point dropped was a point dropped and then something else happened that made us pull out our pipes and say "HmMMM", Sandy Jardine and Wallace Mercer were both interviewed after the game and both made reference to the fact that the game being on a Sunday and live on TV had affected Hearts performance adversely. You don't need to be Sigmund Freud to interpret that as "We bottled it". There is no doubt that this lingered on to the following week where a nervy Hearts beat their bogey team Clydebank 1-0 and you could see all around that the pressure was starting to tell. We had two games left after that and the first was at Fir Park, Motherwell. The task was simple, score as many goals as we can to put pressure on Hearts for the final day. I remember the day for another reason, that day was the first funeral I ever attended. My Auntie Mary had been in a home for a while and we always went to see her on a Saturday morning before the football or on a Sunday if we took the dog, Jinky, for a walk. She was very old when she passed and I probably understood what happened. The day of the funeral was set for April 30th, same day as our re-arranged game versus Motherwell. So we all went to the funeral and I distinctly remember standing with my much younger Auntie Mary and her grabbing me tighter and tighter as the coffin was lowered into the ground. It was that same Auntie Mary whose house we went to back to, via ex Boxer Ken Buchanan's Hotel on Ferry Road, for a few drinks and to kill time before we all went to the game. The snooker was on and Joe Johnson was stunning everyone by romping to an eventual win. A 150/1 outsider, he had never won a match at the Crucible before 1986 and we were all rooting for him because his name sounded like "Mo Johnston" how times change eh? The thing about "Auntie Mary's house" is also a funny one as it used to be my Granny and Grandad's house so to My Dad, Uncle Francey and Auntie Kathleen, it was their house too. Which of course always provoked banter. My Granny and Grandad Larkin both died when I was very young and the only memory I have of my Granny is an image of her. Funnily enough I have more memories of my Grandad and one in particular sticks out. He used to sit in his chair beside the fireplace and read the paper. He'd often have a can of lager too with it. So as kid I'd creep up to him and just as I got there he'd rattle the paper and scare me off. The can of beer was also a bone of contention. he also seemed to have them at the side of his chair yet no one could ever find them. He'd then come in, sit down and the familiar sound of a ringpull would go and he'd be drinking one again. That mystery is up there with The Bermuda Triangle. So off we went to Fir Park hoping for a goal fest but what we actually got was hard fought 2-0 win, both goals by Brian McClair obviously, and with that we had given ourselves a mountain to climb.

The last day scenario was thus, Hearts needed a point to be Champions. If they lost and we won by three clear goals or more, we would be Champions. A tall order. Hearts hadn't lost a game since the 28th of September 1985, we had had the hard fought win against St Mirren four weeks before and knew they would be no pushover and although we had won the last seven games on the bounce, none of them were that convincing. Still, it was the last day of the season, the last chance to see the team in three months (This was before the days of endless pre-season friendlies and tours). There was also defiance. Being surrounded by Jambos, you felt like you had to hold your head up and keep up a front of confidence. I do distinctly remember walking home on the Friday and singing over and over again "Follow the Hearts and you will go wrong". I had a big stick with me and was

pretending to be a conductor as well if anyone's interested. Next day I was up early as usual, a plate of Frosties and the paper, only ever rolls on fried stuff on Sunday at my house, then off on the 32 bus to Clermiston to My Uncle Francey's house. My Dad, to his eternal regret, didn't go to the game, not because he wasn't confident, but because he was working at 7am the next morning and he knew whatever happened today would mean it would get messy so in probably his only moment of clarity, he said he'd stay in. To be fair it was a big job, the big white buildings near Barnton Golf Club so that was that. Maybe. We went from My Uncle's house in Clermiston Loan in his van to the Centurion pub in St Johns Road. I used to love the drive down in the builders van, and my favourite part of Edinburgh is between Clermiston and Silverknowes Golf Club. Don't know why but I always feel good when being there, perhaps now I do know why. We get to the pub and Mark Henderson is sitting on the wall outside, with his Brian McClair cut (Straight on top, permed at back) and we sit, not allowed in the pub, and chew the fat. I must have stood outside half the pubs in Scotland at one time or another. After what always seemed like an age, the bus comes, Edinburgh No1 CSC and we are off. I thought it might be fun to remember every single person I can on the bus that day and where they sit so to prove that it's not all about research, so here goes, front left, behind the driver, Francey, Archie Wright (Mark's Grandad and Legend) Mark and I on their knees, behind us Owenie McLean, Mick McCarthur, Paul McCarthur, Brian Welsh, Pim O'Neill, Audrey Cairns, Tony Lumsden (Good mate of mine), Pat Lumsden, Brian Muir (The Moon), Kev Sweeney (Great guy), Jason Allen, Rab McVicar (from my area, sound as pound), Gary Richardson (Deviant) to the right front, John Crayton (A real Tim), Dode Sproule, Charlie Ainslie (Bursts hunts for a living), My cousins Kevin and Michael Larkin, Neilly Docherty, Davie Miller (Hilarious), Vince Gill, Gary Ward, Bruce Cleland, Alex Wilkinson, Stuart Anderson, Duncan Anderson, Andy Buchan, Freddy Buchan, Herman, Sean Logue, Gordon Duff, Colin Phillip, Shuggie Elden, Ronnie Wilson (Don't think you could meet a sounder guy), John Greaves (Another man after my own heart) At the back of the bus, Mark Gunn, Grapes, and two people I can't mind. And breathe. There were plenty others like but please. Floating about amongst all of us was Mike Shields, Shieldsy, Uncle Mike, you name it. A brilliant guy whom I've written about before, never seems to change or age and the driving force of the Edinburgh No1. I must tell a Mike story, 1995, our first trophy in six years, Mik organised a party at his house or "Chalet" as he calls it. He excelled himself with food, drink and cigarettes all readily available. That's not all. He had all the songs he was going to play in order on a piece of paper and sat co-ordinating it all throughout. So the scene would be folk dancing and bevvying, having a laugh and generally brilliant time. Mike was sitting the whole night, after he gave everyone the chalet tour, DJing the night and bevvying away himself whilst doing the dance he always does which is to keep thrwoing his hands out in front of him all the time. He also had a brand new TV bought for "films". By about 2am things were in full swing, we're all up giving it laldy when Gordon Duff, Club Treasurer, collapses on to said new TV and it blows up. We all look on stunned and turn to Mike who, still dancing away, says "For goodness sake" and keeps on dancing. Everyone's had arguments with Mike, myself included, everyone knows his name and plenty have their say but having travelled all over Europe with him for the best part of 20 years between 1979 and 1999, no matter the situation, no matter the predicament, you couldn't have a better man with you.

Packed in we were off to Chapelhall, passing the odd Hearts bus that was turning right to head north and wishing them all the best. Aye, right. Pulling into Chapelhall, tapes fresh in our head, when the bus door opens it's like a starter gun has gone off with folk sprinting in to get served immediately. I had my usual two pies and can of coke but was then slipped a vodka by someone. To this day I don't know who. We sat in the corner of the pub, The Tap Shop, near the first pool table as usual and we always had a good view of the TV. The owner, Harry Madden, came over as usual and I have to say now that the pies served in there were the best I've ever tasted. My Uncle Francey then bought me a pint of Lager and said "Here, get that doon ye" and if you know one thing about Francey, you don't argue. Shieldsy came round with our "ten minute warning" and was met with the usual pleasant jibes "Aw shurrup you fur fux sake" and before long we were off. Ten minutes earlier than usual as it was Paisley and this almost started world war 3 on the bus with half saying it was too early and half saying hurry up. We got there in plenty time, yet somehow, I still managed to miss the first Celtic goal. "Somehow" should be taken as "We were in the pub next door to the Celtic end til 5 to 3". We saw all the bodies jumping up and down for the first goal, McClair who else?, and we all cheered too but before long this became "Come oan fur fux sake" at the stewards and turnstile operators. We got in and the rain was pouring down but who cared? We were playing like Brazil 70. That is not to overstate in anyway but there was not a team in the UK at least who could have lived with Celtic that day and I include the two in England going for the title on the very same day. Yes, in a situation that would have SKY salvating, Liverpool and Everton were battling it out, Liverpool at Stamford Bridge, Everton at home to Southampton, for the First Division title. If Liverpool won or drew, they were Champions, if they lost, Everton, with a game versus West Ham still to come on the Monday, could still catch them. It never looked that way for any part of the season, Man Utd had won the first 10 games in a row and Mark Hughes, remember his goal v Scotland in September 1985?, in unstoppable form. Then Martin Edwards decided to agree a deal with Barcelona for Hughes and the Man Utd train derailed

that day. Everton were the team to beat, Champions the year before, they had one of the most potent strike forces ever seen in English football in the shape of Gary Lineker and Graeme Sharp. I managed to grab a few words with Sharpy about the whole day and, great guy that he is, they were worth hearing: "On the day we went into the match against Southampton in the same way that we did any other. It was a home match and we expected to win. Of course we knew that in terms of the Championship we needed results to go our way but as any player will tell you, you are only focused on your own match. Goodison was packed on the day and we were quickly about our business, going 1, 2, 3 up with goals from Gary Lineker and myself. We then got a massive boost as the crowd roared and we believed that Chelsea had gone ahead against Liverpool, there was a mood of euphoria within the stadium and we eventually knocked in another 3 goals to finish 6-0 winners. As the second half drew on the atmosphere became subdued and we got the feeling, rightly that the earlier cheers were misguided. Liverpool had in fact won 1-0 thanks to a goal from Kenny Dalglish, they were Champions. I suppose in some respects you could compare our feelings to that of the Hearts players on the day, we had gone into the day full of hope, we were confident of winning our match and that outburst from the crowd gave us the feeling we were about to be Champions again but it wasn't to be. Of course we were down but like Hearts we also had a cup final to prepare for and like Hearts we were to finish on the losing side, again to Liverpool after extra time. We were aware of the title chase in Scotland, at that time I think there was more media coverage and as Scottish players we kept an eye out for events, mainly where the Old Firm were concerned. In some ways I don't think we were overly surprised that Celtic came out on top, that was the usual outcome, however looking back at the circumstances, it was a remarkable achievement but I'm sure the Hearts players of that season don't let a day go by wondering what might have been. In our case we came back the next season and were crowned Champions for the 2nd time in 3 years, the Hearts lads never got to experience that"

As Kenny Dalglish was settling it down south, things were still to pan out in Scotland. One thing that was certain though, Celtic were on fire. We scored a second, me now in my place on the terracing, top left as you look at it in front of the floodlight, and Paul McStay had taken a grip of the game, flicking a brilliant pass to Johnston on the run who dispatched with ease and it was 2-0. We didn't have much time to celebrate as we were to witness something quite magical. The ball came to Danny McGrain on the edge of his own box but moving away from him. Danny expertly knocked back over his own head to Murdo MacLeod and kept moving. Murdo played it back to Danny who was now in command of the situation, moving forward and leaving a bewildered St Mirren player in his wake. He slipped an nice pass to Paul McStay, overlapped him, and the Maestro, backheeled it to give himself more space, before knocking it to Roy Aitken who played in Danny who was running at full pelt now. Danny kept it moving forward to Brian McClair who instantly nutmegged the St Mirren defender to get to the edge of the box, with him also running at full pace, he was able to put in an inch perfect cross for Johnston to slot it home. Love Street went mental, there were maybe 2000 St Mirren fans there in the 17,557 crowd and so a good 15 and a half thousand were going berserk. These two goals in a minute, added to McClair's earlier one had meant that, as long we didn't concede, we had completed our half of what needed to be done. We weren't done yet though. After another brilliant move involving McGrain, MacLeod and the great Tommy Burns, Archdeacon got the ball wide, moved into the box, got tripped but stayed on his feet, knocked the ball back to MacLeod who dummied for the onrushing McStay who smashed passed Jim Stewart for 4-0. By now we were like an audience at a Sinatra gig who had found the chairman of the board in his finest form ever. What of Dens Park though? Well there had been a roar in the first half, which we assumed was a Dundee goal, but this was later dismissed by the radio listeners. Half time came, 4-0 Celtic, 0-0 Hearts.

The first half at Dens had been standard fare, Hearts had been on top and created a few chances, with a decent shout for a penalty not given by ref Bill Crombie, a Jambo from Edinburgh (Incidentally Crombie's son didn't speak to his father for two years after that) As the players went off at half time there was an eerie atmosphere starting to build at Dens Park. Manager Alex McDonald had kept the Celtic score from the players. However a fan had told goalie Henry Smith as he walked off that Celtic were winning 4-0 and Henry replied "Bollocks" before looking back and realising the fan wasn't kidding. Dundee's dressing room was similar, they needed a win and Rangers to lose to qualify for Europe and they were convinced Rangers were losing. The noise that greeted the Hearts team in the second half convinced a few of the players that all was not well and they knew they had to score to settle the nerves or at the very least, don't concede. It was the latter Hearts went for, gamb,ing on the fact that with it now confirmed Rangers were beating Motherwell at Ibrox, Dundee would have little to play for and that was a fair assumption, save for Tosh. Celtic added a 5th goal at Love Street and the kind of polite applause it was greeted with told you that our job was done, fans were listening to radios intently or scrutinising the faces of those who had them pressed to their ears, desperately seeking a sign that something positive was happening. On the Celtic bench they sat impassively, Davie Hay as calm as ever with his small cigars, Jimmy Steele, Bobby Lennox, Mark McGhee and even Peter Grant. Alan McNally hung around, not stripped, still with the Rambo shoulders. Grant was told to warm up, he's going on for Danny McGrain who had put in a man of

the match performance and Davie Hay wanted him to get acknowledged for it by the fans. Time was marching on, we were happy to play out a brilliant 5-0 win, Hearts were happy to sit on a 0-0. I don't really remember much about this part of the game but one part sticks out vividly. Amidst all the tension I turned and saw a guy standing next to me in the full Don Johnson Miami Vice rig out. He even had his sleeves rolled up in his all white suit with turquoise t shirt. He was getting soaked and increasingly pissed off as suit was shrinking.

For Jambos of a certain age, the moment is almost upon them. The young team don't know any different, but some of the guys standing on that Dens Park terracing had been watching Hearts for almost 25 years and seen no trophy in that time. One of them was Ian Proudfoot "If any Hearts fans they saw that season coming, they are lying. Quite frankly if you'd asked most they would have taken consolidation in the Premier League. Nothing about the first few games suggested anything either, we lost six at St Mirren, lost at Clydebank and got pumped at Aberdeen twice. A lot of people don't realise that the unbeaten actually started against Dundee in a 1-1 draw. People always mention Parkhead and quite right too, we got battered and won 1-0 and suddenly everything was on the up. I remember JC's two goals at Ibrox and gubbing Hibs three times out of four, plus Celtic never beat us that season either. By the time we got to February/March people were starting to say it and sing it "We're gonnie win the league" and when we won 3-0 at Tannadice, I believed it. I was going on the old Vietnam bus and we had turn people away from it each week, that's how big the crowds were getting. After we beat Clydebank we hatched plans to go to the boozier and listen to Celtic at Fir Park on the Wednesday, they were four points behind us then and any slip up meant we would be champions. I remember McClair scoring at least one and we had to put the champagne on ice but we were happy that Celtic didn't score loads there. We had a double-decker booked for Dens, 10am leaving I think and we went straight up to Dundee and set up camp in The Ambassador. I didn't sense any nerves at all although we were fair hitting the peev by then. I left the bar at 2.15pm and was anxious to get in, the queue was away down Tannadice St and by the time I got in, the game was underway. Blatant penalty turned down by Bill Crombie of all people and half time was 0-0. I spotted a boy from my work and after shouting his name for about five minutes he eventually turned round and said "Fucking Celtic are winning 4-0" and my heart almost stopped. Fucking Frank McGarvey, Tony Fitzpatrick and the rest of the Tims at St Mirren were doing their job alright. The second half felt like it last about 20 years and we were edging closer to the Championship and I was convinced we had done it. Then Dundee made a sub"

That's right, Dundee made a sub with just 16 minutes left of the season. In the commentary of the highlights that night, at the start of the game, Archie MacPherson made reference to the "seventh son of a seventh son" did he have a vision? who know but with seven minutes to go, someone was about to change the world. Dundee were pressing hard now, Connor bolted down the wing and ball broke to ray Stephen on the edge of the box who hit a brilliant shot that Henry Smith dived full length to save. The ball broke again and Hearts were safe still at the point. The sub, number 14 for Dundee, was looking a threat, his name? Albert Kidd. He teased and tantalised the Hearts defence and earned a corner with just seven minutes left. Robert Connor floated a high ball in that was missed by a cluster of players on the edge of the box and was, for the first time since the corner was taken, seen by Albert Kidd. Retaining his composure whilst knowing that this was his moment he coolly volleyed the ball high into the Hearts net.

At this point everything froze. The Hearts team, their supporters, their management and directors all stopped unable to believe what they were seeing as Albert Kidd was hoisted high by his team mates. At Love Street, there was confusion, then bedlam. We'd almost scored a sixth and St Mirren goalie Jim Stewart had the ball in his hands, juggled it a bit and was surveying who was available to kick it to when an almighty roar came. After the initial confusion "Kidd has scored YES! Why you cheering? He plays for Hearts, Walter Kidd? Naw, naw, Dundee player ALBERT Kidd" came the sheer delirium. First of all it was so late in the game that you'd all but given up hope of anything good happening at Dens and suddenly you were being told it had. We danced around the back of the mudheap terrace going crazy and starting to believe that we could be Champions. At Easter Road there was the same confusion followed by an explosion of happiness that confused Hibs player Mickey Weir so much he lost the ball and Dundee Utd ran up the park and scored. At Ibrox there was a cheer of a Kidd goal then the gradual realisation that it wasn't that Kidd. At Dens the Hearts players took centre and tried to lift themselves for one last push to get the goal that would bring them the title still. From centre, it was played back and launched forward. It was cleared back and Kidd had the ball in his own half. Skipping past first Kenny Black then Gary Mackay, he played the one-two at the edge of the box before smashing a brilliant right foot shot past Henry Smith. 2-0, game over, league lost, Celtic Champions.

At Love Street we got the news the second one had gone in and suddenly that was it, we were Champions. After seeing Celtic play as good as I'd ever seen them play, before or since, we'd pipped Hearts right at the death and

had the league. They didn't have the trophy there so the players did a lap of honour and we danced and sang like mad men. Grown men cried and as I turned round to look for the people I was with, there was Don Johnson lying on top of the mudheap, suit completely ruined, going crazy, this time at what he'd seen and heard. We stayed in the ground for an age and then danced all along the Paisley streets, seeing Billy Connolly in a phonebox as we skipped along. At Easter Road the fans on the terracing were now doing a conga, the impending doom of a Hearts league win now gone, they suddenly had cause to look back on an awful season with fondness. At Ibrox the paltry crowd shuffled out, a Celtic league win putting the cap on quite possibly the worst season in Rangers history. HeeHee.

As Albert Kidd scored the second goal and ran to the Dundee fans in delight, the Hearts fans, to put it mildly, didn't take it well. Quite a few, goaded by the Dundee fans it has to be said, staged a pitch invasion and tried to attack everything in Dundee colours including King Albert. The wee man though, again, outpacing Jambos. Pitch cleared, for now, the final whistle soon went. The realisation was dawning on everyone connected with Hearts, they'd bottled it again. Their fans came on the pitch again, some ready to fight, some just distraught. It's easy to taunt them but I'd say most football fans will know that feeling in some shape or form although few will empathise. Certainly not the ones congaing at Easter Road or dancing round Paisley. Eventually, everyone was back on our bus including Herman who had acquired one of the corner flags from Love Street. I've searched, it's not on Ebay. We had already planned to go back to Chapelhall, it was the last game of the season and who wanted to be in Edinburgh? At least that was our pre-match thought. So we bombed out of Paisley, on out Wilsons Bus driven by "Derek". I say "Derek" like that because his actual name was "Eric" but my Uncle Francey heard "Derek" so that was that. In the same way he always called me "Kid" as in "Hi Kid, how you doing?" and that was that as well. Although to most other I was still "Wee man". We bounced along the motorway giving the standard V-signs to Ibrox on our left as we passed it and before long we were bounding into The Tap Shop again with Harry Madden's booming voice "How's it gaun wee man? Champions again!" and a full pool table spread of food and the first drink on the house as well. Does it ever get any better than this? Not for me it couldn't.

I think I had four pints that night, to My Uncle's 75 nips and halves, and that was more than enough for someone about to turn 12, what do you take me for, a ned? We left happy and got back to Edinburgh around 9pm, it was still light-ish and My Uncle, fair play to him, drove me home when every bone in his body must have been saying to him to go for more drink. As I got in the house, my dog, Jinky, approached me with a Celtic scarf round his neck. My Mum was there but my Dad, as soon as the final whistles had gone, had hot-footed it over to The Gunner and was still there when I got back in, his last words upon leaving apparently were "Fuck the painting, let's get tore into these Jambo cunts" and who could blame him? Living in Edinburgh we'd had it all year and now it was payback. I went along for my mate Steven, a Jambo, and he was out. His big brother Christopher, a Hibby Bono lookalike, shouted down "Alright wee man? he's hiding, I'm going to make the wee bastard's life a misery hahahaha" and all was eerie around Pennywell Grove. So I went over to my mate Ronnie's, another Jambo, and both him and his father were in shock although to be fair they were magnanimous as well, they were Hearts through and through and I respected that from them. I went home to watch the highlights on SportsScene of Dundee-Hearts and was happy that we weren't on til tomorrow so the anticipation could build. Next morning we got all the papers, I read the lot, then tried Steven again, his father telling me he was at the golf course, so, lime green Celtic top on, I ran over there and spotted him and he tried to run away but I caught him and he was kind of raging, kind of smarting, still not able to believe what had happened? What did happen? Hearts had lost the league with seven minutes to go, sure. Hibs fans had something, at last, to shout about after years of garbage from their own team. What had been missed though was the significance to Celtic. We hadn't won a league since 1982 and had only won two trophies since then. Crowds were dropping and faith was being tested to the full. More importantly though, since winning the European Cup in 1967 especially, the fans had always held a belief that there was a special mix of greatness and fairytale about Celtic that when you really needed it, would come to the fore. That belief was on the wane and lot of fans were beginning to think the club was in permanent decline, this season about to confirm it. Then, as we all know, something happened and we won the league. If Celtic on that day at Love Street were the greatness, Albert Kidd at Dens Park was most certainly the fairytale.

Epilogue-After Hours

It is interesting to look back on how things have changed. Albert Kidd was on £110 a week when he scored those goals. £40 a point. Did he at any point think as the second goal went in that "Yes! £190 wages this week!" I always think that one of the things that gets lost in the melee of that day is just how good the second goal is. Of course he did, he will tell you that himself, you didn't play football to get rich then. Should an event like

that have occurred now, collectors would be all over it. Imagine getting Albert Kidd's strip? No chance. Albert himself told me that Dundee kitman John Leddie wouldn't have let him take the strip as a dying wish never mind just because he'd scored a couple of goals. The boots? Slung on the floor for cleaning, lost in a sea of others. Albert is not the sort of guy with regrets but I'd say he'd regret both. Ebay, Motherfucker, Ebay. The Press Conference was essentially a load of press men waiting outside the Dundee dressing room for Albert to appear and when he did the first two people he saw were the distraught John Robertson and Gary MacKay, although Gary's face remained the same obviously, Albert looked and said the only thing that sprang to mind "Sorry boys", neither answered. The Dundee dressing room was a peculiar place after the game, it was fair to see that whilst totally committed to Dundee, there were quite a few Rangers fans in the Dundee team that day and one in particular, one John "Bomber" Brown was raging. Knowing Brown as we all do now, you'd expect him to be the most distraught non Jambo there but he wasn't. That title is reserved for Dundee manager Archie Knox who, when Albert arrived in the dressing room, was sitting there totally drained and devastated, looking up only to say to Albert "Fucks sake wee man", to which Albert instantly replied "are you not happy like?" and Knox replied "Well aye but what a fucking situation you've put us in" adding that he was distraught for Hearts. As we know, quite a few Jambos tried to attack Albert Kidd that day, none really succeeding although one did land a punch. Had they not seen the wee man's pace at that second goal? They sat as long as they could in the dressing room until all Jambos had dispersed. Of course there was post-match drink, not a celebration, Dundee had failed in their objective of getting into Europe. Nowadays players would head to coolest places in the country, like moths to an open lightbulb, drinking copious amounts of Champagne and be laden with lovely ladies. However for their post-season drink, the Dundee 85/86 squad went to the Fort Bar on Fort St in Broughty Ferry. Did Albert know whilst drinking pints of Lager in there that night that 25 years on he'd be talking to folk like me about what he just did? I say no, simply because he does talk to folk like me. So what did happen because of those two goals? Well Hearts lost the cup final the following week, still distraught from Dens. We all know that, but the impact was huge, did Albert know there would be a song written, courtesy of Charlie and The Bhoys?

Albert Kidd (Charlie and The Bhoys)

T'was a Saturday in May 1986 the day that the nightmare began
We were odds on to win the League and Celtic were 6/1
Auld Reekie was buzzing and the tickets were scarce as champions elect we would be
We had a few drinks, and sang a few songs, then headed off to play Dundee.

Twelve o'clock noon and the buses arrived in a fleet of a thousand or more
We promised our friends we would bring back the League, not knowing what lay in store
As our bus made its way up Gorgie Road, our new song we sang it with pride
One o'clock came and the last bus pulled out, t'was the day our lovely team died.

The scarves and banners they crack in the wind, as we tear up the A85
We felt so excited we just had to win, it felt good just being alive
Our buses we left in Tannadice St, as we all crammed into the ground
Three o'clock came and the whistle was blown, Dens Park was a great wall of sound.

The Jam Tarts attacked and we hit the post a young lad beside us he faints
Half time came soon and the score line was blank, but Celtic put four past the Saints
Oh surely to God we'll keep Dundee out and brother just think if we did
We'd be the champions for the first time in years, but then up stepped Albert Kidd.

Kidd scored again and so did the Celts, and we held our heads in despair
No one believed that we'd lost the League, with just seven minutes to spare
Some of our players fled in dismay, and looked for a good place to hide
We stood around, helpless confused, the day our lovely team died.

A visit to Dens is so eerie today, our can sorrow can know no relief
The nightmare you caused is still with us today from Tynecastle right down to Leith
The souvenirs gathered we all left behind, our programs and tickets are gone
The air speaks a deafening silence, but the name Albert Kidd lingers on.

There were awards. From all over the world, Celtic supporters and Hibs supporters of course. There was a standing ovation at Celtic Park in 1986 and again in 2002. The 2002 one is special to the writer. It was the first time

I'd met Albert Kidd in the flesh. We'd talked on e-mail and then I'd jibbered on on the phone and so Albert was back in Scotland Dec 2002 and I managed to pull a few strings and get us in the directors box, along with a lot of the wonderful Kidd family from Dundee. I'd mentioned it to John Paul Taylor who ran the tickets at Celtic at the time and he suggested that Albert could do the Paradise Windfall Draw at half time. So there I am, 11.30am on a cold December morning, outside the ticket office, Celtic v Dundee, waiting. I was nervous, this man changed my life in so many ways and had been a hero for 16 years. Also, I hadn't actually seen him in years, had he changed? What did he look like now? Grey hair? Nae hair? I had nae idea. A guy came towards me and I thought it was him but when I said his name the guy looked at me like I was daft, shrewd assessment. I waited another couple of minutes and then looked round and there he was, hadn't changed a bit, big smile and all hugs. Tickets sorted for all, we went into one of the lounges at Celtic Park and I got word from my friend Ian McLeod, then Celtic CEO, that we had been invited into the actual boardroom at half time. Trying to act as if I was taking it all in my stride, we got a couple of pints and got to know each. Albert, or Alby to his friends is a great guy, full of stories and anecdotes but polite and respectful too. I was getting sucked into all this when Alby said "There's Bobby Lennox" and I was halfway through explaining that Bobby worked the lounges when Bobby started talking to us. "Alright guys, where you from?" I mumbled Edinburgh and Alby said "Dundee" and Bobby shook our hands. I'm in bits already. As he Bobby talked Alby cut him off and said "You don't remember me do you?" Bobby looked puzzled and desperate not to offend and said "I'm sorry, who..." and Alby said "Albert Kidd". Well, talk about an explosion of smile, Bobby lit up and shouted "Aw, Albert, how you doing wee man!!!" and gave him a big hug. They sat there reminiscing and I sat there like a wide eyed idiot, or even more of wide eyed idiot. As Bobby went to leave he said "Wait and I'll get Dixie" and before we knew it Dixie Deans was sitting between us. Dixie and Alby went way back through the Australian connection and talked non stop football to my delight. As Dixie left Alby looked at me and said "This is great, thanks" Thanks? I was in a state of beautiful delirium and he's thanking me?!?

We had a couple of more drinks and were about to go to our seats when the late great Tommy Burns and appeared and shouted "Albert, God bless ye wee man" and gave him a huge cuddle. We went up to our seats and were sitting next to Rod Stewart but it wasn't that big a deal by now given the legends I'd just met. Celtic went a goal up and it dawned on me that no one had approached us regarding the half time draw. So I went up to where we had just been and looked around, this wasn't it, it was actually the players dressing room! I turned round and saw Mike Hamilton and Hoopy The Huddle Hound in a wee room and explained the situation. It was quickly sorted although I should say that just before I went in I heard Hoopy talking about his escapades the night before and it just added to the surrealism of the whole thing. So I go back, grab Alby, and we get led down to the tunnel area. At no point has anyone said to me "Right, you hang back" or anything like that and as he was announced as "The greatest player never to play for Celtic", I could easily have walked on with him! Thankfully, I did hang back and it was amazing to stand in the tunnel and hear the noise get louder as he walked on the pitch, God knows what it must be like to be on it when we score. Alby did the presentation and all was good, he walked off the pitch to cries of "God Bless you Albert" and as he came off he shook my hand and said "Thanks Paul, that was brilliant". Understatement of the millenium. After this we went up to the boardroom and met Ian McLeod who introduced us to Brian Quinn and Peter Marr. We re-took our seats, Celtic won 2-0 and all was well in the World. After the game we got invited up to another lounge and I met Tam Donnelly in the flesh for the first time. Where do you start with Tam? A bonafide legendary supporter, you could sit all week listening to his stories and we almost did. It was soon time for the Kidd family to head back to Dundee and we all embraced and i just couldn't wait to get out of there so I could tell people. I walked towards the Gallowgate and tried to take in the day, something I've probably never achieved and the main reason why I had to write this book, to say, Thanks Alby.

I thought it would be nice, after pages of my rabbiting, to hear what others thought of that day, so here they are, first, some questions for a Jambo.

1) What changed between season 84/85 and 85/86 for Hearts?

A combination of things. First were 2 of players we added in the summer. Colquhoun hit the ground running, scoring in his first game against Celtic and gave us pace and skill down the right hand side and was basically superb for the whole year. Ian Jardine came in to the side after we'd had a pretty poor start and added a bit of balance to the midfield. Probably more importantly he replaced Andy Watson, who was terrible that season (think he started in 5 of our 6 league defeats from something like 9 starts all season. this in a year when we had a 30 match unbeaten run). the young players, Robbo, Mackay, Levein all learned from a difficult season the previous year and had a bit more steel about them, another year's experience and were all quality performers. And then there was the team spirit, which was always good anyway, but once we got on a run of games the old heads played a big part in keeping everyone's feet on the ground, particularly Sandy Jardine and Sandy Clark. And we had a few players having the best season they would ever have, Kidd, Whittaker, Black. It was a good

team for a number of years after that, but that was the peak for a lot of players. Another thing which played a part was the make-up of the fixtures that year. There was a really cold winter plus the Scotland v Australia play-off games so when we had a bit of momentum going we capitalised on it because we were able to get almost all of our games on, whereas a number of teams were idle for a good number of weeks. That got us to the top of the league and the confidence took a real boost from that.

2) Did you think this was the start of a bright new era for Hearts?

I think most fans thought we'd be back up challenging again year on year, but players are obviously more fragile. We lost a good portion of that team the following year with Levein getting a serious injury and Jardine all but retired. We definitely had a hangover from that season at the start of the following season, I mind us losing to Montrose at home in the LC. The league season in 86/87 was very patchy, Rangers had moved miles ahead of everyone by spending vast wedges of cash and we fell by the wayside a bit. We could really have won the Scottish cup that year though, getting beat off St Mirren in the semi when Robbo was suspended, and I think at that point a lot of players started to think maybe it wasn't going to happen for us in the big games. We lost a lot of semis over the next few years and it took until Jeffries came in before we got over that mental barrier. by which time of course it was an almost entirely different set of players.

3) Finally, what in your opinion were the main reasons for Hearts losing out on a historic double?

St Mirren being a bunch of feckless cnuts? To be fair, I think the virus on the last day made a huge difference, especially since Dens was a hard game at the best of times in those days. If we get the penalty in the 1st half we probably go on and win the game and obviously we sat too deep in the 2nd half to try and see it out rather than go and win it. The cup final, even the most naïve fan I think knew we'd lose that after the previous week, I suspect if we'd won at Dens we'd have won the cup as well. For all the talk of us bottling it, from when we were top of the league we drew at CP, won at Ibrox, Tannadice and Pittodrie and Celtic went on a run where they won their last 8 games to snatch it on goal difference. I don't think Celtic get the credit for it cause it was such a dramatic finale but it was a genuine 4 horse race up till about 3 weeks from the end and Celtic just stayed the course slightly better. I'll always hate Frank McGarvey though.

Mark O'Neil, Hearts, Glasgow.

Most Celtic fans old enough will remember where they were in that day in 1986 when Celtic nicked the league on the last day at Love Street.

I'm no different.

I'd like to say I was at Love Street enjoying the party, but that would be to commit a Dougie Dougie.

I was, at that time, a constituency organiser for the Scottish National Party in the "Glasgow Shettleston" and we were in pre general election mode.

That Saturday had me and my merry band of young leafleters down in Carmyle.

One lad in particular was "Celtic daft" and dutifully leafleted every door on his allotted section equipped for the day with a "tranny".

Isn't it strange how words change their meaning?

The leaflets were kept in a car at the start of Carmyle. My visual memory said that this base of operations was parked up near a posh enough looking house surrounded by trees.

When the leafleters ran out of leaflets they trudged back to the car to collect more.

The car was owned by an old style SNP'er a lovely old fella who was simultaneously amazed and somewhat perturbed to have all these young activists from "Labour households" flocking to the cause of the SNP.

I have a clear flashbulb memory of the moment it came through to leafleting HQ that Albert Kidd had scored.

My mate with the radio walked around the side of the car just as the news came through that Dundee had scored.

He whooped and leaped towards me and I reciprocated.

We collided into the side of the car breaking of the door mirror.

The oul SNP fella looked doubly upset.

Happy Fenians in his party and his car fekked!

It was a moment of unbridled joy for the leafleting gang that I had a modicum of control over for the day.

The rest of the leaflets were munched into by eager hands as everyone wanted to be finished and off home to see the telly.

This is a tale from another age when we were dependent on the old media.

We were all powerless consumers in a largely one way flow of information.

Such a vignette would be impossible today as everyone has a TV in their pocket masquerading as a phone.

In those days we had to find the news, today it finds us.

I'm now part of the media that finds people, but back in that day in 1986 I was a Celtic supporter asking my mate with the tranny what the score was.

Phil Mac Giolla Bhain is an author, journalist and writer based in the West of Ireland.

His work can be viewed at www.philmacgiollabhain.com

I was working at the Ideal Homes exhibition that week. The stand in front of us was an alarm company run by two Hibbys, and we had been getting wound up all week by this gunt. On the Friday before the game the Jambo got one of the guys laddies photo taken by the evening news with a Hearts scarf on and it was in the news. We weren't happy with the smug bastard, but what could we do?

Well come the Saturday we kept our heads down and got on with work, but a boy in the stand behind us was a Celtic fan and kept telling us that Celtic were hammering St Mirren, and then joy of all joys he danced round going "DUNDEE JUST SCORED" we were obviously total professionals and went mental, then a couple of minutes later the same again.

At full time we done the decent thing and went straight to the bar a raised a pint to Sir Albert and awaited the return of the Jambo. All to no avail I'm afraid, but I like to think that the Hibs guys wee laddie jinxed the bastards and the Jambos would not be the CHUNKY CHICKEN CHAMPIONS.

Lexo, www.hibeesebounce.com

My dad had a Grundig Majestic short wave radio & he would tune in faithfully every weekend & call me with the scores & scorers. Alas, my dad passed away in August, 1985 and my mum passed on the short wave radio to me. He had it marked in different colours where to get the best reception etc. I used that radio to the inception of the satellite feeds came on the scene. I also had a contact at Reuters (while working in telecom) who gave me a 1-800 number to a London sports desk and they would always give me the scores. If I was working on a Saturday, I would bring my short wave radio in with me to get the scores. That Saturday in May, I could not believe my ears when they were saying Celtic are the Champions of Scotland. I was doing double takes as everything had to go just right that day. Always had a wee soft spot for Dundee after that.

Always felt my dad (RIP) had something to do with the results that day

Jim McGinn, Celtic, New York

Me and my mate Allan were working at St Ninians special needs school in Gorgie Road on the Monday morning re-tiling the roof after said game. One of the kids who was a Celtic fan brought in a Irish tri-colour to school with him. We managed to 'borrow' it for the day and decided to hang it up full mast at the highest point of the roof. You could see a lot of folk who were mighty pissed off as soon as they spied the flag from where they were walking along Gorgie Rd. Feckin priceless it was.

Bomber, Hibs, Edinburgh

Ahhhhh, Love Street.....I'll bet if you are reading this, even the mention of the words "Love Street" has you grinning from ear to ear, right? Regardless if you were there or not, regardless if you were even born on May 3rd 1986 or not, regardless if you have watched the Celts win many League Titles or not, the words "Love" and "Street" used in the same sentence just seem to make you smile don't they?

Images of Tommy Burns, Brian McClair and even Mo Johnston (stop booing at the back, don't let "Le Merde" ruin that fantastic day's memory, cos loathe him or loathe him, Super Mo was, well, just that, SUPER that day) running around in those 80's style lime green shirts immediately spring to mind and give you that warming feeling that not even a big bowl of Ready-Brek on a cold winter day could equal.

Without doubt, because this is a book about that famous season, you have read or are about to read the ups and downs, the drama, the excitement and the importance of this season and the final day itself so I'll not bore you with the details of how that season saved Davie Hay's job (at least for another wee while). I'll not go on about the arrival of Souness to the South side of Glasgow and I'll certainly leave it to other more talented scribes to take you through the minute-by-minute account of the drama that was about to unfold on that rainy afternoon in Scotland.

Instead, I'll take you back to my home town of Belfast and give you a feel for what it was like to be a Celtic Supporter living the glory that day in the City built upon a swamp and baptized in fire (Copyright Mr C Moore).

Belfast in 1986 was a tough place to grow up as a Celtic Supporter, just to set the scene, here are a few reminders about what was going on in the North of Ireland at the time.

- March 3rd, Ulster Unionists had a "day of Action" against the recent Anglo-Irish agreement
- March 31st, Tom King, the Secretary of State banned an Apprentice Boys parade resulting in wide spread social disorder
- Despite this ruling, when the parade was banned from Obins Street in Portadown, about 400 Apprentice Boys attempted to parade along their "traditional route", leading to clashes with police and major rioting ensued. Meanwhile about 3,000 Loyalists, led by Ian Paisley, had assembled in protest as the focus shifted to the parade's return leg along, yip; you guessed it, the Garvaghy Road.
- This was the year of John Stalker, Geordie Seawright and the sad death of the wonderful Phil Lynott.
- In other news around the UK at this time year, Michael Heseltine and Leon Brittan resigned over the Westland Affair, unemployment was at a postwar high at 14.4% and the Wapping dispute was in full swing. Prince Andrew announced his engagement to Sarah Ferguson, John McCarthy was kidnapped in Beirut and Patrick Magee was about to stand trial for the Brighton hotel bombing.

Okay, that's the scene set. As you can now envisage it a bit more clearly, I'll re-iterate, Belfast in 1986 was a tough place to grow up as a Celtic Supporter. But during these times of adversity, the pride of being a Celtic supporter was something special for a young sixteen year old teenager like me, full of romance and revolution. It was a wee bit taboo as well. In those days, you wouldn't have dreamed of wearing your Celtic jersey in Belfast City Center for fear of attack. This was a huge target and a real one. So much so that I was never allowed to sport my hoops out in the street and was only permitted when actually going to play football at the boys club. But even in those days, pulling on the green and white give you that extra wee spurt to win at all costs.

The media coverage of Celtic in the six counties was minimal to say the least. The Belfast Telegraph was getting ready for Norn Irn's bid for World Cup glory in Mexico and English Football was the main entertainment on TV. The only way to follow Celtic was the 5 minutes highlights on Football Focus and buying the Ireland's Saturday Night and the Sunday Mail after Mass to read the reports on the previous day's exploits. The main coverage we got was Radio Scotland which was a pain to pick up as the signal for 810MW was so weak and it seemed like a good gust of wind would transform a Glaswegian accent to white noise in an instant, but we got used to it as we had no alternative. So every Saturday evening my Dad tuned in the "wireless" for himself, me and my older

brother returning from playing local amateur football (no Sunday soccer back then of course) to listen to the reports.

Anyway, back to May 3rd 1986. I remember leaving the house that day for our weekly match with my head dictating the probable outcome with a lot more common sense than my heart. Let's be honest we had no chance that day, did we? Sure, we had won the previous seven games and had at last started to hit the form that a team rich with such talent on paper should have been showing, but inconsistency in the early part of the season had cost us dearly (or so we thought). Hearts on the other hand had started to wobble, but there was no way their bottle was gonna smash against bloody Dundee on what was set up to be the Jambos most famous hour since 1960. I mean they were even due to play the cup final the following week against Aberdeen and were packed with "stars" such as Craig Levein, John Colquhoun and John Robertson. Oh and they had Henry Smith too. All they needed was a draw, surely there was no chance for Celtic?

As we drove home from the playing fields, the reception on the car radio was coming in and out. We knew that the Bhoys were four up at half time and Hearts were tied at nil-nil. The laugh in the car was that it was probably going to be a typical Celtic day as we all predicted that Hearts would lose one-nil and we would win 4-2 and we would be the bridesmaids once again. As the car passed Bellevue Zoo on the Antrim Road that was high up on the Cave Hill, we got the latest sound-bite and it was that Brian McClair had scored a fifth goal we all cheered and tooted the horn like crazy. Our predictions were hastily changed to a five-nil win for Celtic and a draw for Hearts, still close but no cigar. Sure we started to chat about "this just might happen" only to come back to earth with someone sighing and saying "nah, not the Celtic way".

As we arrived back at the house we were still none the wiser about the unfolding events until we went inside where the radio was booming all over the house. The commentators were speaking in tongues and yelling things like "unbelievable" and "incredible scenes". My Dad was in the kitchen, in his usual spot, with his usual pools coupon in front of him. As we came in through the door he was grinning like a Cheshire cat - "Dundee just scored", he exclaimed, "some boy named Kidd" as we all started jumping around I had to ask for clarification - "does Kidd not play for the Jambos?" I queried. For a split second the doubt was back as none of us had heard of a Kidd playing for Dundee. "No, it's definitely one nil to Dundee" We were happy enough with that reply and whooped and yelped again (life lesson number one there, never, ever, doubt your father). Just at that the radio erupted into another crescendo as the news that ALBERT (not Walter) Kidd had scored a second for the Dark Blues and we all jumped up and down, hugging each other all over again. Even my mother joined in on the act, probably more to get a hug from her grown up boys more than a famous Celtic victory, but, hey, that's alright too.

And then it was over. The final whistle went at Dens Park and soon after the same three peep-peeps sounded at Love Street. Ahhhh, Love Street..... Bet you are smiling again, aren't you? Me too.
Chris McGuigan www.LostBhoys.com

I remember some boy on the terracing who was listening to a tranny suddenly throwing his arms up and head back in silent triumph. I clicked what must of happened and went batshit and a second or two later the place exploded then Kano and the other hobbies in the team realised what had happened and went mental too, despite, iirc, having just conceded a goal. Up the town that night was like fucking Beirut.
EGB, www.hibeesebounce.com

I was only a nipper at the time, and I had never even been to ER to watch Hibs 'properly' (I started going the following season) but I remember the build up to the last weekend of the season. The Evening News got very excited about it all and had, I think, printed some sort of special edition which seemed to be anticipating the Jambo double. From what I remember, Hibs were constantly relegated to the inside pages of the local press at the time and Hearts and their players, results, etc were all over the back pages and even the front pages. I can vividly remember listening to the radio build up on Scottish cup semi final weekend and it was just Hearts Hearts Hearts- Radio Forth were so maroon at the time it wasn't true. I remember that I knew Hibs had lost to Aberdeen but I didn't actually hear the score until the BBC news at about 7pm! Am I wrong in remembering that the council had the Waverley Bridge painted maroon in anticipation of Hearts doing the double?
PaddyBarry, www.hibeesebounce.com

I went on the Sons of Donegal bus. Told everyone we would win the league and also gave them a tip "Dancing Brave " it won too. We saw Michael Kelly after the game and he gave our bus a clenched fist salute. We went

back to the Granite City bar, now the Brazen Head, gave my mate a sub and told him get a drink in he says "No, I'm taking her out" I end up rolling about on the floor with him demanding he stays and my brothers see this and start booting feck out of him all the while I am telling them that's my feckin mate so leave it out! I go outside with another mate with a mega cargo looking for my mate. He`s fecked off. I head to my hoose in Denistoun singing Championees through the streets so much we woke up neighbours and went into their house for more partying. Next morning we decided to take it easy so rattled the rest of the cargo and then went to McNees for a small refreshment. So all in all a pretty quiet time despite the euphoria.

Brad, Celtic, Gorbals

I think Radio Forth were having a whole day with them going up to Dundee etc. I listened to Radio One that morning when I was at work.

Hearing updates of the Celtic scores but not really believing it would make much difference. As Celtic had to win 5-0 and they had to get beat 1-0.

The roar that went up at Easter Road when Sir Albert scored the first one I think all the players actually stopped wondering what was happening.

When the second one went in just about the same time as United scored it was like we had won the league. I think it was the first time Hibs had been cheered off the park when they had got beat.

It was a great night

Wee Mo, www.hibeeshounce.com

I was 15 and Celtic mad (I still am mad but the feeling you had then with your whole world revolving round Celtic was the business). I attended virtually every game home and away and can remember the unbeaten run we were on towards the end of season 85/86 like yesterday.

Waking up that Saturday morning I believed we could win it but never really thought Hearts would lose, but you never give up hope. Celtic were my life then, before women, kids and mortgages were even dreamed of and my Mum and Dad won't be too surprised to know even they, along with my two brothers took 2nd fiddle to Celtic. I've never given up on Celtic and I certainly wasn't giving up that Saturday morning.

I arranged as usual to meet my school pals, Mark, Cass, Big Porky, Sean and JK and we boarded the Wishaw Emerald double decker bus bound for Love St. The bus wasn't even 3/4 full and the game was pay at the gate. The young team these days must think this a foreign concept but it was par for the course back then. The Celtic end wasn't even full and can remember outside the ground their wasn't much biting of nails, looks of hauntedness or general shiting of ones self. We, to a man had followed the Bhoys through thick and thin and we had hope in our hearts (although not too much).

The game kicked off and straight away we were searching for someone with a tranny radio (again another foreign concept to the young children of Sky Sports). 1, 2, 3 goals went in to muted celebration as we knew it would be in vain, unless Dundee did us a favour but at least we knew the Bhoys were going to hold up our side of the bet. Memories are funny at times but I'm pretty sure that some bellends were kidding on Dundee had scored for a wind up. Very feckin funny when everything in your life is depending on this (or so it seemed to a 15 year old kid from Wishaw who bled green, white and gold).

2nd half underway and we were:

"Piling on the agony, putting on the style,
1,2,3,4 lovely goal scoring all the while,
there's nothing in this whole wide world
makes you want to smile,
like watching Glasgow Celtic putting on the style!!!"

Sorry about that but as I was saying we had held up our end and now it was serious stuff. "Hey mister what's the score (5 times in 2 minutes)" and by the way God Bless this wee guy bent double wi a stereo at his lug as he just shrugged his shoulders again and again and again and, then it happened.....he stopped shrugging, and he started shaking, and then a section of the main stand across from us erupted, and then I started screaming, and then I didn't believe.....I had to speak to the shrugger but couldn't get near him, I was being manhandled by my m8's and I needed confirmation, but shrugger was going tonto too, it was true.....I started shitting myself!!!!

This was now seriously serious and I didn't know what to do. Then shrugger shouted Kiiiiiiiiidd and I thought Walter Kidd has equalised.....and then he shouted.....2 fuckin 0 ya fuckin dancer.

The rest is a blur and I was on the park, I was digging up bits of turf, I was crying, I was getting booed from my own fans as I wouldn't leave the park, I touched Tommy Burns (RIP Tommy, God Bless and I'll always love you and you'll always be my hero) I laughed, I danced, I nearly had 6 heart attacks, I left the ground walking up the street singing "Can you hear the Capital sing, no no". Yes folks it was at that point the best day of my life (mibee still was but don't tell anyone :-)

My lasting memory of the day that jogs my mind like no other was on the way home on the Wishaw Emerald double decker we reached the bottom of the town to see policemen up ahead. Yes folks, it was the lovely multi-cultural marching season. About 3 bands of drowned rats were marching past our bus and we milked the moment for everything and every Tri-Colour was hanging out of every window.

God Bless the Celtic

Jason Higgins, Celtic, Wishaw.

I remember on that day myself and a few other hibs lads just wanted to get out of the toon.

We all went to the Newcastle v Leicester City game. As the news from the games came through we started goin a wee bit mental and I'm sure seats started coming up.

The Newcastle fans got in on it and started wrecking the place, just brilliant.

When we finally got back we got off at Haymarket and walked along to the Caledonian Hotel where there was a large gathering of Jambos as the team were inside no doubt thinking of ways to get rid of all that memorabilia with Championies on it. Frickin fantastic.

GeoHfc, www.hibeesebounce.com

It was May 3rd, 1986. I was 21 years old and enjoying a rare Saturday off, not a common occurrence in retail. At the time I worked in Flip, a retailer of retro American clothing in Glasgow's Queen St, but on this particular weekend I was off. I had been going to see Celtic since 1971 having attended my first European match against Upjest Doza and my first Cup Final in 1972, a 6-1 victory against Hibs. I was a regular attendee for the next 12 years, home and away. From the age of 17 though I drifted a bit getting more into music and fashion, I was still going to games though, just not as often as I had in the past. At the time I also had a strong interest in Everton FC having followed them from a distance since I was 12 years old, I now had the added interest of a family relation turning out for them.

In the Summer of 85 I left Glasgow to work a summer season in Jersey in the Channel Islands, returning later in the year I found that I'd lost touch with all the guys I went to Celtic with prior to that.

So, where is this all going? Well its a build up of reasons, excuses, call them what you like for not going to Love St on that fateful day, my biggest regret as a Celtic supporter.

On the day I toyed all morning with going to the match, I had transport in the shape of an old yellow volkswagen beetle, I could get over early but then I'd just be myself and what if it all went wrong? My da came home for his standard Saturday fry up, 'you'll be going to Love St?' He asked, not sure I replied, he looked at me and said we'll do it, you know that don't you? I agreed and said I was going to bet Celtic to win the league, 5/1 what a bet.

Time wore on, it was now or never. At just before 2 I jumped in the car and headed West. I got as far as Corals in Millerston, jumped in and had a tenner double, Celtic and Everton both to win the league, 5/1 and 6/1 and jumped in the car and headed back home.

Both my teams could be Champions in a couple of hours but both needed big victories and a favour from another Club. In Celtic's case Dundee and Everton's case Chelsea.

I went to my room and put on the radio, Clyde and Radio 2. Both my teams were flying and the goals flew in, by half time victory was assured, it was just down to events elsewhere.

Liverpool went 1 up at Stamford Bridge and never sounded as though they would let it slip, so the bet was down and Everton were destined for runners up. It was all about Dundee now, I kept faith with Radio Clyde even though I knew I could get the Dundee match on Scotland I couldn't bear to listen. Celtic had the game sewn up and it was now about marking time, I paced and paced as the clock drew closer to 4.40 and then it came.

Jim White's voice went up an octave as he announced drama at Dens Park and by the magic of radio we were instantly transported to Dundee, its a goal!! Aye but who for??? A goal for Dundee, a roar went up as I ran downstairs where my ma was stood ironing, a goal, a goal for Dundee I shouted, we're gonnae do it. Oh my god, she shrieked, jesus, mary and joseph don't let it slip, how long left? Not long I shouted as I bolted back upstairs.

I tried to compose myself, praying that it would stay like that for 5 more minutes but no, we were going back to Dens, this was it, it really was do or die an equaliser and it was all over, a second and it was in the bag.

Albert Kidd has made it 2 0 for Dundee and the Hearts players and fans are shattered, the dream is over, the title is Celtic's. I bolted downstairs were me and my ma did a victory dance round the living room, I ran from the house shouting Championees and in the best traditions of domestic football celebration tied a Celtic scarf on our old dog Bess!

That was it, I toyed with the idea of going straight to Love St but I was in such a frenzy I couldn't think straight, I wanted to see my da and talk football, so I waited in for him coming home from work.

The following day the papers were full of dejected Hearts players and fans, it was in their hands and they let had it slip and they had Scotland's sympathy but not ours, the unquenchable Celtic desire had come through once again, victors in the face of adversity. It remains one of the greatest days in the Club's history and will always be my great Celtic regret.

John Paul Taylor, Celtic, Glasgow

Do do do come on and do the conga ! Best day in the east when we got beat . Get it right up yer CREWE TOLL ya shower o shite . And Sir Albert is related to ma dear auld ma x cheers ma ur a wee diamond .

Tatie, www.hibeesebounce.com

I was at university in Stirling in May 1986. We had a small Celtic community but there was also a reasonable Hearts contingent. My first memory of the week running up to the game was a 'We're going to win the league' conversation in a corridor between a few Celtic and Hearts fans. They were confident, of course, 32 games undefeated, and we had no real reason to believe that was going to change at Dens Park, but news had reached us that Bayern Munich faced a similar last week of the season as Celtic, the previous weekend. Bayern scored four goals as their rivals lost, to take the championship on goal difference. This was our reference point but wasn't a convincing argument.

I had an exam the following week but took a break from the library to listen to the game, alone, in a hall of residence. Most Celtic fans I spoke to later told me they listened to Radio Scotland during the second half, who were covering the Dundee-Hearts game live, but I stayed tuned to Radio Clyde, who were at Love St. I didn't tune into Radio Scotland as I didn't really want to hear Hearts win the league. As the Celtic goals flew in during the first half it was hard to celebrate with any sincerity. I was waiting on the inevitable.

Richard Park, a known Raith Rovers (Rangers) fan was commentating (celebrating) for Clyde at Love St. The second half was dull and uneventful; St Mirren were beaten and didn't want to lose by any more, Celtic had a goal more than they needed and were content to protect the lead.

The way I found out that Celtic were about to win the league was not by hearing the news, it was actually by a silence. Richard Park had been droning on as commentators do but then he stopped short, literally. Radio silence from the man with the microphone, it was only the background hum of the stadium that let me know Clyde were still on the air. What was going on?

After several seconds of no commentary Park came back and said, "Something's happened at Dundee". They talk about knowing where you were when you heard huge news. 25 years later I know exactly where I was when I heard those words.

Radio Clyde then switched to Dens Park, where I think it was Bob Crampsey who was bringing updates, then the news came, "Dundee have scored!"

I still couldn't celebrate, instead I dropped to the floor in complete silence. The next several minutes were spent waiting on what was going to happen. I couldn't enjoy the moment as the prospect of being given a taste of joy for it to be taken away was too much. I stayed there until Richard Park said, "There's been another goal at Dens". Clyde cut back to Bob Crampsey who brought the news of Albert Kidd's second goal.

This brought me onto my feet in celebration, but I was still on my own. I waited the remaining minutes until the full time whistles at Love St and Dens before running to the nearest phone box and calling home.

After sharing the joy with my family on the telephone the Celtic fans on campus went out to party. The campus Hearts fans found us eventually, we had to be magnanimous and assure them they would win the Scottish Cup the next week against Aberdeen. None of us believed it, of course, they were a beaten team when they walked off Dens Park and this was never going to change at Hampden.

Paul Brennan, www.celticquicknews.co.uk

Front page of Mondays Evening News had the picture of a guy with his 2 laddies, 3 of them greetin their eyes oot, Bobby Ross was the guys name, who I'd spoken to on the Sunday efty in the auld Cabin, he had telt me he wisnae that bothered because "at least we have the cup final tae look forward to. haha.

Hibbill2002, www.hibeesebounce.com

For me it was the tortuous build up for several months to that moment. It was the year we went from being rivals with Hearts to despising them. It was the season where their arrogance and swagger knew no bounds. With their jumpers tucked into their jeans and their poor man's wedge haircuts, their stupid, stupid swirly scarf inception and their horrible brand of industrial football somehow getting results, their supporters got cockier with every week and unbearable by the beginning of May as their "Cup Double" loomed. Edinburgh emptied that weekend. Easter Road was sparsely populated. I was on the East Terrace with my brother and we could pick our stanchion to lean on. There were spaces everywhere. No Hibs fan was looking forward to 4.40pm that afternoon and many had simply left town. Those of us who were there, were probably there because at the end of the day Easter Road was for 90 mins a safe haven from all things Hertz. It was the days of the transistor radio. There were those brave enough to have one strapped to their lugs and there were those, like me, not wanting to know the worst but eaves dropping to those relaying news of the possible worst - horribly attracted like a moth to a flame. The game against Utd was incidental. We were losing but thoughts were elsewhere. The thoughts of those on the park too... When the first goal was reported by BBC Radio Scotland the gadgies with the radios needed no encouragement in letting the entire stadium know. I can still remember to this day Stuart Beadie stopping playing and trotting towards the fence on the east to find out what was going on. Suddenly the non-radio cowards were huddling round the wee pocket trannies of the brave. When Sir Albert obliged with the final fatal blow that conga took over and you would have thought Hibs had just won the treble. We celebrated like daft things being daft. The players looked every bit as relieved. Suddenly, Edinburgh was quite definitely the very best place on earth to be. The icing on the cake came the following weekend when Kidd of the W kind obliged with another piece of Jambo history, Aberdeen turned them over without breaking sweat - and that "Double" seemed no more than a distant nightmare from which we were waking up. It was the worst year of being a Hibs fan in terms of putting up with THEM. They went on from this to become even more loathesome as an entity in the 91 of course...now that took some doing.

SKII, www.hibeesebounce.com

Sitting in Tranent high street waiting on the wife at the time comings out the supermarket. I'm sitting in the car wi ma son who was one and a bit at the time and sir Albert popped the first one in. I went radio rental and started battering the car horn like a demented Italian. Wife comes oot the shop wi nae messages and thinks there's something wrong wi the wee man. I tell her he's ok but the gunts are getting beat and are going to lose the league. Your a fuckin arse she says to me. Aye but a fuckin happy one was my witty reply.

Stretch, www.hibeesebounce.com

The 1985-86 season was one of mixed emotions for Hibbies, two fantastic wins against Celtic and one against the huns in the cup competitions were rendered irrelevant by two serious gubbings at the hands of Aberdeen. The season seemed to plummet into all sorts of hideous possibilities as Hearts scraped one nil win after one nil win. By the middle of April there was a seeming inevitability that these bastards (as the Hearts team, Radio

Forth, Wallace Mercer, Sandy Jardine, their supporters, the Evening News, Alex McDonald and John fucking Robertson became collectively known) were going to win the league!

Plans were hatched in Hibs households throughout Edinburgh for emigration, suicide, or facing the consequences of living your entire life being told by people who only bought a Hearts scarf for the first time that week that your team are shite. The only glimmer of hope was Celtic who were hammering everyone, we dared to believe maybe just maybe they could catch them up.

The weeks leading up to the last game of the season were hell; going to school was a new low in terms of psychological torture. People with no previous interest in football were showing up in Hearts strips. These fuckers had never seen a match in their entire lives. This meant a Hearts majority which made playground football horrific as outnumbered and overwhelmed they thrashed the few Hibbies clinging to the cause. My mother (another Jambo) was also seriously driving emotional daggers into me with not so subtle comments like "if you'd supported the Jambos you'd be happy now" and "will you chum me to see them parade the league trophy" was in serious danger of me telling her to fuck off. The alternative was to repeatedly mention the 7-0 game.

The day of Saturday May 3rd dawned my dad nipped to the shops and when he got back he mentioned that he had seen a Jambo he knew. The guy had a tenner on Hearts to win the league placed at the start of the season at big odds. He suggested that to balance the bet he should stick a tenner on Celtic again at big odds. "No chance" came the reply "why waste money?", my father's reaction was "if for no other reason I hope they get fucked just to see that greedy bastard spewing"...

Travelling to Easter road for Hibs and Dundee Utd was a bit of a relief; at least I was among my own. Utd went one up but no one cared as we were mostly listening to events elsewhere. Celtic had built up a good lead if only Dundee could score, as time went on people were saying typical Hearts they'll win the league with a 0-0 draw. With seven minutes left Mickey Weir (a staunch Hibby) had the ball and was trying to beat Maurice Malpas when Easter Road erupted. He stopped turned round to the fans and the picture on his face will forever epitomise the feelings of every Hibs fan that day, Malpas continued and dually set up United's second goal. There was a counter rumour that in fact Walter (Zico) Kidd had in fact scored, a few seconds of confusion ensued before the name of a new saviour emerged, ALBERT Kidd. Every Hibs fan was willing for the ball to stay out of the Dundee net as an equaliser would give Hearts the league, Albert Kidd then scored again and it was all over, the Jambos had lost the league.

Easter road erupted in celebration, the terracings covered in scarves as both sets of fans sang, "You'll never walk alone". Plans were hatched for a welcoming party for the Jambos at Queensferry road. On a personal level I felt as if the whole of humanity joined in the celebration of this wonderful event. I then went home to find my mum in tears, crying her heart out. To my eternal shame my reaction was to turn round and piss myself laughing. Allan Hosey, Hibs, Edinburgh.

I was 10 years old for most of 1986 as my birthday falls in December. At the time I played for an under-11 football team in East Kilbride. The mix of footballing loyalties within our team reflected a phenomenon that was unique to that early to mid-1980s era - predominantly Hun, with a few token Tims and a demographically disproportionate number of "Aberdeen" supporters who would go on to mysteriously discover a hitherto hidden love for Rangers halfway through season 1986/87.

The point of mentioning all this is that my Love Street story starts with a random memory from mid-April 1986. I think we all have a few of these tucked away in our minds, memories which are linked to fairly mundane events or exchanges that happen to stay with you 20 or 30 years later for no apparently logical reason. There was nothing joyous, terrifying, stressful or remarkable about this memory, yet I can vividly recall discussing the contents of that day's Daily Ranger back page at football training back in April 1986.

The previous evening Aberdeen had lost 1-0 to Dundee United and (the future) Sir Alex Ferguson had come out in the Daily Ranger and officially thrown in the towel; Hearts were uncatchable now he said. Jim McLean was quoted as saying it was too late for his team to mount a realistic title challenge, and Rangers had been out of the running since about the previous November, reduced to battling it out with Dundee for fifth place. Happy days.

The detail is now vague, but the crux of the article was that Davie Hay was now the only manager who hadn't officially chucked it in the 1985/86 Scottish Premier League title race. I remember the Rangers fans, joined by the Dons fans without the bus fare, gleefully ridiculing the Celtic manager for refusing to kow-tow and roll over like a good wee boy. Of course at the time I was a wee boy myself and not as wordly wise as I am now and felt meek and mildly embarrassed in the face of the Celtic manager's bold statement and the derision it attracted. Such is the lot of a shy wee Celtic fan in the company of his Rangers counterparts, their confidence and swagger

buoyed by the 'We Are the People' mentality that had been drummed into them, even at a time when their team was struggling to secure fifth place in the league. I remember thinking that maybe Davie Hay should keep his mouth shut, an attitude that would get me an Uncle Tim job with the Laptop Loyal today and one that the media has done much to promote for as long as I can remember.

Now don't get me wrong, I have no memories of encountering any bigotry or sectarian malice from these guys, but they were huns after all, and of course they were going to laugh at claims that Celtic could win the league whilst sitting 4th in the table behind two teams who's managers had already given up the ghost and a Hearts team who hadn't lost since 1983, or so it seemed to our youthful memories at the time. This did seem rather optimistic even to us token Tims.

Yet, through all the embarrassment and the fear of the seemingly inevitable failure a little flickering flame of hope within me refused to extinguish itself. In fact, although my natural pessimism urged me to deny it, the feeling would be more accurately characterised as belief. I am by nature a pessimist who is loath to latch on to hope never mind have the temerity of overt confidence; yet there was something that told me this was not over yet.

So the games passed by – Celtic beat Dundee 2-0 at Dens, then beat Motherwell 2-0 at Fir Park, chipping away at the deficit via our games in hand; but Hearts kept winning too and the goal differential was not improving in our favour.

So to Love Street, 3rd May 1986. As I said, by nature I am a pessimist. I can't help it. I can't get myself to think positively by some artificial process when my gut won't buy it; no matter how much fellow Celtic urge me to "believe!". Belief cannot be learned, it just arrives. Whenever we play the Huns I am filled with a dread that our bhoys will fail to perform on the day, or more likely, an "honest mistake" will intervene to deny us. Part of this I am sure, must be an in-built defence mechanism to deal with a disappointment that would otherwise be too crushing to endure if expectations were not tempered in advance.

Well on that overcast drizzly May afternoon I decided I would forsake the customary Radio Clyde updates with James Sandison and co, for an afternoon of asteroids, aliens and track and field courtesy of my "Aberdeen" supporting next-door neighbour's Atari. The strange thing is, despite my first self-inflicted sabbatical from Celtic on a matchday since I consciously started supporting the club in 1982, I was not nervous. That wee small flame of belief was still flickering away inside despite repeated dousings of pessimism and Hun derision. I had a feeling in my bones that something great was going to happen but tried to suppress it.

After an hour of being unable to get past the high jump at track and field, I decided that it was time to check up on the Celts. My mate Mark had peppered our afternoon of video gaming with smug references to how many goals Hearts would be winning by at that particular point in time. For an Aberdeen fan, he was taking an awfully keen interest in taking the Hearts side in this title showdown, but if I'm being generous, I'd put it down simply to a childish urge to tease a mate.

Anyway, I figured there couldn't be much time to go and if Hearts were winning I could get it over with quickly without enduring the ordeal of hope and its subsequent shattering. Mark and I entered his living room where his father was sitting in front of the TV with the 80s style Grandstand vidi-printer relaying score updates.

"Dundee just scored and Celtic are winning five nothing" his dad said with all the enthusiasm of David Murray inviting a tax inspector into his office (in those days, dads always said "nothing" when referring to a blank scoreline rather than the modern "nil"). Mark's face slipped for a few seconds in that manner where the dagger to the heart renders the pretender incapable of maintaining the façade. His attempt at a smile and a brave face succeeded only in giving the appearance that someone had just wiped his bum with toilet roll doused in vinegar and mustard. Apparently all the previous ribbing that afternoon was not merely childish banter after all. "Hearts will still equalise" he said defiantly after regaining some modicum of composure.

But it was all over. My world went into a weird dream-like state for the next few minutes. Just as I was experiencing a rush of pure joy from the initial news, there was more. No more than 30 seconds after Mark's dad had uttered the word "nothing", Forbes McFaul or some other Scottish correspondent came over the TV to relay the sensational news to Grandstand viewers that Albert Kidd had scored his second goal of the afternoon and that "surely now the Scottish Premier league title is heading for Parkhead". Or maybe Paisley, I'm not sure.

Well, for my mate and his dad that was the equivalent to some workmen opening the living room window and

backfilling two tons of manure onto the carpet. It was time to leave them to it and head next door for a party. I was still in my heightened dream state that I cannot adequately describe. My mates Estadio Nacional and Lofty would call it "magic wee guyness". I guess it could be attributed to an unfamiliar increase in pulse rate and the psychological effect of receiving news that was just too good to be true. But it was true.

I got home and sat in front of the TV absorbed in the footage of the Celtic players on their lap of honour and the Celtic faithful dancing around around Love Street pitch. My mum and dad decided to have a celebratory toddie. One or ten cans of Holsten Pils were consumed in the Bananas household that night. When Grandstand finished I grabbed my fitba and went out and kicked it around the lock ups for two hours solid. Mark didn't feel like coming out for a game but I was on such a natural high it didn't matter. I was Paul McStay, Brian McClair, Danny McGrain, Tommy Burns and Roy Aitken as I jinked in between the cars. I've ever achieved such an emotional high with alcohol or any other substance since.

I was drunk on Celtic and it tasted great.

And to top it all off, the day after I managed to qualify for the round after the high jump.

Tony Hamilton, Celtic, Glasgow.

Remember the day well, we were playing Dundee United at Easter Road and they scored to go 2-1 up almost at same time as Sir Albert scored his second at Dens and I joined in the conga on the East Terracing with quite a few others. The United supporters must have thought we were mad.

Shades03, www.hibeeshbounce.com

I was in Palm Springs with my pal Geraldine, her brother John (Celtic fan) and his pal Joe (Hamilton fan), who were on holiday from East Kilbride.

We couldn't get an answer from our calls to Scotland and there wasn't internet access at that point. In those days, the English or Scottish pubs usually posted the results in the bars. So we went off looking for the nearest pub. No results posted! Couldn't believe it. Finally spoke to someone who went in the back, made a call, came back and was more than happy to tell us the scores of all the games played that day; took his sweet time too! He started with the English leagues, eventually working his way through the Scottish leagues (lowest first). Geraldine kept saying, they lost, they lost; we were telling her to shut up. John was ready to get stuck into this guy, when he told us the Celtic result. Once the penny dropped and we realized Celtic were Champions, we couldn't stop yelling, dancing, etc.

RoseAnn Fleming, Los Angeles, Celtic.

In the run up to that day the pubs in Musselburgh were full of Yams singing championies night after night, at first it was okay, but soon it just grated on everyone (the silent majority) who wasn't a jambo. On the night in question a calm but pleasant atmosphere descended on Musselburgh and those of us who had suffered the arrogant chants of the yams quietly and with dignity enjoyed our night out.

Well that's only part of it! One of my best mates, himself a Jambo, spent the night weeping as, myself, Big G, and Ali from Atlanta (amongst others) mercilessly taunted him for the whole evening over pints of McEwans 80 shilling in the Hole in Wa' pub Fisherrow. Happy Days

O'Driscoll, www.hibeeshbounce.com

Ha ha ha. never forget the look on the St Mirren keepers face when Albert Kidd scored. Place erupted. Happy days.

Chas Duffy, Celtic, New York.

I was in the ER main stand that day, can't remember why, maybe a Hibs Kids fixture? Can remember the party kicking off across the park in the East. Can remember being hurried out of the stand at full time and everyone cramming into every pub trying to get it confirmed on telly. (Nae i-phones and tinternet) What sticks out in my mind is the cameras panning round Dens Park with scumbos (bare chested, scarves tied round their arms) sitting down greeting.

I felt joyous. Was like being saved from certain death, thinking for weeks they had it sewn up. How could we live

with it. Still can't believe to this day they blew it.

Glory Glory Sir Albert
Carluke Hibby

I was at that game too – and have similar memories of the relief/jubilation when Sir Albert did the deed. Quite surreal. We headed off to the Grassmarket to catch a pint on the way home, as was our habit in them days but instead sat in the car to listen to the scenes at Dens. As I recall it, the reporter was describing the scenes of devastated Jambos sitting on the ground “grown men weeping” as the arrogant and over-confident twats realised that they had been Kidd-ed on about being Champions. We were in tears too. Absolutely pishing ourselves laughing literally with tears running down our faces. Then we had a pint. First of many that night
Dr Shrink, www.hibeesebounce.com

I remember the last game of that season at Love Street pretty well.

At the start of the game we were 2 points behind Hearts (2 points for a win in those days), and crucially we were 4 goals worse off in goal difference. In other words to win the Title we needed Hearts to lose away to Dundee by at least one goal and if this happened we'd need to win at Love St by 3 goals.

This would give us the Title by more goals scored although the goal difference would be the same. (This would need to be checked in case more goals scored didn't count in 86. I think it would have though as i don't ever remember any talk of a play off or of the results between the teams coming into it.)

As it happened the Celts were in scintillating form in our lime green tops, keeping our end of the bargain with 4 great goals to no reply in the first half as we simply blew St Mirren away. Brian McClair added one more in the 2nd half and all ears were now on Dens Park where the score still stood at 0-0 going into the latter stages.

In those days I never missed a game and always brought a tranny with me, (a kind of telly with no pictures, for the younger reader). In those days matches were played on a Saturday afternoon at 3pm with both Celtic and Rangers matches going on at the same time.

A tranny was an essential part of my matchday experience as there was always one rocket in those days who would start a rumour that the Huns were getting beat and a roar would go round the ground, oft times falsely. Unfortunately for me and my wee tranny oft times the reception wasn't the best in the Jungle when you spent most of the game singing and it took me about 5 minutes to work out if the info was correct. For years i always craved an exclusive but never got one.

The other downer was the amount of folk who would pester the man wae the tranny with “Here mate, any score wae the animals?” Especially when i was trying to get the final results to see who had beat my coupon as i walked down Janefield St to the supporters buses which used to be parked all along the Gallowgate where the retail park now stands.

Back to Love St and still a teenager in those days i was positioned just to the right of the centre circle in the jam packed enclosure opposite the stand, where all the singing came from.

On that day it was a replica of the Jungle with bodies packed together. The crowd was larger than normal, around 16,000 if memory serves me right although it wasn't jam packed to capacity behind the goals to my left. What i read from this was that although 3 or 4 thousand more Celtic fans travelled to Paisley that day more in hope than in confidence, there was still room for more and going from memory again there was no one locked out. Then it happened.

With only a few minutes left and the match we were watching almost a side show being played out, Jim Stewart the St Mirren goalkeeper had the ball in his hands when bedlam broke out around him and he looked around as if to say “What have i done?”. In the enclosure it was insane as we bounced about split up from mates in total ecstasy. Here was i getting thrown about like a rag doll but at the same time i was trying to kkeep one finger to my ear to keep my ear piece in place to confirm Dundee had scored.

Just seconds before i listened to the commentator say it was a corner to Dundee. I never heard any more. In the ensuing seconds a rush of noise broke the silence as folk listened for word from Dundee. The atmosphere of total helplessness had changed in an instance. All of a sudden we were in pole position and Hearts would have to equalise to clinch the Title with only a few minutes remaining. I spent the next couple of minutes trying to get a signal whilst at the same time my feet were not touching the ground. 2-0 and before our celebrations had even settled from the first goal they just went on and on. This time i heard the commentator confirm the score 2-0 just seconds later and i was able to retire my tranny for the season to join in the party, now in full swing.

A few of us had taken the Supporters Bus the short journey across the Clyde that day and as the whistle neared we pushed our way to the front and ran right across the pitch towards the tunnel as the players tried their best to get off the pitch with their strips intact.

We all crowded together as thousands ran on and waited for our heroes to come back out. I remember we had a giant tricolour with us that day and we stretched it out over our heads as we danced on the pitch. Just a few months earlier i remember looking at the odds on Celtic and Liverpool to win their respective Leagues and the price for a Double was 160 to 1. If only i had a pound on it i would have had enough to get me into every Celtic game for the next season, i thought. As we headed along the road for the short trip on the bus across the Erskine Bridge we looked forward to the celebrations that had been laid on in the boozier where the bus left from. In those days our CSC laid on a feast after every big game win, lose or draw.

It turned out to be one of the greatest days the pub has seen as we toasted the new Celtic hero long into the night. Albert Kidd we salute you.

Brendan Sweeney, Celtic, Clydebank

Don't know why I wasn't at ER but I wasn't. Anyway, I was sitting in Le Jardine in thistle street with a few mates who were all gunts. I went to the loo at half time,you had to go down the back stairs into the toilet used by Hendersons Salad Table and the chefs had a radio on so I stopped to listen to the half times. When I went back upstairs I told the hearts lads the news. Celtic were drawing 0-0 and Hearts were 4-0 up. Ooops silly me but they seemed very very pleased for a while and began getting tanked up to celebrate properly. I decided that discretion was the better part of valour, made my excuses and left before the full extent of my 'mistake' became clear. Of course they were still in with a shout at half time but my little joke worked so much better at the full time whistle.

Dub, www.hibeesebounce.com

When the Sydney CSC started in 1981 videos were still in their infancy,but we got EVERY and I mean EVERY full episodes of Scotsport,Sportscene,Saint And Greavsie,Football Focus from Saturdays Grandstand sent over on Video.Like I say videos were in their infancy so the CSC used to get quite packed to watch a few weeks old highlights [no live games back then were being broadcast back home apart from the Cup Finals] all on a 28 inch TV ,that was the biggest size you could get back then.

It wasn't uncommon to get a few hundred in on a Monday night[meetings were held fortnightly on Mondays to watch the highlights of a 3 weeks or so old game against the Huns. What we did for Cup Finals as back then both the English and Scottish Cup Finals were played on the same day it was the English one that got shown live over here. So what we did was ring back home to Scotland and get someone to put the telephone in front of the radio and we set it up to the sound system here to listen to.Now back then it was over \$2 per minute to do this,unlike today where it costs cents to call home from Australia using a landline phone. Imagine that on a day like Love St 86.

Brian McAvoy, Celtic, Sydney

Dunno if my driving my maroon datsun cherry through Dalry/Gorgie/ Slateford asking weeping Jambos what the score was is the kind of thing you are after?

1875, www.hibeesebounce.com

Wish I could remember the whole day.

Drinking in Glasgow city centre. Hearing Kidd had scored thinking it was the Hearts player. Celtic playing out their skin. Arriving at Central Station and buying the Evening Times with the words CHAMPIONS! across the front and the noise of the Celtic support. Holding the paper up and leaving the front page full out in whatever pubs we ended up in. From there on is very, very hazy.

Next day, headed from Drumchapel to Clydebank to continue all day drinking, Glasgow pubs closed at 2:00. Loads of Celts out, remember spilling Guinness over the pool table, falling out the double doors and lying on the ground saying 'Who won the league' with a massive smile on my face. Mrs Mac who ran the Boulevard at the door with most of the pub all killing themselves laughing. Actually had to be helped home, fell face first into the house and my mother telling me to get up as she thought I was kidding on. Kept repeating 'Who won the league'

Average Joe Miller, Celtic, Glasgow.

Eamonn Bannon walking away shaking his head in disbelief after asking somebody on the terracing at ER what

was happening. The best one was later on 3 of them walked into The Abercorn ordered a drink and left after a sip. We didn't say a word to them but I think they knew what was coming and decided they'd suffered enough for one day.

Westside Green, www.hibeeshbounce.com

That was the day of the Chernobyl Cloud over Scotland, and the rain was kind of warm. The football of course was great, and in those days you could stand at the game. The away end at Love Street was a big mound of earth at its backside, so you always had to scramble up that before taking your place in the crammed away section. We, however, I think outnumbered the home support that day because I remember after the game the buses in the centre of Paisley down Gilmour Street absolutely heaving with Tims. The Graham's buses (a pale orange in colour) were still on the go then, and on one of the double deckers, which was absolutely full, the supporters on the top deck had opened the emergency window at the back, and were hanging flags out of the window.

You could hear the singing all the way down the street "We've won the league again! Fly the flag!"
Marcello Stefani, Celtic, Barga.

Driving to the Barnton Roundabout after the Hibs v Dundee Utd game and just watching bus after bus come slowly through the wee double mini roundabout that was there at that time.

Never said a word just stood their deadpan scrutinising the glum sparryheids faces as they sped past and then went into the wee bar down the side of the Barnton Hotel and drank the night away also taking any opportunity to ask 'What wiz the score mate' to anyone who ventured in and happened to look a wee bit downcast. Surprised we never got pannelled cos I would have. I also remember old Maurice BackPass of Dundee Utd, (Mr Dour himself) giggling as he received the ball back from a thrown in as the 'Old East' went kin mental. Another long forgotten footballing fact from that day is Dundee were a very good side and either qualified or very nearly qualified for Europe with that result..... not that it matters one jot but it gives me an opportunity to sound knowledgeable.

Slov Sam, www.hibeeshbounce.com

It was bright as I left Leroy's Bar to go to the game with 2 mates John Nash and Wullie Valenti. As we passed the betting shop the black clouds gathered and I noticed the supporters bus leaving in the distance. That's that then. Game over. Then my brother Peter was passing by driving his van that he used to deliver butcher meat. Game back on.

We got into Love Street as the teams come out. Come on Celtic and come on Dundee. Rain was coming down. Not heavy but enough to get a soaking. Archdeacon corner up goes McClair. 1-0. Great. The crowd are in full song. Well the Celtic supporters are. Then it's 2-0. A goal scored by a man formerly known as Mo. Now known as Judas. Then one of the best goals I've ever seen. McGrain, McStay, McGrain, McClair through to the man formerly known as Mo now called Judas. Could this be our day. Hopes are lifted when we hear a roar. Is it a goal for Dundee. We start to celebrate then the word comes through it's still 0-0 at Dens. Albert Kidd canny be playing then Archdeacon gets the ball runs down the left wing cuts inside rolls into the path of Paul McStay. Top corner 4-0. Yeesss. We're gonnae win the league.

Half time. Good day so far. Wullie has a wee half bottle of Bells and promptly opens it. AAAGGGGHHHH. Nectar. Second half begins and Celtic control the game as they did the first half. No word from Dens. 1 Goal from Dundee and we are Champions. MacLeod shoots, McClair sticks his knee out. 5-0. Come on Dundee. Jim Stewart has the ball in his hands. The Celtic supporters are going mental. It must be a goal for Dundee. It is a goal for Dundee. Albert Kidd. Minutes later it's 2-0 for Dundee and the League is ours. We sing, we dance, we are soaked but who cares. As we travel home in the van we need a drink to wet the League trophy. Licenced grocer in Paisley. Massive carry out.

And the rest is a blur.

Joe Clark, Celtic, Chapelhall

The scenes on the Hibs pitch with our players and off the pitch with just over 3000 Hibbys will never leave me. Quite surreal really. I don't think 3000 at a rave they days on E had the party and love-in we enjoyed. Thanks. Feck the cunts.

Smurf, www.hibeeshbounce.com

I was only six months old and it still hurts.
Paul O'Neil, Hearts, Edinburgh.

Won a wee bet on the correct score against them that day, fuck them.
Exjarl, www.hibeeshbounce.com

A wee story I've always liked, as told to me by a yam at dens that day; They were all walking down the street to the buses, in total silence. Then one 'lookonthebrightside' chaps pipes up to his mate; 'still, there's always the cup final'; apparently the mate looked at him for a second and then just ko'd the boy there and then.
EGB, www.hibeeshbounce.com

I wasn't in the squad. It was the last game of the season so I thought I'd chance it and remind the manager Archie Knox that I had a pretty decent record throughout my career against Hearts. I did so on the Friday around 11 o'clock in the morning. Archie said he'd think about it and phone me on the Saturday morning. The call came and I was on the bench. Let's be clear here, my aim was to get Dundee into Europe. Of course, if Celtic benefited from that, I wasn't going to be unhappy.

We lived in the shadow of a good Dundee Utd team so it was vital for us. Narey, Malpas, Hegarty, Sturrock, Gough, the list goes on. They were a good side and we were an ok side who always finished on the outside of Europe. Derbies were good and I had a great rapport with Dundee Utd players as I lived in Monifieth at the time and most of the players in Dundee then did as well.

The aftermath was incredible. I walked into the impromptu press conference and saw John Robertson and Gary MacKay, both in tears. My life changed that day. If I had a pound for every time it had been mentioned to me since, well, I'd be comfortable.

I moved to Australia soon afterwards but it never left me. I once spoke to Billy Connolly who treated me well but as a fan, then we realised who I am, he went crazy and started hugging me, that was nice. The Monday after the game I got call to play in a Pro-Am at Cathkin Braes with Kenny Dalglish. On arrival Roy Aitken and Danny McGrain were all over me, whereas at the function after, Andy Cameron absolutely slaughtered me. That's how it's been ever since. First game of the next season was at Celtic Park and I got a standing ovation, something that was repeated in 2002 thanks to the writer of this. Over the course of that summer I got letters from fans with money in saying "Get yourself a pint wee man". I got voted the Hibs player of the year in 1986 by their Sydney branch and went along to collect the award to a brilliant ovation. I meet fans all over Australia all the time and I'm either loved or loathed. After I left the game, I had a couple of opportunities to get back in, notably when Cowboy McCormack was manager at Morton, he wanted me as his Assistant. I've coached in Australia for years and with the business acumen I have now, yeah I think I could coach in Scotland no problem but life is good now and I wouldn't change it for anything. Football has changed so much since my day. In the 80s there were lots of good teams and Dundee could beat Celtic or Rangers on any given day.

As for that day? I'd be lying if I said I didn't feel a little sorry for Hearts but again, I wouldn't change what happened for anything.

Albert Kidd, God.

SCOTLAND SEASON 1985/86

Aberdeen are red hot favourites to win the league for a third consecutive year.

Dundee Utd are predicted to push them all the way.

Celtic are written off as being in a period of transition.

Rangers are hopeless, no one else has a chance and

Scotland are going to blow

going to the World Cup in Mexico, right?

SHOCK FOR CELTS

HEARTS 1
CELTIC 1

By ALAN DAVOSCH

WHAT a sensational end to the Hearts-Celtic season at Tynecastle. The Tynecastle sun dramatically illuminated the last minute when McFLY took advantage of a momentary lapse in the defence to send a life shot into the net off a pass from LEVIN.

DEVALUATING

However, Hearts almost produced a sensational season in the end...

...and Robertson was in close work with a sliding header.

After seven minutes Pro... took a long drive-in... the right handside... and Levin, headed to ground... headed over 100... minutes for a corner.

Then, minutes later, Cel... the corner began to... the... took a long drive-in... the right handside... and Levin, headed to ground... headed over 100... minutes for a corner.

...back to clear just as... Colquhoun was about to... about from an... and from 10 yards... about mid-air high.

...After 90 minutes Celtic... and together a dramatic... and only when the... minutes work by Mackay... assigned Coast as he... in the goal.



Completely wrong. Well almost, Rangers were hopeless.

A pulsating season of highs and lows is re-lived here as an incredible season unfolds and with a TV strike for most of it, only the people watching the games and playing in them can know what really happened.

A new force emerges, one passes on and a new King is born....