



— VERSUS —
GLASGOW CELTIC

THE FAIRYDEAN CHALLENGE
4th September, 1989 — 7.30 p.m. Kick-off

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FOR THE FORTHCOMING SEASON



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

by MATT HALL



We welcome Glasgow Celtic to Netherdale tonight for what we are all sure will be an excellent match. This is another big night in the annals of Gala Fairydean, and everyone at the club was delighted when Celtic accepted our invitation to travel down from Glasgow and play our lads in this challenge match for the Gala Fairydean Challenge Cup.

Celtic's record in Scottish and International football is renowned. First British winners of the European Cup. Their captain that night was Billy McNeill, now the club manager. They have had tremendous success down the years on the Scottish scene and beyond, and we are pleased that they have found the time to come down and play at Netherdale.

Gala Fairydean's commitment to football is 100 per cent. We believe we are one of the best equipped non-league sides in Scotland. Our ambition remains to gain admission to the Scottish League.

There is an increasing interest in football in the Borders, for so long the heart of Scottish rugby country. We believe that there would be great interest in senior football in the central Borders, and that the club is ready for that challenge should the opportunity arise in the future.

Over the past few weeks the club has undergone a number of changes off the field. We have just clinched a new brewery

deal with Bellhaven Ales and we have installed satellite television so that our supporters and club members can watch top European games "live" on the screen.

The club's decision to instal floodlights was a major step forward in our ambitious planning. Celtic's visit tonight will be followed by visits from Falkirk and Meadowbank Thistle. It is also hoped that Stenhousemuir and Stirling Albion will visit the club this season.

The management committee hope to have one game per month under the lights, and other East of Scotland League Clubs have expressed a willingness to play us on Friday evenings instead of on the Saturdays.

Our club has a long tradition in Scottish football. We pride ourselves on success on the field and professionalism off it. My committee works very hard to make the club successful and promote the game in the Borders. We are all committed to a future in the Scottish League.

Tonight is another big night for the club. Earlier in the year we welcomed Rangers to Netherdale. Tonight the other half of the "Old Firm" come to Netherdale. We are delighted that Billy McNeill has seen fit to send down his strongest squad. Only those men on international duty will be missing.

I hope that everyone will have a splendid evening and I am sure they will all see a fine game.

Matt Hall

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A BRIEF LOOK BACK . . .

Gala Fairydean has had a long and illustrious career in Border football since the club was first formed as Gala United in an amalgamation between Gala Renton and Gala Hailes Villa way back in 1907.

After a struggling start in the early days, the 'Dean achieved nationwide recognition on February 7, 1929, when they drew giants Aberdeen in the second round of the Scottish Cup competition.

Originally, the match was to be played on windswept Mossilee, but the club decided to forfeit ground advantage in favour of gate receipts and it went ahead at Pittodrie.

To this day the 17,000 crowd which turned out to watch the two clubs play is the biggest the Fairydean have ever

performed in front of. The Border side were never overawed, even after losing goalkeeper Nichol after five minutes because of injury. They held the Dons to 0-0 at half-time and ended the match beaten, but unbowed, 2-0 down.

Titles were conspicuous by their absence in the 50s, but the 1960s saw Gala Fairydean emerge as the major force in East of Scotland League Football. Things really started to click with the arrival of Alfie Conn, sen., at Gala.

Alfie was something of a legend after his years as a member of Hearts "Terrible Trio" in the 1950s and he certainly helped bring success to the 'Dean for the few, all too short, years he spent with the club.



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