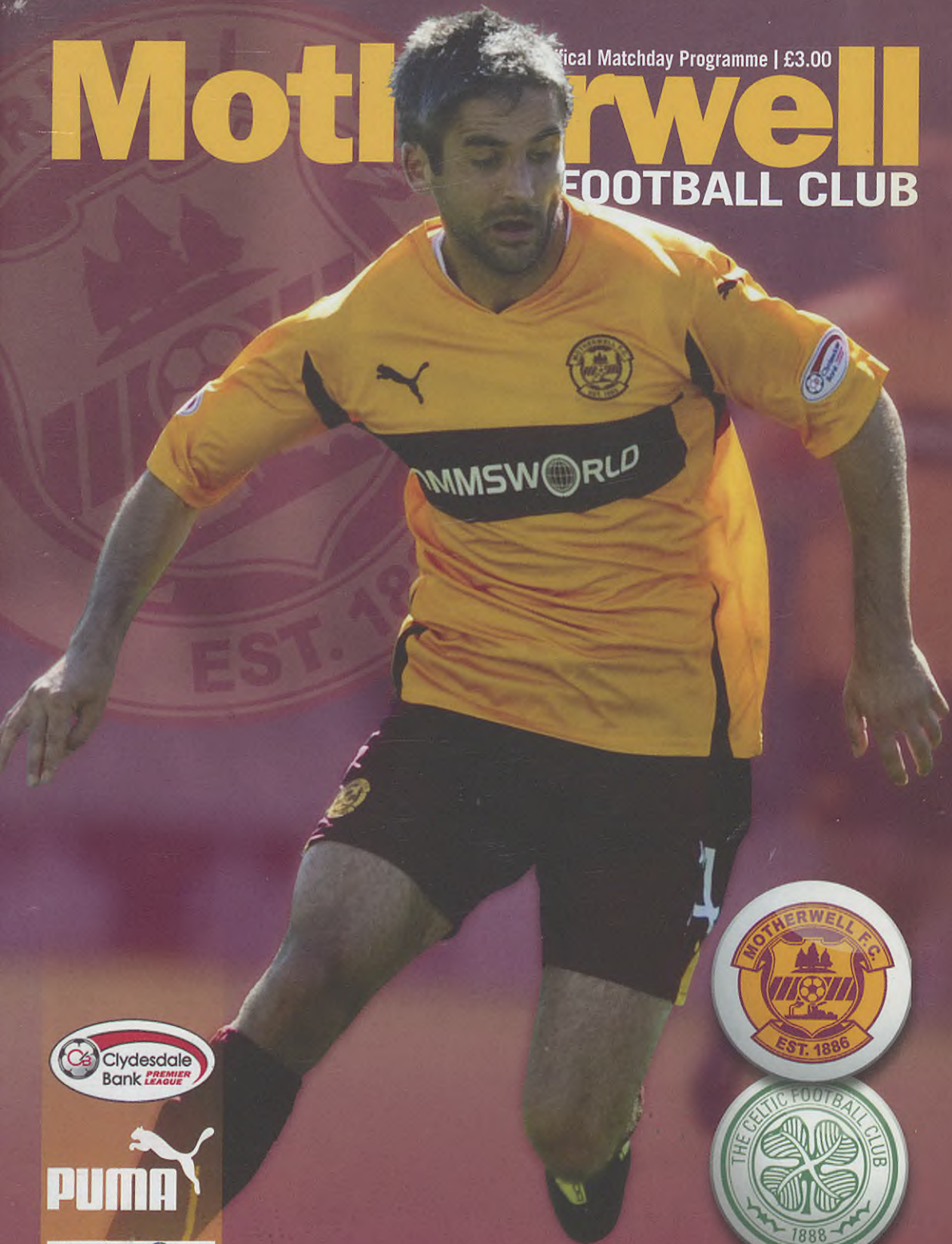


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WE ASK YOU FOR THE SAME ENCOURAGEMENT THAT WE HAVE ENJOYED ALL SEASON AND I AM SURE OUR LADS WILL RESPOND



A word with the gaffer

In association with
Specsavers

Craig Brown shares his pre-match thoughts

It's difficult to be up-to-date with publishing deadlines so I have no confirmation of the Europa League results from Thursday night at the time of writing!

I dearly hope Celtic have gone to Utrecht and repeated their fine home performance from ten days ago and it would be wonderful if we have managed to overcome Odense in our home match.

The bread and butter, for both Celtic and ourselves, is, of course, the SPL. So we return to domestic duty, hopefully with great enthusiasm and considerable satisfaction.

One of our ardent, and loyal, celebrity fans Tam Cowan, said to me on the phone last week, "Aye, Motherwell using the rotation system!" This was because we left out four regular players in last Sunday's game at Kilmarnock because of our desire to ensure that they were fully fit for the game on Thursday and, hopefully, today. We left Keith Lasley on the bench because, with Steve Jennings suspended for the return leg in midweek, it was important that none of our other midfield players, particularly one of the quality of Keith, sustained an injury.

John Sutton was suffering from a virus and Jamie Murphy had already played seven competitive matches as well as Under 21 International for Scotland, so they too were left out. Hopefully, after this Thursday, there will no need to use the "Rotation system". Unlike our visitors, we have a fairly tight squad and therefore everyone is required and likely to be involved.

I have watched Celtic's start to the season and have been very impressed. Neil Lennon has made some astute signings and, in common with everyone else in the league, feel that the Championship will be between the powerful Old Firm sides. Ahead of the game, or at least, at the time of writing, we have no injury worries and I want to once again reiterate my thanks

to John Porteous for his superb injury-prevention exercises and, of course, Archie Knox for his superb training sessions. We have a commitment, recently, of six games in 23 days and our lads are coming through it extremely well. That does not happen by accident so I am pleased to once again acknowledge the contribution of the backroom staff here at Motherwell.

I commented in Thursday's programme notes about the terrific support we received in Denmark and I am sure, without being in a position to report it, as I write these notes before our game with Odense takes place, we will have had the usual great encouragement from our fans in the return leg.

I am sure that a game against Celtic will bring out the best, both in our players and supporters. We ask you for the same encouragement that we've had enjoyed all season and I am sure our lads will respond.

On another note, we have two outstanding young players in the Scotland U21 squad and I am delighted Billy Stark has selected both Jamie Murphy and Steven Saunders for their double header. Obviously, I will not be travelling to Belarus, having been there with the national team in the past, but I will be pleased to make the journey to Pittodrie to support our lads next week.

Also, to Stephen Craigan, who has been included in the Northern Ireland team once again and could win his 50th cap. What a marvellous achievement that would be and I am sure you would all like to join me in wishing our Internationalists every success!

Enjoy the game

Craig Brown



From the Dressing Room

John Sutton looks ahead to the big match with Celtic

It's good to be back in league action today after missing the win at Kilmarnock last Sunday. I started to feel awful on Saturday night and was forced to sit it out at Rugby Park the next day.

But the boys were terrific and it gives us a springboard to go into today's game with Celtic.

Both strikers combined to get the winning goal and that's a good thing for us all. I think it's fair to say all players thrive on competition and it's good to have more bodies fighting for places.

We've now got a bit of depth in the striking department and hopefully we'll be covered if there are ever any injuries or suspensions.

It's not going to be an easy game, but back to back wins in the league would certainly put us on a good footing for another assault on the top six this term.

But you never know; it may actually be a decent time to play Celtic. By the looks of things, they are only going to get stronger so it may be to our advantage to play them whilst they have so many new players. They've also had a tough visit to Holland on Thursday night so if there's any tiredness

in their ranks, hopefully we can capitalise this afternoon.

At the same time, it could work against us too. New players always give a team a boost and we obviously have to guard against that. But the boys are confident; on our day we can beat anyone.

And despite the number of games we've had so far, the boys are still feeling quite fresh. These are the games you want to be playing in though. After today's match there is a short break and we'll all use that to recharge the batteries a wee bit and nurse any aches and bruises.

But before that, we've got a big job here today. I am hoping to get amongst the goals - I've been quite pleased with how things have gone here at Motherwell in the last two years and I want to build on that. Although I don't base everything on the amount of goals I personally score, more on our final league position, I still want to get as many as I can.

I've actually quite enjoyed the different roles I've had this season; slightly deeper or out on the left. I don't mind, as long as I am in the starting eleven, I'll play anywhere and do my very best for the team.

Enjoy the game
John Sutton

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Motherwell FC takes steps for stress

Motherwell FC and the Scottish Government Steps for Stress Campaign

Motherwell FC are launching a season long initiative to encourage all of us to take simple steps to tackle our everyday stress to help us to avoid developing more serious problems, as part of the Scottish Government Steps for Stress Campaign – stepsforstress.org.

Craig Brown, Manager of Motherwell FC said, "We know that stress can affect everyone from time to time but for others it can happen more frequently, last for long periods and impact on our everyday lives. Motherwell FC has played 8 games already this season.

Taking steps to manage the demands and get the balance right between football and relaxation has enhanced our performances. However, we are not alone. We all have busy lives today, juggling work, family commitments, and dealing with the added pressure of the current economic down turn. For me the message is clear. We know that stress feeds off stress if we ignore it. If the causes and symptoms of stress are allowed to snowball, they can risk leading to other problems like unhealthy eating, drinking too much or heavy smoking.

The Steps for Stress campaign sends an important message to all football fans and communities across Scotland. Let's recognise the signs of everyday stress, feel comfortable talking about it and use the advice, information and supports available to take action and help us to stop it in its tracks – such as being more active, talking to someone or helping other people. Stress Less, Enjoy Life – Take StepsforStress.org."

Leanne Dempster, Chief Executive of Motherwell FC, said "As part of our commitment to the Lanarkshire community, Motherwell FC signed the 'see me' pledge in May this year and committed to work with NHS Lanarkshire,



North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Councils and the Lanarkshire Recovery Network to use our profile and links to the Lanarkshire community and footballing world to increase understanding of mental health.

"Throughout the season we will promote Steps for Stress in our stadium, programme, back of home and away football shirts and our interview boards." Kevin O'Neill, Chair of the Lanarkshire Mental Health Improvement Partnership Group, said "We know from national surveys that around 18% of the Lanarkshire community will have experienced stress or depression in the last two weeks.

That's around 75,000 people in Lanarkshire. The Steps for Stress campaign highlights that there are simple steps we can take to reduce our stress and the earlier we do this the better. By reducing our stress we enjoy life more. Actions such as exercise, learning new things, enjoying hobbies, spending time with others and relaxing can all help.

"Facing up to our stresses and using the support that is available also helps, whether it is debt, unemployment or

relationship difficulties. We know that it can be difficult to get started and that is why the Steps for Stress campaign and supportive materials have been developed.

"Your local library also has a healthy reading section with lots of supportive leaflets, books, DVD's and CD's and they can also tell you what is available within your community. The stepsforstress.org website helps you do an on-line assessment of your stress and takes you step by step through the options that may help. In Lanarkshire, the element website www.lanarkshirementalhealth.org.uk provides lots of useful local information."

Richard Nicol, CEO of Commsword, added, "Commsword have ambitious growth plans and are certain that the extensive media coverage that the SPL enjoys will substantially increase awareness of the brand."

Motherwell manager Craig Brown commented, "We're delighted that the club have secured such a lucrative deal with a well-known, established organisation. Even through the priority for Archie Knox and I is very much football matters, we understand and acknowledge the importance of a strong brand on the front of our kits."