

Oh, Hampden in the Sun . . .

Peter Burns
and Pat Woods



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For Edmund Burns (father)
and Tommy Tomasso (uncle)

For James and Jane Woods (parents)
and Pat Woods (uncle)

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P.B. and P.W.

Preface

'7-1'. Even 40 years on, an air of incredulity still surrounds any reminiscing about one of the most remarkable scorelines in the history of football, all the more so for it being the result of a match in a major cup final between two of the deadliest rivals the game has ever known. The authors, therefore, believe it essential not only that the story of this singular event be told as fully as possible, with due regard for both the footballing and the social contexts of its occurrence, but that the telling of it also bear witness as frankly as possible to the living memories of this cherished piece of Celtic folklore which have been generously contributed to this book by Celtic supporters. It is thus inevitable – if such an account is to reflect honestly those supporters' perception of a rivalry which has always generated strong (some might say elemental) passions – that terms such as 'Huns' and 'Tims' crop up in the text when those supporters give their recollections of what it meant to follow Celtic in the 1950s.

Although the origins of these expressions are still obscure, it would be absurd to deny that they have been common currency among the broad mass of Celtic supporters for several decades when 'characterising' their bitter rivals (Rangers FC, their players and their supporters) and their own favourites and fellow supporters respectively. To exclude such an authentic voice would diminish a presentation in which the authors have striven to incorporate a wealth of fresh material (not least, the

viewpoints of Celtic players who took part in a unique occasion).

By way of explanation, it should be pointed out that the term 'Huns' has obvious parallels with - and one common theory points to its derivation from - the demonisation of the enemy ('The Hun') in British press coverage of World War I; while 'Tims' (an abbreviation of 'Timalloys' or 'Tim Malloys') apparently derives from the name of a Catholic gang operating in the Calton district of Glasgow - close to Celtic Park - in the earlier part of this century. (The identity of 'Tim Malloy' himself - if indeed he existed - has proved elusive. An alternative theory suggests that the name was a generic one used to refer to Irish immigrants to Glasgow.) One plausible explanation has it that the gang's name was adopted as a nickname for Celtic supporters and, by extension, the team itself, on account of its rhyming with a pre-existing nickname for the club and the team, 'The Bhoys'. Interestingly, Charlie Tully, one of the most famous Celtic players of the 1950s, uses the term 'Timalloys' when talking about an Old Firm clash in his autobiography, *Passed to You* (1958).

The authors have made some slight editorial changes to the original written or oral contributions from fans which make up a good portion of the book, mainly for reasons of style or to correct identifiable errors in their recollections (the memory does indeed play tricks from time to time).

Finally, the authors found three books useful with regard to certain aspects of Celtic's history in the 1940s and 1950s: *Glasgow Celtic 1945-70*, by Tom Campbell (Tom Campbell, 1970); *Celtic: A Complete Record 1888-1992*, by Paul Lunney (Breedon Books, 1992); and *An Alphabet of the Celts*, by Eugene MacBride and Martin O'Connor, with George Sheridan (ACL and Polar Publishing, 1994).

P.B. and P.W.

CHAPTER 1

October Revolution

*Oh, Hampden in the sun
Celtic 7, Rangers 1;
That was the score when it came time-up,
The Timalloys had won the cup. [1](#)*

PROLOGUE

A former Celtic goalkeeper recounts the following memory:

I live in a village near Glasgow, and there was once a worthy of the village called Paddy L. who was a fanatical Celtic supporter, and a man who was also blessed with appearances from the Lord from time to time. I remember Paddy telling four or five of us of his experience one particular night:

‘I was asleep, when all of a sudden I was awakened by a great bright light in my bedroom. I said, “Who is there?”, and a voice answered, “It’s the Lord, Paddy.” I said, “Lord, it’s three o’clock in the morning, what are you doing waking Paddy at this time for?” And the Lord replied, with a lilt in his voice, “Haw Paddy, dae ye mind the 7-1 game?”’ [2](#)

At just after 4.25 p.m. on Saturday, 19 October 1957, Jack Mowat blew his referee’s whistle to signal the end of the Scottish League Cup final. Most of the terracing at the King’s Park (eastern) end of the vast Hampden bowl was still bathed, as it had been throughout that afternoon, in limpid sunlight. All across its classic slopes, men, women, boys and girls in their thousands were still struggling to take in the

events which had unfolded before their spellbound, disbelieving eyes during the previous 90 minutes of football. Their amazement was only exceeded by their delight. Celtic had just played 'the 7-1 game'.

FOLKLORE AND HISTORY

Astonishment vied with joy among the Celtic supporters present at Hampden that day, and although joy would ultimately win that contest of emotions, astonishment must still - 40 years later - be considered an apt reaction in the circumstances. The game remains for all with an affection for Celtic FC a magical, almost mythical highlight of the club's folklore. So much so that it seems that folklore is a more appropriate category in which to place this particular football match than the more mundane one of mere 'history' - hence Paddy L.'s tale of his nocturnal Visitor. But the match, and the people for whom it meant so much, deserve a history as well as a folklore. This book seeks to provide it.

Celtic's remarkable victory over their arch-rivals Rangers - still the most emphatic win recorded in a national cup final in Britain - brought the club its last major trophy prior to the appointment of Jock Stein as manager in 1965. With Stein at the helm, a glorious period in Celtic's history ensued, during which they were crowned Champions of Europe and attained a prominence and a reputation in the game which has never been matched by the Celtic sides of other eras, before or since.

As a result, Celtic today are a club indelibly marked and challenged by the standards set during Stein's reign as manager. He transported Celtic to pinnacles of achievement - and hence the supporters to levels of expectation - which have irrevocably re-defined the club's sense of itself and of its place in professional football. Despite the generally depressing run of results and lack of achievement in the 1990s, the aspirations of the vast majority of those

connected with the club continue to be based on the accomplishments of Celtic sides during the 1965–75 period.

It is easy, then, to forget how the club and its supporters thought of themselves prior to that 'golden age'. While several extensive histories of Celtic have been published in recent years, thus providing for the current generation of supporters a vastly more intimate and reliable knowledge of the club's history than was previously available, a strong case can be made for placing a more intensive focus on the 1950s.

In the first place, it is a period within the living memory of many who still follow Celtic's fortunes today. Of course, there are some supporters who go back further than that, to the days of Delaney, McGrory and 'Happy Feet' Napier, to John Thomson and even Patsy Gallacher. But time has thinned their ranks considerably. There are, however, a good many not yet collecting pensions who can still recall the 1950s. Secondly, that decade was a time of vast change in both football and society at large, or at least saw the beginning of such changes. From football tactics to popular music, from geopolitics to the cultural mores of youth, the transformations in the intervening years have been dramatic. Hence, the contrasts are all the more sharply drawn when set beside the continuities provided by living memories, such as those recorded in this book. Finally, the 1950s were a particularly romantic period in Celtic's history. Major successes were sufficiently few in that decade to render them especially precious in the minds of the Celtic supporters who witnessed them, and the club's ups and downs were such as to induce in its followers something akin to the lovesickness which afflicts the characters portrayed in fictional romance. The path of true love never does run smooth, it is said, and it certainly didn't for Celtic supporters in the 1950s.

Those supporters had a particularly colourful group of players upon which to pin their affections, among them

Charlie Tully, Bobby Evans, Sean Fallon, Willie Fernie, Neil Mochan, Bertie Peacock and Bobby Collins. The great victory of 1957 – the ‘October Revolution’ – was these players’ last hurrah. Injury and departure broke up the team within a year of their most spectacular triumph, while age crept up on others. In a sense, the era of ‘Celtic in the ‘50s’ ended with the break-up of that team, to be replaced by a long line of youthful and mostly less fortunate recruits to the Celtic cause. In football terms, the 1960s arrived all too early and finished all too soon for most of these youngsters, dubbed ‘the Kelly Kids’, although some were destined to attain true greatness later in that decade.

The supporters themselves were a no less colourful and exuberant group than the players. At a time when British society frowned upon demonstrative behaviour in public, the Celtic fans were renowned for their enthusiasm and noisiness, although they also possessed a less welcome reputation for rowdiness.

David Potter (now resident in Kirkcaldy) recalls the Celtic fans of that era – and their reputation—of that era:

It was always a great event in Forfar when Celtic were at Aberdeen, for supporters’ buses stopped in the town to stock up on bridies and beer for the game. Occasionally there was trouble - one day they passed through early in the morning and there was not a milk bottle or a ‘herdie poke’ [bag of rolls] left on the Brechin Road - but more often they were friendly, as befits the extroverted Glasgow Irish community, full of good cheer and offering you a lift to Pittodrie to see the game on their bus. I was too young to be able to go, but I remember the buses with the green scarves, flags, pictures of the players and cardboard cut-outs of the Scottish Cup ...

Celtic continued to dominate my childhood although I was genuinely appalled by the bottle-throwing which the supporters frequently indulged in in those days. I even made jokes that they should wear ‘bottle green’.

The vast majority of these supporters of course lived in solidly working-class environments and partook of the distinctive West of Scotland version of working-class culture.

Incomes were generally very limited, and most fans – especially the older generation – were still innocent of the burgeoning new consumer technologies. A television set was the prime consumer durable which the masses either aspired to own or had newly acquired. But British television programming was still in its infancy, and mishaps were common. Unfortunately, one infamous mishap deprived Celtic supporters of television pictures of one of their happiest-ever days.

Celtic supporter Jim Coughlan (now resident in Irvine) captures the moment in this story about his grandfather, Harry Reynolds senior:

The story goes that due to work commitments he was unable to attend the match, and for a man who had witnessed the last double-winning team in action, as well as the Coronation Cup final, this was of great concern. But he consoled himself in the knowledge that if the Bhoys should win, he would be able to relive the glory thanks to the modern miracle of television, because he was now the proud owner of a new television set and highlights of the game were to be shown that Saturday night. After completing his shift late that afternoon and with his thoughts firmly directed towards Hampden, he made his way home. On reaching his house he, along with the rest of the family and some neighbours, turned on the radio and waited patiently for the second-half commentary to begin. With the score broadcast at 2-0 in favour of the Bhoys, the family and friends celebrated and settled down for the second half. As the goals crashed in and the score mounted, the only person showing concern was my grandmother, worried in case the shouting and cheering and jumping up and down to celebrate each goal would either bring the roof down or send them crashing through the floor into the downstairs neighbours' living room.

As the match drew to a close and the result of 7-1 in favour of the Bhoys was now a fact and matter of record, my grandfather, uncle and several others set off to their local, comfortable in the knowledge that when the pub closed they could wend their way back home and settle down to watch the historic event on television. I am told by an uncle who was in the pub that night that the match reports of the *Glasgow Evening Times* and *Evening Citizen* were read time and time again with great relish. And as the beer and whisky flowed, the numbers invited back to watch the match at 22 Dalsersf Street in Barrowfield grew by the minute (the close and flat still stand and can be seen from Celtic Park). The hour of ten approached and the happy throng led by my grandfather made its

way home ... Oh, the wonder of television that it gave you the opportunity to watch what you had missed!

The company now sat on all available seats with drinks replenished. The first two goals were greeted with great cheers and handshakes all round, and with the expectation of more to come the party atmosphere got into full swing. Then the unthinkable happened. The football stopped and the presenter appeared, stating that due to a 'technical fault' they did not have any coverage of the entire second half and apologising for the inconvenience caused. The silence which greeted this announcement was stunning - from a party atmosphere it turned into the setting of a morgue. Then voices were raised in protest. 'Write in and complain,' said one. 'It's a conspiracy,' said another. 'March on the studios and sort them out' was the most extreme comment.

All through this my grandfather, who up until then had been the life and soul of the party, sat in silence. Then, with the swiftness of a Shawfield greyhound, he rose, raced towards the television and lifted it up all in one movement, and made towards the window. Family and friends, at first shocked by the suddenness of his movements initially made no move themselves. But then realising his intent was to throw the television set out of the window, they rose as one and threw themselves at my grandfather in an attempt to stop the planned retribution on the hapless TV. After what seemed a considerable time - although it was probably only a few seconds - he was thwarted thanks to several strong pairs of hands and arms, amid chaotic scenes, with drink, chairs and those people less mobile being knocked over. This, needless to say, was the end of the party and my grandmother (now protecting the TV) stepped in, ordering my grandfather to his bed and the rest of the throng out of the house, with the comment, 'Yon television will be nothing but trouble.'

To the day my grandparents both died, any time Celtic featured on the TV in a cup final, the story of the League Cup final night of 1957 would always be brought up, and I, along with all the other grandchildren, would listen in awe as the scene was described again and again. [3](#)

THE BRITISH SOCIAL CONTEXT

As the foregoing story illustrates, television was still a very new phenomenon in 1957. It was the year during which independent commercial television began to broadcast in Scotland in mild competition with the BBC. The new medium was soon mirroring the profound changes affecting British society.

Britain had emerged from World War II victorious and intact, but distinctly war-weary. The immediate post-war years were marked by official austerity, and rationing did not end until 1954, meat being the last item to 'come off the

ration'. The Labour government which had won a massive Parliamentary majority in 1945 at Winston Churchill's expense presided over a radical restructuring of public policy, the main aims being to ensure full employment and to provide a comprehensive system of socio-economic security for all citizens. The National Health Service had come into being in 1948, thus relieving much of the economic insecurity threatened by ill-health. Guaranteed basic rights to an income and to education were strengthened. Social services were expanded, and while most people were still far from affluent, the economic terrors of the pre-war Depression years were confidently and gratefully viewed as gone forever. By the later 1950s, however, a measure of affluence was being experienced by some sections of the population. In January 1957, Harold Macmillan became Prime Minister following the resignation of Anthony Eden, whose stock had plummeted in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis of the previous year, when British troops had tried to prevent the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by the Egyptian nationalist leader Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser. The British intervention had ended in failure, and it was widely regarded as another indication of the decline in Britain's status as the pre-eminent imperial power. Perhaps to deflect concerns arising from that perception, Macmillan focused public attention on Britain's increasing domestic prosperity.

In July 1957, 'Supermac', as he was becoming known, told a cheering rally of Conservative Party workers at Bedford, 'Let us be frank about it - most of our people have never had it so good.' The phrase, though misquoted, was to be his most enduring campaign theme, and it helped the Conservatives to win their third successive election two years later (having regained power from Labour in 1951).

Undergirding this sense of economic security was the low level of unemployment experienced in Britain during the 1950s, the result of policies pursued by both main parties

under a consensus which towards the end of the decade became known as 'Butskellism' (after the Conservative politician Rab Butler and the Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell). Under this consensus, the Conservatives publicly accepted the legitimacy of the newly created welfare state and the goal of full employment, while Labour pulled back from the old socialist dream of taking all capitalist businesses into public ownership. In the early '50s, on average only three out of every 100 Scottish workers were searching for a job. By the mid-'50s there were twice as many vacancies in Britain as people to fill them. (By 1987, the picture had changed dramatically; one Glaswegian male in four was seeking employment.) The average weekly wage for a man rose steadily through the 1950s, doubling by the end of the decade (from £7.28 in 1950 to £14.99 in 1960). [4](#)

Growing affluence was reflected in the vogue for foreign holidays. Britons were attracted by package tourism to Spain in particular. In 1957 one could stay in Spain's newest holiday resort, Benidorm (hitherto an 'unspoiled fishing village'), for the princely sum of roughly £1 per person per night. 1957 was also a pivotal year for mass travel in another way - it was the first year that as many people crossed the Atlantic by plane as by ship. The growth in air travel was also demonstrated by a huge increase in the number of passengers being carried by BEA (British European Airways) - from 10,000 per month in 1946, to 10,000 daily ten years later. By 1960 BEA had five million passengers annually.

Most people, of course, were still not affluent enough as to be flying across the Atlantic. More modest signs of prosperity were the new labour-saving devices for the home. Cookers, washing machines and vacuum cleaners were becoming more widespread, demand being stimulated by hire-purchase facilities (or the 'never-never', as it was less officially known). The discovery of new detergents and synthetic fibres saved householders long hours of drudgery.

As late as 1954 it was reckoned that the average British woman was spending at least five hours a day in the kitchen. The seeds of 'women's lib' were being sown by these and similar developments, although 'liberation' from work in the house was generally followed by new forms of servitude in factories, offices and shops.

Shopping was becoming more convenient with the appearance of supermarkets. In 1947 there had been less than a dozen in Britain. Ten years later they were opening at the rate of 50 per month. There were still many more traditional, family-owned stores and corner shops, but the writing was on the wall as the retail revolution got into full swing. Car ownership was another sign of the new consumerism, almost trebling during the decade. But a car was still a luxury item for many people, and even by 1960 the ratio of cars to people was only 1 to 9.3. The first stretch of motorway, however, was opened in 1958 (the eight-and-a-half-mile-long Preston bypass).

What would nowadays be called the 'feel-good factor' was evidenced by the success of the Conservatives in being returned to power at three successive elections in the 1950s, with increasing Parliamentary majorities. Their popularity was such that for the first and only time they held a narrow majority of Scottish Parliamentary seats (36 out of 71) in 1955, following that year's general election.

But warning signs that all was not well with the British economy were evident too. Barely a decade after being defeated in war, West Germany overtook Britain in car production and exports, and Britain's share of world trade was on the decline. While British productivity grew by rates of 40 per cent, those of West Germany and Italy grew by 150 per cent, and Japanese productivity rose a massive 400 per cent during the decade. British management failed to invest sufficiently in new equipment, and an innate British caution and conservatism hindered overall economic growth. Much of British industry clung steadfastly to

outdated machinery and working practices. Confronted by a management which was often complacent, self-serving and lacking in vision, strong trade unions not surprisingly sought as much of the cake for themselves as possible. This pattern would lead to the trend for growing trade union militancy in the 1960s, which in turn would be met by a backlash of confrontational, blatantly pro-capitalist policies in the Thatcher era.

Charlie Harvey of Simshill has a vivid recollection of the mood in Glasgow's workplaces at the time:

There's a big shortage of labour just now and the wages aren't bad. The Commie shop stewards tell us to grab all we can and salt it away because the bosses will shite on us from a high level when things are back to normal. They're from the past, like their war stories about Spain [the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39]. The bad old days can't possibly return - Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere have assured us! It's a comforting thought when the fitba' depresses me.

Britain's aloofness and its sense of empire were still sufficiently marked that the country stood aside when the Treaty of Rome was signed by six nations in 1957, establishing the European Economic Community (popularly known as the Common Market). Contemporary mistrust of the European idea is nothing new! Britain was content to hold on to its Commonwealth links deriving from an Empire upon which the sun was fast setting. Much of Britain revelled in insularity - captured in the fabled (perhaps apocryphal) newspaper headline which read 'Fog in Channel - England Cut Off'. There was also a certain smug racism abroad, typified by a remark of the (English) Football League secretary Alan Hardaker, who opposed participation in the new European club competitions on the grounds (privately expressed) that it meant involvement with 'too many wogs and dagos'. But probably an equally significant reason for British reluctance to embrace Europe was a fear that Britain was simply not geared to thrive in the competition

generated by a Common Market. Hence, the decision to enter the EEC was not taken until the early 1970s.

Prime Minister Macmillan had no compunction when it came to hiding the truth about the economy from the British people. Cabinet papers for 1957 released in January 1988 under the 30-year rule showed that the country's financial situation was in fact precarious, hurt by the flight from sterling in the money markets following the Suez Crisis. In response, the government considered cutting family allowances, introducing hospital pay beds, imposing higher dental charges and dearer school meals, and scrapping RAF Fighter Command as means of restoring order to the public finances. Chancellor of the Exchequer Peter Thorneycroft in some ways anticipated the later Thatcherite assault on the welfare state, and in August 1957 he proposed a dramatic tightening of monetary policy in the face of a rumoured devaluation of sterling and fears of inflation. The resultant financial squeeze, including a shock overnight 2 per cent rise in the main interest rate (then known as the Bank Rate), meant that unemployment began to rise in the late 1950s, with Scottish jobless figures eventually doubling to over 116,000 by the end of the decade. The economic 'boom' years of the '50s ultimately only served to mask Britain's relative decline in the global economic league table.

Behind his confident, ebullient exterior, Prime Minister Macmillan was in fact distinctly worried about the state of the country. He confided to his diary in March 1957 a fear of a looming general strike, so strong was the mood in the shipyards, engineering works, railways, coalmines and power stations. He had already briefed the Emergency Committee of his Cabinet on plans for troops to take over from strikers in key industries, and thought was also given to introducing legislation restricting trade union rights. This idea was not pursued on the grounds that many trade unionists had begun voting Conservative, and because — in accordance with the new 'Butskellite' consensus — the Tories wished to present themselves as a national party capable of drawing support from all sections of the community.

Allied to its relative economic decline was the country's gradual loss of imperial status and power, already signalled in 1947 by the end of British rule in India. But it was undoubtedly the Suez fiasco of 1956 which epitomised this loss in the public mind. An episode later described by Anthony Nutting, then Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, as 'a mad imperialist gamble', it exposed Britain's declining influence in world affairs. With the connivance of France and Israel, Britain had invaded Egypt following the decision by President Nasser to nationalise the Suez Canal. But without the backing of the United States, the move was doomed to failure, and eventually the British were forced to make a humiliating 'tactical withdrawal'. The *débâcle* later resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Anthony Eden, ostensibly for reasons of health. The British representative at the United Nations lamented in his diary that his country had now been reduced to the level of a 'third-class power'. It would, however, take some time before the truth sunk in fully, not least in the corridors of power.

This reluctance to accept Britain's waning geopolitical influence was perhaps exemplified most strongly in the determination of the political elite - on both sides of the House of Commons - to retain the country's status as a nuclear power. At the Labour Party conference in the autumn of 1957, the Shadow Foreign Secretary Aneurin Bevan, a veteran 'firebrand' socialist, shocked his former left-wing friends by pleading with the delegates not to vote for nuclear disarmament, 'not' - as he melodramatically put it - 'to send the British Foreign Minister naked into the conference chamber'. The 1950s, of course, were very much the peak years of the Cold War, and nuclear weapons were regarded by the British political Establishment as a vital symbol of national virility. The Daily Express echoed this attitude when it exulted over the successful testing of Britain's first nuclear bomb near Christmas Island, a Pacific atoll, in May 1957 with the headline 'It's OUR H-Bomb!'. ('H-

bomb' meant the hydrogen bomb, a more potent type of device than the older atomic or 'A-bomb'.)

The first British nuclear power reactor, Calder Hall in Cumberland, was opened in 1956 ostensibly for 'harnessing atomic power for peaceful purposes'. But in fact it was also used to provide plutonium for military ends. So secretive was the government about the nuclear industry that it suppressed the findings of an inquiry into a serious fire at the Windscale plant in Cumbria in October 1957 - an incident characterised 30 years later when the truth emerged as a 'potential Chernobyl-style disaster'. The Windscale fire released a radioactive 'cloud' into the atmosphere which drifted over 200 miles of the surrounding countryside and prompted the authorities to consider the wholesale evacuation of local people. Heavily contaminated milk was poured into drains, thus carrying pollution into the Irish Sea. To improve its image after this near catastrophe, the plant was later renamed Sellafield. The official report (The Penney Report) into the incident was rewritten on Macmillan's orders lest the public lose confidence in the burgeoning nuclear industry.

Some acknowledgement of Britain's reduced status had been signalled in the spring of 1957 when a Defence White Paper called for the phasing out of National Service by 1962, largely on the grounds that it was too expensive to maintain, and a waste of manpower resources. An earlier report had concluded that those called up - nearly 700,000 in total in the course of 1956 - tended to regard their two-year stints in HM Forces as 'an infliction to be undergone rather than a duty to the nation'. The last batch of medically fit 18-year-olds who were eligible for service (some categories were exempt) received their call-up papers in November 1960, by which time opinion had swung round decisively in favour of an all-volunteer, fully professional military.

GLASGOW

Glasgow, in 1957, could no longer boast - as it had done for over a century - that it was the 'Second City of the Empire', having been pushed into third place by Birmingham

following the publication of the 1951 census figures. It still had a population of over one million, however, making it one of the world's forty most populous cities. But Glasgow was on the verge of radical change. Glaswegians in the 1950s were one of the last generations of Clydesiders to be put in large numbers to the 'hard but rewarding work' of building ships, forging metals and engineering fine tools. Apprenticeships could still be found in abundance, and there was no sense of workers young and old being 'thrown on the scrapheap'. But drastic reductions in employment within Glasgow's traditional industries were not far off. In addition, large parts of the city were destined to be bulldozed following a report in 1957 which proposed major housing redevelopment - 'slum clearance' was the term much in vogue then - aimed at reducing population densities from 450 persons per acre on average to 164. This would require the demolition of over 90,000 dwellings in the following two decades and the consequent removal of 60 per cent of the population from the designated redevelopment areas, much of the 'overspill' being redirected to the new towns of East Kilbride and Cumbernauld, as well as peripheral estates such as Drumchapel and Easterhouse. The redevelopment would be marked by a switch from high-density low-rise dwellings to multi-storey tower blocks, 200 of which would be constructed by 1970, in an expansion of high-rise housing unmatched in any other British city. The human costs of such a massive social dislocation were not imagined in the late 1950s, however.

Those decamped from close-knit, lively neighbourhoods such as Anderston, Townhead and Cowcaddens often found themselves in housing schemes bereft of basic amenities such as convenient shopping areas, recreational and leisure facilities, and safe public spaces. One Drumchapel resident memorably complained that it was like living in 'a desert wi' windaes'. Problems of dampness, vandalism and a soulless layout of the buildings, as well as the depopulation of inner-

city districts, would later become an indictment on the original plans and planners. [5](#)

In the late 1950s, however, the City Fathers were motivated by good intentions, of helping the more disadvantaged sections of the populace, and by a desire to overcome the rather grim image Glasgow then had in the rest of the country. The latter was in part a result of the very squalid housing conditions many Glaswegians then endured, typified by the dilapidated, soot-covered tenements which disfigured much of the city, their grime-encrusted exteriors the legacy of decades of smoke belching from coal-fired chimneys. It was thus not unusual in the early winter evenings for fog to blanket the city, producing, as the poet Edwin Morgan recalled, 'a silent wall of impenetrable grey. There were no buses, trains, taxis or cars to be seen or heard. It was a stricken, immobile place.' Glasgow's 'pea-soupers' were justly notorious, although other cities such as London also suffered from them. They were to become largely a thing of the past following legislation passed in 1956 which required people to burn smokeless fuels in their grates, or use alternative methods of heating to the traditional coal fire.

Charlie Harvey recalls the day of the 1957 League Cup final:

Until I die I'll remember the weather on that late autumn day. It was perfect, and with a unique quality of light that seemed to penetrate everything it fell upon. I would next experience its like on the day Pope John Paul II came to Bellahouston [1982], and never since. There was no danger that day in 1957 of smog, a poisonous industrial filth that tore your lungs apart several times a year.

I had a girlfriend then who worked at the Vicky [Victoria Infirmary]. She said that the smogs killed thousands each time they appeared but the Government wouldn't let the media tell anyone about it. She said they were scared of the cost of cleaning up the air. Hard to believe — after all, we live in a democracy! Still, she was adamant — every time a smog was forecast the mortuaries would go into disaster mode. On the day of the final I was thinking, 'Glad we've missed the smog today,

though I'll probably be sorry when the game's over. A berth in the morgue might seem attractive later on!

Coal, of course, was still the most common domestic fuel in use in 1957, and it was often sold from horse-drawn carts that made their way around the tenement districts which, in the words of one observer, were populated by 'neighbours who gossiped and squabbled' in gas-lit closes. An *Evening Citizen* columnist of the time, gently parodying the city's reputed naming after the Gaelic for 'dear, green place', called Glasgow a 'dear, dirty old place'.

Nor was life in the close-knit tenement communities as rosy as some of the sentimentalists have portrayed. In 1957 Glasgow had, officially, 11,000 'slum-dwellings'; unofficially there were many more. Alastair Borthwick, writing in the *Citizen*, asserted that there were still 17,000 families 'living under conditions in which a reasonably progressive farmer would hesitate to keep his cattle', though he acknowledged that 'there are warm hearts and neighbourliness in the slums which are hard to find elsewhere'. He described a visit to a building in Grace Street in the Anderston district where he watched a woman 'trying to cope with five children and her husband's dinner' in a one-roomed house where the only water flowed from a single cold tap. 'The oldest child', wrote Borthwick, 'was 11 and the youngest was a baby who looked at me from a box-bed in the corner, the bed in which all the children slept. The walls were damp, the plaster was crumbling and the flagstones of the close outside were so worn they might have come from a medieval dungeon ... The place was rotten through and through. It had the unmistakable slum smell that no woman can ever scrub out of her home, however hard she tries. There were 15 other houses like it up that single stair. It was, of course, scandalous. It should not be possible, in a city which calls itself civilised, for children to be born in such a room.' (19 August 1957) Borthwick noted that the family had been on

the Corporation's waiting list for a new house since 1945 and was only now on the point of being re-housed because their present abode was about to be condemned.

Another factor in Glasgow's poor reputation within Britain was the supposed proneness of its citizens to drink-fuelled violence. The razor gangs of the 1930s - immortalised in the novel *No Mean City* - were still fresh in many people's minds. That this perception was unfairly overdrawn is beyond question. But Glasgow was a heavily industrial, overwhelmingly working-class city in 1957, and it suffered from all the social problems which attend poverty and social deprivation. Among these were poor health, to which both the social and physical environments of the city greatly contributed. The unhealthy environment was underlined by the launch in March 1957 by the city's Medical Officer of Health, William Horne, of a five-week-long campaign to screen over 700,000 people (nearly three-quarters of Glasgow's population) for early signs of pulmonary tuberculosis, the dreaded 'TB' which caused more deaths in the city than anywhere else in Britain.

Despite its many problems, the city was very much a bustling centre of commerce. A familiar sight in Glasgow in 1957 would have been that of trams clanking through the busy city-centre streets as they hauled passengers to and from the outer suburbs. But as the year drew to a close, it was becoming clear that this much-loved form of transport, seemingly a permanent feature of Glasgow life, was doomed, only awaiting the formal announcement of its demise.

The tram system had served the city well for many decades, and as late as 1955-56 had borne a total of 367 million fare-paying passengers. But such was the congestion in the streets, particularly in the city centre during rush hour, that it reduced the average speed to only seven miles per hour (according to one calculation by a Corporation Transport official in September 1957). Cost was another