

Celtic's run to the 1970 European Cup final by Tom Brogan

Originally published on the State of the Game website in September and October 2006

Celtic's 1970 European Cup Campaign – From Beginnings To The Quarter Finals

Celtic open their Champions' League campaign on Wednesday against Manchester United at Old Trafford. Their UEFA Cup Final appearance in 2003 gave the current support a taste of European success that fans of earlier generations enjoyed for a number of years.

While I was watching The History of Football DVD it focused on the rise of Northern Europe in the game. This began at club level with Celtic's 1967 European Cup win over Inter Milan.

Three years after their triumph in Lisbon, Celtic returned to the European Cup Final, this time in Milan, to play Dutch champions Feyenoord. As I watched the goals from that match it dawned on me that although I had seen the 1967 success many times on TV, I had never seen the highlights from the 1970 game before.

As a result of this I thought now might be a time to have a look at the campaign that saw The Bhoys fall at the final hurdle in their quest for a second European trophy. Their run to the 1970 final saw dramatic comebacks, sensational climaxes, records being broken, a 'Battle of Britain' and some truly memorable matches.

First Round – First Leg

September 17th 1969

FC Basel 0 – 0 Celtic (Att: 38,000)

Celtic opened their campaign in September of 1969 away to FC Basel of Switzerland, who were managed by the former German international Helmut Benthaus. At the time there were concerns that the Celtic team had lost their edge and perhaps a game against the likes of Real Madrid or AC Milan might see their tournament get off to a more dynamic start.

Manager Jock Stein, however, was confident that his side would be ready to rise to the occasion, having tested their 'European away game' against Aberdeen in the League Cup the previous week. Stein had set Celtic up as an attacking side, though in away ties in Europe he recognised that they had to drop their natural attacking instincts and become more defensive.

38,000 spectators watched a match that Celtic were always in command of, although they couldn't find a way through to goal. As it was, they were very happy to come away with a no score draw, confident that they could finish the job back in Glasgow.

First Round - Second Leg

October 1st 1969

Celtic 2 - 0 FC Basel (Agg 2-0) (Att: 52,000)

(Hood 1, Gemmell 70)

Jimmy Johnstone carved the Basel defence up, almost from the kick off, providing the pass for Harry Hood to hammer the ball into the Swiss net. That was about the last time Johnstone had things his way on this autumn evening as the Celtic goal seemed to galvanise Basel and their defence shut down the winger's potent threat.

The Basel team was filled with Swiss internationals and for much of the night their defence played like one of the best in Europe. In particular goalkeeper Marcel Kuns was outstanding, keeping out a

succession of shots and headers from the Celtic attack. In the end Celtic's pace, individuality and imaginative moves made the difference and Tommy Gemmell fired home a decisive second goal.

The second round draw paired Celtic with 1962 champions Benfica. This meant that they would go back to Lisbon, the scene of their own European Cup triumph in 1967.

After the draw was made Jock Stein said, "We made many friends in Portugal and we are happy about meeting a side of the calibre of Benfica. They will undoubtedly attract a full house at Celtic Park when they come to Glasgow."

Although Celtic came out of the draw first, meaning the first leg would be at home, Rangers were also drawn at home in the first leg of their European Cup Winners' Cup tie with Gornik Zabrze. Rules stated that clubs who are located less than 56km (31 miles) apart could not play at home on the same night. This meant that a ballot had to be drawn to decide which of the Glasgow clubs would have their first leg tie switched. As it was Celtic were allowed to play at home and Rangers moved their first leg match to Poland.

Second Round - First Leg
November 12th Celtic Park
Celtic 3-0 Benfica (Att: 76,000)
(Gemmell 2, Wallace 14, Hood 70)

At a lunch given by Celtic on the eve of the match Benfica director Joaquim Marques Alexandre announced, "We are looking forward to a beautiful game of football."

It was certainly that for Celtic and their fans.

A sold out crowd packed into Celtic Park to see the side nicknamed 'O Glorioso', five times European Cup finalists. With only two minutes on the clock Celtic had a free kick just outside the Benfica penalty area. Bertie Auld surveyed the wall, but with the Portuguese expecting a shot Auld flicked the ball back, as Tommy Gemmell came storming forward. The defender hit it with all he had from 30 yards out. Henrique in the Benfica goal flapped helplessly as it flew into the net. A few minutes before half-time a lucky bounce put the ball in Willie Wallace's path. He shrugged off a tackle and lashed the ball home from a narrow angle.

In the 70th minute Harry Hood glanced a header into the net from a Bobby Murdoch cross. Unbelievably it was 3-0 Celtic. Although a lot of fans in attendance now say the only unbelievable thing about the result was that it wasn't by more goals. The man Benfica were looking toward to turn the tie in their favour, Eusebio, pulled a muscle in the first half and he was replaced at the interval by Augusto. A disappointing Diamantino was also substituted for Jorge. When the Portuguese side did threaten to get back into the game, John Fallon in the Celtic goal kept them out with a string of fine saves.

The main talking point after the match was why Italian referee Concetto Lo Bello chalked off an apparently perfectly good headed goal by Celtic's John Hughes midway through the first half. Everyone on the pitch seemed to think the goal was a good one. The referee, who had taken charge of Benfica's 1968 final with Manchester United, attempted to clear up the confusion. "There was no offside," he said. "But a Celtic player fouled a Benfica man before the ball was netted." Oddly, he could not elaborate upon who the guilty Celtic man was.

The capacity crowd at Celtic Park roared Celtic home from kick-off to final whistle. "They were absolutely magnificent," Jock Stein said of the fans. "Their support was fantastic and it was worth an extra man to the team. I thought they were just great." Of the result Stein said, "It is good to be going to Lisbon with three goals to the good, although you can never really get enough goals. But naturally I am confident that we can win through."

The victory suddenly had many people talking about Celtic winning a second European Cup.

Second Round - Second Leg

November 26th 1969

**Benfica 3-0 Celtic (AET) (Att: 50,000) (Agg 3-3; Celtic won on the toss of a coin)
(Eusebio 35, Graca 40, Diamantino 90)**

Although the talk from the Benfica camp after the first match was that Eusebio would be out for three weeks, he duly lined up for the second leg. Only 50,000 of the expected 80,000 fans had turned up, such was the overwhelming nature of Celtic's first leg victory. However, Benfica were a changed side from the first match and came roaring at the Hoops from early on.

Celtic's hero was keeper John Fallon who pulled off a series of near miraculous saves to keep Benfica at bay. Jorge hit the post before Fallon held a rocket from Eusebio in the 21st minute. It was clear the side from Lisbon were by no means out of the tie. In the 35th minute they got their reward for their constant pressure when a Eusebio header put them one up. A few minutes later Graca went through the Celtic defence on his own, dispatching the ball into goal from off the post.

Two-nil Benfica and the contrast of the tie had changed completely.

The next bit of action saw Bertie Auld on the receiving end of a bad tackle. A melee followed and Jimmy Johnstone was butted by Silva. The referee decided to take no action and the situation, which looked likely to boil over, quickly settled down. The second half brought about the early retirement of Eusebio, who was replaced by Martins. Jimmy Johnstone missed Celtic's best chance of the match. Jinky found himself with only keeper Henrique to beat, but the man nicknamed Zé Gato, came racing out of his goal to make the save. Celtic managed to play with more poise and cohesion as the second half progressed. They began to show more attacking prowess, although their Portuguese opponents were never less than threatening.

With Celtic desperately clinging on to their one goal aggregate lead deep into injury time, the men from the Stadium of Light were awarded a corner kick. Substitute Diamantino, a different proposition from his lacklustre first leg display, headed the subsequently crossed ball into the Celtic net. As he did so the referee blew for full-time. Players and fans were uncertain for a moment if the goal would stand; several Celtic defenders were positive that the game was over before the kick was taken.

The delirious Benfica supporters were in no confusion however as they poured onto the pitch. At this point Laurens Van Ravens, the Dutch referee, led the teams off the field and into the dressing room. Police and soldiers had to come on to the pitch in order to clear it of spectators. Five minutes after the ball had hit the net it was announced the scoreline was three-all and the game was into extra time.

Celtic's players and the Scottish media were baffled by the three minutes plus of injury time played. With no major injuries throughout the game, this was an unusually long time to add. Extra-time was played out with no further goals and some match reports indicate that the second period was actually brought to a close one minute early.

In 1969 a drawn tie was not settled by a penalty shoot-out. The deadlock would be broken by the tossing of a coin. The normal practice in this situation was for the referee to lead the two captains to the centre circle, toss the coin into the air so that instantly the spectators would see from the triumphant captain's reaction who had progressed. It was obvious to all in attendance this night that Van Ravens had a cavalier manner all of his own and so it was as he executed this task.

He took the two captains, Celtic's Billy McNeill and Mario Coluna of Benfica, into his dressing room. Their respective managers went with them. The two linesmen and a handful of pressmen also squeezed

into the cramped room, while club officials packed the corridors of Estadio da Luz.

The ref asked the Celtic captain to call. McNeill revealed years later in his autobiography 'Hail Cesar', that on this occasion his stomach was churning and he felt that he would "Rather be anywhere else at that moment." He turned to his manager and asked him what he should call. Stein's reported reply was "You're on your own." McNeill called 'Heads' and won the toss. The referee then informed him this was just to see which of the captains would have the right to spin the coin. He handed the Scotsman the silver Dutch 2 guilder piece to toss into the air to determine which club would win the tie. "I stuck with my hunch and called heads again," McNeill said in 'Hail Cesar.'

The coin landed on the floor, rolled, hit the referee's foot and lay still. As everyone bent down to get a look the Celtic captain punched the air when he saw he had made the right call. "When I spun the coin," McNeill said to reporters later, "I couldn't believe that I would win again. But I did and it was the greatest relief of my life." McNeill was allowed to keep the coin, worth six shillings in pre-decimal Britain, as a souvenir.

The 50,000 people on the terraces waited anxiously for the outcome. When the message came back that Celtic had progressed to the quarter-finals the Scots in the crowd went wild, while some Portuguese supporters openly wept.

Elsewhere in the European Cup that same night, Turkey's Galatasaray also won on the toss of a coin, knocking out Spartak Trnava of Czechoslovakia after a 1-1 aggregate draw.

On the chartered plane back to Glasgow, Celtic's Chairman Sir Robert Kelly told of his displeasure of winning such an important tie by these means. He indicated that Celtic would press UEFA to have new legislation introduced.

"We won this toss and this is the right time to take up the case," he said. "It is a most unsatisfactory way to end such a vital tie in any competition. Certainly we would not have said anything about this if we had lost the toss to Benfica. But now that we are through, perhaps our words will carry some weight." Several years earlier, as president of the Scottish Football Association, Sir Robert, then plain Bob Kelly, made a complaint to UEFA about the practice of coin tosses settling ties. "Tossing a coin is not part of the game," he continued, "But corner kicks are. I feel that the team with the most corner kicks in extra time should be the winners. If the teams are equal, corners gained during the whole game should count." At this point in time that system was already in use in the Glasgow Charity Cup.

Manager Jock Stein was relieved to have made it through to the Quarter-Finals but was disappointed with the performance. "I thought we could have played much better," he told reporters after the match. "We became careless after the first 30 minutes. A team of our European experience should not have lost the second goal, scored by Graca by the old one-two."

Despite the win this trip to Lisbon was not as happy for Celtic as their 1967 visit had been. On the coach journey back to the hotel, six Celtic players and one official discovered that they had been robbed of money, from their clothes left in the dressing room during the match.

The draw for the quarter-finals was made at St. Gotthard Hotel in Zurich.

Jock Stein, who refused to travel to Switzerland, due to the unpredictable nature of airline travel in the month of December, spoke of his wishes for the draw. "We would prefer to avoid Leeds at this stage," he said. "Obviously it would be great if we could make it to an all-British final." Celtic were the only former winner of the trophy remaining in the competition and the two British sides were seen as the ones to avoid.

Fiorentina's Argentine coach Bruno Pesaola made it clear how he wanted the draw for the last eight to pan out. "At this stage in the competition I don't want either Celtic or Leeds. The English club looks the strongest in the competition, but Celtic appear to be improving."

The betting had Celtic at 7-2 behind Fiorentina at 5-2 and the favourites Leeds United at 2-1. The Dutch side Feyenoord were being written off by the bookies at 10-1.

The draw paired the Celts with Italian champions Fiorentina, at that time lying in second spot in Serie A. Afterwards Jock Stein seemed happy. "Playing against a Latin team is always exciting," he said. "They have that bit of extra glamour. Obviously they are good. You have to be to win the Italian league." Stein went on to say, "The only side we wanted to avoid was Leeds. For we would rather meet them later - in the final if we can."

Celtic were confident of progressing, as their rivals Rangers had played and defeated Fiorentina the previous summer. In the Toronto Challenge Cup the Ibrox side won 3-2 in New York, although they lost 2-0 in the second game in Toronto. Their performance in the first game was enough to show Celtic that the Italians had exploitable weaknesses.

Quarter-Finals - First Leg
Wednesday 4th March 1970, Celtic Park
Celtic 3- 0 AC Fiorentina (Att: 80,000)
(Auld 30, Carpenetti 49 og, Wallace 89)

Before the first leg Celtic had a slight worry about Tommy Gemmell, who had picked up a knock on his shin in the previous weekend's game with Airdrie. At this time Gemmell was Celtic's top scorer in the European Cup and it was a worry that his injury may affect his famous 'Big Bertha' shot. "I'm sure I'll be okay," he said as he packed his bags for Celtic's Seamill retreat. "The injury is still rather painful, but it should clear up. It's a pity it's 'Big Bertha', but I'm sure there will be no twinges when I'm shooting against Fiorentina."

"He's still a wee bit doubtful," his manager said. "He'll have a tough test today."

Fiorentina coach Pesaola, earning a widely reported £30,000 a year, rejected claims that his side played in a style similar to their Scottish opponents. "We are a highly technical side. More so than Celtic. Our play is not like them at all. The fans will see this tomorrow night and I'm sure they will agree that we are value for money."

He couldn't have been more wrong.

Celtic, with Gemmell fit and in the starting line up, began in their now customary whirlwind fashion, worrying Superchi in the Fiorentina goal straight from kick-off. The hero of the night was 30-year old Bertie Auld, considered the 'veteran' of the side. Out of the team for six weeks after picking up an injury, he learned only half an hour before kick-off that he would be in the starting line up. In the 30th minute of the match, he received the ball from the right, 22 yards out. He calmly looked up and sped a sweet shot that whizzed past Superchi's despairing dive.

Fiorentina players were on £1,500 a man to win the match. This was an unprecedented sum at the time. Any hope of picking up that win bonus disappeared 4 minutes after the break when Auld made Celtic's second goal. Auld sent over a cross which defender Carpenetti attempted to clear. He only succeeded in sending it above the head of his advancing goalkeeper and into the net. With a minute to go Bertie Auld sent another cross into the box. Harry Hood headed the ball on and Willie Wallace was there to knock it over the line.

The Italian media blamed the result on Fiorentina concentrating too much on defence, but that did a disservice to Celtic who had rarely looked so commanding in their European career.

“Bertie could not have done more for us,” manager Jock Stein said afterwards. “I have got to single him out for the way he played there tonight.”

Stein's opposite number Pesaola spent almost an hour after the match ensconced in the dressing room explaining the heavy defeat to furious club directors. When he emerged he said “Auld was the master tonight. He was the great midfield player for Celtic.”

Auld himself was more modest, saying, “The rest of the lads carried me for the last 20 minutes. After being out of first team football for six weeks I felt just about jiggered.”

Quarter-Finals - Second Leg
Wednesday 18th March 1970, Comunale Stadium
AC Fiorentina 1-0 Celtic (Celtic win 3-1 on aggregate)
(Chiarugi 37)

The second leg in Florence was played at a less frenetic pace than the previous match a fortnight earlier. Celtic's midfield got on top of their opposition and the Italians failed to make enough chances for their forwards. In the 34th minute Fiorentina were awarded an indirect free-kick inside Celtic's penalty area. Inexplicably, the experienced Chiarugi blasted the ball straight into the net. Fiorentina players and fans exploded with delight. The Celtic keeper Evan Williams simply placed the ball for a goal kick as the Italians realised the goal would not stand.

Moments later Fiorentina got themselves back into the tie. Celtic, for the only time on the night, failed to clear their lines and the ball fell to that man Chiarugi again. He hit a low shot which gave Williams no chance. Unlike in Lisbon when Benfica began their fightback, there was not a hint of panic in the Celtic defence. They simply tightened up at the back, as Fiorentina became dejected.

Auld and Johnstone stood out in the middle of the park; Williams in goal had a sound game while Billy McNeill and George Connelly were at their best in defence. The final whistle sounded on a 1-0 win for the Italian champions, but it wasn't enough and Celtic were in the semi-finals.

Although they went through Jock Stein was furious in the dressing room afterwards. “I have never known worse refereeing in all the games I have seen in Europe. I'm not surprised that British teams find it almost impossible to win in Italy.” He wasn't finished there. “Everything was for the Italians, nothing for us. He played four minutes over time. I thought the game was never going to end, and some of his decisions could have cost us goals. In these circumstances I rate this as our finest performance in Europe.”

No British club had ever knocked an Italian side out of the European Cup over two legs, until this aggregate victory.

Where next for Celtic with the semi-final draw looming? Jock Stein had this to say, “Now I'll settle for Feyenoord in the semi-finals and then look for a final against Leeds in Milan.”

But it was not to turn out that way.

Celtic's 1970 European Cup Campaign – Part 2 – The Battle of Britain

Before the draw for the semi-final was made, Celtic had already decided to move their home leg from Celtic Park to Hampden in order to accommodate the large number of fans eager to see the game. Jock Stein spoke about his hopes for the draw, “Sure, I'd like to miss Leeds, for I feel an all-British final would be a terrific morale boost to our country.”

But he was not to get his wish, as the draw in Rome paired Celtic with Leeds United, with the first leg at United's Elland Road ground.

Leeds had started their first European Cup campaign in style, disposing of Lyn Oslo 10-0 at home and 6-0 in Norway. In the second round they knocked out Ferencvaros of Hungary, the team they had beaten in the 1968 Fairs Cup Final, winning 3-0 both home and away. In the quarter-finals they came up against Standard Liege, who had disposed of Real Madrid. They triumphed in Belgium thanks to a Peter Lorimer goal. The job was finished with an eightieth minute Johnny Giles penalty at Elland Road.

The 1969/70 season began for Leeds and Celtic with a friendly at Celtic Park. 65,000 turned out to see a thrill-a-minute 1-1 draw. Jock Stein said afterwards "I'm as happy as if we had won 3-0."

Just hours after the draw was made Leeds' Secretary Keith Archer announced that Celtic would be allocated only 6,000 tickets for the first leg match. This was met with dismay from Celtic fans.

Celtic Supporters' Association Secretary Hugh Delaney said, "I don't think the allocation is at all fair to our fans. Leeds will be able to get many more tickets for the match at Hampden."

20,000 fans were expected to want to travel down from Glasgow, so to be allocated less than a third of that number was a blow for the supporters. "We have to consider our own fans," said Archer. "For these big games we can attract 48,000 fans and they are OUR fans. They have to come first so we simply couldn't give away any more of our tickets to Celtic." He continued, "I know that Celtic could probably fill half the ground down here, but there's nothing else we can do."

Jock Stein began to get his head around what the draw had thrown up in a conversation with Ken Gallacher of the Daily Record. "It would have been a wonderful final for British football if it had happened," Stein said, "but it hasn't and we have to carry on. It was because I was thinking that way, thinking about an all-British final that I hadn't looked at the semi-final possibility. I honestly felt that we were destined to meet in Milan."

"But now I have adjusted to the fact that we are drawn together in the semi-final and I can assure you that I can scarcely wait for the games to begin." He went on to outline just how much regard he had for Leeds United. "We know Leeds and we respect them too, but we are not frightened of them. I think these will be great, great games."

Down south the Leeds manager Don Revie didn't appear to be too enamoured with the way the draw had went. "It's the draw that we didn't want to face right now. We have a tremendous respect for Celtic and for Jock Stein and we would have been happier to meet in the final."

The 47-year-old Stein, and Revie, five years younger, were good friends. They had attended the 1969 British Open at Royal Lytham and St Anne's together, enjoying Tony Jacklin's victory in a rare British win.

Leeds were no strangers to Scottish football either, having beaten Hibs, Kilmarnock, Rangers and Dundee in the Fairs Cup in recent years. They also had a few Scots in their ranks, including Scotland captain Billy Bremner. "I feel that it is in our favour to meet Celtic in the two games of the semi-final rather than in a one match final," Bremner said. "Our consistency can count for a lot in a two-leg tie. Celtic would have been more dangerous in the final."

Bremner was a boyhood Celtic fan, as was winger Eddie Gray. In Gray's autobiography 'Marching on Together - My Life with Leeds United' he recalls that not everyone in the Leeds camp had such respect for the Glasgow side. "When the draw was made," Gray writes, "I remember saying [to my team-mates] 'I wouldn't get too carried away if I were you. This is going to be a more difficult hurdle for us than you might think'."

At the same time as the European Cup draw, UEFA also made the draw for the qualifying groups of the European Championships. Scotland came out of the hat along with Belgium, Portugal and Denmark.

With typical Scottish optimism, SFA Secretary Willie Allan said, "It could have been worse."

The Scottish press were bubbling with excitement about 'The Battle of Britain' and billed this, 'The greatest European tie of this or any other season.' Maurice Lindley, Leeds United's Assistant Manager travelled up to Glasgow to see Celtic in action against Ayr United on the Saturday. After the 3-0 Celtic win he said, "I saw enough to realise that this match with Celtic will be the toughest we have ever had to play in almost 10 years of European competition."

Tickets went on sale for both legs of the tie that weekend. Leeds had doubled the price of semi-final tickets compared to those for the quarter-final match against Standard Liege. That didn't stop the large number of Celtic fans who travelled down to Elland Road to pick up tickets for the first leg match. Eventually Leeds restricted ticket sales to season tickets and token holders only.

On the Sunday 25,000 Celtic fans queued at Parkhead for the 60,000 second-leg tickets that were on sale, many of them sleeping outside the ground overnight. A coach load of Leeds United fans were among the first 500 to snap up tickets. That first group of 500 supporters could purchase up to 4 tickets each. From then on fans were restricted to two tickets each. Every ticket available for sale sold out, with thousands of stand tickets being held over for sale at an undisclosed home game. "Those 60,000 tickets were just the start," Jock Stein said. "Now we will be giving out thousands of tickets to the various supporters' clubs throughout the country and the Association."

The following night, Billy Bremner was named Player of the Year by the English Sportswriters' Association. Hours later Leeds played their FA Cup semi-final replay with Manchester United at Villa Park. The two sides battled out a pulsating 0-0 draw after extra time. A draw was exactly the result Celtic wanted. This meant that Leeds and their rivals from across the Pennines would have to replay again two nights later.

The fixtures were now beginning to pile up for Leeds. After the second FA Cup replay on Wednesday they would have Southampton to play on the Saturday, Derby County on Easter Monday, then Celtic on the 1st of April.

In midweek 33,000 watched Celtic slump to a 2-1 league defeat to Aberdeen. The result of this was that they would have to wait until the weekend when they would play Hearts at Tynecastle in order that they obtain the point they needed to win the title.

Jock Stein went down to Bolton to see Leeds break the deadlock in their FA Cup epic with Manchester United by winning 1-0 thanks to a Billy Bremner goal in the 9th minute. This would set them up for a final with Chelsea on 11th April.

There was good news for the Celtic support who couldn't make it down to Yorkshire for the first leg. STV announced that a specially lengthened Scotsport, lasting 45 minutes, would feature highlights of the game as the main item.

On Saturday the 28th of March 1970 Celtic drew 0-0 with Hearts to clinch their 5th league title in a row. Billy McNeill, Bertie Auld and Jimmy Johnstone were rested. In England, Leeds, fielding six reserve players, lost 3-1 to Southampton, as they began to see their title challenge slip away.

In preparation for the big game Celtic went down to Troon, running on the beach on Sunday and putting on a practice match in the grounds of their hotel, to the great delight of the crowds of holidaymakers. They would take the Leeds train from Kilmarnock on the Tuesday, staying in Harrogate before the game. In the Easter Monday match with Derby County, Don Revie fielded an entire team of reserves. They lost the match 4-1, practically ending their hopes of back-to-back titles.

The English League was now threatening an enquiry. Revie claimed, however, that there was nothing he could do. He told Ken Gallacher of the Daily Record, "The first team players who played for me against Southampton on Saturday, have been ruled out by the club doctor. Five of these players, Jack Charlton, Eddie Gray, Peter Lorimer, Allan Clarke and Paul Madley were too tired, both mentally and physically to play in this game." He went on to say that the advice of the club doctor was paramount to him. "The doctor examined the players and told me that they must have rest. Taking part in so many games recently had tired their bodies and their minds."

Another seven players, including Billy Bremner and striker Mick Jones were at Elland Road having treatment for injuries. Leeds claimed that they had asked Derby to postpone the match, only for Derby's directors to refuse. However Alan Hardaker, Secretary of the Football League, stated later that he had presented Leeds with a variety of convenient dates to rearrange the fixtures, but that Leeds had rejected them all. Before the season ended the Football League fined the Elland Road side a record £5,000 for fielding weakened teams, in breach of League regulation 23, "Each club shall play its full strength in all league matches unless some satisfactory reason is given". Although Leeds had played a number of reserves in several matches toward the end of the season, the League management committee's decision was based on the Derby match alone.

Despite being allocated only 6,000 tickets, 10,000 Celtic fans were travelling down to Leeds by any means available to them.

British Rail ran a 'Football Special' departing Glasgow at 12.31 on the afternoon of the match, arriving at Leeds 5 hours later. The price for a return ticket was 60/-. A local travel agent had chartered a plane for 100 fans, flying down in the afternoon and returning to Glasgow after the game. Of the Celtic fans' arrival The Yorkshire Post wrote, "Nothing had happened quite like it in Yorkshire since the Roman legions left York." The entire Celtic support arriving from all parts of Britain was estimated at 13,000.

Twenty players were in the Celtic travelling party. In addition to those players who had a chance of playing, Lisbon Lions Ronnie Simpson, John Clark and Stevie Chalmers would also travel. John Clark was the first of the Lions to lose his place in the team, as Jim Brogan broke through to claim a place in defence. Evan Williams was now Celtic's first choice in the goal Simpson had kept so well for a number of years. Chalmers was still a first team player, but had suffered a leg break in the League Cup final the previous October. He would make a comeback in the reserves against Motherwell, a few days later. On the train down to Leeds, Celtic had a special carriage all to themselves.

The popular Scottish comedian Lex McLean had managed to get a seat in that carriage as well. Lex was as famous a Rangers supporter as there was in that day. Among the many songs he wrote celebrating Celtic's deadliest rivals was 'Every Other Saturday', a song that is still sung at Ibrox to this day. Despite his love for Rangers, he was travelling down to watch the match and entertained the squad with his bawdy humour. Tommy Gemmell wrote in his autobiography 'Lion Heart', "McLean made the journey from Glasgow to Leeds feel like 5 minutes. He was non stop, unbelievable." Jock Stein later repaid the compliment by appearing on McLean's TV show, 'Lex', playing the straight man in a sketch.

Don Revie was at the railway station to welcome the Celtic team as it arrived.

Revie told a press conference before the match, "We must win this first leg game. A draw will be no use to us at Hampden. We must get either a 1-0 or a 2-0 victory at Elland Road."

Tony Queen, a Glasgow bookmaker and a personal friend of Jock Stein, gave odds for the first leg game as Leeds 4-6, Celtic 4-1 and the draw 5-2.

There was a conundrum for Celtic before the kick-off. As both teams normally wore white stockings the away team would have to change. Though Celtic claimed they thought Leeds had agreed to do so. This meant that Celtic did not have an adequate replacement with them, but never fear Leeds stepped in to offer them an alternative. They could wear blue or red.

“We'll wear the red stockings,” said Jock Stein, sensing a little bit of gamesmanship from Leeds. “Under their floodlights, they'll show up more orange than red and our supporters will think that we're wearing the colours of the Irish tricolour. That'll please them.”

Semi-Final - First Leg

1st April 1970, Elland Road (Att: 45,505)

Leeds United 0-1 Celtic

(Connelly 40 secs)

Leeds - Sprake, Reaney, Cooper, Bremner, (Bates), Charlton, Madley, Lorimer, Clarke, Jones, Giles, Gray.

Celtic - Williams, Hay, Gemmell, Murdoch, McNeill, Brogan, Johnstone, Connelly, (Hughes), Wallace, Lennox, Auld.

Celtic's team cost £44,000 to assemble, while the cost of the Leeds side was £300,000, with striker Allan Clarke, then Britain's most expensive player, costing £165,000.

Despite all the problems Leeds had with their players' fitness the only first team regular missing was defender Norman Hunter.

The book 'Rhapsody in Green – Great Celtic Moments' by Tom Campbell and Pat Woods, quotes Stein discussing the anticipated clash between Jimmy Johnstone and Leeds left-back Terry Cooper with a friend. Stein said, “They say this Cooper is a great attacking full back, but he's never had this tricky wee dwarf running at him for 90 minutes.”

Leeds had not lost a goal in Europe all season. This record was to fall inside 40 seconds. A high ball bouncing through the middle was misjudged by Madley and fell to George Connelly who hit a shot that deflected off a Leeds defender and crept in at Gary Sprake's left hand post. Curiously this was the first away goal Celtic had scored in Europe throughout the campaign.

50 seconds into the second half Jimmy Johnstone swung over a cross and George Connelly again fired a low shot past Sprake. The goal would not stand, with the referee awarding a free kick outside the box. The decision was presumably for offside against Johnstone, though the crowd were baffled, as Terry Cooper appeared to play him onside.

This let-off seemed to spur Leeds into action as they came at Celtic with Billy Bremner their driving force. But their failure to combat Celtic in midfield, with Bobby Murdoch commanding, led them to resort to a long ball tactic. This bore no fruit as Billy McNeill and the rest of the defence continually out-jumped Jones, Clarke and Charlton.

In 68 minutes Billy Bremner went up for a high ball in the penalty box. As he came down he landed on his head, and he was taken off with concussion. Mick Jones missed a great chance when Jim Brogan made an uncharacteristic error by slicing a clearance. The ball fell to the England international who, with the goal at his mercy, miss-hit his shot and watched as the ball spun harmlessly past the post. It was Celtic's night as Jimmy Johnstone ran and weaved all evening, taking the pressure off his defence at crucial moments.

After the game Jock Stein said, “They have laughed at our football long enough down here. I'm not talking about Leeds United or Don Revie, they have respect for us. I'm talking about the critics and commentators who have rarely given credit to Scottish football. Maybe tonight's result will stop them laughing.” Despite the result Stein remained cautious adding, “Remember this is only half time, we have another 90 minutes to play at Hampden.”

Don Revie commented "Celtic played very well. They are a great side. It makes it very hard for us at Hampden, but nothing is impossible in football."

Liverpool boss Bill Shankly, who was at the game, was impressed by Celtic's performance. He said, "Every manager in England should have been here tonight for an object lesson on how the game should be played."

Even though he was still suffering from concussion Billy Bremner was the first Leeds player in the Celtic dressing room to congratulate them.

To rub salt into Leeds' wounds they discovered that Everton had secured the victory they needed that night to take the English First Division title.

Although some publicans in Leeds feared trouble and closed their doors, there were only a handful of arrests mainly for supporters being drunk and disorderly. The most unusual perhaps was a 39-year-old Celtic fan from Methil in Fife. He approached a police officer on a horse, shouting and waving his arms, before making several attempts to jump on the back of the police horse. He was arrested and later fined £10 for being drunk and disorderly.

Celtic were flooded by letters from those publicans and hotel proprietors who had dared to remain open, as well as members of the public in Leeds commending the fans.

The Scottish press went overboard the next day. Hugh Taylor wrote in the Daily Record, "It was a victory that should have been accompanied by the pipes of the Scots Guard, a roll of drums and a commentary by Olivier."

On that Thursday afternoon 5,000 fans packed Glasgow Central train station to see Celtic return. The station's switchboard had been bombarded all day, with fans asking when the team's train was arriving. British Rail had set up a special path, ringed by metal barriers to control the crowds. As Celtic's train pulled into the platform they burst into song. A tremendous roar erupted when Jock Stein emerged. Jock Stein said, "This is a tremendous reception. Once again the Celtic fans have proved how great they are." A bewildered George Connelly said, "This homecoming is really something."

Amazingly Leeds played in a league match that night, their 8th game in 16 days. The two-all draw with West Ham had a horrific outcome as defender Paul Reaney broke his leg. Not only did this put an end to his domestic season, Reaney, then the holder of a solitary England cap, had to pull out of Alf Ramsey's 28-man squad for the Mexico World Cup.

Jimmy Johnstone was being hailed as a genius by the media on both sides of the border, all keen to suggest he was at least the equal of George Best. He spoke to Ken Gallacher of the Daily Record. "They can put all the valuations they like on me," he said. "They can compare me with any player they like. I don't care. I know people are saying I must be worth a quarter of a million pounds, but as far as I am concerned I am a Celtic player - and I always will be a Celtic player."

"It was my best game at European Cup or international standard. But the whole team played so well. We wanted to do it so much."

On Saturday April the 11th both sides were involved in their national cup finals. Celtic suffered a shock defeat, going down 3-1 to Aberdeen. A result the Daily Record called 'Probably the biggest upset in a final since the war.'

Leeds were held to a 2-2 draw with Chelsea in a game played on a heavy sand covered pitch, the Horse of the Year show having been at Wembley the previous week.

At Parkhead on Monday April 13th, while a few hundred people watched Celtic Reserves beat Partick Thistle Reserves 4-1 inside, 4,000 fans queued up outside for 5,000 extra tickets for the big match. Leeds had failed to shift their allocation of 10,000 and had advised Celtic that they would send up to them the unsold tickets. The tickets were advertised as going on sale at 4 o'clock, but they failed to arrive and at 10pm a loudspeaker announced, "Leeds have let us down very badly". The dejected fans took the news well and trudged home. Leeds claimed there had been a misunderstanding; they had still been selling tickets throughout the day. Secretary Keith Archer assured fans that, "Five thousand five hundred 12 shilling tickets are now on their way to Celtic."

The tickets arrived at Celtic Assistant Manager Sean Fallon's house just after midnight. They went on sale at 7pm on the eve of the match.

Willie Wallace injured himself in training and was ruled out of the game. In addition Captain Billy McNeill was struggling to shake off an ankle knock.

In the day prior to the second leg the Leeds players relaxed by playing bingo and carpet bowls. At Leeds's East Kilbride hotel Revie said, "We have been told that no team who are a goal down at home in a European Cup semi-final have ever reached the final of the tournament. But we won't let that worry us because we are history makers, we are record breakers. And if ever a record can go, then this one can."

Semi-Final – Second Leg

15th April 1970

Hampden Park, Glasgow (Att: 136,505)

Celtic 2 -1 Leeds United

(Hughes 47, Murdoch 51 – Bremner 14)

Celtic - Williams, Hay, Gemmell, Murdoch, McNeill, Brogan, Johnstone, Connelly, Hughes, Auld, Lennox.

Leeds - Sprake (Harvey), Madley, Cooper, Bremner, Charlton, Hunter, Lorimer, Clarke, Jones, Giles, Gray.

Leeds United, indeed no other side in Europe, had ever faced such a one-sided support as this one. With only 4,500 fans travelling up from Yorkshire, the support for Celtic was overwhelming. The attendance was a record for a European Cup match. It still stands to this day and is unlikely ever to be beaten.

The Scottish press suggested that for at least this match, bigotry in Glasgow had been forgotten, as many Rangers fans had gone to the game to support Celtic.

In Archie MacPherson's book 'Jock Stein – The Definitive Biography' he describes Stein's team talk. "Revie's shitting himself. I've never seen that man as nervous in all my life. He's as white as a sheet. If he's like that, what do you think his players are like? They are there for the taking, believe you me."

John Hughes had missed the 1967 final and Stein, legendary for his unique ways of individually motivating his players, took him aside before this match. "I know you were sick about missing the last final, but if you do well for me tonight and we reach the final, you'll definitely play."

Celtic forced six corners in the opening eight minutes as the Scots attacked right from the kick-off. Murdoch, Connelly and Auld took control of the midfield and created a succession of chances.

In 14 minutes, Leeds captain, Billy Bremner, edged forward with the ball before smashing in a shot from around 30 yards out that flew into the net off the angle of the post and the crossbar. Despite Celtic's domination, the aggregate scores were now level at 1-1.

Bremner later recalled that after he had scored the massive crowd fell silent. He confessed to being disconcerted at the funeral atmosphere his goal had momentarily created. It was, however, the one moment during the match where his team-mates could hear him urging them on. He said, "The crowd then began chanting: 'Celtic ... Celtic'. It was the type of noise that made many an Englishman freeze in internationals."

Cooper and Madeley would both clear the ball off the Leeds goal line in the first half as they hung on in the face of constant Celtic pressure. It stayed one-nil Leeds until half-time. Were the game to remain this way, with the sides tied on aggregate at one-all, there would be no coin toss as there was earlier in the tournament. It was decided that a replay would take place at Hillsborough in Sheffield. The venue was decided after the toss of a coin between Stein and Revie at the end of the first match.

But that would prove to be unnecessary as within minutes of the restart, Celtic were well in command of the tie. On 47 minutes, Davie Hay took a short corner, Auld whipped the ball across goal and there was John Hughes to head into the net. Moments later Gary Sprake, the Leeds goalkeeper, was carried off following a challenge from Hughes. On came future Scotland international David Harvey in his place. He was hardly on the pitch before it was 2-1 to Celtic. Bobby Murdoch played a one-two with Johnstone then lashed the ball past Harvey.

Jimmy Johnstone ran both Terry Cooper and Norman Hunter ragged. They had swapped positions after Hunter complained to Cooper about his ineffective marking of the winger. "Kick him!" Hunter was said to have shouted to his colleague.

"You try and kick him!" was Cooper's retort.

In 'Hail Cesar' Billy McNeill recalls meeting Terry Cooper on holiday years later. The 20 times capped England international reflected on his encounters with Jinky. "I still have nightmares. I reckon I had good anticipation, but I could do nothing to take the ball off Johnstone."

With Celtic holding a 3-1 aggregate lead, there was no way back for Leeds. Celtic were the first British team to make it to two European Cup finals.

Jock Stein resisted his players' attempts to hoist him onto their shoulders at full-time. Bertie Auld procured a bowler hat from a fan and paraded the field wearing it. He recently told the Evening Times about the night. "Incredibly emotional," he said. "We seemed to grow by the minute after they had taken the lead and to prove, home and away, that we were better than a much-vaunted Leeds was a lovely feeling."

The crowd didn't seem to want to go home and they stayed on the terraces after the game chanting Jock Stein's name.

There was one man that Jock Stein wanted to acclaim. That man was trainer Bob Rooney. "I don't know how Billy McNeill was able to play tonight. It's a miracle. And Bob Rooney is the man responsible for it. I don't know how Bob did it. Really Billy played that game on one leg. It was a tremendous performance from him. In any other game I would not have risked him."

After shaking hands with the many well wishers Stein retreated to a small back room in Hampden to wind down. Hugh McIlvaney reported in The Observer that Stein turned to him in that room and said, "What about that, then? What did you think of that? It wasn't bad, was it? Eh?"

A despondent Don Revie said, "We lost our chance at Leeds. When we scored I thought we could do something, but Celtic are a very, very good side. I sincerely hope they win the European Cup again." The English press were now fulsome in their praise for Celtic. The Daily Telegraph wrote "They may have only one world-class individual player, Jimmy Johnstone, in what is essentially a team. But what an individual! What a team!"

The Daily Express said, 'Britain couldn't have a team of greater splendour to represent them than Celtic.' And in The Guardian, 'Celtic last night were superior in every phase of the game. The midfield was theirs to dominate and exploit as Giles and Bremner gave best to Auld and Connelly. But the man of the match was again the tiny but wily Jimmy Johnstone.'

In Norman Hunter's autobiography 'Biting Talk' he paid tribute to Celtic. "I played in a lot of European games for Leeds United. That Celtic side was probably the best I played against."

He wasn't the only Leeds player in awe of Celtic. In David Saffer's book 'Sniffer - the Life and Times of Allan Clarke', Clarke said, "Looking back they were the better team over the two matches. There's no doubt we were jaded. That said Jimmy Johnstone was magnificent."

Tommy Gemmell had this to say in 'Lion Heart', "These games against Leeds were two of the easiest that I experienced in all the years I played in European football with Celtic."

Celtic were in the final, the favourites beaten and the Scottish media in a frenzy. Before the Leeds match the great Helenio Herrera, then manager of AS Roma, tipped Celtic for the final, but added, "Watch out for Feyenoord."

Celtic 1970: European Cup Final v Feyenoord – The Dream Ends

Having disposed of Leeds United in the semi-final Celtic were immediately installed as heavy favourites for the final. Their Dutch opponents, Feyenoord hadn't endured quite as many tough matches as Celtic in the earlier rounds, although they still had their significant triumphs.

They began their campaign comfortably enough, thumping KR Reykjavik of Iceland by a record 12-2 in their first round first leg match. Ove Kindvall scored a hat-trick and Ruud Geels bagged four. That result was followed up by a 4-0 win away from home. Their reward was a second round tie with reigning champions AC Milan. In the San Siro, Milan triumphed with a 1-0 win thanks to a 9th minute goal from Nestor Combin. The Feyenoord fans queued overnight for tickets for the return match. They had their reward as the Dutch champions levelled things on aggregate after only 6 minutes. Goalkeeper Cudicini left a Wim Jansen shot that he thought was going wide, only to watch in horror as it hit the post and went in. With less than ten minutes remaining Willem van Hanegem headed the winner.

A quarter final tie against East German champions Vorwärts Berlin awaited. Despite a one goal defeat in the first leg, the Dutchmen progressed thanks to goals in the second leg from Kindvall and Wery. They had matched their achievement of 1962/63 by reaching the semi-final. It was to Poland, and Warsaw for the first leg of the semi-final leg match with Legia. In a downpour and on a sodden pitch Feyenoord came away with a goalless draw. They finished the job in the second leg, as a third minute header from van Hanegem and a 20 yard drive from Hasil after 32 minutes gave them a 2-0 aggregate win. This ensured that for the first time in the competition's 15-year history, two sides from northern Europe would contest the final of the European Champion Clubs' Cup.

Celtic's final league match of the season was on Saturday April 18th against St. Mirren at Love Street. Feyenoord coach Ernst Happel flew in to watch the match. Although Celtic were missing Gemmell, McNeill, Johnstone, Lennox and Hughes, Happel was still impressed by what he saw in the 3-2 Celtic win. "It will be very, very difficult for us," he commented afterwards.

"Celtic had better not underestimate us. We are a good team and we believe we can win in Milan," he continued. "Our team are playing very well and we are afraid of no one. Of course we know all about Celtic. All Europe knows about their two victories over Leeds United and their win in Lisbon."

However, Happel was keen to assert that his side would not be in awe of the Scottish champions. "But although it will be had those victories do not make us afraid of them. We have fine players in our team too and we are looking forward to the final."

An Austrian, Ernst Happel joined Rapid Vienna as a 13-year-old in 1938, making his debut in the first team 3 years later. Between 1954 and 1956 he had a spell at Racing Club of Paris before returning to Rapid, where in total he won 7 Austrian championships. He played for his country at the 1954 World Cup finals as they made it through to the semi-finals. He would return to the finals as a player in 1958. In the 1956/57 European Cup first round, Happel, a centre back, scored a hat-trick in a 3-1 win against Real Madrid as Rapid came back from a 4-2 first leg defeat. They would ultimately lose out in a third game in Madrid.

His first club as a coach was ADO Den Haag in Holland, who he took over in 1962, taking them to the 1968 Dutch Cup. In September 1969 he was appointed manager of Feyenoord.

On Sunday the 19th of April Feyenoord drew 0-0 with NEX in a league match as they tried to make ground on Ajax at the top of the Dutch Eredivisie.

The following day, Celtic defender Tommy Gemmell, was involved in a car crash. At around 4.15 in the afternoon his car mounted a grass verge, struck a signpost and overturned about 400 yards from his home in Kirkintilloch. Passing motorists administered first aid after Gemmell crawled out from under the wreckage. A doctor put 3 stitches into a wound in his head and Scotland physiotherapist Jimmy Steel stayed at Gemmell's home that night to give him treatment for a thigh bruise he picked up in the crash.

Gemmell would be fit enough to play at Hampden Park on the 25th of April as 137, 438 spectators saw Scotland draw 0-0 with England. Johnstone and Hay were the other Celtic players involved in the match.

In Holland, Feyenoord drew 3-3 with Ajax. This meant that they stayed 5 points behind their rivals from Amsterdam in the race for the title. Their 23-year-old keeper Eddy Treytel was deemed to have been at fault for all three goals. Jock Stein and assistant Sean Fallon were at the game.

Stein said afterwards, "I could not have chosen a better game to watch Feyenoord play in. It was vital for them and they went after a victory. I saw a lot of football from them which was impressive. Their big centre forward Kindvall will be a big danger to us. There were two more players we will have to find a method to deal with...but I'm not naming them. I don't want to give away too much."

Assistant Manager Sean Fallon spoke to Malcolm Munro of the Evening Times after he returned from Holland. "A first rate team in every way," he said of their Dutch opponents. "We couldn't spot any weaknesses. Did you know that they haven't been beaten [in the league] this season? They'll take a bit of watching in Milan."

Feyenoord's general manager Guus Brox gave an interview to Ken Gallacher of the Daily Record in the week before the final. "The days of Feyenoord being a part-time team are long gone. I am certain that the wages that we pay are as good as what Celtic pay or any of the other Scottish teams. Our players are earning an average of around £5,000 a year without any bonus payments being added."

The Feyenoord players were on £1,000 a man to beat Celtic. "For the game against Celtic we have decided to pay the players the biggest bonus that they have ever earned from the club," said Brox. "In fact probably the biggest that any Dutch club has been offered...we are determined that we will win." Dutch football had only turned professional in 1954, despite organised football being played there for 50 years previously. Many clubs, however, remained primarily staffed with amateur and part-time players. As a result their outlook was amateur also. Brox was keen to emphasize that these days were long gone and that Feyenoord were a professional side.

"There was a time when most of our footballers were part-time. Today at Feyenoord we have just two part-time men in our first team pool - the two right-backs Piet Romeyns and Guus Haak, who both work

in offices. We are professionals.”

At the time Feyenoord's average home attendance was 51,000 and Brox went on to highlight the club's loyal following. “Originally we asked the European Union for 15,000 tickets for the game. They have ordered another 5,000 tickets. I am certain that we will be able to outnumber the Celtic fans, even after what we have heard about the amazing support the Scots gave their team in the final against Inter Milan in Lisbon. I honestly think this will be almost the same as a home game for us.”

The Feyenoord players went into a recording studio and recorded a song for the final. Titled, 'The Feyenoord Song', it was played round the clock in Rotterdam's bars and on the radio.

Back in Scotland, on Tuesday the 28th of April, Celtic were preparing for the final by travelling up to Fraserburgh to play in an exhibition match in aid of the Fraserburgh Lifeboat Disaster Fund. In January of 1970, while on service to the Danish fishing vessel Opal, the Fraserburgh lifeboat The Duchess of Kent capsized with the loss of five of her crew of six. The little northern fishing port was buzzing with the arrival of the European finalists. Jock Stein was adamant that this was a proper game for the Glasgow side. “This will not just be a training spin for us. We know the game is expected to be a sell out and we want to show the spectators good football.”

6,500 fans turned out at Bellslea Park for the match in which a full strength Celtic romped to a 7-0 victory. An own goal by Broch captain Doug Milne started the rout and goals followed by Wallace, Auld, Hood, Lisbon Lion Jim Craig and a brace from John Hughes. Some local children watched the game from the chute, roundabouts and swings of a playground at one end of the field and from a garage at the other. Hundreds of locals invaded the pitch at the final whistle to acclaim the Celtic players. The match raised £2,000 for the appeal.

With thousands of Celtic fans planning their trip to Milan there was some good news for stay at home supporters. Glasgow pubs were allocated a licence to serve alcohol until 11.15pm on the night of the match. There were however two conditions. The first was that publicans must apply to the Chief Constable and the Town Clerk for permission. The second condition was that the pub must have a television set.

Ernst Happel spoke to Ken Gallacher about Celtic's strengths, as he highlighted Tommy Gemmell, Davie Hay and Jimmy Johnstone as the men his team needed to be wary of most.

“They attack. And they attack better than any other team.” To combat this attacking strength there could be little better in Europe than Feyenoord's mean defence. They had conceded only 14 goals in 28 league games that season. Happel was keen to deflect criticism that they were in essence a defensive side.

“We will try to play offensive football in Milan. But we would be silly if we put everything into attacking moves. We do not play stupidly. We play with some caution and clearly that is needed against a team of Celtic's calibre.”

Even in Holland, Celtic were being touted as strong favourites. Happel dismissed this projection, suggesting that over one match it was wrong to make anyone favourites and reminded his interviewer that Celtic had already been shocked in one final that season. “On one game though, it is different for us. After all, we can look back to Aberdeen's result against Celtic in the Scottish Cup final. It was one game and I think they were bigger outsiders than we are for Milan.”

With the Rotterdam side's next league game Happel made a shock team selection. For the match against DOS Utrecht Eddy Treysel lost his place in goal. Taking over the number one jersey was 36 year old Eddy Peiters-Graafland, who had already announced that he would retire at the end of the season. His inclusion was something of a surprise, as he had not played a competitive first team game since the 11th of June the previous year. Although a chance to finish his career in the European Cup final had come his way, Peiters-Graafland couldn't help but feel inconvenienced by it.

“This has taken me by surprise and I must try to sharpen up my reflexes,” the Dutch international said. “It is not so good after you have played in the reserves to come back suddenly in this way. It has really

surprised me. I have watched as Teytel failed before, but Happel has done nothing. Now suddenly he returns to me.”

Treytel was more succinct. “I am bitterly disappointed,” he said.

The game ended in a one-all draw.

Celtic fans were planning their descent on Milan by any means available to them. A return flight from Glasgow or Prestwick was £35. Fans would also travel by car, van, bike and rail. There were even supporters set to hitch-hike the 925 miles to Milan. Some Celtic fans were already in Milan by the First of May, five days before the game. When they arrived they discovered that the city was in the middle of industrial action. There was a national strike by Post Office workers and telephone operators. In addition local municipal workers and hotel workers were also on strike.

That night Celtic beat Stenhousemuir 8-0 at Parkhead in front of a 5,500 crowd. Bobby Lennox with a double, Billy McNeill, Willie Wallace, Bertie Auld, another double from John Hughes and Bobby Murdoch were the scorers.

On Sunday the Third of May the match was suddenly thrown into doubt. In addition to the workers already taking industrial action, two new strikes were announced. Staff at the San Siro stadium said that they would walk out and refuse to work the turnstiles.

Police who handled the traffic and controlled the stadium crowds announced a week long strike to start on Tuesday. After day long talks UEFA gave the Italians an ultimatum. 'Get the chaos cleared up by noon tomorrow - or we'll postpone the game and play it elsewhere.'

A senior UEFA official was quoted as saying, “If the game cannot be played in Milan on Wednesday a new day will be fixed. But the venue will not be in Italy - the match will go on in some other European city.”

A move to switch the game to Rome was turned down as there was not enough time to make the necessary arrangements.

The strikes, which were over more pay and shorter hours, would affect 30 stadium staff and 250 traffic police all employed by Milan Corporation who owned the football ground. The Corporation's Director of Sport and Tourism, Signor Gianfranco Crespi said, “The stadium strike is the real threat. It would make it impossible to stage the game on Wednesday.”

Two vital meetings were set to take place on Monday in a bid to save the game. The Corporation would meet the men's union and backed by a personal plea from the mayor Signor Aldo Aniasi urge the men to work at least until Wednesday. The Corporation officials would then travel the 50 miles to Lake Como to update UEFA bosses on their progress.

Celtic secretary Desmond White said, “Celtic can do nothing. The only people who can say if the game will not go on in Milan are the European or Italian Associations.”

The Celtic side had made their familiar trip down to Troon, to stay at the Marine Hotel before flying out to Italy from Prestwick on Monday the 4th of May. The entire playing staff of 30 would be flying out. Jock Stein explained why so many players made up the travelling party. “The reason I'm taking all my players is to let youngsters such as Dalglish, Davidson, McGrain and Gorman find out what it's all about.” He continued, 'The earlier they absorb this type of atmosphere, while they're not actually involved, the easier it will be for them when called on.’’

Also on board Celtic's plane would be 31 journalists, the biggest contingent of pressmen ever to accompany a Scottish team abroad. Scotland team manager Bobby Brown and Scottish League Chairman James Aitken were also official Celtic guests.

Celtic would be based in the Palace Hotel, situated on a hilltop in Verese, a small town near the lakes, 30 miles to the north of Milan. "We will not go into Milan at all," Jock Stein said of Celtic's pre-match preparation. "We have been to the San Siro stadium before, little more than a year ago, and we know all about it."

Celtic had drawn 0-0 with AC Milan at the San Siro in the quarter-finals of the 1968/69 European Cup. "In that sense, the ground is not going to make too much difference to the game," Stein continued. "What could affect the players is too much attention from the supporters." "We would like to have peace and we would like to have rest for the players before the game. That is why we are living well out of the city. To go to the San Siro before the game could upset our build up."

Ernst Happel switched his side's Headquarters, on the banks of Lake Como, for the same reason. "It is impossible to keep up their concentration when the fans arrive," he said of the players. "It is not good for the players and we have been forced to move." "Originally we thought that we would be able to keep our hotel a secret," he added. "But the name leaked out in Holland and so we have had to change. It is the only way for us." Feyenoord and Celtic had an estimated 25,000 fans each in Milan. Both sets of fans sang in the main square at Piazza Dumo, as the Italian police looked on smiling.

Glasgow's banks reported that they had run out of lire as Celtic fans exchanged their cash for the Italian currency. The Bank of Scotland on St Vincent Street exchanged one million lire (£700). The Milanese mayor won the police over early on in the crucial meeting on Monday. They agreed to be on duty at the stadium. The matter of who would attend to the floodlights would be ironed out later in the day as talks went on.

With Manchester City having won the European Cup Winners' Cup and Arsenal defeating Anderlecht in the two-legged final of the Fairs Cup, pressure was on Celtic to complete a British clean sweep of European trophies.

At their hotel they received a telegraph from the British Prime Minister. It read: "Best wishes for your success in Milan. Make it a European hat-trick for British football. Harold Wilson, Downing Street."

Celtic Chairman Sir Robert Kelly spoke to the media before the game about his side's chances. "If we play to our best form then we will win all right. I know this. But footballers are not like pieces of machinery for other businesses. We have to beat them as individuals. They are human beings and are not infallible. I said long ago that Celtic would be likelier than any other side from Britain to win the European Cup and I was laughed at. Others made the mistake of trying to copy the Continentals' style of play. We decided that if we were to succeed it would be on our own terms."

At a meeting in Milan before the game, UEFA voted to scrap the practice of tossing a coin to decide the outcome of a tied match. Drawn ties would now be settled by a penalty shoot out. Celtic, who had contacted UEFA to protest about this method of settling drawn European ties after their win over Benfica, welcomed the move. Jock Stein said, "Penalty kicks are a part of the game. There is skill involved in taking penalty kicks, and surely it is better to have skills winning than sheer luck. As a club we welcome this."

In conversation with Malcolm Munro on the eve of the final Jock Stein was quietly confident of a second European Cup for Celtic. "I'll know after ten minutes if we are going to beat Feyenoord tomorrow night. I'll know by the way the defence has settled, how the middle of the field is faring and

how the runners are going. That's all I'll need - ten minutes.”

The position Celtic found themselves in of being favourites didn't sit well with Stein.

“You know I have the feeling we are being overrated and the Dutch underrated. That's dangerous. I don't like it. It's 1967 in reverse. Then we went to Lisbon starry-eyed, the underdogs not expected to win. Now Feyenoord are in that position and we are the fastest gun in the West. We are the target everyone wants to see knocked over.”

On Celtic's chances of winning the trophy Stein added, “I'd like to win - if we deserve to win. I'd like to win in style.”

Stein had nothing to hide from the opposition, declaring that Celtic's Tuesday training session be open to all, including Feyenoord officials and Dutch journalists. “We have been told that Feyenoord will play the Italian type of game, which is basically defensive,” Stein said. “They say the Dutch are worried about our pace and running power. We will let them worry.”

The pre-match betting had Celtic 3-1 on and Feyenoord 4-1 against.

Before he turned in for the day Stein said, “Our only fear in this final is fear of ourselves, not of Feyenoord who we feel we can beat.”

European Cup final, San Siro Stadium, Milan, 6 May 1970, att 53,000

Feyenoord (1) 2 Celtic (1) 1 AET (90 mins 1-1)

29' 0-1: Gemmell

31' 1-1: Israël

117' 2-1: Kindvall

Feyenoord (trainer Ernst Happel)

Eddy Pieters-Graafland; Piet Romeijn (Guus Haak 107), Theo Laseroms, Rinus Israël (captain), Theo Van Duivenbode;

Franz Hasil, Wim Jansen; Willem Van Hanegem, Henk Wery, Ove Kindvall, Coen Moulijn

Celtic (manager Jock Stein)

Evan Williams; Davie Hay, Jim Brogan, Billy McNeill (captain), Tommy Gemmell; Bobby Murdoch, Bertie Auld (George Connelly 77); Jimmy Johnstone, Bobby Lennox, Willie Wallace, John Hughes

Celtic's line up included seven men who had played in Lisbon in 1967. Bertie Auld was actually playing in his third European final having been part of the Birmingham City side who lost to Roma in the Fairs Cup final of 1961.

Stein's team talk began by reminding his Celtic players that 12 months earlier Ajax had slumped to a 4-1 defeat to AC Milan in the final. Five of the Dutch players had virtually collapsed with nerves Stein told his team. “These Dutch players will be shitting themselves,” he said of Feyenoord. Van Hanegem was dismissed as being “A slower Jim Baxter, with a right foot just for standing on.”

The game would be refereed by Concetto Lo Bello, the Italian who had taken charge of Celtic's game with Benfica earlier in the tournament.

On the History of Football series of DVDs, Van Hanegem recalled lining up for the final and looking across at the Celtic players. “They were almost arrogant,” he says. “But that's trivial. It's the way they were standing around, very full of themselves, doing a bit of warming up in a little circle. Besides the fact that we were motivated already, that gave us an extra push.”

Ernst Happel had seen Celtic himself along with his scouts and he was in no doubt where the danger lay in Celtic's side. Jimmy Johnstone. Happel ordered that he be double marked.

After Johnstone passed away in March 2006, Willem van Hanegem wrote in the Dutch newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad* of how Feyenoord effectively stifled Celtic's biggest attacking threat that night. "[Our scouts'] reports did not fill us with confidence," he wrote. "They said that there were no flaws in the Celtic team and that Johnstone was the playmaker. He was unstoppable they said. 'Well, we'll see about that' we thought. We had an excellent left full back, Theo van Duivenbode, but he could not be expected to stop 'the Flea' by himself. We tried to isolate him – Coen Moulijn prevented the supply of ball from David Hay, I blocked Bobby Murdoch, and their number ten, Bertie Auld, was also tied up. Even after we had cut off the supply to Johnstone we followed him everywhere. He didn't get a chance to attack van Duivenbode, which was just as well because you had no chance when confronted by his control and movement. If he got going, he could easily leave three or four men in his wake."

Whenever Celtic got the ball there were almost always three Feyenoord men around Johnstone. Murdoch, Connelly and Auld had bossed the midfield in both matches against Leeds, but on this occasion they were second best to Hasil, van Hanegem and Jansen.

Jock Stein had told Jim Brogan that he would be Celtic's secret weapon. When they had to defend he would drop back, but in attack he would race upfield to join in. He would be the last player Feyenoord would expect in the attack. Unfortunately in the very first attack Brogan picked up a knock that proved to be a chipped ankle bone. Playing the rest of the game with a limp he was unable to provide Billy McNeill with adequate cover in defence to deal with the pace of Kindvall and Moulijn, though he gave everything he had.

Bobby Lennox had the ball in the net after 18 minutes, but it was disallowed for offside. Franz Hasil was the main danger to Celtic throughout the match and his influence spread right through the Feyenoord team.

Yet it was Celtic who took the lead on the half-hour. Willie Wallace was fouled 20 yards out. Murdoch back-heeled the ball at the free-kick and Gemmell fired home one of the low shots he had become famed for. The goalkeeper could claim to have been unsighted by the referee, who had to jump out of the way of Gemmell's blistering shot.

The lead only lasted two minutes, however, as Celtic failed to clear their lines at a free kick. As the ball bounced around the penalty area Rinus Israël, the 28 year old Feyenoord captain, eventually headed it home. Van Hanegem then slowed the game to a walking pace, knowing full well that Celtic's tactics were to go full steam ahead.

Evan Williams was in sensational form in goal for Celtic, pulling off several inspired saves to keep the Glasgow side in contention. Celtic were also rescued by the post and the crossbar on occasion.

The game stayed one-all at the end of 90 minutes and entered extra-time. If the match remained level after 120 minutes there would be a replay two days later.

John Hughes had made up for a poor first-half by putting in a lively shift after the interval. He had a great chance to score in the first minutes of extra-time, as he went through on the keeper, but Pieters-Graafland pulled off an exemplary save. "I honestly believe that my career effectively came to an end at that moment," Hughes said later of his miss. "I was never really forgiven."

With only three minutes remaining Billy McNeill misjudged a long free-kick hoisted into the Celtic penalty box. He lost his balance and as he was falling he threw his hands up to stop the ball, the only time he can remember taking such action during his career. Lo Bello failed to blow for a penalty as Ove Kindvall took possession of the ball. He took it round a defender and lobbed it over Williams to make it 2-1 Feyenoord. The referee would later claim he had played the advantage rule.

There was no time for a shell-shocked Celtic to get back into the match. The European Cup was on its way to Holland for the first time.

After the match Jock Stein had this to say, "We played badly. That sums it up. They won and they deserved to win." He went on to remark, "You can carry a team with two, or even three of the players off form. We had too many out there who were just not with it."

As the Dutch team celebrated in the dressing room next door Stein gave his assessment of the match. "They played as a team without a weakness. Unfortunately we had too many players off form, too many bad players tonight. But I don't want to take anything away from Feyenoord. They played well, better than us. Naturally I am disappointed."

The press were eager to discover from Stein the reason why his players had performed so poorly in one of the most important games of their career so far. But Stein refused to comment. "I know the reasons. But they remain between myself and my players. I am not going to criticise them publicly."

As Celtic's players sat in stunned silence in their dressing room their counterparts from Rotterdam were in a raucous mood. Van Hanegem was even wearing a Celtic supporter's tammy. Winning goalscorer Kindvall spoke to Ken Gallacher in the dressing room showers. "I could see that McNeill was not going to reach the ball in the air when the free kick was sent in," he said of his winner. "I moved round him and got to the ball just ahead of the keeper. I was surprised that the Celtic defence were not harder. I felt that I got more room to play than I had expected - but their goalkeeper was magnificent."

Ersnt Happel has this to say, "I felt we deserved to win. We made more chances. I was very pleased with the way Mr. Stein accepted defeat. He was one of the first to congratulate me. This is sportsmanship."

Van Hanegem, again in *Algemeen Dagblad*, told of Jimmy Johnstone's reaction at the final whistle. "What I will always remember is that he came up to me at the end of the match, a tough battle it had been, and he told me that we deserved to win and wished us all the best. You are a big man if you can react like that immediately after losing a European Cup final."

In Glasgow, police were called to a bar at Hospital Street in the Gorbals at 11.20pm. As a customer, 19 year old John Knotts, chose that moment to shout and swear at the pub's TV set as he watched Kindvall's winner drop into the net. The following day at Glasgow Central Police Court he was jailed for 60 days. When asked to explain his conduct, he replied, "Because Celtic got beaten on the final whistle."

There were plenty of theories as to why Celtic had lost. John Hughes told Archie MacPherson that the answer lies at the end of the Leeds United match at Hampden. "I think that's when it all started to go astray," he said. "For I think that night Jock Stein thought he had won the European Cup itself. If ever a man got it wrong from that moment on, it was him."

Stein's assessment of Wim Jansen before the game was that he 'could only play for 20 minutes before disappearing and he wouldn't be seen again.'

"Jock was right enough about that," said Bertie Auld. "I never did see Jansen after that. He got faster as we seemed to get slower. He was just too good for me."

In his autobiography 'Lion Heart' Tommy Gemmell suggested that Celtic's preparation wasn't as sharp as it could have been. "We were maybe a wee bit over-confident," he writes. "I would say we probably under-estimated Feyenoord as we were the hot favourites to win. The team talk and the information that we got from Jock about Feyenoord weren't up to the usual high standard. He played it a bit too low-key I felt and never really built us up in the way you would expect before a European Final."

Gemmell said in an interview with *The Scotsman* in 2003, "There was a fatal underestimation of Feyenoord, and I mean from top to bottom, at Celtic. That kind of complacency is not a good thing to take into a European Cup final. When we saw them knocking the ball about even in the early stages, we

thought, "Aye, aye, what have we got here?"

"Looking back, you wonder how we could have got it so wrong. I mean, Feyenoord already had Dutch internationalists such as Wim van Hanagem, Wim Jansen and Rinus Israel, as well as the Swedish striker, Ove Kindvall. In time, I believe the rest of them won caps, too, so they had some terrific players.

Gemmell could not deny that they were played off the park by a superior footballing side on the night. "They hardly ever wasted a pass," he said of Feyenoord in 'Lion Heart'. "Every one of them could use the ball, keep it, control it and pass it again. Several of their players were Dutch internationals so it was no disgrace to be beaten by them. It was a disgrace the way we played though because it was totally out of character for us. Normally we would control most of a match but we couldn't get the ball off Feyenoord and they ended up dominating the game."

Bobby Lennox was another to put their poor performance down to the wins over Leeds. He told Eugene MacBride in his book 'Talking with Celtic', "I think, probably at the back of our minds, we thought 'we've beaten Leeds, that's us!' But to be fair, Feyenoord on the night, Feyenoord were brilliant."

Lennox was once asked by the Evening Times about the worst moment of his career.

"After the final whistle in Milan," he answered. "Standing watching the group of lads from Feyenoord celebrating and parading the cup."

In 'Hail Cesar' Billy McNeill said, "In truth they slaughtered us on the night. Feyenoord were by far the better team."

In Graham McColl's book 'The Head Bhoys', Davie Hay said of Stein, "The only one time when he probably failed in all his time - and we played our part in that - was the European Cup final against Feyenoord, where I think we all underestimated the opposition after doing so well against Leeds United. Strangely enough, despite the fact that we didn't play well, we could almost have won that game - not that we would have deserved it. I think we were all to blame for losing that game. It was maybe the one error in his long career."

Hay elaborated on his feelings about that night in an interview with the Sunday Mirror in August of 2006. "Strangely, I really believe we should have won the European Cup that season. We beat Leeds United home and away in the semi-finals and probably thought that was the job done.

My old pal George Connelly was in midfield in both those games...and I thought he should have played in the final. Jock Stein didn't often get it wrong, but I think he did that night in the San Siro in Milan as we prepared to face Feyenoord who, to be honest, were a bit of an unknown quantity. He dropped George who had been so influential in the games against Leeds. I hate to admit this, but probably we under-estimated the Dutch side. Leeds had been hailed as the best club side in Europe until we took them apart. They might as well have just given us the trophy that night after we beat them 2-1 with goals from John Hughes and Bobby Murdoch. Feyenoord were there for the taking and we should have seen them off. It didn't help us that we took the lead...that further enhanced the notion that we just had to turn up to win. In truth, we were overwhelmed by the Dutch as they stormed forward and we actually gifted them the winning goal in extra-time. I remember gentleman Bobby Murdoch throwing the ball to an opponent after the referee awarded them a free-kick just yards into our own half. The Dutch guy placed the ball on the turf and immediately fired it into our penalty area. Billy McNeill didn't have a chance to position himself properly and palmed the ball into the air. Before the ref could give a penalty kick, Ove Kindvall latched onto the ball and fired it beyond the helpless Evan Williams."

Practically the only player who didn't think the blame lay with Stein was Jimmy Johnstone. He told Archie MacPherson, "No one can say a word about Jock on this game. We just didn't play well. If we had played to our strengths we would have won that game."

But was defeat down to underestimating their opposition? Was it simply that they had been outplayed by a superior side on the night? Or was there another explanation? There were suggestions that the team were caught up in a dispute about bonuses. The players had been told that they missed out on commercial benefits from their 1967 European Cup win and should not make the same mistake twice.

Players were also allegedly dissatisfied with the win bonus on offer from the Celtic board and squabbled amongst themselves about how the cash was to be shared out.

Some rumours through the years suggest that players were arguing with Stein in the dressing room before kick-off and even that they were willing to stay in there and forfeit the game if the expected bonuses were not forthcoming.

These suggestions have always been denied by the players.

Tommy Gemmell angrily refuted such allegations in an interview with *The Scotsman* from 2003. "A lot of nonsense was talked and written about that," Gemmell said. "Do you know what our so-called commercial exploitation amounted to? We did a team picture, for which we received the hefty sum of 50 quid each. That was it, nothing else. The reports that there was unrest in our camp as we tried to cash in on our achievements were garbage.

"As for the other story, that we were squabbling with the club over our supposed win bonus, let me tell you something. In my entire career at Celtic Park – and I was there ten years – we were never once told what our bonus would be for winning a cup-tie, either at home or in Europe.

"We knew what the league bonuses were, because we picked them up every week. But for the cups, we were never told, and that applied in Lisbon, as well. I think big Dessie [Desmond White the club secretary] waited to see who we had drawn in the next round and calculated what it would be worth before our bonus was determined."

Billy McNeill said in *'Hail Cesar'*, "There was no squabbling over the share out of cash, because there was no cash to share out. For reasons best known to himself Jock astonished us by employing the services of a Glasgow journalist, Ian Peebles, to act as an agent on the squad's behalf. Even if Ian Peebles had managed to generate a bit of cash, money would never have been more important than winning."

Archie MacPherson was one of the journalists with the Celtic squad at the time. He felt that Stein's usual authoritative manner had deserted him. In its place was a much more relaxed approach, allowing players to socialise with journalists, to lounge in the sun and allowing Peebles, who had written a book about the 1967 European Cup win called *'Celtic Triumphant'*, to advise the players.

MacPherson elaborates in his book *'Jock Stein – The Definitive Biography'*.

"Players were carrying on their negotiations about money and sponsorship deals helped by a journalist, Ian Peebles, who certainly had leanings towards Ibrox. That in itself, given Stein's sensitivity and full awareness of journalistic allegiances, was surprising. All this was being played out in front of and with the permission of the manager."

The day after the defeat Ian Peebles announced a new syndicate involving Celtic's first team pool. He said the players had formed the syndicate 24 hours after the win over Leeds United in the semi-final. Peebles reckoned that despite the defeat Celtic were still the biggest name in British football. Collectively, he said, Celtic's first team pool could make between £50,000 and £70,000 a year from interests outside football. "There's nothing sinister about this," Peebles said. "The syndicate had the blessing of Jock Stein who appreciated that there was extra money to be picked up commercially."

The Celtic players and fans' misery didn't end when they left the San Siro. Malpensa Airport saw more than 3,000 fans from both Celtic and Feyenoord all struggling to get a flight home. Some fans who had went to the airport straight from the stadium were still stuck there 18 hours later.

Workers at the airport, situated 25 miles outside the city, had gone on a lighting strike and no planes were being allowed permission to land. Phone clerks went out on strike too, so Scottish fans could not get calls back to home. Fans, officials, players and their wives were all delayed amid chaos as airport staff failed to take control.

One airport official said, “The traffic is far more than we expected. We simply can't cope.” In five hours only five planes took off, as airport authorities refused to get fans onto planes. The British Council intervened to help those stranded. A Celtic fan commented, “It has been really terrible at the airport. We could take defeat, but not the way we've been treated here. You'd think a bomb had hit the place.”

The following season Feyenoord went on to win the World Club Championship beating Estudiantes de la Plata of Argentina 3-2 over two legs. Feyenoord's European Cup win ushered in the era of Dutch dominance as their rivals Ajax won the next three European Cups.

The 1970 match was not to be Ernst Happel's last engagement with a European Cup final. Eight years later he took the Belgian side Club Brugge to Wembley where they lost to Liverpool. In 1983 Happel led SV Hamburg to victory over Juventus to become the first man to manage two different teams to European Cup victories. Happel also managed the Austrian and Dutch national teams, taking Holland to the 1978 World Cup final.

Sadly, he died of cancer in November of 1992 at the age of 66. After his death the Praterstadion in Vienna, home to the Austrian national team, was renamed Ernst Happel Stadion.

Bibliography

Newspapers

Daily Record
Evening Times
Glasgow Herald
Yorkshire Post
The Observer
Daily Telegraph
Daily Express
The Guardian
Algemeen Dagblad (Netherlands)

Books

'Hail Cesar' by Billy McNeill ISBN 978-0-7553-1315-0
'Marching on Together - My Life with Leeds United' by Eddie Gray ISBN 978-0340819760
'Lion Heart' by Tommy Gemmell and Graham McColl ISBN 978-0753540176
'Rhapsody in Green – Great Celtic Moments' by Tom Campbell and Pat Woods ISBN 978-1851583409
'Jock Stein – The Definitive Biography' by Archie MacPherson ISBN 978-1905156047
'Biting Talk' by Norman Hunter ISBN 978-0340830826
'Sniffer - the Life and Times of Allan Clarke' by David Saffer ISBN 978-0752421681
'Talking With Celtic' by Eugene MacBride ISBN 978-1859832745
'The Head Bhoys' by Graham McColl ISBN 978-1840187595

DVDs

The History of Football – The Beautiful Game