

Hearts to face Gala Fairydean Rovers in Alfie Conn Memorial Cup



Gala Fairydean Rovers will help pay tribute to a footballing legend later this month when Hearts send a team down the A7 to play at Netherdale in a pre-season friendly.

Alfie Conn, who passed away in 2009 was a legendary figure at the Tynecastle club during the 1940's and 50's where along with Willie Bauld and Jimmy Wardhaugh he formed the "Terrible Trio", the most famous forward line in the Edinburgh club's illustrious history.

He played in the Hearts teams that won the 1954 League Cup and 1956 Scottish Cup and was part of the club's League winning squad in 1957/58. He received a Scottish cap against Austria in 1956.

Following a spell with Raith Rovers and a brief sojourn in South Africa he moved to Netherdale in 1960 to become player manager at Gala Fairydean and went onto enjoy great success in the 2 seasons he spent at the club.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of Alfie's birth in Prestonpans East Lothian and the Fairydean Rovers wanted to mark the occasion and the links between the clubs in some way.

After seeking permission from the Conn Family, the clubs will compete for the Alfie Conn Memorial Trophy on Saturday 25th of June at Netherdale with a 3pm kick-off. Hearts are expected to send a strong youth side to the game many of whom played in the SFA Youth Cup Final at Hampden in April.

Alfie Conn senior was player manager of Gala Fairydean in

season 1960-61 during which he made 25 appearances and scored 21 goals including two hat tricks as he finished as the clubs top scorer that season. The Fairydean finished runner-up in the East of Scotland League to Berwick Rangers "A" by a single point, won the King Cup and were runners up in the East of Scotland Qualifying Cup. A photo of Alfie Conn with the King Cup can be seen in the clubrooms at Netherdale.

In season 1960-61 Conn hung up his boots, stuck to the dug-out and steered his side to an unprecedented four trophies. He tendered his resignation at Netherdale with the club requiring a single point to be certain of the East of Scotland league title which they comfortably won with Peebles Rovers finishing six points adrift, his Fairydean side scoring 138 league goals en-route to the title. They also won the Scottish Qualifying Cup (South), the East of Scotland Qualifying Cup and defeated Berwick Rangers in the final of the City Cup, one week after Alfie resigned from his post.

Conn's son, Alfie Junior also went onto enjoy a successful career in top-flight football playing for both sides of the Old Firm, Tottenham Hotspur, Derby County, Hearts and Scotland.

Graeme McIver, the Secretary of Gala Fairydean Rovers said: "I was delighted to receive a phone call earlier this week from Alfie Conn Junior to confirm that the family would give their blessing to the match going ahead and that some of them would also be in attendance. Alfie has fond memories of travelling to Gala with his Dad when he was a young boy in the early 60's and we look forward to welcoming him back to Netherdale."

We are honoured that we can play a part in recognising a true giant of the game who had links to both clubs."

A Hearts spokesperson said: "The club is happy to be part of a match that will honour such a legendary figure in Alfie Conn.

"Alfie made a huge impact at both Heart of Midlothian and Gala

Fairydean, so this meeting of the two sides is a fitting tribute, and we look forward to our visit to Netherdale.”

The club will be issuing a special souvenir programme on the day and prices are set at £7 for adults, £3 for concessions with children under 5 free.

A limited number of hospitality packages will be available on the day. Details will follow shortly.

The Alfie Conn Memorial Cup

Saturday 25th June 2016

The 3G Arena, Netherdale, Galashiels

Gala Fairydean Rovers v Hearts XI

Kick-off 3pm