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## Winston for Paradise – 100 years on!

Exactly one hundred years after his infamous visit to Belfast, the ghost of Winston Churchill will return to the Falls Road on February, 8.

***Winston for Paradise***, takes place at St Mary's University College on the hundredth anniversary of Churchill's advocacy of Home Rule in Belfast, marking the first of many 'centenaries' taking place over the next decade.

Organised by the Belfast Celtic Society, a special drama production, ***Home Rule***, will see local actor Alan McKee deliver the speech made by the then Liberal MP at Celtic Park on the Donegall Road.

This open air venue had to be utilised because Unionists in Belfast had bolted the doors of the Ulster Hall to local Liberals who had brought Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, to advocate for the cause of Irish Home Rule.

At the event, Dr. Eamon Phoenix will recall the political turmoil the city was facing at the time, as the Titanic prepared to slip into history and European slaughter loomed on the horizon.

Belfast Celtic's football season will also be remembered by Belfast Celtic Society Chair Padraig Coyle, in a year which saw trophies and tumult, with gunfire reverberating in the stands at some local football grounds.

The Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, will also be in attendance, along with representatives from other political, community and sporting organisations from all sides of the local divide.

Padraig Coyle said; "Many people associate Churchill with staunch and unbending Unionism, but in 1912 he was among the ranks of the Whigs who were planning to give Ireland Home Rule self government.

"Remember, Churchill's father, Randolph, had stood on the stage at the Ulster Hall thirty years earlier to declare 'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right!' which remains a Unionist rallying cry.

[Cont...]

“When he was locked out of the Ulster Hall, Belfast Celtic’s Directors, who were closely aligned with Nationalist MP Joe Devlin, offered their ground as a substitute venue and thousands attended to hear him speak.

“When the rally was confirmed, the newspaper posters at shop fronts and news stands across the city cried out ‘*Winston for Paradise*’, the nickname for Belfast Celtic Park.

“Leaving his hotel in the city centre on the day of the visit, Churchill was jostled and abused and his car was hit with bolts and rivets as it made its way along Royal Avenue to the Falls Road.

“Tension was high, the blood was up and a football club was at the eye of this political storm.”

“***Winston For Paradise*** allows us to revisit these dramatic times in the early years of the last century and a panel discussion will also be held, where we want to hear all shades of opinion.

“A hundred years on, we can try and assess how much our society has developed.

“The Belfast Celtic Society is also grateful to Belfast City Council for its support and to St Mary’s for providing the use of its campus for this historic event.”

For further information, click online at [www.belfastceltic.org](http://www.belfastceltic.org).

Admission to this event is free.



# Winston for Paradise

Wednesday, February 8 2012

## Running order/Clár

All times approx.

- 7.30**                    **Welcome and Health & Safety announcement**  
Professor Peter Finn, Principal, St Mary's University  
College
- 7.35**                    **Opening Address**  
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Carál Ní Chuilín  
MLA
- 7.40**                    **Review of the football season in 1912**  
Padraig Coyle, Chair, Belfast Celtic Society
- 7.55**                    **The politics of 1912**  
Dr. Eamon Phoenix, Stranmillis College
- 8.40**                    **Home Rule?**  
Drama with Alan McKee, Anna McKiernan, Hannah  
Coyle
- 9.05**                    **Panel and Audience discussion**
- Host**
- Padraig Coyle, Belfast Celtic Society
- Panellists**
- Ms Dawn Purvis – Chair, Healing Through Remembering
- Dr Eamon Phoenix - Stranmillis College
- Dr Brian Feeney - Head of History St Mary's College
- 9.30**                    **Close**