

CWMBRAN CELTIC PEN PICTURES 2014/15

Della Cheedy: 1st team manager. Formerly a player of great distinction as a trainee at Cardiff City, Exeter City & then Blaenavon & Croesyceiliog, Della became assistant coach at Cwmbran Town in the Tony Wilcox era, & managed Blaenavon, Tredegar Town & Risca United before joining Celtic midway through the 2005/6 season. He runs the Fairwater High School Football Academy & holds a FAW "A" coaching licence. Della's son Craig is 1st team player/coach & his daughter Sian is a Welsh international. This is Della's second stint at the helm, having managed the side in 2011/12.

Matthew Williams: Signed by Dishy Richardson from Girlings, Cwmbran in 1999/2000 and played in Gwent County 3rd and 2nd division promotion sides. Then he dropped down to help run the Newport & District Premier League sides which won 3 league titles and the Senior Cup over a period of 6 years. Newly appointed as Della's assistant this season.

Mike Baugh: 1st team physio. 'Baughy' was a skilful left winger who played for Newport County at youth level, then Cwmbran Town before playing for many years for Celtic. He ran Celtic junior & Youth sides. Holds a FAW C coaching licence. A first-class clubman.

Nicky Church: goalkeeper, aged 28. Ex-Academy with Cwmbran Town, Nicky has established himself as one of the best keepers in the Welsh league. A great shot stopper, he has played higher level football at Newport County, Cwmbran Town & Cinderford Town, & Welsh League for Caerleon & Llanwern. Also had trials at Hereford & New Saints. He is in his 3rd spell at the club, having started as an ever present (37 games) in the 3rd Division championship team of 2006/7. Assists with the running of Celtic U19 Youth team on Sundays.

Lewis Watkins: goalkeeper, aged 22. Joined Celtic from Newport County Youth in 2010/11 and has proved a capable deputy for the 1st team during the last 4 seasons.

Rakesh Patel: right back, aged 26. Vice captain. Ex-Academy player, he broke into the side in 2007/8 & has been a regular ever since. Converted to the back four last season and has established himself as one of the best full-backs in the league. Kesh has a great self-effacing personality. He was clubman of the year in 2011/12.

Richard Crees: left back, aged 28. Captain for 2014/15. 'Billy' joined in 2010/11 from Tredegar Town. He is an attacking full-back, a very fast and strong tackler. Very popular throughout the club, he was the supporter's player of the year in 2010/11. Has suffered a number of niggling injuries during his time at Celtic. Formerly with Cardiff City (U16), Llanhilleth, Abertillery Buebirds and Abertillery Excelsiors.

Rhys Hodges: centre back, aged 24. Joined last season after 6 years at Abertillery Bluebirds. A junior at Six Bells, represented Gwent U18. Strong in the air & a good talker, Rhys had a superb first season in 2013/14.

Luke Jones: centre back & left back, aged 21. Former Academy player & U19 captain. Luke is a solid no-nonsense defender with a powerful left foot & prodigious long throw. Played for Celtic junior and youth, made his 1st team debut at the end of 2009/10. Luke is a boxer who has quickly made a name for himself in the Welsh Amateur ranks.

Curtis Patel: centre back, aged 21. Younger brother of Kesh. Made his 1st team debut last season and has played with such assurance that he has kept his place ever since.

Ben Luck: centre back, aged 25. Ex-Academy player, made 1st team debut in 2007/8. Captain in 2009/10 before leaving to join Aberaman Athletic. Returned the following season to become a commanding and vocal defender. Left last season to join Llanwern but has returned for a 3rd time this season.

Craig Cheedy: player/coach, centre midfield, aged 28. Another ex-Academy player, strong with bags of stamina, Craig holds the club record of 200+ Welsh league & cup appearances having been a regular member of the team since it joined the Welsh League in 2005/6. Previously played for Llanelli & Cwmbran Town in Welsh Premier League & briefly for Croesyceiliog. He took over the captain's armband in the 2nd half of 2010/11 & by his tremendous on-field example inspired the team to pull out of the relegation zone in its first season in the top tier. Player's player of the year 2012/13.

Owen Cook: centre midfield, aged 22. Former Academy player, good ball player, strong in the tackle with good awareness. Made his 1st team debut in 2009/10. Played for Fairfield in Gwent County League in 2011/12 but returned to the fold to claim a permanent place in the 1st team squad.

Dominic Connor: left midfield & left back, aged 28. A Chepstow lad, formerly with Chepstow Town, Signed 2011/12 from Caldicot Town. A fleet footed player who likes to get forward to support the attack. One of football's true gentlemen as befits a jet setter in his professional and personal life.

Owen Llewellyn: right midfield, forward, aged 24. Played for Celtic Juniors before joining the Academy. He gained a 1st team place in 2007/8 as a pacey hard-working wide midfield player but was pushed forward as striker in the 2nd division promotion season 2009/10 scoring 17 goals. Missed most of 2010/11 through injury but returned late on to become top scorer with 7 goals in only 13 games which kept the club in the 1st division. Was again top scorer in 2011/12 with 6 goals. The manager's player of the season for the past 2 seasons. He has not missed a game since 18th April 2011, a run of over 110 games, only 2 of which have been as a non-playing sub on the bench – a remarkable record.

Lloyd Kinsella: left midfield, aged 19. Ex Celtic junior, Newport Academy & Celtic Academy. Lloyd has forced his way into the squad with some excellent performances in the U19 side. Very skilful, great crosser of a ball. Can also play at left back.

Michael Baugh: striker/midfield, aged 20. Ex Academy, son of Mike senior, made 1st team debut in 2010/11; winner of club Golden Boot in 2012/13 for most senior goals, principally with the Reserves. Had a short spell with Pilcs last season but later returned to score some important goals for the 1st team.

Lewis Grant: midfield, aged 23. Joined this season, formerly with Newport County Academy, Caerleon, Barry Town United & Goytre. Powerfully built, can play in a variety of positions.

Andrew Larcombe: left midfield, aged 26. Another to join this season. Formerly with Llanwern and Undy Athletic. Skilful and versatile, can play on left flank & up front.

Sean Feeley: striker, aged 18. Formerly a junior with Race (Pontypool), and youth player at Leatherhead (Surrey) and Penybont. Joined midway through last season and made an immediate impact in the U19's and as an impact substitute for the 1st team with his pace and strength.

Luke Thomas: striker, aged 24. Ex-Academy player. Made 1st team debut in 2009/10 as a wide left player. Left to join Cwmbran Town in 2011/12 where he was leading goalscorer last season.

Luke Lewis: striker, aged 27. Joined this season from Abertillery Bluebirds where he was top scorer last season. Hard-working forward who makes lots of chances for himself and his team-mates by getting himself into good positions in the box.

Adrian Maguire: striker, aged 22. Joined club in 2012/13. Powerfully built, strong runner. Former Fairwater Comprehensive student. Was a regular in the side in 2012/13 but sustained a broken leg and ligament damage playing indoor football last season and is slowly working his way back to fitness.

Rhys Williams: midfield, aged 19; at Cardiff University. Has been with Celtic as a junior and Academy player. Strong runner, always makes his physical presence known and on recent displays he could be the find of the season.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CWMBRAN CELTIC

Formed in 1925 Cwmbran Celtic are the town's oldest established football club. In the early years the club was known as CYMS (Catholic Young Men's Society). After the immediate success of winning the Newport & District Division 2 Section A title in 1925/6 there was then a 25 year gap before the next trophy, the Premier Division title in 1950/1. The club was re-formed in the early 1960s under the new name of Cwmbran Catholics. In 1972 with playing membership open to all denominations the club dropped the catholic title and re-named as Cwmbran Celtic. In season 1972/3 Celtic won the Gwent Amateur Cup and were runners-up in the Gwent Premier League.

In 1979 the club bought its own premises at Oak Street, Old Cwmbran, the club's present headquarters. The club's ground was Cwmbran Park but over the seasons the drainage deteriorated and the club sought and was granted use of the grounds outside Cwmbran Stadium which were shared with Cwmbran Cricket club. The cricket club moved to Caerleon and Celtic were granted the lease. Celtic played in the Gwent County League throughout the 1980s and 1990s and after gaining promotion as champions of Division 2 in 1986/7 they were comfortably placed in the 1st division for the next dozen or so seasons. However a disastrous slide found the club languishing in the 3rd division when Paul "Dishy" Richardson became manager in 1999. He transformed the side bringing in experienced ex-Cwmbran Town stalwarts Mickey Copeman and Kevin Payne alongside teenage striker Shane Williamson who for a dozen seasons was the team's principal goalscorer. The side was later bolstered by the return of ex-professionals Ben Graham and Mark Parfitt. They gained successive promotions from the 3rd to the 1st division between 1999 and 2001 and in 1999/2000 they won the Gwent County league cup.

In season 2004/5 under new player-manager Mickey Copeman, the club were runners-up to Clydach Wasps. The champions of the Gwent County League are eligible to apply for membership of the Welsh Football League. Clydach applied but their ground was adjudged not to be of the required standard. As runners-up Cwmbran Celtic applied for the place. Their own ground on the field outside Cwmbran Stadium was also not up to standard but Celtic were able to share Cwmbran Stadium with Cwmbran Town and so the Welsh League accepted the club's application.

In their first season, 2005/6, Celtic struggled near the bottom of the 3rd division all season. In April 2006 Celtic travelled to Chepstow Town knowing that they had to win this game to stay in the league. They went 1-0 down. With minutes of normal time remaining substitute Jason Price equalised but a draw was not enough. In the 9th minute of time added on player manager Mickey Copeman went up for a corner. The ball was cleared off the goal-line by a Chepstow defender, it hit

Copeman on the back and rebounded into the net. Celtic went on to escape relegation on goal difference. The following season, 2006/7, Celtic, now back at their upgraded and newly named ground, Celtic Park, were transformed. They only lost 2 games all season and enjoyed a 24 match unbeaten run. They went to Risca for their last match of the season already promoted but needing to beat the home side to win the Championship ahead of Llanwern. Celtic were 1-0 down with 3 minutes left and playing with 10 men, having had a player sent off, when winger Sammy Winter scored with a speculative long range shot. A draw was not enough but in the last minute a Risca clearance found full back Ben Graham outside the box. He hit a perfect looping volley over the goalkeeper's head into the net. Celtic were champions. In Division 2 Celtic consolidated their position in seasons 2007/8 and 2008/9 during which they introduced a number of players from their new partnership with the Fairwater High School Football Academy in Cwmbran which was managed by Celtic coach Della Cheedy. In season 2009/10 they were front runners destined to win the Championship. However they lost two key defenders who transferred to Aberaman Athletic at a crucial time and vital points were dropped. Nevertheless Celtic still finished their games in 1st place and would win the title if Penrhiwceiber failed to win at Newcastle Emlyn. The home side was 2-0 up at one stage but the visitors clawed their way back to win 3-2 and deny Celtic the championship. At the end of the season Mickey Copeman stood down after 7 years during which he secured 3 promotions for the club from the Gwent County League to the top division of the Welsh League.

In their first season in the 1st division, 2010/11 under new manager Ben Graham, Celtic struggled during the first half of the season and were firmly planted in the relegation zone but in a superb run-in they won 7 and drew 3 of 14 games placing them in 12th place out of 16. In 2011/12 the side made a good start under Alan Dibble who stepped down in September 2011 with the team in 5th place in Division 1, to be replaced by Gareth Morgan. Either side of Christmas Celtic were 2nd in the table but they had a dismal end of season run and again finished in 12th place. In 2012/13 with head coach Della Cheedy now at the helm, Celtic started brightly with some fine performances including a 4-2 win versus reigning champions Cambrian & Clydach but lost their way in the New Year and at one stage were in last place. However, with characteristic determination they dragged themselves up the table and sealed their place in the top division for another season with a resounding 5-1 win against Haverfordwest County. For 2013/14 Steve Morgan was the manager. Celtic underperformed and finished 4th from bottom, but with Afan Lido coming down from the Welsh Premier League, Celtic were relegated despite taking their case to appeal and arbitration. Della Cheedy resumes as manager in 2014/15.