



The "Prof" Returns to Belfast

At the beginning of March our joint patron, Professor Roger Williams CBE visited Campbell College, Belfast. He kindly gave of his time to give a presentation to a large number of young adults from local schools on the dangers of alcohol abuse. Most of you will remember the Professor (or the "Prof" as George used to call him) for his most moving speech at George's funeral. The lecture was well reported in both the local and national press and most of the young people went away with a very clear understanding of the dangers that alcohol can pose.

Dickie Meets Mary

On Friday 24th March we were invited by the President of Ireland to attend a dinner at Aras an Uachtarain, her official residence in the lovely Phoenix Park, Dublin. It happened to be her husband, Martin's birthday and a very relaxing and enjoyable evening was enjoyed by all present. My father Dickie met an old friend in Gerry Storey who was accompanied by his daughter. Gerry inspired us with his stories of his efforts to use boxing as a bridge between the two communities in Northern Ireland providing us with a model to work to in our desire to use the GBF as a healing influence between the young people in our country.

Kelly Meets the Bests

On the 7th April my Dad, Dickie, and I appeared on an Ulster Television Show "Kelly Meets". Just a couple of hours before the show was transmitted, our website went fully operational. What a proud moment! As usual, George created his usual flurry of interest and over that first weekend the site had seven and a half thousand visits and to date it is probably close to twelve thousand. All this before we have even had the official launch of the charity! Incidentally the show had the highest viewer ratings of any of the "Kelly Meets" previously shown. I would like to thank Gerry Kelly and all his

"When I am gone people will forget all the rubbish...."

I find it hard to put into words the immense pride which I feel in writing this very first Newsletter for the George Best Foundation. Since the death of my much loved brother on 25th November 2005, it became instantly apparent that I had to ensure that his memory and legacy live on forever. The amount of support which we received from all over the world was beyond belief, and will never be forgotten.



It was following a comment made during conversation between my husband Norman and I with Professor Roger Williams CBE, and Dr. Akeel Alisa after George's funeral that the seed was planted. A suggestion was made to start a charity to perpetuate George's memory. Since that day it has been a long hard road to ensure that everything we do has been done absolutely professionally and in accordance with what we firmly believe would have been George's wishes. On that note I would like to pass on my heartfelt thanks to those members of my family who have fully supported me in this. My thanks also go to the members of the committee, friends and supporters who have given freely of their time and energy to ensure a successful launch of George's charity. I know with their support, that the George Best Foundation is in safe hands.

So much has happened during the past five months that it is difficult to know where to start. It is overwhelming at times trying to absorb the amount of feeling and pride for "our boy" as my Dad described him and even though I am witnessing this with my own eyes and ears it is still hard to take on board. It is therefore very important that these heartfelt emotions are harnessed to produce a force for good, not just in Northern Ireland but in Ireland as a whole, the rest of the UK and indeed further afield.

Your Shirts

production staff for making the evening so special for us.

The George Best Rhapsody

The 253 Boys have kindly donated a song to the Foundation which you can download directly from www.georgebest.com for £2 with all proceeds going to the charity.

The George Best Rhapsody

Written by Jason Grant & Johnny Cesar

Performed by The 253 Boys.

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)

Another bright new day,
boy kicking a ball down Burren Way
Who was this boy, just watch him run and play
Time to cross the sea and make a brand new start
The family wave goodbye and tears from a
mother's loving heart.

(Chorus)

*He played with feet of gold
Just like a wizard from days of old
Go Georgie Go and score that goal
For the glory of United heart & soul.*

A new dawn arrived at Old Trafford in 63
Playing the game he loved for all to see
A football king in red better than all the rest
To the Stretford End, the Messiah they called Best.

The crowning glory came in 68 down Wembley way
European champions in the greatest game he ever played

Up the 39 Steps, 100,000 fans sang his name
Holding the Cup up high, heroes are born not made.

Back in Belfast now time to come back home
The greatest footballer the world has ever known
Forever Georgie Boy the eternal number eleven
Playing the beautiful game up above in heaven.

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Most people have seen or heard about the many jerseys, scarves and mementos which were left as a tribute to George. These jerseys were left at many locations. These included outside our family home, The Cromwell Hospital, Windsor Park football ground in Belfast, on the railings of Belfast City Hall, Stormont, and of course at Old Trafford. It is one of my regrets that I didn't get to see the sea of colour outside the ground that George graced so magnificently and I would like to say a huge thank you to Dave and Clare Akers, who very kindly sent me over some beautiful photos which I will always cherish. Let me assure everyone who took the time to leave these jerseys that they will be put to a good use. They have all been laundered, and are at present stored carefully until such times as their distribution can be organised. So far, jerseys have gone to a number of places. The first batch went to Kwazulu Natal in South Africa. They went to a group of school children who have so little in their lives that the simple gift of a football jersey brought them so much pleasure. There have also been deliveries made to Jamaica, The Gambia, Malawi and Sierra Leone. Our thanks go to John Forsyth from Countrywide Freight Group Ltd who shipped the jerseys etc from Manchester to Belfast and to William McDowell who has worked tirelessly with his family to launder a large number of the shirts as did the staff of Muggins Total Cleaning Services Ltd.

A typical story is that of Mphatso Nguluwe, who is the deputy principal of Ekwendeni Nursing College in Malawi. Mphatso is studying for a Master's degree in nursing and midwifery at Queen's University Belfast, and will be returning to Malawi in September this year. The nursing college where she will teach has just had its first intake of male students, who have started up their own football team, but didn't have any strips. The George Best Foundation was honoured to be able to help out and donated not only some of the George Best Foundation jerseys, but a full team strip which was kindly given to us by the 1st Lambeg Northern Ireland Supporter's Club. The gratitude which was shown was such a



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humbling experience, and once again strengthened my resolve to make this very important aspect of the Foundation a success. I know that George would be delighted that his Foundation is already helping those less fortunate than ourselves. If any of you are members of a club which is planning to change its strip this year please get in touch and we will ensure your old strip goes to a good home!

Fundraising

So far, the Foundation has had a number of very generous donations for which I am very grateful. Once again, it is amazing just how much effort and time people are willing to contribute. The Ladies of the Portavogie Health Promotion Class in County Down invited my sister Carol and me down for a presentation evening. As some of you may remember George spent two very happy years in the lovely fishing village of Portavogie before moving back to England in 2002. The Ladies very kindly made the Foundation the recipient of their annual charity donation.

On the 7th March Norman and I were invited by the Portstewart MUSC to receive a very generous donation. I spoke to the club members about the aims and objectives of the Foundation, and our hopes and . This was followed by question and answer session. However the biggest surprise of the night was to come. I was proud and privileged to meet one of the ten members of the public who were selected at random to join family and friends within Stormont Buildings on the day of George's funeral. This gentleman, Ronnie McKee, spoke movingly and eloquently about what that day had meant to him and for that I thank him. I would like to say a big thank you to Willis, David, Richard and Susan and the rest of the Portstewart MUSC for making Norman and I feel so welcome.

On Saturday 25th March Norman and I flew to New York. A fund-raising evening had been arranged Nevada Smiths of 74 3rd Ave, New York City. The evening was arranged by their Director of Football, Jack Dermot Keane and Jason Grant of the Good News Broadcasting. Jason has also written a tribute to George, The George Best Rhapsody. You can download this from our website. The evening was hosted by "the voice of soccer in the US", Mr Tommy Smyth and over \$1000 was raised for the GBF. When in New York be sure to visit Nevada Smith where football really is their religion!

When in New York we took the opportunity of visiting our International Patron, George Costacos. George most generously donated the domain name www.georgebest.com to the GBF and for this we will be eternally grateful. George is worth a newsletter on his own and I will be writing about how he came to donate this gift next month. George has very graciously agreed to join us in Belfast on May 22nd and we look forward to seeing him again.



On the 8th April the 1st Lambeg Northern Ireland Supporters Club, held a function at Derrriaghy Cricket Club on the outskirts of Belfast to raise funds for the Foundation. Once again, we were warmly welcomed and delighted to receive a cheque for £1000:00 as a result of the evening's events. The Lambeg Supporters are a small club consisting of only 25 members and for them to raise such a sum of money speaks volumes about the esteem they hold George in. A warm thank you to Stevie McDowell, (chairman), Matt Brennan, (secretary), Chris, Graham and all the others for all of their hard work, and for the hospitality shown to us. Also many thanks for the donation of the football strips, which I mentioned earlier have already gone to a very worthy cause. Another visitor at the club that night was the owner of a local engineering company, Nulife Engineering Ltd, of Dunmurry. This gentleman, who has asked to remain anonymous, subsequently made a substantial donation to the Foundation and for this we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Sixty of the Best

As most of you may know the 22nd of May would have been George's 60th birthday. One of our final conversations with him was how much he was looking forward to it. What a celebration he was going to have!! However it wasn't to be and can I ask you all on that day set aside a moment to reflect on what might have been. That entire weekend will be dedicated to celebrating the genius that was George, with the theme of "SIXTY of the BEST". This will culminate in a dinner at the Belfast City Hall, the principal civic building of George's home town. We will be joined by, amongst others, The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr Wallace Brown, Sir Alex Ferguson, David Gill, Pat Jennings and Paddy Crerand. On that night raise a glass of whatever you fancy to the memory of the Legend. We have asked as many supporters as possible to hold a fund-raising event over that weekend or on the Monday to make George's birthday very special.

As many of you know Belfast City Airport is to be renamed after George on May 22nd. I will be writing about it in next month's newsletter but it will be a very exciting day.

And Finally...

To conclude this first newsletter I would like to thank all of you who

have left such lovely messages on our messageboard. Be assured that between Norman and I we read every single one and they are such a comfort and inspiration to us. As I said in my opening paragraph we have embarked on a journey, a long road. It is my fervent wish that the memory of George Best will live on in the good deeds that will be carried out in his name. For that we need the support of each and every single one of you. Please embark with me on this journey and remember George's words....

"If only one person remembers me for my football that's good enough for me"