Hudson Exclusive

“I’ll always be a leader, whether I’ve got the armband or not.”

Fred Keenor

Statue Fund Update

By City Fans, For City Fans
Hello and welcome to a brand new edition of the Trust magazine.

We’ve had a bit of a face lift and I’m hoping you enjoy it as much as we have putting it together.

The Trust has created a new Communications Group and we intend to produce the magazine much more regularly.

We have a large number of other ideas in the pipeline that I’m sure you’ll like, keep your eyes peeled for more soon.

We’re always interested in contributions, whether they be stories, ideas or volunteering your time.

We’re a friendly bunch and would be delighted if you’d like to come and help.

Please drop us a line at: help@ccfctrust.org or CCST PO Box 4254 CARDIFF CF14 8FD

I hope you enjoy the mix of stories, interviews and Trust news.

Gareth
Editor

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A Word from the Chair

What a start to the season! City are flying high and after what most of us expected would be a season of consolidation we are already dreaming of the play-offs, if not higher.

Our thanks must go to TG and the management team for providing the club with some financial stability at last so that Dave Jones has been able to go out and get some of the best talent from the Championship – and above.

Your Supporters’ Trust can’t take any credit for our on-field success but we are still working hard to ensure your voice is heard in everything that the City does.

We meet the club every other month to put your questions to Gethin Jenkins, the Chief Executive. We have helped sort out ticketing and disabled parking problems for fans and have been able to offer feedback to the club on things like half time events and prices on match days.

We are working with them to try to build a memorial garden at the Cardiff City Stadium so that we can remember loved ones who can no longer be with us on match days.

As a Trust we are also trying to organise open days and tours of the stadium for you the members and are keen that Cardiff is one of the first clubs in Britain to appoint a Supporters Liaison Officer. Get your questions to us so that we can put them to the club at these meetings.

This summer the Trust took to the streets to publicise both the club and the Trust itself. We set up a stall at the Grangetown festival proudly displaying the golden boot we had commissioned for Peter Whittingham.

We handed out leaflets and organised a free raffle. The Trust made a lot of new friends and we are keen that both the Trust and the club get out more and more to ensure we are spreading the word.

Our fundraising evening for the Fred Keenor statue appeal with Dave Jones and Ricky Tomlinson to raise money was brilliantly supported. Dave gave us a real insight into the new players and we were buoyed up by his hopes for this season, while Ricky Tomlinson entertained us with tales of his amazing life. More than £9,000 was raised on the night and we must thank the club for all their efforts.

The Trust Board members were lucky to have a chance to meet TG during his last visit to Cardiff and were impressed by his commitment to the club. Quite frankly I know some of us thought after that horrible defeat at Wembley that our Malaysian saviours would bide their time if not pull out of the club altogether. But they have invested in us once again and that has enable Dave Jones us to recruit real talent like Craig Bellamy and Seyi Olofinjana.

TG told a great story about how he went into the club shop after the Hull game. He said it was heaving in there so he took his jacket off and started to help behind the till. Unsurprisingly, the young lad who was working there was a bit nervous having the big boss at his side, and TG admitted he was pretty useless at wrapping the goods. So he said to the assistant, ‘Go on – just sack me,’ and he was given his marching orders there and then! How many other chairmen though would have made an effort to roll up his sleeves after a match to help the club eh? TG hopes to be over in Cardiff again soon and we will be organising a meeting for Trust members to be able put their questions directly to the Chairman.

The club is committed to maintaining good links with the Trust. Of course we will not always agree with them and will always stand up for fans first. In fact we told them in no uncertain terms what we thought of the ‘season ticket money for players’ fiasco last year. But I really believe things have moved on and that we are building a relationship of mutual respect and trust.

Proper supporter representation within a club can only be a good thing for all of us. The Trust Board does an awful lot on our behalf but we need as many people as possible to get involved. There are lots of sub groups like community, membership and communication that you could get involved with – so, ‘Come join us, come join us, come join us over here’ so that we make the City a true community club.

Tim Hartley
Chairman
Recently, the Trust decided to change its Membership Subscription structure. Trust Board members Tracey Marsh and Mike Roderick had a chat to (try) and explain why.

TM: Mike, what are the new membership arrangements?

MR: It’s very straightforward. We’ve decided to make Trust membership as simple and affordable as possible for as many City fans as possible. All adult members will now pay just £12 a year to join the Trust and under 16’s living at the same address as an adult member can join free of charge.

TM: The Trust has grown to around 900 members in its first couple of years of existence. That’s a success story compared to some other football club Trusts so why change things?

MR: A mix of philosophical and practical reasons. The Trust isn’t a hierarchy and all members are equal. Every adult member has an equal share in the Trust (and a share in Cardiff City through the Trust’s shareholding in the Club), they all have a vote, and they all have a voice. It seems right that everyone should pay the same to be a member. Up to now, we’ve been saying, “Your membership costs £12 but please give more.”

TM: The principle that everyone pays the same for their voice. It seems right that everyone should pay the minimum.

MR: We had some very lively discussions about this! We reckon we can cover the basic running costs of the Trust by charging £12 a year but we’ll be encouraging all members who can afford it to pay more by giving “donations” on top of their membership subscription so that we can build on the work we’ve started. It’s a risk but we’re relying on City fans’ generosity and goodwill towards the Trust.

TM: What about current members who are paying more than £12?

MR: Without such generosity, we’d have struggled to get the Trust off the ground, buy shares in the Club, and support the Fred Keenor Appeal and community events. We’d like to say “Thanks very much” and “please continue paying at the current level so that we can develop the Trust further.” We’ll be encouraging all new members to pay more too but stick to the principle that everyone pays the same for membership.

TM: If you do succeed in getting people to pay more than the £12 a year, what will be done with the extra money?

MR: The Trust Board decided that half of it should be set aside as a Contingency Fund. This will be used for future share purchases or to support the club in times of crisis (though things look much rosier at the moment thanks to our new investors). The remaining 50% will be used for things like arranging events for members, funding community events, supporting the FK appeal and generally, to build the Trust into a bigger and better fans organisation.

TM: You mentioned there were some practical reasons behind the changes too. What were they?

MR: Well, having six different membership levels certainly brought some administrative headaches for our hard working volunteers on the database and finance side of things. It also made our promotional material and enrolment procedures a bit complicated. Simple is beautiful sometimes. But most importantly, the change gives us a platform for a new recruitment drive. We really want to grow the membership this season. There are loads more fans watching the City lately and we’d like to get loads more Trust members too.

TM: So if current members have questions about the changes or they have friends and family who want to join the Trust, what should they do?

MR: We’re always available to provide help and take comments by email at help@ccfc.trust.org. The Trust web-site at www.ccfc.trust.org allows people to download the necessary standing order forms or to join immediately using Paypal. Before home games you’ll always find some Trust volunteers hanging around by the Trust table at the Stadium (between Aisles 108 and 109 in the Ninian Stand) and they will gladly take cash. We’ll be getting out and about around the Stadium on match days too. Look out for a special recruitment day coming soon and if you believe in the Trust yourself and can spare the time that day, we’ll be very glad of your help.

Buy To Help

Fans can help raise funds for the Trust by using a website linking into more than 2,000 of the UK’s biggest retailers such as Marks & Spencer, Amazon and John Lewis.

It won’t cost you a penny extra to shop via http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/good-causes/cardiffcityst/ but the Trust will receive up to 15 per cent from every online purchase made from the website.

Once you’re logged on you shop with the retailer directly and complete your transaction online.

Fans can even help earn the Trust cash by simply using http://cardiffcityst.easyssearch.org.uk as their search engine rather Google or Yahoo. In other words, supporters don’t have to buy anything to earn the Trust money.
CCST Interview: Mark Hudson

BY DAVID TOWERL

Club Captain Mark Hudson believes that, together with Craig Bellamy, he can lead the Bluebirds to the promised land of the Premier League. “It’s all geared up exactly for that (promotion to the Premierships),” said Hudson speaking exclusively to Cardiff City Supporters’ Trust. “It’s the ambition of all the players, the staff and the Chairman. That is where this club needs to be.”

Arriving at the Cardiff City Stadium for its debut 2009-10 season, Hudson, 29, was instantly installed as club captain, due to Joe Ledley’s protracted contract negotiations.

“It’s obviously difficult when you come into any club and are suddenly given the captaincy, you’re automatically looked at like: ‘who is he?’ But Joe took it really well,” said Mark. “I’ll always be a leader, whether I’ve got the armband or not.”

“I love being captain, but if it means that a player like Craig can come in and help us get to where we need to be then obviously I’m going to agree with it.”

Born in Guildford, Surrey, Hudson has spent most of his career in London and unlike the home-coming Bellamy – this is Mark’s first real move away.

“Having been with three London clubs previously I’ve always been around that area,” said Mark. “I like to think I’m quite a family orientated guy and I’ve always enjoyed being around my family. This is my first real move away from them, but it’s been made easy because everyone here has made me feel really welcome.

“Life is a lot more laid back in Wales – in London it’s hectic. I prefer it here, people take time out to speak to you and actually make an effort whereas in London they don’t even look at you, people go about their own jobs and just get on with it – but Cardiff is much more social.”

In his local college, enrolling to study PE and Geography, Hudson surprisingly doesn’t follow in any sporting family footsteps: “I had a really normal upbringing, but I got taken to the football at a young age and I started playing football at six and it just went from there.”

“I began at Aldershot School of Excellence and then moved to Swindon School of Excellence. Swindon played Fulham and following that game I joined Fulham, I was there from the age of 13 to 15. I wasn’t enjoying it though so I took a year out of football and just played locally with my mates. After a year I went back to Fulham because they said they wanted me back and I was there until YTS (Youth Training Scheme). But I was never offered a YTS.”

Despite the set-back Hudson instead knuckled down in his local college, enrolling to study PE and Geography, but four months later he received a call from Fulham, at the time managed by Kevin Keegan.

“They said they made an error and wanted to keep me on but allowed me to continue my college course, which was good because some footballers don’t get that opportunity,” explains Mark. “But then my onus was on football and on my 17th birthday I signed a professional contract with Fulham.

“I saw a lot of managers come and go at Fulham. When I started we were League Two and Keegan was who I signed my first contract with. They have come from nothing really; the Cottage was just a little cottage with hardly any stands, I witnessed the whole transition, once (Mohamed) Al-Fayed took over things started going from strength to strength.

“Chris Coleman was manager when I started making inroads onto the first-team. He said it would be good for me to go out on loan to gain experience so I went up to Oldham. It was great; I really enjoyed my time there.”

“Iain Dowie was in charge and I had a good three months up there. He left Oldham to...”
They had put bets on me and my family came down to watch. Step-dad is from Merseyside and all my home game and I scored the first goal. My team – Everton, it was our first - it was a great experience. I also scored against the likes of Drogba, Saha, Anelka to get the Crystal Palace job and that’s how I ended up at Palace – which was obviously a good move for me at the time.

“When I first joined Palace it was on another loan move from Fulham. Palace went up via the play-offs against West Ham but I left three games before that, so that was really disappointing but I got invited to go to the Playoff Final as a guest in the Millennium Stadium, so I felt part of it, which was great to see and an amazing experience.

“My contract at Fulham was running out that summer, they wanted to keep me on so I signed an extension, but once you get that taste of first-team football you just want more - so when Palace got promoted to the Premiership they came into sign me and I saw it as an ideal chance to go and cement myself in their team.

“I played about ten games in the Premier- ship, against the likes of Drogba, Saha, Anelka – it was a great experience. I also scored against my team - Everton, it was our first home game and I scored the first goal. My Step-dad is from Merseyside and all my family came down to watch. They had put bets on me to score at anytime so that was great that I managed to pop up and score, but we ended up getting beaten 3-1 which was disappoint- ing.”

Despite Palace suffering relegation that season Hudson had enjoyed his first taste of Premiership football – and was hungry for more.

“I had been at Palace for four years and my contract was starting to run out, Neil War- nock was in charge and we had a good year but I heard there were a few clubs interested in me, in particular Alan Pardew at Charlton,” said Mark. “I felt they had a better chance of going to the next level so I made the decision to cross the border, which was not what many people would have chosen to do, but I felt it was beneficial to me.

“I got a lot of stick from Palace fans - it wasn’t long after I had signed we had to go off and play at Selhurst Park - I got a bit of grief.

“Unfortunately it didn’t work out as I would have hoped. At the time word was that Charlton were going to get new investment and hopes were high of going straight back into the Premiership, but two months later Pardew got the sack, which was frustrating because I liked working with him.

“It was coming up to January and things weren’t going too well at Charlton, although throughout the sea- son there was talk of it still happening the investment never came. The physio at Charlton used to be at Cardiff and he mentioned that they were interested in me. They tried to put in a bid during the January transfer window but that didn’t materialise.

“We played Cardiff towards the end of the season, we were winning 2-0 but Cardiff managed to peg it back to 2-2.

“After that the whispers from Cardiff were that they were going to make another bid for me that summer, so in the meantime I just tried to work as hard as I could at Charlton and see how it went.”

That summer a bid did come in from Cardiff, agreeing with Charlton a £1m bid for the defender.

“I knew Mark Kennedy really well through our time together at Palace, so I came down, had a chat with the gaffer (Dave Jones), and it turned out to be even more than I thought it would be.

“Yeah, they (Charlton and Palace) had trouble, I imag- ine every club in the Champi- onship has financial troubles, My ambition is always to get to the next level and play in the Premiership and I felt this was the best place to get that opportunity.”

Once signed for City boss Dave Jones almost im- mediately handed Hudson the captaincy – the third successive club he had been appointed captain of.

“I don’t like to blow my own trumpet, I never ex- pected to come here and do that (become captain) and I didn’t expect to go to Charl- ton and do the same,” said Mark, modestly contemplat- ing his manager’s decision. “I imagine it’s the way I hold myself, how I go about my day job, being professional and doing as much as I can in helping others out.

“I’m very vocal, which helps. I suppose I’m doing things right and people look at me as a leader and a bit of a presence, I think the managers who have given me the capaincy have seen that side of me and possibly a little bit more, but I don’t know whether that is it.”

No sooner had Hudson settled into life at the Cardiff City Stadium, financial mat- ters were distracting the me- dia’s attention from on the field issues – a matter he was well prepared for considering his former clubs’ plights.

“My ambition is always to get to the next level and play in the Premiership and I felt this was the best place to get that opportunity.”

Pictures Courtesy of Pete Thomas/Cardiff City FC
“Craig and I had a chat and being a captain... I can only learn from him – it’s only a bonus.”

whether it’s publicised or not,” said Mark. “Most clubs struggle from month to month, so it’s nothing new, it didn’t take me by surprise.

“It’s something that you’ve got to live with, every day we’ve just got to go out do our job and hope that the people behind the scenes can do theirs. Once you have crossed that white line it’s not even a thought, you train hard every day, working towards something, and as a group of players we don’t let that affect us, we’ve just got to go out there and perform.”

One year into his Cardiff contract and the contrast is quite amazing. The arrival of new Chairman Dato Chan Tien Ghee and business partner Vincent Tan has seen the financial issues being dealt with, plus the hurt of Ledley’s departure is now a distant memory thanks to the home-coming of another local hero.

“I think they’ve done a great job,” said Mark describing the Malaysians’ impact. “The players they’ve brought in and the money they’ve pumped into the club. It seems the stories in the media about things not being paid and bills left right and centre have drifted by, and things look to be running a lot smoother – which is what you need as a football club.”

One of the players brought in has (in comparison to Ledley a year ago) instantly succeeded Hudson as captain – but only on the field, with Hudson retaining club captain status.

“I spoke to the manager about it before it happened, and he said that this was a possibility (signing Craig Bellamy). I don’t think you get that opportunity a lot in football, to play with someone like him who will hopefully take us to the next level,” said Mark.

“Craig’s a leader himself so I told the gaffer that I would agree to it. I told him that I really love being captain of this club - I wanted him to know that. But I would go along and agree with it, and we’ve worked from there.

“Craig and I had a chat and being a captain himself, captaining Wales, I can only learn from him – it’s only a bonus.

“I’ll still sort out tickets for away games for example, things like fines or getting money together for activities we do at the club, but it’s also about being seen as a leader. I’m not about to step back and drift into the background, I’m still going to be at the front trying to drive things on.”

The arrival of Bellamy may have taken some of the burden off Hudson, however he realises that if the Bluebirds are to gain promotion then he must also step-up his own game.

“I think last year was a bit inconsistent from me, obviously the injury didn’t help but I didn’t feel my form was particularly great at all last year,” accepted Mark. “When I came back from injury in my mind I wasn’t fully fit, but then (Anthony) Gerrard got injured and then you’ve got to step up. I felt I did that in the first Leicester game, didn’t play particularly well in the second leg and then leading the team out at Wembley – we didn’t maintain it over 90 minutes.

“Yes, it’s nice to play with somebody for a long period of time, but you’ve just got to get on with it, its part of the game. This season I’ve had different centre-back partners but I feel better this year in myself, so that’s why I think I’m performing slightly better.

“This year I feel fitter, I definitely feel stronger and in games I feel more confident. Whether that’s because it’s my second season or just happier in myself, but I definitely feel more confident.”

Although being the man who led out the Bluebirds for their first season at their new Cardiff City Stadium, Hudson has played several times at Ninian Park (for opposing teams) – so it’s not lost on him the sentiments some fans may hold for their spiritual home.

“I thought it was a really tough place to go,” said Hudson. “The atmosphere was always electric whoever I was there with.

“But that’s gone now, we’ve got a new stadium and we’ve got to try to make this the same - a really tough place to come. Obviously they are different stadiums; Ninian Park was really enclosed and the fans were right on top of the pitch and obviously at the new stadium things are a little bit spaced out and further away. But the last couple of home games have been amazing – we have had 26000 there and the noise has been incredible.”

Hudson hopes that the next few years will see him, together with Bellamy, lead out the Bluebirds to Premiership football, but after that what does the future hold for Mark Hudson?

“I’m starting my coaching badges this year, there’s a few of us down at the training ground who will be doing that for about the next seven weeks and I’ll try and get them under my belt before I finish football. I think I’ll try and stay in football in some capacity. I quite enjoy the agent side of things and hopefully that would be a possibility. I’m trying to keep my options open but I imagine I’ll stay in football somehow.”

In the meantime, let’s hope Hudson can fulfil his ambition and lead Cardiff City into the Premiership – with or without the armband.
Generous City Fans Right Behind Keenor Appeal

Bluebirds fans are getting behind the Fred Keenor Statue Appeal in a big way - and the result is that more than £34,700 has been raised and pledged.

The social evening at the Cardiff City Stadium starring Ricky Tomlinson and City boss Dave Jones brought in a whopping £9,383. The auction, which included City memorabilia, was a particular money-spinner.

But we’re hoping the success of that event will be replicated when The Stand’s I’ll Be There single is released on vinyl, CD and download on October 25. It is based on the terrace chant and mining folk song ‘When The Coal Comes From The Rhondda - I’ll Be There’. We really appreciate the efforts of Jonathan Owen and his team of musicians. We’d appeal to all supporters to get behind The Stand’s record and the appeal, which is benefitting from the proceeds of sales.

And the fundraising committee is holding a buffet curry night with Cardiff City players at the Rhiwibina Recreation Club in Lon-y-Dail, Cardiff, on Thursday, November 4 (starting at 7pm). It is being organised by the committee and award winning Indian takeaway owner Dilwar Ali. The meal costs £25, which includes a substantial donation to the fund from every ticket sold. There will also be an auction and raffle. Places are limited to 140 so early bookings are encouraged. Please send cheques made out to the Fred Keenor Statue Fund c/o the Nahin Spice Centre, 314 Caerphilly Road, Cardiff, CF14 4NT.

That is likely to be the last major fundraising event of 2010, although sales of Fred Keenor badges and miniature statues will continue through to Christmas and beyond. The badges cost £3 and the miniatures £39.99. They’re available from the club shop.

We’d also like to thank City fan Richard Lewis who ran the Berlin Marathon last month, bringing in at least £140 for the fund and wish fellow Bluebirds supporter Matthew Bullock good luck in the Toronto marathon on October 17, also in aid of the appeal.

While the fundraising has been continuing apace, artist Roger Andrews, who was selected to create a lifesize-and-a-half statue of the captain of Cardiff City’s 1927 FA Cup winning team, has not been letting the grass grow under his feet.

Roger has created a three-foot version of the statue of Fred, which gives a really good indication of how the final version will look. The statue formed part of a display on Fred Keenor at the Football Association of Wales’ awards dinner which members of the fundraising committee put on. The committee is now arranging a suitable location to display the three-footer.

The full statue of Fred Keenor, costing £85,000, will rest on a plinth on a triangular piece of land opposite the Gate 3 entrance into the stadium and because of its location will be seen from Leckwith Road.

Roger, who is from Llantwit Major, created the Sir Tasker Watkins statue outside the Millennium Stadium.

Donations to the appeal fund can be made through the Co-operative Bank: Account name: – Fred Keenor Statue Fund or FKSF Account no 65392368 Sort Code 08-92-99 Cheques can also be sent c/o CCST to PO Box 4254, Cardiff, CF14 8FD. Please add the words “Fred Keenor Appeal” on the top of the envelope.
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Delaney inspired City go goal crazy in 98/99

O
nce anyone following a football club has got to the stage where they have a memory bank of former players they can recall, it’s inevitable that they start comparing those from past eras with the current squad and it’s not too much of a leap from there to then start picking things like best elevens you have seen.

When that memory bank I mentioned stretches back to the early 60’s, like mine does, then selecting “best ever” players or teams becomes that much harder – in fact, it’s virtually impossible! Therefore, I make a point of not considering anyone who only played for us during our spells in the Football League’s basement division (which I still call Division Four) for things like a best ever team – however, I do make one exception to that rule.

Mark Delaney’s signing from Carmarthen Town in the summer of 1998 barely registered with City fans and the local media, but I can remember being told that “the new right back looks good” by some fans and the local media, but I can remember being told “the new right back looks good” by some diehards who had gone to watch an early pre-season friendly that year oop north somewhere.

It soon became obvious that those supporters had got it right about Delaney. Although the team made a slow start to the campaign, slow was certainly not the adjective you would apply to Delaney – take your pick from quick, agile, strong, intelligent and classy.

Manager Frank Burrows’ decision to play with three centrebacks certainly gave Delaney more licence to play with the sort of attacking intentions which meant City got the best out of him. However, such was his speed and athleticism, Delaney was able to, effectively, be two players in one – attacking wing back cum winger on the one hand and orthodox, defensive full back on the other.

As City’s form improved with the arrival of autumn, so it became increasingly obvious that Mark Delaney was much too good for League Division Three (as it was called at the time). I daresay bigger clubs were already aware of him at the time, but it probably was when Delaney scored his only goal for us in a 6-0 FA Cup First Round thrashing of Chester that he first made an impact with the national media.

City fans had become used to Delaney’s rampaging runs up the right, but this was something special as he went through the gears in going past four defenders before scoring from a tight angle – perhaps Tony ‘Villars’ goal against Palace beats it as the best individual goal I’ve seen by a City player, but, off the top of my head, I can’t think of any other candidates.

That win over Chester signalled the start of an outstanding run of form for City at Ninian Park with the goals flowing as nine out of ten matches were won. Pretty routine wins by 2-0 and 3-1 over Southend in the league and Huddersfield in the FA Cup respectively were followed by a 4-2 victory over Mansfield in a high quality match between two sides which were destined for promotion that year.

The Mansfield win consolidated City’s place at the top of the table and ensured a good turnout of over 12,000 for the Boxing Day match with Shrewsbury which was won by 3-0. I can remember our second goal by John Williams came courtesy of some comedy goalkeeping and that it was scored right in front of me at the, then open, Grange End.

That reference to “the, then open, Grange End” is significant because the game was played in a torrential downpour and, in my wisdom, I had turned down the offer of a nice dry seat in the Grandstand for a place on the terraces “where the real atmosphere is”!

Hardly surprisingly, my absolute soaking that afternoon gave me one of the worst cases of flu I have ever had in my life as I spent three weeks off work. Amazingly though, my illness relented sufficiently on successive Saturdays during that time for me to see non league Yeovil become the only team to avoid defeat during that run when they drew 1-1 in the Third Round of the FA Cup (we beat them 2-1 in the replay) and Hartlepool (featuring a Peter Beardsley whose performance lent support to the theory that great players should retire while still at the top) be despatched 4-1 in the league.

Next up were another team from the North East, Darlington who ran City close before being defeated 3-2 by eventual champions Brentford were thumped 4-1 in a memorable game featuring an absolutely superb lobbed goal by Jason Fowler.

Although our away form was fairly patchy, City were playing with tremendous confidence at home and this was enough for them to stay at the top of the league. On the face of it, Mark Delaney’s impact on games had lessened slightly during this period because so many of the attacking players in front of him were now doing the business, but his importance to the team would soon be proved in a way which, for anyone who has followed the club for a few years, was depressingly familiar.

That game with Brentford proved to be Mark Delaney’s last for City as Aston Villa had a bid of £500,000 for him accepted by the Board – while the club were hardly in a position to hold on to the player once the big clubs came calling, I think they could have held out for a bigger fee.

Without Delaney, City’s home form stuttered badly – they didn’t lose any games, but six out of the remaining seven were drawn (including a 0-0 stalemate against the same Chester team that had been beaten by six a few months earlier) and a season which had looked on course to deliver only the third league title in our history ended with us rather limping over the line to promotion in third place.

Returning to the subject of best elevens, I tend to go by what a player did while playing for us when considering whether he should get into my fictional team and so, with Mark Delaney only being with us for such a short time, and facing stiff competition for the right back slot from the likes of Peter Rodrigues, Dave Carver, Phil Dwyer and Kevin McNaughton, he wouldn’t get into my team.

However, it’s a different matter completely if you go by what someone did before or after they played for us – Delaney went on to establish himself as a quality performer at Premiership and International level before injury forced him to retire early and, using the criteria of what someone does during their whole career, I would say that only Rodrigues really rivals him as being the best right back I have seen play for the club.

http://mauveandyellowarmy.net/
The Fred Keenor Story: Part One

Cardiff City legend Fred Keenor can justifiably be described as the greatest Bluebird of them all.

Although he was never considered one of the most gifted footballers of his generation, Fred’s fighting spirit, his will to win and his inspirational leadership qualities enabled him to carve out a remarkable career at the highest levels of the British game.

The tough-tackling defender spent the best part of two decades at Ninian Park, during which time his name became synonymous with both Cardiff City Football Club and the Welsh national side. In March 1920, Fred was a member of the Welsh side who chatted up another 2-1 victory against England at Highbury, a city he remained a football self-assurance. He reproduced his high club form and will be a strong candidate for further honours.”

In March 1920, Fred was a member of the Welsh side who authored a remarkable one for the Bluebirds. Fred scored one of his side’s goals in an opening day 5-2 victory over Stockport County and was a virtual ever-present as City cruised to promotion at the first time of asking. The team finished runners-up to Birmingham and also enjoyed an incredible FA Cup run that thrilled the Welsh public.

After defeating Sunderland, Brighton & Hove Albion and Southampton in the early rounds, they were drawn to home at First Division outfit Chelsea in the quarter-finals. A crowd of well over 50,000 crammed into Ninian Park and produced an electric atmosphere. Fred and his team-mates then fought out a 0-0 semi-final draw with fellow Second Division side Wolverhampton Wanderers at Anfield before losing 3-1 in a controversial replay at Old Trafford.

After doing so well during their debut Football League season, the Bluebirds initially struggled in the 1921/22 campaign and made nineteen appearances for the Griffin Park club as they surprisingly won the league ahead of teams such as Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur.

Fred established himself as a regular in the Cardiff side during the 1914/15 campaign as they finished third in the Southern League table, but like all professionals of that period his career was suspended at the end of the season due to the escalation of the First World War. He enlisted in the 17th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, which was better known as the ‘Footballers’ Battalion, and was posted to Northern France before being sent into action at Delville Wood in July 1916 during the infamous Battle of the Somme. After many days and nights in the trenches facing a continual bombardment from the German artillery, Fred sustained shrapnel wounds to his left leg and right shoulder. The leg injury was such that he feared his professional career was over, but following several months of convalescence in a Dublin hospital he was able to rejoin the Army and start playing football again.

Upon his return to the British mainland, Fred was stationed at a depot in Chatham, where he became a member of the Army’s physical training staff. He signed for Brentford as a guest player in time for the start of their 1918/19 London Combination campaign and made nineteen appearances for the Griffin Park club as they surprisingly won the league ahead of teams such as Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur.

Once the War had ended and he’d been demobbed, Fred returned to South Wales and rejoined Cardiff’s Southern League squad. He made his senior debut for the Welsh national team in October 1919 during a Victory International against England at Ninian Park and produced a solid display in the right-half position as Wales recorded an unexpected 2-1 triumph – their first ever victory in England in thirty seven years.

The South Wales Echo’s match reporter wrote: “One might have expected Keenor to show some nervousness on his first appearance in a representative side and before a Cardiff audience, but he played with remarkable self-assurance. He reproduced his high club form and will be a strong candidate for further honours.”

In March 1920, Fred was a member of the Welsh side who chalked up another 2-1 victory against England at this time at Arsenal’s Highbury Stadium. It was only the second occasion that Wales had won on English soil and, following earlier draws against Ireland and Scotland, it was enough to secure the British Home International Championship title for the first time since 1907. At the end of 1919/20 season, most of the teams in the Southern League’s First Division became members of the Football League’s newly-formed Third Division. Cardiff City, however, were voted straight into the Second Division during a specially-convened meeting of the League’s management committee. It was a massive leap forward for the club and the beginning of a golden era in which Fred was to play a starring role.

The 1920/21 campaign proved a remarkable one for the Bluebirds. Fred scored one of his side’s goals in an opening day 5-2 victory over Stockport County and was a virtual ever-present as City cruised to promotion at the first time of asking. The team finished runners-up to Birmingham and also enjoyed an incredible FA Cup run that thrilled the Welsh public.

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After doing so well during their debut Football League season, the Bluebirds initially struggled in the First Division. They lost the opening six games of their 1921/22 campaign and by mid-October were rooted to the bottom of the table, but they staged a miraculous recovery from that point onwards and following a series of impressive victories over the likes of Manchester United, Chelsea and champions Liverpool, they eventually finished fourth. The team’s love affair with the FA Cup continued as they reached the quarterfinals, where they were beaten 2-1 by Tottenham in an exciting White Hart Lane replay watched by a sell-out crowd of 53,626.

The Bluebirds consolidated their top flight status in 1922/23 by finishing ninth. Alongside Fred, the squad included some very talented individuals such as Irish goakeeper Tom Farquharson, Scottish full-backs Jimmy Blair and Jimmy Nelson, English half-back Billy Hardy and Welsh forward Len Davies. City looked ready to mount a serious challenge for the First Division championship and that challenge materialised during 1923/24.

The team made a fantastic start to the campaign and were beaten only once in their first twenty two matches. Despite a dramatic dip in form during March, when they collected just one point from five games, they were still sitting pretty at the top of the table going into the final day of the season. A victory over mid-table Birmingham and a draw would have secured the title, but the Bluebirds could only manage a 0-0 draw. Crucially, Len Davies had a penalty saved by Blues keeper Dan Tremelling midway through the second half.

Meanwhile, championship rivals Huddersfield Town beat...
strugglers Nottingham Forest 3-0 at Leeds Road. The result meant the Yorkshiremen finished on the same number of points as Car- diff. In those days, the method of determining league positions when clubs were level on points was by goal average, which involved dividing the number of goals each team had scored by the number they had conceded. The calculations revealed that Huddersfield had won the First Division title by just 0.024 of a goal, which has since proved the narrowest winning margin in the entire history of the top flight.

Fred gained some compensation for City’s disappointment when he captained Wales to the 1924 Home International Championshipe title. Under his leadership the Welsh side achieved a clean sweep of victories for the first time, beating Scotland 2-0 at Ninian Park, England 2-1 at Ewood Park and Ireland 1-0 at Windsor Park.

Having got so close to the championship in 1923/24, Cardiff’s league form was erratic during 1924/25 and they dropped to eleventh in the table, but despite their inconsistency they enjoyed another fabulous FA Cup campaign which took them all the way to Wembley. They needed three attempts to see off Third Division North champions Darlington in round one before defeating Fulham, Notts County, Leicester and Blackburn Rovers en route to the final. City’s opponents at Wemb- ley were Sheffield United, who were also occupying a mid-table position in the First Division.

Tens of thousands of excited Welshmen invaded London on the day of the final but they returned home disappointed following a dour contest that failed to live up to expectations. United claimed the Cup thanks to solitary first half effort from English international winger Fred Tunstall, who capitalised on a dreadful defensive blunder by City half-back Harry Wake before slotting the ball past Tom Farquharson.

The Western Mail reported: “This final will probably go down in history as one of the most disappointing in the series. The better team on the day won, yet that is not saying a great deal for Sheffield. Compared to Cardiff they were a much better side, but from the standpoint of good football they were certainly not great.”

The Sheffield Daily Telegraph was full of praise for the way in which the Bluebirds and their fans reacted to losing the match. The paper’s correspondent wrote: “Better luck to Cardiff next time. They fought well and cleanly, and the Yorkshire people at Wembley were impressed by the magnificent sporting spirit which was shown both by the Cardiff players and their thousands of disappointed sup- porters.”

During a civic reception at the City Hall two days later, team captain Jimmy Blair admitted that nerves had got the better of the Bluebirds. The veteran Scot- tish international left-back said: “I can assure you that we did our very best, although I must confess the occasion awed me, and I’m a more experienced player than most of the side. It takes a man of tremendous willpower to stand the awful strain of an occasion such as the Cup final.”

Fred, meanwhile, refused to let the defeat dent his spirits as he vowed to make a swift return to Wembley and win the trophy for his countrymen. He told the press: “Just because we lost in our very first Cup final, I don’t think there is any cause to get down in the mouth. I can say here and now that one day soon Cardiff City will bring that Cup to Wales.”

In the second part of the Fred Keenor Story, (which we will publish in the next CCST Maga- zine), I’ll recall the famous day in 1927 when the Bluebirds lifted the FA Cup. I’ll also describe the club’s subsequent decline, Fred’s heroics as captain of the Welsh national side and the final years of his career following his release by Cardiff.

Donations to the appeal fund can be made through the Co-operative Bank (account name: Fred Keenor Statue Fund or FKSF, account no: 65392368, sort code: 08-92-99). Cheques can also be sent c/o CCST to PO Box 4254, Cardiff, CF14 8FD.

Please mark the words ‘Fred Keenor Appeal’ on the top of the envelope.

Although it’s a fans’ group, the Trust, as a legally constituted Society governed by law, is more than just another supporters’ club. It’s a campaigning organisation which seeks to represent the views of Cardiff City fans to the owners and executives at the Club.

Whilst always wanting to work with the club, we are independent of it, giving us the right to criticise and question when necessary.

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