

HIBERNIAN FC

92-99

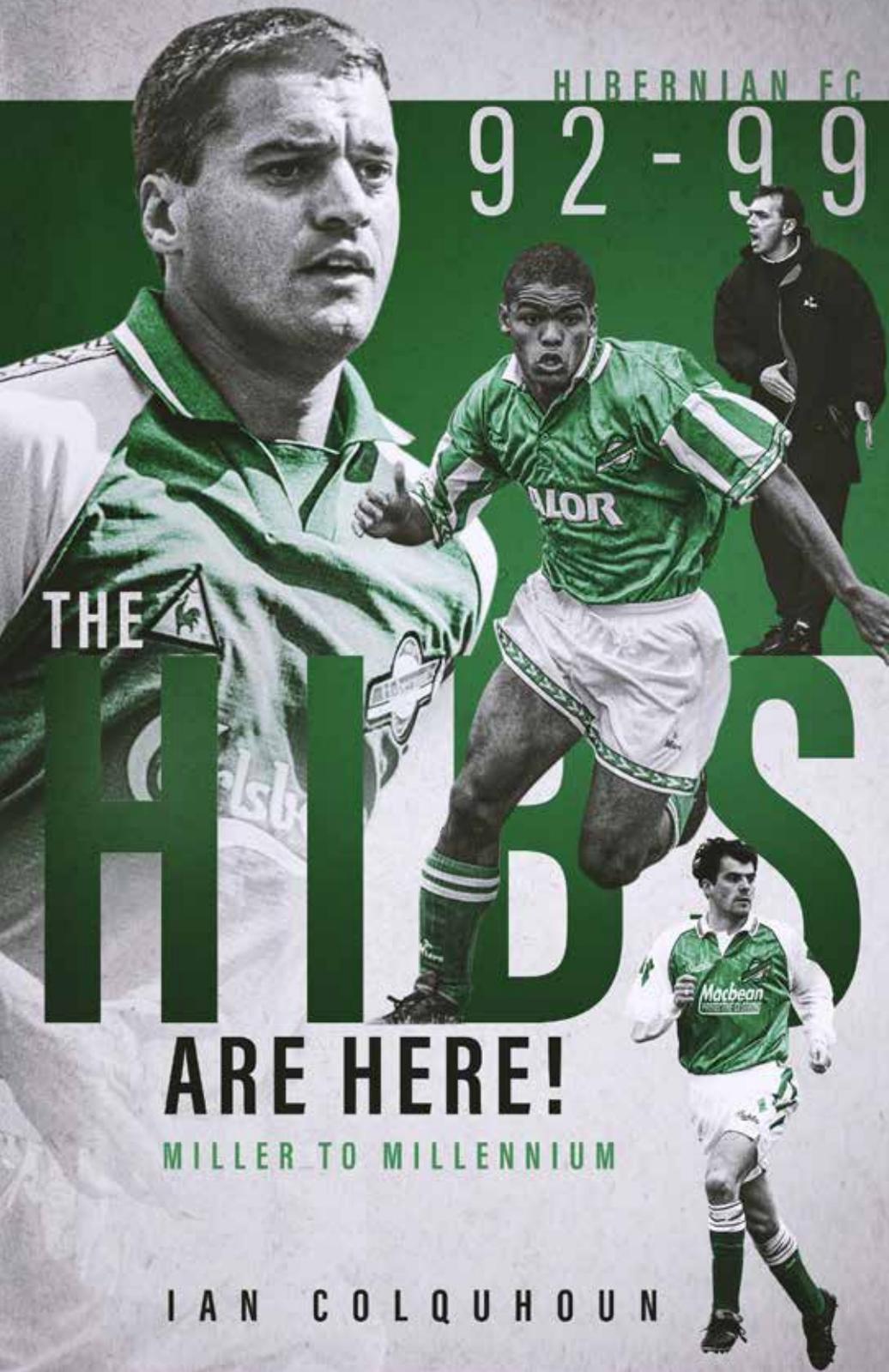
THE

HIBS

ARE HERE!

MILLER TO MILLENNIUM

IAN COLQUHOUN



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92 - 99

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I A N C O L Q U H O U N



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SOUND

'Alex Miller's green and white army!
Alex Miller's green and white army!'

HIBS WERE formed in 1875 by and for Irish Catholic immigrants. Part of the reason was because clubs in Protestant Edinburgh wanted 'papists' and Irish immigrants to stay away from their own clubs. Newspapers from the time often cited how it was a good thing that Scotland at last had a 'sectarian' football team. 'Sectarian' actually had a positive meaning back in the 19th century, whereas today the word is used to mask racism in Scotland by people who don't want Scotland or some Scots to be thought of as racist. Hibernian provided the blueprint for and was copied by other Irish immigrant teams formed in Scotland thereafter, the most famous of which being Celtic and Dundee United (Hibernian), though there were scores of others. For example, Broxburn at one point had three 'Hibs-esque' teams: Broxburn Shamrock, Broxburn Harp and Niddry Celtic. Other similarly constituted clubs included St Roch's of Glasgow, Lochee Harp of Dundee, Larkhall Hibernian and Govan Hibernian.

A multitude of other similar clubs also sprang up around the country, though most remained small and either don't

exist any more or have long since been merged with other teams in their locale.

The problematic thing for Hibs in the earliest days was that being an exclusively Irish/Catholic club in Edinburgh really wasn't sustainable. There wasn't enough of the Irish diaspora in Scotland's capital to *really* make it work. There was in Glasgow, though; that's how Celtic flourished. In the last decade of the 19th century Hibs went bust and had to go on a kind of hiatus, only playing friendlies for a while. When Hibernian resumed proper operations in 1892, resurrected thanks to two ancestors of Sir Tom Farmer, they did so as a non-sectarian club open to all and have remained so ever since.

People from Edinburgh and the surrounding area over the years who are from an Irish or Catholic background would still tend to choose Hibs as their team but Hibs fans nowadays tend to choose to support Hibernian because of family tradition or because of geography, i.e. because they are their local team. A good number of Hibs fans today belong to the socio-economic and religio-ethnic group for which the club was originally formed, or are at least descended from people who were, but many more have no links to these groups at all. In short, Hibernian is a football club for everybody, regardless of race, faith or class. It's all about the football. Some Hibs fans love and revel in the club's heritage, most find it pleasing but don't go on about it, some aren't that fussed about it, you even get the odd few who would rather the club's cultural history wasn't mentioned or celebrated at all. Regardless of that, Hibs fans aren't a homogenous group, but we are all united in one thing – our love of the team. That love transcends all of our differences and has stood us in good stead over the years as we have faced and overcome challenges together. When

Hibernian FC opened itself up to all of Edinburgh, that beautiful city's people welcomed her with open arms and she became a wonderful, integral part of Scotland's capital story and has remained so. Over the years the football club and its fans have formed their own unique identity, based on Edinburgh, Leith, the east coast and, well, coolness.

The attempted Mercer takeover of Hibs by Hearts in 1990 sealed a bond within two generations of the Hibs support, which has endured. It defined us as a club in the 1990s. We were, as Sky dubbed us, 'The team that wouldn't die.' That episode not only showed what Hibs fans could achieve together when our beloved team was under existential threat, it also strengthened our collective mentality. To be blunt, nothing negative that we have had to endure as Hibs fans in the last 30 years has come close to the trauma of 1990, and everything positive that we have experienced since 1990 has tasted all the sweeter because we know that we are lucky to be alive to experience those positives, 1990/91 proved an old adage true – what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

Supporting Hibs in the 1990s was a wee bit different to following 'the Cabbage' today. Most games were at 3pm on a Saturday, and most matches weren't on television, though the number of televised matches increased substantially as the decade wore on. For most Hibs fans, particularly those outwith Edinburgh, the main source of Hibs news came from small columns in the 'weegie'-dominated daily newspapers and from the much better sources that were *The Scotsman* and the *Evening News* – particularly from the excellent David Hardie. Fans keen on extra titbits of midweek Hibs info could resort to Teletext/Ceefax or even the club's premium-rate information line, the number of which was 0898 70 70 70. Your humble correspondent,

then a teenager, once listened to most of a midweek away match on that clubcall number, costing 50p per minute, and experienced a very long week when his mum got the telephone bill. I doubt he was the only one.

By far the biggest change which affected Hibs fans during the 1990s was the Taylor Report. From the summer of 1994 we had to sit down at matches, which was a bit of a culture shock to fans that were used to standing on terraces. Like all fans, we adapted and got used to it, but all-seater did make watching football slightly more sanitised and our game did lose some atmosphere irretrievably. One plus point of going all-seater was that the numbers of women, children and whole families attending games did increase, though there were always plenty of bairns and women at football before 1994 anyway.

The casual group, the CCS, obviously weren't anything to do with the actual football club, but they were part of the support. To ordinary Hibs fans and indeed ordinary fans of other clubs, casual movements were very much a double-edged sword. Their very existence forced police and football clubs to 'wise up' when it came to crowd safety, which actually improved the match-day experience and safety for all as the years went by. The casuals made fans of other clubs wary of Hibs fans; this could work either in favour of or against ordinary Hibbies. For instance, cops might see a group of Hibs fans who weren't wearing many colours but who weren't actual casuals, but would treat them with suspicion regardless. Same with opposing fans. Many would see Hibs fans and think 'casuals', 'trouble' and would either give us a wide berth, be nice to us, or, less often, try to give us a hard time. One negative about having casuals, other than inexcusable violence, *obviously*, was that their existence was sometimes used by the authorities as a stick

with which to beat ordinary Hibs supporters and the club. When we almost died as a club in 1990, many people in Lothian and beyond wanted us to die, for two main reasons: because of the casuals and because of our club's heritage. We were seen, absurdly, as being 'fenian' because we wore green, or as all being a gang of hard men looking for a pagger, because of a small group of casuals. Most casuals at all clubs back then were just angry young men in the Thatcher/Tory years, looking for something deeper to belong to, and they were no more or no less Hibs fans than other supporters. In any case, whenever there was any sort of 'bother' at a match anywhere in the country, there was as much a chance that it was started by steaming drunk 'scarfer' fans as by organised hooligans. Every big club in Britain had a 'firm' back then. Fans today are lucky that they can attend football matches in such comparative safety. Society moves on.

By the mid 90s Scottish football clubs had finally cottoned on to just how much money could be made from merchandise and other club-related curiosities. The newer Hibs shop under The Famous Five Stand is testament to how football merchandising was finally embraced by the club and dragged into the 21st century. Hibs actually released three VHS videos in the 90s as well. One such video was called *Going for Glory* and it was a film about Hibs, released in late 1997 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of our 1972 League Cup win. It featured footage from that match and interviews with Eddie Turnbull and some players of that era. Tony Higgins presented part of it and, as Jim Duffy's Hibs side were flying high when it was filmed, it also featured interviews with the boss and some current players, as well as showing the goals from our good start to that campaign, up to the 3-4 loss against Rangers. It sold reasonably well but by that season's end was a bit of a cringe to watch as it

showed our goals but not the opposition's and half of the players and the manager were gone by the end of the season *and* we ended up going down. Watched nowadays, it's nice; a good snapshot of Hibs history from what was a time of heady optimism at the club. Another VHS, released in 1995, was called *Hibee Hibernian*.

The first of the trio of VHSs came out just in time for Christmas in 1992. It was, of course, *The Team That Wouldn't Die*, which told a compressed story of our near-death in 1990 and our subsequent SKOL League Cup triumph of 1991. Though it largely ignored the three early rounds of that cup run, it was nevertheless a superb video, a must-have for any Hibs fan and remains a classic to this day. Narrated by Jim Hossack, this video is an important part of Hibernian's history, not only as a fine audio-visual catalogue of that historic cup win, its aftermath and of club personalities at the time, but for one other reason. That video brought new meaning to the song 'Sunshine on Leith'.

'Sunshine on Leith' by The Proclaimers was known to Hibs fans ever since its release in 1988 but prior to the release of that cup-winning video in 1992 you'd be stretching it to say that it was a Hibs song. At the Hands Off Hibs rally at Easter Road in 1990 The Proclaimers sang 'You'll Never Walk Alone' on the pitch with the fans. That was our 'dewy-eyed' club anthem at the time, sung at times of great emotion; however, 'Sunshine on Leith' was sung at the Hands Off Hibs rally in the Usher Hall in 1990. For the 1992 SKOL Cup VHS, 'Sunshine on Leith' was dubbed over crowd footage of that Easter Road Hands Off Hibs rally and it worked magnificently. As the beautiful, moving song played over the emotive footage of the rally, everything just clicked. 'Ma heart was broken' echoing over footage of what was a heartbreaking emotive time at Easter Road was

artistic genius. The fact that the song is about Leith and sung by two good Hibbies, both of whom are actually in the clip, was the icing on the cake. It just clicked. In fact, it clicked so well in the Hibernian psyche that some fans to this day mistakenly associate the song with the Hands Off Hibs episode, even though it only really had a minor role in that drama. The song would continue to be a slow burner. ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’ remained our main celebration anthem right up until we sang it near the end of the 6-2 win over Hearts in 2000. We sang ‘Sunshine on Leith’ against AEK Athens in 2001 and then en masse after thrashing Kilmarnock in the 2007 League Cup Final, and, thereafter, ‘Sunshine on Leith’ has been our club anthem, and rightly so. It’s awesome that we have a unique song that is ours and only ours. For that song we have The Proclaimers to thank, and that 1992 video about the SKOL Cup win which embedded it into many of our hearts. ‘Sunshine on Leith’ was, however, played regularly on the PA at Easter Road from the mid 90s, as well as on Hibs pub jukeboxes and on buses, at Hibby weddings, funerals, parties and social gatherings – and probably will be forever. A CD of Hibs songs appeared in the club shop in the late 90s, too. As well as ‘Sunshine on Leith’ and the ‘Turnbull’s Tornadoes’ song, it featured tracks like ‘Hibs Heroes’ (the zoom zoom song), ‘Glory Glory to the Hibeers’ and even a weird electro-dub track by The Jimmy Boco Experience, based on the terrace song ‘We are Hibernian FC’.

At actual games in the 90s, our song repertoire was quite extensive.

Asides ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’, which was reserved for moments of triumph or adversity, or for when playing Hearts or Rangers, we had quite the eclectic mix of songs and chants in the 90s, some of which are still with us today.

‘Hail Hail’ was and is one of our main anthems, usually sung just after we have celebrated a goal and also usually to inspire the team just before or after kick-off. The chant comes from two tunes. The ‘Hail Hail, the Hibs are here, all for goals and glory, all for goals and glory’ part comes from Gilbert and Sullivan’s famous 1879 comic opera *Pirates of Penzance* which has also been made into a movie. The actual song in question is called ‘With Cat-like Tread’ and the real lyrics are:

‘Come friends, who plough the sea!
Truce to navigation
Take another station
Let’s vary piracy
With a little burglary!’

The second part of ‘Hail Hail’ which goes ‘For it’s a grand old team to play for’ comes from a totally different song. It’s from a song called ‘76 Trombones’, which first featured in a 1957 musical called *The Music Man* which has also been made into a movie. Several UK clubs sing versions of ‘Hail Hail’, most famously Hibs, Celtic, Fulham and Everton. There’s some debate about who sang it first, not that that really matters. One story goes that Glasgow Celtic inherited the song when Belfast Celtic folded in 1949. That’s only possible for the ‘Hail Hail’ part, as ‘76 Trombones’, the ‘grand old team’ part, wasn’t even written when Belfast Celtic folded. In any case, each club sings their own words to the tune.

Our other excellent club anthem, ‘Glory Glory to the Hibeese’, is far easier to trace. Our version was recorded by Hector Nicol back in the day. Rather a lot of football teams sing songs to this tune, as it is taken from one of the most popular Christian hymns of all time, but Hibs were the first

football team to make a record with the tune. The original tune was written in the early 1800s in America and was called ‘Say Brothers Will You Meet Us?’ It later became the abolitionist anthem ‘John Brown’s Body’ then also became the US Civil War anthem ‘Battle Hymn of the Republic’ when new lyrics were written by American woman Julia Ward Howe in 1861. It’s one of the most well-known songs in the Christian world, covered even by Elvis Presley, so it’s no real surprise that the song made its way from churches onto football terraces, like so many others. The song had quite a journey – from the hills of Gettysburg in 1863 to the slope at Easter Road a century later and beyond.

Another big 90s Hibs terrace song that we got from Christianity is ‘We are Hibernian FC’. It uses the tune to the chorus of the Easter hymn ‘Lord of the Dance’, written in 1963 by English composer Sydney Carter. For a time in the 80s, after 1986, we sang ‘We love Dundee’ instead of ‘We hate Dundee’ in the lyrics, because of Albert Kidd. An advantage of using old hymns and war songs at the time was that most people knew the tunes. The original hymn was about Christ’s resurrection, so there’s a nice irony that Hibs fans sang a song to the tune, as we ourselves were raised from the dead after the 1990 takeover episode.

I’m unsure of where the tune to ‘Ooh to be a Hibbie’ originally comes from. All I’ve been able to deduce is that fans the world over in the 60s started using that particular chant or pattern of clapping. It may have come from a 1966 UK chart hit by Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick & Tich, ‘Hold Tight’; then again that band might have borrowed the tune from football. We also sang ‘Hibeets’ and clapped to that tune as well, and still do. Every team’s fans use the tune.

Our song ‘We hate Glasgow Rangers, we hate Celtic too ...’ is still sung today. Other teams’ fans use that tune

as well. The original tune 'Land of Hope and Glory' was written by the composer Edward Elgar in 1901. Elgar used to feature on British banknotes, but is probably most revered for writing the tune to a Hibs song. Probably.

'Triumphal March' from the Italian composer Verdi's opera *Aida* was sung a lot in the early to mid 90s by Hibs fans but also by most fans at that time. It doesn't have lyrics, you just sang 'do do ...' to the tune. It's the song of the big entrance and when it filled a football stadium it sounded amazing. It went out of fashion, eventually.

After Euro 96, fans all over Britain started to use the 'It's coming home' line from Baddiel, Skinner and The Lightning Seeds' England song 'Three Lions'. It was usually used to tell other teams they were going down or that their manager would soon be on the dole. Another song which crept from the charts onto the terraces at Easter Road and elsewhere in the 90s was 'Go West'. This happened because the Pet Shop Boys had released a fairly successful cover of the song in 1993, which was originally recorded by The Village People in 1979. You know the tune. You may know it better as 'You're pish, and you know you are' or words to that effect. We also sang a version of it about Russell Latapy, and we also did it to 'Stand up if you hate jam tarts'.

Then there were more obscure songs, less frequently sung. The one about a fictitious 6-2 victory over Rangers at Ibrox and the one about Bill Shankly and the mental Hibeas are examples. The latter still gets the odd outing, usually on big away days, and uses the tune from the 50s rockabilly hit 'Tennessee Wig Walk' by American singer Bonnie Lou.

'Forever and Ever' still gets sung by our fans now and then, not often. Back in the 90s we sang it on the terracing all the time, particularly against Hearts, Airdrie

and Rangers. It's probably not PC any more, with its lyrics about being 'mastered by no ...' Almost every team in the country sang a version of that song as it's very catchy. The chorus of the song, the 'Bring on the Hearts ...' part, uses an old, old tune. It was originally an American Civil War song from the 1860s about Confederate POWs having to walk all the way to camps in Chicago, called 'Tramp Tramp Tramp', which later became 'God Save Ireland', the emerald isle's unofficial national anthem when it was part of the UK. 'God Save Ireland' was actually played by the band on the pitch after Hibs beat Celtic 1-0 in the 1902 Scottish Cup Final for that reason. The tune was later used for Scotland's 1978 World Cup song as well. As for the first part of that Hibs song, the 'Forever and ever' part, well, that's an old, old song. 'Forever and Ever' was written in the 1940s by Malia Rosa, using an old Austrian tune. In 1949 American crooner Perry Como had a smash hit with the song and it became so massive and well known that football fans later adopted it.

We also had songs for players. The manager only had one chant, 'Alex Miller's green and white army.' Keith Wright had 'Keef Keef Keef'. Mickey Weir had 'He's here, he's there'. Darren Jackson had 'Ooh ah Jacksona'. Jim Leighton's 'Scotland's number one' chant used the tune of the 1968 hit 'Helule Helule' by The Tremeloes. Joe Tortolano's song was 'Joe, Joe, Super Joe, Super Tortolano' sung to 'Skip to my Lou'. Steven Tweed's chant was 'Tweedy, Tweedy'; Chic Charnley's chant was the same as Tweed's but 'Chico' instead. Most of the rest of the squad, when they'd earned a chant, were serenaded with 'One [insert name], there's only one [insert name]', sung to the tune of 'Guantanamera'.

We did have some chants specific to certain teams. Celtic, Rangers and Partick all got treated to our 'In your

Glasgow slums' ditty, though we sang that to Hearts as well, changing Glasgow to Gorgie. Aberdeen got hit with 'sheepshagger' patter. For a brief time in the 90s some of our lot taunted fans of both Dundee clubs about the closure of the Timex factory up there, and we also once made fun of Motherwell fans because of Ravenscraig. Those last two were embarrassing chants but that's how football was. We got it back from all of those fans, AIDS 'banter' from the non-Edinburgh teams, songs about saunas, heroin and homosexuality. The odd dig at our club's roots as well. Aberdeen fans travelled the country taunting fans of every other club with 'sign on, sign on' during what was a time of high unemployment. Society was very different in the 90s; football is a microcosm of society, so that's how things were. Some songs are gone, some aren't.

Michael O'Neill's song was 'Oh Mikey Mikey, Mikey Mikey Mikey Mikey O'Neill', sung to the tune of Chicory Tips's 'Son of my father'. Hearts and Celtic both used the same tune about Mike Galloway.

The hymn 'Cwm Rhondda', also known as 'Bread of Heaven', was used for a lot of our other songs; most teams' fans used it. It provides the tune for chants like The referee baiting chant:

'Who's the bastard in the black?
We'll support you ever more
We can see you sneaking out
What the fucking hell is that?'

And other such ditties. There were others, of course. Nowadays most football chants come from chart songs rather than from hymns or army marching tunes. The pop group who have had the largest number of their songs adapted into football terrace chants is ... Boney M. At least

six of their songs have become widespread football chants in Europe – those songs being ‘Mary’s Boy Child’, ‘Daddy Cool’, ‘Brown Girl in the Ring’, ‘Rivers of Babylon’, ‘Sunny’ and ‘Rasputin’. That’s right, 70s disco giants Boney M!

We didn’t just have songs, we had fanzines. Fan-made independent magazines about the club were a superb source of both information and humour. Sold by mail subscription or in pubs and outside the ground, publications like *Mass Hibsteria/Hibs Monthly* and *TANEHSH* provided fans of the club with what one might compare to an early version of internet football forums and social media, neither of which were around for most of the 90s. *MHHM* gave us Grumpy Gibby the North Stand Hibby and had some wonderful contributors, even Irvine Welsh, who used the name Octopus, I think. All clubs had their own fanzines. Hearts’ main ones were called *Always the Bridesmaid*, a reference to their long barren trophyless spell, and *No Idle Talk*. One featured a comic Gorgie-agro hardman called Chi who would spout threats of unrealistic violence.

As the 90s wore on and Hibs got gradually worse on the pitch, somewhat ironically the team was becoming a bit more famous culturally. The movie version of *Trainspotting* in 1996 started it; who can forget most of the characters wearing Hibs gear in the opening scenes, or the décor in Renton’s bedroom? In 1997 you had that guy in the audience on a TV show singing the ‘Leith San Siro’ song. Then 1998 brought another movie version of an Irvine Welsh book, this time *The Acid House*. That, too, had numerous Hibs references in all three of the stories featured; Hibs legend Pat Stanton was even in it, playing a barman. The year 1998 also saw *Looking after JoJo* hit British screens. The gritty but intelligent drama set amid the drug-plagued atmosphere of 1980s Sighthill also had Hibs references.

In 1999 an Edinburgh-based pop group called The Lanterns released a pop song and video called 'High Rise Town'. The song, sung in Edinburgh accents, made it onto cable TV music channels and featured a promotional video showing the now demolished high-rise flats at Broomhouse and nearby street scenes full of adults, youths and children, many of whom were wearing Hibs gear.

We flew many flags. Green and white striped ones. Green saltire ones. Harp ones. The CCS flag. A weird, beautiful one like the CCS flag but done in purple and green. Even Irish tricolours – mostly when playing Rangers, Hearts or Airdrie. Most supporters' branches had a flag. There was, for a time, an enormous green and white flag that covered around half of the area between the TV gantry and the away end when unfurled. You tended to only see flags at half-time in the terracing days as they obstruct the fans' view of the pitch. Big flags could be a godsend at away trips when we were on open terracing in bad weather, as the lucky few could shelter under them. We even had one which said 'Oblivion to Hampden'.

So, by the end of the 90s, no matter how the team was actually doing, Hibernian FC was pretty cool and trendy and supporting the Hibs was a cool experience. Always has been. Always will be.

*Do everything you fear
In this there's power
Fear is not to be afraid of...*