



Ignoti et quasi occulti in hoc mundo
(‘unknown and partially hidden in this world’).

Marist motto inscribed on the plinth
of the Brother Walfrid statue outside Celtic Park

Andrew Kerins [Brother Walfrid] [1840 – 1915] was one of the most significant Irish immigrants to Scotland. He was an outstanding individual in relation to Catholic education and charity in Glasgow and a major contributor to the emergence of organised sport in Scotland in the late nineteenth century.

He was but one individual, amongst countless thousands of victims, who survived the catastrophe of *An Gorta Mor* in Ireland, only to be forced to leave behind family, community and homeland in the hope of finding a better life overseas. Over one million others perished owing to the prevalence of starvation and disease during Ireland’s darkest period. Kerins left for Glasgow as a fifteen-year-old boy and the spectre of hunger, accompanied by a concern for the spiritual and physical well-being of others, are motifs which endured throughout his long and impactful life.

Dr Michael Connolly’s research points up three major themes which motivated Walfrid’s actions in life with the Marist Brothers – namely, his Catholic faith, community-based charitable action, alongside a close and enduring association with football, and Celtic FC in particular. He played a leading role in originally founding Celtic in order to support the impoverished Irish Catholic diaspora in Glasgow. Later in life he did the same work in London’s East End.

An insightful and inspiring historical biography.

Sales history & features

- The first and only comprehensive biography of the life of the founder of Celtic Football Club
- Numerous well-known endorsees [see page 2]
- Photo illustration in b&w including never-before-seen material
- Full colour Brother Walfrid portrait by Peter Howson
- Publicity campaign incl promotion tie-in with Celtic FC
- Available from thirstybooks.com, branches of Celtic Superstore, Amazon, trade from Gardners

Walfrid

A Life of Faith, Community and Football



Michael Connolly



title: Walfrid
A Life of Faith Community
and Football
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Case bound in green Wibalín cloth, with Marist Brothers blue endpapers, including colour head & tail bands and full colour jacket. A handsome book.

Dr Michael Connolly was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Stirling in June 2022 for his thesis titled ‘Faith, Community and Football: The Life of Brother Walfrid’, following completion of a four-year research project funded by the Glasgow-based arts company, the Nine Muses. This book is the product of that work. Michael can be contacted @WalfridPhD on Twitter.

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'An extraordinary book on an extraordinary man.
The definitive story of Brother Walfrid. . .'

Hugh McDonald, journalist

'I would like to congratulate Dr Michael Connolly for this excellent and definitive biography.'

Peter Lawwell, Celtic Football Club

' . . . a well-researched and fascinating account of Brother Walfrid's life. '

Alison Healy, journalist and author

'Michael Connolly's research provides fascinating and important information on the life and work of a man who had a significant impact on the development of the city of Glasgow. . . the combination of his Irish heritage, Marist formation, passion for sport, and religious faith brought improvement to the lives of the poor children.'

**Brother Brendan Geary, F.M.S., PhD.,
Provincial of the Marist Brothers, 2010 – 2019**

'*Walfrid* is the poignant, authoritative account of an Irish migrant who transformed society by his dedication and commitment to the poor. Dr Michael Connolly has provided a narrative that goes well beyond the Celtic story, with timeless thoughts for this age as well as of years past.

Bart McGettrick

'In this biography, Dr Michael Connolly explores Walfrid in the context of late Victorian Scottish life and in the process explains the reasons why Celtic, a football institution in Scotland as well as a socio-cultural Irish diasporic symbol, means so much to so many. This book adds to knowledge and understanding of charity, education, Catholicism, Irishness and football in modern Scotland and further afield.'

**Dr Joseph M Bradley
University of Edinburgh**

'This is a story which requires telling and re-telling down the generations and Michael Connolly has made an outstanding contribution to that endeavour.'

**Jeanette Findlay, Chair,
Coiste Cuimhneachain An Gorta Mòr
(Famine Memorial Committee)**

'The book engages deeply with the masculine worlds of Catholic religious Brothers and football players but it also explores struggles to support Irish multigenerational immigrant communities with education and basic living needs.'

**Bronwen Walter
Emerita Professor of Irish Diaspora Studies
Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge**

A charitable conscience and a caring work ethic are attributes that helped Brother Walfrid create one of the most powerful charitable sports organisations in the world. Michael Connolly's fascinating account of his life will help deliver that mission globally.'

**Paul McStay,
former Celtic and Scotland captain**