

MID-ULSTER FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

TENNENTS MID-ULSTER CUP



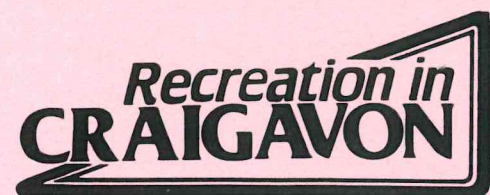
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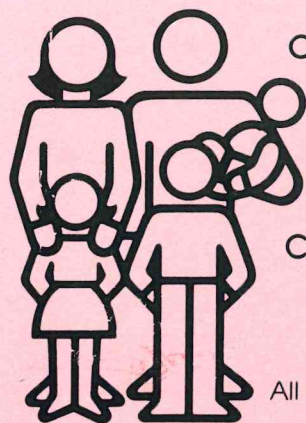
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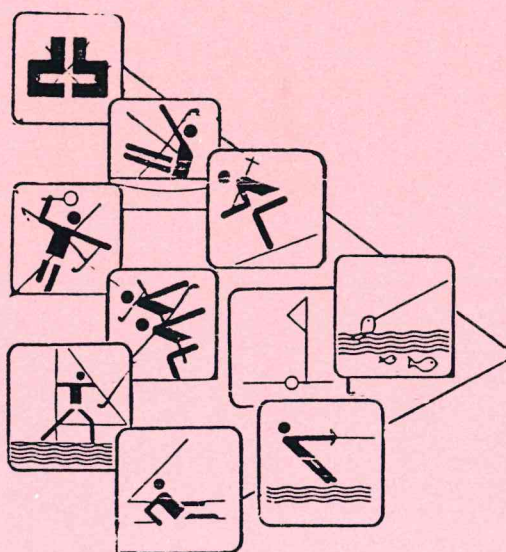
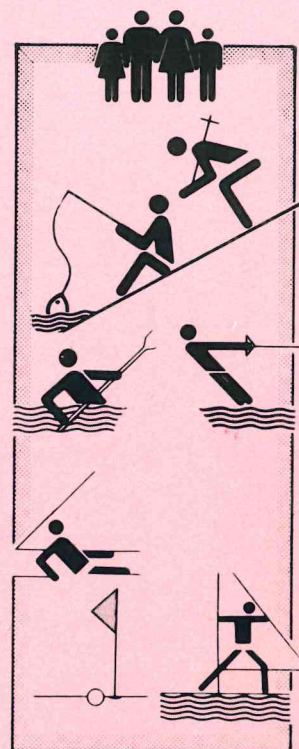
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**CRAIGAVON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

TENNENTS MID-ULSTER CUP



CENTENARY 1887— 1987

Celebrating a Century



A century is always something to celebrate — but a 100th birthday — well, that's a particularly auspicious event.

This is the 100th anniversary of the first-ever Mid-Ulster Cup Final, and for that reason the men entrusted with the running and organising of soccer hereabouts decided to mark the occasion by publishing a souvenir magazine.

Contained on the pages which follow is a history of the competition, the characters who have played in it, some of the myths and stories which crop up whenever the Mid-Ulster Cup is talked about and discussed and some of the highlights which litter the past century.

It is by no means all-embracing. To have compiled such a record would have taken years rather than months and would have resulted in a book rather than a magazine. But hopefully the facts, figures, interviews, recollections and accounts printed here will serve to remind all of those involved in soccer in the Mid-Ulster area — and beyond — of the tradition which underlines this competition.

PRIVILEGE

It has been my privilege and pleasure to have been asked to compile this publication. I count that an honour, for the Mid-Ulster Football Association enjoys a lofty position in Irish soccer's pecking order by virtue of its excellent administration, the players and personalities it has produced, the referees who have come from its ranks and its reputation for doing things

so 'professionally' that its fully amateur status is often belied.

That is why, 100 years after it was first contested, this season's Tennent's Lager Mid-Ulster Cup is a bigger and arguably better competition than at any stage in its illustrious past. Competitions do not continue to run for a century without an incredible amount of dedication, commitment and hard work on the part of all concerned.

SPONSORS

And in today's world, it would be financially impossible to stage such an event without the generous fiscal backing of the sponsors. On behalf of the M.U.F.A. therefore, allow me to express my gratitude to the sponsors of this, the 100th Mid-Ulster Cup, namely Bass Ireland Ltd.

Because they have donated the necessary funding to make the 1987 competition a reality, this season's event fittingly bears their name ... The Tennent's Lager Mid-Ulster Cup.

Cheers to all concerned!

And to steal from the sponsors' own well-known advert; "Are you ready now?"

If so, read on and relive some of the highlights of the past century.

Yours in football,
NIALL J. A. CROZIER

WHEN the late Bob Radcliffe told a fresh-faced 15-year old Ivan Marshall to "get involved in football because the game needs young men coming through all the time," even he cannot have realised just how much the Lurgan teenager would take that advice to heart.

Today, Ivan's name is as much a part of the history and folklore of Mid-Ulster Football as that of the man who first urged him to commit himself to it.

In terms of soccer, he's a workaholic. Not only is he Chairman of the Mid-Ulster Football Association — he is also Chairman of the Mid-Ulster League and of the I.F.A.'s Intermediate Committee. Nor do his duties end there. He is, in addition, a member of the I.F.A. Senior Council and the Youth International, Emergency, Rules Revision and League Sanctions and Referees and Coaching Committees. Some workload!

Trying to contact Ivan is like trying to catch the wind. He is constantly on the move in the interests of football and footballers. Nor is that a recent development. He has been involved in Mid-Ulster League affairs for more than 30 years. He has served — in the truest sense of the word — on the Mid-Ulster F.A.'s Council for 22 years.

"I've been there so long I'm in danger of catching up with Dickie Holmes," he jokes.

He attends football-related meetings at least three nights a week for all but six weeks of the year. I finally succeeded in tracking him down on Easter Tuesday night. That day, he had been to the Mid-Ulster Shield final between Oxford United and Craigpark at Mourneview Park, followed by a quick sprint up to Lisburn to hand over the Intermediate Cup to the victorious R.U.C. team. The previous day he had also been to a match, and although his diary was blank — football-wise — on Wednesday, he was due to attend a further game in Newry on Thursday. Friday night would be taken up with a Mid-Ulster Council meeting to decide the date and venue for the Mid-Ulster Cup Final. And that's a period most of us consider to be a holiday....!

"CAN'T OPT OUT"

Before the Easter 'break,' Ivan had just returned from Scotland where he was on duty with the Northern Ireland youth squad. He is off to France with the same group in the very near future. Doesn't the pressure of it all get to him at times? Aren't there occasions when he's rather just sit down and relax after a hard day's graft at his successful Downpatrick textile factory?

"You can't opt out," he says, "I believe in doing a thing properly, or else not doing it at all. There's no point in accepting positions if you aren't prepared to do the work required."

That says much about his dedication and commitment. When he puts his hand to a plough, he's not one for looking back. Indeed, it was that sort of attitude which saw him decline the offer of a post as Glenavon secretary when that larger-than-life figure, William Walker, died.

"I was up to the neck with Queen's Park Swifts at that time," he explains. "The club meant a lot to me and I was worried that it might fold if I left. I couldn't see anyone else at that stage who would have been interested in taking them over. It was just asking too much of me to waik away and forget about them."

"In the end," he smiles, "it worked out okay. I got my cousin Roy to take the job as secretary of Glenavon!"



Ivan Marshall

HE BROKE HIS LEG

Ivan was, in fact, a signed Glenavon player when he broke his leg as a 19-year old playing for Queen's Park Swifts, the club he had joined from Lurgan Rangers. A promising inside-forward, that may well have cost him his chance of an Irish League career. Still, he bears no grudges. He played again for his beloved Queen's Park, although he left them to spend some time with Dungannon Swifts — then of the old Irish Alliance — before returning to the fold. That was around 1957. As well, he played Summer League football for Eden Rangers.

He won the Mid-Ulster Shield medal with Queen's Park as a player in the early 1960s, and went on to become secretary and then manager of the club, only standing down when he moved to Downpatrick to further develop his flourishing business. The man to whom he handed over at that point was current Mid-Ulster Council colleague, Isaac Gilkinson.

He became chairman of the Mid-Ulster Football Association in 1977/78, succeeding Newry Town's Davy McKee and he has occupied that chair with distinction ever since.

Married to Audrey, he admits that if she ever wants to go out anywhere he has to consult his diary first. "I don't have much free time," he says. "Football and work leave me with very little time to call my own."

HE NEVER FORGOT

Despite the fact that he now lives in Downpatrick, he travels to the Mid-Ulster area every Saturday to watch a junior match. No-one could spend so much time and energy on the game unless it gave him a great deal of satisfaction in return. I asked him what he sees the rewards as being.

"I just get pleasure in seeing the boys enjoying the game," he offers. "There are people with whom I grew up who are now running clubs for which their sons are playing. In some cases, the sons of the men I grew up with are running the clubs themselves! I just think back to the occasion when Bob Radcliffe told me to get involved."

"He said; 'those of us involved in running the game for you boys won't always be here. Some of you are going to have to take over some day.' I've never forgotten that. I like to think that I've done what he asked."

Everyone involved in the game in Mid-Ulster — at whatever level — will nod in agreement with that masterpiece of understatement....



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100 years ago

The 100th anniversary of the first-ever Mid-Ulster Cup Final — that's the milestone we're celebrating this season! What an achievement — what a proud, proud occasion for everyone involved in soccer under the jurisdiction of the Mid-Ulster Football Association.

The first-ever Mid-Ulster Cup was contested way back in 1887, two years before the current holders, Glenavon, even came into being. Queen Victoria still had 14 years of her reign to run at that stage and the conservative Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, the Third Marquess of Salisbury, was Britain's 33rd Prime Minister, having ousted Gladstone whose first Irish Home Rule bill had been defeated a year earlier.

HOME RULE

Edward Carson was a 33-year-old Dublin-based barrister who had not yet been elected to Parliament, Sir Randolph Churchill had just coined that famous line, "Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right," the Orange Order was enjoying unprecedented support in the North as talk of "Home Rule" escalated and the 200th anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne approached, and James Connolly was a 19-year-old living in Edinburgh where he had been born, albeit of Irish parents.

Sport and politics were closely interwoven in Ireland, even in those days. The recently-formed (1884) Gaelic Athletic Association, for example — members of which were not allowed to indulge in soccer — had, by 1887, largely come under the control of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

F.A. CUP

Charles Stewart Parnell — a Wicklow-born Protestant — was, at 42, the leader of the Irish Nationalists of his day, but was poised to topple, his name having been dragged into a messy divorce case, although he himself always protested his innocence.

On a purely sporting front, Aston Villa won their first-ever F.A. Cup, defeating West Bromwich Albion 2-0 before 15,500 spectators at Kennington Oval. There were no Football League champions that season though, for the league had not come into being. In fact, it was 1888-89 before that got underway.

Hibernian won the Scottish Cup, beating Dunbarton 2-1, although Dunbarton themselves were lucky to make the final that year, having been defeated by that same score when they played Hurlford in the quarter-finals. Hurlford insisted on playing on a frozen pitch, did so and won. Dunbarton appealed to the Scottish Football Association, however, and they ordered a replay which Hurlford lost 3-1.

TOUGH

Socially, things were tough and one can only try to imagine what sort of conditions the ordinary folk of 1887 were forced to endure. The bicycle was a mere 47-year old invention — the first petrol-driven car only emerged a year after the first Mid-Ulster Cup final. As for the sponsors of this year's final — Tennent's Lager — their pint was still being hailed as a wonderful breakthrough when the first Mid-Ulster final took place, having come on the market a year earlier.

The first 10-storey skyscraper was five years old, although in those days, Chicago was a long way removed from the more rural environs of counties Down, Armagh and Tyrone. There was little chance of the Ulster populace ever seeing it, either — the Wright brothers wouldn't fly their first aeroplane until 16 years later and the likelihood of Henri Giffard's steam-propelled non-rigid airship taking anyone to America was pretty remote.

A Man for All Seasons

THE name of John Brown is synonymous with Mid-Ulster football, wherever and whenever the conversation gets round to soccer in this part of the world.

That's quite right and proper, too. John has been secretary of the Mid-Ulster Football Association for the past 10 years, having succeeded the late Bob Radcliffe. All told, he has been involved in the administrative side of the game for 11 years.

But his experience extends far beyond the confines of administration. In his native Lisburn, John managed a junior team which delighted in the tag of Lisnagarvey Strollers. They played in the Lisburn League, though their former manager has always kept his cards pretty close to his chest regarding his success or otherwise.

It was during his time in Lisburn, in fact, that his rare talents as an organiser and administrator first came to be recognised. Not suprisingly, his colleagues quickly found a position in which those skills could be utilised, and John was appointed treasurer of the Lisburn League, a post in which he remained until 1966 when he married a Portadown girl and moved to the 'Hub of the North'.

REFEREE

John wasted no time in becoming involved in football in his new home town. But again he showed his versatility and all-round love of the game for on this occasion he opted to become a referee, quickly achieving Grade II status which allowed him to handle 'B' Division matches and to run the line in Irish League fixtures.

You can't keep a good man down, they say — and so it again proved in John's case. Once more that widely acknowledged administrative ability saw him elected to the position of secretary of the Referees' Association, a role he fulfilled with his usual efficiency.

When he joined the Mid-Ulster F.A.'s Council 11 years ago, it was a fitting reward for his years of unstinting service to the local game. He has proved himself more than capable of that position, in addition to which he doubled-up as secretary of the Mid-



John Brown

Ulster League for a number of years, handling the running of all five divisions with an ease which belied the many hundreds of hours of work that entailed.

"Amazingly, he also made time to serve as secretary of Portadown Football Club between 1982 and 1984 as well as chairing the popular and famous Armstrong Cup Summer Football Competition committee, again in '82.

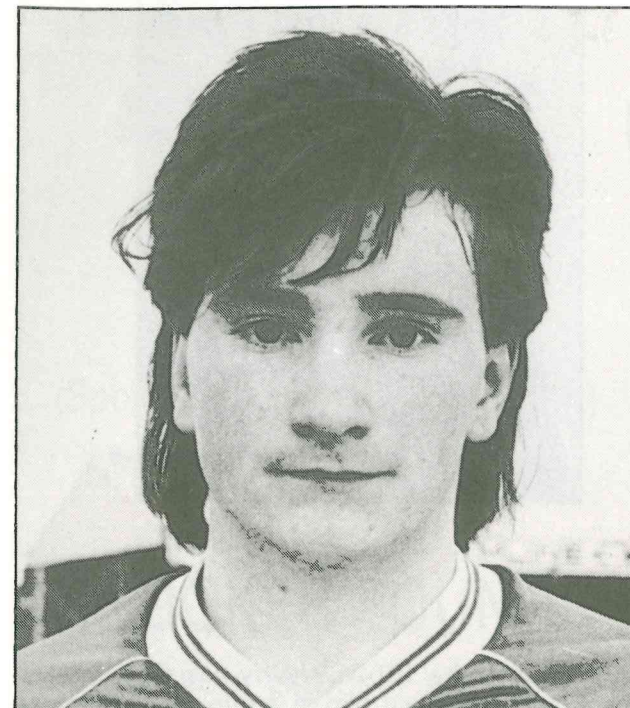
COMMITTEES

Nor did his involvement end there, for that same summer he was in Spain with Northern Ireland to see Billy Bingham's boys do the nation proud in that never to be forgotten World Cup series.

He also serves on four I.F.A. committees, namely the Intermediate Committee, the Youth International Committee, the Referees' and Coaching Committee and the Emergency Committee.

Surprisingly, he does have time for things other than soccer-related projects. Married with two children, he works for the Department of the Environment's Roads Division in Belfast, travelling to the capital each day from the Portadown home he shares with his obviously tolerant wife and two children!

Outside of football, his other sporting passion is golf, though as with his days in soccer management, he is strangely quiet when it comes to discussing his prowess with a 2-iron. Once asked what his handicap was, John replied in typical fashion: — "My hands, my grip, my swing, my eye and my stance. Apart from those handicaps, I'm not a bad player!"



Kieron Tourish

The man whose goal won last season's Mid-Ulster Cup did not kick a ball in this year's competition. Glenavon's hero in the 1986 all-Lurgan "David versus Goliath" showdown with Mid-Ulster League kingpins, Oxford United, was Londonderry-based journalist, Kieron Tourish.

Tourish notched the only goal of the match, thereby sparing the senior club's blushes last May, but at the start of the 1986/87 campaign, Glenavon and the promising young player parted company after failing to reach agreement as to what his talents were worth in terms of hard cash.

ATTITUDE

Manager Terry Nicholson was critical of the North-Westerner's attitude, and was quoted as saying that he felt Tourish's asking price was "unrealistic for a lad with a handful of senior matches under his belt."

For a brief time it looked like Nicholson had won the battle of wits when Tourish returned to Mourneview Park. The fragile new relationship did not last long, however. Having been invited back to Glenavon to prove that he was worth the sort of money he was asking for himself, Tourish never settled and soon moved on again, joining Derry City.

In 20 senior outings for the Lurgan Blues, he scored half-a-dozen goals, with the May '86 winner against Oxford United in the Mid-Ulster Cup Final undoubtedly being the most important in terms of prestige, silverware and cash.

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Richard Holmes

DICKIE Holmes is the man who holds the purse-strings of the Mid-Ulster Football Association ... and there is no-one better for the job.

He took over as treasurer of the M.U.F.A. in 1976, replacing Roy Marshall when he moved on to take up his post with the Irish Football Association. Roy himself was an excellent treasurer but Dickie Holmes proved more than capable of filling the breach when called upon to do so.

He is a football man through and through. Way back in 1954-55 he was elected to the management committee of Newry Town for the first time. That proved to be one of the best off-the-pitch signings the frontier town's football club ever made. The name of Dickie Holmes is synonymous with that of Newry, the club he has served with such distinction

DISTINCTION

Today he is vice-chairman of Newry, having previously occupied every officers' position within the club, including that of chairman. The fact that he is treasurer of the M.U.F.A. ought not to come as any surprise - after all, he was secretary/treasurer of Newry Town and succeeded in wearing both hats simultaneously with great distinction.

But Dickie enjoys telling one particular story against himself! Nowadays he can smile about the incident, but at the time, it was no laughing matter

"Yes, I must be one of the few soccer officials who ever managed to get his own club thrown out of a senior cup competition," he recalls.

"How? We fielded an ineligible player! And the irony of that particular story is that it happened in the Mid-Ulster Cup.

"It was in the 1960s. Newry has signed Terry Davey and we played him in a cup match. Unfortunately, he had not been signed for the required number of days prior to the fixture, so we found ourselves dismissed from the Mid-Ulster Cup. I accept the blame," he admits. "It was my job to check it out and I slipped up."

Dickie was elected to the Mid-Ulster Football Association Council on June 4, 1960. His election came during the annual general meeting, held in the Temperance Hall, West Street, Portadown, under the chairmanship of the late Bob Peel.

RESPECTED

He is a widely respected figure, both in his home town of Newry and far beyond it, for he has travelled extensively in the interests of soccer, and has always conducted himself in an impeccable manner, whatever the occasion. And with Newry Town now back in the Irish League's senior ranks, his legislative knowledge - coupled with his vision and his sense of reality - will help them consolidate for the future.

Two years ago the M.U.F.A. honoured him with a Crystal Presentation to mark his 25th year of council membership, a milestone which makes him the longest-serving stalwart of that organisation.

He is also a member of four I.F.A. committees - Finance, Rules Revision and League Sanctions, Referees and Coaching and Junior Soccer. Mid-Ulster football is indeed fortunate to have a willing servant of such integrity, ability and reputation.



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Loughgall — the Village Boys with high hopes and ambitions

WITH Loughgall beating Armagh Thistle 5-3 in the first round of the 1987 Tennent's Lager Mid-Ulster Cup, followed by a second round victory over high-flying Newry Celtic and a 2-0 win against Seapatrick in round three, they became the last Mid-Ulster League club left in the competition.

Of the Mid-Ulster League's nine original starters, The Villagers went farther than all the others — Edenderry Blues, Seapatrick, Cookstown United, Lurgan United, Armagh Thistle, Hill Street, Hanover or Annagh United.

After a lean spell by their own lofty standards, Loughgall now look poised for a comeback. Despite the rivalries which exist, that's something most people with an interest in the game in Mid-Ulster would dearly love to see. The reason is simple — anyone with a brain in his head can see that Loughgall are a big, ambitious, well-run club.

In the 1950s hundreds turned out to watch them play in their famed 'gold shirts'. The Calvins, the Robinsons, the Williamsons.... they were the heroes of that era. Others included Jimmy Walker, Tommy Johnston, Jim Spratt, Tommy Elliott, and Jimmy Edgar. Their names still crop up in conversation today.

But for some reason, the club folded and died, and it was not until 1967 that Loughgall's name was resurrected. That year, they entered the Greystone League. The re-launch could hardly have gone better, for they walked off with the title at the first time of asking. They continued to build on that platform and joined and ruled the Lonsdale League up until 1973 when they left it to move on to pastures greener.

ANY CONDITIONS ...

There are people who advocate the introduction of summer soccer nowadays, and they are faced by traditionalists who regard football as being a winter game through and through. But over the years, Loughgall have proved that good teams can play in any conditions.

Not only did they dominate the Lonsdale League in the late 1960s and early 70s — they showed they were every bit as impressive on the sunbaked pitches of June/July/August by sweeping the boards in the Armagh and Dungannon Summer Leagues, too.



Even when they entered the popular Armstrong Cup competition for the first time in 1969, they marked their debut by marching off with that trophy as well.

By 1973 it was obvious that Loughgall had grown into a very big fish in a pretty small pool. Ever-ambitious to improve and progress, they applied for a place in one of the three divisions of the Mid-Ulster League. A quick look at their track record was all that was needed. The villagers were promptly elected and given a place in division two on the strength of their previous exploits. "Ah-ha," thought the cynics, "we'll see how good they are now!"

The reply from Loughgall was "very good, thank you." Under manager George Willis, the newcomers quickly established themselves, winning the Foster Cup at the first attempt and gaining promotion to the top flight as runners-up to Red Lions. They'd arrived, and anyone who had any doubts about their right or ability to survive in division one soon got their answer.

CHAMPIONS!

Sammy Robinson's appointment as manager in 1974 proved to be another masterful stroke. He kept the fire started by George Willis burning even more brightly, in much the same manner as Bob Paisley did when he took over from Bill Shankly at Liverpool that same season. The question most pundits were asking at the start of that 1974/75 campaign was could Loughgall survive? By the end of the season they had their answer — and it was that no-one could survive with Loughgall!

They took the first division by storm and finished as champions. They were undefeated throughout their league programme, a record which stretched their unbeaten run beyond the 50-match mark. Not content with that, they walked off with the Alan Wilson Trophy and just missed out on what would have been an amazing hat-trick when they were beaten in the Alexander Cup final. Still, it wasn't a bad first year in the top division, was it ...?

That whirlwind start meant everyone wanted to beat them the following season. Loughgall's scalp was the one they all sought. Not many got it — but there were enough who did to nudge them into runners-up spot in both the championship and, for the second successive year, the Alexander Cup.

Linfield's Roy Coyle has often been quoted as saying that "losing isn't necessarily a bad thing — how you react when you're beaten is far more important."

Loughgall reacted in the best possible manner. The following season — 1976/77 — they were invincible. They knew the mistakes they had made the previous year, and they didn't repeat them. This time there were no slip-ups as they won division one again.

FOUR TITLES

That was the start of an incredibly successful run which saw Loughgall lift the first division for four seasons on the trot. From 1977 to 1980 inclusive, the title was their's. And in 1978, they finally won that elusive Alexander Cup to chalk up another notable 'double.'

In fact, 1977/78 was arguably their best-ever season, for in addition to winning the Mid-Ulster first division league and cup, they reached the finals of the Mid-Ulster Shield and the prestigious Irish Junior Cup, losing both by the narrowest of margins. Now Loughgall's name was known Province-wide.

They retained the championship in 1978/79 and again in '79/'80, a year in which they also clinched the Bob Radcliffe Memorial Cup.

Loughgall might well have won the league for a fifth successive season in 1980/81, but for two very significant factors. The success of the club had not gone unnoticed elsewhere and Irish League managers began to pursue the up-and-coming youngsters with a vengeance. Within a short period, five moved on to join senior clubs or those in the 'B' Division.

AWAY FROM HOME

That was a big enough handicap, but there was another one, arguably even more damaging. In their ambition to develop their pitch and facilities, Loughgall decided to temporarily vacate their home and play their matches away. At the end of the day, those two handicaps proved too much — even for The Villagers.

On Saturday, August 1, 1981, however, they returned home in triumph, entertaining then-Irish Cup holders, Ballymena United, in a match which marked the opening of their magnificent new Lakeview complex.

Long-term, they see themselves in the Irish League 'B' Division. Short-term, they may feel tempted to try their luck in the Amateur League. If that happened, it would be a feather in the cap of the M.U.F.A., but the Mid-Ulster League would lose a club which has blazed a trail — both on and off the pitch — for others to follow.



LOUGHGALL FOOTBALL CLUB

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Soccer the spice of my life!

ALWAYS 100 PER CENT

"I try never to lose sight of what our chairman, Ivan Marshall, has said on many occasions concerning our role," Eddie explains, "We're here to administer the game and if we don't do it, someone else will and perhaps not as well!"

He admits that Mid-Ulster football is very much a part of his life. "After, all," he points out, "I played it for about 25 years and I've managed a couple of clubs too. When you've been involved to that extent, it gets a grip. I wouldn't have it any other way. As a player and as a manager I never gave anything less than 100 per cent. That's still my attitude. If you don't love it and you aren't prepared to work for it, you shouldn't be there."

Eddie Pepper runs a wallpaper business in Lurgan where he lives with his wife, Shannie. Today, as he analyses the state of the game he loves, his biggest regret is that "the crack and the characters have gone out of it."

"There's a 'win at all costs' approach nowadays," he says, "I honestly believe that when I was playing, football was a lot more fun. You were aware of the characters and personalities on the other teams. There were some hard men around, and there were some very talented players, too. I've seen us being hammered on a Saturday afternoon and half-an-hour later we were talking about who we were to play the following week."

"I'll never forget playing against big Roy Hughes - (Bunny,) as he was to everybody. I had some ding-dong battles with him. I think half of the crowds which turned up in those days came along to watch us kicking each other! Yes, it was hard - but there was no malice to it. Roy was the sort of bloke who gave nothing away on the pitch, but would afterwards have been the first to ask you back to his house for your tea. If anyone did that nowadays, they'd swear there was something wrong with him!"

ATTITUDES MUST CHANGE

Another aspect of today's game which annoys him is the players' attitudes to referees.

"That's something which is going to have to change," he says. "When I was playing, of course, there were far fewer teams. That meant there were fewer referees too, so you got to know them pretty well. They knew who was who, and what to look out for. We knew how far we could go with each of them as well, so there was a sort of mutual respect there."

There's a lot more money around today, facilities have never been better, media coverage is extensive and travelling from venue to venue has never been so easy. You would imagine that football would be thriving as a result. Eddie Pepper's not so sure that it is though.

"All of that is true," he admits. "The one thing that is lacking is the 'fun' element. Sometimes I see youngsters preparing to go on to the pitch and I feel like saying! 'Smile, son - go out and enjoy it.' Nobody seem to think that way any more, though. If they lose they're in the doldrums. But even if they win, they still don't look happy - just relieved not to have been beaten. That's no way to play the game. Once the enjoyment goes out of it, it's a chore rather than a pleasure."

THE vice-chairman of the Mid-Ulster Football Association is 50-year old Lurgan man, Eddie Pepper.

Eddie knows football from just about every possible angle - player, manager and administrator. In the latter capacity he has occupied a number of important positions since being elected to the M.U.F.A. a decade ago.

In addition to being vice-chairman of the Association, Eddie is treasurer of the Mid-Ulster League. He has also served on the IFA's Junior Committee for the past eight years, during which he was their vice-chairman for two years, followed by a further two in the chair itself.

"It's probably the most democratic of all the various IFA committees," Eddie says, "They elect a vice-chairman every two years, at the end of which he automatically becomes chairman, again for a two-year term. The position is always rotated among the various Associations which make up the IFA. It's a good system."

"It's a good safeguard being landed with the same chairman for years on end. Where the individual is good at his job, that does not create problems. It doesn't always work out that way, though. More than one committee has made the mistake of putting the wrong man in the chair, only to find that he's still there after umpteen years. That's no reflection on Ivan Marshall, incidentally - I think he does a first-class job", Eddie adds.

PLAYER / MANAGER

He played for Queen's Park for a couple of seasons at the outset of his career in junior football. He was even player manager of Sunnyside, during which time he did a (Kenny Daglish) in bringing silverware to his club. But his name is always linked with Institute for whom he played for 15 years before moving on to join Tandragee Rovers. He spent five seasons at Manchester Park before returning to Lurgan to take over as manager of Institute, a position he held for eight years.

He was a member of their team which won the Mid-Ulster League back in 1963 and also played in the Foster Cup-winning side of the same era. His medal collection goes back beyond them, however, to his Queen's Park days when he helped them lift the Mid-Ulster Shield. He then steered Sunnyside to the Foster Cup.

And he is a rare breed of Mid-Ulster F.A. Council member in that he has actually played in a final of the Mid-Ulster Cup. That cup final appearance came in the course of his five-year stint with Tandragee Rovers, but unfortunately for Eddie, it ended in defeat at the hands of Portadown Reserves who won 1-0, scoring with virtually the last kick of the match.

"They'd half their first team on," he says matter-of-factly, with no hint of malice.

That approach sums up his attitude to the game in general - he accepted the rules as a player and he's prepared to enforce them as an administrator, for which reason he has some interesting views on what happened to Oxford United following their Mid-Ulster Cup Final appearance, as you'll read elsewhere in this magazine.

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Still playing

AT 36-years of age, Noel Hayes is one of the younger faces on the Mid-Ulster Football Association Council — and certainly one of the very few who still dons his boots on occasions!

Each Friday between one o'clock and 2 p.m. you'll find him playing five-a-side football in the Craigavon Leisure Centre — a quite remarkable feat allowing for the fact that he underwent a kidney transplant in the past.

Unlike a number of his elder Council colleagues, Noel has played the game extensively and also knows football inside out as a result of his time spent in coaching and management.

As a youngster, he began playing with Sunnyside, the Lurgan breeding ground for some of the best footballers ever to have graced Ulster soccer. Jimmy Jones and Jackie Denver are two of the better-known examples.

From Sunnyside and the Juvenile League, Noel switched to Waringstown Football Club. In those days Waringstown played in the Lisburn League. Now, of course, they're very much part of the ever-growing Mid-Ulster League family.

Queen's Park was his next port of call, and it was during his time with them that illness forced him to quit soccer for a lengthy spell. But although his playing days appeared to be over, his love of the game was as strong as ever. Management, therefore, was his next logical step.

Ever the Lurgan man, Noel teamed up with Glenavon, running their Youth team for six very successful seasons. The young Blues won the Juvenile League twice under his management and also lifted the Saracen Trophy on two occasions.

In fact, Glenavon's youngsters won just about every cup for which they were eligible — with one notable exception.

"We reached the final of the Youth Cup, but we lost it," Noel said. "I suppose getting there was the highlight of my six seasons. They were a great bunch of kids and I thoroughly enjoyed working with them. It's just a pity they didn't win the Youth Cup — certainly they were good enough to have done it."

In addition, he guided Glenavon's Youth team to third place in two major international tournaments in Scotland and in Ipswich. Not a bad record, all in all...

Noel was elected to the M.U.F.A. Council six years ago, having proved his worth as chairman of the Juvenile League.

"I'd been chairman of the Juvenile League for six seasons," he said. "Then six years ago, at the annual general meeting of the Mid-Ulster Football Association, I was elected to the Council. I've been returned every year since then, so they must reckon I'm doing something!"

Noel is still actively involved in helping Mid-Ulster League fourth division side, Seagoe United. That represents a new departure in that he has moved out of his native Lurgan.

"I don't have a specific role," he said, "I just do what I can to help in a backroom capacity. I simply enjoy being involved in football — that's really all there is to it."

He is a Sales Representative for Ulster Corrugated Containers and as a Christian, Noel's chief hobby away from soccer is working the the Boys' Brigade. He and his wife, Freda, recently celebrated their 12th wedding anniversary.

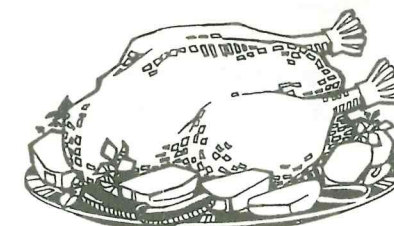


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First year service

NOEL McClure is one of the more junior members of the Mid-Ulster Football Association's Council.

He has only been on the Council for a year, but his involvement in the world of football goes back a long way beyond that. Strange as it may seem, he played very little soccer as a youth, but that did not stop him following the game with enthusiasm and devotion.

As a teenager he followed the fortunes of Tandragee Rovers, then the kingpins of Mid-Ulster League soccer. But about 14 years ago, a major split developed within the ranks of the famous old Manchester Park outfit, and Noel was one of those who moved on at that point, tying his colours to the mast of Richhill Rangers.

He spent three seasons with Richhill, before joining his current club, Loughgall. Now he is very much part of the Lakeview set-up. Noel has been secretary of Loughgall for the past four seasons and anyone who has had occasion to contact him during that period will vouch for his administrative and organisational ability.

He is one of the men who have worked flat-out to put Loughgall on the map and that sort of enthusiasm and know-how earned him deserved recognition in the form of a Mid-Ulster Football Association Council seat.

A plumber by trade, Noel's other sporting interest is indoor bowling. In fact, he is a dab hand with the 'woods' but this year bowling has had to take a back seat.

"I'm tied up two nights a week plus Saturdays with Loughgall" he said. "Bowls is a very time-consuming sport — I've seen us playing every night of the week, bar Sunday, in the course of major competitions. With a wife and family and Loughgall Football Club to tend to, I just don't have time for bowls at the moment."

Noel is outnumbered 4-1 in his Ardmore Drive, Armagh home. He and his wife Lorraine have three daughters!

His passion for football was never better illustrated than when he completed the course run by the Mid-Ulster Referees' Association two years ago. He successfully passed the test and is now a qualified Grade 3 whistler as a result.

"I don't referee, though," he pointed out. "Even if I wanted to do it at this stage, I wouldn't be allowed. You cannot referee and be a Council member at the same time."

"I just did the course in order to learn more about the game. I'm glad I did — it taught me a lot, and it was thoroughly enjoyable. Malcolm Moffett and Jimmy Duffy put a great deal of hard work into it and everyone who did the course agreed that it was very well worthwhile."

"I would encourage anyone who is thinking about joining in next time to go ahead. They will learn a great deal from it — I know I did."



Noel McClure

IN view of the misfortune which has befallen Oxford United as a result of their performance in reaching the final of the 1986 Mid-Ulster Cup, it is interesting to note that back in 1888, Milford played in the first ever Irish Junior Cup. The County Armagh side were beaten 1-0 in the final of the competition by Distillery Seconds — a year after they won the Mid-Ulster Cup. Ironical, eh?

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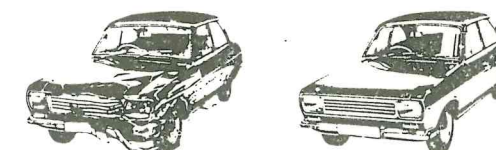


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A match which will be remembered for all the wrong reasons

THE third round clash of Dromore Amateurs and Glenavon Reserves in this season's Tennent's Lager Mid-Ulster Cup competition will alas be remembered for all the wrong reasons.

The teams came face-to-face at Dromore's Mountview Park home on Saturday, March 21, with the prize for the visitors being a trip to Amateur League Rathfriland Rangers' Iveagh Park ground in the quarter-finals. Dromore — having already beaten Kilkeel Athletic and Milford Everton — fancied their chances of upstaging their more 'senior' rivals. The word 'senior' applies merely to Glenavon Reserves' league standing, I hasten to add. Man for Man, Dromore are a vastly more experienced side age-wise...

Glenavon reached this stage by virtue of their 3-1 first round away victory over Cookstown United. the team they brought to Dromore included Northern Ireland under-16 internationals, Ryan Watson and Gerald Taggart, both of whom had been members of the squad which defeated the Republic of Ireland earlier that week to qualify for the finals of the European Championships. A third Glenavon member of that squad — 'keeper Timmy Irwin — was perhaps the most fortunate of the Lurgan trio in that he missed out on the ill-fated trip to Dromore.

Two home team players were ordered off, the pitch was invaded at one point and after the game an angry mob surrounded the Glenavon dressing room.

there were a number of scuffles as the visitors left for Lurgan, resulting in one of their players being knocked to the ground.

DISGRACEFUL SCENES

The dismissals followed a quite disgraceful fracas involving a number of players from both sides, during which fists and boots flew. There were several cases of people 'using the head' for reasons other than for thinking with, too ...

But even though they were reduced to nine men, Dromore had a glorious opportunity of wrapping this one up in the 72nd minute when they were awarded a penalty-kick following an off-the-ball incident. Up stepped the normally-reliable Jim Cochrane — only to blast his drive wide.

There was no score after 90 minutes and extra-time also failed to produce a goal, which meant a penalty shoot-out to determine the outcome of this simmering feud. Robert Blevins scored for Glenavon and Eddie Beattie replied for Dromore. Frank Maguire made it 2-1 for the Lurgan side — only to see Jim Cochrane do what he had been unable to do in normal time — tuck his spot-kick away. Gerald Taggart again restored Glenavon's lead, but Paul Cochrane cancelled that out, too. Paul Byrne stepped up to put the visitors ahead, and the onus for keeping Dromore on terms then passed to Kenny Whan who has spent much of the season at Windsor Park, playing for Linfield Swifts.

TWICE-TAKEN PENALTY

Glenavon 'keeper, Brian Hanley, saved his first effort but was adjudged to have moved early, thereby necessitating a re-take. In came Whan again ... only to see Hanley thwart him for a second time, and in this case the save was ruled to have been legitimate.

Responsibility for the all-important fifth Glenavon penalty was handed to their 13th man, Neil Lennon, and despite the jeers and cat-calls, he kept his head to score and put his team through.

It was a nail-biting finale, but the tragedy of this match lies in the fact that it will live in the memories of those who saw it for reasons other than that. The Tennent's Lager Mid-Ulster Cup is too good a competition for incidents such as those which occurred in this game to be allowed to mar it. The cup has run for 100 years because those in charge of it have insisted on a high standard of conduct, a sportsmanlike approach and decent behaviour on the part of all concerned. They will have to take action after reading the referee's report, thereby restoring the competition's good name and reputation as a result.



FOR a number of years, it was standard procedure for the winners' of the Mid-Ulster Cup to be presented with the trophy during the course of the Association's Annual General Meeting. The Mid-Ulster Shield was similarly presented. The Minutes of the 1949 Annual General Meeting, for example state: — "Mr. William

Walker, Honorary Secretary of 'Glenavon' was presented with the cup and was congratulated on having the name 'Glenavon' once more inscribed on this famous trophy."

"Miniature cups' were also presented to the winning club's representative on these occasions.

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Making up for lost time

TOMMY Colgan has only served on the Mid-Ulster Football Association Council for two years, but already he has caught the bug. Like most of his 16 colleagues, he is fully engrossed in the administration of the game in this area and is committed to its future development.

I spoke to him just 24 hours after Glentoran had knocked his beloved Newry Town out of the 1987 Bass Irish Cup after a semi-final replay at Windsor Park, and his disappointment was so obvious that I reckon even the most dyed-in-the-wool supporter of the East Belfast 'Cock 'n' Hen' could have sympathised on this occasion.

It's hard to believe that Tommy — who clearly takes his football so seriously — actually played very little of the game as a youth.

"Unfortunately that's the case," he admits. "I was very young when I started working as a milkman and I just didn't seem to have as much time as the rest of the boys who were my age. To be honest, I had very little experience of competitive football as a player."

You could be forgiven, therefore, for believing that Tommy Colgan is now making up for those lost years. Football is an obsession with him nowadays.

Four years ago he was voted on to the Management Committee of Newry Town, and such was the enthusiasm and efficiency with which he approached that job that he soon found himself being proposed for a seat on the Mid-Ulster Council. It is significant too, that in both cases, he was elected to those bodies by others who recognised his ability and willingness to work as a soccer administrator.

LOVES BEING INVOLVED

"I love being involved," he admits. "That applies to both Newry Town and Mid-Ulster Football Association. I enjoy working with other football-minded people whose goal — like mine — is to keep soccer going and growing."

And like every other Newry man, he is proud of the frontier town club's record in the Mid-Ulster Cup.

"We have a great tradition in the Mid-Ulster Cup competition," he says, "and we're keen to add to it. It would be marvellous if we could win it in the centenary season, though I suppose all the others are thinking the same thing."

"It's a more prestigious event now with the three senior clubs taking part and sponsorship to make it a worthwhile venture financially. It's getting bigger and better all the time and we're delighted to be part of it."

"What makes it so attractive for Newry is the fact that it gives us the chance to prove that we're the cream of Mid-Ulster football. We're very happy to be back in the Irish League and we're thrilled to have finished fifth in the championship race in 1986/87. We're beginning to prove our worth — we aren't just there to make up the numbers."

"But while it's great to be playing against the likes of Linfield and Glentoran again, there's no getting



Tommy Colgan

away from our roots in the Mid-Ulster Football Association. That's why we're happy to play in the Mid-Ulster Cup every season."

Tommy remembers the days before Newry Town won league status — days when it was considered 'an upset' if they beat Portadown or Glenavon in the cup. For that reason, he fully understood Oxford United's euphoria when they defeated Newry in the 1986 semi-final.

"Fair play to them," he says. "They ran their hearts out and they got a great result. That's the appeal of cup football, isn't it? There will always be upsets as long as there are cups to play for. Who could have seen Oxford going all the way to the final of last year's Mid-Ulster cup with ourselves, Portadown and Glenavon, plus the 'B' Division sides in the competition? It's hard to accept when you're on the receiving end, but from a neutral's point-of-view, those are the results which make cup football so interesting."

Tommy is married to his childhood sweetheart, Evelyn, and they have two daughters and a son. He is a self-employed milkman in his native Newry.

NEWRY TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MID-ULSTER FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Bigger and Better than ever!

At a time when we seem to be forever reading about the decline of the national game, it's interesting to view the reverse side of that oft-depressing coin.

In terms of numerical strength the Mid-Ulster Football Association has never been better placed. In the 1986/87 season, there are 159 affiliated teams. I say teams rather than clubs, because such is the strength of the game in Mid-Ulster at the moment that a number of clubs are in the happy position of being able to field two sides each week.

There are three senior Irish League clubs, half-a-dozen 'B' Division outfits, one Intermediate League side and three more playing in Section 1C of the Amateur League.

Add to that total 14 more in each of the first and second divisions of the flourishing Mid-Ulster League, plus 16 in both the third and fourth and further 19 in the fifth.

Then there are 14 teams competing in the Armagh Lonsdale League, five in the Mid-Ulster Juvenile League, one in the Newcastle League and one more in the Northern Ireland Amateur League.

Newry — a veritable hot-bed of football — boasts 42 Carnbane League sides and last, but certainly not least, come Armagh Boys' Club Old Boys who play where, when and as a match arises. The full list of affiliated teams for 1986-87 reads: —

Irish League — Glenavon, Newry Town, Portadown. **Irish League 'B' Division** (Section One) — Banbridge Town, Dungannon Swifts, Milford Everton. (Section Two) Glenavon Reserves, Newry Town Reserves, Portadown Reserves.

Intermediate League — Cookstown United. **Amateur League** (Section 1C) — Coagh United, Dromore Amateurs, Rathfriland Rangers.

Mid-Ulster League (Division One) — Annagh United, Armagh Thistle, Banbridge Town Reserves, Brownlow, Dungannon Swifts Seconds, Edenderry Blues, Hanover, Hill Street, Loughgall, Lurgan United, Oxford United, Portadown Boys' Brigade Old Boys, Rathfriland and Seapatrik.

Division Two — A.F.C., Ballyoran, Banbridge Youth Club, Bourneview Young Men, Cookstown United Seconds, Craigpark, Lurgan Celtic, Lurgan Institute, Milford Everton Reserves, Oxford United Reserves, Portvale, Red Lions, St. Mary's Youth Club and Tandragee Rovers.

Division Three — Donacloney, Gilford Crusaders, Hill Street Seconds, Killymoon Rangers, Loughgall Reserves, Lurgan United Seconds, Milltown Swifts, Moira Albion, Mountnorris, Moyallon Rangers, New Century, Queen's Park Swifts, Richhill Rangers, Riverside, Scarva Rangers and Waringstown.

Division Four — A.F.C. Seconds, Annagh United Seconds, Banbridge Youth Club Seconds, Brownlow Seconds, Coalisland Albion, Dollingstown, Down Shoes, Edgarstown United, Killymoon Rangers Seconds, Lurgan Institute Seconds, Marlborough, Megaberry, Moira United, Portadown Boys' Brigade Old Boys Seconds, Seagoe United and Tandragee Rovers Seconds.

Division Five — Armagh Rangers, Armagh Shamrocks, Bourneview Young Men Seconds, Blacker's Mill, Caledon, Dromore Amateurs Swifts, Dromore Rangers, Edenderry Blues Seconds, Goodyear, Keady United, Moira Albion Seconds, Mountnorris Seconds, Moyallon Rangers Seconds, Portvale Seconds, Rectory Rangers, Richhill Rangers Seconds, Scarva Rangers Seconds, Seapatrik Seconds and Unidare.

Northern Ireland Amateur League — Dromore Amateurs Seconds; **Newcastle League** — Rathfriland Youth Club; **Miscellaneous** — Armagh Boys' Club Old Boys; **Mid-Ulster Juvenile League** — Cookstown Colts, Glenavon Thirds, Lurgan Boys, Lurgan United Youth Club and Northways Youth Club.

Armagh Lonsdale League — Ajax United, Armagh Shamrocks Reserves, Benburb, Castlecaulfield, Darkley United, Drumcoo Albion, Keady United Reserves, Longstone United, Lurgavallen Celtic, Lurgavallen Celtic Reserves, St. Luke's, Tassagh Rangers, Tyrone Crystal and Tyrone Ramblers.

Carnbane League — Ajax United, Ardallon Wanderers, Armagh Down, Barcroft United, Ballybot United, Bessbrook Strollers, Bessbrook Wanderers, Bridge End United, Camlough Rovers, Carnbane Rovers and Cartwheel United.

Cleary Celtic, Cove Ramblers, Crieve Rovers, Damolly, Derrybeg, Down Shoes, Drumcashlane, Finn Harps, Glenanne United, Glenview United and Grasshoppers.

Harp Dynamos, Hereford United, Killeavy United, Kilkeel Athletic, Millburn United, Newry Celtic, Red Devils, Reeds Olympic, Rockview Rangers and Rockview United.

Rosspoint United, Rosspoint United Seconds, Shanro Santos, Spartak United, The Guys, Tulsa Rangers, Villa Rovers, West End Athletic, Windmill Stars and Woodside.

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Days of begging are over

When you look at the current strength of football in Mid-Ulster, it's hard to imagine that in the not-too-distant past, men like today's chairman, Ivan Marshall, had their work cut out in trying to attract teams of suitable calibre to enter the Association's most senior cup competition!

Hard as it may be to imagine that, it once was the state of affairs. Thankfully, however, it's a whole new ball-game nowadays, to use an Americanism.

The Mid-Ulster Football Association's Irish League members — Glenavon, Newry Town and Portadown — are ever-presents now, and their involvement, along with that of Banbridge Town, from the quarter finals onwards has undoubtedly enhanced the competition's standing in no small measure.

The Mid-Ulster Cup is a competition which they all take seriously. And back in May, 1984, Newry Town's then-manager, Barry Brown, explained why. That season — 1983/84 — marked Newry's return to the Irish League fold.

CHANGE

And as Brown put it in an eve-of-final interview: — "It would be nice to finish it off by clinching Mid-Ulster football's biggest prize. If we do that, we'll

be quite entitled to call ourselves the premier club in this part of the world."

This year, of course, there was no question of the Mid-Ulster Council members having to tour the area in an attempt to woo would-be contestants. The wheel, in this case, has gone full circle. Clubs are queuing up to be asked and are only too happy to be invited to take part.

Just look at the area covered by today's competition — Newry, Portadown, Lurgan, Kilkeel, Rathfriland, Armagh, Banbridge, Dromore, Dungannon, Loughgall and Coagh. Those are the major outposts from which this year's contestants have been drawn. Quite a change from the time when clubs were sheepishly approached and asked: — "Fancy entering this season's Mid-Ulster Cup?"

NEWLY-elected members of the Mid-Ulster Football Association's Council do not have any time in which to 'drag their feet.' As soon as the Annual General Meeting — at which they have just been elected — is over, the new Council meets.

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Worldwide Wilmor

WILMOR Johnston was brought up to watch Portadown by his soccer-crazy father and that was the start of a love affair with football which is as passionate today as it was when he was a bright-eyed seven-year old straining to see over the wall at Shamrock Park.

He is without doubt the most widely-travelled of the Mid-Ulster Council members in terms of the places where he played his football as a young man.

Having been a member of Selwyn Tarlton's famous Armagh Boys' Club as a youngster, he joined the Army in his late teens and continued his career by playing in the Far East Land Forces team, followed by a three-year stint in the Hong Kong first division. A far cry from the Mill Field.

He left the army as a 28-year old and returned to Armagh. Surprisingly, he opted to hang up his boots at that stage and for five years he barely kicked a ball. But the soccer roots ran deep and when a group of colleagues in the Post Office, where he had found employment, suggested launching a team, the adrenalin began to flow again.

That was the birth of Armagh Thistle, the year being 1975. They entered the Lonsdale League and a season later they successfully applied for Mid-Ulster League status. Wilmor retired again — this time permanently — in 1976 and took over as manager. He has been there ever since.



Wilmor Johnston

PLAYED FOR PORTADOWN

He knows the game inside out. In 1958-59 he played three matches for Gibby McKenzie's Portadown. And his colleagues? "Men like Alex Boyd, Jimmy Buchanan, Billy Twinem ... Semple and Robinson from Belfast .. those were the player I remember from the time," he says.

He was elected to the Mid-Ulster Council in 1980, a year after what was undoubtedly Armagh Thistle's most successful season ever. In 1979 they were runners-up to Edenderry Blues in the race for the third division Mid-Ulster title, in addition to which they won

the Mid-Ulster Shield — one of only two teams ever to have done so.

The others were Rathfriland who came into Mid-Ulster League football with a highly talented team and won the Shield as a fourth, third, second and first division clubs in consecutive seasons. In fact, the year Thistle beat them was the first occasion on which they had suffered defeat in the competition for six years.

"That was a great achievement for us," Wilmor reflects. "We beat them 2-0 and John Corvan — now of Newry Town — scored for us in that final. That was our best-ever season and John was our best-ever player."

He is happy with the Mid-Ulster Cup format at the minute. "I think it's going as well as anyone could reasonably hope for at this stage," he said. "So long as the three senior clubs in Mid-Ulster continue to support it, the competition will continue to improve. We were in this year's Mid-Ulster Cup and although we were beaten in the first round by another Mid-Ulster League club — Loughgall — I have no complaints about that."

CUP INCENTIVE

"If we are asked to enter next year's competition, we'll certainly take them up on the offer. The big carrot for all the clubs like ourselves is that we'll get through to the last eight and draw one of the seniors — Portadown, Glenavon or Newry Town. That's the incentive."

Having said that, he still feels sore about what happened to Oxford United last year. "In plain language, Oxford were punished for being successful," he says. "I think what happened to them was wrong and think the rule under which they have been disciplined will have to be changed. I feel very sorry for them — very sorry for them."

He is pleased with the general manner in which the Mid-Ulster Football Association is run, though he would like to see some changes to the Mid-Ulster League set-up. And he believes that the best amendment which could be made is one which would mean that more of the Mid-Ulster Football Association delegates would come from the ranks of the Mid-Ulster League. Similarly, he feels there are Council members who have a lot to contribute to the League's Management Committee.

Wilmor has four sons, none of whom play the game, although his eldest boy — Philip — who is now 20, was a Mid-Ulster schoolboy representative player five years ago.

TELEVISION SUPPORTERS

"Unfortunately, my boys are typical of a lot of kids nowadays," he says ruefully. "It's a different generation altogether. They'll go to Windsor Park to watch Glenn Hoddle or Kenny Dalglish and they'll watch football on the television. But they don't want to know about playing or standing watching Mid-Ulster League football when it's pouring out of the heavens in the middle of January. They'd think I was daft if I suggested that."

"We would have walked any distance for a match and we'd have played in any conditions. We learnt our football on patches of grass in housing estates, or against a gable wall. We taught ourselves and we enjoyed learning it. Today there are great facilities, coaches at every school and it's all laid on. The sad thing is that despite all those things, the kids don't want to know...."

The legendary Jimmy Jones won the Cup for Newry

WHEN Newry Town won the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1964, a certain Jimmy Jones was the hero of their 2-0 Mourneview Park victory over Portadown Reserves.

Jones was in the twilight of his illustrious career at that stage, of course, but he could still play a bit. Capped three times for Northern Ireland in 1956/57 — he actually scored on his debut, in the match against Wales in Cardiff on April 11, 1956 which ended in a 1-1 draw — Jones was one of the Irish League's larger-than-life personalities.

In a career which spanned nearly two decades, he hit 750 goals. He had an on-the-pitch charisma as big as his huge body, although he always insisted that he was no brilliant ball-player.

"I'm there to put the ball in the net — nothing else," was how he once described his role — and there were few better exponents of that particular art. He did it for the great Belfast Celtic and then for Glenavon — his home-town club — when the Green and Whites finally withdrew from the Irish League.

For 10 consecutive seasons, from 1953 to '62 inclusive, Jones was Glenavon's leading marksman. He played in the all-conquering Lurgan Blues' teams of the 1950s and early 60s and was in no small measure responsible for the stream of trophies which ended up on the Mourneview Park sideboard in those years.

IN 1956-57 alone he hit a staggering 74 goals to help Glenavon lift the Irish League, the Irish Cup and the Gold Cup, so becoming the first non-Belfast club to have done the league and cup 'double.'

When he finally left Glenavon, it was to join Portadown. His stay there was brief but, as ever, colourful. From Shamrock Park he moved to Bangor, before finally stepping down to the 'B' Division in the colours of Newry Town.

REMARKABLE FEATS

His goalscoring feats are all the more remarkable when one remembers that his career appeared to be over in 1948 following one of the most infamous incidents in the history of Irish League football, and one which probably did more to force Belfast Celtic out of existence than any other.

Windsor Park was the venue and although the Linfield v. Belfast Celtic match in question took place on December 27, there was precious little evidence of any seasonal goodwill between the teams. Early in that passion-charged 'derby' Jones was involved in a clash with Linfield's Bob Bryson which resulted in the Blues centre-half being carried off.

At half-time, it was announced on the public address system that Bryson's leg was broken. The mood — both on the pitch and on the terraces — grew uglier. Celtic's Paddy Bonnar and Linfield's Albert Currie were ordered off as the feuding in a match which finished 2-2 continued.

But it was at the final whistle that the worst incident occurred. Jones was attacked by a mob of Bluemen who invaded the pitch. He tried to sprint to the safety of the dressing rooms, but was caught, thrown from the running track on to the terracing and then savagely kicked.

FOUR MAJOR OPERATIONS

His right leg was so badly broken in the incident that he was told he would never play again. But Jimmy was as much a fighter off the pitch as he was on it. He spent seven weeks in hospital, underwent four operations and had his leg in plaster for eight, long, lonely, painful months.

When the plaster finally came off, it was found that his right leg was an inch and a half shorter than his left. In the meantime, he had missed out on Belfast Celtic's May '49 tour of the United States and Canada.

He received compensation worth £4,361 for his injuries. And contrary to all the gloomy predictions, the big Lurgan man did play again — and how! Fulham signed him for £3,000, but then found that due to a technical hitch, the English Football League would not accept his registration. He was good enough to have played First Division soccer, but red tape prevented him from ever doing so. A handful of Football Combination matches for Fulham Reserves was as close as he was ever to get....

GLENAVON — ON LOAN

He returned to Northern Ireland, intent on signing for Distillery, but stopped off with Glenavon 'on loan.' It must be one of the longest-ever 'loan' periods in football history...

Jimmy Jones was considered 'to be done' when he lined out for Newry Town in the 1964 Mid-Ulster Cup final against Portadown Reserves at Mourneview Park, the scene of so many of his earlier triumphs in the blue of Glenavon. But the old master was still capable of a goal or two, and not for the first time in his incredible career, it was Jimmy who had the last laugh.

The first-half was scoreless, but 15 minutes into the second, Jones broke the deadlock in typical fashion. That knocked the heart out of the 'Wee Reds' and 10 minutes later, Newry killed them off when Davey and McEvoy opened up their defence, leaving McKeown in the clear to add number two.

As things transpired, that ruined what would otherwise have been a hat-trick of successes for Portadown Reserves. They had won the cup the previous year in 1963, and they lifted it again in 1965. But 1964 was Newry's season, aided and abetted by one of Irish Football's legendary folk heroes...



Jimmy Jones pictured in recent action, showing his skills at a reunion of 3rd Lurgan B.B. Company of which he is a former member.

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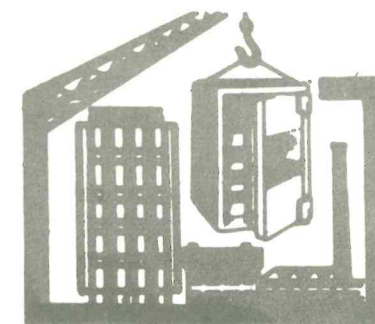
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WHEN Newry Town is the subject for discussion, you can bet your last penny that Billy McVicker's name will figure prominently in the conversation — even though he is now Banbridge Town's voice on the Mid-Ulster Football Association's Council

A football man through-and-through, he represented Newry on the Council up until a few years ago when he resigned as Chairman of the club. Banbridge were only too glad of his help though, and he is now their man when the Council members meet.

When he joined Newry Town — "more years ago than I care to remember," as he puts it — he went straight in at the deep end. The late Micky Turley was deeply involved with every aspect of club life at that point, and it was he who asked Billy to become secretary.

It was one of the most important 'signings' Newry ever made, for in the years which followed, he put his heart and soul into seeing them prosper. Working hand-in-hand with the then-chairman, the late Michael McKevitt, for example, he was largely responsible for the launch and subsequent development of the Newry Town Social Club.

And when Billy himself finally was chosen as chairman of Newry Town Football Club, he and his vice-chairman, Sean Kane, showed just what commitment and service were all about when they built the club's current boardroom. In addition, Billy built the referee's changing room at The Showgrounds, plus the changing facilities for the players.

Players, in fact, have always taken first place in Billy McVicker's view of football. There are chairmen who just cannot get on with those who actually don their club's colours on Saturday afternoons. It's almost as if they see them as 'a necessary evil'. Billy begs to differ on that count, and the players who have served under him can vouch for the fact that he has never been anything other than totally fair and straight with them.

"IT'S ABOUT PLAYERS"

"Football is all about the men who play it," he reasons. "People aren't interested in chairmen or directors or committee members — they come to watch the action on the park, not to listen to debates and arguments about what's going on off it. Directors sometimes have far too much to say about the running of teams. As far as I'm concerned, that's up to the manager and the men he chooses for the job."

He's a very forthright individual. Even as a chairman, he always felt more at ease on the terraces, in the grandstand — or even in the dug-out — than he did in the directors' box. He was never one for post-match drinking in the sheltered privacy of any executive lounge, either. Billy is more at home among the players and the fans.

"I reckon I was taught all I know about Newry town by the late Micky Turley," he says. "He was a great character. He knew all there was to know about the club, the players, the pitch — the club was his life. He tended the ground for years. He could have told you exactly how the pitch would be affected by rain, frost or snow. If, on a Wednesday, he told you a certain spot would be soft and another hard on Saturday afternoon, that's exactly the way it worked out."

"I remember a heavy fall of snow late in the week on one occasion. I went down to The Showgrounds and the entire pitch was covered. Looking at it, you would never have imagined that it could have been ready for Saturday. Mickey knew the pitch and he knew about the weather, though. He guaranteed that by noon on Saturday, the pitch would be clear. he was right — it was."

GO-FOR-IT ATTITUDE

As a youngster, Billy played a little Summer League Football, but by his own admission, that was pretty limited. But even so, his knowledge of the game far surpassed that of others who had played for years. He has always had a knack of getting things done and appears to have been born with a 'go for it' attitude, both to football and to life. Those qualities are acknowledged when he was made secretary of the Carnbane League when it first got off the ground in 1968.

He has some fond memories of the players and personalities with whom he has worked down through the years — and a few unpleasant ones, too.

"I've met some great people — and I've come across some whose approach, attitude — and in some cases, inability — have sickened me," he says candidly.

"I still hold the late Micky Turley in great esteem, the late John Fearon, Newry's trainer and physio — was another great man. Sean Kane was the same, the late Michael McKevitt was another. Then there are two managers who really stand out — Roy Walsh and Jim Brown. Jim was here first and I think he was the man who really began to get things moving on a professional footing. Roy succeeded him as manager and he continued to build on the platform Jim had created. Those days — the end of the '70s and early 1980s

— were the highlights in the history of Newry Town as far as I'm concerned.

"On the pitch and off it, we had a great team. The players were tremendous. The spirit was magnificent. Everybody involved knew we were going places and that attitude ran right through the club. Players like Micky Keenan, Sammy Lunn, Bobby Carlisle, Rab Wheldan, Robbie Barr, John Whitten, young Hookes — I've never worked with a bunch of blokes to better them. We'd a great team and a great club."



William McVicker

Billy was chairman of Newry Town in 1980-81 when they recorded their magnificent 'double' in winning the Irish League 'B' Division and the Intermediate Cup. That was achieved in Roy Welsh's second year as manager.

In 1979 — the first season in which Portadown and Glenavon came back into the Mid-Ulster Cup — he caused a major row at Newry Town when he suggested that they should play Bertie Neill's Ports in the final at Shamrock Park.

"We'd beaten Glenavon in the semi-final at Shamrock Park," he recalls. "At the Mid-Ulster Council meeting to decide on a venue for the final, I proposed that we would play Portadown on their own ground. I had agreed it before hand with Dickie Holmes and he backed me. The Council accepted our suggestion, though I think most of the members were baffled by it."

"When some of the members of the Newry Management Committee heard what we had done, they went mad, I was given a pretty rough time and actually ended up resigning over the incident. I told those who had given me a roasting that Newry would beat Portadown on their own ground. As things worked out, we did. One member — the one who had most wanted my head — was the first to throw his arms round me that night at Shamrock Park. 'You were right,' he told me. I knew I was right — I wouldn't have proposed playing at Portadown otherwise."

Another unusual tale relating to that particular final was that Newry manager, Jim Brown's car broke down on the way to Portadown. That meant another frantic piece of sorting out for Billy. "A call came through for me at Shamrock Park," Billy smiles, "I went to the phone and Jim was on the opposite end of the line. He told me that his car had broken down on the far side of Lurgan and that he was stranded. I set off to pick him up and were back at the ground just in time for the kick-off. There was not time for a manager's pep talk that night, but the boys did okay without it!"

PROUDEST POSSESSION

One of his proudest possessions is an engraved clock which Newry Town's Players and Manager presented to him to mark that historic 'double' in 1980-81. "It means the world to me," he says. "I don't think I'm soft or sentimental, but I cried the night that was presented. I just felt that everything we had been working and striving for had come to fruition."

He is another member of the current Mid-Ulster Council who feels that some of the affiliated leagues have been too big. "In recent years the emphasis in the Mid-Ulster League and the Carnbane League has been to quantity rather than quality," he argues. "The standard had gone down — there's no escaping that fact. However, I can understand those who take the opposite view — that boys want to play and this allows them to do it. There are more teams playing now than at any time in the past. It's a question of which you see as being more important — quantity or quality."

"And I go with the idea of an Intermediate League, although if it was ever to be a success, a number of small clubs would have to merge to form one strong one. There are a lot of people who are unwilling to do that."

A married man, Billy and his wife Lottie run their family printing business in Newry. Indeed, they were responsible for the printing and production of this magazine. They have two children, a son and a daughter.

THE emergence of the Mid-Ulster Cup as a serious competition in modern times can be traced back to the MUFA's Annual General Meeting in 1971.

The meeting was held on Saturday, June 12, in the Shamrock Park Social Club, Portadown. During discussions of the subject of the Mid-Ulster Cup, Portadown chairman, Ted Clarke — the club's representative on the MUFA and the successful owner of Golden Cow Dairies — told the meeting that his company was prepared to sponsor the following season's tournaments to the tune of £200.

This would be split, with £100 going to the winners, £50 to the losing finalists and £25 to each of the beaten semi-finalists. Needless to say the offer was gratefully accepted. Ironically from a Portadown viewpoint, the first winners to benefit from this generous cash injection were Glenavon Reserves who beat Hanover in a bad-tempered final at Mourneview Park.

Hanover collected £50 and the losing semi-finalists — Newry Celtic and Dungannon Swifts — each picked up cheques for £25.

WHEN New Century won the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1973, they did something of an 'Oliver Twist' by asking for financial assistance from the Association, to help the club cover the costs of presenting their players with individual medals "befitting their achievement." The Association agreed that the newly appointed Council would consider the suggestion of supplying some form of grant in lieu of trophies to help the expenses.

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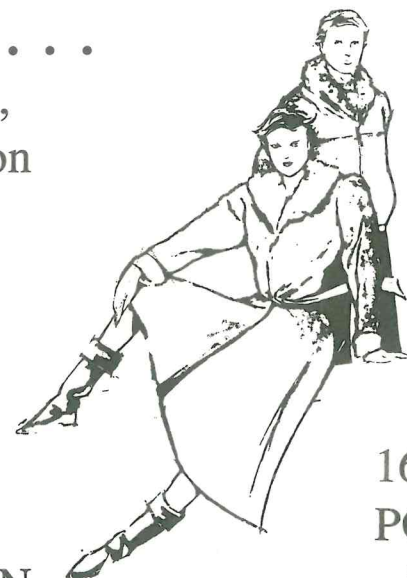
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IVAN Marshall is looking forward to Italy and the 1990 World Cup Finals after missing out on the '86 series in Mexico.

A Life Member of the Irish Football Association, he was to have been at the Mexican showpiece, but a

mild coronary resulted in him being ordered to remain at home.

"I hope to be in Italy," he says, "but what happened last time merely goes to prove that you can't take anything for granted."

Young Ports back from the dead

ROY Alexander was captain of the Portadown Reserves team which won the Mid-Ulster Cup 22 years ago in May 1965. And those who played alongside the Ports full-back that night at Mourneview Park still recall how their skipper, in his excitement, forgot which dressing room his team had changed in!

Banbridge actually had the use of the "away" team's changing room on that occasion, but delighted at having just been handed the Mid-Ulster trophy, Roy forgot about that arrangement and was on his way into the losers' 'camp' until several Portadown players and officials hauled him back.

His excitement was understandable, though, for the young Ports had earlier clawed their way back from a 2-0 deficit to beat Banbridge Town by the odd goal in five, with the winner coming in extra-time.

The Town had not won the competition since 1959 and they were keen to bring that lengthy run of disappointments to an end. And certainly they appeared to be on target for that when they trotted off a half-time with a two-goal lead under their belts.

But a very youthful Portadown side — which included current manager, Ronnie McFall — had other ideas. They gave their best display of the season in that second period, pulled back to 2-2 and so forced the tie into extra time.

Those were the days when the Ports recruited heavily from the ranks of the town's Boys' Brigade companies when looking for promising youngsters. And it was a teenager by the name of Brian Morrison who put them back in contention with a well-taken 62nd. minute goal. Morrison played left-half at that stage, but was later to become an out-and-out striker who established a goalscoring record for Portadown.

The architect of Morrison's goal, incidentally, was another local lad who is still involved in Mid-Ulster football with Bourneview, namely Victor Fleming.

Boosted by that strike, Portadown threw everything into attack and their reward came in the 82nd minute when centre-forward, Brendan Loughran, got on the end of a floated Dennis Freeburn cross to grab the equaliser.

Freeburn and Fleming were Portadown's forward heroes that night, while goalkeeper Ken Craig and centre-half Eddie McKinney took the defensive honours. But the man whose goal clinched the trophy for Portadown was Sydney Cully, their lightweight outside-left.

He was the quickest to react in the course of a goalmouth scramble, ramming the ball home to give the Shamrock Park outfit the cup for the second time in three seasons.

Just look at the names of the men who turned out in Portadown's red on that occasion — keeper Ken Craig, full-backs Roy Alexander and Ronnie McFall, John Proctor, Eddie McKinney and Brian Morrison who formed the half-back line, and forwards Philip Anderson, Dennis Freeburn, Brendan Loughran, Victor Fleming and Syd Cully.

More than a few of those players went on to 'make it,' didn't they.....?



The 1965 Portadown Reserves team which defeated Banbridge Town 3-2 after extra-time to win the Mid-Ulster Cup. Back row, from left—George Craig, Tom McAteer, Dennis Freeburn, Brendan Loughran, Ken Craig, Eddie McKinney, Ronnie McFall, Tommy Sloan. Front—John Fearon, Ronnie Morrison, Philip Anderson, Brian Morrison, John Proctor, Sid Cully and George Johnston.

ONLY one player turned out in all three Glenavon teams which lost in successive Mid-Ulster Cup finals to Portadown between 1981 and '83 inclusive.

The man with that dubious distinction is Robbie Dennison, who was transferred from Glenavon to West Bromwich Albion and has recently joined Wolverhampton Wanderers, where he is currently playing a key role in the famous old club's drive for promotion from the fourth division of the Football League.

CURRENT Banbridge Town player, Ronnie Haughey, finished up a winner and a loser in two successive Mid-Ulster Cup final teams - with a different club on each occasion.

He was a member of the victorious Glenavon Reserves side which beat Banbridge Town 4-3 in a thriller of a final played at Newry Showgrounds on Easter Tuesday, 1977.

Ronnie then moved from Mournview Park to join Banbridge and the following season, 1978, again found himself playing in the Mid-Ulster Cup final, this time against Newry Town. For a second successive season however, the Town ended up being beaten.

PRIOR to last season's Mid-Ulster Cup final appearance by Oxford United, the most recent example of a Mid-Ulster League team appearing in the showpiece occasion was 1975.

New Century made it to the final that year for the second year in three seasons. But whereas their 1973 cup final appearance ended in triumph they lost to Newry Town in Banbridge on that second occasion.

SINCE the office of Irish League President first came into being 97 years ago in 1890, four Mid-Ulster men have been appointed.

The most recent example was the late William Kennedy, the former Glenavon chairman, who was President of the League for 11 years from 1965-76. He was succeeded by Bangor's Jimmy Apperson, who served for eight years up to 1984, at which stage Glenavon's chairman, John Crossen, was appointed.

The first Mid-Ulster man to be Irish League President was T. Topping of Glenavon who served for one year in 1917-18. Dr. N. E. Williams of Newry Town was President in 1940-41. Before that Glenavon's N. Booth had a two-year term of office, from 1924-26.

THE Mid-Ulster Football Association's financial status has grown and improved significantly in recent years. As recently as 1978, a credit balance of just £384.47 was announced by Honorary-Treasurer, Dickie Holmes, at the Annual General Meeting. At last year's A.G.M. in Portadown's Shamrock Park Social Club, the Honorary-Treasurer was in the happy position of being able to report a £3,602.18 credit balance...

In 1966 the late Bob Radcliffe asked Council members "to give serious thought to ways and means of increasing our financial position," following another loss-making season. At the same meeting, Mr. Radcliffe proposed Roy Marshall for the post of Honorary Treasurer. The proposal was accepted, and at the following year's A.G.M. the new treasurer was able to announce; "a healthy financial situation."



Victor McAdam of the Craigavon Sports Shop, Portadown, presents M.U.F.A. Secretary John Brown with a team kit-bag, the prize for the winners of the quiz on page 78 of this Magazine.

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It's an economic fact of life nowadays that without sponsorship and financial backing from 'outsiders,' most sports events would fade and die.

And for that reason, everyone involved with the Mid-Ulster Football Association was delighted with the news that Bass Ireland Limited were to sponsor this season's M.U.F.A. Cup.

Details of the giant brewery's sponsorship package were announced at a Press Conference held at the company's Glen Road plant in Belfast on February 3.

As is typical of Bass Ireland Limited, the whole thing was done in a highly professional manner, geared to attract maximum media exposure. The first round draw was made on the spot, for example, with Mr. Seamus Horisk, Sales Manager of the Tennent's Lager part of the huge Bass empire, assisting M.U.F.A. Chairman, Ivan Marshall, in pairing off the 22 teams.

SPONSORSHIP

Bass Ireland chose the occasion to announce their sponsorship of the Centenary Mid-Ulster Cup, under

the name of Tennent's Lager. In total they have poured £1,000 into this year's competition. The winners will receive the trophy plus £400, while the runners-up will walk off with £150.

The Tennent's Lager Mid-Ulster Cup winners will also be presented with commemorative tankards, as will the beaten finalists. For the semi-final losers, there will be consolation in the form of a £50 cheque.

Explaining his company's decision to again back the Mid-Ulster Cup competition — the second successive season in which they have done so, incidentally — Mr. Brian Houston, Public Relations Manager of Bass Ireland Limited said: — "The Mid-Ulster Cup has a long and famous history, and we at Bass Ireland are pleased to associate our famous lager, Tennent's — which also celebrated its 100th birthday recently — with this event."

£100,000

"Of course," he added, "Bass and Tennent's are no strangers to local soccer. We already sponsor the Bass Irish Cup and the Tennent's Northern Ireland Professional Football Association's 'Player of the Year' awards.

"We have invested over £100,000 in local soccer in the past decade and our hope is that this continued involvement by our company will benefit the players, clubs and spectators alike."

Handy Andy

ANDY Crozier's involvement with Milford Everton — in a whole variety of roles — runs so deep that to most people, his name and that of the club are synonymous.

He has occupied just about every position relating to the running of a football club in the course of the past 20 years. The combined role of player/manager is a common enough occurrence in soccer, but in Milford's case, they have a player / chairman ... and not too many clubs can say that!

Andy is still playing for Milford Everton Reserves in division two of the Mid-Ulster League, more than 20 years after first donning their colours. In addition to playing for Milford and serving as their chairman, he has also done a stint as manager of the second team.

And he is largely responsible for the fact that they now occupy the grand old Milford Institute building in the centre of the tiny village just outside Armagh. As settings go, it's probably the most unusual 'social club' in the country. The decision to move into 'The Institute' was not solely Andy's — "I had a group of good, reliable men around me," he explains — but there is no disputing the fact that he was the prime mover behind the objective... That being the case, watch and see what happens to another project to which he publicly given his support — namely, the creation of an Intermediate League within Mid-Ulster. He just happens to be a man who has a habit of getting a thing done, once he has put his mind to it...

14 YEARS ON COUNCIL

He has been on the Mid-Ulster F.A. Council for 14 years, and although he has never held any of the 'Big Four' offices, he has served in the demanding and time-consuming post of Press Officer.

In addition to his Council seat, his on-the-spot involvement in the running of Milford Everton and his playing commitments, Andy also finds time to sit on four Irish Football Association committees at Windsor Avenue, Belfast. He has been on the Senior Committee for the past decade. He also sits on the Emergency Committee and the Youth International Committee. And he serves on the Intermediate Committee — indeed, he is a past chairman of that body.

As a member of the Senior Committee, he travels extensively with the Northern Ireland international team. For example, he was in Spain and Mexico for the 1982 and 1986 World Cup Finals respectively. Wherever Billy Bingham and his boys go, you'll usually find Andy on the trip. Assuming Northern Ireland qualify for Italy in 1990 — maybe that's taking too much for granted! — It's a fair bet that Mr. Milford will be there, too...

As a player he was a member of the Milford Everton team which defeated Oxford United in the Foster Cup in the mid-70s. And before that, he played for the side which lifted the Mid-Ulster League first division title and the Alexander Cup en route to achieving 'B' Division status ten years ago.

'A GREAT ERA'

"That was a great era for the club," he recalls. "Two of the best men ever to have served Mid-Ulster football — Roy Marshall and the late Bob Radcliffe — played a major part in bringing about our promotion at that stage and everyone at Milford is indebted to

them for that. Once again though, it was down to a hard-working team — both on and off the pitch.

Their greatest achievement since then was in the early 1980s when they defeated Portadown in the first round of the Irish Cup at Shamrock Park, with Jim Nelson — who had appeared in a final for Ballymena United against Linfield in 1978 — scoring the only goal. Andy was injured that day and missed out on that little bit of history in the making, but he was back in action and played against Ballyclare Comrades on the day on which Milford finally made their exit.

As mentioned earlier, he has very clear ideas about the direction in which Mid-Ulster football ought now to be moving. And in case anyone runs away with the idea that he's 'down' on the Mid-Ulster League, it's worth pointing out that he is Vice-Chairman of the League and as such, is very keen to see it flourish and prosper.

'LIMIT THE CUP'

As for the Mid-Ulster Cup competition, he would prefer to see it confined to senior and intermediate clubs.

"That whole sorry mess involving Oxford United brought things to a head as far as I'm concerned," he says. "That was a very messy incident and as an Association, we came out of it very badly. The Press went to town on it. It has again reared its head this season and we have to face up to the fact that it isn't just going to go away.

"The whole situation whereby we include junior clubs in what is a senior competition will have to be reviewed. Things would be different if we had an Intermediate League of our own. We could then limit our big competition — the Mid-Ulster Cup — to clubs competing at that level, plus the senior outfits. Again, the image of the Mid-Ulster Cup would be further enhanced.

"It would be a much more balanced competition. At present, for example, if the draw goes the right way — or the wrong way, depending on the view you take — it's possible that the likes of Portadown, Newry or Glenavon could be paired against a second or third division Mid-Ulster League club at the quarter-final stage of the cup. I don't think the sort of thing should be happening if we want people to take the Mid-Ulster Cup seriously."



Andy Crozier

TIME TO RE-THINK

"The junior clubs already have numerous competitions of their own — the league, the Mid-Ulster Shield, the Irish Junior Cup, the various divisional cups. What happened to Oxford United merely underlined the need for a serious re-think — and that's what I'll be pushing for."

Thought-provoking words from a man who makes his living as a publisher — and as with his football, he is involved at all levels of that trade, too. Married to Noleen and the father of two daughters, Andy works in Portadown and lives in Milford.

Winner of a brace of Shield Medals



Gerald Kennedy

GERALD Kennedy of Mid-Ulster League second division club Lurgan Institute, has been a member of the Association's Council for the past ten years.

As a player he had spells with Portadown Reserves in the mid-1950s, followed by further stints with Glenavon, Bangor and Ballymena.

His move to Mourneview Park coincided with the era of the great Glenavon sides. Men like Cush, Denver, Jones, Corr, Liggett, McVeigh — they were the first-team stars when Gerald was turning out for his home-town's second string. He rubbed shoulders with some great players during his Shamrock Park sojourn as well — Jimmy Magill, Jimmy Walker, Jim Lewis and South Africa's Manny Dolphin.

As a junior footballer he picked up two Mid-Ulster Shield medals with Queen's Park and — fittingly — Institute, who were then managed by the current Glenavon physio, Kenny Bell. Gerald actually succeeded him as manager, before defecting to Sunnyside where he enjoyed considerable success, the highlight being the club's Youth Cup triumph in his first season in charge, namely 1975-76.

But five years ago he went back to Institute where the Mid-Ulster Football Association's Vice-Chairman, Eddie Pepper, had taken control following his departure in 1975. It was a classic example of 'home-coming,' for Gerald had always been deeply interested in Institute's welfare, from the days when they first came into being. Indeed, he had left Woodville Rec to join them at that stage....

PITCH-LEVEL INVOLVEMENT

Like most of the junior clubs' representatives on the Mid-Ulster Council, he prefers to be involved at pitch rather than administrative level. But he's realistic enough to know that the game doesn't run itself — someone has to take the decisions relating to it. And in the light of that fact, he feels it is important that those who deliberate on football should at least be men with a tangible input.

"To that extent I enjoy being part of it," he says. "Being involved with a club like Institute, I know the practical difficulties clubs face. I know the problems

because we experience them, too. Having council members who can spot flaws in proposals at a practical level is a big help. One of the strengths of football in Mid-Ulster is that it is run by men who know the game."

It was his attendance at the Annual General Meeting of the Mid-Ulster Football Association which led to him being voted on to the Council "out of the blue."

"That's the way it happened," he says, matter-of-factly. "I went along to the meeting and before it was over I'd been elected to the Council. I've been serving ever since. I like it, though there are times when you feel it's a bit too demanding time-wise. There's a lot of work involved in keeping football ticking over smoothly. There are a lot of teams affiliated to the Mid-Ulster Football Association, and it isn't easy trying to keep everyone happy."

"As a Lurgan man, that's the town I obviously know best. Just look how many teams there are there! That poses administrative headaches on occasions, but it's something you just have to cope with. I suppose we'd have a lot more to complain about if clubs were going out of existence. Luckily, that isn't the case here. Junior football has never been more popular."

GREAT JUNIOR INTEREST

"That's one of the beauties of the Mid-Ulster Cup, too. There's great interest among the juniors because they have a chance of playing senior or intermediate opponents. That's something to which they all look forward. I was delighted to see the seniors coming back into the competition in 1979. That enhanced the standing of the Mid-Ulster Cup. There's a lot more interest in it now. People are talking about it more and more each season."

"That hasn't just happened overnight. It has come about slowly. At first Glenavon and Portadown supporters treated it as a bit of a joke, but with every season that passes, they are taking it more and more seriously. At the end of the day, they like to win it."

He is happy that the competition has been allowed to grow, develop and evolve naturally. His experience in football has taught him that you can't do things in a flash and expect them to work instantly.

"Look at the Irish League this year," he points out. "Changes have been made left, right and centre and everyone's up in arms. Change for the sake of change doesn't work. You have to weigh things up, decide what it is you're trying to do and then come up with a plan whereby it can all take place. There's nothing amazingly clever about that — it's pure commonsense."

Gerald also sits on the I.F.A.'s Rules and Revision Committee, so proposals relating to changes and amendments to various laws and regulations are something to which he is accustomed to dealing. And he has some very practical thoughts on the current move towards the formation of an Intermediate League within Mid-Ulster, as you can read elsewhere in this publication.

Married to Barbara, he is the father of a grown-up daughter. She herself is married — and lives opposite the same Shamrock Park where her dad turned out for 'The Wee Reds' 30 years ago....

It's a lovely trophy

THE Mid-Ulster Cup is a beautiful trophy, by any stretch of the imagination, and several years ago the M.U.F.A. had it valued for insurance purposes.

Let's just say that if anything were to happen to the grand old cup, it's doubtful if it could ever be suitably replaced. In the first instance, craftsmen like those who fashioned it cannot easily be found nowadays. And even if they could, the money it would take to pay them, coupled with the amount which would be required to buy such a quantity of Sterling Silver, means any replica would be a cheap imitation of the original.

The insurance company which valued the trophy described it thus:—

"Sterling Silver, two-handled, with lid, standing approximately 19 inches high (excluding plinth).

"Made in Sheffield, England, in 1889 and weighing approximately 54 ounces."

ORNATE

"The cup is heavily chased with two ornate handles. At the top of the body of the cup there is a heavily chased scroll border and surmounted on this

on the front, a shield with the engraved 'Red Hand of Ulster.'

"Below that, the inscription reading: *Mid-Ulster Football Association Challenge Cup.*

"On the reverse, a similar Red Hand Shield applied to the border and below an engraved football scene."



"The chased lid is surmounted by a footballer, the figure being approximately 3 inches high."

"The cup is complete with a black-wood plinth bearing 49 shields on which are engraved the names of winners from 1887."

And the value? Well, in 1983 a figure of £3,000 was placed on the trophy, but most experts now believe it to be worth quite a bit more. It's more than something nice to look at, therefore

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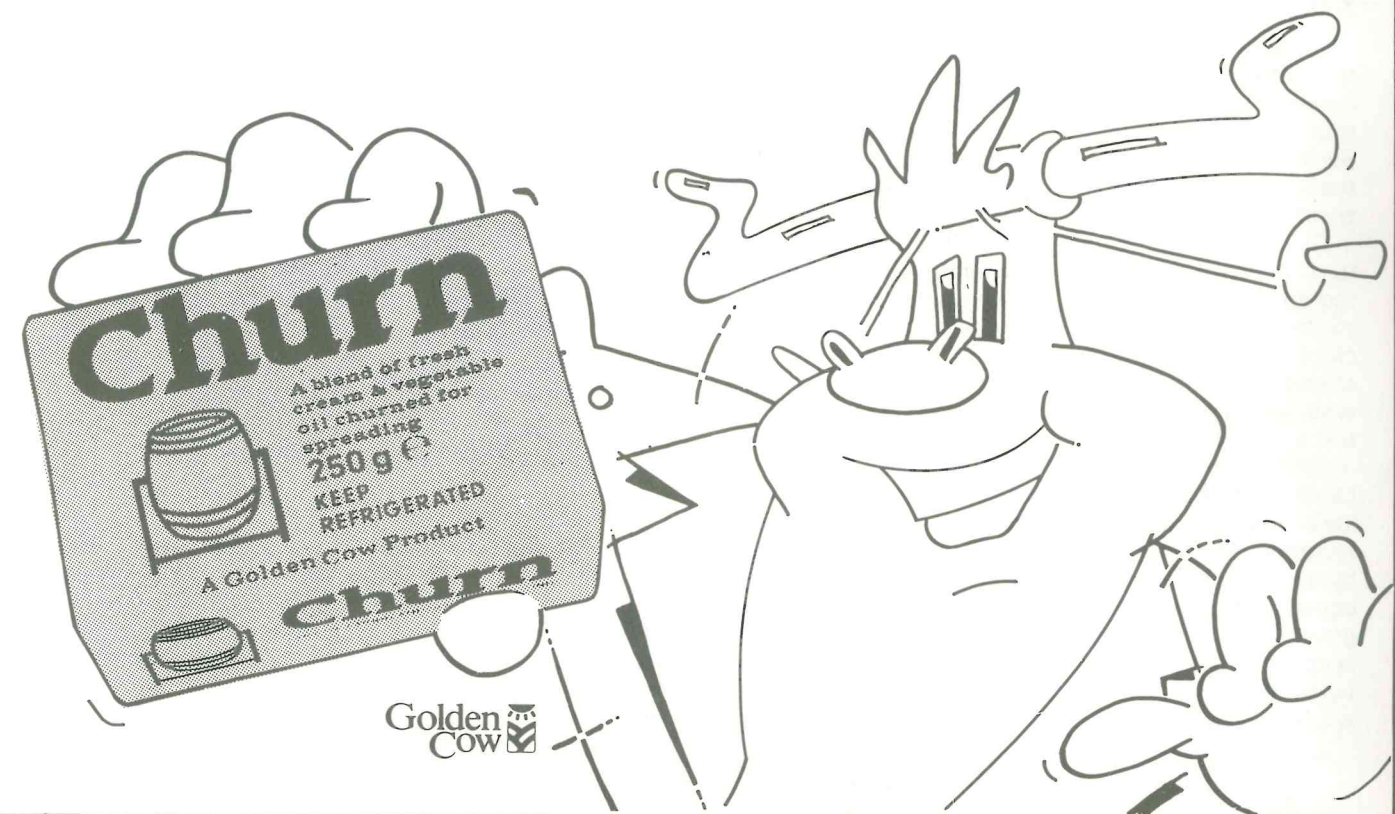
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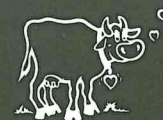
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BUTTER AT ITS BEST

**Golden
Cow** 

As 'swift' as an arrow

DUNGANNON Swifts' Mid-Ulster Football Association's representative is Trevor Barnard.

He is a man who believes that success is all down to hard work. Shortcuts don't work — it's all about honest graft, not craft. And he is convinced that it is that sort of approach which has just seen Dungannon Swifts spend £20,000 to complete the up-grading of their pitch to senior standard — the latest in an impressive list of projects.

Over the past 18 years, The Swifts are reckoned to have spent £400,000 on facilities which today are the envy of a number of Irish League clubs. These include an all-weather training pitch, a superb new clubhouse, a boardroom / viewing lounge which overlooks the pitch, ample packing space and a new wall, complete with turnstiles, which encompasses the entire complex.

"With the exceptions of Windsor Park and the Oval, I believe that what we have compares with any club in the Irish League," Trevor says. "There is no secret formula. There is nothing magical about what has been done. It's all the result of people who share a common goal — to see Dungannon Swifts prosper and grow. Everyone involved with the running of the club is committed. They're all workers. We have decided what we want and having identified our objectives, we have then set about achieving them."

SEVEN YEARS ON COUNCIL

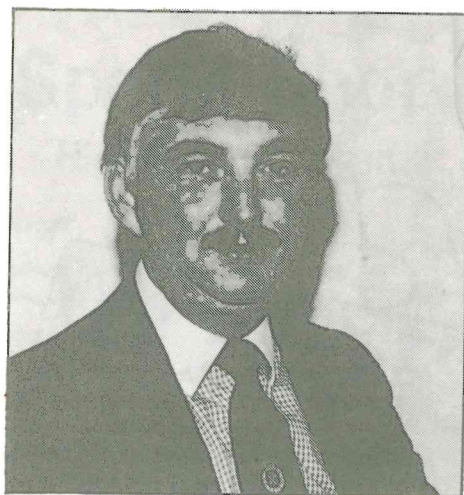
Trevor has been on the Mid-Ulster Council for seven years. In the past his name was associated with that of Moira United, where he served as chairman, secretary and treasurer.

He was then invited to join Dungannon Swifts and assist the late Winston Jennings in running the club's Seconds. It was an offer he accepted and almost overnight, Dungannon Swifts Seconds became a force to be reckoned with. They won the second division of the Mid-Ulster League, thereby achieving promotion to the top flight, and also lifted the Foster Cup and the Alan Wilson trophy.

The successful Jennings / Barnard double act was broken up in 1981, in the most tragic of circumstances. The Swifts' Seconds had qualified for the Easter Tuesday final of the Mid-Ulster Shield and everyone at the County Tyrone club was looking forward to the clash with Shamrock Rovers of Newry at Mournview Park.

But when Winston Jennings died suddenly, the final quickly paled into insignificance. Dungannon Swifts were stunned by the sudden and tragic loss of their second team manager. They requested a postponement of the match, and both the Mid-Ulster Football administrators and Shamrock Rovers agreed to that. When the final was eventually played, The Swifts were beaten 2-1. Trevor found the Mournview Park dug-out a lonely place to be sitting. His friend and colleague had always been beside him on these sort of occasions.

In addition to being elected to the M.U.F.A. Council seven years ago, Trevor became Secretary of Dungannon Swifts that same season. Prior to that, he had served on the club's Committee. He has also sat on the Management Committee of the Irish League 'B' Division, although he gave that up at the start of the 1986/87 campaign. "Too time consuming," he explains. "I have enough on my plate with Dungan-



Trevor Barnard

non Swifts and the Mid-Ulster Football Association."

A joiner by trade, he is in charge of a Northern Ireland Housing Executive workshop and maintenance shop in the Dungannon area. Married to Jean, he has two sons and a daughter, Neil (10) is the oldest of the trio, though at this stage he shows little of his father's love of soccer. "He's more interested in computers at the moment," Trevor reveals. "I'd like to see him taking an interest in football, but I can't force him to do it."

His daughter, Selena, is five and son number two, Ian, will be three in July. "They aren't showing much enthusiasm for it either at this stage," he quips.

Unlike some of his Council contemporaries who support the idea of changing the format of the Mid-Ulster Cup and making it into a competition for intermediate and senior clubs only, Trevor favours an 'open draw.'

"Dungannon Swifts are an intermediate club," he points out, "so we could be regarded as having a vested interest in keeping the juniors out. But I hope we never do that. As far as I am concerned, the strength and appeal of the Mid-Ulster Cup is that it allows juniors to compete. I think others — including the I.F.A. — could learn a thing or two from our format."

"Contrary to keeping the juniors out, I'd like to see a few more of them being allowed in. I'm all for the 'open draw.' I concede that we've got to be practical in running the competition. It just wouldn't be possible to include them all — we'd never get through the fixtures if we did that. The competition would be too big to handle, and that would be as damaging as staging a series which is too small. The Mid-Ulster Cup would suffer, either way."

32-TEAM COMPETITION

"But I feel we could increase the number of teams slightly. This year we started with 22 teams in the first round. Portadown, Newry, Glenavon and Banbridge Town came in at the quarter-final stage, bringing the total number competing to 26. But I can't see any reason why we couldn't have a 32-team knock-out competition. Under the present system, some clubs had to lay an additional match to even up the draw. That's not a good way of doing things — and it could easily be avoided by bringing in six more teams."

Oxford's Education was a costly lesson

IF anyone has reservations about the seniority of the Mid-Ulster Cup, they should consult Oxford United. They are probably the most unfortunate club in the 100-year history of the competition. Quite simply, they have been victims of their own success...

They stunned everyone by reaching the 1986 Tennent's Mid-Ulster Cup Final — and were then equally stunned themselves to find that in the event of them playing in it, they would be ineligible to compete in future Irish Junior Cup matches.

The Junior cup, of course, is the Blue Ribbon of junior football in the Province, but the rules relating to it are strict. Any player who has taken part in senior football is ineligible — and the Mid-Ulster Cup Final is a senior event.

That's the dilemma Oxford United faced in 1986. On one hand, having qualified for the right to meet their Lurgan neighbours Glenavon, in the final, they desperately wanted to play that fixture. On the other, they knew that if they did, the rules of the Junior cup meant that they would be closing that door on themselves.

APPEALS WERE ISSUED

For several days it looked as if the Glenavon versus Oxford United showdown would not take place. Appeals were issued to the I.F.A. on behalf of the Mid-Ulster League first division club. It was pointed out that Oxford had done nothing wrong — instead, they had just done too well.

Quite apart from anything else, it was a very difficult situation for the Mid-Ulster Football Association. They were embarrassed to find that a club which had long been regarded as prime ambassadors for the area administered by them now faced the threat of expulsion from the Junior cup for no reason other than that they had surpassed everyone's expectations in reaching the final of the M.U.F.A.'s senior competition.

After much soul-searching, Oxford made their decision — they would play against Glenavon. Their only hope was that the I.F.A.'s Junior Committee would view their situation sympathetically and that their case would be judged on its merits. And their belief that such a situation had never been envisaged when the Irish Junior Cup rules were drafted seemed, and seems, perfectly valid.

IN THE MIDDLE

Alas, the worst happened, as many had feared it would. Oxford were beaten 1-0 by Glenavon, with Kieron Tourish scoring the only goal of the match, and to add insult to injury, the I.F.A. — while expressing sympathy with Oxford's plight — proceeded to boot them out of the Junior Cup.

Lurgan man, Eddie Pepper, was one of those caught right in the middle. As vice-chairman of the Mid-Ulster Football Association, his heart lay with Oxford United. After all, he himself played junior football for 25 years, so if anyone knew how much the game meant to his home-town neighbours, Eddie

did. On the other side of the coin, however, he is also a member of the I.F.A. Junior Committee, so while his heart was with Oxford, his head sided with the rule-book.

"To be honest, the Mid-Ulster members on the I.F.A. Junior Committee fought Oxford's case all the way," he said. "Unfortunately, it didn't come off for them. I have every sympathy, but at the end of the day we had to face the fact that the rules exist for the overall good of football."

EARNED RESPECT

"What happened in 1986 was unfortunate — to say the least — for Oxford United and the Mid-Ulster Football Association. I think everyone was delighted to see them reach the final — until we all realised just what the implications were. Oxford earned everyone's respect as a result of their handling of the situation."

"Let's face it," he admitted, "it was going to look pretty bad had they pulled out of the Mid-Ulster Cup final. They could have done that, I suppose, and protected their own interests. They chose not to, though. They played in the final, knowing what that would mean to their future Junior Cup aspirations. Not to put too fine a point on it, they really pulled us out of a hole."

Moves are still continuing to have the laws under which the Junior Cup is governed amended to ensure that this sort of situation cannot arise again. To date, the changes have still not been implemented.

"It's a question of trying to change the rule rather than bend it," Eddie said. "The reality of the situation is that under the current laws, Oxford cannot play Junior Cup football. I'm not fighting about that. Where a rule exists, it has to be enforced. As I've said, these laws were laid down with a view to protecting football overall."

UP-DATE IS NEEDED

"Unfortunately, the situation has now arisen whereby one club has suffered under them. But had we gone back on the rules for Oxford, we would have to have gone back on them for everyone. If we'd ignored them in one case, we would have been creating a dangerous precedent. Once you start doing that sort of thing, you bring the game into disrepute. The rules under which competitions are supposed to run are undermined and suddenly no-one knows where they stand. Oxford have fared badly out of all of this and I really feel sorry for them. But a lot more clubs would have been badly affected had we changed things mid-stream."

"What we need to do now is to continue working to up-date our regulations. If that is done sensibly, the sort of misfortune which has befallen Oxford United need never occur again. I think we owe it to them — and every other club — to get this sorted out."

Mr. Glenavon

WILFIE Geddis can aptly be described as an 'elder statesman' of football in Mid-Ulster.

The Moira farmer is the Mid-Ulster Council's father-figure in more ways than one. And fatherhood is something about which he knows more than most. That's hardly surprising, for the affable Glenavon Football Club chairman is the proud father of five daughters and two sons. In addition, he has 15 grandchildren, "with two more on the way," he announces.

He is, first and foremost, a son of the soil. But a big chunk of his heart belongs to football in general and Glenavon in particular. Wilfie Geddis is a real True Blue — in a strictly sporting context...

Two years ago he was elected chairman of Glenavon having previously occupied a Board seat for two decades. But before that, he was a dedicated follower of the club and he still has fond, fond memories of the great Mourneview Park team of the 1950s and early 60s.

Just about everyone who claims to know anything about Irish League soccer is familiar with the Corr, Liggett, Cush era of Glenavon's history. I suspect, however, that rather fewer are aware of the fact that Billy Cush's love affair with the Lurgan Blues was due — almost solely — to the current Glenavon chairman.

Wilfie still chuckles when he recalls how he managed to talk 'the Wee Man' into staying with the club rather than joining Distillery as a teenager. "I talked it over with Billy in my father's byre," he says. "I knew him well and I knew there was no way we should even have been thinking of letting him go."

"WHAT'S THE OFFER?"

"I asked him what Distillery had offered and he told me it was 10 shillings a match plus the train ticket to Grosvenor Park. I told him that if he stayed at home, he wouldn't need anyone to pay his rail fare, and I offered to pay him 10 shillings every time he was chosen. Billy Cush ended up staying at Mourneview Park and the rest is history..."

Glenavon still had not returned to the senior ranks at that stage but another of the promises Wilfie made to Cush was that they would be going back up into the Irish League the following season. On that count too, he was able to deliver. Glenavon, as he'd said they would, stepped up again a year later...

Wilfie has been on the Mid-Ulster Council for the past eight years. Within 12 months of being elected, he found himself called to Windsor Avenue and the I.F.A. Today he sits on two of its committees — the Senior Clubs' and the Emergency Committee. Not surprisingly therefore, soccer accounts for a lot of his time.

"Yes, there are weeks when I'm out every night because of my involvement," he explains. "Mind you," he says, with that infectious smile breaking on his jovial face, "if I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't be doing it."

Like most men of his generation, he is saddened by the decline in today's senior game. But unlike a great many of his contemporaries, he refuses to sit and moan about it. He's a 'doer' rather than a 'talker,' and right now he's doing more than most to try and revive football.

"One of the things I believe might help is the installation of floodlights," he enthuses. "Whatever else happens, I can guarantee that there will be floodlights at Mourneview Park in 1987/88. I have sufficient money set aside to pay for that."

"There's a lot of talk about money coming from this source and that source to help clubs install lights, but with or without that cash, Glenavon will have floodlighting. If things work out and the clubs are given money, so much the better. I will then take the cash I have set aside and use it to build a new pavilion at Mourneview Park. If we can have lighting and a pavilion, our ground will be complete."

He's a traditionalist when it comes to retaining the better aspects of football, but he refuses to fight simply on the grounds that "we've always done it this way." Ever the realist, he shoots that line of thinking to shreds.

"We've got to face reality," he argues. "The senior game is dying on its feet. We've got to be prepared to change. Floodlighting is a prime example. That will enable us to play on Friday nights, for example. It's worth a try. What have we to lose? I think we might see bigger crowds than we currently get on Saturdays when here are so many counter-attractions."

"Take an Irish Cup replay as an example — say it's Glenavon and Bangor. How many people would come to watch that on a Wednesday or Thursday afternoon? Not many. Then you've got to take into account the expense of paying players who have to take time off work. At today's wages levels, it's quite a bill by the time you've paid 13 of them. The option of playing under lights at night would do away with all of that."



Wilfred
Geddis

When he first took his seat on the Mid-Ulster Council, the senior clubs did not compete in the Association's cup competition. Wilfie was one of the people who pushed to have that changed. No-one was more delighted when Portadown and Glenavon finally joined in.

"The Mid-Ulster Cup has grown in importance as a result," he says. "I'm delighted about that. It can only be good for football, and let's face it — football needs all the help it can get at the moment."

The old adage about 'good men' requiring the support of equally 'good women' is something for which Wilfie can vouch. "My wife Anne fits the bill," he admits. "Football duties can be very demanding, but she accepts that."

Away from soccer, farming and the family, Wilfie takes time to relax by racing pigeons during the summer months.



Flashback to 1986 when Glenavon won the Mid-Ulster Cup, beating Oxford United 1-0. Captain Duncan Lowry receives the trophy from Seamus Horisk, Sales Manager of Tennent's Lager, watched by M.U.F.A. chairman, Ivan Marshall.

Glenavon Blues

THEY say that the cup's a great leveller, and certainly that is something which Glenavon discovered back in 1979.

The Lurgan Blues had just finished runners-up in the Irish League Championship race to Linfield and were full of confidence as a result when they turned up at Shamrock Park on April 25 that year to face Newry Town in a Mid-Ulster Cup semi-final clash.

Newry were still in the 'B' Division in those days — indeed, they had just won that league once again. But although everyone respected them for that, there were few who thought them capable of upstaging Alan Campbell's Glenavon.

ALL THE WAY

However, the frontier club showed scant regard for the Irish League runners-up that night. They won 1-0 with full-back John Mallon scoring the only goal of the match in extra-time to secure their place in the final against Portadown.

How many of these players can you remember, incidentally? The men who represented the two clubs on that occasion were:—

Newry Town — Keenan, McAnulty, Mallon, Sherry, Morton, Dixon, Paul, Boyle, Doran, McAleavy and Boyle.

Glenavon — McCullough, Sheppard, Quinn, Davey, Stitt, McGuigan, Denver, Neill, Malone, Gracey and Higgins.

Newry were to go all the way that season, beating Portadown 2-1 in the Mourneview Park final and results like those further underlined their case for the Irish League status they have since deservedly gained.

THE Mid-Ulster Football Association's bank balance was given a massive shot-in-the-arm in 1969-70 when the IFA handed over grant aid worth £250. The Association's credit balance for the year stood at a mere £45-9-3, so this £250 donation represented quite a sum.

...

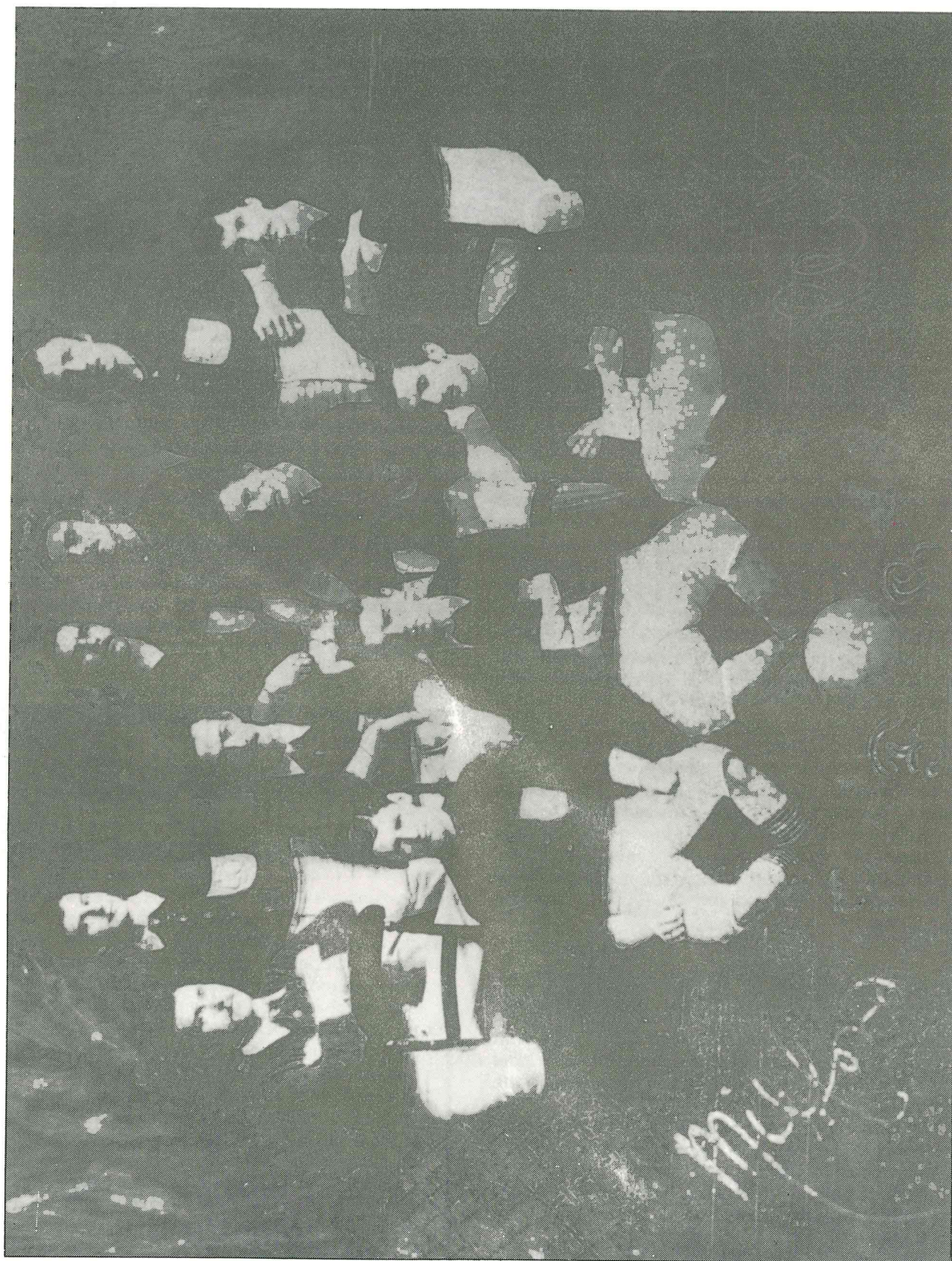
Mid-Ulster Juvenile League



Best wishes to the
Mid-Ulster
Football Association
on their Cup
Centenary

Milford Foot-Ball Club

1888 - 89



Back Row : J. Kimmitt J. McCauley T. Sturgon H. McCauley
Centre : J. Cunningham W. McCrum W. Martin H. Hyde
Front : T. McParland W. D. Harris J. Shieth

Milford the first team to win the Mid-Ulster Cup

OF the three current senior clubs in Mid-Ulster, Glenavon are the oldest by far, having been formed way back in 1889. Portadown, on the other hand, did not come into existence as a club until 1924 and that fact makes them the youngest of the trio, for Newry Town got off the ground a year earlier in '23.

But the 'Daddies of them all,' surprisingly, are Milford Everton who took part in the first-ever Irish League Championship in 1890-91. True, they finished bottom of the eight-strong pack after losing all 14 matches, but no-one can ever deny them their place as the oldest club in Mid-Ulster.

Andy Crozier, incidentally, refutes all rumours that he was the driving force behind the club in those days....!

And the first-ever Mid-Ulster Challenge Cup was also won by Milford a century ago, so clearly the tiny village on the outskirts of Armagh was a flourishing hotbed of football. That's why, in 1890, they were rubbing shoulders with the likes of Linfield, Glentoran, Distillery and Cliftonville.

GLENTORAN AWAY

In their first-ever Irish League match on September 13, 1890, they travelled to Belfast to play Glentoran at Westbourne. That's an interesting historical point too, for the East Belfast giants played all of their home matches there until December, 1892. The Oval was not opened until Christmas Eve of that year.

Just how Milford travelled is not recorded, but allowing for the fact that the whole country at that time was served by an incredible railway network makes it safe to assume that train would have been the mode. Pre-match 'training' had a different meaning in those days!

Milford's trip to the city ended in a 4-2 defeat, with Morgan bagging both their goals.

Certainly the Villagers were thrown in at the deep end in 1890. A week after losing to The Glens, they played hosts to the other half of the 'Big Two,' with Linfield travelling to the country to play Milford in their first home match in the Irish League.

EXTRA MAN

That too, ended in defeat, although Milford's cause was hardly helped when Mullen succeeded in getting himself sent off, Linfield took full advantage of the extra man that created, and trounced the locals 6-1.

This was followed by a 5-0 drubbing inflicted by Oldpark on September 27, following which Milford had a fortnight in which to recover before travelling to Solitude to meet Cliftonville on October 11. Again, from an historical viewpoint, it's worth pointing out that Solitude is the only ground to have been in constant use since the formation of the Irish League. The other senior clubs' grounds — Windsor Park, New

Grosvenor and The Oval — all came into being several years after the clubs they now house had begun their Irish League careers, playing elsewhere.

The Solitude visit also ended in defeat, although Milford were heartened by a vastly improved display which saw them just pipped by the odd goal in five, with Martin and Halligan scoring for the boys from the County Armagh.

Those fresh hopes, however, were quickly and cruelly dashed. Seven days later, on October 18, Distillery hammered Milford 9-1. Ulster went one better — or worse — by beating them 10-1 on December 6.

Five days before Christmas, on December 20, 1890, Glentoran left Milford feeling anything but festive, crushing them 8-0 in the second meeting of the clubs that season.

The first-ever Irish League Championship Table finished as follows:—

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Linfield	14	12	1	1	89	18	25
Ulster	14	9	3	2	72	39	21
Distillery	14	9	1	4	46	37	19
Cliftonville	14	7	3	4	37	46	17
Glentoran	14	6	1	7	40	38	13
Oldpark	14	4	2	8	22	48	10
Clarence	14	3	1	10	21	49	7
Milford	14	0	0	14	10	62	0

The hard facts of life saw both Milford and Clarence withdraw from the Irish League the following year, and in 1891/92, it was little more than a Belfast District League.

Milford still had ambitions though, and they entered the '91/'92 Irish Cup, only to be beaten 5-2 by Linfield Rangers. Linfield that year won the Irish Cup for the second successive season, hammering The Black Watch 7-0 in the final.

FIRST ROUND EXIT

Milford tried their luck in the cup again in 1892/93, but as before, they bowed out in the first round — this time to Limavady. The Roesiders, it should be pointed out, were one of the 'big clubs' of that era, so there was no disgrace in losing to them.

Limavady had, in fact, reached successive Irish Cup finals in 1885 and 1886, losing both to Distillery by 2-0 and 1-0 margins respectively.

Milford's standing as a club of some prestige is obvious from the quality of the company they kept in those days. That was further underlined the season before they joined the Irish League when, on February 15, 1890, the young gentlemen of Dublin University honoured Milford with a visit. In those days of clearly and sharply defined class differentials — a system of near-Apartheid proportions — that was seen as a major honour for the village's team and inhabitants.

The Mid-Ulster Council Members



The 1986-87 Mid-Ulster F.A. Council members. From left (back row)—Tommy Colgan, Mervyn Connor, Wilfred Geddis, Noel McClure, Wilmor Johnston, Gerald Kennedy, Trevor Barnard, Noel Hayes. Front—Isaac Wilkinson, Marshall Beattie, John Brown (Secretary), Ivan Marshall (Chairman), Eddie Pepper (Vice-Chairman), Richard Holmes (Treasurer), Andy Crozier. Inset, Billy McVicker (right). Hugh Heaney (left).



Message from the Mayor of Craigavon,
Councillor George Savage.

May I, on behalf of my fellow Aldermen and Councillors, convey my sincere congratulations to the Mid-Ulster Football Association on the occasion of its Centenary celebrations. I am proud that the majority of the teams within the league make use of the excellent facilities provided in Craigavon, and I trust that the relationship between its officials and the Council will grow from strength to strength to ensure its continuing recognition within the Borough.

30th March, 1987.

Facilities second to none

THERE can't be too many folk around who for one reason or another don't know of the existence of Craigavon. Its main claim to fame lies in the fact that it is Northern Ireland's first new town, and attendant with this is its abundance of recreation and leisure facilities not least of which is the plethora of football pitches which has in a way entitled Craigavon to be known as the home of the Mid-Ulster Football League.

It therefore is probably somewhat pointless to extoll the virtues of the sports and football pitches, of which there are over 60, to the teams of the League, for the majority of them are drawn from the Craigavon area and they can no doubt testify to the excellence of their conditions and upkeep by the borough council.

It might be more expedient to dwell a little on some other aspects of leisure and of sporting life within Craigavon where someone with little experience of the general area might be pleasantly surprised to find such a wide variety of facilities throughout the extent of its 100 sq. miles.

Take, for instance, the Golf and Ski Centre at Silverwood, Lurgan. This complex provides everything for the 'complete' golfer — a floodlit driving range, a nine hole pitch and putt course, an interesting little

9 hole par 3 course and a full 18 hole course, in fact everything to challenge both learner and competitor alike.

Adjacent to the golf centre and sharing the same complex is Northern Ireland's premier ski slope — alas for Craigavon, no longer unique, but nevertheless a most popular facility, which like the Golf Centre, provides comprehensive instruction for all levels of experience on the varied gradients of its 200 foot flood-lit extent, which incidentally is served by a motorised ski-lift.

LEISURE CENTRE

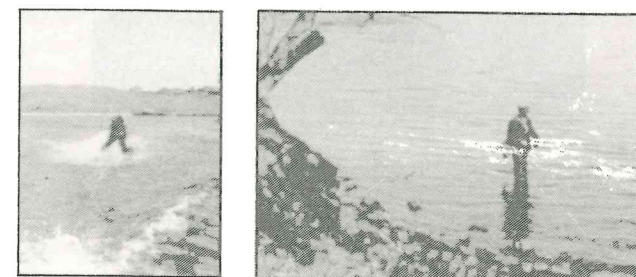
Like most large areas of population, Craigavon has its Leisure Centre which is situated in Brownlow, geographically in the centre of the New Town development. Its 25 metre swimming pool has a pool-hoist to assist the disabled swimmer, and as well as a learner pool it has a large multi-purpose hall, a minor hall, a well equipped weight training room and two squash courts with viewing facilities.

There are also swimming pools in both Lurgan and Portadown, each with squash courts, sauna rooms and solaria, but if one's leisure pursuits are to be sought in the great outdoors, Craigavon can assist remarkably well. Apart from the beautiful municipal parks in Lurgan and Portadown, the concept of the New Town in the country includes over 100 acres of



designated parkland within which lies Tannaghmore Garden, Victorian in its design and created in the grounds of an 18th century farmhouse. With its picnic areas, barbecue facilities and purpose-built play area, it's an ideal venue for a family visit.

The parkland borders the north shores of Craigavon Lakes, and it is here that the borough council has developed its Water Sports Centre. As well as providing instruction for sailing, wind-surfing, water skiing and canoeing, its 178 acres are stocked with rainbow and brown trout, making it a popular angling venue during the season.

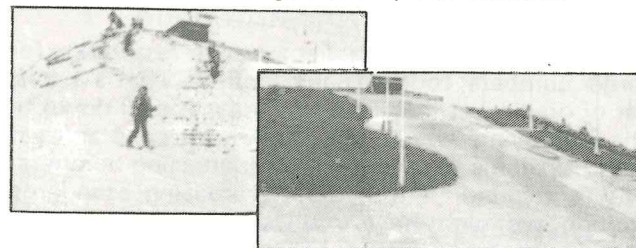


ANGLING FACILITIES

While on the subject of angling, Lurgan Park Lake is worthy of a mention for its fine catches of roach, bream and perch, while the Upper Bann at Portadown retains pride of place as one of the finest stretches of coarse fishing waters in Western Europe.

To some, the jewel in Craigavon's crown is the Oxford Island Nature Reserve, which is situated on the southern shores of Lough Neagh. This award winning conservation area is in reality a peninsula since the lowering of the water level over a century ago, and the Visitor Centre marks the start of its two mile nature trail, which meanders through areas of special interest including observation hides which provide an uninterrupted view of the balance of nature at its best.

The Nature Reserve is also home to the Kinnego Marina which has 50 individual berths from which to sail or cruise the waters of Lough Neagh, and nearby Waterside House provides dormitory accommodation for up to 22 people for self-catering or with full catering service if required — an ideal base for the residential courses organised by the Council.



And there's more — such as the on-going development of the Portadown Riverside Parkway Scheme and the council's interest in the Newry Canal, particularly in the restoration of the lock-keeper's house at Moneypenney's Lock, all of which reflect the awareness of the need to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the area within its modern new-town concept.

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Thirty years with Queen's Park Swifts

ISAAC Gilkinson was elected to the Mid-Ulster Football Association Council at the Annual General meeting in June 1981 in recognition of his 30 years of service to Queen's Park of Lurgan.

Two years later, in May '83, he was sent forward as one of the Association's I.F.A. Junior Committee representatives. Today he is Vice-Chairman of that committee and in summer '88, he will move into the chair for a two-year term of office, thereby following in the footsteps of Eddie Pepper.

A textile factory worker in his native Lurgan, Isaac and Queen's Park together form a double-act in the mould of Marks and Spencer, Anderson and McAuley or Gilbert and Sullivan. One without the other would be unthinkable.

Married with two sons and a daughter, he lives for Queen's Park Football Club. Today he manages the club he served so well as a player, and he insists he isn't casting any aspersions regarding the chairman of the Mid-Ulster Football Association's age when he reminds people that Ivan Marshall was manager of Queen's Park when he was in a prime as a player!

"I remember playing for Queen's Park in the Mid-Ulster cup final when Newry Town beat us 2-1," he says. "Ivan was in charge at that stage, so you can work out for yourself who is the elder statesman!"

CAPTAINED 'SHIELD' TEAM

Isaac also captained the team which defeated Ulster Laces of Portadown to win the Mid-Ulster Shield and since taking over at the helm as manager of the famous Lurgan club, he has had his share of success, too.

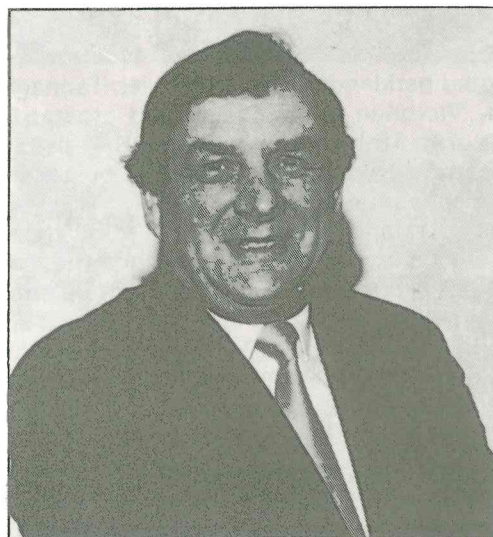
He guided them to a second successive Magee Cup triumph just a couple of seasons ago, for instance, and those victories gave him just as much satisfaction as his achievement in steering them to the third division Beckett Cup a few years earlier.

"Queen's Park have a very good record," he reflects, "Their name is forever cropping up when the conversation gets round to junior football in the Mid-Ulster area. A lot of good players have come through this club down the years, and a number of Queen's Park officials have served on the Mid-Ulster Council."

"Other clubs have had a lot more success in terms of what they've won — for example, I have to admit that under my management, we've never succeeded in lifting any of the Mid-Ulster divisional titles. Against that however, we're still going where others have folded. That's because we're a club, first and foremost. Winning is a great feeling — but we aren't going to quit as soon as the trophies dry up. That happens to some 'good teams' — but it doesn't happen to good clubs, and there's an important difference."

He has very firm views on the state of play in Mid-Ulster at the moment. He feels, for example, that there are too many teams around at the moment — and that standards have fallen as a result.

"In the past, when we had far fewer teams play-



Isaac Gilkinson

ing in the league, the competition for places was keener," he reasons. "That's just the way it goes. It's a fact of life. If you have 2,000 players and only 200 places, only one in ten is chosen. That means the standard is higher. Today though, just about anyone who wants a game can have one. In a way that's good, because it means more people are playing."

"In another way however, it has damaging effects. In the past, every club had six or seven very good players. Nowadays, most clubs have one or two quality players. In a lot of cases there are boys turning out to make up the numbers. In the past, they wouldn't have been chosen. The talent is more thinly spread now and that has seen the standard fall."

"Don't get me wrong," he adds, by way of explanation. "I'm not trying to deprive anyone of a match. But I think we have to be honest and say that in our attempts to keep everybody happy, we've actually contributed to the lowering of the standard of football in the Mid-Ulster League, and in the long-term, I'm not sure that's good for the game."

HIGHER STANDARD

"There are 69 teams playing in the five divisions of the Mid-Ulster League now. I remember when there were a dozen. To play for one of those 12, you had to be good. The result was that the standard was high. We've lowered that in recent years."

"Others will argue that because we're catering for larger numbers, football has benefited. That's a matter of opinion at the end of the day. It's all down to the old saying — you can't have your cake and eat it. If our aim is to cater for ever-increasing numbers, well and good. If it's about increasing standards though, we might have to review the position again at some stage in the future."

Isaac has a 10-year old son, Simon, who is currently turning out for the King's Park Primary School team. Like any football-crazy father, he would like to see him continue in the game. But he would rather see his boy battle through and make it on merit, rather than simply being chosen because there are so many shirts available each Saturday that he's guaranteed one, however well or badly he plays...

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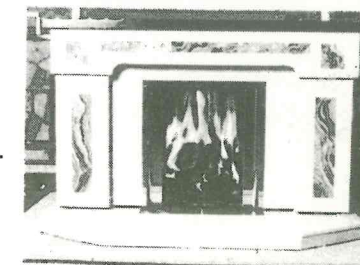
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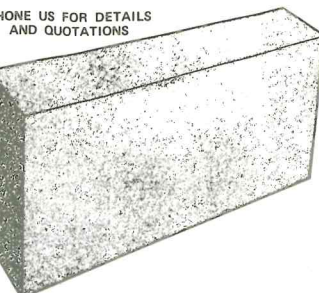
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A born leader on and off the pitch

HUGH Heaney is the third longest-serving member of the Mid-Ulster Council having been elected 15 years ago in 1972. Only Chairman Ivan Marshall and Treasurer Dickie Holmes can better that.

His involvement in football is considerable. He is President of the Carnbane League, a post he has occupied since 1979. He is also Chairman of Newry Celtic, having taken up that position in 1984. He sits on the I.F.A.'s Senior Council, too. His diary is pretty well filled every month as a result.

"You can judge how long I've been on the Mid-Ulster Council when I tell you that John Brown was still a referee in the days when I first joined," he quips.

Hugh was one of the founder-members of the now-thriving Carnbane League back in 1968. Two years earlier he had taken up the job of player/manager with a club called Alpine Athletic and when he and the late William Davis finally succeeded in getting the Carnbane League off the ground under the chairmanship of Billy McVicker, Athletic were one of the 10 founder clubs.

He admits that the way in which the league has since grown has surpassed his wildest dreams. "We started with 10 clubs," he says, "Now — if you count the Youth and Junior sections — there are more than 60 all told. It's going very well. I'm delighted. I can think of no better tribute to my friend, the late William Davis, who died in 1981.

"He probably did more than any other individual to bring about the Carnbane League. There's a ground named after him nowadays, and that's appropriate, too."

TOOK A BREAK

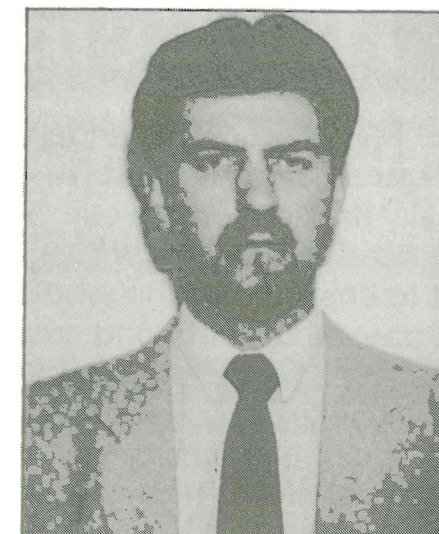
William's brother, Jim — the Sports Editor of the "Newry Reporter" — is, incidentally, the secretary of the league. He has been secretary since 1969.

As a player and manager, Hugh spent 10 years with Alpine Athletic and it was during that time that he was elected to the Mid-Ulster Council. In 1976, he decided to hang up his boots and to take a break from the rigours of management, but two years later, another Newry club, West Ham, invited him to take over as their team boss.

Back he came and for a further two-year stint, he managed the South Down versions of "The Hammers." Enter Newry Celtic! The year was 1980 and when they came along and asked him to take over as manager, he was unable to say 'No.' Off he went....

Another four years of management went in before he stepped aside in 1984 when he became chairman of the club. As a player and a manager, he enjoyed his share of success. His big regret — with this being the 100th anniversary of the first Mid-Ulster Cup final — is that he never played in that particular competition.

"I played in the Mid-Ulster Shield every year from 1968 to 1976," he says, "but not in the cup."



Hugh Heaney

COUNCIL EMPLOYEE

He also steered his original club, Alpine Athletic, to the Carnbane League title and followed that up by taking the A.O.H. Cup in the early 1970s. But his most notable achievement was in helping Newry Celtic to the Bessbrook Cup in 1980, with that being the premier knock-out competition in the South Down / South Armagh area.

An Instruction Foreman with Newry and Mourne District Council, he is married to Marie, who runs the family's Hermitage Bar in the town. They have four children — three girls and a boy. Unfortunately, his story is like that of most of his M.U.F.A. Council colleagues when it comes to his son's interest in football....

"Gerard is 14, but it's really on in the past year or so that he has begun to show any sort of enthusiasm for the game," he says. "Our oldest girl, Siobhan, who is now married, was different. Had she been born a boy, she would have played football! She used to go along and watch me every week. She was mad keen." His other two daughters are Michelle and Ann-Marie...

HE IS DELIGHTED

He is delighted with the way the Mid-Ulster Cup has progressed in recent seasons. "Over the past few years it has really come on," he explains. "When Portadown and Glenavon came back into the competition in 1979, things began to improve. There is even more spice to it now with Newry having been given senior status.

"I think the senior clubs' decision to enter again highlighted the benefits of the way in which the Mid-Ulster Council operates, with junior, senior and intermediate clubs' representatives sitting side-by-side. Willie Geddis of Glenavon and Tommy Vaughan of Portadown deserve great credit for what they did at that time. They played a major part in persuading their clubs that they should compete in the Mid-Ulster Cup again.

"That automatically gave the whole competition a lift. Even the junior and intermediate sides were more enthusiastic about it, since they were being offered the chance of playing against Irish League opposition. And it wasn't too long before the sponsors began to show an interest. That, too, has enhanced the cup's standing."

The Competition Rules

THE Mid-Ulster Challenge Cup is played under a strict set of rules, specifically drafted for this competition and enforced no less vigorously in an attempt to ensure that the whole tournament passes off fairly and smoothly for the benefit of the participating clubs, the enjoyment of the spectators and the well-being of the M.U.F.A. These specially drafted rules are as follows:—

1. The cup shall be called the "Mid-Ulster Football Association Challenge Cup."

2. The competition shall be annual and open to all registered clubs of the Association, subject to the approval of the Council.

3. No player shall play for more than one club during the season, except in the case of reserve team players who may have already played in the competition.

All players must be members of their club at least 14 days previous to the tie. Professional players shall be deemed to be members from the date of their registration with the Association.

An amateur must be a registered playing member of his club in its respective competition at least 14 days previous to the tie. Reserve players of a club shall be eligible under this rule if they are playing members of their team in its respective competition.

The changing of his status by an amateur shall not affect his membership.

PROTESTS

4. A player assisting a team in the Mid-Ulster Shield shall be eligible to play for another club in the competition. In case of protests or if the Council have doubts as to the qualifications of any player taking part in the competition, they shall have the power to call upon such a player, or the club for which he has played, to prove that he is qualified according to the rules. Failing satisfactory proof, the Council shall suspend such a player and dismiss the club from the competition and impose such other penalty as they think fit.

5. In the event of two teams having the same registered colours, the visiting team must change.

6. In the event of a drawn match, extra time shall be played and should the score be equal at the end of extra time, the match shall be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, in accordance with the conditions approved by the International Football Association Board.

7. The secretary shall inform each club in the competition of the name of their opponents and their colours. Should two clubs be drawn and only one have a private ground, then the match shall be played there.

AGREEMENT

8. Any club failing to play the club against which it has been drawn within the time intimated and

without sufficient reasons for doing so, shall be adjudged to have lost the match and should either refuse to compete, such clubs shall be dismissed from the competition. The Council shall have power to deal with offending club(s), player(s) or official(s) as they may think fit, and to deal with any matter not provided for in these rules.

9. The competing clubs in all but the last two rounds of the competition shall appoint the linesmen, unless otherwise arranged by the Council. In all matches the Council shall appoint the referee, who shall have the power to dispense with the services of the linesmen, in case he finds one or other giving decisions at variance with the facts.

10. Unless by mutual agreement, the referee in any of the competition matches shall not be a member of either of the competing clubs. In the case of the semi-final and final ties, the linesmen shall be appointed by the Council.

11. Protests and appeals must be received by the secretary of the Association per Recorded Delivery Post, bearing the post mark within two days thereafter (Sunday not included), accompanied by a deposit of £10 which shall be forfeited in all cases where protest or appeal has not been sustained. A copy of the protest or appeal must also be sent by Recorded Delivery Post to the club protested against, bearing postmark within two days thereafter (Sunday not included).

In no case will the deposit be returned after receipt by the secretary of the Association, unless the protest or appeal be upheld, or not considered. Any objection to the ground, goal-posts or ball must be lodged in writing with the referee before the game is started.

SUPPORTERS

12. If the Council are satisfied that the supporters of the club which have the choice of ground have systematically interfered with the play of visiting clubs, either by verbal and/or physical intimidation, the Council shall have the power to order the match to be played on another ground, neutral if possible.

13. A club, at its discretion, may use two substitute players at any time in a match, except to replace a player who has been expelled from the game by the referee. Such substitute players must be named, in writing, prior to the kick-off.

14. When the winning club shall have been declared, the secretary of the Association shall hand the cup to its representative on receiving a document to the following effect, and subscribed by three persons, whose names shall be previously submitted to, and approved by, the Council of the Association.

"We, A.B. Chairman of the X.Y. Club and C.D. and E.F., club members of and representing the said club, which has now been declared to have won the Mid-Ulster Football Association Challenge cup, and the said cup having been delivered to us by J.K., secretary of the said Association, do hereby on behalf of the said club, and individually and collectively, engage to return the same to J.K., secretary or secretary of the Association for the time being on or before the 1st day of February next in good order and

condition, and providing the said cup is destroyed by fire or lost by any other accident whilst in our possession, we agree to refund the amount of £200."

RECEIPTS

15. In addition to the cup, the Council may present mementos to the winners of the final tie.

16. In all matches, except the semi-finals and final, the competing clubs shall share equally gate receipts after deduction of match expenses. In each semi-final and final, the competing clubs and the

Council shall equally share gate receipts after deduction of match expenses.

17. Finalists of the Mid-Ulster Shield competition, and any other club which the Council may think fit, may be invited to enter the competition.

18. The Council shall have power to alter these rules, but in no case shall they do so until after the final tie shall have been played.

19. Referees' fees shall be fixed annually by the Council.

£50,000 Boost

MID-Ulster Football Association Chairman, Ivan Marshall is, to use soccer parlance, "over the moon," following the recent announcement that the Football Trust is to pour £50,000 into the junior game in Northern Ireland.

Describing the unexpected windfall as "a really significant boost to junior football in the Mid-Ulster area," he expressed his gratitude to the Trust and expressed the hope that the cash will now be put to good use by the minnows.

And one of the things he most wants to see as a result is a move towards the improvement and upgrading of a number of Mid-Ulster grounds to Intermediate League standard.

The onus rests with the junior outfits themselves, of course, but the M.U.F.A. chairman wasted no time in advising them what to do when news of the Football Trust's cash injection was announced in early April.

"It is up to the individual clubs themselves to submit their applications for fresh grant aid," he pointed out, "These should be sent to the Irish Football Association at Windsor Avenue, where they will be carefully vetted and considered."

"It should be pointed out that even those clubs which already own or lease their grounds are still entitled to apply for grant aid," he stressed. "They would be very foolish not to make use of this exceptional offer now. It may be a long, long time before such an opportunity arises again."

"It is a very generous move on the part of the Football Trust — and very fair, too. It represents a tremendous shot-in-the-arm for local junior football. The Mid-Ulster area already includes a number of clubs whose existing facilities are close to Intermediate League standard. If they are able to get some more money out of this scheme, that should see them complete the improvements they need and want."

This £50,000 pay-out is part of a total package worth £200,000 which the Trust has agreed to give to the I.F.A. The money is to be used to install changing accommodation and carry out pitch repair work.

"A lot of clubs have had ambitious ideas for some time, but couldn't carry them out because they lacked the necessary capital," Ivan said. "This could not have come at a better time for them. It's a real bonus and I hope to see a number of Mid-Ulster clubs taking advantage of it."

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The elusive hat-trick!

IN the years from World War II, up until the senior clubs re-entered the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1979, there are a number of examples of teams having won the trophy two years on the trot. The 'hat-trick,' however has always proved just too elusive.

Banbridge Town, for example, won the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1949 and 1950, but just could not make it three in a row. Instead, the cup went to Seapatrick in '51, and like 'The Town' before them, they successfully defended it the following year, 1952.

But Seapatrick's hopes of a treble hit the dust as well, for in 1953 it was Tandragee Rovers who emerged as the top club in Mid-Ulster. And what Banbridge and Seapatrick had done, rovers too succeeded in doing. They also retained the cup for a second year.

Ironically, it was Seapatrick who bounced back to win it again in 1955, thereby denying Tandragee the hat-trick on which they themselves had missed out in '53. A case of 'the bitten' biting back...

From that point up to the start of the 1960s, the cup did the rounds with no one club managing to steal all the limelight. In fact, from 1955 to 1959 inclusive, there were five different winners — Seapatrick in 1955, Tandragee Rovers in 1956, Newry Town in 1957, Glenavon Reserves in 1958 and Banbridge Town in 1959.

TRIUMPH

Tandragee Rovers launched their 'Swingin' 60's' Mid-Ulster Cup campaign on a note of triumph, thereby suggesting that they again would be a major force with whom to be reckoned.

But Portadown Reserves jointly held the balance of power in that era, and for four years they and Tandragee took the trophy, turn about, Rovers won it in 1960, the 'Wee Reds' took it from them in '61, Tandragee's name again went on the cup in 1962 and Shamrock Park club's Reserves won it back 12 months later.

It was Newry Town who succeeded in ending that two-way power struggle by winning the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1964, the first time since '57 that the grand old silver pot had rested on the sideboard of the frontier town club.

Its stay there was short-term, however. A year later, in 1965, Portadown won it for the third time in six years. They never achieved two in a row, never mind three, though. Someone always managed to upstage them. Paradoxically, Portadown Reserves were the finalists Newry defeated in '64.

In 1966 — the year in which the World Club finals were staged in England, The Beatles looked poised to take over the world, hippies were encouraging everyone to hand lose and Dr. Timothy Leary urged the youth of the West to 'trip out' on LSD — Glenavon Reserves took the Mid-Ulster crown from the heads of their Shamrock Park adversaries.

Their reign didn't last long, either. Back came Newry to reclaim the trophy in 1967.

How many readers recall Blanes' Football Club? Their big year was 1968 for that's when they finally managed to take Mid-Ulster's premier award.

They have now ceased to be, unfortunately, but their name is one which remains engraved on the cup...

Newry Town are still alive and well, however — as indeed they were in 1969 when they again won the Mid-Ulster Cup. And as 'Father Time' moved on into the 1970s, and they became involved in a fight for Irish League status and recognition, they used the competition as a means of advertising the fact that they were growing bigger and better all the time.

First blood in the 1970s actually went to Portadown Reserves. They were winners in 1970 itself, but as had been the case towards the end of the 1950s, the cup was shared around for a period afterwards. In 1971 Dungannon Swifts took possession of it. In '72, Glenavon Reserves walked off with it. A year later it was the turn of Mid-Ulster League first division club, New Century, to hold the grand old Sterling Silver pot aloft for the only occasion in their history...

CRACKER OF A FINAL

Banbridge Town's name went on it in 1974, followed by that of Newry — again — the following year. Dungannon Swifts were the next winners in '76 but like the others, they were unable to retain the trophy — it ended up at Mourneview Park in 1977 when Glenavon Reserves wining a cracker of a final against Banbridge Town by the odd goal in seven.

That match was played on Easter Tuesday at the Newry Showgrounds. And it's interesting to look back on the names of the Glenavon players who played in that cup-winning side, which was coached by Derek Shannon — Carlisle, Cull, McAdam, Haughey, Forbes, Smyth, Denver, Turkington, Richardson, Malone and Gracey.

1978 was Newry's year again and that was the last season before the seniors — then just Portadown and Glenavon — joined in, Newry, of course, now have senior status too, and their fine record of six Mid-Ulster Cup triumphs in the 21-year period from 1948 to 1979 makes them the most successful club in the competition in the post-war era.

THE Mid-Ulster League could soon be increased in size to facilitate a sixth division.

Chairman, Ivan Marshall — a supporter of the expansion idea — says: "Two years ago we had to turn 12 teams away when they applied for membership of the league. We're not here to turn people away — we're here to help football grow."

"Grounds are the problem. There just aren't enough pitches to cater for the growing demands of clubs."

"But we have had it in mind for some time to create another division and as soon as it is physically possible, that's what we'll be doing. People say that the Mid-Ulster League has reached saturation point. I don't accept that. How can that be the case when we already know of a dozen teams who are still seeking to join?"

From the Terrace to the Boardroom

MARSHALL Beattie is the classic example of the average football fan's 'ideal chairman.'

He represents the 'die-hard supporter makes good' image, for prior to taking his seat on the Portadown Board of Directors four years ago, he had long-been 'one of the boys' on the terraces. He remembers those days clearly — and the men alongside whom he stood, following the fortunes of his team through thick and thin.

"I started following Portadown way back in 1957," he recalls. "You'd have to describe me as a fanatic. I used to watch them wherever they played, regardless of how their fortunes were going. I seldom missed a match, home or away."

"I've always been like that since the day and hour I first became interested in them," he reveals. "There were some who stopped going to the games when things weren't going as well as they would have liked. I couldn't do that. I always went along because I regarded Portadown as my team. It was a bonus when things went well — but I never saw it as a reason to abandon them when they didn't."

CHAIRMAN OF THE PORTS

Shortly after being invited to join the Shamrock Park Board, Marshall was elected as Vice-Chairman to serve alongside Portadown's then Chairman, Tommy Vaughan. He occupied the position for two years. Then when Tommy stepped down 18 months ago, Marshall was promoted to the 'hot-seat' until such times as the Annual General Meeting came round. When that took place, his appointment was rubber-stamped and he has now completed a year and a half in the chair.

Football plays a major role in the Markethill garage owner's life. In addition to the Chairmanship of Portadown Football Club, he has further involvements. He is, of course, the club's representative on the Mid-Ulster Council. Under its constitution, the senior clubs have to be represented and Marshall is Portadown's man for the job.

He is also a member of the Shamrock Park Social Club Committee and Portadown Football Club's Management Committee. He does not — as yet — sit on any of the I.F.A. committees, but doubtless a call-up will come soon. And it's easy to see what he means when he says: "There are weeks when five nights out of seven are taken up with having to attend various meetings."

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

For the reason, it would be easy to understand it if he grew tired of the game on occasions. He doesn't, however — primarily because his expectations are realistic. "You've got to be like that," he reasons.

"This isn't the Football League. And in fairness to the local game, it has to be said that the biggest difference between what we see on television as opposed to what we see at Shamrock Park, Mourneview Park or the Newry Showgrounds, is the size of the crowds."

"A packed ground generates atmosphere, I've seen some pretty hopeless games on TV, but the fact that they're played in front of a full house gives matches a lift. Football here would be a lot more exciting if the attendances were better. A couple of thousand spectators in the ground would make all the difference."

"With the exception of Linfield, Glentoran and Coleraine, the rest of the clubs in the Irish League are in a similar position. There really isn't a great deal between them. but the thing we must strive for at this stage is to rekindle interest among the football public. We've got to start attracting them back to the terraces."



Marshall Beattie

NO EASY ANSWERS

Asked if he had any definite ideas as to how that could be done, he admitted that there are no easy answers. "No matter what we try, we have no guarantee that it will work," he concedes. "Floodlighting is one idea, but that will be expensive, both to install and maintain. However, we are determined to go ahead with it."

"Some people have suggested that we could let junior clubs and youth organisations and schools use our pitches for cup matches and the like at nights, if we had floodlights. That sounds good in theory, but if you're talking about bills of £50 or £60 to stage a floodlit game, where is that going to come from? You can't ask the Boys' Brigade or the Scouts to pay out that sort of money, can you? If we were to refuse such organisations the use of our facilities on the grounds of costs, we'd be the worst in the world. If we let them use them however, we may actually end up losing money on the deal ourselves. It's a difficult one."

The full Mid-Ulster Cup Draw

THE full draw for the 1987 Tennent's Lager Mid-Ulster Cup from round one all the way through to the final resulted as follows:—

ROUND ONE

Portadown Reserves 1, Milford Everton 2
Dungannon Swifts 6, Edenderry Blues 0
Newry Town Reserves 2, Seapatrick 3
Coagh United 2, Camlough Rovers 0
Dromore Amateurs 5, Kilkeel Athletic 0
Cookstown United 1, Glenavon Reserves 3
Rathfriland 3, The Guys 2
Lurgan United versus Newry Celtic
(walk-over for Newry Celtic, who go into 2nd round)
Loughgall 5, Armagh Thistle 3
Annagh United 8, Rockview United 7 (after penalties)
Hanover 8, Hill Street 7 (after penalties)

ROUND TWO

Dromore Amateurs v. Milford Everton
Coagh United v. Seapatrick
Loughgall v. Newry Celtic.

MID-Ulster Football Association Chairman, Ivan Marshall, believes an Intermediate League could be operational by August of this year.

"Support for the idea has never been greater," he reasons. "It will be the major issue at the Annual General Meeting. If it is proposed and passed, there is no reason why it should not be a reality by the start of the 1987/88 season. The teams are ther the for-

ROUND THREE

Dromore Amateurs v. Glenavon Reserves
Loughgall v. Seapatrick
Annagh United v. Dungannon Swifts
Rathfriland v. Hanover

QUARTER-FINALS

1, Rathfriland v. Glenavon Reserves
2, Banbridge Town v. Loughgall
3, Glenavon v. Portadown
4, Newry Town v. Dungannon Swifts

SEMI-FINALS

Winners of match 3, v. the winners of match 2
Winners of match 4 v. the winners of match 1

1987 TENNENT'S LAGER MID-ULSTER CUP FINAL

mat the only thing that needs to be worked out.

"I believe it is something we badly need. Since the days of the old Irish Alliance, no suitable replacement has ever been devised. I have seen the growth of football in Mid-Ulster from a point of whereby we had eight clubs, up to the present situation wherby we now have 160 affiliated members.

There's only one club for Mervyn!



Mervyn Connor

MERVYN Connor is a one-club man in the best traditions of that description. For him, football life is primarily about Mid-Ulster League third division outfit, New Century.

He has had many approaches from others intent on wooing him away, but his answer has always been the same - "No thanks, I'll stay where I am. I love this club."

Mervyn took over from Bobby Wallace a year after New Century's Mid-Ulster Cup triumph in 1972/73. The juniors beat Newry Town to win the trophy that season, thereby ending the stranglehold enjoyed by more senior opposition like Banbridge Town, Portadown and Glenavon Reserves and, of course, Newry themselves.

Century had a chance of 'doing' Newry for the second time in three years when, on New Year's Day, 1975, the again met in the final of the Mid-Ulster Cup. Mervyn recalls the occasion vividly despite the fact that 12 years have since elapsed.

"It was 2-2 at the end of 90 minutes and the match went to extra-time," he said. "We fell apart at that stage, though - it was a simple case of us running out of steam. Newry were much fitter and that was the difference between the teams. We could have beaten them in the course of normal time, but it wasn't to be. In the end they ran out 5-2 winners. That sounds like a hammering when you say it quickly, but for 90 minutes we gave as good as we got.

PLAYED VERY LITTLE

"Facts like that don't appear on the trophy. The only thing you'll see if you look at the Cup today is Newry Town's name quoted as winners for the 1974/75. That's football."

And football just happens to be the game to which Mervyn Connors is devoted, even though he is another example of a Mid-Ulster Association council member whose playing experience was somewhat limited.

"I played at school, but not much after that," he reveals. "I played for Lurgan Model - in fact, I was captain of the team - and I played for the Technical College. That's really the full extent of my on-the-pitch involvement."

But although his actual playing career was brief, he continued to follow football from the touchlines. Naturally, as a Lurgan man, he was a Glenavon supporter.

"To be frank, I really wasn't interested in the junior game at that time," he admits. "I used to watch Glenavon, but events in the Mid-Ulster League, for example, meant nothing to me."

But then the offer to run New Century came along and everything changed. "The wheel just went full circle," Mervyn explains, "Suddenly I found myself up to the neck in junior football - and my interest in the Irish League disappeared overnight. It wasn't a conscious decision on my part - it just happened that way. There was so much work about involved in running New Century that I didn't have time to worry about Glenavon, Portadown, Linfield or any of the others."

And he was equally frank and open in admitting that

election to the Mid-Ulster Football Association's Council wasn't something he consciously sought, either.

"I never set out to be an administrator," he says. "My involvement had always been of the 'touchline' variety. Attending meetings and sitting around a table was the last thing in my head. I was elected Council, however, after serving on the Mid-Ulster League Management Committee."

In view of those comments, I stuck my neck out and asked him whether or not he actually enjoys his current administrative role. "A lot more than I thought I would," was the reply. "It's all football, isn't it? And anything to do with the game interests me. Let's face it - without the Mid-Ulster Football Association Council and the League's Management Committee, the whole systems probably better equipped for standing on the line on a Saturday afternoon. I love managing New Century. But without the organisation which goes on in the background. I probably wouldn't be able to do that. As time go on, I am beginning to appreciate the fact that all aspects of the game are important."

A maintenance joiner in Craigavon Area Hospital, the highlight of 48-year old Mervyn's soccer career to date came in 1975 when New Century ended all-conquering Loughgall's magnificent unbeaten record (as reported elsewhere in this magazine) in quite emphatic fashion.

Again, Mervyn remembers that only too well. "There's not doubt about it - Loughgall were the team to beat at that stage. We played them at Mourneview Park in the final of the Alexander Cup - and we beat them 7-0! We were 1-0 up at half-time and Loughgall will always argue that they didn't deserve to be losing at the interval.

"The second half was incredible, tough. We ran riot and everything we hit just seemed to end up in the net. It was one of those days when we could do nothing wrong. I don't think I'll ever forget the feeling I experienced that day. It was a bit special to beat 'the Liverpool' of the Mid-Ulster League they way we did!"

Since then, New Century's fortunes have nose-dived a little and there have been rumours that they were set to fold. Mervyn refutes those, however.

"I'm no quitter," he retorts. "If I'd wanted to run, I could have done so long before now. We've dropped from the first to the third division of the Mid-Ulster League. At one stage we went 13 matches without a win. Having beaten the likes of Newry Town, Banbridge Town and Glenavon Reserves in the not-too-distant past, that was hard to take. We're still here, however - and we now have a good, young team. I think we may be on the verge of better days again."

Mervyn, who also sits on the IFA's Junior Committee, is married to a Portadown girl, Hilary. They have a 17-year old son and a 16-year old daughter.

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Ivan Marshall (left) chairman of the M.U.F.A. receives a silver salver to mark 21 years of Council membership from vice-chairman, Eddie Pepper, while Secretary John Brown presents Treasurer Dickie Holmes with a crystal bowl in recognition of his 25 years of service.

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Congratulations and
Best Wishes to the
M.U.F.A. on the
100th Anniversary
of the Cup

Portadown have the best record

SINCE the 'senior clubs' began competing in the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1979, Portadown have the most impressive record.

Things began badly for them in '79 itself, however, for within a couple of days of their heartbreaking 3-2 Irish Cup Final defeat by Cliftonville that season — a match in which current Annagh United player/manager, Tony Bell, had grabbed a superbly taken last-gasp winner — Newry Town made it a double dose of misery by pipping them 2-1 in the final of the Mid-Ulster Cup.

That was a bitter pill for Portadown's fans to swallow, and to add insult to injury, the defeat was inflicted on their own Shamrock Park pitch by Ross Welsh's frontier club. Newry had a great team at that time — indeed, they had beaten Glenavon in the semi-final, also at Shamrock Park, to qualify for a crack at Bertie Neill's Portadown.

The following season, in 1980, Newry again reached the final. It was an all 'B' Division clash that year, but whereas 'The Town' had excelled against senior opponents in the previous competition, they were unable to repeat it against near-neighbours, Banbridge. So it was that the men in red and black from 'the town with the cut' emerged victorious.

The next three seasons — 1981, '82, and '83 — produced 'Reds versus Blues' derbies, with Portadown and Glenavon coming face to face on each occasion. And it was the Ports who held the upper hand in the

Mid-Ulster Cup, for they had the distinction of registering a unique hat-trick of successes against their old rivals, much to the delight of their fans who have had precious little silverware to view down through the years.

All good things must come to an end, of course, and Portadown relinquished their grasp of the trophy in 1984. Glenavon — beaten finalists in each of the previous three seasons — finally got their act together at the fourth time of asking, beating Newry Town to claim the Mid-Ulster Cup which was then sponsored by golden Cow Dairies and Duke's Transport.

That was Newry's first season back in the Irish League and although they were disappointed to have missed out on the cup — manager Barry Brown had admitted that to have won it would have been the icing on the cake for them at that time in particular — they did not have too long to wait for a second bite at the cherry.

That came just 12 months later and this time Newry made no mistake, trouncing Portadown 4-1 to take the trophy back to The Showgrounds on the Warrenpoint Road.

Last season, Oxford United were the surprise package. They went all the way to the final and although it was to cost them dearly, they refused to let their Mid-Ulster Football Association down. They lined out against Glenavon and were unlucky to be beaten by a Kieron Tourish goal.

Since Portadown and Glenavon came back into the competition nine years ago, 1980 is the only occasion on which neither has appeared in the final. With the exception of that one season, one or other of them has made it to the annual Mid-Ulster Football Association showpiece.

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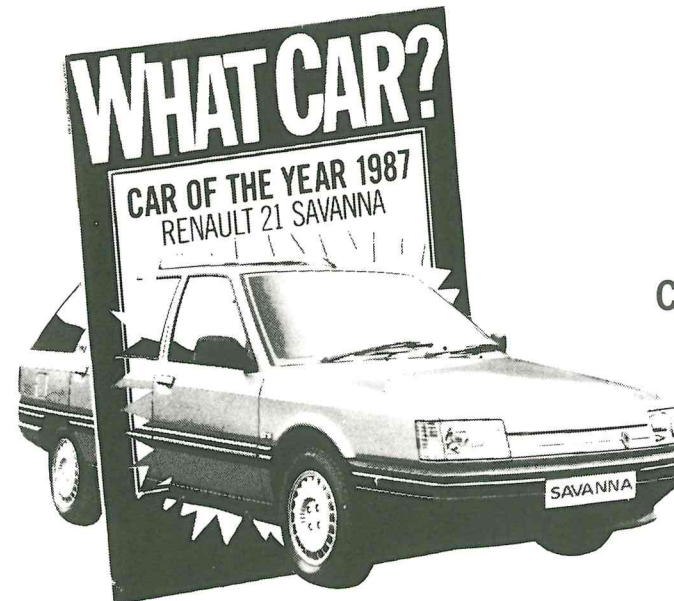
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Jack's threefold disaster in '49

JACKIE Gilpin, the Portadown Football stalwart, has unpleasant memories of the 1949 Mid-Ulster Cup Final on three counts.

Firstly, his team, Gilford Crusaders lost 2-1 to Banbridge town that night; Secondly, he scored what he still insists was a perfectly good goal, only to see it ruled out; and Thirdly, that was the last occasion on which the old wooden grandstand at Shamrock Park was ever used — for that same night it went up in flames, hours after the match had finished!

The 'goal' that wasn't is Jack's most lasting memory of the occasion, and for the benefit of younger readers, he insists it was a replica of the cheeky back-heel scored by Dennis Law for Manchester City, thereby relegating Manchester United to the Second Division in the final league match of their 1973/74 season.

"That's just the way it happened," Jack recalls. "The ball came across and I back-heeled it. Everybody in the ground — with the exception of the referee — thought it was a goal. He ruled that it hadn't crossed the line, but I watched it all the way and it definitely did."

"IT WAS A GOAL"

"To the day I die, I will maintain that we were robbed that night. It was a goal — without doubt, it was a goal."

The late, great Dickie Lunn was coming to the end of his career at that stage and he was playing for

Gilford Crusaders in that match. Lunn, you will recall, was an Irish international cap.

"Dickie often told me afterwards that it was as good a goal as he had ever seen," Jack says. "Like myself, he was certain the ball was over the line. Still, we can talk about it as much as we like — the referee is the man whose opinion matters, and he didn't award it. The cup went to Banbridge Town and that's what's recorded now — that they won it in 1949."

There was a bumper crowd at Shamrock Park for that particular final in view of the added attraction of it being a Gilford versus Banbridge 'derby.' And the other 'characters' Jack can remember playing?

"In addition to Dickie Lunn we had Tom and Bertie West in our team. Tom Madill played as well — and George Hanna. Those are the boys I remember best."

BEST MEDALS

His biggest regret about the occasion was the fact that he failed to collect a winners' medal.

"I'm serious about that," he stresses. "I know players who won every medal in the game — Irish League, Irish Cup, Gold Cup, City Cup, Ulster Cup — and they'll all tell you that the medal for the Mid-Ulster cup winners was the best they were ever awarded."

"The Mid-Ulster Football Association always had very distinctive medals struck. They've changed a bit over the years, but any of them you ever see are beautiful. I'd love to have had one."

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Bertie's Howler

ONE of the most damning things Bertie Neill ever did in the eyes of Portadown's fans was to underestimate the importance of the Mid-Ulster Cup.

The year was 1979 — the first season that Portadown and Glenavon had agreed to re-enter since the war.

The Ports had just been beaten in the final of the Irish Cup a matter of days earlier and their supporters were understandably dejected after that.

Portadown's thriving Amalgamated Supporters' Clubs had bonus money set aside in the hope of a victory in view of their team's fine performance the fans decided to give their players part of it to ease the disappointment of defeat.

And they then decided to offer some more if they beat Newry to take the Mid-Ulster Cup. Jack Gilpin of the Amalgamated Supporters' Club approached manager Bertie Neill and informed him of that fact.

"Bertie didn't want to know," Jack said, "He told me that the Irish Cup was the trophy that mattered and that the Mid-Ulster Cup counted for nothing. That upset a lot of people — myself included."

"To us, a cup is a cup, and we expected our manager and our team to do everything they could to lift it. To be honest, things were never quite the same after that. It might not have been as prestigious a trophy as the Irish Cup, but we wanted it at Shamrock Park nevertheless. Newry beat us that night — and you can imagine how we felt."



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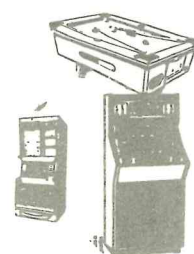
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Newry's Mid-Ulster Cup Pedigree

For a competition — particularly a soccer competition — to have a history stretching back over one hundred years, is certainly a magnificent achievement, and in this respect the Mid-Ulster Football Association deserves the highest of praises.

The Mid-Ulster Football Association is run by a Management Team which is called the M.U.F.A. Council, and the members of this Council represent district areas throughout the whole of Mid-Ulster, stretching from Mid-Tyrone, the whole of Armagh, and the whole of Mid and South Down to the Mourne at Kilkeel.

Over the years this Council, which is elected each year during the month of June, is responsible for the jurisdiction of soccer affairs throughout the whole of its area, and, as well, it organises the annual competitions for the Mid-Ulster Shield, and the Mid-Ulster Cup.

The representatives from the Newry and Mourne Area are Richard Holmes, the "father" of the Council as he has been a member now since the mid-fifties; Hugh Heaney, who has been a Council member since the formation of the Carnbane League in the sixties; Billy McVicker, who as well as representing the Banbridge and District Area on the Council, also works hard behind the local scene; and Tommy Colgan who could be termed as being a "new boy" as he is just into his second term in representing Newry Town on the Council.

Throughout its long life the Mid-Ulster Cup — like every other competition — has enjoyed its ups and downs.

Although always recognised as being a senior competition, for many years it failed to get this recognition and support from the Mid-Ulster Senior Clubs of Portadown and Glenavon because of financial outlays involved by these clubs and instead their reserve teams were entered. This meant that it was really left to the intermediate teams and the junior teams of the fifties and the sixties to keep interest in the competition alive. An added incentive to the junior teams was that each year the four semi-finalists of the Shield the previous season were invited to join the intermediate teams in the competition.

As the sixties progressed and the seventies arrived there was a resurgence of soccer interest throughout the whole of Mid-Ulster, and Dungannon and Milford became clubs of intermediate status, while all of a sudden the Mid-Ulster League also started to expand and its ranks grew amazingly.

The Newry and Mourne area was no exception and the formation of the Carnbane League in the late sixties was a great fillip not only to Newry and Mourne but also to Mid-Ulster because all these additional clubs came under the affiliation of the Mid-Ulster F.A.

It was still, nevertheless, difficult to successfully run competitions from a financial viewpoint, and there was no sign of the senior clubs participating in the Cup.

This is an ever changing world, however, and a complete change came into the soccer scene in the seventies when a new idea was mooted! It was financial sponsorship!

In this respect the Mid-Ulster Cup, like many other traditional competitions, received a new lease of life and the sponsorship by Golden Cow Dairies gave it its best ever boost, so much so, that it encouraged the senior clubs to come back into the competition for the first time in over thirty-five years.

Then the elevation of Newry Town into the Senior Ranks again was an additional boost to Mid-Ulster soccer, and for the past six or seven years the Mid-Ulster Senior cup has been enjoying its best spell in its one hundred years in existence.

Really, the Mid-Ulster Cup should be to the whole of Mid-Ulster what the F.A. Cup is to England because every district should be brought into the competition to create more interest! In the case of the English F.A. Cup in the early stages each season hundreds of little clubs all over England play in its preliminary stages! It is very pleasing to see that this season to celebrate its centenary the Mid-Ulster Council has been working in this direction by inviting little teams dotted all over its area into the competition. These included five teams from the Carnbane League — The Guys who were the Mid-Ulster Shield winners in 1986; Rockview United, the Irish Junior Cup finalists of 1986; Newry Celtic, the Bob Radcliffe Memorial Cup Finalists of 1986; Kilkeel Athletic from the capital of the Kingdom of Mourne; and Camlough Rovers from South Armagh.

The 'B' Division Clubs of the area came into the competition at an advanced stage; and in the quarter-final stages the senior clubs of Portadown, Glenavon, and Portadown were included.

In this way, the Mid-Ulster Cup has brought both excitement and glamour to all of Mid-Ulster — long may it continue to do so!

J. DAVIS, "Newry Reporter"



**The Guys — Mid-Ulster
Shield winners in 1986.**

Serious moves afoot to introduce an Intermediate League in Mid-Ulster

THERE is a significant move afoot within the Council of the Mid-Ulster Football Association to introduce an Intermediate League. And the man who is to the forefront of that is 'Mr. Milford Everton,' Andy Crozier.

"It has to come, and I'd like to see it sooner rather than later," he says. "Already we have seen good, well-run clubs within the Mid-Ulster area switching to other leagues because our system stifles them. I consider the Mid-Ulster Football Association to have a duty to steer clubs towards the objective of a local Intermediate League.

"Administration of the game in this part of the world rests in our hands. We can't be seen to drag our feet. The Clubs themselves are ambitious — we can't afford to be any less ambitious. In addition, we pride ourselves on the way in which we run things. If we're serious about maintaining our reputation and providing the best possible outlets for those clubs with the drive, determination and enthusiasm to proceed, we've got to be thinking about introducing an Intermediate League in the near future.

"Clubs with their own grounds and facilities want to compete against others who are similarly equipped. There are some classic examples of go-ahead outfits in the Mid-Ulster League at the moment — the likes of Loughgall, Annagh United, AFC and Seapatricks, for

example. My fear is that unless we show at least as much enthusiasm as they are showing, they may feel tempted to defect. We've already lost several teams under those circumstances. Now is the time to call a halt to that."

IN THE MINORITY

"Admittedly, clubs with their own grounds are very much in the minority at the moment, but I don't think we should run our league on the basis of the lowest common denominator. Let's look up and let's start thinking big. Grounds should be brought up to standard. Clubs should be encouraged to start working to improve their facilities.

"The unfortunate reality is that too many are content enough to remain as they are. They're happy to turn up at the park and pay a few pounds for the hire of the pitch which is cut and marked for them. People who think like that will never be any further on. If you go back 20 years from now, they'll be doing the same thing and they won't have moved forward an inch in terms of creating something for themselves. Only a brave few are striving to go forward, but I think we owe it to them to at least offer an outlet. That being the case, we've got to be talking about an Intermediate League, catering for the best clubs under the jurisdiction of the Mid-Ulster Football Association.

"True — those clubs which have stepped out and joined other leagues are still affiliated to the Mid-Ulster Football Association. But I think it would be much better to see them involved in a league in their own area."

Mid-Ulster F.A. Chairman, Ivan Marshall, largely supports those thoughts. He is now encouraging local

junior clubs to take advantage of the recently offered £50,000 from the Football Trust as a means of implementing ground improvements.

'THE TIME IS RIGHT'

Secretary, John Brown, is another Council member who feels that the time is right for the formation of an Intermediate League within the Mid-Ulster area.

Newry man, Billy McVicker, supports the idea as well. However, he is realistic enough to concede that amalgamation of several clubs may be necessary to form one club which will be strong enough — in terms of playing staff and financial status — to compete.

"It can't work otherwise," he insists. "Take the Newry area, for example. If clubs are prepared to work together, their combined resources would enable them to compete in an Intermediate League. But only people who want to see the game thrive and flourish will see it that way. Others, who simply want a little personal glory, won't be willing to step aside.

"An Intermediate League is a good idea in principle, and I would certainly give it my support. There are ample opportunities for the blokes who are happy to change in a car at the side of a road, and if that's what they want, they can continue to do so. But for others who are keen to move on, we've got to be thinking in bigger terms. I know there are points of detail which would have to be ironed out, but my attitude at this stage would be; 'Let's at least start discussing the proposal seriously.' That's the only way we'll ever find out what the problems are — and until you know what difficulties you face, you can't begin to plan how to overcome them."

Gerald Kennedy of Mid-Ulster League club, Institute, is another who believes the idea certainly has merits, though he adds a word of caution in the midst of the general euphoria.

"I'm not opposed to it," he said, "but I think we have also to be realistic and admit that it takes a lot of money to buy a pitch and build a clubhouse nowadays. I know of one club who currently pay £140 a season to rent their ground. They've been there for years, and I recently asked one of their officials why they hadn't bought the pitch.

"Because it would cost us £25,000 which we don't have and couldn't possibly raise," he told me. If that's the sort of money we're talking about, I can't see too many clubs being in a position to push for Intermediate status," he added.

Loughgall's Noel McClure is very interested in the proposal, though that's hardly surprising. After all, The Villagers have built a marvellous set-up

"We'd love to see it in this area," he said. "We have put a lot of time, effort and money into building what we now have and there are certainly a lot of people at the club who now feel that we ought to be thinking in terms of joining another league. Our roots are in the Mid-Ulster area though, and we'd be very sorry to move on and start playing elsewhere. It would suit us a lot better if the clubs within Mid-Ulster, who have the facilities, could form an Intermediate League here. I think football in general in the area could only benefit and that's what we're all meant to be working for at the end of the day, isn't it?"

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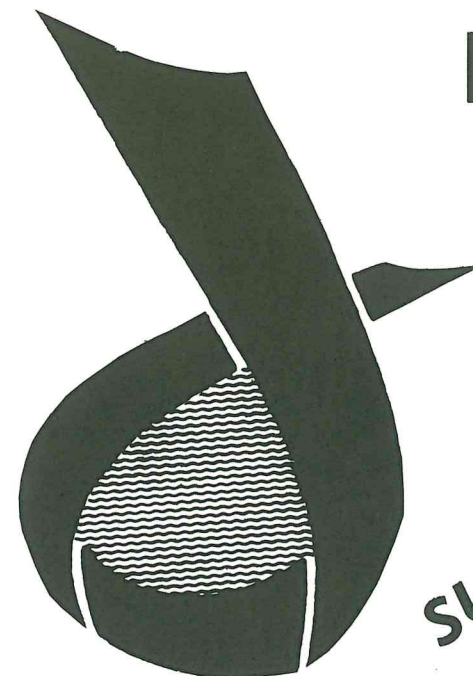
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The Mid-Ulster F.A's Constitution

THE Mid-Ulster Football Association has 19 rules in its constitution, under which soccer in the area of its jurisdiction is administered, governed and controlled. The rules of the Association — not to be confused with those for the administration of the M.U.F.A. Cup — are as follows:—

1. The Association shall be called the Mid-Ulster Football Association.

2. The Association shall be affiliated to the Irish Football Association Ltd., in accordance with the articles of Association.

3. All clubs having grounds which are situated within the area of the M.U.F.A. shall be eligible for membership, subject to the approval of the Council of the Association and the Irish Football Association Ltd.

4. The subscription for each club shall be £5 per annum, payable not later than 20th August, or within one week of election. Any club whose subscription remains unpaid shall not be allowed to compete for the trophies of the Association, or to send representatives to any meeting of the Association.

5. If future calls for money are necessary, the Association shall call a Special Meeting, and levy a proportionate sum over all clubs.

6. The business of the Association shall be conducted by a Council composed of 12 members elected at the Annual General Meeting, together with the Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary, and one representative from each of the senior clubs in the Mid-Ulster District, to be nominated by the senior clubs. At the first meeting held after the annual general meeting, the Council shall elect, from the aforesaid twelve members, a Chairman and Vice-Chairman to act for the season. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary-Treasurer and Honorary-Secretary shall be ex-officio members of all committees appointed by the Council.

The Chairman shall have a vote as a member, as well as a casting vote in case of a tie. Should a vacancy occur in the twelve elected Members, the Council shall have power to co-opt a person to fill the vacancy. Should a vacancy occur in the office of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary-Treasurer or Honorary-Secretary, the Council shall have the power to fill the vacancy from amongst the aforesaid twelve elected or co-opted Members, five Members to form a quorum.

THREE-MEETING RULE

7. Any Member of the Council absents himself from three meetings of the Council in succession shall be called upon by the Council to show cause why his seat should not be declared vacant, and failing to give, in the opinion of the Council, a satisfactory reason, the Council shall have the power to declare the seat vacant, and appoint a successor, notice thereof to be first given to the Member so absents himself.

8. The Annual General Meeting shall be held on Saturday, not later than six o'clock, at such a place as the Council then in power shall decide, but not later than the second Saturday in June. Member clubs shall receive seven days notice.

9. All clubs, members of the Association, shall be entitled to two representatives at all General Meetings. Members of Council shall be entitled to be present at all General Meetings, but shall not be entitled to vote, except as representatives of clubs.

10. Each club shall forward with its subscription, on a form to be obtained from the Honorary-Secretary of the Association, its name, address of Secretary, distinguishing colours, the situation of its dressing rooms and grounds, stating whether ground is public or private.

11. Any club shall have the right to obtain the opinion of the Council on any point connected with these rules, or the rules of the Association's competitions on payment of a fee of £1.

12. At the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, the Council shall elect an Emergency Committee, consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary-Treasurer, Honorary-Secretary and two members, to act between regular meetings should any matter arise requiring their services. The Council shall have power to elect any further Sub-Committees which may be considered necessary to carry out the business of the Association.

REGULAR ACCOUNTS

13. The Honorary Treasurer shall take charge of the funds of the Association and keep regular accounts of same. He shall submit statements of receipts and expenditure to the Annual General Meeting, or to the Council at any time, if so requested.

14. The funds of the Association shall be lodged in such a Bank as may be approved by the Council. Accounts shall be submitted to the Council for approval prior to payment. All cheques shall be signed by any two of the following three Office-bearers — Chairman, Honorary-Treasurer, Honorary-Secretary. The Honorary-Treasurer's statement shall be audited and a certified copy thereof sent to each club in membership, seven days prior to the Annual General Meeting. The appointment of Auditors shall be made at the Annual General Meeting.

15. Each club, when required, shall place players and ground at the disposal of the Council. Any player selected to play in any match arranged by the Association, and without good and sufficient cause refusing to comply with the arrangements of the Council for the playing of the match, may be adjudged by the Council to be guilty of misconduct. Any club which may be deemed to have encouraged or instigated such player to commit a breach or obstruction of rule shall be deemed guilty of a similar offence.

The Council shall have full power to deal with any club player, or member of any club in any official capacity, whose conduct may be deemed objectionable in or in connection with any match.

16. Notice in writing of any addition or alteration to resolutions recorded in the Minute Book of the Association must be given to the Secretary in writing not later than 14 days prior to the date of the meeting at which it is proposed to be brought forward. The Secretary shall give due notice of said motion in circular convening the meeting.

17. Each member of the Council shall be furnished with a ticket (which shall not be transferable) and all clubs belonging to the Association shall admit the holder to the grounds and stands, except for games with clubs from other Associations.

18. Any person who has acted as a member of this Association for ten years shall, on retiring, be furnished with a Life Members' ticket.

19. The Council may call an extraordinary General Meeting of the Association when and where they think necessary.

Men at the Top!

THE Mid-Ulster Football Association's four
office bearers are:—

Chairman
Ivan Marshall
"Ivan Holm,"
Strangford Road,
Downpatrick,
Telephone Downpatrick 2662

Vice-Chairman
Eddie Pepper,
58, Trasna Way,
Lurgan,
Telephone Craigavon 42760

Honorary-Secretary
John Brown,
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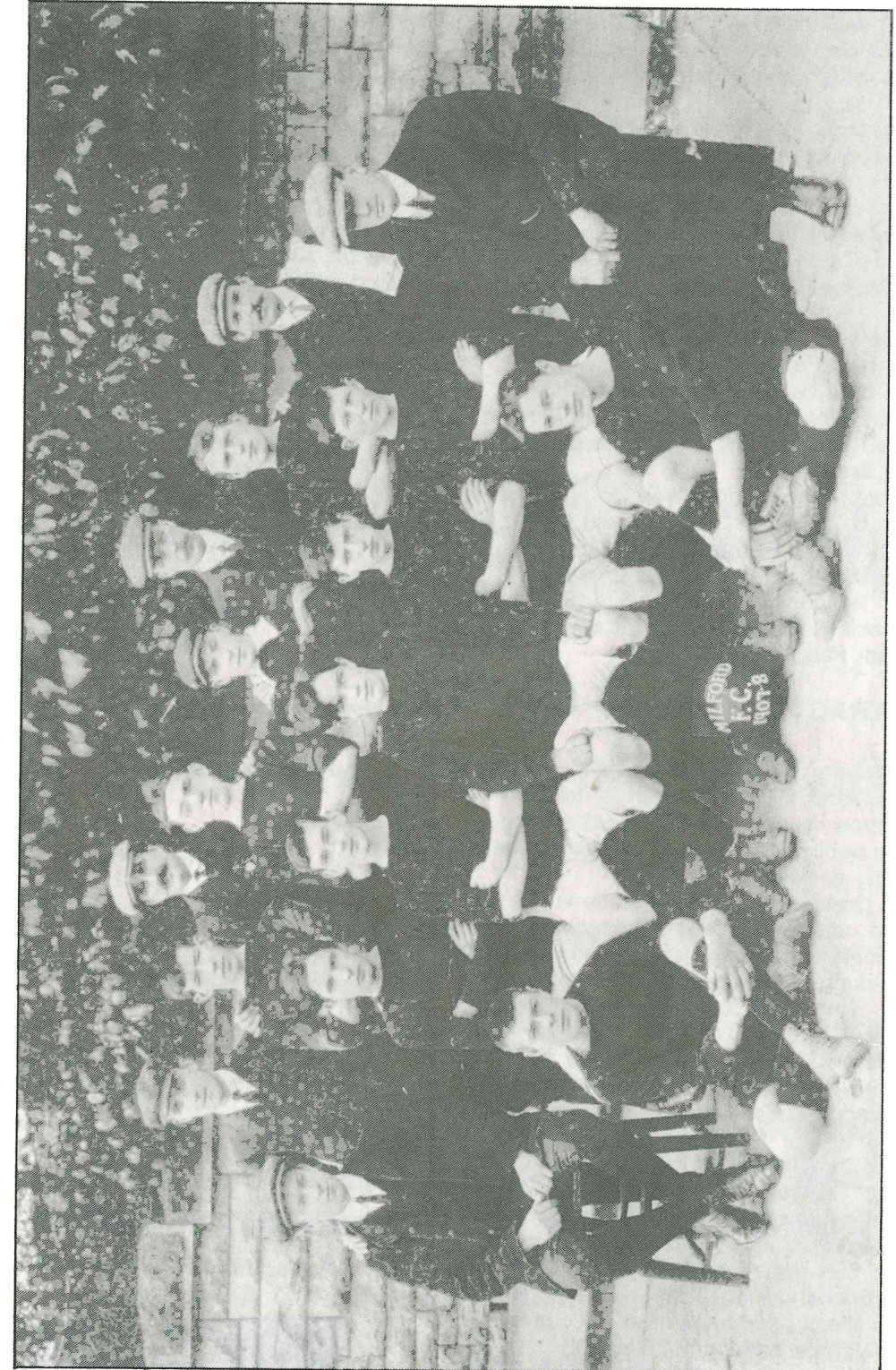
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Front (from Left to Right)—W. Murphy, R. M'Kinley.

Charity begins at home

DON'T be surprised if an Irish League version of the Charity Shield becomes a reality in the next few years.

That's something most of the current 17 Mid-Ulster Council members would like to see happen and if they can persuade their contemporaries in County Antrim to play ball, a new annual Charity Shield challenge match could materialise in the not-too-distant future.

M.U.F.A. secretary, John Brown, expressed the Association's thoughts on the matter when he said: — "Now that our senior clubs — Glenavon, Newry Town and Portadown — are permitted to play in the County Antrim Shield, surely the time is right to consider a challenge match between the winners of that competition and our own Mid-Ulster Cup?"

"I'd like to see such a fixture being played, with the proceeds going to a nominated charity. It could be played on a two-leg aggregate basis, particularly as the likelihood of floodlighting is now greater than ever. Failing that, it could be played on a year-about basis.

"If, for example, Newry Town were to win the Mid-Ulster Cup and Glentoran were to win the County Antrim Shield, the Charity Shield could be played at either Shamrock Park or Mourneview Park in a year in which it was our turn to host the final. In the event of a Belfast match, it could be played at Windsor Park."

ATTRACTIVE FIXTURE

"It would be a very attractive fixture to launch the new season. After all, that's what is done in England. In addition, it would help football's image with the general public in that we'd be seen to be putting something back in.

"I think it's a great idea. I hope we can sort it out and launch a competition along those lines. Certainly the people to whom I have spoken have given it their backing. I think we should sit down and plan it now. There's no reason why it couldn't become a reality."

Fellow Mid-Ulster Council member, Wilfie Geddis, is another who would like to see such a 'Charity' showpiece between the two sister Associations.

"Our chairman, Ivan Marshall, has long been an advocate of this," he said. "I'd give the proposal my 100 per cent support. The 'charity' aspect of it would create interest among the whole community. The fact that the winners of two different competitions would be involved means it would appeal to the football supporter.

"I agree with John's comments. Since it appears that floodlights are on the way, it would be no problem to play this match at night if that's what was needed to generate a crowd. It should be gone into. I think it's a winner."

Eddie Pepper, the vice-chairman of the Mid-Ulster Football Association, is another keen supporter of the proposal.

"The Mid-Ulster Cup has grown in status in the past few years," he reasoned. "So too, has the County Antrim Shield, with the decision to allow all the Irish League clubs to compete. Both competitions have been up-graded and enhanced. The idea of a 'Charity Shield' play-off might not have worked a couple of years ago, but I think it would succeed now. It's worth a try, isn't it."

The last word — for the time-being — rests with John Brown, upon whose shoulders much of the organisational responsibility would fall should the idea become a reality.

"We were quite prepared to give our consent when we were asked to allow our senior clubs to play in the County Antrim Shield," he said.

"That should give some indication as to our goodwill. We'd be more than happy to sit down with our County Antrim colleagues and work out a formula for a new play-off match between the two Association' champions."



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Juniors, Seniors and those in between

IN that the Mid-Ulster Council consists of representatives of the area's senior, intermediate and junior clubs, it's not surprising that from time to time there are differences of opinion over the various sectional interests.

For example, senior clubs have long contended that the ever-increasing numbers of juniors seriously affects their crowd attendances on Saturday afternoons. Why, they ask, can't the junior clubs play their matches on Saturday mornings, rather than during the afternoon, thereby creating a counter-attraction?

Portadown Football Club's former chairman, Mr. Ted Clarke, was an advocate of Saturday morning kick-off times in the Mid-Ulster League, for example. He has always maintained that junior football seriously hit the seniors' 'gates.'

Marshall Beattie is today the chairman of Portadown, and he too admits that there are occasions when he believes the junior sides could do more to accommodate their 'big brothers.'

But he is honest enough to admit that the likes of the Mid-Ulster, Carnbane and Juvenile Leagues probably represent the best 'on-the-doorstep' scouting opportunities in the Province.

The other side of the story comes from Wilmor Johnston, a Council colleague of Marshall's and manager of Mid-Ulster League first division side, Armagh Thistle.

"I don't think the seniors can have their cake and eat it," he responded. "I can't accept that attendances at Irish League matches are seriously affected by the fact that we play at the same time. Speaking personally, I know that I prefer to watch junior football."

"If my own club aren't playing, I watch another junior fixture. I don't feel: 'Oh, here's a free Saturday — I must rush over to Shamrock Park or Mourneview Park.' Most people involved with the junior game feel the same way."

"Here's the big test," he continued, "There have been numerous occasions on which the Mid-Ulster League and Carnbane League programmes have been wiped out because of the weather, while the Irish League has survived. Has there been any significant increase in attendances at the senior grounds when that has happened? No!"

EASY EXPLANATION

"It's too easy an explanation to blame the juniors. The real truth is that Irish League football isn't attractive enough at this stage. Instead of pointing the finger of blame at us, the senior clubs ought to be looking at themselves and asking: 'What can we do to woo the missing fans back?'"

"Junior football may take some away each Saturday, but the numbers aren't significant. Juniors would rather watch other juniors. I know that if we aren't playing, I automatically go to watch another Mid-Ulster League fixture. It never enters my head to go to an Irish League game."

"The only senior competition in which I'm interested is the Mid-Ulster Cup — and that's because there are juniors involved in it."

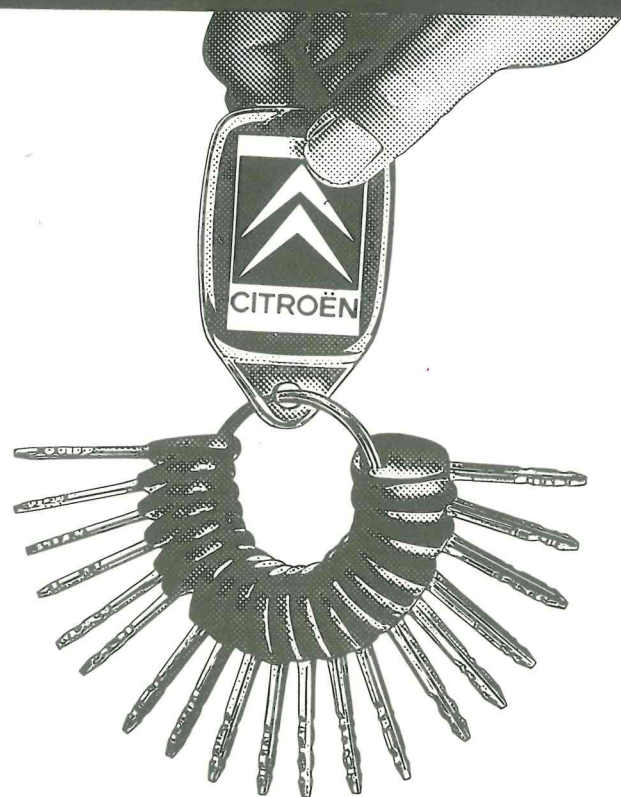
"It's asking a lot of the players at our level to play on a Saturday morning. In a great many cases they have to work up to lunchtime. An 11 o'clock kick-off would mean them having to give up a morning's overtime. And even if they did — which I very much doubt — what percentage of them would want to go and watch Irish League Football in the afternoon?"

"The reverse side of that coin is that while junior players are being asked to sacrifice a morning's wages, the seniors they would then be expected to go and watch are being paid for playing! It's not on as far as I'm concerned, and I've yet to hear a plausible reason as to why we should accept it."

"The missing crowds can't be put down to the juniors. There are more than enough people out there who would watch senior football if it was attractive enough to woo them. That's the reality the seniors have to face up to."



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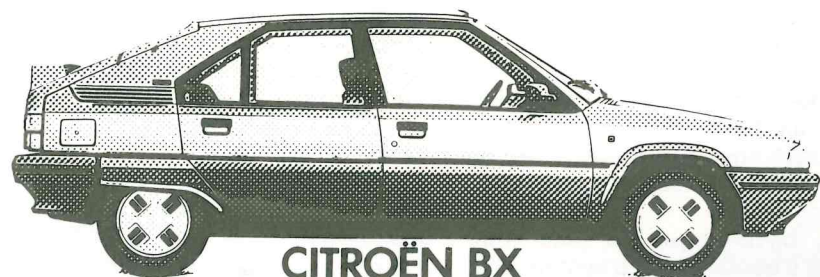
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Looking to the future

"THE Mid-Ulster Football Association is the second biggest in the whole of Northern Ireland. We also like to think that we're among the more forward-thinking when it comes to decisions affecting the future well-being of the game."

The words of Association secretary, John Brown. And to underline that conviction, he points to the fact that two of the three knock-out competitions for which the M.U.F.A. is responsible currently enjoy generous sponsorship which has significantly enhanced their status and image.

"We have three knock-out competitions, each catering for three different levels," John explained.

"The Mid-Ulster Cup is our flagship in that it is for the senior clubs.

"In addition, we are responsible for the Bob Radcliffe Memorial Cup, which is contested by Intermediate League - standard teams. Then we have the Mid-Ulster Shield for our junior clubs. I don't think I'm overstating the case when I say that we consider it to be on a par with the Irish Junior Cup."

"There are some very go-ahead clubs in the League at the minute," he said. "You've only to look at what clubs like Loughgall, Annagh United and A.F.C., for example, are doing, to realise that fact.

"In recent years we have lost three teams from the Mid-Ulster League under these circumstances. We may well find ourselves having to look at the possibility of offering such an alternative ourselves."

So does that mean the introduction of a local version of a 'Premier' or 'Super' League?

"That's probably an overstatement," John smiled. "I'm talking about the formation of a league of intermediate status under the jurisdiction of the Mid-Ulster Football Association. At the minute, we don't have anything like that, which is why several of our best clubs have already moved on and there is a likelihood that others may join them."

HIGHER STANDARD

"They are still affiliated to the Mid-Ulster Football Association, of course, but even so, we're concerned when we see clubs leaving the local league to compete in another because they feel the standard is higher."

A 'boot and ball' rather than 'brain' drain, then ...?

"What I'm talking about need not be too drastic," John added. "We certainly don't want to do anything which weakens our own very strong Mid-Ulster League system. We have to be realistic, though. Perhaps the day when we upgrade the Mid-Ulster League's first division clubs to intermediate standard isn't all that far away.

"The time may soon be right to form an Intermediate League under the jurisdiction of the Mid-Ulster, in fairness to all those clubs which have put so much time, work and money into improving their facilities."

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The Chairman says "Thank you!"

TO be chairman of an organisation at any stage is an honour. To be chairman in the year in which the Mid-Ulster Football Association celebrates the 100th anniversary of the first Mid-Ulster Cup Final leaves me feeling both proud and humble at the same time.

Proud of a century of work, commitment, dedication, vision and enthusiasm on the part of those involved in the running and playing of Mid-Ulster Football, past and present. Humble when I look back over the names of the men whose combined efforts have brought us to where we now stand. This, the 100th anniversary, is a fitting tribute to them all.

"To the players and officials of the clubs involved in this year's competition — and those who have taken part in the past — I offer my thanks and congratulations. To the spectators who have watched the Mid-Ulster Cup matches down through the years, I also offer my thanks. To the oft-times forgotten referees, linesmen and groundsmen, I would like to take this opportunity of saying that without their help and dedication, football would not exist.

"Of course, football is no different from any other organised venture nowadays. Without the necessary funding, competitions like the Mid-Ulster Cup just could not be staged. For that reason, I am particularly grateful to Tennent's Lager, for their generous sponsorship of the competition which is now named after them.

"Sport today depends on the sort of commitment Tennent's Lager have shown to the Mid-Ulster Football Association. Sponsorship in this day and age is not an optional extra — it is the life-blood of sport. We cannot hope to progress without it. For that reason, I would like to publicly express my gratitude to Bass Ireland Limited."

VITAL GROUP

"I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking our past sponsors, Golden Cow Dairies and Duke's Transport, for their financial support in previous seasons.

"And there is another vital group, members of which deserve the highest accolade. I refer to my friends and colleagues in the Mid-Ulster F.A. Without fear of contradiction, I can safely say that the current Council is the strongest of any on which I have served. The development of football in this area is largely due to these men. I count it a privilege and a pleasure to work with them.

"In particular, I would single out my three fellow Officers, Secretary, John Brown; Treasurer, Dickie Holmes and Vice-Chairman, Eddie Pepper have put in an incredible amount of work on behalf of Mid-Ulster Football — not just over a short period, but for years. It is sometimes said of certain players that they are 'models of consistency.' That description applies perfectly to John, Dickie and Eddie. They are consistent, faithful and dedicated to the work which has to be done. I am fortunate to have such men beside me.

"I have been involved in soccer at all levels — as a player, as a manager, as a club secretary, and in more recent years, as an administrator. I know how

it feels to play in a big competition. I know how it feels to watch one's team in a knock-out cup series. I know what goes into organising and arranging an event such as the Mid-Ulster Cup from round one, all the way through to the final."

A TEAM GAME

"As football is played as a team game, so it must be run on the same lines. Every member of the team has a part to play — on the pitch, on the touchline, at administrative level. Everyone who wants to see football played for the pleasure and entertainment of the participants and their spectators, is dependent on someone else doing his part.

"The strength of the Mid-Ulster Cup is that it is run with that objective in mind. It is up to the players to produce exciting, skilful football and to offer sufficient sporting entertainment to attract others to watch them. It is up to soccer's administrators to provide the framework within which that can be a reality. It is up to match officials to ensure that the rules are properly enforced. It is up to the football public to support matches. We are all inter-dependent.

"We in Mid-Ulster have a marvellous soccer tradition behind us. We have a senior cup competition which is now in its 100th year, and rather than diminishing, it is growing stronger. The foundations which were laid in 1887 have been built upon, particularly in recent years with three Irish League clubs now competing for the Mid-Ulster Cup. We can look forward to the start of the second century of this great old competition with optimism, born of a healthy mixture of our past certainties and our future aspirations.

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How much do you know

THE Craigavon Sports Shop of Magowan Buildings, Portadown, have very generously come up with the offer of a team kit-bag for the club which can answer the following questions on soccer.

Manager, Victor McAdam, approached magazine editor, Niall Crozier, and suggested the idea and when he in turn put the proposal to Mid-Ulster Football Association secretary, John Brown, the answer was a quick 'Yes, thanks.'

So, study the questions, write your answers in the space provided (or should you not wish to deface this souvenir programme, a sheet of paper will suffice) and return them to John Brown, 30, Clanbrassil Drive, Portadown, before May 31. If it helps incidentally, most of the answers are contained in the pages of this magazine. Happy hunting!

1. Who were the beaten finalists in the first Irish Cup Final, played in 1881?

Answer

2. Which Mid-Ulster League club won the Foster Cup in 1985, and also finished as runners-up in the Alan Wilson Memorial Trophy?

Answer

3. Which Lonsdale League club won division one, the Tyrone Crystal Trophy, the Alan Wilson Cup, Caf-fola Cup and Top Four Cup in 1984/85?

Answer

4. In which league did Derry City compete in the years between them losing their Irish League and gaining League of Ireland status?

Answer

5. When Glenavon beat Linfield 5-1 in the final of the Irish cup in 1961, one player scored a hat-trick and another hit two for the Lurgan Blues. Name the two players.

Answer

6. Name the past three secretaries of the Mid-Ulster Football Association (including the current incumbent).

Answer

7. Who is the President of Newry Town Football Club?

Answer

8. In what year did Loughgall Football Club play Ballymena United on August 1 to mark the opening of their Lakeview facilities?

Answer

9. Of the Glenavon Reserves team which defeated Banbridge Town 4-3 in the 1977 Mid-Ulster Cup final. Only one is still on the staff at Mourneview Park — and he has played regular first-team football this season. Who is he?

Answer

10. When did Banbridge Town last appear in the Mid-Ulster Cup Final?

Answer

11. Who were the respective Glenavon and Portadown Mid-Ulster Council representatives when the two clubs re-entered the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1979?

Answer

12. When Glenavon won the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1984, it was their first senior trophy success since which year?

Answer

13. Who is the longest-serving member of the current Mid-Ulster Council?

Answer

14. Who won the Mid-Ulster Cup in 1974, and again in 1980, beating the same opponents on each occasion?

Answer

15. Name the man who was manager of Newry Town when they finally made their return to Irish League Football.

Answer

16. Which member of the Mid-Ulster Referees' Association took charge of the Irish Cup final in 1969, 1971, 1973, 1978 and 1979?

Answer

17. Which player, who has since given years of service to Mid-Ulster Football, scored in the 1970 Irish Cup final, but ended up a loser on the day?

Answer

18. After a scoreless Irish Cup final between Ards and Distillery in 1969, the replay produced six goals, with an Ards player hitting four of them. Who was that final's four-goal hero?

Answer

19. Who is the well-known Mid-Ulster soccer personality acknowledged in the Queen's Birthday Honours List several years ago for his services to football?

Answer

20. In which season did Milford Everton begin playing in the Irish League 'B' Division?

Answer

21. Who will be playing Dungannon Swifts to celebrate the opening of their new pitch at the start of the 1987/88 season?

Answer

22. In 1887 — the year of the first Mid-Ulster Cup — Ireland played the other three home countries. They beat Wales 4-1, but suffered heavy defeats at the hands of England and Scotland. What were the scores?

Answer

23. Who is the former Mid-Ulster Council stalwart who won the Roy Stewart / Sean Mullan Merit Trophy for Outstanding Service to Irish League Football in 1981?

Answer

24. Which club did current Mid-Ulster F.A. and Mid-Ulster League Chairman, Ivan Marshall, formerly manage?

Answer

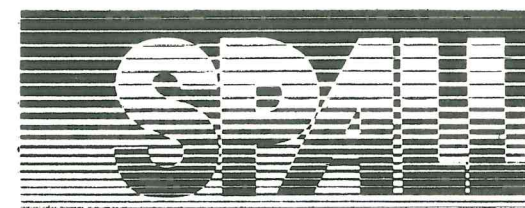
25. Who is Banbridge Town's representative on the Mid-Ulster F.A. Council?

Answer



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Civic reception marks 100th year

THE esteem in which the Mid-Ulster Football Association is held can be gauged from the fact that on Wednesday, May 13, Craigavon Borough Council will be hosting a Civic Reception for M.U.F.A. Council members past and present.

The occasion, which marks the 100th anniversary of the first Mid-Ulster Cup final, has been arranged by the Mayor of Craigavon, Councillor George Savage. The task of tracking down past M.U.F.A. Council members has again fallen on John Brown's broad and willing shoulders, and that being the case, it promises to be a night to remember.

The centenary celebrations will be held in the luxurious Craigavon Borough Council Civic Centre, which commands a spectacular view of the Balancing Lakes — arguably the centrepiece of the excellent leisure facilities in the Portadown / Lurgan area.

A total of 60 guests will be present — among them, representatives of the various Football Associations and leagues in the Province. The I.F.A. will also be represented, as will the Mid-Ulster Referees' Association.

"We're delighted at the prospect," John said, "It will be a great occasion to see so many people, who

have contributed to football in this area, all under one roof for a special celebration to mark this milestone.

"It has been quite a job trying to contact some past Council members, and doubtless one or two will have been overlooked, I've tried — to the best of my ability — to get in touch with them all, but it hasn't been easy. People move on to other areas — that's just a fact of life.

"The 'Ireland Saturday Night' carried an article a few weeks ago, appealing to all past Mid-Ulster Football Association Council members to contact me. That appeared on the 'Soccer Page', so those I was hoping to reach ought to have seen it.

"We're very appreciative of this gesture by Craigavon Borough Council in organising this event. That, coupled with the football facilities they have provided throughout the area they administer — and the fact that they paid for two full pages of advertising in this magazine — goes to prove their commitment to the game in Mid-Ulster. On behalf of everyone involved in football here, I'd like to take this opportunity of publicly expressing our thanks and gratitude."



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Thanks to everyone concerned!

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to two people in particular for their invaluable help and encouragement in the work of compiling this magazine.

Mid-Ulster Football Association Secretary, John Brown, is well known in soccer circles as a first-class administrator — a man who pays meticulous attention to even the smallest point of detail in the course of his work for the M.U.F.A.

His commitment to this venture has been no less wholesome. Nothing has been too much trouble for him, no request has gone unanswered and on each occasion on which I found it necessary to consult him, John was always willing to help or put me in touch with others who could.

The Association is privileged to have such a stalwart in its ranks. It has been a pleasure to have worked alongside him.

ADVERTISING

I would also like to thank my wife, Anne, for her role in the compilation of this souvenir magazine. She made time to do many of the jobs I was unable to do. She sold much of the advertising, rang dozens of different individuals in the pursuit of information,

dealt with time-consuming business like correspondence and kept the coffee-pot well topped-up on those occasions on which I found myself forced to burn the midnight oil.

It may sound slightly trite and corny, but it's true, so I'm going to say it — without her help and support, this project could not possibly have materialised.

My sincere thanks also to Billy McVicker of Newry for the speedy and professional manner in which he arranged to have this publication 'typeset' and printed. Again, the end-of-April deadline could never have been met without his help and willingness to co-operate.

INVALUABLE

There are many others — too numerous to name, in fact — who willingly provided photographs, newspaper cuttings and assorted mementoes, all of which were invaluable in researching material for this 100th anniversary magazine. They know who they are — my sincere thanks to them all.

Yours in football,
NIALL J. A. CROZIER, (Editor)

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12 HOLE PITCH AND PUTT COURSE.

Opened for play in the Autumn of 1976, it has proved very popular with the beginner and the casual golfer, mainly due to the number of golf clubs and time required to play it. It is expected that this course will serve as an introduction to the 9 hole and championship courses. The course measures 888 yards and also has the unique sand-based greens.

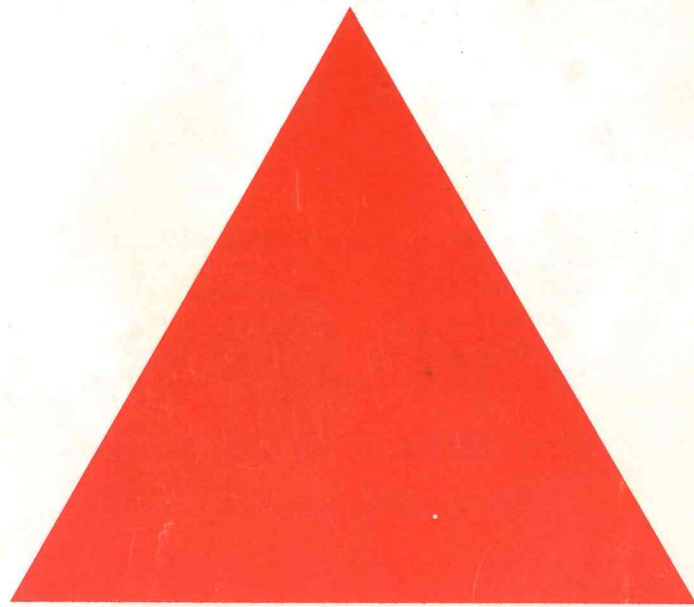
9 HOLE PAR 3 COURSE.

Opened for play in the Summer of 1982. This is an interesting course which measures 1349 yards.

A new 9 hole is being added to the existing 9 hole course and will be available in mid April.

Recreation in
CRAIGAVON

**Great Stuff
this**



Bass