

# Hamilton and Flynn to spearhead revival

## LIMERICK PLAN NEW ERA

By JOHN O'SHAUGHNESSY

WHEN Limerick reached the F.A.I. Cup final for the second time back in the 'sixties, they had Dubliner Tommy Hamilton in their firing line.

And when they collected the prized trophy at their third attempt in 1971, it was Glaswegian Hughie Hamilton who scored two of the three goals that knocked out Drogheda after a replay.

Now Limerick are looking to another Hamilton to bring life back to Rathbane — this time it is Belfast born Billy, perhaps the most famous player ever to play his trade in Limerick colours.

With only the FAI Cup to play for this season — don't talk about relegation now at Rathbane — Pat Grace and his fellow directors would like nothing better than seats in the VIP box at Dalymount Park on cup final day in April.

Hamilton, delighted to take on the challenge, has brought along with him Brian Flynn, the 66-times capped Wales international, and between them they believe they can restore pride to local soccer.

Described in one evening newspaper as Little and Large — Flynn stands at a mere 5' 4" and is dwarfed by Hamilton's tall figure — the new management said it was too early yet to make predictions — "but given a couple of years and a little patience we can do well."

The fact that Limerick City are down to meet table toppers Shamrock Rovers at Rathbane on Sunday doesn't upset them one iota. "It's nice to start with a tough one," said Hamilton, who prefers to look upon his appointment as a joint management venture with Flynn.

### Friendship

At a press conference in Limerick this week the former Northern Ireland international told me that he had a long standing friendship with his colleague.

"We played together at Burnley and afterwards agreed that if we were ever to go into management, that we would do it together."

They both look upon the Limerick job as a challenge.

Though born in Belfast, Hamilton admitted to never

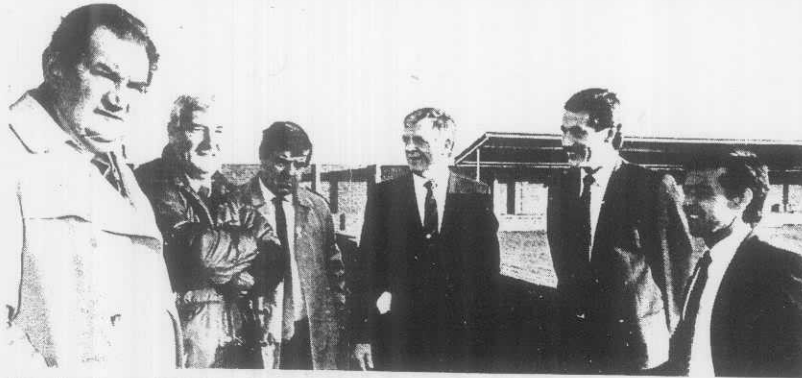
having seen a League of Ireland match — "but knowing the Irish League scene, I would think that standards are much the same."

It is rather curious that Limerick have looked to a former Linfield player to guide their fortunes.

There has been an excellent relationship between the clubs in recent years. When Eoin Hand took control of the old Limerick United his first job as manager was at Windsor Park, where he saw his side go under 2-1 to Ray Coyle's Linfield in the Tyler Cup. A few years later Ewan Fenton brought City to Belfast.

And don't forget that Fenton interrupted his stay at the Markets Field to manage Linfield, where he met with a lot of success before returning to his adopted city.

Hamilton, only 29, but who has packed a lot into his illustrious career, is quite philosophical about his new appointment. As he surveyed the ground this week he said he was impressed by the surroundings, and for a man accustomed to more palatial stadia, he gave an approving nod to chairman Grace.



Brian Hamilton and Billy Flynn (extreme right) with Limerick directors Michael Browne, Michael Bourke, Noel Murphy and Pat Grace.

Though he will not line out with Limerick City for some weeks yet because of a nagging leg injury, he is of the opinion that he will reach fitness once he gets down to business.

### Match

His last competitive match was in early October,

for Oxford United against Coventry, and though advised not to play football again, reckons that the more relaxed approach here will not harm him.

After winning every available honour with Linfield, he moved on to Queens Park Rangers, where his stay was brief. Burnley was his next port of call and it was there that he

really caught the eye. In over 200 matches he notched just short of sixty goals. Northern Ireland called upon his services on the international front — "and I went on to collect 48 caps."

Oxford United sought his services a couple of years ago and he played 31 games on all with them.

Brian Flynn, a quiet and unassuming sort of chap,

has sampled life at the top and bottom of the English League.

He was proud to have been part of the great Leeds teams of the 'seventies and gave six years to them. "I came after Giles and Charlton but we were still a pretty useful team then."

Before going to Elland Road he learned his trade with Burnley.

Unlike Hamilton, he nev-

er sampled World Cup fare, surprising really when one considers that he has 66 caps to his credit. But then, I suppose, Wales have never been a World Cup force.

### Captaincy

He regards his captaincy of Wales as one of the highest honours bestowed on him. Just turned 31, this native of Port Talbot played for Bury last Saturday in their 1-0 defeat by Lou Macari's Swindon Town. He also had a spell with Doncaster Rovers last season, and played for Cardiff City as well as Burnley (twice).

Brian will definitely be in the team to meet Rovers on Sunday, and admits to be looking forward to the experience.

While no contracts have been entered into as yet, Flynn and Hamilton give themselves 2-3 years to do a worthwhile job. Their immediate task is to restore respectability to Limerick soccer, and then they will set about building for the future.

The board of directors are pleased that their search for a manger has come to an end.

But one can only conclude that Hamilton and Flynn were on their shopping list for some weeks.

Negotiations with Martin O'Neill had just broken down when both were on their way to Shannon. Everything appears to have been sealed over a few cups of tea at Rathbane.

Limerick were delighted to show off their new management team on Tuesday and will now sit back and wait for the results — and hopefully, increased 'gate' returns — to flow in.

Hamilton and Flynn hardly know their way around Rathbane as yet and it would be crazy to expect them to perform a 'Houdini' act at short notice. It is a pity really that they are thrown in at the deep end on Sunday when the eyes of the Irish football world will be on the result from Rathbane.

Experienced as he is Brian Flynn can hardly be expected to change Limerick's ebbing fortunes. Shamrock Rovers may have lost some of their gloss following the departure of Liam O'Brien and John Coady, but they will still be extremely difficult to beat.

Limerick City now find themselves in a rather tricky situation in the Premier

League.

### Relegation

Since they have an inferior goal average to Sligo Rovers they occupy one of the two relegation spots, and it is conceivable that their plight will be worsened should they fail to the league leaders.

Remember, Rovers have already clipped their wings three times this season.

Hamilton and Flynn should know the extent of their problems after Sunday and can then prepare for what's ahead.

One week later City travel to Inchicore and then have a date with Galway at Rathbane. On February 1 they meet neighbours Newcastle West in the fourth round of the F.A.I. Cup and bogey side Dundalk are visitors on February 8.

It is most unlikely that Limerick will suffer the humiliation of relegation, but with those immediately above them showing signs of recovery, their future is now in their own hands.

The team to play Rovers will not be picked until later in the week, but there could be a return to duty for Brendan Storan.

The message is not to expect an overnight miracle from Hamilton and Flynn.

### Senior Rugby: Only one game locally

# MUNSTERS TO BOOK A PLACE IN FINAL



Patrick McNamara, F.C.A.A., managing director, Limerick Inn, presenting a cheque to commence the fundraising for the redevelopment of the stand at Thomond Park, to Billy Hurley, president, Munster Branch, I.R.F.U., also included are John Fahy (left), general manager, Limerick Inn, and Michael

### MENS HOCKEY:

#### Institute Notes

Last weekend the first team had an emphatic win over Ashton II at Roshrien. The second team stayed in relegation trouble with a disappointing defeat at home by L.P.Y.M.A. III.

The first team were clearly the better team and only for a fine display by the Ashton goalkeeper the final scoreline would have been much higher. Eddie Cummins opened the scoring for Institute mid-way through the first half and despite intense pressure Institute could not breach the Ashton defence again before half time. Institute carried on in the same vein after the break but a string of brilliant saves by the Ashton keeper from Davie Ryan, Richie and Eddie Cummins kept Ashton in the game, but finally Eddie Cummins was fouled and from the resultant penalty he scored easily. Kevin O'Connor scored soon after from close range and Dave Ryan rounded off the scoring when he followed up on a shot from Eddie Cummins to make it 4-0.

The second team started very brightly against L.P.Y.M.A. and R.I. McAteer scored after ten

### JUNIOR RUGBY:

# TRANSFIELD REPLAY SHOULD BE EXCITING

By FULL BACK

IT WAS the consensus at the end of the drawn game that Thomond were very fortunate to still have an interest in the destination of the Transfield League Trophy.

Bruff deserved to win and win handsomely when the sides met at Thomond Park on Sunday last. However, that game is now part of history and begs the question, did Bruff miss the boat?

speedy and safe full-back, John O'Grady and Garry O'Malley in the centre with half-backs Maurice Nelligan and Seamus Fitzgibbon on par with the best in junior rugby.

But much will depend on the forwards. If Jed Moynihan and company can reproduce the form of last week then Bruff are in with every chance of success.

However, I believe Thomond will have learned much from the drawn game. Their