

# Peter Campbell recalls those happy Markets Field Sundays

By AIDAN CORR

ALL his life, Peter Campbell has been an avid soccer fan.

His keen interest in Limerick United saw him elected as chairman of the club during the turbulent years following their departure from the Markets Field and he still keeps a keen eye on the progress of the city's senior soccer side.

His memories of his younger days as a local soccer fan are many and here he recounts his weekly journeys to Mulgrave Street to support The Blues:

"On every second Sunday during the soccer season, Cyril O'Donnell of Sheep Street, Gerry Hogan and Tom Copues of O'Doherty's Terrace and myself would join the large band of supporters from the north side of the city as they made their way to the Markets Field.

"The route would take us up Mary Street, through the Irishtown and onto the famous stadium to enjoy the magical excitement of a League of Ireland football match.

"Entry to the game was a 'lift' over the stiles by a helpful adult paying supporter and we were immediately experiencing a different world.

"First on the agenda was a visit to Jim Leddin's kiosk shop at the far end of the stand side of the ground. Jim was always doing a brisk trade and had the task



Peter Campbell pictured with the montage of Limerick's senior soccer history which he has put together.

eager customers on match days.

"Sweets and lemonade were the order of the day for the underage fans with cigarettes also available for the adults. A second visit to Mr Leddin's shop was made at half time and this was a more difficult experience. Half the attendance

idea as us youngsters and we had to endure a fair bit of pushing and shoving before we got to the counter to select from his wide variety of drinks and goodies.

"It was a quick run than back to our vantage points on the stand or at the boundary wall of the greyhound track to watch our

names immediately come to mind such as Frankie Johnson, Dessie McNamara, Harry McCue, Donie Wallace and Seán 'the Geeser' O'Dwyer.

"As always we would look forward to visits from the league's great clubs such as Drumcondra, Transport, Evergreen United and Cork

Campbell.

"It all seemed so different on the Sunday's of the away matches. We could not wait to get the result on Radio Eireann's 'Soccer Survey' presented by Tony Sheehan which went on air at 6.30pm on a Sunday night, so we travelled up to O'Connell Street to the Limerick

joined the rest of the anxious supporters waiting for the result to appear on the front window of the newspaper office.

"Paddy Fitzgibbon, then the editor of the newspaper, was the man who would bring us the good or bad news of the away game. We would look through the window and watch him as he took the result over the telephone and we would try to make out if he looked happy or disappointed. He would then carefully write the result in large handwriting on a sheet of paper, move slowly towards the large plate glass window, tear off a piece of cellotape and as he placed the result on the window the crowd would surge forward almost in unison.

"My recollection is that, invariably, the result would show that Limerick had lost and there would be moans and comments like "they're usely, I'm not going up to see them any more." The same people would be the first in the gates of the Markets Field the following Sunday.

"Away defeats for Limerick, of course, were not always the case but those victories were outnumbered by the disappointments.

"Whether joyous or sad we left the Limerick Leader window to go back to our homes and look forward to the next home game at the Markets Field.

"It was our Old Trafford, Anfield or Parkhead. It was the venue that gave us so much happiness and so many great memories even 50 years later," said Peter