

# Linfield's tribute to Ewan Fenton

Former Limerick A.F.C. player-manager, Ewan Fenton is still held in high regard in Belfast, where he managed the famous Linfield club for a period in the late 'sixties.

On Limerick's recent visit to Windsor Park there was much disappointment that the Scot was not in the party. However, there was a fine tribute to Fenton in the official programme, which we hereunder reproduce. It was penned by Ivan Little.

"A Scottish-born driving school chief in Limerick can't lose no matter who wins today's Tyler Cup clash. For Ewan Fenton has a soft spot for Linfield as well as Limerick. And that's hardly surprising, because he managed both of them down the years.

"He held the reins at Limerick between 1960 and 1967 and between 1970 and 1977. And for the three years in between he was the man in charge at Linfield.

"Nowadays, however, the Dundee man who's won an F.A. Cup medal and guided Linfield and Limerick to Cup glory in their respective I.F.A. and I.A.I. Cup Finals has no connections with the game.

"He parted company with Limerick two years ago, after differences with management on the running of the Club. And although it has obviously left a bad taste, it's equally clear that he still cares passionately about the future of the Club in the town that's now his home.

"He still watches them whenever he can. And he takes more than a passing interest in the day to day affairs of the Club.

### BUSINESS

"But he won't be coming to Belfast today. Pressure of business will see to that. He's busy-ing himself totally nowadays in running the driving school that he maintained even with Linfield.

"Looking back at those three years in the North rekindles fond memories for him. "I wouldn't have left Linfield if it hadn't been for the 'Troubles," he told me. "I just didn't see any real future or any solution to the problems. And that was nearly ten years ago. But I'm glad I went there in 1967. I was very lucky to have a great set of players and a superb set-up. The



Ewan Fenton

amenities at Limerick just didn't compare.

"I was lucky to get the job in the first place. What happened was that Limerick had played C.S.K.A. of Sofia in the European Cup Winner's Cup the year before Linfield were drawn to meet them in the quarter finals of the European Cup.

"And I was asked to come up and give a bit of information about C.S.K.A. to the Club. I talked to the players at Windsor Park and at the end of that season Tommy Leishman left the manager's seat and Linfield offered me the job. Luckily my contract at Limerick had just ended.

"In his first season at Linfield, the Club won the Ulster Cup, Gold Cup, City Cup and Top Four competition and finished runners-up in the League, Irish Cup and the County Antrim Shield.

### HAPPY

"But, says Ewan, the supporters still weren't happy. "We'd missed out on the big ones, so it came as a great relief to win the League in the next season." They also won the Gold Cup and in the next term, lifted the Irish Cup by beating Ballymena United at Solitude.

"Cup finals of course were nothing new to him. Not only had he played in the famous Blackpool side that won the Stanley Matthews' final in 1953, but he'd also guided Limerick to the 1965 and 1966 F.A.I. Cup Finals, though they lost both to a then rampant Shamrock Rovers.

"In his first season back at Limerick however, he struck gold again, with his side beating

Drogheda in the final and qualifying for what were to be epic tussles in Europe against mighty Turin.

"But it was a Cup Final too that gave Ewan one of his worst days in soccer. That was the time when Linfield faced Crusaders in what was expected to be a walk-over 1968 Final at the Oval.

Things didn't quite go according to plan. "It was like a nightmare" recalled Ewan. "I can still see Ron Wood and Dessie Cathcart missing those two penalties. Can you imagine it - missing two penalties in a cup final. And we lost 2-0."

"Among his greatest memories of his spell at Windsor were the clashes with Glentoran.

"They were as good a side as we were. And the rivalry was red hot, with big crowds packing the grounds for our meetings. There were some truly memorable games."

### PEELED

"Even now, Ewan keeps his eyes peeled for Linfield's results in the press. And he also takes a keen interest in his "old boys" who are still active in the game.

"I see Alan Fraser's still going strong. I remember bringing him into the side as a teenager. People said I was crazy but Alan proved me right. I must confess too that I've been upset at the way things have gone for Eric Bowyer, with all those injuries."

"Down south too, Ewan's discovered a fair crop of talent too, notably Al Finucane, the one-time Eire international.

"And of the present Limerick side, he says: "They have a lot of potential. But their promise hasn't really been fulfilled."

"He picks out four players worthy of special attention... veteran goalkeeper Kevin Fitzpatrick who's been with the Club since 1959, captain Joe O'Mahoney who's an Eire international, full-back Pat Nolan and striker Gerard Duggan, both cross-channel transfer prospects.

"Even as a spectator, Ewan can't stop his managerial nose for talent twitching. He still takes in junior games regularly to run the rule over the up and coming players in Limerick. And while his links with the game don't extend past watching, he still harbours the hope that some day he'll go back to managing. "You can't turn your back on a lifetime's work" he says.

## City G.A.A.

### Board Fixtures

The City G.A.A. Board at their meeting last Monday night ratified fixtures as under:  
 Sunday, August 9 (12.15