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Club Review

VOLUME 38 - Issue 6, 2025

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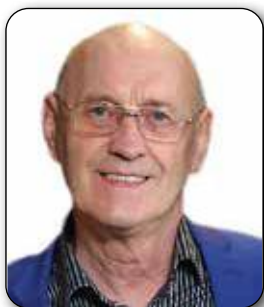
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Facing Challenges, Supporting Members



John Davidson BEM
Chairman, N.I.F.C.



Harry Beckinsale BEM
Secretary, N.I.F.C.

Dear colleagues,

The Federation recommenced the monthly Executive Committee meetings on Wednesday 10th September 2025.

Despite the recess, we remained active in assisting our members throughout the summer period, yet again proving the value and success of the Helplines service.

Unfortunately the hospitality sector continues to face the difficulties presented by increases in the cost of supplies, staff shortages and government legislation through increased Employers' National Insurance Contributions, the increased National Minimum Wage, all in addition to the numerous rumours of impending doom attached to the current government.

Even the once humble fish supper has been in focus on the news, with a cost of £14 being highlighted on a recent news bulletin! We remain of the view that something could be done to help the consumer. For instance, I was in a city centre venue recently and paid £7.90 for a glass of wine and £5 for a glass of Coke, prompting me to ask if there is really a need to charge this amount, even considering the cost of staff and other overheads. It's natural to frown at £5 being charged for a glass of cola when the consumer can see for themselves what a 2 litre bottle costs.

A couple of enquiries this past month were related to the number of Associated Members being permitted by a club. The legislation provides for three Associate Members for each Full Member. Therefore, if a club has one hundred Full Members, it is permitted to have three hundred Associated Members.

Thankfully the Federation's social media presence continues to grow through Facebook and the Federation website, where numerous downloads are available, such as a letter template for the constitution rule book, the Clubs Order and Accounts Regulations, a model rulebook, a constitution template and, of course, the Club Review archive, extending as far back as 2009.

So despite all the difficulties faced by our sector over recent years, not least of which was the COVID pandemic, we have successfully chartered a course through those difficulties.

Naturally, we desire to see the civil unrest highlighted in the media being resolved, but the difficulties highlighted can only be resolved by the government, whether it be at Stormont or Westminster. The

current immigration unrest is a local, national and international problem of unsustainable proportions. Calm amongst the population must prevail, but this will only happen if leaders do their job and lead from the front, providing reassurance that matters are under control.

In conclusion, we feel that the proposed ID Card is maybe a step too far as there are ample means of confirming a person's identity already in place: driving licence, senior citizens cards, National Insurance number, passport. Of course, it is also the case that the Inland Revenue seem to have no difficulty finding you, so what is the necessity for the ID Card!

John Davidson BEM - Chairman • Harry Beckinsale BEM - Secretary

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Minutes of the Executive Meeting

Hosted by the H&W Welders FSC, Belfast, Wednesday 10th September 2025

The meeting commenced with the Secretary reading the minutes of the August meeting, which were passed as a true record by Tommy McMinn and Joe Patterson.

An informative discussion followed on aspects of the gender issue arising from the recent Supreme Court ruling in London. The outcome remains somewhat challenging, though less so for private member clubs due to the control provided by the 1996 (amended 2022) Clubs Order. Members reaffirmed the importance of respecting everyone, which of course includes just what it says - everyone.

The wide-ranging nature of clubs means consideration must extend to sports people of all

ages and genders. The Equality Commission has still failed to provide clarity, a shortcoming also evident in its dealings with the Education Authority.

The Chairman expressed disappointment at the Commission's indecision, leaving matters in limbo. Until an official position is reached, the Federation Secretary has drafted wording for use in clubs to show understanding and consideration to visitors. While welcomed as considerate, members remain mindful of difficulties arising from the lack of guidance.

Further details were reported on Helpline calls to the Chairman and Secretary, including disciplinary issues

and membership levels. Committees were reminded that under legislation, a registered club may have three associate members per full member. Disciplinary cases must be heard by a committee, with appeals referred to a separate body whose members did not sit on the original hearing.

Private member clubs are semi-quasi judicial bodies with powers akin to HM Courts, provided their constitution complies with natural justice. This explains why the Federation produced its template rulebook and guidance.

It was noted the Chairman is sometimes contacted by

accountants and solicitors seeking advice on club law. While willing to assist, the recognised experts are Shean Dickson Merrick of Belfast for legislation, and Lawrence Shearer of O'Hara Shearer for accountancy, whose knowledge is widely acknowledged. Mr Shearer was instrumental in helping many clubs secure repayments through the LINNEWEBBER case originally taken by Deloitte for the Rank Organisation.

The meeting concluded with thanks to H&W Welders FSC for hosting the meeting and for their hospitality which followed.

Harry Beckinsale BEM
Secretary



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Flexible Working

Flexible working is no longer a luxury; it's becoming an expectation. Across GB, employees now have the right to request flexible working from their very first day of employment. Northern Ireland hasn't made this shift yet – here, staff must still complete 26 weeks of continuous service before they can make a formal request. But change is coming, and reforms to the Flexible Working Regulations (NI) 2015 are expected to align Northern Ireland with the rest of the UK.

For those in hospitality, where roles like bartending, kitchen preparation, or cleaning must be performed on-site, flexibility doesn't mean working from home. Instead, it means finding creative ways to make work patterns fairer, even in jobs where remote work is impossible.

Equality vs Fairness

Not all jobs can be done from a laptop at the kitchen table, but flexibility can still be achieved in other ways. For example, offering adjusted start and finish times can help parents with childcare commitments. Compressed hours or four-day weeks can support staff who want more predictable days off, while split shifts or job-sharing arrangements can create opportunities for those who need to balance work with other responsibilities. Even allowing staff to swap shifts with one another can make a huge difference.

The key is fairness. Not everyone will have access to the same kind of flexibility, but all staff should feel that the

options available to them are fair, considered, and consistent. That's how businesses create a culture of trust and value.

Managing Requests

The process for flexible working requests in Northern Ireland remains straightforward. Employees submit a formal request, which can be done via email, and employers are then required to meet with the employee to discuss the potential impact on the business and wider team. A decision must be provided to the employee in writing and they have the right to appeal.

While there is no obligation to agree to every request, any refusal must be based on legitimate business reasons, such as staffing challenges, cost implications, or a negative effect on service quality. Employers must be able to show they have given each request thoughtful consideration rather than dismissing it outright.

The Legal Landscape

At present, employees in Northern Ireland must have completed 26 weeks of service before they can formally request flexible working arrangements. Employers are under a duty to handle requests fairly, and a failure to do so could open the door to tribunal claims under Article 20 of the Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996. The anticipated reforms will change this framework, removing the service requirement and giving employees the right to request flexible working from day one of employment. Businesses that prepare for this change now will have a head start when the new rules come into effect.

Why It Matters

Hospitality is a sector known for its high staff turnover, but employers who take flexibility seriously have an opportunity to change that narrative. By being open to new working patterns, even in roles that must remain on-site, organisations can improve morale, retain skilled staff, and attract new talent. This can also reduce absenteeism and demonstrate a genuine commitment to employee wellbeing.

Moving Forward

Now is the perfect time for businesses to review how they approach flexibility. Start by assessing which roles could accommodate changes to working hours or shift structures. Put a clear and accessible policy in place so employees understand how to make requests and what they can expect in response. Training managers to handle these conversations consistently and transparently will further strengthen trust across the team.

Flexibility in hospitality isn't about letting everyone work from home; it's about balance, trust, and creativity. By making



Ronnie McCullough
Managing Director
Tel: 07835 255794



Nicola Curry,
HR Consultant



Alan Hall,
Health & Safety Specialist

fairness the guiding principle, businesses can build loyalty, resilience, and a positive reputation, whatever changes to the law lie ahead.

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Celebrating 60 Years of the Welders

A Night to Remember

On Friday 29th August 2025, the Harland & Wolff Welders Football and Social Club proudly marked its 60th anniversary with a special evening of celebration. The event was not only a chance to look back with pride on six decades of history, but also to honour the people, past and present, who have made the club what it is today.

From its beginnings in 1965, when it was formed by workers from the Harland & Wolff shipyard, the Welders quickly became a central part of the local community. Over the years, the club has grown in both sporting and social standing, providing not only

footballing opportunities but also a welcoming place where friendships are forged and community spirit thrives.

The anniversary evening was filled with memories and milestones, as members, supporters, and invited guests came together to reflect on achievements and share stories from across the decades. Speeches paid tribute to the visionaries who laid the foundations of the club and to the volunteers and committee members whose tireless efforts keep it strong.

Entertainment on the night was provided by Roy McNaught and Tony Jones

with a Kids in Need Charity Cabaret Show, which brought laughter, music, and a celebratory atmosphere to the occasion. Their contribution also underlined the event's wider purpose, as funds raised from the evening were donated to two deserving charities - Beyond the Battlefield and Cancer Focus.

The 60th anniversary evening was a fitting tribute to a club



A packed Welders celebrated their 60th anniversary in style, with a full house in their Dee Street clubrooms.

that means so much to so many. With proud traditions and strong community values at its core, the Harland & Wolff Welders Football and Social Club can look forward to the future with confidence and optimism.



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RAOB HQ Club Gives Back to Local Hospitals



Roy McNaught (right) with his family and friends at a cheque presentation of funds raised for two excellent causes by the RAOB HQ Club.

The RAOB HQ Club has once again demonstrated its commitment to supporting local healthcare, making generous donations to two vital hospital units. The club presented £2,000 to the Liver Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) and a further £2,000 to Ward 2A at the Mater Hospital.

These contributions will go directly towards enhancing patient care, supporting staff, and providing much-needed equipment for the respective wards. The Liver Unit at RVH and Ward 2A at the Mater play a crucial role in the treatment and recovery of countless patients every year, and the donations from RAOB HQ's Club are set to make a meaningful difference.

Commenting on the donations, a spokesperson for the club said, "We are proud to support the hospitals that do so much for our community. These donations are a small way of saying thank you to the dedicated staff and making a tangible impact for patients."

BETS Club Presentation



The BETS Club Committee were delighted to present a cheque for £1,300 to Alex Easton MLA, following his successful climb to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

The funds were generously raised by BETS members during a special fundraising day, which featured the popular 'BETS Has Got Talent' event on Sunday 27th July. In total, Alex raised an impressive £31,000 for his two chosen charities, U-HUB and Bangor Foodbank. Paul McKee (Hon. Sec.)

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Modern Payments Make Club Life Easier

Clubs across the country are finding that modern payment solutions can make day-to-day operations simpler and more efficient. Wendy McCartan from Tullylish GAC in Craigavon shared her experience with implementing a new payment terminal for the club.

She explained that signing up for the service was really straightforward and that she received excellent support from both Kieran McIlwaine, Senior Area Business Manager, and the engineer, Stephen, ensuring the terminal was fully operational in no time at all.

“Kieran clearly explained the low cost of the terminal and how it works, with funds settling the next day and no additional fees,” Wendy

said. “It has made managing payments so much simpler for the club.”

Since installing the second terminal, Wendy has noticed that younger members are using their watches and phones to pay more readily. “This has reduced the number of trips needed for cash lodgements and has actually contributed to an increase in turnover,” she added.

Wendy concluded by recommending the service to other clubs: “The whole process has been smooth, and the support from BOIPA UK has been excellent. I would definitely recommend them to any club looking to make payments easier for both members and staff.”



Wendy McCartan from Tullylish GAC.

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Comber Rec Celebrate their 75th Anniversary

A heartfelt thank you is extended to everyone who joined Comber Rec FC in August at the La Mon Hotel to celebrate the club's 75th Anniversary.

From the warm drinks reception to the inspiring words of the guest speakers, Joel Taggart and David Jeffrey MBE, along with a fantastic raffle and superb live music – the evening was filled with friendship, laughter, and celebration.

Here's to 75 years of Comber Rec, and to many more successful years ahead!



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Q. Is there a retirement age in the UK?

A. No, there is no fixed retirement age in the UK. Employees can usually choose when they want to stop working. The law no longer allows employers to force someone to retire just because of their age, except in very limited circumstances where a compulsory retirement age can be objectively justified (for example, in certain safety-critical jobs).

However, while there is no set retirement age, the State Pension age still applies. This is the age at which you can start claiming your State Pension, and it depends on your date of birth. At present, it is 66, but it will gradually rise to 67 between 2026 and 2028, and is scheduled to reach 68 in the future.

In short: you can keep working for as long as you want, but your eligibility for the State Pension depends on your age.

Q. Do casual or irregular employees get paid holiday?

A. Yes. All workers in the UK, including those on casual, zero-hours, or irregular contracts, are legally entitled to paid holiday. The statutory minimum is 5.6 weeks per year (28 days for someone working a 5-day week). For irregular hours, this entitlement is calculated based on the hours actually worked.

Q. How is holiday entitlement worked out for irregular hours?

A. Since 1st January 2024, holiday entitlement for irregular hours and part-year workers is calculated as 12.07% of hours worked. For example, if someone works 30 hours in a month, they accrue: $30 \times 12.07\% = 3.62$ hours' holiday.

Q. Can employers use rolled-up holiday pay?

A. Yes, from 2024 employers can lawfully include holiday pay in each payslip for irregular/casual workers, provided it is shown clearly as a separate payment. This makes it easier to manage fluctuating hours.

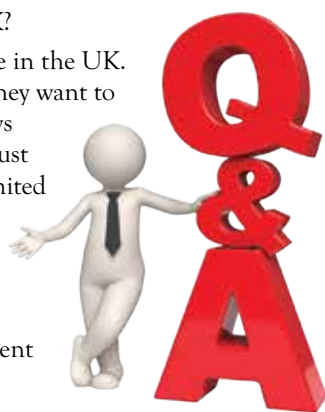
Q. What is pension Automatic Enrolment for employees?

A. Pension Automatic Enrolment is a government scheme designed to help more people save for retirement. It requires employers to put eligible staff into a workplace pension and make contributions. Employees will normally be enrolled automatically if they work in the UK, are aged between 22 and State Pension age, and earn at least £10,000 a year.

Under the rules, a minimum of 8% of an employee's qualifying earnings must go into the pension, with at least 3% paid by the employer and the rest (5%) coming from the employee. Employers can choose to pay more, which reduces how much the employee needs to contribute.

If an employee does not meet the eligibility criteria, for example, they are under 22, over State Pension age, or earn less than £10,000, then they will not be automatically enrolled but can still ask to join the pension scheme. If they earn at least £6,240 a year, the employer must also contribute.

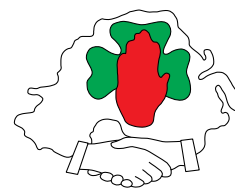
Employees can opt out of Automatic Enrolment, but if they do, they will lose both the employee contribution and the employer contribution. Employers must re-enrol eligible staff every three years, although they can choose to opt out again if they wish.



Q. What are our legal obligations regarding health and safety?

A. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Clubs must take reasonably practicable steps to ensure the safety of staff, members, volunteers, and visitors. This includes carrying out risk assessments for general hazards and specifically for fire safety.

If you have any questions you need answered for your club, then please send them to us at: info@nifederationofclubs.com



MPLC Update

Our colleagues on mainland GB, the ACC, have held constructive dialogue with MPLC, and in conjunction with MPLC are pleased to provide revised guidance, which **applies to all clubs across the UK**.

The revised advice and wording below has been formally agreed with MPLC, so any discussions with representatives or agents of MPLC should mirror the information provided.

If any club has any questions regarding MPLC please call us on the Helplines.

We can confirm that MPLC is a legitimate organisation but that clubs only need to obtain a licence from them under specific circumstances.

Crucially, clubs do not tend to need an MPLC licence to show content such as sports, music channels or Sky News. Therefore, for most clubs the only licence that is required is a television licence. In the Federation's experience it is rare that a club would need to obtain an MPLC licence as most clubs do not screen films or drama series. That said, clubs showing live sport or news on channels which also show other unrelated and possibly licensable content should ensure that only the intended sports event or rolling news content is shown. The simplest way to achieve this is to ensure the television used is immediately turned off after the sports or news content has ended. Clubs showing news or sports on dedicated rolling news or sports channels (such as BBC News 24 or Sky Sports) can leave such channels on for as long as they wish.

MPLC itself represents rights holders such as film studios and television production companies which produce content such as dramas or comedies. If a club showed any of this content then an MPLC licence may need to be obtained.

However, clubs which only show channels such as Sky Sports, BT Sports, Sky News, sports shown on free-to-view channels, such as BBC One or Channel 4, or a music channel are unlikely to be required to obtain an MPLC licence.

Examples of programmes that do and do not require a licence are below:

Six Nations - No licence

Match of the Day - No licence

Sky News - No licence

World Cup - No licence

Sky Sports - No licence

Eastenders - MPLC Licence

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Sky Sports' biggest ever season of live football continues, with action from the Premier League, Scottish Championship, Carabao Cup, EFL football leagues, the Women's Super League and the Bundesliga. Just some of the big games coming up include the Premier League derby between Manchester City v Manchester United, plus top-flight clashes such as Arsenal versus Manchester City, Newcastle versus Arsenal, and Chelsea versus Liverpool.



Picture courtesy of Getty Images

Golf fans won't want to miss a second of the Ryder Cup in Farmingdale, New York, where Europe and Team USA go head-to-head. Europe are the defending champions after winning in Italy in 2023.

The Formula 1 drivers head to Azerbaijan in September, before the Singapore Grand Prix at the start of October. Can anyone catch McLaren pair Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris?

There's action from the oche in October as darts' finest contest the World Grand Prix. This unique doubles-in tournament always throws up some shocking

results. Mike De Decker is the defending champion after he beat 2023 winner Luke Humphries 6-4 in last year's final.

And there's lots more. After the Vitality Blast Finals Day, England's cricketers wrap up their series against South Africa, and then the spotlight falls on the women's team, who are in action at the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup. There are more live NFL games than ever before, plus Super League rugby, the Rugby Championship, golf, tennis and much more.



September & October Highlights

- Sunday 21st Sept.Sunderland v Aston Villa - 2.00pm (PL)
Bournemouth v Newcastle - 2.00pm (PL)
Arsenal v Manchester City - 4.30pm (PL)
Formula 1 - Azerbaijan Grand Prix
- Tuesday 23rd Sept.....Liverpool v Southampton - 8.00pm (Carabao Cup)
- Friday 26th Sept. Ryder Cup golf
- Saturday 27th Sept. Nottingham Forest v Sunderland - 5.30pm (PL)
Spurs v Wolves - 8.00pm (PL)
Ryder Cup golf
- Sunday 28th Sept. Newcastle v Arsenal - 4.30pm (PL)
Livingston v Rangers - 3.00pm (SPL)
Ryder Cup golf
- Friday 3rd Oct.Bournemouth v Fulham - 8.00pm (PL)
- Saturday 4th Oct.Chelsea v Liverpool - 5.30pm (PL)
Australia v New Zealand - 10.55am (Rugby Championship)
Argentina v South Africa - 2.00pm (Rugby Championship)
- Sunday 5th Oct. Newcastle v Nottingham Forest - 2.00pm (PL)
Everton v Crystal Palace - 2.00pm (PL)
Falkirk v Rangers - 3.00pm (SPL)
Brentford v Manchester City - 4.30pm (PL)
Formula 1 - Singapore Grand Prix
- Monday 6th Oct. Darts - World Grand Prix begins
- Sunday 12th Oct. Darts: World Grand Prix (final)

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SCAN TO VIEW



DRINKS INC.

Heverlee Launches Autumn Music Promotion Across On and Off-trade

Heverlee Premium Pilsner lager is giving consumers the chance to win hundreds of pounds in music vouchers by engaging with the brand in store and in outlet, starting this autumn.

In the off-trade, consumers will be able to win £250 Ticketmaster vouchers every month by picking up a promotional 4x440ml or 10x440ml pack in-store and completing the scan-to-win mechanic.

The promotion runs 1st September 2025, to 31st January 2026 and will be supported by extensive in-store visibility and feature space, targeted digital and social media advertising and retail media.

In the on-trade, consumers will be able to win a £500 music voucher every week, by scanning Heverlee POS in outlet. The on-trade promotion runs from 1st September to 27th October 2025 and will be supported with in-outlet visibility including scan-to-win drip mats, table talkers and menu inserts, plus targeted digital and social media advertising around the 450+ participating venues across



Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Eimear Casey, Heverlee brand manager said, "Heverlee has long-held, strong associations with music through activations and sponsorships at music events throughout the UK. This year we are putting the choice in the hands of the consumer, with a music promotion running across channels.

"We are excited to work with our partners to bring this promotion to life, with the dual-channel approach cementing Heverlee's position in music, while helping to drive rate of sale in outlet."

There's a very famous Danish beer company (*you know the one*) - They don't do business energy brokers, but if they did...



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What benefit is there to using a broker?

Expert Knowledge: We understand and monitor the commercial energy market which means we keep a close eye on gas and electricity prices, helping you make informed energy decisions for your business.

Impartial Advice: We operate independently of all energy suppliers, providing an unbiased, transparent service.

Competitive Pricing: By representing multiple accounts each month, we drive suppliers to compete for your business, resulting in margins being lowered and better pricing.

Testimonials

The Royal Naval Association, Belfast, began a great partnership with MJ Utilities in 2017. We can recommend their highly professional services in the complicated negotiating of business gas and electricity contracts.

Royal Naval Association Club, Belfast

I would certainly recommend MJ Utilities. We found Mark to be professional and very helpful. We had never contemplated an energy broker previously. However, we will most certainly use their services again. With their help our club will now benefit from significant savings on both our electricity and gas bills.

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Birra Moretti Brings a Taste of the Italian Summer to Belfast

BELLISSIMO! VIPS and guests from the licensed trade across Northern Ireland were recently treated to a taste of the Italian summer at Waterman House restaurant and cookery school in Belfast, courtesy of leading beer brand Birra Moretti.

Hosted by Craigavon-based drinks distributor, United Wines, guests enjoyed an exclusive pizza-making experience, washing their culinary creations down with a refreshing Birra Moretti, the UK’s best-selling draught lager, or the sea salt-infused Sale di Mare, the newest member of the Birra Moretti ‘famiglia’ which was launched in NI last year.



Getting into the Italian spirit on the night were Clare McCann, Cookery School Manager at Waterman House, and United Wines Brand Manager David Greenlees.

Thatchers Katy Wins Gold at Cider World Awards

Thatchers Cider has secured four medals at the prestigious Cider World Awards 2025, with its single-variety Thatchers Katy taking Gold. Judges described the cider as “perfect,” praising it as “fresh, aromatic, easy drinking” and “technically perfect.” Scoring 119 points, Katy was ranked among the best ciders in the world.

Modelled on leading international wine competitions, the Cider World Awards combine laboratory analysis by Geisenheim University of Applied Sciences in Germany with blind tastings from an expert panel.



Martin Thatcher, fourth-generation cider maker, said, “An award like this is the pride of cider makers around the world, and we are thrilled to have brought home not just one, but four medals this year. This was

one of the toughest competitions yet, with some outstanding entries, which makes these medals even more meaningful.” In addition to Katy’s Gold, Thatchers earned further

recognition for its Cider Barn range, with Thatchers Heritage awarded Gold and Thatchers Oak-aged Redstreak taking Silver. A dual variety blend of Porters Perfection & Vilberie also achieved Gold.

Meet Our **NEW** Star Glass



Gerry Armstrong

A Northern Irish Footballing Hero

For many of us, football memories are measured not just in goals and games, but in moments - those rare, unforgettable flashes that lift a nation and stir the soul. One such moment came on a hot June evening in 1982, when a Belfast man with a fierce will and a heart full of pride scored the goal that stunned the footballing world. That man was Gerry Armstrong, and his name remains a byword for courage, commitment, and in many minds, Northern Ireland's finest sporting hour.

Born in Belfast in 1954, Armstrong didn't take the traditional route into the professional game. In fact, he only switched from Gaelic football to soccer as a teenager - a change prompted by a suspension from his GAA club. Before signing with Tottenham Hotspur in 1975, he worked in local government and trained as an architectural technician. By the time he made his first-team debut for Spurs at 22, he had already demonstrated the perseverance that would mark his entire career.

A Career of Determined Progress

Gerry Armstrong's playing career took him from Belfast to London, from Watford to Spain, and eventually back again - but wherever he went, he brought the same trademark tenacity and work ethic. After leaving Spurs, he joined Watford, where he played a pivotal role in their promotion to the top tier of English football. Then came a spell in Spain with RCD Mallorca - rare for a British player at the time - and later stints with Brighton,



Gerry Armstrong drills the ball past Spanish keeper, Arconada, to set up the biggest shock of the 1982 World Cup finals.

West Bromwich Albion and Chesterfield, among others.

But it was in the green shirt of Northern Ireland that Armstrong achieved true legend status.

Valencia, 1982: A Nation Rejoices

Northern Ireland's qualification for the 1982 FIFA World Cup was itself a proud achievement. But what happened in Valencia on 25th June that year lives on in the hearts of football fans everywhere. Facing tournament hosts Spain in their own backyard, Northern Ireland needed a win to progress. In the 47th minute, Armstrong pounced on a defensive error, drove the ball into the net, and sent the nation into raptures.

The final whistle confirmed a 1-0 victory - one of the greatest results in World Cup history - and Gerry Armstrong, arms raised in triumph, became the face of that triumph. His goal wasn't just about football; it was about belief, resilience, and putting Northern Ireland proudly on the world stage.

Federation Secretary, Harry Beckinsale, commented, "I recall exactly where I was when Gerry scored that winning goal. I was with my band, American Express, in Cheltenham Catholic Hall which hosted a Country and Irish Club run by the late Maureen Molloy. We were playing on the bill with a band called, Pinkerton's Colours, and it was our time to go on stage only for the priest to come over to tell us, 'Go and watch the game lads'. It was one of those times that locks into your memory!"

Service On and Off the Pitch

Over the course of his international career, Armstrong earned 63 caps and scored 12 goals for Northern Ireland. After retiring as a player, he continued to serve the game he loved. He managed at non-league level, and twice returned as assistant manager for the Northern Ireland senior team. Later, he became a familiar voice in our living rooms as a football pundit and commentator, particularly known for his coverage of Spanish football.

Gerry's deep knowledge of the game, coupled with his natural

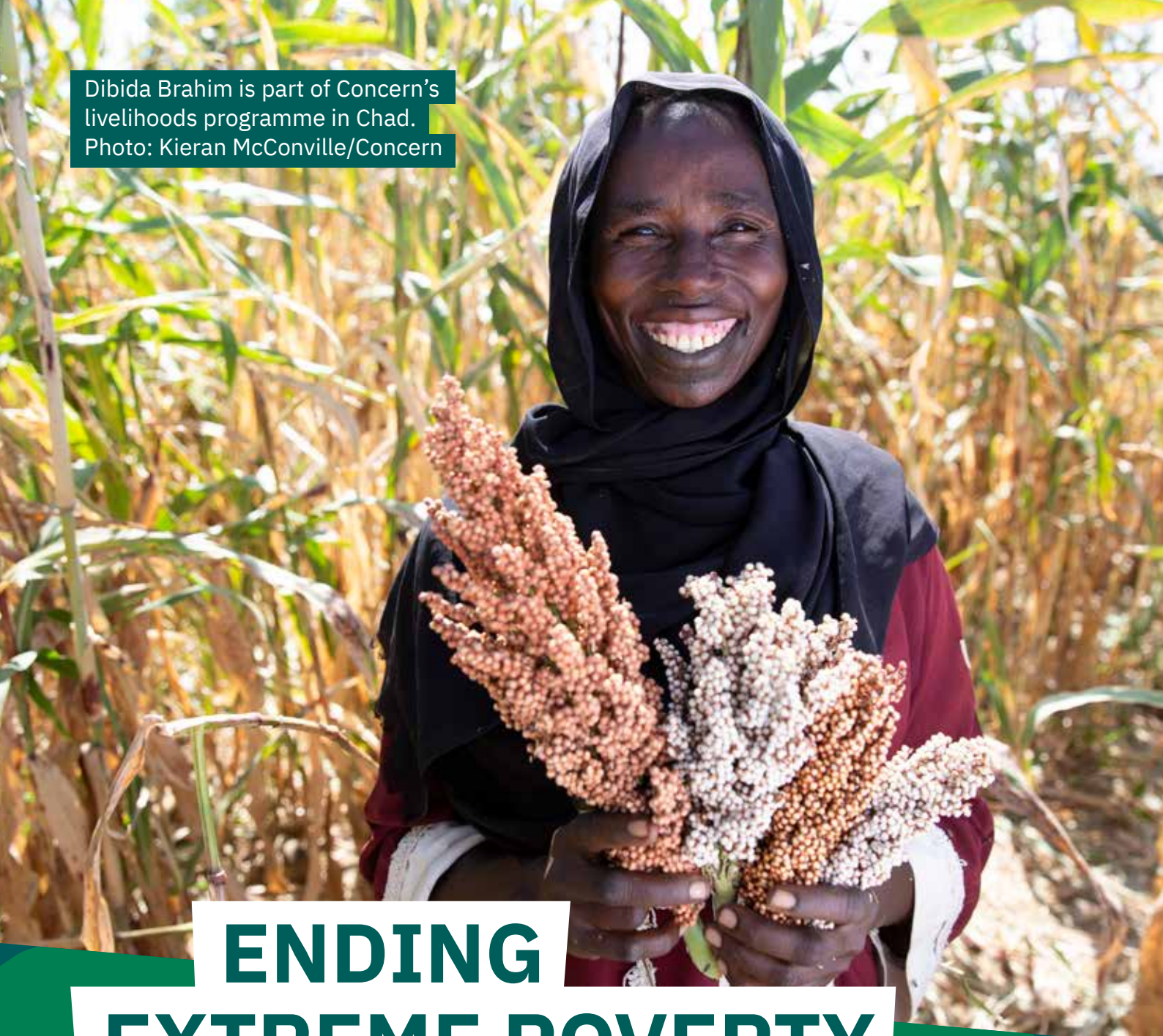
warmth and wit, made him a favourite with viewers across the UK and Ireland. Even today, through broadcasting and public appearances, he remains an ambassador for Northern Irish football - not in an official capacity, perhaps, but in the truest sense of the word.

A Legacy of Heart and Honour

For many club members reading this, the memory of that 1982 goal will still raise a smile - not just for what it meant in footballing terms, but for what it said about who we are as a people: spirited, humble, and capable of rising to the moment. Gerry Armstrong exemplified those values then and continues to represent them today.

He may not have had the flashiest boots or the most graceful style, but he played with heart, head, and no small amount of grit. And for that, he will always be remembered - not just as a footballer, but as a true Northern Irish sporting hero.

Dibida Brahim is part of Concern's livelihoods programme in Chad.
Photo: Kieran McConville/Concern



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NI Football Writers' Association Awards

Glentoran boss Declan Devine is the NIFWA Manager of the Month for August.

The Glens have made an excellent start to the new season, winning four and drawing one of their first five matches. Those four wins came without conceding a goal as they saw off Portadown, Bangor, Glenavon and Crusaders, before a 1-1 draw at home to Carrick to round off the month.

"I just think the commitment and effort of the players has really pleased me. They've been really positive going into the opening stages of the season," Devine beamed. "I'm only winning this award as a reflection of the players and the backroom staff, for their appetite to get better and the work that they put in during the pre-season."

Declan concluded, "You go to tough away venues like Portadown, so it's pleasing to get favourable results. All in all, I'm really happy, but there are bigger tests ahead and we get ready for them now."

August's Championship Player of the Month is **Brian Healy** of **H&W Welders**. The 21-year-old striker hit five goals in three games during the month in wins over Armagh City, Newington and Queen's University as the Welders won three out of four to begin the league campaign.

"I've settled in well. It's a great bunch of lads and staff. They've welcomed me and I'm enjoying my football," said the former Newry City man.

"The manager is brilliant and he has been great with me. It's



Glentoran Manager, Declan Devine, receiving the first Manager of the Month Award of the new season from NIFWA Chair, Michael Clarke.

an ambitious club that wants to win every game and the League title. I am there to score goals which I am doing. This year is the best time to go up as next year it will be harder with the 16 teams involved" concluded Healy.

Faye Loughran has scored a unique first in winning the Sports Direct Northern Ireland Football Writers' Association Women's Player of the Month for July. Two significant performances against the same team helped Northern Ireland under-19 international Loughran earn the prize.

First she scored two goals in an impressive all-round display for Lisburn Rangers against Cliftonville Ladies when the Irish Cup holders were given a real scare in a repeat of last season's final. Just seven days



NIFWA Chair, Michael Clarke, presents H&W Welders Striker Brian Healy with the Championship Player of the Month Award for August after hitting 5 goals in three games.



Faye Loughran is the well deserved recipient of the Women's Player of the Month Award for July.

later Loughran found herself facing the Reds again on her debut for Glentoran Women, slotting in seamlessly as she earned Player of the Match honours despite being on the losing side again.

That has earned Loughran a place in history as the first Women's Player of the Month to win the award having played for two clubs during the month following her mid-season move.



THE BOGG RUN

2025

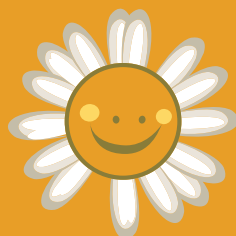
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