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Review Club

VOLUME 36 - Issue 6, 2023

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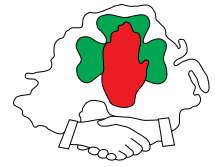
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Autumn updates and member initiatives: Building a stronger Federation



John Davidson, Chairman,
N.I. Federation of Clubs



Harry Beckinsale, Secretary,
N.I. Federation of Clubs

With Autumn rapidly approaching, we are deeply grateful for the continuous upward trend in Federation membership. Now that the amended legislation has been successfully implemented, our primary focus is on supporting our members wherever and whenever needed to address any queries related to the recent changes.

In this issue (page 5), our Federation solicitor, Maura McKay of Shean Dickson Merrick, has provided an informative editorial on the extended hours now available. This piece should prove invaluable in helping our members navigate the means by which this change can be effectively utilised.

In recent weeks, we have received numerous queries via email and our Helplines concerning employment legislation. With escalating costs and the looming colder weather, energy expenses are regarded with uncertainty. Club management committees are naturally exploring avenues to reduce costs, such as staff numbers and working hours, all while striving to remain

cost-efficient and, at the same time, safeguard jobs.

We are absolutely thrilled by the number of our member clubs that are actively involved in running charitable events in support of local charities and worthy causes. This remarkable tradition continues to uphold our historic association, as recognised by NICVA on multiple occasions. In fact you can read about the efforts of Greenisland Workingmen's Club further on, who helped in the fundraising efforts for Antrim Area Hospital, just one example of so many activities held throughout the year.

The voluntary code of practice regarding the availability of alcohol, as mentioned in the previous issue of Club Review, remains of paramount importance. While the registered club sector may not be legally bound by the legislation concerning promotions and related matters, we nevertheless strongly advise the adherence to good practices at all times.

On a personal note, and in my capacity as Secretary, I am

pleased to report that both our Chairman, John Davidson, and his wife, Carol, are steadily improving day by day following their recent illnesses. Throughout this challenging period, John has remained in contact to offer his guidance whenever required.

As we look ahead to the coming season, we are confident that our Federation will continue to thrive, with the unwavering support of our dedicated members. We remain committed to serving your needs and ensuring a prosperous future for all.

Furthermore, we encourage all members to actively engage

with their local communities and continue the tradition of giving back. Let us continue to strengthen our bonds with charitable organisations and good causes, not only as a testament to our rich history but also as a reflection of our commitment to making a positive impact in the world around us.

Together, we'll weather challenges that come our way and emerge stronger, united, and more resilient than ever before.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and here's to a successful and fruitful autumn season for all our member clubs.

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Do you need to complete a Self Assessment tax return this year?

If someone has had a change in circumstances, then they might need to complete their first ever Self Assessment tax return for the 2022 to 2023 tax year, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is reminding people.

Taxpayers can use the quick and easy free online checking tool on GOV.UK and register with HMRC by 5th October if they do need to self assess. Taxpayers can also use it if they think they may not need to complete one this year too.

Taxpayers may need to complete a tax return if they:

- are newly self-employed and have earned more than

£1,000 or have multiple sources of income

- have received any untaxed income, eg. earned money for creating online content
- earn more than £100,000 a year
- earn income from property that they own and rent out
- are a new partner in a business partnership
- are claiming Child Benefit and they or their partner have an income above £50,000
- receive interest from banks and building societies (more than £10,000)
- receive dividends in excess of £10,000
- need to pay Capital Gains Tax
- are self-employed and earn less than £1,000 but wish to

pay Class 2 NICs voluntarily to protect their entitlement to State Pension and certain benefits

The online checking tool can also be used by those who may no longer need to do Self Assessment, including if they:

- gave up work or retired
- are no longer self-employed
- earn below the minimum income thresholds

If taxpayers no longer think they need to complete a Self Assessment tax return for the 2022 to 2023 tax year, they should tell HMRC before the deadline on 31st January 2024 to avoid any penalties.

Taxpayers can register for Self Assessment on GOV.UK. Once registered, they will receive their Unique Taxpayer Reference, which they will need when completing their tax return.

HMRC has a wide range of resources to help taxpayers file a tax return including a series of video tutorials on YouTube and a new step-by-step guide for anyone that is filing for the first time.

Taxpayers need to be aware of the risk of falling victim to scams and should never share their HMRC login details with anyone, including a tax agent, if they have one. HMRC scams advice is available on GOV.UK.

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Permitted hours and drinking up times

In Northern Ireland, the vibrant culture of registered clubs plays a significant role in community life.

These establishments provide a welcoming space for members and their guests to socialise and enjoy a variety of amenities. Central to the club experience is the responsible consumption of alcohol, a cornerstone of ensuring a safe and enjoyable atmosphere for all.

The information below aims to shed light on the essential regulations governing the permitted hours and drinking up time within registered clubs in Northern Ireland. Understanding these rules is crucial for both club operators and patrons to maintain the integrity of these cherished social spaces.

1. The permitted hours for the supply of alcohol in a registered Club in Northern Ireland to members and their guests are as follows:-
 - (a) on week-days, other than Christmas Day, from half past 11 in the morning to 11 in the evening; and
 - (b) on Sundays other than Christmas Day, from half past 12 in the afternoon to 11 in the evening; and
 - (c) on Christmas Day from half past 12 in the afternoon to 10 in the evening.
2. A Club can apply to the local Police to extend the permitted hours until 1.00am on 104 special occasions per annum.
3. Regardless of whether the permitted hours are regular

hours until 11.00pm or extended hours until 1.00am, members and their guests have a period of 60 minutes in which to consume any alcohol that has been supplied during the permitted hours. The Club must cease selling alcohol during this time but members and their guests can continue to consume alcohol on the Club premises for a further hour.

For those seeking further information on the legal aspects of registered clubs, Sean Dickson Merrick Solicitors, advisors to the NI Federation of Clubs, are available as a valuable resource.

You can contact them at 028 9032 6878 or via email at law@sdmsolicitors.com to address any legal inquiries related to club operations and regulations.

In conclusion, understanding and adhering to the regulations governing permitted hours and drinking up time in registered clubs in Northern Ireland is fundamental to maintaining a harmonious and responsible club environment.

By striking this balance between tradition and responsibility, we can



continue to enjoy the unique and cherished experience that clubs offer, while ensuring the

safety and well-being of all patrons.

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'Go Digital' with P&F and increase your income

I'm sure your club, like most, has seen a drastic reduction in its gaming income over the last few years for many different reasons. Honestly, poker and reel-based fruit machines have taken a bit of a nosedive; they have lost player appeal and, therefore, are decreasing the cashbox income that so many clubs need to survive.

Reel-based gaming machines are now, for many, a thing of the past. Digital gaming is the way forward and is significantly increasing income in clubs across Northern Ireland.

In December 2022, P&F made the decision that we wanted to move with the times and the gaming business elsewhere in the U.K. So, we started to introduce digital equipment to the general

hospitality sector. Since the introduction, we haven't looked back, and clubs have been over the moon with the results they are now getting.

The top-ranking digital gaming manufacturers in the U.K. gaming charts are Blueprint and Innov8, who have held this position for many months because of their equipment and regular game updates.

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As a NI Federation of Clubs Approved Supplier, P&F is

offering members a **free trial period** on some of these terminals to let you see the difference. We will even float the machine on installation, and your club will **receive all the profits** made during that time, after which we can have a no-obligation chat.

Alternatively, feel free to arrange a visit to our showroom to view all the latest digital equipment, as well as jukeboxes, poker machines and pool tables, etc.

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Energy costs and your club finances

“BONKERS”...

...is probably the best way to summarise the energy market over the past couple of years. We have seen unprecedented global events which in turn led to unprecedented and often unsustainable gas and electricity prices for many businesses.

The good news is that things have settled down over recent months and wholesale gas prices are as low as they've been in a couple of years, which means if you are entered into a contract or not, it's a great time to have a review of your club's electricity and gas tariffs.

Changes To Pass-Through Charges

(effective from the 1st October)

Electricity prices include 'pass-through' costs which arise from charges for use of transmission and distribution electricity networks and wholesale market operations charges etc. These charges are reviewed and approved by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation each year and are applied equally to all suppliers.

During the period of a contract, the suppliers' energy

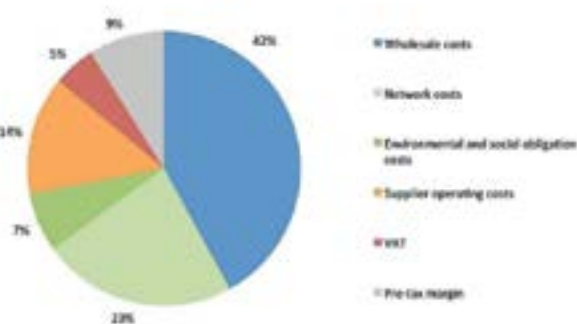


prices may remain fixed, however the pass-through charges may vary if changes or additions are approved. Changes in these charges normally come into effect on the 1st October each year.

Over the past couple of years, there has been little change to these charges, largely due to Covid (less demand), although this wasn't highlighted or discussed much, I feel, due to incredibly high energy prices. This year, however, it's 'reset' time and we will see a much larger increase than the normal.

If you have any questions about these forthcoming changes, or you would like a review of your electricity and/or gas, please get in touch with MJ Utilities today.

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Racking up support: Greenisland Colts pocket funds for Antrim Respiratory Ward!

Last year, the charity chosen to be supported by the Carrick & District Pool League and Greenisland Colts Pool Team was the Antrim Hospital Respiratory Fund, dedicated to the memory of Isabel Grainger.

The Greenisland Colt's pool team spearheaded the fundraising efforts, with the generous support of the Greenisland Working Men's Social Club, the Carrick & District Pool League, as well as family and friends. Together, they raised an impressive £2,040.00 for this incredibly meaningful cause.

This charity holds a special place in the heart of Greenisland Colts pool team Captain Harry Warwick. The dedicated staff of Antrim Hospital's A1 Respiratory Ward went above and beyond their call of duty in caring for Harry's partner Isabel during her illness, providing invaluable support to Harry and his family during an incredibly challenging time.

Harry said, "The Antrim Respiratory Ward's remarkable service often goes unnoticed, and we believe they deserve more recognition for their vital work. It was an honour and a joy for us to present them with a cheque representing the fantastic total raised in support of their work."



Greenisland Colts Captain, Harry Warwick, presents a cheque to the hard-working staff at the Antrim Respiratory Ward.



Above: The Greenisland Colts pool team.

Right: Greenisland Working Men's Social Club Committee Members, Colin Beckinsale and Lisa Morris, with Carrick & District Pool League Committee Member, Darren Whiteside, and Greenisland Colts Captain, Harry Warwick.



Q. The club's president has taken it upon himself to authorise expenditure which has not been agreed by the committee. Is he able to do this without a vote taking place at a committee meeting?

A. Unless previously agreed, the club president does not have the power to authorise club expenditure. The club's rules clearly state that all decisions must, and can only, be made by the committee. The committee could delegate responsibility to a particular

person (such as to the steward in order to purchase products or authorise the treasurer to simply pay routine bills), but unless this has happened then the committee would have to approve any expenditure which takes place.

Any expenditure which has been undertaken without the authority of the committee is, strictly speaking, not applicable to the club and would have to be funded by the individual who gave consent.

I suggest that you remind the president that he must abide by committee decisions and cannot take decisions in isolation from the committee. The president is permitted one vote in committee meetings. The president therefore has no additional powers of decision making unless the committee has previously delegated such responsibility to the president.

Q. Our club runs a free membership draw every Saturday night for a prize of £10. To win, the member must be in the club. If they are not, the draw gets carried over until the following Saturday whereby a further £10 is added. This has on occasion accumulated to hundreds of pounds. Is this legal?

A. I can confirm that there is nothing wrong with a draw of this nature.

As a private members' club you are entitled to run free lotteries of this type as often as you wish. As this is a free draw, it does not encounter the usual problem with snowball prizes in that they may break the 'equal chance' gaming rule. This 'equal chance' gaming rule is concerned with persons who may have contributed to the earlier games but may have no chance of winning the

subsequent games. As, in this case, the whole membership list is used every time and no member has risked any money, then this rule is not breached as all members have an equal chance of winning.

The fact that a member may not be present in the club when the draw is called does not affect the fairness of the draw. The conditions of the draw make it clear that the person must be present to win a prize, and if these conditions are not fulfilled, then they forfeit the prize and it is carried over to the next week.

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

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Ballyclare's Dixon Park - focused on the creation of a 'community hub'



South Antrim club Ballyclare Comrades, has secured funding for a new artificial pitch at Dixon Park. It is understood the project will be financed by funding from the Irish Football Association/ Department for Culture, Media and Sport Grassroots Facility Fund, and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, with the remainder coming via a loan secured by the club.

Federation Secretary, Harry Beckinsale, commented, "As a former Comrades committee member, I am delighted at this news which will add to the upward path the club has been on.

"The development of children playing football, both boys and girls, is a growing trend and is a valuable and essential part of community life in the modern game, and I am so pleased that this famous and long established club is playing such an important role in this trend.

Harry continued, "With a senior men's team, U21s and U18s, added to by a boys' and girls' academy, the future is bright."

In conjunction with Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Ballyclare Comrades worked with consultants, Third Sector Connect, to analyse the needs and develop a complete business plan.

Ballyclare Comrades currently field one men's senior side in the NIFL Championship, one U18 men's team and one U21 men's side, 14 boys' academy teams from age 6-16, caters for players aged 5-6 in the junior development centre, two senior women's teams (firsts and reserves) and 22 teams for girls aged 6-16.

Across the club there are over 500 players and almost 100 volunteer coaches and administrators.

With so many players linked to the club, the use of a grass pitch at Dixon Park has thrown up a number of challenges so this new facility will be a fantastic boon to the running of the club at all levels.

Harry concluded, "I extend warmest congratulations to Club Chairman, and legend, 'Jamesy Kirk', on this exciting development and look forward to witnessing the increasing pace the club is moving at for the present and future generation of players.

Well done to the Rockmount Ladies

Three Rockmount ladies' teams dominated the Ulster South Regional finals at County Armagh Golf Club on 13th August, clinching victory in all three categories.

The Junior Foursomes Team, led by Anne Wynne and Tish Gilmore, triumphed over Castlehume with Ciara Agnew & Leonie Power, Frances Lawther & Abbie Poole, and Barbara Fleet & Pauline McWilliams.

The Minor Cup team, under Barbara Fleet's captaincy, faced Warrenpoint with Alex Poole, Hilda Beamish, Karen Gowdy, Donna Montgomery, and Noreen O'Hare.

Lastly, the Challenge Cup, captained by Donna Montgomery, defeated Dungannon with Alice Tang, Katherina Carswell, Elana Patterson, Moya Sloane, and Emma McCloughan. They received incredible support from team subs, caddies, members, and family.



Ladies Captain, Carol Blyth, proudly displays the three winners pennants.

Carol Blyth, the ecstatic Lady Captain, praised the teams' dedication and thanked Armagh and Golf Ireland. This win propels them to the all-Ireland finals stage.

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The signup process is smooth and efficient, as Davey Gibson from Lisburn Masonic Club explains, "Kieran called in, explained all the details and had us operational by the end of that week." This minimises disruptions during the transition to modern payment solutions.

Moreover, contactless payments often lead to more spontaneous purchases, further enhancing revenue, as Davey Gibson notes, "We have seen an increase in sales overall as customers are happy to use the contactless option."

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Davey Gibson, Lisburn Masonic Club.

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Stay warm with Sky Sports

Your ultimate sporting destination this autumn

The nights may be drawing in, but the content available on Sky Sports should keep you and your members warm and toasty!

There's plenty of sport available on Sky Sports throughout October and, combined with the free-to-air content such as the Rugby World Cup, there's plenty of reasons for your members to stay in your club for longer and at the same time, set yourself up as the place to watch sport in 2023 and beyond.

Your members can look forward to more action in the Premier League, the start of the Women's Super League, the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, all the action from Formula 1 with three race weekends over the course of the month, and the Ryder Cup.

Sneaking in at the end of September (29th September - 1st October) is the 44th Ryder Cup which will be held in Italy for the first time. Europe and USA will go head-to-head in the biggest team tournament in golf, and all three days will be live on Sky Sports Golf.

You wait for one World Cup, and another comes along at the same time... The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in India begins on Thursday 5th October, with the first fixture being a rematch of the 2019 Final with defending champions England taking on New Zealand at 9.30am. The World Cup runs throughout October through to mid-November, so make sure

you know when all the key matches are on by visiting MySkySports.com to plan ahead.

The Premier League is already looking spicy with some big fixtures coming down the line. On Saturday 30th September Spurs play host to Liverpool and kick off is at 5.30pm. There's a West London derby on Monday 2nd October with Fulham v Chelsea at 8pm and heading to the weekend, you've got Arsenal v Manchester City on Sunday 8th October with kick off starting at 4.30pm. October is nicely wrapped up with a Manchester derby with Manchester United v Manchester City on Sunday 29th October, kick off is at 3.30pm.

After the success of the 2023 World Cup, all eyes turn to the Women's Super League. There are six games throughout October including Chelsea v Tottenham at 5.30pm on Sunday 1st October; Manchester United v Arsenal at 7.30pm on Friday 6th October and a Merseyside derby with Liverpool v Everton at 4.30pm on Sunday 15th October.

There's more fast and furious action in Formula 1 with three race weekends all live on Sky Sports. First up is the Qatar Grand Prix (6th-8th October), followed by the United States Grand Prix (20th-22nd October) and finally the Mexico Grand Prix (27th-29th October).

Plus, there's lots more action from NFL, darts and so much more.



Don't forget to promote all this content by using your MySkySports.com account to create posters and social media posts - helping members to

plan ahead and visit your club more, so you can establish yourself as the best place to enjoy live sport.



A selection of sports fixtures coming soon:

29th September - 1st October.....	The Ryder Cup
Saturday 30th September.....	Tottenham v Liverpool - 5.30pm
Sunday 1st October.....	Nottingham Forest v Brentford - 2.00pm
	WSL Chelsea v Tottenham - 5.30pm
Thursday 5th October.....	ICC Men's Cricket World Cup
	England v New Zealand - 9.30am
Friday 6th.....	WSL Manchester United v Arsenal - 7.30pm
Friday 6th October - Sunday 8th October.....	F1 Race Weekend - Qatar
Sunday 8th October.....	Brighton v Liverpool - 2.00pm
	Arsenal v Manchester City - 4.30pm
Sunday 15th October.....	WSL Liverpool v Everton - 4.30pm
Friday 20th October - Sunday 22nd October.....	F1 Race Weekend - USA
Saturday 21st October.....	ICC Men's Cricket World Cup
	England v South Africa - 9.30am
	Chelsea v Arsenal - 5.30pm
	Sheffield United v Manchester United - 8.00pm
Thursday 26th October.....	ICC Men's Cricket World Cup
	England v Sri Lanka - 9.30am

UK Minister declares Titanic Distillers officially open for business

UK Minister for Exports, Lord Offord, visited Titanic Distillers at Thompson Dock recently to officially open Belfast's first working whiskey distillery in almost 90 years. The Minister, who took up his position at the Department of Business and Trade in April this year, performed the opening ceremony at the new distillery, where whiskey production is now under way for the first time in Belfast since the days of prohibition in the 1930s.

Lord Offord unveiled a commemorative plaque at the distillery which is based on the site of the historic Thompson Dock and Pumphouse, the birthplace of the Titanic.

As well as meeting with Titanic Distillers directors, Lord Offord enjoyed a brief tour of the £8M distillery and visitor centre, including a whiskey tasting with Head Distiller Damien Rafferty. He also took time to chat with attending members of Belfast's Dockers Club and H&W Welders Club, in keeping with the company's 'Blood, Sweat And Years' theme which celebrates Belfast's industrial and maritime past, and is inspired by the people who worked in the city's shipyard more than a century ago. The retired workers, from both sides of the community, shared their stories with the Minister, who said he was honoured to be invited to perform the official opening.

"It is an honour to officially open Titanic Distillers at the iconic Thompson Dock today in Belfast," said Minister for Exports Lord Offord.



Pictured at the official opening of Titanic Distillers at Thompson Dock are UK Minister for Exports Lord Offord, who performed the opening ceremony, with Titanic Distillers directors Peter Lavery (left) and Stephen Symington (right).

"The distilling industry has been part of Northern Ireland's fabric for generations, and it's been a pleasure to meet with the team and members of the community to see their skills first-hand."

The visitor centre at Titanic Distillers opened its doors to tourists in April this year. In August, the company received its Distillers License to start producing spirits and the stills have been fired up and pouring ever since.

Titanic Distillers director Peter Lavery reflected on the company's journey to date, saying, "We are delighted to welcome Lord Offord here today to perform the Official Opening of Titanic Distillers at Thompson Dock."

"Today is the culmination of many years' hard graft to bring this amazing project to life, and while it marks the end of the first 'construction' phase, it also signals the start of another phase as we start producing a whiskey and a brand that the people of Belfast and Northern Ireland can be proud of, and that will represent us well all over the world."

Fellow director Stephen Symington added, "We believe the famous Titanic name resonates around the world and we have very ambitious plans to take the product to a global audience, with coast to coast distribution in the US identified as a major commercial objective for the brand. With this in mind, it is very fitting that Lord Offord, in his role as UK Minister for Export, is here today to officially open

our new distillery. Outside of our location's massive tourism appeal and historic significance, we're very aware that we are now a working distillery and we are all focussed on producing our own products to build on our success to date and make the most of the growing global demand for Irish Whiskey."

The new distillery will produce single malt premium whiskey made from ingredients that have been carefully selected to produce the best possible flavour.

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Alastair Coyles - The 'Gentle Giant' of Irish and American country music



Nigel Blair, Belfast 89FM.

Alastair Coyles shares his new single with Nigel and speaks of his forthcoming album.

Alastair Coyles is a long time friend of Belfast 89FM and myself. He is an Irish country singer who includes American country in his shows, which have been requested by his ever-increasing fan base.

Alastair lives in Finvoy, a short distance from Ballymoney and Rasharkin. Although he loves to travel with his music near and far, he always looks forward to returning home.

I recently interviewed Alastair at Belfast 89FM and played his new single, 'I'll See You Later,' a song that, when first heard by Alastair, held an immediate attraction in both lyrics and music. Alastair said, "I was drawn to the song based on a true life story of American country gospel songwriter, Danny Ray. This song tells of his leaving home in West Virginia when only 17 to live in Ohio. Danny and his late mother had such a great bond, that when he was leaving, she never liked to say goodbye, so it was "I'll see you later."

Asking Alastair if this was to be the title of his forthcoming album, he replied, "Having already recorded five successful albums, I have yet to decide the title of my next one. My most recent single before 'I'll See You Later,' was a great hit for me titled, 'Rings of Gold & Gift of Silver,' written by B.G. Pollock, one of Ireland's greatest songwriters. These two songs will be considered for my album title."

Alastair plays his music the length and breadth of Ireland. In 2023, his touring expanded to include Scotland, and there are plans to go to Birmingham in 2024, as well as Spain, with other well-known performers for company. As Alastair said, "I don't set boundaries. Where my music is called for, that's where I'll be."

He is no stranger to radio or television, having appeared on Sky Hot Country with Phil Mac, the Glen Flynn Show, and also Pat Hayes' show, A Little Bit of Ireland, and many others too numerous to mention.

This year Alastair celebrates twenty years as an entertainer. He said, "I have had a wonderful musical journey. It all began when my parents arranged my eighteenth birthday party at the Rasharkin Community Centre. The entertainer was Mark Watt, who asked if I would like to sing a couple of songs, just for the craic! And here I am twenty years later, still singing whenever asked."

"There has been a history of entertainment in the family.



My grandfather from my mother's side played drums at the local dance halls. My mother's sister, in her early days, would sing round the local halls. My mother took me along to some great country music shows from an early age. I have great memories of this, which I would say also played a big part in my decision to become an entertainer."

Alastair spends a lot of his time singing to raise funds for many local charities. He is fondly known as the 'Gentle Giant', a man with a great personality, always the one way, on or off stage, easily approachable, and always bearing a great welcoming smile.

In recent years he has become involved as the Black Santa based in Ballymoney, much to

the pride of locals, knowing he is raising much-needed funds for local charity.

I can tell you, Alastair Coyles is one of the most genuine people I have met in my fifty years of entertaining and interviewing guests from the world of music for my radio shows. It's my opinion he'll be on the music scene for many years to come, pleasing music lovers of all ages, myself included.

As a friend and fellow entertainer, I wish him only the very best in all that he does.

For full information on his available albums singles CDs and DVDs go to www.alastaircoyles.co.uk

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Ireland and Scotland to contest Shinty/Hurling International in October

The GAA is delighted to announce the return of the Shinty/Hurling International Exhibition match, which will see Ireland take on Scotland in a composite rules game for the first time since 2019. This event will be held at Páirc Esler in Newry on Saturday October 21st, promising a display of sporting prowess and rekindling the camaraderie between the two nations.

The Shinty/Hurling International Exhibition match has been a longstanding tradition, bringing together top talents from both Scotland and Ireland in a thrilling showcase of shinty and hurling skills. The event is a collaboration between the GAA and the Camanachd Association, the governing body for Shinty.

Larry McCarthy, GAA President, said, "On behalf of the Gaelic Athletic Association I welcome the resumption of our collaboration with our friends, and neighbours and sporting cousins in Alba agus An Cumann Camanachd to stage the Ireland-Scotland Hurling-Shinty international."

Each organisation will select a 20-player squad to travel to Newry in the coming weeks and more information about the match, including team selections and event updates, will be released in due course. An



Joey Boyle of Ireland in action against Andrew King of Scotland during the Senior Hurling Shinty International 2019 match between Ireland and Scotland at the GAA National Games Development Centre in Abbotstown, Dublin. Photo by Piaras Ó Midheach/Sportsfile

official launch event for the game will take place on Thursday 12th October in Croke Park and further information will be available on gaa.ie and on the GAA's social media channels.



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A.A. Milne



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Stephen Baxter and Ben Kennedy shine in August for Crusaders

In a month filled with remarkable achievements and stand-out performances, Crusaders FC has emerged as the dominant force in the Northern Ireland Football Writers' Association (NIFWA) awards for August. Crusaders' manager, Stephen Baxter, has been named the NIFWA Manager of the Month, while their star player, Ben Kennedy, secured the Dream Spanish Homes Player of the Month accolade. Additionally, Newington FC's Zach Barr claimed the Championship Player of the Month award, further highlighting the exceptional talent in the Northern Irish football scene.

Baxter's Crusaders had an outstanding August, enjoying an unbeaten run in the league with victories over Ballymena United, Dungannon Swifts, Carrick Rangers and Newry City. The icing on the cake was their valiant effort against Norwegian giants Rosenborg, where they narrowly lost 3-2 in extra-time.

Reflecting on the achievement, Baxter stated, "Our full focus in pre-season was on our European campaign, in truth the league was the furthest thing from my mind, but our performances in Europe this summer superseded anything I thought we would achieve. The time together and the good performances carried into the league campaign and allowed us to hit the ground running."

Ben Kennedy, after nearly a year on the sidelines due to injury, made a stunning comeback in August, netting five goals, including an unforgettable four-goal display against Carrick Rangers. Kennedy's remarkable resurgence earned him the Player of the Month award, marking a significant milestone in his career. Upon receiving the award, Kennedy expressed his gratitude, saying, "I would like to thank Dream Spanish Homes and the Football Writers' for this trophy. It's my first monthly award, but hopefully not my last. I have to put these things in perspective. I've had a year out of the game, I'm proud of what I've achieved and it's nice to get a pat on the back for it. I'm hungry for more now."

In addition to Crusaders' achievements, Zach Barr, the Newington FC striker, stood out in August, scoring five crucial goals, including



Top: Crusaders manager, Stephen Baxter, picks up his Manager of the Month Award from NIFWA chairman Michael Clarke.



Middle: Ben Kennedy proudly displays his Premiership Player of the Month Award.

Bottom: Newington's Zach Barr collects his Championship Player of the Month Award.

a hat-trick against Institute. Barr's outstanding performance played a pivotal role in Newington's surprising rise to the top of the Playr-Fit Championship.



Barr shared his thoughts on his team's success, stating, "If you told me we would be top of the league after the first few weeks of the season, I wouldn't have believed you. At this stage, we are just ticking the games off and getting as many points on the board as we can. We're feeling confident and feeling like we can push on."

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