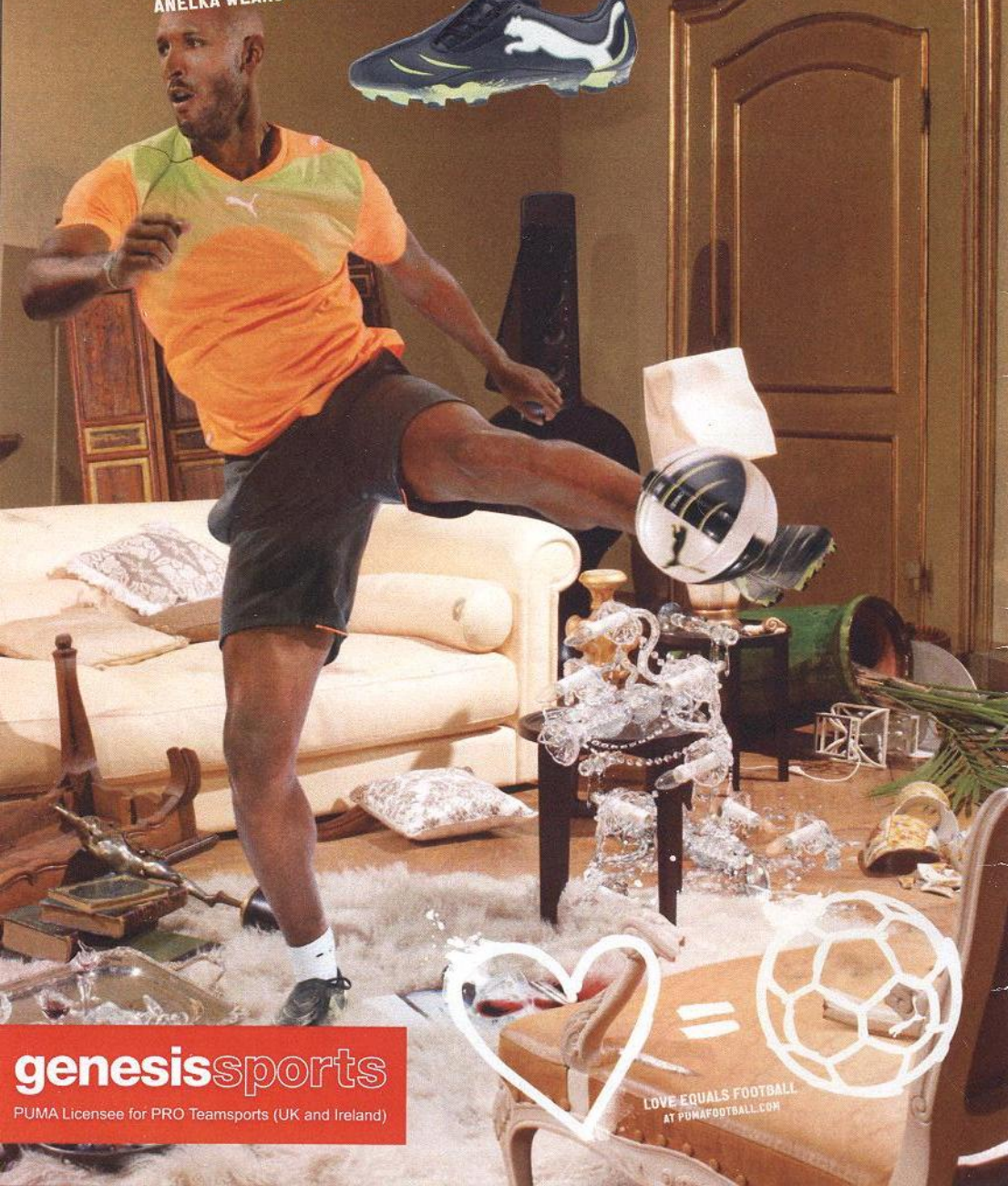


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THE POWER OF 

ANELKA WEARS THE POWERCAT 1.10



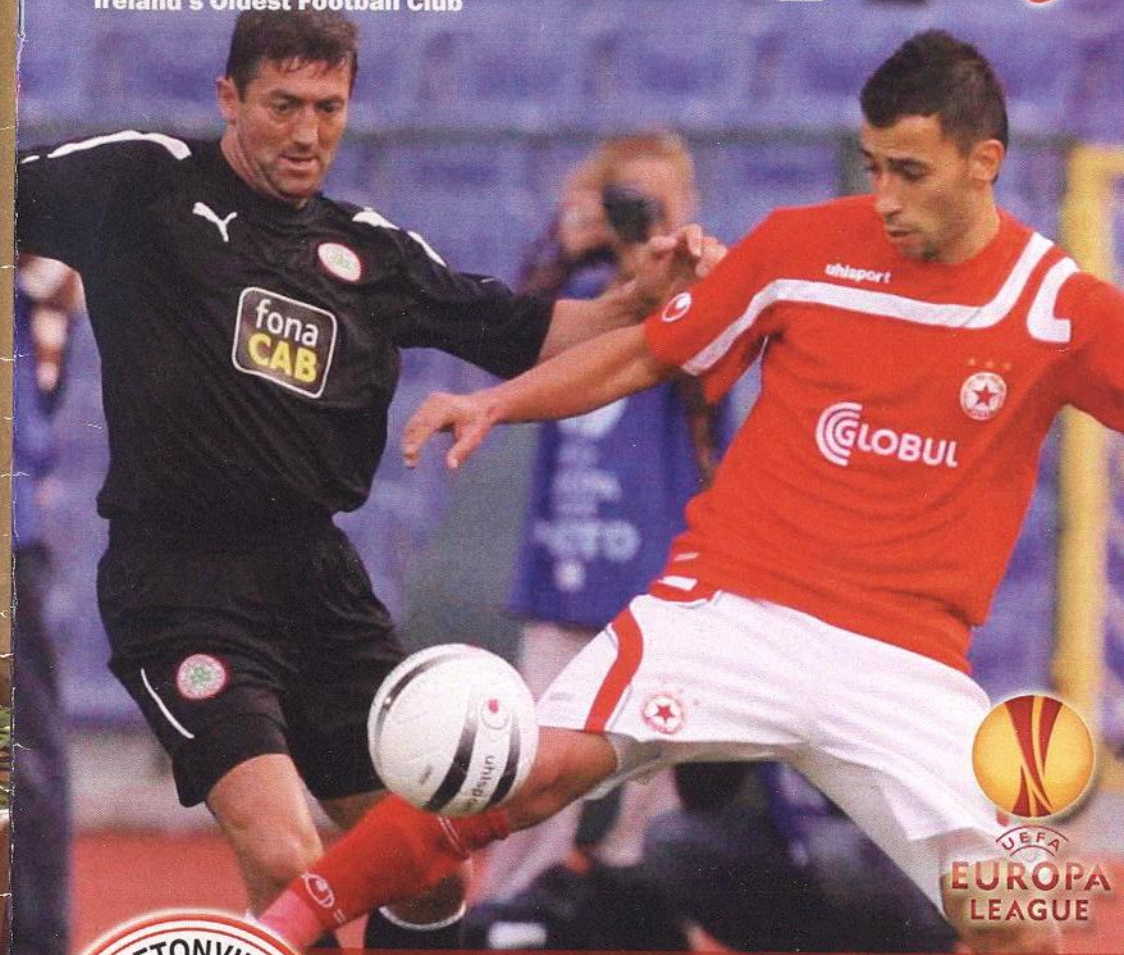
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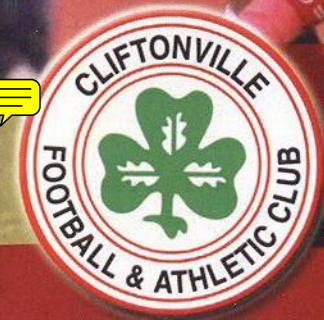
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THE RED EYE

The Official Matchday Magazine of
 Ireland's Oldest Football Club



UEFA
EUROPA LEAGUE



Cliftonville v CSKA Sofia

Europa League Third Qualifying Round, Second Leg
 Thursday, August 5, 2010
 Windsor Park, Belfast, 7.45pm



Volume 30

Issue 3

£2

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PAGE 3 POINTERS



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CLUB HONOURS

IRISH LEAGUE
1906, 1910, 1998

IRISH CUP
1883, 1888, 1897, 1900
1901, 1907, 1909, 1979

LEAGUE CUP
2003

CO. ANTRIM SHIELD
1892, 1894, 1898, 1926
1979, 1997, 2007, 2008

GOLD CUP
1923, 1933, 1980

BELFAST CHARITIES CUP
1884, 1886, 1997, 1888
1889, 1897, 1906, 1908
1909, 1924

ALHAMBRA CUP
1922

FLOODLIT CUP
1996

SOCCER SIXES
1995

CHARITY SHIELD
1998

STEEL & SONS CUP
1900, 1902, 1907, 1908
1914, 1922

INTERMEDIATE CUP
1896, 1900, 1902

'B' DIVISION
1954, 1981

RESERVE LEAGUE
2001, 2003

GEORGE WILSON CUP
1999, 2007

IRISH JUNIOR CUP
1893

IRISH ALLIANCE FIRST DIVISION
1899, 1900

IFA YOUTH LEAGUE
1993, 1994, 2003, 2010

IFA YOUTH CUP
2001

IFA YOUTH LEAGUE CUP
2001, 2003

BOB LARMOUR MEMORIAL CUP
2006, 2007, 2008, 2009
2010

LADBROKES SUPPORTERS' CUP
2010

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Printers
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(028) 9077 4944

The following information has been issued by the Management Committee of Cliftonville Football Club and all supporters are duly asked to take note:

"Cliftonville Football Club is an equal opportunities club and, therefore, will not tolerate any form of sectarianism or racially offensive behaviour or chanting.

"As part of our ongoing commitment to the IFA's Football For All campaign, to Kick It Out and to equality, anyone caught making racist or sectarian comments may be arrested, prosecuted and banned from the Club.

"If you or your fellow supporters hear any abuse of this nature, then, please report it to the nearest steward or call the helpline number 0800 169 9414."

A new code of conduct for adoption by the senior clubs has been introduced by the IFA because of the implications under Article 55 of the FIFA Disciplinary Code. The potential measures available to the authorities for any instances of discrimination, racism or sectarianism in football range from match suspension and deduction of points (3 for a first offence, 6 for a second and relegation for persistent offenders) through to disqualification from a competition.

Cliftonville Football Club have submitted a range of proposals to the Chief Executive of the IFA to demonstrate its commitment to this ideal.

These include the issuing of a statement of non-tolerance with regard to discrimination, racism and sectarianism (see above), conditions attached to being a member, official, player or supporter of the club and steps to ensure that the club does all that it reasonably and practically can to show its level of commitment.

The Club asks all members, officials, players and supporters to work with it in making this strategy a success on and off the pitch and wherever Cliftonville FC might be represented.

LETS ALL KICK IT OUT!

The Cliftonville FC Code of Conduct

Supporters are asked to refrain from...

- Using sectarian, racist or any inappropriate language
- The display of any racist or sectarian emblems or banners
- Using foul, abusive or insulting language, gestures or threatening behaviour
- Missile throwing or entering the pitch area

Supporters should...

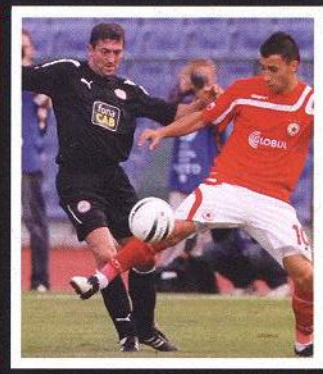
- Respect all players, team attendants and match officials
- Follow directions and instructions given by stewards and Club officials
- Respect other supporters
- Report breaches of our code to a steward, Club Official, or on the telephone number provided (left)
- Remember to observe the Code both at Solitude and away games
- Support Cliftonville loudly and proudly!

Visiting supporters are to also respect our Code of Conduct. ALL supporters please note that observing the Code of Conduct is a condition of your entry to the ground. Any person not observing the Code may be ejected from the ground and may face further sanctions.



THE FORMATION

On the cover
Peter Hutton keeps a close watch on CSKA's Rui Miguel during the match at the Vasil Levski Stadium last Tuesday



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Action from the first leg

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Catch up with the latest news

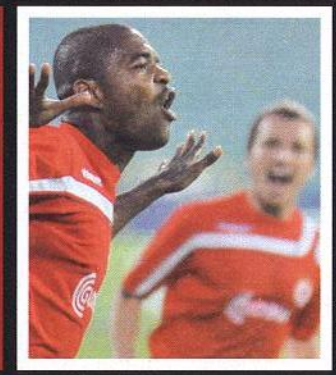
Page 19
A guide to tonight's Cliftonville team

Page 22
Tales from Augusts of yore



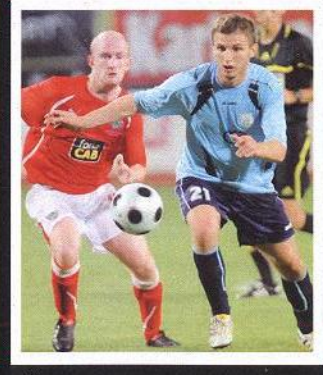
Eddie Patterson
The boss looks forward to representing the Irish League in style on the European stage again

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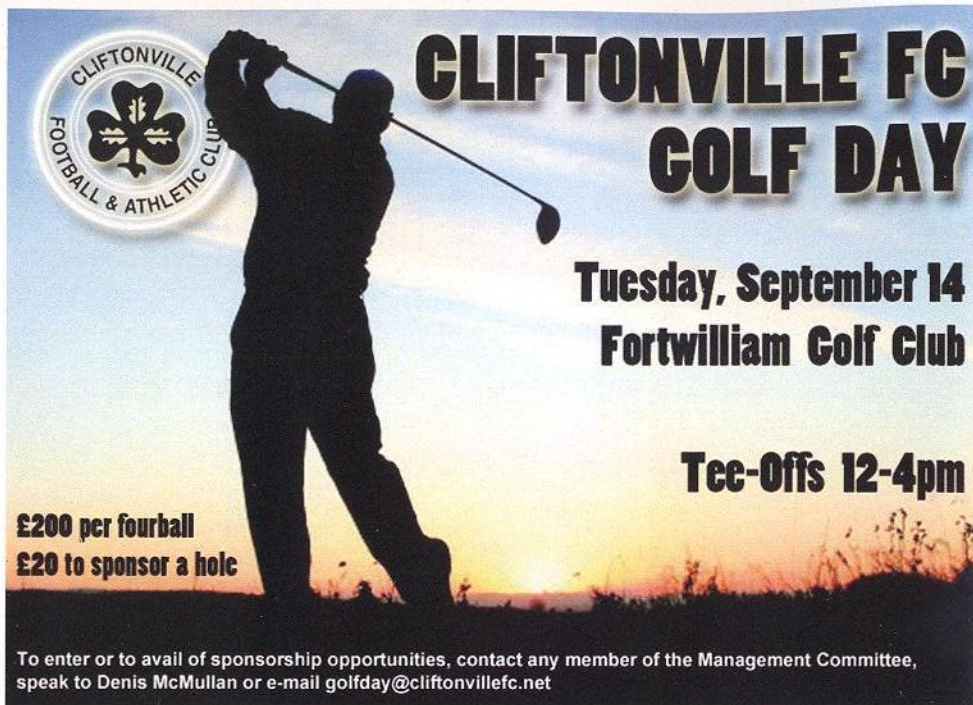
What did you Vink?
Recollections of the trip from Belfast to Vinkovci - via sleepy Luton and sleepless Belgrade

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In the away dugout
A quick look at the 'other' Reds, who have designs on producing another famous European run

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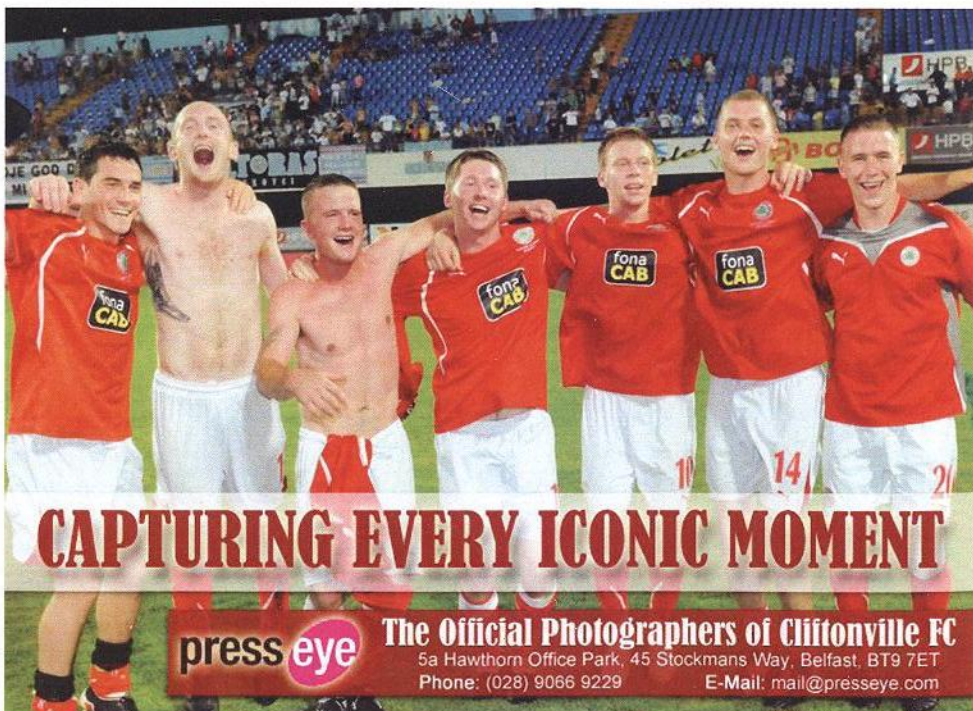
**CLIFTONVILLE FC
GOLF DAY**

**Tuesday, September 14
Fortwilliam Golf Club**

Tee-Offs 12-4pm

£200 per fourball
£20 to sponsor a hole

To enter or to avail of sponsorship opportunities, contact any member of the Management Committee, speak to Denis McMullan or e-mail golfday@cliftonvillefc.net



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EDDIE'S

PATTER

ZONE



THIS evening's game represents another massive test for us and a further opportunity to test ourselves against high-standard opposition.

It is an unfortunately rare occurrence for an Irish League side to still be involved in European competition at this stage of the season so it is with great pride that Cliftonville fly the flag for the local game tonight - though I admit it's strange to find ourselves engaged in Europa League action just two days before the scheduled start of the new Carling Premiership campaign.

We find ourselves in this position thanks, of course, to our wonderful victory over HNK Cibalia in the previous round and, such was the hype of activity to make arrangements for Sofia just five days after that memorable night in Vinkovci, we didn't really have time to properly savour what we had achieved.

To overcome a side from such a strong league was remarkable stuff and, when you consider that

Cibalia recorded victories over both Dinamo Zagreb and Hajduk Split last season, it really stands out as one of the greatest - if not the greatest - results in our Club's history.

I had been delighted with the players' efforts in the first leg but they took it to a whole new level at Stadion Cibalia, overcoming not just talented opposition but some unbelievable temperatures to set up these meetings with CSKA Sofia.

The Bulgarians are one of Europe's most famous clubs and it gives me great personal pride to lead Cliftonville into battle against them.

Last week's game at the Vasil Levski Stadium finished with what I regard as a fairly harsh 3-0 defeat and I'm sure our supporters - be it those who travelled to the match or who watched it online - would agree that it was not an accurate portrayal of the 90 minutes.

We conceded a poor goal at the start but reacted well to it and,

where some sides might have crumbled, I was pleased to see there were no such failings on our part.

We enjoyed our best spell of the game early in the second-half and kept possession pretty well, even if we did find it tough to break CSKA's defence down. It would have been easy to resort to hit and hope hoofball against full-time opposition, but we stuck to our principles and kept the ball on the deck throughout, which was very encouraging.

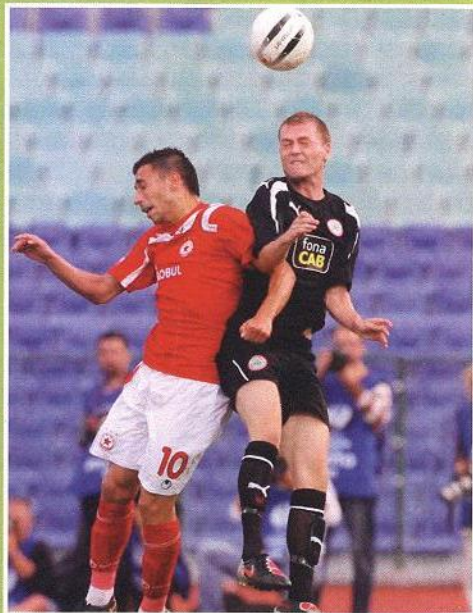
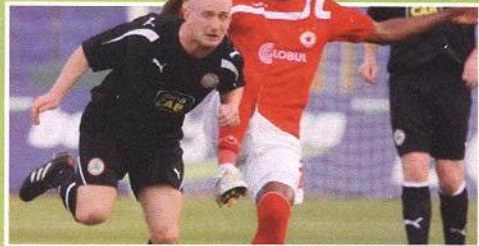
Sadly, though, two good goals within a couple of minutes of one another made it look like we'd taken a bit of a thumping, but we can take confidence from how we performed.

It says a lot about how far we have come that we were hugely disappointed to have lost 3-0 to a club of CSKA's stature, but hopefully we'll suffer greater fortune against them this evening.

The players relish occasions such as these and fingers crossed we have plenty more to come.



MY BALL: Peter Hutton makes a timely challenge, while Ryan Catney makes his presence felt



EYES WIDE SHUT: Ciaran Caldwell beats Rui Miguel in the air, while (below) CSKA's number 10 somehow contrives to miss the target from the closest of ranges



CARD LUCK: Controversy as Stephen Garrett is sent off late on



IT says a lot about the contrasting histories of each club that, as Cliftonville shape up for just their 20th match on the European stage this evening, it will be outing number 203 for Bulgaria's most successful outfit.

Also known as the Reds, CSKA - Central Sports Club of the Army - were officially founded in 1948 but have roots stretching back to more than 20 years previous and have, in the half-century since, played under a host of guises.

A 1923 merger between Athletic Sofia and Slava Sofia laid the foundations, with Athletic Slava (also known as AS-23) receiving support and assistance from the Bulgarian Ministry of War, who oversaw a further merger with two other clubs as part of the 1944 founding of Chavdar Sofia.

The next name change came into being just four years later, with CDV giving way to Narodna Voiska (People's Army) before a host of identities - including Team of the Sofia Garrison, Central House of the People's Army and CSKA Red Flag - eventually led to the 1989 adoption of simply CSKA.

One such name change came about as a consequence of the club's disbandment on the advice

of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1985.

The Bulgarian Cup Final between CSKA and archrivals Levski Sofia at the Vasil Levski Stadium - where last week's first leg took place - was dominated by on-pitch fighting and an assault on the referee.

Both clubs were banished from existence and many players, including the legendary Hristo Stoichkov, were handed lengthy suspensions for their part in the trouble.

CSKA reformed as Sredets and, under their new title, reached the Semi Final of the 1989 Cup Winners' Cup, where they were eliminated by Barcelona, whose manager Johan Cruyff was so impressed with Stoichkov's talents that he would bring him to the Nou Camp the following year.

More recently, CSKA found themselves involved in the group stages of last season's Europa League but, despite an opening draw with eventual Finalists Fulham - thanks to a goal from Brazilian striker Michel Platini - they failed to pick up any further points and were forced instead to focus their efforts on the domestic scene.

Unsettled by a raft of managerial changes, CSKA - who appointed



FAMOUS FACES: Hristo Stoichkov and (below) Stilian Petrov and Dimitar Berbatov



Adalbert Zafirov as a caretaker in March - nevertheless secured second place in the Bulgarian A PFG, finishing two points behind champions Litex Lovech and one ahead of Levski.

This season's campaign kicked off with a 1-0 defeat to in the 'Eternal Derby' against Levski last Sunday - and the Reds of Sofia will hope to make amends by seeing off the Reds from Belfast tonight.



RED THE LATEST?

This week's news noticeboard

Get the shirt off their backs!

The Official Shirt Sponsorship scheme is back for another season and supporters will be delighted to learn that the Club has implemented a price freeze - meaning you can pick up a matchworn jersey at the end of the campaign for a mere £60.

Shirts are available on a first come, first served basis and all sponsors will have their names or the name of their business listed in The Red Eye and on our Official Website throughout the season, although the following stipulations apply...

- The scheme is open only to regular sponsors between now and midnight on Tuesday, August 10
- Non-regulars can sign up anytime from Wednesday, August 11
- A minimum £30 payment must be paid up front with the balance due by the end of the season



You can snap up your favourite player's shirt at The Reds Shop or by sending an e-mail to shirtsponsorship@cliftonvillefc.net.

Win £1000 here!

Keep an ear out to hear if you've won a cool £1000 at half-time of this evening's match.

The 200 Club will continue with an eagerly-anticipated Double Money bonanza tonight, with a total of £2000 set to be dished out to six lucky winners - and you can secure your place in the next draw by signing up to the scheme now!

For just £10 per month, you will be entered into a monthly draw for cash rewards, with a £14000 pot up for grabs over the course of the forthcoming campaign.

Those supporters who have previously signed up to the scheme will need to complete a new application form if you wish to renew your membership for the forthcoming season, with the option now available to commit for a further 12 months or until further notice, removing the need to renew each summer.

Since its inception, the 200 Club has paid out in excess of £25,000 to our fans and you could be our next big winner. Application forms are available for download from our Official Website - and don't forget that, with places limited, you'll need to act fast to secure your spot!

Cliftonville will face Amateur Division 1A side Cruilin United in a Friendly match at Mill Road next Tuesday, August 10 (7pm).



Bob Larmour Cup



The Reds secured the Bob Larmour Memorial Cup for the fifth consecutive season when they defeated Banbridge Town at Crystal Park last Saturday.

A Dale Malone penalty put the hosts in front but the tie would be settled in a shoot-out, which Cliftonville won 4-3 thanks to conversions from Ciaran Caldwell, trialist Eamonn Seydak, Conal Burns and George McMullan - who had actually seen a penalty saved during normal time, while goalkeeper John Connolly also kept a Banbridge spot-kick out in the second-half.

The Brittas Empire, Kenilworth Road, riot police, penalty shoot-outs, avian excretion and the (second) greatest scoreless draw in history...



PLENTY TO CRO ABOUT

THERE'S a world of difference between drawing up travel itineraries and actually sitting half-baked to death on a slow-moving train through Serbia.

The plans had only been made a month in advance but, until you finally find yourself passing through all the cities you have been studiously Googling, then it's hard to genuinely convince yourself that it's really going to happen.

The day that UEFA's draw landed Cliftonville with a Europa League date in Croatia seemed a lifetime ago. Far from asking yourself who HNK Cibalia were, where Vinkovci was, what's the best way to get there and how much it will all cost, you're now suddenly an expert having spent virtually every waking minute since meticulously planning the details of your trip.

And so the day finally arrived. It was time to begin the 1200 mile trek across the continent and, thanks to the team's efforts in the first leg, a 6am Wednesday start doesn't seem anywhere near as bad when you're 1-0 ahead at the half-way stage of the tie.

Thorough as my preparations had been - passport double-checked, online boarding cards printed, hotel rooms booked and currency exchanged - I

hadn't countered on UK Gold's early morning screening of The Brittas Empire almost distracting me from my waiting taxi.

That first hurdle overcome, it was off to the City Airport where a small gathering of Reds had already assembled and suddenly it all begins to seem very real - we're back on a European trip and it's only 36 hours until kick-off.

Not that I was counting any chickens just yet, of course. We still had to negotiate connecting flights in Luton and, following an overnight stay in Belgrade, it was fingers crossed that my understanding of Serbian timetables was accurate enough to ensure we would be on time for the train to Vinkovci the following morning.

First things first, though, and an exchange with which we would all grow as familiar as the 'We Love You' song with over the next few days...

"Have you packed this bag yourself?"
"Yes."

"Could anyone have interfered with your luggage without you knowing?"

"No." (Even though, by very

definition, the answer to that question must always be yes)

"Has anyone asked you to carry anything for them?"

"No." (Not yet, anyway)

Truth be told, Rick could have been asked to carry the plane itself inside his suitcase and nobody would have noticed but, despite the jibes about appearing to have packed for a month in the Arctic, his excessively big case would prove useful when it came to saving a few quid in Luton - which was reached in the straightforward and on-time fashion we had all hoped for. Our flight to Belgrade presented two immediate concerns, though.

First, literally none of us had ever heard of WizzAir and there remained a sneaking suspicion that the whole thing was just a big joke that only we weren't in on. There was only one way to find out and that was to wait seven-and-a-half hours and hope there'd be a plane on the runway.

That in itself led to the second problem. How to pass the time? Few airports boast enough attractions to keep travellers engaged for that length of time and Luton is no different. In fact,



once you've passed Marks & Spencer, it's pretty much downhill from there. The decision was taken that, with the town centre just 10 minutes' walk away, we would set forth for a local hostelry for some food and a few drinks.

Luggage was left into the airport's storage hold for a mere £5 per bag, with an accumulated £10 saving thanks to Rick's gigantic suitcase (Red Army 1-0 Luton) and off we went.

I'll be honest, I could tell from the moment we stepped outside that the town centre wasn't 10 minutes away. There was nothing but car-parks as far as the eye could see and suddenly Shergar's reminder that "someone said it's only 10 minutes away" didn't seem quite so

re-assuring given that the someone in question had, in reality, been him. We started walking anyway and, needless to say, 10 minutes came and went and we were barely outside the airport's grounds.

One busy road crossed, two busy roads crossed, three, four ... er, there's absolutely no sign of anything on the horizon.

The decision to completely ignore the first pub we stumbled across would suggest that someone in our midst had some degree of local knowledge but I've yet to determine who.

It was therefore by accident rather than design that we eventually found what amounted to the city centre and I won't lie, the sight of a few Cliftonville fans who'd foregone the 40 minute walk in favour of taking the bus from the airport only served to add to my frustration.

And so to our eatery of choice, where a range of lunch options were availed of, including my own chicken and egg (not sure which came first), but it wasn't long before the group broke up into smaller numbers for our own individual jaunts around Luton.



We wandered into what on the face of it appeared to be a traditional English pub, but which transpired to be the smelliest, grubbiest, horrible little place in the western world. Not even the picture of Mal Donaghy - father of Ciaran - on the wall could entice us to stay longer than the first round of drinks. It should, however, be noted that I still found time to beat Rick at pool using my now favoured method of boring my opponent into sinking the black.

Barry was then challenged to a game by what could only be described as the local oaf; one of those blokes in possession of neither a hairbrush nor deodorant but who, judging by the state of his drinking buddies, did at least have sole preserve of the pub's tooth for the time being. Unsurprisingly, Barry won. Our third and final drinking den in the city offered a greater degree of comfort and style and we used our

latest surrounds to discuss the sights and sounds of lovely Luton.

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. No harm to you, Donaghy, but your hometown boasts little redeeming features and quite where the various Guided Tour Buses were headed left us stumped - though Barry's dad, John, was willing to wager that simply going backwards and forwards to Kenilworth Road would pass as entertainment in what was a very sleepy town.

We opted for a taxi back to the airport and, after reclaiming our luggage (hold on, that means our bags could DEFINITELY have been interfered with!) it was time to check-in and, while we're flouting airline regulations, sure we might as well just turn a blind

eye to Shergar asking Rick to carry some things in his suitcase for him.

The Departures Lounge was where my infuriating superstitions began to kick in.

I am a great believer in matchday routines and know that, while my choice of socks and underwear cannot have any serious outcome on the result of a match, it's still not worth taking a risk.

The last time I'd gone abroad to watch the Reds, we were gubbed 7-0. It was therefore vital that I avoided repeating the experiences of that trip and the most obvious way I could think of doing that was to stock up on headache tablets, simply because a bout of afternoon football had given me a pounding migraine for the match in Copenhagen. That wasn't going to happen this time.

Meanwhile, it was so far, so good as the far as the chances of WizzAir being real were concerned but,

despite seeing the flight listed on the screens, it wasn't until we were actually aboard that I genuinely believed we would be Belgrade bound before the day was out.

Thankfully, a second incident-free flight of the day led to a scheduled landing in the Serbian capital with perhaps the only real crumb of discomfort coming from the high temperatures within the cabin - something with which we would grow unwillingly accustomed over the next 48 hours.

We made a hasty beeline for the exit doors in a bid to savour some fresh air but, to our great disappointment, we were met with a boiling blast which only served to make things worse - at 10 o'clock at night! That wasn't the only unexpected reception.

A squad of riot police, presumably expecting a gaggle of toiled-up Danny Dyer sorts, looked a little confused to be met with a scaled-down Red Army evidently more interested in a night of rest and relaxation.

Nevertheless, we were shoved into a line of waiting taxis and, with police jeeps (sirens and all) at the top and toe of our convoy, enjoyed a unique journey into the city centre. Better than a 40 minute walk in Luton anyway.

The police oversaw us checking into the hotel and maintained an all-night presence near reception, while also providing numbers to follow a small group of us to the nearby railway station.

Our train wasn't until 10.20am the following morning but there was a collective feeling that actually having the tickets bought and paid for would lead to a more contented sleep.

We joined the queue at 10.15pm and spent the next 45 minutes watching as the Dutchmen in line ahead of us conversed back and forth with a flustered receptionist, who did little to convince them that hurrying up might improve their fellow tourists' chances of retaining consciousness in the most stifling heat any of us had ever endured.

Finally, they concluded their business and moved on. Then, with perfect comedy timing, the sales desk closed for the night.

Off to another pub for some quiet drinks, then, and once more the police tracked our every step to the extent where it was nearly worth breaking into an impromptu break-dance to see if they would follow

suit. Cold drinks turning warm within seconds and an ever-increasing swarm of flies only served to add to the discomfort of those of us (ie me) who'd been stupid enough to venture out in jeans, while the sight of Rigby minus his hat was confirmation were it needed that this was indeed unfamiliar territory as far as the temperature was concerned.

Tomorrow would be a long day, ergo some much needed sleep was more appealing than another lukewarm drink (and they didn't have any Smokey Joes) and so it was back to the hotel.

Now, anyone who knows me will be aware that among my travel essentials for any journey is a miniature football and, spotting it in my suitcase before bed, myself and Rick tested one another's ability with a pretty nifty penalty shoot-out. My delight with the 4-1 victory was minimal in comparison to the sheer joy which came with one pretty stupendous save - and at altitude too. Sort of.

Needless to say, tarting about with a football in a Belgrade hotel room with air conditioning which was only of benefit if you happened to be standing in a very specific spot (beside the table against the far wall) did not lend itself to cooling oneself down. Instead, we went for the ingenious method of lifting tins of Fanta from the mini-bar and placing them on top of ourselves as we drifted off to sleep before returning them to the fridge the following morning. Bet whoever eventually drank them would be delighted to find that out.

If we thought it had been warm at night, the early-morning sun verged on the unbearable. Even venturing into the hotel's bar for a refreshing drink was a no-no on account of the thick fog of smoke which smothered you the second you stepped inside the door. Even prior to the smoking ban, Belfast's pubs produce as much when they were on fire.

The train station was, of course, the day's first port of call and it was something of a relief to finally get

those treasured Belgrade - Vinkovci return tickets safely in the back pocket, even if they were quite literally printed one at a time on the sort of c o u g h - a n d -

splutter printer I'd not seen since about 1991.

The police were once again with us every step of the way and guided us aboard the train, helping us into private carriages at the expense of commuters who were none too pleased having obviously paid for the privilege of travelling in such comfort. It wasn't long before everyone was seated, but the wait for the train to actually depart must have come close to finishing a few of us off.

The stifling heat inside those hokey carriages was difficult to put up with and you've no idea how much you long for a cold Tuesday night in Drumahoe when you suddenly find yourself sitting completely motionless but still absolutely soaking with sweat. You could actually see it forming on your fellow supporters' brows before cascading down their faces or onto steadily-saturating clothes. This was going to be a long journey.

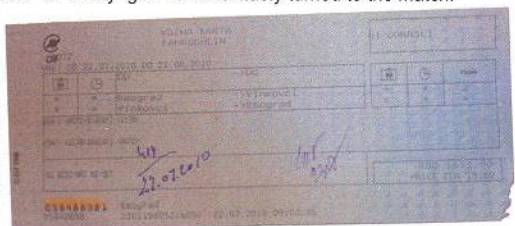
Even when the train finally began to pick up anything amounting to some kind of acceptable speed, there was no chance of a welcome breeze making any sort of appearance through the window.

The air outside was hot and crisp and it only served to make you warmer if you were naive enough to go for a sample.

Indeed, my own desire to lean out of the window was curtailed when Barry advised that a thorn from a passing branch cutting into your skin and raking right up your arm at 50mph would, in his own words, "be rub-bish". Thanks for that, think I'll sit back down.

Different people used varying methods of passing the time. Sleep was probably the option of choice for the majority, while some read and others enjoyed drinks with a police team who had by now come round to thinking that the Red Army were not, after all, the Green Street type.

Myself and Rick played our patented Coin Football game (He stuffed me, The rules are lengthy, but I'll explain them sometime if you ever ask) and talk inevitably turned to the match.



The general consensus was that we would need to score to ensure victory and, while my own gut feeling was for a 2-1 defeat (funny how gut feelings never predict things to go against you), there understandably wasn't anyone who wouldn't have settled for 0-0 - an outcome which would be right up there with the scoreless draw between Coleraine and Linfield which earned Cliftonville the Premier League title on April 18, 1998.

Having at first treated our support with contempt and suspicion, the Serbian police departed the train at the border and group on the platform to wave us a hearty goodbye with plentiful cries of good luck.

Finally being in Croatia seemed to focus minds a little. We were edging ever nearer to Vinkovci and every stop produced that little buzz of excitement until, at long last, we spied floodlights in the distance.

It's a bizarre feeling indeed to find yourself 1200 miles from home only to look along the horizon and see a local pub draped in Cliftonville flags but, far from being able to lap up the pre-match atmosphere, we would instead find ourselves faced with a dilemma - no room at the inn!

We arrived at our hotel to find that, owing to a mix-up over how long the Club's official party would be staying, our booking had been overlooked but that we would be able to stay somewhere nearby.

I'm generally not one for causing a fuss and privately vowed to grin and bear it because, while the hotel we'd been hoping to stay in was a top-of-the-range air-conditioned palace, I could put up with a night elsewhere so long as the place was bearable.

God almighty. The muggy, sweaty corridor led towards a lift which was barely big enough to accommodate Rick's suitcase, nevermind the three of us with baggage in tow. None of us held out any degree of confidence that it would get us to our designated floor either and I remember explaining that, were it to suddenly grind to a halt, we'd all have died through heat exhaustion within the hour.

Thankfully, we somehow made it and, call me intuitive, but I just had a feeling that a hotel with room numbers written on a bit of paper selloaped to the door was not going to provide us with the sort of standards we'd been expecting at our previous abode.

And you should have seen what greeted us when we turned the key.



It was like a prison cell. I took these photos more for evidence than posterity and yes, that *is* bird faeces inside the room.

But this is where we'd have to stay and, with a few hours still to kill and no particular desire to sit on a sofa you'd have caught the plague off had you so much as looked at it, out came the miniature football again.

The game which followed was littered with inexplicable rules (such as who was and wasn't allowed to retain possession depending on whether the ball landed nearer a shoe or the phone) and the questionable decision to have one 'net' considerably bigger than the other led to much heated debate. Then again, everything was heated in Vinkovci... well, apart from the hotel we'd just been turned away from.

Almost a full 90 minutes passed (yes, we took the game that seriously) before we received a phone-call to advise that a member of the Club's Management Committee had used her powers of persuasion to procure us a room back at the Villa Lenije. Without naming names, the fact that she's a she pretty much gives the game away - and she'll never know how truly grateful myself, Barry and Rick were to have had our sentence cut short.

It got better, though, with the news that we'd actually be sleeping in the Bridal Suite - talk about one extreme to the other! - but my greater concern was that our game of indoor football had landed me with a pounding headache. This was not in the script - it was Copenhagen all over again!

The tablets from Luton didn't so much ease the pain as make me feel physically sick but, either way, it took my mind off the migraine and I was sufficiently satisfied that I'd done enough to cancel out whatever sort

of evil karma had lent itself to proceedings.

My superstitious worries continued when I was faced with the dilemma of what shoes to wear - the comfy trainers I'd been wearing since The Brittas Empire or the red converse-types which I'd also worn at Parken Stadium on that night two years ago.

It would, of course, be reasonable to assume that I would plump for the former and thus avert any potential risk of another seven-goal hammering, but then I remembered what Rick had said to me seven days previous.

Before the home leg against Cibalia, I texted him to ask if he'd be up for joining me for a pre-match meal in town. We've never done anything like that before but something somewhere in my psyche told me that, if we golloped down egg and chips on our way to the game, we'd win. And so it proved.

Rick's the same as me when it comes to superstitions and omens. He even made sure that, when we arrived on the Kop that night, we sat seven rows from the front in seats 22 and 23 - just like we do at Solitude.

And, as we celebrated the final whistle, he told me to act on every single impulse in Croatia if I thought it would help secure our place in the Third Qualifying Round.

A less scrupulous soul would have seen that as an invitation to extort money from a gullible colleague but not me, I used it as an excuse to wear red shoes. It just felt right.

We teamed up with Barry in joining John, Shergar, Mash, Paddy and Stephen for what we had planned to be a quick bite to eat in the stadium's restaurant. None of us had expected to be there for three hours but that's mainly because we could not have possibly predicted the standard of hospitality.

As we feasted on some of the finest food we'd sampled in a long time, I began to tally up the various comparisons between this trip and the game against FC Dinaburg in Latvia a few years earlier.

Back then, we'd mainly been based in a city far away from the stadium (Riga and then Belgrade). Check.

We travelled to the host city on the day of the game itself. Check.

We'd tucked into some welcome food just around the corner from the ground. Check.

Compare that to the similarly recent experiences of Gent and Copenhagen (hotels nearby, visiting the



SPACE INVADERS: So great was the team's hope that the travelling support would provide a twelfth man that they even left a space for him in the line-up

stadium the night before the match just to get an idea of the route, no off-the-beaten track journeys) and you start to get a feel of exactly why I held a reasonable degree of confidence as kick-off approached. Because that's how it works.

Having been concerned that the players would not be able to see (let alone hear) our supporters, it was pleasing to find that we had been allocated a small stand (or indeed terrace with some plastic seats bolted onto it) right beside the tunnel to the changing rooms.

Any last-minute nerves were calmed somewhat by the playing of a Cibalia anthem which rang to the tune of The Flintstones theme and, before we knew it, the match was underway.

The home fans were baying for blood from the very first minute and the Ultras maintained a steady volume throughout but, thankfully, it was Cliftonville's players who looked most composed on the pitch. Sure, Cibalia bossed possession in the opening stages but the Reds looked like a side who meant business. They knew their jobs and stuck manfully to them, showing superb discipline in the face of some pretty rough treatment from their hosts.

Then came a free-kick on the edge of the area. Up stepped Mario Lucic -

he of the "Cliftonville are weak" blasts in the previous week's press -

but what a save from John Connolly! Lucic then smashed the post with a strike so powerful that its collision with the woodwork could be heard even above the expectant roars of the home support and the gasps of relief on the away terrace.

Half-time and a race back towards the tunnel to ensure the players could hear our messages of support and encouragement. Quite how they'd been able to maintain such a high level of performance in such energy-sapping heat was anyone's guess, especially when you consider that mere singing and clapping had all but knackered our fans. Whoever used the interval to stock up on and share out bottles of water was a Godsend.

If the first-half had been tough to watch then the second 45 minutes was nearly enough to make you give up football altogether.

Connolly's heroics continued but the exploits of the outfield players cannot be understated. Attack after attack came and went, still 0-0 and the clock was ticking. Twenty minutes remained, which



was annoying because I was sure there'd only been 15 to go the last time I checked. It had reached the stage where you were looking for anything to keep you from actually watching the match - be it the tennis courts behind us, the ever-decreasing enthusiasm of the Ultra's flag-wavers or even the bloody fire engine on the running track. Hold on, there was a fire engine on the track in Latvia too. And, hitherto unknown to myself and Rick, we had spent the entire game stood on the seventh row of terracing. The omens are in place, we're going to do this.

Every near miss sparked cries of anguish among the Cibalia support, while the Red Army roared as though we'd scored a goal ourselves - never more so than when, following a stop from Connolly, a striker raced in to slot into an open goal only to crash his effort against the side netting. I couldn't watch anymore, I had to re-gather myself in private with a short walk along the back row.

The same oohs and aahs emanated from the home end (especially when first Mark Patterson and then Liam Boyce spurned opportunities to end our anxiety) and, out of nowhere, we'd played the regulation time. Up went the board for three additional minutes... and I don't know why, but I chose that precise moment to type up the victory texts for fellow fans back home and, after saving them in my drafts folder, removed my glasses lest they get broken or lost in the celebrations which were now within touching distance.

I wouldn't normally consider such classic jinx-inducing sequences but, again, it just felt right. Until Cibalia forced a corner in the 94th minute. They were going to score here and it would be all my fault. But no, it's headed high over the top... and you just knew we were safe.

It was hard to contain your emotions until the final whistle confirmed things but you just knew that, once this goal kick was taken, the match would be over. A sudden wave of relief surged through our veins as we awaited the referee's signal and, as he raised the whistle to his lips, sheer carnage broke out among a

delirious Red Army. Some hugged, some clenched their fists to the Heavens, some roared themselves hoarse Maradona-style and, in the rare glimpses your own celebration allowed you to have of your fellow fans, what a sight it was to see others doing 'the Mourinho' and racing along the terraces at full speed with arms aloft, stopping momentarily to share in others' delight with incoherent babble and



the sort of acrobatics which defied the exhaustion levels that had engulfed us little more than an hour earlier.

My own over-riding emotion was to await Lucic's departure towards the tunnel and remind him of what he'd said ahead of that first leg in Belfast but, after receiving a barracking from their own players, Cibalia's players made an understandably hasty retreat, leaving us to celebrate alone and, having previously echoed to the tune of rugged anthems in Croatian tongue, now the local air was filled with the finest tunes from the Cliftonville songbook.

The trip back to the hotel and the hours upon hours of celebrations which followed (including watching footage of the game on the bar's plasma screens) would fill an edition of *The Red Eye* on its own - suffice to say we didn't let the occasion pass us by - but my most vivid memory was lying in that Bridal Suite, completely drained but still unable to sleep. The sights and sounds of the match replayed over and over in my head and I remember an overwhelming sense of gratitude that, when you think about those unlucky sods who spent literally their whole lives watch-

ing Cliftonville deliver disappointment after disappointment, I was lucky enough to have seen Cliftonville secure famous away results in Europe twice inside the last three years. Memories of the final whistle (a bizarre thing to fantasise about in itself) sent me off to sleep but it seemed like only five minutes until it was time to kick off the return journey - but not before Barry had sunk the black to earn me a second pool success in three days.

It's amazing what wonders a victory can do for improving your experience of a bumpy train ride in yet more sweltering heat and this four-hour journey was infinitely more enjoyable than yesterday's - but I still wasn't for venturing near the window just incase.

The police once again greeted us back in Serbia and we were led directly to taxis, which joined yet another convoy through the city and back towards the airport. Coin Football - which drew quite a crowd, it must be said - helped pass the remaining time and, as we gazed at the lightning storms from above on the flight, the significance of the team's achievement began to really sink in.

Our flight had been delayed a little because, in the words of our pilot, "chemical smoke had been discovered in the airport" (found nothing about that on Google, which leads me to believe he was simply looking for any excuse to avoid Luton), while Rick took exception to the requirement for a plane to receive permission for take-off on the grounds that, as the biggest thing in the world, the sky would hardly notice one extra plane in it - he nearly has a point there.

Seven hours in a (closed) Luton airport overnight before negotiating your way past thousands of easyJet passengers - each attempting to check into one of 11 scheduled flights within one hour of each other - is nobody's idea of fun... so just imagine what that would have been like to go through if we'd lost. God bless those red shoes.

(Oh and we're heading for that same pre-match meal tonight as well. You just never know.)



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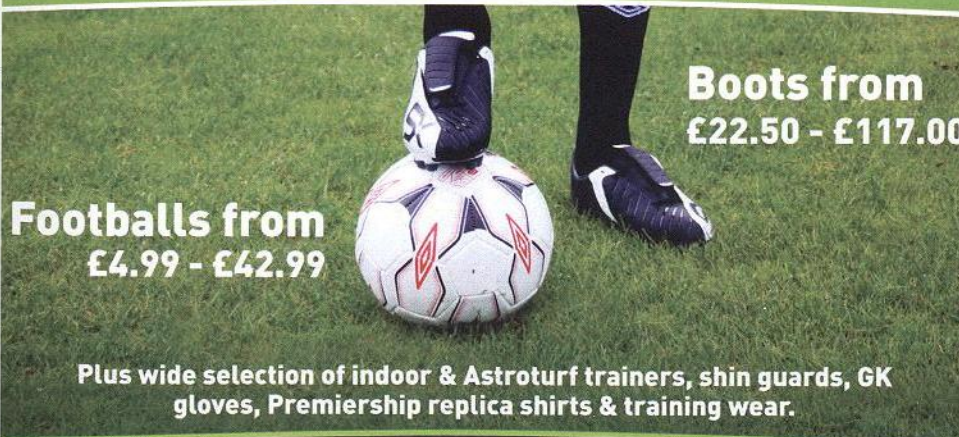
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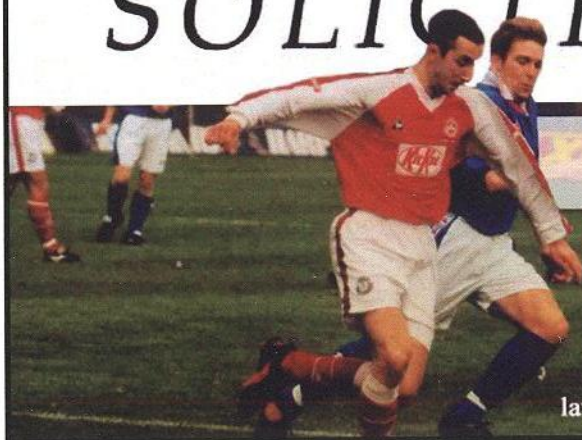
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IN THE RED CORNER



**JOHN
CONNOLLY**

DATE OF BIRTH
February 1, 1977
DEBUT
January 29, 2005
v Portadown

Originally brought to the Club as a short-term loan signing in January 2005, the former Republic of Ireland Under 21 international completed a permanent move from Institute in the summer of 2006 and holds the distinction of being the only Cliftonville goalkeeper in history to have kept a clean sheet in a European match having done so against FC Dinaburg in 2007 and both legs of the recent tie with HNK Cibalia.

Appearances: 197 Goals: 0



**PAUL
McKANE**

DATE OF BIRTH
March 16, 1987
DEBUT
December 27, 2004
v Crusaders

A local lad, Paul made his first appearance for Cliftonville aged just 17 in the white-hot atmosphere of a Christmas Derby with North Belfast rivals Crusaders, keeping a clean sheet in a 2-0 success.

Now 23, McKane has enjoyed loan spells with Carrick Rangers and performed admirably early last season when called upon to deputise for the injured Connolly, whom he continues to battle for a place in the team.

Appearances: 6 Goals: 0



**CIARAN
DONAGHY**

DATE OF BIRTH
February 26, 1982
DEBUT
September 15, 2001
v Ards

Son of former Manchester United, Chelsea and Northern Ireland defender Mal Donaghy, Ciarán is another player in his second spell at Solitude. After signing from Crusaders in 2001, he quit the Club when his studies took him to England and, following his return - via Ballymena United and Donegal Celtic - famously netted the second of the Reds' injury-time goals against Linfield in the 2009 Irish Cup Semi Final Replay.

Appearances: 139 Goals: 6



LIAM FLEMING

DATE OF BIRTH
July 2, 1981
DEBUT
August 12, 2000
v Ballymena United

Liam joined Cliftonville from Limavady United in a swap deal which saw Michael McMenamin go the other way and has, in the decade since signing, proven a loyal servant, captaining the team to that historic first European win in Latvia.

Honeymoon meant he would miss out on the Reds' most recent continental adventures but he will hope to mark his return this evening as the new domestic campaign looms.

Appearances: 307 Goals: 9



BARRY HOLLAND

DATE OF BIRTH
May 10, 1984
DEBUT
August 26, 2008
v Coleraine

Famed for his exceptional aerial prowess, Barry is a versatile defender who also poses a huge threat in the opposition's penalty area as an unforgettable bullet header in a 2006 CIS Cup Semi Final defeat of Crusaders testified in dramatic fashion.

Younger brother of Mark, 'Hawk' - as he is known - is a current Northern Ireland U23 international and penned a new contract with Cliftonville in the summer.

Appearances: 143 Goals: 5



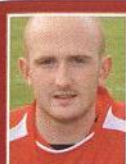
PETER HUTTON

DATE OF BIRTH
March 2, 1973
DEBUT
January 16, 2010
v Lisburn Distillery

A player who has been there and done it all throughout a trophy-laden career, the Derry City legend arrived at Cliftonville in January and played an integral role in the team's surge towards a title challenge.

Always cool under pressure, 'Pizza' lends some much-needed and valued experience to a young Reds team and is no stranger to CSKA, having skippered Derry against the Bulgarians last summer.

Appearances: 20 Goals: 2



RYAN CATNEY

DATE OF BIRTH
February 17, 1987
DEBUT
August 11, 2007
v Limavady United

Signed from Lisburn Distillery in the summer of 2007, the former Reading man quickly gained a reputation for his no-nonsense displays from the centre of the park and his all-action performances earned favour from the Cliftonville support, who were quick to nickname him 'Crazy Horse'.

A Northern Ireland U23 international, Ryan has developed into one of the Reds' most consistent performers in recent times.

Appearances: 111 Goals: 3



GEORGE McMULLAN

DATE OF BIRTH
August 4, 1981
DEBUT
January 12, 2002
v Ards

George, who turned 29 yesterday, is another player who progressed to the senior side via the Reserves and has proven himself a highly versatile performer since making the breakthrough eight years ago, featuring in every outfield position at one time or another.

Something of a deadball specialist, 'Wee Geordie' smashed a last-day double against Glentoran to help secure second place in the table.

Appearances: 325 Goals: 56



KIERAN O'CONNOR

DATE OF BIRTH
August 29, 1981
DEBUT
June 23, 2007
v FC Dinaburg

The much-travelled midfielder looks to have finally found a home at Cliftonville and introduced himself to the fans with a goal on his debut against FC Dinaburg in the 2007 InterToto Cup, maintaining his reputation as one of the Irish League's most potent threats from the centre of the park.

Happy to do his bit for the team, Kieran featured on the wing at times last season but is undoubtedly at his best through the middle.

Appearances: 133 Goals: 24



DECLAN O'HARA

DATE OF BIRTH
February 4, 1983
DEBUT
January 20, 2004
v Glenavon

The former Reading defender grew up little more than a wayward free-kick away from Solitude and fulfilled his ambition of playing for the Reds when he was signed from Coleraine to help the Club stave off the very real threat of relegation in 2004 - a feat towards which he made a very significant contribution.

By no means a prolific scorer, Decky netted his first Cliftonville goal in a 3-0 win over Linfield in September 2006.

Appearances: 230 Goals: 3



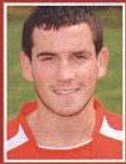
RONAN SCANNELL

DATE OF BIRTH
May 11, 1979
DEBUT
October 9, 1999
v Newry Town

Widely regarded as one of the finest talents in Irish League football over the last 10 years, Ronan progressed from the Club's reserve side, making his debut aged just 19 and, following a two-year spell with Ards from 2003-05, he returned to Solitude and has since played a key role in the team's continued progression.

Along with elder brother Chris, Ronan's 10 European appearances is a Club record.

Appearances: 358 Goals: 19



AARON SMYTH

DATE OF BIRTH
August 25, 1987
DEBUT
November 26, 2005
v Larne

The 2007/08 NI Football Writers' Young Player of the Year, Aaron was thrown in at the deep end when an injury crisis forced him into the side at the age of 18 but appeared assured and composed up against more experienced opponents - a trait he has maintained ever since.

Injury curtailed his involvement last term but he has returned refreshed and reinvigorated for action this pre-season.

Appearances: 107 Goals: 4



MARK PATTERSON

DATE OF BIRTH
October 9, 1989
DEBUT
July 17, 2008
v FC Copenhagen

Son of boss Eddie, Mark joined from Ballyclare Comrades in the summer of 2008 and found himself more heavily involved with the first-team than had been expected owing to an injury crisis but proved himself capable of stepping up to the plate, adding a number of important goals along the way.

A move to university in England means it's likely the 20-year-old will undergo a loan switch to a club nearer his new temporary abode this season.

Appearances: 35 Goals: 5



LIAM BOYCE

DATE OF BIRTH
April 8, 1991
DEBUT
October 1, 2008
v Glentoran

The young striker announced his elevation to the first team with a goal in a 2-2 draw with Linfield at the tail-end of the 2008/09 season and carried that form over into last year when he not only earned the Club's Golden Boot Award, but was named as Carling's Young Footballer of the Year by the NI Football Writers who, following a public vote, also handed him the Goal of the Season award for his sensational strike against Distillery.

Appearances: 64 Goals: 20



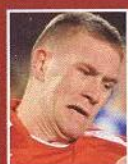
STEPHEN GARRETT

DATE OF BIRTH
April 2, 1987
DEBUT
July 15, 2010
v HNK Cibalia

One of the most impressive youngsters in Irish League football over the last few years, Cliftonville were delighted to see off the advances of a host of other clubs to land Garrett's signature this summer.

The pacey former Linfield youth product has fine-tuned his talents at Newry City in recent times and, though suspension will rule him out tonight, he has already demonstrated his worth in the Euro campaign to date.

Appearances: 3 Goals: 0



CONAL BURNS

DATE OF BIRTH
January 31, 1990
DEBUT
February 23, 2010
v Coleraine

One of the most recent players to make the breakthrough from the Reserves, Conal had an impressive debut when thrust into a titanic battle with Coleraine towards the end of last season.

Although Cliftonville lost the match, Burns was instrumental in the team's bombardment of the Bannside's goal and, having been a regular on the subs' bench, will look to press for further involvement this year.

Appearances: 2 Goals: 0



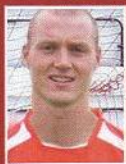
MARK BURNS

DATE OF BIRTH
January 16, 1988
DEBUT
February 27, 2010
v Sligo Rovers

The 22-year-old has been one of the most impressive and consistent performers in the Reserves over recent seasons and has been on the fringes of first-team activity for the last 12 months.

He made his competitive debut when an inexperienced Reds team completed Setanta Sports Cup formalities with defeat to Sligo Rovers in February and did enough to suggest he will enjoy further involvement.

Appearances: 1 Goals: 0



CIARAN CALDWELL

DATE OF BIRTH
October 10, 1989
DEBUT
August 8, 2009
v Ballymena United

Scorer of the goal which saw off HNK Cibalia in the last round, 'Tull' was originally signed as a defender when he joined from Donegal Celtic but now finds himself more heavily involved in midfield.

He has, however, also operated as a striker and even took over goalkeeping responsibilities - keeping a clean sheet in the process - when injury ended John Connolly's involvement in the 4-0 victory over Linfield last season.

Appearances: 40 Goals: 3



MARK HOLLAND

DATE OF BIRTH
July 20, 1978
DEBUT
August 12, 2005
v Larne

Mark wrote his name into Cliftonville folklore when he scored the goal which secured the Club's first ever win in Europe and, though better known for his abilities as a striker, 'Dutchy' - who missed the majority of last season through injury - is equally capable at the other end of the pitch and performed admirably there in both legs against HNK Cibalia, though an injury picked up in Croatia will rule him out of action in the short-term.

Appearances: 180 Goals: 34



MARTIN JONES

DATE OF BIRTH
February 13, 1990
DEBUT
August 11, 2009
v PSNI

Handed an opportunity to impress in a routine victory over PSNI at the beginning of last season, Jones grabbed the opportunity with both hands and earned the biggest cheer of the night when he netted an exquisite solo goal late on.

Blessed with bags of pace, Jones offers a useful outlet on the flanks but has proven a valued commodity through the middle for both the Reserve and senior teams.

Appearances: 14 Goals: 1



CHRIS SCANNELL

DATE OF BIRTH
September 7, 1977
DEBUT
September 1, 1998
v Ballymena United

The Club captain was named Ulster Footballer of the Year in 2009 and has scored in excess of 100 goals for the team - no mean feat for a player who sat out nearly three years through injury and work commitments.

Chris penned a new long-term deal just over 12 months ago and his impressive workrate and ability led to Cibalia's manager suggesting he could have made a name for himself in the English Premier Division.

Appearances: 343 Goals: 122

A GOOD TEAM ON PAPER

Paul Treanor trawls through the archives to see what the scribes were saying in yesteryear

Crues rock as Reds roll

CLIFTONVILLE claimed top spot with a four star Seaview show on August 26, 2000. Goals from Mickey Donnelly, man of the match Tommy McCallion, Chris Scannell and Aiden O'Kane earned a merited victory over Crusaders and sent them to the summit of the table on goal difference. The original game of two halves - the first had 0-0 written all over it, not much action or

skill on show, no goals either. The second livened up, though, and was only five minutes old when the Reds broke the deadlock; Michael Collins forced a corner on the right, O'Kane fired it over and Donnelly headed home. Two minutes later McCallion rifled in from 18 yards to double the lead. The Reds, with more experienced players and greater finishing power,

looked more organised and more skilful than Crusaders who had little to offer. A mix up between the Crues keeper and defender Ciaran Donaghy allowed Chris Scannell to grab a third and O'Kane fired in the fourth at the death. **Reds:** Ingham, Fleming, R Scannell, Small, Davey, O'Kane, Murray, Collins, C Scannell, McCallion, Donnelly. **Subs:** Wall, Mulvenna, Rooney

SUPER REDS ARE SIX-HIT!

CONFIDENT Cliftonville steam-rolled their way into the quarter finals of the League Cup with a swashbuckling display against Bangor at Solitude on August 15, 1995.

New boy Ciaran Feehan and hard working midfielder Mickey Donnelly were the toast of the Reds, both grabbing two goals apiece, the others coming from Shaun Strang and Tim McCann.

It was Bangor who started the brightest though, actually grabbing the opening goal after only six minutes.

Cliftonville hit back straight away, Strang diving in to head home a McCann cross for the equaliser.

It was another 20 minutes before the Reds' deserved lead arrived, a fine Strang effort crashed of the bar, with the alert Feehan on hand to steer home.

McCann made it 3-1 from a Tommy McDonald clearance and an amazing two goals in 60 seconds from Mickey Donnelly - a firm six yard shot and a 15 yard header - ended any Bangor resistance, with the icing on the cake coming from Feehan in the last minute, side footing home a cross from man of the match Donnelly.

Reds: Rice, Hill, Flynn, Tabb, Kerr, Strang, McCann, Sliney, Feehan, McDonald, Donnelly. **Sub:** Davey

Friars tucks in the winner as Eddie guides Reds to first win

A COMMANDING first half display from Cliftonville was enough to give caretaker Manager Eddie Patterson his first three points as boss when the Reds visited Larne for a CIS Cup match on August 12, 2005. Sean Friars was particularly inspirational, ably assisted by fellow midfielder Conor Downey, claiming the winning goal and impressing for the visitors. Downey delivered a perfect cross for Friars to glance the ball past the helpless Alex Spackman. The home side looked disjointed, but responded to their manager's half time tirade, looking a new side after the break.

Gary McCutcheon and Mark Dickson had good chances, but found Reds keeper Paul Straney in top form. Andy Cleary was red-carded after a second 'altercation' halfway through the second half and this knocked the fight out of Larne. Debut boy Mark Holland had a good chance to double the advantage but, after coolly lifting the ball over a defender, flashed his volley just over. **Reds:** Straney, Fleming, G McMullan, Mulvenna, O'Hara, Holland, Cleary, O'Loughlin, Kennedy, Downey, Friars. **Subs:** McConnell, C McMullan, Morgan

SQUADS



Cliftonville

1. John Connolly
2. Liam Fleming
3. Ronan Scannell
4. Barry Holland
5. Declan O'Hara
6. Ciarán Donaghy
7. Mark Holland
8. George McMullan
9. Chris Scannell
10. Stephen Garrett
11. Peter Hutton
12. Aaron Smyth
13. Paul McKane
14. Ciarán Caldwell
16. Liam Boyce
17. Ryan Catney
18. Kieran O'Connor
19. Mark Patterson
22. Conal Burns



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1. Zdravko Chavdarov
2. Pavel Vidanov
3. Tomi Kostadinov
4. Kostadin Stoyanov
5. Todor Yanchev
6. Giuseppe Aquaro
7. Spas Delev
8. Rumen Trifonov
9. Dormushali Saidhodzha
10. Rui Miguel
11. Kristian Velinov
12. Ivan Karadzhev
13. Bojdar Stoychev
14. Dimitar Iliev
15. Elliot Grandin
17. Atanas Zehirov
18. Boris Galchev
19. Apostol Popov
20. Nikolay Manchev
21. Kosta Yanev
23. Tiero William
24. Alexander Tonev
25. Yordan Minev
27. Martin Dechev
28. Marquinhos
29. Gregory Nelson

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Mr Maxim Layushkin (Russia)

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FOURTH OFFICIAL

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