

Illistrin's proud football history recorded



Seamus Murphy and Ciaran McElwaine.

The seeds were sown for organised schoolboy football in Illistrin in the mid-1970s when a new priest came to St. Eunan's Cathedral.

by Declan Kerr

Fanad native Fr. Kieran McAtee identified the sporting need not only for Illistrin but across the whole Letterkenny area. In 1975 he packed a full Illistrin team into his small brown Fiat 127 for a first ever friendly fixture against Iona at the St. Conal's Hospital football ground.

And as they say the rest is history as Illistrin Schoolboys Football Club has become one of the biggest in Donegal with 13 teams that includes three girls sides with excellent playing facilities at Corry Park. Around 320 youngsters are expected to be involved with the teams this year.

On Thursday night a snapshot of the history of the club over the past 50 years was presented to a full house at Century Cinemas in Letterkenny. The video documentary 'Just Another Year'

was produced by club PRO Karl Sweeney over the past year and charts the humble beginnings to the present day with contributions from Fr. Kieran McAtee, Cllr Ciaran Brogan, Paddy Carr, Seamus Devine, Paul Skinnader, Michael Kerr, Conor O'Reilly and Shane Blaney.

According to the records Michael Kerr was the first Illistrin goalscorer netting two in the inaugural Letterkenny & District Schoolboys 1976-77 season. Cllr Brogan played in teams in the early 80s along with his brothers Brian and Martin, Evan Bonner, Seamus Sweeney, Sammy Keenan (RIP), Seamus and Sean Diver and John Kerr. There were also contributions from current managers including Seamus Murphy, Paddy McDaid, Eugene Duffy and John Haran.

The legacy left by the late Seamus Corry was also acknowledged in the documentary. The Corry home looks down on the park which is named after him. Seamus was the chief groundsman and took great pride in looking after the facilities. He was also involved in the management of the girls teams when his daughters were playing. Seamus' wife Fidelma spoke about the huge part that Illistrin F.C. played in his and the family's life.

Others who have passed away including Terry Leyden and Tom McGinty were remembered for their key roles in the early days. The playing field back then was up at the Mountain Top over past the Cottages. In later years the facilities



Fr. Kieran McAtee receiving a presentation from Annraoi Cheevers in recognition of his efforts in paving the way for formation of Illistrin Schoolboys F.C. in 1976.



Cllr. Ciaran Brogan with Shaunie and Kevin Holian.



Dylan Sweeney, Jack Sweeney, Jamie McDaid, Stephen McDaid, Mattis McDaid and Mary Sweeney.



Dkuunu McGlynn, Tony McElwaine, Eoghain Cheevers, and Eoghain Duffy.



Fabian and Patricia Corry with their sons Oisin and Oran.



Mary Kennedy, Aoife Lenehan, Orlaith Doherty and Aoibheann McFadden



Stephen and Kyle Robinson, Maurice and Orla McWalther.

at the Diamond Park in Ballyare were used before the new ground opened at Illistrin.

Paul Skinnader was a key player in the project to develop the playing facilities adjacent to the national

school.

He was part of the negotiating team to acquire the land from the Russell family and in sourcing state funding to develop the grass pitch and the astro turf facility. That was



Niamh Leneghan, Mollie Robinson and Katie Ryan.