

# Olé Days

## ITALIA '90

25 years on



THE IRISH TIMES



eBooks

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## Waddock only surprise in Charlton's squad

*Peter Byrne, May 18<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Gary Waddock, the combative Millwall midfielder was yesterday rewarded for an exemplary exercise in courage with a place among the 22 players Jack Charlton proposes to take to Italy for the World Cup finals next month. Waddock, with just one international appearance to his credit in the last four and a half years is the only controversial selection in a squad which Charlton hastens to describe as provisional. The names of the World Cup party will not be registered officially at FIFA headquarters in Zurich until hours before the May 29th deadline expires but, providing nothing untoward happens in the next fortnight, the 22 named yesterday for the final warm-up game against Turkey at Izmir on May 27th, will be travelling on for the great Italian adventure. Among those disappointed are John Anderson, a member of the European championship squad in West Germany two years ago and the Swindon Town players Tony Galvin and Alan McLoughlin who probably sensed the worst some time back. But, for Waddock all is pure joy. "I thought I had a slim chance after I was called up for the game against the Soviet Union but I daren't even dream about making the cut for Italy for fear that something would go wrong", he said. "This is one of the happiest days I've known in football and I am grateful to all those who, in one way or another, made it possible. These last four years have been difficult but thankfully it has now all come right and I've got the prize I've always coveted." Waddock, who gained 17 caps before serious knee injury put him out of the game, returned to English League football with Millwall for the first time in three years last September but, because of injury, he has made only a handful of appearances for the London club. Inevitably, his inclusion in the squad will be interpreted as something of a gamble but, in a situation in which Charlton feels he needs cover for Ray Houghton down the right side of midfield, his choice was readily justified by the manager. There is recognition also for Bernie Slaven, the Scot who qualifies for Ireland through his ancestry. Slaven's international experience amounts to no more than 155 minutes but he showed enough in the games against Wales and Finland to convince Charlton that he can contribute to his overall strategy. Frank Stapleton, no more than a fringe member of the squad during the last year, was thought to be under some pressure in proving his claims for inclusion but, in reality, he was always going to travel. Sadly, for him, however, his days as a member of the first team are over and his participation in Italy will, at best, amount to no more than late substitutions. John Sheridan, Sheffield Wednesday's gifted but enigmatic midfield player, also qualifies for one of the last places in the squad but, like Stapleton, his chances of playing depend primarily on the fitness of others. John Byrne eliminated any lingering doubts about his credentials with a competent display in midfield against Finland while Niall Quinn and David Kelly, reborn in the "B" international against England at Cork in March will also travel. The hard luck story is that Alan McLoughlin who, almost certainly, would have made the squad had it not been for Swindon Town's second division promotion-chasing commitments which prevented him from playing in the games with the Soviet Union and Finland. Swindon's progression to the final of the play-offs against Sunderland at Wembley on May 27th automatically rules him out of the Turkish trip and Charlton was not prepared to undertake the gamble of bringing an uncapped player onto a stage such as Italy will provide. "I am of course, disappointed but at least I have the consolation that Swindon may go up and I will be playing first division football next season," he said. "This is a great opportunity lost but I hope that Jack Charlton and Maurice Setters will not forget me for the European Championship next season. In fact, McLoughlin could yet qualify for a dramatic reprieve for there are persistent rumours that Ronnie Whelan's foot injury is giving cause for growing concern. Whelan broke a bone in his foot five weeks ago and is not due to have the plaster removed until next Tuesday. "Only then will I know how I stand but

obviously it's all a little worrying," said Whelan. "I would like to play at least one game before the World Cup finals but that may not now be possible." Anderson's disappointment is compounded by the fact that his club Newcastle United were eliminated by Sunderland in their second division play-off semi-final tie on Wednesday.

## Musical departure fails to get Jack singing

*Gerry Thornley, May 26<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Just past 6.30 in the morning is not a good time to approach Jack Charlton. As the Irish squad set off for Turkey en route to the World Cup finals there was, despite the ungodly hour, a predictably noisy send-off. An Italian folk group called I Tari, from Caltagirone in the province of Catania, were provided courtesy of the Italian Institute. But Jack was unimpressed. "I don't like this," commented Jack as he nursed a coffee amidst the fanfare all around him. "It's ruddy ridiculous. Should have been done yesterday." To be fair, he had a point. One sensed he and the players couldn't wait for the sanctuary of the EI 664 to Zurich. The squad's physio and general mother hen, Mick Byrne was in altogether better spirits and this despite the prevailing concern regarding injuries to Ronnie Whelan and Kevin Moran. "I'm still working on Ronnie and Kevin. Ronnie should be all right. He's worked on it since he came here, the same as Kevin with his achilles tendon problem, and I'm hopeful they'll be all right. I know how hard they're working on it as well and I will certainly do the business over the next two weeks." Byrne, an emotive man at the best of times, admitted: "Yeah, it was a bit emotional leaving the hotel, and saying goodbye to all the people who have looked after us over the last four years. And now this is the final stage. People have been great the way they've looked after us and we're going to try and do the business for them. Whatever happens out there, no matter how we do, we'll be doing our best. There's no doubt about that." Even the departure for the European Championship finals two years ago hardly compared to this. This is different. This is another level — it's the World Cup. You just can't describe it, you feel like breaking down every time you think of it. But it's great." Meanwhile, in front of the assorted cameras and lighting. Jack was loosening up a little. Needless to say, he was not about to make extravagant predictions. Regarding Ireland's chances, he said: "I've no idea. I don't know how we'll get on. Bobby Robson doesn't know how his team will get on. Franz Beckenbauer doesn't know. All we can say about the competition is that there will be some tremendous teams in it and some tremendous players in it and we're going to compete in it and we'll do our best. "You can never go into a competition talking about you're not going to win it. There's always a possibility you might." Jack paused for a moment. "It's unlikely." And the mood in the camp? "Squad's great, despite all of this." he said impatiently. "We'd rather get on the plane; have a game of cards, get on with the game and get out of it. This is holding us up really." Jack admitted that the dispute over players bonuses on the eve of departure had been partly his fault. "That was always going to be solved. In a way it was my fault by putting an embargo on the players that they couldn't talk about money until we were going to Italy virtually. They took me at my word." As departure neared, Charlton was asked whether he was excited by it all. "I'm not excited at all actually, I'm a bit tired. We're looking forward to the flight, we're looking forward to the game on Sunday; we're just starting preparing now." The reception, while not entirely meeting with his approval, did bring a smile to his face. "I'm always surprised by the receptions we've had in Ireland." In truth, two weeks in Turkey and Malta did not allow for sufficient acclimatisation. "We should have had maybe a year and a half or two years. Maybe we should have been born in the sun. But we weren't and we aren't. We'll go out and prepare in a logical and sensible way. The players needed a rest after a long hard English football season. I would like to have been out there for a month but we haven't got time to go for a month. So we'll go for about two weeks and two days, and we'll do our best to acclimatise. We'll work very hard at it and we'll, see on the day whether it was right or hot." The team which will play Turkey tomorrow will not necessarily bear any resemblance to the one that will eventually play England on June 11th, if only because Ronnie Whelan is still nursing his ankle injury. With regard to playing Turkey in the European Championship qualifiers next season, Charlton asked

rhetorically: "Is it a good idea for them to show their hand to us? We've got to play Turkey, we'd like to see them. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't. So we're going to have a look at Turkey, they're going to have a look at us and we'll see what happens next year. At the moment all I'm interested in is preparing for the World Cup. I haven't given the European Championships a lot of thought yet." Security can rarely have been so relaxed. The camera crews ensured that. With that, it was time to go. The players posed for a last photograph or twenty as they boarded the plane. Maybe it was the early morning mist but it seemed that tears were swelling up in the eyes of two of those who have waited so long for this moment — Frank Stapleton and Packie Bonner. Fifty odd insomniacs waved goodbye from behind the barriers. The turnout will surely be inestimably larger upon their return. Dr Tony O'Neill, the FAI's general secretary, caused mild concern before arriving on the runway, last of all. One sensed this wasn't the Flying Doctor's best time of the day either. "It's a totally new venture for everybody so we'll just hope for the best. It's going to be very difficult obviously. I suppose the first match is the crucial match of the World Cup." And, in the time honoured tradition, EI 664, alias the St Cormac, eventually took to the air 28 minutes later than scheduled. But, never can the old careworn cliché have been more applicable - better late than never.

## McLoughlin drafted in as Charlton opts for balance in squad

*Paddy Agnew, May 30<sup>th</sup> 1990*

As the skies clouded over, the winds blew and the temperature dropped, Malta yesterday seemed far removed from the anticipated heat and passion of Italia '90. Yet, the surprise omission of Millwall midfielder Gary Waddock from Jack Charlton's final squad of 22 served as a brisk reminder that the very real business of World Cup soccer is not far away. When called on to explain this first significant move of his World Cup campaign, Charlton had no hesitation in pointing out that the replacement of Waddock by Swindon's Alan McLoughlin had been dictated by the need to have some cover for the currently recuperating Ray Houghton. Given the question mark over Houghton's fitness, Charlton feels that he has no option but to draft another, similar type of midfielder into the squad. "It's my job to balance out the 22 players and see that I've got cover for everywhere and the way we see things, this was the only move. McLoughlin is a very good runner, he sees things, supports people and scores goals. He's a good player, we've been very impressed with him but we haven't been able to get hold of him in the last three months because of his club commitment." For the time being, Charlton hopes that McLoughlin's role in the Irish World Cup challenge will prove merely that of providing cover. However, should Ray Houghton not prove fit enough to play against England in Ireland's opening game in Cagliari, then Charlton will have no qualms about selecting McLoughlin. "McLoughlin will only be thrown in at the deep end if we need him. But, we haven't got a player like him in the squad. I've explained this to Gary (Waddock), I've told him that this is the area that concerns us. I can anchor the midfield OK, but it's getting people forward from the midfield that is our problem and McLoughlin's the one to do that." Charlton went on to complain that, ideally, he could have done with another week's recuperation time before having to name his final 22. Given the FIFA requirement that the final squad be registered yesterday, Charlton (and many other managers) finds himself in the difficult position of having to take a risk in naming players who, at this very moment, are far from match ready. Clearly Charlton has little option but to take a chance with the experienced and crucial trio of Ronnie Whelan (broken foot bone), Ray Houghton (pelvic strain) and Kevin Moran (hamstring strain). However, if one of these players should have the misfortune to break down in training this week, then no further adjustments can be made to the squad. Charlton commented "I know that FIFA have to have a day by which to name the squad, but this is a serious competition and we've all come out of a bloody hard football league season. With all the problems we have, we could have done with a little more time." Obviously, the most dejected figure in the Irish camp yesterday was that of Gary Waddock. Jack Charlton had taken him aside on Monday afternoon at La Vallett airport to tell him that his services were no longer required. Even at the distance of 24 hours, however, the hurt showed. Sportingly, Waddock tried to put a brave face on his bitter disappointment. As a player who has struggled back to international soccer from a situation in which medical opinion had adjudged his career at an end, Waddock probably felt that he knows all there is to know about the sling and arrows of outrageous fortune. Being excluded from a World Cup squad at the very last moment, though, has probably been the worst experience of his professional life. When asked how he felt, Waddock responded honestly: "How would you feel? It's very hard for me, but I cannot really say anything. I didn't know it was coming but, obviously, until the final 22 is named you cannot say that you are in it. I wish Alan McLoughlin all the best and I congratulate him on getting into the first division. As far as Ireland are concerned, I hope they win the World Cup, it's as simple as that. I've no hard feelings." Waddock had been asked by Jack Charlton to stay on with the squad as a non-playing

23rd person. However, the Millwall player is not a total masochist. After a deal of thought, he has opted to return home to Ascot this morning. Apart from the Waddock affair, yesterday proved itself to be a day of routine training. True to his already declared intentions, Charlton had his squad out for two strenuous sessions in which the emphasis was firmly laid on building up fitness rather than playing with the ball. Inevitably, too, a number of players including Kevin Moran, Ronnie Whelan, Ray Houghton, Niall Quinn, David O'Leary and Kevin Sheedy all adopted individual and different programmes as they attempt to recover from a variety of injuries. Charlton intends to repeat yesterday's programme, both today and for the rest of this week.

## Italia 90 looks like 'a damn'd close thing'

*Paddy Agnew, June 1<sup>st</sup> 1990*

With the World Cup's opening match only a week away, the organisers have their fingers crossed — with good reason. There we are on the eve of the World Cup and Italy is all keyed up. Ready and raring to go. Italians have waited six years for this moment. This is Italy's chance to show the rest of the world what a sophisticated, technologically advanced, first-world economic power it really is. Or it should be. That is, were it not for the fact that electricians are still wiring up Rome's Olympic Stadium, that the area around the San Paolo in Naples looks like a bomb site, that the San Siro in Milan is presently recovering from a "transplant" of green grass and that all up and down the peninsula projects such as car parks, press centres and road improvements remain half finished. In truth, Italy's preparations for these World Cup finals present a mirror image of modern Italy: dynamic, innovative private enterprise on the one hand and corrupt, inefficient politicians and public services on the other. While the computer giants, Olivetti, intend to make this World Cup the most sophisticated, computer-linked media event ever, the Italian state cannot guarantee that the trains will run at all, let alone on time. There is no shortage of World Cup disaster stories. Take the fast link rail service from Rome's Fiumicino International airport to the centre of the city. Correction: to the south of the city. Inefficient public authorities, allied to a vociferous taxi driver lobby, ensured that the new fast link service leaves every new arrival in Italy in precisely the station (Ostiense) that he or she does not want to be in. The equivalent in Dublin would be to run a train service from Dublin Airport to Finglas. Or take the metro service to Vigna Clara, just beside Rome's Olympic stadium. Someone managed to build the tunnel entrance to the new station 10 metres wide, instead of the intended 18 metres. The result is that only one train can enter the station at a time since the 10 metre width allows enough room only for one train line and a platform. Since the station is itself a terminus, this will create no small problems. In a parliamentary report last month to the Italian Urban Areas Minister, Carmelo Conte, a three-man think tank estimated that the final cost of the World Cup to the Italian state would be £2.75 billion rather than the estimated £1.5 billion originally made available by ministerial decree. They also concluded that whilst the 12 World Cup stadiums would be ready in time, many other major infrastructural projects would not. (Here the report is referring to projects such as a car park at Turin Airport, a metro station in Milan, car parks near Rome, Naples, Florence and Ban stadiums and more besides).

Will Italy pull it off? Will Italy be able to stage a month long, 52-match tournament, involving 12 cities, 24 teams, 528 players, 6,000 journalists, 2 million soccer tourists, 2,600,000 match tickets, 147 television stations and 15 billion television viewers? For definitive answers, we will have to wait until July 9<sup>th</sup>, the day after the World Cup Final is scheduled to be played in Rome's Olympic Stadium. In fact, Italy will probably pull it off all right but, as the Duke of Wellington said on another famous occasion, it will have been "a damn'd close run thing". Why have Italian preparations run so far behind schedule? Why all the delays? Here, the answers are more immediate. Luca Cordero Di Montezemolo, director general of COL, the Italian World Cup Organising Committee, shakes his head ruefully and says: "We are the country that has broken all possible records for getting World Cup preparations complicated, a country that in five years has had five government crises and which, furthermore, on the very eve of the tournament had local government elections, which also delayed the decision making processes." Di Montezemolo is the first to point out that, although Italy was allocated these finals back in 1984, serious preparation for the tournament began only in the autumn of 1988. He has no doubt about where the blame lies: with the politicians. At both national and local

level, Italian politicians have treated the World Cup not as a great opportunity to improve the image of their city or country but rather as an appetising cake to be divided up among friends. For a long time now, the Italian ruling class (especially Christian Democrats and Socialists) has interpreted its political mandate as a permit to administer power and distribute favours rather than to actually govern, to draw up plans and take decisions. The advent of the World Cup was not going to change a national custom. For the organisation of a successful World Cup, nothing is more important than preparing the stadiums — changing seating arrangements and modernising where necessary. However, since all of Italy's stadiums are owned by local government authorities (with the single exception of Rome's Olympic Stadium which is owned by the Italian Olympic Committee), World Cup preparations had to begin with the Lord Mayors of the 12 cities (Rome, Milan, Bari, Bologna, Cagliari, Florence, Genoa, Naples, Palermo, Turin, Udine and Verona). Di Montezemolo recalls how, when he went on a tour of the 12 World Cup host cities in 1986 to discuss preparations for 1990, he was laughed at by Lord Mayors up and down the country, many of whom thought he was more than slightly mad. The typical response was: "What do you want, coming to talk to me about 1990? I won't even be in power in 1990 and, even if I am, we can talk about it in 1989." National government was not much more efficient. Central government funding of £1.35 billion for stadiums and other renovations was made available only in May of last year. Given such a start World Cup preparations are inevitably behind any reasonable schedule. Work on many sites has been carried out at a frenetic pace, with the result that the final bill on stadium renovations has jumped from an original estimate of £337 million to a probable final cost of £528 million. The three Italian trade union confederated giants (OIGL, OISL and UIL), claim that such is the pace of work that normal safety precautions have been ignored, resulting in 24 deaths and more than 670 injuries. Such is the unions concern that they have revoked an earlier agreement to implement a "strike truce" during the World Cup. Therefore, in theory, a bank strike, a train strike, an air traffic control strike, a television strike (all part of the rich fabric of recent Italian experience) could make the World Cup a very chaotic event indeed. As well as worrying about such possible, widespread strike action, Luca Di Montezemolo and his staff are presently more concerned about immediate, definite, problems such as the installation in the various stadiums of the necessary telecommunications hardware. In theory such equipment should be installed and tested well before any major event. Yet, since the builders were working on the stadiums of Naples, Rome and Florence until last weekend, the electrical and electronic wizards have been left little time for testing. One problem for which the Italian organisers are not to blame, of course, is the vexed security question. Apart from the obvious threat from English lager louts in Sardinia, there is always the possibility that a pressure group, Italian or not, may wish to use the unique platform afforded by the World Cup to draw attention to itself. Despite all of this, many Italians remain optimistic. Italy has not prepared as it might have prepared, but... the country's ability for last minute improvisation is not insignificant. At the end of the day, the combination of a large, enthusiastic, sell-out soccer audience, warm weather, good food, cheap wine and good soccer should compensate for autos traffic jams, hotel bed shortages, jammed phone lines and other problems.

## The tough-tackling negotiators

*Andy Pollak, June 1<sup>st</sup> 1990*

The FAI learned over the past years when it comes to tough bargaining about World Cup payments and bonuses the, Irish players are as highly organised and hard-nosed as any top trade unionist or venture capitalist. After the European championship Finals in 1988 they elected a four-man committee to represent them in all financial dealings with the FAI and commercial sponsors. It consisted of Liam Brady, Kevin Moran, Frank Stapleton and Ray Houghton. This was an inspired choice. Brady's eight years in Italy, negotiating with men like Gianni Agnelli, the boss of Juventus and Fiat, had made him a lot of money and sharpened his already considerable business instincts. He personally interviewed a number of potential business for the Irish player's pool such as Sean Kelly's manager Frank Quinn and the golfing impresario Roddy Carr, before deciding that the man he wanted was the untried Fintan Drury. He sees his own future after soccer in the area of professional sports management and has already made a successful start in helping to negotiate a generous deal for team-mate Tony Cascarino in his recent £1.5 million move to Aston Villa. Kevin Moran provides the committee with its formal financial expertise. He studied commerce at UCD — where he knew Fintan Drury — and on graduation worked for the Dublin accountancy firm of Oliver Freaney. Like Brady, he has made good use of his earnings from football, negotiating a good signing-on fee with his former Spanish club Gijon and now owning two profitable greeting card shops in Manchester. Frank Stapleton is widely respected in soccer for being a very straight and serious operator who, if he believes something is right for his career and his family, will stick to it without compromise. The story is told of how in the mid- Seventies he bargained with Arsenal to get rid of the ridiculous differential between his £56-a-week wages and the £750 paid to his more famous striking partner, the English international Malcolm MacDonald. The manager came back with an offer of £14 a week extra; Stapleton asked for a transfer, told the newspapers what London's richest club were paying him and kept up the pressure until he got what he wanted. Ray Houghton brings to the committee the traditional Glaswegian toughness in many matters. Unlike the other three members — or his Liverpool and Ireland teammate Ronnie Whelan — he has only in recent years, since his move to Liverpool, started to earn a sizeable wage from football. This makes it easy for him to identify with most of the players in the Irish squad, middle-rank English first and second division professionals, for whom this World Cup represents -their only realistic chance of making big money in their careers.

## Our great expectations

*Peter Byrne, June 5<sup>th</sup> 1990*

SUPPORTERS of the Republic of Ireland team were counselled yesterday against the dangers of unrealistic expectations as the last props in an elaborate presentation were being rolled into place throughout Italy in preparation for the start of the XIV World Cup on Friday. The Irish squad, currently preparing in Malta, will not be exposed to the pressures of one of the truly catholic occasions in international sport when they arrive in Sardinia, just hours before Argentina open their defence of the trophy against Cameroon in Milan's San Siro Stadium. Their reaction in the three days preceding the game against England at Cagliari may colour their subsequent performances and the mood of the nation for much of the next month. "Only those who have been there can relate to the special atmosphere of the World Cup finals and the different types of pressure it imposes on players," says Bobby Charlton. "The Irish are lucky in that Jack has already experienced that problem as a player and I think he'll be able to settle his lads and get them in the right frame of mind. The team supporters are different. Because of what happened in the European Championship finals two years ago, there is a feeling that the team will now do even better. Perhaps they will, but no less than England, they must approach every game as a mini-final and that adds up to enormous pressure. In that situation, I believe it is advisable that everybody keeps a sense of perspective and takes it a game at a time." That advice might, with profit, be imparted to the great majority of teams in Italy, for opinion among the cognoscenti of the game is that this year's championship finals will be the most competitive of all. In the aftermath of FIFA's decision in 1979 to increase the number of finalists from 16 to 24, there was a suspicion that the enlarged format would make for some grossly distorted scorelines in the first phase of the championship. Those fears were not substantiated in Spain, even less so in Mexico, and the certainty is that Italia 90 will produce an intense battle for survival from Day One. The general levelling up in standards derives from superior coaching and an awareness of tactical organisation which, when implemented properly, can reduce even the most imbalanced pairing to a matter of chance. "We may not have as many good players as the teams from Europe and South America, but I think we now know how to organise ourselves," says the Egyptian manager, Mohammed El Gohary. "Because of television, people in all parts of the world are aware of the way the game has evolved and as a result small teams will always have a chance of creating surprises." Those sentiments will not be lost on the shrewd men who have delivered the aristocrats of Brazilian, Argentinian, Italian, Dutch and West German football in pristine condition for the championship and yet, it will be a huge surprise if the eventual winners do not emerge from this group. Tradition is all against the South Americans, for, with the exception of Brazil in Sweden in 1958, no team has won the Cup when playing on a continent other than their own. The Brazilian team which introduced Pele to the world at large was an immensely talented combination, almost certainly more gifted than the side which manager Sebastiao Lazaroni will now take into action in the first phase games against Sweden, Scotland and Costa Rica. There have, unquestionably, been occasions when the Brazilians were imprisoned by their birthright, obligated by history to entertain the masses with the brand of cavalier football which spectators everywhere demanded. Adventure won minds but not, alas, silverware, and now, ironically, as Europe throws off many of the inhibitions which shackled the game here for much of the last decade, Brazil would appear to be moving in the opposite direction. Pragmatism was the name of their game in each of their qualifying meetings with Chile in which they married athleticism with the dull application more normally associated with European teams. That, in part, is attributable to the fact that the great majority of their better players are now involved in European club football but the end product is a team which looks better fitted for the challenge of scrambling results. Ricardo, Aldair and

Valdo were all centrally involved in Benfica's impressive progress in the European Cup and to these can be added the names of Carcca (Napoli), Dunga (Fiorentina) and Julio Cesar (Montpelier). As the only country to have been involved in all 13 World Cup finals, it is, perhaps, inevitable that every analysis of Italia'90 should start and end with Brazil and yet, the path ahead is strewn with hazard. Argentina, the holders, have only rarely performed to the limit of their potential since victory in Mexico and judged on their build up programme over the last 12 months, they are not nearly as well prepared as in 1986. That could prove deceptive, however, for in addition to established internationals of the quality of Nery Pumpido, Jose Luis Brown, Oscar Ruggeri and Jorge Burrachaga, they can call on the unique talent of Diego Maradona. It was said after Mexico that for all the advanced warning, the opposition had not legislated fully for Maradona's skill. That omission would be even more inexcusable now, for in spite of occasional problems in coping with responsibilities of being the world's best known footballer, his performances with Napoli this season have proved as influential as ever. Maradona, on the one stage still capable of motivating him fully, represents the champions most precious asset. The point at issue is whether some of his senior colleagues can again summon up the inspiration to feed his predatory instincts. Italy, driven by a burning ambition to become the first to win the title for a fourth time, may discover, as Spain did eight years ago, that home advantage can occasionally be counter-productive. Azeglio Vicini's team could scarcely have devised an easier task in the first phase grouping made up of Austria, Czechoslovakia and the USA, but the expectations and, with them, the pressures will grow with each consecutive game. Roberto Baggio's £7 million move from Fiorentina to Juventus makes him the costliest, if not the wealthiest, player in the championship and his flowing skills identify the power base of the Italian side in midfield. Roberto Donadoni and Giuseppe Gianni are convincing examples of that talent — the bigger question is whether they have the striking power to convert their creative talents into goals. Holland, the reigning European title holders, fit Jack Charlton's description of probable champions, as assessment which owes more to their achievements in West Germany two years ago than anything they produced in the World Cup preliminaries. That is attributable in part to Ruud Gullit's ongoing injury troubles, but even in the event of having to trade without Gullit's prolific skills, the Dutch have many of the requirements for victory and the opportunity of compensating for the enduring disappointment of defeat in the 1974 final in Munich and again in Buenos Aires four years later. Just how deeply their managerial crisis has effected the stability of the squad remains to be seen. But in Frank Rijkaard, Ronald Koeman, Jerald Vanenburg and, not least, the accomplished AC Milan striker, Marco Van Basten, theirs is a substantial base from which to build. West Germany, fated to be drawn in the same group as the Dutch in the qualifying series, did not deliver on their pedigree in the European Championship finals two years ago and their form in the intervening period has been relatively low key. No country has a finer record of consistency in the World Cup finals, however, and almost certainly, the countdown to Italia 90 will induce a corresponding response from Franz Beckenbauer's team. England's expectations, as ever, are greater than the sum of their component parts; and yet, it is worth remembering that in Mexico four years ago they gave the eventual winners, Argentina, a lot of problems in their quarter final tie. Age has probably taken the edge from two of the father figures of their team, Bryan Robson and Peter Shilton, but the cumulative talents of John Barnes, Chris Waddle, Gary Lineker and Terry Butcher still represent a formidable axis for Bobby Robson's team. Possible candidates for places in the semi-finals are the Soviet Union, a superbly organised team in the European finals, Spain, stronger now than at any time in the last 10 years, and Sweden, who went through their qualifying programme unbeaten in a group which included England and Portugal. For the Republic of Ireland there is the incentive of a place in the second phase of the championship and after that, who knows... Theirs is the misfortune to be drawn in one of the most competitive groups of all, a point which was given added substance after Egypt, the

apparent no hoppers of the quartet, had surprised Scotland 3-1 at Hampden Park. From a situation in which two points looked assured from the game, the ratings have changed to the point where the Irish men may now be playing for a place in the second phase when they meet Egypt in Palermo on June 17th. Conditions in Italy will not suit Jack Charlton's high tempo game, but against that the squad will have benefited from the experience of West Germany two years ago.

"Unlike 1988, Ireland will not now have the element of surprise in their favour," said Bobby Charlton. "But their record over the last two years ensures that they will represent their country with dignity." More than that the masses willing Jack's Green Army to success cannot ask!

## No doubt there'll be football too

*Kevin Myers, June 5<sup>th</sup> 1990*

WHEN this newspaper was searching around for a journalist to cover the wider aspects of the World Cup, our beloved editors laid down a number of requirements. The first was that the journalist had some inkling about soccer. This meant that the hack would not waffle on about forward passes or silly mid-on, nor complain about the standard of umpiring. This hack would not need to be an expert — expert comment would be left to Peter Byrne, Paddy Agnew and Mark Lawrenson; all the hack was required to do was to refrain from observations about the likelihood of touchdowns in the event of a snooker against a headwind on such a heavy wicket. This was a demanding requirement which instantly ruled out most of The Irish Times staff, a lofty lot whose conversation becomes most animated when the subject of Greek grammar comes up and who are simply too unworldly to be relied on to report on the mundane banality of grown men hoofing a piece of leather about. But the ability to write about a soccer match without giving the impression that one had been watching synchronised swimming was merely the first hurdle (you see what I mean about getting your sports confused?). There were other requirements to be met. One was that the journalist concerned had to be able to get to Italy. Reporting on the World Cup from Iceland would be regarded as disappointing; heroic attempts to cover it from Ecuador would be seen as grounds for dismissal. This really did narrow the field rather drastically, for those few Irish Times journalists who do not get in to a terrible lather about pluperfect subjunctives in the Iliad tend to have a wretched sense of geography. We are still awaiting the return of one of our number who upon being told to report on the ethnic unrest in Georgia departed for Atlanta from where we have received plaintive despatches about the holocaust which seems to have consumed the entire Azerbaijani population; yet another member of staff when ordered to report on the Gaza Strip departed for Soho in the belief it was a dance. He has not been seen since. Newspapers tend not to like these little disappearances. Since this journalist has been to Italy, and what is more, come back again, he met one of the qualifications for the job (though it has been made plain that once the World Cup is over he need not feel obliged to return). But even these demanding requirements — viz, one could tell the difference between a soccer match and the 100 metres breaststroke in poor light and against the wind in heavy going and that one did not think that Leghorn was a form of sexual arousal — were not deemed sufficient. Even more was asked of the journalist concerned. Let us look at the deeper implications of sport; that is to say, let us be pretentious. Sport, it is often said, is a metaphor for war. Through sport we sublimate all those aggressive instincts which might otherwise express themselves in genuine acts of violence. Sport enables us to enjoy all the vicarious pleasures of the martial contest but without bloodshed; that curious little fellow adrenalin, who if it were actually a human being would probably be a Kray twin, may be permitted to have its way with the body without any real physical danger to anybody. Adrenalin was designed to enable tiny mothers to lift container trucks off their children — the entire history of evolution had this purpose in mind — and to enable meek philatelist with wispy, almost putative moustaches take up a meat-axe and Slay Ten. That is to say adrenalin is a rather dangerous substance, a statement you would concur with if you ever saw somebody under its influence wandering through the ILAC centre with a chainsaw in his hand. But adrenalin in sport is a good thing. Sport, as a metaphor for war (I say again), makes possible the harnessing of adrenalin for benign purposes. Adrenalin gives footballers and other sporting types the urge to succeed; it carries them through pain barriers and sustains them in adversity; it conveys to its possessors the ability to do things which in their adrenalin-less state they would not think possible, like running one hundred metres in nine seconds, or beating then men to score a match winning try, or felling Marvin Hagler. Or, more to the point, taking a meat axe

and slaying ten. Because some time ago, sport ceased to be a metaphor for war. It became war itself. Twenty years ago, if you remember, Honduras went to war with one of its neighbours (I can't remember which one, so it's just as well the World Cup isn't being held there) over a football match. Since then the idea has taken root in certain minds that a football match is primarily an occasion for meataxes (though sometimes there can be a powerful argument in favour of a football making its appearance sometime or other during the proceedings). So what was wanted from a journalist covering the World Cup was some experience in not so much metaphors for war but war itself. And this journalist qualifies, having spent a long time in Belfast when the going was good to steady, and in Beirut when the going was heavy. What's more, this particular journalist has also taken an interest in that particular thing called the First World War, so enabling him to tell the difference between a football match between Holland and England and the Third Battle of Ypres. What is the difference? Ah. A good question. Now you come to mention it, I'm not sure that there is any difference, apart from the weather. Nobody is expecting any mud in Sardinia for this engrossing encounter: otherwise all the ingredients that made the Third Battle of Ypres such a gripping little affair — it will run and run, enthused the reviewer for this newspaper — are present for this summer's World Cup. There is no doubt about it, we could be in for an enthralling World Cup not least because the Sardinian and Sicilian police seem to think that two carabinieri with submachine guns constitute an effective riot control system. Experience will show that there is only one police force in all of Europe capable of the crowd control necessary for World Cup matches. Which is why the next World Cup, and all World Cups afterwards, will be played in Belfast. And football? Oh I expect there'll be some of that too, but not so much as to interfere with our enjoyment.

## Responding to people, not to the game

*Nuala O Faolain June 5<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Alright, I don't know much about soccer. I could never join in one of those conversations about how such-and-such a goal was developed, or whether so and so played a blinder in midfield. I can only see the obvious things, and in between actually looking at matches, I forget the rules. Even watching, I only grasp them temporarily. They're like the distribution of surplus votes, or the points system: I only grasp them for the few days a year I need to grasp them. Those are the days Ireland are playing, or the FAI Cup Final, or the Wembley Cup Final or any match where there is a human interest, for example, Mo Johnston's first appearance for Rangers. Like many women, I imagine, I respond to the people in the game, not the game itself. After all, I never played it. It doesn't mean anything to me in terms of childhood, or my standing with my peers, or dreams about myself. Soccer is part of the entertainment industry to me; or at least, that's all it was until last year. I have served my time on the terraces. When I lived in England, I had a friend who was a passionate supporter of Aston Villa. We followed Villa everywhere, Saturday after Saturday in some bleak stadium in the rain. In those days, Villa used to always lose. But the team was still the descendant of the great Villa team of the 1890s, who helped to wrest soccer from the leisured amateurs and give it to the working class. That class basis is another reason I like soccer. And then there's nationalism. I don't know that it makes sense, but as far as I'm concerned, that's my country out there when the Irish team plays. I don't feel like this about show jumpers or tennis-players. I don't feel like this about the Northern Ireland team. I think it is because our players are the children and grandchildren of Irish people who emigrated, and the team in some way reclaims all that emigrant history. It means more to me than if all the players came straight from Mayo or Donnycarney. I badly want to see them beating their club colleagues on the England team, even if they don't beat anyone else. And this isn't a political point of view: it's a tribal one. I know our team isn't glamorous. Not only does it not have anyone like Gullit, in whose play even I can see the beauty, but it doesn't even have striking personalities. But then I like that, too — the homely, unmatching, composition of the team. They're anything but a flawless football machine. You can never relax with them. I never feel confident that they're going to be able to beat anybody, which is why it is so thrilling when they do. When they lose, Jack Charlton gives us all a dignified way out, by implying that it's not the end of the world, and the lads had a good time anyway. And it's not the end of the world: I've seen weep, and get violent, and be, sincerely depressed about the outcome of matches. But this is the big difference between men and women — the women know the next meal has to be cooked anyway, and that however suicidal the husband may be, he's going to have to go back to work. So, however well women learn the lingo, and even though they are genuinely excited by the matches, they really aren't fanatics. They can jump up and down in the pub along with everyone else, and shout and roar, and join in the general camaraderie. But they're not really welcome to make expert remarks, along the lines of "there's no-one like McGrath all the same". There weren't many women on their own in O'Connell Street the day the team came home from Europe. Maybe someday: women really are fanatic about snooker, for example, a thing undreamt of 20 years ago. I meant to go to the World Cup. I had a floor booked in Rome, and four of us had our deposits ready, only too willing to say to-hell-with-work. But then Ireland got dumped on those islands, and with those opponents. I was in a train once, coming back from a match at Charlton, when the Millwall supporters wrecked the carriages and terrified the passengers. Soccer violence really is something to be afraid of, and I could see us spending most of our time in Italy cowering in doorways. So, we didn't go. I suppose I'll watch the games in some pub instead. You could, of course, watch at home, but it would be lonely. This is about the collective, not the individual. This is about all of us being delighted, or all of us being

depressed. This is going to be like the weather and its influence on the national mood, only more so. There is no way to keep women out of it. Or children. Or dogs, or anybody who lives here. At the moment, I'm in a reasonable frame of mind. I just want us to put up a good show, and last an honourable amount of time in the competition. I'm not looking for miracles. But if, say just if, a miracle happened — say we got into the second round. Well, I can't be answerable for what I might feel then. I think, then, nobody would be able to be detached. Whatever it is sport is, whatever the mass magic it can do, will sweep us all away. And whatever happens, the "we" in "we the Irish" will be a richer, stronger word, because "we" have a soccer team.

## GAA wish Ireland well

*Paddy Downey, June 8<sup>th</sup> 1990*

The Republic team carry with them the good wishes of the Gaelic Athletic Association on their great venture into the World Cup finals which starts this evening in Milan with the match between Argentina and Cameroon. The wishes are conveyed in a message issued from Croke Park yesterday by Liam Mulvihill, director general of the association. The text of the message reads: "On behalf of the GAA, both myself and the president, John Dowling, would like to extend every good wish to the Irish team in the World Cup tournament in Italy" In a separate statement John Dowling said that because of a busy schedule of travel, meetings and functions he did not think he would "have time to see much of the competition" on television. The GAA's PRO, Danny Lynch, also said yesterday that he hoped to watch "as many as possible of Ireland's games". Lynch added that after the Irish team qualified for the World Cup finals the GAA president had issued to all Irish daily newspapers an unsolicited message of congratulations to the FAI. "But", he said, "it must not have been considered newsworthy because the message didn't appear in any paper." On behalf of the GAA, John Dowling congratulated the Irish team after their win over England in the European championship at Stuttgart two years ago and his message was widely publicised at that time

## Fans arrive at the start of a hot-and dry-spell

*Kevin Myers, June 11<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Poor unfortunate Cagliari this morning woke to a condition which it has not experienced since mankind discovered the gentle art of coaxing ethanol out of wet barley and pulped grapes. The municipal area of the Sardinian capital has been a dry zone since last night and remains so until tomorrow. Meanwhile, the huge numbers of security police drafted into the island wait, steaming in their coaches and brooding on street corners, to see if this evening's match between the Republic and England can pass off peacefully. Irish officials here are confident that the expected 7,000 or so Irish soccer fans will not be a source of trouble. Twenty-two FAI representatives toured Cagliari last night and will continue to do so today, consoling Irish fans on the closed bars and cafes. Five gardai are also here to liaise with the powerful police reserves that the Italian Government has placed on the island. Theoretically, the two sets of fans can only meet in numbers for the immediate period of the match. Elaborate plans have been drawn up to spread the football supporters in different directions throughout this island. Many of the Irish fans are 70 miles and more away from Cagliari, which has been declared a saturated zone incapable of offering further accommodation. Not the least of the problems is the failure to limit the circulation of tickets. £9 tickets are on sale on the black market here for £25 and are widely available. Segregation of fans is now a virtual impossibility, though segregation is regarded as mandatory for completely effective crowd control. The record of English fans on such occasions is quite awesome; they would quite happily start a riot in a leper colony and the advice of Sally Cooper, the spokeswoman for the English Football Association, for English fans not to bring further shame to England, is probably as effective as Mrs Partington's mop during the hurricanes which once swept the English south coast. Not that Sally Cooper's sound advice is the only mop that the British authorities have to deal with English fans. Nearly half the diplomats in the British Embassy in Rome are being deployed here to liaise between the English crowds and the Italian police. "What about the English hooligans?" the local special police chief here was asked. "That's not the problem," he replied. "I have 1,600 hooligans. All of them in uniform." Italian riot control police have, it is said, a special technique for close quarters not control. It is to slam the thick end of a truncheon butt between an offender's eyes. The victim, when he wakes up in a prison cell, will remember little since childhood until the day a building fell on him.

## The class terror confronts the teacher's pet again

*Kevin Myers, June 11<sup>th</sup> 1990*

It would be futile to consider that this evening's match is genuinely between the representatives of two countries, two cultures. Most of the players hold in common a working class background in industrial Britain. The real contrast is between the cultures and the countries of the two sets of fans; and just as importantly, between the two managers. And just as no Irish football association would have chosen an Englishman with the personality of Bobby Robson to have managed an Irish team, the English FA did not even reply to Jack Charlton's application for the English job. The two countries have the Englishman they deserve. It has to be said that no country deserves the sort of fans that England both generates and attracts, and there can be little doubt that the quality of the fans does affect the players on the field. Players representing Ireland have repeatedly cited the decency and loyalty and superb behaviour of the Irish fans as one of the reasons for their dedication and commitment to representing a country many of them knew little about before representing. It is doubtful whether English footballers have any such feeling. And the two managers seem to reflect their respective burdens. They are anyway widely different personalities. Jack Charlton as a schoolboy was doubtless lord of the playground, cheerfully cuffing swots and whingers and an absolute devil with dead legs. He scrumped apples, had perpetually scabby knees and was known to be on time for assembly just twice in his school career. During classes he sat at the back flicking ink pellets about the place and distributing indecent messages about the teacher. Bobby Robson arrived first at school with a scrubbed face, his cap on perfectly straight, and a leather satchel containing a neat little pencil case. His shiny faced endeavours and his earnest application at the front of the class, his tongue sticking out as he carefully joined his letters with loops, made him the toast of the teachers common room as they collapsed around their cups of tea after a morning of Charltonian bedlam. If only every boy in the school were like that great little chap Bobby Robson instead of resembling that horror Charlton. Do you know he turned up for Divine Scripture last week with a dead rat which he passed around the class while the Reverend Wilkinson was discussing Deuteronomy? Poor little Muriel Sidebottom, the frail girl with freckles, screamed and fainted. He really is a menace. No good will come of him. You mark my words. A bad 'un, and no mistake. If there were any justice in this world, nice Bobby Robson would have nice, amiable fans following the teams he managed, and Jack Charlton would be thinking regretfully, that the price paid for being an unruly adolescent was that in adulthood one came to manage a team supported by thousands of unruly adolescents, each a hundred times worse at their best than he was at his worst. But the reverse is the case. It really is so unfair. But then, so is everything in football. Jack Charlton has an almost completely uncritical press corps. Bobby Robson must sometimes think that the only way to make himself popular with the British press is to take the World Cup and win back the American colonies, too, Yankees sheepishly pulling down the Stars and Stripes and renaming their capital Robson. The faces of the two men reflect their respective personalities and experiences. Charlton's is full of bony confidence. He doesn't give a damn what people think of him (but none of the press contingent would be entirely astonished if he cuffed a journalist whose opinions he disliked). He has a casual authority that invokes great fear. Those who have seen him dressing down a player say the latter melts into a small pool of liquid with boots. At the improvised press conference at his team hotel the other day Charlton strolled into the hotel garden, puffed his cigar, beamed, and said: "Fooking hell, am I doing this right" A couple of small contented clouds of tobacco smoke felled a passing butterfly, as Jack added: "Ah, it's great this. I'm really enjoying it. I've settled the team, and between now and the match we'll have just a spot of training just to give the lads something to do." And so the press conference continued, a few

amiable fooks interspersed with a few amiable clouds of smoke. The only time he was serious was when he complained that Bobby Robson had refused to name his panel of seventeen for tonight's game until an hour before kick-off. In fookless prose, he condemned Robson's attitude as silly. But the Bobby Robson who will not name his team until the last moment is the Bobby Robson of immense anguish, as his face indicates. It is as if somebody had removed his facial bones during the night, and he had been left with a series of facial tucks and folds which he must organise into an expression suitable for the occasion. Normally it is called woebegone, with a tiny tear in each eye. Who would not be woebegone arriving at a news conference where the British press are idly filing their teeth and reading with approval their latest headlined demands: Robson Must Go? And So The Man They Say Must Go replies to their questions in a prose as muscular as his face, the latex furrows and corrugations of his features exceeding anything that Fluck and Law could create with a Spitting Image puppet. And, at the end of a Bobby Robson press conference, one's notes are merely latex, full of opinions that are at once firm yet tentative, and of anodyne certainties — what did he think of Ronnie Whelan's absence through injury from the Irish squad? Well that, he waffled, was a matter primarily for the Irish, and as he delivered this insight, as penetrating as latex, his face performed a huge contraction as he ordered his features to resemble grimness, but with a dewdrop tear in the corner of each beady little eye. No matter what the result tonight, those little tears on latex will be there after the match: so too will be the resolute features of the person who once brought light relief to Deuteronomy and whom Muriel Sidebottom once secretly adored.

## Familiarity likely to breed stalemate

*Mark Lawrenson, June 11<sup>th</sup> 1990*

My greatest concern about this game is not that a few players might be sent off or that England might beat us, but that it will be very, very ordinary. I don't think that there will be much in this game to have us jumping from our seats. It will be absorbing in that it will be a glorified English League Division One game transferred onto the international stage but I cannot envisage any one player taking the game by the scruff of the neck. All the players will know so much about each other which is invariably a bad thing if you are expecting a good game. I still think it will be a draw and, in terms of goals, I would put a maximum of 1-1 on that prediction. I can't see there being much in it. England have put a brave face on this match, saying things like "the press have slaughtered us" and "we'll be ready come match day" but I wonder if they can be ready and will really expect what they are going to get from Ireland because, as I have said already, the ball could get stretched off tonight. Ireland are going to stop England playing at all costs. They've got to. Whelan's loss, while hugely disappointing, will not be catastrophic because both McGrath and Townsend should be capable of fulfilling their primary brief; namely getting tight on both Robson and Gascoigne and effectively just seeking to nullify them. I think Ireland will look to get something from set pieces, at which I know Jack works very hard. Neither John Aldridge nor Tony Cascarino is a prolific scorer at international level, and Ireland will again be looking to the midfield and back four players to chip in with a goal, but, overall, chances will be at a premium. Ireland will seek to make Shilton kick the ball out, preventing him from throwing it to his full-backs or centre-halves and thus stopping England from playing from the back. All of Shilton's kick-outs will be 50-50 balls and, most of the time, defenders are favoured to win the ball. Certainly, you'd have to fancy our centre-backs against Lineker and Beardsley in the air. As soon as they lose the ball Ireland will drop into position and form a barrier across the midfield and the back, thus making it difficult for England. Importantly, the evening kick-off time will be to our benefit in all of this because an afternoon kick-off would have mitigated against our running game. There has been much speculation regarding Ireland's starting line-up but one thing is for sure, and that is that Jack knows his team. Whether he plays Morris or O'Leary at fullback, I don't think it matters greatly because Barnesy, on his day, will cause problems for anybody. Above all, you have to ensure that Barnes keeps his back to your goal when he receives the ball. If you can prevent him from turning and running at you, then you've achieved 85 per cent of your task. An interesting aspect of this match, however, is that Barnes and Waddle have never played well together for England. Either Waddle has done well and Barnesy hasn't or vice-versa. That's because, if they are going to play on the flanks they need the ball; hence the need to nullify the service from Gascoigne and Robson or the defenders. Much also depends on where Peter Beardsley plays. If he plays in the hole between attack and midfield, Ireland could have problems. Either they mark him with a midfield anchor man or, more likely, push up a central defender and if you do that, you effectively leave Lineker one-on-one against your other centre-back. If that's the case, your other centre-back has to be pacey, i.e., you have to have the safeguard of O'Leary, presuming two of the full-backs are fit. Otherwise, it's a problem. Bobby Robson will want to go out on a good note but as far as the English press and public are concerned, that has to be a semi-final place at least. The burden of expectancy is far greater on them and that will benefit us. However, if the pendulum is to swing either way, I would say it will swing in favour of England. By the law of averages, I think they have better quality players going forward and it only requires two of their five forward players to click for them to cause us a lot of problems. There will be a few yellow cards because it is going to be physical. This is the World Cup after all and a lot of careers are on the line tonight. That said, we are not going

to get the usual bout of acting after a tackle when players roll over and do three somersaults. They'll just get on with it. To finish on a more positive note, that, at least, is something for which we can be very grateful.

## The long wait is almost over

*Peter Byrne, June 11<sup>th</sup> 1990*

The props are in place, the actors assembled and the stage is now almost ready for the game which has exercised the imagination of an entire nation for much of the last six months when Jack Charlton sends his Republic of Ireland team into action against England at the start of their World Cup programme in Cagliari this evening. No Greek drama, I suspect, has ever played on the emotions quite as much as this and for two hours or so, issues with only the tiniest affinity with sport will be decided in front of 39,000 spectators and a television audience measured in billions. Two years ago, the Irish stood pedigree and performance on its head by beating England in the European Championship finals and depending on one's allegiance, the memories of that eventful afternoon in Stuttgart will present contrasting challenges now. For Charlton, it is a golden opportunity to consolidate — a chance to show that the immense stride taken by the Irish team under his tutelage is no accident of fortune. To England the perspectives are different. The hurt of that defeat has yielded only grudgingly to time and now, the emphasis is on revenge rather than rehabilitation. What Jules Rimet, the Frenchman variously credited with or criticised for, imposing the competition on the world, would have thought of it all, heaven knows. But this is no ordinary game of football. Gross national product will be forgotten, other accepted measures of prosperity ignored and on the outcome of a mere match may depend the pulse of two peoples by 10 o'clock tonight. It was against that back ground that Bobby Robson, picking his way through the barbs like a politician at question time and ever-mindful of the supplementary question to follow, counselled his audience at the England team's press conference on Saturday. "For God's sake, it's only a game — let's not get things out of proportion," he said. Then he promptly retired to his room to fret long into the night on the result which could write the postscript to his troubled term of office. In a very real sense, the two managers have contributed to the unreal tension by refusing to disclose their teams until the absolute deadline, just before kick-off time. Modern sport is often as much about psychology as athleticism but there are limits to even the deepest exercise in subterfuge. The point was acknowledged by Charlton when he publicly challenged his fellow Geordie to announce his team. "I think we are embarked on a childish game and it's high time we stopped," he said. "By refusing to name our teams, we are not doing our players any favours for it means that they are being fed additional, useless information on opponents who may not even be involved in the game. I have no intention of being the first to go public with my selection but if Bobby agrees, I'm prepared to let him have our side at the same time as he gives me his." All in all, Charlton, whose assistant Maurice Setters once discharged the role of babysitter for Robson when they were both players with West Bromwich Albion, appears to be winning the important psychological duel. He recorded another important plus last evening when he took his players to familiarise themselves with the match stadium. Unlike the England manager who angered his critics yet again by insisting on holding his training session behind padlocked gates on Saturday evening, Charlton invited the world at large to come and watch his players. "We will not be doing any serious work but anybody who is interested — including the English camp, can come and watch us train," he said. Sometime around three o'clock yesterday after the Irish players had participated in an open-air Mass at their hotel, he informed his charges of the match strategy. Those of us in the business of observing were interested in the reactions of the players. Stephen Staunton, under intense pressure to hold down the left back position, went for a long, slow walk with Maurice Setters — and did not look too happy. David O'Leary, on the other hand, looked at ease with himself, fostering the hopes of many that his impressive level of performance in club and international competition, will be rewarded with a place in central defence. As yet, however, this is no more than speculation and any analysis of the likely

outcome must be made in the knowledge that at least two of the leading roles in either side are as yet unfilled. There is no doubt, however, that the absence of Ronnie Whelan, the stricken Liverpool midfield player, has deprived Ireland of many useful options. With Whelan on duty, for example, Charlton could readily have switched Paul McGrath to right back and given him the opportunity of repeating his eclipse of John Barnes in Stuttgart. More and more, however, it now looks as if McGrath will be anchored in central midfield, inviting the enticing question as to who will accept responsibility for the task of preventing the Liverpool winger from cutting loose down the left flank. O'Leary's name has been mentioned in this context but that, many of us suspect, is scarcely a realistic proposition. It is more likely Chris Morris, recovering from an ankle injury, who will be allocated the number two shirt, leaving O'Leary to challenge for a place in the pivotal position. That Mick McCarthy will start the game is not in doubt. For all his detractors — and they have never been scarce on the ground — McCarthy is still regarded by Charlton as the lynchpin of his defence and in Whelan's absence, looks certain to captain the side. That leaves Charlton with the unenviable task of having to measure O'Leary's superior pace against the proven track record of Kevin Moran who performed so magnificently in the European Championship game. Two months ago I suspect Charlton had decided on McCarthy and Moran as his best partnership. Now the odds have changed and the manager's statement that his team will be chosen on the basis of merit rather than sentiment, suggests that Moran may be in some difficulty. Preference for Hughton over Staunton would be no great surprise for the Liverpool player has not impressed in the build-up programme for Italy. Hughton, on the other hand, has done all that has been required of him since joining the team in Izmir and now looks certain to be assigned the responsibility of looking after Chris Waddle. Ray Houghton's injury problems are not designed to inspire confidence and yet, hopefully, the Liverpool player, scorer of the decisive goal in the European Championship game, is sufficiently sharp to bring back the added balance to the midfield line. In all, Charlton may take as many as eight survivors from the successful European formation into this evening's match: the newcomers would be O'Leary, Andy Townsend and Tony Cascarino. Of the trio, Townsend's contribution may yet prove the most critical. Undeniably his arrival in the team has given it new momentum and Charlton will now be looking to the Norwich player, shortly to join Chelsea to push forward and turn the screws on the England central defenders. The questions awaiting clarification in the England line-up deal primarily with Bobby Robson's plans for Paul Gascoigne and Peter Beardsley. Mindful of what happened in Stuttgart and the role Glenn Hoddle played in undermining Ireland's position in the last quarter, Charlton is plainly apprehensive about Gascoigne. Whether Bobby Robson retains the nerve to gamble on the relatively unproven Tottenham players remains in doubt, however, and there is just a chance that the man who could perhaps threaten Ireland most will be left on the bench. Beardsley, blowing hot and cold with Liverpool in the season now ending, represents a skilful, decisive striker on his day but against that Robson must weigh the disappointment of so many of the player's performances in the England shirt over the last two years. On the credit side for England, there is the emergence of Des Walker at centre back, the fledgling talent of Gascoigne and, not least, the exciting potential of Waddle and Barnes down the flanks. Inevitably, however, there will be questions asked about their resource in the face of the sharp counter-attack and their ability to compensate defensively for the attacking instincts of Barnes, Waddle and Bryan Robson. Above all, perhaps, Ireland will be watching for the gifted but enigmatic Gary Lineker, one of football's most accomplished strikers on his day. There is an attractive competitive edge to this game which may perhaps compensate for the overall quality of the football and the point was acknowledged yesterday by Ray Houghton. "We know each other so well that I fear it will be a little like a first division championship game but that will suit both sides," he said. "We were a little lucky to beat England in the European Championship for, if Lineker had been on his best form, I doubt if we could have survived." "But we are now

a better team because we have been together for two years and the achievements of Romania and Cameroon already in this championship, hint that this may be the year of the underdog yet again." That aspiration will be shared by Irish people everywhere and the hope is that when the last echoes of a spartan struggle have died away, we will still be on course for a place in the second phase of the championship. That seems as apt a line as any on which to conclude the build-up to, perhaps, the most tense confrontation since High Noon."

## Irish fans out roar an Italian thunderstorm

*Kevin Myers, June 12<sup>th</sup> 1990*

A deep roar of delight from the Irish fans and an appalled silence from the English supporters greeted the end of the Republic's opening match in the World Cup finals in Cagliari last night. Up to 15 minutes from full time, it seemed that an England victory was a formality after an early goal from their striker Lineker. But Kevin Sheedy's late equaliser brought jubilation to the Irish crowd, whose support for their team never diminished throughout the 90 minutes. The Irish fans were joined by an Irish delegation of the Tanaiste, Mr Brian Lenihan, the Minister for Labour, Mr Ahern, the Minister for Sport, Mr Frank Fahey, and the former Garda Commissioner, Mr Eamon Doherty. After last night's event, with the outstanding contribution from the Irish crowd being measured in mega decibels, all of them will be on the way to the Mayo Clinic for larynx transplants, Mr Lenihan showing them the way in sign language. Nobody watching this match would have come away with the sensation that they had been observing a Brazilian football game. And nobody watching the Irish central pair of McCarthy and Moran in the first half would have believed that this was one of the most successful central partnerships in modern international football. When Lineker slipped so alarmingly past Moran with the ease of a coin down a chute, it was an omen of grim things to come. Shortly afterwards, McCarthy was turned yet again by Lineker, who bounded around the scrambling defenders to bobble the ball in the Irish goal. It was a catastrophic beginning, precisely the kind that Jack Charlton would have been drilling his players into not permitting. One nil, one nil, bawled the English fans with great relish, repaying the taunts they had had to endure for the past two years since Stuttgart. But the Irish fans never let their vocal support for the team flag. Their tonsils must have been shredded by the ceaseless roaring of Ole, ole, ole for the Irish team — so much so that this morning they should be as silent as fish. Throughout the first half, England were given a sickening number of free headers by the Irish defence at the Irish goal, and it seemed that even greater disaster awaited us. The cool wind that made much of this match reminiscent of an English mid-winter encounter in the second division was joined at the start of the second half by a tumultuous thunderstorm that cracked and banged and flashed overhead, pouring an evil downpour on the fans on the unsheltered stands and scattering them. The Irish crowd's support for their team remained a palpable thing stretching across the pitch: you could have built a flyover on it. And the players responded in the way they know best — with courage and endeavour. Perhaps the ball which came on to Kevin Sheedy's wicked left foot was as much to luck as to skill, but that foot could be used in unenlightened countries as a method of executing wrongdoers. In these liberal times, it did more splendid and useful service, driving the ball sweetly and unstoppably into the English net. The English silence was as deep as an ocean, the Irish delight caused the out-roared thunderstorm to lift up its skirt and flee.

## **Ireland fight back to earn draw and keep campaign on course**

*Peter Byrne, June 12<sup>th</sup> 1990*

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND 1

ENGLAND 1

Honour was satisfied but ambition mildly unrequited after the Republic of Ireland, trailing to a Gary Lineker goal for more than an hour, had competed with immense character to salvage a point against England at the start of their World Cup programme in Cagliari last night. An exemplary exercise in commitment was rewarded, in part, when Kevin Sheedy, artful as ever on a difficult surface, seized on a mistake by Steve McMahon to give Ireland the point which now offers realistic hope of a place in the second phase of the championship. Significantly, or predictably, it was the Irish supporters, the only real winners on a damp miserable night in Sardinia, who were singing in the rain at the end of a game more likely to be recalled for the hype off the field than the action on it. A pairing, which held all the chemistry of an English first division game but precious little of the one-touch skills which have already enriched this championship, was always going to condense into a battle of willpower. As it turned out, it was the Irish who displayed the greater commitment and if the achievement of Stuttgart two years ago had, perhaps, pitched ambition at an unrealistic level they could feel well satisfied in retrieving a game which occasionally looked in danger of running away from them. England, optimistic as ever in the long countdown to this championship, were only rarely allowed to play to the limit of their potential and on the count of territorial possession alone, were entitled to feel relieved that they had avoided defeat. Yet, the predominant feeling in their dressing room after the game was less one of relief than of anger as manager Bobby Robson, vociferously supported by his players, protested that they ought to have had a penalty at a critical stage of the second half. Chris Waddle in a fleeting moment of brilliance, virtually destroyed half the Irish defence in the 60th minute when he skipped through tackles by Steve Staunton and Kevin Sheedy only to come to grief when confronted by Kevin Moran inside the penalty area. Instinctively, the entire English team turned towards the German referee Aron Schmidhuber for a penalty but without a moment's hesitation he waved play on. Depending on one's allegiance, it was possible to form widely contrasting views on the merit of that decision but the end product for Ireland was an escape which was to colour the remainder of the game profoundly. A second goal then might have broken the hearts of the brave Irishmen. Instead, the let-off inspired them to a new level of application and shortly afterwards Sheedy, in perhaps the finest moment of a long and largely successful career, delivered the goal which, one suspects, occasioned a temporary breach of the peace in every part of Ireland. As Jack Charlton pointed out, it was no more than his team deserved and now he can anticipate the second assignment in his programme, against Egypt in Palermo next Sunday, with every hope of achieving the win which would take his team into the last 16 in the competition. Memories of the European Championship game in Stuttgart two years ago were raw enough to move the hooligan element in the English support to their usual excesses of vulgarity and throughout the playing of Amhran na bhFian they chorused God Save the Queen. That might have set the match to a tinder situation but to their credit the Irish fans retained their composure and through bad times as well as good, they were unswerving in their vocal support. In a sense, the plot of the Stuttgart game was starkly reversed here for whereas Ray Houghton had stunned the English with a goal after only six minutes in West Germany, it was Gary Lineker who

provided the early glory for England on this occasion. That goal ought to have established the pattern for a composed performance by Bobby Robson's team. The truth is that, with rare exceptions, their game never developed any real fluency and they could have had no real complaints when Steve McMahon, introduced as a substitute for Peter Beardsley only four minutes earlier, hung his head in despair after the mistake which allowed Sheedy pounce for the priceless equaliser. Jack Charlton gambled in leaving David O'Leary and Chris Hughton out of his team and, in spite of the result, the merit of those decisions must remain in question. It was a lack of pace in central defence which, as much as anything, presented Lineker with the opportunity to illustrate his predatory traits and Staunton, without ever making any real mistakes, still looked vulnerable on occasions. The build-up to the England goal is likely to cause some harsh appraisals in the Irish camp. Waddle, floating the ball in from the right wing, may have been as surprised as anybody when it dropped neatly into the gap between Mick McCarthy and Chris Morris, leaving goalkeeper Packie Bonner totally exposed. It is possible that the error in concentration was compounded by the ball behind held up in the wind but, once Lineker moved, it was sheer disaster for the Irish. Kevin Moran, his marker, was nowhere to be seen and McCarthy looked sluggish in his movement as the Tottenham centre forward chested the ball down, took the ball around Bonner before running it into the net. It was not the prettiest of scores but the effect was to present the men in green with a long uphill struggle which was to endure for the next hour. That they managed to scramble their way back to parity says much for the competitive nature of a side which was defending an unbeaten 13-match run. After all the dire predictions about heat and humidity, it was wind and rain which caused the greater problem. Ireland, winning the toss, took first advantage of the elements but it frequently proved more of a hindrance than a help. Unable to weight their crosses precisely on a tight compact pitch, they continually over-hit the long ball, to such a degree that neither of the front-runners, Tony Cascarino nor John Aldridge, was ever in with a real chance of upsetting Terry Butcher and Des Walker at the centre of England's defence. A violent electrical storm blew up during half-time and the effect was to reduce the velocity of the wind significantly. But, as the skies over Cagliari lit up, so the rain intensified to present a whole new range of problems in the second half. Ireland's performance in this period was possibly more constructive. With the long ball being measured more accurately and with their opponents being closed down at every opportunity, they succeeded in preventing England from bringing their supposedly superior pace and skills into play. England will be faulted for not adopting a more positive approach when they needed to build on their early advantage but credit for that must go to another fighting display by the Irish midfield formation in which Paul McGrath and Sheedy were quite outstanding. McGrath, thriving on the responsibility, looked head and shoulders, physically and metaphorically, above everybody else on the park. His was a performance which drew extravagant praise from Bobby Robson and, equally important, he reported no reaction to his brittle knees after the game. On this form, the Aston Villa player is now, more than ever perhaps, the key member of the entire team. There was admiration too for the manner in which Sheedy mastered the conditions to apply the pressure down the left flank. This was, by a long shot, his finest game in international football and when McMahon lapsed it was no more than appropriate that the veteran Everton player should be the one to profit. Andy Townsend, sparing nothing or nobody, improved after a shaky start to push forward in the second half but, sadly, we saw only fleeting glimpses of the real Ray Hughton. A protracted absence from the game had clearly affected his rhythm and in those circumstances it was no surprise that Stuart Pearce at left back should emerge as the outstanding member of the English defence. The Irish equaliser materialised out of nothing for McMahon, dispossessing Sheedy, appeared to have the situation firmly under control until he miscued the intended pass to Gary Stevens. Sheedy was in like a flash and his angled left-footed shot from 14 yards sped between Peter Shilton and his left hand post. The Irish were ecstatic, the English reduced to sullen silence but in that

moment we sensed that the scoreline had already been fashioned and that both teams would have to settle in the end for a point.

ENGLAND: Shilton (Derby), Stevens (Glasgow Rangers), Walter (Nottingham Forest), Butcher (Glasgow Rangers), Pearce (Nottingham Forest), Waddle (Marseille), Gascoigne (Tottenham), Robson (Manchester United), Barnes (Liverpool), Beardsley (Liverpool), Lineker (Tottenham).

Subs: McMahon (Liverpool) for Beardsley (70 mins). Bull (Wolves) for Lineker (83 mins).

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Bonner (Celtic); Morris (Celtic), McCarthy (Millwall), Moran (Blackburn), Staunton (Liverpool), Houghton (Liverpool), Townsend (Norwich), McGrath (Aston Villa), Sheedy (Everton); Aldridge (Real Sociedad), Cascarino (Aston Villa).

Sub: McLoughlin (Swindon) for Aldridge (68 mins).

## England's tactics walk them into Irish trap

*Mark Lawrenson, June 12<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Purely from a footballing point of view it was everything we could have expected and worse. Technically it was the worst game of the World Cup so far and quite possibly it will remain so by the end of the tournament. Nonetheless, it was a further vindication of the way Ireland play under Jack, while it also proved that the spirit within the Irish team is second to none. Yet, from an English perspective, I couldn't understand why they played the way they did. I thought England played into Ireland hands, particularly when playing with the wind behind them in the second half. Butcher and Walker should have pushed up into Ireland's half, because the likes of Cascarino and Aldridge were never going to get in behind them. But by dropping off and lying deep, the English back four let Ireland come at them. Effectively, that cost them the game. The spirit of the Irish team was in great evidence again, especially after conceding such a bad goal early on. I could say it confirmed all my worst suspicions about the lack of pace in the Irish defence in the absence of David O'Leary, while there was a bad case of ball watching by some of the players when they thought Chris Waddle had failed to retrieve the ball before it crossed the touchline. Likewise, Mick McCarthy was guilty of ball-watching in losing Lineker, but to be fair to him it was a quality ball by Waddle. What's more, Chris Morris should have acted as cover in a situation like that. Barnesy was not in the picture and Chris didn't have anybody to mark, so really there was no excuse for not acting as cover. Chris seemed to be caught in two minds. Waddle's pass for Lineker's goal was probably the only quality pass on a night when it appeared next to impossible to find a team-mate. Both teams endeavoured to pressurise each other into mistakes and in this respect Ireland did better. There weren't many goalmouth incidents but it was always going to be that way. You would have to say that it wasn't even a good English First Division match. In fact, it was very mediocre. But the thing is that, whereas Ireland have been given a real boost and now progress to the Egyptian match with great confidence, some of the wind has been taken out of England's sails. England, in their opening World Cup assignment, had everything going for them: a goal up early on and the wind behind them after the interval. If ever you're going to go on and win your opening game, then those are the circumstances in which to do it. By contrast, we did what we are good at, no frills, no fancy football, just pressure, pressure, pressure and stick the ball into the opposition area as quick as possible. It most certainly wasn't pretty but, again it was very effective. The critics will point to the style of the team — or more accurately the lack of it — and will also highlight again McCarthy's selection but, yet again, all Jack has to do is to point to the scoreline. Again, we haven't been beaten. Sure, there are deficiencies, but so long as we continue to overcome those Jack merely has to point to his record. Ireland have pulled themselves back from the dead, and, in the final analysis, England only missed one other chance and that was when Butcher was off target with the far post header from Gascoigne's free. Otherwise, England never created anything. Gascoigne, in fairness to him, was the only player who attempted to bring the ball under control and play with it, but he had no allies. It speaks volumes for McGrath that Robson was reduced to a fringe role, while McGrath himself was able to create the time and space to knock the ball around. The performances of Townsend and McGrath were crucial. It's all very well the English critics having yet another go at John Barnes for not reproducing the magic of his club form with Liverpool, but he wouldn't thrive at Liverpool with a service like the one he received last night. Conditions didn't help the game, although of the two teams they probably helped Ireland. But no matter, on the night Ireland looked the better team and they certainly finished the stronger after equalising. It was a deserving reward for Kevin Sheedy, who produced an industrious and at times, skilful performance. Of all the Irish players to have in a one-on-one situation against Shilton and with

an angle, Sheedy would be the one. Sheedy worked very hard and his passing, whether over short or long distances, was usually good. He seemed to have a split second more than anyone else on the pitch. Overall, you couldn't really fault anyone in a green jersey for his display, or their effort, and the fact that they finished the stronger side augurs well. Looking ahead to the Egyptian game on Sunday, the only fear I would have is that the players might suffer a slight anti-climax. It will be a 5.00 kick-off (4.00 Irish time) which, if it's like the Scotland-Costa Rica game, will mean a temperature of around 85 degrees, and this could make it difficult. I would say that Ireland have to go for the jugular, go straight for the throat: play the long ball early, pile people into the box and let Cascarino cause havoc. Whatever else, don't let their keeper win the first ball. I'm not suggesting they whack him, but just don't repeat the mistake the Scots made. The Costa Rica keeper collected about 20 crosses and was never challenged for one of them. Just let the Egyptian keeper know we're there and through sheer power, force Egypt to capitulate. But for the moment, we can savour a good night's work. Forcing players like Walker into making horrendous mistakes says much for the effectiveness of our style, ugly though it may be. If Ireland play like they did last night against Egypt, the Egyptians won't know what hit them.

## Tonight delirium, tomorrow tremens

*Noel McFarlane, June 12<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Our feet were here on Broadway, as the song goes, but Cagliari held our hearts. And cast down our hearts and raised them up again. In the pleasant room of P.J. Carney's public house, a little bit of Ireland on Seventh Avenue In Manhattan, our huddled masses, God love them, were indeed found duly huddled yesterday evening — around a couple of satellite receiving television sets wielding fistfuls of the finest Guinness stout (dispensed by Ray Haughey of Carlow town) and partaking liberally of many of their little comforts of home, like correct mashed potatoes. But chief among these comforts was the company of their own: As they roared over Sheedy's goal, shrank by times in dread as when Lineker stung so cruelly and so early and, as one man and woman, muttered occasional strong language that was distinctly Irish, some were displaying a remarkable communal recuperative ability. For yesterday morning, an as yet undiagnosed ailment, which a thousand employers in New York, and indeed, nationally, were told by phone bad all the signs of yer man, the 24-hour bug, had swept dramatically through the Irish community. It had even cut down some members of second and third generation gaeldom, it appeared. The huddled masses who huddled closer as the prospect of defeat grew, and closer still as honour was served, were very much in spiritual national communion from across the raging main, live, via satellite, in jerseys green and official T-shirts being vocal in the accents of all provinces. And watching the imbibing it may be well be case of tonight, delirium, tomorrow, tremens. Yer man, the 24-hour bug, could well become a full-blown 48-hour affair. For the TV sets in P. J. Carney's, like countless others in New York, receiving this painfully anticipated game told the story of yet another dire blow to the Irish psyche — not losing. The pre-game warm-up seemed to begin in quite a few Irish houses In Manhattan in the late or early morning There they went, there they, you could hear, in spots along Broadway and Seventh Avenue and West 57th under the little strip of grey between the buildings that they call the sky. In P. J. Carney's, the hurried explanations to American champions, indeed, intimates, of the national gravity of this event were comical in their frustrating failure. The Yanks didn't see the joke when the TNT cable network called Jack Charlton "the head coach." They didn't understand the virulence with which the serious bias of an English co-commentator on TNT, a galling gent, called Mick Luckhurst, was greeted. They did not know why P. J. Carney's sighed for Jimmy Magee. And the Yanks did not understand when Kevin Sheedy, giving Ireland another international hit with "My Left Foot," set the Irish jumping on the table and wailing and, in a bow to the locale, sharing wild "high fives". They watched with some concern as the Irish in PJ's clutched their heads and fell to their knees when the English threatened. And next week, our feet will still be here on Broadway, but Palermo will hold our hearts. The shop's not shut yet, P. J. Carney's decided, the dream is still alive. Whether many expatriates in New York will feel alive tomorrow is another matter.

## Day we learned something about the Egyptians

*Sean Kilfeather, June 13<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Any nation which can lay claim to have played a major part in the development of such things as writing, mathematics, language, medicine, surgery and astronomy and have played a significant role in the civilisation of the world should not be subjected to a patronising attitude when it comes to their ability to play football. When the draw for the World Cup was made we all indulged in such overbearing behaviour. Egypt, we said, are a push-over. But not after their skilful performance in holding the European champions to a draw. Even at half-time in their match against Holland last night Eamon Dunphy was still allowing himself indulgence in our colonial past. "They know what they are trying to do," he said with surprise in his voice. To have said it once would have been forgivable. To have said it three times, and he did, can be regarded as cheek. It wasn't, I'm sure, that he meant it to be so. It was merely that our perception of the Egyptians as a poverty-stricken shower of snake charmers, camel drivers and baksheesh-inspired taxi-drivers has been banded on to us by our nearest neighbours and has managed to cloud our judgement. Well we learn something every day and Eamon Dunphy and the rest of us who joined him for a time in the trap of prejudice have now to confess our guilt and it was meet and just and for our welfare that Liam Brady represented all of us on BBC when he said: "This is what the World Cup is about. They are a credit to the game of football." Liam's colleague Barry Davies was more deeply rooted in his ignorance. With typical long memoried Britishness he referred to Gamel Abdul Nasser and the coup which, effectively, undermined the last bastions of the British Empire. One could detect the plummy tones of Anthony Eden in his chronicle of good players in the Egyptian team. "There are so many of them," he declared, with astonishment dripping from the phrase. One could almost hear his unuttered codicil "They breed like rabbits, you know." The Group F table at the end showed that all four teams are now back where they started. As Bill O'Herlihy pointed out, it might well end in the pulling of teams from a hat. Surely if this happens the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad, Sean Doherty, should be sent to Rome to represent us in this task. At RTE there was consensus that the result of tonight's match could be interpreted as favourable for Ireland's chances. Johnny Giles conceded that there were many "Ifs and buts" and who could disagree with him on that? Liam Brady suggested that on the evidence of last night's match Jack Charlton would be advocating that Ireland should concentrate on getting "the ball into the box" against both Holland and Egypt. One would have thought that getting "the ball into the net" would be an even better idea. Happily for those of us who regard ourselves as the underdogs we have now had a good result ourselves against England and have also been able to rejoice in the successes of Cameroon and Costa Rica. Indeed, it is a measure of the respect that we now demand that the term "Eire" has gone almost completely out of fashion. Even the most inarticulate English players (does that mean all of them, I wonder?) now call us "The Republic". Up the same. Between them RTE and ITV are mopping up the television coverage and it is only fair to say that RTE are winning. Jimmy Magee is King of the Commentary for my money and Johnny Giles and Eamon Dunphy are away ahead of anything the opposition is putting up. Magee, not for the first time; has shown that when it comes to knowledge of teams, players and background material he cannot be matched. But for sheer brilliance based on one marvellous outburst Rodney Marsh is away ahead at the moment. Somebody suggested, mischievously perhaps, that Paul Gascoigne of England could be compared to the great Pele. Marsh shot that down with the same flair as he used to show in his hey-day at QPR. "Comparing Gascoigne with Pele is like comparing Rembrandt with Rolf Harris." he said. Nice one Rodney. Rodney's colleague John Helm was doing the commentary yesterday on the match between Belgium and South Korea. Helm

seemed to think the Koreans were some exotic form of mushroom. "They have grown considerably in stature in the last 5 minutes" he declared.

## Drink ban tests ingenuity of happy fans

*Peter Byrne, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1990*

There was something which mocked history in the drinks ban which local police authorities slapped on the citizenry of Palermo and its tourist public when Holland met Egypt in football last Tuesday. Had not Sicily and its emigrant sons kept America sane in the dark days of prohibition. And yet, here we were in the heartland of the missionaries as parched as a processed tobacco leaf and almost as brittle. Not a drop of alcohol tainted the mixers as grown men- laid waste to copious quantities of soft drink. But the contents of some of the bottles being taken into the ground may well, I suspect, have breached the trade descriptions act. "Forget the football — watch the gargle," implied a neutral Irishman as he attempted to outwit security chiefs charged with implementing the hideous legislation. The passion in the voice suggested that the stakes were higher than a container of lemonade. That all this deprivation would be perpetrated in the name of sport is faintly disturbing. Given a favourable rating over the next three weeks, we could see the great experiment of Italia'90 repeated at venues as far removed as Cairo and Cahirciveen. Honesty demands that one should record that the absence of alcohol did not prevent the Irish making merry in the rain, even at a stage of the game when the outlook looked anything but bright. Was this I ask- a vindication of the ebullience of our race or, more realistically perhaps, a testimony to astute husbandry in stocking up for the rainy day. One way or another, Italy has good reason to be grateful for the presence of the Irish just now. Undeniably, ours has been the happiest noisiest and, unquestionably, the best behaved of the supporters of all 24 teams in the finals. There cannot have been more than 200 of them in the San Paolo Stadium in Naples on Tuesday night; yet they succeeded in leading the post match singing only to be discouraged, at least temporarily when the hundred or so Soviet supporters seated next to them, refused to take up the Mexican Wave. Overall I believe that this has not been as yet a championship to compare in happiness with either Spain in 82 or Mexico four years later. True there were joyous scenes here in Palermo on Tuesday after Italy had plotted their unconvincing win against the United States. But generally, the mood has been subdued, the crack less noticeable and the enthusiasm on the terraces no better than moderate. For this, one can perhaps attribute the blame to a massive security operation, designed to rip the heart from what should be a truly joyous celebration. Add in the prospect of shuttered bars and you get a reasonable summary of a championship yet to take flame.

## Criticism of Ireland over the top

*Mark Lawrenson, June 16<sup>th</sup> 1990*

THE knee-jerk reaction which has greeted Ireland's game with England begs one simple question! What did these people expect? In retrospect, everybody has gone way overboard about it. It was always going to be like an English Cup tie played at international level and those who failed to appreciate that in advance are merely compounding their mistake now. This was what we've been saying all along, that it was never going to be a good game and sure enough it wasn't. Could you have imagined it being 3-2 or 4-3? No way. The game was never going to contain flowing football. All the players knew too much about each other. But, make no mistake, both teams will produce decent performances this weekend and then, just as surely, all the rubbish that has been written and said this past week will be quickly forgotten. I would expect two reasonably good matches in Group F, between England and Holland tonight, and Ireland and Egypt tomorrow afternoon. I would expect much more quality football from both these games in terms of passing and technique, even from Ireland because Egypt will let them play to a certain degree. Egypt won't go steaming in as such, they won't make it unduly difficult for Ireland and the likes of Ray Houghton and Kevin Sheedy will have more time on the ball. Jack is right not to risk Ronnie Whelan because he has missed too many games. It would be better to make him train very hard for the next three or four days just to improve his level of fitness. I would still like to see David O'Leary play at centre-back, again if only for his pace, but I suppose there's not much chance of that. Whatever about Egypt letting us play, I doubt whether Ireland will return the compliment. In fact, I think Egypt might get a shock simply because I thought Holland (and also Scotland in the pre-tournament friendly) permitted them far too much time and space. I don't think they'll be able to cope with what Ireland will throw at them; in terms of being subjected to intense physical pressure and having balls pumped into their area. Admittedly, Egypt possess some good players and probably have more skill all-round but they won't find it easy to express their flair against opponents whose forte is to stop you playing, legally, and within a good system. I can't see Egypt posing that big a threat at all. Ireland will have them in a vicelike grip and I can't see them letting go. We are not a free-scoring team and we are just as likely to score through our midfielders — as was the case again on Monday. We also have the options of well-rehearsed set-pieces and I expect rich pickings, knockdowns, half-clearances and so forth as a result of the presence of Tony Cascarino. I cannot envisage one Egyptian defender who is going to be able to cope with Cascarino. The Egyptians are brave and they may be able to compete with him, but I don't think they'll be able to cope with him. Regarding the prospects for Group F as a whole, one could resort to putting the names in a hat now, and who's to say it won't come to that? However, I think Egypt might lose out at the end of the day. It wouldn't surprise me if they've already had their day in the sun. Some of England's better players must produce the goods and I think it could come against Egypt. Indeed, for all England's problems and the way they performed against Ireland, I think they've got a chance against the Dutch. It wouldn't be the first time that a team which has been severely knocked rebounds and promptly puts eggs on people's faces. I have a feeling that England will do that. It's all very well for the Dutch players to pick and choose their managers but they still have to perform on match days. They didn't do that on Tuesday night. They seem to have forgotten their primary function, which is what they do on the pitch for 90 minutes. You would imagine them playing better but it looks as though they have serious problems. They don't have the fluency or team spirit which they had in the European Championship. Player power is a double edged sword and it may be that three or four groups have the power as opposed to all of them. It doesn't look as though they are all in this together. They haven't got the oneness which the other teams have. And oneness, team spirit, morale, all that only

comes from good results, and that draw was not a good result for them. It is going to be very tight, and it is an unpredictable match between two unpredictable teams, but I just have a sneaking suspicion England might nobble them. Daft isn't it? But then dafter things have happened in this World Cup. As I suspected, Scotland need a snooker already. I expect Sweden to beat them today, or at any rate I expect Scotland to beat themselves again. It's easy to criticise selections but it is very odd that Andy Roxburgh chose not to bring one out and out wide player. Against Costa Rica he played four midfielders, McCall, McStay, Aitken and Bett, all of whom like to play through the middle. There doesn't seem any way for them to get around defences, yet they play a striker like Alan McInally. He didn't play all that well against Costa Rica but he only had one decent cross from the byeline. All the rest were from 30 or 40 yards out, and he is never going to score from them. Sweden didn't do too badly at all against Brazil but I'm tempted to revise my opinion of them. They surprised me by playing with a flat back four and without a sweeper. I can't see any team playing flat at the back ever doing that well. International forwards are so quick nowadays that it only takes one good ball to beat a flat back four. Brazil just did enough against the Swedes. Their first goal especially demonstrated the quality they are capable of and I had the impression they could move up a gear if required. They are playing within themselves and I'd still fancy them to win the World Cup. The real outstanding performance of the tournament so far came from the West Germans against Yugoslavia. From an Irish perspective I would be frightened of the Germans. I have seen all the games in Group E and that has the makings of a good advert for cricket. It hasn't been exactly awe-inspiring and as for the Uruguay-Spain tie, it would have been more interesting watching paint dry. Yet, all the criticism has been reserved for Jack Charlton, Ireland and England — in that order- mostly. True, Jack's style is unattractive. I don't think there's any argument about that. I don't think that Jack, in his wildest dreams, would call it attractive. But it wins games and, as a manager, I know that it's the players that dictate the style'. If you're not comfortable on the ball then you have to get it forward as quickly as possible, thereby forcing your opponents into errors. To be able to play from the back you've all got to be able to do it. If you have one fellow who can't the whole thing falls down. A manager is only as good as the players at his disposal and given the players he has Jack is totally justified in what he is doing. Having said that, Ireland are going to be better than in the last game. We are going to have more quality football than we had on Monday. Either that, or I'm going to retire both as a manager and as a columnist.

## Irish frustrated as cagey Egypt hold on for draw

*Peter Byrne, June 18<sup>th</sup> 1990*

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND 0

EGYPT 0

The pulse of Ireland's World Cup challenge beats a little more slowly this morning after a mountainous exercise in application in the La Favonta Stadium in Palermo had failed to deliver the win which would have drawn at least some of the hazard from Thursday's meeting with Holland. Egyptian relief was only thinly disguised when the Belgian referee Marcel Van Langenhove called time and they knew for certain that blanket defence had prevailed against the best the Irish could throw at them. For Ireland, it was, unquestionably, a point lost rather than one gained, and now the journey ahead is strewn with risk as they go in search of a place in the last 16 in the championship. Egypt, the team which had endeared itself to the Italian public against Holland five days earlier, won no friends here with a performance which encompassed much that is bad in European football and precious little that was constructive. From as early as the fifth minute, they were embarked on a mission in survival, blatantly time-wasting and invariably content to rely on the back pass to goalkeeper Ahmed Shobeir rather than risk being caught in possession. It all made for a hugely disappointing spectacle but the point, I am certain, was lost on the Egyptian manager Mahmoud El Gohary as he walked off the pitch at the end with the protests of the Irish supporters ringing in his ears. He had achieved what he set out to achieve but whether he can go on trading at this level with a team which, on yesterday's display, owes more to caution than courage, is a moot point. Ireland, never the most effective team when required to impose themselves on inferior opposition, were something less than brilliant. Territorially, they monopolised the name from start to finish and yet contrived no more than one or, perhaps two chances. As the pattern developed and the Egyptians coped in varying degrees of efficiency and expediency with the floated centre aimed at Tony Cascarino a change of direction was urgently needed. Unfortunately the options available to Jack Charlton in this area are not exactly abundant and with the attack lacking wit as much as width they were never capable of turning the Egyptians to make the decisive pass. In a blatant attempt to retrieve the situation, Charlton sent on Alan McLoughlin in place of John Aldridge to retrieve a steadily worsening situation but the Swindon player, no less than those around him was unable to detach himself from his markers and find the space which might have unlocked the way to Shobeir's goal. For all the immense work rate by the Irish, Shobeir, deservedly booked for time-wasting, was seldom unduly discomforted. The exception materialised in the 70th minute when Kevin Sheedy, imposing some semblance of calm on a frenetic situation, contrived the pass which sent Ray Houghton clear only six yards out. On another day and in another game, the Liverpool player's predatory instincts might have provided the goal coveted by some 10,000 Irish supporters inside the stadium and countless more watching on television but, on this occasion, he failed in the task of directing the shot wide of the goalkeeper. Shobeir is deserving of all credit for the manner in which he closed down the angle but Houghton's failure to capitalise on the chance portrayed the depth of Ireland's dilemma on a day when the task of timing the final pass with sufficient precision to beat the cover looked beyond their compass. Egypt had done their homework well but, for all their preparation, they were still never able to legislate fully for the aerial power of Cascarino. Time and again, the Aston Villa player got his head to the ball but sadly the knock downs were never sufficiently accurate to find a teammate. As in the England game last Monday, the Irish midfield functioned purposefully and if Paul McGrath and Andy Townsend were not perhaps as effective as one

might have wished in pushing into the opposing penalty area, they still contrived to reduce the threat presented by Abdel Ghani to almost nothing. Houghton, physically fit but still struggling to rediscover his old rhythm after a season marked by injury toiled hard but without any great reward and it was left to Sheedy on the opposite flank to provide the day's more obvious skills. For the second consecutive game, the Everton player's easy, languid style looked so much more effective than the more forthright tactics of many of those around him but, unfortunately, he got few opportunities to demonstrate his shooting power with that lethal left foot. Townsend, sparing nothing or nobody, gave his all, as ever and pluckily carried on after a heavy collision with Heshan Yakan which could make him doubtful for the Dutch game. It is a commentary on a wholly one-sided affair that Paddy Bonner did not have to deal with one direct shot for the entire afternoon while Chris Morris and Steve Staunton were seldom subjected to any pressure down the flanks. Mick McCarthy again looked the better of the centre backs although Kevin Moran made one invaluable saving tackle approaching half-time after Hassam Hossan had, for once got clear of his marker. The backdrop of a sheer cliff face rising 1,000 feet just 100 metres or so from the ground provided a dramatic setting and with the Irish supporters, never more vociferous, on song from the start we had every reason to expect a carnival performance from Charlton's team. It never quite happened like that, however, and as the Irish rolled forward in waves without any reward, a deep sense of inevitability settled on the game before half-time. Staunton had a likely shot blocked by Rabie Yassein in the 23rd minute and later still John Aldridge hooked the ball wide after Cascarino had headed Moran's free. In between the referee rightly rejected a penalty claim as Sheedy attempted to burst between Hany Ramzy and Ibrahim Hassan and when Shobeir comfortably held a shot by Cascarino, the dimensions of a difficult task came more clearly into focus for the Irish. Morris became the first Irish player to be booked in the finals for a tackle on Magdy Tolba in the 51st minute and that was perhaps the only point of note until the Irish picked up the tempo of their game again approaching the last quarter. Houghton's miss was crucial and 15 minutes from the end Staunton held his head in despair after his strongly driven shot from just outside the angle of the penalty area had just missed the target with Shobeir for once beaten. It was, then, a deeply frustrating afternoon for every Irishman in the stadium and now the hope must be that the changed priorities of the game against Holland, will induce a more decisive performance on Thursday.

EGYPT: Shobeir, Ibrahim Hassan. Ramzy, Yakan. Yassine. Oraby, Yousef. Abdel Ariz, Abdelghani, Hossam Hassan, Tolba.

Subs—Abu Zeld for Tolba (60 mins) Abdelhamid for Abdul Aziz (77 minutes).

IRELAND: Bonner, Morris, McCarthy, Moran, Staunton, McGrath, Houghton, Townsend. Sheedy, Aldridge, Cascarino.

Subs—McLoughlin for Aldridge (65 mins). Quinn for Cascarino (85 mins).

## Jack's army is peeved by another draw

*Maol Muire Tynan, June 18<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Into the alcohol-fuelled night they went, their unswerving dedication to "Jack's Army" now slightly ropy. For the second time in a week the Republic's fans had perched on bar stools, before television sets, deranged with the need for victory but yesterday they ended up peeved and a little sulky at their team's failure to score in the nil-all draw with Egypt. As usual, the Irish showed their astonishing capacity to swerve from exultant devotion to painful ridicule in 90 minutes flat. Nowhere was this volte-face more evident than in the pubs and lounges of Dublin, where, less than a week before, the streets were alive with "Ole, Ole," and the sound of car horns when the Republic drew with England. Not so yesterday. The resultant despair from the scoreless draw was enough to force one greenclad, stout-sipping Dub to whinge, "They wouldn't score if they were there till bleedin' Christmas". And so on. Out at the RDS, at Ballsbridge, 6,500 fans were drawing on their large repertoire of football musical compositions — again "Ole, Ole", and "Here We Go" — before the 4 pm kick-off. The esprit de corps was as yet untarnished, but an hour is a long time in football. Professional Event Management had brought four massive screens to the RDS for the single largest showing of the game outside Italy: According to the company's managing director, Mr Michael Dawson, all their £14 and £17 tickets had sold out early, making the £400,000 project a successful venture. "This is the best large-screen production in the world, and the first time it's been done in Europe. I'm not au fait with the technology, but my experts tell me it has the brightest, highest colour definition to be found," he said. Outside the "stadium", one beer stand sold off 100 dozen cans by half-time; the Little Italy shop was trying to convince suspicious patrons of the delights of grissini wrapped in salami and the woman on the wine stall was waiting for someone to part with £80 for the gold bottle made up in the shape of the World Cup. The Minister for Labour, Mr Ahern, had dashed from Croke Park, where he saw Dublin beat Wexford in the Leinster Hurling semi-final, to the RDS for a less satisfying display. Despite being a man of the people, Bertie was in the VIP box, along with the Attorney General, Mr Murray, in a heat resembling that of Palermo. In the cool, dark interior of Kitty O'Shea's pub, Shelbourne Road, verbose gentlemen were giving forth opinions well peppered with expletives implying something less than admiration. Five television screens, no less, were relaying the game and even the action replays of the near misses — particularly Ray Houghton's — drew screams of agony from the assembly. The streets outside were deserted, apart from the occasional pensioner walking a dog and the only sign of life emanated from public houses where the moans of sorrow grew louder as the game progressed. By the end of the day, when the time had come to slip off the bar stool and face the unkind world again, there was still the chance that Thursday, when Ireland meet the Netherlands, might bring a change in fortune. Maybe.

## Jack and panellists forget that it's only a game

*Sean Kilfeather, June 18<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Never having been hoist on my own petard I can't say how painful it is but, judging by Jack Charlton's face on television yesterday evening minutes after Ireland and Egypt had drawn in Palermo, it must be extremely uncomfortable indeed. There he was, ashen-faced and furious, telling us that the Egyptians, "this lot" he called them apparently unable or unwilling to mention their name, were deplorable. Why? They refused to allow Ireland to score. Charlton himself seemed to be the target for Eamon Dunphy's fury back in Donnybrook. He was, he almost spat out the words, embarrassed and ashamed "for soccer, for the country, for the supporters, for the great Irish players of the past like Peter Farrell." All this because Ireland had played "this rubbish." Was this the man who wrote a fine book about soccer called "Only A Game". It has been one of those weekends when we have all gone over the top. When we scraped a draw with England just over a week ago the country went bananas. So what is the difference when we go on to draw with Egypt? Whatever gave Irish soccer teams the right to patronise "the lesser orders"? Charlton gave himself away when, almost out of reach of Des Cahill's microphone in Italy, he could be heard to remark "It was mostly our own fault." Earlier he had said that "when people get to the World Cup finals (Egypt he meant) you expect them to play a bit." Eamon Dunphy's annoyance was clearly because the Irish team had not made any attempt "to play a bit" and that, in adopting this approach, they were following Charlton's express instructions. Johnny Giles was in agreement although not quite so trenchant. Egypt didn't play and didn't try to play, he said. When Johnny Giles and Eamon Dunphy had been highly critical of the way Ireland had played in the first half Bill O'Herlihy made a very good point to both of them. "I've seen them (the Irish team) play like that a million times." He never said a truer word. But his fellow panellists would not agree. After all, in the build-up to the match both had been very positive about the Irish team and its players and pointed out their good points. Eamon had done a voice-over on a package which showed the team playing constructive, skilful passages of football which yielded goals in the qualifying matches. "That," said Eamon "nails the lie that all we do is hustle and bustle." Nothing he and Johnny said compared with the excitement and the thrill of what was happening in the country yesterday. Somehow or other, and I know it is easy to be wise after the event, but Bill O'Herlihy and myself seemed to be on a somewhat different wavelength. It was like watching delighted children at play, I felt, "This could all end in tears" I said to myself. On UTV Graham Taylor, who is the pretender to Bobby Robson's teetering throne, has not set the television world on fire — but he said something which was much more to the point than most things said about Ireland's chances so far. "We've got to recognise that it is their (Ireland's) first time in the finals. They play little pockets of football at times," he said. But the disillusionment with Jack Charlton had begun to set in much earlier than yesterday evening. The leaving out of Ronnie Whelan seemed to sour the previously back-slapping nature of the relationship between the RTE panel and Charlton. Last night Eamon Dunphy seemed to have calmed down and was speaking more in sorrow than in anger. He has given up on Jack Charlton because he left out Ronnie Whelan, Dave O'Leary and Liam Brady. Liam could play against the Egyptians at the age of 65. Jack's policies were "bankrupt, inflexible, sterile and shameful. Today proved that for me," he said. Group F was, objectively, the poorest in the World Cup and England would beat the socks off the Egyptians. Johnny Giles was more contained. "We didn't try to play the way we can play. Jack can't moan about the Egyptians. They had the philosophy (to play well) but they hadn't the players. We had the players but we didn't have the philosophy." Among all the criticism Steve Alkin of RTE, who is out there, was ploughing a lonely furrow. Speaking to Ray Houghton, he said: "I was very

impressed with our tactics. I thought we kept our shape well". Back home all was doom and gloom. What a difference a draw makes.

## At least Ireland will know what they need in last game

*Gerry Thornley, June 19<sup>th</sup> 1990*

One of the advantages, of being drawn in Group F — and, let's face it, there haven't been many — is that by next Thursday evening, when Ireland play Holland and England meet Egypt, every other team in the competition will have completed their first-round matches. Thus, each of the four protagonists will know exactly what is required of them to qualify for the second round proper as one of the four best third-placed countries. To reiterate, teams which finish level on points after three matches will be decided by (a) goal difference, (b) goals for, (c) the result between the respective countries and finally (d) the drawing of lots. As things stand, there are many permutations by which Ireland could advance to the second round or, alternatively, be eliminated. For example, should both of Thursday's matches be drawn then the number of goals scored would be decisive. Were the draws identical, then lots would be drawn. If, on the other hand, England and Egypt drew 1-1 and Ireland and Holland 0-0 then England and Egypt would go through. Lots would be drawn to decide whether Holland or Ireland finished in third place. As both would have three points, the lucky one would almost certainly qualify for the second round. Should both of Thursday's matches be won, then only the winners would definitely progress. To take another hypothetical example, were England to beat Egypt 2-0 and Holland to defeat Ireland 1-0 then, England and Holland would qualify. Ireland would be left in third place, with a goals difference of minus one (1-2) and with only one goal for. Again, come kick off time on Thursday evening, Ireland would know in advance (with the obvious exception of the result of the England-Egypt game taking place simultaneously) whether they could afford to lose by 1-0 and still progress as one of the four best third-placed teams. But, at this stage, that would seem unlikely. Taking the World Cup group by group, it would seem probable that even those third placed teams with just two points would either have a superior goal difference to minus one or at least would have scored more than one goal. In Group A, Austria are the likeliest third-placed team, presuming they beat the USA tonight. Currently the Austrians have a goal difference of minus two (0-2) so anything greater than a 1-0 victory would ensure they would have a superior record to Ireland in the event of us losing to Holland. In Group B, we already know that the third-placed team, Argentina, have accumulated three points with a goal difference of plus one (3-2). By my calculations, this ensures the World Cup holders of remaining in the tournament, for there could only be three third-placed teams with superior records. Group C is the most complex, as it is conceivable that Sweden, Scotland and Costa Rica could all finish on two points. Were Sweden merely to beat Costa Rica by 1-0 they would have a goal difference of minus one also (3-4), but would have scored three goals. Were Scotland only to lose 1-0 to Brazil, they also would have a goal difference of minus one (2-3), but would have scored two goals. It could be in Ireland's interest that Brazil beat Scotland handsomely. In Group D, presuming Yugoslavia beat the United Arab Emirates, then Colombia appear the most likely to finish in third place. Colombia meet West Germany this afternoon and currently have a goal difference of plus one (2-1) so again, it could be to Ireland's benefit that the Germans maintain their free-scoring mood. In Group E, where Belgium and Spain already have four and three points, respectively, Uruguay ought to secure third place and were they to beat South Korea on Thursday afternoon they would do so with three points. Overall, therefore, the chances of Ireland being able to afford the luxury of a defeat to Holland, even by 1-0, are not very good. Although one or, two, or possibly even three teams with two points might qualify for the knock-out stages, Ireland's poor goalscoring record militates against them being one of the lucky beneficiaries. Unless, of course, they were to lose by, something like 2-3 or 3-4. That though, remains purely hypothetical for the moment and at least Jack Charlton

and his team will know exactly the final standings in the other five groups as kick-off time nears in Palermo on Thursday evening. If nothing else, Group F has that much going for it.

## The good, the bad and the ugly in Palermo pre-match tension

*Kevin Myers, June 21<sup>st</sup> 1990*

The age of innocence for Irish international football died yesterday at the football stadium of La Favorita in Palermo. Inside there were tumultuous scenes as the Irish soccer manager, Jack Charlton, walked out of a press conference after refusing to accept a question from the journalist and former footballer, Eamon Dunphy. Outside there were ugly scenes as supporters without tickets heckled FAI officials and, at times, came close to violence. As a prelude to tonight's match against the Dutch, it could hardly have offered a worse omen. There are now hundreds of Irish fans in Palermo without tickets for the match and who feel bitterly let down by the FAI, though how that organisation could have done more than it has is difficult to understand. The Irish press retinue is deeply divided over the conduct of the press conference, which nearly ended in blows as those who defended Mr Charlton's walk-out on the grounds that Eamon Dunphy's appearance was deliberately provocative clashed with those who felt that the Irish manager has not the right at a press conference to decide from which journalists he will accept questions. While Irish fans were learning the worst outside, inside, the expected row between Jack Charlton and Eamon Dunphy was erupting. The Irish manager had fielded a couple of harmless questions when the former Irish international, who had earlier in the week told an RTE television audience that the match against Egypt had been a national scandal, attempted to ask one. It was Mr Dunphy's first appearance at a press conference since the World Cup campaign began. Mr Charlton said that he would not accept a question from Mr Dunphy because the latter was not a proper journalist. Mr Charlton then walked out, and uproar broke out between journalistic supporters of the two men, nearly ending in blows. Speaking to soccer reporters during an informal briefing later yesterday afternoon, Mr Charlton said he was "entitled as an individual to speak to anybody." He did not wish to speak to Mr Dunphy because he did not like him. "I do not have to work with people I do not like. I think he is a very bitter little man and anyway, anyone who is not proud to be Irish, I am certainly not going to talk to," Mr Charlton added. The Dublin branch of the National Union of Journalists yesterday issued a statement condemning the treatment of Mr Dunphy at the press conference. The branch statement said the columnist was a fully paid up member of the NUJ and had been for several years. Irish fans who arrived here without tickets are now seeing some of the most pessimistic predictions come true. Hundreds of them, perhaps over a thousand, will not see the match because tickets are available only at exorbitant black-market prices which Irish fans cannot afford after the ruinous expenses of the past two weeks. Some 600 of them will be able to see the match on a closed-circuit television picture on a large screen. Fans queued through the night in the hope that 90 tickets available at face value might be distributed on a first come, first served basis. They were not. By the time that Joe Delaney of the FAI arrived to begin the lottery, those who had been waiting longest were in a bitter and ugly mood. Additionally, there was an element which has not been evident before, quick to resort to profound obscenity and promising violence as an early option. For the first time since the Irish fans arrived here, Italian police reached for their batons as the crowd, by now several hundred strong, chanted abuse at the FAI officials. The truncheons stayed in their holsters, as Chief Superintendent Bernie Curran, who has orchestrated security for the Irish fans superbly, quietened the crowd with a few calming words. It was a virtuoso performance which spoke volumes about the relationship between the Garda Siochana and Irish football fans.

## Serious times on and off the pitch

*Sean Kilfeather, June 21<sup>st</sup> 1990*

Jack Charlton says he doesn't have to work with people he doesn't like. Johnny Giles said that when he was manager of the Irish team there were a lot of journalists he didn't like. Charlton didn't like Eamon Dunphy yesterday hi Palermo and wouldn't talk to him. Eamon tried to pour oil on troubled waters by saying that Charlton was hectoring, bullying and intimidating. So now you know. I knew it would end in tears. Honestly! Wouldn't it make you weep. Grown men behaving like this over a game of football. Bill O'Herlihy kept his cool in RTE. Johnny Giles remained cool as well although he did stand up for Eamon and his right to be present at press conferences and to ask questions. What I would be worried about would be if Charlie Haughey were to take a leaf out of Jack Charlton's book and refuse to speak to journalists that he doesn't like. We'd all be in a right mess then and no mistake. Out on the pitch things were very serious as well. Helmut Kohl, apparently taking time off from his day job, was refereeing the match between Scotland and Brazil. He handed out two bookings early in the match to Scottish players and Brian Moore on UTV complained that referees were now under so many edicts from the powers that be that they never smiled. Poor old Scotland hadn't anything to smile about either. With only a few minutes to go they conceded a goal and the two points to Brazil whose talent for scoring goals Scotland managed to curb up until then. Jimmy Greaves continues his ridiculous T-shirt routine. A less funny clown you could not imagine, Mind you, he managed to come up with a very obscure statement during the Scottish match. "I'd like to see the ball played down the channel a bit more," he said. What could he have meant? Had it something to do with the Channel Tunnel? Jimmy is good at going down cul de sacs in his comments. Billy Hamilton is settling in slowly in RTE. He is really too shy for this sort of thing but he still makes a lot more sense than Greavesie. At this stage of the competition even the experts seem to be baffled by what will happen when all the first-round matches are complete. Two teams will go through from each of the six four team groups but four others will also go through and there are so many permutations that the mind boggles and a publican I know has banned all discussion on this topic because it is causing so much hassle and taking up valuable drinking time. Billy Hamilton probably got it right the other evening when he said that Charlton's bad temper is the result of frustration. He has seen his plans disrupted by the Egyptians and doesn't like it. Billy was right when he said: "Many other managers have accused Jack of playing the very same way as he does" The word shape seems to have crept into football jargon of late, Jack Charlton was at it yesterday. "If you are under pressure you have to keep your shape. If you can do that you can succeed", he said. It is difficult to know what this means. I suppose it means that players stay in their positions or something like that but it is strange how these words appear and before you know where you are everybody is using them. Nobody will bat an eyelid these days if you talk about a square ball. Going back through my notebook of last week I came across a very interesting statement by none other than Liam Brady on the BBC in the course of the match between Holland and Egypt. Referring to the latter, he said "they are a credit to the game of football". Now isn't that very interesting, don't you think?

## Quinn may get his big chance

*Peter Byrne, June 21<sup>st</sup> 1990*

NIALL QUINN, forced to toil in the slipstream of Frank Stapleton and Tony Cascarino for much of his international career, may be offered the opportunity of imposing himself on the most important game in Irish football history against Holland in Palermo tonight. Quinn is thought to be in line to succeed Cascarino as Jack Charlton prepares to rearrange his forces for a game which offers the prize of a place in the last 16 in the World Cup. Charlton, betraying all the signs of a man under increasing pressure, will not go public with his selection until 10.30 this morning. All the indications are, however, that he is considering at least one change from the side which failed to unlock Egypt's defence last Sunday. His problem is that he plots not from a position of strength, but from one riddled with self-doubt at the end of a season which may have gone on too long for some and never really started for others. Apart from conceding that early goal to Gary Lineker in the England game, Packie Bonner has not been tested in either of his assignments, but of the others only Mick McCarthy, Paul McGrath, Andy Townsend and Kevin Sheedy can be said to be playing well out here. That is a narrow platform from which to build the success coveted by a nation and it accounts directly for the newly manifested interest in Quinn, whose 15 caps over a period of four years, have been won largely as a substitute. Cascarino, promoted to the role of target man in the wake of Stapleton's demotion at the start of the 1988/89 season, won a lot of ball in the air against Egypt, but never at any stage, showed in a scoring position at the far post. Lacking the conviction which established him as one of the more valuable members of the team last season, he missed some splendid chances in a practice game on Tuesday and it was only when Quinn replaced him that the "A Team" suddenly developed a cutting edge in a highly competitive affair. Quinn, reborn in a £750,000 move from Arsenal to Manchester City in February, will trouble any defence with his 6'4" frame, but if that potential is to be harnessed properly, it is imperative that the quality of the Irish crossing be improved substantially. More and more, we are coming to regard the loss of Tony Galvin as a major blow here. Shorn of Galvin's ability to get to the byeline and cross, the Irish attack currently lacks width and variation and if the problem is to be addressed, it involves both full backs to go down the line more often. Presumably Chris Morris will play at right back in spite of his ongoing ankle problem, but it will be interesting to see if Charlton again decides to go with Steve Staunton on the opposite flank. Apart from his lack of mobility, the quality of Staunton's defence has given cause for concern this season and it may now be a close run thing as to whether Chris Hughton represents the safer bet at number three. Equally, it is difficult to endorse Charlton's preference for Kevin Moran over David O'Leary at centre back, but I suspect that, for all his current problems, Moran will again be entrusted with the responsibility of shoring up the middle of the defence alongside McCarthy. Moran's troubles are compounded by the loss of Ronnie Whelan and Ray Houghton's sharp decline in form in the last year. Houghton is no longer the galvanic force who coaxed some compelling performances from those around him during the European Championship finals and urgently needs to find improvement to develop some impetus in the Irish attack down the right. To complete a rather disturbing picture Andy Townsend's ankle injury is proving more difficult than originally anticipated and unless there is a sharp improvement in his condition, he may struggle to convince Charlton of his fitness. That would be a serious loss to the Irish for his central midfield partnership while McGrath has been one of the brighter aspects of this championship for the Irish. The alternatives include a recall for Whelan or more likely the inclusion in the middle line of Alan McLoughlin. Some suggest that Charlton should go for broke and include John Sheridan, a man with the ability to winkle out those precious passes which undo even the most vigilant defenders. Sheridan's ability to compete in the tackle or

track opponents is less obvious, however, and represents a risk which may prove unacceptable in this game. Two years ago when they met in that memorable match in Gelsenkirchen, both Ireland and Holland were riding high. Now the mood in both camps is one of caution, tinged with the hope that the hour will make the men. The Dutch, who came here as one of the championship favourites have failed, undeniably failed, to this point to reproduce the flowing football and decisive finishing which took them to the European summit in West Germany. The point yet to be clarified is whether it amounts to a temporary chill and if the slumbering giants, van Basten, Gullit, Rijkaard and Koeman can stir themselves sufficiently to corner the supreme accolade for their country. On song, the quartet, collectively and individually, represents one of the great power blocks in international football. If they come to life again now, it will almost certainly prove a torrid night for Charlton and his men. The more pleasant scenario for the Irish is that they will continue to slumber and that McGrath and Sheedy will finally close the wounds of Gelsenkirchen and point us in the direction of a place in the second phase of the championship at the weekend.

# Quinn's goal puts Irish back on song

*Peter Byrne, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1990*

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND 1

HOLLAND 1

Ireland was back on song last night and Jack Charlton's squad had found a new sense of purpose after Niall Quinn had capitalised on a calamitous mistake by the Dutch fullback Berry Van Aerle to deny the European champions the win that pedigree suggested in Palermo. A draw was sufficient to send Ireland through to the second phase of the championship against Romania at Genoa on Monday and now the heartbeat of a nation is that much faster as we eye the prospect of further history in the making. This was an occasion for connoisseurs to savour in which sophistication blended with spirit to provide the chemistry of a superb struggle. In the end, honour was satisfied and both teams were content to settle for a point for their toil on a hot, humid night. Unlike Egypt, Holland came to play and the Irish were not found wanting. The European champions, given the foundation of Ruud Gullit's tenth-minute goal, were seldom less than com-posed and if their full talent has yet to flower, they looked sharper in this game than at any stage since arriving in Italy. In that situation, it was no mean achievement by Ireland to compete on even terms and, if Gullit was later to blemish his performance by wasting at least two good opportunities, there were occasions when Ireland, pushing the ball about with fluency and confidence, came close to snatching a winner. In the end then it was not so much the scoreline as the manner in which it was fashioned which delighted the thousands of Irish supporters in the stadium and set the scene for a long night of revelry in Palermo. They had given the lie to those who had dismissed them as out of date and in that, we all felt gratified. As expected, Charlton gambled with Niall Quinn in place of Tony Cascarino in his starting line-up and his judgment was proved faultless. Unsettling the Dutch defence with his aerial power, Quinn battled nobly and there could have been no happier person in this bowl of sound when he delivered the ball to the back of Hans van Breukelen's net in the 70th minute. It was only his second goal in 16 internationals but undoubtedly it was the most critical of his career. It derived in the first instance from a crass error by Van Aerle in volleying a back pass at speed towards van Breukelen. The goalkeeper, caught going the wrong way, failed to hold the ball and Quinn, in moments which he will treasure for the rest of his career, was in at speed to pounce on the rebound and score from no more than a couple of yards. The Irish contingent, never less than vociferous, erupted in a spontaneous show of delight and in that moment we knew for certain that the score incurred in the European Championship meeting with the Dutch in Gelsenkirchen two years ago had been settled, at least in part. Charlton, drawn and tense, had earlier gambled audaciously by withdrawing Kevin Sheedy and John Aldridge in the 62nd minute and sending Ronnie Whelan and Cascarino into action in the hope of retrieving a game which, at that point, looked in some danger of running away from them. Whelan, playing his first game in 12 weeks, was competent with- out ever imposing himself as an aggressive runner but it was Cascarino's arrival which occasioned the bigger talking point. It meant that Charlton was now risking two target men in the front line with every prospect of the unfamiliar partnership unbalancing the team. In fact, it had the opposite effect. The Dutch, struggling all night to come to terms with the problems confronted by Quinn's beanpole frame suddenly had to contend with a second tall striker and soon they were in a state of near panic. With the centre of their defence thus unhinged, the European title holders saw their grip on the game loosened and if the circumstances of the Irish equaliser were heart breaking from their point of view, one suspected that they were not greatly surprised when van Breukelen had to stoop into his net to

retrieve the ball. In fairness, the Dutch goal also originated in slovenly defence with Kevin Moran taking much of the blame for Gullit's early goal. Moran's subdued form has been a source of concern since the championship began and the point was painfully illustrated when he failed to get to Gullit in time to prevent him laying off the pass to Wim Kieft. Gullit, in a situation in which he has few peers in the game, collected the return pass and the angled shot from 10 yards across Packie Bonner's body, was a winner all the way. On this, the 300th anniversary of the meeting of the Orange and the Green, that piece of opportunism put the Dutch firmly in control but, fortunately for the Irish, Gullit's scoring touch was to desert him on two occasions subsequently. The former European Footballer of the Year was entitled to hold his head in shame after he had failed to convert a perfect opening created by Marco van Basten in the 19th minute and later still he opted to go it alone with his team-mate Hans Gillhaus much better placed as the Irish cover lay scattered in the 60<sup>th</sup> minute. Ireland, too, had to endure a couple of heart-breaking moments. Aldridge and Quinn needed only a touch to apply the decisive finish as a cross from Steve Staunton arced through the Dutch defence in the 48th minute and later still Cascarino was only fractionally beaten by substitute Hank Fraeser as Paul McGrath's cross invited the decisive header in the 76th minute. Additionally, there were two controversial refereeing decisions, both of which went against the Irish. John Aldridge headed home a cross from Staunton only to be whistled back for an offside infringement shortly after Gullit's goal and then there were justifiable claims for a penalty when van Breukelen appeared to take Aldridge's legs in the penalty area. In those circumstances then a division of the spoils was an equitable outcome and now the days ahead are full with opportunity. Individually, there were some excellent performances in the Irish side. McCarthy as ever was dominant in the air and, leading by example, eventually extracted a corresponding response from those around him. Paul McGrath did a fine containment job on Gullit but it was achieved only at the expense of sacrificing his power going forward. Andy Townsend battled with tremendous courage throughout and if Quinn was the hero of the night, Aldridge and Cascarino both contributed well at different stages in the front line. This was unquestionably Ireland's best performance since the draw, on an identical scoreline, with the Soviet Union in Hanover in 1988 and later drew unstinted praise from international observers at the game last night. Qualification for the second round means that the players collect an extra £220,000. This brings their total bonus payments from their participation in the finals to £770,000.

**NETHERLANDS:** van Breukelen. van Aerie, van Tiggelen, Koeman, Rijkaard, Wouters, Witschge, Gullit (cap), van Basten, Kieft, Gillhaus.

Subs: Fraser for Witschge (59 mins). van Leon for Kieft (79 mins)

**REPUBLIC OF IRELAND:** Bonner. Morris, McCarthy, Moran, Staunton. McGrath, Houghton. Townsend. Sheedy, Aldridge. Quinn.

Subs: Whelan for Sheedy (61 mins), Cascarino for Aldridge (61 mins)

## Joyous Euphoria as fans take over Dublin streets

*Christine Newman, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1990*

Dublin's city centre was transformed into one huge celebration party last night as the football fans spilled out onto the streets in joyous euphoria at Ireland's draw with Holland. The equalising goal, which ensured qualification for the next round of the World Cup, brought an almighty roar in the packed pubs that could have been heard in Italy. The fans, decked in green, white and orange; were subdued in the early part of the match when Holland scored the goal and the city centre was deserted and quiet. But Niall Quinn changed all that. When he scored, it seemed as if the whole city erupted and responded with the chorus of "Ole, ole, ole, ole". A cacophony of car hooters filled the Dublin air for hours after the match and fans on the paths responded with cheers and songs. Huge Irish flags were draped out of windows and one pair of fans stopped the traffic with a gigantic Tricolour held high over the street. Never has Dublin seen the like. The good humour, the camaraderie and the general feelings of bonhomie were apparent as groups saluted other fans. The generosity even extended to England which must be recorded as another first. When the news was confirmed that England had beaten Egypt, there was a cheer. Nobody noticed that they were cheering their old adversaries. Every time the goal was shown on television, the crowds erupted again and nothing and nobody would have kept Dublin quiet. Nobody would settle down, nobody would sleep. The celebration party continued into the early hours. There were no sour notes, although one T-shirt did declare Jack 1 Dunphy nil. Everyone rose to the occasion, and barmen in one pub had their faces painted in green and white and wore the green shirts. In Limerick, thousands of people sang and danced in the streets as part of the celebrations at Ireland's soccer success. The big crowds who watched the match on television in the various licensed premises in the centre of the city spilled out onto the streets which had been totally deserted for two hours previously. In Galway, cries of "ole, ole, ole" echoed through the city and cars with horns honking in time to the catch-cry prowled up and down the streets. In Cork, the green carnival looked set to continue celebrating through the shortest night of the year. Crowds mingled with horn-blowing cars as people chanted their way through the streets. Patrick Street and the Grand Parade sounded like a Spanish bullfight with the ritual chanting of "Ole, ole, ole."

## Bottomless well of spirit key to Irish qualification

*Mark Lawrenson, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1990*

Our best performance of the competition earned us our best result of the competition; which was particularly nice. No-one could deny us our place in the second round and no-one could begrudge us the slice of Irish luck which came with the drawing of lots. This performance, as much as the result, gave the lie to the nation that this team can't play good football. To come back and get an equaliser against the Dutch, who were playing very well at the time, speaks volumes for the ability and bottomless well of team spirit within the Irish camp. This match proved Ireland are worth their place in the second round and if Jack was disappointed with the display and the result against the Egyptians, he could only have been delighted with this effort. As a footballing side, Ireland played immeasurably better than in the previous two games. The improvement came a game later than I had predicted but, again, this underlined the effect of the heat for afternoon matches. Last night, Ireland produced some decent football; it was nice to see every Irish player attempting to bring the ball under control and play ball. Overall the team's passing was much improved, and it was a much more positive performance from the outset. Both full-backs Stephen Staunton and Chris Morris, pushed forward more in the opening half-hour than in the two previous matches combined, and each of them produced a cross of the highest quality — the type of crosses which we never produced against the Egyptians. Niall Quinn might have done better with both of them but he more than made amends, didn't he? Ray Houghton looked a good deal sharper but, in truth, everybody did well. The defence coped admirably in the circumstances, after experiencing a few flutters, but you're always going to get that against the Dutch when they're firing on all cylinders. And the Dutch were certainly firing. It was clear from the very beginning that they were going to be completely different proposition from the Dutch side of the previous two games. With both teams playing so positively, it only required to give us an early goal for it to develop into a cup-tie more in keeping with the second phase. It was a great goal from Holland's point of view — one of the best in the competition. It would be churlish to criticise the defence. A quick free; lovely one-two; good first touch and burst of pace by Gullit and, to cap it all, a great finish. As we say about the Irish, very simple and very effective. But within ten minutes you would have thought it was Ireland who were winning. The response was magnificent. Instead of waiting half an hour for a shot, as was the case against England and Egypt, Aldridge and Sheedy both had decent efforts and the Dutch appeared genuinely frightened of us — pulling all ten men back immediately for corners and free-kicks. In saying that they gave us space to play; they made a game of it (unlike the Egyptians), and they let us play. The Dutch clearly, went into the game saying to themselves: "Right, let's play football and if we can't win it by playing football, then sod it." They also paid us the ultimate compliment of playing Rijkaard in his best position. Gullit made it difficult for the Irish defenders to pick him up, as evidenced by the goal, by dropping deep and playing in the hole between the front-line and midfield, as well as roving out onto the flanks. Van Basten also dropped deep into midfield (possibly to get him more involved and restore his confidence) leaving Kieft as the only out-and-out striker. But aside from all the positional- alterations, the main thing was the improved level of individual performances by the Dutch. The big boys had clearly come out and decided to play. Gullit appeared to be on a different planet compared to his previous two displays — he looked so, so sharp. The handbrake was off at last. All-in-all it was more like the Dutch of two years ago, more flexible. Beenhaaker obviously gave them a licence to roam around, and adopt freer roles. Nice to see—though for a long while I was thinking it was a pity they had to do it against us. After the interval, I had thought initially that Ireland had to score within 15 minutes or so to reward themselves for such a good start to the second-half. But they just kept going and going-

further testament to that remarkable team spirit. It seems to sustain them for ever and gradually the Dutch stopped passing the ball around and holding possession as they had been doing in the first half— they seemed to settle for 1-0 and just hope for a breakaway. To be honest, I found the double substitution strange. With four men marking just one at the back, or two at most, it would have seemed a safe gamble to withdraw both centre-backs and put on O'Leary and Whelan— playing just three at the back with O'Leary's pace for insurance. But then you couldn't argue with it, could you? Cascarino didn't touch the ball but the goal did come from a long ball to the two tall target men. The equaliser was a comedy of errors from the Dutch point of view, but a fine goal from a striker's point of view. Quinn had the courage or the wit to keep going, and his gamble paid off. The Dutch paid the penalty for not attacking the ball when it landed on the edge of the area. But it was a good striker's goal — a sniffer's goal. For the next five minutes there was only one team who were going to go on and win it. Holland immediately settled for a draw and soon after Ireland followed suit. That effectively was that. But that couldn't detract from a great game of football and a great result. The result of the draw was undoubtedly the best thing that could have happened to us. The only other thing would be if it were played at night. But it's the same for them and the Romanians are eminently beatable as Cameroon proved to us.

## **Holiday for Genoa match a zany idea, says Haughey**

*Christine Newman, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1990*

The Taoiseach, Mr Haughey, has dismissed a proposal by the Labour Party leader, Mr Spring, to declare a half-day public holiday on Monday to coincide with Ireland's World Cup football match in Genoa. Speaking at an EC summit briefing in Dublin yesterday, Mr Haughey said the "the best thing" he could do for "these zany proposals" from the opposition was to "afford them the charity of my silence". Mr Spring had called on the Minister for Labour, Mr Ahem, to declare Monday a public holiday from 3 p.m., so that workers could watch the World Cup match between Ireland and Romania, which starts at 4 p.m. Mr Spring said that, assuming Ireland would win next Monday, all of the team's further matches would take place outside working hours. However, a spokesman for the Department of Labour said that the recommendations of the Federation of Irish Employers on flexibility, so that staff could enjoy the match by, perhaps, coming in early or working through lunch hours, would seem to be an appropriate way of meeting the problem. A spokeswoman for the FIE, Ms Barbara Cahalane, said that in enterprises where work had to continue, perhaps a skeleton staff could manage and be provided with television or radio. "Our view is that we hope employers will approach it with a spirit of goodwill so that there can be co-operation on both sides," she said. The Dublin Chamber of Commerce also advised early starting and finishing, or in-house television, and urges employers to reinforce employee goodwill by entering into the spirit of the occasion. The Dublin City Centre Business Association has announced that all major stores in the city centre will be open all day on Monday. Television will be available in many locations. The general secretary of the ICTU, Mr Peter Cassells, appealed to employers to be enlightened and flexible, and talk with the unions. "Either the employers make arrangements or it's going to happen anyway," he said, adding that it had been shown that national euphoria increases productivity.

## High Irish spirits defy alcohol ban

*Kevin Myers, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1990*

The Irish caravan of soccer supporters has begun its journey to Genoa for Monday's match against Romania in a confident mood with just a few traces of perhaps justifiable smugness around the edges. The Irish team is already in Genoa, having left Palermo yesterday morning after a night of joyful but cautious celebrating in the team hotel. Tickets for Monday's match go on sale in Genoa this afternoon, although many of the thousands of Irish fans in Sicily will not arrive in the ancient seaport on the Italian mainland until later this evening or even tomorrow, thus raising the fears of further problems over tickets for Monday. Ferries to the Italian mainland are expected to carry most of the cavalcade of Irish travellers out of Sicily. All scheduled flights to Genoa this weekend are fully booked, with long waiting lists. Some groups are chartering special planes to avoid the tortuous journey to the seaport of Naples and then up the Italian peninsula. The shocking immediacy of events was brought home to the little knot of Irish supporters yesterday morning after they emerged from their night's celebrating into the inhumanly bright Sicilian sunshine, looking like the survivors of a month-long air raid. They stood in the open air, blinking in the light, rubbing their eyes and gaping horribly. It is doubtful whether any Irish fans abroad have ever celebrated with such a sense of dedication, of almost purposeful nobility, as did the Irish after the one-all draw against a much-favoured Dutch team. It was in an appropriately shattered condition that they had now to plan how to make the next step in the pilgrimage on behalf of the Irish soccer team. The ban on alcohol was apparently as effective on Thursday night in Palermo after the match as was Queen Anne's wish to outlaw sin. Wherever there was a bar that was open there were Irish to be found, and Irish soccer supporters are drawn to beer like salmon to the sea. Sean Valentine of Dublin and Dick Meade of Limerick were two such fish. "It was great, singing till four in the morning with the Dutch. They were grand fellows, they had a great relationship with us and they were delighted we were through," said Sean. "And we have nothing but good to say of the Italians. We all got on great together" Dick Meade agreed. "The craic was terrific and the Dutch made it that way. We had been very despondent after the Egyptian match, because if we played well and got beaten we wouldn't have minded so much. But everything has changed now and I think we'll probably beat the Romanians." The erratic mood swings of Irish soccer supporters have now brought them to an unprecedented optimism, which has not allayed one with their very real bitterness at what they are convinced has been ticket racketeering by Irish travel agents. Numerous Irish fans have named two Dublin travel agents in particular that they allege were acting as ticket touts. Mick Ennis of Crumlin said he had agreed to buy five £9 tickets for £55 each. When he arrived to make the purchase, the price was up to £100 each. "What the travel agent said to me was that there were 1,500 people here looking for tickets and so he would have to up his prices. And in Palermo before the match, one Irish travel agent is reported to have been arrested by police on suspicion of selling black market tickets. It is all connected with that profound law of economics relating to supply and demand. Irish fans who got to see the match are not too worried about how much they paid for their tickets. Alan Sheehan and Jim O'Connell from Cork, travelling around Italy on Euro-rail tickets, paid £50 each of their hard-earned savings to Italian touts for their £9 tickets. As they trudged on to begin their journey to Genoa last night, rucksacks on their backs, they declared that the tickets were worth every penny they had spent on them. With supporters like this it is hardly surprising that every town welcomes the news that Ireland will be, playing, there and every team dreads the news that they will be playing against the Irish.

## Women could be the secret of Ireland's success

*Peter Byrne, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1990*

The transformation was dramatic. From the crew who had toiled to convert possession into the hard currency of goals against Egypt, Ireland suddenly looked a team of verve and some vision. And Holland, not unqualified to make such judgments, labelled them as one of the more dangerous of the 16 countries still surviving in the World Cup championships here. Was the difference down to man management by Jack Charlton, the wounded tiger syndrome or, perhaps, more pertinently, women. Last Monday, Charlton, sensing a growing mood of discontent among the squad, opened the doors of their hotel in Palermo to the wives and girlfriends of the players. It hadn't always been thus, for hours after the game against England ended in Cagliari, a major crisis developed when three wives presented themselves, unannounced, at the hotel. Charlton was manifestly unimpressed, not so much by the presence of the women as by the fact that players had broken the squad rules and invited spouses without first seeking his permission. It was only through some straight talking that disciplinary action was deferred, but in spite of that, or perhaps because of it, the rule was relaxed last Monday and wives, decamped in various parts of Sicily, were invited to stay in the hotel. In doing so, Charlton may have been influenced by the decision of his old adversary, Franz Beckenbauer, in bending the rules for the members of his West German squad last week. Beckenbauer had once found himself on the opposite side of the bedroom door after Helmut Schoen, the then German manager, banned players from seeing their wives during the 1974 championship. More controversially, the women were not admitted to the victory celebrations and Gerd Muller, the celebrated West German forward, was so upset by this decision that he vowed never to play international football again. The arguments on sex before sport, its merits and demerits, are neither new nor conclusive. The adage that you pay your money and you take your choke may not be entirely appropriate, but it makes the point. The question at issue in an event such as the World Cup concerns not so much sex as the capacity of wives and girlfriends to act as amateur psychologists for their loved ones. People not familiar with the problems of living out of a suitcase for five or six weeks can experience a wide range of problems from boredom to old-fashioned homesickness. In that situation, there is an increasing belief that the presence of women in the camp makes for a happier, and, by extension, more successful squad. The counter argument is that wives, with no interest in sport can become involved in personality clashes while sitting around hotel foyers and that this in turn will involve the husbands. Perhaps the answer lies in discretion and after a lifetime spent on the roads in the pursuit of footballing matters Jack Charlton may be in a better position than most to make that judgment. Encouraging footnote: Wives and girlfriends were again admitted to the Irish team's hotel on Thursday night when the singing ended early and the peace was disturbed only by wandering, unaccompanied journalists.

## Road to Rome Beckons

*Peter Byrne, June 25<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Jack Charlton will demand another extensive commitment in art and athleticism in the Luigi Ferraris Stadium in Genoa this afternoon when victory over Romania offers the attractive prize of a place in the last eight in the World Cup championship. Before closing the team's camp, set in the wooded seclusion of the Grand Bristol Hotel overlooking Rapallo Bay, to all but his closest confidants, Charlton spelled out his priorities. "We must be brave and yet vigilant, committed, but still sufficiently flexible to adapt our tactics to fit the pattern of the game," he said. "We know little about the Romanians, they probably know even less about us and to that extent, it is difficult to be specific about pre-match strategy." After watching videos of their three games here, however, the certainty is that there is a vast amount of running ahead of us and if we can blend that with the skills we showed against Holland, we'll give them a run for their money. Seldom has any sporting event caught the imagination of the Irish public quite like this and to the unprecedented interest at home, was added the colour and the enthusiasm of the supporters arriving in Genoa yesterday. The green and white colours were conspicuous on the roads leading out of southern Italy on Saturday as many of the supporters in Cagliari and Palermo travelled overland, to make their contribution to what promises to be another memorable illustration of all that is good in sport. In addition to the survivors of the islands, thousands more are flying in specially for the occasion which Charlton, in rare moments of public emotion, describes as heart stopping. "When we walked out for our earlier games, it was like nothing I've ever known with all that noise and excitement echoing around the stadium," he said. "The game here will be no different and the hope is that it will again lift our players at times when they need that something extra to keep going. Predictably, the red, yellow and blue colours of Romania were less evident on the Genoese streets and highways yesterday. Other, more critical issues take precedence for their people, and yet no less than Ireland, they will be consumed by patriotic pride in a football stadium for two hours or more this afternoon. The point was acknowledged yesterday by the Romanian manager, Emerich Jenei when he said: "The political problems of our people have inspired our players here — and I think they will again do so in the match with Ireland". Politics and football are frequently inseparable in Romania and today's team will be dominated by players from the two top Bucharest clubs Dinamo and Steaua, the former ran by the Ministry of the Interior and the dreaded Securitate; Steaua by the Romanian Army. Given the military's role in the overthrow of Ceausescu there is no argument about which of the two enjoys the greater popularity just now but it is Dinamo, soon to return to their original title of Unirea Tricolour, who will provide the power base of the defence in Mircea Rednic and Ion Andone. Steaua, of course, won the European Champions Cup in 1986 and the man who masterminded that historic triumph, Gheorghe Hagi will again be on duty today to provide the greatest single threat to the Irish. Hagi, currently negotiating the terms of a deal which will take him to Real Madrid next season is accepted as one of the great talents in modern football, a man who combines pace and power with the subtleties of a conjurer. Unquestionably Hagi will seek out any flaws in the Irish make-up now, but with characteristic pragmatism Charlton yesterday appeared to be less concerned with the puppet than the puppeteer. "Ninety-five per cent of their movement is designed to release Hagi in space — our challenge is to find and identify the playmaker who supplies him. This is essential to our survival. "Suspension will deprive the Romanians of the gifted Mariu Lacatus, but there is speculation here that when Jenei announce his team this morning it may include the name of Rodion Cametaru, Romania's all-time leading scorer, who has fallen out of favour in recent months. Charlton has also decided on a late team selection but I shall be surprised if it differs from the starting line-up against Holland with Niall Quinn again winning preference over Tony

Cascarino for the task of complementing John Aldridge in attack and Ronnie Whelan sitting on the bench. Commenting on Whelan, he said: "I don't think Ronnie has the stamina to get through 90 minutes of football in these temperatures but he gives us an option which we may use at some stage of the game." Likewise, the two big men up front, Quinn and Cascarino provide us with attractive alternatives if we need to change the direction of the game." In the event of a draw at the end of normal time, 30 minutes extra will be played and if the game is still inconclusive at that point sudden death will be involved with six penalty kicks to either side, to determine the team to meet the winners of the Italy/Uruguay tie in Rome next Saturday. The penalty takers in the Irish side have not yet been nominated, but Charlton says with a certain amount of confidence "I will not have to choose them — the players who feel up to it will volunteer to do the job for me". On the changed priorities of knock-out competition, the manager comments: "It will be like an English cup-tie, the team which gets it right on the day will go on — the losers will go home. "That is alright by me. We are not accustomed to the business of qualifying, scrambling a point here or there. The knock-out game is our kind of game — we can handle the situation in which we know exactly what we have to do." To achieve the win which will gratify Irish people everywhere, they must cut their margin of error at the back to the minimum. And that thrusts a lot of responsibility on Kevin Moran and Steve Staunton, neither of whom has been in top form here. Midfield, as ever, will be central to the plot and the hope is that Ray Houghton can at last rediscover his old sparkle to complement the sterling qualities of Andy Townsend and Paul McGrath in the centre and the refined skills of Kevin Sheedy on the opposite flank. At the front we will be looking to Quinn to upset the Romanians in the air and perhaps provide the opening for John Aldridge to deliver that long awaited score which could see us safely on the road to Rome next Saturday. If we make it big Jack may well be invited to drop into the Vatican and discuss the question of the vacant See of Armagh. Today's meeting with Romania will be only the second occasion that the Republic of Ireland has encountered them at senior level. The other occasion was in March 1986 when the home team recorded a deserved 2-0 success at Lansdowne Road. On that occasion, however, Romania were short several players who were not released by their club Steau because of their involvement in the European Championship Cup. Coincidentally, Romania was drawn in the same group as Northern Ireland in the preliminaries for the 1986 World Cup and it was largely on the strength of their two victories over the Romanians that Billy Bingham's team qualified for the finals in Mexico. Bingham recalls their 1-0 win in Bucharest as one of the better achievements by his team abroad culminating in Alan McDonald scoring the decisive goal late in the game. Romania, who are appearing in the World Cup finals for the fourth time, took part in the inaugural championship in Uruguay in 1930.

# A day that will be remembered forever

*Peter Byrne, June 26<sup>th</sup> 1990*

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND 0

ROMANIA 0

(Ireland won 5-4 on penalties)

Moments of imperishable drama under a hot Italian sun yielded the result to illuminate Irish sporting history when Romania fell in a penalty shoot-out in Genoa yesterday and the Republic of Ireland were confirmed among the eight teams who will contest the quarter-finals of the World Cup. Millions of Irish people held their breath and then expanded with pride when first Packie Bonner parried Daniel Timofte's shot and then David O'Leary, with monumental calm, delivered the ball to the back of the net for the goal which sends Ireland through to a meeting with Italy in Rome next Saturday. Seldom, in 30 years, has a reporter's notebook been so full of noteworthy incident; never has the end product been received with so much enthusiasm as cynicism melted and hardened critics embraced each other unashamedly in the press box. Around the stadium about 15,000 singing Irish fans hugged and kissed, the tension now lost in a vast outpouring of happiness, the cheers of impending disaster now miraculously converted into drops of joy. Out in the centre of the pitch the Romanians attempted to comfort the disconsolate Timofte. Then slowly, ever so slowly, they turned and trooped leaden-footed in the direction of the exits, leaving the emptying arena to the men who had scarcely given them a moment's respite all afternoon. There had been a Spartan stand in the crucible of the Luigi Ferraris Stadium. To lose it was the graphic illustration that sport can, on occasion, consign even the bravest and the most committed to the loneliness of the losers dressing room. Unfortunately for them, they discovered that steel was met with steel on this occasion, nerve pitted against nerve, and at the end of a game which balanced on a thread for 120 minutes, they had drawn the short straw. There were those who doubted Ireland's ability to continue to trade at parity in these conditions when the game went into extra time; even more who suspected that they might not survive in a shoot-out without one of their specialist penalty-takers, John Aldridge, who by then was back on the bench injured. As the players squatted in the centre circle awaiting the snoot-out, Jack Charlton walked out, threw an arm around his players as if sending them to war and then retreated to the sideline to watch the shoot-out — on a television monitor. Romania won the toss to shoot first. Gheorghe Hagi converted, Kevin Sheedy responded in kind and then, as the fans sat on the edge of their seats, Danut Lupu, Ray Houghton, Josif Rotariu, Andy Townsend, Angelo Ionut Lupescu and Tony Cascarino hit the target in that order. It was 4-4 with just a penalty apiece left before we had death within death. Enter the hapless Timofte, a man who had only recently arrived in the game as a substitute. As he stared out from goal and jutted his jaw, Bonner cannot have been unaware that in a similar drama at the end of the recent Scottish Cup final he had failed to stop any of the nine penalties shot at him by Aberdeen. But now the hour made the man and as Timofte struck the ball, the goalkeeper guessed correctly and, spreading himself to his right, parried the shot, punched the ground in delight and we knew we were halfway there. From midfield emerged the tall, angular frame of O'Leary, a man who had not struck a penalty in competition for almost 20 years. No golfer has ever lined up a more crucial putt, no footballer has faced a greater moment of truth. But the Dubliner, cast at the centre of a stage he may only have dreamed of, betrayed no sign of uncertainty. As he placed the ball on the spot, looked up and then — to a vast explosion of sound — lodged it safely in the back of the net. In that moment David O'Leary at last stood

vindicated, the scars of a long running rift with Jack Charlton finally closed and all Ireland prepared for the celebration which would last well into the night. For the Irish players, heavy with perspiration, it was the perfect response to those who, for all the statistical data to the contrary, had questioned their ability to compete successfully at this level, as we feared, were a skilled accomplished team, technically correct and lacking only the sharpness in the penalty area to have made port safely. There were many anxious moments for the Irish, notably in the opening 20 minutes when we were often nearly snatching at the ball in situations in which the Romanian's possessed all the composure. Spreading the ball wide, the Eastern Europeans set out to draw the sap from Irish legs and even Charlton was getting just a little concerned before the tide turned sharply at the start of the second quarter. For the first time in the game, the Irish midfield began to take a grip, moving the ball fluently and piecing together passes which stretched a defence that had earlier looked unflappable. From a situation in which Bonner was quite the busier of the two goalkeepers, notably in the 19th minute when he had to move swiftly to pull down a shot by Ovidiu Sabau, the eyes of the crowd began to focus on the opposite penalty area as Ireland, by now adjusted to the pace of the game, began to move with conviction for the lead goal. It might have materialised on two occasions in a hectic onslaught approaching half-time. In the 43rd minute Tony Cascarino knocked down a cross from Chris Morris, but Kevin Sheedy, at full stretch, could only jab the ball harmlessly at goalkeeper Silviu Lung. That was a let-off for Romania and they escaped again just two minutes later when Niall Quinn, climbing above the defensive cover, mistimed the header when a precise cross by Ray Houghton invited a better finish. Romania were again first into their stride in the second half but, Mick McCarthy and an improved Kevin Moran presiding with authority at the centre of Ireland's defence, Bonner was not called into action again until the 73rd minute. But when the threat materialised, we had reason to be grateful to the big goalkeeper. Radu Raduciolu struck the shot perfectly and then watched and admired as Bonner pulled it out of the air. That was the stuff of heroism and two minutes later the goalkeeper was the man in the breach yet again, this time knocking over Hagi's effort from 25 yards. Romania were entitled to expect a goal in either or both of those incidents and when it failed to materialise Ireland were reborn. From that to the end of extra time they frequently looked the more dangerous side, pulling the Romanians around by sheer pace and accurate, distribution. And yet it almost came undone in the third minute of extra time when Bonner, at full stretch, did well to turn a shot from Josif Rotariu round the, post. It was, overall then, an eventful game ; in which the names of four players —, John Aldridge, Paul McGrath, Gheorghe Hagi and Danut Lupu — went into the notebook of the Brazilian referee Jose Wright. It was never a bad-tempered affair, however, and at the end victor and vanquished could stand and feel fulfilled in the knowledge that on this, the hottest of afternoons, they had made \_ full contributions to this championship. There were times when Hagi, with that bewildering change of pace, looked in a class apart from everybody else, but it is a measure of the manner in which Ireland came to terms with the threat that Hagi eventually drifted out on to the right wing where Steve Staunton did a fine job of containment. Of heroes, there were many in green shirts yesterday. Bonner has seldom performed more inspiringly and in front of him Chris Morris, Mick McCarthy, Kevin Moran and Staunton were never-less than resolute. Morris's crossing on occasions was awry but in the primary task of defending his was a competent display. McCarthy's qualities of leadership are by now part of Irish sporting folklore and he emphasised the point yet again here when leading from the front. Unbeatable in the air, he tackled and covered with practised diligence and by now perhaps, his critics may have relented. Alongside him Moran enjoyed his best, game in the championship to date and., now looks certain to retain the confidence of Charlton for the awesome task of shutting out the Italians in Rome. It was in midfield, however, that most; of the merit of Ireland's performance resided. It was here that the day's most punishing duels were fought and all four Irishmen, Houghton, Townsend, McGrath and Sheedy acquitted

themselves with honour. McGrath and Townsend disrupted the power base of the Romanians and even in those situations in which they appeared to have lost control, were always capable of dredging up the extra yard of pace to retrieve the situation. Sheedy's smooth skills were surpassed only by those of Hagi, but if there was a real Irish hero on the day it was, perhaps, Houghton. A season fragmented by injury had left him with a race against time to be ready for this championship. His early performances were laboured, but yesterday the little man was back to something approaching the form which captivated the world in the European Championship finals two years ago. Inevitably, the front-runners, Quinn, Aldridge and, for much of the afternoon, Cascarino, had to summon up vast quantities of strength as they chased across the width of the park and yet, were required to present themselves in the penalty area when the cross materialised. Their response caught the mood of this remarkable day for Irish football perfectly.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND — Bonner, Morris, McCarthy, Moran, Staunton, McGrath, Townsend, Houghton, Sheedy, Aldridge, Quinn.

Subs: Cascarino for Aldridge (22 mins), O'Leary for Staunton (94 mins)

ROMANIA — Lung, Rednic, Andone, Popescu, Klain, Rotariu, Sabau, Lupescu, Hagi, Balint Raduciolu.

Subs: Lupu for Raduciolu (75 mins), Timofte for Sabau (98 mins).

## Packie Dives and Spirits Soar

*Kathryn Holmquist, June 26<sup>th</sup> 1990*

As the blind man stood waiting to cross College Green, in Dublin, a smile gradually spread over his face. It was not necessary to have seen the ball shoot into the goal to know what had happened. The city suddenly erupted in sound: first the shouts, then a car horn, then a siren, then the honking of a bus and within minutes thousands of cars were converging on the city centre, all blasting their horns and flashing their lights, completely drowning out the motorcycle escorts which accompanied the speeding black Mercedes of European Ministers on their way from Dublin Castle. The man grinned at the crescendo cacophony as he crossed the street, tapping his white cane. Dublin took to victory like New Orleans takes to Mardi Gras as the thousands of revellers emerged onto the streets waving flags. Men waltzed together down O'Connell Street, and climbed O'Connell's statue, draping it in orange and green. People danced in the Anna Livia fountain, drenching themselves and passers-by. Men grabbed women and kissed them. A young man who stood waiting quietly for a bus was suddenly overcome and raised his fist in the air. A conga line of men and women danced out of a pub and down the street. A granny leaned out of a car, waving her flag at passing pedestrians. Soon bus queues evaporated as chaos took over O'Connell Street and an improvised parade began. Revellers piled onto the boots and bonnets of cars, shouting and waving flags, jerseys, scarves anything, as long as it was green and orange. The Minister for Education, Mary O'Rourke, strode down O'Connell Street beaming with pleasure, having watched the match in her office. "It's a spontaneous outflowing. It's national pride, national faith and hope and belief in what we are and what we can become," she said triumphantly. "It's about pride in Ireland." said Sylvia Reilly, from Stamullen Co Meath, as she danced up the street with her friends. "We Irish think we're great at the moment," said her friend Daphne Lamb from Raheny. Other great Irish heroes were made to join in, as an orange police bollard was perched on O'Connell's head and a flag draped in his hands. The gardai had no choice but to stand calmly by and observe the outrageous behaviour and the countless traffic violations. What will it be like if Ireland win the World Cup? "I hope I'm not here," said one guard. "Dublin's never seen anything like it," said Dubliner Michael Martin. "I've never seen anything like it." Tourists caught up in the celebrations stood rooted to the spot in O'Connell Street as scenes of increasingly bizarre behaviour unfolded around them. "I can't think of anything like this happening in California ever. You'd think they had won the World Cup and they only qualified. What do they do when they win?" asked a bemused Mark Gilbert, in Dublin on holiday. "It's brilliant, like a riot. It's bigger and better than when the University of Southern California wins the Rose Bowl." said Milagro Velasco from Los Angeles. "I thought we were crazy about football in Alabama. This is crazy," said Jesse Mathews. As Dubliner Paul Walsh stood watching the parade of screaming fans create havoc in the street, he said: "The country won't survive this. Just wait 'til we get to the final."

## **Fans besiege Packie's mother**

HUNDREDS of cheering fans besieged the home of Packie Bonner's mother Gracie, at Clough Glass, about a mile from the village of Burtonport, Co Donegal, within minutes of the final whistle sounding in Genoa last night. Ecstatic fans dressed in green, white and orange, carrying green white and orange mascots, piled into green, white and orange cars for the tumultuous cavalcade. Frances O'Donnell who runs Kelly's Aran Bar with her husband Gerard said: "The place was mobbed. The atmosphere was tremendous. It was the best atmosphere there has been for any game so far." Packie's mother lives with her daughter Ann at Clough Glass. His sister Kathy lives about five miles away at Meenmore, Dungloe, with her husband Owen Coyle and a third sister Bea (Mrs John O'Friel) lives in Letterkenny. One of the major assembly points in Burton port throughout the day was the Harbour Bar and Waterfront Restaurant where proprietors Mary McGinley and Michael Boyle and their staff were busy until 3 a.m. yesterday painting the outside of the premises green, white and gold. "We had green beer, and green spirits and a great crowd from half ten this morning," said Mary. "The place was packed. When Packie saved the penalty, they just went mad. I thought at that stage that the floorboards were going to go." Mary Campbell, who runs a shop and guesthouse at Burtonport said: "It was just chaotic. All the business places closed down except the pubs, of course. The atmosphere was like something out of another world. I have never seen anything like it," said Mrs Mary Robb (64), an Australian tourist staying at Campbell's guesthouse. "I have been wanting all my life to come to Ireland... by the end of the game today I was yelling just as much as anybody else here."

## **Power demand fell during match**

There was a 25 per cent fall in demand for electricity during the televising of the World Cup game with Romania at 6pm yesterday as the vast majority of the population decided not to cook a meal and instead watch the drama unfold in Genoa. An ESB spokesman said that at the same time the previous Monday, the demand was nearly 1900 megawatts, but yesterday at 6pm demand fell to 1450 megawatts. "It was fascinating to watch," he said. "The demand jumped a bit at half time when some people tried to cook a quick snack. It jumped considerably when the match ended, but during the match it was down and stayed down. "

## Players faced Tricolour during anthem

*Peter Byrne, June 26<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Ireland's, players, yesterday, risked the wrath of FIFA by refusing to conform to instructions for the pre-match ritual in the Luige Ferraris Stadium. Players of both teams are required to face the presidential box where the various dignitaries of FIFA are seated during the playing of the anthems, but undeterred, the Irish players turned in the direction of the Tricolour, flying at the opposite side of the stadium. "They told me of their intentions before the game and I said if that's what you want to do, go right ahead and do it," said Jack Charlton. "No, I don't imagine there will be any disciplinary action, it was merely intended as a mark of respect to the national flag and I think the Irish supporters in the stadium, and what magnificent ambassadors for the country they continue to be, would have approved of the gesture." Charlton himself was involved in hassle with officials before the kick-off. They insisted that he should be seated on the sideline. He contended that he could not watch the game properly from that position. In spite of numerous efforts to persuade him to change his mind, Charlton stood his ground literally and metaphorically until eventually he was forced to conform in the closing minutes of normal time. After moving forward to complain when the referee booked Paul McGrath for a tackle, he was severely reprimanded by the Brazilian referee. John Aldridge, who pulled a calf muscle immediately before being booked for a tackle on Gheorghe Hagi, may now struggle to be available for Saturday's meeting with Italy in Rome. Aldridge, who confessed to having nightmares in having to sit " and watch the action from the sideline, said he suspected that the injury could be serious enough to keep him out of the game.

## Team shows various signs of frailty after night of celebration

*Kevin Myers, June 27<sup>th</sup> 1990*

The triumphant Irish football team yesterday moved from Genoa to Rome for the next leg of their World Cup campaign, against the hosts Italy, in the quarter-finals. The squad has been granted an audience with the Pope today, by which time it could be expected that they will look a little fresher than many of them did yesterday morning when they arrived at Genoa airport. Some of them were wearing dark glasses and others bore various signs of a forgivable frailty after a night celebrating an unparalleled achievement in the history of Irish soccer. Similar symptoms were evident amongst the press corps accompanying the team in their unexpectedly and decidedly unwelcome early departure for Rome. The decision upon such an early departure had been taken by Jack Charlton before the Romanian match on the grounds that the longer the players had to acclimatise themselves in their new environment the better they will feel as they approach the quarter-final against Italy on Saturday evening. Whatever the wisdom for the outcome of Saturday's encounter, an early rise after a night's dedicated celebration seemed on the wrong side of barbarity. The team manager had allowed the players full rein in the aftermath of the match. Some stayed in the team hotel, the Bristol, where the post-match festivities outlasted the endurance of The Irish Times representative to observe them. Many of the players, such as Niall Quinn, Kevin Sheedy, Chris Morris and Packie Bonner remained in the hotel showing the extraordinary willingness to talk to fans which is one of the distinguishing features of this team. Others celebrated in the various bars of Rapallo, the elegant seaside resort which was at the time undergoing its own orgy of pleasure at Italy's qualification for the match against Ireland. The extraordinary popularity of the Irish team and the Irish fans in Italy would have made them welcome guests wherever they went. The results were only too evident yesterday morning when the squad trooped into Genoa airport. And as with the press corps accompanying them, the absurd enormity of what had been achieved the previous evening was only then beginning to sink in. Despite only scoring two goals in the competition, and without winning a single match, Ireland had nonetheless become the most popular foreign team here and had qualified for the quarter-finals of the World Cup with the last penalty of a penalty shoot-out, taken by a centre back who was making a late appearance as a substitute in a position to which he is wholly unaccustomed, who has never scored in over 50 international appearances, who has never taken a penalty in his entire professional career. It was small wonder that not a single journalist covering this tournament felt he or she had done justice to Monday's events. Never mind the journalists own considerable limitations, the English language itself, the glorious vehicle of Hamlet and Paradise Lost, of Middlemarch and of Ulysses, is not up to the task. Faced with such events, it comes to a baffled halt, splutters, and falls silent. The journalists on this assignment might be incapable of describing these extraordinary events, but there is no concealing the deep affection and respect they unanimously feel for the Irish football fans. We observe a simple truth which cannot be said too often: these people have done more for the international image of the Republic than any group or individual since the foundation of the State. So there is a deep anger at the treatment of these Irish fans by the black marketeers, who have controlled the supply of tickets to ensure that Irish fans, many of them well and truly steeped in insolvency, are forced to buy ludicrously expensive tickets. The FAI has tried and failed to prevent such monstrous injustices continuing. The Italian people, and thereby the Italian Government, have made a great deal of money from these Irish fans. It surely would be no intrusion if our own Government were to take a polite but firm interest in the treatment

being received by its subjects in a fellow EC State before Saturday's match creates new heights of rapacity.

## Schillaci has no intention of letting things slip now

*Paddy Agnew, June 27<sup>th</sup> 1990*

He was christened Salvatore Schillaci. To his friends, though, he is just "Toto". For half the Italian nation, however, these days he has become Salvatore again, "Il Salvatore della Patria", the saviour of the land. Out at Marino, in the Colli Albani hills high above Rome, in the very spot in which Augustus Ceasar and others, would spend the long hot Roman summer planning future wars, the Italian soccer team is planning the next stage of its seemingly inexorable march to World Cup immortality. In the elegant grounds of the Hotel Cabala, the madding crowd of quote-hungry Italian and foreign press people manage to create an atmosphere that is part Hollywood and part casbah. All around the mock Roman swimming pool, little groups cluster around different players. Here a Zenga, there a Donadoni and there a Serena. Meanwhile, in a purpose built marquee beside the pool, Italian coach, Azeglio Vicini, is holding a formal press conference. Despite the general air of activity, there is no doubting the name of the man most in demand — one Toto Schillaci. The Juventus striker, scorer of goals against Austria, Czechoslovakia and most recently against Uruguay is in grave danger of missing his lunch. Portuguese radio, Brazilian, Spanish, Mexican and 67 varieties of Italian television all wish to talk to him. Schillaci's minder is becoming increasingly peeved. Perhaps he can smell the carbonara that is a cooking in the kitchen. Schillaci, the hero of the hour, is taking it all in his stride, however. Patiently, he answers all the questions. Time and again, he is forced to give the same answer: "No, I'm not the new Paolo Rossi. Comparisons are silly. I'm just Toto." For the time being, the 25-year-old "boy from Palermo" refuses to consider himself the saviour of the country. He just keeps saying that he is glad to be able to do his bit for Italy and that it is a wonderful experience to play for Italy in an Italian World Cup. Perhaps, it is a question of his modest Sicilian origins. Perhaps, too, it is simply the guy's nature. Or perhaps, it is the fact that having made it to the Italian first division only at the beginning of last season, at the age of 24, Schillaci has learned to keep his sharpshooting feet very firmly on the ground. But, so far, Toto Schillaci has handled the business of overnight stardom with a sensible dose of common sense. Schillaci is fond of pointing out that Sicilians often have to struggle hard to achieve that which other Italians would take for granted. He has learned patience. When he scored a goal for his first club, the Palermo amateur side, Amat Palermo, he used to collect a £1.50 bonus from the club's kit man, Paolo Rico. When he signed for Juventus last July, the fee was £3.25 million. It was entirely typical of Schillaci's attitude to his new found fame that when he returned to Palermo on a Monday morning last November, he still found time to go visit his former kit man, Paolo Rico. Palermitan football fans are proud of Schillaci, proud of his soccer prowess but, even more, proud of the fact that he has remained "one of us". It was, too, typical of Schillaci's good sense that when his arrival at the Italian pre-competition training camp of Coverciano, near Florence, was greeted with stones that shattered his car rear window, he did not over react. Asked what he thought of the angry Fiorentina fans unpatriotic behaviour, Schillaci just smiled and said: "The car belongs to Juventus not to me" Likewise, when the madding crowd of hacks ask him if he has seen a replay of last night's game, he smiles and says, no. He had more important things to do other than watch television late on Monday night. Such as the need to relax and try to forget about soccer, if only momentarily. The men with the microphones try again. Surely, they ask, this is the most important moment in your life. No, says Toto, the most important thing in my life is my family, adding that these World Cup finals have been particularly happy for him since a second child, little Mateo was born to him and Rita only last week. When an Italian journalist friend suggests to Schillaci that he has become the most talked of man in Italy, he again smiles: "You always exaggerate," he reprovingly tells his compatriot. In front of the microphone, Schillaci is full of unerring good sense. There is

little hint of the killer instinct, the hawk-like positional sense that make him, arguably, the best striker seen at these World Cup finals. There is more to Toto Schillaci than meets the eye. From somewhere within that sultry Sicilian frame, he draws on a reserve of strength forged in hardship, of determination born of hunger. He has struggled to get where he is. He has no intention of letting anything upset his moment now. Like the Ceasars of ancient Rome, Schillaci still has a battle or two to fight. Indeed, Schillaci's Gaelic Wars. Of these, we will be hearing more.

## Packie, the Pope, and mad Latin rhythm models

*Kevin Myers, June 28<sup>th</sup> 1990*

What ever support for the Republic's football team which still lingered on the Shankill Road wilted and died yesterday when the Pope looked over at the squad during his weekly audience at the Vatican, and, having welcomed them, as he does all groups, added: "My best weeshes to you". The audience erupted with pleasure, and meanwhile on the Shankill a small pyre marked the farewell ceremony of the last fan of the Republic as he burnt his green and yellow scarf. Yesterday's ceremony reeked of the charisma this Pope dispenses the way a thurible does incense. Long before he arrived, the crowd of ten thousand, which had gathered inside the Paul VI Aula rather than outside in St Peter's Square because of the heat, were palpitating with excitement at the imminence of his presence. Latin American and Spanish groups rumbaed their religious rhythms and chanted in delight while solemnly joyful North American choirs rehearsed their contributions to the morning's session. When the Irish squad arrived they were led to the side of the proscenium where the Pope was to conduct his ceremony — that they were given such a prominent place at such short notice is proof of the persuasive powers of Monsignor Liam Boyle, of Caherdavin, Co Limerick, who is so devoted to the fortunes of the Irish football team that 60 years ago he arranged for his birth to fall on the date on which in 1990 Ireland would draw so memorably with England. He arranged his ordination, the 35th anniversary of which has also fallen during this World Cup, with a comparable foresight. Faced with planning talents like this, it is hardly surprising that the Vatican bureaucracy, which is so conservative that it has still not made up its mind whether Dreyfus is guilty, crumbled instantly when the Monsignor sought favours for the Irish team. The squad arrived in green and-white tracksuits, and took their places beside a Swiss Guard in a uniform that appeared to be made of striped candy, and bearing a halberd, a most useful instrument these days. Advice on protocol was given to a surprisingly nervous-looking Jack Charlton by Monsignor Sean Brady of Cavan, rector of the Irish College here. Pandemonium greeted the Pope's arrival, with many of the Irish players applauding, others standing to attention, and others yet busy with their cameras. Clerical representatives welcomed groups of pilgrims by name in a half dozen languages. Each hispanic mention brought a cacophony of rhythmic glee from the group mentioned. The Rev Eugene Nugent, from Killaloe, doing the English language introductions, was frequently obliged to pause as American choirs erupted into pious and sugary melody as their names came up. Thus did we hear the choirs of St Mary's, of Gaylord, Michigan, of Butler, Pennsylvania and of Shaper, North Carolina. We might have expected some musical reaction to Father Nugent's mention of the Irish football team — something on the lines of Give it a Lash, Pope, say. Instead we got cheers. It was when the Pope offered his own abbreviated welcomes to the crowd that he offered his good wishes to the Irish players, bringing an eruption of delight from the Irish fans. Not all of them were to follow subsequent proceedings too intently. Six-year-old James Houghton, son of Ray, insisted on Eleanor Moran, wife of Kevin, showing him how her camera worked. He then wrote the names of his entire family, complete with portraits, in the notebook of The Irish Times representative. His mother, he confided, is nineteen. The Irish squad, led by a Jack Charlton, whose grave look and studied gait suggested that he had imprudently feasted on prunes for breakfast, moved to the centre of the proscenium while the Pope touched and blessed thousands of pilgrims. While he waited Charlie O'Leary, the diminutive Irish factotum, grew and grew and grew, so that when he met Pope John Paul he was as upstanding and proud as any man in the church, as he had every reason to be. The Pope spent some time talking to Packie Bonner, doubtless receiving invaluable advice on how to save penalties. Fiona McCarthy and Pat Charlton, wives of Mick and Jack, and Eleanor Moran poked their cameras in the air like periscopes over the throng of onlookers and hopefully click

click-clicked to catch a memorable husbandly moment. They could doubtless have benefited from the advice of young James Houghton, but he had returned to his mother Brenda, (aged 19). It was not a day he will remember tomorrow; but is a day he will remember for the rest of his life.

## 8,500 extra tickets, but no Dublin buses

*Mal Muire Tynan and Kevin Myers, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1990*

As the good news arrived from Italy that Ireland's football supporters will receive a greater ticket allocation than expected, the Minister for Transport and Tourism, Mr Brennan, announced that special licences are to be granted to more than 20 airline companies to take charter flights from this country to Rome for tomorrow's World Cup quarter final match with Italy. Meanwhile, there was considerable disquiet at the decision by Dublin Bus to end city bus services almost three hours earlier than usual because of the game. The last buses from Dublin city centre and outer suburb termini will run at 7 o'clock, instead of 11.30pm tomorrow evening — a development that the Irish Vintners Federation last night described as "choking business" from public houses. In Rome, it emerged yesterday that Irish fans have been given priority access to tickets for the match. The Minister for Sport, Mr Fahey, told a press conference in Rome that 8,500 tickets would be available in the city from this morning onwards. The congregation of Irish fans looking for tickets at the Olympic Stadium in Rome caused police to insist they move off and not return until tickets were officially put on sale. Supporters arriving at the stadium in search of tickets have put their names down to record the sequence of those who came first, and tickets will be allocated accordingly. Most of the 1,000 people who put their names on the list before it closed will get the opportunity to purchase a Category Four £10 ticket. In Dublin, a spokesman for the Department of Transport and Tourism said that, because of demand for plane seats, the Minister had issued a "once off" authorisation to more than 20 non-Irish airlines to carry passengers to Rome. Companies from Britain, Switzerland, Hungary, Sweden, Malta, Yugoslavia, Holland, Jordan, France, Egypt, East Germany and Portugal have applied for licences to fly from Ireland. Aer Lingus announced yesterday that it has laid on extra flights to cope with fans going to Rome. The company has put on an extra two flights today and will provide three additional flights on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to bring team supporters home. As hundreds of fans prepared to make the last-minute dash to Rome, Dublin Bus was severely criticised for cutting its services from early tomorrow evening. However, airport coach services will continue to operate normally tomorrow. During the World Cup series, demand for bus services in the city had been "minimal" but, notwithstanding this, bus staff have provided services during all matches. However, it had been decided that the last buses, including DART feeder coaches, should leave the centre and suburbs much earlier than usual. Mr Frank Fell of the Licensed Vintners Federation, said yesterday the move would stop people coming into the city centre and this would have "an adverse bearing on pub business." "All of this contributes to the death of the city centre," he added. A spokesman for the National Busmen's Union, said it had requested Dublin Bus management to stop bus services for the duration of the game and was "surprised" at the decision to terminate the Saturday night schedule at 7 pm. The union had made similar requests for previous matches, but had been turned down, he added. It was also the union's belief that Dublin Bus management was concerned for the safety of staff running services after the match, when supporters had consumed a lot of alcohol. "It became rough after Monday night's game against Romania and we think it was the safety aspect that swung management in the end," the spokesman added. A Dublin Bus spokesman was unavailable for comment. The World Cup match has also caused disruption elsewhere. Saturday evening Masses have been brought forward in counties throughout the country. A Dublin Festival of Music in the National Concert Hall tomorrow has been changed from 8 pm to 3.15pm; the finals of the Sixth Dublin International Organ Festival have been rescheduled for 3.30 pm. The official opening of the Co Wexford Strawberry Fair in Enniscorthy by the Minister for Finance, Mr Reynolds, will now take place at 5.30 pm tomorrow instead of 8.15 pm as originally planned.

## Vialli argues his case for place against Ireland

*Paddy Agnew, June 29<sup>th</sup> 1990*

Italy closed up shop yesterday. No journalists, no interviews, just peace and quiet and time for reflection up at their Helio Cabala Hotel in Marino, in the same Colli Albani hills where Ireland are also camped. On this eve of battle, Italian manager, Azeglio Vicini, has the sort of problems that managers are meant to like. He has too many good players. He only has to decide who he wants to leave out. It is not quite like that, however. The linguistic gymnastics employed by Vicini whenever the name Vialli is mentioned, make the point. Dropping Gianluca Vialli is no easy business. It is as if the Pope had unfrocked Cardinal Casaroli. You cannot just go and drop the player who until two weeks ago and the arrival of a certain Schillaci was unquestionably the nation's favourite footballing son. Or so think the Italian press, who have spent much of their energies this week, trying to confirm that Vialli is definitely dropped. You see, for the first two games against Austria and Czechoslovakia. Vialli was "officially" injured, there was an excuse, even if not everybody believed it. This time there can be no further excuses. Vicini will have to confirm that Vialli is out. Vicini, of course, will say only that having a fully fit and well Vialli is a problem for Jack Charlton and Ireland and not for him. Not quite true. Vialli himself made clear that it could become a problem when he said the other day that against a tough, physical side like Ireland, the time has come for "hard men" to be used. Vialli's remarks could not be more pointed. He has never been the most technically gifted of Italian forwards. His great strength has always been his gutsy, combative nature, allied to an imposing physique which makes the sort of centre forward who cannot be intimidated out of a game. Clearly, Vialli's remarks were aimed at his brilliant but physically lightweight team mate, Robert Baggio. Vialli obviously cannot spell it out loud but the gist of what he is saying is that, against Ireland, Baggio will be blown aside like chaff in a storm. Vicini is too smart to be drawn on the issue. Yet, all the evidence would suggest that he will start the game against Ireland with but one, enforced change from the side which beat Uruguay, the disqualification of Nicola Berti handily leaves the door open for Roberto Donadoni, who is expected to have recovered from the knee injury sustained against Czechoslovakia, in time to play. There is no uncertainty about Donadoni's position. If he is fit, he plays. He is, along with Franco Baresi, one of the automatic first choices of Vicini's side. Time and again, Vicini points out that there are few players like Donadoni around, inside forwards capable of getting to the byeline down either flank and capable of precision crossing once they have got there. Donadoni plays then, in a midfield in which he will be joined by Giuseppe Giannini, Fernando De Napoli and Luigi De Agostini. The last mentioned keeps his place at the expense of Carlo Ancelotti, who, like Vialli, is recovering from an injury which at this stage may be more diplomatic than real. De Agostini's greater mobility and pace may be preferred to Ancelotti's greater fighting qualities. If this proves so, then Vicini could be making a rare mistake. If ever there was a game which called out for the dour, battling qualities of Ancelotti, it is this one. Undoubtedly, the Irish would be more at their ease against the relatively lightweight midfield outlined above, containing as it does two creative players (Giannini and Donadoni), one runner (De Agostini) and one tackler (De Napoli). No one who, like your correspondent, watches Roma play weekly in the Italian first division could avoid having doubts, for example, about the talented Giannini. If he gets pushed around, fussed and hassled, will Giannini disappear from the game? Giannini, himself, had indicated that he would like Italy to try and slow things down against Ireland. He hopes to be able to make superior skill tell against the Irish tight-marking, chasing, hassling game. Others before him have had the same ambition. On all of this, Vicini remains silent. His biggest concern has been to make it clear to his players that to talk of the semi-final against Argentina could be an act of arrogant presumption. The players, too, have learned that lesson. No one will

speaking ill of Ireland. Indeed, they are more likely to be found speaking ill (in code form of course) of their own team mates. Baggio, who claims that the games already played have been games for "hard men"; Ancelotti, who claims that he is fit and ready: Carnevale, who points out that the team could change shape yet again, etc. etc. These are all cry's from the heart from professionals who desperately want to play for their country in this home town World Cup. These are the sort of problems that managers are supposed to like. In fact, they could prove to be a veritable minefield for Vicini. For the time being, though, Vicini has shown himself always capable of dealing with such problems. Then, too, there came the news yesterday afternoon from the one ANSA (Italian news agency) reporter allowed into the Italian team's afternoon, behind closed doors training session. Vialli still has a touch of fever, while Ancelotti has lumbago problems.

## Jack sinks his teeth into the Italian press

*Kevin Myers, June 30<sup>th</sup> 1990*

As the Irish football team prepares for this evening's World Cup quarter-final encounter with Italy in the Olympic stadium in Rome, there are minor doubts about the fitness of three of the players — John Aldridge, Steven Staunton and Tony Cascarino. But manager Jack Charlton told a news conference yesterday that he expected them all to declare themselves fit. The news conference followed a practice match in the Olympic stadium, where 83,000 will tonight see the most important match in Irish soccer history. At least 15,000 Irish supporters are expected at the match, including the Taoiseach, Mr Haughey, the Fine Gael leader, Mr Alan Dukes and the Labour Party leader, Mr Dick Spring, who are travelling together to the match in the Government jet. The Olympic stadium is as related to the stadiums in which the Irish team are used to playing as the Taj Mahal is to a garden shed. The stands are a superb essay in lightness and elegance, offering an unimpeded view. Seasoned soccer correspondents walked around the stadium in a deep and speechless awe at the beauty all around them. They were especially struck by the playing surface, which is not so much a pitch as a lawn, and a triumph for the chemistry of selective weedkilling. The grass resembles the dense but close cropped pile of a particularly expensive Chinese carpet. For players who have been honing and refining their skills on the corrugations and canyons at Lansdowne Road, it is paradise. Amongst the spectators at yesterday's practice match was Bobby Charlton. He was sparing with his words. "The Irish will do fine, they'll do OK. They're playing against a very good side." He paused, as if tired of saying the same thing endlessly, to the press, and his eyes flickered onto the game going on below. The pause became permanent. End of interview. His brother's regard for the enquiring press shows comparable regard. Yesterday's news conference was a delightful exercise in Charltonia, in which he took neither himself, the World Cup, nor most of all, the Fourth Estate, all that seriously. The first questioner was an unfortunate Italian who presumably did not know that Jack likes to chew journalists' skulls the way American baseball coaches chew cigar butts. Would Jackeeeee like to name tomorrow's team? "No. Now, that's a good start. Anybody else?" The Irish journalists nibbled on their tongues to prevent themselves speaking, and yet another intrepid Italian hurled himself into the breach. Would the team be the same as that in Genoa? Jack puzzled for a while, as if he had a piece of journalistic cranium stuck between his teeth. "I can't remember the team in Genoa," he said. Another Italian — God, what a species, they are, quite fearless — began a further question about today's team. "Look, I'm not going to discuss the team. It's nothing to do with you. In fact, I've no thoughts on anything now. We'll watch a couple of videos of Italy tonight, and have discussion with the players. End of story. All right?" There was a silence, while Jackie idly nibbled upon the latest addition to his diet. And then, would you believe it, another question from an Italian about the composition of tonight's team. It is not often one sees journalists hurling themselves to certain doom. There was almost nobility about it, the sort of thing one tells one's grand- children. Jack did not even favour that one with an answer. "This is a very boring press conference. You ask the same questions, you'll get the same answers." Jack gazed searchingly, almost beseechingly, around the press conference, as if longing for an Eamon Dunphy in the audience to enable him to end this appalling dreariness. But alas the conference was quite Dunphyless, so Jack had to sit on, nibbling fragments of dead Italian journalists. A heroic Brazilian stepped into the breach. Sometimes one can underestimate the courage of the Latin races. Would Mr Charlton like to say something for two minutes for Brazilian television? Right, said Jack, cleared his throat of something soft and retentive and Italian and proceeded to speak. And he spoke the truth. He spoke of Ireland in the first person. "We are a small country. This World Cup has given a great deal of joy to the Irish people. We'll be competitive but we'll be fair. If we win, good. If we

lose, good. If it goes to penalties, terrific." And at the end of two minutes, he said, right, that's the two minutes for Brazilian television. Next question? But some mad, insane, demented Italian journalist then demanded a complete translation of what Jack had said to Brazilian television. Jack stared at him as Bismarck might have done a junior minister caught making paper aeroplanes in cabinet. No translation, whereupon the journalist slammed down his notebook and stormed out. "Do you' want to ask a question?" enquired Jack to the departing back. Another Italian — where does the country get them from? — took up the cudgels. "Tell him," said Jack to his translator. "He seems upset as well." And now, his patience exhausted, he spoke his mind about the press. "Interviews. They drive you mad. If I'm getting cynical, I'm sorry. But I'm fed up to here" (and he raised his hand to throat level, where doubtless a sliver of Italianate journalism was still caught) "with press conferences. It's the same question all the time." And then another Italian volunteered for certain death by asking whether the Irish team was representative or British football. "We do not represent England. We do not represent Scotland. We do not represent Wales. We represent only the- Republic of Ireland," replied Jack with low and deadly finality, and the Irish journalists stifled a cheer. But the trials of a successful soccer manager with all the celebrity that follows are many and various. One more question, said Jack, and yet another Italian impaled himself on the Charlton bayonet. "Right that's it, I'm going," barked Jack, and got up, and so failed to hear the most heroic contribution of the day, from a hitherto silent African. "One final question, please, Mr Robson..."

# Great adventure comes to an end

*Peter Byrne, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1990*

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND 0

ITALY 1

One of the great adventures in Irish sport came to an end on Saturday night after Salvatore Schillaci's goal, struck with all the confidence of a man at the summit of his confidence, had delivered Italy safely through their ordeal in Rome's Olympic Stadium. Instead of a trip to Naples for a semi-final appointment with Argentina tomorrow night, Jack Charlton's squad was homeward bound yesterday but as Dublin opened its heart to them there could be no cause for self-recrimination. Ireland had performed to the limit of their potential, run until there was nothing more to give, but in the end, they just did not have enough players with the requisite class to hold the Italians in their relentless march to a record fourth success in the World Cup. In their going as in their coming, they had enriched the plot of the championship, however, and as they departed down the tunnel for the last time, even the most partisan home supporters in a crowd of 72,000 may have felt a marginal sense of deprivation. No less than their singing thousands of supporters, the Irish team had made a full contribution to the glamour, excitement of Italia'90 and in that, small nations everywhere could find solace. And if there had to be heartbreak at the death, this was, perhaps, the ideal stage on which to exit. Italy, in the manner of their heritage, have put together a formidable team for this, their biggest football occasion in more than 50 years. From goalkeeper Walter Zenga right through to the smouldering Schillaci, theirs is a side which, in terms of pure skill, stands apart from all others in the championship finals. To this imbalance, is added the advantage of playing at home and, by extension ; the probability of enjoying most of the breaks in 50-50 refereeing decisions. It would be naive to suggest that the frequently eccentric rulings of the Portuguese referee Carlos Vicente Silva was the difference between victory and defeat on Saturday. What can be said with some justification, however, is that his handling of the game was largely responsible for the failure of the Irish to attain real momentum on occasions when the Italians betrayed the signs of a team under pressure. Time and again, the Irish won the ball cleanly only to see the advantage taken from them by the whistle. Because of the fundamental differences in British style football and that practised in the rest of Europe, there must, inevitably be discrepancies in the interpretation of the rules. But some of what we saw in the game, defied comprehension. Diplomatically, Charlton and his senior players distanced themselves from the criticism which poured down on Silva and his linesmen after the game but privately, they fumed over several decisions which are, most charitably described as debatable. In fairness, the Italians, too were less than enamoured with the match officials and after the game their manager Azeglio Vicini publicly rebuked them for disallowing Schillaci's late strike for what was, at best, a hair-line offside decision. ; Those comments recorded, it was another joyful celebration of football with Ireland's direct, forthright style contrasting with the tightly patterned Italian moves to produce a classic of its kind. This was, unquestionably, the most difficult of Italy's five games in the championship to date — and it wasn't all down to the Irishmen's fire and brimstone. For the opening 20 minutes or so, the Irish stroked the ball about with authority and composure, effectively giving the lie to those who had expected them to gear their game to saturated defence and the ability to hit quickly on the break. Charlton had instructed them to give it a go and they did. Unfortunately, the build-up was never sufficiently sharp to beat a -shrewdly deployed defence and when Schillaci scored at a vital stage of the game, just nine minutes before the break, at least some of the lights went out for the Irishmen. Only the intervention of

the woodwork denied Schillaci a second goal in the 53rd minute but to their immense credit, the losers still summoned the courage and the conviction to raise their game again in the last quarter. That was the testimony to, perhaps the best prepared team ever, to leave the country but for all the pressure welling up around them in the closing minutes Baresi, Ferri and Bergomi held firm at the back and Italy were through to a coveted meeting with the holders, Argentina. The goal which decided the game was a convincing example of the Italians capacity to capitalise on a mistake a long way removed from Packie Bonner's posts and for many of us, it was a disturbing repeat of that which undid Ireland in their last loss in Seville in November, 1988. John Aldridge "showed" for the pass from Kevin Sheedy on the half-way line but instead of moving, he was caught static as De Napoli made the vital interception. With the Irish midfield cover for once scattered, Italy moved the ball swiftly across the park until it arrived with Donadoni, perhaps the night's outstanding performer, at the angle of the penalty area. Donadoni, checked, came inside and even as the defence scrambled frenetically to recover he released the powerful shot. Bonner slipped, parried, then slipped again as the ball ran loose to Schillaci and the rest was perfection. Untroubled by Paul McGrath's lunging tackle, the centre forward looked up, picked his spot and the net fatally bulged. In that moment a difficult task assumed all the dark attributes of the impossible but how the Irish battled. Bonner was undeniably fortunate when the pace and swerve of Schillaci's 29-yard shot beat him totally in the air but the ball struck the underside of the crossbar and bounced on the line before being hacked to safety. Ireland's moments of menace were few. Niall Quinn, who competed admirably in the air before being replaced by Tony Cascarino, saw his header from a McGrath cross safely held by Zenga in the 25th minute and later McGrath's long-range shot curved outside a post. McGrath, identifying Ireland's defiance on the night, created a half chance for Aldridge as the clock ticked remorselessly on but the centre-forward, drained- by a night's unselfish running, could not make the contact before Maldini got in to clear. On what was always going to be a difficult, night in the heat and humidity of the Olympic Stadium, the Irish defence performed nobly. Fears that Mick McCarthy and Kevin Moran would be exposed by the blistering pace of- Schillaci and Roberto Baggio were not substantiated for McCarthy was as authoritative as ever and Moran continued his recovery from a modest start to the championship. Chris Morris again shaded the full back honours over Steve Staunton and that was significant for it enabled the Celtic player to fill the vacant spaces at times when Ray Houghton struggled. No matter what the remainder of this championship produces there will scarcely be a better midfield formation than that which Charlton sent into action and the point was vividly illustrated yet again here. Houghton was not as effective as in the game with Romania and yet toiled long into the evening in the hope that his tireless running would eventually uncover the gap in the opposing defence. Fittingly Ireland's most inventive moments coincided with Kevin Sheedy's opening flourish. The Everton player impressively composed on the ball frequently matched the Italians for skill in that period Andy Townsend, too, prospered in this the biggest challenge of his career for if the pattern of the game did not permit him to push forward as often as he might have wished, his skill and strength were always a precious asset. Inevitably, however it was McGrath who left the biggest imprint on an eventful evening. McCarthy notwithstanding, his has been the most important contribution of all over the last three weeks and he decorated it here with some marvellous moments when he took on and beat two or three opponents. If there is a more effective central midfielder in Italy just now he has not been identified and when they come to record the drama of the 14th World Cup Championship, his is the name deserving of a prominent place in the script. In a sense, Paul McGrath said it all about the Irish in Italia'90 — now let us push on confidently to Stockholm'92 and the new challenge of the European Championship.

ITALY: Zenga; Bergomi, Baresi, Fern, Maldini, Donadoni, de Napoli, Giannini, de Agostini, Schillaci, Baggio.

Subs: Ancelotti (for Giannini, 63 mins), Serena (for Baggio 71 mins).

IRELAND: Bonner; Morris, Staunton, McCarthy, Moran, McGrath, Houghton Townsend, Sheedy. Quinn, Aldridge.

Subs: Cascarino (for Quinn 53 mins), Sheridan (for Aldridge 79 mins).

## Lack of striker proves our downfall

*Mark Lawrenson, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1990*

By this time next week, I believe we will be in a position to say that Ireland were beaten by the eventual winners of the World Cup. That is a measure of the extraordinary impact we have made since those lifeless and rather boring early group matches against England and Egypt. We took on the favourites in circumstances that were absolutely ideal for them — and gave the Italians a helluva scare'. It was a tremendous achievement by a squad of Irish players who have done everybody proud and, as a former international, have given me a very special glow. Saturday's outcome has to be viewed in that way. There is absolutely no point in us torturing ourselves about whether Salvatore Schillaci was lucky to have been in the right place to score from that rebound or whether the Portuguese referee favoured the home side. It is time for some realism and, in my view, reaching the last eight against Italy was the limit-of our capabilities. I believe we could have held out realistic hopes of reaching the semi-finals, only if we could had come up against with one of the weaker teams in the last eight. Make no mistake, the Irish players did marvellously well, but the factors against our further progress were too great. In this context, our most obvious weakness was the absence of a world class striker like Schillaci or West Germany's Jurgen Klinsmann. Schillaci wasn't lucky to score, but I believe he was the only Italian player who could have grabbed that chance. He plays more like a British striker than an Italian. In the mould of Dennis Law and Jimmy Greaves, he took up what appeared to be a strange position when Pat Bonner failed, to hold that shot from Roberto Donadoni. It is an art form, a gift that is common to all great strikers. The most impressive of Schillaci's many talents is his aggression, allied to electrifying pace. This contrasts sharply with Italy's 1982 hero, Paolo Rossi, who was essentially a poacher. From Ireland's standpoint, the timing of the Italian goal could not have been worse. Had we held them scoreless up to halftime and beyond, there is no doubt but that the Italians would have become worried. I'm not suggesting they would have panicked, but it would have been increasingly difficult for them to remain composed in front of a critical and expectant home crowd. As it was, Schillaci's goal calmed them down at a crucial time in the match. And it is important to reflect on the admirable quality of Ireland's play. We certainly buried some of our most vocal critics with some delightfully controlled movements which had precious little to do with kick and rush. Perhaps some of the referee's decisions may have had an unsettling effect on Ireland, but, it would be unrealistic and unfair to make him a scapegoat. Referees have been faced with an unenviable task in this World Cup. They were chosen, presumably, because of their proven expertise but, on the big occasion, their decisions have been seriously inhibited by the strictures laid down by FIFA. Valente is not among the best referees I've seen, but his handling of the match was not critical, from an Irish stand point. Nor would I criticise Italy for closing things down when they got in front. We used to do the same thing when I was at Liverpool. Defending a one goal lead demands enormous skill and discipline, and nobody does it better than the Italians, at international level. Remember that their guys were under huge pressure and, in such circumstances, could not be blamed for reverting to type. Tactically, I thought the only mistake Jack Charlton made was in bringing John Sheridan on instead of Bernie Slaven. There comes a stage in matches of this nature when you reach the point of no return; you simply have to go for broke in search of goals. We had reached that point when Sheridan, a midfielder, was brought on for John Aldridge, 10 minutes from the end of Saturday's match. Paul McGrath was the outstanding Irish player but I still maintain that his best position is centre-back. Which raised the intriguing point as to whether the current Irish team can reach its full potential when players such as McGrath are used out of position? Still, it must be acknowledged that Charlton has always believed in picking "horses for courses" teams. And where does he go from here?

There's time when it is right for a successful manager to get out, as Howard Kendall did at Everton. I've always thought that Jack might call it a day when we were eliminated from the World Cup but now I'm not so sure He may be intrigued, by the prospect of further triumphs. Against that, there was his obvious discomfort at being the centre of media attention in Italy. He doesn't like the limelight — and it showed. I believe he will use the well-deserved break he is now about to take, to have a long, hard look at the entire situation. He has nothing to prove to anybody, inside or outside of football. As an honest, emotional man, however, he faces the problem of whether he can now break with a loyal group of players for whom he holds enormous respect and affection. Whatever his decision, Jack's achievements have gone way beyond the winning of international matches. He has created an Irish squad in which quality players such as Ronnie Whelan, Tony Cascarino and David O'Leary are battling to get into the team. Such a situation is unprecedented in the history of football in the Republic of Ireland. While I watched Saturday's match, my mind was drawn back to 1984 when I played in the same Olympic Stadium in Rome when Liverpool met Roma in the final of the European Cup. We scored first; Roma equalised and then-we won a penalty, shoot-out after extra-time. And I thought, if only Ireland could score first against the Italians. Perhaps, in the not too distant future, when we come to assess the marvellous benefits which have flowed from our first venture into the World Cup finals, we will be able to point to the emergence of a world-class Irish striker. If that were to happen, Italia 90 would be but a beginning on the road to greater things.

## Heroes' welcome for team

*Irish Times reporters, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015*

At least half a million people are estimated to have taken to the streets of Dublin to welcome the returning World Cup team last night. The Garda, normally reliable at estimating crowd numbers, declined on this occasion, saying that numbers were so enormous they were impossible to calculate. Most observers agreed, however that the team was greeted by the biggest and most joyous public reception the city has ever seen. Perhaps half of the city's population, joined by tens of thousands from other parts of the country, took to the streets to greet their football heroes on a grand scale. A sea of Tricolours saluted the team from Dublin Airport to the city centre. The city ground to a halt, with traffic jams miles long on roads near the route from the airport to the civic ceremonies which awaited them at the Bank of Ireland in College Green. The motorcade, with the team on an open-topped bus, took more than three hours to travel the seven miles from Dublin airport to College Green after a huge welcome at the airport, led by the Taoiseach, Mr Haughey. "I want to thank you all for being wonderful, wonderful supporters and also a credit to Ireland," Mr Jack Charlton, the team manager, told the thousands who filled College Green, where the official reception was given by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Sean Haughey. Charlton urged people to "please go away quietly" at the end of the formal ceremonies. During the long wait for the team, with some people standing for up to six hours in the city centre, there was a steady stream of casualties, mostly women, suffering from the effects of hypothermia and exhaustion. At Dublin airport, and again at every vantage point from Whitehall church to the Bank of Ireland, where the civic reception was held, countless thousands gathered at every vantage-point to see their heroes. Despite the long wait the crowds remained remarkably good-humoured. Music by Paddy Cole and the Gerry O'Connor Allstars at Clery's in O'Connell Street and platform at College Green helped sustain spirits and keep masses of younger supporters entertained. The team arrived later than expected from Rome, after Saturday night's 1-0 quarter-final defeat against Italy. The Aer Lingus 737, the "St. Jack", specially dedicated for the day, landed shortly after six o'clock. It was then that players and officials got their first sight of the massive turnout. Wives, girlfriends and family members were joined by Mr Haughey and several government ministers in welcoming the team. Jack Charlton, hands in pockets, attempted to look relaxed, but was clearly moved by the emotional power of the crowd. "It's absolutely staggering for me to see this welcome," he told the cheering crowd. "The Irish players have been a credit to Ireland and I feel very proud of the job they've done," he added. "I hope we'll do better in the future, when maybe instead of coming back with nothing, again, we'll bring something home to you." Hundreds of extra gardai were on duty to guide the motorcade through the packed streets of the city, but there were no problems other than those caused by traffic choking the main Belfast -Dublin road. The occasion passed off with unparalleled good humour. When the team finally reached College Green the crowd chanted "We want Jack" repeatedly as political speeches were read from the platform. Eventually they had their wish, with Charlton introducing each of the 22 players who had travelled to Italy for the World Cup tournament. "I would like, because we took 22 and only 16 played, to introduce each one individually, because we are a squad and a group." He told the crowd they, were wonderful, wonderful supporters and a credit to Ireland". He also described the journey into the city as "the most terrifying experience of my life" because of how close people had been to the wheels of the vehicle in the motorcade. After the team took their final curtain call at College Green, they led the crowd in singing "Molly Malone". Jack Charlton told the tired, but elated thousands: "Be careful going home, and goodnight. Thank you."