

## Republic of Ireland Soccer Supporters Club (London)

Our Club celebrated the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its foundation at the Claddagh Ring on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

We were delighted and honoured to be joined on the night by our senior international team manager Mick McCarthy, his former international playing colleague Dave Langan and Noel Mooney, the acting General Manager of the Football Association of Ireland.

Mick McCarthy, the inimitable Barnsley born Irishman, beguiled, charmed, delighted and fascinated our spellbound attendees with a magnificent array of anecdotal observations of his life and career in football. His family heritage, his playing path from local club Barnsley to Manchester City, Glasgow Celtic, Lyon in France and finally Millwall were superbly chronicled.

Mick's managerial journey from commencement with Millwall, through his first international voyage with Ireland and subsequent travels with Sunderland, Wolverhampton Wanderers and Ipswich Town all received an airing.

Of course our primary focus is now our current 2020 European Championship qualifying campaign and Mick was unreservedly honest while offering his thoughts on this huge challenge.



Dubliner Dave Langan may be a much more reserved and quiet character but his reminiscences of his football journey, from his teenage days when, together with David O'Leary and Frank Stapleton, he spent a trial period at Manchester United, to his encounters with the fabled Brian Clough at his first senior club Derby County were quite enthralling.

Dave subsequently enjoyed promotion success and a League Cup victory with Oxford United and was of course also instrumental in the recruitment of his then playing colleagues John Aldridge and Ray Houghton to the Ireland cause.



London born, but Limerick reared, Noel Mooney is the Head of National Associations Business Development with UEFA and currently, on secondment, the Acting General Manager of the FAI. Noel provided us with a unique insight into the current situation within a troubled FAI and the measures being taken to regain the confidence and trust of the football community. Noel embraced a significant belief in a brighter future for Irish football, an ambition echoed by all present.

We were also able to extend a warm welcome to Paul, Cathal and Ciaran from Irish Football Fan TV who joined us on the night. They were afforded the opportunity to chat and interact with the members and guests in attendance



Our evening was further embellished by the superb food, service and surroundings provided by Finbar, Nuala and the team at the Claddagh Ring, while those livelier souls in attendance were catered for by DJ Shox and his musical box.

We extend our grateful thanks to Emma, Laura and Marie who cajoled those present into parting with their pennies and pounds to purchase raffle tickets. Their efforts generated an excellent £900 which will be applied to the fund of our nominated charity for this year, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.



In his maiden address, new Club Chair Martin Prendergast thanked our very special guests for their attendance and contribution to the event. Martin also acknowledged the contribution of his fellow officers and expressed his desire and wish that the Club continue its journey on an upward trajectory.



Stephen Harte