

TT No.30: *Justin Holmes* - Sat 12th Sept. 2009; IFA Championship 2; **Harland & Wolff Welders** vs. Queen's University; Venue: Tillysburn Park, East Belfast; Score: 1-0; Admission: £5.00; Programme: None; Match Rating: 3.

This was a game that was made possible in a day trip by Ryanair's incredibly cheap flights. Ryanair has its fair share of critics, quite justified a lot of the time, but I've yet to find another means of getting from Essex to Northern Ireland and back for a tenner, and the current flight schedules from Stansted make this a comfortable day out - touching down at Belfast City Airport at 1pm and leaving at 6.30pm.

There are many other possibilities to take in a game in Belfast on a day trip - Glentoran and Dundela are also within easy walking distance of Belfast City Airport, and Linfield and Bangor are comfortably within range using public transport. Cliftonville and Crusaders are also possibilities, although getting back to the airport in time for when the gate closes for the Stansted flight at 6pm would be tight and reliant on favourable traffic conditions.

Tillysburn Park is the closest football ground to the airport - almost literally a stone's throw away - all that separates the main terminal building and the ground is a dual carriageway. The ground itself is very neat and tidy and with reasonably pleasant surroundings, surrounded as it is by trees and with mountains in the background, although the constant traffic noise from the adjacent dual carriageway was disappointing. No programmes are issued here.

This game, in the third tier of Northern Irish football, pitted H&W Welders, last season's champions, against the students of Queen's University of Belfast. H&W Welders had won both of their opening games of the season, whereas Queen's University had lost both of theirs, so everything pointed to a comfortable home win. This was not how it panned out, however.

In glorious autumnal sunshine, the game was very even and was played in a competitive but fair spirit, although the Welders certainly edged possessions and shots on goals, but it wasn't too surprising that the game was goalless at half time. The second half continued in a similar vein, although Queen's University barely had a shot on goal. Midway through the second half, the Welders scored what proved to be the winner, after a corner was whipped in and headed home at the far post through a crowd of players and past the unsighted keeper.

On the whole, the 1-0 home win was a very fair reflection on the game, with the Welders always slightly the better team, and although Queen's had plenty of possession, they never really looked like scoring.