

Ronnie Hawe – an Appreciation

As we lined both sides of the road from his home to the church on Thursday last to pay respect to Ronnie Hawe, we were conscious that what we were witnessing, was the reality of the funeral of the driving force of Monaghan Motor Club for more than five decades. He was the public face of the club for most of that time and his influences reached into every aspect of the sport locally.

Ronnie's involvement in the sport started first in the Karting Club. In 1968 the Karting Club by mutual agreement and in order to maintain links between the two clubs appointed two delegates from the Karting Club on the understanding that they would automatically become directors of CMMC at their next AGM. Ronnie being one of the two delegates has been re-elected ever since.

He was Clerk of the Course of the major karting race meetings of 1968 and 1969. However, he took the Monaghan Motor Club by surprise when, along with Malcolm Totten as navigator, they took their Sunbeam Stiletto to 5th overall on the 1969 Circuit of Monaghan Rally. This was their first ever rally and they succeeded in winning all the local awards for this event – the George Cannon Trophy and also the best novice crew from County Monaghan. Ronnie went on to compete in local and national rallies throughout the sixties, seventies and eighties culminating in winning the National Navigation Rally Championship in 1989. At the same time during those years, he was immersed in the organisation for the club: Clerk of the Course for the Daylight Stages Rally in 1972 and 1973; Clerk of the Course for the Forestry Rally in 1982, for the Multi Stages Rally 1986-1992 consecutively and then Deputy Clerk of the Course for over ten years.

Since 1968 Ronnie has never been far away from the centre of activities within the club and his valued input has been continuous and immense since. It is to his influences, decision making, force of personality and integrity with which we have come to identify him most of all. He was a constant in the life of the club. No matter what the prevailing negatives might be, socially, politically or functionally he resolutely stood by the theory that a way must be found. His instincts were always geared to his vision of growing the club and adapting to the ever changing demands of the time. In recent years this is reflected in his son Lee-Ron input into the ongoing promotion of the club and its activities through technology and social media channels.

When he came into the club in the late sixties the sport was small, leisurely and largely unregulated. Now the demands of health and safety, professionalism and regulation means the pressures are considerable. He oversaw all that and more. Image building and selling the club in the community were so important to him and today we reap the rewards from his foresight. In summary he was a tireless worker as organiser, administrator, competitor and promotor. A quotation from one of the present directors of the club speaks accurately – “We will miss Ronnie's experience, candour and willingness to safeguard Club interests above his personal popularity or gain. Never faltered on tough decisions and told it as it was. Thank you Ronnie and respect”. Indeed he could be irascible and direct but again this was born of his push for the highest standards for everyone involved.

Throughout his many decades of achievements and commitments in the club, he and Cora were a team in everything. As an administrator Cora was unequalled. She was highly skilled, highly qualified and indefatigable in everything she did for the club. Between them they were the backbone of the club in its growth and many successes. Before a major event it was not unknown for Ronnie and Cora to be labouring away until the small hours getting everything ready for the next day.

In more recent years Ronnie's health deteriorated and he spent periods in hospital. Despite undergoing many medical procedures he never lost his interest and enthusiasm. He astounded many of us by the way he could bounce back. Again this was born of his abiding determination to never give up. A lesser person would have walked away from the pressures of such involvement.

The Monaghan Motor Club will miss Ronnie across many fronts but all this is nothing to the loss he is to Cora, Lee-Ron and Samantha and to the extended family circle. To all we offer our sympathy. He was a motor sport enthusiast but above all he was a family man. May he rest in peace.