

Mike McCarthy R.I.P 15 October 1927 - 20 July 2014



Mike was born and raised on a farm in Mohonagh, Skibbereen, Co.Cork where his early years were marked by his interest in horse training and breeding, which he inherited from his father Jack.

In 1949 at the age of 22 he immigrated to Canada where he learnt his trade as a bricklayer and worked throughout western Canada on building projects. It was at this time that he formed his lifelong friendship with Pat Hughes, which was how he met his wife Teresa, Pat's sister. It was during their time working in Uranium city that they started prospecting for minerals. Some years later they returned to Ireland and used their Canadian experience to explore mining opportunities here. Tynagh Mine and later Tara Mine were found. Mike was a past President of Tara Mines Ltd.



Port Albert, Canada 1952 : Pat Hughes (Newry)back left. Mike McCarthy (Skibbereen) back 4 from left.
Sitting bottom left Joe McParland (Newry), sitting 2nd from left Matt Gibroy (Enniskillen)

Priority Drilling Ltd (now based in Kilimor, Ballinasloe) & Priority Construction Ltd were set up in Canada in 1956 to carry out construction on Mine sites and mineral exploration. Sixty years later, through the boom & busts, good times & bad times Priority Drilling and its sister company Priority Construction are still working. Mike was there for all of these sixty years. He never retired and even when he became ill 5 years ago and could no longer visit the sites or go to Kilimor regularly, he kept his interest alive. Visits from past & present employees and colleagues brightened his days.

Throughout his life, Priority gave Mike immense fulfillment and he always thought he was very fortunate in the caliber of the staff who worked for Priority. He retained his interest in mining and enjoyed speaking with Geologists and Mining people on new, current & past projects. He was proud of his Companies participation in infrastructural & innovative projects such as the construction of the water intake tunnels at Turlough Hill in the 1960's and National Road Projects & Town Bypasses in the 2000's.

There were a number of events which were always on Mike's calendar. None more exciting to him than the Ploughing Championships, which allowed him the double indulgence of large machines and horses in one setting.

He had a passion for Horses, he bred, broke and trained his own horses. On returning from Canada to Skibbereen after four years one of his father's horses heard him coming a mile from the farm and rushed to nuzzle him jumping three fences. He was a true 'Horse Whisperer'. He could train any horse or dog. For 30 years he competed in local fairs with his carriages and traps. Each year at the October horse fair he drove the Queen of the Fair in his carriage at the head of the Parade.

An annual outing was Croagh Patrick. Mike had a shortcut – STRAIGHT UP. Quick Mass and confession at the summit, some banter with a Bishop or Arch Bishop and then home in time for the football final at 3pm on TV.

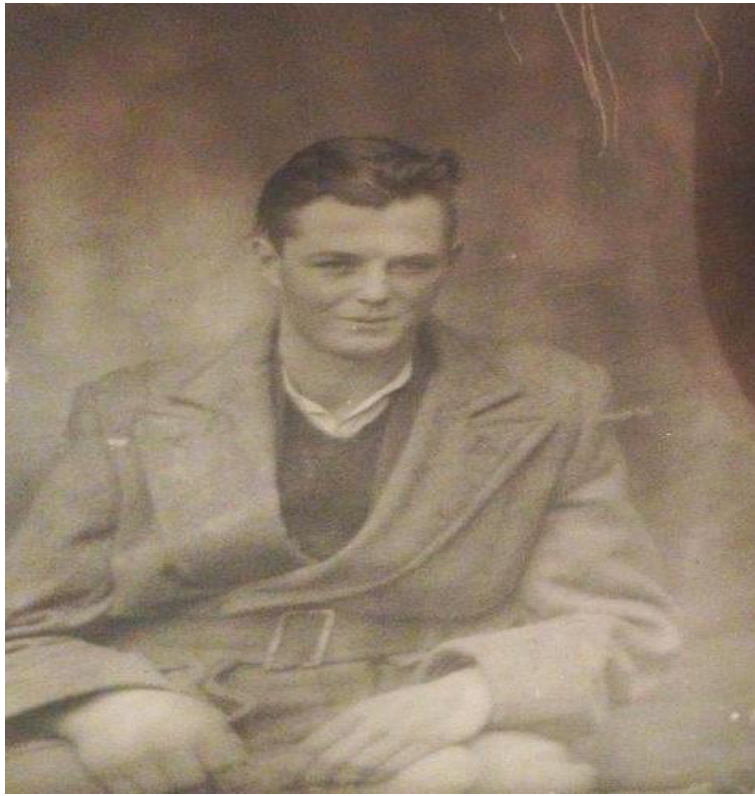
In 1972, 40 years ago Mike had his first brush with illness when he suffered a heart attack. Mike slowly recovered and set himself on a new path of health and fitness. Advised by Dr. Browne to go on long walks, he soon tired of the slow pace and Marathon man was born. His family outings centered around these races for the next twenty years. Mike ran over 20 Marathons, finally retiring after the Dublin city Marathon in 2000 which he completed at age 73. Once he made a commitment nothing would deter him. He would admit that he was addicted to exercise endorphins.

In recent years he attributed his ability to fight his cancer to the training and experience of hitting the wall in a marathon and persevering to the end.

Perseverance and self discipline were part and parcel of Mike's make up.

Another characteristic that helped him during his illness was his love of routine. He loved to rise early. His catch phrase was 'Rise and Shine, it's a beautiful morning'. He genuinely loved the new day and seemed always to be looking forward to how it would unfold. Mike was a family man, trips away were always cut short to get back to where his heart was with his wife Teresa. They were married for Fifty Five years.

Mike enjoyed life & having fun and oftentimes was reduced to tears by laughter. He had a great sense of humour and wit, especially for the ridiculous.



Mike prior to immigrating to Canada in 1948



Mike pictured with his horses in Ballinasloe in 1990