

Jim McConville - Death Of A Champion



The lamented death of Lurgan Clann Eireann cyclist Jim McConville, has saddened the hearts of all cyclists and followers of the sport not only in the North but also throughout the length and breadth of Ireland.

Jim McConville was popular within his own club. A modest man, despite his high achievements he had a good sense of humour and made friends wherever he travelled. Only three years ago, Jim held the time trial, and massed start Championships of Ulster, and proudly wore the jersey of race leader in the Ras Tailteann.

In the following year, he won a stage of Ras Tailteann, was a member of the Irish team at the Grand Prix de l'Humanite in France, and crowned a great year with victory in the 100 miles Massed Start Irish Championship at Westport.

Jim McConville first hit the headlines when at 28 he won the All-Ireland Novice Championship a notable effort for a man who was always busy in his plumbing business. He trained hard and at a time was cycling regular 100-mile pre-race stints in preparation for the big occasion.

Injury hit Jim at the peak of his career, when honours were his for the taking. Then came the illness which was to end his life, so closely echoing the Lilian Board case. Jim McConville's memory will live long among his multitude of friends who will join with us in extending sympathy to his wife and seven children, his relatives and club-mates in their hour of tragedy.

Jim McConville, Lurgan died last Thursday in Craigavon Hospital. He had been in ill health resulting from an accident involving a car during a Club practice at Gawley's Gate last March. Jim leaves his wife, Ann, and seven young children. In private life, he had his own very successful plumbing contracting business. Secretary of Clann Eireann Club, Jim was dedicated firstly to his family and then to cycling. He was 36 years old. Deep regret goes out

to Ann, his wife; Gary (12), Michael (10), Dympna (9), Amos (8), Anya (7), Catherine (4) and David (1), and also to Jim's mother, sister and brother.

One of the largest funerals ever seen in Lurgan took place on Saturday afternoon from his late residence, 29, North Circular Road to St. Peter's Church, where Requiem Mass was celebrated by Rev. Father Smyth. Jim's coffin bore his International Cycling jersey and a guard of honour was made up of four men from the South of Ireland representing their Clubs and four men from the North of Ireland. People lined the Shore Road and North Street as his cycling comrades and friends paid him a final tribute. On the way from the Church to the cemetery, his own Club-mates from Clann Eireann formed the guard of honour. Every Club in Ulster was represented, and also many Clubs from the South. Shay O'Hanlon, as president of the Executive of the NCA attended as did Dermot Dignam (Secretary). Lurgan Road Club members were also in the cortege.

Clann Eireann was well, represented, as well as many local Football and Athletic Clubs.