A MAN WHO IS HITTING THE TARGET

Enda McGloin *Chairman of Allen Gaels, profiles New York businessman Sean McTigue, native of Drumshanbo and a key supporter of the club.*

1989 WAS A year to forget for many people in Ireland. Interest rates and unemployment were very high with little investment in Ireland never mind Leitrim.

Many young people made the journey to the United States, which at that time was experiencing a boom. The construction industry was of course the main growth business in the American economy with a huge demand for labour and a skilled workforce.

Sean Mc Tigue had spent a number of summers in the US, however in the summer of '89; he made the big break. He decided he was going to leave for good or for at least a couple of years to see what would life bring. Sean had spent the previous 3 years in Sligo and Waterford RTC, (now IT colleges) and had qualified as a quantify surveyor.

Over the following 5 years Sean worked with a number of Construction companies in New York building up wide experience in a difficult business.

Ambition, hard work, experience and his background education led him in 1994 to form his own company Target Inc. in New Jersey. In the following years Target Inc. grew from strength to strength with up to 80 employees and the company diversifying into other areas such as 'Target Steel buildings' and property development in Vermont.

Many young people from Leitrim who travelled to New York either for a short-term summer period or indeed a longer term found employment through Sean's company.

In 2001 the 'Leitrim Society of New York' honoured Sean as Guest of Honour at their annual dinner in Queens. In a tribute to him in their Dinner Journal, Sean was praised for his 'positive attitude and amiable nature, combined with his penchant for helping the less fortunate, has earned him the respect and admiration of all who have crossed his path'.

Many people in Leitrim involved in the administration of GAA clubs will talk about the constant difficulties in raising much needed finances. When it comes to development of new facilities like dressing rooms and pitches it becomes even more difficult.

In 1999, Sean Mc Tigue hosted a Golf Classic in New York raising funds for Allen Gaels and the ASCPG a charity that arranges trips to Lourdes for Handicapped children in the New York area, which is headed by Gerry Flood (a native of Drumshanbo).

This was followed in 2000 by yet another Golf Classic. In all Sean raised over €25,000 for the Allen Gaels club over those two classics which was far beyond our expectations.

That financial boost was to be the stimulant the club needed to begin its programme of development, which has culminated to date with a completely new pitch, with two training areas within the Shane Mc Gettigan Park. Following on from a very successful draw this year, the club is currently preparing plans for new dressing rooms, gym and club meeting room to be built in 2005.

The park development committee under Fergal Mc Partland with the support of Senator Pascal Mooney has secured almost €250,000 to date in funding through the Dept. of Sports.

When work is completed in 2005 we expect to have spent in excess of €400,000.

Annually, the 'Allen Gaels Golf Society' has hosted a golf classic on behalf of the club with Sean McTigue again as the main sponsor.

Sean is a keen golfer, playing weekly with a fourball comprising of a 'Leitrim *v* Roscommon' challenge with his playing partners Pat Reynolds, Derek Moran and Michael Guckian.

Pictured at the Target Golf Classic in New York. *Back: Garreth McWeeney & Enda McGloin, Chairman of Allen Gaels. Front: Mary Timoney-McTigue, Sean McTigue & Linda McWeeney.*

Sean, Pat and Derek are very much part of the 'Allen Gaels Golf Society' and have travelled with them on their many trips abroad.

Being away it is easy to forget what is going on at home but the Leitrim Observer keeps Sean up to date on our club activities both on and off the field. I have received many e-mails and calls to say, 'you're running a draw, send me tickets' or 'I'd like to sponsor that'.

In this article I would like to record Sean's generosity to our club over many years and perhaps to suggest a motivation, which is community spirit and pride in his native club, and his ambition to see a community based facility in his native town which over the years will produce many young footballers and give endless pleasure to young and old alike.

of a child got to know her every move. Her whereabouts was quite predictable. She was usually in residence, doing a myriad of household chores such as cleaning her range, tidying out drawers, washing down her soot stained ceiling, to getting Uncle Frank's tea, praying or simply dozing in front of the fire, entertaining some guest or else up the town or out the back having a chin-wag with Sally on her way back from emptying her po (chamber pot) or bringing in fuel. In or out, her door was always on the latch and I enjoyed slipping in quietly and 'getting her on the hop'. She would give a jump, raise her arms, tighten them, throw her eyes to Heaven and on seeing me would exclaim, 'Good God! You made me heart go crossways'! She always had a big penny tucked away in her apron pocket and presented it to me like a sacred host with the stipulation that I would keep my silence.

She was renowned for her hospitality. Her house was a recognised meeting place. Friends from town and country called to join her for a 'cuppa', exchange the gossip, read cups or just rest their weary limbs. She supplied the tea and perhaps a cut of her boiled porter cake or fresh soda bread, well capped with Killeshandra butter. They brought the ginger cake, fig rolls, tea cakes or some real free range eggs carefully wrapped in the Celt. Some had their own unofficial times and she became worried about their welfare whenever they failed to turn up on schedule. No one was ever expected to account for her visit. Presence was all that mattered. Often off-duty guards or custom's men, stationed far from home, dropped in for a chat or simply to while away the time snoozing comfortably in front of her well stoked cosy range or listening to Philip Greene give his soccer commentary on her Pye radio. I knew from experience, however, that there were some occasions when she preferred to be alone - to listen to 'Mrs. Dale's Diary' or 'The Kennedy's of Castle Ross' or prepare her husband Frank's tea or tend to his needs when he arrived home on his bicycle after a hard day's work as the local tradesman. Her canine friends were just as welcome to St. Aidan's on Main Street as her human visitors. No 'Spot', 'Shep' or 'Fido' ever left her doorway hungry. No wonder they always tailed her as she went on her errands.

Wash day in St. Aidan's was something to behold ! Arms bared to the neck, she set up her naval shaped zink bath-tub with its scrubbing board on a backless chair, filled it with steaming hot water, grabbed the Sunlight soap or Rinso (with Rickett's Blue close by) and got stuck into the scrubbing and squeezing right away - but not before Blackie, her cat, anticipating a storm ahead, had scrambled from the kitchen. Soon, great navy bloomers were in full blown sail and huge foamy Atlantic like breakers rolled ashore near range and doors. I usually viewed proceedings from the safety of my perch on her kitchen side-board. This wasn't her favourite time for receiving visitors. 'Oh dear who's that at the door', she would cry if she heard the slightest rattle in the hall. Fortunately, anyone who did come usually took one look , made a hasty exit and promised to come back later! The action filled ritual seemed to continue for an hour or more with Uncle Frank's shirts and collars getting Robin Starch treatment along the way. Then it was time to wring and hang all out to dry. Later in the in the evening, with the help of her old Tailor's Goose, that normally sat patiently beside her singing kettle on the range, she hammered the whole lot into shape and proudly carried the neatly folded garments to their cupboard upstairs.

Around Halloween, when large potatoes were plentiful, she took to making Boxty. Some spuds were peeled and boiled, others were peeled, grated and squeezed in a muslin bag to remove water and starch and then rolled together with flour into cakes that bubbled away on top of cutlery in a huge saucepan for hours. When they were ready, she made cornflour sauce and with this and a knob of butter on top of the Boxty, we let our ears back and together tucked into a ferocious feed. Later on, the remaining cakes were sliced and fried. Taken with a few cuts of hairy bacon, the lot would put hair on anyone's chest!

When it came to taking precautions against the demon Constipation, my aunt was a great believer in such products as Glauber and Epsom salts, Milk of Magnesia, Andrews Liver salts and of course that other old tried and tested antidote, overnight steeped prunes. Any admonition attributed to the local medical practitioner such as the one emphasising the need to ' let your wind blow freely' was reverently acknowledged and much to our simple amusement, adherence to that code was evidenced on occasions!

Whenever we saw her 'freewheeling' around our back, we knew she had some tit-bit on board. We would be encouraged to go out and play 'like good children'. We would feign obedience and listen within earshot for the latest. This often centred on someone who had or was about to have a B-A-B-Y -which she spelt out quietly for my mother'sears. On rare occasions she might add, 'There's no mention of the father but I'm saying nothing !' Sometimes she would present some paraphanolia from an American parcel for my mother's perusal and sing the praises of the figure enhancing American corset. Then she was off out the door like a lamplighter - it had to be the same one she came in! -with her usual parting refrain, 'That's all the news' Nothing remained but the whiff of camphor from the American clothes.

Aunty Kath maintained her concern for others and sense of fun right to the end, even when a walking frame replaced her High Nelly. She departed this world on the 26th March 2001. I"m sure she found the door ajar and received the same hearty welcome she had afforded others when s he reached her Heavenly home.