

# Tom Milne, Lorrha & London

By Seamus King



London-based Lorrha native Tom Milne was honoured by the Tipperary GAA County Board for the second time last year after he already received an award at the Tipperary GAA Corporate Lunch fund-raising function in the InterContinental Hotel in London’s West End in May 2017. After years of welcoming and hosting so many Irish visitors, including many victorious Tipperary teams, along with many other exiles in London there is no doubt that Tom Milne has truly earned all these well-deserved accolades. While it may be possible to take the man out of Tipperary, Tom has certainly stood the test of time after spending nearly sixty years ‘across the pond’ that it is just impossible to take the ‘Tipperary’ out of this man!

A popular, colourful and habitually jovial figure in so many strands of Irish community life since he first arrived in London in the early 60s, Tom’s main interest away from his family and professional commitments in the licensing trade is his unstinting love of his native county. That fact has also been mainly responsible for making Tom a leading figurehead and stalwart in the London Tipperary Association since the early 70s. Serving the London Tipperary Association in a number of roles from Vice-Chairman to his current status as Life President Tom along with his great friend and Drangan native, Johnny Whyte, has hosted and ‘rubbed shoulders’ with some of the greatest figures in Tipperary GAA history including the late John Doyle, Babs Keating, Nicky English and Eoin Kelly right up to some of the members of the current playing squad.

Tom’s own involvement in the game dates back to his school days in the 40s when he attended Redwood N.S. and the 50s with St. Molaises College, Portumna. At the age of 14 he won a county U15 hurling medal with his native Lorrha but in 1962 before he was 18 years of age he headed across the water to West London where he started work in the bar trade which developed into a career that led to Bar management in Kings Cross. It was there he began his long association with the Bros. Pearse GAA Club where he served as player, team manager and many roles as a club officer including club chairman. Tom has also dabbled with many other sports during a very fulfilled life including greyhound and horse racing plus he is a keen golfer having served as captain of Mill Hill Golf Club in West London. As a Life President of the London GAA Golfing Society he has been instrumental in organising frequent golfing trips to various parts of Ireland involving up to 40 club members at one time. Next year Ennis is their destination and recently recruited members, ex Tipp hurlers Joe Hayes and Martin McGrath should really add to the trip. Apart from helping to organise several Tipperary Association functions over five decades Tom Milne has also found time to get involved in helping to organise the annual London St. Patrick’s Day Parade. He has helped and served numerous worthy charitable causes over the years and most notably spearheading the Tony Hogan appeal some years ago.

Ahead of receiving his Laochra Gael award Tom concluded: “I’m delighted and privileged to be honoured by my native county but I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the numerous people I have met and worked with over the years who have played their part in supporting me down through the years and especially my family members - Kathy my wife, son Tony and daughters Michelle and Susan.”

