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## Jim Finnegan's Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.

Posted by Myles Lally - 2008/05/07 22:17

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My Mother used to say "that what you give away comes back to you on the treble", well what Martin gave in terms of the respect he commanded and doing us proud has come back to us a thousand fold over the last few days.

Today is a very special, but very tragic day, for me Martin's Da and his Mother Margaret, and all our family, but especially his darling wife Brenda and precious daughter Rachel.

Today he has brought the village of Lusk to a standstill, - not his usual style or habit to hold up traffic.

Martin was born in October '79, and as the youngest of 2 girls and 5 lads he was of course spoiled, - a point he always denied!. He had to fight his corner to make his mark, and some would say - "what's in the cat is in the kitten", I was the youngest of 11! Martin became competitive at a very early age.

As a youngster he played football for Round Towers, was part of 153rd Lusk troupe, went to Judo with Jack Dennis another Lusk world champion, and went swimming every Thurs night. He was a creature of habit always in bed before 10 and up at dawn, much to the annoyance of Brenda who hasn't had a decent lie-on since they met!

Biking was to become a passion when he got his first bike at seven, - a YZ80 to ride on grass from a friend Fran McGuinness. From this through his involvement with his brother-in-law Alan Sweetman, he progressed to Moto-X where he honed his competitive skills achieving success in winning championships. Now enter Tony Carton – who became Martin's mentor, supporter, sponsor, boss and a best friend.

Our first knowledge of Martin's road racing intention was when his Ma accidentally found his Mondello lap times and licence in a jeans pocket.

His first road race was at Killalane, from then on, supported by his family, friends and sponsors, he continued with local national and international events. Every week-end of the racing season was always a mad panic to get the bikes together, to load the truck with a weeks grocery shopping,, and head off to the four corners of the country. Our house for a couple of hours every week became a "call-centre" as arrangements were made for the week-end's racing. Inevitably, the old reliables, Uncle Pat & co, were on hand to pack up. During this time Margaret & I really should have invested in Eircom shares!

As Martin progressed and was getting more experienced at road racing, he convinced me, (after he knocked down the old one) that we needed a bigger garage – We obliged, but it ended up being just more space for Martin to leave his tools lying about. He could build and re-build an engine with no bits out of place and none left over, but he could never manage to get all the tools back into the box they came out of, much to the annoyance of his brothers and me!

Martin's lorry was always a place where you were guaranteed a welcome and the craic was always good, friendly banter was the order of the day. Round Tower Racing became synonymous with the number 45; Martin Finnegan; Ger; family; and friends. It was a team where hospitality was in abundance, and the kettle was always on. However, if Martin was content to have his dinner as a milk-shake from a drinks bottle, the rest of the crew were not – real food was their thing – one glance at the lads would verify this!

It was appropriate that Martin's number be 45 - four and five – because as a youngster he would not count past the number 5. He had a number book where he would count to 5, but refused to count the 6 dolls on page 6. He hated anything to do with girls then, a trait which was to quickly disappear.

Other traits like perfection, diligence, loyalty, confidence and competitiveness developed, he was only ever satisfied when he was challenged and had completed a task to perfection. He could turn his hand to anything except gardening – this job he always delegated – usually to me!

Martin trained in CIE and spent many years under JCBs in Tony Cartons, and more recently he enjoyed success with his partner when they opened Xtreme45. He was a genius when it came to learning new skills and in the last few weeks did a lot of work for his brother.

They say you are only as great as your friends – that said, then Martin was fantastic, he has a number of terrific, close, best friends, salt of the earth lads, who he treasured dearly and whose company he always enjoyed but even with these he had to win whether it was squash, cycling or even just jogging at a training session!

Martin was the baby in our house and always got what he wanted, and so entered Brenda and their beautiful daughter Rachel. Martin was the super Dad, he took to changing nappies, baby-sitting and domestic life with no bother – though it did help that he lived in a cul-de-sac full of other Finnegan's!

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Martin was always very proud of and loved Lusk and the Round Tower, but he loved the Isle of Man – the mountains, the long stretches and of course the challenge to set goals and targets and to achieve success. He even named his house “Rhencullen”.

Even though many of you here today know Martin the number 45 racer, most of us know him as plain old – “Marty” – while you may think he’s near perfect and got no bad habits Brenda would confirm he had a few. He always set goals and aims and many he achieved, though he rarely got a proper aim at the wash basket!

Over the last few days we’ve heard many stories of Martin’s antics, some we had heard before and some are new to us, but whatever memories we have, and you have, they are yours and ours, to keep forever.

We can’t stress enough how grateful we are to the Supporters Club for the terrific tribute they have paid to Martin in organising so many bikes to bring him home and today for organising the guard of honour. This means so much to us.

Brenda, Rachel and all of us Finnegans would like to thank everyone associated with today, Fr. Joe Mullan PP, Monsgr. Dan O’Connor, Cannon Fitzgibbon, and Martins cousin Fr. Gerard, everyone in the parish of Lusk, the Community, the ICA, the Round Towers GAA, The Scouts, Masterphoto, our neighbours, our countless friends, the Supporters Club, Round Tower Racing, the Fans, the Competitors, the Photographers, the Marshals, the Medical Crews and all those associated with the Tandragee 100. the PSNI, the Gardai and all who’ve travelled the length and breadth of the country to be with us – THANK YOU.

They say that children are the product of their parents and that is true – little Rachel will always know how special she was to Martin and how proud he was of her Mother – Brenda his beautiful wife. His last words to his girls were – “I LOVE YOU SO MUCH” –

MARTY WE LOVE YOU TOO – RIDE ON .

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### Re:Jim Finnegans Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.

Posted by joe - 2008/05/07 23:51

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a very brave man, until the last 2 words,jim you done him proud, how you read that so far

RIP #45

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### Re:Jim Finnegans Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.

Posted by pykey05 - 2008/05/08 09:41

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Thanks you Myles for that tribute RIP Martin.

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### Re:Jim Finnegans Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.

Posted by conor337 - 2008/05/08 13:44

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nothing more to be said, a beautiful tribute that certainly brings tears to the eyes

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### Re:Jim Finnegans Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.

Posted by carberry - 2008/05/08 21:33

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Beautiful words, beautiful tribute. So sad. :(

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**Re:Jim Finnegans Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.**

Posted by Joey D - 2008/05/08 22:20

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What great words, what a great send off for Martin (Finbar) #45.

His family can be so proud.

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**Re:Jim Finnegans Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.**

Posted by Mick - 2008/05/08 22:31

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If there is such a thing, it was a truly lovely funeral. So glad that I took the day off and made the effort to travel up and pay my last respects to the big man. Thanks very much to whoever was responsible for the lovely funeral booklet and bookmark. Also well done to the finn 45 supporters club, ye done a great job lads.

Ride on #45.

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**Re:Jim Finnegans Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.**

Posted by Phil McGlassup - 2008/05/08 22:46

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Lovely tribute.

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**Re:Jim Finnegans Closing tribute from Martins Funeral today.**

Posted by wogey - 2008/05/09 00:36

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I recon Martin would be proud to read that tribute. I only knew Martin in the the last couple of years through a friend of mine that raced along side the big man. What I learned of the man, he loved a bit of craic & never said no to Marias cappuccinos, how the man never had to pull up in the middle of a race to do a pee, is a mystery. Every time I met him he always went out of his way to have a chat (maybe that was because there was always bacon butty's on the go).Although minutes before he went out for his last race he was telling me how he going to put so much into his racing this year & how much time he had been spending training, & I have to say he was a fitter looking Martin than I ever saw. One more thing to say; what a man to take out so much time for his thousands of fans. No matter how stressed out things would get in the padock, he always took time to get his photo with the little fans,that absolutly idolised him, A true Irish sports man with a big hart & smile to match, MARTIN YOU WILL BE MISSED DEARLY,  
from Wogey, Killian & Maria.

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