



***ATHENRY Athletic Club***

**proactive**

design & marketing

***Fields of  
Athenry***

***10k Road Race***

St. Stephen's Day 2006

race programme

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# Welcome to This Year's

The members of Athenry AC take great pride in this race. Once a year we pull together and organise what we hope will be an enjoyable event at one of the most sociable times of the year. This race has developed over time into something that many of us look forward to. Throughout the preceding twelve months Athenry AC runners travel to Galway, Loughrea, Claregalway, Connemara, Tuam, Loughrea and many other towns all over Ireland to enjoy races hosted by other clubs and when December rolls around we make our own contribution to the Irish running calendar.

Like almost every other race, ours is based almost exclusively on voluntary effort and generous sponsorship. If you're taking part today, why not take the time to thank the people who have given of their time as stewards, time recorders, traffic managers and in other roles to make sure that everything goes smoothly for runners and walkers. In addition to our fine band of race organisers and volunteers we have been supported by some very generous sponsorship. The management of Keane's Bar in Athenry have come up trumps this year in support of the race and will also host the prize-giving ceremony shortly after the race. Why not join us there for a cuppa and a quick bite to eat before heading home: you never know, you might have won a prize? Proactive Design and Marketing have been a huge support to this event over time and this year is no exception. Ray and John O'Connor from Proactive are active members of our club and we are exceptionally lucky to have them as athletes and as supporters of this race. Joyces 365 Supermarket Athenry have also generously donated many of our on-course refreshment supplies and it goes without saying that we are deeply appreciative of that support. Our thanks also goes to The Tranquility Leisure Center & Spa at the Raheen Woods Hotel who have kindly sponsored prizes for competitors in today's event. Finally, we thank the Presentation College for the use of their Gym, and grounds for Car Parking and all those who provided spot prizes and other refreshments on the day.

We hope you enjoy the race. Just by being here you've contributed greatly to our success and we thank you for that. One final request to all participants, on behalf of the race organisers, is to take great care with your personal safety on the course today. We've gone to great lengths to ensure that the race will be safe and trouble-free for all of us but ultimately we're dependant on each and every runner and walker taking the greatest care whilst on the course.

Enjoy the race and we'll see you in Keane's afterwards.

**From all the Athenry AC members.**

# Talented Athletes Wanted!



Could you beat this man to the line?

Athenry AC is always on the lookout for new members and we're particularly, almost exclusively, looking for the most naturally talented amongst you.

## How do you measure up?

This is the sort of talent that we're chasing;

- Are you supremely gifted at taking part?
- Could you represent Ireland at having fun?
- Are you 'world-class' at not taking yourself too seriously?
- Would you like to be part of the action rather than just watching it?
- Do you want to get fit and enjoy the process?

If you even match one or two of these criteria you're plenty talented enough to join Athenry Athletic Club. Why not get in touch and get involved?

Membership forms are available today at the race HQ or on our web site at [www.athenryac.com](http://www.athenryac.com)

**ATHENRY Athletic Club**

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# County Galway

## “No showers, changing area, refreshments, physio or mothering provided – just a race”

At a meeting of Senior Athletes in February, it was generally agreed that we could all do with a few more races. Evening races are popular all over the country, from Cork's BHAA races, to West Waterford's near legendary series to Clonliffe Harriers' series in Dublin. We felt it was time to try this out in County Galway. Thus the May 5km series was born.

It was decided from the start that this series was more about participation than real competition. The 5km distance shouldn't intimidate anyone, so we attracted many joggers and walkers, along with regular club runners. It was pretty low profile, and “no frills”, so we could find our feet, but you'll hear more about this series next year.

Four races were held, starting in Athenry, followed by Craughwell, Tuam and Galway City, each hosted and organised by the respective clubs.

The first race on May 9th got us off to a great start. We weren't sure what to expect, maybe 40 runners, we figured, but the good weather brought the crowds out and over 80 runners toed the line. The tight “out-and-back” course at Ballydavid meant we used a lead bicycle instead of the usual Garda car.

Given the speed that Conor Maloney lead out the first race, it's a good thing that Seb Locteau, our cyclist is an international class triathlete. For the record, up and coming star Jason Broderick was first across the line that evening.

So it all went well. It was a great evening to be out and about, and it gave a lot of people an appetite for mid-week-evening racing.

Onwards to Tuam, where we ran a shortened version of the course you can enjoy during the 8km race in January. One of the top road runners in the country, Robert Malseed of Clonliffe Harriers was first across the line this time, but this correspondent had the pleasure of pipping Gary Doherty in a sprint finish.

The following week we hit Craughwell, and had the pleasure of holding up the N6 [well I enjoyed it!] for a few minutes at the start of what was a tough but enjoyable course. Those of us who had taken part in Craughwell ACs 10km series had the edge of experience on the course here. Ruaidhri Geraghty of Galway City Harriers took the honours here.

The series was wrapped up in Dangan on May 30th. On a course familiar to both cross country sloggers and dog walkers. Gary Doherty had his revenge when beating me to the line. Word of the series had spread by now and Dermot Galvin of St John's AC in Clare was first home in a field of more than 100 runners.

Afterwards we retired to Kelehans for refreshments. T-shirts for those who completed the full series were awarded as well as a slew of spot prizes.

At a wrap-up meeting, it was agreed that the series would go ahead next year. We may even get ambitious and expand it. Keep an eye on our website [www.athenryac.com](http://www.athenryac.com) and local press.

Finally, this report wouldn't be complete without the input of our resident statistician, Peter Delmer.

## How do you measure the success of the Galway 5k series? With numbers of course!

4 races in the series  
 4 different courses  
 4 sets of conditions  
 158 people took part  
 29 people ran all four races  
 27 people ran three races  
 32 people ran two races  
 69 people ran one race  
 81 finishers in Athenry  
 75 finishers in Tuam  
 73 finishers in Craughwell  
 101 finishers in Galway  
 21 clubs took Part  
 18 Athenry AC runners  
 18 Galway City Harriers runners  
 16 Galway Triathlon Club runners

15 Craughwell AC runners  
 11 Galway M&T runners  
 8 Clare River Harriers runners  
 6 Loughrea AC runners  
 6 Tuam AC runners  
 4 Hewlett Packard runners  
 3 Mayo AC runners  
 1 Border Ramblers runner  
 1 Castlegar AC runner  
 1 Clonliffe Harriers runner  
 1 Corofin runner  
 1 Marian AC runner  
 1 Naas AC runner  
 1 Renmore church group runner  
 1 Skib AC runner  
 1 St. John's AC runner

1 Suleen runner  
 1 Tir Conaill AC runner  
 42 unattached runners took part  
 61 Ladies  
 1 junior female  
 52 Senior Females  
 1 over 35 female  
 4 over 40 females  
 1 over 45 female  
 2 over 50 females  
 2 junior males  
 72 senior males  
 9 over 40 males  
 6 over 45 males  
 7 over 50 males  
 1 over 55 male



Athenry 5k May 9th 2006

# Road Race or Weirdo's

## Convention

A long time ago I bought my first pair of running tights or 'leggings' as some runners call them. They were mainly black but with a nice little slash of bright purple on the side of each thigh. I'd only been training for a few months and didn't yet have much running-specific clothing. I was living in Dublin at that time not long after I was married. It was only when I had purchased the tights that it dawned on me that I'd have to be seen in public wearing them if they were not to prove a complete waste of cash. This was going to be a problem. How was I going to leave the house without the neighbours thinking I was either a danger to the community or to myself. In the end of course I bottled it. For many weeks I would drive from my house to the nearby Phoenix Park to train, dashing to and from the car on each trip in an attempt to avoid public ridicule. Looking back now I can smile at how worried I was about what others might have thought of what I wore to run. In reality, I'm sure my neighbours weren't even the slightest bit concerned about my partly-purple leggings.

Since those days I've detoured into uncharted sports-fashion territory. As the years pass by I've lost almost all self-consciousness as regards what I wear when I run. At this advanced stage, functionality is 'king'. If a certain running top will keep me warm, cool, dry or visible I couldn't give a hoot what it looks like. I've run attired in green, purple, fluorescent orange and pink, although admittedly not usually all at the same time. I own both red and bright orange running shoes which have seen action from Boston to Ballybrit and my general taste in training apparel is going straight downhill. Perhaps this deterioration in personal style can partly be attributed to my advancing age but I think it's

mainly to do with the fact that runners are a fairly weird bunch anyway.

It appears that as I become more of a running groupie I inherit from my peers the right to behave and dress as oddly as I choose. It seems to be one of the perks of the job and I must say I've become very comfortable with it.



I only realised how far all of this had gone when I ran the Ballycotton 10 Mile Road Race in Cork for the first time in 2002. This beautiful coastal town in Co.Cork is literally invaded each year by thousands of runners for their superbly organised race. The great and the good of the athletic firmament mix freely with the withered and the wonky for a feast of road running. As I wandered around the town in the couple of hours before the actual running started I became aware that I was mingling amongst a large number of kindred spitits. Ballycotton

was ablaze with multicoloured wicked fabrics of every imaginable shade and the smell of Deep Heat and semi-clean running socks filled the air. It was a bizarre kind of homecoming. I knew in my heart that shortly I would have to re-enter the world of normality where people didn't think that running marathons was fun and where stretching meant leaning further across the bar, but for those few blessed hours I was amongst my own.

Like all dreams it had to end and sartorial convention dictates that I must not turn up for work in Ron Hill Tracksters and Asics Kayano's, although I'd absolutely love to, even if it was just once. So have a look around you today and see if you can spot us weirdos. We'll be the ones in the tight pink lycra cycling shorts and lime-green singlets. **Try not to get too jealous.**



*Shape Exercise Benefit*

is proud to support the  
Fields of Athenry 10km road race  
and wishes all participants the best of luck.

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**Ian Egan 087-6961746**

**QUALIFIED MASSAGE THERAPIST**

**ATHENRY Athletic  
Club**

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# Paul & Paul Two Athenry

"It's the roots that make the fruits". The great bluesman Willie Dixon regularly used this phrase when talking about the origins which provided the inspiration for the rich blues tradition of the Mississippi Delta. The same phrase could equally apply to a pair of our clubmen who graduated from the juvenile section and whose successes have been inspired by a rich pride in their small club, and a sense of gratitude to those who have worked so hard to see it blossom.

While the primary focus of Athenry AC's senior section is to cater for anyone with an interest in running, regardless of their level of ability, we have still experienced more than our fair share of success at the elite end of the sport. The twin towers of Athenry AC who have made the club vest recognisable at national level and beyond are Paul Hession, one of the fastest men in Europe over 200m, and Paul McNamara, one of the country's top distance runners. Both athletes have shown tremendous pride in their roots and view it as an honour to wear the 'maroon and white' when larger, more established clubs came knocking on their doors.



In fact, Paul Hession caused quite a stir at the London Grand Prix last year. He was sharing the track with some of the biggest names in world athletics, each wearing the vest of their corporate sponsor, Nike, Adidas, Puma etc. Paul stripped off his tracksuit to reveal his trusted Athenry club vest. The event was being broadcast live on television and the event organisers decided that his attire simply wasn't glamorous enough for the occasion and insisted he change into something a little more flash. Paul was having none of it and

steadfastly refused, almost holding up the start of the race. The organisers eventually acquiesced and his faded old Athenry AC vest was broadcast to the world.

Although Paul's roots run deep, they definitely do not keep him anchored to the track. He is unquestionably Ireland's best 200m runner and many see it as only a matter of time before he breaks the existing Irish record of 20.54. In fact, despite a season heavily affected by injury, he still came within two hundredths of a second of the Irish record in 2006. He clocked personal best

performances of 10.41 and 20.56 in the 100m and 200m respectively this past season, performances which topped the Irish rankings in both events. At the European Championships in Gothenburg this summer Paul qualified comfortably from his 1st round heat and again cruised through his 2nd round heat to earn a place in the semi-final. Unfortunately, a poor lane draw and an uncharacteristically dodgy start conspired to deprive him of a place in the final. Notably, his season's best would have been good enough for 4th place in the final and placed him 11th in the European rankings for 2006.

At the other end of the spectrum, in terms of distance, Paul McNamara had a stellar year in 2006 winning no fewer than six All-Ireland senior medals. He was crowned All-Ireland champion on two occasions, firstly at the National 10km Road Championships, which he also won in 2005, and again at the National Short Course Cross-Country championships.



In fact, as the short-course event is being scrapped next year Paul has the novel distinction of holding this national title forever more. He also won a silver medal when clocking 2 hours 25 minutes at the National Marathon Championships and a bronze medal at the National Half-Marathon Championships.

The highlight of the year for Paul was having the honour of leading the club to its first national senior team medals when winning silver in the marathon and bronze in the half-marathon. He features in the 2006 national rankings in 3000m, 5000m, 10,000m, half-marathon and marathon. His success in his debut marathon, despite very limited preparations, hint at a bright future over the classic distance as Paul aims to make a serious assault on this event in the near future. Watch this space.

While Paul Hession's training consists of high quality speed work performed on the track and lots of weights, Paul McNamara regularly clocks up 100 miles a week in training on roads and forest trails. Very different training regimes for very different events, but the same burning pride in the 'maroon and white' they started out their careers in all those years ago.



# Fields of Athensry

## Results

1	30:34	Gary Thornton	71	42:49	Brian Monaghan	141	48:04	Maire Tarpey
2	30:53	Paul McNamara	72	43:05	Ronan Reilly	142	48:09	John Rafferty
3	31:45	Michael O'Connor	73	42:56	Orlando O'Connell	143	48:13	Michael Duane
4	33:10	Donnacha O'Mahony	74	43:20	Gerry Masterson	144	48:14	Jean O'Connor
5	33:34	Jason Fahy	75	43:24	Frank Flannery	145	48:16	Donal Geraghty
6	33:36	Jason Broderick	76	43:31	Brendan Cusack	146	48:19	Graham Surman
7	34:16	Ian Egan	77	43:35	Tommy McNamara	147	48:20	Ronan Lyons
8	34:31	Martin Corcoran	78	43:37	Peter Walsh	148	48:21	David Healy
9	34:40	Sean Dowling	79	43:40	Phillip O'Toole	149	48:24	Jackie Prendergast
10	34:50	Kevin D'Arcy	80	43:41	John Liston	150	48:27	Padraic Moran
11	34:56	Tom Meehan	81	43:49	Peter O'Halloran	151	48:27	D MacDonagh
12	35:01	Michael Solon	82	43:53	Adrian McCallion	152	48:40	Anthony Fitzpatrick
13	35:03	Conor Maloney	83	43:55	Andrew O'Shaughnessy	153	48:46	Keith Curley
14	35:21	Eoin O'Coileain	84	43:55	Bernard Geraghty	154	48:51	Hanna Kelly
15	35:24	Michael O'Connell	85	44:09	John Donnellan	155	48:52	Andrew Parkinson
16	35:39	Mark Davis	86	44:16	John Sheehan	156	48:57	Chris Wade
17	36:12	Philip Glynn	87	44:18	Eddie Larkin	157	49:05	Mary Lyng
18	36:18	Mike Harvey	88	44:20	Bernie Kelly	158	49:11	Erik Tierney
19	36:37	Matthew Solon	89	44:25	Pat O'Loan	159	49:26	Jarlath McInerney
20	36:41	Danny Carr	90	44:30	Fiachra O'Ceallaigh	160	30:30	Mark Rooney
21	36:45	Billy King	91	44:30	Nichola O'Ceallaigh	161	49:31	Allen Moran
22	36:46	Michael Tobin	92	44:33	Roger Rushe	162	49:37	Tara Whyte
23	36:52	Mairtin Grealish	93	44:35	Daniel Kavanagh	163	49:37	John O'Connell
24	36:56	Binney Mitchell	94	44:47	Kevin O'Loughlin	164	49:47	Mickie Kelly
25	37:13	Darragh O'Brien	95	44:49	Alan Daniels	165	49:47	Tony O'Callaghan
26	37:15	Ray Glynn	96	45:00	Claire Morrissey	166	48:48	Sean Noone
27	37:17	Tom O'Dowd	97	45:21	Tony Nevin	167	49:51	Gerald McGough
28	37:20	Martin McEvilly	98	45:25	Cormac McCarthy	168	49:56	Brian McGoldrick
29	37:23	Padraic Forde	99	45:33	Gabriel Gardiner	169	50:05	Jimmy O'Connor
30	37:27	Brian O'Connor	100	45:37	Gerry Killeen	170	50:20	Patrick Kelly
31	37:28	James Kenny	101	45:38	Brian Kelly	171	50:20	Paul Kilkenny
32	37:30	Lucy Brennan	102	45:42	Patrick Flaherty	172	50:26	Eric O'Brien
33	37:54	Hubie Conway	103	45:56	Michael Quinn	173	50:29	Arnaud Lamy
34	37:55	Vincent Flannery	104	45:57	Michael Higgins	174	50:30	Jim O'Connell
35	38:07	Geaird Quinn	105	46:03	Charles Colletta	175	50:31	Eimear Butler
36	38:15	Dara Lally	106	46:07	Bill Doran	176	50:35	John McInerney
37	38:20	Colm Harney	107	46:09	Alan Sheridan	177	50:37	Richard Cauffield
38	38:31	Jimmy Fallon	108	46:13	Benny Niland	178	50:38	Gerard McGrath
39	38:35	Martin O'Donnell	109	46:15	Sean Brennan	179	50:40	Gerry Hurley
40	38:40	Tommy Joe Whyte	110	46:24	Patrick Scully	180	50:41	Peter Cloonan
41	38:40	Andrew Talbot	111	46:25	James Elwood	181	50:43	Fiona Rooney
42	38:43	David Moloney	112	46:33	P Murray	182	51:06	Des Donnellan
43	39:05	Larry Kelly	113	46:34	John Reilly	183	51:17	Martin Keane
44	39:07	Malcolm Hosty	114	46:35	John Fahy	184	51:31	James McDonnell
45	39:13	Seamus Gilhooley	115	46:35	Gerry Broderick	185	51:40	Steve Williams
46	39:38	Fionnuala Keane	116	46:36	Derek Duffy	186	51:49	Alan O'Regan
47	39:39	Donal Devaney	117	46:44	Kevin O'Dea	187	51:50	Trina Mulryan
48	39:44	Tony Noonan	118	46:53	Diarmuid Quill	188	52:00	Kevin Timothy
49	39:46	Gabriel Brennan	119	46:56	Michael Lane	189	52:02	Paul Frecklington
50	39:53	Josephine Gardiner	120	47:07	Jimmy McNamara	190	52:03	Paula Lynch
51	39:58	Conor O'Rourke	121	47:09	Seán Whelan	191	52:23	Tom MacLochlainn
52	40:21	Fergal O'Dowd	122	47:10	Bartley Joyce	192	52:28	Pat Murtagh
53	40:24	Fergus Nevin	123	47:11	David Naughton	193	52:28	Declan Furey
54	40:29	Rynal Browne	124	47:14	Liam Mulloy	194	52:42	Pat O'Donoghue
55	40:46	Owen Curran	125	47:18	Eugene Hoade	195	52:43	Brian Flannery
56	40:50	Terry Grogan	126	47:20	Cedric Lamy	196	52:59	Pat Reidy
57	41:01	Martin Fitzpatrick	127	47:23	Not Defined	197	53:02	Louis Burke
58	41:02	Owen Murphy	128	47:24	John Naughton	198	53:12	John Mongan
59	41:10	Wally Walsh	129	47:24	William Murphy	199	53:17	Frank Burke
60	41:21	Brian Keville	130	47:25	Anselm McGowan	200	53:22	Sean Doherty
61	41:29	Dermot Burke	131	47:26	Michelle Rowley	201	53:24	Martin Walsh
62	41:57	Kenneth O'Dea	132	47:26	Dave Monaghan	202	53:31	David Rohan
63	42:12	Thomas Lee	133	47:39	Maura Falsey	203	53:32	Anne-Marie Walsh
64	42:15	Enda Higgins	134	47:47	Francis Keenan	204	53:33	John Timothy
65	42:20	Conor Flanagan	135	47:49	Kevin Lambie	205	54:08	Barry Beirne
66	42:25	Hubert Crehan	136	47:50	Con Quilligan	206	54:10	Dolores Foley
67	42:26	Michelle Lynch	137	47:51	Declan Geraghty	207	54:13	Matt Donnellan
68	42:31	Paul Kilkelly	138	47:56	Colm MacEoin	208	54:20	Una McNamara
69	42:46	Paul Flannery	139	48:00	Derval Devaney	209	54:21	Barry McGann
70	42:47	Tom Elwood	140	48:02	Frank Kitt	210	54:22	Mary McCann

211	54:36	Anne Kelly	258	1:02:33	Anne Lyng	305	1:30:00	Lourda Carrig
212	55:02	Brian Niland	259	1:03:00	Lisa Kelly	306	1:30:00	Bernie Doherty
213	55:04	Micheál Quinn	260	1:03:10	Patrick Kelly	307	1:30:00	Eileen Hynes
214	55:19	Caroline Burke	261	1:03:22	Ailish Rohan	308	1:30:00	Siobhán Keane
215	55:21	Clare Hingott	262	1:03:23	Tom Callanan	309	1:30:00	Aisling Keane
216	55:23	Colm Corless	263	1:03:24	Nuala Keady	310	1:30:00	Neil Lynch
217	55:23	David Prendergast	264	1:03:41	Vincent Lamy	311	1:20:00	Treasa Keane
218	55:24	Eoin Costello	265	1:03:42	Martin McDonogh	312	1:30:00	Bernie Quinn
219	55:27	Heather Smith	266	1:03:50	Padraig Farragher	313	1:30:00	Ann Higgins
220	55:29	Tadhg Naughton	267	1:04:23	Sharon Raftery	314	1:30:00	Maeve Noone
221	55:40	Niamh Tierney	268	1:04:37	Clara O'Connell	315	1:30:00	Majella O'Dea
222	55:41	Helen Hallinan	269	1:05:48	Sarah O'Gorman	316	1:30:00	John Donohue
223	55:51	Clodagh Grealy	270	1:05:49	John Kenirons	317	1:30:00	Margaret Donohue
224	55:55	Evelyn Concannon	271	1:05:56	Niamh Coleman	318	1:30:00	Mairéad Feeney
225	56:01	Maria Caulfield	272	1:05:56	Olive Coleman	319	1:30:00	Claire Dempsey
226	56:02	Sinéad O'Connor	273	1:06:34	Alison Finn	320	1:30:00	J Mooney
227	56:05	Gerry Rohan	274	1:06:37	Grainne Costello	321	1:30:00	Margaret Scott
228	56:18	Noeleen O'Malley	275	1:06:46	Kathleen Waters	322	1:30:00	Edel Talbot
229	56:20	Darren O'Brien	276	1:07:00	Lisa Gibbons	323	1:30:00	Suzanne Morris
230	56:38	Ray Prendergast	277	1:07:19	Anne Burke	324	1:30:00	Caroline McLoughlin
231	56:43	Orla Donnelly	278	1:07:22	Mary Mullins	325	1:30:00	Paul Feighery Jnr
232	56:45	Bairbre Ni Mhaille	279	1:07:28	Mary Coyne	326	1:30:00	Patsy Trilly
233	57:28	Tomas Keys	280	1:07:28	Vibeke Soerensen	327	1:30:00	Noreen Doherty
234	57:33	Máire Kelly	281	1:07:32	Christian Walsh	328	1:30:00	Clare Carr
235	57:37	Jim Donnelly	282	1:08:01	Tom Newell	329	1:30:00	Sharon Gardner
236	57:37	Jennifer Donnelly	283	1:09:21	Mary Coyle	330	1:30:00	Joe Killeen
237	57:40	Eileen McNamara	284	1:09:23	Anne Newell	331	1:30:00	Marian Killeen
238	57:47	Mary Walsh	285	1:11:05	Mike Gibbons	332	1:30:00	Majella O'Dea
239	58:04	Maeve Moran	286	1:12:15	Declan McGrath	333	1:30:00	Caroline Deehan
240	58:06	Andrea Ridge	287	1:12:42	David Grealy	334	1:30:00	Rosemarie Atkinson
241	58:27	Tom Waldron	288	1:12:52	Osín McLoughlin	335	1:30:00	Laura Deehan
242	58:35	Tom Monaghan	289	1:12:55	Steven Morris	336	1:30:00	Marie Callanan
243	58:42	Michael Kelly	290	1:13:07	Marka Gilhoolley	337	1:30:00	Bridie Loughnane
244	58:48	Michael Doherty	291	1:13:09	Aoife Doherty	338	1:30:00	Mary O'Brien-Timmon
245	58:50	Gemma McDonagh	292	1:13:51	Eimear Grealy	339	1:30:00	Catherine Cahill
246	58:53	Anne Coleman	293	1:20:00	John McNamara	340	1:30:00	Majella McGlynn
247	58:55	Bridgett McDaid	294	1:30:00	Maeve Roche	341	1:30:00	Ann Gardner
248	58:59	Annette Crehan	295	1:30:00	Rose Hillary	342	1:30:00	Teresa Cannon
249	59:10	John Kelly	296	1:30:00	Brid Hillary	343	1:30:00	Chloe Gormally
250	59:11	Mary Prendergast	297	1:30:00	Attracta Hillary	344	1:30:00	Majella Monaghan
251	59:32	Vincent Kennedy	298	1:30:00	Carmel Callanan	345	1:30:00	Nicola Rabbittie
252	59:56	Dermot O'Connor	299	1:30:00	Susan McLaughlin	346	1:30:00	Gerard Roche
253	1:00:32	Gearóid Ó Murchú	300	1:30:00	Karen Mitchell	347		Dolores Lynch
254	1:00:55	James Langan	301	1:30:00	Paul Feighery	348		Eithna Moran
255	1:01:44	Geraldine Eustace	302	1:30:00	Gerry Leslie	349		Lourda Carrig
256	1:02:25	Danny Mitchell	303	1:30:00	Maeve Donohue	350		Mark McCormack
257	1:02:31	Sile Ni Mhaille	304	1:30:00	Máirín O'Ceallaigh	351		Tom Gormally

# Fields of Athenry

## 10k

### Men

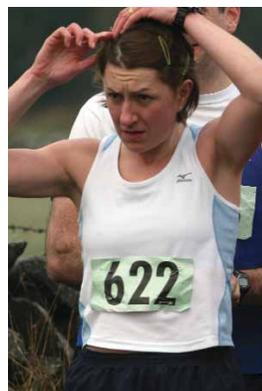
2002	Paul McNamara	31:15
2003	Noel Kelly	32:46
2004	Paul McNamara	31:11
2005	Gary Thornton	30:34

### Women

2002	Kathryn Casserly	36:57
2003	Fionnuala Keane	38:18
2004	Lucy Brennan	36:36
2005	Lucy Brennan	37:30



Give me back my entry fee Alan - the hat's too big!



Fionnuala Keane, Loughrea AC.

## ***Stalwarts***

The following 15 people hold the distinction of competing in all four "Fields of Athenry" 10km races to date. We wish them the best of luck on their fifth outing this year.

<b>Name</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
Bernie Kelly	45:48	49:31	52:05	44:20
Danny Carr	36:15	38:11	36:00	36:41
Darragh O'Brien	38:16	40:53	39:59	37:13
Fionnuala Keane	39:12	38:18	39:11	39:38
Gearóid Quinn	38:43	39:17	37:39	38:07
Kevin O'Dea	48:27	50:16	51:25	46:44
Liam Mulloy	42:34	45:49	53:50	47:14
Martin Keane	51:20	50:02	54:48	51:17
Martin McEvilly	36:25	36:01	36:08	37:20
Mary Mullins	1:05:50	1:00:37	1:06:27	1:07:22
Patrick Kelly	49:16	51:48	52:15	50:20
Roger Rushe	45:07	44:29	46:15	44:33
Siobhan Keane	1:37:10	1:34:38	1:35:20	1:30:00
Tomás MacLochlainn	49:57	56:35	50:10	52:23
Tommy Joe Whyte	36:35	36:16	36:29	38:40

# 20 Questions

from last year's women's winner - Lucy Brennan



## What running shoes do you train in?

Asics 2110.

## How many miles did you run last week?

55 mls.

## What's your favourite racing distance?

10k, 1/2M and Marathon.

## Where's your favourite place to train?

Trails/paths in the woods and open areas on a good day.

## What's your favourite race or event each year?

Omagh 1/2 M, Dublin M and Warriors run in Sligo.

## What annoys you most at races?

Competing in large fields, fighting to hold a good start place.

## What race, that you haven't yet run, would you most like to take part in?

Ultra Marathon.

## What was your best-ever running performance?

Dublin Marathon in 2004 time 2.43.28, Derry 1/2 Marathon 2005 77 mins, Grange 10k 2005 35.38.

## What was your worst-ever running performance?

Dublin Marathon.... had trained v.well, competed v good before the event. Was very ill the week prior to the Marathon and struggled from the first mile. Pure determination and will power took me to the line in 2.47 v disappointed.

## What's the strangest thing that you've ever seen on a training run?

No comment!

## Favourite piece of running gear?

Adidas racing gear.

## Who would you most enjoy beating in a sprint for the line?

My fellow club runner with whom I train. He is v competitive when I am competing in the same races and he has to outrun me. We are good sporting friends -- so its fun.

## What was the best bit of training advice you were ever given?

Be consistent, determined and competitive.

## In ten years time will you still be running?

Yes would like to think I run as long as the body allows.

## If for some reason you were told you could never run again, how do you think you'd react?

Devastated.... as running is very much part of my life.

## Have you ever been bitten by a dog while running?

No.

## Have you ever had to stop for an emergency 'Paula' during a race?

Yes, in the 2005 Dublin Marathon....during my bad times.

## Favourite post-race food?

A large mug of 'hot' tea.

## Most embarrassing ever running-related moment?

None....

## The greatest Irish Athlete of all time is/was?

Sonia and Cathriona.

# Dublin 2006

## One Lonely Bag

Ray '26 down - 74 to go' O'Connor.

Ray (centre)  
at mile 1



It's funny really how every day we learn a little. Two weeks previously in Amsterdam my eyes were opened with the understanding that finding the correct pace and sticking to it is key to completing a marathon in good shape. It's simple really, if you've trained to do a 3:30 then there is no reason for not achieving that goal. And in the same way, if you haven't trained, then you should expect exactly what's coming. If that means a 4 or 5 hour marathon then that's exactly what you'll get. There is no bluffing over 26.2 miles. But be sure of one thing, at my level anyway, your cards are dealt before you start. Sure, things can go wrong during the race and there are a lot of other factors that come into play in a marathon - but for me the new king is PACE.

So what has this to do with what went on in Dublin? The first real funny of the day was when Paul Mc asked me how my training had gone in the run up to this. I told him I had run 4 miles since my last marathon - he laughed. All I was looking to do in Dublin was to get out of the capital without too much pain. It was as simple as that. I suspected that my streak of sub 4s was about to run out but I wasn't too bothered about that. This was just a case of getting another one in and all going well get in around the 4 hour mark. One of the organisers, a friend of mine, offered to hold my bag in the elite baggage area for me so I was able to mingle around the elite start area. I was explaining to Paul how embarrassing it was going to be when I pick up my bag at the finish. I imagined a woman standing, arms folded with a big puss on her face wondering where the feck number 80 had gotten to and there in the middle of the road would be one lonely bag.

It took me all of two seconds to get over the start line and within the first mile I was probably passed by about 3,000 runners. I saw Johnny (the brother) at Mile 1 and pointed to the clock - I was going out way way too fast with a 7:40 first mile. I was been dragged along at a speed that I wasn't comfortable with and it was proving even more uncomfortable to slow down. Three times in the first 3 miles I told myself to 'slow down, remember the lesson from Amsterdam, slow down, 3 hours for 20 miles', that was the target. The miles whizzed by and I met Johnny again at mile 8. I pulled up to check the time and it looked like I was going way too fast, as I was running for 65 mins at that stage which was 7 mins ahead.

To cut to the chase I managed to steady the ship and found myself in good shape at mile 18 having gone through the half still exactly 7 mins ahead of schedule. Just around that point I suddenly felt really tired, sore, and was basically in trouble. Here was my wall, as usual, bang on target. I pulled up at mile 19 and took salt, gel, water and gatorade. Unbelievably I recovered very well and got running again, and I seemed to manage to actually pick up the pace a bit. Mile 20 passed with 2:53 on the clock - amazingly still 7 mins ahead. It was around this point in the race where I passed Lezan Kimutai, the Dublin Marathon record holder from Kenya. He was standing on the side of the road with an official. I shouted at him something along the lines of 'Come on Lezan, pick it up' and funnily enough he shouted back 'hey Ray'. I'm sure the runners around me were curious at this little exchange between the 'elites'. I felt I'd manage to keep

that pace all the way to the finish and was looking forward to seeing my kids at mile 24 (this was only their 2nd time seeing me in a marathon, the first being the first Connemara marathon in 2002 - so this could be nice). Mile 22 went on forever and by 23 I was in trouble again. Walked a bit and finally made it to 24 where the four lads stood, basically laughing at me although I felt in worse shape than I looked apparently. I was enjoying this run even though I was in pain. But I knew that I had 30 minutes to finish and retain my streak of sub 4s. And that's what I did, run, walk, run to the finish in 3:54 and pick up my lonely bag, but it wasn't alone. Lezan's was keeping it company.

So the whole pacing rule stood firm - I was going to run a 3:54 no matter what, and I lost the 7 minutes over the last 6 miles. They were always doomed.

It's interesting to take a look at my last three marathons and see that my cards were probably dealt before each race no matter what pace I set early on

Longford - August 2006  
Half 1:41 - Finish 3:52

Amsterdam - October 2006  
Half 1:58 - Finish 3:54

Dublin - October 2006  
Half 1:52 - Finish 3:54  
(16 seconds slower than Amsterdam)

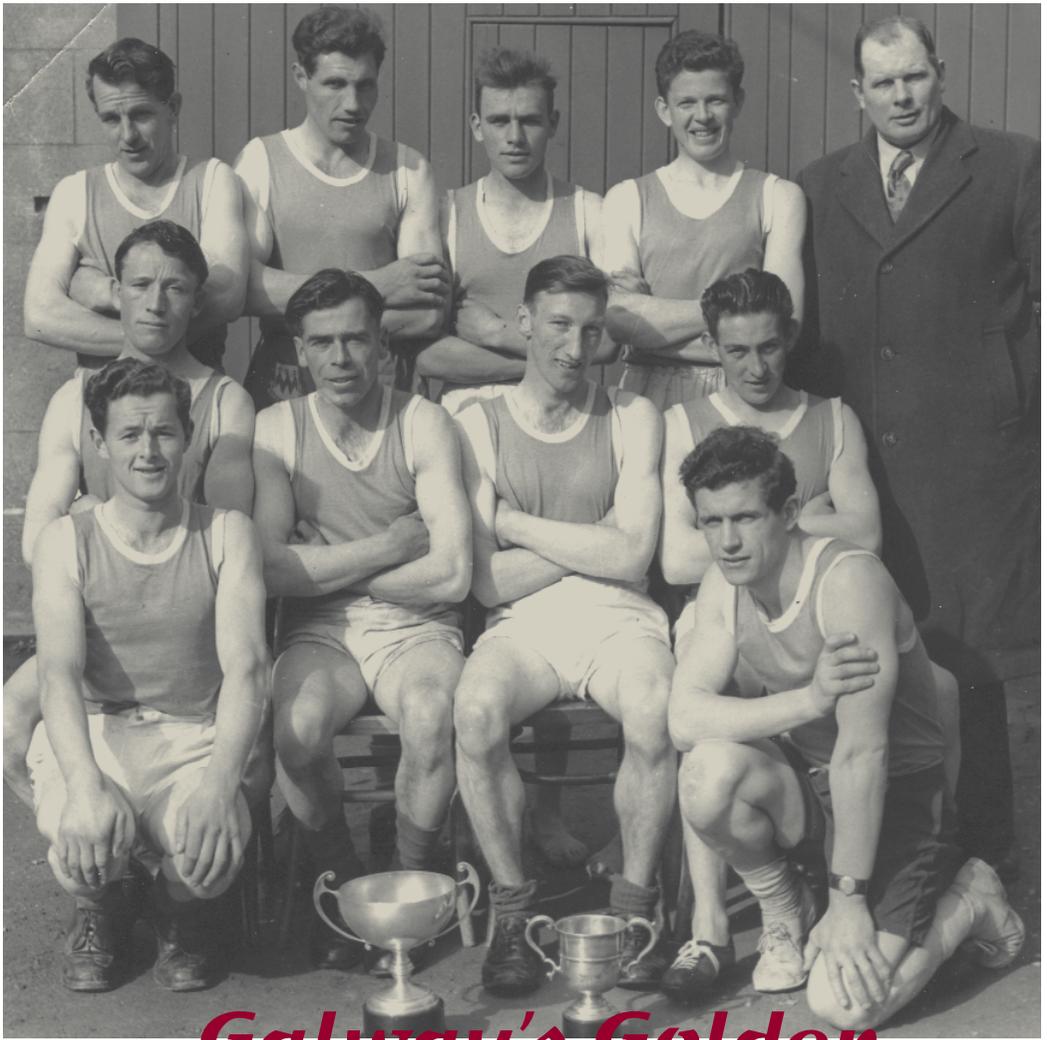
My marathons so far this year show a consistency creeping in London 3:46 Belfast 3:47 (one week later) Edinburgh 3:58 Longford 3:52 Amsterdam 3:54 Dublin 3:54 Luton in December will be my 27th overall, but I can't brag - I met a friend of mine in Dublin, Peter Ferris. He told me he was celebrating his 250th! I have a bit of catching up to do yet.

P.S. Luton was completed on December 3rd in 3:58.



Owen Curran leaving the park.

L-R Mick & Peter of Athenry AC with Tom Hunt Mayo AC.



## *Galway's Golden*

### **Pictured in 1955**

Back: Georgie Moran, John Joe Burke, Pa John Connelly (RIP), Mick Molloy, Dick Walsh. Middle: Bernie Ruane, Willie Morris, Tommy Madden, Kevin Ryan. Front: Bernie Ruhan, Eamon Fitzpatrick.

## *Era*

By TJ BEATTY, Loughrea AC

For many people travelling to the West of Ireland, Derrydonnell is just a place situated a few miles from Galway City. More often than not people associate the name with traffic reports on national and local radio: "traffic on the N6 is backed up as far as Derrydonnell Cross".

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But for Galway athletics fans the name Derrydonnell is forever associated with a golden era in Galway cross-country running.

County Galway has a long tradition and a proud record in cross-country running. Back in the heydays of famed runners such as the late Tom Hynes, the county competed with the best between 1900 and 1920.

The late 1950's and early 1960's, however, could be regarded as the golden era of cross-country running in Co. Galway. The County team in that period contained some of the greatest cross-country runners that Ireland has produced.

In 1956 a first-class field assembled at Powerstown Park, Clonmel, Co Tipperary for the NACA All-Ireland cross-country championships. It was the first time that the race had been held outside of Dublin. Galway carved their names into history that day when Willie Morris of Derrydonnell AC led the team through the tape for a memorable triumph. The race was an unyielding struggle between Galway and the host county right from the start. Little separated them over the first few laps of the nine-mile course. Galway had a slight lead after three miles as Morris and Tommy Madden (also from Derrydonnell AC) challenged Tipperary's Sean Hayden and Walter Scott for the lead. On the last lap Morris proved his worth and romped home, barefooted, finishing 10 seconds in front of Hayden with Madden third. Willie had won his second cross-country title, having won his first in 1953. Tommy Madden, who still resides in Derrydonnell, regards this victory as the greatest performance by a Galway team during his running career.

In March 1958 Willie Morris captured the All-Ireland senior crown for the third time. Over six 1 mile laps at

the Liam Mellows College grounds, Athenry, and before a large crowd he gave a remarkable performance. Perfectly judging each lap he sprinted away at the end to finish 22 seconds ahead of Walter Scott of Tipperary.

While the race proved a triumph for Morris, it was heart breaking for Tommy Madden, who had defeated Morris two weeks earlier in the Connacht championships. Not fully recovered from the 'flu he faded rapidly during the race and though obviously distressed continued on to the finish.

The following year at Dunleer, Co.Louth, Morris (now aged 39) retained his All-Ireland crown and led Galway to victory in the team championship. On that day Willie had what he considers his best race. Running in his bare feet he covered the 9 mile distance (some of it through freshly ploughed fields) in 52 minutes 29 seconds and was followed over the line 40 seconds later by Tommy Madden. It was "Derrydonnell's day" according to the Irish Independent, five of whose runners were among the scoring six of the Galway team, with Bernie Ruane finishing 4th.

In the opinion of many, the best performance by a Galway team during these years was in the All-Ireland Championships of 1966. The race was held in gale-force conditions in Dromoland, Co.Clar. The Galway team, consisting mainly of Derrydonnell athletes, took all 3 individual medals with the other 3 scorers finishing in 5th, 10th and 20th positions.

During the 1970's the Galway team (now competing under BLE rules) were runners-up on two occasions. During this period Joe Scanlan, (UCG and GCH), was rightly regarded as "Galway's cross-country king". Joe won the county title on no fewer than 13 occasions. Joe took part in two world cross-country championships in 1970 and 1974 and won a national 5000m track title in 1975.

Galway had to wait until 1986 to win another Inter-County title. On this occasion Paul Donovan led the Galway team home. Victory was by a single point over a much-fancied Limerick team. Finishing in 4th place on the day was Gerry Ryan, whose father, Kevin, was 5th in the winning team 20 years earlier.

**MICK MOLLOY**

Mick joined Derrydonnell AC in 1957. In 1961 he had his first major success when he won the Galway senior cross-country title ahead of Willie Morris, Tommy Madden and Kevin Ryan. In 1966 he won the National 5, 6, 10, 15, miles and marathon titles and was the NACA athlete of the year. In 1967 NACA and the AAU decided to disband and form BLE. This ended 30 years in the wilderness for many Irish athletes international competition now beckoned.

In 1968 Molloy won his first BLE marathon (in Galway) and gained selection for the Mexico Olympics. Running at altitude (and the last 12 miles in his bare feet) he finished in 41st place.

In 1969 he finished in 13th place in the European marathon in Athens.

In 1974 he wrote his name into the annals of athletics history by setting a world record for 30 miles on Walton track near London, covering the distance in a time of 2 hours 44 minutes 47 seconds.

In all, Mick won 15 national championships on track, road and cross-country and represented Ireland in the international cross-country in Tunisia in 1968.

**WILLIE MORRIS**

Willie Morris took up running in 1949 when he was 30 years old. A native of Newcastle, Athenry, he took part in 21 consecutive All-Ireland cross-country championships between 1950 and 1971. He was victorious on 4 occasions and was a consistent top-10 finisher in those years.

In 1960, Willie had a magnificent win in the National marathon championships. Many who had seen Willie in action in Athenry (1958) and Dunleer (1959) thought he had reached his peak. Willie had other ideas and finished well ahead of the field.

Tom Cryan wrote in the Irish Independent "One of the biggest ovations of the day was reserved for Galwayman, Willie Morris. A cross-country star down the years he tried his luck in the marathon and won on his own".

**TOMMY MADDEN**

Tommy Madden was rightly regarded in his day as one of Galway's and Ireland's finest athletes. A great all-rounder, Tommy competed at distances ranging from 880 yards to 9 miles cross-country. Apart from his many victories in athletics he also won a junior All-Ireland medal for cycling and a county intermediate hurling medal with Newcastle, Athenry.

In the famous Shanaghish Sports in 1956 he was victorious in the 880 yards, 1 mile, 2 mile and 3 mile races.

A supreme athlete, without any specialised training, his best mile time was 4 minutes 20 seconds. In 1959 he finished 2nd in the All-Ireland Championships over one mile on a grass track in the Iveagh Grounds, Dublin. The winner was Joe Cunningham (Metro AC, Dublin). Joe broke the Irish record 3 weeks later with a time of 4mins.13.sec. (In 1960, Kevin Gormley, an athlete with a Loughrea connection, lowered the Irish record to 4mins.12.5 sec.)

On that famous day the six Galway scorers were:

- 1st Mick Molloy, Derrydonnell AC
- 2nd Tommy Madden, Derrydonnell AC
- 3rd Tom Flanagan, Tuam AC
- 5th Kevin Ryan, Derrydonnell AC
- 10th Willie Morris, Derrydonnell AC
- 20th Bernie Feeney, Derrydonnell AC

# Athenry

While Athenry seniors earned their first All-Ireland medals this year, our juvenile section have been earning similar accolades for many years now. It would be a big task to list each and every one of our major achievers, but in 2006 alone Emma Grady, Rachel Shaw, Michelle Sands, Rebecca Nolan, Claire Rockall, Conor Caulfield, Katelyn Duane and Claire McNamara, all made a big impact and won individual medals at national level. The club also won All-Ireland u15 relay medals both indoors and outdoors.

Our under-age athletes begin their year in September with preparations for the cross-country season which culminates in the All-Ireland championships in November and December. Invariably a number of our athletes feature at this level each and every year. As soon as the cross-country is completed the club changes its focus to the indoor track and field season, where our athletes

specialise in their favoured events - sprints, jumps, throws or middle-distance events. As the days start to lengthen, we turn our attention to the outdoor track and field season. A scan of the results of the national track and field championship shows that Athenry is prominent across all age groups and events.

Next up on the calendar is the County Indoor Championships on 6th January followed by the Connaught Indoors on 21st February.

The club trains in Raheen and is always on the lookout for new members. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged in order to assist the club in meeting the needs of its athletes. Training times are as follows: Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 7pm, Sundays @ 11am. For information on the juvenile section contact Dermot McNamara at 844432.

## Long Distance Team Success

Only four years in existence, the Senior Club had never medalled at a National Team Event – until this year.

The omens were good in Tinryland, just outside Carlow Town, when the senior team achieved 5th place in the National 10k Road Racing Championships. On a warm and sunny April day, Paul McNamara led Athenry home taking first place and his second consecutive National 10k Title. Improving from 8th team position in 2005, it is fair to say that this was considered a good day's work.

There was quite a day at the races in Letterkenny in early September at the National Half Marathon Championships. Led home by Paul again in a superb individual third position the remaining Athenry team bunched well behind him to win Team Bronze. To say this was a surprise would be an understatement and the buzz generated is still evident today.

Runners had all sorts of weather conditions to contend with over the two-lap course that combined fast flat sections with tough hilly parts. The relatively tough conditions were reflected in finishing times, however the

three Athenry scorers were in 3rd, 22nd and 32nd places respectively. All six team members placed highly in the large field.

The 27th Dublin City Marathon on October 30th provided the icing on the cake. We are proud that a small club from the West of Ireland managed to field nine athletes in club colours, all of whom completed the course. This was truly a team effort for we also had three members who travelled to Dublin to shout words of encouragement and provide great support.

Once again, Paul McNamara led the team home. His second place finish in the National Championships, which ran concurrently with the main event, was an outstanding debut performance at the 26.2m distance. Paul sliced through the field in the second half of the race to complete the distance in 2:25:42, posting a negative split of over five minutes in the process.

The team performance ensured National Silver medals to complement the Bronze medals from Letterkenny. Any suggestions how we might complete the set?

# Exactly How Long is 10km Anyway

by James Landon

As anyone who knows me can attest to, I am a stickler about distance travelled and time taken when running. I love knowing exactly how far I have run and how long it has taken me, be it racing or training. My running log in Excel is a work of art, with many worksheets full of esoteric - and mostly useless - data and calculations. I can slice and dice data with the very best of them and can tell myself at the flick of a mouse's e-tail, and without having to do a single calculation in my head or on paper, any number of statistics about my whole running career, such as it is!

This same morbid interest extends to road race distances, mile or KM splits, whether a particular course has been certified or not and most importantly whether it has been "Jones Countered" measured or not etc.

In the old days, road races were battles of will, where one pitted one's self against all around them. In the old days, there were no digital watches available so individual times were of much less importance, with many local road races taking no times at all, just finishing positions. In the old days, races usually took place from point to point, or were out-and-back dashes with the distance covered, if known at all, only incidental to the race itself.

To give some context, it is a very proud boast of Ballycotton's John Walshe that every single one of their 140-some races since 1977 has published a full result, with every single finisher getting an individual time and position. This was still quite novel up to the 1990s. All their races were also over defined distances, 5 or 10 miles, unusual for races outside of the marathon distance.

With rapid advances in the measurement of time and distance over the last 20 years, these changes had had profound effects on most local road races, in Ireland and elsewhere. Most races are now digitally timed to almost millisecond perfection, with some local races even going as far as including video cameras at the finish to ensure that competitors are fully recorded crossing the line for the proper compilation of results.

What is of even more interest are the even-more-recent advances made in the proper measurement of road race courses, primarily due to the development of the 'Jones

Counter'. The history and evolution of the Jones Counter is outside the scope of this article. Much detail is available on the web.

With these two advances, races and performances can now be compared, so you are not battling against one another any more, you are battling against yourself each and every time you go out and run a 10KM or 10M road race. Distances and times can now be forensically compared. This has been a particular boon to many mid-packers, which most club runners are in one way or another, especially people like myself, a self-confessed numbers' freak.

My particular interest here is in how this valuable technology was used to re-measure our own 10KM course, in light of the fact that we have moved from Carnaun & St. Mary's GAA Grounds back into town to the Presentation Convent facilities & a finishing line at The Arch on Northgate Street.

We, in Athenry AC, are very lucky to have an internationally recognised and certified course measurer only "across the road" in TJ Beatty. He originally measured our course in 2003, aided by Dave Evans of Tuam. Yes, the race in 2002 was run without being Jones Counter'ed and TJ & Dave found that we under-measured it by a total of 135 metres. So do not believe anyone who says that an engineer's wheel is very accurate over long distances. One Point Three Five Percent doesn't sound much but it's 135 metres over 10KM. This is the equivalent of 20 to 30 seconds less on the road. Since then, we have found that other well-known races have had the same problem over the years, under-measuring their 10KM courses via other conventional methods by between 50 and 250 metres. And that's only 10KM!

TJ arrived one Sunday morning in early November to perform the re-measuring, ably aided this time by Colm Mooreshead also of Loughrea AC. The Loughrea delegation was met by myself, Mick Rice and Peter Delmer!

We quickly proceeded out to Park (scene of the Athenry 5KM earlier in 2006) to get a 400 metre straight stretch of road so as to allow TJ calibrate his Jones Counter -

The long tape



TJ Beatty keeping a straight line.

attached to his racing bike - before proceeding to measure the course itself. The Jones Counter itself is very like the little speedometer that was very popular with cyclists back in the early 80s. A steel tape was taken out and 8 lengths of 50 metres using it were taken in a straight line up the side road in Park. Five centimetres was added to the 400 metres at the end as part of the process! The start and finish were marked and TJ proceeded to go up and down the measured 400 metres twice on the bike, taking the counter reading each time. Once this was completed, the air temperature was taken and the calibration calculations were completed.

These calculations were then used to get the numeric values that would be needed to produce the KM markers along the 10KM route, culminating in a value that the counter needed to display to guarantee that the distance covered was \*at least\* 10KM when run.

Peter and Mick had already done preparatory work on where they felt TJ should start measuring from in order to ensure that he would finish as close to The Arch as possible. Optimally, we would have preferred if TJ could have started from under The Arch and measured back to the beginning of the course but this was not practical due to the clock-wise nature of our course: TJ would be going against motor traffic which was considered too dangerous at the hour we were doing this work. So we started where we felt the race should begin and hoped that we would not be too far out when TJ would get to what his Jones Counter indicated was the finishing point.

Mick and Peter decided that the race should begin right outside the front door of ADC House, across the tracks from the Railway Station in Athenry and it was from there exactly that TJ reset his Jones Counter back to 00000 and started pedalling off up the Tuam Road to the water tower. He stopped after each KM and Peter & Colm got out and took their physical bearings and wrote them down for the report that TJ would produce afterwards for full certification. I also took two or three digital photos to back this work up. Onwards to 2KM, 3KM etc. Mick was in the car behind TJ to protect him from onrushing traffic with myself in front to shield him from traffic coming against him. Where possible, TJ cut corners on the road as any

runner would during a race, so as to more accurately measure the 10KM distance.

Once we got into the groove, each KM took about 5 or 6 minutes to be measured, or about as fast as it could be slowly jogged. Due to our past experience measuring courses, we got very apprehensive as TJ came back into town and close to the proposed finish. It was vitally important that TJ got off his bike as close to The Arch as possible. Otherwise all the intermediate activity that had taken place out the country would have to shifted backwards or forwards a number of metres depending upon whether TJ stopped inside or outside the old town wall i.e. The Arch. Paint to mark the KM splits out on the road had been sparingly used just in case we were well out with our initial start point.

To our incredible surprise, and very much to our collective relief and satisfaction, TJ dismounted from his bike under The Arch itself - exactly where we hope to finish the race. Mick and Peter had done an unbelievable job in estimating the new starting point of the race and now TJ had validated their good work independently.

From start to finish, the job took a little under two hours and 10 minutes. As close to perfection as humanly possible! More accurate than any class of GPS system could give you, or any type of pedometer or engineer's wheel or car speedometer. Mick, Peter and myself all have the mental scars from testing these other methods over the years. Not forgetting software applications like Accuroute. 'Jones Counter' is king, long live the king!

So, hopefully, now you will understand why some runners' first question, when they come across a new race in a calendar is: Is the course Jones Counter'ed? And why exactly it is important to some, including myself!

Enjoy the race and may your KM splits always be consistent.

# 20 Questions

from last year's men's winner - Gary Thornton



## **What running shoes do you train in?**

Nike Zoom Elite.

## **How many miles did you run last week?**

60 miles (took a few days off after inter counties).

## **What's your favourite racing distance?**

3000m or 5000m on a good day.

## **Where's your favourite place to train?**

That's a toughie Richmond Park London or Sandymount Beach Dublin.

## **What's your favourite race or event each year?**

Stormont x-country beauty of a course.

## **What annoys you most at races?**

Massive race numbers which cover my whole chest wouldn't be hard.

## **What race, that you haven't yet run, would you most like to take part in?**

London Marathon 2012 I wish!!

## **What was your best-ever running performance?**

Bmc Solihull 2006 - came in 14th ran a massive Personal Best over 5k and it was so smooth what a buzz.

## **What was your worst-ever running performance?**

There have been many as mac could spill a few yarns about over a couple of arthur g. I suppose my run in the university road relays stands out as my biggest howler to date. I returned from working in the states one summer and after not a step of running in 3 months my so called mates in nuig decided to put me on the 3 mile leg the result was a seriously broken man.

## **What's the strangest thing that you've ever seen on a training run?**

A few deer knocking lumps out of each other.

## **Favourite piece of running gear?**

My half tights of course.

## **Who would you most enjoy beating in a sprint for the line?**

Thomas Porter.

## **What was the best bit of training advice you were ever given?**

"You are only as good as your last race" so true.

## **In ten years time will you still be running?**

Hopefully if I can keep the weight off!

## **If for some reason you were told you could never run again, how do you think you'd react?**

Initially I would be gutted but I would find something else to occupy my free time.

## **Have you ever been bitten by a dog while running?**

A few have tried but failed not much meat for supper on GT.

## **Have you ever had to stop for an emergency 'Paula' during a race?**

Negative.

## **Favourite post-race food?**

Chocolate nothing like a quick fix of dairy milk.

## **Most embarrassing ever running-related moment?**

The numerous hits I have taken while not in shape all part of the running game.

## **The greatest Irish Athlete of all time is/was?**

Ian Egan comes to mind but I would have to say Sonia O' Suilleabhain.

# According to our

**8**

Athenry A.C. Members ran the Tuam 8k on January 2nd 2006 to bring in the New year.

**29**

times - the Marathon distance was covered throughout the year by Athenry AC Members.

**9 89**

The number of different races attended by AAC Since January 1st 2006. *The year isn't over yet.*

went to Ballycotton for The Classic Distance of 10 miles.

**16**

of us togged out for the Streets of Galway in August.

**351**

finishers in last year's Fields of Athenry 10k.

**14**

of us fought the elements at the Connemara International Marathon in March.

**200**

meters - the the distance at which Paul Hession is king.

**2<sup>nd</sup>**

Place medals picked up at the Dublin City Marathon for the National team Event.

**100,000**

metres - the distance Mick Rice ran to compete in the Anglo-Celtic Plate.

**1**

extra two mile lap he was forced to run at the end when race organisers miscounted his laps

**30**

the recorded number of members that have taken part in at least 1 race during the year.

Athenry AC have been represented.

**325**

times in 7 different countries in 15 Different counties!

**52**

Saturday morning runs from the church in Athenry in 2006.

**1**

**st**

Place - the finishing position of Paul McNamara at the National 10k Road Race.

**23**

# Never Again Without Training

by Our French Ambassador Sebastien Locteau

## Ironman

the National swimming age group Champs and then went to Lisburn to the National Open Swimming Champs so a total of 20 days out of training (did one run of 35min in Lisburn). I calculated a total of 103 hours in 12 weeks for this Ironman which is incredibly low and included one or two 2 hours run a week and also 5km or 10km, swim 1 to 2 times a week and one ride of 3 or 4 hours, and that was in best case scenario and includes the races. I also experienced problems with my back where every morning my back was telling me if I could train today or not. I know it looks catastrophic, and maybe you understand why I decided to race all those races in a row.

I travelled to the UK last Thursday with the thought of just participating and certainly to stop during the bike course if my back was getting sore. So no pressure in terms of performance but worried about my health and fitness. We went to the registration tent and collected my goody bag. The next day we tried the first cycle lap which was 60 km and came back to the flat that we rent thinking that I won't be able to cycle 2 more laps of the course, it was just so hilly except the downhill at one stage where I was going down at 50 mph with which I was not too impressed on the bike. In the morning we also swam the 2km of the first lap in which I felt really good. The next day we relaxed and slept a lot and prepared our three bags (one for the morning of the race where you put the wetsuit, clothes for after the race, goggles... the second one for the first transition where you put your cycling stuff that you swap with your swimming gear and the same from the cycle to the run.

The Sunday morning we had to be up at 4am to check our equipment and get ready. The start of the swim began at 6am and I swam very well, 3.8 km swim in 1h03min. It was the only thing I knew I would do well. When I started the bike my clock did not work so stopped to fix it and then realised after the first hill that I could not stand up on the bike properly to climb it so stay seated for the full 180km as much as I could, after 20 km only my back got so stiff that I thought I had to stop. I had a huge bar at this stage and it was like a day where I should not have trained (like in Westport!). Anyway I decided to stop after the first lap and tried to think positively etc.... at the



Sebastien looking fresh at the finish

**As you know, I did Kildysart 4miles, Headford 8km, Swinford 4.5 miles, Westport 13 miles and the Streets in 14 days, to see if my body could take it and especially my back. I do not recommend to anybody to do what I did especially if you are injured like me awaiting surgery. However, we all know that sport is a drug and that my mind is trained better than my body.**

After the Westport and Streets of Galway dual race, I did not run or cycle for a week my back and hamstring were stiff so only did 3 swim of an hour. My preparation was very poor I trained only for 12 weeks in which I went 5 days to the European champs in France, then 5 days in Croatia for the Euro U23, then came back for 4 days to

first lap turn my mind got mixed up between feelings and self esteem : "you are a loser, what will people think about you, you are too fat, you are lazy etc...."

You won't believe what kind of stuff went through my head and was feeling without energy a wee bit dizzy with a sore neck at the stage, so decided to finish the 2 laps whatever happens and get my pride back. The next two laps were very hard, especially after the 120km because I never cycled more than this distance once in the last 4 years, so I was not fit for it but decided to give it a go. My legs felt that they were not trained properly but I kept going in the wind and cold with showers...English weather in short. My main memories were when a guy was impressed that I could stay seated in the hills and I just answered that was just because I could not stand up, and when he ask me why I could not tell him my story so just told him I was disabled

I finished my bike after 7h30 with jelly legs and could not bend to put on my running shoes, and the volunteers are not allowed to help, so I lean on the floor on my stomach and bend my knees to put my shoes on my back which looked I am sure really stupid, "the official story will tell that was for a wee bit of craic". I started running (if I can call that running) and ran at between 10 to 12 min a mile. The course was 2 loops of 5 miles and two other loops of 10 miles with between a run trough the town. The first two loops were actually fine my back pain started to go away at mile 4 but could not run faster my legs just could not stride enough, I suppose the bike make then very weak and I was just thinking 9 hours done 5h left for the run and thought that nothing could stop me, that it could not be harder than the bike course....

WRONG the nightmare kept going the first 3 miles is just a long hill out of the road and the return was on a forest track with very sharp downhill and small hills on little rocks and muck. What made it hard is to repeat it. I managed ok and believed that it had to stop at some stage and was happy with myself I was tired but dizziness and sore neck were gone at mile 10 and felt positive and good again, got lots of energy gel and energy drinks and felt warmer running.

At mile ten I went through the town which was fantastic then started my loop 1 of the second course, we went from a woody run to a dual carriage way run, 5 miles up and 5 miles down it looks like when starting running and looking at hills and thousand of people walking forever, I stopped at the refreshment and asked if they were certain we had to do 2 laps, and asked about 5 people to be sure in the first lap. I just could not believe what I saw a long straight and hilly road which seems to never finish, I ran and at mile 15 at the next refreshment I look at the guy with his drink and he said "Any drink?" and I just answer " at this stage alcohol will be welcome!"

I did not see anybody running, people from the second or first lap were just talking how hard the course is and I personally have never seen so many people walking in an Ironman. My mind started to play games again so I fight and thought about my family friends etc.and decided to run that even if I was not fit enough that I will keep running I am not a walker so I stopped looking at the hills and people walking, sometimes run with my eyes closed and kept looked at my feet for the last eleven miles keeping my head down and did not talk to anybody up to the finish line, it seemed to me like running in the desert without knowing where you go because there is nothing to see but sand dunes.

That was not the hardest run I did but the longest eleven miles I did in my head, I honestly hurt myself mentally and I kept telling myself "never again without training" people know I am not a religious person but for the first time ever I prayed to finish this race in good health. I finished my run after 5h08 the slowest run in my running history of a marathon with a total time of 13h 51m in which I am proud of with the little training I did. I admit I lost the plot when I crossed the line, I was like I was on drugs running all over the place waving up to the public, I was so happy and could not believe that I finished in such a respectable time.

At the end of the race I could not walk my hips were locked and my back did not allow me to move my left leg forward for a day and half even with my strong pain killers I had after the race (not before or after!). When I passed the line the commentator that I knew (he is an

official for the ITU and ETU) told the public that was my 14th Ironman finished and that I was from Ireland and coaching there.

This was the hardest Ironman I have done, the hills were not high but always there, in Lanzarote or other races you know where they are and you have breaks, and usually the run is ok. I just personally think that race organisers in different sports want to claim the hardest

race of Ironman, marathon or others...I think it is beginning to be silly that the spirit of the sport should not be to hurt yourself the maximum you can but to perform the best you can.

Performance or pain addicted.

**Anyway "Never again without training."**



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# Hell Ain't a Bad Place To Be

## UK 100k Championship and Anglo-Celtic Plate

Race Report by Mick Rice

Where to start?

Sometimes, even when there's a good story to tell, it's hard to know where to begin.

Deciding to train for and race this event wasn't a decision I took lightly. Previous experience in marathon races and a small number of shorter ultramarathons had shown me that long distances deserve respect and that very long distances have to be treated with great caution. All this of course isn't to say that one shouldn't have a bash I suppose.

The prospect of this race had dominated all of my training and racing over the last four months. I had run more miles each week than ever before and had chosen not to race in events that meant a lot to me personally. This later choice, particularly in the case of the Connemara Marathon, wasn't an entirely comfortable one. In short, I had taken this race very seriously, perhaps even too much so. On the positive side, having been nominated as an Irish representative in the event meant that I would be running in Irish colours for the very first time. For an aging plodder like myself this was an opportunity that I couldn't easily pass up.

I had only a very few yardsticks that I could use to measure my approach. I had run well, by my own standards, in the fifty-four mile long London to Brighton Ultramarathon late in 2005 and I was hoping to transfer some of those positive experiences to my first attempt at 100k. The eight extra miles on this occasion would nevertheless take me into unknown territory. Expert guidance on how to run such long distances is hard to come by, even in this 'information age'. I found I just had to combine my own limited experience with what I could find online and in old books and magazines and then hope for the best. I owe a great debt of thanks to John Walsh in Ballycotton not only for his continual support but also for providing me with back issues of the Road Runners Club magazine, which contained much useful information. I had read somewhere along the line that training for a race like this is like practicing to be hit by a bus. When all was said and done, this wasn't too far off the mark.

And so, after much huffing and puffing, I arrived at Exeter Airport at lunchtime on Saturday the 1st of April. My good friend Selina met me in the arrivals hall and we headed immediately north and towards our hotel outside of

Gloucester. Selina is an experienced ultramarathoner in her own right with one hundred and fifty marathons and 'ultras' to her name. She was to act as my support person for the race on the following day and so I knew I was in good hands. The peace of mind Selina provided just by being there meant a great deal to me. Roughly two hours later we booked into our hotel and immediately started to meet up with other runners. With the race venue only a couple of miles down the road many competitors had chosen the same hotel as their base.

Time passed quickly. I wanted to prepare my drinks and kit for the following day and with that in mind I retired to my room shortly before ten o'clock. I'd gone through the same pre-race ritual many times before and each step was familiar. On the room's spare bed I arranged all my race clothes and packed a bag with drinks, gels, spare shoes, spare clothes and the many other bits n' bobs that just might come in handy. I also set out food for my breakfast the following morning and had one last glance through the race documentation. One final item caught my eye. I needed my passport as proof of identity. As the race was being held on a Royal Air Force base security was going to be tight. Personal details of each runner, race official and supporter had been submitted months in advance for security clearance. Unbelievably I couldn't find my passport. I won't even attempt to describe my growing panic over the next couple of hours as I turned the hotel room upside down in search of the precious document. I couldn't find it. It was gone.

"Cometh the hour, cometh the man". Despite the late hour a friend James Landon managed to fax me a photocopy of my work identity card from home, which I had to hope would suffice. This, given the fact that he had no access to a fax machine, was no mean feat. James, I shall be eternally grateful. All I could do was hope that I would be let onto the base the following day and to try to get some sleep. My head eventually hit the pillow at about half-past midnight. There was nothing more I could do.

My alarm woke me from a fitful sleep at 6:00am. My race gear was distributed in small disorganised piles about the room as a result of my vain search for the passport the previous night. I re-organised my race gear as best I could whilst stuffing food and drink into my reluctant stomach as fast as I could. Slinging a bag over my shoulder I met Selina

in the hotel reception area at 6:30am. This was it. The next half an hour would determine whether I would be allowed compete or not. We loaded up the car and made our way tentatively towards the RAF Base. The Race Director's instructions asked us to obtain passes from a military policeman at the entrance to the base. With great trepidation I proffered my faxed identification to the young man at the gate and with only a slight hesitation we were both given laminated passes and waved through. Phew!

Although there was over an hour to go to the race start, time passed quickly. Runners, officials and military personnel mingled quietly around the gymnasium that served as our race HQ. From the time that we had parked the car and started walking towards that gymnasium it had been clear that there was a very strong wind blowing. The weather was going to have a major impact on the race. The wind was strong enough to blow down some of the race signage and would clearly make life difficult on the exposed parts of the course. Runners who had targeted particular finishing times, including myself, would need to readjust their goals to take the poor conditions into account. Although rain showers were passing over every half an hour or so, they were light and probably wouldn't affect performances. Each runner would need to complete thirty-two laps around the base, one lap of 3.2242 kms followed by thirty-one laps of 3.1218 kms. Time crept forward and at a little past 08:00am runners and officials assembled at the start to get the event underway. In steady rain our adventure eventually began in earnest and forty-one brave souls padded cautiously ahead and towards a distant finishing line. As the lead runners neared the line of support tables on the very first lap one of the chairs was blown completely across the course in front of them. It wasn't a good omen!

Almost immediately we turned around the first corner and into the teeth of the gale. It was only my lack of real experience at running these sorts of distances that initially shielded me from the full implications. The first lap was to be exactly two miles long and all subsequent laps would be 1.94 miles long. I had originally planned to run at about 7:30 minutes per mile pace for as long as possible. Allowing for some gradual slowing down in my pace this would bring me to the finish line just under the eight-hour mark. Before the race I had crunched the various numbers and had worked out what my lap times should be at this

pace, but with all the confusion over the missing passport I had left my notes behind at the hotel. I had no option but to run by feel but I knew in my heart that I should try to err on the side of caution.

The early laps around the course were a little unreal. Everyone seemed full of energy and little conversations between small groups of runners bubbled along cheerfully. Each lap contained two long straight stretches that faced directly into the wind and some others where the wind attacked from the side. Perversely it seemed that the sections where the wind was helping were much shorter, but I suppose this can't be true. As has been the case before I preferred to run on my own and soon found myself running in between the small bunches of athletes that were becoming distributed around the course. When I passed, or was passed myself, I tried to settle into my rhythm again on my own. My strategy was to creep slowly through the laps, to get by with as little drama or upset as was humanly possible, and for the moment at least I was able to manage just that.

This 'phony war' lasted for quite a while. After eight laps and with a little over fifteen miles done, I knew I had completed a quarter of the total distance but guessed that I wasn't nearly as fresh as I should be with so much ground still to cover. My lap times indicated to me that I was probably a little ahead of the plan I had left behind in the hotel. This didn't worry me at the time but in retrospect the alarm bells should have been deafening. I plodded on oblivious to the fast approaching danger. I could also feel that my right calf was tightening at the site of an old injury. I'd sought treatment for this problem only ten days before the race and hadn't had any trouble with it since then. Some laps I would feel the calf tighten to the point where I was almost limping and on others it would dissolve to a sensation of slight discomfort. I fantasised that I would run it off, that the problem would resolve itself. Oh, the innocence. I passed the 25 kms point with 1:57:37 on the clock. This was around 7:50:00 pace for the full distance.

For the second 25 Kms I raced a quiet race. The tightness in my calf didn't deteriorate noticeably, my pace didn't reduce and so my lap times remained remarkably constant. The stewards all around the course were always cheerful and encouraging. As I was the only runner in an Irish singlet I was greeted with calls of "Come on Irish" and "Looking

Fresh Ireland!" a couple of times on almost every lap. I must have stood out from the crowd a bit in my green shorts, Irish singlet, Athenry woolly hat and 'Bono' shades. Showers of rain came and went, the wind continued to blow strongly and the miles ticked by slowly but surely. With 3:54:08 on the clock I passed the 50 kms mark and very shortly afterwards passed by the aid stations where the faithful Selina stood, as usual, waiting with all sorts of necessary goodies. As I passed her, and gratefully accepted a bottle of watered sports drink, I smiled and said "Halfway!" I surprised myself at how cheerful the word sounded coming out of my mouth. Did I not realise that there was still a long way to go?

I had thought earlier that passing through the half-way mark would boost my spirits but instead I became a little depressed at the thought of another four hours or more on the road. I really couldn't afford to think about the number of laps remaining because when I dwell, even momentarily, on thoughts like "thirty miles to go" my confidence sank like a stone. All the superficial toughness had been knocked off of me by this stage and I didn't feel much like the brave adventurer anymore. I wasn't quite a broken man but all previously held romantic notions about "testing oneself" and "pushing the limits of the possible" had gone the same way as my passport. Coming around the last turn into the sheltered straight that contained the start/finish area my right calf suddenly screamed with pain. I was absolutely sure, there and then, that my race was run. I was finished as far as I could see. I dropped from my previously reasonable pace to a dead stop and clutched at my leg. After a few seconds I started to limp down the long straight towards the officials and supporters based at the other end.

To say I was disappointed would of course be an understatement. I couldn't see a way past this. At the support tables I told Selina that the calf muscle was either torn or in some sort of a spasm. I'd try to walk it off for a lap but felt reasonably sure that I was finished for the day. With head low, wanting very much to be invisible, I shuffled forwards again and tried to take long strides that might stretch the muscle out and help to release any type of cramp or muscle spasm. A minute later I tried a short jog and kept it going for thirty or forty painful paces. I walked again and then repeated the jogging experiment. To my surprise although the pain remained sharp I could maintain a slow jog. For the remainder of that lap I continued to jog

slowly and then very, very gradually the muscle began to loosen. From this point in the race onwards there was only one game in town and that was trying to get to the finish line. All prior considerations about finishing times were completely abandoned, as perhaps they should have been earlier given the unfavourable conditions. I decided that I'd race from lap to lap and get as far as I could. Fatigue had also become a big factor. I was dog tired but determined.

After what seemed like an eternity I passed the 75 Kms point with 6:01:47 on the clock. I was slowing now but, more importantly, I was still in the game. It was clear from looking around the course that many of the other runners were also in deep trouble. Aside from the race leaders the majority of the field was walking and many had retired. Along this stretch I passed two runners who were sobbing as they ran or walked and others who weaved unsteadily along the road making painfully slow forward progress. In fairness, it also has to be said, that some other runners remained doggedly cheerful and continued to encourage others even as they were passed again and again.

I seemed to go into some sort of a self-protective trance towards the end of the race. My memories of the remaining miles are much less distinct than those of the early laps. Every once in a while tiredness and pain would reduce me to a walk for a short stretch and then I'd get going again. Sometimes I'd manage two or three laps without walking at all and then I'd have to walk twice in a few minutes. Each time I'd select an object that was thirty or forty yards ahead and then allow myself to walk that far, but no further, and then I'd jog on again. This wasn't running as I've always known it, it was more like forward motion that didn't technically qualify as walking. I was aware that my right calf was still very sore after the muscle spasm but now that everything else was sore it didn't seem to be nearly as important as it had before.

With only a few laps remaining I asked Selina to dig out my MP3 player. I needed to distract myself with something in order to get through the final stages in one psychological piece. My player had been set to play tunes in alphabetical order and it started up from where it last left off. We were on the letter 'H'. I was only mildly 'freaked' when the first song that played was the AC/DC classic 'Hell Ain't A Bad Place To Be'. When "Hit The Road Jack" by Ray Charles

followed this and then "Hold On" from Carlos Santana I started to worry. Was I cracking up? All the music seemed to contain some sort of hidden message. Was I having weird aural hallucinations? Was the MP3 player even turned on? When the next two tunes turned out to be "I Am A man of Constant Sorrow" by The Soggy Bottom Boys and "I Can't Stand It" from Eric Clapton, I turned the player off and handed it back on the next lap. Seriously.

Fate had stored up one last surprise for me on that day. Each time we passed through the start/finish area an official emerged from a small tent and noted our lap times. With what I was certain were four laps remaining, an official called to me "...five laps to go!" I was gobsmacked! I called back to him that I was sure I had only four left but he didn't immediately respond. As I had recorded all of my splits on my watch I felt I was reasonably sure of my ground. I shuffled on. I hoped against hope that he would check his figures and call the lap count correctly the next time around. As I passed him the next time he confidently called "...four laps to go!" I groaned and again turned, mid shuffle, and asked him to check. Again he didn't answer, as far as I could see, but I managed to ask Selina to raise the issue with race officials whilst I was plodding painfully around the course one more time. Selina pleaded my case but she was absolutely assured that the official count was correct.

At this point I had no option but to go with what I was being told by the timekeepers. Everything I knew pointed to the fact that an innocent error had been made but I couldn't take the risk being disqualified. I knew of course that I could be mistaken myself and above all else I wanted my name to appear in the results without the dreaded letters DQ or DNF beside it. I tried to adjust my mindset to take into account the 'extra' lap and pushed on. From that point on I didn't raise any further questions as I passed by the timekeepers. I knew in my heart that this could only be resolved after the running had finished and I had absolutely no energy to spare on an argument with anyone. When I passed through the finish area for what I believed was my thirty-second time, I joked with Selina that I was finished but would be doing a lap of honour. I'm not sure she immediately appreciated the humour but given the fact that she had spent the previous nine hours standing in the cold and rain this was completely understandable. I put my head down and 'ran' the last lap at 8:30 pace, which was the fastest that I'd managed in the previous two hours.

My odyssey finished with 8:35:25 on the clock. Having initially targeted a time under 8:00:00 I was disappointed on one level but very, very happy to be able to finally stop. Tears were not far away. Almost immediately I wanted to check back on my splits to find out whether I had miscounted the laps. Selina and I went through the data that was stored on my watch and it was clear straight away that I had indeed run an extra lap. We approached the race referee and she requested that we write down the splits as my watch had recorded them. As we went through this process the referee observed closely as I recalled the data and Selina carefully wrote the details down. We also provided the cumulative times I had recorded for 25 Kms, 50 Kms, 75 Kms and the finish. The referee, Dr Hilary Walker, viewed our figures with an apparently open mind and promised us that she would investigate the issue with the official timekeepers. Only a short time later I was delighted to hear unofficially that my case had been accepted and that my finish time would be adjusted to 8:18:51.

And so it was over. All the planning, scheming, dreaming and plotting was finished. I had placed sixth in the men's race and seventh overall. I was more than happy with this. In terms of running ultramarathons I feel as if I learnt a lot from the experience. None of the research I had been able to do beforehand had really prepared me mentally for how tough the later stages of the race would be. In terms of physical training there's only so much you can do to prepare for a race of this sort. For the average runner there are only so many miles you can run each week and I suspect that even the best prepared and most talented runners will suffer towards the end of a race over 100k. These races are hugely self-indulgent and most people who participate in them will depend to some degree or other on the support of friends and family just to make sure they arrive at the start line with a chance of doing themselves justice. I was tremendously lucky to have generous support and encouragement not only from my wife Margaret and extended family but also from my running club Athenry AC. It makes so much difference to feel that people actually care if you make it to the finish line or not. I can't thank people enough for being so kind.

Onwards and upwards.



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