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10km Road Race 2016



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Chairperson's Words



It is once again my pleasure as chairman of Athenry Athletic Club to welcome you to the 15th running of the Fields of Athenry 10K road race. It is a huge tribute to our small army of volunteers, who turn up unflinchingly year after year, that the race is alive and prospering – thank you all.

But the most important person is you, the participant. Without you, there would be no race and we are very grateful for you taking the time and effort to support us. If you have been here before, you know what to expect and we hope it lives up to your previous experience. If it's your first time then you are doubly welcome and we hope to make it as good a race as possible for you.

We do try to build on the race experience every year and if you think there is any area that could be made better, we would very much appreciate you taking the time to let us know.

Tony Killarney.

Race Director's Note



Dear competitor,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 15th Fields of Athenry 10K road race.

We are delighted this year to have Hygeia as our title sponsor. Hygeia is a local Galway firm serving the agricultural sector and the gardeners of Ireland for over 75 years.

Yet again this year we have a bumper entry, with every county represented, and runners from overseas as well. As I look down the list of entries I see some old familiar names: people who come back year after year to run this race. We are truly grateful to each and every one of you for choosing The Fields, especially in the immediate aftermath of Christmas.

This year's preparations for the race started in August and the activities have increased week by week to fever pitch in the last month. Over this time, the team have worked tirelessly, with no job too big or too small. No matter what I asked to be done, the answer was always the same: will do, no complaints and I really am thankful to all for their efforts. It made my job easy.

I would like to thank all our sponsors (see booklet and website) for their kind and generous support, and ask you to support them whenever possible.

This year we are supporting Athenry Cancer Care. They are a great organisation who support people with cancer through their illness.

Whatever your reason for running our race, whether it's your first 10K or your one hundredth, whether you're here to win or just out for a walk around the world-famous low-lying fields of Athenry, I hope you enjoy your race and look forward to seeing you again next year.

Until then, on behalf of all the team I wish you a very happy and prosperous 2017.

Jim Leahy.

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Layout: JO'C - Proof: PN - Editor: JAL - V12

2016 Galway 5K Series Report

(www.5km.ie)

James Landon



The Galway 5K Series celebrated 10 years in existence with another excellent set of races this year. All existing records were broken again, in the 11th iteration of the series. It welcomed aboard a new co-ordinator, Gerry Carty (GCH). He came with bags of experience, being The Streets 8KM race director on multiple occasions in the very recent past. A title sponsor was secured for the event for the first time in BRADLEY RENAULT. The HSE also provided some much-appreciated sponsorship to this great event.

The well-worn on-line entry process didn't stretch ActiveGlobal.com as much as previously on Friday, 11 March at 8PM. Seven hundred people entered via this mechanism. Cost of entry was unchanged at €30. If you hadn't registered by 8:20PM, you were out of luck. A limited number of others were able to enter off-line through their affiliated club, to bring the numbers registered in the series to over 940 – a 14-fold increase on the number of people who finished the first ever 5KM leg back in May 2006.

There was substantial change in the series this year with the sequencing of the legs, with GCH first up, reverting back to Ballybrit on a crisp April evening. Niamh Hennelly was race director. Number pick-up was under the new stand. The course was slightly altered on the other year it was held here, and but for a few spits of rain after 8PM, the leg went off without any hitches. Red Tag Timing provided time services, as John Cunniffe & Co have every year since 2010, when the event became too large to be safely hand-timed. www.redtagtiming.com saw a lot of activity each Tuesday evening of the series!

Craughwell was next up and a record number of finishers was recorded (724 and up two from the previous record 722 who finished the week before in Ballybrit) on a very fast course [for me anyhow!], from

the school to the old bridge. Keith and crew did the needful, as they always do. The less said about Elvis the better.

Loughrea attracted a smaller crowd, partly because the weather in the hour before 8PM had broken! The course was slightly changed, with the start further back closer to the town centre, with the finish halfway up the traditional fast finishing straight. The Martin Smyth-inspired logistics worked out fine as it kept the crowd off the intersection at the local Gaelscoil.

Tuam was roughly over the same course but without the hard 90 degree left turn in the housing estate close to the finish line. This caused some confusion last year as some kept going instead of taking the left turn. The new highway caused some changes in the course but none of them unduly affected the runners, at 500M and again at 2.5KM. There were serious traffic issues getting into the town and many runners – upwards of 100 – missed the race as a result. One must leave lots of time to make Tuam on 5KM evening.

Claregalway was exactly the same as other years, with the start at the turn inside Corporate Park and the finish at its entrance. No traffic jams that evening. There were substantial road works at the Community Centre, for the new school, and it made the road there a bit rougher than usual, but not unduly so. Nothing has changed on Rock Road though.

The first shall be last, and it was the case with Athenry. The race HQ was the Raheen Woods Hotel, both before and after the leg. The start of the race was away over on the Tuam Road near the water tower, which was a decent warm-up on a lovely late May evening. The finish was at the Athenry Primary Care Centre, much closer to the hotel than the start. It was a warm evening, which suited some but not others!

The 2016 technical top was black in colour and 708 were eligible to receive one by the Athenry leg. Yoda put it, in only the way he/she/it could, "Do or do not. There is not try." John O'Connor (Flickr: 77edenhill) cannot be forgotten: he was at all six legs again this year and recorded everyone equally for posterity.

Regina Casey won four of the six legs, with Grainne Ní Uallacháin (Claregalway) and Deirdre Brophy (Ballybrit) sharing one leg win each. Gary Higgins (Tuam & Claregalway) won two legs, while Matt Bidwell (Athenry), Owen Byrne (Loughrea)



Galway City 26th April Craughwell 3rd May Loughrea 10th May
Tuam 17th May Claregalway 24th May Athenry 31st May

"Do or do not. There is no try."
Yoda

and John Greaney (Craughwell) and Philip Niland (Ballybrit) all won one leg!

The excess of €14,330 from the series was given to the Galway AAI county board for the continued advancement of both adult and juvenile athletics in the county. This is the 8th year that an excess has been generated and on all occasions it has been given to the local county board, for which they are deeply grateful. Martin Smyth, 5K Series treasurer, presented the cheque to the county board at its Annual General Meeting in November.

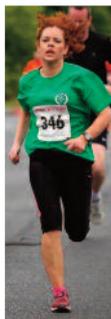
The two 5K series stalwarts remain standing after the 2016 series: Gary Doherty (Athenry AC) and Tony O'Callaghan (Craughwell AC). Each has successfully completed all 63 legs without fail (2006: 4; 2007: 5; 2008-2016: 6 each). There are a number of other people who have each run at least 60 legs each: Adrian Fitzmaurice, Jim Maher, James Landon and Tony Nevin.

Mick Rice and Alan Burke were both presented with specially-commissioned sterling silver medals by Galway AAI County Board for their 10 years working on the series. The presentation was made in Athenry by Brian Bruton in his capacity as chairperson after the last leg.

Race	No.	Director	Date
Ballybrit (GCH)	732	Niamh Hennelly	26 April
Craughwell	734	Keith Devane	3 May
Loughrea	662	Martin Smyth	10 May
Tuam	586	The Monaghans	17 May
Claregalway	637	Andrew Talbot	24 May
Athenry	658	Valerie Glavin	31 May

Races Run per Person	No.	Gender	No.
Six	240	Male	509
Five	261	Female	482
Four	207		
Three	91		

Club	No.
Athenry AC	120
GCH	85
Craughwell AC	57
Tuam AC	53
Loughrea AC	43
HPE Galway	26
Maree AC	25
Corofin AC	23
Castlegar AC	19
South Galway AC	17
CRH	13
Corrib AC	11
East Galway AC	11
Caltra AC	1



2015 Galway Athletic Awards



The idea of an annual awards night came up at a County Board meeting three years ago. It was put forward as a way of recognising athletes who had excelled in their particular grade or category over the previous year. It was also mooted as a way of recognising lifetime achievement, as well as outstanding contribution to athletics in the county, and further afield.

Nominations would come from the clubs themselves. The winners would be selected by a committee who themselves make up Galway's many athletic clubs, based on the quality of the citations received but also the people themselves.

The County Board would sponsor the event given that this organisation was now in receipt of substantial funds arising out of the 5KM Road Race Series, which has been a resounding success since it started 10 years ago. Many thanks go to Mick Rice for the original idea of the 5KM Series and we all wish him a happy retirement from his series co-ordination role and wish the new co-ordinator, Gerry Carty, all the best.

These monies have allowed the County Board initiate improvements in many different areas and to strengthen the impact that the Board and its constituent clubs have on both juvenile and adult athletics and road running locally, so much so that we are now seen as a leading light in many different athletics initiatives nationally.

The first year of the awards was 2013 and they were a resounding success with all winners attending to receive their specially-commissioned crystal awards by Celtic Crystal of Moycullen. The event also received much positive coverage in the local media. Last year was a huge success too, both award nights being in Tuam's Ard Rí Hotel. This year we've moved onto Loughrea, with the Meadow Court being the venue for the third iterations of these awards.

We hope that all the nominees and winners, with their families and friends, have an enjoyable evening and appreciate the effort that has gone into organising the event, with special thanks to Andrea Sellars (local organiser & Loughrea AC), Brian Bruton (County Board chairperson & GCH), Iain Shaw (County Board secretary & Atherry AC) and James Lundon (County Board treasurer & Atherry AC).

Special thanks to the AAI's Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee, Peter Hanlon, for being the guest of honour this evening. He has been a good friend of Galway in many ways over the years and is very welcome here tonight. We also extend our very best wishes to Roger Rushe (2014 Hall of Fame recipient) and wish him a speedy recovery from his recent illness. Kudos to Mary Porter for her comparing of the awards over its three years' duration. Final, thanks to our official photographer

this evening, John O'Connor (Flickr: 77edenhill), a very fine runner in his time too.



2015 Winners

Female 12-15 years old – **Emma Moore (GCH)**

Male 12-15 years old – **Brandon Lee (Atherry AC)**

Female 16-19 years old – **Sinead Treacy (Craughwell AC)**

Male 16-19 years old – **Conor Duggan (Craughwell AC)**

Female Senior – **Jane-Ann Meehan (Atherry AC)**

Male Senior – **Sean Breathnach (GCH)**

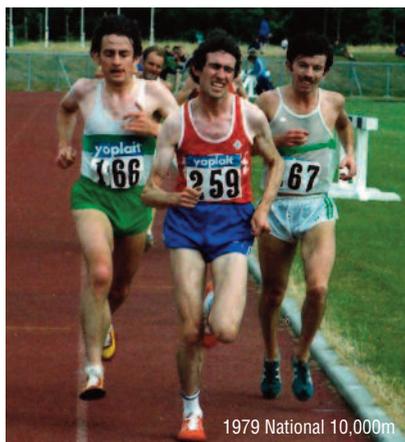
Female Master – **Mary Barrett (Loughrea AC)**

Male Master – **Martin Kearney (GCH)**

Team – **Craughwell AC National League Indoor (Aisling Keady, Caitriona Farrell, Ciara Greene, Michelle Duggan, Rachel Finnegan, Sarah Finnegan, Sinead Gaffney, Sinead Treacy and Tara McNally)**

Outstanding Contribution – **Dermot McNamara (Atherry AC)**

Hall of Fame – **Joe Scanlan (GCH)**



1979 National 10,000m



Conor, Dermot, Aileen and Paul

Dermot McNamara – Outstanding Contribution

Dermot McNamara has dedicated almost half of his life to the coaching of juvenile athletics in Athenry. As head coach of Athenry AC he has had a hand in pretty much all the club's successes in juvenile athletics since the establishment of the club's current incarnation in 1989. Prior to this Dermot was instrumental in the successes of Athenry athletes in the community games. The roll call of successful athletes that Dermot has had a hand in developing over the years is impressive: Paul McNamara, Margaret Page, Nicola Nally, Claire Morrissey, Paul Hession, Elaine Kelly, Claire McNamara, Marie Tuohy, Breda O'Donnell, Martina Finnerty, Martina Coffey, Jarlath Fahy, Sharon Fahy, Martina McCarthy, and Conor McNamara. Add to this his more

recent successes: Evan Quirke, Brandon Lee, Sarah Gilhooley, Shannen Lee, Sinead Tuohy, Calum Healy and a bunch of younger athletes currently coming through the ranks under his tutelage. These athletes have had successes at all levels, at all corners of the globe and in a wide range of athletic disciplines, but ask any of them who has made probably the biggest influence on their athletic careers and without fail they will say 'Dermot'.

Now into his 72nd year Dermot can still be found coaching at least five days a week, and he does it with the passion he did 30 years ago. Dermot still maintains a very hands-on approach to preparing his coaching sessions, whether it be marking a

course on a rainy windswept pitch in Raheen for his cross country athletes, or dragging out the high jump mats on a Thursday evening in the school gym or the thankless task of digging the long jump pit.

However, Dermot is more than just a coach to his own club, but is a total servant to athletics in general. He will often be found at most events, local or national, carrying out some role, whether it be officiating, recording results or handing out medals. He has served on the boards of County and Regional Athletics and also the community games. Dermot's passion for the sport runs deep and he has an encyclopaedic knowledge of athletes past and present.

Fit4Life, A Journey of Self Discovery

Frances Leahy

Running is a journey of self discovery, it is a sport you can do anywhere at any time, but you might need some advice and encouragement to help you on your way and to help achieve your goals. That is where a Fit4Life programme comes in! It is a programme that operates within the existing athletic clubs in villages, towns, cities across Ireland; and it is open to people of all ages, fitness levels and abilities.

The Fit4Life programme strongly

supports the idea of the recreational runner where people can enjoy the benefits of running in a social, safe, and organised environment and also receive tips and advice on training etc.

Athenry Athletic Club has its own Fit4Life programme. We meet on Saturday mornings at 9AM, and Wednesday evening at 7PM. We have dedicated teams of Fit4Life leaders to take people through their paces, from 0 to 5k and beyond. We have programmes to suit all types of

distances up to and including marathon distance (42.2k).

To finish with a quote from an American running guru (George Sheehan) who wrote, "A place for self discovery – play elevated to an intimate encounter with the self, and as such occupying unchallenged high ground in our journey through life. We race to learn our innermost self. In the race we get down to the bedrock, we find courage and strength we never knew we possessed."

2016 AAC @ DCM

Anne Lyng



Dublin City Marathon traditionally on the October Bank Holiday Monday was changed this year to a Sunday, resulting in a 25% increase in entries. In its 37th year, approximately 19,500 athletes, including 5,700 international participants, gathered at Fitzwilliam Square to take on the 26.2 mile loop around Dublin City.

This race is the fourth largest event of its kind in Europe and attracts elite athletes from around the

world. Forty athletes from Athlery AC completed the distance. A handful of impressive PBs were recorded by David O'Sullivan, Kieran Staunton, Orla Stevens, Janet Clancy and Mairead Blake.

For some this was their first marathon; for others (Peadar Nugent) their 37th Dublin City Marathon crossing the line in 5:28:02. Peadar's PB for this race is 2:58:50, which he achieved in 1992.

The following took part in this year's race from Athlery AC:

David O'Sullivan 3:27:46

Jim Leahy 3:10:28

Ray Treacy 3:38:31

David Noone 3:26:26

Kieran Staunton 3:04:11

Patrick Forde 3:30:28

Michael Duane 3:10:49

Frank Burke 3:16:02

Colin Duane 3:24:20

Sean Flaherty 3:42:41

Brendan Galvin 3:06:13

Angela McManamon 3:26:19

Janet Clancy 3:41:14

Aoife Callan 3:43:58

Mark Mitchell 3:51:20

Catherine Burke 3:50:08

Marguerite Wilkinson 4:00:48

Orla Stevens 3:45:56

Martin O'Hara 3:47:49

Maeve Noone 3:47:49

Basil King 3:44:19

Mairead Blake 3:47:50

Ray O'Connor 4:20:01

Assumpta King 4:32:35

Martin Hynes 4:29:02

John Killion 4:23:29

Kevin Devane 4:27:01

Martin Keane 4:25:28

Anne Marie Walsh 4:18:01

Peter Lowney 5:04:26

Bernie Rogers 5:41:16

Maureen Ryan 5:31:49

Michael Glynn 5:28:07

Peadar Nugent 5:28:06

Máire Treasa Beatty 5:28:06

Liam Mycroft 4:53:37

Majella Cummins 4:47:49

Kenneth O'Hara 3:48:01

Sinead Martin 3:44:56

Kieran Guiry 3:48:01



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No Direction Home Mick Rice

Every runner knows that it could happen to them, but in their heart of hearts believe that it probably won't. We live like we'll never die and run like we'll never pull a calf again.

Whilst knowing that the metaphorical 'rug' could be pulled from beneath us at any moment, prior experience makes it seem unlikely. The problem with long-shots however is that occasionally, infuriatingly, just once in a blue moon(ly) they romp home first-past-the-post.

Bob Dylan asked us how it felt. How did it feel to be without a home; like a complete unknown, a non-rolling stone! This year, without ever wanting to, I found out.

In the blink of an eye, I tumbled down the stairs at home and broke my left ankle. Only twelve months later am I beginning to believe that there might be a way back to running. After almost a year in the running wilderness it appears that I might be able to find a way home. Time will tell.

What does it feel like when you've been escorted from the 'building' and the rest of the running world moves on? Whether we've been hobbled by injury or unexpectedly excluded from the sport we love by some other unforeseen circumstance, it's

impossible to know how we'll react to the jolt until it arrives. I now have an idea, at least some idea.

Before another word is written I can assure you that I'm fully aware that the only thing more boring than photographs of other people's children is news of other runners' injuries. That being said, perhaps there are some scraps of news from the dark side that might help if you ever happen to find yourself on the wrong side of the tracks. Hopefully not, but stuff happens.

It will come as a shock to many runners in such a situation and as heresy to others, but it's possible to exercise without running. Granted gym-work and cycling won't float everyone's boat, but they beat chomping on family-sized bars of lurid self-pity every time. Eventually I learned to get off the couch and do something – anything. This was my first smart move.

Injured runners inhabit the land that time has forgotten. Deal with it. Having measured my life in terms of weekly volume, target races and tempo intervals I found myself drifting from one quack to another in hope of redemption. Former comrades remain encased within the Matrix blissfully



unaware that, for the unfortunate, time has little meaning and is measured only in MRI scans. The past is not only a different country, but a different time-zone as well.

I have learned that there are only so many times that running-friends can inquire after a comrade's health or well-being before it starts to get a bit weird. It takes time for the limping former runner to accept the truth, which is that their situation is of marginal interest to others. This is just the way things are.

Accept any kindness that does come your way and, as life inevitably moves on, move with it. Having said all that, things change; not always for the better; but they do change. There are no guarantees, but some of even the darkest injury scenarios will have happy endings.

2016 Road Races in Galway

James Lunden



Permitted events in Galway had another busy year with 56 AA1 permits being granted (70 in 2013, 64 in 2014, 60 in 2015).

We are very much in a downturn after some very busy years. Sixteen races of one type or another were not permitted this year. There was a wide variety of reasons for this, mostly because these races did not go ahead at all. The biggest casualty was probably the Turkey Trot in Carnmore, being symptomatic of the downturn in many ways. Tonabrucky, Castleblakeney and Beagh are other well known races not to run this year, all being in existence for upwards of 6 years. Some will be back; some will not. There were a small number of new events to offset these losses, but only somewhat.

The pillar events continue to do well: The Streets, The 5K Series, The Fields, and Galway Bay with The Connemaraathon, Tuam and Headford holding steady. Most others are surviving but there is a decreased appetite on behalf of both runners and organisers across the county.

Fourteen different Galway clubs (Athenry, Craughwell, Loughrea, South Galway, CRH, Tuam, Caltra, Corrib, East Galway, GCH, Castlegar, Club Chonamara, Corofin, Maree) sponsored at least one road race permit during 2016.

6th Galway (Resolution Run) 5K, 1 January
 12th Tuam 8K, 17 January (Club)
 3rd Ballinderreen 10K, 24 January (Club)
 4th Coldwood 5K, 31 January
 9th Maree 8K, 7 February (Club)
 5th Gort (Gorgeous) 4M, 14 February (Club)
 8th Kilconieron 5M, 21 February
 2nd Clonbur 10K, 28 February
 6th Kinvara (Rock n Road) 10K & Half, 5 March
 4th Abbey 10K, 13 March
 7th Craughwell 10M, 20 March (Club)
 6th Colemanstown 10K, 26 March
 2nd Loughrea 5K, 28 March (Club)
 5th New Inn 5K, 3 April
 15th Connemaraathon Half & Full, 10 April
 13th Connemaraathon Ultra, 10 April
 3rd Claregalway 5K, 12 April
 5th Labane 10K, 17 April
 11th 5K Series #1 @ Ballybrit, 26 April
 11th 5K Series #2 @ Craughwell, 3 May
 11th 5K Series #3 @ Loughrea, 10 May
 11th 5K Series #4 @ Tuam, 17 May
 6th Oughterard (Mayfly) 10K, 22 May (Club)
 11th 5K Series #5 @ Claregalway, 24 May

11th 5K Series #6 @ Athenry, 31 May
 7th Portumna (Forest) Half, Full & 50K, 11 June
 2nd Bullaun 8K, 18 June
 10th Annaghdown 10K, 19 June
 1st Loughrea (St Brendan's NS) 5K, 23 June
 4th Monivea Half, 25 June (Club)
 12th Headford 8K, 2 July
 1st Caltra Sports Day, 3 July (Club)
 8th Connemara 100M, 6 August
 31st Streets 8K, 6 August (Club)
 1st Caltra 5KM, 12 August (Club)
 31st Claregalway 10K, 22 August (Club)
 1st Craughwell Full, 27 August
 1st Lust for Life 5K, 3 September
 1st Clarinbridge 10KM, Half & Full, 10 September
 2nd Barnaderg 10K, 10 September
 8th Clifden (Lifeboats) 10K, 11 September
 1st Castlegar XC, 24 September
 18th Loughrea 10K, 25 September (Club)
 14th Galway Bay 10K & Half, 1 October
 2nd Galway Bay Full, 1 October
 6th Conamara 10K, 8 October
 6th Moylough 10K, 16 October
 7th Corofin (Winning Ways) 8K, 6 November (Club)
 7th Athenry AC F4L 5K, 12 November (Club)
 3rd Killanin 5K, 19 November (Club)
 4th Ballinderreen 10K, 27 November (Club)
 15th Fields 10K, 26 December (Club)

The following is a list of races that are likely to go ahead between January-June 2017:

1 January, Galway (Resolution Run) 5K	17 April, Loughrea 5KM
14 January, Athenry 1M	22 April, Labane 10KM
15 January, Tuam 8KM	23 April, Connemaraathon
29 January, Coldwood 5KM	25 April, 5KM Series #1 5KM
5 February, Maree 8KM	2 May, 5KM Series #2 5KM
12 February, Gort 4M	6 May, Forest Marathon Day 1
26 February, Kilconieron 5M	9 May, 5KM Series #3 5KM
4 March, Kinvara 10KM, Half	16 May, 5KM Series #4 5KM
12 March, Abbey 10KM	21 May, Oughterard 10KM
19 March, Craughwell 10M	23 May, 5KM Series #5 5KM
26 March, Ballinderry 5KM	30 May, 5KM Series #6 5KM
2 April, New Inn 5KM	10 June, Forest Marathon Day 2
4 April, Claregalway 5KM	11 June, Clifden 10KM
8 April, Ahascragh 5KM	17 June, Bullaun 8KM
15 April, Colemanstown 10KM	18 June, Annaghdown 10KM
	24 June, Monivea 5KM, Half

Running from the flu

David Meehan

It is that time of year again and although Christmas is a great time for getting together with friends and family, it also provides ample opportunity for the flu virus to cause havoc with your training routine!

The influenza (flu) virus can cause a variety of symptoms including fever, sore throat, muscles aches and pains, dry cough, sneezing, headache and nausea. These symptoms will be much more severe than a routine flu-like viral illness and even if you are young and fit it can make you ill enough to need to go to bed.

Obviously exercise is good for you and it is recognised that those who exercise regularly 30-90 minutes/day will get a significantly reduced number of infections each year. However those that are planning a winter training programme need to be aware that longer runs/activities lasting more than 90 minutes can actually make you more susceptible to these infections.

We thought we'd put down on paper some very basic tips for avoiding the flu and also what to do if you're unlucky enough to catch it.

If you get it:

1. Rest and wait for the fever to settle. If you try and train during this time you will use up vital energy reserves and ultimately pay the price with a delayed recovery.
2. Take regular Paracetamol or Neurofen to control the fever and improve symptoms.
3. Use a saline nasal spray if you have nasal congestion.
4. Stay well hydrated. The high temperature and your body's overall response to the infection will use up a lot of fluids.
5. Get good rest and sleep. Growth hormones that boost immunity are released during sleep and virus attacking cells are produced in their highest levels after 8 hrs sleep.
6. Ask your pharmacist/GP for more advice on over-the-counter medicines.
7. As a general rule take 2-3 recovery days for each day you were sick. So, if you were out for four days give yourself 8-12 days to work your way back to regular training. This isn't to say that you can't train on these days but



- gradually build things up and keep the sessions easy.
8. Don't spread it! Discourage visitors and stay off work until you're recovered.

How to avoid it:

1. Stay hydrated.
2. Get good sleep – we should be aiming for 7-8 hours per night especially after your harder sessions/long runs as your immune system can be slightly weaker at these times.
3. When training dress appropriately – have proper waterproof gear and layer up if required.
4. Once you've finished your session take a hot shower as soon as possible and get warm.
5. Rehydrate.
6. Eat well. Don't miss meals and make sure you have taken on a good load of carbohydrate before during and after your session.



2016 Ballycotton Road Trip

James London



Martin Keane and I both entered, as required, in December by post. I do recall having to change the date on my entry form as it may not have been posted strictly before the deadline. I hope John Walshe does not get to read this! Martin got a free entry for being of a certain age.

Training started in earnest on 1 January, with a wretched run in the Resolution Run around Galway City. I knew this build-up would not be pretty, to get to the Ballycotton start line; it wasn't. Clarinbridge, Tuam, Coldwood, Kilconieron and Ballindine were my warm-up races. None of them were anything to write home about, with a few PWs along the way – Personal Worst. I was struggling, really struggling to get any bit of form going.

I got sorta injured at the very end of 2014, probably a result of running a record 44 races that year, winning Club Member of the year in the process though. I limped through all of 2015, with a lot of reffing also thrown in for good measure. Did not get down to Ballycotton, as a result. I also made sure not to take any of my various physios' advice: stretching and more of it. Without flexibility, running becomes very difficult, possibly terminal. I know what I needed to do; doing it is an altogether different thing. Habits of a lifetime are very hard to break. I love running but I hate the necessary maintenance it requires.

Anyhow, I stuffed 198 miles into my legs between 1 January and 6 March, but there was no bounce at all. Martin Keane was doing his own work, all behind closed doors, as is always the case with this man. He popped up for a few races, but otherwise kept his cards very close to his chest. He will always be ready, for what is a race he always takes quite seriously.

I drove. It is a very easy journey on a non-work day in early Spring. We knew there was serious roadworks in Buttevant so decided to go by Cahir, whether right or wrong. This meant going back through the part of the world I'm from originally, East Limerick. It also happened to have the cheapest petrol in the country at the time, and we got some in a place called Monard, just inside the Tipperary border. 96.8 cent per Diesel litre too – I don't think it ever got any lower than that during this time. Will we ever see it as cheap again during our lifetime? I very much doubt it.



Loads of time in Midleton for a bite to eat, before travelling the back roads into Ballycotton via Cloyne and Churchtown. We got into the 'high field' pretty much without any delays, unlike other years. Twenty minutes early makes a huge difference on this back road. Martin pointed me to a nice car park spot but I didn't take it and finished up halfway down the field instead. Luckily we were in no rush away afterwards, otherwise it would not have been pretty if we were in a big hurry out. Up into the big tent soon thereafter, which was to the side of the school and not on its usual stand on the basketball court. It was raining and cold now. Brilliant, NOT! Met LG of this AC-parish, but also of Cork. He was not running, though he should have been worrying the top-100 T-shirt list.

The weather looked up soon after and we got down to the start without any further pressure. We both got up very high in the corral, surprisingly high, and quite close to the start line. It threatened rain during the race but it

never came, from my recollection at this remove.

And off the gun went, the Ballycotton song blaring over the tannoy, and cue the mad rush down the narrow main street of the village. Eight seconds to cross. I hate that part of the race as you have the usual quota/queue of lunatics who will do almost anything to get past you, including pushing, shoving, weaving – downright stupid & foolish & dangerous road etiquette. I kept to the side and attempted to run as evenly as possible. I knew what I was capable of, and have been running long enough at this stage to know what I can squeeze out of my racing "tube", without it being fully empty before the finish. This race was a good example of apportioning my race resources almost perfectly evenly over this classic distance of 10 miles.

This was my 11th time racing Ballycotton and I now know the course almost off by heart. Dare I say, that the course is seared into my road racing heart and mind. I can visualise and feel every 'up' and 'down', every twist and turn. I know where every mile marker is. I have poured more of myself into this race since 2002, than I have any other single event I have ever taken part, including The Streets and the Galway 5KM Series. This is always one of the three highlights of my running year, and will continue to be, as long as I am capable and fit enough to travel and compete. My 11 Ballycottons are '02-'06, '08-'09, '12-'14 and now '16. I did not run '07 as I didn't think I was going to run any better than I did in 2006, where I ran the race of my lifetime at any distance, 65:40 (first 10KM was 40:19). How I wish I could roll back the years and review that stupid decision now! The last time I broke 70 in Ballycotton was in '09. I got as close 70:37 in '14, and was targeting sub-73 in '16, but hopefully not a PW of 74:33 when I jogged around the first year, when I was a much younger and inexperienced runner though.

The first few miles resulted in my being passed, on the inside, on the outside, by man, by woman and by old age pensioner. I kept to the middle of the road and stayed away from the watch, trying to control my breath and effort instead. I could not avoid the announcers/clocks at 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 miles, which were easily calculated in my head though. I don't recall the wind being too much of a

factor during the day. Zero six seemed a very long time ago: none of us grow any younger, only more experienced! Stay steady and don't get carried away by anyone who might pass, whether I know them or not. I took on water at 3 and 7 – I cannot recall for sure if there was water at Ballymaloe?

The countryside had not changed much since '14, though I was in for a shock when I turned onto the main road just before four miles. The road seemed to have been re-surfaced and was quite rough. I was surprised and it jolted/annoyed me a little. Strange the things that go through runner's heads during races! People were still streaming past me, right up to five miles and after. This was partly a function of starting so high up, but I felt I was keeping things as steady as I could, so let them all go. I wanted to make sure I have enough in reserve for the more difficult second half, which I have never run in a negative split, even when going well.

I got to five miles and the back entrance to Ballymaloe House in sub-36. I was happy enough with that but the more difficult half was still to come and I didn't know what I had in the locker to make sure that I could come home in sub-37, to get close to 73. That was the real target now: five sub-7:30 miles. Mental note: Martin and I have to call in and see the Allens properly some time, though it wasn't going to this year either. We did try in '14 but the shop was closing as we got there just before 6PM :-).

Down around to 6M. Then the 10KM semi-mark. Then the trudge up and around to 7M, which is also the 3M mark. This is when the race is won and lost. The pressure is on. There are not as many passing me now, as the field have settled down into their various stratums, give or take one or two lunatics who started five minutes after the gun, or who just woke up. Or those poor people who went out way too optimistically and are now learning that time in the bank is not much good, if you don't have sufficient training in the legs. There was a slight onshore breeze wafting over from Ballycotton. That niggled away all the way up to 8M. The money mile in Ballycotton is from there to 9M, across the inlet. This is where your race is won or lost, if you are going for a time. Deep breath time, and try to hold onto the people in



Five mile mark

front of you and hope that no one comes from behind, as there is no doubt people behind me with their eyes only on my bald head and humped back ☺. Up and around the T junction and climb that last third of a mile to the 9M mark. We all look like shite now, there is no other way of saying it. If you look good at 9M, you have been wasting your time out the country. I got from 8M to 9M in 7:30, which I would have bitten the hand off you for before the race. I did 6:59 here in '06 when running 65:40, which I have always said was my best ever mile in any race ever.

There are two things about the last mile in Ballycotton that I will never miss. (1) The big chip van between the old church and national school, with its appealing fish, chip and burger smell. I'm always dying going past it ☺. I have still to partake in any of their specialties, after a race, never before! (2) And then the two village pubs and the huge amps that blare out music and "encouragement" with about 800 metres to go. I have wished very bad things on the poor chap on the "mic" over the years but for no particular reason this year, I don't remember it being that bad or annoying.

That last push, which is ever-so-helpfully measured in segments of 200M, does not get any easier as the years go by. The finish line announcer can now be clearly heard. I passed the chipper at around 65:40, the time I finished the race itself in 2006. That is what 10 years does to a body, mine more specifically. I had little left to race up those last two laps, only hope that I didn't lose too much time. The clock kept ticking onwards, past 71 and then 72 minutes. I was within 100 metres by then and scuttled in as

quickly as my legs would let me without them spasming. I am gone past caring who beats me or who I beat to the line. The only thing that matters is the clock over the finish line and that will never be fully beaten. It was passed under 72:25, and the much coveted mug was soon secured. I spent the next 10 minutes trying to cough up an imaginary knot in my chest, a dry retching cough, and manage a mental tiredness and general soreness that will take some days to wear off too. I made sure to wait for Martin to finish, which he duly did in fine-looking form just over 90 minutes after starting. He was 4th M70. Most importantly, he finished in no obvious distress. I wouldn't like to explain to Mary if anything ever happened to that man while in my care.

We limped back to the school, whereby it had started to rain again. The race stayed itself dry; no doubt the man above was looking on :-). We stuck around for the prize-giving and even got to meet the great man himself, John Walshe, not God! Bernie Kelly, as well as Fr. Liam Kelleher, were there too. On the flip side, they got to meet Martin Keane! By the time we got back to the 'high field', there was less than 50 cars and had some great fun slip, sliding out of there. A necessary pit stop a few miles outside Ballycotton to meet another legend completed the trip to Cork, before heading back up to Galway by mid-evening.

Will I have in the same shape to complete the Ballycotton dozen in 2017? Time will tell, but it may not be kind!

72:15 – 6:50 7:01 7:14 7:21 7:12 (= 35:38) 7:11 7:26 7:15 7:30 7:15 (= 36:37).

Breaking 40

Deirdre Brophy

For me, the details of what happens between the start and finish of a race can be a blur. But I do remember how I got to the start line of the Conamara 10K (8 October 2016), on a perfect day for running, reasonably confident that I could get around the course in under 40 minutes.

In April 2013 I resumed racing after baby number two. I was gunning to get back to where I was six years previously (around the 42 minute 10K mark). I thought a few months should do it, but getting any sort of speed back took a lot longer than I expected. That much lauded post-childbirth endurance boost seemed to completely pass me by. Any physiological benefits of increased blood volume or enhanced pain threshold were counteracted by sleep deprivation and ever increasing demands on my time. I managed to cobble together some sort of training routine (essentially, bolting out the door whenever I could). With little time to be sensible (i.e. stretching, strengthening and resting), I soon got stuck in a cycle of slow progress, followed by periods of over-enthusiasm, followed by injuries that took me back to square one.

By 2014 I had abandoned all time targets, my goal for that year was to stay injury free. I made the time for regular yoga classes and took up TRX (with James in bikefit). On mature reflection, I now swear by this approach! By the end of that year I was bendier (sic), stronger and had reached my modest goal to avoid any running related niggles. I'd also managed to get a little faster through consistent uninterrupted training. I was patiently biding my time...

In April 2015 I finally got back under the 42 minute mark and felt ready to start chasing some PBs. I checked in with Matt at fitness analytics for a



lactate threshold test. Armed with lots of great advice on heart rate training, I started to up the ante. That summer I managed to beat my younger child-less self which gave me more than a little satisfaction. As I watched my times drop in training and racing I started to wonder if a sub-40 10K was a realistic goal.

2016 was the year I was to turn 40. No better time I thought to make it my target. I plugged my goal time into McMillan calculator, I was now armed with equivalent targets for every other distance and as the year progressed I hit them all, 10 mile, 8K, 5K, but the sub-40 10K still eluded me. A few attempts were marred by strong winds and over exuberant starts. The pancake flat Galway Bay 10K was the day before my birthday and the perfect day to do it, but it didn't happen. So aged 40 years and 6 days I made the trek out to Carna to set the record straight.

I'd read somewhere that the course was flat. I had done a couple of triathlons there in the past and it wasn't how I remembered the terrain, but I buried that and was thankful for a perfect weather forecast. On the start line there was talk of a hill around kilometre 4. I remained calm. There wasn't a breath of wind, I could do this. I'd spent an hour and a half in the car winding around the roads of

Connemara and faced the same again on the way home, I had to make it worth the trip.

Off we went. The first kilometre went past in a comfortable 3:55. Kilometres 2-4 were all on target. We hit a fairly noticeable hill between 4 and 5 – my split was 4:15. I furiously chased those 16 lost seconds down the other side of the hill and managed a 3:48 split. Still on target. Another hill at kilometre 9 took me by surprise. At this point I could no longer do the sums. I'd lost 10 seconds, could I get them back? I booted down that hill and rounded the bend to see the finish line pontoon up ahead.

I looked at my watch, 38 something, the gap ahead looked less than a minute. I belted on and hit the finish in 39:45. Delighted, excited and relieved to finally move on from my sub-40 quest. Earning a county medal was the icing on the cake. Fergal and Niall also landed medals for first senior and first over 40 respectively and there was a (hotly contested) team prize for the Athenry men. Well worth the trip.

The Conamara 10K is a lovely race and really well organised by the local hosts, Club Lúthchleas Chonamara. Yes, the course is flat (in parts!), and wonderfully scenic. Next time I'll spend less time looking at my watch.



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Race Result History

Year	Men's Winner	Time	Woman's Winner	Time	Finishers	<40:00	<50:00	<60:00	Top 50
2002	Paul McNamara	31:15	Kathryn Casserly	36:57	69	13	44	59	n/a
2003	Noel Kelly	32:46	Fionnuala Keane	38:18	171	30	92	126	n/a
2004	Paul McNamara	31:11	Lucy Brennan	36:36	253	38	130	179	n/a
2005	Gary Thornton	30:34	Lucy Brennan	37:30	351	51	168	252	n/a
2006	Gary Thornton	30:12	Lucy Brennan	37:03	470	42	211	339	n/a
2007	Gary Thornton	30:02	Orla Ní Mhuircheartaigh	38:52	617	50	253	457	39:59
2008	Gary Thornton	30:40	Catherine Conway	36:53	838	58	359	642	39:29
2009	Gary Thornton	29:57	Teresa McGloin	35:17	517	53	238	406	39:54
2010	Gerry Ryan	31:12	Catherine Conway	35:53	546	49	253	426	40:10
2011	Sean Hehir	31:07	Lizzie Lee	36:27	1042	65	434	794	39:08
2012	Mick Clohisey	30:57	Elish Kelly	35:45	1041	87	426	824	38:15
2013	Mick Clohisey	30:48	Elish Kelly	35:45	1132	71	481	880	39:17
2014	Mick Clohisey	30:18	Norah Pieterse	37:02	1145	85	467	865	39:06
2015	Mick Clohisey	30:03	Marie Hyland	36:36	1045	79	440	834	38:35

2016 Stalwarts

The following 7 people hold the distinction of competing in all 14 "Fields of Athenry" 10km races to date. We wish them all the best of luck on their 15th outing this year.

Name	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bernie Kelly	45:48	49:31	52:05	44:20	46:08	47:46	45:46	47:23	45:50	45:43	1:58:12	49:43	48:07	50:50
Danny Carr	36:15	38:11	36:00	36:41	38:06	38:06	37:29	38:38	38:27	45:54	59:59	39:05	38:25	40:48
Kevin O'Dea	48:27	50:16	51:25	46:44	53:49	53:35	45:57	42:33	40:35	44:23	40:39	42:55	51:24	56:12
Martin Keane	51:20	50:02	54:48	51:17	50:44	52:27	53:42	52:49	52:42	52:09	53:15	53:34	55:02	54:14
Mary Mullins	1:05:50	1:00:37	1:06:27	1:07:22	1:11:31	1:05:23	1:07:36	1:06:30	1:05:32	1:11:20	1:10:18	1:11:51	1:09:56	1:16:12
Tom Mac Lochlainn	49:57	56:35	50:10	52:23	56:58	FNSED	56:32	59:05	57:06	56:41	1:04:17	58:59	1:00:29	1:02:33
Tommy Joe Whyte	36:35	36:16	36:29	38:40	36:58	37:15	37:39	37:11	37:20	38:11	37:37	37:56	38:38	38:48

2015 Prize Winners

Category	Pos	Name	Category	Pos	Name
Women Senior	1st	Marie Hyland	Men Senior	1st	Mick Clohisey
	2nd	Jane Ann Healy		2nd	Brendan Hargreaves
	3rd	Laura Shaughnessy		3rd	Matthew Bidwell
	4th	Angela Buechler		4th	Jason Broderick
	5th	Clare Rowe		5th	Brian Furey
	6th	Irene Gorman		6th	Gerry Carly
Women Junior	1st	Lorna Hannon	Men Junior	1st	Joe Hastings
	2nd	Ruth Keogh		2nd	Pearse McCrann
Women V40	1st	Maggie Vahey	Men V40	1st	Lloyd Malcolim
	2nd	Carmel Coyne		2nd	David Grange
Women V45	1st	Mary Connolly	Men V45	1st	Tom Prendergast
	2nd	Rena Deely		2nd	Lawrence Kelly
Women V50	1st	Carmel Brannigan	Men V50	1st	Eddie Newman
	2nd	Barbara Bergin		2nd	Tommy Joe Whyte
Women V55	1st	Bernie Kelly	Men V55	1st	Padraig Concannon
	2nd	Geraldine McHugh		2nd	Frank Kinneen
Women V60	1st	Adrienne Walsh	Men V60	1st	Martin Kearney
	2nd	Judith Roche		2nd	Michael Harvey
Women V65	1st	Margaret Glavey	Men V65	1st	Martin McEvilly
	2nd	Angela McCluskey		2nd	Caomhan O'Fatharta
Women V70	1st	Kathryn Reilly	Men V70	1st	Philip Cribbin
Women Team	1st	GCH (2:47:14)	Men Team	2nd	Brian Geraghty
	2nd	GCH (3:05:48)		1st	Jerry Forde
	3rd	Athenry AC (3:07:29)		1st	GCH (2:18:03)
			2nd	Craughwell AC (2:21:04)	
			3rd	GCH (2:30:27)	



**FIELDS OF ATHENERY 10K
PREVIOUS WINNERS**

YEAR	WINNER	TIME	YEAR	WINNER	TIME
2017	Paul McKeown	41:02	2007	Paul McKeown	46:58
2016	Paul McKeown	42:46	2006	Paul McKeown	46:58
2015	Paul McKeown	42:51	2005	Larry Brennan	47:50
2014	Paul McKeown	42:54	2004	Larry Brennan	47:50
2013	Paul McKeown	43:12	2003	Larry Brennan	47:50
2012	Paul McKeown	43:12	2002	Larry Brennan	47:50
2011	Paul McKeown	43:12	2001	Larry Brennan	47:50
2010	Paul McKeown	43:12	2000	Larry Brennan	47:50
2009	Paul McKeown	43:12	1999	Larry Brennan	47:50
2008	Paul McKeown	43:12	1998	Larry Brennan	47:50
2007	Paul McKeown	43:12	1997	Larry Brennan	47:50
2006	Paul McKeown	43:12	1996	Larry Brennan	47:50
2005	Paul McKeown	43:12	1995	Larry Brennan	47:50
2004	Paul McKeown	43:12	1994	Larry Brennan	47:50
2003	Paul McKeown	43:12	1993	Larry Brennan	47:50
2002	Paul McKeown	43:12	1992	Larry Brennan	47:50
2001	Paul McKeown	43:12	1991	Larry Brennan	47:50
2000	Paul McKeown	43:12	1990	Larry Brennan	47:50
1999	Paul McKeown	43:12	1989	Larry Brennan	47:50
1998	Paul McKeown	43:12	1988	Larry Brennan	47:50
1997	Paul McKeown	43:12	1987	Larry Brennan	47:50
1996	Paul McKeown	43:12	1986	Larry Brennan	47:50
1995	Paul McKeown	43:12	1985	Larry Brennan	47:50
1994	Paul McKeown	43:12	1984	Larry Brennan	47:50
1993	Paul McKeown	43:12	1983	Larry Brennan	47:50
1992	Paul McKeown	43:12	1982	Larry Brennan	47:50
1991	Paul McKeown	43:12	1981	Larry Brennan	47:50
1990	Paul McKeown	43:12	1980	Larry Brennan	47:50



Fields of Athenry

10km Road Race

2015



In The Old Days

Brian Geraghty GCH

Recently I met up with the spry 97-year-old veteran Willie Morris, the forerunner for all of us elderly athletes. He certainly made it much easier for us to participate in sport at a later stage of life as we always felt so much younger than him. He was in excellent form and has no intention of doing his miles with St Peter anytime soon.

Chatting to him brought back so many memories of yore. I remember I first ran against him 54 years ago in 1962 and would you believe it, that race took place in Athenry. Our college club athletes were innocent novices 'coming up against hardened countrymen, who soon showed us a clean pair of heels and vanishing rear ends.



Races in those days were simple occasions, with little fuss or bureaucracy, requiring no insurance or permits. My old friend John Potts ex-GCH, and now with the famous Birchfield Harriers, sent me a few lines that were published recently in

Athletic Weekly about a just-retired character who organised races and cross country events in the "Old School" Way in Gloucestershire for many, many years.

"Entry fee 5 bob and 6 bob on race day.

Run your eyeballs out.

No goody bags – it's a road race not a children's party.

Return your numbers and pins for reuse.

1st prize three packets of biscuits.

2nd prize two packets of biscuits.

3rd prize one packet of biscuits."

But there has been one thing that has not changed down through the years of racing, and that is the great welcome and hospitality afforded to all athletes and volunteers in the post-race celebration and get-together, when we all enjoy meeting old friends again.

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Concussion – A Public Health Challenge

Jane-Ann Meehan Chartered Physiotherapist (www.athenryphysio.com)



The incidence of concussion is reported as 17% in rugby and in other sports 6%.

Is the rugby percentage higher due to lowering of our threshold of diagnosis on the rugby field, a result of recent IRFU protocols, or is it a reflection of an actual increase in concussion due to the physicality of the game?

The British journal of sports medicine recommend all sports bodies/parents/schools and clubs follow the Recognise and Remove model.

Concussion is an injury to the brain which can result in numerous symptoms. Everybody should be aware of the 'HEADCASE' analogy.

- H - headache
- E - eye/vision disturbance
- A - agitated
- D - drowsy
- C - confusion
- A - poor awareness/orientation
- S - slurring speech
- E - ear/eye trauma.

There are numerous online tools to help diagnose concussion. In the ideal world, these should be carried out by the onsite doctor or physiotherapist, however we do not live in an ideal world so it is imperative that you the public are aware of the above signs and symptoms.

It is worth noting that a second concussion is more likely in the first six months of return to play if protocols are not followed. Sports people must follow a graded return to play. For U20 the average time is 14-20 days and for adults 14 days. Depending on the severity of the concussion the time out will increase.

It is important to remember that asking sports people questions such as 'what is your name?', 'what date is it?' are now being scrapped as assessment questions as these can be learnt and become reflex answers.

Sample questions that could be asked are, 'who scored the last point?', 'who did we last play?', 'who won our last game?'.

Remember concussion is not only a sport injury. We have all experienced that feeling when you jump up and hit your head off the shelf or walked into the press door! Trying to relive your youth doing tumblers on the trampoline, car accidents and bouncing castles are all simple ways in which one can sustain a concussion.

New advances in return to play from concussion are looking at rehabilitation. Physiotherapy after concussion is focussed on balance and co-ordination.

These two skills can be severely affected after concussion. Recent evidence suggests that if somebody suffers a concussion they are more likely to have a musculoskeletal injury in the following year.

Is this injury because they returned to play too soon after concussion? Or is it because recovery focussed on passive rest rather than active rehab focussing on the above, balance and co-ordination?

Please check out the IRFU/SCAT forms/HEADCASE forms all available freely to download.

Every club should have the HEADCASE form laminated and in a visible place in their clubhouse.

Remember brain rest is required post-concussion. No TV/iPad/phone.

Br J Sports Med; 10. 1136-2015-094982

Dr. Simon Kemp and Dr. Matt Cross BJSM online.

SCAT 3, BJSM, Mar 13; 2013.



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Fields of Athenry 10k

(Day 26 of the December
Run Streak #sanityclause)

Joanne Murphy



Following on from the enjoyment of last year's #akwrunstreak I signed up once again in earnest to run 30 minutes or 5k per day for the month of December. Organised by Sean at Amphibian King it was just the target I needed to try get back on track with some training at the end of this year.

Prior to the start of this year's streak I had been running 2-3 times per week 5k-11k per run, nice and steady, squeezing in the sessions when I could. Throughout the year I had let my time for training slip and only raced once in 2015 at the Craughwell 10 mile road race in March. I really needed to kick start something for 2016 and have a focus during the upcoming festive period. The #akwrunstreak was the perfect plan.

It was a busy few weeks in the lead up to the #streak and indeed the first 2 weeks of December were a bit manic having handed in my notice at work in November I had a mammoth workload to get through to finish up with the Irish Cancer Society in mid December. Coupled with plotting and planning for 2016 for Tri Talking Sport and of course a jam packed social diary for the month of December, I was looking forward to the timeout the #sanityclause would bring each day with the chance to make time for me, to just run... Although getting out some days was admittedly tougher than others after too much festive fun!

The Fields of Athenry 10K on Stephen's Day became the focus of the streak. Not sure how the legs and body would hold out with my limited amount of training in advance of December but I wanted to put in a solid performance at the race. If nothing else I wanted to just test the body, see how it would hold up under

pressure, both from the 25 days of running up to race day and also in terms of where my fitness is at heading into 2016. The race did not disappoint.

The 'Fields' is a great local, club race hosted by Athenry AC and is the perfect way to keep the indulgences on Christmas Day somewhat within reason. Don't get me wrong I ate plenty throughout the day, the turkey sandwiches at 10pm the tastiest part of the day as always!

Waking early on race day, I wasn't feeling the love. I would have preferred to stay in bed but that thought disappeared fairly quickly as I got excited at the prospect of participating in a race rather than being on the mic, plus I still had to get my 5k done for the day so I got ready to race. I picked up my pacer, Noel Griffin and off we headed to Athenry. As always the marshals have the parking down to a tee, no issues, #Renaultcaptur parked quickly and easily. Into registration and again the volunteers and marshals were brilliant and efficient, in and out in record time.

Along the way pre race it was great to see and catch up with some familiar faces, Ray O'Connor www.runireland.com and Frank Greally www.irishrunner.com having a chat pre-race, as well as a host of people from Galway Triathlon Club, Galway City Harriers, fellow #streakers and plenty more people from across the county and beyond, all friendly faces, wishing each other good luck and of course Happy Christmas.

With a few minutes to spare, we queued for the loo (plenty Portaloos on site, never any harm to have a few

more) and then it was off to the race start. Just as the gun went we joined the crowd down towards the back of the pack, close to the 55 minute pacers. Based on my training to date and the running times of the streak I had thought somewhere around 55-58 minutes would be a respectable time for me and also doable. Considering this was Day 26 of 31 days of running I didn't want to overdo it and I also wanted to finish the race. I had decided to try and stick with the 55 minute pacers and could move on or fall back as was needed.

Off we go, cross the timing mat, Garmin on, Strava on and it's straight up that first hill, it is a killer, you have barely started running and already are on an unforgiving hill. The 55 minute pacers already had gained great ground and I was fearful of running too fast in the first km, the goal at the end of the day was to finish, I didn't want to have to pull up half way through.

When we got the top of the hill we had the joy of the downhill, what goes up must go down. Noel tells me I am running 5:30km, which is what the plan was. As we continue along the early part of the course the time pretty much stays close to this and I was comfortable. I got the odd word of encouragement and a few jokes from Noel, at one stage I thought he was going to start making up a song called the 'Hills of Athenry' as we continued along the course making it to the 3k mark and the water station.

I was feeling ok, we had passed a few people I knew at this stage and were gaining on the 55 minute pacers. I got a few 'shouldn't you be on the mic' comments going past which was a nice boost and brought a bit of banter as we continued on the course. Coming into the 4k point Noel tells me we are running well ahead of the planned time and to just keep pushing until the 5k mark, then I can relax for 2k and pick it up again. I could not wait to hit 5k for my 'rest'! At this point we had passed the 55 min pacers so I knew if I could keep the pace up I would break 55 mins.

My fear was I had gone out too fast and would not be able to sustain the pace but as we approached the next hill Noel told me I was holding steady.

The pace wasn't slowing down as we went uphill, we continued to pass people on the hills recovering slightly on the down hills, but continuing to run well ahead of the 5:30 min K's we had planned.

Hitting 6k, time for more water and the sight of another hill, I was getting tired at this stage, trying to control my heart rate, but I knew we had at least one big downhill from 9k-10k so I just kept going. We hit some minor flooding on the course, the ice cold water was a welcome wake up for my feet and there's nothing like a bit of splash splashing in puddles to increase the novelty factor on the route and create a distraction from the tired legs.

When we got to the 8k point I was happy that we were running downhill, facing into good road surface and a few small uphill, but it was less than the length of the prom to the finish so I just had to keep going and knew I would finish the race. It was all about the time now.

Hitting the 9k point was a welcome relief, we were picking people off all the way from 8-9k; people who had passed us earlier, some we caught up with joined and ran with us, others I had in my sights for a couple of K's and just focussed on as targets to reach and pass. Noel continued to tell me I was running well and better than the time we had planned so I did my best to try and just stick with him and the pace.

The boost at the 9k mark with the gathered crowd was great, as well as the upcoming down hill section. The support on the course at the junctions was brilliant, the shouts of encouragement from the marshals much appreciated. Running that last km, I knew I could finish the race, my legs were screaming, but my head said just keep going. I knew I was below 55 minutes and that I needed to keep something in the tank for the final sprint under the arch.

As we moved closer to the finish line Noel counted down the distance, 900, 800, 700, warning me not to sprint too soon, 500, 400, 300, 200, 100... rounding the final corner I took off, it was if my legs took on a life of their own, cadence increased, arms pumping and eyes firmly on the finish line I ran as if my life depended on it.

I wasn't sure I would make it to the finish at one point in that final sprint to the end but pushed on, mental strength winning over the cries from my legs to just stop. I crossed the finish line in a time of 53:13! Almost 2 minutes faster than I had planned! I was out of breath and wrecked, I had left it all on the course, but was very excited to see the numbers on Strava. I hadn't really been looking at my watch throughout the race, just relying on Noel to tell me whether we were on pace or not.

Finishing under the iconic arch in Athenry, there were lots of familiar faces and plenty of marshals to direct you to the ample water and bananas

on offer. It was great to see everyone, happy to be finished after #workingofftheturkey. After a quick change it was into the hall for tea and bickies and a catch up with fellow runners and the supporters. The atmosphere and energy was one of excitement and accomplishment, everyone in great spirits. Day 26 in the bag for the #streakers!

My final result from RedTagTiming was 53:06, the fastest and longest (time and distance) run of the streak. I also ran my fastest run of the streak 26:02 for the second 5k section of the race which was a nice surprise. Day 27 was most definitely a 5k and a #recoveryrun.

Although not my fastest time over the past few years at the race it was a good test and a great starting point for setting out my training plans for 2016 and a proper return to racing. Now to just get on my bike and get in the pool to start some much needed triathlon training.

Thanks to Sean at www.amphibiankinggalway.ie for getting us all motivated for the #sanityclause this year, to Noel for his superb pacing on race day and to Athenry AC for once again putting on a great race. I'm looking forward to reading my copy of www.irishrunner.com picked up from Frank Greally as I was leaving the race.

P.S. I love the 2015 edition of the race hat! #brightpink #Roll on 2016.



Selection of 2016 Fields 10k prizes

The Early History of Sports Chip Timing

John Cunniffe



The use of Radio Frequency ID (RFID) technology in timing running races has spread from large mass participation race to almost every race on the running calendar over the last decade.

The origins of RFID go back to the development of radar systems in the late 1930s and through the second World War. Radar operates by sending a pulse of radio waves towards a target and calculating the distance to it from the time taken for the reflected pulse to come back to the radar receiver. During the war radar operators needed a way to distinguish 'friend or foe' aircraft among the radar signal detections. By 1939 an 'Identify Friend or Foe' (IFF) system had been developed to be attached to aircraft which would emit a radio signal at the same system radar frequency. This extra signal was transmitted immediately after the received radar pulse and this lengthened the apparent radar reflection pulse from the aircraft and created a readily identifiable signature to confirm a friendly aircraft. These original IFF systems have grown into the modern civilian and military transponders (transmitter/responder) which use a variety of techniques to improve the quality of the returned signal and to avoid jamming.

One of the first sports to use RFID transponders was motor racing in the 1980s. Similar to the IFF systems these used battery power to give a strong return pulse when the transponder on the vehicle passed over the detection antenna (normally a wire loop embedded under the tarmac.) This form of 'active' radio response to an incoming signal remains the standard design for high speed sports like motorsport and professional road cycle racing. The price of inclusion of a battery in a sports transponder has however kept

'active RFID' out of reach of use in mass participation sport.

Through the 1980s lower cost non-battery powered (passive) RFID technologies were being developed to target mass markets in road tolling, access control, and animal tagging. This work led to the most significant step in passive RFID technology from the sports point of view with the development of the 134kHz TIRIS system by Texas Instruments.

These small glass-encapsulated chips had a read range of up to a metre. Initial products using the chip included car keyfob security systems which prevented vehicle start unless the chip was recognised. Smaller 1cm long versions of the chip with bio-compatible coatings on the glass were implantable under the skin of animals for pet identification programmes. This same technology evolved into the international pet microchipping technology that remains in use today. Under Irish law all Irish dogs were to be microchipped by the end of March 2016.

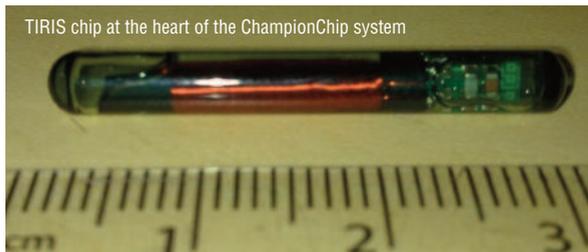
The first significant use of these chips in tracking humans was at the 1993 Zevenhevelenloop (Seven Hills Run) 15km race in Nijmegen in Holland. This technology became the ChampionChip system which was the first major RFID product in the running timing market. After being used in the Berlin Marathon in 1994 it

went on to dominate the timing of large running races worldwide. They also began to be used in the triathlon whose popularity increased dramatically after inclusion in the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

The cost of these glass tags meant that these sports chips had to be recovered after the race for re-use or the athletes needed to buy their own chip to use at each race they took part in.

Through the early 2000s the development of lower cost UHF (900MHz band) RFID technology progressed with new printing techniques allowing aluminium foil antennas on plastic backing and more sensitive silicon devices allowing better reading distance. The desire in the logistics and supply chain tracking industry for cheap, disposable RFID tags that could be read in bulk on a pallet led to the adoption of the current standard. One major driver in increasing adoption and reducing cost on UHF RFID supplies was the drive by Walmart in the USA to insist that its leading suppliers tagged all their pallets with UHF tags. The rollout of this programme through the mid 2000s led to its increasing use through the supply chain in the US and a subsequent improvement in price and availability of the reading equipment and chips. As with the Texas Instruments technology a decade earlier, sports timing businesses began to adopt the new chips with their offer of a lower-cost disposable solution. The early developments in particular by SAI Timing in the US were not without problems including major timing problems at Honolulu Marathon 2007 which delayed adoption. Over the last 10 years however the growing use of disposable UHF technology has largely replaced the older ChampionChip-style low frequency systems.

TIRIS chip at the heart of the ChampionChip system



Onwards and Upwards for Craughwell Athletic Club

Michael Tobin

It's been two short years since Craughwell Athletic Club completed the purchase of its 8 acre site beside the primary school in Craughwell in September 2014. Later that year the club reached another historic milestone when it became the largest juvenile athletics club in Ireland, a lofty position that the club still holds with junior membership topping 600 this autumn.

The club's facility development continued at pace throughout these years with initial floodlighting completed in late 2014/early 2015 to bring the field in routine use for cross

country training and the development of high jump, long jump and sprint lanes with an IAAF standard tartan finish in 2016. There is still some work to do on the sprint lanes but all tartan areas are now in full use for the winter and will be of huge benefit to the club as it continues to develop.

In total the club has spent over €460,000 on these facilities between site purchase, professional fees and construction costs. This was funded to a large degree by loans from institutions and parents, for which the club is very grateful. But a large slice also came in an €100,000 grant from

the Sports Capital Programme and an even larger slice of €160,000 from club savings, parents' donations and other fundraising activities in the past two years with a large number of families contributing substantial donations to the project – amazing support!

Watch this space: the club is hoping to embark on the first phase of a substantial indoor training build towards the end of 2017/early 2018 – a building which will eventually span 36m wide by 110m long, but a lifetime project for the club due to the costs involved.



Go West

Adam Leadbetter

The first time I came to Galway was for a job interview just over two years ago. Having flown to Shannon from Manchester, I had an afternoon to kill and how best to spend it trying to put my nerves about the following day to one side but running. Where to go? As I was staying in Oranmore, I tentatively stepped into Amphibian King (as it was way back then) and spent some time chatting with Sean to find out some routes and discover just how many running clubs there were near by. The following hour or so down in Rinville and Maree had a big bearing on me moving to Ireland from the UK.

Fast forward a few months to the end of the Craughwell 10 mile and my first race in Ireland. It gave me a chance to chat to a few people, in particular to Jane-Ann and some of the other

Athenry AC runners. From there it was only a few weeks to being at club sessions every week. And my running hasn't looked back with all the encouragement and support from the club and its members. PBs at 5km,

10km, 10 miles, half-marathon, marathon all in the last two years and debuts at 8km, 50km (and further!) were all more than I could have hoped for when stepping into a shop to look for a good place to go for an October afternoon run.

What do I miss from my running back in England? There's always the people. Just like Athenry AC, my club in England – Spectrum Striders – is really friendly with a huge range of abilities but everyone has a love of running. Apart from that, it's really the muddy runs either up and down hills after work at a fell race in

the Pennines when you turn up to a pub, give a bloke a fiver for a race number and enjoy the scenery with your pals; or the club XC leagues in the winter.



But what's been so great over the last two years has been the chance to give something back.

Like stewarding today at the Fields race; or blowing the whistle for the club speed sessions on a Tuesday night, but most of all getting involved with the two parkruns around Galway and seeing so many people turn out for their Saturday morning 5km come rain, or wind, or rain, or shine, or rain. Come and join us in Cappagh Park or Rinville Park one Saturday, and ask me where a good place to go for a run is.

You never know where it might take you.

511	Michelle Rowley	51:44	619	Angelina Hynes	54:21	727	Aisling Marlyn	57:29	835	Caitiona Duggan	1:00:00	943	Jessica Deely	1:08:28
512	Shane McCaffrey	51:44	620	Shane Hynes	54:21	728	John Givhan	57:29	836	Sinead Hynes	1:00:01	944	Diana Ryan	1:08:38
513	Peter Barron	51:44	621	Gerry Hurlley	54:23	729	Marlin Naughton	57:31	837	Gerardine McHugh	1:00:02	945	Sean Molloy	1:08:38
514	Colin Gibbons	51:45	622	Maria Lawless	54:24	730	Fergus Walsh	57:32	838	Tom Cleary	1:00:02	946	Angela McCursey	1:08:40
515	Tommy Newell	51:45	623	Hayden O'Connell	54:24	731	Eamon Connaughton	57:38	839	Una Dixon	1:00:03	947	Anne-Marie Dyar	1:08:49
516	Joanne Hennessy	51:47	624	Patrick Dolan	54:26	732	Fionnuala O'Connor	57:40	840	Heleen Creedon	1:00:05	948	Peter Mizzi	1:09:14
517	Noelle Rooney	51:47	625	Dervla O'Reilly	54:27	733	Dee McGrath	57:41	841	Sarah Frawley	1:00:07	949	Gerard Hickey	1:09:17
518	Ned Connelly	51:51	626	Trish Conlon	54:27	734	Lorraine Reynolds	57:45	842	Oliver Kyne	1:00:12	950	Pascal O'Brien	1:09:19
519	Orla Kelly	51:51	627	Bridget McGrath	54:27	735	Dave Connolly	57:46	843	Nina Keane	1:00:13	951	Earl Eats	1:09:20
520	Maigh Robinson	51:52	628	Paula O'Connell	54:27	736	Michelle Naughton	57:49	844	Michelle Murphy	1:00:15	952	Barry Walsh	1:09:23
521	Roseann Heavey	51:54	629	James Duffin	54:38	737	Maggie Duff	57:49	845	Rena Rusa	1:00:27	953	Dearbha Ball	1:09:21
522	Orlaith Cormican	51:55	630	Shaun Porter	54:39	738	Conor Carthy	57:54	846	Maura Shaughnessy	1:00:36	954	Danni Barrett	1:09:31
523	Tara Canning	51:55	631	Chris Murray	54:39	739	Jerry Forde	57:54	847	Claire MacSweeney	1:00:45	955	Teressa O'Malley	1:09:32
524	Annika Hobler	51:59	632	Jim Cloonan	54:40	740	Geordie Mitchell	57:54	848	Siobhan McMahon	1:00:46	956	Joan Connor	1:09:43
525	Anne-Marie Wvash	52:01	633	Tadhg Fyfe	54:40	741	Ferry Larkin	57:55	849	Oliver Niland	1:00:46	957	Lyola Molloy Conway	1:09:51
526	Austin Cogan	52:01	634	Mairéad Lane	54:40	742	Aoife Sharkey	58:01	850	Anne McGuinness	1:00:52	958	Sadhún O'Connell	1:09:51
527	Christa Cellarius	52:04	635	Paula Keenan	54:42	743	Robert Knowles	58:02	851	John Gardin	1:00:58	959	John O'Connell	1:10:21
528	Laura Kiri	52:04	636	James O'Donnell	54:41	744	Siobhan Moran	58:05	852	Mary Duggan	1:01:03	960	Caroline Mott	1:10:15
529	Aoife Mullane	52:04	637	Lisa Finn	54:42	745	Helen Colfer	58:06	853	Liam Egan	1:01:05	961	David Howan	1:10:19
530	Karla Hannon	52:06	638	Maeve Gaquin	54:43	746	Conor Ryan	58:06	854	Bernie Healy	1:01:15	962	Frances Hynes	1:10:20
531	Peter Connor	52:06	639	Steven Horan	54:43	747	Julianne Clarke	58:07	855	Mary Rohan Coll	1:01:19	963	Donna Hansberry	1:10:21
532	Alan Lynch	52:11	640	Kevin Fitzpatrick	54:44	748	Anne Morris	58:07	856	Nora Kenny	1:01:20	964	Eimear Keane	1:10:21
533	John Fyfe	52:17	641	Mary Cummins	54:47	749	Maeve Heneghan	58:07	857	Sarah Burke	1:01:23	965	Eddie Killia	1:11:01
534	Joao Soares	52:18	642	Garry Duggan	54:47	750	Juditha Bogan	58:09	858	Derek O'Donohue	1:01:26	966	Kate Corrigan	1:11:12
535	Hilda Robinson	52:19	643	Jaime Hodjins	54:47	751	Michelle Case	58:11	859	Michelle Case	1:01:33	967	Barry Walsh	1:11:21
536	Tomas Geraghty	52:20	644	Leona Mahony	54:48	752	Michelle Roche	58:12	860	Caitiona Nic Oisreachtain	1:01:37	968	Una Lally	1:11:26
537	Marian Coleman	52:21	645	Joe Duane	54:48	753	Sean Noone	58:12	861	Bridin Nic Dhonncha	1:01:39	969	Helena Kenny	1:11:27
538	Fiona McHugh	52:24	646	Kenneth Greaney	54:49	754	Anne Higgins	58:12	862	Darragh Carroll	1:01:51	970	Shauna Deery	1:11:38
539	Norman Black	52:25	647	Michelle Purcell	54:50	755	Patricia Glavin	58:15	863	Patrick Glavin	1:01:52	971	Lorraine Horan	1:11:46
540	Tom Maguire	52:26	648	Patrick Curran	54:51	756	Sharon Commis	58:16	864	Florence Sharkey	1:01:52	972	Juliana Dolan	1:12:18
541	Mary Kate Heaslip	52:27	649	Derek Duff	54:52	757	Frank Keane	58:17	865	Austin Connolly	1:01:58	973	Aisling Deery	1:12:19
542	Haisin Conner	52:28	650	Paula O'Connell	54:53	758	Paula O'Connell	58:20	866	Michelle Roche	1:02:07	974	John O'Connell	1:12:21
543	Marquette Duffy	52:28	651	Martina Fleming	54:54	759	Lisa Kirwan	58:28	867	Patricia Rovira	1:02:07	975	Eddy Moloy	1:12:25
544	Elaine Wilbur	52:28	652	Rodger Deleahaty	54:54	760	Coral Molloy	58:32	868	Paul Hogan	1:02:10	976	Sonya Brodick	1:12:39
545	Lauren Jauss	52:28	653	Assumpta King	54:55	761	John Kelly	58:32	869	Sandra Smith	1:02:21	977	Ann O'Toole	1:12:39
546	Gerladine Fegan	52:29	654	Emer McDermott	54:56	762	Conal Burke	58:39	870	Shauna Carr	1:02:22	978	Deirdre Kelly	1:12:41
547	Gary Ruane	52:31	655	Fiona Diviney	54:57	763	Aine Coen	58:39	871	Leo Mitchell	1:02:23	979	Padraig Kelly	1:12:42
548	Claran Duggan	52:36	656	Deirdre Keary	54:58	764	Marie Keilla	58:40	872	Edwina Coen	1:02:31	980	Jackie Ryan	1:12:43
549	Hilda Robinson	52:36	657	Paula Freeman	54:58	765	Kevin Keenan	58:41	873	Yvonne Lochlainn	1:02:31	981	Tom Keating	1:12:47
550	Thomas O'Reilly	52:37	658	Mary Keogh	55:03	766	Emer Killeen	58:42	874	Tom Newell	1:02:33	982	Janan Alani	1:12:47
551	Conor McAuliffe	52:38	659	Sarah Burke	55:03	767	Louise Walsh	58:42	875	Paul McEnroe	1:02:49	983	Gillian Morrison	1:13:28
552	Eileen Murphy	52:44	660	Derek McDonagh	55:03	768	Paul Creedon	58:42	876	Joe Leahy	1:02:57	984	Perina O'Halloran	1:13:28
553	Jean Mackey	52:47	661	Caomhan O'Fatharta	55:03	769	Julie O'Donnell	58:43	877	Bryan Fox	1:02:58	985	Joanne Cooley	1:13:33
554	Brid O'Brian	52:48	662	Paul Collins	55:04	770	Geraldine Keogh	58:44	878	Anne-Marie Fox	1:02:57	986	David O'Doherty	1:13:57
555	Maura Walsh	52:48	663	Kieran Duane	55:05	771	Marie Cooney	58:45	879	Gerardine Lally	1:03:02	987	Niamh O'Doherty	1:13:57
556	Brian Burke	52:52	664	Aine Gating	55:06	772	Mary Connaughton	58:46	880	Seamus Quinn	1:03:02	988	Rebecca Ott	1:14:02
557	Frank Keane	52:52	665	Frank Keane	55:07	773	Maureen Burns	58:46	881	Maureen Burns	1:03:02	989	John Keane	1:14:03
558	Maura Rafferty	52:56	666	Siobhan Brennan	55:09	774	Olivia Dwyer	58:49	882	Susan Moggan	1:03:05	990	Clare Kelly	1:14:03
559	Michael O'Dwyer	52:56	667	Imhar Noone	55:12	775	Mary Smyth	58:51	883	Alan Slattery	1:03:11	991	Noreen O'Leary	1:14:03
560	Ann Cosgrove	52:57	668	Colm McAllen	55:15	776	Sandra Dolan	58:52	884	Saoria Ni Fhatharta	1:03:13	992	Julie Carr	1:14:06
561	Peter McKiernan	53:03	669	Sharon Dolan	55:15	777	Geoffrey Naughton	58:53	885	Aine Ni Fhatharta	1:03:14	993	Kathryn Reilly	1:14:38
562	Kate Varley	53:03	670	Lisa Gilmore	55:19	778	Oliver Duff	58:54	886	Niamh Ni Fhatharta	1:03:15	994	Marta Hansberry	1:14:49
563	Sinead Connelly	53:04	671	Stella Fyfe	55:20	779	Karl McCarthy	58:56	887	Sabhrin Ni Fhatharta	1:03:16	995	Eidín Quinn	1:15:34
564	Katie O'Connor	53:05	672	John Coleman	55:20	780	Kevin McCree	58:57	888	Kevin McCree	1:03:16	996	John Keane	1:15:34
565	Barry Kennedy	53:05	673	Rachel Murphy	55:27	781	Susanne Lawlor	58:59	889	Maggie Flaherty	1:03:26	997	Zara Sherin	1:15:36
566	Amir O'Connor	53:05	674	Kenneth O'Hara	55:32	782	Cariousa Walsh	59:00	890	Gianine Engels	1:03:31	998	Kathryn Molloy	1:15:37
567	Patrick Foley	53:07	675	Tony Flint	55:32	783	Helen Connaughton	59:00	891	Fiona McGinley	1:03:36	999	Claire Feeney	1:15:40
568	Olivia Connolly	53:08	676	Breda Fallon	55:35	784	Martin Hynes	59:02	892	Colm Glynn	1:03:38	1000	Niamh Feeney	1:15:41
569	Gabriel Gardiner	53:14	677	Adrian Hurley	55:38	785	Emma Brannlund	59:04	893	Julianne Ryan	1:03:47	1001	Stephanie Joyce	1:16:12
570	Michael Ludden	53:14	678	Naofa Furey	55:39	786	Leonia Cullen	59:05	894	Carmel Mitchell	1:03:52	1002	Mary Mullins	1:16:12
571	John Ludden	53:14	679	John Lawelle	55:40	787	Paula Barrett	59:06	895	Kathleen Kelly	1:03:52	1003	Shauna King	1:16:17
572	Philip O'Riordan	53:16	680	Niamh Duggan	55:42	788	Fergal King	59:07	896	Trina O'Neill	1:04:01	1004	Kate Keane	1:16:17
573	Declan Fyfe	53:16	681	Ruth Keogh	55:54	789	Padraig Gavin	59:11	897	Helene Caulfield	1:04:10	1005	Helena McGrath	1:18:45
574	Mak Fitzgerald	53:18	682	John Keogh	55:55	790	Aura Lounasmaa	59:15	898	Ben Creaven	1:04:19	1006	Majella Lennon-Dalton	1:18:46
575	Denise Barrett	53:18	683	Michelle Tighe	55:56	791	Claire Smyth	59:17	899	Tara Coyne	1:04:24	1007	Cathal Dooley	1:19:12
576	Shane Donnellan	53:19	684	Bernadette Cooney	55:57	792	Shaun Linnane	59:17	900	Louise Melville	1:04:28	1008	Paul Xahey	1:19:15
577	Thomas Curtin	53:21	685	Padraic Meenanagh	55:59	793	Brenda Bourke	59:17	901	Lorna O'Regan	1:04:34	1009	Anita Mundow	1:19:18
578	Caroline Grealish	53:22	686	Fiona Broderick	55:59	794	John Ryan	59:17	902	Sarah O'Ryan	1:04:49	1010	Mary Flaherty	1:19:18
579	Carla Connelly	53:22	687	Kevin Corcoran	56:00	795	Kevin Birmingham	59:18	903	Michael Lindsay	1:04:51	1011	Sharon Cotter	1:19:40
580	Carla Gleeson	53:25	688	Martin Burke	56:05	796	Enda Fox	59:22	904	Caroline McDonagh	1:04:52	1012	Nuala Heaney	1:20:41
581	Gerardine Hynes	53:26	689	Garrod Finnelly	56:05	797	Padraig Cummins	59:26	905	Louise Egan	1:04:52	1013	Deirdre Neale	1:20:42
582	Anne Marie Giblin	53:26	690	Audrey Flynn	56:08	798	Maeve Seery	59:27	906	Deirdre Keane	1:05:01	1014	Joan Connaughton	1:20:45
583	Dermot Hession	53:27	691	Claire Shields	56:11	799	Martina Donnellan	59:28	907	Brid Kirwan	1:05:02	1015	Jennifer Mullins	1:23:27
584	Colin McDonagh	53:29	692	Kathleen Melville	56:12	800	Hilda Dooley	59:28	908	Susanne Curtin	1:05:12	1016	Orla O'Reilly	1:23:33
585	Una Murphy	53:29	693	Kevin O'Dea	56:12	801	Eithne Seery	59:29	909	Adrian Brannell	1:05:18	1017	Melissa Hession	1:23:48
586	Brian Keogh	53:30	694	Paula Kavanagh	56:17	802	Emma Cullen	59:30	910	Johnard McCann	1:05:21	1018	Michelle O'Sullivan	1:24:24
587	Brian Geraghty	53:33	695	Fergal Leahy	56:30	803	Lisa Hanson	59:32	911	Maria Maher	1:05:25	1019	Liam Louy	1:24:25
588	Lynda Madden	53:35	696	Jennifer Mongan	56:31	804	Ann Marie McSharry	59:32	912	Genevieve McDonagh	1:05:46	1020	Catherine Scanlon	1:25:25
589	Dolores Foley	53:40	697	Derek Kerrigan	56:41	805	Brian Flaherty	59:33	913	Hughie McDonagh	1:05:46	1021	Marlan Scanlon	1:25:25
590	Brendan Treacy	53:42	698	Helen Kerrigan	56:41	806	John Kelly	59:34	914	Jerome McDonagh	1:05:47	1022	Corac McGuinness	1:26:50
591	Ned Griffin	53:44	699	Kevin Nolan	56:46	807	Brian Sikke	59:35	915	Jacinta Lyubin	1:05:51	1023	Vincent McGuinness	1:26:50
592	Joanne Murphy	53:44	700	Paula Kavanagh	56:47	808	Enniet Egan	59:35	916	Sinead Costello	1:05:51	1024	Mandy Aonall	1:27:10
593	Mary Murphy	53:44	701	Michelle Keane	56:47	809	Conor Cogan	59:36	917	Kathleen Kelly	1:05:52	1025	Rebecca Keating	1:27:10
594	John Egan	53:45	702	Henry Lawlor	56:48	810	Kevin O'Connell	59:36	918	Michael Keane	1:05:53	1026	Sharon Cotter	1:29:51
595	Tom Moroney	53:46	703	Ronan Sheridan	56:49	811	Ronan O'Grady	59:39	919	Catherine Forde	1:06:00	1027	Aggie Burke	1:29:52
596	Sabrina O'Regan	53:54	704	Aine Kelly	56:50	812	Aislinn Molloy	59:39	920	Bethy Coleman	1:06:01	1028	Jillian Molloy	1:30:33
597	Joseph Clancy	53:56	705	Sandra Morris	56:54	813	Conor Cuddy	59:39</						

Ar Son Na Cúise

Seán Ó Conchúir

Bliain eile (2016) beagnach thart agus chuir eagarthóir na h-irise seo brú orm arís píosa a scríobh ar son na cúise.

Thosaigh cuimhní cinn na bliana ag sodar ar ais chugam. Bliain cosúil le gach bliain eile ó thaobh na haimsire de – stoirmeacha agus tuille – seachas mí na Bealtaine. Bhí aimsir Dé againn don sraith 5K.

Bhí Gerry Carty, stiúrthóir nua, i lár an aonaigh i mbliana. Bhí Mick Rice ar thaobh an bhóthair ag guí go leanfadh an sraith ar aghaidh gan stró gan trioblóid. Bhí an aimsir dochreidte, níos mó ná seacht gcéad reatha agus an t-ádh leis an bhfear mór ó Ghailimh. Mo cheol thú, a Ghearáid.

Taréis tréimhse sa bhfásach bhuaigh Darragh O'Brien an Kilconieron Charity Road Race. Bhunaigh Niall Callanan an rás seo seacht mbliana ó shin. Tugtar an t-airgead go léir do charthanachtaí áitiúla. Is rud iontach é seo i ré an ábharachais. B'é Patrick Forde an stiúrthóir i mbliana.

Bíonn craic, ceol and spraoi timpeall air i gcónaí. Tá sé ina stiúrthóir freisin don leath mharatón i Muine Mheá. Reáchtáilteann Athenry AC cúig rás gach bliain ar son na cúise.

Chríochnaigh an bheirt Mháirtín go h-iontach sna rásaí trasna tíre i nGlaschú. Sa mhí chéanna shroich Martin Keane barr an tsléibhe i DCM37. Tá mí sa phota fós, a Mháirtín. Uimhir tríocha seacht – chuir an t-uimhir sin spleodar i gcroí Pheadair Nugent agus é ag scoipeáil thar an líne sa rás céanna. Níl a ré thart fós. Beidh grá don Gaeilge ina chroí go deo.

Bhí rásaí eile iontacha an fud an chontae i mbliana. In Abbey chonaic mé arán – saor ó ghluin – ag rás don chéad uair riamh. Ba lá iontach é gan ghaorth gan bháisteach. An t-arán céanna i mBulláin. Bhí tine chnámh ag lasadh ann ag dul

faoi na gréine. I gCill Fhínnín thosaigh an rás san áit chéanna ar thosaigh Éirí Amach na Cásca i naoi déag a sé déag. Bhí an craic go h-iontach ag an gcroíoch líne i gCastlehackett. Ní fhaca tú aimsir cosúil leis riamh. An ghrian ag scoilteadh na gcloch, aimsir ghleoite, ardú chroí, ard iúmar agus Matt Bidwell ar bharr a réimse. Rith Matt ar a dhichead sa rás darbh ainm Winning Ways i gCora Finne freisin. Bhí an tae go deas tar éis an rása sin.

I mí Feabhra bhain a fhoirne gaisce amach nuair a bhuaigh Gaillimh dhá Chraobh TreasTíre i dTuaim. Lá eile bhuaibh Brendan Monaghan ar a rothar agus níor chríochnaigh sé go bhfaca sé an Túr Eiffel i bPáras. Casann Tuaim AC an geansaí glas go bródúil i gcónaí.

Bhí bliain iontach ag Laura Shaughnessy. Dara áit sa lár i dTuaim san Intercounties i mí Feabhra; ceathrú agus naoi áit in Abbotstown mí ó shin. Beidh sí ag rith inniu. Is iomaí rás ar na boithre a bhuaigh sí i mBleá Cliath. Is iomaitheoir den scoth í Laura.

I mí an Mháirta tharla an rás deich míle i gCreachmhaoil. Ba lá gnóthach an lá sin – cuireadh rás den scoth ar síúl – boinn, tae, siamsaíocht agus bláthanna.

Thug Celebrity Operation Transformation cuairt ar Chreachmhaoil i Meán Fómhair. Chaith siad leath lá ann. Bhí gach duine bródúil astu féin agus an Tartan Track nua (céad seasca méadar) ag Ionrú i dtaitneamh gréine.

Chonaiceamar Andy and TJ ag cur brú ar reathaí daichead bliain níos óige ná iad. Bhí Regina Casey chun tosaigh i mbeagnach gach rás inár rith sí. Rith Aisling Joyce (NUIG) go h-iontach sa IUAA Relays in i Maigh Nuad. Bhí sí ar fhoireann na hÉireann (sóisearach) i gChia i Sardinia.

Ní rabhas i mBaile Locha Riach i Meán Fómhair. Ach Luan Cásca bhí rás den



scoth ar síúl i Locha Riach. Míle buíochas do Martin Smyth don gheansaí glas a fuairas uaidh ag céiliúradh 1916 ar an lá sin.

I mí Eanáir chuir an bháisteach go mór isteach ar an rás i bhFuairchoill [Coldwood] (chuaigh mo mháthair ar scoil ann). Bhí dhá rás i mBaile Chláir – ag tús agus ag deireadh an tsamhraidh.

Bunaíodh club nua – Caltra & District AC; dhá ocáid a bhios ann – ag tús agus barr an lae. Tá todhchaí gheal ag Ionrú don chlub seo.

I mí an Feabhra bhí rás deas ag Maree AC in aice na mara. Cuimhním Satharn amháin eile i gCarna, rás eile in aice na farraige agus an fómhar ag éagnú.

Bhí Gaeilge líofa thart ort, ceamaráí ó TG4 agus ceoltóirí ag seinm sa chúinne. Cuirfeadh bodhrán, veidhlín agus cláirseach gliondar i do chroí.

Bhios ar ais le haghaidh Hollymount 51 agus creid nó ná creid bhí an aimsir deabhéasach. Rith Damien Larkin go maith. Ach bhí sé níos fearr ag an BDN seachtain ina dhiaidh sin. Bhí Tomás Porter mar thacaíocht dó ann freisin. Níl an rith go maith ag Tomás faoi láthair ach níor chaill sé sruth na cainte riamh.

Ní mór dom imeacht anois mar tá an dinnéar réidh, mo láimh ag éirí troime agus an tobar tírím. Beir bua agus beannacht.

My Special Races and Why

Bernie Kelly GCH



There are a small number of races that I run every year, no matter what. Ballycotton 10 (I did my 15th this year), Warrior Run (I did my 16th this year) and of course The Field of Athenry. 2016 is my 15th consecutive time to run it, an honour that I share with an ever-dwindling number of athletes.

So what is special about these races? What draws you back to a race?

Ballycotton 10M, Cork

This 10 mile road race is indeed a classic. 2017 will see the 40th annual running of the event on Sunday 12th March at 1.30pm. Even though it's hard to get an entry, even harder to get in and out of Ballycotton on the day, you can't deny the wonderful feeling as you start off down the narrow village street lined by crowds to the rousing words of the Ballycotton 10 song "Here we are again for the Ballycotton 10".

It's a fair course but the last mile is mostly uphill so it does require good pacing from the start to have a little something in the tank to conquer that tough climb at the end to claim the coveted T-shirt (for the first 100 finishers) or for the rest of us the famous Ballycotton Mug. (My daughter Róisín once remarked that we would have very few mugs in our house if I didn't run this race every year!) My PB is 1:14:31 (2003).

Warrior Run, Sligo

This (approx) 15K event is tough. It takes place in late August, with the race starting and ending in Strandhill, Co Sligo. The race is classified as a road and hill race, or multi-terrained, so whilst approximately nine of its kilometres are on paved roads, it is the special six kilometres in the middle, to the top of Knocknarea that gives the race its bite. These six kilometres include a 700 foot climb through fields, loose gravel, unsurfaced and heather paths. At its steepest incline on the way up, even the most professional athlete slows to

a walk and then brace themselves to face the equally daunting downhill run, back down the often slippery slopes, even in the driest of weather.

The feeling when one reaches the top of Knocknarea where you then have to run around the large cairn where Queen Maeve is supposed to be buried is magic. It's a race where you get to know just how tough you are. It saps your energy, you slip and slide and it's unrelenting but then you see the top, you hear the stewards encouraging you, you take a quick look back down the hill and you see all that are behind you and suddenly you are literally on top of the world and off you set back down the other side. My PB is 1:20:37 (2002).

Fields of Athenry 10KM, Galway

Back in the noughties I regularly did 50 races a year. I didn't train I raced! I loved the buzz of a race, loved meeting new people, loved travelling to Mayo, Clare, Cork, Sligo, all over Galway, indeed anywhere to a race. It was my social life, petrol was fairly cheap and I loved running. I didn't know a whole pile about PBs and didn't care. When I heard about a 10K on St Stephen's Day back in 2002, I thought it probably was not the best choice of day. Who in their right mind would want to run on that day? Who would be in any shape to run on that day? I wasn't sure even if I would have the discipline to. But of course

when the time came I hauled myself out of my lovely cosy bed and found myself lining up with 70 or so more for the first 'Fields'.

Boy did I enjoy it. There was something so special about running around the legendary 'fields of Athenry' with Christmas trees lit in many windows, practically car-free roads, everyone full of Christmas cheer and so lovely to exchange the traditional Happy Christmas Wishes with my many running friends. I was hooked, this was going on my race calendar from then on. So 14 years later I am still running this race. My PB over 10K happened in 2005 when I ran 44.20 which for me was amazing. I had a really good run that day and had Michelle Lynch (GCH) in my sights for most of the race until she took off over the last mile. I had a very bad year in 2012 when I pulled a muscle in my lower back on Christmas Eve and could barely walk on St Stephen's Day but I was determined to take part and finish, which I did, but it took a painful 1:58:12. I'll never forget getting to the 1K marker just as they were taking it down. Thanks again Frank for leaving the "Finish" gantry in place until I finished!

The 'Fields' is special, a unique day, superb organisation, nice course and best of all great tay (sic!) and buns afterwards.



13th Tuam Athletic Club 8k Road Race
Sunday 15th January 2017 at 2:30PM

Athenry Track Development

Iain Shaw



The Athenry Track Development, or to give it its correct name, Moanbaun Sports Development Project, took its first steps late in 2016 to being able to provide a training facility. As the summer track season ended, the juvenile section of the club faced the prospect of training for the upcoming cross country season in one of our usual haunts around the pitches at Raheen. Now don't get me wrong, that pitch has served us well for years, but at the end of the day it is flat and doesn't provide the training challenge required to develop the runners to the best of their ability. It was decided that we needed to bring the new field into play and a few of the club members, from both senior and juvenile sections had a head-scratching session in the middle of the field to decide what could be done.

A plan was hatched to drive a track around the perimeter of the field, to be as long as possible, and also to maintain the contours of the field to provide a rudimentary cross country track. We engaged with local contractor Derick Caulfield to do the ground works and over the course of 10 days in August Derick constructed a 2.5 metre wide track around the field. As the land had previously been used as a quarry there was plenty of material left in spoil heaps to provide a nice hard surface. Derick was also able to clear away the scrub on the driveway up to the track from the Raheen Woods Road and also provide a small car park area. On 10th August I took a run around the track and my Garmin measured the route at 710m with a 10m elevation gain. If you added on the run down to the gate and back from the car park you got almost another 300m and so we had a route just shy of 1km. At the car park side of the track there is a short and very sharp hill which looked to be a great tester for anyone using the track. So the first phase of the development has been completed with this track and it is now useable.

As the schools returned we moved Monday and Wednesday juvenile training to the new track and tested it out with a large group of kids. Whether it was something novel, or the athletes knew they had something of their own, the numbers of people training there started to swell. At the end of the first session, which was a hard run for many given the summer excesses, there were smiles all around and everyone was saying that it was so much better than running endless loops around a muddy field.

The part they liked the most – the hill, which they all received significant 'encouragement' to get up from our coaches. But this track is not just a juvenile facility and very quickly there were a few from the senior section taking tentative steps onto the track and testing it out, and again the reports back from the senior athletes were encouraging, and more and more people started to use it and the track very quickly became a track of choice to use by all of the AC when a nice peaceful run without traffic was required. The benefits of the track on our juveniles were instant to see and the results from the schools cross country and the Galway cross country championship were very encouraging and across the board our performances have improved.

Alas, the story doesn't end on such a positive note. As the year wore on, the nights drew in and the impending changing of the clocks came upon us. Although the training sessions were brought forward as early as we could possibly make them, darkness soon became our enemy and at the end of October we were forced to leave our new home and take up residency in the field in Raheen. For us to be able to use the track year-round we need to light the track, and light it in such a way that it is safe to use. Lighting is not cheap and we are looking at facing a bill of close on €30K to carry out the works. We have toyed with a temporary solution, but ultimately a

permanent set of lights will be required and so we may as well try to install them from the start. We are currently looking at our finances and it is hoped that we may be able to make a decision on the lights in January and without carrying out a significant amount of fundraising.

So what does the future hold for the new facility? Next year is likely to be a critical year for us, and we need to make significant inroads on the major groundworks required. We need to flatten the ground, and start working on the plans for what the facility will look like. The plans are still to have the 400m track, the new AstroTurf pitch in the middle for the football club and also an indoor training facility for use by all. We will be making an application to the Sports Council 'Capital Grant Fund' to carry out as much work as possible, and also look to find other sources of grant revenue to complete the work as fast as possible.

In time I hope that this facility is something that the whole of Athenry is proud of, and it will provide much needed facilities for our schools and community groups that will allow us to make Athenry one of the fittest towns in the country.

Iain Shaw, Chairman, Juvenile Section, Athenry AC and Director, Moanbaun Sports Development Project.





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Ein Neuer Anfang

Luisa Golz

Hallo zusammen! Ich heiße Luisa und ich komme aus Deutschland. Nachdem ich fünf Jahre im sonnigen Südwesten Irlands in Kilkenny verbracht habe, bin ich in die Grafschaft Galway umgezogen. Der Athenry Athletics Club schien die perfekte Idee zu sein, ein wenig Bewegung in mein Leben zu bringen und neue Galwayaner kennen zu lernen.

Um mit den Profis mithalten zu können, bin ich zuerst einige Male allein laufen gegangen. Im Frühling fühlte ich mich bereit für mein ersten 5km Rennen und meldete mich in Loughrea zum Osterlauf an. Es lief gut, ich war glücklich mein erstes Rennen erfolgreich beendet zu haben.

Kurz danach fühlte ich mich sicher genug um mein Können dem Athenry Athletic Club zu zeigen und ich ging zu einer der Fit4Life Sessions, die immer mittwochs stattfindet. Sehr schnell fühlte ich mich wieder unsicher als wir mit einem 8k Lauf begannen.

Ich machte mit dem Laufen daraufhin einige Wochen Pause und entschied mich dann, es noch einmal zu versuchen. Ich ging zu einigen weiteren Trainingseinheiten des

Athenry ACs und fühlte mich dann bereit für mein erstes 10km Rennen.

Der 10km Burger Lauf fand im July statt und ich ging hin. Eine meiner größten Sorgen war es mich zu verlaufen, da es keine Wegweiser gab. Glücklicherweise hat mich der Club super unterstützt und ich habe es ohne Umwege über die Ziellinie geschafft. Dann genoss ich einen leckeren Hamburger, der von den freiwilligen Helfern professionell gegrillt worden war. Ich war begeistert mein erstes 10k Rennen geschafft zu haben.

Nachdem ich das 10k Rennen überstanden hatte, nahm ich mir vor im Jahr 2016 noch einen Halbmarathon zu laufen. Der Winter kam, das Leben selbst kam dazwischen und leider erreichte ich mein Ziel nicht. Jedoch bin ich mir sicher, dass ich im Frühling einen Halbmarathon laufen werde.

Der Athenry AC ist ein großartiger Verein für Neuzugezogene. Es gibt jede Menge Trainingseinheiten, bei denen man mehrmals jede Woche mitmachen kann und die Mitglieder sind sehr nett. Wenn ihr Laufanfänger seid, seid bereit, denn diese Leute sind schnell!



A New Beginning

Hi guys! My name is Luisa and I am from Germany. After having spent five years in the sunny southeast, in Kilkenny, I had moved to Co. Galway. The Athenry athletic club seemed the perfect idea to get some dreaded exercise into my life and also to meet some Galwegians.

In order to get up to speed, I had gone on some runs on my own. In spring time, I was comfortable with running my first 5k and signed up to the Loughrea 5k race at Easter. It went well - I was delighted to have completed my first race ever.

Shortly after this, I decided that I was now brave enough to show off my abilities in the Athenry AC and went to the Fit4Life session that takes place every Wednesday evening. Instead, I felt thrown into the deep end as we embarked on an 8k run. I managed but felt rather deflated about my running abilities. I took a few weeks break from running but decided that I wanted to give it another go. I went to a few more training sessions with the Athenry AC and finally felt ready for my first 10k race.

The club's 10k Burger Run was on in July and I turned up for it. One of my biggest worries was getting lost as I was unfamiliar with it. Thankfully I received great support from the club and made it to the finish line without any detours. I enjoyed a tasty burger provided by the great catering team

after the race. I was thrilled to have completed my first 10k race.

After finishing the 10k, I had the ambitious plan of completing a half marathon before the end of the year. With winter and life in general getting in the way, I unfortunately did not reach my goal. However, I am confident that I will be able to complete a half marathon in spring.

Athenry AC is a great club for someone new to the area. There are plenty of training sessions that one can attend during the week and the people are very friendly. Be prepared however, if you are a newbie to running, they're fast!

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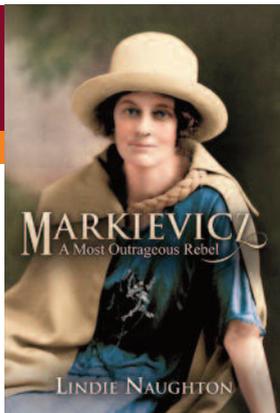
2016

Lindie Naughton

So what are my memories of 2016 – a year of an Olympics, and a European Championships within weeks of each other and much, much more?

The National Track and Field Championships came in June – much earlier than usual. My abiding memory from that is the sheer relief of Clonliffe's Brian Gregan when he crossed the line to win the men's 400m. Brian had been ill with a recurrent virus so debilitating that he spent a night in hospital. His aim to make an Irish 4x400m squad for Rio were shattered, but he had his health back.

At the Europeans, held in Amsterdam, Ciara Mageean took a bronze medal in the 1500m, proving that she is back in top form after years of injury. On to Rio, which was marred by scandals we won't go into here. Could it be the end of the Olympic movement in its current form?



Since it is largely a TV event these days, one suggestion is to turn it into a "virtual" Olympics. Might work.

Then there was the National cross country Championships, held over the new purpose-built course at Abbotstown, which is still looking like a building site, but no doubt will settle down in years to come. For some time, I had noticed Mark Christie from Mullingar belting up my road in

Boosterstown on training runs. He looked better and better as the weeks went by and it was no surprise when he won the Autumn Open, the Leinster senior title and then the national title, beating the doughty Mick Clohisey.

What a thriller the women's race proved to be, when a new star was born in the form of Irish dancer Shona Heaslip, who is coached by Kerry master Niamh O'Sullivan after taking up running only two years ago.

Which brings us neatly to masters athletics, which – so far – remains untainted by the scandals surrounding our sport; in particular doping, and the overnight switching of nationality and name. At the European Indoors in Ancona Italy, Ireland took 27 medals and finished 11th nation – a magnificent achievement.

Among the gold medal winners were Joe Gough, who had earlier competed at the World Indoors in a special masters 800m, Brian Lynch, Master of the Year, Kelly Neely and Denise Toner, all in the middle distances. At World Championships in Perth, Australia, in November, Cathy McCourt won a record five medals individual and team cross country and individual 5000m, 10,000m and half marathon.

Only a week earlier, at the annual British and Irish Masters cross country in Glasgow, the remarkable Carmel Parnell from Cork stretched her winning streak to eleven when she took W60 gold. With Galway's own Christine Kennedy second and Mayo's Pauline Moran third, Ireland had its first clean sweep of the day.

The second clean sweep came in the M35 race won by East Cork's Michael Harty, who was followed home by Paddy Hamilton of Slieve Gullion and East Cork's Tim Twomey.

Finally – road running. My star of the year is wheelchair phenomenon Patrick Monahan from Co Kildare who blazed around the Dublin Marathon course in a new course record of 1 hour 39 minutes leading home a record entry of over 19,000. Dublin is now the fourth largest marathon in Europe.

Wishes for next year? Life bans for doping and residency of three years for anyone switching nationality. Make it happen Seb Coe – or athletics is dead.

Lindie Naughton's latest book is "Markievicz – a Most Outrageous Rebel" (Merrion Press).

GOAL MILE

SATURDAY
14th JAN 2017
11 AM
Clarin College
Athenry
Co. Galway

Registration: Clarin College Gym from 10am
Cost: €5/individual, €10/family
Refreshments: College Gym
Race start: in waves from 11am
Runners chasing a fast time go first!

Athletics Ireland

Loughrea Athletic Club Development



Loughrea Athletic Club purchased 27 acres at Bushfield on the Bullaun road in the 1980s. This was a big decision for the club in recessionary times, but we are glad to say it was a good investment with athletics and other sports benefitting in the meantime. The centre piece of the early development was an eight lane grass track which encompassed a soccer pitch. The grounds also has a one-mile perimeter cross country course and with varied routes has been used for County and Connacht Colleges fixtures.

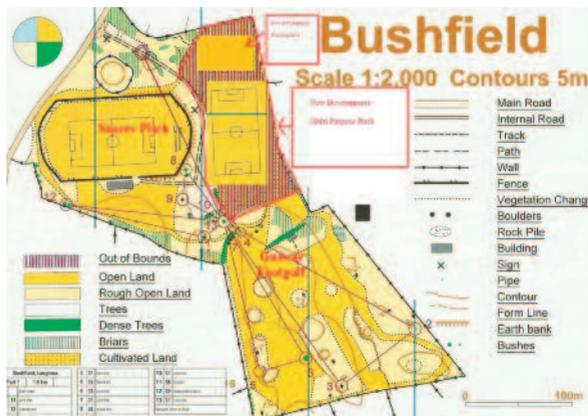
The Manning Sports Day is a big event on our athletic calendar with children from fourteen local national schools competing against each other on a points basis. The opening of our new club house in 2014 was a milestone and has plenty of off-road parking. We are always updating facilities for users. Having a base of our own has enticed more children into the club and with new coaches coming on board, the fun-run child or the more competitive one can both be accommodated. Flood lighting is on site to help with evening training.

However, we always recognised that 27 acres was greater than the needs of athletics and with this in mind we are presently developing a multi-purpose

grass pitch bordered by a running track. The local Gaelic Football club is very keen to use the pitch and we are thankful to them for their help in offsetting the costs involved. The relatively new sport of Footgolf is also being played at Bushfield and on occasions groups from Galway have used the grounds to learn the basic skills of orienteering. Soccer, in particular, has benefitted for many years with all facilities on hand for their followers.

The club is approaching developments at Bushfield with the provision of a multi-purpose pitch our main focus at the moment. Improvements for athletics will always be part of an on-going programme. Present developments will restrict the use of the cross country course for competitive purposes but we will let you know when we are up and running again – pardon the pun!

In the meantime you are welcome to visit our grounds and see the potential for athletics and other activities.



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Best of luck to all the participants in the Fields of Athenry 10K

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20 Questions for BRIAN BRUTON (GCH)



1. What shoes do you train in?
ASICS.

2. How many miles did you run last week?
45-50, not enough and slower to start than ever.

3. What's your favourite racing distance?
Anything Cross Country, 12km used to be great over the mud.

4. Where's your favourite place to train? Dangan.

5. What's your favourite race or event each year?
National Senior Cross Country or Streets of Galway.

6. What annoys you most at races?
Older lads beating you. Marshals who don't direct you.

7. What race, that you haven't yet run, would you most like to take part in?
European cross country and too late now!

8. What was your best-ever running performance?
National 10k team gold M35s a couple of years ago & sub-27 in the Streets.

9. What was your worst-ever running performance?
Loads! Usually blowing up in marathons, Connemara 3:00:20 being the most annoying.

10. What's the strangest thing that you've ever seen on a training run?
Plenty of unusual incidents in Dangan and surrounds involving people in varying states of undress and/or under the influence of unknown substances.

11. Favourite piece of running gear?
Long sleeve anything.

12. Who would you most enjoy beating in a sprint for the line?
Anyone, can't sprint.

13. What was the best bit of running advice you were ever given?
Consistency is key. Train on grass. Aim for the big races.

14. In ten years time will you still be running?
Yes, hopefully better than now

15. If for some reason you were told you could never run again, how do you think you'd react?
Very badly.

16. Have you ever been bitten by a dog while running?
No, but loads of fights with them and their owners verbally.

17. Have you ever had to stop for an emergency 'Paula' during a race?
Yes a couple of times, no fun.

18. Favourite post-race food?
Yazoo and anything sweet.

19. Most embarrassing ever running related moment?
See question 17, in Connemara one year, rough second half.

20. The greatest Irish Athlete of all time is/was?
John Treacy.

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The Year of the Anniversaries

Martin Keane

As we approach the end of another year I'll think of it being the year of the anniversaries. Of course we had the 1916 celebrations, with two events here in Athenry. At Easter we had a big day in the town park, in June we had another outing in Mellows College. We also had the 50th anniversary of Galway winning the football final, completing a three-in-row in doing so. Also in that year, Galway won the All-Ireland cross country in Dromoland Co. Clare and I still remember being at the race with the Galway team made up of Derrynonell AC runners filling four of the first five places to easily winning the team event.

Sometime in the late summer, to satisfy my grá for traditional music, I decided to go to the Fleadh Cheoil in Ennis Co. Clare. Knowing they'd be traffic and parking problems I went by train from the station in Athenry. As the ticket checker approached I held up my travel pass and declared "I'll arise and go now and go to Ennis free". On the journey I switched on the radio to find Joe Duffy doing a 50th anniversary special to Dickie Rock who represented Ireland at the Eurovision song contest in the same year.

Now you have to be of a certain vintage to remember Dickie's hit tunes from that era but Joe played a few I remember like, 'Candy Store on the Corner', 'Come Back to Stay' and 'Every Step of the Way'. While listening to the latter I thought how many steps it takes to complete the Dublin City Marathon. A few days later I read that this year's race was to be special race to commemorate the 1916 rising. Due to my family connection with that difficult time in Irish history, need I say anymore?

Unfortunately, a few small health issues hampered my preparations but anyhow on 29 October, I'm back in the RDS to collect my number. At the desk I handed in my acceptance slip,

which a girl looked at, and then got off her chair turned her back on me and walked away, leaving me to wonder what did I say or do to offend her. She was back in a flash with one hand extended for a handshake, and in her other hand she had an envelope which contained a card wishing me a happy birthday on marathon day.

Haven't they a marvellous team running that race for the last 36 years, with nearly all volunteers I believe, much like John Walshe's gang down in Ballycotton Co. Cork. Nowadays, on those weekends I stay with my daughter Siobhan, who lives in north Co. Wicklow and, of course, she looks after me very well, but I often remind her that it's only payback time.

Sunday morning we're on the M11 driving towards Dublin and as I look to my left I see a dark cloud on top of the Sugar Loaf mountain. Siobhan told me to look out towards Dublin Bay as there was a lovely blue sky there. A good friend of mine has a favourite song called, 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life'. Maybe it's the way to view life in general.

Among the thousands on the start line, I thanked God for giving me the strength to even attempt this long race, as many people will claim you're only half way at twenty miles. In saying that, I'm probably speaking for Michael Glynn and Peadar Nugent too, who were both competing that day as well. My plan for the race was to run each mile in 10 minutes, for as long as I could keep going. After 24 miles I was almost on target but I slowed a tad from there to the finish, mainly due I'd say from not enough of long runs during my health problems.

I finished the race in 4:25, gaining 7th place out of 49 in my race age category, but 4th in my National Marathon age category. My abiding memory of the race was the massive crowd support all along the route, with a lot of them handing out sweets,



fruit, drinks etc. But in that last mile the cheering was something else, and if it wouldn't put the hairs on the back of your neck standing, well, then you have no hair. Not since the early 1960s when the Beatles came to Dublin was such cheering, I'd say.

After finishing, I met a few acquaintances but I didn't have much time for talking as I had to catch my train. As is now the norm, Peadar was on the Six One RTE TV News along with Máire Treasa. Didn't they both look well! The rewards for being "photogenic" I suppose. My one regret is I missed the sprint finish between Michael and Peadar, but Peadar's experience gained over the last 36 years won the day by one second.

On reading the results the following day I noted that had there been a team prize for our age category we'd have won the All-Ireland. I doubt very much if 2017 will have any anniversary important enough to get me out running around the streets of Dublin again, but certainly I've no regrets over losing a good few drops of blood, sweat and tears to get that special medal with the GPO on it.

9:49 9:51 10:10 9:53 9:52 10:02 9:52
9:33 9:51 9:53

10:01 9:53 9:56 10:20 10:05 9:49
9:59 9:43 9:54 9:42

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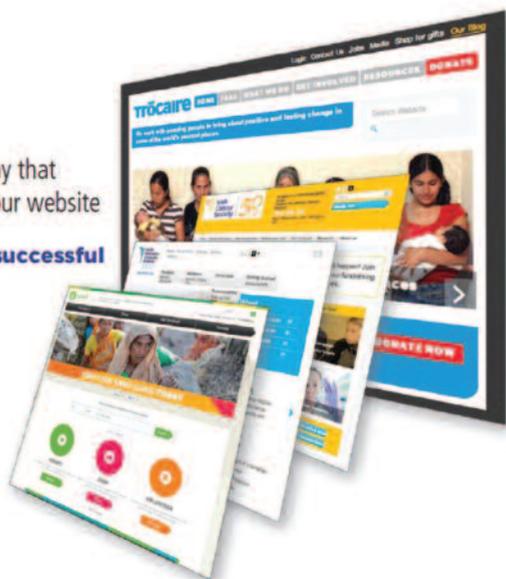
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Athenry AC Juvenile – A Year in Review

Iain Shaw

For the second year I have had the privilege to be Chairman of the Juvenile Section of Athenry AC and work with a fantastic bunch of athletes (much more of them later) and a truly brilliant group of coaches who really do go above and beyond in their dedication to training our young athletes in all disciplines. It is a great pleasure for us all to be under the guidance of our head coach Dermot McNamara, his knowledge is encyclopaedic and his encouragement for all athletes and coaches is second to none.

As has now become customary, the athletics year opens with our trip to the wonderful venue of the Athlone Indoor Arena for the Galway Indoors. Forty-two athletes from Athenry AC competed and came away with a fair haul of metalwork. In the relays the U12 girls and U11 boys got gold and the U13 boys, U15 girls and U10 boys got bronze. In the individual events there were 4 gold medals, 14 silver medals, 6 bronze and many close 4th positions. The U12 girls relay team had another run out at AIT arena when invited to take part in the events of the International Athletics Grand Prix and they did themselves proud in coming second in their race. It is great experience for these young ladies to have competed on an International programme, and hopefully they will have a chance to do the same in their future athletic careers.

Galway's turns to Connachts, and the added bonus of qualification for the National Indoors. Once again we made the 40 minute journey down the motorway to AIT and a very serious level of competition. Thirteen medals came back across the border from Westmeath in a super series of performances. There were a number of breakthrough performances which set the tone for the remainder of the year: Leonore Church took bronze in the High Jump, Aoibhe Deeley took bronze in the 60m Hurdles and Liam Shaw put the cat amongst the proverbial pigeons, and broke up the expected clean sweep by Lake District AC by taking silver in the Shot Putt. Performance of the competition though has to go to Brandon Lee who took silver in the 60m, Gold in the 60m Hurdles and

silver in the 800m. Brandon's constant high level of performance was recognised when he received the U15 boys prize at the Galway Athletics Awards.

The indoor season came to a close with our Connacht qualifiers representing the club at the National Indoor Finals. For the juveniles, this is the toughest competition they will face all year, but to even get this far is the greatest of achievements.

Although there were no medals, both Brandon and Aoibhe qualified for the final of their hurdle events, and Liam reached the final eight in the shot putt competition and a nice haul of PBs were brought back home.

There really is no downtime to catch your breath following the indoor season before the Galway outdoors is upon you. The outdoor track and field is somewhat different to the indoor with the inclusion of younger athletes in a team event, who can ultimately progress to the National Community Games Finals. On the first day of competition, which includes U8-U12 there were 35 Athenry athletes competing, with everybody giving their all with impressive performances. For many of these athletes this was their first taste of real competition. Medals on the day were taken as follows: U12 Sadhbh Mc Donagh silver in hurdles and sprint, bronze in long jump. Leonore Church gold in high jump. Liam Shaw gold in shot putt. Mark O Halloran bronze in hurdles. U11 boys Aska Little and Cian

McNelis bronze in 60m sprint. Senan Treacy and Aska Little silver in 600m, Adam O Halloran and Cian McNelis bronze in 600m. The U11 boys also got silver in the relay. In the older age groups there was a great medal haul with 7 Gold, 7 Silver and 5 bronze across both track and field events. With Ryan McNelis taking four medals and Saoirse Healey taking three medals.

The Connacht championships this year were split across two venues due to the throws cage not being available in Dangan. The team and younger ages competed in Dangan whilst the older ages had to make the journey up to what ended up being a deluge in Sligo IT. Again the Connacht serve as a qualifier for the National Outdoor Championships, with the top 4 in each event going to Tullamore in July. In Dangan an impressive set of performances saw some of our young athletes on their way to the finals: Senan Treacy and Aska Little went one better than their Galway performance and took gold in the 600m. Aska and Cian McNelis were unlucky in that they were edged out of qualification in the sprint by two hundredths of a second – this is ten times faster than it takes you to blink. Leonore Church continued her good form from the indoor season by finishing fourth in the high jump and securing herself a place in the National Finals. For Liam Shaw there was double silver, in both Shot Putt and High Jump. Liam's inclusion in the high jump



Saoirse jumping - U12 boys cross country team



Calum with coach Iain

final necessitated a hasty change in summer holiday plans for the year !!. The variable weather in Sligo made for some challenging conditions. In the early part of the day there was rock splitting sunshine but this soon gave way to some of the worst torrential rain seen at Connacht Championships for many years. However, the weather did not put off our older athletes with Calum Healy coming 3rd in Hurdles and 4th in the long jump and sprint. Sarah Gilhooley took silver in the long hurdles, 800m and 1500m. Brandon continued another fine year with silver in hurdles and bronze in the sprint. The throws duo of Ryan McNelis and Cian Naughton took a gold apiece in the shot putt and javelin respectively, with Cian taking silver in the shot putt. Ryan finished off a great day with silver in the long jump and hurdles. Athenry AC has struggled in recent years with older age athletes and so it was encouraging to see medals being taken by Aine Farrell (3000m gold), Aisling Keane (silver in sprint and long jump) and Patryk Woleniuk a bronze in the hurdles. Our most senior of female juveniles, and role model to all our young female athletes, Shannen Lee took fourth place in both the steeplechase and the 3000m.

The County Offaly venue of Tullamore provides the location for the pinnacle of Juvenile Athletics competition, the National Championships. A mixture of injury and holidays meant that not all our qualifiers made it to the champs and unfortunately for those competed on the first of three days of competition there were no medals making it back west, however there were a bunch of PBs and raised profiles to be proud of. On the second day both Shannen Lee and Patryk Woleniuk made into onto the podium taking bronze in the steeplechase and hurdles respectively. The standard at this

years championships was one of the highest in recent years and to simply be at the championships is a massive achievement. So at this point the curtains were pulled on the track and field season, and the athletes were given their customary break to recover and prepare for the cross country season.

One final event took place before the spikes were hung up with the Community Games Finals in Athlone IT. Athenry AC athletes were well represented in the games, and there were medals for Calum Healy in the sprint (bronze) and Aoibhe Deeley in the hurdles (gold). Aoibhe's performance would probably go down as my performance of the year by any of our athletes. This was the first time Aoibhe had made it to the community games finals as an individual athlete and she had to come through several rounds before she got to the final. Aoibhe played a very well planned campaign, doing enough to secure her progression each round. However in the final she made sure that the performance was one of true dominance. She led from the gun and was the first to rise at each hurdle. As she came over the last hurdle she hit the ground in the lead and screamed to the line. Sunday 21st August 2016 will be marked as the day Aoibhe Deeley came of age and showed just what she can do in the hurdles.

Mud, lots and lots of mud, that is what cross country should be about, it gets you dirty but it also makes you stronger. At the start of the year Athenry AC were represented at the National Juvenile B Championships in Dundalk. Laura Kenny finished 52nd in U13 girls, Sarah Gilhooley finished 11th in the U15 girls and Shannen Lee and Aisling Kenny finished 7th and 14th respectively in the U17 girls. On the back of strong performances, both Shannen and Sarah

were selected to compete for the Galway Junior Ladies team at the Inter County Cross Country Championships where they helped Galway take the silver medal. The Galway Championships were held in Tuam (even ages) and in South Park (odd ages). In near perfect cross country conditions Athenry had good success in Tuam. Obviously training on our new facility in Moanbaun is having a positive effect on performance. In the U10 there were individual medals for Nessa Mangan (8th) and Conor Curran (2nd). At U12 Kayla Madden took a silver and doubled that up with a team silver (Kayla Madden, Leonore Church, Abigail O'Shea, Ciara Walsh, Eabha Rohan and Bronagh Deeley). The U12 boys competition saw gold for Mark O'Halloran and the U12 boys team took bronze (Mark O'Halloran, Aska Little, Sean Doggett and Liam Shaw). In U14 girls - Laura Kenny 5th Aileen Evans 8th. Rory Fitzpatrick took silver in the U14 boys and was part of the silver medal winning U14 boys team (Rory Fitzpatrick, Calum Healy, Fearghus Deeley and Geordan Mangan. Sarah Gilhooley continued to show her strength in cross country running taking gold in the U16 girls, with Aoibhe Deeley 4th and Emma Boyle 5th. At the older ages it was again a pleasure to see the club fielding an U18 team that took gold (Shannen Lee, Aine O'Farrell, Aisling Keane and Aishling Kenny). Shannen took an individual bronze.

The odd ages took us to a new venue for us in South Park, and a great and testing venue it was too. The club again had great success, with a lot of athletes running out of age. U11 boys took team bronze (Adam O'Halloran, Conor Curran, Aska Little, Caelin Harrington, Sean Doggett, Aidan Shaw). U13 girls took team bronze (Kayla Madden, Leonore Church, Abigail O'Shea, Aoibhe Murray). Kayla had a wonderful 4th place finish considering she was out of age. Rory Fitzpatrick went one better than the previous week taking the U13 gold and helped lead the U13 boys team to gold (Rory Fitzpatrick, Fearghus Deeley, Calum Healey, Darragh McNelis and Liam Shaw). There were individual medals for Sarah Gilhooley (gold) and Shannen Lee (silver).

The Connacht even ages were held on the South Park course in Galway and once again the Athenry team were well represented on the podium. U12 girls individual bronze for Kayla madden with team bronze for Kayla Madden, Leonore Church, Abigail O'Shea, Mia Lukina, Ciara Walsh and Eabha Rohan). Mark O'Halloran took an U12 silver. Rory Fitzpatrick, running out of age took an individual silver, Sarah Gilhooley took an

Individual bronze at U16 and the fantastic U18 girls team of Aine O'Farrell, Shannen Lee, Aishling Kenny and Leona Rabbittie took gold. In the uneven ages held at Westport House there was a great gold medal performance from Rory Fitzpatrick (U13) and in the U17 a silver for Aine O'Farrell and a 4th place finish for Sarah Gilhooly running out of age. The silver medal for Aine was a testament to the hard work that Aine has put in all year in training. The day was rounded off by a 5th place finish by Shannen Lee.

The athletics year drew to a close with the National Cross Country finals held on the new course in Abbotstown for the

even ages and the uneven ages in Dundalk. Unfortunately there were no medals this year, in what was some of the hottest competition ever at cross country, which is a reflection on the growing standard of cross country in Ireland. Rory Fitzpatrick was our highest place finisher and rounded off his year with an 18th place finish in the U13 championship, this followed on from his fantastic win in the National Primary Schools Cross Country Finals held in October.

I just want to finish by saying that in some ways it is unfair to pick out individual performances as the club is

more than just about winning medals, it is about providing a training and love for athletics and showing that each and every child has the ability to perform to the best of their abilities. To take a young athlete and watch them progress from struggling to run around a pitch to being able to run constantly for 30 minutes and enjoy doing it is what we are all about, and what we will keep on doing week in week out, helping them to win medals is a bonus.

2016 has been a great year for the club, and I have a feeling that we will be seeing some really special things in 2017.

2016 London Mini Marathon

Shauna Bocquet

On 23 April 2016 my Dad and I flew over to England as I was taking part in the London Mini Marathon the following day. It was my second time racing it, I came third in the U14 last year, and I was looking forward to race it again and hoped to win it this year. I trained hard all year and it was my main objective of the season.

When I woke up the next day I got ready and then we made our way to the start. We went into the waiting area and as we entered the building we were welcomed by the sound of people talking and there was music blaring on the speakers. I collected my number and t-shirt, each age and group category had a different coloured t-shirts to make it easier to know what age group they were from when they crossed the finish line.

I can recall the last 20mins leading up to the race, as I got into my chair and went outside to warm up with the other competitors. With only five mins before the race started the officials called us up to the start line. The boys were going first followed by the girls 2mins after. As I waited on the start line with the other competitors I looked around at the big crowds on the roadside. I couldn't wait to get going.

The boys went off, fast and furious, and then after two more minutes of waiting we were off. A girl called Kare, from the U17 hit the front, followed by Eden, also U17, and I was following close by. I stayed with Eden for about 800m and then she started to pull away, but I still had her in sight so I pushed myself to try and catch up. The three miles of racing flew by and, as I rounded the final bend, Eden was still in sight. The atmosphere in

the crowd on the Mall was surreal, clapping and cheering and banging the barriers. The finish line was in sight. I started to sprint for my life and with about two metres to go I took one final big push for the line. As I crossed the line a sense of joy and happiness came upon me. I had won the London Mini Marathon with a new PB of 15:20!

After I received my medal, I made my way towards the holding tent with my dad and my coach Ian. Then the four category winners had to go to a different tent for the trophy presentation where we were given a London Mini Marathon hoodie and Adidas tracksuits to put on. We were then brought outside where we were joined by all the able-bodied winners. The people who presented our trophies were Prince Harry and gymnast World Champion Max Whitlock. After the presentation, we went back to the holding tent where I got to meet some of the elite athletes including Paralympics gold



medallist Marcel Hug and World Champion and Paralympics gold medallist Tatyana McFadden who both won the Marathon on the day.

It was one of the most memorable days of my career so far, but I am already looking forward to defend my title in April next year!



The Harrier

Tom Mac Lochlainn

Patrick Carter was born in 1902 in the delightfully named townland of Wormhole in Killanin (between Moycullen and Oughterard). Of farming stock, we can safely assume that the young Patrick was a hardy boy, toughened by the never-ending tasks that were performed daily on a small holding. The Boer war, featuring trenches and concentration camps still raged in South Africa and dominated the headlines. The ideals of the Gaelic League and of Sinn Féin were permeating Irish Society at the time, but it was the world of athletics and particularly of distance running that fascinated the young Killanin man.

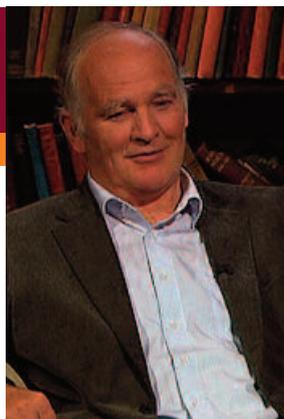
He was reared on stories about the illustrious runners John Joyce and Tom Hynes. Joyce, his cousin, represented the U.S.A. in the 1904 Olympics in St. Louis. He ran the 800 but the event did not suit his talents. Joyce was a multiple champion over the five mile (PB: 28:25.2 in 1904) and ten mile distances while at the same time, back at home, Hynes was one of Ireland's top distance runners and ran internationally for his country in 1905. Both were reared within a mile or two of the Carters and, with such heroes on his doorstep, it is little wonder that the young Patrick obsessed with running.

Patrick had his friends assist him with his training. Two or three of them ran laps with him in turn, constantly pushing the pace. His marathon training consisted of simply running the distance several times a week. This he

did by going the thirteen miles from Wormhole to Galway and home again. This punishing regime brought success at sports meetings all over the country at all distances from one mile to 26.2. His special diet was raw eggs of which he consumed over a dozen a day – while the hens were laying! Success followed success while far and wide he became known simply as 'The Harrier' and athletic excellence consumed his life.

Patrick's most prestigious win was in the Morren Marathon in Sligo in the early twenties. The race was run from the famous Cannon Gun in Strandhill to the village of Gurteen. To get to the start line Patrick crossed the lake at Knockferry and then cycled with another runner from Headford to Sligo. It was not the ideal taper and there was definitely no pasta party. He actually finished second but the 'winner' was subsequently disqualified for taking a lift on the crossbar of a supporter's bike in mid-race. On his return Patrick never mentioned his exploits, until news of the victory appeared in the Connacht Tribune the following week.

Patrick was a regular winner at meetings such as Shanaglish, Gort, Moyglass, Castlebar and of course Ross where he acted as secretary and included a marathon on the programme. He was still competing in his early fifties when he married Mary Joyce from Ardnasillagh and went on to rear a family of six boys and two girls.



The oldest two were still in their infancy when tragedy struck the family. Patrick lost his hand when his gun accidentally went off while out duck shooting. Two years later his house burned to the ground. All the family's possessions were lost including the cups, silver teapot, canteen of cutlery and innumerable trophies that Patrick had accumulated over his career. His response to the double tragedy of those difficult years was typical of The Harrier: he put the running shoes back on. Gradually he learned to cope with the imbalance in his body and rediscovered his old cadence. And while he would never be competitive again, in his late fifties he went back on the circuit. Those who remember him running in those days recall the one-armed competitor whose courage and passion for his sport was admired by all.

Not many runners win marathons. It is a huge achievement that sets Patrick apart as a special athlete. It is, however, the character and resilience with which he dealt with his disability that makes him a unique and inspirational man.



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37th Dublin Marathon NOT OUT

Peadar Nugent



Peadar, Máire and Michael

The first Dublin Marathon started at the stroke of midday in St Stephen's Green on the last Monday of October 1980. Then aged 37 years, I was among the 1,420 who finished the 26.2-mile course. The 37th edition of the now world-famous event, which has been held annually without a break in the intervening years and with ever-increasing numbers, started at 9AM in Fitzwilliam Street Upper on the last Sunday of October 2016. This was the first time that the event was staged other than on the October bank holiday Monday and, with in excess of 19,500 entries, the switch has been hailed a huge success. The course has changed several times over the years. In 1993 it was run over two laps for the first and only time. This didn't prove popular with the participants and it was no surprise that the experiment was never repeated. The event started and finished outside the GPO in O'Connell Street in a few years during the 1990s. A separate Walking Category was included in 1997 and 1998.

My marathon PB of 2:58:50 was achieved some 24 years ago in 1992 at the age of 49 years. It goes without saying that that has been the most memorable highlight of my marathon career. In 2012, twenty years later, despite being just one year short of the M70 grouping, I won bronze in a time of 4:15:30 in the M65 category in the National Marathon Championship which was run in conjunction with Dublin. This also features among my many treasured memories of the Dublin Marathon.

A diagnosis of osteoarthritis in spring 2014 put an abrupt end to my running. My knees had been painning me while running for almost two years before the scan which identified the problem. While advising me that I couldn't do worse than run because of this condition, my GP told me that it would be ok to walk. This has allowed me, along with 13 other hardy individuals, to continue my unbroken participation in all 37 Dublin Marathons to date. My knees don't pain me anymore, thank God.

Training went exceptionally well for me in preparation for this year's episode. I averaged roughly 35 miles each week for about two months before the big day. I consistently walked 10 miles each Wednesday and did a minimum of 15 miles each Saturday. I felt confident as I lined up near the head of the fourth wave beside my very loyal club mate Máire Treasa Beatty who was joining me for the sixth time since 2009. Máire Treasa put me on the spot when an RTÉ crew approached her just before the off and she adeptly shifted their attention to me while telling them that I was aged 73 years. She dug deeply for the walk and, despite her own injury woes and my hard steady pace, stayed with me all the way. The two of us had another club mate, Michael Glynn, for company in the later stages. We had hauled him in with a couple of miles to go and the three of us crossed the finish line together in a very satisfactory 5:28:06.



A group of runners is seen from behind, running on a paved road that leads towards a stone wall and rolling hills under a clear sky. The runners are wearing various athletic gear, including a white tank top, black shorts, a pink tank top, a blue tank top, and a yellow tank top.

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BLE Marathon of 1976

John Walshe



The passing earlier this year, within days of each other, of running greats Dick Hodgins and Jim McNamara recalled a famous marathon that took place 40 years ago last April in which both played leading roles.

The BLE National Marathon of 1976 was held in Limerick on Sunday April 11th. Nowadays, in the weeks leading up to a marathon, interest centres on the numbers taking part and those running for various charities. Back then, it was all about the competition. That marathon of 1976 was also of special significance as it acted as selection for the Olympic Games in Montreal. And, to add to the hype, the hot favourite was a local man named Neil Cusack.

Two years before, the East Tennessee State student had etched his name in the all-time honours list with a famous victory in the Boston Marathon, his time of 2:13:39 was then the fastest achieved by an Irishman. Dick Hodgins was the reigning Irish champion, his 2:19:45 the previous year in Galway giving him a close victory over Mick Molloy

with Jim McNamara finishing third. Danny McDaid – who had beaten Hodgins in the 1974 decider – was also in the line-up along with 1972 Olympic marathon representative, Donie Walsh.

Marathon running then was a different proposition compared to what's experienced today. The race took place at 2.30pm on a Sunday afternoon from the Dock Road in Limerick, straight out the Foynes road where, after 13 miles, the runners turned around and retraced their steps back to the finish. Entry fee was just 30 pence but all runners had to enclose a doctor's certificate indicating they were medically fit to compete. However, with only around 70 entrants the medical profession didn't make a fortune – it can only be imagined nowadays with thousands competing what this would entail!

After the morning rain had cleared, conditions were ideal as the runners faced the starter on the journey, which for at least two would guarantee them a seat on the plane to Montreal. A 14-man bunch went through 5km in 15:15 and at 10 miles, reached just

under 50 minutes, this had been reduced to seven.

Tony Brien, who had returned from the USA for the race, was joined by Cusack just before the turn along with McNamara, Father Paddy Coyle and McDaid. "The pace was faster than most of the runners had ever done on the track, they pulled away from me at 10 miles but I felt someone would have to crack and I kept running on," admitted Hodgins – who would eventually finish eighth – afterwards.

McDaid made his break at 30km, opening a slight gap on Brien with Cusack in third and McNamara, getting over a bad patch, in fourth. Over the closing six miles McDaid continued to increase his lead while a rejuvenated McNamara, just a week short of his 37th birthday, was the surprise packet as he moved into second, thereby clinching Olympic selection.

McDaid's time of 2:13:06 was the fastest ever achieved on Irish soil with McNamara knocking a huge chunk from his previous best to cross the line in 2:14:54 as a tired Cusack finished third on 2:17:07. For the local hero however, justice prevailed as he was later added to the team for Montreal.

Donegal postman McDaid was then aged 34 and many considered his Limerick victory the swansong to what had been a long and successful career. However, his greatest day had yet to come. Three years later, in the quagmire conditions of Limerick Racecourse, he played a captain's role when finishing 11th in the World C-C behind John Treacy's individual victory, thereby guaranteeing the Irish team the silver medals.

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