



ATHENRY Athletic Club

Fields of Athenry 10k Road Race

St. Stephen's Day 2007
race programme

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Welcome

to the *Fields of Athenry* 10k Road Race!

For the senior members of Athenry AC this race is the culmination of our athletic year and we look forward to it enormously. We like to think that we're a sociable bunch and because of that we get great enjoyment out of welcoming our fellow runners and walkers to Athenry each December for this race. A huge number of people contribute to the preparation for and organisation of this event. In order to ensure that everything goes smoothly on our big day, club members have been meeting, emailing, making phone calls and pressing the flesh for months in advance. A considerable amount of money is spent and a huge amount of voluntary effort is forthcoming. As a team we've done everything we can think of to ensure that all of our participants and spectators have a safe and enjoyable day out. If you think we could improve the race in any way please let us know.

For the first time this year we've included a junior run into the day's activities for athletes under 16 years of age. We're particularly proud of this development and wish all of the young people taking part in today's inaugural junior run the very best of luck. Perhaps in years to come some of these runners will bring their own families to Athenry and be able to say that they took part in the very first Athenry Junior Fun Run - we certainly hope so.

Over the last three years, the race has been able to donate €1,900 to GOAL, Croí, Cancer Care West, Croí and the North East Galway Belarus Fund.

All that's left now is for us to wish you all a good race. Whether you're racing, running, pushing your wheelchair, jogging, walking or limping we hope that you have a good time and meet at least some of your targets - if you do, we'll have met some of ours.

Have Fun.

The Athenry AC 'Crew'.

http://www.athenryac.com/contact_details

Low-Rising Hills of Athenry

Mike Tobin's Field of Athenry 2006



Having set a PB on the Athenry 10k course in 2005, I was looking forward all year to St Stephen's Day 2006. It's the closest race to home and a nice one to prevent overdoing the turkey and wine on Christmas Day/Night. Having spent the autumn however struggling with injuries, I wasn't looking for a PB this time around - happy to complete it in a reasonable time. I ran the Port Tunnel race two weeks previously in just over 37 minutes and had only managed one training session since then - so anything in and around the 37 minutes would do. Initially I had planned to make it a family day with us all travelling down to Athenry but a few sick kids put paid to that idea and I travelled alone.

Got to Athenry about an hour before the race and already the Pres grounds were thronged with runners. Popped into the check-in area to collect my number from Race Grand Marshal James London. A few Craughwell AC runners had already got there before me. The new race HQ and facilities seemed much better than other years - definitely nice to be starting in the town. Warmed up with a few Craughwell colleagues and changed into the racers as the start time approached. The start was at the back of the train station, with a short uphill.

My impression of the Athenry 10k from previous years was of a pretty level or slightly downhill first 5km as we went into town and then a slight uphill for the 2nd 5k. With the 2 halves reversed because of the new course layout, it would be interesting to see if the uphill/downhill seemed the same. I lined up a row back from the start line, just behind Darragh O'Brien from Loughrea. Myself and Darragh had a good few battles since this time last year. I had beaten Darragh for the first time in any race at this event last year and in the first 6 months of the year, repeated that on a few occasions - however, he had definitely gone beyond my level in the last few months, clocking some great times and looking in good shape for today. Normally, I'd endeavour to stay with Darragh - this time I didn't even consider it.

After a few words from Mick Rice, Oliver Geraghty got the race underway. It went off at a fast pace and I managed to maintain a good early pace. Mark Davis, who had recently returned from injury and ran a good Tunnel race, hared off and looked like he was on for another good time. Towards the end of the first mile, Ray Glynn, Ian Egan, Martin McEvilly and T.J. Whyte glided past me - I was already feeling the pace a little so didn't try to respond. The miles passed by ok - at the three mile mark my watch showed 18 minutes so I was happy enough with my pace. I was feeling confident for the 2nd half of the race and hoped to go under 37 minutes as I had the impression of a long downhill into the town. However, that impression was shattered once we passed the GAA pitch where the old race start used to be. Over the following miles, hills appeared out of nowhere - knocking my time back slowly. Clearly a hill is not a hill when you meet it early in a race as I had never noticed these hills last year.

As I got back into the town, and reached the turn for the arch, I glanced at the watch. It showed 36 something so I put the foot down to try to get under 37 - unfortunately that wasn't to be and I finished in 37.12. Still, possibly my best paced race ever - 6 min/mile for first and second halves. I was happy enough to have completed it as I hadn't much training done for it. Great performance from Darragh O'Brien, going way under 36 minutes - definitely out of my league now! Some great performances also from my Craughwell AC buddies, with many making significant improvements on their times of last year.

Craughwell AC's pride of place has to go to Kathleen Waters and Tom Callanan on over 7 minute improvements on last year! Although this was eclipsed by the club's first time to feature at the top of an individual award category when Brian Murphy claimed first place in the men's O50 category with a superb 40.04. Talking to Brian after the race (and before he got his prize), he seemed disappointed with not breaking 40. I asked him when he had last broken it... and he responded that it was over 15 years ago! Fastest race in 15 years... not a bad achievement at all!

2007 Galway May 5KM Road Race Series

a short report

James Landon

The Galway May 5KM Road Race Series goes from strength to strength with more races and many more competitors than in its first year, 2006. The final surplus of €2,329 found its way to the local AAI County Board to help promote and finance juvenile athletics in the county too.

The series was also blessed with uniformly dry weather through the five legs, starting at Newcastle, outside Athenry, on Tuesday, 1 May. Over 200 runners, joggers and walkers lined up and traversed a new clockwise course finishing just outside the village itself. It was literally all downhill once the runners got to the four KM mark.

Round two was in Tuam, around the same course as last year, a truncated version of their 8KM course. A strong crowd of over 200 again turned out on what was another enjoyable evening. Going up that hill just off the N17 doesn't get any easier, no matter how many times it's raced.

Craughwell was next up, again over their well-worn 5KM course. Our luck with the good weather held up with a massive 236 finishing at the old railway bridge. The lads going into training at the GAA pitch just before the two KM mark still don't know what they are missing :).

The fourth leg saw Loughrea being added to the series. The course was new to almost everyone who lined up just outside the town on the very old Galway road. And what a treat we were in for. "Out" two KM, "across" one

KM and "in" two KM with the stretch between three and four KM akin to the "Hell of the West" in Connemara such was its unremitting up-hill nature. My personal favourite race of the five this year! Gerry Ryan broke 15 minutes too; good running in any company.

The last Tuesday, 29 May, saw us going back in to the other Newcastle, Dangan this time, and a cross-country-ish course around the NUI Galway complex. A very wide start allowed traffic to settle down to manageable proportions before the course narrowed to the pathway down by the Corrib. Two laps of same before finishing. Over 275 came home that evening. Paul McNamara won his second race of the series.



Who's that with Thomas?

Afterwards, the stragglers retired to nearby Kelehans for some refreshments, red series T-shirts (expertly designed by Johnny O'Connor of Proactive) for those who ran in four or all five races and some spot prizes. Many of them had to be chased off the premises after closing time with all the talk of how 2008 could possibly top what took place in 2007.

Race	Starters	No. Races Ran	People		
Athenry	211	Five	79	Loughrea AC	13
Tuam	202	Four	82	Mayo AC	10
Craughwell	236	Three	52	Galway Tri	8
Loughrea	238	Two	56	CRH	8
GCH	275	One	169	Galway M&T	7
				HP	4
				Suilean Gym	3
				Renmore M&T	3
				Border Ramblers	3
Category	Number	Club	Entrants		
Female Runner	169	Athenry AC	35		
Male Runner	247	GCH	26		
Female Walker	23	Craughwell AC	16		
Male Walker	1	Tuam AC	15		



County Galway **5km Series** - May 2007

Athenry 1st May * Tuam 8th May * Craughwell 15th May * Loughrea 22nd May * Galway 29th May

What A Way To Kick Start Your Summer



Athenry AC 5k - Race 1



Tuam AC 5k - Race 2



Craughwell AC 5k - Race 3



Loughrea AC 5k - Race 4



Galway City Harriers 5k - Race 5

Athenry Women Take Their Rightful Place



The year 2007 was a turning point for the involvement of female athletes in Athenry AC. For quite some time the club had been a little on the male-dominated side but all that has started to change. Although we've always had accomplished women athletes involved with the club, their numbers in comparison with their male counterparts, had been low. At the time of writing we have thirteen female members in the senior club and that number is steadily increasing.

The Saturday morning training sessions have provided a focus for women's involvement in the club with many new members being attracted to the beginners group which was organised earlier in the year by Maria Hehir and Alan Burke. Many of these newcomers have graduated, in their own time, to the main club get-together which happens each Saturday morning at 09:00am at the church car-park in the town. The beginners group has now been replaced by a programme called 'Fit4Life' which encourages both men and women to become involved with the sport of athletics for fun and fitness. There's a separate article on the 'Fit4Life' group.

In addition to enjoying the training, the chat and their new-found fitness, many of the Athenry women have gone on to represent the club in races like the Dublin Women's Mini-Marathon and The Connemara Breakfast Run. With such a busy schedule of events in prospect for 2007 the involvement of Athenry women in this friendly racing scene looks set to grow even further.

Athenry women have also achieved an amazing level of success at the competitive end of the sport. The star of the year without a doubt has to be Ann Carter who claimed two County titles, namely the County 10k Road Championship and the County Senior Cross Country title. The Athenry women's team, led home by Ann, were silver medallists in the County Senior Cross-Country Championships, just being pipped by Loughrea. Ann also led a team of Galway women to national silver medals in the B Category of the National Inter-County Cross Country Championships in the Curragh this autumn.

It looks like the future of women's athletics in Galway is bright.

Fit4Life! Give It a Shot!

The Fit4Life programme has been devised by those clever boffins at the AAI as a way for adults of all abilities and backgrounds to become involved in exercise for fun and fitness. The huge success of events like the Women's Mini Marathon, the Streets of Galway 8km and other similar events show that there's an appetite out there for involvement in athletics for people who just want to get a little bit fitter and to enjoy some company and fun along the way.

Athenry AC have become involved in the Fit4Life programme by organising our very own group that meets up twice a week and builds towards completing one of the local road races. The group benefits from the expertise of an experienced coach and the personal encouragement that only a group like this can offer. Other Galway Athletics clubs like Galway City Harriers, Craughwell AC and Tuam AC have their own Fit4Life groups which have also been a huge success.



If you'd like to find out more about Athenry AC's Fit4Life group contact Alan Burke at Alan@AthenryAC.com and for other groups that might be more convenient you can call the AAI's Regional Development Officer for the West of Ireland, our very own Paul McNamara, on 087-2693675 who will put you in touch with the right person in your area.



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Athenry AC's very own Olympian

Paul Hession, looks backwards and forward

Two thousand and seven was a great year for me. I ran 7 Irish records at three different distances. I came 12th at the World Championships and 7th at the European Indoors. I ran in three Golden Leagues and the World Athletics Final. However, it all matters nothing at this stage.

It's all about next year... the Olympic Games in Beijing, the highest honour in most sports. Last time around, in 2004 I missed Athens by 0.02 seconds; not once but twice! I was still very young (21) and maybe it was for the best in the long run that I didn't go. I've stayed hungry ever since and this time I think I am ready not only to go but to do myself and Athenry proud.

The Olympic Games seems to catch people's imaginations like nothing else. Whenever I am home in Athenry the topic of conversation always comes round to the Olympics - when is it, where is it etc. It's a great chance for some of the athletes on the Irish team to get a bit of exposure and promote the sport that we all love. A few people might have watched the World's last summer but everyone seems to watch the Olympics!

It is great for someone like me from the West of Ireland to get to these heights. I have often found down through the years that Connaught can be the poor relation of the other provinces. However, at an elite level, we had four athletes at the Worlds in Osaka and, at the grassroots level, we have some good juvenile squads being put together that will hopefully bring more and more people through.

I'm delighted to see the hard work that is being put into my club Athenry AC at every level and the Fields of Athenry Road Race is testament to this renewed vigour and passion. As it grows from strength to strength every year I can also see athletics in the West going in the same direction...onwards and upwards!



Fields of Athenry

Photos Gallery



Fields of Athenry

Results 2006

1	30:12	Gary Thornton	71	42:21	David Huane	141	46:24	James Elwood
2	31:25	Paul McNamara	72	42:24	Diarmuid Moloney	142	46:25	Enda Loughnane
3	31:50	Michael O'Connor	73	42:33	Terry Grogan	143	46:30	Caroline Burke
4	33:07	Dermot Galvin	74	42:36	Paul Curran	144	46:35	Kieran Whyte
5	33:57	Erno Kis-Kirly	75	42:37	Tom Elwood	145	46:37	Francis Keenan
6	34:04	Brian Murphy	76	42:37	Michelle Lynch	146	46:38	Jarlath Fitzgerald
7	34:10	Martin Corcoran	77	42:38	Jim Daly	147	46:42	Fergal Byrne
8	34:14	Kevin D'Arcy	78	42:40	James Lally	148	46:43	Diarmuid Quill
9	35:42	Darragh O'Brien	79	42:45	Tara Whyte	149	46:45	Aiden Burke
10	35:59	Ronan O'Flynn	80	42:46	Deirdre O'Mahony	150	46:50	Andrew Parkinson
11	36:00	Tom O'Dowd	81	42:46	Darren Murphy	151	46:51	Tom Hussey
12	36:04	Ray Glynn	82	42:52	Fionnuala Keane	152	46:51	Kieran Ruane
13	36:17	Ian Egan	83	43:13	Josephine Gardiner	153	46:53	Tom Early
14	36:32	Joe O'Donnell	84	43:16	Brian Heavey	154	46:56	Graham Surman
15	36:37	Mark Davis	85	43:20	Mark Breen	155	46:58	Sinead Foran
16	36:49	Martin McEvilly	86	43:22	Fergal Naughton	156	47:01	Michael Gardner
17	36:58	Tommy Joe Whyte	87	43:28	Cathal Greaney	157	47:05	Pat Flaherty
18	37:03	Lucy Brennan	88	43:29	Helen Lavin	158	47:06	Dave Monaghan
19	37:12	Michael Tobin	89	43:22	Gerard Corcoran	159	47:06	Martin Hynes
20	37:59	John Forde	90	43:34	Thelma McMahon	160	47:08	P Mavey
21	38:06	Danny Carr	91	43:35	John King	161	47:08	Pádraig O'Flynn
22	38:10	Patrick Coen	92	43:35	Derek Vaughan	162	47:08	Keith Hynes
23	38:15	Hubie Conway	93	43:36	Michael Higgins	163	47:09	Bernard Geraghty
24	38:19	Seamus Gilthooley	94	43:37	David Monaghan	164	47:15	Keith Curley
25	38:23	Damien Collins	95	43:41	Kevin O'Loughlin	165	47:19	Edel Crehan
26	38:27	Larry Kelly	96	43:46	Rory Kearney	166	47:19	Johnny Lane
27	38:29	David Kearins	97	43:46	Anselm McGowan	167	47:20	John Lynch
28	38:30	Andrew Talbot	98	43:46	Rynal Browne	168	47:26	Eimear Butler
29	38:33	Donal O'Rourke	99	43:47	Brendan Monaghan	169	47:29	Jonathan Reid
30	38:52	Regina Casey	100	43:48	Ian Fitzpatrick	170	47:30	Mark Gordon
31	38:53	Raymond Joyce	101	43:53	Hubert Crehan	171	47:33	Donal McHale
32	39:08	Eoin Murphy	102	43:55	Albert Lane	172	47:35	John McDermott
33	39:11	Stephen Donnelly	103	44:00	Brendan Cusack	173	47:38	John Royston
34	39:13	Malcolm Hosty	104	44:24	Niall Burke	174	47:42	Cathal Murphy
35	39:13	Gabriel Brennan	105	44:24	Barry Smyth	175	47:44	Albert Mannion
36	39:15	Gerry Fahy	106	44:27	Aideen de Paor	176	47:49	Pearl McDonagh
37	39:16	Wally Walsh	107	44:35	Eoin Ward	177	47:54	Tom O'Connor (Other)
38	39:21	Brendan Loughnane	108	44:39	Seán Lally	178	47:57	Maura Faisey
39	39:24	Oliver McGeehan	109	44:43	Enda Devitt	179	47:58	Barry O'Sullivan
40	39:27	Tom Hunt	110	44:52	Gabriel Gardiner	180	47:59	Martin Talbot
41	39:29	Dermot Burke	111	44:56	Dermot Caffrey	181	47:59	Erik Tierney
42	39:32	Pat O'Dwyer	112	44:57	Michael London	182	48:00	Philip Niland
43	40:04	Brian Murphy	113	44:58	Fiachra McLoughlin	183	48:08	John Reilly
44	40:22	Ronan Casey	114	45:00	Aonghus McGuinness	184	48:15	Elaine Newell
45	40:27	Derek Murray	115	45:01	Caoimhe Burke	185	48:16	Colm MacEoin
46	40:35	Brian Duffy	116	45:09	Jane Campbell	186	48:17	Sean Walsh
47	40:37	Karol Kelly	117	45:14	John Heneghan	187	48:18	Maurice Dempsey
48	40:43	Vincent Jordan	118	45:15	Frank Flannery	188	48:18	Mark Rooney
49	40:44	John Devlin	119	45:16	Gavin Glynn	189	48:19	Michael Quinn
50	40:48	Conor O'Rourke	120	45:17	Dara Burke	190	48:20	Derek Conerney
51	40:49	Fergal O'Dowd	121	45:20	Mary McHugh	191	48:23	Michelle Rowley
52	40:53	Enda Higgins	122	45:21	Sean Whelan	192	48:24	Conor Price
53	40:55	Colman Greene	123	45:23	Olive Loughnane	193	48:36	Donagh McDonagh
54	40:55	Paul Flannery	124	45:24	Roger Rushe	194	48:39	Niall Mitchell
55	41:02	Gerry Kilfeather	125	45:25	Ray O'Connor	195	48:46	Michael Ruane
56	41:04	Tony McNicholas	126	45:25	Rhona O'Mahony	196	49:13	Paul Hurney
57	41:28	John Connolly	127	45:26	Brian Keenan	197	49:15	Jean O'Connor
58	41:40	Conor Flanagan	128	45:26	Patrick Scully	198	49:15	Sighle Burke
59	41:42	Daniel Kavanagh	129	45:30	Brian Kelly	199	49:17	David Little
60	41:47	Ingo Zehner	130	45:35	Adrian McCallion	200	49:19	M Walsh
61	41:55	Adrian Healy	131	45:56	Esther O'Flaherty	201	49:26	Enda Crehan
62	41:55	Tony Nevin	132	46:07	Martin Hynes	202	49:35	Richard Monahan
63	42:03	Alan Thornton	133	46:08	Bernie Kelly	203	49:35	Tony O'Callaghan
64	42:07	Patrick Concannon	134	46:11	Philip O'Toole	204	49:39	Frank Kitt
65	42:08	Ray Somers	135	46:11	Noel Fox	205	49:40	Allen Moran
66	42:09	Alan Howard	136	46:12	Owen Percy	206	49:41	Francis Byrne
67	42:11	Colm Harney	137	46:18	Derrick Mitchell	207	49:45	Donal Geraghty
68	42:13	David Ryan	138	46:19	Michael Keane	208	49:49	Anthony Fitzpatrick
69	42:16	Adrian Fitzmaurice	139	46:20	Gerry Killeen	209	49:56	James O'Dea
70	42:17	Michael Burke	140	46:22	Tommy Grealy	210	49:56	Catriona Nic Caba

211	49:58	Eamon Concannon	298	56:14	Ger McManamon	385	1:11:31	Mary Mullins
212	50:00	Stephen Greaney	299	56:32	Ellis Foran	386	1:12:26	Frances Carr
213	50:05	Cathal McDonagh	300	56:33	Peadar de Barra	387	1:13:13	Justine O'Kane
214	50:06	Ronan Lyons	301	56:39	Hanna Kelly	388	1:14:04	Marka Gilhooly
215	50:06	Ronan Kelly	302	56:40	Rena Doherty	389	1:14:05	Aoife Doherty
216	50:09	Morgan Geraghty	303	56:40	Tom Newell	390	1:16:25	Edel Burke
217	50:12	Sean Noone	304	56:41	Mary Molloy	391	1:16:32	Bernie Quinn
218	50:20	Edward Egan	305	56:46	Gerry Sweeney	392	1:16:41	Cliodhna O'Mahony
219	50:27	Val Fogarty	306	56:46	Gerry Rohan	393	1:16:46	Grainne O'Mahony
220	50:28	Noel Fahey	307	56:58	Tomás MacLochlainn	394	1:17:04	Michael Glynn
221	50:31	Leona Spelman	308	57:11	Shane Donohue	395	1:17:06	Noreen Doherty
222	50:32	Coley Kelly	309	57:18	Siobhan O'Shaughnessy	396	1:17:07	Therese Farrell
223	50:32	John Burke	310	57:27	Fergus Murray	397	1:17:10	Anne Connell
224	50:36	Deirdre Waldron	311	57:27	Ruth Kilcawley	398	1:17:20	Ashla Ward
225	50:42	Adrienne Walsh	312	57:31	Michael Doherty	399	1:17:20	Catherine Cahill
226	50:44	Marin Keane	313	57:45	Andrea Ridge	400	1:17:21	Maeve Donohue
227	50:45	Aileen McNamara	314	57:49	Maura O'Shaughnessy	401	1:17:36	Gerry Leslie
228	50:54	Frank Burke	315	57:49	Deirdre O'Shaughnessy	402	1:17:37	Brendan Barrett
229	50:56	Patrick Kelly	316	57:50	Brian Sweeney	403	1:17:56	Maureen Cox
230	50:57	Lisa Kelly	317	57:56	Emily Burke	404	1:17:56	Joe Frazer
231	51:04	John Morgan	318	58:03	Siobhan Niland	405	1:18:13	Claire Burke
232	51:04	John Ward	319	58:04	Oliver Niland	406	1:19:57	Teresa Cannon
233	51:09	Cormac McCarthy	320	58:07	Pat Reidy	407	1:20:02	Ann Gardner
234	51:12	Peter O'Halloran	321	58:12	Helen Hallinan	408	1:20:05	Eileen Walsh
235	51:18	John McInerney	322	58:18	Michael Grealy	409	1:20:08	Anne Hynes
236	51:27	Mickey Kelly	323	58:24	Mary McCann	410	1:20:10	Della Nohilly
237	51:48	Oria Donnelly	324	58:25	Shirley Hanley	411	1:20:10	Paul Feighery Snr
238	51:54	Michael Kenna	325	58:27	Geraldine Fahey-Finn	412	1:20:11	Kathleen Hogan
239	51:57	Fergal O'Neill	326	58:28	Peadar Nugent	413	1:20:11	Martin Falsely
240	52:04	Tommy Morrissey	327	58:32	Sharon Rafferty	414	1:20:12	Tom Gormally
241	52:05	Claran de Barra	328	58:34	Kevin de Barra	415	1:20:13	Joe Monaghan
242	52:08	Tomas Keys	329	58:42	Annette Crehan	416	1:23:28	Catherine Mannion
243	52:11	Tom Conlon	330	58:43	Dolores Foley	417	1:23:29	Claire Dempsey
244	52:13	Jean Mackey	331	58:47	Eimear Fitzmaurice	418	1:25:36	Neasa Carr
245	52:14	Kathleen Waters	332	59:03	Kathleen Waters	419	1:25:37	Celine O'Loan
246	52:19	Declan McGrath	333	59:07	Paul Kilkenny	420	1:25:54	Rose Hillary
247	52:20	Darren Callanan	334	59:08	Gerry Hurley	421	1:25:55	Brid Hillary
248	52:26	Mary Walsh	335	59:09	Mary Prendergast	422	1:25:56	Attracta Hillary
249	52:29	Mark McCormack	336	59:13	Andrew Gavin	423	1:26:01	Etain Wilson
250	52:31	Lesley Kelly	337	59:13	David Ruane	424	1:29:00	Lorraine Fahy
251	52:32	Thomas Hynes	338	59:17	Mairéad MacCoin	425	1:29:01	Majella Fahy
252	52:39	Unknown F in pink top	339	59:22	Fiona O'Brien	426	1:31:00	Stella Kim
253	52:39	Eoghan Hanley	340	1:00:07	Teresa Lavin	427	1:31:00	Siobhán Keane
254	52:40	Michael Quinn	341	1:00:07	Noel Gorman	428	1:31:00	Treasa Keane
255	52:48	Dervilla D'Arcy	342	1:00:45	John Keating	429	1:32:00	Aine Glynn
256	52:49	Triona Coppinger	343	1:01:11	Olive Coleman	430	1:32:00	Enda Glynn
257	52:51	Liam Fitzpatrick	344	1:01:12	Sharon Prendergast	431	1:32:00	Martin Hynes
258	52:52	Jarlath McInerney	345	1:01:34	Sheila Cannon	432	1:33:00	Maria Mackey
259	52:57	Val Murray	346	1:01:34	William Cannon	433	1:34:00	Nicola Rabbittie
260	53:00	Anne Kelly	347	1:01:57	Gavan Duffy	434	1:34:00	Pat Holland
261	53:01	John Rafferty	348	1:02:21	Denis Cummins	435	1:34:00	Deirdre Rabbittie
262	53:03	Gerald McGough	349	1:02:21	Maria Lane	436	1:34:00	Maeve Noone
263	53:04	Sean Doherty	350	1:02:23	Michael Kelly	437	1:34:00	Anne Higgins
264	53:18	Alan Ledwith	351	1:02:36	Marie Allen	438	1:34:00	Mary Holland
265	53:23	Maura Moran	352	1:02:40	Aoife Ruane	439	1:34:00	Anthony Ryan
266	53:28	Steve Williams	353	1:03:15	Tracey Fahy	440	1:34:00	Louise Byrne
267	53:30	Edel Silke	354	1:03:15	Suzanne Morrissey	441	1:34:00	Tara Prenderville
268	53:31	Clodagh Grealy	355	1:03:32	Suzanne Joyce	442	1:34:00	Eileen Trill
269	53:31	Heather Smith	356	1:03:46	Declan Murphy	443	1:34:00	Patsy Trill
270	53:34	Anne-Marie Walsh	357	1:04:04	Maeve Clancy	444	1:35:00	Chloe Gormally
271	53:34	Liam Conroy	358	1:04:05	Niamh Clancy	445	1:35:00	Tanya Geraghty
272	53:34	Neil Walsh	359	1:04:32	David Grealy	446	1:35:00	Bernie Kelly (Other)
273	53:43	Kerrill Rohan	360	1:04:43	Marie Keating	447	1:35:00	Caroline Deehan
274	53:49	Kevin O'Dea	361	1:04:52	Grainne Costello	448	1:35:00	Mary McKenna
275	53:51	Conor O'Grady	362	1:04:58	Martin McDonagh	449	1:35:00	Mary Gilhooly
276	54:01	Oia Kearns	363	1:05:29	Anna Gallagher-Reilly	450	1:35:00	Helena Fahy
277	54:05	Paul Concannon	364	1:05:47	Iain Shaw	451	1:35:00	Maura Burke
278	54:17	Louise Harliwich	365	1:06:07	Grainne Clancy	452	1:36:00	Maura Gannon
279	54:17	Jennifer Donnelly	366	1:07:06	Karen Connole	453	1:36:00	Breda Fox
280	54:28	Sean O'Connell	367	1:07:07	Gillian O'Loughlin	454	1:36:00	Suzanne Diviney
281	54:44	Gemma McDonagh	368	1:07:14	Mary Coyle	455	1:42:00	Majella O'Dea
282	54:44	Sinead O'Connor	369	1:07:15	Anne Monaghan	456	1:42:00	Declan Lally
283	54:47	Gerard Ryan	370	1:07:32	David Donnelly	457	1:42:00	Deardriu Lally
284	54:48	Tom O'Connor	371	1:07:37	Pauline Hardiman	458	1:42:00	Mairead Cooley
285	54:51	Mark Grehan	372	1:08:18	Padraig Farragher	459	1:42:00	Frank Mulvihill
286	54:52	Brendan Davey	373	1:08:22	Noel Reardon	460	1:46:00	Valerie King
287	55:10	Finbarr Connolly	374	1:09:10	Dolores Kyne	461	FNSHD	Gina French
288	55:16	Kama Rowse	375	1:09:11	Wendy Byrne	462	FNSHD	Brian Kelly
289	55:16	Patricia MacCoin	376	1:09:52	Ashling Kavanagh	463	FNSHD	James Murphy
290	55:18	Oliver Carroll	377	1:09:53	Sean Fahy	464	FNSHD	Edel Talbot
291	55:30	Clare Hingott	378	1:10:07	Gamma Garvey	465	FNSHD	Des Glynn
292	55:34	Tadhg Naughton	379	1:10:08	Helen Garvey	466	FNSHD	Naomh Gearty
293	55:36	John Walsh	380	1:10:30	Eimear Grealy	467	FNSHD	Majella Monaghan
294	55:38	Bridgett McDaid	381	1:10:30	Julie Garvey	468	FNSHD	Mary Somers
295	55:45	Tom Callanan	382	1:10:31	Edel Breslin	469	FNSHD	Jimmy Higgins
296	55:47	Paraic O'Dea	383	1:11:02	Mary Coyne	470	FNSHD	Olive Kelly
297	56:02	Niall Flynn	384	1:11:02	V.beke Soerensen			

Fields of Athenry 10k

Race Result History

Year	Men's Winner	Time	Woman's Winner	Time	Finishers	<40:00	<50:00	<60:00
2002	Paul McNamara	31:15	Kathryn Casserly	36:57	69	13	44	59
2003	Noel Kelly	32:46	Fionnuala Keane	38:18	171	30	92	126
2004	Paul McNamara	31:11	Lucy Brennan	36:36	253	38	130	179
2005	Gary Thornton	30:34	Lucy Brennan	37:30	351	51	168	252
2006	Gary Thornton	30:12	Lucy Brennan	37:03	470	42	211	339

Stalwarts

The following 13 people hold the distinction of competing in all five "Fields of Athenry" 10km races to date. We wish them the best of luck on their sixth outing this year.

Name	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Bernie Kelly	45:48	49:31	52:05	44:20	46:08
Danny Carr	36:15	38:11	36:00	36:41	38:06
Darragh O'Brien	38:16	40:53	39:59	37:13	35:42
Fionnuala Keane	39:12	38:18	39:11	39:38	42:52
Kevin O'Dea	48:27	50:16	51:25	46:44	53:49
Martin Keane	51:20	50:02	54:48	51:17	50:44
Martin McEvilly	36:25	36:01	36:08	37:20	36:49
Mary Mullins	1:05:50	1:00:37	1:06:27	1:07:22	1:11:31
Patrick Kelly	49:16	51:48	52:15	50:20	50:56
Roger Rushe	45:07	44:29	46:15	44:33	45:24
Siobhan Keane	1:37:10	1:34:38	1:35:20	1:30:00	1:31:00
Tomás MacLochlainn	49:57	56:35	50:10	52:23	56:58
Tommy Joe Whyte	36:35	36:16	36:29	38:40	36:58

2006 Prize Winners

Category	Pos	Name	Category	Pos	Name
Senior Men	1st	Gary Thornton	Senior Women	1st	Lucy Brennan
Senior Men	2nd	Paul McNamara	Senior Women	2nd	Regina Casey
Senior Men	3rd	Michael O'Connor	Senior Women	3rd	Michelle Lynch
Men's Junior	1st	Seamus Gilhooley	Women's Junior	1st	Eimear Fitzmaurice
Men's V40	1st	Martin Corcoran	Women's V35	1st	Helen Lavin
Men's V45	1st	Tommy Joe Whyte	Women's V40	1st	Josephine Gardiner
Men's V50	1st	Brian Murphy	Women's V45	1st	Mary McHugh
Men's V55	1st	Martin McEvilly	Women's V50	1st	Adrienne Walsh
Men's V60	1st	Martin Hynes	Women's Team	1st	GCH
Men's V65	1st	Roger Rushe			
Men's V70	1st	Mickey Kelly			
Men's Team	1st	GCH			

20 Questions

by Bernie Kelly, GCH.



1. What shoes do you train in?

ASICS Gel Kayanos.

2. How many miles did you run last week?

20.

3. What's your favourite racing distance?

10 miles.

4. Where's your favourite place to train?

Dangan or Knockma Hill about 5 miles west of Tuam.

5. What's your favourite race or event each year?

Ballycotton 10.

6. What annoys you most at races?

Athletes who having finished their race who decide to cool down by running back up the course. It's soul destroying as you struggle to finish these guys are jogging towards you all relaxed and happy looking. Agh!!!

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

Isle of Man Marathon. It sounds like a nice relaxed marathon with small numbers taking part. I spent a very enjoyable week holidaying in the Isle of Man many years ago and thought it a lovely island.

8. What was your best-ever running performance?

Longford Marathon '02, 3:35:43 and I also have to mention Connemara Ultra Marathon (39.3 miles) '04, 6:16:13.

9. What was your worst-ever running performance?

I consider taking part, enjoying the race and finishing to be a good performance. I have always done that so I don't have a worst ever running performance. I have had some awful slow times but what the hell I wasn't built for speed definitely more for comfort.

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

Not so much the strangest thing that I have seen but the strangest thing I experienced was a friend during one of the longest runs I had done in preparing for my first marathon singing to keep me going as we finished our run, "The wheels on the bus go round and round..."

11. Favourite piece of running gear?

Aldi blue and yellow top, seem to have had it for ever.

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

Maura Falsey Kilmurry/Ibrickane my "younger" cousin and great friend.

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

Get off road as much as you can. Grass is easier on the joints and has less impact on the body. This is really important in training for a marathon or other long distance. Thankfully I run injury free most of the time and I think off road training has been an important factor in this.

14. In ten years time will you still be running?

Try and stop me!

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

Would be really disappointed but would stay involved in whatever way I could. I really enjoy the buzz of the race and whether giving out the water or picking up the rubbish I would still be a part of it.

16. Have you ever been bitten by a dog while running?

No, but had a very close encounter with one on the Adare 10K two years ago.

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

Not during a run but in training, yes, one evening in Dangan.

18. Favourite post-race food?

Black with loads of butter and weak tea.

19. Most embarrassing ever running-related moment?

See Q17.

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

Sonia O'Sullivan.

Informal report of the goings-on over at the European Veteran Championships in Germany

Philip Magnier



Four Galway athletes were delighted to join the Irish team at the European Veteran Championships 2007 held in Regensburg, Germany over four days from Thursday 17th May to Sunday 20th. Athenry's Martin Keane and Philip Magnier accompanied those two diehards of Connacht athletics, TJ Beatty and Andrew Talbot for the trip.

Though many fine athletes compete, these championships do not have qualifying standards other than dates on birth certificates, so they make for a great opportunity to represent one's country wearing (and keeping!) the national shorts and singlets.

Ireland's representation numbered around 20 and brought home a great medal haul including gold, silver, and bronze in both the individual events and the cross-country relays.

Full results can be found at <http://www.evaa2007-regensburg.com/english/results.php#4>. The account below describes the fortunes of the Galway athletes for the most part.

A rainy Thursday of 10k running kicked off the championships. Each day had a different venue and intriguingly the 10k races were held in a business park over 9 laps of a very flat course. The general conclusion was that we should try this in Galway sometime rather than our usual single loop course. It makes for brilliant involvement of spectators as they watch the race unfold and cheer for their favourites.

Pat O'Shea of Kerry won the first race for Ireland in a thrilling finish. He also joined Pat Timmons and Francis Reilly to garner the silver in the team event. (This spanned the over 55 and 60 age categories). Our own Andrew Talbot again, in his own words, did an "Eamon Coghlan" to finish fourth of the Irish, one second behind the aforementioned Pat T. However, Andrew's strong training over the past 18 months or so swept him to his fastest time in 10 years, 37:30, a fantastic achievement. TJ Beatty found the cold weather hard to deal with and registered 42:19, two minutes slower than last year. Philip Magnier (saving himself for the half-marathon?!) jogged to 46:51.

Martin Keane, having thrilled some frauleins in a hotel lobby previous to the race, ran a great 48:53 in the concurrent M60 category. Martin had regaled all with tales of just hoping the organisers wouldn't go home before he finished the race, but this represents Martin's best time at the distance. Will we ever listen to his bs again? Francis Reilly, a Cavan man resident in England for many years, took bronze in the over 60 with 37:15.

An interlude for the Galway people in the Austrian Alps on the Friday was followed by re-joining the competition for the cross-country relays at a second venue on the banks of the river Danube. This is the fun day of the championships and it can only have been fun for the Irish who won gold at the 3x4k for over 55s, silver for the women at over 45s, and bronze at men's over 60s. Andrew overcame a team mate's nighttime snoring to finally finish among the medals, a gold at that. The individual splits for each man were around 16 mins, good times for a bumpy and quite hilly course on clumpy grass. The Irish cheers had hardly died down for this before Martin took the Irish team home for bronze in the over 60s.

Some of the older folk made their only appearance of the four days at these relays and not for nothing are they called veterans. I saw a very old German warm up before a race and wondered whether he would even make it to the start line. Watching the older guys and gals struggle up hills to the encouraging cheers of the crowds (regardless of nationality) was very touching and is really what amateur athletics is all about.

We had our final event, the half-marathon, on the Sunday. Much of the course went through the centre of this medieval town and while some found the cobblestones a bit of bother, it's a great way to get locals involved and cheering. Our championships were only one part of the day which included a (serious) rollerblade race, a marathon, and a half-marathon open to all. Starts were staggered and an hour and a quarter after the marathoners headed out, we rocked to Status Quo at the start line while sweating to temperatures of 23 to 24 centigrade. All ages ran in the one race and eight of the Irish took their weary limbs over the chip registers for one more time. Andrew had to drop out after only 500 metres having ignored a torn calf. It was his very first DNF in 43 years of racing.

The heat was a big factor especially from 8k to 16k when there was no shade. But it seemingly had no effect on Pat O'Shea who took a silver in his category with 1:18:45. He was probably the runner of the whole championships with two golds and the one silver; one wonders how good a runner he could have been had he taken up the sport before the age of 50! Ireland again showed their strength at this 55/60 category by taking bronze. Martin completed his third day of running with 2:00 while Philip Magnier ran 1:41:43 to register a pb, and finish 35th of 64 in his category. He also distinguished himself by being one of the three or so Irish runners who did not win a medal at the championships! To gauge the quality of the competition, consider that his time would only have won a bronze in the women's over 60 race, and a silver in the men's over 75 race!

Colophon - a short technical explanation of the www.athenryac.com website from its webmaster,

Alan Burke

What makes www.athenryac.com tick?

The www.athenryac.com website uses a content management system that allows multiple users to add content, without any knowledge of HTML. Members can log in, add a new story & images & attachments, and as if by magic, there it all is on the homepage. There are multiple levels of access allowed, including contributor, editor and benevolent dictator.

This is the secret to having regular content: it's not all down to one individual. www.athenryac.com is built on the Drupal content management framework. This is an open source project which I have been involved with for the last two years. The core install has been augmented by a careful selection of contributed modules, and a heavily-customized theme is what makes the website appear the way it does. The website is running version 5.3 of Drupal, having started out on version 4.6 just over two years ago.

The webserver on which www.athenryac.com is located is looked after by host.ie in Dublin, running PHP version 4.4. The database mechanism storing the website content is MySQL, currently at version 5.

Total website traffic continues to increase and is currently at about 30,000 page views per month. Over 400 unique visitors check out the site every day. Not quite www.rte.ie, but still busy enough! Google also rates the site very highly. A lot of (ongoing) effort is made to make the website content search engine friendly - half the traffic comes via search engines - as well as being always fully accessible. I strive to make the XHTML as clean and standards compliant (XHTML 1.0 strict; CSS 2.1; WCAG priority 2) as possible, a Sisyphean task in a world which still includes Internet Explorer 6, the bane of my on-line existence.

Want to hear more? It'll cost ya! I am STILL available for consultation and development work. Contact Proactive on 091 565 154 or alan@proactive.ie.





Pictured:

Francis Reilly (Cavan),
Martin Keane
(Athenry) and Pat
Bonaff (Dublin).

Germany calling, Germany calling

The story of Martin Keane donning the Irish singlet for the first time and coming home with more than just that in his kit bag!

ATHENRY Athletic Club

Early in 2007 while looking at the Athenry AC web site I was attracted to a Lord Kitchener-style plea, 'Your Country Needs You!' from Loughrea's Mr Athletics, TJ Beatty. It was about the European Veteran Road Race Championships to be held in Regensburg, which is in the Bavarian part of Germany. As these championships don't require a qualifying standard, I thought it would make a nice short break before the hectic summer season so mentioning the words "Foreign" and "Travel" in our house got an instant reply from my wife Mary of, 'And I'm Going Too.'

Fast forward to Dublin Airport on a Wednesday afternoon in late-May and meeting up with fellow Galway athletes, Andy Talbot, TJ, our own Philip Magnier, the rest of the Irish competitors & partners and, of course, everyone feeling young at heart. After a pleasant flight to Munich we got to Regensburg by train, bus and taxi and upon getting to our hotel, we remembered Basil Fawley's advice not to mention the war.

Our first race was on Thursday in miserable conditions. It was a 10KM around an estate and needless to say I finished down the field. The following day, with much better weather conditions, there was a cross-country relay team event in the local park on the banks of the river Danube. Here I must mention how Mary was settling in very well and doing the job of kit woman like a seasoned professional, although once I heard she had picked up the nickname, WAG, I decided to hide the credit card in the bottom of the bag, just in case.

In the M55 event, Andy's team ran the races of their lives to win the gold medals and it was lovely to see them on top of the podium with the Irish tri-colour fluttering in the background, though the Germans didn't have the Irish anthem to go with it. Later on, thanks to my two fleet-footed team-mates (see above), we won the bronze medals in the M60 event!

Saturday was our only free day and thanks to Andy's friend Brian, who lives in the area, he took us on a sightseeing trip to the Austrian Alps and here after using chair lifts and cable cars we reached the top of a snow-covered skiing resort in sub-zero temperatures without a brass monkey in sight.

After Saturday night mass in Regensburg's magnificent cathedral, the Irish contingent retired to a local restaurant for a meal and were helped greatly by the non-English speaking waitress who grunted like a pig to explain pork on the menu to her non-German speaking diners.

Sunday was back at ground level for the half-marathon, through the streets of Regensburg and as the temperatures had soared into the mid-20s, I found it tough going over the last few miles, although the German organisers had plenty of water sprayers out on the

course. I must say that the crowd support, especially over the few miles when we crossed the Danube twice, was something like one of the Tour de France mountain top finishes we often see in TV. I can still hear the chants of 'Bravo' with the occasional 'Bravo Irlanda!'

Then it was a quick rush back to the hotel and as we had checked out of our rooms earlier in the morning, it took a heated chin-wag with the receptionist fraulien to get the use of their gym for a shower. Back at the airport, we had a little spare time to get some badly-needed liquid refreshments and as TJ had gone home earlier, it was great to get a text message from him saying that Galway had beaten Mayo in Salthill earlier that day.

Fellow runners, enjoy today's race around the fields of Athenry as the saying goes, 'We'll Only Be Young Once!'

Athenry AC at this year's Dublin City Marathon

Name	10km Split	Half Split	30km Split	Chip Time	Actual Time	Position	Marathons
Mick Rice	0:39:35	1:24:01	1:58:54	2:46:14	2:46:20	74	24
Brian O'Connor	0:39:20	1:22:51	1:57:14	2:46:39	2:46:45	79	0
Brian Bruton	0:40:35	1:24:29	1:59:55	2:49:41	2:49:53	95	7
Peter Delmer	0:43:00	1:29:53	2:07:01	2:57:30	2:57:36	181	11
Robert Staunton	0:43:01	1:29:51	2:07:01	2:58:10	2:58:13	199	5
Alan Burke	0:43:01	1:30:12	2:07:17	2:58:43	2:58:46	210	2
Owen Curran	0:43:01	1:29:54	2:07:01	3:06:02	3:06:08	318	2
Michael Rooney	0:43:01	1:29:55	2:07:02	3:14:02	3:14:09	501	2
Frank Burke	0:49:36	1:44:25	2:28:36	3:30:26	3:30:53	1142	2
Philip Magnier	0:49:36	1:44:25	2:28:36	3:30:52	3:31:19	1160	2
Conor Dolan	0:50:12	1:46:38	2:32:21	3:37:50	3:38:10	1484	1
Ray O'Connor	0:52:09	1:50:01	2:36:22	3:45:39	3:45:39	1944	36
James Lunden	0:50:49	1:47:40	2:34:36	3:53:13	3:53:32	2523	3
Finbarr Connolly	0:54:21	1:53:44	2:45:04	4:11:49	4:12:39	3880	0
Edward Egan	0:57:46	2:01:50	2:57:49	4:14:57	4:16:16	4107	2
Peadar Nugent	0:59:30	2:04:38	2:59:55	4:20:27	4:21:12	4380	28
Bridget Anne Walsh	1:04:39	2:14:44	3:13:01	4:36:30	4:37:57	5311	20



Peadar Nugent - DCM Ever Present

It is also worthy to note that Peadar is one of the increasingly select band of runners (about 25) who ran in every single Dublin City Marathon since it started way back in 1980. Originally with Dunboyne AC, he got a transfer to Athenry AC during 2007 and is a valuable addition to the club. He is also very proud of the fact that he broke three hours in Dublin in 1992!

Last On The Road

Mr Ballycotton John Walshe's experiences on the roads of East Galway over 30 years ago!



The Fields

of Athenry '10K' is one race I have yet to run, but is surely on my 'to do' list. However, it is another Galway town that holds many memories, both good and bad, from my sojourns on the Irish roads.

It was the warm Montreal Olympics summer of 1976 that the name Loughrea first made an impression in running circles. An announcement that Brendan Foster (who would win Britain's only athletics medal at that Olympiad) was to run in an inaugural four-mile race there that September made national headlines. The brainchild of the late Joe Grace, Colin Moorhead and my good friend TJ Beatty, it was too good to miss.

Hitching a lift on the Leevale bus from Cork, my recollections from that day are of huge crowds lining the streets as the stars of Gateshead and the like displayed their unquestionable talent. And going home to say you had run in the same race as Foster and Charlie Spedding, along with other names so familiar from the pages of the little blue Athletics Weekly.

Nine months later, I would return to a much calmer Loughrea for another race, smaller in size but bigger in significance and which for me was a completely different experience. But first let us take a step back in time to the early 1970s where our story begins.

The BLE National Marathon of 1973 took place at Portlaoise on a wet and windy July day. A good friend and clubmate, Paul Mulholland, was one of the few Cork athletes to compete, finishing just under three hours. On his return he regaled me with the agony and ecstasy of marathon running. With just one long race - the Cork to Cobh 15-miler - under my belt, the decision was made to run the following year's marathon, again scheduled for Portlaoise.

The early months of 1974 (without the distraction of races to run or to organise) saw the weekly mileage creep up from 35 to 60, peaking with one week of 70. Longs runs increased from 13 miles all the way up to

20. But it was all to no avail. Paul had to pull out due to injury and I was left with no option but to do likewise myself as travel then wasn't as convenient as today.

And so, on Sunday May 26, instead of running the roads of Portlaoise I walked the cliff paths of Ballycotton, hearing on my little transistor radio that Danny McDaid had won the National Marathon in a time of 2:19:02 with Dick Hodgins second (2:21:59) and Brendan O'Shea, later to become a well-known coach, third in 2:23:58.

The 1975 marathon was fixed for Galway, again making the journey improbable. So it would be the Olympic year of 1976 and the BLE Marathon to be staged in Limerick where I would make my long-awaited debut.

That race attracted huge media attention, with most of the emphasis on local man Neil Cusack who had won the famed Boston event just two years before. My training had gone well, so it was with a mixture of both anticipation and trepidation that I headed off for Limerick. By the time the race got underway the early-morning rain had cleared and in cool April conditions we assembled on the Dock Road for the 13 miles out towards Cratloe and back.

Running faster than I planned, I reached ten miles in around 61 minutes and the turnaround in about 1:20. Slowing somewhat on the return journey, it was with a feeling of quite satisfaction that I crossed the line in a time of 2:49:24 for 34th place.

There was drama up front as Danny McDaid came though to win again in the fastest time recorded by an Irishman of 2:13:06. Jim McNamara was second (2:14:54) with Cusack only third in 2:17:07. All three were eventually selected for the Montreal Olympics.

Two things from the day stand out. At that time, all you could expect to receive for finishing a marathon was a time certificate. But the sponsors, Omega Timing, gave everyone a T-shirt, along with a result sheet, which was

also a rarity. It would be a number of years before I would receive another race T-shirt, so that one was worn with care and with pride.

Having run a 2:49 marathon and still a few months short of my 25th birthday, I was understandably pleased and harboured notions of going a good deal faster. However, that summer and the following winter things started to go drastically wrong. Training runs proved to be very difficult while the few cross-country races I ran were a disaster.

But the BLE National Marathon of 1977 was fixed for Loughrea in June and I was stubbornly determined to be there. The Cork to Cobh in April took me 1:47 to complete, a time I would have easily done in training the year before.

On the June Bank Holiday Sunday, another good friend, Dan Donovan, drove Paul Mulholland and me to Loughrea. It was an ideal day for marathon running and Paul finally got it all together to finish a well-deserved 15th in a great time of 2:33:59.

The course was again out and back towards Craughwell and at the turn I think there were a few behind me as I tried to run around an 8-minute-mile pace. Reduced to walking coming up to 20 miles, I finally realised there was no one after me when two officials in a car came out to see if I was going to finish, and should they wait for me, or should they go home for their tea.

The main street of Loughrea was nearly deserted as I finally made it over the line. The time was 3:36:36, position 41st out of 41 finishers. In other words, last. Dessie McGann had won in 2:20:34 from Fr Paddy Coyle (2:21:17) with Brendan O'Shea third in 2:21:42. Some of the other familiar names included Pat Hooper, seventh in 2:23:45 and Alex Sweeney - later to become race director of the Dublin Marathon - 11th in 2:30:58.

The next runner to me was over eight minutes ahead (3:28:03) and that was Brian Price, now the man behind Race Management and ChampionChip timing.

There's No Wall In Berlin

Mick Rice and Ray O'Connor on tour in Berlin!

Mick Rice agreed to pace Ray on his 35th marathon in Berlin (September 2007). The following is Mick's report with comments by Ray in Blue.

How do you offer advice on running marathon races to a man who has run thirty four of them already? How can you try to guide or pace a man through a marathon who directs his own highly successful international event? The answer to both of these questions is 'quite carefully', I suppose. I travelled to Berlin to try to help a small group of marathon runners break the 3:30 barrier for the first time. Thankfully most of these runners met or exceeded their performance targets but this report describes only one of those races, the one Ray O'Connor ran alongside me. I'm told that I have to follow the style of the master himself and keep it brief and so here it is.

Ray and I got to the starting pen a little late but at least we avoided that horrible 'waiting around for ages in a big crowd bit' that precedes most big city races. We had prepared our tactics and they were simple, an evenly paced 3:30 marathon which works out at eight minutes per mile or five minutes per kilometre. What could possibly go wrong? Ray was like the proverbial cat on a hot tin roof and even though we were only waiting a few minutes for the start of the race he couldn't get going soon enough. Thankfully, for all of our sakes, the few remaining moments passed and we got on our way. The race had started on the massively wide Strasse des 17 Juni and so it wasn't too long before we were into a stride of sorts even though we had started well back in the pack from the 'F' coral. Within the first mile we swung around the huge triumphal Siegesule column. The buzz was good, the field was massive and we were on our way for good or ill.

The early miles were unremarkable, which was just the way we wanted it. We met a few people we knew along the way but mostly we just kept an eye on the clock and tried not to deviate too much from our target pace. We strode gently along and just tried to keep it smooth. What struck me straight away was the density of the running pack. Even on hugely wide roads it was next to impossible to pass people in the early miles without expending loads of extra energy. This didn't overly worry me as I reasoned that as the crowds loosened up we'd find ourselves going faster without expending any extra energy. I was only

partially right. Ray warned me that starting as far back as we had done that there was a very strong possibility that the crowds would never loosen out. He was mostly right - the voice of experience.

Berlin was crowded.... I have never run a more crowded



marathon. It was nuts. There was very little room to run freely and any gaps that were offered were quickly closed off again by lines of unsuspecting runners stretched right across the road. I have run London 7 times and I long for the open roads on offer there compared to this - and that's bad.

At mile five we passed the Reichstag and from looking at my watch - Ray wasn't wearing one - I could see that we were about two and a half minutes behind schedule. Given that the early miles of a marathon are usually the slowest I was completely confident that we were effectively on target. Towards the end of the first half we got onto target pace and passed most kilometre splits in slightly less than the requisite five minutes. This meant that all we had to do was repeat this process over and over again until we either finished under 3:30 or the metaphorical wheels came off. Simple! Right?

In around the halfway point Mick casually said we were a couple of minutes off target. If I heard correctly we had run the first half in about 1:47 meaning that in order to break 3:30 we would have to run the remaining 13.1 miles in 1:43? I absolutely panicked. Quietly maybe, but I

panicked and actually resigned myself to yet another failed attempt. There was simply no way I could run the second half in 1:43 - end of story! I didn't say anything to Mick and felt bad for him - if we didn't run sub 3:30 then this would be a failure on his part, but I suppose we had a good excuse as the roads were still clogged with slower runners and at the least I might have a shot at another PB.

We passed halfway having clawed back a little bit of the deficit but were still about two minutes down on target time. So far, so good! The pace felt easy for both of us and there were no major pains or aches to report. In my mind I was quite happy that we would naturally reclaim those one hundred and twenty seconds. We just needed to avoid any sudden changes in strategy or pace and above all we needed not to panic. We didn't panic, but unbeknownst to me, Ray was getting a little edgy. He wasn't used to being in the position of having to make up time in the later stages of a marathon and that was precisely what we needed to do now. As we kept, and even slightly increased our pace, we were moving smoothly past thousands of runners. This advance came at a cost as we had to weave all over the road coping with sudden decreases and increases in pace as tired runners ground to an unexpected halt directly in front of us time and again.

Having settled down a bit and eased through 16 miles, a point in every marathon that I do a full body check, I decided to show Mick that I was able to run quicker, so I tried to push the pace a bit. His response was immediate and definite - 'You are going too quick!', 'Slow down!', 'We're bang on target!', 'Relax'. He kept reassuring me that all was OK, but I still didn't believe that we could bank enough time to get through the wall that was sure to bring me to a halt at 22.

By the time the race was three quarters way through we had reclaimed all of the lost time. Ray's concern about being behind schedule, even slightly, had pushed him to press on harder, particularly when small stretches of open road opened up for us. There weren't that many of those open stretches. Up 'til that point I had had to offer Ray very little in terms of advice or encouragement. Ray had run his own race and might as well have been pacing me through the race for all the difference I had made. Having said that though towards the last few miles the wear and tear involved with constantly weaving around slower runners and an increased running tempo in the second half started to come home to roost. Somewhere along Kurferstendamm at about mile twenty-one or twenty-two I could see that Ray was starting to struggle and I could hear that his breathing sounded a little more difficult. This was where he needed to stick to his guns. This was where he hadn't been able to stick to his guns in some previous

races. He had run to this stage in the race faster than in any of his previous marathons and was therefore deep into unexplored territory.

We were picking off the K's all the time, sub 5 minutes, one after another, consistent timing, but every time Mick called out a split I spent the next 4 minutes doing the maths. Maybe this was a blessing in disguise as the distraction allowed me to drift into that zone where you see nothing, hear nothing and more importantly feel nothing. By the time we reached 21 I started to realise that maybe I could hold it together and just maybe I could get in under 3:30. But I was still waiting for the big crash and wallop and forced myself to keep focused on the road, trying to block out any distractions. At mile 23 I calculated that we had to do three 9 min miles to finish in 3:29 and even at that stage I doubted if I could keep that going. I usually break down to 10 min miles at this point and it took all my mental strength not to give in to any tiny sign that I was about to crash. The strain started to show at mile 22 through the speed of my breath. I was obviously finding it harder to maintain the pace and had to work a lot more for every second. I was more and more shocked each time Mick would call out a split as it felt slower and tougher than I was hearing... In fact I was speeding up.

His race could have fallen apart there and then. He had plenty of excuses if he wanted to use them. As we passed each kilometre marker I called the split and he said very little. He kept his head down and concentrated on moving along at a good tempo. We were still slicing through the field but the smiles and banter of earlier miles were gone. It was very, very hard work now. Then all of a sudden we could see the Brandenburg gate ahead of us which we knew was near the finish line. Ray took off like a maniac. He literally sprinted and I had extreme difficulty staying with him. He told me afterwards that he had mistakenly believed that the finish line was actually under the gate whilst it was actually a little bit beyond.

Our fastest K was the last one. What a way to finish a marathon - a 4:28 K. I felt really good. We shot through the finish line with Ray leading the way. Unbelievable! 3:26:57!

We shook hands - a job well done, a mission accomplished.

Had I been on my own I would have run the first half exactly the same, mile 13 to 20 much quicker and I would have broken down to a walk by 23. Mick's reassurance that we were on target is what got me to the finish line in my fastest time ever. 35 marathons and I'm still learning. Isn't it a great sport.

20 Questions

Brendan Monaghan, Tuam AC.



1. What shoes do you train in?

Very smelly ASICS Gel 2110 or Adidas Supernova.

2. How many miles did you run last week?

Only about 25 which included 10k race at Hollymount.

3. What's your favourite racing distance?

I think I now prefer the longer distances so I would say Half Marathon.

4. Where's your favourite place to train?

Palace Grounds, Tuam.

5. What's your favourite race or event each year?

I have to go for Tuam 8k which will be held on Sunday, 13 January 2008 (FREE PLUG).

6. What annoys you most at races?

Bad drivers. I have been known to challenge cars doing about 60 mph and think I will come out best if we collide

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

Connemara Marathon and hopefully will do in 2008.

8. What was your best-ever running performance?

In 1984 I ran a near World Record for 100m leaving Twiggs Niteclub in Salthill being followed by two bouncers. It was a case of mistaken identity - honest!

9. What was your worst-ever running performance?

Too many to mention though if I could locate the above men and put them 10 yards behind me at races I would beat Gerry Ryan!

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

Definitely the elderly lady who was sunbathing and enjoying the Sun just a little bit TOO much in the Palace Grounds last August!

11. Favourite piece of running gear?

The new watch I got for my Birthday. Now I just have to work out how to use it!

12. Who would you most enjoy beating in a sprint finish?

N/a - I am stuck in one gear!

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

Eat Liver (not your own) and being told by clubmate Dan O'Rourke to buy some proper running shorts - 'Nobody could run in them.'

14. In ten years time will you still be running?

I sincerely hope so and have no intention of stopping.

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

I would go up to the attic and take down all my old 42-inch trousers!

16. Have you ever been bitten by a dog while running?

No, but somebody did throw an orange at me from a van doing about 70 MPH and it hurt like hell.

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

Thankfully, no.

18. Favourite post-race food?

Definitely brack/current bread and tea.

19. Most embarrassing ever running-related moment?

At the Loughrea 5k this year, the MC announced that I was 4th Veteran O/40. I made my way up to the stage as if I was Ronnie Delany going up to collect his Gold medal. Halfway across the hall they said there was only prizes for the first 3 and I made a very sharp exit to the left where my wife Patricia was laughing so hard she nearly had a 'Paula'!

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

The above mentioned Ronnie Delany followed closely by Tuam AC legend Micky Kelly.

Battle For Mid-Table Mediocrity

Dave Dunne's Loughrea 5k (Galway Series)



Pictured: The three Amigos after the Loughrea 5k.

Open the sports section of any newspaper and you read articles about elite sportsmen and women, a soccer player who scores a wondrous goal, a hurler who drives a ball over the bar from the touchline or an athlete who breaks his or her own national record. However for each elite athlete, there are a thousand athletes who are battling for what could be termed mid-table mediocrity. And these battles can play themselves out in many different forms. The Loughrea 5k was one such battle for me and Athenry AC stalwart James Lunden (JL), my nemesis for the past three years or so.

To describe my competition with JL in gaelic football terms, I would say it is similar to midland rivals Westmeath and Offaly meeting in the first round of the Leinster football championship. Neither team has a chance of winning the All Ireland final and being realistic, both teams have only the remotest chance of even winning a provincial final. But they are neighbours and although victory celebrations are muted, losing is noted.

Fast forward to the start line in Loughrea. A fine evening, what seems like a strong crowd of over 200 runners and a high level of organisation which we take for granted at these races at this stage. Position myself at the front of the field. Beside the poster boys of the Galway athletics scene, Johnny O'Connor and Alan Burke. These guys warm up by running the race route beforehand, get an idea of the hills, wind direction, kilometre markers. My warm-up involves running from the registration hall to the starting line. A token stretch and ready for action.

However unknown to everyone the battle for mid-table mediocrity has begun. I look over for JL, he has spotted me and the hand goes up.

Whistle goes...

One kilometre... I am trying to find my position. The previous week in Craughwell I gauged myself against Michelle Lynch, keep her in your sights and you are running well. No Michelle Lynch tonight. Never use a stopwatch, give it one hundred percent and the time will look after itself. No sign of JL.

Two kilometres... I have found my markers; Julian Connelly, a sub 19 minute man for 5 k and Tommy Porter, mister consistent of running. Possibly gone out too fast. I think I see Peter Delmer not far ahead; if that is the case I have definitely gone out too fast. No sign of JL.

Three kilometres... I've hit a lull. Julian is getting away. Tommy is maintaining the gap between us. My mindset changes; question now is: 'Where is JL?'

3.5 kilometres... Dig deep to pass Thomas.

3.6 kilometres... Silence behind me.

3.7 kilometres... The inevitable, silence is broken by the thud of a runner behind. The thud is unique to one man. JL. Not going to look around.

3.8 kilometres... JL is alongside. No words exchanged. This kilometre has been all uphill and I am flat out.

3.9 kilometres... JL is gone ahead.

Four kilometres... Sh't or bust... Sprint! I use that word loosely as I am sure that Gerry Ryan would laugh if I told him this is a sprint. Pass JL.

4.9 kilometres... Somebody in the crowd shouts 'Come on James'. Panic sets in and I make a lunge for the line.

Five kilometres... Finish in a time of 19:13. A p.b! James follows five seconds behind, also a p.b.

As Derek 'Del Boy' Trotter would say:
'Everyone is a winner.'

No One Else Remembers Your Training Times



James London's Connemara Marathon 2007

Preparation for Connemara got serious in January, resulting in 440+ miles from the first. Training went well with many long runs, all under 8 minute pace, including two twenty milers. Almost no racing, missing Ballycotton for the first time in 6 years. Everything except my left hamstring, which started playing up fine in the weeks before Lough Inagh.

To cut a boring story short, my taper was longer than I would have liked. Reached race morning very uneasy, discomfort in the usual place.

Worst case scenario would be that I might not make it to five miles and then have the decision whether to walk the other 21.2M or not?

Had to not make the same mistakes as last year too! This demanded that I start slowly, very slowly. I did, in the company of my very own special task force. A beautiful morning. The mountains were a glorious backdrop. The running was easy. Present, Personal, Positive... Wore my old woolly hat the whole way around to protect my bald head and as a sweatband. Quickened up slightly thereafter and started making my way past other stragglers. No chasing anyone down; they just came back to me naturally. Took on lots of water: the small bottles were perfect. No heroics.

Got to the half in 1:56ish. Up the hill outside Leenane without breaking sweat. Even missed the 14M marker. Got to 19M, where I stopped last year, and was still going. Soon after, passed my friend from Longford from two years ago, Larry Rigney. Small world!

Hamstring suddenly went at the 21M marker. Could have happened sooner; no complaint. I would finish! Scrambled to 22.5M and the real start of 'The Hell', where I ground to a walking halt.

Walked, hobbled, never stopped once. Slagged off Iain Shaw at the hilltop. He chased me down and we pushed each other to the finish. Strolled one pole, jogged five! Crossed the line, having run some of the last mile. Happy to break four again. 3:57.

More in the tank, but getting it all together and right on the day is difficult.



2007 Road Races in Galway *James London*

The following road races took part in the county of Galway during 2007.

This list does not include any track, cross country, fun runs or other road races which had restrictive entry requirements or were private athletic club races.

Sunday, 14 January	Tuam 8KM
Sunday, 1 April	Connemara Half/Full/Ultra
Tuesday, 1/8/15/22/29 May	Galway May 5KM series of five races
Saturday, 19 May	Inishbofin Half Marathon
Sunday, 27 May	Roundstone 5M
Friday, 15 & 29 June/27 July/7 September	Craughwell AC 5KM series of four races
Thursday, 21 June	Annaghdown 10KM
Saturday, 4 August	Headford 8KM
Saturday, 11 August	Streets of Galway 8KM
Saturday, 18 August	Connemara Breakfast Run (4.2M)
Saturday, 25 August	Claregalway 10KM
Sunday, 9 September	Killimor 4M
Saturday, 29 September	Loughrea 5KM
Sunday, 30 September	Suileen (Tuam) 8KM
Saturday, 6 October	Galway Bay 10M
Sunday, 10 November	Inis "Iron" Meain 10KM
Wednesday, 26 December	Fields of Athenry 10KM

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Two German Helmets and a Packet of Marlboro Lights Please

Johnny O'Connor flying high in Berlin 2007

I got struck down with 'flu (chest infection) three weeks before the big day. This meant I had to taper early. A 10 mile week two weeks out, 35 miles one week out and 10 miles the week of the marathon. Got to Berlin on the Friday evening feeling fresh. Started the hydration process - three litres of water and headed to the marathon expo to get the number pick-up out of the way. Up at 7:30am on Saturday morning and headed out to the 'Friendship 6km' with Mick and Tim. The main reason we ventured out on this run was to see the 1936 Olympic Stadium, which was a fair spectacle.

Back to the hotel for some rest while the rest of the crew took in some sights. I slept for a few hours and woke up with a hunger that needed to be sorted so I headed to a nearby Italian Restaurant for the much-needed pasta dish. More water, about four litres in all.

An early bed followed another meal that evening. Slept right through the alarm, which is unusual for a marathon eve (I'm a bit like a kid on Christmas Eve). None of the usual nervous tension during breakfast which consisted of some cereal and coffee. Back up to the room to get topped-out before we congregated in the hotel lobby. Some of the 15 Croi Team marathoners headed for the train while we decided to walk the two miles miles to the start. We had enough time.

As we got closer to the start area we met up with a familiar face who was running from the elite start and had a spare number for the 'A' Pen (right up at the front), which he kindly offered up to anyone who wanted it. You earn this if you are a sub-2:20 runner. Coach Mick made me take it as he said, "This is a great chance, Johnny - go for it!"

I reluctantly pinned the paper number onto my shirt (it didn't make any difference to my result as I was wearing my own chip) but was delighted when I got to the pens. The 40,000 other starters were squashed together like sardines but the 'A' Pen had only about 20

blackguards like myself positioned right behind the elite field with acres of room to stretch out and warm up. What a buzz! This all happened after we had to jog a mile or so to the baggage area, against the droves, to leave our baggage off for the aftermath. What a nightmare! good-luck wish to Ray and Mick and we departed for the start.

After a few announcements the gun went and I got swallowed up, from the 4th row back into what seemed like the 10,000th. The leaders were out of sight and their entourage of vehicles were but dots in the distance after a couple of hundred metres.

All I can tell you from here is that I felt very comfortable most of the way around, got to 21km in 1:30:46 and didn't feel like I had started running yet. I kept the pace up until 35k, where I can remember choking on a cup of water, before I got going again and finished fairly strong with 3:01:50 glaring down at me from the finishing bridge like the God above - yes, there is one! My initial goal for this marathon was a sub-3:30, which Mick made me revise down to 3:20 and then 3:15 in the weeks before the race.

Still not sure from what "hat" this time was pulled out of though!

21:32 - 5k
21:40 - 10k
21:24 - 15k
21:30 - 20k
21:08 - 25k
21:17 - 30k
21:10 - 35k
22:22 - 40k
9:51 - 42k

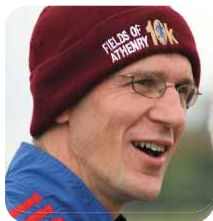
3:01:50



Mucho respect to Ray who knocked a huge chunk off his PB which was only two weeks young.

Praying for Uphill

Peter Delmer Blazing a Trail in the Lake District.



Never write down a goal - it might come true. I thought about that as I struggled up and down over the last few miles of the Garburn Trail Race.

Thoughts weren't coming easy at that stage, nothing came easy at that stage, as I pushed on over

rough, country tracks back towards the town of Windermere and the luxury of just stopping. Standing still has a lot going for it!

A June weekend in the Lake District in northern England. Tea and cream cake country. Yachts on the lakes. Hill walkers in bright sunshine. Olde England at its best. Why then were hundreds of people running over mountain passes, hurtling headlong down steep inclines, heaving lungfuls of precious air just to say 'I did it'? That's why isn't it - just to say 'I did it'.

Early January 2007. Goalsetting. This was my year to run a trail race. Flirted with the idea for far too long - time for action. I chose the Garburn trail race for two reasons. First it's a long run, if I'm going to travel that distance to a race then I'll make sure it's not just a quick dash. 21km of trail with less than 1km on road. Secondly, because it was voted the most scenic race in England by Runner's World readers, so I had to see how it compared to Connemara.

I cajoled my Dad to come with me for the weekend, and we parked ourselves in Windermere for two nights. Got in a bit of sightseeing around the lakes, forests and hills on the Saturday and even an hour of mountain biking to loosen out the legs on the day before the race. (I know, I know, I know - might have been better off sitting with my feet up in the B&B but life is for living!). We took a drive out to the midpoint of the race to see what lay ahead and oohh'ed and ahh'ed at the scenic route. Passing through that point on the Sunday, the oohh's and ahh's were of a different variety - emanating from screaming leg muscles and heaving lungs.

Sunday morning. Bright, and thankfully not as sunny as Saturday. Staveley village hall was the centre of all activity as I picked up my race number and tried to avoid looking at the course map with all those closely nestled contour lines.

I knew the first kilometre was uphill, so I reasoned that I wouldn't be moving too quickly. The warm-up was kept short and easy as I thought that first k would give me all the warmth I needed. My God, what a shock to the system! About five hundred metres of winding village streets past stone cottages and country village green, then a turn to the right, over a cow grate and 'bang' it hits hard. In the next five hundred metres we climbed one hundred. Welcome to trail running Peter. I think in other locations they call it mountain climbing.



We ascended the first climb with relatively good underfoot conditions. As a virgin trail runner I had not invested in trail shoes but my trustee 2010's handled the dry conditions well. Further ahead on the course I reckoned that I was lucky with the conditions - some rain or mist might have made those descents treacherous without good grip.

Already the lead runners had disappeared over the brow of the hill and I guessed I was somewhere inside the top 50 in a field of 500. I decided to measure my performance, not against the nowhere-to-be-seen leading men which included two of England's best marathoners, but against the ladies. I crested the hill in sixth position in the ladies race. A small sign in the grass marked the end of the first km and I looked with interest at the watch. 7:43. I knew the climb was slow, but 7:43 for a kilometre! I lied to myself that the course must be marked in miles, knowing full well that was the slowest kilometre I had ever raced. Not to worry, it would soon be bettered.

Now we're running along a meadow, across a sheep filled field, down a country lane, up a hill, down a hill, but rarely on the flat. I've passed one of the ladies and am running in fifth position, completely blind to the fact that there are dozens of men ahead of me.

About fifteen minutes of running and I'm just learning how to run down the hills. The first few descents were minor but enough for an almost complete loss of control - arms flailing, gravity proves its point and I struggle to plant my feet on solid anything. I begin to realise that concentration will be all-important on the down-slopes if I'm to get through this in reasonable shape and then ouch, the left calf says 'too late, you should have thought about that already'. It's sore, but not enough to stop me. I keep going and hope that it will run off. No Brain, No Pain as a certain running partner of mine is wont to say.

Five kilometres have passed before I see the next km marker. After the first beast of a hill, it has been relatively easy, but consistently up and down. 23:33 for 5k. Time to stop paying any attention to the watch. It's meaningless. At this stage I'm quarter way into it, more or less, and in good shape. I've climbed three stiles, negotiated a few narrow gates, passed a few people and feel I'm racing along nicely. Oh yeah, I've moved up to fourth in the ladies race.

No water! A marshal said something about no water. Although it's not hot, it's pretty humid and I'm losing a lot of sweat. I could do with a drink. Turns out the water station was stolen the night before! Yes you read

that correctly. In the wee hours somebody thought it would be great fun to steal the buckets of water, the tables, the gazebo and even the km markers at 2, 3 and 4k. Beggars belief! I hope that if they catch them they make them run the course.

I've learned something else about trail running. Although you are aware of the beauty all around, all that you see is the six feet of ground ahead of you. I'm watching every step, trying not to favour the right leg too much and just concentrating. I've noticed that people are catching me on the ups but I'm making back the ground on the downhill sections. As we descend towards Kentmere village, and a few hundred yards of solid, blessed tarmac, I begin to steel myself for the Garburn Pass. The half-way point is some way up that monster and I look forward to an easier second half mostly downhill. But first the climb.

I told myself that under no circumstances would this climb get the better of me. Rising about 300m above where I now tried to strengthen my mental reserves, the Garburn pass is a rock strewn path meandering up a steep incline. As I ran (okay that verb might be stretching it a little) I put a lot of effort into steering the most solid path up the hill. The trail was about four feet wide and all the runners criss-crossed it avoiding the bigger stones. Tough climb. People around me began to change from a laboured run to a concentrated walk. But I fought against that. I had never walked in a race before and was not about to do so today - yeah right! Funny how your staunch ideas fade away when necessity demands. I walked. Walking was a little slower than running, but was much more efficient. I could keep going at a slightly slower pace but with half the effort. Up, up, up.

After an eternity I saw a sign saying that I was half-way up. Bottle half-empty or half-full? Just put it out of your mind and keep going. I was clicking the watch out of habit at the km markers and the eleventh split, still climbing, was a 10:29 kilometre. Unbelievable. I was passed by two or three people on the climb. Only one mattered to me and that's because she was a lady - I'm back to 5th place.

Like all good things, eventually it ended. A mountain biker, sitting at the side of the trail congratulated me on making it up there. I debated stealing his bike but instead took in the magnificent views and ran on genuinely looking forward to the downhill running ahead of me. Oh foolish, innocent me!

Downhill. Everybody loves downhill. But downhill, on a steep mountainside, with nothing but hard, loose rocks is a little different. This is where my inexperience as a mountain goat really came to the fore. It starts with carefree downhill running; changes to 'oh shit, I better get control here'; braking, braking; using the banks at the side of the rocky trail to steer from side to side in a frenzied slalom style; imagining what my shoulder, knee or face would look like if I did go over. Some semblance of control is regained, then two guys fly by me like Himalayan goats flitting from rock to rock. Decision time, race or continue to brake? I decided to give chase and then it started again - carefree downhill running; 'oh shit, I better get control here'; braking, braking - You've heard it all before.

Feeling a bit like an over-worked jack-hammer I eventually left the tough descent behind and found the country lanes, grassy fields and undulating hills a pleasure. I was very low on energy and had slowed up a bit but was making reasonable progress and was hanging on to my fifth position in the ladies race. A water station up ahead gave me another first - the first time I ever came to a complete stop at a water station. Two lovely cups of water and some sugary mints. Heaven sent.

The sugar revived me quite a bit but the truth is I was seriously flagging with perhaps 5km to go. I was passed by three or four more people - and yes lost another position in my imaginary race against the ladies. A little too exuberant over the first 5k and chickens were now coming home to roost. Back to sixth.

It was at this stage that I began praying for uphill. Uphill is hard work, we all know that - but the descents are torture. My ankles took the brunt of the twists and turns, but my left calf was in ribbons, quads were

knotting up a bit and hip joints were quite sore. At each turn in the path I hoped I'd see a hill to climb.

18k, 19k and 20k are a bit of a blur to me. Running, climbing stiles and trying not to fall off, cracking jokes with the marshals (in my delirious state I thought they were funny), negotiating gateways and loosing a few race positions. Suddenly a mountain appeared. This was the third of the three big climbs. It was also the easiest but at that stage in the race -

Up I went and managed to pass one or two people (all men unfortunately). As I crested the peak I could hear samba drums in the distance and knew that I was nearly there. It was a sound that called to me and dragged me home. Some energy reserve was opened and I found an extra gear on the descent through leafy deciduous woods. A forest elf - or perhaps it was another trail runner - passed me by even though I felt I was running as fast as the wind, and I gave valiant chase. Passing some marshals I asked how far to go and was told 'not far now!'. What does that mean? Another mile, 100 yards? I had no idea. I pushed on trying to catch the guy ahead, and suddenly we broke out of the woods and into the tented village that was the race finish. Like circus performers we had to spiral around the tents and into the centre to cross the line. I didn't catch him.

Jack-hammered was how I felt. But through it all there always comes that feeling of satisfaction - a new life experience, a huge learning curve, and the knowledge that I'll be back for more!

Place	Time	Name	Team
58	1:47:36	DELMER, Peter	Athenry AC

Never mind that result. I was 8th lady!

Check out a quick video of the race on YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1hddWSCJ1U>

Race website is:

<http://www.lakelandtrails.org/Garburn%20Trail.html>

The slideshow of the course is well worth a gander.

runireland.com

Ireland's running community website



- Race Map & Calendar
- Online entry
- Up to date coverage of local and national athletics news
- Online Forum; ask questions, seek advice from other athletes
- Online store



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