



## Race Programme St. Stephen's Day 2018

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# Race Director's Note



On behalf of Athenry AC and the Race Organisation Committee, I would like to welcome you to the 17th running of the Fields of Athenry 10K. Whether you are a first time participant or one of the few hardy souls who have taken part in every race so far, I thank you for choosing our race.

This year we welcome Pat Callanan Property Sales Ltd. as our Title Sponsor. Athenry AC is closely linked to the local community and it is great to have such a well renowned, local business on board.

The race would not be possible without the small army of volunteers from the club who have worked tirelessly from August to ensure we put on the best possible event for you. No job has been too big or small for them and they have made my job easy. Thank you to each and every one.

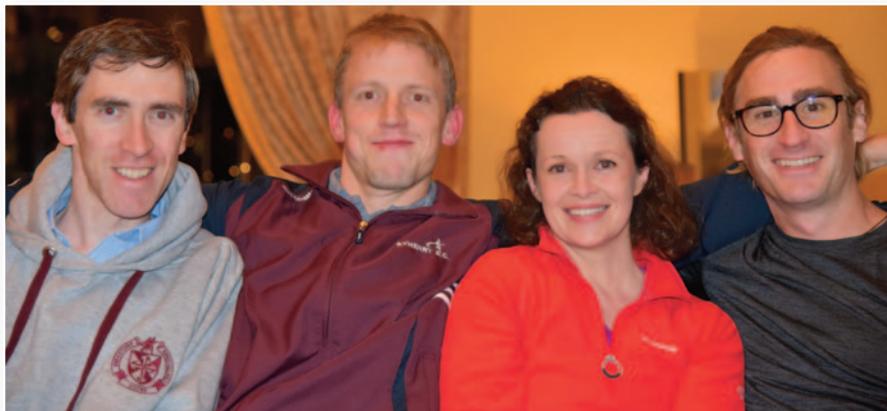
Your safety is the number one concern for us so I would ask that you please listen to any announcements to begin moving towards the start area and listen to our marshals on the course. The roads are mostly open but all junctions are well marshalled.

This year we are delighted to support the Athenry Playground Fundraising who are striving to reopen and maintain the community playground here in Athenry. Unfortunately the playground had to be closed earlier this year for safety reasons.

Whatever your reason for participating today, I wish you an enjoyable and successful race. I hope you achieve your own personal goals and I look forward to welcoming you across the finish line under the historical Arch in Athenry.

Finally I want to wish each of you a happy and successful 2019 and look forward to seeing you back here next year.

**Kieran Guiry**



**Athenry AC Committee:** from left, Kieran Walsh (PR), Kieran Staunton (Treasurer), Aoife Callan (Secretary), Brendan Galvin (Chairperson).

Editor: Philip Magnier. DTP: Johnny O'Connor. Photos: John O'Connor, Philip Magnier.

# Including All

By Philip Magnier

Of the many aspects of the running explosion over the past 20 or 30 years, surely the most heart-warming has been the diversity of those participating.

It's not much of an exaggeration to say races were formerly the preserve of the elite and the club athlete. Now we have the elderly, the overweight, the blind, the wheelchair athletes, the fun athletes, the merely "average" like me or possibly you, taking part. In Galway we have our own "local" heroes in the forms of Jerry Forde and Shauna Bocquet getting out there in so many races.



Participants at the Dublin Marathon 2018

It goes beyond running of course to include virtually all sports. Galway Speeders "is a sports club for young people with a physical disability". Check out their website at [www.speeders.ie](http://www.speeders.ie) or their Facebook page and you'll see these sports listed: athletics, basketball, karate, sailing, swimming, table tennis.

Athenry boy John Blake is a seasoned veteran of the many sports on offer. His mother Mairéad says: "John would try anything, even bubble soccer. Riding a bike was a great achievement, I held the saddle. He also does hurling, playing with his younger brother."

John says that he likes doing sport because it gets you fit. And he likes wheelchair basketball because "I learn to play as a team".



Wheelchair Basketball, Galway, with John Blake at right

Mairéad and her twin sister Deirdre Quinn are stalwarts on the Athenry running scene. Looking back, it seemed unlikely that they would have started.

"I wouldn't have known what a marathon was," says Dee. "I thought 5k was a long distance. I was coming home from work, sitting down, and watching soaps and I thought there is more to life than this. But I was shy about joining a sports club, any club. We never joined any club.

"But Maeve [Noone] was doing her first marathon, and in the middle of her training, she was doing these distance runs and I was wondering whether I could do that and then it was: can I do the Dublin marathon next year? She was my mentor."

For Mairéad: "I got into it for the social aspect, to get out of the house, having two kids. In running it doesn't matter where you're from, who you are."



From left, Deirdre Quinn (with Sorcha), John Blake, Mairéad Blake.

Mairéad has done four marathons: "The first was great, the second and third were not good. For that third, I was carried across the line by my club mates, they were so good. Looking out for someone who is cheering you is great, they might say 'I'll be at the children's hospital, mile 14. And you look forward to that'.

"2018, the fourth, was a brilliant time, the boys came up to see me, I enjoyed it the most. I think of John when I want to stop!"

For Deirdre, her first Dublin marathon was in 2010. Her best is 3:18, then came three children. "I do miss it getting out and running with the club members. It was my social life, if you'd a bad day, always someone to talk about it, or not talk at all."

Final words to Mairéad: "You don't have to be good as sports, everyone should do it. It's great to get out for fresh air. It's not what you can't do, it's what you can do."

# GOTTA RUN

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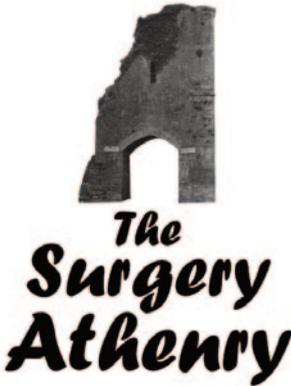
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**Drs Keane, McGloin, O Connor and Meehan wish the committee, volunteers and participants of The Fields of Athenry 10km all the best for 2019.**

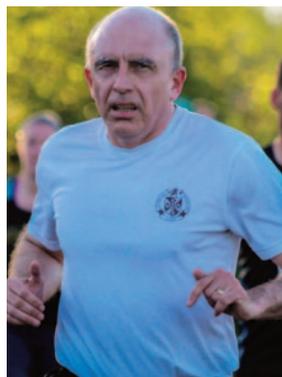
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# Memories of Willie

Willie Morris “was to 1950s cross country what Christy Ring was to hurling”, according to the Athletics Ireland website. A native of Newcastle, Athenry, he competed in his first race at 30 years old in 1949 and had national success almost immediately. Cross country was his main arena: ploughed fields, muck, rain, wind, dry stone walls, and the survival of the toughest.

The national cross country championships were nine miles in those days and Willie ran in his bare feet. He competed in 21 consecutive All-Ireland championships, winning the individual title in 53, 56, 58, and 59, and helped Galway win in 56, 59, 60, and 66. He gave the marathon a lash in 1960 and won that national title too.

Willie died this year at 98 years old.

## Aidan Madden:

An early memory is the World Cross Country at the old racecourse in Limerick, March 1979, when my late father, Tommy Madden, drove Willie Morris and Willie Cannon down.

Over 30,000 attended on a typically wet spring day. I met Brian Geraghty and Mick Molloy though, at eight years old, I didn't know who they were. Each lap our group would run beside John Treacy as far as we could, for encouragement. There was muck everywhere. It was miserable but everyone seem to be enjoying themselves. Afterwards we had sandwiches and bottles of lukewarm tea.

On Thursday summer evenings, Willie would get the bus out from Galway and walk or jog to our house. I would be dragged over to the Derrydonnell forest. My job was to mind their clothes, stuffed in to a bag. Willie and dad would then gallop off along the nine miles of forest road.

I could always hear them coming back before I could actually see them. This training was never a social run, they pushed each other to the limit. Afterwards they would bathe themselves in wintergreen oil. This was bloody revolting: as we walked back home, I always walked to the side of them to avoid the smell. Dad would drive Willie back to Renmore later.

I always found Willie to be a gentleman and a pleasure to be around. Dad and himself would always rerun each race and talk about the ones that they let slip. It was the team that was

important: I often heard them talk about races where one or the other would drop back to pull team mates along in order to get the right result. Even today I am sure that both of them and their team mates from Derrydonnell AC are still discussing the what-ifs of the races and the dances that they attended each weekend, the good old days.



Willie Morris and Tommy Madden.

## Gearóid Rohan:

For many years I have been fascinated with the story of my grand-uncle and legend Willie Morris, outright winner of four All-Ireland Cross-Country Championships. Last summer his brother Michael brought me to visit Willie at his home in Renmore and I had planned to take this opportunity to jot down some of his many of his achievements. However, Willie was such a modest man that he just smiled when I began to compliment him as he wasn't one for flattery.

One story that his brother Michael recounted was of Willie while he worked in St Marys college in Galway. Each lunchtime Willie would train on the pitches and this particular day the infamous Galway three-in-a-row football team of 1964/65/66 happened to be there for a training session. As these lads began to warm up, Willie kicked off the wellingtons and joined in barefoot. The older guys on the team knew Willie, but a few of the younger lads started to laugh quietly at this man in his late 40's training alongside these fine athletes. After a few laps, Willie had warmed up and began to push the pace. One by one they all fell away and Willie continued for another half hour leaving a few red-faced young stars in his wake.

One tip Willie gave me was to settle the stomach before a big race. He said to make a jar of cornflour and milk and have it 2

hours before the race. I haven't tried it yet but I'm thinking I should as I always feel I'm running well when I'm dipping under 6 minute miles for 10 mile races. Willie did mention that he knew he was running well when he was running 5 minute miles for the same distance, impressive!

### **Martin Keane:**

I first saw Willie run cross country in the back lawn in Athenry many years ago. For those who don't know where that place was, well it was where Kenny Park is now and there was a high stone wall from the mini-roundabout to Hanberry's hotel with large oak trees inside it.

For the next 15-20 years, Willie along with his Derrydonnell AC club would rule the roost in not alone Galway but as well in Connacht and Ireland. I got into running many years afterwards and like Willie I joined Galway City Harriers and I got to know him very well travelling all over the country to races.

I think it was in 1992 that word came to the club that there was to be a big race coming up in Birmingham, England, called the World Road Championship for Vets or Masters as they call them nowadays.

Although the most senior of us all at the club that time, Willie was the driving force to make the trip. I would have been the least qualified to go but when I heard they signed up I decided I'd have a go.

We may not have won many medals but the enjoyment we got from the trip made up for it all. Alas of that group of seven only three are still alive. Willie continued to compete for many years after that never missing a race if he could at all. I used visit him often in his home in Renmore and when you walked in the hall door and looked into the roomful of trophies he won over a long career you got some knowledge of his ability .

God rest you Willie your likes don't come too often.



The Veteran World Cross Country championships, 1992 with from left: Brian Geraghty, Martin Keane, Martin McEvelly, Murt Hynes and Willie Morris.

# 2018 AAC in Dublin

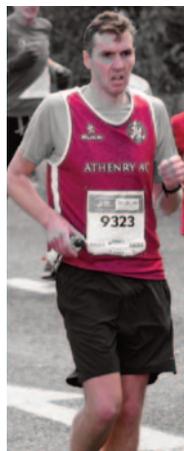
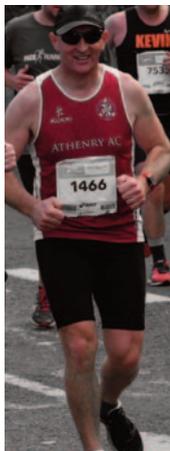


## Forty seven Athenry AC club members ran at the Dublin Marathon 2018:

Dante Acquino  
 Peter Lowney  
 Patrick Forde  
 David O'Sullivan  
 Kieran Walsh  
 Martin O'Hara  
 Martin Hynes  
 Peadar Nugent  
 Maura Treasa Beatty  
 Aidan Madden  
 Brendan Galvin  
 Mick Rice  
 Jim Leahy  
 Frances Leahy  
 Fiona Dughan  
 Frank Burke

Maeve Noone  
 Kieran Guiry  
 Ray Treacy  
 Val Glavin  
 Malachy Conlon  
 Niall Hardiman  
 Niall Lyons  
 Bernie Rogers  
 Krzysztof Straszewski  
 Mairead Blake  
 Sinéad Walsh  
 Noel Fox  
 Paul Dolan  
 PJ Tarpey  
 Seán Flaherty  
 Seán Freeney

Colin Duane  
 Alphonsus Heneghan  
 Tomás Mangan  
 Basil King  
 Orla Stevens  
 Ray O'Connor  
 Kevin Devane  
 Assumpta King  
 Pat Kelly  
 Kenneth O'Hara  
 Michael Glynn  
 Darren Maloney  
 Mike McDonagh  
 Justin Fahy  
 Majella Cummins



# Milestones Athenry AC 2018

The club spring outing this year was to the Rotterdam marathon where five club members ran in April.

Seven competed in the mudscape of the All-Ireland Masters Cross Country Championships, Kilcornan, Clarinbridge in February.

Peadar Nugent won gold (400m), silver (200m), and bronze (100m) on the track in the M75 category at the Irish Masters championships.

Martin Keane represented Ireland M75 at the British and Irish Masters Cross County in Swansea, Wales in November.

Sinéad Brody from Athenry, a former member of the club unfortunately passed away this year. A very moving tribute was paid to Sinéad by many Galway club athletes lining the Athenry streets in their club colours for the removal and the funeral cortege the following day. Sinéad finished third of the Senior Women at the 2017 Fields 10k. Rest in Peace Sinéad.

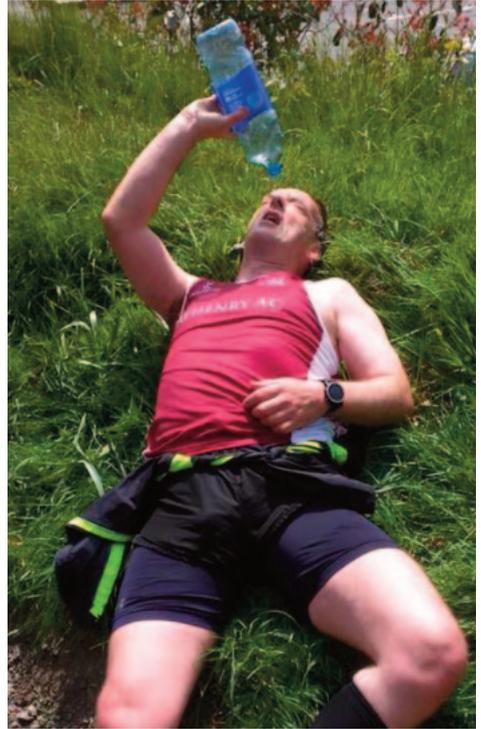
Aoife Callan completed a very tough Marathon du Mont Blanc, a race with some serious climbing.

Valerie Glavin and Myriam Shaughnessy took part in the Energia 24hr Challenge incorporating the AAI National Championships. The goal is to run as far as possible within the 24 hour time period.

Dante Aquino won the Portumna marathon. Adam Leadbetter took second place in the 50k and earned a Boston qualifying time.

614 finished the Athenry leg of the of the Galway 5k series.

Great fun was had by two competing Athenry teams at the Wicklow Way Relay race in May "after two months of trash talk and banter".



Unidentified Athenry runner collapses under an avalanche of reciprocated sarcasms and slugging

Lyll Guiney came second in the full marathon in Connemara.

We continued to maintain group training on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, plus this year for a few months a long run on Sunday for Dublin marathoners.

Track Development: Athenry AC has submitted a funding application for the development with the maximum grant available up to €300,000! An engineer is preparing a structural design, needed for a final costing. Thanks to the Track Committee for all their great work: Kenneth O'Hara, Donal Leahy, Malachy Conlon, Niall Lyons, Pat Forde, Mary Rohan, Iain Shaw.



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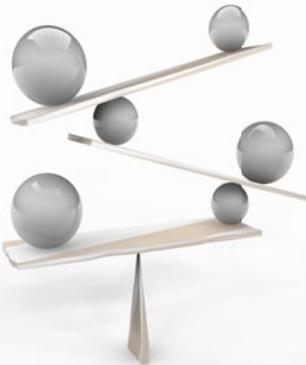




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*Happy St. Stephen's Day*

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**Ciaran Cannon TD**

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We would like to wish Athenry AC every success on the day and for 2019.

Keep up the good work.



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## Race Result History

Year	Men's Winner	Time	Women's Winner	Time	Finishers
2002	Paul McNamara	31:15	Kathryn Casserly	36:57	69
2003	Noel Kelly	32:46	Fionnuala Keane	38:18	171
2004	Paul McNamara	31:11	Lucy Brennan	36:36	253
2005	Gary Thornton	30:34	Lucy Brennan	37:30	35
2006	Gary Thornton	30:12	Lucy Brennan	37:03	470
2007	Gary Thornton	30:02	Orla Ni Mhuircheartaigh	38:52	617
2008	Gary Thornton	30:40	Catherine Conway	36:53	838
2009	<b>Gary Thornton</b>	<b>29:57</b>	Teresa McGloin	35:17	517
2010	Gerry Ryan	31:12	Catherine Conway	35:53	546
2011	Sean Hehir	31:07	Lizzie Lee	36:27	1042
2012	Mick Clohisey	30:57	Elish Kelly	35:45	1041
2013	Mick Clohisey	30:48	Elish Kelly	35:45	1132
2014	Mick Clohisey	30:18	Norah Pieterse	37:02	1145
2015	Mick Clohisey	30:03	Marie Hyland	36:36	1045
2016	Mick Clohisey	30:35	<b>Laura Shaughnessy</b>	<b>35:03</b>	1031
2017	Mick Clohisey	30:21	Jane Ann Meehan	37:39	1095

## 10k Stalwarts, they have run every race

Bernie Kelly, Danny Carr, Kevin O'Dea, Martin Keane, Mary Mullins, Tomás Mac Lochlainn, Tommy Joe Whyte.

## 2017 Prize Winners

Category	Pos	Name
Women Senior	1st	Jane Ann Meehan
	2nd	Colette Tuohy
	3rd	Sinead Brody
	4th	Caoimhe Daniels
	5th	Neasa De Burca
	6th	Catherine Thornton
Women Junior	1st	Caron Ryan
	2nd	Shannen Lee
Women Over 40	1st	Deirdre Brophy
	2nd	Clare Rowe
Women Over 45	1st	Kay Tuohy
	2nd	Cara Gleeson
Women Over 50	1st	Mary Kealy
	2nd	Mary Connolly
Women Over 55	1st	Sheelagh Jones
	2nd	Anne Burke
Women Over 60	1st	Marie Killilea
	2nd	Marie Rooney
Women Over 65	1st	Margaret Glavey
	2nd	Judith Roche
Women Over 70	1st	Eilish McCormack
Women Club	1st	Galway City Harriers
	2nd	Athentry AC
	3rd	Galway City Harriers

Category	Pos	Name
Men Senior	1st	Mick Clohisey
	2nd	Keith Fallon
	3rd	Barry Donovan
	4th	Peter Mooney
	5th	Shaun McLaughlin
	6th	Aichlinn O'Reilly
Men Junior	1st	David Carter
	2nd	Aidan Owens
Men Over 40	1st	Michael O'Connor
	2nd	Tim Jones
Men Over 45	1st	Sean Hanley
	2nd	Gerry Carty
Men Over 50	1st	Eddie Newman
	2nd	Gerard Kenny
Men Over 55	1st	Danny Carr
	2nd	Tommy Joe Whyte
Men Over 60	1st	James Kenny
	2nd	Martin Kearney
Men Over 65	1st	Martin McEvilly
	2nd	Andrew Talbot
Men Over 70	1st	Philip Cribbin
	2nd	Martin Keane
Men Wheelchair	1st	Jerry Forde
Men Club	1st	Galway City Harriers
	2nd	Galway City Harriers
	3rd	Athentry AC
Men's Team	1st	Boston Scientific



**Fields  
of Athenry**  
10km Road Race



**2017**

# 2018 Athenry AC Juvenile Report

Iain Shaw

It is a great honour that for the past few years I have been asked to write a report on the activities of our small but very talented pool of juvenile athletes for this booklet. Athenry AC are really proud to see our athletes on the podium in Local, Regional and National competitions, for the few athletes we have entered these competitions, the return is very high. However medals are not the only thing we value in the Juvenile section, we would like to acknowledge and applaud the commitment of every single one of our juveniles during this year and we very much look forward to seeing you in 2019, may the exploits of our merry band of high achievers give you inspiration in your own athletics pursuits. As ever I am also honoured to work with such a great group of dedicated and very knowledgeable coaches, the successes of the year are down to your hard work and encouragement of the athletes.

So let us delve into the past 12 months and recall the special moments for our club. As always I apologise if I omit anyone, or any particular performance. I would happily fill this entire booklet regaling stories of the year but alas my space is limited and the lists of results are very long.

**Indoors:** The year starts very quickly these days with the first event being the Galway Indoor Championships in the Athlone Arena. This year, due to the large numbers (just shy of a 1000) the competition was split over two days. Eoin Hannon in his first time over the hurdles narrowly missed out on a medal finishing in 4th place in 11.87s, but took a Bronze in the 60m nudging out

teammate Kyle Fitzgerald into 4th by just eight-hundredths of a second. Another agonising 4th place from Emily Rohan in the U8 girls 60m, but she fought back hard to take silver in the U8 girls 200m. Nathan Rooney scored a brace in the U8 competition taking silver in the 60m and bronze in the 200m. First gold of the year went to Conor Curran, throwing 6.89m in the U12 Shot, and Aidan Shaw 4th in the same competition. The sterling work done in preparing our sprint hurdlers paid off with a bag of medals being won here, Aoibhe Deeley (U16/U17 – Gold and a Championship Best Performance), Sean Doggett (U13 – Silver), Cian McNelis (U13 – Bronze), Liam Shaw (U14 – Bronze), Calum Healy (U15 – Silver), Brandon Lee (competing as a senior – Silver). Aoibhe Deeley also took Bronze in the 60m flat and 200m, and she made an early statement of intent for the year ahead. Cian moved up the step a few places on the 60m flat to run sub-9 and take Gold in 8.89s. Calum continued to shine as one of the county's finest sprinters taking Bronze in his 60m. One of the performances of the day was Cian McNelis claiming the 600m Gold in a Championship Best Performance of 01:46.78. In her first race back after a few months off from the sport, Aine O'Farrell secured silver in the 3000m, moving up from her U19 category into the senior womens race. Liam Shaw continued to exert his dominance as one of Ireland's finest juvenile throwers smashing a 13 year old county record by throwing 13.17m in the shot.

At the Connacht Indoor championships, which serves as the qualifier for the National Championships nearly all our competitors came away with medals and qualification for Nationals. At U13 level, Cian McNelis was 4th in 60mH and took Gold in 600m. Leonore Church took a fantastic Bronze against very stiff competition in the U14G high jump and Liam Shaw made it 2 for 2 in the Shot Put taking Gold and

also qualified in the hurdles finishing 4th. Our hurdles team carried on the good work with Aoibhe Deeley taking silver in the U17 race (followed with a silver in 200m), Calum Healy silver in the U15 race and Patryk Woleniuk in the senior mens division. Saoirse Healey qualified in 4th for the high jump and Ryan McNelis Bronze in the 400m. The middle distance duo of Sarah Gilhooley and Aine O'Farrell both took 800m Bronze and 1500m Silver in their respective age groups.

At the National finals, nine of our athletes represented the club, competing against the best in the country. Cian McNelis reached the final of the 600m where he finished 5th and Calum finished 7th in the 60mH final. One of the battles of the championships took place in the shot put ring where Liam finally saw off the pre-tournament favourite in the 5th round to take the top step of the podium and his first national title with a throw of 14.31m.

**Outdoors:** Summer starts when the Galway outdoors are upon us, and the two days of competition, like the summer sun, were fierce with many Galway clubs significantly upping their game in the past few years. Podium places were taken by Cian McNelis - Bronze 80m and 600m Gold with a championship best performance. Calum Healy took a trio of medals with bronze in 100m and silver in 200m and 80mH. Aoibhe Deeley also took a trio taking three silvers – 200m, 80mH and 250mH. Sean Doggett took a brace with 600m bronze and 60mH silver. Aine O'Farrell took Gold in 800m with a championship best performance, with Sarah Gilhooley chasing her down and taking silver. Ryan McNelis took gold in the 400mH with a championship best performance. Liam Shaw took his 4th straight gold in the shot put with a championship best performance and another championship best in the discus.

Connacht Outdoors were held in Claremorris and once again we were treated to truly horrible weather. Cian McNelis took gold in 600m and silver in 80m. Aoibhe Deeley was 4th in 200m and took Gold in 100mH. Ryan McNelis came close to taking the one lap double with gold in 400mH and silver in 400m flat. Sarah Gilhooley finished 3rd in 1500m and took Gold in steeplechase, and in doing so we identified a great talent for running over the barriers. Aine took a golden brace in the 800m and 1500m. Calum Healy unfortunately ended up on the floor after crossing the line in 2nd place in the 250mH which abruptly ended his championships. Aidan Shaw, not to be outdone by his older brother took 4th in the U12 shot put to qualify for his first national championships. Liam made it five straight golds in the shot put in what is believed to be a Connacht record and followed that up with a gold in the discus.

A small team travelled to Day 1 and 2 of the National Juvenile Championships and came away with a couple of medals. On the track, Calum Healy (U15), Liam Shaw (U14) and Aoibhe Deeley (U17) went over the short hurdles with both Calum and Aoibhe progressing to the final. Aoibhe put in a superb qualifying performance winning her heat and obviously putting some doubts into her opponents. Calum qualified as a fastest loser in what was a very high calibre heat. Both of these young hurdlers finished a very respectable 5th in their finals and shows definite progression in their hurdling careers. Cian McNelis was our sole track representative on Day 1 that wasn't jumping over any sort of barrier and in a straight final for the U13 600m he came home 5th in a very tight race. As Cians race was progressing, our sole field representative, Liam Shaw, was out plying his trade in the shot put circle. Unfortunately Liam was not able to reproduce his indoor placing from earlier this year, and threw a 40cm PB of 14.15m to come away with the silver. This throw puts



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Liam into a very elite group of only 8 athletes who have ever thrown over 14 metres at this age group. Performance of the day for the club however came late on when Sarah Gilhooley, who has only recently made the move to Steeplechase put in a stellar performance to take the gold medal in the girls U18 event, beating her nearest rival by nearly 7 seconds. Rounding off the weekend was Aine O'Farrell who took on the U19 3000m event. In what was a scrappy looking race, with the entire field spread out after just a few laps, Aine finished in 4th place behind some quality athletes such as Bandons Laura Nicholson who has represented Ireland both on track and in Cross Country. Preparation for Aine coming into the race was not ideal being on holiday in France the day before and having to have a very long drive, a ferry crossing and then another drive across the country just to get to the track !!

The last day of the 2018 track and field championship had just three of our athletes. Calum Healy who made what was a fantastic recovery from his Connacht injury took silver in the 250mH with a one second PB in the qualifying round. Sarah Gilhooley was also in PB territory in the 1500m finally breaking the 5:00 barrier with 4:59.53. The day rounded off with Liam in the discus. He led to the 4th round by over 10m where his arch-nemesis then pushed out a disc to 42m. Liam followed this up with a massive throw that landed over the 45m mark (3rd longest throw in over 20 years) only to be horrified to see the red flag raised as he left the circle for a minor foot fault, Liam had to settle for silver. Earlier in the summer, Liam took on the outdoor combined events national finals and took a fine bronze, securing four PBs in the process, ironically the worst performance of the day, and no PB came in the shot put.

**Schools Competition:** The schools T&F competition is now regarded as one of the pinnacles of athletic competition in Ireland, with often a much higher standard than the club competition so to medal in this competition is very difficult indeed. Calum Healey in his first schools finals took a fantastic silver in the

75mH, Aine O'Farrell took bronze in the 3000m with a huge PB. Sarah Gilhooley placed 5th in the steeplechase behind several international ranking athletes. In the Schools Indoor Combined events, Liam Shaw and Ryan McNelis qualified for the National Finals, each taking medals at the Connacht qualifiers. Liam found competition just too hot on the day finishing 9th, with Ryan taking Bronze.

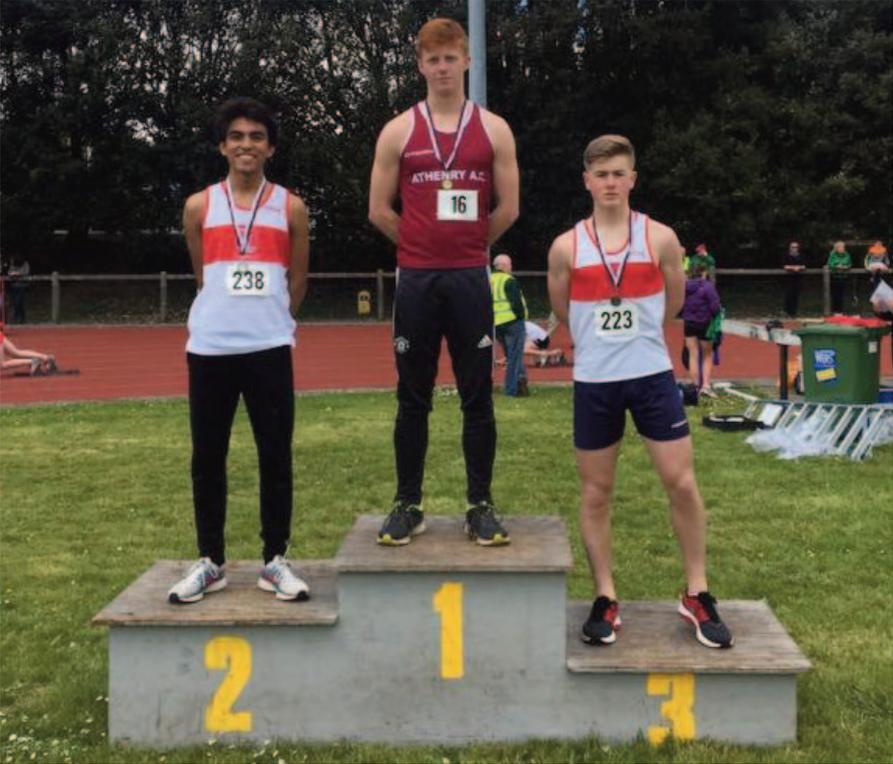
## Community Games

**Finals:** Athenry AC had representation at the 2018 Aldi Community Games Finals on the brand new track at University of Limerick. Again, the club did not disappoint with first medal going to Calum Healy, winning silver in the U14 hurdles. This was followed closely by Liam Shaw winning gold in the shot put, with another huge PB, making this six shot put gold medals for the year. However, performance of the finals has to go to the U13 mixed 4x100m relay team. They were up against it from the outset, in their first heat Leonore Church pulled a hamstring which ended her campaign. Unfortunately reserve runner Alannah Sweeney was representing Athenry in the girls soccer and the two events were set to clash. With a few minutes to go in the soccer, a tactical substitution allowed Alannah to sprint across the UL campus to take up her place on the team which qualified for the final. The following morning, with mere minutes to go, two key members of the team were not to be found, and were delayed in traffic. They eventually were dropped at the campus, sprinted to the assembly area and were immediately taken to the track. The young quartet performed superb and crossed the line in 3rd, but the drama wasn't over yet, a red flag in the second change over zone needed to be investigated. First place team had exchanged the baton outside the zone and were disqualified, Athenry were second. Yet more drama, an appeal by the disqualified team. There then followed a 3 hour appeal until eventually the DQ was upheld and the silver medal was placed around the necks of Leonore Church, Kayla Madden, Alannah Sweeney, Cian McNelis and Liam Shaw.

**Cross Country:** As the clocks go back, the days get short and the mud gets thick, the cross country season descends upon us. Colm McCarthy moving up an age took the U10 bronze, Sean Doggett took the U14 silver and Aine O'Farrell running in her preferred discipline took Junior Women gold and a week later the U19 title. In the Connacht Championships Aine took silver in the U19 race, with Sarah Gilhooley 4th – Sarah also qualified in the U18 race the week before. Sean Doggett had a fantastic last 200m around the Sligo racecourse to pass out some quality athletes and claim bronze medal and a spot in the national finals. All athletes performed well on the National stage in what were extremely high quality races. To just be on the start line is a huge feat in cross country at the moment given the quality. Aine ran 15:19 for the 4km Junior race which placed her in 27th spot, that time for the previous year would have secured 9th place. Last race of the year takes place on 15th December where Aine will look to finish off her year in style in the National U19 championships.

**Last Word:** I just want to conclude this report with a message I received from one of our athletes as I think it shows the true spirit and character of the juveniles within our club. Ryan McNelis was having a fairly tough season this year with recurrent injuries but was determined to make amends for a fall in the final of the schools outdoor 400m hurdles in 2017. I had been suggesting to Ryan that maybe he should miss out on the 2018 Schools T&F to try and allow his leg to recover. On the morning of the race my telephone pinged and I see a message from Ryan, "I'm either going out with a medal or on a stretcher". Ryan McNelis, 2018 Schools T&F 400mH silver medallist, with a new PB of 56.07s





# Running in the Heartland

By Peter Mannisi



***Peter has lived in the Midwest of America (the Heartland) for nearly all his 71 years and has been a runner for much of that time.***

***Training in the extremes of temperature of a continental climate with high humidity brings special challenges to a runner.***

I have lived in Iowa for over 11 years after living in St. Louis, Missouri for 60 plus. I've been a lifelong runner and have always loved it. Started in first grade when I was on the St. Paul Catholic school soccer team and had more speed and endurance than most of my fellow first graders. Was on the cross country team my freshman year in college but then decided I did not want to run on someone else's schedule and ran in the track meets instead.

Being the fastest runner in my basic training company in the army helped me to get a weekend pass! Then in 1980 at age 33 I got into road running. During my peak running years (from 1981-86), I ran a 2:36:48 marathon at Boston, a 1:13:20 half marathon, a 4:29 mile, 5k in 16:05, and 10k in 33:26.

Philip asked me to talk about running in the heat and cold. In St. Louis I always ran outside and did many long runs in the winter months training for the April Boston marathon. I would have multiple layers with two hats, two pair of gloves and just tune into the winter elements. I did avoid running when it was icy and running in snow was tough but a great workout though much slower.

Once there was a 30 kilometre race scheduled in February. It was 17 degrees below zero Fahrenheit [Editor: -27 Celsius] though 67 below

[-55 Celsius] with wind chill. I did not make it to that race because my car would not start!

Whenever possible in the winter I would run during the afternoons when the weather was warmest. Then in summer when we had extreme heat 100+ degrees with 110 heat index, I would run early in the morning or after 7 pm in the evening and in shaded areas.

When I first moved to Iowa people would tell me "You cannot run outside in Iowa in the winter" So I started

using the recreation centre indoor track for runs in bad weather. Ten laps in lane four was 1.07 miles. so I would run 25 laps in one direction then 25 in the other direction to get in 5.35 mile run.

But then about five years ago I decided to go back to outside running. So in up to about 30 degrees below with wind chill [-34 Celsius], I bundled up and ran outside for most all of my winter runs. But when I turned 70 in January of 2017 I decided to do a mixture of indoor and outdoor running, depending on the conditions.

For me I enjoy tuning into the fluctuations of the different seasons with my running. The heat in the summer and the 5 am runs when usually only the birds and deer are up and the winter runs all bundled up when people look at me like I am crazy. But I love running and the feeling of being fit, strong, and connected with nature and the natural elements for me is part of it.



I used to run 70+ miles a week in the early 1980's but after turning 60, I have followed a two-day on with one-day off schedule. On off running days I will do either weights or a total gym/recreation centre workout. So I get about 18-20 runs in each month: around 100 miles.

Goal is to run into and beyond the century mark [Editor: to 100 years old!]. Running for me now is a part of an overall fitness and holistic health regimen I follow. May try to set age group world running records in the future.

I also have done a lot of coaching of running and sharing my running experiences with younger runners and others. I started a track team at an all-black grade school I worked at in St. Louis in the early 80's. I coached a Catholic girl's high school cross country team in the 90's. That came about when a friend's daughter was

running at age 9 and he asked me to coach her. Then when she went to Nerinx Hall high school and I coached there. Finally, with two students I started a university (MUM) running club and we just celebrated the 10th anniversary.

I imagine Irish running would not have the same weather extremes as here in the American Midwest. A former World-class running friend of mine Craig Virgin, who grew up about 40 miles from St. Louis, used to say that running in the extreme weather of Midwest summers and winters made him a tougher runner. He won the world cross country championship in 1980 and '81 and was on a number of Olympic teams.

Well I want to wish all of you the very best with your running goals and with your overall health and fitness goals. Tell all my Irish friends I have some Scotch-Irish ancestry from my

mother's side, the Cooper clan. My grandpa was nicknamed "Irish"!

#### Races 2018

April	Drake relays 5k	22:36
June	Gothic house 5k	21:57
July 4th	Sigourney 5k	21:58
August	Run in the Sun (3.35m)	24:19
August	Skunk River 5k	21:55
August	Old Pioneer 10k	47:38
October	Lacey Keosauquau Park 10k	47:59
November	2 Rivers Hospice 5k	23:04



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

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# Frances Leahy



## **How long have you been running with Athenry, and before?**

I joined in 2011, the May Bank holiday weekend, with the Fit4Life organized by Deirdre and Maeve. I started first, Jim came the following January. He had run for years, but not that many miles. He had done schools cross country, he was quite a good runner and he joined for the Speed sessions, to get faster.

I was hooked on running after six weeks, though I never did it in school at all. With Fit4Life we started with walking. Did my first 5k in Monivea woods in June in 32/33 minutes. That race really got me hooked, I knew I could do the running then. Nine started the Fit4Life at that time, a nice group.

One and a half years later, I ran the Dublin marathon in 2012.

## **2018 was a good year?**

This year was the best. I put my heart and soul into it. I did extra spinning classes from January, and kettlebells from July, also 20k cycling per day going into work so 100k per week cycling. And running 3 days a week,

speed, tempo and long run. But good quality sessions whereas in other years I ran 5 days a week but all with lower quality. Cross training also stops you from getting injuries.

## **What were the PBs you set?**

I set PBs at three half marathons. One in Tullamore which was not a fast course so a difficult race; maybe 10 of us went to that race. Another in Rathoath, county Meath, and lastly in Charleville.

Also the Wicklow Way 8k was a PB for that course, and Dublin Marathon. And for the 5k in Caltra.

## **Summarising, to what do you attribute this improvement?**

The extra classes, dedication, and I put everything in it. Three quality training runs rather than quantity. And the group of people that I ran with, they helped.

## **Any more running goals, soft ones or hard strong ones?**

Just to better my times, to continue my PB streak, I don't know how long it will last, be nice to match it next year.

## **Tell us about your other Athenry AC activity?**

I'm the Fit4Life co-ordinator. Maeve handed it over to me about 4/5 years ago. We start groups in Jan, April, Sept. we do 0-5k in a 9-week programme.

We haven't fully ironed out so we'll be doing something different next year. Jane Mangan and Mairéad Blake help me at the moment.

Of the women that come, there is a good mix, mothers in their late 30s, but also people in their mid-20s, some well in their 50s. And a few guys!. It's a great way to get into a club and to move on from that. A running club is seen as elite, you can progress on 5k or to ultras if you want, wherever you want to go.

All I wanted to do was a 5k, two years later I did the marathon.

## **How easy is it to accommodate training into your life?**

For me, I work day shifts in the week, it's pretty straightforward. I'm free at weekends. It's great with a spouse like Jim, going out together, getting your gear on and out the door, it encourages you. He understands running, I understand running, it must be difficult if the other spouse does not do it, going out three times a week in the pouring rain!

## **Any more thoughts on the who running thing, what would you be doing if not this?**

I don't know, maybe gardening. I'd have a lovely garden instead of weeds! Running is fantastic. It changes your attitude, your diet. You won't have a drink on a Friday, years ago it wouldn't make a difference if you did!

# Out of East Africa

By Philip Magnier



Before Kipchoge, Kenenisa Bekele, and Rudisha, before Haile Gebrselassie, Tergat, Lagat, and Henry Rono, before even the incomparable Kipchoge Keino, there was Abebe Bikila, the first of the great East African runners and the man who initiated the descent from the high plains of Ethiopia and Kenya to the road races and running tracks of the World that left the champions of other nationalities in the dust and turned the world of running on its head.

Abebe's record in essence comprises winning two races, the Olympic marathons of 1960 and 1964, and not much else but afterwards nothing was ever quite the same again in athletics. In the succeeding years — from the 1960s onwards through to the present day — it would be hard to overemphasise the eventual pre-eminence of East Africa across the longer races, from cross country, to the 5k and 10k track events, and the half and full marathons on the road.

But when he came to the starting line of the marathon event at the Rome Olympics in 1960, no one had heard of Bikila. He did cause a sensation but only because he wore no shoes, having discarded a very uncomfortable pair he'd bought. So barefoot it was, even along the cobblestones of some of the ancient Roman streets. The race was held at night because of the heat and the drama was heightened by the Italian soldiers holding torches every ten metres along the Appian Way.

Bikila was 28, and from a very poor family of shepherds and farmers among the remote mountain ranges of Ethiopia. He had run just two marathons previously, both in 1960, but in one he had bested Emil Zátopek's Olympic record with 2:21:23. Before that he had run on the track without much success but a Swedish coach employed by the government, Onni Niskanen, supplied the training

know-how and both felt he could win gold, with ben Abdesselam from Morocco as his main threat. They even scouted the route for strategic places to spurt free of the field and settled on the Obelisk of Axum, a structure looted by Italians from Ethiopia in 1937 (and since returned).

Starting slowly, Abebe gradually moved through the field and at ten miles joined the main leaders. By about 25k, ben Abdesselam and Abebe moved ahead and there they remained locked together for almost the entirety of the route. At 500m from the finish, as planned, Abebe made his break by the Obelisk and ben Abdesselam had no response. Abebe finished in 2:15:41, 25 seconds faster than the Moroccan, a World record by under a second.

He returned home to Ethiopia a hero, hailed by thousands who lined the streets of Addis Ababa. His welcome included promotion to corporal in the emperor's imperial guard and he even received a Volkswagen Beetle, chauffeur-driven since he couldn't drive!

Life settled back to normal for him and in 1961 he ran and won three marathons: in Athens, Japan, and Czechoslovakia. The Athens race was the last time he ran barefoot. He competed in no marathons in 1962 and was 5th when running the Boston marathon in '63, defeated by the cold and the strong winds.

No one had ever won two golds at the Olympic marathon up to this and that was his total focus: to regain his title in Tokyo in '64. Early in the year, he replicated his two marathons from '60: the Armed Forces Championships and the Ethiopian Olympic trials, winning both as expected. In the latter he clocked 2:16:18 and felt good about the Games. But then disaster. While out training 40 days from the Olympic race, he felt strong pain, was rushed to hospital, and had his appendix removed.

Abebe left the hospital within a week, determined to fulfil his Olympic dream. After 11 days he recommenced training and informed all that he would win.

Only two runners really challenged him: Ron Clarke of Australia, and our own Jim Hogan from Ireland. Abebe set a strong pace from ten kilometres out. At the turning point, Clarke was gone and Hogan, in his first marathon, hung on grimly. Finally he too faded and eventually dropped out exhausted. (Hogan won the marathon at the European Championships two years later, representing Great Britain).

Abebe finished in 2:12:11, the fastest marathon ever run. The next man, Basil Heatley of Great Britain, finished four minutes later. Abebe amused the crowd by doing some exercises such as sit-ups while waiting for Heatley.

Again he resumed his duties in the imperial guard, this time after receiving a promotion to Lieutenant, another Volkswagen Beetle, and a house!

Abebe finished just three more marathons: in Japan (1965), and in Spain and South Korea (both in '66). During a marathon in Spain in 1967, he injured his hamstring and had to drop out. The injury persisted and resulted in a limp. The following Olympic year he had treatment for this or possibly other leg ailments in Germany. Nevertheless he had his eye on another gold and made the Olympic starting line later that year in Mexico City beside his Ethiopian

compatriot Mamo Wold. This despite having been told just a week before that he had a hairline fracture of the fibula.

But there would be no miraculous recovery this time: suffering great pain, he dropped out after 16k. However, Mamo Wold did win to reward Ethiopia with a third gold. And Abebe received another promotion, to Captain this time!

The following year brought more tragedy when his Beetle overturned while he was driving. He never walked again. Such was his fame by this time that while receiving treatment at an English hospital, Queen Elisabeth visited him there. He eventually began competing in wheelchair sports including archery, table tennis, and somewhat unbelievably at a tournament for the disabled in Norway he won a cross-country sled dog race over 15 competitors.

Abebe died in 1993 of complications related to his accident. 65,000 attended his state funeral with the Emperor Haile Selassie declaring a day of mourning.

His legacy has endured with the Abebe Bikila stadium in Addis Ababa, four biographies, and even a film The Athlete made as late as 2009. In 2010, the Rome Marathon observed the 50th anniversary of his Olympic victory and the race winner, Ethiopian runner Siraj Gena, ran the last 300 m of the race barefoot in Abebe's honour. Truly, Abebe Bikila was one of the great Olympians.

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# Twenty Questions for Brendan Galvin



headphones on..... or when your tearing down a small country road and there is that car that is coming up through the race and it's like 5 metres behind you and it just won't go away.... Argh!

## 7. What race that you haven't run would you most like to participate in?

I have this book on sky-running and ultramarathons. I'd love to do the UTMB some day. [Editor: Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc. Aoife Callan completed this race in 2018.]

## 8. What's your best ever running performance?

Though not my best time, my best ever performance was the Rome Marathon in 2015. I ran a perfect race for my fitness level. I took a risk with a pace that was 5 minutes faster than my goal, I ran consistent miles and finishes with something like a 1:30 negative split. I was really good at drinking Pinot Grigio that day to celebrate as well.

## 9. What was your worst ever running performance?

Let's just say I had a race ending that was, eh, character building and leave it at that

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

Not so much something I've seen as something I've noticed, but I've realised that the moon phase has an impact on my training and racing. Ask me about it sometime, I'm thinking about writing a book on it. Really strange, but indisputable.

## 11. What is your favourite piece of running gear?

My hair band, especially if it's a pink one and I'm running past Frank Burke.

## 12. Who would you most enjoy beating in a sprint finish to the line?

Frank Burke

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

To always remember that the reason why we do this is for the fun of it, for the benefit of our health, both physical and mental. My wife just told me also that it takes a village to create an athlete. That's lovely too, isn't it?

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

I cannot imagine ever giving it up

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

I would get a second opinion from a runner

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

No, but there's one little Jack Russel bitch about 2 miles from my house that wants a taste of my shorts. I confess to have altered my regular routes as a result

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

I had to google search what that meant. No, never during a race

## 18. What is your favourite post-race food?

I normally haven't much of an appetite after a race but I do really like a nice cold beer, especially if I paid for it with Frank Burke's money.

## 19. Your most embarrassing ever running related moment?

In 2016 Dublin Marathon after what can only be described as an heroic 26 mile effort, some photographer for the Irish Independent thought it would be funny to take a picture of me "finishing" the race and post it in the newspaper. The next day, and almost every day since, my club mates like to remind me of the experience at every opportunity.....

## 20. In your opinion, who is the greatest Irish Athlete of all time?

Tom Crean

## 1. What Shoes do you train in?

Black ones. Usually I find a brand that no one's ever heard of because it drives Mick Rice nuts

## 2. How many miles did you run last week?

Not many, its November so I'm practicing eating. I'm pretty amazing at it.

## 3. What's your favourite racing distance?

Marathon by a long shot.

## 4. Where is your favourite place to train?

Good question... I like a bit of variety, but have ran in a few pretty cool places. I love Killarney, Carlingford, Hyde Park, Cologne, Chicago and a place in Wales with a Welsh name stand out. Do you know what, I love running in mountains. Kinda....

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

I loved the Wicklow Way relay this past year it was such a great club event.

## 6. What annoys you most about races?

A toss up between that late stage in races when you offer a word of encouragement to the person panting beside you only to realise they have



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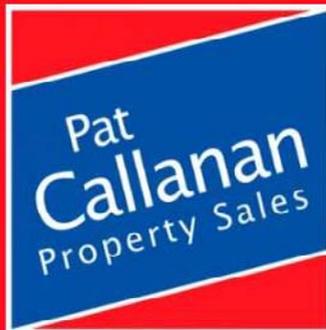
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