



FIELDS OF ATHENRY 10KM 2010

St. Stephen's Day 2010
RACE PROGRAMME

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Chairperson's Welcome



Once again we welcome you all to our annual road race. This year we are celebrating our 9th anniversary and we are already looking forward to the ten year milestone in 2011.

We like to believe that we cater for all levels, from the elite participants to the social runners who may be running their first race.

In particular, we would like to welcome all Fit4Life members. For many of them, this will be the beginning of a love affair with road running.

Our juveniles will start off proceedings and how wonderful it is to see them doing what is natural to one and all. Perhaps in years to come, one of these will be a major contender for the senior race.

Being awarded 2010 AAI Connacht Club of the Year made it a year to remember for our club. Club members travelled to the AAI awards in Dublin last month to accept the award – a heavy crystal bowl. We are very proud of this achievement as there are many fantastic clubs in Connacht and competition is strong.

Last year's race twice fell foul of adverse weather conditions but despite the postponements our supporters and volunteers turned out in their usual numbers and their loyalty is greatly appreciated.

For us this is the highlight of our year and our opportunity to say thanks to all our fellow runners. Hopefully the weather will be kinder to us this year.

Have a wonderful day; enjoy the experience and we hope to see you all for a cuppa and chat after the race.

Maeve Noone Chairperson Athenry AC.

Race Director's Address



Snow is falling...all around.

A heartfelt welcome to runners from all over to our little race in Athenry. As a small gesture to all the long-distance travelers to this race, we're going to refund the entry fee to the person who travels the furthest. Keep an eye on the website for the winner of this prize.

Another addition to our prize-list this year is a small spotprize of sorts. Every 100th person across the line will secure entry to next year's event. So there is something to compete for right down the field.

In terms of innovation, we're going to dip our toes into the world of pacing this year. A common feature in big-city marathons, but less so at smaller races, pacers are used to help people break a time-barrier. This year, we have a 40 minute pacer, and if that goes well, we'll increase our pacing team next year. Let us know if that's a feature that interests you?

I love the snow – the more the better, but last year's big freeze had me question my devotion to it, when Mother Nature did her best to stop the race going ahead. It's a tribute to the hard working team who puts this race together, that we were able to get it ready three times.

Hopefully we'll get it done in one this year!

Beir Bua,

Alan Burke Race Director.



County Galway 5km Series - 2010

Athenry 27th April Tuam 4th May Craughwell 11th May Claregalway 18th May
Loughrea 25th May Galway 1st June

Galway Runners Do It On Tuesday Evenings

The Galway 5KM Series turned five this year and it continued to go from strength to strength, under the watchful eye of its ever-present coordinator, Mick Rice of Athenry AC.

The series retained all the same races as the last two years, in the same sequence and on basically the same courses – Athenry was a little longer than other years; Tuam was on the same course but with a different start and finish; Craughwell had a new start due to road modifications; Claregalway changed their start and finish lines very slightly; Loughrea was unchanged; Dangan was re-arranged substantially to facilitate increased numbers of finishers.

On-line entry was on www.runireland.com again and sold out in, officially, 82 minutes. Not 82 days or 82 hours but 82 minutes (from noon on 19 February to 1:22PM that same afternoon) and still many people were disappointed to miss out. The entry fee stayed at E25, which worked out at less than a fiver a race!

Over 700 were eventually entered and 500-plus lined up that first evening in Newcastle, where the series lost its long record of dry weather during the series races. We had had a few close shaves in the past and the series' luck could not hold out forever!

The main innovation this year was the provision of chip timing at all the races, which was expertly supervised by John Cunniffe of Red Tag Timing. This took a massive amount of administration away from individual series leg organisers. It was also essential when 500 people are thundering through the finish line during rush hour in a 5KM (in the 20 to 25 minute range).

The series juggernaut moved onto Tuam where over 500 ran that fine evening too. There was a table quiz immediately afterwards in the Corralea hotel which raised money to allow Tuam AC's Brendan Monaghan to travel to Haiti later in the year as part of the Haven charity.

Craughwell put on their usual high-class event with the added bonus of Elvis running. It seemed to encourage those running around 20:30 to run that bit quicker. Who would want to be beaten by a man who's been dead for 33 years anyhow?!

Claregalway was next in the series. Rock Road was still there and as formidable as last year, unfortunately. Again, nearly 450 lined up and finished, all in one piece.

A Short Report

James Lundon

Loughrea was the "money" race for nearly 200 of the series participants as it ensured that the series technical top would be earned there for running at least five of the six races in the series. The top was well earned especially after breasting the hill just after four KM mark!

The last race in the series was, as it always has been, in Dangan, but over a substantially different course to previous years. Two hundred and twenty more qualified for their tops that evening. The finish was a relief for many as the previous five weeks had been tough with six races in five weeks. The distinct blue on white technical tops (again expertly designed by Johnny O'Connor of Proactive) proved very popular and was worn by many finishers that evening.

Mark Davis (Craughwell AC) had a brilliant run of form in the series, winning four of the first five races – he didn't run in his own leg. All the winning times were within a few ticks of each other too: 16:13, 16:20, 16:18 and 16:26. He took it easy in the last leg in Dangan, 'trailing' home in third place in 16:44! Athenry AC's own Brian O'Connor was second to Mark on three different occasions.

The nett proceeds of E6,321 from the series were again donated to the local Galway AAI County Board for the advancement of both adult and juvenile athletics in the county. The Galway Local Sports Partnership, via Mick Curley, also donated E2,000 to the series, which was also given to the Galway AAI County Board. Mick was at the final race to see the good work that the organisers and the six constituent clubs have put into the series over the five years of its existence.

And then afterwards to the Westwood Hotel, where over 150 packed into one of the function rooms for an informal debriefing. Many won spot prizes of special 5KM Series hoodies there, which have been worn to other local races with much pride since. Finger food was provided and was scoffed with abandon.

The three remaining three stalwarts survived the 6 races this year, though in one person's case it was a close shave, on the way back from a family holiday. The airport in question was closed a few minutes after their flight left due to the poor prevailing weather conditions. Gary Doherty (Athenry AC), Jim Maher (HP Running) and Tony O'Callaghan (Craughwell AC) can each take a bow for completing all 27 races to date.



Pictures by: Francis Kennedy (<http://irefcb.com>) and John O'Connor (<http://www.flickr.com/edenfil77/>).

CLUB PARTICIPATION

Club	Number
Galway City Harriers	165
Craughwell AC	117
Athenry AC	79
Loughrea AC	65
Tuam AC	27
Clare River Harriers	8
Corofin AC	1

INDIVIDUAL RACE PARTICIPATION

Race	Number
Athenry	535
Tuam	500
Craughwell	503
Claregalway	442
Loughrea	439
GCH	425

RACES RAN PER PERSON

Races Ran	Number
6	178
5	221
4	90
3	55

GENDER PARTICIPATION

Male	296
Female	401



2010 Athenry Fit4Life Report

Deirdre Quinn

If you're a beginner and are interested in running your first 5k then Athenry Fit4Life is for you. Athenry AC Fit4Life is a great programme to help develop your fitness in a fun and sociable environment.

The Athenry AC Fit4Life programme for 2010 started in January. A number of the new members' aim was to compete in the Galway 5KM Series in May and then follow on to 8KM races, such as Headford and The Streets later in the summer. As the Fit4Life members' confidence grew, so did their race distance, and many successfully completed the Claregalway and Loughrea "Grey Lake" 10KM road races during the autumn. Also a number of our 2010 Fit4Life crew have just competed in their second half marathon!

The last Athenry Fit4Life programme was in September, where we got our biggest turn out of new members. These members completed their first ever 5k in style on 6th November at the Athenry AC Fit4Life 5KM road race.

So with the success of their first 5k, it was back to training to complete in their first 10k, the great Fields of Athenry 10KM.

The success story of Fit4Life is seeing their members' joy as they achieve their goals!

For more details on the Athenry Fit4Life programme, check out the Athenry AC web site, www.athenryac.com, or any of the following:
Deirdre Quinn @ (086) 8821976, Maeve Noone @ (087) 7648343, Michelle Toohar @ (086) 6061517, Maria Hehir @ (085) 1085872.



Run into Peace

Martina Passman

Joining Fit4Life in March of this year (2010) was definitely one of the better decisions I've made. Apart from the enjoyment of running in itself, being able to take part in a few races was a plus and I've met some wonderful people.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would be running in a half marathon this year, but it is amazing what you can do when you put your mind to it. I've found that running can be a type of meditation in itself too, depending on your approach to it, I guess. For example, on a sunny winter's morning, what better way to start the day than to go for a few miles of a run? Plenty of healthy fresh air, lovely scenery (depending on where you are running), a warm smile or two from passersby, a friendly wave from a farmer and it's all free of charge (this piece was written pre-budget though).

Out on the road, just you and the elements, the wildlife you might see, those red cows, just standing there looking at you over their wall, the old ruins of a house you might see and wonder who lived there, what their life was like, a pheasant or two swooping by, a curious fox in the distance, the stretch of green fields that seem to go on forever, mountains on the horizon, the crisp fresh morning air biting on your skin but breathing life into your body, soothing away the worries of the day, calming the anxious heart,

quietening the racing mind, no phones ringing, no radios buzzing, no washing machines turning, dishwashers banging, just stillness, you and the quiet road; is this not a meditation in itself, a peace we can run into?

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Moonlit Madness Leading To Connemara

Lyall Guiney



After a couple of weeks of post-DCM recuperation, the running itch started to return. I bought a head torch – the Alpkit gamma[1] – and on a suitably cold and dark November evening I trotted out for a few laps of the Dangan pitches to give it a whirl. Aficionados of the venue will know that the pavilion and the long entrance are always illuminated. But the light ends with a lone lamppost situated just at the end of the running track. As I passed the lamppost, I looked back for a moment, and saw the few hundred meter-long driveway stretching back up to the main road. Looking ahead again: just a black gloom.

Very eerie. That which is so familiar during the day suddenly becomes unnatural and foreboding. That entrance point, where the darkness devours the feeble yellow glow of the lamppost, marks a threshold. From light to dark, of course, but also seemingly from sanity to insanity. Why cross it? Morbid thoughts flooded in briefly and my mind conjured up images of a horror film – typical Hollywood fare, starring me, no happy ending. What unknowns are out there in the darkness? My world should be the floodlit pavilion; the city streets; the people out walking their dogs; the hum and whirr of passing traffic. This darkness was alien. I crossed the threshold and switched on the torch...

...only to turn it off again ten seconds later.

The new moon was just a couple of days young and dim moonlight drenched the grass of the football pitches. My eyes adjusted in moments and I could suddenly see everything. It felt that switching on the torch somehow detached me from reality. The darkness should exist – and this pool of artificial light bobbing along a few feet in front of me was too surreal and unnatural. As I jogged along in the moonlight imbued evening, I had one of those exhilarating moments of running delight. I darted gleefully along the grass and thought how wonderful this was – not a soul about on this magnificent night. Only when passing through the more gloomy tree-shaded areas of Dangan did I switch on the torch, and then reluctantly.

The following week I ambled out a couple of more times. An absence of significant moonlight meant I had to rely on my bobbing light-pool, but lumens are lumens on a night like this. In the unseasonal, harsh late-November frost I passed the last lamppost, plunged into the pitch black, and within moments I was running on a carpet of frost. Crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch. Sub-zero air filled my gasping lungs as I ploughed a furrow through the crisp grass. I turned my head from side to side – head torches don't do peripheral vision – and my eyes soaked up the unspoiled frosting all around. A brilliant experience. I trotted around a few laps and came home on a high.

All this running in darkness is therefore fairly awesome. I must confess, however, that there is method to this madness. In one of the coldest weeks this country has seen in recent years, I just topped my record weekly mileage by clocking up 62.5 miles in the week ending Sunday 5th December 2010. This was across five runs and included a training marathon with Ray O'Connor (plus friends) around Salthill. An unremarkable mileage figure for some people, of course. Pretty big for me. There will be a few slightly easier weeks from now until January, but from then on 60+ will be the norm. The Connemara Ultra is looming large and at time of writing is just about four months away.

Connemara measures 39.3 miles one and a half times the marathon distance. I've asked myself the big question just after the finish line of each of my last few marathons – "How do you feel about another 13 miles?" Most of the time, the answer is, "Not great". And really, the "Not great" is a euphemism for various expletives telling myself to go have a lie down immediately. Of course, the first thing you face after 26.2 miles in Connemara is the mile-long incline up out of Leenane. And then a constantly hilly up-and-down road, before another grueling climb in miles 36 and 37. And then a downhill section to finish off your already-seized-up quads.

But that's all four months away! And that's the challenge: be able to face into mile 27 and power up that hill, leaving the beautiful Killary fjord behind; get to Maum in one piece and hold it steady going up that final hill; respect the course and accept that targets may have to be revised as the race goes on; nail down the nutrition strategy; take a holistic approach to preparation, from diet to core work to psychological preparation to long miles. No amount of willpower will make it happen on the day unless the hard miles on the dark nights are safely in the bag.

The first tentative steps have been taken. The head torch will be donned again and again. The batteries will be replaced. There will be many more moonlit and moon-less nights ahead. They won't all be frosty and exhilarating. Some will be wet, windy, miserable and perverse. There might be setbacks – niggling injuries, illness, motivational challenges and more. But honestly, what is better than getting home from work, chucking on the training gear and zoning out from the world for an hour? Or pounding along the streets with a grin on your face while pedestrians huddle underneath their jackets and umbrellas?

Don't take winter off. Get a head torch. Get a pen-torch[2] as backup. Get some high-vis gear. Get a spare pair of runners to let the muck dry off the other pair. Sort out a target race for the spring. Layer up and stay warm. Revel in the absence of midgets! And remember the thrill of the crunch of frost underfoot, and the moonlight that bathes from above.

[1] – <http://www.alpkit.com/gamma/>

[2] – <http://www.argos.ie/static/Product/partNumber/9821572.htm>

2010 Galway Road Races

James London



Road racing in Galway had its best ever year by far in 2010 with more events being added to the calendar and only a small few dropping away from 2009. There are now races in every month of the year and almost every weekend during busy periods.

All well-organised races are attracting record number of entrants. Seven different Galway clubs organised at least one road race during this year, with Corofin running their first race in 24 years in November, to join Athenry, Clare River Harriers, Craughwell, Galway City Harriers, Loughrea and Tuam on the road.

Truly, the best of times for participation!

AAI Permitted races in 2010

- 6th Tuam 8KM, Sunday 17 January 2010
- 8th Fields of Athenry 10KM, Sunday 24 January 2010
- 1st Newcastle 5KM (School Run), Sunday 31 January 2010
- 3rd Maree 8KM, Sunday 14 February 2010
- 3rd Kilconieron 5M, Sunday 28 February 2010
- 1st Craughwell 10M, 14 March 2010
(County 10M Championship)
- 9th Connemara Half/Full/Ultra, Sunday 11 April 2010

5th Galway 5KM Series,

- Tuesday 27 April, 4/11/18/25 May, 1 June 2010
- 2nd Kiltcornan 8KM, Sunday 16 May 2010
- 1st Monivea 5KM, Sunday 13 June 2010
- 1st Milltown 10KM (Run for Ollie), Saturday 19 June 2010
- 4th Annaghdown 10KM, Monday 21 June 2010
- 1st Portumna Full/50KM/100KM, Saturday 26 June 2010
- 2nd Salthill Mini-Marathon 5KM (Simon Community),
Sunday 27 June 2010
- 6th Headford 8KM, Saturday 10 July 2010
- 4th Magic Mile, Tuesday, 13 July 2010
(County 1M Championship)
- 25th Streets of Galway, Saturday 7 August 2010
- 2nd Connemara 100M, Saturday 14 August 2010
- 23rd Claregalway 10KM, Saturday 14 August 2010
(County 10KM Championship)
- 1st Tuam Festival 1M, Friday 20 August 2010
- 1st Galway City Half/Full, Saturday 28 August 2010
- 3rd Maree 5KM (Boston Scientific),
Wednesday 8 September 2010
- 2nd Castleday 8KM (APA), Saturday 11 September 2010
- 3rd Clifden 10KM, Sunday 12 September 2010
- 1st Coole Park 8KM (Cope), Saturday 18 September 2010
- 12th Loughrea Grey Lake 10KM,
Sunday 26 September 2010 (best after-race food I've ever had!)
- 8th Galway Bay 10KM/Half, Saturday 2 October 2010
- 1st Newcastle 5KM (Fit4Life), Saturday 6 November 2010
- 1st Corofin 8KM, Sunday, 14 November 2010
- 1st Cammore Hurling Club 6KM,
Sunday 12 December 2010
- 9th Fields of Athenry, Sunday 26 December 2010

There were a small number of unpermitted races in Galway during 2010, the vast majority of which were organised outside of AAI club structures and/or due to lack of information about the benefits of AAI permitting (insurance and course measurement) including: Beagh, Inish Bofin, Portumna, Salthill, Ballygar, Dunmore, Oughterard and Inis Mheán. There were also a number of private club events that were not open to the public or were invitation-only that will not be listed here either.

Permits are already applied for for a number of early-2011 events, including Tuam, Maree, Kilconieron and Craughwell!

Athenry AC at this Year's Dublin City Marathon



The usual suspects and a good few more made it up to De Big Smoke for the 31st Dublin City Marathon in late-October. Peadar Nugent made it 31 out of 31 – an A grade in anyone's language. Martin Keane made it a triple crown of national medals this year in the M65 category with an excellent time to boot. Our club's two presidents showing the way for the rest of us!

Mick Rice ran another PB in 97th as he chased down Brian O'Connor at Trinity College, not for the first time either. Brian (99th) PB'ed too, fair play! Owen Adye-Curran broke three for the first time, but not without pacing himself a bit too carefully over the last two miles. Valerie Glavin proved a

goodly number of people wrong by getting down very close to 3:10 – Frank Burke and myself, in particular.

Aoife Callan ran a sub-3:30 on her first journey; a super performance with much more in the tank I am certain. Deirdre Quinn and Maeve Noone both got under 3:45, to put many of their male counterparts in the club to shame. Ed(ward) Egan broke four again, ahead of Ray O'Connor who is now one closer to the 100 Marathon Club too – both big men in more ways than one. There were also two wife-husband teams (Breens & Maeve/Frank) – those who run together, stay together?

The list goes on and on and on and on. Everyone has a story, which is what makes the marathon distance so great.

Name	Chip Time	Marathon # before DCM
Mick Rice	2:44:27	34
Brian O'Connor	2:44:47	2
Brian Bruton	2:51:18	12
Owen Adye-Curran	2:58:23	5
Johnny O'Connor	3:02:27	8
Lyall Guiney	3:09:00	10
Mark Breen	3:10:36	1
Valerie Glavin	3:10:40	19
Frank Burke	3:13:04	6
Adrian Fitzmaurice	3:20:09	1
Patrick Forde	3:21:28	4
Aoife Callan	3:26:49	first
Philip Magnier	3:35:04	5
Maeve Noone	3:42:38	1
Deirdre Quinn	3:42:39	first
Kieran Guiry	3:43:33	first
Tomas Mangan	3:54:02	2
Edward Egan	3:55:54	7
Barry O'Sullivan	3:55:58	11
Ray O'Connor	3:59:32	93
Martin Keane	4:19:31	17
Paul Keane	4:22:17	10
Grainne Breen	4:29:33	1
Brid Moran	4:28:42	first
Peadar Nugent	5:39:44	31

MARTINA PASSMAN

Beauty Therapist and Masseuse



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2010 Athenry AC (Juvenile) Report

Michelle Collins



The Juvenile section of Athenry AC is delighted with how 2010 has gone so far for us. Our Mini Athletes aged 5 – 8 are really enjoying themselves again this year in the Vocational School. They have been taking part in all sorts of games and unknown to themselves are going to be the athletes of the future. Their

leaders really delight in watching their personalities develop and even at their young ages you can see their progress through game, their strengths and weakness.

Children aged from 8 up usually progress well. They are sent out into the wilderness which at this time of year can be wet, cold and dismal but they absolutely thrive on it. Parents can tell you after a night of training they go home tired but happy. At this time of year our training will mainly be cross country, but come mid-December we start training for our indoor track and field and this involves Hurdles, Sprints, Long Jumps and Shot Putt etc. After this, our summer season kicks in, and everything we have learned during the cold winter comes into play again as we prepare for the Track and Field (Summer Sessions). We don't need to worry about the cold and wet, our problems are now: have you enough sunscreen on and have you got plenty of drink so you don't dehydrate. The kids are generally hyper and full of beans at these competitions and the parents are begging them to calm down and at the end of the day the kids win out, going home with medals and smiles on their faces.

Now to the really important part: how did we do this year? Well kids, give yourselves a pat on the back! We feel that it is all about the fact that you competed and if it were a team event and you went through Galway, Connacht and All-Irelands together then, that is special, really special and cannot be taken from you.

We have athletes during the year whose achievements have stood out among the best in the country.

In their first year competing, we had the likes of Sinead Lyons,

Danielle Woods, Danielle Collins and with this, Shea Hennessey and Eoin Lawless placed first in their first ever All Ireland, which is a huge achievement at 9 years of age. In the next age group up, we had Aubrey O'Brien, Osin Rowe, Michael Coleman, Fabien Mangan, Christian Mullen, Tino Laton, Sarah Gilhooley with Brandon Lee and Dean Treacy also achieving gold. In the under 11 age group we had Niamh Hannon, Alysha Woods, Lydia Doyle, Brandon McMenamin and James Oliver Dempsey. In the relays, our under 11 girls won first place with a time of 62.18, the team was Aoibhinn Carr, Lydia Doyle, Niamh Hannon, Alysha Woods, Siobhan McGrath and Aisling Kenny. The under 10 boys lost out by less than 0.2 of a second on third place and will be back to claim it next year – watch this space. These are athletes to watch out for in the future. Remember their names.

Emma Grady, Kate Gallagher, Grace Cahill and Leticia Ryan Collins all competed in the All-Irelands along with their colleagues: Mathew Treacy 3rd and 4th in High Jump (different events); Grace Cahill 3rd place in long jump; Eilish Hynes 4th in Discus; Jack Fitzpatrick 4th in Cross Country; Stephen Coleman 1st and 3rd in Ireland in Long Jump, and 4th in 60metres. In the older age groups (our young adults) we have Serena Hansberry with a 2nd place in the 3500M, Sorcha Murphy and Sinead Tuohy competed on the Women's Galway Team and got Silver. Sinead had a good year overall, also achieving two 3rd places in the High Jump. Our under 18 girls got bronze for representing their county in the snow on Sunday the 28th of November in Derry. They were Helen Geraghty, Yvonne Keary, Orla Grogan and Aideen Healy. Others competing in the snow were Shannon Lee and Liam Egan. Great dedication just getting there, let alone competing, and we are proud of you all! Wow, that was what you call a full year!

We have a few people to thank throughout the year for their hard work: Bernie Johnson, Martin Hynes, Mags Flannery, Yvonne Knight, Lorna Holly, Peter Lyons, Ann Lynn, Trevor Tuffy, Mary Kate Dilger, Michelle Collins and Dermot McNamara. I would especially like to say to Dermot: without your expertise we would all be lost; long may we be able to call on you with our questions and receive your considered and experienced answers.



Athenry AC are 2010 AAI Connacht Club of the Year

Self praise is no praise so it was very humbling when we read what our near neighbours wrote about us on www.craughwellac.com on the day Athenry AC received the AAI 2010 Connacht Club of the Year award in Santry last month.

Over to Mark Davis, who wrote the article:

Our near neighbours Athenry AC are in the shortlist for the AAI club of the year award, the winner of which will be announced tomorrow night. The very best of luck to them in this, the award would be deserved.

Obviously being from Craughwell there's little more enjoyable than beating our big-town neighbors in team competitions :-). However putting aside any friendly local rivalries, there's really no doubt that members of Athenry AC have helped transform senior running in Galway over the past 6 or 7 years. About 7 years ago they had the highest percentage of nerds in their membership of any club in the country. For this reason they were thus one of the first clubs to jump on the internet bandwagon and for years their event list was the first place to go to see what's coming up. This has only recently been superseded by another Athenry AC member organised website RunIreland as the place to find what's coming up.



I also remember that when we'd go to a road race we would look around and be relieved if we saw an Athenry AC member as it meant that the results of the race would be shortly available on the internet – even if they weren't involved in organising it, their facts and figures geeks like James would badger the organisers for results to put up. You also knew that there was a good chance that one of the Athenry members would stick up a Race Report to outline their side of the story.

Other clubs followed suit eventually, but Athenry's website is still one of the best and also a good historical record of the last decade of Senior running in the West of Ireland.

Those same active members are also found behind the scenes or stationed at finish lines at road and cross country races all around Ireland and have been a great help to many clubs when organising events (including our own road race last year), and central to the organisation of events like the Galway 5K series.

Competitively Athenry have had some great stories – mainly through the Pauls: McNamara and Hession, but also from Clare McNamara and the men's team who medaled in the national half a few years ago. In recent times their ladies team has been particularly strong and they definitely have the strongest female squad in the county I'd say.

Obviously the main thing that Athenry AC would be known for is its own "Fields of Athenry" 10k Road Race which has grown exponentially from its inception. All over Ireland the trademark woolly hats can be spotted on dog-walkers, road diggers and taxi drivers alike. As it approaches December, it could be time to book your 2010 hat and sign up for this year's race.

Best of luck guys tomorrow night – hopefully you get some recognition for the part you've played in the West of Ireland "noughties" running boom.

Fields of Athenry 10KM

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
2007	Gary Thornton	30:02	Orla NIMhuircheartaigh	38:52	617	50	253	457
2008	Gary Thornton	30:40	Catherine Conway	36:53	838	58	359	642
2009	Gary Thornton	29:57	Teresa McGloin	35:17	517	53	238	406

2010 Stalwarts

The following 9 people hold the distinction of competing in all 8 "Fields of Athenry" 10KM races to date. We wish them the best of luck on their 9th outing this year.

Name	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Bernie Kelly	45:48	49:31	52:05	44:20	46:08	47:46	45:46	47:23
Danny Carr	36:15	38:11	36:00	36:41	38:06	38:06	37:29	38:38
Kevin O'Dea	48:27	50:16	51:25	46:44	53:49	53:35	45:57	42:33
Martin Keane	51:20	50:02	54:48	51:17	50:44	52:27	53:42	52:49
Mary Mullins	1:05:50	1:00:37	1:06:27	1:07:22	1:11:31	1:05:23	1:07:36	1:06:30
Patrick Kelly	49:16	51:48	52:15	50:20	50:56	49:52	54:53	58:52
Roger Rushe	45:07	44:29	46:15	44:33	45:24	45:52	44:48	46:52
Tomás MacLochlainn	49:57	56:35	50:10	52:23	56:58	FNSED	56:32	59:05
Tommy Joe Whyte	36:35	36:16	36:29	38:40	36:58	37:15	37:39	37:11

2009 Prize Winners

Category	Pos	Name	Category	Pos	Name
Senior Women	1st	Teresa McGloin	Senior Men	1st	Gary Thornton
	2nd	Catherine Conway		2nd	Paul McNamara
	3rd	Breege Connolly		3rd	John Byrne
	4th	Kathryn Cassery		4th	Wayne Reid
	5th	Ann Lennon		5th	Brian Murphy
	6th	Derval Devaney		6th	Robert Staunton
Junior Women	1st	Sophie Ralston	Junior Men	1st	Kieran Fox
Women's V35	1st	Sheelagh McInerney	Men's V40	1st	Mick Rice
	2nd	Kathy Connolly		2nd	Ian Egan
Women's V40	1st	Anne Fahey	Men's V45	1st	Tommy Joe Whyte
	2nd	Valerie Fogarty		2nd	Danny Carr
Women's V45	1st	Kathleen Waters	Men's V50	1st	Tony Killarney
	2nd	Dervilla D'Arcy		2nd	Pat Reidy
Women's V50	1st	Bernie Kelly	Men's V55	1st	Frankie Garrity
	2nd	Maura Falsay		2nd	Martin O'Donnell
Women's V55	1st	Judith Roche	Men's V60	1st	Martin Hynes
	2nd	Andrea Ridge	Men's V65	1st	Brian Geraghty
Women's Team	1st	GCH - 1, 6, 14, 21 = 21	Men's V70	1st	Roger Rushe
	2nd	Craughwell AC - 7, 10, 12, 22 = 51	Men's V75	1st	Sean Dooner
			Men's Team	1st	Mayo AC - 16, 43, 73, 82 = 214
			2nd	Craughwell AC - 162, 195, 200, 201 = 758	

2010 Athenry AC (Senior) Report

Iain Shaw



2010 is my third year as senior club secretary and during that time the club has grown at a phenomenal rate. When the baton was passed into my hands, the club had 71 members with a very heavy male bias. As I write this and peruse over the club database I see that we now number 177 members with 96 females. We are the 8th largest club in the country. The major impact to our club, as for most, has been the AAI Fit4Life (F4L) initiative and the club has 66 athletes currently registered as F4L athletes. This year we saw some of those very same F4L members, some who initially struggled to run a couple of miles, complete marathons, half marathons and take part in national championships, both on the road and over cross country.

Athenry AC had representation in over 130 events this year at local, national and at international level. What is nice to see is that it is not just our elite athletes proudly flying the flag at international events but our entire membership, including graduate members of our Fit4Life programme. I know many of our athletes will secretly stash away their singlet just in case they find a race to run whilst away on holidays and it has become a game of 'spot the singlet' when watching some of the major international mass participation races on television.

Closer to home the 5KM series again exploded in numbers and each of the Galway clubs hosted brilliant races, even if some were very soggy affairs. Our good run of sun on a Galway 5KM Tuesday night was definitely broken in Craughwell this year. Seventy nine Athenry AC athletes participated in the series this year and although the series was blitzed by a red hot run of form by Mark Davis, winning 4 out of 6 races and he didn't run in his own club's race! The dynamic duo of Brian O'Connor and Conor Dolan were ever-present in the top finishers at all the races – well done guys. I don't really have space to review the entire year, and there are so many individual performances, which do deserve a mention but I will mostly refrain so as not to offend individuals

who do not get a name check. However, I do want to give special mention to a few performances, which I personally witnessed this year. I find myself in Cork on the June Bank Holiday each year and if I am not running in it I always go along to watch the Cork Marathon. This year it was a great personal pleasure to see Paul McNamara take the silver medal finishing behind a record-breaking performance by Sergiu Ciobanu (who also won the National Marathon Championship, Connemara Marathon and Longford Marathon amongst others) and also to see Jane-Ann Healy wipe 13 minutes off her marathon PB. However the performances of the day (and probably the year) were from the entire 10,000 people who braved probably the worst weather I have ever seen in a race. Clare McNamara continued her good form in field events at various levels during 2010 too.

Inspirational performances of the year I think have to go to the 11 participants of the Connemara 100 mile road race. It is tough enough negotiating 13.1 miles of the Connemara Half, but to have to do a further 87 miles is something very special indeed. From our own club, Mick Rice ran a superb, metronome-like pace to win in 14h 27m, but I feel the third place finish by Ray O'Connor (20h 39m) deserves a special mention. Ray's run was a performance full of a man willing to overcome anything that was thrown at him (Editor: see Ray's report elsewhere in this booklet). Many people will not know that Ray could not keep any food down from about the mid-point and survived mostly on milk. A superb and gutsy performance.

So to today, I look forward to seeing each and every one of you out on the streets of Athenry, whether you are a runner, a jogger or a walker I hope you have a great time and get chance to soak up the atmosphere that the Fields of Athenry 10KM can offer.

Also, sincere thanks to the anonymous benefactor who donated our new race clock to the club.





An Awesome Adventure Around Antwerp

– Ironman 70.3 (1.9km swim, 90km cycle and half marathon run)

Miriam Wall – Athentry AC and Galway Triathlon Club

In the three weeks before Antwerp I rested as much as possible and stopped racing. It felt like the more I rested, the more tired I got. I began to miss the long training sessions I was used to. I was beginning to wonder what kind of madness possessed me to enter a race of this distance at all. It definitely was not a moment of rational thinking.

Four of us arrived in Antwerp Friday morning, looking forward to our race Sunday. For myself, Owen and Richie it was our first Half Ironman. There is always an element of nervous excitement and worry as you face new challenges. Aidan was there to advise us as he had already completed two Half Ironman distance races.

Race registration was easy but the race expo was a bit disappointing. There was nothing to buy: no pre-race retail therapy to calm the nerves.

Race morning arrived, the microwave was put under pressure as we cooked our porridge but we were cool as ice! The weather was overcast and a little breezy. The transition was huge with 1400 people. There were hardly any girls there but I was not complaining. Plenty to look at (I mean all those top of the range bikes, race wheels and super cool gear!)

There were only a handful of girls in my wave so it was a bit daunting being stuck in a cage with all these men in neoprene. I was in the second last wave so it was exciting watching the elites make their way around the swim course.

Even though the swim was in waves this year I still managed to get elbowed, kicked and swum over. One guy lifted me out of the water and dropped me again! I thought he was going to punch me.

The swim was easy to navigate and to maintain your line. Congestion was the main problem. The waves were only two minutes apart so the swimmers did not disperse very much. I finished the swim feeling strong and ran up to transition.

My transition was smooth and without issue. There was a long run up from the water through transition to the mount line for the bike. Out on the bike and the cycle began. My plan was to ease into the cycle and try to keep my speed between 27 and 30km per hour. I felt that this would be

realistic for me. Any faster and I did not know if I would be able to last the distance without blowing up. I wanted to be able to run off the bike.

I was being passed on the bike by loads of people. I ignored this and concentrated on my own speed and consistency. I tend to lose concentration on the bike so I worked hard to remain focused. I had a gel and energy drink/bar feast on the cycle (yum yum). Apart from the numerous railway tracks, the road surface was smooth and relatively flat. There was a headwind on the return part of the bike course. The last few KM were tricky on the return into transition through the city of Antwerp.

Transition 2 was in a different location to transition 1. It took a moment to find my slot as I had not been in this area before. The sense of relief was huge when I racked my bike and I looked forward to the run. In any of my triathlon races to date, I just love the moment when I start running. Jelly legs or not, the sense of relief for me is huge. I love the run and just concentrate on passing out those who passed me on the bike.

I had planned to wear my Garmin in Antwerp to pace myself. The day before the race my Garmin would not work. I did not panic – I just altered the plan. Now I was going to start running and see what happened. I knew it would take a few KM to get my legs back so I would not be able to go out too fast (my usual downfall).

The KMs or miles were not marked on the run course, so being Garmin-less I had no way of pacing myself. There were 3 laps of 7km approx and 1 km to finish. I started running and surprisingly found my aforementioned legs very quickly. With each lap I tried to get faster and I finished strongly on the run. I began passing people early on in the run. This continued for the whole of my run and especially in the last ten minutes. There were water, gel and energy stations every 2km. I loved the run course with the laps through the town and all the support on the way. Everything else doesn't matter after that...

It truly was an awesome adventure around Antwerp.

Miriam Wall – SWIM 37:48 BIKE 3:10:59
RUN 1:47:07 FINISH **5:40:46**

Static versus Dynamic Stretching

Jane Ann Healy



Static stretching:

Many athletes and coaches advocate the use of static stretching prior to exercise. Static stretching involves reaching forward to a point of tension and holding the stretch. The aim of this short article is to give you, the athlete, enough information regarding static and dynamic stretching so you can optimize your performance and prevent injury.

Does static stretching prior to activity achieve the goals of injury prevention and performance enhancement?

Research has shown that static stretching can be detrimental to performance and doesn't necessarily lead to decreases in injury.

Rod Pope, an army physiotherapist in Australia, recently carried out a wide study to assess the relationship between static stretching and injury prevention. Pope monitored over 1600 recruits over the course of a year in randomised controlled trials. He found no differences in the occurrence of injury between those recruits who statically stretched and those who did not (2010). New research has shown that static stretching decreases eccentric strength for up to an hour after the stretch.

Static stretching has been shown to decrease muscle strength by up to 9% for 60 minutes following the stretch and decrease eccentric strength by 7% followed by a specific hamstring stretch (Critchell 2009). Three 15-second stretches of the hamstrings, quadriceps, and calf muscles reduced the peak vertical velocity of a vertical jump in the majority of subjects (Knudson et al 2000). Moscov (1993) found that there is no relationship between static flexibility and dynamic flexibility. This suggests that an increased static range of motion may not be translated into functional, sport-specific flexibility, which is largely dynamic in most sporting situations.

In conclusion Static based stretching programs seem best suited following an activity.

Dynamic stretching:

The best strength coaches support the use of dynamic stretching. Dynamic stretching consists of functional-based exercises which use sport specific movements to prepare the body for movement. Dynamic stretching involves moving parts of your body and gradually increasing reach, speed of movement, or both, it is not to be confused with ballistic stretching. Dynamic stretching consists of controlled leg and arm motion that take you gently to the limits of your range of motion. Ballistic stretches involve trying to force a part of the body beyond its range of motion by bouncing and jerking at the end of range and is not recommended.

Flexibility is speed specific. There are two kinds of stretch receptors, one measures magnitude and speed and the other measures magnitude only. Static flexibility improves static flexibility and dynamic flexibility improves dynamic flexibility which is why it doesn't make sense to static stretch prior to dynamic activity. There is considerable but not complete transfer of static stretching to dynamic stretching (Kurz et al 2008).

There are few sports where achieving static flexibility is advantageous to success in the sport and athletics is not one of these! Therefore, according to the principle of specificity it would seem to be more advantageous to perform a dynamic warm-up which more resembles the activity of the sport, for example dynamic lunges, knee highs, heel kicks, kick outs etc.

Dynamic Flexibility increases core temperature, muscle temperature, elongates the muscles, stimulates the nervous system, and helps decrease the chance of injury.

In conclusion an ideal work out should involve 15 minutes dynamic warm up, the actual session, followed by 10 minutes static stretching.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me, ja_healy02@yahoo.com.

Jane-Ann Healy – Chartered Physiotherapist,
MISCP, BSc Hons Physio,
MSc Sports Physiotherapy, Dip Acupuncture.
Athletics Ireland carded elite physiotherapist.

160,000 Steps

2010 Connemara 100

Ray O'Connor

Saturday, August 14 2010. 6.00AM Cold summer air blowing through the mountains of Connemara. The little town centre is ablaze with sudden activity as the start line is assembled, supporters gather, runners file in at the start line. It's cold, very cold. My crew sit quietly in the car waiting to steer me to the finish. There are people all around, but in my mind I am alone and staring down a 100 mile road. There is lots of noise but in my head all I hear is the rustle of the wind and the little fearful voices trying to convince me that I'd be just fine.

Barter and laughter breaks the nervous tension in the air, but there is nothing funny about what lies beyond the first climb out of Clifden. I know only too well, as I succumbed to this course and these conditions before. The experience of dropping out after just 42 miles a year earlier should have toughened me up. I surely would have gained the inner strength to get beyond any barriers put in front of me today and make the finish 100 miles later, somehow.

The start comes all too quickly and the usual panic sets in. 'Hold Back' is the mantra, focusing on the plan to cover just five miles per hour. Just hold back. The field spreads out very quickly as the leaders stretch far into the distance and us back markers hold back some more. Through some of the most beautiful places in the country, Letterfrack, Leitirgeish and the first sights of the magnificent Maam Turks, which we must circle once to bring us just short of four marathons sometime later in the day. Lough Inagh is the wonderful setting for the first checkpoint at mile 28 and my first planned break for a quick bite to eat. I really don't want food and cannot stomach it but hide this from my ever-enthusiastic crew whom I feel every bit as responsible for as they do for me. Quickly pulling away from the noisy oasis, I try to find some sort of rhythm as a change in crew distracts the mind wonderfully. This brings me to mile 42, Maam Cross, the scene of my dreaded dropout last year.

Maam Cross on a Saturday morning is a hive of activity with farmers coming from far and wide selling their wares: sheep, hay and God knows what else. I stop momentarily

for a quick cup of tea and wonder what they think of me, invading their mart in such a strange way. I feel fantastic and run faster and faster through the Maam Valley, letting my mantra take a break. Halfway is in sight. I suddenly feel very sick.

Mile 55 and I struggle badly, craving 7-Up, tea, ice, anything that would ease my stomach and allow me get back the free feeling of the Maam Valley. Anything, just get me to Leenane. The medics assure me that I look just fine, heart rate is normal and nothing should stop me. This is the assurance I need. I do not want to be forced out of this. I simply have to finish.

Milk! The doctor's words sounded like he'd discovered a wonder drug...and it was. One pint of milk was summoned and downed in an instant. I just knew that would get me through and felt perfectly fine once more, cruising through the 100KM point and onwards towards another crew changeover at the next checkpoint – mile 68.

Mile 69. Standing on the side of the road throwing up, I look hopelessly around at my very experienced crew, Joanne Fearon. I know I have fear written all over my face. Is this it? She smiles and says, 'You'll be just fine now.' With her thousands of miles of wisdom echoing in my ears, I get back running and decide all I want for the remainder of my time on the road is milk. Running through mile 75, it starts getting dark and the flashing lights of the crew vehicle suddenly annoy me; the sound of the engine becomes so repetitive that I want to explode: where is Roundstone? Where the bloody hell is ROUNDSTONE! I'm very cranky now.

Roundstone is a rowdy place with a festival in full swing. It's close to 11pm and I've been on the road for nearly 18 hours. I have 14 miles to go. This has been a focal point for over two hours now and I feel all the better for reaching it. The checkpoint is manned by my brother Ken, who is probably the most attentive person I know. His presence is completely reassuring. He is elated that I made it to his checkpoint this year and shares his enthusiasm with all that can hear. I'm sorry I can't stay



A well deserved pint after 100miles

longer but I have to get going. I shuffle away from the noisy village and into the black night. Another crew change brings a new distraction. I am at peace and the night is still. I love this moment in an ultra. You literally hover outside your body and everything becomes calm, quiet, whispering. Two hours pass, walking hills and running everything else.

The lights of Clifden eventually come into view and before I realise, I am back in the heartbeat of the event again, with people about, the finish line crew in full voice and supporters to join me for my last three laps of the town. With a mixture of walking and running, and a mixture of emotions, I find the strength to sprint for the line and finish.

Sunday, August 15 2010. 2.39AM. 20 hours 39 minutes later. All is quiet again.



Portumna 100k
50km & Marathon
18th June 2011

ATHLETICS IRELAND
AIMS

ENTER ONLINE :
www.runireland.com

The poster features a green background with a white stylized leaf or path graphic. On the left, there is a logo consisting of a green footprint, a green leaf, and an orange flame-like shape. The text is in white and green.

Fields of Henry Result 2019

1	29:57	Gary Thornton	104	42:45	UNKNOWN UNKNOWN	207	48:20	Seamus Sweeney	310	53:40	Niall Hardman	414	1:01:02	Tara Kealy
2	31:16	Paul McNamara	105	42:40	John Hardman	208	48:17	Edel Crehan	311	54:02	Ross Scully	415	1:00:38	Fiona Fitzgerald
3	32:30	John Byrne	106	42:53	John Flattery	209	48:23	Maura Falsely	312	54:08	Brian Kelly	416	1:01:03	Imelda Hydes
4	32:50	Wayne Reid	107	42:55	Patrick Brennan	210	48:26	Eugene Hodda	313	53:58	Clare Dooley	417	1:01:08	Geraldine Fegan
5	34:27	Brian Murphy	108	42:58	Gerry Killien	211	48:20	Chris O Connell	314	53:48	Kevn Timoney	418	1:01:10	Janette Murray
6	34:33	Robert Staunton	109	43:04	Brian Garrahy	212	48:30	Mike O White	315	54:07	Marina Donnellan	419	1:01:17	Irene Headd
7	34:34	Peter O Sullivan	110	43:13	Hubie Conway	213	48:30	Michael Egan	316	53:49	Judith Davitt	420	1:01:00	Bernard Mulkerins
8	34:39	Mick Rice	111	43:20	Damian Muldoon	214	48:31	Ann Egan	317	54:08	Sinead Caserly	421	1:01:00	Caroline Niland
9	34:42	Mairtin Grealish	112	43:02	James Rohan	215	48:39	James Kelly	318	53:52	Eithne Waldron	422	1:01:13	Aine Rooney
10	34:45	Johnny Lane	113	43:27	Alasdair Conway	216	48:51	Michelle Keenhean	319	54:13	John Reilly	423	1:01:15	Aoife Rooney
11	34:47	Michael Keane	114	43:51	Killian Dooley	217	48:49	Paul Flaherty	320	54:13	Patrick Burke	424	1:01:17	Sinead Heneghan
12	34:46	Robert Davis	115	43:53	Mark Giff	218	48:53	Mark Giff	321	54:03	William Cannon	425	1:01:44	Thomas O'Connell
13	34:51	Keith Whyte	116	44:03	Edna Munnally	219	48:55	Neel Gorman	322	53:50	Tadhg Kilcommins	426	1:01:39	Martina Burke
14	35:04	Ian Egan	117	44:04	John King	220	49:13	Gerry Rohan	323	53:55	Allen Moran	427	1:02:01	Bernie Quinn
15	35:17	Teresa McGloin	118	44:09	Chris Hughes	221	49:10	Jarlah Fitzgerald	324	54:13	Enda Morrissey	428	1:02:03	Anne Lyng
16	36:02	Catherine Conway	119	44:13	Don Nyhan	222	49:08	Alan O Callaghan	325	54:23	Eileen Molloy	429	1:01:58	Grainne Costello
17	36:38	Eoin Brennan	120	44:13	Fergal Lydon	223	49:10	John Looby	326	54:21	Hilda Cooley	430	1:01:46	SP Williams
18	36:41	Brege Connolly	121	44:01	Colin O'Rourke	224	49:27	Jude Donnellan	327	54:20	Vivian Hardman	431	1:02:08	Cara Lennon
19	36:40	Paul Keane	122	44:11	David Donohue	225	49:28	Tom O'Connor	328	54:14	Duncan Warner	432	1:02:19	Norman Paddie
20	36:41	Mick Fogarty	123	44:18	John Lynch	226	49:18	James Elwood	329	54:34	Olivia Dwyer	433	1:02:11	Frank Greene
21	36:43	Eamonn Hornbrook	124	44:21	Barry Lyons	227	49:31	Deirdre Quinn	330	54:34	Mairaed Lujan	434	1:02:19	Maria McArdle
22	36:43	Tommy Niland	125	44:09	Mike O'Rourke	228	49:40	Michael Keane	331	54:23	Pauline Murray	435	1:02:19	Irina Zuskat
23	36:49	Derek Murray	126	44:27	Gerry Trasey	229	49:27	Patricia Foley	332	54:33	Colin McIlrath	436	1:02:24	Helen van de Beek
24	36:49	Brendan Gil	127	44:30	Pat Reidy	230	49:42	Michael Furey	333	54:19	JP McGough	437	1:02:40	Frances Egan
25	37:00	Justin Niland	128	44:34	Alan Lambie	231	49:37	David Glynn	334	54:53	JP Gilmerin	438	1:02:34	Mike Curran
26	37:04	Billy King	129	44:39	Ronan Lyons	232	49:25	Patrick Scully	335	54:24	Declan Craven	439	1:02:26	John O'Neill
27	37:08	Tommy Joe Whyte	130	44:29	Fran Keenan	233	49:53	David Kirrane	336	54:42	Aidan Dwyer	440	1:02:35	Eilaine Hession
28	37:15	Colin Walsh	131	44:32	Michael Keenan	234	49:44	Mairaed Lujan	337	54:47	Mary Lynch	441	1:02:54	Gerard Bodner
29	37:30	Michael MacDonnacha	132	44:47	Paul Curran	235	49:49	Mairieda Holohan	338	54:59	David May	442	1:02:57	Niamh Canning
30	37:32	Damien Reidy	133	44:43	Ciaran Nestor	236	49:59	John Langan	339	54:44	Martha Murphy	443	1:02:16	Michael Glynn
31	37:37	Dan O'Rourke	134	44:39	Shane Donohue	237	50:00	Kathleen Waters	340	55:17	Roddy Byrne	444	1:03:04	John Roddy
32	37:38	Tomny Neill	135	45:00	John Regan	238	49:54	Claire Burke	341	54:56	Mike Carr	445	1:03:41	Peter Gilhooly
33	38:02	Paul Fallon	136	45:15	Niall Lynch	239	50:03	David Edwards	342	54:56	Sharon Allen	446	1:03:21	Stephen Clarke
34	38:01	Daniel McCarthy	137	45:08	Brendan Nobilly	240	49:55	Sinead Cooley	343	55:15	Ray Tracy	447	1:03:42	Tom Fahy
35	38:08	Frankie Garrity	138	45:18	Richard Fox	241	50:07	Tommy Maher	344	55:17	Adam Dubis	448	1:03:35	Andrea Sellers
36	38:18	Patrick Holohan	139	45:24	Sean Lee	242	50:12	Robert Cheevers	345	55:19	Sophie Ratston	449	1:03:48	Liam McCann
37	38:23	Kathryn Cassery	140	45:23	John Kilrairie	243	50:00	Anthony Gleeson	346	55:21	James Donnelly	450	1:03:35	Lily Muldoon
38	38:36	Danny Carr	141	45:31	Morgan McHugh	244	50:17	Joseph Clancy	347	55:23	Aine Hunter	451	1:04:05	Alan Duggan
39	38:47	David Huane	142	45:32	Thelma McMahon	245	50:28	Niam Broderick	348	55:32	Philip Brady	452	1:04:22	Connie Egan
40	38:53	Patrick Kelly	143	45:34	Andrew Walsh	246	50:29	Tracy Fahy	349	55:42	Tracy Fahy	453	1:04:43	Michael O'Sullivan
41	38:50	David Maher	144	45:35	Christopher Carey	247	50:29	Tomás Mangan	350	55:34	Donal Leech	454	1:05:14	Frances Carr
42	39:13	David Mullins	145	45:42	Colin Duane	248	50:49	Tom Hussey	351	55:46	Chris Burke	455	1:05:13	Mattie Duane
43	39:28	Ann Lennon	146	45:45	Edel Tighe	249	50:38	John Donnellan	352	55:34	Stephen Kissane	456	1:05:53	Jimmy Butler
44	39:36	David Ryan	147	45:49	Michael Caserly	250	51:02	John Connolly	353	55:34	Bridget Connair	457	1:06:59	Sara Ryan
45	39:37	Fergal Toole	148	45:53	John O'Connell	251	51:01	Gabriel Ryan	354	55:31	Martin Hynds	458	1:06:17	Paul Mullins
46	39:38	Sadana Magee	149	45:59	Sham Gallagher	252	51:03	Patricia McCaffrey	355	55:43	Colin Kelly	459	1:06:28	Tommy O'Connell
47	39:40	Tony McNicholas	150	45:53	Robbie Kirwan	253	51:04	Ruth Kilcawley	356	55:48	Felim MacCoine	460	1:06:36	Carmel Clarke
48	39:41	Martin O'Donnell	151	46:04	Finola Nyhan	254	50:54	Mark Gurney	357	55:50	Fiona Lane	461	1:06:59	David Quinn
49	39:41	Conor O'Rourke	152	46:10	Laura Garvey	255	51:09	Barry Walsh	358	55:50	Maire Leader	462	1:06:59	Catherine Quinn
50	39:46	Marion Mooney	153	46:17	Marcus Boland	256	51:16	Kelli Connolly	359	56:08	Michael Kelly	463	1:06:52	Jack Mackey
51	39:53	Colman Greene	154	46:14	Martin Lohan	257	51:27	Paul Kilkenamon	360	55:59	Paul Kelly	464	1:06:59	Michael O'Sullivan
52	39:54	Kieran Fox	155	46:21	Kenneth Cronin	258	51:24	Lisa Kelly	361	56:20	Martin Caserly	465	1:06:57	Dionhna Bohan
53	39:59	Paul Giblin	156	46:22	Christy O'Malley	259	51:11	Neil McKenna	362	56:28	Valerie Slattery	466	1:06:57	Simon O'Donnell
54	40:03	Fergal Grogan	157	46:22	Rauidhir Murray	260	51:38	Eoin Larkin	363	56:47	Cora Giffey	467	1:08:40	Way Coyle
55	40:01	John Hardman	158	46:10	John Joyce	261	51:41	Olra Kilrairie	364	56:37	Gerry Hurley	468	1:08:24	Ann O'Connell
56	40:11	Adian Spellman	159	46:15	John Langan	262	51:31	Caroline Rayn	365	55:55	Stephanie Reid	469	1:08:54	Caroline Kennedy
57	40:06	Michael McCarthy	160	46:21	Daniel Kelly	263	51:27	Paul Kelly	366	56:14	Patrick Kelly	470	1:09:09	Michael O'Brien
58	40:10	Willie Burke	161	46:21	Iarlaith O'Rourke	264	51:38	Tressa Gannon	367	56:58	John Culhane	471	1:09:09	Ann Monaghan
59	40:12	Noel Burke	162	46:22	Sharon Gilligan	265	51:50	John Rafferty	368	56:37	Margaret Roddy	472	1:09:43	Sinead Curran
60	40:16	Jim Maguire	163	46:21	Theresa Maher	266	51:34	Betty Coleman	369	57:05	Robert Peary	473	1:10:17	Patricia Monaghan
61	40:16	Daniel Kavanagh	164	46:23	Mark Campbell	267	51:55	Garrett Molekan	370	57:08	Hunter Reilly	474	1:10:17	Myriam Crimmins
62	40:25	Hugh McKeown-Vass	165	46:28	Michael McCarthy	268	51:56	Michael O'Connell	371	57:08	Carola Dineen	475	1:10:41	Michael O'Sullivan
63	40:24	Andrew Talbot	166	46:36	John Fahy	269	52:00	Judith Roche	372	57:15	Lorna Freeman	476	1:10:31	Cara Gleeson
64	40:26	Michael Lally	167	46:36	Maria Long	270	52:14	Dervilla D'Arcy	373	57:16	Mary Givan	477	1:10:31	Aoife Gleeson
65	40:27	Alan Daniels	168	46:40	Eddie Fox	271	52:08	Olivia Walsh	374	57:14	Miriam McCartin	478	1:10:57	Orla Keady-Gibbin
66	40:35	Niall Murphy	169	46:34	Kenneth Burke	272	52:11	Siobhan Hussey	375	57:21	Elizabeth Nugent	479	1:12:48	Deirdre Hardman
67	40:41	Tom Hession	170	46:46	Diarmuid Clancy	273	52:00	Joanne Dolan	376	57:32	Siobhan Kelly	480	1:13:17	Bill Collins
68	40:45	Paul Kilkelly	171	46:50	Roger Rushe	274	52:12	Michelle Toohy	377	57:37	Damen Kelly	481	1:13:20	Sean Dooner
69	40:43	Adrian Fitzmaurice	172	46:30	Marye Reay	275	52:14	Niall MacSweeney	378	57:28	Deborah Foley	482	1:14:16	Maria Ryan
70	40:46	Hubert Newell	173	46:49	Cian Noonoe	276	52:06	Tony O'Callaghan	379	57:31	Aidan Broderick	483	1:15:13	Paul Mitchell
71	40:49	Wally Walsh	174	46:53	Shane Tighe	277	52:16	Liam Egan	380	57:20	Celia Miskella	484	1:15:39	Ann Noonan
72	40:50	Paul Kennedy	175	46:49	Michael Mahon	278	52:18	Dympna Curran	381	57:36	Margaret Flannery	485	1:15:39	Setena Fagan
73	40:55	Kathy Connolly	176	46:42	Rian Farrell	279	52:16	Timmy Haverly	382	57:44	Andrea Ridge	486	1:17:29	Aoife Seoghe
74	41:01	Bernadette Mulkerins	177	47:06	Kevin Lambie	280	52:19	Kevin McElroy	383	57:39	Patrick O'Brien	487	1:18:46	Michael O'Connell
75	41:02	Denis Joyce	178	47:08	Des May	281	52:28	Susanne Lally	384	57:31	Adeline Smyth	488	1:18:57	Mary O'Connell
76	41:03	Kieran Whyte	179	47:11	Noel Griffin	282	52:19	Brendan Davey	385	57:31	Siobhan Donohue	489	1:19:53	Marina Hardman
77	41:13	James Lally	180	47:10	Audrey McMahon	283	52:32	Joyan Brennan	386	57:46	Eilaine Quinn	490	1:20:14	Louise Martyn
78	41:18	Jim Maher	181	47:17	Martin Hynds	284	52:25	James Gleeson	387	57:40	Keith Dwyer	491	1:21:17	Ruth Kelly
79	41:24	Patrick Taylor	182	47:06	Michael Cronin	285	52:46	Michael Ryan	388	57:18	Helen Noonan	492	1:21:19	Grainne Costello
80	41:26	Fergal Grogan	183	47:14	Sean O'Connell	286	52:46	Martin Keane	389	57:53	Pauline Clerkin	493	1:21:34	Kathrina Duggan
81	41:27	Nigel Kilcawley	184	47:22	Eoin McMillin	287	52:40	Tara Ryan	390	58:04	Florence Dwyer	494	1:23:18	Veronica Cogan
82	41:27	Derval Devaney	185	47:11	Bernie Kelly	288	52:53	Stuart Harries	391	58:02	Margaret Parkinson	495	1:23:23	Liam Roche
83	41:37	Noel Fox	186	47:28	John Coughlan	289	52:35	Aidan Gil	392	58:48	Marie Burke	496	1:24:15	Eilaine Carney
84	41:38	Eddie McMahon	187	47:21	Al Callanan	290	52:44	Seamus McCaffrey	393	58:41	Patrick Kelly	497	1:24:13	Noel O'Sullivan
85	41:24	Liam Collins	188	47:26	Michael O'Sullivan	291	52:55	Gareth Smith	394	58:41	Damen Kelly	498	1:24:15	Thomas O'Sullivan
86	41:42	Noel Maher	189	47:35	Anne Fahy	292	52:48	Frank Noonoe	395	58:42	Tomás MacLochlainn	499	1:24:25	Aisling Hardman
87	41:44	Brendan Monaghan	190	47:27	Eddie Fitzsimons	293	53:07	Raymond McMahon	396	59:02	Patrick Kelly	500	1:24:57	Aisling Dwyer
88	41:49	Sarah Neary	191	47:33	Alan Walsh	294	53:01	John Fitzpatrick	397	58:47	Sarah King	501	1:26:12	Edel Burke
89	41:50	Cian Blake	192	47:48	Gabriel Gardiner	295	52:56	Rosaleen Kennedy	398	59:00	Julie Murphy	502	1:27:01	Deirdre Ni Cheallaigh
90	41:52	John O'Leary	193	47:47</										

2009 Fields of Athenry Photo Gallery



Pictures by: Sean Kindregan, Mick Rice, Joe Keating, Francis Kennedy (<http://airefoto.com>) and John O'Connor (<http://www.flickr.com/edenthl77>).



A First Timer's Wonderful Journey Around Dublin

Aoife Callan

I read recently where someone described the marathon as being the closest an adult gets to relive the anticipation and build-up of Christmas morning. The combination of nerves, excitement and severe lack of ability to sleep the night before, really do bring you back to a childlike experience. Running my first Dublin City Marathon was all that and more!

I have been running for about a year now. My aim really when I started out was to run the Dublin City Marathon. How fast, how slow didn't really matter, I just wanted to complete the 26.2 miles. I joined Athenry AC and it wasn't long before I had the running bug and realised that running had become an addiction.

My preparation was somewhat tampered with by teething problems (wanting to do too much too soon). Increasing mileage seemed not to agree with me, which was very frustrating at times. There was a stage where I didn't think I would make it to the start line at all. I did manage to complete one 20 mile run though, which was somewhat of a relief. With two or three weeks to go, I decided there was not much more I could do but go to Dublin to enjoy it and use it as a learning experience. As a first time marathoner I felt I had the added advantage of the unknown (if that makes any sense) and not having the pressure of trying to beat a previous time; we'll leave that to next year...

I arrived on Lower Baggot Street at 7.20am, a tad early for the 8am "Photo Shoot" planned for outside Tesco with the rest of the Athenry AC contingent. I have never seen Dublin City at a standstill before, on a beautiful crisp autumn morning, with no traffic only the onset of thousands of runners of all ages starting to congregate: it really was a site to behold.

The first real nerves started to kick in when I got to my starting pen. Here, I was on my own. It reminded me of my first day at school, in the sense of not knowing what it was going to be like, surrounded by strangers and thinking, "Well there's no going back now, I'll just have to get on with it." That I did, just after Amhrán na bhFiann nearly made me cry with emotion – I wasn't expecting that!

The gun went and off we shuffled.

I started at a slow pace mainly because of the 13000+ runners in the race and also I was heeding the advice of many of not going out too fast. I was situated about 50m behind the three and a half hour pacers. There it was: my race plan just came to me. I was going to stay as much as I could with these pacers, for as far as I could, and would be delighted to finish anywhere between 3:30hr and 3:45.

The conditions were absolutely perfect: no wind, no rain just crisp dry sunshine. Running through the Phoenix Park was particularly beautiful and to see the condensation from the now warmed-up runners rising into the cool morning air was quite a sight. I

reached the 10 mile marker with considerable ease; I felt comfortable and was staying well behind the pacers. I knew if I got close to them I would get driven on by adrenaline and probably crash and burn before I knew it, so I stayed a comfortable distance behind.

At the fifteen mile marker I was right up with the pacers; they were super consistent (8 minute miles) and their words of encouragement along with the vast crowd was hair-on-the-back-of-the-neck-raising stuff. The crowds that came out to support were amazing, strangers on the roadside offering words of encouragement and any amount of sweets, Jaffa Cakes and fruit. I thought this so bizarre – they seemed to be enjoying themselves.

I reached mile 20 (Editor: half way?) and felt surprisingly good. I expected to be suffering but wasn't. I was in two minds whether to up the pace for the last 6.2 miles but I thought to myself I would sit tight for another two miles and then if I still felt in good shape I'd let myself go. The 22 mile marker came and went and I started to pull away from the 3.30 pacers. The countdown was now on...mile 23...my heart was racing I'm nearly there...mile 24...I could start to feel the pain now...mile 25...I could feel every step...I was wishing I'd done more long runs...I was wondering if everybody else was hurting as much...It was the sheer support cheering the Athenry AC singlet that made me forget the pain for a while in the latter stages.

I came round by Trinity College and the volume of people and noise and drums beating made me quite emotional. I thought this must be near the end. Onto Nassau Street, fully sure to see the end in sight but no. My body was screaming out at me, "OMG where is the finish line?" Damn that .2 of a mile! Turned the next corner, onto Merrion Square and there it was, to my sheer delight.

My body suddenly got a turbo-boost injection; I could see nothing or nobody around me only the finish line. Any energy I had left went into that last stretch over the finish line.

Official Finish Time 3.28.06 – Official Chip Time 3.26.49!

What an amazing sense of relief, joy and achievement. My thoughts: what an unbelievable experience, something that I will never experience again no matter how many marathons I run. I was proud of me... However, I would not have been able to do it without the advice and encouragement of the wonderful and talented athletes of the Athenry AC throughout the year and all the supporters on the day and, of course, the pacers whoever you are.

I came to the realisation that the hardest part of the marathon is the actual training, the time and effort put in is phenomenal but worth it when you cross that finish line.

A definite must for one thing to do in your lifetime. A truly wonderful experience...

Éireoidh Leat Peadar Nugent



Cloistear daoine go minic ag rá "Ní fhéadfainn maratón a dhéanamh". Dáiríre píre, níl sé ró-dheacair ar chor ar bith. Tá maratón sodhéanta ag aon duine a d'fhéadfadh fanacht ar na cosa don am a thógadh sé é a chríochnú. Tá maratón 26 míle agus 385 slat ar a fhad. Ní sé órlach níos faide ná órlach níos giorra ná sin. Dá bhféadfá fanacht ar do chosa ar feadh tréimhse a mhaireann idir 2½ agus 7½ uair an chloig – braitheann sé an ag rith, ag sodar nó ag siúl a bheadh tú – d'éireodh leat. Dá mbeadh tú ag smaoineamh ar 2½ uair an chloig, bheadh tú in ann rith chomh tapa le Paul McNamara, mar shampla! Dá mbeadh tú, ar an taobh eile de, ag smaoineamh ar 7½ uair an chloig, thógadh sé timpeall 17 nóiméad, ar an meán, do ghach míle, nó isteach is amach le 3½ míle in aghaidh na huairé. Bheadh an mhórchuid de na daoine ag siúl le ham idir an dá theorainn sin

Má tá fonn ort tabhairt faoi mharatón, molaim duit go mór tosú go luath agus ullmhaigh go rialta do Mharatón Átha Cliath. Glactar leis go bhfuil Maratón Átha Cliath ar na cinn is fearr ar domhan anois. Thosaigh sé sa bhliain 1980 agus bíonn sé ar siúl ar an Luan deireanach de mhí Dheireadh Fomhair go bliantúil gan teip. Chuir breis is 13,000 duine isteach air i mbliana i gcomparáid le 40,000 a chuir isteach ar Mharatón Nua Eabhrach an mhí seo caite. Ritheadh an chéad Mharatón Nua Eabhrach sa bhliain 1970 agus níor ghlac ach 127 reathaí páirt ann i gcomparáid le 1,430 a

bhain ceann scribe amach i mBaile Átha Cliath deich mbliana níos déanaí. Tá a fhios ag an saol, áfach, go bhfuil gach uile rud **mór** i Meiriceá. Maíonn siad thall go bhfuil an fuálan – urinal – is faide ar domhan acu ag an tosú i Verrazano Toll Plaza in Oileán Staten. Ach geallaim duit nach mbeadh an compord céanna agat agus a bheadh i measc na grann i bPáirc an Fhionn Uisce – Phoenix Park – agus tá mé ag labhairt ó thairbh phearsanta. Seachas sin, níl sárú le fáil in aon áit ar na gártha molta ón lucht féachana i mBaile Átha Cliath agus bíonn na sráideanna ann dubh le daoine ó cheann ceann an chúrsa. Deimhneoidh éinne a ghlac páirt ann riamh firinneacht an ráitis sin.

Mar ullmhúchán do mharatón spreagfainn tú tosú le hachar gearr trí nó ceithre uair sa tseachtain, agus cuir leis de réir a chéile, in aghaidh na seachtaine b'fhéidir. Mar chleachtadh agus mar threoir duit féin, d'fhéadfá tabhairt faoi "rás" 10K, mar shampla Rás 10K na mBan i mBaile Átha Cliath i mí an Mheithimh. Tugtar an "Women's Mini Marathon" air sin. Is fuath liom úsáid an thocail "mini" le "marathon". Níl a leithéid ann. Sa bhealach céanna nach féidir € beag (mini euro) a bheith ag duine, ní féidir le mini marathon a bheith ann ach oiread. Tá maratón déanta ag breis is 40 ball den chumann seo againn i mBaile Átha an Rí agus bheadh comhairle fhial le fáil saor in aisce ó dhuine ar bith díobh siúd. Go n-éirí leat.



Trial classes start January 3rd in Galway City & Barna
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I'm a Runner

Deirdre Hassett



I wasn't always a runner – at least, not for a while. I ran as a teenager, but just track. 800 metres was a stretch. I was a sprinter – even then I had sizeable quads (to which I now credit my eternally good finishing kick).

Then there was a long interlude. With beer and bars. And maths and physics. I ate a LOT. I exercised a little. And one day – right in the middle of some college exams – I started to run again. Just a little at first. I staggered around the block in a sweaty cotton t-shirt and old trainers, beamingly proud of my newly refound athleticism.

Another long interlude – of running – a little – slowly. I ran so I could eat. I was chubby as a kid, and always had this terrible fear of ending up on one of those American style shows: "Help, Oprah! Firemen Had to Cut Me Out of My Living Room!" I ran the Dublin Women's Mini Marathon (so proud!) in what then seemed to be an exorbitantly fast time of 55 minutes for 10KM. My family were impressed. My mother said helpfully, "Don't be killing yourself, now!" I started to eat so I could run.

Funnily, running more started by running less. I entered a triathlon, and despite nearly drowning, I finished. I started running track, mid triathlon season, puffing and lumbering after the other runners. I thought I might die. But I didn't. And I started to run a bit faster, and a bit easier. You could run and chat. Like going for a coffee with friends, only running. This was a breakthrough.

My dad's dog got too old to run. We got a new dog and ran together. We loved it, she and I.

Then I started to run a bit more, and a bit further. I ran ten miles. That was FAR. And it hurt a lot when I finished. I trained for my first half marathon in 2007. A marathon seemed out of reach. Then I trained for a half Ironman, and finished it, and a marathon didn't seem so far any more. I started to learn where my limits were, and how to push them.

In 2008 I signed up for my first marathon. Do you remember Berlin, Miranda? Do you remember Berlin? I ran a low mileage program. Every long run was epic. It rained all summer in biblical fashion. I ran soggy laps of the college pitches in Dangan, with throbbing feet. When I finished my first twenty mile run I wasn't sure whether to throw up or to lie down beside my car. But I got fitter. The night before the marathon I lay in bed with a racing heart, reciting mantras to calm myself down – the terrible overwhelming fear of the unknown road before me. And then I ran, and what do you know? There was no wall.

I started to bring an escape kit (it starts with runners and a sports bra) everywhere. I found myself standing under the Eiffel tower, on London Bridge, at the Thames barrier, on the Delft canal path. A foot soldier. At Christmas, instead of saying "I can't take the bickering and the sitcom repeats and the Quality Street any more", I'd say, "the dog needs some air".

I joined Athenry AC; drawn in by the familiar club faces I kept seeing at races, their enthusiasm and friendliness to all-comers, fast and slow, and the rapidly strengthening women's running team in the club. Now I wasn't just a triathlete who ran, I was an official bona fide member of the Athletics Association of Ireland. Me and Sonya and Paul Hession.

And all of a sudden, 26 miles wasn't so far. Two hours was a long run, but – you know – not so long. You could slip in a little half marathon here and there without noticing too much. Then I trained for another marathon – again, low mileage, but I ran hard. Twenty mile runs became this perfect place of happy endorphins and strong running. I didn't have to lie down and nap afterwards any more.

Then I tried some trails. And, you know – that was hard. A new step back; training my road bound muscles into hills and rocks and roots and grass. I ran a whole lot slower. It taught me a bit more about mental toughness. And my quads possibly grew a bit more. And I met a lot of people who regularly run a whole lot further than 26 miles. Running has always been social for me – but setting aside the strictures of a sharp-end road marathon programme meant I ran as I felt – sometimes fast, sometimes slow – but mostly in good company. It didn't make me a great runner, but it made me some great friends.

This November I ran the New York marathon. I lined up for the race with some old friends and some new. I ran strongly, with joy, soaking up the cheers, the screaming crowds, the beats, the high fives and the incredible views.

I didn't run a personal best; I ran within the limits of how I'd trained, off the back of a long summer of trail running, a trail marathon in September and rather sporadic speed work. I was happy when I finished. And I smiled at all of the runners who finished with me and moaned and whined about how far our drop bags were; because our bags were far away because we were (relatively) fast. There were 4,500 runners ahead of me. And 40,000 runners behind.

I'm a runner.



Galway's First Road Race for Women

Mick Rice

For many long years, athletics in Galway was strictly a male pursuit. Although it seems difficult to believe so now, until the 1960s there were few, if any, Irish athletic events that catered for the participation of women. Only a very few clubs in the country facilitated women in any way at that time. The first athletic club to do so was the Crusaders AC in Dublin who were followed very shortly afterwards by Billy Morton's Clonliffe Harriers – who established their 'women's section' in 1963. Importantly, Maeve Kyle's Ballymena AC was the driving force behind the promotion of women's athletics north of the border and she also had considerable influence south of it. Maeve provided enormous support and encouragement to her southern sisters at the time in continuing their efforts to organise and compete. Both the Crusaders and Clonliffe clubs were affiliated to the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), rather than the more widely dispersed National Athletic and Cycling Association (NACA), to which all of the Galway clubs were aligned. With such a small number of clubs catering for women's athletics, competitive opportunities were painfully slow in emerging around the country. The first ever AAU All-Ireland Women's Athletic Championships were staged at the John F. Kennedy Stadium, now the Morton Stadium, in Santry in August 1966. That same year also saw Clonliffe Harriers' Ann O'Brien become the first woman to break five-minutes for the track mile.

It wasn't long before the N.A.C.A. clubs started to catch up with their A.A.U. counterparts, but competitive openings for female athletes under either of the associations remained thin on the ground. The year 1966 also witnessed a breakthrough for women's athletics in Galway when the Galway County Convention of the N.A.C.A. decided to organise a cross-country league over the winter months of 1965 and into January 1966. At the first league race, in Athenry on the 7th of November 1965, two races for females were included on the programme for the very first time: one for under-16s and the second for those over 16 years of age. The under 16s race was won by E. Duane from the Mervue club and the first woman home in the over 16s race was I. Costello of Ballinasloe.

It was an encouraging start that was to be built upon as that season progressed. For the first time ever, both Galway and Connacht cross-country championships were organised for girls and women during the early months of 1966 under N.A.C.A. rules. Teams from Ballinasloe, Mervue and U.C.G. dominated these early cross-country races and so provided the majority of athletes in Galway's first open road race for women, which took place in Athenry on the 16th of January 1966. The women's race acted as a 'curtain-raiser' for the annual Derrydonnell AC men's road race in the town, which attracted many of the best male distance runners in the country at that time. The women competed over a 1½-mile course around the town of Athenry. Eight club teams had been entered and Patricia Ryan of the U.C.G. athletic club was first past the finishing line. Mervue AC picked up the team title, and with it an elaborate silver trophy that had been sponsored by Pierce Jewellers in Galway. It seems that only a small number of local women took part in that first ever women's road race in Galway and the honour of collecting the prize for first 'Derrydonnell' athlete home, went to B. Gibbons of the host club.

LADIES' EVENT

Patricia Ryan, U.C.G. A.C., brought ladies' athletics to a new status in Co. Galway when she ran extremely well to finish a convincing winner of the ladies' event, and looked as though she could run the senior race afterwards.

Second home was A. Duane of Mervue A.C., who also ran a fine race, and led a very fit team to a great team victory. Mervue were worthy winners of the Pierce Perpetual Trophy (presented by Pierce, Jeweller, Galway).

Another team who packed very well were Newmarket A.C. who had two in the first six home.

The following are the results of the ladies' individual race: 1st, P. Ryan, U.C.G. A.C.; 2nd, A. Duane, Mervue; 3rd, K. Frost, Newmarket; 4th, M. Smalle, Limerick; 5th, M. Sullivan, Mervue; 6th, P. Noonan, Newmarket.

1st Team (for the Pierce Perpetual Trophy) — Mervue A.C., Galway (A. Duane 2nd, M. Sullivan 5th, N. Durnin 9th, M. Howley); 2nd Team — Newmarket A.C., Co. Clare (3rd, 6th, 12th, 14th).

Others prizes presented were: Senior Race: 1st U.C.G. man home—M. Molloy.

1st Tuam man home: T. Hynes.
1st Woodford man home—C. Farrell.

Ladies: 1st, Derrydonnell—B. Gibbons.

1st, Limerick—M. Smalle.

1st, Newmarket B—T. Daly.

1st, Tuam—E. Sweeney.

1st, Ballyneety—P. Mannion.

After the race, the prizes were presented by Rev. Fr. Gleeson, C.C., Athenry. He congratulated Derrydonnell A.C. on all the work they had put into the organisation of the race, and he thanked Mr. R. Pierce of Galway for presenting such a fine trophy for the ladies' race. The greatest ovation of the night went to Derrydonnell Captain, Willie Morris, when he received the John Kennedy Cup on behalf of the Derrydonnell Club.

The Derrydonnell secretary thanked all the athletes who participated in the race, and said that without them it couldn't have been the success that it was.

From 0 to 20 in Less Than a Year

Marie O'Connor (nee Curran)



This time last year I would have keeled over had someone told me I would enter (and finish) over 20 races in the next 12 months, discover a whole new world that is running and in doing so meet amazing people.

It all started in Athenry Fit4Life where Maeve Noone and her crew motivated and encouraged me to run 5k without stopping. Once I achieved this the next thing to do was enter a race and so in January 2010 I lined up in Newcastle, Athenry, completing my first 5k race. Not realising this was only the start!

Every month now brings a new challenge, be it a new distance to complete or a new time to try and achieve, in doing so I meet new people, hear their stories and learn something new each day. As one lady informed me you will always learn something in a group.

Over the past twelve months I have surprisingly competed in numerous races from the 5k series, various 5 mile races, 10k races, a cross country race, a mini marathon and a half marathon (I am focused on my next as I am writing this), I even won a prize in the Ballindine 'Guess Your Time' race...you don't always have to be in the top three finishers to win something!

There have been a few road trips along the way, from travelling with the McShane family to various races, listening to Steph's favourite song, "The Wheels on the Bus."

Martina's and mine road trip to Kilkenny (see www.athenryac.com for a full report). Travelling in Valerie's esteemed(!) fiesta to Ballina with Janet, to various stop offs including a cuppa in the Martin Keane household with James Lundon.

As much as I may hope, I am never going to be an elite runner but what I am is someone out to run for fun with a few goals thrown in for good measure.

I would never have known this world existed had it not been for Athenry Fit4Life; there is always someone to run with; someone willing to give advice and most importantly someone to laugh with.

Just think about the fun you are missing... it's never too late to join.

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ATHENRY Athletic Club



Memories of the Carraroe Road Races

Martin Keane



Before Athenry AC started the St. Stephen's Day 10K in 2002, some of you for one reason or another may not be aware that there used to be Christmas road races in Carraroe every year during the 1980/90s.

These races, a 10K and half-marathon, were always held on the day after St. Stephens's Day and at that time when road races weren't as plentiful as nowadays, runners would look forward to them for months beforehand, for as well as the races themselves, a right good party would be held afterwards in the local hotel!

As Carraroe is in the heart of the Galway Gaeltacht, registration was mostly done in Irish but those of us "knowing no focals at all," got by, somewhat like being on a foreign holiday perhaps. Then it was down to the serious business of running 13.1 miles (or 6.2?) in as short a time as possible.

Every year they'd have a different celebrity to start the race and that was always done with a shotgun – yes, a real one. Names I recall include Mick Molloy (Olympic athlete), Liam Ó Maonlaí (Hothouse Flowers), P.J Molloy (Galway hurler) and Sean Óg De Paor (Galway footballer). The half-marathon course went out the country roads, with the 10 mile mark being outside a country school. Now, maybe, some people have unhappy memories of their schooldays, but for some of us with little preparation done, those last few miles brought back some more.

The Carraroe committee always seemed to get massive support from the local business community, as I recall some lovely prizes were given out to all finishers. These items of porcelain or pottery were either bedside lamps, mugs etc and if you ever fortunate enough when visiting my house to get a cup of tea, chances are the teapot will be left on a stand engraved: 1/2 MHARATÓN 1997 AN CHEARRHÚ RUA.

The local hotel generously gave the use of a few bedrooms to be used as changing rooms and even if 12/15 lads were in there, having to use the words "excuse me," a lot, a nice hot shower was much appreciated after coming in from the cold; though spare a thought for the hotel staff who had to clean them later!



The ladies committee always provided a huge amount of food for the hungry runners, who may have travelled from every corner of the country. One man who came from Scotland every year proudly marched into the room in traditional kilt and blazer for the party afterwards. When everyone had stuffed themselves with turkey, ham, salad sandwiches, not to mention Christmas cake, scones, biscuits etc, it was then down to the bar for some liquid food and a local band of good old traditional music started up. This continued for hours and if the Siege of Ennis didn't get as many on the floor as slower dances, perhaps aching limbs was the reason.

Prize-giving would then take place and as I said earlier, every business owner for miles around contributed something, so there was almost a spot prize for everyone in the audience.

Unfortunately, those races came to an end before the turn of the century, but as the Fields of Athenry race started up some years later, people can no longer say, "I think I'll put on a few pounds during the Christmas." Looking back on it all, thank goodness that most of the people I recall are still with us, hale and hearty and some are still pounding the roads, but, unfortunately, it saddens me to think that a few are not.

The Fields of Athenry race is now one of the top races in the country and long may it continue, so that no one like me will have to write its obituary like this.

Everything is Possible



Máire Treasa Beatty

Well I am back, or I hope I am. I signed up for the Amsterdam Marathon last year when I was in Berlin. I met Dave Huane of Mayo AC there ('The Sump' as you all know him). Dave had travelled with Western Alzheimer's to do that Marathon. I met them on the Sunday night and went out to dinner with them. Now Berlin was the hardest run I ever finished. My knee was killing me but I said, "Ah sure I will do a marathon with ye next year." Not Dave now but Western Alzheimer's anyways. They were doing Amsterdam so after the operation on my knee in June, my physio Trish said, "Half marathon, not full!" So then that was it, I said better listen to this advice: Half, it is.

Then I got a lovely flu and ended up very sick for most of July and August. I could not run The Streets. My God, that broke my heart to see you all in your lovely Athenry AC gear and I sitting there like a fool. I just could not run. September rolled in and thank God Grainne Breen came home from her year away in USA. So met up with Grainne and started running again. I did 8 miles with her. Gee, 13.1 was still a long way off!!!!

Amsterdam? The break will do me good, if nothing else. So that was it! Flew to Amsterdam on Friday; went to expo, very low key. Got my number, thinking, gee will I ever finish this? Got up early Saturday, went for the fun run, which was really nice. Took an hour all around Amsterdam; took in the Red Light District, yep those ladies work 24hrs: I could not believe they were working at 8.30AM! Well Sunday morning and the few doing the full went off at 7AM. The gang of us doing the half did not have to start until 1.30PM!

It was a lovely sunny day but very cold in the shade. Meet Marie Hehir down at the start. She was really looking forward to the race. Maria had been out for a long while too. Then it was time to start. All I could think, "Please God

let me finish this." It was a lovely flat course, loads of support all the way around. Well, I got on fine. I ran all 13.1 miles i.e. without stopping: I was delighted. Yes, I was slow but I don't care I just wanted to run and finish a race. At half way I was thinking, "God, they are at home today doing their last run before Dublin." That was hard because I knew I could not do Dublin. So that was it, I did the half marathon in 2h 5m.

I was so delighted. I ran slowly but sure I am lazy (Editor: careful?) anyways. That was it, delighted to have run 13 miles. Roll on the Connemara Half next year! So then I went to Dublin last Monday I had a great day. It was fantastic to see you all running and doing great times. Well done everyone. By the way, James, no one shouted back at me on Sunday like someone we know when I told him to move his ass last June at the Annaghdown 10K! I mean it well done everyone from Athenry AC who ran in Dublin that Monday; it really, really was a fantastic day.

Next for me is the Fields of Athenry 10KM on St. Stephen's Day; not easy to get into that race, you need to know important people! After that, all going well, 2011 London Marathon, please God.

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As Far as Possible in Chicago

Tony Killarney

A man with no bathroom in his house was once asked how he kept himself clean. "I have a simple system," he replied, "Every night I fill a basin with warm water, strip off, wash my face and hands and as far down as possible. Then I put the basin on the floor, step into it and wash up as far as possible. And lastly I wash Possible."

Approaching the Chicago marathon after a terrible year with injuries I had a similar plan; I would run as far as possible, then walk as far as possible and hope that Possible was close enough to the finish line so that I would get over it somehow. And hopefully in under four hours!

10-10-10: the date of the Chicago marathon and a marketing person's dream for a logo. And there are no better marketeers than the Americans! Right from arrival at the airport the logo was everywhere. In fairness though not only was the marketing excellent but the organization of everything from the expo to the actual running of the event was superb. This is the 33rd year and there were 45,000 registered runners, over 12,000 volunteers and 1.7 million spectators. And it all worked like clockwork.

The day of the run was unseasonably warm. Not quite as bad as 2007 though, when temperatures soared over 90F (30C+) and the event had to be stopped after four hours. I arrived at the race corral at 7:00am, a half hour before the start, just as the sun was rising over Lake Michigan. Standing around me was an Australian, a Brit, a Peruvian, a Colombian, two native Americans and numerous other nationalities. Welcome to the melting pot of America! We all had one thing in common though – we were all sweating profusely. It was a welcome relief when we finally headed off north on Columbus Avenue and over the Chicago river. The route crosses the river six times altogether in a meandering series of loops that run out and back from the finish line. This makes it really easy for spectators to move from one section to another and makes the crowds look even bigger (if that was possible).

I started with the 3:50 pacers and was determined to stick with them for as long as I could. Of course I had all sorts of delusions about speeding up in the last few miles and catching the 3:45 guys. And this despite the fact that just the previous Tuesday I had suffered the ignominy of having to wait for Owen Curran to come back for me in his car when my back gave up after just 10K. But hey, we are all used to dreaming impossible dreams when we are running. Many a marathon speech is written by mile four and torn up by mile 24. But it was going fine in the early stages. I concentrated on staying with the pacing team and kept a lookout for my brother and his wife who were bopping about on bicycles around the course. I managed to see them three times, which wasn't bad considering the enormous crowds.

The support was incredible. Every neighbourhood seemed to be competing to provide the best entertainment. The eponymously named "Boystown" had a three level stage with ten young men in very tight black clothes twirling white wooden rifles in superb choreography. In perfect contrast were the five hirsute guys dressed in Wonder Woman costumes with long blonde wigs waving pom-poms outside the Riverview Athletics club. They couldn't dance to save themselves but they were hilarious. Mixed in between were jazz bands, soul bands, gospel choirs, bagpipers, canned music and even an Elvis impersonator in full regalia on a huge stage in the middle of the street.

With all this entertainment and support, the first thirteen miles passed by pretty easily. The pacers were keeping perfect pace and I was keeping with them. The only effort was concentrating on not going too fast and leaving them behind. Then around mile fourteen the old pain arrived in my back. On previous runs I had discovered that if I leaned forward I could reduce the pain considerably. A sort of super-chi style of running. As the pain got worse I just leaned forward more. At mile fifteen I heard a friendly "How are they all in Athenry" behind me. It was Denis McMonagle from Athlone as he cruised comfortably on by.

The heat wasn't too bad in the early stages as we were protected from direct sun by the high buildings along the route but from mile 20 or so we were in direct sunshine and the temperature climbed into the eighties. People were dropping like flies all around me and at this stage I could practically see the runners legs behind me I was leaning over so far. But I had retreated into that inner space where all runners go when the going gets tough. Where all that exists is the road and the beat of your legs and the signals from thousands of nerve endings competing for attention. But they are only signals and you can be selective on which ones you let through. I was concentrating on the good signals and blocking the pain signals and was determined to tough it out as far as possible.

I was startled out of my reverie around mile 21 by a racket coming behind me, which turned out to be the 3:50 pacers. I hadn't even realized that I had left them behind. I stuck with them until mile 24 where a feeling of nausea overcame me and I decide that it would be more prudent to walk for a while. As I walked along on the edge of the road a very large African American woman standing at the 40K marker shouted loudly at me "Come on AT HENRY. Dey waitin' on you up der man". How could I resist such enthusiasm? I started running again and with 800m to go there was another huge shout from the crowd "Come on Athenry" – the brother of course. With 500m to go I came to the only significant hill on the course – really! It's the Roosevelt Road Bridge and it had been the scene of major drama about two hours previously. Tsegaye Kebede was leading coming into the bridge but Samuel Wanjiru put on a spurt and

went on to win in a time of 2:06:24. My transit over the bridge was a lot less dramatic but I made it and went on to cross the finish line in 3:56:30.

What an experience! What memories! I will always remember the huge African American man in full church regalia standing in front of a gospel choir booming out in a wonderful rich voice "Runners, I have one message for you. You WILL finish this race." And the support, the enthusiasm, the beginners, the elites, the sense of camaraderie. It was all wonderful. But mostly what I

took from Chicago was what I learned about myself. I hadn't done the training because of a series of injuries during the year so the race was a lot tougher than faster marathons that I had done last year. But I discovered reserves and toughness in Chicago that I hadn't touched in those marathons. My challenge now is to put the fitness and the toughness together and see where it gets me.

Anything is Possible!

Loneliest of All

MV Mc Donagh

It was a strange feeling travelling to the Fields of Athenry 10KM road race on a Sunday morning in late-January on a third re-fix of the race. The new off time of 1.30 PM was welcomed by runners traveling long distances. What a blessing the new motorway is for shortening so many journeys compared to a few years ago.

Severe foggy conditions for most of the route from Dublin made vehicles ahead without rear fog lights, difficult to observe from as close as 50 metres distant. Yes, you have read correctly and remember to always switch on your rear fog light during fog and turn it off when the fog has cleared to avoid glare for following drivers.

On breaking through the borders of County Galway, suddenly the fog disappeared and the sun shone forth and continued from there until I entered the car park and, already parking attendants were on duty getting the cars into proper parking positions, two hours ahead of the race!!!!

If there is one thought that strikes me when I think of this race, it is precision: of organisation and those who perform all the tasks that are so vital in preparing for and managing such a large group of runners.

My initial involvement with the race was on the very first 10KM (2002) when Martin Keane mentioned that Dermot Mc Namara, one of the race organisers, was short of stewards and wondered could he arrange some help to keep the runners on track. I decided to opt out of the race and instead offered Dermot my services and was given a rural post which meant right away that I could never attain stalwart status despite successive efforts on my behalf!!!! On that first year there were there were 68 runners and probably as many more stewards ensuring their safety during the race and rightly so.

There is probably less need for route stewarding currently as there is a constant trail of runners wherever one is positioned in the race. Well organised road races will always attract large entries. The treatment of participants in the 'Fields' 10KM from the point of view of presentation, space, drinks on the course and refreshments afterwards is probably without equal. That was the feedback I received from runners after the race. The now famous 'Fields' 10KM woolly hat is seen at many sporting venues and must be a great source of advertising. It has been a 'done deal' for many years now.

Having participated every year since that first staging of the race, the most memorable year I recall was the one following the Far East tsunami when Mick Rice, the starter, looking down from his precarious balancing position on a stone wall, while at the same time requesting runners to care for each other on slightly slippery roads, and to remember those who had perished in the tsunami a year earlier. His solemnity was one of those moments in time that one never forgets.

Returning to the heading, it was nostalgic because of the missing faces this year but who will be back again next time on St Stephen's Day when the race will return to its rightful place in the calendar. A question in the future will be what was unusual about the race in 2010? The answer is very likely to be that the race took place twice in the same year, weather permitting of course.

It was a joy to see the two greats, Willie Morris and Tommy Madden being honoured for their achievement in athletic fields around Ireland and beyond. I had the pleasure of running with both of them some years ago and participated with Tommy in his one and only Dublin Marathon. While known for his speed and strength over the short burst distances, he acquitted himself well over the longer distance also!





From the Quill of Diarmuid: 2009/2010 Fields of Athenry 10KM Race Report

Diarmuid Quill – Craughwell AC

Like most runners who enter the Athenry 10k, I only do it for the hat. Jesus, the thought of running 10k for that hat, there has to be some kind of madness to it. After two false starts away we went on Sunday 24th Jan 2010!

I like the new course (Editor: the same course used for the 2008 National 10KM) as it gives the average runner a chance to get their breathing going before we hit the first hill, not like the old course where we were starting just before it.

I hadn't trained all week as I ran a hard race in Tuam the week before and was high jumping (Editor: Diarmuid has a PB of 2.00 metres from back in the mid-80s) in Nenagh on Saturday. Sometimes a rest is just as good as training. I felt great Sunday morning. Picked up Pat Kelly in Craughwell and headed to Athenry, chatted about life on the way down and how to solve the world's problems. There was a great buzz in the hall when we arrived. Met James Lundo on arrival, "Quill, go easy on the warm up." Now most people that know me: warm-ups and warm-downs are not my greatest assets.

We headed to the start; blue sky, no breeze; last words of encouragement from James, "42:30, don't blow it!" Meet half of Craughwell there, wished each other the best of luck with the now traditional handshake.

Bang and off we went around the first corner, around the second corner up the hill, breathing good, and away we go. I looked at my watch at 1k – 4:09. I know I am going well. 2k, 3k, 4k – still moving. No wind to worry about.

Arrive at 5k in 20:50 – magic.

I am 18 seconds inside my PB and haven't felt the effects of yesterday or last week. I do know the second half will be harder but I have also trained harder than before. 6k, 7k, looked at the watch at 8k – exactly 34 minutes, brilliant – but I am starting to get tired up the hill. 9k – another look at the watch: 38:15 and have lost no time. If I can only hang on, but now I am really 'feeling it' coming down the hill. I can see where we started from but now it seems so far away and I am having to dig deep.

Around the corner, I can see the finishing line. Mary Porter calls out my name. I haven't the energy to acknowledge her. I put in one last burst, cross the line, stop the watch, 42:29.

10KM PB by 39 Seconds. Passed by James as he takes the numbers, He knows I have done well as he puts my number down at the end of the second sheet. I whisper the time to him. "Super," he says, "We will talk later." I meet some of the Craughwell lads in their top 50 T-Shirts. They look well. Pat Kelly eventually arrives, wrecked, delighted that he's finished.

The lads suggest a warm down – Pat and myself look at each other, cup of tea and buns for us, thank you very much. Job Done.



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General Round-up - Athenry AC in 2010





Image by mel

Ballindine Ballyhoovooooo – Ballindine (Name Your Own Time) 4M, Sunday, 30 May 2010 James Lunden

Race reports like this are by definition almost always self-indulgent, navel-gazing exercises that people either love or hate to read; mostly the latter to be honest.

Health Warning: this report is no different!

This was not a race I was targeting. It wasn't even a race I was going to run until less than 14 hours before it was due to start. Only for a text from Brendan Monaghan in Tuam late Saturday evening, inquiring whether I was going or not, I would probably have gone out and done three or four excruciatingly boring miles on my own that Sunday afternoon instead. So why not do them in the company of others, in Mayo instead?

I'll cut to the chase, sorry race. Got there in one piece but boy was it a hot day. Left me wondering how Joanne Fearon was able to do nearly three marathons a day for five+ days, a week before in her epic odyssey between Malin and Mizen. I was dreading just doing four miles at a sedate pace and walking away in one piece.

Am in wretched shape at the moment. Just not going well. No Excuses(TM – JAL). It isn't helping that I'm down under five miles a week between races and training, not throwing in the refereeing of one or two Hurling games a week, which do not count in my training log, BTW. My times in 5KM series are only papering over a severe dip in form, coupled with a complete lack of mental and physical "stomach" to go out and train properly. I will ignore my constantly sore right hip or my latent ITB down the same side that is always with me, day and night!

Ballindine is Dave Huane's race and he was most of the real reason why I decided to travel at all. About 70 of us lined up at the start line. I was sweating like a pig before we even started. Thanks be to Allah, that I could do it at my pace rather than run like a lunatic, as fast (not very) as I could as long (not very) as I could. Bumped into my good pal Adrian Fitzmaurice at the start line. He is in the form of his life presently – dipped under 19 for 5KM for the first time during the current 5KM Series. I'm envious but not at all jealous of him, in that he's training fantastically well and is reaping the rewards of same. At our level, running is a very democratic sport – he's proof of that!

I put down 30:00 as my estimated time of arrival at the finish

line. I made the mistake, just before the off, of telling as much to Gary Doherty, another esteemed club-mate. He did tell me his offset in return but that was little consolidation to me as it was 15 seconds more than mine. I was going to be his hare for the next thirty or so minutes. Feck him! Feck me for telling him!!!!

He was never more than a stride or two off me for the first 3.5 miles, needless to say. It was an undulating anti-clockwise course to the right of the village as you go through from the Tuam side.

My old comrade, PJ Hall, passed us by early doors. Chatted for a minute. Bernie Kelly shuttled past me after two miles. We slagged each other off unmercifully. It broke my heart to see her pass me but there were bigger herons to be gutted than Bernie that day. SHE WAS GOING TOO FAST FOR ME! I was even passed by a fella pushing a buggy with a very young child in it. A first for me; for most I would think... Anthony Devaney finished up doing a low-26s, which is good running in anyone's book. He even beat Monaghan home! Leave the child at home the next time, Anto ;)!)

Four miles was the longest I'd run since February so by the time we got past three, I felt myself slowing but was I slowing sufficiently quickly enough to still be around 30 minutes. Doherty suddenly wasn't beside me any more – quelle surprise, in my best bogger accent – and Kelly was only going further into the distance, as we came up onto the main road again.

That last mile was gruesome as I could feel Doherty laughing behind me as I pulled him along. He was assuming that I'd go close enough to thirty and that if he tailgated 50 or 60 metres behind me, that we would both be close enough. I was not tempted into dueling with Michael McGrath of Mayo AC over the last mile. What was I to do about Doherty though?

The finish line did eventually come but as I went up towards it, I suddenly stopped just before the invisible tape. Fair play to the lads manning it – all Athery AC: Alan Burke, Maire Treasa Beatty and Maurice Clarke – for not clocking me in though.

I waited and waited. Four, five, six, seven seconds. Eight, nine, ten. When Doherty passed me out, I stumbled across

after him, hoping that I was OK time-wise. I would certainly be closer to my target than Doherty, assuming I was still under the time I predicted. I had instinctively stopped as I felt I was still going too quickly and to "burn off" – more like "stall" – Doherty. Had it worked though?

Running without the watch was once very difficult for me to do but as I get older and slower, it's getting easier. The only downside of that, is when doing my running log, it's easy to forget to include such runs as there is no record of them on my Timex Ironman!

After a bit of a warm-down – an optional extra for me at the best of times! – with Monaghan, we adjourned to the old school house for a cup of tea and a slice of tart. The results were produced efficiently and the prizes started to be given out.

The winner was Michael Walsh from Craughwell AC, who immediately and without reservation handed the winner's envelope back to Huane. Much kudos, both on that and on his predicted time being a mere TWO SECONDS slower than what he did!

Monaghan popped up in second place. Not his first time being in the frame in such races: he ran a 10KM in Athenry a few years ago in his exact predicted time! 42:30, if I recall correctly.

Dan O'Rourke (FOUR SECONDS) and PJ Hall (EIGHT SECONDS) were joint second and fourth respectively.

When Huane started abusing the 5th place winner, I knew it had to be me. I'll leave the insults – which go playfully, let it be very

clear, back and forth in both directions – out of the report but it was a great shock and honour for me to pick up what turned out to be the joint-5th place envelope with my club-mate and newcomer to road running, Marie Curran. We were ELEVEN SECONDS out, both quicker. That envelope is technically my first ever individual race prize.

Yes, I've won one spot prize before at a race; yes, I did win an overall third prize senior men's in the 2006 Spring HP Series; but this is my first individual race prize of any sort, ever! E-V-E-R!

There weren't any bonfires lighting in Tuam or Athenry on the way home. There wasn't even a call to Mary Porter announcing the good news. This was personal and I wanted to keep it that way. It did demand a report, which I'm duly paying back for now!

I did the needful and handed back the prize to Huane but it was a different & same-valued note to the one which I received a few minutes before. Now what to do with it, to properly commemorate this little victory. I haven't decided yet. Suggestions are solicited? The irony of my "win" is not lost on me. We runners aren't always known for our self-awareness but this one does hurt in one way: I'm in the poorest form I've been for a half-dozen years and I win my first prize. Lady luck sometimes does smile in mysterious ways. P.S. Thanks for dinner on the way home, Monaghans. I was only 10 minutes late for my refereeing assignment but hadn't started without me.

P.P.S. Huane told me afterwards that very near to E2K was raised from the race. Again, well done!



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