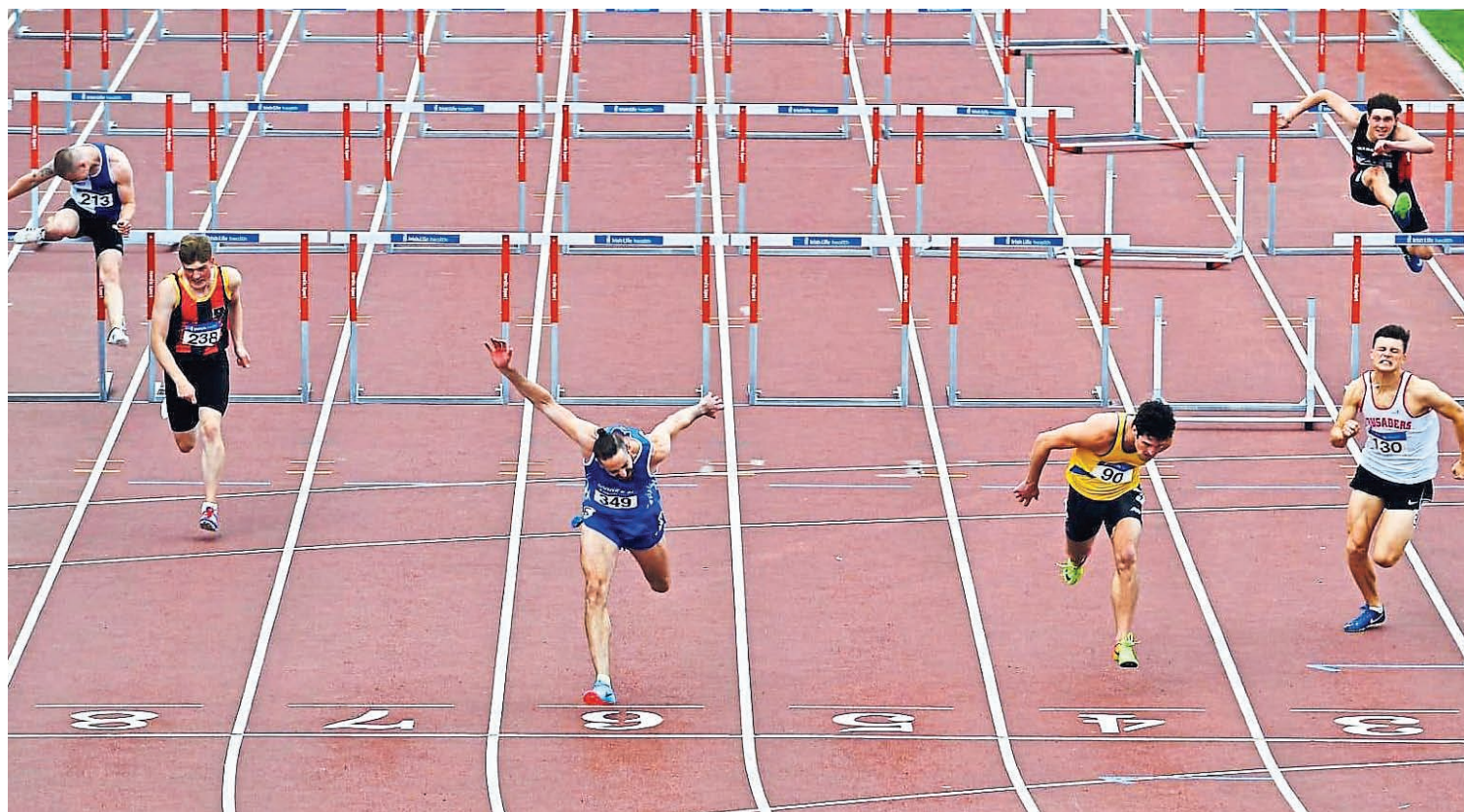


Some Fine Athletic Performances during the Past Year

PADRAIG GRIFFIN



Gerard O'Donnell winning the Athletics Ireland Senior 110m Hurdles title

The outstanding performance of the year was the victory of Gerard O'Donnell of Carrick on Shannon Athletic Club in the Athletics Ireland Senior 110m Hurdles Championship at Morton Stadium, Santry, the last Sunday of July. He edged out Ben Reynolds of North Down in a close finish with a time of 14.05 seconds, one tenth of a second faster than the Ulster athlete. Matthew Behan of Crusaders took third in 14.37.

In many ways, it was a bittersweet victory for Gerard as Reynolds had qualified to represent Ireland in the European Championships in Berlin a few weeks later on foot of having achieved the "B" Standard

of 13.85 earlier in the year while the Leitrim athlete had failed to get that time. Leitrim did, however, have a representative in Berlin where the Belfast based Breege Connolly from Kinlough finished 31st in 2:41.53.

In the AAI All Ireland Under Age Cross Country Championships in Waterford last December two Carrick on Shannon AC brothers, Patrick and Declan Kennedy, put up outstanding performances in the Under 11 event by taking second and fifth respectively.

Leitrim athletes took home three medals from the National Under Age Indoor Championships in Athlone last March where Niamh



The Kennedy brothers — picture shows twins Patrick (left) and Declan (right) after they finished 2nd and 5th in the Athletics Ireland U11 National Cross-country Championships in Waterford

Niamh Carolan (Kinlough) winning the National Community Games 1,500m title. Niamh also won All-Ireland Walking title



Carolan of North Leitrim took silver in the Under 15 Walk with teammates, Sara O'Beirne and Darragh Mitchell, taking bronze in the Under 14 and Under 16 Walks respectively. In the Outdoor Championships held at Tullamore in July, Niamh won the Under 15 Walk while Sara and Darragh again achieved bronze as did Alannah McGuinness of Carrick on Shannon in the Under 17 100m. In addition, Ella McDaid and Diarmuid Giblin of North Leitrim both took bronze in the 250m Hurdles events. Niamh Carolan completed a great season by winning the Under 16 1500m at the National Community Games held this year at the University of Limerick.

Colin Griffin continues to enjoy a good running career following his years as an International Race-walker and on the May Bank Holiday Monday he took four minutes off his previous marathon best time when taking fifth behind three Kenyans and Eoin O Callaghan of Meath in 2:29.15. He improved



Leitrim Olympians Colin Griffin and Breege Connolly at Ballinamore Festival 10K

further when clocking 2:28.17 in 29th position at the recent Dublin Marathon.

During the year Leitrim and indeed Irish athletics mourned the death of Fr John O'Donnell, retired Parish Priest of Killinagh, which occurred at the end of July. Fr O'Donnell was born in Kilmacrennan, Co Donegal, and ordained for the Diocese of Kilmore in 1964 where his classmates included Cardinal Sean Brady with whom he remained a close friend down the years.

He was appointed to teach science at St Michael's College, Cootehill, in 1965 and held that position on the staff of the new St Aidan's Comprehensive School until 1973 when he was moved to the newly opened Comprehensive School in Manorhamilton. In 1984 he became a curate in Teemore, Co Fermanagh, and eleven years later became Parish Priest of Killinagh (Blacklion) where he spent the remainder of his priestly career until he retired on health grounds some years ago.

A tireless worker in the cause of athletics he was prominent in the



The Late Fr John O'Donnall

leadership of the Ulster Sports Council which promoted athletics in Ulster following the formation of BLE in 1967. Having held the position of President and treasurer he was

involved in numerous meetings, discussions, and activities in the

early years leading up to total athletics unity in 2000. In Leitrim, he was prominent in the setting up of the North Leitrim Club and was first Chairman of Leitrim County Board in 1974. He inaugurated the Leitrim Athletics Inter Club Road League in 1974 and this competition continued until 2011.

His abiding legacy in Manorhamilton is the all-weather track at the Community School which he masterminded in the mid 1970s, and with Claremorris and Lanesboro was among the first all-weather tracks in Connacht. He also played a prominent role in the Connacht

Schools Athletics Association during his time in Manorhamilton. An avid fan of International Athletics he attended the ten Olympic Games between Munich in 1972 and Beijing in 2008 and was sorry to have had to miss the London Games due to ill health.

A very conscientious and hard-working priest, he was also prominent and indeed prime mover in many areas of social and community activities in the two parishes in which he served and he left behind him a legacy of visible achievement in both.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE

Sister Bernadette celebrates her Golden Jubilee

Sr Bernadette's parents were Terence & Bridget Fee, from Glenfarne Village and she attended Cornamon N S, in Glenfarne. In 1963 Sr Bernadette entered the Novitiate of the Little Sisters of the Poor, at Raheny, Dublin, and took her final vows in Rennes, France, in 1968. Her work took her the orders homes across the world including Europe, Africa, England and Ireland. Mass was celebrated in St Mary's Church, Glenfarne, where Sr Bernadette renewed her vows. A reception was held in the Rainbow Ballroom with her family, friends and neighbours. Pictured with her are sisters, Stella, Myra and Margaret, Fr Thos Woods, Fr John Quinn PP, Glenfarne, sister in law Mary Fee, brother Pat and sister Susan. Sr. Bernadette is grateful for the loving support of family, friends, neighbours, the elderly residents, the Little Sisters of the Poor, and all she met on her on her journey .

