

# SOME OUTSTANDING ATHLETICS PERFORMANCES IN 2013

*Padraig Griffin*

ATHLETES OFTEN relax a little in the year immediately following the Olympic Games. The London Games last year were of particular interest to Ireland but in the interval between then and now the Irish Women's Cross Country Team made history by becoming the first Irish winners of an International senior team title by becoming Champions of Europe last December and in August this year racewalker Robbie Heffernan became World 50K Walk Champion in Moscow.

At home Laura Reynolds took sixth (93.31) in the 20K Walk in the World Student Games in Kazan in July and some weeks later finished 31st (93.39) in the World Senior Championships. Colin Griffin had a quiet year with only three races, the most important of which was his Six Nations 20K Walk win (87.14) in Breda, Holland, last May. Although he had the qualification for both the European Cup of Racewalking and the World Championships because of a long delay in allocating adequate funding to him which severely hampered his preparation he did not race in either but hopes to resume top class competition next year.

Brian McGovern is a student of Manhattan College and lives in Yonkers, New York. His father Thomas is from Aghoo, Ballinamore and mother Bernadette



from Drumshanbo. He declared for Ireland as he is entitled to and now holds the Irish senior Pole Vault record at both outdoor (5.36m) and Indoor (5.22m). He set the Outdoor record last March and in June represented Ireland in the prestigious European First League Competition at Santry Stadium where he finished fourth among the representatives of the twelve competing nations.

Leitrim had two winners in the AAI Under Age Indoor Championships held in the new International Indoor Arena in Athlone IT last March with Dearbhaile Beirne winning the Under 16 Walk and Mohill team mate James McNabola

*Above: Dylan Mimna (Ballinamore AC) and 139 Eric Hynes (Swinford) lines up beside 319 Robert Heffernan (Togher AC) in the 3000m Walk in the AAI Games at the Official opening of the new Indoor International Athletics Arena in Athlone last January. Mimna finished seventh. Heffernan went on to win the World 50K Walk Championship in Moscow last August*

*Below: Brian McGovern with Colin Griffin in Santry*





**Top: Brian McGovern with his Dad Thomas**

**Middle: Brian McGovern clearing 5.36m to set a new Irish record at the ASU Invitational event in Temple, Arizona, last March**

**Right: Brian McGovern on the runway at the European First League contest in Santry Stadium last June**



the Under 15 walk title. In addition, Peter O'Neill of Mohill & District AC was second in the Under 14 Walk, Aisling McNabola third in the Under 17 walk, Michelle Beirne second in the Under 19 Walk and Ballinamore's Laura O'Dowd third in the Under 19 800m. Carrick-on-Shannon's Joanna Duignan finished second in the Under 18 400m in 59.88.

In the Irish Schools Championship in Tullamore in June Dearbhaile Beirne of Mohill Community School won the Junior 1200m Walk in 5.38. Carrick-on-Shannon Community School runner Joanna Duignan finished second in the Tailteann Schools 300m in 40.70 and as a result qualified to represent Ireland in the AVIVA Schools International in Santry in July where she finished

seventh in the 300m and was a member of the 4 x 300m Relay team which finished third. She went on to win the AAI Under Age Under 18 400m in 57.90 in Tullamore. Here also Dearbhaile Beirne won the Under 16 2000m Walk in 10 Sept 1978 and Laura O'Dowd was third in the Under 19-800m.

Stephen McDermott was Leitrim's only Community Games Athletics medal winner taking third in the Under 16 High Jump. Eanna Madden of Carrick on Shannon A C was second in the Woodies DIY AAI Junior 400m in 50.20. Liam Feely of North Leitrim A C, representing UL, was third in the Inter Varsity 10,000 m in Cork in April. North Leitrim A C won the O Beirne Trophy for the Leitrim Road League. Clive Glancy of Carrick A C won the Lough Rynn 10K, Liam Feely the Waterways Ireland Ballinamore Festival 10K and Siobhan Murtagh of Carrick A C the Leitrim Womens' 5K held in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Leitrim Primary Schools had a very successful Sports Hall competition in Ballinamore

organised by *Leitrim Sports Partnership* and Leitrim AAI. All four Leitrim winners qualified for the National Finals in Athlone at the Regional in Sligo. In Athlone Gaelscoil Liathroma were 5th in the Junior (3/4th Class) Girls and 4th in the Junior Boys event. Scoil Bhrí Naofa Ballinamore were sixth in the Senior Girls and Four Masters Kinlough sixth in the Senior Boys event. *Leitrim County Board AAI* and *Leitrim Sports Partnership* work closely together on the promotion of road racing and primary schools Sports Hall Athletics in the county.

**Brian McGovern signing autographs after his performance in Santry**

