

Athletics Wicklow

Star Awards 2012





Welcome



Photograph from Athletics Ireland

**Fionnuala Britton
Kilcoole A.C.
European Cross-Country Champion 2012
European Team Gold Medallist 2012**



Chill Mhantáin – Meanma Saor

Welcome to Greystones for the presentations of the 2012 Athletics Wicklow Star Awards, the County Cross-Country Trophies, and the Outstanding Achievement Awards, as well as the Slí Cualann Fit4Life Awards. It has been a quite extraordinary year for Athletics Wicklow and Ireland! Wicklow athletes have represented Ireland at the 44th SIAB Schools International in Ashford, Kent, the British & Irish Masters Cross Country International in Belfast, the 21st European Championships in Helsinki, the XXX Summer Olympiad in London and the 19th European Cross Country Championships in Budapest. As in 2011, the sporting year finished on the highest possible note. A Co. Wicklow athlete, Fionnuala Britton, goes down in history as the first female athlete ever to have retained her European Cross Country crown. However, this year there was an extra sting in the tail – Team Gold Medals for the Irish Women - and *Amhrán na bhFiann* rang out twice over the snowy fields in Hungary. Athletics Wicklow also honours another woman it regards as one of its own, Katie Taylor, Olympic Gold Medallist at London 2012. Katie spent several of her formative years in athletics as a member of Bray Runners and competed in Co. Wicklow Championships, before boxing became her chosen sport. The 2012 star awardees reflect everything that is good about our sport and the many achievements of Co. Wicklow athletes during the past year. I congratulate all those receiving awards this evening.

To all those involved in organising the cross-country and track and field championships of Athletics Wicklow in 2012 I extend a special thank you. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the officers of the Co. Board for their hard work during 2012. I also add a special thank you to all the volunteers who drive athletics in clubs throughout the county for their unstinting time and efforts.

Bill Porter, Chairperson Athletics Wicklow

Anything Is Possible

Anything is possible, if you think it is worthwhile

If you're willing to go the distance, to go the extra mile.

With determination and effort, you can often achieve more

Because you don't always get what you wish, but what you work for.

Dreams can become challenging, but no matter what the cost

Strive to complete the task before you, and you'll never end up lost.

So bring with you your goals, and leave your doubts behind

Whether you think you can or can't, you certainly will find

You'll be right either way – so never quit, and this is why:

You'll never become a failure, until you fail to try.

Melissa Underwood

Under 14 – Under 16 Girls

Wicklow Star Award Winner

Ara Freeman – Greystones & District



Photograph Courtesy of Loreto Secondary School Bray

Ara Freeman is one of Wicklow's most promising sprinters. At the Athletics Leinster Outdoors Track and Field Championships Ara won her heat of the U15 100 m in 12.94 secs. In the final she took the Gold medal in 12.69 secs, retaining a Leinster sprint title she won in the U14 category in 2011. At the Athletics Ireland National Juvenile Track and Field Championships at Tullamore Stadium she made a very promising start for a national title in the U15 100m dash, winning her heat in 12.95 secs. This was the second fastest qualifying time for the final. However, in the 100 m final things did not go quite to plan. While the winner's podium place went to the fastest qualifier for the final, the Silver and Bronze medal positions had to wait for confirmation from the photofinish judges as it was very much a blanket dip on the line. Only 6/100ths of a second separated 2nd from 4th place. Unfortunately Ara lost out on the Bronze medal by 0.01 sec on the final rounding of times but by only 0.004 of a second on the photograph. These are the fine margins that can decide World Championships and Olympic Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. It's the art of the final dip!

I'm racing the rhyme
And I'm winning this time
Because the next dip
Is the finishing line.

© Unseenflirt

**Under 14 – Under 16 Girls
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Ara Freeman**

Under 14 – Under 16 Boys Wicklow Star Award Winner

Conor Dempsey - Greystones & District



Photograph Courtesy of Sportsfile & Athletics Ireland

Conor Dempsey has continued to achieve in 2012. He is a hurdler, sprinter and long jumper. At the Athletics Leinster Indoors Championships he warmed up with a clutch of Silver medals in U15 events – 60 m Hurdles (9.80 secs), 60 m sprint (7.84 secs) and Long Jump (5.20 m). At the Athletics Ireland National Juvenile Indoors Championships in Nenagh Stadium, Conor won the U15 Long Jump Gold medal with a leap of 5.68 m and took the Bronze medal in the 60 m dash in 7.65 secs. In the 60 m hurdles final he placed 5th in 9.67 secs. At the Athletics Leinster Outdoors Championships Conor won the U15 Gold Medal in the Long Jump with a 5.68 m jump and took the Silver medal in the 80 m Hurdles in 14.24 secs. He qualified for the final of the 200 m in a time of 27.04 secs. At the Athletics Ireland Juvenile Track and Field Championships he won the U15 Silver medal in the 100 m final in 12.06 secs, given the same time as the Gold medallist. He missed out on the Gold medal by 0.003 secs because he did not dip on the line! At the National Juvenile Combined events he won the Gold medal with 2,944 pts. In the Leinster Schools Championships he added a Bronze medal in the Long Jump with 5.28 m, and placed 5th in the Long Jump final at the All Ireland Schools with 5.49 m. With his tally of 3 Gold, 5 Silver and 2 Bronze medals at Provincial and All-Ireland levels, Conor continues to be a force for Wicklow Athletics.

Legs don't forsake me
I hit the board at mach two
Flew through the air
Just like a bird in flight
Leapt like a human frog
I cleared the pit

From *Long Jump* by John Carter

**Under 14 – Under 16 Boys
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Conor Dempsey**

Under 16 – Under 19 Girls Wicklow Star Award Winner

Phillipa Rogan - Greystones & District & Slí Cualann



Photograph © Matt Browne, Sportsfile & Athletics Ireland

Philippa “Pippa” Rogan could not have asked for a better start to her high jump campaign in 2012. At the Athletics Ireland National Senior Indoors Track and Field Championships in Belfast she won joint Silver medal with 1.65 m. At the Athletics Leinster Senior Outdoors Track and Field Championships she won the High Jump Gold medal. At the National Junior Championships at Tullamore in June she won another Gold medal in High Jump with a winning height of 1.74 m, just 2 cm short of her PB set in 2011. This was to prove to be her season’s best. Going to school in England, Pippa competes in the English Schools’ Championships. In May she won the Oxfordshire Schools’ Championship High Jump with a leap of 1.68 m. At the Aviva English Schools’ Championships in July she placed 4th of 12 finalists at 1.66 m in the Senior Girls’ Championship, equalling the English Schools’ record at that point in the competition. She also won the Berkshire County Outdoors Championship in May at a height of 1.65 m. In mid August at Tullamore competing for Slí Cualann in the Athletics Ireland National League Division 1 finals, she placed 2nd, earning valuable points for the team. The following week she ended her season at the Counties Athletic Union Championships at Bedford, taking the Silver medal at 1.70 m. She also achieved a personal best in Long Jump of 5.00 m in 2012 at the UK Women’s League Division 3 at Aldershot in May.

When you make it, it feels like you’re flying
But when you mess up, it feels like you’re dying
Make sure you jump high enough
Then you know you’re hanging tough

High Jump, Adapted from Rhea & Carollee

**Under 16 – Under 19 Girls
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Philippa Rogan**

Under 16 – Under 19 Boys Wicklow Star Award Winner

Stephen Rice - Greystones & District & Slí Cualann



Photograph © Tomás Greally, Sportsfile & Athletics Ireland

Stephen Rice is the latest in a line of javelin throwers of note from Co. Wicklow, including his older brother Adam Rice who won the Bronze medal for Javelin at the National Senior Track and Field Championships in July. Boys U17 and Schools' Intermediate Boys throw a 700 g Javelin. For the specialist javelin thrower competition is limited to the outdoors season. For Stephen 2012 has been a remarkable year. At the East Leinster Schools' Championships he won the Intermediate Boys Gold medal. At the Leinster Schools' Track and Field Championships he took the Intermediate Boys' Gold medal with a throw of 48.68 m. At the Aviva All-Ireland Schools' Championships at Tullamore in June competing under the banner of Wesley College he threw 50.69 m to take the Intermediate Boys Gold medal. At the Athletics Leinster Track and Field Championships he won the U17 Javelin title with a throw of 52.91, a PB and a Championship Best Performance by an outstanding 5.50 m. The previous CBP of 47.41 was set in 1992 by Adrian Joyce of Cushinstown, the second longest standing U17 record after high jump. A month later Stephen returned to Tullamore to compete in the Athletics Ireland National Juvenile Championships. His best of 52.42 m was almost 2.5 m better than the best throw of the Silver medallist [the CBP is 55.30 m set by A. Gunning in 1976]. The fact that five of his six throws exceeded 49 metres, any of which would have won the Gold medal, gives a true measure of Stephen's competitiveness. With the 700 g javelin in 2013 Athletics Wicklow can look forward to further PBs!

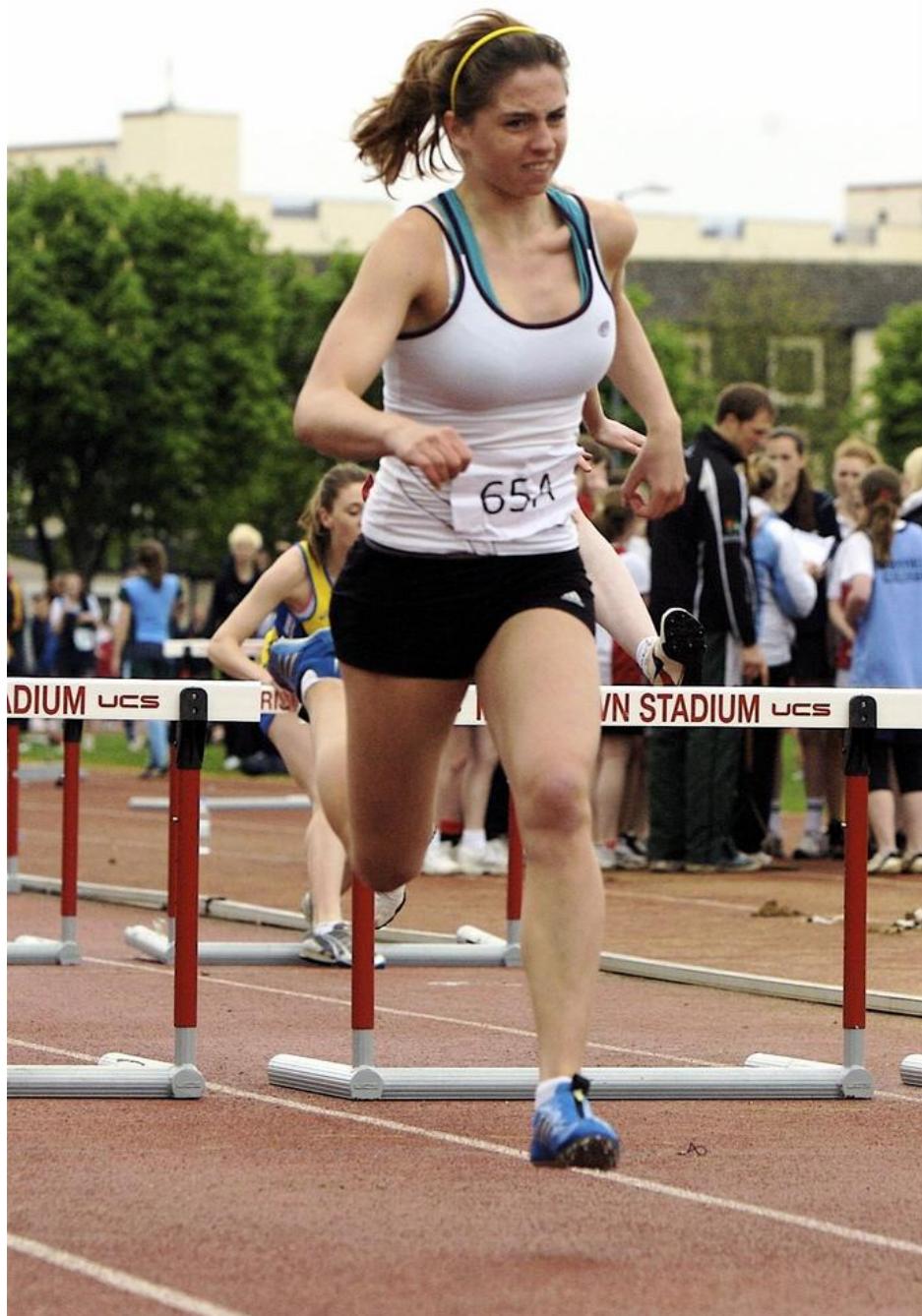
On the far side of the field the crowd's breath lifts,
away over our heads, steel which
flies to nail its shadow in the grass.
Falling, not out of sight but where
two officials in sneakers
run up sure-footed with a measuring tape.

Adapted from *At a Schools' Athletic Day*, by David Malouf

**Under 16 – Under 19 Boys
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Stephen Rice**

Junior Women Wicklow Star Award Winner

Caoimhe Basquille - Greystones & District & Slí Cualann



Photograph, © Lindie Naughton

Caoimhe Basquille is a multi-talented who can bring these skills and proficiencies together in combined events competition. Her season started at the Athletics Leinster Junior Indoors Championships at Nenagh Stadium where she won the Gold medal in the 200 m in a time of 27.64 and placed 4th in the 60 m Hurdles final. In the Athletics Ireland National Junior Indoors Pentathlon [60 m Hurdles, Long Jump, Shot Putt, High Jump, 800 m] she took the Gold medal with a score of 2818 pts. As a first year student at UCD she competed in the Irish Universities Indoors Championships placing 4th in the Combined Events Pentathlon. At the Irish Universities Outdoors Track and Field Championship at Athlone IT, she was again just outside a podium position in 4th place. In the Triple Jump she was also a few centimetres off a podium position in 4th place. At the Athletics Leinster Senior Track and Field Championships Caoimhe won the Bronze medal in the 200 m in 28.17 secs. At the AAI Outdoors Games it was 4th place again in the 200 m. She also competed for Slí Cualann in the Athletics Ireland National League finals at Tullamore in both the Long Jump and 200 m, earning valuable points for the team. Caoimhe gained valuable experience at Junior, University and Senior levels of competition in 2012. We all hope that in 2013 it will be *“Faster, Higher, Stronger”* for Caoimhe and that she will be able to convert her 4th placings of 2012 into podium positions.

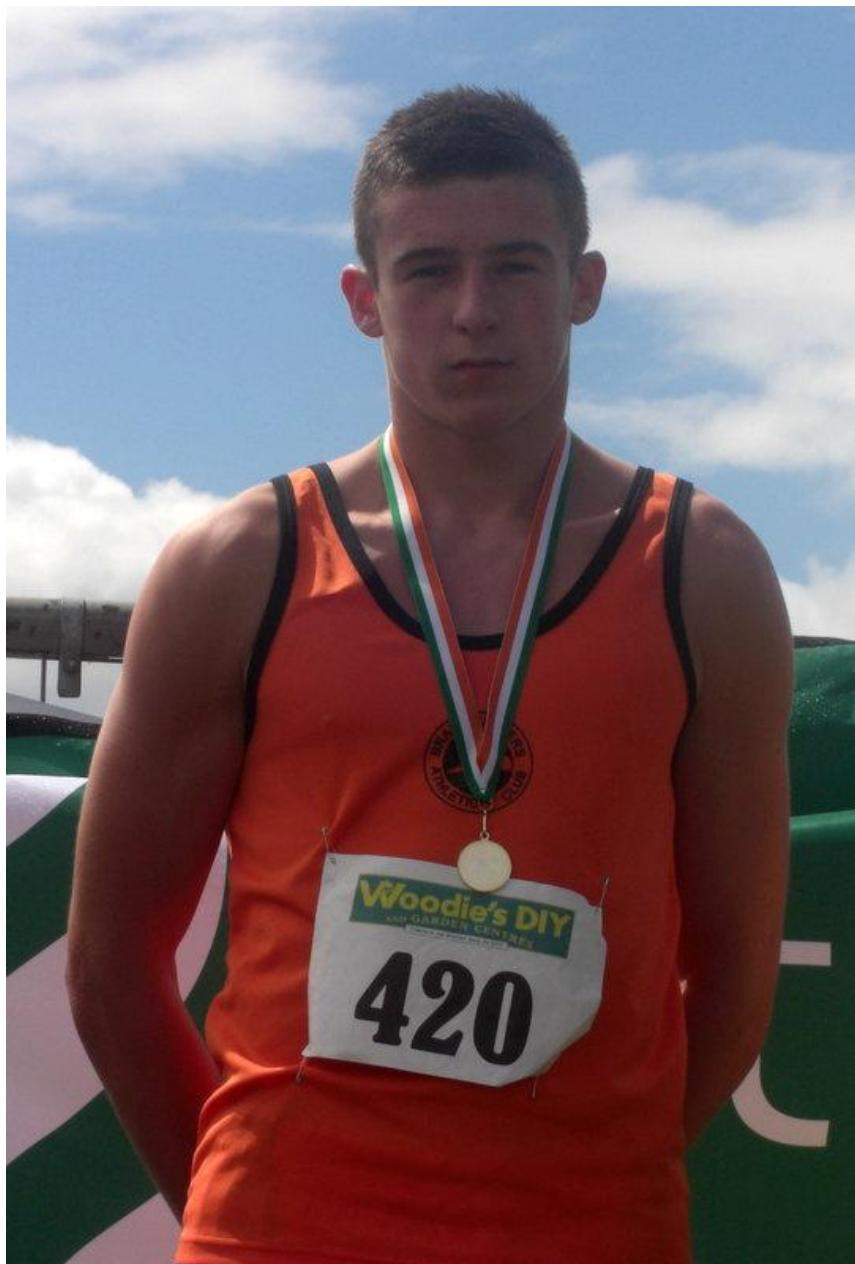
Some men give up their designs when they have almost reached the goal; while others, on the contrary, obtain a victory by exerting, at the last moment, more vigorous efforts than before.

Polybius, Greek Historian [circa 200–118 BC]

**Junior Women
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Caoimhe Basquille**

Junior Men Wicklow Star Award Winner

**Lorcan Murphy - Bray Runners &
Slí Cualann**



Photograph Courtesy of Bray Runners A.C.

Lorcan Murphy's first sporting love is basketball, but when the basketball season is over he is able to put his agility and spring to good use on the athletics field. He is a high jumper, but he also enjoys sprinting. His athletic season started at the Athletics Leinster Indoors Track and Field Championships where he won the U19 Silver medal with a leap of 1.80 m. At the Athletics Leinster Outdoors Championships he again took the U19 Silver medal clearing 1.75 m. At these championships he gained a further medal – a Bronze in the 100 m sprint in a time of 11.68. However, at his next high jump outing, the National Junior Outdoors Track and Field Championships at Tullamore, the same clearance of 1.75 m could only gain him 6th place. The highlight of Lorcan's season came in July at the Athletics Ireland National Juvenile Championships at Tullamore. When he is 100% tuned in for a competition, everything seems to go his way. Clearing 1.80 m at his second attempt put him in joint 1st place. At 1.83 m he cleared the bar at his 3rd attempt while the other three contenders for the medals all failed their three jumps. Raising the bar a further 3 cm he took the U19 Gold medal with a season's best of 1.86 m. He also competed in the National League finals for Slí Cualann, placing 4th= with a leap of 1.70 m.

You have to find something that you love enough to be able to take risks, jump over the hurdles and break through the brick walls that are always going to be placed in front of you. If you don't have that kind of feeling for what it is you are doing, you'll stop at the first giant hurdle.

George Lucas, American Film Director

**Junior Men
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Lorcan Murphy**

Masters Women Wicklow Star Award Winner

Noelle Thorpe - Bray Runners & Slí Cualann



Photograph Courtesy of Tom Kavanagh

Noelle Thorpe competed in the F50 category as a Masters athlete in 2012. She is an inspiration to her fellow athletes in Bray Runners. Like good wine she has improved with age! Noelle has had a remarkable year on the roads and in cross country. In the annual Ballycotton 10-Mile Road Race she placed 2nd of the 61 competitors in the F50 category in a time of 1:13:47. In the Athletics Leinster Masters 3 km Road Race Championship at Gowran, Co. Kilkenny, she won the F50 Gold medal in 12:56, placing 20th of the 50 Masters athletes who finished. In the Athletics Ireland National Masters 10 km Road Race Championship in the Phoenix Park, she took the F50 Bronze medal in a time of 45:13. The National Masters Half Marathon Championships took place in Athenry, Co. Galway, in September. Here Noelle collected the F50 Silver Medal in a time of 1:37:58. In the Raheny AXA 5-Mile Road Race she placed 7th of 38 athletes in the F50 category in a time of 38:08 and in the Rathfarnham WSAF 5 km Road Race she was 2nd of 18 F50 athletes in 20:43, finishing 36th of the 475 competitors. At the Athletics Leinster Masters Cross Country Championships at Avondale, Rathdrum in October, Noelle took Gold in the F50 category in 16:18, finishing 18th of the 42 competitors.

Some masters athletes are as driven as ambitious executives, but many simply find that an athletic act, executed with old bones and muscles, can give meaning to life in ways that love and religion cannot.

Quote from Lee Berquist, *Second Wind: The Rise of the Ageless Athlete*

**Masters Women
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Noelle Thorpe**

Masters Men Wicklow Star Award Winner

Martin Francis - Bray Runners & Slí Cualann



Photograph Courtesy of IMRA

Martin Francis is a prolific competitor, whether it is in road, cross-country or mountain races. He completed 17 Irish Mountain Running Association Races in 2012, ranking 2nd of 35 athletes in the M50 category who competed in at least five IMRA races and was 4th of 120 Masters athletes in any age category who competed in at least 5 races. His best race placings were 5th in the Wicklow Way Ultra [51 km, 1950 m climb], 5th in the Mount Leinster [13.8 km, 635 m climb] and 6th in the Dublin Mountain Plod [21.1 km, 820 m climb]. In the Athletics Ireland National Marathon, run in conjunction with the Dublin City Marathon, he won the Gold medal in the M50 category. He placed 135th overall in the Dublin City Marathon in a remarkable time of 2:49:39, placing 2nd of the 505 athletes in the M50 category in the marathon. In the annual Frank Duffy 10-Mile Road Race he finished 67th of the 2636 competitors in a time of 1:00:53 and was the 1st M50 athlete across the finishing line. At the Longford Marathon he finished 8th of the 192 athletes who completed the course, placing 1st in the M50 category in a time of 2:57:03.

It's at the borders of pain and suffering that the men are separated from the boys.

We are different, in essence, from other men. If you want to win something, run 100 metres. If you want to experience something, run a marathon.

Emil Zatopek, four times Olympic Gold Medallist

**Masters Men
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Martin Francis**

Senior Women Wicklow Star Award Winner

Úna Britton - Kilcoole



Photograph, Wicklow News

Úna Britton's athletic year started already in January 2012. She competed in the BUPA Great Edinburgh Cross Country races in the Senior Women's Division, placing 18th of 47 finishers in a time of 21:13. At the Athletics Leinster Senior 5 km Cross-Country Championships at Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny, she placed 6th of 45 competitors in 19:16. At the Scottish National Cross Country Championships at Falkirk in February she placed 14th of 234 athletes in the Senior Women's race in 31:43. At the Irish Universities Cross Country Championships at Waterford IT, representing the University of Limerick, Úna won the Silver medal, finishing in 19:15. At the Irish Universities Outdoors Track and Field Championships at Athlone IT, she added the Gold medal in the 3000 m Steeplechase in 11:20.16 and finished 5th in a highly competitive 1500 m. She competed in the McCain UK Cross Country Series in Bristol in October as a tune up for her target race, the Athletics Ireland Senior Women's Inter-Counties Cross Country Championship at Tattersalls, Ratoath in November. In this she placed 16th of 73 competitors on an extremely muddy course. Úna was the first U23 Women home to take the individual U23 Gold medal in a time of 33:29.

The freedom of Cross Country is so primitive. It's woman vs. nature.

The footing was really atrocious. I loved it. I really like Cross Country; you're one with the mud.

Lynn Jennings, Three-time World Cross Country Champion

**Senior Women
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Úna Britton**

Senior Men

Wicklow Star Award Winner

Jonathan Phillips - Roundwood & District & Slí Cualann



Photograph Courtesy of Dominic Horan

The year 2012 marked the welcome return of Jonathan Phillips to competitive athletics after the frustrations of injury. Jonathan has always strived to succeed on the track and at cross country. Clearly believing, like Samson, that he would lose his strength if he cut his hair, Jonathan returned to the cross-country scene coiffed suitably. He marked his season's debut by running as a guest in the County Novice Championships in October, pushing and leading a strong field of seasoned athletes to the finish line in Roundwood. Having laid done a marker for his form, he took to the start line in the Athletics Leinster Novice 6 km Cross Country Championship at Avondale, Rathdrum. He mixed it with the leading group for most of the race finishing in 6th place of 69 finishers in a time of 19:12. He thus joined the select group of the few athletes from Co. Wicklow who have ever finished in the top 10 in this event. Two weeks later Jonathan took to the fields at Dunboyne, Co. Meath, for the Athletics Leinster Intermediate 8 km Cross Country Championship. Again Jonathan showed tremendous mettle and maturity in the manner in which he tackled the race. He placed 7th of the 76 finishers in a time of 28:05. Again a top 10 finish in this event has been of rare occurrence for a Co. Wicklow athlete. At the Athletics Ireland National Inter-Counties Cross Country Championships at Tattersalls, Ratoath, he placed 14th in the U23 championship with very trying conditions under foot.

Life is a dream, realise it.
Life is a challenge, meet it.
Life is a duty, complete it.
Life is a game, play it.
Life is a promise, fulfill it.

Extracted from quotation by Mother Teresa

Senior Men
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Jonathan Phillips

Athletics Wicklow International Star Award

Fionnuala Britton - Kilcoole



Photograph © Stu Forster/Getty Images Europe

Fionnuala Britton started 2012 with two excellent Cross Country performances. She won the 8th Edition of the BUPA Great Edinburgh Cross Country International Race, leading home Team Europe to victory over Team USA and Team GB. She followed this with victory in the Antrim International IAAF Cross Country Permit Meeting [McCain UK Cross Country Challenge Series] at Greenmount, Antrim. However, 2012 was really all about European Championships in Helsinki and the Olympic Games in London. Although she had the qualifying time for the Olympic 3000 m steeplechase, Fionnuala wanted to compete in the 5,000 metres and 10,000 metres. At the end of April in her 10,000 m track debut at the Payton Jordan Cardinal Invitational in Palo Alto, California, she recorded 31:29.22 in finishing 3rd, the 4th fastest time ever by an Irishwoman and well inside the Olympic "A" standard of 31:45.0. In Dublin at the AAI Games on 20 May, Fionnuala ran the eighth fastest Irish 3,000 m and a PB of 8:55.01. In Rabat, Morocco, on 27 May she ran the sixth fastest 5000 m time by an Irishwoman (15:15.69), and inside the London 2012 "A" standard of 15:20.0. There is more on Helsinki and London 2012 later. In October in the run-up to the European Cross Country Championships, Fionnuala retained the Sheila Brennan Trophy at the Gerry Farnan Cross Country Festival in 15:36 over 3 miles. She then placed 4th in the VIII Cros de Atapuerca over 7.8 km at Burgos, Spain in a time of 25:48. She continued her preparations with a 3rd place finish in 21:34 behind two Ethiopians, Mekasha Waganesh and Haftamnesh Haylu, at the 23rd Cross de l'Acier over 6.55 km at the Fort des Dunes at Leffrinckoucke, Northern France. Fionnuala finished her remarkable cross-country year at the Iris Lotto Cross Cup over 6 km at Brussels just before Xmas where she placed 2nd to Ruti Aga of Ethiopia in 20:48.

All who have accomplished great things have had a great aim, have fixed their gaze on a goal which was high, one which sometimes seemed impossible.

Orison Sweet Marden (1850-1924), American writer on will power and positive thinking

**International
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Fionnuala Britton**

Athletics Wicklow International Star Award

Michael Byrne

Parnell A.C. & Slí Cualann



Photograph Courtesy of Dominic Horan

After the highs of 2011, most of 2012 was to prove to be a frustrating year through injury for Mick Byrne. For the first time in many years Mick did not compete in the Athletics Wicklow Masters Cross Country Championships. However, like a Phoenix, Mick would rise again from the ashes of a year, which he would like to forget in many respects, to shine anew as 2012 drew to a close. You just can't keep a good man down! For Mick Byrne his target race was the Gerry Farnan Cross Country over 5 miles on 21 October in the Phoenix Park. The results of this race would determine the Irish team selection for the British and Irish Masters International in Belfast. Mick finished in 70th place out of 153 in a time of 27:59. He was the 22nd Masters athlete to finish and the 2nd M50 athlete home, only 4 secs behind the category winner. It was the performance that would gain him another Irish vest. The Athletics Leinster Masters 6 km Cross Country Championship took place on home soil at Avondale, Rathdrum, the following weekend. Now full of confidence, what better way to celebrate his return to form of old than to take the Gold medal in the M50 category. Mick crossed the finishing in 8th place out of 106 finishers in 19:32. Ahead of him were four men in the M35 category and three in the M40 category and he was only 36 seconds behind the M35 winner! At the Athletics Leinster Intermediate 8 km Cross Country Championship at Dunboyne, Co. Meath, Mick finished in 15th place of 76 athletes in a time of 28:42.

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

General Douglas MacArthur

**International
Wicklow Star Award Winner 2012
Michael Byrne**

Athletics Wicklow Outstanding Achievement Award

**Stephen Rice - Greystones & District &
Slí Cualann**



Photograph Courtesy of Athletics Ireland

Stephen Rice had a remarkable year in Javelin competitions – Gold medals in East Leinster Schools, Leinster Schools and All-Ireland Schools Championships and Gold medals at the Athletics Leinster and Athletics Ireland Juvenile Championships as well as a Championship Best Performance and PB at the Athletic Leinster Championships. He was selected to represent Leinster Schools at the Tailteann Inter-Provincial Championships on 23 June at Santry Stadium. He took a Tailteann Bronze medal with a throw of 46.77 m, his least best throw in schools' competitions in 2012. Having won the Intermediate Schools' Javelin title he was selected for the Irish U17 Schools Team to compete at the 44th SIAB Schools International in Ashford, Kent, on 21 July against teams from Scotland, England and Wales. Stephen's best throw of 53.97 m was a new PB and worthy of a Bronze medal. The top two podium positions went to English throwers, both of whom threw over 62 metres. Stephen was unfortunate to lose out on selection for the Irish Celtic Games team. As can happen in javelin events, the U18 National Juvenile Champion Matthew Stockton only got the Celtic team spot for 700 g Javelin with his 6th throw of 55.61 m in the competition. For the record Stockton won the event in Aberdeen with a throw of 55.91 m, Stephen now has had a taste of International competition for Ireland. Athletics Wicklow wishes him continued such. He'll need extra technical training, conditioning and strength if he is to achieve a CBP at U18. The Athletics Leinster CBP stands to a Wicklow athlete, David Kelly (Kilcoole AC), from 1998 at 56.19 m, the Athletics Ireland CBP to Ben Haughton (Ballymena & Antrim AC) at 60.82 m from 1997, and the All-Ireland Schools CBP to Michael Allen (Causeway IFHE) at 65.05 m set in 1999.

Dream big! It's the first step to success. Just like that saying, 'shoot for the moon', even if you miss you'll land among the stars. So aim high, aim higher than you ever thought you could, because if it just wasn't meant to be, you'll still shine. [Anon.]

Athletics Wicklow Outstanding Achievement Award

Michael Byrne

Parnell & Slí Cualann



Photograph © Gérard Legrand and Hubert Minig

**A gem cannot be perfected without friction,
nor a man perfected without trials**

Chinese Proverb

Mick Byrne reflects everything that is noble and good about the sport of athletics. After all his trials and tribulations with injury at the beginning of 2012, nobody would have blamed him if he had hung up his running shoes after a long and distinguished career in the colours of Parnell AC, Slí Cualann AC and Co. Wicklow. However he persevered. Grit and determination came to the fore at the Gerry Farnan Cross Country Festival to gain an M50 spot on the Irish team for the British and Irish Masters Cross Country International held at the Queen's University Playing Fields in Belfast on 10 November. In the M50–M64 race over 6 km, Mick placed 4th of the 68 competitors in a time of 27:45, just behind Tommy Payne (Tinryland AC) who had beaten Mick to the first M50 place at the Gerry Farnan Cross Country. While disappointed at narrowly missing out on an individual M50 medal, the M50 Team Ireland took the Gold medals [3, 4, 7, 10 = 24 pts] beating their main rivals England [42 pts] convincingly with Northern Ireland, 3rd [46 pts]. The Irish M35 team also took Gold medals. As Sir Winston Churchill said, hopefully "*This is not the end, this is not even the beginning of the end, this is just perhaps the end of the beginning*" and Athletics Wicklow will continue to see Mick grace the Masters stage in Ireland and abroad for several years to come. Lang may yer lum reek!

The best six doctors anywhere
And no one can deny it
Are sunshine, water, rest, and air
Exercise and diet.
These six will gladly you attend
If only you are willing
Your mind they'll ease
Your will they'll mend
And charge you not a shilling.

Nursery rhyme from *What the River Knows* (1990), Wayne Fields

Athletics Wicklow

Outstanding Achievement

Award

Úna Britton - Kilcoole



Photograph © Barry Cregg, Sportsfile

For the second year in a row Úna Britton achieved selection for the European U23 Cross Country Championship held at Skanzen, Budapest, Hungary, on Sunday 9 December, 2012. In doing so she won the Athletics Ireland National Inter-Counties U23 title. A bit of double history was again made in Hungary for Kilcoole AC and Athletics Wicklow with sisters Úna and Fionnuala representing Ireland at these championships as in 2011, albeit in separate races. The 19th Edition of these Championships took place in conditions resembling Santa's Grotto. While it may have looked picturesque on television with the sun glistening on the snow and ice, the temperature was sub-zero. These wintry conditions were in complete contrast to the mud of Ratoath, Co. Meath, two weeks previously. Take your pick – bathe in mud or inhale freezing air! Úna placed 58th in a time of 23:42. While the record shows that Fionnuala at an equivalent age and stage in her development won a European U23 Silver medal in San Giorgio su Legnano, Italy, in 2006, there is no substitute for experience on the International stage. Irish Women's athletics has been given a phenomenal boost by the Team Gold for the Senior Women in Budapest. They have shown what can be achieved by training, dedication and belief. Roll on the 40th IAAF World Cross Country Championships in Bydgoszcz, Poland, on 24 March and the 20th European Cross Country Championships in Belgrade, Serbia, in December! The competition for team places will no doubt become increasingly difficult as new kids on the block vie for these honours. Good luck Úna in 2013! All of us would love to see you join Fionnuala on the Senior team.

To succeed you need to find something to hold on to,
something to motivate you, something to inspire you.

Tony Dorsett, former American Football Running Back

Athletics Wicklow Outstanding Achievement Award

Stephanie Reilly - Slí Cualann



Photograph © Brendan Moran, Sportsfile

Stephanie Reilly has again brought honour to Slí Cualann and Athletics Wicklow in representing Ireland in the 3000 m steeplechase at the 21st European Track and Field Championships in Helsinki, Finland and at the XXX Summer Olympiad in London. Stephanie achieved the “A” standard qualifying time for the 3000 m steeplechase for both of these championships with a personal-best time of 9:42.91 at the New York Adidas League Grand Prix in June 2011. Now aged 34, the mother of two sons, Marcus and Dylan, head coach of the cross-country and track and field teams at Bryant University, and ably encouraged and supported by her husband Paul, Stephanie still has the determination to be highly competitive. She achieved three PBs on the track and road in 2012. On 9 June at the Waltham New Balance Boston Twilight Series she recorded 4:14.30 for the 1500 m and at the Cork City Sports on 17 July she clocked 9:02.91 for 3000 m. On 13 October in the Hartford Half Marathon she finished in 1:15:40. Is this the start of a new target – the Olympic Marathon in Rio de Janeiro?

At the European Track and Field Championships, Stephanie finished 6th in her semi-final of the 3000 m steeplechase with a time of 9:44.15, a season’s best, and placed 12th in the final in a time of 9:53.90. When she stepped onto the track at the Olympic Stadium in London on the 4th August, Stephanie became the latest Athletics Wicklow Olympian. She placed 9th in semi-final 2 of 3 heats of the 3000 m steeplechase in a time of 9:44.77. However, World standards in this event continue to increase. The qualification cut-off for the final was 9:30.06. Stephanie can feel justifiably proud of her achievements in representing Ireland on European, World and Olympic stages. What next for Stephanie in 2013 and beyond?

The triumph cannot be had without the struggle. And I know what struggle is. I have spent a lifetime trying to share what it has meant to be a woman first in the world of sports so that other young women have a chance to reach their dreams.

Wilma Rudolph, Double Olympian and Triple Gold Medallist

Athletics Wicklow Supreme Achievement Award

Fionnuala Britton - Kilcoole A.C.



Photograph © Steve Bardens/Getty Images Europe

It has been an astounding year for Fionnuala Britton and Athletics Wicklow. In Helsinki in July she put in a truly gusty performance in her battle to achieve a podium position in the 10,000 metres on the final day of the European Championships. She wound up the pace at the front to try to break the field and when Dulce Felix of Portugal pushed the accelerator further, she gave gallant chase. Her exertions in pursuit of the Gold medal told in the end as she faded to finish 4th in a time of 32:05.54. However, it was the highest placing of any Irish athlete at these championships. At London 2012, Fionnuala became Athletics Wicklow's first double Olympian. In the 10,000 m she finished 15th in a time 31:46.71. The first five places were taken by Ethiopians and Kenyans. In the 5000 m Fionnuala ran a PB of 15:12.97 in finishing 10th in semi-final 1. At the 2012 Athletics Ireland National Athletic Awards in November, Fionnuala Britton was awarded *Endurance Athlete of the Year* for her winning performance at the 18th European Cross Country Championships at Velenje, Slovenia. She was also voted *European Athlete of the Month* for December 2011 by European Athletics for her performance in the 18th SPAR European Cross-Country Championship and also scooped The Irish Times /Irish Sports Council 'Sportswoman on the Month' for December 2011.

As long as we all shall live, the picture of Fionnuala Britton with arms aloft at the end of the 19th European Cross Country Championships in Budapest in December will be indelibly ingrained in our minds. Paula Radcliffe and Hayley Yelling of Great Britain had both won this championship twice. Fionnuala now joins this illustrious company. But significantly she will forever go down in history in becoming the first woman to retain this European title. Fionnuala's individual achievement was capped with Team Gold for the Irish Women [1,8,20, **23** = 52 pts], relegating France to the Silver medals on count-back [5,6,13, **28** = 52 pts]. At the end of 2012 the spirits of the whole country were lifted by this achievement. The biannual cycle of World Cross Country Championships starts in Bydgoszcz, Poland in March. Athletics Wicklow wishes Fionnuala all success at this level.

Accept the challenges so that you may feel the exhilaration of victory.

General George S Patton

Athletics Wicklow Supreme Sport Award

**Katie Taylor
Olympic Gold Medallist**



Photograph © Getty Images

At London 2012, in taking the Women's Lightweight boxing title, Katie Taylor became the sixth ever Irish Olympic Gold medallist since Ireland first competed as an independent state at the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924 – Pat O'Callaghan, Bob Tisdall, Ronnie Delany, Michael Carruth and Michelle Smith. It was one of those occasions when Ireland came to a stop for the duration of the bout and the anxious wait for the decision. Ireland held its breath in hushed silence as the judges' decision was announced before hysteria broke out in the ExCel Arena, in Bray and in every town and village across the country! All the more amazing was the coincidence that she won her Gold medal on 9 August, 2012, exactly 20 years to the day when Michael Carruth won his boxing Gold medal in Barcelona at the XXV Summer Olympiad. In addition Katie had the honour of Irish Flag Bearer at the Opening Ceremony of the XXX Summer Olympiad – one of only 18 Irish Sports men and women who have had this distinction. Gold has been the colour of Katie's international boxing career – 4 times World Boxing Champion at 60 kg [2006–2012], 5 times European Boxing Champion at 60 kg [2005–2011] and 4 times European Union Boxing Champion at 60 kg [2008–2011]. She has been named three times as International Boxing Association (AIBA) *World Female Boxer of the Year*. She scooped the *Best Women's Boxer Trophy* at the London 2012 Olympic Games, was named *RTÉ Sports Person of the Year 2012*, picked up the *Sportsperson of the Year* award at the People of the Year 2012 awards and was crowned The Irish Times /Irish Sports Council *Sportswoman of the Year* for 2012.

However, Athletics Wicklow and Bray Runners can also claim her as one of their own. She competed in athletics at Co. Wicklow Championships, Co. Wicklow Community Games, and Athletics Leinster Championships, taking a medal at provincial level. She also received a Bray Runners Club Award in recognition of her competitive achievements in athletics. Katie Taylor's Olympic Gold medal has put Bray and Co. Wicklow on the World map across all the continents. Athletics Wicklow salutes Katie Taylor's contribution to sport and community in Co. Wicklow.

Champions aren't made in the gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them — a desire, a dream, a vision.

Muhammad Ali

Athletics Wicklow Cross Country Cups 2012

*Junior Women
Slí Cualann Cup*

No Team

*Junior Men
Micky Philips Cup*

Greystones & District

Padraig Lennon
Jamie Lennon
Dylan Grimes Larkin

Athletics Wicklow Cross Country Cups 2012

***Novice Women
Brehon Cup***

Parnell

Hannah Nolan
Catherine Byrne
Eleanor Sheehan

***Novice Men
Cyril Smyth Cup***

Kilcoole

Richard Hourihan
Andrew Lawless
John Baldwin
Darragh Flynn

Athletics Wicklow Cross Country Cups 2012

***Intermediate Women
Sean Murphy Memorial Cup***

Parnell

Hannah Nolan
Catherine Byrne
Pauline O'Byrne

***Intermediate Men
Remax Cup***

Kilcoole

Richard Hourihan
Andrew Lawless
Darragh Flynn
Mark Walsh

Athletics Wicklow

Cross Country Cups 2012

Masters Women
Sean Byrne Memorial Cup

Bray Runners

Suzanne Foot
Noelle Thorpe
Denise O'Leary

Masters Men
Sean Clifford Cup

Bray Runners

Finbarr Kirwan
Joe Cawley
Dominic Horan

Athletics Wicklow Cross Country Cups 2012

***Senior Women
Ellie Brady Cup***

Kilcoole

Fionnuala Britton
Úna Britton
Joanna Cullen

***Senior Men
Joe Jacob Cup***

Bray Runners

Ian McGrath
Neil Wiktorski
Finbarr Kirwan
Gary Condon

Athletics Wicklow

Best Club at Track & Field

The Peter O'Connor Memorial Cup

This cup was presented to Athletics Wicklow by Inbhear Dee Athletic Club, in honour of Peter O'Connor, Wicklow's greatest Olympian, who won a Gold and a Silver medal at the Intercalated Olympic Games in Athens in 1906. At the flag-raising ceremony, in protest at the flying of the Union Jack for his second place, O'Connor scaled a flagpole in the middle of the field and waved the Irish flag, while the pole was guarded by Irish and American athletes and supporters.

He was five times the Irish Long Jump champion – GAA 1899 [7.39 m], IAAA 1900 [7.18 m], IAAA 1901 [7.55 m], GAA 1904 [7.18 m], and GAA 1905 [7.20m]. He was GAA Triple Jump Championship in 1899 [14.63 m] and GAA 220 yards Champion in 1899 [25.2 sec]. He also won the Irish High Jump Championship three times – GAA 1899 [1.75 m], IAAA 1900 [1.78 m], 1901 [1.77 m].

Peter O'Connor was AAA's Long Jump Champion six times – 1901 [7.22 m], 1902 [7.20 m], 1903 [6.95 m], 1904 [7.07 m], 1905 [7.25 m] and 1906 [7.15m]. He was also AAA's High Jump Champion twice – 1903 [1.72 m] and 1904 [1.76 m]. The AAA's Championships were at that time regarded as the World Championships.

In 1901 he set a World Record in the Long Jump [7.61 m] which stood for 20 years and was to remain a National record for a remarkable 89 years. When the IAAF was established in Stockholm in 1912 after the Vth Summer Olympiad, it was the first World Record to be recognised by this new International athletics body. He is a wonderful example for all Wicklow athletes to follow.

Winners
2012
Greystones & District A.C.



Athletics Leinster Star Awards 2012

Congratulations to the following who received
the Leinster Awards for Co. Wicklow 2012

Juvenile Girl

Lynda Earls
Greystones & District A.C.

Juvenile Boy

Jamie Cullen
Greystones & District A.C.

Senior/Master

Jim Boland
Slí Cualann A.C.

Outstanding Achievement Award

Fionnuala Britton
Kilcoole A.C.
European Cross Country Champion
European Team Gold Medallist

Outstanding Service to Athletics Award

Cyril J Smyth
Bray Runners A.C. & Slí Cualann A.C.

Fit4Life

Overall Award Winners 2012

10 Races over Road, Cross Country, Trail & Track
6 best results decided the overall places.

Congratulations to all of the athletes who completed six races
You are all winners !

WOMEN

Junior Women

1 st	Sile O'Byrne	Parnell A.C.
2 nd	Ailbhe Flynn	Inbhear Dee A.C.
3 rd	Sara Kavanagh	Roundwood & District A.C.

Senior Women

1 st	Susan Lawless	Kilcoole A.C.
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Over 40 Women

1 st	Joy Johnson	Inbhear Dee A.C.
2 nd	Martha O'Neill	Parnell A.C.
3 rd	Maureen Byrne	Greystones & District A.C.

Over 45 Women

1 st	Eithne Walsh	Inbhear Dee A.C.
2 nd	Mairead Wynne	Parnell A.C.

Over 50 Women

1 st	Jackie Patrick	Greystones & District A.C.
2 nd	Charlotte Stevens	Bray Runners A.C.
3 rd	Dolores Gilliland	Bray Runners A.C.

MEN

Junior Men

1 st	Patrick Kinsella	Parnell A.C.
2 nd	Donal Flannery	Parnell A.C.
3 rd	Robin Mooney	Inbhear Dee A.C.

Senior Men

1 st	Tim Grummell	Inbhear Dee A.C.
2 nd	Andrew Lawless	Kilcoole A.C.

Over 35 men

1 st	Michael J O'Neill	Parnell A.C.
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Over 40 men

1 st	Ronan King	Inbhear Dee A.C.
2 nd	P.J. Doyle	Slí Cualann A.C.
3 rd	Paul Byrne	Unattached

Over 45 Men

1 st	Tom Byrne	Inbhear Dee A.C.
2 nd	A.J. Cotter	Greystones & District A.C.
3 rd	Tony Gartland	Slí Cualann A.C.

Over 50 Men

1 st	Mick Byrne	Parnell A.C.
2 nd	Noel Kavanagh	Roundwood & District A.C.

Awards to those who completed 6 of the 10 races:

Rory Kelly	Junior Men	Inbhear Dee A.C.
James Byrne	Junior Men	Inbhear Dee A.C.
Robert Bell-King	Junior Men	Inbhear Dee A.C.
Tara Bell-King	Over 40 Women	Inbhear Dee A.C.
Carmel Murphy	Over 45 Women	Bray Runners A.C.



Chill Mhantáin – Meanma Saor

Athletics Wicklow wishes all athletes in Co. Wicklow a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year

We look forward to hearing of your successes in Provincial, National and International Competition in 2013

Athletics Wicklow



Ashford



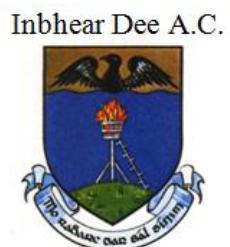
Bray Runners



Enniskerry



Greystones & District



Inbhearr Dee



Kilcoole



Lakeshore Striders



Parnell



Roundwood & District



Slí Cualann



St Benedict

The Will to Win

You can't coach heart, you can never coach desire,

They must always come from within.

Rules may be learned, and skills developed,

But you cannot be taught the will to win.

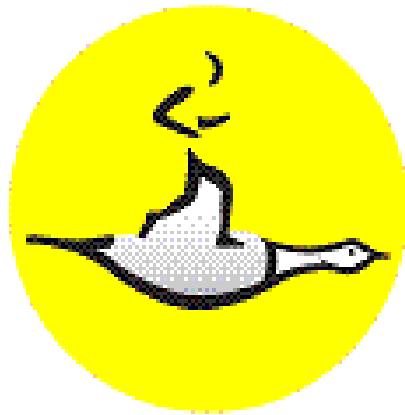
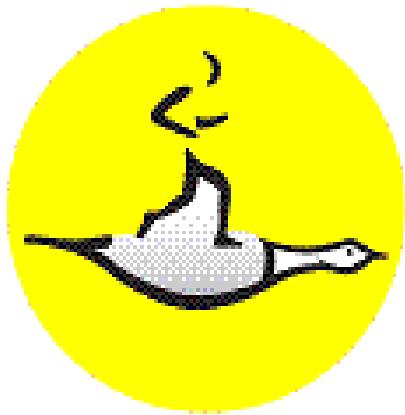
You must reach a little deeper to bring out your best,

You must be your own motivation.

Keep going, never quit, you have to have a reason,

You are your own strength, your own inspiration.

Melissa Underwood



**Kilcoole A.C.
Hosts of the 2012
Athletics Wicklow
Star Awards**

