



# Clonliffe Harriers A.C.

**2020 in Review**

*‘A year like no other’*

## Clonliffe Harriers – 2020 in Review

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## Introduction

2020 has been a year like no other. The global pandemic has impacted us all to some degree or other, with the ensuing restrictions on movement and gatherings of people forcing us to adjust our everyday routines and freedoms that were ordinarily taken for granted. Amid the uncertainty, our future plans have been delayed, thrown into doubt or simply torn up. Obviously, the athletics and running events calendar was no exception, with everything from local Parkruns up to large global-scale events – including the grandest stage of all, the Olympic Games - falling victim to the sweeping wave of cancellations around the world. At a club-level, aside from the dearth of competitions and events, arguably the greatest impact on our members both young and old, athletes and coaches, was simply being unable to meet up for training, the social interaction, the ‘banter’, the learning and developing together as a group. The shared experience that the virtual online world of video calls and social media can never truly replicate.

With that backdrop, this yearbook captures through the articles and excerpts taken from the Clonliffe Harriers website throughout 2020, how the club responded to keep its members engaged in the initial period of ‘lockdown’ and later offer much needed opportunities for competition when that became possible while operating within the required safety protocols. The club’s coaches and volunteers were instrumental in providing a safe and organised return to training and competing during the summer months. Moreover, despite the lack of opportunities to compete and difficulty in simply moving around, the club continued to deliver some excellent individual and team performances and bring silverware to Santry, the highlights of which are captured here. We rounded out the year on a positive, by continuing the “Clonliffe 2-Mile” for its 129<sup>th</sup> continuous edition, although this one was truly unique.

The core of this book was formed by you, the members, through your overwhelming response to the *“60 Seconds with a Harrier”* interviews and the *“Monday Memories”* series which helped us get to know our clubmates as well as the glorious history and tradition behind this famous Irish sporting institution. Your resilience and solidarity in adversity epitomises what this club is about, articulated by the club motto. A special mention also to our loyal sponsor Hireco Trailer Rentals and assorted friends of the club for their continued support throughout what was a challenging year for the industrial sector as a whole.

We hope that you enjoy this re-cap of what has been a truly extraordinary year. Don’t forget that you can read the articles in full by searching the Archive section by Month or Topic at the club website: [www.clonliffeharriersac.com](http://www.clonliffeharriersac.com). We wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy Christmas, as we look forward with hope and optimism to the year ahead.

## Level Heads!

2020 so how was it for you? The year of level 2, level 3, level 5, level 3, and level 3 *and a bit* required one thing and that was level heads.

On behalf of the Clonliffe Committee I wish to thank every single member of Clonliffe Harriers, the coaches and the athletes and indeed the parents of our juvenile athletes for their levelheadedness throughout this extraordinary year. The co-operation of all ensured that we continued with our club activities as much as was humanly possible in a safe environment for all. The club members really bought into what we were trying to do. The initial lockdown in March left us in a situation where all activity was closed down, but innovation prevailed as coaches kept in contact with their athletes by whatever means possible and athletes continued with their training on a solo basis. Some thrived. Some struggled. All prevailed.

When club activity was allowed resume, we set up procedures for bookings, we set up procedures to divide track time. Again, it was difficult as the timeslots did not necessarily suit all but once again the entire club bought into the process. The result was an enhancement of the great club spirit we have in Clonliffe Harriers. Club members who never knew one another before, as a result of the “60 seconds with a Harrier” knew more about one another than they would have learned on a long training run. Our summer track season was a dedicated-club affair comprising of our championship events and then an autumn series. All provided great opportunities for our athletes and enhanced the wonderful club spirit we have. A huge thank you to all of the club’s committee and officials who helped out that those events.

This has been a difficult year and the more recent level 5 restrictions again being a setback. The future, however, is bright and as we now move back to level 3 and with the promise of vaccines in the spring we look forward to a new dawn. We look forward to training and racing as a team moving forward once again. This 2020 Clonliffe Harriers road trip was brought to you as a result of a magnificent team effort. Every single one of you played your part.

A very special thank you to our club captain Joe Cooper for his inspiration, drive and support. Joe never once let his failing health stop him. He is the embodiment of the club motto of our club: Nil Desperandum.

Noel Guiden (Honorary Secretary), *December 2020*



## Winter Sunshine – *Italica International Cross-Country*

2020 kicked off with a mid-January weekend trip by the Clonliffe cross country teams to Seville for the famous “Cross Country Internacional de Italica”. By all accounts the club trip was an outstanding success, in being a hugely enjoyable event with positives all round for every single Harrier competing. Efrem Gidey put in yet another five-star showing in the feature IAAF men’s international over 9,975m as he lined up with a world-class field including Olympic silver medallist Paul Chelimo (USA). As usual Efrem showed no fear in going out fast with the field and indeed in the early stages featured in the lead pack of six athletes. The course is unique in that it winds through the ancient Roman city of Italica over compressed red clay, sand, stone and in some places concrete. Several athletes chose to run in flats while others opted with spikes. The course features a lot of hills but then some very fast downhill sections and therefore the pace was extremely hot from the off.



Huge crowds attend the event making for an electric, noisy atmosphere. The crowds cheered on as Ethiopia’s 17-year old Tadesse Worku upset the form book stealing a march on the rest of his rivals to come home the winner in 27.32 with pre-race favourite Chelimo 2nd (27.48). Efrem obviously tired over the latter stages but never gave up finishing an excellent 14th position in a time of 29.34. A superb run from Jayme Rossiter saw him keep a steady pace throughout meaning that as other athletes tired he was going through them like a knife through butter gaining place after place finishing up in a superb 25th (30.16), next in was Cathal Doyle who on the surface suffered a recurrence of blisters but still hung in to finish 32nd (30.36) and with Eoin Taggart also having an excellent day to place 49th (32.16) it proved to be an extremely satisfactory day for the team.

In addition to the senior team there was a large travelling party of Clonliffe athletes competing in the ‘undercard’. First into the fray, literally at sunrise, were the U18 girls getting the Clonliffe day off to an excellent start with a brilliant run from Aoife Hession placing 13th



with Katie Halpin next in placing 19th and Alana Fitzsimons 24th. Interestingly enough the U18 girls raced with the U14 boys and the feedback from the Clonliffe athletes was that this kept them running stronger throughout the whole race. Similarly, the U18 boys raced with the U20 girls. Niall Carbery was excellent in this race, despite twice falling, battled his way through the field for 20th place. Very positive runs also from Alex Neuroth 44th and John Lawrence 46th. Sarah Bateson finished a brilliant 8th position with Abbie Sheehy close behind in 10th. Tess Loftus recorded 18th place as an U20. In the Men's U20 race, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> places were filled by Clonliffe athletes. Aaron Cullen in 8th with the fast finishing Callum Simpson, in an excellent 9th position. After months of injury frustration Evan Foster got a fantastic 19th. Next in was another on the injury comeback, Ben Guiden placing 22<sup>nd</sup>, Alex Murray (27<sup>th</sup>), Ian McAlweeney (28<sup>th</sup>), Thomas Balthazar (30<sup>th</sup>), and Dermot Buckley (43<sup>rd</sup>).



### **From Santry to Seville: Team Clonliffe**

The day's proceedings also included a 'Popular race', basically open races for men and women. The men's open race had a field capped at its limit of 1000 starters! Leading the Clonliffe contingent home was Stephen Cashin 25th, next was master athlete Declan Power (36<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> M45), Ryan Sheridan (39), Daniel Lacey (46) and Jordan Byrne (53). The women's 'Popular race' was a slightly smaller affair with just the 400 starters! At the sharp end of the field were the Clonliffe Quartet, all having an outstanding race: Laura Tuite (12), Alannah Cooley (14), Clodagh Galvin (32) and Hannah Browne (59).

Overall, it was a brilliant weekend for the athletes all of whom will benefit hugely from the experience of attending a top-class overseas event like this. All supported their clubmates and did themselves and Clonliffe Harriers proud. Indeed, a couple of the athletes recounted their own personal experience of the trip, which you can check out on the club website, along with the more detailed event report (see archive articles from January 2020).

## The Calm before the Storm

On a beautiful spring Saturday morning, it seems like a lifetime ago now, but was only on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March, the usual suspects met at the Clonliffe clubhouse at 7.30 a.m. to commence the task of course building as Clonliffe Harriers for the first time in our history played host to the All-Ireland Schools Cross Country Championships. Like the usual well-oiled machine that the course builders are, all set about their task in Santry Demesne marking out a course worthy of any championship making sure to get in the obligatory hills, the walled garden loop and then of course the best finish in Irish athletics: the avenue through hundreds of year old historic redwoods of the Demesne. Once the course construction was completed and after a welcomed cup of tea the course builders were back out on course to marshal the event.

At that time of course Coronavirus was in the news, but little did anyone suspect that it would change forever not only the world of athletics but the world on a global basis. Indeed, it was a little bit of a joke at the time as we greeted one another with not only an elbow pump but also a kick on the shins!

As it transpired the All-Ireland Schools Cross Country was the last mass participation sporting event held in Ireland to date as within days the Taoiseach had given that historic address from Washington announcing the closure of schools and basically the commencement of the lockdown.



**Putting it all on the line – Sean Cronin (left) almost takes victory**

The All Ireland Schools proved to be an outstanding success. It was an historic day for Belvedere College who finally took the senior boys' championship after silvering in 2019. From a Clonliffe perspective Sean Cronin got the pulses well and truly racing with an

outstanding run in the minor boys All Ireland Cross Country, unbelievably Sean lost out on gold in a photo finish. Still, a silver medal at this stage of the young man's career in athletics was an outstanding performance.

At the end of a long day the course was dismantled, at this stage the hardy troops had been on site for some ten hours when the final stakes and mesh were packed away. An outstanding job was done by the crew with the course and the good humour of the Clonliffe marshals earning the highest praise and gratitude of the Irish Schools Athletics Association.

Hard to believe, but that was literally the calm before the incoming storm clouds descended like a choking fog. There will, however, be sunny times ahead in the future in Santry Demesne.



## 60 seconds with a Harrier

In April, we embarked on a website series to bring some light and laughter during some trying and uncertain times. Morton Stadium was off limits, the Irish race calendar was beset by cancellations and postponements, and athletes were confined to exercising alone within distance limits of their home. Naturally, news on the club website rapidly dried up, so we kicked off the *“60 seconds with a Harrier”* series featuring a Q&A style interview format with members across the spectrum of the club, both young and old. Over 60 athletes responded to the call, from April through to June, offering an opportunity for us to get to know more about our fellow clubmates.

Track & Field athletics is quite special as it’s really a sport made up of multiple sports, and hence on any typical Tuesday or Thursday night at Morton Stadium it’s normal to see many different training groups focused on their chosen discipline, looking to improve and achieve their goals. As a result, it’s fair to say that many of us don’t know all the names behind the faces, nor the interesting stories behind what shapes and drives them in the pursuit of those goals or simply the pure enjoyment that they get out of athletics.



A recurring theme was the choice of favourite Athletics Meet of our club members, with the Morton Games proving the most popular. This is one of those special days in the club calendar where we all come together to lend a hand to deliver the best event in the country! Also, the *“If you were Seb Coe...”* question frequently emitted the response to adopt a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to drug cheats in athletics. Lifetime bans were the preference.

The interviews in full can be found in the club website archive section (simply search for “60 seconds”), while over the following pages you can enjoy a selection of highlights from the series, with every ‘interviewee’ being featured.

## 60 Seconds with a Harrier – the questions in full

What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?

When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?

What is your favourite training workout?

And your least favourite?

What's your favourite race / athletics meet?

What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics? *(as athlete and/or coach)*

What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?

*(For a coach or seasoned athlete)* What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?

Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe Harriers that you could share?

What's your favourite meal? A. *For competition* B. *Outside competition*

Who is your sporting 'hero'? *(athletics or other)* A. Irish B. International

What's your favourite...? A. Film B. Song or Album C. Book

What's your favourite holiday destination?

What's your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?

If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?

How would your non-athlete friends describe you? *(in 3 words)*

What is your next running / athletics goal? *(whenever normality returns!)*

How are you motivating yourself to continue training at these difficult times?

## Long May They Run

As Clonliffe Harriers was originally borne out of the sport of cross country running in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it's logical that we start with some of the current crop of men and women who compete at middle and long distance on the track while building their strength and endurance over the wetter, colder months through cross country competition. They are expertly guided by the distance captains and coaches such as Peter McDermott, Noel Guiden, Joe Cooper, Pamela Cooper, Mick Fogarty, Gerry Cullen, and Stephen Bateson, to name but a few.



**Captain Joe Cooper with some of Clonliffe's current crop of distance men**

## Greg Hossenny



### **Greg under the watchful eye of coach Peter McDermott**

A great asset to Clonliffe, a young man who has already made an enormous contribution to the club, he is an 800 man (specializing in the opening 600!), cross country athlete and a race walker, owner of several senior national team gold medals as a vital member of the track & field team. He currently studies French and Politics in DCU. Originally from Mauritius and living in Dublin since he was 10. I. it's Greg "The Hoss" Hossenny.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

On an individual point, the first time I ran under 4 minutes (1500m) in 2018. I didn't consider myself to be a great athlete, quite mediocre at times, and I surprised myself on how well I was training and that was the day that my coach, Peter McDermott told me that I have good potential when I put my mind to it.

### **Who is your sporting 'hero'? (athletics or other) - Irish:**

Alan O'Neill, my teacher at school who got me into the sport, and I owe everything to him. He's like a big brother and friend to me first before a teacher or running coach.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Try to enjoy it, it's a demanding sport and if you can't, take a few weeks off and return to it later. I felt like I wasn't enjoying it as much this year and that's what I did, took a few weeks off and now I enjoy the grind again.



## Alannah Cooley



### **Alannah competing in the Open race at IAAF XC in Seville in January 2020**

Already a ten-year Clonliffe Harriers veteran and 2019 National U/23 800 champion Alannah Cooley. Alannah is in her third year in DCU studying Genetics.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

You are capable of pushing yourself so much further than you think, so don't be afraid to challenge yourself both physically and mentally. Really give it a shot. You will surprise yourself when you keep consistent and hard-working, but on the days when you are due to recover, take the recovery – this is key to success.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

Our recent trip to Seville for Cross Internacional de Italica was definitely a trip I will always remember shared with my running friends and our coaches. It was so much fun. I've never seen anyone sing and dance to Mamma Mia like Mick Fogarty can.

### **What's your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?**

I love spending time with friends by going out for dinner or out for long scenic walks to Howth or Clontarf.

## Cathal Doyle



### **Cathal Doyle – Morton Mile, August 2019**

The first athlete to graduate from the Junior Mile at Morton Games to the Morton Mile: Cathal Doyle! He's a final year student at DCU. Sport is a big part of his life, especially athletics...and his own words probably too much at times!

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Without a doubt the Morton Games. From helping out years ago, to running the junior mile and recently the Morton Mile. Running in front of your club and a big crowd with world class runners makes it the best and my anticipated race every year. No better buzz than friends and teammates all shouting you on. It gets better every year.

### **If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

Create more rivalries like Lopez Lomong and Paul Chelimo. All meets should have loud music, the crowd as near to the track as possible, if not out on the track. Beer gardens and really just general entertainment, unless you love athletics, you'll not come so events like Highgate 10,000m and Morton Games should be copied.



## Laura Tuite



**Laura Tuite (far right) with clubmates at the National cross-country championships**

Laura is an athlete who has come right through the ranks and has done some coaching and mentoring of young Clonliffe athletes into the bargain. She's her second year of a laboratory analyst apprenticeship in SK Biotek Swords.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I was born into Clonliffe Harriers! It's my second family.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

I will never forget the time Joe Copper with two suitcases in hand walking to the bus on our way home from a cross country race in Brussels. With the bus in sight he reached the top of the muckiest hill on the course, took one step and slipped the whole way down on his backside. I have never seen Mick Fogarty laugh so hard.

### **How would your non-athlete friends describe you? (in 3 words)**

Athletic, determined and kind-hearted.

### **What is your next running / athletics goal? (whenever normality returns!)**

I want to make a national senior final on the track & get new PB's!

### **How are you motivating yourself to continue training at these difficult times?**

I have worked so hard to get to the level of fitness I have now. The fear of losing it and starting from scratch is enough to motivate me to keep running.

## Stephen Cashin



### **Stephen Cashin, National Cross-Country Championships - That great day in November 2019!**

A plucky young upstart ready to take the Senior circuit by storm. Has a penchant for high mileage and Cross Country. Most recent winner of the prestigious “Harrier of the year award”. (his words!)

#### **What is your favourite training workout?**

You simply can't beat 400's on the track. I'll take as many as Joe cares to give.

#### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Winning the National Junior Cross-Country Championship. First time I scored for the team in this race, so it felt good.

#### **Who is your sporting 'hero'?**

A. Irish: Wes Hoolahan; B. International: Craig Engels (His devotion to the mullet is truly inspiring)

#### **How would your non-athlete friends describe you? (in 3 words)**

Awe-inspiring, Magnificent, Humble (very).

#### **How are you motivating yourself to continue training at these difficult times?**

Shame and fear are my primary motivators, in good times and in bad.

## Efrem Gidey



### **Efrem - Irish U/20 European XC Bronze medallist**

Efrem Gidey, a college student studying sport management in Colaiste Ide. He came to Ireland aged 16 years old. Since joining the club, Efrem has won national titles at Schools and Junior levels, National Senior 5000m bronze, and best of all European Junior Cross-Country bronze in December 2019.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

My favourite workout is a fartlek in Santry Park with my teammates. I like to run by feel so fartlek allows that instead of chasing a time.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

When I won my first international bronze medal in Portugal cross country European champion U/20 in 2019. I'd say that is my most cherished moment as it was a huge achievement to me. I had a hip injury and never expected to get a medal. I thought at that time it will be hard because all over Europe there are good, experienced athletes.

### **What was your worst injury and how did you get over it?**

I had fallen off my bike and injured my hips, so I couldn't put any weight or even jump. This went on for some time and it was prolonged because I became hyper-cautious about not wanting to cause more damage. I did a lot of body strength work, management for the anxiety I had around my injury and I also worked with a dietitian to recover better.

### **What is your favourite meal?**

My favourite food is called dero wete it means chicken with spice sauce; it is a traditional Eritrean and Ethiopian food.

### **Bonus Question!**

**You know what you mean to Clonliffe, so what does Clonliffe mean to you?**

I want to thank everyone in my club, but I especially want to talk about my coach and friend Joe. I want to let you know how much we appreciate your investment in our lives. You are our role model and live as an example of how to persevere in difficulty. I am so lucky to have a coach who inspires me every day to be better than the day before. I hope I can inspire future champions as you have inspired me these past two years. You're awesome!

You taught me so much, but also went beyond that to show your love and care for the team. We're so grateful for your efforts! You relentlessly worked with me to help me reach the top. You are amazing coach and amazing club and amazing people. I honestly don't know what I would have achieved without you in my life. Although the workouts you create can be hard for me to get through, they've helped me improve my mind and body. You're an incredible trainer, and I'm so grateful for your work. Your encouragement and constant motivation pushed me to heights I never thought possible. Thank you for inspiring me to be excellent in everything I do. Thank you for bringing out the best in me.



***"You did it!" The welcome home at Dublin Airport, December 2019.***



## Liam Roarty



**Liam Roarty with legendary Morpeth coach, Jim Alder**

Liam is an athlete who has been at university and later lecturing in Sport & Exercise Psychology at Sunderland College for the past few years. He is a frequent visitor home and always fits right back into the training group under Peter McDermott. He is always available for selection for Clonliffe teams and is an athlete who loves to “Keep it Country!”

### **What’s your favourite race / athletics meet?**

The English Nationals Cross Country – the brutality and pace of the race is relentless! The atmosphere is incredible and all about mental toughness.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Time, patience, but most importantly, CONSISTENCY. That was drilled into me the day I met Peter McDermott and has become my motto ever since.

### **Who is your sporting ‘hero’? *International:***

Jim Alder – One of the most resilient people I have ever met and very fortunate to be coached by him at Morpeth. His father died in the WWII, mother died of tuberculosis, lived in multiple foster homes, moved to Newcastle and was bullied in school for having a Scottish accent. He won Commonwealth Gold in the Marathon in Jamaica and European Bronze in Athens ’69.

## Jayme Rossiter



**Jayme Rossiter (right) with clubmate Liam Roarty at the BUCS Cross-country 2020**

Another Clonliffe ‘exile’, Jayme Rossiter, who in 2019 enjoyed a stellar campaign winning the National 3000m Steeplechase title and then in November was instrumental in bringing the National Senior Cross-country team title back to Santry. Jayme is a graduate of Loughborough University and DCU, is coached by the legendary George Gandy and currently based in Birmingham where he lectures in biomechanics, prosthetics and maths.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

There was a rather infamous social after the Euro Clubs Track & Field in Slovakia back in 2013. After having a respectable day at the event, we went out for a little “Social” to celebrate. In classic athletics fashion, things escalated and after befriending the Birchfield Harriers Ladies team, we arranged to meet at their hotel. On arrival, we heard screams and laughter coming from down the hall so a couple of us went to investigate. What we found was half the Birchfield team in a hot tub filled with bubble bath and a mountain of bubbles filling the room. At this point one of the more intrepid members of the team (who shall remain nameless) decided that watching wasn’t enough and immediately stripped down to his boxers and jumped into the hot tub. While the reaction was initially “mixed” to his sudden disrobing and arrival in said hot tub, after some skilful use of classic Irish charm, he was granted permission to stay.

### **What is your next running / athletics goal? (whenever normality returns!)**

Qualify for the European Championships and finally break the club Steeplechase record!



## Richie Owens



### **Richie Owens on his way to winning the 1500m at Euro Clubs, Portugal, 2017**

Richie Owens, one of the club's top middle-distance athletes, who scored maximum points for Clonliffe in the Euro Clubs Track & Field in 2017 to assist the club in taking brilliant bronze in Group B. Richie hails from Wicklow and currently works as a Financial Analyst in the Dublin Docklands.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

Joined as a deadline day deal in September 2016, had long since outgrown UCD and Messrs McGuinness, McDonald and Flynn didn't let me consider anywhere else. People like Joe Cooper and Killian Lonergan had for years also been extremely encouraging. The club has a real family atmosphere.

### **What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?**

For years I would tear hamstrings but once they hit 25 the majority of people will learn they aren't invincible and the achilles and other tendons flare up. I've always been religious with my rehab but still learning.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Patience is key, my progress was shockingly slow looking back but year on year I improved eventually it adds up at 17 I ran 2.00 for 800 and 4.22 for 1500. Year on year I took 1 or 2 seconds off eventually running 1.51 and 3.48 at 25/26.

## Hope Saunders



### **Hope takes the National Junior Cross-Country title, 2015**

Another of the club's top female athletes, who uniquely was double National Junior Cross-Country Champion in the same year 2015 (March & November). Hope is a college student studying exercise science in Wichita Kansas.

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I took up athletics at 14 years old because If I signed up for cross-country I would get to miss a day of secondary school... Sounded like a good deal! The day I took off school for cross-country didn't go too bad... I think I placed in the top 10 in the race, so my teacher tried to get me to join Raheny Shamrocks afterward. My dad said there was no way he was driving me all the way to Raheny (we live in Finglas) so he brought me up to Clonliffe instead.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Probably when i won my first national U-18/Junior cross-country title in Dundalk, 2014. I'd say that is my most cherished moment as it was a huge shock. I never knew I was capable of winning a national title, I was new to the sport and I was also unaware that winning the race gave me automatic selection for Euro Cross that December. I didn't even know what Euro Cross was at the time!

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

To know that you are worth a lot more than your personal bests and training results. Athletics is important to you of course but to also remember that there is more to who you are than just an athlete. You are an athlete but also a friend, maybe a sister/brother, a good cook, a dog walker, you name it. It is really important to have other hobbies and interests outside of athletics, because if it's not going well you have something else to fall back on.

## Eoin Pearce



### **Piercy delivers the “Shock of the Day” at National Indoors 2019, 1500m Champion!**

We know him simply as “Piercy”, a man with guts in abundance who in 2019 delivered the biggest win of his career to date, the National indoor 1500 and in 2020 fought brilliantly in the defence of that title coming home with bronze in the race of the championship. He grew up in Skerries, started out life as a chef, lived in Spain, America and then moved to London where he works in recruitment for analytics (the obvious transition!).

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Definitely winning national indoors last year in front of lots of friends and family (and Joe and Paddy Marley) and two of the most surprised commentators in sports history.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

I mean probably to be patient and remind yourself to enjoy it. Also take the small wins, if you're a few seconds or places better than the last race, that's a win for you. And also, you can use my most famous quote, 'every dog has his day'.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

I probably have millions. One recent one was I was in Omni with Mark McDonald and Collie Murray (former harrier). We met Peter McD and he proceeded to say hello and then “Jesus, Piercy... you're looking great!” (meaning fit). He then looked the other two lads up and down and said “howerye lads” Only a running coach could think a man looking like he hadn't had a burger in years could look good!

## Karl Nolan



### **Eliud Kipchoge fulfils lifelong ambition as he meets his Sporting Hero!**

One of the club's quiet, shy, retiring types put himself forward for the 60 Seconds interview: Karl Nolan! Karl lives in Artane, a father of three, married & proprietor at Clontarf Driving Academy. Karl has made rapid strides since joining the club and now trains under the tutelage of Peter McDermott.

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I ran my first Dublin Marathon in 2014. I signed up for a charity place with 3 weeks to go to prove to my Dad I could do one & eventually smash his PB of 2.52.15. When you can't get a game for your local pub football team & your best mate is the manager, it was time to do something else. Luckily, I met Niall Gorman at a Christening in 2016 and he got me onboard with Eugene Coppinger's group at Clonliffe Harriers.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

My marathon PB of 2.31 in Berlin last year. It was just one of those days when it felt effortless up to mile 18 and I knew I was in top shape and on for something special.

### **What's your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?**

I'm a Shamrock Rovers FC season ticket holder & work in with The FAI on match days, walking my two dogs and figuring out ways to make my kids run faster!



## Sean Doran



### **A serial racer – Sean Doran breaks the tape for Clonliffe**

A 20-year club veteran, despite his tender years and an athlete who is maybe set to replace Gary O’Hanlon as the club’s most prolific racer: Sean Doran.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

Officially joined Clonliffe in 2000 I think, so only 2 decades of failure so far 😂. Truth be told i only start even attempting proper running training when i was 20 and have been upping it ever so slightly since. I have been improving very slowly for the last few years and a lot more to come. I was in the taekwondo club that used to train in the stadium hall for a couple of years before Clonliffe but was only a matter of time before my da made us go out onto the track. Then “security” (Gladys) made us get off the track. I was more talented at taekwondo, but I was destined to be a runner I suppose. So, my Da made me officially join one night and over 20 years later I am still here.

### **What’s your favourite race / athletics meet?**

When’s the next BHAA race? 😂 Ah, I suppose the ‘Raheny 5’ for its atmosphere is unmatched in amateur road races and its strength in depth of the field.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

I am sure 90% of my races are a good laugh for onlookers! Not for me though, particularly the National XC championship ones.

### **What’s your favourite hobby or activity outside of athletics?**

Doing as little as little as possible listening to music and watching movies stuffing my face!

## A New Generation

Clonliffe Harriers doesn't sit still. The club's burgeoning juvenile and junior sections are brimming with enthusiastic and talented youngsters, eager to learn and develop under some of the best coaches in the country. Clonliffe has been a long-time organiser of the annual Brother Schools Cross-Country event, which has seen the emergence of some promising young athletes through the ranks of the club. In this section, we hear from some of the members/recent graduates of Clonliffe's Junior teams, all of whom gained valuable experience on the club trip to Italica Cross-country, Seville in January. And as some of the stories reveal, it wasn't a case of 'all work no play' on that trip!





## Aoife Hession



**Aoife in Italica Cross-country, Seville in January 2020**

Another of the club's fine juniors, an athlete who already will shortly be celebrating her 10th anniversary of being a Clonliffe Harrier, some may say it seems longer! Aoife is a 5th year at Dominican college, competing mainly in 1500m or 3000m.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

I think I like the most hated workout which is 1km reps. I really enjoy the distance and like how it's not very speedy because I very much dislike that sort of thing.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

I think my proudest moment would have to be when I won a silver medal in the 3000m in 2018. What made it even better was the fact I didn't even know I had gotten one due to two age groups being mixed together.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

In Seville when we were sitting in one of the rooms, I told story to everyone trying to convince them that my kettle at home was haunted and wanted tea. I said that whenever I said "do you want tea" to the kettle it would turn on. They all just laughed and thought is this girl okay? I did drive Alana Fitzimons insane when we got back to the room later that night and I hid the kettle in the wardrobe because I thought it looked scary.

## Aaron Cullen



### **Aaron at the Italica Cross Country XC, Seville, January 2020**

One of the club's top Juniors, Aaron Cullen, a 6th year student in Portmarnock CS. Aaron is a middle-distance athlete (primarily 1500m).

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

Around 5th class. Why? Not many clubs have a wall dedicated to Olympians!

### **What is your least favourite training workout?**

Mile repeats around Santry Park – Ben (Guiden) normally bruises the ego of the entire group!

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

I couldn't decide between these two: 1) All Ireland Schools track 2017 – I took the gold in the mile, Daniel won the inter steeple and Craig brought 2 silver medals back to Portmarnock. Everything went right on the day! 2) All Ireland junior cross this year. For the first time in 4 or 5 years the Conliffe junior team were serious underdogs going into the race. On the day everything fell into place and we won.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Don't forget to run slow during the week, we get preoccupied by what our watches say at times, there is no shame in running at 7.30 or slower.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

I've ran with Daniel for too many years now but there has to be some code of ethics within the group.

## Sarah Bateson



**Sarah (133) racing in the 20 x 20 Junior Women's Mile at the Morton Games, 2019.**

Sarah is an athlete who has already demonstrated that she is made of the “Right Stuff”, having competed for the senior women's team in the National league outdoors and indoors and competed in both National Juniors and// Seniors in 2019. Sarah was the Junior Athlete of the year in 2018, and currently in 6th year in St Mary's Glasnevin.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Morton Games of course. Getting to volunteer allows us (junior athletes) to be around amazing athletes. Also helping to organise the junior race and competing at such a big event makes it such a great experience for me.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Although a minor event winning at the Crosse das Areias São João, an open race held as part of the European Club Cross Country Championships in Portugal 2019. The course suited me perfectly with dry, flat straights and steep hills. Receiving the medal on a huge stage with an official presenter was a surreal moment. Also being away with my friends in a sunny country made it 10 times better.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Enjoy running- when you don't enjoy it training becomes a task and a burden. You need to be happy to make those sacrifices and do that hard work. Otherwise you will end up quitting. Also make sure you eat enough. Most distance athletes don't eat enough, and it can cause major damage.

## Daniel Lacey



**Daniel at Italica Cross-country, Seville, in January 2020**

Daniel Lacey is a middle-distance athlete and now joined the senior ranks, coached by Joe Cooper. He's the Clubhouse bar's most valuable worker and a true Clonliffe man, wearing his heart on his sleeve, always gives his best, .... and serves a truly exceptional pint of Guinness!

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Winning the All-Ireland schools 2k Steeplechase as an Inter was a very proud moment.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

Basically, carrying Ian Guiden home on the last night of the Seville trip this year was a memorable one, I am sure he would like to give his side of the story.

### **Who is your sporting 'hero'?**

I wouldn't say I have a hero, but I get inspired by my teammates and people around me performing well.

### **If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

Certainly, advertise it more and make it easier to watch races for the non-hardcore fans.



## Ben Guiden



### **Ben at the National Cross Country in Abbotstown, November 2019**

Ben is studying at DCU. His favourite track race is 3000 or 5000m but prefers cross country. He grew up in a house where one of his brothers competed and his dad was a coach and club secretary at Clonliffe, so club-wise there really wasn't a choice!

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Retaining the Junior cross-country national team title in 2019 while missing our strongest athlete, Efreem Gidey who had moved up to lead the seniors to the senior title.

### **What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?**

Last year I had an Achilles tendon injury. I had to end my season earlier than expected and stop running for a few months. Unfortunately, this was around the time of a family holiday to America which involved a lot of hiking. The hikes didn't feel too good!

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

Being accidentally called Ian (my brother) by my coach Joe Cooper for years. When I started training with Peter's group, he carried this tradition on and keeps calling me Ian!

### **What is your next running goal?**

Retain the Junior national cross-country team title again.

## Quick out of the Blocks

Clonliffe has seen a rapid improvement in the sprint events in recent years, spearheaded by the likes of internationals Brian Gregan and Ciara McCallion. The sprinters have been a huge factor in the club retaining National League titles and competing with distinction at the Euro Clubs level. There is also a 'team within a team' element involved, as the club has brought home numerous Relay titles over the years. Here's a chance to get to know more about the ladies and men who may not get their spikes too muddy in winter, but they put the hours in at the gym and track to achieve peak performance when it matters.



4 x

**100m Relay National Champions 2014: Ciaran, Isreal, Stuart & Keith**



## Leah Bergin



**Leah Bergin (left) with clubmate and fellow sprinter Lauren Carr at AIT, Athlone**

Leah has been a Harrier for 19 years and is developing into a fine 400m runner under the guidance of John Shields. She works as a special-needs assistant, and considered as a valued member of the club track and field team both indoors and outdoors over all the sprint events, including relays.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Probably the national league. Good day out and it's funny watching people do events they don't usually do. I did Javelin one year and hardly made the grass!

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

I'd say my first year with John Shields when I broke my PB by 4 seconds and finished second in the National U-23s.

### **What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?**

When I was 15, I broke my leg jumping over a hurdle. I had a cast from my upper thigh down to my ankle. I had to rehab 3 times daily and finally got back training in 6 months.

### **What's your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?**

Drinking coffee and pier jumping. (Ed: At the same time? 😂 )

## Lauren Carr

Lauren is an up and coming sprinter who last season set a new Clonliffe Junior 200m record. She is studying Sports Science & Health in DCU.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

Definitely a speed session. 6 x 150 on a Sunday morning is always nice well as nice as it can be. Probably catch me throwing up after it though.

### **And your least favourite?**

I hate long sessions. So, anything 450 or over I hate it. Throw in a 600m at the start of the year and that's my worst session by far but its needed.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Probably just having the courage to actually do the senior national championships last year. Always good to gain experience when you're young.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

As John Shields says: "just go for it". You just have to remember you have nothing to lose so you might as well just race for experience and give it your all.

### **If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

Try to make the sport more positive rather than having the focus on the negatives such as drug cheating. Also just showing more coverage of events so that more people could watch.

## Keith Pike



**Keith Pike (second from left) in the 4 x 100m, European Team Championships 2014**

Keith is an athlete who has served Clonliffe very well over the years from Junior to Senior levels. In 2013, Keith won National Indoor 60m Gold and has gone on to receive International recognition. For the day job, he's a technician/administrator at Ottobock.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I joined Clonliffe Harriers in 2010. When I first joined Johns group this man came into the hall. I think his name was Joe, he asked me to fill out a form and give it back to him and before I knew it, I was a Harrier!

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

My favourite workout might come as a shock. 4x300m followed by 4x150m. This session usually pops up just after Indoors and it's a major shock to the system.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

My favourite race is of course the Morton Games, although I never manage to compete well at them. The atmosphere is always electric, and I will never forget that "Santry Roar".

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

My proudest moment was the first time I put on a senior Irish singlet. I went on to compete in Belgium and Switzerland and was later selected for the European Team Championships in Tallinn as part of the 4x100m Relay.

## Timmy Crowe



### **Timmy Crowe, overcoming obstacles at Euro Clubs 2019, in Helsinki**

Here's another great club man who is always available to help the team in the National League and Euro Clubs: "What do you need, and sure go on!" attitude, so if it's the killer 400 hurdles, a 400 flat, Relay or a 110 hurdles, then Timmy's your man!

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

Upon moving to Dublin, I was training with John Shields. For the first year in DCU I was still with Dooneen AC in Limerick. I had then started training in Morton Stadium on Harrier times slots. I honestly found everything about the club amazing from Joe Cooper's BIG smile to the history of the track. From day one I felt welcome even though I wasn't a member. I had always remembered the Harriers from being younger going to watch nationals with dad before heading to Croke Park to watch all Ireland semi and finals. So really it was an easy move for me to make.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Morton Games of course but outside that it has to be IFAM Oordegem. The day of the meet is just amazing, it's what athletics is all about. Kids from all over Europe just coming to run fast no matter what the level everyone is there to do the best they can, and no one cares if you are a 60sec or a 44sec 400m runner.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Walking out into the O2 Prague 20,000 people European 4x400 final and the first two faces I see are my parents and feeling so relaxed over it.



## Ciara McCallion



**Ciara McCallion, in the black & amber colours at an IMC Meet**

400m specialist, medallist at Nationals, Irish International and one of the sports top physiotherapists, it's Ciara McCallion.

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I competed in athletics at the Community Games when I was 8 years old and then joined the local athletics club. When I was older, I transferred to Clonliffe Harriers. I feel like I've never not done athletics!

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Running the anchor leg of the 4x400m at the European Championships in Amsterdam in 2016. It was amazing to run in the Olympic Stadium at an event (Europeans) that years earlier I had been a spectator at, with a group of Clonliffe athletes.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

1. Enjoy your athletics, try new things and ask questions. 2. Try to get your information about training, nutrition, injuries etc from reputable sources. 3. If you have big dreams don't be afraid to make them goals and really go for them.

## Leo Morgan



**Leo Morgan – competing at the NIA, Abbotstown**

Better read this fast as this guy will be gone in a flash! Blasting out of the blocks is Leo Morgan, a 60m and 100m sprinter, and previous 60m club record holder (6.82)

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

September 2017! I had given up on rugby and other field sports in order to pursue sprinting. I joined Clonliffe Harriers because I was familiar with a lot of the athletes and coaches there prior to joining, also the success of the club was appealing

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Winning Irish University silver & a week later, National Senior Indoor bronze for 60m in 2018

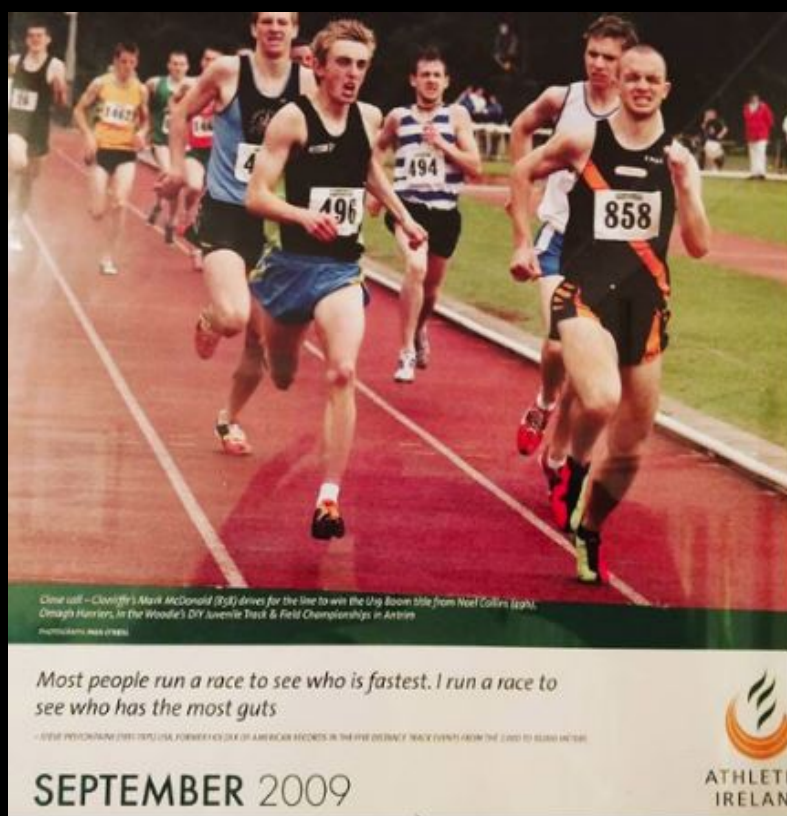
### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

Euro Clubs last year in Tampere, Finland. Stephen Rice & I were in a Finnish nightclub. Stephen was bulling through the doors because he caught a glimpse of the karaoke machine, turns out every song was in Finnish, disappointing is an understatement, so we buy a vodka & coke to drown our sorrows. The DJ started playing more fast paced music, a mosh-pit formed with the attractive women being the majority of it, this was cool, but they were being hell aggressive, we were stunned, didn't expect it, Stephen and I got bullied and shoved off the dancefloor shortly after. Weird experience!

### **How would your non-athlete friends describe you?**

I don't have friends; everyone is a competitor to me. But probably "competitive" if I did.

## Mark McDonald



**Catch me if you can – Mark leading the pack, back in 2009!**

Mark McDonald was the first athlete featured in the “60 Seconds” series and is no stranger to setting the pace! He’s been a very versatile club member since he was 8 years of age and competes in everything from 400m to 10k cross-country. He has also stepped up the plate as a pacemaker in the Morton Games. Mark works in the Financial services industry.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

My father ran for Clonliffe in the 70’s & 80’s coached by the legendary Lar O’Byrne, so I was never joining anywhere else!

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

1st European T&F clubs in Dubnica nad Váhom, Slovakia. Stayed up all night drinking 40c beers trying to solve all Irish athletics problems. No sleep and straight on the bus home.

### **How would your non-athlete friends describe you? (in 3 words)**

Beards, Beers, Bants

### **What is your next running / athletics goal? (whenever normality returns!)**

Run 1.52.2. My father’s PB.

## Stuart Roche



**On your marks! Stuart Roche competing at a rather wet Morton Stadium**

This athlete has been with the club for many years competing at European Club level as both a Junior and Senior and in 2014 was a vital component in the 4 x 100 national winning team that broke the quarter century old club record. Handsome insurance man by day, it's 100m sprinter Stuart Roche.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Proudest moment in athletics is probably winning the national 4x100m relay title with my club team-mates in 2014 and breaking a club record that was standing for over 25 years and our current record still stands today. That or representing Ireland in the Celtic Games when I was 18. It was great to put on the green vest.

### **What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?**

I think I have had every injury under the sun from hamstrings to quads to calves to achilles (probably my lack of flexibility) but my worst was a season or 2 ago I tore the lower part of my hamstring 20m into a race which took me about 4-5 months to heal properly through rehab and stretching and rest. Still trying to get back 100% from it.

### **What's your favourite meal?**

A. For competition: Scrambled egg & toast before leaving the house.

B. Outside of competition I love pizza, who doesn't!?



## Club Classics

In this section we feature some members who joined Clonliffe Harriers in their adult years: through the draw of the Dublin City Marathon or its Races Series, Park Run, a new pastime or sometimes obsession (!), or simply through rediscovering the joy of a sport not practised since childhood. We have even witnessed the conversion of the occasional triathlete (!) so everyone is made welcome. Many of these club members have developed under the expert coaching of Pamela, Eugene, Maurice and Ben, and gone on to represent Clonliffe teams on the road and country, while targeting and achieving individual goals, often at the marathon distance - be it Dublin or further afield. These groups also embody the social side of the club, where groups have travelled on trips from Limerick to London to Berlin and flown the flag of Ireland's finest athletic club. Nil desperandum!



**Flying the Black & Amber: Clonliffe on tour**

## Shane Rooney



### **Shane at the Dublin Marathon - Job done!**

Clonliffe really is a club that has equality at it's core, sure we even have a Cavan man as a member! That very man stepped up to the plate for 60 seconds. It's Shane Rooney!

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I was not remotely sporty as a kid and only took up running in my mid-30s. I decided to give running a go as my housemate kept telling me how great it was to get out and clear your head. My first 'race' was in aid of AWARE and I was bitten by the bug the moment I crossed the finish line (panting and red faced). I'll never be the fastest, but I run because it's a great release, great for my mental health, and a great way to meet people.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

After I completed my first Dublin marathon (back in 2010...I think) I knew I had to join a club if I was to keep at it, however I waited for a few years to build up the courage. In 2015/16 I was at a training session hosted by Gary O'Hanlon and met Stephen Doyle. Stephen has a great way of convincing people to do things and he persuaded me to join CH after we completed a 'Donut run'. I bumped into Declan Grant and Mick Gleeson who were also looking to join the Club, so I immediately had something in common with two people. I also owe a lot to the twins, Karen & Laura (I still can't tell them apart), as they took me under their wing on the first night.

**What's your favourite race / athletics meet?** One of my favourite club races was the 2018 Grand Prix 10 Mile in Malahide when myself and Aideen O'Connor had to keep repeating "*I am a warrior, I am a champion, I can do this...*"

## Aideen O'Connor



### **Aideen O'Connor - No words required!**

An athlete who in her 5 years with Clonliffe has blossomed into a fine runner, and who proves that enjoying the effort delivers the results. Aideen works as a Programmes & Services Manager for the Dublin City Sports Partnership, with over 22 years working in the sports, fitness & health industry.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I joined Clonliffe in 2015 at that stage I had done a few marathons, but all on my own and my own training. Pam Cooper was the 1st person I met when I walked into the hall and I remember thinking oh god what I have got myself in for...but Pam & Ben were unbelievable with their encouragement and it was one of the main reasons I returned the following week and another reason why I am still a member of the Club.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

For me personally as a participant, the Dublin City Marathon hands down, it's part of my life now and my son's birthday always falls on the Oct bank holiday weekend so it is always a weekend packed with great excitement and wonderful memories created with family and of course the Clonliffe Harriers gang & all the volunteers.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Well after many years of running marathons I finally got sub-3:30 ( 3:24), it was an overwhelming experience for me that year as I had struggled through some difficult times, when I crossed the line and seen all my club mates and my coaches Ben & Pam let's just say there were plenty of tears!! I placed 3rd in my age category that year and the women's teams also got medals which I was part of.

## Claire Marie Roche



### **Now if it wasn't for that damned curse!**

An athlete who bravely stepped up to the mark in terms of competition in the 2019-20 cross-country season moving from 'Meet & Train' races into the fray of Novice and Intermediate levels. A Mayo GAA supporter who still believes (ah bless!). Claire Marie is a schoolteacher, running with Clonliffe Harriers for 6 years!

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I joined Clonliffe Harriers in September 2014. Having moved to Dublin only a few weeks previous I really wasn't too familiar with the geography of the place and presumed that Clonliffe Harriers was on Clonliffe Road! A road I was very familiar with as a Mayo person, and one I had walked down many times around those years of 2012, 2013, etc! That is the main reason I rang the club to make enquiries. Funnily enough Raheny Shamrocks is closer to where I live, but I won't be transferring, Clonliffe for life!

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

I have to say there's nothing better than a cold, crisp night with the moon shining down on Trinity fields! I suppose I enjoy pyramid sessions and most work on grass.

### **What's your favourite meal?**

A. For competition – I would use the word 'favourite' loosely. Towards the end of last year, I tried to eat porridge the morning of a race, I would say it's more of a force-feeding exercise, as anyone who has watched me eat it will testify. Putting blueberries on top makes it a little easier. I eat a few nuts before a race also. B. Outside competition – Pizza and anything that involves meat!



## Evelyn Brennan



### **Dublin City Marathon 2019 – 5 in a row!**

Next up, it's one of the nicest, up-beat members of Clonliffe Harriers, always in great form and a person who is with a capital F: Fun! It's Santry native, Evelyn Brennan.

### **What's your favourite workout?**

My favourite training has to be the cross-country because Pamela/Ben can't see you all the time so you can doss a little in the dark parts.

### **What's your favourite race or event?**

My favourite race has to be the Dublin City Marathon. The whole experience is amazing from the months of training, collecting the number, the day of the marathon, seeing the club mates volunteering at the end, Last but not least: the celebration afterwards!

### **What would be the one piece of advice you'd give to any up and coming athlete?**

Best advice would be to join a club. Take the advice from the coaches regarding your training and injuries.

### **Do you have any funny stories of your time with Clonliffe?**

I guess the most recent was our trip away last year to Berlin. We had a late night on our last night and myself and my roommate slept it out. We decided to miss the coach, had our breakfast before leaving, thinking the taxi would be quicker. There was roadworks on the way to Airport and when we finally arrived, the boarding gate was closed. We had to come up with a new travel arrangement. I had purchased some items the day before for our games-night but since we didn't use the toy gun, I threw it in my suitcase. Forgetting, I proceeded through customs (oops) and after a few questions, were allowed to travel but the gun was held at the airport. We caught a flight later via Koln to Dublin. Oops!

## Maurice McCrohan



### **Mo McCrohan: Another Day another Marathon!**

Followers of the club website will be well aware of the exploits of Mo McCrohan with his reports on races far and wide, so it was great to have Maurice give his quick-fire takes in this '60 seconds'!

#### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Try not to overdo the first part of the training workout. It's how you finish the session, not how you start it that counts.

#### **What is your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?**

Following Arsenal

#### **If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

Resign

#### **How would your non-athlete friends describe you? (In 3 words)**

Loyal, determined, hard working

#### **How are you motivating yourself to continue training at these difficult times?**

Do not want to pile on the pounds.

## Eamonn O'Neill



### **Eamonn's World Record for running a Marathon as a surfer, with board & flipflops!**

This next Harrier is a recent addition to the Clonliffe ranks but is a two-time entrant in the Guinness Book of Records for running the fastest marathon dressed as 1. Sumo Wrestler and 2. Surfer! Meet Eamonn O'Neill.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Kinvara Half Marathon, Galway; Race The Train in Towyn, Wales; Grizzly Ultra Marathon in Alberta, Canada; Ultra Trail in the Blue Mountains, Sydney, Australia.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Running across the Sydney Marathon finish line, in exactly 3hrs flat and having my sister waiting for me in the finish area while we both burst into tears. It qualified me for the Boston Marathon.

### **If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

More emphasis on an all-inclusive culture, increased diversity and inclusivity.

### **How would your non-athlete friends describe you? (in 3 words)**

Adventurous, outgoing, considerate

## Mick McMahon



### **New kid on the block, Mick McMahon in the 2020 'Raheny 5'**

One of Pam & Ben's charges, a man who like the Prodigal Son left these shores for pastures new only to return some 15 years later to Dublin. Naturally enough whilst wandering around Santry he happened upon Morton Stadium and Clonliffe Harriers!

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

ALWAYS listen to your body, if it doesn't feel right don't continue. As a marathon runner we tend to try and push through the pain barrier and ignore what our body is telling us – I've learnt this the hard way not just once but twice – on the second time ending up in St James after last year's DCM which left me with the club nickname CPR Mick! There is no failure in pulling out of a race if you don't feel great, there will always be another one!

### **Do you have any funny story from Clonliffe Harriers that you could share?**

I attempted to join the club 3 times....The first two times there was no one about the clubhouse however, third time lucky I thought I'm not leaving till I chat to someone.....I chatted to our head of security John who pointed me towards two guys chatting (not knowing which one was the coach!). I waited 5 minutes or so for them to finish their conversation and they both split off in different directions, I took a punt on who the coach was and went walking after the guy who was heading towards the exit gate. As I called him. He looked at me blankly and shrugged his shoulders. I asked if he could tell me about joining the club and he responded in broken English that he was there to try and join the club too! I eventually got chatting to Pam who gave me the full run down.

### **What's your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?**

I enjoy cooking and getting stuck into the garden!



## Mel Curran



**Mel Curran (front, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left) – finds her tribe!**

An athlete who loves clocking up the miles - and as the miles go up the times are going down! When this athlete joined the club, she also brought along a second Harrier, her daughter Cara. It's Mel "More Miles me" Curran!

**When and why did you join Clonliffe?** I ran two marathons prior to joining Clonliffe in 2016. The initial intention was to get my marathon times down. Well little did I know when joining Clonliffe – a club steeped in history and home to seriously talented athletes, that it would awaken an entirely new passion for running. I have been introduced to XC through Pam and Ben's sessions in Trinity grounds, meet and train competitions, Grand Prix and BHAA races. I found my tribe with so many clubmates interested in different distances and races. The club really becomes a second family.

**What is your favourite training session?**

I really enjoy all the sessions but XC in Trinity tops it for me. Always good craic with the gang. It's always funnier in sessions when Pam is extra strict and throws in an extra rep or when Ben is leading the group and delivers a whopper session and we all cry for Pam's return. There is always a great sense of accomplishment when you complete one of Eugene's marathon mission sessions also.

**What is your most cherished moment in athletics to date?**

There have been many and a few that come to mind regarding Cara's time in the club. If I answer about myself, I would say my comeback from injury last year. Finally, getting a new marathon PB and becoming a wiser athlete and listening to our coaches Pam and Ben's sound advice.

## Peter Bissett



### **Peter & Bertie play a two ball at the K Club!**

A guy who has made great progress from road races to cross country and track. Primary school teacher by day, 'short-shorts' runner by night. The man with two names: Peter & Bertie Bissett!

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

End of summer 2018 – I used to live in Drumcondra and searched for nearby clubs – never having trained with a club before. I nervously popped up one evening to meet Pam and the crew. I drove up, because I was terrified that I'd run out of any energy needed to complete a 'session' (up to that point, this word was strictly reserved for Friday evenings...). The first session I completed was in the park, and I nearly lost a lung doing mile reps. I'd pay to do them now!

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

I don't have a lot of racing experience, but in general a 5-mile road race anywhere is always great fun, especially when there's a good sea of Black & Amber around! My first ever road race was the famous 'Raheny 5' and had such a blast with my training pals.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

One of the GP track races in 2019 – I stumbled mid-race around a traffic cone, and on the second lap, stopped to throw it into the pitch inside the track while giving out to it (I may have cursed at the cone). The best part was one of my training buddies nearly passed out laughing at me, so I caught him for once on the straight. You know who you are!

## Peter Cahill



**Peter Cahill - Stuck in the mud?!**

Peter is a returnee to the sport, who has since competed in club races and both Novice and Masters Cross Country.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I took the plunge and joined Clonliffe Harriers in July 2017. I was working on a contract at the time a few miles away and was aware of the club's facilities and reputation. My mum's side of the family are from Glasnevin and attended events in the Morton stadium over the years. I had run a couple of Dublin City Marathons for the bucket list and wanted to rekindle my love for running from my school days. I felt I needed a structured training environment with like-minded individuals and found a great spirit, devoted coaches and a sense of community after joining the club.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

I wondered why I was getting some funny looks on the track one balmy Thursday evening. In my eagerness to get my new skin-tight lycra running shorts on I had put them on back to front. They didn't feel like the bee's knees until I noticed my error when I arrived home.

### **What's your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?**

Swimming, Climbing, Hiking, Socializing, Reading and Baking. Was always torn between running and swimming. I still cherish winning a Leinster Schools Swimming Championship Title.

### **What is your next running / athletics goal? (whenever normality returns!)**

Race more and perform to my potential on the track both indoors and outdoors at Masters level.

## Darren Horgan



Lastly, another of our relative newcomers, but a guy who has fitted in nicely to the club, someone who will always volunteer to help out. He says he is shy, but he gave full value to his '60 seconds'. An insurance industry veteran of 21 years: meet Darren Horgan.

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I took up cross country running when I was in Secondary School in St. Aidan's C.B.S. It was under the direction of the legend that is Peter McDermott. In all honesty, I was never the fastest or most athletic, but I was always encouraged by Peter and always made feel like I was an important part of the team.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

I love the mile reps in Northwood Park with the gang on the long Tuesday evenings in late spring and summer. A great test, with even better company in a great location. I love the long runs on a Sunday, in particular when I am with my club mates Anthony, Mel, Janette, or Dave (team Sky). The company of my club mates always makes it that much better. It reminds me of why I started running in the first place and the joy that it brings me, even if it breaks my heart at times!

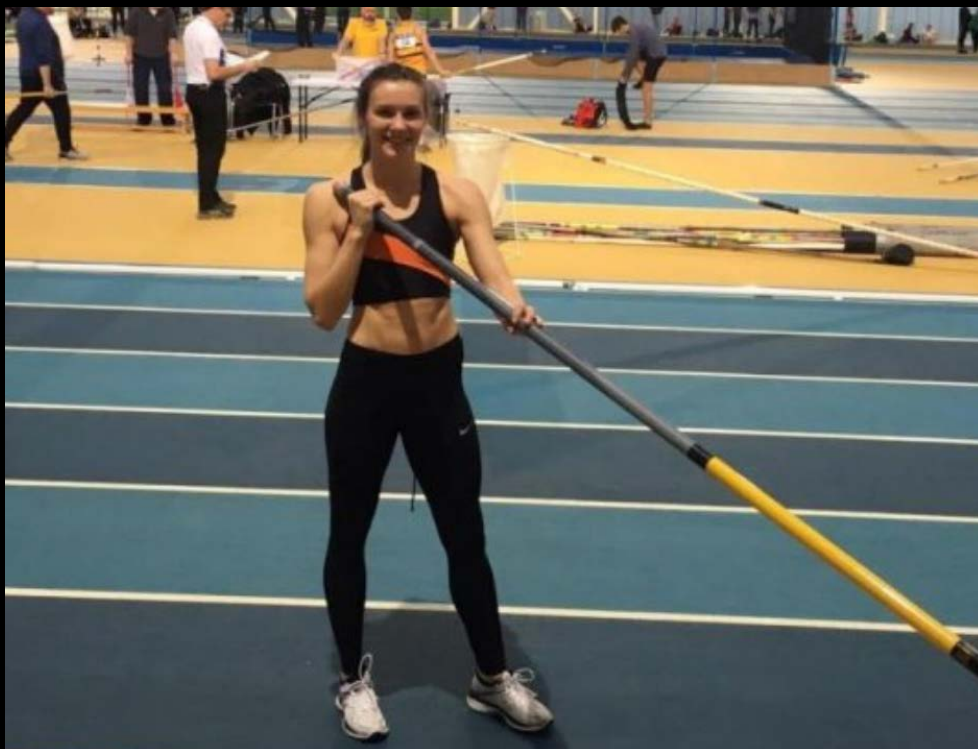
### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

It is one of the very first and in my opinion one of the most important pieces of advice I have ever been given. Run your own race. What I mean by that, is not to get caught up in what's around you and lose focus if things do not go to plan. Have faith in what your plan is and stick to it. But also have a Plan B and a Plan C if that's not working out.



## Outstanding in their Field

Although Clonliffe Harriers was formed as a distance running club, over 130 years ago, and has built its reputation on that discipline, in more recent years the club has built a strong squad in the sprints and arguably even more so in many of the Field events. Benefitting from some of the best coaches in the country, such as Bart Rogers, and the training facilities at Morton Stadium, Clonliffe has boasted national champions and contenders from the Pole Vault, Javelin, Hammer, Shot and the three Jumps, all of which have played a huge part in the club's near total domination of the National League, both Indoor and Outdoor. In recent years, the likes of Stephen Rice (Javelin), Keith Marks (Long Jump) and recent recruit Ariel Lieghio (Pole Vault) – to name but three – have literally 'raised the bar' and profile of Field events for both club and country.



**Club record-setter – Ariel Voskamp Lieghio**

## Niall Counihan



### **Yet another Track & Field League Title – Niall played his part!**

An extremely valuable addition to the Clonliffe track & field team in recent years and who “integrated” well despite being hampered by a Munster accent! A top points scorer in National League campaigns... *and* a top pints man in Europe! Triple jumper Niall Counihan.

### **What’s your favourite race / athletics meet?**

I love indoors because you don’t have to worry about wind and rain, so national indoors are my favourite.

### **What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?**

Dislocated ankle in 2008 during a jump in training. I tried to keep coming back months later and it kept giving me trouble, so I eventually put the idea of jumping to bed. After years of playing rugby and running on grass, my ankle got stronger, so I started doing workouts with some athletes I was coaching and started seeing progress. The rest is history really.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Surround yourself with good people and never EVER forget about them. Nobody does it alone and the good people around you will help you along.

### **How would your non-athlete friends describe you? (in 3 words)**

Competitive, confrontational, obsessive

## Rory Gunning



### **Rory with young training partners in Morton Stadium**

This morning we feature another of our field eventers, an athlete who has made a big contribution to the outstanding success enjoyed by the Track & Field team and three-time National Javelin Champion. From Athboy, County Meath, it's Rory Gunning.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I transferred to Clonliffe from Fr Murphy's. I was always training with Bart and the group on Clonliffe time, and there was an opportunity to get more competitions in, so I made the leap. It's nice to be part of a successful team. They're a sound bunch in Clonliffe.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

I love the National Championships. I just like that everyone is competing on that day to see who is the best in the country. The night out on the Sunday is always good, not for the liver though! There's also the Morton Games which I got to take part in last year. It was nice to throw against a field of better throwers and I got a nice little PB out of it.

### **What is your next running / athletics goal? (*whenever normality returns!*)**

I want to throw over 70 metres. I'm slowly creeping towards it, and who knows what may happen after that.

### **How are you motivating yourself to continue training at these difficult times?**

I just want to stay fit so it's not hard to get up and do something. I enjoy exercise so I don't need an excuse, and it'll stand to me when we get back training properly. It's good for the body and mind.

## Simon Galligan



### **Hammer time! Simon Galligan - National Silver 2019**

Next up is Clonliffe's ace hammer thrower. An athlete always guaranteed to score big points in the league, he has also competed for the club in the Euro clubs at both junior and senior level. A physiotherapist by day, meet Simon Galligan.

#### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

I love competing at Nationals. Hammer Throwers rarely get to compete on the infield at meets and we are usually banished outside away from everyone else. Nationals is one of the few meets where we get to compete on the infield and in front of a crowd which brings a great atmosphere for competing.

#### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

I believe when you first take up athletics it is important to try all events as athletics has something to offer everyone. For those that are interested in the throwing events, I feel initially you should be training in all throwing events before you settle on one. In young athletes, technique will always be more important than weight training and you will improve faster. I also feel it is important to be involved in lots of different sports and only specialise in your late teens.

#### **If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

I believe we as a sport need to do more to showcase field events at the highest level. Field events need to be broadcasted more in order to encourage kids to participate in them and hopefully increase the numbers competing at the grassroots level. The Hammer is not even part of the Diamond League circuit – the only throw event not included.



## Stars in their Eyes

Look at any athletics club competition in Ireland, be it cross-country / track & field / road race, you're sure to see Clonliffe in the mix at the pointy end of the field! The club boasts a long line of regional and national champions down through the years. Indeed, the very best have gone on to earn international stripes, representing Ireland at European, World and even Olympic level. This section features some of the current cadre of athletes who fall into that category who kindly spared the time to give us a 60-second insight to their life inside and outside competition.



**Clonliffe Crimewatch Line-up!**

## Brian Gregan



### **Brian Gregan - and the “Santry Roar”, Morton Games 2017**

Multi-times National Indoor and Outdoor champion, European U-23 400m silver medallist, European 400m finalist and “Santry Roar” revivalist, Brian Gregan.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

The 400m is known as one of the toughest events and the workouts are even tougher. My favourite workout would be 6 x 200m off 3 minutes and 6 minutes between sets all in 22 seconds. If I can do that I am in shape!

### **And your least favourite?**

Winter training and in particular 1,2,3,2,1 mins x 2 sets off the same recovery. I suffer from asthma, and the cold and heavy breathing make it really tough to get through that workout.

### **What’s your favourite race / athletics meet?**

The MORTON GAMES of course!!! Can you beat a hometown meet with a hometown favourite competing for the win? 2017 was a classic, the Santry roar inspired me to run a sub 12 second final 100m and smash my personal best!

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Winning a European u23 silver medal in 2011. It was a long time ago, but international medals do not come around often. The previous edition in 2010 I tore my hamstring in the opening round. Some people get frustrated, but I set myself a goal of winning a medal two years later. I did just that and missed the gold by 0.02 seconds (should have benched some more!).

## Gary O'Hanlon



**Gary O'Hanlon at the National XC, 2012., sporting the modified XS women's club vest!**

'60 seconds' got to spend company with one the most talked about athletes in the history of Clonliffe Harriers, and it's rarely as a result of his considerable athletics feats! Rather it usually starts with: "Do you remember when Gary forgot his.....?". A truly fantastic athlete on the track, country and roads, a national marathon and 50k champion and all-round good guy Gary O'Hanlon!

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

Aged 8. In Kilkerry Parish we had a football club, a running club and Irish Dancing, so blessed with two left feet running was the best option.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

Losing my singlet minutes before the start of National Cross 2012. Captain Joe gave me another number and frantically tried to find a spare singlet. It came down to choices of a men's XL or a women's size XS. The XL vest resembled a wigwam over my slight frame, so the women's XS was a poor second option. Delay tactics were played to halt the race by the vital seconds needed to pin the new number on. When I tried to pull the vest on I realised the XL would have been the better option, the gun goes off and I'm trying to make the necessary alteration ripping the vest under my arm pits to allow me breath and get some arm movement going. Five minutes into the race I realised I was being referred to as Michael McDuirmuid on the mic, even on the rostrum at the medal presentation Michael's names was mentioned. I was sure I'd be DQ'd and a possible loss of team title. Thankfully Clonliffe were too strong that day and comfortably won the team title anyway.

## David Flynn



Next, we feature the National Half-marathon champion. A former wild man, now apparently tamed, the one and (thankfully) only Flynn!

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

My favourite workout is a trademark University of Arkansas workout called 'Mile down' which involved a Mile, 1200, 1000, 800, 600, 400, 300, 200. You were running a Personal Best for the mile, then everything was a blur! I have a best of 4.08 mile in the workout.

### **And your least favourite?**

One time after SEC conference at LSU University I went on ESPN after coming 3rd at the meet and complained that we didn't do enough track workouts. Well I got an earful in the car back to the hotel by the coach and then the week after we were told we were doing 5 x 800, we hit 2.06, 2.04, 2.02, 1.59 and 1.56. I got sick everywhere afterwards..... and never spoke to ESPN again.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

My favourite race is the Stanford invitational in California. No wind, palm trees everywhere and fast races. My favourite athletics meet is the Clonliffe Club Championship. We had some fun in that, with Joe's favourite Faithless song on repeat.

### **If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

I think putting the distance events back into the Diamond league is a must - especially the Steeplechase. Improving sponsorship in the sport for each individual country so that everyone gets the opportunity of help.



## Sergiu Ciobanu



### **Sergiu surges to 4<sup>th</sup> National Marathon title, Dublin 2016.**

One of the great Clonliffe Club men: Sergiu Ciobanu, who has won several national individual and team titles, and represented both country of birth Moldova, and adopted home country Ireland at on the International stage.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

When i made my first Irish cap senior team for Euro cross in 2015 as this was 10y later after i first competed at this championship with my native Moldova

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

It takes time to get to your best, be patient and take easy days serious and not to feel sorry about yourself on those tough sessions.

### **If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

More tv coverage, focus on more athletics stars so young generation can have good examples to follow. XC as an Olympic sport either winter or summer. Athletes who dedicate their time to sport should get rewarded post their athletics career.

### **What is your next running / athletics goal? (whenever normality returns!)**

Try to achieve an olympic standard 2.11.30 Run my best Dublin marathon yet.

## Barbara Sanchez



### **Barbara Sanchez at the European Championships Marathon, Zurich 2014**

Next up an international marathon runner, and former winner of the Dublin Marathon. A mum of two, and proud Clonliffe Harrier, she has represented Ireland on the roads in Europe. Now living in Paris, it's Barbara Sanchez.

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I started running when I moved to Ireland in 2005 but I practiced Modern Pentathlon and Triathlon before, so running was not completely new for me. I did also a little bit of cross country when I was 15/16 but nothing very serious, I was more interested in swimming at that age.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

I could say the Dublin marathon in 2010 but more recent I would say the Boulogne half marathon last December where I ran in 1'14"57, just 6 months after giving birth to Charlotte, my little girl.

### **What's your favourite meal?**

I am French so I love desserts, fresh bread and cheese. And because I am from Bordeaux, I have to add red wine to that list! 😊

## Stephen Rice



**Always aiming higher – Javelin National Champion Stephen Rice**

Next up here's one of Clonliffe's top field eventers. He is the 3-time national champion in the javelin throw and holds the National U-23 record of 75.89m, it's Stephen Rice.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

I am a huge fan of physical challenges, if I can incorporate backflips and handstands into a workout I will.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

I would say my most cherished moment is throwing my pb at the Morton Games, it was years of knowing I could throw it but nothing ever coming together at the right time, it was a pb by 7 meters which is a rare occurrence in the sport.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Never chase results, create memories with your friends and enjoy the process. The results will come.

### **What's your favourite meal?**

*For competition-* I guess I would have to say the meal I had before my PB, two chicken breasts, a tomato, goat's cheese, walnuts and beetroot

*Outside competition-* I have been known to eat a lot of yogurt, about 2000 grams a day which is about 4 large pots so I would have to say yogurt and granola (!)

### **How would your non-athlete friends describe you? (in 3 words)**

I sent this question into my friends in a WhatsApp group, and the replies were... inappropriate.

## Emma Mitchell



### **Emma Mitchell wins the Northern Ireland 10k Road Championships in Bangor, 2019**

Next up, an athlete who although only recently joined the Harriers, has worn the Black & Amber with distinction and is already rewriting the club record books. It's International athlete Emma Mitchell.

#### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

September 2019 And I am so glad I joined! I have been made very welcome by everyone!

#### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Highgate Harriers Night of 10,000m PB's; the National Champs; Armagh 3k Road Race.

#### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

May 2017 – Highgate Harriers Night of 10,000m PB's. It was my first 10,000m track race and I had no idea what to expect! It was probably the first time I'd ever really achieved my coach's expectations in that we wanted the 2018 Commonwealth Games Qualifying time and that one race would probably be the only opportunity we would get to achieve the standard.

#### **How are you motivating yourself to continue training at these difficult times?**

Keeping my normal routine to the best I can. And having a positive attitude, in that it's an opportunity to get a block of training in before competing again and having extra time to focus on rest, recovery and all the little things!



## Masters of the Game

As the saying goes, age is only a number. Over the years, the Clonliffe Harriers Masters contingent has grown in number and competed with distinction for the club over the roads, track and country for Age Categories Over-35 and well beyond! On one hand, the Masters scene offers an entry point for late-comers to the sport to compete for individual and team honours on a regional, national and even international stage, while at the same time it allows seasoned athletes to remain motivated and set new targets if they are not quite ready to hang up those spikes.

In recent years, the club have had several National champions at this level such as Frances Mansfield (Throws), Matt Slattery, Snezana Bechtina (Sprints), Philip O'Doherty, George Maybury (Middle-distance), Declan Power, Pat Bonass (Long-distance). Indeed, most of these have gone on to compete at European and World Masters level in Irish colours and bring home some silverware from their travels! Read on and stay forever young.....



**National Masters Cross-country Championship, Santry, 2007**

## Frances Mansfield



### **Frances at the Spring Throws Competition 2019**

We'll start with a bonafide Clonliffe Treasure. One of the original trail blazers. An athlete who was with the Clonliffe ladies from the founding of the Club Ladies section in 1963, Ladies Captain, Club Treasurer, and the instigator of the first Clonliffe Harriers website. She has been a competitor at various events down the years and more recently for the Throws including discus and hammer. It's the one and only Frances Mansfield!

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I was 19 and always wanted to be a runner, but I didn't know of any club accepting ladies until I saw an ad in the paper that Clonliffe Harriers were looking to start a section for women. I jumped at the chance. It was October 1963 when I turned up to the stadium to begin my athletic career. I lived on the North Strand, so it was easy to cycle to the stadium.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

I love the Graded Meetings and have been competing in them since they began. You get to compete against athletes of your own standard.

**What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

National discus Championships in 1971. I won a silver medal having scraped through to the final, by finishing in 8th place.



**Frances (right) at the 45th Anniversary of founding Clonliffe Ladies - November 2008**

**Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

When the stadium was in debt, Noel Henry accompanied with the ladies' section ran from the GPO to Lanesboro to raise money. The ladies ran in a relay while Noel ran all the way. On the way we called into all the pubs and shops collecting money. When we arrived in Lanesboro all the residents came out to meet us. They were carrying torches of lighted sods of turf to greet us. We were led into the town from the outskirts.

**What's your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?**

Line dancing and playing the bodhran

**If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

Reserve some free seats for young athletes at international events

**How are you motivating yourself to continue training at these difficult times?**

Reminding myself that this lockdown won't last forever, so to keep fit, I wrote out a programme of exercises.



## Philip O'Doherty



### **Philip - Competing for Ireland at the Masters International Cross Country**

Next up another “Lifer”. A guy who has served time as a senior, master and now, even though he is too modest to say so, double-jobbing as a coach to a group of intermediate and masters runners at the club. Raised in Santry, an alumnus of St. Aidan’s, and these days living in Malahide, meet Middle-distance Masters supremo, Philip O’Doherty.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

August 1984. For some reason I have still have a copy of the application form! I wanted to improve my running. I had a 10-year gap, 1993 to 2003 and have been active since then.

### **What’s your favourite race / athletics meet?**

I’ve always enjoyed the National Road Relays in Raheny. Great to participate or to spectate, with good atmosphere.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

I have been lucky enough to win a fair few Masters’ individual medals but my proudest moments were in team events when I struggled to finish with an injury but got there to help the team to medal, in particular the National Masters’ cross country in Galway and the World Masters’ Half Marathon in Malaga, Spain.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

Don’t wait until you are old and crocked to start strength & conditioning work. Make it a life-long habit.



## Snezana Bechtina



**Eyes on the prize. World Champion Snezana Bechtina**

Next up, a great club athlete, and one could say a 'model' athlete (!) who in the National League in times past was almost a one woman team, and has since blossomed into one of Ireland's best Master athletes, a National, European and World Champion. We urge you to check out her full interview on the website, particularly her advice for young athletes. Born in Vilnius, Lithuania and now proud to represent Ireland, meet Snezana Bechtina.

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

Passion for physical activity and a hint from the inside brought me to Athletics. When I was passing by stadium as a child, I had special feeling. I didn't know what people doing inside the indoor arena, but I felt I want to be there, and I had strong belief that one day I will be going there. I didn't have this feeling for anything else.

### **Tell us more about your early life in athletics in Lithuania?**

My mother and father both were very good in school athletics. We can assume I had perfect genes. But in fact, also I was running all my childhood, playing chasing, ball games. Every morning I was running to bus stop which was approx. 300m from the house, I was accelerating when I saw the bus coming. It was 5 days a week. If there were too many people, I run to school approximately 2km, 4x split 500, in order to be on time. This is how I became 400m runner.

**If you don't mind sharing something that could be important for young athletes?**

At age 18 when my weight was 61kg. After the reading the book about toxins I decided to clean my body with fasting, which turned to bulimia. I have lost a weight up to 48kg in 4 months. I was depressed. I was looking into the mirror with thoughts: "My legs are so fat" when my mother came and with sadness and disappointment told: "You are too slim". Something change in my mind: If I think I am fat and mother at the same time think I am too slim it means- I AM NORMAL! These thoughts saved me. From then me start to eat, but made little mistake... I didn't eat all day and at 10pm eat a lot. Many nights my food was full white bread with 200g sour cream. In three weeks, I was 68kg and I found out I feel much better. I was so happy. As I was happy, good ideas came out. I decided to eat in normal way: breakfast, snack, Lunch, Snack, and Dinner. I started to drink a lot of water. Soon I came back to normal weight 61kg.



**2019 Clonliffe Women's Track & Field athlete of the Year**

**What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Definitely I liked the World Masters Athletics Championship in Torun. It was organised on extremely high level. My family was with me, this is what makes me feel proud. I like it not just because I won a Gold medal here, but because it was presented in a nice manner. It was live streamed not just for the competitions, but the medal ceremony as well. For me it was important. I've got great support from friends and family from different parts of the world.

**What is your next running / athletics goal? (*whenever normality returns!*)**

I can't wait for next competition to try my shot put.

## Declan Power



**Clonliffe clean up! Declan (left) with Gary O'Hanlon, Sergiu Ciobanu and Brian McMahon**

Next, it's Masters athlete and Morton Games LOC member: Declan Power. Declan has been National Champion at distance events from 5000m to Half-marathon, and a European Silver medallist.

### **Why did you join Clonliffe?**

I enjoyed the novelty of running on a track, prompting me to check out the local club and learn how to train properly. Clonliffe is welcoming and has a long, rich history.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

Long tempo... with hills as a bonus.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

10,000m on the track. It's tough, mentally challenging and there is no hiding place. The 'Highgate Night of 10,000m PB's' is a great event, while on the roads, my favourites are Dungarvan 10 Mile and City-Pier-City Half Marathon in the Hague, Netherlands.

### **What piece of advice would you give an aspiring athlete?**

From experience, I would say don't force your training while dealing with an injury. "If it hurts, it ain't healing". Be patient, don't jump straight back into high intensity training following a significant layoff.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

On a team trip to the Euro Clubs Cross-Country a few years ago, I was surprised at the capacity of my team-mates to consume every dessert on offer at the dinner table, and repeatedly come back for more! All of them were considerably faster, stronger athletes than me, so it had me re-evaluating my approach to nutrition!

## Pat Bonass



### **Pat discusses tactics while hydrating with Noel Guiden, in Sindelfigen, Germany 2004**

One of the “Old Stagers”, a great promoter of Masters athletics, and a man instrumental in the founding of the Clonliffe Grand Prix Series some 20 years ago, a club veteran of some 50 years, it’s Pat Bonass.

#### **When did you take up the sport and why?**

I started running in the primary school sports in Croke Park, ran a few cross-country races for St Brigits with very little success but it was all GAA then and later some soccer and rugby. I had reasonable success in all three but always loved Athletics since Ronnie Delaney won Olympic gold in 1956.

#### **When and why Clonliffe Harriers?**

I joined in 1971 on recommendation of Peter Purcell, a business colleague and later husband to the great Mary Purcell.

#### **What is your most cherished moment in athletics?**

There are many. Winning Team Bronze in 1989 in Oregon USA with the IRE team. I was honoured by the club with a presentation night and award. Another is when I won an individual M70 Bronze in 2015 cross-country in the European Championships in Torun, Poland on a difficult, hilly, forest trail, after which I was made Master Athlete of the year in Clonliffe and awarded the Tadhg Lynch Trophy by the Irish Masters Athletics Association for outstanding performance.

#### **Your favourite music?**

My own! 2 Songs: “Fairest Maggie” (which I wrote to commemorate the 50th anniversary of my Mother’s death, and “Song for Caroline” which I wrote about 3 years ago.



## Tom Monks



**Tom Monks attired in vintage Clonliffe vest, Dublin Masters XC, Phoenix Park**

Another of the long servicing club members, although he doesn't look to have aged as much as the rest of us! He is a long time Scout, Civil Servant, and one-time farmer, who just loves to run. He's also the proud owner of the oldest Clonliffe club vest ever, a nice shade of grey & yellow at this stage!

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

In my day, it was a hard 14/16-mile group run on a Winter's Thursday night with the senior men leading the way and dragging us young pretenders around. Subtle coaching was the order of the day, amazing how much we learnt on those runs – about life and running!

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Love the Morton Games and in particular the Mile, the whole night is uplifting. On a personal level I used to enjoy the meet on the grass track in College Park (TCD), it was a lovely surface to race on a summers evening in the days of cinder tracks. Other than that, nothing beats the Club 10,000m, especially in former times when all the top club athletics ran – I have never forgotten the buzz the first time I beat Pdraig Keane in the 10,000!

### **What's your favourite meal?**

*A. For competition* – try to eat normally but do avoid heavy protein meals like red meat the day or two before a race. I don't eat much the day of a race but porridge in the morning and tea and toast about two/three hours before a race is a favourite.

*B. Outside competition* – Any fish dish but especially Sandre (Pike Perch, sometimes called Zander), a freshwater fish and a speciality in the Loire river region of France – lovely with a buerre blanc sauce, green beans and garlic.

## Emma Cooper



**2013 National XC Team Bronze: Emma (left) with Eleanor, Ailish, Sarah & Fionnuala**

Now, one of the Cooper clan gives us 60 seconds. Working as Occupational Therapist/Team Coordinator, a wife and mum to three kids. Just like George Harrison was the quiet Beatle, Emma is the quiet Cooper!

### **What's your favourite training workout?**

When I was younger, we used to do a session called 'The Rise', which is a road off Griffith Avenue. We would tear up it and jog back to the start ... then repeat 6/8 times. I also like track sessions when I'm niggly/ache free... which is rare these days!

### **What's your favourite race / athletics event?**

I love watching the Nationals Competitions (track & field / cross-country /road relays).

### **What's your most cherished moment in athletics?**

I am really proud of the fact that I am running /competing /enjoying my athletics after all these years. I am also proud of my 5km PB on the road (17.36min). From a team perspective, coming 3rd in National Cross country in 2013 was great. I was well down the field, but I had a good run. It was great to be on the scoring team.

### **Any funny Clonliffe memories or story you'd like to share?**

In recent years the post-race celebrations have been great craic. Particularly remember the conga around Clonliffe bar!

## Niall Sherlock



**Niall putting in a shift for the team at Masters Cross-country**

Now, an athlete who when he is not busy at the day job as a teacher, still regularly competes for the club on the track and country at both Masters and Intermediate level, it's Niall Sherlock.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

The Brother Ireland schools cross country hosted by the club. As a teacher it's always the first race of the year I get to bring my students to and for a lot of them it's their first taste of real racing. Noel and his team put on what is arguably the best schools race in the country. I love it when an athlete of mine comes home with a medal or better still if we win a team medal. So many of my kids have started there and are still racing today.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

Winning my first track gold in 15 years at the Leinster Masters. Any time one of my teams or schools athletes picks up a prize for the first time. Watching Thomas pick up the Harrier of the year award after introducing him to the club.

### **What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?**

I have a condition called Os-Trigonum which is the presence of an extra bone between the two leg bones and the ankle. To cut a long story short it has caused me to snap my ankles a few times but in 2014 I completely snapped almost every muscle and bone around my right ankle. I almost never ran or played any sport again but through a lot of great physio and patience I eventually crawled back about 15kg heavier!

## Kieran Murphy



### **Kieran takes it out on those “Country Roads”**

An athlete who despite being a relative late comer to the sport set himself goals that have been well and truly met and surpassed! Meet Kieran Murphy.

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

When we moved back to Dublin in 2002, I had to have a stress ECG treadmill test as part of health screening. The doctor who did the test told me afterwards that I was only the third person he knew that had never reached maximum heart rate on the treadmill. When I casually mentioned this to a GP friend, he told me that I should try running as a sport so I started running short distances without any target or structure, mainly to maintain fitness and to keep my weight down.

### **What’s your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Definitely the marathon. You train so hard for so long and the result is dependent on so many different variables. When it works, it’s absolutely brilliant. When it doesn’t, it’s absolutely gutting.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

In one of my earlier years with Clonliffe, I ran a club road race and saw Pat Devitt in the distance with a big X on his back. I accelerated and passed him out delighted that, in my mind, I had taken his scalp. Of course, I had made my move too early and he easily passed me out on the final bend. The race was videoed and when the video was replayed afterwards, all anyone could see was Pat’s beaming grin after he had passed me by. I didn’t make that rookie mistake again!



## Captains, Coaches & Legends

As the saying goes: “Save the best until last”. It’s perhaps no coincidence that the contributions from our assorted club officials, coaches and retired athletes were more detailed and could more accurately be labelled as “600 Seconds with.....”! These ladies and gents stepped up and offered us wonderful insights and stories from years of experience in the club and the sport as a whole. Their input helped to start up another initiative on the club website over the summer, the “Monday Memories” series, which offered a nostalgic look back at events in the club history as seen first-hand by our members. Over the next 10 or so pages, you can read some highlights from our coaches, young and old, and some ‘legends’ who are still very active and supportive in club affairs. Read on and enjoy!



**Club Captain Joe Cooper (back left) and team make it FIVE consecutive National XC titles, 2008.**

## Niall Bruton



Let's start with a big one, and well they don't come much bigger than this! Olympic 1500 semi-finalist, Wannamaker Mile Winner and legendary Clonliffe Harrier Niall Bruton. Niall attended the University of Arkansas, was World Student Games champion and reached the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, US. He is currently the sports marketing manager for Under Armour.

### **Why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I joined because of the strong tradition and due to my connection to Peter McDermott. But certainly, the interaction with people like Lar Byrne, Paddy Marley etc was valuable to me on and off the track. It felt very much like a home.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

As much as I loved racing on the track, to be honest my favourite session would be fartlek which is a Swedish term for speed play. Effectively you do different speeds, distances, vary recoveries etc. Ideally you do it in a good setting like woods, trails, Malahide Castle etc. I would encourage all athletes to do this type of training regardless of age or level. I would even do this during track season as well.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

The Wanamaker Mile, Millrose Games at Madison Square Garden, New York City, USA.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

That would be breaking four-minute mile first time, winning Millrose Games or running in the Olympics.

## Peter McDermott



### **Peter's early coaching days with St. Aidans CBS, All Ireland Schools, Tullamore**

Now for some wise words from one of the country's top coaches and the star of Clonliffe website's "Coaching Corner". A retired schoolteacher, having served two 'life sentences' teaching English & Maths in St.Aidan's 'Running Academy', it's Peter McDermott.

### **Why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

A friend of mine in UCD, Maurice Ahern, then of Donore, wanted me to join his club but I always knew that I would join the Black and Amber. Perhaps it was the stadium and the famous track where Elliott had set his mile record or, perhaps, it was the magic of Billy Morton; but for whatever reason, to me Santry was the Mecca of athletics. I competed for Clonliffe for fifteen years and then turned to coaching I got the imprimatur of Laro Byrne- he even gave me his stopwatches! I have a Level 3 Coaching qualification, but I learned most of my athletics knowledge in the University of Clonliffe.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

As an athlete, I still remember the sense of satisfaction I felt at making the Scoring 4 on the Clonliffe team that won the National Senior Cross-Country title in 1981. Dick Hooper once wrote in the Irish Runner that you wouldn't be served a pint in the Clonliffe Bar if you didn't have at least one National Senior Gold medal in your pocket – now I had my passport! Later that year I was pleased to run 1 hour 45 minutes for the Clonliffe 20. Not a bad time but good enough only for 9th. It was won in 1:38! An interesting footnote to that race was the fact that Jerry Kiernan finished 5th. It was his first time to race longer than 10 miles yet, just three years later, he finished 9th in the Olympic Marathon!

### **Any cherished days as a coach?**

I have far more exciting memories as a coach than I have as an athlete and this is entirely due to the marvellous young men that I have advised over more than three decades. The

majority of my great coaching memories are, naturally, connected to Niall Bruton. Seeing him win the 800/1500 Senior double at the All-Ireland Schools C'ships. in '89, his victory in the World Student Games in '91, watching him outkick World Indoor Champion Frank O'Mara to win his first Irish Senior title in Belfield in '93, being present in Gothenburg in '95 when he qualified for the 1500 final of the World C'ships, being trackside in Madison Square Garden NYC when he won his second Wanamaker mile title and .....well, so many more . I got a big thrill from Colm Rooney's victory in the National Senior 1500 in 2008. It was a slow, tactical race, which played into Colm's hands and he just blew the field away over the final 200. I also got great satisfaction from Jayme Rossiter's win in the National Intermediate XC in 2012. The course was a mud bath and, as we all know, Jayme loves the mud! It was always a pleasure to work with Killian Lonergan. A young man of immense talent he was sadly, predisposed to chronic injuries. He was such a smooth runner you would think he could never get injured, as Laro Byrne once said "When I look at young Lonergan I know how God intended people to run." Undoubtably, Killian could have been an Olympian if he hadn't been plagued by injury. There are so many other great memories: Mark Kenneally's first National Senior XC win , Mark making the final of the European U/23 5000m C'ship.in 2003, Sergiu Ciobanu winning the National Novice XC just a few months after coming to Ireland and joining our training group, Cathal Doyle taking chunks off his PB and eventually running 3:42 last year and qualifying for the European U/23 Championships.

#### **What advice would you give to a young athlete?**

1. Be consistent in your training: consistency is the key. 2. Be patient: it takes time become a real runner. 3. Be realistic in your targets. 4. Be specific in your training. No point in training like a marathon runner if the 800 is your main event. 5. Try to enjoy the PROCESS and don't think too far ahead to the desired outcome. 6. Don't get discouraged by the odd bad performance: everyone has had bad days at the office.

#### **What advice would you give to Seb Coe?**

1. Many years ago the late, great Pdraig Keane proposed that cross country should be reinstated in the Olympics. Nobody took him seriously. But when Seb Coe proposed the same thing a few years ago, everyone said "What an excellent idea, Lord Coe ". So, I would now say to The Right Honourable Gentleman, a former Tory MP to "Just get it done".

2. He should make it more difficult for non-nationals to run for their so-called adoptive country. It is ridiculous to see so many East Africans (in particular) running for European countries despite they not having spent a wet week in Europe.

3. Athletes who test positive for banned substances should be banned for life. Many of those athletes come back after as little as two years and are eligible to compete again as "clean "athletes. The reality is they are still in possession of residual benefits from their drug taking – both physical and psychological.

4. Curtail the use of pacemakers in the Diamond League. I am tired of watching these choreographed time trials instead of real races.



## John Shields



**2017 Athletics Ireland awards: John Shields (right) with Brian Gregan**

Next up, we shine a light on top sprints & jumps coach, John Shields. John has coached some outstanding athletes who have competed at World, European and National level and many of them have won medals on these stages. He has been awarded NCTC Coach of the Year, 2000, European Coach of the Year, 2013 and AAI Coaching Award, 2015.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I joined Clonliffe in 2000 after spending 27 years in Raheny Shamrocks. I saw this move as a challenge that I have quite enjoyed. Winning the National Track & Field League 10 times in the last 12 years has been particularly enjoyable.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Of course, it is the Morton Games – the premier athletics meet in Ireland! I won't forget the 2017 edition and seeing Brian Gregan run the perfect race. Start fast for 50m and then fast and relaxed to 200m. He was in 4th place at the 200m mark and then worked his way through the field to enter the home straight in 1st place and then the "Morton Roar" to bring him home in less than 12" for the last 100m. Perfect!!

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

My proudest moments have always been athlete centred – to see them perform to their best ability is where I get my satisfaction from. A coach does not need awards or kudos. You just take satisfaction from seeing people perform the way you want them to perform.

## Killian Lonergan



**A true mudlark! Killian Lonergan on familiar ground.**

Now, one of the greats of Clonliffe Harriers, a noted athlete, administrator and committee member, statistician, coach, vital Morton Games LOC member and all-round good guy: Killian Lonergan. He's been a member for over 30 years, having moved through the ranks of juvenile, junior, senior and masters, with some coaching and administration work thrown in for good measure. Presently living in Switzerland.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

Interestingly, my first attempt to join Clonliffe was unsuccessful, as I was refused! As a 9-year-old, I was too young for Clonliffe at the time. As a result, I had to go looking elsewhere, and started with Greenfield, based in Albert College Park. After 5 or 6 years with Greenfield the entire club, which only had juvenile athletes, amalgamated with Clonliffe Harriers. I had just served a one month ban from training (to this day I believe it was a harsh punishment!) at Greenfield for some play acting around Morton stadium and as such I was being told I mightn't be welcome by Clonliffe as part of the amalgamation. Luckily that wasn't the case as I was allowed to join.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

For many years it was making the Dublin under 13 cross country team chosen to race the visiting Merseyside team. I'd been injured and had been told not long before the trials race by a physiotherapist to give up running as I wasn't built for it, so to get back in training and make the team was a great moment for me. Apart from that childhood event, running 28.37 for 10,000m on the track is definitely up there. It wasn't necessarily the running of the time itself but calling my coach Peter McDermott afterwards to tell him the result was a proud moment. It came after many years of stop-start training due to injuries and it felt like a job done by both of us that night.



**Winter miles, Summer smiles: Killian (left) with Vinny Mulvey and Mark Keneally, 2009**

### **What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?**

A torn hamstring, not from speed work, but during a cross country race in Belgium. It took many years to resolve and in essence stopped me competing at a serious level.

### **Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

Joe Cooper will often tell the story of how on the morning of a flight to the European Clubs Cross country championships I couldn't find my passport. Its loss was official by 9.30am, but via various adventures and connections, by 12.30 I had a new passport handed to me and made the 1.30pm flight to Portugal with the rest of the team.

### **What's your favourite hobby / activity outside athletics?**

I've taken to cycling over the past 5 years, coinciding with my move to Switzerland. With great roads and climbing for all levels it was always likely to happen. I do enjoy a round of golf whenever I can slip it in when back in Dublin visiting.



## Mick Kearney



### **Motown Mick: Crossing the line at the Detroit Marathon**

Another Clonliffe lifer. Athlete, committee member, Treasurer, administrator, Race Director, pint puller, pint drinker, you name it Mick Kearney has been there, done it and lost the T Shirt!

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I was always fascinated by track and field and made a point of watching top class athletics on TV. I later started attending Olympics, World and European Championships and had some memorable trips in the company of Sean Callan and Harry Gorman.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I joined in 1985. The reason for joining was that practically all of Revenue's Customs & Excise Team were members of Clonliffe Harriers. As I was starting to show some promise my colleagues persuaded me to join and I took my running to another level.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

Fartlek was always my favourite work out. I found it was highly effective in improving my running speed and endurance. It suited me to alternate between fast segments and slow jogs. My least favourite were Mile repeats being the most difficult.



## Nicola Fallon



### Nicola Fallon – tearing up the roads

An athlete who at one time was described by her coach as his “meal ticket and way out of here”, but unfortunately injury intervened, and those best laid plans were torn up! She’s a qualified Geologist turned secondary school teacher, who has returned to the fold in a coaching capacity and is a valued member of the team: Nicola Fallon.

### What is your most cherished or proudest moment in Athletics?

I was unfortunate that I used to pick up quite a few niggles, but I was lucky to have had some great individual and team successes in the black and amber. In 2001 at the age of 15 I won my first All-Ireland 1500m medal and I got the call up to run for the Club’s Senior Women’s A-team in the National Road Relays in Raheny. We won team bronze making it my first National Senior medal and a big achievement for the Club’s Women. I have been lucky to win several All-Ireland medals but a year to remember for me as an athlete would be 2003 as a 17-year-old. 2003 was my most successful and memorable year as an athlete. I won the National Junior and U19 All-Ireland 800m & 1500m. I broke through 2:10 for 800m, 4:30 for 1500m and ran a sub 5-minute mile. As someone who wanted to run track all year round these races were certainly great memories.

### Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?

Joe had organised to bring our junior team over to Hannut in Belgium. We had been shown pictures of our accommodation and it was this amazing stone building which resembled a castle. Unfortunately for us when we got to Belgium our accommodation was quickly christened ‘Chateaux le Shit’ and everything else that followed was nothing short of Fawlty Towers. We did win first International Women’s Team and there was a marriage proposal, so it was a memorable trip let’s just say 😊.

## Maurice Ahern



One of the longest serving Clonliffe Harriers, as an athlete, coach, club officer, President of Clonliffe (1992-2005) and the Lord Mayor of Dublin 2000 Maurice Ahern.

### **What age did you take up athletics?**

I was always interested in running-I first ran in the primary school sports at Croke Park in 1950/51 and many more times there in the 50's as my 2nd level school O'Connells held their annual sports there. I joined Clonliffe after the 1960 Olympics - it was time to join a club and Clonliffe was the one I knew about.

### **What's your favourite race/Meet?**

My favourite meet-of course the Morton Games / Invitational. I have attended most over a period of 70 years at College Park, Lansdowne Rd and at Santry. As a one-off race, my favourite has changed with the years-a choice of so many-Liverpool the Waterloo road race, Tullamore and the Quinlan Cup.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

My competitive highlight was probably winning team gold in the National Marathon of 1968 a rare occasion when anybody got ahead of the all-conquering Donore team.

### **Who is your sporting hero?**

My sporting hero when a young lad was Christy Ring and when I took athletics seriously-right out of "run to the Top" the recently deceased Peter Snell.

### **What's your favourite hobby/activity outside of athletics?**

My favourite sport is GAA (of course the "Dubs") where i have attended roughly 130 All Ireland Finals between Football and Hurling but I have an interest in many sports.

## Graham Mahon



### **Graham on coaching duties with Pamela Cooper at Juvenile Open Sports 2018**

A guy who was one of Fogo's Army back in the day, then college in the USA and then an unfortunate health issue brought the curtain down prematurely on his athletics career in his early 20's, but undeterred is now one of our young coaches giving back to the sport and his club, it's Graham Mahon.

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I only live a ten-minute walk away from Clonliffe so my dad had tried to get me to join them for years when I was younger but it never appealed to me. I joined Clonliffe a few months after I started running with Aidan's under the recommendation of the legendary Alan O'Neill.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

I retired from running in 2014 with health issues so I don't really have a favourite workout anymore, but my favourite was always any workout that involved speed work on the track. I was an 800m runner who did not like going over 800 so I always enjoyed sessions that included 200s and 300s.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

As a coach I have two proudest moments. Since I start coaching, I have tried to get my parents to go to a race of the kids I coach. The Dublin even ages this year was the first time my mam has been able to come. Thankfully then the boys won the race by a huge margin and made me look like I know what I'm doing in front of my mam. The other would be at the Dublin uneven ages this year when the boys under 13 qualified. Going into that I would have been happy if they had finished 5th or 6th but all 8 of them on the team gave it absolutely everything that day to get 3rd place. I had never been prouder of any team that I coach than I was that day.

## Johnny O'Leary



**Johnny O'Leary - Judging by the hair, it's gotta be the 1970's!**

This next Harrier is a Clonliffe legend. A Harrier for 64 years, indeed he ran in the very first opening run in Santry after Clonliffe moved there from Barn Park, Finglas, in 1956. He has served as athlete, club secretary, Committee member, Vice-captain and Trustee. Aside from all those good things he, along with Noreen, was responsible for bringing a 20-year old Noel Guiden to Clonliffe in 1983. Meet Johnny O'Leary.

**What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I was 15 years old when I took up athletics. I took up the sport because I wasn't very good at football! So, I decided to try something new. I was working with a guy who was in Clonliffe – Joe Dempsey – and he brought me to see the Clonliffe 2-mile race in Finglas. It was run from the Old Finglas Road to Glasnevin. I was instantly hooked and joined the club the following Tuesday!

**What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

I was on the Clonliffe senior cross-country team in 1964 at Dundonald, Belfast. I represented Ireland at race walking at several international events during the 1970s. I represented Clonliffe on 'Match Play Quiz' on RTE Radio 1 in the early 1980s alongside Maurice Ahern & Tom Boshell (now residing in the USA). The show was presented by Jimmy Magee and I have the recordings to prove it!

**Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

After the Olympics in 1992, Tommy Griffin and I went to an awards ceremony for Paddy Marley in Donegal and after having a few drinks, myself and Tommy couldn't remember where we were staying so we had to sleep in the car!



## Stephen Bateson



### **Stephen Bateson – Still making great strides.**

Next, a great insight into a guy who has thrown himself 100% into the “way of the true Harrier”: sitting on the club committee, coaching, course building. Basically, a brilliant “whatever is needed” Clonliffe Harrier. A Structural Engineer with Irish Rail by day, it’s Stephen Bateson.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

When I am fit, I love a good long Sunday run but I was never good at getting up at 6am to do these. The longer the day goes on, the more difficult it is to get these done.

### **And your least favourite?**

Nowadays it is anything repetitive on the track or running with my daughter Sarah when she takes off and I can’t catch her!

### **What’s your favourite race / athletics meet?**

The Dunshaughlin 10 k is probably my favourite race as it always high quality and is well supported. There is an atmosphere around the race which is not matched anywhere else. That said even my best time there I was beaten by a guy wearing a beer bottle costume. The Dublin Marathon, of course, can be a great day but I have shuffled home from most of them. We have attended the Morton Games over the years, I love the Morton Mile and it’s been great to be involved as a volunteer in recent years.

### **What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

The last couple of years as assistant coach have been very fruitful for the club at Junior level with a number of individual and team medals in the cross country and a number of individual titles on the track in both schools and club. The athletes have done all the hard work under the guidance of Joe and personally I have learned an awful lot about the sport during this time. I cherish working with this group.

## Stephen Harkness



### **Floating like a butterfly Harko arrives in the promised land (1.55.8 for 800m in 2011)**

One of our most enjoyable '60 Seconds' was from a very popular Harrier. A Carpenter / Joiner Instructor, he joined the club as a sprinter before moving up to middle distance. They say you're not a true Harriers unless you've locked horns with club captain Joe Cooper, so Stephen 'Harko' Harkness' reckons he must be a lifer at this stage!

### **When and why did you join Clonliffe Harriers?**

I joined Clonliffe Harriers in March 2000. I was in second year in Aidans, there was a teacher there called Tom Ward (aka Skeletor, he called me worse!) who put me onto Peter Mac Dermott, who I had for first year math's but when I went to him about joining Clonliffe he hadn't a clue who I was. Must not have stood out in that class, all changed for 5th and 6th year maths (that's right, Peter) and the rest in history.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

It has to be the Cake Race. One of the best club races put on every year great night afterwards. I remember finishing second still a junior and been presented with a bottle of Jack Daniels. I had to swap it for the 1st prize which was a brown box with a clock inside it, wasn't too happy when I opened that.

### **Who is your sporting 'hero'?**

A. Irish: The current Dublin GAA team. I've had the honour of supporting the team since 92, haven't missed one home or way game, starting with the O'Byrne cup in January all the way through to the championship in the summer.

B. International: That would have to be Homer me 13-year-old retired homing racing pigeon. Imagine the distance he travelled, flying internationally. Mind blowing!

### **What is your next running / athletics goal? (whenever normality returns!)**

After being out for so long I just to be on the start line of any race and finish.

## Joe Cooper



**Joe Cooper (2266) sits on the shoulder of future clubmate and 'goat' Tony Murphy**

Finally, it is an absolute pleasure to give the Last Word to the Clonliffe Harriers Club Captain Joe Cooper!

### **What age did you take up the sport of athletics and why?**

I had always been into my exercise and anyone who knows me will know I enjoy a "few sociables" but I was looking for more of a structure and commitment to my sport so when I was 28 I took a job with An Post on the Dublin to Cork mail train (many a story I could tell!!!) at this point I was running in a few local road races then I join the An Post athletics team which eventually led me to join Civil Services AC and my running career really began.

### **What is your favourite training workout?**

As an athlete training for a Marathon I really enjoyed the track endurance session of 20 x 400m or 1 km reps As a coach I now see the importance of getting a mixture of session's covering track, road and cross-country to build both speed and endurance.

### **What's your favourite race / athletics meet?**

Any race / meet from Belfast to Bagdad and I'm happy. I've been extremely lucky to have been to European and World Championship track and cross-country as well as Olympic Games. But the home-grown ones are the best and the Morton Games is one that I particularly enjoy but there is lot of work that goes into organising, so you can sometimes miss out of getting the full spectator experience.

### **What was your worst injury – and how did you get over it?**

Plantar Fasciitis. Rest, Rest and more Rest, and listen to your body.



**Joe playing in a puddle at a cross country race!**

**What is your most cherished or proudest moment in athletics?**

As an athlete I have 2 stand out moments. The first was winning the Master Raheny 5mile in at time of 24.50 and the second would be finishing the Dublin Half Marathon in a time of 68.38.

As club captain / coach there have been several achievements that stand out. In 2015 on home turf, where we won the National Senior Men's XC, the National Jnr Men's XC, and Hope Saunders winning the Individual Nat Jnr ladies XC. This was closely followed the club's first win in the National Track & Field League Championship which ultimately lead to a Bronze medal in the European Clubs Track & Field Championship in Portugal. Most recently seeing Efreem Gidey take the bronze medal at the U-20 European XC championships in Lisbon which unfortunately due to ill health I was unable to attend.

**Do you have any memorable or funny story from Clonliffe that you could share?**

Many moons ago, a good Civil Service AC teammate of mine Mick Fennell (aka Snapper) had his stags-do up in the Clonliffe Bar. In our drunken wisdom, we decided to have a naked 800m race. Being the professional in the group I was appointed the role as starter (naked). Just as I was about to start this prestigious event a woman from the bar comes down to the track, took one look at us and said "You're like a Tinkers Greyhound, all Ribs and P\*\*\*k with no B\*\*\*s!!.....Clearly a few shandys were had that night!!!!

**If you were Seb Coe what changes would you implement to improve our sport?**

That there should be 10% added to prize money for coaches who have nurtured these athletes form an early age, to be reinvested into producing future athletes at club level.

**An tips on motivation to continue training at these difficult times?**

Remember that just because the water is calm, it doesn't mean there aren't sharks about!



## Magic Morton Moments

July drew a close to our '60 seconds' feature and brought a reminder that this is usually the month of the Morton Games, Ireland's premier athletics meet organised by Clonliffe Harriers. Normally in this month many of our club members would be preparing to play their part in putting on the event, led of course by Meet Director Noel Guiden and the Lead Organising Committee. The 2020 event regrettably had to be cancelled - a decision made earlier in the year as a result of the global pandemic and the restrictions on international travels, events and social gatherings took hold. So, this July offered a chance to look back at some of the special moments in Morton Miles and Morton Games editions in years gone by, that has seen the event grow and develop into the premium European Athletics Permit level meet that it is today. Throughout the month, the Morton Games Instagram account posted on some of the memorable races and individual performances witnessed down the years. Check out the list of "Magic Morton Moments" on the following pages, most of which were posted on the anniversary date, marking when those moments occurred.



First, a little history... Clonliffe Harriers A.C. began promoting international athletics meets in the 1940's with meets attracting huge crowds from the sports mad Dublin public. In 1955 Clonliffe Harriers built its own stadium in Santry where the annual 'Clonliffe Sports' found a permanent home. The club introduced the Morton Memorial Invitational Mile in 1970, held to honour the memory of Billy Morton. This later evolved in 2008 to become the Morton Games, a European Area Permit Meet. You can read more about it in the Morton Games website [www.mortongames.ie](http://www.mortongames.ie)

## Magic Morton Moments – Follow [#mortongames2021](#) on Instagram

### 4 July – MMM#1: “Steve Scott 3-peat!” 🏆🏆🏆

On the 4th of July, who better to feature in our "Magic Morton Moments" than Steve Scott... arguably the greatest ever miler from the USA. Steve won the famous Morton Mile an incredible 3 years in a row (1979-81) including a Morton Stadium record of 3.53.8 that lasted for 34 years. Steve recorded an amazing 137 Sub-4 Minute Miles, the most by any athlete in history. His last U.S. Mile record was 3.47.69 set in the Oslo Dream Mile in 1982.

### 8 July – MMM #2: “Foster-ing talent at Morton Games” 🏆🏃

On this date in 2011, Amy Foster lit up the Morton Games, setting a Morton Stadium record and PB for the 100 metres when taking the win in 11.49. That mark also equalled the Northern Ireland record. Amy retired last year, after a stellar career, representing Ireland in 4 European Championships, Northern Ireland in 3 Commonwealth Games and was a regular at Morton Games. Her PB stands at 11.40, set in 2014.

### 10 July – MMM #3: “Setting the Barr higher” 😊🏃

This day's "Magic Morton Moment" looks back to a fantastic Friday in July 2014 when Irish athlete Thomas Barr stunned world champion Jehue Gordon to win the 400m hurdles at the Morton Games. Powering down the final straight, Thomas set a stadium record of 48.94. It was one of an astonishing 8 stadium records on the night alone.

### 11 July – MMM #4: “Where there's a Will, there's a way” 🏠🕒🏆

The Morton Games of 11th July 2014 lives long in the memory with no less than 8 stadium records broken on that balmy night in Dublin. Best of the lot was the blue riband event, the famous Morton Mile. Early in the race, Ciaran O’Lionaird (IRL) took up the running as he drove on to try and secure a European qualifying time for 1500m. O’Lionaird’s decision made the race as the pace was cranked up, with 350m to go John Travers (IRL), seeking to go sub 4 for the first time, hit the front, he was chased hard coming off the last bend by the bearded Will Leer (USA), a two time Morton Mile winner, who powered past to take a thrilling win in a time of 3.51.82. Not only was this a PB for Leer, it was also the fastest Mile recorded in the Morton Stadium and was the fastest ever Morton Mile.

### 12 July - MMM #5: "Grego on fire!" 😄🔥🔥🔥

On this day in 2017, Brian Gregan (IRL) stole the show as he set a new personal best at the Morton Games. Gregan, racing on his home track in the Clonliffe Harriers club colours, brought the Dublin crowd to their feet as he won the 400m in a meet record of 45.26 seconds. Gregan powered around the track with an explosive kick in the final 200m, taking the tape ahead of Brazilian Anderson Henriques and Great Britain’s Conrad Williams.

### 14 July - MMM #6: "Marvellous Morton Mile at the Belfield Bowl" 🤔🕒 .

This Magic Morton Moment takes us back to the summer of 1977 for what was billed as a showdown between Ireland's Eamon Coughlan and the Olympic 1500m champion and WR holder John Walker, from New Zealand. It was staged on the brand-new track in Belfield, South Dublin. Suffice to say, the race did not disappoint, with Walker prevailing in a tasty 3.52.76. It was an honour to have him at our race. One of the all-time greats of athletics - the Olympic champion, world record holder and first man to break 3.50. A true legend.

### 17 July - MMM #7: "Eleanor conquers High Jump Hill" 🤖🚀

This 'Magic Morton Moment' takes us back to last year, 2019. The long streak of favourable weather for the Morton Games came to an end and the wet & windy conditions on the night proved to be especially challenging for the Field athletes. This did not deter Eleanor Patterson (AUS) however, who literally rose to the occasion at High Jump Hill (see pics) managing a superb winning leap of 1.89 before coming close to breaking the stadium record. Sommer Lecky (IRL) and Amina Smith (USA) completed the podium.

### 19 July - MMM #8: "Lipari leaves it late - with epic final kick!" 🤔🏆

A Magic Morton Moment from 2018. In the 1500m, coming down the home straight at the 2018 Morton Games it looked to the crowd that it was Elinor Purrier for the win all the way. Indeed, Purrier surely thought likewise as she raised her arms in victory only to have the diminutive Emily Lipari pass on the blindside to snatch the win by a matter of inches! At least Elinor was able to redress that, by returning to Dublin to take victory in 2019.



### 22 July - MMM #9: "All's Bell that ends well" 🔔🤔 .

We looked back at a 'Magic Morton Moment' from this day in 2016, when Alex Bell (GB) proved to be too strong in the final straight of the 800m, passing Ciara Mageean (IRL) with 20m to go to take a narrow win in 2:00.53. Bell's time was actually inside the Irish record of

2:00.58, although Mageean just missed out, her 2:00.79 was still an almost two-second improvement on her previous best, set in Belfast only a month prior.

#### **24 July - MMM #10: "The night Dublin danced to a Jamaican beat" 🎧 🎵**

On this date in 2015, we remember when Yohan Blake arrived to our shores to grace the track at the famous Morton Stadium. Blake, the second fastest man in the world at the time, was a late addition to the Morton Games mix and certainly didn't disappoint, beating team-mate Michael Frater by 0.15 seconds while clocking 10.12 on his comeback from injury. He immediately raced into the Morton Stadium crowd to sign autographs and pose for pictures with an enthusiastic Dublin crowd. We'll always remember the night he set foot on our track!

#### **25 July - MMM #11: "Birth of the Morton Games - 25 July 2008" 🌞 🏃**

On this date in 2008, the inaugural Morton Games was held to mark 50 years since, over the course of two famous nights in summer 1958, no fewer than 4 world records were set in Morton Stadium, Santry, Dublin. The summer of '58 put this stadium at the forefront of world athletics. The 'Summer of International Sports' on the 9th of July featured Santry's first world record when before an attendance of 7000 spectators Albert (Albie) Thomas (AUS) set a three-mile world record of 13:11.8. A month later and the world's best athletes were back in Santry for the 'August International Sports' for a two-day event. The stadium was packed to the rafters with some 25,000 people. They were not disappointed as they witnessed Herb Elliott (AUS) shatter the world mile record in 3.54.5. Just 24 hours later, Albie Thomas broke the 2-mile record in 8.32.0. Morton Stadium. History Lives Here.



That was a wrap for our look back at all those "Magic Morton Moments" as we said a goodbye to July. Depending on how the 2021 Global Athletics Calendar unfolds, Morton Games plans to resume normal service on 9<sup>th</sup> of July (provisional). We really look forward to meeting old friends and making some new ones! 9/7/2021: Save the date!



## Monday Memories

In the summer months, several of the Clonliffe “Lifers” contributed some fascinating first-hand accounts of great moments in the club’s history, from a personal perspective. These wonderful, nostalgic articles formed part of our “Monday Memories” series which proved very popular with members young and old and ‘in-between, offering some insight into the club’s rich tradition and history for some, while prompting fond memories among those others who wore the Black n’ Amber with pride all those years ago. We urge you to read the full articles on the club website (by searching the site archive for “memories”), but to give you a taster and pique your interest, here’s what to expect!



### Maurice Ahern – *“Rock & Roll Years” (Parts 1&2)*

Maurice penned some of his memories of the 1960’s in and around Clonliffe, beginning with 1961 when the club celebrated 75 years of its existence, and the annual pre-Christmas Toy run to Cappagh hospital and back to Santry stadium. No mercy shown to newcomers! Maurice goes on to recount what were difficult times financially for the club in those years and the heroic efforts made by a band of core members towards funding to maintain the Santry stadium facilities and club equipment. We are treated to vivid stories of a decade that saw Clonliffe’s triumph in the 1964 National Relays, 8,000 spectators crammed into Santry for the Snell vs Simpson mile clash, the regular battles with all-conquering Donore Harriers, plus tales of Hell Drivers, Passion Plays and Football matches to raise precious funds, and culminating with the sad, sudden death of Billy Morton. For every true Clonliffer, this is simply a ‘must-read’ to learn how the club was shaped into what we have today. Some months later, Maurice treated us to some bonus ‘September Memories’ to mark the 60th anniversary of a Clonliffe International Meet in 1960 which saw the reigning Olympic 1500m champion Herb Elliot win the mile, Ronnie Delaney claim victory in the 880 yards, and John Thomas take High Jump honours.

### Colm Brennan – *“The Class of ‘57”*

Colm provides an evocative account of the year he joined Clonliffe Harriers in what was a time of rebuilding across Europe after the destruction of World War II, which had of course carried its heavy economic impact to Ireland. Colm recounts his trepidation of his very first arrival at the club gates, the formal process of gaining membership, and some tales of his first races with the club, bookending with the cake race of Christmas 1957 - a beautiful moonlit evening with no traffic, no street lights, a truly rural experience, with the memory of Billy Morton waving his freshly laundered handkerchief shouting encouragement.

### Caroline Tuite – *“Elvis had blue, but I had brown”*

Caroline looks back fondly on a truly legendary Harrier, Padraig Keane, from his early days in athletics when he learned that “Racing is racing, and training is training” and later how fate (and Laro Byrne) intervened to bring him to Clonliffe rather than big rivals Donore in 1970. Winning the National Junior XC, going onto first wearing the Irish vest, playing a key role in the famous national team XC title in season 1975-76, and the numerous individual titles and achievements that followed. This article is a fine tribute to Padraig, an athlete, carpenter, inventor, philosopher, wit and gentleman who enriched the lives of many people lucky enough to know him before his sad passing in 2016.

### Peter McDermott – *“The Eliza Jane is leaving!”*

In his inimitable prose, Peter takes us on a 17 mile club training run through Dublin’s northside suburbs which gives us a glimpse of Clonliffe and its lead characters in the 70’s, when the club started to sweep all before them on the Dublin and National stage. Back then the “clubhouse” consisted of a rusting Nissen Hut... basic and unappealing on the outside, but it was from here - like the famous ‘Anfield boot-room’ of the same era - where the hard work began and from which championship titles were fought for and won. Grab yourself a cuppa, sit back and follow the path of the ‘peloton’ including the likes of McDaid, Marley, Murphy, Kiernan, Tierney and Keane... under the leadership of coaching legend Laro Byrne.



**Clonliffe National Senior Cross-Country winning team, 1984**

### Gladys Cooper – *“Olympic Dreams”*

Gladys regales us with stories of her great grand uncle, John Joe Daly, an Olympic Silver medallist from the St. Louis Olympic Games in the USA... in 1904! Not without controversy either, as Daly plays his part in what was likely to have been the first political protests at the Games, two years later in Athens.

### Eamonn Tierney – *“Mud, Mullets & Making the Team”*

Eamonn looks back to the days of tight jackets, short-shorts and mullet hairstyles. In particular, the national Cross-Country in Killenaule, Co. Tipperary in 1987. Eamonn’s story extolls the importance of the team competition, running to the line and how every place counts, something that has been drilled into their charges by Clonliffe’s coaches up to this day. We won’t spoil the ending, so make sure to read it and remember when you next don the Black & Amber for the team.

### Dominic Brannigan – *“The Birth of the Morton Mile”*

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, Dominic marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first “Morton Mile” in 1970, by looking back at how the event came about, as well as the race itself of course. The stellar field was headed up by then Olympic 1500m gold medallist Kip Keino and European 1500m silver medallist, Clonliffe’s own Frank Murphy. Also, on the start line was then USA 1500m champion Marty Liquori, along with Clonliffe’s Paddy Marley and rising star Tom Gregan. A sub-4 winning time guaranteed!

### Noel Guiden – *“History Lives Here – A Magical Night at the Morton Games”*

Fast-forward 44 years to 2014, to the Morton Games (incorporating the Morton Mile) on a beautiful summer’s evening in Santry. Noel describes the hard work that goes into organising Ireland’s premier Track & Field meet, and why the 2014 edition will live long in the memory. The highlight was undoubtedly the final and blue riband event: the Morton Mile, producing a Stadium record.



**Morton Stadium Mile Record-setter, Will Leer (USA)**

## Clonliffe back on track! *A return to racing*

After months of restrictions imposed in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic situation across the country, as some of the restrictions were eased, the club took the initiative to host a series of member-only track races during the summer - in tightly managed adherence to the strict protocols regarding participation numbers, hygiene and social distancing. The response was enormous, with sprinters, field eventers and distance runners eager to put their 'lock-down training' into practice and compete! Clonliffe were a leading club nation-wide in this endeavour.



Club Track & Field Championships - and later, Early Autumn Track meets - were held across a number of different evenings, with multiple seeded races required in some events in order to cater for the high demand while following the health & safety protocols. With only athletes and meet officials allowed to enter the stadium, it meant that would-be spectators, friends and family turned to the race reports, results and photos posted on the website afterwards.





As summer came and went by all too quickly, the country reverted to another set of restrictions impacting sports training and competition. By December, training in pods of limited numbers of athletes could thankfully resume, which afforded the possibility of holding 2-mile time trials. This allowed the continuation of Ireland's and one of the world's longest continuous races, the Historic "Clonliffe 2". Needless to say, with the restrictions in place, it necessitated a different approach this time around. Unfortunately it was not possible to hold a road race, likewise it was not possible to have the race as an open race and thus on the 13th of December in torrential rain a Clonliffe club-only morning of time trials - limited to pods of 15 over two miles - took place on the track in Morton Stadium. For the uninitiated two miles is 3,218.6 meters all of eight laps plus 18.6 meters!

Once again, the club's athletes bought into matters fully with some 55 or so athletes braving the inclement conditions, by taking part in four seeded time trials, all observing strict health guidelines as the club commendably continued the sequence of the "Clonliffe 2" going right back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a consequence, confidence was high that there would be a first home win in six years! Equally hopes were high for a men and women's home double! On the men's side, Colm Rooney proved to be a worthy winner clocking a time of 9.15. Unbelievably that was the exact same time Colm recorded in the 2019 Clonliffe 2-mile road race in placing 2nd! Second fastest was Efrem Gidey (9.19) with Ben Guiden 3rd fastest in 9.37. Fastest of the juniors was young Sean Boyne (10.29).



**Don't mention "wet pubs": Ben Guiden (3<sup>rd</sup>), Efrem Gidey (2<sup>nd</sup>), Colm Rooney (1<sup>st</sup>)**

Of the women, Sarah Bateson recorded the fastest time (11.26) with second fastest Laura Tuite (11.41) with Jenny Johnston 3rd fastest (11.51) with fastest of the junior women Katie Halpin (12.36).



**Soft day for it: Jenny Johnston (3<sup>rd</sup>), Sarah Bateson (1<sup>st</sup>), Laura Tuite (2<sup>nd</sup>)**

Kavanaghs (the Gravediggers) of Prospect Square Glasnevin have been a loyal supporter and sponsor of this race and once again supported the 2020 version. Their sponsorship goes right back to the club centenary year of 1986 when the late Eugene Kavanagh most generously began sponsoring the historic Clonliffe 2 and here we are some 34 years later, and the Gravediggers are still on board. The club would also like to acknowledge the sponsorship of the 2020 Clonliffe-2 Time Trials, for the junior prizes by our club captain Joe Cooper.

The Clonliffe 2-Mile will return on bank holiday **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2021**. This will be the 130th running of the event and to mark the occasion it is hoped that the event will return to the roads of Glasnevin finishing at Kavanaghs. If ever an event deserves the full support of Clonliffe athletes, it is this one. Put the date in your diary now!

## Roll of Honour

Despite the extraordinary circumstances we all found ourselves in this year with very limited competition opportunities, however, once there were opportunities available Clonliffe athletes grabbed these by the scruff of the neck with outstanding performances including the taking of national titles and the setting of new club records. Here we present the Clonliffe Harriers 2020 Roll of Honour.

### Senior National Outdoor Champions

Stephen Rice – Javelin

Rolus Olusa – Decathlon

### Senior National Indoor Champions

Keith Marks – Long Jump

Ariel Liegho – Pole Vault

Rolusa Olusa – Combined Events

Clonliffe Men – National Indoor League Champions



**Ready for launch – Rolus Olusa, National Champion 2020, Indoors and Out!**

### **National Masters Champions**

Matt Slattery M/65 200, 800 and 200 (Indoor)

Frances Mansfield W/75 Hammer

### **2020 Club record breakers - Outdoor**

Stephen Scullion – Marathon – 2.09.47

Eoin Sheridan – Discus – 55.05

Shannon Sheehy – High Jump – 1.70

### **2020 Club record breakers - Indoor**

Jeremy Phillips – 60m – 6.79

Keith Marks – Long Jump – 7.33

Shannon Sheehy – 60m Hurdles – 8.69

Shannon Sheehy – High Jump – 1.75

Shannon Sheehy – Long Jump – 5.65

Ariel Liegho – Pole Vault - 4.00

### **Junior records**

Sarah Bateson – Mile – 5.15.15



**Clonliffe Harriers 2020 Senior club champions – Women:**

100 – Rebecca Fitzsimons/Shannon Sheehy (tie)

200 – Rebecca Fitzsimons

400 – Emma McDonnell

800 – Jenny Johnston

1500 – Hope Saunders

5000 – Hope Saunders

10000 – Sinead Smith-Ahern



**Jenny Johnston sprints home to take the Club 800m Championship**

**Clonliffe Harriers 2020 Senior club champions – Men:**

100 – Keith Marks

200 – Pascal Touche

400 – Mark McDonald

800 – Daniel Lacey

1500 – Efrem Gidey

5000 – Efrem Gidey

10000 – Sean Doran

## Peak Performance

On top of Clonliffe's "gold rush" in 2020, there were other excellent performances that deserve a mention. It seems even longer ago now, but matters were kicked off back in January when **Stephen Scullion** achieved the Olympic marathon qualification standard when finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the Houston marathon (a World Athletics Gold Label event). Despite the windy conditions, Stephen held his pace and focus to run 2:11:52 and effectively secured his Olympic ticket based on his top-five finish. Sadly, as we know too well, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics were since postponed to next year, and likewise most of the high-profile races and events followed suit, being either deferred or cancelled altogether. For athletes like Stephen, this led to a re-think and re-adjustment in training cycles and a frantic search to find and secure a starting place in the races that remained.



This did not deter Clonliffe's #1 distance runner, as he delivered two world-class performances in the autumn. In September, he clocked a superb 61:08 for 4<sup>th</sup> place in the high-quality Antrim Coast Marathon in Larne, Northern Ireland to set a new Northern Irish record. He then followed that up with a hugely impressive 2:09:49 in a wet and windy London Marathon in October, setting a club record, Northern Irish record, and the second fastest time ever achieved by an Irishman. Simply outstanding.

Other performances of note in a racing calendar virtually torn apart by the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions included:

**Efrem Gidey**, finishing an excellent 14th position in the Italica International Cross-country in Seville, Spain in January (see “Winter Sunshine” chapter).

Some impressive times posted in the Raheny 5 Mile race, the Clonliffe contingent led by **Efrem Gidey** (4<sup>th</sup>, 22:43), **Colm Rooney** (16<sup>th</sup>, 24:01) and **Ailish Malone** (18<sup>th</sup> Female, 29:32).

February saw **Emma Mitchell** emerge victorious in the Northern Ireland & Ulster Cross-country championship, and later get selected along with fellow Harrier **David Flynn** for the Irish team for the World Half Marathon Championship... sadly another event that would ultimately fall victim to the restrictions imposed in the wake of the pandemic.



At the end of the cross-country season, we had **Jayme Rossiter** placing an excellent 13<sup>th</sup> in the English National XC, while **Cathal Doyle** was dominant in taking gold at the Irish Varsitys XC in Cork. Serial road racer **Sean Doran** picked up triple wins in Duleek (5k), Lusk (4mile), and Clogherhead (5k). Meanwhile overseas, **Eoin Taggart** PB clocked a PB running 68:48 (48<sup>th</sup> pl.) and **Declan Power**, 71:39 (97<sup>th</sup> pl.) at the high-quality City-Pier-City Half Marathon in The Hague, Netherlands.

As racing resumed in the second half of the year after months of race cancellations, there were precious few events to survive outside of the National Championships. New Clonliffe recruit **Johnny Whan** bagged three PB's over 800, 1500 & 3000 in track races during July and August. **Gary O'Hanlon** set a PB and Irish Masters M45 record (66:26; 20<sup>th</sup> pl.) at the Antrim Coast Half Marathon in September, while on the same weekend in the Charleville Half Marathon, North Cork, **Sergiu Ciobanu** ran 67:33 (5<sup>th</sup> pl.) and **Karl Nolan** 72:54 (33<sup>rd</sup> pl.). Rounding out the year in early December, **Gary O'Hanlon** posted 2:19:06 in the Valencia Marathon, Spain among an elite, international field.

## President's Closing Remarks

This has been the most unbelievable year in the history of Clonliffe Harriers. Normally at this time I am slapping captains, coaches and athletes on the back congratulating them for winning national titles, setting club records, representing their country. This year I am slapping you all on the back to congratulate you for your fortitude in continuing with this sport of ours and to ensure the continued drive forward of this wonderful club of ours, Clonliffe Harriers.

Every single one of you deserve the highest respect for the way you have conducted yourselves throughout the course of this extraordinary year. You have complied with all the regulations that the club has had to enforce with respect and good humour. When we had the opportunity to race you raced. We will have that opportunity again next year.

As we bring the curtain down on 2020, I do of course wish to congratulate our men's track and field team who won yet again the National Indoor title, the Clonliffe men have won that Championship every year since its introduction. I also want to congratulate our 2020 National champions: Rolus Olusa, Stephen Rice, Keith Marks and Ariel Lieghio. I also want to wish a special congratulations to Stephen Scullion on his best ever Irish performance in the marathon in London (2.09.47) although Stephen tops the Irish all-time performance list, bizarrely his time has not as yet been ratified as an Irish record! I also want to, on behalf of all the club, wish Stephen the very best of luck in next year's Tokyo Olympic Games.

A huge thank you to the club's captains, Joe Cooper, Gladys Cooper and Louise Carraher, the club's officers, the club's committee, the club's coaches and our magnificent athletes. As we leave this challenging year behind, we stay strong and look forward with optimism to 2021. NIL DESPERANDUM.

*Paddy Marley (Club President), December 2020*





# Clonliffe Harriers A.C.



*“Let’s stick with it!”*

*See you all in 2021.”*