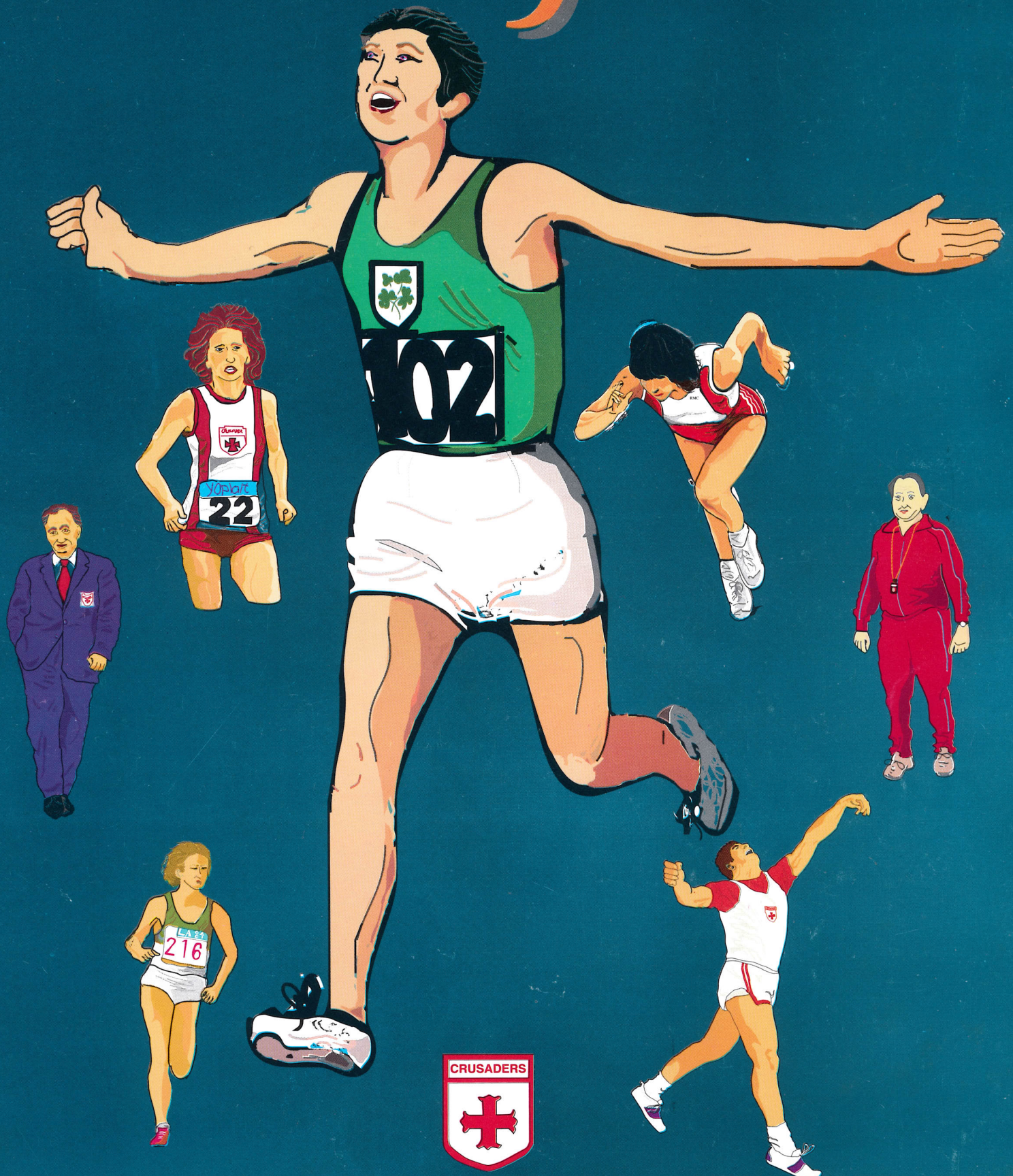


Jim O'Neill
Crusaders
GOLDEN JUBILEE



Celebrating 50 Years of Athletics

Jim O'Neill
Crusaders
GOLDEN JUBILEE



Celebrating 50 Years of Athletics

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Cover

*From Top Right Clockwise : Michele Carroll, Louis Vandendries,
Phil Conway, Caroline O' Shea, Brendan Hennessey, Mary Purcell,*

Centre : Ronnie Delany

INTRODUCTION

by Ronnie Kirkham



The fiftieth anniversary of Crusaders is a particularly significant event, as many, but regrettably not all, of those who have been involved in the club are still with us and able to celebrate this great milestone in our history. They can, I know, look back with pleasure on their own and the club's successes over the years and renew the friendships which have lasted long after the competition has ended. Our anniversary is a celebration of their achievements on and off the track. This booklet chronicles the highlights in the careers of our Olympians and National Champions, but we should not forget that every athlete who competes can look back on their own personal best performances with justifiable pride. Crusaders has played at least a part in those achievements and each success on the track or in the field has been complemented by continuous service in the administration of Irish athletics, first in the A.A.U. and now in B.L.E.

This year we also celebrate the 30th anniversary of our women's section, which when it was set up in April 1962, was the first women's athletics club in the Republic. If anything, the achievements of our women members since then have overshadowed even the considerable feats of our men - a proud boast indeed.

I wish to pay tribute to Peter Hanlon and his team who worked so hard to ensure that this booklet was produced and that as many former Crusaders as possible are welcomed to this celebration.

The first fifty years has been run and the baton has now been handed to another generation. I look back with pride and forward with confidence to the next era of Crusaders' involvement in Irish Athletics.

Ron Kirkham

President

Contributors to publication

Jimmy Meaghan	Lindie Naughton	Eva Mulleady
Peter Byrne	Jennifer Carey	Peter Hanlon
Dave Guiney	Maire Convery	& our advertisers
Kathryn Davis	Catherine Lawlor	All contents © crusaders

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OUR CHAMPION CRUSADERS

by Lindie Naughton



CAROLINE - FINALLY

The date was August 6th, 1984 and the place Los Angeles - the baking, broiling, dusty and besmogged venue for that year's Olympic Games. Down on the track, Caroline O'Shea was making history as the first Irishwoman ever to make an Olympic final - and only the second Crusader (after one R. Delany), male or female, to achieve this.

It was just reward for years of hard work, dogged by injury, and for the careful coaching of coach Mick Purcell, all too aware of his charge's physical frailties.

It even forced Caroline to abandon her premier event, the 400m. At this distance, she had set an Irish record of 53.24 when only 17 and won seven national titles, but after a sciatic problem created havoc with her training in early 1984, she decided to move up to 800m. She had won her debut race at the distance in 1982 at the Dublin Championships with a time of 2.12. In 1984, again at the Dublins, she took the race in a highly respectable time of 2.05. This prompted her to look for a place in the race over the same distance at the Cork City sports.

The rest, as they say, is history. That evening in Cork, Caroline set an Irish record of 2.00.07, finishing third behind two Russian women - and qualifying with ease for the Olympics. In L.A., she made untroubled progress through the heats and the semi finals, despite being spiked. Showing remarkable coolness, she even saved her best run for last, when she ran home with time of 2.00.77 for eighth place in the final, just fractions off the pace.

Later in the year, Caroline travelled to Crystal Palace, where she finished second behind the Olympic silver medallist, Kim Gallagher. So a tremendous year - especially when you consider that Caroline never ran more than four miles in training.



HAIL MARY

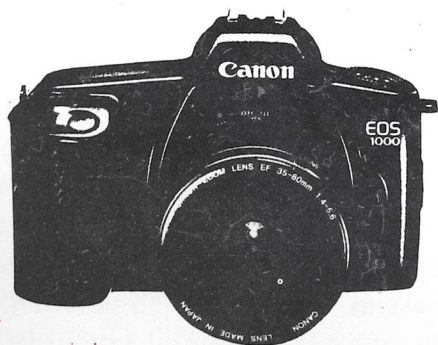
At the Louis Vandendries Trophy match in May 1980, one of the longest winning streaks in Irish athletics history came to an end when Deirdre Nagle beat Mary Purcell in the 1500m. This, amazingly, was Mary's first defeat by another Irishwoman on the track in seven years.

Since 1972, when Mary won her first 800m in 2.04.2 on a bleak night in Santry only a year after joining the now defunct Guinness Club, she had totally dominated the local scene.

That year alone, she won the British WAAA title in 2.02 and qualified for the Munich Olympics, where, a little exhausted after her year, she went out in the early stages of the 800m and 1500m. Mary retained her WAAA title at 800m the next year and in 1976, again qualified for the Olympic Games, though this time she resolved to concentrate on the 1500m. It paid off, she finished fifth in her heat with an Irish record-breaking time of 4.08.63. By 1978, Mary had won the national 1500m title for the sixth time and the following year came sixth in the World Cross Country Championships in Limerick - the day John Treacy retained his title and one of the great days of Irish athletics.

Her debut at the marathon came in 1982, when she won the national title at Limerick in 2.38.49 - still a very respectable time. The following year she won the Dublin Marathon in 2.46 - the last big win for the greatest Irish female distance runner of recent times. Mary's plain talking after that win was typical - who can forget the night she unofficially ran a men's 5000m race at the Dundrum Sports, despite the best efforts of some highly indignant officials. She then proved her point with a time of 8.51 for 3000m in that race.

Certainly she livened things up, did our Mary!



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Success For The Future*

RONNIE DELANY

The Race of a Lifetime by Dave Guiney

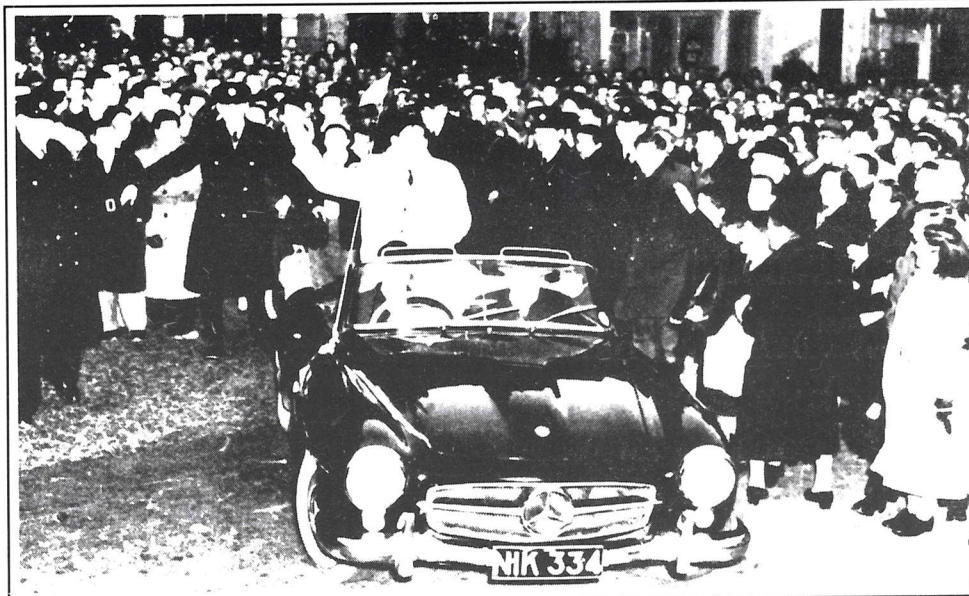
The first time I saw Ron Delany race, I had no inkling that I was watching a future Olympic champion and record-breaker in action. It was a dull, damp and depressing Saturday afternoon towards the end of the 1953 track and field season, and the event was the annual match in College Park between the Amateur Athletic Union and the Northern Ireland Amateur Athletic Association. I knew little about this young Dublin athlete, other than that he had been outstanding in schoolboy competition, but watching him compete that day, I remember being quite impressed with the way in which he won the 880 yards. He ran comfortably through the first lap, bided his time until the finishing straight and then galloped away to win effortlessly in 1 minute 58.7 seconds.

I'd love to be able to say now that I immediately recognised Ron Delany as a potential Olympic champion, but, sadly, I would not be telling the truth. The fact is, I didn't see what should have been obvious to me at the time - that this fresh-faced young amateur would soon become Ireland's number one runner and our greatest Olympic hope. Even when I was summing up the following season's prospects for the A.A.U. 880 yards championship, I gave almost everyone in the race a chance of winning - except Ron Delany. To my eternal shame as a track and field prognosticator, he won it in a canter and broke an Irish record, scuttling my predictions in the process.

From then on Ron Delany's rise to fame was little short of astonishing. In race after race he chipped away at the Irish record for the 880 yards and climaxed a wonderful season by reaching the final of the European 800 metres Championship at Berne. In his semi-final he had clocked 1 minute 50.2 seconds, an incredible performance for a youngster of nineteen, especially when you

staggering. In his first run over the mile, at College Park, he raced away to win with a new Irish record of 4 minutes 5.8 seconds.

Delany began the Olympic year of 1956 with a flourish. On June 1, at Compton, he beat Gunnar Nielser of Denmark in a tremendous race clocking in at 3 minutes 59.0 seconds, and becoming the youngest man to date to run a mile in under 4 minutes. On that performance alone Delany seemed absolutely certain to be selected for Ireland's Olympic team. During the summer season however, he lost two races i



Ireland's only Olympic winner, Ronnie Delany, who won the 1,500 meter race at the Olympic Games in Melbourne, is enthusiastically welcomed upon his return to Dublin.

consider that the current Irish record for the 880 yards was 1 minute 52 seconds.

In September 1954, Delany accepted the offer of a scholarship to Villanova University in Philadelphia, and the following year he returned home to set a new Irish record of 1 minute 50.0 seconds for the 880 yards. Just before he returned to America that year, Billy Morton of Clonliffe Harriers persuaded Delany to try his hand at the mile. The result was

Dublin to Brian Hewson, and

rumblings began to come from some quarters that Delany's form did not justify sending him to Melbourne to represent Ireland in track and field. Thankfully, no-one gave serious attention to these detractors, and Ron Delany was chosen to compete for his country in the sixteenth Olympic Games held in November 1956.

At Melbourne, Ron Delany was drawn in the second heat of the

1,500 metres alongside some of the finest runners in the world. With him were such names as Mervyn Lincoln of Australia, Ken Wood of Britain, Laszlo Tabori of Hungary, Olavi Salonen of Finland, Gunther Dohrow of Germany, Yevgeniy Sokolov of Russia and Don Bowden of the United States. Lincoln went on to win the heat in 3 minutes 45.4 seconds, and Wood took second place with 3 minutes 46.6 seconds, but Delany stayed in the running by effortlessly coming in third with 3 minutes 47.7 seconds.

The day of the final was warm and windless, ideal conditions for a fast and hotly-contested race. The line-up consisted of Lincoln and Landy (Australia), Halberg and Scott (New Zealand), Wood, Boyd and Hewson (Britain), Nielsen (Denmark), Richtzenhain (Germany), Tabori (Hungary), Jungwirth (Czechoslovakia) and Delany (Ireland). It was the greatest field of 1,500 metres runners the world had known up to then.

At the 400 metres mark, Halberg was in front with 58.4 seconds, Hewson and Jungwirth were behind him, and Ireland's solitary hope, Ron Delany, was far back in second last place. With just two laps to go, Lincoln, who had been in last place, was now in front and running strongly. Hewson, Jungwirth, Scott and Halberg were close behind him. At the end of the field was the great John Landy, and two places ahead of him was Ron Delany. Every runner seemed relaxed, unhurried, preparing themselves for the final surge that would take them to the finish.

As the runners approached the last lap the tension was beginning to build up as everyone wondered who would be the first to make a decisive move. Landy had moved up close to the leaders, with Hewson, Jungwirth and Wood in strong striking positions, and as they swept on towards the bell, the entire field was bunched up with just eight yards covering the twelve runners.

The mounting excitement in the Melbourne Cricket Ground could now be felt by everybody. When the runners thundered into the final lap, the official was so excited that he forgot to sound the bell. The runners just kept on going - Hewson and Lincoln in the lead and running abreast, Landy in the middle of the bunch, and Delany back at the end in 10th place.

Out of the curve, things began to change rapidly. Lincoln lost his momentum and the field streamed past him. Nielsen also dropped out, leaving Britain's Brian Hewson in the lead. Richtzenhain had moved into second place and Boyd was in third; Delany and Landy had also moved up. As they tore down the back stretch, Hewson did his best to pull away. He opened up a slight gap and his team-mate Boyd quickly slipped into second place and was giving chase. The rest of the field was poised, ready for someone to make the inevitable break.

Then, suddenly, it looked as if Landy was going to go for broke. The Australian had been branded a front-runner without a finish, and so he was careful to lay back for most of this race. Now he was ready to make his move. But

almost as he did, Delany took off like a thunderbolt. With just 200 metres to go, the Irishman was in fourth place behind Hewson, Boyd and Richtzenhain. Eight yards separated Delany and Hewson, but over the next 100 metres Delany had cut the gap to three yards and was still driving ahead powerfully.

As the runners came tearing round the final bend, Delany swept past Boyd and the German, and now only Hewson was ahead of him. The Englishman tried vainly to keep his lead, but Delany surged past him in a final burst of supreme effort. With no-one left to challenge him, the Irishman whirled forward at a glorious pace and, arms outstretched in triumph, burst through the finishing tape for a historic win. Delany had not only beaten some of the world's finest runners in one of the most exciting races of that year's Games, he had also set a new Olympic 1,500 metres record of 3 minutes 41.2 seconds. It was Ireland's first Olympic gold medal since 1932, and when Delany returned to Ireland in triumph, he was given a tumultuous welcome and treated like a national hero. He had done his countrymen proud, and they showed their appreciation by lining the streets of every town between Limerick and Dublin.



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"Winter Hammers"*

*Kevin Cardiff, Clonliffe Harriers A.C.
& University of Washington
57.00m 1979*

*Sean Egan, Donore Harriers A.C.
71.10m 1980*

*Brendan Fitzgibbon, Dundrum/South Dublin A.C.
61.18m 1988*

*Liam Hickey, Raheny Shamrocks A.C.
& Manhattan College
59.28m 1984*

*Declan Hegarty, Civil Service Harriers A.C.
& Boston University
77.80m 1985*

*Marc Linscheid, Tara A.C. & University of Lowell
63.60m 1979.*

OUR CHAMPION CRUSADERS

MAEVE KYLE - A TRUE PIONEER

In July 1949, Crusaders organised three women's events - the 100 yards, 220 yards and high jump - as part of a special meet on the 352 yard Lansdowne Road track. Winning the 100 yards was Trinity student and hockey international, Maeve Shankey.

But although Maeve was then a member of the fledgling - and short-lived - women's section of the club, it wasn't until she married Jack Kyle and moved to Ballymena that her athletics career took off. By 1961, when the question of reviving the women's section in the club arose, Maeve Kyle had become synonymous with women's sport in Ireland. She was the first female athlete ever to represent Ireland at the Olympic Games when she travelled to Melbourne in 1956, and four years later, also qualified for the Rome team.

In April 1962, Maeve was invited by Crusaders to inaugurate the revived women's section at a special meeting in the Clarence Hotel. By then she was 33, but in 1964, she became one of the elite few to make it to three Olympic Games and two years later, ran her fastest 200m ever during the 400m heats at the European Championships in Budapest, breaking 24 seconds.

The final flourish of a glorious career came in 1970 when at the grand old age of 41, she made the 400m final at the Commonwealth Games.

Off the track, few athletes have contributed so much. She was secretary of the NIWAA from 1969 to 1976 and served on both Cospóir and the Ulster Sports Council at the same time. A true Crusader - in every sense!

AIDEEN MORRISON - TEENAGE WINNER

Aideen Morrison, then just 16, took her first national title in 1970 when she won the 100m in 12.5. In 1982, she more or less bowed out with an 800m title won in 2.6.77. In between, she achieved some great victories - her 400m win at the 1973 Europa Cup in 54.1 perhaps the most notable.

PADDY O'DWYER HANDICAP				EOIN FINLAY SEALED HANDICAP	
1961	M.Doyle and B. Fitzpatrick	1977	Tony Smyth	1987	Con O'Rahilly
1962	Michael Doyle	1978	Alan Brady	1988	Brian Cullen
1963	Paud Lavelle	1979	Eddie Hanratty	1989	Tara Rush
1964	Paud Lavelle	1980	Eddie Hanratty	1990	Jimmy O'Neill
1966	Gerald Nolan	1981	Barry Austin	1991	Stephen Lynch
1968	Colman Nolan J.Smyth	1982	Peter Hanlon		
1969	J.P. Jordan	1983	Declan Kearns		
1970	Sean Kearns	1984	Ray Kinsella		
1971	Robert Walker	1985	Pat O'Callaghan		
1972	J.A. Hanratty	1986	Alan Cox		
1973	Gerard Doyle	1987	Declan Kearns		
1974	Cillian Ryan	1988	Colin Kirkham		
1975	Christine Malone	1989	Alison Michael		
		1990	Con O'Rahilly		
		1991	Jennifer Carey		
		1992	Jennifer Carey		

CLUB HISTORY

- 1942:** Formed by T. Rooney, B. Slevin, H. Begley, H. Thornton, G. Ryan and C. Callon at Monkstown Park School as away of keeping fit for rugby during the closed season. First Captain - Mike Duffy. Initial membership was only eight!
- 1944:** Brendan Hennessey joined and later became coach to Ronnie Delany and Honorary Life President of BLE. The club moved to Serpentine Avenue and Luke Duffy became our first title winner when he won the Leinster 1/2 mile.
- 1945:** Membership doubled to 30.
- 1946:** Con Sheehan won our first international vest. Mr. G.V. Ryan passed on.
- 1947:** We hosted and beat our first overseas visitors the Racing Club de Paris whose team included a European champion. Attempt at formation of ladies section unsuccessful.
- 1948:** At AAU Senior Championships we won seven of 15 titles. Three of our athletes represented Ireland in the London Olympics - Dan Coyle (Hammer), Cormac O'Cleirigh and Reggie Myles (4 x 400 relay). Jack Gregory represented G.B. in 100m and 200m. In September Mr. Louis Vandendries arrived. He was to become one of our greatest organisers and managed Irish teams at 1960 and 1964 Olympics, 1954 and 1962 European Championships.
- 1949:** Long serving medical officer Dr. John Fleetwood came aboard.
- 1950:** Current red and white singlet made its first appearance - membership now at 70.
- 1951:** Mr. Theo Ryan elected President - his first committee position. Theo is our longest serving member having joined in 1947 and is still active today. He organised a meet at Lansdowne Road with Germany and over 2000 spectators attended. Ladies section disbanded as "unworkable".
- 1952:** Ron Delany joined - won All Ireland and AAU Youth's 880 yards. Joe Delany also had a good year retaining his AAU and All Ireland Long Jump title, with a best of 22ft. 10 3/4 inches.
- 1953:** Crusaders International held at College Park. Start of our domination of Grade "C" championship for Verney Shield - held continuously until 1964.
- 1954:** Inaugural meeting for G.V. Ryan held at College Park and we won trophy.
- 1955:** Retained G.V. Ryan Trophy. Inaugural 5 mile road race held. First winner of Crusaders medal Tony O'Donoghue who finished 24th. Jim Mc Donnell inaugural winner of Cormac O'Cleirigh trophy (highest point scorer in graded meeting).
- 1956:** Ron Delany brought home the Club's only Olympic gold medal from Melbourne in the 1500m with a new Olympic record of 3:41.2. Attempt to have AAU form a 32 county association.
- 1957:** Clean sweep of high jump medals at AAU championship - J.P. Eliot, Br. Kelly, and K. Borneman. All 3 pennants also won by club and K. Borneman won title for most points.
- 1958:** Ron Delany finished 3rd to Herb Elliott in a world record for the mile, 3:54.5. Our first cross country medal won by finishing second to Donore in AAU Youth Championships.
- 1959:** First CC scalp by beating Donore in a 6 mile race in Phoenix Park. D. McCleane and M. Doyle tied for 1st. A 4 x 110 yards record was set in a time of 43.8 seconds.
- 1960:** Death in London of Paddy O'Dwyer. Club won 18 medal places in AAU Championship T & F. D. McCleane unlucky not to be selected for Rome Olympics. Ron Delany was selected.
- 1961:** Balbriggan to Dublin 20 mile race won by M. Doyle. D. White captained an Irish team to the Maccabi games in Israel. Irish 4 x 400 relay record set by R. Delany, L. Ryder, D. McCleane and J. Linnane in 3:18.2 beating our own record. M. Doyle obtained the Club's only marathorn championship gold. Inaugural Paddy O'Dwyer saw a tie between M. Doyle and B. Fitzpatrick with Philip Doyle inaugural handicap winner.
- 1962:** Ladies section re-constituted - 41 members joined and H. Sinnott and P. Hogan became the first secretary and captain respectively. Our first competitive encounter was courtesy of Maeve Kyle at Ballymena. We obtained our first individual C.C. gold thanks to Brian Fitzpatrick winning the novice championship.
- 1963:** Took our first C.C. mile title which Victor Manial won on a brief sojourn from Poland - he also helped us to another G.V. Ryan victory. Ladies section in full stride and cleaned up on many top events.
- 1964:** Derek McCleane represents Ireland at Olympics in Tokyo and Louis Vandendries appointed team manager. Paud Lavelle becomes first member to obtain an international C.C. vest.
- 1965:** Finally secured Senior AAU C.C. title. Four ladies clubs now in existence and first T. & F. championship held. Jackie Spence becomes our first ever Ladies champion and we added a further four titles. First time Christmas Relays held.
- 1966:** Inaugural Women's All Ireland T. & F. Championships and Louis Vandendries Trophy.