

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Bill Britton

by **Michael O'Dwyer**

Bill Britton was born on 12 October 1890 at Ballydonnell, Mullinahone, County Tipperary. He was the eldest son of Patrick Britton, a farmer, and Mary Britton (née Mullally). Educated at the Cristian Brothers school in Callan he was successful at the examination for clerkships at Munster and Leinster Bank in 1909. Serving first in banks in Cork and Tallow, he was a member of the Waterford staff for three years when he was transferred on promotion as sub-manager of the Cahirciveen branch in 1916. He was next in Kilmallock and went on to manage branches at Ballinamore, Cavan, Bruff and Kenmare before retiring in 1954. It would be more correct to say that Bill Britton's competitive, rather than his athletic, career commenced in 1910, for his attention was given only to cycling in that year. He competed in the 220 yd, 880 yd and mile races at the national athletics championships the following year, and his first medal in the national athletics championships was for third in the long jump in 1913 at Mallow, and the year after that he came second in the high jump also at Mallow. Bill Britton's first success at the national championships was on 25 July 1915 at Fermoy when he won the high jump. From then until the last national championships he competed in Ireland in 1933 he won sixteen Irish titles, and his last provincial title was the hammer at the Ulster athletics championships in 1935 at Omagh with a throw of 152 ft 10 in. (46.58 m). He also won three hammer titles at the AAA championships in England. Bill Britton represented Ireland in athletics on many occasions, including at the inaugural British Empire Games (now known as the Commonwealth Games) in August 1930. Eleven nations competed at the Games held in Hamilton, Canada and the Irish team comprised of five athletes. However, two of them missed out on their events completely as the Irish team's ship was delayed by fog. Bill Britton came second in the hammer event with a throw of 153 ft 10 in. (46.89 m). In the British Empire v. United States athletic competition in August 1928 he threw the hammer 146 ft 11 in. (44.78 m). His best hammer throw was 162 ft 9½ in. (49.62 m) at the Ulster athletics championships on 27 July 1929 in Belfast. Bill Britton died on 15 February 1965 at his residence at Galtrim Park, Bray, aged seventy-four, and is interred in St Peter's Cemetery, Bray.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Gaelic Athletic Association Championships

1915	High Jump	5 ft 8 in.	(1.73 m)
1918	120 yd Hurdles	17.0	
1918	Long Jump	21 ft 8 in.	(6.60 m)
1919	Hammer	138 ft 10 in.	(42.31 m)
1920	120 yd Hurdles	17.6	
1920	Hammer	144 ft 0 in.	(43.89 m)
1921	Long Jump	22 ft 2 in.	(6.75 m)
1921	Triple Jump	43 ft 8 in.	(13.31 m)
1921	Hammer	150 ft 10 in.	(45.97 m)
1922	Long Jump	22 ft 0 in.	(6.70 m)

National Athletic and Cycling Association Championships

1923	Hammer	150 ft 7½ in.	(45.91 m)
1924	Hammer	148 ft 6 in.	(45.26 m)
1925	Hammer	142 ft 8 in.	(43.48 m)
1926	Hammer	147 ft 8 in.	(45.01 m)
1929	Hammer	150 ft 0 in.	(45.72 m)
1933	Hammer	146 ft 6 in.	(44.65 m)

Amateur Athletic Association of England Championships

1928	Hammer	152 ft 11 in.	(46.61 m)
1929	Hammer	156 ft 2 in.	(47.60 m)
1933	Hammer	147 ft 6½ in.	(44.97 m)