

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



Tom Davin

by Michael O'Dwyer

Tom Davin was born in 1851 at Deerpark, Carrick-on-Suir, County Tipperary. His date of birth is not known but he was baptised on 18 June 1851. He was the third son of John Davin, a farmer, and Bridget Davin (née Walsh). The nine children in the Davin family were Maurice (1842–1927), Johanna (1845–died young), Denis (1846–1927), Margaret (1848–died young), Tom (1851–90), Peter (1853–died young), Pat (1857–1949), Bridget (1859–1932) and Margaret (1859–died young). It is likely those that did not survive childhood are interred in Churchtown in the family plot, as are the famous athletes Maurice, Tom and Pat. Denis emigrated to Australia in 1886 and is interred in North Rocks cemetery, Sydney. Bridget, who never married, is interred in the Walsh family plot in the Friary cemetery, Carrickbeg. Tom Davin was educated locally and was later sent to St Kieran's College, Kilkenny, where he spent over two years. He began his athletic career at a sports meeting in Tramore on 3 September 1869 when he came second to his brother Maurice in the high jump, and was also second in the 100 yd hurdles race. It was on 7 July 1873 that the inaugural Irish athletics championships were held at College Park, Dublin. About 8,000 spectators were in attendance. Tom Davin won the high jump event with 5 ft 10¼ in. (1.78 m) and came second in both the 120 yd hurdles and long jump. The highlight of these first championships was Tom Davin's high jump which was a world record. His other successes at the Irish athletics championships were winning the high jump and long jump as well as finishing third in the 120 yd hurdles in 1876, and a second place in the high jump in 1878. In England he came second in the high jump at their national championships in 1874. In what was the first ever international athletics meeting anywhere in the world, on 5 June 1876 when Ireland took on England at Lansdowne Road, Tom Davin tied with his brother Pat to win the high jump with 5 ft 8 in. (1.73 m), and he also finished third in the long jump. Tom practised as a solicitor in Carrick-on-Suir, having been admitted in 1874. His other interests were rowing, hunting with the Waterford Hounds, and was also a great dog lover. Tom Davin died on 12 February 1890 at his residence, Carrickbeg, aged thirty-eight, and is interred in Churchtown cemetery.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

Irish Champion Athletic Club Championships

1873	High Jump	5 ft 10¼ in.	(1.78 m)
1876	High Jump	5 ft 7 in.	(1.70 m)
1876	Long Jump	20 ft 8½ in.	(6.31 m)