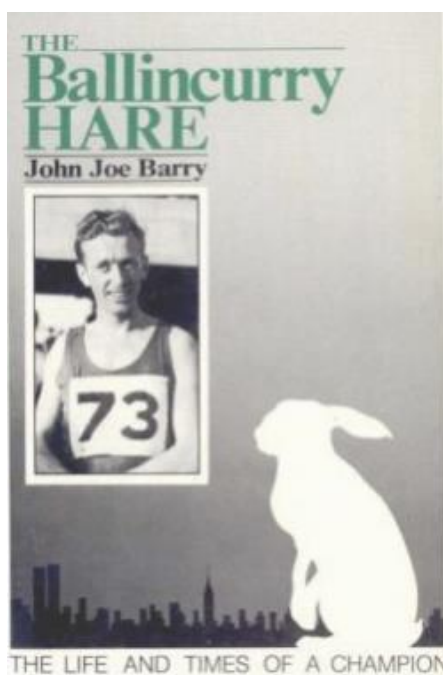


TIPPERARY ATHLETES



John Joe Barry

by Michael O'Dwyer

John Joe Barry was born on 5 October 1924 at Joliet (south-west of Chicago), Illinois, USA. He was the eldest son of Michael Barry and Mary Jo Barry (née Cashen). They got married in Ballingarry on 22 September 1923 and soon after emigrated to America. When John Joe Barry was three years old his grandfather died and his mother inherited her father's farm. This meant John Joe, his younger brother and their mother went to live on the family farm in The Commons, County Tipperary. His father stayed in the United States for another seven years before moving back to Ireland. John Joe Barry attended The Commons National School, and when he was nineteen he joined the local Ballincurry Athletic Club. His first race was held on the first Sunday of June 1944 at the annual Gortnahoe sports organised chiefly by Canon Maurice Morrissey (son of athlete Maurice Morrissey of Dromline, Kilfeacle), a curate in the parish of Gortnahoe-Glengoolle at the time. The following year on 25 February 1945 he won the Irish junior cross-country championship in Belfast with Tipperary winning the county title. Five weeks later over a nine mile course he won the Irish senior cross-country championship in Dublin with Tipperary again winning the county title. John Joe Barry became the fastest ever Irish athlete to run a mile on 9 August 1947 when he ran 4:15.2 in Dublin. The previous best was Tommy Conneff from Clane, County Kildare with 4:15.6 in New York in 1895. The fastest mile in John Joe Barry's running career was 4:08.6 in Dublin on 27 August 1949. In all, he won sixteen Irish track titles, one Irish senior cross-country title, one English 3 mile title in 1949, one Scottish 3 mile title in 1949 and one American indoor mile title in 1950. In fact, when he won the American indoor mile title at Madison Square Garden in front of 15,000 spectators on 18 February 1950 he then held Irish, English, Scottish and American titles all at the one time. He competed for Ireland at the 1948 London Olympic Games in both the 1,500 m and 5,000 m. He left for America in November 1949 after been awarded a scholarship to Villanova University, Pennsylvania where he studied commerce and finance. John Joe Barry, affectionately known as 'The Ballincurry Hare', died on 29 December 1994 in Dublin, aged seventy, and is interred in the church cemetery in Ballingarry. He was the recipient of the Knocknagow hall of fame award at the 1976 Cidona Sports Awards. A memorial to the legendary athlete was unveiled by Ronnie Delany on 20 July 1997 in The Commons.

Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

National Athletic and Cycling Association Championships

1945	Mile	4:23.6
1945	4 Miles	20:03
1945	Cross Country (Inter-County)	50:24
1946	880 yd	2:01.2
1946	1,500 m	4:17.8
1946	Mile	4:29
1947	1,500 m	4:23.6

Amateur Athletic Union Championships

1948	880 yd	1:59.7
1948	Mile	4:32.2
1949	880 yd	2:06.4
1949	Mile	4:39.4
1949	3 Miles	14:56.3

All-Ireland AAU/NIAAA Championships

1947	Mile	4:30
1948	Mile	4:23.8
1949	Mile	4:25.1
1949	3 Miles	14:50.5
1950	Mile	4:20.1

Amateur Athletic Association of England Championships

1949	3 Miles	14:11.0
------	---------	---------

Scottish Amateur Athletic Association Championships

1949	3 Miles	14:18.2
------	---------	---------

American Amateur Athletic Union (Indoor) Championships

1950	Mile	4:11.5
------	------	--------