

TIPPERARY ATHLETES



John Quirke

by Michael O'Dwyer

John Quirke was born in 1871 at Ardane, Bansha, County Tipperary. Local church records show he was baptised on 1 August 1871. He was the seventh son of Edmond Quirke, a farmer, and Hester Quirke (née Grogan). His parents got married in the parish of Bansha and Kilmoyler on 3 February 1853. John Quirke was one of twelve with most of his siblings emigrating to America, settling around the Rensselaer and Troy areas of New York. His eldest brother William worked on the farm at home and had been many years a member of the old Tipperary Board of Guardians and Rural District Council. John Quirke's best performances in national athletics championship events were second in the mile at the Irish AAA championships in both 1902 and 1903, and third in the mile at the GAA championships in 1898 at Thurles. The Irish AAA championships in 1902 and 1903 were held at the Mardyke, Cork and Ballsbridge, Dublin, respectively, and the winner of the mile on both occasions was John J. Daly, Galway. At provincial level John Quirke won two Munster mile titles. On 6 June 1900 he won the Irish AAA Munster mile championship title at Markets Field, Limerick. The second was at the GAA Munster athletics championships in Dungarvan on 7 September 1902. He won the mile in 4:40.4, and came second in both the half-mile and three mile events. The winner of the latter championship was Jackie Morrissey of Dromline in 16:49.8. For a number of years John Quirke ran with the Dublin club Haddington Harriers. In the athletics international meeting between Ireland and Scotland at Ballsbridge, Dublin on 19 July 1902 he competed in the mile for Ireland. Three other Tipperary athletes on the Irish side that day were Jackie Morrissey, Pat Harding and Tom Kiely. John Quirke was for a period creamery manager at Ballycarron, Lattin and New Pallas. He got married to Catherine Morrissey from Clashaquirke, Bansha on 25 January 1912 in Bansha church. They lived in Tipperary town, initially at Henry Street, where their first two children were born, before moving to O'Connell Road. John Quirke died on 3 October 1942, aged seventy-one, and is interred in Bansha cemetery.