

TIPPERARY ATHLETES

Maurice Morrissey

by Michael O'Dwyer

Maurice Morrissey was born on 27 November 1864 at Dromline, Kilfeacle, County Tipperary. He was the eldest son of John Morrissey, a farmer, native of Dromline, and Ellen Morrissey (née Barlow), native of Spittle, Ballylanders, County Limerick. The nine children in the family were Maurice (1864–1925), Arthur (1866–1947), Julia Carew (1868–1953), Mary Ann Crosse (1870–1955), Jane Keane (1872–1927), Patrick (1874–1960), Nora Hickey (1876–1956), Jackie (1878–1914) and Elizabeth (1880–1882). Their mother Ellen Morrissey was a first cousin of Fr Arthur R. Barlow, of Monour, Kilross, County Tipperary, who was a priest in New York when on a trip to Europe and the Holy Land he attended the first of the modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. A niece of Ellen Morrissey was married to Dan Shanahan, of Kilfinane, who once held the world record for the triple jump and travelled to the United States in 1888 with the Gaelic ‘invasion’ team. Maurice Morrissey competed primarily in the half-mile and mile races, hurdles and jumps. He finished in the top three in the GAA national championships four times. He was second in both the standing hop, step and jump (weights allowed) in 1889 and the high jump in 1893, and third in both the high jump in 1892 and the standing long jump (weights allowed) in 1897. The latter championship was won by Sergeant Joseph Chandler in a world record distance of 12 ft 9 in. (3.88 m). Maurice Morrissey also occasionally competed in weight throwing and was runner-up to Tom Kiely when he set a world record of 36 ft 1 in. (11.00 m) in throwing the 56 lb weight, with unlimited run and follow, at the Clonmel Rowing Club athletic and aquatic sports in 1893. Maurice Morrissey was for many years a member of the Tipperary Board of Guardians and District Council. He got married to Catherine Hickey, of Gortrue, New Inn, on 14 February 1899 in New Inn church. The youngest of their eight children, Canon Maurice Morrissey (1908–1989), was president of County Tipperary NACA from 1947 to 1957, and national chairman of Muintir na Tíre from 1957 to 1963. Maurice Morrissey died on 28 June 1925 at Dromline, aged sixty, and is interred in Bansha cemetery.