

# SEIKO AWARDS

BY FRANK GREALLY



• **Marcus O'Sullivan**



• **Gerry Curtis**



• **Valerie McGovern**



• **Patricia Griffin**



• **Jim McNamara**

The Irish Runner/Seiko Awards for 1989 are awarded to a total of ten individuals whom the selection panel felt achieved outstanding performances in athletics in 1989.

**Marcus O'Sullivan** heads the list of distinguished award winners. His World Indoor 1500m Gold Medal performance in Budapest has been chosen as the **Outstanding Individual Performance** for 1989. Marcus also contributed greatly to the success of the Irish team in the Ekiden Relay in New York. He won the Irish 800m title at the National Championships and also won the mile in the big New York City track promotion in July in a time of 3.53.57. This is his second year in a row to win the award.

**Gerry Curtis** of Donore Harriers receives the award for the **Best Home-based Athlete of the Year**. Gerry had a most encouraging year which started with his individual victory in the National Cross Country Championships in Killenaule. He later ran a blinder to help the Irish team of John Treacy, Marcus O'Sullivan, Frank O'Mara and John Doherty retain the prestigious Ekiden Relay for Ireland. Gerry also posted a highly impressive 28.01 10,000m on the track in Stockholm this summer. He wins the award for the second time.

**Valerie McGovern** is also a member of Donore Harriers and is currently on an athletic scholarship at the University of Kentucky. This past year saw Valerie make a breakthrough in collegiate competition in the States when she became the first Irishwoman to win an NCAA outdoor track title. She achieved this distinction when winning the 5000m in the American Collegiate Championships. She also placed 2nd in the 3000m at the same championships. Valerie turned in another sterling performance with an individual 2nd placing in the All American Collegiate Cross Country Championships just two weeks ago. She receives the Irish Runner/Seiko Award for the **Best Irish International Female Performer** of '89 and wins the award for the first time.

**Patricia Griffin** from Ballinamore has made an outstanding contribution to women's running in Ireland for over 20 years. This year, the Leitrim mother of two again turned in some very consistent performances on track and road. Her range of achievements gain her the award for the **Best Home-based Female Athlete** of '89. Among the

events won by Patricia in 1989 were the Evening Press Women's Mini-Marathon, The Evening Herald Streets of Dublin 10K, the National 10 Miles Championship, the National 5000m and 10,000m titles on track and a host of top road races countrywide. Patricia also took the silver medals in both the 1500m and 3000m at the National championships. This is her first Irish Runner/Seiko Award.

**Jim McNamara** is rapidly making a name for himself on the international front as the world's best veteran runner in the O/50 category. Jim has in the past won World and European veteran titles, but this year's achievement of two gold and two silver medals at the World Veteran Games in Oregon has got to be his crowning glory. Jim McNamara is without doubt the best O/50 5000m and 10,000m runner in the world and he wins the Irish Runner/Seiko Award for the **Best Irish Veteran** of '89.

**Emily Dowling**, one of Ireland's most popular runners, has over twenty years of involvement in the sport and still she continues to turn in quality performances. Emily has represented Ireland in both road and cross country events and this year she won a silver medal in the O/35 category in the cross country event at the World Veteran Games. This was a first achievement by an Irishwoman and will do much to encourage Irish veteran women's running. She earns the **Best Veteran Woman's Award** for '89.

**Andy Ronan** from New Ross is a runner who first showed great promise as a junior before taking up a track scholarship at Providence College in Rhode Island.

He performed well at collegiate level, but it is only since his graduation from Providence that we have seen the best performances from the talented Wexford runner. Ronan placed third in the National Cross Country Championships in Killenaule this year and went on to make the Irish senior cross country team for the World Cross Country Championships in Norway. Just a few weeks ago came another great performance, when he ran a brilliant 2.13.48 in his marathon debut in Minnesota. This performance in particular wins him the award for the **Most Improved Irish Runner** of '89.

**Aisling Molloy** from Ballymahon enjoyed a highly successful career at Brigham Young University in Utah and while attending there she won a National Collegiate Indoor 3000m title. This past

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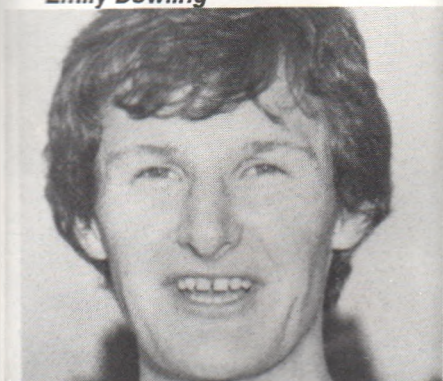
# BILL BATTERSBY

## The Quiet Hero

BY LINDIE NAUGHTON



• Emily Dowling



• Andy Ronan



• Aisling Molloy



• John Murray



• Bill Battersby

To at least a couple of generations of Irish athletics fans, Bill Battersby has been the impeccably dressed man on the gate.

If you were young and didn't have the money, Mr. Battersby would wave you in, but woe betide anyone who tried to do BLOE or BLE out of their due.

Despite this occasionally onerous labour, Bill has the enormous gift of making only friends in this world, which has meant that he has steered clear of rows and confrontations, quietly doing his job, first as registrar for the fledgling BLOE, then as its secretary and since 1974 as its treasurer, a post he still holds.

But Bill Battersby is not just the man who keeps BLOE in a very healthy financial state. Every year before the All-Stars dinner you will find him looking as close to harassed as he ever gets, as he plans the seating arrangements, argues with the hotel staff and even blows up the occasional balloon before the major function. Its success is another tribute to his quiet efficiency.

Aside from athletics, the sport he adopted as a means to keep fit during his soccer playing days, Bill is above all a family man and, since his retirement from CIE a couple of years ago, he has had more time to enjoy home life with his wife Gladys, their children and grandchildren.

Most of them, inevitably perhaps, have

been involved in athletics at one stage or another, either as members of Kilmacud AC, a club the family helped found, or later, of Crusaders.

Indeed, youngest son George earned an American scholarship for his prowess over 800m and is now settled in North Carolina with his American wife, not too far from big brother Kieran in Chata-nooga. High jumper Austin is settled in Canada while former 400m specialist Barry lives in England.

Still close to the family home in Kilmacud, Dublin are Greg, Gladys, Joyce, Denise and Louise, most of them still involved in sport at one level or another.

Bill Battersby has never looked for honour or glory from sport; he has been involved because he enjoys being involved and his quiet influence has been enormous. Just one instance: when BLOE was linked to the Milk Run, which in those days involved running ten miles, he was one of the few people to encourage women to run long distances, something they didn't even contemplate back then.

Athletics has changed enormously since Bill Battersby became involved. But suffice it to say, that as long as BLOE or indeed BLE can draw on people of his calibre rumours of the death of our sport will definitely be exaggerated.

### 1989 IRISH RUNNER / SEIKO AWARDS (contd)

track season, Aisling dominated Irish women's 800m running. She ran 2.02 for the distance on no less than five occasions. She also took a silver medal at the AAAs Indoor Championships and made the final of the European Indoor 800m. Among her other achievements were winning the 800m at the Dundrum International meeting and placing in the top three in all her other international races. She wins the **Special Merit Award** for '89.

This year BLOE, the juvenile board of athletics, celebrates its 21st anniversary and we introduce the **Irish Runner/Seiko BLOE Award** for the first time. **John Murray** from North Cork AC is the recipient of this award which he merits for an outstanding year's achievement in BLOE competition.

John is the current BLOE National Cross Country Champion U/16 and U/17. He also won gold in the 2000m steeplechase with a time of 5.56.20. He

won the 2000m steeplechase event in the junior international and also qualified in the steeplechase for the European Junior Track and Field Championships. He competed for Ireland in these championships at 17 and must be one of the very best of our emerging young stars of the future. John has also recently been selected as a member of the prestigious Kerrygold Squad. He looks like having a great future in athletics.

**Bill Battersby** is our final award winner for '89. He receives the **Outstanding Contribution to Athletics Award**. Bill is something of an institution in Irish athletics and the accompanying article by Lindie Naughton is but a brief tribute to a rare individual who has contributed greatly to Irish athletics for many years. We salute Bill Battersby and all the other award winners.

The Irish Runner / Seiko Awards will be presented in January.