

Report of Honorary Secretary 2006–2007

***Michael Hillery, University of Limerick
Past President of the IUAA***

The IUAA lost one of its stalwarts on 24 May 2007. Professor Michael Hillery's contributions to the IUAA were considerable. He was one of the initial group of members of university academic staff and postgraduate students who founded the IUAA in 1990 as a successor to the Intervarsity Committee to bring structure and rules to championships and membership. He drafted the first Constitution of the IUAA and guarded it carefully during the IUAA's formative years as the IUAA expanded to embrace the Regional Technical Colleges, later to become Institutes of Technology. He was the second President of the Association from October 1993 through October 1996 in succession to Professor Cyril M. White of UCD. He remained a member of the IUAA Executive until 2005.

Michael's single greatest achievement, which brought much kudos to the IUAA, was his bringing of the World Student Cross Country Championships to the University of Limerick in March 1994. He masterminded the event and its sponsorship. Michael also took on much of the organisation of the first IUAA Indoors Track and Field Championships. In its initial years these championships were organised by the University of Limerick with Michael Hillery very much at the helm. Michael saw the need for IUAA championships to cater for multi-event athletes and was instrumental in the introduction of the Multi-event Championship. At times he seemed to officiate at multiple events as well! He quickly calculated scores to keep athletes informed. More than anything else he encouraged athletes to have a go at multi-events and gave advice and praise to all competitors, not just to those from his own University.

Michael Hillery was Honorary President of the University of Limerick Athletic Club and immensely proud of its achievements in Track and Field. However, he took particular joy when the UL Womens' team won the Road Relay Championship and the Cross Country 'Cheetahs' in the 2000–2001 championship year. One did at times have intense arguments with Michael, but he was always gracious if he lost a vote or failed to persuade others. Above all he wanted third-level students to enjoy athletics. He was not tolerant of bad behaviour from any athlete or group of athletes on or off the sports field.

Professor Michael Hillery was the nephew of former President Patrick Hillery and had retired as Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Limerick in 2006. He was a founding member of the Progressive Democrats when Des O`Malley was expelled from the Fianna Fail party in the 1980s. Michael Hillery was a very highly respected engineering educator in Ireland

and abroad. He developed new courses and policies at UL within the Faculty of Engineering. Michael was much sought after as an external examiner for his rigour but fairness. He was very involved in prosthesis design to allow dynamic responses for natural and fast walking. Michael served on the Board of Forfás. He chaired its waste management task force.

Michael Hillery will be remembered by many of us for his tremendous enthusiasm and camaraderie and for the great energy he brought to his various roles in his service to the IUAA. From his varied roles, he could contribute a wealth of experience not only to Engineering in Ireland but also to his interests outside academia such as the IUAA and UL Athletic Club. Michael loved cycling, but his bike was no normal bike as it was fitted out with a speedometer and computer to record the details of each run, e.g., speed achieved and distance traveled.

Michael was not to be granted the long healthy years of retirement he richly deserved. He will be sorely missed within the IUAA for his wisdom, counsel and cráic. Robert Burns, the Scottish poet laureate, wrote an epitaph to his very good friend William Muir which is appropriate to Michael Hillery:

An honest man here lies at rest
As e'er God with his image blest!
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there's none, he made the best of this.

Michael Hillery may you rest in peace!

***Road Relay Championships
Host College: NUI Maynooth
Saturday 18 November 2006***

In the Womens' Road Relay Championship there were 9 scoring teams representing 7 Colleges plus three other 'composite' teams. The very strong DCU quartet of Ciara Durkan, Linda Byrne, Fionnuala Britton and Ellen Diskin won the team championship from UCC in Silver medal position and UCD taking the Bronze medals.

There was a fantastic turn-out for the Mens' event with 19 complete teams representing 9 Colleges with 2 non-scoring 'composite' teams. The race was a very closely run affair between UCD "A" and DCU "A" teams with the UCD team of John Eves, Alan McCormack, Mick Clohissey, James Nolan and

Garrett Coughlan taking the title in the end by 7 seconds. DCU took the Silver medals and QUB "A" team, the Bronze medals.

It was a chilly day but dry. Once again NUI Maynooth staged the event very well and the meal in the Maynooth dining hall was followed by an impromptu get-together by many of the athletes in Maynooth.

***Indoors Track & Field Championships
Nenagh Olympic Stadium
Saturday 2 December – Sunday 3 December 2006***

The Indoor T & F Championships took place in Nenagh during the first week in December. There were an increased number of heats and competitors in the Mens' sprints (60 m, 200 m, 400m) than in immediate past years. Particularly pleasing were the large numbers of athletes in the field events in both the Mens' and Womens' Championships.

Five new championship records were set.

Event	Athlete	College	Time/Height/Distance
1500 m	Danny Darcy	DCU	3:54.97
High Jump	Christopher Crowley	DCU	2.01 m
Pole Vault	Liam Houlihan	UL	4.30 m
16 kg WfD	Jeremy Harper	UU	9.29 m
8 kg WfD	Laura Kerr	UU	8.74 m

Particularly impressive was Danny Darcy's solo run against the clock from the gun.

Fifteen Colleges competed in the Mens' Championship, with all bar one scoring points. Twelve Colleges competed in the Womens' Championship, all of which scored points. The Mens' Team Championship gave a comfortable win to DCU, with UL in 2nd place and TCD, third. The Womens' Team Championship was a more closely fought event with the final result going down to the wire on the 4 x 200 m relay. UL took the title, with UU a close 2nd and DCU third. DCU won the combined championship from UL with UU in third place.

***Cross Country Championships
Host College: Athlone Institute of Technology
Saturday 24 February 2006***

The weather was kind for the Cross Country Championships at AIT. The course was well laid out and challenging. DCU Womens' team of Fionnuala Britton (1st), Linda Byrne (2nd), Ciara Durkan (3rd) and Azmera Gebrezgi (5th)

took the Team Championship emphatically, just being denied the perfect score by Mary Margaret Meade of UU in 4th place. Thus, UL's record of the first four places in 2001 remained intact. The Silver and Bronze team medals were closely fought with TCD beating UU by a single point.

Fionnuala Britton merits particular mention. Her win at AIT marked four straight IUAA cross country championship titles – 2004 (Tinryland, Carlow), 2005 (Malone Road, Belfast), 2006 (Santry, Dublin) and 2007 (AIT, Athlone). Her performances in the World Cross Country Championships in Mombasa, Kenya and in the World Athletic Championships in Osaka, Japan in the 3,000 m steeplechase attest to the calibre of this elite athlete who has graced IUAA cross country and T & F championships for the past four years. She has qualified for the 3,000 m steeplechase at the Beijing Olympics.

The Mens' Championship was keenly fought out over the 10K course. The individual medals went to Joe Sweeney (UCD), Patrick Hamilton (UU) and Mick Clohissey (UCD). UCD had four finishers in the top ten against DCU's three. Despite the DCU team packing well between positions 11–20, UCD brought their final two runners home in 18th and 20th positions to clinch the title. The Bronze team medals went to UU. DCU took the overall title by a mile.

Because of the change of date for these championships, the hotel that had been booked was no longer available for the social evening. AIT put on a dinner in the AIT restaurant and the disco was held in the 'Scribes' social centre. Special thanks are due to Noel Lawlor and Gordon Kennedy for the arrangements made at relatively short notice.

***Outdoors Track & Field Championships
Host College: Dublin City University
Friday 13 April – Saturday 14 April 2007***

The championships were held at the National Stadium, Santry. The two days were blessed with some of the finest of the weather in 2007. The temperatures on both days were those one would expect on a summer's day. For once the sprinters did not have to endure rain, high winds and chill.

Five championship records were set.

Event	Athlete	College	Record
3000 m S/C	Fionnuala Britton	DCU	10:07.08
4 × 400m		UU	3:52.32
8 kg WfD	Eileen O'Keeffe	RCSI	9.42 m
Hammer Throw	Eileen O'Keeffe	RCSI	67.21 m
Pole Vault	Edel O'Meara	NUIG	3.00 m

It is both fitting and proper to note in her one-year-down year, the outstanding contribution that Eileen O'Keeffe has made to IUAA championships as a student, firstly at AIT and latterly at RCSI. She has brought Irish Hammer throwing to new heights. Eileen has represented Ireland at three Universiades (World Student Games). Since 2001 she has won 19 IUAA Gold Medals in Hammer, Discus and 8 kg WfD – plus two Silver Medals in these events and 1 Bronze in Shot Putt – and has set 7 Championship Records. Her Silver Medal in the Hammer Throw at the World Student Games in Bangkok was a much deserved culmination of an outstanding Irish University athletic career. Many in years to come will look back on her performances, at times in very inclement weather, as having been a privilege to watch. All in the IUAA wish her success at the Olympic Games in Beijing next summer.

DCU were clear winners of the Mens' and Womens' Team Championships and Overall Team Title. UL took 2nd place in both team championships and 2nd overall. UCD took third place in the Mens' Championship and UU, third place in the Womens' Championship. The Noel Carroll Memorial Trophy for combined mens' and womens' middle distance events (800 m, 1500 m, 5000 m and 3000 m steeplechase) was won by DCU. DCU also won the Combined Events Team Trophy.

Fifteen Colleges participated in the Mens' championships, all bar one of which scored team points, while 13 Colleges competed in the Womens' Championships, all of whom scored points.

The championship dinner was held in the staff restaurant at DCU with the social event in the Hub student centre afterwards.

***Celtic University Cross Country
DCU Sports Grounds, Ballymun Road
Saturday 31st March 2007***

The Celtic University Cross Country was revived in 2007 and held in conjunction with Kit Kat Schools International Cross Country Championships, hosted by the Irish Schools Athletic Association in Dublin. Fine weather graced this event. The IUAA was represented by Irish Universities and Colleges Teams and Presidents' Select teams.

The IUAA teams won both the Mens' and the Womens' events, although Scottish Universities pushed the Mens' team to the very end. Thanks are due to Ryan Montgomery, RDO of the AAI for South Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford, for his enthusiasm for revitalising this event.

A buffet dinner was held in the Mercer Hotel followed by a pub-crawl and disco-crawl by team members. The Scottish and Welsh teams both enjoyed their experience in Dublin and the hospitality and were also enthusiastic that the event should continue on an annual basis.

This cross country event is now firmly back on the calendar as an annual event to be held in conjunction with the Schools International Cross Country

Championships. The incorporation of this event into the Schools International is aimed at improving the transition from under age athletics to junior/senior athletics. The opportunity for young athletes to watch, talk and run with senior athletes on the same course on the same day is designed to show that opportunities for athletics do exist in Irish third-level institutions.

Next year's event will be hosted in Perthshire, Scotland on Saturday 5th April 2008. This event will clash with the World Student Cross Country Championships on 5–6 April 2008 in Mauquenchy, France. Also with the World Cross Country Championships in Edinburgh on the 30 March 2008, the Celtic University Cross Country event will provide opportunities for athletes other than the top elite athletes to get international competition. Again team selections will be based on the IUAA championships.

AAI Integration

During 2006–2007 the IUAA has been represented on the Board of AAI by John Saulters (QUB) and Eric Brady (UCD). While the IUAA would have liked faster progress, much of the AAI business has been fraught with politics. However, recently progress has been made and the IUAA has made a submission to the AAI to indicate the areas in which the IUAA would like funding and assistance.

XXIV Universiade XXIV World University Games Track & Field Championships Bangkok, Thailand 2007 Main Stadium Thammasat University

Ten Irish track & field athletes competed at the World Student Games in Bangkok from the 9 August – 14 August 2007. Bro. John Dooley was the team Coach and Teresa McDaid, Assistant Coach. The full results for the Irish athletes are on the appended sheets.

The Silver medal won by Eileen O'Keeffe in the Hammer Throw continues the success of Irish athletes at the last two Games in Daegu (South Korea) and Izmir (Turkey) in bringing home medals. Other notable performances came from Deirdre Byrne (Cal Poly) and Orla Drumm (UCC) in getting to the final of the Womens' 1500m, finishing 8th and 10th, respectively. Joe McAllister (QUB) finished a credible 14th in the Half-Marathon, the 2nd European to finish. David McCarthy (UL) and Ailis McSweeney (UCC) made it to the semi-finals of the 800 m and 100 m, respectively. The most unfortunate athlete was Thomas Chamney (Notre Dame). He placed 4th in Heat 6 of the 800 m with the 16th fastest time overall of the 7 heats comprising 53 athletes, yet

did not qualify for the semi-finals – in 4 of the other 6 heats, he would have qualified by right for the semi-finals.

By all accounts the facilities were first class and the events well run. The one event where things went awry was the final of the Mens' 100 m. The race was ordered to be re-run by a Jury of Appeal the day after the first running of the final because the official result sheet showed the winner's reaction time (Simeon Williamson, GBR) as 0.0999, i.e., one ten-thousandth of a second faster than the reaction time permitted. The Jury decided that a malfunction had occurred during the race, which meant that the sprint, won by Williamson in 10.28 seconds, was not run fairly. In the re-run the first three athletes placed in the same Gold, Silver and Bronze positions, Williamson running a faster time of 10.22 into a stronger minus windspeed.

Irish University athletics has had a good year. The IUAA wishes all those athletes who have not already made the qualifying times for the Beijing Olympics all the best between now and next summer.

Cyril J Smyth
Honorary Secretary
3 November 2007

Universiade, Bangkok, Thailand Irish Athlete Performances

Athlete	University/ College	DOB	Event	Round	Heat/ Group	Place	Performance	Remarks
Anna BOYLE	University of Ulster	29 March 1983	100 m	1 st Round	7/7	4	12.13 (– 1.8)	Rank 23 rd =
				2 nd Round	1/4	6	12.03 (– 0.9)	Rank 24 th
Deirdre BYRNE	California Polytechnic State University	21 September 1982	1500 m	Semi-Final	2/2	4	4:15.61	Rank 10 th
				Final	1/1	8	4:16.58	Rank 8th
Thomas CHAMNEY	Notre Dame	16 April 1984	800 m	1st Round	6/7	4	1:49.05	Rank 26 th 16 th on time
Orla DRUMM	University College Cork	6 April 1984	1500 m	Semi-Final	1/2	7	4:20.88	Rank 12 th
				Final	1/1	10	4:22.78	Rank 10th
Sharon HEVERAN	University of Wales Institute	5 March 1985	High Jump	Qualifying	Pool A	11 =	1.70 m	Rank 15 th =

Athlete	University/ College	DOB	Event	Round	Heat/ Group	Place	Performance	Remarks
Eoin EVERARD	Dublin City University	23 April 1986	1500 m	Semi-Final	3/3	10	3:51.36	Rank 23 rd
Joseph McALLISTER	Queen's University Belfast	23 December 1980	Half Marathon	Final	1/1	14	1:12:44	Rank 14th
David McCARTHY	University of Limerick	16 July 1983	400 m	1 st Round	6/7		DNS	
			800 m	1 st Round	7/7	3	1:49.59	Rank 15 th
				Semi-Final	2/3	5	1:48.16	Rank 9 th 7 th on time
Ailis McSWEENEY	University College Cork	1 February 1985	100 m	1 st Round	1/7	2	12.13 (- 1.2)	Rank 23 rd =
				2 nd Round	3/4	4	11.92 (- 0.5)	Rank 17 th =
				Semi Final	2/2	8	12.14 (- 1.9)	Rank 16 th
Eileen O'KEEFFE	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	31 May 1981	Hammer	Final		2	68.46 m	Silver Medal