

LEGACY BY WORLD-FAMOUS LIMERICK ATHLETE

Great collection of sporting trophies

ONE of the largest collections of sporting trophies in the world is housed in one of the smallest villages in County Limerick. The trophies, consisting of massive silver cups and medals of solid gold — many inset with diamonds — were won by the world-famous athlete, John J. Flanagan, and are on display in the licensed premises of his nephew, Mr. Michael O'Dea, Athlaca.

Born in Moortown, near Kilmac, in 1868, John Flanagan came of a family that has made sporting history. His father, Mike, was an Irish record breaker in hammer throwing and jumping and his brother, Tom, broke two world records for throwing the 12 lb. hammer. Another brother, Patrick, held the Junior Championship of America for throwing the 16 lb. hammer.

Before he left for the United States in 1894, John Flanagan had already broken the record for the 16 lb. hammer throw in Ireland. In Kilmac, where he came to from Moortown as a boy, he learned to become one of Ireland's best all round athletes, and even in his youth his prowess at the sports field had become a local legend.

But it was in America that this Irish, English, United States and Olympic champion climbed to world fame. He brought the hammer record from 140 ft. 11 ins. to 184 ft. 4 ins., and his feats with the 56 lbs. weight were remarkable, too.

At his first public appearance in New Jersey he created a new world's record in the hammer throw, and it was an indication of the great things that were to come. He went on to become the hammer champion of England in 1896, with a throw of 181 ft. 11 ins., and the introduction of the new style hammer with a steel wire handle literally left old world record figures yards behind.

Champion of three Olympics

His is the amazing distinction of winning the three successive Olympics of 1900, 1904 and 1908 for throwing the 16 lb. hammer. In the Paris Olympics of 1900 he represented the United States and won with a throw of 167' 4". He received a later honour for this feat from the New York Athletic Club, which is incorporated under the laws of the State of New York. In the home of Mr. O'Dea, Athlaca, a certificate of the club reads: "This is to certify that John J. Flanagan was winner of the Hammer Throw in the Olympic Games held at Paris, France, in the year 1900. As a reward for having won this significant feat, he was duly elected an Olympic Champion Member of the New York Athletic Club of the City of New York, February 14, 1903."

Standing 5' 9", this 18-stone of bone and muscle won countless minor trophies and held nine American Championships for his uncanny skill with the hammer. And to prove his versatility, two of his many wins with the discus are recorded on gold medals in the Athlaca collection. One, inset with a diamond, is for a throw at the Championships organised by the St. Patrick's Athletic Association, Wilmington, Delaware. Another, from the A.U.U.S., tells how he won the Championship of the United States in 1907 with a record throw of 111 feet.

Ranking with the most ornate of the medals is the Dowling Trophy for Points, presented by the Greater New York Irish Athletic Association, 1902. Fashioned from solid gold, this triple pendant has the Irish and American flags beautifully embossed in enamel.

The fat man's race

John Flanagan repeated his Olympic win of 1900 at the Olympic Games held in St. Louis, 1904. And on the side-board in Athlaca stands a massive silver cup which he also won at the Games. It is The Louisiana Purchase Exhibition, presented by



Mr. and Mrs. Michael O'Dea, Athlaca, with some of the many trophies won by John J. Flanagan.

Erasmus Wells. But not all of the trophies tell of serious trials of skill on the sportsfield. One huge cup which he bore away in 1904 must have raised many a laugh in the winning. It is the Louis F. Hallen Cup, presented by the Policemen's Benevolent Association of the Borough of the Bronx for the Fat Man's Race. The distance was 100 yards and every competitor had to weigh over 15 stone!

In between the Olympics of 1904 and 1908, many cups and medals tell of John Flanagan's achievements. There is the Points Trophy for the athlete scoring the most points in the United States, presented by the Hon. John F. Ahern, President of the Borough of Manhattan, 1905; Police Field Day, 16 lb. hammer, 1906; Deputy Commissioner Arthur J. O'Keefe Trophy for Police Field Day, 56 lb. weight, 1907, and at the same sports meeting, the Globe Trophy for 56 lbs. hammer. They are but a few of the many.

A year of glory

For John J. Flanagan, 1908 was a year of glory. Many of the massive silver cups and heavy gold medals tell of the glorious days of that year that could never fade in his memory. But one of the least elaborate was the most prized. It was the simple Olympic gold medal, briefly inscribed "Hammer record, J. J. Flanagan, 170 ft. 4 1/2 ins. in Olympic Games, 14th July, 1908."

That year too he won the British Hammer championship with a throw of 183 ft. 4 ins., which was also a record for the competition.

A New York policeman himself, John Flanagan travelled from London Olympics of 1908 to test his strength against that of his colleagues in the D.M.P. An inscription on one of the medals in Athlaca tells how he got on — "Presented to John J. Flanagan, world's champion hammer thrower, by some of his admirers in the Dublin Police, per Denis Carey, on the occasion of his breaking the world's record with the 16 lb. hammer at their sports, Ballsbridge, 3rd August, 1908." Denis Carey was a Kilmac man.

Another gold medal, inset with a diamond, tells of another honour conferred on his return to the United States — "Columbia's greeting to J. Flanagan. Presented by the citizens of New York, commemorating the homecoming of the victorious American team from the Olympic Games, London, 1908."

Many other medals, telling of many other honours, include: Irish-American Athletic Club, N.Y., 56 lb. weight, 1908; The Pittsburgh Press, inset with diamond; Field Day, Danbury, Conn., throwing the 16 lb. hammer, June, 1906; Recreative Association of Firemen, for 56 lb. weight, 1909; Federation

of Canada, Amateur Athletics, Championship 16 lb. hammer, Sept. 15, 1909; East Shore Amusement, 16 lb. hammer throw handicap, 1909; Co. Cayuga Y.M.C. and B. Association, 16 lb. hammer handicap, 1909; Clan na nGael, Rhode Island, 56 lb. weight championship; Amateur Athletic Union of the U.S., champion throwing 56 lb. weight, 1909; Metropolitan Association championship, 16 lb. hammer, June 11, 1910, at the 84th games, Travers Island. And so the trail of glory goes on and on.

His brother trained Jack Johnson

A few words about John's famous brother, Tom, will not be out of place here. Tom chose Toronto, Canada, as his adopted home and did tremendous work for the promotion of Gaelic sports there. He had the distinction of being the first "palace" who was formally instituted a member of Gayuga Indian tribe. As a weight-thrower, he was a world record breaker with a one

hand throw of 122' 8" and a two hand throw of 128' 7" (12 lb. hammer). He trained and managed many famous athletes, including the marathon Indian runner, Tom Longboat, and was also associated with the success of the Olympic runner, Johnny Hayes, Johnny; it will be remembered, paid a visit to Ireland last year.

Tom Flanagan was manager and trainer of the world-champion boxer, Jack Johnson. An interesting link between the two has been preserved for many years now in Mr. O'Dea's home in Athlaca. It is a simple but sincere tribute to Tom Flanagan from Jack Johnson's mother, and reads: "Tom Flanagan, the Real Irishman, from Jack Johnson, Champion." The part referring to the Irishman is written in green, and that to the negro in black. Enclosed in a frame, it carries an explanatory note from Tom: "The enclosed I want always kept in the family. It was made by the hands of a grand old negro slave, Jack Johnson's mother; she sent it to me 28 years ago."

Tom Flanagan brought many Irish athletes to Canada and had them trained there. One was Mick Creed of Bruff.

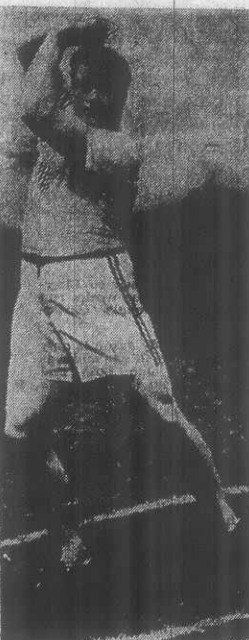
The wife of the late John Flanagan, Mrs. Flanagan, still lives in Kilmac, and a brother, Michael, farms there. Another brother, Patrick, lives in Newcastle West. His nephews are Michael O'Dea, Athlaca; William O'Dea, Corbally, Limerick; and Josie O'Dea, Ballyferriter. Josie was well-known in Limerick sporting circles; he was a member of the famous Young Munster Bateman Cup team of 1928. A niece of John Flanagan's, Mrs. Con Randles, lives in Kilmaclock.

John Flanagan closed his brilliant athletic career in 1911 and later took up farming in Kilmac, East, Kilmaclock. During his years in America he coached in Harvard and Princeton Universities. He helped to turn out many well-known athletes here, too, including Willie Britton, who won a number of British and Irish championships for throwing the hammer.

'Winning glory for Ireland'

John Flanagan died in June, 1938, and he buried in Ballingaddy, Kilmaclock. Perhaps some day his admirers will erect over his grave a memorial commemorating his great athletic achievements.

John Devoy, the noted Irish patriot, in one of his last letters paid him a fitting tribute: "It is one of my most pleasant memories to stand in Celtic Park watching your splendid figure as you whirled the hammer around and sent it flying into space... you have done more credit in the athletic field than any other man, except, perhaps, Martin Sheridan, and I always held you as the fresh type of the old Gallowglass... winning glory for Ireland."

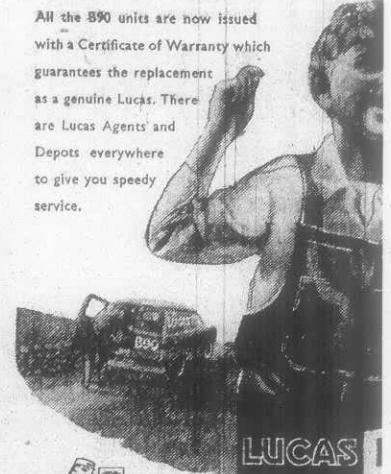


World record breaker John J. Flanagan, winner at three successive Olympics, and one of the greatest Irish athletes of all time.

Here's the man with the B90, dad!...

"What already I only phoned a little while ago"
"Yes Dad, I know—but they do say its immediate!"

All the B90 units are now issued with a Certificate of Warranty which guarantees the replacement as a genuine Lucas. There are Lucas Agents and Depots everywhere to give you speedy service.



IMMEDIATE EXCHANGE

Keep the certificate safely and produce it should the need arise

JOSEPH LUCAS LTD.
North Portland Street, Dublin
Upper Library Street, Belfast
Baginbun Quay, Cork.
147 Strand Road, Derry.



THE GO-AHEAD FARMER



CAN BE AIDED BY—
LONG TERM LOANS from
THE AGRICULTURAL CREDIT CORP.
HARCOURT STREET, DUBLIN

IRISH SUNSHINE CRUISE

S.S. DEVONIA
DUBLIN—MADEIRA—CASABLANCA—LISBON
OPTIONAL—DUBLIN.
Sponsored by Bencavin College Building Fund (D)
APRIL 30 to MAY

Tickets
ALL PARTICULARS:
J. H. LEWIS & PARTNERS
53 Mid. Abbey St., Dublin. 'Pho
(j26-f9-m9-a13)

You Save Money by Shopping... Lowest Cash Prices

THOMAS J. WALSH
COMPLETE HOUSE FURNISHER
12 ROCHE'S STREET. 64 & 65 CA1

