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months, among them Chief Supt Gerry Mahon, who officially retired this Monday.

"I think everyone is aware that there has been a significant drop right across the country in Garda numbers. Obviously it is linked into the current political situation in relation to the economy, and

the impact of the Budget," said Supt O'Brien.

While he pointed out that Division had been fortunate in that there had been a significant increase in Garda numbers over the last few years, he warned that the full effects of the embargo on recruitment in the public service probably won't be felt for some time.

number of new gardai in the Division, so what's happening is there is nobody now going into Templemore so it will take some time for the trickle effect of that to impact on the ground. We are losing a number of senior people in rural areas, in particular, who have given tremendous service. There is no

going to be difficult to replace them and it won't happen overnight," he said.

The moratorium on recruitment and promotion in Gardai, which came into force last March, has seen many senior vacancies remain unfilled and has left Templemore being used predominantly for updating the training given

local knowledge is being lost by men and women leaving the force, in some case well before their time," he said.

Meanwhile, tributes were paid by members of the committee to Chief Supt Gerry Mahon on his retirement from the force this Monday after 38 years of service.

## Memorial is unveiled to 'Barefooted runner' Tom

### Leader Reporter

THE accomplishments of the famous athlete, Tom Walsh, will never be forgotten in Caherline where a memorial in his honour was unveiled at the weekend.

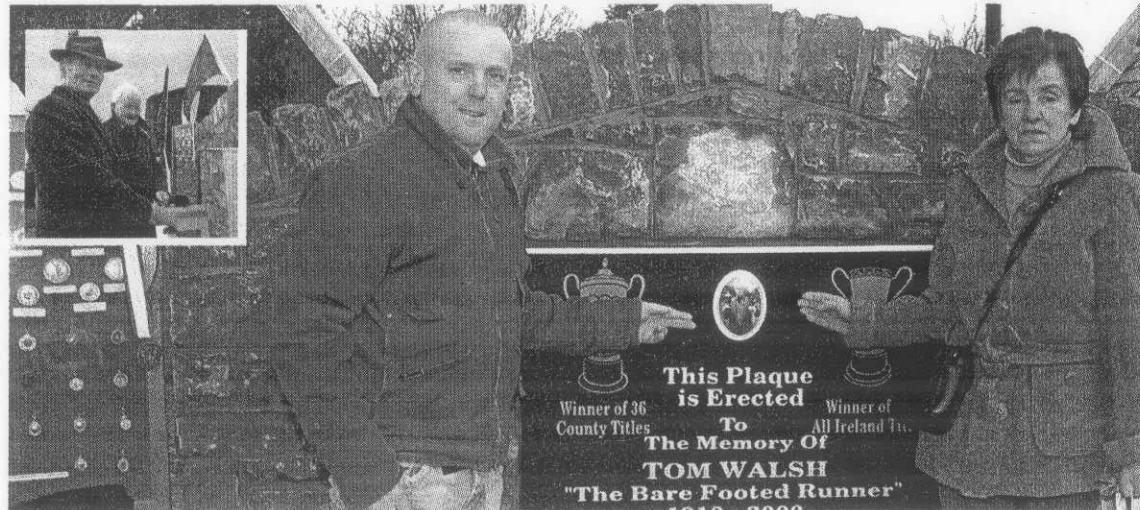
Known as "the barefooted runner" Tom won over 200 races, including numerous Munster titles and 36 Limerick championships.

Despite the inclement weather at times, a large crowd turned up on Sunday at the church crossroads to honour one their outstanding natives.

The unveiling ceremony was jointly performed by former Olympic athlete Jim Hogan, a close athletic colleague of the late Tom, and Fr Pat Currian, PP, who had earlier celebrated a memorial Mass in the local church.

"The memorial committee had everything arranged down to the last tee," said local man Pat Hourigan, who produced a souvenir booklet for the occasion.

The chairman of the Tom Walsh Memorial Com-



Maisie Williams, a niece of athlete Tom Walsh, and Fergus Williams, at the memorial to her uncle in Caherline, and, inset, Tom Hogan, a contemporary of Mr Walsh, and Fr Pat Currian, who unveiled the memorial

mittee, Sean Murnane, acted as MC.

Former cyclist and athletics administrator Ronnie Long praised the effort put in by local people in remembering Tom Walsh and recalled some of the historic aspects of athletics in Ireland, which goes back 150 years.

He outlined an area with a radius of 40 miles, and with its centre at Croom, as one of the most famous

areas possibly in the world that produced world standard champion athletes.

He said that possibly only for the advent of the Second World War, when Tom Walsh was in his prime, that he would have made the Olympic Games and would have gone on to greater things.

Tom Walsh's athletics career spanned 22 years in all. His athletic prowess on the running fields and

tracks of Ireland and abroad during the 1930s 1940s and 1950s inspired many a young athlete.

Maisie Williams, Tom's niece, thanked all who contributed to the memorial and a special word of praise was given to Bobby Wright for the donation of the site.

"Several of Tom Walsh's former running colleagues attended, and it was indeed heartwarming to see them in fine fettle," said Mr

Hourigan.

Among the large attendance were Deputy Niall Collins and local councillors Bridget Teefy and John Egan.

"All in all it was a great day for the parish of Caherconlish / Caherline, and in particular for the Walsh family and their extended family. It was most certainly a unifying and memorable event," said Mr Hourigan.

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