

# TIPPERARY ATHLETES

## James Tobin

by Michael O'Dwyer

James Tobin was born in 1844 at Ballytohill, Nine-Mile-House, County Tipperary. According to local church records he was baptised on 1 June 1844. He was a son of Charles Tobin and Judith Tobin (née Cody). His parents got married in Mullinahone parish on 5 March 1832. James Tobin was a well-known exponent of the hammer and 56 lb weight. During this period of early Irish athletics history among other weight throwers from the area were Michael Tobin of Drangan, Thomas Kennedy of Poulacapple and, of course, not too far away was Maurice Davin of Carrick-on-Suir. At the Irish athletics championships James Tobin was the winner of the hammer throw in 1880 when he was unopposed and had a best throw of 94 ft 8 in. (28.85 m). He was runner-up at the championships in 1883 with 81 ft 8 in. (24.59 m) to Owen Hart of the Royal Irish Constabulary with 90 ft 3 in. (27.51 m). Both years the championships were held at Lansdowne Road. James Tobin got married to Mary Tobin, native of Croughclooney, Newcastle, on 23 October 1880 in Newcastle church. However, after she died in 1890, he got married again to Ellen Morrissey, native of Fort Edward House, Ballinahow, Ballycahill on 14 February 1893 in Ballycahill church. Thirty years later her younger sister Stasia Morrissey got married to Michael Heffernan, the TD and international rugby player. Interestingly, James Tobin's eldest child, Charles (1882–1966), spent many years working as a cooper in San Francisco. His daughter, Mary Tobin (1919–1996), was a columnist for nearly fifteen years for the *San Francisco Examiner* writing on adoption and social welfare. Her first trip to Ireland was in 1963 when she covered the Rose of Tralee Festival for the paper. She was also public relations director for social service programmes in the archdiocese of San Francisco. A grandson of James Tobin, Charlie Tobin of Ballyduggan, Mullinahone, was killed in action during the Second World War in September 1944. James Tobin died on 26 April 1908 at his residence, Ballytohill, aged sixty-three, and is interred in Kilvemnon cemetery, near Mullinahone.

### Titles Won at Senior National Championships:

#### **Irish Athletics Championships (under the auspices of Irish Champion Athletic Club)**

1880	Hammer	94 ft 8 in. (28.85 m)
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