

## **PBs Galore for Newcastle & District AC athletes at the Antrim Coast Road Half-Marathon**

It's been a better than average summer with some fine spells of weather along the way as many runners are preparing for the autumn marathon season. Notable on Sunday 3 October both the London and the Belfast Marathons take place with Manchester a week later.

Many in Newcastle & District AC are preparing over the traditional 3-month period for one of the three and Sunday was an opportunity 5 weeks (or 6) out to understand the 'state of play' and the outcome, to say the least, is very encouraging.



*Totten stong as an ox passing the 17km mark*

First up at 8am in the elite field was **Eoghan Totten**. A 2:16 marathon runner from Dublin 2016, Totten also boasted a half-marathon PB of 65:00 from Barcelona 2020. 18 months on it was hard to tell exactly what shape he was in as he rebuilt from 3 months out with injury around the turn of the year. Safe enough to say he surprised everyone with a magnificent run coming home in 64:15 to take 45 seconds off his lifetime best. Great progress that should give him confidence going into London where he will be part of the elite field.

The main field departed at 9:45am and with conditions still very good – a 10/12mph headwind from the north along the coast on the way out and so a helping wind for the harder miles on the way back.

**Lindsay Gordon** set a 69:37 PB in Edinburgh in September 2019 but has an a series of more downs than ups since then. Overt he past few months he has trained very consistently and today produced his second fastest half-marathon ever recording 70:24 and all the signs are there that he can go from strength to strength from here.



*Lindsay Gordon with Coach Richard Rodgers*

Similarly **David O'Flaherty** set a PB of 72:30 all the way back in December 2017 in Lanzarote and has been interrupted by injury even in recent months. However, a late decision to race on Sunday after recent good weeks of training paid off as he came home in 73:28 for also his second best ever. He is preparing for a December marathon in the Canaries.



*Synchronised Runny – David O'Flaherty & Aidy Brown*

Age is creeping up on **Aidy Brown** too and he recently joined the ranks of the over40s and he showed that he is in the shape of his life too with a 74:16 PB taking nearly 3 and a half minutes off his best – 40 is the new 30.

After nearly 30 years of running and still only 42, **David McNeilly** has been planning his first marathon effort since before the pandemic and all being well it will happen in London in 5 weeks. After today's display of running, coming home in a 3-minute PB of 1:14:37 he will be very much looking forward to that.



*David McNeilly on his way to another PB*

Hilltown's **Thomas O'Gorman** has been a prolific racer and came to Larne ready to re-write his best and he didn't disappoint either recording 75:26 knocking just over a minute off his previous best.



*Thomas O’Gorman with 200m to go to record a one minute PB*

Bryansford’s **Sean Russell** ☺ is hoping for a big marathon performance in London and showed he is rounding into form with an excellent 76:10 PB knocking 1 and a half minutes off the time he recorded in April at Down Royal.



*James King & Sean Russell – big PBs*

Sean ran much of the race with **Jimmy King** and the picture above shows the pair of them locked together with only 200m to go. They seemed to cross the line together but the chip timing gave King a time of 76:09 knocking a full 5 minutes off his PB – brilliant running.

Next home was **Brendan McQuaid** who after another really consistent period of training ran a massive PB of 76:29 knocking nearly 10 minutes off his best – a tremendous result.



*Brendan McQuaid heading for a 10-minute PB*

**Neil McGeough** took up running during lock-down around a year ago and his progress has been spectacular. He continued that progress today with a 79:19 PB in his first attempt over the distance.



*Neil McGeough heads for a debut sub-80 minutes half-marathon*

**Johnny Crutchley** ran the Rankin Round in just over 21 hours a few weeks ago and seems to have kept on running. He intends to do the London Marathon and he rocked up to record a 79:51 PB in Larne today, his first time under 80 minutes.



*Johnny Crutchley heading for a first time under 80 minutes*

Maybe even 50 is the new 30 for since **Phil Murdock** turned 50 last year there has been no looking back. Today he ran like Forrest, he just ran and ran, coming home in 79:53 to knock over 3 minutes off his personal best – consistent work paying off again.



*Phil Murdock easing his way to a 3-minute PB*

**Áine Gosling** is another one who just passed a significant birthday milestone this summer reaching the dizzy heights of 40 and she too goes from strength to strength. Setting PBs already this summer she turned her attention to the half-marathon where she had a PB of 89:12 from the Belfast Half-Marathon in September 2019. Not any longer for another storming run brought her home in 84:10 more than a 5-minute improvement.



*Áine Gosling flying to a 5-minute PB*

**Mark Holland** has trained consistently well over the past couple of years and those efforts are paying dividends. He ran an 18:31 5km PB in Lisburn a year ago but today represented a breakthrough with a brilliant 85:29 PB knocking over 10 minutes off his best from the Belfast Half in September 2019.



*Mark Holland taking 10 minutes off his PB*

**Bob Brown** also plans an autumn marathon in five weeks time and he showed his preparations are going well with a very strong looking 86:38 today.



*Bob Brown approaching the finish*

**Ashlene Mussen** is another who has produced PBs across the board this year and last since returning to running after the birth of Ronan. She has reduced her 5k PB to 19:21 and very recently her 10k PB to 39:51. She shocked evn herself to come home today in 87:51 to take nearly 10 minutes off her previous best.



*Ashlene Mussen powers towards the finish line to record a massive 8-minute PB*

**Oran Dillon** has loads of potential and recorded his 2nd fastest half-marathon ever of 92:18 and will go again in London at the Royal Parks Half a week after the London Marathon.

**Gerard McAuley** has had a mixed bag of training but is now coming out the other side and 93:38 represented a step in the right direction. His mate **Kerri Grant** ran a debut performance of 97:09 exceeding his own expectations. Finally, **Gerry Kingston** followed up the Donard Race on Saturday with a 101:48 performance in Larne.



*Back Row: Aidy Brown, Coach, Phil Murdock, Mark Holland, David McNeilly, Brendan McQuaid, James King, Neil McGeough; Front Row: Ashlene Mussen, Áine Gosling, Gerard McAuley, Kerri Grant, David O'Flaherty*

## **Newcastle & District AC Results**

**Eoghan Totten 64:15 PB (PB was 65:00)**

Lindsay Gordon 70:24

David O'Flaherty 1:13:28

**David McNeilly 1:14:37 PB (PB was 1:17:42)**

**Aidan Brown 1:14:16 PB (PB was 1:17:45)**

**Thomas O'Gorman 1:15:26 PB (PB was 1:16:28)**

**Sean Russell 1:16:10 PB**

**James King 1:16:09 PB (PB was 1:21:10)**

**Brendan McQuaid 1:16:29 PB (PB was 1:26:00)**

**Neil McGeough 1:19:19 PB**

**Johnny Crutchley 1:19:51 PB**

**Phil Murdock 1:19:53 PB (PB was 1:23:08)**

**Áine 1:24:10 PB (PB was 1:29:05)**

Bob Brown 1:26:38

**Ashlene Mussen 1:27:51 PB (PB was 1:36:00)**

**Mark Holland 1:25:29 PB (PB was 1:35:59)**

Oran Dillon 1:32:18

Gerard McAuley (GMAC) 1:33:38

**Kerri Grant PB 1:37:09**

Gerry Kingston 1:41:48

### **Footnotes:**

Congratulations to **Patrick McNiff** on his victory at the 10k at Strangford Festival on Friday night past. Patrick covered the undulating trail course in 32:03, a quick time over that terrain and another good step back on his road to recovery.

Also congratulations to another club man, Seattle-based, **Ryan Forsyth** who won the Seattle Marathon-organised 10k in 31:30 on an undulating course with c900 feet of climbing.