



OVERALLS OFF

Name:	Aidan Garvey
Place of residence:	Newry, County Armagh
Number of cows:	160 cows
Hobby:	Irish dancing

Aidan Garvey: "It gives me a positive outlook on other aspects of my life"

Lord of the dance!

text Rachael Porter

He's been Irish dancing since he was four years old and, today, five-times world champion Aidan Garvey is a member of the famous Irish dancing troupe, Riverdance.

Aidan also travels to the US twice a year to teach dancing – sometimes for months at a time. And he likes nothing more than to dance in team competitions, particularly when representing his local dance school where he learnt his first steps with teacher Mona Roddy.

At 29 years old, he's plenty more dancing years ahead of him and he's fortunate that his father, Brian, and three older brothers also have a hand in running and managing the family's 160-cow dairy herd, based at Silverbridge in Northern Ireland.

This allows him the freedom to pursue his passion for dancing. "I'm spoilt really – I have the best of both worlds. If I'm not dancing then I'm working with the cows," says Aidan.

When he's at home you'll find him milking, feeding or carrying out other day-to-day tasks. "But being part of a large family, I do have the freedom to go off to the US once or twice a year to teach or tour with the troupe."

When he does come home, he says that the positive outlook on life that dancing gives him is invaluable. "Dancing is great for the mind – as well as the body. Not only am I fit, but I'm also positive about life. When I'm dancing I'm not thinking about anything else. I'm in the moment. And it's incredibly life affirming. It's the best feeling in the world, whether you're on stage in front of a hundred or thousands of people."

Adding to his world titles, the first of which he took as a 15 year old, Aidan also has three individual and five team All-Ireland championships under his belt. He turned professional in 2009, at 21 years old, after winning his final world-title. He then began to tour the world, as part of the 30-strong world-renowned Riverdance Irish dancing troupe. "I've been to the US, China, Russia and across Europe. Dancing has opened up the world for me and given me a broader perspective on life."

A particular highlight for Aidan is an annual summer project, Studio2Stage, in New Jersey in the US. With girlfriend Miriam Lee and other renowned choreographers, he teaches 100 aspiring professional dancers and produces a full stage-produced show in just nine days. "It's a huge challenge – it's great fun and extremely rewarding," he says. "This will be the fourth time that we've run the project and I feel honoured to be part of it. And I'm lucky to have a big family back home to take care of the herd in my absence."