

NORTH DOWN ATHLETIC CLUB

SECRETARY'S REPORT

2011 started with an excellent performance from our athletes at the **NI & Ulster Junior, Inter & Masters Cross Country Championships** on January 8. Niall Robinson became Junior champion and Lauren Scott won the Inter ladies. Both men's (Niall, Robin Brown 3rd, Alex Donald 9th, James Budde 14, Thomas Simpson and Glen Willis) and ladies team were placed 1st (Lauren, Julie Balmer 13th, Debbie Matchett 14th and Ali Robinson 16th).

We continue to receive support from **Lucozade Sport**. The support involves nutritional talks, athlete tests and supply of product samples. We have had two seminars delivered by Emma from the Science team one in April (mainly Paddy's throwing group) and one in September for the Monday night group.

In 2011 we introduced a series of track and field meetings using the spotlight and the electric timing at the Sportsplex. Roy and Lynne have trained James Budde in the use of the electric timing equipment. The first meeting was held on Tuesday 4 April and billed as a pre season meeting. Subsequent meetings were held on 17 May and a jumps and throws meeting on 28 June. The object of the series was to increase the number of meetings held at the Sportsplex and to give competition for events not well catered for. Tony Wall acted as Event Director for the series and was instrumental in putting the meetings together, setting the timetable and organising officials.

North Down Sports Advisory Sports Awards were held on Friday 8 April at the Marine Court Hotel. The guest speaker was Justin Fitzpatrick. We nominated Stuart Brown as Young

volunteer, Paddy McGrattan for the Bruce Mulligan Award, The Senior Ladies team for Team of the Year, Matthew Martin as Young Sports Person of the Year and Tom Reynolds as Sports Person of the Year. Tom Reynolds won Sports Person of the year for his performances in the Commonwealth Games for 2010 and former member, Amy Foster, received an award of Merit for her performances at the Commonwealth Games.

The postponed **Ken and Lynne Hawtin Trophy** took place on Wednesday 4 May. The winner was David Balmer.

The Cross Country Awards and Annual Club Handicap was held in Crawfordsburn Park on Monday 20 June. **The Smith Handicap Shield** was won by Brian Smith. Perpetual trophies for performances throughout the season were presented to: Claire Francis, Abbey Taylor, Jessica Craig, Lauren Scott, Lynne Kerr, Roberta Dornan, Charles McNutt, Charlie Quinn, Glen Willis, Josh Lowry, Niall Robinson, Francis Marsh, Les Wilkinson and Terry Eakin.

Northern Ireland Young Athletes League, sponsored by McCain was won again this year by City of Derry Spartans on 836 points. We were placed 4th on 510 points. The sponsor has awarded prizes to a boy and girl from each participating club in each of the three qualifying league matches. Winners from North Down AC were Round 1 Oliver Wakefield and Olivia Cumming; Round 2 Beth Wilson and James Doherty.

The Senior Men's Team retained their 1st position in the **Team Trophy** with the Women's team finishing 3rd.

The **North Down Youth Games** were held this year on 2 August. This is a popular fixture and the weather was kind to us. We had a good field of athletes from a range of clubs. Our faithful band of officials and willing parents made the evening a success. Age Group prizes were awarded to Oliver Wakefield, Andrew Kennedy, Andrew Mellon, Kate O'Connor (St Gerard's), Katie Larmour (CofL) Beth Wilson and Erin Quinn (CofL).

The scenic **Crawfordsburn 5K** Trail Race was held on Wednesday 17 August with a good field of 93 finishers. Jordan Stokes was 2nd and Kerry Speers was the first North Down lady home in 13th position. Thanks to Jonathan McGrath for assisting with the results service.

The Senior Men and Ladies travelled to Sligo to compete in the AAI League final (Premier Division).

The **Bangor Classic**, sponsored by **North Down Borough Council** was held on 24 September. Our sub-committee, Brian, Geoffrey and Davie have a very good working relationship with the council officials and the PSNI, without whose support the race could not take place. It was a bright autumn day and we were very pleased to have 820 entrants with the online and Friday night entries proving a great success. Rodger Perrott took on the role as Clerk of the Course and did an excellent job. Our members were very successful with the ladies team of Jessica Craig, Roberta Dornan and Julie Balmer finishing in 2nd place; Debbie Matchett 2nd O45. The Men's team was also 2nd James Budde, Darren McKee, Glen Willis and Christopher Bryan. The 2012 event is already in the planning stages.

The first **Victoria Park Relays** and NI relay championships organized by Orangegrove AC proved a successful day out for North Down. The team placings were as follows: Senior Men's A team: 3rd Senior Men's B team : 7th, Senior Men's C: 9th, Male Masters Team: 6th, Master's Women A 1st, Master's Women B 3rd, Senior Women's A 3rd, Senior B 6th.

Nominations were sought in various categories for the annual **UKA Awards**. This year we nominated Francis Marsh for Coach of the Year, Paddy McGrattan for Performance Coach, Roger Perrott as Official of the year, North Down Special Olympics Club as providing opportunities for People with disabilities. The awards ceremony was held at Athletics House on 19 October. Presentations were made by Lynn Davies, Olympic Gold Medalist, and Tokyo 1964. I am pleased to report that Roger Perrott was awarded Official of the Year.

The following members represented Northern Ireland at the recent British and Irish Masters Cross Country International at Bellahouston Park, Glasgow on 26th November, 2011; Stephanie Hambling, Roberta Dornan, Debbie Matchett, Mark Weir, Gerry Coy, Terry Eakin, Fred Murdock, Brian Smith & David Seaton.

Our Annual **Christmas Dinner**, hosted by Brian Smith and organised by David Seaton was held in Carnalea Golf Club on Monday 5 December with over 65 members, from all sections of the club attending. Thanks to Michael Jenkins, (Up and Running) and Geoffrey Weir (La Mon Hotel) for providing the majority of the prizes for the charity ballot. This year almost £300 was raised to be donated to Kindfund a charity supporting the work of a school in Kenya.

Paddy McGrattan, Claire and Barry Scarth, Jill Aiken and Sarah Benton attended meetings arranged by North Down Borough Council as part of the consultation process on the Sport and Leisure Strategic Development Plan for the Borough.

Crawfordsburn Trail Runs: O'Boyle Accounting and Taxation Ltd (Gerry O'Boyle) is offering a prize of £20 to the first lady member of North Down AC to beat 20.00 mins in any of the 3 trail races throughout the year and a USB 2gb Memory Stick to North Down AC lady or man (35 years or older) who runs less than 22.00mins in any of the three races during the year. The club will offer £20 to the first man to beat 16.30 mins.

The Hawtin Handicap Shield was held on 10 December at Crawfordsburn Country Park. The sprints and multi events section of the club dominated the event won by Francis Marsh.

Virgin London Marathon club places have been balloted and awarded to Pat O'Driscoll and Michael Jenkins.

The Men's team was 2nd in the 77th McConnell Shield and the ladies team was 1st team with an excellent score of 14 points.

Four North Down girls made the winter journey to Derry on Saturday morning of the 18 November for the North West Cross Country Championships where the home City of Derry AC club celebrated an early Christmas - taking the first 7 places in the 6K race plus both men and women team titles plus maximum league bonus points. The North Down girls made the right decision to travel as they were 2nd team and still have a healthy lead in the ANI XC League. In the women's race **Stephanie Hambling** had a great run to finish 7th in 23:34 min and 1st F40. **Jessica Craig** was 11th in 24:15, **Roberta Dornan** 11th in 24:26 and taking the F35 prize, and **Rachel Gibson** was 17th in 24:41. City of Derry had 20 points, North Down 27 and Foyle Valley 46.

We are in our second year as a "**Hub Club**" part of an Athletics NI Development initiative **McCain Athletic Club Networks**. Paddy and Claire have included athletes from other clubs into their groups. Claire, Paddy and Amy Foster have been coaching at Glenlola School on Saturdays during the Spring Term. Nicky Wakefield will lead a Fundamentals in Athletics course in Ballyholme Primary School during February and March 2012. The course will encompass our own athletes and pupils of Ballyholme Primary School.

The club is grateful for the assistance we receive from the Sportsplex staff, the Council's Sports Development Staff, Jonathan Moffett, Sports Development Officer and Tanya Fisher, his assistant.

We were very proud to learn that **Tony Wall** our Coach Co ordinator, Vice Chairman and Assistant Treasurer had been successful in receiving a Fulbright Award to do research in Washington in the United States. Senator Fulbright commented *"The Fulbright Program aims to bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason and a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby to increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace and friendship."* When Tony was in the US he worked with homeless people and he wishes to continue this work in Northern Ireland, therefore he has decided that he can no longer continue to give the level of commitment to the club. His intention

is to continue to work alongside Brian with the junior middle distance group and continue to serve on the Young Athletes League committee. Tony's selfless commitment will be sorely missed, especially his support to me, as he compiled the teams for the Young Athletes League, acted as Team Manager and acted as Meeting Director at the series of Track and Field meetings we hosted in 2011.

Ian Atkinson has been our Assistant Secretary and PRO and representative to ANI for several years and another person who has been of great support to me. Ian is currently doing a course on Monday nights and due to his increased work and academic commitments can no longer fulfill these roles.

North Down continues to have members involved in all facets of our sport. David Seaton has been re-elected to the position of Chairman, Athletics NI and continues to be an excellent ambassador for our sport. Barry has been elected as Track and Field Chairman and re-elected as YAL Chairman, with Rodney Brown as Treasurer and Tony Wall as committee member. Tony Wall has been re-elected as Minute Secretary, ANI and member of the cross country committee. Geoffrey has been re-elected as Chairman of NDSAC and David Seaton continues as NDSAC Executive Council member.

We are indebted to the officials of the **Athletics NI** who always support our events and promotions. We acknowledge that without whose help, events would not happen. Our own officials continue to work hard to ensure events are run to the highest possible standard. We pay tribute to Daphne Hamill, Eddie Wilson, Mike Moffitt, Pat Moffitt, Pat O'Driscoll, Philip West, Tony Wall, David Seaton, Brian Smith, Paul Curran, Ian Atkinson, John Saulters, Lynne Kerr and Roy Kerr, Ange and Roger Perrott for their dedication to the sport of athletics.

The club is very proud to learn (although we are not supposed to tell anyone until May) that **Ian Atkinson and Philip West** has been selected to officiate at the **London 2012 Olympics Games**.

Jill Aiken has continued to co ordinate the ordering of club kit and has agreed to continue this task this year.

Our **Monday night group** is continues to thrive and grow in numbers. Thanks to Brian, Davie and Ange for their enthusiasm, development and mentoring of the runners. James Budde continues with his Thursday night group. Lynne Kerr continues with her group on Wednesday night, and the hard work of the ladies is showing benefits. This group has proved very popular especially for those with young families and work commitments who find attending on Monday nights difficult. Lynne has also attained some coaching qualifications this year.

The **Club Development Plan** is still underway and will hopefully be completed early in 2012. We are grateful to Paddy for co-ordinating the plan and to the coaches for their involvement and gathering the information required.

We continue to receive grant aid support from **SEELB**, which we very much appreciate especially in these difficult financial times. This enables us to provide transport for our Young Athletes League meetings.

Our **club website** is without a doubt one of the best and the envy of other athletic clubs, all thanks to Barry and the many hours he spends keeping it up to date and accurate. Our new updated website up is still not completed after almost two years and this causes Barry frustration and additional work inputting data.

Several photographs of club members past and present have appeared in Terence Bowman's recently published "Bangor in the Seventies" book bringing back memories of the club in its formative years.

I would to pay tribute to our coaches; Claire, Barry, Brian, Tony, David, Jeremy, Paul, Francis, James, David Hewitt, Lynne, Paddy who give so much to our athletes. We have welcomed Nicky Wakefield, Tracey Catherwood, David McMeekin and Jim Taylor as coaches this year. Brian and Tony's group have been assisted

by Simon and Tara Cummings and Lynsey Doulton. However, we still require more coaches to support our talented young people.

Our team captains; James, Kenny, Ange assisted by Francis and David have a difficult task organizing and co-coordinating teams. This year we have tried to work more as a club when submitting teams for events but this proves very time consuming. We are grateful to all involved for their time and effort.

Finally I would like to thank our Chairman Roy for his support and guidance throughout the last year and the outgoing committee for all the time that they give to our club. I would like to especially thank 2 of our outgoing members Jill Aiken and Lynne Kerr for their service and commitment to the committee. We hope to welcome Jill back in a year or so.

We would appeal for more members to join the committee to continue the vital work of the club to ensure its success and maintain its vibrancy.

Gillian Weir, Honorary Secretary 25 January 2012

Report on North Down Special Olympics Club

Our numbers remain steady at about 50 athletes and 30 volunteers. Training during the winter continues in Bangor Grammar in 2 sessions 6.30 to 7.30 and 7.30 to 8.30pm to accommodate all ages and special needs.

We continue to have volunteers from schools and youth organizations. For the last two years we had Josh Lowry who was completing the community service element for his Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Training at Bangor Sportsplex commenced in April until June and will start again in September, on Monday evenings.

We entered 1 team in the Belfast Marathon Relay. Each athlete is supported by two volunteer runners to ensure the safety of each special need athlete. Extra training sessions were organised for the athletes and volunteers in the weeks leading up to the event. After the event the PSNI invited us to come to Newforge Country Club for refreshments. This has become a very important part of the whole Marathon event. The Marathon relay is also an important fund raiser for the club.

We have had 3 away Inter club events at Theipval Barracks and Valley Leisure Centre with Newtownabbey Racers, Belfast All Stars and the Larne Red Sox. We hosted an event in Bangor in May and the Mayor, John Montgomery, kindly attended to present prizes.

We are always grateful to our sponsors. This year we received a grant from George Best City Airport Community Fund to purchase new tracksuits and equipment.

2 of our athletes Nicolle Smith and Martin Mahood were selected for the World Special Olympic Games in Athens in June to represent Ireland. Nicki Gregg traveled to Athens with Nicolle's family to support her. Martin won 3 silver medals, 800m, Shot and relay. Nicolle was 5th in the 100m. Stephen Yetman competed in Dressage and won 3 gold medals.

There were mandatory training days prior to the Games for athletes in Dublin as well as our own training sessions and they all worked extremely hard to achieve their successes.

Nicolle became the face of Special Olympics with a number of media appearances and interviews about her successes, prior to the Games in Athens. She was awarded a Woman of Courage Award from Ards Borough Council.

We held our end of year BBQ and prize night at Camphill Community Glenraig catering for over 100, athletes, parents and friends.

Three Athletes, Robbie Summers, Rebecca Ross and Stephen McCartan were selected to attend the Mencap Games in Watford. They attended additional training sessions at Mary Peters Track, prior to the Games.

Our Christmas night out was on 12 December (over 80 including carers attended). The athletes enjoyed bowling, food, and a visit from Santa at the Odyssey.

Gillian Weir (Hon Secretary)

Athletes of Note 2011

- **Matthew Martin- Javelin:** European Youth Olympics (representing Ireland)-13th, Youth Commonwealth Games (representing NI) -7 Celtic International 2nd (Team Captain)
- **Matthew Stockton- Javelin:** County Down, Ulster and Irish Schools Under 17 Champion, Northern Ireland and Ulster Age Group Champion, AAI Age Group Silver, Schools Interpro-1st Schools International, UK School Games
- **Niall McGrattan- Javelin:** Northern Ireland and Ulster Age Group, AAI Age Group bronze
- **Sophie Cree- Javelin:** Ulster Schools Bronze
- **Francesca Brown-Javelin:** NI and Ulster Age Group silver , Schools interpro
- **Emma Stockton- Javelin:** NI and Ulster Age Group bronze
- **Celtic International Selection:** Beth Wilson, Callum Graham, Clare Robinson, Matthew Martin
- **Mark Patterson- 800m & 3,000m:** 3rd Celtic Cup, 5th AAI Indoor Championships, 3rd European Trials, U20 3,000m Champion
- **Niall Robinson – Middle Distance:** NI Junior Champion, UK Rankings: U23 6th 3.52.8, 5K U20 10th 14.55, 3k 2nd 8.45, 2nd Armagh International Road Race
- **Kathy Hetherington- Discus & Shot:** 1st Ulster schs (SP), 3rd AAI Indoor champs (SP), 1st AAI League Final (Dis), 2nd Irish Schools (Dis), 1st Sen Champs (Dis), 4th U23 Irish Champs (Dis)
- **Gareth Irvine – Discus:** 1st Ulster Schools, 2nd Irish Schools

- **Glen Willis – Middle distance:** Ranked 12th UK 600M, 4thAAI Indoor champs (800m), 1500m; 2nd Ulster Schools, 6th Irish schools, NI Champion, 8th Ulster Schools Cross Country, 34 Irish Schools Cross Country
- **Beth Wilson –Shot & Discus: Discus;** Ranked 12th U17 UK, NI YAL Final winner, UK School Games 7th, 2nd Ulster Schools, 3rd Irish Schools, 4th Irish Juv Champs, 3rd Schools Inter Pro, **Shot;** NI Champion, 3rd Ulster Schools, AAI Indoor Champ, 6th Schools Inter Pro
- **Tom Reynolds – Multi Events:** UK Rankings 12th Decathlon, 1st Pen
- **Lauren Scott – Middle Distance:** Inter Ladies NI Champion, UK Ranking U23 7th 1500m indoor, 1500m indoor 4th British University Champs, 1500m 3rd BUSC, 1st 1500m Irish Milers club.
- **Ben Reynolds – Multi Events:** UK Rankings; U23 110mh 2nd, 7th overall, 60mh U23 8th, 1st HJ & 110MH AAI league final, AAI Champion 110mh and NI Champion, Only NI Athlete to break an NI record twice in the NI Senior Championships in 100mh, Reached standard for European Championships 110mh.
- **Oliver Wakefield – Sprints & Multi events:** UK Rankings 10th 100m, 13th LJ, 4th Pen, 1st Ulster Schools 100m & LJ, NI Pen champion
- Robin Brown **Middle Distance and Cross Country:** 1st 1500m and 2nd 800m Oxford V Cambridge Varsity Match, 2nd Ards Half Marathon, 2nd Oxford V Cambridge Cross Country
- Peter Glass: **Decathlon:** 1st PV and 11mh at British Athletics League

- Hannah Lewis: **200m & LJ**

2nd in both the Indoor and Outdoor BUCS championships, NI Outdoor Champion in both LJ and 200m, AAI Under 23 Champion in LJ and 2nd in 200m and she was 5th in the AAI Senior 200m. Plus she did jump an Indoor Club Record in LJ (5.95m) as well as wind- assisted outdoor 6m jumps. She is also ranked highly in Ireland and also in the Tops in Athletics lists.

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