# NORTH DOWN ATHLETIC CLUB

**SECRETARY’S REPORT**

2009 started on a very positive note with the U15 Boys cross-country team (Glen Willis, Harry Speers, Roger Dawson and Sam McKibbin) coming in second place in the IAAF International Cross-country meeting at Antrim.

At the **Indoor Championships of Ireland** we were again asked to provide basket carriers for the 2 day event at the Odyssey. The athletes really enjoy this event as they get to be near the big stars and have the opportunity to talk to them and ask for autographs. Those who officiate at this marathon event know that it is no mean feat to organise the young people in time slots to ensure that all the events are covered.

**The Cross Country Awards and Annual Club Handicap** was held in Crawfordsburn Park on Saturday 21 March. Cross Country Awards were presented to Peter Speers, Jemma Speers, Glen Willis, Conor O’Boyle, Clare Scott, Mark Patterson, James Budde, Roberta Dornan, Francis Marsh, Jill Dowie, Tony Wall, Lynne Kerr, David Seaton, and Brian Barron. **The Smith Handicap Shield** was won by **Glen Willis**.

**North Down Sports Advisory Sports Awards** were held on Friday 24 April at the Marine Court Hotel. The guest speaker was Mark Pollock, who was very inspiring. We nominated Hannah Irwin for Young Administrator, Roy Kerr for the Bruce Mulligan Award, The Senior Men’s’ team for Team of the Year and Mark Patterson as Young Sports Person of the Year.

The club was very proud to learn that **Eddie Wilson** was awarded an MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List. The award is an acknowledgement of the years of dedicated to our sport; officiating summer and winter in sunshine and showers. I am sure all would agree very well deserved award.

**Northern Ireland Young Athletes** **League, sponsored by McCain** was won again this year by City of Derry AC on 1108 points**.** We were placed 3rd on 586 on points.The sponsor has awarded prizes to a boy and girl from each participating club in each of the three qualifying league matches. Winners for North Down AC were Round 1, Louis Atkinson and Jemma Speers at Antrim Forum on 25 April. Louis won the U15 boys discus and hammer and was runner up in the shot whilst Jemma showed versatility in winning the 800m minor girls, 2nd in discus and 3rd in the 75m sprint. In round 2 at a very wet and windy Templemore stadium, Londonderry on 23 May the awards were given to Glenn Willis at U15 Boys and Brogan Marsh at U17 Intermediate Girls. Glenn showed his class on the track with victories at 400m and 1500m and produced a great throw to win the “B” javelin helping the North Down team to the double in the event. Brogan Marsh continued to show her enthusiasm and team spirit with solid performances giving her 2nd in the 100m, 2nd discus and 3rd at 300m. Completing the awards for the club in Round 3 were Nico Espana and Beth Wilson both at the U15 age group. This was a split match being held at both Mary Peters Track and Magherafelt. It was also a night where the U15 boys from NDAC dominated in winning all but 2 events, in these picking up 2nd place making the decision even more difficult than normal. In the end the verdict went to Nico Espana for his performances in the High Jump and 4x100m relay. Beth Wilson continued her great first full season of throwing with a stunning discus throw winning her event.

Congratulations to the Men’s senior team in being placed 10th “A Team and 19th “B” in the Road Relay of All Ireland.

The Senior Ladies team won the **Team Trophy** for the 1st time and the men’s team were 2nd. Both the men’s and ladies teams finished 8th in the Premier Division of the ESB league.

The scenic **Crawfordsburn 5K** Trail Race was held on Wednesday 29 July. Simon Seaton took 1st prize, with Roberta Dornan taking the 2nd ladies prize. We went back to a mid week fixture this year but we may need to look at this again.

Our Young Athletes meeting was held this year on 4 August. We are very grateful to Bank of Ireland Corporate Services for again being able to provide us with sponsorship. 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. Our athletes won several events with Elleana Hull U13 Girls, Michael Gaffney U13 Boys and Glen Willis U15, winning the overall age group prizes.

We finished the Track and Field season with our **club championships** with over 50 athletes competing on 26 August and had a very enjoyable Barbeque afterwards.

Our **Track and Field** prize evening and quiz was held on 5 September at the Sportsplex with 60 members, parents and friends attending. Awards were presented to Jemma Speers, Abbey Taylor, Laura Hamilton, Natalie Steele, Michael Gaffney, Glen Willis, Matthew Martin, Gerry Coy, Mark Patterson, Hannah Lewis, Katie Dickson, Mark Widdowson, Matthew Stockton, Elleana Hull, Beth Wilson and Niall McGrattan.

The **Bangor Classic,** sponsored by **North Down Borough Council** was held on 26 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 pleasantly surprised to have over 700 entrants with the online entries proving a great success. Our members were very successful with Francis Marsh finishing 6th, Julie Balmer 4th lady. North Down won both the ladies and men’s team prizes; Mark Weir was 2nd o35 vet, Stephanie Hambling 2nd o40 lady vet, and Roma McConville 1st 050 lady vet. Next year’s event is already in the planning stages.

Nominations were sought in various categories for the annual **UKA Awards.** This year we nominated our club as Club of the Year, Tony Wall as Coach for Participation, Francis Marsh for Coach of the Year, Paddy McGrattan for Performance Coach, Roger Perrott as New Official, Philip West for Services to Officiating and Lisa Crawford, as Young Volunteer, North Down Special Olympics Club as providing opportunities for People with disabilities. The awards ceremony was held at Athletics House on Thursday 19 November. Presentations were made by Niels de Vos, UKA. I am pleased to report that the Special Olympics Club was successful.

A very successful **Christmas Dinner**, organised by Brian Smith was held in Carnalea Golf Club on Monday 14 December with over 60 members, from all sections of the club attending. Thanks to Michael Jenkins, of Up and Running for providing the majority of the prizes for the charity ballot.

The **Ken and Lynne Hawtin** **Trophy** was contested at the Crawfordsburn Handicap Race on Saturday 21 December led by Santa and his helper. A record field of 47 runners competed and records tumbled in every category. Robin Brown was fastest overall in 16.50 net, Lauren Scott broke the women’s record with 21.01 mins and Glen Willis ran a new U15 time of 19.10mins. The female master’s record went to Stephanie Hambling with 21.29 mins. The race winner was Harry Speers who was also inside the former U15 best.

The club is grateful for the assistance we receive from the Sportsplex staff, the Council’s Sports Development Staff, Jonathan Moffett, Sports Development Officer, Tanya Fisher, his assistant and Director Stephen Reid who are always supportive of our club and events. We are building a good working relationship with David Warden who has taken over from Stephen McMaw.

North Down has more officials that any other club within our sport. David Seaton has been re-elected to the position of NIAF Chairman and continues to be an excellent ambassador for our sport. Barry has been 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. Geoffrey has been re-elected as Chairman of NDSAC and David Seaton continues as NDSAC Executive Council member.

We are grateful the officials of the Athletics NI who always support our events and promotions. We acknowledge that without whose help there would be no events. 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, 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.

I must make a special mention to two of our parents David Willis and Mark Speers for assisting me with the junior group throughout the summer months. Their help and support has been invaluable as it is quite daunting when you arrive at training to find 40 athletes waiting for coaching. David and Mark just step forward, are willing to assist and have knowledge of most events.

In 2009 we added additional kit to our vests and tracksuits. Hoodies, hats, shorts, tights and tee-shirts are now available. We are grateful to Jill Dowie and Ange Perrott for volunteering for the task to source, design, order and manage the stock of the kit. Everyone who has received kit seems well pleased.

Our **Monday night group** is the fastest growing section of the club, with up to 60 runners participating. Some who have started as fun runners are progressing well and we are building up a very healthy ladies cross country team. Thanks to Brian, Davie and Ian for their enthusiasm, coaching and mentoring skills. James Budde is taking a group of about 8 on Thursday nights, for those interested in competing in 10ks, meeting at the Sportsplex at 7pm and we are grateful to James for developing this group.

We are very appreciative of the continued grant aid support we receive **SEELB**. This enables us to provide transport for our Young Athletes League meetings. The Youth section is keen that some of our volunteers would participate in their Leadership Programmes. If anyone is interested I can provide details.

The year finished well for our cross country athletes with **Francis** **Marsh and Simon Seaton** winning the Castlewellan Christmas Cracker.

Congratulations to **Shane Logan** on his appointment as CEO of Ulster Rugby. We wish every success in his new role.

**Power of 10 Awards** were awarded to Jordan Neil, Ben Reynolds and Hannah Lewis who cleared the UK 10 Target Line during the 2008 season.

The **UKA coaching course structure** has undergone some changes in 2009. Access NI forms need to be applied for with the course application via Jenni Robinson in the ANI office. Clearance will not come through for a while but this does not prohibit anyone doing a course. The next courses are in March 2010.

It is very important that we keep the clubs name and profile to the fore within the Community, and I would like to thank Ian for his weekly articles in the Spectator.

Our **club website** could not continue without Barry’s input**.** We are indebted to him for the hours he puts in to updating records, posting articles and photos and answering queries from interested parties on the club, sometimes working into the small hours. We are also very pleased that Barry has made an excellent recovery from his recent surgery.

Finally I would like to thank our outgoing Chairman, **Norman** **Munnis**, who has completed his term of office. I am sure you will all join me in wishing our new Chairman **Roy Kerr**, every success in his role. I make a special mention to Ian who has had to stand in for me at committee meetings over the last few months due to my incapacity. Hannah Irwin and Gemma McAnirn have also had to cover coaching sessions in my absence since October and I am indebted to them for keeping training sessions going. I would like to thank the out-going committee for their support, enthusiasm and commitment, to making North Down Athletic Club the all round club that it is.

**Report on North Down Special Olympics Club**

Our numbers have grown steadily and we currently have 50 athletes and 30 volunteers.

The coaches and volunteers work extremely hard to ensure the athletes obtain the best opportunity not only to train but to socialise as a club.

We entered 2 teams in the Belfast Marathon Relay. Each team of athletes is supported on a one to one basis with volunteer runners to ensure the safety of each special need athlete. Extra training sessions on organised for the athletes and volunteers in the weeks leading up to the event. The Marathon relay is an important fund raiser for the club.

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

A BBQ & Prize Night was held at Camphill Community Glencraig on June 22 and was a very enjoyable evening with athletes, parents and friends.

10 athletes were selected to compete at the Regional Games in Letterkenny on 5 & 6 June 2009. 5 have been selected to compete at the Ireland Games in Limerick June 2010. There will be mandatory training days prior to the Games for athletes and coaches. One athlete has been selected to compete at the World Summer Games in Warsaw in September 2010.

We attended an indoor Athletics event 7 November 2009 at Valley Leisure Centre hosted by the Newtownabbey racers. The athletes really enjoyed the event which was based on Sportshall athletics activities.

We held a volunteer evening to encourage new volunteers and raise awareness of the club. We have volunteers from all over the Borough some from Bangor Grammar School, Regent House and Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College. Some of the young volunteers are participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

On 19 November Hannah Irwin collected an award from Niels de Vos, UKA as we were Regional winners for the club catering for the people with special needs.

Training during the winter continues in the 2 halls in Bangor Grammar to accommodate everyone.

Our Christmas night out was on 14 December (over 70 including carers attended). The athletes enjoyed bowling at the Odyssey followed by a meal at Pizza Hut.

**Athletes of Note 2009**

* **Peter Glass- Multi Events:** NI rankings 3rd 110mh, 6th HJ, 3RD Jav, 3RD PV, 3RD Discus, 2ND SP , AAI Rankings 8th
* **Matthew Martin** – **Javelin:** Schools International, 1st Schools Interprovincial, Age group championships 1st, NI rankings1st SP, 1st 600g, 1st 700g, Power of 10 UK rankings 12th
* **Celtic International Selection**: Kerrie Craig HJ, Kathy Hetherington Discus, Beth Wilson Discus, Matthew Martin Javelin
* **Ben Reynolds – Multi Events:** Irish schools champion 110mh, NI rankings 1st110mh, 6th discus, Power of 10 UK rankings 2nd 110mh, 2nd 60mh, 2nd Heptathlon
* **Mark Patterson- Middle Distance:** Irish Schools 800m champion, 5th 400m U23 AAI Championships, NI rankings 3RD 400m & 2ND 800m, Schools Interprovincial, 1st, AAI Rankings 10th, Indoor Championships of Ireland 6th 800m, 10th Ulster schools cross-country championships
* **Kathy Hetherington- Discus**: 2nd Irish Schools, Schools International, Power of 10 UK rankings 11th , Schools Interprovincial, NI rankings 1st, AAI Rankings 7th
* **Sarah Newell – Javelin:**6th Irish Schools, Schools Interprovincial, NI rankings 2nd
* **Matthew Stockton- Javelin:** 4th Irish Schools, Age group championships 2nd, NI rankings 3rd
* **Kerrie Craig- High Jump:** 3rd Irish Schools, 3rd Schools Interprovincial, Age group championships 1st, NI rankings 3rd
* **Gareth Irvine – Discus:** 2nd Irish Schools; Schools International, 2nd Schools Interprovincial, Power of 10 UK ranking 7th
* **Katie Dickson - Triple Jump:**  Schools International, NI rankings 6th, Power of 10 UK rankings 12th, AAI Rankings 12th
* **Alexandra Catherwood – Multi Events:** 3rd NI Championship
* **Glen Willis – Middle distance & Multi Events:** 2nd NI Multi Event championship, Age group championships 3rd 800m, 1st Comber Cup, 8th NI & Ulster cross-country championships, 2nd Ulster Schools cross-country championships
* **Mark Widdowson –** **Multi Events**: 3rd NI Multi Event championship, Age group championships 2nd 100m, 1st LJ, 3RD 200m
* **Amy Foster –** **100m & 200m**: U23 AAI Championships100m 2nd, AAI Rankings 7th 200m, NI rankings 1st 200m & 2nd 100m
* **Niall Robinson –** **Middle Distance:** 3rd 800m U23 AAI Championships, 1st Comber Cup, 14th AAI intercounties cross-country, 4th McConnell Shield, 7th Bobby Rea Memorial Races
* **Conor McGrattan –** **Javelin**: 3rd Schools Interprovincial, Age group championships 3rd, NI rankings 3rd
* **Beth Wilson –** **Javelin, Shot & Discus**: Age group championships 2nd SP & Dis & 3rd Jav
* **Niall McGrattan** – **Javelin**: Age group championships 3rd
* **Matthew Hamilton** – 100m & 200m: Age group championships 100m 2nd, 200m 3rd
* **Louis Atkinson** – **Discus & Hammer**: Age group championships 2nd both events
* **Gemma McAnirn** – **Discus**: NI rankings 5th
* **Kenny Elliott** – **Sprints**: NI rankings 5th 200m
* **Tom Reynolds** – **Multi Events**: NI rankings 6th 400m, 4th 110mh, 2nd PV, 6th LJ, 4TH Discus
* **Michael Dyer** – **Middle Distance**: NI rankings 5th 800m, Schools Interprovincial, NI rankings 1st, AAI Rankings 11th 800m
* **Brendan McConville** – **Multi Events**: NI rankings 1st PV, All time NI Record, Decathlon 2005
* **Jeremy Harper** – **Shot & Discus**: NI rankings1st SP, 1st Discus, AAI Rankings discus 3rd
* **Mark Weir** – **Middle Distance**: 2nd 800m Masters Championships