



Peterhead Athletics Club Members Bulletin #8 April 2023



www.peterheadathleticsclub.co.uk

WELCOME TO ALL NEW AND EXISTING MEMBERS OF PAC

Welcome to our 1st bulletin of 2023! We hope you enjoy reading this latest update to what's all going on within your club. Within the past 3 months, both the cross-country and indoor track & field seasons have concluded and the outdoor track & field season has just got underway again. The club committee have been busy behind the scenes with the planning and organising of the Lido 3k/Junior Mile series and the 10 Mile Longside Loop which has had to switch to the 3rd June from its usual slot in May due to the King's coronation. The club are also planning on switching the Club Championships from September to a slot at the end of June/beginning of July which will hopefully give us better weather for staging the Championships. We are also looking into creating a new PAC 5k event in July. Look out for more news on the Club Championships and 5k soon.

3K / JUNIOR MILE SERIES

It's almost time again for our 3k & Junior Mile series to kick-off once again at the Lido. We're hoping to build on the success of last year's event where we created a proper licenced event and were able to open it up to all other runners out with PAC. It was great to see runners coming along from other local clubs and we hope they will be back to join us again this year.

The dates for this year's series will be;

Saturday 29th April

Saturday 27th May

Saturday 24th June

Saturday 29th July

Saturday 26th August

Saturday 30th September

For more information on the series keep a look out on the PAC members Facebook page or check the club website using the following link for details - [junior mile & senior 3k \(peterheadathleticsclub.co.uk\)](http://junior-mile-and-senior-3k.peterheadathleticsclub.co.uk) Sign up is via Entry Central where you can enter the whole series or each event as it comes.

CROSS COUNTRY / TRACK & FIELD / ROAD RUNNING HIGHLIGHTS

CROSS-COUNTRY (XC)

The 3rd North District XC league event was held at Inverness on the 10th December. Sophie Needs finished 17th in the U11 girls race and Euan Steel 29th in U11 boys race. In the U13 girls, Hollie Steele was 6th and Emma Steel was 7th. Jessica Needs finished 3rd in the U15 girls race and Finley was 9th in the U17 men's race. In the senior/masters woman's race we had Susan Strachan, Barbara-Anne Needs, Linda McGee and Arlene McRae all running. Susan finished 21st, Babs 27th, Linda 29th and Arlene 36th. Running in the senior/masters men race we had David Horne, Richard Masson, Shaun Adam, Andy Davidson, Andy Steel and Bobby Davidson. David finished 17th, Richie 35th, Shaun 53rd, Andy D 60th, Andy S 64th and Bobby 65th.

The Inter District XC Championships were held on the 14th January at Scone Palace near Perth. It was great to see 3 girls from the club, Emma Steel, Hollie Steele and Jessica Needs, being selected to represent the North District at this event. In the U13 girls race out of 62 runners, Hollie finished in 53rd place and Emma in 59th and in the U15 girls race Jessica finished 32nd out of the 68 runners. Very well done girls!

On the 28th January it was the turn of Peterhead Athletics Club to host the 4th event of the North District XC league at Aden Park. The club had been unable to stage the event here for the past two years, in Jan '21 it was due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and then last year it was cancelled due to the devastation to the park caused by Storm Arwen. Therefore it was great to see the return of the event again and we couldn't have asked for better weather conditions on the day to ensure such a large turnout from all the clubs involved.

First up on the day we had Sophie Needs in the U11 girls race finishing the 1600m course in 10th place in a time of 9:07. Next we had the U11 boys, Aaron Cruickshank, Jonas West and Euan Steel. Aaron finished 9th in 6:35, Jonas 15th in 7:10 and Euan 16th in 7:44. The U13's ran a distance of 3.2k and in the girls race we had Hollie Steele, Emma Steel and Charlotte Smart. Hollie finished 6th in 13:13, Emma 8th in 15:04 and Charlotte 9th in 15:21. In the U13 boys race we had Angus Robertson, Jakob Whitham and Noah West. Angus finished 8th in 14:44, Jakob 9th in 15:45 and Noah 10th in 15:53. Our sole runner in the U15 girls race covering a distance of 4.8k was Jessica Needs. Jessica ran superbly to finish in 2nd place in a time of 20:53. The U17 mens race also just had one sole PAC runner, Finley Collins. Finley had a 6.5k course to navigate and finished 7th place in 29:11.

The biggest race of the day was the Senior Men and Senior Womens 8.5k race with a mixed field of almost 150 runners as the U17's started their race alongside the seniors. In the womens race our first PAC finisher across the line was Kelly Cruden finishing 11th in 38:20 followed by Shelly Lawson 18th in 40:12, Susan Strachan 24th in 41:48, Babs-anne Needs 32nd in 45:23, Linda McGee 36th in 45:59, Shelley McSeveney 39th in 47:49, Kirsteen Donald 41st in 48:21 and Arlene McRae 50th in 53:29.

In the mens race we had 12 PAC runners starting but after around 3k, Ryan McRae had picked up a niggle and chose to stop. Our first PAC male finisher was David Horne as he battled it out to the line with Ross Aird. David just edged it as he finished in 12th place in 33:00 with Ross in 13th given the same time of 33:00. Next across the line was Mark Beagrie finishing 26th in 34:40 followed by Calum Sinclair 36th in 35:59, Richie Masson 38th 36:06, Graham Steele 40th in 36:40, Shaun Adam 51st in 38:25, Darren Anderson 59th in 40:04, Andrew Brown 63rd in 41:26, Derek Isaac 72nd in 45:05 and Andy Steel 75th in 47:21.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered and assisted us at this event, with the setup of the course, marshalling, helping at the finish line and of course cheering on and supporting all the runners. Well done team PAC!!!

On the 11th February the 5th and final event of the North District XC league took place in Forres. With the final medal and team placings up for grabs all was to play for or run for I should say. In the U11 girls race we had Sophie Needs finishing 19th in 9:49 and then Euan Steel in the U11 boys race finishing 30th in 8:25. Emma Steel in the U13 girls race finished 10th in 18:55. In the U15 girls race, Jessica Needs secured another 2nd place finish in a time of 18:26 to ensure she finished in the silver medal position overall. Finley Collins finished 11th place in 27:12 in the U17 mens race. In the Senior Womens race, Susan Strachan finished 26th in 44:35 to claim 3rd overall in the FV40 category. In the Senior Mens race we had two runners, David Horne and Andy Steel. David finished 20th in 35.25 to finish 3rd place MV50 overall with Andy placing 67th in 50:04.

Final PAC team and individual placings in the various age groups for the North District XC league season were as follows;

U11 girls – 6th (9 teams) Sophie Needs 12th

U11 boys – 6th (10 teams) Euan Steel 17th, Aaron Cruickshank 35th & Jonas West 39th

U13 girls – 2nd (8 teams) Hollie Steele 6th, Emma Steel 7th & Charlotte Smart 21st

U13 boys – 6th (10 teams) Angus Robertson 27th, Jakob Whitham 28th & Noah West 30th

U15 girls – 4th (9 teams) Jessica Needs 2nd

U17 men – 5th (9 teams) Finley Collins 6th

Senior Women – 4th (17 teams) Susan Strachan 15th (3rd FV40), Barbara-Anne Needs 23rd, Linda McGee 26th, Arlene McRae 35th, Kirsteen Donald 42nd, Kelly Cruden 45th, Shelly Lawson 71st & Shelley McSeveney 83rd

Senior Men – 5th (22 teams) David Horne 9th (3rd MV50), Richie Masson 28th, Graham Steele 36th, Shaun Adam 41st, Andy Steel 68th, Bobby Davidson 79th, Ross Aird 90th, Andy Davidson 99th, Mark Beagrie 101st, Calum Sinclair 116th, Darren Anderson 137th, Andrew Brown 144th, Andy Thom 150th & Derek Isaac 154th

Well done also to all the PAC junior athletes who participated in any of the 6 races in the Active Schools Run4Fun North XC series that ran from November to April.

This concludes the cross country season for another year. A massive well done to all those who have come along to these events and competed for PAC, especially those of you who tried cross country for the first time.

INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

On the 10th December the indoor season got underway with an OGM held at the Aberdeen Sports Village. Jack Bruce and Katy Bruce competed in the 60m sprint, shot put and long jump events. There was a PB for Jack in the 60m and a club record for Katy (W45). Katy also achieved a PB and club record in the Long jump and a club record in the Shot Put.

On the 6th January at the GAA Miler Meet at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow we had Ewan Calder competing in one of the Scottish 3000m championship races. Ewan clocked a time of 10:09.58 for his run and set a new indoor club record in the Senior Men category.

On the 15th January at the 2nd indoor OGM event in Aberdeen we had Ava Alexander, Sophie Needs, Euan Steel, Emma Steel, Alix Findlay, Jessica Needs, Jack Bruce, Babs-Anne Needs and Katy Bruce all competing. There were many new PB's and also club records broken by Katy (W45) with 10.6s in the 60m and 5.70m in the Shot Put and Babs (W45) with 2.75m in the Long Jump. Alix Findlay had a great jump of 4.42m to equal the U15 girls record.

On the 21st January at the National Indoor Open event at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow we had Jessica Needs competing in the 60m and 1500m. Jessica ran 9.37s for the 60m and in the 1500m she finished the race in a new club record time of 4:59.70, which was just 0.01s off equalling her outdoor PB.

On the 5th February at the 3rd indoor OGM event in Aberdeen we had Sophie Needs, Euan Steel, Emma Steel, Hollie Steele, Jessica Needs, Jack Bruce, Babs-Anne Needs and Katy Bruce all competing. There were PB's for Sophie, Euan, Emma and Hollie in the 60m and also another PB & CR by Katy (W45) with 10.53s in the 60m. Babs (W45) extended her Long Jump record with a best jump of 2.88m this time.

On the weekend of the 18th/19th February the National Indoor Championships for the U13 & U15 age groups were held at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow. On the Saturday, Jessica Needs was competing in the U15 girls 1500m race where she finished in 4th place, agonisingly missing out on a medal by just a few hundredths of a second. In a fast race where the first & second placed athletes both finished inside the previous championship record time, Jessica smashed her PB and set a new club record with a time of 4:52.58. On the Sunday, Hollie Steele was competing at her first ever indoor championship event in the U13 girls 60m and 800m. Hollie finished in 6th place in her 60m heat with a time of 10.15s. In the 800m timed finals, Hollie finished in overall 15th place out of the 23 entrants with a new PB of 2:49.82.

On the 5th March the 4th and final indoor AAAC OGM was held at the Aberdeen Sports Village. We had Olivia Knyihar, David Knyihar, Sophie Needs, Ava Alexander, Charlotte Smart, Jessica Needs, Alix Findlay, Jack Bruce, Babs-Anne Needs and Katy Bruce all competing in either the 60m sprint, Shot Put or Long Jump events. Alix Findlay produced a superb jump of 4.48m to take the U15 girls Long Jump record outright having equalled it at a previous event in January. Katy Bruce (W45) set a new Shot Put record of 5.82m and Babs (W45) again jumped a little bit further to set a new record mark of 2.95m. There were new PB's for Olivia, David, Ava, Charlotte, Alix and Babs in the 60m, Charlotte, David, Sophie and Olivia in the Shot Put and also another for Charlotte in the Long Jump.

That's it for the indoor season once again. The 3 months or so of indoor competition always comes and goes in a flash.

The outdoor season got underway with the Spring Open on the 9th April in Aberdeen. We'll cover this and all the other outdoor events in the next bulletin.

ROAD RUNNING / TRAIL / ULTRA

On the 4th December, Kelly Cruden, Susan Strachan and Billy Riddell ran the 5k Den Dasher at Turriff. Kelly finished 11th in 21:51, Susan 18th in 23:30 and Billy 25th in 25:47.

Our Santa Mile fun run was due to be held on the 18th December at the Lido, but with Elf n' Safety concerns over the icy footpaths it was decided it would be better to call it off.

On Boxing Day, Susan Strachan invited runners along to join her for her annual post-Christmas run, the first time its been able to be held since 2019. A group of runners met at the Lido car park and headed out for a run to Boddam and back and were then treated to some tea/coffee and sausage rolls upon their return. Thanks Suz!

On the 6th January the 3rd event of the Proms 3k Winter Series was held at the Aberdeen beach promenade (December's event was cancelled due to work being carried out on the footpaths). We had Richard Masson, Kelly Cruden, Susan Strachan and Alison McGee all taking part. Richie finished 18th in 11:23, Kelly 30th in 12:13, Suz 39th in 12:35 and Alison 76th in 17:17.

On the 3rd February the 4th event of the Proms 3k Winter Series was held at the Aberdeen beach promenade. We had David Horne, Richard Masson, Kelly Cruden, Susan Strachan and Linda McGee all taking part. David finished 6th in 10:20, Richie 11th in 10:50 (new M45 CR), Kelly 32nd in 11:49, Suz 45th in 12:35 (new W50 CR) and Linda 64th in 13:43. Well done to both Richie and Suz on their new club record runs.

On the 3rd March the 5th event of the Proms 3k Winter Series was held at the Aberdeen beach promenade. We had David Horne, Jennifer Robertson, Susan Strachan, Andy Davidson and Alison McGee all taking part. David finished 6th in 10:20, Jennifer 42nd in 12:24, Suz 45th in 12:41, Andy 53rd in 13:01 and Alison 101st in 17:16.

On the 4th March there were a few of our athletes who took on the challenge of the 10k Glack Hill Trail Run. Jessica Needs was 6th place but the first PAC and also female finisher across the finish line in a time of 43:43. Next we had Graham Steele 30th in 50:20, Hollie Steele 31st in 50:21 (1st U20), Susan Strachan 32nd in 50:21 (2nd FV50), Barbara-Anne Needs 80th in 58:30.

On the 5th March we had 3 PAC runners at the Nairn 10k. John Robertson finished 54th in 41:50, Andy Davidson 107th in 47:21 and Andy Steel 151st in 50:52. John was 3rd in his M60 category and also set a new club record with his time. Well done guys!

On the 11th March, Richie Masson and Graham Steele took on the challenge of the D33 Ultra. A 33 mile trail run along the Deeside way from Aberdeen to Banchory and back again. In the snowy and icy conditions, Graham completed the run in 5:01:51 and Richie in 5:38:23. That's awesome endurance, very well done to both of you!

On the 12th March we had John Robertson, Ewan McGee, Joe Strachan, Kirsteen Donald, Bobby Davidson, Arlene McRae and Alison McGee all running the Inverness Half Marathon. John finished in a time of 1:31:27, Ewan 1:46:06, Joe 1:46:50, Kirsteen 1:54:28, Bobby 1:57:40, Arlene 2:09:33 and Alison 2:39:45. Babs, Sophie and Jessica Needs all ran the 5k fun run but no official times are given for this run.

Also on the 12th March, Ross Aird was in Paphos for the Cyprus Marathon. Ross finished in an excellent 5th place in a time of 2:49:49.

On the 18th March the Young Athletes Road Race Championships were held at East Fortune Race Circuit in North Berwick. Jessica Needs ran in the U15 girls 4k race and finished in 15th place out of 61 runners in an excellent time of 15:10. Sadly for our club this was Jessica's last run in the blue vest of PAC. Looking to progress her running career, Jessica has now switched to competing for Aberdeen AAC with the added competition opportunities that

this larger club can offer. Hot in the footsteps of Jessica is Hollie Steele who is also switching from PAC to Aberdeen. We wish both young girls all the best and we'll continue to watch your progress with interest.

On the 19th March at the Newburgh Beach Bash 10k we had Kelly Cruden, Susan Strachan, Andy Davidson, Linda McGee, Alan Yeatman, Andy Thom, Alison McGee and Richie Masson (using it as part of an epic marathon training run from Newburgh to Peterhead), all running for PAC. Kelly finished 33rd in 46:43, Susan 67th in 50:57, Andy 83rd in 52:53, Richie 134th 58:42, Linda 141st in 59:34, Alan 184th in 62:57, Andy 223rd in 68:58 and Alison 260th in 76:05. Kelly was 1st in the women's FV40 category and Suz was 2nd in the FV50 category and both received a prize. Well done ladies!

On the morning of the 26th March a group of PAC and Fraserburgh runners set off from the Peterhead Golf Club car park on Sandy Hastie's annual charity beach run. A gruelling 27k run along the coast later and the runners arrived in Fraserburgh at the pavilion at Kessock Park for some much needed refreshments. Well done to all those that joined in this run, raising an amazing total of £672 for MND Scotland.

Also on the 26th March we had David Horne running in the Moray Road Runners 10k at Miltonduff near Elgin. David finished in 15th place overall and 2nd place MV50 in a time of 36:09. David also broke the club record in this age category by 18 seconds, previously held by the great PAC runner Alan Reid.

On the 2nd April at the Glenlivet 10k we had Andy Davidson competing for PAC. Andy finished in 62nd place overall and 6th place MV50 in a time of 48:34.

Also on the 2nd April there was the Tom Scott Memorial Road Races at Strathclyde Park, Motherwell where John Robertson was running in the Scottish 10 Mile Championships. John finished in 186th place overall and 6th place MV60 in a time of 69:56. This sub-70 minute time earned John a new club record and was even under the Diamond club standard time of 70:30. Awesome performance John!!!

On the 7th April the 6th and final event of the Proms 3k Winter Series was held at the Aberdeen beach promenade. This was an additional date due to the cancellation of the event in December and this time we had David Horne, Richard Masson, Kelly Cruden, Jennifer Robertson, Susan Strachan, Andy Davidson and Linda McGee all taking part. David finished 9th in 10:10, Richie 16th in 10:58, Kelly 31st in 12:03, Jennifer 33rd in 12:18, Suz 34th in 12:22, Andy 36th in 12:40 and Linda 46th in 13:41. Both David and Suz's times were new club records. In the overall results for the Metro Proms 3k series - David was 1st MV50, Suz 1st FV45, Richie 2nd MV45, Alison 2nd FV50, Andy 2nd MV55, Kelly 3rd FV40 and Linda 3rd FV45. Well done to everyone who took part.

CLUB STANDARDS

We hope that many of you are getting on well in your attempts to achieve a club standard this year. The qualifying period is open until 30th September 2023, so you all still have plenty time yet to enter events and achieve one. If anyone has achieved their targets already then that's absolutely fantastic. Get in touch with Mark Beagrie as he will be keeping a note on who will be receiving one of those shiny medals and certificates come prizegiving time.

As a reminder or to any new members - there are 5 standards available, DIAMOND, GOLD, SILVER, BRONZE and COPPER. These in turn are set for 6 race distances - 3K, 5K, 10K, 10 Miles, Half Marathon & Marathon.

Awards - You will have to complete **THREE** out of the six distances at or below the times stated for your age category, you can of course complete up to all six distances, if you so wish, within the qualifying period. To obtain your standard, simply submit your three best runs out of however many distances you have completed. For full details visit - www.peterheadathleticsclub.co.uk/clubstandards



A reminder to parents of our junior athletes that the junior version of club standards are the Thistle Awards. The club are registered with Scottish Athletics for this and to be in with a chance of a Thistle Award, athletes must compete for PAC in a minimum combination of 1 running, 1 jumping and 1 throwing event during the indoor/outdoor seasons. We managed to quadruple our winners of this award last year so let's see if more of you can continue to smash your PB's and reach those Purple, Bronze, Silver & Gold targets.

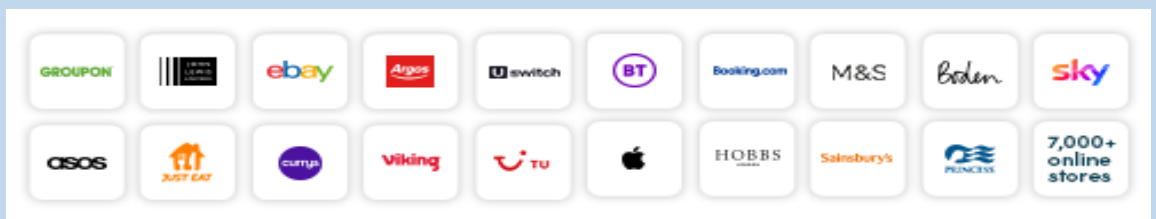


The club are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can help us for FREE. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! All the big names like eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Argos, ASOS, Expedia, M&S, Just Eat, Uswitch and many more! This means you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you're buying. All you need to do is sign up and remember to use easyfundraising whenever you shop online. It's easy and completely FREE! These donations will help the club so much, so please download the app or visit the website to sign up to support us at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/peterhead-athletics-club/>

Also, if you're planning to go on holiday, did you know you can raise FREE funds using easyfundraising for Peterhead Athletics Club when you book?

Whether you're booking your holiday, or a short-getaway, if you book via easyfundraising on TUI, Booking.com, Expedia, First Choice, Hotels.com, Cottages.com, easyJet holidays, PurpleParking, plus 250+ other well-known travel brands, you'll raise free funds for us at no extra cost to you.

You can also raise money by booking your airport parking, transfers and even your foreign currency and travel insurance!



UPCOMING EVENTS

As we now move into a busier outdoor season once again, here's a list of just some of the events due to take place over the next few months until the end of July;

22nd April – Active Schools Run4Fun North XC series race #6 (Aden Park)

22nd/23rd April – Run Balmoral

23rd April – London Marathon (featuring Richard Masson & John Robertson)

23rd April – RAM athletics league #1 (Dundee)

26th April – OGM (Aberdeen)

29th April – Lido 3k/Junior Mile race #1

29th April – U12’s SUPERteams regional qualifier (Inverness)
10th May – Active Schools Athletics Festival - Trials (Catto Park)
13th/14th May – East District Track & Field Championships (U13+ / Grangemouth)
14th May – Run Garioch (plus junior races)
17th May – OGM (Aberdeen)
20th May – RAM athletics league #2 (Aberdeen)
27th May – Lido 3k/Junior Mile race #2
3rd June – Longside Loop 10 Mile race (plus junior mile run)
3rd June – Active Schools Athletics Festival - Final (Banff)
11th June – RAM athletics league #3 (Dundee)
11th June – Fraserburgh 10k
14th June – OGM (Aberdeen)
24th June – Lido 3k/Junior Mile race #3
24th June – U12’s SUPERteams National Final (Glasgow)
26th/27th/29th June & 1st July – PAC Club Championship events (Catto Park)
2nd July – Collieston Multi-Terrain 3k & 10k
8th/9th July – Scottish Combined Events + Masters Championships (Grangemouth)
14th July – PAC 5k (Catto Park) *new club event *
16th July – Summer Open OGM (Aberdeen)
29th July – Lido 3k/Junior Mile race #4

There are of course numerous other road running, trail or ultra events on the athletics calendar which you can check on the SA events website (<https://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/events/>) or on the likes of runABC Scotland (<https://runabc.co.uk>) & Entry Central.

Please note that entry to events open well in advance and there is normally a limited number of athlete places available. To avoid disappointment, please go to the official SA website events calendar to check entry dates for a particular event and sign up ASAP.

Could the parents of children competing for the club please register them on the Power of 10 website [Power of 10 User Login \(thepowerof10.info\)](https://www.thepowerof10.info) It’s free to register so will not cost you anything. The benefit of being registered to this athletics website is that all your results from the events you compete in are collated together and listed in one place. This makes for a great reference point when tracking an athletes performance especially for the likes of the PAC/Ellon RAL team manager for choosing who might be best suited to certain events. This also applies to any adults too who are new to competing for PAC or have not registered themselves on this website before.

As always, we’d love to see and hear about who’s all been out and about competing in the blue vest. Please feel free to share a wee photo or some info of what you’ve been up to on the PAC members Facebook page.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

In this edition of members spotlight I thought as editor of the bulletin and newly elected Chair of the club that I would take this opportunity to share my athletics story with you all.

EWAN McGEE - PART ONE



I first joined Peterhead Amateur Athletics Club back in June 1986, just as I was turning 9 years old. One month later I entered and won the club championships and received my first athletics trophy – I was hooked (see pic). There was only a grass track at Catto Park then, the track you see there today wasn't built till a couple of years later. I quickly joined in with Jim Mundie's training sessions alongside all the slightly older kids and taught how to run properly. Although I could sprint fairly fast, it was the longer runs I enjoyed the most and so the 800m, 1500m and cross country races quickly became my favoured events and where I soon had great success. The club regularly ran a busload of us kids to track & field and cross country meetings all over the north and north east of Scotland. I was never a great morning person though and would get travel sick every time we'd head off anywhere. Luckily for me my mum was always prepared with a Farmfoods plastic bag for those occasions. I always remember whenever we'd be coming back on the bus from somewhere up north we would stop off at Fochabers chip shop on the way home.

Besides winning many individual races it was always enjoyable to win something with your teammates and in the summer of 1990 I was part of the PAAC junior boys team that won the Grampian Athletics League Final. No mean feat considering the level of competition there was in all the teams back then. Also during the 1990/1991 cross country season I won a bronze medal at the North District cross country relay championships along with two great PAAC athletes – Jamie Mundie and Darren Strachan.

At the end of the 1991 cross country season I was approached by the legendary Aberdeen AAC coach Ken Hogg to become part of a training group he was putting together at the time of the top junior boys athletes in the north east. I could hardly refuse so off I went and joined Aberdeen and trained with Ken and the boys twice a week. My running excelled to new levels, spurred on in no small measure by the friendly rivalry within the group. The new competition I faced were on another level and if you didn't adapt quickly you were going to be left for dead. Running harder, faster and for longer in a race didn't faze me though as I'd already learned pacing and control of races from such a young age from Jim's sessions at PAAC. Also, the hours I'd spent running round the streets of Peterhead during winter on Fartlek training from such a young age had built up a good foundation of stamina and endurance within me. I much preferred hard and fast races anyway as front running was very much my style and often I'd just take it out all the way from gun to tape.

With my training partners and teammates in the same races then the track races just became like an extension of training and we'd often dominate races and finish in an Aberdeen 1st & 2nd. Heading into the 1991/1992 cross country season I was in top condition and was raring to get going. It would soon turn out to be the best season of cross country I ever ran. Having run many north district cross country courses from the likes of Nairn beach, to snowy fields as far north as Thurso and in treacherous muddy, boggy conditions at Fort William in the foothills of Ben Nevis, on numerous occasions, there was nothing that the east district courses were going to offer that could possibly be any worse. Cross country is brutal at times and really is survival of the fittest and every man for themselves, especially when you line up at some of the big national races and there can be a least 200 sometimes 300+ other athletes all charging along and jostling for position when the start gun goes. On top of this I also had to contend with the challenge of some of the toughest competitors I faced being my very own teammates. The annual

Scottish national cross country championships and senior schools cross country championships were always held at the Irvine beach park course back then. I finished in the top 5 at the nationals and was selected to run for Scotland and soon afterwards at Hawick in the borders I lined up against teams of athletes from England, Wales and Ireland. I remember my mum telling me that she thought us Scottish lads must be in the wrong race as the English lads were so much taller than us and they all had facial hair! Sure enough we were spanked by the English and I didn't run my best that day, only managing to finish just inside the top 15, but I was still proud to have worn the vest and represented Scotland.

By the end of the season I had won national and east district team medals but what I cherished most was becoming Aberdeen AAC cross country champion for the year beating the likes of Alasdhair Love and Chris Smith, teammates of great quality who both went on to become Team GB internationalists. Alasdhair is now the National Events Manager at Scottish Athletics but tragically Chris died in October 2020 whilst out on a training run in the hills near Aberfeldy when he was caught out by atrocious weather conditions.

Moving on from the cross country and back onto the track competitions in 1992 the winning of medals and team titles continued. The highlight was competing at the famous Meadowbank stadium when the national track & field championships were held there that year. I was entered in the 800m and I made a huge blunder in the heats when I eased up near the end thinking of conserving some energy and was passed on the line by two other athletes. I had an anxious wait to see if I qualified in one of the fastest loser spots which luckily I did. Lesson learned never to make that mistake again. The athletes call rooms were located underneath the track and when it was time for your race you'd climb the steps and emerge in the infield area of the track facing the large iconic scoreboard. I remember looking up and seeing my name listed on the scoreboard and thinking to myself I had a great chance of winning the title as I'd beaten these guys already in other race meetings. I decided I was going to make this a hard race so went all out from the start. I went through the 1st lap and was still in the lead with less than 200m to go but in the final straight I tied up badly and ended up finishing just outside the medals. The consolation was, although not immediately at the time, that it was the 1st time I had run under 2mins for an 800m so at least I had a new PB of 1:59. It was a pity that it was also the 1st time the other 3 in front of me had also run under 2mins so maybe I shouldn't have made it such a fast race after all.

The 1992/1993 cross country season started off well and although I did win more team medals my performances just weren't the same and by the end I felt completely jaded. This feeling carried on into the track races and it looked as though I was suffering from burnout. The years of running from such a young age and doing near 7 days a week of training had finally caught up with me and taken its toll. My coach Ken said I should take time-out but I was no longer enjoying running and so at the age of 16 I quit and walked away from running altogether. If I was to give advice to any aspiring young athlete these days it would be to concentrate on the quality of training sessions and not quantity.

PART TWO

Fast forward 22 years to 2015 and my daughter Ellie started to get involved with athletics through Active schools and joined PAC. As Ellie started competing for the club I then found myself returning to many familiar tracks and cross country venues. There are much better tracks and facilities for the kids these days though, not the grass or cinder tracks I would sometimes have run on. Even the old Chris Anderson stadium in Aberdeen where I used to train and compete at has now been transformed into the excellent Sports Village facility.

When Alison got into running in 2017 as part of her recovery mission from a serious back injury I never gave any thought as to me ever doing anything similar and taking up running again. I was simply happy and content with travelling around and watching Ellie wherever she was competing at. It wasn't until the following year in March 2018 when I watched Alison complete the huge achievement of running the Inverness Half Marathon after all she'd been through that it inspired me to say "I'm going to come back here next year with you and I'm going to run it too".

I didn't get back into running right away, I just did the odd Parkrun now and again. At the beginning of January 2019 and still looking considerably overweight I thought I'd better take things more seriously if I was to run a Half Marathon so I embarked on a 10 week training programme that took me up to the start of the Inverness race in



March. After a 26 year gap in running any sort of big race and not far off turning 42 I then ran my 1st ever Half Marathon in 1hr 45mins which I was pretty pleased with.

Taking up running again in your forties is not easy and I've had a few knee, leg and foot injuries which have set me back. I enjoy running just to keep myself fit and for the fun and social aspect of it and those that turn up regularly on a Tuesday night to Babs & Alison's Senior Progressive training group or have been to Jim's hill sessions through the recent winter months on a Thursday are a great bunch of folk to meet up with. I think I'll try and just keep on going with these guys till my legs give up on me completely.

In my new role as Chair I'd like to do everything possible that I can to build on the success of my predecessors and help the club grow. In recent years I've managed to implement the Club Standards system and juniors Thistle Awards, introduced the 3k/Junior Mile series, revised the Club Records and created a results and tracking system for the Track & Field events. With the support of some great people at the club I will look to continue to improve upon all aspects of the club as best I can.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Should you require further information on any of the above or have items you would like us to include for any future club bulletins, please contact either our club Chair or Secretary at the following e-mail addresses;

chair-phdathleticsclub@outlook.com

secretary-phdathleticsclub@outlook.com

If anyone has missed or would like to read any of the previous bulletins, then please get in touch on the above-mentioned e-mail addresses and we can send copies to you. Alternatively, all previous bulletins can now be found on the club website.

We'll be back with more news for you towards the end of the summer.
Till then enjoy your running and stay safe & healthy!

Peterhead Athletics Club



