

EKAC REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2013

In many ways 2013 was a significant year for EKAC. As usual, our athletes were a source of great pride. Performances improved, many new personal bests were registered and throughout the year they conducted themselves in an exemplary way. Back in February we voted on whether to merge with Whitemoss AAC and despite our unanimous vote for the motion, the Whitemoss majority vote went the other way so the idea was shelved. Following on from what was a disappointment for many, we took the opportunity to adjust our training times, launch a new Coaching Structure, take on lots of new athletes and go ahead to order new clothing to reinforce our unique identity. This idea kept moving forwards as we got the bright yellow training tops and then EKAC big bobble hats. We repaired the Clubhouse door and got new steps, thanks to one of our athlete's parents. We were awarded the Scottish Athletics Podium award, one of the first clubs in Scotland to achieve this level of quality recognition. We had a bag-packing fundraising event, visits from International athletes, a great family fun-day club track & field championships, a Halloween fancy-dress training night and our best ever ceilidh.

January 2013

The year opened with the Inter-District Cross-country Championships at Edinburgh. U17 Aidan Gilbride was rewarded for some good recent form by being selected to represent the West of Scotland at this event. Finishing in 12th place, Aidan was 3rd counter for the West and took home a silver team medal. Elsewhere, John Fergusson grabbed a bronze at the Scottish Universities Athletics Championships the following Saturday. Held at the new Emirates Arena, he ran the 3000m in a PB of 9:11.98. A host of East Kilbride athletes kicked off the 2013 competition season with a trip to the new Emirates Arena for the popular National Open event towards the end of the month. It's not a championship event so it was run as an open graded and many athletes' performances benefited from being in competitive fields. Pick of the performances was possibly Aidan Gilbride's new 800m PB of 2:05.

February 2013

The first event in February, rather than a competition, was a fund-raising bag-pack at Sainsbury's in the Kingsgate. 28 young athletes plus 17 parents & coaches helped raise a magnificent £820 from this effort and put a smile on our Treasurer's face. Thanks to Anne Thomson for the organisation. The EKAC Cross-Country Championships were held on Feb 3rd at the Showpark and were a combined event with Whitemoss AAC. Club champions were Abbie Kirwan and Ross Hamilton at U9, Lucy Muirhead and Calum Hopkins at U11, Rebecca Russell and Matthew Kirwan at U13, Megan Barrie and Aidan Gilbride at U15, Vincent Hastings at U17, Beth Cochrane and Grant Baillie at Senior level. Our turnout was 39 people, a 70% increase on the previous year which is a good sign. Following on from this was the Scottish Schools Indoor Championships, where EKAC athletes claimed 2 bronze medals in the shape of Shannon McMahon in the 200m and Aidan Gilbride in the 800m. A great performance from Callum Field too as he narrowly missed a medal with 4th place in his 200m final. Not to be outdone by younger club members, M60 Master Derek Leitch notched up a gold and bronze in the 800m and 1500m respectively at the Scottish Masters Indoor Championships, thereby qualifying for the European Masters Championships. EKAC were represented by 16 athletes at the National Cross-country on 23 February. Run of the day was probably Grant Baillie's 39th place in the Senior 12k race but Martin Lynas in 29th position in the U15 Boys race is also worth a mention. At the end of the month we

held a combined EGM and Parents Evening to vote on a proposed merger with Whitemoss AAC . This was something both Committees had been working for some time as it was felt it would be in the best interests of all local athletes. The EKAC vote was unanimous, 73 for and none against the merger and reflects well on both the unity within our club and our willingness to be progressive and look to the bigger picture for athletics in our town. Whitemoss voted 'no' by a majority (24 for and 50 against), meaning the merger could not happen. It was a disappointment, but it was important to register this vote so we would know where we stood. This gave a mandate to the Committee to focus all our energies on developing our own athletes, our coaches and our club. The day after the votes were cast, our Coaches met to review and fine-tune a new Coaching Structure as a first step in this re-focusing of our aims. The new structure unveiled on 11 March was aimed at creating a viable pathway for all our young athletes as they grow and develop into high performing junior athletes. A number of other initiatives were also kicked off. First was a change to our group training times, to alter the start time from 7.15pm to 6.45pm. We also looked at our competition structure, to ensure all our athletes had access to appropriate levels of competition for their continuing development. Finally, we were in a position to order new kit, so all the newer athletes would be resplendent in new gear for the Summer.

March 2013

Meanwhile, on the indoor track, at the Scottish age group indoor Championhips EKAC athletes set several PBs. U16 Callum Field reached 2 finals, coming 4th in the 200m and 7th in the long jump. This at the end of a week that had seen him set PBs at 60m and 100m at the Ravenscraig Open Graded meet. Aidan Gilbride set a 400m PB, which is quite impressive for a middle distance runner in the cross-country season, and Shannon McMahon again excelled in the U18 60m and 200m, just missing out on finals places in both. Moving back outdoors, we had the first appearance of a new EK senior recruit in the shape of Alessandro Tronconi towards the end of the month. He headed up a strong squad of Seniors in the Clydebank 5k Road race. Another performance worth noting was U20 Vinnie Hastings' PB over the same course. The following day the EKAC highlight of the Young Athletes National Road Races on a damp Herriot Watt course was a bronze medal from Aidan Gilbride in the U15 Boys race, to continue his fine run of form.

April 2013

Following on from his brilliant bronze medal at the British Championships, Derek Leitch jetted off to San Sebastian to take on the best in Europe in the European Veterans Athletics Indoor Championships. He was the only British athlete to advance past the heats, making the 800m final and eventually finishing 8th.

May 2013

At the first CSSAL Division 3 meeting at Grangemouth on 12 May we finished in 5th place overall. The CSSAL result always depends on filling as many competition places as possible and our lack of numbers in certain age groups was exposed. Nevertheless, there were many great performances to celebrate. 'A' string female winners were Rebekah Sykes in the 80m and Mhairi Boyle in the javelin, while 'B' string winners were Maria May in the 80m and Chloe Mason in the 100m & 300m. On the male side, winners were Owen Selfridge in the 80m, the U11 boys relay team, with 'B' string winners David Thomson in the 3000m, Jamie Clements in the 400m, Callum Carmichael in the 80m, Ryan Clydesdale in the 100m & long jump, and Niall Walker in the 800m. Filling a 55-seater coach, the EKAC contingent set its sights on Carlisle for the Lanarkshire Relay Championships a couple of days later. There were plenty of good performances in all age groups,

with a lot of medals won. It's worth noting the 4 senior teams that competed in the men's 3x800m, achieving 1st team (Niall Walker, John Fergusson and Jamie Clements) 1st Junior Team (Aidan Gilbride, Vincent Hastings and Luke Kirwan) and 1st Masters team (Gordon Selfridge, Graeme Haddow and David Condra). Mid May saw the unveiling of the new EKAC training T-shirts, an idea conceived by Jamie Clements and sponsored by Peri. These bright yellow T-shirts were an immediate success and proved very popular with all our athletes. By the time the club received the Scottish Athletics Podium Accreditation Award on 21 May they were everywhere and made for great photo opportunities. This award, essentially a Quality Mark, was achieved with a lot of help from our Club Together Officer Caitlyn Mackie, and we can take great pride in the fact that EKAC was one of the first few clubs to receive it. The award was presented by Nigel Holl, Scottish Athletics CEO and Derek Hawkins, one of Scotland's top endurance athletes. Shannon McMahon was a double medallist at the West District Championships at Ayr at the end of May, winning the U18 200m and taking silver in the 100m. Other EK track finalists were Chloe Mason (U16 100m & 200m), Martin Lynas (U16 1500m), John Fergusson (Senior 1500m), Rachael McCusker (U16 300M), Aidan Gilbride (U16 800m) and Niall Walker (Senior 800m). In the field Nicole Sharp, Rachael and Sarah McCusker all jumped in the U16 long jump final.

June 2013

The National Relay Championships and Masters Championships took place simultaneously on a busy day at Grangemouth mid June. EKAC had an impressive 2 teams in the senior men's 3 x 800m and an U16 girls quartet in the 4 x 100m. The Senior A team of Niall Walker, John Fergusson and Jamie Clements just missed out on the win, finishing 5 seconds adrift in a club record time of 6.06.85 and claiming Scottish silver medals. The girls relay quartet of Chloe Mason, Alisha Montgomery, Nicole Sharp, and Chloe Mulligan posted an impressive time of 53.57s in their heat. This was enough to qualify for the final after another team was disqualified. However, by the time the athletes were made aware of this they were already halfway down the M80 on the journey home! In the National Masters Championships, Keith Garrow had a very busy and successful day as he competed in, and won, all four throwing events on offer. The newly crowned 4 time Scottish champion was victorious in the Hammer, Javelin, Discus and Shot Putt in the M35 age group and then used his strength to carry all that gold home. Billy Muir also took home a handful of medals with the highlight being becoming the Scottish champion in the Hammer in the M50 age group. He also claimed silver in the Javelin, and bronze in the Discus and Shot Putt. 15 EKAC athletes contested the Calderglen trail races on 28th June. Aidan Gilbride won the 3K race in a course record time. Vincent Hastings was first U20, Kelly Baillie was first lady and the team of Vincent, Jamie Clements and David Gorman took 1st team in the 5K race. The 2nd CSSAL meeting of the year was the very next day. We finished 6th in the meet and again the problem was lack of numbers in significant age groups, compared to the other clubs. However this League does perform the function of giving a chance for young athletes to experience track & field competition. Female winners on the day were the U11 Girls relay team of Emma Wilson, Rebekah Sykes, Maria May and Holly Coutts, Lucy Muirhead and Sarah Connolly in the 1200m, Jessica Hagan in the 200m, Shannon McMahon in the 200m and the U15 Girls relay squad of Rachael & Sarah McCusker, Chloe Mulligan and Georgina Massie. On the male side our winners were Owen Selfridge in the 150m & 600m, Elliot Bain in the 150m, Calum Hopkins in the long jump, the U11 boys relay squad of Owen, Elliot, Euan Barrie & Calum Carmichael, Aidan Gilbride in the 1500m, and Keith Garrow in the discus.

July 2013

This was a quiet month – looks like everyone was on holiday!

August 2013

Right at the beginning of August a number of our middle distance runners took to the track at Scotstoun for the British Milers Club Meeting, intent on setting personal bests at 800m. They were not disappointed: Lucy Muirhead broke the 2:30 barrier, Niall Walker broke 2 minutes for the first time, and Elliot Bain, Joseph Hagan, Euan Sweeten and Aaron Gilbride all ran faster than ever before. We had the final CSSAL meeting on the 4th at Kilmarnock. A 4th place finish saw us place 6th overall in the Division 2, which means relegation to Division 3, unless some other new clubs join the CSSAL. On a brighter note there were some fantastic performances, 27 wins in total coming from Nicole Sharp and Chloe Mason in the 100m, Rebekah Sykes in the 80m, Shannon McMahon and Alisha Montgomery in the 300m, Lucy Muirhead and Sarah Connolly in the 800m, the U11 and U17 Girls relays teams, Mhairi Boyle and Alisha Montgomery in the shot and Lucy Muirhead and Laurie May in the long jump. Note to be outdone by the girls, the boys winners were Callum Field and Ross Malloch in the 100m, Owen Selfridge and Elliot Bain in the 80m, Callum Field, Ross Malloch and Niall Walker in the 400m, Aidan Gilbride, Jamie Clements and Niall Walker in the 800m, the U11 and Senior relays teams, David McGiven and Jamie Clements in the shot. As usual what beat us was lack of coverage in some age categories, something we plan to address in future. The Scottish Age Group Championships in the middle of the month saw 17 young athletes make the trip to Aberdeen. Finalists were Lucy Muirhead (4th in the U14 800m), Georgina Massie (10th in the javelin), Shannon McMahon (6th in the 100m), and Callum Field (7th in the 100m, 5th in the 200m). The others also registered excellent performances at the highest age-group level in the country. A notable absentee from this event was sprinter Chloe Mason, who was on International duty representing South Lanarkshire at the International Children's Games in Canada. Chloe returned home with a well deserved silver medal from the relay event. Several athletes were clearly taking advantage of late-season fitness by chasing personal bests at open-graded meetings as the month neared its end. On the 20th, Aidan Gilbride broke 2 minutes for 800 with a time of 1:58.9, and Jack Kirwan and Vincent Hastings also recorded best ever times. A few days later, at Wishaw, Owen Selfridge set a new club record of 22.0s for the U11 150m and Aidan Gilbride set another club record, this time recording 1:27.4 for the U17 600m. These were just the highlights as many other EK athletes set PBs and top-20 times on the same day. The Lanarkshire Track & Field Championships came at the end of August. Unfortunately there were no results forthcoming, so, although we had several Lanarkshire Champions, the results are lost to posterity.

September 2013

Early September saw our own Club Track & Field Championships which for the first time incorporated a family fun day as well as the traditional competitive action. By all accounts it was a resounding success, with the bouncy castle a particular hit with young and old alike. Getting back to the action, there were some great performances and close competitions to end the track and field season for most. From 53 competitors over all age groups, club champions for 2013 were Rebekah Sykes and Owen Selfridge in the U11s, Lucy Muirhead and Ryan Clydesdale in the U13s, Sarah McCusker and Callum Field at U15, Mhairi Boyle and Aidan Gilbride at U17, Rachael Thomson and Jack Kirwan at U20 and Andy Clydesdale at Masters. At Senior level Grant Baillie and Niall Walker tied for first place. Ties were a feature of this Club Championships, occurring in 3 other podium positions as well as throughout the age groups and this testifies to the close nature of the competition. The event was also notable for the race dubbed "the race of the century" between U11s Elliot Bain and Owen Selfridge, which moved some senior athletes almost to tears, such was the never-say-die spirit of these 2 youngsters as the lead changed multiple times up the finishing straight.

October 2013

The club's endurance section was in action from the start of the cross-country season in various relay races. First was the Senior only McAndrew Relays at Scotstoun. This event was notable for the guest appearance in an EK vest of GB international Mike Skinner. Mike was up for the whole weekend of the Great Scottish Run, and he kindly led a training session with our young athletes as well as hosting a Q&A session in the Clubhouse. Mike was very impressed by the standard of questions, to the credit of our young athletes, and proved a very entertaining guest. His job in athletics allows him to meet many famous athletes and he surprised everyone there by handing out autographed photos of Mo Farah at the end of his inspiring talk. Next up was the West District Cross-country Relays at Hamilton Park Racecourse. The going was firm as the Young Females race got underway, with Sarah Connolly having an excellent first leg run to bring her team back in 12th place. Sarah's team were completed by Chloe Mulligan and Rebecca Russell, while the other team comprised Jessica Hagan, Shona Burt and Sarah McCusker. The Young Males A team were anchored home in 22nd place by Aidan Gilbride, with the fastest EK run of the day. The other team members were Calum Hopkins, Matthew Kirwan, Ross Malloch, Ryan Clydesdale and Luke Kirwan. The Senior team were also competing and the first leg saw a great head-to-head from 2 of our U20 athletes in their debut season at this level. Vinnie Hastings and Jack Kirwan were separated by only 4 seconds at the finish as they handed over to their second leg runners. From this point the A team runners moved through the field thanks to great runs from Alessandro Tronconi, John Fergusson and Grant Baillie, to register a 6th place finish, the best for many years. The Under 11s had their first outing of the season at the Lanarkshire Road Relay Championships the following weekend. A nasty fall by Rebekah Sykes just after the start ended the chances of our U11 Girls but the U11 boys team of Owen Selfridge, Cameron McDonald and Elliot Bain were not to be denied as a storming last leg and fastest time of the day from Elliot made them Lanarkshire champions. The mixed girls team of Sarah Connolly, Lucy Muirhead and Shannon McMahan took 2nd place thanks to joint fastest U13 times by Sarah and Lucy. The U13 boys team just missed a medal in 4th place, but the U15 Boys came back with a bang to take the Lanarkshire title. The team comprised Callum Field, Ross Malloch and Martin Lynas, who set the fastest time of the day as he took the boys into the lead. The early season relays culminated in the Scottish Cross-country Relays over a notoriously hilly course at Cumbernauld. 2 Girls teams started and fastest Girl over the demanding course was yet again U13 Sarah Connolly, although Lucy Muirhead had every right to feel unlucky at this event as she was unjustly held back from starting by overworked officials, a move which prompted a protest to the race referee. Two EKAC boys teams completed the course, the first finishing in 17th place. This event saw Martin Lynas overtake 33 athletes on the 2nd leg to register the 10th fastest U15 time of the day and Aidan Gilbride register the 15th fastest U17 time. 2 Senior teams competed, with the fastest time going to Grant Baillie as the A team finished in 22nd place.

November 2013

After the October relays, November saw the U10 and U12 athletes turn out at the Emirates Indoor Arena for the South Lanarkshire Athletics Partnership Superteams event. This was essentially a mini team decathlon comprising a sprint, long jump, shot-put and relay. Everyone had a great time and despite some strange decisions by the officials, the squad came back with gold, silver and bronze team medals. The following week saw the Club return to the Kilmarnock Cross Country races, this year on a new course which was mostly flat but had one section of bog to negotiate. From 18 young athletes taking part in very high quality competitions, top EKAC finishers were Abbie Kirwan and Joseph Hagan at U11, Lucy Muirhead and Matthew Kirwan at U13, Euan Norrie at U15 and Mhairi Boyle at U17. The U15, U17 and Senior athletes had a different event that day

in the shape of the National Short-course Cross-country Championships. Martyn Lynas excelled in 14th place in the U15 race, with Aidan Gilbride 17th in the U17s. Best Senior run in the squad of 5 was by Alessandro Tronconi in 32nd place, leading the team to 13th position. The club's annual ceilidh was held on 16 November at the Murray-Owen centre and was judged by all there to have been the best ever! My thanks go to Anne Thomson for organising the event and to Graeme Haddow for the trophies. Highlight of the evening was the awards presentation. This started with the club track & field trophies, then the Senior 10 event championship which went to Jamie Clements, the Hugh Wilsom Memorial Trophy to Aidan Gilbride and the Stuart Whitehill Memorial Trophy to Vinnie Hastings. The efforts of Caitlyn Mackie, Chloe Mason and 5 young helpers (Megan Barrie, Chloe Mason, Callum Field, Luke Kirwan and Kieran Fyfe) were acknowledged by special awards. The Scott Walsh Endeavour Award, for the club member showing exemplary commitment, attitude and effort went to Jack Kirwan. Competition for Athlete of the Year trophies was as close as any athletic competition. Recipients were Lucy Muirhead in the Junior category, Aidan Gilbride in the Youth category, and Niall Walker in the Senior category. Last but not least was a special Honourary Life Membership for Anne Thomson for her exemplary work over many years on the Executive Committee.