

KENT ATHLETIC CLUB NEWSLETTER – Issue 53

Kent Athletic Club

Kent Athletic Club
April 2013

NEARLY THERE

We had set ourselves a series of targets for the various competitions over the Winter season, as we felt that the endurance section of the club was now in a position to really move on and challenge for team honours at a higher level.

After our superb early season success in the Southern 6 Stage Road Relays in September we were disappointed to find that the National 6 Stage

Road Relay was cancelled because of an e-coli outbreak in Sutton Park. This disappointment was compounded by the knowledge that our Southern 6 Stage winning team would have won the National title!

We then went through a spell of three races where we came second team in all of them – The South of Thames Team Race, South of Thames Senior and the Kent County Cross

NEARLY THERE

NEWS AND VIEWS

NEW MEMBERS

WOMENS WORLD

CROSS COUNTRY

JUNIOR CORNER

LONDON MARATHON

RESULTS



Country Champs. This suggested that we did not have enough strength in depth. However, being disappointed with silver medals speaks volumes for our ambitions. Nonetheless these races produced some good individual runs, notably Chris Greenwood winning his first championship race (S of Thames Team Race) and John Gilbert storming to his third successive County Cross Country title.

We continued our adventure in the Surrey Cross Country League and started with a good win in the first match before falling away slightly in the next two fixtures, leaving the team 82pts behind Thames Hare and Hounds going into the last match at Coulsdon. The 'mother' of all comebacks was witnessed as some superb runs on the day hauled back 99pts and a surprising league title! Most of the guys did not believe Ken's shouts of joy 'We're winning the league!' at the end of the first lap. Since joining the Surrey League in 2009 we've had three successive promotions from Division Four and by winning the Division One title at the first attempt we've created a feat that probably will never ever be equalled. A great result as this league

really tests the strength of a club with its '10 to score' format.

Our main target past Christmas was to attempt to win team medals at the National Cross Country Champs in Sunderland, but it was not to be as this National held in the North was stronger than usual (and unexpected). Despite appalling conditions of melting snow and thick mud, we achieved our best ever position of 5th team although at the time we had hoped for better. All scoring six runners achieved a top 100 position.(again for the first time). So it made it a day (and night) to remember in the frozen North.

Again the team were led home by John Gilbert who produced his best ever run as he rose to the challenge of running with the leading group and finished in 10th place – a result of his new found confidence after gaining an England vest in January and justifying his selection with a great 4th place in very good company.

The indoor season tends to get a bit overshadowed by the wonderful achievements of our cross country and road runners. However, some great performances were achieved, none better than Michael Holden's winning performance in the National Indoor Combined

Events Champs at Sheffield and setting a new Club High Jump record on the way. Matt Burton won the National Indoor Long Jump Champs again with a new club record and gained a second England vest in Vienna. Sean Breathnach also set a club record in the shot whilst winning the All Ireland Champs and now being injury free this will hopefully carry over into the outdoor season.

Not to be outdone, Paul Pollock gained yet another Irish vest as he ran well in the World Half Marathon Champs in hot and humid conditions in Bulgaria, to be one the first European home. He also set a new club record and then followed this up with a run in the Dublin Marathon, setting yet another club record and he is closer than ever to making a 'major games'.

The end of the season is always marked by the 12 Stage Road Relays and the London Marathon, but again we had to suffer the disappointment of having a potentially winning team being thwarted by cancellation of the Southern due to an icy Milton Keynes!

The London Marathon is the year's main target for a number of our members and it was a day to remember! With no less than 8 guys running this

year in which 7 gained PBs and the other, Paul Pollock was second Brit. Paul has moved up a level recently and maintained 2h12m pace for twenty miles before tailing off a little. The travelling fans – and there were many of them had a day to celebrate as Kent AC won their first National Title – National team champions

as Paul finished 2nd, John Gilbert just behind in 3rd and Phil Sanders 81st. To cap it all, young protégé, Alex Yee produced his best run so far to win the age 15 Borough's Mini Marathon 3ml race. (this after finishing 12th in the English Schools despite being bottom of the age group) - one to watch in the future!

There can be no doubt that although all of our targets were not reached, the 2012/13 winter season represents our best ever season and is yet another massive step forward. So as we are on an upward curve and despite 'moving the bar higher' we can look forward to getting ever closer to being a GB top club!!

By Ken Pike

NEWS AND VIEWS:

The Kent AC Club 200 Draw has now entered its second year and again has a full uptake of 49 participants. The winners so far have been:

December	Brian Sanders	January	Phil Sanders
February	Paul Bell	March	Chris Greenwood
April	Dan Hale		

All the above winning the £200 monthly prize!

The AGM took place on 4th December 12 at the Goose on the Green Public House. It was well attended and the following was agreed; Full membership fees will be raised to £35 per annum from 1st January 2013 and that the reduced subscription will be £25 per annum. Elections of Officers were as follows:

Committee Posts

President	Larry Garnham	General Secretary	Phil Sanders
Treasurer	Kehinde Dauda	Track Secretary	Dennis Fairbrass
Social Secretary	Adrian Musson	Fixtures Secretary	Norman Fairbrass
Track Manager 'A'	Ken Pike	Track Manager 'B'	VACANT
XC Country Manager	James Connor	Coaching Secretary	Ken Pike
R/R Manager	Andrew Dunwoody	Women's Secretary	Kate Williams
Membership Secretary	Bernie Hutchinson	Two Other Posts	Stuart Beaney Rob Moye

Non-Committee Posts

Records Secretary	Len Reilly	Women's Manager	Adrian Musson
Veterans Manager	Luke Armitage	Track Captain 'A'	Joe Appiah
Track captain 'B'	Trevor Jamies Agard	XC Country Captain	Stuart Beaney
R/R Captain	Lee Haze	Trophies Secretary	Pete Boxshall (Temp)
Road Race Co Ord	Julian SpencerWood	Road Race Organiser	Barry Dix
Newsletter Organiser	Larry Garnham	Presentation Officer	James Connor
YA Manager	Spenser Lane	Club Champs Promo	JOINT VENTURE
Website Manager	Jules Gevers	Club 200 Organiser	Stuart Beaney
Kit Officer	Adrian Musson		

The Membership Secretary reported that
Total club membership is now 263, including 53 women.

The Treasurer reported that
Despite losing the London Borough of Lewisham grant which was worth around £3,500 per year the club made a small surplus of £150.

The Club Presentation took place on Saturday, 5th January 2013. The main focus was on the achievements of Kent AC athletes at the Olympic Games in London 2012. Jack Green was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the club.

CLUB RECORDS:

Already with just a few competitions out of the way Kent AC athletes have been very productive and have revised five club records!

LONG JUMP	Matt Burton	7.94m (i)
SHOT PUTT	Sean Breathnach	16.75m (i)
HIGH JUMP	Michael Holden	2.01 (i)
HALF MARATHON	Paul Pollock	65.38
MARATHON	Paul Pollock	2h16m30s

STOP PRESS!!

Congratulations to Michael Holden for winning the senior UK indoor heptathlon with 5457pts – Max Hall was 11th with 4768pts.

Congratulations to Matt Burton for winning the senior UK indoor long jump championships with a leap of 7.94m.

Congratulations to Sean Breathnach for winning the All Ireland indoor shot putt Champs with a putt of 16.75m

Congratulations to Matt Field for winning the All Ireland indoor 60mHdls with a time of 8.20secs

INTERESTING?

I've never heard of the North Pole Marathon either!!” But it was won recently by ex- member Gary Thornton in temperatures of -30C. A time of 3h 49m 29s running on ice is pretty impressive!

TOP PERFORMANCE £200 PRIZE

Robert Harris has put forward a £200 performance award to any competing club member. He must be a fully paid up first claim member and he must not be in receipt of UK funding.

The performance must be while representing Kent AC in either the British League or Southern League and the member must have competed in at least two league matches that season.

The evaluation of the performance shall be as a percentage of the current UK record in that event.

The award went to Matt Burton in 2012 for his long jump – but didn't seem to know about it, despite it being in the Newsletter and on the website. So please let all your fellow competitors know that there is £200 up for grabs. All the more reason to compete in the British League or southern League for the club!!

CONTRIBUTIONS

Every Newsletter I ask for contributions and it is the same familiar faces that send me the standard articles. If anyone wants to contribute or run an idea past me then why not get in touch on **01637 874573** and I'm sure we can formulate some interesting articles and new bits and pieces. Better still, if there is someone that is a budding copywriter/typographer/computer geek then why not volunteer to take over the production of the whole Newsletter.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Men's Southern League

4th May 13 at Mile End
18th May 13 at Horsham
15th June 13 at Tooting
13th July at Kingston
10th August 13 at Windsor (Play Off)

British League

11th May 13 at Cardiff
8th June 13 at West London Stadium
6th July 13 at Windsor
3rd August 13 at Liverpool

Assembly League

18th April 13 at Beckenham
13th June 13 at Dulwich Park
8th August 13 at Victoria Park

9th May 13 at Victoria Park
4th July 13 at Battersea Park
5th September 13 at Beckenham

NEW MEMBERS:

Lawrence Avery (32) He lives in Herne Hill and joined us as a 19 minute 5K runner and he has brought that down to a 2h 49m in this year's London Marathon. He is now a regular trainer at Ladywell and he is getting a lot quicker so expect to see him feature strongly in next year's Surrey Cross Country League and even our 12 Stage team as his half marathon is down to 75m30s recently.

Joe Lawrence (20) He lives in Sutton and he joined us from Blackheath & Bromley. He is a triple jump specialist despite a recent long jump of 7.24m. He trains with Matt Burton and has a PB of 15.48m for the triple. A major talent, he has already been a medallist in the National champs at under 20, and a gold medallist in the English schools. Looking to get close to 16mtrs this year and really contribute to our British League campaign.

David Longley (25) He lives in Elmers End and was spotted running this year's 'Sidcup 10' where he ran 58m30s and he ran 2h58m in the 2011 for the Marathon. Like Lawrence, he is a newcomer to running and has made great progress already. He was in good shape for this year's London Marathon but sustained an injury at the last minute – hence he will undoubtedly get PBs in the 5K, 10K and half marathon this summer. Another one to watch in the future.

Drew Lothian (28) He lives in Lewisham and he has also become a regular 'B' group trainer at Ladywell. The third one of the talented newcomers to running, who has already done 58m45s for 10 miles – virtually his first race! Once he gets training regularly we expect to see some genuine progress.

Ben Phillips (33) He lives in Brockley and joined us as he started to train at Ladywell. He has yet to race but he has coped well with the pace and length of sessions so far, so he could well be a wild card once he gets into regular training and racing.

Jean-Charles Roghi (32) He was born in Paris and has been in London for seven years. He has just moved to Peckham and joined us from Belgrave Harriers. He is now training with Pete's group at Ladywell and is a talented 400Hurdler with a PB of 53.4. He will be a

welcome addition to our British League team and hopefully will reinvigorate this ailing event.

WOMEN'S WORLD

ROAD RUNNING:

Despite the cold winter many of us managed to pull on the shoes/gloves/hats/skins and tread the roads over the Winter season.

First up the Canterbury 10. This year it was designated as the Kent champs and Grand Prix so had a busier than usual feel to it and probably more club runners. We had 5 in the top 50 out of 293 female runners with Cath Stibbs 4th in her age group.

Tunbridge Wells Half (30th Anniversary) was on a bitterly cold Sunday in February but 3 brave souls Ali Farrall (she lives close), Sheila Strange and Janett Ricketts all acquitted themselves well with Ali placed 4th in her age category.

Greenwich 10k (3/03/13) was a new course due to the park restoration following 2012 and on first impressions looked a bit dull being x3 loops. However, it was great with locals cheering and a good turnout by both the men and women from Kent AC. We had some great individual results with Lydia Blackmore coming

3rd women in her first 10k race. We also picked up first team prize with Lydia, Kate Williams and Caroline Evans. Lets see if they go back to the old course next year.

Other notable results were a great PB for Amy Clements at the Bath ½ finishing in a tidy 1:25:44 and Cath Stibbs 9th woman at the Brighton Half.

The winter season round up was the London marathon which is detailed in Len's write up.

By Kate Williams

CROSS COUNTRY:

Kent AC women had an excellent cross country season finishing in 5th place, out of 18, in the '3 to score' Kent League table, with plenty of PBs and great performances at the separate events throughout the season. At the Kent Cross Country Champs in January we were also 5th team in the '6 to score' but an impressive 2nd in the '3 to score' thanks to excellent performances by Cath Stibbs (10th), Amy Clements (20th) and Ali Farrall (33rd).

The success was down to a dedicated and consistent team of ten runners who showed up whatever the weather and wherever the race to keep the Kent AC colours flying. And of course, thanks are due in no small measure to the excellent and professional dedication of 'The Boss' Adrian Musson whose gruelling track sessions, endless encouragement and enthusiasm lifted the runners to peak performance every race day. With ten runners making most of the fixtures, and a mix of new faces and old hands, we had a really strong and positive team. Thanks also to our dedicated supporters – of all ages – who are such a welcome presence at the side of the course. With their help, on top of everything else, we had a quite brilliant season. Due to illness we had a small number at the masters champs so there were no complete teams but we had a respectable 13th V35 Ali Farrall, 12th V45 Ellie Brown and 6th V55 Zoe Gaffen. We've set our sights on one of the top 3 spots in the league, continued

success in the champs and more masters representation for next year. And the campaign starts now!

By Caroline Evans

Kent AC Girls Group

As the nights got darker and the weather colder, we prepared ourselves for the worst – that we potentially had a group of fair-weather runners... Thankfully, we couldn't have been more wrong and the group has shown real dedication to our Tuesday night session turning up with bags of enthusiasm each week despite rain, snow and sub-zero temperatures. Even when the track was shut due to icy weather conditions we still had a keen group and so head off to the park to do sprint work on the grass

in the snow, (and cool down with a compulsory snow ball fight.) The girls have shown undeniable progress with their running technique, pacing and endurance, which has only fuelled their confidence to work harder. Our sessions each week have remained varied incorporating sprints, middle distances, circuits and hurdles- (which were particularly enjoyed as many had never tried them before), to keep things interesting and to hopefully create a group of well rounded, multi event runners. At the end of last summer we timed each of the girls over distances 100m-800m as a record of their achievement and to have a time to improve on. By March of this year every single one of them had got

quicker on most, if not all of their previous times, which is a true testament to the training that they have done. The good news continues as three of our group qualified in the Ladywell trials to represent Lewisham in the 2013 Mini Marathon in the U13 and U15 categories. This is an amazing achievement and I hope that this will be the start of some very promising racing careers. We are hugely proud of all of the girls and hope that the group continues to grow and develop as we become a more established part of Kent AC. Thanks to all of the coaching team for their hard work and we look forward to more progress and success throughout the summer.

By Carly O'Hara

CROSS COUNTRY

**Surrey CC League - Sat 20th Oct 2012
Roehampton**

History is made – our 13th Consecutive victory in Surrey XC League and a victory in our first Division One match. We got off to just the start we wanted in the much anticipated first Surrey League Division 1 fixture – a win- albeit a narrow one. Provisional results indicated that we were just twenty points ahead of Thames who in turn were twenty points ahead of Herne Hill.

The race at Roehampton Vale was on a proper cross country course, testing with steep climbs and fast descents and made

even more demanding by several stretches of glutinous mud.

The race was won by Belgrave's Ugandan international, Paskar Owor who had a terrific tussle with former National Cross Country winner, and leading our challenge, 2nd claimer, Frank Tickner. Frank's in heavy mileage training at the moment, but obviously Owor deserves great credit for a getting the better of Tickner by six seconds at the end. After Frank Tickner we scored heavily having the next three home in the race. Andy Rayner, for long a stalwart of Ken's training group, was our second class 2nd claimer. With the first two cutting a fierce

pace out in front, Andy was an isolated third with a bit of gap before James Connor and Chris Greenwood came home in fourth and fifth respectively. Positions that might have been reversed had not Chris taken a tumble on the descent leading into the finish. In the event it looks as though the pair are well matched and likely to have close races in the rest of the series.

Whilst having 4 in the first 10 was undoubtedly the key to us being able to come out on top in the fixture, it should be said that this was a really good all round team performance. Thames packed well and for a while were looking to threaten our victory. However, with our B Team squad members almost all running to form, and in some cases exceeding expectations, we were able to hold sway. After Chris, our next runner home and making a welcome return, was the always reliable Jim Savage. Jim was inside twenty, coming home in 18th. Then leading B Team member on the day, and relishing the tough conditions, was Steve McGrory (24). Following on from Steve, the close personal battles resulted in the following finishing order. Paul Bell (28) closely followed by the steadily improving Paul Griffiths (32). A little further back, and giving a lie to his pre-race anxieties, was Team Captain Stuart Beaney (35). A cautious start and then a charge through the field seemed to be the tale of Stuart's race. Our closing scorer on the day was Phil Sanders (43) - a solid run but he's no doubt got his sights set on turning the tables on some of his B team colleagues in future races. Outside the scoring ten today was Dan Hale (45), possibly feeling the effects of last weeks' half marathon. After Dan came Andy Moreton (56) and Richard Bidgood (105), another steady improver in recent months. Commiserations must go to Stuart Scott who was another who started slowly but had worked his way through the field. Stuart took a nasty

tumble gashing his leg and injuring his ankle as a result of the fall. Let's hope Stuart's not out for too long.

We had three further finishers, yours truly, wanting to enjoy the day despite very few miles in the bank (136). It showed too as my elderly rival, Julian Spencer- Wood showed he had recovered from his recent heart flutter by running away from me with ease (119). Behind me and Julian but commendably turning out on was ex Herne Hill man, James Ward (146).

So as mentioned in the headline, an historic day – not only victory in the first fixture of Division 1 but a continuation of a winning streak that makes it 13 in a row. But we must take heed of our Captain's rallying cry and ensure and optimum turn out for forthcoming fixtures. Whilst we'll have the redoubtable John out for the next fixture, we will also need to maximise our resources if we are to have a chance of carrying on with our winning ways.

By Andy Gardiner

Surrey CC League - Sat 10th Nov 2012 Richmond Park

A third place finish, but league victory is not beyond us - keep the faith!

A sense of perspective is what's needed after our third place finish in the second Surrey League Division 1 race, a landmark, 200th fixture of the league. I say sense of perspective as initially there was a sense of disappointment that we'd finished third behind both Herne Hill and Thames H&H. But the realists amongst us knew that whilst it was marvellous to get off the winning start in the first fixture, actually winning the league was never going to be straightforward considering the strength in depth of our closest rivals.

Despite being without big hitters John Gilbert and James Connor, the team that Captain Beaney and Ken had coaxed to

the line was still one that looked likely to do well. It was just that on the day Thames had an impressive solidity about them that we couldn't match. The beautiful setting of Richmond Park played host to the second fixture. It was a course that suited the track type runner - none more than the talented winner Nick Goolab, a former National Junior winner who demonstrated what a quality runner he is by winning comfortably from his Belgrave, club colleague, and winner of the first race Paskar Owor. Behind the winning pair we scored heavily with 3 in the first ten. First home was 2nd claimer, Andy Rayner, who we may well owe a big debt to at the end of the season. Andy finished a fine 3rd then in 5th and 6th we had Russell Bentley and Chris Greenwood. It was good to see Russell impressing over the country. Perhaps usually regarded as a track and road man, Russell showed that he has the quality to excel over the country as well. Chris had him in his sights at times, but couldn't quite match Russell's speed. Our next man home was Jim Savage, again proving how valuable he is to the club. Jim came home in 21st. Also making the top 30 in this quality field, with only a couple of seconds separating them, were Noel Pollock and Mark Bruce. Both very welcome additions to the team. A bit further down the field we had the B Team rivalry being sustained with Paul Bell again gaining the upper hand over skipper Stuart Beaney who was attributing his defeat to his fast start. A special mention must go to our tenth scorer, Andrew Dunwoody, who closed the scoring in 73rd position. Andrew hasn't been at his fittest and was suffering from a cold but chose to help the cause. In total we had 17 runners turn out which was a credit to the persuasive powers of Stuart, ably aided and abetted by Ken. And whilst initially there might have been a slight sense of deflation after we'd

got off to a flier in the first match, the message has got to be- keep the faith. Evidence is there to suggest the gap between us and Thames is retrievable. So to coin a phrase with topical resonance, "Don't panic Captain Beaney".

By Andy Gardiner

Surrey CC League – Sat 12th Jan 2013 Hamlands

Second team again as Thames get the better of us with quality packing

It seems to be becoming a bit of a familiar story in this season's Surrey XC League. This race again saw us have a number of runners in the top ten, but still not managing to quite secure the win. However, although Thames now have a good lead on us in the overall competition, this race saw us increase the distance between ourselves and Herne Hill to a margin we would hope to be able to defend.

The conditions encountered in the race were remarkable - even for old campaigners like me who thought they'd seen it all. The course at Ham Lands set beside the Thames saw the river collide with the tide and cause flooding of a large segment of a field that had to be negotiated twice. On the first lap it was brutal with water nearly up to your knees, but on the second lap for those like me near the rear of the field it was actually virtually waist deep and any pretence of trying to run through it had to go by the board. Wading became the order of the day.

The race itself at the sharp end was reportedly a tight affair with John Gilbert keeping pace with the impressive Paskar Owor for most of the race. They had a young runner from Leeds running as a guest keeping them company who was to finish just ahead of John. However he wasn't counting in the race. Owor, the Ugandan international, would seem to be

in the form of his life and it seems John was holding him until the latter stages of the second lap. Hopefully, though, John has a fair bit left in the tank as he was receiving our congratulations after we'd heard the previous day that he'd been picked to represent England at a forthcoming representative fixture at Cardiff. We then had a further 3 runners in the top ten. Behind John was Andy Rayner who turned out again for us and will hopefully be able to compete in the final fixture for us which will mean he will have done all four. Not far behind was another friend of the club, 2nd claimer Nick Torry who has turned out many a time for us on the track. Nick just got the better of Chris Greenwood who was 7th-, battling to keep ahead of a couple of Thames runners. Then just outside the top ten was the ever reliable Jim Savage in 13th. After Jim, there was a bit of a gap before Paul Bell again led the B Team squad home. He was closely followed by Stuart Beaney and Phil Sanders. One could speculate that if we'd had a fit James Connor and possibly Mark Bruce out, we might have made things more uncomfortable for Thames. But there are always "what ifs" and Thames could argue that several of their top guys were missing.

Anyway, it looks a distinct possibility that if we can have a good turnout for the final fixture, we can secure second spot and that's quite an achievement in our first season in the top division. Today it was great to see such a good turn out and cross section of runners from the club from the old (me) and the new – Lawrence Avery, making a very promising debut for the club in what was his first ever cross country race. We actually had 22 on the start line so let's see if we can beat that for the final fixture at Farthing Down in February.

By Andy Gardiner

Surrey CC League - Sat 9th Feb 2013 Coulston

Memorable Victory in Final Fixture that also secures League Title

The last Surrey League fixture brought a slightly unexpected triumph, with us not only winning the final fixture but also taking the overall league title. I say unexpected as although there was a degree of optimism pre-race, realistically with us trailing Thames by 63 points, the majority of us thought the gap might be too much to make up. However, make it up we did.

It was a combination of a tremendous team performance from our runners, and Thames perhaps not being as strong as anticipated. The race over the testing Farthing Downs course showed that our international second claimer, Frank Tickner, is rounding nicely into form. Frank looked majestic as he strode to a convincing victory. Whilst it may have been convincing, John Gilbert again showed his quality with an equally convincing second place and actually only forty seconds down on Frank. Ahead of Paskar Onwar, who had won the previous three fixtures, was Nick Torry, not scoring for us today but having a fine run. Following on from Nick, came an impressive grouping with Andy Rayner in 6th, James Connor 7th. Chris Greenwood 8th and Jim Savage 11th. Undoubtedly this high end scoring helped to seal victory. However, all 16 runners who turned out deserve great credit. Notable mentions on the day go to James Connor, skipper Stuart Beaney, Andrew Dunwoody, Paul Bell and although he was just outside the scoring ten, Luke Armitage. As usual Stuart was a bundle of nervous energy before the start. But he led from the front with a real captain's performance, coming home in 29th, and having a terrific run. James Connor's fine seventh place showed he is getting over his injury problems and again

demonstrated what an asset to the club he is. Andrew Dunwoody as usual looking tortured as he went round, did well to close the Team in at 51. Just ahead of Andrew, Paul Bell who'd been suffering from a nasty virus did tremendously well to finish strongly after feeling so wiped out he'd briefly had to stop. Then Luke deserves a mention, not only for having a strong run, but also one would think motivating Andrew to stay ahead of him. Finally, just to reflect. When the decision was taken over four years ago to join the Surrey League, it was a decision that did not meet with universal approval. However, most would now have to acknowledge it's been a resounding success. To win each division in succession is unprecedented and something that I am sure won't be repeated. The league has provided a sense of purpose and given us unity. It has also seen runners really improve as a result of the competition. All runners, have contributed, but perhaps a special word praise should go to several individuals who have help us succeed. Our first class second claimers. John Gilbert for his inspirational performances. the organisational input of Rich Munn, James Connor, Stuart Beaney and finally to Ken Pike, for well, being Ken Pike.

By Andy Gardiner

SOUTH of THAMES TEAM race at Reigate Priory on Sat 24th Nov 2012
Medals Galore was the order of the day as Kent AC came close to a clean sweep of the medals despite being narrowly beaten by Tonbridge AC in the 4 to score competition.

On a drizzly day Chris Greenwood set out his stall early when as planned he went into the lead after the start across the playing fields and by the top of the first hill he held a 20 metre lead. He piled on the pressure relentlessly and on every

sighting his lead increased as the race up and over the North Downs progressed. Despite Ken' warnings about staying on his feet he continued his record of rolling around in the mud as he took a nasty fall when negotiating the tight turn at the bottom of the last steep climb but he was never going to allow anyone to take away his first victory over the country to join Jermaine Mays and John Gilbert as winners of this century old championship race.

Tonbridge AC were packing well, including last year's runner up Ben Cole, but Jim Savage and James Connor were keeping us in with a chance. Jim is steadily returning to fitness as he showed by coming home in 8th place despite serious problems with his shorts in the latter part of the race! James however was hell bent on confusing everyone around him by using the race as a therapy session on his comeback from injury and doing 5 minute efforts where he surged backwards and forwards in the top 10 - finally coming home in 9th place.

The last scoring spot for us was a great battle between Stuart Beaney and Paul Griffiths as they both produced their best runs of the season (a result of them both easing down for once ?) with Stuart getting the nod in 12th place with Paul right behind him. Phil Sanders started steadily as he had a bad head cold but he surged through the field to come home a respectable 15th. Our birthday boy Dan Hale, now an evergreen 30 years of age, also ran well to come home in 22nd place despite a slimmer version of Andy Moreton looking like he enjoyed the race as he got steadily stronger and had Dan in his sights coming in right behind him to close the 8 to score team which had a resounding win on the day.

So we had the individual winner again, won the 8 to score, were 2nd in the 4 to score and our B team were pleasantly surprised to come 3rd in the 4 to score as we cleaned up on the silverware. In

addition the birthday boy not only took a medal home but also had the 8 to score trophy to place on the table that evening

at his birthday celebration in New Cross !

By Ken Pike



**South of Thames Senior XC Champs
at Kingston Gate, Richmond Park on
Sat 15th Dec 2012**

There is something of a curse on this race as far as Kent AC are concerned! We have contested this race since its inception in 1888 – a period of 124 years - yet on countless occasions we have nearly won it only to have it snatched away from us by either bad luck or our own incompetence.

This year was yet another yo yo year as first of all a winning team was decimated by injury only then to reform at the last minute but to then finally fall just short. None the less given our problems Second Place is still a good show but surely next year.....

The one real fact that must be recorded here for posterity is that Mark Bruce has just snatched the record for a member's travelling distance to a race as he flew in especially from New York – arriving at Heathrow at 6am that morning! A

fantastic commitment to the cause and a real example to us all.

John Gilbert's return to racing surprised us all as he had only run 5 times in the previous two months but his class and determination shone like a beacon as he challenged the leading group all the way to only be edged out by an in form Paskar Owar in the last mile but he took Dean Lacy apart as they fought for the lead. Chris Greenwood had been doubtful but he showed that he has moved up a level now as he came home in an unchallenged 4th place - again easily taking some good scalps into the bargain.

Team Captain, James Connor, came home in 9th place despite having lost a lot of training recently and having to ease back as he felt his long standing injury again – surely 2013 will bring him better luck than 2012. He was backed up by a great club man, Jim Savage, who was only 24 secs behind him in 16th place - despite working in Manchester and living in London recently.

It was great to see two of the B Group have their best races of the season so far and into the bargain be rewarded with Silver team medals as firstly Stuart Beaney, in 21st position, and then Dan Hale, in 28th position, closed the team to comfortably gain those medals. Mark Bruce's efforts were not to be successful as the jet lag got to him but if his example can be followed next year then finally we can lift this damned curse!

By Ken Pike

Kent County CC Champs on Sat 5th Jan 2013 at Detling

John Gilbert wins a third County XC Title with team silver

John Gilbert completes a hat-trick of wins while the Team have to settle for 2nd in the team competition.

After last year's triumph at the County Championships, with the club having both the individual winner and taking home the silverware in the team competition, we were obviously hoping for a repeat performance. The Championships were back at the County show ground due to building work at the site of the Grammar school that had hosted the last two Championships. Previously the showground has provided some dire weather conditions, but today was mild and being so high the course was relatively mud free, certainly compared with others we have run on recently.

Despite a good turnout (16 runners) and virtually everyone running to expectations, and some above, we were beaten in both team competitions by an impressive Tonbridge side. This was despite our score being very similar to the one we ran out winners with last year. However, fair play to Tonbridge it looked like they had done their homework on what was required to beat us after the close encounters we had had in the two

recent South of the Thames fixtures. Whilst Tonbridge got the better of us, the Team was a fine second in both the six and twelve to score competitions with no other Teams near us.

Although Tonbridge may have won the Team competitions, the story of the day had to be John Gilbert's third successive win – and what a win it was. John dominated the race almost from the outset. He forged a lead early in the race that he built on throughout and ended up with a significant winning margin – probably a margin that hadn't been seen at these championships since Barry Royden was in his pomp. John was followed home by Blackheath's Andy Rayner, a training partner of John's and someone who has been supporting our cause in the Surrey league. After John our next man home was Chris Greenwood in a fine fifth position. Chris had picked off a number of runners ahead of him and at one stage it looked like he might have finished higher. However, the likes of Michael Coleman rallied and Chris couldn't quite get up to those ahead of him.

Whilst we may not have won the Team competition, our scoring six all received letters of invitation to represent Kent at the forthcoming inter-counties championships. Some may have got the letters as they will be regarded as reserves, but nevertheless receiving one of the invitation letters is no mean achievement. It was good to see two debutants making an important contribution to our success. David Morgan was just outside the scoring six in 26th, with Richard Elliot running solidly coming home in 62nd. The two now seem to be paid up members of the B Team and the gruelling Tuesday night sessions are paying off. Anyway, next up is the third Surrey league fixture and I would just echo our captain's urgings "let's be having you" - a full turnout is imperative. *By Andy Gardiner*

JUNIOR

The junior boys section has had a very eventful time since the last update. We currently have 10 year 7-11

C O R N E R

boys now signed to the club which is the most seen for quite a while. At the beginning of the year, they were all asked what their targets for 2013 would be. For one lad, it proved to be one of national significance!

The main focus of the early part of the year is the Virgin Mini Marathon. We encouraged as many of the boys to enter the event and they rose to the challenge brilliantly. At the beginning of the Lewisham Mini Marathon Trial, it was noted that they all stayed together in their warm ups. When I asked them why they did this, the response was they had noted my comment that it shows the rest of the competitors that these boys mean business. The results were not in doubt with Alex Yee winning the entire event and Josh Correia not too far behind in the U17 (coming 3rd in his age cat). Oisin Brennan ran a fantastic race catching Francis Sumaye with 400m to go and come second in the boys U15. (Francis joined our training group soon afterwards to improve his chances and proved to be a very hard grafter.) Benoit Jaunaux also put in a

good time to qualify for the borough.

Unfortunately, we don't have the times for the trial for reasons of data protection ("apparently") but this was immaterial as it gave the boys confidence that they could achieve in the main event six weeks later.

In the main event on Marathon day, Francis excelled himself with a fantastic 25th place in the U15 Boys. Oisin & Josh were slightly down on their times but that was not unexpected with problems during the winter training. They will undoubtedly be looking to improve them significantly next year. Benoit was pleased to put in a good time and only a few seconds behind the other Lewisham runners. Again, there seems to be an issue about times here, with the leading ones being changed. However, this doesn't detract from the result.

Whilst we work together as a team, it would be wrong to not mention the achievement of one boy who continued to raise the bar throughout the year. Alex Yee came to the club at the end of last year where he immediately made an impression with his win of the annual Parlauf Tournament partnering Rawlston Morian (we now know who the lead runner in that team was). He was a well-known junior national triathlete but

wanted to improve his running times. He made it clear to me that his target this year was the Mini Marathon and we made an agreement that we would do what we could to win this event. That was something that few would believe was possible, with a top 5 finish.

Alex trained hard during the winter, trying to combine his tri training with specific training to improve his running speed. This balance of training has proven to be a challenge to him but he has dealt with it fantastically. He competed in the England Schools XC event as one of the leading London runners. What wasn't made public knowledge was the conscious decision that he was not going to make this a main race but a training run. This didn't stop him from running an intelligent race which kept him out of trouble and any possible problems to an incredible 12th. A result few people predicted would happen in any case. The week before the Mini Marathon, Alex took part in the Dulwich Park Run, giving the eventual winner a very good run for his money. That person was John Gilbert!

His win in the Virgin Mini Marathon is now a matter of historical fact and is coupled with a 3rd in the National event as well. I met him that evening after the

event where he showed me the trophy presented to him by Prince Harry. He becomes the first member of the club to win this prestigious event and it will be interesting to see what lies in the future for this gifted runner. Personally, I think we are going to see him at the Olympics within 10 years and I'm happy for the record to reflect that today ☺

Attention now moves to the track with athletics becoming the focus for the next few months. The boys have all done trials for their primary distance with secondary distance being considered as well. We hope to see more events for them to appear in and will be looking to see improved results and PBs.

Sebastian Chambers has returned to work on bringing his 400m time down from 68secs last season. Max Habord has had a

very good indoor season winning a number of 60m races in sub-8s and already seen a 3 second improvement in his 200m. The rest of the group will be looking at 800 & 1500m.

This year, Kent AC has shown to have a superlative year with results and achievements that have been superb and the boys have contributed to this admirably. It was noted that they have all adopted the club spirit with teamwork. In addition, it is hoped that some of the senior athletes in the club will be able to come down at some point during the season to lend their expertise to the group. These boys have showed themselves to be a real credit to Kent AC.

By Spenser Lane

Young Athletes Manager

THE LONDON MARATHON

It's now a cliché (and a bit arrogant) to keep stating that Kent AC keep getting better, or go from strength to strength, but performances in the 2013 [insert sponsor name here – but you all know who it is] London Marathon, show this to be very much the case.

In near perfect conditions (again) our runners excelled themselves. Pride of place must go to our first three men scorers who for the first time have won the UKA team championship. This is based on the total finishing times (not position). First home was Irish international Paul Pollock and club marathon record

holder (2h16m30s at Dublin, 2012), who ran an aggressive race (halfway in 66.13!) accompanied much of the way by Blackheath's Scott Overall, who dropped out at c 25k leaving Paul on his own. Pollock finished 15th in 2.17.10. Closing him was the uber-committed, determined and reliable John Gilbert in 16th place 2.17.43. John had hoped to from a group (if two can be a group) with Steve Way, but Way dropped out early on and so John ran over 20 miles solo, a massive achievement of concentration and control. He was second Brit, first Englishman, will get silver in the UKA individual

Champs and is eligible for a time bonus of \$1,000.

There had been much speculation amongst members as to the likely third scorer. Stuart Beaney, Phil Sanders, Paul Griffiths and Dan Hale were all in the fray. It wasn't decided until mile 25 when Sanders and Griffiths, who had been together for most of the way, gently parted company, Sanders taking the honours in 2.35.54 (as 8th V40 in the race and now 3rd on the club's V40 rankings) and Griffiths in 2.36.14. (Sanders has a habit of close finishes: ref his sprint battle with Paul Bell at the 2013 Kent Vets V40 Champs). Stuart Beaney got an official time of 2.39.00. (His target

was sub 2.39 so he was officially disappointed), but it was still a PB. And evidence that marathon training is the way to perform in shorter races too. Dan Hale ran a much more restrained race than his team mates, and was the only one to run a negative split (by 10 secs!) to finish in 2.39.29 – a debut time to be very proud of. Still inside three hours was Lawrence Avery (2.49.43) who showed immense character competing only a few days after his mother's untimely death and dedicating his run to her memory, and Richard Bidgood in 2.52.15 So, the superlatives: six starters on the championship start; PBs all round (except Paul Pollock); winning the UKA champs (by provisional calculations 7h.10min from Belgrave 7.17 and Serpentine 7.27);

individual championship medal to John Gilbert and Paul Pollock providing the Irish selectors with the possibility of a run in the World Champs in Moscow (he has the qualifying time of sub 2.17).

In the women's race Cath Stibbs justified her place on the championship start and shaved a minute from her PB, clocking 3.07.18; next in was the consistent Ali Farrall (3.20.24); then 2 seconds separating first timer Cathy Hirschmann (3.48.15) and Caroline Evans (+2 secs), who, extraordinarily, was 1 second slower than in 2012.

Our youngsters also had a successful day in the mini marathon as Alex Yee won the London U 15 boys' race. And Luke Armitage's sons Noah and Alfie acquitted themselves well: although members of Cambridge Harriers, and running for Southwark,

Luke can claim credit for their coaching and some of their genes.

The day wasn't entirely about competition: Paul Bell (2.38 in 2012) did his bit for Hungarian blind athlete Csaba Orban, (category T12) competing in the International Paralympic Committee Marathon World Cup, running for much of the race as his guide (a job John Gilbert had done for him during the Paralympics).

So, quite a day, balancing the disappointment of not contesting the 12 stage relays: the Southern due to the weather and the National due to collective lack of appetite.

There was the usual enthusiastic and noisy supporting round the course and much arithmetic and then celebration in the Chandos after.

By Len Reilly

Thanks go to all contributors of this Newsletter – Ken Pike, Andy Gardiner, Larry Garnham, Kate Williams, Spenser Lane and Len Reilly

If anyone wants to make a contribution for the next Newsletter then please contact Larry Garnham anytime.