

Early in 1887 James Campbell from Clydesdale Harriers Dunbartonshire Section won the Scottish Cross Country Championship and shortly thereafter **John Blane**, a banker from Maybole joined the Ayrshire Section of the club.

A contemporary of Andrew Hannah, Alex Pettigrew and many other notables, his career in the sport was remarkably short at three seasons but won four Scottish Championship medals, set a Scottish One Mile record and picked up numerous other trophies.

His first season was 1886/87 and in the summer of '87 competed in several of the sports meetings held by the principal football clubs of the time. For instance, he won 880 yards at the Abercorn FC Sports in Paisley and with it the magnificent 16" tall very ornate pewter tankard and the large engraved and hall marked silver teapot for being second in the One Mile Handicap at St Mirren FC Sports.

His really marvellous season however came in 1888 when he was placed second in the SAAA 880 Yards Championship at Powderhall Grounds in Edinburgh and followed up by winning the One Mile Championship in a time of 4:35.4.

That was on 23rd June and less than a month later he set a new Scottish Record for the One Mile of 4:30.2 which took a full two seconds from the existing record held by DS Duncan of Edinburgh.

For this feat he was presented with a gold Clydesdale Harriers Medal complete with shield, hunting horn and whip and fully engraved on the back.

All trophies are currently held by his grandson Wilson Baird and are illustrated on this website.

In the same season he won the Empire Exhibition One Mile Handicap Race in Glasgow and took the beautiful 15" tall silver cup as his reward. He also won the ornate 18" diameter silver shield for the One Mile at the Abercorn Sports for the first time. He went on to win the trophy in the next two years and it was presented to him as outright winner.

It is indicative of the club's dominance of the sport - at the time that the previous winners were all Clydesdale Harriers: J Logan of Bonhill (Dunbartonshire Section) in 1885, RC MCwalter of Hamilton in 1886 and W.M. Thomson of Larkhall in 1887 (the latter both of the Lanarkshire Section).

In 1888 he missed the SAAA Championships where the 880 yards and the One Mile were won by Clydesdale Harriers (R Mitchell and C Pennycook) but won prizes at several Sports Meetings.

1890 was his final year in the sport when he took second places in both the 880 Yards and One Mile at the Scottish Championships in Edinburgh and of course he won the Abercorn Shield for the third consecutive year.

At this point at the age of only 22 years he took up cycling and was successful there as well. There is no saying what he might have achieved had he stayed with athletics.

The collection of medals and trophies retained by his family may well be the only such collection extant - we know that many collections were broken up between relatives and that many, many medals and trophies were melted down for their metal content.

In this context it might be the best single collection in existence.

We also know that Clydesdale Harriers gave gold medals for outstanding performances but the one shown on the Trophy page is one of only two that we know of still in existence.