



Welsh Masters Ladies at the World Championships Malaga, Southern Spain – September 2018

When we were told a couple of years ago that the Masters track & field World Championships for 2018 would be hosted by Malaga in southern Spain, we decided there and then to add it to our “wish list”. We promoted the event to other athletes and even visited Malaga towards the end of 2017 in order to locate the various venues, check out accommodation options and get to grips with the Metro system. This level of preparation paid dividends, as we were able to advise and support other athletes as well as reducing the anxiety levels sometimes associated with such adventures!

And so it was that in early September 2018 no less than 13 of the ladies who had previously represented Welsh Masters at Inter Area competitions arrived in Malaga to compete on what is obviously the largest track & field stage on the globe, the World Championships, this time as part of the **Great Britain** squad.

The event was spread over four separate tracks and lasted two weeks, so it was simply impossible to see everyone and be everywhere. What follows is a summary by individual athlete, in alphabetical order!

Liz Bowers – enjoyed her first Masters international and at 800m (W65) qualified for the final with her fastest time for several years, 3'03.32. This was 5sec quicker than the winning time in the European Indoor Championships in Madrid earlier this year! However, Malaga was the World Championships and Liz didn't medal, such was the standard. In the 1500m final, in extremely hot conditions, Liz came home 6th with a time of 6'14.66



Liz Bowers – running hard in the 800m



Sarah, setting the pace

Sarah Everitt – (W50) was another athlete making her Masters international debut – and another who did rather well! At 800m Sarah came 2nd in her semi-final then went even faster in the final with an SB of 2'26.84.

This is the quickest 800m Sarah has run for 4 years – and what a place to do it. Sadly it was only good enough for 7th place.

At 1500m Sarah progressed through the heats into the final where she produced another SB, of 5'03.19 and finished 5th. Sarah's friend and training partner Clare Joliffe also made the final, coming 16th.

Dorothy (Dot) Fraser - is in the W80 category but can still show some younger athletes a clean pair of heels. Dot came 6th in the 100m and 5th in the 200m. At 400m, in her first race over the distance in six years, Dot came 4th with (obviously) a season's best and an age group PB. In the final 30m of the 400m race Dot was in danger of being overtaken by an athlete from Chile, but was determined not to give up 4th spot and clinched the position in a sprint finish. Dot now tops the UK Rankings at 100m, 200m and 400m for her age group.

Joanne Frost – was always doubtful due to injury, so it was no surprise to see that Jo was a “DNS” for the 100m. However, following treatment from the GB Medical Team Jo did manage to compete in the (W40) Long Jump, where she achieved 5.45m to secure a Silver Medal – see below

Dot Fraser – watching the Long Jump?



Jo Frost jumping 5.45m



Jo helped out the (W40) GB relay squads at both 4x100 and 4x400 but with weakened teams they didn't medal. Jo will now enjoy a rest period while she attempts to recover from a number of different issues.

Pat Gallagher – is another of our athletes who arrived in Malaga less than fully fit, but was determined to compete and to enjoy the whole experience. Pat's efforts were rewarded with an SB in the (W70) 800m of 3'23.04 which at these Championships was only good enough for 6th place.

At 1500m Pat was forced to withdraw with breathing problems, an issue which may encourage Pat to focus on the shorter distances.

In the (W70) 4x400 relay Pat helped the GB squad to a Gold Medal.

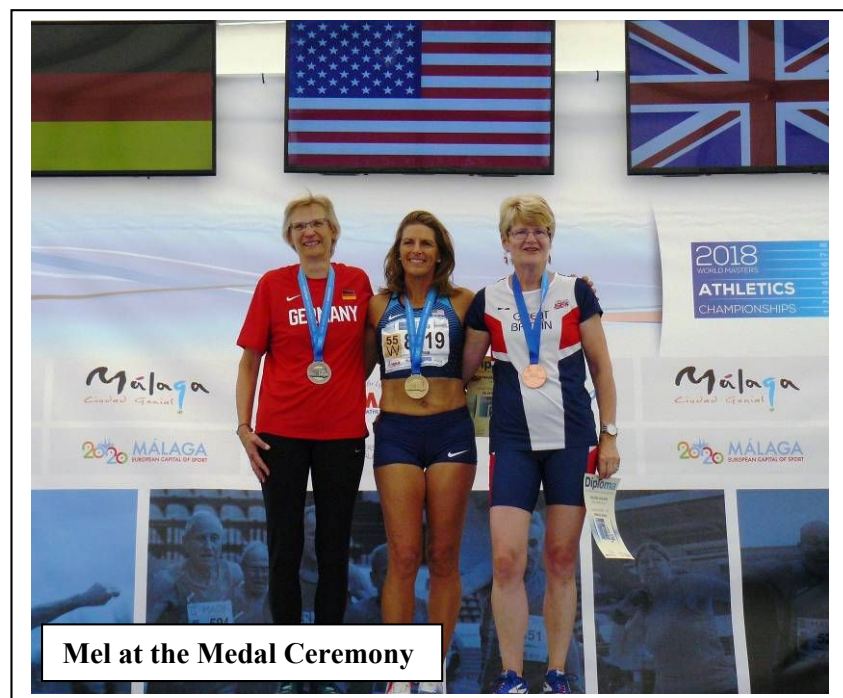


Pat in 4th place in the 800m

Melanie Garland – was delighted to arrive in Malaga fit and healthy, unlike the previous World Championships in Lyon where she was only about 80%. Mel's fitness was reflected in her performances where she qualified for the (W55) semi-finals in both the 100m and 200m. Mel ran even faster in each semi but did not progress to the finals.

In the High Jump Mel recovered some of her early season form and managed a very respectable 1.36m for 5th place. In the Triple Jump, Mel set a new lifetime best of 9.42m but was narrowly beaten by her friend and GB colleague Janice Pryce who achieved 9.46m for third.

Long Jump is possibly Mel's best event and at the end of the first round of jumps she was leading the



field, in the World Championships, with a leap of 4.53m. Unfortunately the enormity of the occasion seemed to get to her and Mel delivered a series on “no jumps” plus a relatively modest 4.19m. An athlete from the USA and one from Germany each cleared 4.58m relegating Mel to 3rd place and a Bronze medal, so mixed emotions. Mel was ecstatic about winning her first “individual” medal at international level, yet left wondering at what might have been.

Selected for the GB 4x100 relay team, Mel was surprised when one of the squad (Eni Font Freide) flew back to the UK. No worries, she was back in time for the relays! The GB team did well and secured a Bronze Medal.

Iris Holder – was yet another who arrived with an existing injury, competing with a heavily strapped knee. Her performances were also hampered by a chest infection necessitating a trip to hospital for assessment, followed by a course of antibiotics.

In the (W75) 100m Iris managed 19.00s for an SB in the heats, but could not improve in the final and failed to medal.



Iris with friends from around the world

In the Long Jump Iris cleared 2.81m (not bad with a dodgy knee) for 5th place but went a bit better in the Triple Jump where she secured a Bronze Medal with just a tad under 6m.

Iris was also in one of the GB 4x100 relay teams. She dropped down to the W70 age group to help form a composite team – then clinched a Team Bronze.



Caroline – in full stride

Caroline Marler – having qualified through the heats, ran an outdoor SB in the (W65) 200m for 5th place in a time of 32.59s. This was followed by an excellent 72.76s in the 400m final to clinch 3rd place and a Bronze Medal.

In the W65 relay teams, Caroline was selected for both the 4x100 and the 4x400. The GB squads won both races, so two Golds for Caroline and two more for the Welsh Masters growing collection of medals.

Pat Oakes – knew she had a problem before she travelled and despite her best attempts Pat was unable to compete. Pat did get as close as running up for a Long Jump, but her hamstring called time and she

ended in a heap at the edge of the sand. Several helpers and an Ambulance crew later, Pat was heavily strapped then sent back by taxi to the apartment she was renting, but couldn't manage the stairs unaided...

Sharon Samuel – was booked into the Champ's where she was due to compete at both (W50) 100 and 200m. Unfortunately Sharon did not make the trip so still has to make her first appearance on an international stage. Next year maybe Sharon?

Juliet Sidney – also entered the (W50) 100 and 200m, where she qualified through the heats to the semi finals, but not beyond. Juliet would have needed to set PB's at each distance to make the finals, such was the standard on this world stage.

Juliet was selected for the GB (W50) 4x100 relay team, but they could only manage 4th so were squeezed out of the medals.

Angela Sonn – or should that be **Bryant**, married her partner Mike just before the trip, so hundreds of friend joined them on their honeymoon in Malaga!

Angela ran the (W55) 100, 200 and 400m, but sadly didn't make it beyond the heats.

In the 4x100 relay Angela joined the top three ranked GB (W55) 100m athletes Mel Garland, Kirsten King and Eni Font Freide to form a really strong team. The baton changes could have been sharper, but with no relay training this was to be expected. Despite this, they achieved 56.52s for 3rd place and a Bronze Medal.



Puff those cheeks out Juliet!

Mike and Angela



Angela had also been selected (through the proper BMAF selection process) to run a leg in the GB (W55) 4x400 relay team.

When she arrived in the pre-race call room Angela was unceremoniously bumped out of the team and replaced by another athlete. As the relay teams all had to be fully agreed and declared to the organisers the day before the race

(we had seen a copy of the team sheet) we knew that Angela was in the GB (W55) squad. However, on the day, it appears that something underhand took place, which must have involved part of GB Team Management and probably the self appointed captain of the W55 squad.

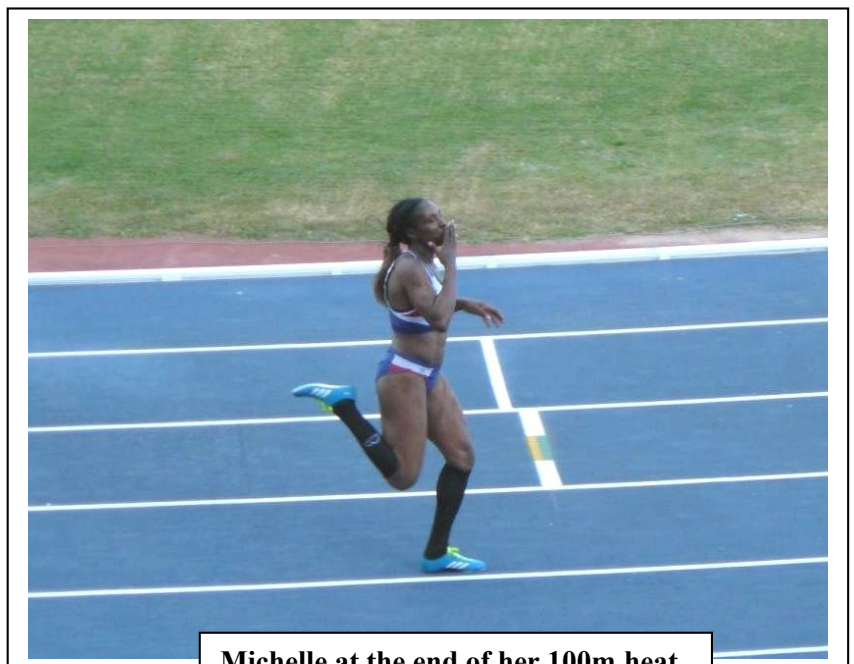
Angela was shuffled down into the W45 relay team (she is almost 58) and unsurprisingly they failed to medal. Meanwhile, the team in which she should have raced, the W55 ladies, came home with Gold. To rub salt into the wounds Angela's name remains on the official results sheet, so it looks as though she won a Gold Medal. Her name also appears on the GB team within the W45 results.

Michelle Thomas – won her (W45) 100m heat with a relatively slow time, but into a strong headwind. However, blowing kisses to the spectators??? (see below) In the semi finals Michelle had a following wind and shaved ½ second off her time. Against some top class athletes Michelle could only manage 6th in the final with 13.21s

In the 200m heats Michelle again had a head wind so registered a relatively slow time, but sufficient to reach the semi finals. Sadly, she did not progress to the final and soon afterwards I was told that Michelle had returned to the UK. Having entered, Michelle was a “DNS” in the 400m and was not around for the relays.

Jan Timberlake – was yet another of our athletes who went to Malaga with an injury. Not bad enough to stop Jan competing, but sufficient to have an impact on her performances.

At High Jump Jan came 17th with 1.28m whilst at triple jump she achieved 8.64m for 11th place



Michelle at the end of her 100m heat



Jan in the 80m Hurdles

Jan entered the (W50) 80m Hurdles, where she came 6th in her heat and did not progress. Jan tells us that this equates to 21st place.

In the Long Jump Jan managed 4.17m for another placing of 21st in her age group.

The 2018 World (Masters) Athletics Championships attracted over 8,000 entries from across the globe, making it by far the biggest T&F competition anywhere, dwarfing the Olympic T&F for example. Even from the UK there were over 700 athletes, no wonder competition was fierce and standards so high.

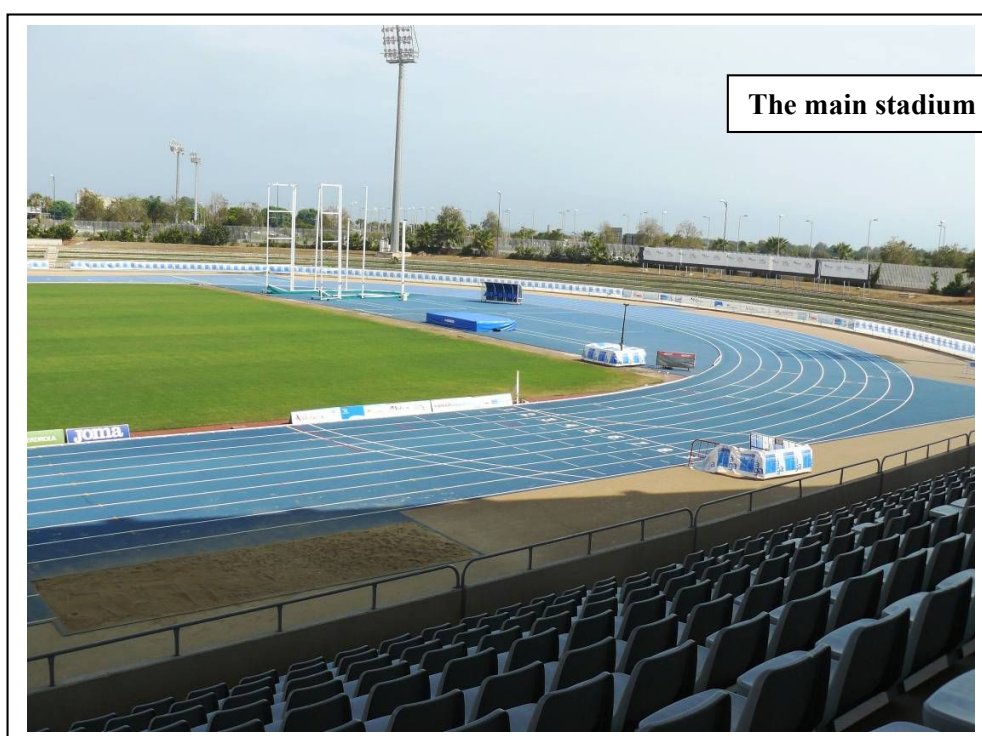
Many people said they felt privileged simply to be involved, just to be part of this massive organisation, to meet fellow enthusiasts from foreign parts, greeting friends old and new, to soak up the atmosphere and the camaraderie.

For those who wish to consider experiencing something like this in 2019, the World (Masters) Indoor Championships take place in Poland in March, then the European (Masters) Outdoor Championships will be held in Italy next September. Details will appear on the BMAF website, or contact me directly if you have any specific queries.

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The main stadium at Malaga