



Worcester AC's Athletes at the World Championships Malaga, Southern Spain – September 2018

When we were told a couple of years ago that the Masters track & field **2018 World Championships** 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 7 of the ladies team who had been competing for Worcester in the Midland Vet's League, together with one of the Worcester men's team, arrived in sunny 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 some 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 so should be very pleased with her performances



Liz Bowers – running hard 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. You may need to read that sentence a second time!

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 GB squad (Eni Font Freide) flew back to the UK. No worries, Eni was back in time for the relays! The GB team ran well and secured a Bronze Medal.



Mel at the Long Jump Medal Ceremony

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.

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 helped them clinch a **Team Bronze**.



Iris with friends and rivals from around the world



Henry Hopkins – could not be over in Malaga for the whole 2 weeks, but arrived in good time to tackle the (M60) **Triple Jump**.

The standard was incredibly high with the top three jumpers all clearing in excess of 11m.

Starting with a “no jump” Henry improved to register a best of 9.87m but sadly did not make the cut, which would have qualified him for three more jumps. 10.12m would have been sufficient for the extra jumps, a tough ask and a distance Henry has achieved only once this season.

Due to an injury to one of the (M60) **GB 4x100 relay** runners, Henry was drafted in as a late replacement. Running on the anchor leg Henry brought the team home in 53.96s narrowly failing to overhaul the Japanese team that came 4th Henry did the team proud, at very short notice and was really chuffed to be able to represent his country in a relay team at the World Championships.

Great height and effort from Henry in the Triple Jump

Marion Loveridge – was competing in the W55 age group where she tackled a couple of the throws

At 3kg **Hammer** Marion was the only “B” Final competitor to qualify for extra throws. Marion managed 39.17m to set a massive SB, finishing 8th

In the **Weight** Marion also threw a big SB, 12.85m, coming 6th. We think this throw has moved Marion to the top of the UK Rankings and is one of the best Weight throws of her career.



The main stadium at Malaga – 10 min’s walk from the Med!

Becky Selvey – was another of the athletes making her (Masters) International debut. Where better to do so than the World Championships?

Becky ran 2’31.44s in the (W45) **800m** coming 5th in the semi-finals. This was an excellent time in the conditions and only about a second outside her PB.

One or two of us feel there is more to come if Becky maintains her current level of training and commitment, so watch this space!



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.



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.

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 remained 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 4x400 results.



Jan in the 80m Hurdles

Jan Timberlake – was yet another of our athletes who went to Malaga with an injury. Not serious 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

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.

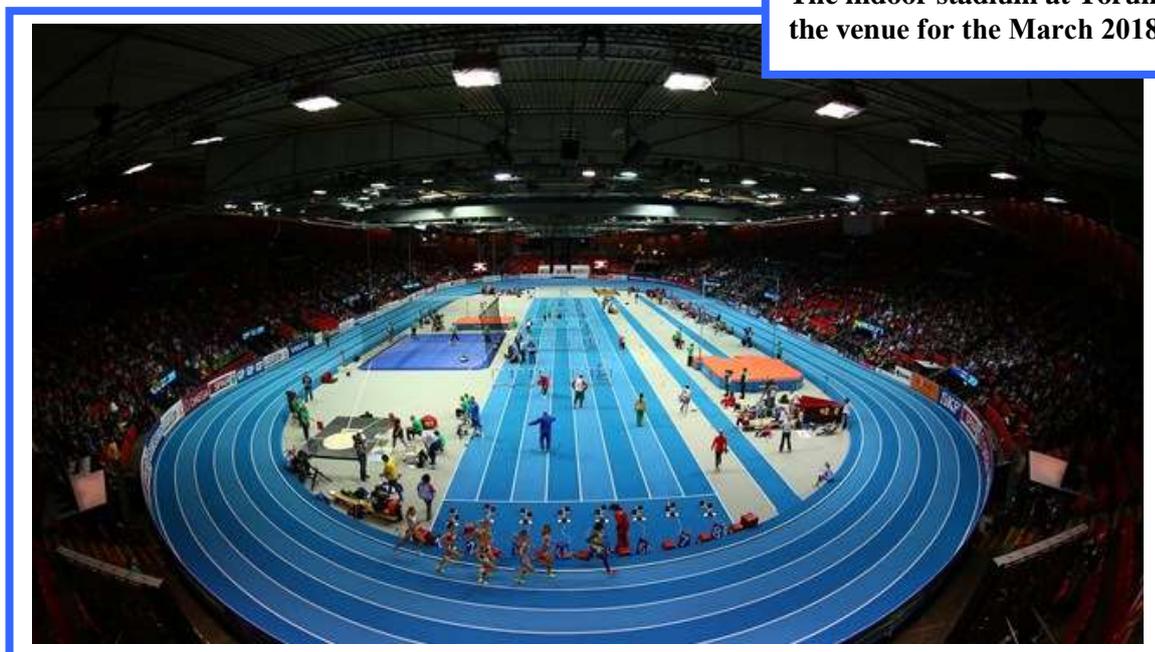
Well done to all the Worcester AC athletes who made the trip to southern Spain and competed in these World Championships. You produced a range of excellent performances as part of the GB team and the fact that Worcester AC had so many athletes mixing it with the very best at the Championships did not go unnoticed!

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, soaking 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 indoor stadium at Torun, Poland
the venue for the March 2018 Champ's