



THE MIDLAND VETS CUP FINAL 2021

On a “Seriously Sunny Sunday in September” athletes from the best Masters/Vet’s athletics clubs within the whole of the region assembled at Nuneaton to compete for the coveted “ATV Gold Cup”. The Worcester club’s performances during the league season had already placed us in the top eight across the Midlands, so we were in the “A” Final together with...

- Burton
- Leamington
- Nuneaton
- Notts
- Rugby & Northampton Lions
- Stratford-Upon-Avon
- and Telford



Henry – concentration and effort as he takes on the 200m Hurdles.

In the Men’s competition

The track races got underway with the (M50) 200m Hurdles.

Henry Hopkins agreed to step down an age group to cover the event – and Henry is not even a hurdler!

However, like several others Henry is a fantastic Team player so here he was giving it his best and scoring solid points for Worcester.



Matt Moon was next on track at the (M35) 800m. Matt also dropped down an age group but performed admirably. Our photo shows Matt having a right old battle down the finishing straight with a guy from the Leamington club.

Matt also competed in the (M40) 400m with a highly competitive field of runners, finishing third in a time of 58.36s for 6 Team points

Henry Hopkins – was soon back out as he was competing in the (M60) 800m soon followed by the (M50) 100m. There was a lot of this, with certain athletes being called upon to cover several events.

Many of the Worcester athletes that train regularly at the Worcester club track did not make themselves available due to injury, holiday, or simply choosing to be somewhere else, despite this being the most significant track & field meeting all season for Worcester Athletic Club, not just for the Masters/Vet’s.

Ben Reeves – made his debut for the club, first at (M40) 100m where he came first with 12.49s then in the (M35) 200m where he recorded a very respectable 25.48s for a wonderful total of 14 Team points!



Worcester’s Pat Carpenter watching to make sure the athletes stay in lane, as Ben sprints to victory at 100m

Let’s not forget...

A big “THANK YOU” to all Worcester AC’s Officials, Supporters, Coaches and Team Managers etc for your combined contribution in helping to make 2021 such a very successful season.

In the **(M60) 100m David Shaw** was our representative. David put in an excellent performance but was narrowly beaten by the Rugby Lions athlete who just heads him in the UK rankings. David ran 13.63s for second place and 7 Team points.

David in the M60 100m
Such a very close finish!



Racing again in the **(M60) 200m** David again came second with a time of 28.03s and another 7 points for Team Worcester.

Moving to the **(M70) 100m Laurence Oldfield** was running for Worcester. It was another exciting finish which saw Laurence come third on the day with 15.65s to secure valuable Team points.

In the **(M70) 200m** Laurence once more came third, this time with 32.84s



Nick Hitchings was our runner at the **(M50) 3000m** coming 2nd with a time of 10'57.66. This was a bit down on Nick's time in the league match, but was a great run in the hot sunny conditions and secured 7 Team points.

Nick also stepped in to cover the **(M50) 400m** and the **(M35) 1500m** – both of which are races that would ideally have seen “missing” Worcester athletes running, but Nick made the effort, made the trip to Nuneaton and gathered extra Team points.

The Cup Final, above all else, is a Team competition, so unusually for athletics it is not about the individuals. We obviously want the individual athletes to do well and were thrilled to see several SB's and even a few PB's but the Cup Final is about representing Worcester AC against other top clubs from across the Midlands.

It is not a family fun run, an Open meeting or a local 10k – there are plenty of those in the season, but only one Regional Cup Final.

Derek Jackson (M60) 1500m was racing down an age group but was still too quick for the opposition! Derek even saw off the challenge of the award winning GB (Masters) International Dave Oxland (number A46). Fantastic running Derek, securing maximum points for your club, Worcester AC.

Derek produced a steady but relentless pace that gradually ground down the opposition!

In the **(M35) Race Walk Nick Hitchings** (yes, the same one) volunteered to cover for the injured Hugh Davies, whilst in the **(M50) Race Walk Richard Drewett** was representing WAC.

Both guys delivered solid performances, with Nick completing in 13'49.79 and Richard in 14'25.82 collectively scooping up 9 Team points for Worcester.

With a depleted squad, we were unable to fill the **(M40) 3000m**. This was the only track event we failed to fill on the day, male or female.



And so to the relays...

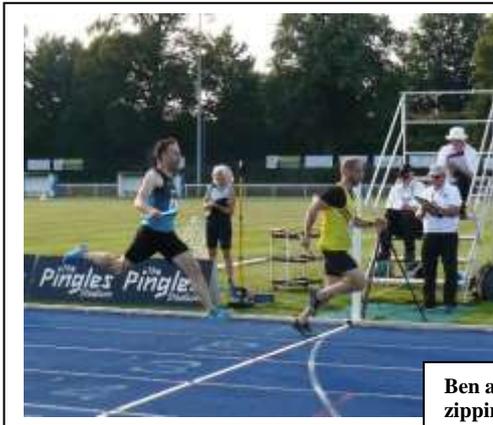
In the **4x100** our team of **Ben Reeves, David Shaw, Henry Hopkins and Nick Hitchings** managed to get the baton around safely and came home in 4th place.

The lack of opportunity to train together showed in the changes, but they had a good race finishing in 54.05s

Our sprint relay squad (left to right)
Nick, Henry, Ben and David



The **4x400** relay team should have once again included an over-worked Nick, but Ben kindly stepped in to take his place. Ben had never run a 400m let alone as part of a relay team, so that was quite a big decision - thank you Ben! The Worcester club team was



Ben at the end of the 4x400 relay,
zipping past the Burton athlete

made up of **Matt Moon** on the first leg, who handed the baton to **Henry Hopkins** in second place, a good 10mt ahead of the following pack. Henry safely passed the baton to **David Shaw**, by now in 4th place, but the Leamington athlete and the baton ended on the floor, moving us up to 3rd. David maintained our position then it was over to **Ben Reeves**. Ben ran a controlled race, moved past the Nuneaton athlete down the back straight and as the finishing line approached he cruised past the guy from Burton. Second place for Worcester AC in the 4x400 relay in a time of 4'19.25, with a scratch team, well done guys.

The men's Field Events ...

Started with (M40) **Hammer** where **Damon Cripps** made a long overdue but very welcome return to our Vet's Team. Damon got the field events off to a flying start with a fine victory. Despite having dropped down an age group and throwing a heavier implement, Damon managed 33.10m for maximum Team points.

Damon also competed in the (M50) **Shot Putt** which he won with 10.71m (covering for Mike Small) and the (M35) **Discus** where he came second with a distance of 29.99m.

Damon with his
match winning Putt



That is a superb return of 20 Team points out of a possible 21.

Next it was the (M35 and M60) **Pole Vault**. Sadly, both **Hugh Davies and Marc Flannery** picked up injuries and neither managed to register a height. Whilst Marc had a calf injury, Hugh suffered a fractured neck of femur (broken hip) as a result of an accident whilst attempting his opening height. Ironically, Hugh was not even meant to be vaulting, but he had stepped in on the day to help his club. Hugh was admitted to hospital where he underwent an operation the following day and is now recovering at home. I am sure you all join me in wishing Hugh a speedy recovery.

Hugh should have been competing in a couple of other events, plus a leg in the 4x400 relay. Luckily some of Hugh's team-mates stepped in to cover two out of three of these. The one we couldn't cover was the (M40) 3000m.

Marc was also doing other events. He came second in the (M50) **High Jump** with 1.40m and fourth in the (M35) **Shot Putt** with 9.03m having dropped down three age groups and using an incredibly heavy implement. Although disappointed with his Pole Vault, Marc still acquired 12 valuable Team points.

In the (M70) Shot Putt, **Roger Garland**, in his first event for two years, managed 7.56m for second place and 7 points for the Team.

David Shaw dropped down several age groups to cover the (M35) Long Jump. Although clearing a very reasonable 4.59m, David only managed 5th place against some really good (much younger!) athletes.



Henry Hopkins took on the (M50) Triple Jump coming 3rd with 8.99m and securing 6 precious Team points. Henry also represented Worcester AC in the M60 Long Jump, an event which he won with a leap of 4.25m to obtain maximum points.

Nick Hitchings (remember him from earlier?) tackled the (M40) High Jump covering for David Mehaffey. Nick cleared 1.30m to come 4th just losing 3rd spot on countback to a Leamington athlete

Javelin (M60) should have been covered by Mike Small, but he did not get across to Nuneaton. One or two other people could have stepped in on the day but in the excitement (mayhem?) that is the Cup Final we failed to get the event covered – a lesson learnt.

John Reynolds dropped down an age category to take on the M40 Javelin, an event that he won with a new Club Record of 44.52m. John then helped out with the (M50) Discus – another event that was initially down to Mike Small. John had not thrown a Discus for several years, but achieved 7 points for his Team with 2nd place throwing a distance of 22.90m.

The last of the men's Field Events was the (M70) Triple Jump. We don't actually have any triple jumpers at M70, but **Derek Jackson** agreed to give it a go. Derek managed 3rd place with a distance of 5.96m for 6 Team points.



Derek in the M70 Triple Jump – just for the points

Moving to the ladies track events...



Once again it was the (W35) 200m Hurdles that kicked things off. With Vickie Watkins absent, **Mel Garland** stepped in to cover this event, coming third with an excellent time of 36.7s and gathering 6 points for the Team.

It must be a new PB as Mel had never previously done 200m Hurdles!

Mel getting events underway with a fine 200m Hurdles

Karen Holland (W40) 800m was next on track. Karen ran 3'12.1 for another third place and 6 more Team points

Ros Townsend-Hope started her busy schedule by dropping down an age group to tackle (W50) 800m. Ros ran a seasons best (SB) of 3'10.5 coming home in 2nd place to pick up 7 Team points.

Ros also raced (in her correct age group this time!) in the (W60) 3000m an event where she triumphed by almost 20 seconds, collecting maximum points for the Worcester Team.



However, Ros was still not finished and the best was certainly still to come! In the **(W50) 1500m** Ros led for most of the race but in the finishing straight on the final lap she was overhauled by multiple (W70) European and World champion Angela Copson of Rugby Lions. Ros subsequently told me she thought to herself “I’m not having that” and with another increase in pace crossed the line in the lead to win the race and clinch maximum points, plus a significant scalp!

In the **(W40) 100m Nicola Guiver** made a welcome return to the track after a lengthy injury. Although a little concerned about making an explosive start, Nicola (A84) came 3rd with a time of 15.05s in a race won by GB (Masters) International Paula Williams (A64)



Nicola also competed in the **(W35) 400m** again coming 3rd collecting 12 Team points from the two events

Next on track it was the return of the Ladies Team Captain, **Mel Garland in (W50) 100m**. Although this is not Mel’s strongest event, she was determined to get decent points. On the day the rest of the field couldn’t better Mel’s time of 15.18s so it was a maximum score for the Team. As Mel explained, this race was not about the time, it was about position, as competing at the Cup Final is about scoring points whilst representing Worcester AC.

Angela Bryant (W60) 100m was in the next race where she also returned with 8 points, winning her race in a time of 15.46s. This was just 5/100^{ths} of a second ahead of an athlete from Stratford in what must have been the closest finish of the day!

Angela was racing again in **(W50) 200m** where she finished third in 34.10s and also in the **(W60) 400m** for another third place, in 94.62s. This time the race was won by the Stratford athlete that Angela just pipped in the 100m.

Iris Holder (W70) 100m was giving away several years to the other athletes, but still managed 19.91s for an impressive second place so collected 7 points for the Team.



“Socially Distanced” members of the Worcester ladies squad, but can you name these four?



Speed and style – Mel wearing her “race face” in the 100m

Rachael Alexander dropped down an age group to cover the **(W35) 3000m**, coming second in 13’13.68 and another excellent haul of Team points.

In the **(W40) 1500m** we were represented by **Alison Buttle**. Alison ran an SB of 6’23.13 to add more points to our Team total.

Amy Pinkney (W35) 200m was well pleased with her “electronic PB” of 29.57s as she came second to collect 7 points for her club.

In the **2k Race Walk** Worcester had **Cat Hutchinson (W35) and Gill Repton (W60)**. Cat recorded a time of 14’53.93 and Gill 16’05.59.

Gill thought she had been DQ’d, but no, Gill had just picked up a few “Yellow Paddle warnings” so both athletes added valuable Team points



Cat in the 2k Race Walk.
Is that a smile or a grimace?

and now for the relays...

In the Cup Final, each relay team must include at least one athlete aged 50+. These relays are usually exciting and this year was no exception!

The **4x100m** squad was made up of Angela (likes to start) Nicola (prefers a straight) Mel (likes running bends) and Amy (who just likes running!)

The baton was safely transported and the clock stopped at 58.77s for second on the day and 7 points.



All smiles from the winning quartet

Our **4x400m** relay team was led off by Amy who must have been shocked by the speed of the Nuneaton athlete who led by some 60m by the end of the lap. Even so, Amy ran a solid leg and handed to **Sara Saunders** in second. Luckily, the Nuneaton runner on the second leg was rather slower and was quickly overhauled by Sara, who handed the baton to Mel in first place with R&N Lions in second. Mel went off steadily then increased the pace towards the end of the lap to lengthen our lead and safely hand over to Nicola. The final leg was completed in a strong but quite controlled manner and Nicola crossed the line some 80m ahead of second placed Leamington.

Our winning time was 5’10.55 and of course they added a lovely 8 points to the Team total.

In the Ladies Field Events...

Pole Vault was first on the programme, but we do not (currently!) have any female pole vaulters.

For some two years there has been no pole vault training / coaching at Worcester.

Iris Holder (W70 Shot Putt) achieved a distance of 5.01m competing down into a younger age group and having to use a heavier implement, 3k rather than 2k. Even so, Iris came 3rd collecting 6 Team points

Iris in the Shot Putt

In the **Long Jump (W40) Mel Garland** was competing against younger athletes but still managed second place and good Team points before dashing off for her 100m race.

Mel also competed in the **High Jump (W50)** where she cleared 1.34m a full 10cm ahead of her nearest rival – 8 more Team points.



Next for Mel was the **(W35) Triple Jump** – yes W35, which she won with an SB of 9.28m for another maximum points haul for the Worcester club



Gill throwing the Javelin

Gill Repton (W60) Discus achieved 14.43m for 3rd place and 6 Team points then followed this up with 4th place and 5 points in the **Javelin (W60)** where she registered a distance of 12.81m

Iris Holder was keeping busy, next up was the **(W70) Long Jump** where Iris came second with 2.66m

Iris then took on the **(W60) Triple Jump** where she cleared 5.80m for third spot, just a few cms behind the second placed athlete, Sally Hine from Rugby Lions.

In total, Iris accumulated an amazing 26 Team points on the day!

Making her (slightly delayed!) debut for the Worcester team was **Ruth Wells**. Ruth competed in the **(W35) Hammer** where she came 3rd with a throw of 19.74m then switched to the **(W40) Shot Putt** where an SB of 7.93m was good enough for another 3rd place.

That was 12 Team points between the two events and some very solid throwing from Ruth.

Jan Timberlake (W40) High Jump set a big SB with 1.30m for third spot. To say Jan was chuffed (and rightly so) would be a bit of an under statement – and Jan doesn't do under statements.

Jan also did well in the **(W50) Shot Putt** where she cleared a decent 7.41m to finish second. In the **(W50) Discus** Jan achieved 18.99m for another second place. A great total of 20 Team points were obtained by Jan in these three field events.

At the end of a very full day of athletics and before we knew the match score, Mel handed out chocolate medals to all the Worcester athletes that we could gather together for a photo shoot. It had been a simply fantastic day of highs and lows, so we celebrated the end of the event in the age old traditional manner, with half the athletes jumping into the air!!



There was quite a wait before the Cup Final results were announced, but during that period there were several presentations made with regard to the actual vet's league.

Worcester AC were awarded the **MVTFL (South Division)** titles once again, men and women, as we are the league champions for 2021. Nick collected the men's award and Mel collected the women's award.

I was given the job of announcing the male and female Athletes of the Season for South Division. The men's award went to **Ben Kruze of Stratford** for his amazing performances this season whilst the women's award went to **Julie Wakelam of Bromsgrove & Redditch** for scoring a massive number of points for her club as she competed at W35, 40, 50 and 60 age groups across a wide range of events. Nominations for these awards are made by the Team Managers of each club.

When the Cup Final positions were announced, in the "A" Final the results were as follows...

Points	MEN	Points	WOMEN
229	Rugby & Northampton Lions	217.5	Rugby & Northampton Lions
197	Worcester	209	Worcester
179	Leamington	164.5	Stratford
141	Stratford	127	Nuneaton
137	Nuneaton	120	Leamington
126	Notts	94	Telford
107	Burton	32	Burton
50	Telford	18	Notts

So that was it, we had come second from the 22 clubs across the whole region that have vet/masters track & field teams. Such mixed feelings, to do so incredibly well, yet once again fall short of the R&N team that have won the Cup Final, men's and women's event, nearly every time for the last 10 or more years! I am told they are a club that was created by combining two large clubs into one, so they should be strong, but I know we gave it our best shot with the athletes that were available.

On the plus side, we had a massive amount of excellent performances across the disciplines and across the age groups. We also had several athletes who were making their Cup Final debut who will hopefully have enjoyed a tremendous day of vet/masters athletics.

Sadly, on the negative side our friend and fellow athlete, Hugh Davies, suffered a very serious injury whilst trying to help his team to score a few more points in the Cup Final.

We wish Hugh a full and speedy recovery – our thoughts are with you Hugh.

Roger Garland
Worcester AC

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Hugh in happier times – setting off in a 200m race at Redditch earlier this season.