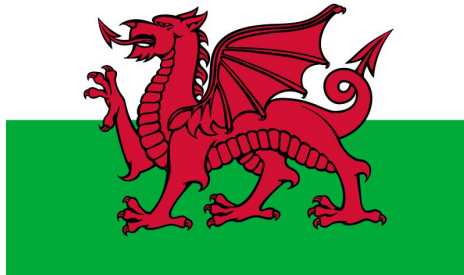


# WELSH MASTERS LADIES "HOT" AT SOLIHULL



## Masters Inter Area Track and Field Challenge (2018)

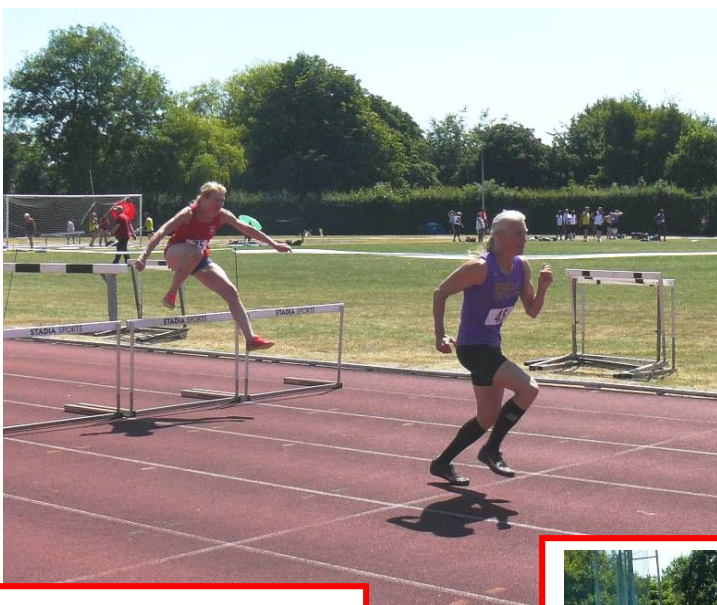
Just like last year, the weekend of the Inter Area Challenge arrived with blue sky and sunshine. I woke at 7am knowing that we had a reasonably strong ladies team, although we did have a few gaps where people had pulled out. Even so, I was confident we would finish ahead of at least a couple of the English regional teams. However, unlike last year, when three people were forced to withdraw on the day (before I left home) this time we still had the team intact when I set off just before 9am.

For the uninitiated, the **Masters Inter Area Challenge** is a Track & Field **team competition** involving regional groups from across the UK. Each athlete scores points, 8 for first place, 7 for second and so on. The standard of competition is incredibly high, so historically we struggled to make our mark. We are the smallest

of the competing regions in terms of population and with the least number of masters/vet athletes from which to select our teams (men's and ladies teams). It means we have to try harder and, as a few people have said, to punch above our weight. The age categories in the various events are 35-49, 50-59, 60-69 and 70+

### Track Events

First out on the track tackling the 80m sprint hurdles it was **Amanda Wale** (W35) from Wrexham and **Jan Timberlake** (W50) from Worcester. Both are multi-eventers not specialist hurdlers, but they finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>



Jan Timberlake in the Hurdles

in their races, both with SB's. Together they kick started our team total with 13 points.

Next it was time for the 1500m race. Llinos Jones (W35) Amman Valley, managed an excellent 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 5'06.43.

Sadly, Alison Wood (Fairland Valley) had withdrawn through injury so we were unable to fill the W50 slot at this event.

In the 400m races we had Vickie Watkins



Llinos Jones leading the way for athletes from North East Masters and Southern Counties



(W35) Worcester, Louise Kirby (W50) Newport and Liz Bowers (W60) Worcester. Amazingly, all three returned SB's as they brought in 15 more points for "Team Wales".



Louise gave us a real scare as she collapsed and crashed to the track, just after the finishing line. Patched up by the First Aid guys Louise and her smile were back racing later in the day – only slightly the worse for wear!

Louise giving it plenty around the top bend

And so to the 2k Race Walk where Welsh Masters ladies had hoped to field two athletes, but our European medallist **Wendy Bennett** was unable to compete. Nordic Ski Walker **Gill Williams** (W35) Lliswerry was our sole competitor, but Gill completed the Race Walk in a time of 16'37.08, just 3 seconds slower than her PB, despite the 28° temperature.

At 100m we were one of only three teams (out of eight) to field athletes in all the age groups. At W35 **Jo Frost** (Bromsgrove/ Redditch) ran a storming race, to finish first in 12.89 seconds, for a Season's Best.

**Juliet Sidney** (W50) from Newport was another who finished first, this time dipping below 14 seconds – superb!

Ros Townsend-Hope (W60) Worcester with an SB and Pat Oakes (W70) Ashford, also with an SB, completed the Welsh Masters quartet, but faced tough competition from multiple European and World champions! As I said earlier, the standard of competition at this event is incredibly high. Collectively, our 100m runners returned a magnificent 26 points towards our team total.



Race Walker Gill Williams

Juliet, with a 6m lead in the W50 100m race





The 800m was another distance where we were invited to enter four athletes – and did so. **Llinos Jones** (W35) (having already run a 1500m) stepped in to cover for **Georgie Parnell**. **Louise Kirby**, having recovered from her unplanned meeting with the track surface in the 400 was another who returned for the 800, likewise **Liz Bowers** who had also run a 400 earlier. **Pat Gallagher** (W70) from Westbury ran a fine 3'26.95 for second place, behind current World Champion, Angela Copson. In total, these WMAA ladies brought back another 19 points for the Welsh Masters team total.

In the 200m we didn't have a W35 sprinter to cover for **Michelle Thomas** (Birchfield) when she pulled out, so **Sharon Samuel** (Bromsgrove/ Redditch) dropped down an age group to fill the slot. **Juliet Sidney** was back at W50 and **Ros Townsend-Hope** at W60. Together, these athletes (all with SB's) secured an excellent 15 points for our team total.



Only one athlete wore her trademark gloves despite the scorching heat. Nice one Pat!



Sharon Samuel in the W35 200m

For the 3000m, **Sarah Kearney** (W35) from Wirral had not recovered from injury and **Angharad Mair** W50 (Les Croupier) was unable to compete, so we sadly had no athletes in these races.

### Field Events

In the Field Events, we managed to cover 20 out of 21 events, amazing! We could not cover the W50 Pole Vault, following **Alison Murray** having withdrawn, but otherwise we had an athlete in every event, at every possible age category. Only one other team covered more Field Events than Welsh Masters.



Claudia in the Pole Vault

**Claudia Cabbage**, one of several former Welsh Internationals in our team, cleared a decent height in the Pole Vault to secure 6 points.

Claudia is a great multi-event team member and even stepped into the Triple Jump slot when **Amanda Wale** was forced to withdraw, coming third and obtaining another 6 points towards our team total with 7.86m.



**Cath Alford** (Rhondda) came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the (W35) Shot Putt with 8.60m and followed it up with 28.08 in the Hammer and 20.84 in the Discus

**Karen Llewellyn** (W50) from Pembrokeshire is possibly best at the Hammer, where she threw 27.46m. However, Karen also agreed to cover Discus and Shot Putt

Together, in these throwing events, Cath and Karen secured an excellent 27 points for the Welsh team

Also helping out in the Shot was **Iris Holder**, competing down into the W60 age group “just for the points” following the withdrawal of **Renate Prells** (Swansea) through injury.

**Pat Oakes** who had finished behind Angela Copson in the 100m turned the tables when it came to W70 Shot (SB) and Long Jump, out-performing her illustrious rival in both these Field Events – well done Pat.



**Pat in the Shot Putt, where she seems to be aiming at the official in the blue shirt!**

**Jo Frost** (W35) having recovered from her 100m sprint, leapt 5.29m to victory in the Long Jump and another 8 team points. The UK record of 5.61 remains for Jo to attack another day! Jo is ranked number one in the UK at Long Jump within the W40 age group.

**Mel Garland** (W50) wasn't required in the sprints, so could focus on the jumps. For Mel, the Long Jump was a higher standard than at the British Masters Championships, as it included the athletes ranked numbers 1 and 2 in the UK at her own age group (W55-59) plus those ranked 1, 2 and 3 at the younger (W50-54) age group! Never one to duck a challenge, Mel cleared a magnificent 4.63m for a **lifetime best** and moved to top spot on the British W55-59 rankings, as well as obtaining great points for Team Wales.

At W60 WMAA don't really have a Long Jumper, but **Liz Bowers** kindly offered to register a distance (PB!) and win a few more points for the team – thanks Liz.



**Extreme Effort!**

In the Javelin, **Claudia Cubbage** competed at W35 and **Lisa Franklin** (Llanelli) should have competed at W50, the first time Lisa would have represented Welsh Masters. Unfortunately the timing of the event was switched from 12.15pm to 5.15pm, without my knowledge. Lisa, with her family having come to support her, couldn't stay the extra 5 hours so reluctantly headed home to South Wales. **Mel Garland** withdrew from the relay team in order to cover the W50 Javelin. In a strange twist of fate, Mel's relay spot with filled by Jan Timberlake, a Javelin thrower recovering from shoulder surgery, so currently unable to throw.

At High Jump, **Mel** (W50) cleared 1.38m for second place, only beaten by Wendy Laing, the current European Champion. **Claudia** (W35) managed 1.29m for 3<sup>rd</sup> in her age group, whilst at W60 we were again suffering as a result of having no High Jumpers. **Ros Townsend-Hope** bravely offered to clear a height for a few points. Well done ladies, together you acquired 16 more points for Welsh Masters

An exciting day of athletics was drawn to a close in the customary fashion, with the 4x100m relay races.

First off it was the W35 team, boosted by **Juliet** who I moved down from the older age group to run with the youngsters! **Juliet** was on the opening leg and held her own around the bend, to hand over to **Amanda Wale**. **Amanda** sprinted up the back straight and handed the baton to **Vickie Watkins** for the top bend then it was **Jo Frost** and the finishing straight. Second place and an excellent time – well done ladies.

Next it was the turn of the W50-59 age group, where **Jan Timberlake** took the first leg, handing over to **Angela Sonn** for the back straight, **Louise Kirby** for the top bend and **Sharon Samuel** to bring the baton home in first place with loads of cheering in a time of 59.32s. More great points for the team and smiles all round.

In the W60-69 age group we had only two athletes, **Liz Bowers** and **Ros Townsend-Hope**, but the team was bolstered by two ladies dropping down from the next age category, **Pat Gallagher** and **Pat Oakes**. They enjoyed their run in the very hot sun, coming 3<sup>rd</sup> and securing yet another 6 points for the team.

On only one occasion during the day did the commentators give out the match score. At that time, after 22 events, both our men's and ladies teams were in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. By the time the presentation of awards was due, it was clear that computer gremlins had screwed up some of the results so we headed home without knowing the team results. Only a few days later did we learn that we had finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, getting the better of most of the large "area clubs" from within the UK, scoring a creditable 225 points. Only Midland Masters, on home soil and Southern Counties Vet's managed to accumulate more points than our Welsh Masters ladies – and they each have three times the number of athletes from which to select their team!

*The Welsh Masters ladies team were excellent. All those individual performances combined to produce a team result that did us proud! I had forecast 5<sup>th</sup> place (out of 8). The effort people made makes all the hard work worthwhile.*

*The indoor "Inter Area" takes place at Lee Valley next Spring. If we can field our strongest team we might frighten one of the big two that got the better of us at Solihull – are you up for it gang?*



*To check how the WMAA Men got on (they came 3<sup>rd</sup>) see the Welsh Masters website and Power of 10*



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