

The Arthur Dagger Memorial Fund - 2011 AGM Report

At the 2009 AGM of Great Western Runners it was agreed that the Club should set up a fund called The Arthur Dagger Memorial Fund (ADMF) in memory of Arthur Dagger who died in 2008.

Some newer members may not have met Arthur but he was one of the longest standing members of Great Western Runners, a stalwart who sat on the club's committee for many years and who worked tirelessly for more than a quarter of a century on behalf of the running community in the Bristol area. He especially had a track record in supporting young people in their running. ADMF trustees are Mike Willcox, Hilary Coe, Mike Campbell, Paul Marshall, Keith Bonham, Angela and Malcolm Dagger. A financial report will be available at the AGM.

This is the second year of the ADMF and the Trustees have made small grants of between £90 and £190 to ten young athletes. To date we've had feedback from five of them, extracts from their reports as follows:

Steve M [22]

I would like to thank the Arthur Dagger Memorial Fund for the contribution they have made to my season ... The money I received from the ADMF has proved invaluable to helping cover the transport and accommodation costs incurred during the season.

At times I have to pinch myself when I think about how the 2011 track season has gone so far. I have lowered my 1500m PB by over two seconds to 3.41.92mins, which puts me 11th on the UK rankings for 2011 so far. I have also travelled to Belgium where I won an international 1500m race, and a couple of weeks later came 2nd in the England 1500m Championships. I also came within a whisker of securing my first international track vest, when I was selected as first reserve in the 1500m for the World University Games in China. However it is the last week where my season has really taken off. It started off when I came 4th in the UK Senior 1500m Championships ... & when I won the Ann Hill Memorial Mile in Cwmbran with the incredibly pleasing but also infuriating time of 4.00.13mins! Hopefully I can use this as a springboard to a sub 3.40minute 1500m clocking by the end of the season, and then to a medal (and Olympic selection!) in the UK Championships next year.

Again thank you for the donation, it is very much appreciated.

Sophie T [12]

North Somerset AC

As my season draws to an end I thought I'd drop you a line and let you know how I spent my funding.

As a first year U15, I have had a terrific season. I have set new personal bests and NSAC Club records as follows - 60m - 8.33, 100m -12.84, 200m -26.59, 300m - 43.80, Discus - 16.50m. I am the first female athlete at NSAC to break the 100m 13 seconds barrier, something I'm really proud of.

In May I became the Avon County Champion in the Discus and 200m. In June, I won the 200m at the Avon Schools championships and progressed to the South West Schools Championships. I finished 3rd there and was over the moon when I was selected to be part of the Avon Schools team to compete in the 200m and relay at the English Schools Finals at Gateshead. I never dreamt I'd be picked as a "year young" athlete especially as the team contained 35 athletes. I used my funding to pay for the 3 day stay and to buy my Avon Schools Kit. When I was there I ran very close to my pb in my individual event and the experience was truly amazing. In the relay, we won our heat and progressed to the live televised final as fastest qualifiers. Unfortunately the baton was dropped between first and second leg, and as I run last leg by the time it got to me there was no hope. Despite this I hope to be selected again next year, and I hope with a good winters training I can make the final in my own right.

Since then, I competed at the Midland Championships in August. I was chuffed to bits to take silver in the 200m which matched the silver I won back in February over 60m at the indoor championships. My school are very proud of my achievements too. At the end of the school year I was given the Year 8 Outstanding Achievement to Sport Award.

Once again thank you for my funding, it's been a brilliant help.

Jake F [16]

I would like to start by thanking you for supporting me during my 2010/11 season. As a student in full time education with limited access to other sources of income, I really value your financial support.

At the start of the 2010/11 season I set myself a few goals:

- (a) To learn the technical skills needed in Pole Vault to enable me to compete in the decathlon;*
- (b) To try out different forms of athletics (endurance road races as well as track and field);*

- (c) To get used to higher hurdle heights / heavier throwing implements in track & field;
- (d) To be involved in various events to raise the profile of athletics in the local community and to raise funds to develop athletics facilities in North Somerset.

Despite injuries, (initially to my achilles, then to my heel and most recently to a hamstring), I am really pleased to report that I have achieved all these goals. *I have managed, thanks to the financial support you provided, to attend specialist pole vault training sessions at Bath University and am no longer daunted by this event ...*

... I have got more used to the equipment used at U20 level, competing in several open meetings, recording new PBs and being selected to be part of the "Team Avon" squad competing in the National Junior Athletics League. So looking back, I can see that I have in fact moved forwards and not backwards this season - and with a solid winter training season, along with the support of the coaches at Filton College Athletics Academy, Bath University and my club (North Somerset) – I am optimistic that my 2011/12 season will be one to remember! Thank you, once again, for your encouragement and support

Angharad F [13]

I am extremely grateful for the money from the grant; I think I wouldn't have been able to have done a lot of the things I did without it. Unfortunately, in May I ripped my hamstring during a P.E lesson, where we were not allowed to warm up properly and fully. This meant that I was not able to run at all for 5 or 6 weeks. During this time, I kept up my fitness by cycling and swimming.

... In the 'Welsh combined events championships' in June, competing in ... the Shot, I got a PB which I was pleased about.

My hamstring is nearly fully recovered and I am able to run and train once again although, I am not back to full training. I have been going to a Physiotherapist since May which is what I have spent most of the fund money on. As a result of the hamstring injury, my hip has been hurting but, it seems to be on the mend.

*... I competed in the Bristol Mile races (As part of the Bristol half marathon weekend). I think I managed to come 5th which I was very pleased about after my injury, though I had won the year before ... *During the beginning of the year and May, I spent some of the money on getting to competitions and training fees.* Towards the end of the cross-country season, I was tiring because, I think I peaked too early in the season. I did compete in the National schools in Nottingham and the inter-counties in Birmingham. It was my first English schools and my second inter-counties.*

I think I have learnt a lot from having ripped my hamstring; knowing when my body is telling me to stop ...

... I am extremely grateful for the money from the grant and it helped me to learn a lot. I hope to be in contact in the future.

Felix McG [16]

I am writing to give you an update of how I have spent the very generous award that I received from the Arthur Dagger Memorial Fund.

*I particularly wanted the money for this summer's fell racing season. Some of the money has been used for travelling expenses up to the Peak District where I have participated in the English Fell Running Championship. One of the races also doubled as a selection race for the England team and *I was selected for the Under 17 England team to compete in the World Youth Mountain Running Challenge which was held in Gorenja Vas, Slovenia on 25th June. I finished 18th and was first English runner home from a team of three.* It was an amazing experience, being part of and travelling with the squad and participating in an international race. I also competed in the FRA Under 18 English Uphill Championship in Sedbergh in July which was a 1300ft 2.5 mile climb on the Howgill Fells, on the eastern edge of the Lake District and was delighted to win this race and the title.*

*I have spent the rest of the money on a two day England Squad Fell Running Camp which I was invited to join in August in Sedbergh, Cumbria ... I really appreciate the opportunities that this money has given me. It has enabled me to have a successful fell running season and to make progress towards the winter cross country season and next summer's fell races. *Travelling up to the North of England as many as eight times this season would have had a big impact on my family's finances and this award has really helped to alleviate the costs.* Many thanks.*

Scott B [19]

As you know, my targets for this year were to gain medals at both indoor and outdoor national championships. I had an incredible start to my indoor season and became the indoor midland champion! This gave me a lot of confidence going into the national championships 2 weeks later.

I came 2nd in my semi final and ran a personal best of 6.91 (60m) which was the second fastest times of the day for

my age group. My confidence was blooming and my initial target was now back on the cards. The final came and I just took second running yet another PB of 6.90. Considering I was 6th on the powerOf10 rankings going into the competition, I was extremely happy with a silver medal. My indoor season was a success and i looked forward to the outdoor season...

About a month into the season I ran a hand-timed PB of 10.5 seconds and this gave me an incredible boost and once again made my original targets available.

I went to the Midland Championships with the hope of becoming both indoor and outdoor champion, however on the day I didn't have what it took to win and claimed a bronze medal in the 100m clocking a time of 10.93. I was very disappointed in this result but soldiered on with the bigger picture in mind (national championships).

1 week before the national championships I changed my starting technique and ran a personal best of 10.79 which again gave me great confidence going into the nationals.

On the day of the nationals I was in peak condition and was ready to reach the final and reach my target. However when in the starting blocks in the heat the person next to me twitched and reacted to the gun and got a false start. Under the new rules this led to a DQ. I was devastated and have learned from my mistakes and after watching the world championships i now know that it can happen to anyone (Usain Bolt).

The money i received from the fund was used on transport to and from competitions, various supplements and physiotherapy leading up to big competitions.