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Arthur's sporting passion was making a difference

Arthur Mason died in an accident on his family farm in July 2014 but as **Sylvia Steele** discovers, his legacy and his passion for bringing health and wellbeing into the world of sport continues...

Moth in a China Shop is a relatively new charity, but its name is somewhat enigmatic. The designation has a touch of quirkiness that immediately poses the question 'what is this all about?' Happily on hand to talk about the charity's foundation – and the meaning of its name – is Eve Matthews, PR Events and Marketing Administrator. She's the best person to explain the origins of the name and the charity itself, which was launched in 2015 in memory of Arthur Mason, a young man who sadly lost his life in a tragic farm accident.

"Moth in a China Shop was actually a phrase put forward by Arthur himself as a slogan for the family's rapeseed oil business," she says. "It's something that embodies Arthur's character to all who knew him – as a fun-loving, caring, gentle giant."

The charity links Arthur's Norfolk friends from around the Fincham area with the University of Gloucestershire, where he studied history and where his passion for rugby and the benefits of health and wellbeing in sport are legendary. Moth in a China Shop was created to expand on these ideas while continuing to build on the issues he felt so strongly about.

Despite the distance between the two locations, the charity shares a strong bond with Cheltenham – principally through the work it does with the rugby team. Nearer to his home, Arthur's Home Ground rugby pitch is available for community use throughout the year.

Fundraising events have been an ongoing commitment since the charity's inauguration, and Eve is eager to talk about these.

"Film in a Wood is an outdoor cinema event held annually at the home of the charity, Old Larchwood near Beachamwell," she says. "The concept has grown from strength to strength

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with our 2017 event being the best yet. The strong links with the University of Gloucestershire are upheld in a charity bike ride from Cheltenham to Fincham each year. The ride is followed by a Beer and Music Festival also attended by many of Arthur's local friends and members of the public to help raise funds for the charity."

A memorial rugby match is a momentous occasion held annually for all of Arthur's family and friends, to renew memories of a young man who made such an impact on all who knew him

"The day begins with a round-robin rugby match between the University of Gloucestershire's current rugby team and one from the Old-Boys," says Eve. "This is followed by a Memorial and Awards Dinner and charity auction."

Huge achievements have been made by the Moth in a China Shop charity, all designed to focus awareness on Arthur's passion for bringing health and wellbeing into sport to everyone's advantage.

An Ambassador Scheme exists to provide university students with the opportunity to qualify as rugby coaches. Once qualified, they go into local communities offering free coaching and support to schools and clubs and giving future generations access to the sport.

Alongside this, the charity also offers

a 'Rugby Activator Role' and the Arthur Mason scholarship programme. This is aimed to promote a student who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford the opportunity to develop and complete a Master's degree in a sport-related subject. The individual assists the qualified coaches to source opportunities in which to provide free coaching – whilst gaining further experience in organisation and management as well as their MA.

The Elite 7's Moth in a China Shop rugby team made its debut at the Bournemouth 7's Festival this year, and its success has encouraged plans for the team's development ahead of next year's season and future tournaments.

One particular project that Eve Matthews is excited to talk about is the work achieved to enhance the sporting lives of the Eden Boys School in Birmingham.

"It sparked our interest when we learned that the children had to walk 45 minutes to and from their sporting facilities," she says. "The charity supplied the school with a Moth in a China Shop minibus which allows the school to be self-reliant in transporting the boys to their facilities – enabling them to have more time to enjoy and play sports."

"The minibus is making such a difference to our pupils," said Asiyh Ravat, Principal of Eden Boys School.

"Moth in a China Shop is a wonderful charity partner for our school. We're delighted to have formed such a positive relationship with them."

It's just one testament to the charity's success and its ongoing commitment in pursuing the ideals of such a well-loved sportsman.

For more information about Moth in a China Shop and how you can help support the charity, please see the website at mothinachinashop.co.uk

